



SCRAPS OF INFORMATION

Most villages have their interesting characters of the past. One must mention:-

MARY HUMBY: who was born in Teffont, the 10th child of her parents. She was taken to church with a sprig of myrtle attached, so that the Rector could not claim her as tithe. Later she married Joseph Ewence, a blacksmith, and lived at the Old Turnpike (now Redroofs). The initials J.E. 1765 are still on the porch which he erected.

JINNY FOSTER: was a witch, or wise woman, who lived in a cottage now gone, behind the present rectory, in about the early 18th century.

MARY SAUNDER'S HOLE: Mary was a gipsy who lived about 1860 in a hole in the wood on the edge of Chilmark parish, and had a covering only of branches etc. The hole can still be seen.

GIBBONS POT or BUBBLE POT: is a spring which bubbles out of the field opposite the Old Rectory when the stream is in flood.

"TEFFONT CRESS and CHILMARK RABBITS": cried in the streets of London.

A few old games are remembered, such as **SQUIRRELLING ON PALM SUNDAY.** The young men of this and neighboring villages all went to the quarry after dinner and stoned squirrels. Also **BIRD CLAPPING.** The men beat the hedges and caught birds in nets on bamboo poles. These rather unattractive games probably originated from attempts to get rid of sparrows and other pests.

Still in the village is AN OLD KEEPERS GUN mounted on a block of wood, used for over a hundred years to start a bonfire on November 5th.

IRON QUOITS were thrown and an old doggerel was sung. One of these quoits can still be seen:

“Upper Teffont candlesticks, Lower Teffont belles.
Chilmark lousy dirty slums, Fovant pretty girls.”

There was an old dance called “Up the sides and down the middle”.

YEATE'S PIPPIN About 80 years ago, the brother of Mr Yeates who kept the Post Office emigrated to Australia, taking with him some grafts of an apple which he grew in his garden in the village. These survived, and it became a very good commercial apple. Some Australians during the First World War came especially to Teffont to look for the original home of “ the best apple in Australia”. A resident some years ago went to Australia, also Tasmania, and found evidence of this very popular apple.

In about 1880 there lived a man at Teffont Lodge called “Short”. Who had ridden as a trooper at Balaclava in the “Charge of the Light Brigade”. He had on his wall a picture of Lord Cardigan.

A few residents can remember before the organ was installed at Teffont Ewias Church there was a band. Mr Scammel sang Tenor and played the bass viola at the same time, this instrument is still in the cottage where he lived. His father called the people to church by playing all three bells at once, one in each hand and one tied to his foot.

MUMMERS came from Swallowcliff, none lived in the village, but the local men at Christmas time would go round the village pushing a harmonium on a barrow and singing carols.

A NON-CONFORMIST CHAPEL was built about 1820; it ceased to be used in 1905 and is now a bungalow. There is in the village a silver-plated spoon with a Cross engraved on the bowl which was used for taking the Communion bread from out of wine.

THE ALMS HOUSES: were built in 1884 by William Fane de Salis, Lord of the Manor, and Emily his wife. It is held on lease from September 1884 for 99 years. There are two dwellings, and the income from the original endowment, which is £450, is used for rates and repairs.

CHARITIES: There are some small endowments to provide coal at Christmas and blankets in January for the poor, but the purchasing power of the interest nowadays is so little that the money is allowed to accumulate and not given each year.

Extracts from “Dinton-Dalewood” letters 1827-1853:

From Aunt Charlotte.

Dinton Jan 13th 1831 to George Wyndham in Australia:

“..... no doubt you remember a notorious poacher and evil disposed person of the name of Jack Ford, alias Henwood, belonging to the parish of Upper Teffont, who always wired all the hares and pheasants on Thickthorn and the adjoining coppices. He joined a party in Wilton, assisted by breaking machines and doing other violence there. At Barford he headed a mob and broke Mr Nicholson's mill and then went on to Mr Shipman's house and declared he would have gold or blood, so Ono gave him a sovereign. These last two offences have transported him for life.”

From Great Grandmama 8th April 1831:

“..... Another neighbour of ours, but I cannot commend, is sentenced to visit your country. John Larkham, a friend of John Ford, on this occasion was not with him, having been employed the whole winter in repairing the drains with George Den, and your father was delighted at having kept the fellow out of mischief by employing him: but having lost a

considerable amount of wheat, it was necessary to make enquiries about it, and there being a hole in the sack in which it was carried away, they were enabled to trace it; step by step, from the lower barn to Jem's lodging in Teffont, where it was found under his bed. He was taken into custody while at work in front of the dining-room windows and the evidence was so clear he was transported for 7 or 14 years – I forget which.....”

LIME KILNS: Up to 50 years ago, stones were fetched from the Quarry at Butt(s Hill, and taken to the two 18th century kilns at the foot of Carters Lane in Lower Teffont. The stones were transported in small trucks which ran on a single track-line and were drawn by a donkey.

About 1879 a cooper named FRED COOPER MACEY lived in Upper Teffont. He made and repaired barrels. In front of his house he lit the fires for heating the barrel hoops.

A small moated mound resembling a tumulus on Teffont Down indicates the site of a little turf hut in which a shepherd named Kellow used to sit and make besoms.

SPARK'S BRIDGE: over the stream near the Old School in Upper Teffont was built by the Fitz family in 1717. An old fire insurance badge is on the East wall.

VINES were grown in Teffont within living memory. Wild raspberries and strawberries are still growing in the woods.

Extract from Teffont Village History Scrap Book by Womens Institute published 1956.