

A Memorial Meeting of Thanks
for the Life and Work of
CHARLES BARBER

at the
Lecture Room
Town Hall
LEWES

on
Friday, 4th September 1987
at 6.30 p.m.

1. A few words of appreciation and thanks
by Lord Oram (son-in-law)
followed by
Mr R. Armitage (former Town Clerk)
Mr J. Jacobs (Lewes Labour Party)
Mr M. Hillman (League of Friends of
Lewes Victoria Hospital)
and by others who have grateful
memories of Charlie.
2. A few moments of meditation.
3. IMAGINE, written and recorded
by the late John Lennon.
4. Refreshments.

IMAGINE

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today.

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace.

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will be as one.

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world. . .

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will live as one.

John Lennon

Bert's introduction at Charlie's memorial meeting.

Good evening, friends. May we begin?

May I begin by thanking you for coming to this meeting at which we shall try to pay our collective tribute to the life and work of our good friend, Charlie Barber.

And may I first indicate how we hope to proceed. After my opening remarks these three friends have kindly agreed to recall their association with Charlie in three major aspects of his work for the town of Lewes which he loved.

Mr. Armitage was Town Clerk at the time of Charlie's Mayoralties and will recall his civic work.

Mr Jacobs will pay a tribute from the point of view of the Labour movement for which Charlie did so much.

And Charlie's concern for the social welfare of the town will be acknowledged by Mr. Hillman from the League of Friends of the Lewes Victoria Hospital.

Then we very much hope that others will share with us their memories of Charlie. Not long speeches, please - but a few words to remind us of the richness and the variety of Charlie's activities and friendships.

We shall conclude by listening to the words of John Lennon's Imagine which so aptly expresses the humanist philosophy which was so central to Charlie's personality and beliefs.

But to appreciate fully the life for which we are this evening expressing thanks we need to go much further back than the memories of most of us here. Charlie had to work hard all his working life at a great variety of difficult jobs. First, briefly, as a stable lad, then at hard and dangerous work at the iron foundry, followed by a period as a warehouseman filling and lifting heavy sacks of corn. Army service took him to Ireland and to India and then followed a further nine years at the foundry. It was little wonder that all of this toil affected his health and, as you know, he suffered from arthritis of the spine for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, in the face of unemployment he cycled long distances in East Sussex earning a sparse living as an insurance agent. Then for the last twenty years of his working life he worked as a printer at Baxters.

To face all this he had to be tough - and he was tough. Throughout his life he overcame adversity in a positive way. As an eleven-year old boy he spent nearly a year in the Children's Hospital. It was then that he learned the delights of literature. Later in Guy's hospital because of an accident to his eye at the foundry he read with his one eye to a fellow patient who was blind, and that led him to appreciate the newspapers which today we call the "heavies". He remained active despite the pain in his spine, but only because he diligently exercised with dumb-bells to ward off his malady.

Much of the rest of his story you will hear from my companions at this table and from those who speak from the floor; but a few days after his death I had an opportunity to sit in his sitting room and to be reminded of his achievements in recent decades. There was a picture of him in his mayoral robes. There was

an illuminated address from his fellow councillors. There was the certificate he received when he became a Freeman of the Borough. There were pictures of his grandchildren. There was a picture of him as a Home Guard sergeant leading his platoon in an exercise across the Downs; his painful back did not stop him from doing that. And then, something quite different, two items of furniture which he had made himself, a bookcase and a fender.

But perhaps most important of all were his books - H.G. Wells, Shakespeare, Bernard Shaw and many others - not least Bertrand Russell, a biography entitled Bertrand Russell, the Passionate Sceptic and Russell's magnum opus The History of Western Philosophy.

It was from such books as those that he derived his wisdom. Friends have written to us in recent days and many of them write of the good and wise advice that Charlie gave them. Now through them that wisdom lives on.

Friends, with those few words of mine as a background I shall now ask Mr Armitage to speak.

**The London Committee of Licensed Teachers of Anatomy
of the
London Medical Schools**



**AN ECUMENICAL
SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING**

**For those who have donated their bodies for
Medical Education and Research**

at the
**University Church of Christ the King
Gordon Square, London, WC1**

on

Friday, 13th May 1988 at 12 noon

CHARLIE BARBER - OBITUARY.

On Sunday 16th August 1987 the WEA (and many people, including myself) lost a very good friend. Arthur Charles BARBER, affectionately known to all Lewesians and everyone in the WEA as "Charlie", was 88 when he died peacefully, in his own home.

He was born in Brighton, the son of a printers' compositor and the family moved to Lewes in 1908..Times were hard and wages very low and I have often heard Charlie tell how, as a pupil at the Ragged School, he had to go barefoot, even in winter. His first job, as a young boy, was at the Lewes iron foundry, where the work was so hard & heavy that it set up the arthritic spinal condition which tormented him for the rest of his life. He also lost the sight of one eye in a horrific accident at the Foundry when he was only 15. His injuries prevented him from seeing active service at the Front in World War I but he served in the Yeomanry in Ireland, and in the Home Guard in the second world war. Three times Mayor of Lewes, (and a Freeman of the town), he was a tireless champion of the working people and of the Labour movement. In 1931 he and his wife Dorothy founded the first WEA Branch in Lewes, which for several years met at their home, attracting as lecturers such great educators as Henry Collins, Dr. A.W. Wilson, Michael Carritt and many other names famous in the Movement. Charlie was Chairman of the Branch for its first fifty years, after which I had the privilege of succeeding him for a number of years. He was a Humanist who left his body to medical research and therefore had no funeral service, but his daughters and friends arranged a Memorial Meeting at Lewes Town Hall on September 4th, which was addressed by his son-in-law Lord Oram, the well-known Labour peer, and numerous other friends and colleagues, and at which I was very glad to represent the WEA and pay tribute to the great little man whom everybody he ever met admired and loved.

PAMELA FRANKLIN, LEWES WEA.

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU! Charlie Barber Remembers

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The billeting in Lewes, of the men of Kitchener's army in 1914, was a really great exercise in Local Government and also showed up clearly the underlying social conditions in the town.

In those days the working class people were very overcrowded. In 1906 the Minister of Health Dr. Steinehauser (afterwards changed to Stenhouse) reported on these housing conditions, blaming them in part for the high rate of T.B. He started a health crusade among the children and used to lecture to a Town Hall full of us on what should be done to combat the causes of illness in Lewes.

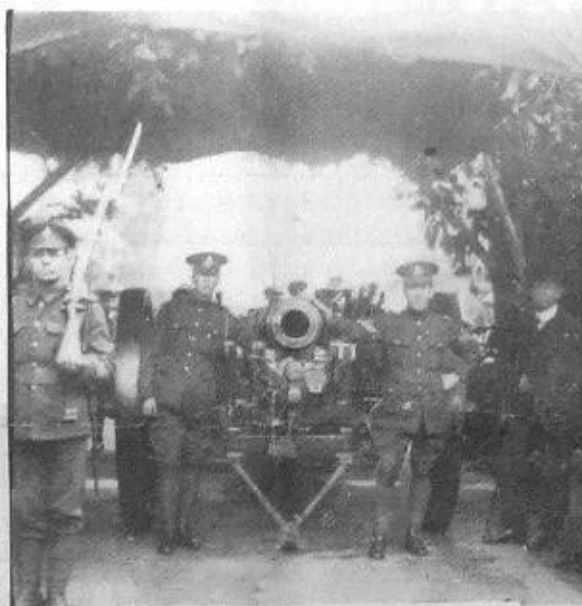
There were quite a number of houses in the town where the only water supply was from an outside tap shared by two or more houses. Add to this the fact that the town had no proper arrangements for sewage disposal at this time (the sewage works were not built until 1921) and it will be seen that billeting these thousands of mainly new recruits was more than a matter of finding them somewhere to sleep.

I was fifteen years old at that time and I lived at 10, New Road. There were ten in our family, eight still at home. In many parts of the town there were smaller houses with families just as numerous. Suddenly, the townsfolk were informed that troops would be billeted on them and every house would have to take some. Officials came round to see how many each house could have squeezed into it. Then the appropriate number was chalked on the wall. We were to have two. Shortly afterwards more officials came round to every numbered house and gave £1 for each man's keep. The student of Social History should take note of the fact that the working people in the early years of this century (Citizens of Great Britain and of the greatest and richest Empire ever), lived from "hand to mouth" only earning from 18/- to 30/- per week. So even the provision of one good meal for two extra mouths was quite beyond reach.

In a day or so the men came. Among other regiments were the Lancashire Fusiliers (we had two of them) and some from a Welsh regiment. To get a picture it must be remembered that these men were not in uniform, just the flat capped, heavily shod and soberly clothed workmen of those days. In the main working people had just one lot of clothes for all purposes. Most of the Lancashire Fusiliers wore clogs and so there was even more of a clatter in the

streets due to men wearing nailed footwear and no noise from traffic. It must also be borne in mind that the local population was doubled in a day or two and the implication of this for the Local Government people whose responsibility it was to guard the health of the community.

There was not much room in their billets as can be imagined, and so wherever one looked at evening time, there were rows of men sitting on kerbs or steps or squatting on their heels (for there were a great number of miners among them). Straw was placed in some parts of the Town Hall and some men, for whom there was no room, slept there.



Lewesians being encouraged to buy War Bonds. Photo lent by L.S.Davey

Swift steps were taken to provide entertainment during the long evenings. There were not many halls in Lewes that did not have a smoking concert each evening. Those held in the Phoenix Ironworks Institute gave me many a happy evening listening to strange old songs and equally strange sounding dialects, interspersed with songs by local singers who sang, mostly, patriotic numbers as was the fashion in the early days of the war. Anger and ridicule came later.

I remember a football match arranged between the Welsh and the Lancashire men. It was played in the Dripping Pan and I enjoyed watching it. The Welshmen proved to be a much more efficient team and won 8 - 0! The two Lancashire men billeted with us told me that the Welsh had nearly all the Cardiff football team playing for them! I mention this match because, more than fifty years later I was at the Lewes Football Club's headquarters (as Mayor) and I mentioned this match and asked the late Lewes sportsman, Harry Cottrell if he remembered it "oh yes" he replied, "I should remember it, I was referee!"

These first troops left us before long - still without uniforms. They were succeeded by a Territorial Cyclist Battalion, in turn succeeded by the Royal Field Artillery, who also wore their civvy clothes. It was these R.F.A. men who made their mark in Lewes. They stayed until the summer of 1915, by which time they were in uniform and were equipped with guns. They had no horses at first and had to make do with tall South American mules and wooden guns to learn manoeuvres. They also had to learn equitation with these animals. In consequence, on occasions the streets seemed to be full of mules being led, or ridden, or throwing the blokes off. The mules had to be stabled wherever there was a suitable building. If one pictures the long shed at the Iron-works (just by Green Wall) full of rows of mules, and every other shed in the town, then one has an idea of what it was like. In those days practically every working class family had an allotment garden, so our "Dungy Earth" was soon helping to provide more food for the troops.

This account would not be complete without a tribute to the Civic authority and the Army, who smoothed out the troubles of overcrowding and kindred problems. It demonstrated that people of all types could live together when circumstances made it necessary. When my time came for Service and I was billeted in Ipswich the whole country looked upon this way of housing troops as the natural one.

Charlie Barber

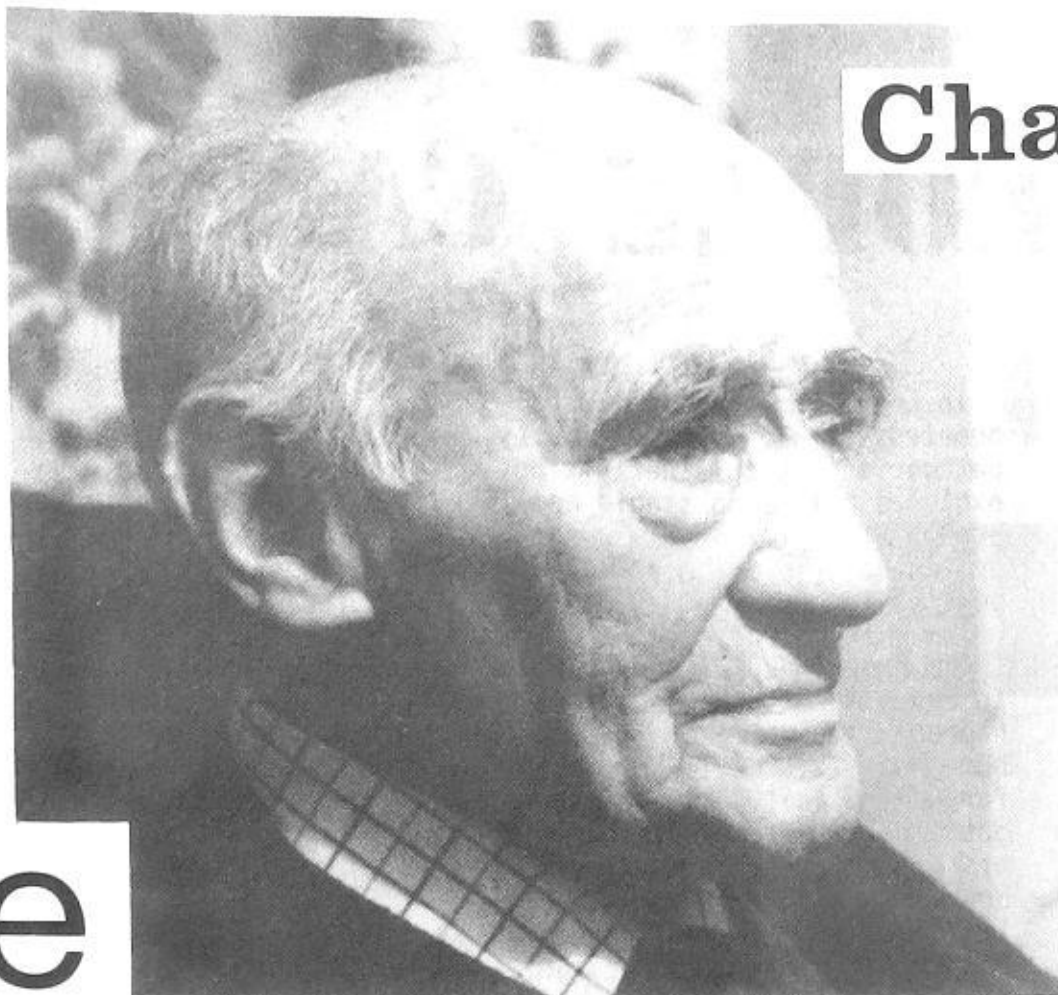
SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE MOVES

On 29/2/80, the office of the County Council's Social Services Department moved to 214 High Street, Lewes (Tel: Lewes 77788). This office, which is opposite 'Boots' and despite its address is in Eastgate St. is the Social Services base for Lewes and surrounding villages (Kingston, Ringmer and villages to the north). Based at 214 High Street are Social Workers, Occupational Therapist, Residential Advisor, Home Help Organiser and support staff.

It is hoped that the new site will encourage closer links with the town and easier access for the public.

The move from Warren House is the first of a series designed to bring the Social Services closer to the general public. The Social Work Teams covering Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven are also in the process of moving out to their own areas.

Lewes Life



Charlie Barber

Photo: Richard Walsh.

expand his chest. Charlie and his brother had both worked hard at boxing and athletics in earlier years, indeed A.O. Barber had turned professional, and now Charlie found the doctor's suggestion a wise one for his body soon responded. Nevertheless he changed his employment, becoming an insurance agent who cycled on his rounds.

By now he was a married man with a family. He had married Dorothy, a local lass whom he had "known always". They had two daughters. Joan became a teacher, has two schoolboy sons and is now Lady Oram. Bunty studied medicine then specialised in psychiatry. Of her two daughters, one is still at school, the other top of her medical class!

The habit of serious reading Charlie acquired in hospital has continued all his life, one great interest being philosophy. Though not a churchman he believes God is love and is present in every living thing. Both he and Dorothy, sometimes together, sometimes independently, have devoted their lives to improving the lot of their fellow men.

About 1930 a fellow moulder told Charlie he should learn to discuss and debate properly, not just argue his case. A notice appeared advertising an inaugural lecture by a notable in the university world. Charlie went and was "hooked". A study group was formed but soon dwindled to one. Instead of giving up, the tutor was so impressed by Charlie's earnest desire to learn, she continued to bring eminent speakers on a range of topics to meet in the Barbers' sitting room. After the lectures, essays had to be written. This was the beginning of the Lewes branch of the W.E.A. At length the membership rose from two to eight or nine. Meetings have continued till now, apart from during the war years.

During the 1939-45 war, Charlie became a sergeant in the Home Guard. Someone seeing a photograph commented that he "looked fit" - a fillip to a man with his medical history. Among their duties were guarding the Lewes telephone exchange, the water works and railway; drilling, and watching for parachutists. Despite this, evacuee children were sent to Lewes.

Towards the end of the war, Charlie joined the staff at Baxter's, operating a ruling machine, and remained there till he retired. Many O.A.P.s will tell you they wonder how they ever found time to work! It was after his retirement that Councillor Barber was, three times, elected mayor, holding office 1964-5, 1965-6, 1968-9. Asked what was his overall aim, he said, "To unite the town". To this end he invited representatives of all organisations to meet together for discussions. During this time he received great kindness from his fellow townsmen and some of their comments made him feel he achieved his aim.

But now the years are weighing heavily. Last spring, Dorothy died, a day before their diamond wedding, after years of pain and stiffness. Charlie's back is bent and his sight is poor. Unable to read, he now enjoys his books on tape, and looks forward to visits from his daughters and home-help.

The Town thanked Charlie, and, indirectly Dorothy, by making him a Freeman about 1969, but framed certificates are no company. You can do better than that, can you not? A steady stream of letters, notelets, telephone calls (at sensible times) would be indisputable proof that he has not laboured in vain.

K. Boxall

To talk to Charlie Barber about his life is to gain an insight into the social history of Lewes.

He was born in Brighton in 1899, the first boy after four girls, eventually the fifth of ten children. For the first few years he lived at 1 Fairlight Place, opposite the school he attended at four years of age. This was a modern "Board school" with a tarmac playground and a gymnasium. It no longer exists.

When the family moved to Lewes in 1909, the boy was shocked by the muddy slope which constituted the playground of Pells C.E. School. Here he did well, partly because of the high standard set at Brighton, partly because those sisters urged him on. As was the law, he remained till the age of fourteen.

However, before that a severe setback came. At the age of ten, Charlie was admitted to Brighton hospital with a diseased hip - a not uncommon complaint! There he stayed for eleven months, sometimes his cot outside, enduring five operations to clear an abscess. When his parents visited, they travelled by train. One unhappy memory has remained. A visiting clergyman told the lad, "I saw a case the other day who had been like this for sixty years."! One lasting benefit over-rode that. Charlie read deeply and widely, books not usually tackled so young. He was especially drawn to books depicting social conditions and those by J.A. Henty.

Of course, this long absence affected Charlie's position in school where children were placed and promoted by attainment, not age. During his final year he underwent a routine leavers' medical inspection by a Dr. Steinhauser. Mr. and Mrs. Barber were sent for and told their son had a heart murmur! This same doctor returned two years later, unasked, and passed Charlie as fit. This kindness left an indelible impression on the boy's mind. During the Great War, the doctor changed his name to Stenhouse and served with the R.A.M.C. A few years ago, after publishing an article locally about billeting during the 1914-18 war, Charlie letting during the 1914-18 war, Charlie received two telephone calls from the son of Dr. Stenhouse! These gave him immense pleasure.

On leaving school in 1913 Charlie reported for work at a local farm. When he discovered he would be sweeping the filthy yard, he retraced his steps and applied to the foundry to learn iron moulding. This was poorly paid and very dirty work connected with Worthing pier. Once home he had a bath in a zinc tub or, once

a week, went to the public baths at the Mechanics' Institute.

Some of you will not realise what lies behind that simple statement: wood to be chopped, copper filled, fire lit under and constantly replenished; hot water baled out with a saucepan and poured into the bath lifted from its hook on the garden fence, cold water carried from the scullery tap. All this in reverse after the bath and, probably, the copper to hearthstone! No wonder even Queen Elizabeth I did not bother!

Now a permanent setback. A steel splinter lodged in the learner's left eye. He walked to Lewes hospital holding a handkerchief over the wound. The nurse was afraid to tamper with it so sent Charlie home to his mother who took him to the doctor - Stenhouse. Neither was he equipped to do anything but administer cocaine, give the couple their railway fares and send them to Brighton Eye Hospital for an x-ray. After fourteen daily doses of cocaine, the lad travelled to Guys Hospital where part of the splinter was drawn out by a magnet. The remainder was removed manually a month later! Mr. Barber applied for compensation for his son's injury. This was a new idea and none was paid without argument but he persisted and won.

Charlie returned to the foundry to a different task but all were heavy and he did not remain. Some time he worked at Strickland's granaries on the river side, filling and lowering sacks in the five storey tower that is still to be seen from Cliffe Bridge. He made good friends there and revelled in the view after the grime of his earlier work place. By now war had been declared: everyone kept rabbits and goats grazed the railway banks!

In 1917 A.C. Barber enlisted in the Surrey Yeomanry - which used bicycles. Being graded B.1 meant he could be used for garrison duty abroad and he was sent to Ireland. After the war he re-enlisted for two years with the K.R.R. spending the time as a muleteer in India. A train of twenty mules would travel long distances to fetch water. Each man rode one animal and led another. If one beast was stung and galloped off, the whole lot would panic!

As ex-servicemen found it difficult to get work, Charlie returned to the foundry. Because of his blind eye, his former work was unsuitable, but all work there was heavy. He developed back pains diagnosed as spondylitis - arthritis of the spine. The doctor suggested exercises would help to straighten his back and

CHARLIE BARBER.

I am very pleased to have been asked to speak here this evening and I regard it as a privilege to have such an opportunity. There are many people here who are much better fitted than I to speak about Charlie's activities in the Labour Party, and I hope we shall hear from them later. My claim to speak does not come from a lifelong knowledge of him, but rather from my being one of those who has inherited and benefitted from the legacy which he leaves behind, and from being one among many to whom it falls to make sure that we carry on where he left off.

I once had a long conversation with Charlie about his life in politics. There were three things which struck me very forcibly as I listened to him. First, he was always ready to name other people as having influenced him or helped him in what he did; always ready to acknowledge his indebtedness to others and claiming very little personal credit for his achievements. Chief amongst these others was of course Dorothy, but listening to him was like hearing the roll call of old Lewes, and if in what I have to say it sounds as though Charlie did everything by himself that is purely to save time; it's certainly not how Charlie would have told it. Secondly, there was no mistaking the breadth of his understanding of the times he had lived through. Every time he talked about the landmarks in our political history, he spoke with a real feel for the complexities of the issues which he'd taken the trouble to think about and find out about in a very active way. His account was full of quotations from a multitude of sources, and he was as likely to slip in a reference to Nietzsche as to Sidney Webb or other socialist thinkers. And thirdly it was also clear that he'd not only thought about them but in his own way had done what he could to be a part of them. He didn't just let events happen around him, he was in there playing whatever part he could.

His father was a printer and what Charlie called "one of H.G. Wells's young men", who read Wells and Shaw and had at home a collection of books and magazines. "I suppose it was probably the result of the 1870 Education Act," he said. Absolutely typical that rather than just taking his father's interest in books for granted he should look for an explanation and that he should find one related to what had been going on at the time.

When he left school he went to work for Every's at the foundry, the biggest employer in Lewes. His job was making the heavy weights for sash windows; the work was incredibly hard and dangerous, so much so that in the end he walked out and enlisted. But not before he had lost his eye there when he was only 15. His father had to fight hard to get him the compensation due to him under the recently passed Workmen's Compensation Act. Because of his lost eye he was passed unfit for active service, but did garrison duty in Ireland, where he first became interested in politics. He recalled hearing a speaker in Galway Barracks telling him that "democracy" came from the Greek words meaning "the strength of the people".

Charlie had his first vote in 1918 during the "Khaki Election", when the vote was extended to include serving soldiers. In Lewes the Labour candidate lost by only about 2,000, though the electorate was much smaller then because women under 30 couldn't vote.

When he came out of the army in 1921 it was at the beginning of the slump. It was a time of great open air political meetings; every Saturday night people would gather at the top of Market St. to hear

speakers from all parties. The Russian Revolution was a present reality, and workers and soldiers councils were being formed all over the country. When Britain tried to send troops to the aid of the Tsar, Ernest Bevin formed the "Hands Off Russia Movement", and it was with unmistakeable pleasure and pride that he told me that it was a battalion of the King's Royal Rifles, Charlie's own regiment, that as a result refused to embark for Russia at Dover. And while all this was going on Charlie was looking and talking and learning.

There was a Labour Party in Lewes at the time, though to Charlie it seemed like , and I quote, "a lot of old men sitting round and talking about things I didn't really understand". They met in Fisher St. but he said that in those days the High St. was always crowded with people ready to talk politics; you didn't need a place to meet; it wasn't a once a month activity but a living context. The long dole queue stretched all round Castle Ditch Lane and there too people talked politics.

After his discharge from the army he was, like so many men, out of work, in his case for two years, which had a great influence on him. Eventually he got a job back at Every's, where he had to resume the hated job of making sash weights. Just as unemployment had shaped his ideas, so did the experience of working at the foundry. It was hard, backbreaking work --- maybe even literally in his case -- which amongst other things involved single-handedly humping around loads weighing 2½cwt. It was piecework, and when materials were scarce he'd seen men come to blows over them to earn enough to feed their families. He reckoned he worked 54 hours a week, from 6.00 in the morning to 5.30, with no pay for meal breaks. There was no union. The men had struck once to improve the pittance they were getting and stayed out for nine months. They were all sacked, and the union men were not taken back.

His interest in politics really took off when there was a bye-election in Lewes in 1924. The Labour candidate was a Fabian, and got some of the biggest names to come and speak for him; Bernard Shaw and George Lansbury came, and he and Dorothy went to hear them. Inspired to find out more, he bought and read books. Mear's, the greengrocer on the High St., was then a bookshop, where he bought a copy of Shaw's Fabian Essays. He and Dorothy were avid attenders of meetings, of which there were many, and they joined the Labour Party.

But he did more than that. His insatiable thirst for knowledge led him to start a local W.E.A. group, which soon attracted and kept as members local notables like Julian and Quentin Bell. The first meeting was in the Barber home when Dorothy was expecting Bunty; "Do you know John", he said, "it was marvellous", and I could still hear the excitement in his voice sixty years later.

In 1935 he was taken very bad with spondylitis, the back condition which was eventually to double him up. He was told that he had about ten years to live, and had to endure agonising physiotherapy. This pre-occupied him for several years to the exclusion of most other things, including his political activities. He couldn't work for much of this time, and he recalled how in desperation he went to the Tatler to see if they would buy Dorothy's home-made jams. They did.

During the Second War the local Labour party faded away, but as the war drew to its close Charlie decided that he had to do what he could

to revive it. He did so out of a powerful sense of obligation to the men and women who had been in the party before the war and who would soon be coming back. In particular, there was his cousin, Bob Briggs, who had been the Secretary of the party when war broke out and had been taken prisoner at Dunkirk. How would he feel when he came back if there was no Labour party for him in Lewes? He couldn't let him and others like him down, so he and Dorothy got some people together, hired the room in the upstairs of the King's Head and literally rebuilt the party from scratch. Their first test came very soon with the 1945 Election, at which a "very green young candidate" contested the seat for Labour and polled 18,000 votes, the highest Labour vote ever in this constituency; not quite enough to win, but if the constituency hadn't included a great chunk of Hove, who knows what might have happened?

Charlie was Secretary of the party from 1945 to '51, after which he put his energies into reviving his other love, the W.E.A., which he also saw as being part of the labour movement. By this time the party was in very good shape, with about 300 members and was beginning to win seats in local elections. He and Dorothy both stayed very much involved in ways which everyone here knows. He was constituency chairman, was elected a borough councillor and deservedly became the first Labour mayor of Lewes.

By the time I was first elected to the borough council in the early seventies, Charlie was no longer so active in the party, so I didn't see much of him in action. What I did see was that he was someone of whom everyone without exception spoke with respect and affection, no mean feat for someone who has spent a lifetime in politics, and Labour politics at that! And of course it was easy to see why. He was not merely one of the undisputed giants of the local party; he was much more than that. He was a man of great wisdom, with a profound conviction that you did what you could to make your corner of the world a better place. This he tried to do with dignity, conviction and passion, yes, but also with a wonderful, Puckish sense of fun and a sharp eye for humour. Just as illuminating quotations were never far from his lips, neither were good-humoured chuckles.

Isaac Newton said, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants". I don't claim to see further than Charlie did, but I am deeply conscious that I and my comrades in the local Labour party are standing not just on his shoulders but on those of all the men and women who were his friends. Outside Lewes there are few people who will have heard of Carlie Barber; but it's men like him and women like Dorothy up and down the country who are the Labour Party, who have immeasurably enriched their communities by their lives and who have inspired those that follow to try to live up to their example. I am very proud to have known him and especially proud to have been bound together with him by the fellowship and comradeship of the Labour Party which was so much a part of his life and for which he did so much.



live page
In 1919 he re-enlisted, for two years, with the King's Rifles, serving in India where he was runner-up for the featherweight boxing title in the Army championships. Demobilised in 1921 he was intermittently out of work, doing occasional jobs until in 1923 he returned to the Phoenix Ironworks for a further nine years. Then, in 1932, he became a ~~co-op~~ insurance agent, doing the job for ten years until in 1943 he went to work as a machine ruler at Baxter's printing works, where he worked until he retired in 1964.

He and his wife Dorothy were married in 1923. The following year saw the First Labour Government and in July 1924 came the Lewes Parliamentary by-election, a major test of public opinion on the new Government. Amongst the major figures who came to speak in Lewes was George Bernard Shaw. His speech on the aims of socialism marked the beginning of Charlies and Dorothy Barber's long association with the Labour Party which they then joined. From 1945 to 1948 he was secretary of the Lewes Labour Party, and from 1956 to 1958, Chairman of the Constituency Party. In 1954 he won a seat on the Lewes Borough Council for Castle Ward, holding several committee chairmanships during his years on the Council. In March 1967 he was elected an Alderman, continuing to serve in that capacity until the demise of the old borough in 1974.

On Wednesday 20th May, 1964, Arthur Charles Barber became the first Labour Mayor of Lewes. Altogether he served three years. A major hallmark of his Mayoralty was his insistence that every organisation in the town should have the opportunity to be represented at Mayor-making; and he and the Mayoress invited almost every organisation in the town, in turn. Another initiative of his Mayoralty was the founding of the League of Friends of the Lewes Victoria Hospital at a meeting called by him and presided over by him in the Council Chamber on 25th February, 1966.

During the 20th school exchange in April, 1966 between the Lycee Augustin Thierry and the Boys Grammar School, he led a Civic Party to Blois. He also launched the Oxfam Relief Campaign in Lewes and carried out a heavy social programme with great personal interest and approachability.

A tribute to his immense popularity was the silver cigarette box presented to mark his Mayoralty by his former colleagues at W.E. Baxter's, now amongst the civic regalia in the Mayor's Parlour, and the illuminated address from his fellow Labour Councillors, now in his house at 9 Toronto Terrace.

Apart from the Labour Movement, his other great enthusiasm was education and the desire for self-improvement. In 1931 he founded the Lewes branch of the W.E.A., which met in his house and of which he was for many years Chairman. For his services in this field and in his Council work on 28th January, 1970 he was created an Honorary Freeman in tribute to a life of service to the local community.