

Volume 2

Summer 2006

In Our Age

Living local history

Herefordshire Lore

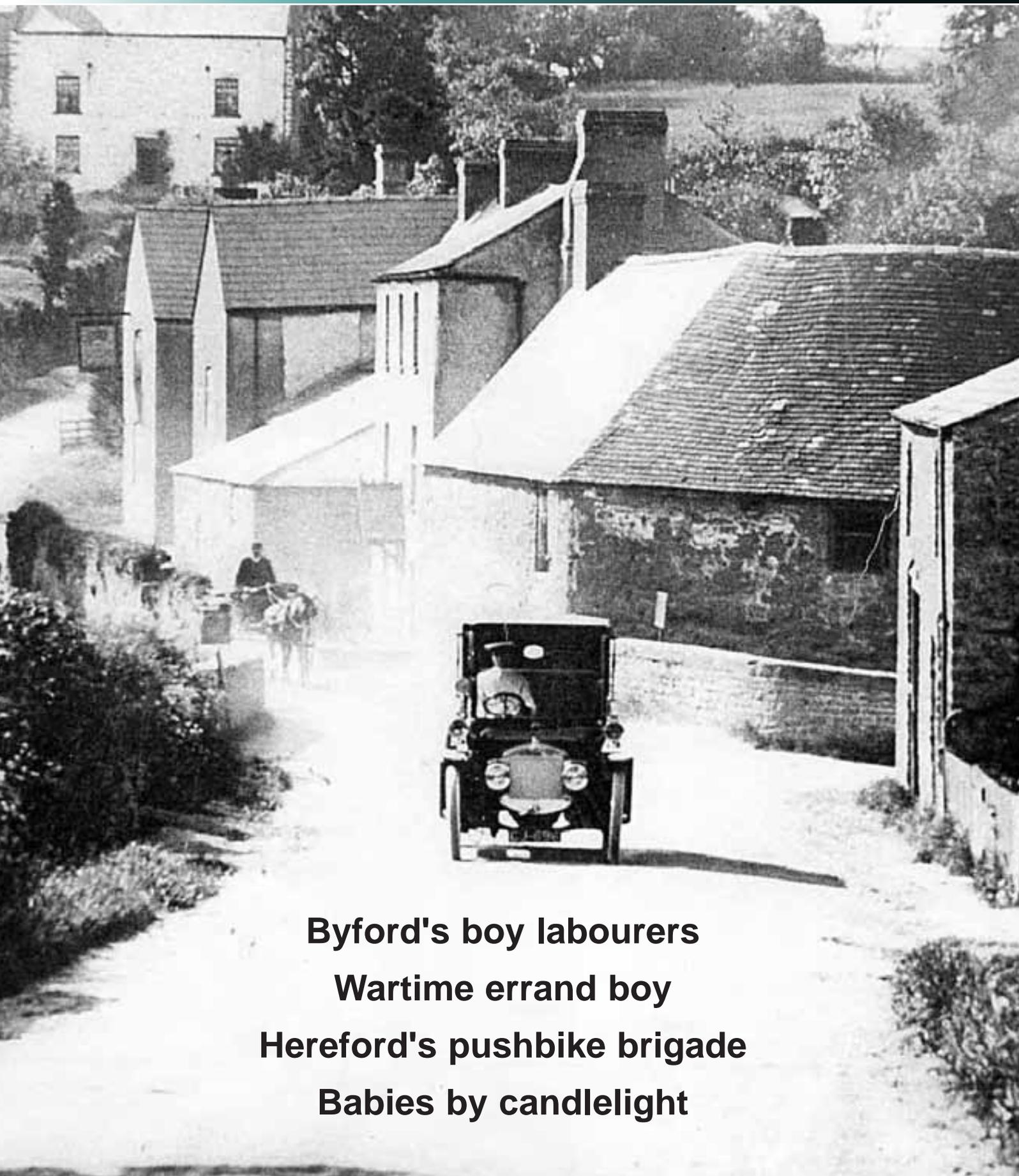
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Byford's boy labourers

Wartime errand boy

Hereford's pushbike brigade

Babies by candlelight

Get in touch on 07845 907891 or inourage@btinternet.com

In Our Age has been out and about talking to Herefordshire people about wartime food.

- Bread pudding: soak bread, add sugar, fruit and powdered egg and a little drop of milk. Mix it all up and put it in the baking tray, like a Christmas pudding, and boil it. That was what my kids had for their tea with some custard many a time and the boys are all six footers!

Phyllis Yapp, **Hereford**

- When mother went to market she'd have butter and dressed chickens in her basket. And they were dressed in those days, trussed up with parsley, sage . . . by the time you'd got the greenery off you got enough to stuff the bird as well!

Don Glead, **Madley**

- We bottled everything. We bottled fruit. And we used to slice beans and put a layer of beans and then salt and so on until the jar was full. You name it we bottled it! We used Kilner jars: every one went mad for Kilner jars.

Katie Latham, **Hereford**

- A funny thing, a lot of the old ladies used to do the killing (of hens). Used to hang them on the clothesline and cut the vein in their beak and bleed them. If they didn't flap they didn't get all the blood out of 'em. A neighbour used to say: "Don't feel sorry

- Watercress was gathered from a brook where no brook runs today. It's dried up because of drainage. But there was a brook and a watercress bed there and people guarded it with their life too!

Don Glead, **Madley**



Phyllis Edwards (pictured second from right in the middle row, above) of Redhill recalls happy times working as a civilian cook at **RAF Credenhill**. She remembers one incident which might send Health & Safety inspectors into a spin these days. Lofty (pictured far left in the back row, above), one of the cooks, was pouring flour into a big boiler and out of the bag came a mouse's nest and baby mice. He scooped the nest and mice out. Later when the gravy was made Deirdre (furthest right in the front row), while ladling the gravy out of the boiler into jugs, saw what she thought was a piece of string, hooked it out, and discovered a mouse at the end of this tail. Deirdre won't say what she did with the gravy but nobody died!

for them else they won't die!"
Don Glead, **Madley**

- You'd have to queue for everything. Queues'd be miles long at Higgins the butcher in Widemarsh Street. No good being in a hurry, you'd be ages. I used to hate queuing, but if you wanted it you'd got to do it.

Phyllis Yapp, **Hereford**

- Through the winter months we always had hot potato cakes on Sunday evening. Cook the potatoes, mash them well with some flour, a knob of butter and then lightly fry them both sides. They go down well with some meat and pickle.

Katie Latham, **Hereford**

Herefordshire's Harvest Camps

Gordon Smith recalls the Byford boy labourers

Times were hard for the boys at Barford Road Secondary School in Ladywood, Birmingham during the war years, writes Gordon. There were shortages of everything and, living close to the factories we were often interrupted by air raids. People were killed less than 50 yards from where we sheltered in our underground air raid shelter. So you can imagine our joy at being offered three weeks in Herefordshire and the chance to get clean fresh air into our lungs. On June 6 1946 the boys went at Whitsun for one week as an experiment to the War



We used to swim and fish in the river which

Agricultural Committee Camp at **Byford**. In August 1947 there was a three-week camp where we were allowed to work four hours a day for 9d an hour. We picked potatoes by hand, picked plums in the orchards and stacked sheaves of corn together to dry, afterwards loading them onto tractors and unloading them into the barns. After each trip to the barn we all had a glass of homemade cider and, being only 14 or 15, it did have quite an effect on us – as did all the unwashed fruit we ate!

ran through our camping field. And we would bait hooks with worms – although the farmer wasn't pleased when his hens ate the worms and choked on the hooks! We had to take more care after that. Gordon and friend Brian Palmer have researched their days at Byford and even traced the relevant documents from Birmingham Education authority. One official account reports: "Swimming and fishing competitions were most successful and carried out without over-organisation. No single complaint of damage of any sort was made against the boys."

- **Do you remember the Byford boys? Let us know at In Our Age.**

Front cover photograph: A chauffeur-driven car drives through Lea on the A40, Ross to Gloucester road around 1913.

Harry moved to Bishops Frome in the war. We came from London to my grandmother's, Aldridge Cottage, **Bishops Frome** and worked on the farm. We lived in a little tin bungalow – no running water and an outside privy.

Mum worked on the land so I took my little brother to Bishops Frome School. He couldn't have been more than three and he'd stand by my desk while I did my schoolwork.

We spent the summers on the hop fields. We'd gather sticks, make up the fire. The Gypsies came in their wagons. I played with Henry Lee and the Boswells, and Smiths. They were nice kids.

We were chucked out of our cottage when father joined the

Munitions factory at **Rotherwas** because he wouldn't work on the farm at weekends. The Munitions had built special workers' houses in **Hunderton** with flat-roofs, thick walls,

two slit windows and big wooden shutters (you can still see the clips on the walls). The front room was an air-raid shelter. We moved there in 1941.

Everyone had a good garden. I remember the vegetables, especially runner beans. Mother kept chickens and ducks, hatching the eggs in the warming oven. And rabbits would arrive home – inside father's overcoat. Before I left Scudamore School, I worked for Sugarkings in Eign Gate as the errand boy delivering the groceries. People would come with lists, the food was packed up and the delivery boys cycled off. On Saturday I'd go to the bus station, with a tarpaulin in case of rain, and the other

boys would deliver the parcels to me, to be collected by people as they got on the bus home.

My mother continued working on farms:



Dents at **Yarkhill** was one. She loved it. She and the other women would travel by bus or by lorry to pick hops (she had a pillow made out of hops). The women would be quiet in the morning but would all be singing on the way home.

Jock jumps ship

My father, 'Jock', was born in 1897 in Glasgow, says Harry. He was a bit wild and was sent to a training ship, 'for those that might drift into delinquency', the HMS Mars on the Clyde. There was room for 400 boys on board and he learned many skills there – shoemaking, sewing, cutting hair. But he wasn't happy and literally jumped ship and swam for shore. He never returned to Scotland.



He lied about his age, joined up and served on the Somme. He met my mother after being injured when he was in hospital in Cheltenham.

After the Munitions, he worked part time at the SAS camp. He used to tell this story. 'Jock,' said the sergeant to my father, 'have you got a spare cap and coat at home?' 'Yes,' said my father. 'What do you want with them?' father asked. 'Just hang them on that peg over there. Today's Tuesday: don't come back until Friday. If anybody asks if you're in, I'll say "he must be because there's his hat and coat".'

RAF bikes

One of Harry's brothers trained at RAF Madley as a wireless operator and air gunner. "When his mates had leave, they cycled to our house and left the bikes in our garden, picking them up when they returned and cycling back to Madley. They were big Air Force issue bikes: no one got the same bike that they came with."

Cycle Hereford, a new group, is launched in National Bike Week on June 17. Cycle Hereford, 30 Grove Road, Hereford HR1 2QP (01432 340107) or editor@cyclehereford.com



Elizabeth Godsell from **Woolhope** and bike outside Redhill, 1943. "The RAF lads had my bike: they used to steal bicycles to get back to camp after the Hostel dances." (See That Hereford Hostel, back page.)

The Good Life

Phyllis Yapp recalls birthing by candlelight

Before the war Phyllis was a finisher and then a dipper at Thimms Tile Works.

It wasn't a very healthy job: two or three

girls died of lead poisoning while I was there. Granny used to make me drink a pint of milk a day. Every fortnight a doctor examined you: you had to put your hands down and then raise them up. If you couldn't raise them there was something wrong. I married at 21. They didn't employ married women so I had to leave.

When my husband was called up I went to stay with my mother at The Builders Arms, **Bearwood**, outside Pembridge. I was

about 28 and I had two little boys.

We didn't go without a lot. It was a good life. Dad was a baker in Pembridge – The Steppes: he used to cycle down every morning about 4 o'clock to bake. It was lovely bread.

The pub was down-to-earth. There wasn't much shorts or whiskies and we only had one kind of draught beer and cider, of

only Tilly lamps and candles. Dad had to cycle down to get the midwife. There was me waiting. Of course he was born before she got there.

We didn't do badly. You'd got eggs and goat's milk. Farmer over the road would kill the pig for mother, hang it up in the larder. I used to dig the garden and we saved our potatoes and the seed from one year to another. My husband, when he came back from the war, used to catch the rabbits. Two rabbits hanging up on the back door: one for stew and one for roast.

The thing I really liked was the hop picking. I loved that. It was the only way I could earn money to

buy the kids their school clothes. You'd get there for seven and work until tea time. First thing we done was light a fire, boil a kettle and make a cup of tea. That cup was absolutely lovely!

Three boys and a dog : Phyllis' sons play among the corn stooks.



course. The beer was drawn from the wood in the cellar. I'd take a tray down, fill 'em up and bring them back. I used to clean too: it was hard work on all the flagstones floors. My youngest son was born there in the middle of the night. We had no electricity,

On the Home Front

War work wasn't a bed of roses



When I was 17 I thought 'I've got to help win the war'. I volunteered to be in the army – I wanted to be driving officers around! *Instead, Eunice Latham from Canada became an orderly.*

We ended up cleaning baths, sinks and toilets (the toilets only flushed every ten minutes) and we cried. It was a terrible experience.

We went to the officer. We said: 'Why couldn't everybody take a turn?' She was such a diplomat. She said: 'You girls are helping win the war', and we believed her. We came out with our chests out: 'We Are Helping Win The War!' Eventually she gave us a turn at the Mess. Now we were washing dishes all day with hardly any soap and our hands red raw up to our elbows. You cannot wash greasy plates with cold water and no soap. We wore clogs and we had to wash the cement floors because there was a lot of grease there.

So that too was hard labour.

Then the war ended. They asked me to stay and be the camp hairdresser. That was perfect! All I did was the officers' and I just had a little hut, decorated the way I wanted. Now eighty Eunice is still hairdressing.

Land Army girl Kitty, Eunice's sister, out with the cows during the last war.



What's On Around Herefordshire

Ledbury



England's Past for Everyone is a national project designed to produce well-researched regional histories, involving local people in the research and recording of their own localities. It is run under the auspices of the Victoria County History Trust, with funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The Herefordshire project, based on Ledbury, is also supported by Herefordshire Council, the University of Gloucestershire and the Herefordshire Victoria County History Trust. The results will appear in two paperback books and also on the Internet, where a special website will be able to display much of the background research material. The first, due to be published at the end of 2007, will be on Ledbury from 1558 up to the present, the second, appearing two years later, will cover everything before 1558! Based at the Heritage Centre in Ledbury, a group of some thirty volunteers (above) are involved with a variety of projects, some working on old documents, others looking at buildings and others about to embark on an oral history project.

The focus of the oral history group will be the impact of World War Two on Ledbury. The volunteers will explore memories of daily life as well as finding out about the prisoner of war camp, munitions work and evacuees.

Three Choirs Festival

2006 is Hereford's turn to host the Three Choirs Festival again. This festival 'floats' between the three cities of Hereford, Worcester and Gloucester, with each city taking its turn to play host. Essentially classical, it is the oldest music festival in Europe. Its origins lie in the city choirs meeting annually to sing together and improve their musical abilities and it is known to have been in existence before 1720.

These days every festival has its 'fringe', the other, often more visible side of the festivities, and each fringe has its own character. The Edinburgh Fringe is now as famous as the Edinburgh Festival itself, with street performers, comedy and music. Hereford Three Choirs Fringe's character is based round exploring our own creative abilities, joining in, being a part of the festival community and, most importantly, having fun. We aim to promote the good things that are already happening in our county and to put on as wide a variety of activities as we can.

The Fringe is for local people as well as visitors and we welcome everyone who would like to contribute. To get involved call Mary Tolhurst (01544 231732). (Silver surfer? visit the new website: www.hereford3choirsfringe.org.uk) In Our Age will be part of the Three Choirs Fringe. 'Listening to Elgar' is an illustrated



Credit: Jim Meenahan

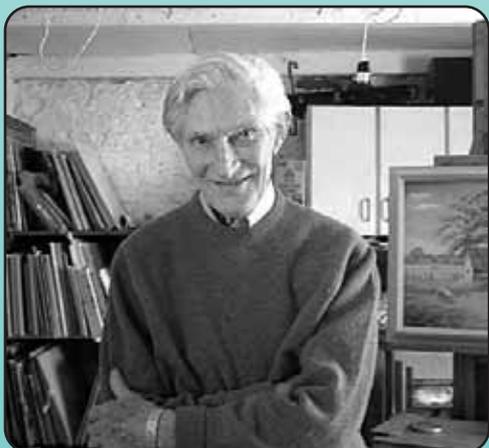
snapshot of recollections from local people: from Edward Elgar (above) to the Odeon concert organist. Watch out for details.

Oh What a Terrible War

It's 90 years since the Battle of the Somme, an appropriate time to be putting on a play about that terrible war. *Not About Heroes* is based on the true story of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owens who met while recovering from their injuries at Craiglockhart Hospital in 1917. The performance reflects the way their relationship influenced some of the greatest war poetry ever written. *Not About Heroes* is on at The Courtyard, Hereford until Saturday May 24.

Eric's Orcop – a labour of love

Eighty-eight-year-old Eric Bunday has created an extraordinary book: a walk around Orcop based on paintings and sketches (right) that he and his wife Audrey



did over their years living in Orcop Hill. The book takes you on a circular walk, beginning and ending at their cottage in the village.

Audrey, who in the past was a very talented artist, is no longer able to paint and this book is a tribute to their shared artistic life. It contains views of landscape and depictions of cottages, some of which

have disappeared, some have been modernised almost out of recognition. The book was beautifully produced by Laurence Smith, Eric providing all the illustrations and the text. It is a historical record and would be a lovely gift for anyone who knows the area. Eric can be contacted through In Our Age.

We have spent about eighteen months collecting oral living history in **Castle Frome**, writes Louise Manning. There were many memories of the war years and how life changed in the parish. There were quite a few evacuees billeted around the village, mostly from Birmingham, and they all had to attend school. This meant that local children only went half-days to school.

Rationing was quite a problem for most families. Those on the farms were lucky as they had their own bacon and meat from the pig, chickens for eggs and plenty of milk and lots of vegetables from the garden.

Some of the characters who were remembered included 'Aussie Jim', an Australian who, when he was demobbed and given a ticket home, got so drunk he never made the ship. He worked in Castle Frome for about two years trying to save up the money to get home but he kept spending it all in the pub. In the end, his employer kept back most of his wages as Jim had a wife and two children at home. With the help of the local transport company he was taken to Cardiff Docks and put on a boat to Australia. He got a job on board as a painter but it isn't known if he made it back to Australia.

Another character was Michael Daunt. He was a Spitfire test pilot from Gloucester. But he suffered from stress and came to Castle Frome to help with the hop-



Castle Frome Home Guard

picking. One of his jobs was pumping water from the brook into a tank on the tractor and then hauling it back to the buildings. His tractor had never gone so fast! Despite many warnings one day after heavy rain Michael, the tractor and the tank slid into the brook. He escaped unhurt.

Once Michael was back at work he used to fly low over the farm at 4 p.m. every day and loop the loop.

Louise is on 01531 640820 or l.manning@btinternet.com



Mary Morris was fourteen and working at the Ritz Cafe in Commercial Road, Hereford when news of her father's death was announced in 1939. "There was a telegram to my mother. He was a cook with the Herefordshire Regiment Kings Shropshire Light Infantry and had been killed in a cellar at Arnhem. Before the war he had worked for the Council: he used to work on Boxing Day to pay for our Christmas. Then he joined the Territorials and they were the first to go into the war. Afterwards mum brought seven of us up on College Estate on thirty-two shillings a week." Mary and husband Peter now live in **Tupsley**, Hereford, but grew up a few doors away from each other in Catherine Street, Hereford. (See Peter's letter, Diphtheria and Sudan 3, back page.)

Motoring mysteries

Local businessman and car enthusiast Ian Morris has amongst his model car collection a Bugatti Royale in mint condition, writes our motoring columnist Rosemary Lillico. Here's the real thing, pictured in Age To Age ten years ago. The Bugatti was photographed by Basil Butcher in **Leominster** in the 1950s. It was said to have survived the German occupation of France hidden in a Parisian sewer before a Captain Henry of Leominster acquired it. Only six of these absolutely wonderful cars (sometimes shown in World War Two films) were reputedly manufactured.



Your News & Views



Age: we won't be able to promise the world, but trust that even a small contribution will help to buy some more printer's ink. Best wishes to you all. Long Live In Our Age!
Juergen Koenigsbeck

Inspiring project

Herefordshire Lore has been playing an important part in, literally, recording the history of Herefordshire for many years. Its real engagement with individuals who not only contribute their memories, but who often go on to help with other aspects of the project is a fine example of what community history projects are all about. They and their publications are an inspiration to new community history projects such as ours. All the best for the future.

Dr Sylvia Pinches, Victoria County History of Herefordshire, University of Gloucestershire.

Not quite right

I must point out some irregularities in the last In Our Age. Thomas Frederick Pitt is on the left, not the right, of the front page picture and he was a wireless operator and air gunner – not rear gunner. I must also point out that my photograph is on the pillar at Rotherwas where Nora is standing. Hope this puts the record straight.

Joan E Hiles, email.

Well done

Congratulations on the first issue of In Our Age which we are happy to distribute from The Courtyard, Hereford. I wish you luck with this venture for the future.

Sophie Dubber, press and marketing, The Courtyard.

Herefordshire



People's Advocacy Network

Advocacy for Older People

welcomes In Our Age

We are always on the lookout for volunteers.

Call Ray Danenbergs on
01432 263757

Advocacy House, 103-104 East Street,
Hereford HR1 2LW
advocacy@herefordshire.com
Charity no.: 1043947

Looking forward

The first edition of In Our Age has been received by members of Hereford Baptist Church's Wednesday Club with great joy and interest, and I trust that our reaction reflects the general trend. We look forward to the second edition.

We plan to make our autumn Coffee Morning with Bring & Buy in aid of In Our

AGE
Concern

Herefordshire &
Worcestershire

You'll never know
what you might be
missing if you don't
give us a call

Are you over 50?

Would you like to join a new and exciting membership organisation, which will offer you opportunities to make new friends, do new things and save money in the process?

If your answer is "yes", you can find out more by calling Jim Smith on 01905 726652, or emailing jsmith@achw.org.uk

Your News & Views

How do I get my copy?

Many readers have called (07845 907891), written (Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Callow, Hereford HR1 9BX) or emailed (inourage@btinternet.com) to ask for a regular copy of In Our Age.

Many have said they would be happy to subscribe to In Our Age.

This is our second In Our Age and it's published free thanks to a grant from the Home Front Lottery fund. Like Issue 1 it's distributed to all Herefordshire's libraries, museums and tourist information centres and read by about 10,000 people.

We are planning four issues a year (Issue 3 should be out in August) and Herefordshire Lore will decide shortly whether to pay for future issues through subscriptions, advertising, sponsorship, a cover price and grants.

Watch this space!

John Turner, Chair

Events

Until Saturday May 24 – The Courtyard, Hereford. *Not About Heroes*. 0870 1122330

May to June 25 – County Tour. Museum on the Move's *It's Good to Talk* exhibition. 01432 260692

May 14 – St Weonards Parish Hall. Rural craft, activities and plants day. Jo Knight 07717 178246

May 20 – 26 A Herefordshire Quiz. Test your knowledge of the County at the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery and Libraries around the County.

May 20 to July 2 – Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, Broad St. Heath Robinson exhibition. 01432 260692

May 30 & 31 – Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. Fairy's Birthday drama workshop and costume making. 01432 260692

Saturday June 24 – Castle Green, Hereford. Medieval fayre and festival. www.herefordshire.gov.uk/leisure/museums

That Hereford Hostel

More should be done to celebrate the old Redhill Hostel, says Elizabeth Godsell from Woolhope. Rotherwas Munitions factory has its memorials, partly thanks to Herefordshire Lore's *In The Munitions – Women at War in Herefordshire* book; the same should be done for the old hostel which was built by the Ministry of Supply in 1941 off the Ross Road, she says. The hostel employed 120 staff including Elizabeth: "It was hard work and we retired to our hard, little bunks after our nine-hour shifts and fell fast asleep."



Larking around: Vera, Lil and Elizabeth Godsell dress up for a mock wedding at Redhill Hostel.

Diphtheria and Sudan 3

Does anyone remember Hereford's Diphtheria and Scarlett Fever Isolation Hospital at **Hampton Dene**? asks Peter Morris from Tupsley. "I was a patient there for eight weeks in 1939 as there was an epidemic at Hunderton. Myself and my sister Muriel, Mary and Tony Perkins, Mary Harper, Hazel Quinsey, Sylvia Coppins, another girl called Griffiths, Brian Hankins, Dr Maynard, Denis Craddock and, sadly, Dorothy King of Catherine Street who died at the hospital. The matron was Jones, always dressed in a grey uniform and two

nurses, Hilda Price and Nurse Parker. The ambulance man lived in a cottage at the start of the drive. The hospital was an H-type, wooden building with a corrugated iron roof and was used later for convalescing TB and chest patients." Peter worked at Barronia Metals (see Hereford's Wartime Secrets, in our last issue) and recalls the use of the controversial Sudan 3 food colourant being used there – "It was used to colour the paraffin in the inspection room," he explains.

Spot the box?

Jo Doversman of Whitecross, **Hereford** knew the answer to our poser in the last issue: Where's this signal box? "I was relief signalman on the railways and often used to work at this one, the Rotherwas Junction. It was an interesting box because it was the junction for the Cardiff to Shrewsbury line, the branch line (now closed) to Gloucester and also trips into the factory, when every morning a Pannier engine brought in thirty or forty wagons and took them out again in the afternoon."



Herefordshire Lore has been collecting and publishing people's memories since 1989, working closely with the *County Records office*, *Herefordshire Museums*, *Herefordshire Libraries* and *Age Concern*.

Previous publications include: *Age To Age*, *Amazing How Times Change*, *The Schoolchildren's Tale*, *The Shopkeeper's Tale* and *In The Munitions - Women At War in Herefordshire*.

Herefordshire Lore includes: John Turner (chair), Mary Horner, Sirol Collins, Sandy Green, Rosemary Lillico, Eileen Klotz, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe, Marsha O'Mahony, Harvey Payne, Betty Webb, Lenora Williams.

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