

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2018

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk



Coronation
Celebrations in 1937
with a tea party
taking place in
Henley Street,
Alcester. The High
Bailliff, W H Thomas,
at right.
(ADLHS Collection)

JUNE MEETING: The speaker at our June meeting was Christine Penney, who spoke to us about “**A Bishop & His Books**”. The title referred to the library at Hartlebury Castle built up by Bishop Richard Hurd during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Richard Hurd was born in Congreve, Staffordshire in 1720, the son of a farmer. Hurd went to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, taking his BA, MA and becoming a fellow of the college. He was ordained a priest in 1744 and was a prolific author, largely of religious works. In 1749 he formed a long lasting friendship with William Warburton, who later became Bishop of Gloucester, and whose library Hurd purchased after his death. By 1767 he was appointed Archdeacon of Gloucester and in 1774 he became Bishop of Lichfield & Coventry. Two years later he was selected to be tutor to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. In 1781 he became Bishop of Worcester and moved to Hartlebury Castle, seat of Bishops of Worcester, where he built up a magnificent library. As well as acquiring Warburton’s library he also purchased the books of the poet, Alexander Pope, and the postal reformer and entrepreneur, Ralph Allen, both friends of Warburton. Many of his books are annotated in his own hand with comments on the texts, not always complimentary! Books include *Flora Londiniensis* (1798) with hand coloured plates of wild flowers and an edition of 1611 of Edmund Spenser’s work annotated by Pope. This amazing collection of books is one of the few eighteenth century working libraries which is still complete, containing 5,000 volumes dating from 1476 until Hurd’s death in 1808. Not only are the books amazing, but so is the library in which it is housed. Christine encouraged us all to visit Hartlebury to enjoy the castle and Bishop Hurd’s library. Although our audience was not as large as we usually get, probably a result of the fine weather and summer holidays, it was much enjoyed by all those present.

ALCESTER STREET MARKET

Once again the Society took part in Alcester’s Street Market with a stall, staffed by five members, selling Local Past and our various other publications. We were able to introduce many passers-by to the Society, as well as meeting many of our members, who took advantage of the sunshine to take in the delights of Street Market. Ian Greig assembled a display showing photographs from our Photo Surveys 1988 – 2008, which attracted much interest.

PHOTO-SURVEY 2018

Our Photo-Survey 2018 is drawing to a close. If you agreed to take part, please return your memory stick at the August meeting. If you need help to download your photos or need further assistance, contact Steve Godfrey on 07773-293968.

EVENING VISIT TO HILL CLOSE GARDENS, WARWICK – TUESDAY 10th JULY

Unfortunately, owing to the low numbers of members and guests who booked on this visit, we were forced to make the decision to cancel the coach trip to Hill Close Gardens. All payments will be refunded to members as soon as possible.

NEXT MEETING: Our next talk will be on **Wednesday 8th AUGUST** the speakers for the evening will be Vince Williams & Jon Goodson. Their subject is “**IDLE WOMEN: the story of women working on the canals during WWII**”. More details in next month’s newsletter. Meetings are held at St Benedict’s RC High School Sixth Form Centre and commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome to attend.

Alan Godfrey

(alandgodfrey@hotmail.com)