

Tina Webb-Moore Remembers.....

Redditch Circa 1946



Within an area of under half a mile from my home 89 Beoley Road, there were two Churches and two schools, one Roman Catholic (Mount Carmel) and the other Church of England (St George's), there were three public houses (The Kings Arms, The Wagon and Horses, and The Cricketers Arms), and a general store with a post office. The Co-operative general store, was part of a group of shops which included, a shoe mender, a fruit shop, and a shop where we took our radio battery to be recharged. Another general store was just across the road from number 89, where we bought bottles of lemonade with corkscrew tops. Next to the general store was a shop which sold cottons and mending materials. A fish and chip shop and a butcher (Mr Long) were a little further down the road. With the exception of the fish and chip shop and the Co-operative shop, most of these "shops" were in the "front" room of the local houses, as had been my grand-parents butcher's shop. My grandparent's home where Prudence Mary (nee Buckley) and Fred Styler had lived with their 13 children, was just a few houses on the right and across from where I lived.

89 Beoley Road

There was a stone path leading to the front door with a small garden to the right. Under the window on the right of the door was a covered opening. The cover was removed for the coal to be dropped into the cellar. If you walked into the house by the front door, the room you entered had its own fire-place and gas lighting, eventually changed to electric lighting (c. 1950). You walked through the room past the door which led down to the cellar and into the living- room. A back door led into a covered lobby area which led to the kitchen. There was a door from the lobby into the back yard. The lavatory was outside and adjoined the back of the kitchen.



The Kings Arms at the junction of Beoley Road and Ipsley Street before the RH side was demolished to widen the road.

Image from the RLHS Archives.

Inside the house again and in the living room, there was a door leading into a winding staircase which took you to the two bedrooms one front (overlooking the road) and one back. Both rooms had small fireplaces. There was another winding staircase to the attic. From the attic window there was a good view across to St George's Church and the grammar school fields. The back bed-room window looked over the gardens the allotments and St George's Church.

St. George's Church

At the back of the house a central path divided the gardens, ours on the left and the neighbour's on the right. It was a good size garden with a small lawn and flower garden. My father kept two chicken pens and runs on it, plus a variety of fruit bushes, gooseberries, rhubarb, apple and plum trees. This garden led into our allotment, which was a huge area, where he grew innumerable vegetables, plus there was a herb patch, another chicken pen and run, apple and plum trees, plus black and red current bushes. The cooking apples were stored on the attic floor in the winter and my mother made jams with the fruit and bottled the plums.

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The homes in Beoley Road varied in size. Further up the road and on the left-hand side there were six homes which were larger. My father's cousin who was a tailor lived in one of these with his wife and family. They kept a white Cockatoo. It "crept" around the cage in that rather strange way that a Cockatoo moves.

My memory of the house was that it had a long rather large entrance hall. There was a garden front and back. The Post Office and general store were on the far corner next to these homes. If you walked left, just past the Post Office, you came to the recreation ground – a large grassed area where the Circus would come.

There were also blocks of houses which had just two rooms (one up and one down on ground level) and a small kitchen. One block of such houses leading off from Beoley Road was called "Phillips Terrace". This had, I estimate about 12 houses in all, six on either side with a very small patch of garden in front and a pathway between the row houses that led to a central yard where there were small buildings where the house wives did their washing and there were lavatories for the homes. Next to the yard there was a large grassed area with posts and washing lines to dry the clothes. There would have been no heating in these houses, except from an open fire.

A few houses below number 89, was a larger house, where a Miss Huins lived – It was detached and must have had a number of reception rooms and bedrooms. Behind the house there were very small factories. There was a similar, perhaps slightly smaller house almost opposite the post office, which had a lawn in front and again factories behind, The factories (Grange Works) were at the side of Grange Road, which if you walked along to the end, you had allotments and St George's Church on the right and St George's Road on the left.

But more about the one up and one down properties. Below Miss Huin's property, was the pub "The Cricketer's Arms" and opposite that, the fish and chip shop. Below the pub, was an open space and below that, were one up and one down properties, which were also back to back. So that as you walked past and looked at these tiny places, there would be a mirror image of them attached and facing the other way. There was also another set of the properties, that were further back and facing into the area. I never went there, but assume they had wash houses and outside lavatories,



St. George's Church

Image © Tina E Webb-Moore

Further Down the Road

Walking on down Beoley Road, the butcher – Mr. Long was on the right. My mother bought at least some of her meat from him and my father sold the eggs from our chickens to him. Continue our walk down Beoley Road and on the left was Prospect Road, where Prudence Mary Styler (my grandmother) in later life owned two properties. On the right was Sillins Avenue. If you walked through there it took you to Holloway Lane and after a ten/fifteen minute walk a left turn took you into Watery Lane.

However lets go back to Beoley Road, and past Kingsley Avenue on the right, with a few newer houses on the left and go for a walk before the New Town Development. One walk to the right went into the fields and by the brook (River Arrow) where I used to take a fishing net and fish for "red soldiers" with a neighbour's son called Graham. If you walked across several fields it brought one into what I remember was called Watery Lane. Take a left and up the hill you go to the top where we attended evensong at St Peter's Church, Ipsley. My father enjoyed the vicar's sermons, and they made a great Harvest Festival celebration. With corn sheaves in front of the altar, and home-made plaited bread on top of the altar.

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All the window sills would be decorated with fruit and vegetables. It was a wonderful smell of harvest as you entered the Church. There was a bellow for the organ which someone pumped so that it could be played. This was accompanied by a tiny choir, with one member of the choir who always managed to sing “AMEN” in a very loud voice after everyone else had finished.

If you came out of the Church and took a left, this took you to the Roman Road (Icknield Street), and if you walked for a while then took a left, it brought you into the road which took you to Bomford’s Farm, and eventually back into Beoley Road. Or if you walked straight on along Icknield Street and took a right, it would take you to St Leonard’s Church, Beoley (which I could see in the distance if I climbed a tree in our allotment).

If you took a left and walked for a while you would eventually come out at the bottom of what was called “Birmingham Road”. If you took a left again and walked, it would take you into the town of Redditch. I must at one time or another have “done” all of these walks. Mostly with my father and with both my parents on Sunday evening. In the countryside, we would find, violets, primroses, cowslips. If you pull one of the flower heads off a cowslip and suck them they are sweet. In those days some people made Cowslip Wine.

Going back to the bottom of Beoley Road again and walking straight on, we went past the cottages, behind which was the Weir and the river Arrow, where I once saw a water snake. The swans nested on the ground on the other side of the water. That field took you to the bottom of Easemore Road, and walking up Easemore Road, took you to Church Green East, in the centre of the town of Redditch.

However, lets go back past the cottages, and walk over the bridge, and walk along until you get to what we called Bomford’s Hill. There in the field at the side of the road one spring time I saw tiny lambs gamboling and jumping around.

At the top of the hill on the left was a duck pond, and on the right was the Bomford’s family farm. The farm was surrounded by land which was eventually bought by the Redditch Development Corporation to bring in the large road ways which destroyed much of the beautiful countryside and part of Beoley Road which included my home.

Think then about a small girl and her father walking together, enjoying the birds in the fields and hedgerows, wild-flowers, and bees gathering nectar. Much of this has gone. Treasure and take care of what remains.



Tina E Webb - Moore

Heartsease - This delightful little flower could be seen in the grass verges on our walks.

Image © Tina E Webb-Moore

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The Bricks From Beoley Road



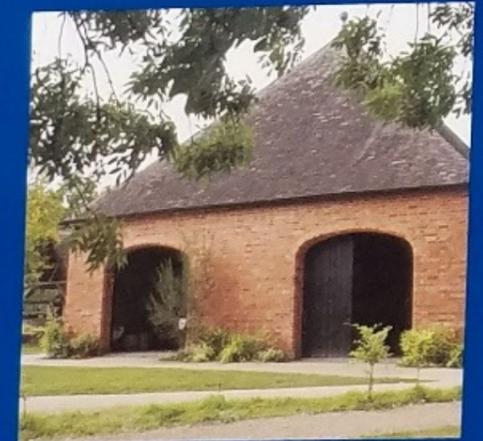
This photo is from an informational sign posted just to the right of the reconstructed Cockpit building at the Avoncroft Historic Building Museum in Bromsgrove

In the Right Top corner of this display is an image of a reconstruction of the Cockpit from Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

This reconstructed building is at the Avoncroft Historic Building Museum in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. Presented within the script of the last paragraph is a tale of Bricks from demolished Beoley Rd, Redditch buildings.

Cockpit Bridgnorth, Shropshire

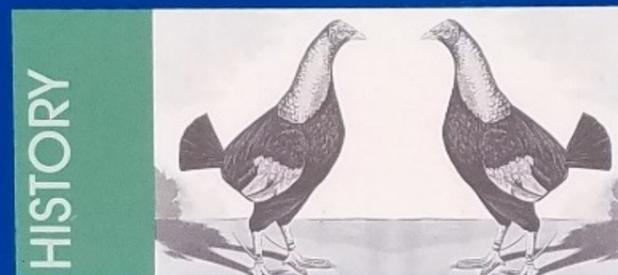
The cockpit, one of three in the town, was built in the late 18th century, at the rear of the Crown Hotel, Bridgnorth. The square brick building has a clear roof span of 11.7m (38'6"), which is regarded as one of the largest roof spans in a historic building in England. The roof timbers are a complex structure of beams connected to a large king post which enables such a large space to be spanned.



Cockfighting in the late 18th century

This cockpit was also used as a theatre from 1811 to 1824. Following the opening of a new purpose-built theatre in Bridgnorth, it was subsequently converted to a coach house, with a new front wall incorporating two arched doorways. Latterly, it was used as a garage for about forty years.

The opening performance in the Cockpit Theatre was entitled "The Earl of Essex and Queen Elizabeth". Many of the performances appear to have been undertaken by a local company, but on 15th April 1819 Edmund Kean (1789 – 1833) is known to have performed there. Kean was considered one of the greatest Shakespearean actors of the 19th century. Junius Brutus Booth, a relative of John Wilkes Booth who assassinated Abraham Lincoln, also acted at the Cockpit Theatre.



Gamecocks

Cock-fighting is an ancient pastime, which was very popular in Britain among all social classes from the medieval period until the mid-19th century, when laws were introduced to ban it. Cock-fighting took place in a range of buildings, including inns, barns and even the drawing rooms of the aristocracy. Special purpose cockpits were built in larger towns.

Cock-fighting birds, gamecocks, were specially bred and extensively trained to be aggressive toward each other. They would be brought into the cockpit ring to fight to the death.

From 1833 to 1952 a succession of laws were passed to ban cock-fighting in Britain. However it still continues today in many countries as well as illegally in Britain.



Dismantling the Cockpit in 1972

The cockpit was threatened with demolition in 1972. The Bridgnorth Civic Society had hoped it could be re-erected locally, but after prolonged negotiations this plan failed, and the roof timbers were offered to Avoncroft. During demolition work, a contractor discovered a ring of sandstone blocks about 4.9m (16 ft) in diameter, with what appeared to be a drain; the likely remains of the original cockpit ring.

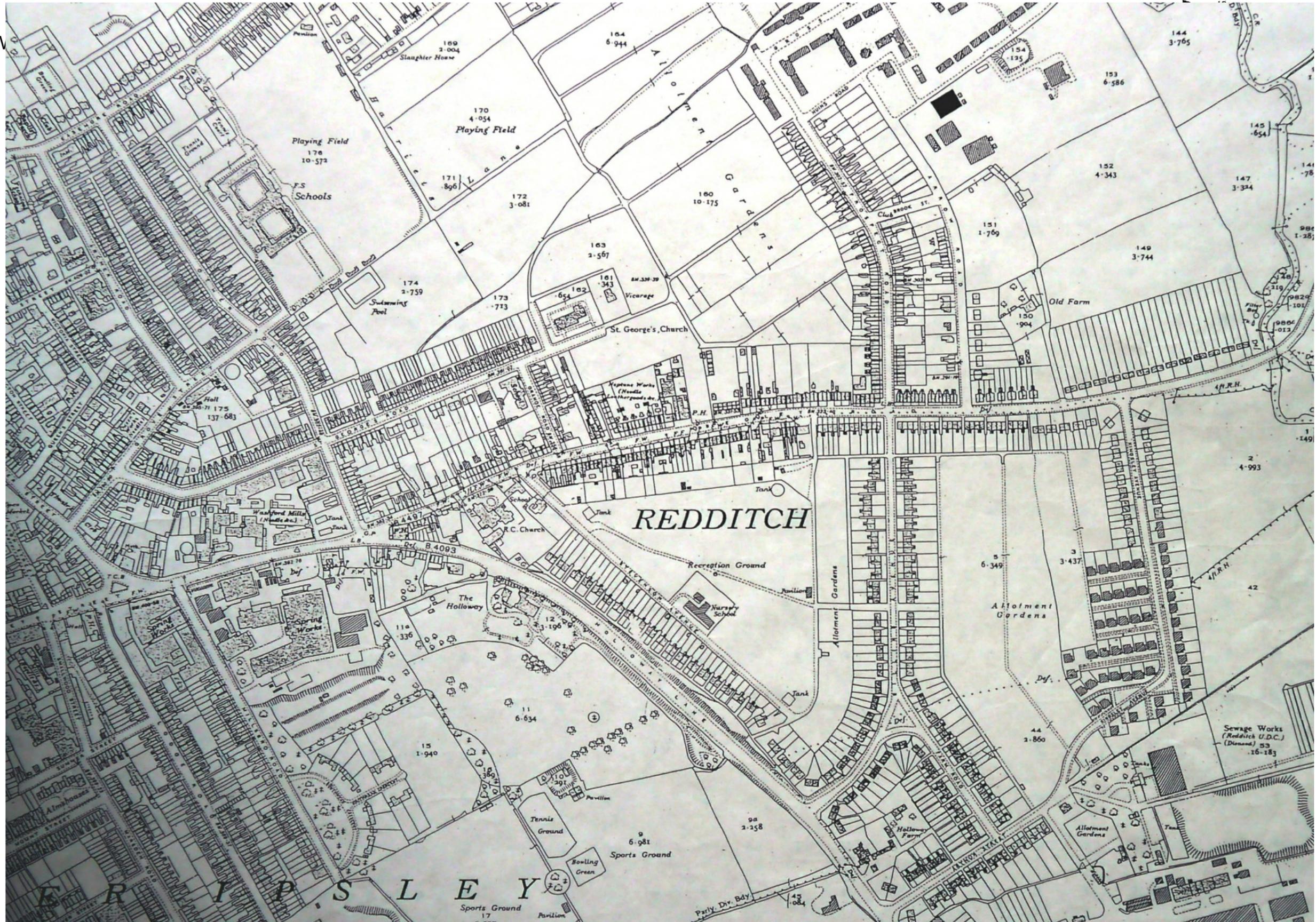
It was not until 1978 that the cockpit was reconstructed at the museum. The 30,000 bricks needed to re-construct the four and a half metre high, and nearly half a metre thick walls, were obtained from demolition of buildings at 51 to 61 Beoley Road, Redditch. The cockpit was opened to the public in May 1979.

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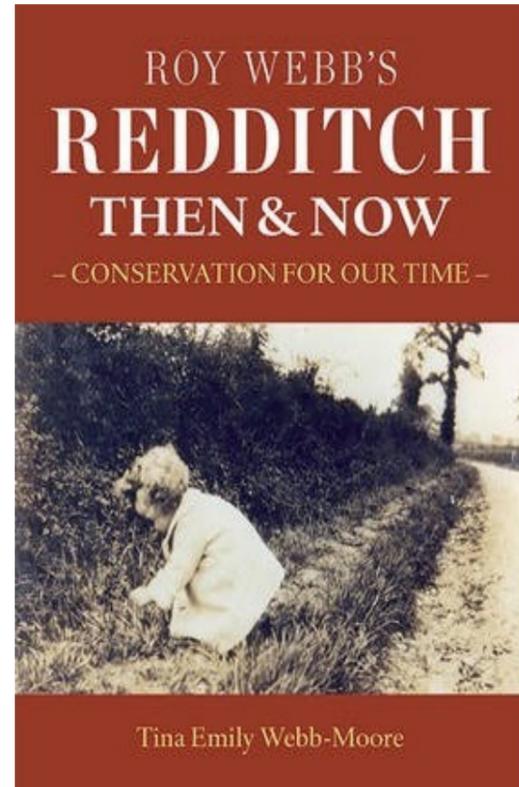
My House, My Street
My Redditch Childhood
Nan's Old Redditch Places
In My Spare Time
My Redditch Memories
Shopping School Days
PLACES
Back Hill
I Remember
People
The Alloy's
St. Stephen's
My First Job
When I Was young
Where I Worked
Sweepy Jobs

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Tina Webb-Moore Remembers.....

Her brother, Roy Webb



Tina edited and published this book in memory of her brother. She writes....

"My brother Roy Webb was born 29th June 1921 in Redditch and the book is dedicated to our parents Annie and Sydney Webb"

"The challenge in putting my brother's poems, essays and letters into a book, was to encourage you the reader to want to read his work, and to make all of what he wrote relevant and interesting for today and to all ages, not just in the town of Redditch and the area of Worcestershire and Warwickshire. These events or something like them could have happened anywhere at any time and are still happening in other towns and countries now, as we read of the new homes being built all over the country and the loss of land. This was a different age a different town."

The book contains detailed description by Roy taking a local walk, now long since gone as well as Roy's life as a boy in Beoley Road, the people who lived there, the events that took place and also describes a visit to the movies, the circus and even spotting an air ship. After covering the outbreak of the second world war, discussions of war and then finally peace it moves on to his marriage and the birth of his daughter.

There are discussions on town issues of Redditch which worried or pleased Roy. It covers tree planting, land values, town market issues, nurses and the Alexandra Hospital. Next a large chapter is split into three sections covering "People," "Places" and "Events."

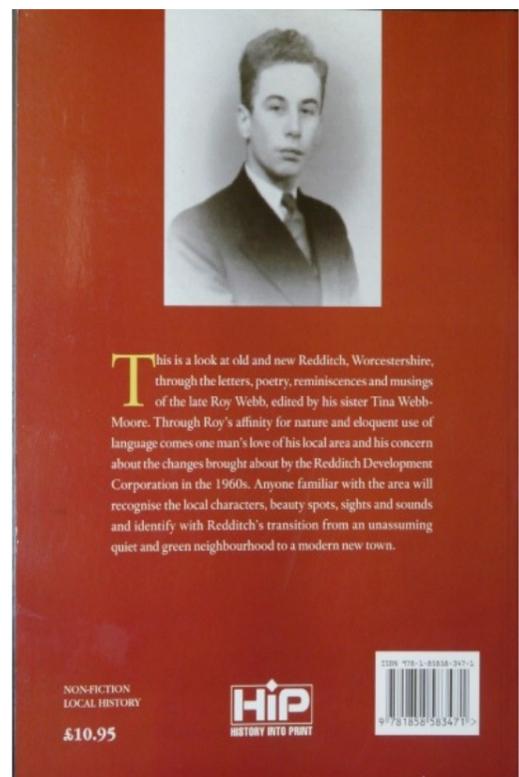
Tina describes chapter 7 as a favourite of hers where The Liturgy of Anglican Churches is discussed, followed by a discussion of some of our English terms of expression, and then finally the delightful letter about the Pocket Oxford Dictionary.

The next chapter will give those of you who love our wild birds some delightful readings and poetry together with exceptional bird photographs from members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Throughout the book you will see references at the bottom of the page to "give nature a home" or "state of nature." "Give nature a home" is an RSPB initiated project to encourage citizens to help create habitat conducive to nature's husbandry. 'State of Nature' refers to a report compiled by a partnership between 25 organisations, including RSPB, which is a health check of nature in the UK and its Overseas Territories. Lastly there are poems and essays about flowers, birds and trees. In the appendices you will find reference with specific writings, taking you to detailed conservation information.

This book is about my brother's journey through life, but from the beginning, I have hoped to inspire its readers to possibly take a similar journey, that is one of discovery for you in your world, which may provide you lasting memories of pleasant and comparable experiences. I wish you as much happiness and fulfilment from your exploration and conservation of nature that I and my brother experienced through the eyes of my father and the love of nature that he gave to us.



Our parents Sydney Webb with his wife Annie and Roy 1922



A copy of the book maybe purchased from Brewin Books, Studley.

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Tina Emily Webb-Moore - 25th July 2019