

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2017



Funeral of Hugh de Grey Seymour, the 6th Marquess of Hertford in 1912 at Arrow. The band is from the Warwickshire Yeomanry (ADG Collection)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

MARCH MEETING:

The speaker at our March meeting was Professor Rebecca Probert of Warwick University, who entertained us with a fascinating talk intriguingly entitled "*The Runaway Wife, the Bigamous Earl and the Farmer's Daughter*". This referred to the tangled love-life of Henry Cecil, the tenth Earl of Exeter and his first wife, Emma Vernon of Hanbury.

Henry married Emma in 1776 and moved to Hanbury Hall, which he renovated and improved. In 1789 his wife confessed she was having an affair with Rev William Sneyd, the local curate. He took the news well, but told his wife he did not want to separate. However he agreed to one last meeting between Emma and the curate and he accompanied Emma to the Hen & Chickens in Birmingham and left them alone. Emma and William eloped and Henry returned to Hanbury alone. Eventually Henry moved right away and settled in the village of Great Bolas in Shropshire under the assumed name of John Jones. He enjoyed the simple life as an artist. Here he met Sarah Hoggins, the 16 year old daughter of a farmer. In 1790 he 'married' Sarah, although he was still married to Emma. He immediately petitioned Parliament for a divorce, which eventually he obtained leaving him free to legally marry Sarah, this time at St Mildred's Church Bread Street in London in 1792. Henry took his bride to Burley House, the large and imposing home of his uncle, although it seems she was not really at ease there.

A few months later Sarah gave birth to a daughter and the following year to a son, who died after a few months. In 1795 she gave birth to a son, Brownlow, who became Henry's heir. The couple returned to live at Great Bolas. Sarah died in 1797 at the young age of 23. Henry inherited the title, 10th Earl of Exeter, from his uncle 1793 and in 1801 he became Marquess of Exeter. He married for a third time in 1800 to Elizabeth Hamilton (herself a divorcee). Henry died in 1804 at the age of 50, his third wife survived him by 33 years.

As for Emma, she married William Sneyd in 1791, although he died in Lisbon two years later.

Rebecca Probert delivered an excellent, well researched talk, in a faultless style which was enjoyed hugely by all those present.

STUDLEY HERITAGE: An open afternoon has been planned to celebrate Studley's Needle Heritage with a project display at Studley Village Hall on Saturday 22nd April from 12.00 to 3.00pm.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Annual subscriptions for 2017 are due. It would be appreciated if your subscription (still £5 per person) could be put into a **sealed envelope marked with your name and address** and handed in at the next meeting. Alternatively, you can post your subscription to Sue Fisher at 37 Corinthian Court, Alcester B49 5AY. Your membership card will then be available for collection at the following meeting.

SUMMER OUTING: This year our full day outing is to Sudeley Castle and Winchcombe on Saturday 17th June. Full details are included in the attached sheet.

JULY EVENING VISIT: Our traditional evening visit on Wednesday 12th July is to Avoncroft Museum of Buildings at Bromsgrove. Full details are included on the attached sheet.

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting is on Wednesday 12th April and our talk will be: "*The Major Repairs to Tyntesfield*" presented by Derek Clarke. Tyntesfield is a large Grade 1 listed Gothic Revival Victorian house, in North Somerset, which was the home of the Gibbs family from 1843 until 2002, when the National Trust acquired the 106 room house and contents after a major fundraising campaign.

Meetings are held at St. Benedict's Sixth Form Centre, Kinwarton Road, Alcester and commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

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