



January 2023 New Year Newsletter

Happy New Year and welcome to our first Newsletter of the New Year.

When we began 2022, it was with some trepidation. The 'pandemic' had been so worrying for everyone and we were not sure that we would be able to survive. The Committee continued to keep in close contact and I continued to maintain a regular Newsletter to existing contacts.

We had, of course, during the pandemic, the separation of the Society into two groups, the Redditch History Society, based on monthly history meetings, and the Redditch Local History Museum based on the archives of the Society. I am pleased to say that both groups are active and surviving.

In 2022, after the pandemic was easing, we began our first complete season of speakers since 2019. It was with some concern that we looked at membership and visitor numbers. We should not have worried! Our membership has increased to over the 50 we were hoping for, attendance at meetings has increased to over 40 and we have an active Committee. So, I am happy to say that the Society now appears to be on a stable footing.

On **page 2** There are forthcoming events including our first meeting in 2023. This is on Monday 13th February 2023 and the presentation will be 'Wayside Wonders and Country Curiosities – local items of historic interest which people overlook' by Dr. Richard Churchley.

Pages 3 and 4 I have completed the picture postcards produced by Hodges of Redditch showing Redditch 100 years ago. This was a simpler age and shows Redditch as it used to be.

On **page 5, 6, 7 and 8** I have produced a timeline of Redditch 80 years ago, 1943, the year I was born! To produce this history timeline, I used information I produced for an exhibition the History Society produced in 2021 at Forge Mill Needle Museum on WW2. I give a little more information on how it was produced in the text, The result is very interesting and gives an overview of a different age and attitude.

This Newsletter was produced entirely from my own archives and memories. I would love to add yours! Please feel free to contact me.

Take care, stay safe and have a Happy New Year.

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Coming up

Next Meeting

We do not have a January meeting and our first meeting of the year will be on:

Monday 13th February 2023

and the presentation will be 'Wayside Wonders and Country Curiosities – local items of historic interest which people overlook' by Dr. Richard Churchley.

Richard is an excellent local speaker, and this is a good start for our 2023 programme.

The meeting will be in the 'Reeves Room', our new location in the Oasis Christian Centre, Plymouth Road. This is where we have always had our refreshments.

Richard has requested that I should let members know about the talks at the Feckenham Forest History Society, and so below you will find a programme of events. For more details about venue, charges etc., please visit their website: <http://feckenham-forest-history-society.org.uk/home.html>

2023		
Tuesday 10 January Webheath	Alan Godfrey	Kinwarton - A Tin-Pot Village <i>Illustrated Talk</i>
Tuesday 14 February Feckenham	Julian Davey	History of the Seymours of Ragley Hall <i>Illustrated Talk</i>
Tuesday 14 March Webheath	Julian Hunt	Bromsgrove, the Story of a Market Town <i>Illustrated Talk</i>
Tuesday 11 April Feckenham	Chris Jackson	Granny Lock's to the Royal Oak <i>Illustrated Talk of old Redditch</i>
Tuesday 9 May Webheath	Antony Rich	The Battles of Evesham and the Siege of Kenilworth <i>Illustrated Talk</i>
Tuesday 13 June Feckenham	Howard Robinson	Great Witley Church <i>Illustrated Talk</i>

Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre

The Museum fully reopens for the spring season which runs from the 1st February to the 28th February. The MUSEUM, SHOP, VISITOR CENTRE, GROUNDS and COFFEE BAR will all be open Monday to Sunday: 10.00am to 3.00pm.

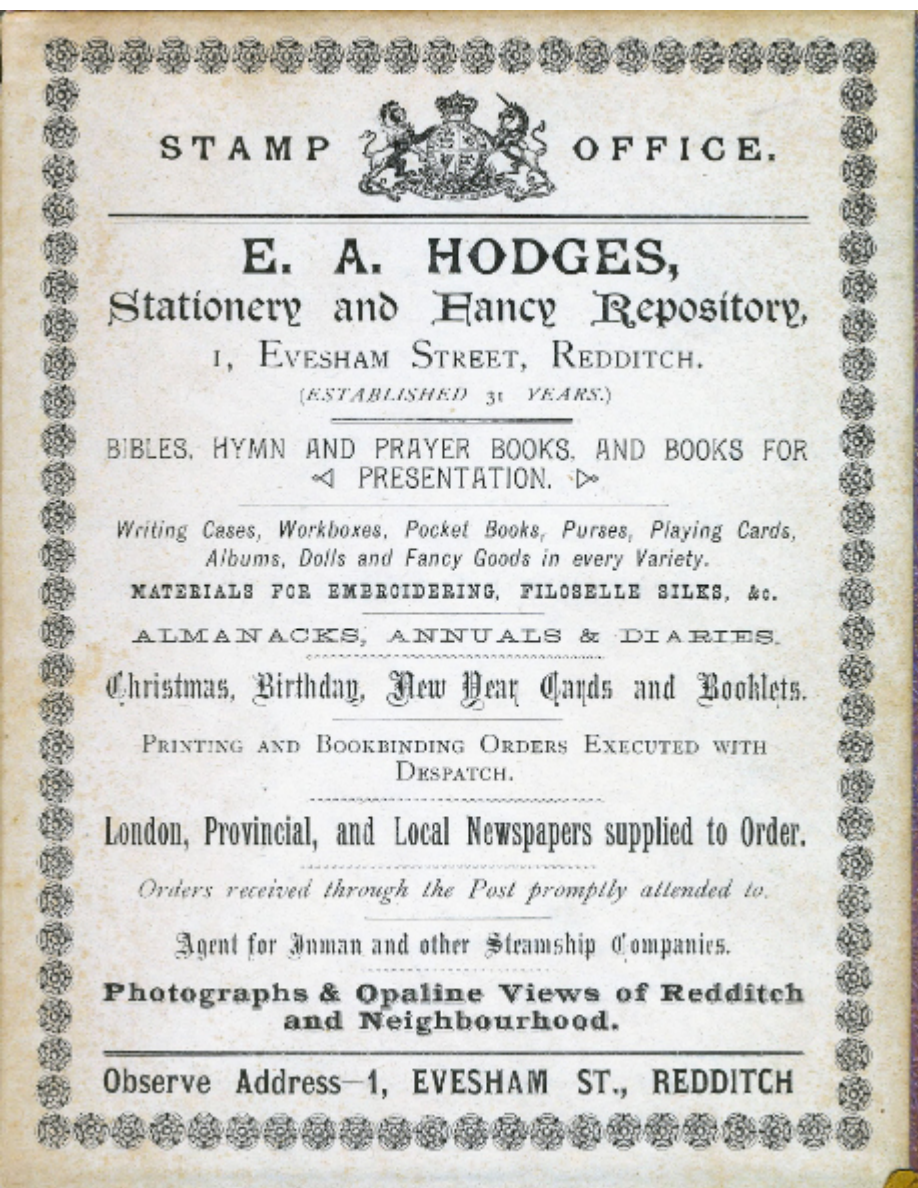
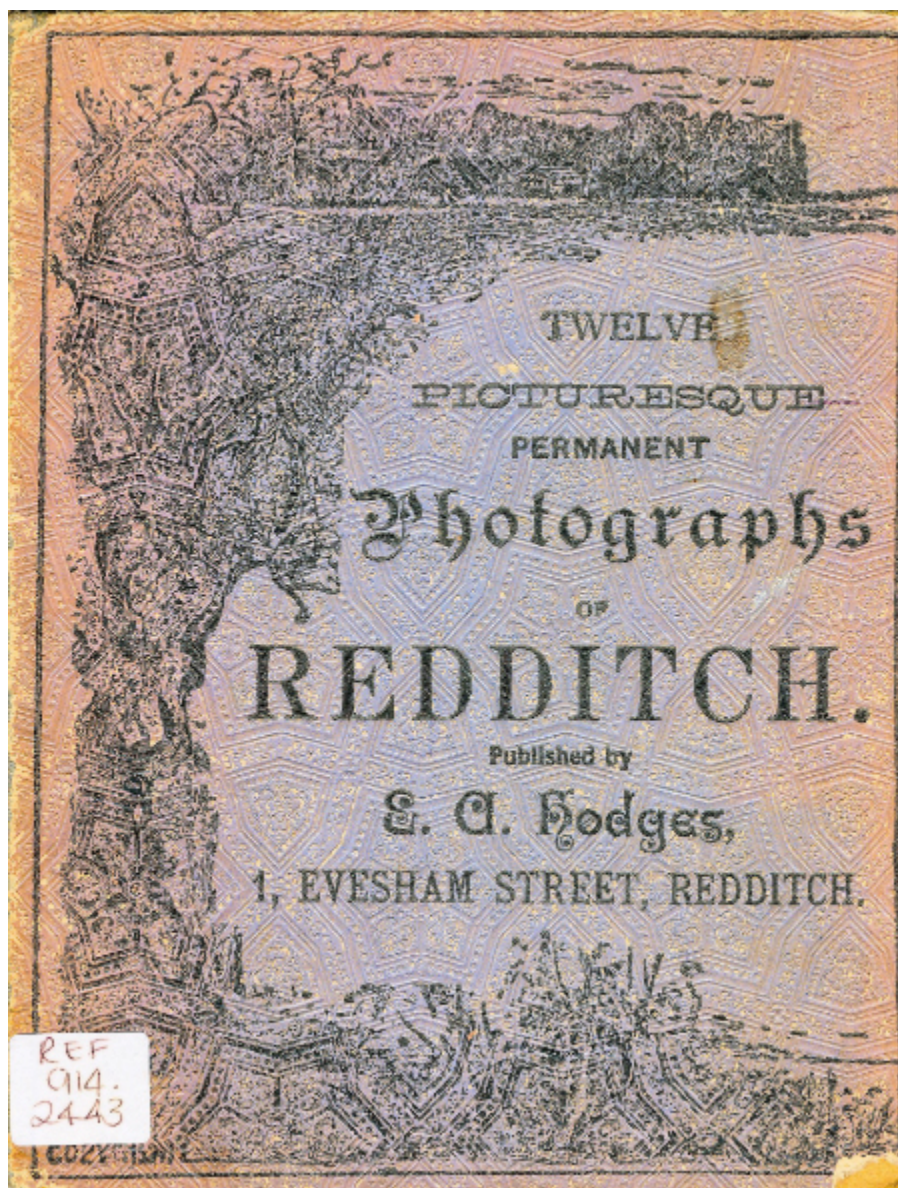
The range of exhibitions and events for this year has not yet been published but I do know that Jo-Ann is curating an exhibition in the Museum Gallery on the fishing tackle industry in Redditch.

I have had a preview of what is being presented and there is an amazing range of rods, reels, floats, flies to see as well as many rarely seen documents and pictures.

This is a great opportunity of viewing this amazing Redditch industry.

As soon as the exhibition is complete, I will do a photo-montage on my Friends of Forge Mill Facebook page.

Further details of the activities at Forge Mill can be found at <https://www.forgemill.org.uk/web/>



Hodges was located on the corner of the town centre crossroads where Three Cooks Cafe is based. They sold a wide range of stationary and related items.

Hodges was one of a number of Redditch firms which produced postcards of the town at the height of the use of picture postcards for sending short messages.

Their cards were of good quality.

These postcards were produced at least 100 years ago, but it is amazing how little the town had changed from when I grew up in the 1950s.

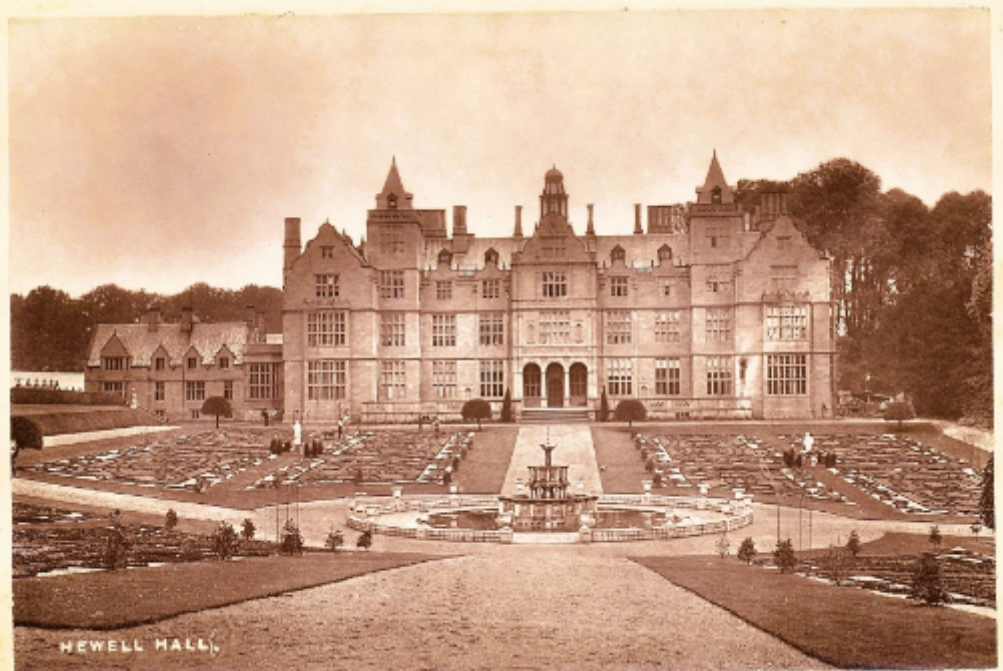
The fence on the left of the postcard opposite is the entrance to the Congregational Church where I was baptised in 1943.

The general view above is taken from an area of rising ground. So, I assume that it is off Mount Pleasant, but I wouldn't guarantee that!





Next to the Midland Bank at the top of Church Road at the time of this picture were some old cottages. These were some of the last of the old buildings which were swept away in the rebuilding of the town centre from the mid 19th Century to early 20th Century. These were replaced by the Redditch Building Society building in 1922, which is still there today, but not as a building society.



The Earl of Plymouth and his family were the local aristocracy for Redditch and images of Hewell Grange always featured prominently in any pre-WW2 collections of postcards of the area.



80 years ago by Anthony Green

Redditch in 1943 - a selected timeline of activities

In 2011, I was involved in an exhibition at Forge Mill Needle Museum on Redditch in WW2 and a fundamental part of the exhibition was a timeline for events in Redditch and the equivalent events internationally.

To produce the Redditch timeline, I had significant help from a young Redditch history undergraduate Dan Hume who spent many hours looking through the microfilm of the Redditch Indicator at Redditch Library to find interesting events during that time.

We then took the list he produced and selected what we thought was most interesting and brought it down to a manageable timeline list. To complement this, I also produced a timeline of National/ International events to match this list. However, although it was relevant to the exhibition, it is of no real interest here.

Over the next two pages I have reproduced the section of the timeline for 1943 - 80 years ago - and it shows the level of activity throughout the town during this period.

January

- 9** Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund Week - Redditch raise £3,500.
- 23** Competition promoted by a national pictorial weekly for 'Neatest Worker' competition - Kathleen Williams won.
- 25** Exhibition of war artist's work at Redditch opened at Redditch Gas Co. Ltd. Showrooms, Church Green, Redditch.

February

- 13** Redditch British Restaurant Kingfisher a year old. Inspected by Lady Wardlaw-Milne - very impressed.
- 20** Former Redditch bank clerk - Geoffrey Wyndham Pain, Flying Officer, awarded D.F.C
- 20** Farmers to raise £5,000 for Red Cross Agricultural Fund - meeting at Talbot Hotel - £442 collection to date.
- 27** Redditch Savings Competition - Redditch win Eddy Cup again for period ending 13th Feb for investing £2.18s.8d per head of pop.

March

- 2** Two act play titled 'Appreciations' by Major E. A Grace - before audience of Home Guard officers at Union Club, Redditch.
- 20** Eddy Cup won for 7th time by Redditch. Silver cup presented at Savings meeting at 'The Mount' British restaurant for February

April

- 8** New HDA Home Guard Headquarters opened by Colonel A.E Scothern - commanding officer of 9th Worcestershire Home Guard
- 11** 100 American soldiers visit Redditch. Mr. J.W Hughes welcomed Lieutenant Fisher on Church Green. Successful and well-received.

May

- 1** Redditch 'Wings for Victory' week - imposing procession and stirring speeches - £34,900 subscribed towards the £150,000 target.
- 15** Home Guard celebrations to be held following 'Wings for Victory' - target smashed - Total for week = £682,704.

Redditch 80 years ago cont....

June

- 5** Ration book distribution. Response of public preparations made for issuing of food books at Redditch Food Office
- 5** BSA employees' gift to Smallwood hospital fund - Modern x-ray apparatus. Ceremony on hospital steps.
- 19** Wounded men entertained at Redditch - 26 men from a Midland Hospital - by Britannia Batteries Limited

July

- 3** Enfield Cycle Co. Ltd, Sports. 77-year-old wins veteran's race. Their first sports event in 20 years - £2,000 to Soldier's Comfort Club.
- 31** Successful war-time carnival Fancy dress competitions. £168 raised for Smallwood Hospital, £80 for Redditch Youth Centre.

August

- 8** 'Chile Con Corney' - US Army Concert Party - helps Smallwood Hospital. - £60 raised.
- 11** 'The Cossacks' celebrated horse riders visit Redditch Football Club. Acrobatic feats. Collected for Aid for Russia Fund
- 21** Terry's Athletics - aid of Smallwood Hospital funds - Terry's Sports Ground, Easemore Lane, Redditch

September

- 4** Redditch Horticultural Show at County High School grounds. Part of stay at home scheme and effort on 'Dig for Victory' campaign.
- 25** Ipsley Water Tank holds water for emergency firefighting. People depositing rubbish into it and the water not guaranteed to fill.

October

- 2** 'Battle of Britain Sunday' - Thanksgiving service at St. Stephens - celebrating victory of RAF 3 years ago - well attended.
- 9** Presentation at County High School, Redditch of importance of knowledge of First Aid by members of the Home Guard.
- 30** Industrial film - HDA - film made in their works - a film exhibited on Sat at Danilo - Films shows the work done at the factory.

November

- 4** Carnival proceeds announced as £1,200 for Smallwood Hospital - at annual Carnival Committee meeting - Beech House, Redditch.
- 11/12** Food exhibition - travelling food circus touring Worcestershire came to Headless Cross to demonstrate how to not waste food.
- 14** 'Norton Follies' - 4th visit to Redditch - Palace Theatre - to benefit Worcestershire Home Guard Benevolent Fund. **27** War work of the YMCA - Hostel for girl workers opened Thursday last week. Terry Hostel opened by Lady Helen Graham.

December

- 1** Redditch savings - 'Wings for Victory' plaque presented by Vice Air Marshal Fraser, C.B. Bates Hill Schoolroom.
- 4** Talent discovered during Carnival Week in new show at Palace Theatre in aid of funds for Redditch Girl's Training Corps.
- 4** Lieutenant S. Thurman W.A.C unveiled plaque commemorating gift from citizens of Willoughby, U.S.A to Youth Centre.

80 years ago illustrated by Anthony Green

A 1943 miscellany from the Redditch Indicator

Using the timeline we had created (pages 5 and 6), I then looked at the actual bound copies of the original Redditch Indicator, which are stored in the basement of Redditch Library. These are very large and each bound copy contains a full year of the newspaper, which made them very heavy to handle. The quality of newsprint and printing during wartime was not that good and I did the scanning using a hand scanner (sometimes called a scanning wand). This had to be moved at a constant speed, by hand, over the document and, since the newspapers were bound, and therefore gave a curved surface, this was not easy.

The best scanned images came from public notices, and so I have given over the next two pages a miscellany of items which I hope give a flavour of wartime conditions.

I would like to thank the Library staff of the time who brought these very heavy bound newspapers from the basement to the public level of the Library so that I could go through them.

Can you keep a secret?

There's plenty of them in Britain now and the Axis would dearly love to share them with you. Careless talk of any kind may give the enemy a clue and put him on his guard. Silence is more than golden — it's safe!

What don't I do...?

I don't discuss troop or ship movements with anyone.
I never talk about my war work or the position of factories or stores.
I don't write letters about bomb damage near me, or troops billeted on me, or friends getting embarkation leave.
If I've got a secret, I don't share it!

Issued by the Ministry of Information
Space presented to the Nation by the Brewers' Society

DEATH OF THE EARL OF PLYMOUTH

End of Useful Public Life

Deep and sincere regret was felt by his many friends in Worcestershire and in South Wales, when it was announced on the radio on Saturday, that the Earl of Plymouth, P.C. Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1908 to 1929, had died suddenly on Friday night, at his home, St. Fagan's Castle, near Cardiff. For about four years the Earl had been in poor health, but he continued his public duties to the last. On Friday he was one of the guests of Mr. H. H. Merrett, at a luncheon given in Cardiff on the occasion of the visit of Mr. R. S. Hudson, Minister of Agriculture. Later he accompanied the Minister and Mr. Merrett to Penarth to inspect the demonstration farm of the Glamorgan County Council.

Like his father, who was created Earl of Plymouth in 1905, the late peer conscientiously carried out the many duties in connection with the various offices that he occupied. He has left behind a splendid record of public service.



B.S.A. Recreation and Social Association:
"Piled Arms" Club, Studley Rd., Redditch
TO-DAY (Saturday), November 27th, 1943
GRAND DANCE
8 p.m. to 11.30 p.m.
IVOR THOMAS AND HIS ORCHESTRA.
M.C. MR. GORDON WALL.
ADMISSION 2/-

SEVENTY-SEVEN YEAR OLD WINS VETERANS' RACE

ENFIELD CYCLE CO. LTD. SPORTS



GIRLS UNDER 18 WALKING RACE, FINAL.

REDDITCH SAVINGS



"WINGS FOR VICTORY" PLAQUE, PRESENTED BY VICE AIR MARSHAL FRASER, C.B.

REDDITCH WINS ITS WINGS

WITH A GRAND TOTAL OF

£282,704

VERY NICE WORK THANKS EVERYONE

TARGET SMASHED



WINGS FOR VICTORY WEEK
GRAND TOTAL £282,704
WELL DONE EVERYONE!
REDDITCH SAVINGS

WINGS WEEK PROGRAMME

SATURDAY, MAY 1st.

3.30 p.m. PROCESSION OF R.A.F., W.A.A.F. and AMERICAN FORCES BANDS, supported by Redditch Civil Defence Units and R.A.F. Personnel. Salute taken by GROUP CAPTAIN R. CALEY, M.C.
EXHIBITION OF R.A.F. WAR PHOTOGRAPHS in the Gas Company's Showroom. Open daily. (By kind permission of the directors of the Redditch Gas Company).

SUNDAY, MAY 2nd.

10.45 a.m. PARADE of A.T.C. and A.C.F. to Bates Hill Church.
6.30 p.m. THE ARDEN SINGERS, with the W.A.A.F. Band, present a Variety Concert in the Palace Theatre. Tickets: Stalls 2s., Balcony 3s. 5d. Bookable at the Palace only. Doors Open 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5th.

7 p.m. to 9 p.m. CONCERT on Church Green (if wet in the Kingfisher), by the BAND OF H.M. ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE, CRANWELL, LEICS. (By permission of Air Commodore H. M. Probyn, C.B.E., D.S.O.). Conductor: Flight-Lieutenant A. E. Sims, M.B.E., L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., Director of Music, Royal Air Force College.

THURSDAY, MAY 6th.

"WINGS FOR VICTORY" DANCE at the Plymouth Hall, 8—11 p.m. Tickets 2/6d. each. Forces 1/3d. Certificates as prizes. Tickets on sale at the Saving Centre, Church Green East.

SAVINGS CENTRES

SAVINGS CENTRE, Church Green. Open daily 11 a.m. till 7 p.m.
GAS SHOW ROOM, Parade. Open daily 11 a.m. till 7 p.m.
TRUSTEE SAVING BANK, Evesham Street. Open daily 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. till 7 p.m., except Wednesday, 10 a.m. till 12 noon.

CINEMA VAN WILL TOUR THE TOWN DURING THE WEEK.

