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THE PARISH PAPER

Puttenham & Long Marston with Wilstone

The death of Mr. Percy Chapman marks almost the end of the old Puttenham of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. It was a Puttenham, English to the very core. And with the same names re-appearing century after century, the bearers of them ploughing the same fields, reaping the same crops, marrying, breeding, dying, to be followed by their children and their children's children as generation followed generation. That is all no more. To-day the 20 or so inhabitants number among them nationals of at least 11 other nations, Swede, Welsh, Hungarian, Irish, German, Scot, Italian, Jew, New Zealander, Pole and U.S.A. Ignoring minors Mr. Chapman's passing leaves in the parish only four men who are Puttenham born, his own son, and Messrs Job Saunders, George Chandler, and Leonard Green.

The School Managers will shortly have a post garage to let, the terms from any one of us. The building of the house is postponed temporarily due to prevailing difficult conditions. Mrs. J. M. Gregory promises us an autumn effort for funds for some immediate fencing and site clearing.

C. Chandler, H. W. Collings, L. Dean, A. Gomm, R. Higgs, D. Ives, W. Jeffery, E. Lear, C. Proctor, H. Stanfield, L. Tomlinson, C. Wilkins. In this list of candidates offering themselves recently for election to the Tring Rural Council there is perhaps more than meets the eye, in fact, a bid between Wilstone and Long Marston for control of the Council. In the result the voting gave a majority on the Council to Marston, as it must do always if Marston voters sufficiently bestir themselves. Caught napping Marston in 1955 had only 2 votes on the Council to Wilstone's 5. Came the offer from Tring Park Estates of the Marston Recreation ground at the give-away price of £125, which if bought on the rates the apportioned purchase price would be roughly Marston £75, Wilstone £50. The Council voted against buying, not once but on three occasions when the Chairman, Mr. Southerwood, repeatedly tried to get the offer accepted. The third occasion

was two days before the zero date fixed by the vendor as the last day the offer would remain open. Late that evening in Marston we heard from Mr. John Chapman that the Council had finally turned the offer down. Time was short, and the next morning with only 24 hours to run I drove straight to a solicitor, told him the story, and asked what could be done to secure the field for the village. He advised that the only course was to go to the Council, and present it with the purchase price! "Did I know anyone who would give thia?" No, but I would put the purchase price into the Council's hand on condition that they bought the ground, though on the distinct understanding that I would hope that some committee yet unborn would raise the money voluntarily in Maraton and repay me. He drew me up a statement in which to pledge this on condition that the Council bought the ground. It was just past lunch time when I got to Mr. Southernwood's and told him the plan. "Would he act on it and call a Council meeting that evening?" "Yes," I typed the notices, he signed them, I delivered them. With the solicitor's document in his jacket pocket Mr. Southernwood went to Wilstone, I waited in the adjacent classroom ready to be called in to sign if the Council agreed to buy. At this point sectional interests fled the Council chamber, and statesmanship took over, the Council agreeing to buy the ground on the rates. Two or three days later at an Assembly of the Parish to confirm the Council's decision the Bucks Herald (Oct. 21st, 1938) reports Mr. Southernwood thus, "We, Mr. John Chapman and myself, in the minority had tried in every shape and form to come to the point of buying; and at last we have done it, really through the ingenuity of the Vicar." Twenty years ago. If my seeing in the list of candidates a pattern of a still uneasy partnership is not wrong the question does arise whether or not it is in the best interests of both Wilstone and Long Maraton that the two should continue to be harnessed together. To be continued.

BAPTISMS

At All Saints:
1957. Dec. 8.—Martin Boniface.
1958. Apr. 3.—Martin James.
At St. Cross:
Apr. 27.—Vivienne Cartwright.
May 18.—Deborah Rance.

BURIALS

At Puttenham:
Apr. 24.—Percy John Chapman, 78 years.
May 12.—Joseph Berry, 84 years.