

Floody Hell



Many readers recognised the photo of a flooded Belmont Road in IOA 19 (above right) including Valerie Gittings and Phil Davies. “The view is down Belmont Road towards the ASDA roundabout (previously known as Belmont roundabout, but that name seems to have transferred to the one outside Tesco’s further up the road),” writes Phil. “The buildings on the left have been shops, farmhouse, dental surgery, fish and chip shop whilst, if my memory serves, the building on the right was a motorcycle repair business. “The area notoriously flooded most years until ASDA came along and a large sump pump system was designed to protect their very vulnerable position, which despite scepticism from locals, has proved effective.”

Top, Ross Road from The Ship Inn around 1935 (is that the old St Martin’s School entrance, top right, mentioned by Eric Dean, page 4?) and, right, Rees Shop at 58, St Martin’s Street. Photos: Derek Foxton.

Picture puzzle

Can you shed any light on this photo? Let us know at IOA, contact details below.



Don't Miss Out!

It's National Mills Week
on May 14-15
and there's 17 Herefordshire mills open and waiting for
your visit - details at www.herefordshirelore.org.uk.

And if you're in Hereford on **June 25**,
drop by and meet the In Our Age team at the Castle
Green Fair, Hereford.

In Our Age Herefordshire Lore PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX
M: 07845 907891 E: info@herefordshirelore.org.uk www.herefordshirelore.org.uk
Editor: Bill Laws Picture Editor: Bobbie Blackwell Design: Lisa Marie Badham @ pinksheep
Herefordshire Lore: Eileen Klotz, Mary Horner, Rosemary Lillico, Stasia Dzierza, Marsha O'Mahony, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe, Sandy Green,
Harvey Payne, Liz Rouse, Chris Tomlinson, Betty Webb, Mary Hillary, Mavis Matthews and Julie Orton Davies

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“Well done for the hard work you all do to produce the little gem that is In Our Age. Keep up the good work: it provides older people like us with a look back at our childhoods and youth.” Mike and Doreen Wood from Belmont.
Keep those subscriptions coming in.

To subscribe to In Our Age please send this slip to: **Herefordshire Lore**, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX.
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In Our Age
Living local history

Spring 2011
Issue 20



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And Ullingswick Page 2 & 3



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Eaton Bishop Page 5



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Rotherwas Page 6

POWs at Peterchurch



POW Otto Carl

Otto saves two-year-old's life

I was born at Penlan, Peterchurch during the Second World War and remember first Italian and then German prisoners of war coming to work on the farm, writes **Eva Morgan**.

The camp was on the left-hand side of Wellbrook road just below The Elms, now the Crossways estate. I remember with affection Emil Franz and Otto Carl. They learned to plough and plant, to reap and mow with my father's green Standard Fordson tractor.



Emil Franz

One time Otto earned my parents' gratitude when he grabbed my small sister from virtually right in front of the carhorses my father was bringing into the stable. As the huge horses galloped round the corner into the farmyard, Otto, washing his hands at the outside tap, saw that Mary, aged about two, was playing right in their path. He vaulted the wall, about four and a half feet high, and scooped her up, risking serious injury to himself.

Spring 2011

"Hasn't Herefordshire changed during our lifetimes?" muses **Phil Davies** (by email at info@herefordshirelore.org.uk). "Not all for the better and so it is great that your publication exists to look back at how things were. I always enjoy IOA and pass it on to my father-in-law who can be heard exclaiming: 'I know them!' as he peruses it. Great work. Keep it up." After Phil's kind endorsement, help us keep IOA going by persuading your friends to subscribe using the form on the back page. We've pegged the costs at £10 a year despite rising post and print prices.

Back copies of IOA at www.herefordshirelore.org.uk



Before they returned to Germany they stayed briefly at a camp at Tupsley, Hereford, where Otto, a non-believer, was converted to the Christian faith. He and my mother regularly wrote and he sent us photographs including ones of his wedding to Gerda. But Mum lost his address when she and

my father moved to Bodenham in 1960. In about 1982, after her death but while my father was still alive, a letter arrived at Penlan from Otto to say that his son would like to bring himself and Gerda over to see where he had lived and worked and been so happy. They stayed during the strawberry season and ate Penlan strawberries with relish for at least two meals every day. Otto had changed little, still tall, dark and handsome and always smiling. He was pleased to see that the hedge he had pleached, learning as he went, at the bottom of the Castle Pitch was still growing well and kept trim. It still is.

Otto and I continue to correspond. He, like us, never heard from Emil whose wife and son were in the East and we can only hope that he was reunited with them.



Otto in 1946

Nursing mystery solved

Elizabeth (Betty) Steffen, pictured in IOA 19 worked at Bell Orchard House, Ledbury and retired in early 1963, writes her granddaughter **Jan Thomas** (nee Steffen). "The photographs are of my father, Adrian Steffen (he was Elizabeth's son) and her daughter Monica and my cousin Jane around 1958. Elizabeth lived in a caravan off Hoarwithy Road, Hereford when she retired until she was caught pneumonia and died in the winter of 1975. Her son Adrian died in 2004 and Monica died two years ago in Devon.

"As far as I'm aware, my sister who lives in Birmingham and I are her last surviving relatives."

A reader found the photos in an old suitcase buried under a pile of rubble at Wyelands caravan site, where ASDA now stands. They will be forwarded to Jan in Lingon.



Camp bakery



Fred and wife Eileen.

The Ullingswick bread smugglers

When **Manfred 'Freddie' Kocksch** from Pencombe sailed back to the UK from Canada, having been a German prisoner-of-war over there, he applied to stay in Britain. "My home had been East Germany and I didn't want to go back there. You could stay here if you agreed to work in agriculture for five years."

After a spell at a Ledbury camp, Freddie was transferred to Ullingswick. In the DVD



Fieldwork, he tells of how his fellow prisoners always kept a little wheat back during the harvest and after having it secretly ground into flour at the local mill, baked bread back at camp. "The guards were in on it too; they used to

take some home."

One time Fred was carrying the wheat in a bag on the cross bar of his bicycle when he lost control. "I went straight down this hill, across the main road and into the railings. That was the end of that bike!"

Copies of the *Fieldwork* DVD (£10) from The Rural Media Company 01432 344039.

POW memories?
Let us know at **In Our Age**
www.herefordshirelore.org.uk

Our Skylon summer

Rosemary remembers London in the '50s

In the summer of 1951 after the lean war years, the Festival of Britain was held on the south bank of the Thames in London, writes **Rosemary Lillico**. One of the many exhibitors was Painter Brothers Steelworks of Mortimer Road, Hereford, their contribution being the huge silver space-craft like apparition that towered above everything else, Skylon.



Skylon towered "above everything else."

I was just 13, but took a great interest as my Granddad, Joe Cotterell and Dad John 'Taffy' Harris worked at Painters in the galvanising or dipping shop. My aunt, Rose Cotterell was also a crane driver there.

Skylon brought Hereford roads to a standstill as it was hauled on two articulated transporters and when the exhibition opened my Dad took us to London for the weekend to see it and visit my sister who lived there.

We left Preston Wynne in our little Austin 7. Dad had pages of directions, but that didn't stop us getting lost. And when our car broke down, out came the toolbox and

overalls: Dad usually managed to find and fix the problem.

We went up Birdlip, through Northleach, Wantage, Whitney and finally along the Great North Road to my sister's at Highbury.

The next day we went to the Festival site with its fountains, the Royal Festival Hall and the Dome of Discovery, but you could see Skylon above everything else: I was so proud to think it had been made in Hereford. Dad bought me a gyroscope (I never ceased to wonder how it balanced) then we were off to Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, St Paul's and Westminster Abbey. It cost a fortune in bus fares (my brother-in-law paid for everything). On Monday morning it was back to Hereford, getting lost and breaking down. Skylon was scrapped after the Festival: now, I wonder if anyone kept a piece as a memento?



Rosemary, left, with her family.



Festival fountains.



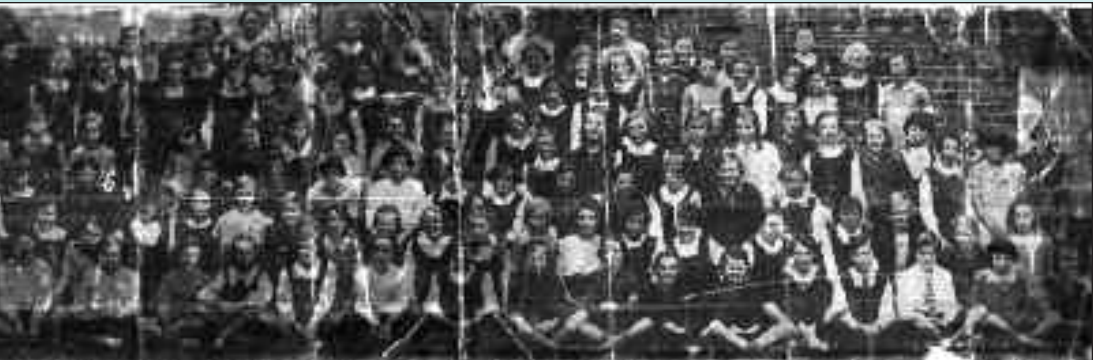
In 1927 Francis Mostyn, the Archbishop of Cardiff takes tea with Rev'd Jeremiah McCarthy and Colonel John St. Clare Macmillan at a garden fete at Merton House in Ross on Wye. The photo comes from Gordon Amand who is researching the life and times of Ross Urban District Council. Do you have any photos of the councillors? Call Gordon on 01989 562291.



July 1946 and Ravenhill's directors J.H. Tummey and R. P. Ravenhill along with 104 workers visit Ford's at Dagenham to celebrate 25 years in business. According to the Hereford Citizen and Bulletin the Commercial Road agricultural servicing buisness had started in 1921 as an agency for Ford cars. Later the workers took a boat trip down the Thames.



'It's hard work, this!' Sheila Payne worked not at the Sanitary Laundry but at St Mary's, Burghill. "I started there at 16 in 1964 - it was an isolation hospital as well - and worked through til it closed when I was 55. They tried all sorts to keep it open - we had contracts to do the Dutch army's sleeping bags and ambulance uniforms." Did you work at St Mary's? Share your memories and photos with IOA: 07845 907891 or info@herefordshirelore.org.uk



Phyllis Dean was at Bluecoat School (above) while husband Eric attended St Martin's (right).

Check out
www.herefordshirelore.org.uk

Sanitary Laundry: A smile from workers at Hereford's Sanitary Laundry. Phyllis Dean in the middle of the back row (left) started there at fourteen. Facilities at the laundry, next to the Rose Gardens in Ledbury Road, Hereford included a workers' tennis court. (Also in the photo, middle row, left to right, Rene Taylor and Katie Beardsley with, front row Molly Leary (nee Payton) and Violet 'Bozzy' Evans.)

Phyllis attended the Hereford's Bluecoat School (below left) while husband Eric went to St Martin's School (bottom front row, third form left) in 1927 seen here preparing to celebrate May Day with their May Queen.



Up river at Eaton Bishop

Riverside fry ups

When I returned last year to have a new look at Hereford after nearly 60 years, one of the first things that struck me was a complete absence of pleasure boats on the river, writes **John Slatford**.



From left: John Tebbut, Brian (Fishy) Gardiner (in front), Alan Bradbury, Tommy Dawes, Roy Brimelow, Barbara Jones, John Slatford, Nimmy Hodges, Audrey Baker, Roya Bevan, Malcolm Startin, Margaret Powell (now Margaret Bentley-Leek), Ben Bentley-Leek.

During 1951- 52, much of my leisure time was spent at the Rowing Club and on the river. For me the summer of '52 was the most enjoyable. After a week of training and Saturday regattas, Sunday was for pleasure and many of those days were spent rowing up the river to the Camp Inn at Eaton Bishop. Now this all seems to be long gone.

As I remember, there were at least four pleasure boats that the club owned and they were already probably fifty years old. The largest of these with four pairs of oars was affectionately known as the Comet. Another with three pairs was called Randan - I've no idea why. Having booked our places, we would set off mid Sunday morning, with food ready for a river bank fry up, to arrive at the "Vee stream", then disembark and climb up to The Camp in time for mid-day opening. There we would stay until closing time at two o'clock.

Then it was down to the river bank for the fry up and a leisurely afternoon swimming, with ball games and generally lounging around until opening time again at seven. Eventually after various 'black and tans' and 'Wickwar ciders' and after ten o'clock closing time, a noisy row back down river to the club house brought the day to a close. Monday mornings at work were often rather hung-over!



Canary Girl Clohilda



Clohilda Dickinson lived at Christchurch in the Forest of Dean during the Second World War. In the second extract from her memories as a Canary Girl at the Royal Ordnance Factory, Rotherwas, Clohilda recalls the ominous sound of an aircraft overhead.

In rain, hail, snow and sleet we boarded Old Faithful, our bus for the thirty mile journey to ROF Rotherwas, and to the tune of *She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain* *When She Comes*, or *Run Rabbit Run* we kept the driver entertained and kept up our own moral at the same time. One day, skidding and sliding in the snow, one of the wheels parted company with the bus and went its own way: another time when I missed that particular bus there was an accident and a man was killed. In winter it was anybody's guess as to how long our journey would take.



One Sunday evening my companions and I were standing at the cross roads near our old church with our gas masks and helmets, waiting for the bus to take us to work. It was our night shift and nostalgia overtook us as the village folk began to assemble for the evening service and we listened to the mellow strains of the organ drifting down to us through the trees. Eddie Gwilliam, the only man amongst us, turned to me: "I wonder how many more times we shall be standing here catching the bus," he wondered. Little did he know that he would never wait with us again. He was about to take his last ride and never return to his sick wife and children.

On time as usual the bus pulled in and after an uneventful journey deposited us at the factory. After a brief spell in the canteen we started working through the night shift. As was the rule, people working in contact with explosives took it in turns to have a bath once a week. The bathrooms were a great distance from the factory proper, and we were allowed the time to have our bath during working hours. This night the leading hand came to me and told me to take the last bath of the shift. I calculated that by the time I had finished my bath it would be the end of our shift and I would not have to go back to the unit where I worked. Feeling fresh and clean after washing away the horrible powder that burnt my fair skin I closed the door and stood outside for a moment, the workers in the units would be almost ready to leave. Listening to the sweet song of the nightingale everything seemed to be at peace, it felt good to be alive. The peace was broken suddenly by the sound of an approaching aircraft.

Read Clohildas final account in the Summer issue.

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Weobley's 'bolshy' post box

It's easy to spot the Royal cipher on Royal Mail letter boxes, writes **Simon Vaughan Winter**. There's VR (Victoria Regina), EVIIR (Edward VIII), plain GR (George V), GVIR (the Queen's father), EIIR (the Queen) and even EVIIR (Edward VIII before his abdication.)

This 'Anonymous box' outside Weobley post office, however, lacks the Royal cipher. Cast by Andrew Handyside of Derby it is dated between 1883 and 1887 when the Post Office were introducing new boxes. A Type A and a smaller Type B (the Weobley box) were brought in from the late-1870s, but in 1887 it was pointed out that the new boxes lacked the Royal cipher.

A scathing letter to The Times demanded to know if the Post Office was siding with the Bolsheviks: "The General Post Office is saving the revolutionaries the task of removing the Royal cipher."

As soon as the presence of these Anonymous Boxes was brought to the attention of the Secretary of the Post Office he ordered that all future castings should bear the words POST OFFICE and the Royal cipher.

If you want to find another Anonymous box (this time a Type A) in Herefordshire go to Hereford's Churchill Museum where the box, formerly on Aylestone Hill is sited. Find out more about our letter box heritage at www.lbsg.org.



Weobley's Anonymous pillar box

NEWS AND VIEWS

Bandsman Delamont

The life and times of a famous Canadian bandleader, Arthur Delamont, are recalled by **Don Griffiths** from Newtown. Delamont emigrated to Canada where he founded Vancouver's Kitsilano Boys Band which won an international award at Crystal Palace, London in 1936. "Delamont, who was born in Hereford in 1892 (he played in the local Salvation Army Band), really achieved something and we ought not to forget him," says Don.

Wonderful Work

"I am thrilled by In Our Age and your website www.herefordshirelore.org.uk," writes Liz Summerson (nee Garrett). "As an exiled Herefordian, I'm delighted by your wonderful work. I lived in Llanwarne from my birth in 1950 to about 1958 (my mother was the last headmistress of the village school) and I attended the Girls' High School. My family had roots in several parts of the county, and while I no longer have close family in Herefordshire I come back when I can to enjoy the red soil, the beautiful landscape, the sandstone houses and the local accents. I don't know how you are funded, but I do hope you are going to be able to survive in these difficult times."

(Big thanks to our many readers for their kind donations.)

Parade Girls

The girls on parade (IOA 19, page 5) were in the Victory Parade, writes **Alan Willis** from Three Elms, Hereford. VJ day was August 8 and the big parade took place around the twenty-something of August, 1945. The girls are from the Girls Training Corp (GTC). Boys were well catered for during the war with a choice of Army Cadet, Sea Cadet or Air Cadet. You published another photo of the parade in August 2000, in Age to Age of the Air Training Corp Band (see the picture at www.herefordshirelore.org.uk)

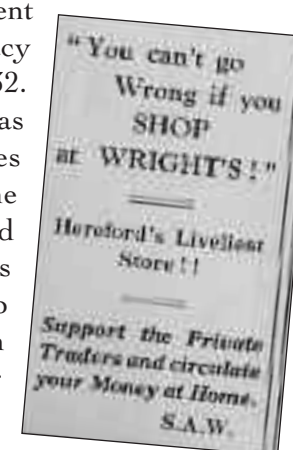
Burton's Bakery outing

Valerie Gittings reveals that the coach trip (IOA 19, page 4) was for employees of Burtons Bakery, West Street, Hereford. "My father Jack White, standing next to the driver, was foreman there and he almost always sat in the single seat next to the driver. The coach would be one of Bill Morgan's of Wye Valley Motors who operated two luxury, maroon-coloured coaches at that time. The building on the left behind the coach was pulled down to make way for Iceland, the lower building being a hairdressers and part of the Stagecoach Inn."



Shop local

It's not a new message as this advertisement from the 1934 Hereford High School for Boys magazine shows. It was sent in by old boy **Lesley Rowlands** from Ewyas Harold who went to Holme Lacy School in 1932. Lesley also has fond memories Monkleys the grocers' and Douglas Monkley who died from tetanus after grazing his leg.



Hereford Cathedral

After 18 months of collecting, filming and editing stories from the Cathedral Close, The Close in Living Memory was screened at Borderlines Film Festival to a packed auditorium. The film was very well received and many commented on what a great evening they had - one, who'd been to ten other films, said it was the best! Alongside the festival audience, many of the film's 'stars' turned out to see themselves on screen and were joined by family and friends, creating a very happy, festive atmosphere.

Copies of the DVD are available at the Cathedral shop (donations welcomed). Teachers interested in the education pack that accompanies the DVD can call Jo Henshaw at Hereford Cathedral on 01432 374255.

The project was a Catcher Media presentation for the Hereford Cathedral Close Project in association with In Our Age, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Send us your memories

Call us (07845 907891),
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