

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017



Mr Harry Green
at the old
blacksmith's
forge in
Dunnington,
1998. (ADLHS
photosurvey
1998)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

MAY MEETING: Our May meeting witnessed the welcome return of Max Keen who has spoken with great success at several of our previous meetings.

On this most recent occasion his talk focused on Henry V and the Battle of Agincourt. Those who have heard Max speak before will know that he usually dons the clothing of the time and this occasion was no different – our speaker entered the hall clad in an authentic reproduction suit of armour such as would have been worn by the participants in the famous battle! Our speaker lost no time in removing much of the armour and headgear citing both the weight and heat suffered by those in battle. Max also explained how both sound and sight were impeded by the helmet so that orders could not be clearly heard and vision was extremely limited.

Max demonstrated and spoke of some of the weapons used in battle – fearful implements capable of almost disembowelling the foe!

Henry V himself was a cultured man who spoke several languages and liked music. He also inspired loyalty and great respect in his men.

The battle of Agincourt was, perhaps to the surprise of some, fought in muddy conditions akin to those encountered several hundred years later at the nearby Somme. This of course provided huge difficulties for both men and horses.

The conflict arose as part of the Hundred Years War with France and was fought on Friday 25th October, St Crispin's Day and Henry's eventual victory over the French was achieved despite having a smaller army. Henry had learnt the value of defending focal points and of establishing good supply lines – essential as large numbers of the foot soldiers were ravaged with illness and had to be replaced.

Henry himself led his troops into battle and also participated in hand-to-hand combat. The battle itself is famous for the deadly use of the English longbow which, literally, 'rained' arrows down on the enemy with English and Welsh archers forming 80% of Henry's army.

Max Keen gave a bravura performance evoking the conditions, sights and sounds of battle as he told the story of this famous victory. Several members of the audience mentioned that the children that he teaches in his 'day job' must be fortunate indeed to have a teacher who can literally make history 'live' for his pupils.

LOCAL PAST MAGAZINE: The latest edition of our half-yearly magazine **Local Past** is now on sale and includes articles on 'Memories of National Service' by John Bunting; 'The original post-chaise book used at the Swan Hotel in the 19th century'; 'The Great Alne magistrate and the Zulu King'; 'Turnpike toll-gates in Great Alne, Kinwarton and Alcester'; and, 'When Buses carried more than just passengers'; These, plus photographs and letters to the editor make the £2 selling price a bargain!

It is also gratifying to report that we have two new High Street outlets where you can purchase **Local Past**. These are **Classic Clutter** and **Venue Xpresso**. **Local Past** can also be obtained from **PSW** in **Studley** and **Alcester**, **Alcester Library**, **Coffee @ 26** in the High Street, and **Hill's Retail** in Evesham Street, (previously Ross's Garage).

SUMMER OUTINGS: We still have some seats available on our Summer trips to Sudeley Castle & Winchcombe on Saturday 17th June, and to Avoncroft Museum of Buildings, Bromsgrove on the evening of Wednesday July 12th.

The Sudeley trip is an all day trip and costs £20 per person including coach travel and entrance to the castle itself.

The trip to Avoncroft costs £12 per person. This includes the cost of coach travel and a guided tour of the buildings. For an extra £3.50 refreshments are available at the end of this tour.

If you would like to book for either or both of these trips please phone me, **Sue Fisher**, on **01789 763121** as soon as possible.

NEXT MEETING: At our next meeting on Wednesday June 14th our speaker will be Christine Cluley and her subject will be the **History of Compton Verney, House and Gardens**, near Kineton. This beautiful house and surrounding gardens was latterly designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Meetings at St Benedict's RC High School Sixth Form Centre commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

SUE FISHER