

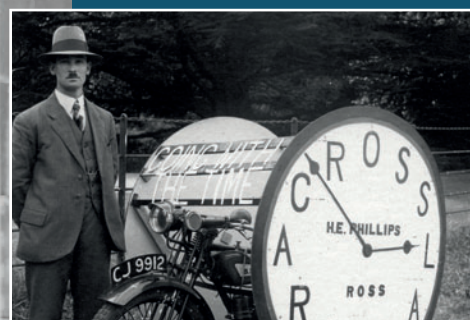
In Our Age

Living local history

Issue 35
Winter 2015



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The Wren Will Wear White

Chick Heggie thrust into media limelight

When wartime clothing coupons came to an end in 1949, *Illustrated* magazine looked for an uplifting story to cheer the hearts of its war-weary readers.

Then it discovered that Violet Heggie from the Womens Royal Naval Service (Wren) was planning a wedding. "The Wren will wear white – she's going ashore this Easter to exchange a uniform of navy blue for a wedding gown," wrote *Illustrated* staff writer Isobel Robertson as Violet, or 'Chick' to her friends, was whisked away on a glamour shoot around the shops of Oxford Street, Chelsea and Knightsbridge.

Having served three years with the Wrens, Chick was leaving life aboard HMS President to marry Elved Reed at St Martin's, Hereford on Easter Monday 1949. (Elved was the son of Arthur Reed, the boy soldier featured in IOA 31.)

"Her only acquaintance with New Look, the Tube Look and all the other looks [has been] window-shopping in the West End," declared *Illustrated*. Chick, who would become the fashion buyer for Chadds, Hereford now became briefly the bride-to-be model for photographer Russell Westwood.

So how much did she spend on her trousseau? Turn to page 5 to find out.



"She couldn't resist trying on this wedding gown when she went trousseau shopping at an Oxford Street store."



What do you think of the bridesmaid's dress? "Her mother in Hereford was seeing to the catering for 120 guests," explained *Illustrated* magazine.



"Plenty of assistance is offered by Chick's cabin mates." Wrens Kathleen Kenny and Hazel Shipperley join in.

Happy 2015

A happy new year and a warm welcome to subscribers, new and old. Over 300 readers have signed up and many have generously made an extra donation. Postage, printing and production of *In Our Age* costs around £5,000 a year so every little helps. If you'd like to join, fill in the form on the back page.

After the uplifting story of 'Chick' Reed's London fashion shoot (above), find out how much she spent (page 5). Read recollections of VE Day, the Battle of Arnhem and Vivian the Hereford photographers; of Ross town's oldest shop and Herefordshire's most famous citizen, Edward Elgar. Help us name those pictured at the Yeoman's reunion and in the Clehonger and Allensmore Home Guard. See if you can identify the burning church on the back page. Above all keep sending your memories in – without you there would be no *In Our Age*.

Mark Hubbard, Chairman Herefordshire Lore.



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Front cover. Number 281 Foxley and Lily Darke and children Christine and Malcolm in 1957. See more on Foxley, page 6.

Day to remember

VE Day 70 years ago

Survivors of the 1939–45 war fondly remember the day when peace came – Victory Europe Day, 1945. Reader **Jim Lawes** was among them. “I was in London and recall the sheer relief. Everyone came out in the streets, every pub was drunk dry; there was music, laughter, dancing and lights. The blackout was over and house- and street lights glowed at last.”

Caught up in a conga that danced down the Mall to Buckingham Palace (“shouts for the royal family”), Jim briefly lost his



VE Day street party. (Photo: Derrick Blake)

sailor’s hat while his companion, a young ATS girl, threw hers to the crowd. “After escorting her to the underground station I finished up about 4.00 a.m. stretched out on a platform at Waterloo Station.”

Back in Hereford tables and chairs were

brought out into the road as all the week’s rations were devoted to celebratory street parties. “Afterwards the streets became dance halls with music from local musicians and gramophones. Can your readers add their own memories?” asks Jim.



Hereford Air Training Corps and the band on a victory march through High Town in 1945. (Photo: Gordon Lamputt)

Fatal error on front line

Tragic mix-up follows Battle of Arnhem

Two Hunderton boys, Geoff ‘Mutt’ Cole and James Jones, were best friends at St Martin’s school and it was no surprise when, as war was declared in 1939, the two 20-year-olds joined the Parachute Regiment, writes **Geoff Cole**. (It earned them an extra 6d a week.)

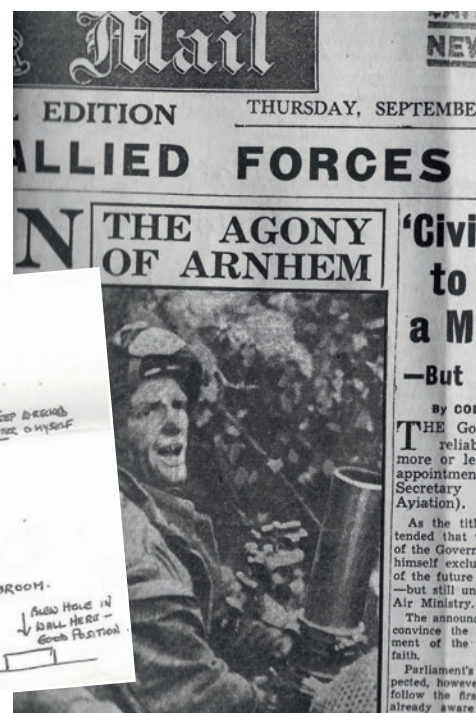
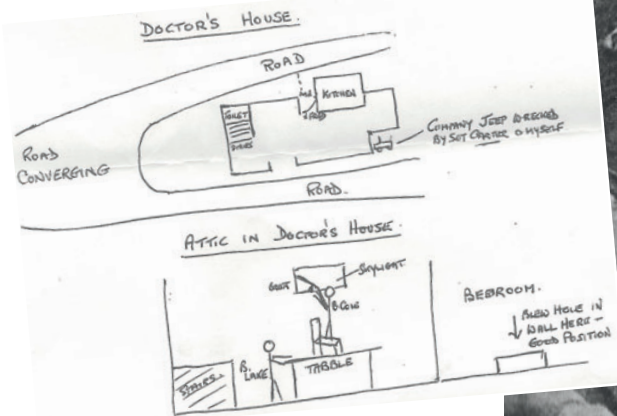
In the autumn of 1944 British and Polish forces parachuted into Holland to try and secure the strategic Arnhem bridge from German Panzer divisions. Mutt and James became embroiled in the battle.

Boatless, Mutt had swum the Neder Rijn, the Dutch river that claimed many lives in the Battle of Arnhem. He later attributed his swimming to “good training in the Wye”. Mutt was holed up on the first floor of a doctor’s house overlooking German positions with another soldier, Billy Lake. He fired a “couple of good bursts”, standing precariously on a chair perched on a

table (see drawing) and was leaning down to pick up a Bren gun from Billy when German fire took out the skylight. “I should have been kaput,” he recalled later.

In the confusion the following message was sent through to his parents: “Your son has been killed in action at Arnhem.” It wasn’t until Mutt returned home and discovered his parents in mourning that the true story came out. It was his mate James

who had died, hit by the stray bullet from a loaded rifle dropped in the road. James was the first of the 1,500 Allied Airborne Unit killed at Arnhem.



From My Album: *John Martin, Annie Lilwall, Gordon Lamputt, Phil i*



Harold Phillips and eldest son, William (known as Howard), were keen supporters of the Chamber of Commerce and Ross Carnival. (Photos: John Martin).

The oldest shop still in business in Ross, H.E. Phillips of 6 Gloucester Road, was opened by Thomas Edward Bliss in 1893. Employee Harold Evelyn Phillips from Walford took over around 1919, writes his grandson, **John Martin**. Harold's other three children were Kathleen (Kay), son Wilfrid (as a member of No 1 Commandos he was killed taking part in World War 2 Operation Torch in Tunisia) and John's mother, Barbara, who still lives in the county. When Harold retired in 1957, Howard took over until the 1970s when jeweller Hedley Rogers, who had another shop in Gloucester Road, moved in. Phillips is now run by James Willetts. Contact John Martin (01432 351454 john@jmartin58.wanadoo.co.uk) if you can add to the story about the oldest shop in town.



Lamputts XI formed by Gordon Lamputt with wife E club-less team eventually joined Hereford Sports Club.



H E Phillips taking part in a Carnival c1930



Phil Bufton and Michael Young share their photos



Elaine (manager and secretary) in the 1950s. The Club in Grandstand Road. (Photo: Gordon Lamputt).



"Chick weighs the cost of her trousseau." Violet 'Chick' Heggie (page 2) ponders on how much she spent including black suede gloves (£1.12.9d), utility blouse (£1.3.6d), coat (£6.19.1d) and wedding dress material (£5.16.3d): total £60.14.1d. Not bad for a 20-year-old Wren on £1.15s a week.



Sid Dykes (far left) was in the Reserved Occupation as a farm labourer for Honey's, Clehonger Court, during the last war. Like many of his mates he was part of the Clehonger and Allensmore Home Guard, seen here, says daughter **Annie Lilwall**, outside Ridler and Son, the cider and perry makers.



David Griffith's Yeoman bus photos (IOA 34) prompted **Phil Bufton** to share his family photo of this drivers and conductors' reunion at Canon Pyon village hall. Phil's Dad, Geoff, married to Mary, is smiling away on the back row, 2nd from left. Can you help with any names?



The Midlands Reds bound for Leominster outside Pritchards in High Town, Hereford around 1948. (Photo: Michael Young)

Home Sweet Home

Readers reflect on having a place to live.

Somewhere warm and safe to call home: it's a basic human right. Over the years many readers have faced homelessness.

In the 1930s Katy lived in a single room on the top floor of Moorfield House (now the surgery), Hereford. "I got pregnant and had to leave: they didn't have children there." She moved to a house belonging to "Osborne, the office people" in Richmond Street for 6s 7d a week. "If you didn't pay your rent you were out," Katy remembered, adding that, in an emergency, a basket of freshly laundered clothes would fetch 2/6d at the Commercial Street pawn shop. In 1939 her home was condemned, but she was saved by a council tenancy in Fredericks Avenue on 9s 8d a week.

For 10-year-old evacuee **Mrs. M. Matthews** (nee Owen: IOA 12) it was the blitz of 1941 that drove her from home. "I'd never been so far from home and I cried bitter tears because I thought I would never see my Mum and Dad again."

June Walter (IOA 15) experienced a problem familiar to many farm workers: losing their tied cottage at Pontrilas when her husband lost his job. They were rehoused at Foxley, Mansell Lacy. "People were ashamed to say they lived there, but I enjoyed it."



Christine Green's photo of herself and school mates at Foxley camp. Mike Joinson attended the school too when his family lived at number 159, as did Vicky Rayson (nee Bishop) from number 296. Her parents separated when she was 6 and she and her two brothers were fostered by "the lovely Mrs. May Middlemiss at Broxwood post office". They joined their mum at Foxley in 1955. "We were very happy to be back with our mother." Pat Preece, meanwhile, remembered a swathe of neighbours including Llewellyn, Chamberlain, Martindale, Glover, Hornsby, Close, Peglar and Gundy.

Home Sweet Home?

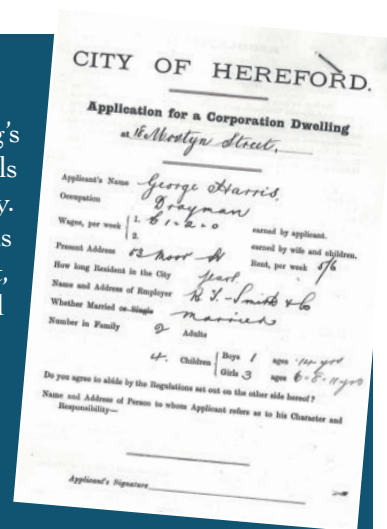
Was yours always a home sweet home?

Did you spend time in any of the children's homes? Foley House, for example or St Francis, Monyball Road, Kings Heath? Would you share your memories?

Call 07845 907891 or write to us at Herefordshire Lore, Castle Green Pavilion, Hereford HR1 2NW.

Moor Farm

Herefordshire Housing's Peter Brown reveals details of a First World War tenancy. Drayman George Harris moved to Moor Street, Whitecross with his wife and four children in March 1915. Mr Harris, who earned £1.2s a week, was reminded that "tenants are not allowed to paper, paint, or drive nails into the walls or woodwork without the consent of the Collector". The collector was a powerful man.



In 1954 their daughter and her new husband, a local shop assistant, took on the tenancy as the outside toilet was replaced with a modern one and the council consented to the erection of a TV aerial. The lady remained there until she died in her 90s.

"Generations of working people on low wages – a drayman, shop assistant, storeman and clerk – enjoyed the security of a home: this is the true value of social housing," says Peter Brown in his blog <http://www.hhl.org.uk/news-leaflets/blog/>

Tupsley isolation hospital

Life away from home could be miserable. In 1935 11-year-old Jim Thomas was marooned in Hereford's isolation hospital on Gorsty Lane with scarlet fever.

"I don't remember feeling homesick, but I did used to sneak out to the brick gatehouse where the horse-drawn ambulance driver, Mr Vaughan, lived. It wasn't half a mile to our home in Foley Street, but it seemed far away."

During his stay Jim, who had already lost three school friends to diphtheria, fell seriously ill. Surgeon Mr MacGregor performed an emergency operation on a painter's trestle, the anaesthetic administered by family doctor Bill Maule with cotton wool and a tea strainer. "If I did to you now what I did to you then I should have been struck off," the surgeon told Jim later.

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Support our work of recording people's memories in Herefordshire.

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Fearis

Ann Young recognised herself and friends Joy and Julia in Annie Lilwall's photo of Fearis' Christmas party at the Booth Hall. "Our manager was Mr Leach," she says.

More on the Buses

"My uncle Bill Thomas and his wife Jessie lived in Foley Street, writes **Michael Young**. Bill (below) trained Midland Red's first Hereford lady driver during World War 2. She used to drive the H5 and H15 routes from High Town to College Road and when she passed along Barrs Court Road we'd shout: 'Uncle Bill taught her to drive!' As exciting to us as Flash Gordon's spaceship was Bill's Ford 8, laid up for the duration on wooden blocks. Finally I recall travelling home to Rugby in the 1960s and being baulked by a Morris Minor doing 32 mph and well over to the middle of the road. 'Must be some old codger who thinks he's driving a bus,' I muttered, eventually overtaking on the straight between Tupsley Pitch and Lugwardine. Glancing over I recognised Uncle Bill with Auntie Jessie sat low down in the passenger seat out for a Sunday afternoon spin."



Elgar in pain: left to right Festival secretary H.K. Foster (also a member of the famous Worcestershire cricketing family), Percy Hull (Hereford cathedral organist), Elgar, Sir Ivor Atkins and Herbert Sumsion (organists at Worcester and Gloucester cathedrals respectively) outside the west door of Hereford Cathedral, September 1933.

Vivian of Hereford

The photographic studio Vivian of Hereford was founded by Thelma Holland and Ada Durrant (IOA 10). Ada shared her memories of the 1933 Three Choirs Festival with reader **Michael Young**. She had been helping with the monochrome photography at the Festival. "It was a colourful occasion which Ada wished to capture in colour; but the process required the subject to be motionless whilst three separate colour plates were exposed. Sir Edward Elgar was a proud, determined man. He managed the pose for two exposures, but a spasm of pain compelled him to walk away before the third. The Festival would be his last: within six months Elgar succumbed to cancer."

Holy Trinity

Griff Loydd remembers an awkward moment during an amateur performance at Holy Trinity Institute Hall in Whitecross in the 1940s. "I had to play a difficult classical piano piece, but dried up towards the end. Apologising I began again, only to dry up again. I could hear the producer calling out 'Come off, Griff' from the wings, but I was not to be humiliated."

"In 1949 The Third Man with its haunting Harry Lime theme tune was showing at the Odeon. I was studying piano with Miss Evelyn Kear at her St Peter's Square studio and taught myself to play the theme. (Miss Kear loved it)." Griff took a deep breath and announced: "'Ladies

and gentleman. I'd like to play my own arrangement of The Harry Lime theme' which I did to perfection. It gained thunderous applause and I'm sure I heard cries of 'Encore!' as I came off stage."

Talk to us

Bromyard's Frome Bank, Hazelhurst and Brockhampton Court nursing homes, Herefordshire Housing, St James, St Barnabus and Hereford Baptist churches have all joined Herefordshire Lore for 2015. Would your members like to meet the IOA team? Give us a call on 07845 907891.

Bassom tragedy

Gordon Lamputt shared his memories of 12 years with Hereford Air Training Corps. As a reward for increasing cadet numbers during the 1950s and '60s, Gordon took charge of a redundant Vampire T11 jet. It remained parked outside the Eign Road, Hereford HQ for many years. The former squadron leader had less happy memories of the day he and his teenage friends were swimming in the Wye in 1939 or 1940. "We were swimming at the Bassom, the bathing hut by Bartonsham. These army chaps from Bradbury Lines were being rowed across in a boat when the damned thing overturned. Their heavy uniforms dragged them down and we were diving to try and get them up but we couldn't." Gordon still wonders how many survived.

Where is this?

Can you help our reader? He happened to be passing this church fire in the 1950s or 60s, but cannot recall its location.

Readers **Jack Gittings**, **Bill Jackson**, **Margaret Makin** and **Ann Morgan** recognised Michael Griffith's photo below (IOA 34). "It's the old cafe at Queenswood, Dinmore Hill – it looks a sorry sight today," wrote Jack Gittings. Michael explained: "It was taken just after World War 1 when the trees had been felled for the war effort."

Jack Gittings was also interested in Thelma Netherway's photo of her grandfather's blacksmith forge, reportedly at Vaga Cottage, Tupsley (IOA 34). "Number 84 on Old Eign Hill has 'Vaga Cottage' set in the wall above the front door. The buildings to the right have been replaced by a detached house. The buildings are just up from Tupsley Post Office on the opposite side."



Dinedor revealed

The photo (left) comes from the book *Dinedor & Rotherwas Explored* (Logaston £12.95), a rich and detailed history of the district launched in 2014 by Dinedor Heritage Group. The book is "a voyage of discovery", writes **Eileen Klotz**. "Comprehensive and well researched, the book reveals much hidden history from the Neolithic 'ribbon' to the World War 2 Dinedor Secret Patrol and their accounts of what they would do if the Germans landed."

Editor Chris Over says the group continues to collect local stories: "We're still collating information and want to hear more from local people." You can contact Chris – and order your copy – at chrisover@btopenworld.com or on 01432 870320.

Are you part of a local history group? Let us know what you're up to!



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