

Fifty years ago, in January 1970, an American offered to help a dying village called Shutford!!

American offers to help

Driver did not report accident

A 26-YEAR-OLD farm labourer was fined £2 by Banbury magistrates on Thursday for failing to report an accident.

David George Page of 11 The Close, Great Bourton, was also fined £2 for driving a tractor without a licence. He pleaded guilty to both offences.

His employer, Robin Iver Hall, Glebe Farm, Horley, was fined £1 for allowing Page to drive without a licence and £1 for being uninsured. He pleaded guilty.

Sgt. J. Ealey, prosecuting, said Page, who was driving a tractor and trailer, was involved in a damage-only accident with a car on the Banbury to Drayton road.

Both vehicles stopped but no names or addresses were exchanged. And the other driver reported the matter to the police.

When seen Page admitted no driving licence and revealed that provisional licence in July.

In a letter, Page said, "I've had to report it if no case."

Two men on charge

Two Banbury men were remanded by magistrates on charge of the theft of a silver tray from a shop in the town. The men, who were aged 15 and 16, were Mr. Giles (15) and Mr. Wansley (16) of Hampden Close.

The two men were charged with causing a disturbance and causing bodily harm.

Applications for bail were refused and the men remained in custody overnight.

THREE MEN IN CUSTODY

THREE MEN were taken into custody by the police on Thursday night.



Part of Shutford, showing derelict Cottages.

dying village

A WEALTHY AMERICAN businessman has offered to buy property in the "dying" village of Shutford to save it from falling further into decay.

'Eyesore' of a Town Enters Contest for Prettiest Village

SHUTFORD, England (Canadian Press)—Although this Oxfordshire community has entered an annual competition to choose Britain's prettiest village, its 250 inhabitants do not want to win.

They hope their crumbling community will get a special award for being an eyesore. Residents complain county municipal authorities have let empty cottages decay, weeds sprout on sidewalks and fences

are overgrown with weeds and ivy. The first the council knew of his offer to buy up property in Shutford was a letter which was pushed through the letter box of the clerk to the council, Mrs. Vera Hodgkins.

"I must say I was rather surprised to hear from him, although his offer looks perfectly genuine," she said.

"Personally I welcome his interest. It is a pity more people in the village have not got his obvious intentions of putting the village right.

"But whether it will do any good or not I do not know. As far as I am aware the property is not on the market, and presumably the owners do intend to fix it up at some time or other.

"I have called a meeting of the parish council when the matter will be raised and the contents of the letter discussed."

He is Mr. Charles Roberts, a general dealer living in Wincisquan, New Hampshire, who made his written offer to Shutford Parish Council after seeing an article in the New York Times concerning the "run down" condition of the village.

At that time the council — fighting desperately to prevent the village "dying" of neglect — had entered the Best Kept Village competition — hoping to lose.

This they hoped, would draw the attention of Oxfordshire County Council and Banbury Rural District Council to their plight.

Deplorable "Although we do not stand a chance of winning, at least the judges will see what a deplorable state the village is in," said parish councillor Mr. Arthur Cardwell when the fight was on last July.

Their unusual efforts to draw attention to the crumbling cottages, overgrown waste land and unkempt gardens attracted the attention of the Canadian and American Press.

Mr. Roberts, who was born in Birmingham, England, and has connections with Stony Stratford, saw his article — headed "Eye-sore town enters prettiest village competition" — in the New York Times. And he decided to do something about it.

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The Banbury

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COURT GARAGE

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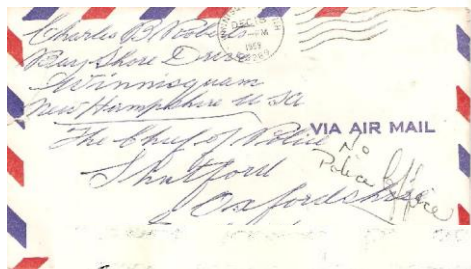
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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1969

Article that appeared in New York Times in October 1969 which American 'Charles Roberts' saw.

Mr Roberts then sent a letter from USA to The Shutford Police, Shutford. The Oxfordshire County Police handed the letter to Vera Hodgkins who was the Clerk to the PC.



CHARLES B ROBERTS
GEN DEL
WINNISQUAM NH
03289

Jan 18. 64
To Whom it may
Concern.
The Chief of Police
of Shutford Oxfordshire.

Telephone:-
Swalcliffe 204.

Slatters Barn,
Spwell Road,
Shutford,
Banbury, Oxon
England.
14th January 1960.

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Your letter was handed to me by the Oxfordshire County Police, because we have no policeman in Shutford.

I am the Clerk to the Parish Council - the local Government of the village.

We were very surprised to learn that the efforts of this little community to improve the village had been reported so far afield.

Shutford is a small stone-built village in North Oxfordshire - very near the Warwickshire border. It is hilly and has been very picturesque but is now spoiled by the decrepit cottages which have a very depressing effect.

I have made enquiries but as far as I can find out there are none for sale. I have given your name to various owners, so

hope they may contact you direct.
The owner of the largest number of
these tumble downs is Mr. R.W. Messenger
West Street, Shutford, so I don't
know if you think it worth while to
get in touch with him.

There is one cottage - in fairly good

repair for sale - the owner being Mr.
Lawrence Brown, 90y Lane, Shutford.

I should tell you we are about forty
miles from your birth place - Birmingham
and about thirty miles from Ferry &
Stony Stratford which are in Buckingham
-shire.

If you come over to England some
time I do hope you will come to
see the village - you could stay
with us if you liked - but you
might find conditions a bit primitive!

Yours very Sincerely
(MRS.) Vera Hodgkins.

**BEST KEPT
VILLAGE**

This Certificate
is presented to

Shutford

which reached the finals
of the Best Kept Village

Competition

organised by the
OXFORDSHIRE

RURAL COMMUNITY
COUNCIL

in
1963

Curiously as in 1963 Shutford
reached the finals of 'Best
Kept Village' competition.

Thank you to Jacky Hone
& Debbie Pitt for the
documentation.