

AVAILABLE ON TAPE

# AGE TO AGE

*Hereford Lore Reminiscence Newsletter*

Vol. 4 Issue 1 January 1996

Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS



## Bikes in the Pond

*Elizabeth Godsell (left) and Ada Wright are photographed with their bicycles near Ross Road in 1943. But what are the buildings behind? And why did their bikes end up in a pond? Turn to page 3 and read about the Redhill Hostel.*

## Happy New Year

And so we look forward to 1996. They say once you reach the age of 21 time flies. Maybe there is some truth in the saying. Well when you reach the age of 65, or 88, there still is so much to be achieved, especially as members of Hereford Lore realise.

1995 has been a very busy and eventful year. We have visited many people to note their valid memories. The feedback has been tremendous. Please keep your stories and photographs coming in, and if you belong to a group and have not yet received a visit from members of Hereford Lore, get your bookings in early for 1996.

We do hope that 1996 will be a healthy, happy and peaceful year.

*Roy Kennett, Chairman.*



## Old Boys

John Hancock of Tupsley loaned us this picture of a Lord Scudamore Boys' School Reunion held in the 1940s to celebrate the retirement of Andy Allison. There are two names missing from the back row - perhaps you can fill them in?

Back row: left to right: Mr Newcombe, Ashley Evans, Les Savoury, Bert Hemmington, Philip Hancock, Clive Grimmer, Charles Clarke; middle row: Mr Broome, Nelson Norris, Dennis Bevan, Roy Lewis, Doug Mytton, Herbert Powell, Roy Pearce, John Hancock, Eddy Rumsey; front row: Mr Beaze, Vic Rumsey, Chris Ruffe, George Powell, Mr Allison, Vic Haines, John Gooding, John Philipps and headmaster Mr Chandler.

Our next issue of Age to Age will be out in March. 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, Tom Woolaway, Bill Morris and Bill Laws. Thanks to The Rural Media Company and Natalia Silver.

We are grateful for the support of:



Charity Projects UK





**A swimming new year? Why not attend one of the special sessions for older people at the Hereford Leisure pool? Concessionary rates apply for an hour on Tuesdays (10 o'clock start) and Fridays (9.00 a.m.). And there is the new LIFT scheme (Lifestyle Improvement for Today) to help you get fitter whatever your age. For details of LIFT, contact your local doctor. And for swimming details, you can call the pool at (01432) 272512. Our picture from the Hereford Times shows swimmer Chris Ruffe, centre, who has taught over 600 people to swim.**

### Who Was Edith Erskine?

Who was Edith Erskine, asks Nan Payne from Dinedor? "When I was visiting Oakhurst Cottage at Hambledon in Surrey owned by the National Trust, I was surprised to see a sampler from Hereford, hanging on the wall. It was beautifully worked and carried the usual design of the alphabet in upper and lower case and the name Edith Erskine, aged 10 of St John Baptist School Hereford, September 1892. Additionally Edith had stitched the words "What is Home Without A Mother" and "God is Love." Does any reader know who she was? And how her sampler could have found its way to a remote cottage in Surrey?"

### The Black Fusilier

A poignant memory of race relations comes from Alf Evans recalling his younger days at the Wye Hotel, now the Wye Inn at Bullingham

"The main bar was packed with Royal Welch Fusiliers. They were getting very noisy, but owing to the blackout and tobacco smoke, you could not see across the room. Suddenly a man started crying and out of the smoke walked a black soldier tears running down his cheeks. He came up to me at the bar, rolled up his tunic sleeve, pulled out his bayonet and slit his forearm from elbow to wrist. 'Boss, he cried out, 'tell them that my blood is red not black! His mates had teased him so much that he had broken down completely."

### The Road Mender

Alf Evans also recalls a road mender in the early 1920s.

"There was always a bit of excitement when a Foden steam waggon would drop off tons of granite type stone, on a piece of ground opposite the Wye Hotel. Later a small, wiry man, badly crippled, would arrive with shovel, two Godsell Brown sacks and his knapping hammer to sort the stone. The knapping hammer had an egg shaped head and a three or four foot ash handle. It was a skilled job. The little man would knap away for weeks, carefully

selecting the stone and striking it with the grain while sitting on his Godsell Brown sack. If it rained, he would put the second one over his shoulders, tied on with a piece of baler twine.

Gradually he reduced the pile of stone, graded to size. Much to my mother's annoyance, because it interfered with the cleaner's work, he would come into the Wye for his breakfast pint of cider (3d) at 8.00 every morning, bringing his large red handkerchief containing bread and cheese. He smoked a clay pipe and a twist of tobacco and had a horrible temper. He was reputed to have learned his art in Dartmoor

"Speaking of clay pipes, we used to sell them from the Wye. They came, packed in sawdust, in seven inch square boxes made of white wood nailed together with panel pins and we sold them straight from the box. At one time it was thought that they could cause cancer of the lip so the mouthpieces were painted with a kind of green coloured lacquer"

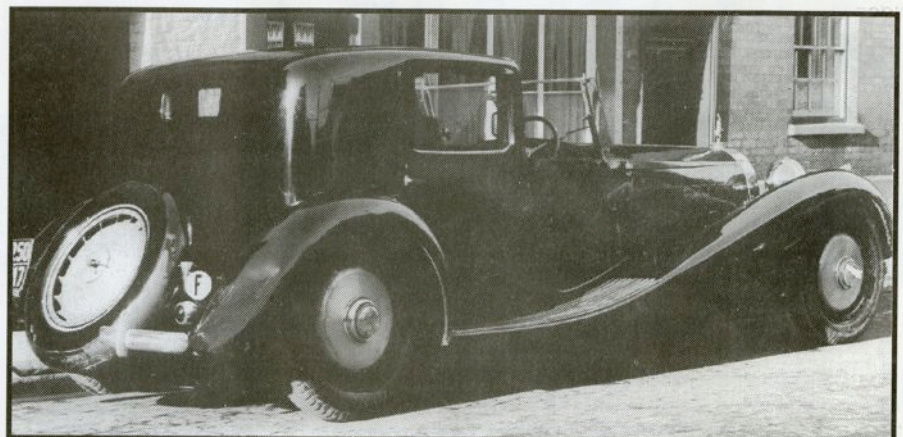
### Into Print

One of our regular readers, Hereford born George Whitcomb has just completed his autobiography mainly dealing with his police experiences at home and abroad, entitled Bullet, Rope, Guillotine.

Meanwhile Mr Norman Owen and his wife Jean have compiled Dates And Events, a publication detailing events down the centuries at Holy Trinity Church. With text drawn from various sources including old parish records, they have managed to find illustrations of all the past vicars who served the church. The book costs £5.00 and profits are going towards the cost of improving the west end of the church. Copies are available from the parish office. Ring them on (01432) 273086.

In our next issue we will be reviewing some other reminiscence books. If you know of any locally published books of this kind, do let us know at Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS

## Hidden In The Sewers



**This rare, hand built Bugatti Royale, reputed to have been only one of six made by Ettore Bugatti, was photographed in Leominster around the 1950s by Basil Butcher. It was rumoured to have survived the German occupation of France hidden in a Parisian sewer before a Captain Henry of Leominster acquired the car. Jim Thomas thinks it was sold on to an American and then brought back to Britain. And for the technically minded, Jim tells us it had 26 inch wheels, an 8 cylinder engine and gave a not very generous eight miles to the gallon!**



## Redhill Hostel

It was a cross between a barracks and Butlins writes John Hunt. Redhill Hostel (now demolished) on the Ross Road was home to thousands of war workers, Land army Women's Timber Corps construction workers and transport drivers ferrying essential supplies to the ports before and after D-Day.

Built by the Ministry of Supply in 1941 it was managed by the Holiday Fellowship Ltd and could accommodate nearly 2,000 residents although numbers averaged 1,250 at any one time.

About 120 staff were employed mostly as bedroom stewards, chamber maids in the twenty single storey sleeping blocks (seen behind in the picture on our front page) and as dining room staff. Two vast dining halls could each cater for 500 at one sitting. Other facilities included a large concert theatre, dance hall, residents lounge, sick bay and chapel.

Mrs Elizabeth Godsell of Woolhope (top right with some of her fellow shift

workers) remembers working nine hour shifts in the dining hall. "Early shift one week, late shift the next. It was very hard work and we retired to our hard little bunks and fell fast asleep." All staff worked a seven day week, the eighth being a rest-day with a weekend off every six weeks.

The picture on the front shows the boiler house chimney part of the central heating and hot water system. To the right are the sleeping blocks and in the far distance the concert hall with its 'fly tower' for stage scenery. Many Herefordians will remember the plays that came down from London with West End stars like John Clements, Google Withers, Sybil Thorndike and Sonia Dresdel.

### Stolen Bikes

And the bikes? "All the RAF lads from Madley used to come to the dances and steal bicycles to get back to the camp. They had many of my cousins and another girl's. After the camp closed in a pond somewhere near they found dozens of rusty bicycles!" reports Mrs Godsell.

Although Redhill was only one of many large hostels built for war workers, it was regarded as a showpiece and excellently run by the Holiday Fellowship which had operated country guest houses before the war. Most were requisitioned at the outbreak of war and the Fellowship had a surplus of trained catering staff who were drafted into war service. Together with the locally engaged staff they brought a friendly happy atmosphere to a site which could have been bleakly institutional.

### Questions Answered

Herefordshire DIAL was established 11 years ago when Wendy Francis, a senior physiotherapist, felt that people with declining health and capabilities needed a one-stop enquiry office.

DIAL is based at 15 St Owen Street and is open Monday to Friday from 10.00 to 4.00, but they can arrange home visits too. They can give impartial, confidential advice on anything from welfare benefits to travel and special equipment to support groups. Their phone number is (01432) 277770.

## Snippets

### Blue Fishmonger

Mrs Peeble of Eign Road has vivid memories of Richard Jennings who died in 1934. Six foot seven inches tall, he was a colourful character who owned a fish monger and fruit shop in Blue School Street. He enjoyed a drink and drove around town in a trap pulled by a horse called Polly. And to persuade Herefordians to vote Conservative he painted everything blue.

### Cotterell Street refugees

Kathleen Colley lived in Cotterell Street during the early part of the first world war. She was very young, but remembers refugees from Belgium coming to Hereford. They lived in a tall house facing Clifford Street and Kathleen used to say "Bonjour" to them, without knowing what it meant. At the same time she recalls musicians, probably also refugees, who used to play on the corner of Cotterell Street and Whitehorse Street.

### Elephants never forget

Elephants are said to have exceptional memories, but what about Herefordians? Does anyone recall the elephant which paraded through Hereford in about 1912 and was rumoured to have died and been buried in a corner of Merton Meadow?

### Geo. Mason's Christmas

Many faces were recognised in the photograph of George Mason's 1965 Christmas party held at Three Counties Hotel, Aylestone Hill and published in our last issue. Among them are Margaret Newman, Ann, Marie, Carol, Bobbie, Maurice, Margaret, Roger Jones, Patricia Bursell, Pat, Pat Littlewood, Peter, Carol Wyndamere, Bill Fleetwood, Roger Jones, Malcolm, Tony Bigglestone, Gertie Bevan, Frankie, Mary Cuthbertson, Eric Blundon, Harold Webb, Betty Price, Jean Westmorland, Jake Skyrme and Michael.

### Deep Loss

Our thoughts this month are with Tom following the death of his wife, Vi Woolaway, late last year. Her indomitable spirit and passionate interest in Hereford and its people made Vi one of the key members of our editorial group. She is sadly missed.



Mrs Pitt of Groby, Leicestershire loaned us this picture of the local government cricket team who played in the Evening League at Widemarsh Common in 1946. Mr E.W.Pitt stands in the middle of the back line with Bruce Rutherford (first left, back row) and Brian Cutler, (2nd right, back row). Are there any faces here you recognise? Write to us at Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS.

## Pigs, Cats and Cabbages - Hereford's Old Lane Names

In 1855, writes Councillor John Newman, a committee was appointed to rename lanes and streets in and around the city. All lanes became streets (and for some time people with the surname Lane were humorously addressed as Street). Sadly some lovely old names were lost, but High Town was allowed to retain its name for geographical reasons.

Bye Street became Commercial Street, Bye Road, now a suburb, became Commercial Road. Others changed like this: Cat's Lane Catherine Street; Canal Wharf Moor Street; Albert Lane (was this named after Prince Albert?) Conningsby Street; Blue School Lane became Blue School Street; Cabbage Lane lost some character when it became Church Street; Pipe Lane Gwynne Street; Pig Market Aubrey Street. A new street from Commercial Road to St Owens Street was called Bath Street and St Nicholas Square became St Nicholas Street. These are just a few of the changes. I think we should put the old name along side the present street sign since they are part of our history and should not be lost. What do you think?

## FRIENDS OF AGE TO AGE

### Freestyle Graphics

Croydon House, 5 Eign Road, Hereford HR1 2RY  
Tel: (01432) 343188 Fax: 01432 358513

### The Good Old Days

Chandos House, 42 St. Owens Street, Hereford. HR1 2PR  
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### Abbotsfield Funeral Directors

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## GENTLE EXERCISE CLASS

STARTING AFRESH IN JANUARY THE GENTLE EXERCISE CLASS IS FOR PEOPLE OVER 60'S TO HAVE CREATIVE FUN.  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT NATALIA SILVER ON 01432 364652.

## NOTICEBOARD

### CLASSICAL CONCERT

An evening of Beethoven, Rachmaninov and Brahms at Hereford Town Hall on Thursday 25 January 1995.

Tickets £7.00

### The Collective Exhibition

An exhibition by Herefordshire Artists at Hereford Cathedral from 9 January 1996

## FINE ARTS BRASS ENSEMBLE

As part of their national tour the ensemble come to Hereford on Thursday 22 February, at the Shirehall, Hereford. Tickets £8.00