

Mr. Percy Bagg

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By Carl Whiteley



MR. Percy Bagg sat back in his armchair, popped a cigarette into his mouth and relaxed.

In the comfort of the homely lounge in his delightful bungalow at Riverway we talked about his life—a full life in which he has worked hard not only for himself but for others.

Is it possible for a man whose mind has been active for so long to relax? "I find it difficult," said Mr. Bagg. Difficult because he has loved every minute of his work and he misses it terribly.

At the age of 68 he remains an active director of the oil company he joined in 1922 but he retired six years ago from the position of hon. secretary of the

South Avon and Stour Agricultural Society. And it was in this position that Mr. Bagg gave valuable service for 13 years.

DIFFICULT DECISION.

His resignation was to the sorrow of every member of the society. For Mr. R. P. J. Bagg it was a difficult decision to make. But he felt he could go on no longer and his remarks at a society presentation to him were typical of the practical, thoughtful man he is.

He told his friends at that gathering that although he did not want to relinquish the secretaryship he felt it was the best thing for both himself and the society.

The words spoken by Mr. H. A. Kemp-Welch on that occasion gives some idea as to how much the society appreciated his work. He said "It is largely owing to his ability and energy that the society is where it is today. We can never forget that, and I hope that this gift from the members will bring joy to his heart".

Mr. Bagg was presented with a television set.

The society, established in 1794, organises ploughing and hedging competitions and from June to October each year Mr. Bagg was responsible for arrangements for the holding, organising and judging of farms, silage, roots, leys, corn, herds, pigs, rick-making, thatching and dairy staff competitions.

Mr. Bagg's work went on the whole year round and it was very largely the result of his personality and ability that the society made such progress.

In 1940 he was asked to become secretary of the Ringwood branch of the National Farmers' Union. He agreed to do the work for a year, without pay, and he remained its hon. secretary until 1944 when the union changed its policy and insisted on having a paid man for the joint Ringwood and Brockenhurst branches.

During his period of office, membership of the branch increased nearly three times.

ORGANISED GIFT SALES.

It was during his hon. secretaryship of the N.F.U. branch that Mr. Bagg organised gift sales for the Red Cross Agricultural Fund, the R.A.F. Pilots' and Crews' Fund, and the Merchant Seamen's Fund and a total net amount handed over from all these sales exceeded £13,000.

This amount, said Mr. Bagg, could not have been raised but for the generosity of farmers in the neighbourhood. "We were given cows, calves, motor cars, and once, a racehorse."

Mr. Bagg has also applied his energy and executive ability to the National Savings Movement. In 1939 he formed the South Avon and Stour Agricultural Society Savings Group and became its honorary secretary—a position he still holds.

He is justly proud of the fact that since starting the group he has collected a total amount of £31,094 5s.

In addition to his work for the society's group, Mr. Bagg took over the secretaryship of the Christchurch Savings Committee during the years 1943 and 1944.

"WINGS FOR VICTORY WEEK"

His efforts in this position will long be remembered for he was responsible for most of the organisational work in connection with "Wings for Victory Week", "Salute the Soldier Week" and "War Weapons Week". The target of £120,000 was passed on each occasion.

Mr. Bagg paid tribute to the assistance he was given during those three savings weeks by Mr. David Llewellyn and Ald. T. Markham, a former Mayor.

Travelling extensively in Hampshire and Dorset for his firm, Mr. Bagg has been able to combine business with voluntary work. When secretary of the "South Avon and Stour" he was able to pass on society information or perhaps remind a member that "subscriptions are now due!"

Mr. Bagg's love of the countryside is not hard to imagine. The pictures on the walls of his lounge give some clue as to his yearnings. Village life appeals to him and had he been given the chance he would have taken up farming.

He is interested, too, in stamp collecting, and has a wonderful collection. He has had very little time for this hobby but he hopes some day to revive keener interest.

His interest also embraces church music. Mr. Bagg was once a chorister and there is nothing he likes better than to sit back and listen to church music. "I love it all," he said.

During the whole of his voluntary work Mr. Bagg has carried on without any clerical assistance. But "in all my activities my wife has been a great help to me. Without her I could not have carried on."

DORSET BORN.

Born at Weymouth, Mr. Bagg was educated at King's School, Bruton, Somerset. He lived in Taunton for five years and it was here that he first started his secretarial work. He was a member of the Y.M.C.A. and took charge of the sports section. For this work he was presented with a silver inkpot.

From Taunton he moved to Southampton and then to Portsmouth where in 1912 he joined the Territorial Army and obtained his commission in the 6th Duke of Connaught's Own Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. He attained the rank of Captain in 1916 and served in the regiment throughout the first world war. He saw service in India, Mesopotamia and Persia.

Wearing his old regimental tie, Mr. Bagg recalled his Army days.

It was while in camp at Blandford in 1918 that he met his wife, formerly Miss Dorothy Wareham, of Blandford. He was playing with the brigade cricket team against Blandford and Mrs. Bagg, a keen cricket fan, was serving tea.

KEEN SPORTSMAN.

Mr. Bagg has always been a keen sportsman. From about 1920 to 1922 he captained the Blandford cricket team and for the following three years captained Boscombe C.C. During one of the years at Boscombe the team won the championship, the Page Croft Cup and the De Zoete Cup.

On two or three occasions he played cricket for Dorset and for several seasons he played right back for Poole and Dorset County hockey teams.

Mr. Bagg was initiated into Masonry in 1928 and he occupied the chair of Octa Lodge,

Bournemouth, in 1940. He received his Provincial Collar—Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of works —about five years ago.

A founder member of the Twynham Lodge, Christchurch, he was Director of Ceremonies for a number of years. A founder member of Christchurch Rotary Club, he is its representative on the committee of the Disabled Sailors and Soldiers Workshops at Winton. Until recently he was on the executive committee of the Christchurch Savings Association.

BLENDING WORK WITH PLEASURE.

Mr. Bagg, a man of great sincerity, has been, and to a certain extent still is, a man of many interests and activities. He has blended work with pleasure and the result is a degree of happiness and a depth of contentment to support him in whatever small amount of relaxation he now allows himself—and all of which he so richly merits.