

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2017



Alcester Post
Office in Church
Street c1910
(ADLHS
Collection)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

JANUARY MEETING:

Our speaker at the first meeting of the year was Adam Busiakiewicz, who is an independent art historian and was curator at Warwick Castle, as well as a former pupil at St Benedict's. His subject was "Fulke Greville – Collector, Builder, Gardener and Warwickshire Man". Greville was born at Beauchamp Court in Alcester on 3rd October 1554, the son of Fulke Greville II and grandson of Fulke Greville I, who is buried in Alcester Church. The original Beauchamp Court lay behind the current 18th century building and, judging by the inventories was very substantial and luxuriously furnished.

He received a privileged upbringing: attending Shrewsbury School and Jesus College, Cambridge. He travelled to the court of Queen Elizabeth together with his school friend, Sir Philip Sidney, where he soon became a favourite of the Queen. Both he and Sidney wrote poetry, especially of love and romance, and also travelled widely around Europe. Sadly, Sidney died in 1586 while fighting at Zutphen. Greville wrote "Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney" in memory of his friend. The Queen appointed him secretary to the principality of Wales, a position he held for 45 years, and he received a knighthood in 1597 and became treasurer of the navy in 1598. Unfortunately, he made an enemy of Robert Cecil, who hounded him from his job after the Queen died. After Cecil's death, King James I appointed Greville as Chancellor of the Exchequer, a post he held until January 1620/1. The same year the King conferred on him the title, Baron Brooke. The King had also bestowed on him Warwick Castle, then in ruins, on which he spent £20,000, restoring the castle and its gardens to its former glory. He died in 1628 at his house in Holborn, as a result of a stab wound inflicted by his manservant, Ralph Heywood, who was disappointed at being left out of Greville's will. His body was taken back to Warwick and he was buried in St Mary's Church, where his epitaph reads: "*Folk Grevill Servant to Queene Elizabeth Conceller to King James Frennd to Sir Philip Sidney. Trophaeum Peccati.*" Our speaker was very engaging and articulate throughout, and finished his talk by playing a beautiful piece of music by Dowland (to words by Greville) on his lute.

TERRY CARTER: Sadly, I have to report that Terry Carter passed away at the beginning of January after a short illness. He had been a member and keen supporter of the Society for many years, as well as a committee member and treasurer until a few years ago. He also took a keen interest in projects to preserve the town's heritage. We will miss him greatly.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Annual subscriptions are due at the February meeting on 8th February. It would be appreciated if your subscription (still £5 per person) could be put into a **sealed envelope marked with your name and address**. Your membership card will then be available at the following meeting.

NEWSLETTER: Most members receive their newsletter by email, please remember to let us know as soon as possible if you change your email address.

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting is on 8th February and the **Annual General Meeting** will be followed by an illustrated talk: **Rowland Hill – Genius & Benefactor** presented by Alan Godfrey. Rowland Hill was born in Kidderminster in 1795 and lived for most of his early life in Birmingham. He was a teacher, developing radical ideas on education; an inventor and a social reformer; as well as the creator of a model for an efficient postal system providing cheaper postage. The talk follows his life, family, influences and achievements. 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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