

A Word from the Editor...

So, here we are in May, and it's time for another monthly newsletter.

Unfortunately, May is also the busiest month in the garden, and I delayed putting the newsletter together for nearly two weeks. As a result, we've reached a point where the temperatures are breaking all records — which, in its own way, is now part of our history.

Nevertheless, the newsletter needed to be done, and it is now complete and available on our newly redesigned website.

One ongoing challenge for me is that I currently produce the newsletter entirely from my own material. I would very much welcome contributions from members and supporters. I know many of you have stories, memories, or snippets of local history that would be of real interest to our readers.

Finding content is not the problem — but relying solely on my own viewpoint makes the newsletter more limited than it needs to be. I would much prefer it to reflect a wider range of voices and experiences.

May Meeting

For our May meeting we saw another excellent turnout: 38 Members, including one new member and 8 renewals, and 9 Visitors, making 47 in total. We now have 57 members who are fully paid up with up to 14 to pay.

Once again, we were delighted to see the Redditch Standard feature us with a great article, thanks to Pat's press release.

Our May speaker, Henrietta Lockhart, Curator of Museum Collections at Winterbourne House and Garden, talks have become a much-valued part of our programme. Her previous visits have focused on the stories and personalities connected with Winterbourne. However this time she led us into a very different chapter of History. Drawing on her background as an art historian, Henrietta explored the extraordinary range of art produced during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945





Exhibitions and Events

Exhibition: Wed 22 April to Sun 31 May 2026

PATHWAYS

An exhibition by Contemporary Textiles Group



Sat 30 May 2026: 5.00pm to 11.00pm SILENT DISCO

Come and enjoy a Silent Disco in the unique surroundings of our Cloisters area and grounds.

Details of events and activities at the

Museum including costs involved can be found at <https://www.forgemill.org.uk/web/> 'What's On'



Next Meeting – Monday 8th June Body on the Bromyard Line by Emma Hancox from 'Explore the Past'

The discovery of a human skeleton buried within an embankment of the Worcester, Bromyard and Leominster Railway Line in 2021 has sparked interest and curiosity.



The skeleton was found near Riverlands Farm in Leigh, west of Worcester, and was part of a series of posts exploring the story behind the discovery.

In this talk by County Archaeologist, Emma Hancox, members can learn more about the story behind the skeleton and the research conducted to uncover its history.

'ART goes to WAR 1939 – 1945' Henrietta Lockhart . (1 of 2)

When we gathered for our meeting on Monday 11th May, there was a familiar sense of anticipation. We were welcoming back Henrietta Lockhart, Curator of Museum Collections at Winterbourne House and Garden, whose talks have become a much-valued part of our programme. Although her previous visits have focused on the stories and personalities connected with Winterbourne, this time she led us into a very different chapter of history.

Drawing on her background as an art historian, Henrietta explored the extraordinary range of art produced during the Second World War. Between 1939 and 1945, artists across Britain responded to the conflict in ways shaped by their own experiences. Some were appointed as official War Artists, commissioned to record events, shape public understanding, and create a visual record of the nation at war. Others painted simply because they felt compelled to capture the world around them as it changed.

Henrietta introduced the British War Artists' Advisory Scheme, devised and run by Kenneth Clark of the National Gallery.

Key to Pictures

Top Left: S-class submarine: The wardroom and forward mess deck Stephen Bone
Top Right The Withdrawal from Dunkirk, June 1940 Charles Ernest Cundall,
Bottom Left: Battle of Britain Paul Nash
Bottom Right: A Child Bomb Victim Receiving Penicillin Treatment Ethel Gabain



'ART goes to WAR 1939 – 1945' Henrietta Lockhart . (2 of 2)



Under his leadership, the War Artists' Advisory Committee assembled a remarkable collection. By the time it was dissolved in 1945, it held 5,570 works by more than four hundred artists — an archive that reflects both the scale of the conflict and the diversity of artistic responses to it.

With such a vast body of material, Henrietta selected a series of works that illustrated how artists drew on long-established artistic traditions to express the urgency, fear, resilience and humanity of wartime life. Many of the images she shared remain instantly recognisable today, their impact undiminished.

Rather than attempt to summarise her detailed and engaging presentation, I have included a few examples of the paintings shown, covering not only battle scenes but also industry, agriculture and medicine.

It was a compelling and thought-provoking evening, warmly appreciated by our audience.

Key to Pictures

Top Left: Glass-blowers 'Gathering' from the Furnace Mervyn Peake

Top Right Land army girls - Evelyn Mary Dunbar

Bottom Left: Ruby Loftus Screwing a Breech-ring Dame Laura Knight

Bottom Right: Tempests Attacking Flying Bomb Walter Thomas Monnington



Trustees appeal to community for help as Redditch Local History Museum faces closure



TRUSTEES at Redditch Local History Museum are appealing for help from the community to find a new home for the museum after being served notice on their current lease.

In October last year, the museum moved out of their base on Market Place after a devastating flood in the flat above.

The Kingfisher Centre stepped in and offered a vacant unit to set up some of the more popular exhibits and temporary storage for all of the artefacts, but they cannot continue to afford to remain in the unit.

Peter Brough, chairman of the Trustees, told the Standard that unless they find affordable premises that they can move all their artefacts to by July, they will be forced to close.

Peter added: “For the museum to close would be a great loss to the town.

“Redditch is applying to be recognised as a Town of culture in 2028, it’s a great opportunity to celebrate our rich history, how ironic could it be that we lose our museum just as the town is recognised for its cultural heritage.

The Trustees have said they are determined to keep the museum alive and so are embarking upon a campaign to find alternative premises.

They are asking people of Redditch to come forward with ideas for new premises, and to rally councillors and town MP Chris Bloore to help find a home for Redditch’s History.

Dave Handley, who has worked with the museum on his Remembering Istel project and is a volunteer said it is dark days ahead for the museum.

“Like many others in Redditch I was horrified by the news that our wonderful Local History Museum have been served notice on their premises.





“The news is particularly devastating for everyone involved in the museum. We had a flood last autumn and much effort was spent both moving the thousands of historical artefacts to a temporary store, setting up a temporary site in Kingfisher and arranging repairs to the flood damaged site in market place.

“Having seen how hard everyone worked to complete the above and then to be served notice by our new landlords has been hugely demoralising “It would be a tragedy if Redditch was to lose the museum.”

Redditch Local History Museum was founded in 2020, and aimed to show the achievements of the town and its residents.

It is run entirely by volunteers and relies on public donations, local business sponsorships and grants to fund its operation.

Email trustee June Strong on june.strong@rlhm.online with any information about a premise that would suit the museum.

Update from Redditch MP Chris Bloore: (17th April)

‘My office is working closely with Redditch Borough Council to identify vacant town-centre premises for the museum’s 7,000-strong collection. Our history matters. If we are serious about our Town of Culture 2028 bid, we must preserve and celebrate our heritage for future generations. I vowed to secure a new home and protect this vital part of Redditch’s identity.

At our next meeting the presentation is given by Emma Hancox, who is a member of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Team. So, I thought that it would be interesting to give a little bit of an introduction to them.

The website can be found at <https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/> which gives links to their activities.

Explore the past is an enormous resource and a quick look through the different sections of the website shows their wide range of activities.

Unfortunately, much of the archives require a visit to the HIVE. <https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/services/> However, they do have some on-line services and details can be found at <https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/services/archive-advice-information/online-services/>.

To help residents to uncover more detail about your ancestors' lives or where they lived they have produced free downloadable 70-page family research guide as the perfect starting point to discovering your family's history, wherever you are in the world. It explains how to get hold of the information you need, whether it's held in our collections or from other sources.

You can:

- Find out how to get copies of original documents, maps, photographs and archaeological information
- Learn more about the resources most commonly used to research the history of people and places in Worcestershire, and in English archives generally
- Understand more about the records and our services to help you on your journey of discovery

This can be downloaded at <https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Explore-Worcestershire-Archive-Archaeology-Service.pdf>.



and finally....

Three More Paintings based on Early Postcards

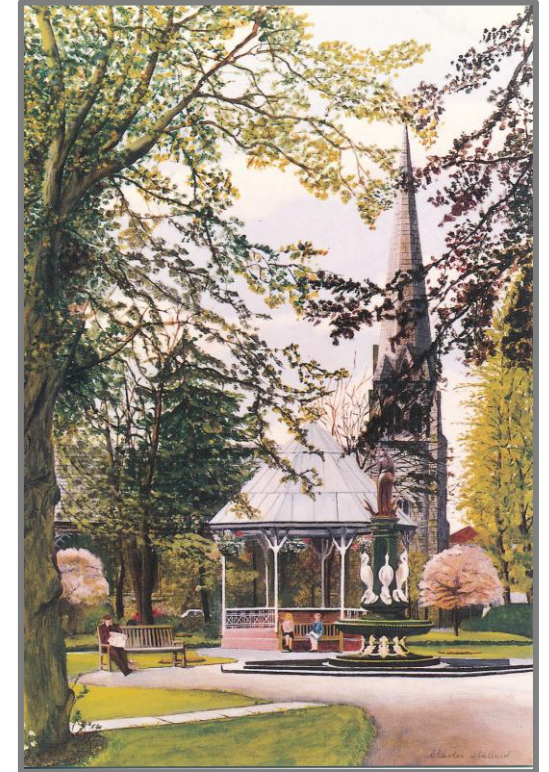
In November 2025, I shared three paintings by Charles 'Charlie' Stallard worked at the BSA on Studley Road during and after the Second World War. He was an enthusiastic amateur painter, known for recreating old photographs of the town in his artwork. His daughter, Lynn Elise, kindly made a selection available by printing a limited run of postcards and, as promised, here is a selection of three more of his works.



Town Centre Crossroads



Unicorn Hill



St, Stephens Church

This Newsletter is edited and published by Anthony Green, Society Secretary, Redditch History Society and is produced on behalf of the Society.

Web Site www.redditchhistorysociety.org
E-mail: secretary@redditchhistorysociety.org.uk