

# Branch Meetings

## Much Wenlock - June 8

This meeting was definitely one of the highlights of this year's branch programme. We were allowed to meet in the beautiful medieval guildhall where two speakers entertained us. The Much Wenlock Festival Committee welcomed us with wine and juice, and booked us in the Copper Kettle for an excellent tea, **and** we had a preview of the Richard III Society's exhibition.

Having already arranged for Doug Weeks to talk to the branch on the 8<sup>th</sup> June about William Caxton, we didn't know what to do when the Festival Committee asked our chairman to give a talk on Richard III the same day, to open the exhibition on the king.

After a hasty consultation with the committee, they suggested we could hold our branch meeting in the guildhall in the afternoon, then stay for Ralph's early evening talk. As his talk would be open to the public, we agreed that members of the public could also attend the talk on Caxton. We also invited the West Midlands Branch and were very pleased to see many of their members present.

Jean and I arrived early and went to Much Wenlock Priory for a quick look round. The audio guide is very good but we didn't have time to do it justice, as we needed to eat lunch before going to the guildhall for noon. A very friendly ginger cat joined us so do look out for him if you go!

The exhibition opened at noon for our preview. Geoffrey Wheeler had supplied the many panels on behalf of the Richard III Society. We used some of them at Tewkesbury and there will be another chance to see them at Beoley.

At 2pm we were welcomed by the Chairman of the Festival Committee with wine and juice. The guildhall is a beautiful building and our meeting room was all dark panelled wood. A charter was given to the town by Edward IV in 1468, also signed by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and a copy is on display in the guildhall.



Doug Weeks from Kent told a packed meeting all that is known about William Caxton. He couldn't have known when he introduced printing to London what a huge impact this would have in the future. The Yorkist royal family were important patrons of his.

For tea we went to the Copper Kettle Café, where we were extremely well catered for with plates of sandwiches, delicious cakes, and plenty of cups of tea. Definitely the place to go if you're in Much Wenlock.



Back in the guildhall the room was full of Ricardians and members of the public to hear Ralph Richardson dispel the myths about Richard III.

The exhibition was on display all June and all but one of the fifty society leaflets were taken. Hopefully there are now many people wiser about Richard III, who will have been sadly disappointed by the Channel 5 programme on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Very many thanks to the Much Wenlock Festival Committee for allowing us to use such magnificent surroundings and for organising refreshments.