

NOW ON TAPE

# AGE TO AGE

*Hereford Lore Reminiscence Newsletter*

Vol.2 Issue 2 September 1994

Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS



## John Tarrant - ghost runner

One of Hereford's more extraordinary sporting stories is that of John Tarrant, once known to the nation as the Ghost Runner

John died tragically of cancer in 1975, aged only 41 but his wife **Edie Tarrant** who lives in Newton Farm recalled many of his outstanding achievements.

John Tarrant broke two world records 40 miles in 1966 and the 100 miles in 1969; he won the London to Brighton twice, Exeter to Plymouth three times, Liverpool to Blackpool five times, the Alexandra Track Race at Portsmouth and naturally many of the local events. And he was still running for charity locally even when he was suffering from cancer

Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about John was that for years he was barred from the world of amateur racing all because he once earned £17 doing boxing bouts in Buxton.

This prize money according to the authorities, deprived him of amateur status, and therefore barred him from long distance running.

"But John was completely dedicated to running," says Edie. "He used to gatecrash races and win them." The authorities tried to prevent him running on the road, but John's fellow competitors would bunch around him and thwart their efforts. The national press made his a cause celebre and eventually partly because they could not stop the irrepressible Ghost Runner from winning race after race, they relented.

The life of John Tarrant was featured on BBC radio Saturday night theatre in July a posthumous tribute to the man who gave so much to the lonely world of the long distance runner

The unstoppable John Tarrant claims another title, winning the 44 mile Exeter to Plymouth road race in 1922.

## Sporting Times

In this issue we look at sport and leisure. As the subject is so wide ranging we have confined our attention, in the main, to the period 1900 - 1970. If we have not included your favourite player or match, we can only plead lack of space as an excuse and hope to fill in the gaps in some future issue.

Once again we offer our thanks to those whose contributions have made this issue possible.

*Bill Morris.*

Our next issue of Age to Age will be out in November. Copies are available from City and Belmont Libraries, Hereford Tourist Information Centre, The City Environment Directorate at Garrick House, Age Concern Offices, Berrows House, Bath Street and Hereford Town Hall, Good Old Days' Shop, St Owens Street.

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



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# Sporting Hereford

## Running to War

**D**oes anyone recall **R.E. Cole**, the long distance runner mentioned in our January issue? He ran from his home in Vowchurch to the labour exchange to sign on for the war. On being told he was too old he ran off to the Munitions Factory at Rotherwas in search of a job before returning home in his running shoes.

## Bare Fist Boxer

**B**orn at Rudge End Farm near Fownhope in 1795, **Thomas Winter** eventually became licensee of the Hereford Hostelry now known at the Booth Hall.

In between times Tom Spring, as he became known, was one of England's most famous pugilists, Champion of All England in 1823 and 1824. Tom went to London to train with Tom Cribb who gave him the name Spring because he believed Winter was unlucky. A direct descendant of Tom Spring, **John Wright** tells us that his ancestor carried himself through life as a gentleman in and out of the ring. When he retired to the Booth Hall six Irish hawkers arrived in town intending to deal with Spring for twice defeating their Irish champion, Langan. But Spring got to hear of their plans and was waiting for them in full boxing kit when they arrived. Shortly afterwards all six had to be carried out of the Inn!

Spring supported many local charities including the education of Orphan Children and a memorial stone was erected in his memory just off the Fownhope to Woolhope Road. Tom died in 1851.

## Never Marry on a Saturday

**H**ereford has had its share of cricket players who have reached Test Match level. Only the oldest of our readers will remember Jack Sharp who played three times for England and scored a century against the Australians in 1909. He captained the Lancashire team and also played football for England.

In the late 1930's, Reg Perks, one of the best bowlers ever to play for Worcestershire, twice represented England and, but for the war, would have played in many more Tests.

In more recent times, Peter Richardson represented England in 34 Tests, scoring five centuries while his younger brother Derek (Dick) played in one Test.

In local cricket, before and after the last war, the Thornycroft family played significant roles. For many years Lt. Col. C.M. Thornycroft was the guiding force in Herefordshire cricket and after the war one of his sons, Colonel Guy Thornycroft proved himself one of the finest attacking batsmen ever seen in Herefordshire. **Noel Pritchard** who later captained Hereford and was an accomplished batsman himself, remembers batting with Guy in 1947.

"While I compiled a mere 30 or so runs, Guy hit 230 with awesome power. One of his towering sixes put the ball through the windscreen of a parked car belonging to one of his team mates and bought only that day!"

Guy scored his second hundred in less than 30 minutes. He hit one ball right over the old grandstand on the Racecourse. Only those who saw this feat would consider it possible.

Hereford had many fine captains. **Bill Morris**, who played under several of them, considers Jack Goodwin for many years an impressive player, the most determined of them. "Jack always had a fierce desire to win and was always bitterly disappointed when he lost. He thought that cricket took priority over anything else. Once, when the Colwall team arrived half an hour late for their fixture with Hereford, their captain apologised explaining that they had been to the wedding of one of their players. Jack turned to me and said, with genuine incredulity: 'Fancy getting married on a Saturday!'"

## A fit of Giggles

**B**efore the war there was only one division in the Evening League, but there was no shortage of outstanding players. **Ken Proctor** himself a redoubtable player in the Y.M.C.A. teams before and after the last war remembers two of the league's outstanding players. Arthur (Alley) Harris who was a destroyer of bowling of any class scored 500 runs and took 50 wickets each year for ten seasons. He never wore batting gloves and when asked why, enquired: "Is it cold?" When an umpire asked "Do you want a guard?" Alley said: "Why? Am I in danger?" It is claimed that people living in houses bordering Widemarsh Common moved far away from their front windows when Alley came in to bat.

Ken also writes: "Ferdy Davies was the finest all rounder in met in the League. Each side he played for won the League. With his fine fast bowling he captured all ten wickets on several occasions. In



The men in white line up for the photo

one game in his first over he clean bowled five batsmen with his first five balls and would certainly have captured the sixth wicket had he not suffered a fit of the giggles as he ran up to bowl. On several occasions he also scored centuries in impressive style."

## Playing With the Pig

**I**n the 1930s one of the most successful and certainly one of the most skillful teams in local football was the team representing Thynnes's, a well known Hereford tile company. One of the stars of that team, now living in Lincolnshire (and a regular correspondent to Age to Age) was **Doug Parsons**.

Doug writes: "As young as I was, football was my sport, but we



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could not afford a football Mr Chave at the Rose and Crown in Tupsley kept pigs and when he killed them we used to beg to have the bladders, washed them, blew them up and used them as footballs.

" In the mid 1930s Thynnes were a wonderfully successful team. They were league champions three years running and in one of those years did not lose a match. My team mates were Harry Wood, 'Butch' Williams, Wat Parker Tom Smart, Joe Nixon, Arthur Perkins, Geoff Perkins, Jim Newman, Billy Hope, Ivor Lewis and my brother Jim. We had wonderfully happy times. But then came the war in which several of the team were killed"

**Joe Wade** had an impressive career with the famous London club, Arsenal, captaining them in 1954-56. Joe



Hereford City Football Club photographed at Edgar Street around 1937 But who are they all? And where are they now? If you can recognise anyone here, drop us a line at Hereford Lore, 26, Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS.



grapher - Hereford Cricket Club in 1956

became a popular player manager for Hereford United when he left Arsenal. But Joe first played for Hereford United in 1945-46. He writes: "When I was stationed at RAF Credenhill, Tom Price the secretary of Hereford United invited me to play for them. In the years 1945-46 I played many games for Hereford. In those days we had the services of quite a few guest players. I played with Gage (Fulham) McPhee (Dundee and Scotland), Bowyer (Stoke City) Broome and Shell (Aston Villa) and my favourite, Charlie Thompson (Sheffield United). It was a joy to play with such talented players. I fell in love with Hereford where I had the good fortune to meet my wife Kathleen who was in the Women's Land Army and whom I married in 1945"

## Snippets

### Carnival Time

How many Herefordians remember the carnivals which took place in the 1930s? **Bill Griffiths** recalls the Hereford YMCA group dressed as a chain gang for the 1935 carnival.

### Scudamore School

The picture of Lord Scudamore School published in the May issue (No 6) brought back many memories for **Eddy Watkins** and **Jack Jones**, both Scudmore pupils in 1936. Eddy and Jack still have their copies of the 3rd annual report Joint Schools' Athletic Sports held on Edgar Street Sports ground on June 6 1935.

### Ted Woodriffe

Anyone interested in sport will have heard the sad news of the death of Ted Woodriffe, for so many years sports editor of the Hereford Times. Ted did so much to forward the cause of sport in the county that sportsmen and women are much indebted to him. We offer our sincere sympathy to his wife, Pat. B.M.

### Handmade in Hereford

Our next issue will be devoted to your memories of anything and everything which was hand-made in Hereford. From brick makers and bottlers to bread making and brewing, send in your memories and pictures to Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS.



## NOTICEBOARD

### HEREFORD PHOTOGRAPHIC FESTIVAL

24 September 22 October

On the theme of 'Reframing the Family' the festival will include exhibitions, workshops and talks. Contact Chris Smart, The Rural Media Company, St. Peter's Church House, St. Peter's Square, Hereford. Tel. 0432 344039.

### WRITE ON TIME

A five week course every Wednesday evening with Bill Laws. Contact: Hereford Theatre and Arts Centre, Edgar St. Hereford HR4 9JR. Tel: 0432 359252

Don't forget your copy of **Amazing How Times Change**

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

### Danny La Rue in 'The Good Old Days'

Tuesday 18 October 7.30am  
Tickets £10.00

Hereford Theatre and Arts Centre, Edgar St. Hereford HR4 9JR. Tel: 0432 359252

### HEREFORD THEATRE AND ARTS CENTRE

~ OPEN DAY ~

**Saturday 10 September 11.00am - 4.00pm**

*The Open Day includes tours around the building, stands, displays and performances by local art groups and the launch of the Autumn season of performances and events.*

Edgar Street, Hereford. Tel. 0432 359252

### Hereford Contemporary Crafts Fair

**18, 19 & 20 November**

*A show case of contemporary crafts from Hereford and Worcester County*

Hereford Town Hall, St. Owen's St. Hereford.



Mickey Minton photographed at Preece's Commercial Street Studios

## Bowling Along

**V**i Woolaway talked to Tommy Higgins about a sport which those of us not as young as we were, might enjoy "Tommy joined the Wormelow Indoor Bowls Club when he retired. Bowls has been played for years but television coverage has made it more popular. The membership at Wormelow is currently 500 and the game is played Monday to Sunday all year round. Since ladies also play it can be a shared interest in one's retirement years," reports Vi. If you would like to know more contact the county coach, Brian Howe on Hereford 354031

## The Little Wonder

**T**he Little Wonder otherwise known as Mickey Minton, puts on a balanced pose for the camera (left)

Herbert (Mickey) Minton, born in Much Dewchurch in 1883 was a keen amateur cyclist who took part in cycle races all over the country. In 1908 he won the quarter mile world grass track event in a record time of 33.25 seconds; in 1909 he did even better - 32.80 seconds. He became the quarter mile half mile and mile champion and won the 5 mile and 10 mile championships of Great Britain. In 1912 he was hailed as the 440 yards English champion.

The venue for some of these local events was Cannonmoor Athletic Grounds at the rear of the old Public Baths, now the Hereford Theatre, in Edgar Street.

In later years the Little Wonder turned his attention to motor cycling and took part in T T racing on the Isle of Man, riding a Norton. Mickey died aged 74 in 1957

### FRIENDS OF AGE TO AGE

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