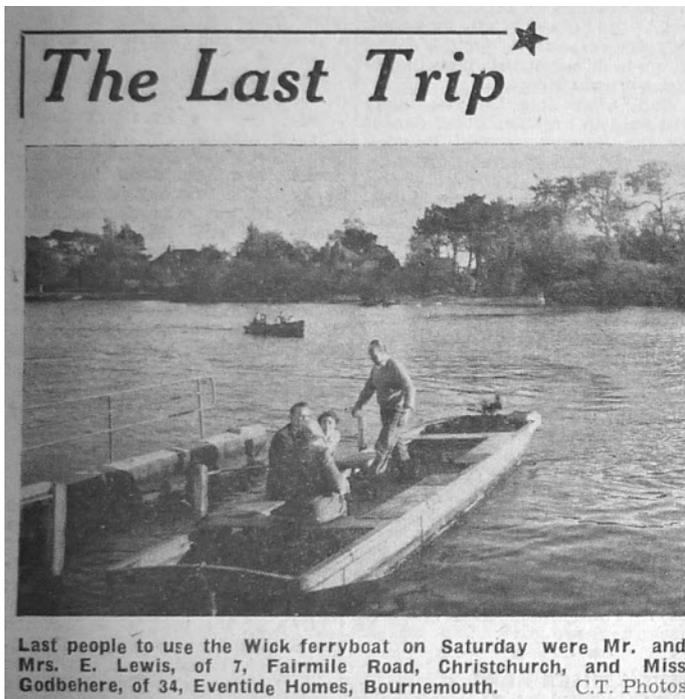


Wick Ferryboat Closure Sparks Off A Big Controversy

C.T. October 4, 1957



ANGRY residents telephoned the C.T. office, protest letters have been pouring into the Town Hall, and associations have written to both Christchurch and Bournemouth Councils. The suspension of the Wick ferry boat last Saturday has sparked off a first-class controversy.

The 400 strong Hengistbury Residents' Association and Southbourne Ratepayers' Association have "petitioned" the Councils, and people living in Wick village say they have been "isolated" by Wick Ferry Holiday Camp's decision to stop the ferry boat. On Sundays people used the ferry to attend Priors Church services and thousands of holidaymaker's used it as a short cut to reach Hengistbury Head and Southbourne beaches. For the school children of Wick it was regarded as the school bus.

Now the inconvenience of a two-mile roundabout journey into Christchurch, including a half-mile walk down Wick Lane, is necessary.

Mrs. J. Tripp, of Branders Lane, Wick, has used the ferry four times a day to get to a Christchurch insurance company's office where she works.

"I am most upset by the closing of the ferry," said Mrs. Tripp. "To get home at lunch time is now out of the question. When my children are away from school I will not be able to get home to see them," she added.

Mrs. C. Knagg, who keeps the general store in Wick village, thinks business will be affected "I daresay we will be hit," she said. "Half our trade on Sundays is from folk who come across the ferry for walks and picnics." Another Wick resident, Mr. W Beecher Aston, a photographer, of Wick Lane, has been using the ferry for six years.

Said Mr. Aston: "My business will be affected. I use the ferry extensively—especially during the summer. The situation is most inconvenient".

FINANCES.

Many people thought the reason given for the ferry closing—that the running of a boat entailed heavy financial loss — was inadequate and that a fuller explanation should be given.

The C.T. put the questions to Mr. R. E. England, director of Wick Ferry Holiday Camp Ltd.

"Let's get one point straight, said Mr. England. "The ferry has not been stopped. We just suspended it until further notice and there are notices to that effect prominently displayed. From the letters and complaints we have had many people do not realise this."

"As reported, the ferry has been operated at a financial loss," continued Mr. England. "We have been losing hundreds of pounds a year, and it is getting worse. Last year the cost was £710."

REASON.

Why the loss? "First a reliable man must be employed," said Mr. England. "It is a full time job and no wage under £10 can be paid for such a position. Secondly, both the Bournemouth and Christchurch Councils charge us very high rates for the two small plots of land we use as landing stages. There are also heavy additional costs for petrol and maintenance."

Is there a possibility that the ferry will be run during the summer alone?

"It is quite likely," Mr. England told us. "From April to the end of September we make just about enough to cover ourselves financially. Pending any further outcome the directors are seriously considering resumption of the Ferry next Spring."

PUBLIC DEMAND.

Mr. England pointed out that the ferry would resume normal service as soon as public demand was sufficient to run it without loss. "We are fully aware of the inconvenience caused by the decision, but no firm can afford to lose money like we have been doing. If a way can be found to run the ferry on a non-profit, non-loss basis we shall be glad to do it."

Interest in the problem is being taken by both the Christchurch and Bournemouth Councils.

Coun. W. F. Holliday, of Southbourne, told the C.T. that he intended raising the matter with the General Purposes Committee of the Bournemouth Council

DISCUSS PROBLEM.

"It would be a good idea for both the Christchurch and Bournemouth Councils to appoint committees to discuss the problem," added Coun. Holliday.

"I think that, although we have no power to do anything substantial, some decision could be reached. It would be a great pity to see one of our main amenities go for good."

Said Ald. W. E. Tucker, of Christchurch: "We sympathise with the people affected by the suspension of the ferry, but I see no immediate solution to the problem. We would be glad to confer with Bournemouth Council about the decision," he added.

WICK FERRYBOAT NEEDS 80,000 CUSTOMERS *But Will Restart Soon*

C.T. October 25, 1957



Mr. R. W. Bishop.

WICK Ferry boat is to operate again, and will be run by well-known local fisherman, Mr. R. W. (Bob) Bishop. Providing there are no legal hitches the ferry will start again on or before November 1st.

Announcing this on Wednesday, the directors of Wick Ferry Holiday Camp said "they were glad to announce they had made satisfactory arrangements for the running of the ferry. The new ferryman, a well-known figure in Christchurch, lives at Avon Cottage, Quay Road. He has rented the ferry from the Wick Ferry Company on a five year lease.

Mr. Bishop intends to run the ferry full time, but if he knew what patrons wanted in advance would run it in accordance with demand.

To make the ferry a paying concern he added that 80,000 people would have to use it each year.

"FREE FERRY."

Prices, he hoped, would remain the same, added Mr, Bishop, but he had debated whether or not to make it a "free" ferry, and rely on the generosity of the public to make it pay.