

A MISCELLANY OF PAST DAMERHAM LIFE

SPOOKEY GOINGS ON

In a book called "It happening in Hampshire" compiled by Winifred Beddington and Elsa Christy in 1936, two ghostly happenings were described from Damerham. First, a donkey:-

"Damerham has the vision of a white donkey, which would come down Back Lane, Green Bank Corner, and disappear in a sawpit which used to be there"

And then, a coach and four:-

".....The one at Damerham drove round the pond on great market nights."

STRANGE PEOPLE, STRANGE EVENTS.

If a village had a pond, it was also sure to have a ducking stool, a sort of see-saw affair, at the end of which, overhanging the water, was fixed a chair into which the unfortunate person, generally a woman, was strapped and suddenly dipped into the water. At Damerham, the Manor Farm once belonged to a sour and arbitrary spinster called Tabitha Coffin, who had a ducking stool of her own, and when she was offended by anyone, she would have them ducked in the pond there.

Another unpleasant punishment was the making of 'Rough Music' by the young lads, when a villager was suspected of being guilty of beating his wife, owing to the indulging of too much alcohol. Faringdon tells us that the

'music' was made by banging old cans and tin utensils of all descriptions round the village, to advertise the fact that someone had transgressed the moral code, and this was sometimes kept up for a week.

DIRECTORY, EARLY 1900's.

DAMERHAM SOUTH is a parish and village, giving name to the hundred at the western extremity of the county, on the borders of Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, 2 1/2 miles west from Fordingbridge station on the Salisbury and Dorchester section of the London and South Western railway, and 11 south-west-by-south from Salisbury, in the Western division of the county, Fordingbridge union and county court district, petty sessional division of Ringwood, rural deanery of Chalke (Chalke portion) archdeaconry of Sarum, and diocese of Salisbury. By the Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (No.12) Act, 1895, this parish was transferred from Wiltshire to Hampshire. The church of St. George is a very ancient structure of rubble and stone, in the Early English style, consisting of chancel, nave of three bays, aisles, south porch and square tower with 5 bells, one of which bears date 1666: the Church was restored in 1857, and seated with open benches and has 340 sittings. The register dates from the year 1678. The living is a vicarage, tithes commuted at £277.10s., with 130 acres of glebe, net yearly value £247, with residence, in the gift of Hyndham's trustees, and held since 1862 by the Rev. William Owen M.A. of Hertford College, Oxford. There are Primitive Methodist, Baptist, and Congregational

chapels. In May, 1863, about a fourth of the village was burnt down, but the effects of the calamity were speedily removed, as a sum was collected, mainly through the exertions of the Rev. W. Owen, the vicar, sufficient to rebuild those cottages not insured, and otherwise reinstate the sufferers generally. The industry of weaving was formerly carried on extensively here. The principal landowners are Sir Eyre Coote, of West Park, Rockbourne, who is lord of the manor, and Mrs. Wallis. The soil is gravel, clay and chalk; subsoil same. The chief crops are wheat, barley, oats and turnips. The area is 4,677 acres of land and 3 of water; rateable value £2,928; the population in 1901 was 547. East End, North End, Stapleton, 1 1/2 miles west on the Cranborne Road, and South End, are tithings. Lopshill is a farm and a hamlet, the property of Sir Eyre Coote; it is mentioned by that name in Domesday Book; Hyde Farm is also mentioned. One of the Saxon queens was called Elflæda of Damerham, or Damerham. Parish Clerk, Edwin Percy. Post, M.O. & T.O., S.B. and A. & I. Office - Miss Mary A. Freke, sub-postmistress. Letters arrive from Salisbury at 5.45 a.m. and 4.50 p.m.; dispatched at 1.35 and 7.10 p.m.; Sundays 6 p.m. Elementary school, (mixed) built in 1857 for 109 children; average attendance 100. W. Douglas, Master. Carriers to Salisbury - Henry Vincent and Frederick Jerrard, Tuesday and Saturday, returning same days. Berney, Algernon H. Game, Walter Gulliver, Wm. Haydon, Wath Cottage

Owen, Rev. William, M.A., Vicarage.
Scamell, Mrs.
Commercial:
Bedford, Caroline (Mrs.) watercress grower.
Berney, Algernon H., agent to Sir Eyre Coote
Blanchard, George, farmer
Brewer, Jesse, head gamekeeper to Sir Eyre Coote
Britten, Sidney, farmer.
Bush, Abraham, wood dealer
Coombs, Walter, farmer, Court Farm.
Curtis, Walter, Compasses Inn.
Elliott, George, farmer, Hill Farm and Hyde.
Freke, Mary A. (Miss) stationer and Post Office.
Goodenough, Charlotte (Miss) aparts.
Hibberd, Josiah, farmer, South Allenford Farm
Holman, Clara (Mrs.) apartments
Hunt, Samuel C A., estate clerk
Jerrard, Acquilla, cowkeeper
Jerrard, Frederick, carrier,
Jerrard, Henry, farmer, Knoll Farm
Jerrard, Walter, farmer.
Lush Arthur (Mrs.), farmer, Stapleton farm.
Marsh, John and son, grocers and bakers.
Marsh, Harry, estate foreman.
Nation, Thomas (Mrs.) dress maker
Percy, Charles, cycle agent
Percy, Edwin, blacksmith
Read, Charles, farmer, Lopshill Farm
Rumbold George S., farmer
Stevens, Sydney, farmer, Bowlesbury
Tiller, Francis, shoe maker
Tiller, George, wheelwright
Tiller, Philip, shopkeeper
Vincent, Henry, carrier
Vincent, William, carrier.
White, George, jun. farmer.
White, Robert, blacksmith

"ECHO" NEWSPAPER EXTRACT, SATURDAY, JULY 19TH, 1947

Daisy Didn't Explode. Now About to End Her Career.

"Echo" Staff Report, Damerham, Near Fordingbridge, Saturday.

"Damerham Daisy", pride of the Luftwaffe when she was dropped six years ago, is about to end her evil career.

"Daisy" was one of the biggest bombs ever aimed at Britain. An 18,000 kilo missile, she was the equivalent of the British 4,000 pounder.

To-day she is lying at the bottom of a shaft in a Hampshire field, where Southern Command bomb disposal personnel are preparing to make her harmless for ever.

All this morning, the bomb was being de-fused. This afternoon it is planned to remove her from the shaft and take her away from the place which has been her home ever since she was dropped during Britain's dark days in 1941.

She was Unlucky.

"Daisy" always was unlucky. The plane in which she was taken to England was hit before the bomb could fulfil her proper function in life, so she had to be jettisoned in a hurry. Even then she might have struck a stout blow for Hitler, for she had been released by chance near a major ammunition dump. But again,

"What we have never had we never miss" is a true saying! Some day our own times will be judged in part by what we are ourselves in our old age; and if we can still show ourselves as sound and sweet as the heroes and heroines of these tales; if we have kept so much courage and humour in spite of the trials of life; then and then only shall we have any right to feel superior about the 20th century.

I ask you to accept this little book as a token of affection, and may I add that there is plenty of room for another volume in the portfolio, and plenty of material in the village if you will only keep your eyes and ears open, and it is my earnest hope that there will soon be another and much better attempt at preserving "Village History".

Yours affectionate friend,

Audrey Hadow.

STRANGE SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

In 1866 I was a boy, but I remember well one night in November our policeman bade me look up at the sky, which was full of shooting stars (not just one here and there, but it was like a shower of gold) and keep in mind what I saw, for I should never see another sight like it. He was right, for I never did; but I saw the Great Comet in 1882, between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning.

John Percy - Born 1852, died 1932

A LONG WALK

Two young girls (Jane Tiller and Virtue Ambrose) who wanted situations walked all the way into Salisbury and back again to look for them. We could walk in those days!

Agnes Clara Kenchenton

A REAL HEROINE.

My grandmother, Harriet Phillips, was born in 1813, and had eleven children. There were some years between them, so it happened that she was left a widow with several quite little ones when she was fifty; and she had to keep them as best she could, for in her time there were no widow's pensions or anything of that sort, so she went to work in the fields.

She would tell us how she would rise at 3 o'clock to get her own work done first, and on baking and washing days it would be still earlier.

She would put the little ones in a box-cart and take them with her to her work.

They never had butcher's meat - but she would walk to Cranborne to buy a pig and drive it home herself, and she would tell us what a dance it would lead her.

She could not buy tea*, so they drank toast-water as many did; made by pouring boiling water on toasted crusts: sugar was only for a treat on Sundays.

It was a hard life; but she lived to be eighty-four, and I never remember her anything by cheerful and happy.

(N.B. * 5/- a lb. in those days. Editor)

Mrs. Agnes Clara Kenchenton.

HOW THEY WENT TO WORK IN THE OLD DAYS.

My grandfather would tell about getting up on a winter's morning.

First you had to get a light, and that was done by striking flint and tinder together and catching the spark on a bit of scorched rag. (I myself remember an old man who could only do a little work for very small wages and was too poor to buy matches, though he would contrive to buy his baccy somehow; and he still used the flint and tinder.

He would borrow us boys' knives for steel, but we weren't very willing, for he pretty near spoilt them scraping the backs of them on the flint.)

Well, Grandfather would say it was a long job, and by the time you had a light to see what time it was you were so cold you were forced to run to warm yourself; and often he would take his "barley bannock" (a flat round loaf of barley bread) and "troll" it along the frosty roads like a hoop to the fields to warm his blood.

Those barley loaves were so hard you couldn't hurt them and it was mostly barley bread in those days.

In a wet year, when the harvest had to lie about a long time, the flour was not good and the bread would be all black and sticky: they would sometimes be forced to chop it with a spade. (N.B.) Grandfather had six-shillings a week as wages, and a shilling rise when he married.

(N.B. Mr. John Percy could remember seeing his mother take a long loaf from brick oven and break it and it was all "sticky grey threads from one piece to the other" Barley bread in itself was good enough and Mrs. Coborn can remember her grandfather in his last illness pining for it. Editor)

William Kenchenton

BOY LABOUR

The farmers would always take on boys fresh from school in my day and give them light jobs for 2/- or 2/6 a week, and all we were worth, too! But we soon picked up some knowledge that way.

William Kenchenton.

My grandfather remembered when farmers would hire boys to go into Salisbury "Great Market" (which took place every fortnight) to help with a load of corn; but they had to lie under a sailcloth to hide when they got near Salisbury to avoid being caught for military service.

Mrs. Jane Ambrose

THE ROADS

In 1860, or thereabouts, my father John Forster hired West Park for five years. I was a young girl in the school-room and I think my sisters and I had the happiest time of our lives there. We did not go much into Damerham, for we always went to church at Rockbourne and the only road to Salisbury was from there; just a track over the downs. If we had visitors in the house and some bad weather came it might be weeks before they could leave, for the road

could be quite impassable. How we did enjoy our rides over those downs!

Susan Walker

(Daughter of John Forster)

I can remember when Court Road was so narrow, with the trees arching right over it; that one big wagon could not pass another. The horses for the corn wagons, (and there would be six of them for a load of corn) would have an arch of bells over their heads to warn another teamster not to start coming down the hill until the first had got to the top.

(Mrs.) Jane Tiller.

The children used to play on the grass where the Church Road joins the main road to Fordingbridge. It was a fine stretch of well-kept turf then, and was called "Bounding Alley"; and there was a rhyme sung about it:-

"Damerham is a pretty place
It lies down in a valley

There is a pretty "cheem" of bells

Upon the Bounding Alley."

GHOSTS

COURT FARM was said to be haunted by a carriage and four (coach and four?) which came out on "Great Market" nights and drove round the pond.

NORTH END FARM also had a ghost, and CHANNEL HILL had a white donkey which would come down Back Lane; Green Bank

Corner to the top of Steel's Lane and disappear in the sawpit which was once there.

MANOR FARM

This was always a "small Manor" independent of any large estate. It was once owned by Tabitha Coffin, who had a ducking stool of her own. She was a sour and arbitrary spinster and when she was offended with anyone she would have her ducked in the pond.

THE POUND AND "SOBBIT'S PLOT"

At the corner of the lane from North End that goes to meet Brown's Lane there is a field called "Sobbit's Plot" where there was once a sawpit. The Pound was also by that lane. The last Haywarden was Abraham Bush (father of 'Farmer Bush' and grandfather of Daisy Nicklen and Clara Waterman)

The Pound was in the care of the Haywarden and of a bailiff and a steward (who was always a solicitor). These were called the "Court Leate". All stray animals would be "impounded" and a fine had to be paid by the owner before he could get his property out.

A rhyme was made about one victim of the Court:-

If Joe had-a-hit-em
He'd ha made 'em pay the cost
But Joe paid the Pound
For his poor old horse.

THE CORNPITS

These were so called because the corn used to be stored in them. There was another pit to

which it is said that stolen timber cut in Ashridge was rolled, there to await the confederates of the woodmen who would remove the timber for sale.

Clara Holman

THE ZOOZE

A piece of land near Hawkhill Farm is called the Zooze. Does no one know the meaning of this strange name?

Editor.

LITTLE RECREATION, BUT "VERY HAPPY"

In my young days people were very strict in their ways in Damerham. To sit round our Mother and sing hymns of a Sunday evening was a treat to us: we had no toys but those we would make for ourselves, such as whistles.

I remember one Whit Monday (that was the only bank holiday then) some bold spirits were dancing in a barn there was in those days in Back Lane. My little sister watched them and ran to my Mother to tell her how pretty it was and ask if she could dance too. My Mother sent her straight to bed (and it was in the forenoon) to teach her what a terrible sin dancing was!

We never tasted cake unless it was "parliaments" (gingerbreads) or "seedy cakes" which Anne Penny sold - but that was not often. All the same we were very happy and contented.

J. PERCY

We thought it a treat to go for a walk in the lanes, but we mustn't come back empty-handed: we must pick up a few sticks to show we were not idle. We never missed what we didn't have, and I know we were very happy.

MRS. W. AMBROSE.

□THE CHOIR AND SCHOOLS

THE CHOIR AND SCHOOLS

It is very unfortunate that the Parish Registers do not seem to provide any interesting details about village life. The old registers have disappeared and there is nothing prior to 1678, but we have some amusing recollections of the Choir and Schools given by those who were children in the middle of the last century.

The Editor.

We went to the National School as it was then called and our school-master was a village man (Mr. Ambrose) and I think well grounded us in the three R's and grammar but not much beside. There were then about 110 children attended school as some came from Rockbourne and Sandheath and other outlying places. We walked in pairs to the Church and the biggest girls and a few men tried to lead the singing after the school-master, who played a flute.

I well remember when he was away one Sunday, one of the men tried to begin the chants and could not manage it. He looked at Mr. Owen (the parson) and said: "I'll tell 'ee what tis sir, we can't COME it." that of course, we never forgot!

Mr. Warner gave a harmonium to the church afterwards and it was carried to and fro from

church by two men every Sunday, the children walking behind in pairs.

Our master played the harmonium and we sat near by to sing, where the organ now is; the other children on the other side below the pulpit and reading desk. We were proud of the harmonium, but I once hear Mr. Owen say he would much rather hear the flute; "It was so SWEET."

MRS. COBURN

The Sunday school walked to church two and two, reaching from the church gate to the lowest bridge on the church path. The twelve oldest girls wore scarlet cloaks bound with black (Some contributors say dark-grey cloaks bound with red, and holland coats in summer, but this may have been later) - and the twelve oldest boys wore grey-blue ones bound with red. On Christmas Eve they all walked up to West Park and sang carols: each had an orange and a bun and walked back, singing through the village.

The bell-ringers too used to sing carols through the village then.

(Mrs.) JANE AMBROSE

Mr. Owen the clergyman had quite a farm; kept several horses and cows and a flock of sheep. One very cold winter he killed a sheep and had mutton broth made. We children sat round on benches and the broth was served out to us and very nice it was.

The children in the Chapel school were not so lucky and felt sore about it so they used to shout "Mutton Broth Scholars" after us. We soon had a nickname to shout back at them, of course.

J. PERCY

NAMES OF FAMILIES

There are at present (1931) ten houses occupied by people named Tiller, while eight other houses have relationship to that name, directly or indirectly.

(MRS.) BEATRICE MONK

Other names very usual in Damerham are: White; Percy; Bush; Ambrose; Coborne.

THE "BONE-SHAKER"

My father, Frederick Bush in 1866 owned a bicycle (the first probably ever made) which was of wood with iron-bound wheels, on which he went to and from from Rockbourne to Southampton where he was working at the docks, and roads were not then what they are now.

The bicycle was made by Mr. J. Shering of Rockbourne and caused great excitement; the folks rushing to their doors to see the strange sight.

HARRY BUSH

SOME SAYINGS.

Yes.... you do have to be terrible nice before everybody'll like you.

(Mrs.) J. TILLER

There was a man lived up East Street when I was a boy and they used to say of him: "When

she missed her opportunity, and when she came down impotently in an open field half a mile away, there remained the final humiliation



- she didn't explode!

Now, watched by the smiling villagers she hoped to terrify, her last day has come. Work on "Daisy" began in September, 1945, and has lasted 20 long, dangerous months. The average working party consisted of two N.C.O.s and 11 German prisoners of war.

Sister Evades Discovery

Four 50ft. shafts, each measuring 12ft. by 12ft., have been sunk to get at her. Two of these have been filled in, the one in which she was found is being worked, and the fourth is used as a sump into which is pumped the water from the working shaft. Her sister, "Damerham Dolly", has not yet been found. She lies nearby, and has so far modestly evaded all efforts to discover her.

MANOR OF DAMERHAM PARVA

Admission of Mr. James Woodrow to a Cottage Garden, Orchard, and Piece of Land within the said Manor.

The Great Baron of the Hon. Cropley Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, Baron Ashley of Wimborne St. Giles, and Lord Cooper of Pawlet, Lord of the said Manor there held on Friday, the 27th day of October in the first year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and in the year of Our Lord, one thousand, eight hundred and thirty seven, by Thomas Coombs, Steward.

To this Court came James Woodrow of Damerham Parva in the County of Wiltshire, Gamekeeper and Lookout of the lands of the Lord of the said Manor.

By the delivery of Thomas Coombs, Gentleman Steward, according to the custom of the said Manor, all that cottage garden and orchard formerly part of the tenement called John Holleys, and also all that piece or parcel of arable land, containing three roods, and 31 perches or thereabouts, being part and parcel of a tenement called Littlecots, bounded on the North by a chalk pit, on the east by a highway leading to Crindle Common, and on the South and West by lands in the occupancy of James Silley, called Ashridge, wholly within the Parish and Manor of Damerham Parva aforesaid, to have and to hold the said Cottage garden and Orchard unto the said James Woodrow, aged 32 years, and also unto

Charles Frederick Woodrow, aged 7 years, son of the said James Woodrow, for the term of their lives and the life of the longest liver of them successively. In reversion of the life of John Holly, and also to have and hold the piece or parcel of arable land unto the said James Woodrow and Charles Frederick Woodrow for the term of their lives and the life of the longest liver of them. Successively In Reversion of the life of Joseph Littlecot under the yearly rent of four shillings, to be paid on Lady Day and Michaelmas under equal proportions. And a heriot of sixpence when it shall happen and by all other works, Burthens, Rents, Customs, Suits and Services therefore due and all right accustomed to be paid, done and performed, and for such estate in the premises so as aforesaid as the said James Woodrow has given to the Lord for a fine, the clear sum of one hundred pounds.

Examined and Incolled by T. Coombs, Steward.

FAREWELL

My dear Friends,

I am writing these few words in the study at Damerham Vicarage, where, like the rest of the Vicarage, silence will reign in but a few days.

Our parting from you all after the shortest time and yet happiest we have so far spent in the ministry has been very painful. The 'send off' you gave us is far more than we ever deserve and left us speechless. What can we say to thank you all for such a splendidly enjoyable, amusing and most memorable farewell evening at the Village Hall? What can we say to express our indebtedness to the bell-ringers who rang on Sunday, 18th April to mark our

departure, and, though they may not have realised it, to mark the end of an era both for the vicarage in which I sit and of vicars resident in Damerham? What, too, can we say to all those friends throughout the village who contributed so very generously towards the cheque and other gifts we received? Thanks are ineffable. So, we must content ourselves with just saying 'Thank you' for absolutely everything.



In moving we incur, as some of you know, colossal expenses, but we promise you that we will buy something tangible, as if this is necessary, by which to remember our wonderful stay among you.

May I leave you with Acts C. 20 v.32, which I gave you at my final service at church. We will remember you and visit you whenever we can. Our fondest love to you all,

Yours in His Service,

Alan, Muriel, Jennifer and Richard Mathers

(Curate-in-Charge, 1970 - 1971)

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD DAYS IN DAMERHAM

Collected by Audrey Hadow and presented by her to the Damerham Women's Institute and dedicated to the memory of Mr. John Percy, who inspired her to make this attempt.

The Birthday Party, 1932.

Dear Fellow-Members.

(As I may still call you, though not for long). I can hardly hope that you will enjoy the reading of this small bundle of tales as much as I have the making of it; for I cannot reproduce for you the charm of the friendly talks from which it is selected, though I have tried as far as possible only to tell what I was told as it was given.

If it all seems to you very simple and "everyday", please consider that it is from such material as this, historians, or great novelists like Walter Scott make their books; and if to the young people, some of it seems to give a dismal and unpleasant picture of what they think of as the "bad old times", they must please remember that the richest and most powerful people in the land in the early part of the last century never dreamed of such a variety of food or of many of the luxuries and comforts which are to be found in most cottages now; and most certainly they had not a quarter of the change and amusement which we all take for granted in these days.

he had only one match to go to bed with he struck it first to see if it would light.

J PERCY

Mrs. Winnie Tiller said of the people in Damerham and their complicated relationships: "They're all in the pudding together."

RHINING

"Rhining" was taking the bark off trees (for tanning?) and in May, a good half the people in Damerham were busy at it. I supposed it meant "rinding".

JOHN PERCY

EXTRACT FROM "IT HAPPENED IN HAMPSHIRE."

PARCHMENT was made at one time at Stockbridge, and the water power from the River Test no doubt greatly helped with this industry. A good deal of tanning also went on here, also at Brockenhurst, and at Bishops Waltham until the latter part of the 19th century.

At Damerham, this business used to employ half the people in the village during the month of May. The taking of the bark off the trees was called "rhining". This word may have been something to do with the word "rind" we use now, meaning the outer skin.

"SALISBURY AND WINCHESTER JOURNAL"

January 18th, 1868. Delay of the Mailbags.

On Sunday evening last, as the driver of the mail cart was proceeding from Cranborne to Salisbury, his horse suddenly dropped down dead just before he got to Damerham. In consequence of this accident, the letters which ought to have arrived at Salisbury at nine o'clock that evening from Cranborne, Fordingbridge, and Downham, did not get there until the next morning, as the driver, instead of going on, returned to Cranborne with the bag, as though the delay was of no consequence.

January 1st, 1887.

The neighbourhood of Fordingbridge and the town itself fared very badly in the storm of Sunday. The snow fell in flakes 'thick and fast' from three o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. Mr. Dunne of Ibsley lost several sheep; and Mr. Ridley of Damerham lost heavily, 70 of his sheep being smothered in the snow....