

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2018

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Pram race in
Alcester High
Street 1950
(ADLHS
Collection)

MARCH MEETING: The speaker at our March meeting was Dr. Richard Churchley both a long time member of the Society and our newly appointed Archivist.

Richard is a very experienced speaker and his talk on this occasion did not disappoint.

Entitled '**Local Farm Houses and Buildings**' Richard's talk explored the history of our local area via the local farm buildings which abound in our local countryside. The landscape had been largely formed by farmers and farm workers and before the 19th century these farm workers lived in the farmhouses alongside their masters. It was only in Victorian times when farmers began to provide separate, small cottages for their workers.

Richard's talk ranged from Manor Abbey Farm at Halesowen to Rectory Farm at Grafton Flyford and many places in between.

In most cases local stone was used to build the farmhouses but the original farmhouse may have been half timbered with additions made later when times were good and there was money to spare. A good local example of this was at Kings Court near Alcester where the timbered remains of the original farm building may still be glimpsed, overlooking the car-park. The smart Georgian frontage was only added when the road outside was turn-piked in the eighteenth century.

Rous Lench Court was a lovely black and white large farm building. Stone, Inkberrow Sandstone, used for its construction were quarried at Stonepits Lane in Inkberrow.

At nearby Sambourne, Middletown Farm was the original Manor House for Studley though evidence of this was hidden beneath many later additions.

Hunt End Farm originated in medieval times and had connections with the Knights Templar.

Lane House Farm near Feckenham was originally an Elizabethan building with Victorian additions.

Tookeys Farm at Astwood Bank dates from the time of Henry VIII and there were rumours of a secret passage leading from the farm to the church.

Richard also mentioned several places known as 'Mudwall' or 'Mudwalls' for the very reason that that was how they had been constructed.

Outhill Farm near Studley had been the setting for the murder of a young girl who was shot by her assailant.

Richard's talk ranged far and wide over our local landscape and many will have recognised the farms and buildings mentioned.

This was a wonderful talk focusing on true 'local history' backed up with a marvellous array of slides which illustrated the real beauty of the many buildings which form our landscape.

ALCESTER TOWN HALL 400th ANNIVERSARY:

A series of events celebrating the 400th anniversary of Alcester Town Hall is planned during April and May. The first of these is on Friday 13th April when Adam Busiakiewicz will give an illustrated talk on Sir Fulke Greville and the original context in which the Hall was built.

Our own Ian Greig will also be giving a talk at the Town Hall on Friday 11th May entitled **From Market House to social centre: 400 years of Alcester Town Hall**. Tickets for both talks are £5 each and include cheese and wine during the interval. Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30 start and tickets may be obtained from Venue Expresso, Town Hall committee members, or Susan Juned on 01789 762751.

During the summer there will be several opportunities to view the exhibition on the history of the Town Hall to which the Society has contributed a section entitled 'The Town Hall at the heart of the community'. Ian Greig will give further details at the next meeting.

MARCH MEETING: At our next meeting on **Wednesday 11th April** the speaker for the evening will be Dr Sylvia Pinches, a freelance historical researcher & lecturer who also works for the Victoria County History Trust. Her subject is "**A Tale of Two Castles: Warwick & Kenilworth**". This talk looks at the history of Warwickshire's two premier castles and the connection between them. 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)