

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2018

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk



Haselor church
in the snow
1983
(ADLHS
Collection)

FEBRUARY MEETING:

The meeting started with the Annual General Meeting. In addition to the usual reports, our President announced that Cyril Johnson had decided to retire from the Committee and from his role as Honorary Archivist. He was thanked for his many years of service on the Committee and his valuable contribution to the Society as archivist. This role has now been taken by Dr Richard Churchley. This means that there is now a vacancy on the Committee. If you would like to serve on the Committee or find out more about the Committee's work, please contact the Chairman, Alan Godfrey.

The speaker at the February meeting was our Vice-Chairman, Stephen Godfrey. His subject was the **"The Story of Alcester's Railways"**, which explained the history of the three railway lines which provided vital transport links to Alcester.

The first line built was the Midland Railway line from Redditch to Evesham. The line from Evesham to Alcester opened in 1866 and the remaining section to Redditch opened two years later. This proved to be a valuable asset to the town, allowing not only passengers to commute to Evesham, Redditch and Birmingham (and the stations in between), but also allowed the important freight traffic to bring coal (for the gas works), livestock and raw materials, into the town as well as carrying the manufactured goods produced in the town to reach its markets. There was even a 'Fisherman's Special' in the summer months bringing passengers from Birmingham to fish at Wixford. This line continued in operation until 1st October 1962, when poor state of the railway tunnel into Redditch station forced the closure of the line for safety reasons.

The second line was founded as the Alcester Railway and opened on 4th September 1876, although it was operated by the Great Western Railway. This line ran for six miles from Alcester to Bearley (where it joined the North Warwickshire line and the GWR line to Hatton) with one station at Great Alne and in 1922 a halt at Aston Cantlow. The station at Great Alne is now a private house, but still recognisable as the station house. The single track used a single engine, known locally as the 'Coffee Pot'. In 1917 the line was closed and the track lifted, but opened again in 1923. With the outbreak of the Second World War

passenger traffic ceased, although after the building of the Maudslay factory in Great Alne in 1941, untimetabled workmen's trains began operation. These ceased in 1944, freight services stopped in 1947, with the line being officially closed in 1951.

The third line was the Evesham, Redditch & Stratford on Avon Railway, opened in 1880, which ran from Broom Junction to Stratford upon Avon, joining the East & West Junction Railway (in 1909 becoming the 'SMJ': Stratford upon Avon & Midland Junction Railway, known colloquially as the 'Slow, Jolty & Mouldy Railway'). The signal box at Broom still stands and can be seen from the A46. This line continued until 1960.

This was a fascinating talk, well supported with excellent photos and videos. Our speaker was enthusiastically thanked.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2018

Annual subscriptions are 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 next meeting. Alternatively send by post to: Sue Fisher 37 Corinthian Court Alcester B49 5AY.

ADLHS CALENDAR 2018

We still have a few Society calendars remaining. The price has now been reduced to **HALF PRICE AT £3** (reduced from £6) and calendars can be purchased at our meetings, or from our website (delivered free in B49 & B50 postcode areas or postage will be £1.30 extra).

MARCH MEETING: At our next meeting on **Wednesday 14th March** the speaker for the evening will be our archivist, Dr Richard Churchley. His subject is **"Local Farm Houses and Buildings"**. This talk looks at the history of agricultural buildings in Warwickshire and Worcestershire. 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

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