

**The opening of Warwickshire Miners' Convalescent Home, Swanage, CR3323/887**

The Document of the Month for July is a selection of three telegrams sent to the Chairman of Warwickshire Miners' Convalescent Home in Swanage, Dorset, on the occasion of its grand opening in 1949.



Figure 1: Warwickshire County Record Office, CR3323/887/1

At a meeting of the General Management Committee on 20 December 1946, Mr A. J. Pratt, the General Secretary of the Warwickshire Miners' Association, reported that there was a very strong feeling among the Warwickshire miners that a new convalescent home should be provided for them, preferably at the seaside. By this time, the Warwickshire miners had been without the sole use of a convalescent home for three years; their original Convalescent Home, Higham Grange, had been sold to the Miner's Welfare Commission for use as a rehabilitation centre in 1943.

Within a few weeks a special Sub-Committee was instructed to investigate the possibilities of Swanage, Dorset. On 23 January 1947, Durlston Court was purchased at an auction held in Bournemouth. The new Convalescent Home comprised three buildings: Durlston Court, Maycroft, and Nethercourt. The Committee obtained possession of Durlston Court on 8 June, and on 18 October 1947, the first batch of six convalescent Warwickshire miners arrived at Swanage and were accommodated in Nethercourt.

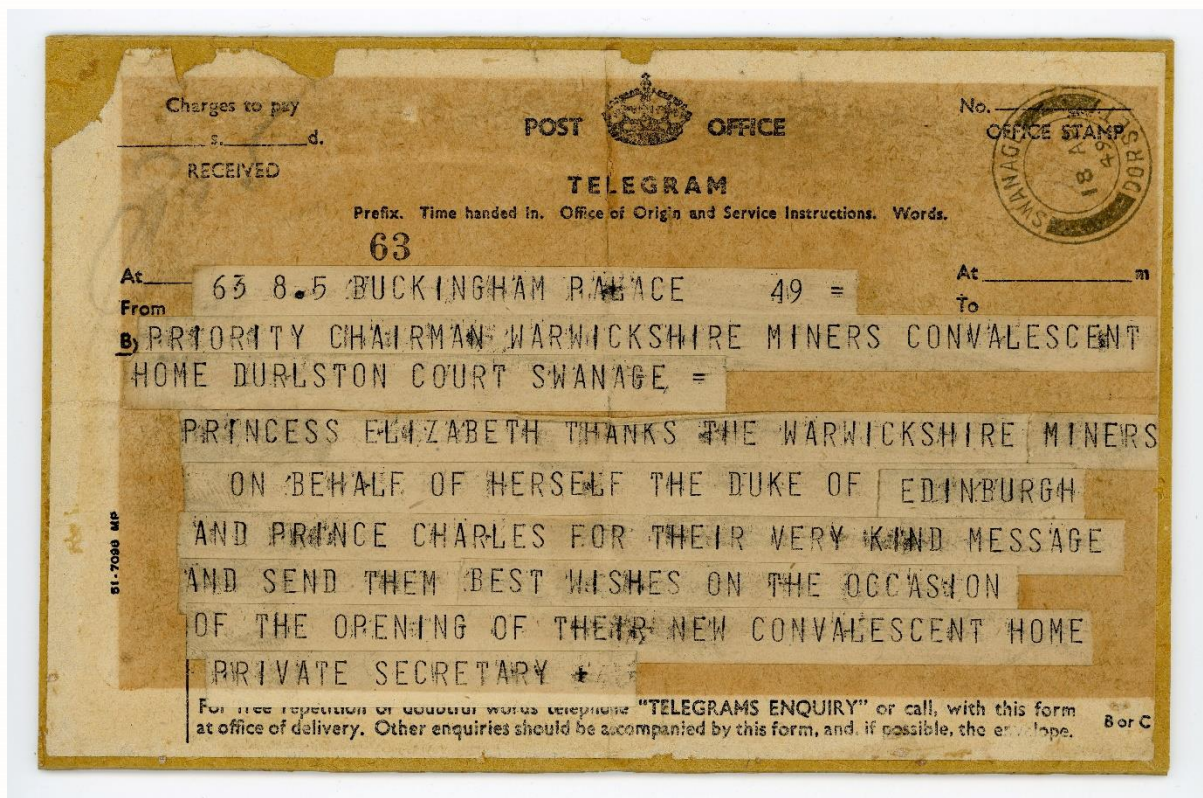


Figure 2: Warwickshire County Record Office, CR3323/887/2

On Easter Monday afternoon, 18 April 1949, Durlston Court was officially opened by The Right Hon. Hugh Gaitskell, C.B.E., M.P., Minister of Fuel and Power, at a ceremony attended by the Chairman and members of the Swanage Urban District Council, alongside representatives from the Miners' Welfare Commission, the National Union of Mineworkers, and Warwickshire Miners' Association.

These telegrams show well wishes for the opening ceremony sent from the offices of King George VI, Princess Elizabeth, and the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee. The wording of all three telegrams appear to be in reply to correspondence sent by the

Chairman of Warwickshire Miners' Convalescent Home, Mr A. J. Pratt, however the content of his original messages has not survived. It seems that Mr Pratt must have prized these telegrams; when they were deposited at the Record Office as part of the Warwickshire Miners' Association Collection, they were carefully backed on thick card and displayed in picture frames, suggesting that perhaps Mr Pratt had them on display in the Miners' Offices in Bedworth, or even in Durlston Court itself.

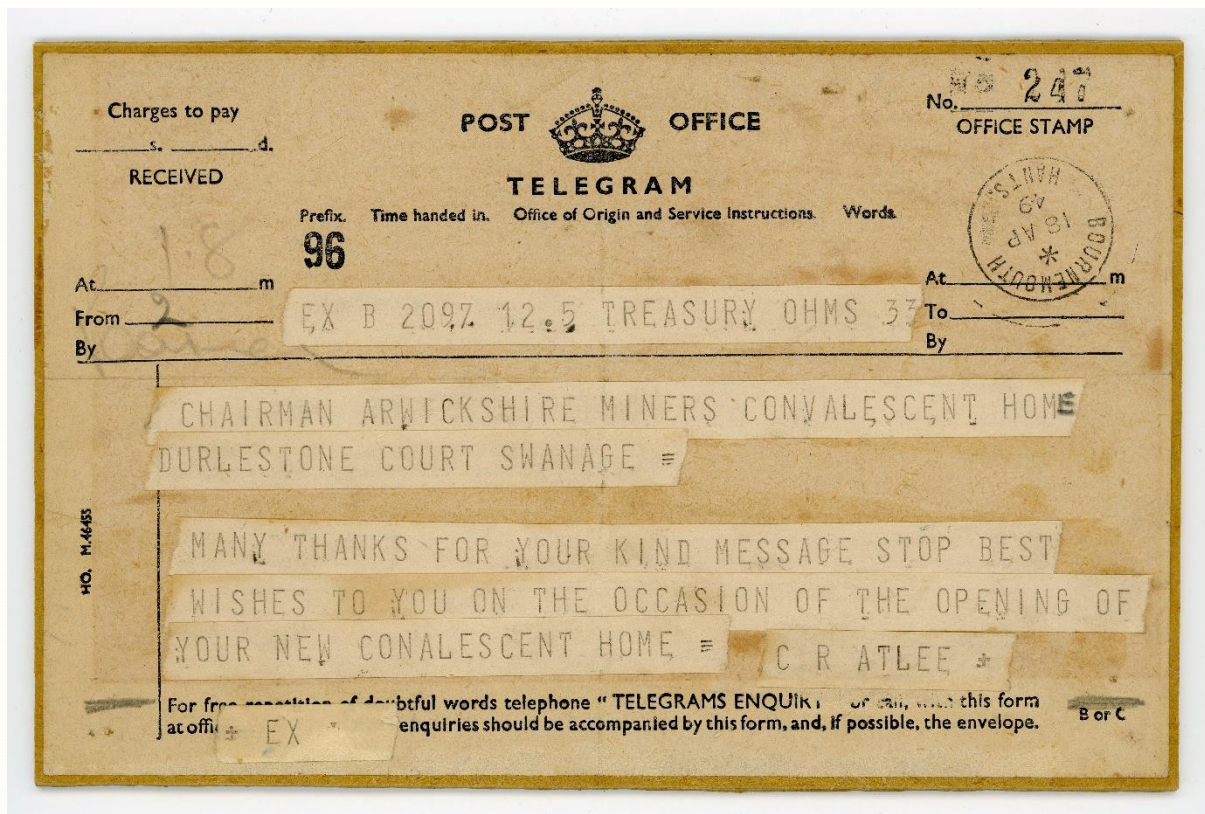


Figure 3: Warwickshire County Record Office, CR3323/887/3

### Transcripts

CR3323/887/1

64 8.5 BUCKINGHAM PALACE OHMS 34

PRIORITY CHAIRMAN WARWICKSHIRE MINERS CONVALESCENT

HOME DURLSTON COURT SWANAGE =

THE KING SINCERELY THANKS ALL WARWICKSHIRE  
MINERS ASSEMBLED AT SWANAGE TODAY FOR THEIR  
LOYAL MESSAGE OF GOOD WISH WHICH HIS MAJESTY  
MUCH APPRECIATES = PRIVATE SECRETARY +

CR3323/887/2

63 8.5 BUCKINGHAM PALACE 49 =  
PRIORITY CHAIRMAN WARWICKSHIRE MINERS CONVALESCENT  
HOME DURLSTON COURT SWANAGE =  
PRINCESS ELIZABETH THANKS THE WARWICKSHIRE MINERS  
ON BEHALF OF HERSELF THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH  
AND PRINCE CHARLES FOR THEIR VERY KIND MESSAGE  
AND SEND THEM BEST WISHES ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE OPENING OF THEIR NEW CONVALESCENT HOME  
PRIVATE SECRETARY +

CR3323/887/3

EX B 2097 12.5 TREASURY OHMS 33  
CHAIRMAN [W]ARWICKSHIRE MINERS CONVALESCENT HOME  
DURLESTONE COURT SWANAGE =  
MANY THANKS FOR YOUR KIND MESSAGE STOP BEST  
WISHES TO YOU ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF  
YOUR NEW CONVALESCENT HOME = C R AT[T]LEE +