

A lovely afternoon was presented by Bill and Dorothy Every, who have over 100 years of film making between them.

The first film took all the many streets and areas of Kidderminster and showed the changes that had been made over the last few centuries. Right from Victorian times and earlier in some of the streets, we could see how the landscapes, factories, churches, houses had changed and even demolished over the years. We could see the changes in peoples clothing, car models the change from horse and cart, old taxis, trams to omnibuses and the many alterations in the road layouts around Kidderminster.

Many of us “newcomers” to the area were surprised to see how many beautiful buildings had been destroyed for the sake of the ring road, which clearly was constructed too close to the town centre.

Very noticeable is the number of shops and public houses that have just disappeared. We heard a story that was made up from using over 100 public house names, many of which are no longer around. It bought memories of where members did their courting and where the town’s entertainments took place.

The second film which was a movie, showed an actual Civil Defence practise event in 1953 in case of a nuclear bomb being dropped by the Russians during the Cold War. There obviously was no Health and Safety Executive in those times. Again the film allowed us to see old fire engines, ambulances, police cars of that era, also the uniforms of the participating personnel.

The exercise used local people as the victims of the aftermath, but we think they were more battered and bruised by the actual rescues and medical procedures that followed the dropping of the bomb.

The civil defence regulars, Dorothy was one of them, seemed to have so much to do with every report, message, event planning paperwork being completed in triplicate and in long hand.

The main way of passing on a message from the scene of damage would be the first person wrote it in his notebook and again on a piece of paper who would then give it to a member of the team, who would then run to the nearest telephone box, give details to the Civil Defence HQ who then would pass messages along to other services and Civil defence volunteers, then all went into action to save the survivors!

We can laugh about it now but at least there were local people who were prepared to risk their own lives in those scary times of the Cold War years.