

# Mary Dormer Harris

1867



The Warwickshire Historian

Mary was the daughter of Mary Dormer and Thomas Harris and was born in 1867 at Dale House Farm, Stoneleigh. In her memoir 'Unknown Warwickshire' she recalls attending, as a child, the service at Stoneleigh Church.

Long, long too, was the service in the familiar church to the mite in the family pew. There were so very few people to look at, and their backs and a few side faces were so well known. Long, long, long was the Litany; endless the alternate reading of the Psalms, to a child of infelicitous vacuity of mind and none of Charles Lamb's infantile devoutness. After the momentary thrill occasioned by the sight of the tall fine old gentleman – Sir Roger de Coverley to the life – who said his private devotions into his hat, the service, save for the clerk's all too forcible "Amens" relapsed into monotony.

We were a genteel congregation, though I do not know which family was the more genteel, the household with the rather pale, stern-looking mother, who won her future husband's esteem and obtained the offer of his hand by boning seventy sparrows for a pie, or the two tall sisters with exuberant figures and social aspirations, whose father ..... but a truce to these foolish stories. After the service (why, I know not) the most genteel of the congregation sat on, and it was sometimes a struggle to ascertain who could show the greatest gentility by sitting longest. I remember the palm was usually carried off by the lady with the sparrow-pie training in patience.