

Ledbury Past & Present

Written by John Eager

Tuesday, 18 November 2008 18:32 - Last Updated Tuesday, 02 December 2008 11:55



Ruth Smith has just had her first book published entitled *Ledbury Past & Present*. The book covers Ledbury in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries and covers a wide range of subjects such as buildings and transport, everyday life, royal occasions, sport and even the weather.

Ruth, a local girl hailing from Vineyard Farm, Donnington, is currently studying English Literature at Cardiff University.

“The book took about a year for me to write and research. I found it to be hugely interesting as I came to learn so much about the town! I felt that I wanted to unearth information about one of the leafy corners of Herefordshire which so often seems to be forgotten.”

Read on to find out what else Ruth had to say during our email interview and how you can get yourself a signed copy of *Ledbury Past & Present* in time for Christmas.

What was your inspiration to start the book?

“In 2006 I did some work experience with what was then Sutton Publishing. For a couple of days I shadowed people working on the Britain in Old Photograph series. They joked that I could write one for the series on my home town if I wanted. A year later I rang them up to see if they remembered saying this, and so then they confirmed I could write one. I think I wanted to investigate Ledbury, to find out more about its past and also promote an area of Herefordshire which is sometimes forgotten.”

Can you tell me something about the writing process?

“I thought it would be a lot easier than it was, or maybe a quicker process. Gathering the old photographs took quite a long time, but I am very grateful to those who lent me their personal collections. I did end up having to hurry up and get down to work and writing in Easter of this year as I realised my deadline was fast approaching to give the manuscript to the publishers - which was in June. As I am at university I also had to do work and essays for my course, English Literature, at the same time.

“I began with the weather as a chapter, as Brits almost always seem to talk about the weather as a way of entering into conversation. I have used some pictures of various snow in Ledbury in the book so I thought it was a different way to begin. So the book includes themes about agriculture - something I probably wanted to lean towards, having lived on a farm, and also has some nice photographs of the Ledbury Hunt coming through the town.”

Do you see writing as a career option?

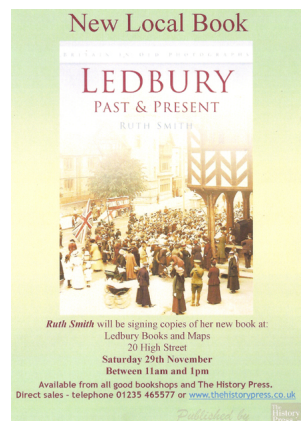
“I would love to be a fiction writer, as my career, but it's so difficult to get established and published - that's after the hard part of writing the book! I think I would really enjoy working in a team of writers for the BBC or something, but again that's very difficult. After uni if I can't get into writing I would like to keep it as a hobby whilst doing something like law, publishing or journalism. I still have a year and a half to go before I finish my degree though, so hopefully enough time to make a few decisions!”

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Ruth will be signing copies of *Ledbury Past & Present* at Ledbury Books and Maps on Saturday 29th November from 11-1pm.



Ledbury Past & Present is published by The History Press and will be available in Ledbury from Ledbury Books and Maps, The Three Counties Bookshop and the Tourist Information Centre.

It is also available online from [The History Press](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk) and [Amazon](http://www.amazon.co.uk) .

If anyone would like to write a review of Ruth's book, the Ledbury Portal would be happy to publish it.