

The Burton Homes

A Little Bit of History
by
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The Burton Homes - one of Caerwent's best known landmarks - were founded by Colonel Henry Burton and Miss S. E. Burton in 1913. The photograph shows them when they were newly completed and ready to be occupied.



They were designed to provide homes for elderly ladies who had spent their lives 'in service'.

As domestic servants they usually 'lived in', and upon retirement, frequently found themselves with no home to go to.

The Burton Trust designed the homes as twelve self contained units and a central hall. Each residence comprised a furnished bed-sitting room, a kitchen and a small pantry. The toilet was outside, along with a coal-house.

There was no electricity, and lighting was by candles or oil lamps, and food was cooked on a small coal fired range.

Each resident received a small 'pension' of ten shillings per week. The money was delivered by post each week in ten shilling notes in a registered letter to Miss Callaghan, who lived at No 2, and who had been appointed the 'matron'. Each resident would have to go to Miss Callaghan and solemnly sign for her ten shilling note!

The caretaker was Joe Tyrell, and as well as maintaining the garden he would chop firewood for the residents, in return for which he got a cup of tea!

Once a month the vicar of Caerwent Church would administer Holy Communion in the hall. Eventually the local Women's Volunteer Service started delivering meals to the residents, each member of the WVS taking it in turns to cook the food. The ladies were Mrs Micklethwait, Mrs M. Jones (from Trewen) Mrs Morgan and Mrs Summerhayes.

Mrs Micklethwait would deliver the dinners in a Land Rover, with a layer of straw in the back to keep the containers warm! All the residents had to provide was a plate and their cutlery. They enjoyed a safe secure retirement in the Burton Homes, living in their private walled garden behind a pair of magnificent wrought iron gates which were closed every evening at 5 o' clock, not to be opened again until 9 o' clock the next morning!



Founders Day, 1927. Colonel Burton and Miss S. E. Burton are standing in the middle. Miss Callaghan is seated immediately before them.