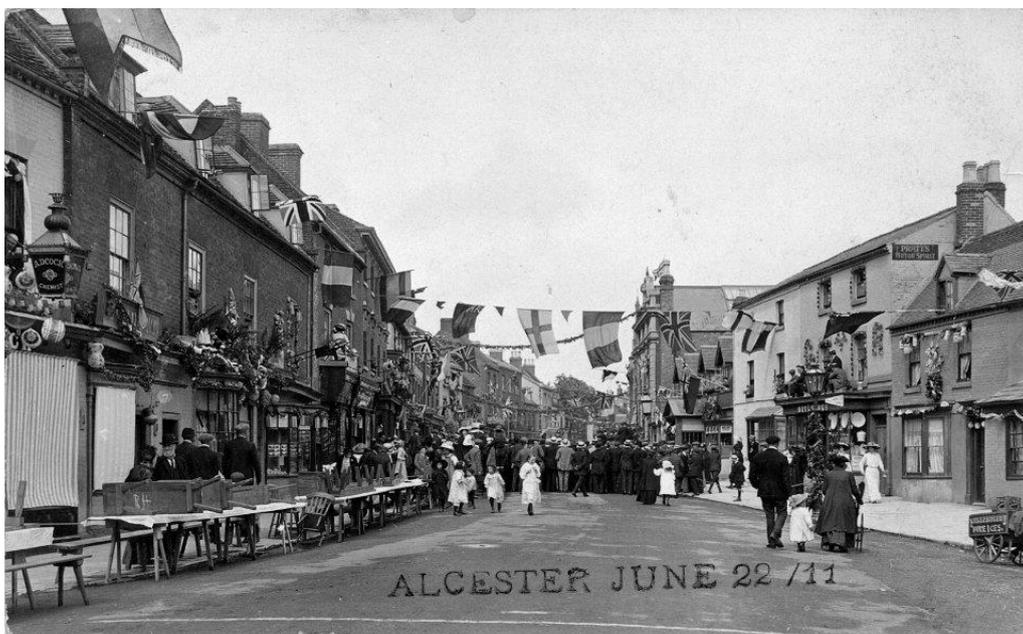


ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2018

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk



Alcester High Street during the June 1911 Coronation Celebrations (ADLHS Collection)

MAY MEETING: The speaker at our May meeting was Mairi Macdonald, who spoke to us about “**Medieval Women**”. Mairi explained that medieval women were often not well treated and married women had few legal rights – their property became their husband’s on marriage, except for ‘paraphernalia’ (everything the wife wore at her wedding). There was a strong tradition of matriarchy in the Catholic Church. Many middle-class marriages were arranged for purely practical reasons. Wives would be involved in the running of the family business, including looking after the apprentices and other workers as well as keeping the financial records. Marjorie Kemp of Norwich, the wife of a wealthy businessman, ran a business as brewer and corn dealer. The money she earned enabled her to travel on pilgrimages and buy fine clothes.

After the death of their husband, local custom often meant widows would receive more than their legal entitlement and would quite often continue to run their late husband’s business. Aristocratic women had little freedom; they were often used as pawns in arranging advantageous alliances. The aristocratic wife would be employed in running the household. Second and subsequent marriages would also often be arranged. In 1463 the widowed Duchess of Norfolk was married to her fourth husband, who was only 20 years old! She managed to outlive him and it seems they got on well during the marriage. Unmarried, well-bred girls would enter a convent.

Peasant girls had no formal education, however they did, occasionally, have rights to land. In agriculture, the marriage would be one of true partnership involving real teamwork. The later growth of Puritanism and the spread of the printed word, made things somewhat worse for women in the seventeenth century.

This was a fascinating talk and much enjoyed by the large audience.

PHOTO-SURVEY 2018

There is still time to register to take part in our Photo-Survey 2018. We undertake this survey every 10 years to create a snapshot of life in the town and villages in the district. Photographs can be a record of local shops, businesses and other buildings (especially those that may be at risk). Interiors and staff at work are also of interest (please obtain permission). We are also interested in local events, fetes, society meetings etc. If children are included you may need permission to take the photographs. All pictures must be taken during the month of June. If you wish to take part please download a registration form from our website or contact Steve Godfrey on 07773-293968.

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

There are still some seats available on the coach for our evening visit to Warwick. Hill Close Gardens are the restored pleasure gardens which originally belonged to the shopkeepers and merchants of Warwick. The coach will leave Alcester at **6.15pm**. On arrival there will be a brief introductory talk followed by a guided tour of the various gardens. The visit will conclude with refreshments before returning to Alcester by approximately 9.30 pm. The cost will be £15 per person (to include entrance, refreshments and coach). Anyone who booked seats, but has not paid, please do so at the next meeting and also provide contact phone numbers. Contact Sue Fisher 01789-763121

JUNE MEETING: At our next meeting on **Wednesday 13th June** the speaker for the evening will be Christine Penney, archivist at Hartlebury Castle. Her subject is “**A Bishop and his Books – Bishop Hurd & his Library**”. 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

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