

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 churchyard is six feet above the level of the church."

Mr. Cash's lovely house and the church make a complete circle in a ring of trees. In pre-Christian days the circle may have been a temple on a burial ground. "Digging in my garden," he said, "I often find bones."

Mr. Cash financed considerable restoration of the church. He showed me the chalk walls of the church. "They have stood there for 500 years," he said—"and yet people say that chalk doesn't last. Builders were more patient then. They let the chalk weather for 20 years before they used it."

From the porch of the church you can see away to the Cotswolds. You also look down an avenue of limes, planted by Mr. Cash, and there is a charming view of the village hall converted out of three cottages given to the village by Lady Craven in 1936.

#### MANOR HOUSE OF GREAT CHARM

Ashbury Manor House is one of the finest things of its kind. The brick upper story of the porch, added in 1697, does not altogether blend with the chalk and sarsen walls, limestone dressings, and stone roof of the original 13th century building, but the general impression given by the house is one of great beauty and charm.

The house is said to have had only three owners. The first was the Church—it was attached to Abingdon Abbey. The second was the Earl of Essex, to whom it was given by Henry VIII after the dissolution of the monasteries, and the third, and present owner, is the Craven family.

Mr. R. G. Spence has farmed at Ashbury Manor, as a tenant of the Craven Estate, for 25 years. His wife showed me the interior of the house: the stone staircase, the 17th century plasterwork, the drawing room panelling that dates from the time of Henry VIII.

The pond more like a moat, which surrounds much of the house—where the monks are said to



Mr. J. G. Clarke, Ashbury's schoolmaster.

have fished—is now a series of water cross beds. The right of way through a passage between the front and back doors—by which at one time, if you wished, you could lead a horse through the house—has been closed.

"You are very lucky," I told Mrs. Spence, to have such a lovely home.

"Yes, we are," she said "but it is rather a nuisance at times. Everyone wants to come and see it. One gets tired of showing sightseers round the place."

#### A HOUSEFUL OF REFUGEES

Ashbury's most conspicuous building is the Rose and Crown hotel, reopened three years ago on the site of a 350-year-old thatched building which was burnt down in 1949. The present licensee, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Spence, both of

#### FOOTBALL AND DARTS FAME

The Rose and Crown has a good darts team. In the Wansborough and District League, it won the championship and knock-out cup in 1930-1, and the knock-out cup in 1931-2.

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



Mr. Stayne, mine host of the Rose and Crown, Ashbury.

I met Mr. Fred New, the Club's chairman, on his way home from work at the Ashbury engineering works of William Bunce and Sons, where 40 village men are employed.

Last season the team won the Lambourn Valley Charity Cup, and this season it reached the final of the Lambourn Valley Challenge Cup.

For the last four years the club has used a field belonging to Mr. Spence of the Manor House.

The team gets good support from the village nowadays and home matches, in good weather, attract a crowd that is rarely less than 200—a fair proportion of a village with a population of only about 600.

#### THE PARISH COUNCIL'S AIM

Mr. New is also a member of the parish council which comprises, besides himself: Mr. A. Bunce, owner of the engineering works, who is chairman; Mrs. A. Beavis; Mrs. F. Walker; Mr. R. H. Lawrence, who farms Rectory Farm, Idstone, and Mr. F. G. Firter, who is employed at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham. The clerk is Mrs. F. Jeffries.

The council's chief aim at present, said Mr. New, is to get main drainage and a playing field for the parish.

Part only of Ashbury has main drainage, and Kingston Winslow, which comes within the parish, has none at all. There is main water throughout the parish, but Idstone, another of its hamlets, has no electricity. Nor is there any gas in the parish. A scheme to make good this deficiency was abandoned with the outbreak of war.

For as long as he could remember the council had been trying to get a bus shelter and street lighting.

Its Coronation plans include tea for the under-15s and over-60s, sports, a fancy dress parade and competition and a display of fireworks in the evening on the top of Ashbury Hill.

Money is being raised by public subscription, dances, and whist drives.

One of the oldest inhabitants of Ashbury is Mrs. Florence Pound, a charming lady of 88, who lives in the old Upper Mill, which, she told me, is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

The mill has been in her husband's family for 100 years. Her father-in-law was miller, and so was one of her three sons. She ran the mill herself till it went out of use with the outbreak of war.

"We were doing very well," she told me. "We made stone ground flour. That's better than flour ground in roller mills, for it contains the germ of the wheat."

The pond which once provided water to drive the mill wheel, now runs into a charming stream with millstone water falls in Mrs.

#### HEARS PLANS

Mr. H. M. Litchworth 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 county. If each district provided two Scouters that would give them an entry of 18.

There would be a Scout county competition again this year, when the theme would be camp craft, patrol leadership and organization, with Col. Boyle, formerly of headquarters, as the chief judge.

The chairman (Lieut.-Col. S. M. C. Theye, County Commissioner) thought they should transfer some of the Association's balance to the Equipment Maintenance Fund.

Mr. Litchworth said none of the tents would stand another Jamboree. They were almost worthless, and he thought they should be renewed for the next Jamboree.

On the proposition of Mr. J. Wort, it was agreed that £100 be transferred to the reserve fund and that the equipment fund be made up to £100 and that £50 a year should be added to it in order to raise £200 for the next Jamboree.

Officers appointed were: Hon. County Secretary, Mr. F. W. C. Merritt, Devizes; Hon. County Treasurer, Mr. E. P. P. Bull; president, the Duke of Somerset. Additional vice-presidents elected were: the Chief Constable of Wiltshire (Col. H. A. Golden), the Mayor of Devizes (Mrs. Read) and Mrs. Coles, Local Education Authority's representative. Miss Curry; Girl Guides' representative, to be appointed by the County Commissioner.

#### ANNUAL MEETING

Members of the North Wiltshire Boy Scouts Association are holding their annual general meeting in the Arts Centre, Swindon, on Wednesday next at 7.0 p.m., and during the evening a talk on Scouting will be given by Mr. R. T. Kemp, Assistant County Commissioner (Overseer).

This will be followed by two colour films, "Princess Margaret Reviews Guides and Scouts at Baywood Park—June 1952," and "In Search of History—Round the White Horses and Ancient British Camps of Wiltshire." These will be shown by permission of Mr. Winslow of the Swindon Film Unit. Admission will be free and the Association is looking forward to a large attendance.

#### PERSONAL SOCIETY AND

Mr. G. O. Wheeler, of Devizes, has had conferred upon him the honour of appointment as a Grand Lodge Officer in the United Lodge of England. He was invested by the Grand Master, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Scarborough, K.G., at the Grand Festival at the Freemason's Hall. Mr. Wheeler also holds Grand rank in the Royal Arch and Mark Degrees.

language in deliberate protest "natural" dialogue of a Noel Coward.

The experiment is no a success. This sort of a much more quickly bones dialogue and so the play is made to see

The elaborate rhythm one more task for the surmount in their brief rehearsal. The play would no harder had it been p Lynn Harrison, who t overcame this difficulty others, at times, under the reality of the dialogue t it wrongly.

The play, however, essentially on the strong situation in it. Here it came off in Lynn Harrison in a lo cult speech had he gripped in a silent sp of success.

"The Nest-Eg Next week's adverti going on tour, and so available for repertory. Instead we are to see "The Nest Egg," in w rake, played by Jn attempts to induce his Lindsey) to lead a ga rather more success it gained for. Sheila Mitel romantic, Peter Russe and John Herrington E

#### EMPIRE THEATRE A MILLION IN ON MAGIC

Swindon's Empire T be the startling point other tour of the w travelled theatrical The Great Lyle and i revue entitled "The My

Lyle has but a few returned from a tou braced India, China, S the Philippines and Mal completing his million travel. To travel seems when one remembers t of properties and the pany must travel as w mean feat.

Lyle, abroad, is terme Ambassador of Magic," that is also confirme country, for Lyle hold Medal and Star of "

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