

Happy 90th Birthday to Eva Bye!

Eva was born Eva Watton, on 3rd April 1920, in Lamb Cottage, Shipton. She grew up with her two sisters and one brother.

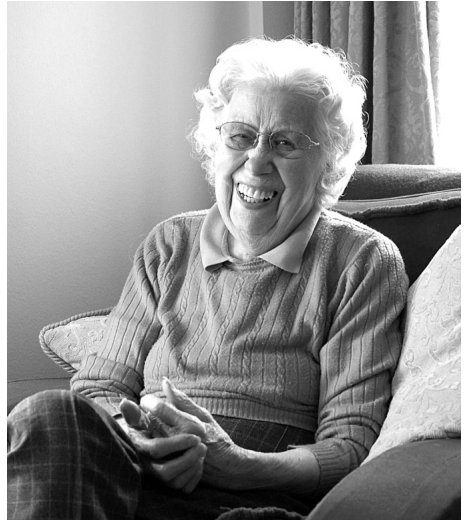
Life as a Dairy Maid

After attending school at St. Mary's, she went to work in the dairy at Court Farm, where she was trained as a skilled dairy maid. Mrs. Hall ran a fine herd of Jersey cows, which she regularly showed; her main interest was in winning prizes! In those days the dairy was housed in buildings at the back of the Dower House, but Major and Mrs Hall built a new dairy in what is now Home Farm Close. Eva remembers the bulls being kept in the large barn there.

When war broke out Eva was in a 'reserved occupation'; providing the nation's food was a high priority. After much thought though she decided to enlist in the WAAF, because she was desperate to learn to drive and this was the only way that she could think to do it.

After her basic training at Morecambe she was posted to Blackpool. She still has her original notebooks showing how to navigate without maps, around roads from which all road signs had been removed, not an easy task. She progressed to driving staff cars and lorries and had to learn how to change a tyre on a lorry. She refused to take promotion to a desk job as her love was driving. Her happiest time was at Great Yarmouth, when she helped the Air Sea Rescue at night.

When her brother Albert was killed, she was giving a compassionate posting to Kidlington Airport, to be nearer her parents. She would often cycle home from there when she was off-duty. Here she



met up with her old friend from Shipton, Eddie Townsend, who was now an officer in the RAF. She did sign on again after the war but did not like her posting in Wales, so took her demob.

Eva's Bread Round

Eva met husband Bill for the first time when he was travelling back to base with her brother. It was several years later when they met again and romance blossomed. They were married in Shipton Church. Eddie Townsend arranged for the local boys to ring a full peal as Bill and Eva came out of church.

Eva did a bread round in Burford, anything to keep driving! When Bill bought his first car she taught him to drive properly.

Eva says she has enjoyed a wonderful life here in Shipton. She even ended one wartime romance because she did not want to leave here and live in Lincolnshire.

And, at the age of 90 she is still driving!

Christine Halliday