

Ledbury

Written by Jack Parry

Saturday, 13 June 2009 00:00 - Last Updated Monday, 22 June 2009 16:45

Ledbury

I rest awhile on Dog Hill Wood

And view the scene where Masfield stood

To write his poems of renown

Down there below in Ledbury Town.

John Abel's Market House I see

Built there in sixteen sixty-three;

A house on props - a room above,

A favourite haunt of cooing dove

And flying pigeons near Church Lane

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To all and sundry to proclaim

That surely this - this Market Place

Should think awhile and just retrace

The history of a former day

Near to the church where locals pray.

Where Roundhead fought with Cavalier

And yeoman swilled their daily beer,

Where Bye Street's widow did abide

And tanners beat the stinking hide,

Where sheep and ox and swine were sold

And bears were baited, we are told,

Where colts from Wales were chopped and changed

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While in the High Street stalls were ranged

And butchers bought and sold their meat

And let the blood run down the street

Until it reached an open stream

Where slops were thrown - t'was most unclean.

And smelly straw and muck were thrown

Where prowling cur ate rotting bone;

And nearby stood the Feathers Inn

Next to the Chapel of St. Katherine,

That noble saint and servant Mabel

(Some say she once lived at the Hazel)

Rested here to end her times

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Attracted by the belfry's chimes.

At Upper Hall lived Squire Skipp

Who ruled the town and used the whip

To quell the mob and make them pay

The tolls imposed on Market Day.

Then came the Martins, Biddulphs, Skinners

To rid the town of whores and sinners

Until we come to present day

And see the church and hope and pray,

That Ledbury Town will ever be

A home, a rest of sanctity,

Where streets are clean and flowers grow

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And filthy streams no longer flow,

Where people live bereft of strife

And live a long and prosperous life.

Jack (John) was born 14th October 1914 and died 19th December 2001. He was born at the White House, Eastnor, the eldest son of John and Lucy (nee Weston, daughter of Henry Weston, founder of Weston's Cider).

He followed his father into farming and farmed at Priors Court, Staplow in partnership with Tom Gallimore.

On his retirement he moved into Ledbury. A very keen gardener he created a wonderful garden at Priors Court and his love of flowers and nature was life long.

He researched and recorded the Parry family tree back to 1745, which entailed years of research - prior to the Internet!

[Biographical information written by Jack Parry's niece Catherine Forrester. The poem *Ledbury* reproduced here with the kind permission of Catherine Forrester and Wyndham Parry].