

## COCUM FARM HARVEST HOME 1903

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The ingathering of the harvest was again celebrated by the good old custom of a harvest home at Cocum on Wednesday evening, when Mr George Judd [1840-1909] issued invitations to the whole of the hands - men, women, and lads - who have been engaged on either of his farms during the season [*he had purchased John Wade's Farm in 1894 and was a tenant of Lady McCreagh's farm at Cocum*]. In addition to the workpeople there were a few guests, tradesmen and others, from neighbouring villages with whom Mr Judd has business relations, and the company in all numbered 173.

There was a friendly game of cricket in the afternoon between a Cocum team and the King's Somborne Cricket Club, resulting in a win for the former by 66 runs to 30. Dinner was served in the fine barn adjoining Mr Judd's residence [*Cocum Farm House*], at five o'clock. The interior of the barn had been very prettily decorated by Mrs and Miss Judd; large sized national flags - Union Jacks and Standards - with streamers of autumn-tinted foliage were hung down the centre of the barn, posts were covered with red material, and all round the sides were green-leaved boughs.

The catering was in the hands of Mr W.A. Gadaden, of the White Hart Hotel, Whitchurch, and a bountiful and in every way excellent meal was provided. Mr G. Judd presided, and Mr Judd, with members of the family, assisted in the waiting, and saw that the guests were made at-home, so to speak, and had all they wanted in the way of a hearty meal. Mrs Cockayne, Miss Maudsley, and Miss Lutter also helped in the waiting. The tables were re-arranged after dinner, and an entertaining and varied programme followed. Tobacco and drinks - alcoholic and non-alcoholic - were placed on the tables, and, while the proceedings partook somewhat of the character of a smoking concert, there were other features to give variety. Amongst those who contributed songs were one or two of more than average ability. Mr Judd and his son, Mr Edward, both sung. Mr Miller amused the company with a capital gramophone. The King's Somborne band, under the conductorship of Mr Charles Browning, attended, and played selections as well as items for dancing. The King's Somborne is certainly one of the best village bands in the district, and the members and their conductor merit praise for the proficiency at which they have arrived. Their performance was distinctly good.

The idea of introducing dances was a happy one, particularly acceptable to the ladies, and those of the company who were unable to participate derived pleasure from watching the dancers. The barn is so commodious that there was ample room to set aside a portion for the dancers without interfering with the convenience of the guests generally.

There were two or three toasts. That of "The King and Queen, and the rest of the Royal Family" was first submitted from the chair, Mr Judd alluding to the popularity of his Majesty, and going on to remark that the flags they saw about the barn testified to their patriotism as well as their loyalty - he did not think anyone could possibly come

to a harvest home at Cocum, and assert they were wanting in loyalty or patriotism. It was something to say this in these days when so many of them were accused of being "Little Englanders," and such like. The toast was accorded a loyal and hearty reception.

Mr Judd said he next wished to propose the health of all who had assisted in gathering together the harvest on his farms. He looked on these meetings as being productive of a vast amount of good [applause]. As rather an old-fashioned farmer he regretted very much that the custom of giving harvest homes had very much dropped out all over the country [hear, hear]. They had heard him declare, he supposed year after year for the last twenty years, that so long as he farmed in Barton Stacey he should always hope to meet his work people once a year in order to spend a pleasant evening together [applause].

The in-gathering of the harvest was a much more important event than many people seemed to imagine; almost everything we need came from the land, the food we eat, and the clothing and boots we wear. It was not merely a question of the immediate neighbourhood in which they lived, but it was part of the world's produce, and sometimes he thought they were not sufficiently thankful for the abundance which we received at the hands of the Almighty. They know from history - happily not during the last 50 or 60 years - that century after century there were times when many people were short of food, and no doubt hundreds of little children and sickly people died off, simply because they could not get fresh, wholesome food. Fortunately we had seen better times, and that was due in a great degree to the industry and the pluck of workers upon the land [applause].

During the last two seasons we had had in England rather difficult weather to deal with. Last year we had a great abundance of rain, and cereals were very much damaged; therefore we were very pleased to have imports of wheat from other parts of the world in order that we might still enjoy a good loaf of bread. Other crops, such as barley and so on, were very much damaged, and where farmers had to trust entirely to cereal produce to get a living, times must have been very bad. But he had always tried to put as many eggs as possible into the basket, so that if one variety failed another sort did better [hear, hear]. He had always kept a good many sheep and cattle, and if corn-growing was unprofitable sheep did better. They had had at Cocum this year a very good year for the sheep [hear, hear]; this was not altogether due to his skill, but it was due very much indeed to the very great care his shepherds took of the animals. The same also applied to the cattle, and generally throughout the country where they had good flocks of sheep and pretty well fed, and a few animals in the yards in the winter, they saw the fields standing thick with corn and greater abundance than in starved districts where there was not sufficient cattle employed on the land [hear, hear].

He thanked them all for the willing service they had given him; where one employed as many as he did it was absolutely impossible they could go through from one year to another without just a little friction, but he thought taken altogether they were generally a pretty happy family and if they had a little bit of a squabble one day the first thing they tried next morning was to make it up [hear, hear, and loud applause]. He had the advantage of having two very good, straightforward, upright men as foremen [applause]; he had in Weston and in John Crouch two men who he knew tried

to do the best they possibly could for him, and to act fairly and honestly towards the men [applause]. It was a difficult position for any man to stand as between master and men - the master perhaps expected a great deal, and the men could not always have all they wished. However, in their case they rubbed along very well [hear, hear].

He was also glad they had present a few of their lady friends [applause], and if the fact that during the last year or two they had had more women working in the fields than previously - it was a wonderfully healthy occupation. He again thanked them all for the kindly way in which they had put up with all his whims and faults through another year; he was looking forward hopefully to the future that they should have perhaps equally good crops and a better season to gather them in. He trusted they would all have good health and spend as happy a time as they could expect until they met there again next year [applause].

Mr John Crouch, in acknowledging the toast, said he thought that of all the times they met together in the year the occasion of the harvest home was the happiest [applause]. He was very pleased with the way in which their employer had spoken of the foremen, the shepherds, and the labourers - they could not get on very well, one without the other [hear, hear]. A foreman's position during the recent harvest was not a very nice one, because of the weather - sometimes the hands would be got together and have to be dispersed because of the rain; then the sun would come out, and they had to be got together again [laughter and applause]. It required a lot of study how to arrange the hands, but he was glad they had after all got the harvest so well together [hear, hear]. All the hands had worked uncommonly well, and he was very much obliged to them for the way in which they assisted him [applause]. He believed their employer was very well pleased with the way they had got on with the work although he had not been with them during the harvest - at one time he thought that was a good job, for he did not for the moment know what to do, and if Mr Judd had been there it would have meant a lot more worry [laughter]. Not that he wished Mr Judd away, because he would sooner always he was at home. He again thanked them and hoped they might all be spared to meet next year.

[In reply Mr Judd remarked] ..... spared for just a few years more - he was getting a rather old bird, but he was precious tough, and he hoped to hold on a bit longer [laughter and applause]. When he dropped out he trusted there would be for at least another generation a Judd or two farming in that district, he hoped in that parish .... Mr E. Judd [*Captain Edward Thomas Judd (1881-1963)*], as representing the younger members of the family, added a few words ...he had rather shirked the harvest, having been away volunteering for a fortnight [*Army Service Corps Company (Stockbridge) of the 1st Hampshire Volunteer Brigade*], and on returning he found the harvest finished. When he was at home, however, all the men worked splendidly, and they must have done so while he was away. All the ladies, too, worked very well and hardly ever quarrelled [laughter] - whenever they did quarrel they worked harder than ever [laughter and applause].

These were the whole of the toasts.

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