

CROSSWAYS FARM



GERALD, DOROTHY, ROBIN &
MICHAEL JERRARD

Map Reference E6

Gerald Stanley Jerrard, farmer, born in village. Hobbies are farming and tractor work.

Dorothy Vera Jerrard, housewife, married to Gerald. In village since 1947 and hobbies include cooking, cakemaking and flower arranging.

Michael Charles Jerrard, gardener and village hall caretaker - born in village. Hobbies are gardening, collecting vinyl singles and music. He has a large collection of village photographs.

John Robin Jerrard, pump maintenance engineer - born in London. Hobbies are music, T.V. and reading.

Three cats, Snoopy, Tarqueen and Sasha, various aviary birds, cattle (beef) and of course the Damerham Ducks & Geese!

Built in 1865 after original brick/thatched house called Scammells Farmhouse burned down in 'Great Fire of Damerham' in 1863. Originally called Crossways Cottage it was changed to Crossways Farm in 1977. Bought by A.S. Jerrard in 1941 from the West Park



Estate for approximately £600, but could not move from the family home at Mill House until 1946 due to the army and then U.S. Army requisitioning it for Officers Mess.

Mr. Virgil Rice, ex U.S. Army, from Vestavia Hills, Alabama, U.S.A., has fond memories of the house from 1944, when he was billeted here before being posted abroad. He has made several visits over the past 55 years and keeps a keen interest in village life and developments, such as the new village hall in 1996 and the footbridge over the Allen River in 1998. Crossways Farm's lounge was converted in 1906 to a coach house with heavy oak doors, a concreted area outside with drain for washing the coach with the year (1906) written in the concrete. A thick oak beam was positioned over the door opening, which remains today 50 or so years after the coach house was returned to a lounge.

A well-known village character, Mr. Reg Bailey, once told us that an amount of unwanted ammunition from the war was buried in the ground beneath the tall Norway pine tree (opposite the bus shelter) although none has been uncovered to date.

During the heyday of West Park Estate, Crossways Farm was used as a tree nursery for the propagation of saplings for Sir Eyre Coote's vast tree planting programme, hundreds of which still stand today in locations such as Knoll, West Park Drive and until a few years ago, the Martin road out of the village.

As children, we attended the Methodist Sunday School every Sunday morning. We were supposed to recite a new text from the bible each week and were often 'ticked off' by Mr. Jos Tiller (Village postmaster and Sunday school teacher) for saying the obvious 'Jesus wept' or 'Hold fast that which is good' which

was painted in banner form above the pulpit and is still there today. On Sunday afternoons we would go to St. George's Church Sunday School clutching our one penny (old money) for the collection, with Mrs. Daisy Waterman, the Sunday schoolteacher, who would ask us before entering the church if we wanted to 'go to tiddles' as she described it! Inside she would give us two sweets, always one jelly baby and one hard toffee type which tasted very much like today's 'Werther's Originals' and may well have been those. We all had an attendance stamp album and each week we were given a stamp depicting a bible scene. I think I am correct in saying that the sweets ceased at the age of nine when we progressed into the Vicar's section of the Sunday School.

I remember the first T.V. installed in West Park Lane - I think it was no 44 or 46 - for Mr. Bill Stamp (the paper delivery man) in around 1957 and I distinctly remember Dennis Bailey's men from Southern Radio coming to fit our ITV aerial - what excitement! Two channels to watch (a far cry from our multi-channel TVs of today). ITV during the sixties started around late afternoon each day but sadly for us, just at the same time as all the housewives (there were a lot then) switched on their electric cookers for cooking hubby's tea and down went the power, causing our T.V. picture to break up into lines. Mr. Bailey said it could not be helped. I remember Mum complaining on a Sunday morning because the roast was so slow to cook due to everyone having their cookers on at the same time. How lucky we are today.

At school, on cold frosty mornings, Miss Tiller would place the 1/3 pint bottles of milk on the

old coke stoves and we would drink it lovely and warm. I remember the long bars of carbolic soap which used to be sliced off by Miss MacKenzie for hand washing and being gramophone winding monitor during country dancing or maypole dancing and having to give a special performance at the summer flower show in the cricket field in July. There was great excitement when the school had its first electric record player in 1961 - we were told it was very fragile and we were not allowed anywhere near it! One summer, we painted a map of the world on the playground using a plastic pattern. Children from the village in the 50's and 60's were not allowed to cycle or be driven to school, unless they lived beyond a certain distance. We were left at the school gate - mums did not go into the playground unless on 'official business' and at the end of the day, after the Lord's Prayer was said and 'Now the day is over' was sung, the Headmistress would see us across the road to the Greenclose path, where mums waited inside the gate.

In 1990, a well was uncovered at the rear of the house, with beautifully constructed flint walls. The water is crystal clear and even in the summer is ice cold - it has not dried up in the ten years it has been opened.

The Jerrards have been in Damerham since 1750. How could we live anywhere else! Long established families, newcomers, weekenders, whoever, all add to our village's wonderful spirit and Damerham embraces them all!