

NEWSLETTER

October 2021 Volume 3 / Issue 7



October 2021 - Annual General Meeting

Hi All,

It was really exciting to have a 'live' Annual General Meeting' (AGM) and to enable members to be directly involved in the organisation and future of the Society.

We had 29 people at the AGM which was 27 members and 2 visitors. We have 3 apologies from members who would otherwise have been there.

One member rejoined at the meeting and we had another new member, no longer resident in the area but who wished to support the society, who joined during the month. This brings our current membership to 47.

This is a brilliant result as we have heard so much concerning local societies throughout the UK which have closed down due to the pandemic.

The elections were followed by a 40min film 'A Journey Down the River Arrow' which was produced by Heritage Films in 1995 who, sadly, no longer appear to exist. The film was very much enjoyed by the audience and we will try to find something similar for next year's AGM in April.

We followed the film with refreshments in the adjoining room. This was a bit of an experiment as we were not sure how many people would be interested. In the event there were about 20 people decided to 'give it a go' which the room was easily able to accommodate without overcrowding.

We will continue this for future meetings for those who are interested.

In this newsletter we have...

On page 2 is the 'Coming Events' section.

- Next month's presentation is a talk on Monday 8th November entitled Redditch Between the Wars and is given by Society member Sue Tatlow.
- A meeting at Astwood Bank 'A History in 100 Pictures' by Dr Richard Churchley on the 22nd October.
- Gives an overview of our programme for 2022 which will be available at our next meeting.

Page 3, 4, 5 and 6 has the report of the Annual General meeting.

- Pages 3 and 4 are the officers reports
- Page 5 has a copy of the accounts.
- Page 6 has the results of the elections.

Pages 7 and 8 is an article by our Chairman, Don Vincent, giving a personal view on history research, based on his wide experience.

Next Meeting...

The talk on Monday 8th November is entitled Redditch Between the Wars and is given by Society member Sue Tatlow.

The meeting will be, as always at the Oasis Christian Centre starting at 2.00 pm.

Take care and stay safe

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

E-mail: anthony.green@rhs2020.org.uk Tel: 01527 61434



Produced by Anthony Green - Secretary - Redditch History Society - e-mail anthony.green@rhs2020.org.uk

Redditch History Society <http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/>

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Coming up.....

Next Meeting - Redditch Between the Wars - Sue Tatlow

The talk on Monday 8th November is entitled Redditch Between the Wars and is given by Society member Sue Tatlow.

Sue was a former Museum Assistant at Forge Mill Needle Museum & Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre and studied at Birmingham University, UK.

She has a particular interest in Redditch history and has carried out much research into the area.

Sue will be giving a talk on how Redditch changed between the First and Second World Wars.

It is quite difficult today to envisage the major changes which occurred during this period.

The 'war to end wars' effectively ended in June 1919 with the Treaty of Versailles and the second world war began only 20 years later on the September 1939, when Nazi Germany, under Adolf Hitler, invaded Poland.

So we had only a few years to grieve before we had to prepare for war. Sue covers the period between these significant world events.

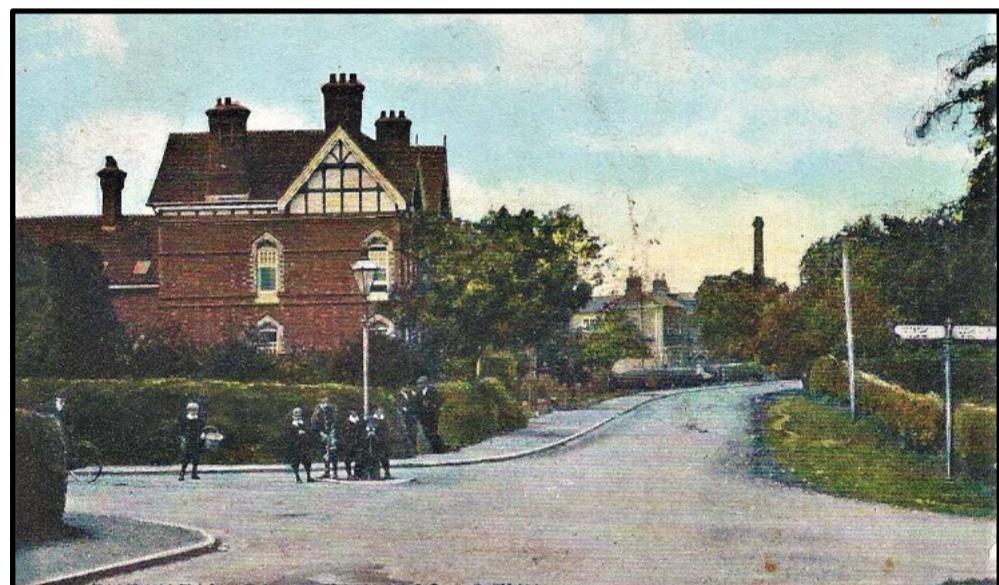
Astwood Bank Meeting A History in 100 Pictures – Dr Richard Churchley

On Friday 22 October 7.30pm at Ridgeway School, Astwood Bank there is an illustrated talk by Dr Richard Churchley. Entitled "a History in 100 Pictures"

Admission: £3. Refreshments available. Proceeds to Astwood Bank Carnival/Community Group.

Exhibition of local information and Local history books are on sale.

Richard's talks are always well researched and well worth attending.



Programme for 2022

We are creating the Redditch History Society leaflet for 2022.

This will have an overview of the Society on the front page with details of our aims, where we meet and contact details.

On the reverse we have the list of our 2022 meetings, dates and times.

Our 2022 programme is now established and we will be having 5 meetings of talks by History Society members, five talks by external speakers and our Annual General Meeting with a local history film.

We will be promoting our 2022 programme with printed copies to members at the next meeting before making it generally available.

We are pleased to have a wide range of history talks covering Redditch, the West Midlands and general history of interest.

This will be available at the November and December meetings, when we will then make it available generally and as a download from our website.

Redditch History Society **Promoting the history of the area since 2009**

The Redditch History Society is a local community group which aims to provide a range of monthly history presentations, both local and more general, to promote the history of our town, both within the area and more widely, and to encourage members to investigate, document and promote the history of Redditch and the surrounding area.

We have eleven Monthly Meetings throughout the year from February to December. Nine of the meetings have the same format with a speaker for the first hour followed by tea/coffee and biscuits (a small charge applies). The April meeting is our Annual General Meeting and the December meeting is a Christmas social.

We meet at the Oasis Christian Centre in Plymouth Road on the second Monday of the month. Meetings begin at 2.00 pm. Membership costs £15 per year, which includes entry to all meetings. Non members are welcome to attend our meetings and a charge of £3 is made. This is refundable against the membership fee if joining at the meeting.

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The newsletter has updates, a meeting report, including the presentation, activities, news, information on the next meeting, and short articles written by members and supporters. We will continue to produce an eight page edition as long as we have sufficient material.

The society also supports and encourages members to:

- Create presentations/talks concerning their interests and we are very pleased for members to give their talks at our meetings.
- Produce articles/books on local history and we are able to publish short articles in our Newsletter.
- Carry out research into our local and regional history.

Of course, we are happy to have members who simply wish to attend our monthly talks. This is the majority of our members and we are grateful for their support.

For further details of the Redditch History Society visit: www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk
E-mail: contact@redditchhistorysociety.org.uk
or telephone the secretary at 01527 61434

Annual General Meeting Report

Executive Reports

Chairman's Report

It is a pleasure to be presenting this report because our society have come through a torrid eighteen months.

With regards to your society the fact we are having this meeting is due mainly to the Stirling efforts of your hon. Secretary. In itself producing a monthly newsletter is no small task. Not only that but next years programme is formulated.

I would also like to thank your hon. Treasurer for looking after our finances. The rest of the committee have also contributed to our survival.

One of that committee, Peter Harris, has decided not to stand for re-election due to his workload at the newly formed local history museum. I am sure you would all like to thank Pete for his valiant efforts over the years.

However, in thanking the committee I have not forgotten to thank you the members for hanging on to your society, for returning when restrictions were lifted and having faith in its officers.

Whilst the committee might produce the framework for the society it is the members that make that a society.

Thank you
Don Vincent

Secretary's Report

In 2020 we had two meetings, February and March, and 'bang' everything came to a halt.

Something which kept the Society, and to be honest, me, active during the worst of the pandemic was the Newsletter, and it is interesting to look back at our thinking as time progressed.

In April 2020 we rearranged our programme to restart in June 2020 with the AGM but thought that it might not be until the autumn. It was still two pages.

Since we did not have any clarity as to what was happening, I did not produce another Newsletter until early July, the Summer 2020 edition, when the committee decided that we would restart in April 2021 with the AGM. It was still a simple 2-page newsletter.

In August we produced a late summer newsletter. This has reports from the three officers, information from Derek on his plans for the Society and other archives. This had now grown to six pages.

In September, the executive decided that it was necessary to have an AGM as, not only our constitution required an annual AGM with election of officers etc, but we needed to have agreement from our members for the transfer of our archives to the newly created Redditch Local History Museum.

Since we would no longer be collecting local archives, we needed agreement to simplify our name to the Redditch History Society. These two items meant a change to our constitution and publicity.

This took the form of an online Proxy survey, similar to those which are used by organisations such as Building Societies, Charities and Professional Bodies, where members are unable to attend the AGM.

Members who were not on internet were supplied with a postal vote.

We had twenty-nine members who voted, which was about 50% of our membership and fairly typical of a physical AGM.

The result was an overwhelming 'Approve' for all resolutions and the necessary measures were then acted on.

The November Newsletter contained the results, executive reports and all other items related to an AGM. This was our first 8-page Newsletter.

Continued on page 4

Annual General Meeting Report

Secretary's Report.... continued

This was followed by our Christmas newsletter in December which was a 'bumper' edition of sixteen pages.

Following on into this year, in January we had a 4-page Newsletter, and at this stage we had no idea when we would recommence meetings.

This was followed every month in 2021 with an 8-page edition, which is now the 'norm' if I have sufficient input.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Newsletter, which is not only members but supporters both in the UK and overseas.

Also, thanks to all those who have sent appreciative comments.

Just to finish, our Facebook page has gone from 1103 followers in 2019 to 1663 today, which is a 50% increase, and our website has shown a 5% increase in visitors per month to just over 700.

A big thank you to everyone for supporting the Society. Without members and visitors we could not exist.

Anthony Green

Treasurer's Report

The Society's income was quite small in 2020 as no subscriptions were collected.

We were able to hold the first two meetings of 2020 before we went into lockdown. This gave us the only income of the year – just £97.00 (visitors and refreshments).

At least we were able to complete the 2019/20 year as far as meetings were concerned.

We still had payments to make.

We paid the Oasis Centre for six meetings although we had only two (£378).

The Centre have allowed us to carry over the four meetings paid for and this has covered our meetings for August to November this year.

The two meetings held in 2020 were by speakers who were paid (£95).

Dave Spyer has continued to keep a record of weekly events from the Standard and Advertiser for which we are grateful.

New books each year cost £19. Secretaries expenses were £79.74 and our subscriptions to WLHF and the British Association for Local History came to £85.

Our total expenditure was £656.74 meaning we had a deficit of £559.74.

The end of year bank balance was £798.47 and with £38.56 in petty cash this means total Society assets were £837.03.

I wish to thank Gil Barlow for examining our accounts and doing such a fine job.

Graham Smith
10th October 2021

A copy of the Income and Expenditure Accounts to December 2020 is given on page 5. This is a pre-signature copy but the signed copy was shown to the meeting.

Annual General Meeting Report

Income and Expenditure to December 2020

REDDITCH HISTORY SOCIETY
Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended 31st December 2020

2019 £	INCOME	2020 £	2019 £	EXPENDITURE	2020 £
855.00	Full Membership @ £15.00	-	660.00	Room hire (February to July) April to July not used.	378.00
67.50	Half Membership @ £7.50	-			
201.00	Visitors to meetings (25):	75.00	40.00	Payment to Speakers	95.00
95.00	Refreshments	22.00	18.60	Refreshments cups	-
52.50	Christmas Raffle	-	18.21	2 Sketchbooks for cuttings	19.00
			30.84	Meeting flyers (for 2020)	-
			47.48	Printing & distribution on <i>Heritage Matters</i>	-
			47.28	Secretary's Expenses	79.74
			165.67	Costs of Forge Mill Exhibition	-
			11.90	Christmas Social Refreshments	-
			100.00	Donation to Acts of Kindness	-
				<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS:</u>	
			10.00	WLHF	10.00
			75.00	British Association for Local History	75.00
					(656.74)
			+46.02	DEFICIT/ surplus of income over Expenditure	-559.74
1271.00		97.00	1271.00		97.00

2019 £	Balance Sheet as at 31 st December	2020 £		
1321.19	Bank at 1 st January	1358.21	I have examined the Account Book, receipts, bank statements and vouchers presented to me by the Treasurer.	
46.02	DEFICIT/Surplus end of year	559.74	I confirm that in my opinion these accounts show a true and fair view of the income and expenditure of the Society for the year ended 31 December 2019.	
1358.21	Balance c/fwd at 31 st December	798.47		
	Represented by:			
1358.21	Bank Account at 31 st Dec.	798.47
36.31	Plus Petty Cash	38.56	Date
1394.52	TOTAL SOCIETY FUNDS	837.03	Accounts Examiner	

Annual General Meeting Report

Election Results

Election of Officers:

Executive Posts

Chairman - Don Vincent was re-elected unopposed.

Secretary - Anthony Green re-elected unopposed

Treasurer - Graham Smith re-elected unopposed

Non-executive posts:

Newsletter Editor - Anthony Green re-elected unopposed.

Speaker Organiser – Anthony Green re-elected unopposed.

Website Administrator/Social Media - Anthony Green re-elected unopposed.

Management Committee

The Management Committee consists of the 3 executive members, Chairman Don Vincent, Secretary Tony Green and Treasurer Graham Smith and non-executive members. The current member representatives. Elizabeth Simpson and David Spyer were re-elected unopposed. However, Pete Harris, due to his commitments to the RLHM, felt that he could not give it the attention required and was standing down. However, Sue Tatlow had agreed to join the Management Committee and was duly elected. This brings the Management Committee back to six members.

Accounts Examiner:

Gil Barlow was re-elected unopposed.

Postscript.....

Don Vincent is the Chairman Open University History Society Midland Region and he receives the newsletters from the different regions. This is from the Open University History Society North West Region Newsletter.

Stretford History Society RIP 2021

At the end of September 2021, Stretford History Society announced that it would be closing. Some local history societies were struggling before the pandemic in terms of members and in other ways. For a few the pandemic and the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 were the straws that broke the camel's back. For Stretford History Society it was a perfect storm of events in 2020 and 2021, including the pandemic, that caused its closure. Losing three committee members, including its much-missed chairman Bill Newton, in 2020 and 2021 was one of the causes, along with the ceasing of meetings.

Members are getting older and fewer; suitable venues are becoming scarcer and more expensive; public transport in the evening – even in large conurbations – has been reduced.

Fewer people want to be on the committees that run the local history societies, believing, wrongly, that such committees are a lot of work. They rarely are, just a couple of hours every few months.

We are nowhere near this situation. We have an excellent venue at the Oasis Christian Centre, our membership is recovering after the trials and tribulations of the lockdowns, we have a full programme for next year and all our posts are filled.

However, none of us are getting any younger and so there is always a risk. So, if anyone wishes to put their toe in the water and have a go at anything to do with the organisation of the Society just let me know. No-one is going to be asked to do more than they want to.

Anthony Green



Studying History

By Don Vincent

Since you are reading this piece, I presume you are interested in History.

Whether you, perhaps, follow: -

Thomas Carlyle's view (1795-1881)

No great man lives in vain. the history of the world is but the biography of great men.

Perhaps you follow the view of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835)

Only those who know the past have a future

Or perhaps a quote sometimes attributed to Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

The further back you can look, the further forward you are likely to see.

Or George Santayana's great quote

Those who do not remember the past are destined to repeat it

It does not really matter what is important is being interested in the subject.

How would you view your sources for the subject? Is studying History a matter of poring over dusty tomes?

Perhaps it is visiting museums, purchasing history periodicals, or attending lectures.

What of the television?

No, I do not mean the lightweight comedy shows. Although Baldric's understanding of how WW1 started might not be so far away from the understanding of the infantry in the trenches. (*Blackadder goes forth*, BBC One 1983)

Nor the out and out History based features such as 'The Boleyns' no I mean historical facts that crop up unexpectedly.



Blackadder goes forth - BBC TV

I was watching a repeat episode of the BBC's series 'Who do you think you are?

This particular episode concerns the actor Sir Ian McKellen.

It turned out that McKellen's great- great grandfather Robert Jack Lowes, was a clerk in a Manchester warehouse, sometimes working fifteen hours a day.



Sir Ian McKellen

Lowes through the society of which he was hon. Secretary convinced the warehouse owners to grant their workers a half day's holiday per week, without loss of earnings.

Originally Lowes proposed Friday afternoon.

However, both sides settled on Saturday afternoon.

Manchester at this time was probably the most important industrial city in the world.

Studying History continued

Other manufacturers, some 3-400 'merchant princes' followed suit and so was born the modern weekend. Of interest is that this was in 1843.

The more famous Ten-Hour Act proposed by John Fielden MP was not put on the statute books until 1847. Even then it only limited the daily working hours of women and children in textile mills.

The great beauty of programmes like Who do you think... is that the researchers use to a great extent primary source.

That is sources produced at the time the event happened.

These would include Birth, Marriage, and Death certificates, parish register entries, diaries etc.

It could be said that newspaper reports are primary sources.

However, remember that some newspapers may have a political slant.

Secondary sources are those sources produced after the event, scholarly books, magazine articles, lecture notes etc.

While they might provide an insight, they are produced by a well-educated author(s) not only looking back but also adding their understanding of an event.

Where secondary sources quote statistics they will also quote the source, often a primary source.

It is often a pleasure to watch television programmes from the likes of Bettany Hughes, Professor Alice Roberts or Dr Lucy Wordsley.

However, the last-named penchant for dressing in period garb does sometimes turn it into a bit of a pantomime.

However, historical facts do not have to be confined to serious programmes they can be gleaned from all sorts of programmes.

Just be careful to sort the wheat from the chaff.

Do not be afraid to question those facts.

Ask the questions how does she/he know that?

Is it correct?

Seek more than one opinion.

Happy hunting

Don Vincent.



Newspaper report on death of King George V



Alice Roberts in an episode from
Digging for Britain BBC TV



Bettany Hughes