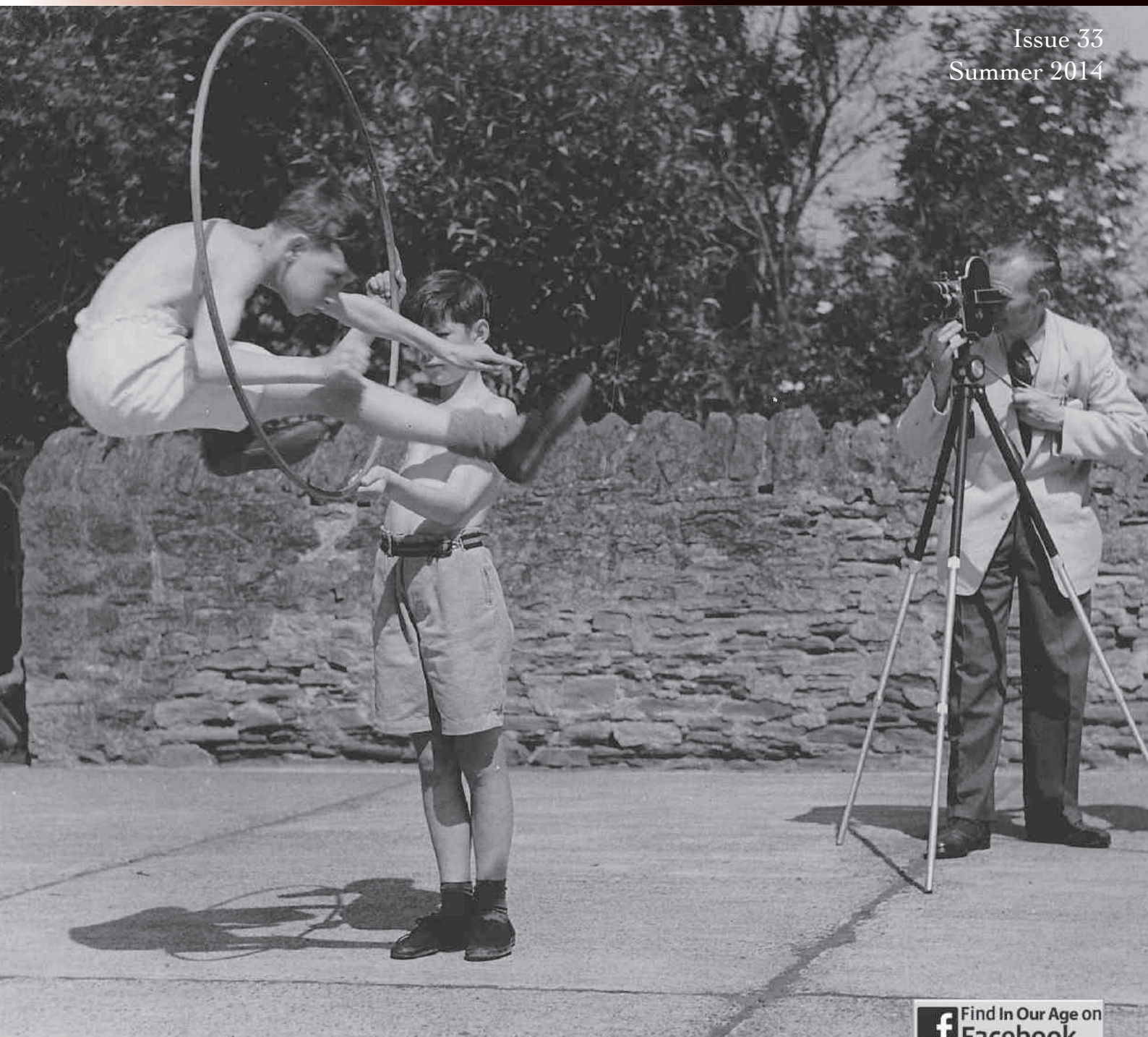


In Our Age

Living local history

Issue 33
Summer 2014



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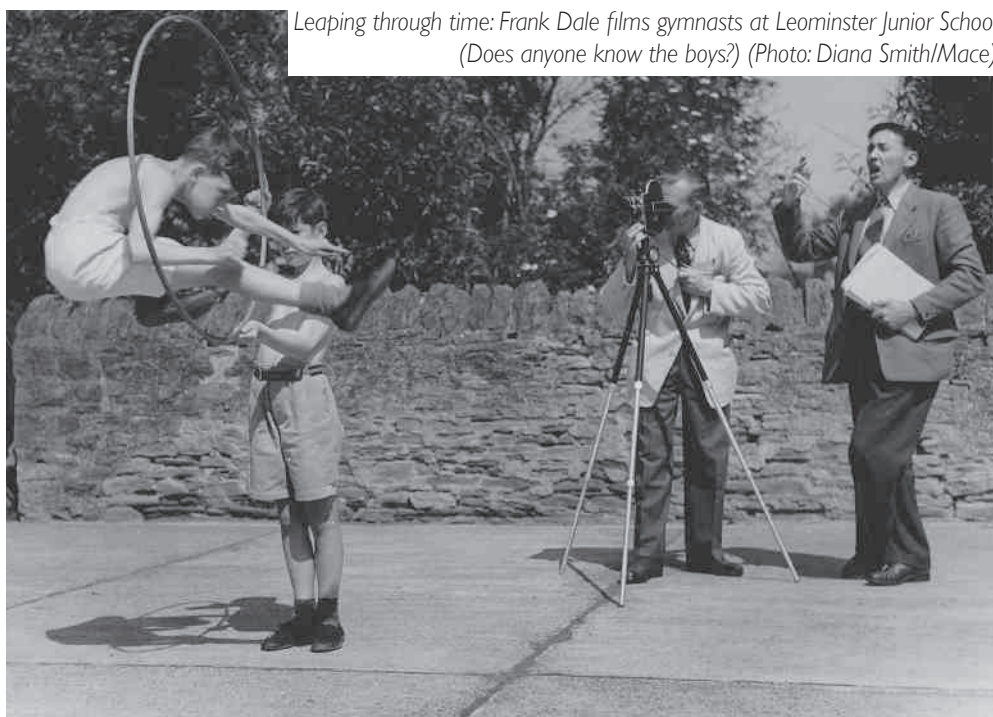
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Frank Dale – barn builder and film maker

Look at any group of farm buildings in Herefordshire and the chances are that at least one will bear the name F. H. Dale, writes **Anita Syers-Gibson**. This Leominster steel construction company, founded by Frank Dale in 1948, is still in family ownership, still occupying its original site.

Frank Dale was a local farmer's son who, with £100 in his pocket and a lathe, started making poultry houses and pig huts and later the market buildings at Hereford, Leominster and Brecon. The business prospered and Frank bought a family house near Eytton. There he farmed Hereford cattle and grew the bedding plants that graced the gardens fronting the Leominster works.

Busy in the local community (he chaired several organisations including the River Lugg Drainage Board, which successfully diverted the converging streams that regularly used to flood Leominster), Frank's passion was horses. He rode to hounds, was a recognised National Hunt trainer and countrywide show judge. But after breaking his neck in a riding accident



Leaping through time: Frank Dale films gymnasts at Leominster Junior School (Does anyone know the boys?) (Photo: Diana Smith/Mace)

he took up a new passion: filming his family, shows, ploughing matches, carnivals and other Leominster events on his new cine camera.

This archive, eleven miles of film preserved by his daughter Diana, has been made into the newly released film *Five Years in the Fifties*.

Five Years in the Fifties, with music by Kim Humphrey and accompanied by a narrative poem by Philip Wells, is showing at Cawley Hall, Eye Lane, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0DS on Thursday August 14, 7.00 p.m. and Ledbury Market Theatre, Market Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2AQ on Friday November 21, 2014, 7.00 p.m.

Summer theme

What did your Mum or Dad do? That's the theme this summer as **Ian Robinson**, **Debbie Pask** and **Stan Davis** recall some family memories. And there's more from Munition workers' relatives **Fiona Penwarne**, **Sara Tait**, **Terry Harris**, **Margaret Chamberlain** and **Ann Brick** on page 6 and 7. Meanwhile **Terry Bullock** writes about the Belmont Plate, **Dianne Evans** recalls the British Restaurant and **June Smith** her days at the Commercial Square Milk Bar. Enjoy your read.

Be sure to book tickets for The Canary Girls (The Courtyard, September 16 – 20, 01432 340555). The play is loosely based on *In The Munitions – Women at War in Herefordshire* (page 6).

Mark Hubbard, chairman Herefordshire Lore.



It's not often *In Our Age* hits the headlines, but our Munitions Group under **Barrie Mayne**, here with brother Peter (left), has a national exclusive: a full list of all UK munition workers.

Formed last year to campaign for a proper memorial to Rotherwas' munition workers, the Group has found a detailed record of all names, ages and addresses of employees from 1915.

Barrie's mother, Cissie Eileen Mayne (née Aplin) worked there in 1940s. "We have traced paper records kept by the Ministry of Defence," says Barrie. "Although we have already collected around 2,000 workers' names, this is a real breakthrough. We hope the records, which are believed to detail all British munition workers, will eventually be lodged with a national organisation such as the National Archives at Kew or the Royal Artillery Museum so that we and others can finally list all those brave people."

Keep in touch with the Munitions Group at www.rotherwasmunitionshereford.co.uk.

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What Mum and Dad Did

Evacuees and two close calls with death

(Below) Scouts honour: Stan Davis, 13 (middle row, end left) with Herefordshire's Air Raid Precautions (ARP) controller Cecil Coney (glasses) and Deputy Commissioner Major Bailey.



Joan and Denis Robinson – Hereford

“Mum and Dad were Newcastle-upon-Tyne Geordies, although they only met in Hereford during World War 2,” writes **Ian Robinson**. “In his late teens Dad, short and slight, was sent to a camp near the Oval, Belmont to be ‘beefed’ up. He was later a Sherman tank radio-gunner (ideal for a small person) and sailed for India on Victory Europe Day, arriving after Japan surrendered. He stayed during Partition as India and Pakistan gained independence.

“Mum, then Joan Foggin, meanwhile recalled the night before D-Day when Hereford was home to thousands of Americans. The following morning they’d all disappeared just like the May Fair slips away in the night.

“She was in the Timber Corps, quartered near Stirling Lines and selected trees for felling by Italian prisoners-of-war (POWs). She would report to the local POW camp and pick up the Italians who were driven to the woods by lorry while she followed on pushbike. In reality Mum waited for the lorry to round the nearest corner when her bike went into the back of the lorry and she climbed into the cab! After the war she was sent a pair of Italian silk stockings. There was no address – if there was maybe I’d be speaking Italian!”

Ian adds: “Both my mum and dad have died and I wanted to record a few things about them relevant to Hereford before they were lost for ever.” Mum and Dad memories? Send them to In Our Age, address below.

Dorothy Vaughan – Ross-on-Wye

“My mum Dorothy, 80 in September, remembers evacuees in Ross in 1942,” writes **Debbie Pask**. Brothers and sisters were sometimes separated and sent to different homes on arrival: there were lots of tears, but local people rose to the occasion. Dorothy recalls children sitting on pavements in Hillview and Three Crosses Road while neighbours brought out food and jugs of powdered



lemonade. One of her best friends, Maureen Harper, was billeted with Maureen’s brother Billy at Mrs. Gilbert’s in Morley Square while Alan Mychenski and David Leibovitz, two Jewish boys from Birmingham (Mum is unsure of the spellings), also became good friends.

There was a terrible moment when Dorothy thought she had been orphaned. Her Mum, also Dorothy, worked at Hereford’s Rotherwas munitions factory along with her sisters, Rose and Vera. In July 1942 Dorothy was walking in for her morning shift when the factory came under enemy attack. She was thrown to the ground and lost a shoe.

“Someone came to break the news to Dad: ‘Sorry Billy, but your wife has been was killed.’ Everyone was crying until Mum was spotted, coming up the road from Ross station wearing an odd boot she had been given.”

Reuben Davis – Bringsty

Stan Davis from Bodenham recalls how his father, Reuben, from Bringsty joined the Worcester Regiment in the First World War. After fighting in Greece and Thessalonika he was demobbed on Good Friday, 1919. “There were no trains so he walked the 13 miles home.”

He gardened for Richard Hollins Murray at Dinmore Manor (the accountant invented the reflective lens used in road ‘cat’s eyes’), before joining the Rotherwas munitions. He too was there on the day the factory was attacked. “I was 16 and when I was not working 11.5 hour shifts at Aeroparts in Commercial Road, Hereford I was a senior volunteer messenger based in the operations room at the police station in Gaol Street. The day of the bombing the ground shook and we thought: ‘This is the real thing’.” Sent home early he was relieved to find his Dad’s bike outside the house. “The buggers didn’t get me the first time round and they didn’t get me now,” he told his son.



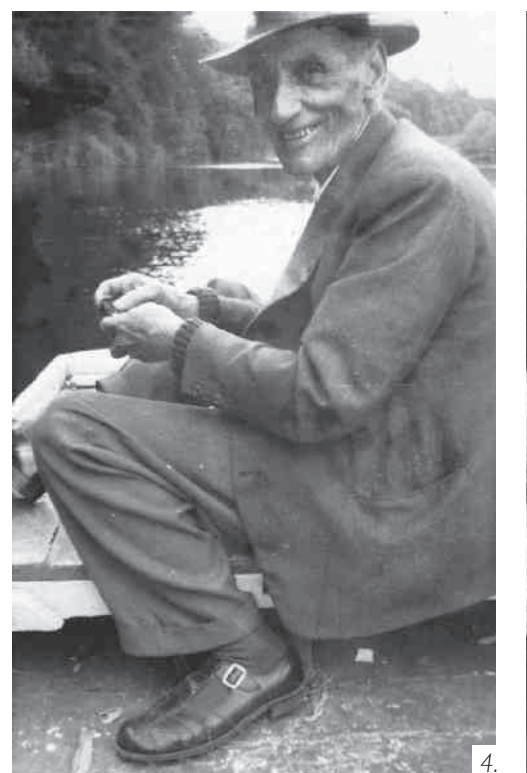
From My Album: *Joyce Chamberlain, Jan Preedy, Sara Tait, Terry Bu*



1.



3.



4.



8.

Bullock and Dorothy Jancey



1 & 2: Ted Edwards was busy with his camera in the 1960s, snapping the construction of the new Hereford city bridge. (Photos: Joyce Chamberlain)

3 & 4: When ferryman Walter Preedy from Hunderton died in 1961 his daughter Jan (3) took over. The city's first ferrywoman, she followed in the footsteps of grandfather and bootmaker Tom Preedy, (pictured in IOA 32). He began ferrying passengers across the Wye on his boat, the Princess Mary. (Photos: Jan Preedy)

5: Annie Button. Annie sent this photo of herself and three children to her husband William, incarcerated in a prisoner of war camp during the First World War. Neither the boy on her lap nor her husband survived long – see For King and Country page 6. (Photo: Sara Tait)

6 & 7: Rowing teams competing for the Belmont Cup – see River Battles, page 7. (Photos: Terry Bullock)

8: When Dorothy Jancey died last year she had lived in Sutton St Nicholas for 102 years. Her family passed on her postcard collection to In Our Age, starting with this one. But where is it located?

In The Munitions

Canary Girls Nellie Lambert and Annie Button; and was Winnie Aulsebrook really The First Fatality?

"Before I was 14 I was in service, up at 6 o'clock and on until you went to bed," Canary Girl Nellie Lambert (far right) told her granddaughter, **Fiona Penwarne**. "When I was young, a thing called sex was never talked about as it is now. My mother worked in a big fishmongers when I was born and when I was 13 and had a monthly as it was called then, my Mother told me that when I was a baby she had dropped me on the fish slab which caused a bleeding now and again!"

"Then war broke out and in 1915 Dad, who'd been in the Boer War and wasn't in good health, died. Mother was left with a pension and I got a job at Rotherwas munitions where we went yellow from using explosive powder. When the war ended I was one of only five kept on for cleaning. I'd met my husband-to-be there and on June 9, 1919 we married, early in the morning, at St. Nicholas Church before going to Ledbury for our honeymoon. It was wonderful, but we came down to earth when we moved into two rooms in Daws Road, Hereford."



For King and Country

Sara Tait recognised her grand mother, Annie Button (above, marked), when this photo was published in *Who Do You Think You Are* magazine. "I knew she did war work and I have her triangular cap badge and this photo. But I never knew Annie, who had three children under six and lived in the heart of London at Kings Cross, worked in Hereford!"

"Her husband William was in the Kings Royal Rifle Corps and was captured by the Germans in 1914. He contracted TB and died a week after repatriation in 1919. Their boy, also William, died seven days later. Annie hated the Germans for the rest of her life and during the Second World War made sten gun magazines at the Lines Bros factory at South Wimbledon."

The First Fatality?



Elsie Moss (above right), born in 1896, and her sister Kit, born in 1899, were living at Redhill, Hereford during the 1911 census and both worked at

Rotherwas Munitions factory, writes relative **Ann Brick**. Elsie married Harry Aulsebrook in 1920, just over a week before his 19-year-old sister, Winifred (below left), was killed at Rotherwas. He had to formally identify her body. According to the inquest (*Hereford Times* April 17 1920) Winifred's was the factory's first fatality.

But Malvern historian **Anne Spurgeon**, who when exploring the National Archives Industrial Disease Registers, discovered that toxic jaundice (TNT poisoning) was made a notifiable disease early in 1916. She writes: "Altogether there were 430 cases between 1916 and 1918 including 111 fatalities, across all munitions factories. At Rotherwas there were 13 cases between 1917 and 1918, including two fatalities in January 1918: Lily Maud Weaver, 21, from Merthyr Tydfil and Constance Marion Lotinga, 20, from Hull. The other women listed all came from outside Herefordshire and were nearly all in their late teens or early 20s."

Ann Brick bids good luck to Herefordshire Lore's campaign for a lasting memorial:

"They certainly deserve one."

In The Munitions Women At War In Herefordshire

Price: £10 plus £2.50 p&p

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



Milk Bars

"I still have a Bartonsham Dairy milk bottle," writes **June Smith** (née Jones) from Bridgend. In the early 1960s June worked at Hereford's Commercial Square Milk Bar, owned by Robertsons of Blackpool and later, Jones of Swansea. When the road was altered the milk bar, the black and white fish and chip café and a fruit and veg shop were pulled down. "It was hard but enjoyable work. We'd open at 7 a.m. for the lorry drivers on their way to Birmingham with a load of steel collected overnight from Ebbw Vale. Bread and cakes were delivered from Worcester before the Chadds' staff came for their tea break. Evenings were quieter unless it was a race day or big football match and we'd wash the floors and close at 9.30. During May Fair, however, we closed at 10.30 – it was a work of art trying to get the last lot out!"



Objectors at Rotherwas

The treatment of conscientious objectors, held at Rotherwas Military Detention Barracks in the first World War, was challenged in 1916 by Bishop Percival, according to a new book, *Meet at Dawn, Unarmed*. Written by Andrew Hamilton, the book mentions letters in the Hereford Times in August and July from Percival and Rev. Herbert Davies addressed to Captain Robert Hamilton, Andrew's grandfather, who was responsible for the objectors. Leintwardine History Society is researching the subject. Can you help?

River battles

The Belmont Plate mentioned in IOA 32 was started in 1952 and is still contested today, writes **Terry Bullock**. Pub and work crews originally competed and regular winners, the Vaga Tavern at Hunderton, were the team to beat. Big rivals during the seventies to my Dad's Vaga crew (Roy Williams, Geoff Edwards, Trevor Whitefoot, Keith Scott and Terry 'Tug' Bullock) were the Moon at Mordiford and Derrick Herdeshee. Other crews contesting the course between Hunderton railway bridge and Hereford Rowing Club's steps were the Strongbow from Bulmers and the Orange Tree's Motor Cycle Club. Over the years the Bullock family (Tug and his brother Les) put their names on the Plate as winners no fewer than 28 times.

Municipal Restaurant

Mike Staite asks about the British Restaurant (IOA 31 & 32), writes **Dianne Evans**. "My Mum, Phyllis Lyons, worked at what was then known as the Municipal Restaurant, Hinton Road. It was managed by Mr. Pearce and owned by Hereford Council. My husband Dave had luncheon vouchers when he started work at the Post Office. Phyllis went on to cook at Whitecross, Redhill and later Our Lady Queen of Peace schools. I also remember head teacher Miss Brookes at St Martins School, happy, carefree school days and no sign of an Ofsted Inspector apart from Mr Herbert, the Truant Officer collecting children who had bunked off.

Back on the buses

Congratulations to all those who identified Hereford's first bus station (IOA 32). The Midland Red was at the rear of the Black Lion pub in Bridge Street.

Firefighter families

Fireman Albert A. Haynes was awarded the British Empire Medal for his actions in May 30 1944 when a bomb overheated and caused an explosion,

writes Albert's son-in-law, **Terry Harris** from Australia. Apparently there were two chaps involved and although Bert always maintained he was making the tea, he perched on top of a 2,000 pound bomb playing a hose over it to keep it cool. We still have his medal but there are no photographs or citations. Can anyone help? (Footnote: Bert's older son Bryan was killed by a truck near the railway bridge around 1944.)

Two other firemen on duty that day were Alfred 'Joe' Chamberlain and Jack Davies from Allensmore, writes Joe's daughter-in-law **Margaret Chamberlain** from Fownhope. "They were spraying the area with foam when the explosion occurred. They escaped serious injury perhaps because the blast went over their heads. Some other firemen recovered the badly damaged brass nozzle of Joe's hose and presented it to him. We still have it – and his British Empire Medal."

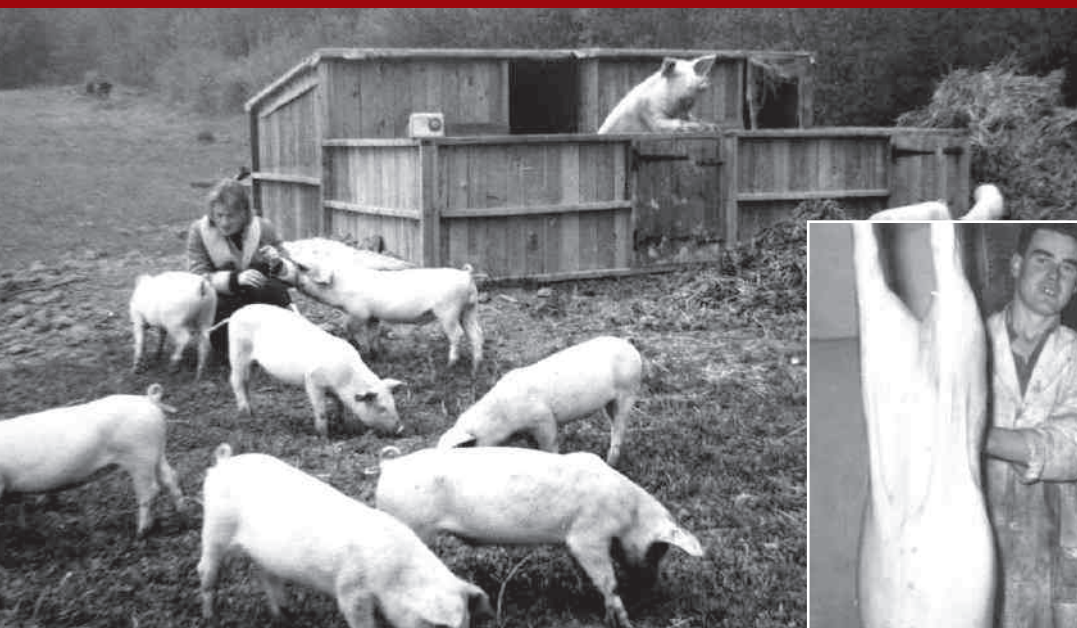
Munitions workers

Pauline Hart sent the name of her mother, Olive Jubb (née Woodward) and **Liz Bryon** from Marden that of her mother-in-law Lilian May Bryon. Both women worked at Rotherwas during the war. "Our parish magazine published a request for names of relatives who worked at the Munitions Factory," wrote Liz, "but I was unable to contact you through your web address."

If you have a relative's name to add to our list, contact our Munitions Group direct at www.rotherwasmunitionshereford.co.uk

Hereford's Friends of Castle Green are running a WWI, Heritage Lottery funded commemoration project, researching the lives of some of the women who worked in the munitions factory. Anyone with information about relatives who worked there or anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the research contact: friendsofcastlegreen@yahoo.co.uk or Annabel Oxford on 01432 263992.

Pigs and poultry – *A new Little Herefordshire History*



From the house pig to the housewife's poultry, these two have been a lifeline for smallholders and farming families for decades. While the practice of keeping a pig or two in the backyard has declined, hen houses are as hot as they ever were.

On Mary Wakefield Jones' suggestion we're inviting you to send in your pig and poultry stories and photographs for our next *Little Herefordshire History: Eggs and Bacon*.

And here, to whet your appetite, are a few from our archives.

Margaret Bell kept her pigs at Fownhope as happy as she could. This meant leaving the radio on, seen here (above) on the sty wall, until one of her favourite sows ran off with it in her mouth. "They were happy pigs." (Photo: *A Slap of the Hand*)

"Mother kept chickens and ducks when we lived in Hunderton," recalled **Harry Carroll** (left). "She hatched the eggs in the warming oven and we used to have the chicks and ducklings running round the room." (Photo: Harry Carroll)



Les Jones (below) ran the abattoir behind his shop in Ledbury, killing and dressing up to 200 pigs a week. With Les are Bill Summers and Doug Kington. (Photo: Les Jones)



Milk, the first of our *Little Herefordshire Histories* is selling well. In the words and pictures of Herefordshire people themselves, it tells how the county produced, processed and delivered the milk, fresh on the doorstep in the days before plastic bottles or fridges. Get your copy now, £4 plus 60p. p&p. Details on the tear off slip below.



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