

Elizabeth the First's Visit to Worcester

Nearly 80 people turned out on a dank wet summer's day to hear Paul talk about this a month's topic, the visit of Elizabeth the First to Worcester.

The visit took place on 13th August 1575, nearly all the monarchs since then have visited Worcester. King John spent a long time here and is buried in the Cathedral.

Inside the Hive there are miles of documents that can be seen, and the visit is very well documented included an itemised bill of the visit. Worcester was a very prosperous city during the Tudor times. Worcester was the 7th largest city at the time of

the Civil War because of the river. The wool trade was very important in Worcester and helped to build its reputation and wealth. A lot of people were involved in the trade. Greyfriars is a typical



Tudor wool merchant's house and that is where the money went, the workers whilst living in reasonable homes where paid a lot less.

South Quay was the major dock for the wool to be taken to the buyers. A lot of ships would come to unload their goods including pewter and silk and then they would take away the wool.

Worcester knew that Elizabeth the First was coming at least 6 months ahead of the visit. Monarchs generally

did not stay in London during the summer due to the smells etc. The monarchs need to to get out so that the people could see them and know what they look like. But she also knew that Worcester produced excellent broad cloth and how much money we were making, and the Cathedral so specially needed to visit and be seen here. The High Bailiff of the city would have helped to arrange the visit, he was the forerunner of the Mayor, Worcester would not get a Mayor until much later.



In the Hive are the Chamber Books, city meeting minutes, which detail all the preparations for the visit and the meetings were held in the Guildhall. This was in the same place as the current one but had a row of shops in front of it.

Things to do for the visit:

- Painting the homes and houses in the streets that she would walk down in comely colours, such as red and yellow. Houses were not black and white in Tudor times, the wood was not painted and would have weathered to a silver colour and in between was wattle and daub, which was painted any colour.
- A campaign to clear out the privies along the route so it would not smell too much.
- They were given 10 days to clear away their dung hills and Miskins along those routes. The dung hills were where people would throw out their full chamber pots in the morning so a hill would be created. Miskins were rubbish heaps.
- People were told to hang up herbs on the front of their houses to help cover the bad smells.
- Fine quality Worcester cloth was tied up on the gates to the city.
- Banners with the Coats of Arms of the Queen were hung up over the gates.
- People were told to have candles, beeswax candles were very expensive, so many were tallow. Candles were always lit during celebrations.

The Queen approach the city from the north, stopped briefly at Whiteladies, which was where Worcester Grammer School is now, to compose herself before entering the city. The Alderman and important people gathered in Salt Lane in all their finery. The Guilds had their painted silk banners, which still exist to this day.

The Queen processed down, what is now the Tything, it was a very large procession of all the of all the knights and hangers on. She went through the Foregate to the Guildhall and then on to the Cathedral. There were 2 pageant stages built of wood, one was at The Cross where a Mr Frogmorton welcomed her and introduced her to the City. The weather during the visit was actually very similar to this year's summer weather, wet and windy.



Another stage was built near St Helen's church for a pageant to be put on. She only stayed in Worcester until 20th August, but during this time she did go out to places like the Battenhall Deer Park and Hartlebury.

Worcester's shield gained the 3 black pears after the visit. The story is that she saw pears growing in the city and the fruit was still on the trees and local legend says that she then gave the city the 3 pears on its shield. All the tourist posts in the city now have a black pear on the top.



A wonderful display of cakes were available and a great queue of them and drinks suddenly appeared when the refreshment break was announced.

