

# In Our Age

Herefordshire Lore : Living local history

Issue 56 & 57  
2020

DOUBLE ISSUE



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## Quiet conversations

By his own admission *Mike Potts* was a shy and retiring errand boy in the 1970s. But the King Street community, he says, made him feel at home.

"I left school at fifteen in 1961. My first job was working for Harold Wilson. No not 'the' Harold Wilson, but Harold and Nell Wilson (although I called them Mr and Mrs Wilson, of course). They ran Wilson's Supply Stores, 14 King Street, Hereford and employed both their son John, Joe Barnham (Mrs Wilson's brother), his wife and me.

"Mr and Mrs Mailes, who had the butchers shop in Eign Street, were friends of the Wilsons and Mr Mailes would spend time in conversation with Mr Wilson at the back of the shop. Yet not a word was said: Mr Mailes was deaf and the conversation was in sign language!

"Perry's, on the corner of King Street and Aubrey Street, had a petrol pump outside and did driving lessons. They taught me to drive.

"And Richard Hammond the photographer, who had a studio along the passage by the doctor's surgery, installed an electronic security beam, connected to a bell, across the passageway. I used step over it when delivering his groceries and surprise him.

"At the end of King Street was Wathens, who made the most delicious ice cream. Next door was Thomas's the paper shop and further along were Mr and Mrs Pritchard, the tailors, and their son Edward.

"Further along again was Jennings the saddlers and Gardiners the game shop, their son Brian used to do grass-track racing. (One of their staff, Joan Stephens and her husband became two of my best friends.)

"Millard and Stewart was next door and in Bridge Street it was Baxter's the Butchers, Apperleys fruit and veg shop, Bosbury's DIY and Franklin Barnes. The Wilsons did a lot of country deliveries and since many of the customers kept chickens, we sold corn and meal which usually came from there. I was rather shy and timid and Franklin Barnes' staff used to tease me, but it was good natured.

"Further down Bridge Street was the bakery where I spent a lot of time – I like a bit of cake! Edna Cound who worked there and her late husband Frank became good friends. Across the road was Meredith's paper shop, Thomas's Mastercraft Cycles, Wyeval photography shop, Lewin's the paper shop, Miss Mathews at the chemist shop, Mr and Mrs Aggett the tailors, and the estate agents who were all regular customers at Wilson's."

Mike stayed with the Wilsons until 1969 when he moved to J. and M. Stone's electrical shop. "We do not always appreciate what we have at the time, but it was a helpful, supportive community in its own."



Joe Barnham, left, his sister Mrs Wilson, right, and another member of staff whose name I have forgotten but I think her surname was Huffer. She later was at the fruit and veg stall in the butter market. And right, a teenage Mike Potts.



**Herefordshire Lore** was launched 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.

### Welcome back!

Following four months of lockdown creating distribution problems and the suspension of the Spring issue, it is now with relief and much pleasure we are able to dispatch a bumper double issue.

Herefordshire Lore has also been fortunate in acquiring Lottery support enabling us to extend this year's subscription until February 2021 – no action required on your behalf.

However, if you did not receive a copy of Issue 55 – let us know and we will send you a replacement.

Strange times – Best Wishes Julie Orton-Davies

Front cover: *What are you looking at? VE Day party* – see *The full picture*, page 8 and 9.

## Serving castle and cottage

Herefordshire's mobile library service fell victim to local authority spending cuts in 2011 after more than 60 years. *Peter Holliday* remembers the early days.

I was librarian for the Black Mountains area from 1972 to 1978, and people still talked about Cyril Jenkins (featured in IOA 55), even though there had been two other librarians before me: Mr McIver and Alan Bell. In those days four vehicles served the county: David A'Court for Leominster; Graham Sprackling in Ross, John Keen for East Herefordshire, and myself the Black Mountains, a patch which stretched from Madley and the Golden Valley, down to Longtown, Craswall, and the Olchon Valley. What a wonderful piece of country!

Based at Hereford we operated in all weathers and on many occasions I would leave Hereford in cloud or rain only to find the terrain beyond Dorstone or Ewyas Harold covered in snow. Each vehicle carried a spade and a broom, but not really much use in deep snow. A pair of wellingtons was a necessity, and I found a Damart vest and a pair of long-johns invaluable.

Occasionally I drove our spare vehicle, an ex-Civil Defence van (double-declutch!) with a five-step ladder for the readers and a tent that was to be erected in the event of nuclear war! We worked out routes that would provide a monthly visit to all readers, up farm tracks, narrow lanes and the steepest hills. Coming down from Arthur's Stone or the Slough above Vowchurch with a heavy load of books and ice on the road was a hair-raising experience. The Olchon Valley road was still unmetalled then. I often covered 50 or 60 miles a day – in the days before power steering, so it was quite physically demanding. But the rewards were the warmth, friendliness and generosity of the people I met. There'd be cups of tea or coffee, and I'd return with sacks of potatoes, bags of peas or beans, and in the autumn boxes of apples!

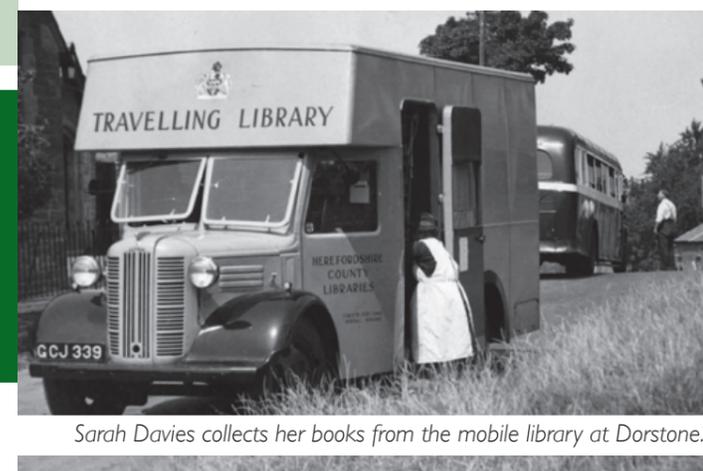
I was given knitted cardigans or scarves for our two daughters and, on their birthdays or at Christmas, cakes and goodies! Yes, their kindness was heart-warming!

Our readers included farmers, of course, and their families, and farm workers; villagers who had lived in the same cottages all their lives and knew everything about the countryside and everybody in it; poets and writers, like Edward Kaulfuss from Shenmore or Penelope Chetwode, John Betjeman's wife, way up in the hills above Hay; artists, like Harry Franklin, sculptor and fell-runner at Urishay, and musicians seeking seclusion and inspiration; colonels, Colonel Beck with his super-strong home-made wines, majors and commanders who retired to live in the country; diplomats back home from postings abroad.

And what of the books? We carried about 2,000 books to, quite literally, serve castle and cottage and you could never predict which might be chosen. Crime and romance, and country books, were always popular, but biography, travel, history and, for one farmer's son in Craswall, anything on Buddhism and philosophy.



Moving books: Herefordshire's mobile library service started in 1948 with this ex-military lorry and a stock of 1,800 books. It was soon receiving 100,000 visits a year. The image comes from the Library's exceptional photographic stock: [www.herefordshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirehistory.org.uk)



Sarah Davies collects her books from the mobile library at Dorstone.

### Sarah visits the mobile library

There was a surprise in store for Robert Morgan's mother Olive when this Herefordshire Library photo ([www.herefordshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirehistory.org.uk)) was published in IOA 38. "Imagine my mother's surprise when she saw her grandmother, Maria 'Sarah' Davies on the front page," writes Robert. "I would guess that the photo is from around the early 1950s, before my time. The village hall, then the school, is on the left and the man looks to be Mr Frank Lammis, owner of the shop on the right."

But the bus service has Robert stumped: "The service bus, Route 39, operated by the Red and White, would have been a double decker. Perhaps there was a service operating from Pontrilas and Ewyas Harold that ran round through Snodhill?"

Read Character portrait, page 15, Maria Weal.



Christening, 1952: baby Dawn Smith (then Dawn Tocknell) in the arms of her grandmother Sophia Tocknell with Sophia's wash day sisters Alice and Emily Terry (right) and brother Keith in grandfather Alec Summer's arms.

## Wash day at Wilton

**Pontshill's Dawn Smith tells Suzie Williams about her industrious aunts' cottage laundry**

As a child in the 1960s Dawn Smith enjoyed regular holidays with spinster sisters Alice and Emily Terry (Aunty Al and Aunty Em) at 2 Mill Ditch Cottages, Wilton, near Ross.

The cottage was small: "Even their best room, with its aspidistra and photo-covered little table, was tiny." The aunts shared a double bed, managed with an outdoor loo ("a shed at the bottom of the garden with a long wooden plank with a hole in it") and lavished attention on their favourite flowers. "Their borders were filled with hundreds of geraniums. Every autumn they were painstakingly lifted, the roots and tops trimmed, then put in pots to fill every windowsill through the winter."

The women made a modest living laundering linen for Ross-on-Wye's Wilton Hotel. Wash day, says Dawn, was a mammoth task. "There were maybe a dozen rooms at the Wilton, and Aunty Al and Aunty Em washed all the bed linen, table linen and serviettes by hand."

A fire would be lit under the big stone boiler at the back of the house and the laundry, delivered in giant wicker baskets, was sloshed around in the hot water with added Daz and starch before being rinsed in a series of buckets and put through the mangle. Dawn and her brother Keith were occasionally drafted in to turn the mangle before the washing, "so beautifully white", was hung on the line.

"If it was raining they had it hanging by the range in the living room." The kitchen range, which was 'kept in' through winter and summer and on which Alice and Emily cooked their meals, also warmed the four black irons used to iron the Hotel's napkins and table cloths.

### Field work

When Dawn left home to start work she found a job at Hereford's Starting Gate Beefeater restaurant, but supplemented her evening income doing field work. "We went round all different farms picking by hand for the Co-op: potatoes, strawberries and peas. Back-breaking work!"

"That way of life may seem strange to us today," says Dawn, "but that's how it was."

*What did you do to make ends meet? Write or phone us at In Our Age.*

## Going hopping

**As the picking season draws near, Marsha O'Mahony recalls the mass migration required to fill Herefordshire hop pockets**

The days of the hand-picked hop harvest brought an unprecedented pilgrimage to Herefordshire. Growers were delighted to see them arrive. And equally delighted to see them leave. They came on foot, by bike, horse and cart, caravan, charabanc, train and truck. They transformed hitherto sleepy, in some cases, backwater, rural communities, into hives and bustles of activity, and often licentiousness.

In the early 1900s, an estimated 40,000 Midlanders descended on the district, the *Midland Gospel Mission to the Hop Pickers of Herefordshire and Worcestershire* dedicated itself to their welfare. They came from South Wales, the Forest of Dean and the Gypsy community triggering an air of expectancy, and some dread too.

For Janet Parker and her sister Mary at The Sponend, their Fromes Hill home in the 1940s, it was an exciting time: "Our pickers came mainly from Worcester. Dad used to fetch them in our lorry and Mary and I couldn't wait to meet some of the families who came year after year.

"Mrs Sutton was our ganger lady and she was the person who agreed the price of a bushel of hops with Dad. We also had local people from Fromes Hill. I still meet a lady who recalls our picking days as the happiest of her life.

"At weekends the husbands used to come out on the bus from Worcester to visit. They usually ended up at the Wheatsheaf and usually came back singing. Oliver Howe was the landlord then and he had a shop too where he used to keep a mousetrap on the counter by the cheese!"

Village populations tripled and pubs grew lively. When the young police constable Mike Wood was posted to Burley Gate on hop duties in the 1950s his beat stretched from Preston Wynne to Stoke Lacy. One evening he dropped in on the Plough Inn, Stoke Lacy run by landlord Bill Symonds: "There were two groups of hop pickers in there and I could sense the tension.

"There was a large Welsh lady in one group, who had a beautiful singing voice, but she was very annoyed because the other group from Liverpool included an older lady who was very drunk and trying to out-sing her.

"I went to the Welsh lady and said in a Welsh accent: 'You've got a lovely voice my dear. Don't take any note of that drunken old bitch, you carry on singing!' Then I crossed the room and quietly told the Liverpoolian: 'Don't take any notice of that fat old Welsh woman – you just carry on.' That diffused the situation."

Another police constable who went down as a bit of a legend in hop areas was PC Fred Harris of Bishops Cleeve. The strong arm of the law was needed more than ever during the hop harvest when Bishops Cleeve became the Wild West of hoppicking country. As pubs were spilling over with pickers spending their hard-earned cash, PC Harris, a big burly man, was the man for the job. (Russell Bunn remembered him in IOA 54) When PC Harris retired, a collection of over £300 was raised by the pickers, a measure of their affection for him.

Marsha's book, *The Wonder of the Hop: Hop growing in the West Midlands* will be published by Logaston Press later this year.



Busheller and booker pause for a photo on Carwardine Farm, Lulham. (John Griffiths). Can you name them?



### Saving the nation

In 1945, just as in the recent pandemic, the nation ran short of agricultural workers. It was left to women like Annie Buckley (above) and her friend Gertrude Pasley to step in. Her son **Robert Pasley** recalls "the crisp autumnal mornings, mist rising from the river as we waited for the 7 am pick-up. It was a battered ex-army troop truck which trundled along the narrow country lanes to Farmer Paske's Lyde farm.

"My first job, together with my cousins Dorothy and Maureen, was to go searching for kindling wood for the fire for the 10 o'clock tea break. Soon wood smoke would drift across the hop-lines and mix with the pungent hop aroma. I remember the crack of the line-pole as the foreman dropped the huge vines into the large canvas cradle – then the frantic picking began!"

Annie Buckley was mother of the late Eileen Carpenter. Readers may remember her memories of being a Hereford evacuee. (Catch up with them again at [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk), In Our Age 43, 44 and 45).

## Read all about it!

**Keith James looks at the changing fortunes of the Hereford press and predicts troubled times ahead for our local media.**

Long gone are the calls of the news vendor shouting out the evening news headlines on a city centre street and few youngsters have their first taste of a working life delivering the morning newspapers. Hereford knew both the High Town siren call and the stream of young schoolboys on their red painted bikes as they left Smith's in Commercial Street and headed around the city with panniers full of newsprint. Newspapers had a special place in the community and Hereford was well served by three local 'rags'. In the 1950s there was *The Citizen*, the *Hereford Times* and the *Hereford Citizen and Bulletin*. Their journalists and photographers became well-known and even personalities in their own right spending their working life in the county.

*The Citizen*, a Hereford edition of the Gloucester-based evening newspaper, was headed by Ted Woodruffe and operated from premises in Bastion Mews off Union Street. Woodruffe later, in 1958, became sports editor of the *Hereford Times* and known as chief publicist for Hereford United FC by the club's supporters.

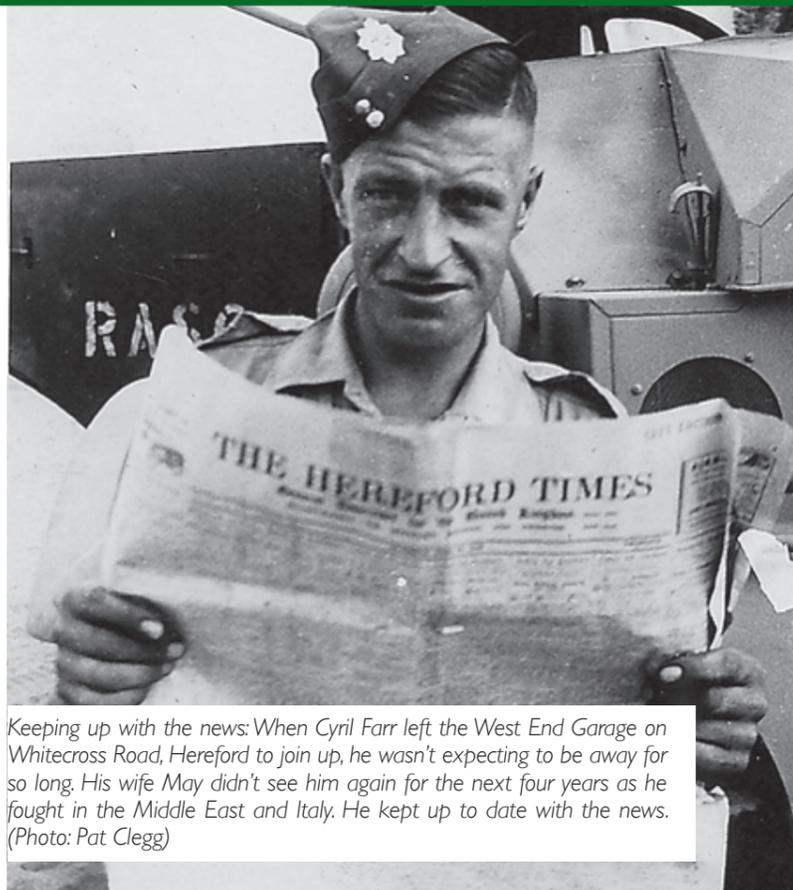
The weekly *Hereford Times*, of course, survives to this day and many will remember the mid-week 'Green-un' which was published on a Tuesday and was appropriately pale green in colour. Owned privately by the Macaskie family, its editorial offices and printing works were in Maylord Street opposite the Hereford Citadel of the Salvation Army. Few in the farming community did not know agricultural correspondent TJC 'Tubby' Court whilst Chief Reporter Tony Badman was a familiar figure at Council meetings and magistrates' courts. Badman finally retired at the age of 80. One reporter, John Palamountain, spent his entire working life in Hereford journalism. He joined the *Hereford Citizen and Bulletin* in 1952 as the office junior, became sports reporter on the *Hereford Evening News* until 1960 and finally retired from the *Hereford Times* in 2000.

Berrows bought the *Hereford Times* after the death of proprietor George Macaskie in 1963. Earlier in 1959, after buying and adapting the old Flour Mills in Bath Street, the Berrows Group launched a daily evening newspaper called the *Hereford Evening News*. Initially the newly acquired weekly and evening daily operated from their separate existing premises, but then the *Hereford Times* moved to the Bath Street site and the Maylord Street site was demolished. Sadly it is recorded that cellars filled with old photographic and other files were simply bulldozed over and buried. Later the reporters and editorial staff would make further moves, firstly to Aubrey Street and then to Holmer Road. Recently it has moved again to Skylon Park at Rotherwas.

The *Hereford Citizen and Bulletin* was the original Hereford newspaper of the Worcester-based Berrow's Group and had offices in St Owen's Street opposite the Town Hall. It was printed in Worcester and edited by Gilbert Smith with Don MacFarlane as chief reporter. Photographer Derek Evans (left) quit the newspaper to start his own freelance office being replaced by equally well-known Dennis Lewis (far left). The paper folded as plans were laid for the daily evening newspaper.

The *Hereford Times* is the sole surviving newspaper title and towards the end of the last century was seen as a successful and viable publication commanding a considerable national reputation. Every edition was filled with commercial advertising to such an extent that it included a separate property section. It must have been eyed with envy for the *Hereford Journal* soon challenged it. Published from premises in Widemarsh Street it was edited by campaigning journalist Colin Osborne for a number of years before that too folded.

Recently fighting losing sales and lost revenues, the *Hereford Times* shocked readers with a very considerable hike in price. With revenues falling from society's switch to online sales, the growth of social media and local radio, newspapers have been treading a precarious path and have suffered another recent body blow with the lockdown for coronavirus.



Keeping up with the news: When Cyril Farr left the West End Garage on Whitecross Road, Hereford to join up, he wasn't expecting to be away for so long. His wife May didn't see him again for the next four years as he fought in the Middle East and Italy. He kept up to date with the news. (Photo: Pat Clegg)

## Tough times

*Arthur Hughes* recalls the hard edge to life in the Ivy House children's home as he talks to Suzie Williams

"My mum Lillian died on the third of January 1934. She left eight children, the youngest 12 months old, the oldest 12 years old."

Arthur's mother died from pre-eclampsia carrying her ninth child. Unable to support the family Arthur's father, Walter Percy Hughes, put Arthur, then six years old, and his older brother Geoff into the Hereford children's home, Ivy House on Ledbury Road. The boys remained there for six years. They returned to live with their father who, by now, had set up home with a widowed mother and her two children Bill and Mary Mellings, from Tarrington.

"He was renting a place with six acres called the Van near Wormbridge." Arthur and Geoff were moved from Tupsley's school to Wormbridge's.

"You never seen nothing like it!" recalls Arthur. His brother Geoff and stepbrother Bill, who had a talent for drawing, shared a desk. The headmistress's husband, himself a teacher, came into the classroom one day.

"He was walking round, looking at what you been doing, like, and he said to Bill: 'William, you've got the eye of an artist.' When Geoff joked 'there's another one here' the teacher struck him so hard he fell to the floor."

Geoff should have stayed silent: "You learned that by being in Ivy House: you only spoke when you were spoken to." Arthur remembered one occasion at Ivy House when a new boy asked: "What's for tea?"

"You always used to have bread and jam for tea. This other kid, Davis, said, 'Oh I expect it'll be bread and jam.'"

The Master, passing by, overheard the conversation and turned on Davis: "Oh it'll be bread for you, Davis."

"That's the sort of discipline you knew," says Arthur.

Arthur from Lea, Ross-on-Wye later joined the army, serving in Northern Ireland and Palestine. On his first night in the barracks, sharing the dormitory with 30 other young men, he woke to the sound of crying. "I realised these soldiers were missing their parents, like. But I'd done my crying: there was no cry left in me, to be honest. I'd been kicked from bloody pillar to post (pardon my language) since I was six."

Arthur's first job, after leaving home at 14, was as a servant at Llysdyman, in Newbridge-on-Wye, the home of Sir Charles Dillwyn-Venables-Llewellyn, the Radnorshire High Sheriff.



He woke to the sound of crying. "But I'd done my crying; there was no cry left in me, to be honest. I'd been kicked from bloody pillar to post since I was six."

"One of my jobs was to go round making sure the fires were right while they were having dinner." On this particular evening he'd lit a fire in the billiard room, but then strolled over to the window to admire the view over the Wye. "There was a decanter of port there, and a glass. And a pair of binoculars. So anyway I poured a glass and was looking through these binoculars when I realised there was somebody behind me. It was the old man! Course they'd finished dinner!"

Sir Charles said nothing: "He smiled at me; he never even told the butler!"

Arthur eventually settled near Ross with his own family after working at the Imperial in Hereford, (the landlord, Mr Jones, had lost an eye in a ruckus with some Canadian soldiers), The Swan and the Royal in Ross (where he met his wife-to-be Beryl), the Gloster Aircraft company, then building the Meteor jet, and as a tanker lorry driver.

## Ivy House

**Ron Morris** was another boy who had the unfortunate experience of being sent to live at the Ivy House children's home as a lad.

His son, also Ron, writes: "Emily, his mother, ended up in the Workhouse on Union Walk. Emily had seven sons and two daughters, one being Ron's twin sister. Every Sunday they'd be dressed in their best clothes and marched to the Workhouse to visit their mother."

When one of his older brothers managed to rent a house on Edgar Street, next to the Moorfields surgery, he took in the family including Ron and his mother. "My father didn't say much about his time at Ivy House except that he wasn't very happy being there." Ron died last year, aged 92.

## From My Album *Jon Hunt, Judith Morgan and Anne Milne*



Evocative scene: this moody image was caught by amateur photographer Geoffrey Hunt on his 1938 Kodak 620 Duo. Pictured (below) outside his Ledbury home in 1944, Geoff was born in 1916 in Derby, but moved with his family to Ledbury when he was four. His father, a Great Western Railway employee, was initially housed in the Ledbury Clock Tower flat and later at a house in Bank Crescent.



Geoff moved to Hereford in his late teens. "He met my mum Irene 'Jean' Helme when they both worked at Boots," writes their son Jon. "She'd grown up in Cornwall Street and they moved to Baysham Street while he worked for the Red Cross. After the war he became an architectural model maker, and later an architect, for Worcester City Council's planning office. He moved to Worcester in 1960 and stayed here until his death in 2008."



The full picture: Judith Morgan's evocative VE party photograph was taken in Guildford Street, Hereford in May 1945. The adults, left to right, include (unknown), Mr Croft, Judith and her sister Valerie's grandmother, Mrs Emily Dee (seated), her father, Godfrey Broad and mother Jessie (seated), Harry Evans and, standing, Mrs Fleetwood (seated). Also possibly in the picture think's Judith are Reg Scott, Neville Payne, Trevor Watts, Eddie Stirling and Babs, Keith Price, Bob Hicks, Jean and Norman Dewsbury, Johnny Fishbourne, Alan and Derek Neesham, Richard Lovie and John Cotton.



Ross-on-Wye: Highfield School was evacuated from Gorleston-on-Sea, Norfolk to New Street or Kyrle Street along with headmistress Miss Cleo Blank and her dog Chum. Anne Milne, daughter of the Brockhampton Court head gardener and Home Guardsman Jim Lewis, would catch the train from Fawley to attend.



Partying publicans: Landlords and ladies join Hereford mayor F.R.W. Blackler (centre) for the annual Licenced Victuallers dinner and dance. Back row (left to right) Mrs E. Hall (Bunch of Grapes), Mrs G. Woodward (The Plough), Mrs F. Ridgway (Seven Stars, Clehonger), the Mayor, Mrs L. Cobley (The Ship), toastmaster Mr T. Chambers, Mrs A. Jenkins (The Red Lion Hotel) and Mrs L. Pugh (The Barton Tavern). Seated (left to right) Mrs L. George (Horse and Groom), Mayoress Mrs Blackler, Mrs F.E. Ford (The Booth Hall Hotel), Mr and Mrs F.A.A. Atkinson, Mrs G. Fry (The Rose and Crown) and Mrs G. Southall (The Crown and Anchor, Lugwardine). (Photo: John Ridgway whose parents ran the Seven Stars at Clehonger.)



Making the most of it: VE Day, Portfield Street, Hereford. (Photo John Ridgway)

## Italians in Herefordshire

During the war hundreds of Italian prisoners of war ended up in Herefordshire, especially after that nation's disastrous North Africa campaign.

Official records list Herefordshire's Italian POWs being held either at Ledbury or Moreton on Lugg. Yet IOA readers recall POWs at Wellbrook in Peterchurch; the Hunt Kennels and the Park in Wormelow; Tupsley; the former SAS camp in Lower Bullingham; Weston under Penyard; and Foxley.

One Peterchurch Italian POW even assisted with a military air crash investigation: see Moccas air crash page 11.

Gerry Davies's father remembered the POWs near Aconbury: "My father told me stories about a very friendly bunch of Italian POWs in Aconbury Wood. They'd meet them in the woods – there was only one guard – they'd teach each other their form of arms drill."



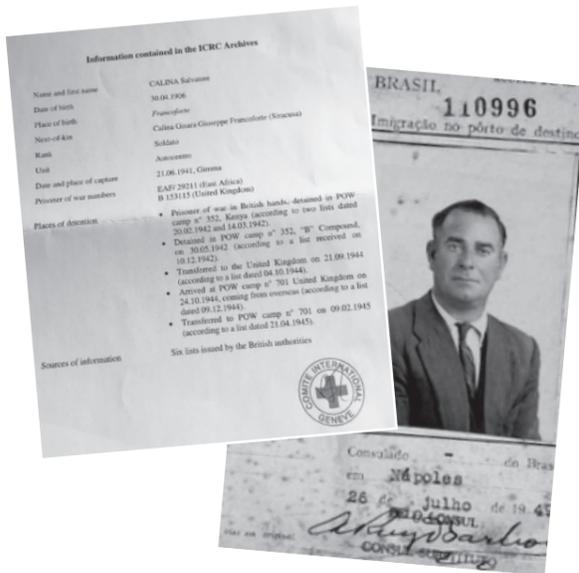
### Wormelow POWs

Roger Partridge's parents farmed at Upper Pengethley during the last war. Like any good farmer's boy, he had plenty of chores to perform, but one was unusual for a boy of 14: "He would cycle to Wormelow POW camp, collect a working crew of Italians and deliver them to the farm before heading off to school in Ross," explains his son Adrian. Roger, who died last year, was especially impressed by one Italian who could, carrying a bag of wheat under each arm, mount the granary steps at Upper Pengethley. Here (left) is the Ross Grammar School boy at 18 in 1947 with some sporting trophies.

And Toddler Maureen was photographed by her father Tony Williams with either Italian or German POWs at Bryngwyn, Wormelow (*In Our Age*, issue 24, [www.herefordshirelore.org.uk](http://www.herefordshirelore.org.uk)) during the war. There are also delightful stories and photos at [www.old-ledbury.co.uk/POWcamp.htm](http://www.old-ledbury.co.uk/POWcamp.htm). Camp 27 was erected on Mable's Furlong at The Southend, Ledbury.



This portrait of Heather Manning's father, Stuart Gavin-Robinson, was signed 'POW G. Mostini, 26.6.1944'. "His parents, Ralph and Winifred owned Post House at Vowchurch at the time and they must have had Italian POWs working there," writes Heather.



A copy of Salvatore Calina's Brazilian passport and the Red Cross report to his family.

### Salvatore Calina

"I'm looking for my grandfather, imprisoned in a Herefordshire POW camp in the 1940s," writes Antonio Calina. Sicilian Salvatore Calina fought the British with his fellow Italians during the East African campaign. Captured at Gimma in 1941 he, along with 8,000 other Italians, was sent to a British POW camp in Kenya. According to the Red Cross he was transferred to Camp 701 in England where he remained until being liberated on February 9, 1945.

Salvatore did not stay in Italy. He made his home in Brazil and died around 1975. So where was Camp 701? Official reports suggest the Boars Head, Walgherton, Nantwich but Antonio believes he was held somewhere in Herefordshire.

## Moccas air crash

Many plans have gone awry during the lockdown, not least those of Dorstone History Society.

The Society planned to unveil a memorial to the air crew of a Wellington bomber that crashed on Moccas on April 29 in 1945. The stone memorial, erected close to the scene of the crash, was to have been unveiled by Dulcie Richardson.

When she was five Dulcie Jones, as she was then, was among the first to arrive on the scene with her father Wilfred. She remembered seeing the wreckage and being lifted back over a stile and told: "Go and tell your Mother what's happened and send for help". One of the Jones' workers was dispatched by bicycle to Dorstone to find a phone.

The Wellington Mk X LP410, 105 OTU, RAF Transport Command, was on a training flight from Nuneaton when at 10,000 feet it ran into a snow storm. The aircraft crashed on Moccas Park killing all six air crew: Flight Lieutenant Harold Crowther (23), Warrant Officer (pupil pilot) Henry Bays (23), navigator Eric Skelton (22), Pilot Officer (pupil navigator) Geoffrey Smith (23), Flight Sergeant (wireless instructor) William Forster (28) and Flight Sergeant (pupil wireless operator) Gwilym Whitcombe (24).

The aircraft took off at 10.19 a.m. and flew to Nutts Corner (Belfast). It was due to return to base via The Smalls when, flying at about 10,000ft the aircraft encountered a heavy snow storm on the approach to Dorstone. It caused the aircraft to go into a steep dive which was partially recovered from, but caused the airframe to fail, resulting in LP410 crashing onto high ground in Moccas Park.

In the official report, 10-year-old John Goring described being "in one of our fields with Cyril Williams (also aged 10) when a big plane flew low over my head. It came from Snodhill way and went towards Moccas Park. I thought it was going to crash into one of the trees. Shortly afterwards, I heard a loud bang and I saw some smoke and all kinds of stuff going up in to the air. I then ran home and told my Daddy."

Terlizzi Carmine, an Italian prisoner of war at the Peterchurch Camp added his own account: "I was not far from Cross Lodge, Dorstone. I saw an aeroplane diving fast and circle. When I first saw it I thought it would strike me so I got into a ditch with my bicycle. Shortly after I heard a whoof and saw smoke and flames."

Sarah Catterall, the chair of Dorstone History Society, had contacted relatives of the air crew, many of whom had hoped to attend the service of remembrance, now postponed until next year.

### Radar aircraft crash

John Kinross, who was himself based with the RAF at Credenhill, writes about the memorial to the Handley Page Halifax Mk II, which crashed near Goodrich on June 7 1942. The test flight, from RAF Defford in Worcestershire, carried vital experimental radar equipment, and the crash, caused by a servicing fault, killed three leading electronics engineers including Alan Blumlein, the five-man crew and three others. A memorial raised by readers of the *Hereford Times* was unveiled at Welsh Bicknor. John had contacted Mike Phillips, the son of one of the crew, Pilot Office Algernon Phillips. "He had never met his father. He was able to attend the unveiling of the memorial along with the two sons of Alan Blumlein, the chief scientist."



Women's Defence: Major Rex Townsend, seated centre, led A Company of the Hereford Home Guard during the Second World War. The Company includes several women – women were admitted to the Local Defence Volunteers, latterly the Home Guard, from 1943. Rex, who ran the family stationery and jewellery business from 78 Eign Street, Hereford had previously served as a medic in France during the First World War, a terrible job, writes his son Tim: "The German snipers always tried to pick off stretcher bearers as they collected the wounded."



Twenty-eight-year-old Flight Sergeant William Forster was married to Edith from Shildon, County Durham in the village where his mum and dad Thomas and Ruth Forster lived. After the crash his body was returned for burial there. William was the instructor, wireless operator / air gunner. (Photo: Forster family)

## Staying at the Swan

Angela Croft remembers Ross-on-Wye, 1945–1946

Flocks of ewes were herded down into the valleys to winter in their thick woolly coats. The windows glazed with ice, we sang carols; fogged the air with our breath but mother's health was suffering and soon after we broke up from school, Uncle Bill Thomas came up from Ross-on-Wye and said:

"If you come back with me for Christmas, you can have ice-cream every day."

And so he took my brother, John, and me on the train to stay courtesy of The Swan Hotel, a Trust House he managed with his wife, Eleanor, during the war. My aunt had lost a baby boy in childbirth and greeted us warmly. Given the run of the place, we would go into the bar before opening time and play darts, sample a cocktail cherry glistening in the jar and gather up the shiny metal bottle tops that bejewelled the wooden floor.

We befriended two boys, Gug and Rupert, whose father, a British army general, relaxed in the lounge with his wife for afternoon tea, while we played hide and seek behind the huge oak cupboards and studded leather sofas.

In the evening we put our shoes outside our bedroom door to be polished (my aunt told us years later, she cleaned them herself). I always took a ruler into the bathroom since a notice on the wall read: "Do not fill the bath above the two and a half inch watermark."

Our guardians would take us for long walks along the Wye with Bosky and Lynn, their Kerry Blues. If the dogs spotted an otter – and they were plentiful at that time – they would race over the snow-laden fields and down to the river, skid over the ice and dive in.

The hotel was decorated for Christmas, with a big tree in the entrance hall. On Christmas Eve I was so excited, waiting in bed for Santa Claus with his sackful of presents. I heard the door open and, peeping out from under the covers, the stardust fell from my eyes when I saw my aunt put two stockings at the foot of our beds. I woke my brother to tell him Father Christmas didn't fly through the sky on a sleigh. At almost nine he had already expressed doubts and scoffed at my belief in fairy tales.

### Famous writer

In the New Year (1946) a banquet was held for author Vaughan Wilkins who had written about Queen Victoria. I was shoed out of the kitchen when I popped in to see what was cooking. Saw the meringues, the parfait biscuits, smelt the consommé, the culinary herbs; heard the chopping of vegetables chime in with the click of the German cockroach on the tiles.

I was sent smartly off to bed – only to tiptoe down again later to see the dining room table spread with laundered cloths and damask napkins, candles aglow. I peered through the banisters to catch sight of the author and his glittering wife, when an inebriated gentleman stumbled towards me: "If you don't get back upstairs, I'll strangle you with your hair ribbon."

Time to pack my haul of shiny bottle tops into my school case and insist on humping them around Hereford Cathedral before we caught the train back home to North Wales...

Poet Angela Croft's *Dancing with Chagall* is published by Prole Books. Much of her work reflects her childhood split between North Wales and Cornwall before returning to London to work as a journalist.



Bill and Eleanor Thomas, outside the Swan in Ross, and above Angela, her friends Gug and Rupert and far right, her brother John at Ross.



Local businesses, such as G.F. Roberts, have always been vital to our economy. Painter Bros, for example, celebrates its centenary this year, writes Nick Jones. "The company's most famous project was the fabrication (and site assembly) of all the steel components for the Festival of Britain's totemic Skylon." Did you work for Roberts? Painters? How about Bulmers, Sun Valley or Wiggins? Why not share with your memories?



## Who do thee reckon you be?

In the second part of her memoir Leicestershire's Ann Stoakes recalls her early days at Ashperton School and the benefits of her grammar school education.

Starting school at Ashperton neither my sister nor I could understand the dialect. Our fellow pupils were hostile especially when they (and my teachers) realised my standards of literacy were higher than the then Herefordshire norm.

I had to endure taunting in a language I found hard to understand: "Her's big sorted" and "Who do thee reckon you be? A clever dogs?"

A couple of days later an older girl called me over and announced she was my minder. Her father was foreman on a neighbouring farm and his boss had been told by my Dad's (Gilbert Whiting), new boss to look out for us. Dad's boss Mr Thompson of Pixley Court was a gentleman farmer, a county council alderman, an influential person!

The head teacher thought it unwise to put me in the top Standard 5 so I stayed in Standard 4. He patiently explained to my Dad why, but suggested I be entered for the entrance exam to Ledbury Grammar School. 'Council school kids' weren't usually entered, only bright kids from church schools. But Dad's boss arranged it and I passed.

Meanwhile we attended church for the first time. (Going to church meant you were settled and ready for callers.) Our previous parish's parson had written to the Pixley parson commending us as a 'good church family'. Dad had been a churchwarden and I'd been a chorister. As we left church we were introduced to every member of the congregation.

The parson visited us one evening that week. Sunday clothes were worn, a fire was lit in the best room and he used the front door. Ever after that, when the parson called, he, like everyone else, walked through the back door, shouted a greeting, put the kettle onto the fire and sat down to wait for Mum or me to make tea.

### The Bish

I attended the Grammar School from 1944–50, dad paying the fees until the Education Act came in. Girls studied physics, chemistry, biology and applied maths along with the boys, headmaster Pip Greaves telling those parents who objected that women were, and should be able to, carry on with the jobs they had done all through the war.

One teacher, Miss Bishop, was a very private person. With her short, straight hair, she always dressed in tweeds and wore sensible shoes and thick stockings. 'Bish' was the rector of Putley's daughter and among the first women to have studied at Oxford. She kindled my passion for history.

Ledbury Grammar School enabled me to train at a prestigious teaching hospital in Birmingham and qualify as a registered nurse and midwife at Hereford General Hospital, then as a Senior Night sister at Gloucester Royal Hospital until I married and gave up work as women did then.

I have lived in Herefordshire now for 73 years and can call myself an incomer instead of a stranger. I married a man who was born, educated and worked all his life in Herefordshire and my children qualify as 'Whitefaces'. And the girl who'd become my minder at Ashperton school? Many years later, working for Social Services, she helped care for my Dad.

## Betty Hartland School of Dance

Florence Morris left Harvey's jam factory in Bewell Street, Hereford during the First World War to secure a job at Rotherwas' munitions factory, says Jan Preedy. Florence even took to the Kemble Theatre stage in Broad Street in 1918 as part of the celebrations for Armistice Day. Like Florence Jan too enjoyed dancing, learning the steps at Betty Hartland's School of Dancing above Sid Wright's green grocery warehouse in Little Berrington Street.

And like so many readers Betty stayed home throughout lockdown: "We got back from two world wars – we'll get back to normal after this," she insists.

And Chris Playford messaged us on Facebook (In Our Age): "The man on the right in your photo of Henry Rogers (IOA 55 page 2) is my father Len Playford, manager of Hereford Produce Company. The photo was probably taken at their Barton Yard depot (now Sainsburys) where the bananas arrived by train and were stored in a heated room until ripe."

## Tiger Coates

Reader **Charles Weston** attended the Hereford High School for Boys from 1954–1961. "Michael Young's article on art teacher E. H. D. 'Tiger' Coates (IOA 55 page 3 and *Bulmers' Angels*, page 7) was not the only master with a nickname. There was Bunny Reynolds (Bugs Bunny lookalike), Gabby Heys (Wild Western film character), Taff Owen (distinctive Welsh brogue), Oscar Wilde (obvious literary connections), Horace Cook (vague classics connection), Bomber Cook (ex-RAF), Spike Howgate (distinctive hairstyle) and The Yob – K. J. Jones for his fondness for brutal military discipline in class.

The school magazine featured a 1933 photo of Mr Ruscoe, headmaster from 1927–1958, with four staff who were to teach me 25 years later: E. R. 'Erky' Wood, K. J. 'The Yob' Jones, (back row), J. I. 'Steve' Stephens (end right, middle row) and A. 'Jammy' Hartley (seated, end right front row). Academic gowns had become less de rigueur by the time of the second photograph taken in 1962. Mr Jones (with pipe) was still in post and 'Spadger' Morris, himself an ex-pupil, is cosily established by the fireplace. The other three members of staff were Mr Bissell, Mr Bridges and Mr Heys.



## Who was Tommy Faulkner?

Twenty-two-year-old Tommy was the son of Charles Henry and Florence Faulkner who lived somewhere in Hereford during the last war. Tommy, or to give him his full title, Sapper Thomas William Faulkner, Service No. 2115238; Royal Engineers, 9 (Airborne) Field Company was shot by a firing squad at the German Army base at Slettebø on November 20 1942 and buried in a Commonwealth War Grave at Eiganes Cemetery, Stavanger, Norway.

Tommy was one of the soldiers on Operation Freshman involving a group of specially trained Royal Engineers flying in two Horsa Gliders and two Halifax bombers with the aim of destroying the heavy water facility at Vemork in Norway. The facility was part of Hitler's attempt to build an atomic bomb.

According to Bruce Tocher who is researching the story, only one aircraft returned safely from the mission. All the soldiers and airmen from the three other planes were either killed when their aircraft crashed, or executed shortly after by the German Army. Does anyone know the Faulkner family? Let us know at IOA.

## Where is it?

The corner of Union Street and Bath Street, Hereford, writes new subscriber **Robert Green** in response to our quiz in IOA 55.

## Lottery grant

Herefordshire Lore has received £3000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to continue its work in Herefordshire, contributing to the county's historical archives by recording first-hand accounts. Chair, Julie Orton-Davies, is delighted: "Thanks to the National Lottery and its players we can continue to produce and distribute our quarterly magazine, *In Our Age*, sharing our stories, memories and photographs. We're grateful that The National Lottery Heritage Fund is supporting us at this crucial time – it's a lifeline to us and others who are passionate about sustaining heritage for the benefit of all."

## Black Lives Matter

On-the-field racist chants against black football players is not new. Hereford United historian **Ron Parrott** recalls United's first black player, Tommy Best. Tommy earned the nickname, 'Darkie Best' when he served in Belfast during the war: "He was actually very proud of it." However he experienced some of the worst taunts from one particular Welsh club whose supporters threw bananas and made monkey chants. "I'll never forget Tommy's reply," says Ron. "He winked at me and said, 'You know, the more they taunted me, the harder I tried!'"



## Bobblestock Where's Jackie?

In 1988 Bobblestock's Jackie Smith was working as a tour guide for Thomson Holidays. Jackie, fluent in Russian, was guiding a group around Saint Petersburg and Moscow when a Peter Altman from Edgware came up with a strange proposition: he wanted someone to help him set a world record for the fastest visit to all 123 stations on the Moscow metro. Jackie agreed and the pair eventually entered the Guinness Book of Records with their 9 hour 39 minute and 50 seconds underground journey.

Researcher Adham Fisher is trying to trace Jackie, who would probably be in her fifties by now. (Could this have been Jackie Jones who in IOA 17 sent us a photo of her Grandad, Home Guardsman Frank Howells?) Let us know at IOA.

## Character portrait Nana Davies - Maria Weal, 1879–1958

Maria Weal was born in 1879 at Clifford. Later she worked as a barmaid at The Bear Inn, Hay-on-Wye: "Say what you like but keep your hands to yourself".

Around 1901, aged 22, she was a domestic servant at Lady Arboar Farm, Eardisley. Whilst there the farmer's son, about six years older, apparently had a drop too much cider and had a mishap during the night.

Next morning whilst out picking apples with the other staff, the farmer's son appeared. Maria in her inevitable style, said to him: "Your arse made a fool of you last night, Sir."

When she became a maid at Bell Farm, Dorstone the Breese family found it easier to call her Sarah (ironically she had an older sister called Sarah) and the name stuck. Here she met her future husband, William John Davies, 'Jack The Brook' who was also working there.

They married at Clifford in 1903 and remained married until Jack passed away on Christmas Day, 1949. They had six children, only five survived.

Her door at Brook Cottage, Dorstone was always open for anyone to drop by. In later years when her eyesight was failing she would say loudly (her husband was quite deaf from a child): "Who was that bugger going by?" much to her family's discomfort.

She could talk to anyone. Dorstone's rector, Rev. George Henry Powell was a hunting parson – if, when the hunt was passing someone failed to touch their cap, Powell would send them back to do so. Maria/Sarah, however, was happy to advise him, seeing him sat on a stone seat awaiting the bus: "You'll catch a cold in your backside sitting there Sir."

When the BBC broadcast a service from Hereford Cathedral, Powell, as a prebendary, was chosen to preach. A bus, possibly Bowyers of Peterchurch, carried many locals, including Sarah, to the service. Mrs Powell met Sarah in the next day and asked: "What did you think of the service, Sarah?"

"Well, marm, I thought our old parson looked the best of the lot of them." Apparently Rev. Powell was quite pleased.

Sarah also laid out the dead. A story from *Dorstone 1890 to 1990* relates how milkman Ted Perry was dispatched to sit with a villager, Jim, who was found lolling in his chair with his boots half on. Presently in bustling Sarah, gave Jim's ear a vigorous tweaking and pronounced him dead. Then, firmly but kindly, she organised those present: "Come on, get hold of him. You know what's to be done."

Her working day was over when, sat by the fire, she would remove her hat and throw it on to the settle to await the morning.

Robert Morgan, Maria's grandson



# Thank you – NHS

In the light of the corona pandemic Herefordshire Lore is researching a social history of health care in Herefordshire. We'd love to hear your stories, reminiscences, memories, or see your photos.

Health care, in all of its many forms, touches our lives from the cradle to the grave. From midwifery to herbalism; from dental care to bone setting; from traditional home remedies to palliative care.

Whether you were a nurse or a doctor, a specialist or a cook, a cleaner or a carer, worked in eye medicine or in mental health – and everything in between – give us a call at 07845 9078912 or email [info@herefordshirelore.org.uk](mailto:info@herefordshirelore.org.uk)

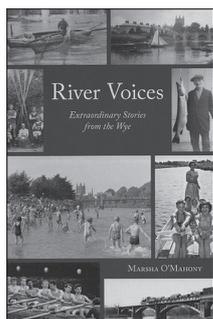


1947 and Great Western Railway men Jimmy Perkins and Godfrey Broad brave the winter weather at Burghill. In the age of steam, railway workers often suffered eye injuries from escaping steam and hot cinders necessitating emergency treatment at the Victoria Eye Hospital in Whitecross Road, Hereford. (Photo Judith Morgan)

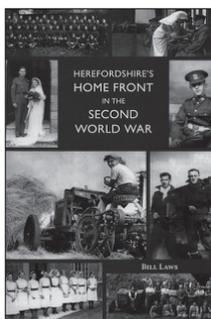


Emergency measures: the St John Ambulance Brigade provided first aid at county events. Lynden Haynes loaned this photo of the Hereford Brigade in the 1950s with his father, Frank, seated centre.

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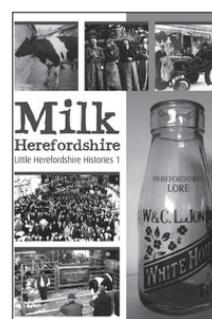
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