

Newsletter June 2025

Hi All,

We had another successful meeting, with a good attendance comprised of 37 members plus two new members, making 39 members plus 14 visitors, so making a total of 53 at the meeting. The addition of two new members brings our membership up to 60, which encourages us that we are supplying a popular range of talks. Attendees will have noticed that I have reintroduced the printed agenda since putting it on the screen was not a success!

On the remaining pages of the Newsletter, we have:

On page two is the 'Coming Events' section.

Our next meeting is on Monday 14th July and is entitled Ten Birmingham Women and is given by Henrietta Lockhart, University of Birmingham.

Also, we have the latest information on events/exhibitions at Forge Mill Needle Museum, particularly for dog lovers!

Page 3 Is a report on the 'Surgery in the Nineteenth Century' presentation given at our June meeting.

Pages 4 and 5 I have written a short reminiscence of being a delivery boy at Webbs of Redditch which you may find interesting. I hope that this, plus the articles by William Purser, may inspire others to do something similar. Even if you are not a native of the town, your memories of arriving here is all part of local history.

On page 6 Is a short piece about the British Association of Local History.

On page 7 and 8 we I have posted the front and back pages of the latest Redditch Local History Museum four-page leaflet.

Next Meeting...

Our next Meeting is on Monday 14th July 2025 see page 2 for more information. Our meeting will be, as always at the Oasis Christian Centre starting at 2.00 pm.

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

E-mail: tony.rhs@btinternet.com Tel: 01527 61434

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is on Monday 14th July and is entitled Ten Birmingham Women and is given by Henrietta Lockhart, University of Birmingham.

This talk revolves around Margaret Nettlefold, a well-educated and confident Victorian woman, born into a prominent Birmingham industrial dynasty and destined to marry into another. It draws upon objects from the collection held at Winterbourne House and Garden - to explore her life and those of other women associated with her. We meet suffragettes, academics, artists, a ladies' maid - and a baby



It's great to have Henrietta back at the Society and we know that we will have a well presented and informed talk using information from the collections at Winterbourne House and Garden.



Sun 13 July 2025: 12.00 noon onwards FUN DOG SHOW

A fun filled dog show for the whole family with rosettes awarded in each category:

Categories are:

Best Youngster (under 18 months); Gorgeous Girls; Handsome Chaps; Golden Oldie (9 and over); Best Dressed (Dog and Owner); Dog Most like the Owner; Waggiest Tail; Young Handler (under 16); The dog the judge would most like to take home; Forge Mill's Got Talent; Best In Show

Register your dogs from 12.00pm. Demonstrations from 12.15pm. Dog Show starts at 12.45pm.

Registrations are on the day and will cost £2.00 for each category.

ADMISSION FREE - Normal museum entry fees apply.

<https://www.forgemill.org.uk/web/events>



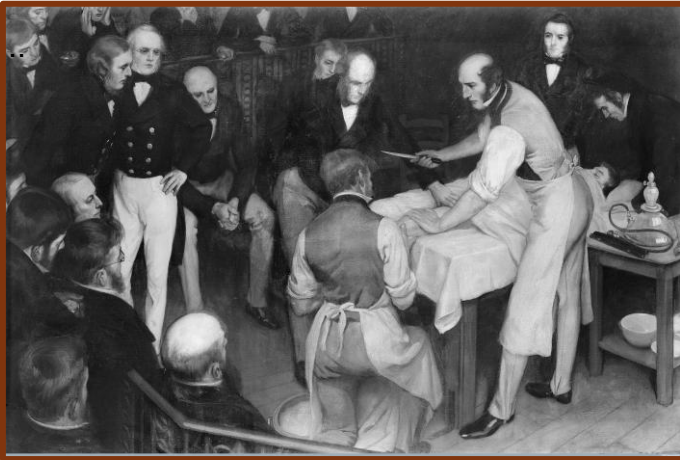
Stalls and photography will also be available.

'Surgery in the Nineteenth Century.'

by Louise Robinson

Louise revisited the History Society this year to give another of her fascinating talks on the history of medicine in the 19th Century. On this occasion she discussed the major advances in surgery which occurred during this period.

This was a very detailed presentation lasting more than an hour where she discussed the individuals involved and the advances made. In this report I will give a simple overview.



Historically, there were four main problems related to successful surgery, ignorance of the layout of the human body, blood loss during surgery, pain and infection.

The former two were largely understood by the 16th Century, and there were solutions, however the latter two were still serious problems,

At the beginning of the 19th Century surgery was very painful and had a high death rate, by the end, pain had been significantly reduced, and survival rates were much higher.

The methods used to reduce pain at the beginning of the century included alcohol, opium, deadly nightshade, stinging nettles, mesmerism which were just as likely to kill the patient and were geneally ineffective. So, the trick for the surgeon was to do the operation as quickly as possible. However, often those who did not die on the operating table died soon afterwards.

Louise described the work that went into the development of anesthetics, the stops and starts, the characters involved, passing through false starts such as nitrous oxide until we arrive at ether and finally chloroform.

I must point out that these two paragraphs summarise a very interesting and detailed history of the development of anesthetics which took up more than half the presentation, so apologies for the brevity.!

Unfortunately, no matter how good the operation, it was derailed by death by infection afterwards and over the century the understanding related to infection improved in line with the understanding of infection generally.

At the beginning of the century the 'gentlemen' surgeons often wore their day clothes to carry out the surgery and did not wash their hands. However, despite their resistance, hand washing and gowns were introduced. Joseph Lister had noted that carbolic acid was very effective against sewage and so introduced a fine mist spray of the acid throughout the area and, in 1890 rubber gauntlets were introduced. The actions reduced the incidence of death by infection from more than 17% to less than 2%.

This, again, was an amazingly detailed and informative presentation from Louise which shows how recent, in historical terms, modern medicine is and how grateful we should be to our Victorian trail blazers. The presentation was much appreciated by the audience who had many questions to ask afterwards.



Reminiscences

Saturday delivery lad at Webbs - Anthony Green

I began working as a 'Saturday Lad' at Webbs bakery in early 1956.

Although the earliest age when it was possible to do part time work for schoolchildren was 13, I actually started a few months before my 13th birthday as my brother Vince, who was leaving school at 16 to take up an apprenticeship at Entaco, proposed me for a job there before he left.



This is a recent picture I took of the area. Peakman Street is the road to the right. On this side of Peakman Street, now Shipleys, was the Webbs Seed shop, and on the opposite side was the bakery shop, followed by further down Peakman Street by the bakery and, finally, opposite Wellington Street, the garage for the delivery vehicles.

I began by working in the seed shop which was the other side of Peakman Street from the bread shop (it's now Shipley's) where I weighed and packed seed potatoes which arrived in large sacks into brown paper bags and put on the labels.

I can still remember some of the names such as Arran Pilot (and all the other Arrans), Home Guard, King Edward and Pentland.

I also weighed out bulk peas, runner beans and broad beans and put them into their packets.

I then moved over the road to the enclosed area behind the bakery where the vans were loaded and charged, and other activities were carried out.

A task I well remember was bread slicing and wrapping. The machine would never be allowed these days, as it consisted of a row of vertically activated blades (similar to hacksaw blades) and you pushed the large tin loaf down an inclined chute using the other loaves so that it was pushed through the blades.

The sliced loaf then went through a complex, and largely unreliable, wrapping section which used wax paper and hot plates which swung up and melted the wax to seal the two sides.

The final loaf was pushed through using an old stale loaf!

A Saturday Deliver Lad - continued

At the beginning I helped numerous roundsmen with their rounds when their 'Saturday lad' was ill or on holiday. I think that I must have delivered bread in every road in the town! However, eventually, I had a permanent round where I helped the roundsman every Saturday.

The routes were amazingly spread. My permanent round did Bridley Moor Road, the Cedar Road area (we used to go to the Cedars and the housekeeper used to come out and collect the bread), we then crossed Hewell Road and went up Dixon's yard, past the coal sidings, and up to the wooden bungalows.

We then returned, went along Elm Road, Britten Street, turned into Bromsgrove Road and did all the houses as far as Cherry Tree Walk. We then crossed the town and did Marsden Road (including Mount Street and Glover Street) and Lodge Road and then did Farm Road/Sillins Avenue area. I think that we had one or two other bits and pieces as well and by the time we had finished the poor old battery in the float was really struggling.



The vehicles used within the town were battery powered delivery vans. This Co-op van is a good example of the type used by Webbs.

They had lead acid traction batteries which could give a good discharge over a long time.

They were particularly used in the 50s and 60s for bread and milk delivery. This type of delivery is suited to battery powered vehicles and, after a long pause, we seem to be going back to this concept with modern technology.

When I think of the amount of cash, I carried in my leather money satchel, it is horrifying in terms of the risks today, but then it was not an issue.

I worked at Webbs for 5 years, beginning a few months before my 13th birthday and finishing a few months before my 18th birthday, as I thought that perhaps I should do a bit of revision for my 'A' levels.

I never thought that giving up my Saturday in this way was an imposition and it was satisfying to earn a little bit of money of my own.

I learnt a lot about the value of money, about people and about work, all useful stuff for later in life.

The Redditch History Society is a member of the British Association for Local History which is the national charity which promotes local history and serves local historians. As well as having a web site with details and contacts for all it's members, it publishes two journals, the Local Historian and Local History News every three months, various publications and provides a comprehensive insurance scheme.

The journals are available at our meeting reception area, and you can borrow them at will. Within The Local Historian they have a section for Journals and Newsletters received, which they describe as:

The more substantial articles in these journals are noted below, but we do not give a full contents list. Most journals are listed alphabetically by geographical location, not title of publication; general journals are at the end of the list. Newsletters generally include details of forthcoming events, society business and administrative matters not noted in these summaries.

For interest, I have copied our entry from the latest Local Historian which gives a three-month summary of the type of articles which we publish.

Redditch History Society Newsletter

(vol.6 no.7 November 2024)

<http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/>

Redditch station staff just before WW1 (photo); Forge Mill Needle Museum event; Vernacular architecture in Britain (report of talk); Redditch, from farmland to housing, 1945 to the present, part 2, areas west of the Arrow (vol.6 no.8 Dec 2024/ Jan 2025) Astwood Bank History Group; Forge Mill Needle Museum reopens; Redditch in the snow, winter 1962/3 (report of talk); Redditch timeline for 1945, end of WW2 (vol.6 no.9 February 2025) Forge Mill Needle Museum; Merrie England's Folklore Calendar (report of presentation); Communication from William Purser, resident of Headless Cross until 1960, including The Rookery at wartime (vol.6 no.10 March 2025) the Lunar Society (report of talk); Redditch Local History Museum; Forge Mill Needle Museum

LOCAL HISTORY Museum

***Admission
Price**

*** Less than the
price of a
Coffee!**

Discover the fascinating story of Redditch's history and heritage



The town of Redditch has a history stretching back a thousand years and has transformed and adapted over the years to changing times.

In 1964 it changed again to become the prosperous vibrant town we know today.

Museum Opening Times
Thursday – 10am – 4pm
Friday – 10am – 4pm
Saturday – 10am – 4pm

Telephone: 01527 390745
Email: contact@rlhm.online



*Find Us

We're in the heart of Redditch opposite St. Stephen's Church at 5 Market Place, Church Green, Redditch, B98 8AA

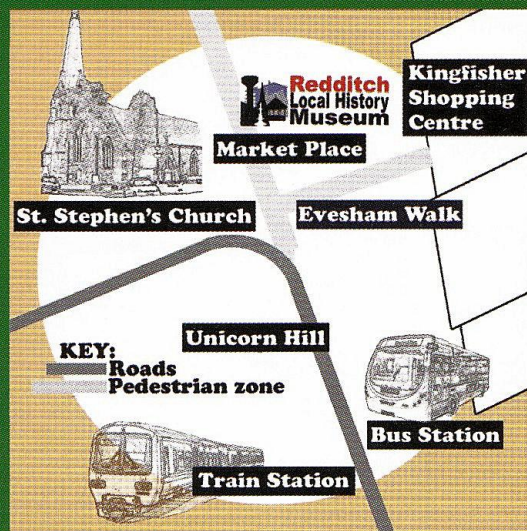
Public Transport

Railway and Bus stations are 5 minutes walk away. Walk up Unicorn Hill, continue straight on at pedestrianised area, Museum is 20 yards on the right

Car Parking

There are public car parks off Redditch Ringway. Exit car park into Kingfisher Centre, walk through to Worcester Square and exit adjacent to Nationwide Building Society. Walk 50 yards and turn right, Museum is 20 yards on the right.

Other surface car parks off Exit 1 of the Redditch Ringway on to Red Lion Street.



Can't come to us ?

We offer an outreach programme to allow Redditch and surrounding area societies / organisations who cannot access the Town Centre museum a bespoke service, tailoring curations to be exhibited within your own location.

Published by The Redditch Local History Museum which is registered with the Charities Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation..Registration Number 1191166.



*Open

Thursday, Friday & Saturday
10am to 4pm

* The ground floor gallery area is wheelchair accessible.

*Contact Us

Telephone:
01527 390745
Email:
contact@rlhm.online