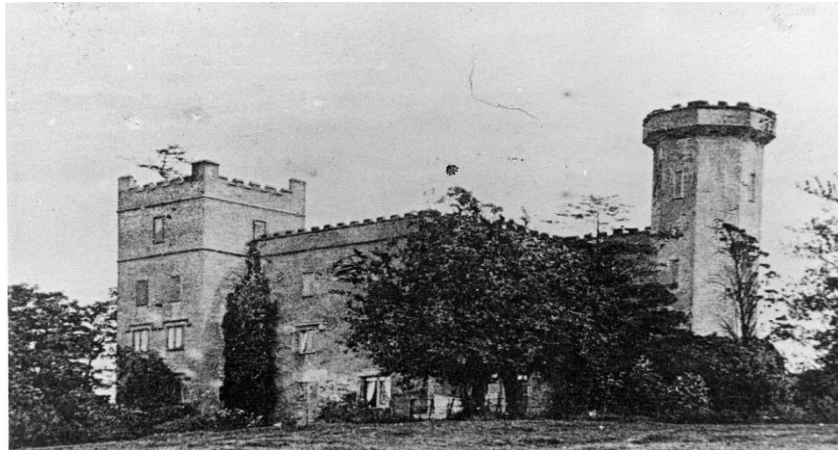


ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2016



Recently in the news, Oversley Castle, soon to be demolished. (ADLHS Photo Archive)

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Selly Manor in Bournville was the subject of our most recent talk given by Gillian Ellis who is the Heritage Manager for Bournville Village Trust and a qualified museum curator. She is also passionate about Bournville itself and its creation as a model village close to the heart of Birmingham, by the Cadbury family. It was a surprise to hear that Selly Manor, thought to date from the 15th century, was actually built elsewhere and moved lock, stock and barrel to its present site by Lawrence Cadbury in the early 1900's. It had originally been a yeoman's house and the earliest records of the house from 1476 state that it was known as Smythe's Tenement and was let out by the landowner, William Jenette to a local farmer. Though the owners of Smythe's Tenement prospered it was eventually inherited and sold to a succession of absentee landlords and began its slow decline and had, by 1853, been split into three cottages and was known as the Rookery. The census shows that in 1861 twenty one people lived at the Rookery in what must have been very squalid conditions. George Cadbury bought the property to be a museum and under the auspices of his son Lawrence, the whole building was moved and re-erected a short distance away in Bournville village. Every brick and beam used in the construction was numbered and under the eye of architect William Alexander Harvey, who meticulously made detailed plans, drawings and took photographs of the construction.

The story of the reconstruction of the old house at Bournville was fascinating especially the knowledge that it had been continuously lived in and all past residents traced through census and archive records.

This was an engrossing talk given by a speaker with infectious enthusiasm and Selly Manor may well be a suitable place for an evening visit next summer!

HERITAGE OPEN DAY: On Sunday September 11th we again mounted a display on the upper storey of Church House, which was open to the public as part of Heritage Open Day. Our display entitled "Rail and Roads around Alcester" featured many photographs from our archives telling the story of the transport system in and around Alcester from earliest times until more recently.

We also had a variety of our publications on sale and it was gratifying for both Church House and ourselves to receive a good many appreciative and enthusiastic visitors during the afternoon.

ROMAN ALCESTER – ANOTHER STROLL WITH HISTORY:

During Heritage Open Day we took the opportunity to launch a revised and updated version of our leaflet originally published twenty years ago. In the form of a short, 1 mile circular walk around what would have been the Roman town of Alcester. Following the guide makes for a gentle stroll around what would have been the Roman Alauna giving background information at each of the stopping points. The walk is all on pavements, no steep hills. If you get tired you can stop for rest and refreshments along the way.

We have kept the price as it originally was, 50p. Copies may be obtained from Alcester Heritage Centre/Library and it will be available at all of our meetings.

DISPLAY AT ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH: An illustrated display of information about the surviving churches built by the Georgian master builder, Francis Smith of Warwick is in St. Nicholas Church for all to view. It includes a copy of Smith's own drawing for St. Mary's, Monmouth, which Smith rebuilt in 1737 under instruction from the 3rd Duke of Beaufort, one of his patrons. The copy on display is reproduced from Smith's original kept at Badminton House archive by the current duke's Somerset Trust, who have specially licenced the copy for permanent display at St. Nicholas.

This display explains how closely similar this drawing is to Alcester's beautiful nave, rebuilt under Smith's supervision a few years before his Monmouth church, since, entirely replaced. The likeness indicates that our nave, with its Palladian style columns and ceiling could be a rare surviving example of Francis Smith's church architecture. Lists of 'Smith' churches to visit and some of his other nearby properties are on display.

Alcester PCC is currently seeking £250,000 to restore and protect the exterior stonework of St. Nicholas for future generations.

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting on Wednesday 12th October will feature as speaker, Cora Weaver, a Malvern resident for nearly forty years who writes & researches books on Malvern's famous wells and springs. On this occasion her talk is entitled **Florence Nightingale and the Malvern Water Cure.**

Meetings are at St Benedict's Sixth Form Centre, Kinwarton Road, and Alcester and commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

SUE FISHER