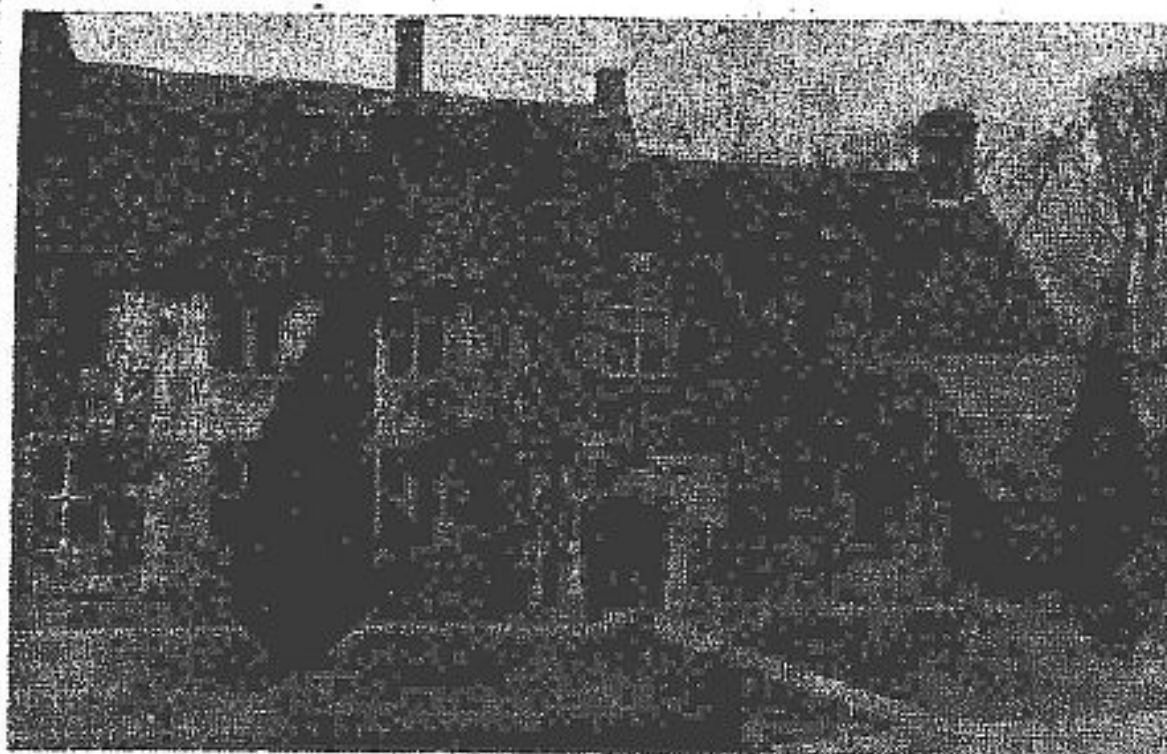


The Changing Scene — Ashbury



The ancient and historical Macor House, Ashbury, home of Mr. R. G. Spence, who farms there, and his wife.

End of a milling tradition dating back to Domesday

By BARRY O'BRIEN

LIKE many villages in the White Horse Vale, Ashbury grew around a mill. There are several mills along the foot of the Downs, where water springs from a break in the chalk. Most are now disused, though one at Bishopstone has been electrified. They were all connected by the Roman Portway.

In prehistoric times, the Vale was an impenetrable mass of marsh and forest, which wise travellers avoided. Pilgrims on their way to Avebury kept to the ancient Ridgeway along the top of the Downs, flanked by the stockades—the so-called "castles"—where nomads corralled their herds.

Then, as the forests were cut, the marshes drained, and a road made through the Vale, men put their cattle out to graze upon its pastures. At the foot of the Downs, by the break in the chalk, they tilled the soil for corn, and on the slopes of the Downs themselves, they kept their sheep.

In time of war, in recent years, when farmers were told to produce more food, even the Downs were ploughed. When peace returned, so did sheep—but not in 1945. Flocks no longer graze on the slopes of the Downs. What with worrying by dogs, and the difficulty of getting shepherds, farmers find them more trouble than they are worth.

With the passing of 20 centuries, thousands of men have lived and died in the White Horse Vale. In the graveyard of Ashbury—a village with an unchanging population figure of about 500 and an average of ten deaths a year—at least 20,000 must be buried.

The question is—where? Mr. William Cash, a London company director and chairman, who lives at the Old Vicarage, Ashbury, knows the answer.

NO COFFINS OR GRAVESTONES

"In the old days," he told me, "people didn't bother with coffins or gravestones. They just buried over and over again on the same ground. The level of the church-

They had a household of guests, all refugees from the London blitz. The fire put an end to the hotel, side of the business, but they opened it the following morning and kept it open through the years till the hotel was rebuilt.

Many of the guests, are archaeologists and university dons who come to this part of Berkshire for a quiet walking holiday, or parents of children at the preparatory school at nearby Bourton.

Like other property in Ashbury, the house belongs to the Craven Estate, from which the People's Refreshment House Association hold it on lease.

FOOTBALL AND DARTS FAME

The Rose and Crown has a good darts team. In the Wanborough and District League, it won the championship and knock-out cup in 1950-1, and the knock-out cup in 1951-2.

The village also has a football team, which plays in the Swindon and District League, Division 3.

her sons fixed in the stream to drive the generator.

ANCIENT HOME OF GENERAL STORES

As well as being one of the first people in Ashbury to have electricity, Mrs. Pound was the first to have a radio set.

When Mrs. Pound, who spent some of her youth in China, first came to Ashbury, she and her husband lived at the Lower Mill at a rent of £10 a year. It was here that her husband died—in the room in which he was born.

Among Ashbury's shops is a well stocked general store, where everything from food and newspapers to drapery and shoes is sold in a centuries-old building. It is kept by Miss E. M. Bastard and Miss G. Isacke. Both came to Ashbury from Cirencester four years ago. Miss Bastard was Matron at the Memorial Hospital, and her partner was secretary at a garage.

N. WILTS SCOUTS' WOOD COURSE

SALISBURY MEETING HEARS PLANS

Mr. H. M. Leitchworth presented the Scouts' report at the annual meeting of the Wiltshire Boy Scouts' Association at Salisbury on Saturday, and said the North Wilts group had asked for a wood badge course, which would be from August 22 to August 30. It would be the first course of that kind to be held in that part of the

NEW THEATRE, OXFORD

A NEW MUSICAL COMEDY

The new Austin Mel Emuey musical comedy "A King," which Jack Hy present at the New Theatre, Oxford, has no accidental or otherwise monarch who has ever throne. In bulk Fred Emuey like a certain mid-Or King and there the sun's and ends. The author to avoid any possible int repercussions, have bolt the Kingdom that of a story by Shakespeare scene of Twelfth Night.

As a King without a with no responsibilities conducting his wife a Fred Emuey viewed with quiet the sudden tempo rooting which brought hi face with plots, coun assassins and his wife—t

Eve Lister, as the Queen in her element after appearance with Fred "Blue For a Boy." The who falls in love for he will be played by Shani talented young actress w the show at the first night "Me Madam" at The Colli lover will be Dickie Austin Melford as a por rian Minister, will have ing task of trying to loc scallion King in order.

DELIUS OPERA WORLD PREMIERE

"Irmelin," at the New Oxford, this week, is all has had to wait 60 years first performance. I im almost the entire sud filled with misgivings Thomas Beecham came a conductor's rest. A there must have been who disagreed when S said the work was a cri country.

Had a poll been taken of Act I, opinion would been so unanimous. E end of Act II, there a been many who were vined. But the magnif music of the last act, deserved to be, by Edr and Thomas Round, car fore it.

Yet even the excellen tion and decor which a fected the quiet bear music, could not who the early romances. Th Delius is dramatic only cult.

Where Puccini can m fusal of a milk punch event, Delius here make cess refuse three bus after the other without of the theatrical.

What opera, however have some fault which ruin it? "Irmelin" sury than many of them.

REPERTORY A TRIUMPH CONCLUSIVE

Of his play "The Sac at the Playhouse this w set Maughan has said written in deliberate language as a protest "natural" dialogue of a Noel Coward.

The experiment is no a guess. This sort of a much more quickly bones dialogue and cc the play is made to see The elaborate rhythy one more task for the surmount in their brief