

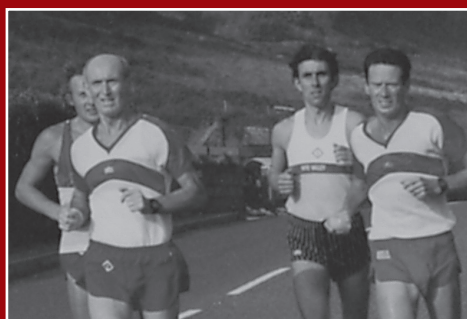
In Our Age

Herefordshire Lore : Living local history

Issue 61
Summer 2021



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Editorial

Many will know the delights of an unexpected visitor anxious to see old family photographs. Invariably, so many of us have reached for an old biscuit tin filled with treasured memories left sleeping in some cupboard or drawer.

Now of course we don't all have a biscuit tin but computers, the Ethernet and 'the cloud'. Millions and millions of pictures but perhaps something of the magic lost of that almost secret archive with its shared moment of discovery.

An article in The Times newspaper on the 18th July 2019 quoted that Vinton Cerf, one of the founders of the Internet and now a vice-president at Google, had been warning for years that we're in danger of entering a digital dark age, where everything on computers will be lost. We may end up knowing less about the early 21st century than we do about the 20th.

All too easily we think that because we archive something on a computer or store it in a 'cloud' that the information is secure. When software moves on sometimes it is not backwards compatible and historic items are no longer 'seen' by the new system. He reminds us to ask, "Who can now access a floppy disk"?

This was his warning and he concluded that the only safe custodians were paper and the printed word.

Many would say he forgot to mention an old biscuit tin.

Keith James, committee member

Herefordshire Lore

Herefordshire Lore launched in 1989 and has 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, associate editor Bill Laws, editor Marsha O'Mahony, and committee Joyce Chamberlain, Keith and Krystyna James, Rosemary Lillico, Jean and Peter Mayne, Chris and Irene Tomlinson, Linda Ward and Betty Webb. Design: Pink Sheep. Print: Orphans Press.

Eardisland School



Eardisland School: Robert Edwards is standing in the second row from the back, the third from the right.

One of our readers, Robert Edwards, sent in this photo of Eardisland School in 1956, a world away from whiteboards and iPads.

Robert attended Eardisland School from 1954 to 1960. It had just two classrooms: an infants for five to seven year olds with a junior teacher, and the senior class for eight to twelve year olds, with the headmistress as teacher. "We had old wooden desks with inkwells, and used pens called 'dip and scratch'. Heating was an open coal fire, and an enclosed coal boiler. The toilets were very primitive and unheated, and could only be accessed from the outside playground. We had hot dinners delivered each day from a catering centre in Leominster. I remember the quality was good and plentiful. It was always a set meal (no choice) but was always meat or fish with potatoes and vegetables, followed by a pudding, usually with custard. We paid five shillings a week for our school dinners and lined up to pay our money to the headmistress on a Friday. Those who were on free school meals remained at their desks, so we knew which pupils were getting free dinners, and very sadly this became a stigma in many schools. I walked a mile to and from school, whatever the weather. When I was 13, I left Eardisland School, and spent my last two years at Kingsland School. As I had failed my Eleven Plus exam, I could not go to Leominster Grammar School, and

Kingsland was the only alternative. I was not happy there, and as soon as I was 15 I left and went straight into work. I went into the grocery trade, and worked at a Leominster family business called Saxbys, run by the Radnor family. I did a multitude of tasks, filling shelves, putting up orders for local delivery, boning sides of bacon, weighing up bulk tea, dried fruit, prunes, rice, into 1-pound and 2-pound bags with weight stickers and a price tag on every one. I skinned huge blocks of cheese and cut them into much smaller pieces with a cheese wire. In those days lard came from the wholesaler in 56 pound blocks, and we would cut it into half-pound and 1-pound packs and wrap each one in greaseproof paper. My working week from the age of fifteen was 44 hours with a half day on Thursdays. My first year's pay was £3 and 8 shillings per week. I cycled five miles to get there six days a week and the same going home at night, whatever the weather. Back then I lived with my parents on a holding of ten acres. We had sheep, cattle, hens and a milking cow. We grew all the vegetables we used, and frequently gave surplus to neighbours. I sometimes wonder if I had passed my Eleven Plus and gone to the Grammar School, how my life would have turned out, and would it have been totally different? That, I will never know."

Golden Valley Faces

Richard Jenkins was born in 1890 at Quarrelly Farm in the parish of Newton. He was a farmer but was also a keen photographer and, at the beginning of the 20th century, started documenting the life of his community, capturing weddings, farming, chapel, outings, christenings, and

funerals. Now these images can be seen in Golden Valley Faces: The photographs of Richard Jenkins, compiled by Hilary Engel. It is available from local bookshops. Any profits from the sale of this book will go to the Laurie Engel Fund for Teenage Cancer Trust www.laurieengelfund.org

Front cover: Hereford River Carnival Photo: John Baker

Roll out the barrel

It is a dying craft, but during its glory days, barrel makers – coopers – were a common sight across the county, crafting containers for beer, cider, and even seeds.

The smell of sawdust brings back strong memories for Roger Hewlett Sell. As a child he often visited his grandfather's cooperage in Hereford, where barrels of every size, description, and even condition, were either made or repaired:

"My grandfather, Robert Young, left school when he was twelve, in around 1910. He enlisted straight away into



World War One veteran, Robert Young, was a Master Cooper in Hereford. He is seen here in his workshop at the railway station. (Photo: Roger Hewlett Sell)

the Herefordshire Light Infantry in 1914, when he was far too young, and had quite a traumatic war experience. By 1917 he was a full sergeant and attached to the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI) all through the war. When the war ended he came out of the army and married my grandmother and went on to work at Bulmers as a Master Cooper, a major employer in those days. He was following in the footsteps of Thomas Young, his father, who was also a Master Cooper. He had moved his family to Hereford before the First World War, to work at the Cheltenham & Hereford Brewery, where Tesco's is today in Bewell Street. He had thirteen children, three of them in the coopering trade: my grandfather Robert, then George (who lost a leg at Gallipoli) and finally Sidney.

By the early fifties, he had set up on his own, known then as a Journeyman Cooper. He did everything except make the hoops. I can remember going to his cooperage on the banks of the Wye, where Jordan's boatyard was. It was a large tin shed full of barrels, and there was always oak stacked up all around. In 1957 he moved his business to Station Approach and closer to the train station, employing just one other person, an ex-Polish soldier. The shed was full of barrels, with lorry loads coming in to be repaired. Most of them were for beer or cider, but a lot of seed was kept in barrels too. Jaïne's farm at Marden had a lot of barrels off him once. He made and repaired different size barrels. There was hogshead, tuns, butts. I remember being put in one once when I was a kid! And I seem to recall that green paint was used for cider and red paint for beer, just a quick swipe



around the top of the barrel, indicating what was in it. He had a contract once from the Royal Navy, fixing and repairing their rum barrels, and he told me that if you ever get an old Navy rum barrel, fill it with hot water and let it stand for three days. At the end of that time you will get neat rum!"

While his widow gave his cooper tools to the Cider Museum after his death, any evidence of his craftsmanship has been lost. Roger knows every barrel his grandfather worked on was stamped with his initials, RWY. *If any of our readers happens to have one tucked away in a shed somewhere, Roger would love the opportunity to have a look. We can pass your messages on.*

Accident with Bulmer's dray leads to compensation

Angie Harmen Sale's great-great-uncle Ernest was another craftsman: he kept a tailor's shop in Moorfield Street at the turn of last century. Another three brothers were also tailors in Hereford. In the early part of the 20th century (dates are unclear) Ernest's wife, Bessie, was knocked down by a horse and dray from Bulmers, leaving her with a badly injured leg and was left disabled. Angie takes up the story: "We know Bulmers paid some compensation that helped them buy a bungalow in Tower Road. This has since been knocked down; it was next to the playing field. I would be really interested to learn a bit more about the incident but have drawn a blank. If anyone can add any more information, I would love to know."

Editor: if you can add to the story, please get in touch and we can pass on any leads to Angie.

Weobley Carnival

Once so much part of childhood summers, from cities to villages, here's a reminder of the whacky and wonderful floats from carnival time across Herefordshire



The first Weobley Carnival took place in 1972, with the intention of raising money for the new village hall, which it managed to do in style, opening the new hall in 1984. In the years following, other carnivals paraded through Weobley with wildly varying themes. Rev Chris Rhodes, with her husband Peter, was part of the organising team: 'We used to make a weekend of it. We had bedstead races on Friday night, with teams dressed as babies, donkey



derbys, medieval fairs, wild West. Peter was the treasurer, and we came home with all the money at the end of the day and didn't know what to do with it, so we put it under the bed until the bank opened on Monday morning! The whole village pulled together with some amazing floats. We had a celebrity judge in the form of Alf Garnett (Warren Mitchell), who judged the first carnival queen in 1972 (winner that year was Daintree Games). That was the year we made a flying saucer float out of balsa wood-type stuff, and plastic. It was very lightweight and the children could get inside, Bill Dyer and my husband built it. We dressed up as aliens, using old potato sacks for our costumes. It was so big, the width of it was more than a single carriage way, that we needed a police escort into Hereford.'

River Carnival



Photo credit: John Baker

From the 1960s through to the 1970s, the River Carnival was a huge spectacle, with a stream of colourful, inspired, and silly river floats. Gary McLeod, whose father was landlord at the Vaga Tavern, Hunderton, remembers the excitement of the much-anticipated event: "I always remember my dad

bringing me down there once a year and it was a hell of a big thing. All the firms had their boats on the river, all in different categories. There was a Bulmers float, Paynter Brothers, Denco, they were all there. It was one of the high points of the summer when I was a kid."

Ross Carnival



Next year Ross-on-Wye Town Carnival will be celebrating its 45th anniversary. Its history, however, stretches much further back. After years of no parade in the town, the Carnival was re-established in 1977 by a dedicated committee in celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. (Photo: Herefordshire Histories/HARC)

Lazy days on the River Wye

A look back to days when the River Wye was pollution-free, and endless days playing on the river, writes Doris Kershaw.

The happiest memories of my childhood were certainly that of the wonderful River Wye. My family, the Marshalls, were members of the Hereford Rowing Club for over 50 years and had already brought up one generation to appreciate this beautiful river. All of our leisure hours were spent on the Wye and we were brought up to respect the dangers of the river and, also, the amazing banks of wildflowers.



*Washing up in the river.
Credit: Doris Kershaw*

The most memorable fortnight of the year was when my Aunt Neruda, Uncle Cyril and cousins, Charles and Bessie, came from Bradford for their summer holiday. Excitement rose, when a week before they arrived, a GWR horse and dray brought their trunk of holiday clothes. They followed by train.

Every day we packed food and rowed upstream. On more challenging days, we rowed to Bridge Sollars and Monnington Falls but the most magical of our family gatherings took place at Breinton. On the shingle beach below Belmont Abbey, we could moor and the river was safe for swimming. Mr Crissall the boatman always reserved us the two largest boats – The Comet and The Ran-dan. Grandma always steered and we took it in turns to row.

August Bank Holiday was very special, when the family from Windsor Street joined us making us a party of sixteen. I remember going with my brother John and cousins to Burtons Bakery in West Street, where we bought seventeen loaves to last the weekend. Shops were never open on Sundays or Bank Holidays in those days. Fruit and tomatoes were always plentiful in the Windsor Street garden. Wilson the grocer opposite our house delivered

most of our food, while Gardiners the fishmonger stocked excellent fruit, veg and fresh salad. We were well-drilled and had to be! Baskets were packed with food, cutlery, crockery, milk in terracotta coolers, water, swimwear etc. There was no such thing as paper or plastic picnic gear, no cling film or foil, nor fridge or freezer at home to help with preparations. Everyone took their turn in carrying supplies to the boats. Arriving at our destination, our first task was to collect twigs and driftwood to light a fire on the shingle and get a kettle boiling for tea! Settling down for lunch was also a major operation. My mother and aunts sat in a row, conveyor-belt style, each responsible for a link in the chain, cutting bread or buttering it, doling out salad etc with my grandfather at the end of the line, carving the meat. The adults drank cider and the younger generation was treated to Corona, a fizzy drink!

Afterwards, we spent hours swimming and paddling, catching minnows and scrambling on the banks. I recall making my grandmother daisy chains and hats from Balsam leaves, decorated with buttercups and daisies. Nature walks led by the adults taught us the names of wild flowers. We gathered mushrooms and blackberries in the adjoining fields – I remember the maggots in both! A cricket or rounders match usually took place before we returned home.

Returning to the boats, we set off downstream. If we encountered the Hammond family, very expert rowers, we were challenged to a race back to the Club, which they won more often than not. We trudged home, happy, exhausted and sunburnt. A penny worth of chips from Elcox rounded off an idyllic childhood Bank Holiday, with the tantalising possibility of a scoop of free batter bits to complete our joy!

*Picnics at Breinton.
Credit: Doris Kershaw*



St Weonards' WI

The mainstay of many a community, Ivy Manning remembers a vibrant St Weonards WI, which provided friendship and entertainment.

St Weonards' WI was a large group for a small, rural village, attracting members from nearby Garway and Orcop and even as far away as Hereford. We used to meet on a Monday afternoon once a month. An elaborate tea was prepared by whosoever birthday it was that month and we were entertained by a speaker. Some members attended Denman College (WI training centre) for day schools and residential courses in cookery, craft and lifestyle, as well a variety of events and conferences. At different times presidents were Joan Sparey, Barbara Evans, Mrs Humphries and Winifred Matthews. Sadly, owing to dwindling membership, it no longer runs.



Back row left to right: Christine Jenkins, Barbara Evans, Joan Sparey, Gwen Morris, Mrs Watkins (Corras), Ivy Manning, Janet Pawson, ??

Middle row left to right: Mrs K Williams, Joan Price, M Humphries, Mrs Poyner, Frances Matthews, Vera Jones, Enid Watkins, Ashlene Bevan, Doris Virgo.

Front row left to right: Mrs Williams (post office), Jenny Jenkins, Molly Cornwall, Winifred Matthews, Evelyn Bevan, Nurse Mabel Meadmore (district nurse).

Couriers Running Club reaches 40th year celebrations



Forty years ago a group of postmen, while out on their regular afternoon run, decided to form a running club. It started off with just five members, and it is now one of the leading running clubs in the county - and not just for postmen. Little did they know that four decades later it would still be going strong. It was the inspiration of one of these runners, Derek Davies, another postman and well-known local runner, who had achieved an international Welsh vest. Derek thought a running club might encourage other Post Office employees to

Above photo: left to right: B. Pritchard, P. Higgins, P. Mayne (Junior), B. Morris, M. Fowler, P. Mayne, and G. Davies.

Photo to the right: caption: B. Hodges, J. Norton, M. Fowler, and D. Davies.

Editor: if you have any photos/memories/mementoes you would like to share with the Couriers as they celebrate their 40th anniversary, get in touch and we can them pass on.

join in and get fit. And so it came that the Couriers Running Club formed in 1981. One of the club's biggest fundraising events was the organisation of the 40-mile Built to Hereford race, with support vehicles arranged by the late Brian Foster. Peter Mayne, one of the original crew said: "All the security and health and safety measures had to be implemented too. Without Brian's enthusiasm and organisation skills, the race would not have been possible. We were very fortunate to have had the generous support of Tracey Goodwin Sports Gear and Wear Hereford. Money was raised for many local charities and refreshments provided by the Couriers members' wives, and presentation of trophies was made by the Head Postmaster. They really were great days, and we were very fit!"



Fencing at teacher training college



Does anyone recognise these fencers standing (on guard!) outside the old teacher's training college. Thank you to Hereford College of Art Principal Abigail Appleton for the photo.

Pub Sport



Pub sport – darts, skittles, quoits, shove’penny, cribbage – once sported very competitive – and highly social - leagues in pubs across the county. Here the darts team at the Yew Tree Inn in Brockhampton, celebrate a win with a modest trophy with pints of beer. (Photo: Keith James)

Three Choirs Festival

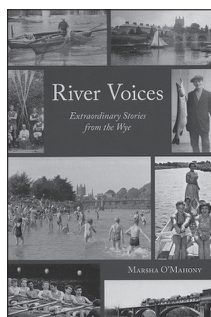


John Arrowsmith, 22, back row, second from the left, performing with the BBC Chorus at the 1933 Three Choirs Festival, Hereford.

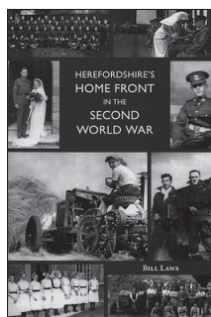
This year's Three Choirs Festival went ahead in Worcester as usual, to the relief of organisers following last year's cancellation. In September 1946, Griff Loydd was just thirteen and as a chorister with the Cathedral Choir was taking part in the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford Cathedral. "One afternoon, I was wandering through the cloisters," he said, "and noticed an old lady sitting alone on the stone seating that ran the length of that section. I stopped and sat beside her to keep her company. I explained who I was and that I would be in that evening's performance. I chatted to her for quite some time and she was really grateful for that. As I left her,

she gave me a shilling, telling me to get myself an ice-cream. That evening, as I got up onto the stage, somebody handed me an envelope, inside which was a half-crown piece plus a little note which read: 'Please get another ice, a large one this time; and thank you for being pleasant to an elderly lady.' I gazed out across the audience, hoping the dear lady would wave, so that I could wave back in gratitude, but there was no indication of where she was sitting. However, she must have been there somewhere, and must have seen my great surprise and joy as I opened that envelope. I still have that little note she wrote to me. It is one of my most treasured possessions."

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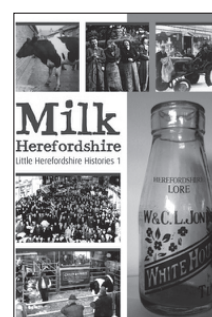
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