

Age To Age

Hereford Lore Reminiscence Newsletter

Also available on tape

Vol 6 Issue 2

Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS

April 1998



Still going strongHereford Amateur Operatic Society took to the boards with a performance of The Gondoliers in 1923. (See Inside: A Century Of Song) Photograph loaned by Basil Butcher.

May Fair Memories

Once again we must express our gratitude to those whose contributions made this issue of Age To Age possible.

Before our next issue goes to print in June, the May Fair will have invaded our streets again. Many of you must have memories, some exciting, some amusing and perhaps frightening, of the May Fair years ago. Put these memories on paper and send them to us at the address above.

Bill Morris

(See St Ethelbert's Fair Back Page)

Tales From The Riverbank

Richard Shaw from Dunstable has sent in a mine of information from his reminiscences, 'Sparks From My Pen'. Among them are his memories of saving the 2d ferry toll to cross the Wye when, in February 1928, he and his mother could walk across the river 'frozen over like a Dutch canal.

Another day, he recalled, a crowd gathered on the old Wye bridge. 'They were pointing at something near the bank, 50 yards upstream. My mother lifted me up and there, apparently heedless of all the spectators, I saw my first and only otter.' And like many readers he recalls Jordan's boat house. Mr Jordan, like his father before him, hired out boats by the hour or day. Unfortunately his customers had little knowledge of the various hazards, the rocks and sandbanks. So, at the end of the day, poor Mr Jordan would have to search for some boat which had failed to return and recover the wreck from wherever it had been abandoned.

Age To Age is published bi-monthly by Hereford Lore, a group of people working to collect and remember our past. Our editorial team, Edith Gammage, Roy Kennett, Bill Morris, Vi Thomas, Jim Thomas, Tom Woolaway and Bill Laws, depend on grants, donations and book sales to keep going.

Age To Age is available free from the Town Hall, City Library, Belmont Library, Tourist Information Centre, Age Concern and Garrick House reception. But you can ensure your copy by taking out a £3 a year subscription from Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS. Next issue will be published in June 1998.

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A Century of Song

Hereford Amateur Operatic Society was founded in 1898 when a group of enthusiasts led by Mr George Banks and supported by Mr FT Carver and Mr A.E. Capel among others, were so keen on the Savoy Operas, they decided to stage their own public performance of 'The Sorcerer'

These first performances were put on at the Drill Hall, Friar Street, with a piano instead of an orchestra and basic lighting from one, Percy C Hull, on an acetylene lamp. (This was the young man who would one day receive a knighthood and serve as organist and choir master at the cathedral).

By the early 1900s, under the presidency of Sir John Cotterell, the Society was already a success. There was a full orchestra and week long performances at the Kemble Theatre in Broad Street which carried

on, apart from war-time interruptions, until the Kemble was pulled down in 1962. (There was one war-time charity performance in 1915 for the Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Brigade, a fund-raising tradition still carried on by the Society today).

When the Kemble came down, the Society turned to the County (or Palladium) Theatre in Berrington Street and then, as the new American style musicals began to be performed, they moved to the Garrison Theatre at Bradbury Lines. In the 1970s the

Society moved again, first to Belmont Abbey and eventually to the Nell Gwynne theatre.

It was around this time that the Society established its own rehearsal space and an energetic youth group who continue to meet regularly and stage their own productions. The Society itself mounts two full scale productions a year and a number of concerts which benefit local charities like our own Age To Age.

Interested in amateur operatics? Find out more about the Society from the secretary, A.G. Powell on 01432 820601



Smiling like professionals, members of the Hereford Amateur Operatic Society in 1962. (Photo: The Hereford Times)

Snippets

The Good Samaritan

Ray Williams' fine picture of the skin yard in our last issue reminded Connie Morgan (nee Beavan) from Putson of the day, more than 50 years ago, when she was knocked over as she walked past the yard. She screamed loudly because she had hurt her ear and a man, working at the yard, ran out and picked her up.

The Bassom

Taking an early morning swim before work is a popular past-time at the city baths.

However, when she saw Ray William's picture of the Bassom in our last issue, Margo Edwards recalled her regular river swims in the 1920s. Now in her eighties and living with her daughter in Exmouth, Margo used to swim every morning at 7.00 a.m. with her Auntie Glad and friends before they started work at the laundry in Rockfield Road.

Margo also remembered the Station Fruit Stores and the Mrs Twyning who ran it. Mrs Twyning had a daughter the same age as Margo.

After school at All Saints and the Blue Coat, Margo was apprenticed to the tailoring trade at Ravines, a gentlemen's outfitters in Commercial Street, before she married at All Saints and moved to Ryeland Street. Her father-in-law, Billy Edwards, who worked at the skin yard before joining the electricity company was a keen footballer who could have played for the Thistles. Margo also remembered the

Reverend Snell, his wife Gwen and their son, John Blashford Snell (author of several memorable pieces for Age To Age). 'I was a frequent visitor to their home and they gave me advice on baby-care,' writes Margo.

After The Somme

A touching tale of a Red Cross nurse and a survivor of the Somme comes from Mrs Maud Andrews. Her father, William Owen, born in 1880 was brought up in the Boys' Home in Bath Street. When he joined the 17th Welsh Regiment and was sent to the Front in France, he was wounded at the Somme during the Hill 60 battle.

Mrs Diamond, a Red Cross nurse and a member of the family who owned the Hereford Times, took him under her wing when he returned to Hereford. He went to live at her home in Eign Hill, where Mrs Diamond nursed him until his death at the age of 38 in 1918. William's brother, Albert, also served in the army and was taken prisoner-of-war

The Complete Picture

John Barnett writes from Weston Beggard to say that Aubrey Roberts, an engine driver with the old Great Western Railway, was one of the names missing from the picture of the Rifle Club, published in our last issue and another reader discovered Maurice James Crisall as the other unnamed rifleman.



Pumping History

We have stirred up a lively debate about exactly where Hereford's first petrol pumps stood. In our last issue we suggested Marriott's Garage in St. Owen's Street.

Not so, thinks Basil Butcher from Tupsley.

'Do you mean the first pump on the street?' he asks. 'James Fryer Ltd. had a Bowser petrol pump just inside the entrance to the Green Dragon garage in Aubrey Street in 1910. The tank was below the ground (as far as I know, it still is) and the petrol was pumped by a semi rotary pump into a tank about ten feet up with a sight tube marked in gallons and then released by gravity into the car's tank.'

'Fryer's large garage in Widemarsh Street was opened in 1921 with three pumps on the forecourt and Max Marriott has a photograph of a stack of petrol tins just unloaded into the street when his father had the premises in St Owen's Street, where the Oxfam Shop is now. I believe the first pump on the street was installed by Whales & Edwards of Shrewsbury. Mr Perry had petrol pumps at his premises in King Street, two 250 gallon tanks in the cellar, and living over the top! This was prohibited after a similar set up in Bristol exploded.'

Jim Went of Hunderton also recalled the Perry's pump in King Street, on the corner of Aubrey Street. Surely, he thinks, that was the first?

Meanwhile, his wife Madeleine wants to know which regiment with a goose as a mascot was stationed at the Cattle Market in the Second World War 'It stood as sentry at the cattle market gates, opposite the abattoir at the time. I remember trying to stroke it as a school girl and it attacked me.'



Hereford's new one-way system may not be universally popular, but what about these measures taken to improve the flow of traffic in the 1960's? They were photographed by the late Roger Staunton. Now who can tell us where they were? Drop us a line at Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS.



Then And Now

There have been numerous books published in recent years of photographs of Hereford in the past, but Derek Foxton's 'Hereford Then And Now' (Volume 3) shows that the subject is far from exhausted, writes Bill Morris. This is a fascinating collection, including the only known photograph of the Market Hall, above, taken in 1855. Comparing the old photographs of buildings, streets and views with their modern counterparts in the book is a very interesting exercise in which the new is not always superior to the old. This excellent book is on sale in city bookshops.

Noticeboard

Hereford Amateur
Operatic Society

Memory Lane

1st - 6th June 1998
7.30

Club Room
Whitecross Road
Hereford

Herefordshire's
Community play
THE VISITOR

Shire Hall
2nd - 11th April 7.30
4th April 2.30
Tickets £6/£3 (con)
Family ticket (4) £15
Disabled access by
arrangement
BOX OFFICE
01432 359252

Macmillan Cancer
Relief

Herefordshire
Symphonic Wind
Band

INAUGURAL CONCERT

in support of
**MACMILLAN CANCER
RELIEF**
Royal National College
for The Blind
Saturday 4th April 7.30
All tickets £6
available from
Outback, Church
Street, Hereford
Telephone Bookings
01432 880700
At the door if available



'Ivy Lewis, 1938' is the mysterious inscription on the back of this photograph, loaned by Mrs Boucher from Merestone Road. Who was Ivy? And where is she selling her ices? Let us know at Age To Age, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS

St Ethelbert's Fair

Hereford's St Ethelbert's Fair, granted to the Bishop of Hereford Richard-De-Capella in 1121, is one of the oldest in the kingdom, writes councillor John Newman. Now a three day event held on the first Tuesday after the first Sunday in May, the fair was once nine days of merriment and money-making.

In Oliver Cromwell's time, the Bishop's rights were sold to Col. John Birch, the officer who captured the City for parliament, but when the bishops were restored by Charles 11, the rights of the St Ethelbert's Fair returned to the Bishop, most likely Dr Herbert Croft.

The early fairs, which were trade and hiring fairs, represented a nice little income for the Bishop. The Bishop's men who collected the tolls came from the Bishop's side of the city, the Port, and were often involved in fights with the citizens from the Bailiff's (and later the Mayor's) side of the city. Eventually all weapons were barred from the City for the

duration of the Fair. If you listen to the words of the opening civic ceremony you will still hear the proclamation banning weapons from the Fair.

In 1838, the see was sold to the Corporation, the City Council, and the Bishop's rent was commuted to twelve and a half bushels of best wheat. It is still ceremoniously handed over to the Bishop at the opening ceremony traditionally attended by dignitaries including the Mayor, the chairman of the Markets Committee, the Town Clerk and the chairman of the South Wales Showmen's Guild.

And what of St Ethelbert? He was the unfortunate King of East Anglia, apparently murdered by King Offa at Offa's Palace, to the north of Hereford in 792. After reports of miracles at his Marden grave, Ethelbert's remains were moved to Hereford where he was made the cathedral's patron saint.

Friends of Age To Age

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