

Coun. And Mrs. Ivor Edwin Baker

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By Carl Whiteley



Coun. and Mrs. I. E. Baker.

Coun. and Mrs. Ivor Edwin Baker, of Fulmodestone, Westfield Gardens, are two of the busiest people in Christchurch. Their lives are full of activity—never a moment to waste—and a good deal of their energy is devoted to voluntary work for the benefit of the borough.

I talked with Mr. and Mrs. Baker at their business premises in Barrack Road. It was a hot day and customers were beginning to appear in their ironmonger's shop, but the Bakers were "cool, calm and collected".

This is how they tackle their work and

the reason why they are able to do so much.

At the present time life is a little more hectic. The carnival is billed for August 13 and 14 and there is no time to waste and for Mrs. Baker, chairman of the Carnival committee, it is full speed ahead with the many and varied arrangements for this annual attraction.

Mrs. Baker was the first woman president of the Chamber of Trade. She was appointed in 1949 and held the position for two years during which time the Carnival was revived, It first took the form of a shopping week but after two years it was decided to organise a carnival.

Since the carnival started, more than £750 has been raised for charity in addition to providing the canopy over the front entrance of the Town Hall and a television set for the people of Strete Mount.

OUTSPOKEN.

Mrs. Baker proved her great organising ability before her appointment as president of the Chamber when she acted as hon. secretary to the "Christchurch Can Make It" exhibition. On trading matters she is particularly outspoken and does not mince her words when giving her views on any matters relating to the retail trade.

Born in Highgate, she was previously Miss Hilda Forsey, daughter of a civil servant at Clerkenwell County Court. They moved to Tottenham where she attended the High School before going to Bangor University.

TEACHING APPOINTMENT.

Mrs. Baker obtained a B.A. honours degree and did some of her training at Strasbourg University. She then completed a teachers' training course at Bangor University before taking up a teaching appointment at Tottenham.

Mr. and Mrs. Baker first met at relatives in Wembley during the time Mr. Baker was working as a shop assistant at Selfridges.

Mr. Baker had just returned from New Zealand where he had been dairy farming with his brother for about two years. He was born at Tunbridge Wells, but moved to Bournemouth at the age of two when his father opened an ironmonger's shop at Wimborne Road, Winton.

Besides his father, Mr. Baker's grandfather and great-grandfather were also ironmongers and the family originated from Norfolk.

POLICE WAR RESERVE.

Mr. Baker left his job in London to open up their business at Barrack Road and in 1932 they were married. After a short spell of supply teaching in Bournemouth, Mrs. Baker joined her husband in the business and when Mr. Baker was called up to serve full time in the Police War Reserve at Christchurch she took charge of the shop.

She was also looking after a hairdressing business next door which they opened in 1937.

Mr. Baker returned and in 1948 they had a daughter, Anne. When Anne was five months old, Mr. Baker had a very serious motor cycle accident in which he nearly lost his life and which left him with a permanently stiff leg. He was in Salisbury hospital for 17 weeks and Mrs. Baker had to return to the business. She has retained an active interest ever since.

TABLE TENNIS.

When they first came to Christchurch Mr. and Mrs. Baker took a keen interest in table tennis and took part in tournaments together. Mr. Baker was secretary of the Bournemouth Table Tennis League and was responsible for the appearance in Bournemouth of several international players.

He played for Bournemouth on many occasions and was captain for three years.

Mrs. Baker joined Christchurch Tennis Club in 1936 and was secretary for 16 years before becoming chairman.

MAGISTRATE.

She is a Christchurch magistrate, on the Board of Governors for the Twynham and Somerford Secondary schools and a former president of the Christchurch Business and Professional Women's Club.

In addition to these connections she is also a keen gardener and has a great interest in cooking.

Mr. Baker has been a member of the Council for five years and is well known as chairman of the Road Safety Committee. He is a Rotarian, an instructor at the 622 Gliding School, Christchurch, a governor of the Priory school, president of the Bournemouth Table Tennis Association and plays cricket with the Adastral Club.

He is also a member of the Chamber of Trade and actively assists with the carnival.

DISLIKES APATHY.

Mrs. Baker dislikes apathy in people. "I like people to be enthusiastic about things even if I don't agree with them." And she would like to see the carnival a more whole-hearted effort on the part of the townspeople instead of being an arduous task for the few. "I feel that if more people helped with the carnival we should really get somewhere," she added.

After our talk, Mrs. Baker returned to the counter while her husband drove away to attend to some road safety matter. Another day it will be Mrs. Baker's turn to attend to voluntary work while her husband takes care of the business.