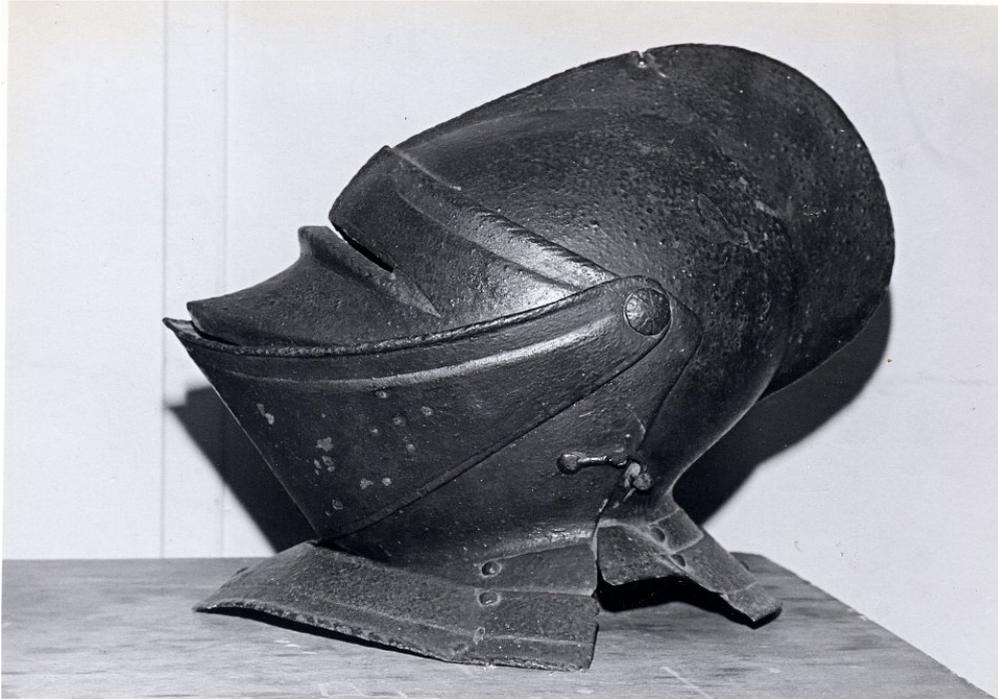


ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017



Helmet of Sir
Fulke Greville I
(1491-1559),
formerly held in
Alcester Church
(ADLHS
Collection)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

DECEMBER MEETING: Our Christmas meeting was a truly seasonal subject: "A 1940s Christmas". Paul Harding and Paula Lee presented a typical Christmas from the war years and after with the help of a wide display of objects of the period. The government recognised the importance of celebrating Christmas at home to keep up morale. However, many basic materials were in short supply during the war, especially those necessary for a Christmas celebration. No paper was available to make new decorations and so homemade decorations recycled paper and used newspaper. Newspapers were used to make Chinese lanterns, paper hats and paper chains. They could also be used in crackers, although without the snap. There was a call for the public to donate cracker snaps to the war effort, intending that they could help the Home Guard to practise firing without having to use live ammunition!

It was fortunate that Boys Own Paper and other publications provided advice and instruction on how to "Make-do and Mend" for Christmas decorations, presents etc. Often people were able to find out old decorations from years past, including artificial Christmas trees, which had been invented in the 1920s. Electric lights for Christmas trees were not available, but many people mounted candles on their Christmas tree, which although attractive could be a fire risk. Around the house it was recommended to put up holly, ivy, mistletoe or evergreen foliage. Small logs could have a hole drilled in the top to take a candle, a reminder of the traditional yule log. Pine cones dusted with floury water could be hung up on the Christmas tree.

Paul Harding explained that Christmas was a shorter season than is currently celebrated, Christmas trees were often not put up until Christmas Eve. Children's stockings contained an orange (if this was available), some nuts and perhaps a small toy (homemade).

This was an entertaining talk with a display of artefacts from this era which, I am sure, brought back memories of the 1940s and 1950s to many of the audience.

LOCAL PAST

The November edition of Local Past is on sale at our meetings, at our usual outlets or by post (see our website).

2017 PROGRAMME OF TALKS: Our Programme of talks for the coming year is available at meetings and on our website, see: www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Annual subscriptions are due at the February meeting on 8th February. It would be appreciated if your subscription (still £5 per person) could be put into a sealed envelope marked with your name and address. Your membership card will then be available at the following meeting.

NEXT MEETING: Our first meeting of the year on 11th January will be an illustrated talk: **Sir Fulke Greville (1554-1628) Collector, Builder, Gardener & Warwickshire Man** by Adam Busiakiewicz. Sir Fulke Greville III was born at Beauchamp Court in Alcester and went on to serve at the courts of Queen Elizabeth I, King James I and King Charles I, holding many important positions at court. He was granted Warwick Castle by the king in 1604. The tomb of his grandfather (also named Sir Fulke Greville) is in Alcester Parish Church. This will be an interesting talk with local connections. Meetings are held at St. Benedict's Sixth Form Centre, Kinwarton Road, Alcester and commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

Happy New Year from
ALAN GODFREY