

AGNES BENHAM'S 100TH BIRTHDAY



Wednesday 11 August 1999 was a very special day. For many millions of people, it was an occasion of wonderment and awe as they watched the eclipse of the sun from the various vantage points along the line of totality, from the Scilly Isles to India. But here in Southampton, it was a day that eclipsed that other world event. Agnes Benham was celebrating her one hundredth birthday.

The day began early for the centenarian, as she went to the hairdressers first thing. Then the piles of cards and telegrams arrived, and flowers were delivered. The lounge at Fairhavens Christian Residential and Nursing Home looked - and smelled - just like a florists. Amidst it all sat Agnes, known also as Auntie Agnes or Benny or Mrs Benham to her family and friends. She was in good spirits, perhaps convinced once she had received that very special telegram with its royal photograph that she really was a hundred!

As the day went on, visitors began gathering for her teatime celebration. They came from far and near, by train, by taxi, by car. They came from Selston in Nottinghamshire, from Bungay in Suffolk, from New Milton in Hampshire and from Buckland Newton in Dorset. They came with gifts, with flowers, and with love. Some of them had known Agnes for a very long time;

Merly Ross can claim a friendship of seventy years. For a short time, Fairhavens' lounge became a crowd of memories, of laughter at remembered moments, all centring on this remarkable lady.

Just before the cake was cut, and teas were handed round, we all listened as Alan made a short speech, highlighting some of the main details of Agnes' life. He spoke of her childhood, as the eldest of eleven children. He spoke of the years she spent as a resident maid at Crimea Farm, a time of much happiness. And he spoke of her married life, as the wife of a gamekeeper, Bill, and their happiness together on the various country estates where they lived and worked.

Finally, he spoke of her time in Damerham, where she spent such a large part of her life latterly. Her skill with the needle and crochet hook, her enjoyment and participation in village events, her involvement with the church, her love of gardening; all these have contributed to the long life that we were celebrating. Finally, as he spoke of her increasing disability and the resultant move into care, first in Bickerley Green and then in Fairhavens, we could appreciate the frustration that she feels at times when she acknowledges that she can no longer do so many of the things she did before. He concluded with a prayer of thanksgiving for all the varied aspects of her life.

The candles were blown out on the splendidly decorated cake provided by Fairhavens, and we all sang "Happy Birthday". The photographer from the local paper, who had arrived right on cue, took a few pictures, and then we could

enjoy our tea, and more conversations, before the visitors began to take their leave and set off for home.

It was a splendid day. So many thanks are due to the staff at Fairhavens, for all their kindness and their care over the arrangements for this once-in-a-lifetime happening. And thanks are due too to all those who remembered the day and sent greetings, flowers, and gifts, or who came to help Agnes celebrate her very special birthday. She has always treasured the love and friendship of all who have known her.

Although she felt a little "down" as the last visitors prepared to go, and wondered how she would spend the evening, this occasion will undoubtedly go down as one of the highspots in a very long life.

MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF DAMERHAM



ANTHONY BAVERSTOCK

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 11b and 21b 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.

BETTY WASKETT



30 years ago I came to the village which was to dominate the rest of my life.

I was born and lived most of my life on the other side of The Forest and had never heard of Damerham. As the other older properties around our then home at Butts Ash disappeared under housing estates we decided to sell up and move further out. A chance perusal of the local paper led us to look at the cottage which became our home for 21 happy years. We visited the village on a sunny summer afternoon and it reminded us at once of the happy years we spent in the South of Ireland.

Unspoilt by horrid road signs (there was one old finger post on the grassy triangle in the centre of the road to South End - Both alas gone under tarmac) with a population of around 400 - mostly local families and only 18 children at the school and everyone seemed to be related to everyone else! - just like Ireland.

Each morning and evening I walked with my dogs on Ashridge- then a wonderful unspoilt place. The only person I ever met up there was Ralphie, the woodsman, many animals, deer, hare - a huge badger set, all kinds of fungi and wild plants - no horrid alien plants and birds. It was a perfect place. Along the top ran a footpath - once an ancient 'green road' which went down to the site of the original village at what is now called 'The Common'. Presumably the village grew around 'Holywell', a spring never known to dry up. When the Black Death plague arrived the village was destroyed and the survivors moved to the present site of the village, one old habitation survived, known to us as 'Fred's Shed'.- it has now been adapted to modern living.

Rising up past our cottage was the lane known as 'Nodden's Hill'. The name probably derived from Wotan or Odin. Under the garden at Hilltop Cottage is a paved floor of great antiquity - maybe the remains of an old place of worship. Maybe the Vikings were there - we know they came up the river to Fordingbridge.

Ashridge has a secret area with piles of oyster shells, pieces of ancient pottery and mosaic. On a winter's day a shadow picks out the site of the old road which leads to a Roman camp. In my garden I often dug up pieces of ancient

lead glazed pottery, (I was a potter for many years and know something of its structure). Maybe there was once a potter working nearby or perhaps it was just a rubbish tip. The old chalk pit, that was our garden, had been used for many centuries. Ashridge is on a clay soil and on the Daggons side are the remains of pits where clay was dug out for the famous Verwood Potteries.

Most of our end of the village belonged to the Damerham Parva and is now known as Manor Farm. After the first world war the land and cottages were sold - ours changed hands for £40! There were 4 cottages, with one well for water, in what became our garden and a chalk cob cottage, opposite our gate, which stood until the late 1960's. There was a very pretty chalk cob cottage on the road side at Greenbanks which was destroyed in the 1970's when the new house was built.

Due to health problems we made the sad decision to leave and move to Fordingbridge but Damerham will always be my home. Although it has changed much I still look on it as my place and its people my family. I belong - and if when I'm dead you see a ghost on Ashridge - it will be me with my little dog - back home again!

DAMERHAM IN 1959



SHEILA WILLIAMS

When we were house hunting in 1959 we had specific requirements. We wanted to live in a village - not too far from Salisbury. We needed a house large enough for Ted and me, our two children Andrew and Alison aged three and a half and two, a soon to hatch Sara and also an ageing mother-in-law. Also that house had to be one that no-one else wanted and so be cheap enough for our budget. We were so lucky that we found all these in Damerham.

On our very first visit I just knew that I could live there. Herbie in the shop next door directed us to the owner, on the way I met and had a chat with Mrs Daisy Nicklen and Mrs Nelson Bush. I was hooked.

The house had been empty for 2 or 3 years, it had a cold tap, basic electric lighting and one socket outlet. The very un-mod con was at the back behind the laurel bushes. We moved in and did it ourselves in situ.

We found Damerham people to be welcoming and kindly, two little tots and a bulge provided a good passport no doubt. I spent the first 10 years of my life amongst village people, mostly related to me, so I felt really at home there.

Mr & Mrs Ron Ridout ran the shop next door, Mr & Mrs Josh Tiller the Post Office in the High Street, Mr & Mrs Roberts in the Garage, David Herrington was their apprentice, Bill Stamp delivered the papers and the bread and Mr & Mrs Cliff Butler delivered the milk. The Vicar was the Reverend George Moule, a bachelor and very keen botanist. He had taught in a number of public boys schools. His late father had been vicar for many years, his mother lived in a bungalow in West Park Lane. The older Moules had been missionaries in China at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. Mrs Moule was very old and was lovingly cared for by Mrs Marjorie Budd, a good friend to me.

The village school was taught by Mrs Wilding and Miss Nellie Tiller, one of Damerham's Tiller Girls - a kind and popular teacher. Her sister taught Martin schoolchildren.

The village hall was the largest one in the area. It was given by Lady Eyre Coote and looked like an old Nissen Hut. The roof leaked and there was absolutely nothing "mod" about the "cons" whatever - they were best avoided. However this was where village events took place. A barber, Dennis Chalk, came over from Broad Chalke, fortnightly I think, and had his salon in a draughty cubby hole at one end. I met more people while waiting with Andrew for his turn and caught up on the latest gossip.

The children's Christmas Party committee invited me to join them and I was able to see the village in action. The "committee" was really an assembly of all those who were likely to be able to help, with the jumble sale and with the party which ensued. Mr Billy Manston was there, a wise and tactful

presence, he may have been the Chairman. The committee itself merely fixed the date and everything else happened as before. They all knew their jobs and did them with a will. Mrs Ivy Manston, Mrs Marsh, Mrs Daisy Nicklen, Mrs Ernie Pearce, Mrs Budd and Betty Waterman always did the catering arrangements. They were a very experienced team and they had a lovely old gossip as they worked. There was plenty of laughter escaping from the kitchen area.

We lived opposite the village hall. The most regular booking was for the Youth for Christ's gospel rally each month. There didn't seem to be many youths in attendance but it filled the hall with people and song.

These are some of my memories of Damerham in 1959. We lived there for 25 years and became absorbed into village life. Ted is now in the churchyard among friends.

EAST END 1841 AND 1977

By E.C.W.

For the uninitiated these notes do not refer to Tower Hamlets but to one short length of road in Damerham, from the bridge over the River Allen to the bottom of Court Hill.

In 1841 a Ringwood surveyor, Harry Holloway mapped South Damerham, then in Wiltshire, for the Tithe Commissioners so that the Church could more easily collect the taxes they had levied since at least the 9th century. As an

interesting side note tithe annuities are now finally being abolished at the end of 1977.

East End is the one part of the village that seems to show little change, but I think Harry would have great difficulty recognising it in 1977 after 136 years of de-population, fire and decay. Starting on the North side by the bridge (which did exist in 1841) there were three cottages on the site of the War Memorial and Village Hall with a barn and two more cottages in the car park. The length between West Park Lane and Court Hill contained only one farm with its barns and a block of four cottages at the bottom of Court Hill close to the road. In those days there was no lodge and no entrance to West Park from the village, the entrance being from Rockbourne and the top of Court Hill. As the four cottages were demolished recently and the Terrace wasn't built till long after his death Harry would find great changes.

He would however have rather better luck on the return journey on the south side of the road. Court Cottage hadn't been built but both East End and Wood View were there with a shed on the site of the Garage Workshops. The garage house was half of a semi-detached pair with the eastern half now removed. No doubt Harry knew the Compasses, as like all good surveyors he carefully notes it on his plan and it was the same shape then as it is now. The old barn behind the car park is also shown but the remainder of the south side has changed almost out of recognition. The central part of the building, between the shop and Meadowsweet is all that existed in Harry's day. The wing containing the shop was probably built many years after his survey and the other wing forming Meadowsweet was added by the estate

in 1910 as the village post office. One more cottage completed East End, the burned remains of this now lie under the drive of Meadowsweet.

Fire took its toll of Damerham - thatch burned only too readily, and this is probably what cleared the village hall site and led to the terrace being constructed.

HILL FARM



FAMILY OF LIZA DRAX

Liza came to live at Hill Farm in 1969 when it was in a near derelict state. She improved it greatly keeping it thereafter in immaculate order and actively took part in the life of the village. She kept beef cattle and bred Dachshunds showing them in the local show. Her great love was horses which she bred in a



small way almost single handed for many years experiencing all the problems well known with the rearing of horses but ultimately achieving her greatest success by selling a yearling foal for a very large price at the Newmarket Sales. The Hill Farm Stud, as she called it was

therefore the first time recognised by the racing world.

She operated the 'Box' from home for many years at one time taking the Duchess of Norfolk's horses. She was greatly helped by Alf Abbott who worked with her until her death in 1995.

MEMORIES OF DAMERHAM



JOHN HATHAWAY
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.

QUEEN'S SILVER JUBILEE



CHLOE 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.

THE MANSTON FAMILY IN DAMERHAM



Arthur Manston and Elizabeth Edwards, both members of local families, married around 1900 and settled in Damerham. They lived first at Greenbank, then at Mill End and from 1928 at The Common.

They raised four children to adulthood:-

(1) Ethel who became Mrs. Horace Hooper, lived at Mill End, and had two sons, Cyril and Trevor.

(2) William ("Bill") and (3) Fred, both of whom lived as neighbours at The Common.

(4) Kate, who left the village when she married.

Arthur spent much of his working life in the building industry, latterly as a brickmaker. Bill also worked in brickmaking. Fred worked on local farms, then delivering milk and later for the Avon and Stour River Authority.

Arthur died in 1936, just before his seventieth birthday, but Elizabeth lived until 1981 when she was 104 years of age. She loved wild flowers and walking and was well known, latterly as "Granny Manston", to all who lived in Damerham during those years. She remained remarkably active in her old age and extended an open invitation for village people to join her in the village hall to celebrate her 100 birthday.



Bill and his wife, Ivy, were married in 1928 and had one son, Roy. He left the village in 1949, but returned regularly to visit the family and play cricket for the village. He married a Damerham girl, Molly Ings, in 1956. Although no longer residents, all of their children were

baptised in Damerham Church. Bill was active in village life. He was a parish councillor and a member of the Village Hall Committee for many years. He took a particular delight in supporting the annual Christmas Party for the village children and also Damerham Cricket Club. He, Ivy and Fred were regular spectators at the club's matches. He was also an enthusiastic advocate for retaining the footpaths in the village and devoted much of his energies to keeping them open, particularly from 1950 to 1970 when they were in danger of being lost.

Bill and Ivy died in 1980 and 1981 respectively. Fred, a retired bachelor, then left Damerham to live near Roy and Molly and their family. The only descendant of Arthur and Elizabeth still living in Damerham in 1999 is Cyril Hooper of Mill End. He is one of their four grandsons. Living elsewhere there are seven great grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren.

From Roy & Molly Manston, previously of The Common

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE



CHRIS BAVERSTOCK

Even in the "fifties" many people seldom went out of the village, few people had cars and we had our own shops. Jos Tiller kept the Post Office, Dicky Rogers had a grocer's shop, Dan

Palmer was a baker and Marky Tiller was the shoe mender. Apart from a trip to Fordingbridge, or occasionally to Salisbury most people stayed put.

The only time that we went further was on a Sunday school outing in Herrington's Charabanc and then we sometimes travelled as far as Weymouth or Swanage.

There was little to disturb the tranquil routine of village life so the Flower Show was something to look forward to. There was usually a Fair with swingboats, a coconut shy and roundabout - Connelly's Golden Galloping Horses. When the show was held in a field at North End there was even grass track racing! There were also races and other sporting events for children and adults.

Records in the Salisbury Journal Office would show that C. Baverstock and C. Baverstock (cousin Clifford and I) won the three-legged race. There were pillow fights where two men sat on a pole and tried to knock each other off. Budgie Jerrard was very good at this and Cyril Hooper took some shifting - bloodied but unbowed!

Sometimes there was a tug-of-war - the ICI Estate versus the village. The ICI Team had some big fellows; Jock Somerville and Bob Saunders were two.

I don't suppose that Damerham more than any other village welcomed newcomers. George Bowers was the new village policeman. I first met him when I was up a tree in the copse by the crossroads - he told me to get down. I couldn't understand this since I had been climbing ever since I could walk and had conquered most of Damerham's best. I

suppose he thought it was dangerous and he clearly didn't understand the nature of country "play" - he must have come from a town.

Also at this time there was a men's race which was twice round the cricket field, a distance of about six hundred yards. There was a rumour that George Bowers, a tall athletic man, was a serious runner and out to win this race. The rumour caused a certain amount of hostility among the locals and a plan was devised - probably in the Compasses - to beat him and bring him down a peg. The plan was that somebody should run the first lap very fast, tire George out and leave the way clear for a back runner to come through and win. Arthur Percy and Bill Mulligan were chosen to put this plan into action. Arthur Percy (otherwise known as "Little Peck") was a rotund red faced man with short grey hair. He worked for the Post Office and no doubt in his day he had been quick, but now he was in his forties. Bill Mulligan was a gamekeeper on the West Park Estate. He had brown curly hair and always wore brown plus fours even while playing tennis!

The day of the Flower Show came and there was much excitement and speculation about the race. George turned up in full running kit - singlet, shorts and spikes! - something unheard of in Damerham. Arthur had managed to find a pair of shorts and plimsolls while Bill was still wearing his plus fours and boots.

When the race started there was a crowd of spectators and some vocal interference. Arthur set off at full speed with George tracking him. There were others in the race and Bill soon took his place at the back of the field settling

into a steady pace. At the end of the first lap, Arthur had shot his bolt and retired. George overtook him and kept going at the same speed. Bill was a long way behind. The moment when George was supposed to tire never arrived and when he finished the race, a clear winner, Bill was still plodding around the top of the field with half a lap to go. Perhaps the applause was slightly muted - I can't remember.

HAZEL JARVIS

(NEE TILLER)



I was born and brought up in Damerham and lived at the "Nutshell" in the High Street with my Parents until I married in 1960 and moved to Fordingbridge.

School days with Miss Nellie Tiller and Miss Barnes as teachers and later Miss Mackenzie were very happy years. I remember Miss Tiller teaching me to knit at the age of five years, being left handed was difficult, I made a dolly's bonnet and had 1st Prize in the Damerham Village Show. I remember Miss Barnes taking us out into the playground to show us a baby cuckoo in a thrush's nest a good nature lesson, and frog spawn in the stream. The concerts we used to put on in the village hall with Miss MacKenzie and Miss Tiller, and Mr. Jim Drewitt playing his violin and getting the bow caught in Miss MacKenzie's hair as she played the piano.

Other happy memories are of the time I spent in the Girl Guides, Mrs. Brown our captain did so much for us, we used their house at North End to cook, learn first aid (with the help of Dr. Brown), camp fires in the field, games on the lawn, parties at Christmas. We kept a pig in the yard, and shared the meat when it was time for slaughter, we went swimming in Salisbury on a Saturday morning, and camping at Foxlease in the New Forest. I left school at 14 years and helped my Parents in the Post Office and shop. I was also telegrams girl. I cycled many miles.

I remember when a team of German prisoners were digging a trench through the village to lay water pipes, they would come into the shop to buy thread to send home, they had a good foreman and worked well for him, but not for his relief foreman on his day off.

I remember going to a party at West Park house for the school children given by the Americans. I had a guinea pig that escaped and got into the cook house at the village hall when they were stationed there. I remember the evacuees from Portsmouth and Southampton, we had two to stay with us, and I'm still in touch with Joan Stamp nee Channel today.

JOSH AND WIN TILLER



JOSHUA TILLER

Josh and Win Tiller married and came to Damerham to live at the Nutshell, High Street. (He was born and brought up in Rockbourne,

the son of Tom and Emma Tiller who lived on the West Park Estate at Popplepit as Head Keeper).

He was Sunday School Teacher at the Methodist Chapel - right next door and enjoyed worshipping there. After his spell in the RAF he returned home not knowing what job he would do, he visited the local Post Office at South End run then by Mrs. D. Palmer, and in conversation with her discovered she was retiring and she said why don't you apply. Which he did, hence he now was to be Postmaster. The Head Postmaster of Salisbury told him all you need is a table and a chair (little did he know). The business grew and eventually we moved to the bungalow across the road for more space. The shop was often called Little Woolworths as we sold everything. When bonfire night was over it was time to put on the Xmas display in the back room and many folks looked forward to it, if we hadn't it in stock we would try our best to order it.

REST HAVEN (now The Haven)



WENDY JUKES
(NEE BELL)

Mr Merrill Crighton and Mrs Joan Beatrice Bell (nee Sully) and their daughter Wendy Francis Bell moved to Resthaven, Mill End in October 1966 from Emsworth nr. Havant Hampshire.

Mr Bell was born 28 March 1919 in Southampton, Bermuda and Mrs Bell on 7 June 1916 in New Southgate, London.

In April 1939 Mr Bell joined the 44th Division, Territorial Army RASC, was commissioned in the corps in 1940 and served until 1946 attaining the rank of Captain.

Mr and Mrs Bell met in Sleaford in 1939 and were married on 10 May 1943 in Bournemouth. After demobilisation they went to Bermuda where Mr Bell was appointed Assistant Register of the Supreme Court and Assistant Registrar General with the Bermuda Government. Mrs Bell was a trained shorthand typist and worked in the Colonial Treasury Dept. Their daughter Wendy Frances was born in Bermuda on 18 December 1955.



Joan Bell Oct 1989

In 1961 they returned to England where Mr Bell worked for the Ministry of Defence at Winterborne Gunner until his retirement and Mrs Bell worked as a day-room hostess in Fordingbridge Hospital. They kept chickens, ducks, geese and a vegetable garden on the land between Church View and Resthaven.

Their Daughter was married in St George's Church, Damerham to Peter Anthony Jukes a farmer's son from Woodlands near Wimborne.

Mr Bell died on 17 March 1988 and Mrs Bell on 27 September 1993; both are buried in St George's Churchyard overlooking where they lived.

L.O. KING



It is a well known fact that World War 2 brought many changes to the lives of most people. Our family were bombed during the Blitz, and we found ourselves living in Fordingbridge. My sister Dorothy had married Gerald Jerrard, whose family are well known in Damerham. At that time they were living in the Mill House at Mill End. I visited them from time to time, and so became familiar with the village.

In 1949 I married Christine Murphy from Brickhill, her family was also related to well known Damerham families. Uncle Mont & Aunt Winn from the Compasses Inn. Uncle Bill & Nora from Stapleton Farm. Christine and I settled in our little cottage at Mill End. No electricity or mains water in those days.

Water came from Tommy Bedford's cress beds and was heated by a Primus burner placed under a tea urn.

To us Damerham is very much the same as it must have been many ages ago. From the dim past Damerham has seen everything that has happened to it. Damerham has not changed, but the people have. There's still a Pub, a Garage, a Shop, a Builder, a Gardener, Odd Job Man. A lovely village hall stands proud, the previous hall was almost a hundred years old.

Living in our cottage, on early summer mornings, at about 5 am, cheerful whistling on the air, Tommy Bedford and young Macky (Bill) Witt, cutting watercress, thick bunches fresh as the morning, sent on their way to feed the people for another day. What about Dan Palmer's bread, those lardy cakes big round as your head. Alas no more for us to see those lovely bread and cakes laid out for tea.

Damerham remains the same, it has seen generations of families some with a claim to fame. Tabitha Coffin from Manor Farm, had her own Ducking stool, but not a lot of charm. Watch out for the White Donkey coming down Back Lane disappearing in a sawpit never to be seen again. The Ghostly Coach and Horses Galloping around the pond on old Market Nights. Must have given a few quite a fright. The Damerham Great Fire of 1864, the cry for contributions and help for the poor. £591 pounds collected, what a relief, all signed and sealed by a Mr Nuth, Manager of Wilts & Dorset Bank at Fordingbridge.

From the distant past through to today Damerham has not changed, people from long

ago would see many familiar sights and not be strangers. Damerham has not changed. People have.

DAMERHAM'S LAST DONKEY DERBY



JACKIE SWINDELL

I had missed all the previous Donkey Derbies. I am not keen on betting myself but don't object to others doing so and was pleased to be asked to help. I had hoped to be given a trackside job, like issuing hard hats, where the fun could be observed and a good laugh had. No such luck - I was assigned the task of bookie's assistant.

The early nineties will be remembered in Damerham not only for the frenetic fund raising, first for John Roger's Salisbury Scanner Appeal and then for the New Village Hall, but also for power cuts. A heavy shower or stiff breeze and out went the lights. The evening of the Donkey Derby was one such occasion. Not that the donkeys needed lights but power was essential to get the beer flowing. A generator was produced and eventually all was up and running. In the tote Duncan and his reluctant assistant were ready for the off. Though from the gloom of the cricket pavilion there was not a donkey in sight, let alone a beer and the punters were an argumentative lot.

It started at the end of the first race and rose to a crescendo by the third. People were bringing up the wrong numbers and insisting they had won. There seemed to be two winners for every race. It was some time before we discovered that both the donkeys and the jockeys were wearing numbers - not the same ones. Things were pretty fraught at the tote. Collecting winnings became as much a lottery as picking a winning donkey, or jockey, depending on which camp of punters you belonged to! We stuck to our guns and paid out on the donkeys.

The completion of the last race saw the start of a saner pursuit. Counting money is a much more rational task. Money does not argue, it sits in orderly piles and quiet columns. We settled to our task with enthusiasm. All was going very smoothly until someone decided to take the generator home. Plunged into darkness in the middle of the coin count, distinguishing silver and copper with difficulty, we laboured on. I don't know why we did not take it home and finish it in comfort. Could we have caught some attribute from the donkeys?