

AGE TO AGE

Hereford Lore Reminiscence Newsletter

Issue 1 July 1993

Hereford Lore, P.O. Box 87, Hereford, HR4 9XS

Where are they now?

Christmas 1934 and George Mason's employees pose for a photograph. We don't know them all, but we have identified (from left to right) Charles Hulse, Norman Bliss, Ida Baugh, Ted Ellis, Harry Kennett, Harold Webb, Jack Bishop, W.L. Goode, Ken Andrews and Reg Williams.

The Picture was kindly loaned by Arthur Bush, one time employee of George Mason's.



Welcome to Age to Age

Last year we published "Amazing How Times Change," the book containing memories of Hereford as related by older citizens.

It was a success. So, backed by Hereford City Council and West Midlands Arts, we have decided to publish a free-of-charge, bi-monthly newsletter, edited by Bill Laws with Leestyle Graphics, and compiled by the Editorial Group of Hereford Lore.

This edition will cover Streets and Shops with useful information, a noticeboard of events, and the launch of the International Penfriend Scheme.

Future editions will cover many interesting subjects, aimed at the senior citizen, but with interest to people of all ages. The

issues will also look at the achievements of older people in the city, particularly focusing on the arts.

The newsletter aims to give older people the chance to share experiences and learn from each other. So please get in touch with us if you have any memories of Hereford, or have any old photographs we could borrow and print - we promise to guard them with our lives.

Perhaps you would like to contact an old friend or work mate that you have lost touch with? We will try to help you.

Remember, we can't control being old in years, but we can all be young at heart.

Happy Reading!

Vi Thomas.

Looking for Penfriends

Has anyone spotted three magpies recently?

One for sorrow, two for joy, three for a letter...

We are launching a scheme to get more letters in the post by inviting you to adopt a writing penfriend. We are looking for penfriends in Dillenberg, Germany (Hereford's twin town) and in Herefordshire itself.

Many of us cannot get about as well as we used to; but that is no reason to lose contact with old friends, or to make new ones. Get writing!

If you would like to adopt a penfriend, send us your name and address (PO Box 87, Hereford HR4 9XS) and tell us if you are looking for an old friend in Hereford ...or a new one in Germany

Our next issue of Age to Age will be out in September. Copies are available from the City and Belmont Libraries, Hereford Tourist Information Centre, The City Environment Department at Garrick House and Age Concern, Berrows House, Bath Street.

Hereford Lore Editorial Group are Edith Gammage, Roy Kennett, Jim Thomas, Alf Evans, Vi Thomas and Vi Woolaway. We are grateful for the support of:



Hereford City Council
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Across the County

The Farmer and His Cow

Chris Ruffe finished his school days at Lord Scudamore school, under headmaster Mr J Ryder. My first job was at L.C.M, the butchers in Eign Street after which I entered the grocery trade at India and China in High Town.

When I was a mere lad on a visit to the cattle market a farmer said: "You look a useful lad, how would you like to earn some pocket money?"

"Yes please," I said.

The farmer said "Walk this cow to Lyde." He could not pay as he did not have any change, but, he said, "when you get to Lyde my wife will pay you." I led the cow through High Town where some of my mates were.

"Did the farmer tell you his wife would pay," they asked.

"Mark our words, his wife will say don't come that story with me, you've already been paid." So I tied the cow to the nearest lamppost and there it stayed.'



Boots girls go West. A picture taken by Happy Snaps on The Grand Pier at Western Super Mare captures a staff holiday outing in the late 1940's. Mary Jones and June Elesmere are on the left and Barbara Davies is on the right. Does anyone know the two in the middle?

George Mason's

Jack Hill left the High School in 1926 and took a job as junior apprentice at L.H.Fearis, the grocers. After nine years I moved across High Town to George Masons where Harold Webb was manager

The grocery trade then was very hard work for very little pay. I would spend three days a week travelling around the county collecting orders and money. Hop picking was one of the busiest periods. We started work at 8.30 and finished between six and eight but on Fridays, putting up orders for no extra pay it could be as late as ten.

Few goods were pre-packed; sugar and sultanas all had to be weighed and packed in blue paper bags. Two hundred weight bags of sugar were delivered by the railway dray. Danish butter came in 90lb tubs, and was prepared at a customer's request using wooden pats with salt added to taste and decorated with a leaf or cow design. A side of bacon had to be boned before slicing to rashers and every counter had its weighing scales.'

Trousers

"Do you think my husband could try those trousers on in the window, please?"

"No, I'm afraid he'll have to use the fitting room."

This was one of the stock answers Roy Kennett learned during 49 years service in the clothing trade with Bradleys on Eign Street.

One of their busiest times of the year was late autumn when the hop pickers were paid. I remember the senior members of the gypsy families would have suits made to measure, usually of Derby Tweed, a medium to dark grey herringbone. Each would ask for some special feature to be included like flap pockets, jacket cuffs sometimes loose, sometimes stitched down. Stitching was of great



importance for instance the turn up on the trousers would be two to three inches deep with six rows of stitching and trousers were 'fall-fronts' not the conventional fly. The buyers were always keen to know what design a particular member of another family chose.

My starting wage was 12/6d. Of this 1/3d was spent in Heins music shop, record department every week. Miss Millman who was in charge of the records was so knowledgeable of music, if you did not know the title, you sang or whistled the tune and she could tell you the title.

Boots

I started work at Boots in 1943, writes Mary Harrison from Whitefriars Road. We were in High Town. Mr Gunn the area manager interviewed me. Usually Boots employed High School girls - I went to Scudamore, but I was good at spelling and got the job.

I started in stationery and books at 25/- a week. We had to leave when we married. We had no cash tills, just a drawer for the money and we gave receipts. When it was our break, a junior was sent to Marchants to buy our coffee.

Junior girls wore overalls but senior assistants wore their own clothes. We never called each other by christian names. I remember the late Mr Marshall was dispenser and the late Mr Frank Freeman was manager.

Half Day Closing

One lady who had been a sales assistant at Greenlands in the forties started work in the underwear department when she was nineteen. They wore uniforms of black or navy dress.

Thursday was half day closing, a measure thought to have been brought in by a Hereford tailor, Mr Pritchard. His grandson, Percy Pritchard told us: 'My grandfather, introduced the half day closing and the workers were paid for it' When Vi Woolaway started work at George Mason's the Grocers in 1949, the half day was well established. My hours were 8.30am to 5.30pm, an hour and a quarter for lunch and a half day on Thursdays, two weeks paid holidays and a rise in pay every birthday. But if there was an error in the balance at the end of the day you stayed behind after the shop was closed until the mistake was found. This could mean an hour or two without pay. Before Pritchard moved their shop to King Street, their premises were in High Town. The centre of Hereford was a great social centre because all the different families lived on the premises. There were the Greenlands, the Gurneys, the Marchants and the Slatters, all with families. It was a big community of private businesses.

Remember the Butter Market fire? Sugar in blue paper bags? Nuff sed - Haines for Sweets?

In this issue of Age to Age, we listen to the memories of shop workers and shoppers.

Market Fire

The butter market was always a focus of High Town' John Burgoyne, whose family had a fish shop in the market told us. "There were two fish shops in there, ours and some people named Parkinson. Then there was Neashams who sold mostly toys but anything that wanted selling, and Hillmans the florists. On Wednesdays and Saturdays the country people used to come in and sell their produce.

Outside the back of the Market was the old Maylord Street where all the farmers used to come with their horse and carts and we kids used to nip in and hold their horse for 6d.

Then the market fire came; I can remember my dad coming and shouting up the stairs to my mother "The market's on fire!"

And who remembers: Nuff sed - Haines for Sweets? The Hereford Pop In Club told Hereford Lore about the sweet factory in Bewell Street, next door to an old brewery. Their sweets were sold at Elcock's in the Butter Market and were advertised with a picture of a mother with her son across her lap having his backside tanned for not going to Haines. Nuff sed is still painted above the fancy goods store in Tupsley run by a member of the Haines family

Home Deliveries

Jim Thomas, like many young Hereford lads worked as a delivery boy while still at school. "Your mother never carried heavy shopping from town, it was always delivered by the boy on the bike. It was a favourite Saturday job. I did a spell at G.W.Russells in High Town, a high class book sellers where Lloyds bank is now, going up towards what Herefordians know as Bells Corner after Bells the tobacconists'

Kathleen Deem remembers horse deliveries in Commercial Street.

I was having my milk delivered by horse in 1947 when we had that big snow. The milkman used to come and tether his horse there (in Commercial Street) and I used to take the old fashioned billy can to the door. I used to pay every day because you couldn't afford to run a bill up.

In Commercial Street there was Liptons the grocers, then there was the pawn shop, then Whites the fish shop. Further up there was Slatters, then opposite there was Rossers the butcher. The pawn shop was a family affair there was nothing snobbish about them. They were down to earth, they knew the plight of the people. You could only get about half a crown on a big bundle of clothes - then you would have to find half a crown on the weekend to fetch it all back for them to wear. It would be washed and pressed and sent back again! You would take it in on Monday morning, fetch it back on the Friday or Saturday ... it was back there again on Monday morning!"



Cedric Howells, seen here delivering to the shop in High Town, worked for George Mason's in the 1950's.

Chadds since 1929



Chadds shop window in the fifties.

Vi Woolaway one of our editorial group talked to John Chadd, present owner of the High Town department store about this landmark shop and its past.

My parents met when they were working in Wakefield Knights, a general drapery shop which used to be in High Town. My father went there when he was about 14 and showed considerable flair - he was made a buyer when he was only 18. He always wanted his own business and in 1929, although it was in the depths of the depression and he had a lot of well meaning advice not to throw away his money, he took his first premises here at Chadds.

Today virtually the same things sell in Hereford as will sell in London but Hereford then was conservative from a fashion point of view.

In those days it would be very much clothing. Men's protective clothing, bib and brace overalls, wellingtons and working shirts. A lot of clothes would be sold by the yard and the customer then made them up. Government surplus goods were the big thing after the war; that was late forties, nearly finished by the fifties. And rationing went on quite a long time after the war

There's a lot of things we don't sell any longer. We used to have perhaps the biggest gramophone record department in Hereford. Singles were the things you sold in quantity. Of course it was a high risk thing because what was a good seller one week was dead as door nails the next. Funnily enough, Ken Dodd's Happiness, was a very high seller but then when a new Beatles single came out we'd sell hundreds and hundreds in a day. It was very busy even with eight staff in the record shop on a Saturday.

We've about 172 staff at the moment and we probably sell things that need a bit of help to chose. We don't sell the things you just pick up off the shelf but if you want a bit of advice, that's what we're geared to.

Vi: I can remember the New Look being seen in Hereford for the first time. I remember the young lady who first wore the New Look, a long skirt down to about calf level, thin waist and gathered skirt. That would have been the end of the forties and was a big sensation.

John: I remember customers coming in and asking for "those shirts that don't need washing". They were the first non-iron shirts, the first polycotton material. They appeared to have been dipped in a sort of chemical solution. They used to be on quota and we had a certain dozen each month which used to go very quickly.

Vi: If you saw a queue you got in because it was obviously for nylons.

John: Nylons were a big sensation after the Lisle stockings, the Nora Batty type things. The first nylons would virtually last for ever - they had to change the design because they would never have made a fortune - the stockings just lasted too long. Same with men's nylon socks, they never wore out.

Traffic used to be such a problem. There was a long wait for the traffic lights and buses queuing up outside used to pump diesel fumes into the store. The air was almost blue at times! Pedestrianisation was one of the best things that happened in High Town. It's interesting to look to the future. I think there is a feeling that people are looking for something different. The multiples have been so successful its been almost counter productive because they now appear everywhere, every shopping centre looks the same because you've got the same names and they're showing the same goods in the same way. There's only one Chadds so whether we're good or bad, at least we're different.

NOTICE BOARD

WHO REMEMBERS?

Jim Thomas is seeking news of Basil (BH) Yarwood who lived in St Owens Gate, believed killed in action in the middle East with the RAF in 1939. Contact our P.O. no. with any info.

AMAZING HOW TIMES CHANGE

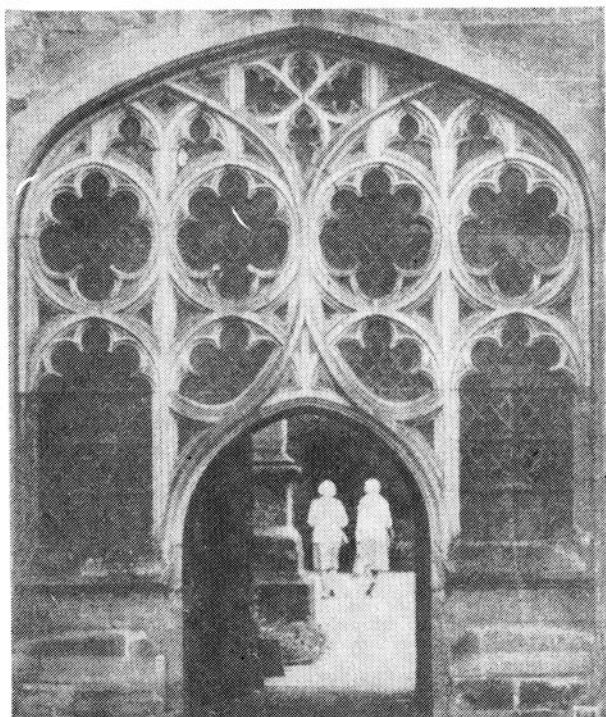
Available for sale are copies of the first Hereford Lore book that tells the history of the City from 1900 - 1960, as told through the memories and recollections of local people. Illustrated with photographs. Cost: £3 from Hereford Tourist Information Centre, St Owens Street, Hereford Hereford Bookshop, 24 Church Street, Hereford. The Environment Department, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford.

PHOTO COMPETITION

To celebrate European Year of Older People Hereford and Worcester County Council and Artlink have joined forces to run a photography competition. The entries should be positive images of age, black and white or colour prints. Closing date 1st October. For more information contact: Artlink, The Garage Arts and Media Centre, 1 Hatherton Street, Walsall. Tel: 0922 616566

HEREFORD PHOTOSCULPTURE

Ever tried making life size photos? Well here is your chance. Photographer, Jane Smith, will be running activities during July and August, with people over 60 wanted to take part, no experience required - Contact Jane on 0989 86265



Hereford Cathedral

Maija McDougal

Active Retirement

Since my retirement as a professional musician, I have been involved with growing interest in one of the visual arts - photography. The process of learning and mastering the technical side has been most absorbing and challenging.

While exploring the various aspects of photography, it led to the discovery of the early photographic processes, some of which differ greatly from modern day technology. I chose to specialise in one of them - the Bromoil process.

I have been involved in diverse activities, participating in exhibitions, lectures and in the administrative and promotional work of two photographic societies.

Music still plays an important part in my life, however, the newly discovered world of photography has brought additional wealth of experience.

Maija McDougal.

Maija will be leading a Bromoil workshop at the Hereford Photographic Festival in September

Everyone needs a friend

Like everyone, the Hereford Lore Newsletter needs friends. We are looking towards local businesses to support the newsletter by becoming a "Dear Friend" "Close Friend" or "Friend" by donating £100 - £700.

Your friendship will be acknowledged in each issue and any affiliated retirement group will be sent copies of the newsletter. The donations are needed to extend the print run of the newsletter and allow the Hereford Lore team to develop and learn new skills by working with professional editors and designers. Donations will also be used to help administer the international Penfriend Scheme.

If you would like to receive a friendship pack, or would like more information, contact Natalia Silver, Hereford's Arts Development Officer on 0432 268121 ext 253

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