

In Our Age

Living local history

Summer 2011
Issue 21



He's subscribed? Have you?

Dennis, above left, reveals the identity of a talented Herefordshire artist. Page 2



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Llanwarne page 3



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Samuel Meredith page 4



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Hereford United 1939 page 5

He's subscribed. Have you?

Welcome to Issue 21 and words of wisdom from **Chris Tomlinson** and **Eva Morgan** (with POW memories) and **Rosemary Lillico** reporting from Violette Szabo Museum (opposite); **John Barrie** on a traumatic road accident (page 6) and **Wendy Beavan** on her football star Dad, Buck Oliver (page 5); Canary Girl **Clohilda Dickinson** on a fateful morning for Forest man Eddie Gwilliam (page 6); and **Ambrose Emerson** on the famous Russ Allen Band (page 7).



Dennis Beavan (pictured right) recounts the story of his RAF dad (below). He is one of our new subscribers. We need more! In Our Age costs £6,000 a year. Without more subscribers we may have to go subscription only before the end of the year. So dig out that tenner, and send it in with the form on the back page. Ask a friend to join too! Already a subscriber? We'll send you a reminder when it's due for renewal.

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Mystery artist revealed

This hand-painted poster, found by **David Williams (IOA 19)** was painted by **Roy Beavan**. His son Dennis from Fownhope says his father was originally a draughtsman and designer for Thinns Tile Works (it stood on Holmer Trading estate).



Dennis' grandfather Fred, a Hay-on-Wye bespoke tailor, had met and married Annie Price after she called at the shop to have a riding habit made to measure. After the couple moved to St Martin's Street, Hereford they ran a tailor's and sweet shop. It was here that their son, Roy was born.

Artist Roy had no professional artistic training and when war broke out he went shell-filling at Royal Ordnance Factory Rotherwas (see Clohilda's story, page 6). Later he joined the RAF and worked in the drawing office at RAF Credenhill. "After the War Roy worked on fairground painting until he got a job with Butlins Holiday camps and moved to North Wales," recalls Dennis.

Like his father, Dennis also joined the RAF, training at Madley as a wireless operator. When war started, however, he was one of the Stonebow Road messenger boys. "We were trained by Superintendent Weaver to go around the city giving out information if bombs fell on the city."



1947 and Roy (front) surveys flood waters in St Martin's Street, Hereford with (right) Captain Derek George and Squadron Leader Ken Smith, a former POW at the German prison camp Stalag III.

Bridge Street Breakdown

Mastercraft's Eddie Thompson of **Allensmore** shares his thoughts on **Bridge Street, Hereford**.

"Having started a cycle business in Ross Road with Edgar Thomas in 1953, we moved to Bridge Street in 1958, purchasing the property from the newsagents, Harry McSoley, a dapper man with a waxed moustache. Spurways Bakers, which had a horse-drawn bread van, and a black cat that sat amongst the cakes in the window, was next door.



In the 1950s there was the Black Lion, nurses' home, Spurways, Mastercraft, Edgar Thomas House Furnishers, Mr Day the haberdashers, a similar shop with Mr Walters with a model of a beehive above the shop, George Lewin newsagents, and Lewis Smith chemists.

Opposite was Wilson grocers (on the corner of King Street), Stewarts Jewellers, Freddie Rudge greengrocers, LCM Meat Butchers, Harding Ironmongers, the church, Daisy Bishop's Cae Glas Café, Franklyn Barnes seed merchants, Monkleys grocers, a shoe repair shop, Mrs Godley's sweet shop and Sully Garage – Armstrong Siddley agents. There were also two solicitors: Lambe Carless and

Capel, and David Allen & Carver.

Dennis Beavan remembers people fire watching from the roof of Franklyn Barnes during the War.



The Italian POW basket makers

Eva Morgan with the second of her reminiscences about prisoners of war working on the family farm, Penlan, Peterchurch.

I was born during the Second World War and there were two Italian prisoners-of-war living in the house with us but I don't remember their names. If the camp where they were billeted was a distance from the farm, they could stay with the family, a popular move as farmers' wives [and certainly my mother] were usually good cooks and there was always plenty to eat even when food was still rationed.

Rabbit figured pretty often on the menu (usually alternating with home-cured bacon, most of which was fat!) and was delicious and popular in the days before myxomatosis. Rabbiting with ferrets was a popular weekend pastime: it was essential too as five rabbits were said to eat as much as one sheep. And they bred like, well, like rabbits!

The Italians made baskets in the evenings out of split hazel, which they dyed red and green as well as leaving some natural. I wonder did they use natural dyes? If not where did they get the dye from as things were all very short for a long time after the war and they wouldn't have had much if any money.

The baskets were oblong in shape with a solid piece of wood forming the bottom with the upright spars stuck into it and woven in underneath. The sides sloped outwards slightly and there was a carrying handle. They were good and strong and Mum had hers for many years. I presume they may have sold some to locals. They also made my Mother a basket with a lid attached to the main body of the basket by two circles of woven hazel on the one side and a peg and loop fastening on the other. She had this to keep all her mending and sewing things in and used it up until her death in 1982.



Violette Szabo, the British secret agent executed by the Gestapo at Ravensbruck concentration camp aged 23, would have been 90 last June, writes **Rosemary Lillico**.

Rosemary Rigby organized a party in her honour at Catref, Wormelow.

Once the home of Violette's aunt, Florence Lucas, Catref was where Violette spent happy hours on leave from the Special Operations Executive. Pictured at the party last year, (above, left) Virginia McKenna who played Violette in the film *Carve Her Name With Pride* and Violette's daughter Tania (right). A round of 'Happy Birthday' was sung to the brave young lady who was most certainly with us in spirit.



Hereford had its own master basket maker: Andrew Barnett.

Spaghetti lessons And missing eggs

Eva Morgan's memories remind me of three Italian POWs who came to work on the Hills Farm at Llanwarne, writes **Chris Tomlinson**. The POW camp was at the South Hereford Hunt Kennels at Wormelow.

Curiously we ran very short of eggs on the farm, which was a mystery as there were plenty of chickens. Suspicion fell on the Italians. The farmer Mr. Spode, (a member of the Spode China family) did not say anything to the prisoners: he just went round their coats which were hanging in the barn and clapped his hands either side of their pockets, breaking the eggs in them.

Later, I remember, some of the POWs were invited to the farm to make spaghetti. It seemed to me as a six-year-old, a very messy business. Later in the war a German POW came to work on the farm. He seemed a very nice person. He told me he did not want to fight and surrendered as soon as the opportunity arose.



Farmer spode of Hills Farm



From My Album: 'They're moving a landmark'



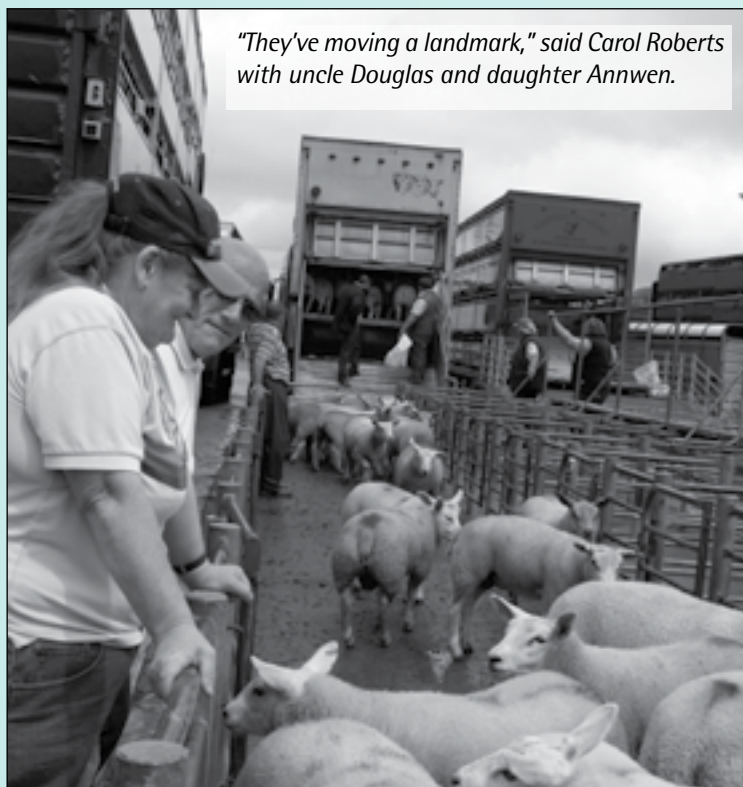
Ninety-three year old Samuel Meredith, of Howberry Barn, Westhide came on the final day "just for a chinwag. I was born December 3 1917 (the midwife got stuck in the snow so I was told) at Lower House Farm Clyro." What did he think of the move? "It's progress!"



Eric Price of Cale Farm, Longtown with Cliff Price of Vowchurch, Tracy Guy from Cannon Bridge and Don Chilman from Preston on Wye.



David James from Tenbury with Andrew Baker of Kingstone and Bryan Morgan from Bridge Farm, Almley.



"They've moving a landmark," said Carol Roberts with uncle Douglas and daughter Annwen.

Joanne Probert's family once owned Merton Meadow. She contributed to *A Slap of the Hand – A History of Hereford Market* in 2007.

"Hereford was purely a market town. Everybody knew everybody. The market was enormous, every day of the week, horses, cattle, pigs all sorts of things. I loved it. I used to walk down to the stables to see the animals. Then there were all these cheapjacks, people bargaining, selling medicines and all sorts.

"I was talking once to a lovely girl who worked in the National Bank, Broad Street. She said: 'When I was in the bank, you might look through the window and see somebody walking down by the Green Dragon who you didn't know. You'd say: 'Who is that?' You wouldn't know anybody in Hereford now. Isn't that strange?"

We still have a few copies of *A Slap of the Hand* left - £12.00 including p&tp.


The National Bank, 1930, now the NatWest which recently celebrated 175 years in Hereford.

'Everybody knew everybody'



x" – the final day for the Cattle Market in the city

Market memories



Our country columnist **John Thacker** casts his mind back to the pig that prompted a divorce.

You used to have to get to Market early for the pigs. They were sold up under the wall down there by the Market Tavern. One day Rolly Manning and his brother took ten little weaners in, but two escaped.

The roads were quieter then and the weaners ran up Widemarsh Street. Rolly caught one under the counter in a shop and his brother caught the other in the street.

Everybody kept a pig back then. One day this lady went shooting pheasants with her husband and there was a sow starting to farrow on the farm. When they came back this sow had had ten piglets and the last was just a small one.

"What'll happen to that one?" she asked the farmer.

"He'll probably die. He's what we call a niscul, a runt," he said.

"Well," she said, "I'll take it."

And she took it back to their house in Hereford and kept it

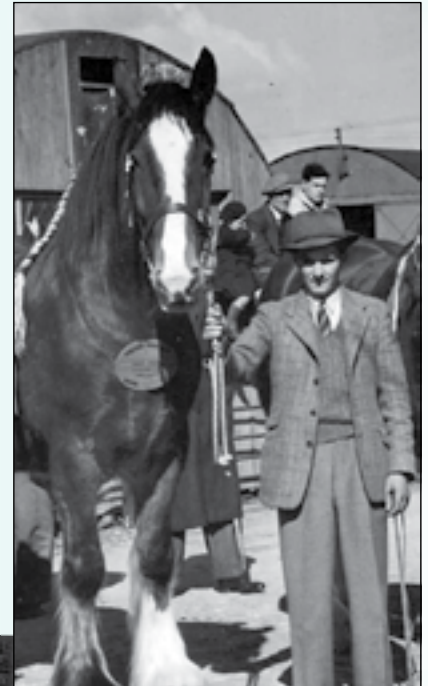
in the garden feeding it on milk. Of course it grew and it grew and it grew. The husband wasn't happy about the pig, but she wasn't going to give it up.

Then one day she had to go to her mother's and while she was away he took the pig to the slaughterhouse and had it killed. She never spoke to him again and they were divorced.

Every Friday in the 1960s and 1970 there would be 50 or 60 fresh-calved cows sold in two lairages down there in the Market. Philip Yarranton used to wash them down and get them looking nice. The dealers came mostly from Cheshire.

But that was all long ago. All we can say now is good luck to the new livestock market.

Prize Shire Horses at Market in a photo from Mrs S. Winney for A Slap of the Hand.



Hereford United 'Buck' Albert Oliver, fourth from the left, was born in Ebbw Vale and after winning a schoolboy international joined the Hereford United team, seen here in 1939. Daughter Wendy Beavan from Fownhope says he and his wife Doris lived in Whitehorse Street and that her Dad worked for Bulmers – "You automatically had a job at Bulmers if you played for United."

Football memories: does anyone remember referee Basil Watkins? And are there any women who played at Edgar Street in the wartime teams? Let us know at IOA – 07845 907891 In Our Age, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX or info@herefordshirelore.org.uk

It was the enemy!

Canary Girl Clohilda tells of the fateful day nearly 60 years ago at ROF Rotherwas.

Clohilda Dickinson from Christchurch in the Forest of Dean was one of Herefordshire's munitions workers, the 'Canary Girls' so named because handling explosives caused their hair and skin to turn yellow. The war ministry made workers a bath break during their shift to mitigate the effects and Clohilda was returning from her bath break on July 27, 1942.



"Dawn was breaking and the quiet countryside lay shrouded in a pall of mist that hung like a canopy about the ground. Without warning, a plane appeared low above me. As there was an RAF airbase nearby I thought it was one of ours and waved to the pilot who I could see quite clearly.

"Horror struck as I recognised the emblem on the plane. It was the enemy. It swooped down over the units. The sirens sounded too late and the bombs fell. Then he was gone.

I never knew how many lost their lives. Was it just a coincidence that I had been told to take the last bath?

"It was a sad little crowd that returned home to the Forest of Dean that morning and there was a vacant seat on our bus, Old Faithful. I went at once to the little cottage where fellow worker Eddie Gwilliam lived to tell his sick wife that he would probably be tending the injured and not to worry. I knew she would be wondering why he was so late. In my heart I feared the worst had happened.

"Eddie never returned. He was buried in the little churchyard (Christchurch) near the crossroads where we had stood that fateful night. He was soon to be joined by his young wife as she was laid to rest beside him. When the war was over I chanced to meet again one of my old friends from the city, reminiscing about old times.

"Oh yes, we were bombed very heavy the day you left and the house next door where you used to shelter in the cellar received a direct hit.' I hope and pray as I travel on through the storms of life until I reach my journey's end that my guardian angel will always be near to shield and protect me, under his wing."

Ninety-three-year-old Clohilda died in her new-found home, Australia, in June 2010. Her daughter Sandra Watson writes: "I have to tell you how special it has been to be able to read Mum's story. Each day I looked on the computer to see if the next issue had been printed and was up on the web: today of all days I find it there. Soon I'm flying back home to the Forest of Dean to bring Mum's ashes to Christchurch where she belongs. Mum never got to see her story printed in her lifetime, but I know how proud she would be."



Widemarsh tragedy

John Barrie from Devon recalls a sixties trauma.

In the summer of 1965 when I was a pupil at Hereford High School for Boys on Blackfriars Street (our headmaster was very stern Bertie Howe) we lived in Lyde and cycled everywhere, Leominster, Ross, Hay-on-Wye, Abergavenny, even Monmouth.

One day I was cycling into town down the one-way Widemarsh Street behind one of those distinctive Corona lorries with crates of pop stacked at 45 degrees on both sides. We were by a butcher's shop on the right, midway between Blackfriars Street and the High Street.

All of a sudden the lorry screeched to a halt, crates rattling and women screaming. I swerved around the lorry's driver's side and was confronted by someone's legs in the road: a lad of my age had been run over.

He was lying completely in the road, flat on his back in a crucifix position. He was clearly dead. A pole with a metal hook, used for lowering shop sun canopies, was lying nearby.

I found a policeman outside the bank where Widemarsh Street joins the High Street and we returned to the scene, by which time someone from the butcher's shop had draped the young lad's head with towels. I assumed the butcher's lad had lost his footing whilst lowering the shop's sunblind.

It was a tragic accident that gave the driver no chance to react. I still recall the tragedy to this day, over 45 years later.

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Dance nights

Don't forget the Park Hall Ballroom at Wormelow, says one reader. **Ambrose Emerson** obliged with his recollections. "Park Hall was opened by a haulier from Halifax, Amos Peel, who had a farm at Little Dewchurch. He built a shed and turned it into a music hall saying if it didn't work out he'd put chickens there instead."

But Park Hall was a success. From the 1950s until 1982 the dance hall was also an important venue for the Russ Allen Band. Ambrose who played keyboards with the band remembers: "There were three trumpets (including Pete Chambers, Doug Long), two trombones (Sammy Cairns, Des Owen, John Chamberlain and Andrew Amott amongst them), four saxophones (including Ray Walters, Harry Boarder, Ernie Lawrence), bass (Neil Hirst) and drummer John Sidwell who formed the band with Russell, Allan and Desmond Owen. One of our singers was Yvonne Roberts."

Ambrose, whose father Archie, an engineer at Hereford Aeroparts, encouraged his musical abilities from the start, was also part of the Booth Hall jazz scene: who remembers them? Let us know at 07845 907891 or info@herefordshirelore.org.uk

That Festive feeling

Chris Tomlinson writes: "I, my parents, and my late twin brother came from London in late 1940 when the Barronia Metals was bombed out (September 1940) and moved to Fryers Garage in Widemarsh Street, Hereford (where Wicks is now). Our family was billeted at the Hills' Farm, Llanwarne from 1941 to 1947 before we moved to The Lyons, Orcop.

"Orcop School fundraised to enable a school party to go to the Festival of Britain (IOA 20). (I remember being asked to stop singing during the concert rehearsals: I never tried to sing since!) Eventually the money was raised and we headed for London, most of us having never been there before.

"Skylon was an incredible sight: it's still the first thing that comes to mind whenever the Festival is talked about. After the Festival we stayed overnight in bomb shelters under Clapham Common, which were so deep they were below the Underground. It was very noisy until the trains stopped. We all came out itching and scratching. On our second day we went on the underground to the Docks to go over a cargo ship.

"Because I had been on the underground trains before, I knew what to do, but not everyone got off the train at the correct station – they didn't know you had to be ready to get off as soon as the train stopped. The trains didn't wait!"

Pat Morris and sister **Judith Neville** remembered the day her Dad, Jo Hanks, a welder at Painter Brothers made a replica of the Skylon and mounted it on the back of Pat's bike for the Hereford Carnival parade. "We won first prize!"

And **Philip Weaver** writes: "I was fascinated to hear that the famous Skylon had been made in a Hereford factory. It could have been re-erected on Castle Green! I am compiling a dictionary of county biography and would like to include Painter Brothers. Does Rosemary Lillico or other readers have any biographical information on them? [philipweaver@live.co.uk]

Wrestling matches

Gill Bett from Breinton remembers going to see wrestling matches at the Market more than fifty years ago; **Margaret Riley** remembers her days in Hinton when the Bishops' Meadow was still fields.

Old wool washers

One reader recalls G. R. Herron and Son of Commercial Road ("You drove through where the petrol station is now into Canal Rd.") With its distinctive tall chimney Herons, built here to take advantage of the Tan Brook waters, processed wool for the wartime Wool Marketing Board. Around 100 lost their jobs when it closed around 1967.

Wrong RAF station

The aircrew (Family Album, IOA19) were from RAF Madley, not Credenhill points out **Dennis Beavan**. "You can see the white flashes on their caps which indicates they were training as aircrew." And apologies to Sheila Payne (IOA 20, page 5) "You made me ten years older than I am!"

Sevastopol canon

"What happened to Hereford's Crimean trophy cannon, which Percy Pritchard mentions in In Our Age 2009," asks **Roger Bartlett**. A Hereford Times report in 1940 says the Council approved scrapping all the Castle Green guns except Roaring Meg and the Sevastopol gun. Metal railings were scrapped at the same time for the war effort. The two guns currently by the Nelson Memorial appear to be earlier weapons, though their origin is also uncertain.

Bone setter

"My ageing father was treated by a bone setter by the name of Drew. Do readers know if there are any Drew relations still practising in the field of bone manipulation," asks **Jamie Loach**. Eddie Drew, (right) held a surgery at the Wheatsheaf on Market day where he attended both people and animals. His mother was also a well-known 'bone setter'. The Drews held a large family reunion in 2009.



Send us your memories

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or send us a letter

Horse-drawn deliveries

A photo of **John Sheffield** and his horse Roddy, one of the final horse-drawn deliveries from Bartonsham Dairy comes from farmer **John Matthews**. "By the way, the Sanitary Laundry (IOA 20) was next to the Rose & Crown not the Rose Gardens. It was big business in the days before the washing machine. They used to do all our laundry."



Bartonsham Dairies: John with Roddy

Company archive



Congratulations Miss Morris – 1925 to 1961, reads the banner.

The Woolworths chain, which opened in 1909 as a 'penny and sixpence' store closed in 2009. Readers have recorded little about the local 'Woolies', which stood near Sugarkings in Eign Gate with the Palladium cinema at the back. However **Mrs. M. Spratt** loaned us this photograph of a staff celebration for Miss Morris. Did you work there? What can you remember?

Another puzzler

This is an old town farm, one of the many swept away by post-war building. But which one? The clue is: the district still bears the farm's name.

Well done to all those who spotted Ledbury Market (Picture Puzzle: IOA 20) including **Mrs G. Lewis** from Bobblestock. "The farmer is driving cattle to our slaughter house by the station. My husband and I were on TV's Way We Were programme once."

Glenn Sanger thinks the picture was taken near the Chocolate Box and **Andy Taylor** reckons the photographer is outside Woolworths or Wellworths looking towards the top cross. "The trees on the right are those in front of the Almhouses, the windows on the extreme left would be the windows of the New Inn and are now a shop, and halfway along the top you can make out the legs of the Market House.



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