

Durrington

Mr. Spreadbury, The Thatcher

Time and weather have played havoc with the thatched roofs of Durrington, Wiltshire. Mr. Spreadbury, the local thatcher, was on war service elsewhere. Things got so bad that the local council had to apply to the War Department to release him.



His Raw Material

Only wheat or rye straw will do, and good rye straw is best. Barley is too short, oats soaks up the water. Thatchers say straw isn't what it was. They think artificial manures take the "guts" out of it.

His Tools

The rake may have belonged to his great-grandfather. The Spreadburys are a thatching family. Eaves-knife, trimming-knife, shears, mallet and "bat" for smoothing complete the traditional kit.





*He Pegs Down the
Straw*

Hazel rods, bent into a U
shape, are used. The
thatch will last for 15
years.

He Trims the Thatch

The keen edge of the trimming knife makes
the roof close-cropped and sleek.





He Finishes the Eaves

The knife has cut away the surplus straw;
the shears give the final touch.

Waterproof at Last: The Job is Nearly Done

The roof of the village
store glows golden
against the old thatch of
its neighbours. But
there are many more
roofs to patch or renew.



The above article features in the Picture Post on 28th October 1944