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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: 150 Years of Ludlow Museum

Author(s): Norton, J.

Source: Norton, J. (1983). 150 Years of Ludlow Museum. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter, Vol 3 No 7*, 367.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1356>

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150 YEARS OF LUDLOW MUSEUM

Ludlow Museum will celebrate its 150th anniversary at the Feathers Hotel, Ludlow, on the 12th October this year. It is believed the first suggestion for a Museum at Ludlow came even earlier from the time when Lucien Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon was taken prisoner of war. He was provided with Dinham House, Ludlow, as a residence where he lived with his family and a large number of servants. Lucien formed a small Museum in the Stables of Dinham House and on leaving Ludlow in 1811, is supposed to have left behind certain things to form a nucleus for a future town Museum. After that a Mr. Jones lived at Dinham House and continued to add to the collection, taking particular interest in the local fossils.

On the 12th October 1833 the Museum and Ludlow Natural History Society was founded by a group of local naturalists. Among these were the Rev. T. T. Lewis of Aymestry and Dr. Thomas Lloyd of Ludlow. It was their pioneer work on local geology which provided much of the information used by Sir Roderick Murchison, in his work on the geology of this part of the Welsh Borderland. Sir Roderick was himself one of the founder members of the Society which also included the Earl of Powis, T. A. Knight of Downton Castle, the celebrated horticulturalist, Lady H. Clive and Lady L. Clive, Mr. H. Salwey, Mr. B. Botfield, Miss Walcot, Mrs. Stackhouse, the Rev. Thomas Wellings, Mrs. Johnes-Knight, Mr. Swainson and Mr. R. Marston. The first annual report lists donations of geological and other specimens including fossils given by Mr. John Galliers of Stapleton Castle, who was known for experiments with electricity and his knowledge of natural history.

The Museum continues its natural sciences tradition to this day and now has more than 35,000 geological specimens, the majority coming from Shropshire and North Herefordshire. It is very much hoped that additional space may soon be provided in Ludlow for much needed displays which would tell the geological story of this part of the Welsh Borderland and for wildlife habitat groups.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Bonaparte-Wyse are attending the Museum's 150th anniversary. Mr. Bonaparte-Wyse is a descendant of Lucien Bonaparte. Many of the other guests will be members of the families of the original founders.

John Norton