

in

OUR AGE

HEREFORDSHIRE LORE : LIVING LOCAL HISTORY

Issue 75
Spring 2025

Inside:

Dinedor childhood 1950s – Page 3

'Everyone kept a bacon pig' – Page 5

Hop stringing in Castle Frome – Page 7



Welcome

Happy New Year to all our loyal readers. We were delighted to see so many of you at our AGM on February 6th. Thank you for coming along and for all your contributions. And in further news, we're pleased to announce that Herefordshire Lore will be taking part in the inaugural county-wide Herefordshire Histories Festival. Taking place across the county from May 10th to 18th, our contribution will be in Hunderton. We are thrilled to have children's history author Andy Seed visit the school in the morning. Later on in the day, from 6pm – 8pm, we will be decamping to the Vaga Tavern. More information at the bottom of page 3. Everyone will be welcome. Free admission, but donations are always appreciated. Our summer issue will mark the end of WWII with a special commemorative issue. If you have any photos to share or stories to tell, and want to include them in IOA, please get in touch. Contact details on the back page. And finally, a huge thank you to our contributors. Please keep your stories rolling in.

Marsha O'Mahony, Editor

Subscription renewal reminder

It's that time of year again. Please continue to support us and our work by taking out another year's subscription. Just £18 and you will receive four copies direct to your door. See back page for details.

Cover Story

Stringing in the hop yards

The hop-growing season starts in March with stringing the new crop and culminates in September with harvesting. Stringing is still carried out by hand each year. Ray Whiting had it down to a fine art at Pridewood Hops, Ashperton, where he worked for many decades. The string (coir) held in a pouch, is strung up onto the top hooks of the wirework and down to the ground pegs, using a long pole called a monkey, with a hollow tube at one end. When complete, the pair of strings from each root are braced together at waist height using binder twine. George Hopkins, another veteran stringer said: 'It's quite an intricate job, a skilled one. I like stringing but a lot of people when they've had about ten minutes say they've had enough! The stringer has to put them on such an angle. I liken it to knitting. Once I gets used to it and get in the flow, get a rhythm, I could do about an acre and a half a day. I knew someone who used to do two or three acres a day on piece work, but it wouldn't be so tidy, and we do it tidy.'



Ray Whiting, with 'monkey',
stringing at Pridewood Hops, Ashperton.
(Photo credit: Pauline Andrews)

Herefordshire Lore

Herefordshire Lore launched in 1989 and has been collecting and publishing your memories ever since. We are: chair Bill Laws, secretary Eileen Klotz, treasurer Harvey Payne, webmaster Chris Preece, proofs Sandy Green, editor Marsha O'Mahony, and committee: Joyce Chamberlain, Keith and Krystyna James, Rosemary Lillico, Jean Mayne, Chris and Irene Tomlinson and Linda Ward.

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Growing up in Dinedor

Professor Mick Price's article in issue 73 has prompted fond memories from another Dinedorian, Mary Every (née Winfield)

We moved from Birmingham to Hereford in the late 1950s when my father's employers relocated the factory to Holmer Road. We had to live at the Green Dragon while our house was being modernised – to 1950's standards not the current day! I don't remember any of our time there, but I must have started school.

Eventually we were able to move into a house in Dinedor and what a shock that was. I was used to the noise and bustle of a city and suddenly we were living in peace and quiet with only the lowing of cattle, baaing of sheep and the sounds of birds. Our house was old and had been three cottages originally. So, the floors leaned, the floorboards squeaked, and the ceilings were low. Water came from a well and there was a septic tank in the garden. Dad and my brother had to build a larger one quite soon after moving in.

The village had a church and an old school which was used as a village hall. There were no shops, and we had to walk half a mile to catch a bus – and they didn't come very often. My mum had to learn to drive so she could go shopping. I made a few friends, mainly the local farmers' children. We had an idyllic childhood, outdoors when the weather was good or playing in the barns when it was wet. Stone-picking was a job we could do before the potatoes were planted. We swam in the river near Sink Green Farm, we picked primroses in spring from along the disused railway line and used them to decorate the pulpit in Church at Easter, we sledged in the winter – there always seemed to be lots of snow then, we rang the bells at Church and prepared for the services. The day before Dinedor Sports Day everyone would be on the field picking up sheep muck from along the track ready for the races. And of course, all the children and some adults would take part in the races and competitions such as the sack race, pillow fights, three-legged races and ladies ankle competition – very non-PC now, and cooking competitions on Sports Day, which is still held on the last Saturday in July.

I always found Rotherwas spooky and a bit forbidding with its derelict, mostly roofless, buildings. It was abandoned. I knew nothing of the history of the site until we returned to Herefordshire to live 20 years or so ago. I do remember the



Mary Every (née Winfield)
as a child in Dinedor.
(Photo credit: Mary Every)

metal gates at the Hereford end of the 'straight' mile that would have been locked during the war when bomb cases were being filled. Once we had passed our driving tests, we all used to speed along that road. Imagine my horror when, on returning to do some investigation, I found that there is now a 40mph speed restriction and ROUNDABOUTS!! No more fun! It is good to see that vast tract of land being used though and bringing more wealth to Hereford.

I remember driving along High Town before it was pedestrianised. There was a zebra crossing going across to the Butter Market, then we drove down Commercial Street and then up Union Street before coming round to The Old House again. The shops were wonderful – Greenlands, where M&S is now (I bought the material for my wedding dress there) and Chadds in Commercial Street, where I had a holiday job one summer.

I trained as a cookery demonstrator at Hereford Tech, then worked for The Milk Marketing Board. In November 1970 I met Graham and by March 1972 we were married. The Church in Dinedor was too small for all the guests, so we got married by special licence at Holme Lacy Church. The previous week the Church had been flooded so the smell was pretty awful! We've been married now for nearly 53 years, living in Reading and Swindon before moving back to Herefordshire in 2000 when we moved to Ledbury and have become immersed in the life of the town and love every minute of our time here.

Herefordshire Histories Festival

Plans for the first ever Herefordshire Histories Festival continue to gather pace. Taking place across the county from May 10th to 18th, Herefordshire Lore's contribution



– Down by the Riverside – will be in Hunderton on Friday May 16th for a celebration of the

South Wye and its relationship with the river.

In a first for Herefordshire Lore, we have arranged a visit to Riverside Primary from children's history author Andy Seed in the morning, and later in the day, the Herefordshire Lore team will decamp to the Vaga Tavern from 6pm to 8pm for a pop-up exhibition and a talk from river author Marsha O'Mahony. More information on the festival here: <https://herefordshirehistories.org>

Floods at Ledbury Road 1950s and 1960s

Thank you to a reader who sent in these interesting photographs. 1. Railway Bridge Eign Mill 1960s. Single-storey white building was a dairy. 2. 1960s Flooding at the bottom of Foley Street and onto Ledbury Road. Shop on the left. Before Meadow Bank and The Rose Garden were built. 3. St Martin's Street, mid-1950s. Mead & Tomkinson in the background. A lot of lovely detail in this photograph.



Down the rabbit hole

As many a researcher among you will testify, research, be it in archives or old newspapers, can lead one down many rabbit holes. It was down one such hole that we came across this report, and it was too interesting not to share, a report from the Kington Times of February 23rd, 1929, recording an event from the other end of the county. A cold spell hit the Ross-on-Wye area hard that month, with temperatures dipping to bone-chilling -18C.

‘Charles Wiston (75), who lived the life of a hermit in a lonely hut on the windswept and remote Welsh Newton Common, Herefordshire, was found on Saturday frozen to death in a sitting position. Wiston was missed and neighbours who searched in his hut found him dead. Wiston had of late led the life of a hermit. His wife was dead and of his three sons, two were killed in the war, and the remaining son is thought to be living in Cardiff. Wiston was known all over the countryside of Herefordshire and Monmouthshire as the last of the makers of besoms – bundles of twigs for sweeping purposes. His home-made antiquated cart and donkey were a familiar sight in the towns.’

Family pig in the orchard

'There was only one thing you couldn't use with a pig and that was his squeal!'

We always kept a bacon pig. Kept out in the orchard, outside the house here. It was full of apples and pears. Not many plums. Cider apples a lot of them. And the pig was kept out there in a big wooden pig hut. I helped my dad, yes. You had to clean them, litter them down. It was thought a lot of to have a bacon pig mind. When you were a family a lovely bacon pig, lot better than it is today. Beautiful. You'd get him at about six weeks old. Might buy him from this farm here or you might know a man who's got piglets down the road. You'd get them wherever you could. About £5. What they'd call a weaner. You'd buy it about April, and he'd live on any old scraps but before he was about to be killed, you'd give him some meal. The



pig killer would come. The one I knew first was Sid Smith and the last I knew of was Alan Cottrell. Most people had a pig then. Bacon pigs stood up to that height. Ooh, dad had a big one. You would grow fond of it. My mother was a bit tender hearted, so she didn't like it when the butcher came. She would stop in the house when the pig was being killed because they would squeal. But they were nice and the meat on them ... beautiful. Butcher would come after about four days the pig had been hung. The butcher would cut it into joints and there would be odd bits and pieces and that would be what they called pig fry. He'd put it into a bowl then you'd put that into the frying pan.

That fat ... you would have to tip it into a basin. Lovely though. Lovely. It was a treat. None of it was wasted. There was only one thing you couldn't use with a pig and that was his squeal! John Brooks, Sellack.

Show time at the livestock market

We recognise one familiar face from this trio. Many among you may remember auctioneer Colin Manning (second from right). But can anyone name any of the others, the date and occasion?



Forgotten Talent

Bill Laws dips into the Herefordshire Lore archive

Eighty years ago, as Victory Europe (VE) Day approached, the Hereford Kennel Club was one of several groups planning to welcome home the men and women who had served in the armed forces. Under their president Major E Amphlett Capel (listed as living at 36 Bridge Street, Hereford by the Woolhope Trust, to which he belonged), the Club commissioned this poster from self-taught artist Roy Beavan. The fund-raising event appears to be a prize dog show.



According to his son, the late Dennis Beavan of Fownhope, Roy had been raised in St Martin's Street by parents Fred Beavan and Annie Price from Hay who ran a tailors and sweet shop. Having started out as a draughtsman and designer at Thinns Tileworks, Roy moved to Rotherwas Munitions factory before joining the drawing office at RAF Credenhill. After the war Roy worked on fairground painting before heading to North Wales when he found work with Butlins holiday camps.

Like county artists Brian Hatton, Dora Carrington, Silas Ellis and John Ward, his contribution to the war effort is worth remembering. (Roy is one of several Herefordshire artists, professional and self-taught, who produced war-related work. They are featured in Bill Laws' latest talk, Herefordshire: The Art of War.)

Reader's Letters:

Hereford Times editorial team

Regarding your 1956 photo of the editorial team from the Hereford Times enjoying a staff lunch at the Bunch of Carrots, Hampton Bishop (Issue 74). I was very interested to read the article by Janet Mumford, recalling her spell on the Hereford Times. I also started my career on the Hereford Times as a junior reporter in 1960 but Janet had obviously left by then.

However, in the four years of my apprenticeship I also was posted to the Leominster office and covered the same courts and councils she mentioned – often cycling to these in the spring and summer with the then chief reporter on the Leominster News, Horace Reid, a kindly gentlemen with immaculate shorthand. There was rivalry but it was friendly and professional.

I recognise some of the faces in the 1956 photograph. In the middle of the back row were reporters Derek Lewis and John Meredith. In the centre of the middle row there are Tony Badham, Deputy Chief Reporter, and 'Tubby' Court, Chief Reporter and Chief Agricultural Reporter, whom I accompanied on many agricultural shows around the county, and possibly Chief Sub Editor Ray Goulding next to him. In the centre of the front row was Philip Peacock, Editor, Mr. Lewis, Deputy Editor, and Mrs Nancy Peacock (Philip Peacock's wife). Philip Peacock was also my uncle, and his father was Editor before him.

I did not stay with the Hereford Times once fully fledged but went on to work for the Cheltenham Echo (twice), and the Western Daily Press at Bristol, finishing as Assistant Chief Sub-Editor on the Daily Mail before moving to senior PR roles in the NHS and water industry.

Bruce Pell, Devon

Wye Bridge

I was intrigued by the lovely colour photograph from issue no 73 with a brick building standing, where many locals will remember Sully's and Mead and Tomkinson Garages on that spot. I decided to check local Directories for more information.

Kellys - 1896 Bridge Street

No. 20 Bridge Street John WATKINS - Coach Builder

No. 21 Bridge Street John William REIDY- Saddler

No. 22 Bridge Street Charles BOUNDS - Butcher

1905

No. 20 Bridge Street John WATKINS - Coach Builder

No. 21 Bridge Street John William REIDY - Saddler

1909

No. 20 Bridge Street Richard SULLY - Coach Builder

No. 21 Bridge Street John William REIDY- Saddler

No. 22 Bridge Street Percy SLANN - Fruitier

In one of Derek Foxton's volumes of 'Hereford Then & Now' there is a postcard photograph taken in 1913 of Henry Slann's Fruit shop. The building also housed Sully's Carriage & Motor Body Builders business, and a photo of Derek's also shows a very smart motor car belonging to Richard Sully outside. Sully's built a showroom and later added an upper floor. It was later taken over by Mead & Tomkinson and replaced by the Left Bank, which opened in 2000, which is a great asset to the city.

Judith Morgan, Hereford

Office party

I'm surprised that whimsical picture of Derek Evans escaped (Issue 74).

It was an office party, and we were all drunk as Owls. Hereford Journal editor Colin Osborne decided to give our secretary Jean Taylor a piggyback ride around the studio for fun. Not the sort of behaviour of a newspaper editor but those were different days.

Keith James

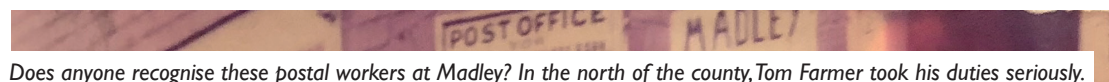
Stringers and bracers

Pauline Andrews' parents, Ray and Irene Whiting, met in the hop yards of Herefordshire. 'Mum, Irene Bradley, started to come hop picking around 1945, when she was 14, with her mum and four siblings, from Tipton. It was their annual holiday, and they all looked forward to it. It was at this time she first met Dad, Ray Whiting. He was 16 and worked on the farm they visited, Pridewood near Ashperton. They stayed at the old army barracks there and Dad made sure that they were all well looked after, taking them wood for



the fire and keeping them supplied with potatoes. Nothing stopped Mum coming hop picking every year. Whatever job she had at the time in Tipton, she would leave it for the hop picking and find another job when she got home. When she was a bit older, in her late teens/early 20s, she would go hop picking with two friends from Tipton, Alice and Eileen. Mum ended up marrying my dad, and Alice and Eileen married his two brothers, Charlie and Toby, and all three brothers worked for the Rimmells at Pridewood Farm.'

Postal workers at Madley



Does anyone recognise these postal workers at Madley? In the north of the county, Tom Farmer took his duties seriously.



Every day, after a breakfast of honeyed porridge and a hunk of bread, postman Tom Farmer waved to his parents before setting off for his thirty-mile round trip delivery trip. His routine barely changed throughout his 40-year service from his north Herefordshire home. He wore the regulation uniform of heavy blue serge, with red piping, topped off with his peaked cap. Pinned to the front was his unique badge number, TAF371. Inside his pannier he always tucked a waterproof cape and leggings – just in case. His Post Office-issue heavy iron bike was peddled thousands of miles.

Friendly reminder to our readers that it is subscription renewal time!

Thank you for your continued support.

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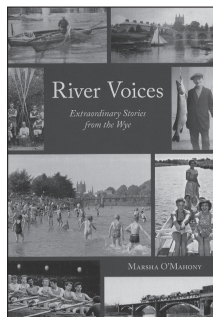
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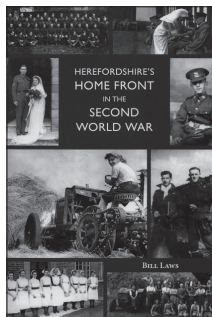
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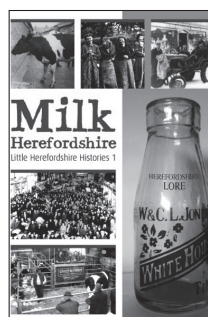
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