

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2015



Coughton Cross with Post
Office behind.
Date unknown
(ADLHS Collection)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

LAST MEETING: Our last meeting featured a welcome return visit from Robin Hill, now retired as Curator of Hartlebury Museum in Worcester. His superb talk was entitled **A Lifetime Through the Lens** which examined the work of the photographer Marjorie Wight. Although little known now, her photographs which chronicled rural life during the early years of the 20th century deserve far wider recognition.

Marjorie Wight was born in 1889, the daughter of a Staffordshire solicitor. She died in 1975 at the age of eighty-six but, as Robin Hill explained, about the greater part of her life, little is known.

What is known is that she had a remarkable eye for detail and became a gifted photographer. It is known that, for a time, as a young woman, she worked in Hereford for the photographers Vivians where she may have picked up some photographic skills. At one point in her later career she was employed as a photographer for the famous Shell Guides of Great Britain series of guide books.

Robin Hill explained that Marjorie Wight's large archive of work is not, unfortunately, housed in one place but is spread around the country making research difficult and lengthy.

What is clear is that Marjorie Wight ought to be considered one of the foremost photographers of the rural countryside in the early twentieth century. Most of her work focused around Herefordshire and Shropshire though she did, on occasion, travel further afield in her car. She visited and photographed Whitby in Yorkshire showing the fisher-folk, the harbour and sea-front and boats. In rural Wales one picture showed the post being delivered by the postman on horseback and also the shelters on the seashore used by the lava collectors; also, sheep being washed in the river by farmers in coracles.

Notable photographs to mention from this superb collection showed a group of clay pipe manufacturers in Broseley and one of oxen pulling a farm cart in Gloucestershire.

This wonderful talk, accompanied by so many of Marjorie Wight's pictures, made one only regret that so little is known of the photographer herself.

ADLHS WEBSITE: See our website www.alcesterhistory.org.uk for the "Then and Now" page which currently features Alcester Railway Station – as it was and, as it now appears!

OXFORD VISIT-23RD MAY: Would anyone who put their name down for the trip to Oxford in May, but did not pay at the last meeting, please do so at the next meeting. There are still seats available but, from now on, payment (£12 per person) must be made on booking.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: A reminder that subscriptions for this year are now overdue. The amount of £3 per person remains the same as last year. Please bring your money in an envelope marked clearly with your name and address and hand it on entry to the next meeting. If you are unable to get to meetings, then payments may be sent to me by post or by hand at **37, Corinthian Court, Stratford Road, Alcester, B49 5AY.**

Please, also remember to collect your new membership card at the next meeting, if you paid your subscription at either of the last two meetings.

NEXT MEETING: The speaker at our next meeting on Wednesday 8th April will be Roger Pringle, the distinguished Director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust from 1989 to 2007. His talk entitled **Shakespeare's Local Background** should be full of local interest and fascination. The talk will be illustrated throughout and will look at Shakespeare's upbringing and the extent to which it influenced his writing. Aspects covered will include his family background, education, and the rural environment he knew. The talk will also investigate the links he maintained with his native town during his successful years in London.

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

SUE FISHER