

In Our Age

Living local history

Issue 28
Spring 2013



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Veteran Voices

celebrates the contribution of Herefordshire people in all conflicts whether it was filling shells at ROF Rotherwas, serving as Bevin Boys in the mines, as prisoners of war on local farms or in "The Regiment".

The memorial at Rotherwas lists around 280 of the estimated 5,000 people who worked here in two world wars. Many readers have asked for their relatives' names to be recorded.

"I have been desperately trying to find out how to add the names of my grandmother, Annie May Davies and aunt, Kathleen Davies," writes **Sally Robertson**. Annie worked on the gate searching ladies going in to work, checking that they weren't carrying any matches.

Also missing from the list is **Barrie Mayne's** mum, Cissie Mayne (nee Alpin) and **Sandra Watson's** mum, Clohilda Dickinson from the Forest of Dean (Read Clohilda's story in IOAs 20 to 22 at www.herefordshirelore.org.uk).

Emma Morris hoped to add her grandmother: "I wanted to have Mary - 'Molly' - Clifford's name added, but was told I was too late. After the factory was bombed Mary was sent to work in Coventry where she met my granddad, Harry Harding."

Emma treasures the letters written to Molly by Harry (14844625 Private, 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regmt, on duty with South East Asia Command). "He spent time in Burma, but mostly he was in the Sumatran jungle and writes of the native men being followed by a line of wives, and of how he's going to bring back yards of silk, Indian carpets, crocodile skin handbags."

Another name missed from the list is Dorothy Morgan.

"My mother's sister, Dorothy Morgan, was born and brought up at Old House, Bredwardine until her father's death when she was 12, writes **Eva Morgan** from Peterchurch. "When WW2 began she was

living with her mother, Mary Ann, in Mill Street, her call-up having been deferred while she looked after Mary Ann, who having been in ill health, died on Christmas Day, 1942. My mother often spoke of the night when Clive Prosser, who owned the Peterchurch lorry business, came to our farm with a telegram to say that her mother was very ill: he took she and I, then 9 months old, into Hereford in his van to be with Dorothy and their mother. Dorothy then left her secretarial work at SR Whitfield, the well-known gentlemen's outfitters in Broad Street, to be an examiner at ROF Rotherwas. She would walk to the night shift, sometimes with a neighbour who also served there, but often it was alone, over the Victoria Foot Bridge and down Holme Lacy Road.

"She was transferred to Kidderminster for a while and then back to Rotherwas, but after Mary Ann died, Dorothy couldn't afford to stay in Mill Street so moved to Redhill Hostel, situated off Ross Road. It housed about 1000 people, many of whom worked at Rotherwas. Having returned to her work at SR Whitfield, she met at Hillside, and married in 1956, Horace Broad, a railman for 45 years, based at Hereford. They both died aged 91 years, he at home in 1992, she at Abbey Grange Care Home in 2008.



Clohilda Dickinson (above) and Dorothy Morgan (below) both former workers at the wartime Hereford munitions factory in Rotherwas.



Make it 500!

Last year Hereford City Council, which was behind the launch of Herefordshire Lore back in 1989, gave a grant from its Community Fund to help put In Our Age on a more secure footing. We are delighted to report we're now well on our way to our target of 500 county-wide members.

We've been collecting and publishing your memories for almost a quarter of a century. Join up now and keeping us going for another few years!

A special thanks to our new group members including the Rose Garden, St. James Saturday Club and the Stonebow Unit.

Mark Hubbard

Chairman, Herefordshire Lore.

Editor: Bill Laws **Pictures:** Bobbie Blackwell

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Hereford City Council

Veteran Voices

is campaigning for the names of relatives who worked at ROF Rotherwas to be added to the Memorial (right). We are asking Veteran Voices supporters, Jessie Norman (MP), councillors Adrian Blackshaw and Jim Kenyon, and Lady Darnley to help put more names on the Memorial.

Cissie Alpin, Wilfred John Archer, Majorie Ballenger, Molly Clifford, Annie May Davies, William Thomas Davies, Clohilda Dickson, Marie Hill (nee Wills), Kathleen Lawley (nee Davies), Bertram Levett, Elsie Marsden (nee Aspley), Dorothy Morgan, Doris Prosser, Beryl Sadler (nee Davies), Phyllis Shipton, Albert Wills, (Additional research: Faith Ford), Violet Lilian Griffiths (nee Williams), Florence Clarke (nee Wargen), Vera Butler

Front Page: Anne-Marie Davies' grandfather, Jack Davies with the then Duchess of York, later Queen Mother at the Royal Show.

Walter Marchants

I left school at 15 in 1957 to work at Walter Marchants Chemists, High Town, Hereford, recalls **Margaret Makin** (nee Langford). The shop stood between the Midland Bank and Briggs shoes shop and was a three-storey building; Mr. Slinger did some chiropody on the second storey and the top storey was a stockroom. To save carrying things up and down stairs we had a basket on a rope, which we pulled up and down.



Ready to serve: (From left to right) Ann Yarnold, Rose Lewis, Dulcie Powell and Margaret Makin.

There were five staff, Rose Lewis, Dulcie Powell, Mary Williams, later replaced by Ann Yarnold, and myself – we all had to wear starched white coats - plus Maurice Slinger the pharmacist. When Mr. Marchant came to “do” the books his spaniel, Jill, would sit in a bottom drawer to wait for him. All the town chemists used to work together, borrowing things when they ran out.

Mary and I, being the youngest, had to fill bottles with glycerine, castor oil, liquid paraffin: nothing pre-packed in those days. We also made Lactozone, Marchants’ own hand

lotion: I think Mrs. Marchant thought up the recipe. We hated the job, but it was very popular.

We loved dressing the windows, watching all the people in High Town. The shop always seemed busy, especially Wednesdays when all the farmers’ wives came in for their shopping. There used to be a policeman on points duty outside on the corner and some of them used to come in for a cup of tea.

In the end the lease from the Midland Bank ran out and Mr. Marchant was too old to renew it. But it was a lovely first job.

Policing the hop workers

After joining the police in 1952 I was posted to Leominster to help PC Carl Andrews at Burley Gate as extra man during the hop-picking season, writes **Mike Wood**. I was living in digs at Ocle Pychard and, when PC Andrews fell ill, I looked after the hop picking area on my own. The beat stretched from Preston Wynne to Stoke Lacy and it was at Bill Symonds’ pub, The Plough (now home of the Wye Valley Brewery) that I decided to visit on my bike one evening.

There were two groups of hop-pickers in the bar and I sensed tension between them. There was a large Welsh lady in one group. She had a beautiful singing voice, but she was annoyed because the other group, from Liverpool, included an older lady who was very drunk and trying to out-sing her.

I went to the Welsh lady and said in a Welsh accent: ‘You’ve a lovely voice, my dear. Don’t take any notice of that drunken old b****, you carry on singing.’ Then I quietly told the Liverpudlian: ‘Don’t take any notice of that fat Welsh woman – you carry on.’

That seemed to diffuse the situation. Then Bill called time, the Welsh pickers left and the older woman, who’d had a little ‘accident’, fell down the pub steps, hurting her ankle. The men started saying: “How are we going to get Gran back to the farm?”

“Put her on my bike and wheel her to the farm,” I told them and off we went. When we reached the pigsties where they were staying (they’d been cleaned out for the pickers) they offered me a fry-up and a beer. But I had to get back so, drying my saddle off, I cycled back to Ocle Pychard. I visited the Plough several times during that season and the Liverpool crowd were no trouble at all.



Charlie Green bushelling at Lulham Court in the days when up to 140 hop-pickers would be staying on the farm. (More pictures from his son Charles Green on pages 4 and 5)



The Memorial to ROF Rotherwas: Veteran Voices is campaigning for new names to be added to the list.

From My Album: Charles

Charles Green from Bridstow shares his ph



Above. Madley Young Farmers in 1958: (back row from right) Jamie Watkins, Colin Johnson, ?? Johnson, Charles, Margaret Thomas, Sheila Farr, Don Johnson, Mike Watkins, Pat Powell and Tony Lane; (front) Victor Lane, John Yarnold, Mr. Smith, John Johnson, Maxwell Davies; (seated front) Olive Davies, Hazell Powell, Margery Johnson and Ashleene Thomas.

Below. Kingsland Young Farmers at the BOCM Mill at Avonmouth in 1953: (right to left, front) John and Bill Thomas, Betty Thomas, Bill Lyke, Sheila Owens and Mr. Sperry. (Left to right, centre) Geof Thomas, Arthur Morgan, Hughie Like, Tom Helme, Mike Williams, Geof Pudge, Keith Miles; (right to left, back) Keith Miles, Jim Griffiths, Charles, Victor Evans.



Left. Madley Young Farmers on a trip to Wedgewoods: Peter Willings, Margery Johnson, Rosemary Meredith, Mr. Dale, Sheila Farr, Margaret, Eileen Bevan, Mr. Hobby, Mr. and Mrs. Monkley of Lane End Farm, Eaton Bishop, Joyce Bevan and George Roper.



Above. On the hops: head wag and, in the foreground three h and 90s. The farm was Lulham Co on the security at ROF Roth around for father to follow in

Green and Winifred Reece

Photos from the Young Farmers in the 1950s.



Above & Right. Two more pictures from Winifred Reece's collection. The photographer, her father Richard Jenkins of Quarrelly farm, Longtown left few names behind, but he produced a wonderful record of life in the 1920s in west Herefordshire.



...goner Harry Warburton (left) with Granville Powell, Charlie Green ...op pickers including Mrs Turpin and Mrs Mole who were all in their ...urt and Charlie Green was about to take on the farm after working ...erwas. "Times were hard in the '30s and there wasn't the money ...the family butcher's business based round Burghill and Credenhill."



Country living:

In the second part of his recollections of an Eastnor childhood, Geof Nicholls remembers the arrival of the steam thrasher

I'm not sure when I started at Eastnor school, but I was there during the Jubilee party at Eastnor Castle in 1935, lining the drive when Queen Mary and King George visited. They were collected by horse and carriage from Ledbury Station and at the lodge gates, they got out of the carriage and Queen Mary took my hand and we walked to the Castle together.

Lord Summers, the Chief Scout after Baden Powell, lived in the Castle and soon afterwards the World Scout Jamboree was assembled in Eastnor Park with hundreds of tents, dozens of tree huts and rope bridges between them. There were crocodiles and wild animals, all with children's legs protruding from underneath, and flags from across the world.

I never thought how privileged we were: the Castle provided us with everything – cricket field and pavilion, grass tennis courts, a tea hut by the laundry and St Mary's, a home for young girls, a bowling green and the village hall, a brick building with a thatched roof with animal trophies around the wall and a stage at one end. One day Dad shouted: "Get your bike!" and we raced to the Hall to find it on fire.

There were exciting Christmas parties, fireworks and concerts, everything arranged by Mr. Birtwhistle, head butler. At Easter cream eggs at school for everyone.

Summer holidays meant hop-picking time. With my Mum pushing a pram with my baby sister, up and over the Ridgeway, through Masington Farm to Mr. Parry's, about three miles away. The busheler came round late afternoon to measure what we picked in a bushel basket. Then home for tea, picking mushrooms on the way.

Steam Thrashing

Thrashing time was exciting. We'd hear the steam engine puffing its way up Ridgeway, pulling the large threshing machine, a shepherd's hut, and the straw tusser behind. Before descending through the apple orchard, the back wheels would be rolled onto its slippers: brakes were not thought to be a high priority. After this the convoy pulled its way into the rick yard and the driver decided where it would operate. It was jacked up level, and wedged solid so as not to move when in use. At 7.00 a.m. the steam whistle would blow and the thrasher would start to hum.

The driver's mate fed the machine, standing in his little box behind a sloping board onto which my mum put the sheaves that my dad pitched to her, the right way round, and the knot side up. Another person pitched the sheaves to his feet, unpicking the rick backwards to the way it had been built.

The straw tumbled into the trusser that would pack and tie a "bolting" with two strings as it was now called, ready to be pitched to two other men building the straw rick.

The boy's job – often me – was to clear the chaff from under the machine. The strongest man, usually the boss, Mr. Foxwell, looked after the grain, weighed into Gospel



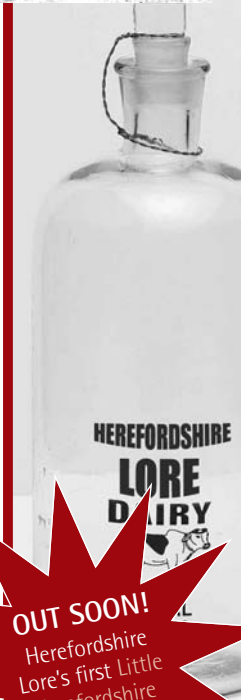
Brown sacks, wheat at two and a quarter hundredweights, barley at two hundredweight, and carried it into the barn.

During the lunch break the men would test their strength, lifting a 56 lb. weight above their heads with one hand. Some could do it with one weight in each hand, but I saw Mr. Foxwell standing in a bushel basket, roll up a full sack of wheat from the ground onto his shoulders!



MILK HEREFORD SHIRE

Little Herefordshire Histories 1



OUT SOON!
Herefordshire
Lore's first Little
Herefordshire
History: Milk

Polish car maker

Does anyone recall the model glider enthusiast, Dr. Cotton of Kingstone? **Tim Weedon** of Loughborough used to cycle to Madley aerodrome to watch the doctor fly his 'planes. Tim, whose parents had moved from The Plough at Wellington to Bank House, Ruckhall in 1944, went to Clehonger School "in the era of Mrs. Pat Grey"). He also remembers a Polish model car maker. "He made and raced radio controlled cars and drove a home-made car based on the Ford Pilot."



POWs at Aconbury

Henry Moss (above) recalls prisoners of war working at Aconbury Court, where his father was waggoner in 1939. "Mr. Arnold Layton was known as 'a good man' who took in evacuees as well as prisoners-of-war. The Italians taught us how to cut willow stems, bunch them together and lay them in a ditch of water for six days. The bark would then slide off, after which they were made into clothes and shopping baskets. They could also make a ring out of a three penny piece, hammering it out on the farm anvil. They even made bikes out of bits and pieces of scrap and rode their bicycles to the bottom of Dinedor Hill to meet their friends: they were not allowed any closer to Hereford." The four-year-old Henry used to cycle the two miles to Little Dewchurch school. Apologies to **Ruth Edwards** (it was Edwards, not Ruth Ward) who shared memories of a bicycle made for three in the last issue.

Cathedral story

George Barnardo Eagle, a clairvoyant who came to Hereford to marry and perform; Robert Andrews, a member of the vicars choral who ran off with church funds; and a Polish lieutenant who drowned in mysterious circumstances – all feature in the latest book from Hereford author **Liz Pitman**. Her book on the Hereford parish of Saint John focuses on Victorian times and "the tensions within the cathedral between the 'parish' church of St Johns and the cathedral." Liz is looking for a publisher: contact her at 07766 752665 or e.h.pitman@btinternet.com

Cathedral ghosts

Neil Carter reports on ghostly goings on at the Close. His grandmother Rosina Powell (IOA 27) who would walk through the Close to sing in the Cathedral with Edward Elgar, reported encountering a ghostly figure there one evening. When Neil's family stayed at Castle Cliffe East in Quay Street, his mother Violet would occasionally glimpse a young girl, about 16, wearing a mob cap and accompanied by a strong scent of lavender. "Mom made a pact with this apparition: that they would co-exist. On another occasion Mom was climbing the stairs when a mature woman, dressed in white, slipped by and passed through a locked door."

Scudamore closed

Charles Green remembered the hard winter of 1947 when his father decided it was time to go to school. "He made me walk with a friend, Clive Reynolds, to see if the school was open. It wasn't and we walked all the way home." Scudamore School was seven miles away.



Aylestone Hill

Nineteen-year-old June Stone worked for Messers T. O. D. Steel of Aylestone Hill, Hereford in 1948. Daughter-in-law **Kim Lamer** is hoping to find out more about June's days in Hereford. Can you help?

In Our Age
wants your comments or memories
EMAIL – POST – CALL
(contact details below)

Railway men

Marion Warren from Blandford, Dorset asks about her family, the Warrens from Westfaling Street, Hereford. "My father, Frank, was a railway driver and my aunt, Dot Lewis, worked at White's fish shop in Commercial Road. Frank and Dot, who lived in Whitecross Road, are photographed with another driver, Reg Phillips (right)."





Who? What? When?

Charles Green from Bridstow sets our latest teaser. Just what are fifty men and women, many dressed in their Sunday best, doing in the middle of this field near Madley? You can send in or email your answers. Meanwhile here are the solutions to our last puzzler: oont – a mole; tushing out – clearing small timber out of a wood; firkin – a barrel measure; bate – the farm hand's morning meal which he carried with him into the field; a hop crib.

Is it a Hereford?

How many visitors to Herefordshire's borders ponder over the county sign, Herefordshire You Can?, asks **Richard Beard** from Malvern. "It looks like a Limousine bull! The ghosts of the Hereford cattle breeders must be seething. (Val Fleming on Facebook In Our Age reckons: "It's an Angus!")

With his trademark colour and distinct markings, writes Richard, the Hereford established itself as England's No 1 beef breed and by the mid 20th century encircled the globe. And there was no more famous cattle breeder than De Quincey of the Vern Herd. Born in 1896, Richard Saher de Quincey Quincey (Captain for short) purchased the Vern near Marden in 1922 and began selecting the type within the breed that appealed to him. He was after smaller, faster-growing and more muscular Herefords, particularly one with a wider rump. By September 1939 he had produced Vern Robert and this bull became a legend, siring sons totaling over £100,000 in the days of natural service. Because it was war time he was never exhibited at a show and by the end of hostilities he was too valuable. Captain Quincey died in 1965 and in October 1966 136 Vern animals were sold for a staggering average of £1596 each as far afield as Argentina, Brazil, Canada, South Africa and the USA.



Is it a Hereford? A Limousine? Or an Angus?

Ledbury's Ox Roast weekend

The Feathers Hotel, Ledbury will be the focus for several (free!) talks as part of the town's Ox Roast Weekend on June 2. Speakers during the day will include Farmer Will Edwards, All Saints chef Bill Sewell, local food enthusiast Jess Allen, and In Our Age editor, Bill Laws, on our history of Hereford Market, A Slap of the Hand. (www.ledburyoxroast.org)



Jack Davies (far right) leading the 1933 Royal Derby show winner, a real Hereford. (Picture: Anne-Marie Davies).

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