



Spotted by Rosemary Lillico.
But where did she find it?

Ghostly goes on in King's Acre

Hereford is renowned for its tales of strange hauntings and in my early childhood I vividly remember two experiences of ghostly encounters, writes **Griff Lloyd**. When I was nine I lived at 28, King's Acre Road. One night, asleep in my small back bedroom I was suddenly awakened by the feeling of a 'presence' – and there at my bedside was a dark figure. Who the heck was this person who had come silently into my bedroom? I must have eventually fallen asleep and whatever had been there evaporated with the dawn. The next day I was taken ill with 'flu.

Not long after I was playing with toys in the attic – Mum had gone out shopping. Thirteen lino-covered steps led up to the attic and four of them made distinctive sounds when trodden upon. I was playing happily when I heard the steps groan. Someone was coming up the stairs. I picked up my hefty cricket bat and moved behind the door waiting. I raised the bat above my head . . . then I heard the front door open and close: my Mum was back home! I fled down the stairs. I said nothing of my ordeal for fear of ridicule. But much later a school friend told me that a certain farmer's grandfather had died in my house many years previously.

Memorial Hall 9 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Graham Sprackling: 01981 240529.

13 – 21 June: Herefordshire Walking Festival: 61 county walks 01568 797842

13/14 June: The Garden Festival, Hellens Manor, Much Marcle, HR8 2LY. Local, organic food plus live music. Gail Mittelholzer: 07791 253 720

14 June: Open Garden, Fawley Court, How Caple, Nr. Ross-on-Wye. British Red Cross: 01432 272522.

19 June: Herefordshire Family History Society, Kindle Centre, ASDA, Jennifer Green: "The Secret Life of Aunt May". Free. 7 p.m.

8 August: Three Choirs Festival Opening Day, The Exhibition Elgar – The Hereford Years. Richard Bradbury 01432 820317.

8 August: Steam and Vintage Rally at Boatside, overlooking Hay-on-Wye, more details visit www.threecoaks.org.uk

What's On

2 –21 June: Kington Festival. 01544 340070 for details.

5 June: Ross Farmers Market 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

5/6 June: The Big Event, Wyese Music Festival, King George V Playing Fields, Hereford: fair, music and free fun for all ages. Fri. 6 – 11 p.m. and Saturday 12 noon to 11 p.m.

6/7 June: World War II Weekend: Berrington Hall, near Leominster. Free to visitors in costume! Disabled access to grounds only. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 01568 615721.

6/18 June: Hereford Farmers Market 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. High Town

13 June: Leominster Farmers Market 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Corn Square

13 June: Echoes of the Past: Oral History Event at Ewyas Harold

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In Our Age

Living local history

Late Spring 2009
Issue 12



Finding Sanctuary at Foxley



Shop Front

Hereford's Lost shops



Capturing Family History

Herefordshire Evacuees

Pamela Double couldn't keep away

Pamela Double, from Belmont, arrived in the summer, 1940 with her twelve-year-old and three-year-old brothers. They went to Almley while she and another girl went to Canon Pyon. "It was so late the people had gone to bed so we stayed the night in the Vicarage Cottage. Next day we met Mr. and Mrs. Lewis – they asked us to call them Uncle Will and Auntie Emm. I don't think she was that pleased to have two nine-year-old girls to stay, but Uncle Will who was the gardener at the vicarage took to us straight away.

"We were well treated and went to school in the village. I liked helping Will in the garden and going up to the farm to collect eggs and look after the calves.

"I loved the country life and stayed till Mother had a house in Hereford. I came home and have stayed here ever since."

Mavis Matthews goes to Paradise



Mavis, centre top, with (left to right) Evie from Foxley Camp, Chloe and Claire. Who's the missing girl, right?

Evacuation was a life changing experience, whether good or bad, for lots of children, writes **Mavis Matthews** (nee Owen) from Hereford.

"I was evacuated in January 1941, aged ten, after the first heavy blitz on Liverpool. I had never been so far from home and I cried bitter tears because I thought I would never see my Mum and Dad again. But I was very happy in Clyro with Mr. and Mrs. Evans of Paradise. And the smallholding was true to its name. They were kind and caring people.

"I passed my scholarship that year and went to Brobury House. There were ten girls there and it was like being at boarding school. Our school from Liverpool had taken over Hergest Croft in Kington and again we were very happy.

"I didn't return home until 1944 and then joined the Land Army in 1947 to get back to Hereford. And here I shall always be."

Front cover: Mavis Matthews as a Land Girl.

Life at Foxley



Priest John Vigar with children from the Polish community at Foxley in 1957.

Searching for the Middlemiss

When **Vicky Rayson's** (nee Bishop) parents separated she was just six years old. "I and my four-year-old and two-year-old brothers, Donald and Jeffrey, were put into care for three months before we were fostered, or boarded out as it was called then, by Mrs. May Middlemiss and her lovely family at the Post Office, Broxwood, Leominster. I recall two daughters (one called Pat?) and two uncles, one named Jimmy Rainbow.

"My wonderful Mum took us back to live with her on December 12, 1955 and we lived at 296 Foxley Estate. We were very happy to be back with our mother. I remember going to the Polish church, to school and for picnics in the hills at the back of the house. It's a funny thing: I went back to Foxley a couple of years ago to look for some memories and found the site of the prefabs and an unusual tree on the hillside where I played with my brothers.

"I wonder if any of the Middlemiss family are still alive?"



Toddler Vicky and one of her young brothers before the family tragedy.

The pig on the bus

RAF Credenhill during the Suez Crisis

John Kinross of Little Dewchurch joined RAF Credenhill for his National Service in 1956. It was the Suez War, the RAF was at full strength and you needed a car log book before you could collect your petrol coupons – "about a gallon a week," John recalls.

"Luckily I had two log books, one from my first car, a wreck now lying in my mother's back garden. The Flight Sergeant soon learned of this and one parade day I was excused so that I could drive his cat to the vet.

"Two cooks got into trouble when they dressed a pig carcass in RAF uniform complete with beret, marched it to the bus into town and sold it to one of the Widemarsh Street butchers. But the bus conductor had noticed the trail of blood as did the RAF police and the two were apprehended. That led to a cook shortage in the Airman's Mess so volunteers were called in every night. I recall crawling into the custard vat to clean it and never wanting to eat RAF custard again.

"I was posted to Aden, via Malta and didn't manage to return to Hereford until 2003."

John, president of St Ethelbert Probus Club, is the author of *Discovering the Smallest Churches in Wales*, the same title for England and, you guessed it, is researching for the Scottish title.



John with his sisters on his first 48 hour pass from RAF Credenhill in 1956.

Monday's wash day

More of Freda Morris' memories

"The young lads who worked on the farms had a very hard life. It was lads who earned the farmers their money. My brothers and the other young lads who worked on the farm had to drive cattle into Bromyard by road. They walked and ran miles, poor things. After school on Thursdays (market day in Bromyard) the farmers would be going home in their traps and we children would jump up and hang on the back to hitch a lift. If the farmer knew we were there he would flick his whip behind at us. If it caught you it really hurt.

"All the cooking was done on an open range which had to be black leaded every morning. The washing was done on Monday in a big metal boiler by lighting a fire underneath. It was boiled up with Persil or Rinso, then taken outside and rinsed with soft water from the rain tub. In the last rinse we added a blue bag (they were always good when you got a wasp sting). Everything was stiff and starched and hung outside to dry, then ironed using a flat iron. These were heated on a flat plate, which was put over the fire in the range made by father.

"We had to have an iron holder made of cloth as the iron handles got hot. The travelling Gypsies who sold pegs, sold these iron holders. I loved to see the beautiful Gypsy wagons go by in the hop picking season: they would be travelling to Mr Pudge at Bishops Frome."



Young Freda from Acton Beauchamp was one of ten children of local blacksmith Bill Morris and his wife Polly.



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Shop Front – *Your memories, please!*

Wakefield Knights, Chadds, Wilsons' Seeds, Lakins, Burton Bakery, Marchants, Deans, Kings, Edwards, Hardings, Woolworths: so many old city centre shops have closed. In Our Age wants to hear from you, the shop workers, owners and shoppers about your memories.

Hereford City Council has asked Herefordshire Lore (publishers of IOA) to help collect photos and recollections for Shop Front.

We'll publish your pictures and memories: and we'll produce some displays based on them to brighten up some of the old shops, currently standing empty, in time for Christmas. You can call us on 07845 907891 (just leave a message and we'll call you back); email at info@herefordshirelore.org.uk send us a letter to In Our Age, Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX. Or drop by and meet us at the Butter Market. (We'll post the dates on www.herefordshirelore.org.uk). Meanwhile, here are some past contributions to whet your appetite.



Left: The Royal George (left) stood on the site of the multi-storey car park in Widemarsh Street. The last landlord and landlady were Gerry and Daphne Tillam who used to have sing-songs on a Sunday nights. "We were invaded by coach trips from Wales when the singers found out we had a Grundig tape recorder and they could hear their singing played back. The George was said to have been the first – and the last – coaching inn in Hereford.

Below: A sporty line-up from Marks and Spencer's Sports Team taken in 1953. Were you there?



Above: Sid Wright's Original Fruit Bazaar in Eign Street had the Home & Colonial Stores on the left and Jennings, the saddlers on the right. Sid was a great character and friend of the author, J.B. Priestley who, with his wife, turned their home, Broxwood Court, into a temporary home for blitz victims in the last war. (Photos: Michael Young, Rugby)

Below Left and Below: Two scenes from the Co-op in Widemarsh Street (next to Coral's betting shop). In 1954 Heather Knight (nee Bigglestone) worked in the greengrocery department and recalled the cafe next door, her boss Brian Marchant and even her Mum's dividend number – 698. Valerie Hughes of Garrick Avenue remembered Percy Hughes, Winnie Jones, Doreen Jones and manager Ernest Ellis. (Photos: former Co-op worker Norman J. Owen)



Left: The Vine Inn (left) on Blueschool Street in the late 1930s. (Photo: Mrs A. Lynes)

Below: Monkley's in Bridge Street around 1914. Monkleys had a warehouse in Newmarket Street where, on Market day, they took delivery orders. The late Vi Thomas remembered: "Nothing was too much trouble for them."



The Golden Guinea

Country columnist John Thacker casts his mind back to 1943 when he was scuffling the beet with his wife-to-be, a Land Army girl called Shirley.



It was a warm day in '43 and we were working in the sugar beet field called The Old Hopyard on Boswick Farm, Wolverlow. In those days the seeds were singled out in the rows with a hoe: it was all done by hand, not like today.

I was hoeing the beet out and the Boss was there while Shirley the Land Girl was scuffling between the rows with the one-row hoe pulled by Lively, the old cart horse. At the end of the rows the headland wasn't wide enough and Shirley kept catching off the last beet in the row. And the Boss wasn't in a very good mood.

- You got to get the horse's head right up in the hedge before you turn the scuffle round, he told her.

When Shirley came round again the Boss was all smiles. He offered her his tobacco tin.

- I don't want your old baccy tin, she told him.

But when she opened it she found a gold sovereign in there. She had scuffled it up on the headland. The Boss was pleased and we all went back to the farmhouse for tea. We've still got the sovereign now, but I often wonder about the poor hop picker in years gone by who had dropped and lost his sovereign in The Old Hopyard.

'Our' street

Our family name was Edgar and as a child I thought Edgar Street was named after us, recalls Mrs. Rae Phillips (nee Edgar) from Hereford. The view of the street (below) with Deans grocers on the corner (right) and the Victoria Vaults pub, demolished in 1968 reminded her of the days they lived in one of the houses on the left. "There were five houses; we lived in the right hand one which had an outside toilet for all five houses. At the other end was an outside sink for the five houses to share."



Capturing the family history

Joy Williams has published a history of her own Mum, Edna. Sadly her Mum died before the finished book, reviewed here, was printed. Joy explains how she did it all.

"We grew up with tales of the old days and Mum began to write them down over many years. But the manuscripts were difficult to read and I bought her a computer so she could print them. In her eighties she learnt the skill of the word processor – but it was a team effort: she read and I typed.

"The more we did the more interested I became. The words on the screen spoke of strong emotions. Photographs were found (my cousin scanned and enhanced them: eventually the whole family became involved) and the people in the photographs were brought to life by the stories. The different elements, photos, memories, letters, are so much more valuable when they are brought together. I began to really know my ancestors and not just see them in fading photographs.

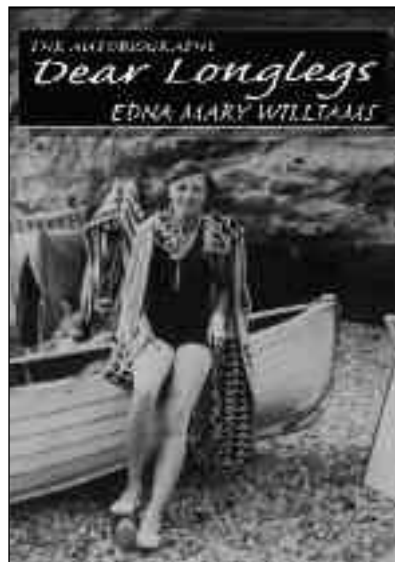
"I continued collecting photographs, letters and tales, after the book was produced. We printed 600 copies at a cost of £50. Mum died before the book was printed, but her tales live on.

The Autobiography: Dear Long Legs, Edna Mary Williams 1918 – 2007

Edna was born in Hadley, Worcestershire in 1918 and in the book we are taken through her childhood and teens with much detail and many photographs. Edna qualified as a teacher and at 19 had a class of 49 pupils. She was 21 when war broke out. Edna seemed to have had a fulfilled career and we are taken through her school lessons and hobbies.

This is a delightful book and I hope it will encourage readers to think about writing their autobiography – everyone has a story to tell. Just think about it!

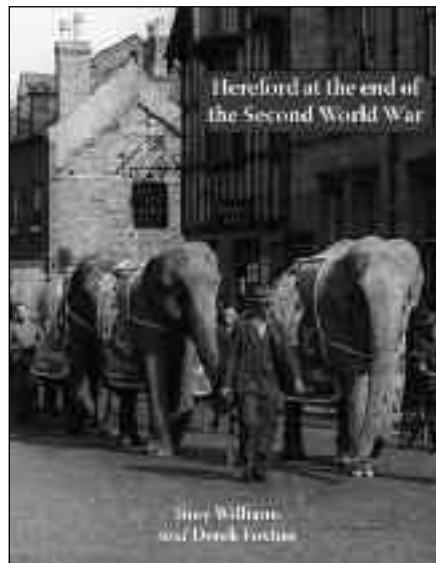
Reviewer: **Rosemary Lillico.**



Hereford at the end of the Second World War, Derek Foxton (Logaston Press, £10 at Waterstones, W.H.Smith, etc)

Derek Foxton has excelled once again with the publication of his latest book. The photographs by Tony Williams, a production engineer and photographer who was relocated to Hereford with Barronia Metals (in Widemarsh Street where Wicks now stands) in 1940. Barronia Metals managing director acquired the Hereford Citizen and Bulletin newspaper and Tony was employed to take pictures for the paper. A huge collection of negatives was discovered when Dr Maureen Beauchamp (Tony's daughter) found them while dealing with her father's estate. What a find!

These were passed on to Derek who, with his vast local knowledge and love of Hereford compiled this book for all the supporters of his previous work to enjoy.



This is definitely a 'people' book and many older Herefordians may well be surprised to find themselves in the photographs and be transported back to 'when and where'. Times were hard, but the British fighting spirit was still strong as shown in the photographs.

In 1946 designer Donald Healey and Westland Motors of Hereford produced a top range motor car known as the Westland Healey Roadster. Sixty four were built, all at Hereford.

This book will be a welcome addition to the book collections of many Herefordians.
Reviewer: **R.L.**

NEWS AND VIEWS

Is that Mother?

This is a long shot, writes **Sally Boyce**, but your picture (In Our Age, Autumn 2008), may include my mother, Joy Merrick (second right). She spent her Land Army days on a farm at Ivington, Leominster. I wonder if Nancy Price in Alberta, who sent in the picture, knows the names?



Buskers at Drill Hall



"My family did their bit for the war effort." *The 1st Battalion Herefordshire Regiment at Cheltenham in 1928.*

"Yes! I remember the Drill Hall, writes **Joan Powell** (nee Faulkner) from Hereford. I had my first birthday there in 1921. My father was Charlie Faulkner, Sgt Drum major of the Bugle Band.

"My brother and I used to watch the parades and band in the yard from our large sitting room window upstairs. In the Military Club (ladies weren't allowed in) there was a large photo of my grandfather, Sgt Hayes, W. A. Faulkner, hanging in the Bar.

"The Drill Hall was well used for Trade Exhibitions, lots of food

samples - lovely! - shows, concerts, flower shows, dances with "Buskers Dance Band" and boxing matches. A few of the doctors from the Greyfriars practice used to play badminton in the evenings.

"Three generations of my family died in uniform: my grandfather in Gallipoli August 7th 1915. My father who died from a heart attack on Ross Shooting range in his 40s was with him. My 21-year-old brother was killed in 1940 in Norway with the Airborne. I was called up and went to RAF Credenhill so I think we did our share in the war effort!"

The Pretenders

Just to correct you, Martin Chambers (the drummer in the Pretenders: IOA Issue 11) was the son of Peter Chambers, trumpet player for the Russ Allen Orchestra, writes **David Hirst**. And **Simon Clarke** emailed from Ross to say much the same. Sorry!

Caroline Wood emails to "commend you on the wonderful content and concept of In Our Age". Is it possible to download future issues of IOA?" Yes, so long as we can persuade our long-suffering web editor, Chris Preece to post them at www.herefordshirelore.org.uk. IOA comes out every three months.

Paul Reeves from Hampton Dene says: "Absolutely love IOA" and has taken out a subscription. Follow Paul's example and fill in the form on the back page.

M.W. Hereford

I remember Majorie Wight (IOA 9, Summer 2008), writes **Margaret Howells** from Winchester. My mother and aunts were friends of hers and may have gone to school together at the Alice Ottley School, Worcester. Marjorie lived with a Miss Marsh in a house at Mordiford in the 1930s and used to visit my parents at Putley. In summer they drove an open-topped car. I didn't realise she was a photographer.

And **Mary Wakefield-Jones** writes from Grendon Bishop to say that many of Marjorie's photos appeared in the correspondence pages of Country Life in the 1950s. "In the December 2, 1954 copy she has a photograph of two measuring sticks used for measuring cloth and a few lines of explanation. She always signed herself M.W. Hereford."

Bronze Age finds

Herefordshire Lore's **Rosemary Lillico** was given a detailed tour of the archaeological dig at Rotherwas recently by Darren Hillier. "We published our book about the Munitions factory that stood here from 1915 to 1946 in 2003. But here were the remains of a Bronze Age settlement and a Roman villa – there were also traces of tank repair work from World War II together with lengths of tank tracks."

The site is earmarked for the expansion of the business park, but a full archaeological investigation is being carried out before buildings go up.



Above: Rosemary and Darren at the Bronze Age site.

Special Air Services

We are working with BBC Hereford and Worcester on a plan to record the recollections of families from our most famous Regiment, the SAS.

IOA is also working with the County Records Office on Take Flight, a project with Herefordshires' Polish people. Get in touch if you can help.

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MORE INFORMATION: STUART HOWARD

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