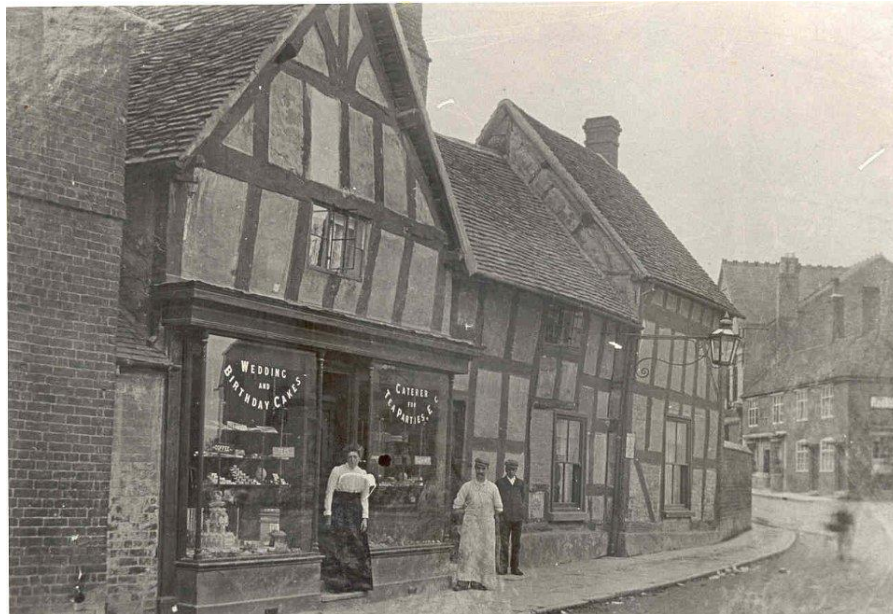


ALCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2021

www.alcesterhistory.org.uk



Hodges Bakery,
Swan Street with
Mr & Mrs Hodges
outside c1905
[ADLHS Archive]

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Although the COVID pandemic is far from over, indeed Alcester has now been moved into Tier 4, however the news of another vaccine getting the green light is very welcome and we hope that things may get back closer to normal by the summer. Once again, the Society is holding a virtual meeting using Zoom and I hope as many of you as possible will join this talk on Wednesday 13th January. Details are shown at the end of the newsletter. Using this software is very easy and if you would like to know more about how connect to a Zoom meeting, please email me. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy New Year in 2021.

Alan Godfrey

LAST MONTH'S MEETING ON ZOOM

December's illustrated talk was entitled "**Life and Loss in Alcester & District during the English Civil War**" and the speakers were Dr Martin Popplewell and Wendy Shaddick. They first explained that they had been recruited as part of a team of volunteers to transcribe the 200 or so Warwickshire 'Loss Accounts', which were produced during the First English Civil War. The project, managed by our member Dr Maureen Harris, secured Heritage Lottery Funding was launched to give the volunteers the opportunity to learn about 17th century palaeography and about the English Civil Wars. The intention is that the completed transcriptions will be published by the county's Dugdale Society.

The first task for our speakers was to learn how to decipher the secretary hand used to write the Loss Accounts. Although written in English the alphabet used was significantly different to the modern day. For example: "þ" is used in place of "th". In addition, spelling was often variable and numerals shown in Arabic script, but sometimes in Roman numerals.

The Loss Accounts vividly record the human cost of the English Civil War and through them the despair, anguish and fear of the civilian population in war-torn Warwickshire. The accounts were produced by a variety of individuals: gentry, parish constables, clergymen and local tradespeople.

Among the gentry, Loss Accounts submitted included: Ferrers Randolph, gentleman of Wood Bevington; Lady Dorothy Clarke of Broom Court, whose submission included 22 horses valued at £100; and Edward Green of Great Alne. Parish constables were responsible for collecting taxes and for paying out parish funds as necessary. Among those listed in the Loss Accounts were Henry Harris of Salford Priors and Mr Field of Alcester. The Salford Priors Loss account also mentioned the vicar, Richard Eades and Elizabeth Emes, who listed among other things the cost of feeding 30 Scottish soldiers. Margaret Sheldon of Grafton Court in Temple Grafton submitted an account for £795 6s 8d which included £400 for household goods.

In Alcester a number of ordinary folk were included in the Loss Accounts, especially regarding the costs incurred in supplying the Scots army: Henry King, William Batersbee, John Hunt and Richard Yarnall (apothecary), George Tongue (baker), Anthony Cheshire (chandler) and Richard Johnson (gunsmith).

This was a fascinating talk with a truly local flavour and especially interesting as it came from so much original research by Martin and Wendy. The thirty-eight members taking part in the Zoom meeting were very appreciative of the illuminating and detailed lecture by our speakers.

Alan Godfrey

OVERSLEY BRIDGE

Alcester was well served, and still is, with its crossings over the River Arrow. Gunnings Bridge was noticed in the last issue and was seen to derive from the 13th century at least and to have been the concern of the manor of Alcester. Oversley Bridge, by the 17th century, was regarded as a 'county bridge' by Quarter Sessions and thus the concern of all county ratepayers. Our first documentary evidence comes from the mid-16th century but how much older than that it was we do not know. Originally, the 'Salt Way', or Roman road from Stratford through Alcester, would have crossed the Arrow at this point - or a few yards away - by means of a ford. This stone bridge connected the parishes and

manors of Alcester and Oversley as well as the ecclesiastical parishes of Alcester and Arrow: it carried the Stratford road from Alcester.

The turnpiking of the Stratford-Alcester road in 1753 presented the trustees with no problems on entering Alcester, for here was a stone bridge at Oversley to carry coaches over the river. For a year or two the Turnpike Trust relied on a toll house on the Oversley side of the bridge. Perhaps this was not a good idea, for the low-lying land around Oversley Green was subject to frequent flooding and may have been the reason that the toll gate was transferred to Hoo Mill corner. No remains of the Oversley toll house are visible today.

In 1659 Oversley Bridge was the worse for wear: there are no indications that either side in the Civil Wars had damaged the bridge (as happened at Bidford Bridge) but Quarter Sessions tried to raise £120, a not inconsiderable sum. This, and work in the 1670s, seems to have preserved Oversley Bridge for future generations.

In the 1960s a bypass of Oversley Green resulted in much less pressure of traffic on the bridge, which today stands as one of Alcester's historic and much-loved buildings.

Edward Saville

[This article first appeared in Local Past – Autumn 1991]



Oversley Bridge before the Stratford Road was re-routed to bypass the village.

[ADLHS Archive]

THE GREEN DRAGON AT SAMBOURNE

The current listed building dates from the seventeenth century and was probably a pub from at least that time. Harold Parsons states in "History, People and Places in Warwickshire" that it was a carters' inn where the drivers congregated before entering the dangerous forest. Edward Saville suggested the Dragon may have got its name from the Welsh cattle drovers who followed green roads eastward from Wales into England and passed this way.

The first probable publican recorded is a needlemaker, William Lee 1736-1769. Around 1750 the manor court was held here on a number of occasions. Joseph Woods was named publican here from 1811-1815, and it is possible other members of his family also served the public at the Dragon before him. In 1821 the landlord was Matthias Truslove, who had married Elizabeth Woods (part of the family mentioned above) and they lived at the inn. From 1821 to 1845 John Truslove ran the inn, he was probably Matthias' brother.

The inn was also associated with the nearby Dragon Farm, shown on an estate map of 1880. Josiah Perkin was publican from 1850 to 1874. He was followed by Henry Quin(n)ey from Astwood Bank

1881-4 and Thomas H. Lamb who occupied the pub with his wife Kezia, until almost the end of the century.

The pub remained in operation throughout the twentieth century and only recently, with the uncertain economic situation for pubs has been forced to close its doors.

[Thanks to Dr Richard Churchley for information taken from his book "Having a drink round Studley ... a short history of the pubs of Studley, Warwickshire, and surrounding villages before 1940 Published by Astwood Publications 2014]



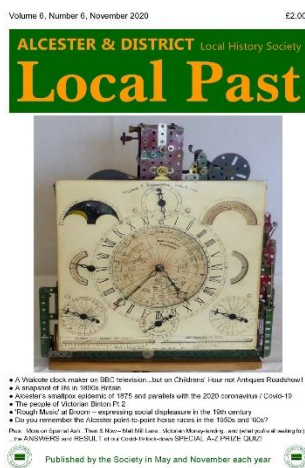
The Green Dragon on the village green at Sambourne c1940s

[ADLHS Archive]

ADLHS PROGRAMME 2021 (JANUARY- APRIL)

These meetings will be held online by Zoom, unless circumstances change in the meantime.

- 13th January The Battle of Stow Simon Marsh
- 10th February The Photographer's Gaze: Viewing Warwickshire since 1839 James Ranahan
- 10th March A History of Billesley Alan Bailey
- 14th April The Hugely Huggable History of the Teddy Bear Dr Gillian White



The latest edition of 'Local Past' is now available from the usual outlets: Mace – Hills Retail (was Ross Motors) in Evesham Street, PSW in Market Place, Alcester and PSW in Studley or online through our website. For FREE delivery in Alcester, Studley, Bidford etc. call Sue Fisher on 01789 763121
Price is still £2.00

Our next 'VIRTUAL' meeting will be held by ZOOM on **Wednesday 13th January 2021 at 7.30pm**. The subject of the talk is "**The Battle of Stow**", which was the last battle of the English Civil War in spring 1646. The speaker is **Simon Marsh** of the Battlefields Trust. If you wish to join this talk, please email me *as soon as possible*. **If you signed up for previous Zoom meetings, you will automatically receive an invitation for this meeting.**

Alan Godfrey

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