CENTENARY SUPPLEMENT

# The Redditch Indicator

1859–1959

ESTABLISHED 1859

The Redditch Indicator Centenary Supplement, Friday, September 25th, 1959.

The "Redditch Indicator" is 100 years old—an occasion which brings royal recognition

# QUEEN'S CENTENARY CONGRATULATIONS

## OUR OPENING ADDRESS

THE practice of putting the leading article in the first column on the front page—regarded as a comparatively modern innovation among newspapers—was in fact the style followed in the first issue of "The Redditch Indicator" 100 years ago this week.

Under the heading "Our opening address," the editor and proprietor, Mr. W. T. Heming, set forth his aims in providing the town with its first newspaper. He wrote:

"A Newspaper for the Needle District is thus put forth as an experiment. Redditch and its co-adjacent and co-operative neighbourhood have made such rapid advances in many respects as to raise a desire to establish a Local Newspaper of low price to advocate Local Interests and record Local Events and Local Progress more fully than the county papers can allow space for.

"This particular period in the history of Redditch seems particularly adapted for our first essay as Indicators—of what is doing and to do—here. A Railway is just opened—a Land and Building Society just successfully inaugurated—new and extensive Gas Works rapidly rising—a Local Government Commission very recently called into existence—a population out-growing the house-accommodation; and many other institutions and subjects for expression of opinion, and report of proceedings and progress, as well as to announce or advertise public matters or individual enterprise."

That first paper was a four-page issue, and barely a column and a half, or a sixteenth of the total, including the leading article, was given over to local news. The remaining three and three-quarter pages were full of a miscellany of news, features and fiction from an astonishing variety of sources. The proprietor was well aware of this, and set out to explain it:

"The present is not by means a fair sample number of the INDICATOR as a medium of local intelligence. It is opened, like the railway, in an unfinished state, and will, like it, grow more complete and efficient every week. News and correspondence will, by the kindness of friends, grow constantly until it may, possibly, 'out-grow its clothes,' like other youthful beings; and the general matter will, it is hoped, be found carefully arranged."

It was many years before Mr. Heming's hope was fully realised. It is true that the local content of the paper increased very considerably, but well into the present century it was still found necessary to include items of news from a wider sphere to make up enough material to fill. Nowadays, nine times out of ten, there is such an abundance of local news that there is barely space in which to accommodate it. Mr. Heming continued:

"The columns of the INDICATOR will be open to communications of private correspondents on any subject bearing on the interests of the neighbourhood. Those who wish to express their opinions on passing events will have full liberty to do so, so long as they write in a spirit of fairness and honesty.

"That a paper at so cheap a rate [it was a penny] should be made to pay even its expenses, will require a large circulation; the proprietor, therefore, respectfully and earnestly solicits the co-operation of all parties to gain for it a standing which shall insure its continuance; and when circumstances justify it, he pledges himself to enlarge its size, and increase its columns."

Those are sentiments which might well be repeated today. The pledge to increase the size of the paper was, of course, honoured, and the "Indicator" reached a pre-war maximum of 14 pages. A return to the same standard has been achieved since the war. Mr. Heming went on:

"To the tradesmen who may make use of its pages as a medium of advertising, the INDICATOR cannot but be of great service, since it is a generally admitted fact that no means of increasing a business, or the sale of any specific article, can be employed so efficient as the columns of a newspaper.

"It may be asked whether the INDICATOR will advocate any specific party, political or ecclesiastical sentiments; the answer is, none whatever; all parties will be fairly represented, whatever their political views or their ecclesiastical convictions. In a journal circulating through a locality of so limited a character, where parties are so equally balanced, it is obvious that no peculiar sentiments can be prominently and exclusively upheld with any hope of success.

"The proprietor pledges himself to give no offence to any, but remain neutral on those points on which his readers may differ, and by a candid, impartial, liberal spirit, to gain the favour of all.

"With these preliminary statements, and specification of objects, he sends forth his first number, and trusts he may, from time to time, be enabled to progress, and ere long to tell his readers THE REDDITCH INDICATOR has a prosperous career among the journals of the day."

The same impartial outlook has remained, and the celebration of a hundredth birthday may be taken as giving notice to all and sundry that a prosperous career has been achieved.

*Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has graciously sent "warm congratulations to all concerned" in the celebration of the centenary of "The Redditch Indicator."*

**This striking photograph of Her Majesty the Queen was taken by the Canadian photographer, Donald McKague, in the White Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace. The Queen is wearing a dress of kingfisher blue with a full skirt designed by Hardy Amies, a four-row pearl necklace and pearl stud ear-rings.**

Her Majesty's message, sent on Balmoral Castle notepaper, reads:

*Please convey the Queen's sincere thanks to the Proprietors, Editor and Staff of "The Redditch Indicator" for their kind and loyal message sent on the occasion of the centenary of their newspaper. Her Majesty sends her warm congratulations to all concerned with the publication of this newspaper and her best wishes to all its readers.*

*PRIVATE SECRETARY.*

*24th September, 1959.*

The message from this newspaper, to which the Queen referred, read as follows:

*The Proprietors, Editor and Staff of "The Redditch Indicator" present their loyal greetings to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of the centenary of their newspaper, founded when Her Majesty's great-grandmother was Queen. They wish Her Majesty long life and happiness, and assure her of their hope of loyally serving her and her successors for another 100 years.*

Your weekly newspaper, *The Redditch Indicator*, was 100 years old yesterday. On September 24th, 1859, "Printer Heming," a prominent personality in the little town of fewer than 6,000 people, had the courage to launch a local journal at a time when only a minority could read, and newspapers were few. It was a struggle at the start, as he must have foreseen, but his dream-child overcame its difficulties to prosper and grow as he probably never imagined, and to live longer than he could have hoped.

The foundation of the *Indicator* coincided with the beginning of a great upsurge of life and progress in the life of the town. Before the 1850s Redditch had been a sleepy little place of no account, scarcely more than the hamlet which had grown up on the hill after the dissolution of the nearby Bordesley Abbey.

At the time of the birth of the paper, however, many more projects first saw the light of day — schools, the railway line, the Building Society, the Parish Church, the Literary and Scientific Institute, the gas works — all within the same ten or twenty-year period.

The birth of the newspaper was part of the outward expression of this vigour, and the new journal immediately fell into its stride in the absorbing business of reporting and commenting on all that went on in the thrusting, growing town.

As the paper comes up to its centenary it finds itself embroiled in just such another period of rapid, surging growth.

This similarity between local life in the 1850s, which led up to the foundation of the paper, and in the 1950s, preceding its centenary, may be the merest coincidence, or it may be part of some less widely understood and less easily explained cycle of events.

Whichever is the case, producing *The Redditch Indicator* in 1959 is as great a privilege as it must have been in 1859, for life is moving ever onward, and the future of Redditch beckons no less brightly now than it did 100 years ago. The *Indicator* will march forward into its second century with the rest of the community, confident that it has a place in the hearts of its readers, and an important task to fulfil.

People who have sent messages of congratulation to us include the Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Macmillan, the Chairman of Redditch Urban District Council, Councillor R. J. Dickens, the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Admiral Sir William Tennant, the Chairman of Worcestershire County Council, Mr. Michael Higgs, the two local M.P.s, Mr. James Dance and Mr. John Profumo, and others.

These messages appear together on page 2.

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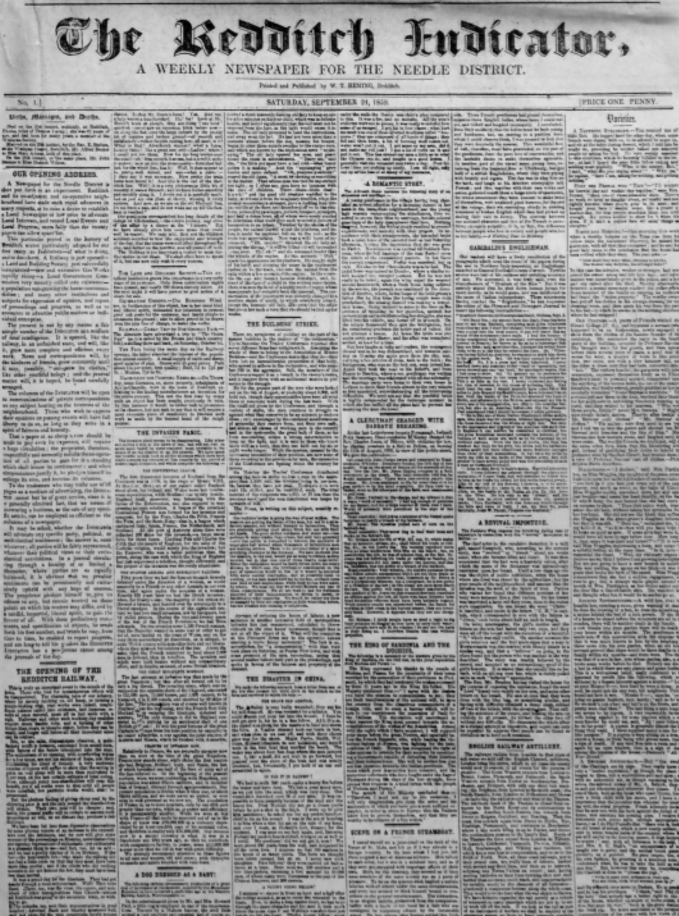
At the time W. T. Heming decided to launch a weekly newspaper for Redditch and its neighbouring villages, the international scene was one of immense transition. The Crimean War had ended four years before. Garibaldi was about to emerge as master of Sicily and Italy and Otto von Bismarck was the exponent of statecraft in German and Austrian affairs.

1859 saw the United States of America complete a commercial treaty with Japan, while Porfirio Diaz, dictator of Mexico, was bringing order and prosperity to his country following civil war and the landing of European troops to enforce foreign rights. This was the period of Queen Victoria's peak of her celebrated reign. She succeeded to the throne in 1837, and remained as head of the British Empire until her death in 1901.

## THE FRONT PAGE OF THE FIRST ISSUE



The Redditch Indicator,

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER FOR THE NEEDLE DISTRICT.

Printed and Published by W. T. HEMING, Redditch.

No. 1.] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1859. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

Births, Marriages, and Deaths.

OUR OPENING ADDRESS.

THE OPENING OF THE REDDITCH RAILWAY.

THE INVASION PANIC.

A DOG DRESSED AS A BABY!

THE BUILDERS' STRIKE.

THE DISASTER IN CHINA.

A ROMANTIC STORY.

A CLERGYMAN CHARGED WITH SABBATH BREAKING.

SCENE ON A FRENCH STEAMBOAT.

GARIBALDI'S ENGLISHMAN.

A REVIVAL IMPOSTURE.

ENGLISH RAILWAY ARTILLERY.

Varieties.

**When we put news on the front page of the "Indicator" only five years ago, it was regarded as a great innovation, but in fact the fashion was set by the very first issue, 100 years ago yesterday. The reproduction above is of that first front page, with a leading article entitled "Our opening address" in the first column. That address is discussed in the same position on this page. It was followed by a report of the opening of the Redditch railway which turned over into the second column, and then by a few more paragraphs of local news, but by the time he was half way down that second column the editor of the day had run out of local items, and went on to refer to "The invasion panic." The rest of the page and in fact the rest of the four-page paper, was taken up with a mixture of national news, international news, hints, gossip, court news and fiction.**

# CONGRATULATIONS HAVE COME IN FROM ALL QUARTERS

## PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

**THE Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Macmillan, heads the list of other distinguished people from whom we have received congratulatory messages. He writes:**

For most of us our local newspaper is an institution we perhaps take too readily for granted, but which we value and hold in affection none the less. It has an important part to play in our lives, and we are right to cherish it. That is why I was glad to hear that "The Redditch Indicator" had achieved its centenary. I send my congratulations and good wishes to all engaged in its production.

HAROLD MACMILLAN

## Founded in the year local government began

**The present Chairman of Redditch Urban District Council, Councillor R. J. Dickens, J.P., and Mrs. Dickens.**

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Council and the townspeople, to tender our congratulations to our local newspaper, the "Redditch Indicator," on the centenary of its first publication.

A hundred years ago, in 1859, Redditch was a small community, about a sixth of its present size, but even then it had far-sighted and public spirited citizens, and by their efforts it was emerging as a progressive industrial town recognised throughout the world as the centre of the needle-making industry.

It became a separate parish from Tardebigge in 1841 and from then on rapid progress was made.

Public lighting by gas was installed in the streets in 1844. Redditch had long had Church Schools, and National Schools were opened in 1846. In 1850 a Literary and Scientific Institute had been formed to organise lectures and found a library. The fine church of St. Stephen had replaced the old "Chapel on the Green," a Roman Catholic Church and several non conformist churches had been built.

We come then to 1859, the year your paper was born, and a decisive one in the history of the town. In that year the railway to Birmingham was opened for passenger traffic. Previously the only connection the town had with the railway was by means of an omnibus connecting with the trains at Barnt Green.

The same year saw the founding of the Redditch Building Society which, in the latter half of the last century, contributed enormously to the expansion of house-building in the town.

Most important of all, in my view, the year witnessed the beginning of local government in Redditch by a Local Board consisting of nine elected Commissioners, charged with the care of the highways and sanitary conditions in the district. They set about their task with energy and at their first meeting, held on April 4th, 1859, appointed a Clerk, Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances, and a Rate Collector. They then proceeded to levy a highway rate of sixpence in the pound, to inspect and bring up to date the street lighting and to prepare a series of byelaws.

The "Redditch Indicator" therefore came into being in stirring times, and during the next 100 years recorded week by week the continuous and remarkable progress the town has made. I feel sure it has done more than just that; its influence on public opinion must often have inspired and encouraged many things that made that progress possible.

With all good wishes for the future.

R. J. DICKENS
Chairman of the Council.

## "Beneficial"

**Major F. W. Smith, chairman and managing director of the Enfield Cycle Co., Ltd., and president of Redditch and District Manufacturers' Association, writes: "I take this opportunity of expressing my congratulations on the long and beneficial influence which 'The Redditch Indicator' has exercised in the area of its circulation."**

F. W. SMITH

## Carnival chairman

**The chairman of Redditch Carnival Committee, Councillor H. D. Spencer, writes:—**

**I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you and your company every success for the future.**

H. D. SPENCER

**One copy of this supplement is being given away with every "Indicator" sold today, but additional copies may be obtained, price 1d. each, at the "Indicator" shop or office, Church Green East, or through your newsagent. COPIES ARE LIMITED, so order your "extras" NOW.**

## Oldest newspaper pays tribute

HEADING the list of congratulatory messages from other Midland newspapers comes one from the editor of the oldest of them all—"Berrow's Worcester Journal." Founded in 1690, it is the oldest existing newspaper.

The editor, Mr. Frank B. Greatwich, a former president of the Guild of British Newspaper Editors, writes:—

It is a great pleasure to offer congratulations to the "Redditch Indicator" on its 100th birthday.

Such celebrations are a welcome sign of the stability of the British provincial press in general, and in particular a tribute to the skill and assiduity with which your newspaper has been managed and edited over its long life.

Alexander Pope wrote "Who lasts a century can have no flaw"—and no newspaper can survive that long unless it deserves itself unflaggingly to its task of serving faithfully and well the community in which it circulates. May you go on doing just that for another 100 years!

F. B. GREATWICH

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The following message comes from Mr. Eric R. Clayson, chairman of the Birmingham Post and Mail, Ltd., the Birmingham Daily Post and Mercury, Ltd., and the West Midlands Press, Ltd.:

May I join with your many friends in sending the "Redditch Indicator" heartiest congratulations on its centenary, and best wishes for the future? May your next hundred years lead you to even greater success in maintaining the highest traditions of the local press!

ERIC R. CLAYSON

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Mr. W. Vaughan Reynolds, Editor of "The Birmingham Post," writes:

I have pleasure in sending this message of sincere congratulation to "The Redditch Indicator" on the completion of its first hundred years of useful life.

Changes in the structure and in the functions of the British newspaper Press in those hundred years have been of profound significance. They have reflected corresponding changes in the structure of society. The newspaper reading public is vastly greater than in mid-Victorian times, and with the passing years journalism and journalists have had to meet a series of challenges—to their ingenuity, adaptability and resource, and above all to their integrity. All these the "Indicator" has met with success, and the respect and affection in which it is held by its readers at the end of its first century is the happiest of auguries for its prosperity in the equally challenging times ahead.

Since 1859 one truth has been illustrated with growing force: that a local newspaper is an essential part of the life of the community it serves. It retains that essential quality by virtue of the accuracy and objectivity of its reporting, and the honesty of its comment. That the "Indicator" is so young and resilient in heart on its hundredth birthday is proof that it has deserved and continues to deserve the esteem of its readers.

W. VAUGHAN REYNOLDS

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Mr. A. J. Josey, Editor of the "Evening Despatch," Birmingham, writes:

I am delighted to be able to join in the many well-deserved congratulations you will receive on the completion of your first hundred years, and I wish you ever-increasing success in the next hundred.

A. J. JOSEY

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A neighbouring newspaper — the "Stratford - upon - Avon Herald" — was established within a few months of the "Indicator," and will celebrate its centenary very shortly. The editor, Mr. Alick E. Cleaver, writes:—

Many congratulations on reaching such a notable landmark.

In these days, when the provincial newspapers are facing such heavy competition from the larger groups, and also from commercial television, it is good to know that there are still some sections of the Press which are holding up the flag of independence, having firmly established themselves in the hearts and habits of the public.

The "Indicator," I know, can be fairly said to be one of these papers, and long may it continue to be so.

I know that the traditions of one hundred years are being worthily maintained by the "Indicator" and its staff, and as long as this continues, I am sure that all we hold dear in our English way of life will also be upheld.

ALICK E. CLEAVER

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Mr. Malcolm Graham, chairman and managing director of the Wolverhampton Express & Star, writes:

Many congratulations to the "Redditch Indicator" on achieving its centenary. To have done so the "Redditch Indicator" must have rendered consistently valuable service to the community it serves.

In the years to come the opportunity for a weekly newspaper such as yours to help improve the cultural and economic welfare of Redditch and its surroundings will increase. May you take full advantage of such opportunities and reap the reward which you will have earned.

MALCOLM GRAHAM

## Queen's representative urges a high standard

ADMIRAL SIR WILLIAM TENNANT, Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire and thus the Queen's representative in the county, writes urging that a high standard should always be maintained. He says:

It is with great pleasure that I write to congratulate you on the "Redditch Indicator" having reached its centenary. Worcestershire has many papers of a high standard, including the oldest newspaper in the world. There are others that largely go out for sensation, and let the news items of valuable information take second place. May the "Redditch Indicator" always have a place in the first category.

I wish you all success as you embark on the second century of your existence.

WILLIAM TENNANT

## M.P. on "immense value of local papers"

MR. JAMES DANCE, Conservative M.P. for Redditch and Bromsgrove from 1955 until Parliament was dissolved last week, stresses "the immense value" of local papers like the "Indicator." He writes:

First of all, I would like to congratulate the "Redditch Indicator" on its centenary and to wish it many more successful years.

I do not think it can be stressed too strongly the immense value which the papers of the calibre of the "Indicator" are to members of the public. I feel that the reporting of the deliberations of local Councils is of great importance, as also are the announcements of the activities of the various organisations and clubs in the area. It is only by such reporting that citizens can realise all that is going on locally, and I do feel most strongly that the more this local interest is fostered, the stronger will be the local traditions and the community's pride and interest in them.

They also provide a very useful function in the exchange of goods and property through the small advertisement columns, which is of inestimable value to local traders, and I know what very great interest is taken in the correspondence columns in connection with many local affairs.

I conclude by again wishing the "Indicator" many more years of providing local news for local people.

JAMES DANCE

## Newspaper's part in a democratic community

MR. CHRISTOPHER NORWOOD, Labour's prospective Parliamentary candidate for Redditch and Bromsgrove, refers to the part local newspapers can play in the life of a democratic community. His message reads:

To be effective a democracy needs a strong and independent press, both nationally and locally, and the part that local newspapers play in the life of a democratic community should never be forgotten. A good local newspaper both stimulates and maintains the interest of its readers in the affairs of the district in which they live. Without the regular provision of information, whether on the subject of local politics, on cultural or religious matters, on sporting occasions or simply on matters of personal interest, we should all be much the poorer.

Many local newspapers set a high standard of reporting and of informed independent comment. Unquestionably the "Redditch Indicator" is among the best of these, and I am very happy to be able to offer my congratulations to it on the occasion of its centenary. I hope that the "Indicator," having reached its hundredth birthday, will continue, a lively and interesting paper which it is always a pleasure to read, on into the second hundred years of its life, adding very considerably to the life of Redditch.

CHRISTOPHER NORWOOD

## "Importance of free speech and free press"

THE importance of free speech and a free press are stressed in the centenary message received from Mr. Walter Heath, president of Redditch Trades Council, an organisation composed of delegates from trade union branches all over the town and district. Mr. Heath writes:—

May I congratulate your paper on attaining its centenary. I am sure that my colleagues of the Trades Council agree with my sentiments, expressed below.

The centenary of the "Redditch Indicator" is a notable milestone in the life of this town, and one of which we can be proud.

The freedoms that we enjoy in this country are taken as a matter of course in our everyday lives, because we have never been deprived of them.

Such basic principles as freedom of speech and freedom of the press are things we should jealously preserve, and it is at such a time as this that we should reflect upon our good fortune in living in a society that upholds these liberties.

This present age, with its tremendous potential for good or evil, has advanced enormously during the lifetime of this newspaper, but no matter what science may discover, the destiny of mankind is ours to make or destroy.

We now have at our disposal the means and materials to provide for everyone's needs. Poverty and starvation can be abolished.

We must ensure that we utilise our resources for the betterment of our fellowmen, and share the responsibility in carrying it through.

The press has its share in this, in guiding public opinion, and reflecting fairly upon its conduct, and our local newspaper has its part to play.

I trust that the "Indicator" will remain for a further century as a faithful mirror of public life in this growing town of Redditch, preserving its impartiality and independence.

WALTER HEATH

## Value to trading and business life of town

THE president of the Redditch and District Chamber of Trade, Mr. Leslie Biggs, of a local newspaper to commercial life of the town.

The "Redditch Indicator" has been closely associated with the development of this district over the past years, and during that time it has improved its presentation to a standard worthy of its years of experience.

Its advertising service has proved of inestimable value to the trading, business and commercial life of the town. The editorial policy, too, has always given the Chamber of Trade fair comment and support.

On the occasion of your centenary the Chamber of Trade offers sincere congratulations, and wishes you many years of expansion and prosperity.

A. L. BIGGS

## IN LONDON

FROM 1925 until his death in 1942 at the age of 89, Mr. J. Robson was London representative. This work of liaison between the company and the principal advertising agencies in the metropolis then passed to his son, Mr. J. C. Robson, who continues to act in this capacity.

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One Joseph Stallard, of Alvechurch, who was apprenticed to W. T. Heming, originator of this newspaper, eventually emigrated to Australia, where he established a large paper and printing business.

## "Proof of quality and loyalty"

PROVINCIAL newspapers are banded together in membership of the Newspaper Society, and the following message of congratulation has been received from the president of the Society, Mr. A. G. Jeans, managing director of "The Liverpool Daily Post and Echo":—

I am delighted to congratulate "The Redditch Indicator" on attaining its centenary. A hundred years is a long time in the life of a paper, and to reach the 100th milestone is in itself both a proof of the quality of the newspaper and of the loyalty of its readers.

The "Indicator" covers every aspect of local life, and is read in every home in its area. It clearly offers to advertisers the most extensive coverage of the Redditch and Alcester district.

A. G. JEANS

## Provincial press "backbone of country"

THE Newspaper Society's director, Mr. H. R. Davies, refers to the saying that the provincial press is the backbone of the country. He writes:—

It is with a sense of personal pleasure that I send this message of greeting and good wishes to the "Redditch Indicator" on the occasion of its centenary.

In my long years with the Society there have been many similar happy occasions, a continuing proof of the saying that the provincial press is the backbone of the country.

You must feel proud to join the illustrious ranks of centenarians. Your pride is more than justified. The good wishes of the Society go with you into your second century.

H. R. DAVIES

## "None serves community more faithfully"

THE president of the West Midland Newspaper Society, Mr. Richard T. Crabtree, sends a message referring to the service a local paper renders to its own community.

On behalf of the West Midlands Newspaper Society, I send greetings and heartiest congratulations to the "Redditch Indicator" on achieving its hundredth anniversary. There is no other section of the English press which serves its own community more faithfully or intimately than the local weekly newspaper. The Redditch Indicator is no exception, and reaching its hundredth birthday reflects the greatest credit on all members of the staff, both past and present, who have contributed to and upheld those fine traditions of English journalism and newspaper publishing.

RICHARD T. CRABTREE

## J. S. Mill's "liberty" is recalled

THE message from Mr. John Profumo, M.P., Joint Minister of State at the Foreign Office and Conservative M.P. for the Stratford-on-Avon and South Warwickshire Constituency (of which Studley and Alcester are a part), points out that the "Indicator" was founded in the year which saw the publication of John Stuart Mill's dissertation on liberty. Mr. Profumo writes:

I send my sincere congratulations on the centenary of the "Redditch Indicator." It is no mean feat to have recorded local events accurately and accurately for 100 years.

The past 20 years or so have seen newspapers of all types facing new problems and difficulties, and I rejoice to know that the "Redditch Indicator" has surmounted them all so successfully.

I am sure that, judging by its vitality and brightness, it will go on for another 100 years.

The local newspaper is indispensable. It is the only medium through which people can learn reliably about every aspect of the life of a local community, and so enables them to play their part as well-informed citizens.

Neither radio nor television can take its place, and moreover the weekly newspaper fulfils a function which the national dailies and evenings can never do, nor indeed do they wish to do.

Further, I feel that so long as local newspapers like this one are able to record events without fear or restraint, our democracy is safe. I recall with pleasure that the same year the "Redditch Indicator" first appeared, saw the publication of John Stuart Mill's famous dissertation on "Liberty." In it he pointed out the enormous importance of the Press in securing and safeguarding every form of human freedom.

JOHN PROFUMO

## County congratulations

THE Chairman of Worcestershire County Council, Mr. Michael Higgs, former Conservative M.P. for Redditch and Bromsgrove, writes as follows:

I am very pleased to have this opportunity of congratulating the "Redditch Indicator" on its centenary.

Informative and reliable local newspapers are indispensable for keeping the public fully aware of the affairs of their local Councils and of the work being done by their Council representatives, and your paper can be depended upon to maintain a high standard of reporting in rendering this valuable public service. I hope that you will long continue to give publicity to the views and opinions of both the elected and their electors, as well as offering your own comments, which are always welcome.

MICHAEL HIGGS

## "STANDARD WELL ABOVE AVERAGE"

THE Chairman of Bromsgrove R.D.C. writes:—

The Rural District Council of Bromsgrove have for long held the "Redditch Indicator" in high esteem. In the field of local government reporting, this newspaper has achieved a standard well above average.

The content of Council proceedings is such that, whilst of considerable importance to ratepayers, these matters receive but cursory attention if treated by a newspaper in a dull and pedestrian manner. At the other extreme, it is unfortunate when local government activities receive newspaper publicity only when they afford scope for sensation, or provide a butt for journalistic humour. In such cases it is rare for the full facts to be fairly represented.

The "Redditch Indicator" eschews sensationalism and dubious humour, and whilst retaining a fair balance and presenting all important facts, yet succeeds in presenting Council business to its readers in a lively and interesting fashion.

In so doing, this newspaper follows the best journalistic traditions by enabling its readers to keep themselves well-informed with a minimum of effort, and thus performs a most essential and valuable public service in its area of circulation.

The Rural District Council congratulates the "Redditch Indicator" not only on achieving its centenary, but also on having risen during the past hundred years to be such an important and esteemed publication, with an assured and well deserved place in the regard of its readers.

W. EDGAR LEE

## Jubilee message from London correspondent

A JOURNALIST who has recently celebrated his personal golden jubilee in the profession, and who has represented us in London during recent years, Mr. George A. Greenwood, sends this message of congratulation:—

I am delighted to have the opportunity of sending this word of congratulation to the proprietors, the editor, and staff of "The Redditch Indicator" on the occasion of its centenary, not only because of my happy association with the paper, but also for the personal reason that, less than a month ago, I celebrated my own golden jubilee as a journalist.

An experience of 50 years has taught me that the newspaper in general, but the local newspaper in particular, is an indispensable factor of life in a civilised community, and for all the years I have known it "The Redditch Indicator" has worthily upheld the best traditions of journalism. In its own way, the local paper is every bit as important, not only to the community which it serves, but also to the nation at large. It is of the greatest importance to realise that Redditch, and Alcester, and all their neighbours like them, are merely a microcosm of Britain, and it is these entities which, en masse, make up the whole, and in the ultimate, guide its destinies.

"The Redditch Indicator" never fails its readers and, for myself, I have in recent years been particularly interested in all that it has done to develop an international atmosphere by fostering the town's links with Auxerre. This is a service of the utmost importance in promoting good understanding, and so reducing the perils of another conflict.

The British weekly newspaper, like the Redditch Indicator, remains at threepence, the cheapest commodity on the market.

GEORGE A. GREENWOOD

## "First-class relationship with Council"

COUNCILLOR H. E. WHITEHOUSE, Chairman of Alcester Rural District Council, sends a message which refers to the "first-class relationship" which has existed between his Council and "The Redditch Indicator."

In congratulating the "Redditch Indicator" on the occasion of its centenary, on behalf of the Alcester Rural District Council, I am discharging a duty which is particularly agreeable, for during that time the "Indicator" has been circulated throughout our rural district, and is now looked upon by the residents as one of the weekly "musts" to have.

Nothing astonishes me so much in modern journalism as the mass of information that is weekly poured forth from your newspaper office for our amusement and edification, and in spite of the speed at which it is produced, presented with literary charm and a singularly accurate perception of the relative importance of things.

With the necessity for rapid composition has come a facility of expression that is truly remarkable, and, even in the case of leading articles, which from the stress of circumstances have been written so shortly before the paper has gone to press, it is seldom that the critical eye can detect evidence of the difficult conditions under which they were evolved.

May I conclude by wishing your excellent paper further success in the years which lie ahead, and sincerely trust that the first-class relationship which has existed in the past between the Council and the "Indicator" will continue.

H. E. WHITEHOUSE

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS
TO
"THE REDDITCH INDICATOR"
ON REACHING ITS 100th BIRTHDAY
AND ALL GOOD WISHES FOR
THE FUTURE
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ABEL MORRALL LTD.
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Congratulate *The Redditch Indicator* upon the completion of its first century, and are proud to have been associated as suppliers of Printing Ink for most of this period.

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Not in the vintage class or even of pensionable age. Unable to aspire to the 100 years of my parent concern although years ago I had a brother in Prospect Hill.

• • •

Those who know me well enough say that I am a lively youngster for five years of age, and I realise I am growing up.

• • •

To papa, the newspaper, must I be respectful and offer congratulations. Also to add that I will try to emulate his example of giving reliable service to all who visit us.

*THE INDICATOR SHOP*
*11, Church Green East*
STATIONERY - FANCY GOODS - GIFTS FOR ALL

## In many respects, the Redditch of a hundred years ago was

# NOT A VERY PLEASANT & SANITARY SPOT

REDDITCH was no more than a village in 1859, when this newspaper was founded, and in many respects was far from a pleasant and sanitary spot. The population was something over 4,000, and the limits of the place corresponded roughly to what we think of now as the town centre.

It is true that the layout of the streets, as far as they extended, was the same, and that the Parish Church and several of the older and larger houses stood where they stand to-day, but there the resemblance ends.

The area roughly bounded by Evesham Street, Alcester Street and Ipsley Street was a hideous huddle of dreadful little cottages piled almost one on top of the other, row upon row of back-to-back houses long since swept away. Here lived the greater part of the working population of Redditch, many of them in conditions not fit for animals.

Pavements, metalled roads, drainage, water supply, guttering and spouting and damp-proof houses as we know them were non-existent as far as those people were concerned. They were conditions which had given rise to a cholera epidemic only a few years before 1859.

### *Honeycombed with wells*

The centre of the town was honeycombed with wells — very often the only source of water—and toilets were conspicuous by their absence. Years later Dr. Herbert Page, one of the earliest and most outspoken of medical officers, was complaining that an average of 175 people had to share one midden.

An example of the type of building existing then was the line of cottages built below pavement level and sheltering behind a hand-rail in Red Lion Street which were knocked down in the recent slum clearance programme. Just before their disappearance they were considered to have been the oldest property in the town, but they had been modernised by the addition of guttering and spouting, and in other ways.

This area included Walford Street, Silver Street (between Red Lion Street and George Street, and almost parallel with George Street; it crossed the site of the bus station and the Council depot), Clarke's Yard, George Street, Herbert Street (now the Evesham Street end of George Street), Ipsley Row and the north side of Ipsley Street.

A similar but smaller cluster of cottages stood in William Street, Adelaide Street and Hewell Road.

### *Named after Prince Albert*

Approaching Redditch from the direction of Birmingham, one really entered the town at Albert Street, named after the Prince Consort. The original intention was that Albert Street should be carried through to link up with Easemore Road, but this has never been achieved. British Mills already stood on the corner.

As one climbed the hill one was flanked by the larger houses of the Bartleets, the Hemmings and other manufacturers. Richard Hemming, who lived on the right, later moved out to Bentley, where his daughter, born in 1853, married Col. G. C. Cheape and became the famous woman squire of Bentley.

On the left, at the top, in buildings which are still there, and which house the W.V.S. office, was the Literary and Scientific Institute, forerunner of a later Institute established in Church Road, now the Public Library. Just above there was the first office and printing works of the Redditch Indicator.

At the top of the hill, as has been stated, stood the Parish Church, very much as it is to-day, but the surrounding churchyard was quite small, and was bounded by a high wall which later gave way to railings taking in a larger area. The remainder of the Green was a green in name only, being so trodden that it was a dust heap in summer and a mud-patch in winter. Barely 40 years previously it had been common grazing land. Even in 1859 there were no pavements; road and green merged. Pavements did not come until 1881.

### *Cottages on hospital site*

On the right there were various rows of cottages and small houses where the hospital, the library, the offices of the Building Society and other premises now stand. Probably the only structure which appeared then as it does now was the Red House, now nurses' quarters attached to the hospital, but then the home of the Neasom family. Nearby was the home of the man who had built the first gas works in Gas Street (now Windsor Street), and there the first consumers paid their accounts. It was not very far from the present gas showrooms.

William Street and Adelaide Street, named after King William IV and his Queen, had been in existence for about 20 years, and round the corner was Bates Hill Methodist Chapel, then 16 years old, and bright new jewel of the early and well-established local branch of the Methodist faith.

The recently cleared cluster of buildings in Hill Street and Hill Street Square were there, together with some of those just removed from the south side of Unicorn Hill, but just below, at about where the station now stands, the town petered out into the countryside.

Evesham Street, then as now, was the main thoroughfare, but it presented an even less neat and tidy appearance than it does today. There was no established building line, beyond which premises might not protrude, and the street was narrower at the northern end than it is now, widening out lower down.

One side of the entrance to Evesham Street presented an appearance which would have been familiar even to the present generation, for the general aspect of the Cranmore Simmons building, on the right-hand corner, swept away recently to make way for the grand new Burtons building, was substantially the same. Further along the same side stood the Congregational Church, built in 1825.

A feature of the town in 1859 was the number of public houses in relation to the population. There were several in Evesham Street, three stood in Red Lion Street, including the one which gave the street its name, the Greyhound Inn stood on part of the site of the present hospital, and there were many others.

Evesham Street was by no means a mixture of shops and public houses, however. Much of the property there was residential, ranging from a doctor's house to another row of mean little cottages, sunk below road level, and standing on the site of the present Co-operative Society premises.

Having once climbed the hill at the end of Evesham Street, one was out of the town again. There was nothing beyond there but an isolated building or two, and Headless Cross was a quite separate village. Prominent on the skyline just beyond where Beaufort Street now stands was the Round House, a peculiar cylindrical structure known to this generation only through the survival of old prints.

The best houses in Redditch—Georgian residences which are still there to-day—stood in Church Green East. To reach them from Birmingham one passed the narrow mouth of Easemore Lane—now the much wider Easemore Road. That road led only to a few farms.

Further along, building had begun in the Peakman Street area, but had by no means reached the extent evident to-day. The Mr. Peakman whose name survives in the district died 20 years before this newspaper was founded, and his land was sold off in building plots. The scheme was far from complete in 1859, but Peakman St. itself, Queen Street, Victoria Street and Wellington Street were sketched out and partly built. They represented the limit of eastward development; Archer Road did not exist. The National School was the last urban building in that direction, the school yard being bounded by the hedge of Easemore Farm.

This new property going up in the Peakman Street area reflected the tendency of the times for master and man to live side by side. Even to-day a clear-eyed look at the buildings shows large houses next door to factories, with an archway big enough to take a horse and carriage, and a row of small houses opposite or alongside. The young Herbert Terry was one of the people living and working in Peakman Street.

### *Disfigurement of the town*

Smith Street, the short connection between Alcester Street and Wellington Street, was then a foredraught leading to a smithy—hence the name.

Further along Alcester Street there was another of the motley collections of cottages which were such a feature and a disfigurement of the town at that time. They were grouped together round a courtyard in the most haphazard fashion, and were old in 1859. Known as Salters Yard, they survived until 1912, being demolished to make way for the Palace Theatre.

Beyond the end of Alcester Street there was very little. Washford Mills were just round the corner, and Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church had been built a few years previously. The first few cottages were beginning to appear in Beoley Road. Holloway Lane was a country lane disappearing down between high banks under an archway of trees, as it was to remain until well within living memory.

Although "The Redditch Indicator" has had two other homes since its foundation in 1859, this shop, still in existence at 4, Prospect Hill, was standing 100 years ago and was the first office from which the newspaper was published.

The old Round House, at the top of Mount Pleasant, built by William Sheward, the needle-maker, to the design of a man named Avery, father of the 19th century historian, William Avery. It was intended to be a windmill, with the sails inside the house, but that use of the place was soon abandoned. The building remained, however, until well into the present century.

"Known as Salters Yard, they survived until 1912, being demolished to make way for the Palace Theatre."

Congratulations from the MANUFACTURERS of Royal Enfield

MOTOR CYCLES BICYCLES & DIESEL ENGINES

to The 'REDDITCH INDICATOR' on completing 100 years of public service.

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## Nowadays nearly 8,000 schoolchildren are fully catered for, but

# A CENTURY AGO WE HAD FEW SCHOOLS

A CENTURY ago the only schools in Redditch were private ones, and although they were good they met the educational needs of only a small percentage of the population — of that section whose parents could afford and were prepared to pay the school fees.

Private schools for boys were conducted by Mr. John Osborne and Mr. J. M. Woodward, and for girls by Miss Swann, the Misses Burrows and the Misses Abbott.

A change came with the passing of the Education Act of 1870. Under this Act, small local governing bodies were set up to manage the schools provided for instruction in elementary subjects.

### Private school

Attendance at an elementary school was compulsory up to 13 years of age, and it was free, but for many years after 1870 elementary schools were maintained by those people who wished their children to have religious instruction of a particular sort, and at those schools a small fee was charged.

They included the national school (now St. Stephen's Infants' School, in Peakman Street), the Wesleyan (now the Youth Club), St. George's and St. Luke's — all of which have now been incorporated into the national system.

Mr. J. E. Bryant, for many years headmaster of the National School, in 1874 opened a private school for boys at the top of Park Road which he named Redditch Grammar School.

Evening classes were being conducted in Redditch during Mr. Bryant's time at the National School, at least 90 years ago. The subjects be taught in these classes included science, electricity, chemistry, physiology and advanced arithmetic.

The 1902 Education Act coordinated and simplified the country's educational system, but it still left, in the "non-provided" schools, some freedom of choice. These schools included St. Stephen's, St. George's, St. Luke's and Mount Carmel.

The same Act permitted the foundation of secondary schools, and Redditch Secondary School was opened in an extension to the building which housed the Technical School (now the College of Further Education) for many years.

The Secondary School outgrew its premises in time, and in 1932 was superseded by the present County High School, built in Easemore Road at a cost of £45,000.

For over 40 years, from 1909 until the Atom Age, the chairman of the governors of this school was Mr. H. Guise, editor of this newspaper until his retirement in 1939.

### More than doubled

In July, 1939, the school population of the Redditch education district, which includes Wythall, Tardebigge, Feckenham, and other areas, was 350 secondary school children and 3,460 children, aged 5-14, attending all-age schools. By the end of the second world war the total number of children attending schools in the district had grown to 4,300—about 3,840 in all-age schools and 450 at the County High School.

With the expansion of education since the war, the school population has more than doubled, present figures being 5,021 primary school children and 2,714 children attending secondary schools.

Twenty years ago, there were 27 schools in Redditch district, including the County High School—the only one providing secondary education in the town. To-day, there are 27 primary schools and five secondary schools. Two schools, at Bentley and Rowney Green, have been closed.

Since the war four secondary modern schools have been built, improvements and modernisations carried out at eight other schools, and provision made for more accommodation for children under eleven.

The first of the town's new secondary modern schools, Bridley Moor, was opened in September, 1952, with accommodation for 505 children. To-day, nearly 800 children attend the school.

Three years later Lodge Farm Secondary Modern School opened, with provision for 540 children. Nearly 700 now attend the school.

In September, 1957, a third secondary school, Woodrush County Secondary School, was opened at Wythall, with 440 children attending it, and last year the Ridgeway School, Astwood Bank, was opened for 300 children.

### Another school

Now in the course of erection in Feckenham Road is another secondary school — Walkwood County Secondary School — which is expected to be opened in a year's time.

"That," says the Clerk to Redditch Education Committee (Mr. W. A. Sharpe), "will be the extent of building for secondary education in the Redditch district, unless there is 'overspill' population received, in which case both primary and secondary schools will have to be reviewed."

Although the accent, since the war, has been on secondary education, Mr. Sharpe explained that there had been a good deal of progress made in the provision of primary school places in the district.

At Hollywood, where part of Silver Street School, Wythall, catered for war-time evacuees in a church hall, an entirely new primary school was started in 1949 and was completed last year. Headless Cross County Primary School is being completely modernised.

The Ipsley County Primary School was opened on the Studley Road estate in January, 1958, and Webheath County Primary School was opened at Easter. This replaced an existing school in the village hall which had begun in 1945 as an annexe to Bridge Street School.

With the building of the new college of Further Education, now in progress, children of junior age who attended the old St. Stephen's School were transferred to a new school at Meadowhill Road, and the old St. Stephen's building has been modernised to serve as an infants' school.

Infants were the first children to benefit by the town's post-war school building scheme. An infants' school, opened on the Batchley Estate in September, 1949, was the first new school opened after the war.

### Technical classes

Technical instruction classes were first opened in Adelaide Street and later transferred to the technical school in Easemore Road.

This technical school became the College of Further Education, the new extensions to which are expected to be opened next year.

Since 1942, when there were 280 students attending evening and day release courses at the old technical school, and 120 students at the school of art, there has been a great increase in the numbers attending further education courses.

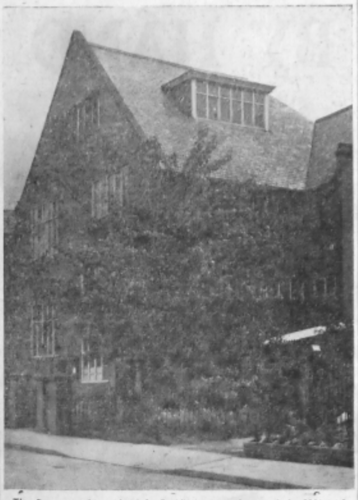
By 1946, the students at the technical school had increased to 520, and at the School of Art to 145.

This year there are 1,465 students at the College of Further Education and 240 at the School of Art.

In 1942 a junior commercial course for boys and girls began with 30 students. The following year there were 60, and the course was so successful that an engineering course for boys only was decided on.

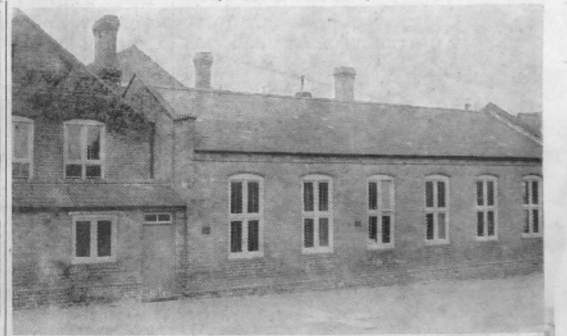
This continued until 1957, when the course was incorporated with others at the County High School, which by then had become a grammar school.

Extensions to the County High school provided for an ultimate total of 900 students. Last year about 762 boys and girls attended; this year about 800.



The first secondary school in Redditch, opened as such in 1909 and superseded by the County High School in 1932. The building, in Easemore Road, is now in use as the College of Further Education. Extensive new premises are being built behind it.

The oldest school still standing in Redditch was built before this newspaper was founded. Seen below it is St. Stephen's Infants' School.



The new primary school at Webheath, the latest to be brought into use in Redditch.

### REDDITCH RACES—1838

ONE of the earliest horse races in Redditch was run in 1838. In one of the races, for the Yeomanry Subscription Cup, one of the horses was named Alvechurch.

In the Town Stakes horses, not thoroughbreds, "the property of gentlemen residing within eight miles," could be entered. There were five entrants for the Galloway Stakes, and Mr. T. Holyoake's Wildboy was matched against Mr. Perks' Black Diamond.

## When coach services through the town were "very uncertain"

THE first local directory of Redditch was published by W. T. Heming in 1861. At that time Mr. W. Ricketts, Dr. Nicholson, Mr. Wm. Kinchin, Mr. Wm. Boulton, and Mr. Joseph Warren were members of the Local Board.

Leading solicitors were Mr. E. Browning, Mr. G. C. Richards and Mr. Thomas Amphlett.

The bank was kept by Mr. John Osborne, the post office by Miss Elizabeth Taylor, and the stamp office by Mr. Edmund Connell, who collected the rates. Mr. J. E. Clift owned the gas works.

A more complete directory was compiled for the year 1822 by Mr. Frederic Milward, but was never published.

This directory records that about 4,000 were employed making needles and fish-hooks, which were exported to North America and "many other parts of the globe." Fifty-seven people gave needles and fish hooks as their business.

Redditch was said to be conveniently situated for trade and "a very healthy and pleasant spot."

Good workmen, even in those far-off days of 1822, were known to earn upwards of £5 a week as pointers and hookmakers.

With Headless Cross the population was estimated at 3,500, and the town contained 700 houses, counting those at Headless Cross.

A free school for boys was established by the Earl of Plymouth in 1820.

Two coaches passed through Redditch several times weekly for Kidderminster and London, but they were said to be "very uncertain."

There were wagons to all parts of the kingdom advertised by Jolly's, and there were gigs to be hired from the hairdresser, Mr. P. Waring. Most people, however, must have relied on shanks' pony. There were 16 boot and shoe makers in the town.

James Cashmore was the Sherriff's Officer and Bailiff, and James Bray the Town Crier.

C. B. Bromley traded as a stationer, bookseller, druggist, medicine vendor, bookbinder, grocer, music shop, etc.

### *AN ANCIENT HOSTELRY*

The Barley Mow at Studley, probably older than anything Redditch can boast. Parts of it go back to the 14th century.

# PROGRESS SINCE THE ENTIRE NEWSPAPER WAS SET BY HAND

THE news content of the newspaper was set entirely by hand in the early years, and was the task of six compositors. This meant that after printing the type had to be distributed and returned to the type cases for use in the next edition.

Hand-setting has its hazards, especially when the forme, as the made-up page is called, is locked into a steel chase. The story is still told of a mishap which occurred in the original premises, now the site of T. & M. Dixon's showrooms, and opposite the existing works.

The formes had to be taken from the composing room to the lower press room by means of a hand-operated lift. On this occasion the front page, all locked up and ready for printing, was duly placed on the platform of the lift, but not with the customary care. The forme slipped, the entire page disintegrated, and had to be entirely re-set.

The 1918 influenza epidemic caused an emergency which upset the routine of production. Two compositors died, which meant a grave depletion of the staff, and the setting of type was performed by a helpful firm in Birmingham.

The type was despatched at frequent intervals by Midland "Red" bus, and the many parcels were collected at Redditch, in readiness for the page make-up.

The battery of Linotype type-setting machines available to produce the modern newspaper. The operator in the foreground is Mr. Albert Strain who, as related in this supplement, has completed over 50 years' service.

## Night work

On another occasion, this time of a machine breakdown in the printing, Mr. Eades and his fellow compositors had to be roused from their beds at midnight and asked to return to the works to start to set up type for the remaining pages to be printed later in the day because the failure of the press would delay publication a matter of some hours.

Setting by hand was eventually superseded by mechanical setting, first by the Monotype method and subsequently by Linotype machines. The latter is the more widely used for newspaper production.

Both Monotype and Linotype machine setting eliminates the need to laboriously return type to the cases. The metal after printing is thrown into the melting pot, and made into fresh ingots in readiness for a subsequent issue.

Mechanical setting was further extended in 1937, this time in relation to advertisement copy.

This had been set by hand and, following publication, the varying size and styles of type were returned to the cases—a more involved process of distribution than with the uniform size used for news matter.

The installation of the Intertype machine not only speeded up the setting and improved the presentation of advertisement layout, but it enabled the headlines to be mechanically set in a variety of type faces.

## Blew up

The actual printing of the newspaper was achieved originally on a cylinder machine driven by a gas engine—two pages at a time. This unit eventually blew itself up, and the engine-room roof with it. Four strong navvies were at once engaged to operate the printing press by hand while a small steam engine was fixed up in Mr. Heming's garden.

Following the removal of the works to the present site in Easemore Road during 1912, printing was by means of a "Wharfdale" flat-bed machine. Known in the industry as a twin-feeder, an operator was required at each end to simultaneously feed the sheets of paper into the machine for the four pages to be printed together. It was essential that the machine men worked to a team, otherwise the pages of type would appear on the machine "blanket" and be impressed on the reverse side of the paper.

Two instances of failure in printing which occurred over the years caused serious delays in publication. The whole of one Thursday night, for example, only single feeding of the sheets was possible and this by an employee controlling by hand a check device for every single sheet which was printed.

The other record was of the failure of the ink device which maintained the automatic and constant inking of the rubber rollers passing over the type. This necessitated applying the ink to the rollers by ink knife for an entire night's machining.

## Carving knife

The printed eight pages of the newspaper were then cut by hand with a carving knife—24 sheets at a time—in readiness for folding on an adjacent unit. In this age of mechanisation what is now regarded as an antiquated process soon gave place to a reliable and faster folding machine.

Those were also the days when the stock of flat paper was stored in a cellar below the Prospect Hill shop, and when the gas engine which drove the printing press had to be coaxed to start by a man and a boy. Each apprentice served his time by sharing this task in a weekly rota.

The power thus provided was seldom constant, and was invariably insufficient to drive the machines of the lithographic printing section at the same time as the newspaper Wharfdale. It was therefore necessary to cease production in this other department while newspaper publication had priority.

Nowadays the newspaper production is but one phase of the works' daily output at Easemore Road, but as recently as 30 years ago all other forms of machining ceased for at least two to three days every week.

## Swarm of boys

Before 1937 four pages were printed during Thursday afternoon and evening, and frequently were not completed until the early hours of Friday morning. The remaining pages were printed later on Friday in the hope and purpose of distribution in the late afternoon.

Errand boys from the newsagents of the town would swarm around the side entrance, each striving to take delivery of the copies ahead of his fellows. With barrows, handcarts, and carrier cycles, they would impatiently await their quota, and if they became too insistent the gates would have to be locked to prevent infiltration into the machine-room.

Copies for the neighbouring villages such as Astwood Bank, Studley, Rowney Green and Feckenham, were despatched in small packages handed to the Midland "Red" buses at intervals during the afternoon by apprentices and other messengers.

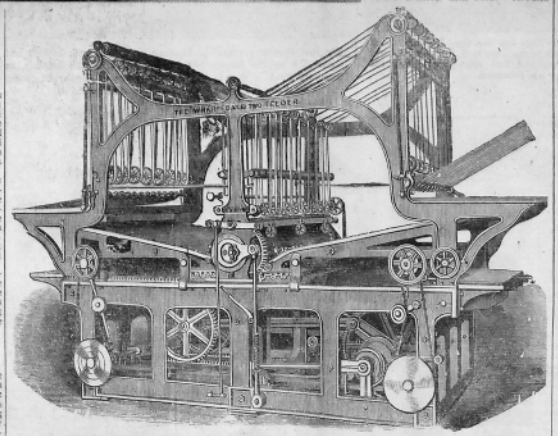
Another emergency took place during the overhaul of the printing press. The pages of type were transported by coach to a Birmingham works, and printed there. A compositor (Mr. H. Harbridge) went in the vehicle to be available for corrections and any changing of type. The sheets were then collected the following day and folded, and that week's issue was only a few hours late in publication.

## Colour pages

History was made during the concluding months of the regime of the cylinder machine presses.

In December, 1936, a special Christmas shopping edition contained two pages of the issue which were printed in red and green ink as well as the customary black presentation. How elated we all were to have contributed to this notable phase of newspaper production, for which, as a young salesman I had procured and written the required advertisements.

The year 1937 saw yet another development in production. A "Cossar" machine was installed which not only printed the newspaper from reels of paper, instead of flat sheets, but slit the pages, folded them and delivered the papers in dozens. This same unit, with later modifications, made from time to time, continues to produce your local weekly newspaper, and was responsible for the edition now being read.



The old "Wharfdale" press used for printing the "Indicator" between 1912 and 1937.

Three times during its first year of installation, the "Cossar" produced a 14-page edition, but the usual number of pages was 10 and 12. Wartime shortage of newsprint restricted the editions to eight pages, which remained the order until 1953.

## Larger papers

Towards the end of that year, the fitment which made possible more than eight pages was overhauled and reinstated, and larger size newspapers became the fashion.

A few months prior to this centenary a further adjustment was made to the mechanism to permit once again 14 pages per issue. Six pages are printed on Wednesday and wound upon spare reels; as the remaining eight pages are printed on Thursday afternoon the first six pages are wound into the machine, which then delivers newspapers of 14 pages.

Extra pages per issue had become necessary by the development of the news and feature story presentation, together with the increased demand upon advertising space.

With the acquisition of a motor vehicle around 1935, distribution came under the control of the publishers. Now, with the remarkable growth in circulation, copies are delivered to all newsagents in our circulation area. The mileage covered by two vans during Thursday evening and Friday morning of each week totals approximately 150 miles.

Distribution of the "Indicator" is made into the southern fringes of the city of Birmingham, and the still rapidly expanding housing areas of King's Norton, Wythall, The Maypole, Grimes Hill, Earlswood, and Hollywood. The edition for this part of our territory carries the separate title of "The Wythall & King's Norton Edition of the Redditch Indicator."

## Photographs

The introduction of photographs was intensified during the late 1930s by the employment of freelance photographers. Subsequently a full-time staff photographer was engaged to cope with picture presentation.

In October, 1956, the acquisition of an electronic engraving machine in the early days of this method being used by weekly newspapers, enables blocks to be made on our premises within an hour or so of the photograph having been exposed and developed.

The format of the newspaper underwent a radical change in the autumn of 1953, following the trend of weekly newspaper presentation. Front page news and pictures were introduced, and the former front page of advertisements relegated to the inside of the newspaper.

Weekly newspaper production does not have to be maintained with the same speed and spot decision as that of an evening or morning newspaper, but there have been occasions when news of important local significance has "broken" on the eve of publication.

Such an occasion was when Colonel Victor Milward, M.P., died on a Friday morning.

When it was decided that a full memoir should be included in that day's edition, Mr. H. Guise (editor) commenced his task of compiling the story of Colonel Milward's life and career.

## Late printing

The copy was distributed, as it was written, amongst the compositors, and the article put into type, read, and corrected in readiness for printing.

The newspaper was two or three hours behind its usual time of publication that week, but it contained a full and the only memoir which appeared so soon after the event.

On September 1st, 1939, publication was again deferred, this time to include news of Hitler's invasion of Poland.

Where mechanisation is involved, the timing of publication can be affected. A weekly has not to be geared to the tempo of its daily contemporaries, but nevertheless the edict "publication must be on time" is observed to the letter.

We have recounted one or two instances when, despite mishap, this has been, to a large degree, achieved, but the many aspects of production, together with its vicissitudes of distribution (fog or icy road conditions permitting) are ever the concern of those responsible for publication of a newspaper.

A comparatively recent experience was that of a machine stoppage caused by an electrical fault. Four thousand copies still had to be printed on that Thursday night.

Only prompt attendance by an electrical engineer enabled printing to be resumed, and the edition was completed around 2.30 a.m. Among the numerous other problems which can arise are those of temperature affecting the rollers, and this eventuality is present in the coldest of wintry days as well as during summer's heat.

## Circulation rise

We believe that in the early years 2,000 copies of each issue were printed and sold. Around 1918 circulation had increased to 4,000, which in 1930 had risen to 6,500 weekly.

During 1933 a commercial research organisation certified that among "C" class of families (eight or more rooms per house) readership of our newspaper was 48%, and in "B" class, of five rooms per house or less, readership was 70%.

Within a few years, with the housing and industrial development brought about by the war years, readership of the "Indicator" increased rapidly.

Making up a page on the "stone"—the metal-topped table used for the purpose. The editor (centre) indicates his preference for positioning various items to the "stonehands."

The figures jumped from 8,000 in September, 1941, to 10,600 in January of 1945, and advanced still further that same year.

By 1951 weekly sales of the "Indicator" were around 12,500, and early in 1959 the number of copies sold each week was varying between 14,000 and 14,250. This weekly sales of the "Alcester Chronicle" are treated separately from the circulation of its parent newspaper.

A 1958 readership survey of selected towns in the West Midlands produced the significant

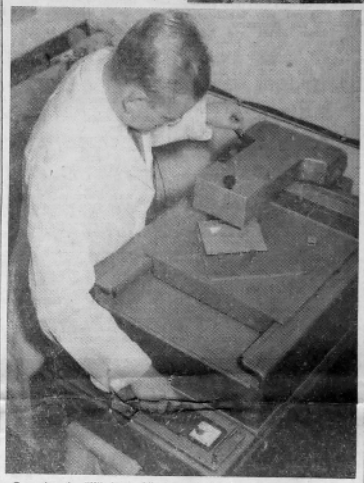
(Continued in column 8).

The "Indicator" staff photographer, David Brazier, as so many of his "victims" see him. He has held his present position for eight years, and takes most of the photographs which appear every week.

(Continued from column 6).

fact that 85% of the housewives who were interviewed were readers of a weekly newspaper. With our joint circulation of well over 15,250 copies per week, distributed in areas which carry a total population of something like 47,000, this coverage of one newspaper per three head of population is considered in the trade to be an achievement. And is a record of which we are justly proud.

F.A.K.



Operating the "Klischograph" electronic block-making machine, which is the latest addition to the firm's newspaper equipment.

Loading a small part of one week's issue into the firm's vans.

## OVER 50 YEARS A COMPOSITOR

LAST February Mr. Albert Strain began his 51st year as a compositor engaged on type-setting for the newspaper. He started work at the old premises and still recalls having to run errands for the stationery shop which was then situated in Prospect Hill, and delivering newspapers to the larger houses in the

He joined the Worcesters during the first world war, saw service in the Middle East, and spent his 21st birthday in Basra hospital. From convalescing at Bombay and Alexandria, he returned to civilian life in 1920.

After resuming his trade as a compositor, it was in 1926 that he became a linotype operator, responsible for the type-setting of the "Births, Marriages and Deaths" column.

It is interesting to recall that Mr. Strain, who in 1955 was the recipient of a gold watch to mark 46 years' service with the company, is still operating the same machine as the day he was transferred from hand to mechanical type-setting. Nowadays his chief responsibility is the setting of the classified advertisements, the auction sale notices and paragraphs of news.

## PRINTER FOR 20 YEARS

LARGELY responsible for the printing of the newspaper for over 20 years was Mr. S. C. Benfield.

Apprenticed to the machining department in 1918, he operated the former Wharfdale machine before taking over control of the new press when it was installed in 1937.

Mr. Benfield has an interesting tale to relate of happenings, both grave and gay, which were associated with newspaper production over a period of 27 years.

He left the company's employ in 1945, holding the position of machine room overseer at that time.


DAWSON, PAYNE & ELLIOTT LTD.

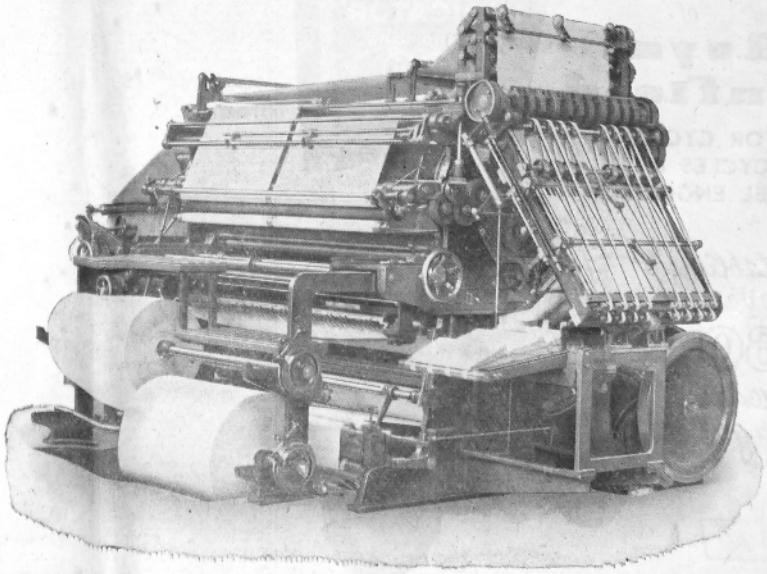
ARE PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR CENTENARY EDITION AND EXTEND OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUCCESS.

THE REDDITCH INDICATOR HAS ALWAYS BEEN A WELL PRODUCED PAPER AND WE ARE HAPPY TO BE CONNECTED WITH ITS PRODUCTION OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ONE OF OUR—

COSSAR NEWSPAPER PRESSES

DAWSON, PAYNE & ELLIOTT LTD.

ATLAS WORKS, OTLEY · YORKSHIRE.

The Cossar newspaper press on which this newspaper is printed.

# The Milward family have played a great part as directors

THE year 1893 saw the formation of a limited company, and Mr. John Morgan was appointed its first chairman, remaining in office until 1904.

A native of Studley, he was elected its first representative on Warwickshire County Council when that body was formed, and remained a member for 20 years.

When his father's business, William Hall & Co., was made a limited company in 1895, Mr. Morgan became its first chairman, and also served in this capacity when, ten years later, the formation of Amalgamated Needles & Fish Hooks, Ltd., included the acquisition if his family concern.

Of strong Liberal views, he was a Parliamentary candidate for East Worcestershire in the General Election of 1906, being defeated by Austen Chamberlain. Later he contested, unsuccessfully, seats at Worcester and Walsall.

Mr. JOHN MORGAN

Mr. Morgan was one of the founders of both the Redditch and Studley Liberal Clubs, and in 1896 he started a halfpenny Liberal newspaper for Redditch, but its career was short-lived.

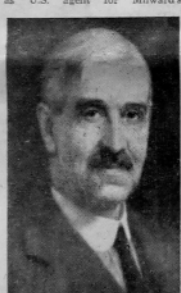
His work as a magistrate brought recognition as chairman of the Alcester Bench as well as at Redditch.

Mr. Morgan died in November, 1916, at the age of 58 years.

★

COL. C. F. MILWARD, D.L., J.P., succeeded Mr. John Morgan as chairman of the board of directors, and served in this capacity from 1904 until his death, in his 87th year, in 1947.

Colonel C. F. Milward was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1860, during the period of the residence in the U.S.A. of his father, Mr. J. F. Milward, who was then acting as U.S. agent for Milward's



Col. C. F. MILWARD

needles and Clark's thread. Colonel Milward was closely associated with the needle and allied industries, and was chairman of Amalgamated Needles & Fish Hooks, Ltd., from 1909 until 1945.

He was also greatly interested in public affairs. He was a member of the Worcestershire County Council from 1907 to 1942, and was Chairman from 1930 until 1942. He served as High Sheriff of the county, and was a J.P. from 1909 until 1944, having acted as chairman of Redditch magistrates for a number of years.

In 1910 he served as Master of the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers of the City of London. A keen churchman, he officiated as churchwarden both at the Lickey Church and later at St. Lawrence's, Alvechurch.

★

COMMANDER C. DISNEY MILWARD, R.N. (retired), followed his father, at the latter's death in 1947, as chairman of the Redditch Indicator Co., Ltd.

A principal in the town's traditional industry of needle-making, and leader in many spheres of social service, he brought to bear upon his contacts and interests a delight in living, discernment, and idealism. He possessed an engaging power of conversation.

He was a founder-member of Redditch Rotary Club and was its president in 1947. On three occasions he served Redditch Round Table in the presidential chair, was chairman of two or three firms, including the East Worcestershire Waterworks Company, and was first chairman of the governors of the Bridley Moor Secondary School.

Commander Milward was a director of Amalgamated Needles & Fish Hooks, Ltd., and followed his distinguished father as chairman of Redditch magistrates.

He evinced great satisfaction from his work as a prison visitor

Cdr. C. D. MILWARD

and in the after-care of juvenile offenders.

A submarine officer in the first world war, he returned to further service in the 1939-1945 hostilities.

His principal relaxation in his earlier years was yachting, but in later years he found great pleasure in long country walks. He once broadcast a stimulating talk in which he expressed his outlook on life.

His death occurred suddenly in 1953, at the comparatively early age of 62.

★

MR. LEONARD HARGREAVES BEARE, B.Com. (Birmingham), who joined the board of directors in January, 1948, was appointed chairman in 1953.

A member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Mr. Beare

Mr. L. H. BEARE

is associated with the needle industry of the town and district. He is also a member of the Court of Assistants of the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers.

Following the merger in 1932 of Amalgamated Needles Ltd., with the Milward group of companies, Mr. Beare joined the new combine as secretary of Needle Industries Ltd. In 1951 he was appointed a director of the holding company, Amalgamated Needles and Fish Hooks, Ltd., and three years later he became deputy chairman and managing director.

Mr. Beare has held the office of chairman of the Needlemakers' Association for a number of years. He is also on the Grand Council of Federation of British Industries, and of the Council of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. His other interests include a life governorship of Birmingham University, and he is chairman of Governors of the new County Secondary School at Studley.

His colleagues on the board of directors are Messrs. G. B. Pickering, B. G. Lewis, F. S. Taylor, H. Philip Terry and F. A. Kettle. Mr. C. Donald Pickering is secretary to the company.

## THREE MANAGERS OVER 60 YEARS

OVER a period of 60 years there have been three general managers of the Redditch Indicator Co., Ltd.

Mr. William Frank Skinner was appointed to this office in 1897, after serving his apprenticeship in the printing trade at Gloucester.

Outside his business responsibilities, his principal interest was that of camping. He was a pioneer in caravanning, which in recent years has increased in popularity. Acquiring a horse-drawn vehicle in 1915, he toured this country and parts of the Continent over a period of 30 years.

Mr. Skinner was one of the first in this locality to hold a driving licence, and his first car, an Oldsmobile, is still a museum piece entered occasionally by its local owner in vintage rallies.

He was also a skilled engineer, and held many diplomas, including a Paris Exhibition award, for toolmaking.

Mr. Skinner, who retired in 1932, died in 1951. He was a former chairman of the Redditch branch of the Dickens Fellowship.

He was succeeded by Mr. Percy T. Austin, who was general manager for a period of 21 years. He brought a new impetus to the newspaper production, making wider use of pictures, building up circulation, and introducing increased mechanisation both to the type-setting and printing of the weekly editions.

Mr. Austin had derived enthusiasm from a youthful entry into the trade at a local firm of printers, and his return to Redditch in 1932 followed service as an executive for a firm in Wolverhampton. He retired from management and directorship in 1953.

## GENERAL MANAGER AND CONTRIBUTOR

THE present general manager, Mr. F. A. Kettle, was appointed in 1953, following the retirement of Mr. P. T. Austin. He had previously been on the staff of the company from 1934 to 1938 as an advertisement and printing salesman.

From 1939 until 1953 Mr. Kettle was the proprietor of his own printing and stationery business in Kidderminster.

Since his return as general manager there have been a number of important developments, including the installation of new and much improved machinery and the opening of the company's retail stationery shop on Church Green East, Redditch. During the period the newspapers have changed over to front page news, while the number of pages have been increased and new advertisement features have been introduced.

Mr. Kettle has himself been a frequent contributor to the news columns and is the author of the recent series of musical biographies. He was appointed a

Mr. F. A. KETTLE

director of the company in October, 1958.

He has always taken a keen interest in amateur dramatics, and was for a long time both a playing member and business manager of the society owning the Kidderminster Playhouse. A founder-member of the Redditch C.H.S. Old Students Association in 1932, he appeared before the war in a succession of plays by the Old Students' Dramatic Society.

During the war years, 1940-45, Mr. Kettle promoted celebrity concerts on behalf of Kidderminster Corporation and the National Savings movement. He was also invited by the B.B.C. to undertake the house management of broadcast concerts from Kidderminster Town Hall, when Rae Jenkins was conductor of the Midland Light Orchestra.

Active participation on the stage is no longer possible owing to the demands of administering the many affairs of this company, states Mr. Kettle, but he adds, "I derive considerable enjoyment from attending amateur operatic performances in neighbouring towns."

## EMPLOYEES' VALUABLE SERVICE

OTHER employees whose years of service played a valuable part in the building up of the newspaper production were Mr. Robert A. Field, machine room foreman for 45 years, Mr. O. J. Eades, who was foreman of the composing room for 49 years, Mr. Harry Harbridge and Mr. Charles Ville, both of whom were compositors for many years until retirement.

Mr. Eades began work at the Indicator Office during the proprietorship of Mr. William Lane. In 1890 he was promoted to the position of overseer, which he held for 49 years. From the fusion of the letterpress and news composing departments, he was also in charge of the make-up of the newspaper and the preparation of its pages for the machines.

During the 1930s, one remembers him as a familiar figure at the "stone," the metal table on which type is assembled in readiness for printing on the presses. How interesting it all seemed: the spacing out of news, allocating the headlines, and displaying the advertisements. And with what satisfaction Mr. Eades, by that time a veteran of the industry, appeared to derive from the weekly shaping of the newspaper format.

He had seen the laborious setting by hand of the type superseded by type-setting machinery, which at the tapping of a keyboard produced each line of news on a metal "slug," and the old hand-feeding machines give place to the high speed automatic cylinder press.

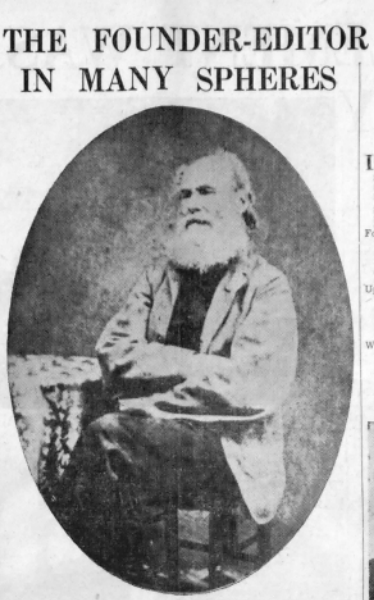
In 1937 he was appointed works

Mr. O. J. EADES

manager. His retirement from the company in 1946 ended 49 years as a craftsman who evinced pride in his industry and as a conscientious employee.

For almost 50 years he was the correspondent for Headless Cross and Webheath, providing news of weekly events in those areas, and his regular articles on "News and Notes of the Churches" caused him to be recognised, among the staff, as an authority on ecclesiastical affairs.

# THE FOUNDER-EDITOR IN MANY SPHERES



The founder, Mr. W. T. HEMING

WILLIAM THOMAS HEMING was not only a master printer and owner of a flourishing business which depended upon the prosperity of local industry for its life and progress.

He was a scholar, a geologist in his leisure hours, and an enthusiast of several scientific societies; one who enjoyed the companionship of men of like interests, whose literary attainments later found expression in the columns of a new local newspaper.

An alert and upright figure, with long and curly white hair and beard, which characterisation made him an outstanding personality of his day, he was a firm believer in physical fitness, and could be seen most morning striding up and down the recreation ground—now Other and Archer Roads—indulging in sword exercises with a stout walking stick.

Occasionally he would be found enjoying a siesta in the office, lying flat on his back on the coco matting covering of the floor, with three or four ledgers as a head rest.

### NO FIRE

No fireplace or stove was to be seen in his "den," and on the coldest of winter days a century ago, he would sit at the desk with a zinc bucket at his side, in the bottom of which was a solitary lighted candle providing the only warmth outside the burning enthusiasm of a commercial zealot.

He provided the employees with a set of old bentwood chairs and encouraged them in their spare time to punch each other, to keep themselves warm and out of mischief.

A nature lover, his attention one summer morn was called to a swarm of wasps which had entered the open window and had settled among printing materials on a shelf.

How remarkable," he exclaimed, "do not disturb them: let us see what they will do." However, the invaders became too aggressive and had to be evicted.

For a year or two "Printer" Heming, as he was affectionately known in Redditch, had toyed with the idea of launching a newspaper for the "Needle District."

### BY CHANCE?

Was it merely chance that the inception of this newspaper coincided with the opening of a railway service between Barnt Green and Redditch, with the facilities of a station in Clive Road, the founding of a new Land and Building Society, and a rapidly expanding gas works, or surely the result of a forward look of an astute business mind?

The opening editorial described as an experiment the commencing publication of a newspaper for the industrial and agricultural area.

There was no canvassing for advertisements in those early days. It was often difficult even to have one inserted. Once when a tradesman applied for space for a column announcement, Mr. Heming in a rage shouted: "He wants a column of the Indicator for his allotment. Not likely—damn his confounded cheek."

Times have changed. Advertisements are now the mainspring of newspaper publication. They enhance the reading interest and appeal, and their revenue is essential to the cost of coverage of the locality which the newspaper serves.

### INSURANCE AGENT

The founder and the first editor of this newspaper was agent for an insurance company. As the town's fire engine was housed in a cottage home near the printing works in Easemore Road, it was convenient for the employees to constitute the brigade.

As the printers were manning the pumps at a fire, W. T. Heming would slip over the head of each fireman a brass chain with attached tab bearing the name of the insurance company. Each man received half a crown for his services at the end of each fire.

The employees also formed a rugger team which played on the site of Terry's sports field in Easemore Lane.

W. T. Heming lived to see his newspaper soundly established in the reading habits of the residents of Redditch and its environs. At his death in January, 1879, Mr. Fred Heming became the proprietor. Subsequently the business passed into the possession of a William Lane.

★

## NEARLY HALF A CENTURY AS EDITOR

TOWARDS the end of the nineteenth century, in May, 1899, Mr. Harry Guise accepted the invitation to occupy the editorial chair.

During earlier years in his father's needlemaking business he had often contributed articles on cycling, sport and music; at the

Mr. H. GUISE

age of 35 years he commenced to direct the editorial policy of this newspaper.

In nearly half a century of service he seldom missed a week writing the leading article for every issue.

He was appointed managing editor of the "Indicator" in 1917, and its subsidiary "Alcester Chronicle," and in 1935 he joined the board of directors, the latter position being held until his death at the age of 89 years in 1949. He retired from the editorship in 1939, but continued to write local notes and leading articles for the newspaper for a number of years afterwards.

### MUSICIAN

Journalism was not his only interest. Possessing a light tenor voice, he was in demand for concert and oratorio. As a violinist, he was deputy leader in the old Redditch Orchestra.

Sport, too, claimed his allegiance. In his younger years he excelled in rugger for the town club, was a keen angler, and a founder member of the Redditch Swimming Club. As a boy he rode one of the "bone-shaker" bicycles, and, in succession, the "penny-farthing," solid tyred, and subsequently the pneumatic tyred machine of convential pattern.

Long-distance cycle rides to the coast in a day were quite a habit, and after he ceased active participation in cycling events he was official judge and timekeeper for the National Cyclists' Union. He held the presidency of the Redditch Road and Path Club from 1945 to 1948.

In matters of education, Mr. Guise was an outstanding figure for many years. He was a pioneer in the establishment of a Secondary School in Redditch, and held the chairmanship of the governors from 1909 until 1936, when the Secondary School became known as the County High School. He was made chairman of the reconstituted governing body, and held this office until retirement, after 40 years, a few months before his death.

He also served the community as a member of the Urban District Council, the special constabulary, and the Smallwood Hospital Committee.

# HAD AN INTEREST

## A FAMILIAR FIGURE AT MOST EVENTS OF THE DAY

IN 1904 a young journalist from Bromsgrove joined the reporting staff of this newspaper. His name: William Brown; he had already taken part in the South African campaign, with the 2nd Battalion, the Worcestershire Regiment.

For 43 years Mr. Brown served this newspaper and its readers. During the 1914-18 war he again answered the call to arms, and saw service in Flanders with his old regiment.

Upon the retirement of Mr. H. Guise in 1939, Mr. Brown was promoted from chief reporter to the role of editor, which position he held during the difficult war years, retiring in 1947.

William Brown could unfold an interesting tale of his association with the "Indicator"; of civic developments and of cub reporters trained and influenced; of years of coverage—with the travelling which it involved—of

Mr. W. BROWN

the matches of Redditch Football club, and of telephoning reports in time for the Saturday evening editions of the Birmingham sporting newspapers.

### FRIENDS

He found delight in the many facets of his work, not only because thereby his journalistic flair was extended, but because he was brought into touch with a wide circle of acquaintances. For William Brown enjoyed making new friends, and keeping them.

During his tenure of service, he saw and reported on boundary extensions, new roads and housing schemes, recreation grounds, a Garden of Remembrance, a new Council House and a County High School.

In his recollection of those 40 odd years Mr. Brown has touched upon one significant feature of life and work in this district which he has witnessed. It is the generous and ready response which has always been given to a deserving cause: Cottage Hospital, Poppy Day, and Redditch Carnival, to mention but a few. This familiar figure, with his cycle, was to be seen at most of the happenings of his day. With a finger on the pulse of local events, he was an encyclopaedia of men and movements.

He had a prodigious capacity for reporting, and looking through the newspaper files of his era gives an idea of the millions of words he must have written. It was fitting that his professional connection with the sporting life of the town and district should have brought recognition in being awarded high office in football administration.

In a busy life in which never was restricted to a mere eight hours per day, Mr. Brown found time to give his interest to many organisations, among them the Boy Scouts, Redditch Carnival, the Angling Club (life membership) and St. Luke's Church Council. Some continue to claim his attention, particularly his work for the blind and the Redditch Youth Centre.

As an ex-Serviceman of two wars, it was inevitable that the British Legion should receive a measure of Mr. Brown's enthusiasm. For years he has been President of the Webheath branch, chairman of the Benevolent Committee of the Redditch branch, and member of other phases of the Legion's activity.

In 1955 Mr. and Mrs. William Brown celebrated their golden wedding. Mrs. Brown continues to collect for the British and Foreign Bible Society, and together they find much of interest in a joint outlook which has sought to contribute to the well-being of their fellow citizens.

★

## FROM JUNIOR REPORTER TO EDITOR

MR. LEONARD D. MILLAR, a native of Redditch and an enthusiast in astronomy and music, served as editor for a period of five years from 1947.

He had been nurtured in the art and practice of journalism by Mr. H. Guise and Mr. W. Brown, upon joining the staff as a junior reporter in 1930. For ten years he was a familiar figure, with pencil and notepaper, at functions held in the district.

Mr. L. D. MILLAR

Shortly after becoming chief reporter in 1939, he joined the Pioneer Corps and saw military service until being invalided out two and a half years later. He had a brief spell as deputy works chemist at the works of High Duty Alloys, Ltd., before returning to his earlier job with the privilege and task of the compilation and presentation of the news.

Mr. Millar was a founder-member of the Redditch Society and of the Redditch Rotary Club, was actively associated with the Redditch Christian Council, and the Astwood Bank branch of the British Legion, holding the post of organist and choirmaster of the Astwood Bank Parish Church from 1936 until 1947, with the exception of his Army service.

★

## EDITOR FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS

THE present editor is Mr. George Withy. Born and educated in Birkenhead, the son of a naval architect, he received his early training in journalism on the "Birkenhead News," where he subsequently had charge of a district edition.

Service with a Royal Artillery unit during 1942-47 interrupted his professional career.

Shortly after returning to civilian life, he left Merseyside for the Midlands. It was in 1948 that

Mr. G. WITHY

Mr. Withy joined our editorial staff as chief reporter and deputy to the editor. Within a month of arrival, he found himself in sole charge owing to the illness of Mr. L. D. Millar.

Two years later he left the company to become local representative of two Birmingham newspapers.

Upon the resignation of Mr. Millar in 1952, the former chief reporter was invited to return, this time in the role of editor. At the age of 26, Mr. Withy probably became one of the youngest weekly newspaper editors in the country.

During these seven years in the editorial chair, his aim has been to introduce new features, and the modern presentation of news. His hope of changing to front page news reached fulfilment in 1953, when a new manager arrived with similar intent.

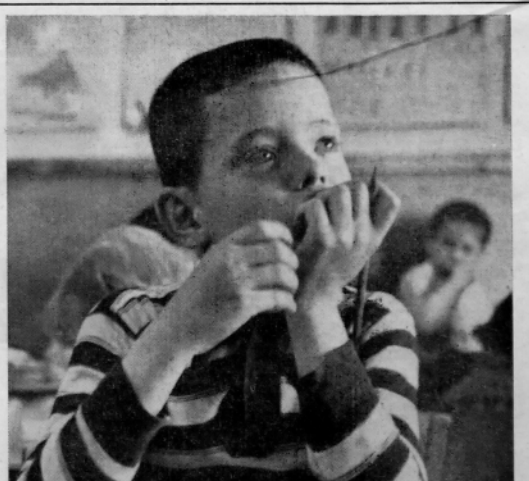
Mr. Withy has been a member of Redditch Round Table for over ten years, having held the offices of secretary, chairman and vice-chairman, press and publicity officer, which latter duty he continues to perform.

In the Rotary movement, during four years' membership, he has served the local club as speaker's secretary, refectory steward and editor of the club bulletin. Mr. Withy is now senior vice-president.

He has been actively associated with the Friends of Auxerre, in the role of public relations officer, since the inception of this twinning organisation.

Mr. Withy is married, with two daughters.

(References to other employees of the company will be found on page 4 opposite, and page 7).



*Each child born this year in the United States will need, on average, 15 tons of paper during its lifetime*

During the next 20 years this figure, it is estimated, will rise to 25 tons. Certainly the trend is clear. The world is going to need more paper and more things made from paper. Bowaters are deploying their wide-spread and diversified resources in line with this trend. In the United States and Canada as well as in Britain, Bowater mills and factories are ready, or being made ready, to follow the indicator of rising demand.

*facts point to a buoyant future at* **Bowaters**

THE BOWATER ORGANISATION

GREAT BRITAIN U.S.A. CANADA AUSTRALIA SOUTH AFRICA EIRE NORWAY SWEDEN

# IN A 12-PAGE ISSUE WE USE 19 MILES OF PAPER

THE basic raw material for the weekly production of this newspaper is newsprint.

Upon changing from flat sheets to reels in 1937, it was necessary to make available increased storage space to accommodate the new reels which, from time to time, arrive at our works in consignments of ten tons.

These monster reels are the product of the renowned Bowater Paper Corporation, and their making is an interesting story in itself.

They come in two widths—35½ inches and 53 inches—reeled to a diameter of 33 inches. The weight of the reel is approximately 7 cwt. and 10 cwt. respectively, and the average length of paper per reel is just over four miles.

Thus a customary weekly edition of 12 pages uses 19 miles for 1½ tons of newsprint, and our centenary issues will have greatly exceeded that quantity. And some of this paper has to pass twice through the rollers of our newspaper press during the weekly printing.

## Distant places

The life of the newspaper which brings you the news and opinions of your town and district begins in the forests of such distant places as Newfoundland, Scandinavia, and the slopes of the great Smoky Mountains in the southern United States. Even our own native woodlands form part of the background picture.

Timber is the raw material for newsprint: tall straight firs; and one has only to begin to translate the figures of the colossal demand every year for newsprint into terms of trees to realise the magnitude of the forestry operation which lies behind the headlines of newspapers.

The extraction of timber by the paper-making firms is most carefully regulated, and the growth of new trees exceeds the annual rate of tonnage of timber grows every year in Canada and the United States than is cut down.

Much of the pulpwood cut in Canada starts on its journey to the mills in a spectacular "log drive" taking place in the spring, when the swollen rivers rush down their courses carrying before them vast quantities of cut timber.

Pulp converted from the logs is dried and compressed into sheets of convenient size for shipment to Britain. The vast tonnage demands much shipping space, a requirement which spotlights the cause of shortage of newsprint during the war years, 1939 to 1945.

## Complicated

The complicated processes of converting the wood pulp into newsprint involves the use of some of the largest machines in industry. Such mechanism is capable of producing 45,000 square feet of paper every minute.

It is a continuous process. Each completed roll has to be lifted clear and the swiftly moving band of paper deftly transferred to a new spindle without stopping the machine.

To increase the smoothness of the paper surface and make it suitable for printing, the paper is passed at high speed through a stack of rollers. Finally, it is re-wound to create reels of the exact size required for use at the Easemore Road works.

Consistency of quality and the continuity of supply of newsprint are among the factors which the Bowater Corporation aims to give their many consumers, of which this company is one.

Reels of newsprint are too bulky to store in large quantities, either at the paper mills or at the printing works. It is a commodity which must ever be on the move; either in the making at the mill, transporting to all corners of Britain, or in the printing of your weekly issue. The supply, like its manufacture, is a continuous process day and night throughout the year.

As our own expansion continues, our increased use of newsprint will parellel an expected rise in the world-wide production and consumption.

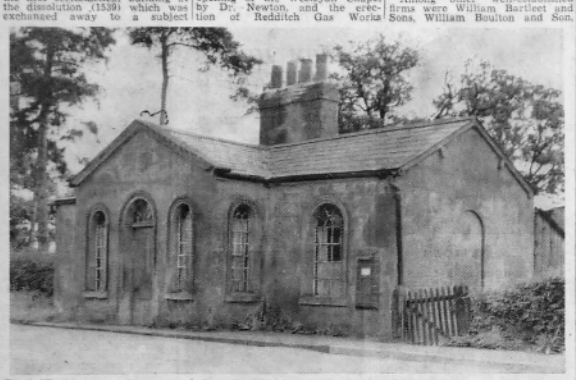
# THE FIRST SETTLEMENT WAS CONNECTED WITH BORDESLEY ABBEY

ALTHOUGH there is some indication of very early encampments in the district, the first reliable records of a permanent settlement in the immediate neighbourhood are connected with Bordesley Abbey, which stood in the fields behind and beyond the Birmingham Road cemetery.

A royal Charter authorising the founding of Bordesley Abbey over 800 years ago was issued by Maude (daughter of Henry I of England, empress of Henry V of Germany) in 1138.

The first stone was laid by one of the witnesses to the document, Waleran de Beaumont, first Earl of Worcester.

The Abbey accommodated an Abbot and 12 monks of the Cistercian Order, and the whole community numbered in the region of 60. Historians say that the site of the buildings occupy eight acres, and Bordesley Abbey was remarkable as having been the first ecclesiastical building at the dissolution (1539) which was exchanged away to a subject (Lord Windsor) on advantageous terms.



The old toll house at Bordesley Corner, the only one remaining in Redditch. At one time they commanded the main entrances to the town. There was one in Hewell Road and another at Headless Cross, and toll bars stretched across the road.

Nearly 200 years after the foundation, King Edward III was entertained at Bordesley Abbey, and four years later the University of Oxford granted a testimonial to Robert de Snitterfield, one of the monks.

## Surrendered

Four years after the dissolution the Abbey was surrendered to Thomas Cromwell on behalf of Henry VIII.

"Some, with less probability, assert that it was destroyed by Oliver Cromwell's troops but the Abbey did not entirely disappear for some years after this," stated an historian. It was described as "an imposing ruin" in 1666.

For many years the chapel of St. Stephen, like the rest of the Abbey, served as a cattle shelter, and was granted by the Earl of Plymouth's ancestors in 1687 by Tardebigge Parish Church it was endowed with an estate and benefaction. It was then used as a place of worship by Redditch people until 1807, while the adjoining burial ground was used for burials until 1805. Some people who died from a cholera epidemic in 1832 were buried there.

An Act of Parliament of 1805 authorised the borrowing of £3,000 for building a chapel in Redditch to replace the chapel at the Bordesley Abbey ruins. Much of the material used was taken from Bordesley, and consecrated in 1808 by the Bishop of Chester.

According to a history of Redditch published towards the end of last century, the first place of worship in the town was a Quaker meeting house built in 1704 near H. Milward and Son's works, and used until 1796.

The land and building was conveyed to Thomas John and William Sheward, who were the first needle makers in the town of whom there is any record. Over 70 years later this meeting house of the Society of Friends and its Sunday School was still the only place of worship in Redditch.

## New road

The population of Redditch and Headless Cross in 1832 was estimated to be 3,500. A year later Primitive Methodism was established in the town.

During the period 1825-26, a new road to Birmingham was constructed. It was called the Great South Road from Birmingham to Headless Cross. The previous road turned in at the British Needle Mills and ran by Abbey Meadow. The road to Beoley off the Great South Road was scarcely wide enough to take one vehicle. It was named "Rych-nield Street."

During the same period the foundation stone of the Congregational (Independent) Chapel was laid by the Rev. John Angell James.

A needle-pointers' strike meeting was held in 1826 in a lane between Green Lane, Studley, and Headless Cross.

Its object was to resist a reduction in wages of sixpence a day. During the three weeks which the strike lasted the workers were supplied with bread, cheese and ale at each meeting. The same year saw the introduction of eye-drilling for needles.

The first public elementary school for the poor was erected by Other Archer, the sixth Earl of Plymouth, in 1829, at Bates Hill.

A foot stamping press for the needle trade was introduced in 1830 by Abel Morrall, Thomas Baylis and Brandon Whisnell, whose brother John was High Bailiff of Alcester in 1813. Its introduction led to a riot in December of the same year by the soft-work needlemakers. Their ringleaders were convicted at Worcester Assizes and gaoled for periods varying from six to 18 months.

There was a second needle pointers strike that year against the masters' proposals to take threepence per packet off the cutting back.

The masters yielded after a strike lasting only a few days.

## Cholera epidemic

A cholera epidemic which swept over Europe and England caused the loss of 16 lives in Redditch during the months of September, October and November, 1832.

There was yet another needle pointers' strike in 1836. Steam power was introduced into the local needle trade by Yarnall, Abel Morrall, of Studley, introduced, among many ingenious inventions in the process of needlemaking, the helix burnisher. The exclusive use of this machine was confined to the one firm, resulting in a competitive machine being introduced by a number of manufacturers in combination.

In 1840 needle manufacturers met to discuss a means of resisting further wage demands by the needle pointers.

They resolved that a list of prices should be prepared and agreed upon for various descriptions of needles and fish hooks. They also agreed with each other not to pay any greater or other prices than those stated in the list.

### The Redditch story

Their decision was printed and distributed in Redditch and district and gave the names of 54 manufacturers responsible for framing the resolution.

The year 1843 saw the opening of the Wesleyan Chapel by Dr. Newton, and the erection of Redditch Gas Works in Windsor Street (then called Gas Street) by William Mees, the price of gas being 10s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet. The works were subsequently sold to William Hollington, and later to John E. Clift, who obtained a private Act of Parliament.

A year later, a railway bus service from Redditch was started to meet trains at Barnt Green. Before the end of that year, the needle pointers went on strike for the third time against the introduction of machines. There were riots, and the cavalry was called out.

## Gas-lit streets

Christmas Eve of the same year saw Redditch streets first lit with gas.

The foundation stone of the National Schools was laid by Lady Harriet Clive on October 28th, 1845, and they were opened on Sunday, August 2nd, the following year.

The Literary and Scientific Institute was established in 1850 with the Hon. Robert Windsor Clive, M.P., as its first president.

Plans for the erection of a large church on the site of the chapel on the Green were approved by a committee in 1851, and the foundation stone was laid by Lady Harriet Clive two years later.

A bottle containing a quantity of needles, fish-hooks, some current coins of the realm, together with a parchment describing the ceremony, the names of those who laid the stone, the names of the committee, minister, churchwardens, architect and builders, and a description of Redditch as the seat of the needle trade, were deposited in a cavity beneath the stone.

A considerable area of the old chapel burial ground was enclosed in the new church. Lady Clive also promised land for a new burial ground.

The consecration and opening of the church took place in 1855. The building cost £9,000. The Rev. G. F. Fessey was created vicar of Redditch, and a new parochial district was formed.

The first issue of the "Indicator" came out almost exactly six years after the laying of the foundation stone of the Parish Church by Lady Harriet Clive and about four years before the outbreak of the American Civil War.

Originally established in Prospect Hill, the "Indicator" Company moved later just round the corner onto the north side of Easemore Road and later still, in 1912, to new offices and works lower down the road on the opposite side. Those premises are still in use as the works, but the offices are now grouped with the retail stationery shop, in Church Green East.

At the time of the establishment of the "Indicator" the needle industry was flourishing. Henry Milward and Sons, of Washwood Mills (the firm was founded in 1730), was then the largest needlemaking firm.

Among other well-established firms were William Bartlett and Sons, William Boulton and Son, William Field and Co., Thomas Field, Richard Hemming and Son, J. and C. Chambers, A. G. Baylis and Sons, T. and J. Holbrooke, William Gould, T. Baylis and Co., J. and Mathew Mills, Joseph Reading, William Smallwood and others.

At the same time the fishing tackle industry was growing steadily, and the story of one of the oldest firms in the trade, S. Allcock and Co., Ltd., is told elsewhere in this supplement.

## Spring trade

It was just about this time that we saw the introduction of the spring trade to the town, the largest firm in the trade, Herbert Terry and Sons, Ltd. (whose story is also told elsewhere) having been founded in 1855.

The cycle industry was introduced to the town on a large scale towards the close of the last century by the late Mr. Robert W. Smith, J.P., and the late Mr. Albert Eadie. Mr. Smith's firm became the Enfield Cycle Co., Ltd., whose premises are in Hewell Road, while the Eadie Manufacturing Co., Ltd., beginning at Hunt End, moved first to Lodge Road and subsequently to Studley Road, where it was absorbed by the B.S.A. Co., Ltd.

An artist's impression of Bordesley Abbey in its heyday.

The foundation year of this newspaper also saw the opening of the first night school, the opening of the railway line at Redditch for passenger traffic, the foundation of the Redditch Benefit Building Society, and the laying of the foundation stone of the Wesleyan day school in Ipsley Street, the grant of a recreation ground for Redditch by Baroness Windsor, the removal of Redditch gas-works from Windsor Street to Birmingham Road, and a strike of needle finishers on the introduction of a finishing machine.

A Rifle Volunteer Corps was formed in 1860, the officers being Captain R. S. Bartlett, Lieutenant W. Boulton, and Ensign V. Milward, with Mr. Fessey as chaplain.

A year later a Post Office Savings Bank was opened in Redditch, a union of needle finishers formed, and the first service of Unitarians held.

## Police station

In 1862 Redditch was made a Petty Sessional Division and in 1864 the old police station and magistrates' court room in Evesham Street was opened.

When the present police station and court room were built, the old premises in Evesham Street were used as offices for the Urban District Council before the Council House on Mount Pleasant was acquired. They were then converted again for commercial use.

The Baptist Church was founded in 1862, and in industry a remarkable needle was manufactured and presented to Queen Victoria.

It was a sort of miniature Trajan's column.

"All around it are represented scenes from the Queen's life, executed so minutely that a magnifying glass is required to distinguish them. The needle can be opened, and within it are a number of very fine needles on which other scenes have been engraved, which can be reopened."

Excavation of the ruins of Bordesley Abbey were begun in 1864 under the supervision of J. M. Woodward, whose history of the Abbey became the standard work.

Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church having been established in 1834, this was followed by the building of a Roman Catholic school in 1868, and the foundation stone of the United Methodist Free Church, in Evesham Street, was laid in 1871.

The postcard reproduced above shows the town centre as it appeared in 1912, while below is an up-to-date photograph of the south-western corner, with the new building shared by Burtons, the Inland Revenue and the Ministry of Pensions.

The old bridge over "Beoley Brook" (the River Arrow) at the foot of Beoley Road, now replaced.

In 1868 came the first suggestion for a scheme of sewage disposal and a public water supply.

The first Local Board for the management of the town's sanitary affairs was established in 1872.

The question of the town's sewage disposal was raised again in 1875.

## Agitation

A Ratepayers' Protection Association, formed in 1876, was soon in action, for in 1877 they stirred up agitation against the proposed sewerage and water schemes.

A local inquiry into the scheme was held on June 1st, 1877, and a history of the district mentions a loan of £11,000 for the works.

There was another inquiry to consider alternative schemes by G. H. Roberts (Preston). The scheme was rejected by the Local Government Board. The original estimate was £3,275, and the final £6,600.

The order for carrying out the scheme was issued in 1880, and the scheme completed in 1881.

In 1869 a new organ was installed at St. Stephen's Church at a cost of £700, and the offer of the gas-works was made by Mr. Clift to the Town Commissioners for £10,000. It was rejected.

A public meeting was held in 1870 to consider the erection of a market and public hall combined, and in 1871 the foundation stone was laid for the United Methodist Free Church in Evesham Street. A start was also made on the Wesleyan School in Bridge Street.

A School of Art was opened in Unicorn Hill in 1872, and in the same year a Local Government District was created, with a Local Board of nine members who held their meetings at the National Schools.

The incorporation of the Redditch Town and District Gas Company was completed in 1873, and an inquiry into the proposed extension of the boundaries was held in 1874.

## New church

The foundation stone of St. George's Church (chapel to St. Stephen's) was laid in 1875 by Lady Mary Windsor Clive. A copy of the London "Times" and the "Redditch Indicator" newspaper, as well as some current coins, were deposited in a cavity beneath the stone. The church was opened in 1876.

In the same year the boundary was extended to include Headless Cross, and the Star Club House, "for the benefit of the working classes," was opened by R. S. Bartlett and conducted by him until December, 1897, when the Cocoa House replaced it. The premises were in Market Place. It contained a reading room, two games rooms, refreshments and smoking rooms, and a large room for meetings.

In 1880 a Town Band was formed from the late Rifle Corps Band, and later that year a provisional order of the Local Government granted the Local Board power for the compulsory acquisition of land for sewerage purposes. It received royal assent on July 19th, and by the end of the following year a sewage works was completed, at a cost of £7,030.

Redditch Swimming Baths, constructed by the Local Board at a cost of £358, were opened on July 19th, 1882. In December of that year, the East Worcestershire Waterworks Company's works at Burcot were opened, and mains were brought through Headless Cross to Redditch.

Two years earlier the enclosure of Church Green was completed at a cost of £1,206, and opened by Lord Windsor.

## School opened

St. George's School was opened on April 2nd, 1883, and in the same year the "Indicator" was enlarged to eight pages, and sold at a penny.

Other events that year included the gift of an ornamental fountain to the town by R. S. Bartlett, and a public reception after the marriage of Lord and Lady Windsor.

The Vicar of Redditch, the Rev. G. F. Fessey, resigned in 1884, and eight months later, the Rev. H. C. Milward was inducted as vicar in his place.

A farewell presentation including a silver salver, a purse of £140, and "a table from the poor" was made to Mr. Fessey on his departure from Redditch.

An event which created a storm of feeling in the town at about this time was the imprisonment in Holloway Jail of four trustees of the Brunswick Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows for sanctioning the illegal distribution of surplus Lodge funds.

Public meetings were held, a committee formed and a fund opened for raising the £2,500 illegally distributed. When this sum was paid into court, the trustees were released on bail.

By the time the first "Indicator" was published, the forerunner of the present public library had been flourishing for five years. This was the Redditch Literary and Scientific Institute, and for 31 years without a break it promoted a series of lectures of high educational value.

## Still in use

In 1884 Lord Windsor presided at a public meeting held to consider the provision of a new Institute and School of Art. As a result of this meeting, the Hon. G. H. Windsor Clive laid the foundation stone the following year, and the new premises were in use by January, 1886, having been opened by the Earl Beauchamp, the then Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire. This building has remained in use as a library and school of art up to the present day, considerable extensions having been added in 1956.

The year 1885 was only two months old when Constable James Davies, of Beoley, was murdered by Moses Shrimpton. A stone pillar in the bank at Eagle Lane, Beoley, inscribed "J.D. 1885," marks the spot where the crime was committed.

A James Davies Fund raised £1,443 8s. 1d. The money was invested for the widow and children on May 2nd of that year, while Moses Shrimpton, who was tried for the murder of the officer, was sentenced to death and hanged at Worcester on May 25th.

The same year marked the laying of the foundation stone of the Public Hall (now the Gaumont Cinema), by Lord Windsor, and the laying of the foundation stone of the Temperance Hall (now the Kingfisher Hotel) in Worcester Road, by Mrs. S. Allcock, of Redditch, and Mrs. J. Slack, of Birmingham. The cost of the latter was £1,500.

Copies of the "Redditch Indicator" and other documents were deposited in a cavity under the foundation stone of the former in Church Road.

## For 700 people

The Public Hall was designed to accommodate 700 people, and the contract for the work amounted to £2,099.

Sewerage problems had to be faced even in those days, for exactly 74 years ago an injunction was served on the Local Board to restrain them from further pollution of the River Arrow by their sewage farm. The cost of the action, heard at Birmingham Assizes, amounted to £902, while the direct cost to the district was £420 1s. 3d.

There was also a crowded public indignation meeting in the Temperance Hall against the suppression of open-air preaching by the Salvation Army.

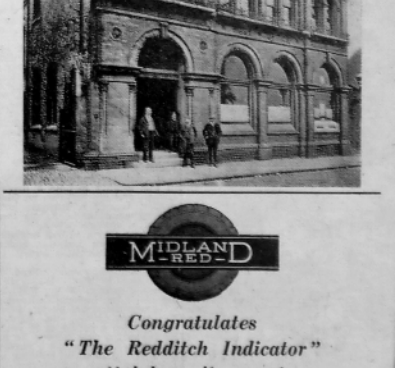
A hall marked the opening of the new Public Hall on December 2nd and early in the new year the new Literary and Scientific Institute was opened by Lord Beauchamp, Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire. A public luncheon followed.

A history of the Literary and Scientific Institute, compiled by H. Page, its honorary secretary, appeared in eight issues of the "Redditch Indicator" in 1896.

(Continued on page 7, opposite)

The Post Office in Church Road was begun in 1887. When this photograph was taken, the entrance was at the opposite end of the building to the one now in use.

This cartoon was published in Redditch about 78 years ago as an attack on die-hard elements on the Local Board (forerunner of the present Urban District Council) and circulated privately. The victims went to court and secured a verdict that all copies were to be withdrawn and destroyed. The court order was carried out in all but three cases—and this copy was made from one of those three. The three principal characters, who appear in the foreground of the picture, are directed to a scheme to provide sewers for the district. They prophesied that the rates would go up and up—the inscription on the ladder balanced on the central figure's chin shows them rising, step by step, from 1s. 4d. to 10s. That this was a bee in this gentleman's bonnet is indicated by the insect on a stalk protruding from his hat. What the cartoonist thought of his moral character is indicated by the drawings of playing card emblems and a butterfly on his chest. Just in front of him is another member of the Board who had the misfortune to have an ape-like countenance, and who was alleged to have been very changeable in his attitude to various affairs—hence the weathercock on his head, and the dish he is holding marked "Change." The figure on the left acted as clerk to the Board, and was also a sweep, his trade being indicated by the brush in his hat. The unicorn's horn sticking out of the donkey's head was an allusion to the fact that the Board met at the Unicorn Hotel. The cartoonist was J. M. Woodward, a writer of some note whose work frequently appeared in the "Indicator," but it was generally believed that he was inspired, if not actually commissioned, by the progressives on the Council who wanted the sewage scheme adopted. Banging the drum (inscribed W.R.V., for Worcestershire Rifle Volunteers) was Col. Victor Milward, and if further identification was needed his head was adorned with a fountain. One of the buildings in his firm's premises (Washford Mills) was an old inn known as The Fountain. Behind him, wearing the Lickey Monument on his head to link him up with the Windsor-Clive family, was the agent to the Plymouth Estates, and (a shadowy figure) beside him is the landlord of the Unicorn Hotel. The farrier in the corner was a man named Gibbs, who kept an ironmonger's shop in Evesham Street.

MIDLAND RED

*Congratulates "The Redditch Indicator" on attaining its centenary and wishes it many more years of successful publication*

*During the future, as in the years since 1912, when our first regular service to Redditch was operated we also look forward to serving the people of "The Needle District" with ever increasing efficiency*

The Friendly Midland "Red"

# Dramatic growth of town and district

THERE was a sequel to the injunction served on the Local Board when a meeting of the ratepayers was held in the Temperance Hall to consider the best way to prevent heavy rates in the future. The Local Board and the Clerk were requested to resign. A second ratepayers' meeting followed to consider the reply of the Local Board to the resolution and requisition to call a public meeting.

A public meeting was held at the Park Road room in 1887 to arrange a local celebration of the Queen's Jubilee on June 21st. A sum of £150 was subscribed to meet the day's expenses, and £175 was promised towards the erection of a nurses' home (as nucleus of a future cottage hospital) as a permanent memorial.

The year 1887 also saw the erection of a new Post Office in Church Road at a cost of about £2,000. In October of that year the Post Office began a mid-day delivery of letters and arranged for two additional pillar box collections.

The Shah of Persia visited the district in 1891, staying at Hewell Grange as the guest of Lord Windsor.

The Smallwood Hospital, the story of which has been fully told separately, was opened in 1895.

### Continuing The Redditch story

**A hundred years ago Redditch covered 1,023 acres—just under one-twelfth of the present area of 12,059 acres—and had a population of 5,541, as against the present-day total of 33,000. The population climbed steadily, reaching 13,000 by the turn of the century, 22,000 by 1930, and 29,000 by the 1951 census.**

**The increase in physical size, by contrast, was much more dramatic. In four steps between 1929 and 1933 the district grew from 1,023 acres to 12,059.**

**The first step, in 1929, took in parts of Alvechurch, "North Redditch" (the Bordesley district), and Webheath, and the next, a year later, absorbed part of the parish of Feckenham, formerly a part of the old Feckenham rural district. The parish of Ipsley was included in 1931, and 1933 saw the completion of the transfer to Redditch of Webheath and Feckenham.**

## Council formed

In the year 1894, 23 candidates were nominated for the newly formed Redditch Urban District Council. Twelve of the 23 were members of the Local Board which preceded the Council. The programme suggested by some of the candidates included the efficient administration of the Public Health Act, particularly regarding insanitary dwellings; better lighting and cleansing of the streets; improved scavenging and the efficient control of contractors; the provision of an infectious diseases hospital; the preservation of open spaces and footpaths and consideration of the standard rate of wages to be paid by the Council.

At Redditch Post Office's second annual dinner in February, 1895, Mr. Webb, the postmaster, said that in 1883 letters passing through Redditch Post Office numbered 40,000 a week, and by 1894 this figure had jumped to 82,000.

The number of parcels dealt with also increased—from 46,000 in 1884 to 130,000 in 1894.

The same month Mr. Victor Milward agreed to contest the Stratford-on-Avon Parliamentary Division on the retirement of Mr. Freeman Mitford, M.P. His adoption as prospective candidate for the Conservatives was approved at a meeting at Stratford-on-Avon, with Lord Hertford in the chair.

Acute distress among the poor was reported during the same month and with help provided from many quarters considerable relief was given.

## Gale damage

A terrific gale in March of the same year caused widespread damage. Chimney stacks fell and the roof of a public house at Headless Cross was demolished.

More serious, however, was the wrecking of the Wesleyan Chapel at Headless Cross. A special note in the Redditch directory said: "The violent cyclonic gale which swept over the Midlands caused the total demolition of the chapel. While the gale was at its height the roof of the chapel was noticed to be affected by its violence, and five minutes later there was a loud crack. The roof then fell in, followed by the demolition of the whole of the east wall."

Later it was estimated that a new chapel at Headless Cross would cost up to £2,500.

An amateur photographic club was founded in Redditch in 1895.

## Hospital

At the first annual meeting of the governors and subscribers of the Smallwood Hospital in February, 1896, it was reported that during the seven months the hospital had been open 55 patients had been admitted. Of that number it is reported: "Thirty-six had been cured, 10 benefited and three died, and there remained three under treatment."

A notable event in April of that year was an enquiry by Worcestershire County Council, through Col. Victor Milward, M.P., regarding an application by Redditch Urban District Council to divide their district into five wards, and to increase the number of members from 12 to 15.

A new police station for Redditch was decided on by Worcestershire County Council in July, 1896. The building was to be erected in Church Road.

The foundation stone of the new Wesleyan church at Headless Cross to replace the building destroyed by storm the previous year was laid in July, 1896. In accordance with the custom of the times a bottle was deposited beneath the stone. It contained local notes, a synopsis of the progress of Wesleyanism at Headless Cross, an account of the destruction of the old chapel, an account of the day's proceedings and other relevant matters.

A forerunner of Redditch Carnival, as it is now known, took place in July of that year, when the first annual hospital Saturday event took place. Sixty-four men and women collected in the different streets. There was a provisions stall in Church Green and the total receipts for the year amounted to £101 14s. 8d. Two thirds of the proceeds, after expenses had been deducted, went to the Smallwood Hospital and the remainder to the Nursing Association.

Special celebrations were held in Redditch to mark the Queen's jubilee. There were special church services. Volunteers fired a royal salute on Church Green, and festivities, including a procession of more than 3,000 school-children, were carried on in the town centre. Flags and bunting lent colour to the scene, and bonfires could been seen for miles around.

The foundation stone of the new Baptist Church (Ipsley Green) was laid in July, 1897. Several people took part in the ceremony but the principal stone was laid by the Rev. C. Spurgeon, of London, in memory of his father, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. Among the speakers was Mr. J. Smallwood, of Stratford-on-Avon, who contributed £500 towards the scheme.

Redditch Fair was held for the last time on the recreation ground in Easemore Road. The fair was the successor of the markets held on the night of St. Stephen's Day (to whom the parish church is dedicated), originally, perhaps 500 years ago, around Bordesley Abbey.

The fair is mentioned in the Constitution of the Manor of Tardebigg, 1542, and the fair left its Tardebigge site for the one in the town when St. Stephen's Chapel was erected on Church Green in 1805, and the wake became the fair.

At the 47th annual meeting of the Institute the report of the Technical Committee asked for £1,000 towards the provision of a new technical school.

## Lock-up removed

During November enquiries by the District Council showed unanimous favour in support of an electric lighting scheme. The number of lamps required was 2,000.

At the same time the Old Lock Up—the first public building in Redditch—which was erected at the junction of Alcester Street and Red Lion Street in 1824, was removed to widen Alcester Street.

There was a local inquiry in August into an application by the District Council to borrow £14,200 for a lighting scheme.

September saw the opening of the new bandstand in Church Green, and by November the District Council resolved to negotiate with the owners of properties causing the narrowness of Evesham Street and obstructing the laying of the proposed light-railway. This scheme was estimated to cost £4,500.

Local Government Board enquiries were held frequently in those days. There was another in March, 1899, into an application by the District Council for a loan of £1,000 for the purchase and adaptation of the old police station in Evesham Street for conversion into Council offices and public baths.

In 1899 Lord Windsor laid the foundation stone of the new Technical School in Easemore Road. Deposited in a bottle under the stone was a history of the development of technical education in Redditch.

At a public meeting in the Temperance Hall, in December, it was decided to open a town fund to provide help for men serving in the war in South Africa, and from time to time graphic extracts on the Transvaal War appeared in the "Redditch Indicator" from the diary of Lieutenant P. H. Milward.

A Volunteer Artillery Corps was formed in Redditch in January, 1900. They were made up chiefly of employees of the Enfield Cycle Company and the Eadie Manufacturing Company.

## Royal telegram

The foundation stone of the Methodist Free Church at Mount Pleasant was laid in February, 1900. The building was estimated to cost £2,800, and by the end of the day's proceedings, the total sum in the treasurer's hands amounted to £1,040.

There were local celebrations to mark the Queen's 81st birthday, and among the telegrams of congratulation sent to Queen Victoria, then at Balmoral, was one from the Chairman of the Urban District Council. The telegram was despatched to Balmoral at 4 a.m., and the Royal reply—the first royal telegram ever to be received in Redditch—arrived at 6.51 p.m.

The new technical school in Easemore Road was opened in October by Mr. J. Willis-Bund, Chairman of Worcestershire County Council. The building, when complete, cost about £2,800, of which the County contributed £850.

Lectures by prominent people were a feature in those days, and at a meeting in Alvechurch a talk on "The Lessons of War" was given by Mr. Austen Chamberlain, M.P.

January, 1901, saw the erection of a drill-hall in Easemore Road for the Redditch Volunteer Artillery. The site—nearly an acre—was given by Lord Windsor.

## Alcester flood

Alcester was seriously damaged by a flood in December, 1900. The flood, it was then reported, was "unprecedented in the history of this ancient Roman town." Shops and houses were flooded, roads were impassable and in some places the flood water rose to a depth of 11 ft.

There were peace celebrations in June, 1902, and in the same month Redditch became a Petty Sessional Division of its own, with a resident Superintendent of Police.

In the week of the coronation of King Edward VII, the "Indicator" published a purple edition to mark the occasion.

A conference, followed by a public meeting in March, 1903, brought alarm to Redditch when it was reported that the death rate from tuberculosis in the town was double that of the county, and three or four times as high as that in some other parts.

## Ratepayers

A Ratepayers' and Property Owners' Association was founded in May, and at a meeting of the Union Club in October it was decided to send a letter of congratulation to the Rt. Hon. Austen Chamberlain on his promotion to Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Redditch Urban District Council levied a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound for the half year ending September, 1904.

The Council also condemned the Sunday trading being carried on by some of the shop-keepers.

An Astwood Bank man accused of cattle stealing was committed for trial after a Redditch court hearing.

A full report of a polishers' strike was reported in this newspaper, while a large public meeting at Beoley protested against a proposal by the County Council to form Beoley and Wythall into two separate wards, with one representative on King's Norton Urban District Council.

**A works outing, thought to be that of Abel Morrall, Ltd., photographed as they were ready to start off in Mount Pleasant in 1910.**

During the same period the Redditch and District Cricket League was a thriving organisation, and at the annual meeting a third division was suggested.

Canon Newton, who had been vicar of Redditch for 13 years, preached his farewell sermon at the Parish Church in 1905. At about the same time there was a large scale temperance crusade in the town.

During the same period a new football club was formed in Redditch.

## "Death trap"

Mappleborough Green church, which was built in 1888, at a cost of £7,000, was consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester in 1905. The money for the building was provided by Sir William Jaffray in memory of his wife, Mabel Augusta Jaffray.

During the same month there were Labour demonstrations in Redditch: trees were planted in Birmingham Road to commemorate the coming-of-age of the Hon. O. R. Windsor-Clive, and an inquest jury described the level crossing at Redditch railway station as "a veritable death trap."

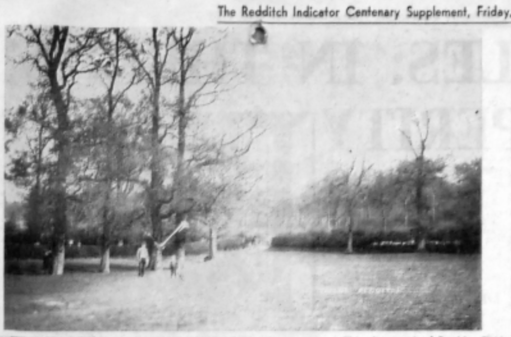
At Redditch Licensing Sessions the granting of eight licences was withheld and the Justices advocated a reduction in the number of public houses in the town.

At a meeting of the Alcester Co-operative Society in 1906, it was decided to open branch shops in Redditch.

A fire which destroyed Beoley Mill took place in mid-summer, 1906. There were further Labour demonstrations in Redditch during a visit to the town of Mr. Keir Hardie, the first Labour M.P.

In September of that year a start was made on the building of a new Salvation Army Hall in Ipsley Street. The same month saw the foundation of the Redditch branch of the Independent Labour Party.

At the January meeting of Alcester Court Leet, in 1907, it was reported that records found by the High Bailiff, Mr. G. W. Facer, showed that the Court Leet had been in existence since 1299. It was also reported that a Mr. Thomas Shakespeare—believed to to be an uncle of William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon—had been High Bailiff of Alcester in 1530.



An early attempt to introduce meals for school children is referred to in the Redditch Directory for 1908. At the same time a committee to carry out the work was appointed.

The death from enteric fever of Viscount Windsor was reported from India in December, 1908. His body was brought home to England and buried in Tardebigge churchyard.

A new secondary school for Redditch was opened by Mr. J. F. Milward in February, 1909.

## Golden jubilee

The 50th anniversary of the "Redditch Indicator" and of the Redditch Benefit Building Society were celebrated in September, 1909. A reproduction of the first copy of the "Indicator" was issued as a supplement, and the paper also contained reports of the changes and progress made in Redditch and district during the previous 50 years.

Even the 1909 relations between Birmingham and Redditch were a matter of argument for the Redditch Urban District Council which, at its December meeting, discussed a greater Birmingham scheme.

On August 16th Redditch Council discussed the widening of Alcester Street, and 10 days later there was an enquiry into an application by the Council for £1,200 for the scheme. The inspector commented on the high price for the land.

The death took place on October 9th of Mr. Samuel Allcock, J.P., head of the firm of S. Allcock and Company, Limited.

Mr. T. Huins, J.P., Chairman of Redditch Urban District Council, died on November 26th. He was a leading official of the Redditch United Methodist Church.

Mr. J. Ladbury, of Headless Cross, who was organist at St. Luke's Church for 50 years, was presented with gifts on December 9th. The Rev. Edwin Orme, a retired United Methodist minister, died at the age of 86.

In 1911 the death occurred of Mr. C. G. Huins, one of the pioneers of the temperance movement. He was in his 80th year.

An inspection of the Boy Scouts of both Redditch and Bromsgrove was made by General Baden-Powell, who was on a visit to Hewell Grange.

An Employment Exchange building for Redditch was opened the following month by Mr. T. Haines, and during the same period a new Wesleyan Mission Hall was opened at Holyoakes Field.

During the same year Mr. J. B. Jones, librarian at the Redditch Institute for 25 years, died, and Tardebigge obtained a new village hall. This was the gift of the Earl of Plymouth, but some years later, when the estate was broken up, it was sold, and is now a country club

## Marquess dies

The death took place in March, 1912, of the Marquess of Hertford at the age of 69. From then until the recent restoration Ragley Hall was not used as the family home—a period of over 40 years.

Redditch was severely hit by a storm in August, 1912. Flooding took place in many parts of the town and Beoley Brook rose to a height of seven feet.

Later in the year steps were taken to revive the Redditch and District Cricket League, which had lapsed some time before.

The death of Sir Thomas Chavasse, of Alvechurch, took place in February, 1913. He was 58.

Lord Windsor declined an offer to stand as Unionist candidate for East Worcestershire in March, 1914.

By the end of the following month Redditch F.C. had become champions of the Birmingham Combination.

A few months later the country was plunged into war with Germany. The Council opened a War Relief Fund, and by November £1,175 has been subscribed. The Redditch Volunteers left the town for training and service abroad, and Redditch opened its doors to many of the Belgian refugees.

## Unrest

Life in the town and district went on in much the same way as it had done in the years preceding the first world war. Many of the social, cultural and sporting organisations continued to function, but there was a certain amount of unrest industrially, particularly in the staple trades of the town.

There was little or no loss of employment for the workers, who changed over to work of a military nature, but the effects of the war were felt in other directions.

The cost of living increased, shops were ordered to close earlier than they had been doing, a ban was placed on the hoarding of food; land was appropriated and divided into allotments and the town and district was plunged into an almost complete "black-out" on account of the threat of war from the air.

Before peace came in November, 1918, Redditch and district lost many of its sons, among them being Captain Philip Milward, Col. R. C. B. Throckmorton and Major Lionel Kerwood. Many others received awards for bravery in the field.

## Torpedoed

When news was received in Redditch in 1915 of the sinking of the "Lusitania" off Queenstown it was learned that a local man was among the victims. He was Mr. J. H. Harper, managing director of T. H. Harper and Sons, who had been on a business trip to America.

In the months that followed the end of the war, towns and villages throughout the country planned the erection of memorials in memory of the fallen.

But although attempts were made by everyone to carry on as before, unemployment on a large scale was one of the aftermaths of the war. There were demonstrations of ex-Servicemen in Redditch, and the Council received a deputation of unemployed at one of its meetings.

A town's meeting approved a scheme for the erection of a memorial in Redditch in February, 1920, and on its completion, in April, 1922, it was unveiled by Viscount Windsor before a large crowd. The scheme was estimated to cost £16,000. Memorials were erected in other parts of the district before that date.

In May, 1920, Redditch Council considered borrowing money for a proposed housing scheme, and a little later an enquiry was held into their application to borrow £1,750 for the provision of a public depot in George Street.

By 1922 the committees of the Smallwood Hospital were thinking in terms of extensions to the building, and a scheme was launched to raise £2,700.

The end of the year brought the start of another scheme with the stone-laying ceremony of the new Baptist Church in Easemore Road.

The centenary of Primitive Methodism was celebrated in Redditch during 1923, and by October the following year the country was in the throes of a General Election.

## Local Boards

While local Boards of Guardians played a big part in local affairs throughout the years, it would appear from the information available in the middle twenties that their power was becoming less and less. From then on little mention was made of their activities.

A Civic Aid Society was formed in the town to take the place of the War Relief Committee, and by December, 1924, Redditch Council was considering a scheme for the extension of its boundaries.

Early in 1925 the death took place of Sir James Yoxall, a native of Redditch, who had been secretary of the National Union of Teachers for 32 years.

Later the same year a visit was made to the town by the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers—their first for 49 years.

There was a General Election in May, 1929, and in July the Duchess of York visited Studley College to open a fete in connection with raising £20,000 for the purchase of the college and grounds.

Bates Hill Wesleyan Church was re-opened after renovation in February, 1930. At the same time a memorial was dedicated to Mr. Raymond F. Terry.

Lt.-Col. C. F. Milward was elected Chairman of Worcestershire County Council in March of that year.

June marked the bi-centenary celebrations of the firm of Henry Milward and Sons, Ltd., and the occasion was high-lighted by a visit of the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers from London.

**On Batchley Estate the Batchley Brook was preserved and beautified to make an attractive centre.**

Double-decker buses were introduced to Redditch for the first time in March, 1936, and were inspected at Church Green West before moving off.

Increased road traffic made it necessary to widen the Redditch to Birmingham road.

Two hours after the annual meeting of Studley Parish Council the retiring chairman, Mr. C. H. Hemming, died at his home.

After many years of discussion a public meeting in the village decided to approve a scheme for a Parish Jubilee Memorial Hall. A few weeks later the committee resigned because of poor support. The Council, to-day, is still discussing the provision of a village hall.

## New wing

In May the Earl of Plymouth laid the foundation stone of a new wing for Studley College. Among many distinguished visitors was the Countess of Warwick, who was its former owner.

General Evangeline Booth, daughter of General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, visited Redditch in July. She was given a civic welcome.

The diamond jubilee of St. Paul's Church, Cookhill, was celebrated in October, 1936, and in November St. George's Church, Redditch, held its diamond jubilee.

During a tour of the Midlands in September, 1937, the Minister of Labour (the Rt. Hon. Ernest Brown) visited Redditch Employment Exchange, where he was introduced to a number of prominent Redditch people.

## Changing world

1939 was a significant year in Redditch and district. From an industrial point of view two new factories—High Duty Alloys, Ltd., and B.S.A.—were opened in the town, providing employment for hundreds of people. The former factory was opened by the then Air Minister (Sir Kingsley Wood) in August.

Although in the early part of 1939 there seemed to be no immediate threat of war, Mr. Anthony Eden, later to become Foreign Secretary in the war-time coalition and then Prime Minister in peace time, warned his Alcester constituents of the need for a strong Britain. He said that to surrender before violence was not to gain peace.

Two months later he spoke at a meeting at Crabbs Cross on the international situation, emphasising the need for the unity of peaceful nations. By mid-April war seemed nearer; an A.R.P. section was formed, and in June the first recruits signed up for duty in Redditch and Alcester.

## Minister's visit

To see the important part that Redditch was playing in the rearmament programme the newly appointed Minister of Supply (Mr. Leslie Burgin) visited Redditch in July, when he tested a machine gun at the B.S.A. works.

During March Alcester Roman Catholic Church celebrated its golden jubilee. In Redditch the town's premier football club celebrated their winning the Birmingham Senior Cup for the third time.

The third firm to find a home in Redditch within two years was Monochrome Ltd.—a subsidiary of B.S.A.

War came on Sunday, September 3rd, following the German invasion of Poland.

By January, 1941, Redditch's war weapons contribution was in full swing and everything possible was being done to make the lives of the evacuees as comfortable as possible.

## Chairman again

Mr. C. H. Blackford was elected Chairman of Redditch U.D.C. for the fourth time in April of that year.

In her tour of Red Cross hospitals in June the Princess Royal paid a visit to Ragley Hall—the ancestral home of the Marquess of Hertford—near Alcester, where the great hall had been converted into a hospital. Among others she was accompanied by Lady Helen Seymour, the then President of the Warwickshire Red Cross, and of the county war organization.

Another Royal visit was made to the district in December. This time the Duchess of Kent was welcomed to Redditch by the Chairman of the Council.

After May, 1945, peace was celebrated in a large scale in Redditch and district, and thanksgiving services were held in all churches.

With Japan crushed there were further celebrations in the town and district, and in September a victory Carnival was held in Redditch.

**This photograph of Batchley Fields was taken in the early years of the present century, and many more years were to pass before they were finally engulfed by bricks and mortar.**

Studley and Redditch—the centre of the needle-making industry—were honoured by a visit in May, 1947, of the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers.

July, 1948, marked the end of the Smallwood Hospital as a voluntary institution maintained solely by public subscription for more than 50 years.

At the voluntary board's final meeting the handing over to the State was accomplished with the passing of a resolution empowering the officers to "transfer the funds of the hospital as directed by the Act of Parliament."

## Housing

Redditch Urban Council appear to have concentrated all their efforts on house-building and by January 1949, 768 houses had been erected and a further 225 were approved by the Ministry for completion during the year.

Local manufacturers were among those named in the new year Honours List. The late Alderman Charles Terry, who was already an Officer of the British Empire, became a Commander of the Order, while Mr. G. Basil King, of Mappleborough Green, and Mr. W. W. Llewellin, then governor of Hewell Grange, received the O.B.E.

In August, 1951, a plaque was unveiled to mark the erection of Redditch Urban Council's 1,000th post-war house. The plaque was unveiled by the then Chairman (Councillor H. J. Paramore).

In April of that year the Marquess of Hertford celebrated his coming of age.

The year 1953 will no doubt still be remembered as Coronation year. In the same year Redditch Post Office announced they had dealt with over 1,000,000 items at Christmas. Redditch Council gave much of their time to traffic problems, while an analysis of Redditch trade showed that there were 350 retail trading shops in the town with a combined annual sale totalling £2,539,000.

## Abbey Stadium

During the same year Redditch Council at last saw signs of the start of a 20-year scheme to provide the town with recreational facilities in Birmingham Road. This scheme is now known as the Abbey Stadium and present discussions centre on the provision of an adequate pavilion and dressing-room accommodation.

The general impression of the year 1955 was that it had been a courageous municipal year as far as Redditch itself was concerned.

The Council acquired the old Methodist Chapel in Mount Pleasant for offices; they purchased the Abbey Hostel and they provisionally agreed to build 1,000 houses in five years to house Birmingham overspill.

The year 1956 was one in which the people of Redditch heard almost as much about Frenchmen and Hungarians as they had about themselves.

Redditch by that time had formed a link with Auxerre, in central France, and the town played its part in providing a temporary home for a number of Hungarians who escaped to this country after the revolt against oppression in their own country.

## Took control

The month of May, 1957, was a memorable one for the Redditch Labour Party, who took control of Redditch Urban District Council's affairs for the first time in history.

Events during 1958 which many people might remember included the visit of a number of Russians, and Glubb Pasha (Lieutenant General Sir John Glubb, former Commander of the Arab Legion, Jordan's Army).

Mr. Fred Morris, of Redditch, was a member of the Royal Society's Antarctic Expedition.

One of the most important events to take place this year—which was the subject of an eight-day inquiry—was Birmingham's proposal to take over a large part of Wythall. The result of the inquiry is still awaited.

## Thanks for newsagents' service

**THIS newspaper comes to you through the service of its newsagents, a day-to-day facility which, by virtue of its continuity, could easily be accepted without a thought of appreciation.**

**The recent printing strike must have brought into prominence the contribution which the newsagent fraternity make to the distribution of periodicals and newspapers.**

**At the least the emergency made one realise that one of the newsagent's principal sources of income dried up without diminishing the expenses of shop organisation and maintenance.**

**As a newspaper we recognise the worth of the co-operation readily extended by our agents in town and village. The relationship between publisher and distributor has long been of a cordial nature. We hope we shall continue to merit the loyalty of the newsagents, and that they will ever recognise our endeavours to provide a service which aims at regularity and efficiency.**

**Their worthy messengers—the newsboys—are also deserving of our thanks. Like their seniors, theirs is a job of early rising, in bleak winter as well as lovely summer.**

**We pause awhile in our birthday celebration to pay a tribute to all those who handle the weekly copies of this newspaper in order to ensure the readers have it very soon after publication.**

## CHIEF REPORTER AND DEPUTY EDITOR

THE resume of the story of Redditch which appears on this and the opposite pages has been compiled from various sources by Mr. George Burns, chief reporter and deputy to the editor of the "Redditch Indicator" for the past nine years. Mr. Burns has also been responsible for many of the other articles in this supplement, which has entailed a great deal of work during recent months.

For several years Mr. Burns represented this newspaper in the Alcester and Studley districts, and for a long period was principally responsible for following and reporting Redditch Football Club.

★

## 30 YEARS AS CHIEF REPORTER

PROMINENTLY associated with the earlier years was Mr. William T. Dewey, who held the position of chief reporter and sub-editor for 30 years. He was apprenticed to the composing department at the age of 14 years in 1874, and wrote an interesting story of 60 years' service in our 75th birthday issue.

For the whole of his apprenticeship of seven years, he walked every day from Hunt End to Redditch and back home in the evening. His weekly wage was 2s. 6d., for daily working from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m., with overtime payable at 1d. per hour. At the age of 21 years, when he had completed his term of apprenticeship, his wage became 12s. 6d. per week, overtime rate being increased to 3d. per hour.

In addition to learning the printing trade, his duties consisted of sweeping-up, lighting the fires, running errands, and for a short while being promoted to the position of stoker and engine driver of the gas engine which provided power for the presses.

★

## BRANCH MANAGER FOR 50 YEARS

MR. ARTHUR J. GWINNETT was branch manager at Alcester for 50 years, and contributed much of the news of that district for inclusion in both the "Indicator" and its subsidiary "Alcester Chronicle." Prior to taking charge at Alcester in 1889, he served for four years under Mr. William Lane at Redditch.

An authority on archaeology and local history, which enthusiasm is now shown by his son, Mr. Aubrey Gwinnett, he had a journalistic flair which found expression in the hundreds of reports which he must have submitted over the years.

A recollection of Mr. Gwinnett in the 1930's was of his weekly visits to head office every Friday to collect the newspapers intended for distribution in his area. He would not trust public transport for the parcels, but had an apprentice carry the newspapers to Redditch station, where he entrained for the return journey to Alcester.

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# NEEDLES: IN THEIR MAKING LAY THE TOWN'S PROSPERITY

NEEDLES were responsible for the existence of Redditch: their making lay the town's prosperity. Redditch, indeed, might conceivably never even have found a place on a map but for the manufacture of that once valuable currency, the needle. For its speedy growth from something less than a hamlet to its present size Redditch has to thank the needle-making trade.

Why did that trade come here? That has always been a matter of conjecture. It may have been because of economic necessity, or for religious reasons or, as is often the case, a combination of the two. There seemed no compelling reason why Redditch should be favoured as a needle-making centre over many other Midlands towns, products of the Industrial Revolution.

Needles, indeed, could have been made anywhere in the country, as they must have been in the past, for they have a long history and were probably used before recorded history.

In recent times the first reference to their manufacture is in 1370, at Nuremburg in Germany, but the exact date that the first needle was made in Redditch and district is not on record.

## Craftsmen living here

Nor is it possible to say why the town became the accepted centre of the needle-making industry in this country. The earliest date which can be associated with the industry in Redditch is 1694; and needle-making is first mentioned a year later in the Studley parish registers.

Were there any peculiar advantages that we can see that would make Redditch a desirable needle-craft centre?

Probably the fact that craftsmen were already living in what is now Redditch was one cause.

That, and the development of the industrial revolution, with its insistence on quicker processes through the use of steam power. The River Arrow could provide essential water power for the mills along its banks, as the revolution gathered momentum railways were expanding and providing easy transport for the manufactured needles; and machines, no doubt made locally, were being put into service.

All this industrial development helped in the quick and easy making of needles which, before the age of mass-produced suttings, were essential tools in every family's clothes-making outfit.

## Lay-brothers the first?

There can be little doubt that there were needle-makers in Redditch area in the 16th century, and perhaps even before that time. Among the earliest probably were lay-brothers — "nedlers" as they were called — who had settled in the area. Indeed, after the dissolution of Bordesley Abbey in 1535 it is believed that a few monks went to live at The Grove (now the Redditch Liberal Club premises) and there continued carrying on their trades. The "nedlers" may quite easily have taught their craft to nearby cottagers, and have been protected from the persecution of the times by the great Catholic families. It is in fact suggested that, as the needle-making families were themselves Catholics, this was "one of the strongest reasons why needle-making has remained attached to this district."

At any rate, for one reason or another, needle-making became centred in Redditch and its surrounding villages. That may explain why, at different times from the 18th century onwards, there were migrations of needlemakers from Long Crendon, in Buckinghamshire, to the Redditch district, where they would find fellow craftsmen.

Long Crendon had been an important needle-making centre since the 16th century, and in 1656 the trade had become so strong that a needle-makers' company was formed. It prospered and when, in the 1650s needle-making houses on London Bridge were demolished, Long Crendon attracted the London needle-makers, who may have been the country's earliest craftsmen, taught either by a Spanish refugee Moor or, as seems more likely, by monastic craftsmen seeking sanctuary from foreign squabbles.

## Needlemakers' charter

Needle-making in London was a trade of great standing and, during Oliver Cromwell's protectorate the needlemakers were granted a charter which is dated November 10th, 1656.

Although it is believed that there was an even earlier charter than this, and although there was a confirmatory royal charter from King Charles II on February 9th, 1664, the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers of London is the only livery company now in existence which was not originally chartered by a crowned head.

Through its connections with Long Crendon, Redditch is thus directly associated by its craftsmen with this ancient company.

In turn, the company retains its links with the town. In 1876 they paid a ceremonial visit here, and in 1947 and 1951 special courts were held in the town.

In the middle of the eighteenth century about 1,000 people left Long Crendon for Redditch. Others, who migrated from 1813 to 1862 to come to work here, included men with such well-known names as Spires, Wharrad and Shrimpton, some of whose relatives early in the eighteenth century had established important firms at Redditch and Alcester.

## Walked from Long Crendon

One man, Mallam, was said to have walked to Redditch from Long Crendon. Others who left included Govier, Harris, Levy, Hims, Johnson, Laight, Lee, Lewis, Spencer, Tyler and Warner. The last exodus from Long Crendon was in 1877, and today no trace of needle-making is left in the village, except for one derelict factory.

The skilled numbers of Long Crendon craftsmen added to those who, in Redditch, had been making needles for more than 200 years. Late in the 17th century there is definite evidence that needle-making was carried on in Redditch, though, as there was no parish, and probably no settlement, before 1700, and hence no parish registers, it is not known for certain if there were any needlemakers in the district before then. What is known is that in 1799 there were 400 people making needles in Redditch, and about 2,000 altogether in the district engaged in their manufacture.

"There were distinct traces and traditions earlier than the middle of the 18th century," says W. T. Heming in "The Needle Region and its Resources" (1877). Heming claimed that he had documents showing that a Mr. William Sheward and Mr. John Mills were "evidently carrying on the manufacture of needles about 1760."

## Driven by horse-power

Even earlier claims of needle manufacturing at Sambourne and Studley had been made, he said. The first needle-mill in Studley in 1700 was driven by horse-power. A little later another horse mill was set up at Sambourne. Later research has shown that the names of people described as needle-makers appear in the parish registers at Studley, Alcester, Feckenham and Tardebigge.

Mr. Richard Hemming started a workshop at Sambourne in 1700 which was meant specially to help and encourage needle-making. His example was followed by neighbouring mill-owners, tenants and farmers.

Some well-known names are among these pioneers: Bartlett, Holmes, Holyoake, Mills, Milward, Moore, Morrall and Rawlings are some of them—names which were to become either famous in needle-making or to be forgotten.

Before 1800 many of these families had established themselves in Redditch, and the town was born. It is known that in 1698, for instance, the oldest existing firm was started at Astwood Bank. This firm, now trading as James Smith and Son (Redditch) Ltd., was founded by the Butler family of Astwood Bank.

## For more than a century

They carried it on for more than a century until Miss Butler, the heiress of the firm, early in the 1800s married the Rev. James Smith, who had become the first Baptist pastor of Astwood Bank after a period of service at Alcester Baptist Church.

Then the business was carried on as "Smith and Butler," and later as "James and Joseph Smith." Eventually it became "James Smith and Sons," and in 1900, a limited company with Mr. James Butler as the first chairman and Mr. P. A. Hill as secretary.

Another old firm was the Holyoakes. The local connections of this business, which was sold in 1899, went back many centuries.

In November, 1593, John Holyoake married a Mary Nash, according to an entry in Bosley parish register. Another entry (February 18th, 1603) says that Joyce, daughter of Thomas Holyoake, was baptised there, and adds that she was "born in Redditch."

For many years prior to 1734 a Holyoake was engaged in the town as a needlemaker, and early in the 19th century the Holyoake firm had built up an extensive foreign trade with Australia, Canada and U.S.A.

## Gift for Queen Victoria

Thomas Holyoake presented some gold-eyed needles to Queen Victoria when, as Princess Victoria, she visited Hewell Grange.

In 1880 the firm, through an action in the Chancery Division, proved that it was the original "Holyoake" firm. Since 1734 it had been carried on under several names—"T. and J. Holyoake," "Holyoake," "Joseph Holyoake," and "Joseph Holyoake and Son," were some of them.

The first water mills in the district wholly devoted to needle-making were, said Heming, owned by John Mills. Those were the Washford Mills at Studley, said to be working in 1780, which are still in existence and owned by the Milward family.

There was some ground for rivalry to the claim of Washford to be the oldest mill in the Redditch area. Another mill, which had been in being for a long time, was Forge Mills, Redditch. Though there is no evidence to show when these mills were first used for needle-making, they were occupied by the Chillingworth family in the early 18th century, and needles were still made there up to 1815.

Some records say that the purpose for which Forge Mills were used before 1730 is not known, but Heming claimed that he had "incontestable evidence" that, on June 24th, 1711, they were kept going by the Earl of Plymouth as iron refinery mills.

Before that time they had frequently changed hands. The last tenant, Joseph Wheeler, had handed them over to the landlord in 1709. Then they became unprofitable, and it is likely that it was during the period of the next tenant, Joseph Chillingworth, that needle-making was begun.

## Close rival claims

Even supposing that needle-making had begun as soon as Chillingworths took over, however, there could have been few years separating the rival claims of the two mills, for it is known that Washford Mills were a needle manufactory as early as 1730. The first Milward was then in occupation of them before they were taken over by John and Mathew Mills.

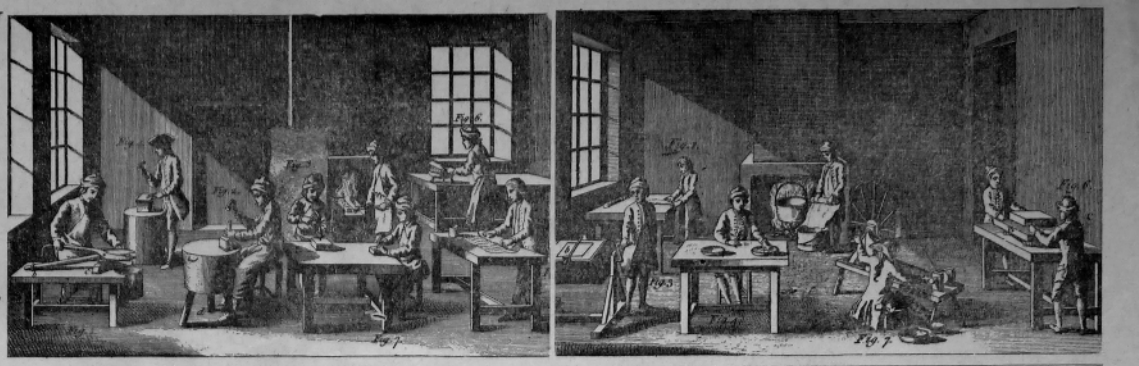
When the Mills left Washford about 1780 the premises were then taken over by Michael Morrall, who had learned the art of needle-making from his uncle, Charles Rawlins, a leading Alcester manufacturer.

Michael entered into partnership with his brother, Abel Morrall, and their brother-in-law, John Archer, and in 1790 the firm of Morrall, Archer and Morrall was making nearly half the total output of needles in the district, and more than the total output, at that time, of all the other Redditch makers.

The Morralls were noted for their inventiveness. One of their adaptations was to make two eyes to a needle in one operation. Later their firm moved to Castle Road, Studley, where a mill pond provided power for their mill.

Abel Morrall, Ltd., was formed in 1898 by the amalgamation of Abel Morrall's business with Lewis and Baylis, of Clive Works, Redditch, and the firm moved to the town with active control in the hands of the Lewis family.

After John and Mathew Mills had left Washford their business was absorbed by Whitehouses and transferred to Ipsley Mill about 1830, and the firm then passed into the hands of Henry Milward and Sons, Ltd.



These two prints depicting needle-making by hand first appeared in The Universal Magazine in September and October, 1764, and were reprinted in a booklet entitled "Needles," written by Mr. Harry Guise, former editor of this newspaper, and published in 1936. Whether, when originally published almost 200 years ago, they had a Redditch establishment as their source, or were based on Long Crendon or some other needle-making centre, cannot now be established. In the print above the figure on the extreme left is cutting the wire into lengths. Facing him, in the foreground, is a woman piercing the wire to make the eyes, and behind her another cleans the pierced eye. The man standing in the left background is flattening the wire before it is pierced. The hardening process can be seen in the centre background, over what appears to be a fire, while tempering is taking place on the table placed in the window (right background). The right-hand figure at the centre table is grooving the needles, and on the extreme right they are being polished.

Different processes are illustrated in the second old print. In the background on the left the needles are being prepared for scouring, while in the centre, in front of the fire, they are being washed. The man turning the handle in the left foreground is winnowing, or fanning, the needles, while his partner seated at the table is picking and cuffing the needles, and turning all the points the same way. Another part of the scouring process is illustrated on the right, where two men are at work at the polishing table, while the pig-tailed figure seated at what looks like a spinning wheel is in fact pointing the needles on an emery stone.

# Milward's is one of the oldest firms in the country

THE Milward family has been connected, in unbroken succession, with the needle trade since the early 1700s, the actual business of Henry Milward & Sons, founded in 1730, qualifying as amongst the oldest firms in the United Kingdom.

The business of that day undoubtedly followed the usual pattern of the yeoman capitalist and outworkers, but no records unfortunately exist to indicate when certain out-processes in needle-making and fishhook making were grouped in an actual manufactory, though this would undoubtedly have been at the original Washford Mill, near Studley.

Here the two processes essentially requiring power—pointing and scouring (polishing)—were carried out by water power provided by the River Arrow.

Before 1800—the exact dates are uncertain—various manufacturers, including the Milward family, had established their warehouses in Redditch and the birth of this needle town had taken place.

In 1800 the second Henry Milward (1770-1838) had purchased the "Old House," Redditch, as a residence, with some of the surrounding land, where the second Washford Mills, Redditch, was built.

The original Washford Mills at Studley—from an old print.

Henry Milward III (1802-1878)

Col. H. G. V. Milward, T.D., D.L., the present managing director of the Milward branches of the business.

This "Old House" which, it is related, had very good cellars, gave undoubtedly an old inn—"The Fountain."

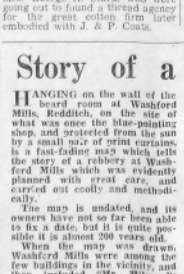
In those days, inns were very often collecting centres for outwork (part of the payment received being no doubt converted to the benefit of the innkeeper, into liquid refreshment), and it seems not unreasonable to suppose that as the Milward business, and therefore outwork, increased, the site of an established collecting centre should have proved convenient for an extension to the manufactory and warehouses.

Washford Mills was, in fact, locally known as "The Fountain" until recent times, and a photograph of an inn-type building demolished in 1895, still exists. A reproduction of a charming engraving of both the premises known as Washford Mills appears as two separate illustrations to this article.

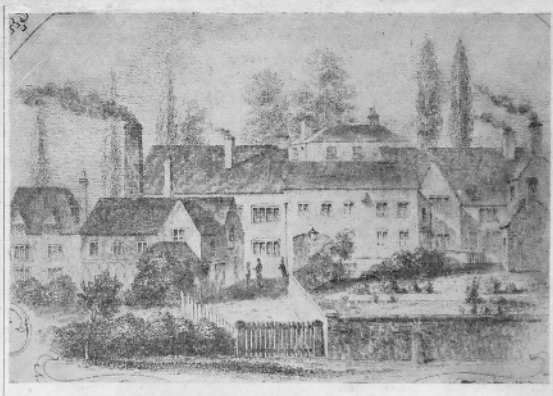
As the business prospered, or as his family increased, Henry Milward moved across the way to a more commodius residence named "The Poplars," through which the then boundary of Worcestershire and Warwickshire passed. It was always related of a rather disreputable member of the Milward family that this boundary line proved most convenient, for when the bailiffs of one county sought him he was able to elude them by crossing the corridor to the other county.

It was not until the 1860s that the business under Henry Milward III (1802-1870), with his two sons, John Frederic (1834-1916) and Victor (1840-1901) made a real step forward on to a factory system in the manufacture of needles and fish hooks, with the majority of workers employed on the premises.

New buildings were put up and steam power, with stamping shops and a pointing mill, were provided.



Mr. Ian Milward, most recently joined representative of the family.



Washford Mills, Redditch, as they used to be—another illustration from an old print.

The two men decided to set up an office together in New York, what could be more kindred than needles and cotton! When the Civil War broke out in 1861 John Frederic, whose wife had just given birth to Charles Frederic, decided to come home, and handed the needle agency to his friend.

It is said that the family were not at all pleased to see him back in England, and considered that he had deserted his post, but his action created the wonderful link between Milward, Clark and Coats which exists today, and has been such an asset in the expansion of the Milward business throughout the world.

Further building extensions were carried out towards the end of the century, a large scouring mill being built in 1890 so that although scouring was still carried on at the old Washford Mills at Studley.

John Frederic was sent out to the United States in 1867 as sole agent in the rapidly developing new world. On the passage out he became friendly with a Mr. and Mrs. George A. Clark, who were going out to found a thread agency for the great cotton firm later embodied with J. & P. Coats.

practically all the trade could be dealt with under one roof. A great step forward also was made in the introduction of labour-saving and automatic machinery.

In those days morning prayers read by John Frederic or Victor were a regular institution. All young people were obliged to attend, this being checked by the timekeeper through a system of numbered brass discs. The Bible used for these gatherings is still in existence, with the lessons for 1894 marked.

John Frederic and Victor were followed by their sons Charles Frederic (1860-1947) and Henry Tomson (1868-1949), and shortly after the 1914-1918 world war by their grandson, Charles Disney (1891-1953) and Henry Gerard Victor (1900), the present managing director of the Redditch companies of the Amalgamated Needle and Fish Hooks, Ltd. group. Ian Newton Milward (1934) entered the company's employ in 1954.

As a contrast to the methods of needle-making illustrated at the head of this page, the photograph above illustrates a fully-automatic outsize combine—stamping and eyeing machine—in use today at the needle-making firm of Abel Morrall, Ltd., one of the oldest firms in the business. Made in Germany, it deals with the larger sizes of needle.

# Morrall's gifts to Queen Victoria

THE name of Abel Morrall is one of the oldest in the needle trade, and is still one of the foremost in the locality. They amalgamated with another local firm 60 years ago, but remained independent of the principal merger carried through in the needle trade in the present century, and now have a business with a world-wide trade.

At the time of the foundation of this newspaper, 100 years ago, the firm had already achieved national fame, for when the Great Exhibition was held at the Crystal Palace in 1851, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were shown a needle-making machine exhibited by Mr. Abel Morrall, and were given needles made in Studley.

Mr. Morrall's firm was then 66 years old, and noted for the progressive contributions it had made to the industry. Although an amalgamation took place in 1898, it still carries on under the title of Abel Morrall Ltd., at Clive Works, Redditch.

The business was founded by two brothers, Michael and Abel Morrall, in 1785, near the site of the Griffin Inn, Studley. One of their earliest trade marks was a griffin.

Five years later the firm of Morrall, Archer, and Morrall was making nearly half the total output of needles in the district, and some years afterwards that total was estimated at 2,500,000 needles a week.

The Morralls later moved their premises to Castle Road, Studley, where a convenient mill-pond provided power. They still own a scouring mill on the same site.

In 1852 Professor Crisp, lecturing at the Royal Polytechnical Institute, paid tribute to the inventive genius of the Morralls.

The firm had its labour troubles in a day when trade unions were apparently not as concerned with working conditions as they are to-day.

## *Twelve-month strike*

A quotation from a work by a member of the firm states: "In 1844, the operative needle workers formed a trade union among themselves. In 1846 the needle pointers struck for an advance of wages, although they were earning £2 to £3 a week, as 26 s a week.

"But little skill or labour is required in the process of pointing; but in consequence of the needles being ground on a dry stone, the dust from the needles is inhaled by the pointer and settles on his lungs, so that his life is of short duration, seldom exceeding 35 years.

"Their wages were mostly spent in intoxicating liquors and other degrading practices, their maxim being a short life and a merry one. The pointers were about the most degraded part of the population of the district, only about one in six could write his own name."

Mr. Morrall was noted to say that the union members fought against moves to improve their conditions, believing their wages would fall.

After a strike lasting 12 months, which dislocated the whole business because pointing was one of

(Continued on page 9, opposite)

# Story of a robbery 200 years ago

HANGING on the wall of the beard room at Washford Mills, Redditch, on the site of what was once the blue-pointing shop, and protected from the sun by a small pair of print curtains, is a fast-fading map which tells the story of a robbery at Washford Mills which was evidently planned with great care, and carried out coolly and methodically.

The map is undated, and its owners have not so far been able to fix a date, but it is quite possible it is almost 200 years old.

When the map was drawn Washford Mills were among the few buildings in the vicinity, and they included "Mr. Milward's house". They stood in what was then known as Bosley Lane, with the directions "from Redditch" and "to Birmingham" appearing at either end of the map. The road to Ipsley and Studley is shown forking off to the right, but apart from one or two footpaths and a foredraught there are no other roads. Houses are depicted here and there, but for the most part the factory is surrounded by fields and orchards.

The thieves evidently used two horses, and when they got to the factory it seems they found watch dogs there, for one of the eight lime pits shown on the map has the notation: "Pit dogs found drowned in". Another note on the map indicates that they took away the contents of a number of tin boxes, which they found just inside the door of the blue-pointing shop.

They took one horse right up to the gate beside the factory and loaded it there, but for some reason they loaded the other in the far corner of the field adjoining the factory—probably at the bottom of the hill near what is now the junction of Otter Road and St. George's Road, where they would be unobserved.

In fact all the rest of their actions, as far as can be ascertained from this map, seem to have been an elaborate attempt at avoiding observation. Clearly they could not have returned along the main road, even if it was a dark night, and the tracks of the horses which were found after the robbery had been discovered have been reproduced on the map.

When the thieves had loaded the second horse down in the dip behind the factory they struck off again across a wheat field at an angle which brought them out through "Townsend Close" onto Bosley Lane (now Beoley Road) probably just below the present location of Grange Road.

There were no houses as far down the road at this point, and they evidently felt it safe to cross there. Having done so they skirted the back garden of a house which stood somewhere about the present King's Arms, emerging onto The Holloway through a lane.

Following a diagonal route across the Holloway they entered the mouth of another lane which led along the back of a garden. This lane took them into a wheat field—and by this time they were almost back opposite Washford Mills, and evidently felt they wanted to put a greater distance between themselves and their crime, for their tracks turned quite sharply south until they were the length of two fields away.

Having achieved this they crossed a footpath which led to Ipsley Lodge and then turned north-west across Waltry Park Meadow towards Redditch and—as far as we are concerned—oblivion.

1934 1959

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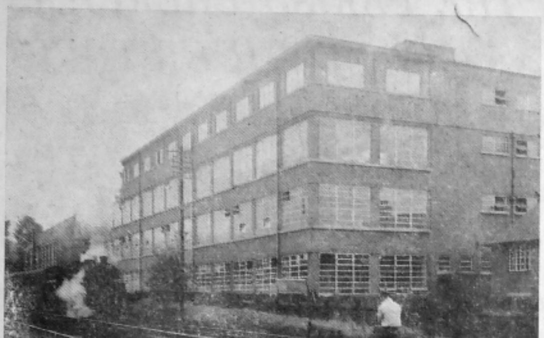


In 1898 the firm of Abel Morrall, Ltd., of Studley, amalgamated with that of Lewis and Baylis, of Clive Works, Redditch. "This was a good move, for it took them to a site alongside the railway at a time when other transport was slow and primitive." In recent years the firm, still known as Abel Morrall, Ltd., have rebuilt a great part of their works so that they present the aspect seen above.

## The Abel Morrall story

(Continued from page 8)

the first processes in needle-making, fans were installed to dispel the dust, and the pointers reluctantly went back to work.

Within a short time they had overcome their reluctance to such an extent that if a fan broke down they would stop work until it was repaired.

In 1898, the firm of Abel Morrall Ltd. was amalgamated with that of Lewis and Baylis, of Clive Works, Redditch. This was a good move, for it took them to a site alongside the railway at a time when other transport was slow and primitive.

Although active control of the business passed to the Lewis family, Mr. George Lewis becoming managing-director, Lieutenant-Colonel Abel E. Morrall remained as chairman of the company until his death in 1941.

In recent years the company has built up a big home and export trade with their "Aero" knitting needles, and has opened a cabinet-making section which has grown rapidly and which provided the shelving in the Public Library extension at Redditch.

## AMALGAMATIONS

A SUCCESSION of amalgamations within the needle trade during the last 50 years or so have built up a group which now embraces needles, fish hooks, fishing tackle and certain branches of the general engineering trade, with headquarters in Studley and branches in Scotland, India and South America.

The financial holding company which controls this group is Amalgamated Needles and Fish Hooks, Ltd., and the principal trading company is Needle Industries, Ltd. The former title dates back to 1905, Amalgamated Needles and Fish Hooks, Ltd., having been formed from a merger between William Hall and Co., Wilkes and other Studley firms.

A parallel merger took place in Redditch between the Milwards, the Bartleets, the James and others.

Amalgamation of the Redditch and Studley groups followed in 1929, and other activities were unified in 1932 by the formation of the English Needle and Fishing Tackle Co., Ltd., now Needle Industries, Ltd.

# In business in Redditch for a century

## *ADVERTISED IN THIS NEWSPAPER SINCE 1871*

A LOCAL concern which boasts as long an existence as this newspaper, and which has been associated with us as an advertiser since 1871, when announcements of Redditch business houses were first encouraged, is that of Neasom and White.

In 1867 Mr. Thomas Neasom, father of Mr. Sidney Neasom, present chief partner of the business, was apprenticed to Mr. Charles White, who was then trading in premises now occupied by Mr. N. Gold in Church Green East.

Thirteen years later Mr. Neasom started his own business in premises near Littleworth House. This site was used as a grandstand for the public to see the Shah of Persia as he left the station in 1891 for his visit to Hewell Grange.

1890 was the year of the amalgamation of Thomas Neasom and Charles White. Shortly afterwards they moved to the premises which the firm still occupies in Church Road.

Mr. Sidney Neasom entered the business at the age of 16 years, and this month, at 78, he will celebrate 62 years at his profession of estate agent.

Shortly before the death, in 1907, of Mr. Thomas Neasom, the novelist Rider Haggard visited the district in search of material for a forthcoming book on "Rural England." The late Colonel Wiggin brought the famous writer to interview Mr. Neasom for information. Copious notes were made of what was then imparted to him, and these no doubt helped to colour the literary result of the visit.

In the early days of the firm's tenure Church Road was an unadopted thoroughfare. A gravel pit existed where the Midland Red garage now stands, and at the annual May fair, horse judging was conducted in the vicinity. The General Post Office was established well before the local authority assumed control of Church Road and had it paved and adequately laid.

Mr. Sidney Neasom held the office of assistant overseer for Webheath and North Redditch Parishes until 1925, when the Rating and Valuation Act came into force.

The family resided at the Red House, Prospect Hill, for 50 years.

Mr. Neasom conducted sales for years at Barnt Green and King's Norton, and he recalls the scene in 1925 when, at King's Norton, he sold on behalf of Cadbury Brothers, Ltd., the remaining vans and horses before their fleet became motorised. He tells of the drivers and attendants of the horses being in tears as their charges were disposed of to various buyers.

He was certifying officer in both world wars at King's Norton and Barnt Green stock sales.

The firm has been instrumental in handling large land and property sales during their years of business.

In 1896 they sold the estate of John Walford, which comprised Evesham Street, New Street, and Market Place. 1922 was the year when two Plymouth Estates in the north east of Redditch changed hands, and part of the Coughton Estate, which took in parts of Crabbs Cross, Astwood Bank and Sambourne, to Spernal Corner. As recently as 1948 the Skilts Estate of 761 acres was sold by Neasom and White in conjunction with a Birmingham house.

A nephew, Mr. David Thomas, is now actively assisting Mr. Sidney Neasom in the administration of the firm, as a partner.

The present Council House in Mount Pleasant. Previously the Council met in the old police station (now a café) in Evesham Street, and the Local Board, which preceded the Council, met in the Unicorn Hotel.

# INSPIRED BY THE SAME MAN, WE CELEBRATE OUR CENTENARY AT THE SAME TIME

The cottage which stood on the corner of Church Road and the Parade until 1923, when the Building Society replaced it with the offices in which they now celebrate their centenary.

The society's present offices.

THE Redditch Benefit Building Society celebrates its centenary within a few days of the centenary of this newspaper—and in fact the same man was behind the birth of both ventures.

More detailed references to this remarkable man, Mr. W. T. Heming, appear elsewhere in this supplement, but he was the man who inspired the meeting which led to the formation of the society, and the growth and sustenance of the infant organisation was the subject of one of the first campaigns in the columns of his equally infant newspaper. Week after week he "plugged" the new society, and exhorted his readers to practice thrift by joining the increasing membership.

Building societies in those days were not as we know them now. It is true that money was accepted for investment and was susequently issued on loan to people who wished to borrow money to build houses. For many years, however, these advances were limited to 50 per cent of the cost of the house, the directors insisting that anyone taking advantage of the facilities they offered should be a substantial citizen on his own account, and a first-rate risk with the society's funds.

In addition to this, however, and until incorporation under the Building Societies Act, 1874, a building society could deal in land and buildings, and the Redditch Society was not slow to take up this aspect.

### *Built houses*

Very early in its history it bought and developed land in Beoley Road, and when this was disposed of an estate was purchased at Headless Cross. The society not only sold off plots, but undertook the erection of houses for sale, and even interested itself in the sale of land of which it was not the owner.

An account of the sale of land near the centre of the town, published 99 years ago, gives the impression that some of the problems of those days were similar to some which are faced to-day. The account read:—

"The sale of houses and building land on Unicorn Hill and Bates Hill, held at the Fox and Goose Inn on Monday last, was a very spirited affair indeed. Situated as it is in the very heart of the town, its hilly and inconvenient shape did not deter or daunt purchasers. A clever architect would very likely, by the exercise of his genius, convert the disadvantages presented by the high ground into conveniences, as has often been done in towns where the ground is very uneven. There can be little doubt that the existence of the Land and Building Society at Redditch contributed much to the spirited bidding at the sale."

This reference to a land and building society is a reminder that the society was generally known by that title for many years after its formation and registration as the Redditch Benefit Building Society. It appears that the society was registered under one title to conform with the law, but traded under another which seemed to have been more readily understood by local people.

### *Why "Benefit"?*

A Statute generally referred to as "the Building Societies Act, 1836" was the first measure designed to control building societies, and John Tidd Pratt, a barrister appointed to certify the rules of building societies, made it a practice to refuse to register a new society unless its name contained the words "benefit building society," that is to say, a society having the benefit of the Act. Although the Act was repealed in 1894, many societies originally formed under it have retained the word "benefit" in their names.

Another prominent local man who played a big part in the formation of the building society was Mr. John Osborne, schoolmaster at the National School, now St. Stephen's Infants' School, Peakman Street, and it was in his school that the first meeting of the inhabitants to consider the idea was held on July 25th, 1859.

Mr. J. H. H. Foley, M.P., took the chair, and the following were requested to act as a committee to make the preliminary arrangements: Messrs. Edward Connell, Thomas Free, Richard Bennett, J. Duggins, John Green, John Osborne, Dr. Nicholson, W. T. Heming, James Ladds, J. W. Hill, William Avery, J. Mogg and George Smith.

The first pay-night was held on August 22nd—before the rules had been registered, and thus before the society had been properly founded—when the sum of £12 17s. 0d. was subscribed. Among the first 40 shareholders was Mr. Herbert Terry, founder of the business which now bears his name, and others possessing names still familiar in the district. They included a Webb, a James, a Millward, a Treadgold, a Goodall, two Bennetts and three Bartleets.

### *Sale of shares*

The usual practice of the society was to advertise, as soon as funds were sufficient to make an advance equal to £100, that a share would be sold to the highest bidder, and the first such sale was advertised for November 28th, 1859, but in fact no purchaser was found until a fortnight later. It was suggested at the time that the reason for this was probably that although houses were wanted, there was little land available for building purposes.

In 1875, 15 years after its formation, the society met with its first and only serious setback, but thanks to the good sense of its members it rode the storm with very little difficulty and rapidly recovered.

It was found on the death of the then secretary, who year after year had been voted into office in the face of opposition from the board, that there was a deficiency. Many people, in defiance of the rules of the society, had entrusted money to the secretary. At a special meeting the members almost unanimously agreed to the terms of an arrangement which met the shortage at some sacrifice to themselves.

As was pointed out at the meeting, the society had paid an average dividend of four and three-quarters per cent per annum for 15 years, and the loss to those members who had not paid their money to the wrong man was only equal to about 15 months' income from their investment. At the annual meeting not four months later, the directors were able to declare a dividend of five per cent.

Two changes in the leading personalities in the society which occurred during this period set the society on a course which was to be undisturbed for the next 34 years. Mr. William Harbon, junior, appointed secretary at the time of the setback, held the post for 39 years, during which time the assets of the society grew to £161,138.

He had the reputation of being incorruptible, steadfast and dedicated to his work up to the last moment of his life.

In January, 1879, Mr. Heming died. He had been chairman from the outset, for almost 20 years, and was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Haines, a genial, kindly man whose partnership with Mr. Harbon lasted almost until the first world war, when he died. Mr. Harbon died at his post in August, 1915.

The silver jubilee of the firm, in 1884, passed unnoticed, but the directors' report presented to the annual meeting in 1909 referred to the completion of 50 years' service, and showed that the total amount then due on mortgages was £102,988, secured on 248 properties.

Another secretary who gave long and valued service to the company was Mr. W. T. Baylis, whose period of office extended from 1915 to 1934, when the society was 75 years old. In retrospect it appears that his principal contribution lay in his decision to build up the reserves.

When he took office they were as low as one and a half per cent of the total assets, and this was considered much too low. The policy of declaring as high a dividend as possible, while not unreasonable in the very early stages, had persisted into a period when it was quite out of keeping with the times. Moreover the first world war was in progress, bringing increasing taxation and the possibility of damage by aircraft, and the general uncertainty of the future made it imperative that reserves should be built up.

This Mr. Baylis succeeded in doing to such effect that when he resigned the reserves represented six-and-a-half per cent of the assets, and the sale shortly afterwards of securities he had bought raised the reserves to just over eight per cent.

With the continued growth of the society, it was fast becoming apparent that the office accommodation would have to be increased.

After starting life in the National School, the society's directors met at various places in town, including the Temperance Hotel and a room over the Maypole Stores in Evesham Street. Their penultimate move was to a suite of offices in what is now the District Education Office, and after a great deal of earnest discussion it was decided in 1922 to purchase the site of two old cottages at the junction of Church Green West and Church Road, where the present offices stand.

### *Chairman 27 years*

In carrying out this project, and others, the secretary had the constant and unswerving support of one director in particular, Mr. W. C. Freeman, who made his own contribution to the society's tradition of long service, and who is still a member of the board.

Mr. Freeman was elected a director in 1914, vice-chairman in 1920 and chairman five years later. He held the latter office from May, 1925, until March, 1952, an unbroken period of nearly 27 years, and when he resigned the chairmanship and was succeeded by Mr. Fred Blackford, the present chairman, he retained his seat on the board. His son, Mr. George Freeman, is the present secretary of the society.

Another link with the earlier days of the society is preserved in the directorship of Mr. A. G. Peel. His father, Mr. Harry Peel, was chairman from 1914 to 1916, filling the gap between the long-serving Mr. Thomas Haines and Mr. R. W. Fisher, who preceded Mr. Freeman.

For the first 60 years of its existence the society was served by directors who received no reward for their work. This was changed by the 59th annual meeting in 1918, when the sum of £25 was set aside for the payment of their fees, and this practice is still observed, although the figure has increased with the passing of the years.

### *Annual election*

The records of long-service achieved by some of the earlier officers of the society were attained in spite of the fact that they had to face an annual election, and it was not until the society was 71 years old that they were freed from this annual ordeal and uncertainty. The members did not give up what they regarded as one of their rights without a struggle.

Just before the 75th anniversary, in 1934, Mr. Eric G. Howes, of Northampton, the present general manager, was appointed joint secretary with Mr. Baylis, who was soon to retire, and his task was to steer the society through a major change of policy.

In the late twenties and early thirties the mark of Mr. Baylis's failing health was discernible in the records of the society's progress. The growth continued, the building up of reserves continued, but the call of the unprecedented building activity of the period, and the challenge of its impact on building societies, had not been met.

Stimulated by the housing drive following the first world war, building society practice had undergone a change. On the one hand, loan terms had been slackened in favour of the borrower by granting 90 or 95 per cent advances under various types of guarantee, and on the other many of the larger societies had embarked upon a policy of expansion which involved opening agencies and branches throughout the country, and paying commission on the introduction of mortgage business.

These changes had conspired with the secretary's declining health and too rigid adherence to a policy which, although it had served the society well, was not in harmony with the changing world, to reduce the possible outlets by way of advances on mortgage.

Thus the task confronting the new secretary was to extend the society's mortgage business. This involved great changes.

A policy of modernisation within the office, and of the improvement of facilities for borrowers and for investing and saving members, has characterised the closing years of this society's first century.

# *A CENTURY'S OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC ACTIVITY*

IN matters of music and drama, the people of Redditch and district have shown considerable aptitude, and perusal of our files over much of the years under review reveals an interesting story.

Space permits only a sketchy reference to the activities which have occupied the interest of devotees of the theatre and concert hall during this century.

During the early years of this newspaper Redditch frequently had visits from Birmingham stock companies of the drama. "Hamlet" was performed in 1862 at the Red Lion Hotel Assembly Room. Saturday evening concerts also became a popular feature of the town's social life.

We notice that the Redditch Amateur Dramatic Society had a new lease of life in November, 1901, after a lapse of 15 years, and continued its activities for a number of years. During the 1920s a group known as the Thespians presented plays annually at the Temperance Hall.

Founded in 1870 by the son of the local rector as a "reading society," the Alvechurch Shakespearean Society was going strongly at the turn of the century, members of the Baseley family being prominent among its players.

The Rowney Green Shakespearean Society may have gained inspiration from its Alvechurch neighbour when it opened up in 1923. One of its early productions was "The Merchant of Venice" and a succeeding work each year since has gained laurels both for the society and its players.

In 1946, the Shakespearean Society amalgamated with the Rowney Green Dramatic Society to become the Rowney Green Players, a group which, with its unusually high standard, has won fame at competitive festivals and public presentations.

### *Small balance*

In April, 1901, the Amateur Orchestral Society gave its seventh seasonal concert. That same year saw the presentation of "Rose Maiden" by the Redditch Choral Society. At its annual meeting, also in 1901, a credit balance of 1s. 2d. was reported, as compared with twopence the previous year.

Four years later, this Society was stated to be the only musical group in the town.

Under the conductorship of Mr. Lionel Field, now residing in South Africa, the choral society enjoyed a further spell of concert and festival activity between the two world wars.

During the 1939-45 period the Redditch Choral Singers, with their instigator, Mrs. Constance Millward, and the Redditch Friends of Music were two groups which sought successfully to develop a public taste for choral singing, and introduced artistes of national repute to local audiences.

In November, 1886, the D'Oyley Carte Opera Company visited Redditch and performed "The Mikado" in the Public Hall. This ensemble paid a return visit to the town when "Patience" and "The Rose of Persia" were presented, and the company subsequently visited the Palace Theatre.

The opening years of 1900 were also the days of touring companies playing Shakespeare and other works at the Public Hall.

In 1904 the ballad opera "The Waterman" was given a public presentation; by public demand and on behalf of the Redditch Poor Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Slater, assisted by Mr. J. Avery, repeated the work in February, 1905.

At Studley that same year the Choral Society gave its patrons their version of "Rose Maiden" and twelve months later, produced "The Merrie Men of Sherwood Forest."

The year 1907 saw an advance from choral works to those of comic opera, and Studley Operatic Society came into being. Following a suspension of activity for a number of years, Mr. Leonard Parkes revived the society in 1949, changing his role of actor to that of producer. This society is still a lively and enterprising amateur group.

For many years Astwood Bank enjoyed a reputation as a village centre of musical ability and exposition. Much of the inspiration emerged from the Baptist Church and its choristers, many of whom graced concert and church platforms in neighbouring districts.

### *Long run*

Born in more recent years, the Operatic Society of Astwood Bank continues to arouse considerable public support with the success of its annual performances.

Also a comparatively recent development in the village is the Ridgeway Players. Their enthusiasm and consistent quality of presentation have upheld the reputation of their musical forebears.

Formed in May, 1905, and giving "H.M.S. Pinafore" as its initial presentation, the Redditch Amateur Operatic Society had a successful existence until immediately prior to the second world war. Its inspiration and driving force was Mrs. Charles Slater, to whom tribute has been paid in the recent series of biographies. She remained as musical director for nearly 30 years.

The scene of their achievements has varied from the Public Hall, now the site of the Gaumont Palace, to the Temperance Hall, a works' canteen in Glover Street and the Palace Theatre.

Subsequently these amateurs transferred their affection from Gilbert and Sullivan to the popular comic operas of the 1930s.

For a number of years between the wars Bates Hill Methodist Church was the venue of oratorio presentation. The Festival Choir drew choristers from other churches, and under its conductor, the late Mr. A. L. Harris, attracted large audiences. Visiting soloists were also a feature of these annual programmes.

With the popularity of competitive musical festivals, among which the East Worcestershire, originating at Redditch, became well known, representative singers from this area have frequently been among the successful entrants. Midland towns have also enjoyed visits from soloists in concert and oratorio who have been natives of Redditch.

### *New birth*

Upon the opening of the County High School in 1932, the Old Students Dramatic Association had a new birth. Taking advantage of the stage amenities of the new school, this group gave evening performances of one-act and three-act plays until shortly before the outbreak of hostilities in 1939.

Within recent years the musical and dramatic group of the County High School has intensified its activities with more ambitious programmes in concert and operatic presentation. Performances from the College of Further Education, in choral and orchestral exposition, have also occupied public interest in these latter years.

The Redditch Drama Festival, which may have derived inspiration from the all-too-brief spell of the Midland Theatre Company at the Palace Theatre, is a product of the post-war years. It has given opportunity to newly formed groups of amateur actors, and made them capable of providing entertainment for loyal followers. The Redditch Drama Group has a notable record since its inception.

Military band concerts on Church Green at one stage of our 100 years were a regular and enjoyable experience. In the history of the Redditch Town Band, since defunct, pride of place has to be extended to members of the Spencer family, some of whom continue to exercise their ability with local orchestras.

The existence and activity of Mr. W. A. Dean's group of instrumentalists also spanned 25 years.

An effort to revive public interest in and support for amateur musical shows was seen in the post-war productions at the Palace Theatre by Miss Mavis Bennett, and the excellent series of shows staged by Miss Elsie Siddele Downing.

As these notes are being written, the Redditch Amateur Operatic Society has been re-formed. Enthusiasm is youthful but exceptionally keen, and with the guidance of some of the stalwarts of the former society, the new venture promises to be successful and lasting.

# Actors had trouble with stage "props" nearly a century ago

AMUSING accounts of dramatic performances given locally only a very few years after the foundation of the "Indicator" appeared exactly half a century ago, and are reproduced below.

In the dramatic performances of half a century ago scenery was less a matter of consideration than is now the case. The actor was then the chief and central figure, and upon him rested the task of producing the effects.

Moreover, halls suitable for dramatic performances were far less numerous than now, and in country towns the scenery and other "properties" at such performances were often of a very incongruous and makeshift sort.

The story has been handed down of a certain performance of an historical play in Redditch at which, right in the midst of an impassioned speech by one of the actors, the walls of Anjou commenced to wobble and sway portentously, whereupon the actors had to "cease orating," as a Yankee would say, and hold up the walls of Anjou until they were re-fixed.

At a certain performance of "Hamlet," too, there were some unrehearsed incidents which we do not find recorded in the "Indicator" of the time. The spectral armour worn by the Ghost of Hamlet's father had apparently grown a trifle rusty. Anyhow, the joints of the armour of the right leg would not work.

There was a long delay, whilst the Ghost muttered things about armour which were altogether improper from one inhabiting the Spirit World, while Polonius was heard telling the Ghost "not to be a fool, but hobble on somehow."

The Ghost did "hobble" on, with a most unghostly creaking. This was bad enough, but worse followed. Upon the Ghost's second appearance the stiff joint had been made to work, but in gliding on the stage he — or should it be "it"?—caught its ghostly foot against a projecting nail, and Ghost and armour came down with a rattle like unto that of a collapsed iron-monger's shop.

★

ANOTHER dramatic performance in "Old Redditch" brought a very remarkable lunar display.

At a certain part of the play one of the actors had to call the attention of another to the "pale moon rising behind the walls of the distant city."

This was the cue for a moon-rising which was depended upon to produce one of the most striking effects of the performance.

The moon—made of cardboard with a circular hole in it, a sheet of tissue paper, and a candle—should have risen up slowly from behind the city wall. But at the cue the moon "failed to eventuate", to use another Yankeeism.

The actor continued to point, but there was no moon, and the audience smiled.

The actor went red, and somebody went to investigate. The explanation was simple—the moon-man had gone to sleep and missed his cue.

The prompter gave him a kick, which was a cue he understood quickly, and in his excitement he grabbed the pole upon which the moon was fixed and sent it up with a run.

Never was seen such a rapid moon-rising. At the same speed it would have completed its full journey over the heavens and been at the setting in about four minutes.

The smiles of the audience became roars of laughter. They did not know much about astronomy, but they knew that a respectable moon should not behave that way.

## EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE

The first religious meeting to be held in Redditch took place in 1705, when the Quakers held a meeting on the site of what is now Milward's factory.

This gives rise to the belief that the first religious work done in Redditch was performed by a Non-conformist body.

The little church at Bordesley, which had succeeded the Abbey, was kept going until about 1820. Then most of the material of this church was carried away to help to make the chapel on the green—the predecessor of the present Parish Church.

Meanwhile the year 1808 saw the first Wesleyan Mission in Redditch—a town which was very different from the town of to-day. Needle manufacturing people did not receive much spiritual help from the parish church at Tardebigge, three or more miles away. The needle grinders of those days lived a rough, hard life, got big wages, worked when they pleased, enjoyed themselves in general, and died an early death.

Thus there were plenty of opportunities for the missionaries who came to Redditch.

The Congregational Church followed the Wesleyans in 1828.

The various branches of Methodism in the town amalgamated in 1932.

JUST north of Redditch is the site of Bordesley Abbey where years ago the monks quietly plied their ancient craft of needlemaking until the Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1538. Two centuries later, in 1730, Henry Milward founded the Company which still bears his name and is the leading member of the Needle Industries group. For over 200 years needles of quality have been sent to all parts of the world from this small corner of England. Needle Industries Limited are proud to be part of the thriving community who have been served so well by *The Redditch Indicator* since 1859.

**Congratulations on your first centenary!**

# REDDITCH MAY HAVE BEEN LIKE COVENTRY

## But there was only one survivor of the cycle trade "war"

ELEVEN years after the first appearance of the "Indicator," Redditch began to play a part in what was to become a revolution in transport. One aspect of this revolution has played a big part in the town's industrial development, in another Redditch was not so fortunate in following Coventry and Birmingham as a motor manufacturing centre.

In 1871 components for bicycles were being produced at Hunt End by George Townsend and Co., but the first cycle in the town was probably built a few years later by

**The Enfield Cycle Co. Ltd., one of the town's major firms where cycles, motor-cycles and industrial engines are manufactured, is the only survivor of the fierce battle which raged in the local cycle trade at the turn of the century. The story of the struggle is told here, with acknowledgments to Mr. W. J. Salloway, of Redditch, who was responsible for the research which established the facts, and who wrote an earlier published article on the subject.**

Charles Cross, of Mazeppa Works, Windsor Street, Redditch, whose Mazeppa bicycles and tricycles appeared in 1879.

Ten years later, a Coventry toolmaker, Arthur J. Simpson, took over a small needle factory in Evesham Road, Crabbs Cross, where he made a number of Ixion diamond frame cycles.

The first foundations of the cycle industry in Redditch, however, were laid by E. J. F. and G. Townsend who, at their Gilwry Works at Hunt End, made cross-frame cycle safety parts in 1885 and complete cross-frame cycles and Cripper pattern tricycles in 1888. At about the same time they were probably making complete cycles for the trade, and a full diamond frame "Erossus" machine was put on the market in 1889.

The day in 1953 when a Royal Enfield bicycle was presented to the Duke of Edinburgh as a gift for Prince Charles was a proud day for Major F. W. Smith, C.B.E., J.P., the chairman and managing director.

### *Pneumatic tyres*

In this year they manufactured a frame to which Arthur du Cros fitted pneumatic tyred wheels and two years later machines to which Dunlop pneumatic tyres were fitted.

These could be called the preliminary skirmishings: in the early 1890s the great cycle boom in this country struck Redditch and, by 1896, the Enfield Cycle Co. had been formed, through the efforts of Mr. Robert W. Smith, J.P., and Mr. Albert Eadie.

They saw the possibilities of the new industry, took over the Townsend firm when its financial position worsened, and changed its name to the Eadie Manufacturing Co. in August, 1892. It proved to be the most successful of several cycle making concerns.

Albert Eadie, late of Perry and Co., known then as the "Emperor of Redditch," and the most successful cycle salesman of his day, became managing director of the new company.

### *Enlivened*

With Mr. R. W. Smith, who became works manager after having been with the Rudge Cycle Co., he quickened up production with new methods and enlivened the whole business with a first-class sales organisation.

In October, 1892, they announced the "Enfield" — a new lightweight for the following year Royal Enfield machines were introduced.

The company, with its famous trade mark, was registered in that year. In 1895, because of congestion at Hunt End, new works were begun in Union Street, Redditch, and it was here, two years later, that practically all the cycle manufacturing side of the business was transferred.

In the meantime a new company, which incorporated the Enfield Manufacturing Co. Ltd., was formed. It was called the New Enfield Cycle Co., Ltd., and it took over all the works and cycle making of Eadies.

When the Hunt End Works were sold to the Enfield Autocar Co. another factory was built in Hewell Road, Redditch, in 1906.

Since then the growth of the company has been great. In 1932 Major F. W. Smith succeeded Mr. R. W. Smith as managing director.

In 1939 all the company's manufacturing activities were concentrated at Redditch but, to cope with orders during the second world war, satellite factories were built in other parts of the country.

Many other cycle-making companies which flourished in Redditch were not so fortunate. Most of them were dissolved.

### *An offshoot*

One offshoot of the Eadie organisation was the New Eadie Manufacturing Co., Ltd., which was registered in June, 1897, and produced cycles for the trade. In 1907 it was taken over by the Birmingham Small Arms Co., which carried on cycle production until the works were closed 21 years later.

B.S.A. fittings were mainly used in machines made in Redditch, known as the "British Cross" and made by Frederick Lee, who had begun in 1900 to build cycles in a workshop at the back of his house. As he also made fishing tackle he found the two interests conflicted and dropped the cycle making. The tackle business flourished and continues to this day.

Also making bicycles in a backyard shop in Hewell Road, Redditch, was Henri Guillaume, who had come to live in the town in the 1890s. For a time he was more successful than Lee. First he bought a nearby building, and then he moved out to Rectory Mills, Alvechurch, where a water-wheel provided power.

His firm then had a chequered career. In 1898 it was made into a limited company; a year later it went into liquidation; then it was carried on by Mr. Guillaume, and in 1901, as Guillaume, Ltd., it went to the British Mills, Prospect Hill, Redditch, where cycles known as the "Varsity" were produced.

An earlier firm which had used the British Mills for cycle production was the Radiant Cycle Manufacturing Co., Ltd., which, in 1898, had taken over C. E. J. Tomkins & Co., and was also known as the A.B.C. Cycle Co., Ltd.

The Radiant Cycle Manufacturing Co. Ltd. was in turn taken over, in March, 1897, by a new company—the Herman Cycle & Needle Co. Ltd. The Hanman Co. also acquired the needle-making firm of S. Thomas & Sons, whose family had built the large and rambling British Mills, and which acquired the assets of the company seven years later. Cycle-making had finished some years previously, and by July, 1901, only fish hooks and needles were being made.

The Redditch Cycle Co., Ltd., which was registered at British Mills in October, 1896, bought the Woodwill of John Edward Hinsham, of Aston Manor Cycle Works, Upper Portland Street, Aston, makers of "Prairie" cycles.

The company was wound up three years later, its remaining assets being bought by H. J. Tanner, who re-sold it to the Redditch Engineering Co., Ltd., a new firm which registered at the same address in April, 1898. After a short period, during which it manufactured high-class cycles and parts, it was dissolved at the end of 1902.

### *"Challenge"*

"Challenge," "Cranfield" and "Reliance" were the names of other bicycles made by different firms in the town.

The "Challenge" was produced for about eight years—first in 1896 by a cycle repairer named E. Ladbury, and a partner, O. Coleman, at 99, Evesham Street, Redditch, and then, after the principals had parted, until 1904, by Mr. Coleman and the Challenge Engineering Co.

"Cranfield" cycles were the product of the Cranfield Cycle Company, in Evesham Street, was a business run by W. J. Cranfield, who produced good quality machines in 1896, exhibiting then at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, in the two following years.

For about seven years "Reliance" cycles were assembled by Edward John Smith, of Reliance Works, Evesham Road, Astwood Bank. He started assembling them about 1893, using good quality fittings, but about the beginning of the century they had disappeared.

Also noted for the quality of their frame-building were Adkins Bros., of Windmill Works, Astwood Bank, who were building bicycles in the early 1920s.

The "Airflow" principle of streamlining motor-cycles, introduced nearly two years ago, represents the determination of this firm with a long history to stay in the forefront of design.

# REDDITCH WAS NOT ON THE MAP

This map of Worcestershire in 1610 finds no place for Redditch—then just the smallest of hamlets. Most of the nearby places were named—including Alvechurch, Beoley, Ipsley, Studley, Tardebigge and Hewell Grange—then the home of the Lord of the Manor.

# *THE PARISH CHURCH IS A LINK WITH HISTORIC BORDESLEY ABBEY*

WHEN the Redditch Indicator was founded in 1859 the Parish Church was just four years old.

It was built on the site of a chapel which had stood on the green for 47 years—a chapel which was a direct link with the now vanished Bordesley Abbey.

To follow the train of events leading to the building of the church, it is necessary to turn back the clock 400 years.

At that time St. Stephen's Chapel stood by the gatehouse of Bordesley Abbey. Services were held in it for the labourers who lived near the abbey, and for travellers who stayed overnight there, for Cistercian monkes were small, and designed only for the use of the monks.

**Acknowledgment is made to Mr. Roy Vann, Redditch librarian and authority on local history, for the information contained in the accompanying article. He was the author of a history of the Parish Church written at the time of the church's own centenary.**

Its dedication to St. Stephen may have been in memory of Stephen Harding, the founder of the Cistercian order, but, like that of the present church, it may have been to St. Stephen the Martyr.

The start of a long connection with the abbey and Tardebigge came in 1542, when the abbey was granted by the King to Lord Windsor in exchange for the Manor of Stanwell. Lord Windsor was given the right to the patronage of St. Stephen in Bordesley, and was charged with the payment of the stipend of the curate for the time being.

### Independence

From this time the chapel came within the parish of Tardebigge, but it preserved much of its independence, and even possessed its own parish boundaries.

In the 17th century the chapel was neglected and lay desecrate, probably because there were no funds for its repair. It was used as a steeplejack and as a barn.

The needlemaking industry was, however, well established in the district and the population was growing rapidly. So the need for the services of a church became urgent, and in 1687 the chapel was restored.

It was repaired from time to time by subscriptions, but at the end of the 18th century it was in a ruinous condition. At this time Redditch was growing round the green at the cross-roads, and the inhabitants decided to build a new chapel on the green rather than carry out further repairs.

An Act of Parliament was then necessary for the creation of a church, and a committee, led by Richard Hyde Guarnieri, solicitor, John Akers, landlord of the Unicorn, and a number of needle manufacturers, including Messrs. Richmond, Holyoake, Mallows, Mills, Millward and Mountford, sought the necessary powers.

### Authority

The Act authorized the trustees to build a chapel, and to obtain the necessary money by borrowing a sum not exceeding £4,000 on the security of the rents to be obtained by letting the pews in chapel, after making some provision for free seats for the poor. Interest of five per cent. was to be paid on the money borrowed, and it was estimated that the pew lettings could provide enough money to pay back both principal and interest—an estimate which was to be proved very wrong.

The trustees were also authorised to take down the old chapel at Bordesley and to sell or use the material for the building of the new one. The site of Bordesley Chapel, and the graveyard, after use, was to revert to the Lord, quote the Act, "The fence to be made round, the same shall for ever afterwards be supported and repaired . . . by the inhabitants of Redditch in the same manner as the new chapel . . . is directed to be supported and repaired."

The new chapel was built on land given by the Earl of Plymouth, and was completed in 1808. Much of the stone from Bordesley Chapel was dragged up the hill and used in the building.

For many years the chapel was a constant financial burden. The country was in the middle of a long war, and only a few years before, in 1801, the Bromsgrove Militia had been called to Redditch to disperse a crowd of rioters who were protesting at the high price of bread.

### Too small

Eight years after its erection the chapel was already too small to contain the number of its worshippers, and the west wall was taken down to extend the building 26 feet. A further gallery, on the south side, was completed in 1835.

The population continued to grow, however, and the curate, the Rev. G. F. Fessey, saw that a larger church was essential. He formed a committee to plan the building.

The first difficulty the committee had to overcome was the raising of money. Several thousand pounds were needed for the new building and the £1,200 debt outstanding on the chapel had to be paid before it could be taken down.

This obstacle was removed by the generosity of the mortgagees, who relinquished their claims to a total of £1,100.

The estimate for the new church was £5,300, without the tower and spire. Sufficient money was raised—£2,100 being subscribed by the townspeople—and the trustees decided to erect the church, pledging themselves to make every effort to complete the tower and spire.

Mr. John Osborne, who was secretary of the committee, started a new fund to raise money for building the tower and spire. He received good support, and it was soon realised that the complete building could be erected.

The foundation stone was laid by Lady Harriet Clive, then head of the family who were lords of the manor, on October 21st, 1853. The stone was hollow, and in it was placed a bottle containing an inscription on parchment, together with needles and fish hooks, and the following note:—

"Redditch is the principal seat of the manufacture of needles and fish hooks. The population is about 5,000, nearly all of whom are engaged in the staple trade of the place. There are about 25 millions of needles and five millions of fish hooks manufactured yearly, which are exported to all parts of the globe, and are allowed to be superior to those of any other country. The enclosed specimens show the state of perfection to which the articles are at present brought."

The stone was placed under the centre of the east window in the chancel. To-day nobody knows where it is. It may have been buried or removed when the church was later enlarged by an addition to the east end.

### Entertained

After the stone-laying the workmen at the church were entertained to dinner at the old Fox and Goose Inn.

Almost two years later, on July 19th, 1855, the consecration was performed by the Bishop of Worcester. It was a typical English summer day. The rain poured down from dawn until 10 a.m., when it became so torrential that even umbrellas were useless. It stopped at half-past ten.

Redditch was now a parish, with its own parish church, and a vicar assisted by curates.

At this time the church was doing much that is now the responsibility of the Welfare State. There was little local government in the town, and it was not until 1859 that the residents, alarmed by frequent cholera and other epidemics, asked for the appointment of sanitary commissioners to have care of the town.

The church's work thus included the care of the sick and poor, and the education of children. A school was built on a piece of land at the junction of Unicorn Hill and Bates Hill in 1820 and another erected at the end of newly-made Peakman Street in 1846.

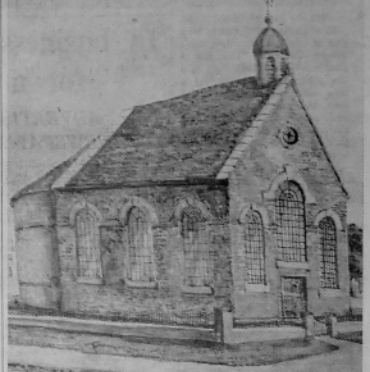
A social problem which occupied much of the attention of the church was drunkenness, and the Church of England Temperance Society was very active in Redditch. In the latter half of the 19th century the Redditch magistrates sat several times each week, and almost invariably on Saturday and Monday mornings in order to try the many cases of drunkenness, and the crimes which went with them.

The church also sponsored Redditch Horticultural Society, which held its annual show, with athletic sports, in a field off Easemore Road.

The church has undergone many changes since those days. The roofs over the present nave and side aisles originally ran the entire length of the building, and the long lines of slates looked dull and uninteresting.

The chancel was very small, and extended westwards only as far as the pillars which now stand half-way down its length; it was raised high above the level of the nave floor. The present chancel arch did not exist, there being a much less impressive arch on day towards the east, and there stood the pulpit and lectern. The pews in the north and south aisles continued to the east walls. Those beyond the chancel arch facing inwards.

There was no choir vestry, and the organ was placed in the south wall; overhead were roof timbers, but there was no ceiling in either the nave or the aisles, and even the chancel roof was boarded. The font was beneath the tower where the bellringers now stand, and the present baptistry was filled with pews.



The chapel which stood on Church Green before the Parish Church was built.

The church appeared as an immense space, barely furnished or decorated, while the chancel seemed mean to many.

There was to be much criticism of the church for these reasons, and because of defects in the building. The roof needed constant repair, while the Tardebigge stone used in the construction, cheap because available locally, was found to weather badly.

In 1891 the condition of the church gave cause for concern and an architect, Temple Moore, was asked to prepare a report on the state of the building, the renovations necessary, and the estimated cost.

His sketches were much admired, but the cost was too great. Later, however, it was learned that William Smallwood intended to give £1,000 towards the scheme, and it was proceeded with.

Smaller sums were also forthcoming, and the Bartleet family offered £500 to be used in the making of the chapel in memory of Thomas Moore Bartleet. While the alterations were being made services were held in the Public Hall, a building on the site now occupied by the Gaumont Cinema.

### Controversy

At this time a screen was erected in memory of Mr. Fessey, who had retired in 1883, after serving the church as perpetual curate and first vicar for more than 42 years, and had been succeeded by the Rev. H. C. Milward, a native of Redditch.

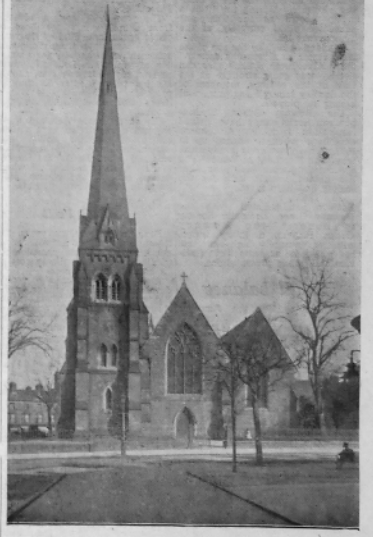
The screen was the subject of much controversy. It was evidently disliked by the architect, and it was eventually decided to place it temporarily across the new chancel arch for nine months to give the congregation the opportunity to decide if they wished to keep it there.

Two years after the renovation, in 1896, two bells were added to a peal of six which had been installed nearly 40 years earlier.

At the end of the first world war the vicar, the Rev. Leonard Bradley, and the church council, had to overcome many difficulties. The most important of which was to raise money for the repair and restoration of the church at a time of dwindling congregations and collections, and of much local distress and unemployment.

The soft Tardebigge stone was badly worn; the church was still lit by gas, which gave a poor light and darkened the walls and ceil-

(Continued on page 11, opposite)



The Parish Church as it appeared before the war—with its surrounding railings.

# *PRINCE GEORGE'S VISIT TO SOCIAL SERVICE CENTRES*

ON July 14th, 1934, Redditch had one of its rare Royal visits, when His Royal Highness Prince George, who later became the Duke of Kent, visited social service centres in the town and at Crabbs Cross. There he also planted a commemorative tree.

The Redditch centres were included in a programme of visits to other centres in the Midlands which had been organised as meeting places for the unemployed of that time.

The Redditch centre was at Prospect House, Prospect Hill, where the Prince erected at about 10.30 a.m. by the then Chairman of Redditch Urban District Council (Mr. B. Woodbridge, J.P.). He was shown round the premises by the chairman of the Redditch Social Service Council (Mr. A. Mahler), and on a bowling green at the rear of the premises other members of the Urban District Council and the Social Service Council were introduced to him.

#### WRITTEN ADDRESS

They included Mr. F. Kershaw, Mr. J. P. Davis, Mrs. Tristram and Mr. W. M. Coupe.

The Chairman of Worcestershire County Council, Colonel C. F. Milward, J.P., was also introduced.

The Prince was handed a written address by Mr. Woodbridge, who welcomed him in the name of Redditch. There were still many people unemployed in the town, he said, although trade had improved. It was an industrial town which, however, they claimed had not been spoiled.

Prince George said that he had been pleased with all that he had seen.

He asked about the unemployed, how long they had been out of work, and the nature of their work. He was told that no charge was made at the centre for meals, and Mr. Woodbridge told the royal visitor about the traditional and newer industries in the town.

Children, who had been given a day's holiday, lined the streets, and near the approach to the centre they formed a juvenile guard of honour.

#### WELCOME STREAMER

In Evesham Street a streamer was hung with words of welcome to the Prince, and other streets in the town were be-decked with flags and bunting.

Prospect House and factory buildings had been transformed by unemployed volunteers as a centre, not only for themselves, but also for occupational work, as a club, offices for other social workers and branches of the British Legion.

At Crabbs Cross Prince George was introduced to other social service workers by the chairman of the committee (Mr. V. G. Sealey). In the grounds he planted a tree, given by Bordesley Abbey, visit by Alderman Charles Terry, after he had inspected a smallholding where the unemployed were growing flowers, fruit and vegetables.

The approach to the smallholding was decorated with streamers, flags and bunting, and children from Crabbs Cross and neighbouring schools formed a guard of honour to the grounds.

Mr. Woodbridge, thanking the Prince at Crabbs Cross for his visit to the district, and for the interest he had shown in the social service movement, said he hoped he would visit Redditch and district again soon.

(Continued from foot of column 6).

(Continued from column 5).

# When Redditch had a common as well as Church Green

A MAP of Redditch issued in 1873 showed about 24 streets, all of which were centred on St. Stephen's Church.

Methodism was strong in the town, as there were five chapels for Methodist sects. There was the Wesleyan Chapel in Bates Hill, the United Methodists in Evesham Street, the Free Methodists at Mount Pleasant, the Primitive Methodists in Adelaide Street and the Wesleyan School Chapel in Bridge Street. In addition, there was a Baptist chapel in Ipsley Street, and the Congregational chapel in Evesham Street.

A Wesleyan schoolroom in George Street is now the Youth Club, while the National Schools, in Peakman Street, are now St. Stephen's Infants' School.

Of the three public houses shown, two—the Unicorn and the Crown—are still on the same site, but the Fox and Goose is shown at the junction of Church Green South (now Market Place) and Red Lion Street.

Public offices included the magistrates' clerk's office in Church Green East, the Public Office and Police Office at the junction of Park Road with Evesham Street, and the Town Surveyor's office in Park Road.

There were two banks in the town: The Gloucestershire Bank in Church Green East, which is now Lloyds Bank, and the Stourbridge and Kidderminster Bank in Church Green West, now the Midland Bank.

The "Indicator" offices were then at the top of Prospect Hill. Almost opposite the "Indicator," and bounded by Clive Road and Prospect Hill, was a triangular piece of land known as the Common.

If you want to purchase a Tin of COLMAN'S best MUSTARD, make sure the name of COLMAN and the BULL'S HEAD are on the label.
Accept no pretence whatever any Tin which does not bear these distinctive Marks.
D.S.F. (Double Superfine) is the name of the best quality.

AN ADVERTISEMENT FROM "THE REDDITCH INDICATOR" DATED JANUARY 6th, 1900

J. & J. COLMAN, LTD. Founded 1804

# A Carnival King 'reigned' in Redditch nearly 30 years ago

In 1930, the year after the birth of Redditch Carnival, Mr. A. H. Bate, enthroned above, became the first Carnival King. Crowned by the late Councillor T. W. Hollis (behind the microphone), he was known as "Alberto the Great, illustrious and supreme governor of mirth and emperor of merriment." He was King again the following year, and later served as Lord Chancellor.

The first Carnival Queen, selected two years later, was Miss Margaret Lewis, seen here cutting the first slice of the ox.

# CARNIVAL HAS BEEN A MAJOR LOCAL EVENT FOR 30 YEARS

ALTHOUGH Redditch Carnival cannot yet lay claim to venerable old age, it can be justly proud of its meteoric rise from a modest beginning to one of the biggest events of its kind in the Midlands in the comparatively short space of 29 years, and prouder still of the spirit of voluntary service which has been the driving force behind its success.

Apart from a break of two years during the last war, the Carnival can be said to have been one of the most outstanding events in local activities since 1930. Reports of the organisers' 29th programme of revelry will be appearing at the time of this centenary.

For more than 20 years the Carnival has been outstandingly successful in its two-fold purpose of providing pleasure for local people and in helping local charities.

During the period between 1930 and 1950 over £22,000 was raised, mainly for the Smallwood Hospital, Redditch.

The hospital, built in 1895 by the munificence of the brothers Smallwood, has been helped for over 50 years, mainly by that spirit of voluntary service typified by both the organisers of the Carnival and the old Hospital Saturday Fund.

The coming of the National Health Service, we are glad to say, the double object of the Carnival, for the entertainment provided is still popular, and there are still many worth-while local charities in need of help.

## Other avenues

For a time the Redditch Maternity Hospital was the chief beneficiary, and since that closed for lack of adequate support the organisers have found plenty of avenues for the funds which are raised year after year.

The Carnival, which has grown in stature and popularity throughout the years, began with a modest evening procession in 1929.

The germ of the idea was a Health Week staged by Redditch Urban District Council the year before, when there was an illuminated procession. For several years previously the Redditch Motor-Cycle and Car Club had held an annual gymkhana in aid of local charities, and in 1929, at the suggestion of Mr. H. S. Morris, then treasurer of the Hospital Saturday Fund, it was decided to hold an evening procession round the town centre after the gymkhana.

The organisation of this combined gymkhana and carnival was a joint effort by the Motor-Cycle and Car Club, the Hospital Saturday Fund, the Civic Aid Society and the Council.

Among the early pioneers were Messrs. C. H. Blackford (then Chairman of the Council), N. F. Cave, C. E. Spooner, H. S. Morris, C. F. Bladen, C. Turner, D. L. Walsh, E. Pencice, R. Heath, W. Turner, J. E. Wilkinson (the present president of the Carnival Committee), and Councillor A. J. T. Jobson. Mr. J. P. Dyer, who had organised the Health Week procession, was appointed hon. secretary.

## Separate entity

And so the fun began, and has continued ever since. After entertaining the public with all the thrills of motor-cycle racing these enthusiasts of 1929 manned a few side-shows outside the Smallwood Hospital and staged a brilliant race, marshalled a few people in fancy dress into a procession, had a local band to play in the Church Green bandstand, and concluded the events with a dance at Washford Mills.

Plans were made the following year for another combined gymkhana and carnival on August 9th, but because of the revival of the Redditch Fair, which coincided with this date, it was decided to postpone the Carnival part of the programme until the evening of August 30th, with the result that the Carnival as it is to-day—valued £31 15s. The Parish Church was also floodlit for the first time, and became the focal point of the town centre illumination scheme. Mr. A. H. Bate was again King, but another new feature was the appearance of Mr. Frank Wilson's fun fair in the main streets.

They had run in those days. The keeper of a certain well-known hostelry was found smoking cigars in Church Green. He was fined 10s. for his offence, but knighted "Sir Ansell."

But in 1931, for all its gay abandon, the Carnival was not without its anxious moments. The procession exhibits had been assembled in the Royal Hotel yard, and there was momentary chaos when one got stuck in the narrow entrance.

Other new features included the appearance of Mrs. Frank Lee's juvenile concert party.

September 17th, 1932, was a day of brilliant sunshine for the 12-hour reign of the Carnival's first Queen, Miss Margaret Lewis.

## Hundreds came

She was crowned by Councillor G. White, Chairman of Redditch Urban District Council, and accompanied by her maids-of-honour, the Misses Dorothy Gwynne and Mabel Spiers, and the Lord Chancellor, Mr. A. H. Bate, who had planned the day's revels with a tour of the fun fair and the Smallwood Hospital. Her bodyguard was made up of members of the Redditch branch of the British Legion.

Buses and trains brought hundreds of people to the town to watch the procession, which had became considerably.

Events were also held during the week. They included a swimming gala, which has been a Carnival feature ever since.

Redditch Carnival then followed a set pattern for the next few years until 1935, when the organisers depicted something of the pageantry of ancient Rome. The procession then was a mile in length.

The following year brought a change in the personnel of the Carnival Committee. After five years as chairman Mr. C. F. Bladon vacated the office, and was succeeded by Mr. J. E. Wilkinson—an office which he held until 1950, when he became the Carnival's first president.

Mr. Walter Brown also resigned from the secretaryship, and Mr. Charles Crow took over.

## Pack of cards

Inspired by Mrs. Frank Lee, the central tableau of the Carnival was a representation of a complete pack of cards, with Mr. R. T. Ellens as the "Joker."

The celebrations planned for 1937 —Coronation year—were marred by heavy rain. In the same year the Carnival magazine made its first appearance, and has been produced ever since, with the exception of war years.

The year 1938 brought to the Carnival stage one who was destined to be one of its most ardent workers. Mr. H. D. Spencer, who was elected King in 1938, took over as secretary the following year and continued in that office until 1950, when he became chairman. Later the office was held by Mr. L. Gregory, and when he left the district for the south Mr. Spencer again stepped in to take over the chairmanship.

In 1938 12 jazz bands took part in a mammoth procession, and street collections showed an increase of £60 over the previous year.

Miss Enid Bowen was the Queen, and the royal court comprised 10 ladies-in-waiting.

## War intervenes

When plans were made for the 1939 Carnival the committee could not have foreseen that by the day fixed for the revelry Britain would be at war.

Instead of floodlights and illuminations there was an all-pervading black-out, and although most of the plans had to be abandoned, Carnival magazines and immunity badges were on sale. Collections were made and £105 was raised.

This marked the suspension of the Carnival until 1942, and although the proceedings lacked the colour and spectacle of pre-war Carnivals, it brought a touch of gaiety into those sombre war-time days.

By the time Miss Millicent Phillips came to the Carnival throne in 1944 there was a hint of the coming silver lining in the dark clouds of war, but one of the highlight years of the Carnival was 1945—the year of peace and victory. And but for the absence of the ox-roast and the flood lighting the Carnival was back to its pre-war splendour.

Mr. A. H. Bate in his new role as Lord Chancellor in 1934. Capt. W. T. Hodgetts was King and Miss Vera Crow, Queen.

Miss Lynetta Spencer, Carnival Queen in 1947, leaving Smallwood Hospital with members of the Carnival Committee and Mr. George White, then Chairman of Redditch Urban District Council.

In this year the additional impetus of victory brought the Carnival spirit to the town for more than the usual week, for there were flag-decked streets, pealing church-bells, impromptu "V.E. parties" in the streets and a welcome for returning Servicemen.

## Celebrations

The people of Redditch celebrated victory and at the same time gave generously in support of the hospital.

The year 1946 brought the return to Redditch Carnival of the Dagenham Girl Pipers, and the following year saw a change in the date of the Carnival from the traditional September to August.

By a coincidence the opening of the new maternity hospital came at the same time as the 1948 Carnival, and from the proceeds of the major part of the proceeds were devoted to the maternity hospital, instead of the Smallwood Hospital, which had become the responsibility of the State.

By 1949 the Carnival had regained much of its pre-war brilliance, and for the first time since 1935 saw the main buildings in the town were flood-lit.

The story of the growth of the Carnival would be incomplete without a word of praise for the scores of people who, through the years, have given of their leisure time to plan and run it.

But for their enthusiasm many organisations might have had to disband, many might have found themselves in difficulties, and many there could not have carried out their charitable work to the same extent. The Carnival band of workers' spirit of voluntary service has kept the organisation alive.

In 1948 the emphasis of the Carnival's efforts was shifted from the hospital to The Gables—the new independent maternity home in Birchfield Road—and the new trend was signalled by a visit paid to The Gables by the 1948 Queen, Miss Margaret James.

# BOY TRAVELLER ROAMED WORLD FOR HIS FIRM

THIS century number would hardly be complete without some space being devoted to one of the town's staple industries. A firm which was founded at the time of the French revolution can claim that it is the oldest and one of the largest fishing tackle businesses in the world.

The firm, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1955—Coronation year—is S. Allcock and Co., Ltd., of Standard Works, Redditch. It was named after Samuel Allcock, who gained renown as "the boy traveller."

It seems appropriate that an industry which caters for the needs of the patient angler should itself inherit some of the qualities for which the customer is famed.

This can be seen in the careful and patient way in which the business was built up from the early days, when the industry was still very much of a cottage one, to the large premises of to-day, with products sent to all parts of the world.

The founder of the business was Mr. Polycarp Allcock, who was a needlemaker in Redditch needlemaker, was apprenticed as a hook-maker. His grandfather was a farmer.

Samuel, Polycarp's son, was born in 1829, and began to work for his father at the age of 10. He was an enterprising business man, and travelled all over Britain seeking orders. His journeys attracted sufficient notice for him to become known as "the boy traveller." He was then only 15.

## Machinery

By 1866 the Allcock works, then employing 30, was making floats, rods and hooks as well as many other articles.

Although hooks continued to be made by hand, Samuel began to introduce machinery for other lines. It was about this time that the present works were constructed in Clive Road. The number of employees had then doubled, to 60.

In 1871 Samuel Allcock paid his first visit to America. The firm's books of this period show orders for flies and other lines from the Continent, Canada and the United States.

An example of his business acumen was the setting-up in the 1890s of his own factory for the production of silkworm gut at Murcia, Spain. At that time Spain was the only producer of consequence of silkworm gut. The factory's annual output increased to enormous proportions, supplying markets all over the world.

By 1891 the firm employed 400 people, and the Clive Road works was probably the largest fishing tackle factory in the world.

Fishermen are said to be conservative folk, who do not take kindly to change, and it is unusual for there to be any great revolutionary changes in the making of tackle, but in 1879 there came the most important development in the production of rods—the elevation of the hexagonal built (or split) cane rod, made by cementing together six identical tapered triangular sections of cane.

## Glass rods

More than 70 years later another change was brought to the river bank in the development of the glass fibre rod, which has given the angler the benefit of an invention which is up to the minute in its conception.

1894 Samuel's daughter, Annie Kezia, married J. W. Skrimpton, a member of an established needlemaking firm in Redditch, and their son, Mr. S. A. Skrimpton, is the present chairman and managing director. He joined the firm in 1902.

Although machinery plays a leading part in all modern rod production line to-day, it does not do so at the expense of craftsmanship, rather has it increased the scope and potentialities of the craftsman.

In the late 1890s Mr. Samuel Allcock sent his products to several international exhibitions and gained many successes. At the Paris Exhibition in 1878 the Shah of Persia made a thorough inspection of the goods, and purchased several of the more expensive articles, principally rods and lines.

Further successes were obtained in Australia, Canada and Germany. During the course of an exhibition in Berlin the Kaiser Wilhelm took special notice of their exhibits, which were fully explained to him by Mr. Allcock.

## Shah's visit

Some 10 years later Redditch was honoured by a visit from the Shah of Persia, and in the waiting room of the railway station were arranged the various samples of the chief products of the town and district for presentation to the Shah. Allcock's products were presented by Samuel Allcock.

Two years later a disastrous fire occurred. The timber shed was gutted, and the damage was estimated at well over £2,000. Another serious fire took place in 1920, when it was estimated that the damage amounted to between £25,000 and £30,000. So bad was the fire that it was said the flames could be seen from Bosley, King's Norton and Bentley. There was another fire in 1952, but this was confined in the main to some derelict shops in the old building.

In 1897 Allcocks gained the highest possible award when they won the "Grand Prix" at the Brussels Exhibition. Similar awards were won at Paris, Liege, Milan and Antwerp.

Just as fishing is an art, so is the creation of the tackle. Something of the happiness of the angler is communicated to the work-people, perhaps because some of them like fishing themselves, but the undeniable fact is that length of service is a feature of the industry—and service brings more skill and experience.

Allcocks are convinced that, moving with the times, their future is assured, and having survived 150 years of war and peace, of poverty and plenty, they step forward to face in the knowledge that as long as there are fish there will be anglers, and as long as there are anglers there will be a market for their products.

When *The Redditch Indicator* was founded in 1859, Samuel Allcock, still quite a young man, was contemplating a move from his premises in Unicorn Hill. These had become inadequate for his growing business, and he built his new factory in Clive Road, which is the present headquarters of the company.

Thirty people were employed at Unicorn Hill making rods, floats and fish hooks. By the end of the century Allcocks were one of the largest employers of labour in Redditch. Other industries have taken root, but fishing tackle and needles are the original products most characteristic of the town.

Allcocks have done much to make the name of Redditch famous, and in doing so have offered steady and progressive employment to many thousands of Redditch people.

# RAILWAY MARKED BEGINNING OF NEW ERA FOR REDDITCH

ONE of the most important events in the long history of Redditch, and one which was given prominence in the first issue of this newspaper 100 years ago this week, was the construction of a railway line from Redditch to Barnt Green — where the line previously ended.

It marked the beginning of a new era for Redditch both commercially and industrially, for in linking up the town with the main line services it opened the way for the growth and expansion of its staple industries.

It robbed Redditch of its feeling of isolation; it meant that industry could flourish and develop because its products no longer had to be conveyed to the nearest main-line station by slow-moving horse-drawn traffic, and it played a large contribution in bringing importance to Redditch first as a needle and fishing tackle manufacturing town, and later as a town with a remarkable diversity of industry.

The railway was opened for passenger traffic on September 19th, 1859, and for goods traffic two weeks later. The Act of Parliament authorising the construction of a railway line from Redditch to Barnt Green received royal assent on July 23rd, 1856, and the first sod was turned in the same year by the Rt. Hon. Robert Windsor-Clive.

### LACK OF FACILITIES

Mr. W. F. Stafford, writing of Redditch 15 years before the railway came into existence, said: "Young readers, or even those of middle age, can hardly realise the conditions of Redditch for the lack of railway facilities.

"The nearest station was Barnt Green, and there was no regular road conveyance then. There was a road coach to Birmingham starting at 7 a.m., the fare being 2s. 6d., but when fate decided that Redditch must have a railway station of its own there was great jubilation in the little town.

"I well remember the formal opening of the new line to Barnt Green. I also remember that we boys looked upon our comrade who had secured a job as a junior clerk at the new station as a sort of local hero.

"Make money other boys I envied him his luck, although I have since occupied much more important positions in the railway world."

Mr. Stafford's story appeared under a picture of the old station in Clive Road, published in this newspaper in December, 1924. The caption read: "Its days are numbered, as its removal is necessary under the new extension scheme which the L.M.S. Railway Company have now in hand. Among other old landmarks this will soon have disappeared. It is a one-storey building partly hidden by trees and shrubs, and it is now being sacrificed to the exigencies of public needs, for early next year it is to be demolished."

### SPECIAL EXCURSION

A report of the opening of the railway line from Redditch, carried in the first issue of the newspaper, described it as "a very important event in the annals of the town."

The report went on to say: "If the few who made the railway did not feel a little pride on that day, then they must have been more than mortal, and if the others who did nothing towards it did not honour the few, then they must have been less than mortal."

It added: "It was a proud day for the directors. They had got through a most arduous task. Well! They were there. There, too, was the vicar, the curate, and ministers of other denominations. Almost all Redditch was going on the special excursion to mark the opening, or at least wished to go.

"The suburbs, too, sent their representatives in good number. Astwood Bank and Studley mustered well, and not alone did the main congregate; lovely women lent charm to the scene, and we will back our train to have conveyed more beauty to Cheltenham than any similar freight on a like occasion.

"Our correspondent has long details of the doings at Cheltenham, of the return journey and of the close of the affair by a dinner at the Unicorn Hotel.

"We may add that not the slightest accident occurred to mar the enjoyment and triumph of the day."

### SERVED DISTRICTS

"In my early days at Redditch we served the country districts as far as Alcester and Arrow, said Mr. Thomas Diggles, who was stationmaster at Redditch from 1864 until 1873, and whose reminiscences of railway matters in the early days were reported in this newspaper later.

He continued: "I remember a Mr. Hunt, of Arrow, sending his teams for coal. We used to have bumper excursion trains, and when the Redditch Volunteers were camping at Malvern we had a day excursion, booking 970 passengers.

"At the Birmingham Onion Fair, a special train was provided, and when 1,050 passengers had booked all the carriages, the guards' vans were full to the door. I then had to stop the booking, and the waiting ones took ordinary return tickets at 3s. 6d. The ordinary trains followed the excursion train (myself on the engine) and, as I expected, we had to push the excursion off the branch at Barnt Green."

Mr. Diggles went on to say that they had a big pantomime excursion to Birmingham on January 6th, 1875, and after the return journey at midnight there were eight or nine inches of snow on the tops of the carriages.

### LINE BLOCKED

"It kept snowing all night, and next morning, when I went down to see the 8.10 train off, I found that the Worcester Drive box told me he could not take the train, and I answered that he must. He then got the carriage was off the rails in the station, but I told him he must take the first brake carriage, and I would go with him.

"We had one or two stoppages, and after passing the canal bridge beyond Alvechurch we ran into a long stretch of snow level with the footplate of the engine."

Mr. Diggles said that with the assistance of another engine, and help from a large gang of navvies, eventually "dug out."

He said that the second engine the navvies stuck fast in a drift, and the driver said his boiler was nearly empty. It was a very difficult job to take the train back to Barnt Green, and then to Redditch, to find the station full of intending passengers. Mr. Diggles told them that it was impossible to run any more trains, and the station was closed.

"We had no telephone at that time, so I was ignorant of what was taking place elsewhere, but during the night or the early morning assistance came from Birmingham."

### SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

A railway time-table published 18 months after the opening of the line showed that Redditch had a train service seven days a week.

There were six trains to Birmingham on week-days and two on Sundays, while four went to Worcester on week-days, with two on Sundays.

As far as Alcester and Studley were concerned, an omnibus left Alcester, calling at Studley, every week-day in time to catch the trains leaving Redditch at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., returning from Redditch after the arrival of trains leaving Birmingham at 10.5 a.m. and 4.50 p.m.

Passengers had to travel third-class in all trains between Redditch and Birmingham.

# Mount Carmel, now 125 years old, preceded Catholic emancipation

REDDITCH Catholic Church, the foundation stone of which was laid on February, 1833, was said to be "the first Gothic Catholic Church of any pretensions to be built in England since the Reformation."

Prime mover in getting the Church built was Father Tunstall, who was born in Redditch, and it was for that reason that Redditch was selected for the site.

The Church was consecrated on April 24th, 1834. High Mass being celebrated by the Revd. R. A. Parker and the Bishop of the Midland District, Dr. Walsh, preached a sermon to a large congregation.

Sir Charles Throckmorton presented some costly vestments of French workmanship, used during the service, and a chalice. Other properties of the church were three chasubles of the late 15th century, a silver gilt chalice with a paten of splendid Renaissance workmanship, a cross, known as the "Bosley Cross," about 12 inches high, which is said to have belonged to Bordesley Abbey.

At the time Father Tunstall lived at Coughton, in what is now the Throckmorton Arms. He opened a Sunday School at Studley where he did not have a long life; and before a Catholic Church was built in the town Catholics from Studley attended the Redditch church.

### THEIR CENTENARY

References to early Catholicism in Redditch were made by the Archbishop of Birmingham (Dr. T. L. Williams) at centenary celebrations held at the church on Sunday, April 29th, 1934.

He said that Catholics in 1834 were "a very small and scattered portion of the great Protestant population of England," and that during the days of persecution it was the old Catholic families who succeeded in keeping Catholicism alive.

In the Redditch district before 1834 the Catholic religion had been kept up by the Sheldon family, of Beoley, and the Catholics of the district heard mass at Beoley Hall.

With Catholic emancipation in 1829 Catholics were able to enter public life. Then, with the appointment of Nicholas Wiseman as first Archbishop of Westminster when the hierarchy was restored in 1850, the Oxford Movement, and immigrants from Ireland, there was an upsurge of the church.

The immigrant Irish, coming to England from the famine in Ireland made a great change in the life of Catholics in the factory towns, the Archbishop said. Henceforth Catholicism was the religion of the poor people in the towns.

The Archbishop was preaching at a morning service at which High Mass was celebrated by Canon Edward Godwin, who had been associated with the church for 53 years. In the afternoon Dr. Williams held a reception at St. Benedict's Hall, and in the evening he gave confirmation.

Dr. Williams was accompanied by the priest-in-charge (the Rev. L. S. Cave) and his private secretary (the Rev. Bernard Griffin, D.D.) who later became"?

## Parish Church

(Continued from page 10, opposite)

ing; the organ was almost worn out, the heating system was insufficient; the framework on which the bells were hung was worn, and ringing caused vibration which threatened the safety of the tower; the baptistry, which had not been altered when the church was renovated in 1894, was not a worthy one.

Almost all these deficiencies were made good in the years between the wars through the generosity of Redditch church members.

In 1948 the Rev. J. C. Williams was appointed Vicar of Redditch. He remained here until early this year, when he became Rector of Halesowen.

During his 10-year stay, Mr. Williams took a keen interest in Redditch and its people. He was chairman of the Redditch District Education Committee, chairman of the governors of Lodge Farm Secondary Modern School, and the chairman of the managers of St. Stephen's School. He served as second vice-president of Redditch Rotary Club and as chairman of the club's Club Service Committee and was chairman of the Redditch Moral Welfare Association.

Before leaving Redditch, Mr. Williams made this comment about the Parish Church:

"The church has now re-established itself with the civic and community life of the town and is, in fact, in as strong a position in that respect as any church in the diocese."

Look at the church the next time you pass it—better still, look at it early on a summer morning, when it is flanked by the sun's rays, the bow master is leaning, standing in the centre of a grassy, wooded triangle; see how proudly its spire shoots upwards above the mellowing stone building to form one of Redditch's most conspicuous landmarks—and think: 100 years ago the church on the green was four years old; since then, wars, kings, queens and governments have come and gone; since then, the church has grown.

# VICTORIAN WITH VISION WHOSE TRADE BECAME WORLD-WIDE

OVER 100 years in business is the record of a family whose name has become synonymous with Redditch, whose products are to be found throughout the world and whose modest beginning in a little workshop was only four years behind them when this newspaper first appeared in Redditch.

It is the spring-making firm of Herbert Terry and Sons, Ltd., which was founded in 1855.

Terry's is essentially a family firm, and its gradual rise to fame and world renown began when a man of vision, Mr. Herbert Terry, looked beyond the traditional trade of Redditch (he was a bait maker) with the result that his inventive brain soon found outlets which were profitable.

He first invented and marketed a spring-clip for a hat-guard—the sort of thing men used when they wore straw hats. He made metal fittings designed to keep the crinolines of the ladies in proper shape and position, and he invented all sorts of little novelties in metal.

Very soon this new side of the business was keeping him so busy that he was able to abandon the manufacture of artificial bait.

And from a small room, ten feet by twelve feet, where Mr. Terry worked with one other man and two boys, this tremendous business, with large premises in Redditch, and another building in Alcester, has grown and grown.

The growth of the business from such a small beginning was aided to some extent by the introduction of the bicycle, and later the internal combustion engine. But before they came Terry's had gained a reputation for springs and pressings.

## Laboratory

Very early in the life of the firm a laboratory was established in which everything that came into the works—the raw product in the shape of steel wire—was analysed, and everything that went out was tested.

The firm began in a small workshop in Bosley Road, but the premises which now form the main works were entered about 50 years ago. At that time the factory was surrounded by small dwellings, and leaning against it was a Baptist church.

Gradually the houses were purchased and pulled down and workshops erected in their place. The church was also acquired and was used as a warehouse, but it was burned down in August, 1932.

Mr. Herbert Terry relinquished control of the business in 1902, and his three sons, Mr. Charles Terry, Mr. A. Victor Terry, and Mr. Alfred E. Terry, took over. They proved to be a remarkable trinity.

Mr. Charles Terry (later Alderman Charles Terry) was chairman of the directors for over 40 years and concerned himself largely with the financial side of the business.

## Inventive

Mr. Victor Terry was of an inventive frame of mind, and was the creator of the Terry spring-seat saddle. He made himself responsible for the works, while Mr. Alfred Terry, by his unremitting attention to the publicity side of the business, helped materially to build it up to its present gigantic proportions.

Terry's advertising is world-wide, with the inevitable result that the firm's goods are known and appreciated in every quarter of the globe.

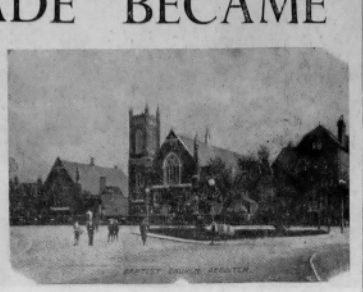
Mr. Alfred E. Terry died in 1926, and his son, Mr. Douglas Terry, succeeded him as a director. Mr. Douglas Terry, however, died in 1951, and his place on the board was taken by his son, Mr. David Terry—making the fourth generation in direct descent from the founder.

Mr. A. Victor Terry died in 1953, and his son, Mr. Norman Terry, is now chairman of the board.

Alderman Charles Terry, who died in 1954, was succeeded on the board by Mr. Philip Terry. Mr. Raymond Terry, his elder brother, and the eldest son of Alderman Terry, died in 1939.

The founder of the firm, Mr. Herbert Terry, died at his home, Bordesley House, on January 22nd, 1910. He was then 73 years of age.

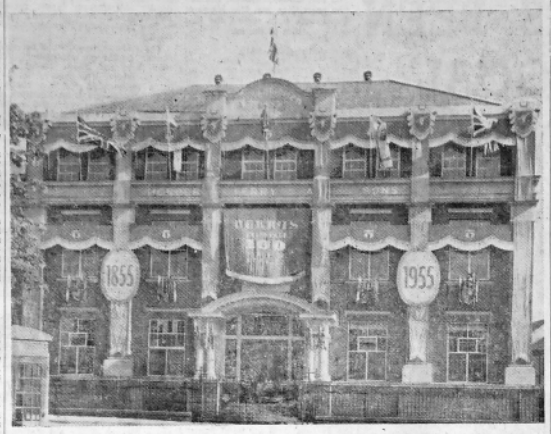
At that time it was written of him: "Although not taking an active part in local public life, Mr. Terry was ever ready to help forward any good work. He was a prominent member of the Redditch Wesleyan Church, and a warm supporter of the temperance movement, while in politics he was a Liberal. He was of a genial disposition, and highly respected."



The old Baptist Church on Ipsley Green—where Terry's main offices now stand.

## Service

Because the direction of the firm is a family affair, this point of view has been reflected in its employees, and sons and daughters of former employees are now working there. That does not mean that in some cases their parents have stopped working, for the records of years of service show that here is a firm which keeps its employees for many, many years.




The firm's head offices as they were decorated for the centenary in 1955.

The firm has also earned a reputation for its good relations with its employees, and the reasons are not hard to find. In 1926 the spacious playing fields in Easemore Lane were laid out, and in 1929 a welfare hall was opened, making additional recreational facilities for the workers. A first-class canteen, which can also be used as an entertainment hall, was also built.

The canteen is also used for the firm's annual flower show—which is regarded as one of the biggest events of its kind in Redditch.

On the occasion of their centenary in 1955 the board of directors decided to commemorate the event by making a gift as a token of appreciation of loyal service.

Every employee received £1 and in addition £1 for each complete year of service with the company. Some people collected over £40, and the total cost to the firm was in the region of £25,000. In addition a profit allocation scheme gives employees a percentage on their total earnings for the year.

## All over the world

Terry's employees are not confined to Redditch and Alcester. It is their proud boast that they have representatives all over the world. Their London premises were opened in 1908.

Terry's became a public company in 1933, and during the last war they opened a small subsidiary works at Kineton, Warwickshire. It remained open only five years.

It has been said of the company: "It has been built by the practical hand and the resilient mind," and there can doubt that the manufacture of springs is a job for the specialist. It cannot be carried on successfully without years of experience.

It is true that any general engineer can make a spring which will give reasonably good service, but to produce hundreds of thousands, each of which will give substantially the same service, and possess the same technical characteristics, calls for the specialist having at his disposal a specialist plant.

As far as coil spring-winding machinery, and machinery for the more simple forms of "flat" springs is concerned, nothing intricate or out of the way is required. But when it comes to hardening and tempering operations, upon the efficiency of which depends the "life" of a spring, the requirements in the direction of plant are infinitely more stringent, while the human element, in the shape of the operatives, making a gift as a token of appreciation of loyal service, takes on added importance.

## The secret

While the secret of the firm's business may be said to lie in the spacious hardening and tempering shops, almost as much depends on the use of suitable materials, since if these are of poor quality, or unsuited to the needs of any particular line, the skilled labour of the hardening and tempering specialist is nullified.

Every piece of raw material delivered to the works is called upon to pass strict tests at the hands of qualified metallurgists.

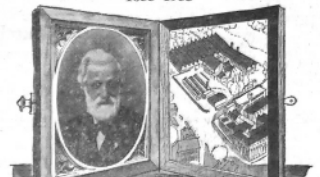
The firm once explained the scope of their spring production thus: "Springs a mile or a millimetre in length—a dwt. or a cwt. in weight—to extend or compress, plated or other finish. Our scope is limited only by the needs of spring users."

Extensive as is this claim, it is no exaggeration. There are literally thousands of different Terry springs alone, and hundreds of other lines, including the firm's Anglepoise lamp.

Even in the early days the range of the business was tremendous, and an 82-page catalogue was said to contain only some of the products.

Assembling the Anglepoise lamp—one of the articles which has carried the name of Terry's—and that of Redditch—all over the world.


1855-1955

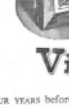


Victorian ... WITH VISION

FOUR YEARS before the Indicator was first printed a young Herbert Terry was hanging out his sign as "Maker of Presswork and Springs".

SUPPLYING AN AWAKENING WORLD

He chose well his locale . . . in Redditch, where the green Worcestershire fields march with Shakespeare's country, near Birmingham, the growing manufacturing centre of Victorian England. The world of 1855 was very much an enterprising young man's oyster . . . the Industrial Revolution in full flood . . . overseas markets opening with every packet that sailed . . . new trades, new outlets for his wares.



THE MAKING OF GOOD SPRINGS AND PRESSWORK

The planted acorn sprouted and grew. Through succeeding decades, Herbert Terry, his sons and grandsons, expanded and developed their business and making good springs and presswork, designing springs and presswork for each new industry as it evolved.



TRADE CYCLE

The 80's saw the cycling boom, begin with Terrys really 'going to town' on its whirling wheels. A notable contribution to cycling comfort was Mr. Victor Terry's invention of the celebrated Spring Seat Saddle, which has never been surpassed. Production and sales increased, with Terrys inventing, adapting, exploring every application of their products to the new industry. This was to be repeated when, later, the automobile took to the road.

THE LAMP OF 1901 ANGLES

Pausing, for a moment, from their main tasks, Terrys took time off to develop their world-famous Anglepoise Lamp—whose flexible, yet 'stay put' action, based on spring action and re-action, has made it a "best seller".

PIONEER'S REWARD

Long before he passed to his rest, Herbert Terry saw the firm he founded becoming greatest Springs and Presswork Specialists in the world—a position they have maintained—due tribute to a Victorian with vision.

TERRY'S of Redditch

HERBERT TERRY & SONS LIMITED · LONDON · BIRMINGHAM · MANCHESTER


## 136 YEARS AGO REDDITCH WAS "A very respectable and thriving hamlet"

A GLIMPSE of life in Redditch more than 136 years ago describes it as "a very respectable and thriving hamlet in the parish of Tardebigge."

This description appeared in a Redditch Directory dated 1823, compiled and written by T. Menge, the Postmaster of Redditch at that period.

It goes on to say: "Redditch is delightfully situated on an eminence which commands a short but pleasing view of its extensive environs. The seat of the Earl of Plymouth—a building admired for the simple elegance which it displays—lies about one and a half miles from this place, situated in the same parish.

"There is a chapel-of-ease, neat and convenient stone edifice placed in the centre of the town, besides a very large Methodist meeting house and a National School on the Lancasterian system.

"It is noted for being the principal place of the needle and fish hook manufacture, besides its factories in all branches of hardware and other articles of commerce; indeed this hamlet displays considerable neatness and cleanliness.

### POPULATION

"The population of the hamlet and its immediate neighbourhood around is more than 4,000, and about 800 houses."

The article goes on to give a list of names and professions and trades of people in Redditch in 1823. Some of these trades included whitesmiths, malsters, brass-makers, bucksters and dealers in sundries and earthenware.

Needle manufacturers included Polydwarf Allcock, William Bartlett and Sons, Henry Milward and Sons, William Smallwood, Chas. Swann and Co., and William Field and Co., while needle factors and makers were shown as William Avery and Son, James Avery, Bate and Lewis, James and T. Baylis (Fancy, etc.), and Holyoake and Gardaers. Sixteen needle mills were named.

Nine schools were listed, six coal merchants and seventeen fish hook manufacturers.

Coaches were run to London, Kidderminster, Worcester, Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Birmingham.

## SEWAGE DISPUTE

THE proposal, first made in 1875, to institute a sewage disposal scheme caused a considerable controversy which raged for nearly five years.

Mr. W. T. Heming, the thrn editor and proprietor, was in personal agreement with those who opposed the intention of introducing a broad irrigation system and turning the storm water into the sewers, and although the news columns of the paper gave full and impartial reports of all that was said on both sides, Mr. Heming used his influence against the proposal.

The system was, however, adopted but it never gave satisfaction and eventually the bacteriological method of treatment was adopted. The works have been extended several times since.

Mr. C. E. Knight was on the reporting staff from 1899 to 1904, when he was appointed clerk to the District Education Committee.

An up-to-date photograph of Smallwood Hospital, showing the new front built on at the time extensions were added a few years ago.

# HOSPITAL PROVIDED FROM THE PROFITS ON A GOLDEN NEEDLE

ALTHOUGH the Smallwood Hospital has 36 more years to go before it celebrates its centenary, its story marks a further milestone in the progress of the town. Six years after the launching of "The Redditch Indicator," the first suggestion of a small cottage hospital for Redditch appeared in the correspondence columns of the newspaper.

The letter was written by Mr William Avery in October, 1865, although the hospital was not to materialise for another 30 years, it had an almost fairy tale beginning, in that it could be said to owe its existence largely to the golden-eyed needle.

The hospital really owes its existence to the generosity of two brothers, Edwin and William Smallwood, but they in turn obtained their money from their father, William Smallwood, and it was the golden-eyed needle that won his prosperity.

As to the hospital itself nothing happened about Mr Avery's letter until 1887—the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign.

Then a public meeting called to consider the form that local celebrations should take—beside the proposed festival for the children and the poor—suggested that a cottage hospital would form a fitting permanent memorial. But the suggestion failed because of lack of funds.

In 1891 Councillor S. Allcock approached the Local Board with a conditional offer of £250 "as a nucleus for a cottage hospital."

### Amplified

This offer was subsequently renewed and amplified, conditionally, to the amount of £1,000, but, as a contemporary puts it: "Through the masterly inactivity of the Board a cottage hospital again failed to be acquired."

William Smallwood, the elder, was born in 1781, and in 1807 he married Elizabeth Beck. He was a needlemaker by trade. Born in early life, he served his apprenticeship with William Bartlett and Sons, and he took into partnership a Birmingham man named Wright. The indenture being that Wright could gild the head of a needle so as to make it appear like gold instead of having the dull hue invariably put on by the Redditch manufacturers of that period.

The business of the firm proved a very lucrative one—in magnitude of profits rather than of turnover. Their gold-eyed needles sold at no less than £1 per 1,000, and Messrs. Wright and Smallwood were appointed needlemakers to Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte.

### Legacies

When Mr. Smallwood died in 1829, Mr. Edwin Smallwood succeeded to his father's business, continuing the partnership with Mr. Wright. For some considerable time the prosperity won by his father continued to flit past, but he never adapted himself to modern ideas and requirements, and the business, in consequence, gradually died.

In the meantime most of the shares of the other five members of the family fell into the hands of Edwin and William.

Edwin died in 1892, leaving £75,000. By his will he gave £9,500 in legacies, free of legacy duty, which amounted to nearly £1,000 more, and the residue of his estate he left to his only surviving brother, William Smallwood.

Soon after he became aware of this, William generously resolved to give the money away. He contributed a sum of £50,000 to charitable institutions.

A sum of £5,000 was left for the founding of Redditch Hospital by Edwin Smallwood, and William Smallwood gave about £15,000 towards the project.

When Edwin Smallwood left the £5,000 for the building and endowment of a cottage hospital in Redditch, his trustees at once formed a representative general committee to carry out his intentions. William Smallwood then made his offer of £15,000.

No provision was made for a site, and in 1892 the scheme became the private concern of William Smallwood, who selected a site on Church Green West, and a group of dilapidated buildings disappeared to make way for the site.

Building began in November, 1893, and on May 25th, 1895, the "Needle District Almanack":

"The new building occupied for the hospital is about 3,720 sq. yds., and cost about £5,000. The expenditure on the building has been about £10,000. Its architectural style is of the favourite English type—the Elizabethan—the materials being red brick with stone copings and dressings, with red tiles; these and the proportions present a pleasing effect. A projecting porch with gable to the central window accent the entrance to the building. On the ground floor, to the left of the entrance, are situated the matron's room, the board-room and the admission hall, with a consulting room and dispensary; these last three are contained in a small separate wing attached to the main block.

"On the right of the entrance are the nurses' sitting room, the ward kitchen, bathroom and lavatory. Opposite to the operating room is a door communicating with the grounds, and opposite the ward bath is the male ward, with the nurses' room on the left overlooking the ward, and on the right a small ward, capable of holding two beds (for cases which may require separation from the general ward).

### Staircase

"On the first floor (which is approached by a wide staircase in the eight-hand corner of the ground floor corridor) on the left are have the servants' bedroom, the matron's bedroom, the linen store, the nurse's bedroom, and a children's ward. On the right of the staircase is the ward corridor, having on the right a bathroom, a storeroom and the female ward kitchen, bath, lavatory, and female ward, with the nurses' room on the left overlooking the ward, and separation room arranged as on the ground floor.

"In the basement is the hot-water heating apparatus and coal store. At the rear of the building, in the extreme north-west corner, is the laundry and mortuary. The whole of the fittings are of the most modern type, as also are the surgical appliances. Communication between all parts of the building is affected by telephones and electric bells.

"The main wards are fitted for eight beds each, and the separation wards for two beds each, the children's ward is calculated for eight beds; so the total number of beds is 28. The cubic capacity of the wards give between 1,222 cubic feet to 1,480 cubic feet per bed, which agrees with the space usually required for hospital patients.

"Ventilation of the wards is designed to be effected by the introduction of warmed fresh air, discharged over the fireplace (on the Galton principle) into the centre of the ward, and the extraction of the vitiated air is provided for by the adjustment of special openings over every window. The wards and the whole of the building is heated by hot-water apparatus."

The president for the first year was William Smallwood; the vice-presidents were William Smallwood, J. Ac Chamberlain, M.P., Colonel Clive V. Milward, M.P., William Jaffray, T. E. Field, William Smith (surgeon), E. James, E. R. S. Bartlett. The trustees were F. H. Joscelyne, G. E. Fisher, Canon Newton, T. Evans, William Gibbs, William Avery, J. Morgan and W. S. Tunbridge.

There was a board of management consisting of 23 members, including the trustees and the medical staff of six members. The matron was Miss K. E. Fonwick, who was trained at the London Hospital, Whitechapel.

The balance of the invested funds of the hospital brought in an income of £400 per annum, and the additional annual expenditure was expected to be met by public subscriptions.

WILLIAM SMALLWOOD

EDWIN SMALLWOOD

### "Noble gift"

The Almanack concludes: "This, through the generosity of the late Mr. Edwin Smallwood, munificently supplemented by the liberality of his brother, Mr. William Smallwood, of Alcester, the town of Redditch and neighbourhood have been put in possession of a complete and modern-fitted cottage hospital, which will bear comparision with any similarly-sized institution; and further, the generosity of the founder and of the benefactor has made provision for its recurrent wants by a partial endowment. Let a grateful public, whilst ever remembering the name of Smallwood, see that their noble gift and scheme be worthily supported."

From then on the people of Redditch supported the hospital in many ways, and even after 1948, when it was taken over by the State under the National Health Service, the spirit of voluntary help has continued.

While the hospital still retains something of the old-style architecture, alterations and additions have had to be made to meet the growth of the town.

Thirty years after the hospital was opened it was found that extensions were necessary. These, and still more extensions, which were made in 1934, cost £11,109, and of that sum £6,132 was provided by the Redditch Hospital Saturday Fund, which in turn had been built up by public subscriptions and gifts.

The hospital was also one of the main beneficiaries of the town's annual Carnival for many years, being helped to a great extent—but that is another story.

People can still make gifts to the hospital—and still do—the money is used specifically for the local hospital.

An official said: The monetary gifts are put into what is called "free money," which is used at the discretion of the local House Committee.

It can be allocated to the hospital for a special purpose, and if that is done the House Committee must respect the request.

Although the hospital is controlled by the State it is still looked upon as the town's own hospital and help is given in many other ways by gifts of flowers, books, and produce from various organisations in the town and district.

Much of this work has been undertaken by the Ladies' Linen League and the League of Friends.

When the latter organisation came into being in November, 1953, its object was to maintain and encourage an interest in the patients in the hospital.

One of the first members elected on the new committee was Mrs. W. G. Thomas, who was secretary of the Ladies' Committee for 30 years.

Many people thought that with nationalisation the spirit of voluntary service would disappear, and the personal touch would be squeezed out by the impersonal State machine.

### Filling the gap

That was not so in Redditch. Been quietly filling the gap and rebuilding the tradition of voluntary service which was so strong and so proud in the town.

It is right that the work of the League which appeared in this newspaper four years ago, the chairman, Mrs. Dallas E. Warder, of Hopwood Grange, Hopwood, was quoted as saying that the League existed to do anything it could to further the interests of the patients and staff.

They had begun by visiting patients regularly, but the need for this type of work in Redditch had greatly diminished with the extended visiting hours, and they now confined their visits to patients who had neither friends nor relatives to go and see them.

The report spotlights but one phase of the League's work. It refers to the presentation of a table tennis table and equipment for the use of the staff.

The money for their work is raised by means of bring and buy sales and other evenings. The secretary of the committee is Mrs. C. L. Potts.

### Portable altar

A portable altar was also presented to the hospital three years ago by the same organisation. At the same time Bibles were given by the late Mr. F. Whitehead, of Cotswold Cottage, School Lane, Alvechurch. There were 34 Bibles—one for each bed—and 12 copies of the New Testament for the nurses.

Two years ago a children's ward was provided, the cost of the work, which was carried out in the former female convalescent ward, being met from a legacy of £1,000 left by the late Alderman Charles Terry, J.P. It includes accommodation for seven children, as well as two cubicles for isolation purposes.

In the same report mention is made of the number of patients attended to annually.

There were 7,176 in the out-patients' department 1,868 new patients were seen during the year, while the attendance of new and old patients amounted to 8,458. The casualty department was busy. 6,051 new casualties being treated, involving 13,279 attendances.

The report concluded by saying: "The House Committee would like to pay tribute to the many voluntary organisations and individuals who have given their service to the hospital during the year."

There was a public outcry earlier this year when the House Committee was disbanded without warning, and one result of this has been that the League of Friends has taken on more responsibility for welfare work in the hospital.

The cottages on the west side of Church Green before the hospital was built.

# LOCAL FAMILY WHICH WAS A POWER IN THE LAND

Italian Gardens, Hewell Grange, Redditch

Hewell Grange was the Worcestershire home of the Windsor family for generations, although the building, now in use as a Borstal Institution and the back of which can be seen in this postcard, is not the original Grange. The Italian gardens are still preserved.

THE story of Redditch in the last 100 years—or in practically any period during the last 400 years—could not be told without reference to the Windsor-Clive family, whose influence on the town and district has been profound and all-pervading as the story has unfolded.

There are reminders of them everywhere one goes in Redditch. At one time, within the lifetime of this newspaper, no local committee was complete without a representative of the family in the chair, few foundation stones were laid or buildings opened by anyone but the head of the family or his wife, and no-one felt that a new venture was safely launched unless it had the seal of approval of the Lord of the Manor, who lived at Hewell Grange.

For the Windsor-Clives (for centuries simply "the Windsors," and for generations Earls of Plymouth) were by far the biggest landowners in the district. Their title to land here (as recounted in this article) stretched back to King Henry VIII, and at the peak of their power they owned 12,000 acres of land in Worcestershire, and much of that acreage, centred on the site of Bordesley Abbey, included practically the whole of Redditch.

## Gave much away

Over the years the family generously gave away much of their local holdings, and a great deal of money. Anyone wishing to erect a church, a school or any building considered to constitute a public amenity usually had the site given to them, together with a substantial donation towards the cost of erection.

Reminders of these acts of generosity can be seen carved on the foundation stones of many local buildings, and other reminders, the reason for some of which will become apparent as one reads through this article, survive in local road names, such as Windsor Road, Windsor Street, Other Road, Archer Road, Ivor Road, Plymouth Road, Salop Road, Ludlow Road, Bromfield Road, Hewell Road, Grange Road, Clive Road and Lady Harriet's Lane.

At various periods during the last 1,000 years the ancestors of the Plymouth family, whose history is extremely well documented, have been a power in the land. Always they have been among the country's military and political leaders, and their periods of apparent eclipse have never lasted long, and have been followed by an impressive resurgence.

## Market rights

The Lords of the Manor of Bordesley and Earls of Plymouth were owners of the market rights of Redditch, and for many years the Council paid them an acknowledgment rent.

On the sale of the Plymouth Estates in 1947 the market rights were acquired by Alderman H. R. Bird, the present holder of the title of Lord of the Manor of Tardebigge, who presented the rights to the town.

The family name Other, revived by the Windsors within the last three centuries (and commemorated in Redditch in Other Road), was a name of power some ten centuries ago. The first Other, or Othoere, on record, as far as can be discovered, is the great Norse Viking. "Othere, the old sea captain, who dwelt in Helgoland," commemorated as the discoverer of the North Cape in the appendix to King Alfred's translation of Orosius.

## King Alfred

King Alfred, who assumed the throne of England in 871, took down the story of the old sea-king from the man himself, and eventually persuaded him to stay in England, rich though he was at home.

His descendant, Other, flourishing in the reign of Edward the Confessor, lived at Stanwell, on the north bank of the Thames, between Staines and Old Windsor. His vast estates extended over considerable portions of five counties—Middlesex, Berkshire, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and Surrey.

His son, Walter, who later assumed the surname de Windsor, was treated leniently by William the Conqueror, and kept his estates.

Throughout the 350 years that followed the fortunes of the family fluctuated, but they continued to play a part upon the stage of English history.

The family star was in the ascendant when the episode occurred which introduced the Windsors to the Redditch district.

## Marks of favour

Andrews de Windsor was made one of the Knights of the Bath at the Coronation of Henry VIII in 1509, and other marks of favour quickly followed. In 1520 he was chosen to attend the King on the occasion of his famous interview with Francis I of France, at the place which became known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

He supported the King in his differences with the Pope over his divorces, and was one of the principal commanders in an army sent to invade France in 1523. His loyal service was rewarded by his elevation to the peerage (the family's earlier title having lapsed) as Baron Windsor of Stanwell.

King Henry VIII, however, was an imperious character and, in spite of the favours he had shown Lord Windsor, he eventually dispossessed him of the vast Stanwell estates, giving him Bordesley Manor and Hewell in exchange. The story, as related by Lord Windsor himself to Sir William Dugdale, is worth repeating.

In the year 1541, Henry sent a message to Lord Windsor announcing that he would dine with him at Stanwell on a specified day. Henry arrived on the day with great pomp and ceremony, and was sumptuously entertained.

After the banquet the King informed the baron that he liked the place so well that he was determined to have it, "yet not," he added, "without a more beneficial exchange."

## Baron's plea

Lord Windsor replied: "I hope your highness is not in earnest," and he prayed the King not to take the place from him, as it had been the seat of his ancestors for so many generations.

"Tut, tut, man," exclaimed the masterful monarch, putting on a stern countenance. "It must be so."

Not caring to incur the displeasure of the imperious king, Lord Windsor waited upon the Attorney General, who showed him a draft of a deed already prepared for an exchange of Stanwell in lieu of Bordesley Manor, Worcestershire, which included the Hewell domain, and which had been seized by the King after the suppression of the monasteries.

Lord Windsor felt that he was compelled to accept the hard bargain, and had to quit his seat, the ancient home of his family, forthwith.

Succeeding holders of the title continued what had almost become a family tradition of royal favour and military prowess. Thomas, Lord Windsor, born 1591, became Admiral of the Fleet. He had no sons, and the property passed to a nephew, Thomas Windsor Hickman, on condition that he assumed the family name and arms. He won back the barony for his zeal in the service of Charles II during the Civil War, and went on to achieve even higher status for the family.

## Lord Lieutenant

Charles II made him Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire and, five years later, Governor of Jamaica and "Admiral of those seas." England was at war with Spain at the time, and Lord Windsor proved himself an vigorous and successful admiral, defeating a force of 3,000 Spaniards and capturing seven Spanish ships and the fortified town and castle of St. Jago, in Cuba.

For these and other services he was created Earl of Plymouth in 1682.

It was the new Earl of Plymouth who revived the family name of Other, a name which was continued by successive Earls for the next five generations.

The second Earl of Plymouth, a man of many appointments, was thought to have been a Stuart sympathiser, for on the accession of George I to the English throne he was suddenly deprived of all his official traditions without any explanation.

Another member of the Windsor family brought Cardiff castle into the possession of the family through his marriage, and the fourth Earl of Plymouth married Katherine, daughter of Thomas, Lord Archer.

## Lickey Monument

The sixth Earl of Plymouth, who succeeded to the Earldom in 1799, at the age of one, enjoyed a popularity in Worcestershire which, according to a family historian, was "almost unbounded." He was the founder of the Worcestershire Yeomanry, and shortly after his death, at the age of 44, the Lickey Monument was erected to his memory.

In 1819 a marriage took place which allied the Windsor family to the Clive family, of Oakly Park, Shropshire, a family more famous, perhaps, for the Robert Clive who became Clive of India—virtual founder of the Indian Empire.

The marriage was between Lady Harriet Windsor, youngest sister of the sixth Earl of Plymouth, and the Honourable Robert Henry Clive, second son of Edward, first Earl of Powis, and a grandson of Clive of India. The pride of the Windsors in this ancestry was illustrated by their much later decision to commemorate the exploits of Clive of India in carvings which can now be seen in the Plymouth Gallery in Tardebigge.

A history of the Windsor family published in 1879 gave the extent of the family property as nearly 17,000 acres in Glamorganshire, 12,000 acres in Worcestershire and another 11,000 in Shropshire.

The sixth Earl of Plymouth, who died in 1833, was the last member of the main branch of the family to hold the Earldom for many years. He had no sons, and the title passed first to one uncle and then another, to peter out altogether in 1843. The Barony of Windsor was terminated in favour of his younger sister, Lady Harriet Clive, who adopted the additional surname of Windsor in 1855.

## Window memorial

Her son, the Hon. Robert Windsor-Clive, M.P., who died before her, was present when his wife, Lady Mary Windsor-Clive, laid the foundation stone of Redditch Parish Church. He died before the church could be completed, and the present East window is a memorial to him. His only son, Robert George, born in 1857, was 18 months old at the time, and as Lady Mary Windsor-Clive also died at an early age, the boy was brought up by his grandmother.

It was in the person of this boy, heir to over 40,000 acres in Worcestershire, Shropshire and Glamorganshire, that the family's titular fortune was restored, for he was created Earl of Plymouth, in the county of Devon, and Viscount Windsor, of St. Fagan's, in the county of Glamorgan, in 1905.

Lord-Lieutenant of Glamorgan, and a deputy-lieutenant in Worcestershire and Shropshire, he was honorary colonel to no fewer than five regiments. Mayor of Cardiff in 1895, High Steward of Cambridge University and a trustee of the National Gallery.

## Paymaster-General

He was Paymaster-General in the Government in 1891-92 and First Commissioner of Works from 1902 to 1905.

His elder son, Other Robert Vincent Windsor, died unmarried in 1908, and his third, Archer, a lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards, was killed in action in 1914. When the Earl died in 1923 he was succeeded by his second son, Ivor Miles.

It was this second Earl of Plymouth in the new creation who is northerly well remembered in Redditch by thousands of people still alive to-day. His family still owned a great deal of the land in the district, and many of the local farmers were his tenants. He would frequently walk from Hewell Grange into Redditch.

He, too, was Lord Lieutenant of Glamorganshire and a deputy lieutenant in Worcestershire and Shropshire, and he too, served in successive Governments. He was Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Home Secretary in 1922, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to the Dominion Office in 1929, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, 1931-32, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Colonial Office, 1932-36, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office from 1936 to 1939.

Lord Plymouth died in 1943, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Other Robert Ivor, the present Earl. His eldest son, in turn, also bears the name Other, and another traditional family name, Archer, is still held by the Earl's younger brother, and by a nephew.

The present Lord Plymouth lives at Oakly Park, Shropshire. Hewell Grange is no longer owned by the family, having been sold on the death of the second Earl. For the last 12 years it has been owned by the Prison Commissioners, and is used as an open Borstal Institution.

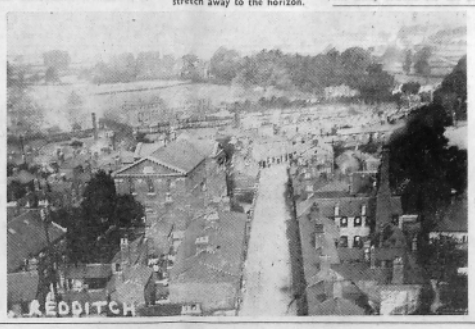
Lord Plymouth, born in 1923, was educated at Eton, as were many of his ancestors, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained his B.A. degree. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1953.

He served in the Coldstream Guards from 1941 to 1945, attaining the rank of Captain, and in 1950 married Miss Caroline Helen Rice, of Dane Court, Kent. They have two sons and a daughter.

# Volunteers—the T.A.—date back to 1806

REDDITCH had Volunteers as early as 1806. It was perhaps about then that they must have been formed, for in 1800, when there were riots in Redditch because bread was dear, Volunteers were brought from Bromsgrove to "quell the disturbances," according to William Avery's history of Redditch.

Looking down William Street from the tower of Redditch Parish Church. On the left is Bates Hill Church. The date of the photograph is uncertain, but there is little building evident beyond the railway. The bridge from Windsor Street to Bridge Street is there, and A. Poole and Son's old factory beside it, while the houses in Edward Street and Britten Street can be seen faintly through the smoke in the left background, but beyond the factory the fields and the trees stretch away to the horizon.





The 100 troops of the Worcestershire Yeomanry Cavalry were stationed in the town before marching to Hewell Park, where they were reviewed, and during the first year of the "Indicators's" life "Lines on the Redditch Rifle Corps," by R. Merry, were published and referred to a Redditch native, Tom Fright, who "fought most valiant at Waterloo."

The Rifle Volunteers in 1860 were mostly professional men in the town, and a copy of a muster roll of 200 names is now preserved in Redditch Public Library.

### WELL-KNOWN NAMES

Captain Robert Smith Bartleet, Lieut. William Boullion, Ensign Victor Milward, Sgt. George Charles Richards, and a surgeon, Dr. Smith, headed the list. Other well-known Redditch names included Allcock, Melen, Avery, Bayliss, Hemming, Shrimpton, Clark and Woodward.

In 1866 Victor Milward became captain of the volunteers. An account of their annual camp at Hewell is given in a report kept in Redditch Library. It shows that the daily rations for the men included about one and a half pounds of meat each.

The formation of the Militia, and a Rifle Corps room, licensed for practising in 1832, are also mentioned in Avery's Redditch history and both organisations must have carried on, in some form or other, in the 1860s, as by the beginning of the century there were two military organisations in the town—the Volunteer Rifle Corps, H. Company, Second Volunteer Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment, and the Volunteer Artillery Corps, 1st Worcestershire No. 4 Battery.

### SOLICITOR

The Rifle Corps was captained by S. H. Clark, and had its headquarters in Ipsley Street, and the Battery Commander of the Artillery Corps, whose headquarters were in Easemore Road, was a Redditch solicitor, Capt. W. S. Tunbridge.

With the birth of the Territorial Army in 1908 there was a reorganisation, and the Rifle Corps became the 2nd South Midland Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, 3rd Worcs. Battery, with Capt. Tunbridge as commanding officer, and the Life Corps became "H" Company, 8th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, with Capt. Clark still in command.

On mobilisation at the outbreak of the first world war in 1914, Major Tunbridge was still in charge in the Royal Artillery. His battery was commanded by F. W. Smith, and his junior officers were Lt. E. W. Tunbridge and Second Lieutenants A. C. W. Hobson and S. H. Smith. Capt. Clark remained in charge of the Redditch "H" Company.

### FLYING CORPS

Capt. F. W. Smith, shortly after the outbreak of the war, transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, qualified as a pilot and achieved rapid promotion. Frank Walker Smith was the eldest son of Mr. R. W. Smith, founder of the Enfield Cycle Co., of which he eventually became chairman and managing director. He was awarded the C.B.E. in 1949.

Lt.-Col. A. C. W. Hobson, O.B.E., M.C., T.D., D.L., who was born in Redditch in 1891, was twice wounded whilst serving in France and Italy, and twice mentioned in dispatches. He took over the command of the 67th Field Regt., R.A., at Redditch in 1923, following Lt.-Col. G. H. Taylor, T.D., of Stourbridge.

He was promoted Brevet Colonel in 1926 and was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Worcestershire in 1931. Since 1924 he has been a member of Worcestershire T.A. and A.F. Association.

In 1938 Col. Hobson raised the 119th Field Regiment, R.A., in Redditch, Dudley and Stourbridge and, on the outbreak of the second world war, was appointed to command his old regiment, the 67th Field Regt., R.A., and went overseas in 1939.

### GENERAL STAFF

He took the same regiment to North Africa, after its return from Dunkirk, and on the capture of Tunis was promoted Colonel (General Staff) on the staff of General Eisenhower in Algeria. He remained on the same staff in Rome, under Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis, until 1946, and was awarded the Legion of Merit (U.S.A.) and mentioned in dispatches.

He was honorary Colonel of his regiment (then the 267th Self-Propelled Field Regiment, R.A.) from 1946 to 1956.

Colonel Hobson, who was clerk to Droitwich magistrates, holds the Military Cross with bar and is a former captain of Redditch Cricket Club and Redditch Hockey Club.

Col. Hobson was followed in command of the 67th Field Brigade by the late Lt.-Col. H. B. Sankey, C.B.E., M.C., T.D., who commanded the Brigade for two years until 1933 and then, until 1936, the commander was a Redditch man, Lt. Col. J. T. James, T.D.—until recently a director of Needle Industries Ltd.

Col. James had joined the second line of the 2nd South Midland Brigade Royal Field Artillery in September, 1914, and served with the unit and other units overseas until the end of the war.

For 11 years, until 1935, he commanded the 267th Field Battery at Redditch.

### HOME GUARD

On the post-war re-establishment of the Home Guard, Col. James was appointed Commander of the 3rd (Droitwich) Battalion, which included Redditch area. He retired from the command in 1953.

Lt. Col. P. W. Robinson, T.D., of Cookbury, took over command of the 67th Brigade in 1937. In 1939, the new 119th Field Regt., raised by Col. Hobson, was commanded by Lt. Col. E. W. May, M.C., T.D., with Colonel H. G. V. Milward, T.D., D.L. as Commander of 267 Field Bty., R.A. (The Redditch Bty.) prior to a staff appointment and attachment to the American Army for the Normandy landings.

On the re-establishment of the Territorial Army in 1947, Colonel Milward was appointed to command the new 639 Heavy Regt., R.A., T.A., the successors to 8th Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment and 119 Field Regiment, R.A. with headquarters in Redditch. Lt.-Col. Milward was promoted Brevet Colonel in 1951 when he was also made Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, and appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of the County.

Col. Milward, who was educated at Rugby and Clare College Cambridge, is now managing director of Milwards Fishing Tackle, Ltd., Shrimpton and Fletcher, Ltd., and Milwards Fish Hooks, and is chairman of the Association of Fishing Tackle Manufacturers.

Col. Milward was followed as commanding officer of the new 639 Heavy Regt. R.A. (T.A.) by Lt.-Col. N. C. Faithfull, and then by Lt. Col. J. B. Parker.

The present commander is Lt. Col. J. S. Hayward, H.M. Prison Commissioner.

### NATIONAL RESERVES

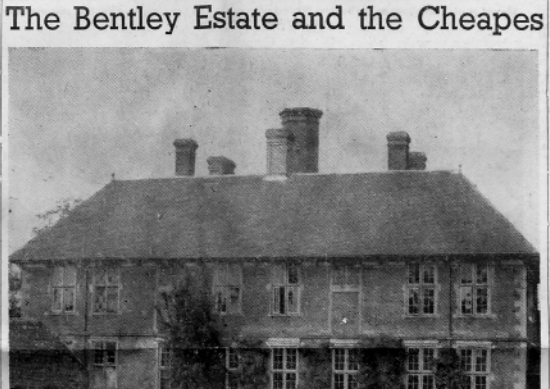
Forerunners of the Home Guard in the town were what were known as the "old and the bold"—the Worcestershire National Reserves. They were formed during the first world war, and had a strength of about 200. The local secretary was C. F. Laight, of the Royal George, Evesham Street.

In December, 1914, a civilian rifle corps was formed, of which the chairman was Col. C. F. Milward and the secretary W. C. Crowall. This became the Redditch and District Drill and Rifle Corps, with Lt. L. Lambert as commandant.

In 1916 the 3rd Battalion Worcs. Volunteer Regt. "A" (Redditch) Co. was formed, with Lt. Col. C. F. Milward as commandant.

The late Duke of Kent photographed during his second visit to Redditch—paid in 1941. He is talking to Lieutenant R. C. Morom, who commanded the guard of honour supplied by the local Home Guard. The Duke was welcomed to Redditch by Councillor George White, Vice-Chairman of Redditch Urban District Council, who was deputising for the Chairman, the late Councillor C. H. Blackford, who was ill. He inspected Home Guard, Civil Defence and Fire Brigade units drawn up in Church Green East, and told Mr. White that he congratulated Redditch on possessing "such a fine war-time service."

# The Bentley Estate and the Cheapes



Norgrove Court, used by the Hemmings and the Cheapes as the home farm to the Bentley Estate, was once the home of the previous owners of the estate, the Cookes. It outlasted Bentley Manor, pulled down 11 years ago, and is now scheduled by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government as a building worthy of preservation.

IF the Hewell estate of the Plymouth family was the greatest in the district, with a constant and powerful influence on local life, the neighbouring Bentley estate ran it a good second, and at one time was equally intimately bound up with Redditch.

The present head of the family, Lieut.-Col. Leslie Gray-Cheape, still lives in the district, at "The Sillins," Bentley Manor having been demolished 11 years ago.

The Gray-Cheapes are descended through the distaff side, from the Hemmings, a family with a long history and a strong connection with the needle trade.

The Hemming family are one of the oldest in Warwickshire, the name appearing in the Haselor Parish Register as early as 1594, and before that date they lived in Hertfordshire.

During the 17th and 18th centuries they lived at the Manor House, Great Alne. Haselor, later to be an outlying portion of the Bentley Estate, lay just across the river.

One of the many Richard Hemmings (it was a traditional family name), who lived at Great Alne early in the 18th century, encouraged his estate workers to make needles at home in their spare time, to create a new interest for them.

## Built warehouse

As their work progressed, he arranged for their products to be delivered in quantities to the Redditch markets. Interest in the trade spread beyond his own cottagers, and he built a warehouse in Redditch for them, thus obtaining a substantial stake in the needle trade through his original concern for his own employees.

One son, Richard, continued to live at the Manor House, while the other, William, took over his father's position in the needle trade, living at Prospect Hill.

About the year 1790 William bought the Foxlyditate estate, and later, about 1830, bought the adjoining Bentley estate from his great friend and neighbour, Mr. John Cookes.

William Hemming had two sons, Walter and Richard, the latter eventually becoming sole possessor of Bentley and Foxlydiate, and sole partner in the needle business, which William Hemming had built up considerably.

In addition to being the Squire, William Hemming had been a magistrate, and in 1846, two years before his death, he was High Sheriff of Worcestershire. On the day of his funeral all the shops and most of the factories in Redditch closed for the day.

## Majestic views

Bentley Manor, a great, straw-thing property, stood on the Ridge, way, 600 feet above sea-level, and commanded majestic views. The centre portion was very old, having been built some time before 1649, and added to later.

It was believed originally to have been the watch-tower for Norgrove Court overlooking Feckenham Forest.

Norgrove Court, also on the estate, was run as the home farm. It was believed to have been one of the first houses in the country built of bricks (all hand-made) and to have been the place where King Charles successfully hid after the battle of Worcester. It was the home of the Cookes family, from whom the Hemmings bought the estate.

The Manor of Norgrove was mentioned in Domesday Book.

The Hemmings added to the estate 1,340 acres at Haselor, adjoining their old Manor House at Great Alne, and had an 8,000-acre grouse moor at Glaschorrie, in the Highlands of Scotland.

They stayed in the Highlands every August, and also had a London house which they used "in the season." Other residences of the family also lived, at one time or another, at Bordesley Hall (now the headquarters of the British Cast-Iron Research Association) and at Beoley Hall. The family also had properties at Bickmarsh and Hillborough.

The Richard Hemming who was Squire of Bentley 100 years ago was an art collector and patron of the arts. He had an outstanding private collection at Bentley and in London. He commissioned several works by Sir Edwin Landseer, and possessed paintings by Constable, Gainsborough and others.

## Sportswoman

Squire Richard Hemming's eldest daughter, Maude, inherited Bentley and the other properties on the death of her father in 1891, and became famous as "the woman Squire." She was the complete sportswoman, taking an active part in hunting, controlling packs of hounds in Scotland and in Worcestershire. She also controlled a pack of beagles at one time, and was a successful breeder of horses, hounds and cattle.

She was married in 1873 to Lieut.-Col. George C. Cheape.

They had three boys (two of whom were killed in the first world war) and three girls (one of whom was drowned in Scotland at an early age, another being drowned in the St. Lawrence of Ireland some years after her marriage).

The third son, Leslie St. Clair Cheape, became a polo international some years before the war, being a member of the England team which defeated America in 1914 for the first time for several years.

He and his brother-in-law, Lieut. A. J. Cay, were killed in Egypt in 1916, while serving with the Worcestershire Yeomanry.

The Squire's eldest son, Lieut.-Col. Hugh Gray-Cheape (who had added the name Gray before his own on his marriage in 1906 to Miss C. G. Gray, of Forfarshire), lost his life in the last year of the war, being drowned when the troopship on which he was sailing from Egypt to France was torpedoed in the Mediterranean.

## In South Africa

He commanded the Worcestershire Squadron of the Imperial Yeomanry in the South African War. When the Worcestershire Yeomanry was re-formed in 1914 he took command of the local squadron, going with them to Egypt and Gallipoli, and later served as second-in-command of the 2nd Composite Yeomanry Regiment. At the time of his death he was Colonel of the Warwickshire Yeomanry. He was awarded the D.S.O. and bar.

The second son of the Squire was Brigadier-General Ronald Cheape, who survived many of the most famous battles on the Western front, eventually commanding a Brigade in the Army of Occupation. He was awarded the C.M.G., the D.S.O. and bar, the Croix de Guerre and bar, and the M.C. He died in 1967.

The present head of the family, Lieut.-Col. Leslie Gray-Cheape, is the son of the Lieut.-Col. Hugh Gray-Cheape who was drowned in the last year of the first world war, and grandson of the "woman Squire." He inherited the estate on the death of his grandmother, and still administers it.

The last three generations of the family have been Masters of Hounds: Col. G. Cheape, Col. Hugh Gray-Cheape and Col. Leslie Gray-Cheape.

1875. On March 20th that year, HOLLINGTONS were selling through this medium, Mantles, Jackets, Baby Linen, Ladies' and Children's Under Clothing.

OF those days, HOLLINGTONS are proud to record that it was earlier, 1833 in fact, when they opened an establishment in Redditch. Throughout the years they have gone from strength to strength, and today are able to offer first-class facilities to its many customers in FURNISHING, HARDWARE, HOUSEWARES, LADIES' FASHIONS, SOFT FURNISHINGS, CARPETS, FLOOR COVERINGS, HOUSEHOLD LINENS, KITCHEN EQUIPMENT, &c.

OF the notable occasion this week, HOLLINGTONS, as a Centenarian-plus, are proud to acknowledge their long association with "The Redditch Indicator."

**Congratulations, *Redditch Indicator*, on achieving a century of public service.**

Hollingtons REDDITCH TELEPHONE 138

THE REPUTATION THAT ENDURES ESTABLISHED 1833

JOHN WRIGHT & SON (REDDITCH) LTD.

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# NEAREST WE CAME TO CLOSING IN 100 YEARS

OUR centenary story would be incomplete without a reference to the emergency which arose during the closing weeks of our first hundred years—and with that story comes a tribute to the excellent work achieved by three youthful operatives during the shut down in June and July imposed by the nation-wide dispute in the printing trade.

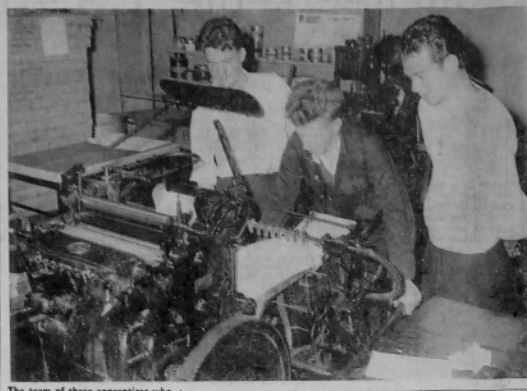
In anticipation of our being unable to produce a normal size newspaper if such a crisis arose, preparations were made, and when normal working ceased on June 19th, we set in motion the plans for publication of a "make-do" edition.

There remained two apprentices in the composing room to set the type. Peter Cook operated a Linotype typesetting machine, and John Cooke set out the type in columns, set the headlines, and locked the forme ready for machining.

In the machine room the Cossar news press was also idle, but one apprentice (John Farmer) was available to operate a much smaller Heidelberg platen machine, and platen machine. He printed both sides of the 13in. x 8in. size news sheet, and the first emergency issue totalled 13,250 copies.

Office personnel counted and packed the news sheets, which were delivered by van.

These emergency newspapers, which were published up and down the country, made history. Complimentary reference to our first news sheet was made in B.B.C. Television's Midland News, in which the commentator, illustrating our two-colour effort, described it as one of the smartest emergency issues of the Midlands.



The team of three apprentices who helped us to maintain continuous publication for a century. In the centre is John Farmer (machine-man), operating the machine on which our single-sheet emergency issue was printed for seven weeks, and watching him are the two compositors, John Cooke (left) and Peter Cook.

# SHOPS WITH A LONG HISTORY

SEVERAL of the trading establishments in the town have a long history, and two of them have already celebrated their centenary.

Among them is the firm of F. W. Hollington and Co., Ltd., of Evesham Street, founded on May 15th, 1833, by Mr. William Hollington, who set up a single-windowed shop and published the following announcement:

"W. Hollington begs leave to inform his friends and the inhabitants of Redditch that he has just returned from the London and Manchester markets with an entirely new stock of linen and woollen drapery, hosiery and haberdashery; having engaged the shop lately in the occupation of Mr. S. Roberts, where he will offer them at the smallest possible profit for ready money. Opens Wednesday, May 15, 1833."

The founder of the business was also then the owner of the gas works, having bought them from the founder, Mr. Thomas Mees. He owned a farm at Clent, and often walked there with his son (the F. W. Hollington whose name survives in the title of the firm) to do a day's work and walk back at night. It meant starting at 4 a.m. and walking each way.

The business grew steadily with the expansion of the town, and became a limited company in 1900. One of the first directors of the new company was Mr. J. Pruden, managing director for over 30 years. He died only a short time before the celebration of the firm's centenary in 1933. The late Mrs. Pruden was also a director of the company.

The post-war modernisation of the business has been carried out under the management of Mr. Harold Parker.

## Country trade

ESTABLISHED about the same length of time—and certainly for well over a century—is the New Street and Walford Street business of George Heaphy and Sons, Ltd., drapers and outfitters.

Heaphy's have always been very proud of their extensive country trade. It was built up years ago by the practice of taking their samples round the outlying districts by packhorse before the advent of buses and railways—a practice which was continued by other means of transport until the second world war. The firm are now reaping the benefit of this policy, for they still have the country trade, although the customers now come to them.

In recent years the business has been greatly expanded, the shop premises being extended until all the living accommodation which was previously available behind and above the shop has been taken over.

The present managing director, Mr. Cyril Nash, joined the firm as a youth of 18.

## Family firm

LINKED with the centenary of this newspaper is the history of one of our near neighbours—Webb and Sons, bakers and corn and seed merchants, of Church Green.

It was as long ago as 1837 that the business was founded in Evesham Street. The production of bread was the principal interest in those days; confectionery and the corn and seed trade were added later. The firm have occupied the present premises in Peakman Street for well over 80 years.

The rapid development of Webbs' bread service has seen many new machines brought into Peakman Street. Among them is the "travelling oven" 45 feet in length, which takes in the dough, after weighing, moulding and proving, at one end, delivering the loaves at the other end at the rate of about 1,000 an hour.

Up to 1913 horse-drawn vans delivered the bread in the town and outlying villages. Then the firm took delivery of one of the first Model T Fords seen in Redditch, and nowadays a fleet of 18 vehicles covers nearly 3,000 miles a week.

Webbs are a family concern. A nephew of the founder, Mr. E. E. Webb, still controls affairs at the age of 83. With over 70 years in the trade, he still attends at the Church Green office every day. Older readers will recall his sister, Miss C. E. Webb, who died in 1941, and his mother, who was closely associated with the firm to an advanced age. Two sons, Mr. J. N. Webb and Mr. E. G. Webb, having had technical training, are now in the firm, and four employees have records of over 40 years' service.

Their proud boast is the delivery of the goods in all weathers. During the heavy winter of 1947 they were the first tradesmen to reach the outside districts after a snowstorm. On that occasion vans had to be left abandoned all night, bread was carried in sacks across the fields for delivery and a Jeep had to be used to tow the vans from deep snowdrifts.

In recent years confectionery has again become an important part of their business, using the newest models of reel-type gas ovens, and corn and seeds have for long been a well-known part of their trade. Because the bakery section required the storage space, the handling of agricultural seed was abandoned a few years ago, but garden seeds and products continue to add to their renown as seedsmen. Their seeds go out to the friends and relatives of local people in South Africa, New Zealand and elsewhere overseas every year.

## Family firm

A FIRM which has been controlled entirely by the same family since its foundation just over 80 years ago, in 1878, is that of John Dyer and Sons, Ltd., the Alcester Street ironmongers.

It was founded by the late Mr. John Dyer, grandfather of the present managing director, at 33, Alcester Street. When he died in 1913 the business was carried on by his son, the late Mr. Frank J. Dyer, who opened a branch shop at the present address, 3, Alcester Street, in premises previously occupied by the old Labour Exchange. His son, Mr. William J. Dyer, the present managing director, carried on the management of the original shop until the premises were disposed of in 1930.

The whole of the business is now conducted at 3, Alcester Street, under the directorship of Mr. W. J. Dyer, Mrs. U. M. Dyer and their son, Mr. J. B. Dyer.

## GLAD TO SELL ELECTRICITY UNDERTAKING

FOR 25 years the town owned and managed its own electricity undertaking, and for a good many of those years the "Indicator" campaigned against the system adopted for the production of current, and against those faults of management which resulted in a heavy financial loss to the town.

This eventually became so heavy that the Council was glad of the chance to sell the undertaking in 1923 to the Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire Electric Power Company—now known locally as the S.W. & S.

The total capital expenditure on the undertaking in the 25 years in which it was the property of the town was £162,000, of which £53,000 had been repaid by the ratepayers. The total indebtedness at the time of sale was £109,000, the purchasing company taking over all the outstanding liabilities.

This company remained in control until nationalisation 11 years ago.

The old people's bungalows on the Batchley Estate, known as Queen's Cottages, were the first post-war homes specially built for old folk.

Named Auxerre Avenue, this road on the latest housing estate—the Greenlands Estate on Studley Road—perpetuates the friendly link which has recently been established between Redditch and Auxerre, a similarly sized town in Central France.

Traffic could not roar through Alvechurch if this house still stood astride the main road, as it did when this postcard was in circulation half a century ago.

The village green at Sambourne, one of the quietest and prettiest in our entire circulation area.

# CRICKET REIGNED A CENTURY AGO

CRICKET was the pre-eminent game in Redditch a century ago, with games being played against teams from Stourbridge, Belbroughton, Kidderminster and other places, and many well-known local names appeared in the team lists.

Redditch possessed a football team about 90 years ago with a ground in Windsor Road, and the type of football played seems to have been a mixture of both codes. Again there were many well-known local names among the players.

Later on there were no fewer than three strong and useful Rugby teams in the town—the "Harriers," the "Alberts," and the "Alerts."

When the Rev. Wilson Lee came to Redditch the game was changed to soccer.

Perhaps one of the most widely known personalities in the athletic world who was a local man was the late Mr. W. W. Alexander. The landlord of the old Fox and Goose, now the Royal Hotel, he was a fine distance runner in his day, and was said to be one of the best judges of the prospective possibilities of the novice in the land.

But it was as the originator of international competitions, and as founder and honorary secretary of Birchfield Harriers, that he was best known. He died in 1933.

St. Paul's Church, Cookhill, which Mr. Barber served for many years, and beside it the new Village Hall for which he raised money for an almost equally long time.

# District correspondent for more than 50 years

A REGULAR reader of this newspaper since 1901, and a district correspondent for more than 50 years: this is the proud record of Mr. Thomas Barber, of "Clerkscroft," Cookhill.

He became a reporter by chance. In addition to his profession as a schoolmaster he organised classes in shorthand, typewriting and music, under the auspices of the County Education Committee, the comments at meetings of Inkberrow Parish Council, of which I was a member for 30 years, and gave details of our walking of the footpaths and the dispute about Rabbitbury Lane, which were widely read.

"I often regret that I did not keep cuttings of those reports, and of those of experiments carried out in the school garden in collaboration with the Potash Syndicate.

## Public offices

"As I held so many public offices in the district and county it was inevitable that my own name appeared in many reports sent in by your paper, and I also wrote letters on various subjects to local and national newspapers signed by my own name. This led to being taunted on one occasion with 'being fond of blowing my own trumpet'. I have never regretted having become a reporter, as it has brought me in touch with many people whom I should never otherwise have known.

"The tempo of life has altered tremendously during the past 50 years, and so has the format of 'The Redditch Indicator'. On November 12th, 1924, I had a long report of a church meeting at Inkberrow which occupied a column and a half of space in the paper.

## Full day

Mr. Barber tells how on one occasion he cycled to Birmingham early in the morning, had 11 teeth extracted at the Dental Hospital, cycled home to Cookhill, and attended the Sunday School festivities in the afternoon and evening.

The competitions, which were arranged for the amusement of competitors and onlookers alike, included eating a rice pudding with the aid of wooden skewers and 'grinning through a horse's collar.'

In the processions the younger element rode in a wagon decorated with flowers and bracken.

Mr. Barber continues his story:—"I took to reporting 'like a duck to water' and soon felt disappointed if a week passed without something to report. This was particularly true after I began keeping records of the weather in 1912, and I was appointed secretary of the Village Hall Committee in the same year.

"I sent voluminous reports of comments at meetings of Inkberrow Parish Council, of which I was a member for 30 years, and gave details of our walking of the footpaths and the dispute about Rabbitbury Lane, which were widely read.

"I often regret that I did not keep cuttings of those reports, and of those of experiments carried out in the school garden in collaboration with the Potash Syndicate.

## "Not today"

"Many people just glance at the headlines, and only read a few of the items in which they are interested.

"I once heard a person boast that he had read every word in the current issue of 'The Indicator,' including all the advertisements, but I question if any reader could say that to-day."

Mr. Barber has continued his close association with local causes and events. He and Mrs. Barber celebrated their golden wedding in 1948 and their diamond wedding last year, and since his retirement from instilling knowledge into the minds and hearts of the many youngsters who have attended Cookhill School he has busied himself in various enterprises, and in his great love of gardening and horticulture.

Those records of the weather which he has collated so assiduously for almost 50 years continue to interest our readers as they appear in the columns of this newspaper.

In the field of weekly newspapers, the publishers are dependent upon their district correspondents not only for maintaining a continuity of reports appertaining to their own section of the readership, but also in building up goodwill between the villages and the newspaper office.

Mr. Thomas Barber is one of those stalwarts to whom we owe this valuable link.

The Square at Feckenham, scene of some of the events to which Mr. Gould refers.

ANOTHER district correspondent who has served this newspaper for the best part of a lifetime—48 years to be precise—is Mr. Norman W. Gould, of Bradley Green. He, too, was a man who took a prominent part in the public life around him which he reported, and his reflections of the passage of local life in the period reproduced here, make interesting reading. Mr. Gould writes:—

Hearty congratulations to the "Redditch Indicator" on their centenary.

For the past 44 years I have been the correspondent for Feckenham and Bradley Green.

Many changes have naturally taken place during that period, and some old institutions have become extinct since 1915. At that time there were no village halls. Concerts, dances and whist drives were held in the village schools. Now there is a fine Parish Hall at Bradley Green, opened by Commander Eyres Monsell, M.P., in 1935, and an excellent Village Hall at Feckenham, opened in 1936, much to the relief of the parishioners, who had to make do with a ramshackle tin army hut for their village activities.

The chief event of the year was the Feckenham and District Flower Show, in aid of the hospitals, organised by the secretary, the late Mr. Fredk. Bradley, who was the wire wire in the village, and who was also band-master of the Feckenham Brass Band, now disbanded.

Feckenham Wake was a wake only in name. Five years ago it was revived by an energetic Wake Committee and is now an attractive and flourishing annual event.

The Bradley and Feckenham Women's Institute was started in 1919, and became two separate institutes in 1941.

The ancient Court Leet and Court Baron of the Lords of the Manor of Feckenham, held yearly by the Steward of the Manor (the late Mr. J. N. Edmonds) and his assistant (Mr. H. K. Eastmond) on the third Thursday in November, has now disappeared.

In 1925 I was appointed the Manor Bailiff of Feckenham in the place of the late Mr. John Lewis, who left the village on his retirement as headmaster of the Feckenham C.E. School.

My duties were to collect the chief rents, varying from 3d to £4 per annum, from between 50 and 60 tenants of the Manor; and on the death of a tenant, or on the sale of property with a chief rent on it, to seize a heriot—the best stallion or gelding, but-or bullock (if any)—for the Lord: of the Manor.

At the annual Court Leet I had to summon the Jurymen and guests invited by the Steward to attend the Court, and also organise the dinner.

The proceedings opened under the oak tree on the Square, where the proclamation convening the Court was read by the Bailiff, and the Jurymen answered to their names.

An adjournment was then made to the Rose and Crown Inn, where the Foreman of the Jury was elected and the Jury sworn in.

I paid in all rents collected and reported on the work of the officials, viz., the Beadle, the Reeve, the Breadweigher and the Aletaster.

The last named (the late Mr. David Harries) applied for his salary to be doubled, owing to the rise in the price of beer. As the office was an honorary one, this was readily granted.

After the business of the Court had been transacted, the Steward discharged the Jury and invited all present to dinner at the Red Lion Inn, Bradley Green.

These Courts Leet were thoroughly enjoyed by all taking part.

Owing to the compulsory redemption of chief rents in 1935, the last Court Leet and dinner was held in 1934, but my duties as Manor Bailiff, which also included the supervision of the village square and village pound, terminated in 1936.

Of the Feckenham Court Leet officials only Mr. Eastmond and I remain, together with three Jurymen—Messrs. Chas. Smith, R. V. Adams and S. Spencer.

The village square has now been passed over to the Feckenham Village Hall Committee at a peppercorn rent of one shilling a year.

Both Feckenham and Bradley Green now have mains electricity and water. Feckenham also has a sewerage system, but in Stoke and Bradley parish, for the most part, primitive conditions still remain. Perhaps in 2059 the powers-that-be will awake and provide the parish with a sewage scheme.

★

DISTRICT correspondents who have contributed news items regularly and kept their respective localities well to the fore in the weekly editions have included Mr. W. H. Humphries, who for 30 years was representative at Studley, and Mr. A. C. Dilks, who served for a similar period at Tardebigge.

Mr. Harry Woodward was the doyen of "Indicator" district correspondents. He was appointed as representative for Astwood Bank in January, 1891, and retired in 1939 after 48 years of notable service.

A man of many parts who commenced work as a butcher's boy earning 4d. per week, he introduced typewriters into the district in 1899, and taught shorthand and typing at neighbouring villages, under the auspices of the Worcestershire and Warwickshire County Councils.

He was a sportsman of some ability, amateur gardener, life-long abstainer, and well versed in the local art of needle-making.

★

# WRITER ON A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS

THE journalistic association with this newspaper of Mr. E. Woodward Jephcott, of Wheelhalls, Alcester, dates from April, 1916, and continues to the present day.

It was the issue of April 22nd of that year that contained verses written by Mr. Jephcott in memory of Thomas Hunt, the Alcester taxidermist.

It was not until 35 years later that the author learned that the family of Mr. Hunt had reprinted the poem in leaflet form for private distribution.

Mr. Jephcott commenced to contribute feature articles in 1928. From that time forth his range of subjects has been wide and varied, ornithology and archaeology having been treated with the same authority as his references to local personalities.

In 1935-36 he wrote a series of articles on the former stalwarts of the needle industry, John and Matthew Mills, which appeared in issues spread over three months.

A further aspect of Mr. Jephcott's literary career have been the musical and dramatic criticisms he has written of events which have taken place in Alcester and its environs.

He has served as district correspondent for this newspaper for Great Alne and Kinwarton since 1932, whilst finding opportunities to devote support as a violinist to amateur orchestras in this part of the West Midlands.

# SOLD AT A PENNY FOR SIXTY YEARS

From its inception until the first world war this newspaper was sold at one penny. In March, 1918, "due to increased costs and shortage of newsprint" this was increased to three halfpence per copy, with a promise to return to a penny once normal conditions existed.

In September, 1920, it was found necessary to put the price up to twopence, which figure remained throughout the world world war to September, 1947. Then the price became threepence, remaining until the present day, although many of our contemporaries have raised their price to fourpence per copy within the past year.

# A PROBLEM 75 YEARS AGO

Twenty-five years ago, when this newspaper was celebrating its 75th anniversary, writers were complaining of the silting up and pollution of local rivers and streams which had made good fishing a thing of the past.

Twenty-five years ago we said:—"No greater change has taken place during the 75 years of the 'Indicator's' existence than in the conditions which affect the fisherman and angler. The whole space of the paper would be inadequate to 'For years every stream, river, pond and pound was simply alive with fish of every description. Those days are gone. Silent, derelict and dismantled, all the mills, once so busy, have no further use in the modern age. No longer are the pounds and approaches dredged out. Silted up with a luxuriant growth of weeds and trees, sucking up the greedy reduced volume of water, it is truly a case of change and decay in all around I see' when the mind is retrospective.

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