

Ironmonger's shop open all hours

The February photo (below) of the Reepham Life 2019 Calendar shows the Roger Korval Sports shop in Market Place, Reepham, possibly in the 1960s.



Many Reepham inhabitants will remember that this shop was once an ironmonger's and seed merchant's store run by the Gibbs family.

When Edward Gibbs took over the business in 1888 it had been trading for many years, previously by Stephen Leeds and before that by the George family, who were running the shop in the 1830s. The shop front itself remains remarkably similar to the earliest photographs we have (below), including the railings, which are still a feature of several buildings in the Market Place.



By the early 1900s Edward Gibbs had expanded into the building next door and his son, Edward Gibbs junior, recounted in a newspaper article how he had to remove 16 shutters ready for the shop to open at 7 am.

The shop was open until 7 pm every day, except Thursdays when it closed at 4 pm (half-day closing!) and Saturdays when it stayed open until 10 pm.

The article lists items that were once in everyday use: tortoise stoves (so-called because they burned fuel very slowly), larding needles, goffering irons (for ironing frills and ruffles), leather for pump clacks and lamp glasses for oil lamps. A hundred years from today people might be just as intrigued by the objects for sale in Reepham Home Hardware!

Reepham Archive has a small selection of items from the shop, including a selection of kitchen tinware made by James Wasey.

When Edward Gibbs senior retired he moved into The Laurels (previously Veranda House) on Dereham Road. His son Edward and daughter Marjorie continued to run the business until December 1966. Marjorie is commemorated by the bench that stands near the pharmacy in the Market Place.

*Janet Archer*