

MEON VALLEY LEADS IN VILLAGE VENTURES

THE energetic work of three villages in the Meon Valley has been rewarded by winning the Hampshire Village Ventures Competition — 1978-81. Meonstoke with Corhampton and Exton Village Hall came top out of 68 entrants in the recent competition organised by Hampshire Council of Community Service and sponsored by "Hampshire" Magazine.

The aim of the competition was to stimulate, support and encourage voluntary initiatives in rural communities. Meonstoke certainly lived up to these aims for the community has built a new village hall, which as the final judges—Major-Gen. B. St. G. and Mrs. Irwin—stated, is impressive by any standards.

It is, in fact, a complex containing two halls. The main hall has a badminton court, and a stage, the smaller hall incorporates a well equipped kitchen and there are adjacent dressing rooms with showers serving the large playing fields in which the building stands.

The financing of this mammoth venture, costing over £80,000, would, the judges felt, have daunted lesser spirits, but there can be no doubt that the bold imagination of the Management Committee is to be rewarded by an amenity which will serve not only Meonstoke, Corhampton and Exton, but probably a good many outlying areas as well.

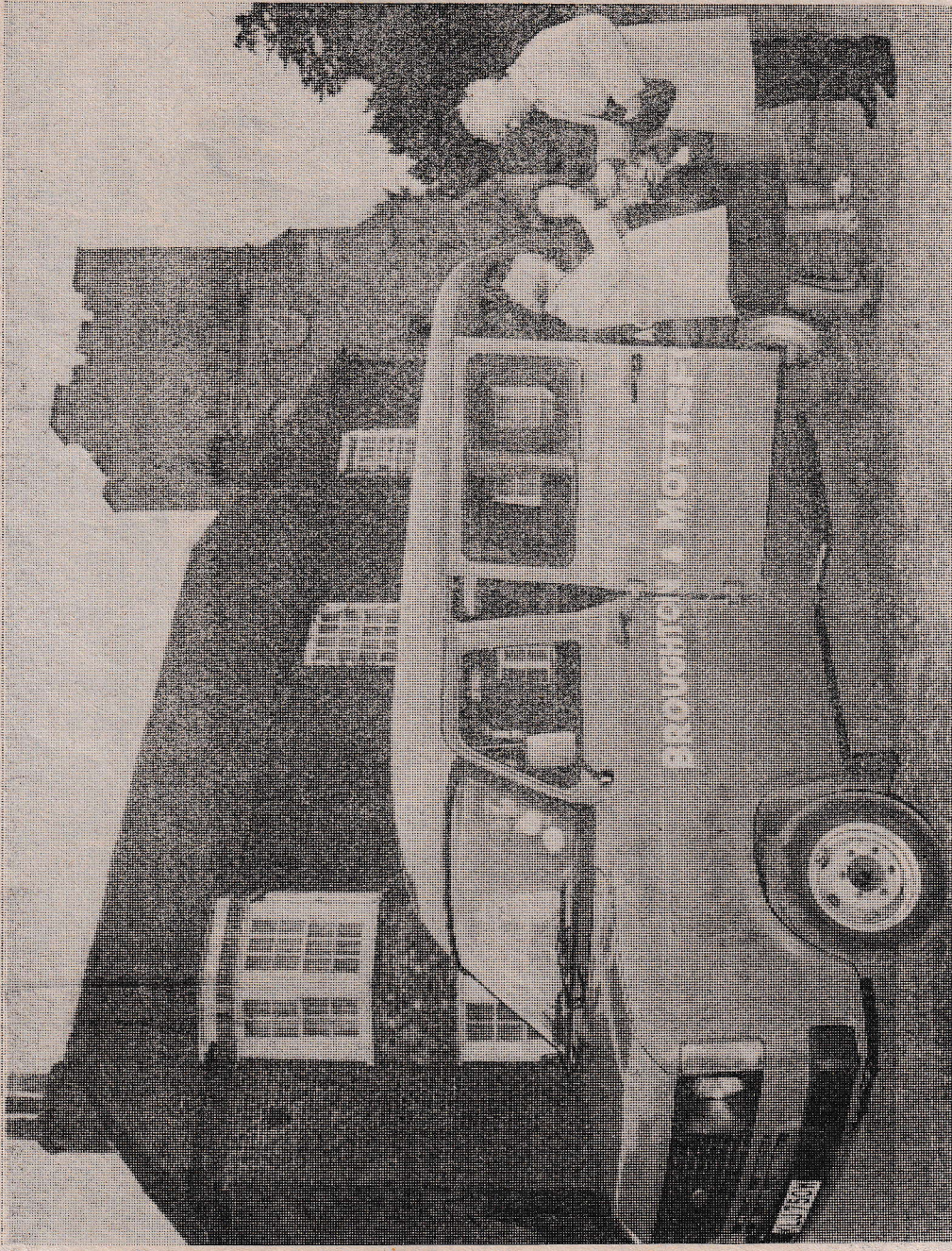
Joint second were Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus (Test Valley) and Grateley Village Hall (Test Valley). The judges felt that the Community Bus Committee had organised this local bus service in a most

also when presenting their recommendations to higher authorities.

Thorney Hill is in a rather remote part of the New Forest. Having recently lost its school, the village had no community centre. A second-hand hut was acquired and erected and from it grew a well supported Youth Club. The whole community has benefited from this imaginative venture.

Thrupton Village Association has become a vital force within Thrupton, where it runs, sponsors and encourages all sorts of activities. Results include the acquisition of the village green, renovation of the Village Hall and the production of an excellent Village Appraisal. This has enabled the promotion of a thriving community spirit in the village.

Joint fourth were Blackfield Youth Group (New Forest), Boldre Parish Council (New Forest), Chawton Recreation Group (East Hampshire), Cowplain Prochurch Community Playgroup (East Hampshire), Highclere Arts and Crafts Group (Basingstoke) and Houghton Tiny Tots (Test Valley). The enthusiasm and determination of Boldre Parish Council



Broughton and Mottisfont village bus which this week celebrated its first anniversary, and is among the prize-winners in the Hampshire Village Venture competition. The Rector of Broughton (the Rev. David Howell) — driver of the day — collects fares from Mrs. Gwen Hatcher and Mrs. Joan Stone

Hampshire, despite the pressures which modern society has brought. In the New Year an exhibition of some of the 68 projects will be travelling to the libraries and community centres of Hampshire, to put the experience of the entrants to good use by showing what communities in Hampshire can do. Due to the tremendous response to the competition, another biennial competition will be held. Any person connected with a community project launched too late to enter the 1978-81 competition and likely to be in a form which deserves recognition in 1985, should in the first instance contact the Field Officer, H.C.C.S., Beaconsfield House, Andover-road, Winchester, for further information.

the local church, where mothers with very young children can meet each other. The group does much to care in a practical way for elderly, sick or disabled people in the village. A notable result of this is the creation of an excellent community spirit in Houghton. The judges were most im-

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The financing of this mammoth venture, costing over £80,000, would, the judges felt, have daunted lesser spirits, but there can be no doubt that the bold imagination of the Management Committee is to be rewarded by an amenity which will serve not only Meonstoke, Conhampton and Exton, but probably a good many outlying areas as well.

Joint second were Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus (Test Valley) and Grateley Village Hall (Test Valley). The judges felt that the Community Bus Committee had organised this local bus service in a most competent and professional manner. Now, after several months operation, there is a well used and financially viable bus service, which is of great benefit to the local community and will doubtless continue to be so in years to come.

Grateley Village Hall is an excellent hall which is already well used and will clearly be a focus for many activities. The judges were impressed by the support of many local people and local firms either in terms of effort, money or both. The village has been rewarded by the acquisition of a splendid asset.

Joint third were Headley Village Appraisal (East Hampshire), Thorney Hill Youth Club/Community Hut (New Forest) and Thruxton Village Association (Test Valley). Headley Parish Council organised a Village Appraisal so that the community's views on the future of the village would be known. The judges were impressed with the amount of data collected, particularly through the household questionnaire, and the way in which it is being prepared in such a highly professional manner. When completed the Parish Council will possess a most valuable document which will help them greatly, not only in taking their own decisions, but

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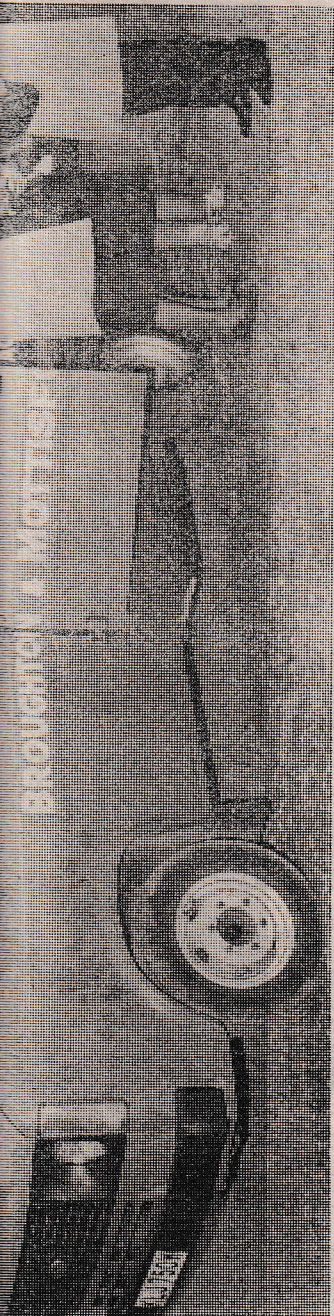
Joint fourth were Blackfield Youth Group (New Forest), Boldre Parish Council (New Forest), Chawton Recreation Group (East Hampshire), Cowplain Prochurch Community Playgroup (East Hampshire), Highclere Arts and Crafts Group (Basingstoke) and Houghton Tiny Tots (Test Valley). The enthusiasm and determination of Boldre Parish Councilors has enabled several innovations and improvements to take place in the parish. These include the installation of some excellent playground equipment, improvement to the sports pavilion, tree planting and the publication of a useful footpath guide.

The whole community of Chawton has been involved in the purchase and subsequent clearance and improvement in the recreation ground site. The community now cares for and maintains the area, local children being notably involved in this work.

The Cowplain Prochurch Community Playgroup has provided a building in which it caters for as many children under five years old as possible. The speed with which the building was acquired, transported, erected and subsequently improved was impressive and was achieved at a relatively modest cost thanks to enthusiastic volunteers.

The Highclere Arts and Crafts Group has not only managed to embrace a very wide range of subjects, but also to achieve an astonishingly high standard. By encouraging those with particular talents to help, the group has created an exceptionally warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Houghton Tiny Tots is an unusual venture as it is centred around a midweek service in



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The judges were most impressed by the extremely high standard of all entries and felt uplifted by the depth of voluntary work carried out and the wealth of enthusiasm displayed. Almost without fail all the entries have been of exceptionally high quality, proving without a shadow of a doubt community spirit, which is the hallmark of village life, is still alive in

Hampshire, despite the pressures which modern society has brought.

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