

No. 21 Col. John Tilleard

The Deputy Mayor of Canterbury, who prefers to be known as Colonel rather than as Councillor John Tilleard, is "not one of those people who can sit down in the evening and read a book."

He first opted for the open-air life in 1936, working on a farm at Minster, after being born and bred in Margate and educated at Charterhouse. But instead of going on to take a degree at Wye College he was one of the very first to be mobilised, going to France in November, 1939, in the 4th Battalion The Buffs (Territorial Army), having been commissioned a year after joining up in 1938.

He came back from France in the hold of a coal-boat, two weeks after Dunkirk—one of the last to get away. He had left headquarters with his C.O. just half an hour before the position was taken by the Germans.

His next post was in Malta for three years, where he met his wife who was an Army nursing sister in charge of the officers' ward. The Battalion was then transferred to the island of Leros but on the way there the destroyer he was travelling in was blown up in the middle of the night by a

"I was in the sea for about eight hours until I was picked up by an R.A.F. rescue launch in the morning," he said. "Out of 300 people on board only about 100 were saved."

He was taken to a makeshift hospital on Leros with severe burns and was again one of the last to be evacuated when the island was abandoned.

After going to Alexandria, he returned to England in February, 1944, and finished his war service as company commander at the Depot, The Buffs, in Canterbury—having been mobilised there in what is now the canteen at Station Road West.

He rejoined the Territorials when they were re-formed after the war, taking over A Company in 1953 and finishing in April last year, after exactly 30 years' service.

In civvy street, after trying marine engineering at Margate, he took up life insurance underwriting and moved to a more central position in East Kent at Bridge, where he now lives, and opened an office in Canterbury.

He has always seen himself as an organiser—in amateur dramatics he was the stage-manager—and one position he values particularly is as local chairman of the British Empire Cancer Campaign.

He was elected to the City Council in 1964 where he announced his hobby-horse as social work for "the young people and the old people."

Now, five years later, he says "I think bureaucracy as a whole is all very frustrating when you are itching to get something done in a hurry. It is the Ministries really—you can get the Town Clerk writing up to the Ministry of Housing and getting his reply six months later."

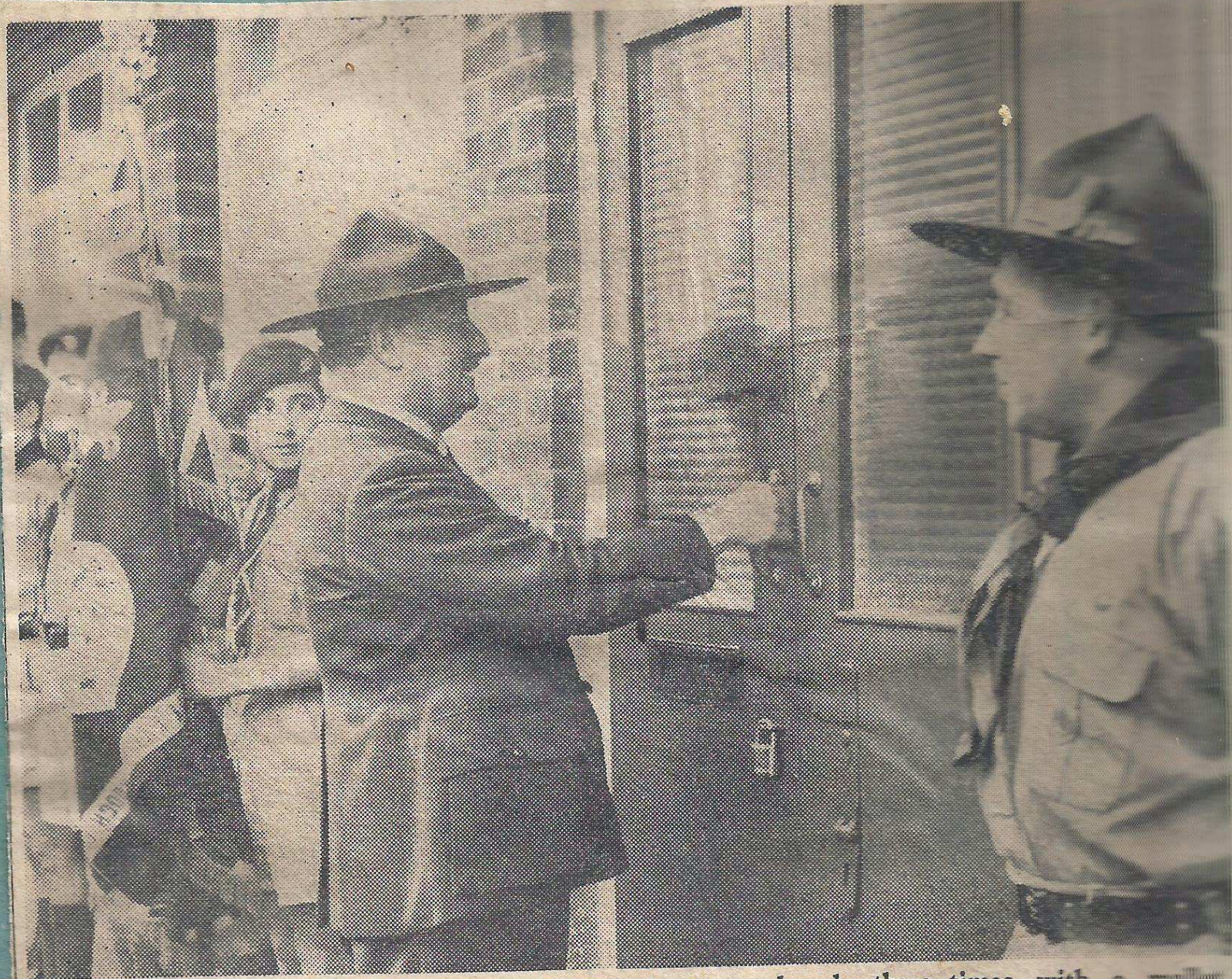
He feels strongly that leadership in local government must be direct to cut through the red tape, without neglecting the smaller issues which do not so much lie on the table as get pushed underneath it.

"The small details are so often forgotten," he says. "The biggest example is the fact that we should have had a new 'Pines' a couple of years ago."

Although he sees himself as a leader for the young people them as "unpre-



The wheel of fortune attracted attention.



Commissioner H. R. Walters, of Imperial Headquarters, knocks three times with a mallet before opening the new Boy Scouts' headquarters at Sturry Road on Saturday. Right is Scoutmaster Bernard Smith, who designed the hall and led the voluntary builders.