

In Our Age

Living local history

Issue 31
Winter 2014



 Find In Our Age on
Facebook



Remembering Those Who Served
Page 2 & 3



Rotherwas recalled
Page 4



The Odeon Opens – in 1937
Page 7

Readers' relatives and the First World War



Jeanette Bates, above, and her father; Arthur Reed in uniform aged 14, below. (See Boy Soldier Arthur Reed, opposite)



Land Fit For Heroes?

Not for Alfred James (right) of the Royal Artillery

As a new century dawned for the young Alfred James at Marsh Farm, Upton Bishop life must have seemed perfect, writes his grandson, **Keith James**. With his father, mother, two brothers and two sisters the farm was well managed.

All that was changed by the outbreak of the Great War. A brother moved to Canada never to be heard of again. His father died and then brother Arthur died. As the first salvos of the war began Alfred was the only man left on the farm.

In the autumn of 1915 thanks to Alfred's work the farm was still productive but at the market in Ross-on-Wye a woman had singled out the fit young man to shame with a white feather.

A diligent and prize-winning pupil at Upton Bishop and well known for ringing the Sunday church bell, Alfred found the mark too much to bear.

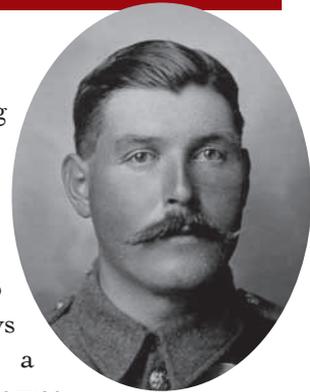
Believing perhaps, as all young men do, that he would survive, that the war would soon be over and he could return to put the farm in order, he enlisted.

For three years he was just one of many

making the big guns of the Royal Garrison Artillery roar. In 1916 there was little sleep for seven days and nights as a creeping barrage was launched as the prelude to The Battle of the Somme.

On September 19 1918 he was wounded with a "gunshot wound to the head –severe" and hospitalized.

War over, his duty done and his white feather critic answered, he returned home. His homecoming was not to be a "land fit for heroes" for in his absence his family had been evicted from the farm because "there was no man to work the land". He never again trusted any politician or voted in any election.



Gunner Alfred James (top) and above, Alfred (far right) rick building at Marsh Farm, Upton Bishop.

Marking the moment

As the First World War centenary dawns, readers Keith James, Michael Bolt, Jeannette Bates and Fiona Penwarne share their family stories. Meanwhile read about Gypsy families, beef chef Keith Taddy, Aconbury's lost heronry, and the big event that changed Gladys Christopher's life – passing her driving test (page 6).

A big thank you to everyone who joined for another year and to some generous donors including Mr. and Mrs. Wood, John Davies, Jim Lawes, Mrs. J. Smith, Mr. I. MacLean, Mr. C.B. Williams, Mr. M. Rees, Vera Hadley, Sara Stringer, R. W. Barker and Mike Brook for their kind donations. Every little bit helps!

Our May issue marks the revival of the Hereford River Carnival. Send your watery memories and photos to In Our Age.

Mark Hubbard Chairman, Herefordshire Lore.



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

Design: www.pinksheepdesign.co.uk

Website: Chris Preece **Print:** ABC Print

Herefordshire Lore: Eileen Klotz, Rosemary Lillico, Sandy Green, Marsha O'Mahony, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe (County Records), Julie Orton-Davies, Harvey Payne (treasurer), Liz Rouse, Chris and Irene Tomlinson, Betty Webb, David Clarke, Keith and Krystyna James, Jean O'Donnell. Munitions Group: Barry Mayne (chair).

We are sorry to report that **Mary Hillary**, a member of Herefordshire Lore for many years, died in January this year.

Front cover. Liberal Candidate Robin Day speaking at Hereford Market in 1959. Sir Robin was known as the grand inquisitor but despite his fearless interview style, he dreaded the hustings in the Market because the farmers were always well informed. See Chewing the Cud: page 5. (Photo: Derek Evans Archive)

When we published Arthur Reed's photo in IOA 30 his daughter *Jeanette Bates*, seen here in the days when she worked at Chadds, instantly recognized him. Share your story with our Lottery-funded partner Herefordshire in the Great War: Telling the Story (contact In Our Age: details below). Meanwhile Herefordshire Lieutenantcy Office will be marking the event and running an events diary: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/fwwc.

Twenty-nine days a soldier



The short life of 2nd Lieutenant Bertram Bolt

"April 14, 1916. Received orders to proceed overseas when I returned to Shrewsbury."

So begins the diary of 2nd

Lieutenant Bertram Bolt, 24, (left) of 88, Baysham Street, Hereford. His diary would be short.

Bertram was one of William Bolt's four sons. William, formerly a Devon shipwright, ran a building firm in West Street next to builders Beavan and Hodges.

Bertie enlisted with the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry and on Sunday 16 April he recorded his final day in Hereford: "Wet. Eignbrook in morning. Short walk with E in afternoon. Left Hereford by 8 o/c train."

Nine days later, on Easter Tuesday, Bertie was in the

trenches near Ypres. "Tipping weather. Shelled heavily about mid-day for 2 hours. (Casualties - 2 dead) no officers. Trenches bashed in horribly."

On Monday 8 May he wrote: "Raining all day long. Patrolled at night. Baker unwell. Writing letters nearly all day. No casualties." On May 10 his diary reads: "Weather improved. No rain. 6 casualties. Nothing very exciting happened except C.T. [Communication Trench?] knocked in." And here the diary of Bertram Bolt ends.

A temporary cross on the



road to Armentieres marked his fate. "2nd Lieutenant F.W. Bolt KSLI Died of wounds 13 May 1916."

You can read the diary entries at www.herefordshirelore.gov.uk

Boy soldier Arthur Reed

Veteran survives two world wars

Arthur Reed (right) lied about his age and enlisted. He was only 14. Arthur not only survived the war, but served for most of the Second World War. One of his daughters is **Jeanette Bates** from Withington. She describes her Dad as a "lovely quiet man who never talked about the war."

The family home was in Stonebow Road, Hereford where Arthur and wife Elizabeth brought up five children. ("They planned to have a new three piece suite after their fourth, Thelma, was born but they had Ann, their youngest, instead!" recalls Jeanette.)

The couple moved to Beattie Avenue, Hunderton and Arthur died there peacefully in 1970. Like many others he said nothing about his wartime service, says grandson **Paul Bates**. "We know he served with the Loyal North Lancashires and later with the Territorials until 1943." Arthur's oldest brother was less lucky. He was killed at Gallipoli in 1916.



Nellie Lambert, Canary Girl

Munitioneers worked long hours in dangerous conditions



Nellie Lambert was born at Edgar Street, Hereford in 1898, the second eldest of five children. When her father, a railway man and former Boer War soldier, died in 1915 17-year-old Nellie went to work at Rotherwas National Filling Factory. "We were yellow from using T.N.T. powder, a poison. Whilst I was there I had many experiences. I can remember queuing for 1oz of butter, 2 ozs of sugar and when I got near to

the counter they had run out of food." Nellie also recalled performing in the factory choir. "When war ended only five workers were kept on for cleaning. I was one of these as my Father had died in the services. Men out of the services were sent to the factory to break down the ammunition and it was there I met my husband-to-be."

Nellie Lambert became Nellie

Williams. Before she died in 2002 her granddaughter, **Fiona Penwarne** recorded her memories.

Did your relative work on the munitions at Rotherwas? Barry Mayne chairs our Munitions Group. "We are trying to trace official records on those who worked at Rotherwas. We have collected over 150 names - keep sending them in and keep in touch with developments through In Our Age."

From My Album



Pictured with his work mates, Thomas Richard Williams (front row, 3rd from left) worked in the boiler house at ROF Rotherwas, writes his daughter **Mrs. H. Pinnell**. His name appears on the Rotherwas memorial although that of his wife, Florence Morris who also worked there, does not. Florence's name has been added to our list – see page 3.

Below: two young men from t (photo: Bill Kerswell) and, below outside the Five Bridges, Much

Below: Frank Taddy from The Steak Bar in King Street would sometimes pay huge money for a champion Hereford and then put it on the menu. (Photo: Derek Evans Archive)





the Locke family in Shropshire
v right, local Gypsy hop pickers
Cowarne (photo Tom Nellist).



Above: A local farmer keeps a weather eye on sales at Hereford
Market. (Photo: Derek Evans Archive)



Miners' Fortnight

Before the Welsh mines closed, the Miners' Fortnight was big date in the Market calendar. Reader **Alan Williams** recalled how 30 or 40 coaches brought miners and their wives to Market and the pubs stayed opened until 3 o'clock on Market Day. "The men would go to the pub because of the extra hour, the women used to go shopping and then the bus would take them home."

The Chewing the Cud (CTC) team, who are capturing people's memories and photos of the former cattle market, want to hear more about the Miner's Fortnight.

They will premiere the Market film at The Courtyard (6.p.m. Tuesday 11 March) although, as Julia Goldsmith from Catcher Media Social emphasized, "we've not finished yet! People remember women and girls in pretty summer dresses and sandals, and talk of the market heaving during the Fortnight."

Do you have any photos, film or memorabilia? Do you remember friends and family going to Market on Miner's Fortnight? It's not too late to get in touch with CTC's Jo Henshaw (01432 266611, joannahenshaw@btinternet.com or 07788 643184) or by post to Herefordshire Lore, c/o Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW.

Spitfire Overhead

Henry Moss recalls wartime economies, Aconbury Wood and the Home Guard

Evensong at Aconbury church one evening in the 1940s was drowned out by the noise of hundreds of German bomber planes flying over. Leaving church to walk home, we could see the search lights at the top of the Callow picking them up as flares or anti aircraft fire lit up the night sky. Later Father took us outside as the night sky was lit up by the first night of blitz on Liverpool. Two nights later Swansea was bombed and that also lit up our night sky. Mother told me to say a prayer for those in the cities.

Father joined the local home guard and trained every Sunday morning. The country needed ash wood for gliders so most of Aconbury Woods were felled. We watched the caterpillar tractors pulling out and loading the trees amidst the mud. Also lost at that time was the great Aconbury heronry, opposite Aconbury turn.

The teachers asked us to bring all spare pots and pans to school for the war effort. 'Every Little Helps' was more relevant than today: on weekends I would gather sheep's wool from the wire fences, which was sent to make blankets for the troops. One day a brand new Spitfire flew over: "That's our frying pan in that one!"



Dad's Army: Tupsley Home Guard in the early 1940s. (Photo: Linda Griffin)

Armaments Inspector

Passing her driving test was a breakthrough, remembers Gladys Christopher

We travelled to the munitions factory at Rotherwas by W. E. Morgan Wye Valley buses. I was trained as an examiner (CIA – Civil Inspection of Armaments) and issued with a stamp to say the shells had been filled satisfactorily. If they failed, they were sent back.

We never talked about our work there. However the shells were filled with powdered TNT and cordite, which made our skin yellow. We worked three 8-hour shifts (mornings, afternoons and nights), wore overalls and turbans to cover our hair and no rings, hairgrips or anything metal. We had our meals in the canteen and they were quite good considering it was wartime.

One morning in July 1942, as we got to Belmont, we were warned by police to pull into a layby. We actually saw the German bomber. We didn't know how many were killed (we learned later at least 17 were killed and 24 injured), but it didn't affect the North Section where I worked. In October 1942, two died and four more were injured in an explosion.

In 1944 I married Bill Christopher and because I was marrying a farmer, had no difficulty leaving the factory. I married on April 17. (My skin was still yellow, but it soon faded). With the money I saved I was able to buy three cows. We used horses until my husband Bill and his two brothers bought a Fordson tractor, which they shared. I kept a lot of poultry in two deep-litter boxes and a lorry came each week from Thames Valley to collect the boxes, each holding 30 dozen eggs. Each week a dealer from Blaenavon came to collect the dressed poultry, butter and any fruit or vegetables we had to sell.

Later Bill would go to Hereford Market. We had a van by now and Bill drove it with the lambs, which the butchers bought for their shops while I did my shopping.

One day Bill booked some driving lessons for me and I passed my test. I was 37 and it was one of the best things I have

done. I could save Bill a lot of journeys, popping into town for machinery while he was haymaking, silage making, harvesting corn or potatoes.



The Empty Shell store at the former munitions factory today and, inset, Gladys at home with her hens.

In The Munitions Women At War In Herefordshire

To mark the 10th anniversary of its publication, a copy of *In The Munitions* has been presented to the Imperial War Museum in London.

Price: £10 plus £2.50 p&p.

In The Munitions,
Herefordshire Lore,
c/o Castle Green Pavilion,
Castle Green,
HR1 2NW

Name:
Address:

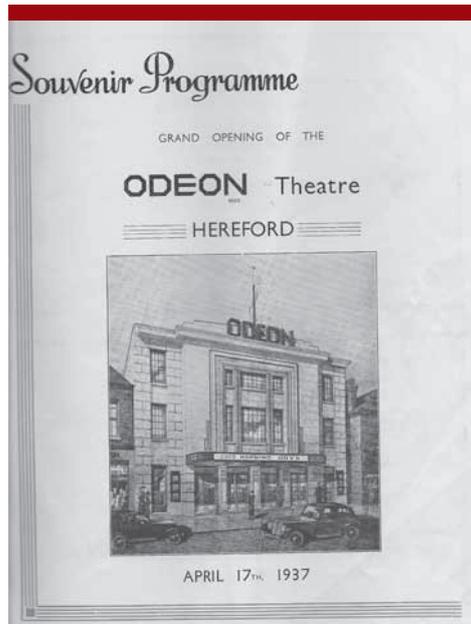


British Restaurant

Whatever happened to the British Restaurant, asks **Mike Staite** whose mum, Lucy, worked there? It was situated on the Bishops Meadow, Hereford near to what is now the Welsh Club.

High Jinks

L. J. Meredith recalls the eve of election meeting at the Kemble Theatre, Broad Street, Hereford in February 1956 (not 1957 as in IOA 30). Having just left school and started at Lloyds Bank “a group of us young Liberals painted High Town with the slogan ‘Hereford Son Second to None. But it was never seen by anyone as it snowed heavily that night!’”



Old Odeon

As a new Odeon cinema prepares to open in Hereford, reader **Doug Amery** has found his souvenir Odeon programme from 1937. The Odeon was built in Gomond Street on the site of the old judges' lodgings (now the Body Shop) and involved over 40 contractors: only two, electrical contractors Drake & Gorham of Wilson Chambers and tillers W. H. Peake of Barton Works, were from Hereford.

Brook Brothers

“In your splendid picture of St Martin’s School (IOA 30) you call the headmistress Mrs Brookes”, writes reader **Mike Brook**. “My spinster maiden great aunt, Miss Fanny Brook, would have been affronted. Having

lost her fiancé in the Great War she never married and died, aged 81, in 1973. Two of her elder brothers founded Brook Bros Ltd, and many readers will remember the depots in Blueschool Street and Kington.”

Fireman Dennis

The photo of Jack Cornes (Improving Jack, IOA 30) brought back memories for **Dennis Winter** from Lea. He worked as fireman with Jack during the Great Western Railway era. Jack ran unofficial self improvement classes for other railway men at the Barton Shed on Sunday mornings.

Both Jack’s granddaughter **Geraldine Woolcott** and his son **Will Savage** spotted Jack. “He was seen as a something of a father figure to younger drivers,” explained Will on Facebook (In Our Age). **Chris Martin** identified two other drivers, the late Robin Jones and Johnny ‘Brec’ Davies, who sent in the photo while **Phil Bromage** adds that the late mayor, John Gooding, moved on to driving diesels.

Conscientious objectors

Hereford Peace Council is looking for stories about relatives who served in the First World War or were conscientious objectors. Can you help? You can contact us at In Our Age or phone Marie Prout on 01432 358330 or email jennywmcnd@gn.apc.org



Two-tone Healey

Following “Hereford to Romania” (IOA 30) I found Mary Jeynes, a music teacher living at 99 Park Street in the 1871 census, writes **Keith Morgan**. Going forward to the 1911 census 99 was home to a young lad destined to become a successful Hereford businessman, Cyril Franklin, son of corn merchant Charles. Cyril became head of Franklin Barnes. I did electrical work for him and found him a really nice man, but I envied him, in 1959, his two-tone, cream and green Austin Healy 3000 sports car, one of the loveliest cars ever and one which grew of the Healy sports cars (above) first made in Hereford.

8d a pint

Your Women At War book (see page 6) brought back so many memories I cried my eyes out, writes **Doris Hadlow** (nee Ford) from Fareham. “I worked in the canteen at Rotherwas selling the cider. I think it was about 8d a pint. I always remember crowds of men coming in at lunchtime all fighting to be served at once.

“My family had been bombed out. We were too old to be evacuated with Mum and our younger brother and sister so my sister Peggy and I slept in a public shelter until we got to Hereford. My boyfriend was stationed there and he got a room for me and Peggy. I was 18. We both got jobs at the factory and we loved it so much we sometimes did a double shift.

“We were so happy in Hereford that we had a double wedding at St Martins. I’d been married for six months and fell for a baby – I’d planned to earn such a lot of money! I don’t suppose there are many of us left: what wonderful memories!”

Patricia Dainton

That wasn’t a Miss World contestant on your front page (IOA 30) it was Patricia Dainton, writes **Kev Mailes**. “She’d come to promote her new film The Dancing Years and my brother Peter and myself saw the film . . . and Miss Dainton.”

Monkland Rose

I didn’t know my mother Rose Gower (nee Williams) of Shop Cottage, Monkland had worked at ROF Hereford until I acquired a copy of your In The Munitions, writes **Alan Gower**. I was born in London’s East End where Mum and Dad lived: Dad, who served in Burma, was stationed in Hereford for a short time when he met and married Mum. Sadly she passed on in her early 30s.



When was this?

Win a pair of film tickets

A sprightly Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh greet crowds at Hereford Market (Photo: Derek Evans Archive). But when was the visit? Grab your chance to win a pair of tickets to Chewing the Cud - Memories from Hereford's Old Livestock Market. Send your answer to In Our Age/ CTC c/o Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW by March 1 and the first correct answer out of the hat will receive two free tickets to the Chewing the Cud film.



Sneak preview? Check out new weekly web episodes for short clips and interviews at www.chewingthecud.net

Tales of the river bank

We are looking for your stories of floods, fishing and river carnival floats, anything to celebrate the revival of the River Carnival, which takes place on the May Bank holiday, May 3.

Our photo comes from reader **Jan Pell** and features Norman Manning of the Devon Creamery delivering milk to a young man in a rowing boat in Greyfriars Avenue during the floods of 1947. Jan's photograph features in MILK Herefordshire, the first of Herefordshire Lore's Little Herefordshire Histories, out soon.



Send me In Our Age every quarter

Guarantee your copy – and get it in the post.

To receive the next three issues send a cheque or postal order, made out to **Herefordshire Lore**, to our new address:

Herefordshire Lore, c/o Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW

Individual £9 Group (10 copies) £22.50.

Name: Contact number:

Address:

Post code: Email:

*I love your mag
and the pictures are great.
Reader Keith Morgan*