

AGE TO AGE

Hereford Lore Reminiscence Newsletter

Issue 2 September 1993

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



Meet The Team

The Hereford Lore Team is pictured here at the Pensioners Lunch at Hereford's Summer Festival. They are (left to right) Vi Thomas, Roy Kennett, Alf Evans, Vi Woolaway and Jim Thomas.

Thanks for the Memories

This is Hereford's second bi-monthly newsletter. The first was produced and released in July at the time of the Hereford Summer Festival. Reaction to our efforts has been favourable.

Letters we have received via PO Box 87 Hereford HR4 9XS have asked for overseas penfriends and some have volunteered stories and reminiscences and others photographs and sundry other matters.

All of which we will endeavour to attend to. This edition

focuses on matters pertinent to Health and Welfare as well as more reminiscence of days past. We will try to point our readers in the direction from where such help can be obtained. Newsletters like this will succeed if we can use the information we receive. So if you have a memory be it nostalgic, amusing, happy or sad that you would like to share with others, please let us know.

We would love to hear from you.

Jim Thomas.

Not a Charity

Social Security benefits are not a charity - they are your legal right.

But are you getting what you deserve?

The government's Benefits Agency are doing their bit for the Year of the Older Person by launching "Help After Retirement", a free booklet on entitlements.

You should be able to get a copy from your local post office or you can ask for confidential advice on benefits from Agency staff at St Nicholas House, 6, St Nicholas Street, phone 0432 277272.

There is also a free phone service on 0800 666 555.

If you are involved with a club or group of older people, Agency staff will come and talk to the group about benefits.

Our next issue of Age to Age will be out in November. 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 Alf Evans, Edith Gammage, Roy Kennett, Jim Thomas, Vi Thomas and Vi Woolaway.

We are grateful for the support of:



*Hereford City Council
supporting the Arts*



The Good Old Days

Striking Story

A striking story of employment conditions has been sent in by one reader. She writes.

"During the busy periods at one Hereford factory, they took on extra men from the ranks of the unemployed.

A large number would line up in the yard, the Head Foreman walked up and down pointing "I'll have you, you, you" etc until he had the required number. The unlucky ones turned away to try again another time.

One morning whilst men were being chosen, a man in the line shouted. "I'll work for ten pence an hour." The rate was ten pence halfpenny.

"Right," said the foreman, "You're on."

He then called out: "If one can work for ten pence then every one can, that's now going to be the rate."

I remember a neighbour whose husband had been taken on, being very upset when she told my mother about the cut in wages. It meant a difference of approximately two shillings (10p) a week.

At that time it would have bought one hundredweight of coal."

The Depression

In the 1930s the Depression made its mark on Hereford as Tom Woolaway remembers.

As a young lad living in Bath Street in the thirties, it was surprising how much poverty there was in Hereford.

My memories of these days go back to the Soup Kitchen on the corner of Bath Street and Delacy Street where the John Venn Trust provided a meal of pea soup at a halfpenny a bowl and threepence a jug.

As kids we used to leave the jug at the kitchen on our way to school and collect it at mid-day for dinner.

I also remember my mother collecting Parish Bread (two loaves) from a Bakery in St Peter's Square.

Times were hard in the thirties, the Means Test was operating in those days when you were more or less forced to sell possessions that were not essential to pay for the necessities of life.

The Soup Kitchen?

Many Midland Red bus passengers may recall the conductor's shout of "Anyone for the Soup Kitchen?" as the Tupsley buses pulled up near where Winchester Avenue joins upper Ledbury Road. Jim Thomas remembers a single storey war time building which stood behind a hedge.

The Soup Kitchen was demolished when Salisbury and Winchester Avenues were built and Jim wondered if the old building was anything to do with the prisoner of war camp which formerly stood where Bishop's School's sports field now stand. John Burrow, a war-time reserve policeman in Tupsley, remembers the kitchen in action. He used to drop in on cold winter's nights for a hot drink from a kindly cook. Other Tupsley residents have told Jim that the building was a local authority kitchen, used to prepare school meals in the later and post war years. Originally known simply as the kitchen, the word soup was added by humorous bus conductors.



The Dispensary

Among the many letters to Age To Age was one from Mrs Enid Parker born in Ledbury Road, and now living in Cheltenham. Her father, Mr W.H. Preece used to work for the doctors with a surgery at 34 Castle Street and at the Old Hereford Dispensary in Union Street.

"The dispensary was founded by Rev John Venn, a local philanthropist. I heard recently that the grey stone building, now used as a storage place, was in a dilapidated condition and would make the founder rise in his grave."

Many members of the Pop In Club at Venns Lane recalled the Dispensary. "You had to pay for the doctor and you used to have to pay 1/8d a month. If you failed to make your donation, you were fined a penny a week. They'd make up a doctor's prescription at the Dispensary and you used to have to sit on benches while you were waiting."

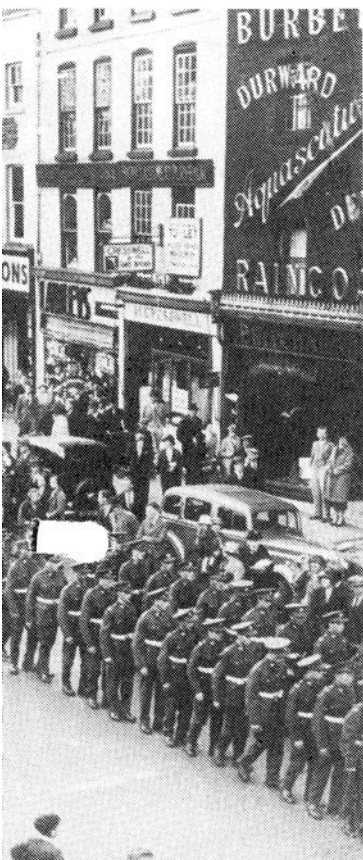
One remembered being sent to Watts the bakery for stale cakes when her family lived in Cotterell Street. "We never died over it," she added. Another recalled using the wash house boiler to cook the Christmas pudding and boil the ham. "Mind, you wash it out first!"

Another speaker recalled her father coming home from the first world war. "There was no work. They were taken to the gaol, where the bus station is now and they had to do woodwork or break stones for about seven shillings and sixpence a week. The bread was only four pence a loaf and sugar about thrupence ha'penny and you could get a pound of cheese for about thruppence. But that was a lot of money if you didn't have it!"

If things went seriously wrong, there was always the workhouse. "Gilbert Harding out of What's My Line, his father was principal at the workhouse," recalled a Pop In Club member.

?

Remember the good old days? Or were they as good as we think? In this issue of Age To Age we listen to your memories of Hereford before the founding of the Welfare State.



Photograph courtesy of the Hereford Times

The country, emerging from the Depression was plunged into war. Here the King's Shropshire Light Infantry are seen marching through High Town around 1935. The photograph is from Barbara Dawson whose father was Sergeant Major Bill Pullinger, seen here, three rows back, turned away from the camera. Like many others, he joined the KSLI in the 1st World War, lying about his age to become a soldier at 14! He stayed in until he was sixty. Barbara was born at the Drill Hall in Friars Street and remembers at the age of four "going to sleep every night to the sound of drums"

Hereford Hospitals

An occupation pursued by many women in the 'thirties was nursing. One ainee nurse at that time, who went on to become a hospital administrator remembers training at the General Hospital. It was, she says, arduous work.

The morning began at 6.55 with prayers and a hymn in the hospital chapel followed by the first job of the day cleaning the wards, which included the castors on the beds. The uniform included a cap which you pleated yourself, stiff cuffs and a stiff collar and a clean apron at mid morning after the ward cleaning was finished. Lectures were attended in off duty times and the working day finished with a return to chapel for prayers. Wages were £20 a year for an eighteen year old. A staff nurse would be earning £55.



"Prelim," May 1936

Hospital Radio

George Burton who at the age of 73 is one of the oldest hospital radio presenters in the country took up his Wednesday morning broadcast after retiring from work with W.H.Smith. His radio catch phrase is Don't do anything I wouldn't do."

Positive Images



In a whirlwind demonstration of what older people can do, given the opportunity the Hereford Lore group pictured on our front cover have interviewed and edited a book, given spotlight public readings of their writing, worked with young people in schools, assisted with a reminiscence training day and been the driving force behind this newsletter

Age, as another Herefordian, Dorothy Petit, has shown, is no barrier to leading an active life. Dorothy pictured above with a group of pupils shortly after the last war now lives in Green Street. She left her parent's Herefordshire farm to take up teaching in 1939, but when she retired she not only took up teaching music she plays the guitar, accordion, piano and harp she also began making harps.

She built her first in 1974 and has made four more since then. She sings, accompanying herself on the harp, plays in the band at the Elim Church and still finds time to pursue her other interest, painting.

Benefits

Among the benefits of being a pensioner says one older Hereford resident are bus passes, rail cards, parking tickets, free prescriptions, free chiropody and safety gas checks every two years.

And she added, you have time for hobbies, travel and visits; if you board a bus, looking like you need the kiss of life, some young passenger might give you a seat. Last of all, she says candidly, you don't need to practise birth control!

Young ideas

Several young people have been asked their opinion of age. Fourteen year old Martyn Evans thought older people had lots of experiences. "They can see life from a laid-back perspective and a deeper understanding," he added.

Seventeen year old Kathy thought age brought you respect and independence and the freedom to do what you want, when you want. Rachel Bowcutt, a 21 year old was more specific: "I hope for a reduction in my car insurance premiums. When the time comes I would like to spend my retirement in the comfort of my own home."

Twelve year old Rebecca Jones thought the good thing about being older was not having to go to work anymore. "You can have a quiet life and do what you want because you have more time."

Seven year old Simon Thomas, asked if he thought there were any good things about being old gave a cautious reply: "Well, I won't know really until I am old, but I think it will be nice to visit my grandchildren."

Picture Competition

Have you captured a positive image on film?

A photographic competition which aims to show the positive side of being an older person is being organised by the County Council.

Run to coincide with the European Year of Older People and Solidarity Between Generations, the competition is open to anyone.

An exhibition of the entries will tour the county

Entry forms and details are available from: Rachel Clarke at Artlink (0922) 616566 or Valerie Jarrett at the County Council (0905) 766921

Noticeboard

History Into Fiction

Novelist Frances Brown will be running a writers workshop for people who have family stories and want to turn them into novels. Redditch Library, Saturday October 2, £12, (£10 cons). Contact: 0527 63291

Hereford Autumn Music October 15 - 31

Hereford comes alive with the sound of music with performances at various venues in the City. Pick up a programme from the Tourist Information Centre, St Owens Street.

Don't forget your copy of Amazing How Times Change

available, price £3.00 from Hereford Tourist Information Centre, St Owen Street, Hereford Bookshop, 24 Church Street or The Environment Department, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford.

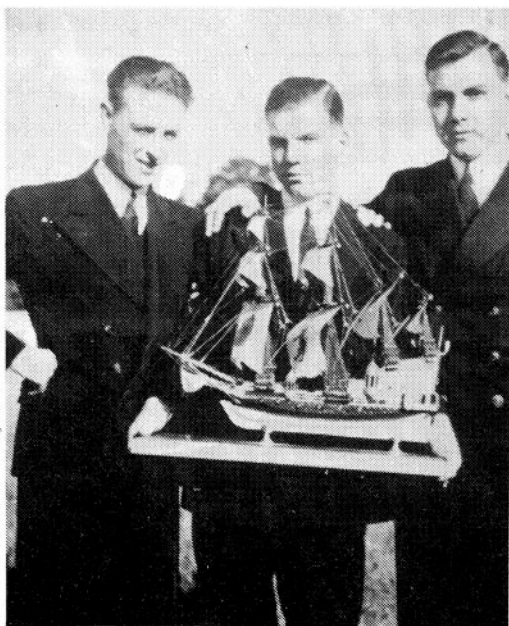
Hereford Photographic Festival September 11 October 2

Exhibitions, talks and workshops with a special display of photographs from older people who have taken part in the Art Link and County Council photograph project. Pick up a programme from the Tourist Information Centre or the City Art Gallery in Broad Street.

Apple Day Celebrations

October 23 November 6 Includes cider apples displays and tastings at the Cider Museum, Pomona Place, Hereford.

Do you know Herbert, the man on the left in this picture? His friends, Bill Goodfellow from Essex (right) and Frank Chambers (centre) were serving as fitters with the Fleet Air Arm in Rosshire, Scotland during the last war. Frank and Bill have since met up but they are still trying to discover news of their friend Herbert. His surname may have been Haywood or Hayward, but they think he came from Herefordshire. Write to us at P.O.Box 87, Hereford HR4 9XS and we will pass any news on.



Those Boots Girls

Remember the Boots girls in our last issue? Barbara Preece, now Barbara Bedlan, has written to say she was one of the Boots girls, not Barbara Davies as we reported. And, she tells us, the two others were Beryl Wood and Beryl Watkins.

Dorothy Whittingham from Tupsley was a Boots girl. She started work aged 14 in 1914 when the shop was on the corner of Cabbage Lane, off High Town.

"I was in the showroom upstairs in the Art, Silver and Fancy goods department. We worked long hours "(until 7.00 or 7.30 most nights, but 10.00 p.m. on Saturdays)" and my wages were five shillings a week.

In 1918 when we knew the war was about to end an arrangement was made that if the Armistice was signed, Gurney's shop would hoist a flag. Well, on November 11th I was cleaning silver by a window on the first floor when I saw two men pulling up the flag. I shouted 'it's over' and everybody ran from the shops, overjoyed. The War was over and our boys would be coming home."

She worked for Boots until her marriage in 1921 and remembers much of what was in our last newsletter "At the Kemble we saw moving pictures for the first time; I did see the picture Nuff said Haines for sweets with the little child being smacked. It must have been one of the earliest commercials."

Another contributor has pointed out that Haines sold their own sweets in the Butter Market and had several shops in the town.

Any complaints?

Are you happy with the service you receive from Social Services? Have you a comment or complaint to make? Social Services have a complaints procedure to help people resolve any problems - you can find out more at the Social Services offices in Bath Street.

But if you would rather have someone who is independent of Social Services give you a hand, contact Herefordshire Citizen Advocacy at 25 Castle Street, Hereford (0432) 263757. They train and recruit volunteers to assist vulnerable people.

And their services are free.

FRIENDS OF AGE TO AGE

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The Good Old Days

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