

Mr. Tucker

C.T. 1958

By Carl Whiteley



Mr. John William Tucker, pictured in his office last Friday—his 87th birthday. C.T. Photos

MR. JOHN WILLIAM TUCKER, of Stour Mead, South View Road, Christchurch, celebrated his 87th birthday last Friday with a full day's work at his business premises in High Street.

That is the way he likes to spend his time. "I can't stand about doing nothing," he said. "I must be doing something or else I would be miserable."

Mr. Tucker, one of the best known personalities in Christchurch, goes to his family business —W. Tucker & Son, grocers— every morning at nine o'clock and keeps himself busy in his office until six o'clock in the evening.

He has never thought seriously of

retiring. "As long as I am fit and able I shall carry on," he said.

The business was established by his great-grandfather, Mr. Ambrose Tucker, in 1798, and the name of Tucker has been in the forefront of many town activities for the best part of 150 years.

As a grocer there is not much that Mr. Tucker does not know about the trade. All his life he has been in the business, starting as a boy after leaving a private school called Evans School, which was situated in Purewell.

In his younger days he would set off from High Street in his pony and trap and tour the surrounding villages for business orders. He is assisted in his business by his son, Mr. William Henry Tucker.

In 1928 Mr. Tucker decided to stand for the local Council. Two years after his election he became Mayor and during his Mayoralty became an Alderman.

FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

Mr. Tucker and Mr. D. Galton, a former Alderman, made history in 1956 when they became, the first men to receive the honorary freedom of the borough.

While Mr. Tucker says he has not had much time for hobbies, there is one thing at which he is particularly adept. It is the keeping in order of other people's accounts. The office of treasurer has fallen to his lot on several occasions and perhaps more important still was his work as chairman of the Council's Finance Committee.

TREASURER

But since 1924 he has also been treasurer of Christchurch Regatta. His work for this annual event is greatly appreciated as is also that of his son who has been secretary of the Regatta for many years. It would be difficult to think of the Regatta without the name of Tucker among the organisers.

Mr. Tucker retired from the Council last May. He was then the "father" of the Council, being the oldest and longest serving member. He misses his Council meetings but on his retirement felt it was time he stood down and gave way to a younger person.

There is a definite link between grocer and farmer and perhaps that is why Mr. Tucker has

always shown such a keen interest in the South Avon and Stour Agricultural Society, of which he was treasurer for many years.

FOUNDER MEMBER

He has always been interested in bowls and is a founder member of the Bowling Club, being president in 1931. In his younger days he was interested in wood carving.

The Priory Church has always claimed much of Mr. Tucker's interest. He has been treasurer of the Parochial Church Council and still carries out the duties of a sidesman. His name numbers among the trustees of the Clingan's and Magdalen charities.

SEEN MANY CHANGES

Mr. Tucker has seen many changes in Christchurch, but most of them, he said, were for the better.

At 87, Mr. Tucker is still a very active man. He is one of a long line of the Tucker family who has devoted almost all his spare energy and time to matters concerning the welfare of the borough.