

POSH PEOPLE ONLY IN MY CEMETERY, SAYS THE VICAR

ANOTHER *Sun* EXCLUSIVE

By PETER GAME

A VILLAGE rector has reserved the picturesque burial ground next to his church for "posh people only."

He has told ordinary folk that they must take their final rest at a council cemetery which is down the road.

The Reverend Bob Stapleton says that the graveyard at the parish church in Chenies, Bucks, is full.

But villagers say that a plot of land he uses as a garden was meant to be an extension to it.

The plot was part of an estate owned by the wealthy dukes of Bedford, who are buried at the church.

It was donated when the graveyard became overcrowded.

Servants

Mr Stapleton, 54, says that the extra land will be used for the graves of VIP Bedfords only . . . and a few trusty servants.

"All the newcomers will have to go elsewhere," he said yesterday.

He added:

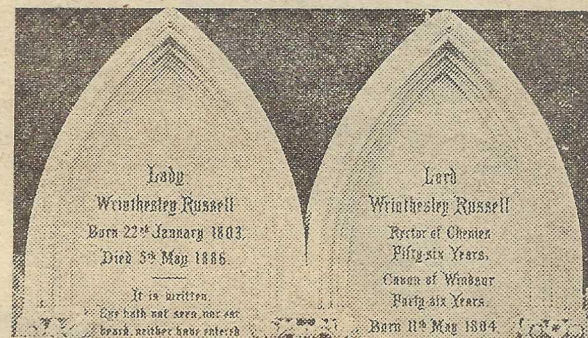
Some of the new types think that the extra land should be used as a general graveyard.

But I am not having that.

I can still take dukes,



The Rev Bob . . . a ban



Reserved . . . graves for two "posh folk"

duchesses and a few of their elderly estate workers, but that's the limit.

He said: "It could take hundreds of years to fill."

And he added that some servants could be "popped into family graves on top of their relatives."

Mr Stapleton has sent a letter to villagers saying:

"It is suggested I have appropriated the village churchyard for my gar-

den. Of course anyone is entitled to do battle with the Church Commissioners' legal department if they think they have a good case."

But the village society has sent out another letter saying that everyone in Chenies has a right to be buried in the rector's garden.

Parish council vice-chairman Nigel Ince said:

"We're trying to organise a petition to force the church to admit that part of the rector's garden is really a graveyard."

And he added: "We even have documented proof that the law is on our side."

"But the man won't budge. He just smiles back at us and talks about something else."