

Victorian Worcester

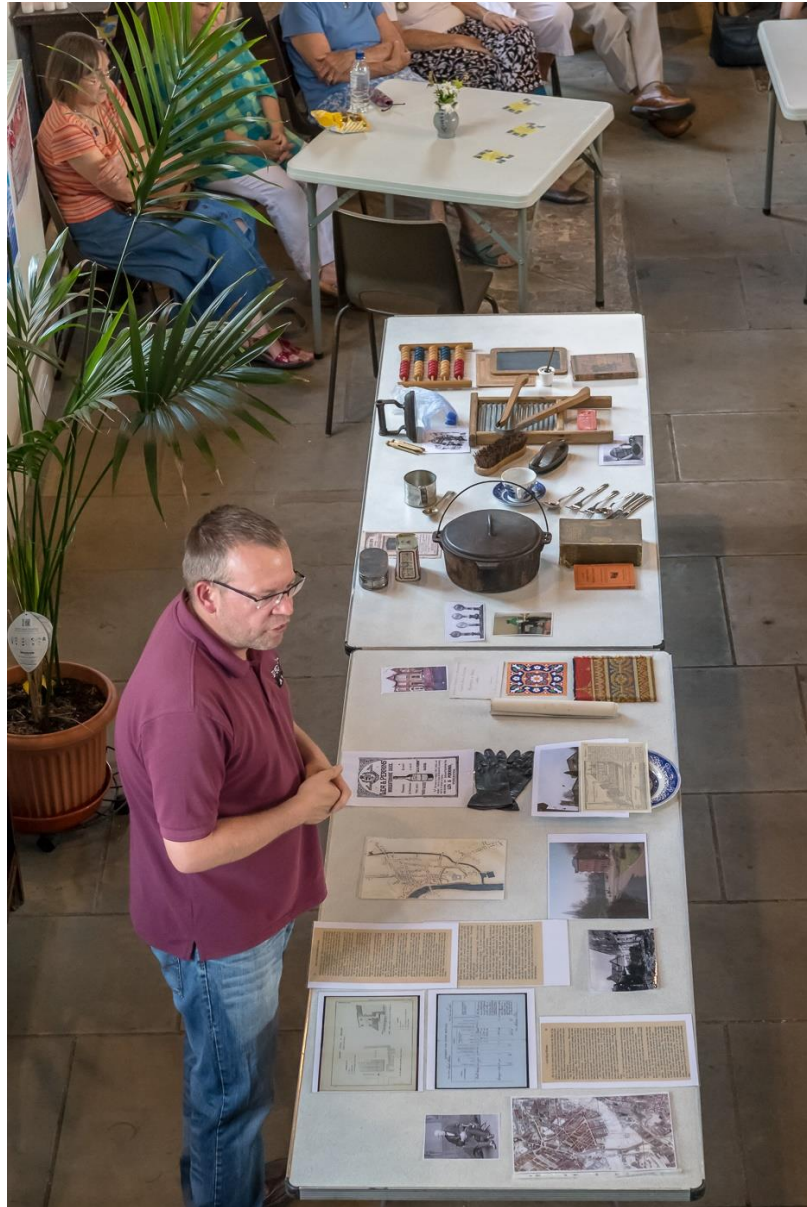
What a surprise when I arrived to listen to and take some photos of the latest talk from Paul Harding, AKA 'The History Man'. The North Aisle was packed, there were over 70 people sat waiting to listen to his talk.



This time Paul had been asked to look at Victorian Worcester and the slums of the area. As usual we had a very enlightening, entertaining and humorous talk from Paul and he covered a wide range of issues about Victorian Britain and Worcester in particular.

He explained how Charles Booth, a social reformer, mapped London using categories such as 'Well-To-Do' and 'Semi-criminal' to identify the people living in particular areas and how there were similar areas in Worcester. Bull Entry off the High Street for example was less than 100 yards long at the time but had 44 houses along it with several families living in each house. For these there were 9 Privies, outside Toilets, listed but of these it was known that up to 7 of them were unusable for various reasons, not for the Parish Newsletter!

Sir Charles Hastings from Worcester was very influential in improving the health of the poor and he influenced the creation of the GMC and the BMA as part of his pioneering medical work. Paul explained that one Churchyard was higher than the houses around it and the smell in those houses was extremely bad along with the substances that would penetrate the walls of the houses. It is no wonder that the poor had such poor health.



In Worcester there was a second viaduct from Foregate Street station that had been built to take trains down the river side and along to Diglis to meet up with the boats travelling on the river. However, it was stopped before it reached the Cathedral as the Bishop was not going to have trains running along outside the Cathedral damaging the West Window and being noisy during services. The benches along the river on the east bank are designed to remember the tracks and railway.



This is only a flavour, perhaps not the best term for what we were told about, of Paul's talk. Why not come along to the next talk, on 20th September, where Paul will tell us about the history of some of Worcester's buildings, you can always ask about one of them that you want to know more about.