

## Winkton 1958

It is encouraging to know that there are still several villages within easy reach of our town that have survived the change of time and escaped the mass intrusion of the modern builder.

Winkton, the charming, sleepy village between Burton and Sopley is one of these. Its people, like those in all our surrounding villages, are welcoming and hospitable and their cottage homes reveal ageless beauty. Theirs is a rich inheritance of which they are justly proud.

The River Avon, which weaves its way past the village, is an angler's paradise, while the surrounding countryside offers endless fascination to the natural historian.

Winkton, I am told, is not an actual village. It has no church and is, therefore, a hamlet. But the residents like to consider it as a separate community, and it is generally referred to as a village, in the parish of Burton, the church people either go to Burton or Sopley.

Included in Winkton is the hamlet of Holfleet which consists of the Lamb Inn, the village "local" and three cottages.

In the middle ages there were two manors, those of Winkton and Holfleet, and in the Domesday Book Winkton was known as Weringetone, and was stated to have land for four ploughs- enough to support four teams of eight oxen.

It was held then by a huntsman named Waleran, who it is understood, arranged hunts for the King when he came into the neighbourhood.

### UNUSUAL RENT.

Waleran paid his rent to the King in eels. Later, the catching of eels developed into an industry and is one which has been carried on throughout the ages to the present day.

During certain dark nights the local fishermen place traps in the water behind Winkton House and the eels are then transported to London where they are eaten as jellied eels.

Winkton people, I am told very rarely eat them! "Only Londoners really enjoy them," said a villager.

Salmon have provided many an angler with hours of exciting sport. They have also been the subject of many a "fishy" tale-it was at least so long and we know the rest. Here is a story however, which my informer convinced me was true. A certain very keen lady angler caught a 48 lb. Salmon 25 years ago.

One of the biggest, and to prove it, her picture appeared in "Country Life" with the fish, it was almost as tall as its proud victor.

Hérons are frequently seen at Winkton and a charming little bird seen in the winter time is the dabchick. On several occasions during the migration period the Slavonian grebe has been seen.

It is recorded in a book on fishing, published in 1913, that in 1814 the Knapp Mill "Royalty" Fishery yielded 1,600 salmon, which take dwindled to nearly nothing in 1860. Illegal fixed nets across the Run at Mudford and the Knapp Mill fishing dam formed almost insurmountable obstacles to the ascent of fish as they were netted immediately below the dam."

There was another fishing dam at Winkton and these two obstructions practically barred the fish in any numbers ascending to the spawning beds in the upper waters.

In 1862 fixed nets at the mouth of the river and in the harbour were declared illegal; at the same time fish passes were constructed in the weirs at Knapp and Winkton. In 1864 there were more breeding fish in the river than had been seen for many years. As soon as the Avon was opened up a new difficulty arose owing to the complicated system of irrigation, water being taken from the main stream by large cuttings divided into smaller ones. These were again sub-divided into smaller ones until they became rills barely a foot in width.

## IRRIGATION.

From these narrow channels no fish could escape in their descent to the sea and destruction was inevitable. This evil was met by a system of rewards and payments to "drowners" Or waterman who attend to irrigation. By this method many wanderers were returned to the main stream. Fish returned to the river on the 3rd February weighing 17 lbs. were, caught again on 2nd April weighing 18 ½ lbs.

The water meadows at Winkton are a favourite haunt of swans during the winter flooding, but their presence is not always welcome for they nip off the buds of the "King Cup," one of the most characteristic wild flowers of the area.

I had not been in Winkton very long before I discovered the one main grouse which seems to be shared by most of the villagers- they have no Post Office.

"We feel very strongly about this," said Miss M. R. Dacombe, of Gosfield Cottage.

There was a Post Office until 1914 and for some time after that it was carried on at the local shop, but although they have petitioned the authorities they have not yet had it returned.

The village has a letter box and a telephone kiosk but any over-the-counter business has to be transacted at Christchurch, Burton or Sopley.

Original Post Office was in a cottage opposite the three Ray Cottages on the Green.

Backing up the complaint was Mrs A. V. Cave, of the Village stores. "It is most inconvenient when we have to travel out of the village to do our postal business", she said.

Visitors to the village come into the shop and ask for stamps. It is very irritating when we can't oblige, It is difficult too for the old people who have to get on a bus and travel about two miles to get their pensions."

Mr. and Mrs. Cave have been in Winkton nearly ten years, and up to two years ago they also baked the village bread.

Many are the interesting stories which Miss Dacombe can tell of past village life.

## "STAR OF THE SEA."

She remembers Mr. Perkins who lived in an adjoining cottage called "Stellamaris", meaning "Star of the Sea." He was a seafaring man who fought in the Navy during the Crimean War. When in 1914 he was too old to serve again he sat at his garden gate singing old naval songs which he thought would encourage the lads who were off "a fightin'."

Miss Dacombe recalls, too, the fire at "Wings" Guest House during the First World War. In those days it had a thatched roof and until the fire brigade arrived from Christchurch the villagers made a chain of buckets from the river and also helped to bring out the furniture. It caused great excitement, she said.

"Wings", which has recently been taken over by Mr. and Mrs. E. Blevins, from Bournemouth, was built in 1719, but considerable re-building took place after the fire.

Plaish House Hotel, a picturesque building in delightful grounds, was built in 1673 but is believed to have been rebuilt in 1920.

In the cosy lounge the walls are adorned with portraits from Gilbert, and Sullivan. Take a closer look and you will see a resemblance to the owners of the hotel. Major Ewart Nott and his son, Errol.

Take a look at the records on the radiogram and you are then convinced that this is a G. & S. stronghold.

Major Nott and his son have been members of the Bournemouth G. & S. Operatic Society for several years and both have taken leading roles. Mr. Nott is taking part in the society's current production.

The Nott family have a large collection of G. & S. records and these are often played by hotel visitors.

"Some get very interested in them, but for those who hate the music we have a record made by an American singer which is a horrible skit on G. & S.," said Mr. Nott.

But father and son are not the only members of the family with amateur stage interest. Mrs. Nott, junior, is an experienced Shakespearean actress who has taken leading roles with the Bournemouth Shakespearean Players.

## "MOST FRIENDLY"

Moving to Plaish House last October, the Nott's soon settled in. "People in Winkton are most friendly and helpful," said Mrs. Nott, senior. "We hadn't been here long when a note was pushed under the door: 'Please come to tea, we are neighbours'."

History of the house is not fully known but it is believed it was originally known as Splash House because of the Avon weir just across the road. And there are stories that a former owner found bundles of treasury notes in the most unusual places in the house. "I have since gone through it with a fine tooth comb but with no luck!" said Mr. Nott.

Strolling round the gardens of the house I met the 70-year-old gardener, Mr. Ted Vallance, of Ripley.

Ted- "He would rather us call him that," said Mr Nott- was described as "one of the best .He works an eight-hour day, has half an hour for lunch and two 15 minute

breaks but works an extra hour to make up for the lost time "You pays me for eight hours work, guv., not to eat,' he told Me. Nott. He was turning over the kitchen garden when I asked him where he was born. "Dar-r-set", he replied and not being a native of either Dorset or Hampshire I lost the rest of his reply in some most fascinating dialect. I joined in with a broad Yorkshire accent, and I can tell you we had a fine-time together! Then he was off, straight back to his digging-there are not many Teds about these days.

Pottering about in the garage was Mrs. Nott's (senior) father, 81-year-old Mr. Frederick Rees. "He is never happy unless he is tinkering about with woodwork," said his daughter.



**The Musical Hosts**  
Mr. Errol Nott (left) and his father, Major Ewart Nott, hosts at the Plaish House Hotel. Both are Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiasts and in the background are portraits of the two as they appeared in G. & S. productions.

## OLD WORLD CHARM.

Winkton Lodge is another place of extreme interest. From the moment you set eyes on the beautifully embroidered Victorian fire screen you realise this is a place of old world charm. The impressive, winding staircase and the original Adam fireplace in the spacious lounge add great character.

Towering to a height of about 80 feet in the grounds of the house is a cedar tree which is reputed to have been brought to this country as a seed by a man who guarded Napoleon at St. Helena.

Lieut.-Col. and Mrs. B. C. H. Whicher have been at the Lodge since 1950. A Georgian style house, its exact date of building is not known, but on the chimney is the date 1706.

Further down the road is Winkton House, unoccupied for about two years. Owned by Maj. John M. Mills, a Christchurch J.P., of Bisterne, it came into the Mills family together with its several fisheries about 1860 when it was bought by the trustees of the will of Major Mill's great-great-uncle, Mr. Francis Mills. The only member of the Mills family ever to live there was John Mills, who resided there for some two years after his marriage to Louisa Frances Entwisle, of Wolhayes, before moving to Bisterne, which he inherited on his father's death in 1871. John was the nephew of Francis Mills and great uncle of the present owner.

Erected on the banks of the Avon, it has in its grounds an ice house, used in the old days for storing ice during the summer months.

The Lamb Inn, meeting place of the local darts team, is reputed to have been originally intended as a railway station. It is said that at one time the railway was to have passed through Winkton. Further support for this story is a small shutter window in the bar which could have been intended for the ticket office, the bar being the waiting room.

Present landlord is. Mr. Walter Kellaway, whose family have been connected with the house for half a century,. His grandfather, Mr. H. Cox, took over the inn during 1909 and it was later carried on by his grandmother. Her daughter, Mrs. Lily Cox, aunt of Mr, Kellaway, then held the licence until 1952. Owner of Winkton Nurseries is Mr. Alfred Haines, a former head gardener on the Winkton Lodge estate when it was owned by Mr. and Mrs. H. Shawe.

The nurseries were originally the kitchen gardens of the Lodge and Mr. Haines took over when the estate was split up.

Mr. Haines understands that the original Lodge stood further back from the road' than the present building, and, he has found signs of a house on this site.

Mrs. L. Brown, aged 57, of St. John's, has lived in the village since she was nine. She came with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. J. Thompson, and has been told her home was formerly a farm house.

Mrs. Brown can remember when Stony Lane was a stony lane. "We had to walk to town, or, if we were lucky, ride in a milk float."

Enjoying village life are Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Lamb, of The Thatched Cottage, who retired to Winkton two and a half years ago.

Both take an active part in various local organisations, Mr. Lamb, a retired bank manager, being treasurer of the Burton Parish Hall, and a member of the Parochial Church Council. Mrs. Lamb is treasurer of Christchurch Inner Wheel.

#### KEEN SPORTSMAN.

Founder treasurer and a past president of his former home town Rotary Club, Worcestershire, he was a keen sportsman in his younger days. He has 20 cups for tennis and has played football for the Old Wulfrunians — Wolverhampton Grammar School. Mr. and Mrs. Lamb have settled "wonderfully" in Winkton. "Some people say life in the country is dull, but you get out of it as much as you put in," said Mr. Lamb.

Winkton Kennels at Brook Cottage, Holfleet, is well known for its breed of Holfleet miniature poodles and toys. It is run by Mrs. K. M. Clifton-Clarke and Mrs. M. Kamm. Their white miniature "The Riot", which became quite notorious over two years ago when he was lost for three days while returning from Oxford, was best in breed at the recent Bournemouth show.

The thatched, cottage home of Mrs. Clifton-Clarke and Mrs Kamm is believed to be nearly 300 years old.

#### FORMER SUB-POSTMASTER.

A former sub-postmaster at Winkton is 92-year-old Mr. George Parsons, of Preston Lane, Burton. He took over the Post Office in 1903 and was there for about 17 years. During the early part of the First World War, his daughter, Miss D. Parsons, became the first post-woman in the district.

#### TITLE DEEDS.

Miss D. Rowe, of St. Anne's Cottage, is one of the few people in Winkton who can give some idea as to when her home was built. She has title deeds dated 1779 and believes the cottage was built a few years previous. Title deeds for the land date back to 1739.

The cottage was apparently built by a Timothy Hatcher, a seafaring man, and was later added to in the 1840's.

In the year 1779 there was a cottage next door occupied by a person named Ann Brenton, described as a mantua—a dressmaker or seamstress—who held the premises for a "peppercorn" rent.

Winkton Garage is owned by Mr. J. A. Ottewill, who spent five years in the motor trade in New Zealand before coming to the village three years ago. He is usually assisted by his wife, but owing to illness his daughter, Mrs. K. Penny, of 3, Winkton Green, helps with the petrol pumps.

Mr. A. T. Hiscock, of 2, Ray Cottages, retired to Winkton six years ago. He was born at Bransgore but spent 22 years in Southbourne while he was a bricklayer for Bournemouth Corporation. His brother, Mr. George Hiscock, of Godwincroft, helped to build Ray Cottages in 1906 for Miss Lascelles a former owner of Winkton Lodge.

#### PRIDE.

Mrs. S. A. Harrington, president of the Burton Green Congregational Women's Guild, has lived in Winkton for 30 years. She was pleased to talk about the village and there was pride in her voice when she remarked: "And we've got the hotels, too, you know". Pride, I think, in the fact that the beauty of her village can attract tourists from all over the world.