

# In Our Age

Living local history

Spring 2008  
Issue 8



Glewstone romance



Allensmore butcher



Ledbury Preserves

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# LAND GIRLS AND LUMBER JILLS



Ada Tipper (above in the driving seat) from Ross was a driver with the Women's Land Army ferrying fellow workers from the hostel (below) Morreston House, near Ross to farms in the district.

Below bottom: at Ada and Fred's wedding the Army girls formed a wedding arch with their pitch forks.



As the Government announces an award for Land Girls and Lumber Jills (Women's Land Army and Women's Timber Corp), IOA shares readers' memories of life on the land.

## Glewstone romance

"What brought a city girl from Stoke-on-Trent to Herefordshire?" asks Nancy Price from Alberta, Canada. "The Women's Land Army.

"When I joined I was met, along with other city girls, at Ross and driven to a hostel in the countryside. No messing about: next morning we were handed bib and brace overalls, black high top boots, and a hoe for our first job. So, lots of blisters and sore backs, but we toughed it out. A few days later we got dropped off at different farms then back to the hostel for the night.

"You could chose to live in at the farm house with farmers needing full-time help. I decided to do this and went to Mr and Mrs Josephs, Whitefield Court, Glewstone. Rolf, a German prisoner-of-war, was dropped off daily from Ross.

"I fell in love not only with the beautiful countryside, but with Tom Price from the adjoining farm, Little Whitefield. Tom drove a B.S.A. motorbike – wow!! – and the courtship started with local dances, trips to Symonds Yat and to Lower Common Farm at Mitchel Troy to meet Mum and Dad Price.

"In June 1950 we married so that was the end of my Land Army Days. We moved to Westbrook Court, Dorstone where Tom worked for Uncle John and Aunt Florence Drew." (Nancy's late husband, Vincent Tom Price, was related to the bone-setter and horse-breaking Drew family featured in IOA 5).

"We stayed there for six and a half years and lived at the Wood's Little Mountain on a smallholding before leaving for Canada in 1957 with our two daughters."

## War's over

Anyone remember VE night on the Castle Green? asks **Jean Muldowney** from Oxford Street, Hereford. "Glen Miller music, *In The Mood* and *Little Brown Jug*, was blaring out from the bandstand. I joined a snake of people of all ages doing the Conga which wended its way into High Town where the city was alive with celebrations. The atmosphere was magical. I remember the Key Hostel, a dance hall next to the Odeon Theatre. I used to peer through a crack in the door and watch American soldiers dancing the jitterbug. It was an amazing sight! I wished that I was older and able to join in.

"I was home late that night, but I didn't get into trouble because everyone was singing and dancing. The war was over."

**Front Page:** Topsy Price in the Land Army.



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## Poster girl



Topsy Price from Ross (above) had the distinction of appearing on wartime recruitment posters for the Women's Land Army.

Topsy joined in 1939 spending a month training at Usk College. Sent to a farm near Chepstow she drove the Fordson tractor, managed the hay cutter and worked all day long. "It was very, very hard work and the hours were long." After being photographed for the recruitment poster she was approached by another photographer in 1940. He took his pictures and later Topsy received a set of glossy prints together with a visit from the police! It seemed the photographer was a spy who had used Topsy as a front so that he could photograph the munitions factory nearby.

## Land volunteers

Don't forget the Voluntary Land Army, says **Ruby Edwards** from Whitecross, Hereford.

"My sister Winnie Philpots and I worked at Greenlands during the last war. She was in the glass department and I was on the dress and suit making. After work we'd go off doing farm work, hop tying, weeding, all different jobs.

"We weren't told where we were going because of the war and we didn't get paid. But we quite enjoyed it. It was a lovely atmosphere, everyone working towards something." Later in the war Ruby became a porter guard on the railways delivering parcels and freight across the country with the Great Western Railway and London Midlands Service.

"We had to come off the railways when the men came back and I went to work at Chadds as a charge hand fitter."

After the war Ruby's Mum, Mrs Kemeys from Cotterell Street, organised the bus out to the Pomona hopyard at Bartestree.



## Horsing around



**Lilian Kearne** writing to us in 1995 remembered working with this Blakemore Gypsy family when she was with the Women's Timber Corps.

"Working in the wood one day, I sat on one of their horses. What a width to straddle! One of the men nearby hit the animal across the rear end and the horse bolted with me hanging on for dear life. It eventually stopped and Ann (the bride in the picture) caught us up and helped me down, very shocked, she and I!

"They were a fine and proud family, hard working, spotlessly clean, the inside of their caravan an absolute picture of tidiness." See Gypsy History Month – page 4.

## Apples for Italians

Another wartime memory from **Griff Lloyd** from Ottery St Mary in Devon. Griff grew up in Hereford during the War and recalls a column of Italian prisoners-of-war being marched past his home in Kings Acre Road where some of the residents gave them apples from their orchards. He also remembers the American servicemen preparing to leave for the D-Day invasion.

Griff recalls meeting the first Doctor Who, William Hartnell, who came to Greenlands Store, Hereford to promote his latest film. And before leaving the city Griff was in a BBC broadcast with the London Symphony Orchestra, on stage with the likes of Heddal Nash, Isobel Bailey, Dame Myra Hess and the composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams.

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## June 2008 – National Gypsy Roma Traveller Month

This June is national Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History month. "It's a great chance to celebrate a community that has suffered more than its fair share of intolerance and persecution," says Credenhill's Mary Horner who runs the national Gypsy History group, Romany Road and publishes a regular newsletter. ([www.romanyroad.co.uk](http://www.romanyroad.co.uk))

Have you any tales to tell? Write, phone or email IOA – details on back page.

### Horse breaker

"I lived at Allensmoor as a child back in the 50s," writes Mr Roberts. "We didn't have televisions, computers or so-called entertainments then . . . but we did have Enos Evans. He was a horse dealer. He bought ponies from all over and kept them on Allensmore Common. He used to let us kids ride them on the Common. Some of them were pretty wild so we used to break them in. We loved the life. We would ride anything including sheep and bullocks.

"Then there was the Peterchurch Rodeos where one of the attractions was riding wild ponies. Whoever stayed on the longest won a couple of quid. Those were the days!"

Right: Enos and his wife Rosina's grave, complete with pony and lorry, in St Andrews churchyard, Allensmore.



### Finding mum

In 1940/41 me and my twin were evacuated from London, first to Hereford and then Leominster, writes Geoffrey J. Baker from Utah, USA. For a time we stayed at Priestley Nurseries, Broxwood Court, opened by the wife of the writer J. B. Priestley.

My mother, Mary Baker, is 94 and lives in London. In 1942/43 she worked at the Rotherwas munitions factory. Unknown to us she had a daughter while there. Later in 1944/45 she was employed at the US 107th medical facility near Kington, Hereford. There she met an American PFC, Neal Wilson Reagan, by whom she had another daughter.

As young boys we had no inkling of these events and only saw our mother once or twice a year. In fact we were one of the last to leave Leominster after the war was over, not being picked up till late 1947 by which time our mother had had another child, a son.

Fast forward to about 1999. Carole Bryan from Georgia, USA was searching the internet for her 'sister', the child of dad Neal Reagan and Margaret or Peggy Baker, maiden name Smith, born in Dumfries, Scotland. My mother!

Then my sister-in-law found a message from a lady called Thelma (right) in Belgium looking for her mother. As both stories were located in Herefordshire and during the war there seemed to be a connection. Doing family research I traced an older sister in Scotland, born in 1936.

I know this sounds like a TV drama but there's more: Dr. Louise Manning, of Benbow farm, Castle Frome was in Utah for a symposium on an early Mormon missionary, Wilford Woodruff, who baptized some 400 people in the early 1840s in the pond at Benbow farm. I wrote to her about my Hereford connections.



Thelma Verhulst – is she Geoffrey Baker's long lost sister?

Imagine my surprise when she sent me Herefordshire Lore's *In the Munitions – Women at War in Herefordshire* [£12 include p. & p. 07845 907891] where there is a reference to Thelma and my younger brother!



**Cyril Stephens** of Allensmore with his travelling butcher's van in the 1940s ready for the Christmas round. Cyril, driving, lived on the Abergavenny Road where he ran the local abattoir. Far left is Caleb (Burt) Roberts.

## Reading history

Our resident reviewer **Rosemary Lillico** leafs through some new books.

*A Time to Remember*, editor: John Hughes (£8.99 from Bromyard Local History Society 01885 488755). *A Time to Remember* tells the tale of the author John Hughes as he grew up on a small farm near Stoke Lacy during the Depression and later World War 2.

He tells of difficult times and bad times, times without the benefits accepted as normal today. There is no mention of 'the good old days' here as they were few and far between. With poor diets and bad living conditions many did not survive the hard winters. But through all that shone the love and care of his family, which he never fogot.

Readers of a similar age will pause and think: 'Ah yes, I remember it well!'

*Fownhope Remembered*, editor: David M Clark (£10, Fownhope Local History Group 01432 860017).

Congratulations to editor David Clark and everyone who contributed to *Fownhope Remembered*. This tells of the life of Fownhope from 1919 to 2000, leaving the years from 2000 to be charted in the future.

Many changes have taken place in Fownhope and, as the book shows, with many photographs and personal memories, the community spirit is still very strong: there are thirty-two clubs and activities to chose from.

The people of Fownhope are, I'm sure, very proud of their village, which is well worth a visit. Maybe call in at the Green Man or the New Inn for a little refreshment?

Also out: *Prosperity to this Parish, a history of Redmarley D'Abitot* by Eric Warde touches on people, events, and buildings from Neolithic times to the 21st century. (Redmarley Historical Society 01531 820306).



### Have you any tales to tell?

Write, phone or email  
In Our Age – details on  
back page.

Gordon Thomas of Redhill, Hereford loaned these snap shots of the Queen's visit to Hereford in 1957.





## Eddie's journey – Exiled to England

**Polish-born Eddie Dzierza lives in Hereford. But his journey to this country, told in the last two issues of IOA, was extraordinary. As a teenager he and his family were sent to a Siberian labour camp where one brother died of meningitis. Later his mother and her five children were loaded on cattle trucks and sent to Kazakhstan. She and Eddie's youngest brother and sister died of starvation. Placing his surviving brother and sister in an orphanage Eddie enlisted with the Polish Army.**

"I was Polish Cavalry with armoured tanks. We fought in Italy, at Monte Cassino where nearly 5,000 of our soldiers died." Injured in the head by shrapnel Eddie was flown to India for an operation. He received a second shrapnel wound later. Then, in a field near Ancona, he was strafed by German planes.

"My friend got a rifle and I got the ammunition. He went from me and I said to him: 'Stop! Don't go.' He didn't listen to me. He got a couple of bullets right through and he was dead. I take his identity tag, break the line: put one ring with the number on in the mouth and one ring in the pocket. Then when I stood I feel something very warm."

Eddie had been shot five times in the stomach. "I put my belly in my army cape and I start walking, but I collapse and an Italian woman come and I ask her first which part I am: German or English. She say: 'Inglaterra'. And she went and got the ambulance."

Again Eddie survived and, on the eve of victory, found himself in Bologna. Driven from their armoured car by the heat, he and his two comrades came under sniper fire. Both friends were killed.

As the VE celebrations started Eddie passed the mutilated bodies of the Italian leader, Mussolini, and his mistress. Passing Italians were spitting on the corpses.

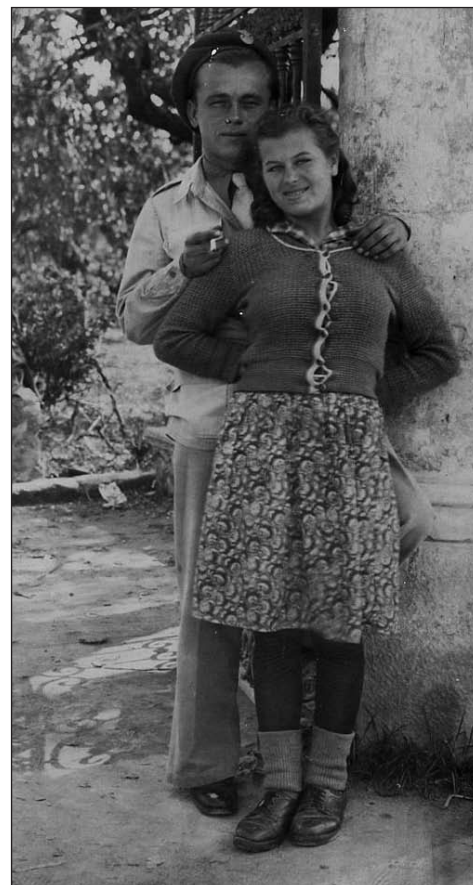
"Everybody went in the street, you know, drinking, lot of flowers, lots of kisses."

Later, at a former camp for Jews, now a transit camp for Polish people, Eddie met his future wife, Emilia.

Now a new problem faced them: where to go. His homeland was under East German rule; Poles who had been forcibly returned had been murdered. And the Italians were unfriendly "because a lot of Mussolini people don't like Poles. When you talk they notice."

In the end Eddie and his family settled for England and came to Foxley Camp in north Herefordshire. Eddie worked for a while at Thynnes tile factory, Withington before becoming a bricklayer.

But there was trouble when his boss, Charlie Bloxham, sent him to work on the new gates at Hereford's King George Playing Fields. "The English bricklayer, he didn't call my name, he call me \*\*\*\*. I told him: 'My name is Eddie. If you want something call my name.' But they was joking, and I lost my temper."



*Eddie and Emilia in Italy.*

The men were fighting when Bloxham returned. "I was thinking: 'That's the last day with Charlie Bloxham.' But he said: 'No, you stay. They got the sack.'"

A year later Eddie was looking for bricklaying work at the Credenhill army base. But when he saw the foreman he realised it was the bricklayer from the fight. Eddie turned to leave, but the man came after him.

"He called me: 'Eddie, come back.' I went. And he gave me the job."

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## Library van

Why don't you do a history of Hereford's Travelling Library? wonders Ann Stoakes from Ballingham.

## Ledbury Preserves

That was my mother, Lil Hopkins, (nee Gwynne) aged 18, pictured on the tractor in 1947 (IOA 7, page 5), writes Sally Preedy. Lil used to ride her push bike from Fromes Hill where she lived to and from her work at Ledbury Preserves every day come rain or shine."

Lil's husband still works as a farm labourer at the ripe age of 78. "There's just no stopping some people!"



Hereford Library van in 1948. Can anyone identify the village? (Herefordshire Libraries)



## Wicked winter

Betty Manning from Castle Frome provides more details of that 1947 winter. "The road between Castle Frome and Fromes Hill was blocked for six weeks by drifts over the telegraph poles in one place. You could walk for a mile holding on to the telephone wires.

"People were running out of food and on the day before this picture was taken my father, Leonard Morris, and three men dug through two miles of snow to Bosbury to get bread. Next day Leslie Farr and his team joined in and they dug their way to Ledbury. In the picture (above) are: (left to right) Leonard Morris (Birchend), Leslie Farr (The Hill), Sid Johns, George Hopkins, Les Jones. Standing: Alex Vernall, Lily, Charlie Jones and Albert Rowlands."

## Fire!

Betty also tells of her mother's phobia of fires after seeing a fatal hotel fire in New York. "Olive Morris lived at Buckend House on the Hopton Estate, the second home to Canon Frome Court. Because of Mother our family all had ropes in their bedrooms and we did fire drills. We thought Mother was over the top, but on April 13 1967 the house was gutted by fire and my mother was lowered to safety. We still have our ropes."

## That water tower

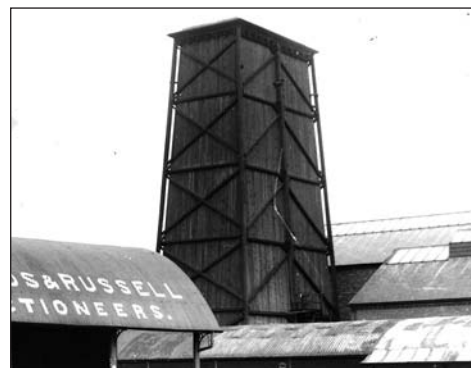
The fall of water from the two wooden towers (Miracle Cure, IOA 7, page 7) was not generating electricity, but cooling the generators which would have become very hot (as they do in a car engine), writes Howard Evans. Water was pumped to the top of the towers and allowed to flow down the inside to cool before reuse. It was common for small fish to pass through the filters at the water intake point and to go through the cooling system and end up in the reservoirs where they grew and bred.

Still on the subject Marie Louise Tudor points out that Passy and Nott were auctioneers, not corn merchants. Her father-in-law remembers that at Market in 1943 his father bought 40 sheep. "He was only 12, but he walked them all the way back to Shire Glatt Farm, Canon Pylon."

## Tickets please

Tony Staite has an unusual request. "I'm looking for rail tickets from any Hereford destination to Rotherwas Munitions factory. I believe weekly tickets were issued in the First or Second World Wars." 01981 250501.

Local rail ticket collector requires a ticket that was used on the ammunition trains to Rotherwas Factory  
Please call 01981 250501





# SNAPSHOT



Fred Tipper, with his niece Gillian Heathcock, was a delivery driver for Williams Central Cafe in Ross.

[www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk)

"Thanks for a great journal - so good for old pen and paper people like me that aren't computer whiz kids," writes Nancy Price from Alberta, Canada.

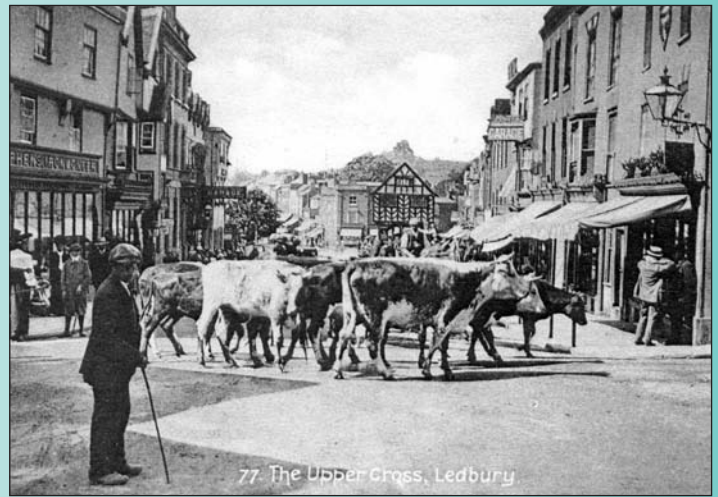
But did you ever regret missing a back copy of IOA? You can now find them all at [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk).

You can email us, send in photos and find out more about Herefordshire Lore's *A Slap of the Hand - Hereford Cattle Market Teachers' Pack*.

## Market drama for primary schools

There's a whole set of ideas for teachers to use for drama based on stories from *A Slap of the Hand: The History of Hereford Market*.

Listen to the farming community speaking of their lives in the downloadable audio files. Each story has simple to follow ideas for drama with Key Stage 1 and 2 children. You don't need any specialist knowledge. Just download the Teachers' Pack, devised by drama teacher Toni Lunn, at [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk).



Ledbury Market in 1904 from an old postcard sent in by Tim Ward from Ross. "The congestion and filth from the market caused it to be moved to land between Bye Street and New Street, a site now redeveloped for housing." By the way, adds Tim, "I enjoyed *A Slap of the Hand: The History of Hereford Market*, but the picture on page 60 is not a thresher - it's a reaper-binder."

## What's on?

### From May 16 Old Market Photos

*A Slap of the Hand* - images from the book will be on display as part of the Herefordshire Photography Festival at the Cider Museum.

### Saturday May 10 and Sunday May 11

**National Mills Week** - County mills open to visitors: (Saturday) Hergest Mill, Kington; Clodock Mill, Longtown; Clenchers Mill, Eastnor; Rowlestone Mill, Rowlestone. (Sunday) Mortimers Cross Mill, Lucton; Court of Noke Mill, Staunton on Arrow; Mordiford Mill; Arrow Mill, Kingsland; Cowarne Mill, Much Cowarne; Waterworks Museum, Hereford; and Clodock Mill, Longtown. Details: Alan Stoyel 01544 230235.

### Friday June 6

#### Music and memories at St Weonards

St Weonards Church. An evening of music and memories based around *A Slap of the Hand: The History of Hereford Market*. Details: 07845 907891.

## In Our Age

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Have you got yours? Copies of *A Slap of the Hand: The History of Hereford Market* from Herefordshire Lore