

in

OUR AGE

HEREFORDSHIRE LORE : LIVING LOCAL HISTORY

Issue 73
Autumn 2024

Don't miss
Hereford
History Day,
September 21st
10am to 4pm

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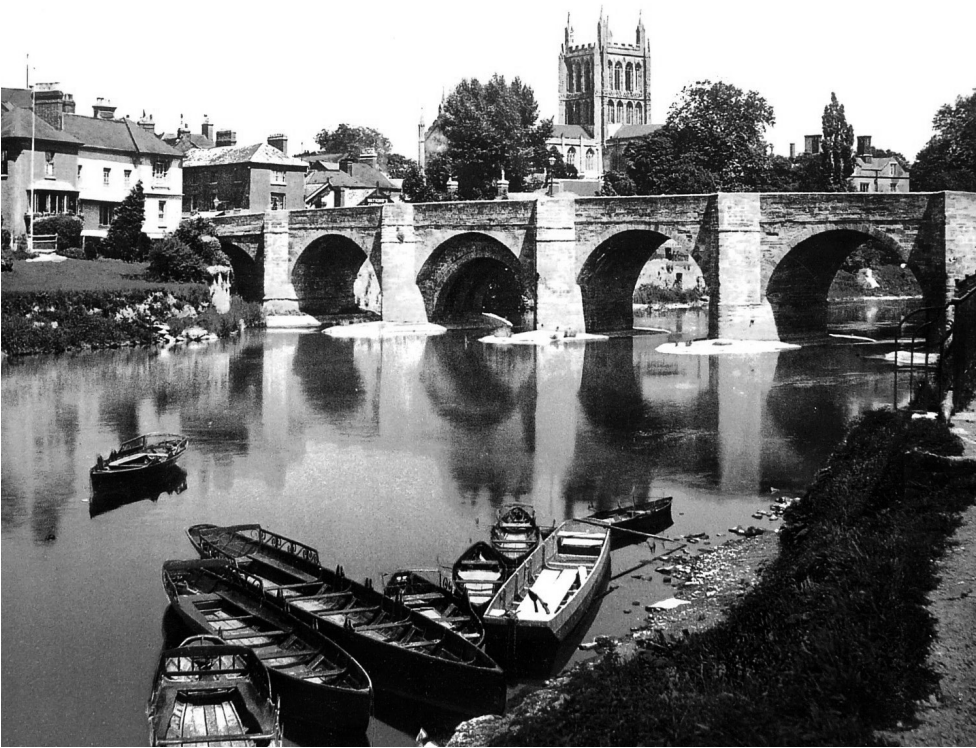
Welcome

Back by popular demand, Herefordshire Lore is excited to deliver a second History Day. Make a note in your diaries: Saturday, September 21st, from 10 am to 4 pm. Thanks to funding from Hereford City Council and generous sponsorship, we are delighted to make this a FREE event again. The full programme appears on the back page. We have 17 representatives from the city's history and heritage landscape. We have listened to feedback from last year's event, and therefore our speakers will appear in the Council Chamber this year. There will be lots to see and do. Don't forget to call into the all-important refreshment corner for endless cups of tea and delicious homemade cake. We look forward to seeing many familiar and new faces.

Marsha O'Mahony, Editor

Cover Story

This pre-WWI view of the Old Bridge over the River Wye, with the Cathedral in the background, has little changed. Jordan's Boat Yard is very much in evidence. One of several boat hirers in the city, they were also boatbuilders, with a boat yard tucked behind them, probably where Asda is today. Campions across the river and Hereford Boat Club also hired out boats like these. A popular weekend jaunt was up-river to the Camp Inn and Breinton, before taking a leisurely trip back down the river.



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 and Linda Ward.

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Rural peace interrupted by Rotherwas bomb

Mick Price, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta, Canada, remembers his childhood in Dinedor.

The world was a very different place in the 1940s. I was born in January 1944, at Dinedor Court, my family's farm, just a few miles south-east of Hereford. The birth was attended by a midwife, Nurse Miles, who came by, in uniform, on her bicycle to visit me (and all the other children that she had delivered in the area) at regular intervals for many years.

Soon after I was born, towards the end of May, a 2000 lb bomb exploded in the filling factory at Rotherwas, less than a mile from our farm. It had been recently filled and apparently overheated during storage. The explosion blew out some of our windows, and frightened people at the factory so much that many of them ran pell-mell through fields and hedges (according to my father) shouting to everyone to get out because the whole of Herefordshire would blow up. I think my family just watched them go by and then got on with feeding the cattle. Our main concern was who would pay for the broken windows.

Of course, I remember nothing of those events. My earliest memories are of a great snowfall, which actually occurred in mid-January 1947, putting me a few days past my third birthday. I recall clearly that we were snowed in. A driveway runs from the farm to the Holme Lacy Road (it is about half a kilometre long – though no-one would have known what a kilometre was in those days), and it needed to be cleared to give us access to the world, and for the older



(Photo credit: Mick Price)

children to walk to Dinedor School. Luckily, we were a big family, so our only limitation was finding enough shovels. I don't know how long it took, but the snow had drifted to way over everyone's heads in places. My cousin John and I thought it was great fun, the others probably less so.

During the war everyone was issued with a gas mask, ours were kept in the cellar, and the only time they were ever used was when we children would take them and run around wearing them and trying to frighten each other. All children also received a weekly bottle of orange juice which we loved, and a spoonful of cod liver oil which we didn't. I have recently discovered that the orange juice came from Mazoe, in Southern Rhodesia, a place I came to know well twenty years later when I was studying Agriculture at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The College farm was at Mazoe, and we went there most Saturdays for some practical agricultural experience.



Workers and their wives from the Marlbrook plant take a trip up to Cadbury's in Birmingham sometime in the 1950s. Can anyone put a name to any of these faces?
(Photo credit: Sally Morgan née Bowen)

A dip into Herefordshire Lore's archives

Double Tragedy for Postman's family.

One Friday afternoon in May 1923 Credenhill was rocked by a sudden explosion. Villagers soon learned that a workman at Credenhill Munitions Works had been killed trying to dismantle an 18-pound military shell.

The victim was a First World War veteran, 34-year-old Jim Charles. The coroner's inquest, reported by the Hereford Journal, revealed how Jim had been worried about a particular shell and asked a chargehand for assistance. He was told to do the best he could.

James Samuel Charles was one of four sons of ex-postman William Charles and his wife Hannah of 94 Park Street, Hereford and had worked in the Liverpool mills before the war.

He signed up with the Royal Artillery in 1915, the same year his brother, also William, who had emigrated to Australia, also enlisted. William was killed at the Battle of Gallipoli, yet Jim survived, remaining in France after the armistice recovering from flu. He returned to Hereford in 1918 and was engaged to Nellie Davies, the daughter of a Foley estate gamekeeper.

The inquest was told Jim was dismantling shells because he could find no other work. Credenhill Munitions Works was described in 1996 (www.herefordshirelore.org.uk/Age/A2A/4/2) by Bullingham's Alf Evans. "In the War artillery shells from Rotherwas munitions works were sent to the Front Line via train and ship and the detonators were fixed to the shells over there. After the War they constructed

a number of buildings at Credenhill, made of lightweight, hollow bricks to absorb any blast, and employed women to dismantle and empty the shells.

"The women worked with brass rather than steel tools to avoid sparks and they used to undo the gaine, a brass insert that took the detonator, after it had been filled." There were so many shells to be dismantled the weight of the trucks carrying the shells stripped the roads between Rotherwas and Credenhill down to the base stone, recalled Alf.



Jim Charles, centre

Charles' inquest reported this was the second death at the munitions store: an explosion had killed 19-year-old Winnie Aulsebrook and injured Annie Tranter in April 1920.

(Thanks to research from Judith Morgan, a direct descendant of the Charles family.)

Don't miss the Munition Works display at Hereford History Day on Saturday September 21st at Hereford Town Hall.

Ward duty at Hereford Hospital

Mary Blackwell (seen here in middle and top right photos) was a nurse at Hereford Hospital in the 1960s and 1970s. These candid shots, taken on and off duty, show a very jolly bunch. We have very few details about the doctors and nurses in the photos, so if anyone can put a name to a face, please do get in touch.



Readers letters

Friends Reunited

I want to thank all the volunteers for producing IOA magazine, past and present. It is enjoyed by so many and is great for putting people back in touch.

In a recent IOA there was a letter from a person in Shropshire recalling memories of her father's garage in Edgar Street, Hereford, before the re-widening and building of Greyfriars Bridge. I realised the person had to be Margaret Lewis, a friend of mine from Lord Scudamore's Girls School, which we left in 1956! Although I have been holding school reunions for the past twenty-eight years, I have failed to 'find' her until now, 68 years later! We are enjoying 'catching up' on our lives, so thank you so much.

Judith (Morgan), Hereford.

Evening all

Thanks to you and your committee for always providing an interesting read. I recall Bob Wilson very well during his time in Leominster during the 1980s. He was a quite an exceptional PC, who knew his patch and its people. He was a very visible presence in the town, much of the time patrolling on foot and greeting people by name. It was a time when the old-style PC was disappearing, but Bob was determined to continue policing by force of character. He knew children and their parents, and so could nip anti-social behaviour in the bud, with a quiet word here and there. He lived in the town at the time, and people knew how to get hold of him easily. Although he had moved from Leominster by the time of his untimely death, he was remembered by many then and is to this day.

Geoff Bricknell

Hereford Training College – A Secret Society?

Conjecture perhaps but a College magazine, in my possession, is entitled CHERABOME and the editorial consists of four lines in similar obtuse style ending in 'oot aah zulahbah H-E-R-E-F-O-R-D (repeated twice). The date of the magazine is 1953. Presumably, this was some sort of chant but can any ex-student or reader explain this gobbledygook to the uninitiated?

I purchased the magazine recently together with a booklet, 'Hereford Training College 1904-1954', a menu card for a Going-Down Dinner and an embroidered badge of the HTC logo. The booklet is inscribed M Taylor. Miss Taylor was clearly proud of her time at Hereford College for the badge has been cut from her blazer and retained over the years; she would have graduated in 1954, the date of the Going-Down Dinner. I know nothing further of what must have been a charming young lady.

I have only vague recollections of HTC and its students when I attended All Saints School. I have though a vivid memory of a boisterous group of graduates, about 1949, chanting on platform 4 of the railway station. I lived opposite at Barrs Court Terrace and all were in happy mood, exams over, a teaching career in prospect, waiting for an early evening express to Bristol and Cardiff. The Chant:

'Two... Four... Six... Eight... Who Do We Appreciate?... H-E-R-E-F-O-R-D. (climax) HEREFORD!'

Michael Young

Appeal for help

Volunteers at HARC (Hereford Archive and Record Centre) are busy cataloguing the archive of Miss Marjory L Wight (1889 to 1973) and are appealing to our readers for help. Miss Wight was an author and photographer who worked mainly in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. She was an enthusiastic recorder of rural crafts and disappearing agricultural practices.

Volunteers have sent in this photo from her collection. "It would be great to find out where it was taken and, even better, if anyone knows who the man is. We don't have a date, but her era was pre-1970s back to 1920s." It is labelled simply, 'A Herefordshire farmer'. If anyone can help, drop us a line and we will pass on any information.



(Photo credit: Miss Wight, HARC)

September morning – hop picking season



A full crib of hops at Cawardine. (Photo credit: John Griffiths)



Hop pickers of old will recognise the phrase 'a September morning'. There is a chill in the air as autumn arrives, but the sun is out, it's the perfect day for picking hops. There are fewer than 20 hop growers left in Herefordshire now. Perhaps some of our readers picked hops at Cawardine and Pomona?

Victorian Soup Kitchen

The Guild of Guides shares some of Hereford city's hidden historical buildings.

Did you ever walk down Union Passage, the alleyway between MacDonalds and the CeX Entertainment Exchange, and wonder what's the story of the two blocked-up doors opposite the new mural?

Rev. John Venn did much to help the poor after his arrival in Hereford in 1833 as vicar of St Peter's Church and he set up the Hereford Society for Aiding the Industrious. From 1844 one of his many charitable acts was to provide soup throughout the winter during the "Hungry Forties" following the failure of the potato crop, poor harvests and high unemployment. A variety of locations were used where batches of meat and mixed vegetable soup were cooked, 80 gallons at a time, saving many families from starvation.

However, in 1871 the Society moved to Commercial Street and they built a soup kitchen and dining room at the back of the building. with the entrance and exit doors for ticket holders in Union Passage alleyway. The office and soup kitchen moved to the corner of De Lacy Street in 1885 but soup was still made after the First World War and even during the Depression.

It's rare to still see such signs of a Victorian Soup Kitchen doors so clearly marked.

This hidden gem is a taste of the fascinating history of our historic city. If you are interested in hearing more why not consider "Exploring Hereford's History" a lecture course to be run by Hereford Guild of Mayor's Guides from January 22nd to March 19th 2025, every Wednesday morning, from 10.30-12.30 at the Kindle Centre at a total cost of £75. If you are inspired to become a guide there are four further guide training sessions. For further information contact the Training Officer Laura Sommerville at lasommerville@yahoo.co.uk. We'd love to meet you there or sooner on Saturday September 21st at Hereford History Day, where we will have a stand and offer two free guided walks. Sign up on the day.

With thanks to Linda Crichton of the Guild of Guides

Hereford History Day back for a second year

Don't miss five hours of local history and heritage with a return of special guest, Nick Barratt from BBC's 'Who Do You Think You Are?'

Programme:

- 10.00 – 10.30 Civic Procession
- 11.00 – 11.45 TALK – The Origins of the SAS with Major (Rtd) David Seeney
- 12.00 WALK – Hereford's Historic Buildings with Guild of Guides
- 12.15 – 1.00 TALK – Family History in the Digital Age, with Nick Barratt
- 1.30 WALK – Historic Women of Hereford, with Guild of Guides
- 1.45 – 2.30 TALK – The Campaign for Women's Suffrage from a Hereford Perspective, with Clare Wichbold OBE
- 2.30 – 3.00 PERFORMANCE – The History Slam 'Whose Plinth Is It Anyway?'
- 3.00 – 4.00 PRESENTATION – Winners of the Young Historian Award

All day – don't miss

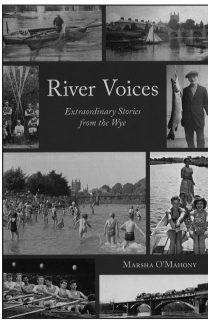
- History supermarket – with over 18 stall holders
- Tours of the Mayor's Parlour with John Marshall
- Rolling film: Remember Hereford in 1984

FREE admission. Join us for fabulous homemade cakes and good company. Mix, mingle, and share your family histories.

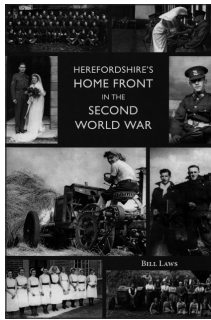
(Photo credit: Chris Preece)



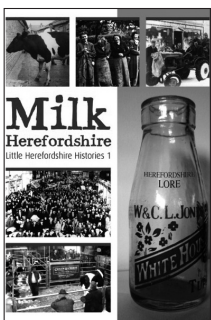
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