

***THE  
POOR AND THE  
WORKERS OF  
REDDITCH***

***Taken from the Index  
of Newspaper Documents  
(1838 – 2015)***

## **This Document.....**

*We have been researching the history of Redditch as reported in newspapers as events happened. We have collected together over 15,000 clips of such events and these have been organised into about 200 categories. Each of these documents reports the newspaper clips for that category in chronological sequence. At the start of each document is an index to the contents of that document.*

*This document represents the index for **“The Poor and the Workers of Redditch”** documents which gives an overall view of life in Redditch through the years, 1838 – 2015.*

*These documents have been created to enable those interested in researching, or just reading about Redditch history, and opportunity to see what topics have been included in the detailed documents, which, for copyright reasons, cannot be put on-line.*

*The detail documents are accessible off-line at shows, exhibitions and other events organised by the Redditch Local History Society.*

## **Newspaper Titles – 35**

### **The Poor and the Workers of Redditch**

**(Document The Poor of Redditch 1838 – 1927)**

#### **Contents**

*A subscription, which already amounts to nearly £100., has been opened in Redditch, for the purpose of regaling the poor in that place and neighbourhood, including about 700 children belonging to the various Sunday Schools, on the Coronation Day. – June 1838* 6

*The munificent donations of the noble Plymouth family at this time of the year to the poor neighbours are well known. – December 1838* 6

*Ten tons of coal, the gift of Mr C. Milward, was on Wednesday distributed to the necessitous poor of this town. This is the second time during the present winter that the above named gentleman has performed a similar act of judicious benevolence. – February 1841* 6

*Relief of the Poor – June 1847* 6

*Bromsgrove Union – Persons willing to contract for the supply of bread, flour, meat, and groceries for the period of fourteen weeks from the 18th December next, are requested to deliver at the Union Office, Bromsgrove, Sealed Tenders, properly endorsed, with samples of the Bread, Flour, and Groceries, not later than 10 o'clock on Monday morning, the 13th December next, on which day the Tenders will be opened. – December 1847* 7

*A liberal Landlord – The Hon. R.H. Clive has in the most kind and considerate manner, returned half of the year's rent to the various tenants of the allotments at Redditch, Webheath, and the Lickey, in consequence of the failure of the potato crops. – September 1848* 7

*St Thomas's Day Bounties – The Messrs. W. Bartleet & Sons last week caused to be distributed amongst the poor the liberal sum of £15. and half of the best beasts the town could produce, cut up into suitable pieces of four and six pounds, according to the number in the family of the recipients. – December 1848* 8

*Christmas Gifts – Nineteen guineas, left by the will of the late W. Hemming, Esq., were last week distributed by the Rev. G. F. Fessey to the poor of Redditch. – January 1849* 9

*Relief of the Poor – By means of public subscriptions, a soup kitchen has been opened for several weeks at the Unicorn Hotel, from which numerous poor families have derived substantial relief twice in each week, doled out with a liberal hand by the Rev. G. F. Fessey,*

- W. Field, T. Holyoake, Esqrs., and assistants; the soup being of superior quality. – January 1849* 9
- Land Allotment – During the last few weeks, Easemore Farm, adjoining this town (for many years in the possession of the late Mr Charles Wadcot) has been subdivided by order of the proprietor the Hon. R. H. Clive, M.P. – March 1850* 10
- Seasonable Benevolence – We are happy to hear that the Messrs. W. Bartleet & Sons, of the Fish and Shrubbery Needle Works, have, with their accustomed liberality at this festive season, gladdened the hearts of a numerous body of the poor with a bountiful provision of very excellent beef, together with various sums of money to poor widows. – January 1851* 10
- Generous Conduct – Messrs. Bartleet and Son, generously caused to be distributed on St Thomas' days among about 300 widows and indigent folk, 21 score of prime beef and £15 in money. – December 1852* 11
- Seasonable Munificence – With their accustomed generosity, the Messrs. Bartleet caused to be doled out on Christmas day, in suitable proportions, upwards of 5 cwt. of prime beef, and a sum of money to the poor of the town, as did also the representatives of Messrs. R. Hemming and Son. – January 1854* 11
- Seasonable Beneficence – With considerate kindness for the poor and needy at this inclement season. Jas. Holyoake, Esq., last week caused to be distributed amongst fifty of the aged poor of this township, 4lbs. of good beef and 2cwt. of coal each. – January 1854* 12
- This severe weather is very trying to the poor. Trade continues bad at Redditch. – February 1855* 12
- Munificent Gift to the Poor – James Holyoake Esq., formerly of Redditch needle manufacturer, by his will dated the 16th of March last, has given to the Minister and Churchwardens of Redditch, for the time being the sum of £2,000, to be invested in their names in the public funds or on mortgages. – May 1859* 12
- A good example – Charles Milward, Esq., the respected Magistrate of this town with his characteristic benevolence has transmitted to the Vicar of Redditch the sum of £15, to be distributed according to his discretion among the destitute poor of his parish; thus maintaining the reputation of a kind-hearted Christian gentleman which he has long since joined. – January 1862* 13
- Christmas Gifts – Messrs. John James and Sons have distributed to upwards of seventy poor and aged persons portions of a side of prime beef. – December 1863* 13
- A good example – We have great pleasure in recording seasonable benevolence of Charles Milward, Esq., who, according to his annual custom has conveyed to the Vicar of Redditch, in*

<i>which Parish he formerly lived the sum of £15 for him to distribute according to his discretion among his necessitous and deserving poor of that place. – January 1864</i>	13
<i>On Thursday about 80 children and several poor families were by the kindness of R. G. Collins, Esq., and his amiable daughter, made truly happy by gifts of clothing. – January 1865</i>	14
<i>Mr A. Shrimpton, proprietor of the Britannia Needle Works, gives his workpeople a Christmas treat. – January 1865</i>	14
<i>Thanks to two “Knights of the Cleaver,” Messrs. F. Vincent and Guest, the poor will in this season of festivities be enabled to obtain a prime cut of Christmas beef at a fair price. – December 1865</i>	15
<i>Charity – On Thursday, St Thomas’s day, the Messrs. Bartleet and Sons caused to be distributed, in suitable joints, to their poor and infirm workmen. – December 1865</i>	15
<i>Benevolence – On St Thomas’s day, Messrs. John James and Son, needle manufacturers, gave their usual supply of beef to upwards of seventy of their old workmen. – December 1865</i>	15
<i>Coals for the Poor – A further distribution of coals has taken place during the late severe weather. – March 1867</i>	16
<i>Seasonable Benevolence – On Thursday last the well-known firm of Messrs. John James and Son, Victoria Needle Works, cheered the hearts and homes of upwards of 80 families with their usual gift of a piece of beef for each family. – December 1871</i>	16
<i>A few days since Messrs. Booker, Mogg, and Wright, the Redditch Guardians, made an appeal for contributions from the inhabitants for supplying coal to the needy and deserving poor. – December 1878</i>	17
<i>The Guardians distributed 350 quarts of capital soup to as many persons, and on Friday, they gave away upwards of 35 tons of coal. – February 1879</i>	17
<i>Fund for the Poor</i>	18
<i>Christmas Doings – On Monday evening the annual dinner was given to the poor in the Drill-room, Red Lion Inn. – January 1881</i>	18
<i>Dinner to the Poor – The annual dinner to the poor took place in the Drill Hall, when about 330 sat down to a substantial and well cooked meal. – January 1882</i>	19
<i>Entertainment to the Poor Children – A tea was given in the Drill Hall to some 320 poor children. – January 1882</i>	19

<i>Poors' Dinner – The annual dinner to the poor was given in the Drill hall – December 1883</i>	20
<i>Childrens' Tea – On Saturday evening some 230 poor children were entertained at the Drill Hall – January 1884</i>	20
<i>Dinner to the Poor – The annual dinner to the poor took place at the Drill Hall, when about 400 aged and poor people sat down to a plentiful and well-served meal, - January 1891</i>	22
<i>Much distress is still experienced among the labouring and out-door working classes in Redditch. – March 1895</i>	22
<i>Annual Christmas tree and distribution of articles of wearing apparel to between 500 and 600 poor children of the town took place in the Public Hall, Redditch. – December 1895</i>	23
<i>A Generous Gift to Redditch – Ten Acres for Recreation Purposes, Redditch Urban Council on Monday night accepted an offer by Messrs. Herbert Terry and Sons, Redditch – in memory of the founder of that firm, Mr Herbert Terry, and one of its directors, Mr Alfred E. Terry – of the freehold of ten acres of land, to be used for recreative purposes, subject to its being reserved for elementary school children during school hours. – March 1927</i>	23
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	24

# **The Poor and the Workers of Redditch**

**(Document The Workers of Redditch 1783 – 1899)**

## **Contents**

<i>At the hamlet of Red-Ditch, in the parish of Tardebigge, there is a considerable manufacture of needles, in which about four hundred persons are employed, and two thousand more in the neighbourhood. - 1783</i>	7
<i>Serious riot took place at Redditch - On Friday se'nnight a serious riot took place at Redditch, Worcestershire, on account of the high price of provisions. - 1800</i>	8
<i>Although most of the manufacturing branches of the kingdom are labouring under extreme depression and difficulty, we understand that the needle makers at Redditch, and neighbourhood, were never more fully employed than at the present period. – 1829</i>	9
<i>The following is a copy of a letter the production of some modern “Swing” addressed to Mr Whadcoat, of Easemore Farm near Redditch. - 1838</i>	9
<i>Redditch - On Monday a meeting was held at the “Red Lion Inn”, to take into consideration a petition which had been presented to the Needle Manufacturers of this place, against the introduction of a change in the process of Hardening Needles. 1840</i>	9
<i>Curious End of a Strike - For several weeks past the needle pointers of Redditch and surrounding neighbourhood, have been on strike. – September 1844</i>	10
<i>Important Triumph of the Needle Finishers Union - 1845</i>	11
<i>Carpenters’ Strike - 1846</i>	12
<i>The Needle Trade – In a depressed state and that the manufacturers have been compelled to discharge many of their country hands. - 1846</i>	12
<i>The Needle Trade – Notice were served on the pointers at Redditch, Ipsley, Studley, Alcester, Feckenham, Astwood Bank and Stoke Prior to quit their holdings. – September 1846</i>	13
<i>The Needle Pointers of Redditch have struck for higher wages. They get £1 a day, but the occupation is so injurious to health that few live beyond the age of 50. Ladies must look sharp for a rise in the price of needles. – September 1846</i>	13
<i>The Needle Trade – The needle pointers and the manufacturers of Redditch are still at variance, and the latter have resolved upon the decisive measure of employing machinery to supersede entirely the fatal practice of hand pointing. – October 1846</i>	14

- The needle pointers of Redditch are still out on strike, and at a meeting of the manufacturers held on Wednesday, a proposal on behalf of the men, made through the medium of the delegates of the London National Association of United Trades, was rejected. – November 1846* 14
- The Strike – The needle pointer’s strike is at an end; they have accepted the masters’ terms. – November 1846* 15
- The Needle Pointers – We are happy to state that since the resumption of work by the needle pointers the town has resumed much of its wonted appearance of activity and bustle. – December 1846* 16
- A meeting took place last week at Redditch between the manufacturers and the needle pointers, for the purpose of coming to some arrangement for establishing a sick or benefit society. - 1847* 16
- The Needle trade – The needle trade, we regret to hear, partakes of the general depression in other branches of manufacture, and so limited are the orders that it is many years since business has been so dull. 1847* 17
- State of Trade – The nail trade here is very depressed; many of the inferior workmen employed by the small masters are in want of work, and, in the course of the last fortnight, sixty nine persons, most of them nailers have been admitted to the workhouse, which never was so full before, except on one occasion. – January 1848* 17
- Redditch – Improvement in Trade – Business during the last week has we are happy to learn, become much brisker, and it is confidently asserted that several houses have received very extensive orders. – January 1848* 17
- Narrow escape by a little boy named Perkins, employed in the machine-room of the British Needle Mills. - Curiosity in the Needle Trade – A correspondent states that Mr James Chambers, needle stamper, has in his possession one thousand needles, perfect in every respect, weighing but ten grains. - 1851* 19
- Needle-Making – A number of visitors to the Great Exhibition may usually be seen round an ingenious contrivance for making needles, the invention of Mr Morrall of the Studley-works, Warwickshire. - 1851* 20
- Feast to Workpeople – The annual festival to the hands in the employ of Mr John James, Victoria Works. – March 1854* 21
- Treat to Workpeople – Mr S. Thomas, of the British Needle Mills in this town, regaled his workpeople with a substantial repast of roast beef and plum pudding, in one of the rooms in his factory, on Saturday last, which was suitably decorated for the occasion. There was liberal allowance of ale &c. and a very pleasant evening was spent by the party. - 1854* 21



<i>The needle trade at Redditch and its neighbourhood Feckenham, Astwood Bank, Hunt End, Studley, and Alcester is very slack at present. The fish-hook manufacture however, does not experience the same depression. - 1854</i>	21
<i>Provident Needle Pointers - 1857</i>	23
<i>Treat to Workpeople – The work people in the employ of Messrs. H. Milward and Sons, were treated by the firm with an excellent dinner. - 1862</i>	23
<i>Headless Cross - Treat to Workpeople – Some thirty or forty years ago, this pretty roadside village was not only steeped in darkness, but except to the casual wanderer or wayfarer was unknown. - 1862</i>	24
<i>Treat to Workmen – Mr Alfred Shrimpton, needle manufacturer, gave his employees a trip to the Licky Hills by rail. - 1863</i>	24
<i>Annual Treat to Workpeople – One of those pleasant affairs which so directly tend to cement the good feeling which ought always to exist between masters and their workpeople, came off at the extensive works of Messrs. J. Townsend and Co., Hunt End. – 1864</i>	25
<i>On Tuesday, at the Red Lion Hotel – The employees of H. Milward, Esq., J.P., heartily enjoyed a bountiful dinner of old English fare cooked in good style by Mrs Webb, the hostess. – December 1865</i>	25
<i>The Strike in the Building Trades - 1866</i>	26
<i>On Tuesday evening a large meeting of stampers and filers in the needle trade was held at the Crown Inn - 1871</i>	27
<i>The Agitation in the Needle Trade – A meeting of needle tampers and filers was held at the Golden Lion Inn, to consider the desirability of either forming a local union or a branch of the Redditch Stampers and Filers Union. - 1871</i>	28
<i>Redditch and District Journeymen Scourers' Union - 1872</i>	28
<i>Making Needles – There are probably few branches of industry which so strictly localised as is the manufacture of needles. - 1872</i>	29
<i>Increased Wages in the Building Trade- The workmen employed in the building trade at Redditch have commenced an agitation for an advance of wages. - 1872</i>	30
<i>The Needle Trade – The needle trade, although it is, like every other branch of industry, influenced by, periods of commercial activity or depression, is not one which fluctuates greatly. - 1872</i>	31
<i>The Employment of Children in Agriculture – Reuben Webb, a little boy was charged with leaving the service of his master. - 1873</i>	32

<i>The Needle Polishers – The principal subject of discussion was the introduction by one of the manufacturers of a machine for polishing. - 1873</i>	32
<i>A large body of needlemakers from Redditch in Worcestershire, have arrived in London in great distress, resulting apparently from that old grievance the introduction of machinery to supersede hand labour. - 1876</i>	33
<i>Needlemakers' Association of Redditch - 1881</i>	33
<i>Workpeople's Treat – The workpeople in the employ of Messrs. S. Allcock and Co., fishing tackle manufacturers, numbering about 400, were conveyed by special train to Liverpool. - 1882</i>	34
<i>Presentation – Mr T. Free, who on that day completed his fiftieth year in the employ of Messrs. H. Milward and Sons, was presented by Mr J. F. Milward with a handsomely bound, and illustrated edition of Farrar's "Life of Christ." - 1884</i>	35
<i>Tradesmen – Apply to W. Harbon, near Railway Station, Redditch. - 1884</i>	35
<i>Workpeople's Treat – The annual treat to the workpeople in the employ of Messrs. R. Hemming and Sons, Forge Mills, took place as usual at the Fox and Goose Inn, Foxlydiat. - 1884</i>	36
<i>Treat to Workpeople – The work people in the employ of Messrs. Henry Milward and Sons celebrated a trio of events – namely, the marriage of Mr Charles Frederic Milward to Miss Constantia Ellis. - 1889</i>	37
<i>A Meeting of needlemakers was held at the assembly room of the Golden Cross Hotel, Redditch, for the purpose of considering a proposal to form a trade union for the district. - 1890</i>	38
<i>Work and Wages – The Redditch needle trade - 1892</i>	38
<i>Bricklayers' Strike at Redditch - 1892</i>	39
<i>The Bricklayers' Strike at Redditch has ended, the masters conceding the demand of the men for an increase in the rate of pay per hour. – June 1892</i>	39
<i>Carpenters' Strike at Redditch - 1893</i>	40
<i>Tradesmen's Association - 1894</i>	40
<i>Cycle Trade at Redditch is reported to be "flourishing" - 1899</i>	41
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	42

# **The Poor and the Workers of Redditch**

**(Document The Workers of Redditch 1900 – 2015)**

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<i>The Redditch Fund – At Redditch the local fund for the relief of sufferers by the war now amounts to £305. The total collected in the town considerably exceeds £500. For the past two months the employees at various works have been contributing. - 1900</i>	5
<i>Redditch Trade – In one or two branches of the local industries there is noticeable some easing of the pressure which has been felt for several months past. - 1914</i>	5
<i>Scarcity of Labour in the Hay Fields - 1914</i>	6
<i>Redditch Industries – The result of the outbreak of the war has been to cause a temporary dislocation in the needle, fishing tackle and cycle industries these being largely dependent upon business done with the Continent. - 1914</i>	7
<i>Redditch Industries – In the needle industry full time is in most cases being worked. - 1914</i>	7
<i>Redditch Needle and Cycle Trades – Redditch, Friday – in the case of two of the three principal local industries – needles and cycles – the conditions are, in the circumstances satisfactory; while in regard to fishing the outlook is improving. - 1914</i>	8
<i>Redditch Industries – Business is at the moment very brisk in the needle and cycle industries, and is improving in the fishing tackle branch, which was the most hardly hit upon the outbreak of the war. – December 1914</i>	9
<i>Birmingham Small Arms Company and Redditch Employees – The question of increases in the rates of pay between the Birmingham Small Arms Company and their employees at the Lodge Road Factory, Redditch, has not yet been settled. - 1915</i>	10
<i>Needlemakers' Wages – Employers' terms rejected by Astwood Bank men. - 1915</i>	11
<i>Redditch Industries – There is a continued firm demand from America for needles of the medium and higher qualities, and Canadian and Australian orders are but little if any below the average for this part of the season. - 1915</i>	12
<i>Messrs. Henry Milward &amp; Sons announce an increase in their workers' wages. - 1915</i>	13

<i>Threatened Strike at Redditch – An application has been made to Herbert Terry and Sons (Limited), Novelty Works, Redditch, by a large number of men engaged in spring-making for an advance of 10 per cent on day work and piece work rates. - 1915</i>	14
<i>Labour Disputes settled – The dispute in the Redditch Spring making industry, arising from a demand of the Brass-workers’ Union men employed at Messrs. Herbert Terry and Sons (Limited), Novelty Works, Redditch, for an all round increase of 10 per cent in their wages, has been arranged amicably. - 1915</i>	15
<i>Redditch Wage Claims – Workers determined to continue the struggle. – The unrest in the fishing tackle industry has not abated. - 1916</i>	16
<i>Provisional Agreement Made as to Wages – After negotiations extending over seven months we understand that the dispute between the National Federation of Women Workers and the Redditch and District Needle and Fishing Tackle Employers Association in regard to the wages of female workers in the Redditch area has been settled. - 1916</i>	17
<i>Christmastide – Christmas was observed quietly in Redditch. - 1916</i>	18
<i>Interesting Ceremony – On Friday in last week some 150 employees of the B.S.A. Works were the recipients of an address and medal each for long service in the employ of the Company. - 1919</i>	18
<i>Their Bonuses Will Cheer Soldiers – Several hundred workers engaged at the B.S.A. factory at Redditch have voluntarily given up the bonus awarded them for working on Whit Monday and Tuesday. - 1940</i>	19
<i>Fewer Jobs in Redditch - 1974</i>	20
<i>AT &amp; T move threat stirs job fears - 2006</i>	21
<i>AT &amp; T denies rumours of mass redundancies - 2006</i>	22
<i>Jobs lost as coach firm is closed – A long established Redditch coach company has collapsed after more than 70 years leaving scores of people with a job. - 2011</i>	23
<i>Mettis Aerospace staff settle dispute over pay - 2013</i>	24
<i>MP backs apprentices despite fall - 2015</i>	24
<i>Low pay ‘epidemic’ hits borough hard – More than a quarter of Redditch workers are earning below the living wage. - 2015</i>	25
<i>Zero hours workers pushed to the edge - 2015</i>	26
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# ***The Poor and the Workers of Redditch***

***(Document Trade Unions 1890 – 1916)***

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## **Acknowledgements**

*In the research and compilation of this document the author acknowledges the following sources:*

*www.bromsgrovebmsggh.co.uk - Martin Stephens who digitised the Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Redditch Messenger for Bromsgrove BMSGH web*

*www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk – British Library Images*

*www.redditchstandard.co.uk - The Redditch Standard archives*

*www.redditchadvertiser.co.uk - The Redditch Advertiser archives*

*www.ancestry.co.uk*