

# In Our Age

Living local history

Spring 2009  
Issue 11



## Point duty

In another fine picture from John Edwards, a young policeman stands on point duty at the long-gone junction between Eign Street, Eign Gate, Edgar Street and Victoria Street. The junction disappeared when the inner city ring road was opened, writes Rosemary Lillico. The policeman, writes his first husband, Mrs M. Watts, was young Scotsman George Blacktodd who died of cancer aged 32.



Fred Parry, above, and on the front cover spraying a Morris pick-up, at Browns Garage in Aubrey Street. Below, Fred puts the finishing touches to a C.F. Roberts' van sign.

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### In Our Age

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Grandad's army  
at Callow



Harvest time  
at St Weonards



Thanks for the  
memories

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The Home Guard during the last war at camp somewhere on the Callow, possibly near the Angel pub. (Bruce Leonard)



The Angel pub, now a private house on the Callow. (Photo: Dave Edwards)



Friar Street: "I enjoyed Barbara Dawson's memories of the Drill Hall in Friar Street, Hereford," writes **Andy Taylor**, assistant curator at the Herefordshire Regimental Museum and who loaned this photos of the Friar Street drill hall, which later became the bus depot.



Seventy years ago the first evacuees began to arrive in Hereford. While the authorities expected over 700 only some 200 arrived amidst complaints, about their health and hygiene, according to the *Hereford Times* of 1939.

**How was it for you?**

**Were you evacuated to Hereford?**

**How were you treated?**

Drop us a line or call us at IOA  
– details on the back page.

## Hopping with Shirley Bassey

A group of Herefordshire hop pickers (left). Traveller **Frankie Smith** from Ledbury remembered the hop picking, cutting 'the flags', (the hop bines) down while **Evelyn Cooper** from Whitestone remembers one of our more famous hop pickers working the fields locally: **Shirley Bassey**.

**Henry Rogers** emailed us ([info@herefordshirelore.org.uk](mailto:info@herefordshirelore.org.uk)) to say: "Your photo of 'what looks like spent hops' in the bottom picture on the centre pages of the last issue are dried hops being taken from the kiln to the cooling floor prior to being shovelled into a pocket for pressing as shown in the upper picture."

## Norman Wisdom

Evacuee **Bruce Leonard** (the handsome devil pictured in our last IOA, page 2) loaned us this photo of the Gilbert and Sullivan amateur dramatic production at Hereford's old Nell Gwynne Theatre, now the Courtyard. Bruce is away on holiday so we couldn't ask him what the production was, but that's him in boots at the back (right). Can you help?

Meanwhile 91-year-old **Marianne Bridgewater** recalls the famous Norman Wisdom, the 1950s TV star who was a regular visitor to Hereford. When he came to town he always visited his old friend Marianne's husband, Fred. She explains: "Norman met Fred, who went on to be organist at St Sennen, Cornwall for 33 years, in the army, and he became Norman's piano accompanist."



## St. Owen's School

Children at St Owen's Boys School, Hereford in the 1920s. **Fred Parry**, says his daughter, Mrs Leonard, recalled how young lads would take

days out to go 'cattle banging' (droving) and on their return would be beaten like the beasts themselves by the head teacher for their misdemeanours. One former St Owen's pupil was the late artist **John Ward** who recalled headmaster **P.H.Alder-Barrett** with affection although another correspondent, **Charles Morris**, remembered him as "the only person that I can honestly say I have hated my whole life."



## The Pretenders

Evacuee **Connie Hurst** from Tupsley, Hereford left Kentish Town, London at the age of 13 to escape the Blitz. "I went to Kettering, then back to London then to Somerset." When, in the 1950s, she landed up in Hereford she became the county's first lollipop lady and forty years ago she took up station at the five road junction outside St Paul's School, Hereford.

"The children called me Lollipop, after the song My Girl Lollipop which had just come out. One time a motorist was prosecuted for ignoring my lollipop sign."

Connie's husband, Neil, was bass guitarist with the Russ Allen Band. "There was **Ambrose Emerson** on piano and **Martin Chambers**, father of **Pete Chambers** from the Pretenders on trumpet."

Anyone recall dancing the nights away to them?

## Pet service

**Susan Weinmann's** grandparents lived at Burton Lodge, Whitecross Road, Hereford next to Holy Trinity Church from 1941. "I spent most summer holidays there in the '40s and '50s," writes Susan. "The house was the old vicarage and had an orchard and well-worked garden. Grandfather, **Evan Davies**, used to pick the fruit, leaving it at the gate with an honesty box. Burton Lodge was a refuge for many visitors on Wednesday, Market Day: there was always a dash to close the gate since they then used to drive cattle and sheep down Whitecross Road to market.

"Next door was Holy Trinity vicarage occupied by Rev. David Snell (father of **John Blashford Snell** of explorer fame). Mrs. Snell had a lot to do with the RSPCA and the Church had a Pet Service every year."

Susan lives in Scotland and found IOA at our website [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk) A big thank you to **Chris Preece**, our diligent web site manager, for making it all possible.



(Above) **Barbara Matthews** in the hat, **Susan's** aunt, rides to the Pet Service on **Houdini** with her friend **Barbara Rawlinson** on **Fanny**.

(Left) **Susan's** grandfather, seen here signing the marriage register, was church warden at Holy Trinity.



# Life on the land

These farming photos come from Geof Jones of Sandyway, St Weonards, born at Coalbrooke Farm, St Weonards. Geof was only four when his mother died and his grandfather, who had been farming there, gave up and moved to Coppice Farm on the Treago estate.

## In the spring of the year

Our new country columnist John Thacker from Upper Sapey can tell a tale or two. Here's his story about what used to happen 'in the spring of the year'.



The mare takes an eleven fold gestation and in the spring of the year the stallions used to come round. The grooms, they were very proud men because these were great big shire stallions and they took a lot of looking after.

Of course they was 'houted up;' to be frisky: I mean, to serve three or four mares a day they were got to be fit.

The tale goes that with the grooms they was always a little Jack Russell terrier dog and if you didn't lock up your bitches they would have puppies as well! And some said you got to jolly well lock up your daughters as well!

But these grooms as used to bring the stallions were special men and they always used to get everything out of them. They'd charge around a guinea a time and then, if the mare had a special good foal the grooms would want a bit more money the next year.

This story of John's comes from [Fieldwork](#), a new collection of farming stories from The Rural Media Company. See page 7.



1. Cutting corn at Coppice Farm. 2. Geof Jones and sister, Nesta sit on the horses waiting to draw the cart, around 1940. In the foreground stand William Jones and his wife. Standing on top of the cart is Percy Daniels. 3. Following the tractor are Geof and his father, William. In the driving seat is Lewis Evans. 1934. 4. Lewis Evans on the tractor at Treago Farm in 1936. 5. 1940 at Treago Farm. 6. Threshing at Coppice Farm, then owned by Wiliam Jones, in 1939. The thresher and tractor were owned by the contractors, Lewis Evans. 7. Lifting hay at Treago Farm.



The horses were 'houted up' to be frisky (Photo: Hereford Archive Office).



## Foxley Camp

Foxley Camp during the Second World War served as a hospital for injured American soldiers. Electrician Edward Spencer (below) was a member of the civilian maintenance team who kept the hospital running. His daughter Doreen (above), now **Doreen Skinner**, used to accompany Dad to work during the summer holidays riding on the bus from Hinton, Hereford. Doreen would wander the grounds all day often going into the wards to sit with the injured American soldiers. Their sweets, chocolates and gum made her very popular when she redistributed them at school next term.



**Emma Maund** (nee Gwynn) stands outside her cottage in Bleathwood, Little Hereford perhaps at the turn of the 20th Century, writes Dr. **David Maund**. Born in 1829 in Ross she married farm worker and drainer, John Maund, from Bleathwood around 1846 and brought up 10 children. Her last child, David, had an adventurous life as an underage participant in the Boer War and a breaker of wild horses in the USA before returning home to look after Emma who died in 1917. David's family still farm in Sutton St Nicholas.

(Dr. Maund from Pembridge went to Leominster Grammar School before embarking on a career in education. Now retired, he has a long time research interest in Herefordshire including in recent times rural migration patterns.)

## Ham and broad beans

By Freda Morris

I was born in 1920 at the Blacksmith Shop in Acton Beauchamp where I have lived all my life. I was the youngest of ten children, seven boys and three girls. My brothers were farm workers.

I started school at five with a teacher, Mrs Clark, who lived in the school house. Mrs Clark who took a dislike to me made my school days very unhappy and I was always getting a smack across my face.

But Miss Harris, who used to bike every morning from Suckley Station where her father was station master, used to teach us.

People were very poor in those days. I remember in winter months when we came to school we used to go round our mole traps to see how many we had caught. The farmer next door used to let us lay traps on his land. We then had to skin the moles and nail the skins to a board with small nails to dry. Then we would sell them for a few pennies to poor old men who came to the door. When we went to school we had four weeks holiday in September to go hop picking to get some money for our winter clothes. Then my mother would go into Worcester to buy them, on Acton Beauchamp Transport buses owned by H.F.Taylor.

We always kept a pig. It was fattened until it was about 19 stone and killed before Christmas by Mr Turbutt from Pippens Hill cottages. It was hung for a few days and then he came back to cut it into pieces for bacon and hams. They were salted on a special table in the kitchen then dried off. They were then wrapped in muslin, hung on cratches suspended from hooks in the ceiling. The first of the hams was cut when the first broad beans were picked in the garden.

(Look out for more memories of country life from Freda in the next issue of IOA)



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# NEWS AND VIEWS

## Hedley Prosser

Joan Cutler remembers Hedley Prosser, the smiler with the cart horse pictured in our last issue. "He worked for farmer Charles Cole and he was a lovely gent." Anna Austin writes to say Hedley was her husband's uncle.

## Market workers



**Phyllis Dean's** photo of her Market worker father, Jack Beck, prompted **Peter Evans** of Hunderton to name them all. They are: (left to right) Jack, Frank Clayton, George Willetts, Alec Baynham, Fred Thomas, Bill Norton and Peter; front row, Jack Headen, Bill Lewis and Eric James. "The photo was taken around 1958 just after they finished the Langford Sale room."

## Almley Isolation Hospital

When **Tony Osman** suffered from tuberculosis he was hospitalised at Almley. "I was there from the age of three to five and these were stables converted into wards. The doors were left open all night, covered in sheets. It cured me!"

## Gypsy history

Next June sees the start of national Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and there are plenty of events planned. IOA hopes to produce a special Gypsy issue – can you help us with memories and photos? Contacts on the back page.

## Market interviews – 'of the greatest value'

Master copies of the interviews recorded with Herefordshire families for *A Slap of the Hand – the History of Hereford Market* have been formally handed over to the County Archive Office.

Senior archivist **Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe** received the material and told the audience at the handover: "These are fundamental to the county's history. It's important to us and to the researchers of the future because our recent history is most at risk: people rarely think of collecting it."

"The Market book is very accessible but the interview transcriptions provide an even wider picture of the Market. This raw material will be of the greatest value in the years to come."



Herefordshire Lore and friends

Handing over the tapes and transcripts, together with a copy of the book, the project's advisory group chairman, retired auctioneer **Julian Gallimore** told Elizabeth: "The book has sold very successfully. And the project was a lot of fun to do."

In Our Age editor Bill Laws thanked everyone for their help, especially all those who agreed to be interviewed. Sales from the book, he said, are helping to pay for the continued publication of IOA.

If you want to buy a copy of our book ring Eileen on 07845 907891 or email at info@herefordshire.co.uk



Thanks for the memories: Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe with Julian Gallimore

## Mystery picture?

It's the George Hotel in Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye, writes **John Baker** of our mystery picture (right) in the last issue of IOA. The George was listed in the 1941 Kelly's Directory, proprietor Jn. Weeds.



Fieldwork – Extraordinary farm memories from Bromyard and Eardisley

When Eardisley farm worker Ron Langford wanted a job, he went to the hiring fair at Hay. When Mike Roberts' grandfather, a Bringsty farrier lost his hand in a chaff cutter, his wife saved his life... with cobwebs. When a Pencombe former POW was imprisoned at Ullingswick, he found a way to make do.

This arresting DVD from the Rural Media Company and Bromyard and Eardisley local history groups is a must-see.

Buy the DVD, (£10: call Natalie 01432 344039 or nataliep@ruralmedia.co.uk) or come and see them at the Borderlines Film Festival, 4.30pm Saturday 4th April (www.borderlinesfilmfestival.org)



www.ruralmedia.co.uk

