

## April 2024 - Annual General Meeting

Hi All,

We had another successful Annual General Meeting' (AGM) with a record attendance for an AGM of 48, which was comprised of 42 members, which included four new members, and six visitors.

We had nine members who were unable to attend and sent their apologies.

Members have until the June meeting to update their membership without having to complete a new membership form...

We followed a slightly different format this year for collecting subscriptions by making the renewal/enrolment forms available at reception and collecting the subscriptions after the films during refreshments. This worked well and we will probably adopt it for future years.

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

**On page two is the 'Coming Events' section.**

Our next Meeting is on Monday 13th May 2024 and is a presentation 'Sutton Hoo and King Rædwald. by Paul Mortimer.

Also on page two we report the sad death and funeral of local historian Alan Foxall.

**Pages 3 and 4** Is a report on our AGM film presentation.

**On pages 5 to 8**

Pages five and six are the officers' reports.

Page seven has the results of the elections.

Page eight has a copy of the accounts.

**Next Meeting...**

Our next Meeting is on Monday 13th May 2024 and is a presentation 'Sutton Hoo and King Rædwald' and is given by Paul Mortimer. There is more on this presentation on Page 2.

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

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

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# Coming up....

**Next Meeting Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**Sutton Hoo and King Rædwald.**

**Presentation by Paul Mortimer**

Paul Mortimer has had a lifelong interest in the early medieval period, particularly in Northern Europe.

He has been trying to understand the Sutton Hoo, Mound 1 burial and its implications for several decades.

During that time, he has had many of the items reconstructed and that process has led to a number of new insights into how the objects may have been used and how they could work together.

He has written extensively on the period and his most recent book was a collaborative effort on swords from England during the fifth to seventh centuries.

Paul was a consultant and prop supplier for the film 'The Dig' a Netflix film which re-imagined the events of the 1939 excavation of Sutton Hoo.

He has appeared on television both in Britain and in many other countries.

Paul, for most of his working life, was a secondary school teacher.



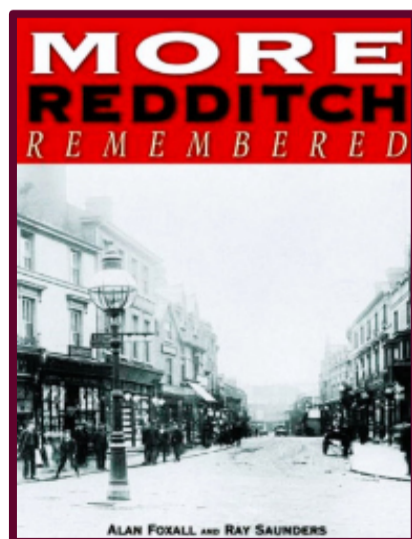
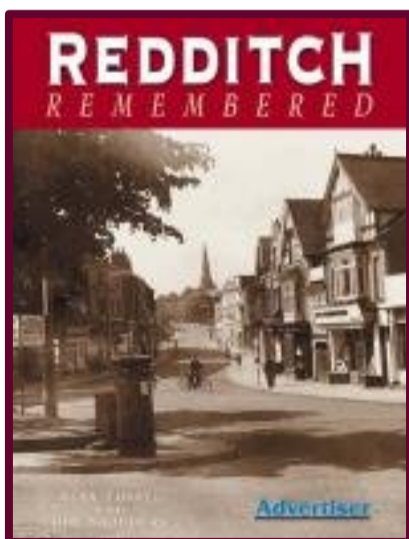
## Sad death of Alan Foxall

Renowned local historian, Alan Foxall, has died aged 86.

Alan Foxall was a well known Redditch local historian who wrote many books on the history of Redditch and its surrounding areas, including books such as Redditch at War, Redditch Remembered, More Redditch remembered and books on Redditch pubs and the local needle industry.

He also exhibited at many local history events around Redditch and was a member of the Redditch local history society.

His funeral will be held at Redditch Crematorium at 11:45am on Wednesday 17th April. All are welcome to come to the funeral and it will be followed by a 'wake' at Forge Mill Needle Museum.



Although it is quite difficult to find some of his published work, including his definitive work on Redditch Public Houses, which he spent many hours searching through the Needle District Almanacs at Redditch Library, it is still possible to find certain of the illustrated publications he produced with Ray Saunders.

When I looked, Redditch Remembers and More Redditch Remembered were still available at Amazon.

## April AGM Presentation: 'Three Films'

The Annual General Meeting has, by definition, been a bit formal with regard to the perceived interest for our members, and we fully understand this.

When we created the Society 15 years ago, we began by following the elections with a general discussion on activities - this didn't work, we then had the elections with a speaker. However, this was unfair on the speaker as they spent a large part of the meeting waiting to be called, so it was a bit shambolic.

Finally, from 2023, we began to follow the election with a film, or films, related to the town and general history. This has always been the Secretary's (my) role and I enjoy finding suitable content which I hope our members and visitors will find interesting.



Sadly, Mike Johnson, and more recently Alan Foxall, stalwarts of preserving Redditch history have both recently passed away.

In particular, Mike Johnson was a pioneer of filming Redditch activities and characters in the 70s and 80s.

Fortunately, due to the efforts of Derek Coombes, his films have been digitised and are now stored at MACE, Media Archive for Central England. As a tribute to Mike, I am showing the short film of the Queen's visit to Redditch in 1983.

This is a film which records what was a major event in the history of the town and is remembered by many residents. MACE can be found at <https://www.macearchive.org/>



## 'Three Films' continued

Night Mail is a 1936 British documentary film directed and produced by Harry Watt and Basil Wright, and produced by the General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit.

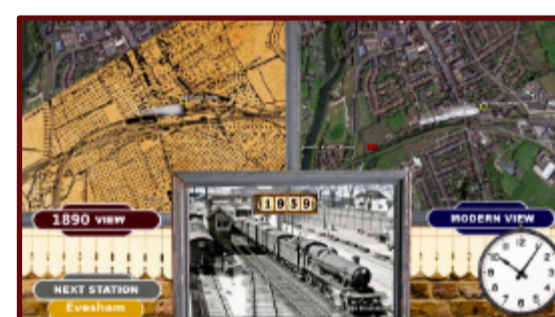
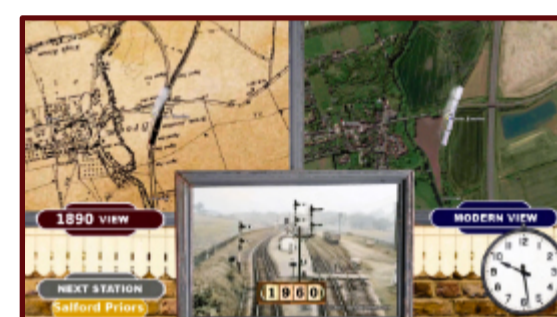
The 24-minute film documents the nightly postal train operated by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) from London to Scotland and the staff who operate it.

Narrated by John Grierson and Stuart Legg, the film ends with a "verse commentary" written by W. H. Auden to a score composed by Benjamin Britten. The locomotive featured in the film is LMS Royal Scot Class 6115 Scots Guardsman.

Night Mail premiered on 4 February 1936 at the Cambridge Arts Theatre in Cambridge, England in a launch programme for the venue. Its general release gained critical praise and became a classic of its own kind, much imitated by adverts and modern film shorts. Night Mail is widely considered a masterpiece of the British Documentary Film Movement.

It is widely considered a masterpiece of the British Documentary Film Movement.

It is available on YouTube with the following link..... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTEZ25sQGmc>



To complete this little film show I needed something to fill 5 or 6 minutes, and I found this little gem by James Fox (not the actor!).

What he does, and he has done for a number of disused lines, is to use a split screen to follow the line as it was, show an aerial view of how it is now, and points of interest on route.

In the last few Newsletters I have been describing Redditch transport systems and, in the March edition, I described the local railway system which included the Birmingham & Gloucester Loop. Integral to this was the Evesham and Redditch Railway which was authorised in 1863.

I was really pleased that he had produced a version for the Redditch to Evesham line, which I included as the final video of the meeting.

Following the meeting a number of members told me how they remembered travelling to Evesham on the train.

My personal memory is when I was at Junior School (Bridge Street) we had a trip to Windsor Castle and Runnymede entirely on the train. We travelled from Redditch to Evesham, changed trains, and then went on for the rest of the journey. What an adventure!

We lost a lot when Ernest Marple destroyed the rail system in order to build his motorways!

The video is available on YouTube, but there is a problem with the link. So, I suggest that you go to YouTube and do a search using this link

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=ghost+train+redditch+evesham](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ghost+train+redditch+evesham)

# Annual General Meeting Report

## Executive Reports

### Chair's Report

I am pleased to report that during 2023 our membership has steadily been increasing, which resulted in us returning to the main room at Oasis, to accommodate the higher level of membership.

Last August we had to postpone our meeting due to electrical work at Oasis and so we reinstated a December meeting. The change seemed to be well received and therefore we are going forward with that change in monthly meetings, leaving the summer available for holidays and often family commitments.

We ran a full programme of presentations during the year, with four of our meetings provided by external speakers, which has widened the number of topics presented and for this I wish to thank our enthusiastic Speaker Organiser, Pat Bushaway. The topics covered Wayside Wonders, Victorian and Edwardian buildings, Winterbourne House and Gardens and Excavations in Beoley. Our other presentations were made by History Society members with Chris Jackson providing a Walk around Redditch using old postcards and Bill Macham recalling his war time memories in 'From Brum to Bringsty Common. The Executive members also provided talks, with mine on the Changing Face of Redditch, Tony Green on Remembering the Batteries and Graham Smith 'From Common to Posh', with the history of Church Green. I would like to wish a very warm thank you to all our contributors to a successful series of presentations. If anyone would like to make a presentation in the future, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

I would like to pass on my thanks to all the members of the Committee for their valuable contribution to the success of the Society. I particularly want to thank our Secretary, Tony Green, for the huge amount of work he carries out throughout the year. One of the very notable ways he adds to the standing of the Society is through the very readable newsletter he produces throughout the year, with many interesting articles. If anyone would like to provide an article for the newsletter, rather than make a presentation, we would love to talk to you about this. Graham Smith, our Treasurer, keeps us up to date on membership attendance and our financial position throughout the year, which is very helpful in trying to plan for the future.

I hope all our members have enjoyed the work of our Committee and will continue to support the growing strength of the Society.

**Elizabeth Simpson**

**Chair, Redditch History Society.**

### Secretary's Report

In 2023, after our slow start in 2022, we moved into the Reeves room which was more suitable for our smaller meeting numbers. However, happily in 2023, there was an increase in membership and visitor numbers, and we needed to move back to the main hall for our presentations,

During 2023 we averaged an audience of slightly over fifty per meeting, ranging from 40 to 72. Included in this was an average of nine visitors per meeting.

Although the Oasis Christian Centre has had to increase their charges due to higher energy costs, they were able to offer us favourable terms for our 3-hour period over the main hall and Reeves room.

This is a good venue for us, it is convenient for many members, and the overhead monitors give a good visual presentation which can be seen by everyone.

However, this increased our costs and, as we had less 'free' talks from members, and the need to have more external speakers, we needed to increase our membership fee,

It was agreed at the 2023 meeting that we would increase our membership to £20/annum, which is still only £2 per meeting, and visitors would pay £4.

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# Annual General Meeting Report

## Secretary's Report.... continued

### Newsletter:

In 2023 I reduced the Newsletter to ten per year, to match our number of meetings. Apart from the April (AGM) Newsletter, they all follow the same format. Page 1 is a general introduction, page 2 has up and coming events, including our next meeting, pages 3 and 4, have a report on the previous presentation, and pages 5 to 8 have articles on local history. Currently I am filling this latter section with my material, but I would be happy to give space to anyone who wishes to write something.

### Internet:

Visitor numbers to our website [www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk) typically has risen to about six hundred and fifty visitors a month. About 20% were from the UK, 28% from the USA and about 22% from the rest of Europe. On a continent basis Europe and North America make up 70% of our traffic. The remaining 30% are from the rest of the world.

Our Redditch History Society Facebook page has increased by 100 to 1,900 followers. Not particularly large in Facebook terms, Forge Mill Needle Museum, for example, has 4,300 followers, but nevertheless, still respectable.

### Meetings:

Pat Bushaway has done an excellent and difficult role of speaker organiser, and I think that we can agree that last and this year's programme has a wide range of speakers. Pat has also done an excellent job in producing press releases for the local press and we have good support from the Redditch Standard. It is good news that Pat is happy to continue in this role. I know how much 'behind the scenes' work is necessary for this.

**Anthony Green**

**Secretary, Redditch History Society.**

## Treasurer's Report

*(to be read in conjunction with the account sheet)*

Financially, 2023 was a very good year. The Society receives most of its income from members and visitors. In 2023 both of these saw increases. Our membership grew from 58 to 68 with the half price membership from October proving popular. Members contributed £915 to our coffers. Visitor numbers were also up with a total of 90 attending our meetings. Last year it was 61. Pleasingly, more people are enjoying our refreshments and this brought in an extra £93.00 up from £59.00. Thanks must go to all who helped serving refreshments during the year. In 2023 we introduced two book sales which raised a welcome £95.60. Thanks must go to Pat Bushaway who efficiently organised these. Finally we had one donation of £25.00. Our total income for the year was £1398.60.

Expenditure on room hire was down on 2022 as we started the year using only the Reeves Room. As membership grew we made the decision to move back into the main hall using the Reeves Room for refreshments only. With 10 meetings rather than 11, room hire came to £652. We are likely to pay more for speakers in future as we rely more on outside speakers and inevitably they get more expensive. In 2023 we paid out £245.80 for our speakers. Our subscription to the Worcestershire Local History Forum remains at £10.00. This organisation provides us with a list of Worcestershire speakers, newsletters from other history societies and helps to advertise across the county our meetings. The British Association for Local History subscription is now £90. Membership provides us with insurance for our meetings and we receive periodicals that are available to our members to borrow.

At the end of 2023 we had a surplus of £400.80.

The bank balance at the start of 2023 was £1222.47 and at the end was £1623.27. Adding in the petty cash the Society had total funds of £1664.45 on 31st December.

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# Treasurer's Report..... continued

At the AGM in 2023 members voted to increase our annual subscription to £20 from April 2024 and the visitor charge to £4.00 from February 2024. I am confident that these increases will ensure a healthy financial future for the Society and that we will be able to look forward to excellent speakers on a wide range of topics.

Finally, I am indebted to Gilbert Barlow who has done an excellent job as our accounts examiner.

**Graham Smith**

**Treasurer, Redditch History Society.**

## Election Results

### Election of Officers:

All the current officers and committee members are willing to continue in their current roles and so, election of officers becomes a something of a formality. We are grateful that the membership has confidence in our organisation and our direction. However, none of us are getting any younger and there is no barrier to anyone involving themselves in the organisation of the Society.

### Executive Posts

Chairman -Elizabeth Simpson 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 – Pat Bushaway re-elected unopposed.

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

Refreshments Organiser - Graham Smith re-elected unopposed. Graham, as always, is looking for volunteers to support this activity and there are a number of members who are prepared to help.

### Management Committee

The Management Committee consists of the 3 executive members, Chairman Elizabeth Simpson, Secretary Anthony Green and Treasurer Graham Smith plus non-executive posts, Speaker Organiser Pat Bushaway, and additional elected members .

The current member representatives, Dave Spyer and Sue Tatlow, who were both unable to attend the meeting due to illness, but were happy to continue, were re-elected unopposed.

Richard Watson is also willing to be a member of the Committee and was formally elected.

This brings the Management Committee to seven members.

*(Note that there is no limit to the size of the Management Committee, so if anyone wishes to be involved please let us know)*

### Accounts Examiner:

Gil Barlow was re-elected unopposed.

There were no additional motions and there was no action brought up in 'Any Other Business'.

