

supplying an explanation for the name Bowbridge.

The spelling of the name, however, is unimportant to the people who live there. They are much more ready to tell of the events which have taken place in Butterrow. Mr. Walter Sutton, for instance, now 70, who has lived there all his life. On leaving school he worked for his father, the late Mr. William Sutton, who founded a building and decorating business almost 90 years ago. After the first World War he and his brother, Mr. F. Sutton, now living at Rodborough, carried on the business until about four or five years ago when a member of the third generation, Mr. Raymond Sutton, took over the reins.

MORE ACTIVE

Mr. Walter Sutton recalls the village as a more active place than at present. During election times, apparently, Butterrow was "a red hot place." Torchlight processions with placards and banners were the thing and bonfires were kept going, very often by taking down somebody's fence. It may have no significance but the late Sir Stafford Cripps' father, who stood for Stroud just before Mr. Charlie Allen's time used to stay at Woodhouse during his campaign. At that time Woodhouse was owned by Mr. James Smith, who was then chairman of the Conservative Association. After him came the Eltringham family, Dr. Harry Eltringham being a lepidopter authority. The present occupier is Mr. A. C. Cook.

Mr. Sutton lives at the junction of the Rodborough Lane with the old lane used by the wagons and horses in the old days. About 30 years ago, he remembers, this lane (it would now be more correct to call it a pitch) was used frequently for motor-cycle trials. As many as 25 or 30 riders would start on Butterrow Hill, race up the pitch, cross the Rod-

borough Lane and on up the next pitch to Mount Vernon, then turn left back to the Hill, race down the hill to the starting point and thus complete a circuit. This sort of thing went on for some time until the noise began to jar the villagers and the route became a little too dangerous, especially with the increasing number of vehicles on the main road.

FAVOURITE PASTIME

When the car was still a novelty, however, it was a favourite pastime of the village lads to watch out for them trying to negotiate the hill. Rarely, says Mr. Sutton, did they manage the hill all in one go without stopping. Many times it was their lot to have to push these tired cars. One of the first steam cars to be seen on the hill, he recalls, was one driven by the late Dr. Waller.

Mr. Sutton also remembers the time when the Rodborough "Mayor" would tour the village at a certain period of the year. From all accounts it was a very merry and spirited occasion. The "Mayor" would be carried in a chair on two poles, the last one being a Mr. Bishop.

METHODIST CHAPEL

It was Mr. Sutton's great grandfather, Mr. Nathan Sutton, who helped found the Methodist Chapel—"the Zion" to Butterrow people—in 1856. The centenary celebrations were held last week. His grave lies in the chapel grounds—the only one. Mr. P. Sutton is a steward at the chapel.

The pike house, just above "the Zion", has, within living memory, always been a shop. Mr. Jack Willis is the first owner Mr. Sutton can recall. A customer buying one ounce of tobacco for 2½d. would inevitably come out of the shop with a clay pipe thrown in to smoke it, we are told. Since that time the shop has changed hands many times, but most of the district will remember Miss

J. Hepburn, now living at Avening, who kept it for many years. The present owner is Mrs. R. N. May and it is run by Miss Jean Smart. The other general store in Butterrow has been owned by Mr. Gilbert Critchley, a native of the village, since 1912.

Two of the oldest residents are Mr. Thomas H. Furley (85) and Mr. Albert Mayo, also in his eighties. Mr. Furley is a native of Frogmarsh and has resided here for over 50 years. He was employed at the Stroud Metal Co., retiring about three years ago. A keen gardener, he held an allotment in Rodborough for more than 50 years, but as regards the village itself can recall few changes. The main change, as far as he is concerned, is the view. He used to pick hay and wheat where the new Council house estate is now at Spider Lane, Stroud.

WOODCARVER

Mr. Mayo has lived here for more than 60 years, being a native of Chalford Hill. He was a wood carver at the Branscombe stick and umbrella works for about 27 years. He can recall the late Walter Chandler, the second chairman of the Stroud branch of the National Farmers' Union.

The only Butterrow representative on the Rodborough Parish Council today is Mr. H. B. Smith, a native of Stroud who came to live in Butterrow about 29 years ago. During his 10 years as a traveller for a wire purchase firm he toured this district extensively but has always been an active worker in just one village—Butterrow. Besides being a councillor since 1914 and a steward of the chapel for almost 20 years, Mr. Smith started a junior football team about 1930 and was secretary of the Junior Jazz Band. Both these organisations fell through at the beginning of World War II. Many will remember the jazz band, however, for they entered many competitions both locally and at Evesham. They gained second prize twice at Stroud Show.

Mr. Smith was also chairman of the Forces Fund during the last war. The secretary of this was the late Mr. A. E. Gardner. When the war ended a few people carried on the work as a social club and it was the money from this club which went a long way to providing the village with its bus shelter. In fact the villagers subscribed about £160 of the £190 which it cost.

GOLF CLUB FOUNDER

Outside the village, Mr. Smith was one of the founder members of the Amberley Artisans' Golf Club and is now vice-president. He was also chairman of the old Rodborough Artisans' Golf Club for many years.

Another keen golfer is Mr. Robert (Bob) Mellor, a Yorkshirman, who came to Butterrow about 22 years ago as a foreman during the building of the Aston Down aerodrome. Since that time he has had several jobs, all in the building line. Though now more or less retired he still does a bit of cobbling for villagers. He is on the committees of the Stroud Darts League, the L.V.A. Quoits League and the Mid.-Glos. Inter-League Darts. These are public house sports and there are two in Butterrow: The Woolpack and

the Lamb. The licences are Mr. and Mrs. A. Thornton and Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Herbert respectively. There is a tradition that another public house, The Skylark, existed round the lane towards the school and yet another in the same lane near the Pike in the row of houses where Mrs. Elsie Merrett lives now. Mrs. Merrett is another native and for 42 years was employed as a winder at Ham Mills. She is a keen gardener but insists that the whole of her garden should be for flowers. "I never have any luck with vegetables," she says. Nearby lives Mrs. R. Whale, who kept the Woolpack Inn for over 13 years.

CANTEEN ADDED

The school we mentioned just now was opened in June, 1880, the first master being the late Mr. William Dawkins. Mrs. Amelia Aldridge, who lives near the school was caretaker there for about 25 years starting in Mr. Dawkins' time. Later masters and mistresses were Mr. Barrett and Mrs. M. Barbosa. The present schoolmistresses are Miss E. M. Howell and Miss P. Beard, both formerly at Rodborough School. In the canteen, which has been added, the cook is Mrs. J. R. White, Mrs. I. Sparkes is the supervisor and the canteen assistant is Mrs. B. Pratt—the last two being ex-pupils.

Another ex-pupil is Mr. Arthur Cook, now in his 72nd year. On leaving school he started work in his father's bakery but for the past 35 years has been a chauffeur-gardener to Mr. E. T. Davies, at Glenview. Mr. Cook knows many facts about Butterrow's history; it was through talking to him that the Butterrow Hill graveyard came to light.

VIEW OF VALLEY

The view of the Stroud Valley from this hillside village, which, incidentally, is half in Stroud U.D.C. and half in the R.D.C., is one of the joys of the villagers. It prompted Mrs. Annie Cottrell to say "This is the prettiest place I have ever seen, and I have travelled about all over the place."

She came to Butterrow over 20 years ago with her husband, Mr. Frederick Cottrell, who for many years worked at Holloways' cloth factory.

Butterrow, as we have attempted to prove, is a village of greater stature than the first impression of it suggests. For although it rarely appears in any guide book, even of the Stroud Valleys, it possesses an individual history of which larger villages in the district could indeed be envious.



The Pike House, Butterrow.

"Our Village" Series

BUTTERROW

Village on the Hillside ★ When They Practiced Archery ★ The Toll Charges

"HILL one in eight—low gear for half a mile." That is the modern motorist's introduction to Butterrow, but the common-carriers of wool, cloth and general merchandise, using wagons and horses at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had a much more formidable task.

According to Fisher, the noted local historian, their journey ended, as now, at Bowbridge, but their route in reverse meant crossing the River Frome and carrying straight on up the steep, narrow lane known today as Court Bank, up another rough track to the old highway leading from Rodborough Butts to Butterrow" (Rodborough Lane) and on up to Mount Vernon, owned today by Mr. A. B. Cooke, chairman of the Stroud Magistrates and an alderman of Gloucestershire.

"The ascent of this long lane from Bowbridge to the hilltop," says Fisher in his "Notes and Recollections", "was an incline of somewhat more than one in six; and it may seem strange that it could ever have been traversed by horses and carriages. But, notwithstanding this extraordinary steepness, it was much used; and was indeed the general (being also the shortest) way from the valley and the upper end of Stroud, into the Cirencester turnpike road to the common-carriers' warehouses."

STEEP, SUBSTITUTE

Though this rough lane still exists it can only be used today as a footpath. The Great Western Railway built their line across its lower end and steps have been built where it joins Rodborough Lane. The present-day mile-long turnpike road to the Bear Inn was regarded by Mr. Fisher as "a good, though somewhat steep, substitute."

Relating the "perilous exploit" of his youngest son skating down Butterrow Hill during the severe winter of 1849, the historian says: "He was obliged to crouch as close to the ground as he could, in order to avoid being precipitated headlong down the hill by the great velocity of his uncheckable motion and by the sharpness of the curves. The descent from the Bear Inn to Bowbridge was effected in less than four minutes."

A little known tradition about this hill is that just below the turning to Mount Vernon the road passes through what was apparently a graveyard. Unanimous approval of the trustees was needed before the road could be cut. At least one grave still exists, hidden among the trees in the field on the valley side, but there is doubt about

the site of the church, chapel or wherever the services were held.

A site and building more generally known is the Pike—a toll house on the cross roads in the centre of the village, now a shop. During the summer months the sight of tourists craning their necks to read the toll charges is quite common. The board on which they are painted was restored in 1952 and reads:

BUTTER ROW GATE

Tolls authorised to be taken at this gate:

For every Horse and other Beast drawing any Coach, Stage Coach, Post Chaise, Diligence, Van, Caravan, Sociable, Berlin, Landau, Chariot, Vis-a-Vis, Barouch, Phaeton, Chaise, Marine Calash, Curricie, Chair Gig, Whiskey Hearse, Litter or other such Carriage—3d.

For every Horse or other Beast drawing such wagon, Wain, Cart or other such Wheels there of the breadth of Four inches and a breadth of more than Six inches at the Bottom or soles thereof—2½d.

For every Horse or other Beast drawing such Waggon, Wain, Cart or other such carriage having the Vellies of the Wheels thereof of the breadth of Six inches—2d.

For every horse, Mule or Afs (Ass) laden or ridden but not drawing the sum of—1d.

For every drove of Oxen, Cows or other meat cattle per score, and so in proportion for a greater or less (less) number—3d.

For every drove of Calves, Hogs, Sheep or Lambs, per score and so in proportion—2½d.

For every Carriage drawn or propelled by mechanical machinery or power other than Animal Power for each—1s. 0d.

By order of the Trustees.
Wilberforce Lucas Clerk.

CLUE TO ORIGIN

It will be noticed that Butter Row is given as two words though Post Office officials are now about the only people who keep this up. This spelling, however, gives a clue to the origin of the place, name. Again referring to Fisher, we are told that Butter Row is a slight corruption of Butt-row and indicates the place where butts were formerly set up against the hill, when the inhabitants of every parish in England was obliged to practise archery.

Other people have given similar explanations but say the butts were along the canal bank in the valley, thus also

Stroud News 25.5.56