

## BURTON 1958

If ever a village could upset the often heard remark that country life is dull, Burton is the one.

A quiet, inactive little place it may well appear to the stranger. But in reality it can throw out a challenge to anyone who dares suggest the villagers have nothing else to do but sit around the fireside or chew pieces of straw over the meadow fence!

With at least a dozen flourishing organisations in the village, Burton can claim to be one of the liveliest spots in the area.

And there is plenty for the youngsters, too. Football, cricket, rugby, drama and dancing are some of the attractions in addition to a youth club, boys' club. Scout troop and Wolf cub pack. An excellent variety for a village with a population of under 1,000.

There are, of course, several other organisations such as the Women's Institute, the Flower Show Association, and the various sections of both the Parish Church and Congregational Church.

### BUSY CORNER.



**"Craftsman's art . . ." Thatcher Mr. William Albert Rose uses a wooden leget to drive the straw into place. He is thatching Burton Cottage, reputed to have been the home of the poet Southey.**

The Parish Hall is certainly a busy corner of the village and events there have to be booked well in advance. Happily, only friendly rivalry exists between the organisations and overlapping of events are avoided as much as possible. This is the sort of community spirit which prevails at Burton. Keeping a big brotherly eye on the interests of the village and its activities are the Parish Committee, made up of representatives from the various organisations.

This has been in existence since the war and any problems which arise are dealt with by these voluntary workers. They are to be thanked for the provision of a telephone kiosk and it was through their work that the village has a recreation ground.

This amenity is probably one of their biggest achievements, although when it was first mooted some people described the idea as "ridiculous". A playing field in the country was not necessary, they thought.

Miss K. Chance, of Cedar House, a Christchurch magistrate and member of the Parish Committee, told me the story of the recreation ground. "The committee," she said, "looked ahead and decided that as the village was showing signs of development they should make sure of at least a good playing field."

Sir George Meyrick let the committee have the ground in Martins Hill Lane and the Parish Committee set up a special sub-committee for getting grant aid. The ground was rough and covered with gorse, but it was cleared, partly by voluntary labour. Chairman of the committee is Mr. E. Harrison, Mr. Wrenn is secretary and a member since its formation is Major W. O. Campbell of Burton Hall. A well-known figure in the village, the Major represents Burton on the Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D.C., and during the war was in charge of A.R.P. in the area.

Miss Chance came to the village from Bournemouth in 1933. Her delightful home is believed to have been built in 1790. She is chairman of the Scout troop, president of the Youth club, a churchwarden along with Major Campbell, and president of the Flower Show Association.

Burton Parish Church, dedicated to St. Luke, was built in 1865 and the first churchwarden was Mr. Joseph Lander, who built the Vicarage.

But there was once a very ancient church of Burton called St. Martin's. Probably as old as Sopley Parish Church, it was built on a mound at the Triangle and this is how Martin's Hill Lane got its name. The church, served by a Vicar or Rector, was later taken over by monks and eventually neglected.

Acoustics in the church are described as "perfect" and peculiar to St. Luke's is the "Ceremony of re-lighting the lamp", held each year during Epiphany.

The lamp, in the sanctuary, was given by the parishioners in memory of Lawrence Croucher, who was for many years organist of the church.

#### IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY.

The ceremony is impressive. The whole of the church is thrown into darkness and prayers are said for all who have served in the church, particularly those connected with the musical part of worship, and at the prayer: "Lighten our darkness, . . .", the lighting gradually comes back.

Another impressive service is the Dedication Festival on St. Luke's Day, which is attended by a large congregation.

First Vicar of the newly constituted parish of Burton was the Rev. Bush, who later became Vicar of Christchurch.

#### OLD FONT.

In the present church is an old font from the original St. Martin's. This was recovered from the mound but had been used as a bird bath and left on the Green for some time before it was placed in St. Luke's.

The village was without a church for a very long time and was served by Sopley and High-cliffe until the parish was eventually renewed just over 100 years ago. Services were held in the local school until the new church was built.

Canon C. D. Kirkham has been Vicar of Burton and Sopley since 1942 and both he and his wife take an active interest in village life.

Burton Hall, home of Major W. O. Campbell since 1920, was built about 1727, but there was a previous house, probably built in Cromwellian times, where the tennis courts now stand. All that remains of this house are some foundations and probably the old mulberry tree.

The present house is a good specimen of early Georgian building, but the fine staircase seems to have been imported from some other house.

For many years the village cricket team used the park for their matches.

Burton is a village which has changed considerably over the past few years. Whitehayes estate has been developed, a council house estate has appeared in Stony Lane, and the village has now almost joined hands with Christchurch.

#### BY-PASS.

The new by-pass touches its boundary and with this development a big chunk of countryside has disappeared. This loss has been felt by farmer Mr. D. R. Wrenn, of Staplecross Farm. He used the land for crops but now has only sufficient land to provide food for his dairy herd.

Mr. Wrenn has farmed there for 10 years and his wife is now running a riding school on the premises.

A person who has seen many changes in the village is 78-year old Miss Alice Rogers. She has lived in her present cottage home ever since she was taken there from Christchurch at the age of three months.

Her father, Mr. James Rogers, also lived in the cottage for many years and he was works foreman for Mr. Joseph Lander at Burton House workshop.

This is another part of the village which has changed, for the lawn at Burton House was the former site of Mr. Lander's workshop. There was a wheelwright's shop on the ground floor, a carpenter's shop upstairs and a blacksmith's shop also on the premises.

Miss Rogers can remember the works' bell being rung at six o'clock every morning to summon the men to work.

The railway line, too, was built during the early life of Miss Rogers and she remembers clearly the laying of the foundation stone of the parish hall in 1913. As I spoke with Miss Rogers in her cosy little roadside cottage, snow was gradually covering the fields outside. Thoughts of leaving her warm fireside were not at all encouraging but the cold outside was nothing compared with some of the wintry weather Miss Rogers can recall.

#### HAD TO BE DUG OUT.

"In the 1880's the snow was as high as my house and we had to be dug out." I gave a shiver "Then it happened again in the 1890's." Another shiver as I glanced through the window and saw the snow still floating down.

"But we don't get winters like that nowadays," she added. That sounded much better and I was then prepared to walk out into the "cold, cold snow" with the happy thought that at least the weather is one change which we all don't mind!

Before her retirement in 1940, Miss Rogers was a dressmaker and her workshop was in an upstairs room at her cottage. She served her apprenticeship in Christchurch and walked there and back for three years.

Miss Rogers is still very active. She is secretary of the Parish Hall Committee, a committee member of the Women's Institute and secretary of the G.F.S. Savings Group.

Another well-known personality in the village is 81-year-old Mr. Edward Harry Peckham, of the Thatched Cottage. He moved there when he was 12 years old.

In his boyhood he paid 3d. a week to attend the village school — "And we had no milk at that". The headmaster, he recalled with a mischievous sparkle in his eye, was a six-footer, and from Mr. Peckham's conversation I gathered he used to "make 'em do".

#### "BIRD STARVER"

Mr. Peckham started work at the age of 12 as a "bird starver" This was the name given to a lad who spent from 7.30 in the morning until 7.30 at night keeping the birds off the growing crops. He used a "clapper" to keep the birds away and for this task he received a weekly sum of 3/6.

Then Mr. Peckham became a farmer's boy for Mr. Joseph Lander and worked from 4 a.m. until 5 p.m. for four or five shillings a week.



**Mr. Edward Harry Peckham, "bird starver", farmer's boy, seaman, trapper and now—retired.**

But the urge for the rolling seas was strong in this young lad and it was not long before he ran away to Poole to join the Navy. That was the life for the adventurous Mr. Peckham. He served until 1919 when he decided to return to the land and take up rabbit trapping.

With his little black and white Irish terrier, "Bruce", at his heels and a dozen or so rabbits over his shoulder, he was a familiar figure in the village.

He went happily along until five years ago when myxomatosis spread over the countryside. This touched the heart of the hardened seaman and trapper. "It was awful to see the poor things, I haven't done anything since," he said. His dog, too, is no longer with him. "Bruce" served his master faithfully for 10 years.

Mr. Peckham remembers the first train to pass Burton. "There were flags flying and lots of excitement but I didn't have my first ride until I joined the Navy."

Burton Green Congregational Church began its Christian witness on the first Sunday evening in August, 1875, being known then as Burton Green Chapel.

Previous to this, the building had been a Roman Catholic Church and had also been unused for several years. There is still a

confessional box in the adjoining caretaker's cottage.

#### TRUSTEES.

One of the trustees who secured the building for Free Church service was Mr. Elias Lane. Following his death, one of his sons, Mr. Howard Lane, a popular grocer in Christchurch, continued the work as superintendent of the church and Sunday school for 40 years until his death in 1940.

For many years, Mr. Lane walked to and from Burton each Sunday in all kinds of weather.

Mr. A. W. Williams then succeeded in these positions until his appointment as minister of the Verwood Congregational Church in 1945.

Present church secretary is Mr. R. Bolton, who has held the position for 11 years—his wife is a Sunday school teacher. Treasurer is Mrs. C. Honeywill and organist, Mr. T. Cherry. Two life deacons, Mr. H. Cobb, of Bockhampton, and Mr. H. Newham, of Verwood, were elected to the first Church Committee in 1919.

Mr. T. Legg of "Goodrest" Burton, in his 94<sup>th</sup> year is one of the regular Sunday worshippers, and is only occasionally absent through ill-health.

Services at the church are conducted mainly by lay preachers and ministers of several denominations.

Caretakers of the church are Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Shave. They have been there for the past 18 years.

#### OAK INN.

Mrs. Shave has lived in the village all her life and was brought up at the original Oak Inn, where her grandfather, Mr. Henry Blandford, was landlord for 47 years.

In those days, her grandfather had a smallholding and visitors to the inn could enjoy home produce. Home-made butter and home cured ham and bacon were some of the tasty dishes which graced the table.

The old inn was eventually pulled down and replaced by a modern "local" about 26 years ago. Present landlord is Mr. Harry Vivian Castle, and the inn is now the meeting place of the local football team.

Next door to the inn is a cottage which was formerly called the "Acorn" and the story is told that a former resident had three taps in the cottage sink—one hot, one cold, and the other bitter!

On the other side of the Oak is the well-known Pathfinder Kennels, owned by Miss Norah Woodifield. Such names as Pathfinder's "Drummer Boy", "Band Leader", "Red Riding Hood", "Last Dance", "Quick Step" and "Two Step" have brought fame to the kennels which specialise in wire haired fox terriers and Irish terriers.

Those names, too, indicate that ballroom dancing comes into the picture somewhere. Miss Woodifield is an accomplished ballroom dancer. With her partner, Mr. J. S. Pringle, she has been three times runner-up in the Hampshire championships, has appeared in the finals of the West of England championships and has numerous trophies for various competitions.

A breeder of pedigree Persian cats, she has several champions and is chairman of the Wessex Cat Club. Her trophies for both cats and dogs are many.

Burton has many picturesque thatched cottages and one of these is Burton Cottage, home of Mrs. C. Egerton.

### THATCHER.

Visiting the cottage, I met local thatcher Mr. William Albert Rose, of North Ripley, busy working on a new roof. A thatcher since 1920, he is in great demand in the surrounding villages, for thatchers are very rare.

His craft, he said, is one which will never die. "It used to be "a poor man's roof, but now it is a rich man's."

Burton Cottage has an interesting history. It is reputed to have been the home of the poet Southey and a favourite rendezvous for other famous poets, including Goldsmith, Lamb and Shelley.

The village school is a building greatly improved since its early days and recent re-decorations and new furniture has given it a brighter look.

Built in the middle of last century, it has an interesting log book. One entry states that: "So-and-so is absent today because he has had to visit the magistrate's court for poaching".

Present headmistress is Miss E. M. Crossley, and caretaker for many years until her death last year at the age of 80 was Mrs. Bartlett. The school is proud of canteen cook Miss Mary Smith, who received the highest award in the advanced cookery course of the City and Guilds last summer.

Burton has had a Post Office for close on 70 years. Mrs. W. K. Kerley has been sub-postmistress for 31 years and it was her mother, Mrs. E. H. Head, who first took over the business for a wage of £5 a year.

The local off-licence shop has been run for the past 20 years by Mr. and Mrs. S. Beaton, Somerset people, who came to Burton from neighbouring village Sopley.

Owner of the village stores is Mrs. A. M. Hawkins, who moved to Burton from Somerford two years ago. "I am most happy here," she said. "The people are really good and you couldn't wish for any better."

### DANCING SCHOOL.

Burton is also the headquarters of the Eve Derham School of dancing. Mrs. K. Derham, of Sunnyhayes, has been running a school for 22 years and she moved to Burton from Mudeford 11 years ago.

When a young girl, Mrs. Derham had ambitions of going on the stage. She got as far as a London dancing troupe but her parents intervened and her dreams were shattered. By running her school of dancing she feels she can help girls to attain the ambition which she herself had hoped so much to achieve.

The Eve Derham annual pantomimes are known throughout the surrounding district and these are all staged for charity. The Red Cross, P.D.S.A., Bournemouth Horse Fund, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, youth centres and many other organisations have benefitted through the admirable work of Mrs. Derham and her pupils. Staplecross House is another place which is bringing fame to the area. It is the headquarters of the Christchurch Rugby team formed by Mr. D. Hope, who moved to the house four years ago.

A former Harlequins player, Mr Hope is doing great work for the young sportsmen and he has helped to put the team on the fixture list of the country's two big rugby teams Cardiff and Harlequins.

## BAKERY.

The village bakery is at Winkton Common, where the Quinton family have been in business for many years. Mrs. Bessie Quinton, whose husband took over the business about 58 years ago, still helps in the shop. Burton Lodge is the home of Lady Clementina Tottenham, who moved there from Staplecross House four years ago. She has taken a great interest in village life and was president of the Avon Valley Girl Guides' Association for 30 years. Burton is a big farming area and coupled with this are the names of Farwell, Crabb, Hunt and Bolton well-known local farmers. Village life is not, after all, as dull as one might think!