

MANOR FARM HOUSE DAMERHAM



NOVEMBER 1967 - JULY 1991

Lived in by Alistair and Alice Wallace and his children by a previous marriage - Caroline, Jamie and Emma and then children Adam and Anabella, born in 1969 and 1971.

The house was bought at an auction in Fordingbridge in 1967 for £7,500 and had been put up for sale by the Dampneys who previously bought the farm and house from the Lush family.

H. Dalton Clyford and Partners (architects) in Salisbury were responsible for the plans for the extensive alterations, W.J.F. Shering & Sons, in Fordingbridge, did the building work and Pamela Robertson Des. RLA MSIA has been responsible for a great deal of the interior plans.

The house was ready for occupation in July 1969 and, although there had been a great many renovations and changes, the roof did not have any attention. During the excavations a Queen Anne coin was found and several oyster shells, which suggests Romans may have used the site.

Before we moved into the house Charlie Drewitt, a life-long Damerham man, had taken on the garden. He had been in the Compasses when we telephoned the Landlord to ask if he

knew anyone who would be interested in the job. Apparently he had expected to be asked ! His wife, Nellie, also came to us and looked after everything and everyone and left after she and Charlie had celebrated their Golden Wedding and Charlie had died.

Ken Sims, also a Damerham man, who had spent much of his childhood at Manor Farm, was then employed in the garden and we had the great good fortune that he took on all aspects of maintenance and part of the animals, including the Jacob sheep which were introduced in 1982. His wife, Pat, also came in place of Nellie and she and Ken stayed with us to the last day. Their daughter, Bernadette, who married Michael Cooper, had her wedding reception at the house.

The cattle yard which was bought separately at the auction for £250, was the next project, and in 1970 the stalls were pulled down from the south facing wall and the north wall was made continuous. The ground was then put down to grass with a border at the north end and fruit trees on the south wall. There was a great deal of chalk in the soil as 3 cubic yards a year was put down to keep the ground dry for the cattle.



Harvest Supper Sept 72

The first Harvest Supper was held in the barn in September 1972. The 114 guests (approx.) sat on straw bales at the Village hall trestle tables, a bar was provided by the Compasses and staffed by the guests. The background music and lights were arranged by Michael Jerrard. After the supper, which was produced by a committee, the tables were cleared and Ena Zebedee played her accordion for a sing-song. The proceeds went to St George's Church.

In 1973 the 'nursery wing' was completed and joined to the main house by an overhead walk. The existing outbuildings were added to and built over. The cost of building work had escalated alarmingly by then.



*Harvest Supper Sept 73
Ena singing her heart out*



*Harvest Supper Sept 73 - Cathy, Mrs
Wallace and James Bouskell*



*Harvest Supper Sept 73 - Mr
Wallace way out west*

In common with everywhere else in England, the mature hedgerow elms were killed by Dutch Elm disease - changing the outlook from the house across to the Vicarage. The oak tree planted in the field to the south of the house was grown from an acorn brought back from Australia.

In the summer of 1976, the swimming pool was put in where the pigsties had been in the field to the west of the barn. (This field was a separate purchase and cost £1,250). The building of the pool took three weeks and was done as a surprise while we were away !

The final building project was the conversion of the granary to a retirement cottage for Miss Joan Sadler who had been Adam and Anabella's nanny since they were born. The work was again undertaken by Shering and the plans done by Pamela Robertson. Planning permission stipulated that the cottage could

only be used by a member of the family or an employee of the owners of the house or someone employed in agriculture. The cottage was called Primrose Cottage as we had tried to establish primroses in the bank between the house and the cottage.



Great Storm Jan 1990

In the January storm of 1990, the beautiful wall on the roadside was brought down with the rambler roses that covered it. The wall has been repaired but the pale pink bricks could not be reused.

During the 23 years we were in the house it has always been available for the British legion Fête or other aspects of village life. In February 1991, the Choristers of Salisbury cathedral, with the organist and other relevant adults were given a meal in the house before the service in St George's Church to mark the rebuilding of the church's organ.

It was with great sadness that we said 'goodbye' to everyone at a party given for us in the Village hall in July 1991.