

## WOMEN'S INSTITUTE 1925 – 2007

In amongst the Institute's *Book of Memories* nestles a beautifully printed home-bound tale, written in 1993 and submitted to the judges of that year's writers' competition run by the Oxfordshire Federation of WIs. I could find no mention of a possible prize received by the author but think that her recollections of the 1940s are of interest to us all.

### **A Reminiscent Walk around Deddington by Daphne Harper**

Let us start at the top end of the village outside the Holcombe Hotel (previously Bolton's the Butchers). We walk down this side of the main road to just opposite Hudson Street where Compton's, fruiterer and fishmonger, offer their ware. A few doors down is the Congregational Church next to the garage run by Mr Horace Tibbits who is also the village blacksmith and shoes many local horses at the rear of his premises. (In later years the garage was taken over by Mr and Mrs Len Plumbe who did servicing on local cars as well as selling petrol and paraffin.)

Further down the road we reach Park Farm run by Mr John Bletsoe. He trains horses for steeple-chasing and flat racing, polo ponies and hunters. He also keeps ponies to give riding lessons to children and young people. Mr Stockford was head groom for many years, assisted by his son Dick and others, including at one time my father. Next door to Mr Bletsoe's farm is the Manor House, owned by Mr Roberts. This house has an interesting history, having its own ice house and dovecote. The grounds are used annually for the Conservative Party fête. We now reach Mrs Hore's farm.

Continuing Daphne Harper's walk through the village remembering sights, places and people in the 1940s, she is now walking north on New Street, having passed Mr Course's Bakery.

'We now come to Miss Ruth Fowler's shop. She is a very good cook and sells high quality confectionery, biscuits, and my favourite, delicious cream horns! Miss Fowler owns the original recipe for Deddington Pudding Pie. [DH fears she may have taken this to her grave.] Further north is the Crown & Tuns pub run by Mr and Mrs Savage and a few steps further Mr Runicle sells anything

from nails to saucepans and paraffin lamps in his ironmonger's shop. Fast approaching the entrance to Hudson Street, we pass Mr and Mrs Stockdale's chemist shop next to the Volunteer pub run by Mrs Jenner with her son Frank and his wife. On the bend into Hudson Street stands the house and business of Mr Saunders, colloquially known as "Fudgy". He sells a wonderful selection of sweets temptingly on offer from glass bowls and for the weekend reader he sells the Sunday papers. Crossing Hudson Street, we come to the Holliday's garage and shop with bikes, bike accessories, car tyres, petrol and paraffin on sale. Now, keep walking north and you will reach Lewis high class grocer shop where Mrs Lewis senior, clothed in a long black dress and white pinafore, sells her wares helped by her son and his wife. Before we reach the Magistrates' Court (now the Library)

Daphne Harper's walk through Deddington village in the 1940s continues. She has just whetted our appetite with the aroma of excellent baking issuing from Wallin's bakery and now strides on, probably munching a freshly baked doughnut.

'Next door to Wallin's is the Hayward's fruit, fish and general grocery shop. Jim and Lily Hayward began the business, their son Walter drives into the outlying villages with goods in his mobile van, and daughters Doreen and Peggy help in the shop. Further along, still on the west side of Market Square is a veritable 'Aladdin's Cave' run by Harry Wells, colloquially known as 'Ticky Wells' [because he offered goods 'on tick']. In his empire you can buy anything from a pin to a suite of furniture, from a carton of elastic to tweed suits. His wife Ruth helps in the shop supported by employed staff. Ticky Wells drives his own van delivering goods into the rest of Oxfordshire but also into Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and as far as Gloucestershire. Two doors south of 'Aladdin's Cave' we take another rest, maybe a welcome drink in the 'Unicorn Hotel' run by Mr & Mrs Bill Saunders and daughter Freda. We press on, past Mr & Mrs Charles and Gertie West's general Haberdashers and cross over into Chapel Square where Arthur Canning sells candles, night-



*St Thomas Street. On the right are the gates to Bliss's orchard, with Mrs Bliss in the righthand doorway. The cottages on the left were thatched, like many in the village. From a postcard dated 1905 lent [c1975?] by Mrs Alice Sykes, Market Place. Her late husband, Bertram, is the boy on the right of the line of children*

Concluding Daphne Harper's 'Reminiscent Walk' around 1940s Deddington:

'In Chapel Square, of course, stands the Wesleyan Chapel and nearby is Johnson's Timber Yard that, just recently, had a bad fire. Also in the vicinity are the businesses of two coal merchants and hauliers, Mr Jack Callow in Philcote Street and Mr Fred Deeley in Castle Street. Returning into Market Place we pass 'Nurse's Cottage', the home for many years of the District Nurse. I remember Nurse Keyes and Nurse Fox, maybe on the way to visit a patient at home, maybe deliver a baby, their little black bag close at hand! Three doors up from 'Nurse's Cottage' are the Co-op Stores managed by Mr Francis George since 1920, helped by his wife for many years. After Francis George's retirement the stores had two managers in five years before I took over for the following 23 years! Further along to the north is SS Peter and Paul, the parish church, where members of my family sing in the choir, others ring the bells. Further north is the historic Castle House but we stay in Market Place to look in on Mr and Mrs Robert Tucker in Tucker's Stores. Their main brand of tinned goods is Epicure and they stock Fuller's cakes and chocolate and sell 'ironmongery' and

She sells milk and butter. Some people collect their milk (available twice daily) to enjoy a chat with Elsie Hore, others have their milk delivered by wooden truck. (This business was later taken over by Elsie's niece, Mrs Ivy Rainbow.) Let us cross the main road and make our way back to The Style where Mr Course the Baker has his shop and ovens. He very kindly allows villagers to bring their Sunday roasts to be cooked in his oven! Mr Course bakes good cottage loaves and stocks Oliver & Gurden's cakes made in Oxford, a great favourite with young and old.

*The next instalment of Daphne's reminiscence will follow in the February 2009 issue. Daphne has lived all her life in Deddington. She was born in a cottage off St Thomas' Street which, together with another three or four, was demolished years ago. Two of these cottages faced the street just above Satin Lane, the others were built on ground now known as the Allotments. I wonder if a kind reader, in possession of a photograph of this long forgotten village quarter, would let us copy it to enhance Daphne's trip down memory lane in the next issue?*

**Ruth Johnson, 338355**

where Mr Douglas Hopcraft, a local builder, is a Magistrate, we pass Mr Goundry's wireless, accumulator and battery shop next to the British Legion and then, walking quickly past the Magistrates' Court with its two fearsome cells, we

turn west into Horsefair where beckons The King's Arms run by Mr and Mrs Stanley Hall. (Mr and Mrs Hall's son Robin was killed in Malaya whilst on National Service.) Mr Hall also sells petrol, runs a local bus service with his well beloved, if not too comfortable, buses with wooden seating! In the yard behind

The King's Arms the all important local fire engine is parked ready for off when the fire alarm's wail has summoned the crew to man it.

Turning into Market Square, keeping to the right, we pass Miss French's sweet shop (now Red Lion Cottage) and, next door, the Red Lion run by Mr and Mrs James Green. We now stop awhile at The Bakehouse owned first by the Dodwells and later by Mr and Mrs Bernard Wallin, their sons Lawrence and John and their wives. They cook a very good batch loaf and their specialities are: on Mondays lardy cake, on Wednesdays jam doughnuts, and on Fridays dough cakes, and they also cook Sunday roasts for their esteemed customers.'

Daphne's account will continue in the next issue.

**Ruth Johnson 338355**

lights etc and paraffin, a truly combustible sounding mixture! There are 3 more shops in Chapel Square. The first belongs to Miss Sermon who makes wooden toys, paints and displays them for sale to the delight of many young customers. The second, across the road, is a Butcher's shop, owned by Mr & Mrs Sandy Hopcroft, who employ an excellent local butcher, Mr Jack Melcher. On Wednesdays Mrs Hopcroft always makes faggots, large trays full of them, turning faggot & peas lunches into a Wednesday village tradition. [At some time Reg Powell, their nephew joined them, eventually took over and moved into larger premises in Market Place at the end of Hudson Street]. The third shop in Chapel Square is yet another Grocers owned by Mr & Mrs Weaver and their son Bert.'

Daphne, probably reflecting at the time of writing on the proliferation of Deddington shops, pauses here in her remembrance to remind us that, without the then obligatory Government Ration Books, only a few goods could be bought, but remembers gratefully that Deddington traders shared out their wares fairly.

**Ruth Johnson 338355**

PS No picture of Daphne's cottage of birth in St Thomas' Street (now demolished) has been found, leaving me to include a picture of other cottages, lower down the street, taken quite a few decades before Daphne's birth!

garden requirements. Round the corner, north of Tuckers Stores, is the Post Office for many years owned by the Bolton family who run the postal department and sell newspapers and stationery.

It seems incredible that Deddington has so many shops, all of which make a living for their owners and give employment to local people.

We have now completed our memory walk but must not forget the Home Guard and Wireless Communications Dept in Hempton Road, manned by Mr Jack Morris who donated two bells to SS Peter and Paul tower named after his children, Jack and Jill. Apart from the Youth Club, football teams Deddington Town and Reserves, the Bowls Club founded in the early 1900s, there is the Air Training Corps and a Morris dancing team, and



*Market Place in wartime, with white wings and running boards on the car and white flashes on the pavement edges to guide in the blackout*

did you know Deddington once had 14 public houses?

Thank you Daphne for putting your memories to paper for inclusion in the now historic Deddington Women's Institute Scrap Book and allowing us to print an edited version in the Deddington News Reproduced here is a very precious photograph lent by Colin Robinson.

**Ruth Johnson 338355**