

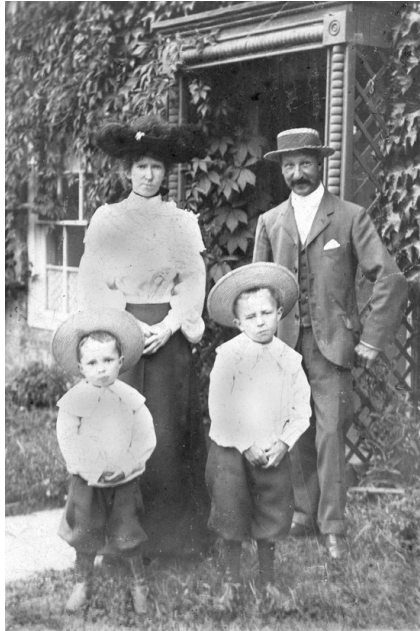
## Past and Present

# Five Generations of Avery's Store

You may have noticed that the little shop, at 8, Church Street - opposite Shipton Green, recently re-opened at Easter after 23 years. It is now a bright and cheerful florist shop run by Elaine Avery (now Ireland). Elaine is the daughter of Vic and Gladys Avery, who are well known to many of us. Elaine considered various names for the shop - such as: 'Flowers on the Green' or 'Big Bloomers', but only one name felt right; 'Ivy's', after her grandmother, Ivy Avery, who was born in 1902 and ran Avery's General Store until her death in 1980.

### Back to the Beginning

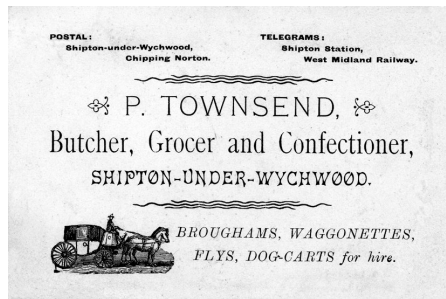
Elaine is the latest of the five generations involved in the shop. It was her great - great grand father, Peter Townsend, who started the shop, probably in the late 1800's. The advertising card shown here indicates that, as well as running a Butcher, Grocer and Confectioner, he also hired out



children; Percy Townsend Avery (the smaller boy) and his brother Dick.

### A Woman of Substance

Percy Townsend Avery, who was Vic Avery's father, married Ivy who had started as a secretary in the Co-op in Chipping Norton. The pair wed in St Mary's and held their reception in the garden of Grove Farm. From then onwards Ivy ran the shop and Percy, amongst other



interests, ran the local taxi business. Ivy would take in big sides of bacon and then cut them up herself. Elaine can remember

as a ten year old being shown by her grandmother how to bone bacon and her father, Vic, can remember scrubbing and peeling the spuds, before they got their great green machine! Ivy sold general groceries downstairs and haberdashery - ribbons and cottons upstairs. Most popular of all were fish and chips, served on Tuesdays and Saturdays from a counter behind the shop. An eager queue ran from their back door into the garage, right round the corner and down Church Street!

Ivy could take shorthand faster than she could speak! She drove a model T Ford in some style and often took taxi passengers when Percy was too busy. She would also take groceries to isolated houses in Wychwood forest on her push bike. She was a regular visitor to the 'snug' across the road in the Crown! Vic's father, Percy, when not running his taxi business, went buying antiques. Ivy always had nice jewellery which Percy would add to with his wins on the horses!

### **Times They Are A Changing**

Vic Avery met Gladys at a dance and they were married on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1957. After only 6 weeks of married life, Gladys found herself thrown in the deep end when Ivy took a week's holiday with Miss Coombes from the Post Office and she was left to run the store! Gladys continued to help out for many years

whilst Vic ran his electrical business. By the late 1970's, with the opening of supermarkets in Chipping Norton, the grocery side of the business was starting to fade. By this time Ivy was ill and Gladys's other daughter, Marie, helped



out. When Marie left to get married it was Elaine's turn! In 1979, on bonfire night, Elaine, a trained florist, took over, keen to run Avery's as a florist shop. Her opening window display was a fiery arrangement of cork bark, unusual wooden flowers and grasses in reds,

yellow and oranges!

Although the fish and chip side of the business had long since closed down, wet fish was still delivered at 3am in the morning from Grimsby. The boxes were packed with ice and it nearly killed Elaine having to lift and carry them in!

### **Ivy's Again!**

Not surprisingly, she decided that wet fish on a Tuesday didn't really go with flower arrangements! On September 4<sup>th</sup> 1982, Elaine got married in St Mary's. The last thing she did in the shop was to prepare her own bridal flowers! The shop then closed and she and her husband moved away to Brackley. After her divorce and with her son grown up, Elaine once more re-opened the shop as 'Ivy's' in March 2005 - this time with an Easter window display. The shop today looks much as it did in 1979! As the fifth

generation of Avery's, Elaine has kept faith with the past. The counter she serves from is the original marble fish slab. The magnificent Avery's scales, (no relation), have been sitting proudly in the same position for at least the last 50 years! The shop is now a mass of flowers and cottage plants as

well as cards, balloons and sundries and the beautiful china dolls and watercolours of Margaret Gibbs. Elaine hopes soon to have a credit card facility and a link with Flowers Direct. But her



real dream is to open up the sunny courtyard at the back as a little garden centre. When you next go in for your flowers, stop for a chat with Elaine and persuade Vic and Gladys to share some of their memories as they pour over their photographs. One of these was an old commissioned photograph of the outside of the shop for

which they were paid £100. Elaine admitted: "I got £50 and Mum took £50". "Oh did you" said Vic: "Now it's all coming out!"

**Liz Clarke Watson**

## West Oxfordshire Cats Protection

The Cats Protection (West Oxfordshire Branch) was established in 1997. We have a main committee for the day-to-day running of the branch and a network of fosterers and fund-raisers all making the branch run smoothly.

We help cats for all sorts of reasons, anything from stray to abandoned and sick. We also help people with their cat problems – re-homing, neutering, vet's bills and dealing with ferals (wild cats).

### Ways You Can Help

Our costs are high but all our hard-earned money goes to the cats; all our helpers are volunteers. We are always looking for new helpers and fosterers and there are many different ways to help. We also welcome sponsorship from private individuals and businesses to help buy

kitten and cat pens, equipment and goods for re-sale.

You can help the Cats Protection by volunteering in any capacity, fostering cats for re-homing (short term), fostering a sponsor cat (long term) or assisting with home-checks; for any of these call Frances on: 01993 703810. We also need help with fund-raising, making cakes, jams and marmalade, making craft goods to sell, donating cat litter, food and cat toys and bric-a-brac. Subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, '**Cats' Tails**' or set up a standing order to our branch funds. Any help in any way is always welcome.

Please call: 01993 831350 for more information.

**Olivia Tyack**