

In Our Age

Herefordshire Lore : Living local history

Issue 55
Winter 2020



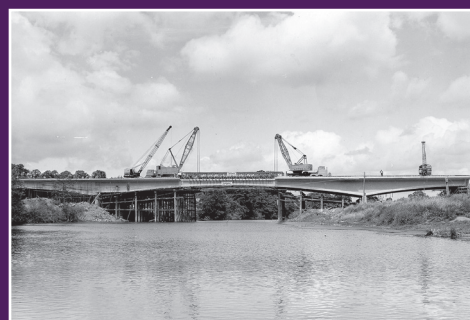
 Find In Our Age on
Facebook



Hereford High School
Page 3



Black Mountains
Page 6



Ross-on-Wye
Page 6

Yes, we do have bananas

From the Banana King to Hereford Butter Market

A familiar figure in Eign Street and High Town at the turn of the last century was Berrington Street's Tom Russell. Remembered as the Banana King, his granddaughter Eileen Whent recalled how the well-dressed Tom – he always sported a large flower in his buttonhole – sold bananas from his hand cart with a cry of “Come on Ladies! Seven for Sixpence. All ripe”.

Germany's U-boat blockade put paid to banana imports during the Second World War so their arrival at Rogers' fruit and veg shop in the late 1940s (right) was a cause for celebration.

Rogers' shop was opened in High Town by Henry Redan Rogers and his son, also Henry. The business did well, expanding to include a sweet shop and the Café Redan, reports Henry senior's great-grandson, **Peter Jones**. “I believe Henry senior may have had the corn and seed businesses in Commercial Street and Bridge Street, which later became Franklin and Barnes. When Henry retired in the 1950s Littlewoods stepped in and bought the business.”

The shop and café were recalled with poetic licence by local historian Bert Daniels:

Café Redan for your buns and cream teas,

Henry R Rogers for your fruit and veg

But the Rogers' post-war celebration was muted since Henry's second son, Andrew, pictured here as a boy with Henry senior and junior, died in 1944. The 21-year-old was killed when his tank was ambushed near Tilly-sur-Seulles on June 26 after the Normandy landings.



Henry Rogers (centre) with the first bunch of bananas to reach the city after the Second World War. Is this greengrocer Sid Wright on the left? (Photo: Hereford Times)



Hillmans

Competing with Henry Rogers were the Butter Market traders, recalls **Rosemary Lillico**. “The farmers' wives would be seated on benches behind the Market trestle tables with their wares laid out in front: dressed chickens, ducks, cakes, jam, eggs and all manner of preserves. The Market was a hive of activity on Wednesday – market day – with the vegetable stalls, butchers', fishmonger Benjamin's and the large Peacocks' clothes stall.”

Rosemary has special memories of the florist, Mrs Hillman: “When I married in 1956, she made my wedding bouquet. It was absolutely beautiful, made up of a dozen dark red roses with maidenhair fern trailing down to the floor and costing 1 guinea. Happy days.”

Read about another Fruit and Veg champion – Powell's of Commercial Road, Hereford – page 4 e3 5.



Going strong

Hereford mayor Kath Hey (right) and Herefordshire Lore's Julie Orton-Davies and Chris Tomlinson (left) are shown the city's 1189 royal charter by mayor's officer John Marshall on a visit to the Town Hall's refurbished Heritage Suite (open, free, to the public on Wednesday mornings).

Herefordshire Lore was launched during the city's royal charter's 800th anniversary celebration in 1989 and we've been collecting and publishing your memories ever since. We are: chair Julie Orton-Davies, secretary Eileen Klotz, treasurer Harvey Payne, webmaster Chris Preece, proofs Sandy Green; committee Joyce Chamberlain, Keith and Krystyna James, Rosemary Lillico, Jean and Peter Mayne, Marsha O'Mahony, Chris and Irene Tomlinson, Linda Ward and Betty Webb.

Design: Pinksheep. Print: Orphans Press. Editor: Bill Laws.



Front cover: Chandos Street, Whitecross. Ernie Powell from Number 48 with his great-nephews Bob (left) and Geoff. “We're returning from catching minnows, probably at Breinton Springs, circa 1963,” writes Bob.

Tiger Coates

Everyone remembers a good teacher. In *Michael Young's* case it was the art master at Hereford High School

I experienced a sense of elation seeing the group of amateur radio enthusiasts in IOA 54, writes **Michael Young**. Staring out at me through his round, heavy lenses was Tiger Coates dressed in his classroom dark suit and displaying, in his top jacket pocket, a cluster of pens and pencils – a seeming trade mark of all school teachers at the time.

Mr E. H. D. Coates TDA (Teaching Diploma in Art) was senior art master at Hereford High School (HHS) for Boys during my time there (1946-52). Whoever coined the moniker Tiger was a genius for having captured his classroom presence.

You did not fool around in Tiger's period. With his longish black hair swept vigorously to the back of his head (not a traditional style for a master) he stalked the classroom looking over shoulders, offering advice, and encouragement or constructive criticism as necessary. Any boy with 'attitude' could invoke Tiger's wrath. If your perspective was a little wonky the rest of the period could be spent in drawing rows of telegraph poles receding to infinity; if your serifs in his lettering course lacked some of the subtlety of a Roman stone mason, then ... “Try Again, Boy!”

Tiger had arrived in Herefordshire when his school was evacuated from London. Remarkably, he married his predecessor. Miss Milligan, a Herefordian with two brothers at HHS, was recruited in 1940 to teach art 'for the duration'. Consequently when she left in 1946, Tiger was appointed to his wife's job!

When the new subject of Engineering Drawing was introduced into the curriculum, Headmaster Ruscoe must have considered the second word to be operative and appointed Mr Coates to teach the subject. I enjoyed it and, after an apprenticeship in engineering, spent my life-long career in industry. All hail Mr Coates, an outstanding teacher!

“My passion for history,” adds **Ann Stoakes** from Ballingham, “was kindled by a history teacher at Ledbury Grammar School, Miss Bishop. Bish, the daughter of the rector of Putley, was one of the first women to study at Oxford (although her degree wasn't recognised until after the war).” Read about Ann's country childhood, page 6

(Worth a read, says Michael is *Hereford High School for Boys, An Account of its First Fifty Years*, by R. G. Ruscoe, 1962.)



The long jump and, below, a queue for refreshments during Hereford High School's sports day. “It's around 1967,” reckons **Marcel Glover** who loaned the pictures to IOA and identified Colin Keates, holding a camera, and, to his left, Alan Lloyd and Dieter Goetle.



1940's air crashes

Mystery surrounds those killed in a post-war plane crash near Dinedor, writes **Mary Alam** from Ross. She looked into the crash, which involved a Percival Proctor from RAF Madley, while researching a friend's family history. “I was amazed to see the cursory account of the deaths of these three young service people.”

The Proctor, piloted by Pilot Officer Hunter Simmonds, carried two crew: Sergeant John Robinson from County Durham and, unusually, a women, 20-year-old Leading Aircraft Woman Dorothy Cowen from Cumbria. All three died at the crash site in Quarry Field at Mr Carter's Twyford Farm on September 6 1945.

The circumstances surrounding another crash, that of a stricken US Flying Fortress B-17 bomber, Ascend Charlie, which hit the mountainside in the Black Mountains killing all ten crew, has been fully commemorated (right).

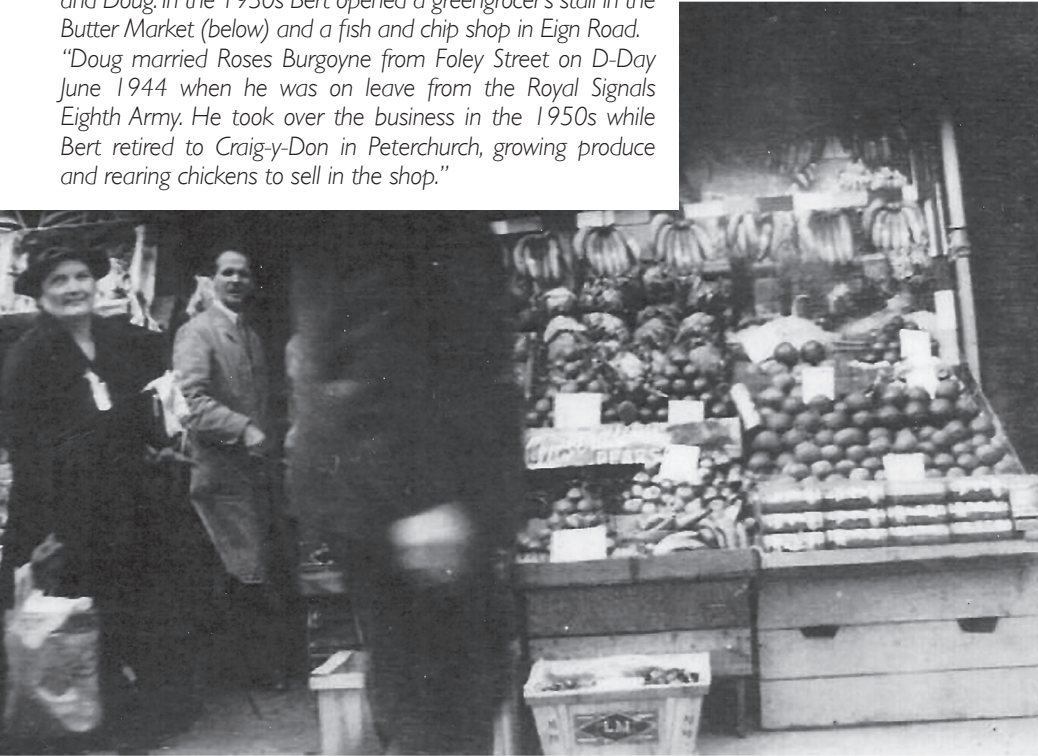
This memorial to Ascend Charlie (a wry nickname referring to its 'ass-end' position in a bombing convoy over Bordeaux) stands on the mountain side at Pen Gwylt Meirch. From the left, Arthur James, Bill Cave, Ann and Mel Powell and Derrie Edge.



From My Album *Stuart Powell, Maggie Conu and Christine Mason*



Powell's: Left to right: Doug Powell, his father Bert, manageress Margaret Wilson and Doug's wife, the delightfully named Roses Powell. Doug's son **Stuart** explains: "Bert moved from Ystradgynlais in 1929 and opened a greengrocer's and game shop at 7 Commercial Road with his wife Blodwen and sons Bert and Doug. In the 1930s Bert opened a greengrocer's stall in the Butter Market (below) and a fish and chip shop in Eign Road. "Doug married Roses Burgoyne from Foley Street on D-Day June 1944 when he was on leave from the Royal Signals Eighth Army. He took over the business in the 1950s while Bert retired to Craig-y-Don in Peterchurch, growing produce and rearing chickens to sell in the shop."



Police Reservists Wilf Mason (third right, second row) and John Burrow (third from left, second row) pose for a portrait at a police reservists training centre in 1941. (Photo: Christine Mason). **Vera Hadley**, author of **Herefordshire Constabulary 1857-1967** (Orphans Press, 1999) explains that there was a critical shortage of policemen during the war. In 1939 eighteen left to serve in the forces and by 1943 eleven more were released for military service, three of them signing up as RAF air crew. As older officers were forbidden to retire, Herefordshire recruited Reservists and Special Constables. "By the end of 1940 twenty Specials were spread throughout the county including two in Wigmore, stationed there to protect the Elan Valley to Birmingham water pipe," says Vera. "Women were also recruited. Twenty-one joined the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps between May 1940 and December 1946." The police reservists were disbanded in 1948.



Prizes are passed round at Hereford Bowling Club (left) by the club president with Ilsa Conu, far left, M. Bell, D. Curtis, Del Sayer and Maissie Richards and, back row, M. Ayer and D. Bullock. As we reported in IOA 54 Ilsa and husband Max sold Villiers-powered motorcycles, James, Francis Barnett and Cottons along with Lambretta scooters at Conu and Wheeler's in Commercial Road, Hereford. Daughter Maggie, (below, centre) inherited a passion for motoring and is pictured here in her rally days with David Skeffington (far left). "We used to go round car rallies taking photographs and selling them afterwards," explains Maggie.



Country life in Pixley, 1944

A culture shock awaited ten-year-old Ann Stoakes when her family moved to Trumpet Cottage

I arrived from Leicestershire with my mother Ciss and five-year-old old sister Jill to join our Dad Gilbert, who had come with the furniture in a container by rail, a week earlier to take up the job of foreman for E.B. and D.H. Thompson of Pixley Court. We were to live in Trumpet Cottage.

It was getting dark at Ledbury Station when Dad met us in the farm runabout, a battered pre-war Jowett, the back seats removed so that it could carry anything from pigs in a sack to spare machinery parts. We couldn't see much, except the tall hedges of the hop yards and gates of cleaved ash with oak posts, a different design to our Leicestershire ones.

Trumpet Cottage had two rooms up and down, beams all over the place, cupboard stairs and no bathroom (until 1947 when building permits were easier to get). The only tap, in the kitchen, was fed from a cistern filled by water hand-pumped from a well. A serious outbreak of diphtheria and polio the previous summer had seen all the wells tested, purified and sealed with concrete covers.

Electricity for the single ceiling bulbs came from the paraffin-powered generator next door – since this was also the Trumpet Garage, they received a paraffin allowance.

Dad found a pre-war Calor gas cooker for Mum. Otherwise cooking and hot water came from an old fashioned coal-fired range in a huge inglenook and a side bread oven. Coal was still rationed so we used the fallen wood and prunings from the cider apple orchard behind the house.

The outhouse toilet round the corner from the back door was a flush (from a bucket, filled from the roof butt) and connected to a sewage tank. Mum did the washing in a corrugated iron lean-to where we also kept the old tin bath stood on a frame that was emptied down the yard.

Ashperton School

Ashperton School was next. What a school! Three teachers, children aged from 5 to 14 and my fellow pupils hostile to these 'Foreman's kids' from another county! Neither my sister nor I could understand the dialect. There seemed to be distinct groups (I realised later they were grouped according to the farms where they lived) and all, including the teachers, ignored the Traveller children that attended. I got to know them and found they were real clever, often talented artists and craft makers.

Next time: Ledbury Grammar beckons.



Travelling librarian Cyril Jenkins with a customer on the Black Mountains run. The image is drawn from Herefordshire Libraries' remarkable collection. (www.herefordshirehistory.org.uk)

Travelling library

Travelling libraries catered for a lot of educated young women stuck at home with preschool families and limited incomes. "When I married and gave up work, as women did then, I relied on the travelling library," writes Ann Stoakes, a former nurse and midwife. "Its arrival in the village was a social occasion and travelling librarians like Bernard Sprackling helped us to continue reading." The travelling library service has since been axed and Ann worries about the future of its replacement, the Home Delivery book service.

Bypass blues

While Ross-on-Wye's M50 road bridge (left) was opened in the early 1960s, the debate over whether to bypass Hereford continues. Alternative eastern and western routes were being proposed over 30 years ago as the Herefordshire branch for the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) declared its opposition to the "government's massive road expansion programme.

"Rather than solving the problems of urban congestion the programme will generate more, and yet more, road traffic which will lead, after temporary relief, to even greater congestion," predicted CPRE in 1992.

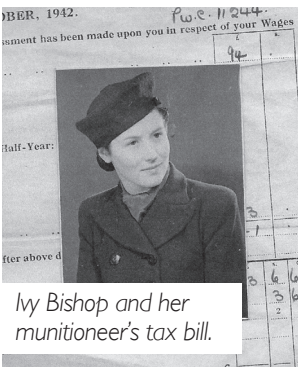
Around & About

Bulmers' Angels

Michael Young recalls several teachers' nicknames at Hereford High School for Boys although none, he writes, "so apposite and incisive as Tiger Coates [page 3]. There was Jammy Hartley (obvious), Doughy Baker (too obvious), Erky Wood (initials E. R. and served in the RAF during the war), Spadger Morris (chirpy, of small stature) and Pop Rawle (kindly grandfather figure with lush white hair and moustache)." Tim Rowberry in IOA 45 recalled the nickname given to his diminutive father and landlord of the Lichfield Vaults, 'Titch' Rowberry, and customers like 'Chitterlins' Bill and 'Oyster' Vaughan. And Margaret Combe once recalled how Hereford's women cider workers were dubbed Bulmers' Angels.

Meanwhile Annie Lilwall has been recording some curious old sayings. "For example, if my mum's cup is full to the top, she says she has a 'Malvern measure' but if it is under-filled she remarks: 'Half souls don't go to heaven!' Then there's 'Looks black over Bill's Mother's' for rain on the way; 'black your ass and go naked' if you've nothing suitable to wear; and this reference to someone who's not too bright: 'He needs to go to Ross to get sharpened'."

Eaton Bishop



Ivy Bishop and her munitioneer's tax bill.

"My mother Ivy Elizabeth Mary Price worked as a demonstrator (White Group) in the training department at ROF Rotherwas from 1941 to 1945," writes John Osley from Abergele. "She lived with her parents at Eaton Bishop and either rode in on her bicycle or caught the work bus from Honeymoon Common. At her interview the board assumed, from her name, that she was Welsh, to which she took great exception. Nonetheless the work was better paid than what she received in service at Abbeydore."



Where is it?

An aerial raid? An earthquake? What's happening here? And where? Answers to Herefordshire Lore, The Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW

Walterstone

Strict instructions (below) were given by the War Agricultural Committee in St John Street, Hereford to Nigel Hirst's family about what to grow at their Walterstone farm during the last war. Nigel has also found a buckled First World War Army Service Corps badge near the farm well. "I fondly imagine a soldier home on leave, sitting on the bank by the well, admiring the view when the pin snapped off the badge. In a huff, he folded the badge over and threw it away. We will never know."

List No. 530. Please quote Ref. No. 218/14
DEFENCE REGULATIONS, 1939.
THE CULTIVATION OF LANDS ORDERS, 1939

To: Mrs. J. Jones, of Upper Coed-y-gravel, Walterstone
or other the occupier of the land described in the Schedule hereto
THE HEREFORDSHIRE WAR AGRICULTURAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE being the body authorized to exercise on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries within the administrative County of Hereford the powers in that behalf conferred by Regulation 62 (1) of the Defence Regulations, 1939, hereby direct you to carry out in respect of the land described in the Schedule hereto the works of cultivation specified in the said Schedule.

Failure to comply with this direction or any part thereof is an offence under the Defence Regulations.

SCHEDULE.
Holding known as Upper Coed-y-gravel in the County of Hereford.
In the Parish of Walterstone

Ordinance Map No. and Edition.	Area Acres.	Description.	Required Cultivation and Date of Completion.
Winter Meadow	Est. 2	Pasture	To plough not later than 31st Dec, 1940, then cultivate and plant in a husbandlike manner for the harvest of 1941 with any of the following:- Wheat; potatoes; barley; oats; sugar beet; mixed corn; beans; peas; or rye. Preference must be given to wheat and beans for autumn planting, and potatoes for spring planting where the land is suitable.

Dated this 25th day of September one thousand nine hundred and forty.
N.B.—Where any Order is served upon an occupier of land a copy must be sent to the owner of the farm concerned.

By Order of the Committee,
War Agricultural Committee,
4, St. John Street,
Hereford.
Chief Executive Officer.

Radio Times

Tim Bridgland-Taylor points out that the call sign G3ESY (IOA 54, p 5) belonged to Peter Jones of Blenheim Close. And the editor's apology to Brian Willder - not Wilder!

VE-Day

Below, war hero Eddie Dzierza and his wife Emilia were stranded in Italy when the European war ended. Having lost their homes in Poland, the couple eventually settled in Hereford. The 75th VE Day anniversary will be celebrated on May Bank Holiday. Meanwhile a Women's Football Tournament at Hereford's Edgar Street ground on Sunday March 8 will not only mark International Womens' Day, but a famous match between Rotherwas' women munitioneers in 1918.



Brook Bros of Hereford

The answer to our Where was it?

"Brook Bros (Hereford) Ltd was the motor dealership that sold Rootes Group cars (Hillmans, Sunbeams, etc) and International Harvester and David Brown tractors. It was based in Blueschool Street and founded in about 1926 by two of my great-uncles James and Percy," explains **Mike Brook**.

The car showrooms and main offices were near the Widemarsh Street junction next to the Farmers' Club until the Council, in its wisdom, drove the internal bypass through. The engineering workshops were at the Commercial Square end, currently home to Kwik Fit.

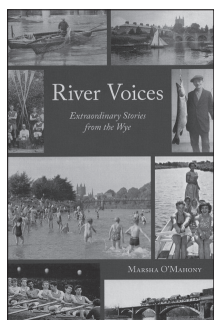
James and Percy's father, also James, was head of Allensmore School. He had seven children; three became motor engineers and four became head teachers like their father, Reginald and Fred in Bristol and Ramsgate, Harry at Clifford and Fanny at St Martins School in Hereford.

After Percy died in 1938 (a minor motorbike accident led to sepsis, untreatable then without antibiotics) and James left to farm in Cornwall, Frank Brook took over as managing director with his son Reg running the agricultural side.

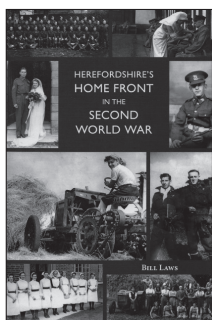


Purcell Steele was one of those, along with Chris Tomlinson (both men, by coincidence long-term county hockey players) who correctly identified Brook Bros. Born in India, Purcell joined the firm as a store boy in 1955 and loaned this photo from those days. Far left Dennis Map (who later ran the Grandstand Road chip shop); 3rd foreman Dan Hughes; 10th Audrey Whiting. From the right, Mr Price, 2nd Graham Whiting; 6th Neville Daw; 7th Purcell in his best blazer. In front are Freddie Jones (left) and Gordon Jenkins (centre) from Kingstone. **Chris Tomlinson** also recalled Brooks' Ernie Lawrence who later worked at Thorn and played in The Russ Allen Band.

In Our Age Subscriptions and book orders



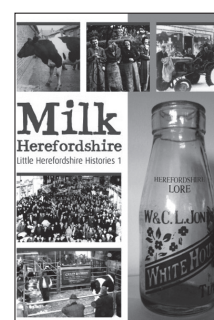
☐ *River Voices*
£10 + £2.60 p&p



☐ *Herefordshire's Home Front in the Second World War*
£10 + £2.50 p&p



☐ *In The Munitions*
£10 + £2.50 p&p



☐ *Milk*
£4 + 65p&p

Get In Our Age delivered to your door! Subscribe today - £12 for the next three issues ☐

Send a cheque made out to Herefordshire Lore to: Herefordshire Lore, c/o The Pavilion, Castle Green, Hereford HR1 2NW

For BACS details call 07845 907891 or email info@herefordshirelore.org.uk

Name:

Address:

Postcode: Contact number: Email: