


Volume 1
Issue 1
Spring 2006

In Our Age

Living local history

Herefordshire Lore
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1946 - 2006

Madley smallholders

Wartime gardening

Pembridge pub life

Hereford's homemade car

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

**Herefordshire's
Home
Front**

On The Home Front

Rosemary Lillico on food in the Forties and Fifties.

Food rationing was in operation from January 1940 to 1954, I was born in 1938 and can remember going shopping with my mother, walking in to Hereford from **Breinton**. This, then was our weekly allowance (if you could get it!):
Meat - 1/- to 2/1d (5p to 10p)
Bacon: 4 ozs to 8 ozs
Cheese: 1 oz to 8 ozs
Fat: 1 oz to 8 ozs
Eggs: 1/2 to 2.
Tea: 2 ozs to 4 ozs. In 1944 those over 70 were given an extra ounce at Christmas.
Sugar: 8 ozs to 16ozs (plus 2lbs extra when available for jam making).
Dried milk: half a tin.

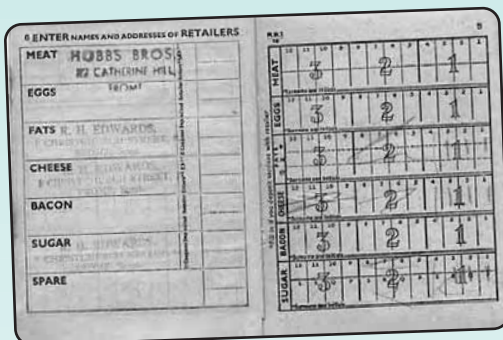
Dried egg: 1/8th packet. Children up to five received the same rations while 5 - 16 year olds and pregnant women had one pint of milk daily and extra fruit when available.

● Everyone had a ration book and would have to register with a grocer, butcher and dairy. Later on many other items of grocery were in short supply and put on rations too. The contents of the Ration Book were known as Coupons or Points. Having very few ingredients to cook with led women to invent their own, closely guarded recipes: cabbage pie, carrot cake, no fat cake, no sugar cake. Some families were so poor they couldn't afford to buy the rations and exchanged their points for eggs, vegetables or clothes.

● Seasonal fruit and vegetables were available but in very short supply and everyone had to queue for everything. The standing joke was: if you see a queue join it and then ask what it's for. There was plenty of bartering and extra rations kept 'under the counter' for favourite customers. Some shopkeepers

had extra supplies from 'the black market' and no one asked too many questions about where they came from.

● My family was very fortunate in that they lived out in Breinton and had a large garden. My parents did seasonal land work for local farmers (I can remember picking up cider apples by moonlight with my father) and were sometimes paid with milk, potatoes and other things in lieu of wages.



Smallholders in Madley

Don Glead on his family smallholding at Canon Bridge.

There were eleven smallholdings down at **Canon Bridge**, set up after the First World War for returning soldiers. Each had an average of 50 acres with one piece of 8 - 10 acres for arable and the rest pasture and orchards or grazing and mowing. Father moved there in 1936.

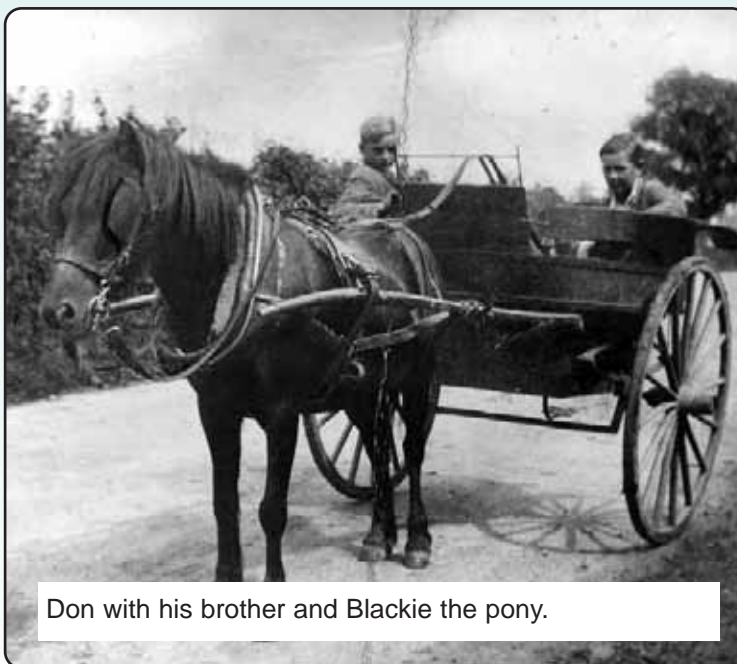
There's no bridge now: it was where the religious canons used to cross over to come to Madley. We used to cross the river to go to the Nelson pub - you could walk from stone to stone.

There was a field by the river, called Barking Field where timber, cut for going down river to the shipyards, was barked for the tanning.

When we came here there was Cuckoo Tom. He lived in the saddle room and there was Archie John, he lived over the cowshed. And there was another who lived in a chicken house!

These places were mostly self-sufficient. The only things we bought in were tea

and sugar, not much else. Mother would take 30lbs of butter to market in Hereford on the bus. We used to handmilk, pour it straight into the separator while it was still warm. You



Don with his brother and Blackie the pony.

made butter with cream when it was ripe; it would stand in bowls in the dairy, about

a week.

She had a big Victoria Overend churn and when she was expecting it was too heavy. We'd have to churn it for her and it would churn a lot of butter. Tempers got frayed in the thundery weather because it would not churn very well. Mother would tip a gallon of water in.

She'd use 'Scotch hands' (a kind of butter pat). Once the butter was kneaded and made up she could dig her Scotch hands in and slap it on the scale and it would be exactly half a pound.

Father had a chaff cutter and mill, run off a stationary engine and his first tractor, in 1943, was a 1923 Fordson.

He was the first to sell milk there to the Milk Marketing Board, to Cadbury's. There was cattle and pigs, 5 - 6 nursing cows, Hereford cross and Welsh blacks. Friesians were just starting: they said they'll never

stick the winter, those bony Friesians! But the milk was a cheque every month.



Bill Dean, of Walnut Tree Avenue, Hereford was in the Reserved Occupation at the outset of war, working a ten-hour day as a gardener at Amersham in Buckinghamshire. "We had a half hour for breakfast at 8.00 a.m. and used to bring our own and cook it ourselves. At 10.30 we had half hour for a smoke because gardeners couldn't smoke on the job. The owner was very generous with his cigarettes, but I didn't smoke so he used to give me chocolate instead. "On Saturdays we worked 7.00 to 1.00 and after that, in the summer, went to play village cricket. "The tools were so different then: no Flymo or strimmer! Imagine how we used to do it all before with a hook and clippers.

"Since it was wartime we had to dig up the owner's lawns for potatoes. We planted Aran Pilot as early; Majestic was an old favourite while King Edward was a soft potato that the slugs like. But it was a good one for mashing."

In 1941 Bill joined up with the Anti-aircraft Guns sailing out around the Mediterranean on the City Of Glasgow (rations were "a bit rough") before transferring to the Mauritania at Durban when rations improved and included exotics like oranges and chocolate.

At one point they survived on tinned rations, which were something of a mystery. "The tins came from a ship sunk at Tobruk. They'd recovered the tins but none had any labels so you never knew what you were getting."

When, eventually, he reached Sicily he was

astonished to see the generous rations given out to a black American brigade, the 92nd. "They even had fridges. They were so different to our lot: while the British army only gave you ammunition if you needed it, the Americans had all sorts of guns and ammunition - and they would fire away at anything."

Definitely not a case of 'Praise the Lord and Save the Ammunition'.

When war finished Bill returned to the house he'd worked as a gardener. It had been turned into a nursing home and she was on the staff of assistant matron Elizabeth Grace Thomas from Kinnersley. She was to be his future wife.



The late Elizabeth Thomas, above, picnicking with husband Bill came from Lower Ailey Farm, below, in Kinnersley. After the war the couple worked in Cookham, Berkshire. "I remember the painter Stanley Spencer coming round the village with his pram filled with his paints."



Fresh Fish

Colin Jones of Little Dewchurch, remembers the fruit and vegetable horse and cart which used to come round **Putson, Hereford.**

"We had friends in the Merchant Navy in Fishguard. Once a month they would send us a box of fresh fish which we used to deliver around to our neighbours."

His family used to grow quite a lot of vegetables in the garden: and he still does today.

Being wartime they had war workers, mostly munitions workers at Rotherwas, billeted on them including one Miss Jones, daughter of the Staunton-on-Wye postmistress. When it was his turn to go out and make a living he joined Greenlands in Hereford as a cabinetmaker and undertaker in 1953. "If I had to go out to Bromyard or Monmouth on a job I would go out on my bike. There was no other way of getting around."

Front cover photograph:

Thomas Pitt, right, with fellow crew member while training as a radio operator at RAF Madley. Tom was engaged to local Hereford girl, Joan Hiles. But sadly he was killed when the Halifax bomber in which he was radio operator and rear gunner crashed in Nottingham returning from a bombing raid over Germany.

Life of a Land Girl

Kitty Latham recalls her battle to join the Women's Land Army

As Britain prepared for war **Kitty Latham's** efforts to join the Women's Land Army were frustrated at every turn.

Farm at Kineton, Warwickshire. So that was that. I went round with the different workmen, watching the jobs they'd done and my prime job was to milk and do odd jobs round the fields so the men could be

send a tractor and a dray to College Estate in Hereford to get the mothers and all the kids to come out and work. "When it was time for coming home all these kids disappeared and then they'd

come back to where the tractor would be waiting. And they had a job to climb into this dray because the weight they were carrying in the bottoms

"In 1938 I wanted to join the Land Army but my mother said: 'You certainly can't do anything like that'. Several months went by. I went to Miss Jesper at work. I worked in the restaurants



Kitty steps out after joining the Women's Land Army in Birmingham.

at Birmingham's Barrows Stores. 'Oh my dear,' she said, 'you are in essential work.' I spoke to Blanch, the cook and she said: 'You're needed here'. I thought if I hear that again I'll go mad. I was 20 by then. So I just wrote to the headquarters, Dennam College, and they sent me all this literature and 'if you collect your uniform at such and such a date' . . . that was it. I was a Land girl! I had to go for an interview with a nice old gentleman, an editor for one of the London papers, Mr Park at Moorlands

released for heavier work. It was hands to the plough all the time. Grow more this, more that, more the other. But I loved it, every minute of it." When Kitty married the couple moved to Hereford. She returned to land work at Lower Lyde. "I was hoeing mangles, going in the barns and putting them through the chaffing machine. "The farmer used to

of their coats with all the apples and potatoes and what ever. It was the funniest thing I have ever seen."

Wartime fare at The Builders Arms

Phyllis Yapp of Ross Road, Hereford tries out her acting skills in the Dormington hop yards (below). But during the War Phyllis lived at The Builders Arms, **Bearwood** near **Pembridge** with her mother and father. "You saved everything in those days. From the day I married 'til my



husband died, I've never bought anything out of a garden: he grew everything we had. During the war, with the building at Shobdon mother used to have up to eight workers staying overnight for bed and breakfast. They loved coming there. Mother would cook fresh eggs, home cured bacon, fried bread . . . we'd have a side of pork hanging up and you used to get it down and slice it off. "Mum used to make lard. Used to buy from Higg's the butchers, put it in the saucepan and heat it. She used to have a sieve and let it drain through, you know? It was pure white. I used to make the pastry with that. I used to make a bit of butter, take the cream off the milk, (leave it a) couple of days, put it in a jar then put a lid on it and shake it, separate it, take the lid of the jar off and the whey that was left, made the cakes with it. "Even though it was the war time we didn't do bad: you know, we done very well really."

Girls from the Ministry



Working girls from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Feeding Stuff, pictured by the Castle Pool, Hereford surround their boss, John Thompson. Ivy Manning (nee Billings), second from the left on the back row, recalled some of the other names including Joan Jones, Joan Lloyd, Pamela Popplestone, Violet Priday, Josie Vanstone and 16-year-old Gwen Thomas, front left, who died suddenly of tuberculosis.

What's on around Herefordshire...

Family History

Thought of exploring your origins, but don't know where to begin? It's time to meet the experts. Herefordshire Archive Service is running a *Family History Starter Day* in May (see Events, back page) when you'll be introduced to the main archive sources for family history and talk through the business of compiling your own family tree. Start your research at this free event at Herefordshire Archive Service, Harold Street, Hereford. 01432 260750, archives@herefordshire.gov.uk

Travelling families

Many Gypsies and Travellers have their home in Herefordshire. And many have a story to tell. Sample some of those recollections in the newsletter of the national Romany Organisation for Cultural and Creative Arts (ROCCA). "Anyone with memories of Travellers is welcome to get in touch," says ROCCA's Mary Horner who lives in Credenhill.

Meet up with Mary at ROCCA's second *Romany History Day* (see Events, back page) on May 6. There'll be stalls, exhibits, crafts, photos and books during the day (10.30 to 4.30, entry £1) followed by an evening of dance, music and a play (entry £2). Details from Mary on 01432 760938, mhorner022@aol.com

Travelling Tales

A series of atmospheric two-minute digital stories of the lives of Traveller families from the West Midlands will be screened in March (Events, back page) at *Borderlines Film Festival*. 0870 1122330

Walled gardens

The Hereford and Worcester Garden Trust plans to publish a booklet on the counties' walled gardens. Did you used to work in one or own one? Could you help with their research? Call Fiona Grant (Fridays only) 01432 273359, fgrant@hereford-art-col.ac.uk

Tell Your Story

Have you got a story to tell? BBC Local television is working with The Rural Media Company to make short, local programmes to be shown on satellite and broadband. Details from Mike Jackson on 01432 344039.

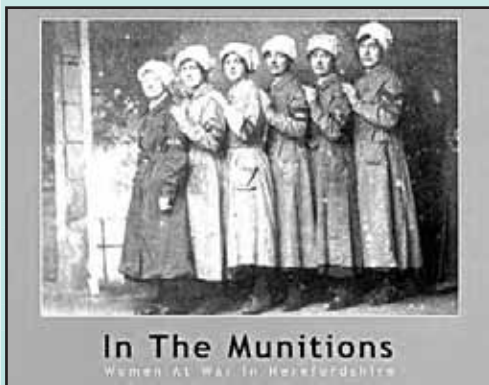
Rotherwas Munitions News

The History of Rotherwas Munitions Factory

A book detailing the history of the Royal Ordnance Factory reveals that Rotherwas was used to charge gas shells in the First World War.

And, despite the Geneva Convention, the author John Edmonds, suggests that they planned to go on using Rotherwas for gas weapons. What would International Weapons inspectors have made of this! John Edmonds book details the development of the munitions factory from the First World War through World War Two to its closure and use as a military supply depot.

The History of Rotherwas Munitions Factory, written by John Edmonds is published by Logaston Press, £9.95 and available at most local booksellers. And if you still haven't got your copy of *In The Munitions - A History of Women At War in Herefordshire*, call Dawn on 07845 907891. Copies cost £9.99 plus £2 postage.



Nora Foster 1920 – 2006

Nora Foster who died in February had become the face of Rotherwas since her image was used on one of three memorials at the Hereford industrial estate. The image is not a flattering one - "I look awful," she used to tell friends - but she was proud to have been chosen to represent the several thousand women and men who worked at the Rotherwas Munitions factory during two World Wars.

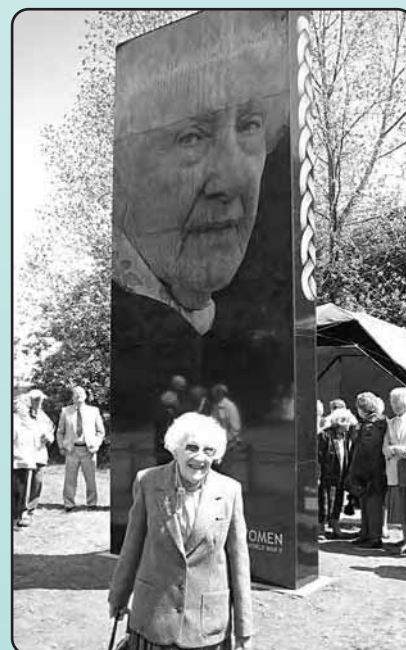
During the Second World War the young Nora Davis, as she was then, was the voice of Rotherwas too. As a wartime disc jockey, she worked as one of the three women announcers on the factory's radio station. Her recollections of life at the factory brought her into contact with Herefordshire Lore and for the past four years she was an essential member. This was in addition to her regular voluntary work for Cancer Concern and in her local community at Putson. Nora showed that age is no barrier to leading an active and fulfilled life. She will be greatly missed by her colleagues, friends and family - Lynn, Peter, Jon, David, Joe, Thomas and Elin.

Plans for Munitions Workers' play

Photographed in the undergrowth at Rotherwas, Rosie and Vicky were helping in the making of a film about the wartime workers. The film, produced by New Theatre Works, will springboard the writing of a play, *What Did You Do In The War Granny*, about Herefordshire's munitions workers. See Events, back page.



Above: Vicky (left) wears a First World War overall, bonnet and trousers while Rosie (right) wears overalls and a bonnet from the second war. These replicas of the munitions workers' uniforms were created by theatre costumier Stephanie Ross from Llangarron.



Hereford's Wartime Secrets

New film reveals the story behind Barronia Metals.

Second World War workers from around the county will soon be joining forces to see *Wartime Secrets*, a film about the top secret factory Barronia Metals.

Albert West from **Tupsley** will be there. Now 93, Albert moved to Hereford with Barronia after the factory was bombed out of London in the



Blitz. Albert and his newly married wife, Winnie, arrived from London on their motorbike and sidecar in the early 1940s, carrying the company's wedding gift, a carriage clock which still has pride of place in his Tupsley home.

"People knew nothing about our work then, but looking back now, it makes you proud to have been involved," says Albert. Barronia Metals in Widemarsh Street, Hereford, was the only factory making aircraft fuel valves for Britain's airborne defences. "The RAF was suffering significant numbers of casualties from aircraft running out of fuel and crashing, despite having full reserve tanks," explained **Christopher Tomlinson** from **Clehonger** whose father was chief designer at Barronia. "It

was Barronia's designers who modified the fuel valve which saved the day." Old film of the factory workers was discovered by **Dr Maureen Beauchamp** of **Kingsthorpe**. Her father, Tony Williams, worked as production manager at Barronia.

The new film has already surprised former workers. When Carole Catley viewed the rushes she spotted her own father: "It was eerie, like stepping back in time," she recalls.

Others who contributed their memories of Barronia included Evelyn Hill, Walter Williams, Dan Nash, Neville Dawe, Betty Webb, Peter Morris, Michael Wear, Margaret Palamountain, Doreen Oldman, Eric Mayers, Peter Yemm, Daphne Grey, Joyce Davis, Kitty

Latham, Eve Lichfield, Joyce Mann, Gladys Jones, Mrs Short, Barbara Mitten, Doug Parry, Donald Powell, Norman Owen, Carol Pritchard, Christine Harrison and Johnny Davey from Wimborne, Dorset. Johnny reported that many of the old machines at Barronia were moved to Dorset - where they are still in working order.

Highly recommended

"I would recommend anyone with an interest in the history of Hereford to see *Wartime Secrets*," writes Chris Tomlinson. "*Wartime Secrets* shows just what a critical part Barronia played in the war effort. The film itself is very well edited and faithfully records the works of people like my father who worked at Barronia."

Handmade in Hereford

"Five years ago while viewing a motorcar exhibition in High Town I came across a bright red, very pretty, open top sports car," writes our motoring correspondent, Rosemary Lillico.

"I've always shown a keen interest in old cars. My father was a mechanic at Enterprise Garage, Gomond Street, Hereford and I often helped him.

When I was told that the little red car had been made by Westland Motors, Hereford I tracked down an ex-employee of Westland's which was situated in Commercial Road close to the railway station and its associated company, Aeroparts Engineering.



The former worker told me my little red car was a Westland Healey made between 1947 - 1949, designed by Don Healey and powered by a Riley 2.4. The car, not to be confused with the Austin Healey, was manufactured and assembled at Westland Motors with many of the components made by the nearby Aeroparts.

As I understand it the little Westland Healey wasn't the only car made in Hereford; the Naylor car, (right) was built at Naylor's in Friar Street. If any readers have any information on the little Westland Healey and the Naylor - or any other interesting motoring history, write and let me know."

BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

Friday 24 March to Sunday 2 April 2006
www.borderlinesfilmfestival.org



Saturday 25 March 7.30pm
Conquest Theatre Bromyard
Looking Back: River of Life Retrospective

Sunday 2 April 4.00pm
Courtyard, Hereford
River of Life 2006

The Courtyard
0870 1122330

Fish & Chips!
*One of the few dishes
not rationed in the last
war!*

**Good luck to
In Our Age
from Alan Williams &
staff at Mr Chips!**



Herefordshire Libraries

We are delighted with the launch of *In Our Age*. Not only will many readers look forward to each issue, but for the libraries it puts memories of Herefordshire as it was into a permanent format accessible to future generations.

We wish you success in continuing this valuable work. Good luck with the launch.

**Robin Hill,
Senior Information Librarian**

Herefordshire



**The
Advocacy
for Older
People
Project**

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

Congratulations to
In Our Age
from
**Herefordshire
Museum & Art
Gallery**

01432 260692

www.herefordshire.gov.uk
(follow the links for 'Leisure'
and then 'Museums')

**Our best wishes to
In Our Age.**

We always extend an open invitation to folk over 50 to join us in Christian fellowship and friendship on a Wednesday morning at

**Hereford Baptist
Church**

in Commercial Road, Hereford.

**Herefordshire
Archive Service**

is delighted to welcome
In Our Age

and hopes to continue to have close associations with Herefordshire Lore in the future.

For information on studying many aspects of your family or local history, contact:

Herefordshire Archive Service

01432 260750

archives@herefordshire.gov.uk

**Age Concern
Hereford
(City and Rural)**

is delighted to welcome
this issue of
In Our Age

Volunteers are always welcome at Age Concern, Berrows Business Centre, Bath Street, Hereford.

01432 350483

ageconcern@hfdciry.freereserve.co.uk

Best wishes from the



Herefordshire's community music charity. Join our Courtyard Club, a monthly programme of arts activities for older and retired people.

01432 278118

www.musicpool.org.uk

At the
Hereford Times

we know how popular Nigel Heins' monthly Flashback articles are and are proud of the success of the Flashback books, so we welcome this new issue of ***In Our Age*** and wish it all the best.

**Liz Griffin, Editor,
Hereford Times**

01432 274413

Your News & Views

What's this all about?

In Our Age is a new quarterly magazine from Herefordshire Lore, the county reminiscence group which works to remember, celebrate and record Herefordshire's past before it is lost with the passing of generations. In Our Age follows in the footsteps of our late, much-loved publication Age To Age. The first two issues of In Our Age are published thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Home Front project.

Want to make sure you get the next copy?

Call Dawn on 07845 907891 or write to: Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Callow, Hereford, HR1 9BX or email us at: inourage@btinternet.com

Events of Interest

March 4, 10.00am - Leominster Library *Printmaking workshop*. "A great opportunity to get creative and learn about printing," according to the Library's Anne-Marie Dossett. Details from her on 01432 260646

March 13, 7.30pm - Record Office *Friends of Herefordshire Record Office* talk by John Eisel on Herefordshire Clocks and Clockmakers.

March 16 - Record Office *User Consultation session* - a chance to air views and ask questions. 01432 260750

March 27, 5.00pm - The Courtyard, Hereford. *Wartime Secrets* - screening of the film about Barronia Metals. 0800 1122330

March 29, 10.30am - 12pm - Hereford. Baptist Church Coffee Morning at the Wednesday Club.

March 31, 11 am - The Courtyard, Hereford. *Travelling Tales* film. 0800 1122330

April 2, 5.00pm - The Courtyard, Hereford. *Wartime Secrets*. 0800 1122330

April 7 - *Your Rights Week* - Benefits information and more from Age Concern. 01432 350483

April 29, 7.30pm - Studio, The Courtyard, Hereford. *What Did You Do In The War Granny?*

May 6 - *Romany History Day* at TGS. Bowling, Station Approach, Hereford. mhorner022@aol.com or 01432 760 938

May 20, *Family History Society's Open Day* at the Record Office, Harold Street, Hereford. archives@herefordshire.gov.uk

Spot the box



Bob Bullar from Hereford worked on the signals for the railways on the Hereford to Ross line before the line closed in 1964. Here's a picture of the signal box where he worked. "I remember the strange sight of London underground trains coming along the tracks on their way to be scrapped by George Chen's," he recalled when he met up with Herefordshire Lore at the *Big Event* in South Wye last summer. Can you identify the location of the signal box? (Yes, that's Aconbury Hill behind.) Write to us at In Our Age, Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Callow, Hereford HR1 9BX

The Holy Thorn

Freda Davy from Ross recalls how, every Christmas, the Holy Thorn at Orcop, burst into flower.

The farm belonged to my grandparents and used to be called The Maltsters Arms - when it was a pub. Now it's called the Stars. The tree stood between the farm and a barn and it used to come

out in flower every Christmas time. People would come out from miles around to see it. I believe young men used to pick it for their girlfriends. But once the flower was picked, it didn't last. It would be dead by morning. It reminded me of a viburnum and I don't remember any perfume. I think the tree blew down in the 1960s.

Do you remember any unusual plants? Let us know at Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Callow, Hereford HR1 9BX



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), Siroil Collins, Mary Horner, Bill Dean, Rosemary Lillico, Eileen Klotz, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe, Harvey Payne, Lenora Williams, Sandy Green, Marsha Mahoney, Anna Falcini. **Editor:** Bill Laws. **Administrator:** Dawn Turner. **Researcher:** Bobbie Blackwell.