

HINTON 1958

The story of Hinton estate can be traced back to the eleventh century. After being held under Edward the Confessor by the Saxons Ulwi and Edric it passed to Earl Roger of Salisbury, and a little later to the De Redvers family, who in 1100 were to become Lords of the Manor of Christchurch.

In early Norman times the Manor of North Hinton, also known as Northentone or Northington, was distinct from that of the future Hinton Admiral and was held by the Priory of Christchurch, the Prior paying a certain sum for castle guard.

The present mansion of Hinton Admiral, residence of Sir George Meyrick, is a fine 18th century building. Standing in a beautiful wooded park, this house replaced one which was burnt down in the 17th century. As the Priory became completed sufficiently for the monks to administer services and spiritual guidance, the people of Hinton had to go to Christchurch every Sunday for Mass.

In the early 15th century or late 14th century there was a severe flood of the River Avon between Roeshot Hill and Christchurch and as the people were going to Mass they were drowned. After this the people of Hinton petitioned that they should have a church of their own to be served by the monks from Christchurch. A church was later built and dedicated to St. Anne. The whereabouts of the building does not appear to be known but it is thought to have been somewhere near the Cat and Fiddle Inn. The present church was built in 1783 without a tower or chancel, but it was restored in 1874/75 when a chancel was added and an organ installed and other alterations made. High box pews which stood in the middle of the church and the gallery, where the children used to sit, were done away with.

PEAL OF BELLS.

A peal of bells was installed in 1884 when the present Sir George's father was married, and it is believed they were hung and dedicated in readiness for the first peal when he returned with his bride from their honeymoon.

When the church was first built it was a Chapel of Ease of Christchurch, and burials and weddings took place at Christchurch. First burials were those of a Mr. and Mrs. Bridgwood in 1866 and the first wedding was about that time or a little later.

Hinton School is a picturesque building. Although the actual date of erection is not known it is believed to be very old and there have been several schoolmasters and schoolmistresses. It has always been regarded as a very happy place, much beloved by its scholars.

One of the most ancient roadside inns in the country, the Cat and Fiddle, is said to be many hundreds of years old and to have been the meeting place of smugglers and highwaymen. It is also said to have been the haunt of soldiers who had been to the French wars in the time of Edward III and they named it Catherine Fidelis, meaning Catherine the Faithful.

Some authorities who have studied this story say it is unfounded, but the villagers consider it a unique name and are very proud of it.

UNALTERED.

Although much has been added to the original building the front is much the same as many years ago, and the main structure of the building is unaltered. The open fireplace and straight chimney in the public bar have also been preserved.

Whether the inn is as old as 800 years is open to argument, but it may well be that it stood by the side of the road—a road not much more than a track—in the time of the Plantagenets when Christchurch Priory was being built and the hunting of deer took place in the vicinity.

It would have made a welcome place of rest to the weary traveller on his tiring and comfortless journeys not without the dangers of highwaymen and robbers. Landlord of the inn is Mr. W. R. Price. Hinton was a very isolated village before the advent of the railway, postal services and the motor car. There was no railway there until 1886 and the nearest stations were at Christchurch and Holmsley.

The main line from London came as far as Brockenhurst, then turned off to Holmsley round to Ringwood and then to Christchurch. Travellers from London would have to go to Holmsley or Christchurch, and it was a weary trudge along the hot, dusty or muddy road.

What great news it must have been to the villagers when it was announced there was going to be a railway line from Brockenhurst to Christchurch, going through Cranemoor Common with a station at Hinton. It took about two years to lay the line and navvies who worked on it camped on Cranemoor Common.

COLONY.

This was all very interesting to the people of the village, and they used to stand and watch the men cutting through the ground with their machinery. There was quite a colony of navvies about the village and the Vicar and his daughters used to serve tea, coffee and food at a canteen at the Vicarage.

The station was opened in 1886, and the first train was from Hinton to Bournemouth. There was quite an official opening and first passenger was Sir George's grandfather, who had given the ground through the Common for the line. A building which became the Vicarage was originally intended to be the new Cat and Fiddle. It was built about 80 or 90 years ago, but as there was no residence for a Vicar when the church separated from Christchurch, it was turned into the Vicarage. The building is no longer used as a Vicarage for in 1954 the benefice was united with the neighbouring benefice of Highcliffe, and the Rev. R. T. Barnett became Vicar of the two parishes.

Hinton had no Post Office until about 70 years ago when a sub-office was opened in a cottage at the corner of the Green opposite the present police cottage.

This was taken over in November, 1928, by Mr. Cecil Penton, but three weeks after he moved in the cottage was burnt down. This has always been regretted by the villagers as the cluster of cottages at that corner presented a picturesque rural scene.

POST OFFICE.

Mr. Penton carried on business in a nearby cottage until the present Post Office was built the following year. On his death in 1945, Mr. Penton was succeeded by his wife who held the position until her daughter, Mrs. M. E. J. James took over three years ago. The village reading room was built in 1897 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. First reading room was a tin hut.

The Green was always kept neatly mown and was a favourite spot for the children. Many a happy game of rounders, and cricket have been played there.

RESTING PLACE,

In the early days of travel East Close Farm was a resting place. Pack horses were kept there for the stage coaches and travellers would go inside for a rest and in the winter for warmth while the ostlers would be busy outside changing the horses ready for another journey.

Remembering the days of the stage coaches is Mr. Albert John Kitcher, aged 87, of Step Cottage. Some of the coaches, he said, also stopped at the Cat and Fiddle, where the horses were given water and a sponge down. Born at Beckley, Mr. Kitcher was working on the estate when Sir George Meyrick's grandfather brought his bride to Hinton Admiral after their honeymoon. "The carriage drew up at the Lodge, the horses were taken out and the men of the estate pulled the carriage up the drive to the house," said Mr. Kitcher, who was one of the men who helped to pull.

In 1890, Mr. Kitcher enlisted in the Royal Artillery at Christchurch Barracks, where he stayed for 18 months before setting off on a six weeks' march to Newcastle-on-Tyne as part of a recruiting campaign. He was posted to India where he served until 1899, and then fought in the South African War.

1d. A WEEK FOR EDUCATION.



The old horse-drawn fire engine used in the days of the private fire brigade at Hinton Admiral. Belonging to 82-year-old Mr. John Penton, a former member of the brigade, the picture was taken about 30 years ago and shows, l .to r.: Mr. Chandler (first officer), Mr. Saltaire, Mr. T. Rogers, Mr. S. Taylor, Mr. J. Taylor, Mr. E. Barnes, Mr. T. Penton, Mr. John Penton, Mr. J. Evens and Mr. Rawlinson (second officer).

Mr. Kitcher remembers the railway being built and had a free ride to Christchurch on the first train. He attended the Hinton School and paid Id. a week for his education.

Mr. John Penton, aged 82, of Oak Tree Cottage, has lived in the village since he was five. His father was house carpenter on the estate and Mr. Penton followed his father in that position.

After attending the village school he started work doing odd jobs at the Cat and Fiddle for a 1s.a day. At Christmas time, said Mr. Penton, children of the school were provided with a school uniform by Lady Meyrick. The boys were given red caps and scarves while the girls had cloaks with a red hood. Mr. Penton, who worked on the estate for over 60 years, was also a member of the estate's private fire brigade.

When fire broke out, a bell on the roof of the mansion was rung and the workmen dropped their tools and ran to the fire station, he recalled. "The engine was worked by steam and the fire was lit

as soon as we left the station. By the time we reached the fire there would be sufficient steam to work the engine." The firemen had drills once a month and every quarter an inspector came down from London to "put us through it".

NEVER CHANGES.

Hinton said one old resident never changes. Modern traffic has replaced the old stage coach and the nearest town is only a few minutes ride on the 'bus, but the beauty of Hinton remains.

And the villagers consider themselves lucky to be living in unspoilt surroundings, particularly when other villages in the vicinity are in the process of being changed beyond recognition.