

A Difficult Time in Dilton Marsh

William Bailey's Letter to his Son In Australia

Bruce Bailey (9921)

This is a transcript of a letter written in 1847 by my 3x great-grandfather, William BAILEY, and his wife, Hannah (née HEARNE), of Dilton Marsh to their son, William BAILEY junior. The letter details some family news and also what life was like in Dilton Marsh at this time. It is in the possession of one of my second cousins and had been passed down through her side of the BAILEY family in Australia.

William junior with his wife, Hannah (née DOWDING), and three young daughters, Ann, Elizabeth, and Emma, emigrated from Westbury in 1841 to Peel near Bathurst in New South Wales on the ship the *Duke of Roxburgh* under the 'bounty immigrant' scheme. Emma was six months old and died on the voyage.

After arrival in Sydney in January 1842, William junior was hired by Henry SUTTON as a shepherd to work on his property 'Brucedale' near Bathurst. Seven more children were born to William junior and Hannah in Australia. In the 1870s, William and Hannah moved to a property

near Parkes in the west of New South Wales with two of their sons, Charles William and George. Hannah died at Parkes in 1900, and William junior in 1902.

There are now many descendants in Australia and New Zealand and also back in the UK. William BAILEY senior and his wife Hannah lived on in Dilton Marsh until their deaths in 1873 and 1878, but it is unknown what contact or news they had from their family in Australia. You can feel the anguish in the letter of not knowing how the family was faring, but also the hope and optimism that all was well.

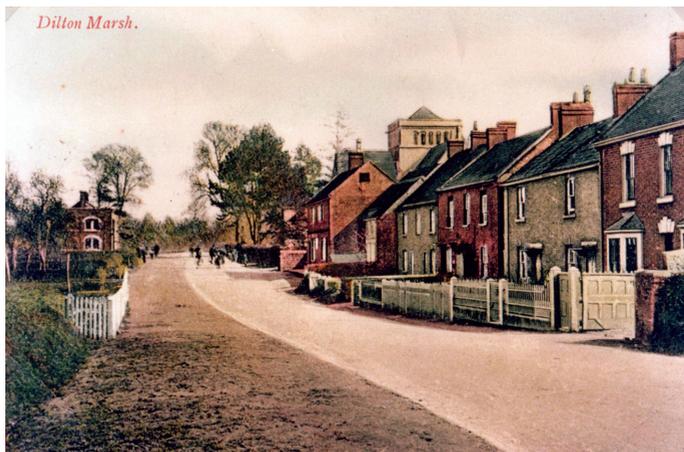
June 30 1847

Diltons Marsh Westbury Wiltshire

My Dear Children

I take another opportunity of writing to you which My D is the third letter we have sent in answer to one we recvd from you bearing date April 7 1843 which we recvd which we recvd [sic] August 28/43 for what reason we cannot imagine that we cannot get another letter from you we you know are getting on in years and sometimes we are ready to think that you are prosprg in the world and careth not about us other times we think you are all Dead and we

shall never hear
from you again
but we will again
recall the thought
of ingratitude
that you have
forgot us and
think your letters
must be wrong
directed or that
they must be lost
we again write
to you hoping
you will soon
receve this and
write immeadetly



Dilton Marsh, the home of the Bailey Family

(courtesy of Dilton Marsh Local History Society)

as you must imagine how we are with what anxious night week months and years we are looking and longing to hear from but nothing but disappointment to increse our Greif we have to inform you that trade in generall is very dead and what to write on a revival of trade we can not say at present our wages/ on weaving is not so good as when you was at home with us is not so good by near 4d on a shilling and not near enough to do many people in marsh and leigh has experinsed a dreadfull winter for the 3 last winters we have a failure in the potatoe crop but the last crop was by far the worst we had a good wheat crop but it was of little use to the poor we in old England have expienced the dreadfulest winter in the memory of almost the oldest Inhabitant our potatoes was cut of by a desease in the halme which did afet the fruit with rottenness so that the cropps was not worth digin many an acre had not 2 sacks of good potatoes the poor was destitute farmers went to work held their corn from markett corn jobbing has been carried on to a dreadfull extent prises in every Article rose wheat to £4 per bag flour to 5S pr peck beef to 9D per lb mutton 8 Dry bacon 10d butter 1s 1d and every other article in proportion ading to all this a long hard Dreary winter with abundance of snow sharp freeing and blustrous winds as ever was known for many years if you ask many people how they got throw the winter they would say they can not tell we are now in the middle of summer we have a fine prospect on the land our pease is now commencing in selling at 7d per peck young potatoes at 4 & 8 [4s 8d] per quarter peck we hope our crop will not be cut of this season as in the 3 former seasons as it has been in the month of July that they was cut down last year we

June 30 1847

Suttons Marsh Westbury Wiltshire

My Dear Children

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my father third letter we have sent in answer to one
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and sometimes we are ready to think that you are prospering
in the world and care not about us other times we think
you are all Dead and we shall never hear from you again
but we will again recall the thought of ingratitude that
you have forgot us and think your letters must be
wrong directed or that they must be lost we again
write to you hoping you will ever receive this and
write immediately as you must imagine how we are
with what anxious night week months and years we
are looking and longing to hear from but nothing but
disappointment to increase our grief we have to inform
you that trade in generall is very Dead and what to write
on a revival of trade we cannot say at present our wages
on weaving is not so good as when you was at home with
us is not so good by near 2 on a shilling and not near
enough to do many people in marsh and leigh has
experinced a dreadfull winter for the 3 last winters
we have a failure in the potatoe crop but the
last crop was by far the worst we had a good
wheat crop but it was of little use to the poor we
in id England have experinced the dreadfull
winter in the memory of almost the oldest
John B. Pittant

our potatoes was cut of by a disease in the native
which I do suspect the fault with turneps so that the
crop was not worth the Virgin many an acre had not
a sack of good potatoes the poor are destitute farmers
want to work hold their corn from market even potatoes
has been scarce on to a dreadful extent found on
every article rose wheat to 4 for the flour of 5 shillings
to 6 a peck water & 3 for sugar & butter in some
every other article in proportion owing to all this
a long hard dreary winter with abundance of snow
sharp frosts and blizzards worse as ever was
known for many years if you ask many people how
they got thro' the winter they would say they can
not tell we are now in the middle of summer we
have a fine prospect on the land our price is now
expensive in getting a peck of good potatoes at
2 a peck in winter peck we hope our crop will not
be cut of this season as in the 3 former seasons
as it has been in the month of July had they been
cut down last year we had a bad day in order of
our success this is now a high price that we hope it
will soon be low again we must give our thanks to the
Lord no earthly lords for they would have as altho we
keep every one of them for neither of them can sow
reap or mow I do not enjoy a good state of health at all
I have been poorly for a long time but your mother
is better than when you was at home your sister
mary and her Husband is in London he is working
at his own trade as a blacksmith they have 3 sons
and one daughter the oldest is with us for 2 years
past your cousin miriam is married to a person
of westbury named lucas he is a weaver

We have to inform you your wifes father is dead
he has been a twelvemonth past your wifes mother
is living but is getting feeble all of the rest of
the family is well we have a Church and large
school room built in Marsh near the Croosroad
in brown's ground and a great many Churchs built
in different parts of England so that people can
hear the gosple preached almost at their
own door we should like to know if you have any means
of hearing the gosple preached in your country
it matters not where we are Quakers or in England
if we love the life of a Christian by faith on the
son of God who died on the cross to save sinners
and willeth that all who put their trust on him
shall find mercy and will show none a way that
seek for mercy the ever great mercy sins may
be for the dected in his holy word says that sinners
could we not hear that the you are at such a distance
from us that you talk had we had an altar in that
precious word of faith we might be of much comfort
and grace to the poor you when we must be
of seeing you again tho not in this world but in that
world of bliss where saints immortal reign on once
to part no more for remember there is no religion
in the grave where we are all hastening your uncle
James Jones is dead we hope you will give us an account
of your situation your troubles if you have any that
we may share it with you give hope if you have
any that you wish with you and a particular account
of your children and how they are doing do us
a letter from your affectionate father and brother
William andannah Bailey yellow creek willshire

The sad and quite desperate letter written by William and Hannah Bailey to their son and his family who had emigrated in 1841 to New South Wales.

held a fast day by Order of our Queen

flour is now 4s 4½ d per peck but we hope it will soon be cheaper we must put our trust in the Lord no earthly lords for they would starve us altho we keep every one of them for neither of them can sow reap or mow i do not enjoy a good state of health at all i have been poorly for a long time but your mother is better than when you was at home your sister mary and her Husband is in london he is working at his own trade as a blacksmith they have 3 sons and one daughter the oldest is with us for 2 years past your cousin miriam is married to a person of westbury named lucas he is a weaver

We have to inform you your wifes father is dead he has been a twelvemonth past your wifes mother is living but is getting feeble all of the rest of the family is well we have a Church and large school room built in Marsh near the Croosroad in brown's ground and a great many Churchs built in different parts of England so that people can hear the gosple preached almost at their own door we should like to know if you have any means of hearing the gosple

*preached in
your country
it matters not
where we are
Churchman or
dissenter if we
live the life of
a Christian by
faith on the son
of God who died
on the cross to
save sinners and
willeth that all
who put their
trust in him shall
find mercy and
will turn none a
way that seek for*



Holy Trinity Church, Dilton Marsh
It was built in 1843-4 as the village grew and needed a
local place of worship.

(courtesy of of Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre)

*mercy tho ever great their sins may be for he declar'd in his holy word him that
cometh unto me i will in no wise Cast out my dear children could we but hear
that tho you are at such a distance from us, that you both had seek'd an interest
in that precious blood of Christ, methinks it would smooth our passage to the
tomb for then we should be assured of seeing you again tho not in this world but
in that world of Bliss where saints immortal Reign and meet to part no more
for Remember there is no repentanc in the grave where we are all hastening
your uncle James Jones is dead we hope you will give us an account of your
situation your troubles if you have any that we may share it with you your
joys if you have any that join in it with you and a particular account of your
Children and how they are doing so no more at present from your affectionate
father and Mother William and hannah Bailey Dilton Marsh wiltshire*

The letter was addressed to:

William Bailey at
W H Suttor esq.
Near Bathurst new south Wales
Van deimand's Land
Australia

bruce23cc@gmail.com
Martock, Somerset