

Age to Age

HEREFORDSHIRE LORE LIVING LOCAL HISTORY

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100 year old Annie built bombs in World War One



This is how it was: Herefordshire Lore's Bobbie Blackwell talks to former munitions worker Annie Slade at Annie's Nuneaton home. (Photo Ken Webb)

An Astonishing Meeting

Hello everyone. It's good to see spring coming around again with lighter nights. Coming to light too is the amount of information emerging through Eye Witness, Herefordshire Lore's investigations into the Royal Ordnance Factory at Rotherwas.

One of the extraordinary finds is that of Annie Slade (right). Annie, brought to our attention by her grandson, **Adrian Lambert** of Whitecross, Hereford, is possibly the oldest surviving worker from ROF Rotherwas. Annie's recollections will feature in our book about ROF Rotherwas, to be published this summer. But equally pleasing are your recollections and pictures of Herefordshire's craftspeople - Craft Appeal inside. If any readers can recall strange and interesting crafts, please write to us at Herefordshire Lore.



Annie Slade at eight.
"It was dangerous work but it was fun".

On a less jolly note we are having to raise subscriptions to Age To Age from our next issue in June. But all of you who have subscribed in the last twelve months will continue to get Age To Age until April next year. So keep enjoying it - and keep sending in your recollections.

Bobbie Blackwell

Anyone seen our Train?

The strangest tale to come out of Eye Witness, our project to talk to former workers from the Royal Ordnance Factory at Rotherwas, Hereford is that of the missing train. **Ken Hyett** wrote that, when a Ministry of Defence inventory was pending, worried workers discovered they had one train too many on site. "Lines were laid to the edge of a nearby disused gravel pit, the excess engine was fired up and driven in," wrote Ken.



Stears out: One of the old Rotherwas engines (Photo: Hereford Library)

BBC Hereford and Worcester, the Hereford Times and the Hereford Journal have all taken up the story and many readers responded:-

- "When they were building the Foundations for Englands Ice Cream they hit upon a buried train," said one caller.
- "We heard that the train was buried on Westfields playing fields.

There's always been a big yellow patch in the grass where it was buried," said another.

- **Mike Davies**, whose address, significantly, is Stoke Edith Station would be happy to help restore the old engine if it could be found.

But the strongest evidence seems to point to the old pit, now used as a fishing pool, close to the former Thorn Lighting Works. Drop us a line if you think you can help.



Herefordshire Lore was set up in 1989 to collect, remember and celebrate our past. Age To Age comes six times a year and some copies are available free at the county libraries, tourist centres and museums, Age Concern (Hereford), Hereford Town Hall and Herefordshire College of Technology. But if you can afford a subscription, please support us. Details on the back page. Herefordshire Lore is John Turner (Chairman), Margaret Beare, Bobbie Blackwell, Mary Blackwell, Siriol Collins (Hereford Museum), Rosemary Lillico, Eileen Klotz, Elizabeth Semper O'Keefe (County Archives), Harvey Payne (Treasurer) and Sylvie Smith, Editor: Bill Laws, Administrator: Dawn Turner. **The next Age To Age is due out in June 2003.**

Craft Appeal

'Butcher, baker and candle stick maker'. As Hereford markets itself as the City Of Crafts, Herefordshire Lore records your memories of local craftspeople

Basketmaker

Andrew Barnett (Vol 11 issue 1) was a friend of the family in the 1960s, says **Irene Clegg** from The Homend, Ledbury. "While I was expecting my daughter Becky in 1963 he made a basket which was for her early cradle and is still being used around the house today. I believe he had made a basket for the Queen."

Stonemason

William Rumsey was a monumental sculptor and stonemason. Born in 1859, the second son of Charles and Mary Rumsey who lived at 14 Whitefriars in Hereford, he is remembered by his grandson, William Rumsey.

"In his travels as a journeyman he worked on the construction of Cardiff docks and the ornamental stonework of Hereford's Town Hall. Some of his work can be seen on the gravestones in the older part of Hereford cemetery.

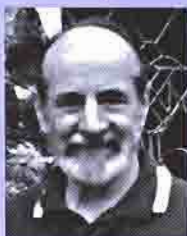
"His younger brother, Alfred, also apprenticed to the stonemason's trade, became instead a picture framer and mount cutter, setting up the business which still bears his name in Church Street, Hereford."

Tinsmith

At 14 I was apprenticed to Harding Bros (now McDonalds in Commercial Street), writes Derek Adams from Grafton.

For the first twelve months I was an errand boy on a bicycle, taking customers' purchases and paraffin deliveries.

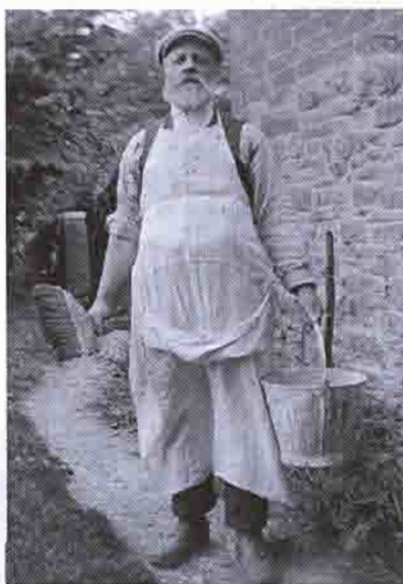
At 15 I became apprentice tinsmith, making buckets, colanders, hop-pickers' kettles and billy cans. There were two tin-shops, one in Berrington Street and the other in the cellar at Hardings.



Apprenticed Tinsmith, Derek Adams.

I also made stove pipes, front door canopies, anything in sheet metal, plus assisting, when required with the lock smith, foundry and plumbing.

And the pay? I had a four year apprenticeship earning in the first year 2/6 (12.5 pence) per week, 5/- (25p) in the second year and 7/6 (37.5 pence) for years three and four.



Arthur Burnett

Arthur Burnett, born in 1849, lived at Woolf Cottage, Lower Eggleton and worked as a painter, decorator and glazier in Bromyard. Seen here with his lime wash brush and bucket, Arthur would walk to work in Bromyard every day. His grandson, John Bunn of Checkley, loaned the picture.

Carpenters at work in Hereford (below). Entitled F. Dredge, wood carver, Hereford it shows very clearly the near completion of what looks like church stalls.

(Photo: John Bunn)



Butcher

Jack Tillam, seen outside his butcher's shop, could prepare a good cut of best Herefordshire beef.

Dorothy Tillam sent us the picture. But who knows where the shop used to stand?

Have you any memories or pictures of former County Crafts people? You can send them to:

Herefordshire Lore,
Pool Farm,
Belmont Road,
Hereford HR2 7JZ

Eye Witness

Memories of Munitions

As Britain edges into war, more than thirty Hereford women and men have recalled their role in making munitions in the last two world wars. Royal Ordnance Factory, Rotherwas was the only munitions factory open when hostilities with Germany began in 1939. "I have lived in the Fireman's Quarters since 1939 when I was five.

My father was a fireman at Rotherwas and attended the explosion and the bombing of the factory - we spent many nights in the shelter during the war. The glass in the Quarters was broken during the explosion, but that's all the damage that was done to our homes as they were built for bomb blasts," writes **Margaret Hornsley**.

Joan Weaver writes from Sheffield to say her father, despite being nearly 70 and in poor health, would cycle daily to Dilwyn Post Office to catch the 7.00 a.m. workers' bus to ROF Rotherwas. "He liked to think he was doing his bit if only by stencilling on the boxes the type of contents they contained. I believe the bus went as far as Kington to collect workers."

At 100 **Annie Slade's** memory is still sharp. "When I was in munitions work I was on the powder. I worked in the mills where the powder was. You had to put TNT and AN in and there was a big board on the wall and you 'ud to put down the time you put that powder in. And then you had to put the time when it had to come out. 'Cause if it was over that it would blow the place to pieces.

"And at night we'd go to the canteen and have a couple of bottles of milk. We got to drink a lot of milk because of the powder. We had to wear masks on our face. My hair went all green because of the powder! When we used to go to the canteen at night and all these Lancashire girls, they'd be step dancing on the tables and we'd be playing (on) the tin plates. You know? They used to wear clogs. And they'd be on tables clog dancing, ha! I say it was dangerous work but we had fun".



What ever happened to Buster? muses regular contributor **Dorothy Tillam** who with her late husband Gerry used to run the Royal George in Widemarsh Street, Hereford, seen here in 1956.

"He was a really good friend to me at The George - and he had Buster tattooed on the inside of his bottom lip.

"That's Dorothy, fourth from the left with her father Bert Kwett, first on the left and stepmother Peggy fifth from the left".

Join Us In July

A book based on the memories of the war work by Herefordshire women - and men - will be launched at The Courtyard, Hereford in early July. And we want YOU to be there! If you would like to come to the launch, write to us at Herefordshire Lore, Pool Farm, Belmont Road, Hereford HR2 7JZ. Check out Herefordshire Lore's web site: www.herefordshirelore.org.uk

This project, called Eye Witness, is funded by the Countryside Agency and Nationwide's Local Heritage Initiative, and is based at: Pool Farm, Belmont Road, Hereford HR2 7JZ 01432 268806,

E-mail: mail@herefordshirelore.org.uk

Snippets

Important Notice

Around 20 of our 500 subscribers have not received their copy of Age To Age, despite paying their subscription. Most problems occurred in October 2002 when we transferred our subscription list on to computer. Do you know of anyone who has not received Age To Age? Please let us know and we will renew your subscription for free until 2004. Meanwhile, subscriptions will be rising to £10 a year from the June issue. So guarantee yourself a copy and fill out the form on the back page now!

Moved Away

"I enjoy your Age To Age." I was born and bred in Hereford, but left to go the teacher training college and unfortunately I never returned - but I visit the glorious city as often as I can," writes **Mrs L.E. Hickinbotham** from Rugby. And **Dulcie Powell** left in 1941 to join the W.A.A.F and has lived

in Norwich since 1946.

"I still like to think of Hereford as the place I grew up."

Jumping Generations

Do you have a sense of humour? Would you like to share a lifetime of skills with a new generation? Young children today don't always have the opportunity to talk to older people and may not know much about things that have shaped all our lives. Age Concern's Jumping Generations project aims to redress the balance by bringing the two generations together at playgroups, after school clubs and day

nurseries. They are running training courses for people over 50. Give **Avril Hill** a call on 01432 261681

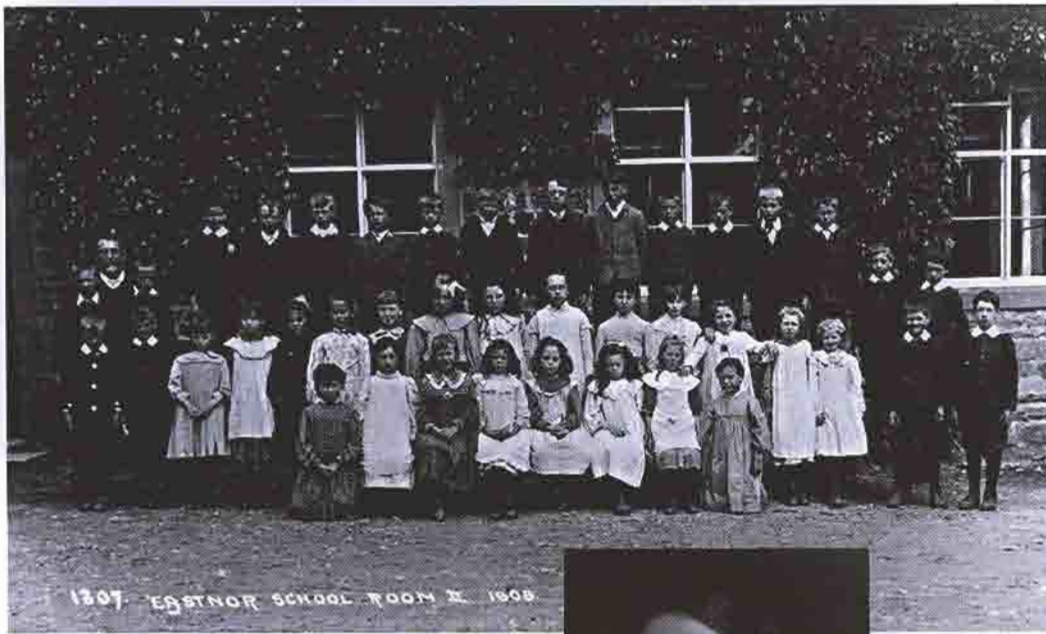
Food for Thought

How do I know my youth is all spent?
Well, my get up and go has got up and went.
But in spite of it all I am able to grin
When I think of where my get up has been...
Thanks to new committee member **Rosemary Lillico**.

Court History

"I know that the old magistrates court was once a city prison and a police station, but I would like to find out more about the building's history," writes **Benjamin Pardoe** from Bartrestree. Drop us a line at Herefordshire Lore if you can help.





This is my class, a few children were away from school the day it was taken. The girls with short hair are from Lady Henry Somerset's home. The schoolmaster is stood in the corner. I like him and his wife very much indeed. Edie came back with me last Sat. & stayed the night, she went back on Sunday night. When she wrote to you, did she tell you about the fire at Homend. The stables were burned down. Mrs Trafford was buried yesterday.

My Class

So writes school teacher **Elizabeth Mary Burnett** on the back of this card (above) to a friend in 1908. Elizabeth (right) taught at Eastnor School. She was born, and lived all her life, at Eggleton.

Any suggestion of the prim school mistress is dispelled by her nephew's recollections. **John Bunn** says she rode a motor cycle in the 1920s. This is Elizabeth on her motorbike CJ8851 (right)

Later she would drive John to school in her Austin 7, a journey fraught with difficulties as, John reports, "she had difficulty changing gear and could not reverse the car at all".



Land Girl

Myra Taylor now lives in Stretton Grandison near Ledbury, but she was a Yorkshire girl, sent to Hereford to be a land girl in the last war. "Your front page picture (Vol 11 issue 1) brought back memories," writes Myra. "I was sent direct to work for Captain and Mrs Hayter at Munsley. The farm was a lonely spot near the overgrown Gloucester to Hereford canal. I had a magazine monthly from the office at Hereford (Offa

Street) and I entered a competition, an essay 'My experiences as a land girl in Herefordshire.' I won 2nd prize of £3 of books which were very cheap then. There were several, all beautifully inscribed: 'Presented by the Herefordshire War Agricultural Executive Committee, George H. Bray, Chairman'.

"I stayed in the county and married a returning soldier in 1947 and had 52 happy years marriage in this lovely village. Sadly Jim passed away, but his work is all around at our church and in many of the old cottages he renovated and gave new life to. He was a carpenter and builder by trade."

Friends of Age To Age

Thanks to all those organisations that have made a donation or taken out a group subscription to Age To Age. A Group subscription will bring your residential home, day centre, nursing home, group or club 12 copies each issue for only £25.00 a year

- TUPSLEY TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD
- ST JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH LUNCHEON CLUB
- HEREFORD BAPTIST CHURCH WEDNESDAY CLUB
- RAIL REUNION ASSOCIATION
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Fill in your details below (or send them on a piece of paper) together with a cheque or postal order made payable to Herefordshire Lore to: Herefordshire Lore, Pool Farm, Belmont Road, Hereford HR2 7JT. E-mail:- mail@herefordshirelore.org.uk

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