

## July 2021 Issue

Hi all,

The Newsletter is later this month as I wanted to have some clarity from the Government as to how 'opening up' would be handled.....

Anyway, this week I went down to Oasis Christian Centre as they have made some small changes to their audio-visual system and I wanted to check that we would have no issues, but also to see how they were handling the situation with regard to their meetings.

As expected, they are very serious with regard to safeguarding their congregation and we will be following a similar format.

Our first meeting will be on Monday August 9th, starting, as usual, at 2.00 pm. I will be giving a talk on the needle industry, and we will not be having refreshments afterwards as the room we use for this is not suitable for social distancing.

On page 2, I have given a run down on how our meetings will be organised to ensure that our members and visitors will be safe.

Also, on page 2 there are a number of notices which you may find of interest.

These are for a Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service: Community Archaeology Project - Help unearth the history of Beoley, a History West Midlands on-line Film - 'A golden era - The post-war Black Country' and this year's Festival of Archaeology.

There are links where you can find details.

On page 3 there is the 'poster' for the Heritage Open Day at Forge Mill Needle Museum.

This annual event is well advanced and provides free entry to a range of events. We missed last year due to the 'lock down' and had to produce a 'virtual event'

(still available at <http://www.hod2020.redditchmuseum.org.uk>).

So, we are hoping that nothing happens to stop this year's event. However, as the organiser, I have some options available if we have to make this an outdoor only event.

Page 4 concerns the Danilo cinema, our last original cinema building remaining. This was a quality destination in its time. This is text originally produced by Brian Thomas for the local 'talking books'.

Pages 5 and 6 concerns memories of growing up in Redditch by Wayne Harris. This covers the time up to leaving school and starting work.

Next month I will include the second part of his story from school to today.

Pages 7 and 8 are essentially pictures of the grounds of Southcrest taken in the 1930s/40s. These were provided by Jane Wareing, whose grandfather was the Head Gardener from the late 1920s.

I found them fascinating and I am sure that you will too.

If you can support Jane in looking into this period of her history, please help.

So, we hope to see many members and supporters at our first 'live' meeting on the 9th August and we will be taking every measure to ensure the safety of our visitors as described on page 2.

Take care and stay safe

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

E-mail: [anthony.green@rhs2020.org.uk](mailto:anthony.green@rhs2020.org.uk) Tel: 01527 61434

# Organisation for Redditch History Society Meetings

England is in the process of having a rapid reopening with events involving thousands of people. How well this is driven by 'the science' is unknown and, until a few weeks have passed, it is difficult to know how this will work out.

However, our concern is to reopen our meetings, and if we do not open now when do we restart? We have therefore decided on a very cautious approach using the experience of the Oasis Christian Centre, who have reopened meetings of their congregation without problems, and adopting the policies which were in place before restrictions were removed.

We are therefore adopting the following procedures to ensure the safety of visitors.....

## Facemasks

All visitors must wear facemasks when entering the building and moving around. We may allow some relaxation during the presentation when a visitor is sitting down and is suitably distanced from other visitors. However, we will only take this relaxation with the agreement of the meeting.

## Entrance

When entering the Centre, you must wear a mask and we will have hand sanitiser available. There will be Society officials collecting money, taking names, and enrolling people into the Society. Please respect their safety.

## Seating

The Oasis Church normally has seating for well over 200. The Church has reorganised the seating into groups of three with social distancing between each group of three. This reduces the church to 120-140 seats, and it has been operating successfully on this basis. With our numbers we will have no problem in providing excellent social distancing in the meeting and no-one should feel at risk.

## Refreshments

We have decided that the room where we have our refreshments cannot provide social distancing. So, we will not be having refreshments at our first meeting. At this moment in time, we do not know how this applies to future meetings and we will decide on a monthly basis.

## Notices

### Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service: Community Archaeology Project

Help unearth the history of Beoley!

The Small Pits, Big Ideas project is looking for host gardens in Holt End and local volunteers to help discover more about the village's past. Over the weekend of 2nd -3rd October 2021, 15 test pits (mini 1m2 archaeological digs) will be excavated across Holt End, Beoley. Download leaflet at [http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/download/HoltEndDig\\_May2021.pdf](http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/download/HoltEndDig_May2021.pdf)

### History West Midlands on-line Film

'A golden era - The post-war Black Country'

The years from the end of the Second World War to the late 60s were a period of prosperity and change in the Black Country; there was full employment, wages were increasing, new houses, schools and hospitals were rising up on previously derelict and despoiled land. Today this 'golden-era' is often forgotten, lost in the hardship which the Black Country suffered in the closing decades of the 20th Century. <https://historywm.com/articles/forging-ahead-austerity-to-prosperity-in-the-black-country-1945-1968>

### 2021 Festival of Archaeology

This year's Festival of Archaeology runs from the 17th of July to the 1st of August 2021.

Events are a bit sparse this Year, for obvious reasons. You can do an events search at <https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/find>





Forge Mill Needle Museum



# Heritage Open Day



## Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021

After a difficult 2020, when we had to produce a virtual event, we want to make 2021 the best ever. We have had an amazing level of support from local groups and, provided nothing goes wrong regarding taming the virus, we hope to make this a real success.

Amongst the wide range of local activities activities which we will have are:

- A range of iconic motor bikes from the Royal Enfield owners Club
- Meticulously built model boats from the Little Radford Model Boat Club
- Live music from Indigo Arts, our local community charity supporting young people.
- Additional live music from local musician Clem Dalloway
- Exhibition of art from local artists some of which is available for purchase.
- Display from AIR (Arts in Redditch), a charitable organisation promoting and supporting arts in the area from singing and dancing to painting and crafting.
- Presentation by Scour Arts who will put on the final exhibition of the Redditch arts project which was terminated in 2020 by Covid and will be showing some plans for what's next.
- Redditch Local History exhibitions
- Free entry into the museum - the only existing water powered scouring mill will be operating on the day. (depending on regulations at the time)
- Tours by experienced volunteer guides of the Needle Museum and the Bordesley Abbey Ruins depending on regulations at that time.
- Free entry to 'A Journey into Marvel', an exhibition by Lee Bradley in the Museum gallery (the penultimate day of the exhibition).
- Refreshments will be available from the Mill View Coffee Bar

**The Event runs from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm.**

Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to places that normally have an admission charge. Our event has steadily increased in support from local groups since we began, and we, the volunteers at the Museum, appreciate the continued support given by 'Rubicon Leisure Redditch' to our efforts.

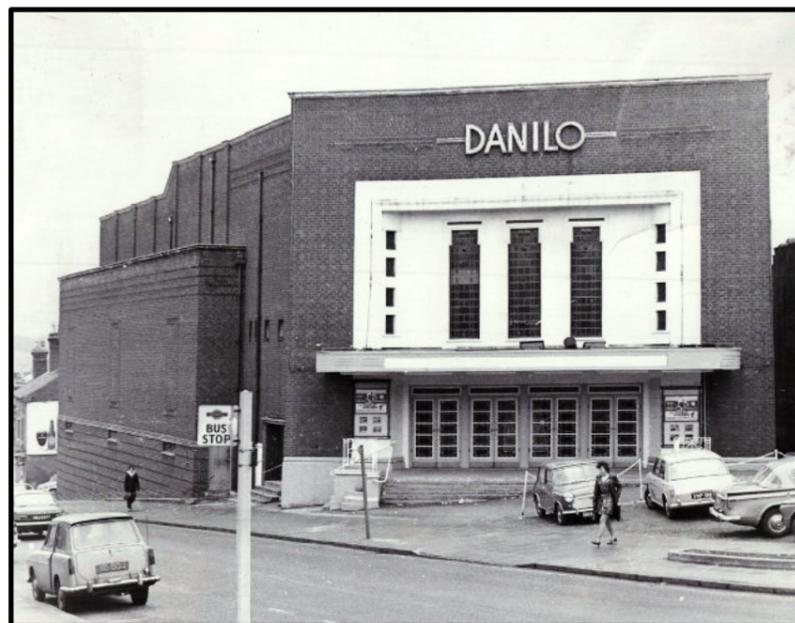
# The Danilo Cinema

## By Brian Thomas

*Birmingham Daily Gazette 8th February 1937 (Courtesy of British Newspaper Archive)*

### *'Redditch New Cinema*

*Saturday marked the opening of a new super cinema in Redditch. The Danilo on Unicorn Hill. The new cinema has modern requirements, including a cafe. It has seating for 1,500 people and has cost about £30,000 to build. The opening ceremony was performed by Lady Throckmorton and attended by two well-known film stars, Billy Milton, and Julie Suedo.'*



***Above Left: The Danilo Cinema under construction in 1936***

***Above Right: The Danilo Cinema in the 1960s***

The Danilo cinema mentioned above, is now a pub, known as The Royal Enfield.

In the Kinematograph Weekly- Thursday 11th February 1937, Lady Throckmorton, of Coughton Court Alcester, who officially opened the cinema commented that she felt somehow that she was launching a ship. The article states that at this time there were 4,500 cinemas in which half a million people were employed.

Using members of the aristocracy to officially open cinemas seem to have been a feature of the Danilo chain of cinemas. When the first cinema in the Danilo chain opened in 1936. The opening was performed by Viscount Ednam. Press articles in the 1930s refer to 20 million visits to cinemas each week.

During the 1920s and 1930s cinemas tended to target an audience of more affluent consumers.

Cinemas tended to become "posher". The building of the Danilo in Redditch reflected a trend towards more luxurious cinema venues with expensive decorations and high-quality seating. Another Cinema in Redditch, the Gaumont, opened in 1931 and now demolished, had a very attractive "Art Deco" interior.

Less grand cinemas were often deemed to be "flea pits".

Another cinema, which predated the Danilo and the Gaumont, the 'Select' in Alcester Street, was known as a "flea pit".

Several older residents of the town have informed me that it was widely believed that a visit to this venue would lead to the visitor being bitten by fleas which allegedly inhabited the seats.

# Growing up in Redditch - Part 1

## by Wayne Harris

I was born in Redditch in June 1946 and I lived at number 12 Wellington Street. The house shared a wall with the back entrance to The Corn Stores shop on Alcester Street.

My father was a quality inspector at the BSA factory when I was born. Unfortunately, he contracted TB in 1948 and was taken to Malvern Isolation Hospital. He did recover, but the damage to his lungs meant he had to convalesce for some time at home. I remember him making plastic handbags and silk thread "Duchess Sets", to earn a little extra money.

One of my earliest memories is the Christmas I received a metal pedal car which I raced along the pavement outside our house. This was great fun until one day I left it beside the entrance to the Corn Stores and a lorry ran over it! However, the shop owners did buy me a replacement.

In September 1953 I moved over the road to St. Stephens Boys School where I was placed in Norman Turners class. For my first two years there the school remained a boys only school.

In 1955 it became co-educational and some of the younger girls from the St. Stephens Primary School joined use for my last two years at the school, which became St Stephens Junior School.

The older boys and girls moved to the newly built Lodge Farm County Secondary School.

Our education at both Infant and Junior level was firmly rooted in the 3 "R's". However, at junior level there was some attempt to include music and art type lessons. During my last year at Junior School, I developed appendicitis just as we were practicing for the 11+ tests and underwent an emergency operation at All Saints Hospital in Bromsgrove.

The result was I failed the exam and, along with many of my classmates, was destined for Lodge Farm.

I remember my mother taking me to Heaphy's Mens Clothes shop to be fitted for my school uniform, during the summer holiday.

Suitably kitted out I boarded the bus at the bus station at the beginning of September 1957 and duly arrived outside Lodge Farm School. When the school bell rang we were all assigned our classes and teachers and filed into the school.

I was in Miss Parr's class. It was during my first year I was introduced to science, which became a lifelong interest and subsequently my early career. At the end of the year, I was told I had achieved first in class and would be invited to receive a prize book on speech day.

In September 1958 I moved up into Miss Greave's class, whose reputation as a very strict teacher cause me some apprehension.



**Above: No 12 Wellington Street 1970  
Photograph from Wayne Harris**

## Growing up in Redditch - Part 1 ... continued

However, if you worked hard and persevered, she seemed a fair and reasonable person.

It was during this year I began to receive my Science teaching from Mr. Holden and really enjoyed this subject. Also, classes tended to move to appropriate rooms in the school for different subjects and the workload gradually increased.

Once more I managed to achieve second in class with the resulting prize book.

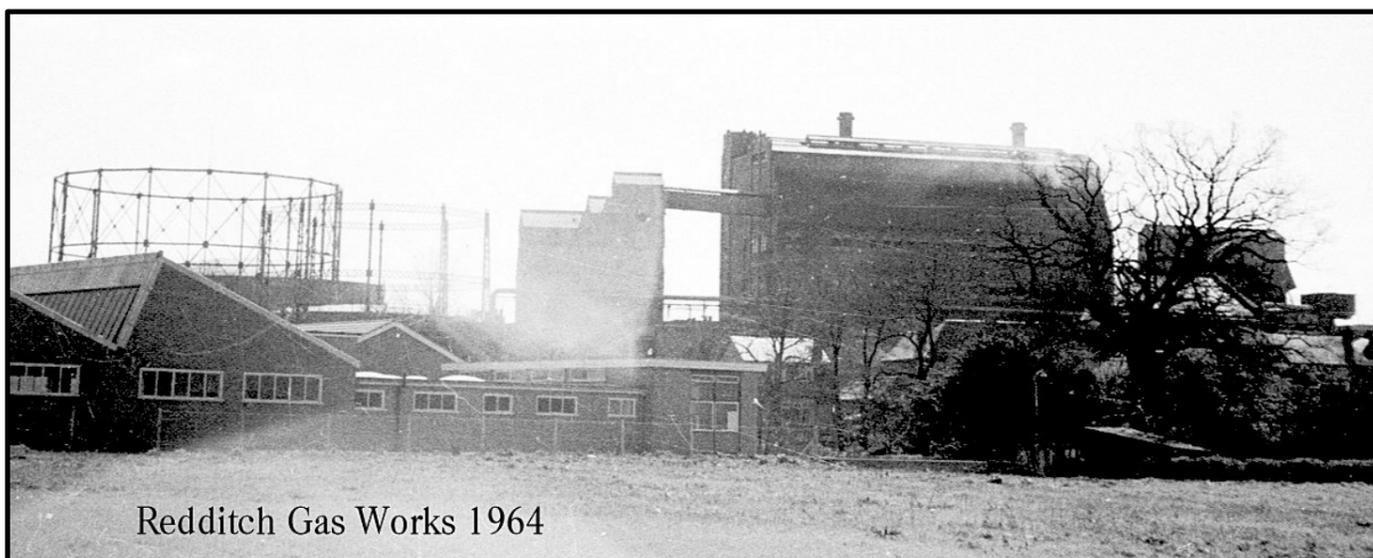
The year 1959/60 was an important year for me as I found added interest in English Literature and Language as well as becoming fascinated by Chemistry.

The result was I achieved first in class, first in English and first in science.

These results lead to a visit to the Head Teacher's office, where I was told I would be placed in the GCE class for my remaining two years at school.

**Right:**

**Redditch Gas  
Works 1964  
Photograph from  
Wayne Harris**



Redditch Gas Works 1964

My interest in science (especially Chemistry) was encouraged by Mr. Holden

As a result, I was allowed to take the GCE Exam for Physics with Chemistry which was a first for the school. All GCE students had to take "O" Level English Language and Literature. During my final year at Lodge Farm, I had to study the GCE Physics with Chemistry Syllabus virtually unaided whilst sitting in the Science Prep room. Mr. Holden would then test me at various times during the year.

My class all took their "O" Levels during June 1962 and by this time we were really only spending a few class based lessons per week. The rest of the time was taken up with small study groups around the school.

My last speech day at the school was memorable because Mr. Jarvis, the Head Teacher, was retiring and all my friends in 5A would be leaving too.

It was really the end of my State School period of education and the beginning of my life in the world of work.

By the end of the Summer Term 1962 I had been offered a job as a laboratory assistant at Redditch Gas Works, provisional on my passing my GCE "O" Level Physics with Chemistry. When the results letter came I had passed that as well as English Language and Literature, too. Consequently, I left Lodge Farm on a Thursday and started at the Gas Works on the following Monday.

**NOTE: The second part of this article will appear in the August edition of the Newsletter**

# James Hart - Head Gardener at the Southcrest Estate

I received this fascinating e-mail from Jane Wareing concerning her grandfather, James Hart, who was head gardener at the Southcrest Estate from the late 1920s. She sent me digital copies of the photographs which I thought were so interesting that I have reproduced them all here. The titles I have used are those given by Jane. I do not like to give personal e-mails in distributed documents such as this, so, if anyone wishes to contact Jane, please contact me and I can pass on her e-mail.

*'My sister and I have been writing up our family history.*

*My grandfather, James Hart worked for the Terry family at Southcrest. He was the Head Gardener and my Dad and his sister grew up there. They lived in the Gardeners house, which had lovely views down the terraced garden. We can remember it well when we visited as children.*

*We have family snaps of the gardens and the gardeners house, and I just wondered if they were of any interest to your society. After my parents deaths it is quite difficult to decide what to get rid of and I saw your web page and it made me think that they may be of interest.*

*We thought that the gardens were amazing when we were little, seeing all the espalier fruit trees, walking down to the boating lake, going through the grape houses and into the orchid glasshouse. We thought that everybody's Grandad lived somewhere like that!*

*If there is anyone in the society that has a particular interest in the Terry family that might be useful background information for us and equally if we have any information or photos that might be of use to you, please let me know.*

*My father went into the police force and joined Northamptonshire constabulary, so our family are all living down here.'*



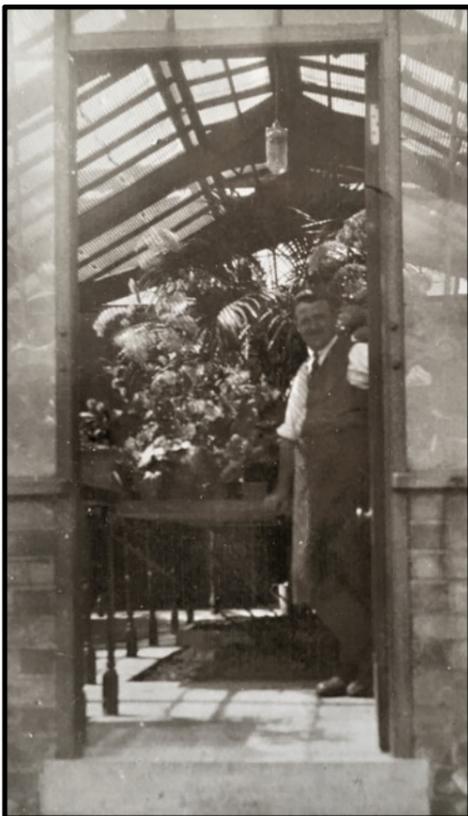
**Left: House and Rock Garden**



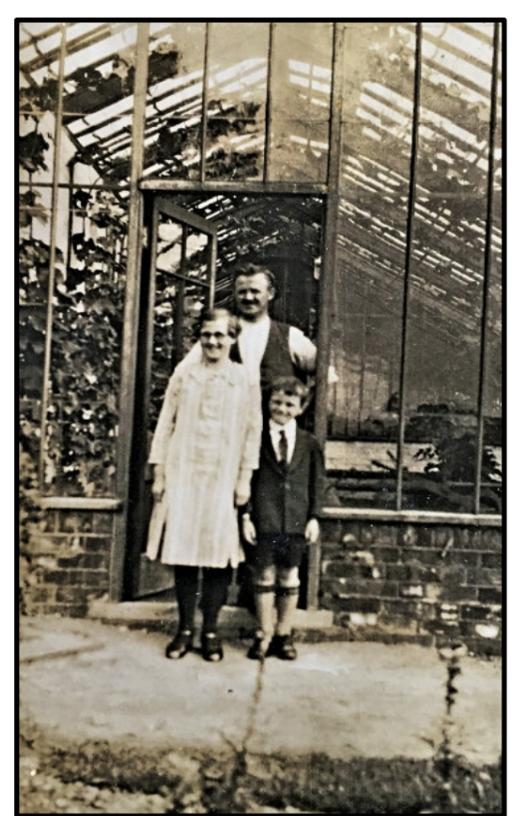
**Right: Boathouse**

**Below top: Grape House**

**Below bottom: Jim outside greenhouse**



**Above:  
Jim in Orchid House**



**Above:  
J W M Glasshouse**

# James Hart ..... continued



*Above Left: Fountain Top Row  
Below Left: Gardens at Southcrest*



*Middle: Rose Arches  
Middle: Pathways*



*Right: Avenue to bench  
Right: path down to wood*



*Left: Gardener's house*



*Right: Grandparents watering cans*



*Above: Jim and cup*



*Above: Redditch flower show*