
Past and Present

The Shaylers

In the first Volume of The Wychwood , 25 years ago, the magazine introduced us to Miss Sophie Furniss (Aunt Sophy), Mrs Florence Treweeke, Edith Greenaway, Ivor Chapman and George Shayler. We remember **George** and ask his son, **Gordon** to continue the Shayler story....

George Shayler

George was born in 1898 in Fiddler's Hill, his own father was a Leaffield hedger-and-ditcher. He met Gordon's mother, Victoria Elizabeth, at a dance and they set up home over Avery's Shop in Shipton. In the



George Shayler pictured in 1975

Wychwood article George, aged 82, recalled that at the turn of the century there were 12 shops in Shipton; including two bakers, a blacksmith, 4 grocers, a combined drapery and grocers and of course the mill. George was an expert drystone waller and worked in most gardens in Shipton at one time or another. In the early 1920's he had helped to create the lily-pond at Shipton Court. He worked for Mr Mawles, the farmer, and later the family moved into Magnolia Cottage, where Gordon, his only son, grew up. George died in 1981.

Gordon Grows Up

Gordon remembers his father's impeccable manners; he would always hold doors open and take his hat off, characteristics which Gordon has

definitely inherited. Gordon can remember his father's allotment behind Bradley's Garage, chiefly because: "I had to help digging taters up". Although a fine gardener now, it was not a task he relished at the time! The first day Gordon was sent to school, in Church Street he ran home, away from the

terrifying Miss Archer. His mother soon took him back!

Gordon says that Shipton was "a lovely village to grow up in". Of course the road was much quieter then and Gordon can remember roller skating up it! Difficult for Gordon or anyone else to do today!

Shops Calore

Taking up his father's memories of the turn of the century, Gordon recalls the local shops. Starting at the 'top' in Fiddler's Hill, these were Nobby Clarke's shop (Nobby retired to Bath); Miss Tubb, Kethero's Bakery, Dick Avery, the Butcher, (in the Lamb), Mr Willis the Saddler, beside the Shaven Crown (see page 5 for more on Mr Willis!), Mrs Avery on the other side of the High Street selling grocery and fish

and chips, and making not a bad 'pop', the Post Office and down by the Village

Green, Mrs Longshaw's Antique Shop and Cecil Viner's Hairdressing Shop. On our nostalgic shopping trip the final delight was Shipton Stores, Gordon can remember being taken up the stairs to the top room which was full of Christmas toys.

School-Ugh!

At 11, Gordon went to the newly built Burford Comprehensive School. He didn't like it. He left at 15; in fact a bit before, as he went potato picking and never came back! His good friends were Tony Brooks, now in Charlbury, 'Ginger' (Graham Joynes, sadly dead), Jimmy Watton and Ralph Bradley. Gordon played football for Milton - Under - Wychwood and made the first team at 16. He went to work for the Holloways, who were local farmers, as a tractor driver. Better than school and he got paid!

Marriage and John Arrives

Gordon met Rose at a cousin's wedding, and they were married in St Mary's when Rose was 20. John, their only child, came along in 1963. Gordon recalls that George would dress up as Father Christmas; the first year this was accepted by John - the second year, aged four, he was a bit sharper. When asked

who this was, he answered; "That's not Father Christmas, its my Gramp!"



Gordon and Rose with Molly and Sam

Gordon left the farm and worked as a driver for George Bradley, going all over the UK. He then went to work for Groves and later Fisher and Townsend. He remembers when Bruern Abbey was sold by the Astors to an American called Mr Stover. Gordon worked on converting that beautiful old

house into a boy's school. Now it has been converted back to a private house.

A New Life

Soon afterwards, Gordon returned to Groves and retired from there 2 years ago. Both Gordon and Rose looked after both sets of parents until they died. Their adored grandson, Luke, was born 11 months ago and Gordon and Rose have now settled down happily with their family near, their darling dogs, and of course that garden! The boy who didn't really like gardening now has a garden which is the envy of all the neighbours! His dahlias are magnificent and as for his sweet peas! He has been heard to tell many a green with envy passer -by how to grow sweet peas. But hang on a minute, *whose flowers?* It is Rose who grows all the flowers and is Rose who already has next year's seeds chitting in the cupboard!

Liz Clarke- Watson