

In Our Age

Herefordshire Lore : Living local history

Issue 50
Autumn 2018

50th Issue



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Seduced by Rabbit Pie

Hazel Evans was celebrated as one of our Remarkable Women (IOA 49, Whitney’s Wartime Women). Daughter *Jenny Hill* recalls how her Mum and Dad met.

“Hazel (left, centre with friends) lived in Whitney all her life – a real country girl. When war came she worked for T.S. Henderson making parts for allied aircraft, quite a hard life for a young woman who was a ‘second batch’, and the only one of six children left at home to look after her elderly parents.

“Nineteen-year-old Bob Rayner, meanwhile, had started a career at a London merchant bank, commuting from his Watford home. In 1939 he joined the army and, being fluent in French and German, was recruited to the Intelligence Corps attached the 49th Division (the ‘Polar Bears’).

“By the early 1940s Bob was stationed at Whitney Court. He met Hazel and, loving his food, he was soon enticed by her famous rabbit pie. He’d regularly walk across the fields to Hazel’s for a good feed. They married at Whitney Church in 1943, but he wasn’t home for long: in 1944 Bob joined the D-Day landings at Juno Beach and fought on through to Holland. Having assisted as interpreter during the German surrender, Bob was posted to Germany to help round up and interrogate former Nazis. He was proud to have marched through Whitehall during the Victory celebrations in June 1946.

“Hazel, meanwhile, was raising their two girls and like everyone else at the time, the couple had to adjust to living life in peacetime. It was not easy, especially for Bob, taking on life as a country boy following the horrors of war. Truly the war did shape their lives.”



“The war truly shaped their lives.” Hazel and Bob Rayner, Whitney Church 1943.

Welcome to Issue 50

Our loyal subscribers will find their renewal forms inside – sorry for the £1 price hike, but hopefully £15 a year won't put too many of you off!

The front page of our 50th Edition celebrates our rich agricultural heritage and the role played by farmers in cultivating the land for harvesting and nurturing rich pastures required for our dairy herds. There are more ploughing pictures on pages 4 and 5.

Meanwhile the launch of **River Voices** is imminent as you can see from our insert. This is a project which not only describes the lives and experiences of county people but also offers an opportunity to introduce the younger generation through a **Schools Pack** to recall and record their own experiences.

Good luck with identifying the location of our mystery photo on the back page!

Julie Orton-Davies, chair, Herefordshire Lore

Home style

A nostalgic cornucopia of cylinder vacuums, deco hair dryers, heavy-duty kettles, Bakelite switches and lethal-looking radiant fires feature in this Vivian’s



photo. But where was it taken? asks Chris Gooding from the New Curiosity Shop in Church Street, Hereford. “It looks like the interior of an electrical showroom, possibly from the 1950s,” says Chris. Vivian’s (featured in IOA 48) was also based in Church Street. Reader Michael Young adds: “Vivian or Vivian’s? Ada Durrant favoured the former; Thelma Holland, from postcard evidence, traded as Vivian’s Studio. My 1934 Kelly’s Directory lists the Misses Durrant living at Termonde Villas, St James Road, Hereford. I have three postcard views of All Saints Church published by A. Durrant, presumably after she retired, to support church funds.”



The Buddies – or The Doc Thomas Group as they were known in Italy: Stan Tippins, Mick Ralphs, Pete Watts, Dave Tedstone and Rob Hall with the Band’s van which finally died on them during their Italian tour in the mid-1960s.

It’s all rock and roll

Venue: the Unicorn Hall, Weobley. Date: December 6, 1963. Starring: Jet Black and Storm Raisers.

Jet Black and the Storm Raisers gave Weobley its first taste of rock and roll at the Unicorn Hall on December 6 1963. With school boys Ed Barnett from Kinnersley on guitar, Mick Best on bass, Dave Scudder also from Kinnersley on drums and Sarnesfield’s **Stan Tippins** as lead singer, the band’s repertoire included Johnny Kidd’s *Please Don’t Touch* and *Shakin’ All Over*, together with Eddie Cochran’s *Come On Everybody*.

“We had one microphone, plugged in through the lead guitar’s amp,” recalls Stan whose stage kit featured a black and white shirt, which Ed’s Mum had run up for him. “I dread to think what we sounded like, but the girls in the audience started screaming!”

(Stan’s aptitude for singing had already been clocked by one of his teachers. On one quiet Friday afternoon when he was ten Stan’s teacher Mrs Preece had asked: ‘Can you get up, Stanley, and sing *Davy Crockett*?’)

Jet Black and the Storm Raisers was started by Ed Barnett. “I used to play football for Weobley School,” recalls Stan, “and one day the match was called off. I went round to Ed’s instead and listened to his records. When he played Johnny Kidd and the Pirates I thought: ‘Fantastic!’”

After the Storm Raisers, Stan joined the Buddies with, following various arrivals and departures, Pete Watts, Dave Tedstone, Mick Ralphs on guitar, and Bob Hall on drums. They were soon playing two or three gigs a week around the county.

“The Hereford Times would come out full of these dances:

Weobley and Pencombe village halls, Bromyard’s Falcon Hotel, the 1600 Club in Aubrey Street, Hereford, Park Hall Ballroom at Wormelow, the Top Spot at Ross, the Crown in Hay, the massive Redhill Ballroom and, always on Friday nights, the British Legion Club in Leominster.”

When the band’s first break came (they’d been talent spotted and given a residency in Germany) Pete left his job as a trainee architect, Mick abandoned his electrician’s apprenticeship and Stan and Dave quit work at Wiggins. Germany was followed by a spell in Italy.

Months after the Buddies, doubling as the Doc Thomas Group in Italy, folded the majority of the band were signed by Island Records with Shrewsbury’s Ian Hunter as singer and song writer and the band branded as Mott the Hoople. Stan came back, this time as tour manager, and continued singing the top harmonies (off stage) on Mott’s big hits from the *All the Young Dudes* album.

When Hoople finished in the early 1970s Stan tour managed Chrissie Hynde’s Pretenders (with Herefordshire’s James Honeyman-Scott on lead guitar, Pete Farndon on bass and Martin Chambers on drums), Simple Minds, Paul Young, Adam and the Ants and finally Sade. Yet in all those years of rock and roll, Stan still remembers the night that the Rolling Stones played the Redhill. “The Stones had released their first single, *Come On*, but the Ballroom was only half full because nobody had heard of them. I’d never seen anyone move like Mick Jagger and Keith Richards and then there was Brian Jones just standing there and never moving. They were just so good!”



Front cover: Autumn scene: horse-drawn ploughing at a local ploughing match (Derek Evans Archive, HARC). Can you help us identify which one? And who’s on the plough? See *Turning the soil*, page 4

From My Album *Keith Williams, Derek Foxton, Graham Wilson and the Derek Evans archive*



Roundabout: a familiar scene from an unfamiliar angle, Donovan Wilson's 1957 aerial photograph of Whitecross. Read Donovan's story on the back page.

Turning the soil: Above, World Champion ploughman Les Goodwin in 1958 outside Hereford Station (photo: Derek Evans Archive, HARC). Kings Cagle farmer Keith Williams reports that Les' success was followed by Tarrington's John Gwilliam in the early 1960s and Viv Samuel from south Herefordshire in 1980. Viv's father Horace was a champion horse ploughman. Keith (above, with his 1943 Standard Fordson bought from Johnson's Garage on the Callow, and a 1936 Ransome plough) has himself won eight British championships and, in 2003, a European championship. Self-taught, he began ploughing aged 11, taking the family's new Ferguson and plough, bought from Hereferg on Holmer Road, to a match at Dason Court, Hentland around 1950. Above, right, predating these Herefordshire heroes of the soil are R.P. Ravenhill, H. Minton, S.W. Powell, J. Wall, A.R. Groom and E. Williams with their prize Overtime tractor towards the end of the First World War. Ploughman Wall and driver Powell would heave their imported tractor and its Cockshutt plough into the record books, winning the Ministry of Food Production's national ploughing championship. The Ministry aimed to increase wheat production by cutting Herefordshire's grazing land and milk meadows by half. They were assisted by the ploughing teams working through the night. The teams were led by former chauffeur George Butcher, awarded an MBE for his efforts, and based at Fryer's No. 2 Garage in Commercial Road, later to become Ravenhills Motors. (Photo: Derek Foxton)



Chocks away: RAF trainees at Credenhill manoeuvre a Supermarine Spitfire into place at the Station gates (photo: Derek Evans Archive, HARC). Ken Barr writes that Credenhill actually had two Spitfires, BL 614 (above) which arrived at the Station in 1955 and is now at Hendon Museum and an earlier one, which ended up in Texas. This one above was built at Castle Bromwich and first flown in action by 24-year-old New Zealander Flight Sergeant 'Dusty' Miller with 611 Squadron, according to the RAF's Andrew Simpson.

On The Milk

Gillian Woodman Smith, brought up on The Flann, a dairy farm near Ross-on-Wye, loved the sounds and smells of milking.

My grandparents, Ernest and Agnes Clarke, had the tenancy of The Flann, a small Guy's hospital farm of about 120 acres next to Peterstow church near Ross-on-Wye from the 1920s, my grandfather having been wounded in the First World War. They built their business up gradually, to include a flock of sheep, pigs, chickens, two working carthorses and a herd of pedigree Guernsey cattle. They endured the economically gloomy 1930s, including a bout of foot and mouth which decimated their herd before the outbreak of World War Two.

My father Ronald Clarke and his sister Mildred were born and raised in the fine Georgian farmhouse, which had no electricity, mains water or drainage. Only wood and coal fires and a kitchen range heated the house. Some water was pumped up by hydraulic ram from a spring in the valley, and a limited soft water supply could be pumped by hand in the dairy. The arrangements continued until the early 1950s when they bought a generator to provide a limited electricity supply.

Father left in his twenties training as an aeronautical engineer. He only returned there at the end of WW2, married his wife Frances, and, having made a huge life-changing decision to go into partnership with his father, eventually took over the farm.

Cows and Dairies

My grandmother had been the driving force behind the dairy work and oversaw the cooling and bottling of the milk, the separating of cream and the making of butter. There was a strict hygiene regime each and every day, twice a day, for every utensil, bucket and surface. The original dairy was in a large extension at the back of the house, having a capacious stone sink, a water pump, a stainless steel cooler and milk tank on top with a copper with furnace in one corner. The milk was carried up from the sheds, two buckets at a time, to be chilled, bottled and capped, then stacked in crates and kept cool to await delivery. After my grandmother's death in 1949 the dairy work was mainly performed by a series of Land Girls.

Land Girls

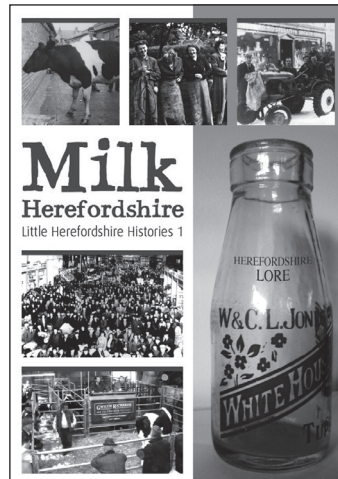
The Land Girl I loved the most was Pam. Pam Johnson, as she became, left us to marry a local farmer and have five children, one of whom, her son Michael, set up a cider business at the Broome next door. Mavis, another of our Land Girls, also married into a local family.

My grandparents established a local milk round in the village, the bottles in crates of one pint or one quart, the cardboard lids bearing the farm name each pressed on by hand. The milking was done twice daily, then the bottles stored in the cold, earth-floored cellars underneath the house. The original small dark byre where the hand milking took place only had stalls for about five cows at a time. I am not sure of the size of the original pedigree herd, probably not more than 30 beasts. The byre was at the end of a group of fine stone barns and was easily accessed from the orchard, a collecting point from wherever the cows had been for best grazing. They came in response to an unvarying simple call: "Come on, come on!"

All the cows had names, often flower names like Daisy or Poppy or Violet, or turn of the century female names such as Maud or Alice. Alice was a particular favourite of mine, small and gentle in temperament, golden in colour, never known to kick; it was she who allowed me, aged six, to learn how to milk, whilst under the supervision of our gentle and experienced cowman Ernie Cole.

More from Gillian in our next issue. Have you memories from the farm? Let editor Bill Laws know at Herefordshire Lore, The Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW or call us on 07845 907891.

Milk, our booklet on local milkmen and milkmaids is still available at £4 (includes postage) from Herefordshire Lore, The Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW.



Around & About



First communion: Belgian refugees attend the Catholic Church, thought to be Lower Bullingham, during the First World War. (Strangers in a Strange Land)

Belgian Exhibition

Kington's townspeople devoted the proceeds from their 1915 May Day carnival to their cause; Hereford Mayor George Greenland's wife Nellie, helped raise £2,250 for them; and county police chief Frank Richardson billeted a party of 13 at his Ballingham home, Kilforge. Herefordshire welcomed nearly 400 Belgian refugees, fleeing the German occupation, to the county in 1914. When, in April 1919, they finally departed one declared: "We consider Hereford a paradise." Catch Herefordshire Library's intriguing *Strangers in a Strange Land – The Story of the Belgian Refugees* at Hereford Town Hall until November 30.

Herefordshire Technical College

Eagle-eyed readers on Facebook (In Our Age) identified some of the young women in lecturer Margaret Riley's photograph of the 1974 typing class. The names included Elaine Harris, Suzanne Johns, Shirley Mayo-Evans, Gill Skyrme, Tricia Silvey, Dianne Cox (Sallis) and Hannah Williams.

Those Hereford Prefabs

Ken Hyett from Horsham recalls Alma and Johnny Williams who stayed at the Redhill Hostel until, much relieved, they moved to an Eign Mill Road "near the Whalebone Inn. Alma, one of Tom Smith's daughters [High Flier, page 6, IOA 49] was my wife Doreen's best friend," writes Ken. "They met at the Garden City Youth Club, and later worked at Chadds, Commercial Street. Her husband Johnny was a classmate of mine at All Saints Infants School, 1933 to 1936.

"And Trevor Burland [Hereford Prefabs, page 7, IOA 49] was school captain of Lord Scudamore's Boys School when I first went there from All Saints School. I never associated him with the Barrs Court area, as he was occasionally seen walking the top rail of Hunderton railway bridge, probably as a dare!"

Midland Red

Reader John Meaford has responded to our Midland Red story (page 7, IOA 49). Born in Hereford (his father, John Whiston, was based at RAF Credenhill and his mother, Phyllis Clarke, came from Brockhampton) the family later moved to London. But after John returned he drove for Midland Red, joining the company at the age of 65 in 2002. "We did all the routes, driving up to three buses a day." He said Midlands Red were a good company to work for and he hopes local buses can do more to encourage us to leave our cars at home. He has a particular interest in buses, having built his own horse-drawn double decker omnibus from scratch.

Art School

It's almost eighty years since former Hereford Art School students John Ward and Jehan Daly went to war. Staying with Ward's parents in Church Street, Hereford, they savoured their last few months of peace, cycling the country lanes and hop picking ("earning little since we were slow compared with the locals and gypsies"), before joining the Royal Engineers. John Ward, who became a noted portraitist also recalled in *The Paintings of John Ward* (David & Charles, 1991) how he sold the odd work to Hereford's May Marchant, "a gifted woman" who "played the cello, was a good actress and had a passion for painting, pottery, fashion and horse racing."

Where is it?

One or two readers correctly identified our Where is it? puzzle in Issue 49: Tom Henderson's photo of the old railway crossing at Whitney-on-Wye. Readers may have more difficulties with this picture of a Herefordshire laundry taken one Sunday morning (so they could line up the delivery vans) in 1955 by **Donovan Wilson**.

The photographer (below preparing his camera as his pilot checks their plane) had come to Hereford from Birmingham after the last war and set up his studio in Brewers Passage. When, later, he moved his studio into his home on Ridge Hill south of the city, he had a reputation not only for some fine wedding portraits, taken with wife Pat, but also his aerial shots.

His son Graham explains: "He had started as a glider pilot at Long Mynd at a time when private flights were relatively rare. Later he took to the air using an old RAF camera to record the county scenes." Donovan's regular pilots included a former Spitfire pilot, Hubert Knight, and farmer Ken Davidson and his photo collection is now being archived at Herefordshire Records and Archive Centre (HARC) – see below.



Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre

Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre (HARC) is a treasure house of our county's stories from the Middle Ages right up to the present day. Thousands of letters, photographs, maps and parchment documents bring the history of Herefordshire and its people to life. If you're interested in the story of your family, home or local community, this is the place to visit. Start by checking their web pages at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/archives.

- Look up your family history;
- Hunt down the story of your old house;
- Study local history sources, geographical surveys and records;
- Deposit valuable old documents and photographs;
- Join the Friends of HARC (www.foha.org.uk)



Volunteer Alan Walker scans some of the Donovan Wilson collection into HARC archives.

HARC is on Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas HR2 6LA 01432 260750 is open Tuesdays to Fridays, 9.15-4.45 and 2nd Saturdays 9.15-4.45.

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"I must say how much I enjoy the IOA magazine. Thank you so much. And long may it continue." Ken Hyett, Horsham, Sussex.