

GOODBYE TO DEVON

One evening while I was at the Clinic I had a phone call from my mum to say that Doc had just died. The Sister on the ward I was on was very kind, she gave me some money, and said to catch the very next train to Devon, which I did. It was not until the following morning that I actually reached Gabberwell. It seemed he had had a slight cold and was watching T.V. he said he wasn't feeling too good and my mum went to get him a cup of tea and when she got back with it he was gone. My Mum was naturally quite shocked. He was not yet 80. Someone from the village had laid him out, and the funeral parlour took over. It is when you see a person's slippers and the sweet that he had not eaten along with the unfinished book that he was enjoying that the sadness strikes. We both recognised that he had led a full life, and believed that he was as happy at Gabberwell as he had ever been anywhere.

What my mum was going to do next was quite a difficult one to work out. The house at Gabberwell was way back from the road and quite isolated. She had of course to stay there until the place was sold, so Lamorna's grandmother stayed with her for a while. Andrew and I went down there whenever possible to get the place ready to sell. It was bought by a local couple *voets toets*, furniture and all. We only kept the silver tray, Chinese vase and a little bit of other stuff, but let all the knives, pewter and much that we should have had held onto go under the auctioneers hammer. We took quite a lot of books with us of course!

It was good that Andrew had just that much contact with Gabberwell and some of the folks of the village.

It was one of the Stevenses from the Modbury garage that drove us out of the gates of Gabberwell. He remarked with wonder that neither my mother nor I looked back as we left.

About forty years later Andrew and I visited Kingston. There was a widowed lady living in Gabberwell and her daughter living in a small house built on the old large house foundations. The Gabberwell residence was by that time called 'Ridgeways' and the set of cottages down the hill from it was called 'Gabberwell Cottages'. Much change had of course been made in what was our house. As they do in England, though, as much of the original, like the oak beams of the ceiling and slate roof, had been left intact.

Here really the story changes greatly, and ceases to be my story in a way. My mom lived with me for a while in London. Andrew and I became engaged. We all decided that a new life in South Africa sounded good, and this obviously had to include my mom because she could hardly live in England on her own. So - GOODBYE TO ENGLAND - and off we all went on the Stirling Castle, a boat, which nearly set fire to us. That having failed, it nearly sunk us en route! But as I say, that is another story.

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