

SHIPTON EVERGREEN CLUB (continued)

As the present committee has given notice of intention to retire at the end of this season we are in urgent need of help to form a new committee for the club to continue. About 20 members are now aged 80 years or more and are not able to arrange and carry out a programme for next year. Meetings or outings in the past have been arranged for one day each fortnight between April and October so that it is not a very onerous task.

If you have a few hours to spare occasionally, will you please contact either Mrs Audrey Fincham, 830364 or Mrs Dulcie Arundle 830555. We should also appreciate offers to give slide shows, demonstrations, talks etc. Newer village residents will be most welcome. The club has been in existence for over 40 years with older people enjoying their get-togethers. Will you help us to keep it going?

Shipton Bells

There is a ring of eight bells in the tower of St. Mary's Church at Shipton. The heaviest, the tenor, weighing about 750kgs was cast in 1634 and is listed for preservation by the Council for the Care of Churches. The oldest bell is the fifth which was cast in 1628. In those days they had no means of moving heavy bells about, so itinerant bell founders would cast the bells in the church yard and if found to be sound would haul them up into the tower. The tenor was cast by Henry Bagley from Chacombe near Banbury and the fifth by James Keene from Woodstock. The seventh was cast by Abraham Rudhall from Gloucester in 1726. The other five bells were all taken down and taken away to the Whitechapel bell foundry to be re-cast in 1893.

The ringing of church bells evokes strong feelings on both sides, but I think the majority of people like to hear the bells and certainly most people include them in their wedding plans. Change ringing is very much an English tradition because of the way our bells are hung. There are 5,200 towers in England where you can ring bells compared with about 200 in Scotland, Wales and Ireland and about 50 in the rest of the world. On the continent they can only chime their bells, so here is a tradition we must keep going.

Ringing does not require great strength, just a sense of rhythm and good co-ordination. It's a hobby that can be enjoyed by both sexes, young and old. We can now count on six people to ring at Shipton but we would dearly like to have a few more. How about joining us now, so that you can learn to ring before the Millennium celebrations? What a unique opportunity to be part of the team that rings in the 21st century in Shipton! You'll never get another chance.

If you are interested do come and meet us. We ring on Sunday mornings from 10.15 to 11.00 am and we practice on Wednesday evenings between 7.30 and 9.00 pm. or get in touch with me.

John MacVicker. Tel. 831471