

MEMORIES OF DAMERHAM

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Rector 1984 - 1991

Memories - as one grows older, memories become more precious - you look back and realise what a privilege it was to be there. Damerham (and for me Rockbourne, Whitsbury and Martin) will always be 'special' for me. The beauty and peace of our Church; the very timelessness of so ancient a building and the surrounding country side, still stirs me. I look back and realise my stay in Damerham was a challenge with a lot of hard work - but it was fun. We were the first family to live in the New Rectory; I was the first Rector of a new benefice, travelling many miles each Sunday taking services in four churches, not one!; sharing our village life in all its forms.

Memories - where does one begin. Just to name a few, I think of our School with its wonderful happy atmosphere. Barbara always looked forward to her 'Thursday Morning' and the times when she shared her love of the countryside when the children came to our garden. I think of our Assemblies; our services in Church when every seat was taken - of our Nativity Plays in Rockbourne Church with every child taking part (and not a tea-towel to be found in the Rectory!) and the staff with

Judy Sheppard at the helm, so genuinely committed to making the school the "success it is. I shall always remember winter mornings when we ran round the playground with

kettles of hot water trying to defrost the boys Loo before school time - no wonder we all worked to convince the powers that be that our school was No.1 priority for renovation.

Memories of Marie Woodvine, our Lay Reader, helping her with her sermons, sitting in her kitchen in a cloud of smoke putting the Church of England to rights! I miss her friendship. Dennis and Peg Bailey who welcomed us on our first night with much love and the most comfortable bed I have ever slept in. Stan and Betty Waterman - one could not have had a more loving pair. I wonder if Stan still eats ice-cream!

I think of 'The Tiller Girls' - who could not help falling in love with them and they are among my friends to this day. David Benfield with his Daphne - always ready with his sound advice and kindness. I remember how he rescued me from the hurricane (no electricity at the Rectory) and knowing how ill that Barbara was, he cheered me up with a very hot curry which we ate wearing bush-hats - we let our hair down that night. Roy Shepherd explaining at great length the benefits of feeding by computer and who could forget George with his donkey on Palm Sundays!

The Millennium is a time of great thanksgiving - for all that we have shared but most of all for our Christian faith and the knowledge that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever - always our Saviour and our friend. Thank you Damerham for all you gave to me and mine -HAPPY MEMORIES.

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HAYWARD

In 1977, the Queen's Silver Jubilee year, Damerham staged a carnival/pageant. I am sure it will have been written about already. There was a parade of floats through the village, and stands, stalls and games on the recreation ground, and a big barbecue for everyone in the evening.

Knoll Farm's entry for the parade was a replica of Concorde, at the time a state of the art aircraft, viewed with much national pride, which it is still. The Concorde, which was about ten feet long, was made up in the farm workshop with old oil drums for the fuselage, a cone-shaped piece of metal for the famous "droop snoot" and plywood wings. It was painted in British Airways colours, and mounted on top of a tractor cab. John Attle drove it down to the village to join the parade. We all thought it was amazing, but we didn't win! I think it was South Allenford's entry with all the Shepherd family who won, with a portrayal of Laurie Lee's Cider with Rosie.

I really feel I must write a few lines about Reverend George Moule who was vicar of Damerham when I first came here. In his pre-BMW days - I am sure he was the first person to own a BMW in Damerham, most people had never seen one around here! - George visited his parishioners on a push-bike. He was the most delightful and courteous man, a real

gentleman. Also a confirmed bachelor and a little nervous of women. I am sure he wouldn't mind me telling the following story. One very hot summer day, my mother and I were sunbathing in the garden, A peaceful hour before collecting the children from school. Our garden was fairly secluded and therefore we were scantily clad! There was a long border of flowers running down one side of the garden, parallel with the lane. Suddenly with no warning George Moule burst through the delphiniums and landed almost at our feet. Imagine his embarrassment! He was extremely confused, mumbled an apology, and disappeared the way he had come. Apparently he had been knocking on the door to no avail, but as he was leaving on his bike heard our voices, so decided to clamber through the flowerbed. He wouldn't stay for a cup of tea, but instead went to see my mother-in-law at the house. I am sure she calmed him down with a good brew and a large slice of her chocolate cake.

If I were asked to nominate someone of the village as PERSONALITY MOST RESPECTED or whatever title might be chosen, I would nominate without hesitation Monty Palmer. As we all knew, he and his late wife Joyce ran the village Bakery, together with small shop, for many many years. Every day he baked the bread very early in the morning and come rain or shine delivered it to the villagers in his white van. Always cheerful and helpful, he came up to Knoll three times a week without fail. Our children would await his arrival with their pennies for sweets, with cries of "Mr. Palmer! Mr Palmer's here!". He's our Number One.