

# Mr. Dick Ford

C.T. 1958

By Carl Whiteley



**There must be thousands of people in and around Christchurch who admire Mr. Dick Ford. He is a remarkable man with extraordinary popularity and energy and whether in an immaculate dress suit or well-worn schoolmaster's outfit his appearance is always refreshing.**

Mr. Ford has entertained thousands of children and old people throughout the Borough. He has great organising ability and a personality which makes a party.

He has a flair for "patter" and with his well-worn gown, mortar board and referee's whistle he never fails to win his audience. But in the scarlet suit of a toast-master, greying hair well groomed, he is a dignified figure.

**Mr. Ford, who lives at 103 Bargates, has been entertaining people since the age of 18 when he was a member of "The Good**

**Companions," a patter and song act.**

The schoolmaster's act, which has proved the most popular so far among the youngsters, was introduced at a Civil Defence concert during the war. Mr. Ford impersonated the famous Will Hay, members of the Civil Defence Corps were pupils and the show was a "riot."

## IN GREAT DEMAND

During the war he was a Gentleman of the Ordnance Corps and served on various entertainments committees. Before the war he and his wife ran the Iford Social Club for young people and since then hardly any man in Christchurch has been in greater demand for dinners, dances, carnivals and parties. All this work is done voluntarily.

Mr. Ford his real Christian names are Harold Ernest, but he has been known as Dick for as long as he can remember, has been M.C. at many civic events. His most outstanding, he recalled, was when former Aldermen J.W. Tucker and D. Galton were made Freemen of the Borough.

**He has also experienced embarrassing moments when acting as an M.C. Such as when he introduced a young couple as man and wife when, in fact, they had only become engaged that very day. On another occasion he introduced a married couple as Mr—and Miss—!**

And on several occasions he has stood blankly at couples who have presumed he knew their names!

Mr. Ford has been a member of Christian Chamber of Trade for 20 years. He was among those who revived the Carnival and four years ago was appointed carnival manager.

It is in this capacity that he exerts a great deal of energy for he is ex-officio on all sub-committees connected with the carnival and responsible for the smooth running of the event on the day.

## ANNOUNCER

Not the least of his many tasks at carnival time is the job of announcer. He is at the microphone for two to three hours at a stretch but his task is also shared by Coun. I.E. Baker.

Mr. Ford whose father was a private hire coachman, was born at Boscombe. He was educated at St. John's C.E. School and at the age of 12 started part-time work as a van boy for the M. & P. Dairies—a firm he has worked for all his life.

As a van boy he started work at six o'clock in the morning until school time. He also worked

Saturdays and Sundays and for this he received 2s. 7d. a week and a pint of milk a day.

After leaving school, he started full-time at Boscombe and at the age of 16 took over his own round. At this particular time there was a flu epidemic and he worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Some eight years later he was appointed an outside representative for the Southbourne area.

#### YOUNGEST MANAGER

When the firm took over the Latch Farm Dairies at Bargates, Mr. Ford was put in charge and at the age of 32 became one of the firm's youngest managers.

**Last month, Mr. and Mrs. Ford celebrated their 26th wedding anniversary. His wife was formerly Miss Bessie Giles and came from Bristol.**

When Mr. Ford was elected president of the Chamber of Trade in 1953—a position he held for twelve months—he appealed to traders to beware of apathy.

#### GIVE UP APATHY

In his presidential address he remarked: "I implore all traders to give up this apathy towards things local and national, for if you don't you will find it will spread to your staff and from them to your customers with the consequent loss of business all round."

He still has strong views on apathy and describes it as one of the "most deplorable things today."

This week-end 55-year-old Mr. Ford will be able to relax a little after a hectic carnival week. But his work as carnival manager will not be finished. It is an almost all-the-year-round job and soon the season of dinners, dances parties and concerts will be here and the popular Mr. Ford will be "at it again."