

Herefordshire Lore

Age to Age

Reminiscence Newsletter



SPECIAL
GOLDEN JUBILEE
ISSUE

Vol 10 Issue 3

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June 2002



Take a letter Young women learning to type at Hereford. But do you know who they are? When the picture was taken? Drop us a line at Herefordshire Lore.

Time To Celebrate

WELCOME to the June Issue of Age To Age. It is a celebratory issue this time. Not only are we all celebrating the Golden Jubilee of HM the Queen we are also celebrating the successes of our Munitions Project (see inside) and we are rapidly approaching the tenth anniversary of Age To Age.

The Munitions Project certainly has been a highlight of the year so far. It seems to have caught the imagination of many and we have received a great number of responses to the picture in the last

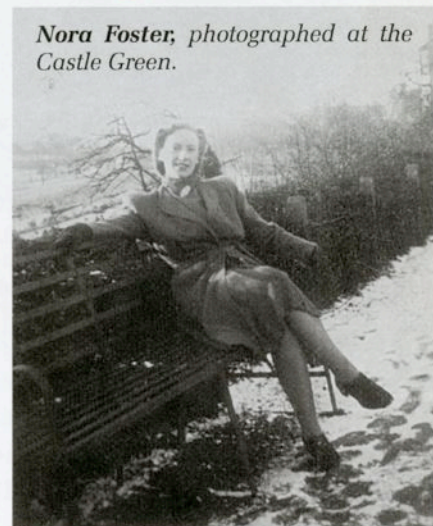
issue. We are currently seeking additional funding to extend the Project. Many thanks to all those who have contributed so far.

Although we are not yet celebrating our Golden Jubilee we will be getting into double figures later this year. Watch out for a celebratory issue later in the year. In the meantime we all hope you enjoy this issue and will continue to send us your contributions.

John Turner
Chairman

Sixty Years On

Nora Foster, photographed at the Castle Green.



June 27, 1942 - 60 years to the day when the Munitions factory at Rotherwas, Hereford was bombed. **Norah Foster** from Putson was there. "We had heard the alarms and didn't take much notice. Then we looked up and saw the cross and dived for cover into one of the air raid shelters."

This June 27, Herefordshire Lore will be presenting memories of Norah and her workmates to Sue Hubbard at the County Archive Office in Hereford. Read more about the Munitions Workers inside.

Herefordshire Lore - Living Local History

Herefordshire Lore was set up in 1989 to collect, remember and celebrate our past. Age To Age became our bi-monthly newsletter.

Free copies are distributed to local libraries and Tourist Information Centres, Museums, Age Concern (Hereford), Hereford Town Hall and Herefordshire College of Technology. We rely on subscriptions (see back page), grants and donations to keep going.

Herefordshire Lore is Margaret Beare, Bobbie Blackwell, Mary Blackwell, Sirlol Collins, Sam Goodwin, Eileen Klotz, Bill Laws, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe (County Archives), Harvey Payne, Sylvie Smith and John Turner. The next Age To Age will be out in August 2002.





Look at those flares. Families from Grosmont Grove and Brampton Road Hereford celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee — thanks to Mrs D. Taylor from Homer.

Fearsome Fifties

RATIONING was coming to an end. The King had died. Queen Elizabeth had stepped up on to the throne. Herefordshire in the 1950s was a very different place . . .

Rosemary Young remembers "the good old Divi days at the Co-op", as she puts it. Working at the Co-op in Widemarsh Street during the decade: "Dinner dances at The Imperial, sports events and going to Ross and Leominster to pay out the Divi." And she recalls her workmates. Betty Beavan and Brenda in shoes, Brian Marchant in fruit, Eric Reed in Groceries, June Vale in Ladies' Wear, Ken Halford in Gents' Wear and Eric Talboy in Furniture.



Motor traders from Herefordshire and Worcestershire visited 'Fort Dunlop' near Birmingham in 1935. **Basil Butcher**, who loaned the picture, can identify (front row) Albert Marriott, Vic Wherle, Frank Bailey, Mr Thonett and himself; (back row) Percy Downes, Mr Sully, Percy Brooks, Vivian Sully, Harold Butcher and Jack Butcher from Ross.



1952 and residents from Rogers Avenue, Hunderton, Hereford prepare to party for the Coronation. Thanks to **Mrs Evans** from Hunderton for the photograph.



Wallis Avenue, Hunderton celebrates the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. **Molly Coleman**, now in Brisbane, Australia remembers the Denhams, Wents, Hankins, Mrs. Cowley, Muriel and Rosie Jones and Ken and Margaret Coleman.

Memories of The Munitions

WHEN the bombs fell on ROF Rotherwas at least fourteen people were killed both in the factory and in the Police Superintendent's house, just outside the factory fence. There were two other major incidents one in September 1941 and later in May 1944. "On June 27 I was lying in bed enjoying a week's leave from the RAF when I heard the unmistakable sound of a German bomber followed by several explosions," recalls **D.C. Booton**. The year before, on September 12 1941, he was working on a small automatic telephone exchange at ROF Rotherwas when a large explosion shook the equipment. "I dashed outside to see a large pall of smoke rising above one of the sheds at the far end of the Straight Mile." (An overheated milling machine had exploded some armaments killing **George MacLaren**, **Francis Hicks** and **Henry Bigglestone**)

Trevor Watkins lives at Credenhill. "I was with friends close to Mill Farm, Credenhill and the farm windows were blown open by a blast — we thought the explosion was on the RAF station. "Later the terrible news of the death of my uncle, **William Walton**, a security officer, was brought to my father. There was further anxiety as my mother waited for news of her sister **Irene Winney** who was working on the same shift.

Eventually we learned she was safe. "I shall never forget watching the funeral cortege passing The Residence, Kenchester en route to Kenchester Church."

Sybil Nicholls (then Chamberlain) worked twelve hour shifts at the factory in 1939 and 1940. "We were often searched at the entrance making sure we wore suitable clothing and no metal hair grips, etc. We had to change into a cap and overalls

making sure to hide our hair which could change colour if exposed to the atmosphere. "I worked in a cubicle with one other girl putting the detonator devices on the 25lb bombs. One other memory I have was being sent to a room and given a liquid to drink, said to kill the effects of TNT," she writes from Lavenham in Suffolk. **Catherine Eckley** — Millie — from Withington shared her memories with Age To Age at Age Concern's Day Centre in Sutton St Nicholas. Millie had been packing shells ready for transit. After the bombing she was moved to filling landmines instead. **Florrie Bevan** from Kilpeck and **Daisy Rees** from Kentchurch spoke to Age To Age at Ewyas Harold's Age Concern Day



*It's War Weapons Week, Hereford 1944 and the city's Sea Cadets have re-enacted a battle scene aboard ship for a Parade float. **W.A. Parker** from Hereford says the picture was taken outside the Masonic Hall in Kyrle Street.*

Centre. "I was on the 'clean' side, 7.30-6.30, long hours but good money," says **Florrie**. "I was filling shells and sometimes we'd fill little bags with cordite and those were sewn up and put in the shells. We were also putting cardboard tops on the shells."

Daisy lost a relative at the factory. "My brother, **Edward Rees**, was in his 30s. He was standing next to this bomb and he was blown to pieces. The man standing next to him was from Colwall," she recalls. What do you know about ROF Rotherwas? Do you have any pictures from those days? (Thanks to the South Wye's Community Fund and Herefordshire Partnerships Small Grants Fund)

Snippets

Plant Nurseries

WHERE were **Binghill Grange** and **Wilson's Nurseries**? asks **Ted Blackwell**. He's looking into past plant diseases in Herefordshire. "Dating back to 1951 there are records at 'Binghill Grange' (**Col. Benson**), and **Wilson's Nurseries**. The latter had a shop in Commercial Street, Hereford, but where were the nurseries?" Let us know at Age To Age, P.O. Box 2 Hereford HR2 8YE

Road Racing

THEY were racing cars on the Rotherwas Straight Mile in

1923 and again on the Whitecross Road, Hereford in 1925, reports **A.B. Demaus** from Leominster. Being a motoring historian he wants to find out more.

Drop us a line if you can help.

Ten Bob Supporters Club

WERE you in the Ten Bob Supporters Club at Hereford United, asks **Mr D. Marshall** from Hereford? "The annual subscription was ten shillings and enamel badges were issued to members each season between 1950 and 1955," reports **Mr Marshall** who is trying to collect them all.

Let us know if you can help him.

That's Not Me

APOLOGIES to former evacuee **Pamela Double**. That was her friend **Peggy** in our April issue. This is the ten year old **Pamela** in the Vicarage Cottage, Canon Pyon.





The old Ballingham school, seen here in 1928, has been turned into a village hall 'of great magnificence,' reports **Betty Cutcliffe** (that's her as Betty Russill, fifth from the left, front row). Betty, who spent her married life in Merseyside, returned to her Hoarwithy home in 1986. She can still name most of those pictured: (back, left to right) Dorothy Jeffries, Amy Foster (nee Price), ?, Bobby Hargreaves, Muriel Watkins, ?, Margaret Harris, Eileen Price; (front) Percy, Phyllis, Barbara Langford (nee Owen), Stanley, herself, Hilda, Danny Bayley, ?, Wilfred Probert, Sylvia Probert, Joan Lamb and John Watkins.



*Happy Jubilee
Ma'am*

"I have been fascinated by your last April 2002 issue especially Experiences at ROF Rotherwas. A very interesting Newsletter"

Ted Blackwell.

George Bernard Shaw And The Servant Girl

THE Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw is remembered by **Mrs Pitman** from Lydney. "He was a real old gentleman. He had a beard and he stayed at Kentchurch Court because the people there, Mrs Scudamore, were from Ireland."

Mr Shaw said to me: 'You were here last year!' I could have asked him to sign something couldn't I? But when you were a servant.

Friends and neighbours **Violet Bradley** and **Sissie Williams** from Sutton St Nicholas were both in service by the time they were 14.

"Blue uniform in the morning, black in the afternoon with a funny apron and cuffs. Mop caps in the morning, a fancy one in the afternoon,' they both recalled.

Violet worked at St Michael's Boys College in the north of the county.

"Everything had to be done by the clock. Our lunch was at 2.00 and when the clock chimed on the church, there was 74 steps down (to where they ate lunch) By the time it had struck two you were on the bottom step. "The wages were high — if you put 'em up on the shelf!"

(Thanks to Age Concern Mobile Day Centres)

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