

1927

Messrs

ASHFORD EXAM

ASHFORD, MARCH 12

SITUATION

AGES 15 &

passed away in 1943



MR. CHARLES WILLS
 Bridge's "Grand Old Man."

Mr. Charles Wills, of The Terrace, Bridge, Canterbury, is affectionately referred to as Bridge's "grand old man." His record of long service in village affairs which began when he was only 15 years of age, as a member of the Bridge Choir, 23 years as a member of the Brigade, 20 years as a member of the Parish Council, and 3 years as Secretary of the Bridge Gas and Coke Company, and a member of

the Parish Council, of which he is now Chairman, ever since it was formed.

Born in the year 1848 he attended the Commercial School, Canterbury, now known as the Simon Langton School. On leaving, he assisted his father in his baker's business, which he took over upon his father's death in 1893. A man of charming manners and genial disposition, Mr. Wills has been closely connected with nearly every branch of sport and social life in Bridge. He has been a member of the St. Peter's Church Choir for 68 years, and has a fine falsetto voice. In his younger days he was in great demand in the district at concerts. He has also been the Vicar's Churchwarden for the past 36 years. For 51 years Mr. Wills has been a member of the Bridge Fire Brigade, and for the past 28 years he has been its Chief Officer. These years of fire service must surely constitute a record. Mr. Wills has always been a keen cricketer, and played for Bridge C.C. for many years. He remembers playing in such good company as Mr. C. Howard (the local veterinary surgeon), who on one occasion played for Kent, Arthur Webb, who afterwards became one of Hampshire's leading professionals, and Tom Kersley, who later qualified for Surrey and was on the ground staff at the Oval for several seasons. Even now Mr. Wills does not forsake the game, and can always be found scoring for his old club. Although 79 years of age he is still a very active and busy man, being a member of the Bridge Rural Council and Board of Guardians, Chairman of the Parish Council and Secretary to the Bridge Gas, Coal, and Coke Company, a position he has held for the past 42 years. Those who during the Great War were in camp at Bourne Park or any of the other camps that were around Bridge, will remember Mr. Wills, the old gentleman who assisted every night without a break at the canteen that was run by the late Mrs. E. Wilson for the troops at the Reading Room.

Mr. Wills comes of a family noted for longevity, and is the nephew of Mrs. D. D. D. D., who celebrated her 100th birthday on Feb. 25th, and who lives with him and his two sisters. The combined ages of the four people living in that house total 335 years. That Mr. Wills or "Old Charley," as he is affectionately known, will live to celebrate his 100th birthday is the wish of all in the village. They are proud of him.

192