

Newsletter...

Latest meeting

The latest meeting of the Redditch Local History Society was our last meeting of the year and was held on Monday 16th December 2019 at the Oasis Christian Centre, Plymouth Road

For the meeting we had an attendance of 28 (27 members and 1 visitor), as sadly, for some reason, the Christmas meeting is never well attended. The meeting was opened by the Chairman.

Presentation

Graham Smith gave an entertaining talk entitled 'The Story of Christmas Traditions'. In a well researched presentation he looked at the history of 10 Christmas traditions including Christmas food, trees, cards and crackers. The ten Christmas traditions described by Graham were.



The first Christmas Card 1843

1. Mince Pies
2. Christmas Dinner
3. Christmas Pudding
4. Christmas Crackers
5. Christmas Cards
6. Christmas decorations
7. Christmas Trees
8. Carol singing
9. Pantomimes
10. Father Christmas



Queen Victoria and Prince Albert
Traditional Victorian Christmas 1848

Graham illustrated how many of these traditions were either pagan festivities which were absorbed into the Christian tradition, were imported from outside cultures or were the creation of the very active Victorian 'entrepreneurs'.

As an example, among the wide range of examples illustrated by Graham, the first Christmas Card was actually produced on behalf of the post office and cost 1/- shilling. They sold 1000, but only 21 exist today. They cost ½ d (d is one old penny!) to post.



Christmas Pudding - 'what a whopper'



Christmas Cracker Promotion

It is generally recognised that our Christmas is based on the vision of Christmas created in Victorian times. It is true that Victoria and Albert, coupled with the stories involving Christmas by Charles Dickens produced our typical Christmas image.

However, as Graham admirably demonstrated there is much more to the story of Christmas than our modern commercialisation.

This was, as we have come to expect, a well researched presentation from Graham which was well appreciated by our audience.

It is sad that at Christmas we have a lower attendance than usual and perhaps, next year, when we have our December (Christmas) meeting on the second Monday of the month, then we will have a better attendance.

Exhibitions

Derek Coombes gave an overview of this years 'Redditch Memories' exhibition which was, without doubt, a real success. Visitor numbers for the period of the exhibition was 330 adults and 16 children and of these there were 73 repeat visitors. On the last Friday of the exhibition there were 40 paying visitors which was probably assisted by a second article In the Redditch Standard.

Forge Mill Needle Museum said that "These are fantastic figures and the museum is delighted and very appreciative of your hard work and the input from members of the Society."

As an overview for the 2020 exhibition, Tony Green explained how we formed the Society 10 years ago in December 2019 and, since that time, have produced 10 totally new exhibitions at Forge Mill Needle Museum, repeated at other venues (see list on the right).

It is quite difficult to imagine 'instantly' what to do next as we are searching for a theme for 2020. It is quite late in the day to do this as Forge Mill needs to know by mid January. It was therefore agreed to refer this back to the Committee for a solution and next year to begin early in deciding a theme for 2021.



2010 'History of Alcad' batteries in Redditch.
2011 8 week exhibition Redditch in WW2.
2012 Redditch History 1, Medieval to 1919
2013 Redditch History 2, from from 1919 to 1964
2014 Redditch History 3, 50 years from New Town
2015 Redditch People major figures past/present.
2016 Redditch - It's Farming Heritage.
2017 History Society Archives exhibition.
2018 History that flows through the River Arrow.
2019 My Redditch Memories - see above.

Speaker Programme

At the meeting we distributed the leaflet of our talks for 2020. This will be available at all our meetings and, in the New Year, outlets such as the Palace Theatre, Redditch Library and other Local History groups. It can also be viewed and downloaded from our website <http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/meetings.htm>

We are now looking at our programme for 2021 and there will be more information in our January 2020 Newsletter.



January 2020 Newsletter

Although we have no meeting in January there will be a newsletter and we will.....

- Announce next years exhibition at Forge Mill Needle Museum
- Preview the 2020 speaker programme.
- Begin work on the 2021 speaker programme
- Begin looking for ideas for a theme and input for the 2021 exhibition at Forge Mill Needle Museum.

Raffle

At our Raffle contributing to the Oasis Christmas Charity we were really pleased to raise £50. This was organised by Pete Harris and a number of members gave prizes. As in previous years we matched the funds raised by a donation from the Society. This allowed us to donate £100 to support disadvantaged members in our local community. Well done everyone involved.

Contact

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

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