

# In Our Age

Living local history

SPECIAL  
ISSUE

Issue 26 | Autumn 2012

Keep us  
going



herefordshirelore.org.uk

Find us on

SUBSCRIBE  
TODAY!  
Back Page

www.herefordshirelore.org.uk

Find us on

SUBSCRIBE  
TODAY!  
Back Page

www.herefordshirelore.org.uk

Find us on

www.herefordshirelore.org.uk

Find us on

facebook

Join  
NOW

for your slice of  
living local history

www.herefordshirelore.org.uk

Find us on

facebook



Hereford City Council

# We need your support



Welcome to *In Our Age*. This issue marks the end of subscriptions and the start of our membership. From now on we're asking readers to pay at the beginning of the year, £12 for individuals and £30 for groups. Please fill out the membership form and send it with your cheque or postal order to Herefordshire Lore. We cannot keep going without your support!

We know that many voluntary groups, day centres and communal homes enjoy *In Our Age*. This issue, supported by a generous grant from Hereford City Council (who helped us off the ground 23 years ago), aims to reach those clubs and groups. We want your members or residents to enjoy *In Our Age* and share their memories and recollections just as many of our regular readers do. Why not start by testing your knowledge in our Twenty Questions (there's a question in there about Gilbert Harding). We'll publish the answers in our next issue.

Belonging to Herefordshire Lore not only brings you your regular copy of *In Our Age* by post, it also entitles you to come along to our Living, Local History events.

Don't miss the first, a look back at Royal Ordnance Factory Rotherwas by local historian Julie Orton-Davies.

**Mark Hubbard**, chairman, *Herefordshire Lore*.

In Our Age, Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX  
M: 07845 907891

E: [info@herefordshirelore.org.uk](mailto:info@herefordshirelore.org.uk)

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

Follow us on Facebook

Editor: Bill Laws

Pictures: Bobbie Blackwell

Design: Lisa Marie Badham

Website: Chris Preece

Print: ABC Print

**Herefordshire Lore:** Eileen Klotz, Rosemary Lillico, Sandy Green, Marsha O'Mahoney, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe (County Records), Julie Davies, Harvey Payne, Liz Rouse, Chris and Irene Tomlinson, Betty Webb, Mary Hilary, Derick Barnes and Carol Smith.



Hereford  
City Council

## The Wonder of Woolies

My First  
Job

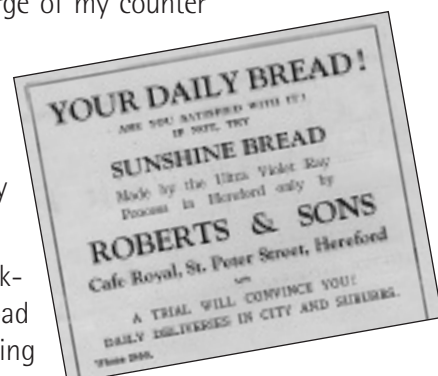
I started work in 1953 as a 15-year-old 'Christmas Temporary' in Woolworths, Eign Street, Hereford on the toy counter, writes **Rosemary Lillico**. After Christmas I was put on permanent and moved to Hardware on £2. 7s. 3d a week of which my Mum took £1. 10s for my keep.

As well as selling 'home management' items - hammers, saws, screwdrivers and drills - we counted out screws or weighed out nails into correct-sized brown paper bags for sale under the watchful eye of the floor walkers, Mr Fry or Mr Mitchel.

A stock order was put in daily and once a week the whole counter cleared. The assistant in charge of my counter came by train from Ledbury. Later a local girl took charge. She and another assistant were my bridesmaids when I later married: it was a happy place to work.

We wore unflattering brick-red overalls with a note pad and pencil hanging on a string from the belt. If you sold more than three items you had to enter them on the note pad and add them up. The notes were inspected by a supervisor.

Staff had to address each other as Mr. or Miss - I felt quite posh to be Miss Harris at 15. Conversations between staff were discouraged and you weren't allowed to serve your relations. Dad sometimes came in for a cup of tea during his dinner break. I was proud to be seen working there, but I would be told off if I spoke to him for too long.



## Battery Life

My First  
Job

I left school at 14 after our house in London was bombed in 1940 and we moved to Belmont Avenue, Hereford, writes **Derek Lloyd** from Wimborne. I started work with Mr. Rawlins who ran an electrical contracting business and electrical goods shop in West Street. In 1946 we used to load up Mr Rawlings' van every Thursday with dozens of low voltage accumulators. They contained sulphuric acid and lead plates in a glass container, about the size of two house bricks. One of our routes was out to Fownhope and we would call at houses and exchange the charged battery for a discharged one. These would then be recharged at the shop. To make your radio work you still needed an additional high voltage battery about the size of a cereal box. How technology has improved our life!



The store had its Tea Bar (run by Miss Queenie Bethall) and once a week the Manager, Mr Love, would stand over a glass topped partition and give us a pep talk. Miss Spratt who worked in the office was much respected: she checked and emptied the tills and put

out our wages. During post war rationing we were registered with The Sugar King grocers, managed by Mr. Knight. Harry Hartland's butchers was on the other side.

After two and a half happy years I was persuaded to join my Mum at Thynnes Tile Works with a huge rise in wages - £6.0.0.



## Cheap chocolates and office revision

My First Job

I wanted to go to university, but my parents could not afford to send me, remembers this 92-year old lady interviewed by **Carol Smith**. So I left school at 17, having passed my matriculation exam, which ensured me a job in the wages office at Cadbury's in Bournville. This suited me very much as I enjoyed working with figures, but it was expensive catching the tram to Selly Oak then a bus to the outer circle and onto Bournville every day. So my father bought me a bike for 4s. 10d. This was much quicker too !

Our office, in an old store room, was extremely cold. If we complained they just told us to wear more clothes. At lunch time we ate in the terraced restaurant with waitress service while the factory workers had to queue up for theirs and eat separately.

There was a seconds chocolate shop where you could buy imperfect chocolates in a bag, 7d for a 1lb. We even had tennis courts – and I love tennis!

Although the company was strict at times, it was a good company to work for and I was very happy there. I even met my husband-to-be there. We were friendly at the time, but dare not tell anyone as I would have been moved from that department straight away.

Once a year Dorothy Cadbury would give us our

'office revision' talking to each of us individually about our progress and our social life. She was amused when I told her that in my spare time I like to tap dance and also took a course in Commercial Mathematics.



Elsie Rex, left, prepares for a proper, hessian sack race at Overbury Road, Tupsley. Elsie's family ran H. C. Rex's Cottage Dairy from their smallholding there until the late 1950s when they moved to Bromyard. (Photo: Di Ingram).

## Central Garage, Kington

My First Job

**Ray Bird** had just started work at the Central Garage, Kington when he witnessed an air crash. Ray from Coldwells House, Holmer had just turned 14 and was working at Alf Edwards' garage opposite the Burton Hotel when two aircraft collided above the woods. The collision destroyed the wing on one plane and the tail on the second. The four men on board the planes were all killed.

Later, in 1947, Ray was called up for military service with the Army. (He was stationed in London during the Queen's wedding.) One of his duties was driving tanks onto transporters, a nerve wracking experience especially when the tanks were almost vertical before they dropped down onto the transporter. One time Ray was hospitalised after burning his feet on a tank's steel floor. But Ray always wanted to fly and he lived his dream when he entered the Air Training Corp's 1205 Squadron and flew from Shobdon and Madley aerodromes. He remembers aircrafts' bomb dropping practise and flying in a Wellington at Shawbury.

Ray remembers Operation Pluto when a petrol line was run across the Channel to provide fuel for the Allied Forces in France and he recalls the last German prisoners-of-war being driven down to Russell Square, London at Christmas 1948. Ray ran Birds Garage in Kington with his Dad, Alfred (the man who sold the first bus in Herefordshire, back in 1920). He was also a part-time Hereford Fire Service man for 30 years.

Interviewer: Carol Smith.



Our star reporter at Coldwell House was Carol Smith. If you'd like us to pay residents a visit call Eileen at Herefordshire Lore. 07845 907891



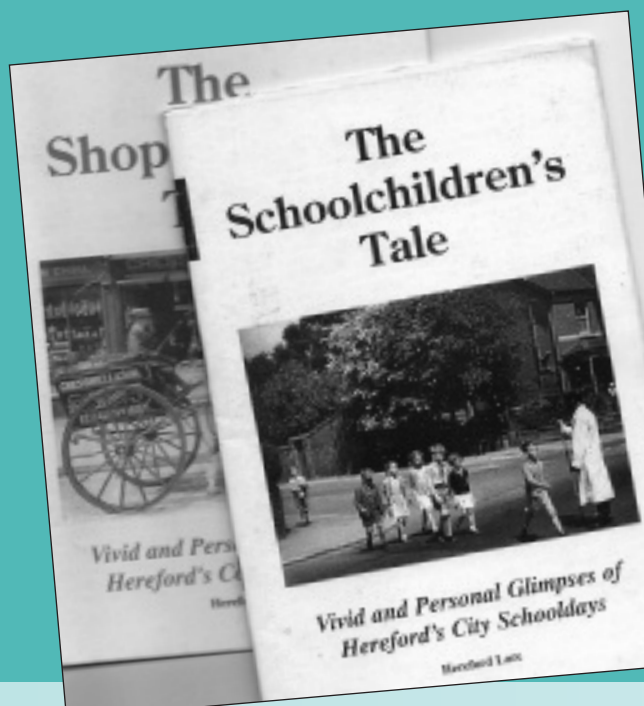
The Kington Brigade with fireman Ray seated, bottom right, next to Jim Morgan and Bill Price. Behind Ray from the left are Gerald Parry, Mike Turner, George Phillips, Harry Tomkins, Bill Edwards and Alf Parker.

# Herefordshire Lore

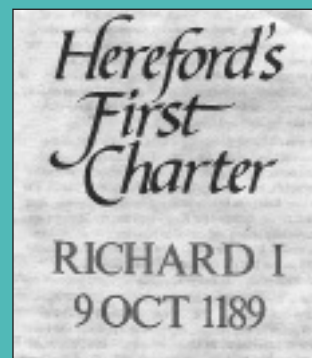
## Herefordshire Lore has been collecting an

### 1989

Hereford Lore (as it was then) was launched to celebrate the Hereford City Charter year. Richard 1 granted the charter to 'Hereford in Wales' in 1189. In 1989 the City Council gave a small grant to editor Bill Laws and story teller Lenny Alsop to start the group. Our first booklet, *Amazing How Times Change*, was followed by *Age To Age*, which continued until August 2003. *In Our Age* was launched in Spring 2006.



*In Our Age* is run on a shoestring. We've no office or staff, but printing, postage and other costs amount to £6,000 a year. Help us to keep going: join Herefordshire Lore now!



### Amazing how times change



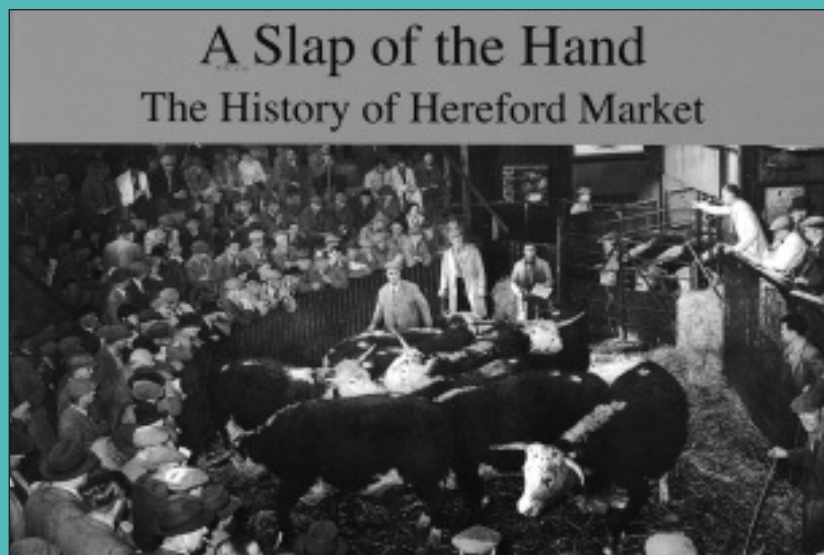
HEREFORD REMEMBERED

### 2007

#### The Market

Herefordshire's a farming community and readers' memories regularly return to the country life whether it's hop picking at Claston, Land Army Girls at Morreston House, Ross, or evacuees arriving at a strange new country home in the middle of the night. Our most ambitious project to date was the recording of more than fifty people and the subsequent publication *A Slap of the Hand – The History of Hereford Market*.

It prompted Ron Hooper to write from Hereford: 'One Sunday in the 1940s Mac Higgins purchased



300 sheep from a farmer at Dinedor. It was our job, three lads and a dog, to take them through High Town to his farm at Munstone.

'When we arrived at the farm he would count the sheep passing through the farm gate and make out we had lost a few. He'd say: 'Lads if you hadn't lost any I would have given you two shillings and sixpence each, but as you lost them here is six pence a piece. Think yourselves lucky.' What a farmer!'





# Lore: 1989 – 2012

## and publishing county memories for 23 years

### 2003

#### The Munitions

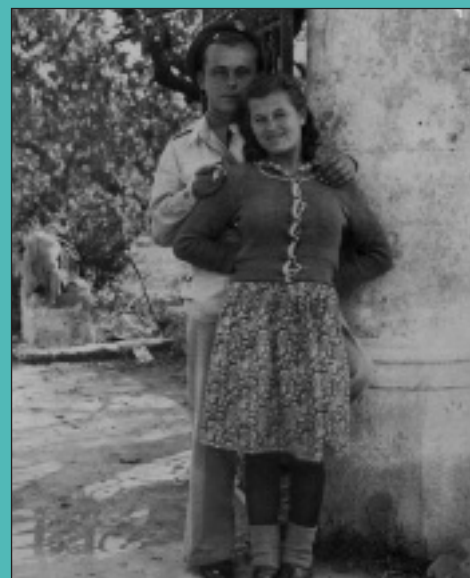
Nearly 6,000 women worked making shells, bombs, landmines and torpedoes at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Rotherwas, Hereford during two World Wars. In 2003 Herefordshire Lore published *In The Munitions – Women at War in Herefordshire*, a collection of recollections of life at ROF Rotherwas among the Canary Girls. (They earned their nickname from the effects of the explosive powder on their hair and skin). Come along to the Rotherwas Experience, Julie Orton-Davies' Lunchtime History event at St. Peters Square, Hereford, 11.30 – 1.00 Saturday January 5. (See back page) keep going: join Herefordshire Lore now!



### 2008

#### Personal memories

Herefordshire Lore has regular published people's personal memories. There was Hereford tailor Percy Pritchard who recalled meeting T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia: 'he introduced himself and his adjutant as Lenin at Trotsky!') and riding in Alfred Watkins' steam car – "Watkins was a nice man"); Annie Mary Slade, the Rhondda-born first World War muntioneer who ran away to join the Army. After she was discovered to be under age (she was 15) she joined worked on explosives at Rotherwas. Perhaps the most extraordinary story was that of Eddie Dzierza, sent to Siberia aged 15 when his native Poland was overrun. Later Eddie fought the Germans up through Italy before finally settling in Hereford. His story was published in IOA from 2008.



### 2012

#### Who's Herefordshire Lore?

Over the years many people have been part of Herefordshire Lore, perhaps no more than the original team Vi Thomas, Roy Kennett, Alf Evans, Vi Woolaway and Jim Thomas (not to mention Tom Woolaway and William Morris). Today's volunteers (listed on page 2) do everything from collecting stories to fund raising funds: or even dressing up in funny clothes for Hereford's History Day (from left Julie Smith, Carol Smith, Bill Laws and Rosemary Lillico).



From My Album returns in the next issue. Give us a call if you have some photos to share.

# Wartime Wardrobe

*Joan Thomas* from Hampton Dene, Hereford continues the story of her early life: in the final extract Joan joins the Timber Corp.

Both the Land Army and the Timber Corps had green and gold badges with a wheat sheaf in the centre. But the Timber Corps, which I joined, also had a dark brown Bakelite cap badge with a tree as the centrepiece. Crossed axes also distinguished us from the Land Army: the axes adorned the arms of our greatcoats, while similar axes in felt were worn on the arms of our green pullovers. The Americans were intrigued. "Gee! You girls are something else!" were words intended to flatter. Well, we were very colourful with our vivid green pullovers and bright green berets.

Our berets distinguished us from the Land Army's rather duller fawn-coloured brimmed hats. We liked our berets because they tolerated a variety of hairstyles and could be worn at jaunty angles. We could pull them forward or push them back so as not to flatten the more bouffant look. We could tilt them sideways or balance them aloft cheekily. If you did that you might be asked: "Have you got a stiff neck?" (This might have been a euphemism for "Have you any idea how ridiculous you look?").

Our ties did not sit well with Aertex shirts, but they smartened up our Poplin shirts. Dungarees were worn to work in, and they became the forerunners of hot pants when we chopped the legs off as short as we dared for a touch of glamour in the summer. Besides, it was easier to dry our legs after a downpour, than it was to dry our clothes. I'd never taken a lot of notice of legs before, thinking they were all much of a muchness but my goodness, ours weren't. With perseverance and thick socks our sturdy brown shoes became wearable, though my feet never forgave me. They donated two

enormous bunions and a couple of painful corns.

Our greatcoats were fawn colour, three-quarter length, heavy and of superior quality. There was a vent at the back for freedom of movement. The epaulets were useful for tucking our berets into, or preventing our shoulder bags from slipping. The Aertex shirts were easy-care, but the Poplin ones looked better if you showed the collar and cuffs an iron occasionally.

Talking of Land Army coats brings to mind the time when, Rose Ellerton was having a wash in her room, getting ready to meet her boy friend, Derek, for an evening out. Rose's girlfriend, Josie, saw Derek talking by the bicycle stands as she came up from the dining room. She called at Rose's room to tell her so as she passed. Rose wasn't ready yet and, thinking she might be some time, slipped out to ask Derek to wait a bit longer.

As Rose was in the middle of a full wash down she had no clothes on. She grabbed her Land Army coat and slipped into it for a respectable cover up. As she neared the bicycle stands she could see several airmen

chatting together. She pulled her coat further round her as she passed them by, forgetting the vent at the back of the coat.

The airmen burst into laughter as she walked past. "Were they laughing at me being in my curlers do you think?" she asked Derek. "Oh no," said Derek. "They wouldn't be looking at your head."

Do you have a story to tell? What were your early days like? Write and tell us at IOA.



**Send us your memories**

Call: 07845 907891

Email: [info@herefordshirelore.org.uk](mailto:info@herefordshirelore.org.uk)  
or send us a letter

## In Our Age

reaches more than  
**5,000 readers,**  
has a **long shelf life,**  
no other History publication  
**covers the whole County** and  
**all issues are archived**

This eighth page costs  
**just £75**

(other sizes available)

Contact In Our Age for more details





## The Bulls

A professional footballer, my father Norman Adler (front row left) signed for Hereford from Southport in the summer of 1937, writes Pam Collins. The only other player I know is Emrys Warren, back row (third from the right). Hereford could not afford full time professionals in those days and they found jobs for their players to supplement the wages. My father worked at the Ministry of Defence (MOD) at Rotherwas while others worked at Bulmers. The start of the war in 1939 saw the end of my father's footballing career, but he remained at Rotherwas until the late 50's. Emrys worked at the MOD at Moreton on Lugg until his retirement.



## Pool Farm

I'm working at the Pool Farm dentistry practice in Belmont Road, Hereford, writes **Judith Simmons**. We would like to learn more about its history: can anyone help? Meanwhile one reader came across this old hop workers' bothy near Bidney Farm, Dilwyn recently, "unloved and unlisted". Do recall your days on the hops?



## Cheap fireworks



**Reg South** from Putson recalls his friend Cecil who turned up at Holmer School in 1946 with some six inch fuses. They lit them and enjoyed watching sparks shooting out. "Cecil had found a small ammunitions dump in the grounds of Holmer House, which belonged to Mr. Hughie Hall owner of the nearby cider works. Was this a secret ammunitions dump, to be used if the Germans invaded, Reg wondered. Another time friend Cecil came to school with a special dollar bill. They were from boxes of similar notes that had been printed by Anthony Hall, a Hereford man who in the 1930s claimed to be a direct descendent of King Henry VIII. Hall attracted national attention when he called on George V to quit and issued his own currency during mass rallies in St Peters Square, Hereford. He died in the 1940s and was buried at Little Dewchurch.

## Life's a lottery

There's nothing new about the Lottery, **Malcolm Startin** reminds us. He joined Hereford Rowing Club at 17 in 1949 when the club's finances showed just £270 in the bank and the club consisted of some rotten old boats and a crumbling clubhouse. By 1960 (the final year of Malcolm's role as club captain) they had arguably the best clubhouse and boats in Europe. They even had an investment portfolio of over £100,000 and had distributed around £300,000 to local charities. The windfall came after a lucky train ride to Birmingham when club members Geoff Hammonds, Harry Pressey, Norman Groom, Fred Lee and Malcolm shared their carriage with a gentleman who ran a weekly lottery for his local Catholic church. The Hereford contingent set up the River Wye Guild lottery. In the 1950s the Guild became the Wye Valley Pools with its own printing press, the St Owens Printing Company. Competition from other lotteries and a postal strike finished the local lottery in the 1970s. By then Hereford had a rowing club that was the envy of the land.



The Austin Seven Club was out in force in Hereford High Town in August for the Vintage Fayre. It was a great day, writes Rosemary

Lillico, "reminding me that Hereford is a market Town with a history to be proud of". The Austin Sevens, their bodywork gleaming, have been lovingly restored to their former glory. The three-year-old club is open to new members: call Stuart Howard 01432 353100.

## What Dads do

**Anne Milne** posted on our Facebook page the story of how her father, head gardener at Brockhampton Court near Ross, became anxious about his parent's safety after the bombing of Bath on 1942. He scrounged sufficient petrol to drive down in his Morris 8 (reg: VJ 8497) but could get no further than Cold Ashton seven miles away. He parked up and walked to Bath and back to satisfy himself that all was well with the family.

(What did your Dad do? Let us know at IOA)



## Who? What? When?

Congratulations to Ann Morgan and Tony Hitchings who identified artist Jason Hodges' picture. 'It's Widemarsh Street looking north at the town gate, with the Farmers Club, which is still there, on the right wrote,' wrote Tony. Here's the Club in 1945, writes local historian Derek Foxton when it first broke out. And the date? Friday April 13!

Pam Collins emailed us ([info@heredfordshirelore.org.uk](mailto:info@heredfordshirelore.org.uk)) and Audrey called (07845 907891) to point out that the previous Puzzler picture was of Mick (not Nick) Magor, a teacher and football referee with a class from Hunderton School. Reg South and his pals wracked their brains to identify the Good Companions pub (IOA 25, page 5).

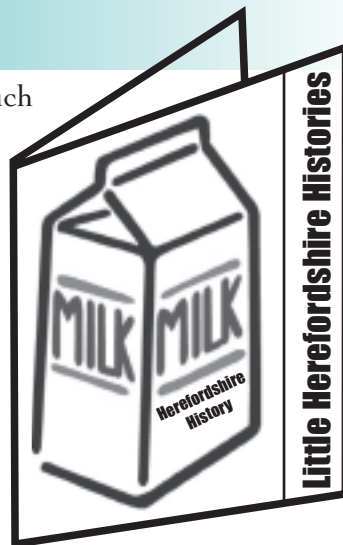
Test your skills on this town scene. But which town? And where? Answers in the next issue.

## Dairy Days

Many of you have been in touch regarding our appeal for Dairy Days memories.

We're still collecting material for our Little Herefordshire Lore History on Milk. Here some recollections from milk maid Joy Atkins and Madelene Went.

"When I left school," writes Joy, "my parents, the rector and his wife at Upper Sapey, moved in with auctioneers Mr and Mrs Baldwin at Collington to make room for the Poupart family who owned a jam factory in Birmingham. I started milking the house cow. In due course the cow went in with the herd with the bull. When I went to get her in for milking the Hereford bull objected. He began



to shove me and I had to climb the thorn hedge with him shoving me and snorting. I survived!"

Madelene from Ledbury Road, Hereford recalled her Mum's Midnight Milkman. "He was so called because he delivered milk at ten o'clock at night. This was during the war and my mother was reported for getting extra milk. However she split deliveries between the Midnight Milkman and the Co-op so no offence was caused."

## The Rotherwas Experience

"My Aunt said 'We're going to work tonight and I'm not coming home tomorrow.' She never did. This curious premonition involved one of the 6,000 women who worked at Royal Ordnance Factory, Rotherwas between 1915 – 1918 and 1939 – 1945. She was one of the unlucky ones, killed during the only enemy bombing of the city that happened 70 years ago.

### Come to the Rotherwas Experience,

Julie Orton-Davies' Lunchtime History event

at St. Peters Square, Hereford

11.30 – 1.00 **Saturday January 5**

Presented by Herefordshire Lore, funded by Hereford City Council

Free to members, £3 non-members






# Herefordshire Lore

Living local history

## – Twenty Questions –

How well do you know your county? Resident's groups, day centres and individual readers are invited to test their knowledge in our Bumper Quiz.

1. Name the famous 20th century composer and cyclist who takes pride of place in Hereford Cathedral Close.  
.....
2. A famous orange seller who was a favourite with Charles 2. What was her name?  
.....
3. The Victoria Bridge was completed in 1897 to celebrate an important event. What was the event?  
.....
4. Which famous Admiral is associated with the memorial on the Castle Green and Ross-on-Wye.  
.....
5. Who was the Man of Ross?  
.....
6. What was the significance of Gilbert Harding and BBC's Twenty Questions to Hereford?  
.....
7. The Queen's Jubilee in the Summer of 2012 celebrated with a pageant on the Thames. Hereford provided one the boats. What was this boat called?  
.....
8. Up until the 1950's there was a theatre in Broad Street.  
What was its name? And what is the Catholic connection with the man after whom it was named?  
.....
9. St Nicholas Church was demolished and rebuilt to replace an older building. Where was its original position?  
.....
10. Herefordshire used to have at least eight cinemas. How many can you name?  
.....
11. Alfred Watkins was a well-known Hereford archaeologist, historian and photography. What else was he famous for?  
..... 

**We're changing the way people pay for In Our Age.** Readers, community groups, day centres and residential homes will now pay once a year. The new rates are £12 for individuals and £30 (or a donation) for groups.

**Why?** IOA costs just over £6,000 a year. The money comes from your subscriptions and your many kind donations. Print and postage costs have risen. Paying once, at the start of the year, will help us plan ahead.

**What do you get for your money?** A year's membership of Herefordshire Lore and regular copies of IOA sent direct to your home. (Group members will receive 10 copies). Free or reduced entry to our History Events.

**What should you do now?** Fill in the form on the back of this page and post it with your cheque (£12 for individuals, £30 for groups) made out to HEREFORDSHIRE LORE to: Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX.

Your next issue of IOA is due in February 2013.

12. Why is this Westland car special to Herefordshire?



.....

13. Which supermarket stands on the site of this railway yard?



.....

14. St Ethelbert Street, Hereford was the home of a well known Herefordshire doctor who visited his patients in his own pony and trap. What was his name?



.....

15. What does this Wye riverside building have to do with art students?



.....

16. Which county market is this?



.....

17. What was this GI doing at Leominster station?



.....

18. Which war memorial is being unveiled here? And after which war?



.....

19. What was the name of this post-war housing estate? And why was it important to Polish people?



.....

20. Which market town is this?



.....

Thanks to Julie Orton-Davies for helping with the quiz.  
Answers in the next issue

*Make me a member of Herefordshire Lore.*

Tick the relevant box: ☐ Individual Member ☐ Group Member

Name: .....

Address .....

..... Post Code .....

Telephone number ..... Email address .....