

Mr. Harry Marshall

"Christchurch Times" Reporter 1948



Mr. HARRY MARSHALL wiped his brow with a large coloured handkerchief, turned to a crowd of visitors, and said: "Well, it was interesting, wasn't it?"

They clamoured round him, anxious to hear more. Old Harry could tell too: he knows as much about the Priory as anyone. He was anxious to get away because he had work to do, but it was a hard job and it was thirty minutes later when the last of the sightseers walked out through the porch.

Thousands of people all over England know Harry, and there is hardly anyone in Christchurch who isn't familiar with him. He is a character in himself, and when he tells you the history of the Priory in his soft Hampshire burr you could close your eyes and imagine it was one of the old hooded monks speaking to you.

How did he learn all this? "Well," says Harry, "the old ones passed it on to me you know. And I daresay I shall pass what I know on to the youngsters."

That's what old Harry does. All day long during the summer he is telling sightseers something about the Priory.

He comes from one of the oldest families in Christchurch. All his life he has been a gardener.

"When I went to the Priory 17 years ago the churchyard was a wilderness," he said. "Now I don't care who looks at it—I'm proud of it."

Harry Marshall has seen a lot of people come and go at the Priory, and he will see thousands more. That is what he wants to see because it is his life.