

## March 2025

Hi All,

We had another excellent turnout for our meeting on Monday 10th March. We had 46 members and 15 visitors, and so a total of 61. The history of the Lunar Society is clearly a topic which creates much interest.

On the remaining pages of the Newsletter, we have:

**Page two is the 'Coming Events' section.**

This devoted to our Annual General Meeting, which is on Monday 14th April 2025. Please try to attend, as we rely on the input from members.

**Pages three** is a report on our March meeting event 'The Lunar Society' which was an excellent presentation by Peter Borg-Bartolo.

As this is the Newsletter for the Redditch History Society, I feel that it should promote our two history museums. The well established Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre and the newer, and much smaller, volunteer run, Redditch Local History Museum. So....

**Pages four and five.** I have reproduced the article, originally published in the Redditch Advertiser, concerning the reopening of the Redditch Local History Museum after the winter break.

**Page six.** This is devoted to Forge Mill Needle Museum and I have reproduced their 2025 leaflet.

**Pages seven and eight.** I have printed the minutes for last year's AGM. These will need to be approved at the meeting. I will not be printing them out for the meeting, but they will be on screen.

**Next Meeting.**

Monday 14th April 2025 and is the AGM which is detailed on page 2.

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

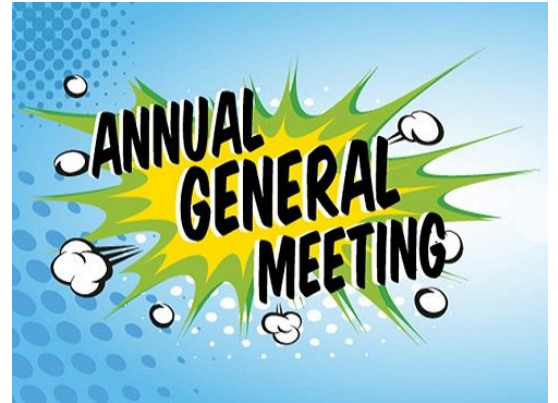
Anthony Green, Secretary, E-mail: [tony.rhs@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.rhs@btinternet.com), Tel: 01527 61434

# Next Meeting

Our next Meeting is on Monday 14th April 2025  
and is the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The annual general meeting, which is probably the least interesting of our meeting for many members is, in many ways, the most important.

It is here where we elect our Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and members of the executive committee, we decide our programme of events for the next year, and, obviously, without these actions the Society could not exist.



The format for the meeting is that the current Chair (Elizabeth Simpson), Secretary (Anthony Green) and Treasurer (Graham Smith) give their annual reports, and this is followed by the election of officers for the current year.

Our current officers have agreed to continue in their posts and Pat Bushaway is happy to continue as speaker organiser. The other elected member of the management committee, Richard Watson is willing to continue, and we are always looking for additional members for the Committee.

Gil Barlow has stepped down as our Independent Accounts Examiner, and we are pleased to announce that Malcolm Acton has agreed to take on the position.

Of course, if anyone is interested in being involved in the management of the Society, we are pleased to welcome them. There is no limit to the size of the Management Committee.

We will have renewal forms and new member forms at reception, and we will be collecting the fees after the meeting in the refreshments (Reeves) room.

Please have cheques/cash, and pens, at the ready.

The AGM meeting will take about 20 minutes and following the AGM, we will have about 40 mins of film related to WW2, particularly the end of.

These are contemporary cinema 'shorts' both government information films and Pathe news.



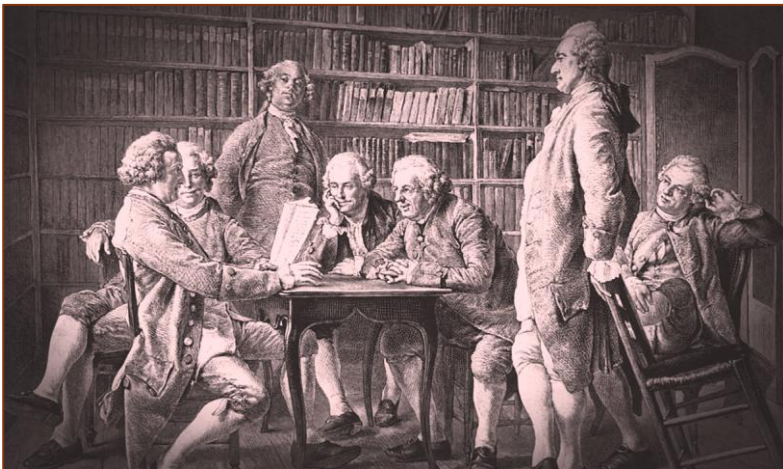
## 'The Lunar Society' - presentation by Peter Borg-Bartolo

The presentation at our March meeting was 'The Lunar Society', and was given by Peter Borg-Bartolo. Peter is a qualified doctor who has spent his entire working life in various roles in the medical profession. He was the recent Chair of the Lunar Society, Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, and a trustee of Services for Education.

Peter gave us a fascinating introduction to the Society which was created in an important period in the history of the industrial revolution and put the West Midlands at the centre of these developments.

The Birmingham Lunar Society was an informal group of friends including some of the most prominent figures of The West Midlands Enlightenment such as Matthew Boulton, Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgwood, Joseph Priestley and James Watt. The society met during the full moon as its light made the journey home easier and safe. Many of its discussions which often included experiments took place at Matthew Boulton's home Soho House.

They existed from around 1765 and 1813 and were a major contribution to the industrial revolution.



Left: A meeting of the Lunar Society

Right: Boulton, Murdock and Watt by William Bloye

Peter, who talked without notes, had a clear and open style, and took us through the history of the group. Although there were the principal members of the Society, there were many others with different disciplines who contributed, not to forget their families and friends.

This wide range of interests and ideas was a 'melting pot' which made an important contribution to the technology and industry of the age.

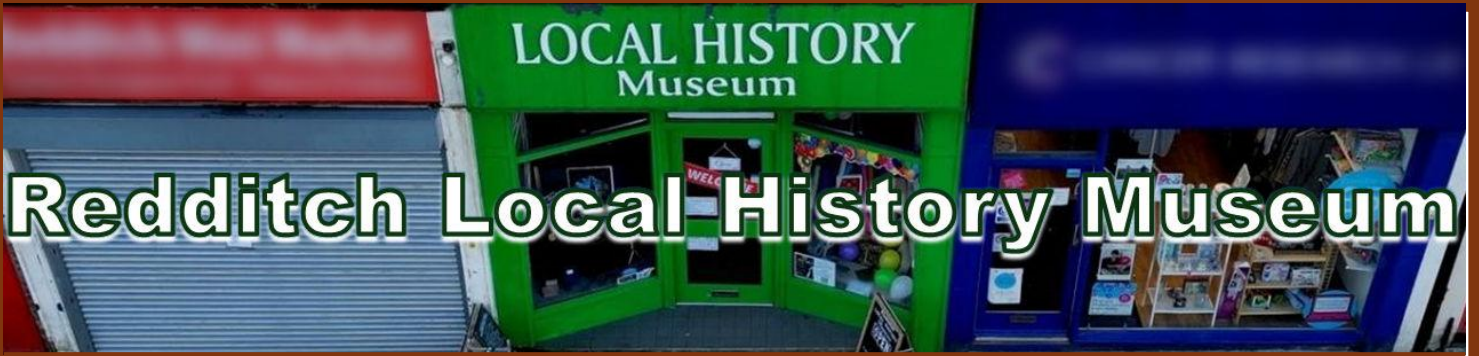
There are interesting Heritage Trails created by the modern-day Lunar Society which can be found at <https://lunarsociety.org.uk/the-lunar-society-heritage-trail/>. There are two leaflets available one covering Birmingham and, a second, Midlands Lunar Trail which explores the Midlands connections of the original group. Both can be downloaded from the above link.

The Lunar Society fizzled out in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but after much post war discussion the modern Lunar Society was created in 1991.

Their website <https://lunarsociety.org.uk/> has information about the wide range of activities the modern society is involved in, but also much information about the original society and its importance to the industrial revolution.

This was an absorbing talk, and Peter had many questions both from the audience and later one-to-one with individuals.

This was a fascinating account of an important part of our West Midland history.



# Redditch Local History Museum

Staff at Redditch Local History Museum were delighted to reopen their doors on February 6 after being closed over Christmas.

The popular museum in the town centre, which had undergone a revamp and now features a new John Bonham display, held a special event to mark its reopening earlier this month.

Mayor Juma Begum and other councillors attended the event alongside many guests who have supported the museum from its inception.



**LEFT: Juma Begum, the Mayor of Redditch, attended the reopening event (Image: Roy Edwards)**  
**RIGHT: Joan Williams and June Strong who work at the museum (Image: Roy Edwards)**

The museum gallery has now been revamped, and visitors can now have a virtual walk down Evesham Street passing artefacts relating to several shops. Philip Jarvis has donated a model of Redditch railway goods yard which was located on Clive Road originally. The Palace Theatre have also provided artefacts and a sewing machine. A display dedicated to Led Zeppelin's late drummer John Bonham, who hailed from Redditch, was also donated by Ros Sidaway, who previously ran the Vintage Trax record shop.



**LEFT: The new John Bonham display (Image: Roy Edwards)**  
**RIGHT: Chairman Malcolm Hicks with Redditch mayor Juma Begum (Image: Roy Edwards)**



**LEFT:**  
The museum was busy on the day  
(Image: Roy Edwards)

The museum is open Thursday to Saturday 10am until 4pm, but can accommodate larger groups outside of these hours, also evening if required.

Malcolm Hicks remains chairman alongside Trustees June Strong, Peter Brough and Martyn Curry. Julia Cutting is now the museum's manager.

The Redditch Local History Museum is a registered charity formed to create and run an independent local history museum.

It is run entirely by volunteers and relies on public donations, local business sponsorships and grants to fund its operation.

It is located in the centre of Redditch on Church Green and focuses its activities on those areas of local history not included in the scope of the National Needle Museum at Forge Mill.

As a key part of its operation, it has created the Redditch Historic Archives. The facility collects, stores and interprets artefacts that represent Redditch Local History.



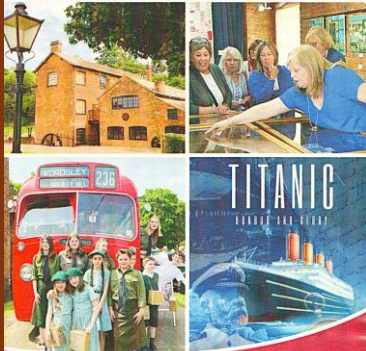
**Right:**  
Visitors taking a look at the displays  
(Image: Roy Edwards)

*Text by kind permission of Redditch Local History Museum and previously published in the Redditch Advertiser.*

# FORGE MILL NEEDLE MUSEUM

Experience the fascinating story of needle making in Victorian times

## Forge Mill 2025



## Needle Museum & Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre

- Specialist textile centre
- Historical buildings & excavations
- National collections
- Exhibitions & events
- Activities & fun days
- Children's play area

forgemill.org.uk  
01527 62509



## FORGE MILL

Tells the fascinating & sometimes gruesome story of needle making in Victorian times. The Mill is a listed building which houses original water-powered machinery. Models & recreated scenes provide a vivid illustration of how needles were once made & how Redditch came to dominate the world needle trade. The museum was opened by the Queen in 1983.

Step back in time & experience the atmosphere of a Victorian needle polishing mill. The scouring mill is the only one of its kind remaining in the world.

### CONTEMPORARY TEXTILES

To celebrate our association with needles, Forge Mill regularly hosts textile exhibitions. Please see our website for more details.

### PLAY AREA

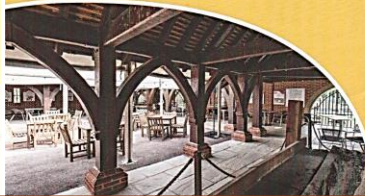
Our play area has been refurbished for our younger visitors with new play equipment surrounding our extensive sand pit.

### ENJOY LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AT THE

#### MillView COFFEE BAR

Which serves a range of hot drinks, including specialist coffees.

These can be accompanied by a selection of light refreshments from teacakes to toasties & delicious, locally made homemade cakes.



## BORDESLEY ABBEY



Just a short walk from the Mill are the Medieval ruins of Bordesley Abbey, once a thriving Cistercian Abbey. The site has been extensively excavated & many of the archaeological finds can now be seen in the Visitor Centre in which the story of the Abbey is told; from its early development to its destruction in the 16th Century by Henry VIII, during the Dissolution.



## OPENING TIMES FOR MUSEUM, SHOP & VISITOR CENTRE

**1 FEB TO 28 FEB** Every day: 10am - 3pm  
(Inc. Coffee Bar & Grounds)

**1 MARCH TO 2 NOV** Every day: 10am - 4pm  
Coffee Bar & Grounds: 10am - 4.30pm

**3 NOV TO 24 NOV** Every day: 10am - 3pm  
(Inc. Coffee Bar & Grounds)

Last admission 30 minutes before closing time.  
**MUSEUM CLOSED FROM 24 NOVEMBER.**  
REOPENS 1 FEBRUARY 2026.

### ADMISSION RATES

ADULTS: £6.95

CHILDREN: £2.25

FAMILY TICKET: £16

Textile  
Connoisseurs  
Club Pass £14  
see website for info

### FACILITIES

The museum has ample parking, toilets, a shop, large play area & picnic tables throughout the grounds. Bicycle stands are available at the visitor centre. Only registered assistance dogs are allowed inside the museum.

- Guided tours of the mill every Tuesday, April - Sept at 11am.
- Venue hire available for weddings & private parties.

### DISABLED FACILITIES

The museum has designated car parking, toilet, & manual wheelchair available. Guides in Braille & large type on request. An interactive guide is available for the top floor displays.

### CONTACT US

FORGE MILL & BORDESLEY ABBEY VISITOR CENTRE  
Needle Mill Lane, Riverside, Redditch, B98 8HY

01527 62509  
www.forgemill.org.uk  
info@formgemill.org.uk

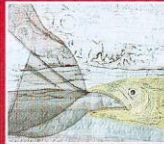


## EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

### 1st February - 16th March

#### Hidden

An exhibition by the Contemporary Quilt Group of the British Isles



Challenged to create 12 small journal quilts (one each month) including a 3D piece. The resulting work shows pieces that are technically complex and some others are deceptively simple; some showcase the design element, others have deeper stories to tell.

### 19th March - 27th April



#### Expressions

An exhibition by Bernice Hopper and Becca Birtles

These two textile artists come together to explore the themes of captivity, freedom and identity, disability and communication in an exhibition that goes beyond the traditions of textile art.

### 12th - 20th April Easter Egg Trail



### 30th April - 1st June

#### Mixing it up

An exhibition by Eclectica The textile group are back at Forge Mill with a vibrant new exhibition which showcases their diverse approaches to contemporary textiles. Expect the unexpected!



10th & 11th May

### 25th May Farm Day



### 4th June - 13th July

#### Curiosity

By The '98 Lace Group

Inspired by the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, this exhibition aims to challenge the traditional view of lacemaking by giving it a contemporary twist.

### 8th June

## INKED!

Art for Tattoo Needles



### 14th & 15th June

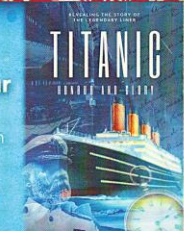
#### Step Back in Time



### 19th July - 30th August

#### Titanic: Honour and Glory

This special exhibition contains rare artefacts from the Titanic and her sister ships, Britannic and Olympic. Discover more about the allure of Titanic through original ephemera and the personal stories of those on board.



### 31st August 'The Big Bad Wolf' Outdoor Theatre



### 3rd September - 19th October

#### Arranging Nature

An exhibition by Hilary Beattie



Well known textile artist Hilary Beattie is back with an exhibition drawing upon her love for the natural world. She aims to inspire you to notice all the wonderful, varied form and motifs, amongst nature's enduring beauty.

### 21st September Heritage Day



### 22nd October - 23rd November

#### Creative Approaches

An exhibition by Oddfellows Art

Nine artists, each with their own specialism - including pottery, textiles, printing and painting collaborate to bring together an exhibition celebrating the natural world.



### 30th Nov & 7th Dec Christmas Craft Fair



# Minutes of AGM - April 2024

## Annual Reports

The meeting began with the annual reports from the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The treasurer also presented the accounts for the financial year ending December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023.

## 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.

# Minutes of AGM - April 2024 cont...

## 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.

## Any Other Business:

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

## Society Accounts:

The accounts for the year ending December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023, were presented by the Treasurer and were approved by the meeting.

The minutes for the AGM in April 2023 were approved by the meeting.