

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2019

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk



St Faith's CE Junior & Infant School in School Road, 1969 (now Malin Court). The school was opened in 1874 as the National School. The coat of arms of Queen Adelaide (widow of King William IV) appeared in the school, as she was one of the first to make a donation towards a new school. It was demolished in 1988 (ADLHS Collection)

DECEMBER MEETING

The speaker at our last meeting was a return visit by Robin Hill who spoke to us about **"My Collection of Collections: A Personal Choice of Objects, People & Places from over 30 Years in Museums"**. Robin's talk was loosely based on the format of "Desert Island Discs", he chose eight of the objects, people and places which he had encountered during his career and which he valued.

The first was Witley Court, the former home of the Foley family from Dudley, who sold the house in 1920 to the carpetmaker, Sir Herbert Smith. However, in 1937 a fire started in the kitchen and spread throughout the house. The ruined building was auctioned in 1948 and the valuable materials removed from the site. Eventually, in 1972 English Heritage took over the building and have gradually been restoring the Italianate house and grounds, including the spectacular Perseus & Andromeda fountain.

The second was Mikael Pederson (1855-1929), a Danish engineer who invented agricultural equipment as well as a bicycle which clearly much ahead of its time.

The third was a model of the three-masted barque "Marques", the original of which had appeared in "The Onedin Line", "Poldark" and "The Voyage of Charles Darwin". She sank in 1984 in the Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Race.

Number four was a night watchman's clock. This was used to allow the night watchman to clock in at intervals along his round. This device appeared briefly in the film "Driving Miss Daisy".

Number five was the straw-fill leather horse collar for a heavy horse to pull a cart or plough. Robin Hill explained he kept such horses.

Number six was a cartwheel penny of 1797, which was introduced to solve the problem of a lack of small change in circulation. They were minted by Matthew Boulton at the Soho Mint in Birmingham.

Number seven was Chedham's Yard in Wellesbourne. This is a restored nineteenth century blacksmith's and

wheelwright's workshop, which won the BBC Restoration Village Competition in 2006.

The final object was a pair of Women's Land Army trousers. Robin explained this was a reminder of the 23,000 women who served in the Land Army during the First World War.

This was a most unusual, but much enjoyed talk.

PHOTO SURVEY 2018

The results of the photo-survey held in June are now available to be viewed on the Society website: www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

2019 CALENDAR

The Society's calendar of Alcester and district as it was is now on sale and selling fast. The calendar can be purchased for £6 at meetings or from PSW, Classic Clutter or Alcester Heritage Centre. If you are unable to obtain your calendar from these outlets, you can receive your calendar by post by ordering online from our website. Don't delay only a limited number of calendars are available!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our February meeting is also our Annual General Meeting. The Committee is proposing at the meeting to adopt a new constitution for the Society. The current constitution has been unchanged since 1974 and needs to be revised and brought up to date. A copy of the proposed new constitution will be sent to all paid-up members (at 31st December 2018) at least fourteen days before the AGM.

NEXT MEETING: Our next talk will be on **Wednesday 9th January 2019** and the speaker for the evening is a return visit by **David Clarke**. His subject is **"Sentenced to Beyond the Seas: Female Convicts Sentenced to Deportation"**.

Meetings are held at St Benedict's RC High School Sixth Form Centre and commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome to attend.

I WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

Alan Godfrey

(alandgodfrey@hotmail.com)