

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2017

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk



Her Highness
Princess Marie
Louise of Schleswig-
Holstein (grand-
daughter of Queen
Victoria) at Ragley
Hall with the
Marquess of
Hertford (right) 1906
(ADLHS Collection)

SEPTEMBER MEETING:

At our last meeting Dr Gillian White made a return visit and spoke to us on "The Most Dissolute Man in London": William Cavendish, the 1st Duke of Devonshire and the builder of Chatsworth House. At the age of 16 Cavendish was sent on a Grand Tour to absorb the architecture and culture of Europe. The tutor who accompanied was only 21 himself and the stay in Paris turned into a drunken gambling spree and he left owing a great deal of money. He had a reputation for fighting and had a short temper. At age 21 he married Lady Mary Butler, a beautiful, virtuous and noble young lady, but Cavendish remained a lifelong roué and debaucher.

Despite being a hot-headed womaniser, he proved to be one of the greatest protectors of civil liberties. At first he was a supporter of Charles II, but by 1670s opposition to the king started to grow. It was rumoured that Charles II planned to become a Catholic and that he was too friendly with the French. After the Rye House Plot in 1683, a plot to assassinate Charles' brother James, Cavendish attempted to save one of the plotters, his friend Lord Russell. As an MP Cavendish became a leader of the anti-court anti-monarchy group in the House of Commons. In 1684 he succeeded his father as Earl of Devonshire. After the failed Monmouth Rebellion he was brought before Judge Jefferies and fined the enormous sum of £30,000. Cavendish escaped prison and fled north to Derbyshire. Cavendish's opposition to James II led him sign the "Invitation", with six others, offering support should William, Prince of Orange and his wife Mary, seize the throne. As a reward he was made 1st Duke of Devonshire in 1694. He also rebuilt Chatsworth House in magnificent style between 1687 and 1706. He was assisted by Thomas Archer of Umberlade in Warwickshire. This was a most interesting talk delivered in Dr White's inimitable style.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY – SUNDAY 10th SEPTEMBER

The Society supported national Heritage Open Day by putting on a display of photographs showing "Lost Alcester Buildings" at Church House. Despite somewhat inclement weather we had a

steady stream of visitors and sold a number of our publications.

TALK AT WOOTTON WAWEN – "THE GUNPOWDER PLOT IN THE MIDLANDS" BY MAIRI MACDONALD

This talk is being held at St Peter's Church, Wootton Wawen on Friday 13th October from 7.15pm. Tickets are £10 (Children half price) which includes a pig roast bap as an extra temptation! Contact Sue Steele 01564 792505 for information.

NEW BOOK – "CHANTING AND CHASUBLES: THE EARLY YEARS OF WILMCOTE CHURCH"

This book describes St Andrew's Church, Wilmcote from its foundation in 1841 to about 1900 and its founder Edward Bowles Knottesford Fortescue. It includes Fortescue's involvement with the Oxford Movement and additional information on specific events in the history of Wilmcote. The book costs £8.99 (+£1.50 postage) from Mr S Lapidge, 41 Hillside Rd, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 9EB. Please make cheques payable to Stanley Lapidge. Proceeds to church funds.

ADLHS CALENDAR 2018

As announced at the September meeting, we are producing a calendar of 13 photographs from the Society's archives. The images cover Alcester and local villages and provide a glimpse across our area of times gone by. The price is expected to be £6 and calendars can be purchased at our meetings or on our website (postage extra).

OCTOBER MEETING: At the meeting on **Wednesday 11th October** our speaker will be Alcester resident, Rev Dr Julian Davey. His subject will be "**Royal Arrow and the Ragley Connection**". It promises to be a most interesting talk on a truly local subject. Meetings at St Benedict's RC High School Sixth Form Centre commence at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

Alan Godfrey