

Home and Colonial

Rachel Grant was born 90 years ago on her very isolated family farm at Hampen, near Andoversford. Over the years she has travelled many miles around the world but was happy to settle in Shipton-under-Wychwood, not so very far from where she started.



Rachel Grant and family

there. As District Commissioner, Harry often took the family along when on safari. Rachel found the tents comfortable as long as someone else put them up! She felt very privileged to see herds of game moving across the

landscape and was once in the middle of a wildebeest migration in the Serengeti. Despite having servants to help, it was not an easy life for Rachel as they often had to move house and make new friends. Their children Keith and Helen were away at boarding school from a young age and were eventually sent to school in England. After 18 years in Tanganyika the Grants returned to England and began a new life in a village near Basingstoke.

Meeting Harry

Although not involved in the farm work, as children she and her brother and sister were allowed to ride on the wagons and to lead the big horses - no Health and Safety issues in those days.

In 1940 Rachel joined the Wrens and was sent to Milford Haven as a 'writer'. Climbing the ladder of promotion she was sent to Greenwich for officer training. Commissioned as a Third Officer, she learnt Naval cipher and began work at Chatham.

Then her globe-trotting began as she was posted to Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). It was here, on a long train journey, that she met her future husband Harry, who was serving as a Lieutenant in the King's African Rifles. Although the war years were hard, Rachel was able to visit so many places that she never thought to see. In India she found the work very dull because there was not much happening, but she did get to see the Taj Mahal and the beautiful lakes and mountains of Kashmir. In 1948 she and Harry were married in Tanganyika. By this time Harry had joined the Colonial Service and they began their married life

Back to the Cotswolds

In 1970 Harry's office moved from London to Bristol; they decided to move for the last time and found Shipton. Rachel became involved in village life, helping with Meals on Wheels for 25 years and taking on the role of President of the WI. When there was a problem getting a committee together, Rachel told the members that without a Committee there would be no WI; they rose to that challenge and the Shipton WI is alive and well today. Well done Rachel! Rachel recently enjoyed a 90th birthday party weekend with her family and puts her long life down to her genes and all that travelling. She says that Harry took her to Africa but she brought him back to the Cotswolds.

Christine Halliday