This Is Not A Dying Village

COTTAGES with produce for sale clustered around an old village church; a hotch-potch of no entry and one way streets.

But this is only the heart of Newbold Verdon, where the old folk rightly spend their days in retirement.

For surrounding them are the young folk who have trebled their population in the post-war years.

They have moved in from areas badly hit by mining subsidence to find a safe retreat in Newbold and in turn surround the pensioners in a fortress of family life.





● **OVERHANGING** trees on the left shroud the entrance to The Old Rectory and place this central view of Newbold Verdon. Chairman of the parish council, 30-year-old Michael Preston, heads our way on his tractor.

● **Cachous and lozenges.** Mrs. Elizabeth Wood has been serving them over a quarter of a century in Newbold Verdon, but while she moves ahead with the times with her groceries, she owns to being an "old fashioned" who likes to keep to a mop cap and overall for work.

While the men travel away every morning to collieries and factories their women folk shop and their kiddies pour into the village school in numbers never known before.

Proud to be the first person outside of Ibstock to be appointed a governor of Ibstock Secondary Modern School is Mr. John Mensley.

● *One Regret*

He and his wife—the postmistress—can be found in the modern Post Office these days amid huge boxes of Christmas goodies.

He's a parish councillor and represents the village on Market Bosworth Rural Council.

And it's no small parish to represent these days with the growth he has personally witnessed from 1,400 during the war years to 3,000 at the present time.

They have moved into two sizeable new council estates —some 250 homes on the Dragon Lane site and another 50 not far away known as Sparkenhoe.

In addition 91 houses and bungalows are in course of erection as a private development and another 50 are scheduled.

A far cry from most accusations of dying villages. But one which brings just one note of regret from Mr. Mensley — Newbold has no industry.

Perhaps the family which can boast the greatest local service to the community is the Prestons.

At 13, Dragon Lane, pensioners May and Walter coped simultaneously with callers for milk and eggs, the *Leicester Advertiser* in search of information, the butcher, chemist and son Michael arriving with a lorry load of coal!

● *Ancestors*

Mr. Preston (Medaille Militaire the first-class Croix de Guerre and the British Military Medal) from the first world war has for 30 years been president of the local branch of the British Legion and his wife has just finished with her Poppy Day returns as organiser for the 24th year in succession.

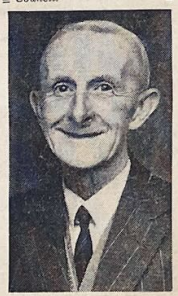
Walter's been a member of Newbold Verdon Parish Council for 30 years and a rural district councillor to Market Bosworth for 28.

Both are natives of the village and their parents before them. May's ancestors can be traced back to 1500.

Together they have watched the village "mushroom" from an era of no gas and no water services to a thriving village development with an even brighter future before it.

And May, as a member of an old church family who has herself been on the church council since 1945, delights in the heritage they have bestowed in the striking new tower on the parish church.





Stalwarts of Newbold Verdon are May (above) and Walter Preston, of 13, Dragon Lane. Their family line in the village dates back centuries and they have been ardent workers for the church, British Legion and Council.

Its dedication some two years ago highlighted 40 years' work to raise the sum of £6,000 in the village.

But nothing could please them more than that Michael, their son, aged 30, is the youngest member ever to become chairman of the parish council.

Not only did he elect to follow his father into council work he took over the command too of the farm and coal business his father started in the village 40 years ago.

● *Ordained*

Mr. Henry Cadle, has been headmaster of the county primary school for 27 years and now finds himself teaching the sons and daughters of the parents he taught a quarter of a century ago.

And from 120 on the school roll in 1936 there are today 300. "It seemed to shoot up from the 100 to the 200 mark in a matter of months," he said.

"We ran pretty well out of stocks of material and the overflow had to be accommodated in other buildings in the village."

A school orchestra, a good school choir and some first class efforts at pottery were modest claims of the headmaster.

But Mr. Cadle himself is a man of worthier note.

For in conversation he reveals himself to be an ordained minister—he believes possibly the only ordained priest in a state school.

Since his ordination three years ago he has become a curate at Market Bosworth and hopes within the next two years to be a parish priest within the Leicester Diocese.

Between the churches in the village there is a "very good spirit of friendship". This description came from the rector, the Rev. R. Gibbons, who said that although there was no official Council of Churches in the district, the different denominations did co-operate.

Mr. Gibbons came with his wife and young son to Newbold Verdon five months ago. He had previously been at Diseworth and in Birmingham.

● *Busy Life*

Mrs. Gibbons has a busy life as leader of the Young Wives' group, enrolling member of the Mothers' Union and simply in her capacity as wife of the rector. The Young Wives' group and the Mothers' Union are each about 20 strong. Each has monthly meetings.

Mrs. Gibbons enjoys the work of a rector's wife. "No other married woman could have such an interesting time simply by virtue of being a wife", she declares.

The Baptist Church belongs to a group of four Baptist churches which for the past two years have been without a minister to serve them. The other churches are situated at Barton Fabis Barleston and Crosshills.

The period without a minister came to an end on Saturday however, when a new minister, the Rev. Peter Peel was inducted at Barton Fabis.

The fact that local men are engaged in shift work means that lunch times see quite a large number of domino-playing customers in the Old Swan.

Like many of his customers, the landlord of this attractive and ancient inn, Mr. T. J. Nutting, has spent most of his life as a miner—33 years in fact.

He and his wife Winifred took the Old Swan over from Mr. Reg Dalton two years ago. They are local people and formerly lived in Brascote Lane.

There are three darts teams attached to the inn, two of them for women. All compete in the Barlestone Old People's League.

It is hoped to arrange a Christmas party or treat for local old people this year, with the proceeds from the matches.

The 18th century Hall is the home of Mr. John G. Selkirk, who is president of Leicester Rotary Club and a former chairman of the Leicestershire branch of the National Farmers' Union.

Mr. Selkirk is the parish church representative on the Diocesan Conference.



PROUD moment for 16-year-old Donovan McStocker, 58, Preston Drive, Newbold Verdon. When our photographer called he had just been presented with the Queen's Certificate which he is seen showing to colleagues of the 1st Newbold Verdon Troop.



MUSIC is a particular feature of which Newbold Verdon Primary School is proud. The choir and the orchestra (one or two have made the grade into the County Youth Orchestra) have made excellent progress under music specialist Mr. J. W. Emmerson.

● *New Arrival*

On the "Dragon" estate is its newest arrival but one of the most important members of the community—the district nurse.

Mrs. Norma Lee has just arrived from Yorkshire and is herself the mother of three young children.

From an industrial centre she felt she would like country life and Newbold Verdon has not disappointed her.

"I find everyone so friendly", she said. "I really like it."

From the newest arrival to one of the most established shopkeepers in the village—Mrs. Elizabeth Wood.

Immaculate in her white overall and white mob cap she has been dispensing lozenges, groceries—and sweets to the kiddies she adores—for 29 years.

But increased population has not meant increased prosperity.

New estates have brought with them new shops and travelling vans have tended to reduce the trade at the village shops in the main street.

IN NEWBOLD VERDON TODAY

Eighty-one-year-old Mr. Tom Biddle has been a Jehovah's Witness for more than 40 years. "But," he says, "I was not the first to organise meetings at Newbold."

There are about 20 Jehovah's Witnesses in the village, he says, who together with worshippers from other parts meet at their new Kingdom Hall.

The building, which was completed last December, was the result of two years' of effort by the Witnesses to replace their earlier building which was destroyed by fire.

In the evening the young people come to the fore and when we visited the village it was a great occasion for the 1st Newbold Verdon Scout Troop with the presentation to 16-year-old Donovan McStocker, 58, Preston Drive, of the Queen's Scout Certificate.

Dad, Mr. F. A. McStocker, himself a former Senior Scouter was there to see the presentation to his son.

The troop, about 60 strong, is a combined one serving Newbold Verdon, Bagworth and Bosworth and meets in various places.

The Methodist Church has no resident minister but is served by the Rev. Gordon Argyle of Hinckley as Superintendent Minister and the Rev. John Stephens from Barwell.

In two years a debt of £3,800 for the new hall and the redecoration of the church has been cleared.

● *Highlight*

At the Working Men's Club the Sunday night dances are the highlight of the week.

The membership of 600 is rising steadily with the constant influx of newcomers and the miners, who comprise the largest section, are served by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest French as club stewards.

NEXT WEEK
RATBY



Long alley skittles are the vogue at Newbold Verdon Working Men's Club but the night we called the team were resting on their laurels over a pint. Enthusiasts merely gathered around club steward Ernest French to show what they CAN achieve.

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