

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2015



Evesham Street
1900's showing
both the Bell and
the Rose &
Crown, both now,
private houses
(ADLHS)
Collection)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

JULY EVENING OUTING: As is customary for our Society, there was no lecture at St Benedict's in July but instead, a party of some fifty members made an evening visit by coach to Winchcombe, a delightful small town on the edge of the Cotswolds.

On arrival at Winchcombe we were placed in the capable hands of the Winchcombe Walkers, a group of guides who regularly show visitors around the town, pointing out the many interesting facets which make up the history of Winchcombe.

After being divided into several smaller groups we began our tour at the delightful church. For anyone planning to visit Winchcombe in the future, the church, St Peters is a 'must' to see. Apart from a wonderful stained glass window that enthralled everyone, the church has a series of very informative wall plaques throughout the church which guide visitors around. Among the many artefacts on display is an ancient wooden chest with three locks and, two large, stone coffins, one over six feet long. Also, and surprisingly, there appears to be a Winchcombe connection to our own Ralph de Boteler whose name appears on a plaque near the church door and who built the original, nearby, Sudeley Castle.

The town itself is amazingly unspoilt with most of its ancient buildings still intact. Many of the more recent buildings were built at the behest of Emma Dent in the nineteenth century. She arrived at Sudeley Castle as the bride of William Dent and sadly remained childless throughout her marriage. Some said that Winchcombe itself became her child and that the people of the town had good reason to be grateful for her care for both them and for Winchcombe itself.

Perhaps surprisingly, at various times in the past Winchcombe has been a centre for the wine trade and for tobacco growing. The town is sheltered on three sides by the surrounding hills from the prevailing winds and so, has its own balmy, micro-climate.

Anyone thinking of visiting this delightful town should not hesitate – it is fascinating and full of interest – and try to get one of the Winchcombe Walkers to show you round!

NORMAN BARKER: We were saddened to hear of the death of Norman Barker recently. Norman was a remarkable man, one of Alcester's 'characters' and, his always youthful appearance belied his age, 91 at the time of his death.

Norman had been a member of this Society for many years and held the post of Secretary at one time. The Society was well represented by several committee members at Norman's funeral on 14th July.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY: The picture at the top of this Newsletter is only one of hundreds from our archives, showing the old and 'lost' pubs of Alcester. To mark Heritage Open Day on Sunday, 13th September we will be mounting a small photographic exhibition at Church House, Butter Street, on the theme of "Alcester's Pubs - Then & Now", using more photographs from our archive.

Church House itself has undergone a great deal of repair and restoration over the last several years and guided tours around the building are planned by members of the Church House Development Trust, on the day. Do come along and see the once unused first floor, following extensive and sensitive restoration work.

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting at St Benedict's will be on Wednesday 12th August when our speaker will be Dr. Gay Hill whose fully illustrated talk is entitled **West Midlands Struggle for the Vote – Suffragettes and West Midland Electoral Reform**. Dr. Hill teaches both Family and Local History and was the Founder Chairman of the Wyre Forest Historical Research Group. We also understand that Dr Hill will be dressed as a suffragette!

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

SUE FISHER