‘A Great Hero’

LOUISE RUMBALL

From *Shaw the Villager*, p. 161. Louise Rumball’s mother taught at a school in Ayot from 1905 to 1930.

Bernard Shaw sent my mother cheques every year to be spent on sweets for the school-children in Ayot. She passed the money over to the village post-office and shop, and the children could then get sweets there without paying, to the extent of a shilling each. This sum was, in those days when golden sovereigns were common tender, the equivalent of perhaps seven or eight shillings today – quite a lot of money for a child to buy sweets with. As a result, Mr Shaw became a great hero with the school-children. How many schools are there with benefactors of this kind – which are so truly appreciated by the pupils? Certainly Bernard Shaw was the only person in the village who did this, and I have not heard of anyone else at any time or place with the same original idea.

On Being Shaw’s Private Secretary, 1912–20

ANN JACKSON (née ELDER)

From *Shaw the Villager*, pp. 263–4. Ann M. Jackson (née Elder) succeeded Mrs Georgina Musters as Shaw’s secretary in 1912. She had been recommended by Mrs Musters herself, and remained in the position, with one interruption of service in 1918–19, until 1920, when she married and left to join her husband in India. Margaret Bilton was the Shaws’ cook-housekeeper at Adelphi Terrace until her retirement in 1927.

I enjoyed every minute of my period with Bernard Shaw as his Secretary. I was in my twenties at the time, and although Mr Shaw was in his late fifties and early sixties he was full of zest for life. I’ve always had a