

MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF DAMERHAM



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Born at South Allenford in 1933 my first memory of Damerham was staying with my Auntie and Uncle who was then living in one of the semidetached cottages at the bottom end of West Park Lane, then if I remember rightly was called Back Lane, my Uncle being a Carter at Knoll Farm, whilst my Father was a Dairyman at Allenford.

My parents having previously lived at Toyd Farm. My elder Brothers and Sisters attended Martin School where I did my first seven years schooling, walking each day the two miles each way with my older Sister and Brother, eventually we did get bicycles, not new ones in those days, A S Ps as we used to call them. (all spare parts). It was not until I was twelve years old when I changed schools that I really got to know Damerham.

One of the tragedies I remember most vividly whilst at Martin school was hearing a loud bang at about 11 o'clock one morning only to discover on arriving home in the late afternoon every window in our house had been blown out by an accidental explosion of stockpiled land mines opposite the turning to Knoll Farm, less than half a mile away, leaving a belt of trees flattened for several hundred yards. Tragically four soldiers lost their lives, as the older

residents know their graves are in the Churchyard, this was in 1941.

On another occasion when coming home from school we found various parts of burnt American uniforms strewn on the road, evidently there had been another accident where several coloured soldiers had been badly burnt in the back of a lorry carrying inflammable munitions. Luckily we never heard of any fatalities in that incident, this was nearing the end of the war.

Moving on to happier times I often think of the hours we used to spend playing fox and hounds in the chalkpit near Court Farm, cycle speedway in the little field next to the cricket pitch, tickling trout in the river near Knoll bridge, a few pranks on bonfire night but no vandalism, the sight of a policeman and we would run a mile.

On leaving school at the age of fifteen I started working at Mr Rogers grocery shop, spending many hours bagging sugar into 1lb and 2lb bags, (some may remember the old type - stiff blue ones), in those days sugar came loose in sacks of over 2 cwt. Quite regularly I would take half of one of these sacks on the old tradesman's bike to Bouldsbury, can not remember the gentleman's name now but he was a bee-keeper and I presume he fed this sugar to his bees. At the end of the week I collected 15 shillings in wages, (75 pence today) From Mr Rogers shop I was tempted to Mr Hubert Jerrard's at Channel Hill farm for a wage of £2-2-0 a week, overnight I became rich? From Mr Jerrard's I worked for a couple of years at Mr Woodvine's farm at Tidpit

Martin before joining the Royal Air Force where I served for five years.