

# ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### JANUARY 2018

[www.alcesterhistory.org.uk](http://www.alcesterhistory.org.uk)



Oversley Bridge,  
when the main  
road to  
Stratford  
crossed the  
bridge  
c1940  
(ADLHS  
Collection)

#### DECEMBER MEETING:

Our last meeting had a somewhat smaller audience than we have been accustomed to for the Christmas meeting, largely resulting from the inclement weather at that time. As usual there was plenty of festive food on offer and the popular raffle in place of the entrance charge.

However, the audience that greeted our member, Alan Benjamin (Benjy), made up in enthusiasm what it lacked in numbers. He spoke extremely fluently of his early life growing up in Astwood Bank and his time in the police force.

Benjy attended a boarding school, Old Swinford, in Stourbridge, but as he was not academically inclined he decided to join the police force on leaving school. He wrote off for six application forms from different forces, but completed just one, for West Mercia police and was duly invited for interview at Hindlip Hall. He was offered a job and attended the Police College at Ryton on Dunsmore for training. Benjy began his new job at Redditch Police Station, which before the building of the new town had a population of 35,000. The area covered by Redditch extended from the Birmingham border at Maypole as far as Inkberrow. With few police cars most 'bobbies' had to walk or cycle. Among his many humorous reminiscences he called coming across two thieves removing a safe from a building in Redditch, as well as numerous drunks especially at New Year. Walking the beat usually involved finding a shop doorway to escape from the weather to write up the 'beat book'. He transferred to Alcester in the '70s, working under Sergeant Searson, where he recalled the friendly family atmosphere. He later became the Schools Liaison Officer, his best job, and finally retired in 1998. This was a wonderful talk full of local anecdotes and much enjoyed by all.

#### STUDLEY MEMBERS

We apologise to some of our Studley members that, as a result of the adverse weather conditions, the newsletter was not delivered to your door before the December meeting.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS 2018

Annual subscriptions are now payable for 2018. The amount remains unchanged at £5 per member. Please put your payment inside a sealed envelope showing your name and address and bring it to the January or February meeting. Thank you.

#### ADLHS CALENDAR 2018

As mentioned in previous newsletters, we have produced a calendar of 13 photographs from the Society's archives. The images include many of Alcester and several of the local villages and provide a glimpse across our area of times gone by. The price is £6 and calendars can be purchased at our meetings or Classic Clutter, Alcester Heritage Centre, PSW, or from our website (postage will be £1.30 extra). The calendars are selling fast, so make sure you buy yours before stocks run out!

***A happy and healthy New Year to all our members in 2018.***

**JANUARY MEETING:** At our next meeting on **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January** the speaker will be Neil Cook. His subject will be **"The Recreation of the Formal Gardens at Hanbury Hall"**. Hanbury Hall, built by the Vernon family, is just twelve miles away from Alcester and is in the care of the National Trust. The formal gardens were designed by George London in the early eighteenth century, but in 1770 were changed to the more fashionable landscape style. This talk looks at how the original formal gardens were restored. 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**