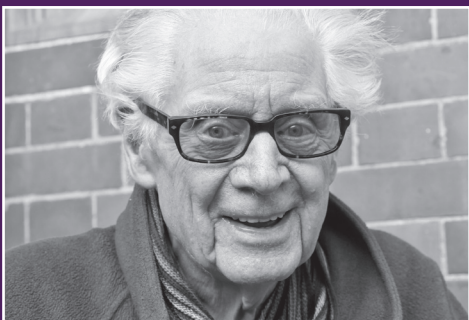


# In Our Age

Herefordshire Lore : Living local history

Issue 59  
Winter 2021



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## Herefordshire POWs

Our feature on Prisoners of War (IOA 56, 57 & 58) has prompted even more memories from our readers. *David Phelps* writes in with his mother's amusing story:

"My mother, Ena Phelps, worked for Captain de Quincey at The Vern near Bodenham during the Second World War. Several Italian POWs were sent there. One, named Giovanni, was considered by all the girls to be the best-looking and it was thought a great coup on her part when he took a shine to her. One morning he came up to her and said, 'put your hands in my pocket, Ena'. My mother was shocked and said, 'I'll do no such thing!' The other girls hooted with laughter. Shame-faced, Giovanni put his hand in his pocket and took out his chocolate ration, which he had been trying to give to her. 'He hadn't meant anything by it,' my mother explained when she told me the story years later."



Ena Phelps aged 19 in 1938.

## Herefordshire Lore

Herefordshire Lore launched in 1989 and we've been collecting and publishing your memories ever since. We are: chair Julie Orton-Davies, associate editor Bill Laws, editor Marsha O'Mahony, 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, Chris and Irene Tomlinson, Linda Ward and Betty Webb.

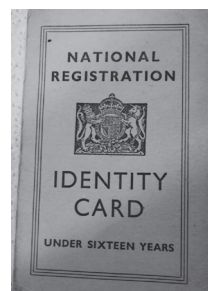
## Hereford City Council award

A huge thank you to the Community Development Grants Committee at Hereford City Council for supporting our work by granting an award. We are delighted as this will help us to continue to distribute *In Our Age* across the city. It is great that our City Council recognises the importance of our work.



## National Registration Identity Cards

We hear lots about ration cards, but what about these, National Registration Identity cards? They were introduced during the Second World War under the National Registration Act 1939. Everyone, including children, had to carry an identity (ID) card at all times to show who they were and where they lived. They were abolished in 1952 under the new Conservative Government. Have you still got yours? Thank you to **Frankie Hereford** for sending his in.



## It's goodbye, but it's not the end

As Chair I would like to welcome our new Editor, Marsha O'Mahony, and wish her every success in her new role. I would also like to thank Bill for his inspirational approach to journalism and his integrity in describing the lives of local people, allowing an insight that we can enjoy and trust. He has been guiding the committee and editing *In Our Age* for 22 years. His instinct to start recording the memories of Herefordians in the mid-1980s was an important and inspirational one and has ensured that the extraordinary stories of the ordinary are not forgotten. I am pleased to report that Bill is not leaving us completely. He will now take on a new role as Associate Editor.

Meanwhile, as members of the cultural and heritage sector in the county, we roundly welcome news of a probable new investment in a new museum and library in the city. We shall be watching progress keenly.

**Julie Orton-Davies, Chair**

Front cover: Tom Henderson of Brilley stands on a frozen River Wye at Whitney, in the winter of 1962/63.

## Leominster Clifton Cinema Projectionist

George Colley, who passed away in 2018, fulfilled a childhood dream by becoming a projectionist at the Clifton Cinema in the mid-1950s.

"I was working with another two projectionists, because there were always three of us working in the projection room at a time. Each film lasted two or three reels, so we always had to have a reel ready to pick up as the other one finished. The audience wouldn't have noticed, but our signal was the appearance of a black dot in the right-hand corner: that's when we knew it was changeover time.

"We had to do this roughly every 20 minutes, but there were occasions when we got mixed up. I remember the Diana Dors' film, *Yield the Night*, when she was told there would be 'no reprieve' twice! But no one seemed to notice. Particularly memorable was *Gone with the Wind*. It consisted of 25 spools of film and was a lot of work. If the film has been stretched out, it would have reached the bottom of Dinmore Hill. It was so popular that it played to increased prices, which was quite unusual then.

"Saturday morning kids' club was always popular. There were usually a couple of cartoons, a feature film (usually a cowboy western), then a serial, *Tarzan* or *The Lone Ranger*, to finish. And of course there was Elvis Presley's *Jailhouse Rock* and Cliff Richard's *Summer Holiday*, they were very popular too. Bill Hayley's *Rock around the Clock* came with a warning: 'no dancing in the aisles and no bad language or behaviour during the screening'. If there was, we would stop the film. The 1978 John

Travolta and Olivia Newton John film, *Grease*, was the only film ever at the Clifton that ran for four weeks and queues ran all the way to the Talbot; it was the longest ever running film in Leominster.

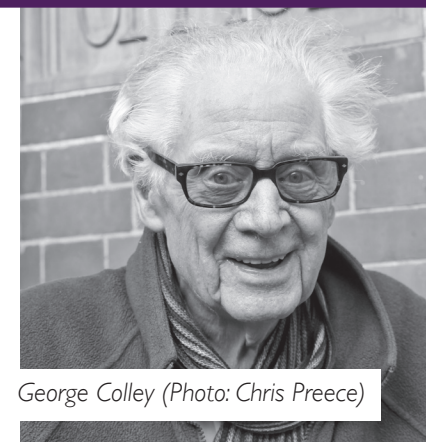
"In those days, the film contained nitrate and was highly flammable and therefore it had to be handled with great care – no smoking on the job for us. If we wanted a smoke then we nipped out onto the roof.

"A lot of locals worked as usherettes. Their uniforms would be checked for neatness, straight seams on stockings that sort of thing. Walenty Pytel's mother was one of them.

"When the last film was shown in 1980 before the cinema closed, we were still using the same projection equipment that screened the first film in 1936. I was sad when it closed but it wasn't getting the support it needed anymore."

For more on George's reminiscences, please visit <http://facesandvoices.org.uk/portfolio/george-colley/>

Editor's note: Do you have any childhood/teenage memories of going to the cinema? The Roxy in Ross-on-Wye, Kingston's Picture House? Get in touch. We would love to hear from you.



George Colley (Photo: Chris Preece)



## Home time at Walford School 1965

The county's Women's Institutes have an excellent record in recording their communities. In the mid-1960s, Walford WI set about doing just that. Fifty-five years later, this document, now part of the HARC archive, appears extraordinary. Here we see headmaster, Mr Hadley, seeing children safely on to the school minibus. Were you one of the pupils?

**NB:** HARC is the Hereford Archive and Record Centre based in Rotherwas in Hereford. A fantastic resource if you are doing family or project research.



## Herefordshire in winter



Mr Spode of Hills farm, Llanwarne, clearing heavy snowfall in 1947.  
(Photo: Chris Tomlinson)



In 1947 nurses at the 'open air' Hewat Ward, Hereford General Hospital, did not let a bit of snow stop their work. In the orthopaedic ward it was 'business as usual'. The screens have been pushed back, snow cleared, and soon the patients will be wheeled out for some fresh clean air. (Photo: Mary Blackwell)



Groundsman Bill Groves on a very snowy Edgar Street Pitch, January 1972. (Photo: Derek Evans Archive, HARC)



The great snowfall of 1982 provided perfect conditions for tobogganing in fields near to Whittem Way. (Photo: Terry Croker)

## Snow, floods, we've seen them all



Floods on St Martin's Street were a common sight right up until the late 1990s. Worried householders peer out of their houses in this 1946 photo.  
(Photo: Derek Foxton)



Greyfriars have had it hard when it came to flooding this year. Our thoughts go out to all the residents there. This photo was taken in the mid-1970s.



Who do you think is rescuing who here?! This is the Boat Inn at Sugwas during some serious flooding in the late 1940s.



Floods in Winforton, early 1960s. An RSPCA inspector is helping Mr Amos round up a runaway sow, with the help of a bucketful of swill. (Photo: Derek Evans/HARC)



## Cricket, rugby, tennis, parachutes and airplanes

Our feature on the Hereford City Sports Club (IOA 58) brought back some good memories for several of our readers.

**Ray Williams**, 91, of Hinton, played rugby there in 1946: "There were two rugby clubs in Hereford then: the Hereford Rugby Club and the Old Herefordians, who used to play over the far side of Holmer Road. So they amalgamated and I started playing for the club in around 1946. For a short while there was an aero club there and we used to have to take one set of posts down when these light aircraft were coming in or taking off. They used to come from the top corner and come down to take off. I think the Indian Army was stationed there too.

"There wasn't a great deal down there. There was a cricket pitch there, but hockey and rugby were the main things. We moved around a bit. The changing rooms were where the jockeys used to change, underneath the big old wooden stand. Before the war, where the club is now, that was the start and the finish of the racecourse. After the war they moved the start and finish line to the far side where it is now. Everything was down one side on Grandstand Road. At one time the horses used to be kept on Holmer Road and they'd bring them across for the start.



Cricket team at the City Sports Club. Can anyone put names to faces? (Photo: Nick Nenaditch)

All down that one side where there are houses now, there used to be Nissen huts. The army was there during the war and used it a lot for parachuting. When the Hereford Regiment came back in the fifties, they used to do their parachuting from there, from barrage balloons, taking a balloon up with a cage underneath and then did their main parachuting from there then. I used to go down and watch them. Quite a spectacle."

**Bill Jackson** is chairman of Jackson Properties. His earliest memories of Hereford City Sports Club start when he was just five-years-old and playing cricket at prep school.

"We used to be bussed there from the Cathedral Prep from 1951/2 onwards. When I was 16 I started playing there for the City Sports Club when John Chadd came back from Worcester (Mr Chadd played for Worcester CC), and we took over as the unofficial county side, the Hereford Gents. This was the golden age of county cricket. Sir Derek Bailey was playing then, one of the leading players of the day, alongside Jack Goodwin and Ted Strange. Other players



Bob Willis made an appearance at the City Sports Club in 1981 when he turned up for Bernard Flack's testimonial. Bernard was the head groundsman at Edgbaston. His son, Bob, played at the City Sports Club and worked in Chadds Department Store. Clive Wheatstone's father, Tom, was groundsman there in the 1980s: "I remember what it looked like before the bar was extended, with the stairs up the middle at the front, the balcony, the scoreboard on the right, and walking across the little bridge to the nursery school for the teas, good times. Bob Willis bought me a pint because I took his catch when he was practising in the nets." (Photo: Nick Nenaditch)

included the Clays and Sir John Cotterell. I did all my net training there. In those days we used to play on Saturdays and Sundays, and play against other teams at Pershore, Kington, the Grange at Leominster (when I opened my office there in 1967 I started playing there), Bromyard, Brockhampton, Allensmore, Moreton on Lugg. I captained there for two seasons, it was a Sunday side. It was highly amateur but taken quite seriously. If you were a good cricketer, it was a good way of making contacts. In fact, when I joined Russell Baldwin & Bright, they encouraged me to play cricket for that very reason."

Thank you to **Chris Tomlinson** and **Bill Housden** for their work on this piece.



Mordiford football team 1958. Sadly, we have no names. Someone out there must recognise some of these faces. (Photo: Frank Kenward)

## The Belmont Plate

### Pen pushers vs tradesmen

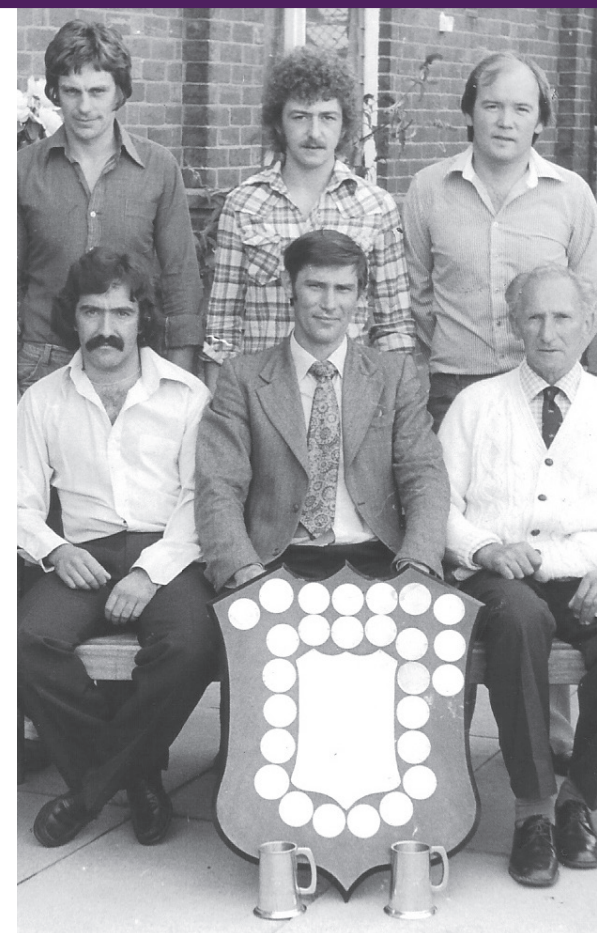
The Belmont Plate was a hotly contested boat race that pitched club rowers against their less likely competitors, pub and work crews. Many of these 'once a year rowers' were, by their own admission, more familiar with a pint of ale and a pack of cigarettes than with competitive rowing. But that didn't mean they weren't up for a fight to cross the finishing line first. The Vaga Tavern team at Hunderton became the team to beat, with some of them, including Roy



Women's teams took part too. Deb Hill, second from left, with her team at the rowing club, 1990s. (Photo: Deb Hill)

Williams, Geo Edwards, Trevor Whitefoot, Keith Scott and Terry 'Tug' Bullock, achieving legendary status. Serious rivals to The Vaga during the 1970s included The Moon at Mordiford, Bulmers and the Orange Tree's Motorcycle Club. Gary McLeod's dad was landlord at The Vaga during some of the winning years:

"The Vaga were very successful in it. Charlie Trier, the Hankins and all those, they used to row for the Booth Hall. And then, of course, they moved back up here, and they started rowing for The Vaga and they won the most shields on the Plate. Every time they won, my old man would put a new shield on. He must have put on eight or nine I expect, and they are the only shields on there that are solid silver. He used to go to Oswins and get a proper silver shield. People used to say that the Rowing Club's biggest earner was their Regatta. But the second biggest one-take was the final of the Belmont Plate. The Vaga would be empty and everyone would be across watching because The Vaga team was always in the final. And they would be there going bananas, doing somersaults. All the big firms had



Bulmers were the winning team in 1978. In no particular order: Eric Holt, John Wooles, Mick Gullis, Bob Goode, Mike Netting, and Paul Miller, front right, rowing coach. (Photo: Netting family)

teams in there, like Wiggins, Bulmers – everyone would have a crew. This wasn't a small event. The Vaga team were so good. And there were big celebrations in the pub after!"

## Football team – of nurses

The competition these nursing footballers won is unknown. Thank you to retired district nurse **Sylvia Jenkins Bigglestone** for providing most of the names: From left to right: First with the trophy, Sr Healey, Outpatients Dept; Sr Groves, Oxford Ward, Male Surgical; Sr Perkins, Victoria, Children's Ward; Sisters from Night Duty – names unknown; Sr Delahay, with the ball, Davey Ward, Male Medical; Sr Doreen Davies, Hewat Orthopaedic & Isolation; unknown; Sr Pritchard, Maternity Ward.



Nurses in their footballing kit outside the General Hospital. (Photo: Mary Blackwell)

Editor's note: We would love to know more about this photo. If you can help, please do get in touch.



# This little piggy goes to market



Pig market Hereford.  
(Photo: Slap of the Hand,  
Herefordshire Lore)

Who remembers the pig market at the old city centre livestock market? A time when pigs were penned in, with the trees giving shelter from the sun. The late **William Sayce** of Garway Hill sold his pigs at Hereford Market from the 1950s onwards. "I used to go to the cattle market with my father. He'd sell a sow and pigs and sometimes he'd buy a sow and pig. I remember when the pigs were down by Newmarket Street. Well, when I was a boy the pigs were in a line of pens right down by the side of Newmarket Street, from the Newmarket tavern, in the open of course. Graham Baker was the auctioneer later on. I remember once when a schoolteacher came in with a class of school children. She was pointing to the pigs, while someone was bidding for the pigs next to her. Anyway, Graham Baker banged the gavel and said, 'sold to the lady in glasses and the red jumper!' He said, "name madam please?" And just when she was going to collapse, he said, "sold to the dealer!"

## Food and Farming Herefordshire

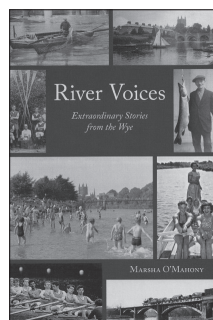
Over the next five years, Herefordshire Lore will be documenting food and farming life in the county. We want to ensure the crafts and skills and people associated with farming and food production are recorded. If you would like to be interviewed (observing all Covid-19 distancing rules), or have photos or diaries, we would love to hear from you.

## Subscription renewal

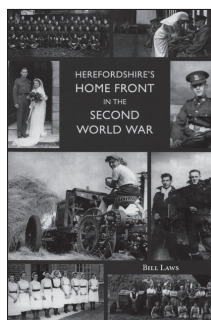
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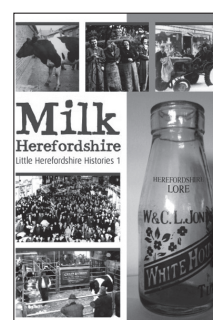
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