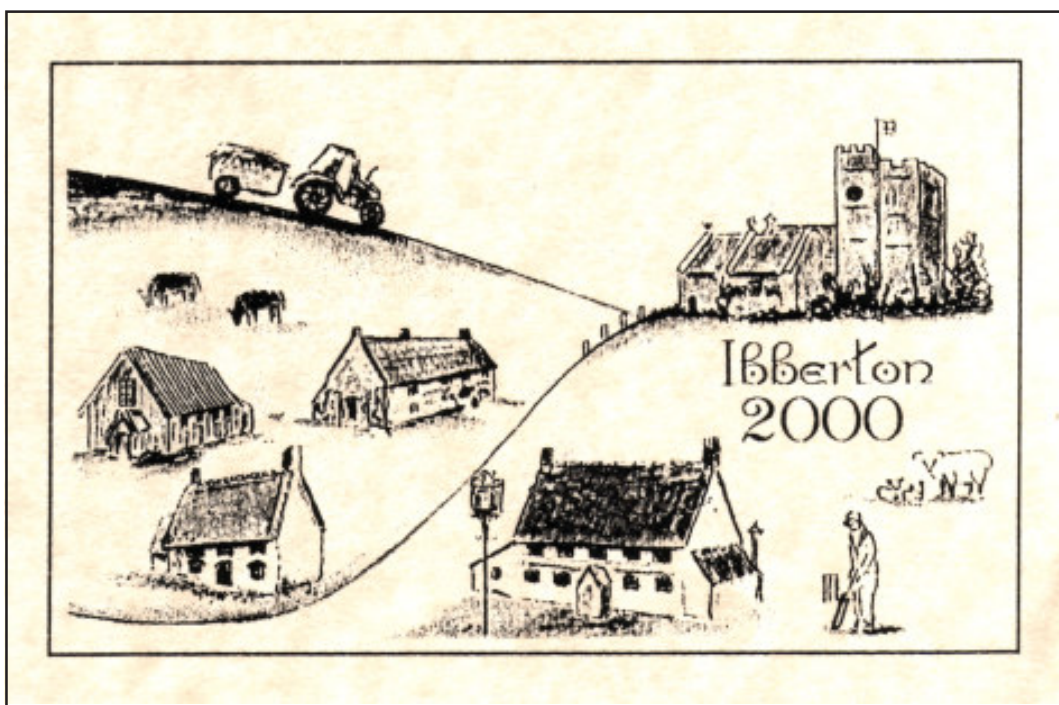


Ibberton Village



in the
Year 2000

Wibbert
2000
Millennium

A VIEW OF THE VILLAGE FROM THE CHURCH



This is a record of the village of Ibberton in the Year 2000

Villagers' accounts of their lifestyle provide a snapshot in time and comparisons are briefly drawn with bygone days..

There are also reports on the special projects and events that contributed to the Millennium Year Celebrations and the annual events and activities that make up village life.

ABRISTENTONIA TO IBBERTON

One thousand years ago the Domesday Book records the Saxon name of our settlement as Abristentona, and over the years the name gradually evolved into Ibberton. The village nestles in the lee of Bulbarrow Hill and evolved according to prevailing circumstances. In the early days lack of understanding about the techniques of land clearance and drainage resulted in the dwellings and cultivated land being sited on the lower chalk slopes and greensand immediately around and below the church where numerous springs provided water. Evidence of the early settlement is found in the terraced slopes on the hillside above Manor House Farm. A knowledge of drainage and land clearance enabled the community to develop the lower ground where the major part of the village is now sited.

The village has had many owners, the most historically famous was probably Henry VIII's wife Katherine Howard, although there is no evidence that she ever resided at the Manor House. In the nineteen seventies the last large landowner, the Pitt Rivers family sold off much of the land and houses into private ownership, but prior to that the farms and cottages would have been leased from the Estate.

The church is the oldest building in the village, built in the late 14th century it has survived plague, pestilence, religious reformation, civil war and restoration of the monarchy. The parish belongs to the Benefice of Hazelbury Bryan and the Hillside Parishes. The Wesleyan Chapel constructed during the nineteenth century in the higher reaches of Ibberton is now a private residence, but the Primitive Methodist Chapel built at Leigh, is still active under the North Dorset Circuit.

During the mid-eighteen hundreds Kelly's Directory lists carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers and numerous farmers living in the village. The church registers throughout the 19th century record occupations as varied as innkeeper, shoemaker, shopkeeper, thatcher, shepherd, blacksmith, butcher, baker, candle-maker and numerous farmers. Over the years the village population fluctuated as indicated in the 1801 Return of Parliament that lists 157 people occupying 33 houses, with 106 employed in agriculture. In 1861 however, the census listed 237 people living in 54 houses in the village. The current population of 120 is augmented by the "weekenders" who own a small but growing, proportion of the 50 or so dwellings in the parish.

The village hall was originally built in 1892 and first used as a temporary church in 1893, serving the parishes of Ibberton and Belchalwell when both churches were in a dilapidated state. Once Ibberton Parish church was reopened in 1909, the blue-grey galvanized iron and wood building was used as a Church Room before eventually becoming a village hall, with trustees and run by a committee.

The village school is now a private house, sold in 1946 for the princely sum of £100. Local children between the ages of 4-11 now start their education at Hazelbury Bryan Primary School, and then move to the comprehensive school at Sturminster Newton.

The Crown Inn was built in the 16th century, and was no doubt well attended. However due to a strong Temperance movement in the nineteen thirties its custom came from the surrounding villages, as locals could not be seen to be frequenting an ale house!

TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

Tremendous changes took place in the 20th century with the advent of motorized transport, and farm mechanization playing a major role in altering both the landscape and sociological structure of the village. When Charlie and Barbara Smith moved to Ibberton in 1957, most people lived and worked in and around the local villages. Charlie was one of only two people who travelled away using motorized transport. The number of people working locally declined with the demise of the farms that had traditionally employed labourers. There are signs that new technology will result in more people being able to work from their homes, which will alter the working structure of the village once more. Ibberton currently has a barrister, solicitor, architect, builder, private car hire business and holiday accommodation all resident and work based in the village. The nature of work is different and individuals are isolated in comparison to the days when the village was filled with the activity of tractors, animals, workers and watchers that formed part of the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Ibberton had many farms and small-holdings until well into the 20th century. After the last war there were ten farms but currently the only three remaining are Manor House, Cross, and Marsh, Farms. Technology effected the size of farms as larger machinery not only eliminated work for many farmworkers but required larger fields in which to manoeuvre. Hedges disappeared, and small farms were amalgamated to create larger acreages. The working horses and farm labourers ultimately became redundant.

Nowadays house owners acquire the land for keeping a horse or running a few sheep. Barry and Linda Dunning who moved out from Poole some years ago sell eggs from their "happy" hens, keep a couple of sheep and specialize in breeding bantams on the two acres adjoining Aldersgate.. The majority of horses are kept for recreational purposes in contrast to the first half of the century when most would have been working horses. Many, like Jane Wilkinson of Wrekin House keep a Point to Point horse in training, Patsy Harris has bought on many a young hunter in her yard at Marsh Farm and Andy and Sue Old's Stable is emerging as a successful Racing Yard in the Village.

The last incumbent of the Ibberton Rectory was The Reverend Michael Pomeroy and he conducted services in the churches at Woolland and Belchalwell as well as Ibberton. "Pom" as he was affectionately nicknamed, tended anyone in the village needing his help regardless of their faith. Upon his retirement it was decided not to appoint another rector and the rectory was sold. The Reverend Pomeroy died at the end of January, and on the 8th February 2000 returned to Ibberton where he was laid to rest in the churchyard.

The school was run by the church, and the last teacher employed by the diocese was Mrs. Holland, whose daughter Mavis, along with several of the pupils, still live in the village. Nowadays a coach transports the children of Ibberton and neighbouring villages to the primary school at Hazelbury Bryan. Children attend school for half a day from the age of four, progressing to a full day when they reach five and spend two years in each of the three classes until they reach the age of eleven. Due to the enthusiasm of the headmaster, Vernon Parkin and an active Parent Teacher Association, the school was one of the first village schools to acquire a computer. Hazelbury has always been successful in sports, competing in and often winning the area netball and football competitions, but in 1999 the cricket team excelled itself by winning the South West Region Kwik Cricket Trophy at the County ground in Taunton. Sturminster Newton High School takes care of the secondary education, sharing its 6th form with Shaftesbury Upper School.

The dwellings in the village date from the fifteen hundreds to the council houses, barn conversions, bungalows and Wrekin House all of which have been added in the last century. Some of the new buildings replaced old cottages, and with the exception of the social housing all are now privately owned. Extracts from the Parish Council minutes of January 10th 1950 report on the cracked houses at Leigh (Cutlers Close) that subsequently had to be rebuilt prior to occupation due to foundations moving on the clay soil. There is no housing for the elderly in the village, although at a Parish Council meeting in 1951, Mr. Joyce intimated that it was intended to build some Eventide homes in the parish and the site provisionally selected was one on which a demolition order was pending.

The current village amenities and services do not compare with those in existence in the early part of the century. Individual transport and the change in working conditions have enabled people in the community to travel to supermarkets in the larger towns for their shopping but not so many years ago practically everything, from paraffin to knitting wool, and all food-stuffs, was brought round in vans. Deliveries to the village are now confined to milk, papers, coal, and fish.

There was a Post Office in the village as far back as the eighteen hundreds, but the last Village Office, run by the Postmistress Mrs. Mary Howells at 4, The Orchard, closed in 1995.

There is a minimal transport service in operation compared to that of some thirty or forty years ago and nowadays most households have at least one car, if not two! The current service provides a bus to Blandford on Thursday market day, and two buses on a Saturday to Sturminster Newton, Blandford, and on to Poole and Bournemouth. There are daily coaches to transport the children to and from the schools in Hazelbury and Sturminster Newton. The old Somerset and Dorset Railway service from Bournemouth West to Bath, has long since closed and the old tracks are now footpaths or part of farms. Villagers were once able to catch a train from Shillingstone and travel to, Poole, Bournemouth, Bath or up to the Midlands if they wished.

Buildings that facilitate entertainment are the Crown Inn, the venue for many a riotous night over the years and the Village Hall where various local activities are held, most prominent being the annual Church Fete, which raises money for the three parish churches of Ibberton, Woolland and Belchalwell. A Lottery Grant application has recently been awarded for work to bring the Hall in line with the necessary Building, and Health and Safety Standards and so ensure its continued use well into the future. Originally constructed in 1892, it was for many years used as a temporary church and shared with Belchalwell when the Parish Churches in both villages were in a dilapidated state.

In 1999 the village kicked off a series of fund raising events for various Millennium projects by holding a table top sale in the garden of the Crown Inn, followed by a Dog Show, Quiz Night, Skittle Evening and Millennium Path Walk. The money raised was put towards the village Millennium celebratory midsummer Barbeque and Disco. The projects include the presentation of mugs to all village children, opening up footpaths complete with map, planting a walnut tree, and compiling a book.

It is hoped that the following contributions will present a picture of our village and the lifestyle of its inhabitants as we enter a new Millennium.



View from the Cross to The Crown Inn in the early 1900's



The Cross in 2001

ST. EUSTACE'S CHURCH



The 14th century church is sited on a plateau on the lower slopes of Ibberton Hill from where it overlooks the village. Built between 1380 and 1400 the parish church is one of only three to be dedicated to St. Eustace; the others being Hoo in Suffolk and Tavistock in Devon. There are some fragments of Elizabethan stained glass in some of the windows and the font is 15th century. Originally there was a wooden gallery at the back of the church but this was lost when the building fell into disrepair in the late eighteenth century. During this period services were held in the temporary tin building which subsequently became the village hall. The church was reopened in 1909 after extensive restoration costing approximately £1,500. The clock on the tower is a First World War memorial, the names of the fallen are listed on a plate in the porch. There are four bells in the tower, but due to deterioration of the bell frame and wheels, they became unsafe to ring and could only be chimed. In 1982 the bells were rehung for stationary chiming only, as it was too expensive to renew all the necessary woodwork for full ringing. In 1998 most of the coping stones on the roof were rendered at a cost of over £10,000 inclusive of V.A.T. and architect's fees. This work has helped to keep the wet out of the walls.

The halter path to the church is steep and was designated a vehicular right of way, but is more suited to travel by horses than any motorised vehicle. In recent years a nonslip pathway has been laid so that churchgoers may walk without fear of slipping in the mud.

The Parochial Church Council is responsible for running the Church affairs and the current serving members are Mr. Derek Old and Mrs. Jane Abell [Churchwardens], Mr. and Mrs. Peter Phillips, Mrs. Kay Old, Mrs. Jenny Parsons, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Mott, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Courage, Mrs. Barbara Smith and Mrs. Annette Newman

The building itself still requires further costly repairs, but that remains a problem the Parochial Council will have to resolve in the future.

THE CHURCH'S MILLENNIUM YEAR

On New Year's Day many parishioners, both young and old, gathered in the church at 12 noon for a special service. The bells were rung for five minutes to coincide with other bell-ringing in churches throughout the land. The service was taken by the Church wardens, with Naomi Freeland reading the special Millennium Prayer.

To mark the Millennium a new white altar cloth was made for use at communion services. Also a fine new oak notice board has been placed in the porch, the cost being met by donations from American descendants of the Applin family who lived in the village a few centuries ago.

In February the funeral took place of Reverend Michael J. Pomeroy, a much loved Rector, who served this parish from 1969-1990. He was buried in the churchyard next to another popular and long serving Rector, the Reverend L.S. Plowman, who was responsible for the restoration of the church at the beginning of the 1900's.

Notable fund raising events have been the musical concert in July, and the annual fete in August. Musical concerts by the Bournemouth Symphony Brass have been given annually in aid of the church, over the last few years, with the exception of 1999, when a string quartet performed in the church. We are very fortunate in having such excellent musicians as Andy and Sally Cresci living in the village who give their services free to raise these funds. The brass concerts are held in the beautiful garden at Manor House farm and refreshments are also provided. This year the event was held on a Sunday afternoon instead of the usual Saturday evening as this was the only available free time for the musicians. The weather was indifferent, but the rain held off and a large gathering sat around in the garden eating cream teas and listening to a very mixed repertoire from the band.

Fete day dawned hot and sunny and a large crowd had gathered by 3.p.m. when Mrs. B. Wingfield-Digby of Hazelbury Bryan opened the event. Thomas Dudley presented her with a basket of flowers. £1269 was raised during the afternoon - not quite a record - but still a worthwhile amount to divide between our three parishes of Ibberton, Woolland and Belchalwell

Another milestone during the year has been the induction of the Reverend Diana Jones on the 1st August. She is living in the Rectory at Hazelbury Bryan and has the care of six parishes in all.

Still to come is the Harvest Thanksgiving in October and the Carol Service with its Nativity scenes to round off the year in December.



**THE CHURCH
DECORATED FOR
HARVEST FESTIVAL**



THE CHRISTMAS NATIVITY PLAY

Ibberton has always had a Carol Service and approximately twelve years ago Jane Abell initiated the Nativity Play which was subsequently incorporated into the Service and is now an annual event. I began assisting and slowly became more involved as the numbers of children increased, including our own children for whom it was, of course, obligatory! Jane has always favoured the traditional nativity play which we vary by taking a different perspective and portraying events through the eyes of the Innkeeper, Angel Gabriel, Shepherds or Kings. We involve the older children in readings which are spoken between the carols unfolding the story as the youngsters enact it.

The first rehearsal is usually rather chaotic, but may I assure you both Jane and I are secretly in command, I think! Rehearsals are kept to a minimum, usually one weekday evening and a day over the weekend as this is a busy period for everyone. The children read from sheets avoiding the added pressure of memorising lines, both for them and the adults.. Picture a scene of around a dozen youngsters, ages ranging from five to twelve years, their younger siblings, and the older children, [usually to be found lolling against the furniture] all with different readings and clamouring for attention. The characters are “suggested” to the children giving them the option of indicating their role preference however in reality they are led in a required direction to avoid ending up with eight angels and no shepherds! On one occasion we had a Mary and Joseph who wouldn’t talk to each other, which was disconcerting. Angels are always popular with girls, as are Kings with the boys however it is difficult to find Shepherds, which is possibly a reflection of our modern life style. Once we have some semblance of order, we move into the vestry and start running through the nativity scenes putting the right groups together and eventually ending up with everyone in the centre of the church surrounding the baby Jesus. We keep the children moving around as experience has taught us that a child on the move can’t be poking another child with the candle snuffer or discovering that the altar is actually a trestle table and therefore hollow inside so that those small enough can run from one end to another and all heavy objects are locked in the cupboard. We usually manage to run through the scenes twice before calling it a day.

By the second rehearsal, all the alterations have been made and the script typed out in full with the name of each child against their reading or enactment. and although theoretically it should be all plain sailing it is surprisingly difficult to bring it all together. I am always surprised at the end when it actually works! Barbara Smith, our organist, is present at this stage and we now run through the whole thing with the music. We like to include a small selection of well known Christmas songs, such as “Twinkle Twinkle little Star” and the hymn “Away in a Manger.” There are usually a few alterations to the final performance but everything begins to come together at this stage and I always have several copies of the readings as there is always someone who has either forgotten or chewed their readings.

THE CAROL SERVICE. When the day arrives we all gather in the church decorated beautifully for the festive occasion by many of the parishioners. Mums and Dads crowd into the small vestry, clutching plastic bags full of tea towels for the Shepherds, old curtains to drape around the Kings’ shoulders and various other vestiges with which to transform the players. Mary and Jesus never fail to look wonderful. It is usually Mary’s responsibility to supply baby Jesus and there was only one occasion when this was forgotten and one of my girls was despatched home to find the doll with the least amount of hair and resemblance to Disco Barbi.. The Shepherds do not carry crooks as arming eight year. old boys with four foot .poles proved too much of a recipe for disaster on the one occasion it was tried,. We did, however, once turn the lights out for the Innkeeper’s entrance carrying a lighted lantern through the church, without mishap. During the performance in between the carols and the scenes on many occasions there is a tug at my side “Is it my turn yet?” or “When do I go on?” or “What’s happening out there?” The over confident are often late, the anxious early or the shy suddenly decide they don’t really want to perform. and the panic stricken who can’t remember what to do. There was only one child who refused point blank to go out so nobody saw how lovely she looked in her angel’s outfit but on the whole they all rise beautifully to the occasion, There was one occasion when the child playing Mary failed to turn up and Sarah Mott, a willowy older girl acted as stand-in, towering beside a rather small Joseph until a flurry at the church door redeemed the situation and a somewhat flustered little bundle rushed through to the vestry. (the sitting room clock had stopped) Barely stopping to draw breath she changed into costume all the time gently sobbing with anxiety until told she could change places with Sarah after the next carol whereupon she rushed out, ousted Sarah from Joseph’s side and proudly sat in her chair like a queen! The rest went swimmingly. Under their costumes most of our players are usually swathed in many layers for added warmth and I always remember a little angel tripping in on airy feet, white robe swathed around her, headdress sparkling with tinsel and fine cobweb wings of sequins, looking across to Angel Gabriel she said “Even Angels wear sneakers” The Carol Service is great fun and as well as the nativity scenes many children perform and sing. We have had recorders, violins, clarinet, guitars, keyboard and many solo voices to charm us during the service, We couldn’t do it without everyone’s help, the parents, children, helpers and especially Jane, who brings it all together. May it long continue.

Mary Freeland

SCENES FROM THE NATIVITY PLAY

