

FOUR RETIRED HEADMASTERS ALL OVER EIGHTY

The Stroud district keeps up its reputation for longevity

A JOKE often related about one village in the Stroud district was that it was such a healthy place that it was necessary to shoot one of the villagers to start a cemetery, and the amusing tale of the three old men of Painswick certainly had its origin in the longevity of its residents.

It could almost have been written about retired school teachers in Stroud for there are several who are over 80 years of age, all active and still making their contribution to the communal life of the district.

Something of a record has been created by four of them—all retired headmasters—for their combined ages are 337 and they are all still active to a remarkable degree.

The G.O.M. of this quartet is Mr. Albert John Dee who was headmaster of Cainscross Church of England School for 38 years.

Mr. Dee was 90 on February 1 and can often be seen walking in Ebley—where he lives



MR. DEE

with his son, Mr. B. P. Dee—and in Stroud—still extremely upright.

Nearly the whole of his life was associated with the Cainscross School for he attended there as a pupil, served afterwards as a monitor for some time and, after training at St. Paul's College returned as a teacher and remained for 45 years.

Always keen on gardening and nature study, Mr. Dee enabled Cainscross School to gain renown by being the first to win the Bathurst County Garden Shield for the best

School Mr. Dee was closely associated with Cainscross Church and for a number of years he was the choirmaster. Outside his school and church work, he worked hard in many directions, and was particularly active in connection with local efforts for Stroud Hospital.

It was in 1933 that Mr. Dee retired and he continued to be a keen gardener until recent years.

Two of Mr. Dee's sons followed in his footsteps as educationists. One of them, Old Marlintonian Professor P. I. Dee, occupies the Chair of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow University and besides being a Master of Arts and Fellow of the Royal Society, has been awarded the OBE and CBE.

The other is Mr. B. P. Dee, who is science and mathematics master at Rodborough County Secondary School. The latter's daughter Janet is carrying on the family tradition for she is now at a teacher's training college. Mr. Dee's other son, Mr. Eric Dee is an inspector of taxes.

Still singing

Still singing in the Leonard Stanley Church choir and able to get top G without difficulty although he will be 84 in June, Mr. Percy H. Blick continues to look forward to an active life although not so widely embracing as it has been in the past.

When Mr. Blick retired from the headmastership of Leonard Stanley School about 15 years ago he had completed over 50 years as a teacher. He started his career as a pupil teacher at Thrupp—where he was born—and after obtaining his teacher's certificate he served as assistant master there at the time of the late Mr. J. W. Ricketts.

He was still a young man when he was appointed headmaster at Leonard Stanley before the first world war. Except for a break for war service—he was a CQMS with the 12th Gloucesters and served in France until he was badly shell-shocked—he continued as headmaster until he was 63.

The possessor of a fine tenor voice he has been in the Leonard Stanley Church Choir for about 50 years, was a member of the Three Choirs Festival for a number of years and, to use his own words, "has sung all over Gloucestershire."

Keen musician

A keen musician—a player of the piano, banjo and mandolin—he started the Leonard Stanley Jesters, who for several years gave concerts in all parts of the district for charitable causes.

From the inception of the organisation he has been a member of the British Legion, was formerly chairman of the local branch and for many years ran the village Poppy Day collections.

In his younger days he



MR. JEFFERIES

was instrumental in securing a national salary scale. In turn he held the offices of secretary, chairman and treasurer of the Stroud NUT branch.

A keen spokesman, Mr. Jefferies excelled at cricket, soccer, tennis, rowing and, later in life, at bowls. At the turn of the century he was a playing member of the Stroud Cricket Club, when at college he was captain of the soccer team, was the winner of the college tennis finals and joint winner of the sculls final.

For several years he was the captain of the Victory Park Bowling Club and still retains his connection with the club as vice-president.

Practically all his life Mr. Jefferies has been keenly interested in Ebley Congregational Chapel of which he was for many years treasurer and is now a life deacon. This interest is a natural one for his father and uncles were to a great extent responsible for the building of the present church.

Mr. Jefferies' wife also made teaching her career. For a number of years was an assistant teacher at Thrupp and was subsequently the headmistress of Castle-st. Infants' School, holding this position when she retired.

A brother of Mr. Jefferies was the late Rev. William Jefferies who for some years was minister of Painswick Congregational Church. Mr. and Mrs. Jefferies live at Holmleigh, Cashes Green-rd., Stroud.

Recorder

Capt. B. D. Parkin, O.B.E., who has lived at Rose Cottage, Ruscombe, for the past 16 years and who will be 82 in July takes official rainfall and temperature recordings daily for the Meteorological Office. This is one of the jobs he has retained but many others he

was a member of the Gloucestershire War Pensions Committee for 27 years from 1923 and he was also a member of Stroud Disablement Advisory Committee. In 1946 he was awarded the O.B.E. for his work on behalf of ex-Servicemen.

Pupil teacher

A Derbyshire man, Captain Parkin finished school at 14 to become a pupil teacher, studying before school started every evening. It was at St. John's College, Battersea, that he qualified as a certificated teacher and in 1900 took his first appointment as an assistant master at a school in South Hackney.

He remained six years in London and it was the year that his son Ben—formerly Labour MP for Stroud and now MP for North Paddington—was born that he moved to Gloucestershire.

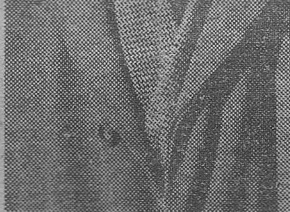
He was still in his 20's when he was appointed headmaster of Winterbourne School and he was 32 when he became headmaster of Stonehouse school, remaining as such until his retirement in 1939.

His active work for ex-Servicemen did not prevent him from taking a full share in the life of the district. He was for many years a member of Stonehouse Parish Council of which for some time he served as chairman and he helped to start the Stonehouse Community Centre.

For 14 years he was a lay reader at Standish Church and in 1942 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, sitting with the Stonehouse Bench. During the second world war he was the Chief Warden for the Stroud and Nailsworth area, was head warden at Stonehouse and the Deputy Civil Defence Officer for Stroud and District.

It was while he was still at Stonehouse that he started his work as a weather recorder for the Meteorological Office—which he has continued ever since—





MR. DEE

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Always keen on gardening and nature study, Mr. Dee enabled Cainscross School to gain renown by being the first to win the Bathurst County Garden Shield for the best school garden, and this success was repeated on several subsequent occasions. A number of silver medals were also won by the school for nature study achievements.

When Mr. Dee was a young man most schools in the district ran Rugby teams and it was Cainscross School who first won the Schools Cup given by Stroud RFC.

Throughout the long period he was linked with Cainscross

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In his younger days he played soccer and cricket for Leonard Stanley, for many years was a member of the Parish Council and has, in fact, been a prominent figure in the village activities as a whole.



MR. BLICK

Only a few months younger than Mr. Blick is Mr. J. Edgar Jefferies who is affectionately remembered by generations of Thrupp School pupils. A member of a prominent Ebley family, Mr. Jefferies entered Marling School on the first day it was opened in 1890 and was one of the earliest local scholars to obtain his London matriculation.

It was after he had spent a time as an assistant master at Church-st. School, Stroud, from January 1897 onwards and then three years as house-master at East Devon County School, that he went in 1902 to Borough-rd. College.

From 1904 to 1908 he was assistant master at Park Walk Council School, Chelsea, and in 1909 he was appointed head-master of Thrupp School, remaining as such for 32 years. In his case, too, there was a war service break and he served with the Gloucestershire Hussars in Palestine from 1916 to 1919.

A stalwart in the NUT, Mr. Jefferies was president of the Lower Paid Areas Association—a body with 40,000 members at the time—for several years. This organisation was large-

for many years treasurer and is now a life deacon. This interest is a natural one for his father and uncles were to a great extent responsible for the building of the present church.

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Capt. Parkin is probably even wider known for his work for the British Legion than as a schoolmaster for his legion activities have reached national level.

It was while he was still a young teacher that he first donned uniform—as a volunteer in the 2nd South Middlesex Volunteer Regiment at the turn of the century soon after the Boer War had started. He was promoted sergeant and was one of the bodyguard to Queen Victoria when she laid the foundation stone of the South Kensington Museum.

When the first world war began he volunteered for the army and although at first rejected on medical grounds, succeeded eventually in getting enlisted and rejoined his old Boer War Battalion.

He was later commissioned and served with the West Riding Regiment in France, Belgium and Germany. At the end of the war he was appointed education officer to the 62nd division in connection with the Army on the Rhine adult education scheme—which was designed to prepare troops for their return to civil life.

When the division returned to England he was given a similar post with the 51st Highland Division.

British Legion

On his return to civilian life Captain Parkin joined the Comrades of the Great War and held office. Following the amalgamation by Earl Haig of all ex-Service organisations into the British Legion, Captain Parkin organised the change-over in Stonehouse and became the first secretary of the local branch, subsequently becoming chairman and president in turn.

In 1921 he was appointed the chairman of the County Unity Relief Fund and when the county branch of the Legion was formed he was elected vice-chairman and continued to hold the office until he was made chairman in 1942.

He was a member and was once chairman of the Midland Area Council of the Legion. For seven years also he was a member of the National Executive Council and in all capacities he proved himself a glutton for hard work.

He gave up most of his public work in 1948 but is still a vice-president of the Legion Area Council, the county branch and the local group. He

worked as a weather recorder at the Meteorological Office—which he has continued ever since—



CAPT. PARKIN

and in 1937 he became a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society

Yet another interest of his throughout his life has been music. He was both a vocalist and pianist, and he acted as accompanist for Stonehouse Choral Society.

Although now living in a quiet backwater, Capt. Parkin remains very much in the thoughts of his many former pupils and fellow public workers, quite a number of whom keep in touch and not a few of whom still seek his advice.

Altogether there are over 50 retired teachers living in Stroud district and besides being welcomed at the meetings of the Stroud NUT, they have a get together once a year, usually in September, when they have the opportunity of recalling past associations. A number of them are over 70.

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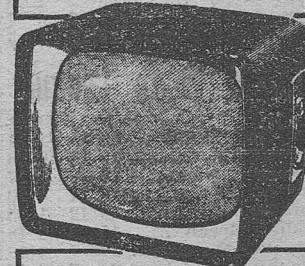
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