

Field notes written by M<sup>rs</sup> GREG DAWSON OF MERRIAM. Recollections  
Ague  
3728  
1891  
AGED 94 (1897)  
1893

### Sowing wheat

Land was first turned over with a single furrow plough. When seed time arrived the grain was spread by hand, harrowed twice & left. The first harrowing was the same direction as the ploughing & the second time it was across, using two horses & a 9 ft harrow.

The wheat had to be first prepared for sowing. One, two or three bags (4 bushel) of clean seed were heaped on the ground & a solution of blue stone water would be sprinkled over it. Then the farmer would turn it over with a long handled shovel until he was sure that all the grain had contacted the bluestone water. This was a guard against "smut". The stone was melted in hot water

### Dams

In 1884 Bishop Moorhouse opened the C of E at Witley, 5½ miles N of Merriam, asked to pray for rain he replied "Gentlemen, you must dam the rain". Same story is told in Ringwood

### Mud Bricks ("Egyptian Bricks")

a small plot of land was ploughed, without touching the sub-soil, leaving a level section either side. The ploughed piece was then flooded with water & short straw strewn over it. A horse was then ridden over it a number of times to churn it up. When it had dried out a bit the brick maker with his mould would start work on one of the level sections. With a square mouthed shovel he would fill the mould with the mud & straw, pressing it down firmly with his feet. Carefully lifting the mould off he would then repeat it all. Allowing them to nearly dry in the sun he would turn the brick & later stack them. His pay was 12/6 per 100.

Some builders used lime & sand as mortar, others just mud. All walls were built on a foundation of burnt bricks with a damp course. After the house was built some owners wet a wall with water & whilst wet scrape them to get a nice level face. Others, while a wall was wet mixed up red ochre with mud & painted it on. To keep the rain away it was usual to build a verandah around the house. Others not having the time have been known to cover the wall with fat or coal tar, & later lime wash it.

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School

Used red ink made from pressed very ripe mulberries & black ink made by mixing gunpowder & water.