

December 2024 / January 2025

Hi All,

We had another excellent turnout for our December meeting with forty-three members. and twelve visitors, so a total of fifty-five. This is an encouraging as we have averaged 45 members and 11 visitors throughout the year, which means, hopefully, that supporters appreciate the diverse range of subjects that we cover in our presentations. I would also like to mention the Redditch Standard for their support in publishing the press releases produced by Pat, our speaker organiser. On the remaining pages of the Newsletter, we have:

Page two is the 'Coming Events' section.

Our next Meeting, which will be the first of 2025, will be on Monday 10th February 2025 and is 'The Archives of Redditch New Town' by Vicky Fletcher. Explore the Past' the Hive'. There is also an interesting history course organised by Astwood Bank Group and details of the Forge Mill Museum winter closure.

Pages three and four is a report on our December meeting presentation, 'Redditch in the Snow - The Winter of 1962/3 by Anthony Green

Pages five, six, and seven. To mark 80 years since the end of WW2 in 1945, we have the Redditch Timeline for 1945 based on articles in our local Newspaper, the Redditch Indicator. This uses information from the microfilm copies of the newspaper held at Redditch Library.

Page eight. Has our latest programme for 2025. There are a few details to sort out and we will be printing a definitive version before our February 2025 meeting.

Next Meeting.

Monday 10th February 2025 and is details page 2.

The meeting will be, as always, at the Oasis Christian Centre starting at 2.00 pm.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone!

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

E-mail: tony.rhs@btinternet.com Tel: 01527 61434

Coming up in 2025

Next Meeting, and first for 2025 is on Monday 10th February 2025

The Archives of Redditch New Town – Vicky Fletcher. Explore the Past', the Hive

Vicky Fletcher, Archivist at 'Explore the Past,' will be giving us an insight into the ambitious project to catalogue the records of the Redditch Development Corporation, so shedding light on the town's remarkable transformation. New Towns were part of a visionary plan developed in the aftermath of World War II, aimed at rebuilding Britain and offering a fresh start to those living in overcrowded or war-damaged cities. Redditch was at the end of this initiative and benefited from earlier errors. It was part of the 'garden city' concept and Vicky will give an overview of how well this was achieved.



Astwood Bank History Group

organises two, ten week courses a year on Thursday evenings, 7-9 pm, at Astwood Bank Social Club, Dark Lane, B96 6AS.

A new course is starting on 9th January 2025 for ten weeks. Title: The Ottomans 1300 – 1922 and the Making of Modern Turkey.



Lecturer: Dr Stuart Jennings from Warwick University.

Cost: £10 per session to cover the cost of the hire of the club and the lecturer.

These courses at Astwood Bank have been running for 36 years!

For further information please contact the Secretary, Julie Snailham, at Julie.snailham@gmail.com

The first session of the course is free, so please come along and try it at no obligation.

Forge Mill Needle Museum

Museum and Visitor Centre reopens on 1st February 2025

For the the WINTER SEASON - 25 November 2024 to 31 January 2025. the GROUNDS and COFFEE BAR are open all days: 10.00am to 3.00pm. Except CHRISTMAS CLOSURE when the entire site is closed for three days from Tue 24 to Thu 26 December 2024 inclusive.



Redditch in the Snow - The Winter of 1962/3 Presentation by Anthony Green

The winter of 1962–63, known as the Big Freeze of 1963, was one of the coldest winters on record in the United Kingdom. Temperatures plummeted and lakes and rivers began to freeze over. On 29 and 30 December 1962 a blizzard swept across England and Wales, snow continued to fall in February 1963, and we had to wait until 6 March for the first morning of the year without frost in Britain. Temperatures rose to 17 °C (62.6 °F) and the snow disappeared.

When the snow hit Redditch, I was 19, and like my brother Vince needed to get to Birmingham, which was impossible, so we set out to record the effect on Redditch at this time.

At the time we lived in Holloway Lane and so we began from there. Holloway is the long incline between Studley Road on the Arrow Valley plain and Ipsley Street on the town plateau. Many vehicles were stranded and the view is looking up at the Kings Arms. On the left are the trees in the gardens of Holloway House, which was demolished a few years later. The next image is looking down Ipsley Street towards the Kings Arms. At the Kings Arms it split into Beoley Road to the left and Holloway Lane to the right. On the left is Washford Mills and to the right in Terry's Springs.

Continuing along Ipsley Street we arrive at Poole Place, which is the junction with Alcester Street. The third picture is of Alcester Street looking up towards St Stephens Church. The only building still existing on this view, apart from the church, is the Palace Theatre on the right.

The final picture on this page shows the view from the end of Evesham Street to the north. The Birmingham bus, the 147, is just setting off! The bus station was off Red Lion Street, and the bus depot was in Church Road, both of which were at the same level as the crossroads, so no problem. It then went down Birmingham Road (Prospect Hill) and continued along fairly level ground on through Alvechurch until it arrived at the Birmingham Plateau, a rise of about 500 feet, at Hopwood. It didn't make it! And the Redditch – Birmingham route did not operate that day.



Redditch in the Snow: page 2

Evesham Street was the principal shopping centre for the town and was full of small local shops which served the local community. This is a view looking up Evesham Street to wards the south. The building facing us at the top were the Co-op.

Unicorn Hill is one of the oldest roads in the town. It had two public houses at the time. At the bottom was the Railway Inn (Golden Cross) and at the top, on the opposite side, was the Unicorn Inn.

At the bottom of of Unicorn Hill was Oakley Road. On the left is the Rifleman public house, and on the left the entrance to the railway station.

The picture bottom right is Easemore Road. This view has changed very little over time. After the town we then drove down to Watery Lane in my brother's Land Rover and walked as far as Ipsley Church.

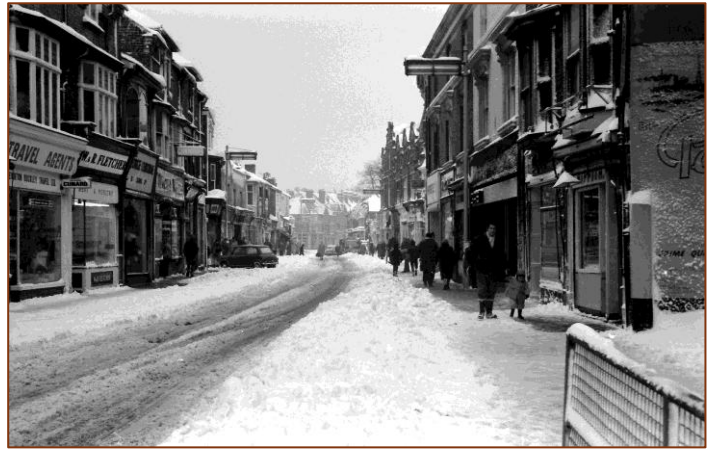
This is a small selection from the 26 I used in the presentation.

The presentation was much appreciated by the audience which included those who remember Redditch at the time and those who remembered the snow but didn't know Redditch at the time.

A genuine touch of nostalgia.

I have stopped giving presentations, except for the History Society, and so this will be the last time that I will give this presentation.

However, I do not want these pictures to be lost and so I have produced a 48-page book which will be available at the Forge Mill Shop from February at £3, and I plan to make the pictures available for download next year.



80 years ago – 1945/2025

Redditch Timeline for 1945 – end of WW2

January

15 Redditch lends hand of sympathy to West Ham, London - 117 blankets, 27 beds, 19 camp beds, 10 bedsteads and many, many more

25 ATC help to RAF thanked - tribute to RAF 143 (Redditch) Squadron - casualties of battle against Luftwaffe are fewer than expected.

February

13 A Garden Village for Redditch - proposed estate for owner-occupiers by J.W Hughes - 100 houses.

14 Formation of St. John Ambulance Brigade Nursing Division - Headquarters at Littleworth House Unicorn Hill.

24 Post-war employment conference at Redditch - Sir John Wardlaw-Milne M.P says, 'Get Ready'. Meeting at Council House.

March

3 Redditch plans new savings campaign - a target set not in money but in people - 2,000 people not in a savings group.

Wounded soldiers entertained at Redditch - Barnsley Hall Emergency Hospital by members of Redditch British Legion.

30 Redditch War Savings - Over £3 million raised – £3,484,803 since outbreak of war, and gratifying proportion by small savings.

The actual results for Redditch for specific targets exceeded the initial estimates and were:

- War Weapons Week - £195,000
- Warship Week - £210,000
- Wings for Victory Week - £283,000
- Salute the Soldier Week - £251,000

Each of the targets set were surpassed by a good margin.

April

7 Gaumont British Junior Club opened at Gaumont Palace - more than 800 boys and girls 7-14 years old were present at opening.

14 Mr. and Mrs. G. Prescott who had been civilian POWs on German occupied Channel Islands have been repatriated to Redditch.

REDDITCH WARSHIP WEEK
SOCIAL EVENTS
MILITARY BAND CONCERT
Arranged and performed by the members of the
CZECHOSLOVAK ARMY
IN THE DANILCO CINEMA
(Doubly based free of charge by St. Dunst. Bldg., Stanning Lionston)
On SUNDAY, NOV. 16th, at 6.30 p.m. Doors open 6 p.m.
All Balcony Seats are now booked, but Stalls are still available at 1/6

CONCERT
METHODIST SCHOOLROOM, ASTWOOD BANK
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15th
ALL STAR PROGRAMME.

DANCES
Washford Mills Recreation Room, Friday, November 14th. 2/6
Headless Cross Memorial Hall, Tuesday, November 18th. 2/6
Astwood Bank SS. Matthias and George Hall, Friday, Nov. 21st.
2/- Civilians, 1/6 Forces.
B.S.A. Piled Arms Club, Saturday, November 22nd. 3/-
SAVING STAMPS AS GIFTS AND PRIZES.

WHIST DRIVES
Washford Mills Recreation Room, Tuesday, Nov. 18th, 8 p.m., 1/-
E.N.F.T. Canteen Hall, Studley, Saturday, Nov. 22nd, 7.30 p.m., 2/-
FREE GIFTS OF SAVINGS STAMPS.

Have you got your Warship Badge? The proceeds from the sale of these badges are to defray Warship Week expenses, publicity, etc.

**IT IS OUR AIM TO SAVE
£120,000
DURING WARSHIP WEEK
TO BUY THE CORVETTE
H.M.S. "KINGFISHER"**

"SAVE FOR YOUR SHARE"
See the grand collection of Naval Photographs at
THE SAVINGS CENTRE, CHURCH GREEN EAST.
Hours of opening 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. during
WARSHIP WEEK.

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Redditch Timeline for 1945 – end of WW2 page 2

May

- 8 V.E proclaimed - Redditch received the great news. Streamers and electric bulbs of illuminations in Church Green.
- 13 Thanksgiving services and celebrations for victory at Redditch at all churches in Redditch- Civic parade on thanksgiving Sunday.
Processing of a police and town band march to Headless Cross Methodist Church for service - every available seat occupied.
- 18 Ministry of Food advice centre at Redditch opened in Evesham Street, Redditch. Formally opened by Mr. J. H Taylor - RUDC chairman
- 19 Redditch Horse Show and Gymkhana - Redditch NFU - HDA Grounds - raised £20 for Red Cross.
- 27 ATC salute RAF at national thanksgiving parade - London-Corporal R. Taylor represents Redditch Squadron
- Throughout May there were VE celebrations - processions, street parties, fancy dress parades, etc - over all the town and area.

The Redditch Indicator reported...

The official announcement of the ending of hostilities in Europe was broadcast by Mr. Winston Churchill on Tuesday afternoon. Immediately afterwards the Prime Minister went to the House of Commons and told the news.

News that VE Day would be celebrated on Tuesday was received on Monday evening. The prospect of the war clouds rolling away and letting in the bright sunshine of peace evoked feelings of gratification and of enthusiasm. Soon the streets of Redditch, and roads in the vicinity were made gay with bunting. Thanks to the good work of the members of the Redditch Carnival Committee, streamers and electric bulbs of illuminations had been fixed in Church Green. The national flags gave a touch of colour and blended tastefully with the summer garb of the trees in the pretty town centre.



June

VE day celebrations continued throughout the town - everyone felt it was a period to rejoice after so many difficult years

- 9 Redditch Royal Observer Corps Post ended 5 ½ years of valuable wartime service following order to stand down by Air Ministry.

Redditch Timeline for 1945 – end of WW2 page 3

July

- 25 Civil Defence Force - farewell entertainment and dinner - Kingfisher restaurant., Redditch
- 25 Redditch honours Australian Senator George McLeay - brother of Miss McLeay who ran Redditch Community Club.
- 27 Holidays at Home - Garden party at South Crest - scene at children's sports - Included donkey rides for children.
- 30 Britannia Batteries Sports Ground - Children fete in connection with Holiday at Home.

August

- 14 VJ peace celebrations at Redditch - at Midnight it was announced - Joyous but calm - decorations at Church Green
- 18 Redditch Liberal Club party - for members children - 120 children taken on ride into country. Sports at County High School
- 24 Typical VJ festivities in Abbeydale- main feature was a large bonfire with the burning of a 'Tokyo-Joe' effigy.

September

- 8 Batchley Road - party of 72 children went on to Stratford-upon-Avon for VJ celebrations - enjoyable visit spent.
- 15 Climax of 'Day of Days' Victory Carnival. Redditch Victory Carnival - to help food funds for hospital and celebrate victory.
 - Local tradesman exhibits won by Mr. H. Ralph - Bananas on wheels exhibit called 'things to come'
 - Terry's and Nife won best manufacturing exhibits.
 - Climax of week of festivity - concerts, dances and displays - decoration. Exhibits assembled and judged.
 - Day of Days ended just before midnight - key of town handed back to Mr. J.H Taylor by Carnival Queen.

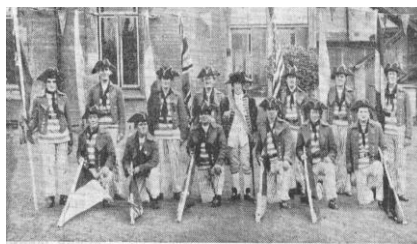
Redditch Victory Carnival

SEPTEMBER 8th to 15th.
CARNIVAL DAY SEPTEMBER 15th.
 Crowning Ceremony September 8th, at 4.45 p.m.
 Dances and many other attractions each evening.
 Twelve hours of Fun and Spectacle on Carnival Day.
THE LARGEST PROCESSION IN THE MIDLANDS.
 Classes for All. No Entry Fees. Valuable Prizes.
GREAT VICTORY TABLEAU
 with Carnival Queen and her Court.
 Several Bands and the principal Jazz Bands of the Midlands, with many displays.
GIGANTIC FUN FAIR IN THE STREETS.
 "SPASH NIGHT," WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th.
 Do not forget your favourite Carnival Programme of week's Events. Also your Immunity Badge.

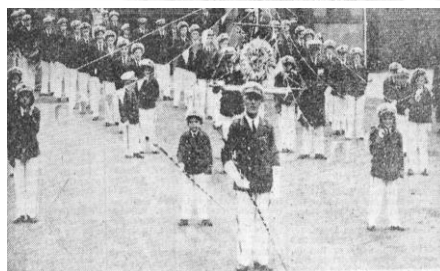
CARNIVAL VICTORY CONCERT
 MONDAY NEXT.
 County High School, Redditch, at 7.45 p.m.
 A varied and interesting programme with—
MARION HAYES (Mezzo-Soprano).
CHARLES DUVAL (Entertainer).
THE ORSLEY HARMONY (M.V.) QUARTET
MILDRED LAYTON and WILFRED JOHNSON
 (Piano Duets).
THE ENTACCO DRAMATIC SOCIETY
 (Presenting a One-Act Play).
THE REDDITCH CHORAL SINGERS
 Conductor: **CLAUDE W. MILLWARD**.
 Compose: **CLAUDE W. MILLWARD**.
 Reserved and Numbered Seats 5s., 3s., 2s.
 Book now at Spencer's Music Warehouse, Evesham St., Redditch. Phone 70.
 Proceeds in aid of the Redditch Hospital, Redditch.



[photos] "Time Marches On"—prizewinner at Axtwood Bank.



THE BRITISH LEGION GUARD OF HONOUR.



REDDITCH JAZZ BAND—FIRST PRIZE.



THE QUEEN, MISS EILEEN EAVES.

January	We have no meeting in January	January Break
10 th February	The Archives of Redditch New Town	Vicky Fletcher, 'Explore the Past', The Hive
10 th March	The Lunar Society	Peter Borg-Bartolo
14 th April	Annual General Meeting plus, WW2 Newsreels and Broadcasts	Society Executive
12 th May	Hewell Grange: Is the landscape worth the 2* designation given by English Heritage?	David Whitehead, Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust
9 th June	Surgery in the Nineteenth Century.	Louise Robinson
14 th July	Ten Birmingham Women	Henrietta Lockhart University of Birmingham
August	We have no meeting in August	August Break
8 th September	Redditch 1939 to 1945 How our town supported the War Effort	Anthony Green
13 th October	Early postcards of Redditch Town Centre and the Postal History	Chris Jackson
10 th November	Needlemaking in Worcestershire and Warwickshire 1640 - 1940	Richard Churchley
8 th December	Richard III: Hero, Murderer or Loyal Brother	Max Keen