



### *Getting to Know Your Neighbours*; - NO.8

"Why", asked a friend, "have YOU been chosen as the subject of 'Getting to know your neighbours'? You've only been here a few years". EDWARD AND RONA TWIGGS could not answer this of course, so we (editorially speaking) should explain that mere length of residence in itself does not qualify for selection for this feature.

The Twiggs, who were both born in N.W. London, moved to Shipton 11 years ago from Stanmore in Middlesex.

During the war Ted's work for the Ministry of Buildings & Works involved him in investigations into fraudulent claims for War Damage; he worked in close collaboration with Scotland Yard. At night he was Squad Leader in the ARP where his knowledge of buildings proved a valuable asset; and he also served in the Home Guard.

Meanwhile Rona was playing her part by giving hospitality to RAF Officers from nearby Fighter Command at Bentley Priory

and the family 'adopted' one Canadian and 3 Polish airmen; the Canadian still writes to them at Christmas.

Some of the RAF Officers helped Ted to build a model railway round the wall of his study - much to Rona's chagrin! He had taken this up in an attempt to find relaxation from the strain of wartime life, and in the same vein he took to making models of houses and toys, using wood from an old pair of gates.

When Ted collapsed with nervous strain at the end of the War, a Harley Street specialist encouraged him to make a livelihood out of this model-making hobby. His main difficulty was obtaining 3 mm. plywood, for new timber could only be bought with a licence. Nothing daunted, Rona took a taxi to High Wycombe and bid for the wing of a glider! Soon Ted was mass-producing his toys and Rona, who had started life as a draughtswoman, began a new career, that of a saleswoman.

By concentrating on doll's house furniture they gradually built up a thriving business, supplying top-class shops like the John Lewis Group, Hamleys and Harrods. At one time they were turning out 10,000 sets a year and employing 17 helpers, mainly relatives and friends.

Rejecting a chance to expand and export, the Twiggs opted for keeping the business down to a level where they could manage without too much worry or overheads. Now they are semi-retired and keep a small part of their business as a paying hobby. Besides this, Ted tends his garden, reads avidly and still reckons to walk 5 miles on a Sunday. Both the Twiggs are well known in the village for their help with local causes, particularly the Parish Church and the RNLI.

They have a married daughter living at Henley and a son at Hemel Hempstead, who between them have produced 5 grandchildren. With some 80 other relatives and friends they will come together in the Parish Church in June for a Thanksgiving Service followed by a party to celebrate their Golden Wedding.

The Twiggs are hoping that the Best Man and the three Bridesmaids will be among their guests.

R.O.B. Long