

In Our Age

Living local history

Issue 40
Spring 2016



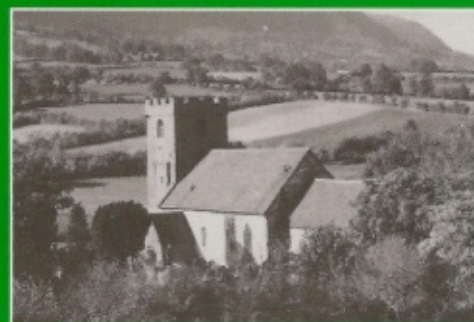
Find In Our Age on
Facebook



All aboard
Page 2



Hereford ATS
Page 5



Clodock
Page 6

On the line

Gus Brymer started his railway days cleaning engines

The anticipated arrival of the Flying Scotsman this June brought back many memories for retired railwayman Angus 'Gus' Brymer of Little Hill.

Gus started work at Smith and Warren, Ewyas Harold "on the horse and cart delivering meal, paraffin, methylated spirits and the groceries in orange boxes". But his ambition was to follow his grandfather Dick Trapp on to the footplate: Dick was a driver on the Golden Valley Railway.

Gus joined the Great Western Railway (GWR) at Hereford as a cleaner and knocker-up: "You travelled round on your bike knocking up the men: not a bad job as you got your fresh doughnuts from the Moorfields Bakery on the way by at 4am.

"Then two of you would be given an engine to clean on your eight-hour shift. That meant cleaning it right down, oiling it, the footplate and all the motion, polishing it off, doing the brass with brick dust, blacking the smoke box with jelly."

After national service in Germany, Gus returned as a fireman before becoming a driver in the early 1960s. "You started at the bottom, shunting engines and junior goods before moving up to senior work on the bigger, faster engines."

He recalls the tremendous amount of traffic that passed through Hereford, from ammunition trains bound for Ewyas Harold to prize bulls sent to America in special steam-heated and padded coaches.

Eventually Gus became an inspector responsible for Hereford's 120 drivers, firemen and guards. (Today there are around eight.) He also dealt with a variety of rail accidents including seven suicides, a cattle strike that killed 24 beasts, and the closure of the mainline Pontrilas bridge after it was hit by a lorry. (Gus was commended for spotting the damage.) The modest railwayman was often called



Above, Angus 'Gus' Brymer with fireman Jack McRon and driver Arthur Mead on the Flying Scotsman. Before her overhaul, the Scotsman was more Dying than Flying, says Gus, recalling the time they drove the engine to Gloucester with a broken bearing. Yet the Scotsman could still pull its weight. Driving the Scotsman through Leominster one time, Gus encountered a broken-down diesel engine with a 2,000 ton load of steel. The Scotsman was hitched up and the load brought home. Left, fireman Stan Reynolds, Gus and driver Tony Shaw on the former Bulmer engine, King George V.

out to fix a problem – even after he retired in 1996. One exasperated crewman called him at home when his diesel unit was marooned at Bromfield. Gus talked him through the problem over the phone and got the engine going again. "It's a different day and a different age now," says Gus.

Disaster averted

Jean Alford recalls the collapse of Strangford bridge

One stormy March night in 1947 Jack Alford was coming home with pal Eddie Davies at Kings Caple when they heard a tremendous crash. Jack, Jean's husband-to-be, who worked on the family smallholding at Lightfields, went to investigate. They discovered a pier on Strangford railway bridge had collapsed, brought down by the weight of the winter's flood. The station master at Fawley was alerted and the late-night GWR from Gloucester was stopped just in time.

In Our Age

Editor: Bill Laws Pictures: Bobbie Blackwell

Design: Lisa Marie Badham

Website: Chris Preece. Print: ABC Print.

Herefordshire Lore: Chair: Mark Hubbard; Eileen Klotz (secretary), Rosemary Lillico, Sandy Green (proofreader), Marsha O'Mahony, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe (County Archives), Julie Orton-Davies, Harvey Payne (treasurer), Liz Rouse, Chris and Irene Tomlinson, Betty Webb, David Clarke, Keith and Krystyna James, Joyce Chamberlain.

Munitions Group (www.rotherwasmunitionshereford.co.uk)
Barrie Mayne (chair).

Generous gift

We now have almost 400 subscribers, enough to keep going for another year. Many thanks. And many thanks too to those who have kindly made a donation to our funds, especially the generous donor of £100 who insists on remaining secret. We will use her money to host a Memory Day in the near future. Watch out for details.

Chair: Mark Hubbard



Front cover: Fishing for tiddlers in the Wye around 1958. (Derek Evans Archive at the County Records Office).

Postmistress Aunty Emm

Aunty Emm, as Mrs Evans was known, ran the post office at Mansell Lacy for almost 50 years. It was a haven for the dozen or so Hereford postmen on the Weobley round.

Every morning the Weobley boys, who included Jim Yarwood, Ray Grisman, Lenny Chip and Peter Mayne, would take breakfast with Aunty Emm while the village mail was sorted. Part-time postman Frank Bishop would take the post round on his old Fordson tractor along with the milk.

"Then it was off to Weobley with the mail for Mrs Pennington to deliver on her bike," recalls Peter. "On the afternoon shift the Weobley boys arrived back at Mrs Evans' at 4pm for a cooked tea. We'd often pick up Aunty's dog, Simon, from the Yarsop box and if Aunty Emm was expecting a new batch of pullets, we'd collect them from Woodseaves for her. We all missed Aunty Emm when she died."

Since his retirement Peter has collected a host of postal paraphernalia



including memories of Aunty Emm for the Hereford Post Office Museum. It's open by appointment: 01432 346100 or email ricky.sault@royalmail.com

Serving at the Queens

Mary Fryer (nee Morgan) enjoyed her days at the Hereford hostelry

Before her marriage in 1950, Mary Morgan was a waitress at the Queens Arms hotel in Broad Street, Hereford. Run by Harry Packard and wife 'Mim', the Queens provided lodgings for a host of commercial travellers. "We had our regulars: Mr James who did the window displays for Cadbury's Chocolates, a Mr Coward, and J.J. O'Shea who did something with the papers." He was the brother of actress Tessie O'Shea, the Cardiff entertainer frequently seen on stage at the Kemble Theatre in Broad Street.

Mary loved the Kemble. "I had my own seat, every Thursday night, upstairs, 2nd row – if I didn't want to go I had to let them know. I saw some wonderful shows there, Over the Garden Wall, the comediennes Gert and Daisy – you'd see them walking up the street going into the Green Dragon."

Mary left in 1950 to marry Stan Fryer, but not before a curious confrontation with a black Hereford Football Club player: "Mr Packard was a director at the Club and this football player called one day to see him.

"I called up: 'Mr Packard – there's a black man to see you.' The footballer told me off: "You shouldn't call me black," he said.

"I said: I can because I don't know your name. And you are black!"

(To discover the unusual circumstances of Stan and Mary's first meeting, go to www.herefordshirelore.org.uk and read page 8 of IOA 4.)



Above, Mary, right, with Violet Powys. "We had to change uniforms for serving in the evening."

Left, Harry Packard, standing, Mim Packard and Bert the barman with his arm around a young lady. Mrs Packard's family, the Capes, ran a taxi business from a cottage opposite the Ship Inn on the Belmont roundabout.



Tommy Best

The player, above, was almost certainly the legendary Tommy Best who joined United in 1950, writes **Ron Parrott**: "Born Milford Haven in 1920 Tommy, a prolific goal scorer, spent three years with Hereford and notched 80 goals in 142 games. He was a splendidly built, bustling type of centre-forward who could use either foot with equal ability and his committed style of play made him a firm favourite with the fans. He started his career with Merthyr Tydfil at the end of the Second World War and joined United in the summer of 1950.



To celebrate the recent Wye brigade run a hose test and c

When the last war broke out Billy Stephens, 2nd right, back row, was on a training exercise with his brother Dennis at Weston-super-Mare, writes sister-in-law **Mary Stephens**. Dennis joined the 8th Army, but his 22-year-old brother fell ill with lead poisoning after working on tank painting. Billy died in 1942 and was buried at Bullinghope church.

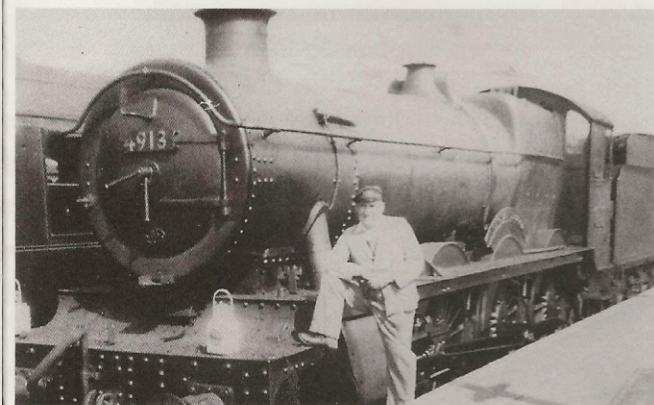


2ND. HEREFORDS.

Gus Brymer, Lynden Haynes and Rolly Bradstock



...river Carnival, two more pictures from the extraordinary Derek Evans picture library: the fire...
...going off in the river. (Derek Evans Archive at the County Records Office)



Driver Ron Wargen, left, of Park Street, Hereford with an engine at Hereford station. Hereford took delivery of two new Hall-class engines, the Wightwick and the Owsden in 1948, recalls Gus Brymer who loaned the photo.



Left, cornet player Frank Haynes, standing to the right of Mr Polly and Reg Ruck, ran the Hereford City Ambulance Cadet Band pictured here in 1950. (Photo: Lynden Haynes)

Farmer's daughter Stella Griffiths, right, joined the women's branch of the British Army, the Auxiliary Territorial Service, in Hereford during the last war. She's seen here smiling for the camera held by her friend Mary Millichamp outside the army huts that once stood on Widemarsh Street. (Photo: Rolly Bradstock & Herefordshire Museums)



Life on the left for Doris

Photographer Doris Kershaw (nee Townsend) recalls her first job at Vivians.

I attended Lord Scudamore School, Hereford where our infant teachers included Miss Pensum, Miss Hatton, Miss Marshall and Miss Knott. Being left-handed was a nuisance. I bumped elbows with my desk mate and was continually chastised and made to sit separately for forming my letters the wrong way. My brother Norman, also left-handed, had his hand tied behind his back until he had mastered writing with his right!

At Senior School our teachers included Miss Atkins (music and history?), Miss Roberts (shorthand, typing and bookkeeping), Miss Pritchard (English literature and PE), Miss Hatton (nature) and Miss Dredge (geography). I believe the head teacher was a Miss Young. Each form teacher was responsible for English, maths and scripture. We were divided into four houses, Elizabeth Barrett Browning (purple), Sarah Siddons (yellow), Nell Gwynne (red) and Edna Lyall (blue), of which I was house captain.

We went to the Town Hall once a week to be taught domestic science and housekeeping by Miss Thomas and Miss Roberts, who apparently lived there. They must have had little housework to do with so many different schools going each day! Amidst cleaning kitchen floors and lavatories, I remember sitting on the seat reading aloud the toilet paper newspaper squares and tying dusters to our feet to do the polishing.

We went swimming at the Edgar Street baths with Miss Young (non-swimmers were harnessed and dragged by a rope) and played netball and shinty. As part of the war effort part of the playground was dug up for growing veg. Lousy girls had their heads shaved and the ultimate disgrace was a teenage pregnancy.

At 14 and in my third and last year I was selected for the English and Commercial Class and chose the Post Office in preference to Bulmers. Imagine my disappointment when having passed the oral exam on British geography, I was asked to take a phone message and was rejected because I was left-handed.



An Ada Durrant photograph of Clodoch.
(Photo: Michael Young).

With the war still at its height, I was apprenticed to the High Town photographic studio, Vivian. (My mother had worked with proprietor Miss Ada Durrant when it was Norman May's studio.) I started on 2/6 a week, 9am to 7pm (although especially during Christmas we worked until orders were completed), shooting, finishing prints and retouching negatives.

Vivian's main commissions were for group troop photographs. Although owning a small car, Miss Durrant would be driven to Bradbury Lines, Credenhill, Shobdon and Malvern with her cocker spaniel Timmy Baba by a Mr Weaver from Marriotts Garage.

I was excited to accompany her to Merebrook Camp one time because I was involved with a young second lieutenant there. Miss Durrant swept into the mess and proclaimed, 'Sit down, my men! I know Mr Kershaw!' much to our mutual embarrassment. (Mr Weaver later drove Cyril Kershaw and me on our wedding day.)

Photographing country weddings was complicated by the absence sign posts, while studio photographs were very popular especially on Saturdays.

Shortly before Vivians opened another branch in St Peter's Square, Polyfoto was introduced – 48 different positions for 2/6 on a single sheet. The glass slides, packed and posted to Ilford every evening, often broke in transit and customers had to re-sit.

I became the main photographer for Polyfoto and was very fond of babies and children. Some were photographed regularly for fathers serving abroad and who were prisoners of war. Around D-Day, we

were joined by RAF personnel to process some identity photographs in secret.

I had a very happy time working with Miss Baugh, Mrs Penny, Mrs Jackson and some of the junior staff.

(Read Doris' recollections of river holidays in IOA 39 at www.herefordshirelore.org.uk)

Foxley Camp

The former Polish resettlement camp near Mansell Lacy features frequently in IOA. Now Wendy Cummins of Wellington has added to the stock of memories with this photograph of her father, Captain William Hawker who was at the camp in 1947. I would love to know if anyone remembers him," she writes. "Mr Marian Maczka, Tadeusz Michalak, Mrs Nowasielski and Henry Pavlovich all remember their time there.



Tupsley air crash



When a Percival Proctor aircraft took off from RAF Madley one fine Sunday morning in January 1944, writes **Steve Binnie**, the pilot and trainee radio operator anticipated a routine

flight. The aircraft, used by the RAF for radio operator training, carried 20-year-old trainee operator Corporal Nutter and Steve's father, 24-year-old Flying Officer Bill Binnie (above). Bill who had joined in 1937 had recently returned from the Empire Flying Training School in Canada. Initially a rigger on early Tiger Moths, he went on to fly Spitfires on aerial reconnaissance before being sent to Madley to shuttle around the young radio operator trainees. But that Sunday, January 30, disaster struck. The Proctor crashed after losing its port wing. Reader **Margaret Bentley Leek** saw the wing fall in the school playground, while 16-year-old **John Slatford** was parading with the Home Guard outside the Rose & Crown. "We heard the bang and saw the plane go down. My platoon ran the quarter of a mile through the old brick field, the Brickie as we called it, and came on the

crash site in the middle of my father's allotment in the garden of The Knoll."

Steve never met his father: "I was born a few weeks later and my mother never really talked about my father's death. It was only after her death that I was able to piece together his last moments thanks to your readers' accounts."

Munitioneers

Nina Klein has sent details of her Auntie Amy Evans who worked at Rotherwas a century ago. The Munitions Group is collecting names of former workers: send details to www.rotherwasmunitionshereford.co.uk or write to us: Herefordshire Lore, c/o Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green Hereford HR1 2NW



Greenlands artist

Who remembers Laz? asks **Mary Wakefield-Jones** (nee Palmer). "He was an artist who occasionally came to Greenlands department store and set up to sketch portraits of customers. It was mainly mothers bringing their children to be drawn. I have still got the sketch done of me on April 4 1958 when I was eight."

St Owens Cross

Sidney Smith, the local pig butcher from St Owens Cross, Ross survived the First World War. Many others did not. **Bill Webb** has researched the lives of the soldiers on the war memorials (and some names missing from the memorials) in Llangarron, Llangrove, Whitchurch, Ganarew, Walford, Goodrich, Sellack, Welsh Newton and about half of those in Ross. His work is available as a series of pdf email files (in return for a generous donation to the British Legion) from billwebb.llangarron@gmail.com



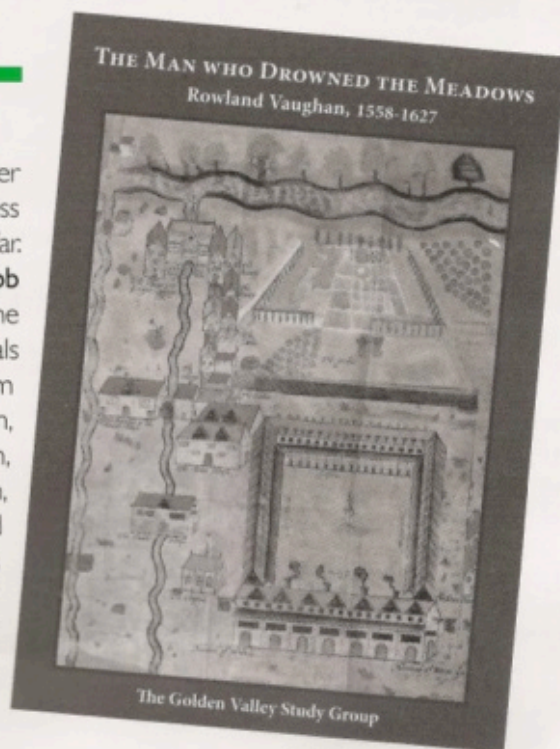
Survivor, Sidney Smith. (Photo: Mary Fryer)

Bridge Sollars

"It was nice to read *Messing About in Boats* (IOA 39) Doris Kershaw's mention of the boats Comet and Randal on the river at Bridge Sollars," writes John Slatford. "I thought it sad that there wasn't a boat to be seen on the river when I started returning to the city." (You can read John's recollections of life on the river in IOA 20 at www.herefordshirelore.org.uk)

The Man Who Drowned Meadows

Several new books have come out on Herefordshire's past including the story of phantom runner; Bob Cole (Bob Cole – *The Strange Life of a Forgotten Champion* by Steve Herrington, £6 plus £2 p&p from Steve at The Sun Inn, St Margarets, Herefordshire HR2 0QW). Also out now *The Man Who Drowned The Meadows – Rowland Vaughan, 1558-1627* from the Golden Valley Study Group; Liz Pitman's *The Parish That Disappeared – A History of St John's, Hereford*; *The Story of Hereford* edited by Andy Johnson and Ron Shoesmith; and Phillip Weaver's *A Dictionary of Herefordshire Biography*. All four titles are published by Logaston Press and available from local bookshops.



The King George V passes through Woofferton. (Photo Gus Brymer)



A street scene in Herefordshire, but where is it?

In Our Age direct to your door?

If you would like to subscribe fill in the form below. Existing subscribers will receive a reminder towards the end of the year. Sign up below for:

- the next two issues of IOA: Individual £6; Group (10 copies) £15
- booklet: MILK £4 plus 60p p&p
- book: In The Munitions: Women at War in Herefordshire £10 plus £2.50 p&p

Send a cheque (made out to Herefordshire Lore) to Herefordshire Lore, c/o Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW

Name:

Address:

.....

Contact number:

Postcode:

Email:

