

A Community Newsletter for:

KINNERSLEY-SARNESFIELD-LETTON-NORTON CANON
BROBURY-MONNINGTON-STAUTON

Merry Christmas



AND A HAPPY

NEW YEAR.



A GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST?

A CORRESPONDENT writes:-

THE narration of ghost stories, whether true or fictitious, is a long-standing Christmas tradition, and as this is the Christmas issue of 'Signal' I thought that the following true incident, which happened to me personally many years ago, might be appropriate for publication.

Soon after leaving school in 1933 I joined a local tennis club situated about two miles from my home. Access to the courts was by a long lane which was built up for about half its length and then went across open countryside. Shortly after leaving the houses the lane crossed a small stream and from then on it was considerably higher than the fields on either side.

One moonlit evening I was going home from the club on the back-step of a friend's bicycle. Just as we reached the bridge over the stream an old man wearing a long coat stepped in front of us and disappeared over the side of the bridge into the stream. My friend had apparently not noticed the man and I felt sure we would hit him. But nothing happened, there was no further sign of him and I concluded that I was 'seeing things.'

Some weeks later the same thing happened again at exactly the same spot, and this time my friend also saw the figure. She swerved to avoid him but once again there was no sign of him when we stopped to look.

The whole episode seemed so strange that I decided to make some enquiries. After considerable questioning of some of the people who lived on the housing estate near the bridge I discovered that during the first World War an elderly couple had lived on the estate and that both of them had fallen victim to the world-wide influenza epidemic that caused many thousands of deaths in 1918. The man recovered but his wife died, and his grief was so great that he committed suicide by drowning himself in the stream close by the bridge on which I had twice seen his apparition.

THIS CHRISTMAS NUMBER
OF 'SIGNAL' IS
A COMBINED ISSUE
FOR DECEMBER 1983 AND
JANUARY 1984.

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The next issue will be in
February 1984 and copy must be
sent to Owls End, Norton Canon
not later than the second
Friday in each month.

EXHIBITION BY 'SIGNAL' ARTIST

AN EXHIBITION OF
BOTANICAL WATERCOLOURS,
HAND DECORATED CHINA
and KNITWEAR

by

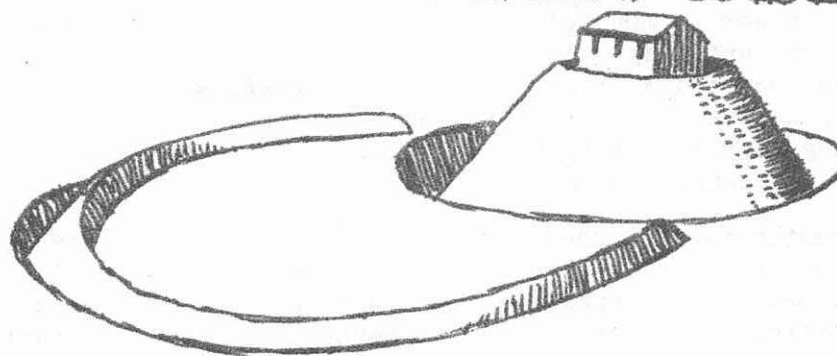
SANDRA CHILDREN

at the

MAYORS PARLOUR GALLERY,
CHURCH STREET, HEREFORD.

Open from Dec 6th to 17th
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily,
except Sunday.

THE MYSTERY OF AILEY CASTLE



ONE cannot travel very far through the western side of Herefordshire without coming across the ruin or site of a mediaeval castle. Practically every village along the Welsh border of the county has its castle or castle mound, all marked on the large-scale Ordnance Survey map in the old English script which the cartographers use for such features.

Most of these castles are very old indeed, dating in fact from the reign of William the Conqueror, and they form a significant reminder of the trouble he had to occupy and subdue the territory of which he became king after defeating the Saxons under Harold II at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

Resistance to his rule began almost immediately after his accession and it was sparked off in Herefordshire. A local Saxon chief called Edric the Wild lit the torch of revolt, which quickly spread to other parts of England. The Danes, those habitual predators, seized the opportunity to send over an invasion fleet and later on the Scots, under their king Malcolm Canmore, also joined in. It took William practically the whole of his twenty-one year reign to stamp out the conflagration and he was only able to hold down the troubled areas by the construction of an extensive system of castles.

This system was most heavily concentrated in the west midlands and along the Welsh border, for here William had to contend with the Welsh as well as with Saxons and Scots. Both he and his successors found the Welsh to be a tough proposition and they were not finally subdued until 1283 in the reign of Edward I.

Many of William I's most important castles were situated in Herefordshire and among the first to be built in the county were Richard's Castle, Wigmore, Eardisley, Ailey, Clifford, Hereford, Ewyas Harold and Goodrich. Later ones followed at, among other places, Huntington, Almeley, Longtown, Kilpeck, Snodhill and Bredwardine. The whole system consisted eventually of a continuous chain of fortresses right along the Welsh border.

These castles were, in their initial form, far removed from the massive stone constructions many of which still survive in a ruined state. The original Norman castle was a simple earth and timber fortification known as 'motte and bailey,' consisting of a timber building situated on a mound or 'motte' and flanked by a bailey, or enclosure. The whole con-

struction would appear similar to the drawing above. It was only later that these hastily thorn-up fortifications were replaced by stone buildings and in many cases they never even reached that stage. This is, no doubt, the reason why so many of them survive merely as overgrown earth mounds such as at Eardisley, Almeley, Hereford and Lyonshall. But despite dilapidations caused by the progress of time, war and deliberate destruction by the victorious Parliamentarians in the Civil War, at least something is still visible of Herefordshire's Norman castles, with one conspicuous exception, Ailey.

Ailey castle has vanished completely and it is fairly safe to say that most Herefordians are not even aware that such a castle ever existed or, indeed, know exactly where in the county Ailey is. I must confess that, until I saw it marked on a map of Norman castles featured in Malcolm Falkus and John Gillingham's recently published 'Historical Atlas of Britain,' I myself had never heard of it.

Ailey today is a scattered hamlet lying to the south of the former railway line near Kinnersley to the west of the Kinnersley-Letton road. There is no sign anywhere in the hamlet of a former castle, or even the earthwork of one, nor is the site marked on the Ordnance Survey map as is usually the case. But there is one important clue. One of the farmhouses in the hamlet is called Oldcastle House. If ever there was a castle at Ailey this would appear to be its likeliest site.

There is no sign of any castle earthwork anywhere on the farm and it is, of course, possible that the farmhouse itself is built on the site. But the fact that the site is not marked on the Ordnance Survey map seems to indicate that the castle must have disappeared a long time ago, possibly before the Ordnance Survey was inaugurated. The additional fact that it is not mentioned in any book covering Herefordshire history which I have been able to get hold of also seems to bear this out. One therefore wonders why this castle, and this one only, should have vanished so completely.

Was it considered redundant and therefore abandoned, to be ploughed over at a later date by successive generations of farmers? The fact that there is another castle at Kinnersley, only a short distance away, makes this a distinct possibility. Or it may perhaps have been become dilapidated and its stones - if it was in fact a stone-built castle - used as a quarry by local builders. Whatever its ultimate fate, it certainly seems strange that it should be the only Herefordshire castle which has vanished without trace. It would appear to be an ideal subject for research by interested antiquarians.

M.B. Collingwood

GOLDEN WEDDING - 11th DECEMBER

Mr & Mrs E Price,
The Bower,
Norton Canon.

Congratulations and Best Wishes
Mum and Dad.

With love from all the family.

Congratulations

CONGRATULATIONS to Dawn and Martin
Powell, Fair Winds, Norton Canon on
the birth of their baby daughter,
Sarah Louise.

HEDGES AND HISTORY



History at school was always a disappointment for me. Among all those endless dates, treaties and wars you only ever heard about Kings, Queens, Barons and Bishops. Why couldn't we be taught about what it was like living in the countryside or on farms? Nobody seemed to know.

Writing of course was the preserve of the nobility and the church so old history consisting of their intrigues, wars and religious arguments. Except for the Domesday Book nobody bothered to record what the ordinary people were doing or what the county looked like. Can we ever know?

On my wall I have an aerial photograph of the parishes of Norton Canon and Staunton-on-Wye taken about 1960. The patchwork of fields is quite random and all shapes and sizes. There is hardly any discernable pattern in the lines of the hedgerows.

Most of these fields are the same now as they were when they were first reclaimed, piece by piece, from the original ancient woodland which covered Britain. This history can be read in the hedges themselves.

From studies of hedges all over the country a rough rule has been found, that for each species in a 30 yard stretch of hedge add one hundred years for its age.

Around here I have counted up to eight; a typical list might be: Hazel, oak, ash, field maple, spindle, hawthorn. This gets us back to 1180 A.D. Getting near to Domesday records of 1066.

The entries for Norton Canon, Letton and Staunton, add up to about 1400 acres of land which paid tax, and 40 people with 14 ploughs between them. Most of this would have been on the higher ground. So much of the lower wetter ground, say around 'Letton Lake', would have been untouched virgin oak woodland which was starting to be reclaimed about this time, 1100 A.D. and later, with basic field shapes the same ever since.

So what is written in the shape and ecology of the countryside accords with the history in the book, with a bit of imagination, of course!

Dave Lovelace
Pool Cottage
Norton Canon

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW HEREFORDSHIRE?

'Signal's' Prize Competition

It is quite possible that many people who have lived all their lives in the same county may not be completely familiar with every aspect of its history and topography. It is also possible that they may not know much about the lives of some of the famous people who have lived in the county or, indeed, be aware that these people ever were fellow inhabitants.

'Signal' invites its readers to test their knowledge of Herefordshire by taking part in a prize competition designed to find out just how much they do know about the county. Below we list 18 questions on various aspects of Herefordshire, and a prize of £10 will be awarded to the entrant submitting the first entry with the most correct answers opened on Monday, 16th January next. All entries, bearing the sender's full name and address, should be sent to Owls End, Norton Canon so as to arrive not later than Saturday, 14th January, 1984. The answers and prizewinner will be published in the February 1984 issue of 'Signal.'

1. Where is Herefordshire's highest point above sea level?
2. Which Poet Laureate was born in the county, and where?
3. Which seventeenth century poet was for some time rector of a Herefordshire village?
4. Which Herefordshire country house was used as the setting for the TV serial 'The Pallisers' about ten years ago?
5. What feature do Hope-under-Dinmore, Ledbury and Colwall have in common?
6. Where in Herefordshire is there a church part of whose parish is located in a neighbouring county?
7. Which famous British composer obtained the inspiration for some of his greatest works while fishing in the River Wye?
8. The River Teme at Hay Mill near Downton-on-the-Rock is spanned by an aqueduct in the form of a large iron pipe. What is the purpose of this aqueduct?
9. In which Herefordshire church is there a memorial to a lady who was a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth I and who, according to its epitaph, 'always with maiden queen a maid did end my life'?
10. A Victorian literary figure is buried in a Herefordshire churchyard under a tombstone inscribed 'He being dead yet speaketh.' Who was he, and where is he buried?
11. How did the Golden Valley get its name?
12. Where and what is the Wonder Landslip?

13. Which Herefordshire man who was a magistrate in a neighbouring county was, in the present century, tried for murder in his own court and hanged in Hereford Gaol?
14. What and where in Herefordshire are: High Vinnalls, Red Daren, Butthouse Knapp, Hole-in-the-Wall, Ladylift Clump?
15. Which Herefordshire village was once the home of William Wordsworth's brother-in-law and which the poet visited on more than one occasion?
16. A sixteenth-century architect who was the builder of some of Herefordshire's finest timber-framed houses is buried under a tombstone with the epitaph ... 'His house of clay could hold no longer, May Heaven frame him a stronger.' Who was he and where is he buried?
17. Which Herefordshire village contains the site of a Roman town which flourished before the City of Hereford existed?
18. From which battle, fought in Herefordshire, did the victor go on to become, ultimately, King of England?

AFTERTHOUGHT

WE have all been warned from birth never to believe all we read - even if it is in 'The Signal'. And just to prove how careful we should always be here is a true cautionary tale from the First World War - all about those German Atrocities in Belgium.

Kolnische Zeitung

When the fall of Antwerp became known the church bells were rung throughout Germany.

Le Matin

According to the 'Kolnische Zeitung' the clergy of Antwerp were forced to ring the church bells when the fortress was taken.

Corriere della Sera

According to what 'The Times' has heard from Cologne via Paris the unfortunate Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been sentenced to hard labour.

Le Matin

According to information which has reached the 'Corriere della Sera' from Cologne via London it is now confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring their church bells by hanging them as living clappers with their heads down.

(Quoted by Robert Graves in John Terraine's 'The Smoke and the Fire'.)

Gareth Evans

WEOBLEY GROUP OF PARISHES

CHURCH SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

Sarnesfield

11th 10 am Holy Communion
25th 8 am Holy Communion

Norton Canon

4th 9 am Holy Communion
11th 9 am Morning Prayer
18th 9 am Family Carol Service
19th 2.15 School Carol Service
25th 9 am Holy Communion

Staunton-on-Wye

4th 11 am Holy Communion
11th 11 am Morning Prayer
24th Midnight Holy Communion

Monnington-on-Wye

11th 9.30 am Holy Communion
22nd 7.00 pm Carol Service
25th 10.30 am Holy Communion

Letton

18th 11.00 am Holy Communion
21st 7.00 pm Carol Service

Kinnersley

4th 10 am Holy Communion
11th 10 am Mattins
18th 6.30 Carol Service and
Nativity Play
25th 9.00 (Christmas Day) Holy
Communion with carols

NORTON CANON

It was not possible to publish the amount raised from the Harvest Festival Thanksgiving in the November issue of 'The Signal' as some envelopes were still outstanding.

The Parochial Church Council would like to thank all parishioners who contributed, which raised the excellent sum of £174.86 and also to thank those who gave fruit, flowers and vegetables, which were very much appreciated.

CHURCH SERVICES FOR JANUARY

Sarnesfield

8th 10 am Holy Communion
22nd 10 am Morning Prayer

Norton Canon

1st 9 am Holy Communion
8th 9 am Morning Prayer
15th 9 am Holy Communion
22nd 9 am Family Service

Staunton-on-Wye

1st 11 am Holy Communion
8th 11 am Morning Prayer
15th 11 am Holy Communion

Monnington-on-Wye

8th 9.30 am Holy Communion

Letton

22nd 6 pm Evening Prayer

Kinnersley

1st 10 am Holy Communion
8th 10 am Mattins
15th 10 am Holy Communion
22nd 10 am Mattins
29th 10 am Family Service

Letton P.C.C. 17th January

7.30 pm at Old Letton Court

Norton Canon P.C.C. 24th January

7.45 pm in the Hall.

29th January is the fifth Sunday in the month. There will be a service of Holy Communion (1662) at 11 am at Weobley.

NORTON CANON CHURCHYARD FUND

The sum of £211.50 from donations in lieu of flowers has been received in memory of the late Clive Lane.



"What is a Christmas tree?" asked Susie Squirrel.

"It's a fir tree" said Mrs. Squirrel. "You hang pretty lights and presents on them." But the Squirrel family couldn't afford one.

One day when the Squirrel children returned from playing in the wood, a big surprise was waiting for them at home. Great Uncle Silas had come to visit them from Canada. As they scuttled into the room, they found him even bigger than they expected, and his tail was very bushy and tall.

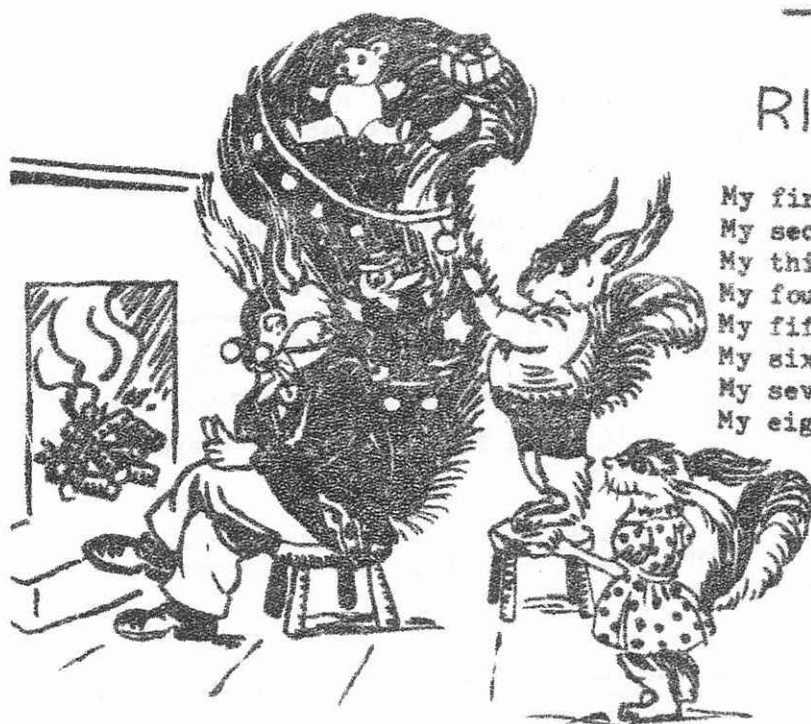
"Oh it must be a fur tree," Susie whispered to her brother.

Uncle Silas had brought them some toys and sweets which made them shriek with delight. After supper he dozed off and soon began to nod and his glasses slipped down his nose. As his tail curled over his head Susie said "I'm sure it's a fur tree, let's hang our toys on it and we shall have a Christmas tree."

They made it look lovely with coloured stars, nuts and ribbon. Uncle Silas woke up with a very heavy tail. "Bless me!" he gasped and laughed till his tail shook.

"So you've never had a Christmas tree," and he showed the pictures of real Canadian firs. "I will get you a real fir tree for Christmas."

And Uncle Silas certainly kept his promise.



RIDDLE-ME-REE

My first is in happy but not in sad,
My second's in jolly but not in glad,
My third is in lose but never in win,
My fourth's not in fat but is in thin,
My fifth is in day but not in night,
My sixth is in eat but not in bite,
My seventh is in you but never in me,
My eighth is in saw, and so and see.

Answer on Page 12

BIRTHDAYS

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Kinnersley

Ian Lewis	2nd Dec
Stephen Mark Thomas	17th "
Julie Ann Phillips (Sallies)	30th "

Sarnesfield

Wendy Evans	5th Jan
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Letton

Richard Merriman	10th Dec
Robert Bryan (Over Letton)	11th "
Mark Addison (Over Letton)	24th "

Moorhampton

Matthew Turley (Mansel Gamage)	6th Jan
Andrew Whitney (Upperton)	12th "

Norton Canon

Lyndsey Evans	2nd Dec
Nichola Cole	2nd "
Nicola Watson	7th "
Lucan Raphael	8th "
Tina Colcombe	11th "
Johnathon Absolom	15th "

Gail Davies	11th Jan
Jaime Loxton	12th "
Stuart Powell	25th "
Andrew Davies	26th "
Duncan Hardman	30th "

COMING EVENTS

STAUNTON-ON-WYE LADIES CLUB

Next meeting will be held on 7th December at 8 o'clock at Staunton Village Hall.

There will be a demonstration on making Christmas Floral Decorations. You may bring along your own materials to make a decoration if you wish.

CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST LETTON

On Wednesday, 21st December there will be a Service of 9 Carols and lessons at 7.00 p.m. with the Hereford Church Singers in support.

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Afterwards, at The Swan Inn, Letton a 'Pastry & Punch' night with more carols commencing at 8.30 p.m.

WEOBLEY

A Carol Concert will be held in Weobley Comprehensive School on Tuesday, 13th December at 7.30 p.m. to which all are welcome.

Programme given by Weobley Comprehensive School Choir and Orchestra and Hereford Salvation Army Band with audience participation.

Admission free. Retiring collection.

Refreshments at moderate charge.

CHRISTMAS AT THE 'SHOES'

Tuesday, 20th December - carol singing around the village. Anyone interested please meet at The Shoes at 6.30 p.m.

Wednesday, 21st December - Christmas Draw. Don will also be singing.

Saturday, 24th December (Christmas

Eve) - carol singing and mince pies.

Christmas morning - glass wasenail cup.

Boxing Day - Clay Pigeon Shoot 11 a.m. field opposite The Shoes.

New Years Eve - faggots and peas and fancy dress.

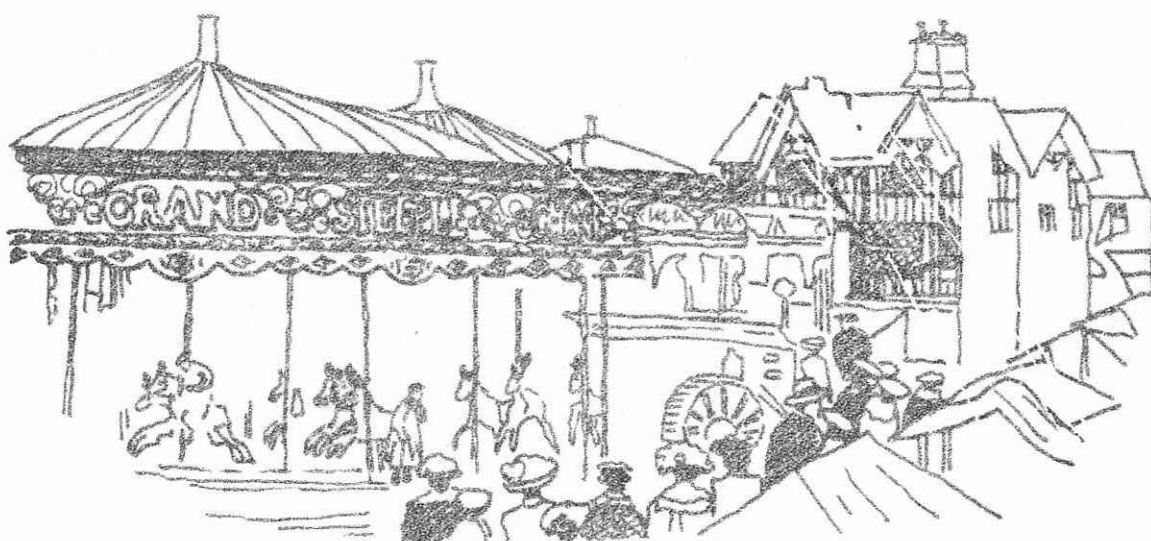
'HERE-WE-FORD'

Hereford at the turn of the century

A really lovely town with the River Wye flowing through it, and lovely Cathedral with its chained library. The Old Wye Bridge spanning the river still stands. Some of the streets were narrow, with a wide open High Town, the main shopping centre. A lot of the shops were privately owned. In High Street there was Greenlands, a huge store selling drapery and furniture, and also Oatfields the China Shop in an alleyway with signs displaying chamber pots marked 1/-, and 1/3d. for the patterned one. A favourite riddle would be 'why is High Street like the country,' because it has Greenlands and Oatfields. There was a drapery shop in High Town named Walmesleys and outside would be hung thick black stockings 1d. a pair and men's working shirts 1/11d. The Market Hall was a great place to bring their produce in, butter, dressed poultry, eggs, any garden produce, flowers and sit on benches with their goods laid out. They usually paid 1/- each time to 'stand' there.

The great time was Hereford May Fair held in the streets the second Wednesday in May. It still takes place and is justified by Charter from the 17th century. There has often been a lot of opposition to the Fair but its abolition would need an Act of Parliament. The great argument is the risk of fire. The fair covered High Town, Broad Street, St. Peter's Square, Commercial Street. The ground was taken by one of the Stowmen Guild and let out at a sum of about £250. On the Thursday of the Fair the takings are given to the local hospitals. It all made a wonderful sight with the huge engines driving the motorcars and hobby horses and providing the organ music. There would be a cinema show at Wadsworth stand with dancing girls outside. The picture would be very shaky with an entrance fee of 1/- while the 'girls' would be dressed up in frilly skirts and all made up with lots of rouge. Their ages could be anything from 20 - 40. There were also a number of hoop-la stalls, coconut shies and Aunt Sally's and servant girls would, as a special treat, be given part of the day off to attend the fair.

Previously it was what was known as a Hireling Fair where girls and boys were hired out. The wage offered was a yearly one of about £10 - £20 for a maid and £20 - £30 for a boy with reep included. They would stand



on the street and the employers who were looking for staff would approach and interview them.

A Regatta would be held annually and at night the boats would be lit up as they sailed up and down the river. Jordans, the boat builders, had a yard on the banks just over the Wye Bridge and did a great business.

The Old House in High Town was once the site of Lloyds bank and is now a Museum. The town had two Flour Mills. One in Bath Street belonged to the Rev. John Venn who opened this as a place where the poor took their flour to be ground. The offices were called 'The Hereford Society for Aiding the Industrious' and the Revd. Venn left a large Charity to the City which consisted of the Flour Mills, Baths and several allotments in White Cross and Bath Street. There was also a loan fund where one could borrow at a small rate of interest.

In Blue School Street there was a Carriage Builder called Jones who specialised in gypsy caravans and showmen's vans. These were very ornate with an Italian commissioned to paint the interior with birds and flowers. The cost of some of these carriages would be £1,000 - a vast sum in those days.

Mention must finally be made of the renowned Cider Works of Bulmers in White Cross. Here worked women who, dressed in clogs and sacking aprons, were known locally as 'Bulmers Angels.'

to be continued.....

We are not what we think we are but, what we think, we are.

Buddhist aphorism

ANSWER TO RIDDLE-~~ME~~-REE...

HOLIDAYS

FOR A GOOD READ....

AN ICE CREAM WAR by William Boyd (Penguin paperback - £2.50)

Warning

'The publishers discount all responsibility for any loss of marital bliss that may be occasioned by the reading of this book.'

Such advice might well be justified on the grounds that any reader could easily be so carried away by the tale that, until it is finished, all normal domestic obligations would be let go by the board.

A little exaggerated perhaps but not by too much. It is an absorbing tale - evenly split between events in England and East Africa - about a long forgotten 'side show' of the First World War. It is no wonder that it attained the eminence of being one of the six novels considered for the 1982 Booker Prize. After you have read it you will wonder why on earth it didn't win.

Gareth Evans

A CAROL FOR MUMS

Christmas again! It seems but yesterday
Dad took the holly down and put the lights away,
Dumped all the empties - did we drink all that?
Mum sent a New Year card to overlooked Aunt Pat.

Now all the worry starts afresh for Mum,
Shall it be fowls again? And will our daughter come?
Must we ask Lucy and those frightful kids?
Don't overlook the special food for Pam and Sid's.

Puddings! How many? Time to make her own?
Boughten ones are not the same; don't want Dad to moan.
Must get to Handmore Cross about the cake.
How many glasses will she need, for goodness' sake?

Christmas cards! Bought but not enough, she fears.
All got to be addressed, last day for posting nears.
Anguish! The list of presents not complete!
Must keep appointments for her hair-do and her feet.

Calmly through all the stress our Mother sails,
Coping with problems hopeless to mere males.
Maybe each year when again Christmas comes
One of our carols should be 'Thank you, Mums.'

H.O. Aldhous



OBITUARY

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Mr Harding Preen of Jarvis Chantry, Staunton-on-Wye, who died in Kingswood Hall Hospital on November 30th after a long illness.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME ENVELOPE COLLECTION IN NORTON CANON

Those who subscribed to the above Charity back in September, may like to know that the sum of £17.29 was raised and passed on to the Weobley District Secretary, Mrs. Tia Lloyd, Weobley. Mrs. Lloyd reports a very much improved total for the whole district of Weobley this year - £591 as compared with £365 last year.

Volunteer collectors are needed for the Moccas and Blakemere areas.

R. Norman

HAVING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CAR?

Bad starting?
High petrol consumption?
Poor performance?
Not charging?

You require a

CRYPTON TUNE

Tel. REG PILLING

ELECTRO-TUNE

MOBILE CAR CLINIC
MOCCAS 415

I COME TO YOU!

MIDNIGHT MASS

It's asking much for one hour one night
To welcome the Christ Child and his light -
The cause of all this festivity
Of Christmas, Noel, Nativity.

'I won't be going to midnight mass.
The ancient church is so grim and grey,
It's not the place for me and my lass.
We haven't been since our wedding day.'

'I shan't be there if the wind is cold.
I must take care of a tender chest.
I won't give the germs a stranglehold
Despite my triple-force thermal vest.'

'Some friends are coming that night, I fear.
Both good at darts and snooker men too.
A game we'll have and a festive beer.
More fun, we think, than hassock and pew.'

To church there'll be some happily go
And sing the same old carols we know,
And hear the cleansing words again said,
And share the sacred wine and the bread.
You see from their faces as they leave
It's worth the effort on Christmas Eve.

H.O. Aldhous

Results of Silver Jubilee Children's Painting Competition

CLASS 'A'

1st Catherine Stokes
2nd Jason Jenkins
3rd Kim Mason

CLASS 'B'

1st Lydia Lewis
2nd Rebecca Lewis
3rd Leigh Mason

Highly Commended - Daniel Price
Stephen Nutt

CLASS 'C'

1st Brendon Rees
2nd Bryn Evans
3rd Nicholas Rees

Highly Commended - Neil Capel
Louise Deem

RUBBISH

Writing a cheque for the second instalment of rates, I thought of what in practice we get for the money. Mighty little. I concluded, considering uncut verges and hedges, unlit streets, the absence of police, vandalised and unpainted street signs, holes in roads. But one District Council service, it occurred to me, continues to be good - the rubbish collection. Regular, quiet, efficient, helpful. What a boon those black plastic bags are! How effortlessly the chaps sling them into the great van! Not a bad job, that, if you like a bit of exercise and improving the environment.

Which reminds me. I once asked a 'trash can man' (as they are known in N.Z.) whether much of value turned up out of the bins. He answered that he and his mates had a gold wrist-watch apiece, and a new hand was given the next one to be found by the team. That seemed to be a point of honour. He added that on marriage a man got a full set of cutlery, although this might take some time. And the pattern might not exactly match.

This assurance was given with a straight face. I still wonder what do you think?

H.O. Aldhous

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE— 1938 VINTAGE

by A. Aldhous

(Concluded)



THEATRE work was extremely interesting, the hardest part being to remember the idiosyncrasies of individual surgeons. Sometimes it seemed to our jaundiced imaginations that to put out iodine instead of flavine or the wrong make of artery forceps was only a little less heinous than killing the patient. Every week as a routine all walls and ceilings were washed and every piece of equipment cleaned. This was in addition to the normal washing and sterilising after use. Instruments were taken apart where possible and the hinges scrubbed before drying and coating with a thin smear of light oil.

These days dressings come pre-packed and syringes and gloves are disposable. We had to wash and boil everything after use. Dressings came as rolls of lint, gauze and cotton wool. Wool was made up into balls of different sizes. Lint was cut into squares and folded three ways so that no ends were likely to stick on a wound. These were packed into drums and sent to the operating theatre for sterilization. Night staff were responsible for keeping wards supplied with dressings etc.

Eventually the four years came to an end and we were ready to take finals. In order to revise we would go to either Battersea or Dulwich Park and take out a boat. The theory was that one would row and the other(s) have a text book and ask questions. I don't think that we ever opened the books but that was our story and we stuck to it. We celebrated result day by a visit to the theatre - free tickets of course and as luck would have it we were given a box that night.

Throughout the war we were helped enormously by the local troupe of Rover Scouts. They were marvellous. They came in every evening and all weekends taking it in turns to sleep in out-patients in case of emergency. Their main job was as porters and stretcher bearers but they did whatever came to hand cheerfully and willingly.

Looking back over those four years we found many things for which we could be thankful. One was that with living in we fared better ration-wise and did not have the bother of housekeeping on top of everything else. Another was the friends we made through shared dangers and difficulties. Some of these are still flourishing. Later we realized that training in a small establishment was good in that we were allowed to do treatments etc that in a larger hospital would have been the lot of the medical students.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



SCROOGE TOOK HIM AND SHOWED A CHRISTMAS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. SCROOGE BECAME VERY SAD WHEN HE SAW HIS GRAVESTONE



AT DAY SCROOGE WAS A CHANGED MAN HE WENT TO THE OFFICES AND BOUGHT THE BIGGEST TURKEY BOB CRATCHIT HE SAID WHEN HE BOUGHT IT HE TOOK IT TO HIMSELF WHEN HE ARRIVED AT HOME AND JIMMY MARLEY TOLD THEM HE WOULD PAY FOR TIM TO GET



SCROOGE NEVER FORGOT THAT NIGHT AND FROM THAT DAY HE CHANGED TO A DIFFERENT MAN. LATER HE TOOK BOB ON AS A PARTNER AND TINY TIM BECAME WELL

THE END