

## HURN 1958

FOR many people the name of Hurn means airport and work. It is a name known in many parts of the world and often in the news.

Thousands of people go there daily to work in the great aircraft industry and in many other light industries which have developed on the large airfield since the war.

For the traveller, Hurn is a stepping stone to distant lands, but as the aircraft soar into the sky what do they leave behind? Not just Bournemouth (Hurn) Airport, but a village which is the real Hurn. Clusters of little cottages, stately homes and farm buildings that were there long before the aeroplane was invented.

What a difference there is from Hurn of 20 years ago. But the villagers have long been used to the noise of aircraft. They don't even notice it!

There was a great influx of population too, after the war, when the many huts left by the R.A.F. were taken over by families in search of homes. The maximum number of families in these huts was in 1952 when there were about 170 families. Since then some have been rehoused at Ringwood, 54 families are in new council houses in the village and quite a number have left the area.

### 60 FAMILIES.

There are now about 60 families still living in the huts, but of these the Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D.C. hope to re-house about 41 families at Burton and others at Christchurch and Ringwood.

Captain Vere Myles, the Council's Housing Officer, told me it was hoped to have the whole of the site cleared by the end of this year. The land would then be returned to the owners, the Forestry Commission.

Memories of old Hurn treasured by 81-year-old Charles Daniels and his 79-year old wife, of 1, Red Cottages who spent 38 "happy years" in the employment of Hurn Bridge farmer, Mr. Ayles. Mr. Daniels was a farm labourer and his wife helped around the farmhouse about two days a week. They came to Hurn 44 years ago from Ringwood.

### GOOD OLD DAYS

Mr. and Mrs. Daniels told me of their their early life in the village They tried to recapture those "good old days" when Hurn was just another quiet, peaceful village and when all the villagers knew each other. Not even the noise of a tractor disturbed the scene for it was the old faithful horse that plodded across the fields. The Daniels have been married 58 years and they have had a happy, contented life. "We worked hard and had some real good times." They would set off and walk the three or four miles to Christchurch or catch the train from the old Hurn station and spend a day at Ringwood.

Next door to Mr. and Mrs. Daniels live Mr. and Mrs. Peter Crabb and their two young children.

The children will only, hear stories of their once fairy' tale little village. They will grow up to know Hurn as a hive of activity. Born at the old brickfields cottage, Avon Road, Mr. Crabb is a cattle haulier, a business which he took over from his father. His wife has lived at Hurn since their marriage eight years ago. She likes village life but feels that social evenings and dances at the village hall would "liven the place up".

## ESTATE AGENT.

One of Hurn's best known personalities is Mr. John T. Wallis, the Malmesbury Estate agent; He is a cheerful man with a big smile who is always willing to give a helping hand.

Dorset born, Mr. Wallis has been estate agent for 34 years. He represents Hurn on the Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D.C.; he is chairman and clerk of the Parish Council and chairman of the local Area Rabbit Panel. He has a great interest in bee keeping and is chairman of the Bournemouth Beekeepers' Association. A member of the Special Constabulary, Mr. Wallis has been a sergeant for most of his 20 years' service.

His home, Mill House is on the site of the old flour mill mentioned in Domesday Book. The old wooden paddle wheels were destroyed in 1907.



Shown above are Mr. A. J. Holley, Mr. P. H. Savage and Mr. S. Tuck



Mr. John T. Wallis glances at a map of the Malmesbury Estate for which he has been agent for the past 34 years. C.T. Photos

The present estate office built in 1937 after the building was destroyed by fire. Hanging on the walls of his office are huge portraits of the Malmesbury ancestors which come from Hurn Court, ancestral home of the Malmesbury family until the death of the fifth Earl in 1950.

First Earl was James Harris, who led a distinguished life as an ambassador to Russia, Spain and France. He came from Salisbury and the present Earl lives at Newnham. Covering an area of about 2,000 acres, the estate has several farms, 50 cottages and maintains a staff that carries out repairs.

There is a saw mill and most of the timber from the plantations is now used for repairs on the estate. Hurn Court was purchased in 1951 for a boarding school for boys, mainly for the type of boy who is more interested in practical subjects including horticulture, farming and light engineering. Principal of the school is Mr. P. G. Tyler, and headmaster, Mr. E. R. Morris.

The River Stour winds its way through the grounds and a tributary widens out to form an ornamental lake, at one time used by the monks of Christchurch as a fish preserve.

Before the Reformation the house was the summer hunting lodge of the Priors of Christchurch. It was entirely rebuilt by first Earl of Malmesbury and a long, low farmhouse, surrounded after the fashion of the day by its own farm buildings, was converted into a stately mansion.

## MODERN AMENITIES.

Additions were made to the property by succeeding Earls and today the Court enjoys all modern amenities. Stables have been converted into classrooms for practical subjects and the old laundry is now the chemistry laboratory.

The house is built of brick and stone and is modelled on the Elizabethan style. The beautifully appointed interior contains some finely decorated ceilings and a wealth of expensive joinery and period chimney pieces.

Most of the rooms retain their original character and in one classroom is a portrait of Lady Fitzharris, wife of the second Earl, who was reputed to have been the most beautiful woman in Europe. She designed the rose garden which is now in process of conversion into a kitchen garden.

The second Earl was in Parliament but when his wife died he was reputed to have been so fond of her that he gave up public life and spent his time building up the estate.

Trees in the grounds of the Court include Lebanon cedars, silver and Scotch firs and a rare hornbeam. An interesting feature of the estate is a 300 year old monk's rhododendron walk from the house to the ornamental lake. The house was previously called Heron Court but was changed to Hurn Court in 1934 by the fifth Earl.

## EAST PARLEY.

East Parley, although now only a small part of Hurn, was at one time more thickly populated. There were several cottages in this part of the village and a church was built there in 1863 to be used also as a day school.

Dedicated to St. Barnabas, the church was financed by St. Peter's, Bournemouth, but is one of the Priory's daughter churches. It was built of brick and tile from a nearby brickyard which closed down many years ago. Before the church was built evensong was held at Parley Court.

The school closed down in 1934 because of the small number of children in the area. It had previously served the whole of Hurn, Blackwater, West Parley and Dudsbury.

The church has several interesting features. There is a 200 year-old Bible given by Mr. Trelawney Dayrell Reed, in memory of his mother and a prayer book also given by Mr. Reed in memory of his sister.

On the wall are two pictures, "Christ blessing little children" and "The parable of the lily", given by Mr. Frederick Bateman, of Church House, who has been organist at the church for 40 years, His brother, Mr. Ernest Bateman, and their sister, Miss Dorothy Bateman, are also active church workers.

The two pictures belonged to their great uncle, of Sandhurst College Farm.

Services at the church have been taken for the past 30 years by Mr. L. R. Durrant.

Close by the church is an old derelict building which was a Baptist Chapel. The original chapel had a thatched roof, a gallery and two cottages at either end, but was destroyed by fire.

In the churchyard at West Parley stands a sundial, the gnomon of which is broken off. The post on which it stands formed part of a gibbet, which formerly stood at Gibbet Firs on East Parley Common. In the register of Christchurch Priory is the following burial entry:

"1803, Dec. 5th. William Harbin, who was murdered by his son and John Guppy, who were both hanged and gibbeted."

## VARIATIONS.

Harbin lived at a farm on Parley Green. The story has variations, but one version says that he was much displeased at his son's ways and threatened to disinherit him, whereupon his wife urged the son to kill him before he had time to alter his will. He objected because of the risk, "Upon me be the risk, only murder him," replied the unnatural wife. At last he yielded, and giving his mate half-a-crown to help him they made two attempts, the second of which was successful.

Both the murderers were caught and tried and executed at Winchester, their bodies being gibbeted in chains at the place where the first attempt was made

The mother became insane and spent days and nights at the foot of the gibbet, scaring away the birds and trying to feed the bodies by throwing potatoes into their mouths.

In time the gibbet became a favourite resort of picnic parties, which so disgusted the owner of the land that he cut it down and gave part of the post to the Rector of West Parley, who set it up and I placed the sundial on it.

Because of the dreadful use to which it had been put, it was popularly believed that the sundial never gave the right time.

It is believed that this was the last case in which criminals were hanged in chains in the South of England, although a case occurred in Derbyshire as late as 1815.

Another part of Hurn is in the parish of Sopley and the village hall is used for family services and a Sunday school.

Chairman of the hall committee is Canon C. D. Kirkham. Vicar of Sopley and Burton, secretary is the local policeman P.C. W. Trueman and treasurer is Mrs. M. Judson.

### LOAN.

Money for the purchase of the hall was given by local people. Originally, they were asked to loan 2/6 each towards the cost but no one asked for their money back and within three years finances of the hall were in a healthy state.

It is now used by several organisations including the St. John Ambulance Cadets, Brownie pack, Women's Guild, W.V.S. team, and those connected with the annual fete and Horticultural Society.

The hall was previously used by the N.A.A.F.I.

Nearby is the local off-licence shop which is also housed in an ex-R.A.F. building. This is run by Mr. T. Williams, who came from South Wales.

Hurn Post Office too, is in an ex-R.A.F. building. This was opened in February 1951, and sub-postmaster is Mr. H. Parker.

Merrytown House, occupied by Mr. L. A. Lucas, who has been farming there for about 25 years, is believed to have been built during the reign of Charles II by the Duke of Buckingham and the third and last of the Villiers' creations. It is recorded as a Manor House and originally had a wing on either side of the remaining building.

Another interesting house is Parley Court. Front portion is believed to date back to 1700 and the rear, made of bricks from East Parley Common, to 1840. A moat house has stood on this site since 1300.

Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Wyatt are a family who have had long associations with East Parley Green. Mrs. Wyatt's mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. F. Sellers, and her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. A. Sellers lived on the Green, and her father worked at Parley Court Farm.

### FERRY BOAT.

Hurn at one time had a ferry boat at Blackwater. This was last operated by a Mrs. Marshall about 40 years ago but was previously run by the landlord of the old pub "The Jolly Sailor".

The village also had a railway station on the original line from Brockenhurst via Ringwood and Christchurch. This was closed in 1935 and the lines were taken up the following year. Stationmaster for 20 years was Mr. W. A. Waterman, who was one of the founders of the Hurn Gospel Mission. He held services and a Sunday school in the booking hall at the station.

## SEVEN JOBS.

When it closed, the station was run by Mr. Harry Delia, who had seven jobs. He was stationmaster, porter, signalman, lamplighter, booking clerk, ticket collector and station cleaner. In addition, he had to open the level crossing gates and do other general station duties.

The station house has been occupied since 1934 by Mr. and Mrs. A. V. Toop. A railwayman, Mr Toop is a charge hand at Branksome. Their children used the station to go to school at Boscombe.

Is there a ghost train? "We have never seen one but the wind blowing through the tall firs sometimes sound like a train whistling through the station," said Mrs. Toop.

The Hurn Gospel Mission has a cosy little meeting place near the Station house. There are Sunday meetings, a Youth club run by Mr. H. Oakley and Mrs. T. C. Skinner and a woman's meeting every Thursday. Leader of the Mission is Mr. F. T. T. Whitlock,

Secretary is Mr. Oakley, and treasurer, Mrs. F. G. Tuck.

Commandant of Hurn Airport is Mr. E. D. C. Cooper, who took up his appointment in July last year.

## R.A.F. STATION.

It was early in 1940 that the Air Ministry commenced clearance and excavation work on farm and common land at Hurn preparatory to the construction of an R.A.F. Station, and by November, 1941, the first aircraft was able to take off.

During its life as an R.A.F. Station, Hurn was used by many different branches of the Service and numerous types of aircraft. To mention only a few of the wartime activities, there were Whitley aircraft towing gliders, Halifax and Wellingtons and the Overseas Air Despatch Unit delivered mail to Africa.

Russian crews spent some two months at Hurn on Albermarle aircraft familiarisation and eventually took these aircraft to Russia. A lot of radar co-operation flying also took place. In 1944, squadrons of Typhoons were assembled here for the Second Tactical Air Force, in addition to a number of Mosquitos and Intruders required for the invasion of Normandy. The United States Air Force were also here for a few months during the middle of 1944.

In September, 1944, the Department of Civil Aviation, Air Ministry, in conjunction with B.O.A.C., began to make preparations to take over the station as a civil airport.

## IMPROVISED.

Accommodation for the reception of passengers was improvised from officers' and N.C.O.'s quarters and recreation rooms and the officers' mess was converted into a passengers' restaurant. In addition, offices for the various authorities, such as customs, immigration, health, movement control and the services had to be provided, and accommodation found to house and feed all the staff employed by these authorities.

On November 1, 1944, the airport was opened as a civil aerodrome and services began to fly to and from Cairo, Lagos, Lisbon, Gibraltar, Karachi and Leopoldville, operated mainly by British Overseas Airways Corporation and to a lesser degree by K.L.M. and Sabena. As time went on further services were inaugurated to various parts of the world.

A Lancastrian aircraft, converted from the well-known Lancaster bomber, commenced to operate a new United Kingdom-Sydney service, one flight each way per week, on May 17, 1945, and later in the year Pan American Airways and American Overseas Airways commenced services to and from New York and Washington. In November, 1945, B.O.A.C. commenced a new scheduled service to Johannesburg.

## EXTENSIONS.

Construction of additional hangars and extensions to the marshalling area commenced during 1945 and were completed in 1946 and with the completion of a runway and the provision of temporary buildings at London Airport, most of the scheduled services began transferring there during May and June, 1946, and the operators' staffs also began moving. The B.O.A.C. Maintenance Base remained at Hurn, also their Development Flight, and much training and testing of various types continued at Hurn and at this time the airport assumed the role of No. 1 Diversionary Airport for London. This continued during 1947 until 1949 with B.O.A.C. gradually moving various sections to London Airport.

Vacant hangars and buildings were let to various aircraft and industrial organisations, amongst them being de Havilland's, Portsmouth Aviation, and Airwork. In 1951, Vickers-Armstrongs started to take an interest in Hurn and leased many hangars and other buildings. The Valiant four-engine bomber did quite a lot of its early training and testing here.

## VISCOUNTS.

Eventually the construction of Viscounts commenced and the two biggest of the Vickers hangars were more than doubled in size to cope with the ever-increasing demand for this type of aircraft, and many other buildings were also altered, enlarged and modified. During the time Hurn has been a civil airport, many V.I.P.s have arrived here including members of the Royal Family, among them Prince Philip; Duke of Gloucester; Duchess of Kent; senior officers of all services, both British and Allied; Cabinet Ministers, British and Commonwealth; the Shah of Persia; Mr. Ghandi; King Fuad; King Feisal; President of Turkey; and many others.

The airport has also a school of Air Traffic Control, attended by students from all over the world. Vickers-Armstrongs' Hurn factory employs 3,400 people and last week they flew the 200th Hurn-built Viscount.

Hurn is one of two production plants for the Vickers Viscount, first propeller-turbine airliner in the world. Viscount production was transferred to Hurn from the main Vickers-Armstrongs' factory at Weybridge in December, 1953. Previously Hurn had been occupied with production of the Varsity R.A.F. Trainer, which had reached a rate of 100 a year.

## DEMAND.

By the time this transfer was made, the Viscount was already well on the way to the success it has since firmly established. Although the capacity of the Hurn factory has been increased by over 100% during the past few years, the demand for Viscounts has been so great that it has been necessary to resume large-scale production at Weybridge.

Hurn is primarily an assembly plant. Most of the components and structural parts for the Viscount are manufactured elsewhere, at the Weybridge factor or by sub-contractors, and brought to Hurn for incorporation into the assembly line.

The assembly line starts with the construction of the front and rear sections of the Viscount fuselage in cantilever jigs in the first of four hangars or "shops" which comprise the main part of the factory. The sections are then moved over to the fuselage shop to join the centre section of the fuselage, which is built in a main frame.

Nose and tail sections are also added here. The completed fuselage is then pressure tested and moved on a trolley to one of the two erecting shops to join the final assembly line. Here it progresses stage by stage, up the line until it emerges at the head as a finished aircraft ready for testing and delivery.

#### DELIVERIES.

The Hurn factory has delivered Viscounts to British European Airways, Aer Lingus, Air France, Trans-Australia Airlines, Trans-Canada Air Lines, Capital Airlines, British West Indian Airways, Iraqi Airways, Fred Olsen Airtransport (Norway), Misrair (Egypt), Linea Aeropostal Venezolana, Central African Airways, the Brazilian Government, States Steel Corporation, Kong Airways, the Standard Company of California and Linee Aeree Italiane.