

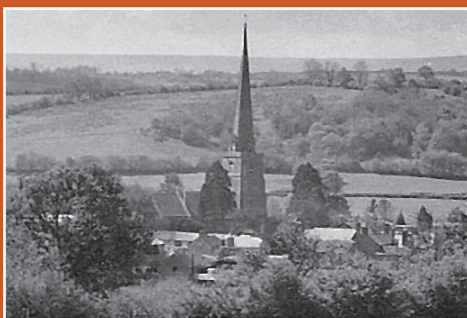
In Our Age

Living local history

Issue 43
Winter 2017



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Hereford High Town

Vivians, Pritchards, Littlewoods, Lloyds, Marchants – readers recall the old city centre



Picture postcard: a finely framed shot of Peterchurch from Vivians. (Photo: Michael Young)

Vivians

Ada Durrant worked at the Norman Mays studio in Malvern alongside Goff Johnson, later chief photographer at the Hereford Times, writes **Keith James**. Goff would accompany Ada as she photographed groups at Malvern College with a glass plate camera. Always the gentleman, he pulled the heavy handcart loaded with equipment.

When Ada and her sister Gertrude opened Vivians in the 1930s, occupying the top three floors next to Lloyds Bank, she recruited several young women. They included Doris Kershaw (her mother worked with Ada at Norman Mays – read Doris' recollections in IOA 40 at herefordshirelore.org.uk) and two 16-year-olds, Thelma Holland and Pauline Dykes (then Seymour).

Fresh out of the Girls High School, Pauline had no plans to become a photographer's assistant until a chance meeting with Ada who, having remained unmarried, treated her new assistant like a daughter.

Thelma eventually took over the business, but in 1953 she started on ten shillings (50p) per week, her parents having paid the £50 apprentice fee. Thelma witnessed the changeover from large format glass plates to 120 size roll films, although "even when I

started we still used large 12 by 9 inch cameras for big groups and quarter-plate Speed Graphic cameras for wedding groups."

Their principle contracts were the admin trades and later the RAF School of Catering at Credenhill – they continued photographing new intakes of apprentices until the RAF pulled out in 1994 – and military recruits at Bradbury Lines.

Thelma left Vivians for a spell, working at Henry Wiggins' photographic department alongside Roy Willets. Vivians, meanwhile, moved to 28 Union Street. Thelma, who died late last year, finally took the business to 16 Church Street.

"Ada Durrant was a pioneer in colour photography using the Tri-chrome-Carbro process which was arduous and very expensive, but produced, when perfect, wonderful and stable results," Thelma recalled.

"When war came a lot of the work was taken up by the military and she photographed troops at Madley and as far away as Moreton-in-Marsh. She also did a lot of work at Painter Brothers who, with their galvanising baths and fabrication shops, made steelwork for electricity pylons. Unfortunately, when Ada and her sister Gertrude went into care their St. James Road home was cleared and negatives and historical prints destroyed."

Calling all subscribers

Welcome to your New Year issue of IOA and our readers' look back at some of the city's memorable old businesses.

Most of our subscribers have joined for another year, in spite of our having to raise subscriptions to £14 a year.

Our only regular income comes from you, the readers, which may explain why so many of you (30 readers to be precise) kindly donated a little bit extra.

Enjoy your IOA and a very happy New Year to you all.

Chair: Mark Hubbard



Front cover: In the 1960s, when our local hospitals were still training establishments, student nurse Mary Blackwell was photographed with a patient on Arkwright Ward at the County Hospital. Next year our NHS turns 70. Send us your memories!

Pritchards

Pritchard & Sons, tailors, hatters and outfitters, was a prominent High Town store until the 1960s. The business, started by Hay tailor William Pritchard in Packers Lane (where Church Street meets West Street), moved to 1 and 2 Commercial Street in 1841 and remained in High Town for over 120 years.

Former Scudamore school boy and first world war veteran, Percy Pritchard ran the business for many years. He learned the trade working cross-legged on sewing benches alongside their journeymen tailors: "we had a lot of Irish, Poles and Germans."

"There had been a big livery trade, county families ordering two outfits a year for their coachmen, footmen and butler: box coats, crested buttons, all hand made. Then there was the clergy trade and, before the motor car, every farmer was a riding man [requiring] his britches and riding jacket and the huntsmen's uniforms. All that disappeared."

In 1963 Percy moved the shop from the town centre: "I sold out for about £41,000 and bought [the shop] in King Street because I could see High Town being taken over by the multiples."

The Pritchard family fortunes feature in a new book, *The Tailor of Hereford*, by **John Harrison** and reveal not only the commercial life of the city, but the family's "adventurous out of hours" activities involving gliders, hot air balloons, a tiller-steered Oldsmobile and monster kites.

After the First World War, for example, Percy, now living in Broad Street, developed a passion for amateur radio. He bought a licence, an old RAF radio and a call sign (2 QO), but he still needed an aerial. "So I presented the library with a new flagpole and ran my aerial up that."



Littlewoods

Joyce Chamberlain (below) moved from the Buttermarket's Farmers Depot cheese counter and joined Littlewoods in 1986.

"Littlewoods was a good shop to work in – lots of laughter and the customers kept coming back, which was what you wanted. I worked as a part-time food assistant three afternoons a week (college students did the weekends) serving cheese, bacon, sausages, sliced cold meat pies and salad things on the fresh deli counter. At the end of the day the goods were put away in the cool rooms on the next floor up. Here were the staff offices, first aid room, canteen and main kitchen where meals for the café beneath the food hall were cooked. There was a dumb waiter to take the food down. On the top floor was a stockroom, clothing racks and a big freezer room.

"As a girl I remember Marchants and the unforgettable smell of coffee as you walked by. By now Marchants had gone, but part of the shop had been saved and hoisted up to the front of Littlewoods. The public could look inside by special appointment, but some of the early-morning cleaners said the old shop was haunted.

"Littlewoods staff Christmas parties were fantastic. A cooked meal was served by senior staff and although only so many bottles of wine were allocated, a few managed to get tipsy before the disco that followed in the staff canteen. (One manager was tied up with bandages and bundled into a wheelchair! He was an OK guy.)"



From My Album: *Geof Tarring, Peter Holman, Glen Butcher, Peter and Jean Mayne*



Hereford City Council Municipal Nursery officially opened in May 1966, next to the Sanitary Laundry on Ledbury Road, Hereford.



Former World War I soldier: Another nurseryman, Albert Mangham, was a former First World War veteran, who with his wife Annie, seen here with grandson Peter Holman, ran Ye Olde Flower Shop in Church Street, Ledbury. (Photo: Peter Holman)



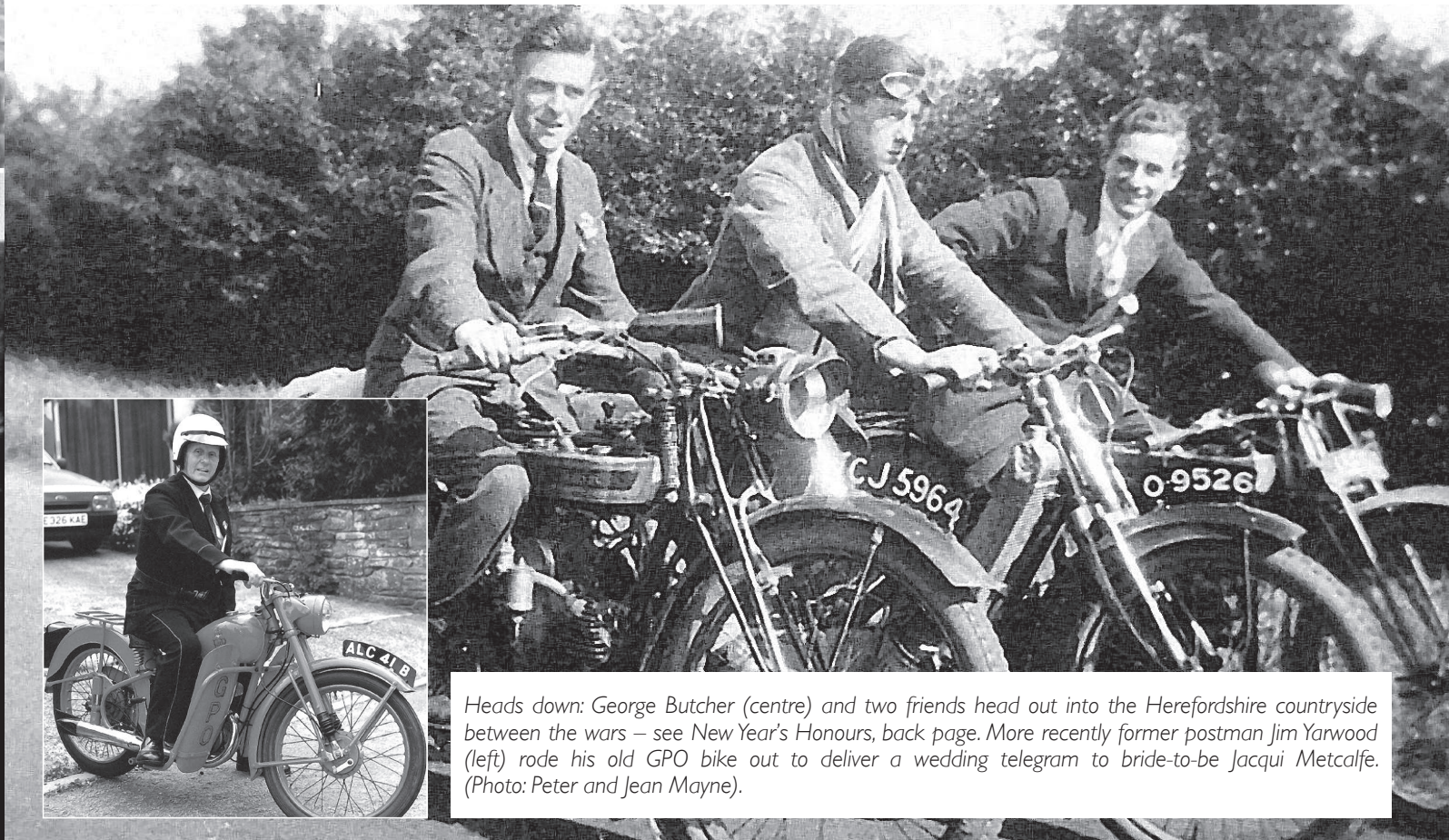
A source of civic pride, the Nursery would open to the public twice a year.



Budget cuts forced the closure of the Nursery, which, after a spell as Unity Gardens, became the Rose Garden retirement village.



The Parks Department once employed 60 people to maintain public spaces such as Castle Green. (Photos: Geof Tarring)



Heads down: George Butcher (centre) and two friends head out into the Herefordshire countryside between the wars – see New Year's Honours, back page. More recently former postman Jim Yarwood (left) rode his old GPO bike out to deliver a wedding telegram to bride-to-be Jacqui Metcalfe. (Photo: Peter and Jean Mayne).



The Hereford Garden City Youth Club, previously the Girls Club, on a summer outing in 1945. Former club member **Ken Hyett**: "The club was well organised and most of us learned to ballroom dance under the tutoring of Mrs Dorothy Turner who died a few years ago, aged 96. Back row, left to right: Dorothy, Barbara Johnson, Ted Hadley, Pat Yorath, Joan. Front, left to right: ?, Daisy Williams, Gordon Hyde, Betty Griffiths (now Pontin), Muriel Hamer, Percy Burrows, Kathleen Williams."

Please Miss – it was the cows

Eileen Carpenter recalls a run-in with her headmistress

Birmingham-born Eileen Buckley, as she was then, found herself marooned in Hereford in September 1939. "We'd been staying with my father's cousin in Edgar Street and were packed to come home on the Sunday when it was announced that we were at war. My parents decided to leave me there."

After a brief spell back home in Birmingham Eileen moved to a new place in Hereford and remained there until the war's end. "I was quite happy there and well treated." Initially she enjoyed school too: I attended three: Our Ladies Catholic School in Little Berrington Street (we used to cut through Woolworths) then St Peters where I had a lovely teacher,

Miss Burnett who lived near Stretton Grandison and would stop to give me a lift if she saw me walking to school.

"At 11 I moved to Bluecoat School where I sometimes rode to school on my bicycle. One Wednesday morning I came out of the gate where I was living and there was a herd of cows spread



across the road being walked into Hereford market. The fellow with them said for me to go through them: no way! I was terrified of cows after two earlier experiences with the animals. The delay made me late and I'd just put my bicycle away at school as Assembly Hall doors were just being closed.

"Being new to the school I didn't like to open them: I expected that, after the first prayer a teacher would let me in. But no one did and by the time Assembly finished I was ten minutes late. I'd been joined by another girl and we were both led to the headmistress's room and asked why we were late. I told my story (I forget why the other girl was late) and the headmistress said she'd had to come through some cows. My response, "but you were in a car, I was on a bike", probably didn't help. We both received ten strokes of the cane on each hand. I was very upset and never forgave that headmistress."

Life on the Black Mountains

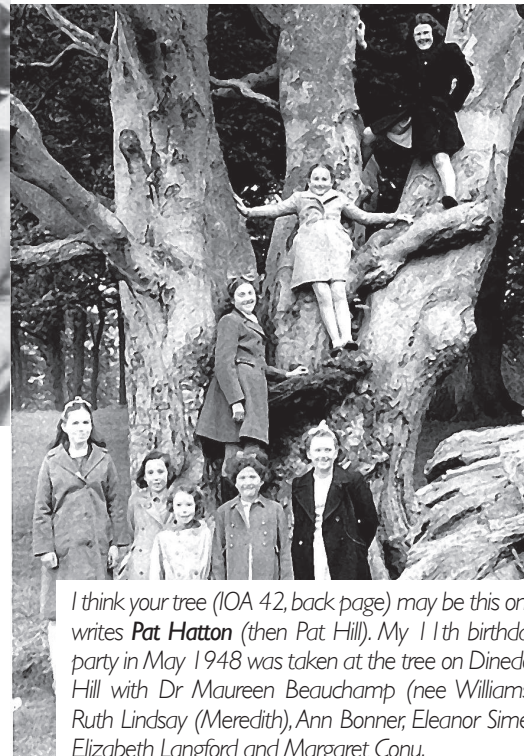
Continuing **Milwyn Morgan's** reflections of working in the west. Having been a farmhand around Clyro, Milwyn joined a farm at Bronllys where the farmer had broken his thigh after being kicked by a shire horse.

"I did not stay there long as the farmer's wife was obsessed with dogs. She had nine useless ones. They did not like me any more than I liked them so I went to work at the adjoining 126-acre farm, looking after the livestock. The farmer was an agricultural contractor with a threshing machine. I lived in the house with him and his wife and Mary, their only 19-year-old daughter.

"Eventually Mary and I went to Blackpool for the weekend and came back engaged: I was her mother's blue-eyed boy and, although our engagement faded out after twelve months, we all stayed as close as any family. Mary went on to become one of the managers at Powys social services while I bought a 54-acre farm near Hay-on-Wye."

(Apologies for referring to Milwyn Lloyd instead of Morgan in IOA 42 and incorrectly identifying his father in the photo. Instead the photo showed local blacksmith Mr Ruck with his donkey and cart on Garway Common.)

Dinedor



I think your tree (IOA 42, back page) may be this one, writes **Pat Hutton** (then Pat Hill). My 11th birthday party in May 1948 was taken at the tree on Dinedor Hill with Dr Maureen Beauchamp (nee Williams), Ruth Lindsay (Meredith), Ann Bonner, Eleanor Simey, Elizabeth Langford and Margaret Conu.

Redhill

IOA has featured Belgians, Basques and Polish refugees, but what about the Hungarians, asks reader **Roger Calow**? Several individuals fleeing the 1956 Russian invasion were put up at Redhill Hostel on Ross Road, Hereford. Exploring the district as a small boy, Roger remembers seeing people queuing for meals with their enamel mugs outside the Hostel kitchen.

Dinmore Tea Rooms

The Dinmore Hill tea room with its road-facing veranda was everyone's favourite insists Tupsley's **Brian Saunders**. He has fond memories of being taken there in the late 1940s by his parents, Jack and Alice, to meet Jack's brother Tom and his family. Jack and Tom were both bakers, Jack in St Owens Street, Hereford and Tom in South Street, Leominster. Brian himself was making doughnuts in the bakery of the wood-panelled Tudor Tea Rooms and Bakery in Commercial Street, owned by Kerry Arms licensee Mr Snell. Brian also recalls helping prepare a dinner for a hunt ball at the Shire Hall, cooking whole salmon in long tins and a boar's head, complete with an apple in its mouth.

Moor Street

Brought up in Edgar Street, **Ken Hyett** from Horsham identified many friends including Roy Barrington in the Brewer family photo (IOA 42, pp. 4 and 5, 3rd from left kneeling on his chair). "The last I heard he was working on a ferry from Vancouver to Vancouver Island. Standing 3rd from the left is Mrs Morris from 46 Moor Street, mother to Marion (wife of Hereford United's Ken Emery) and Eric. In front of Mr Barrington (2nd left standing) with the paper hat, stands Mrs Colwell, her eldest son Reg in front of her. He went into the printing trade, married and moved to Yorkshire where he died quite young. On his left is his brother Bobby who joined the police, later transferring to the United Nations police and moving to Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada. He married Inspector Harris's daughter whose nickname was May. In front of the first man in the back row (left) is Mrs Dutton from Priory Street and her only daughter, Joan, (front row, 6th from left) in a white hat. Mr Hicks (back row, 3rd from right) drove the shire horse and big dray of the Great Western Railway. Mrs Hicks (5th from right, middle row) and Mrs Shepherd (4th from right with the white apron) were always together. Most of the boys attended Lord Scudamore School and were wonderful friends." Call us (07845 907891) if you'd like to talk to Ken.

Ledbury

Mention of Rider Haggard and the Putley strawberries (IOA 42) reminded **Celia Kellett** that the author opened the town's Barrett Browning Memorial Institute in January 1896 and has a memorial in the parish church. "The rector of Ledbury from 1892 to 1909 and Master of St Katherine's Hospital was Preb Charles Edward Maddison Green whose wife Ella was Haggard's sister. Haggard made good use of his celebrity during his Herefordshire trip, being entertained by the gentry at Croome Court and Hampton Court."

Fownhope

Fownhope Beyond Memory, **David M Clark** (History Group, £12, available from local bookshops or Ann Corby at Pippins, Fownhope) delves beyond living memory to unearth such details as the day in 1853 when William Badham was struck down by a falling mast on his barge, and a Hereford Times' report of games of kiss-in-the-ring and the "brawlings of heavy-headed hiccups who had drunk not too wisely but too well" at the annual Club Walk.

In another recent title, Castles of the Marches (Amberley Publishing, £14.99) **John Kinross** explores our border forts and moated manors.

College Hill

Hereford's Ladies Training College, originally built in 1881 as an affordable boys' school, is now in the hands of Hereford Art College. They want to learn more of its past - and the students who attended. Were you at the College? Call us on 07845 907891.



Herefordshire

IOA is collecting memories and photos for a new book, Herefordshire in World War 2, due out next year. What do you remember? Let us know. (info@herefordshirelore.org.uk).

FOWNHOPE BEYOND MEMORY



Change in a Herefordshire village 1832-1911



David M Clark
Fownhope Local History Group

New Year's Honours

George Butcher OBE becomes Britain's best known ploughman

When Brockhampton Court's Mrs Forster packed off her Daimler and chauffeur, Garway man Arthur Webb, to France for ambulance duties in the First World War, her former chauffeur George Butcher of Belmont Road stayed home. He was soon assisting the war effort (left) as manager of the Hereford County Tractor Unit. By 1918, more Herefordshire acres had fallen to the plough – and at less cost – than in any other county of England or Wales. (Rival Lincolnshire came a close second.) He was remembered by his nephew, the late **Glen Butcher**, as a generous and genial man and one of only two county people (the other was Mrs Dorothy Kevill-Davies of Croft Castle) to be awarded the new Order of the British Empire in October 1918.



Plough-wright: George Butcher (centre) with engineers from the local tractor unit at Friars Garage and (left) his OBE. (Photo: Glen Butcher).

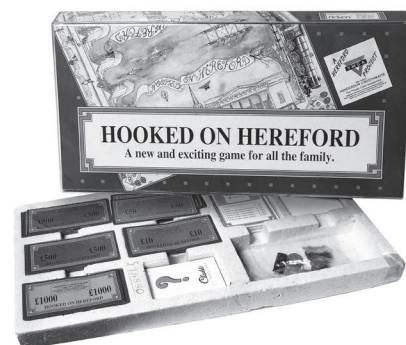
Hidden Treasures

Our museums are packed with rarely seen treasures. IOA sent photographer *Keith James* to investigate.



Every baby born in County Hospital's Maternity Unit from 1987 (and probably a few years earlier) was weighed on these scales. Destined for the scrapyard during the move to the new hospital, a group of nurses saw them safely delivered to Friar Street Museum and Resource Centre in Hereford.

And were you hooked on Hereford? Generous **John Feeney** of Villa Street gifted the Hooked on Hereford board game, produced in 1991 to raise funds for the YMCA. Its Monopoly-style sites include the Hereford Times, Rockfield DIY (the most valuable at £800 and £700 respectively), Jessons at £500 beating Hereford Cathedral School (£440), with Gilbies priced at £200. The YMCA valued themselves at £500 and all the "chance" cards had Chadds of Hereford covers.



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

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