

February 2023 Newsletter

Hi All,

Our February meeting, which was the first of 2023, was opened by our new Chair, Elizabeth Simpson.

Elizabeth, who is a member of the Management Committee, has agreed to take on the vacant role. This has the full support of the Committee. It will be subject to approval by Society Members at the Annual General Meeting in April.

We had an excellent presentation from Richard Churchley entitled 'Wayside Wonders and Country Curiosities – local items of historic interest which people overlook'.

As always, Richard attracted a good audience and we had an attendance of forty-one members (we had in addition an apology from one member), and nine visitors which made a total of fifty at the meeting, which is a good start for the year.

This was the first meeting we have held in the 'Reeves' room instead of the main church. This room is more suitable for our numbers, there is really no need for amplification and it saves us money. So, as they say, what's not to like!

On **page 2** These are forthcoming events including our next meeting on Monday 13th March 2023 which is Victorian and Edwardian Buildings of Redditch Bromsgrove and Birmingham by Tim Bridges of the Victorian Society, and other items of interest.

Pages 3 and 4 Is a report on our presentation on 'Wayside Wonders and Country Curiosities – local items of historic interest which people overlook' by Dr. Richard Churchley. Richard has kindly sent me some of his photographs to enhance the report (I like pictures!).

On **page 5 and 6** Graham Smith has produced part 1 of a series of three articles which are inspired by the BBC television series by David Olusoga 'A House Through Time' but, obviously, will be based on an historic house in Redditch.

On **page 7 and 8** In the Redditch Official Guide of 1935/6 there is a section called Brief Notes on Redditch Industry. I have selected those related to Fishing Tackle and I have also selected appropriate advertisements from the Guide to accompany this.

Take care, stay safe and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

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Coming up



Next Meeting Monday 13th March 2023

Victorian and Edwardian Buildings of Redditch Bromsgrove and Birmingham

by Tim Bridges of the Victorian Society

The Victorian Society is a charity dedicated to fighting for our Victorian and Edwardian heritage. They campaign for the sensitive reuse of historic buildings rather than demolition and rebuild. Tim Bridges is the Conservation Adviser for the Birmingham and West Midlands Group.

The image left is an early picture of Church Green East, which has the best range of such buildings in Redditch.

Worcestershire Local History Forum - Forum Focus

The Worcestershire Local History Forum was set up to help coordination between interest groups and studies in Worcestershire from around the county. Members are a mixture of organisations and individuals who all share a lively interest in the history of Worcester. The Redditch History Society is a member.

In 2022 the Forum decided that they would like to produce a 3-or-4-times a year newsletter to members of the Forum, which was aimed at improving communication with group members by encouraging them to tell us all what they've been up to, what's been going on, etc.

The first "Forum Focus" Newsletter was well supported and we had three articles taken from our newsletter.

The Editor, Norman Broadfield, is now looking for information for a March edition, and I am providing 2 - 3 articles from our Newsletter.

Unfortunately, the WLHF website does not have a link to copies of 'Forum Focus' as it is sent by e-mail to Norman's contact list. So, to make this easily available to members, and those interested in our local history, I am making them available on our website.

The WLHF also have a useful 'What's on in Worcestershire' listing, which is available on their website.

So, to cut to the chase, if you go to our website 'links' at <http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/links.htm> and scroll down to 'Local Area History Groups', for the Worcestershire Local History Forum you will find links for Whats on in Worcestershire linking on their site and Forum Focus linking to our site.

Redditch Library - Documentary film of Redditch in 1957

Redditch Library have discovered, with the help of their volunteer archivists, a film 'A Portrait of Redditch 1957' about Redditch on a film reel. With the help of the Redditch Local History Museum this has been digitised and converted to DVD, This has been screened but, by 'popular demand' new screenings will take place on Tuesday 21st February at 12.30 and 5.30pm at the Library. Booking essential in person or via Facebook. All screenings are free.

Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre



Exhibition: FISHING TACKLE TREASURES

Wednesday 1st February to Sunday 5th March 2023.

Forge Mill Needle Museum begins their season of exhibitions with an excellent local history display by Jo-Ann showcasing the world renowned fishing tackle industry of the town.

This is a first rate demonstration of the products produced by the industry – fishhooks, rods, reels, flies, spinners, floats and accessories.

Included in the exhibition is an original foot powered lathe used by Alfred Tay to turn the cork for his float making.

Forge Mill has a wide range of fishing industry archives and this exhibition shows some of the museum's rarely seen fishing tackle treasures.

For further information and details of the exhibitions for 2023 please visit <https://www.forgemill.org.uk/web/exhibitions/>

February Meeting Report

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

Richard Churchley is an experienced local historian, specialising in areas of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and North Gloucestershire. In 2010 Richard was awarded a doctorate at the University of Birmingham for his study of changing occupational structure in the rural area around Redditch (in East Worcestershire) and Alcester (in West Warwickshire), the area where he has lived for more than thirty years.

Richard is interested in all aspects of local and family history covering all periods. He is also a musician well-known for his interpretations of local folk songs.

He gives many presentations throughout the area and he last gave us a talk on 9th March 2020 entitled 'Off to the Workhouse – the poor are always with us' and it was the last talk we had before the lockdown. So it was really pleasing to have him back again now that the situation is returning to normal.

In this presentation Richard gave us a fascinating and thought provoking illustration of how much local history there is around us which generally goes unnoticed.

Richard gave us a wide range of examples from his personnel collection which I can obviously not cover here. So I have given some general overviews and a few specific examples related to images which Richard kindly supplied.

Whatever your religious views, the Church has created a surprising range of historic artefacts in our landscape. These can be churches, graveyards or other items associated with the activities of the clergy.

A fascinating artefact is the stable in the churchyard at St. Milburga Church at Wixford. This is probably 18th Century and is a small plank structure with thatched roof. It is thought to have been the stable for the visiting clergyman's horse during services. As services at that time were very long, it was probably felt that it was unreasonable to leave the horse outside, particularly in the winter, for several hours.

Richard also explored the importance of gravestones in local history and gave several examples.

Well preserved monuments of two railway workers can be found at St John's the Baptist Church in Bromsgrove for Thomas Scaife, 23, and Joseph Rutherford, 32.

They died after the boiler of an experimental locomotive they were working on exploded on the Lickey incline, Bromsgrove on 10 November 1840.



Above: St Milburga Wixford 2014

Below: Worcs Bgrove grave 27 Jan 2012



February Meeting Report cont.....

Although a bell tower is simply a tower that contains one or more bells, Richard pointed out that the implementation of the concept in a church can take many forms.

In some of the local county areas, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire have many examples. Pembridge is one of several Herefordshire parishes whose belltower stands separate from the church.

Richard made the point that, perhaps, since bell towers in churches had the habit of collapsing, then perhaps to have the bell tower as a separate building, meant that such an event only destroyed the bell tower and not the Church.

Another feature found in the area is a stone Church, but a wooden bell tower. This was possibly an effort to reduce costs, but did result in an attractive building.



Above: St James Kington Sep 2013

When the railway line arrived at Stratford on Avon, the residents to the South felt deprived that they could not have the cheap coal delivered by the railway. So the Stratford and Moreton Tramway was created.

This was a 16-mile (25-km) long horse-drawn wagonway which ran from the canal basin at Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire to Moreton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire, with a branch to Shipston-on-Stour. The main line opened in 1826, whilst the branch to Shipston opened in 1836. The most prominent remaining piece of infrastructure, is the tramway's brick arch bridge across the River Avon at Stratford, which remains in use as a public footbridge, and is still known as the Tramway Bridge.



Above: Stratford Feb 2012

Signposts provide a fascinating insight to the area and non more than the sign at the top of Broadway Hill. This has distances in miles which are not related to the miles we understand today. This is before the introduction of the railways which forced the introduction of a standard time and standard distances, Until the railway, areas had different times and, also, different distances. So, to find the actual distance in miles, it is necessary to multiply the 'country' miles on the signpost by 1.5 to obtain our normal miles.



Above: Broadway Hill signpost

In this short overview of the presentation it is difficult to do justice to the breadth of information supplied. Richard is an excellent speaker and his presentation was appreciated by the audience.

A House Through Time

A Series of three articles by Graham Smith

Part 1: Setting the Parameters

One of the most outstanding history programmes on British television over the last few years has been A House Through Time. Produced for the BBC and written and presented by David Olusoga, the programme ran for four series and was made between 2019 and 2021.

What made it so interesting for me was that this was a completely new way of looking at the social history of Britain at a time of huge change and development in the country.



For those who missed the series, the programme tells the story of the people who lived in one house from the time it was built up to the present.

Each series was based in a different city so that the social history of that area and the city itself were explored.

Above and right: David Olusoga Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester.

Some residents emigrated to other parts of the world so their lives could also throw light on developments abroad.

The cities chosen for the four series were Liverpool, Newcastle, Bristol and Leeds.

Although Olusoga wrote the script it is clear that a team of researchers did all the spadework.

First, the house had to be chosen.

- It needed to be a house built in the 18th century or early 19th century.
- It needed to be essentially the same as its original design with some allowance for extensions and bringing it up to modern living conditions.
- The current owners had to be on board with the filming and, where possible, happy to be interviewed.
- Most important, however, was that it had a continuous sequence of owners from first occupation right up to the modern day.
- In most cases the houses chosen saw new residents moving in every few years and staying for less than 20 years.



A House Through Time cont.....

Some of the houses started as single family houses and later, as the nature of the area changed, became multi-family rented accommodation, before, later in the twentieth century, reverting to family homes.

The researchers used a wide variety of source materials.

For basic information about births and deaths, employment status, family members and servants the census was widely used. But other sources proved vital in revealing the lives of the residents: marriage certificates, newspaper articles, trade directories, church and other religions' records, data collected by official organisations such as the National Archives for military records, and electoral registers.

When dealing with more recent times it was even possible to feature the people who had lived in the house.

For example, in the last series, the house had been used as university accommodation and some students who had lived there were traced and gave accounts of happy times spent there. All of this evidence was used extensively in the programmes, illustrating how history is uncovered by the painstaking trawl of primary sources.



Left:

The southern portion of Church Green East today.

The programme got me thinking about which property in Redditch could be selected to investigate all the residents who had lived in it.

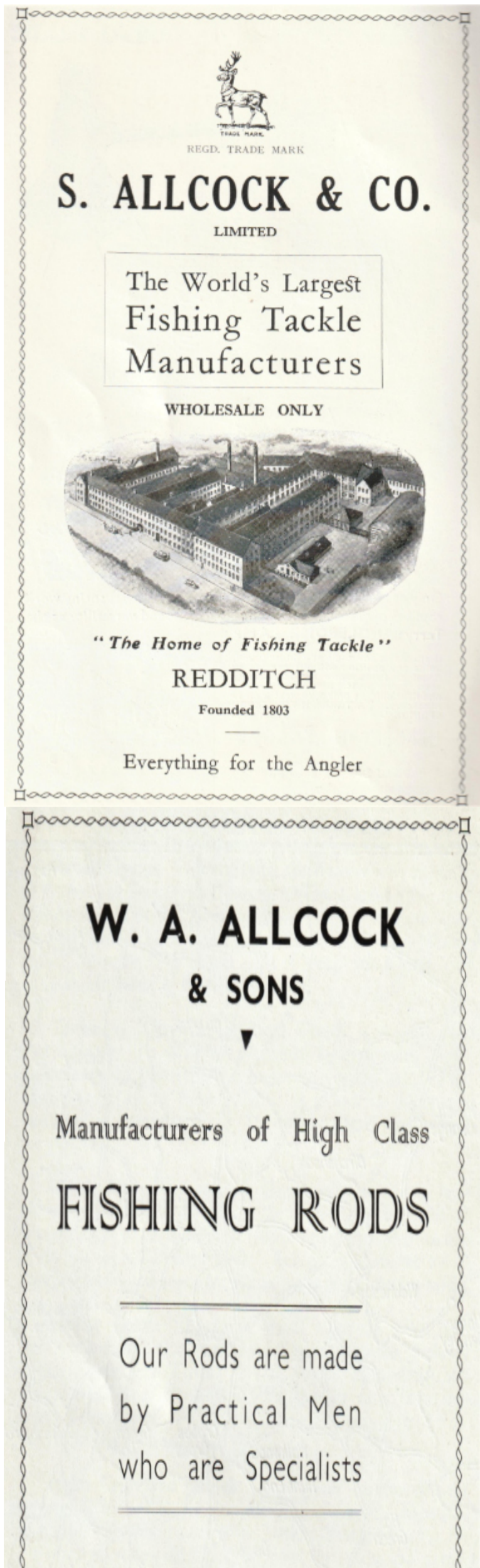
The obvious choice would be a large house built for one of the needle masters of the town. Most of the houses I know of have long since been demolished. If you know of one still standing I would love to hear from you.



I know most about the history of Church Green and of the 88 dwellings identified in 1849 I could identify just three which might fit the bill. They are all on Church Green East where most of the properties were located.

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- First, there is the house where Edwin Smallwood lived, the benefactor of Smallwood Hospital. The property is above the alleyway which leads to Herbert Street.
- Second, there is Beech House at the north end. This is a substantial residence and indeed, when it was built in the early 1850s, was the most impressive property on the Green.
- Finally, there is Webb House, next to Lloyds Bank. Another impressive building that like the others has found a new use as a commercial property.
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But which one to choose? Find out which one I went for in the next History Society's newsletter.

Brief Notes on Redditch Industry - Fishing Tackle from the 1935/6 Redditch Official Guide




 REGD. TRADE MARK
S. ALLCOCK & CO.
 LIMITED
 The World's Largest
 Fishing Tackle
 Manufacturers
 WHOLESALE ONLY

 "The Home of Fishing Tackle"
REDDITCH
 Founded 1803
 Everything for the Angler

W. A. ALLCOCK
& SONS
 ▼
 Manufacturers of High Class
FISHING RODS
 Our Rods are made
 by Practical Men
 who are Specialists

The following two pages are taken from the Redditch Official Guide of 1935/36.

They have a section entitled 'Brief Notes on some Local Firms', which is what we would call these days an advertorial.

In this section they cover all the major industries in the town of the time.

On these two pages I have selected the section of the fishing tackle industry and I have also added the advertisements from the three companies which can be found in the guide.

Messrs. S. Allcock & Co. Ltd. are inseparably associated with the manufacture of fishing tackle and have been for over 130 years when the first seeds of the ever-growing business were planted by Mr. Polycarp Allcock.

Great extensions took place after the advent of his son, the late Mr. Samuel Allcock, J.P. into the business.

Messrs. Allcock's are the largest and oldest firm in the fishing tackle world. There are branches at Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, Newport, Isle of Wight and Kelso-on-Tweed and there is a sister Company in Paris.

At all International Exhibitions Messrs. Allcock's products have secured the premier awards. These include Grand Prix, Paris 1900 ; two Grand Prix, Liege, 1905 ; Grand Prix, Milan, 1906 ; Grand Prix, Antwerp, 1907 ; Grand Prix, Brussels, 1910.

Messrs. Allcock's special lines for the sporting angler comprise "Hercules" casts, "Aerial" and "Aerialite" reels, "Model Perfect" hooks, "Duplex," "Allcock-Stanley" and "Felton Crosswind" light casting reels, "Jagut" gut substitute, "Sapper" built-cane rods, "Glider" lines, "Easicast" reels, etc.

Everything in the angler's kit is made by Allcock's, including rods, reels, flies, hooks, lines, baits, swivels, floats, hooks-to-gut, landing nets, &c.

Agents of Allcock's are to be found in America, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India, Holland, Czecho-Slovakia and indeed, everywhere where the community includes fishermen.

A Canteen is provided for the use of the Staff where dinners may be had at reasonable prices, and there is also a well-laid out Sports Field with pitches for football and cricket, a bowling green, and three tennis courts, and naturally a thriving fishing club.

Fishing Tackle cont.....

Devotees of the gentle art of angling know the firm of **J. W. Young & Sons**, Mayfield Works, who turn out such highly specialised reels for trout and salmon fishing of both fly and spinning type.

Their fame is literally world-wide for their representatives are stationed in the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

Many ingenious patents are utilised in the firm's products.

Concentration on this one branch of the industry ; specially adapted modern plant ; the use of superfine materials ; and the employment of skilled and thoroughly trained artisans are factors which have helped Messrs. Young to achieve and maintain perfection in reel production since the establishment of the business in 1884.

Established 1884

Wholesale
only



Illustrated
List on
application

Manufacture

WE ARE EQUIPPED WITH A MODERN ENGINEERING PLANT, SPECIALLY SUITABLE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF FISHING REELS, which are SKILFULLY MADE, UNIQUELY DESIGNED AND SUPERBLY FINISHED

Price

WE SPECIALIZE IN THIS ONE BRANCH OF THE FISHING TACKLE EQUIPMENT WHICH FACILITATES BETTER PRODUCTION AT THE MOST REASONABLE PRICE

Guarantee

ALL REELS ARE GUARANTEED AGAINST DEFECTIVE WORKMANSHIP AND MATERIALS

J. W. YOUNG & SONS

MAYFIELD WORKS, REDDITCH

Another famous fishing tackle house is that of **George Buggins & Co.**, Vulcan Works, Hewell Road.

This is one of the few firms in the commercial world which is under the direct supervision of the principal—in this case Mr. George Buggins.

Thus first, and not second, third or perhaps fourth-hand attention is given to all seeking information on goods appertaining to angling.

The machinery installed in Buggins' works is the last word in modern invention and the quantities of rods, rings, swivels, spoon baits, sea booms, etc., turned out have been gradually increasing for years and necessitated, some time ago, the acquisition of the present extensive premises.



Rod Rings, Swivels
Spoon Baits
Spinners, Sea Booms
etc.

GEO. BUGGINS & Co.

Vulcan Works, Redditch

Established 1891
Telephone 438