



The visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Redditch on Tuesday 5th July 1983.

A Step back in History - the official opening of the Forge Mill Needle Museum



It was over 600 years ago the last reigning monarch visited Redditch. That was in 1328 when Edward III came to see Cistercian monks at Bordesley Abbey

But in 1983, 655 years later, the Queen could have almost retraced her predecessor's steps as she officially opened Forge Mill, which is only yards from the site of the Old Abbey.

It was a double celebration for all connected with the historic needle-making mill, for on Wednesday, just a day after the Queen forged another link in the town's history, the museum's doors were opened to the public.

PLAQUE

The Royal guest opened the mill and museum by unveiling a plaque and then rang a bell to set the water wheel in motion. The plaque reads: "National Needle Museum, opened July 5 by Her Majesty the Queen."

She met all those who had put their time, hard work, and effort into getting the buildings ready, including museum manager Bryan Gee.

Forge Mill guide Mr John Luty, Redditch Amenity trust development officer Mr Jim Martin and trust chairman Derrick Higgs.





Mr Luty explained some of the static displays in the museum to the Queen before chairman of the Forge Mill Trust company. Mr Tony Jeffs presented Mr Oliver Gray and his two sons who told how they restored the old water wheel and its drive.

NEEDLES

The Queen saw scouring shop with scouring beds operation and met Les Jakeman, a former employee of Forge Mill who used the machinery years ago, Mr Bernard Lee, who is well-known for his associations with the old needle industry, and Mr Stan Wright, a relative of the previous owners of Forge Mill.

EXCITING

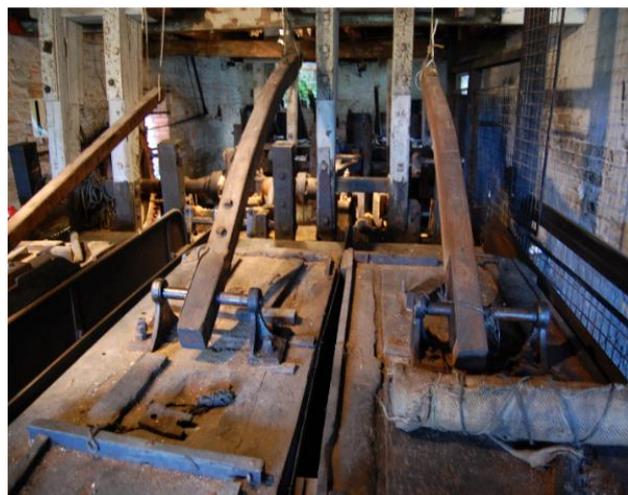
Mr Bryan Gee, the museum manager, explained how busy he and others had been in preparing for the big day.

Just hours before the Royal guest was due, he said "the Queen s visit was proving very exciting.

"It is a once-in- a-lifetime happening and I am confident everything will be ready on time."

Mr Gee added he had plenty of 'experience in this field. "I get a gut feeling if there is anything wrong, but I have opened enough places like this to know that this time, we are home and dry."

All text from the Redditch Advertiser Report of the visit.



'SWEET' MEMORIES PART 1



Who doesn't remember Blue Bird toffees?

Maybe you remember buying and eating them?

Maybe you remember using this little hammer to break a slab of toffee into bite-sized pieces?

Maybe you still have one of the famous tins? Perhaps, on a shelf in your garage, full of rusty nails!



Most of the Blue Bird Toffee Factory buildings, situated in the North Worcestershire village of Hunnington, are due to be demolished during the next few months to make way for a large housing estate.

The factory was originally opened in 1927 by its founder, Harry Vincent, who was moving his company from its previous site in Ladywood, Birmingham, to a more rural setting. The choice of Hunnington may well have been influenced by the proximity of a railway line between Longbridge and Halesowen. Toffee production continued on this site until 1998.



Construction site 1925-26

As part of the new development, the main office block and the canteen building will remain externally intact (as they have both been recently designated as Grade II Listed). Internally, however, they are due to be converted to apartments and terraced housing.



Main Office Block



Canteen Building

Knowledge of these imminent changes has evoked many memories for past workers and villagers alike.

Most of the photographs above can be seen in 'Growing Up in Blue Bird's Garden Village', a recently published hardback book produced by Romsley & Hunnington History Society in order to keep the memory of the iconic 'Blue Bird' name alive.



In the next newsletter we will recall some of these memories of the factory and life in the surrounding village, with more photographs from the book.

Romsley and Hunnington History Society

**GROWING UP
IN
BLUE BIRD'S
GARDEN VILLAGE**

by
Margaret Harding (née Cowling)
and Valerie Mills (née Hastlow)



Blue Bird Toffee Factory in Hunnington

LIDAR Opening up the Landscape by Anthony Green Redditch History Society

Airborne LIDAR (light detection and ranging) measures the height of the ground surface and other features in large areas of landscape with a very high resolution and accuracy using laser. Such information was previously unavailable, except through labour-intensive field survey. Because LIDAR uses light beams it has the potential to penetrate gaps in the canopy and so record the ground surface under trees and vegetation. This can reveal features that would not otherwise be seen, so providing archaeologists with the capability to recognise and record otherwise hard to detect features.

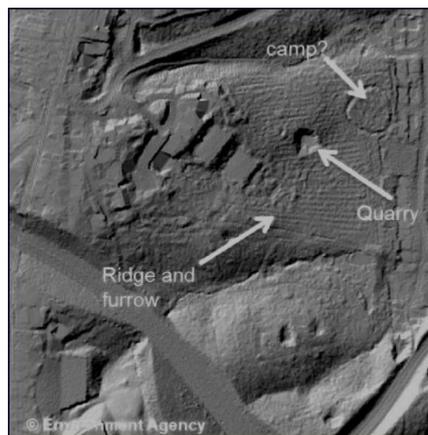
I first came across LIDAR when I was researching material for an exhibition/presentation I was producing on the history of the local area before Redditch existed i.e., from the last ice age, 12,000 years ago, to the dissolution of the monasteries, five hundred years ago.

At that time LIDAR was expensive to access and I was kindly allowed to use this image by Worcester University Archaeology Department.

However, since 2015, as part of a move towards open data access, the Environment Agency has made all the LIDAR data they have flown freely available through the government data portal.

<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/f0db0249-f17b-4036-9e65-309148c97ce4/national-lidar-programme>

A big advantage of LIDAR for archaeology is that it makes the surface of an area more visible than any other method other than expensive surveys or archaeological digs. This makes it ideal for an ‘armchair archaeologist such as myself! As a volunteer at Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre, I have given tours of the Bordesley Abbey site. This includes visiting the site of the gateway chapel, walking up to the viewpoint next to the boundary fence/ditch, and down to the Abbey Church site. This is, of course, only a small part of the site but does take an hour to complete. When looking across the site it looks very much like the Google Earth view below.

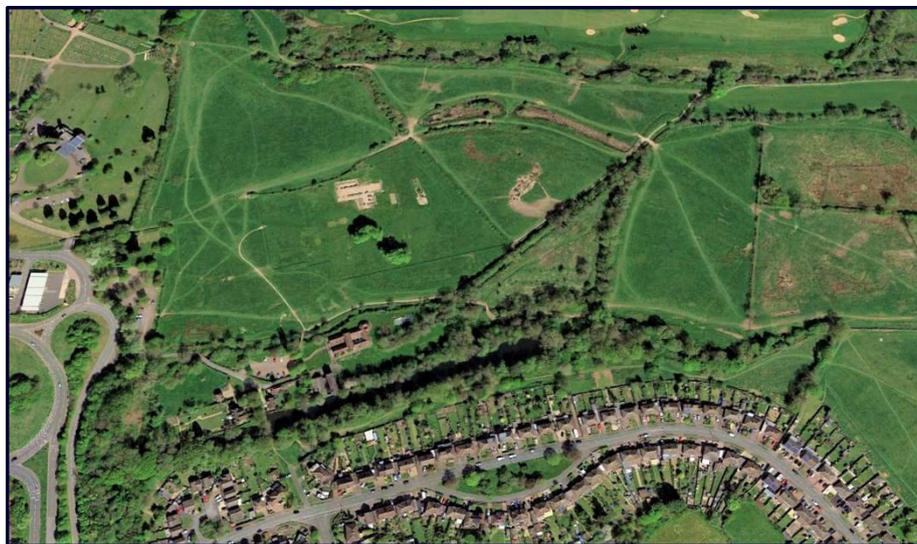


Right:

Google Earth view of the Bordesley Abbey precinct.

This covers nearly one hundred acres and is one of the most important monastic sites in the UK.

Much of it has not been excavated and to most local visitors it will be seen as a large field with a few ruins.



However, using LIDAR gives a completely different aspect of the area and the image below gives more or less exactly the same view of the Google Earth view on the previous page.

Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre, Forge Mill Road, the River Arrow, the boundary/fence by the Redditch Cemetery, and the road leading onto the ‘Sainsbury’s Island’ can be clearly seen. What is really interesting is how it shows the extent of Bordesley Abbey.

In the centre/left of the image is the exposed portion of the Abbey Church. Only a small part of this is currently visible, much more was excavated. But it is possible to see how extensive it was.

Below the Abbey Church can be seen the outline of associated buildings which included kitchens, refectory, infirmary etc.

To the right of this area was the industrial area and the triangular earthwork which contained the mill pool

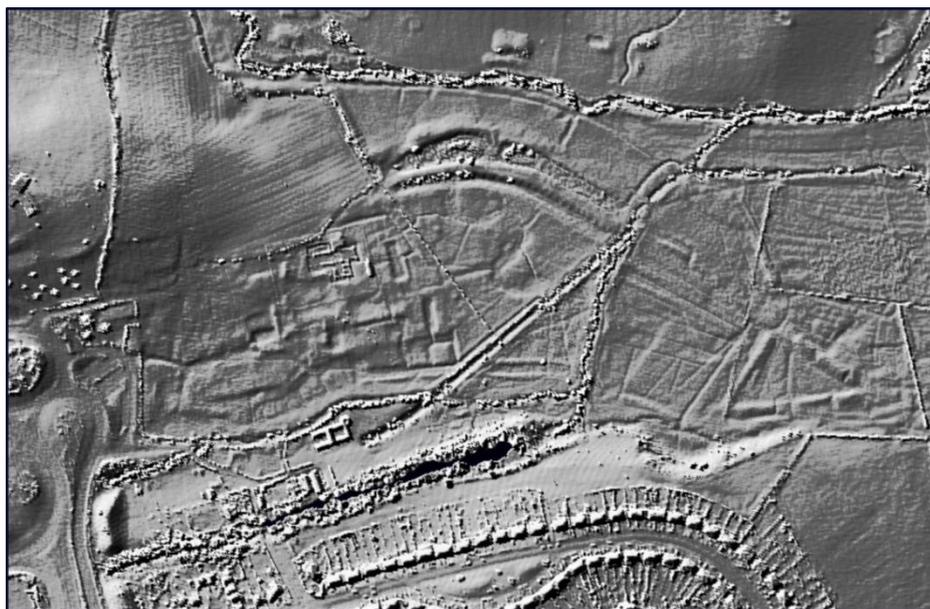
of one of the earliest metal working mills ever found in the UK.

Next to the boundary fence/ditch separating the precinct from the Redditch Cemetery can clearly be seen the 'ridge and furrow' field pattern typical of Medieval times. Examples of this is rare in Redditch due to modern developments. As this is high ground for the area, it is likely that farming was here before the Cistercians and, since it has been relatively untouched for 1,000 years there is still much to learn.

I have looked over the rest of the Arrow Valley Park using the LIDAR maps but there is nothing to see. This is not surprising as the Redditch Development Corporation conducted much construction work.

In the central area they excavated an enormous area to create the Arrow Valley Lake, canalised the Arrow, and built car parks and a visitor centre. In the southern area they built the Bromsgrove Highway, Morrisons supermarket, a housing estate by Ipsley Church and scoured the surface to produce football pitches and leisure areas.

We are fortunate that Redditch Development Corporation understood the importance of the Bordesley Abbey site and set out to protect it from encroachment. It is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to be of national importance.



Wolverley and Cookley Historical Society

Wolverley and Cookley Historical Society received a request during the summer from Wolverley Church who announced that they were celebrating the 250th anniversary of the consecration of the new church on the 20th September and could we put up a display about the history of the church for their celebratory weekend.

This was going to be a problem. The research and organising of a display would usually take 6 to 12 months, also the Society doesn't meet during August.

So, a couple of members did a rapid study of the church history using work done by earlier historians and using material from the Society's archive. Our chairman quickly printed the various subjects, and a meeting was arranged to get them mounted. We were rapidly running out of time to achieve a satisfactory display when the local curate received the news that the weekend event was cancelled due to Royal Mourning.

We are hoping that the event will be rescheduled and our display, now finished, will be of use at a future date.

Worcestershire Medieval Seals Project

When I retired from the Record Office, I didn't want to lose all contact with archives, so I planned a couple of projects for my retirement. One of these was a Worcestershire Medieval Seals project. I had handled many thousands of deeds throughout my career and had been aware that many still had wax seals attached, but had never had the time to think about these seals seriously.

About the time of my retirement Dr Elizabeth New had just finished a three-year project examining seals at the National Library of Wales and had published a book 'Seals and Sealing Practices – British Records Association Archives and the User No.11'. This gave me lots of background information and also a suggested format for recording seals. I was able to arrange a lunch with Dr New and Daniel Huws, former Head of Manuscripts at the National Library, to discuss my ideas and I got great encouragement from them.

So I started a systematic search through the holdings at the Archive Service for all surviving examples of personal seals dating to 1500 or earlier. For each seal I found, I allocated it a serial number, together with the full WAAS reference. I noted the parties to each deed, and what sort of deed it was, as well as its date, both as expressed in the original and converted to a modern date format. If the deed was not dated, I assigned a date range based on the type of script, when parties or witnesses lived or any other clues I could find. I also noted the sealing clause included in each deed.

I then described the seal, noting what it was made of, and its colour, shape and size. Then, most interestingly, I attempted to describe the image on the seal – where a seal was worn or damaged this could be very challenging, as was making out the legend around each seal, very often damaged or indecipherable.



Seal of about 1280 (Lechmere family archive by permission of Sir N. Lechmere)

I then photographed each seal. I ended up with records for over 450 seals, ranging in date from c. 1100 to 1500. I was interested to see whether the design of seals changed over time, and what sorts or classes of the population might have had a seal. I haven't done detailed analysis yet, but a first impression is that earlier seals are more likely to have religious or armorial images (especially where gentry families were involved) but later, especially in the fifteenth century, increasingly such personal seals just bore an initial letter. There was also at all periods a great range of images, including animals and birds of various sorts, plus stars, crosses and flowers.

Seal of 1376 (Lechmere family archive by permission of Sir N. Lechmere)



At the moment this all exists in hard copy as hand-written record forms. When I have time, I need to convert these to a digital format. This will make the catalogue more easily available to others and searchable but will be a big and time-consuming job.

Robin Whittaker

Small Pits Big Ideas

Bewdley was one of six places in Worcestershire to benefit from a Heritage Lottery Funded project to dig test pits. These 1m square pits have the soil removed in 10cm spits or layers and everything unnatural is removed and put in a bag. The aim is to get to the bottom of human occupation and hope the findings tell us something about the history of the area.

Bewdley was allowed 20 pits. One was dug in April behind 6 Kidderminster Road, and much was found. However, it was clear the garden had been used as a dumping ground, especially for bricks and tiles.



Over the weekend of 9th and 10th July, 15 more pits were dug – two at Ribbesford, nine in Bewdley and four in Wribbenhall. The weather was hot and dry, but our diggers did a valiant job. There were 51 adults and 15 children involved. Professional archaeologists did the rounds making sure everything and everyone was alright. On the Saturday afternoon and all-day Sunday, a separate group of people began cleaning the finds. On the Monday and Tuesday (11th and 12th July), four more pits were dug this time by High School pupils, all the sites being within walking distance of the school. Each pit had four diggers who shared the workload and also did some finds cleaning. Again, there was professional archaeological supervision. Processing the numerous bags of finds continued for another four weeks after the digging had ended. This involved 26 adults and 5 children.

So what was found? A lot of concrete, bricks and rubble, but more interestingly a lot of china, bone, glass, slag, iron bits and clay pipe bowls and stems. The school pupils found the oldest item – a flint tool dated to 4000–1500BC, but they were more

excited about discovering a dismembered Barbie doll!

We will have to wait for the Spring to know the significance of all these finds. The archaeologists will give a presentation to the general public when their analysis is complete. So watch this space!

Heather Flack



My wife and I had a few days in the City of Wells recently and, while meandering around in the usual touristy fashion, we landed upon (not literally) the **Memorial to Harry Patch**, dubbed in his later

years "the Last Fighting Tommy". Harry was an English supercentenarian, briefly the oldest man in Europe, and the last surviving trench combat soldier of the First World War from any country. He fought on the Western Front, surviving the terrible Battle of Passchendaele, unlike many others.

He appeared in all sorts of history-based TV programmes and lived to the fine old age of 111, passing away in 2009. He died in Wells and is buried at St Michael's Church, Monkton Combe.



Norman Broadfield

POEMS ON THE OLD LOCK-UP.

(Supplied by Tony Green of The Redditch History Society)

The following poems, which obtained prizes given by the committee of the Saturday Evening Entertainments, are from the programme of November 11th, 1865

The Old Lock-up

Built in 1824, it stopped being used as a lock up at about the time of these poems, and was finally removed in 1898

It was at the junction of Alcester street and Red Lion Street. The route of Red Lion Street lies roughly under Threadneedle House and the Town Hall.



FIRST PRIZE.

“ON THE HOLE.”

Unfurl thy wing, O Muse, to Knock-up,

Something on the Redditch Lock-up,
Just to help the rhyming stock up—

On the “Hole.”

A halo more of gloom than glory,
(With thy Stocks and Stones so hoary)

Dwells about thy dismal story—
On the (W) “Hole.”

How oft the strong has found thee
stronger!

How from the wronged thou held’st
the wronger!

“In durance vile,” with cold and
hunger—

In the “Hole.”

How fain from thee the fierce would
falter!

In the palmy days of “Salter!”

Tho’ with no prospect of a halter—
In the “Hole.”

Thou wert not built for rogues
gigantic, —

They may cross the wide Atlantic,
—

But petty theft and drunken antic,
—

On the (W) “Hole.”

Our modern Limbo now must
shame thee,

Thou worthless ‘Jug’ none seem to
claim thee;

No old acquaintance cares to name
three—

On the (W) “Hole.”

My rhyming room’s now getting
scanty,

I’ve wrote my road through eight
and twenty

Lines, the which I think are plenty
On the “Hole.”

W. GUISE.

Redditch, Nov. 6th, 1865.

**SECOND PRIZE.
THE OLD LOCK-UP.**

Neglected and decayed our Lock-up
stands,
Gone are its terrors, —gone the
stubborn hands
That once, relentless, locked its heavy
door
On vagrant, thief, or the besotted boor
Who staggered drunk along the quiet
street,
Insulting everyone he chanced to meet.
If its old walls could speak, how sad a
tale
Would strike our ears, and make us all
grow pale.
'T would tell a tale of good advice
forgot,
'T would tell how that old poor decrepit
sot,
Though he had money, yet would never
save,
But have his drink, and make himself a
grave,
And he who, tempted by the glittering
sight
Of gold or silver, thinks not if it's right
To take what is another's ; but who
steals
The useless stuff—Who would like
what he feels ?
When in his dungeon he thinks calmly
o'er
His wicked act and knows that never
more
Can he be happy. Character is gone,
And he's disgraced, and wretched, and
alone.
This and much more these grim old
walls could tell;
But now no more its dreary little cell
Will hear the thief in misery repent
or curse the cause that brought his
punishment.

ALBERT STRATTON.

**THIRD PRIZE.
LINES ON THE OLD LOCK-UP.**

Redditch Lock-up is condemned;
We want to see it down.
It stood for many years a friend
To Justice in our town.

Its cells have been, for strength encased
With walls of thickest bounds,
While Salter went about and chased,
And watchmen beat their rounds.
Rioting days—sad state of things, —
We will not give detail;
We had to send for Jemmy Kings,
He came and fill'd the Jail.

A dungeon, in whose dark recess
The vilest found a place,
So full of anguish 'and distress,
When Justice they must face.

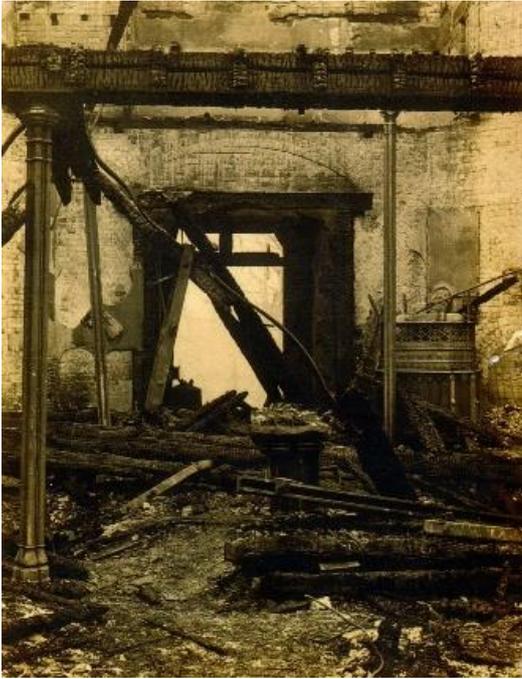
Now it rejected, and forlorn,
The object of a slight.
In former times hearts have been torn,
When tenanted for night.

Then why despise the poor old jug, —
It answered for the past.
Tell me where you would find a mug,
That would for ever last?

So great has been the change of late,
Under Police control;
They cease to slam thy Iron Gate—
Farewell! our Redditch Hole.

WILLIAM BENKETT.

One Hundred Years Ago This Month.....



The people of Kidderminster awoke on Monday morning, November 20th, 1922, to find that the 'Waterloo' or Commissioner's church of 1824, St George, had been gutted by fire. How the fire started is not clear. At the close of the evening service on Sunday everything appeared as it should have been. The fire is thought to have started near the heating apparatus by the door which faces Radford Avenue, immediately under the tower.



Sergeant Charles BINT photographed by HARRISON

What is known is that at about 2:20am PC Robinson was on duty in Blackwell Street when he saw flames coming from the tower of St. George's church. He ran to the police station and informed Sergeant Bint who immediately alerted Kidderminster Fire Brigade.

Meanwhile PC Robinson informed Mr Beech, the parish clerk, who lived in Leswell Street. When they arrived at the burning church they opened the safe and with the help of Sergeant Bint, PCs Moody, Short, Mason, Lowe, and other helpers, the valuable communion plate and registers were removed and saved.

In a few minutes the Kidderminster Brigade was on the scene. The commanding officer, Captain W. M. Hughes decided that further aid was needed so he summoned Stourbridge Fire Brigade, who arrived, according to an extract from the Kidderminster Shuttle of Saturday 25th November 1922: "*..... in quick time and in full force with their new motor engine and splendidly equipped machines under the command of Chief Officer Walker.*"

The Kidderminster crew worked from hydrants nearby while the Stourbridge Brigade worked from hydrants halfway down Radford Avenue. The two Fire Brigades had worked



bravely under dangerous conditions. Three Kidderminster firemen were working under the choir vestry when the girders gave way and the men were thrown to the ground. Fortunately, none were seriously hurt.

By the time the Chief Constable (Mr F Gray), Inspector Harris, The Vicar of St. George (Revd. R.H. Stephen) and the church wardens arrived the flames reached 20 feet above the roof of the tower.

It was clear that there was not much hope of saving the building. All of the inside was destroyed. Only the outer walls and the tower were left. Even the new church memorial vestry was burned out. With a base at 190 ft above sea level, St George's Church tower had been a landmark for miles around for the last hundred years.

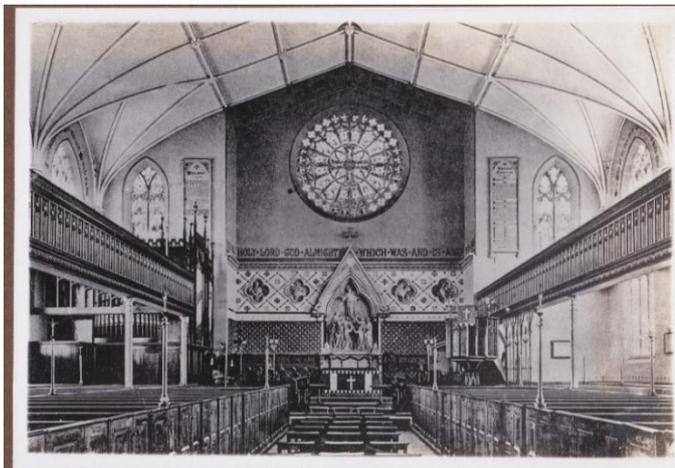
After the fire only the tower, the surrounding walls, windows, and the tapering pinnacles remained.

Whilst reviewing all my scanned photographs for this project, I was excited to find in this last photograph of St George's without a roof in 1923, from an album given to the church by a relative of photographer William JJ THOMPSON, St George's



only Commonwealth War Grave white obelisk of Cedric Ashleigh NICHOLLS in the lower right. It could not have been long in 1922 since it had been erected. THOMPSON, a Sunday School teacher at St George's and owner of the shop on Comberton Hill had been first on the scene that dreadful night. He and others made postcards to help raise funds for the shortfall in the insurance.

It was decided to ask the famous architect, Giles Gilbert Scott, to design the new



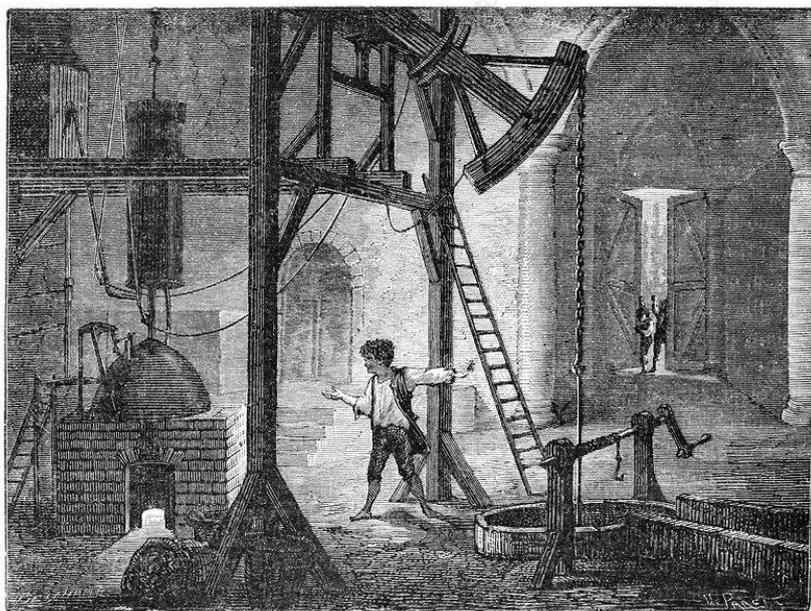
interior. That year he had been working on the Whittall chapel at St Mary's, the well-known red telephone box and the Anglican Liverpool cathedral. His design was airy and spacious with no galleries, tall Bath stone pillars supporting a new high wooden roof without a false ceiling. Sunday services were held in the Town hall until the church was rededicated on 13th september 1925 exactly 101 years, to the day after the church's Consecration. The building is now Grade 2* listed.

These are THOMPSON's photographs taken well before and just after the Consecration.

I have presently put up an Exhibition in the church to remember this tragic event. It will be there until after the centenary. The church is open Wednesday afternoon and Friday mornings, or I can be contacted to arrange a viewing. I am also available for information on any burials or family history research.

Mattie Underhill 17 September 2022

For the September meeting Chaddesley Corbett Local History Society heard David Hardwick explain **How Chaddesley Corbett Changed the World** (The Role of the Potter family in the Industrial Revolution)



An image of Potter improving the Newcomen Engine. Picture credit: Science Photo Library
In the talk David gave explanations of the various images and their credibility, referring to the engines in the illustrations, the age of the ‘boy’ and the situation the engines are in. The image I have chosen here appears to be rather incongruously in a cathedral type building, not very usual for a

steam engine!

The beginning of the Industrial Revolution is often traced back to Thomas Newcomen’s invention of the Steam Engine and the erection of the first example of a mechanical pump that was not powered by wind, water, or human/animal power, in Dudley in 1712. There are however many myths and mistakes in this traditional narrative and particularly in the role played by a small boy called Humphrey Potter in creating the first truly self-acting machine. This is of particular interest given that the Potter family were from Chaddesley Corbett!!! Their property was even named as such on the map of that time – Potters Park.

This talk looked at the facts around the earliest Newcomen Engines and what role this local family played in changing the world, including the relationship with religion, travel, law and family.

Our speaker, David Hardwick is a Chartered Building Surveyor specialising in historic properties and particularly in Industrial Archaeology. He is an experienced lecturer at university level in all aspects of construction and Heritage as well as giving talks to a wide range of local and national history organisations. It is his passion for industrial archaeology and in particular mining history and the development of the early Newcomen Engines that results in his latest research. He is the current chairman of the Western Region of the Newcomen Society and has delivered a paper at the Early Steam Engines in Central European Mining Conference in Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia in October.

It was a delight to be presented with some new angles on the old familiar steam engine development story, and to feel that little old Chaddesley Corbett made such an impact on the world of the early 18th Century and beyond. I hope that Mr Hardwick, having been introduced to our village and the Potter family, actually enjoyed and benefitted a little from the discoveries he made and that the conclusions he came to might feed into the enthusiasm of the international enthusiasts of the steam engine world.



We are excited for Wednesday October 19th 7.30pm “Producing the BBC’s ‘Antiques Roadshow’” By Mike Jackson and then another very local talk by David Green “How war and work shaped my family” with some good genealogy research and local revelations, supported by a superb family album and local historic views of the parish.

For now, though, I leave you with an recent view of where Potter’s house was from the leafy surrounds of Chaddesley Corbett’s local footpaths. (the building visible was built in the 1930’s).

Freda Griffith

Planned Conference

The Worcester History Society are planning to hold a conference in early 2024, titled *Interpreting Worcestershire History*.

It is hoped to that it will deal with different ways of looking at the county’s past from as many perspectives as possible.

So far, a number of possible speakers have been identified, but many more are needed. The topics so far on the agenda are

The early History of the Worcestershire History Society – Robin Whittaker

Early historians and their concerns- Speaker to be confirmed

Landscape History – George Demidowicz

Architectural History – Stephen Price

Worcestershire Peasantry – Chris Dyer

Monuments and Empire – Neil Fleming

Music and Cathedral – Speaker to be confirmed

Sport in the County – Speaker to be confirmed

Aspects of the history of the business Community in Worcestershire – Alan Robertson

Some aspects of Communication in the 18th Century – Teresa Jones

Some aspects of the history on Worcester – Speaker to be confirmed

Collections for Local History – Adrian Gregson

In particular they want some parish histories. So, if you have articles on your parish history, please let me know.

Phil Douce Chairman

VEHS costume on display at Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum

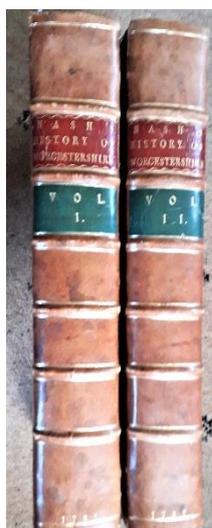
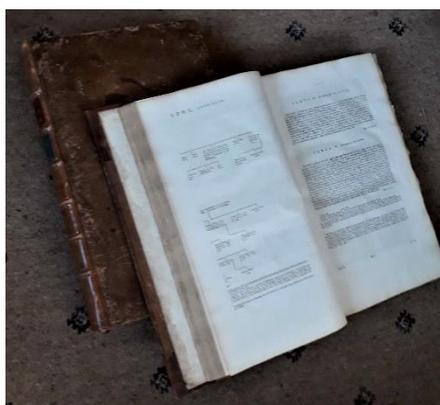


A lady's robe, dated circa 1740, which is part of the **Vale of Evesham Historical Society's** costume collection, is currently on loan to the Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum for their exhibition, "Canaletto: a Venetian's View". The robe is made of a fabric of a very complicated Jacquard weave and would have been very expensive. It might even have been worn at Court.

The exhibition runs from 1 October until 7 January 2023.

Gerry Harte

A Malvern lady has 2 volumes of **Nash's History of Worcestershire** (1781 & 1782) for sale.



Good condition. **£550 ono.**

Contact Sarah 01684 311043 or Chris 01684 564611

Cora Weaver

Carole Gumbley of the **Lickey Hills Group** writes that “We are contributing a piece written by George Gascoyne who sadly died this year and was known to many people in history groups across Worcestershire and Birmingham. We have also included a short obituary”

George Gascoyne

2nd May 1941 – 1st June 2022

Many of you interested in Worcestershire local history will have come across George Gascoyne. He was a very active member of our Society. He joined in about 1996 and became a committee member in 1998. He was Secretary from 2004 to 2016, when he became Chairman. For over 20 years he was the mainstay of the Society. About a year ago he stepped down due to ill-health, but he still attended meetings when he could. He booked speakers for our talks; gave talks especially on Chadwich Manor, the subject of his 2003 M.A. thesis for Birmingham University; ran our popular History Quizzes; and liaised with other local history groups. He was very good at making and keeping contacts – today we would call it networking. His work was split between three people when he left the Committee! He is much missed.

As many others, our 2020/21 season of talks was cancelled due to the covid pandemic, but the Society published a monthly Bulletin, to coincide with the cancelled meeting, filled with local history items. As a tribute to George, here is one of the last articles he wrote for the March 2021 Bulletin about his beloved Chadwich, which concentrated on agricultural matters.

John Carpenter

John Carpenter was an eminent Agriculturist and was named in the Chadwich Inclosure Act of 1791 as the driving force to bring the ‘wastes and commons’ into agricultural production. He purchased the adjacent Woodrow Estate in 1778, and proceeded to purchase other farms in the area, as well as becoming the Lessee of the Manor of Chadwich in 1787, which was owned by Christ Church Cathedral Oxford.

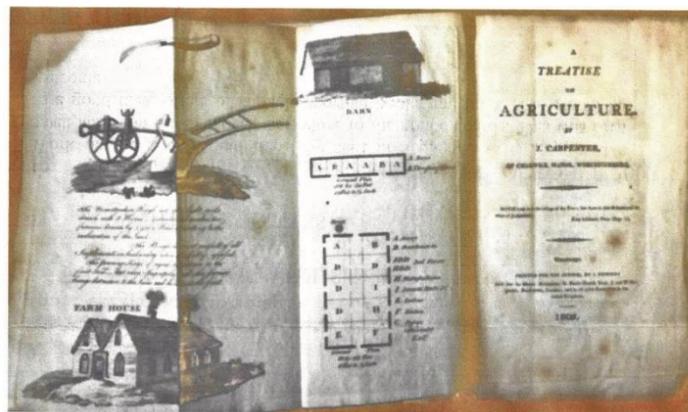
His passion for agriculture was such that, aged 62, he wrote a book on the subject in 1803 called ‘A Treatise on Agriculture by J Carpenter of Chadwick Manor, Worcestershire’, followed by Volume 2 in 1805. He dedicated the book to the two Worcestershire Members of Parliament, Edward Foley and William Lygon, who were ‘friendly encouragers of the noble art of agriculture’.

They, also, sponsored the Act of Parliament of 1791 for the Chadwich Inclosure. The book took the form of letters in which he outlined his views on how to improve agriculture. Among his many points were: draining the Wildmoor by the Elkington method; feeding potatoes to pigs and cattle; floating mud onto the meadows and keeping the sheep out; growing flax to obtain a Government bounty of four-pence a stone; and listing out tools and implements - *‘he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing’*.

He was a Non-conformist and pressed for a piece of land in the Inclosure Award to be allocated to the Quakers. He was also a humanitarian, commenting that ‘chimney children would be better employed at the plough’. He was against cruelty to horses: ‘a merciful man is merciful to his beast’; lamented that there was no provision for day-labourers in later life and denounced the French Revolution and the ‘cruel West India Slave Trade’.

John Carpenter was held in high regard as an agriculturist. He was so well acquainted with William Pitt that when, in 1813, Pitt published a ‘General View of Agriculture for the County of Worcester’ for the Board of Agriculture, he credited him in the preface - ‘Mr Carpenter of Chadwick Manor near Bromsgrove, author of an ingenious Treatise on Agriculture, for attending me in an excursion round his neighbourhood’.

Lickey Hills Local History Society



An illustration from ‘A Treatise on Agriculture’ by John Carpenter

Malvern in a Day

The exhibition of posters to celebrate the 51st anniversary of photographs taken by Worcester photographer Michael Dowty on 30 July 1971 has taken place this summer in July and August in Church Walk in Malvern outside Waitrose and Wilko and has recently ended with a mini exhibition in Malvern Library.

The posters were based on a selection from the 202 photos held by the Library. As a Friend of Malvern Museum, I volunteered to examine the photos to check their condition and catalogue them. The condition was reasonable, but the photos were stored in acidic folders as used by photographers at the time. But what struck me most was the subject matter. All taken on the same day, the photos represented a chunk of relatively recent social history of the town. Here were the clothes worn by young and old, male and female, the cars, buses (lots of buses), trains, shops, leisure facilities, buildings... in other words, here was everyday life recorded with people unposed, un-self-consciously going about everyday activities.

My museum colleagues were working on older materials belonging to the Library. Dowty's photos (and there is another box from 1975) are part of a bigger scheme to record items from the past. As the 50th anniversary of the collection was relatively soon (I started the work in 2019), I put in a bid for a grant from the Town Council. It was successful, and with their help and that from the Civic Society and the generous technical expertise from Ian Thompson Photographic, with permission from the Dowty family (which holds the copyright), I have been able to get the correct storage materials for the collection and to produce the posters for the exhibition.

We are lucky to have an outdoor exhibition space in Malvern owned by Malvern Hills District Council and in such a central position. Advertised in All about Malvern, and in Midsummer Malvern, in the Tourist



Information Centre and associated web sites, the exhibition attracted probably hundreds of people (it is not easy to count numbers at an exhibition outdoors- open all hours). My unscientific method to collect feed-back can best be described as "selective lurking!" The TIC, Library and Waitrose kindly made an information leaflet available and also passed on, informally, comments to me. During "lurking", I eavesdropped and if anyone seemed to be looking closely at a poster, politely asked what they thought of the exhibition before declaring my involvement as its curator. Many comments were one word "wonderful", "amazing" but often people were pleased to talk to me about what they viewed and shared their thoughts and memories. People of all ages visited and were often

observed talking to each other about what they saw. Some people made a return visit with friends and relatives. Not all visitors were local- there seems to have been something for everyone. Two special visitors on the 51st anniversary day were Michael Dowty's daughters

On some of the posters I added brief quotations from the memories project which was started during the pandemic and continued afterwards when contributors who wanted to make audio recordings of their memories of the early seventies. Another spin off was the collection of photographs taken by members of the Civic Society on the actual 50th anniversary of Michael Dowty's photos in 2021. Sadly, it was raining, but we now have a set of recent images to complement the originals, over thirty sets of memories, and the 25 posters. When all items are catalogued, cross-referenced and made available, they will form a fascinating archive of life and times in 1970s Malvern.



Jan Condon. Malvern in a day project.

LOCKDOWN

I have come to the conclusion that it is not a good idea to know what the future holds for us, although I know that some people think differently.

In February 2020, I travelled to London by train to visit family. As it was a beautiful, sunny early spring day, I decided to walk from Euston to Victoria, as I love to walk, and I dislike using the underground! It amazed me how many people were wearing masks. I had of course heard that the Coronavirus was spreading across the world towards the UK fairly quickly, but still in my positive, innocent mind, didn't realise its tragic severity and potential effect on me and my loved ones.

How that was to change several weeks later!

After a short time, reeling from day-to-day restrictions being imposed and realising all the implications that were becoming apparent, I quickly became aware that decisions had to be made close to home.

In my role as Chair of Bromsgrove Society Local History Group, one of these was the cancellation of our LHG monthly meetings with speakers, that took place in public.

Naively, we thought this might be for a couple of months, possibly until Easter. Soon, we also realised that we would need to cancel our annual Summer School – 3 great days with 6 speakers talking on various subjects with afternoon visits – something looked forward to by many!

After a few weeks, the word 'Zoom' entered our vocabulary. Our committee began to discuss the possibility of presenting 1 or even 2 talks via the Zoom platform. This would hopefully help people to cope with the loss of meeting up with friends and keeping their minds occupied with something other than the virus and its horrible effects that were becoming apparent very quickly. It was looking very likely that our monthly meetings were definitely going to be cancelled until the end of the season, possibly even until next year?

Fortunately, we have several speakers in our membership, who were very willing to 'Zoom' their talks and also luckily a couple of members who knew all about the technological knowledge necessary to enable us to do it all. So, we went for it!

The rest is history, as it were – appropriate word!

We enjoyed many Zoom presentations, varying in subject and we were overjoyed that they were so positively received by many people, members and non-members. The joy was that we could entertain viewers from our local area, a bit further afield than usual and even from far away as USA and Australia! The positive benefit of modern technology in a very desperately sad time.

As we all know, this went on for much longer than anyone imagined, and I don't think we can say now that it is out of our lives for ever.

Another bonus for us, from the Zoom talks, was that our Society gained many new members, perhaps because people could join from far and wide and viewers could enjoy the talks from the comfort of their own homes without venturing out on a cold, wet, dark winter's evening! We were thrilled to have over 100 people join us on many occasions and received many positive comments after the talks.

BUT not everyone is computer literate and so couldn't join us during lockdown, therefore missing our talks and seeing their friends smile, albeit on a screen. They definitely missed out.

At our monthly meetings, we run a second-hand book stall which is very popular and enables people to purchase recently printed publications as well as sometimes dog-eared favourites! Our Society eventually produced a new book 'Bromsgrove – the story of a market town' by Julian Hunt and Jenny Townshend in early 2022 but have been limited as to where we could sell it, other than on-line.

All of the above has caused much discussion in meetings –

'Do we carry on with our live talks?'

'Do we just continue to present the talks on-line?'

'Do we try to combine the 2?'

The last option is still being explored, although we have listened to people who have been speakers and/or the audience on such occasions and sadly reports are slightly negative. The camera has to remain static – on the speaker, preventing the speaker moving around! Or the camera stays focused on the screen and therefore no one sees the speaker! We are still trying to solve this one and maintain a high quality.

We also realise that it might take some time for people to be confident enough to return to our live meetings and other public events for many reasons. Hopefully, we will eventually return to some sort of normality.....or will we?

The after-effects of the virus have been enormous – some very tragic and incredibly sad, some making life tremendously difficult for others and some giving us all far-reaching effects for us to cope with.

But I think, as well as all the negatives, we need to cling on to some positives – they are there!
Some of our communities are working together more than before.
Some of us have found the positive benefits of modern technology.
Some of us have revalued our priorities and perhaps our list of ‘important things in our life’ has a different number one at the top!!

Chris Nesbitt Chair of Bromsgrove LHG October 2022

A short trip on Bramble

As some of you may be aware, Bramble is a restored canal barge that was built in 1934 for Fellows Morton and Clayton, the “Eddie Stobart” of their day on the canals. Bramble is managed by Stourport Forward, a not-for-profit Company that helps look after the Canal Heritage of Stourport.



I thought that many people would enjoy a shortish trip along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal in a canal barge. It was also amazed by the number of people who had not travelled through a canal lock in a boat. With this in mind, I approached Gill Edwards at Stourport Forward, and we discussed the possibility of having a trip up the canal from the bottom basin by the Severn in Stourport to Pratts Wharf which is just on the Kidderminster side of Oldington.

Pratts Wharf was an ideal destination as there are not many places to turn a 68ft barge around along the canal. But there is a “winding hole” to turn the boat at Pratts Wharf. It’s also an interesting destination as it was a lock off the canal to transfer barges from the canal and up the River Stour to Wilden Works and also tranship goods from large barges on the canal to smaller ones to Wilden Works.

As the Group that I envisaged being guinea pigs on the trip were interested in history, I suggested that we could have a history commentary around the basins and along the canal indicating interesting historical points. The whole round trip would take about 3 hours.



The experimental trip turned into a really enjoyable day out for everybody, and I have received several requests subsequently to do the trip again. We made a stop on the way back at The Bird in Hand where we had a comfort break, and the Landlady was happy to provide coffee and tea and food by arrangement with Gill Edwards of Stourport Forward. If you have a more energetic group, then Gill can make arrangements for refreshments at the Rock Tavern and so the group can enjoy a short walk along the old railway line at Leapgate and to the Rock Tavern.



The accommodation on the barge is fairly rudimentary but everybody brought a cushion along and was comfortable. The Bramble is licensed for only 12 people and the car parking in Stourport is expensive in the parks close to the Basin. But nevertheless, our group thoroughly enjoyed our "Cruise" along the canal. Wendy and Gill were excellent hosts on the Bramble and thanks are due to the Volunteers who handled the barge. I will certainly be organising another trip next Spring. Should you wish to arrange a trip for yourselves then contact Gill Edwards of Stourport Forward at gill.edwards@stourportforward.org.uk
Brian Garrett, Wichenford Local Heritage Group