

## Feedback

I am an old Shiptonian, having been born at *Qui Appelle*, now *Monksgate* in 1921, which was my home until my mother and I moved to the Bournemouth area in 1947. I have many memories of the village in those days. The older one gets, the more vivid earlier memories become. Both my parents were born in Shipton, so despite moving about and having no connections there now, I still feel I belong to the village.

I have received the Dec/Jan issue, via friends who are cousins of Jim and Wendy Pearse, and am prompted to write by the photographs and article about the Church bell-ringers.

### Those Photographs

Harry and Ted Coombes founded the 'United Woodworkers' in the early 1920s and ran it successfully for about 40 years, but I do not think they were as close as second cousins. There were four strands of Coombes in the village at that time but not related in living memory: I don't think there are any left now.

If you look through a magnifying glass you will see that all are men, wearing collar and tie; the object that looks a bit like a hat is, I think, the watch chain of



the man behind. The taller man on the left could be Ted's older brother Sam, who was killed in the 1914-18 war. It's very like an old family photograph that I have. It could have been taken between 1910 -14. The second photograph could not have been later than early 1919. Until the young men were being called up for Military Service it was unthinkable for a female to be admitted to the ringing chamber or to try to ring one of those 'heavy bells'.

### Showing the Girls the Ropes

With many of the men disappearing to fight in the war, I think it was the Vicar, the Revd. Dr Oldfield, who suggested that bell -ringing be taken over by young women. It was the experienced George Bartlett who literally showed them the ropes! They soon became a team capable of ringing rounds calling the faithful to worship on Sundays and no doubt sending brides and grooms on their merry way. I think there was a full ring of girls at one time but I don't remember who the others were. This photo must have been fairly late, after Uncle Ris had been invalided out of the army; as soon as the men began returning all but one of the

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ladies left to make room for them. Dorothy Clifford (Doff) continued to mount all those stairs twice a Sunday, certainly until the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, when no bells were allowed to be rung except to warn of a German invasion.

### **Daughter of Dee's Shop**

Dorothy Bartlett was, of course, George's daughter and later, after her marriage to Jack Hawkes, was to become the mother of John, who occasionally sends in his memories. Percy Avery, on the right at the back, was, I suppose, not old enough for Military Service, but next to him is Margery Coombes, sister of Ted. She married Harold Dee of Dee's Shop and I am the result. I have never heard her called Lonnie; where that name came from goodness knows. I think she told me that the young man on her right was called Shayler, but I don't remember the Christian name. The other, slightly older lady, was not a Shipton girl but I think had come to work at The Court as governess or lady's maid. I remember mother speaking of a Miss Arkle, but cannot say for sure that is who it is.

### **Beech Trees**

I enjoyed Janet Wallace's story of the

beech tree on the Green. I knew Janet as a little girl and well remember the two horse chestnut trees, one pink and one white, which bloomed profusely in early summer for many years. Had I been around I might well have joined Ivy Avery in trying to save the last pink one! My grandmother lived next door to the Averys at No 6 Church Street and the Green in early summer was a particularly attractive sight.

### **History of Shipton**

I well remember Muriel Groves *History of Shipton* and had my own copy until a recent clear out. Mrs Groves was a great character, never slow to speak her mind, but she did a lot of good things in both Shipton and Milton, particularly with the Women's Institute. We had several different contingents of American Army billeted in the village, mostly in St Michael's Home for Waifs and Strays (Children's Society), later Meecham's Mill. It is likely that some GIs were given a copy of the book as a memento of their time in the village.

I dare say there are some descendants still living locally!

### **Deaconess Mary Dee**

## **Maypole Dancing**



Judy Shayler responded to Marion Robinson's request for school photos with this snap of the pupils of Milton School in their maypole dancing attire. The photo was taken in 1955; can you see yourself?