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Hereford Lore Reminiscence Newsletter

Age to Age

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In a typical pose (pipe clenched tight between his teeth) the author, J.B. Priestley, reads through the script of Hereford greengrocer Sid Wright's Shop Talks. They were photographed by Picture Post at Broxwood Court, Herefordshire which Mrs Priestley converted to a hostel for blitz victims in the last war. Right: Sid Wright's Original Fruit Bazaar in Eign Street with the Home & Colonial Stores on the left and saddlers on the right. Both pictures were loaned by Michael Young of Rugby. (See also Orchestrated Sales on page 2).



Happy 2000!

The celebrations of Christmas and the Millennium have come and gone with conflicting views over whether the new Millennium should have started in January 2000 or January 2001, but there has been no difference of opinion in the committee of Age To Age in wishing you all a happy and healthy Year 2000 and in thanking you again for your contributions to our new letter

We look forward to your contributions to our April issue. Perhaps some of you might like to write about the most significant happenings to you in the last Millennium.

Bill Morris

Patch's Criminal Conviction

In our last issue **Bob Birch** recalled the honorary member of the ABC Minors' Club in the 1950s, Patch the dog. The ABC Minors met every Saturday morning at the Ritz cinema in Commercial Road and Patch was presented with an ABC

Minors Club badge to wear on his collar. Now **Claud** and **Dorothy Morgan** from Tupsley have written in with some revelations about Patch's past. "He was a member of our family for 13 years and a great pet," they say. "He loved children and

spent most days outside St Owens School usually coming home for food and sleep." But Patch had one failing: he hated uniformed men on bikes. One day Patch made the fateful mistake of nipping a policeman. He earned a criminal record - and a fine of ten shillings.

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, Kit Gundy, Vera Kelly 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 is posted to you, by taking out a £3 a year subscription from Hereford Lore, 26 Quarry Road, Hereford HR1 1SS. Next issue will be published in April 2000.



Fire!

When Holy Trinity church caught fire in the 1950s, Fireman **A.J.Thomas** recalls how he was quickly on the scene.

"We were in Whitecross in minutes and, as we passed Ryeland Street, we were entering a white haze just like a fog. I knew we had something serious, but the crew were young, ex-servicemen, keen and afraid of nothing. We pulled into the forecourt of adjacent premises. A quick 'recee' across the churchyard revealed flames six feet out of the vestry window. Firemen Bill Bould and Dave Thomas got a hose line to work at the vestry end and Fireman Harry Evans and myself took another line thro' the front door. On our stomachs, we worked our way down the aisle. It was hot and smoky.

We could see the flames approaching the organ. We hit them hard. It produced clouds of vapour that filled the church.

In 20 minutes it was over. By now senior officers including the Chief Officer were there and more machines. So too was the vicar, the Reverend Snell. I could see the Chief was pleased - Rev. Snell was also a councillor and he could show him the rate payers were getting good value for their money from the comparatively new Herefordshire Fire Brigade (previously the NFS).

On the way back we were cock-a-hoop. We knew it was our crew who had been at the cutting edge that day and it would be something to talk about on the Station for days to come.

What about the church? Well, the Rev. Snell could still preach on Sunday and the congregation could still sing to their organ. In twelve months the church looked sparkling again.

For the crew, well, there was something in that 'holy smoke.' Fireman Jim Harris was to become a Divisional Officer in Clwyd and Flint; Fireman Dave Thomas became Station Officer at Hereford and Fireman Bill Bound was a Sub Officer there too. Fireman Harry Evans was to be an Industrial Fire Chief at Rotherwas and I ended up Deputy Fire Chief (Divisional Officer) in Pembrokeshire.

Most of us of that era will have hung up our tunics for more than 20 years"

I hope they'll have many more to come.

Millennial M



Orchestrated Sales

Many people think about committing their rich reminiscences to paper, but few of us succeed. However, **Donald Austins**, born in Hereford in 1916, did just that and has published the result under the title "Childhood and Others Memories of a Herefordian". Here he recalls the Wright family, in particular Sid Wright, pictured on our front page.

"Sid and Bill Wright at one time owned a jam factory in Widemarsh Street. I remember when Sid opened his Bazaar in Eign Street, devoted entirely to fruit and vegetables. For the first week or so he had an orchestra playing on a raised floor above the shop. The place was crowded and I think he did an excellent trade. For years the local papers carried a weekly advertisement, something like Sid Wright's Diary, which contained small snippets of information. The very last paragraph would advertise the produce on sale in his shop, together with the prices, a clever ploy."



The Reverend Snell's son is the British explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell, pictured here with members of the Mongolia Amarsanaa Expedition on White Table Mountain in Mongolia. One of our regular readers, John Blashford-Snell returns to Hereford this June to lecture for Riding For The Disabled.

"Merrie England"

Merrie England" by Edward German (see Noticeboard, back page) is a very suitable choice for the Hereford Gilbert and Sullivan Operatic Society to start the new millennium. It was previously performed by the Society in 1951 and then in 1969.

It's interesting to note that Holy Trinity Operatic Society performed "Merrie England" in October 1937 before the outbreak of the war. After the war, in 1947, the Society was renamed Hereford Gilbert and Sullivan Operatic Society. The first performance was "The Gondoliers" in 1948.

Betty Reinold (nee Southall) conversed with Roy Kennett recently about the production by Holy Trinity Operatic Society in 1937. Betty remembers the cast and presentation very well - Sid Roberts was one name that came to mind. Percy Arrowsmith was a founder member of the H G & S Society. Were you involved in this production? Please let us know at Age To Age.

Madness? Snippets



NO! it's Christmas 1951 and workers at Rotherwas celebrate in style. Mrs Jancy who loaned us the picture tells us the work place began life as an ammunition factory before becoming Sankeys, A.E.I, Smart and Brown and finally Thorn Lighting. And well done the eagle-eyed reader who spotted the mistake on the caption below the picture of Marks & Sparks Christmas Party - it was 1952, not 1932.

The Married Misses

Nancy Miller from Bridstow, who loaned us the photograph of Hereford High School staff, pictured in our last issue writes: "I'm glad the photograph was of interest, but before anyone else comments on your caption 'Not a Mrs among them' can I set the record straight? At least 3 of the staff did marry Miss Major became Mrs Cunningham and after she died, her husband married Miss Stokes. Miss Bellamy married Mr E.R.Wood from the Boy's School and was well known in Hereford for plays she wrote for amateur dramatics."

Warren Family

Marion Stevens from Blandford, Dorset, is trying to find out about her parents Frank and Rose Warrens family from Arran Avenue, Hereford. "My father has died, but my mum is 91 My father's sister, Dot Lewis, used to work at Whites in "Commercial Road," she writes. If anyone can help, drop us a line at Age To Age

Temperance Hotel

Sheila Thomas' paternal grandparents owned a boarding house in Commercial Road in the 1930s called Thomas Temperance Hotel. And she wants to find out more about it. Sheila writes from Ruislip, Middlesex: "My father worked at Chave and Jackson after leaving Hereford High School for Boys. I am researching the family history and would be interested in any reminiscences."

Early Rugby

Derek Miles, for many years a leading figure in Hereford Rugby Club, has been given a metal plaque bearing the inscription "Herefordshire Rugby Football Club 1889. Does anyone have any information on the county team in those days? Let Derek know at 31 Quarry Road, Hereford (01432 277129).

An Old Newhouse?

Brian Skyrme sends us a strange request from Borth. "Does anyone know of the New House in Herefordshire which has its double at Newhouse near Redlynch, Wiltshire?", he asks. "The Wiltshire house was built around 1619, possibly to a design by John Thorpe, in a Y shape" When Brian and Betty's daughter, Lisa, was married at the Wiltshire Newhouse last year, Brian read that the only other similar Newhouse was somewhere in Herefordshire. Let us know if you can enlighten the family.

Local Lottery

Mrs H.A.Basford has sent us her draw ticket for the Bolstone Church Expenses Fund - from 1949. The ticket cost 3d and offered 16 different prizes including a dressed chicken donated by Mr.A.Ward, a fruit set from Mrs J.Grundy, a couple of rabbits from Mr B.Nichols, an irresistible Toni Hair Wave Set from Miss R.Williams and (forget those New Year resolutions) 40 cigarettes from Mr R Watkins. There were also cash prizes of 1 shilling (5 pence)



Kathleen Lawrence from Kings Acre has sent us some wonderful pictures over the years. This month we include two more from her photo album: a group posed beside an Austin 7 at Breinton Springs sometime in the 1930s and, below, grandma's birthday party at Allensmore around 1952 with Pat Griffiths, Jean Williams, her brother and Jane and children from the Turpin, Mussell, Palmer and Lawrence families.





Sporting Heroes

Is there anyone you recognise here? The Royal Army Medical Corp. team, pictured on the left, were photographed outside the Hereford Barracks around the time of the first World War. The second team, the Hereford Early Closers, were photographed the year before. The Early Closers took their name from the fact that most Hereford shops once closed on Thursday afternoons to give staff a much-needed break. The one familiar face is the father of Hereford Lore chairman Roy Kennett. Harry Kennett is on the front row, far right in both pictures.



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Ice And Otters

We often receive recollections which are too long for one issue, but are so good we keep coming back to them. Such are those from **C. Richard Shaw's "Early Days"**

"My earliest memory of the Wye was in February 1928 when the river froze over like a Dutch canal. Muffled against the bitter cold, Mother and I ventured down Hunderton ferry steps and on to the ice. As far as we could see downstream, people were sliding, skating or strolling about as if the river were a new road specially built for their benefit. Others were obviously enjoying the novel experience of being able to cross to the opposite bank without having to pay the ferryman 2d. for the privilege.

Another early memory is of finding a crowd of people standing on the old Wye Bridge, staring and pointing at something near the bank. My mother lifted me up and there, apparently heedless of all the spectators, I saw my first - and only - otter

One of my most evocative memories of the river is that of its scent: a heady mixture of river weed and sandbanks, little beaches, mud and minnows. And, in winter, of the river in flood, brown and foaming, tossing great trees like sticks in its turbulent passage down to the Severn Sea. Well might that good little fellow Ratty (in "Wind In The Willows" have enthused "What it hasn't got is not worth having, and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing." Richard who lives in Dunstable, Bedfordshire is writing his autobiography, "Sparks From My Pen"

NOTICEBOARD

Hereford Gilbert and Sullivan Operatic Society

Directed by the same successful team, of recent years

Present **"Merrie England"**

At the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford 6 - 11 March 2000

Tickets £7.50; some concessions. Courtyard Box Office now open.

Scout Gang Show 2000

Monday 24th April to

Saturday 29th April 2000

at The Courtyard Theatre, Hereford

Tickets from the theatre box office from

February 1st 2000