

**ZILPHA DRAPER OF GRIFFYDAM -
(NURSE AND WARD SISTER)**



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - JUNE 2022

© **Samuel T Stewart – June 2022**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise without first seeking the written permission of the author.

Zilpha Draper, a past resident of Griffydam, is still remembered and spoken about fondly by those who were fortunate to know her. She was born in Griffydam on July 1st 1893. The Draper family at that time lived in a cottage near to the Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.

Coming from a poor and humble background, Zilpha was apparently determined to make something of her life. It seems that she had an inbuilt desire to become a nurse, and when she had reached the required age, an application was made to join the profession. Apparently though, she was turned down because her father was a coal miner hewer and by 1911, at the age of 18, Zilpha was working in an affluent area of Leicester as a domestic servant. She was advised that she should re-apply to become a nurse by putting her father's occupation as a small-holder and she was subsequently accepted for training. She achieved her aim in life and eventually qualified to become a ward sister.

She travelled widely in England working in various hospitals, including Chester & Northampton, but is recorded in the 1939 register as lodging at "Paddock House", Coleorton, when she could possibly have been working at "Ashby de la Zouch District Cottage Hospital". On her retirement, probably around 1953, Zilpha moved back to live in the village of her birth in a cottage at, 25, Elder Lane, across the road from the Dimmock's family residence. Sue Smith (nee., Dimmock), relates the fond memories she has of Zilpha as a child, who her mother helped a lot. Zilpha in fact delivered her mother and twin into the world in 1927. Sue inherited the trunk Zilpha took on her travels with her, which she still has.

Zilpha's family were clearly religious, and apparently her father Arthur Draper became a local Wesleyan Methodist and features on Ashby Circuit plans in the author's possession. He Apparently travelled around the district on his bike to preach his sermons at various chapels. Either a bicycle or a pony and trap was the usual means of transport in those days.

At this point, it is worth mentioning, that the name Zilpha is a variant of Zilpah and was revived in English speaking areas in the 18th century and was still relatively popular in the 19th. It is a biblical Hebrew name meaning frailty in Hebrew. This was the name of the handmaid who was given to Jacob by Leah (presumed to be a slave) in order to bear him his children (Genesis 30:9). Young Zilpha's mother was also recorded as Zilpha. In fact, her daughter's birth registration name was recorded as Zilpah at Ashby, and in the 1901 census young Zilpha was in fact spelt Zilpah. All very confusing, but we can conclude from this that her real name was Zilpah which had been corrupted over the years to Zilpha.

The author was told on good authority that Zilpha worked at Northampton Hospital and helped in the development of radium treatment. Apparently, it was her duty to put the radium isotopes down the well when the German bombers came over. The same source related, that before she died, she became covered in large lumps and eventually her immune system broke down. After finding out she had worked with Radium, they decided that this was the cause, even though it was some 50 years prior. Zilpha was presumably cremated, as only a plaque in memory of her is in Worthington Graveyard. Her brother Arthur is also buried there with his wife Elsie Tet.



ZILPHA'S BROTHER ARTHUR'S GRAVESTONE

TIME LINE

START

In the 1861 census for Griffydam, John Massey aged 47, a Blacksmith, is living with his wife Zilpha aged 47. Also living with them is a daughter Martha A, aged 10, and a step daughter from a previous relationship Louisa Draper aged 22 who has a son Arthur R Draper aged 2.

THE BLACKSMITH'S SHOP – GRIFFYDAM

The “Post office Trade Directory of 1855” records that **Joseph Mee was a Blacksmith at Griffydam**. This is interesting from the point of view that he was the grandfather of Edgar Mee who was running the Blacksmith's Shop at Swannington in the 1950s.

Edgar related in his interview with the Coalville Times that his grandfather Joseph came to run the Blacksmith's Shop at Peggs Green / Swannington from Griffydam in the 1850's when the current Blacksmith had been “transported” for stealing iron.

In the Peggs Green 1851 census, Joseph Mee is living with his family on Froggat's Lane. During the turnpike road era, Froggats Lane (an extension of the Hinckley to Melbourne turnpike road) ran from Tugby's Lane along the now Nottingham Road and down what is now known as Storden Lane, and on through Osgathourpe till it met the Ashby to Loughborough turnpike. His profession is given as a Blacksmith, and presumed to be working at the blacksmith's shop described below, prior to moving to the one at Peggs Green / Swannington.

An old resident of the village described a rather strange shaped building, which was used as a “Blacksmith's Shop” on the north end of what was known as “Rose Cottage” shown in the following photograph. The same property is marked **B** on the following 1903 O/S map and the strange shaped extension can be clearly seen on the end of the cottage. The property was directly opposite the horse stables belonging to the Waggon & Horses which are marked **A** on the map. The Waggon & Horses is marked **C**. Wagons would have continually broken down, with the horses losing shoes whilst travelling up *Nickerson's (slang for Nicklinson)* Hill on the Rempstone Turnpike Road. The horses that were stabled at the Wagon & Horses could well have been used to assist in helping to pull the wagons weighing up to 4 tons up the steep hill. Other stables for horses presumably used for farm work as well, were situated at the back of the Inn. In the sale documents of 1927 they had stabling for up to seven horses. We know a building was on the site of the Waggon & Horses in 1802, and this raises the question as to whether it was a coaching Inn at one time?

There is no blacksmith recorded in the 1851 census at Griffydam, **but in 1861 (after Joseph Mee had left to go to Peggs Green), John Massey, aged 41, is listed as a blacksmith living with his wife Zilpha (47) and family members**. No further records have been found of a blacksmith residing in Griffydam, until the September 1939 registration document lists George W Hyman and his son living at “Rose Cottage”. The father's occupation is given as a “Shoeing Smith” and he was also a Special Constable.

He was born on 7th May 1887. On the 1911 census George Hyman is listed as living on Derby Road, Ashby de la Zouch with his occupation given as "Blacksmith".



Extract from the 1903 O/S map



The above photograph at the end of Elder Lane was taken in the 1950's when Mrs. Richardson lived at the property. It was unfortunately demolished to make way for a later road modification scheme. The stables opposite had also been demolished by the time the photograph was taken.



In the old photograph above was taken c.1895. The building on the RH side is the Waggon & Horses, The cottage in the centre is marked **D** on the preceding map and the edge of the building on the LH side was part of the Blacksmith's Shop extension to the cottage, marked **B** on the preceding map.

- In the 1871 census for Griffydam, Zilpha Massey now aged 57, is living with her grandson Arthur (R), now aged 12. (**presumed to be the Arthur shown on the gravestone in Worthington Cemetery**). There is no mention of her husband John Massey, so he is presumed to have died.
- In the 1881 census, Zilpha now aged 67, is living with grandson Arthur (R) Draper now aged 22, and still in Griffydam.
- In the 1891 census, Zilpha had died, and her Grandson Arthur, aged 32, is now married and living with his wife Mary (nee. Earp) aged 26 in Griffydam. Mary was born in Griffydam in 1865. They had 2 children George William aged 4, and Louisa Ann, aged 2 at this time.
- By 1901 the family (all born in Griffydam) is now living in Worthington and consists of:-
 - Arthur R Draper, aged 43 (head) - Coal miner hewer
 - Mary Draper, formerly Earp, aged 36 (Wife) born in Griffydam in 1865
 - George William, aged 14 (son) - Coal miner - pony driver
 - Louisa Ann, aged 12 (daughter)
 - Arthur, aged 9 (son)
 - Zilpha (written **Zilpah**), aged 7 (daughter)
 - Lilly, aged 5 (daughter)
 - Will ?, aged 3 (son)
 - Clara b.1901

The families living either side were the Leeson's and Leech's.

- By 1911 Zilpha, aged 17, is now at work as a Domestic Servant to F.W.S Clarke - Printers Traveller, aged 69 and his wife in an affluent area of Leicester.
- By the 1921 census, Zilpha has now achieved her ambition of becoming a nurse, and is working at Chester Royal Infirmary. She like all her colleagues, appears to be living in hospital quarters.



CHRISTMAS AT CHESTER INFIRMARY IN THE 1930s

Continued over page

- Interestingly, the 1939 register shows Zilpha living (lodging) at Paddock House, Coleorton which is shown in the photograph below, the photograph probably being taken around that time. Her occupation is given as "Nurse and Ward Sister". Paddock House was in the area opposite Coleorton School and exhibited some interesting architectural features. The author is not aware why the house was subsequently demolished, but subsidence from coal mining in the immediate locality could have been an issue.



Continued over page



The people in the above photograph are thought to be :-

RH Side - Herbert Martin
 Centre - Lilly Martin
 LH side - Zilpha Draper

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS IN 1939 REGISTER

Herbert Martin	Born Dec 11th 1886	Head Farm Bailiff - Unemployed
Lilly Martin	Born Oct 19th 1895	Wife Unpaid domestic duties
Herbert E Martin	Born June 12th 1924	Unm Carpenter (erecting)
Geoffrey J Martin	Born Feb 28th 1927	At school
George E Martin	Born June 23rd 1929	At school
Zilpha Draper	Born July 1st 1893	Nurse and Ward Nursing Sister

It is possible that Zilpha was working at Ashby District Cottage Hospital at this time but that is only conjecture. No records of Staff at Ashby District Cottage Hospital have been located.

- Zilpha retired to 25, Elder lane, Griffydham in the 1950's
- She passed away on September 16th 1979 aged 86 - Probate, London £8,157.

**MEMBERS OF THE DRAPER FAMILY BURIED IN GRIFFYDAM
WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL GRAVEYARD**

Arthur Draper	b.1858	Died May 10th 1932	Age 74
Mary Draper	b.1865	Died May 25th 1952	Age 87
Clara Draper (D)	b.1901	Died Sept 17th 1907	Age 5 1/2
Will Draper (S)	b.1899	Died Jan 6th 1953	Age 54
George William (S) and (H)	b.1887	Died Jan 24th 1964	Age 77
Ellen Draper (W)	b.1888	Died Jan 19th 1948	Age 60