

## Cllr. T. H. McArdle

"Christchurch Times" Reporter 1948



"I've knocked about this town for a long time and there's not much I don't know about Christchurch," is the boast of Councillor Tom McArdle.

He is one of the few remaining of the real old-time Christchurchians.

But he was not born here. It was seventy-five years ago in the sultry heat of an Indian evening at Peshawar when young Tom opened his mouth to let out his first yell.

Since then he has opened it a good many times to say a good many things, mostly on behalf of the ratepayers.

He came to Christchurch when he was seven. His father was in the Army and transferred from India to the Barracks. There were no married quarters then so the family lived in Portfield Road.

"It was the only road there, all the rest of Jumpers was open common," he says.

"Mac" went to the old National School and he tells an interesting story of how the boys used to make their own fun.

"Whenever there was a new policeman on duty in Market Square (where the Silent Policeman stands to-day) we used to go up and ask him the time. Whilst he was looking at his watch one of the boys would kneel down behind him. The rest would push him over.

Then we used to run. He would follow us and we always led him across a bog called "Shivery Shake." Of course we knew the paths, but he didn't and he always used to go in up to his knees."

Mac laughed. Those were the good old days. With all your youth organisations to-day the kids never had half as much fun as us.

He started work at 11, looking after cows. "I earned the princely sum of 2/6 a week," he said.

When he was a little older he got a job as a guard on the stage coach that ran from Bournemouth to various places of interest. "My job was to play the horn, and later I won first prize in a coach horn contest," he declared.

After getting married, Mr. McArdle came to live at Christchurch, but he still worked at Bournemouth. "It was nothing for me to leave Bournemouth at mid-night, cycle home and be back at 6.30 the next morning. All the workers did that then and they were happy and content."

After he left coaching Mr. McArdle took up farming. He gave it up before the war and now concentrates on his greengrocers business.

He entered the Council in 1935 and has fought three elections in the Central Ward topping the poll every time.

"I went on the Council simply because I thought they wanted shaking up. The old gang were running the town then and were non-progressive," he said.

He could have told me a lot more, but he wanted to see one of the ratepayers. "I try to do all they ask me," he said, "I will always put a case forward if I consider it just."

That's why he is still on the Council.