

REVIEW OF THE YEAR'S NEWS

By Carl Whiteley(C.T.)

WHILE everyone is by now looking forward to Christmas festivities and prospects for the New Year, we pause for a while to look back on some of the outstanding events in Christchurch during 1957. It will be remembered as a year of controversial issues. The proposed sewage disposal works at Holdenhurst, Queen's Close, South View Road and Tutton's Well are a few of the subjects which have led to long discussions both in and out of the Council Chamber. The Nigel Nicolson affair took up a lot of time.

January

The discovery of a second mine within two months on Highcliffe beach led to local residents urging that a new "sweep" be made of the beach to ensure it was clear. First mine was exploded on the beach by a naval bomb disposal squad the previous November after it had been used by fishermen as a rod rest and had actually been kicked along the beach by several people.

The Royal Engineers bomb disposal squad from Portsmouth exploded the second mine after it had been found by 14-year-old Barry Fitzpatrick, of 2, Upper Gordon Road.

Christchurch Merchant Navy Officer. Mr. George William Kilmister, of 102, River Way, was awarded the M.B.E. in the New Year's Honours List. Also honoured were Sgt. Arthur Phillip Tizzard, an R.A.F pilot instructor and son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Tizzard, of 52, Chewton Way, Highcliffe, who received the Air Force Medal, and Mr. Sydney George Jones, a former Christchurch resident and Records Officer to the French District of the Imperial War Graves Commission, who received the M.B.E.

Sanction for a new nurses' home for Christchurch Hospital was sought by the Bournemouth and East Dorset Hospital Management Committee. Need for the new home resulted from a £60,000 development scheme for the hospital.

Mr. Nigel Nicolson. M.P. for Bournemouth East and Christchurch, suggested he should be given a chance to make his peace with the Divisional Conservative Association.

The great majority of local Conservatives could more easily be united if the decision about the Conservative candidate were to be delayed until nearer the next election, he told a Young Conservative meeting.

A local licensee declared that "Christchurch is the happiest little town anywhere. Let's tell England—let's tell the world— more about it".

Vice-president of the Christchurch and District Licensed Victuallers' Association, Mr. H. C. Cook was urging the town to spend "a little more on publicity". He was proposing the toast of "The Borough" at the association's annual dinner, at the King's Arms Hotel.

Cracks in the Bournemouth East and Christchurch Conservative Association over "the Nigel Nicolson affair" became a split that echoed through the division with the decision by two members to quit the executive committee.

Christchurch Council Beach Committee backed the appeal for a new mine "sweep" to be made at Highcliffe and a letter was written to the War Department Land Agent expressing the Council's concern that mines were still being discovered and asking that arrangements be made for the area to be swept again

Plans for a £14,000 extension to Christchurch Town Hall were approved by the Borough Council's General Purposes Committee.

The Executive Committee of the local Conservative Association considered that the best way of obtaining unity locally was in the early introduction of a new prospective candidate. The selection committee had already begun its consideration of a long list of possible candidates.

February

Plans for a 60-van holiday camp for Mundeford were quashed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government. Refusal of planning permission for the camp—to be sited in the 10½ acre grounds of "Sandhills", only a stone's throw from the beach—led to a public inquiry the previous December.

Major J. A. Friend was selected as official prospective Conservative candidate for the local division. Mr. Nicolson's answer was: "I am going to fight back".

The Prime Minister. Mr. Harold Macmillan declined to intervene in the break between the association and Mr. Nicolson.

Christchurch Council was urged to strongly oppose Bournemouth Corporation's plan to build a sewage disposal works at Holdenhurst.

Approving a new general rate of 17s. 4d. in the £ (2s. 2d. up on the previous year) the Council decided to protest to the County on the "exorbitant" rise in their rate, and urge economy.

March

Mr. Nigel Nicolson was divorced by his former supporters on the grounds of "adulterated Conservatism".

Temporary sea defence measures for Friars Cliff were urged after a "state of emergency" had arisen at Southcliffe Road where private property was jeopardised.

The Carnival Committee decided to adopt Bernards Mead and equip it as a borough Sports Centre as an objective for the carnival. It was also decided that the carnival queen would this year win her way to fame by selling votes at the rate of 3d. a ticket.

A resolution expressing a vote of confidence in the chairman of the local Conservative Association, the Executive Committee, and the Ward Branch Committee was carried by a large majority at the annual meeting of the association.

Mr. Nigel Nicolson called for an armistice in the local political controversy.

The engineering strike during March had a varied effect on local industry. Labourers were the only men who turned up for work at one firm and they were engaged on "spring cleaning".

While no incidents were reported at de Havilland's or C. F. Taylor's, the strike committee at Hurn apologised for the placing of tin tacks over the road at the Chapel Gate entrance.

April

With the official opening of the new £60,000 surgical unit, Christchurch Hospital became a General Hospital, with facilities for dealing with most types of medical and surgical cases. The Mayor, Coun. K. L. Smith, described it as "the fulfilment of a need for which we in Christchurch are very grateful".

It was announced that a new Christchurch Post Office may eventually partly replace Square House, for it was incorporated in plans for a modern shopping arcade on the site.

Mr. William John Wareham, of 66, Boscombe Grove Road, was adopted prospective Liberal candidate for Bournemouth East and Christchurch.

The controversy over the proposed Bournemouth sewage disposal works at Holdenhurst led to stormy scenes at the Council meeting.

A scheme for sea defence works at Friars Cliff, estimated to cost £39,000, was approved by the Council. Good progress was being made on the by-pass at Somerford Bridge and across the water meadows at Barlins.

A best Easter for many years was reported and good weather for most of the period provided a holiday to be remembered. But salmon catches from the Royalty Fisheries water were reported to be far below normal.

About 140 guests were present at the Mayor's reception and ball which was the first of its kind to be held in Christchurch Town Hall for many years.

May

Sea bed changes at the Avon beach led to a public warning by Mr Ken Derham, director of the Avon beach undertaking at Mudeford, that bathing was dangerous at certain times.

Signs were erected at the beach drawing attention to the danger and leaflets were handed to beach visitors.

In a 40% poll, Mr. Bertram Edward Mulhall (Independent) defeated the retiring Highcliffe member, Coun. Alan Gray (Conservative) in the Christchurch Municipal elections.

In the Jumpers, Central and Mudeford wards the retiring Councillors were unopposed.

Christchurch anglers, who were representing Great Britain in the international deep sea fishing tournament, left for Ostend. Among them was Christchurch and District F.C. member, Richard Thompson, who was junior champion at Boulogne last year.

Coun. W. E. Tucker won the first round of his fight against the proposed Bournemouth sewage disposal works at Holdenhurst, when the Council decided to pursue their opposition of the works.

Coun. K. L. Smith was elected Mayor for the third year in succession.

June

The County Planning Authority approved a revised sketch plan for the new shopping arcade on the Square House site. Subject to detailed plans being approved and no objection by the Borough Council, demolition work was planned for August.

The much awaited public inquiry involving the proposed sewage disposal works at Holdenhurst was opened in Bournemouth Town Hall and lasted for two days. It was stated the decision of the Minister would be made known later.

Presentation ceremony of the Callaway Shield at Hurn Airport turned out to be a double success story for members of the Airport Fire Service.

The Callaway Shield is awarded the Fire Service judged the most efficient in the southern district but they were also announced winners of the national competition for the most efficient service in the whole of the British Isles. They received the British Airlines Cup.

Two local people gained awards in the Birthday Honours List. Mr. H. A. Kemp-Welch, of "The Homestead", Sopley, was awarded the M.B.E., and Mr. V. S. Sackett, of 62, Stour Road, the B.E.M. Twelve visitors from Cognac, France, were entertained by members of Christchurch Rotary Club. The visitors were guests in the homes of individual Rotarians during their 36 hours in Christchurch. They went away convinced the town was a delightful place and the visit was a success. Mr. J. D. Rutland was chosen prospective Labour candidate for the Bournemouth East and Christchurch Division.

July

Residents of Friars Cliff, who earlier in the year lost part of their gardens when the cliff edge disappeared during bad weather, received bills for their contributions towards sea defence works. The bills went into thousands of pounds and one house owner received a bill for £3,900.

Miss Barbara Lewington, 21-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. I. A. Lewington, of 93, Burton Road, Purewell, was announced winner of the Carnival Queen competition. She sold 47,000 votes.

Allegations that women and children were living in "appalling conditions" in Bournemouth Corporation owned property at Queens Close, Fairmile Road, were made to Christchurch Council by Coun. W. E. Tucker.

Coun. Tucker went to the Ministry of Health. He stated he was given a "definite promise that inquiries into this matter would be made without delay".

The Mayor realised a life-long ambition when he travelled from London to Bournemouth on the footplate to sample a new two-hour rail service from Waterloo . . . and he had to pay his fare!

August

Although heavy rains fell throughout the morning the Carnival attracted large crowds. They lined the route of a one-and-a-half mile procession and filled the recreation ground for a full programme of attractive events. There were record entries for the Carnival Flower Show.

The Regatta was claimed best ever. Weather conditions were good and for Christchurch Rowing Club it was a day of triumph.

A warning that flooding and impeded drainage would be dangerously imminent around Christchurch harbour within a year, if the present build-up of the Mudeford sandspit continued, was made by Mr. W. H. Crocker Chief Engineer of the Avon and Dorset River Board.

He was conducting the Boards annual inspection of the area "No action will be taken until after the October survey, but meanwhile it is a question of watching and waiting," said Mr. Crocker.

September

Christchurch adventurer, Danny Weil, arrived home in search of another boat in which to complete his round the world lone cruise. Later in the month Danny suffered a "bitter disappointment" when his new boat blew up in Holyhead harbour. He immediately started looking for another.

It was announced at the Council's General Purposes Committee that Wick Ferry Holiday Camp intended to cease operation of the ferry boat from Wick Village to the camp. Strong protests were made and when the ferry ceased, Wick villagers said they had been "isolated".

Christchurch Rowing Club completed their most successful season when at Poole they became holders of a £750 silver bowl, presented for the Senior Fours championship race at the Hants and Dorset A.R.A. South Coast Rowing Championship.

October

Scientists at S.R.D.E., Christchurch, contributed to the National information gleaned by signals from the Russian satellite, which was circling the world,

Mrs. I. E. Baker, chairman of the Carnival Committee, announced at the Chamber of Trade meeting that profit from this year's carnival would be about £350, of which approximately £250 had been raised by the girls who competed for the Carnival Queen title.

Mr. R. W. (Bob) Bishop, well-known local fisherman, announced he was starting Wick ferry again. To make the ferry a paying concern, 80,000 people would have to use it each year, he said.

Mudeford fishermen and villagers announced that they were to petition the Council protesting against the erection of the Guide hut at Tutton's Well.

The local political controversy flared up again when an ultimatum to the 40-strong branch of the Boscombe East Young Conservatives, who refused to pledge their support to Major J. A. Friend, expired.

November

Members of the Boscombe East Young Conservatives decided to each put 5s. in the "kitty" and rename themselves the Boscombe Independent Conservatives.

Mrs. Emily Barclay, of "Sunnyholm", Mudeford, celebrated her 100th birthday.

Mr. Robert St. Clare Byrne christened the new staggered seat coastal four which he gave to Christchurch Rowing Club. "Robert St. Clare II" was its name.

Miss Caroline Velen Jenvey, oldest surviving member of a family of 17, celebrated her 100th birthday at Christchurch Hospital.

In a petition to the Council, 90 Mudeford residents said they wanted the Guide Hut at Tutton's Well removed.

Later in the month parents and friends of the Guides were organising a petition to be presented to the Council at their December meeting "approving the Council's action in putting the hut where it is."

When the General Purposes Committee of the Council was asked to support protests against aircraft noise at Mudeford, Coun. W. E. Morgan said a large number of people were considering moving from the area. If this was the case it might even affect rating values, he added.

The Town Clerk, Mr. J. Macfadyen, said so far as the Council was concerned no action could be taken in respect of the noise.

December

It was announced that Square House, planned to have been demolished in August, would be standing when the New Year comes in. Private developers of the site stated that demolition work would start early next year.

At a national savings social it was stated there were roughly one in every three people in the town contributing to the movement. It was a record to be proud of.

The Municipal and Health Committee gave further consideration to the future policy with regard to Tutton's Well and on a suggestion that another site for the Guide hut could be found, the Borough Surveyor was instructed to investigate and report to the next meeting.

Danny Weil announced that bad weather had delayed the start to his second round the world trip.