

October 2024 Meeting Report

Hi All,

We had one of our best turnouts for the year at our October meeting with forty-five members including two new members, and twenty visitors, so a total of sixty-five. We had four apologies from members.

So far this year, since February, we have averaged an audience of fifty-seven, made up of members and visitors, which is very healthy for the Society.

On the remaining pages of the Newsletter, we have:

Page two is the 'Coming Events' section.

Our next Meeting, is on Monday 11th November 2024 and the presentation is by Dr Richard Churchley. We also have information on our occasional book sale at the November meeting and the current Forge Mill Exhibition.

Pages three and four

Is a report on our October meeting presentation, 'The Redditch Railway', by Philip Jarvis.

Pages five, six, seven and eight.

In the October and November editions of the Newsletter I am reaching the conclusion of my Redditch Farming heritage series.

This month, using the 1945 aerial survey of Redditch which is available on Google Earth and comparing this with satellite image from Google Earth, I have looked at the change in land usage for the modern Church Hill, Winyates and Matchborough areas compared to their areas in 1945.

Next Meeting.

Our next Meeting is on Monday 11th November 2024, details 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 11th November 2024

Humble Homes: Vernacular Architecture in Britain

Presentation by Dr. Richard Churchley

Vernacular architecture usually serves local needs.

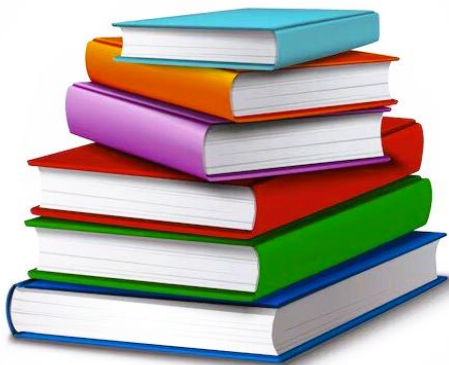
Vernacular houses are houses built in the main from locally available materials that reflect custom and tradition more than mainstream architectural fashions.

It does not have a particular style and reflects local traditions and cultural practices.



With his usual thorough research, Richard will introduce us to this form of architecture and how it varies in different regions.

Book Sale at November Meeting



We are having one of our occasional book sales next month, November, which will take place during the refreshments in the Reeves Room.

There will be a wide range of titles including Redditch Local History, other non-fiction books and general fiction reading.

If you would like to donate books to the sale, please bring them along. All income from the book sale goes into the Society's funds.

Forge Mill Needle Museum Exhibition:

Wednesday 23rd October to Sunday 24th November 2024

The final exhibition for 2024 is SPACES TO DREAM

An exhibition by the Stitch in the Middle Group.

Using a visit to Packwood House (a NT Tudor mansion) as inspiration, these talented textile artists incorporated into their work many of the house's features such as the iconic gardens with its famous collection of Yews, its 16th century textiles, furniture and architecture.

All these themes are richly interpreted in this exhibition of contemporary textiles.



The Redditch Railway Presentation by Philip Jarvis

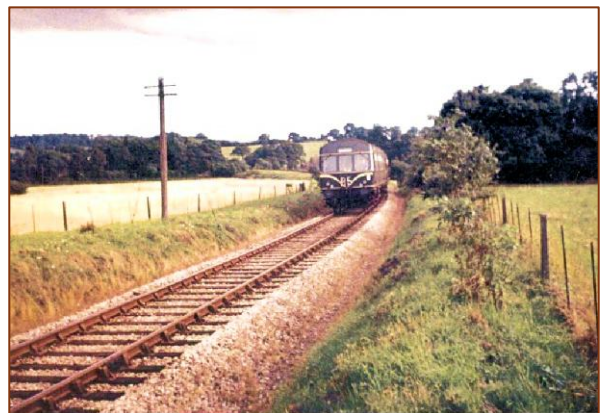
Philip Jarvis was our speaker at the meeting and is a local historian who is an acknowledged authority on all aspects of the Birmingham Gloucester Railway Loop, including the Redditch section, about which he is a published author.

Philip gave us an illustrated presentation, Taking us on a nostalgic visit to the Redditch section of the Midland Railway branch line which served Redditch, Alcester and Evesham.

This included many pictures of the station, line, tunnel and locomotives – especially in the 1950s and 1960s – which provoked nostalgic memories at the meeting.

Most of the photographs, which were taken in the final years of the line's life as a secondary through route between Barnt Green and Ashchurch, had been selected to show not only the engines, trains and railway structures but also to give an in and around view of Redditch.

New town development works have dramatically changed the scene at some of the locations, so that it is now almost impossible to perceive that a railway ever existed.



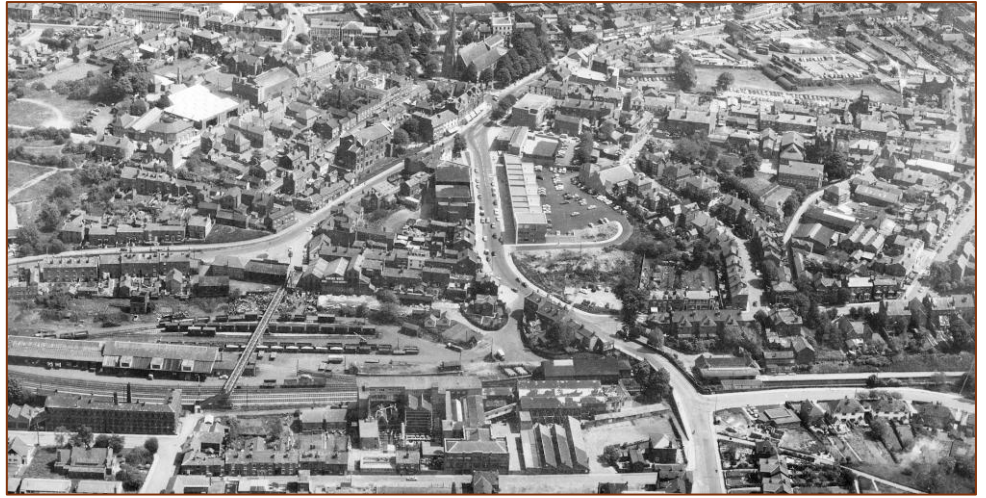
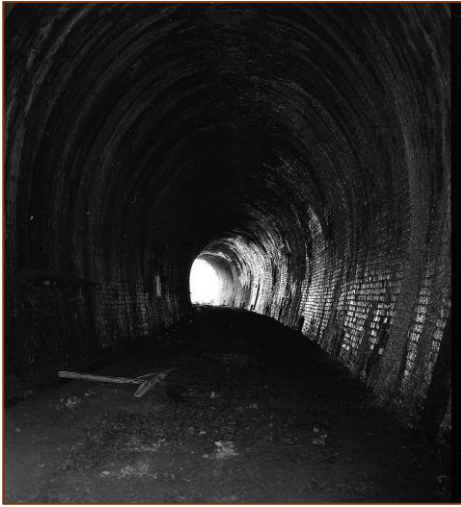
Top: An early image of a steam train entering Redditch station passing under the railway bridge in Bromsgrove Road

Middle Upper: Train in Redditch Station.

Middle Lower: The railway line from Barnt Green passing by the HDA and the Gasworks (who had their own sidings)

Bottom: The railway line near Oakenshaw Farm (now approximately the route of the Alcester Highway).

The Redditch Railway page 2



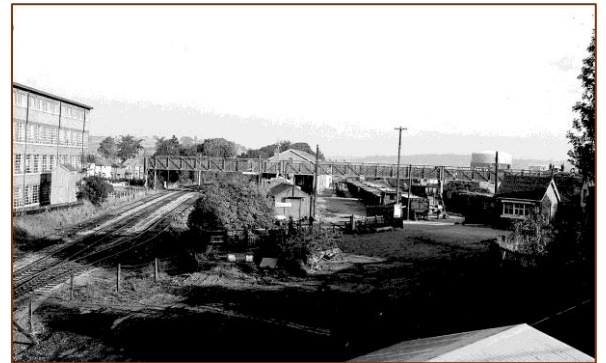
Philip began his presentation with a brief history of the line, the initial section from Barnt Green to Redditch opening on the 18th September 1859 with its original terminus and station in Clive Road. The opening was reported in the first edition of our new local newspaper, the Redditch Indicator.

The line was then extended with the 'Royal Enfield' bridge over Hewell Road and the new station at the bottom of Unicorn Hill.

With the completion of the tunnel under the ridgeway all the sections of the line from Barnt Green to Ashchurch were completed in 1868.

Philip gave us an amazing range of images of the line in Redditch mostly from the 1950s and 1960s which were much appreciated by the audience.

He was available during the refreshments session to talk to the many people who enjoyed his talk.



Top Left: View from inside the tunnel under the Ridgeway taken after closure.

Top Right: Aerial view of the area of the station taken in the 1960s. This shows the area from the sidings to the station.

Use the pdf zoom facility to look at more detail.

Middle Upper: Diesel local in the station and steam train arriving from the tunnel.

Middle Lower: view of good yard and steel pedestrian bridge.

Bottom: Railway Station south of railway bridge shortly before demolition and move to current northern site.

Redditch from farmland to housing 1945 to present time

Local Areas Church Hill, Winyates and Matchborough

by Anthony Green

When in 1945, the government of the day utilised the RAF to carry out an aerial survey of the country to establish the level of damage created by the bombing of WW2, they didn't realise how valuable they would be to today's historians.

They provide a unique view of the change of land usage in the period since the end of the Second World War.

We are fortunate that these have been made available by Google Earth, provided you use the downloaded version, not the on-line version.

Obviously, these are not the same image quality as the satellite images available today, but with a little digital enhancement, such as sharpness and colourising, it is possible to enhance the image to emphasise the roads and housing.

Over the next two Newsletters I will be looking at the changes which have occurred due to the developments carried out by the Redditch Development Corporation which ran from 1963 to 1973.

I have begun with the three areas lying to the east of the River Arrow and generally, east of Ikniel Street, the Roman road.

I have chosen these as they align closely to the concept of a 'New Town' as they are built in an area which is an essentially farming area, with no appreciable housing developments.



Redditch from farmland to housing page 2

Moving from North to South, the areas involved became Church Hill, Winyates and Matchborough.

I have shown on the 1945 aerial view the main routes and features, which I have repeated on the google earth view sixty years later.

With the 1945 view of the now Church Hill area the main routes, Ikniel Street and Marfield Lane, the farms, Marfield, Ravensmere and Papermill, and Moons Moat can be seen.

Ikniel Street and Marfield Lane are retained as footpaths, Papermill Farm still exists as housing, Marfield cottages exist and have been extended, one of the barns of Marfield Farm is still in place for use by the community, Ravensmere farm has gone completely, although the farm road from Ikniel Street still exists as a footpath, and Moons Moat is now a protected site.

So, although enveloped by new roads and housing, the original landscape is still to be found.



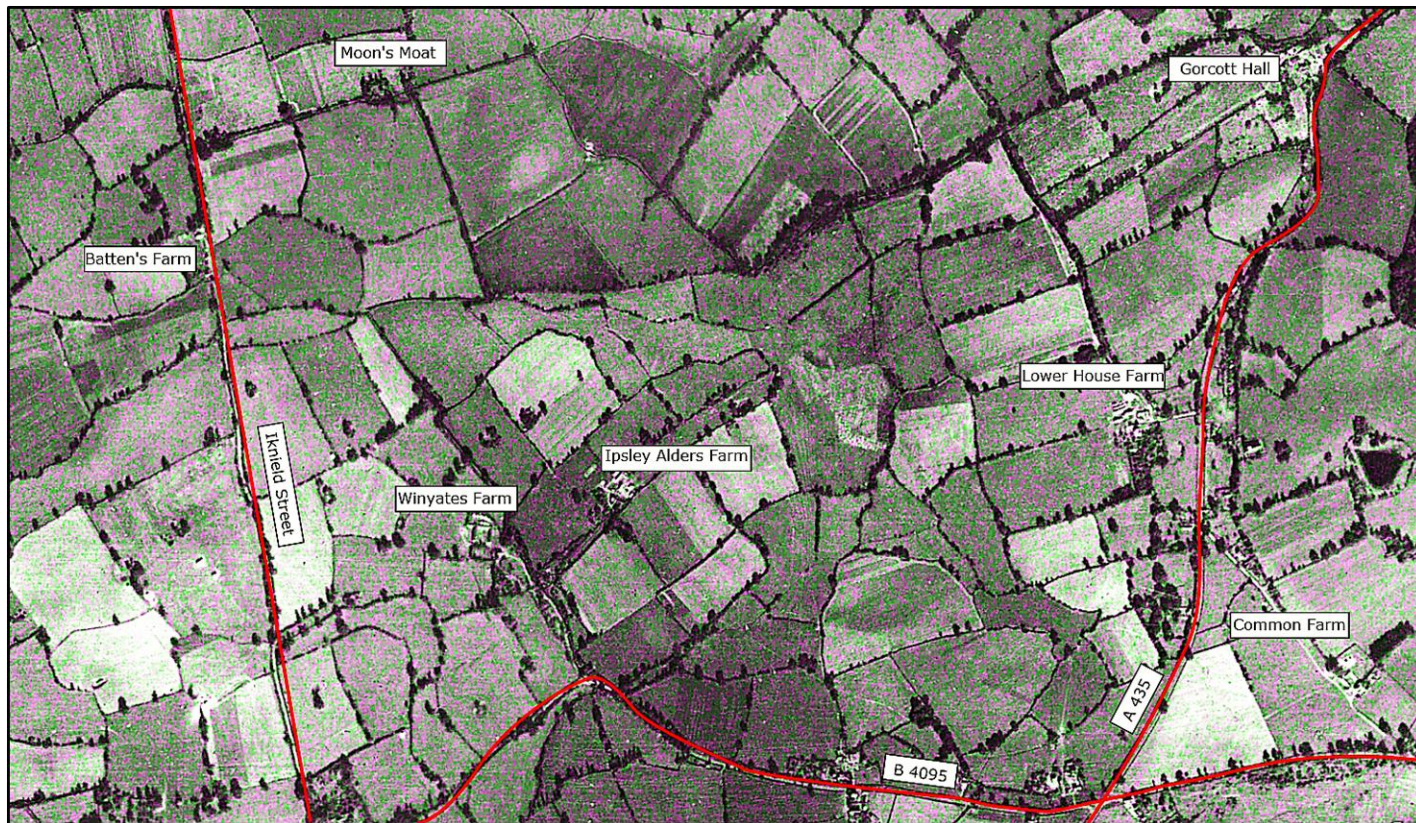
Of the three developments in the east, Church Hill is the only one which includes Ikniel Street within its development.

Winyates and Matchborough, further south, are very much east of Ikniel Street, which effectively separates them from the Arrow Valley Park, which was designed as a green space for the newly expanded town.

The next development south is Winyates, named after Winyates Farm, which lies roughly between Ikniel Street, the Alcester Road (A435) and the B4095.

Redditch from farmland to housing page 3

The 1945, aerial view illustrates the absence of any development other than farms in the area and a very rural landscape. It is interesting to see how it compares to the view sixty years on.



Redditch from farmland to housing – Part 4

The area, Matchborough, is named after Matchborough Hill, now covered by housing. It fills the area between Iknield Street, the B4095 and the A435, the Alcester Road. To the west of Iknield Street now lies the Arrow Valley Park.

