

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2015



The Nevill Arms
at Cookhill, 1988

(ADLHS
Collection)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

LAST MEETING: The speaker at our May meeting was the Rev. Dr Julian Davey, a long-time resident of Alcester. Dr Davey confessed at the outset to a life-long fascination with Richard III – his life, death and fate. This fascination with King Richard had also led down various paths of research including the seemingly peculiar idea that Richard III and his retinue may have passed through Alcester itself during the stately progress which followed his coronation. Dr Davey's fascinating talk entitled **Richard III and the Alcester Connection**, went on to prove that this might not have been such an odd idea after all! King Richard's coronation in July 1483 was followed a progress by Richard and his Queen throughout his kingdom. The retinue was enormous comprising of 15 to 20 coaches, carts and wagons loaded with gold and silver plate, ornamental hangings, clothing and money as well as numerous people attached to the Court. The Royal progress wound its way from London to Oxford to Gloucester then on to Worcester, arriving on 5th August. Warwick was reached on the 8th August, but where this huge retinue stopped during the intervening period has never been recorded.

Dr Davey had worked out that the halfway point between Worcester and Warwick, using the roads then in existence, would have been – Alcester.

There were, at the time various places where the King and his Court might have stayed, such as Cookhill Priory, Shurnock Court at nearby Feckenham. The picture at the head of the Newsletter, of the Nevill Arms, perhaps bears witness to a past association with Richard, the Neville family of Warwick.

Supporting the theory put forward by Dr Davey is the fact that Richard's first cousin, a Boteler, lived at Oversley Court, approximately where the Travel Lodge is now situated. Now, buried beneath the Rose Garden at Ragley Hall lie the remains of Ragley Manor, which would have been standing at the time of King Richard's progress.

However, Dr Davey thought it most likely that, had Richard and his court stayed in the Alcester area Beauchamp Court would have been the most probable – the current house being the third to have occupied the site.

This totally fascinating talk and the illustrations which helped to back up the theory, was given by a wonderful speaker who must surely have left many in the audience thinking 'could it be?'

SOCIETY VICE-CHAIRMAN: At a recent committee meeting, Steve Godfrey our webmaster and committee member agreed to fill the vacant post of vice-chairman.

In addition to his considerable IT skills Steve also has an abiding interest in local history and in particular the history of Alcester itself upon which, he is very knowledgeable.

OXFORD TRIP: On Saturday, May 23rd fifty-three members of the Society enjoyed a wonderful day in Oxford visiting museums, parks, and gardens and sampling all the things that this wonderful city has to offer. In addition, we were blessed with fine weather!

WINCHCOMBE TRIP: Our evening trip to Winchcombe on Wednesday July 8th is now fully booked. We will be leaving Alcester by coach, from Priory Road at 6.00pm prompt, returning to Alcester at around 10.00pm. If you have any queries, please phone me on **01789 763121**.

ALCESTER STREET MARKET: As we have in the last few years, we will again be having a stall at the Street Market on Sunday 14th June. Volunteers to help committee members run the stall would be very welcome. You will not be required to be a fount of historical knowledge but simply take money for the publications we will have on sale and chat to anyone visiting the stall. If you would like to help, on what is usually a very enjoyable occasion, for the odd half-hour or even an hour during the afternoon, please speak to me or any other committee member at the next meeting on June 10th.

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting on Wednesday June 10th will be Max Keen making a very welcome return visit. Many of you will remember his hugely entertaining talk about Sir Walter Raleigh two years ago. His is a very knowledgeable and humorous speaker and, on this occasion his talk is entitled **Oliver Cromwell – Our chief of Men or, Royal Murderer?** Meetings are held at St Benedict's 6th Form Centre and commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome to attend.

SUE FISHER