

In Our Age

Living local history

Issue 27
Winter 2013



Stretton Sugwas
Page 2



Spitfire Girl
Page 3



Eastnor Page 6

Veteran Voices

As the centenary of the First World War draws near plans are being laid to remember the 1914 – 18 conflict. In Our Age, however, plans to celebrate our more recent history.

Did you have family members in the Forgotten Army (the Burma campaign)? At Royal Ordnance Factory Rotherwas where women risked their lives on the munitions? In the Special Air Service? We want to hear from you.

Have you looked into the names on your war memorial? We'd like to publicise some of the stories collected by local history groups.

And we want to update the names on the Rotherwas Memorial (see right).

Can you help? Call 07845 907891, email info@herefordshirelore.org.uk or visit www.herefordshirelore.org.uk or write to Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX



Edith Davies, top left, worked at Royal Ordnance Factory Rotherwas in the 1940s. She had been filling shells, but was badly affected by handling the high explosives. She was moved to another part of the factory. She used to catch the Midlands Red bus number 32 from her home, Railway Terrace, Stretton Sugwas for one of the three shifts: 6am – 2pm; 2pm – 10 pm or 10 pm to 6 am. Her brother **Graham Davies**, who loaned us the photos, knows very little about her workmates: Edith died not long after the war. Do you recognize anyone? Is Miss Monkley in the front (bottom left)?



Some of the names of those who served at ROF Rotherwas are recorded on the Rotherwas memorial. If your family member isn't, let us know.

Thank you!

Over 200 responded to our appeal to join Herefordshire Lore. With just a few more (fill in the form on the back page) we'll be safe until 2014.

Julie Orton-Davies' Rotherwas Experience was a knockout - watch our for our next Lunchtime History Event. Our Little Herefordshire History on Milk will be out soon. And we're hoping to launch Veteran Voices, a project that celebrates a century of soldiering in the county - and highlights the valuable work of all the county's local history groups.

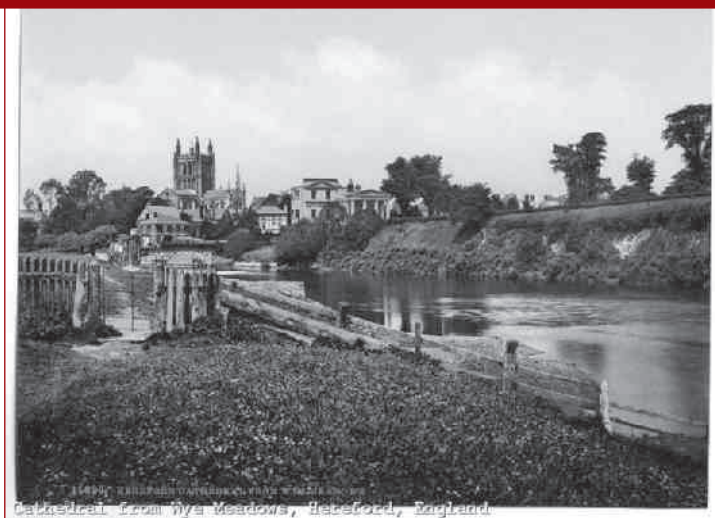
Wearing another hat, the Friends of Castle Green have undertaken their most ambitious project to date - the restoration and development of the Castle Green Pavilion for community use. The Friends want to hear from anyone with memories of the building in its earlier guise as the Hereford School of Arts, particularly people who have pictures of the building in use. Please contact us at Herefordshire Lore.

Mark Hubbard
Chairman, Herefordshire Lore.

Editor: Bill Laws **Pictures:** Bobbie Blackwell **Design:** Pink Sheep Design (lisamarie@pinksheepdesign.co.uk)
Website: Chris Preece **Print:** ABC Print

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

Front Page: Richard Jenkins – see From My Album, page 4 & 5



Hereford
City Council

A big thank you to all those individuals and groups like the Ken Griffiths Dance Club who made a donation to Herefordshire Lore.

The lady who flew Spitfires

Marjorie Rosser left school at 15 and, having learned Pitman shorthand and typing, started work in Dunlop Rubber offices near her hometown Liverpool. "I earned 7/6d and gave Mother 5/-," she recalled. Then in 1942, she was conscripted into the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, the WAAF's. "I became a flight engineer at RAF Rednal, an officers' training unit in Shropshire. We'd fill the kites up with petrol in the morning and empty the tanks at night.



"There were two-seater training Spitfires at Rednal and sometimes we'd be taken up for a ride: we flew in our ordinary battledress - no special training or anything."

Marjorie had a shock when she checked her planes one morning. "There was a German prisoner of war, curled up asleep inside the cockpit. I screamed and everyone came running. Later, before he was returned to his POW camp we all had cocoa, but he wouldn't drink his until I had been brought over to stand by his side. He was only a boy, but I have to say he was the most gorgeous young man I ever saw in my life."



Clothes for country people

When I was a schoolboy, writes **Les Rowlands** from Garway, most of my clothes were made by Mr Howard of Michaelchurch Escley who made clothes for a lot of country people, especially cord breeches. This involved three visits: one for measuring, one for fitting with paper and pins, and one for a final check and collecting.

We were on one of those visits when he told us: "We've been invited by our landlord to an aircraft display by three German airmen who are on a visit."

We went up the road and joined a small group of spectators and were given a spectacular display of stunts, especially the 'falling leaf', equal to anything by the Red Arrows today.

One of the planes had swastikas on its wings: we little thought that those planes would be back in about ten years time to rain down bullets on us.

Peter Holman's photograph shows his grandfather, Albert Edward Mangham (1866 – 1949) in Ledbury High Street during Duke and Duchess of York's visit in 1927. Albert, hatless, on the left, had served as a corporal (No. 97555) in the Duke and Duchess of Yorks' Royal Garrison Artillery in France during World War 1. He later served with the Home Guard and as a Special Constable in Ledbury and, with his wife Annie, ran Ye Olde Flower Shop in Church Street. "As a small child I used to be wheeled along on his long, flatbed wheelbarrow to the Railway Station when he sent flowers off to Birmingham Market."

Swastikas over Michaelchurch

Les Rowlands (left) was witness to one of Randolph Trafford's extraordinary air shows at his private aerodrome in Michaelchurch. An account by James Baxendale (www.Ewyaslacy.org.uk) records how he flew his own Morane Saulnier and Gypsy Moth aircraft, drove a Rolls Royce (registration VJ 989) and on several occasions invited foreign fliers to the flying displays.

Among the pilots in July 1934 and 1937 was Alexander von Winterfeldt, who brought many British pilots down during the Battle of Britain, and Hans Seidemann, who led the Luftwaffe against Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. Seidemann also oversaw bombing missions on Britain. He escaped the Nuremberg trials and died in the 1960s while Winterfeldt died in a flying accident. Trafford died when his Fairey Fulmar crashed on Dartmoor. He was buried at Michaelchurch.



The IOA team visited the Rose Garden, Hereford in January to meet **Dolly Danks, Eric Morris, Joyce Densham, Barbara Gee and Elwin Owens**. Call us if you'd like the Team to visit your Home

From My Album: Winifred Reece



Richard Jenkins, born in 1890, inherited his father's farm, Quarrelly, near Longtown. He was smitten by the new world of photography and during the 1920s and early 1930s he took a plate camera around the hill farm community. Parts of the Richard Jenkins Collection have been published, notably in the Longtown local history series and the originals have been lodged with the County Records Office.

Thanks to Winnie Reece for her loan of the photographs.

Can we take a look inside your family album? Call us on 07845 907 891.

From the top, a picnic on the Black Mountain; a farmer's wife feeds the chickens; road menders take a rest; an unknown girl stands for her portrait; the headmistress and headmaster of the school at Newton St Margarets; a new car in the village.





Country livings:

Country life in the 1930s and 1940s wasn't all roses round the cottage door. **Geof Nicholls** and **Ruth Ward**, both brought up in and around Ledbury, share their experiences.

Sacked on a whim

I appeared on the scene at a difficult time: the 1930's Great Depression, writes **Geof Nicholls**. The Labour Party had been voted into office and on the farm where my father worked all the hands were called into the barn by the farmer: "You buggers voted them in so go to them for a job," he told them. All 15 were sacked.

We moved to Eaton Bishop, to a black and white house at Holme Lacy on a slope slightly higher than the tarmac road. The lav in the shed had a smaller wooden lav for me.

When I was four we moved to Netherton Cottage on Eastnor Estate near Ledbury. Our semi detached cottage was quite new,

built halfway up the edge of a grassy Front Meadow without a track or a road although there was a stone road to the farm about two miles from Eastnor. Water came from the roof, collected in a pit at the back until a spring was exposed in the Meadow and piped back to the house.

Dad was a waggoner (waggoners use two horses as opposed to carters who used one) employed by the Netherton Farm tenant Mr. Foxwell who farmed 300 acres plus grazing rights on the south side of the British Camp.

I attended Eastnor School which had three rooms that were opened into one big room by sliding back the floor-to-ceiling screens. The headmaster, Mr. Jenkins, taught the top three classes in the middle room. My class in the bottom



room was taught by Mrs. Court who rode to school on a bicycle with a basket on the handle bars and a thin cord round the back wheel to stop her skirt being caught up. At morning break we had hot Horlicks: later this would be replaced with a third of a pint of cold milk.

There's more from Geof in the next issue of IOA

A bicycle made for three

I was born in January 1939 and I have a brother who is four years older than me, writes **Ruth Ward**. Father was in charge of the cow herd on a farm, three miles from home, which was a council house with a third of an acre of garden, no water, no sanitation and no electricity. My brother and I went to bed with a little Kelly lamp while, on the kitchen table we had a Tilley, which gave out lots of light and warmth.

There was a great community spirit among our four houses. Each kept two pigs, one for market and for the house. When the time came for the pig to be slaughtered the butcher came to the house with his sticking bench, enormous knives and the poor beast was harnessed and dragged up the garden, kicking and screaming. While the deadly deed was done we children would go as far from the house as possible.

But the meat was delicious, nothing like the pork eaten now. It was shared with the neighbours and the hams were salted down and hung on the walls to be used

when needed. The bacon was very fat, but very sweet, a lovely flavor.

The butcher used to blow up the bladder with a straw, and, having secured it firmly, left it to dry out. Later the lads would use it as a football. It lasted months. We all had bicycles. And we cycled everywhere. I learned to ride with wooden blocks attached to the pedals, climbing on a brick to reach the saddle. We cycled into Ledbury twice on Sundays, into morning service and then back, for my brother and I to attend Sunday

school. And I remember my aunt and uncle coming from Stourbridge, 47 miles away, on a tandem with a sidecar which contained their baby.



THE ROSE GARDEN

INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR THE OVER 55s

Do you like spending time with people?

Can you spare an hour or so a week?

We are looking for be-frienders to spend time with some of our residents at the Rose Garden.

Interested?

Please contact **Lynn** or **Tina** on **01432 363352** for more information

THE
EXTRACARE
CHARITABLE TRUST

Tea with Mrs P.

My grandmother, Mrs Rosina Powell lived at number 15, Eign Road, Hereford, writes **Neil Carter** from Australia. She once served tea to Mrs Pankhurst. "Votes for Women" was a radical concept, but grandmother seems to have been on the front line. She sang in the Hereford Cathedral choir, led by Sir Edward Elgar who would walk from his home Plas Gwyn on Hampton Road and stop to chat with Mrs Powell as she tended her roses.



Between 1963-64 Neil's family moved from Canada to England for a year renting the riverside Castle Cliffe East from Mrs. Parsons. While brother David worked at the County Council's Chandos House Planning Department, Neil attended the Boys High School: "I failed First Year Sixth admirably," he writes.

The Four Feathers

Eleven-year-old **Alan Willis** saw The Four Feathers with Ralph Richardson, John Clements and C. Aubrey Smith at the Odeon, Hereford in 1939. "Outside, the cinema canopy had opaque, cheese-shaped globes suspended from the canopy (removed when war broke out) and inside the Art Deco building an octagonal auditorium clock with O. D. E. O. N. written on the faced with black digits for the hours. In the thirties New Age, Streamline and ultra modern were the buzz-words for these new fashions.

Hopping at Stoke Edith

While my father was serving in the army during the last war, writes **June Morris**, my mother Jean Knight and her brothers Tony, Johnny and Bill and sister Irene used to go hop picking during the war with their grandmother at Stoke Edith. They used to travel from Cheltenham, slept in a barn and had lots of fun. It stopped when her father came home from the war: Does anyone remember the family?

Rogers the Grocer?

Robert Rogers from Brisbane, Australia is trying to find out about his great grandfather, Charles Rogers, a Master Grocer from Sutton. His father William had been born in 1820 at Bishops Frome. Robert and his wife Ada (nee Parker) had 12 children.

Left off the list

Our list of founders (IOA 27) should have included **Edith Gammage**. Born in 1906 at Hunderton, Edith could recall wandering through the Bankie meadows (now the Three Counties Hotel, Belmont) amongst orchids and wild mushrooms.

Lovely filly Foal

By 1931 I was Gaffer Preece's Land Girl working at Church House Farm, Upper Sapey, writes regular correspondent **Joy Atkins**. In those days stallions, mainly shires, walked the area around Bromyard visiting farms, which had mares ready for serving. The stallions looked beautiful with their manes and tails plaited and the grooms who walked them tended to be fairly short to emphasis the size of the stallion. One time I took some of Gaffers' filly foals into the ring at Bromyard Market. As I walked into the ring the auctioneer announced: "Here is a lovely filly foal – the foal, not the girl!"

Rawlings Electrical

Several readers recalled Rawlings Electrical shop in West Street, Hereford. **Rosemary Lillico** remembers the family accumulator being taken to the shop to be charged up on Saturdays before she and her brother went along to the Odeon to watch the children's matinee. "We rationed our wireless programmes in order to last the week. As I was around 10 I wasn't allowed to touch wireless, but if it started to fade out and there was no one around, I'd undo the terminals at the top of the accumulator and give it a good shake. This seemed to put a bit more life into it. And our favourites? Down Your Way, In Town Tonight, Riders of the Range, PC49, Paul

Temple Detective Valentine Dyal and the Man in Black and of course Dick Barton Special Agent, every weeknight at 6.45. If I was washed and changed ready for bed I was allowed to listen. And Friday the programme always seemed to end on a cliff hanger: I couldn't wait til Monday.



Cusop Home Guard was pictured in IOA 15. **Mike Brook** can reveal most of the names. They are (back row, left to right): unknown, unknown, Raymond Smith (not Billy Bounds), Charlie Williams, Trevor Lloyd. Front Row (left to right): Herbie Williams, Charles Parry, Herbert Parry, Captain Hissey, Gordon Williams, Charlie Watkins and Harry's great uncle, Harry Brook, then headmaster of Clifford School. Thanks Mike.

Freezing Up

In the winter of 1963, recalls **David Lloyd** from Dorset, houses and shops were without water when the mains water pipes froze. He and a friend, Mr. Roebuck, resorted to using a weighty, low voltage transformer that had once powered their electric cooker. "One lead was attached to the main water tap in the house and the other to the main water pipe under the pavement via the inspection cover. Gradually the heat thawed the metal pipes – the expression on people's faces when the first trickle appeared was worth the effort." They not only rescued the Conservative Club in East Street, but the bungalow belonging to the managing director of Saunders Valve.

Joy Atkins remembers the winter of 1947 when Jack Lane, the blacksmith at Upper Sapey, struggled through the snow to every farm to 'frost-nail' one horse at each so the farmers could take a fodder cart out to their stock.

Another pu??zler



With so many contributors casting their mind back to country childhoods we want to test your country memory with these top 5 country expressions. What do they mean?

1. Oont.
2. Tushing out.
3. Firkin.
4. Bate or bait.
5. Name the container being used by the hop pickers above.

Five out of five? Go to the top of the class.

Twenty Questions – the answers

Answers to our 20 questions (a special well done to Derek Foxtan, Dennis Beavan, Derrick Blake, Mavis Adams, Mrs Woodward, Ann Stoakes and Ann Morgan): 1. Edward Elgar; 2. Nell Gwynne; 3. Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee; 4. Lord Horatio Nelson; 5. John Kyrle; 6. Gilbert Harding's parents were master and matron of the Hereford Workhouse;

7. The Wye trow was the Hereford Bull; 8. Kemble Theatre: John Kemble's hand is preserved at St Francis Xavier's church; 9. North end of Bridge Street within the city walls; 10. Odeon, Ritz, ABC, Focus (Classic) Alhambra, Kinema (Pavilion) Regal, Palladium, Courtyard, Kyrle Picture Palace (there are more!); 10. The Westland was made in Herefordshire; 13. Sainsbury's; 14. Dr. Francis; 15. The A49, Ross to Hereford at Callow; 16. Ross-on-Wye; 17. US units were based at Baron's Cross and Foxley; 18. Hay-on-Wye, World War I; 19. Foxley; many Polish refugees lived here; 20. Ledbury.

Mike Brook adds: Gilbert Harding's father (also Gilbert) was sometime Master of the Hereford Union Workhouse. He and his family lived on St Owen Street and my maternal grandmother was in service with the family. The irascible Gilbert Junior was born in Hereford and in the 1911 Census is listed at the Workhouse address as being 3 years old. His mother (by then widowed) was Matron of the Workhouse at the time.

Field work

Left, apples are processed in the field. Meanwhile **Madeline Warhurst** recalls the autumn queues of tractors, trailers and old vans waiting to unload their apples at Bulmers in Ryeland Street. "They queued round Baysham, Whitehorse and Chandos streets and used to wait so long Mother would go out to them with a cups of tea.

"Then alongside the factory men in their welly boots and big bibs used to load crates of apples onto the train that stood there. They would drive the engine onto a turntable to turn it round. I would fall asleep at night with the lovely smell of apples and the sound of the engines shunting."

We're not sure who's who in the photograph. Is it you?

Who? What? When?

Ken Griffiths and **Alan Willis** were quick to solve the puzzle picture (IOA 26), a photo taken by Tony Williams (see IOA 23) and kindly loaned by Maureen Beauchamp. Alan gave it careful thought. "High Town, 1945 – 1955 looking down Commercial Street because there are gas lamps (electricity didn't come until the late 1950s, early '60s), the parking restriction sign, the Labour Exchange (or 'The Labour', still standing on the corner leading into Maylord Orchards), and the Odeon Cinema." Read Alan's cinema memories on page 7.



Join Herefordshire Lore

to receive the next three issues of In Our Age.

Individual £9 Group (10 copies) £22.50 Cheques should be payable to: HEREFORDSHIRE LORE.

Name: Contact Number:

Address:

Post Code: Email:

Send to: Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX

Call 07845 907891 Email info@herefordshirelore.org.uk Visit www.herefordshirelore.org.uk Write to Herefordshire Lore, PO Box 9, Hereford HR1 9BX