

DOROTHY JERRARD



My family moved from Southampton to Sandleheath in 1941. I attended school at Fordingbridge until 1943, leaving at 14 years to work in King's Drapers, High St. Fordingbridge for 10 shillings a week, rising to 15 shillings, after the first year's service. I cycled to work each day, and sometimes would leave early to get meat from the butcher, cycle home with it for the family's dinner, and then return again to start work at 9 am. I slept in the attic of the bungalow in a double bed with my 2 older sisters. In the same room was another bed with my brother's wife and her sister. My mother and father slept in another room and my mother's parents had the front room. I also had 2 other brothers who must have slept in the living room, I can't remember.

Thursday was early closing in Fordingbridge. My friend Lorna Knight and I would cycle in the evening to Damerham Village Hall for the weekly dance, then organised by Gerald Hockey, (formerly of Stapleton Farm). He was good fun and made a light box with moon and stars shining through. We all thought it was marvellous. It was at a dance in 1944 that I met my husband Gerald Jerrard.

In 1946 the family moved to Cherry Orchard Lane, Salisbury, and Gerald and his friend Ken Sims would come up from Fordingbridge on the bus. Ken was courting Pat, (now Mrs. Sims), who lived in Herhert Road. Once during

a bus strike they even took the train from Fordingbridge Station. We married in January 1948, and lived at Hillview, (now Bethany), the Common, Damerham with Gerald's sister Molly and her husband Ted Butler, (formerly of Hill Farm). We then moved to the Mill House, (now the Old Corn Mill), Mill End, which had no mains water or electricity. I had to cook on a primus stove with only 2 legs and a cork to keep it upright. The water pump would gush out several pints of rusty water before it cleared. We had an accumulator radio



which would run down after a short time. Gerald would go out shooting rabbits, and we saved enough money to have 2 lights and 2 sockets fitted. We had the electricity connected, and bought a Baby Belling cooker. The first and third of our children were born in the Mill House in 48 and 50, (the second being born at the Sandleheath Off Licence in 49, then being run by Molly and Ted Butler). The three cots would be in our bedroom at night, and we would hear the rats scampering to and fro in the attic and under the floor boards. The Barn Owl would also hoot in the old mill part all night long. Coming from a street lit town I found all this very frightening especially when my husband was out playing darts for the Compasses Inn.

When we moved to Mill House it had just been vacated by Gerald's parents Arthur and Emily Jerrard who in 1941 had bought Crossways Farm in the sale of West Park Estate. They were unable to move in straightaway as the farm was immediately requisitioned by the army to billet officers, one of whom was Virgil Rice from Alabama, U.S.A. in 1944. He has also written a piece for the Damerham Domesday Book. Our families are still in regular contact 55 years on.

In March 1951 we moved to No. 5, (now 24), West Park Lane to the lovely new "modern" Council houses, which had 3 bedrooms, a sitting room, living room, kitchen and wash house. What luxury. We had our fourth and fifth children here. There were electrical points in the living room, kitchen, wash house, and a strange one in the main bed room which we never could find a plug to fit. The Council supplied a boiler for wash day on Mondays. The gardens along the road were festooned with whiter than white sheets etc, hanging out to hopefully dry. No bonfires were allowed on Sundays or Mondays.

In December 1977 we moved to the family home at Crossways having had a bathroom and kitchen added. There were no facilities until then.

Over the last 22 years we have developed the garden and still sell vegetables as Gerald's father used to do.

Our 2 youngest sons Michael and Robin live at Crossways, daughters Dawn and Carolyn live in West Park Drive, and the eldest Gary at Mockbeggar near Ringwood. We have 7 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren (soon to be five). One of our grandsons and his wife

and 2 children are now missionaries in the Ivory Coast, West Africa and are there for 4 years.



Life in Damerham has been a very busy yet enjoyable time and the family have been involved in many fund raising events over the years starting with the "Young Wives" founded by Sheila Williams (formerly of Meadowsweet) in the 1960 s.



After 50 years Gerald and I were given a wonderful party on the 31st. January 1998 to celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary in the new Village Hall. There were 280 family and friends from past and present gathered together for a memorable evening.

We look forward to having many more happy times in Damerham.

