

Accident at Sea!

While at West Runton, Favell continued her writing. She completely revised *Reading Without Tears* adding new material, much of it from her recent experience. She even included an exciting episode where her poor donkey nearly drowned!

This near disaster happened when Favell drove down to the beach one morning with the donkey chaise. The younger children were in the chaise and the older ones running alongside. On the way they encountered the postman and took the post from him, putting it into the chaise. Favell wanted the donkey to bathe its legs in the sea water as the salt water was well known to be good for the legs of horses – and so presumably those of donkeys as well. The donkey seemed afraid when it saw the water so Favell blindfolded it with her shawl. Blindfolding horses was, and still is, often practised. They can be trained to go blindfold so that in case of danger (typically a stable fire) a blindfold can be applied and a horse that would otherwise panic at the sight of flames or other danger can be led to safety. Unfortunately Favell did not unhitch the donkey from the cart. She told the bigger girls to lead the donkey into the water which they did. A larger than usual wave, however, made them drop the rein. The donkey was afraid and being blindfold and having the cart behind he began to run deeper and deeper into the water.

The poor animal would certainly have drowned but for the prompt action of some local fishermen who, hearing the cries of distress from the children, rowed quickly over and pulled the drowning creature out of the water by his jaws, grabbed the bridle and dragged him ashore. Somewhat surprised to find the shivering donkey had been blindfolded they were nevertheless glad to be rewarded for prompt action. As for the letters, they were “lost at sea” and never seen again.