

THE CROUCH FAMILY OF BARTON STACEY, HAMPSHIRE, 1875-1920s

**by Linda Moffatt © 2018
for the Barton Stacey History Group**

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JOHN CROUCH (1850-1916) was a son of Charles Crouch, blacksmith and his wife Elizabeth (Reeves). Raised in Ludgershall, Hampshire, he found work in Collingbourne Ducis and in 1874 married Elizabeth Gale (1853-1913) from that village. They settled in Barton Stacey around 1875, soon after their marriage, where their first home was one of Fennel's Cottage near the southern end of Barton Stacey village.

John rose from groom and gardener at Cocum Farm under George Judd to become the farm bailiff. John and Elizabeth raised their ten children in one of the Cocum Cottages. The esteem in which he was held by his employer is clear from a newspaper report of the Harvest Home held at Cocum in 1903, extracts of which are copied here¹.

'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 issued invitations to the whole of the hands - men, women, and lads - who have been engaged on either of his farms [*Cocum Farm and Wade's Farm, both in Barton Stacey*] during the season. 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.....

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]....

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

¹ Hampshire Chronicle - Saturday 26 September 1903, p.7. The full text can be found on our website via the Manors, Estates and Farms tab.

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 honesty 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 he men could not always have all the wished. However, in their case they rubbed along very well [hear, hear].... 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 lthough he had not been with them during the harvest - at one time 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 another year [applause].'

Barton Stacey Roll of Honour for World War I shows that John Crouch was a member of The Royal Defence Corps. This corps of the British Army was formed in March 1916 and disbanded in 1936. It was initially formed by converting the (Home Service) Garrison battalions of line infantry regiments. Garrison battalions were composed of soldiers either too old or medically unfit for active front-line service; the Home Service status indicated they were unable to be transferred overseas. Eighteen battalions were converted in this way. The role of the corps was to provide troops for security and guard duties inside the United Kingdom; guarding important locations such as ports or bridges. It also provided independent companies for guarding prisoner-of-war camps. The corps was never intended to be employed on overseas service.

Elizabeth Crouch died in 1913 aged 61, John Crouch in 1916 aged 66. They are buried in grave no. 218 in Barton Stacey churchyard.

Children of John and Elizabeth (Gale) Crouch,

- i. Henry John Gale (1874–1929). According to a pedigree posted at Ancestry.com, he was born on 18 January 1874. He married Emmeline Batchelor on 4 July 1899 at St Peter's, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Hampshire and was a gardener in Curdridge and Shedfield, Hampshire. He died on 31 December 1929 at Fairfield Cottage, Droxford, Hampshire.
- ii. Edith Mary, born 1875. She married George Kimber in 1898 and lived in Botley Road, Hedge End, Hampshire, where Mr Kimber was an engineman at a flour mill. She died in 1958 aged 82.

- Children - Elizabeth May, Frederick George, Emily Florence, Edith Mary, Henry J., Sidney C.
- iii. William Henry (1878–1937). In 1907 he married Maria Tarrant. She was born about 1878 in Andover, daughter of Albert Tarrant, a coal porter of 61 London Street, Andover and his wife Sarah. Maria's mother Sarah was a native of Barton Stacey, daughter of John and Maria Ball.
William Crouch died on 1 December 1937 at 61 London Street, Andover, said to be aged 61. Maria Crouch died on 22 March 1933.
- iv. Elizabeth Fanny, born 1879. In 1901 she married Albert Cook of Barton Stacey. He was a son of Albert and Fanny (Stone) Cook. They went to live at 165 Market Street, Eastleigh and Albert Cook was a blacksmith's striker in the carriage department of the railway works there. He served with the 1st Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment but we have been unable so far to locate with certainty any surviving army records.
Elizabeth Cook died on 25 April 1947, her husband in 1968.
Children - Dorothy Annie *Crouch*, Hilda May, Albert John, Alan.
- v. Ellen Jane, born 21 April 1883. She went into service in Sutton Scotney, in the household of widow Elizabeth Smallfield. In 1914 she married Frank Sims who became a Sergeant while serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery during the Great War. She appears to have married secondly Harry P. Dawe in 1921 and lived in Romsey. Ellen Dawe died in 1970.
- vi. Annie, born 27 August 1885. In 1908 she married Wynn Adolphus Canning, a coal merchant and hire contractor. They lived in Easton, near Winchester, and then Salisbury, Wiltshire. Mr Canning died in 1923 aged 41. Annie Canning moved to Salisbury and died on 16 December 1950.
Children - Edward Adolphus, John C., Maurice, Albert W., [perhaps also Peggy A.].
- vii. **SIDNEY CHARLES**, born 7 February 1889. He joined the Territorials in 1909, and was assigned to the Army Service Corps, no doubt a result of his employer being an officer in the ASC (he was E.T. Judd's chauffeur).
He married Edith May Izzard (born 13 June 1889) in 1913. He re-enlisted for war service in December 1915 and was in France for two years, a Berna lorry driver on the ammunition column for 267 Siege Battery (service number M2/167873).
Sidney Crouch was a farm bailiff in Yarness [?Yarnes] Farm in Compton, Winchester at the time of the 1939 Register. He died in 1951.
Children of Sidney Charles and Edith May (Izzard) Crouch,
- i. Sidney John, born 19 November 1914, baptised 24 January 1915 at Barton Stacey Methodist Chapel.
 - ii. William George, born 18 November 1916, baptised 14 February 1917. He became an aircraft fitter and was living unmarried in Compton in 1939. He died in 1973.
 - iii. Edgar P., born 1925.
- viii. Alfred, born 1891. He was a horseman at Cocum Farm at the time he enlisted on 30 November 1914. Like his older brother Sidney, T/4.210556 Lance Corporal Alfred Crouch was a Driver with the Army Service Corps. He went to France on 1 August 1916 and was with the ASC attached to 15th Bn Cheshire Regiment. Alfred was made Lance Corporal in December 1917. In that same year he married Ada Williams, the

Judds' cook. They are listed at Cocum in the 1920 electoral register but had moved on before 1926.

- ix. **ALBERT**, born 13 December 1893. He was a gardener in Barton Stacey before the Great War. His service number with the Regular Army Service Corps (T/4.210557) was consecutive with that of his older brother Alf but we have not been able to find his army service records. After the war in 1919 he married Ethel M. Evans (born 16 March 1890) and became head gardener at The Gardens, Wonston Lodge, He died in 1968 aged 74.
- x. Frederick Thomas, born 19 September 1897. 212621 Gnr. Frederick Thomas Crouch (1897-1968) was a carter at Hatchells Farm, Nether Wallop, Hampshire when he enlisted on 10 December 1915. On 13 February 1917 his brother-in-law Wynn Adolphus Canning of New Manor Farm, Winterslow, Salisbury wrote a note on Frederick's behalf, asking whether it were possible 'to put him in the same unit as his three brothers the A.S.C. who are now in France' or, failing that, with another brother who was then with the Royal Garrison Artillery (Frank Sims, his brother-in-law). Frederick was mobilised the following day and, despite the note, went on to serve in South Africa and India with the 217th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery. In 1926 he married Alice Gray (born 2 December 1901) and at the time of the 1939 Register was a farm tractor driver in East Bloxworth, Dorset. He died aged 70 in 1968 in the Winchester registration district, his wife in 1970.

NOTES:

James Crouch arrived in Barton Stacey by the time of the 1881 census, when he was an unmarried farm labourer lodging at The Swan. He was born about 1835 in Abbots Ann, Hampshire, a son of William and Sarah Crouch. He remained at The Swan until at least 1901, when at the age of 74 he was a road labourer.
