



Thatched wall, Broughton; topiary, Kings Somborne

SURELY there cannot be another place in Hampshire which possess so much beauty and such a diverse collection of local activities as the tiny village of Broughton?

Although thatched cottages may be seen in many parts of Southern England, these standing beside the Wallop Brook have a particular air of serenity. But let no-one be fooled into thinking that life in this Utopian corner is a series of long dreamy days spent watching the trout as they dart through the streams, while nearby the water tumbles through the water-mill and a thousand birds fill the air with song.

The forge which lies tucked behind a row of cottages is only one of the little hives of industry to be found in Broughton. Although no longer busy making horse shoes, it is a thriving business coping with the needs of some unusual customers. Mr Philip Blake, blacksmith, supplied Chipperfield Circus with several large iron tubs which the elephants use in their balancing acts; he also made a large saddle for one of the elephants which carries a tiger on its back. Mr Blake also made several handsome lions for the wild life estate at Longleat.

BROUGHTON AND AROUND

Tubs for elephants and ties for a prince

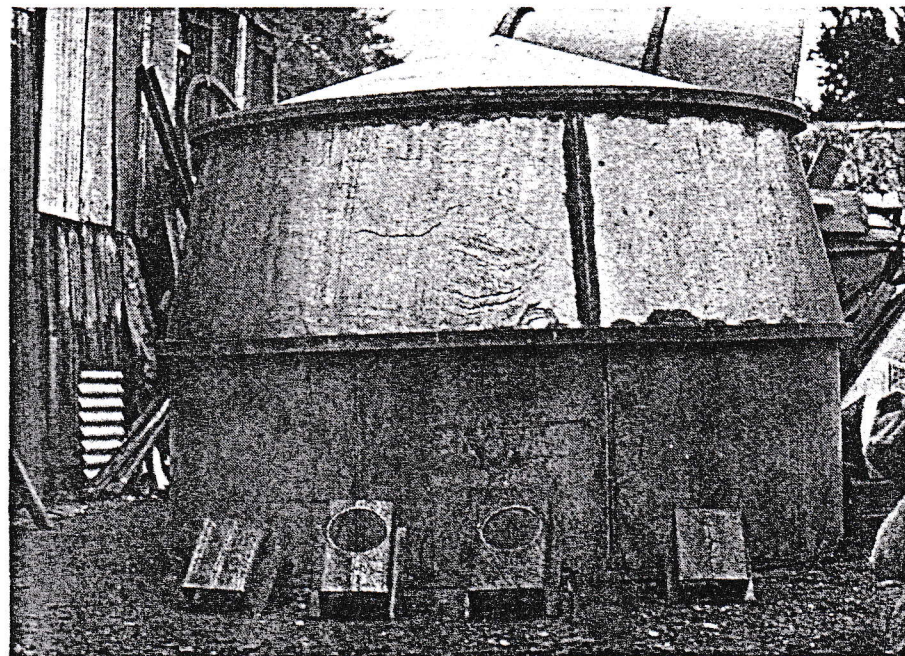
by L. M. DYSON

An American visitor to the safari park so admired the lions that on her return home she phoned Mr Blake from America to ask if he would make some for her, and eventually two were sent to Miami.

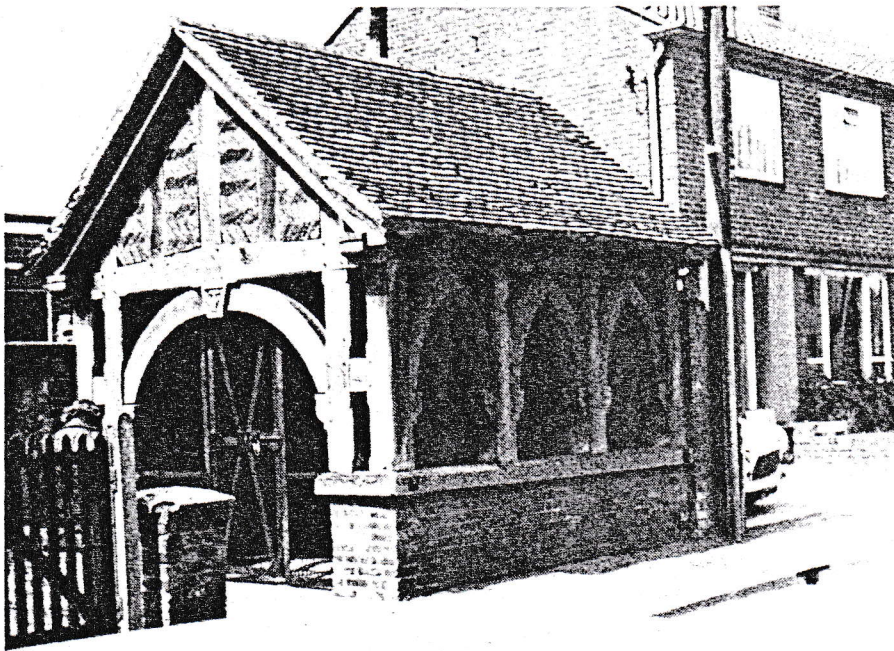
Huge charcoal kilns measuring 8ft 6ins across and standing 6ft high with domed lids are forged here and sent overseas, one

standing in the yard was waiting to be dispatched to Africa.

Almost next door to the blacksmith's is another unusual business, mens neckwear. Incredulous though it may seem, neckties from this modest corner supply shops all over Britain, and many are sent abroad. It is their proud boast that they supplied



Above, columbarium or pigeon cote; right, charcoal kiln forged at Broughton.



Village well at Broughton.

Prince Charles with his very first grown up tie, soft silk the colour of ripe corn, and it is their fondest hope that they will one day be asked to supply one for his wedding day.

An enterprising and enthusiastic lady, Mrs. Tannis Hewlett has formed a group of Majorettes, and these young attractive girls add a touch of glamour to some of the social events in Hampshire.

In the street is the village well which was made in the drought of 1921, 'and was given to in memory of Lt. J. Tripp, who was killed in action, 1915.' The name Broughton was removed from the tablet during the last war when all place names were removed from sign posts, post offices and businesses. A number of German prisoners were

employed on local farms and it was the policy to keep place names secret. Perhaps now that the war has been over for 40 years, the name Broughton could be safely restored to the plaque over the well. The well house is made from Hampshire oak and the iron work was made by the blacksmith.

A magnificent 17th century Columbarium stands behind St Mary's church. Pigeons still use the loft where they were bred for many years as a reliable source of food in times of shortages. Birds of a more exotic nature may be seen and sometimes heard at the nearby stud. Here are graceful flamingoes and gaudy parrots, and here too strut peacocks, their heartrending calls making an odd contrast to the pheasants rusty cries.

Leaving Broughton, the road to Nether Wallop runs through beautiful green countryside with the Wallop Brook twisting and turning through the meadows. Great willow trees thrive in the damp soil and many thousands of cricket bats which have been made from these willows are being used on cricket pitches the world over. To the inexperienced eye all willows look alike, but to experts like the famous W. G. Grace, only the Nether Wallop willows are good enough for cricket bats.

Although one always associates Lady Godiva with Coventry, legend tells that she lived in this village by the Wallop Brook for many years. Nether Wallop, Middle Wallop and Over Wallop abound in thatched cottages and thatched garden walls, and flowers bloom everywhere. One unhappy story about Nether Wallop concerns the winter of 1834. After weeks of deep frosts and heavy snowfalls a sudden thaw brought the melting snow like an avalanche down the hillside to the tiny village below. Torrents of freezing water tore through the narrow street, wrenching away a cottage wall and drowning a young girl asleep in her bedroom. Two men who had ventured out to search for their sheep were also drowned.

A few miles east of the Wallops is another delightful village, King's Somborne, who proudly boast that they sent a detachment of archers to help King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. Opposite the Norman church is an elegant pub which has unusual example of topiary by the door. A track known as Cowdrove is a reminder of the days when toll gates were set up across the roads in 1663. The farmers, objecting to paying tolls when they took their cattle to market, found other ways and Cowdrove was one of these little tracks. Farmers fought for almost 100 years, chopping and burning the gates, before they were forced to accept the fact that those who use the roads should expect to contribute to the upkeep.

Many quaint names for birds, beasts and flowers are still remembered by older inhabitants. Where else but in Hampshire would one expect to find an unked zitty, sheltered from the up-along, watching a pudding bird searching the nickies for chiddle-bobs. Interpreted for those of us who are not Hampshire Hogs, means a broody hen sheltered from the west wind is watching a sparrow searching woodpiles for woodlice.



Willows at Nether Wallop.