

# Redditch Local History Society

June 2019

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# Newsletter...

## *Latest meeting*

The latest meeting of the Redditch Local History Society was held on Monday 10th June 2019 at the Oasis Christian Centre, Plymouth Road

For the meeting we had an attendance of 34 members and 9 visitors, giving a total of 43 attendees. The meeting was opened by the Chairman who welcomed members and visitors.

## *Presentation*

Today we had an audio/visual presentation which was entitled 'Remembering Redditch'. This consisted of stories about old Redditch read by members, with an appropriate visual support provided by Tony Green (me!).

Over the years many people have produced histories and memories of the Redditch area and its history but, sadly, so many are no longer with us and their memories, although some were published at one time, are quite difficult to find. The purpose of today's event was to give a voice to a few of these memories and, by reading them, bringing to life stories that could be easily lost.

The stories covered a period of 150 years, from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



We began with James Mills Woodward who was a major figure in the cultural and artistic life of Victorian Redditch. He was, amongst many roles, tutor to the children of the needle manufacturer William Bartleet, who asked him to excavate Bordesley Abbey and write an illustrated history which was published in 1866. Graham Smith read an extract concerning the excavations on the site.

William Avery was the successful manufacturer of needles and needle cases. He took a prominent part in the public, social and religious life of the town. In 1886 he delivered a series of lectures entitled Old Redditch and these were collected together into a history. This is quite rare but in 1999, Anne Bradford reprinted these with illustrations by Norman Neasom and Don Vincent read an

extract describing when St Stephens Chapel was moved to the town Green.

The next two gave memories of the area in the 1930s. The first, read by Elizabeth Simpson, was from Old Redditch - A Walk Back in Time Lily Norris published 1993 and is an extract from Chapter 3 - Working Days. The second, read by Dave Spyer, was by Albert Wharrad, who gave a series of talks on his memories which he self-printed on request. These were later collected together by Anne Bradford and made available in a small booklet and the extract chosen describes growing up in Crabbs Cross.

The next section was memories of WW2 and they were from interviews of some residents for a WW2 exhibition which the Society produced at Forge Mill a few years back.

Nova Leighton read a memory from Phyllis Smith about the bombing of Redditch, Chris Jackson read Bernard Browning's memory of when he visited Coventry immediately after the Blitz and Nova then read a memory from Beryl Carr concerning a lucky escape when she went to the Prince of Wales Theatre during the Birmingham Blitz

For the final two stories, Chris Jackson read a story from Not Just Bricks and Mortar by Arthur Newbould which was published 1999 and is an extract from Chapter 14 - A Measure of Honesty.

The final story, read by Graham Smith, was put in as a tribute to Ralph Richardson, who sadly passed away 6 months ago, and is from his publication The Book of Redditch which was published 1986. The extract is from the final chapter in the book - Old Town, New Town.

This presentation was very much appreciated by the audience and we will certainly be repeating this next year with a new range of stories concerning Redditch and its residents.



## Next meeting

Our next Meeting at the Oasis Christian Centre is on Monday 8th July beginning at 2.00 pm.

The presentation is entitled 'People of Church Green in the 19th Century' and is given by Graham Smith.

Graham has carried out much research on the history of Church Green and has given several presentations to the Society on this area of the town.

There are always new things to learn about the town and we can be sure that Graham will not disappoint.



## Notices

- The Society will be at the June 15th Bandstand Event. This is themed as a "Vintage Day" and we will be sharing the Community Gazebo with other groups and will be promoting this year's Carnival Event being held on September 28th. Members are invited to help us promote the society or just come along and share the event.
- Our exhibition at Forge Mill Needle Museum this year entitled 'Redditch Memories', will run from Thursday 31st October to Sunday 24th November. We still need your stories!
- Subscriptions for existing members are now overdue. Please pay ASAP. After the July meeting members not having paid are assumed to have resigned, but, of course, can always re-join later
- There is an interesting Royal Enfield exhibition in the Kingfisher Centre (opposite Clinton Cards in Walford Walk). Well worth a visit.

## Our Meetings

The Redditch Local History Society meets, from February to December, on the 2nd Monday of the month (except December which is our Christmas social and is on the 3rd Monday).

Meetings begin at 2.00 pm and last for approximately 2 hours, it begins with a presentation, which lasts about one hour, and this is followed by refreshments and society business, event news and project reports.

Non-members welcome for whom there will be a £3 entrance charge.

(Refundable against membership fee if subsequently joining the society the same day.)

## Contact

For details of how to join the Redditch Local History Society or to contact us:

**email:** [contact@redditchhistorysociety.org.uk](mailto:contact@redditchhistorysociety.org.uk)

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