

The Damm Family & Gorse Bank Farm

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The Damm families were in Baslow from the late 1500s to the early 1700s when the family died out or dispersed.

The earliest record from Baslow in 1577. Over the next 15 years five Damm spinsters were married in Baslow Church pointing to an active family life at the time. Spelling varies with Damm, Dam, Dams and Dame

In 1614 Roger and Henry both perambulated the bounds of Baslow. In the Hearth Tax reports in the 1670s, there are two houses, belonging to Roger and Alexander respectively.

Two family trees can be traced from the data.

Henry Damm married Martha Wilkinson in 1593. He had a large family, but there is no evidence of a third generation.

Roger Damm (Dame) married Sarah Gorse in 1641. It is not known whether he was related to the other Baslow Damms, possible the son of Henry, or came from Calver or elsewhere. He was succeeded by his son Alexander and Grandson also Alexander. The first record of the family living at Gorse Bank Farm was in 1744 on death of the junior Alexander's wife Elizabeth. It was routine for property to be passed from father to son or son in law so it is to be expected that his father and grandfather also lived in Gorse Bank

The junior Alexander lived to the ripe old age of 85. With no sons, his daughter Maria was due to inherit but she died before he did. The tenancy passed to her husband Robert Froggatt b1692 of Cross Farm Bubnell. It remained with the Froggatt family for the following six generations. Initially it appears that younger family members were responsible for Gorse Bank, until Thomas b 1776 became the full tenant in his own right when he came of age in the late 1790s.

The last Alexander Froggatt b1874 was tenant at the time of the great Rutland Sale in 1920. He either could not or did not want to buy the property himself so it was sold at the auction and bought by the Thorpe family from Ashopton who still own it today.

The marriage of Sarah Gorse to Roger Damm in 1636 is intriguing. The only other record of the surname Gorse is the death of Alexander Gorse in 1641. Alexander is an unusual Christian name which was adopted by Roger's son and grandson and continued in use in the later Froggatts at Gorse Bank Farm: it is reasonable to assume that Sarah was the daughter (or close relative) of Alexander Gorse. It is possible that Alexander was the previous occupant of the farm, and Roger inherited it through his marriage. In any case the name of the farm may well have had something to do with Alexander Gorse. It is stretching the imagination to suggest that Alexander or his predecessors might have got the surname from Gorse on the bank above the farm (still a problem).

(see the family trees of Damm and Froggatt at baslowhistory.co.uk)

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