

December 2023 - Meeting

Hi All,

Well, we finished the year on a high; a good speaker, a good audience and the Society looking very healthy.

We had forty-five members (including one new member and one rejoining member) and three visitors, so, a total audience of forty-eight. Our membership now stands at sixty-eight, which is a record level for the Society.

Our leaflet for 2024, which includes our 2024 programme, was available at our meeting, and will be available at future meetings.

The programme is also available on our website at <https://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/meetings.htm>, where you will also find, new for this year, a link to download the leaflet in pdf format.

Regarding this Newsletter.....

On page two are details of our first meeting for 2024 on Monday 12th February, more information related to our programme for 2024 and some useful local history links.

On Pages three and four we have a report on our December Meeting presentation 'From Brum to Bringsty Common: Tales of a Wartime Childhood.' This presentation by Bill Macham was fascinating which was very much appreciated by the audience.

On Pages five to seven I have continued my 80 years ago January Newsletter with 1944, the year before the end of WW2. This fits in well with Bill's presentation and marks an important part in the history of our town.

On Page eight I have included the programme for 2024. Well, why not, it fills in a page!

Our next meeting is our first meeting for 2024 and is on Monday 12th February 2024 'Plants preserved for Ever': Tales from the University Herbarium' which is a presentation by Henrietta Lockhart, University of Birmingham.

We do not have a meeting in January, so this Newsletter covers both December and January.

So, from all of us at the History Society we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

E-mail: tony.rhs@btinternet.com

Tel: 01527 61434

Coming up

Next Meeting Monday 12th February 2024

'Plants preserved for Ever': Tales from the University Herbarium'

A presentation by Henrietta Lockhart, University of Birmingham

For our first presentation of 2024, we are pleased to have a return visit from Henrietta, who, last year, gave us an excellent general introduction on Winterbourne House and Garden, Edgbaston.

This year Henrietta will be using her expertise to enlighten us on the plants preserved in the University Herbarium at Winterbourne,

As well as actual plant specimens, the collection also includes early photographs, botanical drawings, and correspondence about the formation of the Herbarium which sheds light on the many plant collectors who contributed to it.

This is an opportunity to learn more about this important historical source of plant data from an expert in the field.

This will be of interest to anyone interested in history or plants, or both!



Our programme for 2024

Our 2024 leaflet is now available and we have printed copies available at our meetings, and they will also be available at the Palace Theatre and Redditch Library.

There is a copy of the programme on page 8 of this Newsletter and it can be found on our website at <https://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/meetings.htm>. A pdf copy of our complete 2024 leaflet can be downloaded from this website page.

Circumstances can obviously create changes to the programme, but the website will always have the latest programme information.

You can also follow us on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RedditchHistorySociety>

Supporting Local History

If you are interested in the History of the area then the following have much to offer.....

Forge Mill Needle Museum <https://www.forgemill.org.uk/web/>

Redditch Local History Museum <https://rlhm.online/>

Worcestershire Local History Forum <https://www.wlhf.org.uk/>

Redditch Railway Interest Group <https://www.redditchrailwaygroup.org.uk/>

You will also find more at our website at <https://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/links.htm>

December Meeting Report.

'From Brum to Bringsty Common: Tales of a Wartime Childhood'

A presentation by Bill Macham

When WW2 began in 1939, Bill was one, by the end of the war, 1945, Bill was seven, so this amazing period was presented from the viewpoint of a young child living through this time.

This was a very special presentation for the Society as Bill, who is a member of the Society and was born in 1938, was able to describe, at first hand, growing up during the historic period of the Second World War.

Born in Birmingham, which was heavily bombed by the Luftwaffe, he recounted his childhood adventures from growing up in Perry Barr, moving out to the countryside and moving back to Birmingham during this period.



*Left:
Birchfield Road
Perry Barr
1930s*



*Right:
Victoria Road
Aston
1930s*

He included in his experiences growing up, the bombing and blitz of Birmingham, visiting the countryside and meeting Italian POWs, a working holiday on a farm and finally back to start school in Birmingham.

Bill was an excellent raconteur, and he was able to present his talk from the viewpoint of the adventures of a young child, while introducing the more serious aspects of an adult.

Bill lived in Perry Barr, his father worked in a factory and his mother ran the office in the successful family knitwear business until he was born.

He gave a fascinating image of how life was at this time.



*Left:
Birmingham
Bombing
WW2*



*Right:
AA Gun
WW2*

Bill described the bombing which occurred, the sleepless nights, the anti-aircraft fire, the ambulances, and the bombing destruction. Too much to mention in a quick description.

December Meeting Report cont....

His grandmother, whose only experience of the countryside was by day visits, decided that they could move to a nice cottage, and went to take a look.

The trip proved to be a disaster and, Bill gave a fascinating picture of the difference between the city and the countryside at that time. In fact, the most helpful people they met in their visit were Italian POWs.

The family then moved to Handsworth and, as well as how they lived. Bill gave an overview of Anderson and Morrison shelters.

Bill's mother and children then went on a holiday in the country on a farm in Little Hereford, near Tenbury Wells.

This was a mixed farm with a dairy herd, pigs, chickens and a working horse.



*Left:
Italian POWs
working in the
countryside*



*Right:
Children
working on a
farm*

Although rationing was strictly controlled within cities and large towns, it was not so rigorous in the countryside, and the farm was a good example.

In the kitchen they had a well under a flagstone and this was also used to store 'black market' meat sold to local people, including the local police officer.

Returning to Birmingham, Bill started school and not long afterwards we had the end of the war and all the relief which ensued.



*Left:
VE Day
Street Party in
Birmingham*



*Right:
VE Day Parade
Birmingham*

Bill obviously did not have photographs of the time and so I created a slide presentation of contemporary images from the period to carefully support the narrative.

It is not possible to describe in this brief note the wide range of experience described by Bill and his poignant and humorous presentation was very much appreciated by the audience.

Eighty Years Ago Part 1 of 3

Timeline for Redditch in 1944

January

15 Redditch soldiers in Bay of Biscay action - TA Houghton R.N - present onboard HMS Enterprise which routed 11 enemy destroyers.

29 ATC recruiting week - Parade of 60 cadets - 100 parents and friends attend Visitor Day of 143 (Redditch) squadron of ATC.

February

19 BSA Savings group - half-millionths savings certificate - since 1940 members raised £400,000 bonds and £100,000 in savings.

27 Sir Stafford Cripps, Minister of Air Production visits Redditch - Inspected 2 factories engaged in essential work.

27 Presentation to Redditch sailor Signalman G.F Sealey R.N - medal of Royal Humane Society for saving man from drowning.



*Left:
Redditch Indicator
Publicity for ATC
recruiting week.*

*Right:
Redditch Indicator
Visit by the Lord
Mayor of Manchester
to present the Coat of
Arms representing
the chief industries of
the town,*



March

11 Alcester and district women's Land Army Club presented 1944 revue at Youth Centre, Redditch.

18 Redditch Voluntary Land Corps formed in Redditch as result of Farm Sunday as farmers concerned about harvesting crops.

27/28 Lord Mayor of Manchester visit Redditch. Grant of arms representing chief industry fishing, needles, spring manufacture presented.

April

21 Redditch Red Cross Agricultural Fund - meeting of Red Cross Committee of Redditch Branch of National Farmers Union

22 ATC and RAF combine operations during ceremony of recruiting campaign for RAF for RAF recruitment week.

Eighty Years Ago - part 2 of 3

May

6 'Salute the Soldier' week - largest military parade ever held in Redditch turned out for opening. Target = £250,000.

8 Jimmy Wilde former world flyweight boxing champion visited factories and cinemas of Redditch supporting Salute the Soldier Week.

10 Exhibition of army weapons in Redditch - Gas Co. Ltd showrooms. Part of Salute the Soldier Week.

13 'Salute the Soldier' - target exceeded - triumph of small savers - £259,309 the final figures - £147,089 in small savings

22 General Sir William Dobbie speaks at Redditch - Hero for the Empire. He is governor of George Cross Island, Malta

June

16 Fire at Redditch - praise of NFS - Local fire prevented from being a disaster. At Unity Works, Other Road, Redditch.

24 Enfield Sports Gala day - included entertaining a party of wounded soldiers from nearby Emergency Hospital.



*Left:
Redditch
Indicator
'Salute the
Soldier' total
sum raised*

*Right:
Redditch
Indicator
Images of
Redditch
Carnival 1944*



July

1 Terry's Athletics Sports - Terry's Athletic Club ground - Winners received prizes in savings certificates.

28 Redditch Carnival - week of amusement - opened with crowning Carnival Queen Millicent Phillips - presented with key of town.

August

12 Redditch Hospital and Carnival sports - well organised events. Finale to Carnival - Open-air concert outside Smallwood Hospital.

19 Wounded servicemen entertained - Guests of Terry's workers - over 100 entertained in Welfare Hall, Redditch

Eighty Years Ago Part 3 of 3

September

2 Redditch Horticultural show - record entries and fine exhibits - visitor Mr. G. W. Giles, Secretary of National Allotments Society

16 Britannia Batteries - Britain Sports Club organised - joint sports and flower show on works ground - Millsborough Road, Redditch.

17 Teams from 9th Worcs (Redditch) Battalion Home Guard competed for Collier Cup at Hampton Lovett. Winner Terry's Platoon.

October

7 HDA - tributes to Civil Defence and Home Guard - entertained them with concert - hundreds arrived.

9 RUDC meeting. Pictures of the blitz on Dec 11th, 1940, presented by Mr. George White - to show effort of Civil Defence Services



November

12 Home Guard band - concert at Kingfisher - 9th Battalion of Worcs Home Guard made first public appearance.

18 Equipment of Home Guard called in to central depots to be sent back by Dec 31st. Parades on Dec 3rd but no arms.

24 Carnival Committee meeting- £1,400 realised for Smallwood Hospital Extension Fund.

December

3 Home Guard - stand down from active roles - ceremonial parade in Redditch - 9th Worcs Battalion parade, addresses and hymns.

9 Redditch recognised over 'Salute the Soldier' week - plaques and certificates. Colonel Bullock OBE attended for Secretary of State

16 Pilot Officer G.G Chesworth obtain Distinguished Flying Corps award for dedication to duty in RAF.

January	WE HAVE NO MEETING IN JANUARY	<i>January break</i>
12 th February	'Plants preserved for Ever': Tales from the University Herbarium	Henrietta Lockhart, University of Birmingham
11 th March	The English Civil War in Worcestershire 1642-1651	Max Keen
8 th April	Annual General Meeting plus local history film(s)	Society Executive
13 th May	Sutton Hoo and King Radwald	Paul Mortimer
10 th June	A History of Death Masks and Phrenology	Louise Robinson
8 th July	All Roads Lead to Rome: The Story of Roman Roads in Britain	Alan Godfrey
August	WE HAVE NO MEETING IN AUGUST	<i>August break</i>
9 th September	Continuing our walk around Redditch using old picture postcards	Chris Jackson
14 th October	The Redditch Railway	Philip Jarvis
11 th November	Humble Homes: Vernacular Architecture in Britain	Richard Churchley
9 th December	Redditch in the Snow - The Winter of 1962/3	Anthony Green

Our meetings take place at the Oasis Christian Centre, 4 Plymouth Road, Redditch, B97 4QB

Meetings begin at 2.00 pm and last for approximately 2 hours, it begins with a presentation, which lasts about one hour, and this is followed by refreshments and society business, event news and project reports.

Non-members are welcome for whom there will be a £4 entrance charge. This is refundable against the membership fee if subsequently joining the society the same day.

if planning to attend a specific event, please check our web site, our Facebook page, or monthly Newsletter for meeting details and any changes.

For further details of the Redditch History Society visit: www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk

E-mail: contact@redditchhistorysociety.org.uk or telephone the secretary at 01527 61434