



Mrs. Ridout and the Coombe Express

The above is an oil painting by Frank Brooks (1854-1937) of a local character named Mrs. Ridout. She is depicted going towards Ayleswade Bridge, East Harnham.

She was the proprietress of a carrier business conveying goods between the village of Coombe Bissett and The Shoulder of Mutton Inn, Salisbury.

Frank Brooks records that he would meet her by Harnham's Ayleswade Bridge when she was leaving town. She would always stop at The Swan (The Greyfisher now stands in its place) for a refresher for herself and the donkey. Generally the donkey would drink from the same jug!

He also claims that the pace at which she walked enabled him to walk backwards and draw her at the same time.