

# In Our Age

Living local history

22 Autumn 2011

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# Welcome

Welcome to IOA 22 and to Madeline Haines' memories of county runners (page 3), June Evans' county dancers (page 4), Joan Thomas' Redhill Hostel, James Petrie's lost Civil War evacuees and all those recollections of Hereford's Sanitary Laundry (page 7).

Herefordshire Lore, run by volunteers, has been publishing Herefordshire memories since 1989. Following on our histories of ROF Rotherwas (Women At War in Herefordshire) and Hereford Cattle Market (A Slap of the Hand) we are planning to record the story of Hereford Butter Market.

Next year will be 90 years since the old Market burnt down. Did you work there? Do you have any old photos? Let us know - contact details below.

## Funds

IOA costs £6,000 a year and, since our Butter Market bid failed to secure National Lottery cash, we're looking for grants, donations and sponsors. We're also cutting back on costs. **This means fewer free copies of IOA.** So subscribe if you can.

A year's subscription still costs only £10. Or you can buy a group subscription for your day centre or residential setting for only £25.

Fill out the form on the back page or go to [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk).

(We are changing banks, so be patient if your cheque takes time to clear.)

## Back issues

Did you know you can download IOA free at [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk) And you can read all the old copies back to summer 2006. Old copies of Age To Age are available at the County Records Office, Harold Street, Hereford.

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## Catholic chapel for POWs

**In her final article on wartime Peterchurch, Eva Morgan remembers the religious Italians.**

The prisoners-of-war were based at a purpose-built camp on Wellbrook. There were several long huts covered with corrugated tin and lined with tongue and groove boarding. I can't remember if any had an apex roof, but I remember the ones with a curved wall and roof forming a half moon shape.

There was a superintendent who had separate brick built quarters.

The Italian prisoners made a chapel for those who wished to worship, in one of the huts and this was furnished with the chairs, organ and, maybe, other things, from the disused church at Urishay Castle.



*Family friend: One of the German POWs, Emil Franz, who worked the Standard Fordson at Penlan, Peterchurch.*

This chapel was later used as a church by the Roman Catholic congregation of the area. There was a severe shortage of housing after the war and most ex-service accommodation, including that at Peterchurch, was utilised as housing for local people, mainly young married couples who eventually moved into the new houses at Closure Place.

After the Italians, the Germans arrived and after them came the Poles who helped with the haymaking. They didn't live with us I have no recollection of their names, but several married local girls and made their homes on farms in Herefordshire.

I recently discovered from a TV programme that these Poles might have been the Polish Resettlement Corps, some of whom had escaped from Europe and fought with the Allies. They couldn't go back to Poland, now in East Germany. Many had had been in the Russian gulags or slave camps.

Read Eddie Dzierza's memories of a Polish fighter in IOA 6, 7 and 8 at [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk)



*In Our Age at the Butter Market: right to left Rosemary Lillico, Betty Webb, Irene Tomlinson and (left) Chris Tomlinson with a new subscriber. We welcome new volunteers.*



## Runaway success

### She picked hops to pay for her running pumps

Sprinter and sports-girl Madeline Haines went to Scudamore School when she was twelve. "It was just for girls then."

Her father, Herbert Jenkins, who had worked at Evans cider makers on Widemarsh Common, was a regular timekeeper at many of the athletic events. He persuaded Madeline to pop on some running shoes.

"We went hop picking to pay for my track suit and spiked running shoes. I bought my best, a hand-made pair, from Jennings Sports in Eign Gate." (She still has them today). Then she took to the racetrack.

At 16 Madeline was in Plymouth for the All England Amateur Athletics and she went on to win a gold medal with a relay team for a major sports event on Widemarsh Common.

"Funny thing was we were all Madelines that year: there was me, Madeline Palmer, Madeline Bufton and Madeline Jenkins." But, says Madeline (now Haines), no one could beat Jennifer Powell. (Front page).



Year 5 at Scudamore School, Hereford and Madeline Jenkins (now Powell) is first on the left, middle row.

## Disaster on the Wye

### Dare leads to drowning

I was in my third year at the High School for Boys in 1940, writes **John Slatford**, when Birmingham's St Philip's Grammar School brought 195 evacuee boys and 14 masters to Hereford. Our school day ran from 9.00am until 1.00pm and the Birmingham boys were there from 1.30 until 5.30pm.

January was said to be the coldest month ever recorded in Hereford and the Wye was frozen over by the Castle Green. Having a half day free was a novelty and many children played on the river.

But on the afternoon of January 18, between 40 and 50 children were playing on the ice when it gave way plunging eight or nine children into freezing water over eight feet deep.

Some scrambled to safety, but four of the children, Elva Mudge, Jocelyn Whitlock, Heather Berryman (all 12 and pupils at the High School for Girls) and Denis Mason from St Philips, were drowned.

Survivors Decia Green, 10, was taken straight to hospital and Iris Cotterell, 12, to the fire station in Wye Street. Another, Philip Thomas from Birmingham, told the inquest later that they had been tracing their school initials on the farthest part of the ice and dared the High School girls to do the same.



Floodwaters creep up Greyfriars Avenue, Hereford in 1998 as Gail Barrett heads for June Evans' home in a rescue boat. (Photo: June Evans)

The coroner gave special tribute to four of the rescuers, Hereford Training College student Margaret James, Roma Dean from Bridge Street, Francis Collins of Stanhope Street and Henry Cairns of Baysham Street.

A little more than a term later St Philip's returned home, influenced perhaps by the river tragedy.

(Our best wishes to Decia who also recalled that dreadful day).

**Front page:** Racing ahead. Jennifer Powell now in her seventies and living in America was a winner when she lived in Mostyn Street, Whitecross, Hereford. "She won everything," says Madeline Haines.



# From My Album: June Evans and Madeline Jenkins



*Mice smile: A BBC camera man focuses in on a young Madeline Jenkins (now Haines) who had brought her two mice to the Holy Trinity animal service at Whitecross in 1952. The services were run by the vicar, Rev David Snell (father of explorer John Blashford-Snell).*



*White Planes: Wormelow Park Ballroom in the early 1960s saw the Saunders Valve Christmas party featuring the White Planes band on the famous revolving stage (see IOA 20, Dance Nights, page 7). From left John Parry, Peter Cheshill and his wife, Madeline Jenkins, her sister Pamela and husband Bernard.*



*Dancing girls: June Evans was one of many child ballerinas who attended the Betty Butcher Dancing School held at the Town Hall between the wars.*





# Haines open their family albums for IOA



*Standing still: Madeline Haines with, from the left, back, Trevor Watts, Victor Tarrant (brother of the late John Tarrant, Hereford's famous Ghost Runner), Alan Marsh, Jennifer Powell, David Rees, Brian Snell, Derek Davies, Margaret Morris, Madeline, Bill Thomas (he ran the Broadleaze pub and loaned the athletics group a room) and Don Cousins.*



*Tile works party: Madeline Haines' mum, Bunty, at the Thinns Tiles Work Christmas party where her sister, left, worked in the late 1940s. The Works stood on Holmer Trading Estate, Hereford.*



*Olympic hopefuls: In 1953 the Fire Brigade won the Hereford Carnival float competition with their pirate galleon, but it didn't diminish the spirits of the Olympics team from Ediswan, Rotherwas, Hereford, says Bernard Haines.*

*With Jock Rogers at the wheel, Bernard (left) and his cycling mate John Sockett on the right, they set off from Rotherwas with Ray Bishop and Randolph Vaughan (founder of Ascari's Café) holding the torch aloft. Next to Randolph stands Monica Quinn and at the rear, Doreen Tovey, Betty Quinn and a couple of others. (Do you know who they are?)*

*The apprentices at Ediswan, which later became AEI, were a creative lot: they also built river craft for the Hereford Regatta including a Mississippi paddle steamer complete with revolving paddle, recalls Bernard.*

## Life at Redhill Hostel

**The Timber Corps didn't do 'drained'**  
In 1942 Joan Thomas quit her job in a Market Drayton shoe shop, joined the Women's Timber Corp and boarded the train to Hereford. Her new home was to be the Billy Butlin designed Redhill Hostel.

My life changed forever when, on the 15 August 1942, I stepped from the train at Hereford.

My friend Phyllis Green joined the Women's Timber Core with me. "They cried when I left home this morning," she told me and looked as though she was about to do the same.

A lorry manned by girls in dungarees and aertex shirts met us and, because we were new and wore skirts, we were allowed to sit in the lorry cab. On the way to our new home, Redhill Hostel, we stopped for milk shakes at a milk bar in Commercial Street. By now the girls had become Betty and Iris.

The Hostel was a new world with its glassed-in reception area and a very efficient man with the most attractive voice dealt with us quickly (too quickly for me, as I liked the look of him). I summed him up on the spot. Intelligent - the spectacles bore testimony to that. Below average height - oh, but I can wear my flatties. I had almost fixed our wedding date. He was smartly dressed: but then I've brought my navy two-piece with the white trim - and my

flatties are navy too so it'll be all right. He dispatched us with our keys and a typed list of do's and don'ts without giving me a second glance.

The Hostel had reading and writing rooms, a cute little library and a residents' lounge with a radio and luxurious armchairs grand enough for any hotel.

The large, maple-floored dance hall with its stage and dressing rooms was kept cleaned by Eric Caton. He had a string of filthy stories. He'd worked in a circus looking after the lions. He was proud of his affinity with his lions. No doubt they'd heard his stories first.

The social events were presided over by the portly social director Eric Newall who looked every inch the West End theatre manager. (He had been a railway booking clerk before the war and his favourite reading when on a lavatory seat was rumoured to be Bradshaw's Railway Timetable.)

The entertainment was fab. There were Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA or Every Night Something Awful) and Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) shows while film and stage stars Googie Withers and her husband John McCullam played in a stage in a production of *They Came to a City*.

A Negro Ballet Company brought us a wonderful stage performance, and we had entertainers such as Bernard Miles ("Best bit of sharpin' stone in 'ertfordshire").

There were two 500 seater dining halls served by a huge central kitchen bustling with staff. The staff worked the whole of the seven-day week in shifts. A free weekend came round every six weeks, yet it was

## Holiday Fellowship

Redhill Hostel in south Hereford was built by the Ministry of Supply in 1941 and managed by The Holiday Fellowship. It was home to Women's Timber Corps, Women's Land Army, and munition workers from Royal Ordnance Factory, Rotherwas.

It could accommodate up to 2,000 residents, although numbers averaged 1,250 with about 120 staff, most of them bedroom stewards in the twenty single storied sleeping blocks.

We weren't surprised to hear that Billy Butlin had advised on its design: it looked like a cross between a Barracks and a Holiday Camp, though later, when we returned to it at the end of our gruelling day's work a little of the holiday flavour was lost.



*Still open for business: a 1971 advert for Redhill Hostel*

accepted as quite normal by those it affected. The pattern of operation for Redhill Hostel was, like the famous Windmill Theatre motto: We never close.

On the Timber Corps we worked from dawn to dusk in winter and in the summer from dawn to early evening. One of our girls recalled how she once helped to chop a tree down in her garden at home and was "drained" for the rest of the day. She never thought then that she would be felling massive trees as a job. The Timber Corps "didn't do drained" so she just had to get on with it.

*Next time Joan describes her days as a Timber Jill.*

Footnote: Cameron Gray writes: "My grandparents, Gerald Moy and Jane Birchall were living at the Hostel in 1949 when they married."



*Lookouts: Fire watchers on the roof of Franklyn Barnes, Bridge Street - from Anne Sandford's Hereford in Old Photographs (1987)*



## Spanish evacuees

Nineteen Spanish children were evacuated from Spain during the Civil War to Hereford in July 1937, writes **James Petrie**. They were housed in Berrington Street at St Vincent's Convent, now the Bingo Hall, I think." James is from Basques Children of '37, a group which keeps alive the memories of the 4,000 children evacuated from Bilbao to Britain during the Spanish Civil War. "This is a plea for more information," says James. Contact him at james\_petrie@btinternet.com or call us on 07845 907 891.

## Burghill 'plane crash

Plans to place a plaque at Burghill marking the crash of a B24 Liberator on August 4 1944 were revealed at a recent meeting in the village, writes **Rosemary Lillico**. "Jerome Corre and Neil Taylor gave an excellent presentation of the crash that came down on the laundry of what was then the asylum. Two crew survived the crash, but eight others died. The Mountain Rescue Team from Madley attended the accident, but details remained secret for many years. It was heart warming to see so many younger people at the presentation."

## Skylon

With much talk about Skylon, built by Painter Brothers for the Festival of Britain, **Malcolm Startin** recalls his days at the company, set up by Ralph Painter and his elder brother in 1929. The company, which had been making barns and garages, moved into electrical transmission in the late 1920s. "I joined as a 16 year-old apprentice when I left Hereford High School for Boys in 1947." He had become director and business manager when he finally finished forty years later.

## The Sanitary Laundry

Several readers, **Derek Blake, Reg South, Ken Griffiths, Michael Morris, Viv and Maureen Bilbao** among them, called or emailed (info@herefordshirelore.org.uk) to remind us that the Sanitary Laundry stood next to the present day Rose Garden complex off Ledbury Road in Hereford.

Derek Blake used to deliver the papers and recalls his grandfather's pony and float, equipped with milk churn and ladle, "not a posh Bartonsham one," he says. (See IOA 21, back page).

Reg South remembers the path that passed by the laundry from the end of Stonebow Road and onto Ledbury Road while Maureen Bilbao used the Union Walk footpath, which ran alongside the hospital, to meet her Mum after school so they could travel home together on the bus.

"My mother and aunt both worked there in the late 1940s and early 1950s. My mother was in the ironing department and had a special iron for the choirboys' ruffles on their cassocks. My aunt was in the packing department where clean washing was wrapped in brown paper and tied up with brown string. I was fascinated when she showed me how to break the string with a quick tug (no knives or scissors required)."

The Sanitary Laundry, she explains, was situated where Highgrove Bank is now. Keith Morgan worked there from time to time.

"I was involved in the electrical installations and maintenance there as an apprentice electrical engineer with my uncle, A.V.C. Morgan, from 1958 to 1961.

"The Sanitary Laundry was a lovely place to work. Washers and rotary ironers were powered by belts and shafting driven by a lovely old steam engine fitted in a green and white tiled enclosure and the brass parts of the engine were lovingly kept polished by the man who tended it.

"The steam engine and laundry boilers and ironers were heated from a coal fired boiler at the rear of the premises. In those days Rockfield Road came out on Ledbury Road and the Sanitary Laundry stretched up Ledbury Road with Laundry Cottages 1 and 2 next door. Opposite the Laundry was Wilsons Nurseries that fed Wilsons Seedsman's shop in Commercial Street and Rockfield Farm."

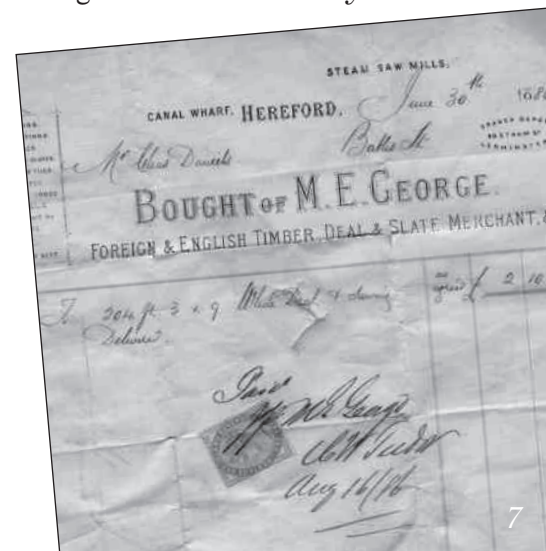
Keith eventually left for the better pay and the wider experience of Harding's Electrical before joining Bulmers Cider for over 39 years.



*Sheila Payne's recollections of life at the Sanitary Laundry (IOA 20) sparked many of your memories*

## Tudor's

**Doug Emery** discovered this 1886 invoice in the attic of a house in St James, Hereford. It records the receipt of £2.10 shilling by M.E. George of Canal Wharf, Hereford. "Today," explains Doug, "the business is Tudor's, but it started out as George's before becoming George and Tudor and finally Tudor's."



## Chips for the G.I.s

**Annie King** used to take in washing for the American GIs based at the Harold Street barracks in the 1940s, remembers her daughter, **Marian Emery**. "Our house backed onto the barracks and one time, when they were confined to barracks after some trouble in town, the G.I.s were calling to her: 'Can you get us some fries?' Dad had the potatoes from his allotment and the G.I.s had plenty of frying oil (there was a big shortage of cooking oil) and we were soon handing bowls of fries over the fence." Marian is still in touch with one of the G.I.'s nieces in America. "The Americans must have been on a secret mission, because he never returned from Europe," she says.

Who were these G.I.s? It's a mystery to Martin and Fran Collins, authors of the forthcoming book on G.I.s, *The Friendly Invasion of Leominster*. "There were armoured US units at Foxley preparing for D-Day and the SAS-style 5th Rangers in Leominster, but we knew of no Americans billeted at the Barracks." Can you help? Who were the Americans in Hereford? Call us on 07845 907891 or email: [info@herefordshirelore.org.uk](mailto:info@herefordshirelore.org.uk)



## Puzzler

**Derek Blake** was the only reader who correctly identified this puzzler (below) in the last issue of IOA. It was the Newton Farm before its post-war transformation into a housing estate. **Doug Emery** from Park Street, Hereford has loaned an even more difficult picture for readers to identify. The side of the shop, which faced a busy Hereford street, still looks the same today while the old mill name is a handy clue. The shop keeper pictured was William George Jay, seen here with a lad on his lap at a relative's wedding.



## Those Woolies girls

*I was amazed to recognize myself and my friend Edith Palmer in the photo of Woolworth's staff, writes Pamela Wright. (IOA, 21, back page) Seventeen-year-old Pamela Bishop, as she was then, is in the spotted dress and Edith, with her hand on her chin, sits next to her. And Derek Blake from Pengrove Road thinks he recognizes Herefordshire councillor Glenda Powell, sitting next to Edith. (Photo: Mrs M. Spratt)*



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