



MELBURY OSMOND

Melbury Osmond - one church, one chapel, one school, one pub and one shop - is, I think, one of the few really unspoiled villages in Dorset, mainly due perhaps to its geographical position. Our village lies off the main Yeovil - Dorchester Road but there is, luckily for us, no "through" access to any other village. You cannot drive through Melbury because you would end up in the private grounds and deer park of Melbury House. We therefore, to our joy it must be admitted, do not get a procession of cars even in the summer. Indeed if we see a strange car in the village we openly wonder to whom it belongs.

The village has literally remained almost the same during the last few hundred years, the layout of the cottages remaining virtually unchanged, strung between the watersplash and the church and from the church to the main road. Village family names are the same as years ago and family roots are deep. Nevertheless all newcomers who come and live in Melbury Osmond get such a wonderfully friendly welcome that, realising their good fortune, they stay put. Though there is only one bus to Yeovil, the nearest town, three times a week, and it might seem to a casual onlooker that we "don't go far", during 1965 residents of Melbury have visited Scotland, Eire, Wales, the Channel Isles, France, Spain, Gibraltar, Malta, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and even as far afield as Canada and Kenya.

Our population is only 250 but among this tiny community we number, as well as farmers and skilled estate workers, a retired surgeon, colonel and wing-commander, a builder, a press photographer, a haulage contractor, a garage owner, two nurses and six qualified teachers. Also the only professional falconer in England, a T.V. personality. Without doubt a good mixed batch with no lack of colour and talent, as their hobbies prove - everything from salmon and trout fishing to professional standards in pottery, wood-carving, wine-making and painting.

Lots of the cottages are thatched, giving a special charm and character to Melbury. Indeed the whole village is pleasing to the eye, but it is "special" because of its people. Everyone has time for everyone else, time to stop and chat for a few minutes, time to find out if anyone needs help or sympathy or just a lift to town. A death in the village is everyone's sorrow, a birth or marriage everyone's joy. Our small population is more like a large family. Ours is a picturesque village, but above all a happy village to live in. I am glad I was lucky enough to find it.

E.M.W.

very modern machinery and he and his family work long and hard hours. However, Mr. Portch has his leisure time like everyone else and pursues his three main hobbies with great interest.

Photography rates very high in his activities and as well as ordinary black and white snaps, he has taken some excellent cine films in colour, also coloured slides. During this year, Mr. Portch has shown some of his films and slides at functions in the village hall.

Wine making is another of his hobbies. He does this in the proper scientific manner with the correct bottles, jars and distilling equipment. What Mr. Portch cannot quite fathom is why the wine made by a lady living opposite, made in the most unscientific manner possible, always seems to taste just that little bit better than his!

Never having had a music lesson in his life, Mr. Portch seems to make his small electric organ come to life. He will sit by the hour playing anything from classical music to the latest pop hit. He plays completely by ear, listening to a record and then sitting down at the organ and picking out the notes with remarkable speed and accuracy.



Mr. Everett of Lower Holt Farm
Melbury Osmond



Sara and Mary Jane Stenhouse,
whose father is a farmer,
with their pet guinea-pigs.



Farmer's wife,
Mrs. Constance King
pictured with the
spring lambs on
their farm.



In August, after application to the Court, Wing-Cdr. McGregor was granted permission to open an Off-Licence in conjunction with his shop. The only shop in the village, it is also a Post Office. The variety of articles that can be bought is absolutely enormous and if anything needed is not in stock, the Wing-Cdr. is only too happy to do his utmost to get it.

During the summer trading stamps were issued but after three months it was found that these were not an economical proposition, but in order to help customers, stamps were issued until those who had been saving them filled their books.

The shop opens at 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. until 5.30 p.m. every day, closing Saturday afternoons. Groceries are delivered by car each Thursday evening after the shop has closed, a service which is much appreciated by customers.

Wing-Cdr. and Mrs McGregor are always extremely helpful, with a smile and a pleasant word for everyone.



JUDY MCGREGOR, daughter of Wing-Cdr. and Mrs. McGregor, is a Lone Guide. She is a keen horse rider and a champion swimmer.

Terry Portch, the only son of Mr. & Mrs. E. Portch who farm at Drive End Farm, has this year been elected the Chairman of the Hermitage and Hilfield Young Farmers Association.

Terry does the village milk round, and is extremely popular with all his customers.

Mr. W. Paulley works for the Strangways Estates Ltd. - his bricklaying, plastering etc. is (as Mr. Peach's carpentry), a feature of many of our homes. His skill turns crumbling walls and flagstone floors to beautifully smooth surfaces - in fact Mr. Paulley makes a very good job of everything to which he turns his hand.

Mr. Paulley is retiring at the end of this year, after 50 years - a very long record of faithful service to one Company.

Mr. Paulley's garden has to be seen to be believed - not a weed in sight. He is looking forward to his retirement when he can spend even more time in his garden - Mr. Paulley always puts up a good display at the Annual Flower Show - one wonders what talents he will display when he really gets down to the job.



Mr. & Mrs. Peach live at Walnut Tree Cottage. At one time, what is now the stump of a tree, was a very large walnut tree which stood in front of Mrs. Peach's house. During a storm this fell down - fortunately in the opposite direction to the cottage, it would have caused a great deal of damage had it fallen the other way.

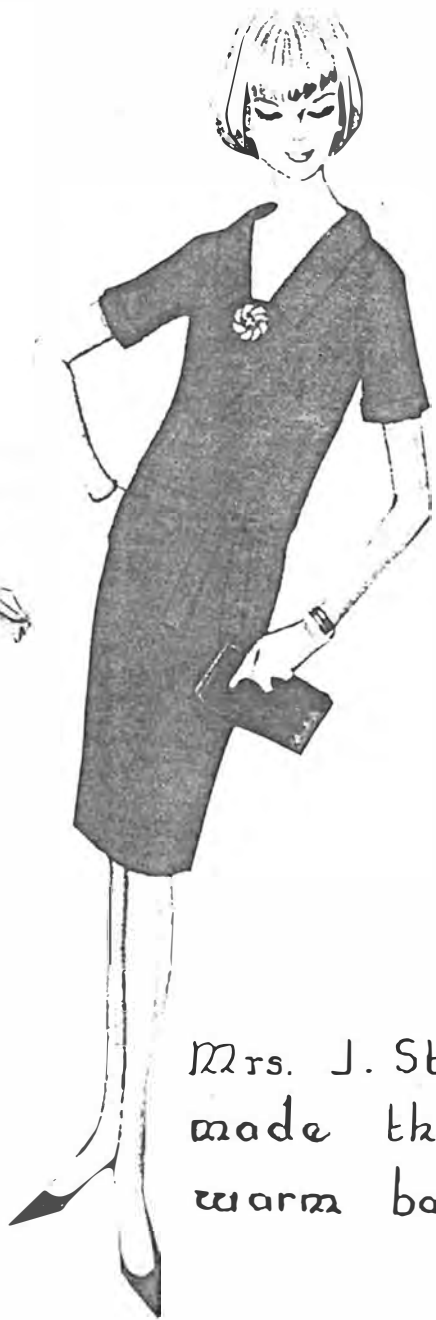
Mr. Peach is a Carpenter, and works for the Strangways Estates Ltd. Mr. Peach is one of the very few remaining real craftsmen of our time. He does a great deal of work for many people in Melbury - making bookshelves, units etc. to fit into awkward nooks and corners, both great features in most of our houses.

Anything made by Mr. Peach is a work of art and 'there to stand forever'. His skilled workmanship makes anything fit anywhere - and it looks so sturdy that one can imagine it still standing, long after the houses have gone!



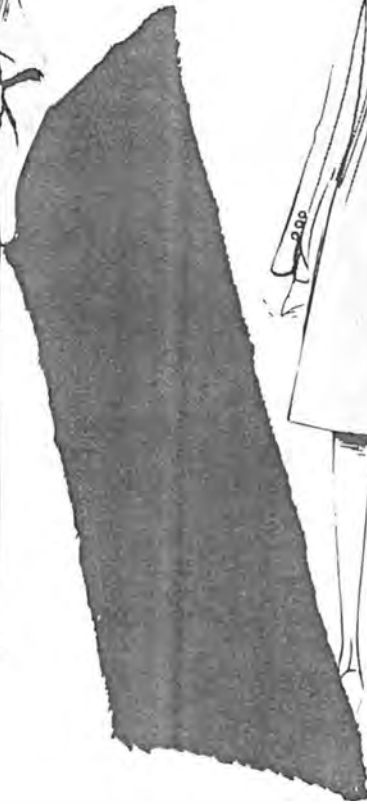


MELBURY HOUSE - SPRING 1965



Mrs. J. Stenhouse
made this dress in this
warm backed material.

Mrs. Morris
made this
'Coat-dress'
from a
"Cut out and
ready to sew"
pattern, an
offer in a
magazine



TRANSPORT AND ITS PROBLEMS

Our 'bus service definitely leaves much to be desired. The first one of the week is on a Wednesday, this leaves Melbury at 10 o'clock and goes into Yeovil, seven miles away. The return journey must be made at lunch time for if one insists on travelling by 'bus, the wait will be a long one - the next 'bus does not go into Yeovil until Friday. Again it leaves at 10 o'clock but this time does not return until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. This is rather inconvenient - one either has to buy lunch in Yeovil or wait till the 'bus arrives back at Melbury, which is something like 2.15 p.m. - 2.30 p.m.

The next 'bus is on Saturday. Again, it goes into Yeovil at 10 o'clock but there is one returning at 12.45 p.m. There is one back into Yeovil again at 2 o'clock and one back to Melbury at 5 o'clock. The last 'bus to return from Yeovil is 9 o'clock on Saturday evenings. As far as the young people of the village are concerned, this makes dancing and the cinema very definitely OUT! Consequently, most of the youngsters have their own transport in the form of Motorcycles, Scooters and Cars.

The biggest problem of all is - How to get to and from work. Most have to rely on the generosity of others to give them lifts. Again, this presents another problem - everyone does not start and finish at the same time. However, by much shuffling of people and cars, the difficulties are nearly always overcome. Occasionally someone may be stranded in Yeovil on a Thursday lunch time (the local half-day closing being a Thursday). This means either a long wait until the evening, a train journey to a nearby station and then a two or three mile walk, or a pleading telephone call to Father to - "Please come and get me!!"



Eddie Wood
trying to
solve our
transport problems
in his own way.