

# ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2019

[www.alcesterhistory.org.uk](http://www.alcesterhistory.org.uk)



The Hertford  
Memorial  
Sanatorium with  
matron's house  
(centre)  
(ADLHS  
Collection)

### FEBRUARY MEETING

The speaker at our last meeting was **Richard Osborne** who spoke to us about “**Exploring the History of St Nicholas Church, Alcester**”.

Richard explained that St Nicholas church occupied a site which probably was the site of earlier churches, A synod was supposedly held near Alcester in the eighth century and the finding of the walrus ivory tau cross was also an indication that Alcester was the centre of religious activity. In the twelfth century Alcester's priests were presented by Cookhill Priory and Alcester Abbey. During the Middle Ages the interior of the Church would have been illustrated and painted in bright colours. The rood screen was also painted, as remains of the painting have been discovered.

During the Civil War the Church was used as a billet for Parliamentary troops and the Church tower as a lookout. At this time the nonconformist priests: Rev Samuel Clarke and his successor Rev Samuel Tickner, were responsible for painting over the decorations in the Church and implementing a more Puritan style of worship in the town. They were aided by Major Matthew Bridges, steward of the manor. In 1657 he was commissioned by Quarter Sessions to remove 'the rood loft and all superstitious paint' from the church. After his death in 1677, he was buried under the nave of the Church.

One of the treasures of the Church is the benefactions board, thought to date from 1603, which includes the £300 given by Sir Fulke Greville to build the market hall (Alcester Town Hall). It is currently being renovated.

The Church was largely rebuilt by Francis Smith of Warwick in 1730-2, a prolific builder of church buildings around the country. This was a wonderful talk on a subject familiar to us all, given in a confident and knowledgeable style.

### ASTON CANTLOW & DISTRICT LHS

We have been notified by Alan Bailey of a forthcoming talk taking place at Wilmcote Village Hall:

“The Romano-British Settlement of Billesley Manor Farm” at 7.30 on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March. Call 01789 268618 for details.

### VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE TEAS & COFFEES

There are still a few vacancies for volunteers to help with teas and coffees at meetings. Volunteers may choose which meeting to help at and full instruction is provided. If you would like to help, please put your name down at the entrance table at the next meeting.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscriptions for 2019 are now due. The cost remains at £5 per person. **Please put your cash or cheque in an envelope bearing your name and address.** If you have already paid, you can pick up your membership card at the next meeting. If you are not able to attend the meeting, please send your payment to our treasurer: Sue Fisher, 37 Corinthian Court, Alcester B49 5AY.

### NEXT MEETING:

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March** starting at 8.00pm and the speaker for the evening is **Dr Nic Fulcher**. His subject is “**Leeds Castle**”. This famous castle in Kent was largely constructed in the thirteenth century by the wife of Edward I, Eleanor of Castile. It remained the favourite residence of kings and queens over the centuries. In 1974 ownership passed to a charitable trust to preserve the castle and open it to the public. Dr Fulcher was for ten years curator of Leeds Castle.

Meetings are held at St Benedict's RC High School, Sixth Form Centre, Kinwarton Road, Alcester B49 6PX. All are welcome to attend.

Alan Godfrey

(alandgodfrey@hotmail.com)