

Hi All,

Well, I have managed to produce and issue the February newsletter in February! It was a tight call – it is surprising how the time flies

We had our first meeting of the year on February 14th, with a presentation 'Redditch - Mtwara: History in the Making' by David and Jackie Morgan. We also decided to reintroduce the refreshment break, after the presentation.

Sadly, we had an attendance of only twenty-four people, which was both disappointing for the speakers, but also worrying for the Society.

Our current attendance and membership levels means that we are running on reserves, and we need to decide what actions we need to take to resolve this. The Executive Committee will be having a meeting before the Annual General Meeting in April, and we will discuss this problem. There are, of course, the obvious options, more members/visitors, increased fees, fewer meetings etc, but if you have any ideas on the matter please let me know and I will pass them on to the Committee.

#### **On the remaining pages of the Newsletter, we have:**

- Page two has information on the March 14th presentation by Alan Godfrey entitled 'Parcels and Newspapers by Bus: Midland Red Parcels Service', a request for speakers for outside groups and an update on refreshments available at Forge mill Needle Museum Mill View coffee bar.
- Pages three to five is a report on the February presentation 'Redditch - Mtwara: History in the Making' by David and Jackie Morgan.
- Page six has a request from Michael Lippert concerning a walking stick which certainly has an interesting story to be discovered. Michael contacted me 'out of the blue' and I think that the history of the walking stick is fascinating. He grew up in Redditch and he has a story to tell about his early years.
- Pages seven and eight is poem by Paul Wareing on the demise of the town. It is not the most cheerful item I have put in the Newsletter, but it personifies the feeling that many older residents feel about the changing years. This is the first time I have put a poem in the Newsletter, and I have illustrated it with some 'period' photographs. I would like to thank Paul for allowing me to use his work.

#### **Next Meeting...**

Our next meeting is on March 14th, and we have a presentation by Alan Godfrey which is entitled 'Parcels and Newspapers by Bus: Midland Red Parcels Service'.

The meeting will begin at 2.00 pm and will be, as always at the Oasis Christian Centre, Plymouth Road. We have now reintroduced the refreshment break but, obviously, there is no obligation to remain after the presentation.

Although restrictions have now been lifted, we will continue to conduct our meeting with the safety of members and visitors as our main concern. The seating in the Oasis Church will continue to be socially distanced and we encourage attendees to wear face-masks, when moving around, and to use the hand sanitisers.

Please continue to support the Society so that we can continue into future years.

Take care and stay safe

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

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# Coming up.....

March 14<sup>th</sup> a presentation by Alan Godfrey

## Parcels and Newspapers by Bus: Midland Red Parcels Service

In this PowerPoint display Alan examines the development of the express delivery service of the Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Company, known as the Midland "Red".

This aspect of the bus service has been largely overlooked but formed an important part of the business from 1915 until it ceased in 1980.

Letters, parcels and bundles of newspapers were carried by bus and delivered across the midlands, using the network of 500 parcels agents, to be found on most Midland Red bus routes.

Stamps were issued to show payment of the carriage cost and were usually cancelled to prevent re-use.



Large customers could charge deliveries to an account; door to door collection / delivery, and 'cash-on-delivery' were also available.

This was a business where speed was everything and same day delivery usually expected.

Alan is Chairman of Alcester and District Local History Society, gives many local history talks and has a wide knowledge of the history of the area,

## Speaker Requests

As Secretary, I have requests from groups for speakers to give a history talk. In the past I did many of these myself. However, at the moment, I am no longer able to do this.

Currently I have a request from two groups, the Bromsgrove and Redditch NHS Retirement Fellowship and Redditch Home Educators - who have a mixed meeting of adults and children.

If you are able and willing to give talks, please let me know and I will send your contact details on.

## Forge Mill Needle Museum - Mill View Coffee Bar

Starting from 19th February, Mill View coffee bar will be offering two new additions to its snacking menu.

Hot buttered toast, with jam optional, and toasted teacakes.

These options along with toasties, locally made cake, and a full range of coffee, tea and chocolate, will be available while the coffee bar is open Tuesday to Sunday 10am till 3pm.

Entry to the museum grounds and parking is free, so why not enjoy a walk over the meadows and relax in the historic grounds of the Museum.

Entry to Forge Mill Museum is £6.20 for adults/ £2.20 for children, which includes three free return trips during the year.

So you can see four of the exhibitions in the Museum Gallery for just £1.55 per visit.



# February Presentation

## Redditch - Mtwara: History in the Making by David and Jackie Morgan

David and Jackie began the presentation with an overview of their personal interest in Mtwara as a twinned town.

'Jackie and I, as long-term members of the Redditch One World Link/ Friends of Mtwara, are delighted to be able to share with you about the historic town twinning between Mtwara and Redditch.

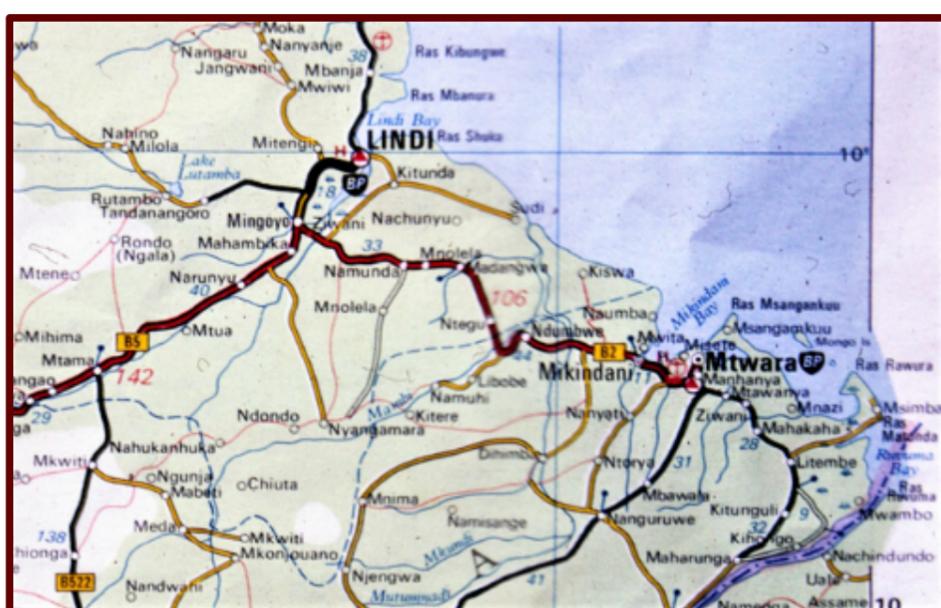
Our own experience of Tanzania goes back to the mid-1960s. Just after our wedding in Cheshire, we flew out on a Comet jet airliner to Dar es Salaam to enable me to take up a teaching post at St Andrews Minaki Secondary School.

The school was situated in the rural Kisarawe hills, 17 miles west of Dar es Salaam.

I was sponsored by the British Ministry of Overseas Development as a chemistry teacher, and Jackie later was offered a local biology teaching contract, until the birth of our first daughter, Leonie, in 1969.

When we returned in 1970 to England and a post in Redditch at the County High School, little did we realise that 20 years later, our links with Tanzania would be re-established!

So we are now going to share with you the story of the Redditch-Mtwara town friendship Twinning.'



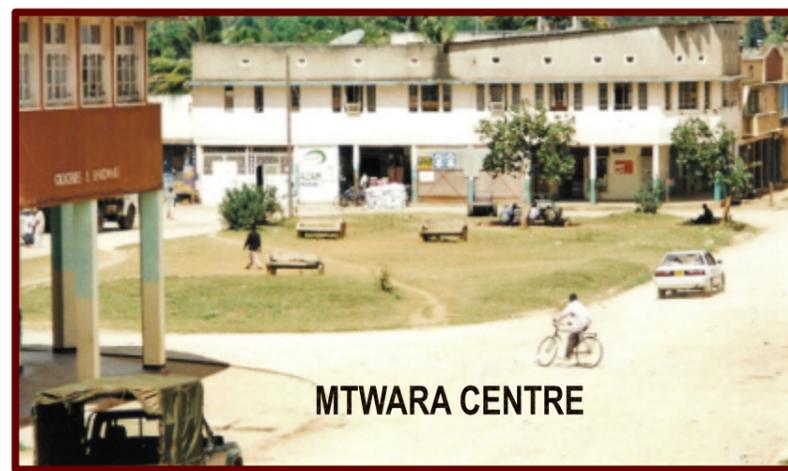
Mtwara (Portuguese: Montewara) is the capital city of Mtwara Region in southeastern Tanzania. In the 1940s, it was planned and constructed as the export facility for the disastrous Tanganyika groundnut scheme, but was somewhat neglected when the scheme was abandoned in 1951.

The city is spread out over a large area planned to accommodate up to 200,000 people. The present population is around 108,000.

As part of the development associated with the failed Tanganyika groundnut scheme, Mtwara features a deep-water port that can accommodate ocean-going vessels, and a range of large municipal buildings, including a post office.

Recent improvements in the port made it possible for big container ships to berth there.

(Note: from Wikipedia)



# Redditch - Mtwara: History in the Making Cont.....

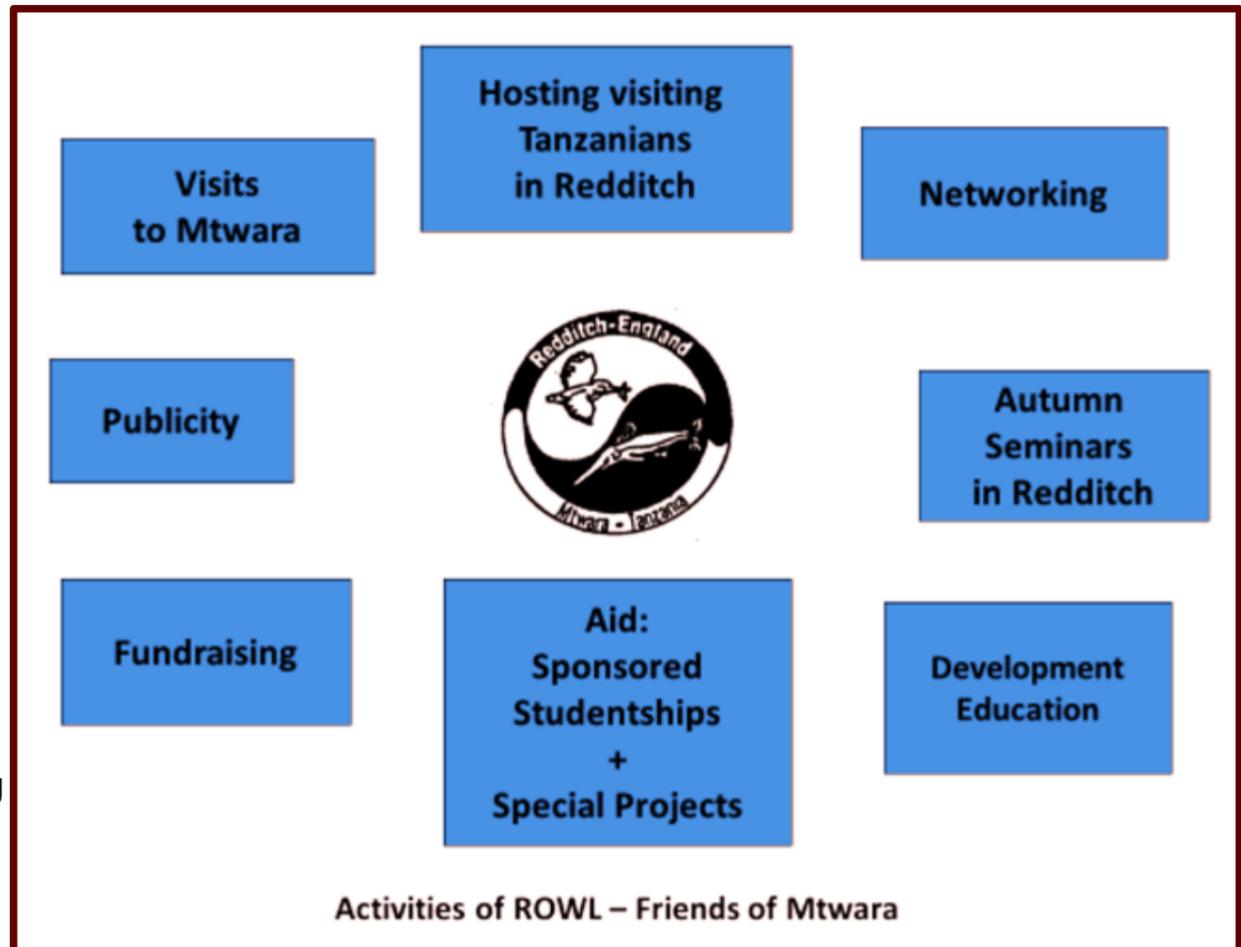
Redditch One World Link was officially recognised in 1985. Mtwara, in Tanzania, a 'new town' of similar size to Redditch, was identified as a suitable twin in a developing country. The first visit was made in 1987 by the Mayor of Redditch, Cllr Ron Passingham and his wife Betty, chair of ROWL.

With the two towns working together, the link has continued to thrive and grow with the help of:- The Councils, Community groups, Schools, Faith groups and Individuals

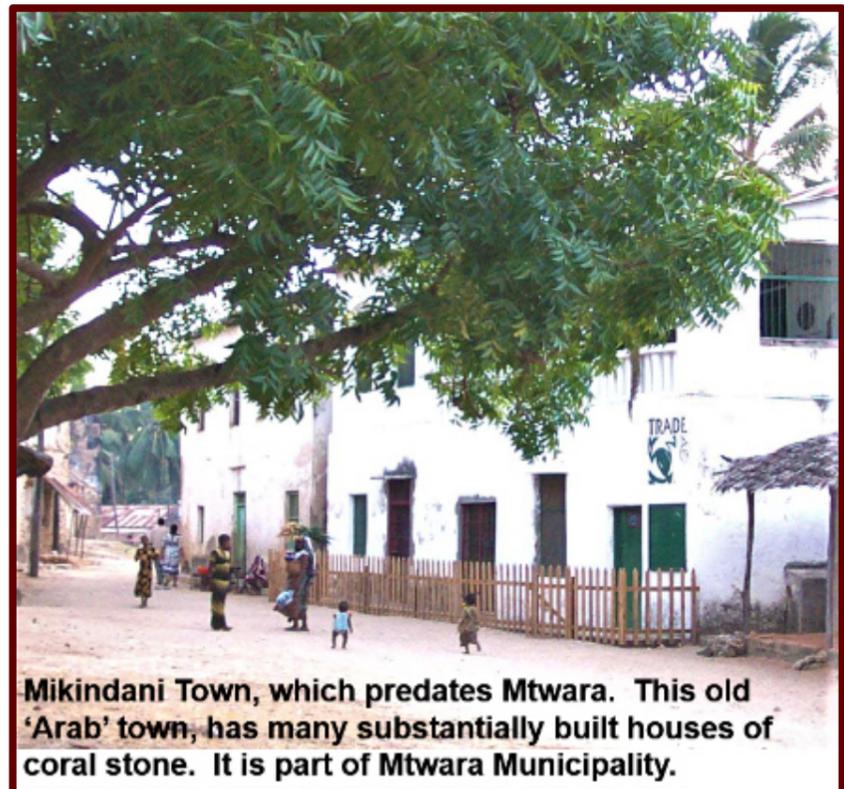
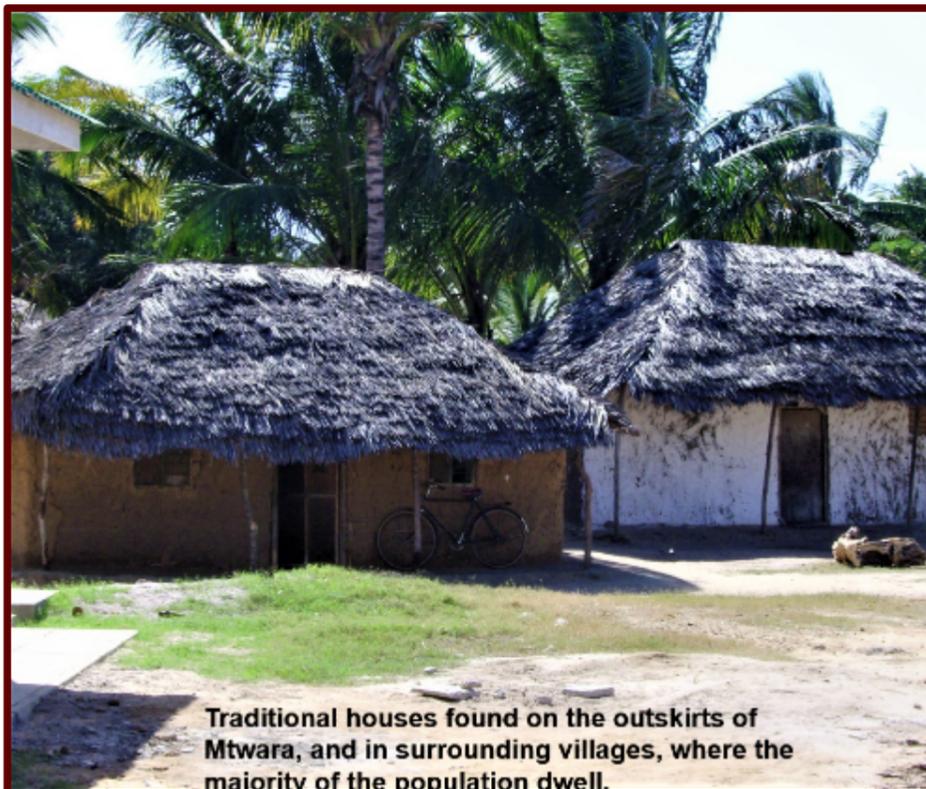
ROWL committee works closely with the partner committee of Mtwara One World Link. Sharing of responsibilities is encouraged.

Projects include:-

- Student sponsorship scheme to help with the secondary school fees of needy pupils.
- Exchange visits involving teachers, pupils, religious leaders, councillors and the general public.
- Partnerships between schools and faith groups.
- Supplying items via containers – fire engine, ambulance, medical equipment, school & library books, lab equipment, garden & carpentry tools, sewing machines & typewriters.
- Facilitating the funding for school buildings and a water pipe.



David and Jackie presented a wide range of photographs showing their experience over the years with the project and so, I cannot do better than complete this short summary of an extensive presentation with some of their images.



# Redditch - Mtwara: History in the Making Cont.....

Visiting Mtwara 1994



Crossing the Rufiji river



The busy market where locals can sell and buy their produce.

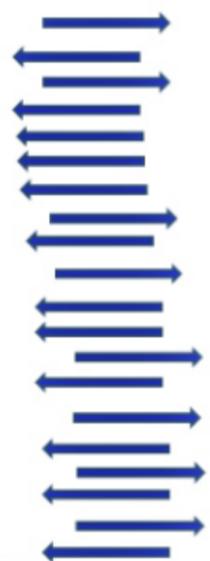
Sponsored pupils at Mangamba Secondary School, 2015



Party of 8 being welcomed in Mtwara Town Hall, 2011

## Visits between Redditch & Mtwara

- 1987 Cllrs Ron (Mayor) & Betty Passingham
- 1988 Mr Adu Mkomambo
- 1991 Mr David & Mrs Jackie Morgan
- 1992 Mr Richard Mgoloka (Chief Planning Officer)
- 1992-3 Rev Stephen Mkomi
- 1993 Mrs Getrude Mpaka
- 1992&3 Dr Shemshad Sejan
- 1994 Party of 18 to Mtwara
- 1995 Exchange visit, 4 Teachers to Redditch
- 1996 School exchange visit (party of 11) to Mtwara
- 1997 Return school exchange of 7 to Redditch
- 1998 Ms Noorjehan Sejan
- 2000 Exchange party of 17 to Mtwara
- 2001 Return exchange party of 5 to Redditch
- 2005 Exchange party of 11 to Mtwara
- 2007 Return exchange of 3 to Redditch
- 2011 Exchange party of 8 to Mtwara
- 2013 Return exchange of 3 to Redditch
- 2015 Exchange visit of 7 to Mtwara
- 2018 Return visit of 4 to Redditch



Next visit to Mtwara now delayed due to the covid pandemic

## A Walking Stick with a story to be discovered.

I offer the following article to the society in the hope that it will be of interest to someone in Redditch.

About fifty years ago my brother, Roger Lippett, was on leave from the Royal Navy and visiting our mother who lived in Rowan Crescent, Batchley Estate, Redditch.

Whilst there he was walking on the field at the top of the crescent and came across a bonfire being prepared for bonfire night.

He noticed that in amongst the wood and branches was a nice looking small walking stick.

Thinking it to good to burn he removed it and noticed it was crafted from an unusual wood and possibly bone.

It was also engraved with the following words :-  
W.Tryhorn. St. Helena, 1903.

I understand that St Helena in the Atlantic Ocean was, in 1903, an island that was used by the British army as a base for holding prisoners of the Boer war.

There being up to 6000 prisoners there at one time.

It is our assumption that this walking stick was carved by one of the prisoners at that time.

The thing of interest in this story is, how on earth did it get from St Helena in the Pacific Ocean to Rowen crescent in Redditch sixty plus years later.

If this is of interest to the society or there is someone who has a genuine connection to the said walking stick my brother ( who lives in Plymouth) is happy to donate it to them/ or the Society.

I attach a couple of photos to give a better idea of what it looks like.

Michael Lippett

*If you have any information concerning this walking stick please contact me and I will pass it on to Michael.*



# It is over, - that is all. A poem by Paul Wareing

The Bindery and Printers

In a little red brick town,  
Where there was a thousand trades,  
So industrious with blades,

Where machines went up and down.  
And the boys with grease and pain,  
With the girls with dexterous hands,  
Saws of spinning discs and bands,

Paper cut in reams against the grain.  
Old men cursed to get a wage,  
Young men swore to get ahead,  
Most are long since gone and dead,

A long gone forgotten age.  
I was factory fodder from my school,  
In that town of needles made,  
And the fishing tackle trade,

Just another working mule.  
Apprenticed by my Dad,  
To the printer in the town,  
So many chemicals to drown,

I was then a poor young lad.  
Oh the noises they were loud,  
With the presses back and forth,  
From the South up to the North,



## It is over, - that is all. Cont...

Men were sweating, they were proud.

Many fought and came back home,  
To jobs in the local firm,  
After being soldiers for a term,

Their children greasers with a comb.

Then computers took the jobs,  
First with magnetic tape to tape,  
Then the desktop keyboard shape,

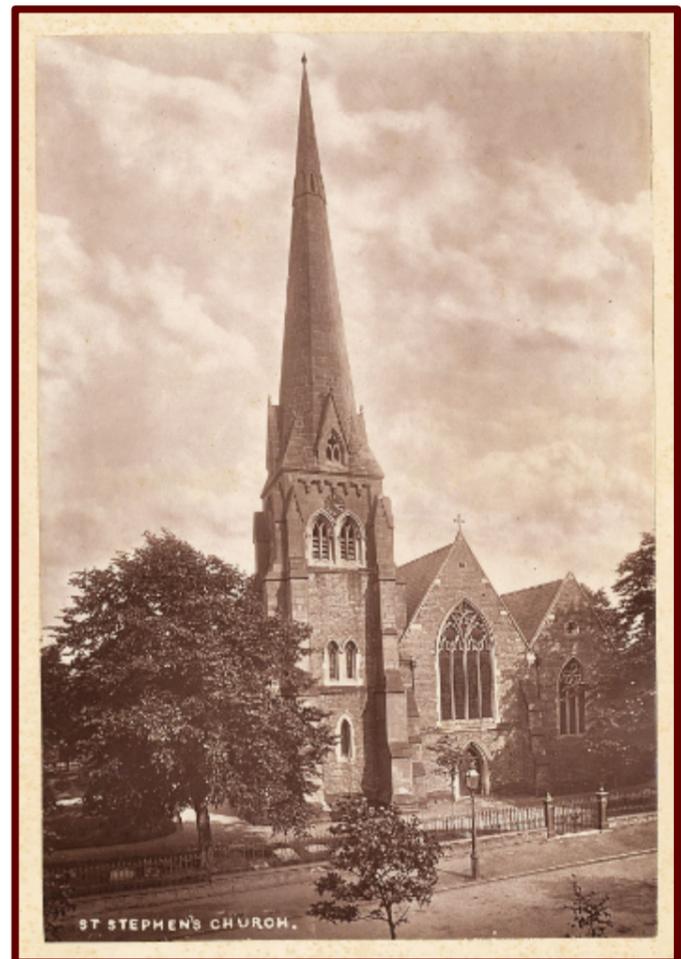
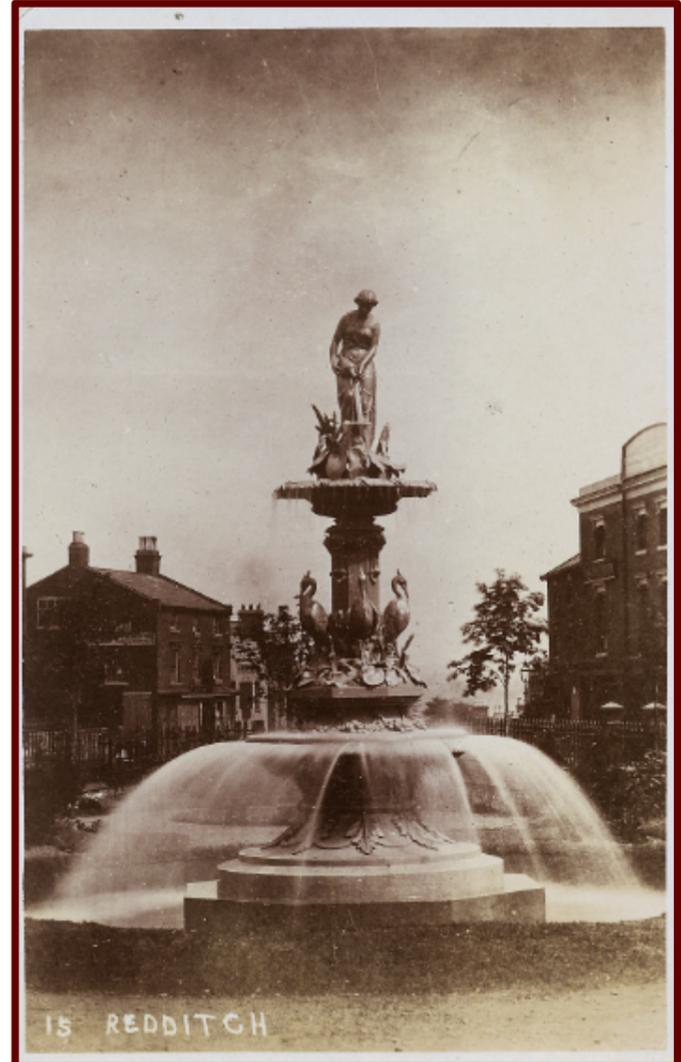
With those YTS young jobs.

It is over, some survive,  
I'm not far from 'New' old town,  
When I think of it I frown,

Even though I'm still alive.  
In the graveyard Fred now rests,  
Maurice gone in ashes now,  
Arthur dead, he knew just how,

Life was full of empty tests.  
We were Great, now England's small,  
And our industry most gone,  
That our life was built upon,

It is over, - that is all.



*This is a poem by Paul Wareing. It is his original work and he has copyright over it. He gave me permission to use it in our Newsletter.*

*He publishes his poems on Facebook and they can change over time which is the advantage of publishing in this way as it means he can edit, improve and change as he sees fit.*

*I have added some old images of the town but they are not linked to the text of the poem.*