

In Our Age

Living local history

Autumn 2007
Issue 6



Power to
Tower Road



German POWs in
Ledbury hopyard



Eddie's extraordinary
journey to Hereford

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MARKET MEMORIES



Dead cattle near Garway in the 2001 outbreak. Six million animals on 900 farms were killed. Photo: Hilary Smallwood

Foot and Mouth

Does history repeat itself? In our final extract from Herefordshire Lore's forthcoming book, *A Slap of the Hand*, one Market auctioneer recalled the last, catastrophic outbreak of Foot and Mouth.

Mr Blair said that he wanted Foot and Mouth stamped out as quickly as possible. They put an awful lot of money into it. They employed the army to round the sheep up and the cattle. They had to be valued before they were shot.

I've seen grown farmers cry. They'd been milking the same family of cows for 50 years. They hadn't got Foot and Mouth, but they might be contiguous to a farm that had it. You had no option: shoot 'em!

I did 172 valuations from St Weonards down to the Abergavenny Road and all the Golden Valley. We started one day and by the time we were finished we drove back up the valley and we didn't see one head of livestock left. And in all those valuations I never saw Foot and Mouth once in my life. They never had it.

The worst part was officials left the animals lying about the place, dead, for so long. On one farm there were 150 dairy cows, 100 other cattle, 50 or 60 pigs and something like 700 sheep. They were all shot one night and they were still there around the farm buildings ten days later.

I spent a week with one family doing their valuation. There were little girls from Bristol University injecting lambs, killing them all day long and crying the whole time. Afterwards the sheep lay in the yard, dead, for eight days.

Later the Ministry were trying to get some of the compensation money back because they reckoned some farmers didn't send the right bills. Yet they were importing men from Portugal and paying them through the nose to come and do the work. We had vets from Australia, South Africa. We were in Ross on Wye doing a valuation and they had to go to Worcester first and get the instructions and then come back. And they were staying at their hotel, £120 a night.

The vets panicked. Everybody panicked. And they were horrible to the farming fraternity. After the 1967 outbreak they held a public enquiry under Lord Northumberland, but they refused to hold one this time. I wrote to the Minister and I said I think it was wrong. They didn't dare have a public enquiry because of what would come out.

Someone rang from the Ministry and he said: 'I understand you have files and a dossier of things that happened during Foot and Mouth?' I said: 'I have'. He said: 'I wonder, if I send a van over, could I have the files? I'd like to have them to help us.' I said: 'No. You can't have them. You can see them, but they don't leave my domain and that's it.' He said: 'Well I think I can get an order'. I said: 'You get what you like. You're not having them unless I'm with them all the time'.

We never heard another word. All they wanted was get rid of my files. And I promise you there is a story in those files.

Launch

A Slap of the Hand - The History of Hereford Market, will be launched at **The Courtyard, Edgar Street, Hereford on Tuesday October 16 from 5.00 to 7.00 p.m.**

Can you come to the launch? Call Eileen on 07845 907891 now!

Launching *A Slap of the Hand* will be David Probert, a contributor to the book and the auctioneer claimed to be the loudest in Britain.



Medicine man?

As a boy in the 1950s I vividly remember the Medicine Man who used to sell elixirs, miracle cures and embrocations, always stripped to the waist, presumably to endorse the efficacy of the product, writes **John Baker** from Hampton Dene, Hereford. Nobody seems to remember him. Is he a figment of my imagination?

And, asks John, what about a feature on Hereford Allotments – we have a thriving community at Corporation Farm in Holywell Gutter Lane?

Hiring fair

You might think hiring fairs, where men and women lined up for their services to be bought for a year, are a thing of the long-distant past. But retired auctioneer Colin Manning remembers what may have been the last on the Borders.

The Hiring Fair was in Brecon in May 1945 and young men and women were stood on the bottom rail of the cattle pens to offer themselves for hire for the year. They were paid either £50 or £100 for the year and had everything, bed and board, all in.

These days it sounds like a kind of slavery, but that wasn't the case. The Hiring Fairs were useful: if you were a farmer with five or six children, for example, you couldn't afford to keep them all. Being bought at the hiring fair gave them a leg up in the world.



Colin Manning at Hereford Market

The auctioneers did not sell the people: instead the farmer would go along the row and ask: "Are you a stockman? I'll have you." Or "You a cowman?" The girls would be going in to service.

It was also an opportunity for the young people to get out in the world because a lot of these old farmers, they hardly let their children out of the home. We sold a farm once for an old farmer and he'd never been beyond Bristol in his life. I asked him: "What are you going to do now?"

"Go to Egypt and see the pyramids," he replied.

Moses's washing machine

Moses Meadham lived at Hive House at Tillington. He travelled around Herefordshire in his bee van promoting beekeeping. In this picture however, he is trying to promote the sale of his new invention, a washing machine. Unfortunately he did not patent it. It's believed he also ran a stall in Hereford Butter Market.



Teaching pack

From the infamous sales of wives to the memorable race between a prize pig and a champion runner, some of the stories in *A Slap of the Hand* have captured the imagination of drama practitioner Toni Cook.

She's now working on a resource for teachers, coming up with ideas and starting points for a drama that explores the rich history of Hereford Cattle Market through its stories and characters. "Some of the stories in the book would make great drama pieces for children," says Toni who recently moved to Hereford from York with her young family.

Hired out



Cliff Jones, pictured by Bobbie Blackwell on his allotment at Drybridge, Hereford, was thirteen when he was himself hired out as a farm labourer at a hiring fair. It was the Depression in South Wales and Cliff was happy to work on the farm for food, shelter and £30 a year. Every May 13, Cliff and others like him would travel to Talybont Fair to receive their year's back pay plus the offer of one shilling and sixpence (15p) to work on the farm for another year. They had till May 17 to make up their minds. If they stayed they kept the money and were 'bound' to the farm for another year.

LIVING LOCAL HISTORY



Scenes from a Herefordshire hopyard, possibly Pomona Farm at Bartestree, during the last war when German prisoners-of-war helped with the harvest. One of the prisoners is thought to be a man called Kurt (above and right). Ruby Kemeys from Hereford believes Kurt may have stayed on in Ledbury after the war and later moved to Port Talbot.



On the bus. Many Hereford people remember queing for the early bus and travelling out to the hopyards on their Autumn holidays. Send us your memories of the hopyards.



Power comes to Tower Road

Dave Edwards from Newton Farm loaned us these pictures of workmen laying new power cables in the Tower Road area of Hereford around 1925. His grandfather, Jack, is seen at the top of the pole . . . in defiance of any health and safety rules.

Dave also loaned us this picture (right) of his mother, Naomi and her brother digging a hole for their Andersen Shelter in 1942 at 30 Cottrell Street Hereford.



Crafta Webb

Between St. Andrew's Church and the Red Lion Inn in the quiet village of Bredwardine in the Wye Valley stands the village War Memorial, commemorating those who died in the two World Wars. One of the names on the plinth is that of A. ARROWSMITH, but no one of that surname now lives in the parish.

Who were the Arrowsmiths, and where did they live?

The answer lies in a bare field high above the village, where pasture slopes steeply to a dingle. Some heaps of stone can be seen by the roadside.

This is all that remains of the abandoned hamlet of Crafta Webb, which sprang up about 1800, grew to house a quarter of the people of Bredwardine, but decayed later and was completely deserted by 1930.

Its origin, like its name, is obscure, but it is believed to have resulted from the influx of squatters on the common after the Jarvis Charity began relieving poverty here during the hardships of the Napoleonic War.

One of the early arrivals was James Arrowsmith, from nearby Eardisley. Like most men in those days an agricultural labourer, he married local girl Hannah Bevan in 1813. They had a daughter, Elizabeth, the following year, and went on to produce eleven sons.

Alan Stone

Local people in and around Bredwardine have been working on a film and history of Crafta Webb with The Rural Media Company (www.ruralmedia.org)



Bredwardine War Memorial and A. Arrowsmith, the Crafta Webb man who fell in the First World War.

Civic mystery



John Gallagher from Lichfield sent in this picture postcard of old Herefordshire. But where, he asks, was it taken? "It is circa 1910 and shows a carriage with a mayor and sheriff in a very busy, crowded street."

John Gallagher document87@hotmail.com

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Eddie's journey

In the first part of his story Eddie Dzierza from Hereford tells how, as a teenager, he survived life in a freezing, Siberian labour camp. His older brother was not so lucky.

Edward Dzierza was born on August 6, 1925 in a little village in eastern Poland. By 1939 the village had become a battle front.

As his father Yann rushed off to fight with the Polish Army, his mother, Eugenia, and her six children fled the family farm with a pair of horses.

They were soon caught up in fighting. In a valley before them a Polish cavalry force had stumbled on a Russian cavalry unit.

"When the Polish officer saw what was happening it was too late to turn back. He went for his sword and called: Charge." The family hid behind their cart as Russian planes arrived to bomb and strafe the Poles.

"We went down. My sister was lying in the cart which got a lot of bullets through. But they missed her."

The family escaped, only to almost lose their thirteen-year-old son to a Ukrainian unit. Eddie had found a statue of an eagle, the Polish symbol, lying in a village street. Picking it up he shouted at the Ukrainians: "One day this bird will fly over you."

He was being marched away for summary punishment when his mother

came, crying and begging for mercy. Just then a Russian colonel, passing on his horse, asked his captors what he had done. "Let him go," he told them. "One day he'll be a good man."

Now down to one horse – the other had been shot in earlier fighting – Eddie's family went to stay with another Polish family. But in December the Russians came knocking on the door. "The KGB came and gave my Mum twenty minutes to pack everything."

They were herded on to cattle trucks and, for the next 22 days, transported across northern Europe into Siberia.

"When we arrived, there was a big snow and it was very cold. The Russians soldiers told us: 'You must be marching. If anybody falls out they will be shot.'

"And we saw that. A lot of mothers were carrying everything and eventually they fell and collapsed to the right or left. They were bayoneted or shot."

The Dzierza family's new home was one of the wooden huts of a concentration camp built by German prisoners-of-war. But there were no watch towers or high fences: "You can't escape because the nearest

station was 100 kilometres away. You know, it was only forest.

The next day the now fourteen year old was sent into the forest to work. Given a chisel and a hammer and told to mark trees for grading, he was glad to work. "If you work you have a portion of bread, very little and, if you got brothers and sisters, then you must share. If you don't work you don't have the bread."

Later that year Eddie and his brother were sent deep into the forest to work. They lived in the forest. "It was better because every couple of days a special horse was sent in to bring us supplies."

Several times they saw bears – "You must stand still and solid until the bear goes away" – and then one time a bear attacked their horse. The horse fought back, kicking and pawing the bear with its hooves until the bear fell. But the horse was badly injured and died. "The bear, he's covered in bruises, but he survived."

Then Eddie's oldest brother, Tadeuz, fell ill. It was meningitis. "We'd got a doctor, a good doctor, but he had no medicine because everything, food, bread, was going to the Russian army." Tadeuz died.

"We were still in the camp when war started between Germany and Russia. I remember everybody meeting and singing the Polish national anthem. Then we got the news we were free. Somebody got a newspaper and it said: 'Prisoners free because General Sikorski in London make a deal with Stalin'.

"That same day everybody got a special document, you know? Something like a Russian bus pass! The commander came and told us: 'You must leave this place.'"

Once again Eddie, his mother and her four other children were loaded on cattle trucks and for the next three or four weeks made their way down through Europe to Tashkent in Kazakstan. Dying of starvation in Tashkent the family would soon be reduced to three.

In the next issue Eddie lies about his age and joins the Polish Army.



Eddie Dzierza with his wife and two daughters after the war.

Eddie the bone setter

I was interested to read about my cousin, Colin Manning, and my late mother's cousin, Eddie Drew in the summer issue of IOA, writes Jan Pell from Hereford.

My mother's maiden name was Drew and, following the family history, I have been in touch with relatives in Canada, Australia and America.

I once visited Eddie with my mother and underwent treatment in his surgery at his home - a disused railway carriage. You did not mention his mother who also was a bone-setter and believed to be even better than Eddie. I remember Eddie (below) had a surgery at the Wheatsheaf Pub on Wednesdays, Market Day, when farmers attended either for themselves or their animals.

A Drew family reunion will take place in August 2009 in Aberystwyth.

Dave Price, a Drew relative, is organising the event from Canada and has asked me to help spread the word.

Jan Pell, Hereford
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or 01432 350267



Blind letter

Can we get In Our Age for blind or partially-sighted readers? asks Daphne Ibbott from Hampton Park. And, she adds, print on a colour background is impossible to read even with a CCTV magnifying system.

We don't have the resources to produce a copy specially for blind or partially-sighted readers. But Lisa Marie, our designer, is increasing the size of the typeface by one point and avoiding text on colour backgrounds. Hope this helps.

Fighter plane

A new book by Dilip Sarkar, *Spitfire Voices: Heroes Remember*, features the wartime experiences of Spitfire survivors, amongst them Herefordshire's Bob Morris, then an 18-year-old engineer on a heavily engaged Spitfire squadron during the Battle of Britain. The publisher, Victory Books International, has also published Andrew Long's first work, *The Faithful Few: Worcestershire's Fighter Boys* which mentions Herefordshire's Squadron Leader Neville Reeves DFC, who was killed in action and lies in peace at Anzio. Both books are £20 and can be ordered from any bookshop.

Were there doughnuts In Monkmoor Street?

In Issue 5 of IOA, in *Forgotten Cash* you mention someone who sold doughnuts in Monkmoor Street, writes Mrs P. Morgan. I lived there and would be interested to know where this was. And I think the pork butchers mentioned would be Bridgewater's in Commercial Road. The piece about Eddie Drew was interesting: my father visited him a few times in the 1960s with hip trouble.

Books

Cricket in Herefordshire in the 20th Century by Frank Bennett and Ken Hook tells the story of cricket in the county with tales of the various clubs and their history. 'Cricket is about people and numerous stories tell the social and humour side of the sport including the one about the local player who caught his false teeth instead of the ball and of the player who slid through a cow pat to stop a boundary. The book costs £14.95 and is available from Frank (01432 354917) or Ken (01432 279602).



Joff Leng is 2nd on the right of the back row and he organized this match in the 1970s. But who are all those others?



Typing temp. But who is she? Call IOA if you can help.

Herefordshire Lore?

We're a voluntary group and we've been collecting and publishing people's memories since we started in 1989.

We publish *In Our Age* and we're currently working on our *History of Hereford Market*. We work closely with Herefordshire Archive Service - the master copies of all our interviews are kept there - and the Museums and Libraries service. Previous publications include the newsletter *Age to Age*, *Amazing How Times Change*, *The Schoolchildren's Tale*, *The Shopkeepers' Tale* and our last book *In the Munitions - Women At War in Herefordshire*.

We rely on grants, subscriptions and donations to keep going. *In Our Age*, which costs around over £6,000 a year to produce, is given out free, because we want everyone to get a copy whatever their circumstances.

We don't have an office. But you can reach us at 07845 907891, inourage@btinternet.com or at Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX.

Who's who - On the committee are John Turner (chair), Mary Horner, Rosemary Lillico, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe, Harvey Payne (treasurer), Dawn Turner, Betty Webb and Lenora Williams. Also involved are Bill Laws (IOA editor), Eileen Klotz (administrator), Bobbie Blackwell, Sarah Laws, Marsha O'Mahony and Sandy Green, and our Market Advisory Group including Tom Nellist, Geoff Jones, Liz Rouse, Julian Gallimore, Margaret Wheatstone with committee members Mary, Rosemary and Betty.

The next issue of In Our Age is due in December

What's on?

14th and 15th October - Big Apple event on the Marcle. More details from www.bigapple.org.uk or Tel. 01531 670544.

Friday 19 October - Coach trip to the National Archives, Kew, London. A chance for a day's research at the country's leading archive. The National Archives is also well placed for other attractions, such as Kew Gardens. The coach will pick at 7.00am from Herefordshire Record Office, Harold Street, Hereford HR1 2QX. Tel: 01432 260750. Fee £15, booking essential.

Saturday 27 October - 11am-4pm - Tupsley Murder Commemoration, a FREE open day by Herefordshire Record Office to mark the 120th anniversary of a grizzly event in Tupsley. Children's activities, quizzes, exhibitions and a period reinactor will put the spotlight on crime and punishment in Victorian Hereford.

12th October and 9th November - Antiques and Collectibles Fair, High Town, Hereford 9 am - 4pm. Contact: Elaine Hawkins 01432 260095

20th and 21st October - Annual Cider-making Festival at Hereford Cider Museum. Tel: M. Thompson 01432 354207.

20th October - Leominster Apple Fair, Lion Ballroom, Broad Street, Leominster. Big display of apples and pears, many local and unusual stalls selling local products. Tel: H. Glover 01432 273560.

27th and 28th October - Flavours of Herefordshire Food Festival at Hereford Racecourse. Over a hundred local producers and demonstrations from TV celebrity, Sophie Grigson. Daily 10am until 4pm.

3rd November - ajtc Theatre Company present: "On the Black Hill" at The Market Theatre, Ledbury, £10. Starts 8pm. Box office 01531 636147.

16th November - Herefordshire Family History Society - research evening at the Kindle Centre, ASDA Supermarket, Hereford at 7.30pm. Tel: Philip Bufton 01432 355723.