

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
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The old Post
Office at Arden's
Grafton.

(1998 ADLHS
Photo Survey)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

JUNE TRIP TO SHREWSBURY: On Saturday 4th June a group of around fifty, made up of members, friends and relatives set out by coach for the historic Shropshire town of Shrewsbury taking, on the outward journey, the faster route via the motorway whilst planning to take the more scenic route back, at the end of the day.

Shrewsbury really is a town that has something for everyone and I think the consensus was that we all enjoyed a really delightful day out and were lucky to be blessed with lovely weather.

Shrewsbury contains some 600 listed buildings which line the winding streets and alleyways. These include Shrewsbury Castle which now houses a regimental museum in addition to Shrewsbury Abbey, made famous by the fictional Brother Cadfael. Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury and there are many reminders of him throughout the town which remains beautifully unspoilt despite the many visitors and local people who throng the streets.

The town boasts a wide range of shops comprising of both the usual high street names but also, many small, specialist shops, cafes and restaurants. Also, I am told that it has two vegetarian restaurants which is two more than Stratford!

Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery is housed in what used to be the old Music Hall and its portico, preserved from its heyday, gives no indication of the large and very beautiful, modern museum which lies behind it.

The town itself is virtually an island surrounded as it is by the winding River Severn and so there is easy access to many lovely riverside walks and also river trips on the pleasure boat, Sabrina of which several members of our group took advantage.

Shrewsbury has often been referred to as the Town of Flowers and the justly famous Quarry Gardens, once overseen by the first of the television gardeners, Percy Thrower, are ample proof of this. Running down to the river, these beautiful gardens were simply breath-taking.

EVENING TRIP TO THE HIVE AT WORCESTER: In July, traditionally, we do not have a meeting but instead organise an

evening trip to a nearby place of historic interest. Thus it was that on the second Wednesday of July we journeyed by coach to nearby Worcester to visit The Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, otherwise known as The Hive, situated at the Butts in the centre of the city.

The Hive opened in July 2012 and was the first of its kind in Europe. The building has a very distinctive design and its gold coloured roof has quickly become a landmark in the city. The building has won two international awards for its design and sustainability. It houses 12 miles of archive collections and contains a quarter of a million books. The building is laid out over five floors serviced by lifts and escalators. Our destination, as a group, was floor 2 where the 'Discover the Past' area is situated.

We were split into two groups and given a tour of this floor including the public resources available. We then went 'behind the scenes' to the archive strong rooms where we were able to view William Shakespeare's marriage bond and other archaeological materials and recent finds.

We also got an insight into the painstaking work involved in the restoration of some particularly delicate objects notably very ancient books. Our guide told us that all work could be reversed if newer and better methods of preservation emerged in the future.

This was a really fascinating visit and it was a privilege to be guided around areas not normally seen by the public by two expert guides. Anyone engaged in family history research or any kind of historical research involving Worcestershire is heartily recommended to visit the Hive.

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting, back at the Sixth Form Centre at St. Benedict's High School, will be on Wednesday 10th August when our speaker will be Lt. Colonel Gerald Lesinski, Master of the Lord Leycester Hospital in Warwick, the work and history of which, his talk will focus upon.

Meetings commence at 8.00pm and all are welcome.

SUE FISHER