

MEMORIES OF TWO HOUSES IN DAMERHAM



JEAN HARRIS

I have lived in two other houses in Damerham with a gap of over 38 years when I was away, married, and bringing up a family. The first was North End House, and the second Colt Green.

So now to Colt Green, a spacious cedarwood bungalow built in 1959 by my parents "for their antiquity". It did pretty well - my mum died in 1983, aged eighty three, in a car crash, and my dad in 1985, aged 92, at home.

Elizabeth and I took turns to come and look after him, then I moved to Colt Green after my youngest son married (I was divorced by then). Colt Green was built in the one acre garden we knew as the K.G. (Kitchen Garden!) which my dad had bought from the Coote Estate at the same time as North End House. It is a quarter of a mile up the road, and one day, I will research its history as it is full of bits of slate, and digging a hole is often a pick-axe job, to get through different sorts of foundations. In my childhood, Mr Whitmarsh grew potatoes, asparagus and all sorts of other nice things like peas and raspberries. It had a tennis court upon which our mum and Eleanor Whitelegge (Martin) used to serve devastatingly, underarm, and the cherry tree up which I sat, because I could not and would not play tennis, is still there. There was an orchard with a long bit of

river frontage which was a great centre of activity over the years. Apart from us paddling and catching minnows and sticklebacks, there were ducks (Aylesbury and Khaki Campbells), hens (Rhode Island Reds and Black Leghorns), trout, coots, kingfishers and during the war a sow with babies and a couple of pigs fattening for the larder ("for indoors", we used to say).

Now, here we tap into one of the legends of Damerham - our mum and the Girl Guides. It was the Second World War and they did things like keeping pigs. The Guides' pig lived in the orchard pig sty and they saved "pig swill", and someone grew potatoes, and they lit a fire and boiled these goodies up in a large "copper" for the pigs' dinners - and watch it - pigs don't eat hot potatoes. I still have a notebook with all the Guides' names and a rota for mucking out the pigs.

The Guides met at North End House and I think everyone of the right age joined. They learnt how to use the telephone (circa 1940 +), how to write business letters, lots of First Aid, cooking, knot tying and the Morse Code with buzzers and flags. They went on Guide Parades to the cathedral, to International Camps and to their own annual camp - where they had many adventures with rain and wind and - yes - intruders, and they sang lots of camp-fire songs. All concerned remember the Damerham Guides fondly, those that are left!

North End House - Elizabeth and I had a wonderful childhood there, specially once the war had seen off the Governesses etc. We did not comprehend - when we saw Southampton burn from our bedroom window - or dog fights, little silver planes high in the sky above glinting in the sun, Spitfires and

Messerschmitts. Our dad did, he had been through the trenches in 1914-15. The concrete "pill boxes" at strategic corners, the anti-tank barricades on the coast, the bombing of cities on the news, the Home Guard (not unlike the original Dad's Army series), the First Aid classes (our dad held these in many places) the Black-Out, (not a chink of light to show round or through curtains, doors etc after dark) and we had Black-Out wardens, no sign posts (in case the Germans landed and wanted to know where they were), the rationing of everything - food, clothes, fuel; "the dig for victory" posters (veg), our gas masks, our identity cards (EEST 1384), our identity discs (round the neck). All this, and we did not comprehend how close the German invasion was, and what would happen then. We were kids, this was the way things were - and Churchill (he was known as plain "Churchill", Winston if pictured in his air-raid siren suit) imbued us all with this great, romantic, fighting spirit - we were BRITISH, we would deal with the enemy and win the war, if we all put our backs into it. (Fantastic stuff; do listen to recordings of his war-time speeches).

We had land girls in Damerham, who came to help out on the farms and married and stayed. We had evacuees - yes - little kids with labels pinned to them with their name and age arrived at the school with their gas masks and not much else. Every household that had a room and was able to, took them in. We had Eva and June from Portsmouth, then David and Tessa from Southampton. I still hear from Eva and her husband every Christmas and Easter and meet her children and grandchildren most years.

Then, before D Day, the American army came to Damerham - they had food, which they were very generous with, and they had ammunition which they stored in camouflaged dumps, perhaps six foot square, all along every accessible hedgerow at twelve foot intervals. They also had black soldiers. Damerham had only ever seen black people in pictures (black and white ones at that), but they were a wow - no racial nonsense here. Then, suddenly, they were gone, and over us flew very, very low, an immense armada of transport planes towing gliders. This was D Day - there followed V.E. (Victory Europe) day and V.J. day (Victory Japan) celebrations, and rationing got tighter, though we no longer had to carry gas masks.

We felt quite safe as children, wandering about the countryside on our bicycles, or looking for birds' nests or wild flowers, or riding our ponies. The only "bogey man" was the game keeper because our dogs would go hunting. Like all country kids we grew up knowing what we could or couldn't do or go. Farms were each great communities then. No combines, we had Fordson tractors and three-furrow plough. I have done my time, sitting on one of these (ploughs) on a straw pallet, with a galvanised bath full of seed potatoes in front of me and a metal cone down which I carefully shot the potatoes with Bill Butcher, I think, as my team mate on the tractor.

At harvest time we all went "hailing", propping up the sheaves of corn, six or eight at a time, making a tunnel with butts down and heads meeting. All the able-bodied turned up for this job - kids and wives and school masters. Cold tea was the drink - not cider - sweet and

milkless and a beautiful amber colour in a lemonade bottle.

I am talking about Knoll Farm where Elizabeth and I spent many happy hours working as children and later teenagers. We had a binder, a couple of tractors and three horses and wagons for harvest. I don't recall how the system worked, but Elizabeth and I had charge of Sam, Bliss and Jo (all very large) at harvest time (manpower shortage) on the grounds that we kept ponies (very small feet - in comparison). Jo was the trace horse, Bliss in an empty, rattling wagon was reputed to bolt, but she never did with us. For the wagon to be loaded, we had to go along the rows of "hailes" stopping at each, and woe betide you if you did not shout "hold tight" and "woah" at start and stop, on time so that the loader on top could brace himself and not fall down. It's a skilled job, loading slippery sheaves on a bump-along wagon and they sure laughed if your load slipped! Even more skilled was the rick builder - more slippery sheaves involved. A rhythm of work developed between the chain of two, three or four people pitching from the wagon to the rick builder, and delivering each sheaf to him at exactly the right moment, in the right place, and facing the right way. Bill Brewer and Gerald Baverstock were our men for the job. Same sort of thing: thrashing. I remember Gerald as cutter (cutting the binder twine) feeding the cut sheaves and Bill, who teased them out and fed them into the thrasher drum - and you could tell by the hum of the thrasher when it was going through. Thrashing equals dust equals sore eyes, if you are under it, cleaning out the cavings. Foreman Walt Way would send greenhorns all round to ask for the "putting on" tool. I mustn't go on about Knoll

any longer, they were very happy days - but I can't not mention the Benson family who farmed it then. Old Dr Benson was a dear, his son Ian was very keen on his hunting, and went off to the States to show them how, I think - and Diana and Barbara who farmed latterly and worked like Trojans. Barbara was an especial friend to me - when I went off to boarding school and was miserable, she wrote me long, long letters about everything and everybody.

Some more about our mum and dad and lovely, lovely North End House, I even love writing the name still. It's "our" house, though those nice Gurowskis have lived there a long time now!

Margaret (nee Nasmyth) and Alan Brown, were both Scots, born and brought up and married in Scotland. Her father was a physician and surgeon, his father spent most of his life in the East India Trading Company. Father was severely wounded in the Great War and his brother James was killed, as were two of his close cousins. Father was invalided out of the Cameronians and went to Glasgow University where he did a B.A. He then decided to be a doctor and trained at Cambridge (Emmanuel) and Barts. Molly had the best years of her life, she always maintained, at Oxford (St Hugh's) where she was one of only two women in the entire Forestry School - no wonder! They came to live in Southampton, but he had to give up medicine because his health wouldn't stand it and they came to North End House in the early 1930s, where they remained till 1960 when they moved up to Colt Green, built in the K.G.

Fifty years they had in Damerham, and loved it and were loved by it, I think - though they

remained true Scots, spending part of every year in Scotland - from 1950 at Ivy Cottage on the Solway Coast, where they had many friends and stays. They lent it to friends in the village and in the Guide world and to relations. I was there very often with my boys.

Here are a few mental snapshots of home life at North End House:

Father fishing for daisies on the lawn! He tested rods and lines for Hardys, the rod maker, and would spend hours at it. He was also a keen shot.

Winter evenings in the morning room by a huge log fire. We had tea there, after the unlucky one had been out in the rain to feed the ponies. We read; two walls with books from floor to ceiling, and we knitted at the same time - all our jumpers etc. The radio was for the nine o'clock news only, if father was around. Someone had to go out into the cold and make supper. Those evenings I remember with warmth and pleasure - so different from how my grandchildren spend their winter evenings nowadays.

Mrs Moule's pudding which was made and delivered every Sunday, for her lunch, while she lived in Back lane (West Park Lane). Then ninety-something, she was the widow of Henry Moule, our much loved Vicar. Tall and slender and slightly stooped he was white haired, grey suited, sparkling blue eyes and always a joke. A lovely man who spent his life as a Missionary in China, and returned to the "living" of Damerham, and spoke such understandable sermons. Their son George, who only recently died at St Bees in Cumbria, was Vicar here too - different, but similar - he was a great naturalist. We have been so

fortunate to have them both. And son Charlie, a high profile professor of Theology at Cambridge, has been no stranger to our pulpit either. He used to stay with us when he came to see his mother, and always got a Father Christmas stocking at Christmas.

Mice and Ghosts - our mum used to hear footsteps going up stairs and along the passage sometimes, no one else in the family did, though others have, I believe - and it was all very nice and friendly, not scary.

The mice in the wainscoting were my friends. Elizabeth and I used to be sent to bed at 6.30 for ages, but did not sleep, and if it was dark, mice scuttling about was a sound I knew and felt safe with. We had adjoining rooms, and we would lie in bed tapping out tunes on the wall to each other.

The Nursery had a grey, cork floor with nursery rhyme rugs, a piano, a gramophone, an open fire and Dapple Grey, the rocking horse, who used to stop the kitchen clock below when we galloped him too hard, and Bushy, our dear friend May Bush, the carter's wife, who cooked for us, would get very cross.

We had a Nanny at one time, and various Governesses, but our mum used to come and read to us most evenings there - a snapshot of us three on the sofa, with tears of laughter streaming down our cheeks while she read "Pickwick Papers" - and Dougle, the black Labrador, quietly being sick in the corner because he had been sleeping too close to the hot, hot fire.

The Fire on the Nursery wall - before the electricity came to Damerham, we had a gas machine in the shed for wall lights, and a

number of oil lamps, one of which lived on the Nursery table, and one day a big map of the World, pinned to the wall behind, caught fire - panic - I can't remember any more!

Before mains water came, we all had wells. We had one in the garden and another one was pumped direct from the kitchen, by hand.

There was a semi-circular stone sink just at sitting height, and a big pump handle. Joe Baverstock used to do the pumping - a hundred and twenty if I remember right, to fill the tank. Eventually, we had an electric pump, much to Joe's relief. Bushie used to cook on a three-burner paraffin stove, with an oven that lifted on and off - oh, those chocolate cakes - little, two-egg sponges with icing on. There was a hot water boiler in the kitchen too, black (it got polished) and greedy, but wonderfully efficient. Also a lovely big stone sink that you could put buckets in, and sharpen carving knives on.

Blue ceiling - Mum was worried by the fly spots on the dining room ceiling (cows, ducks, horses equal flies) so she had the Tillers, (David and Edward's father) come and paint it sky blue and so it remained for ages - a talking point at parties and the flies loved it.

The washing green - another mental snapshot - a long clothes line from which father's woolly long-johns flapped amongst the washing. A pig sty and mum scratching the pig's back with a stick, Piggy looking very happy - wonderfully clean animals if you give them the chance, she used to say. Buttercup and Daisy, the goats, being nosey and Elizabeth and I trying to stay on Mokey, the donkey, who kept putting her head between her knees and sliding us off.

Many discussions between our parents about matters of the District Council, the PCC, the British Legion, the School, the W.I. (anyone remember Mrs Monk, South End), Fordingbridge Cottage Hospital, the hall, the Cricket Club with whose affairs they variously were involved over the years.

The School - Mother used to spend a lot of time here and was campaigning, even then, for lavatories - we got them in 1995! We had great teachers always, it seemed. The Tiller sisters, Miss Barnes, Miss McKenzie. Everyone could read and write by the time they were seven and a number went on to Grammar School (11 + exam), Bishop Wordsworth and Salisbury Girls' school and then to University. Mum used to have Easter-egg-hunts for them in the garden and, every year, she would give the whole school, according to age, a little competition - a picture to draw - writing about something - I have spent hours with her on the drawing room floor judging the results and awarding the prizes, often books, but could be little pen-knives, dolls etc. Norman Nicklen, for one, still has his book. She wasn't a do-gooder, my mum, she just did things. They both had a very full social life.

We had ponies and so we hunted and went to gymkhanas, and if they were too far away for one day, we would ride to somewhere near and spend the night with friends. Charlie Colbourne taught us to drive (dog-cart), and I can feel now the bony withers as I sat on Abe Bush's cart horse. Smart for one, bare back going to the field. I have been connected with horses and ponies all my life since.

I must talk bell-ringing - it played a large part in my life at one time and I met my husband,

Frank, in the Damerham Tower. Henry Moule joked me one day into learning. Percy Waterman was captain and he taught me to handle a bell. I soon became involved in method ringing and a band of us would go out on most Saturdays to ring a peal, 5,000 changes, taking two and a half hours to five and a half hours according to the weight of the bells. We rang some notable peals with some great ringers of the day. That is one aspect of bell ringing, but the reason for its existence is Sunday Service ringing. Damerham has always maintained this on their 6 bells (each one has its own history) and it is unusually good ringing (well struck!). Damerham and Martin ringers have now amalgamated and in spite of difficulty in finding new recruits, they maintain their standards, and win "STRIKING" competitions under the able captaincy of Jack Baverstock.

Elizabeth has recently died, of cancer, and I am the last of that North End House household - the end of a family era with Colt Green on the market too - but the future unfolds, and the new millennium, with my two sons, Johnnie and Drew and their wives, Jackie and Alex and my grandchildren, Lisa, Michael, Tom and Emily - and I am a "working granny" as my mum used to say when she had mine to look after, when they had measles, mumps etc, when I was so busy running our International Riding and Training Centre at Knight Bridge.

AND I live in Damerham - what more could I ask?

My thanks for deciphering my handwriting to Janet Clampit, whose husband Gordon has a most intimate knowledge of most of the chimneys of Damerham.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY EARLY LIFE IN DAMERHAM



GERALD. JERRARD.

I was born in January, 1929, at "Cressview", The Common (now Common Farm House). The family then moved, in the early 30's to Mill House, where my Great Uncle Aquilla Jerrard had lived, who was the last person to operate the water mill.

The road to Hill Farm in those days was just a track, which went through the River to the rear of Mill House. At the front was a footpath with a wooden bridge over the millrace. and an arched bridge over the River which led to the stables and farm buildings (now demolished) where our lorry was later kept.

Fred Butler, who farmed at Hill Farm used to bring all his dairy cows down to the river to drink every day. All the water for cooling the milk had to be pumped by hand.

The Mill was a two-storey building. On the ground floor was a 10 foot metal water wheel, which was connected to a wooden wheel, which can still be seen outside the Old Corn Mill today. The first floor was the milling area, and the top floor had storage bins for grain. (I used to keep my tame rabbits in these). The sacks of corn were winched to the top floor by hand - 2cwt. barley sacks, 2 1/2 cwt wheat, 1 1/2cwt oats - all in hessian sacks .

I remember well the war days, standing with my mother Emily outside the back door of the Mill listening to the war planes. She would say "That's one of ours." or "That's a German." At night we would watch the red glow to the South East as Southampton burned.

One time, a glider crashed at Brick Hill, and the Halifax bomber which had been towing it crashed at Stapleton Farm. The crew were all Canadian. I don't know if any of them survived.

On another occasion, a glider crashed at Hill Farm near Millbrook Cottage. The crew of two were taken to the Farm House and cared for by Mrs. Susan Butler until the military ambulance arrived. The wooden ladder from the glider is still in use today at Crossways Farm.

My father's business was haulage, market gardening, and slaughter-man. In those days many people kept a pig or two in their gardens, one for selling at market, and one for meat. My father would often slaughter pigs for villagers. The pig would be shot in the head with a humane killer captive bolt pistol (which we still have in our possession as a family heirloom). It was then laid out on tin, and surrounded by straw which was burnt until all the bristles were gone, and the skin was a golden colour. Then we would hang the pig up in a tree, usually the old apple tree, and the pig would then be bled. A large bath placed underneath caught all the chitterlings, which my mother would wash, by me holding a funnel in the end of the intestines as she poured water through them. She would then plait them and fry them for our dinner. A couple of days later the pig was cut into joints, put into

silt, salt, and brine. Every two or three weeks more salt was rubbed in to preserve the meat. (No freezers in those days).

During the 1930s. Col. Coote of West Park House regularly visited the bathing pool at Mill End to fish, which in those days was surrounded by tall poplar trees and laurel bushes. I used to hid in the bushes and throw small pebbles into the water and watch him cast his line towards the splash. The Cootes constructed the bathing pool in the 1800s but failed to realise that the river was partly fed by the spring in "Vicarage Meadow" below the Church, which is ice-cold even in Summer - much too cold for comfortable swimming!

To the West of the Mill were the cress beds, owned then by Tommy Bedford. Now moorhens did a lot of damage to the cress, and he would pay me a silver threepenny piece for every one I shot with my No. 3 shotgun, and took to his packing shed. He would throw the birds into the bushes, and when he wasn't around, I would retrieve them, keep them for a while, and then take them to him to be paid again.

I well remember, during the 2nd World War, my father Arthur Jerrard teaching me to drive his Bedford lorry Reg. No. DRU 214, 1937 model, at the age of only 12 years. One of our regular jobs was to collect the swill from the Army Camp based at the Old Village Hall. We also had to collect the 8 1/2 gallon toilet buckets and take them to the field in Brown's Lane called "Sourland" and empty the contents, and then take them to Mill End and wash them in the River. In return for this rather unpleasant task, we were given extra petrol coupons. The toilets were simply a

long, tin shed with lengths of 4" x 2" timbers to sit on - no comfy seats!

On one such trip -I was about 13 or 14 years old, and driving illegally - I was stopped by our local Copper who was riding his bike past the Vicarage. He got me out and gave me a good clout around the ear, and marched me home to my father at Mill House, and gave him a good telling off too. Yet, that very same night, I drove the toilet buckets back to the Village Hall and parked the lorry outside the Compasses. My father got me a bottle of lemonade (in those days the bottle had a glass ball in the neck). From the driving seat, I could see into the Public Bar. It was past closing time, and the Landlord Monte Hockey had locked the door, some of the drinkers staying inside. And in through the bar door came the copper, and was immediately bought a pint by my father! Later I asked my father why he had bought him a drink after he'd told us both off, and he explained that the copper has to be seen to be doing his job - someone may have been watching.

I had my first driving licence in 1945, at the age of 16 1/2 years, having added one year to my age. Lorries then were petrol driven. Our nearest pumps were Joe Miles at Harnham, Salisbury, "Croudies", Fordingbridge (site of Rose and Alexander today) or Nicklens Fordingbridge (still going strong). A sovereign would buy 10 gallons.

The lorry had one rear light, one mirror, no heater, one windscreen wiper which worked by suction - only operating when you decelerated. Batteries were 6 volt and engines were started with a handle, remembering always to pull the

handle up, never to push it down, or the engine may "kick" and possibly break your wrist.

Our lorry was used for livestock and general haulage. The tail loading ramps were in two halves, and it took a lot of effort to lift them, as in those days they were not spring assisted. Most farms were Dairy, Arable, Pigs, Hens, etc. The cattle mainly being shorthorn, (with very long horns!) To transport them on the lorry they had to be roped head to tail, so they could not harm each other. Potentially wild cows or bulls were "bull dogged" - a detachable ring put in their noses. Bulls were blindfolded and roped for transport. Farmers kept their bulls tied most of the time, unless required to visit an amorous cow!

During the War there were 16 mixed farms in the Damerham Parish, most, if not all, with dairies:-

Reg Zebedee, Lopshill Farm
George Gray, Hyde Farm
Bill Hockey, Stapleton Farm
Bert Beale, Boulsbury Farm
Edgar Hibberd, Allenford Farm
Dr. Benson, Knoll Farm
George Rumbold, Back Lane Farm (now Channel Hill Farm
Hubert Jerrard, Channel Hill Farm (now Old Channel Hill Farm House)
Jimmy Lush, North End Farm
Mont Hockey, The Compasses
George Bryant, Court Farm
Fred Butler, Hill Farm
Charles Lush, South End Farm
Arthur Lush, Manor Farm
Simeone Loader, Greenbank Farm
Sid Butler, Lower Lopshill Farm

Cattle markets at Salisbury were:-

Woolley and Wallis, Castle Street
John Jeffrey and Son, Brown Street
Knapman Son and Bament, The Canal
and at Ringwood, Woolley and Wallis.

At the end of 1999 there were no dairy farms left in the parish. The last one was John Burrough's of Manor Farm, Cornpits Lane. The Dairy was sold in 1998. The last person to keep two "house" cows was myself. "Choco" and "Liz" were sold in the latter part of 1998.

By the time the I.C.I. came to West Park in the late 1940s., I was living at Crossways Farm. The bungalows at West Park Drive were built for the keepers to live in and to breed pheasants in the gardens, and half of Park Field (the field on the left of West Park Drive), for shooting in the winter. Some of the keepers liked to tell us village bumpkins what to do and we were not allowed to shoot their pheasants for food. But I would borrow my father's bird scarers (bangers with long fuses). I would light the fuse of one in the chalk pit on Court Hill, go back home and wait for the bang. The keepers would race on their bikes towards the bang, and I would hurry up with my gun to Greenbank corner plantation, shoot a pheasant or two, race back home, and watch the keepers pedalling again towards the sound of the latest shots! They were quite a sight pedalling along in their plus-fours!

ARTHUR JERRARD'S SERVICE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1915-16



GERALD JERRARD



Arthur and Emily Jerrard and son Arthur (Arch) 1917

My father Arthur Jerrard was born in 1899, and was one of a family of 13 children - 6 sisters and 7 brothers. Six of the brothers served in France during the First World War. My father joined the Army at the age of 16 years and 3 months, and was in the horse artillery in France

at the age of 16 1/2. He was in charge of two horses called Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum. The gun crew consisted of five soldiers and



Arthur Jerrard with Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum. Tidworth Barracks early 1916

four horses. During the shelling, four of his comrades were killed. He survived by lying between his two horses, which were also killed. He owed his life to those horses. He was awarded the Military Medal for Gallantry for bringing the two remaining horses and gun carriage back to his own line, although he said he didn't know whether he was running to his own side or towards the German line, such was the confusion - he was just lucky. At the age of 17 years he was home, having been gassed, and also having lost his trigger finger after it was trapped in some tack. He brought with him two hooves from Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum as souvenirs, which were in the stable at Crossways Farm for many years, but have long since been lost

He lived in Damerham at Mill End and Crossways Farm until 1977. Then in Croydon with his daughter Phyllis and son-in-law Jack Richards until 1992 when he died aged 93.