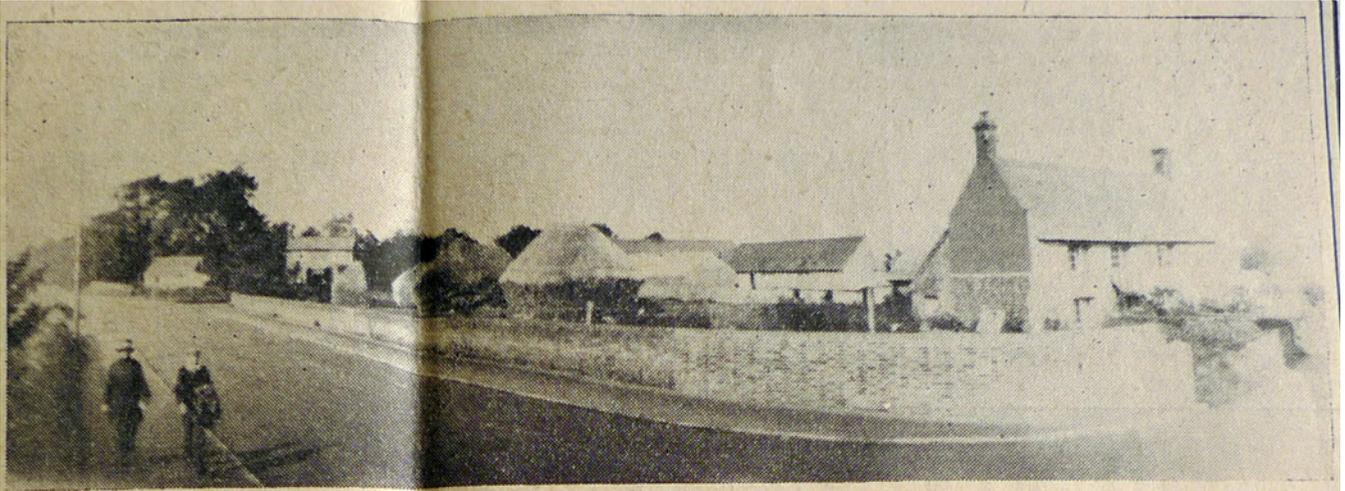


TUCKTON 1958

EVERYBODY knows it as "Tuckton Village." The housewife washes the dishes, tidies the kitchen and then "pops down to the village." But, asks the bewildered stranger, where IS the village?



If you don't recognise the scene above then take a glance at the one below and you have the answer. The country scene is Tuckton of about 40 years ago and the picture below is the same road today. One building which appears in both pictures is the cottage at the junction of Iford Lane, used as an office by the Lander building firm. The top picture was loaned to us by Mr. C. W. Dennis.



There is no village green in sight, no picturesque little cottages or century's old church, and not even a duck pond or the smell of a farmyard. Instead of all this, there is a smart parade of shops on either side of the road.

Compare Tuckton of today with the village of 40 years ago and it is unrecognisable.

Who would believe the main Tuckton Road through this modern shopping centre was once a dusty cart track? Or that it was once described as "way out in country"?

Ask 72-year-old Mr. Frederic George Elford, Mr. Walter Chick or any of the older generation to describe Tuckton of the past and you will come to the conclusion that the village has not only had a face lift but a whole body lift. Not only has it developed as a residential area, but as a shopping centre, too. Indeed, Tuckton was described to me by a retired tradesman as "a gem of a place for business".

The fact that it is no longer a quiet little out-of-town spot does not matter in the least and it is with affection that the residents refer to as "the village".

FIRST TRADER.

Mr. Chick, who now lives in retirement at Albion Road, Christchurch, was one of the first traders in Tuckton. He was a newsagent for 28 years. When he left school he was an apprentice to a Boscombe baker and one of his jobs was to deliver bread at Tuckton. At that time there were only a few houses in the village and it was known as "the country round".

One house he particularly remembers calling at is Tuckton Cottage, occupied then by Mrs Hayter and family. This cottage still stands at the entrance to Iford Lane.

After the First World War, Mr. Chick opened his shop along the dusty road and his first customer was Mrs. Hayter's daughter who later became his wife. "She came to buy a birthday card."

Mr. Chick said they had one 'bus an hour and when it went by he had to close his shop door for about ten minutes until the dust settled on the road! "When it rained you needed sea boots to wade through the ankle deep mud outside the shop."

It was a big occasion when Mr. Chick and another trader decided to have their shop fronts made up. "People came to the shop just to walk on the newly laid footpath. Mr. Chick moved to his shop from Boscombe and living with him when he first moved in was his father. Having lived in the town, his father found country life quite a change.

"He would remark about having to walk to Christchurch for meat or fish and about the dark roads. But I told him. That if we wanted to live in the country we would have to put up with country conditions." Having seen the birth of Tuckton as a shopping centre, Mr. Chick looks back with pride on the old pioneering days. He saw great possibilities at Tuckton and he was right in his belief. Over the years more and more traders moved in until now there are over 50 shops.

Mr. Chick was one of the first to suggest a Tuckton Traders' Association. He was their first president and he is now affectionately known as "father" of the association.

A few weeks ago he was invited to attend the association's annual meeting. His fellow members thought he would like to see how his "baby" was getting along. "I told them Tuckton was a good spot for business and that a better place could not be found."

Mr. Elford, known in the village as "Pop", was born in a cottage which stood near the site of his present modern bungalow at Tuckton Bridge. His father, Mr. George Elford, opened a blacksmith's shop in 1883.

The building is still standing but is now used as a machine shop in Mr. Elford's engineering, business.

Mr. Elford attended the old Congregational day school at Christchurch and went over on the Wick ferryboat, owned then by Mrs. Miller and operated by Mr. John-O'Brien. He paid 2d. a week to-cross every week-day and twice on Sundays to attend Sunday school.

On leaving school at 13 he started work for his father in the blacksmith's shop but a few years later went to Christchurch to work in the motor trade. He injured his hand six months later and then returned to his father who bought him a lathe for just over £28.

Engineering fascinated Mr. Elford and he would spend many hours on his lathe. He built a ¼ horse power gas engine which he converted to a petrol engine and used for cleaning rusty horseshoe nails.

In 1902 a customer gave him a 14ft. dinghy and suggested he should use his engine to make a motor boat.

This he did and he became the first person to have-a motor boat on the River Stour.

Mr. Elford remembers the original Tuckton Bridge and the building of the present one in 1905.

His father's blacksmith's shop was built for him by Mr. Moser, the former landowner, who lived at Carbery House. His mother was in service at the house for 14 years, his wife also worked there for about three years, and his aunt, Miss Mary Mintern, in service for Mr. Moser for 35 years, cooked the wedding breakfast for Mr. Moser and his wife when they first moved into the house.

Tuckton had connections with the Russian Revolution for it was at Tuckton House where an exile outpost was set up and where literature and a newspaper were printed. This reached Russian peasants in the farthest corners of that continent.

TOLSTOY.

The colony was closely connected with the Great Russian novelist and reformer, Tolstoy, for the leader at Tuckton was Count. Vladimir Tchertkoff, literary agent and representative in England of the great writer. There were sometimes as many as 30 residents in the colony coming from different countries. and it became known to people in the neighbourhood as the "Tolstoy colony".

NO SIGNS OF LUXURY.

The rooms at Tuckton House were plainly furnished, there were no signs of luxury and the women and children worked in the garden, where the Russians grew and cultivated their own food. The Russians had a complete outfit of printing machinery for producing in Russian type prohibited pamphlets of an advanced and revolutionary character including Tolstoy's vetoed works. Books and papers were sent to London, Paris, Berlin, Geneva, and they found their way to Russia. Several men worked as compositors, binders, photographers and printers. The newspaper was printed on a German machine and to enable the copies to be folded very small, thin rice paper was used for the Russian edition. The Russians had Tuckton House from about 1896 until 1929 when it was taken over as a nursing home by Mrs. C. Angus, matron of the home since it was started at Tuckton Lodge in 1913. In the house is a strong room, built on the ground floor by the Russians, where Tolstoy's manuscripts were stored. This is supposed to be fire proof; burglar and earthquake proof and the walls are about 4 feet thick. Attempts were made to convert the room into a bedroom but when a week's work by three men resulted in nothing more than a hole about four inches in diameter the idea was abandoned. Instead, it is used as a storeroom. The old Tuckton waterworks on the bank of the Stour, now a motor works, were also used by the Russians, and Miss P. Angus, daughter of the matron at Tuckton House, can remember as a little girl seeing the printing equipment there. The first shop in Tuckton, said Miss Angus, was opened by a Mr. Southgate. This was a grocers, which also became the first Post Office in the village, about 1926 Tuckton Tea gardens were opened in 1920 by Mr. James Newlyn and his brother-in-law, Mr. G. K. Ball. They looked after the boating side of the business while, their wives had charge of the catering.

SHOT 42 RATS.

When Mr. Newlyn first came to the spot it was a Corporation dust heap with a 6ft, depth of tin cans and bottles. "I shot 42 rats in the first week, so that gives you some idea of what it was like," he said. Mr. Newlyn set to work and he soon transformed the dust heap into a beautiful rose garden, admired by visitors from all parts of the world. He had numerous rare plants and shrubs and was often asked to send his seeds to the homes of his visitors, many of them abroad.

TUCKTON TRADERS

Tuckton Traders' Association was formed about seven years ago. The association has also been the force behind several improvements in the village. They negotiated with Bournemouth Corporation for a 'bus shelter at Cranleigh Road, and some of their other efforts resulted in better street lighting and the attractive little garden at Iford Lane corner. Various competitions are organised by the traders throughout the year including the shop window competition during the shopping week, and a strong social section takes care of social life. The name of Lander, the builder has been well known in Tuckton for nearly 40 years. It was one of the first businesses in the village and is managed from the same office at the corner of Iford Lane where the Tuckton firm was started by Ald. T. S. Lander, of Christchurch. The original firm commenced in the early 1800's at Burton by Ald. Lander's grandfather, Mr. Joseph Lander.

The office at Tuckton is believed to have been a chapel and nearly 300 years old. It was marked on the 1811 ordnance map when there were only two or three houses in the village.

Just over the river at Tuckton is the pitch and putt golf course, opened in 1932 as Tuckton Golf School by Mr. A. Vine. During the war it was taken over by the Home Guard and used for exercises.

The course is stated to be the only one in the country with floodlights and these are used on the darker evenings in August on the 12-hole course.

Nearing completion at the Tuckton Road and Carbery Avenue junction is the Bournemouth New Church. A main hall used as a church and Sunday school and a smaller room were completed in September, 1950. Foundation stone for the new church was laid last year by Mrs Curry, and the Rev. W. Whitaker, superintendent of the London and Southern province of the church, dedicated it.

Mrs. Curry presented a stained glass window, which will dominate the southern wall of the £10,600 red brick building. The new church will seat more than 120 people and minister is the Rev. Charles Newall.

Tuckton is not all shops, and houses for the banks of the Stour provide some of the most picturesque river scenery in the area. And on this stretch of the river holidaymakers have enjoyed boating for many years. There are boat owners on both sides of the river—Tuckton River-side Services and Tuckton Tea Gardens.

The Riverside Services came into operation in 1951 with only a "lean-to" for headquarters. Since then the company, headed by Lieut. Cmdr. Michael Wallrock, R.N.R., who is a Master Mariner in steam and sail, and Mr. P Taylor, has developed rapidly.

A huge workshed towers over the "lean-to" and a new office stands in a well-tended rose garden in which the Tuckton Yacht Club also has their headquarters. The company operate a "Funnel boat" passenger service and a fleet of self-drive motor boats which have become increasingly popular among holidaymakers during the past few years.

GIVEN NOTICE.

Efforts are now being made by Bournemouth Corporation to beautify the Tuckton bank of the river still further. Houseboat dwellers and boat owners were given notice to move their craft from the banking last year and it was stated the Corporation's idea was to develop an attractive river side walk.