

November 2024 Meeting Report

Hi All,

We had another good turnout for our November meeting with forty members including a new member and eleven visitors, so a total of fifty-one.

We raised £42 from our book sale, and we now have sixty-two paid up members of the society.

On the remaining pages of the Newsletter, we have:

Page two is the 'Coming Events' section.

Our next Meeting, is on Monday 9th December 2024 and the presentation is by Anthony Green. We have a picture supplied by Philip Jarvis to commemorate Armistice Day and details of the Forge Mill Christmas Fair.

Pages three and four

Is a report on our November meeting presentation, 'Humble Homes: Vernacular Architecture in Britain' which was given by Dr. Richard Churchley

Pages five, six, seven and eight.

In this edition of the Newsletter, I reach the conclusion of my Redditch Farming heritage series.

Last month I looked at the change in land usage in the area east of the Arrow, the modern Church Hill, Winyates and Matchborough areas, which were effectively built on virgin farmland. This month I am looking at areas west of the Arrow, which were in fact large extensions of the existing urban areas.

Next Meeting.

Our next Meeting is on Monday 9th December 2024, details page 2.

As this is our Christmas meeting, we will have mince pies in addition to biscuits in our refreshment break.

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 9th December 2024

Redditch in the Snow - The Winter of 1962/3 Presentation by Anthony Green

The winter of 1962–63, known as the Big Freeze of 1963, was one of the coldest winters on record in the United Kingdom. When the snow hit Redditch, I was 19, and at Aston University, and to attend lectures was impossible, so I set out with my brother Vince to record the effect on Redditch. The photographs I took not only showed the extent of the snow but also showed Redditch at the pre-development time. In



the presentation I use contemporary maps to show the locations, for those not familiar with the town at that time and, of course, a little bit of history. Whether you lived in Redditch at the time, if you are of a 'certain age' you will certainly remember the snow!



Armistice Day 11th November

Following his talk last month, Philip Jarvis has sent us a picture of Redditch Station staff taken just before WW1.

Of those who lost their lives in the war a total of five were listed, but only two lived in Redditch and their names are on the War Memorial by St Stephen's Church. Some, or all, of them may be in the picture, but he thought it would be a fitting tribute.

Forge Mill Needle Museum Christmas Craft Fair Sunday 1st and Sunday 8th December 2024: 11.00am to 3.00pm

Traditional music and carols will provide the festive atmosphere whilst you browse amongst a variety of craft stalls to choose unique Christmas gifts.

Enjoy traditional carol singing, festive music from the Alcester Victoria Silver Band, mulled wine and Christmas crafts for children.



ADMISSION FREE

Humble Homes: Vernacular Architecture in Britain Presentation by Dr. Richard Churchley

We were pleased to have Richard again at the Society to give a presentation. as he is always interesting and entertaining.

This year he gave us an introduction to vernacular architecture which is a building form which serves immediate, local needs, and is constrained by the materials available in its particular region, reflecting local traditions and cultural practices.

Early buildings would use local materials and, before about 1850, would change a few miles away from each other due to the difficulty of transporting materials.

However, beyond this date, the canals, and more importantly, the railways changed all that and it was easy to transport materials throughout the country and building styles became more standardised.

Greensleeves (right) is a house in Edgioake Lane on the outskirts of of Astwood Bank. The centre



of the building is 17th Century and the outer parts are 20th Century. An interesting fact about this building is that it is a first building where we know that needles were made by Butler in 1690. Although needle making began earlier in Studley and Sambourne, none of the buildings now exist.

Many buildings at this time used 'wattle and daub' (right) which was a building method for making walls and buildings, in which a woven lattice of



wooden strips called "wattle" is "daubed" with a sticky material usually made of some combination of wet soil, clay, sand, animal dung and straw. The technique was used within a wooden framework which created the classic structure, however, the building was usually built on a stone base, as simply having the wooden structure in contact with



the earth would quickly cause rotting of the wood. The 'black and white' style is Victorian and would not be the original colouring. There were often additional crosspieces added to show importance as with the Bailiff's House, Bewdley (above left), and the Alvechurch centre (above right) may show both a genuine version (right of the road) and a Victorian kitsch version (left of the road).

Humble Homes: page 2

The difficulty in transporting materials is illustrated by Alcester and Bidford. Many of the original houses in Bidford (below right) are made using the local lias stone (which is a hard limestone), Alcester (below left), only four miles away, has only two stone buildings due to the difficulty of transporting such a heavy material.

It is said that the Falcon Inn in Bidford (image far right of Bidford image) was one of William Shakespeare's favourite haunts. The Falcon is no longer a pub, having been later converted to residential use, but you can still see the inn's location in the village.



Of course, an important aspect of this area is the underlying red clay. This led to the use of bricks. Initially these would be handmade and only used on expensive properties, however in the 1820s mechanised brickmaking began and allowed them to be used generally.

This led to the replacement of 'wattle and daub' by brick for buildings for the 'workers' and became the method of choice in small industrial towns such as Redditch. However, this did not change the building material used for ecclesiastical and important buildings, which was always stone.

It is not easy to find an example of the type of house we have been discussing, but fortunately we have the Merchants House at Avoncroft Museum. The building (right) had no glass in the windows and no chimney, these were reserved for the houses of the aristocracy. However, these were still superior to the hovels of the peasants which no longer exist. We are always pleased to have Richard at our meetings. He has an engaging and interesting style which keeps the audience captivated.



Redditch from farmland to housing 1945 to present time

Local Areas Woodrow, Headless Cross and Crabbs Cross

by Anthony Green

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

So, it is possible to compare an aerial view of the area in 1945 to the area after the completion of the New Town development.

Last month I looked at the change in land usage in the area east of the Arrow, the modern Church Hill, Winyates and Matchborough areas, which were effectively built on virgin farmland. These were, in my view, a true 'New Town'.

This month I am looking at areas west of the Arrow, which were in fact large extensions of the existing urban areas.

The areas which were most affected were:

Woodrow was the first major housing development for the Corporation and included the first commercial centre. In 1945 Studley Road was relatively free of housing but during the post war period there were extensive developments such as Lodge Park and Greenlands. Woodrow extended this on taking in the farmland between Redditch and Studley with an increase in both housing and industrial sites.

In 1945, **Crabbs Cross and Headless Cross** were still regarded as separate from Redditch but in the intervening years there was steady development along the Ridgeway. With the New Town expansion, the developments spread east and west to the valley and new roads were introduced to bypass the Evesham Road.

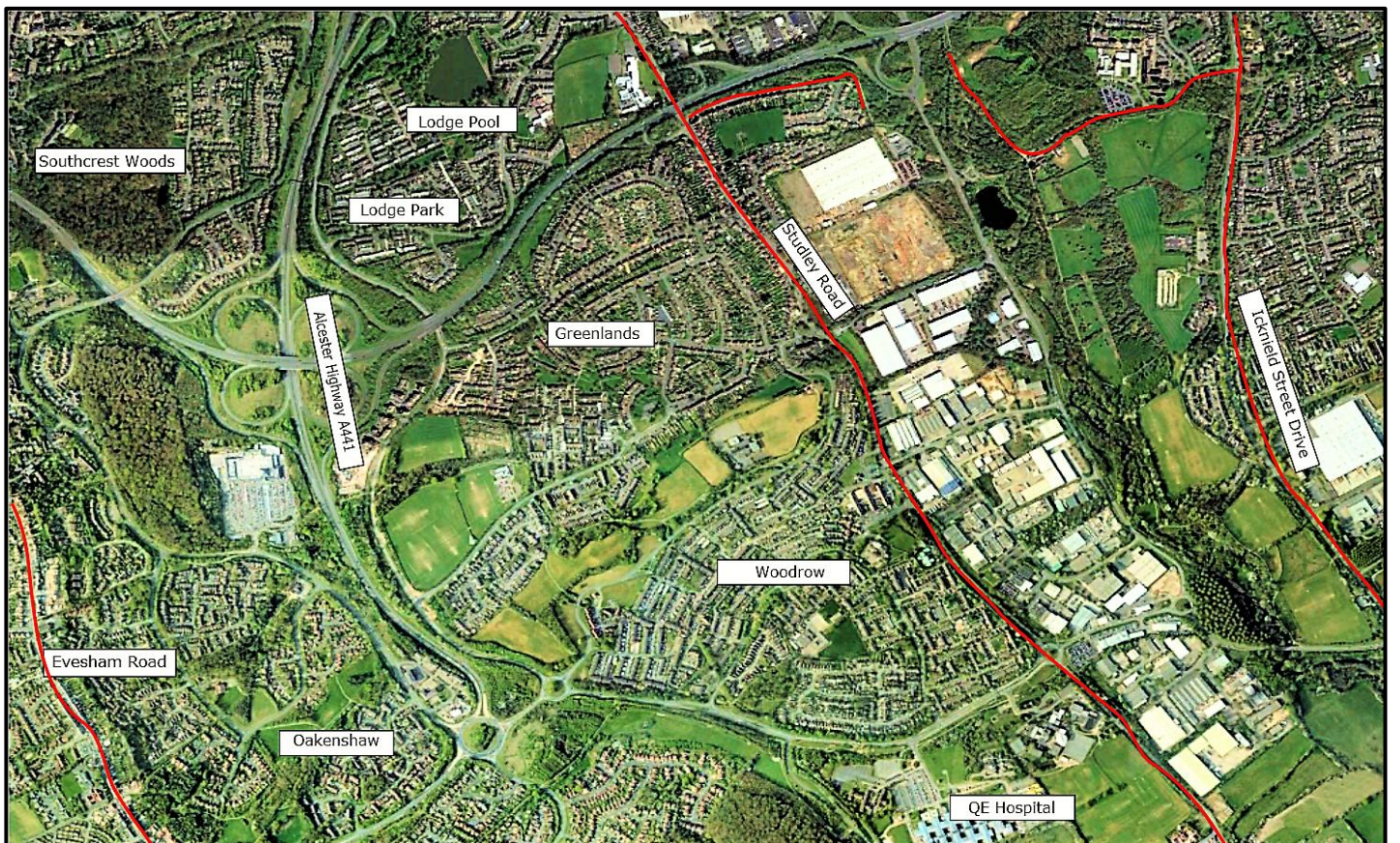
Webheath and Batchley, had both been extensively developed after the post war period. Webheath, primarily private houses, and Batchley was the towns largest council estate. There were additions during the time of the New Town Development Corporation, but these were extensions to existing housing developments.

This therefore concludes my articles on the farming heritage of the town which I began in the May 2024 issue.

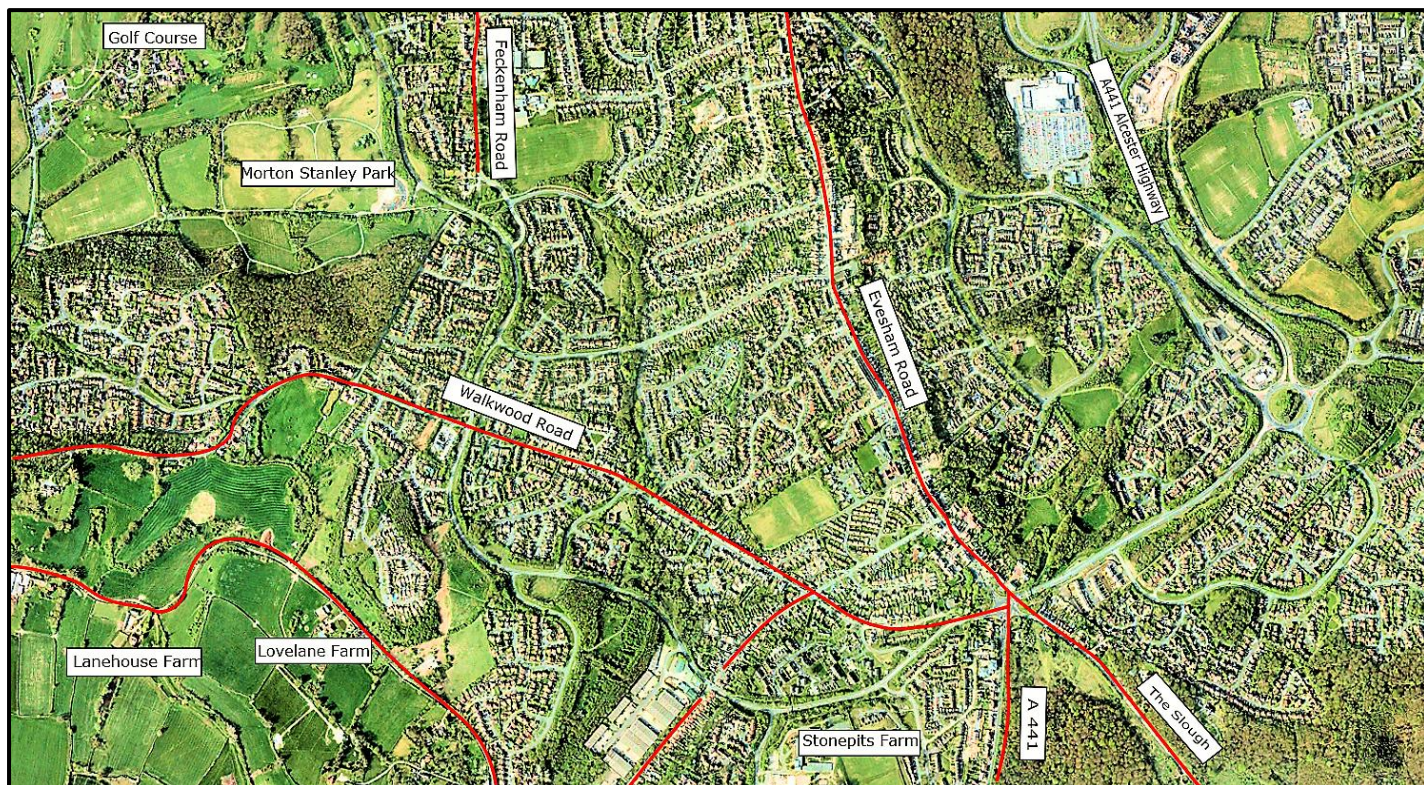
Hopefully, we may have some input from members and supporters which can be used in 2025. It is your Newsletter and your opportunity to tell us about something of interest to others.

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Studley Road and Woodrow



Crabbs Cross



Redditch from farmland to housing – Part 4

Headless Cross

