

in

OUR AGE

HEREFORDSHIRE LORE : LIVING LOCAL HISTORY

Issue 68
Summer 2023



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Welcome

Welcome to our Summer edition. Thank you to all who have subscribed for another year. We never take your support for granted and remain very grateful to you all. For our new subscribers, thank you also and welcome to the Herefordshire Lore and In Our Age family. For those of you yet to subscribe, there is still time!

We have some exciting news. Hereford City Council have awarded us funding to organise a history day. Therefore, we are pleased to announce the event will take place on Saturday September 23 at the Town Hall in Hereford. More details on the back page. Please do get in touch if you or your history group would like to be involved.

Finally, on a very sad note, we must announce the death of our much-loved and long-standing committee member, Betty Webb, who died last month. She will be greatly missed by us all. Her obituary is on page 3.

Marsha O'Mahony, Editor

Cover Story

Ross-on-Wye's iconic Market House and town centre as seen in the 1950s. Traffic was two-way then and some readers may remember the traffic policeman who used to direct traffic at that spot. The National Provincial Bank is tucked in on the right. It was there in the mid-1960s that the bank manager – 'He wore a bowler hat' – listened to the appeal of two young men for a loan for their fledging mobile discotheque business. The Vaughan brothers of Courtfield, Goodrich went on to form one of the world's biggest entertainment systems, Juliana's.

Apropos of nothing, Ross-on-Wye was recently voted as one of the UK's best-loved market towns by a leading coach tour company.

National Express Managing Director Tom Stables said: "With its picturesque location and stunning Market House it's hardly surprising Ross-on-Wye is regarded as one of the best towns in the UK. It's tough to think of anything more quintessentially British than a market town and we think that's worth celebrating."

Correction

We are grateful to keen-eyed reader, John Mager of Gloucester for pointing out an error in the last edition regarding a former Ross-on-Wye resident.

In the story about the famous Crossroads actress, we managed to spell her name incorrectly. It should have read Noele Gordon and not Noel.

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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The Blacksmith's Shop at Marden

Barry Rogers of Orelton has been sharing some memories and photographs of his family's blacksmithing business in Marden.

His great-grandparents, George and Harriet Rogers and their baby son Alan moved back to their home county of Herefordshire from South Wales in the 1890s and George rented the smithy at Sutton St Nicholas.

On leaving the village school Alan followed his father into the family business. A skilled farrier in his own right, in 1913, Alan passed the examinations to become a proud member of the Worshipful Company of Farriers.

At the outbreak of WW1, he volunteered as a farrier in an artillery regiment. This country boy ended up spending the war in Basra, Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq). He spent time in Cairo where, when off-duty, he rode out around the pyramids. He returned home in 1919 and continued working with this father.



Donald Rogers was the last of the Rogers family to offer blacksmithing at Marden

In the mid-1920s, Alan left the employment of his father and took the tenancy of the forge at Marden. He opened the business as a general smith and farrier. His youngest son, Donald continued the family trade while his eldest son Jim, Barry's dad, joined the railway. The Council for Rural



Donald at the forge

Industries came out and trained Donald in welding, he was one of first smiths in the area who could weld. During WWII, Hereford farmers started a petition to have Donald, then 18, released from the army, because they could not manage without him.

The Rogers family were well known in the



George and Alan Rogers at Sutton smithy

Marden and Sutton area as blacksmiths. They had a mobile forge and many of the local farmers had accounts with them.

They closed up shop 35 years ago, the end of the village blacksmith. Several pieces of equipment were sold to the Acton Scott Farm Museum. The fire plate, a large metal disc let into the ground and used to hold the fire for banding wooden wheels was sold to a blacksmith in India.

Obituary: Betty Webb

London-born Betty was a reluctant evacuee. Having lost her Mum in a wartime bus accident in which she was also badly injured, the 16-year-old was sent to Hereford where her brother was with the RAF. He found her digs at 11 Hopton Road and the Labour Exchange found her shop work.



*Betty, left, with Gypsy family historian Mary Horner selling copies of **A Slap of the Hand** at The Courtyard in 2008*

“But the shop only paid £1/7s a week and the digs cost 6d more.” Betty went back to the Exchange who found her war-work at Barronia Metals. “They paid £3 a week!”

The mother of six girls, Betty was a firm believer in women's rights: “In the old days you were dependent on a man. For everything. And that was awful.”

Betty worked on the fruit and veg stall in the Butter Market for over 20 years. She was presented with the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Jubilee Awards which acknowledged her many years as a volunteer with the British Heart Foundation. Betty was a testament, at her great age, to fortitude, survival, and lack of self-pity. She will be greatly missed.

Roll Out the Barrel

Joseph Sankey & Sons celebrate the making of their millionth barrel

In March 1967, the Rotherwas factory of Joseph Sankey & Sons reached a milestone when it celebrated the making of their millionth beer barrel. Local newspapers reported it as a 'great day in the history of brewing and cooerage'. The famous barrel, made of stainless steel, was polished to a fine shine, and stamped with the date of production and its number. It was never sent off to the brewery to be filled with beer, however. It was instead kept for display purposes. Does anyone know where it is now? Sankey & Sons opened their first factory at Rotherwas in 1948, when they transferred their main container production line from Staffordshire.

To commemorate the making of the millionth barrel Mr T Honess, the managing director of Sankey's four factories, presented gold tie clips in the shape of half a beer barrel to 14 of the factory's employees in the brewery division who were doing the same job in 1951, when production of barrels first began. These gentlemen were: Mr P Astbury, Mr R Davies, Mr W Davies, Mr M Harrison, Mr A Huberry, Mr L Hyett, Mr B Jones, Mr A Kelland, Mr G Powell, Mr L Preece, Mr D Skyrme, Mr Edwin Smith, Mr Eric Smith, and Mr A Thomas.

Ex-worker Esme Fosbery, from Fulham, who sent in these pictures said: "Sankeys used to elect a Queen of the Works at each plant. Sankeys, Hereford voted in Joyce Morris from Moor Farm, and everyone went by coach to Bilston to celebrate . . . with a crate of Cherry B in the back."

Editor's note: We wonder where these tie pins are now and the millionth barrel! Thank you to Esme Fosbery, a former Sankey's worker, for lending her material.



The millionth barrel roll out at Rotherwas



Dave Williams



Tom Hardman and Bill Watson



Henry Rogowski and Ron Singleton

Hereford's worst river tragedy



The rescuers left to right: Mr F W Collins, Miss Margaret James, Miss Roma Dean and Mr H A Cairns

City soldier one of the rescuers at the scene

On the wintry Saturday afternoon of January 20, 1940, the River Wye witnessed its worst tragedy when four children drowned. One of the drowned children was an evacuee from Birmingham. In a contemporary account from the Hereford Times, army man Mr F Collins recounted the scene. He was only 23 at the time and living in Stanhope Street. He estimated there were 50 children playing near the scene when the tragedy occurred. "I was walking down the river when I heard screams and realised that something serious had happened further down the river. I ran to the spot and when I saw several children disappear into the water, I snatched off my coat, pullover and boots and dived into the water.

"One girl [described as the 'heroine of the tragedy', Margaret James of Kingsland, a student at the Training college] had already jumped into the water and she had got hold of one of the drowning girls. I could see that the task was too much for her, so I went to her assistance and released her from her burden. I swam towards the bank with the little girl and told the other she had better try to reach the bank. We gained the bank with difficulty, but people helped haul her out of the water. I went back but could not see any other children in the water. I did not know who the girl who jumped into the water was, but it was the pluckiest thing I have ever seen. When she saw the others in difficulties, she did not hesitate for a moment but went straight into the river to their aid."

Each of the rescuers received a bronze medal from the Royal Humane Society for their efforts. They were Mr F W Collins, Miss Margaret James, Miss Roma Dean and Irishman, Mr H A Cairns.

Editor's note: We know Mr Collins went on to serve with the Post Office after the war, but don't know anything of the other rescuers. Please do get in touch if you do.

Work is in progress for the archiving of Herefordshire Lore's vast catalogue

One of their unearthings was this gem, 'Working Perils'

One of Herefordshire Lore's founders, Bill Laws, interviewed Hardings Manager Alf Evans in 1991, and Alf talked about working perils.

In those pre-plastic days, lead was commonly used, but with caution. Back in 1850 the Hereford doctor Henry Bull, gave evidence to a government health inspector about the several cases of permanent paralysis in the St Owen area of the city caused to cider drinkers by the lead piping from cask to tap. (Others claimed the lead came from sour wells, but Dr Bull showed it was a case of what was known as 'Devonshire Colic'.)

Lead was still causing problems 50 years later as Hardings manager Alf Evans recalled: "Tradesmen bought their supplies of white lead paste, turpentine and the colouring from Hardings or Vaughans. The plumber's apprentice would fetch the supplies. But a curious thing about the painters – you could always tell them by their white aprons – was that two or three of them were almost stone deaf from the lead poisoning: they were careless, you see, never washed their hands or anything like that to have their food, no facilities."



Yvie James and Judith Morgan have begun archiving the several thousand images published by Herefordshire Lore. Herefordshire Records and Archives Centre are kindly hosting the work.

Secretarial training in Hereford



Standing 1 to r: Denise Prosser, ?, ?, Jean Cratchley, Jean Farr, Dianne, Winnie Frost, Margaret Lewis. Sitting: ?, ?, teacher Miss Walker, ?, and Rosemary ?

Over 60 years later, and ex-student Margaret Lewis still uses her shorthand

I attended the Hereford College of Further Education in 1957/1958 (later to be the Hereford Technical College), doing a secretarial course. I and some of the girls in the class had our photograph taken outside the ATC Hut, Eign Road, at the end of the final term. I was 15 years of age when I started college. We learned Pitman's shorthand and typing, English, book-keeping and geography. As odd as it sounds, we had to travel all over Hereford for our lessons – a room above the YMCA, the ATC Hut, a hall in Barrs Court Road and the main building at the end of Edgar Street on Newmarket Street. I left Hereford in 1966 and moved

to Shropshire, where I still live. After I finished college, I obtained work as a shorthand typist at the solicitors TA Matthews & Co then in King Street. I have worked most of my life as a legal secretary and worked part-time until I was 70, when my boss retired. I am now gone 81, but I am still '40' in my head. I still do shorthand daily, drafting letters etc and my daughter surprised me recently with a portable typewriter as I have missed typing so much.

Editor's note: Can anyone fill in the gaps and name some of the young women in the photos?



Standing: Denise Prosser, Ann Baldrey, Jean Cratchley and Margaret Lewis. Sitting: Winnie Frost, the teacher, ?

Hereford Scrap Metal Merchants Meet TV Star

Steptoe and Son's Harry H Corbett paid a visit to Hereford in the 1970s

TV rag and bone man Harry H Corbett visited Hereford in November 1974 and met his scrap metal counterparts, Hereford merchants, Mr and Mrs Smith (no other details given), whose mode of transport was a horse and cart.

Editor's note: Who remembers Mr and Mrs Smith and why was the Steptoe and Son star in Hereford?



LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Get your facts right

'There are couple of errors in the heading (page 2) to the Cover Story. The train appears to be not arriving but departing Hereford station. Barrs Court Road is in the background whilst Aylestone Hill signal box is partly in shot and Barrs Court station historically, is and always will be, a RAILWAY station. The slick American term 'train station' has no place in In Our Age!

'Now, the cover photograph, whilst there is no direct reference to the Hereford, Ross and Gloucester (HR&G) branch the implication is that the photo has some relevance to that line. It has not. The readership should not be misled by a steam train photo just because it's a photograph of a steam train. The locomotive (engine if you like – it's got fewer syllables!) is an LMS railway express type (then as now preserved) which would not have worked on the HR&G because of its LMS company origin, and its weight. Such a loco would have been banned because of restrictions on the bridges. The train is not a service train but a steam special of sorts, possibly mid-1970s, and a good ten years after any service on the HR&G line. An arcane point but the HR&G did not run into Barrs Court but made a junction with the main line at Rotherwas. Some attempt could have been made to source a photograph of an authentic HR&G train hauled by a small branch line engine, say at Ross-on-Wye or in the vicinity. The desolation at Barrs Court cheers no one.' - *Michael Young, Rugby*

Director of Education

'It was good to see a picture of Maurice Edge, director of Education in Issue 63.

My first job at 16 was in the wages section of the County Treasurer's Department, Bath Street paying county council roadmen. The County Treasurer was A.B. Turner, we were on

the ground floor, Education was on the first floor. We often saw Mr Edge along the corridors. Mr Edge had his own parking space on the left of the County Offices. Mr Vin Brown, County Architect, has a space to the right of the archway.'

- *Ann Morgan (née Phillips) Moreton-on-Lugg*

Barrs Court Road Youth Club

'The winter edition of IOA showed Barrs Court Road in the background and off the picture to the rear of the train is St Barnabas Church, a tin and wood construction. Father Windle was the vicar there for many years. He dropped dead (after an exhilarating cycle ride) at the Vicars Rest Home in St Weonards. I attended the church youth club and later the garden city youth club. The father of a life-long friend, Betty Griffiths, was in the ticket office at Barrs Court Station in the 1940s. He owned two greyhounds and used to go greyhound racing at weekends with Mr Hyde (also a greyhound owner) and a plumber on the Hereford corporation.

'The redundant POW huts from the last issue, I was a constable in the Herefordshire constabulary in 1952 to 1957, before transferring to the West Sussex constabulary (now the Sussex Police) and these huts were on my beat and were patrolled quite regularly. I used to feel sorry for some of the occupants as they were not the best places to call home.

'Finally, the Pumphreys article. When my younger sister and brother were born in 1938 (twins) the older children were taken to stay with aunts and uncles for six or seven weeks. I was deposited at the home of Auntie Beatty, who lived in Tedstone Wafre near Bromyard and on market day we went into Bromy and shopping, and sometimes selling fruit. We always called at one of the Pumphrey shops as I believe they had three shops and one day I was introduced to Mr Pumphrey, the owner, a very nice old man.' - *Ken Hyett, 94*

Girl Guiding at Tupsley

Judy Wilson sent in this photo of a Girl Guide troop at Tupsley from the mid-70s. Recognise anyone?

Judy now lives in Sunderland, with her mother. She grew up in Moreton-on-Lugg and went to Our Lady's RC school and Hereford High School for Girls and Hereford Sixth Form College. Her early days as a volunteer at St Mary's Burghill was to lead to a career in mental health, eventually ending up as a chief executive at two mental health trusts in London. Her mother taught French at Weobley Secondary school, Bromyard Comp and Hereford High School for Girls, later Aylestone School. Her father was quality control manager, then production manager at Painter Brothers, then group training officer at Hereford Engineering Group.



Tupsley Girl Guides mid-1970s, Judith Wilson née Miller second from the right front row

From humble beginnings, a lowly railway worker achieves heady heights



In our last edition we asked our readers to dig deep and share their railway memories/stories. Our regular contributor, Michael Young, has come up trumps.

The Hereford, Ross and Gloucester Railway (HR&G) was a branch line of the Great Western Railway (GWR). It had in its employ a personality with one of the most remarkable careers of any man springing from the ranks of the workers in the twentieth century.

Fred Burrows (for it was he) was born just over the border in Gloucestershire, the youngest of ten children. His father was a labourer, presumably on the GWR because Fred, on leaving school, obtained a job as goods checker on the HR&G at Backney (IOA 66/7). He served during WWI in the Grenadier Guards and by dint of sound leadership rose through the ranks to company sergeant major. On leaving the army he re-joined the HR&G at Grange Court near Westbury-on-Severn. Promotion saw him transfer to Ross as goods checker/porter where he was an active member of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR). In 1924 and for eighteen years he represented GWR employees in negotiations with the company. His hard work for the union

saw him successively secretary of his branch, representative for South Wales and Southwest England at national level, and finally in 1942, president of the NUR, a position he retained for a further two years. By the early thirties he was a Justice of the Peace and living with his family in a small cottage, Thrushes Nest, on Rope Walk in Ross-on-Wye. His record as a moderate NUR leader, particularly during the war years, brought him to the notice of both Churchill and Atlee.

Burrows' last task as a railwayman was to travel to Paddington to attend a lunch hosted by Viscount Portal, the Chairman of the GWR, together with the directors. The date was 25 November 1945. The gathering was to celebrate his appointment and imminent departure to Ceylon (later Sri Lanka), and to recognise his appointment as Governor Designate of the State of Bengal.

His career after leaving the Great Western Railway was impressive: Member of a Delegation to Ceylon to discuss constitutional matters; Governor General of the Indian State of Bengal [*Powerless to prevent the internecine killings that accompanied partition and handover of power and which he described in a letter to Atlee as worse than anything he had witnessed on the Somme*]; Chairman, Agricultural Land Commission; Director, Lloyds Bank; High Sherriff of Herefordshire; Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire (23 years, died in office).

Sir Frederick John Burrows GCSI GCIE born Westbury-on-Severn 3 July 1887 died 20 April 1973 whilst still resident of the cottage in Rope Walk, Ross-on-Wye.

Married in 1912 to Dora Beatrice, daughter of J Hutchings, railway guard of Hereford. Lady Burrows was awarded a prestigious gold medal in recognition of her work in India and died in Ross-on-Wye in 1968.

Editor's note: Does anyone remember this remarkable man? He was six feet tall, sixteen stone and spoke all his life with a Gloucestershire/Herefordshire accent so he should have been well known on the streets of Ross.

Hereford History Day

Celebrating History Now

We are thrilled to announce we will be hosting our very first Hereford History Day on Saturday September 23rd, 2023, at Hereford's Town Hall.

We are inviting individuals and history societies to take part in our 'history supermarket'. Alongside this, we will have guest speakers and workshops, including a 'history slam'. We are in the very early planning stages and more details will be shared in due course. In the meantime, if you would like to get involved, please do drop us a line.

The event is made possible thanks to funding awarded to Herefordshire Lore from Hereford City Council. Herefordshire Lore Chair Julie Orton Davies said:

"We are very excited to be planning this event and thank all members of the Council for making this possible. We hope this shows confidence and trust in our skills as a group to record and archive local history. We are very much looking forward to the day and look forward seeing old and new faces on September 23rd."

Members of the City Council said, "We recognise the contribution the organisation makes towards the city, and it was agreed that Herefordshire Lore be awarded a grant to support Hereford Local History Day. Not only has Herefordshire Lore provided a lifeline for the preservation



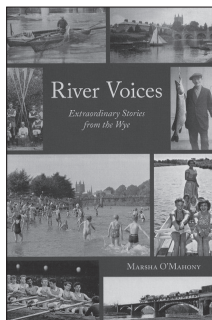
History Day at the Town Hall, 1948

of local history which might otherwise be lost, but also the opportunity to celebrate and appreciate our substantial and unique history; one which the city will surely welcome."

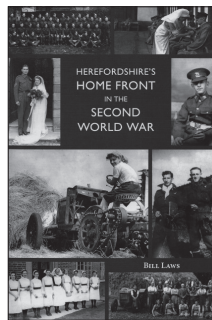
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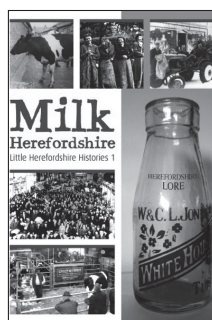
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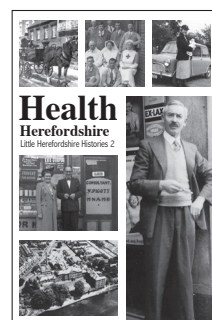
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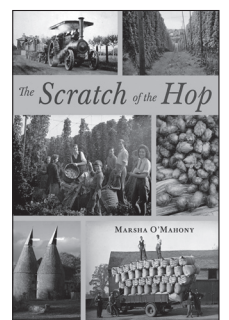
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