

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY



magazine

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Contents

- 2 Constitution and Officers
- 3 Chairman's Notes
- 3 Stand and deliver us
- 5 Ian and Pearl's Kithurst Walk August 17th
- 7 David and Linda's River Park Walk October 5th
- 6 Some definitely terrestrial aliens
- 9 Beer for the workers! (2)
- 10 Petworth in the 1860s. Some stories from the *West Sussex Gazette*
- 11 The house of Whitcomb
- 17 An Owl on the Roof
- 21 A not particularly temperamental chef
- 23 A Tillington Childhood (4)
- 27 What's in the cupboard?
- 34 *The Soldier Spiritualised* - a hitherto unknown Petworth book
- 39 'Wash the Boots First...'
- 44 Under the Mulberry Tree

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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE
LECONFIELD HALL
AND PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM!

WHEN MOVIES WERE MOVIES

A NEW MUSICAL TO CELEBRATE THE GOLDEN AGE OF CINEMA

Presented by **The Gilt & Gaslight Theatre Company**

Written and directed by **KEITH MYERS**

Musical arrangements by **DEAN AUSTIN**

Set by **ALAN BOLGER**

Choreography by **MARTIN WIMPRESS**

Production photos by **ROBERT WORKMAN**

Set in The Odeon in 1959 this fast moving musical comedy explores the British experience of going to the pictures from the silent era to 1950s.

Meet Flo the usherette with her stories of the goings on in the back row. Charlie on the "Mighty Wurlitzer" and watch as they conjure up your favourite stars of the silver screen.

Go Over the Rainbow with Judy Garland. Face the Music and Dance with Fred and Ginger. Jive in the aisles with Elvis, meet Mae, Groucho and many more.

Sponsored by : Wiseman Lee Solicitors



MONDAY DECEMBER 15th

LECONFIELD HALL

ADMISSION £4 (on door)

SEASONAL REFRESHMENTS

NOTICE BOARD

SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER

PETWORTH TOWN BAND CONCERT

HERBERT SHINER SCHOOL 7.30 p.m.

Adults £2.50 Children £1.50 Raffle, refreshments.

In aid of Cystic Fibrosis and Reflex-sympathetic dystrophy syndrome [RSDS]

On Tuesday December 9th The William Cobbett Society will hold a Cheese and Wine Evening in the Garden Room at Farnham Museum from 7 to 9 p.m. with readings, video and a quiz. Admission £1. All welcome.



Winter/Spring Programme. Please keep for reference.

Monthly meetings Leconfield Hall 7.30pm

Monday 15th December

Extra special Christmas Show!

The Gilt and Gaslight Theatre Company present:

"When Movies were Movies"

A new musical to celebrate the golden age of cinema.

Details see over. Admission £4 on door.

Refreshments (seasonal) and raffle

Wednesday 21st January

Peter Jerrome

Materials for a

"History of Petworth"

The second of two talks

2) The age of photography

£1.50 Refreshments, raffle

Monday 30th March

Reg Smith

Edwin Lutyens and
two lady gardeners.

£1.50 Refreshments, raffle

Thursday 26th February

Brad Bradstocke and the Off the Rails Company

A Glance from a train

with songs and real life characters

A Glance from a train tells the true story of a
Community faced with traumatic upheaval - including
two world wars. Just when everything looks back to
normal, hard-won skills are needed no more.

Admission £3 on door. Refreshments and raffle.

Thursday 23rd April

Dr Nick Sturt

returns to the Society with

"Wild flowers of old Sussex"

£1.50 Refreshments, raffle

EVENING CLASS

IS IT POSSIBLE TO WRITE A HISTORY OF PETWORTH?

Tutor: Peter Jerrome

Do the materials exist for such a project? We'll look at what is available and whether it could be drawn together to make a formal history. Certainly there's a lot of material. Perhaps the problem is that there's too much! After all no one has attempted a formal history since Arnold in 1864 and he would have looked on his book as a series of lectures. The tutor is often asked about a straightforward look at Petworth over the centuries rather than some particular subject. Well this is it!

Petworth Herbert Shiner School

P6 Monday 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Start 12th January 9 sessions

TELEPHONE NIKKI ON 01730 - 816683

Constitution and Officers

The Petworth Society was founded in 1974 "to preserve the character and amenities of the town and parish of Petworth including Byworth; to encourage interest in the history of the district and to foster a community spirit". It is non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit making.

Membership is open to anyone, irrespective of place of residence who is interested in furthering the object of the society.

The annual subscription is £7.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £8.00 overseas £9.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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Mrs Goodyer, Mrs Williams (Fittleworth)

Society Town Crier

Mr J. Crocombe, 19 Station Road (343329)

Note: The crier may be prepared to publicise local community events and public notices for you, even snippets of personal news such as births, engagements or lost pets. It is suggested that such personal and business cries be made for a small donation to a charity to be nominated by the crier himself.

Chairman's Notes

Just a line or two to introduce Magazine No.90. I hope you will find something of interest. Two brief points : don't forget the visit of Gilt and Gaslight Theatre Company for the Christmas evening on December 15th. Also for the first time for several years I am offering a straightforward look at Petworth History for the Spring evening classes from early January. For details of Gilt and Gaslight and the evening classes see the Activities Sheet.

Peter

28/10/97

'Stand and deliver us' - the Revd. James Fielding, 'Highwayman-Parson'

The 1997/98 season of evening meetings got off to a good start with the 7th Garland Memorial Lecture by Tony Douglass from Chiddingfold. His subject was the Revd. James Fielding (1740-1817), the 'Highwayman-Parson' of Haslemere. This would have appealed to George.

Born in London, James was a cousin of Henry Fielding, the novelist, who with his brother John, established a law-enforcement group which evolved into the Bow Street Runners! Educated at Harrow, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, quickly transferring to Trinity, at a time when standards were very low. Obtaining his BA, he became MA by paying the usual fee and in 1764 was ordained Deacon and appointed Curate of Barnay in Norfolk. This was a time when many young gentlemen with poor prospects entered the Church for want of anything better. After a year, he was ordained Priest in Winchester and became Rector of Cranleigh, where Lord Grantley was a benefactor. After 7 years, he also became curate at St. Bartholomew's, Haslemere, normally an insignificant position, but since St. Bart's was under the jurisdiction of Chiddingfold, he had more freedom and access to power in the absence of the Rector. He moved into Town House and bought Chase Farm, strategically sited on the Surrey-Sussex border, as well. The properties brought with them voting rights in Parliamentary elections.

At the time, many churchyards had an empty tomb which could serve as a temporary depository for smuggled goods. Fielding had a large one built at St. Bart's. There is evidence to link him with mail-coach robberies; seals were found in the cellars of both his houses. It is unlikely that he actually took part in the crimes but he certainly ran the gang. He came to own 5,000 acres bordered by Blackdown, Haslemere and Lythe Hill and finally took over as Vicar of Womersley and moved into the Vicarage there.

There are many stories of clergymen-highwaymen through the country and there has no doubt been some confusion between James Fielding and another notorious highwayman



HOBSON'S CHOICE.

Travelling Lecturer for Society (to one remaining listener). "I SHOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU, SIR, FOR SO ATTENTIVELY HEARING ME TO THE END OF A RATHER LONG SPEECH."

Local Member of Society. "NOT AT ALL, SIR. I'M THE SECOND SPEAKER."

*Tony Douglass' gloomy predictions were not borne out! (October 14th).
With acknowledgements to Punch.*

of the time, James Field. It is certain, however, that Fielding was implicated in a hold-up at Midhurst by the Drewett brothers, who were caught, tried and hanged at Horsham. They were the last to be gibbeted following the hanging, in Sussex. Another local link concerns his son, also James, who, after service under General Wyndham, died at Cockermonth. Mr. Douglass' highly entertaining talk, with dramatic interludes when he took the part of Fielding in appropriate costume, was interspersed with a fund of amusing anecdotes and mention of historic facts and people which set the scene in the context of the times. A final ironic coincidence was that one of those convicted of the biggest robbery ever (Brinks-Matt) lived at Fielding's Chase Farm.

KCT

Ian and Pearl's Kithurst Walk August 17th

Ian's route map directed us first to Bury and then through the narrow lane between Bury and Houghton, meeting the A29 at the familiar timber-framed building that had so often been used as a background by George Garland in the 1930s. No horse-drawn timber-waggons toiling up the road and past the pub today. We turned left at the junction, following the road down over the bridge and past the spot where Ian had picked up the bemused pigeon as we came back from Burpham a year ago. Further along the A29 past the Chalkpits, Amberley village away on the left. A right turn up a lane, climbing steadily to the Downs. Kithurst Hill. They were cutting in the corn fields, a combine-harvester threw up dust in the distance. A field of vetch was still in purple flower and there were white stones in the fields. After climbing for a time with the path we bore off to the right downhill, talking as much as looking. The map showed a Roman-British flint mine and this seemed visible away to the left. John Crocombe went to investigate, coming back with two pieces of flint and talk of "horizons" - separate beds of flint. Not all flint was of use for making tools: it had to be capable of being "flaked". It was a hot day in a hot August and the walkers stood talking until John returned to report. Recalling Miss Mellors at Petworth Girls School, the gold bangle she used to wear, living in retirement at Bognor and playing bowls rather well, keeping mementoes of Petworth days and always pleased to encounter someone she remembered. The conversation veered to the use of bacon pudding as a slimming aid - have three slices instead of four! Someone thought a meteorite had been found here. Was this true?

Cyclists had a disconcerting habit of coming up behind you and then at the last moment ringing their bell to demand room to pass, when you were really thinking about something like bacon pudding. Elder berries were beginning to turn colour and the sheep were enjoying a quiet Sunday afternoon. Into Lea Farm before turning right with the footpath. Bruno the dog insisted on scuffing up the dry dust instead of walking on the concrete path.

The incline wasn't too steep - stubble fields with the broken stems slippery even on the footpath. Looking south toward the coast - was it greenhouses or water that blazed in

the sun? The Bognor tower in the distance. The light stone in one particular place like a wartime searchlight - it had to be glass we decided. Thinking of searchlights, it was time to make a short detour to see the tank. A massive metal cadaver indeed. The turret, it was said, had disappeared comparatively recently but the reinforced lower limbs would probably remain part of the landscape for the foreseeable future. Apparently the tank was Canadian and had at one time been used for target practice. A REME mark at the back seemed to testify to some authorised pirating. On toward the cars, rape in full brown pod. Alternately sultry and breezy.



Gordon Stannard with Bruno and tank on Ian and Pearl's Kithurst Walk.

Back at Kithurst some police volunteers were warning visitors about car thieves. Ian and Pearl had drinks waiting for us. It was five o'clock. Even by Society standards it had been a leisurely walk. A buzzard hovered in the evening sky, then another. No great hurry. Effectively new territory for us. Ian and Pearl disclaimed all credit for the walk, they'd worked it out, they said, with their friends Terry and May who live in the area.

P.

David and Linda's River Park Walk October 5th

Through Lodsworth and Lickfold to the turning for River Park Farm then down a long track. A good turnout for the last walk of the season and a convoy of cars. We were coming to the end of a long spell of autumn days full of a mellow sunshine. Today it was still, grey, and, for once, there was no sunshine. We started at Lodge Farm, the subject of some local unease - farm-buildings being converted for office premises. We knew the buildings well enough from previous walks. Certainly there seemed a case for renovation of some kind - if left to their own devices the buildings would have been doomed. Dried stems of mugwort or desiccated heads of yarrow stood quite upright in the still grey atmosphere. Off on to Lodsworth Common, up a steep slope under the tree cover. A violet was in full flower on the path, the warm weather was bringing things on — bulbs too were sprouting someone said. Talk of previous inhabitants just after the war, a well-defined way of life faltering and dying in face of a quite different one. Chickens allowed inside cottages, goats tethered in the garden. Anne's aunt just coming into Petworth once a year — on Fair day! People delivered then, there was no need to go shopping. The world would come to you, or at least that small world that took in Lodsworth Common as part of its radius or sphere of influence. Michaelmas daises and perennial sunflowers appeared now over a high brick wall.

Eventually we came out on the Lickfold road again. We had come in a kind of crescent, there was the huge gunnera on the opposite side of the road. Off down another lane, slips of distressed black plastic stretched on the ground. It came from silage bales, David said. Dirty Bridge, again the dilemma of conservation, carefully built structures of stone and brick decaying in the hedgerow, redundant and now past saving. Sometimes the stone could be pirated for something else. Eventually we came out at Lurgashall Mill Farm, two Sunday anglers by the pond. A swan seemed unperturbed, grebe in the distance. Fern growing from old stone and the quiet farmyard of modern agriculture. Then along the side of a field, swede turnips, already there was a hint of purple root. Whites Green could be seen across the fields, we were walking now parallel with the Upperton road. The smell of autumn greenery was strong on the air. Back to Lodges Farm, the newly repaired bridge with its headstone saying 1797. When working here David had seen a kingfisher flash down the river under the bridge, and on. To the cars, drinks, the sun at last came out. A world approached from Lickfold rather than Tillington, not far from Petworth but always somewhat distant and remote.

Some Definitely Terrestrial Aliens

Not at first sight a good day for looking out plants, grey and dismal all day but relenting in late afternoon. The second hottest August recorded was beginning to lose its way. Nor, at first sight, did Nick's suggestion of Coates seem particularly promising, but Nick has usually

got something up his sleeve. Coates has been fenced and an attempt made to remove the bracken, possibly as a first step towards reinstating some form of grazing, we didn't know.

Down past Stroud, taking the Shopham Bridge road. A great pool in the road, needing effectively to be forded, golden tansy on the high banks before Bigenor. At Coates a stray centaur was still in pink flower on the verge. No need to park in the shade on an evening as mellow as this. Silt and assorted jetsam on the path showed just how heavy the recent rain had been, briefly turning the tracks into wadis. A horse passed us, then pulled up at having to walk through a shiny temporary pool. Eventually persuaded, the horse was mirrored in the water.

A time of fields no longer growing but supine - waiting for harvest, linseed brown and tired, a deserted sand quarry in the background. In the 1930s, when linseed was a rarity and a talking-point, harvesting was something to be feared. The tough stems meant a constant sharpening of the knife, and no doubt several changes of horses too. Apparently even modern machinery still finds problems. I thought back to early summer when the linseed was in full bloom and the Balls Cross road seemed briefly like a causeway between pale blue waters. One day the vision was there, the next it was gone.

Nick was more concerned with the field edge, a later summer profusion on the margin of the linseed, tangled but unassuming. He was pleased to find Butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), surprisingly a member of the lily family. In more leisured days the gipsies would spray the stiff prickly "leaves" with gold or silver paint and sell them as festive decorations. Here were two varieties of goose-foot, smaller insignificant-looking relatives of the white goose-foot or fat hen (*Chenopodium album*) at one time picked as a substitute for spinach. Nick found the fig-leaved and oak-leaved goose-foot. Not all the goose-foot family are true natives. Many have naturalised from foreign cargoes and there are now some eighteen different species, some very difficult to distinguish one from another.

We walked on to come out on the road to Coates church. Field margins again looked the most promising territory. Weld or dyers' rocket (*Reseda luteola*), a rather coarse plant but impressive with its long curling bead-like seed stems was in some numbers. A few starry yellow flowers still testified to its kinship with the garden mignonette. *Amsinckia*, with tiny yellow star-like flowers, is another naturalised alien; a relative of the forget-me-not, it has come to this country as a seed impurity. Here were various cudweeds, another insignificant plant, this time a native, but one that is threatened by the loss of its traditional meadow habitat. There was even a rather bedraggled thorn-apple (*Datura stramonium*), another naturalised alien but this time poisonous to livestock. Native but still something of a nuisance is the corn spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*). Nick found, too, the red goose-foot we had seen in the linseed field.

Marian and Liz were already at Coates church. The cemetery is on a slope and the older graves lay in deep shade. Inside the church was a square stone font. We wondered how often it was used. A memorial in the chancel commemorated the Duchess of Abercorn. I remembered Brenda Knight once telling me how the Duchess had given her father a letter to bring in to Petworth to post - addressed to Queen Victoria!

Blackberries, black, crimson, and green hung in the roadside hedgerow. Like the

elderberries they were quite still. As the road rose we could look back across the valley, the light at once sharp and mellow, such as comes only after heavy rain. There are several hundred varieties of blackberry, said Nick, and only an expert can tell them apart. A batologist (one 't') is the name for a blackberry expert. One of those curious pieces of information that stick with you, like "richesse" for a company of pine martens. A little difficult to fit into any ordinary conversation. My dictionary says that a battologist (two 't's) is someone who uses needless repetition in speaking or writing. Two Greek words. For an uneasy moment it occurs to me that we might have a classicist's wry comment on my own role of Boswell to Nick's Dr. Johnson ... but no. Batology to one side, the potatoes were still in the field, row upon row of bleached haulms, with the furrows between the rows turned into flat silt-beds by the rain. The haulms reminded irresistibly of bones, as if waiting for some latter-day Ezekiel to call them to life.

Back over the common, the odd marshy patch at the side of the path. Nick remembered a legend of a horse and cart disappearing into Red Hill hollow. Which one was it? And had it really been at Coates? We didn't know. A night of a curious stillness. On the verge where we saw the centaur there were agrimony stems. The flowers were long spent just the long curling bead-like seed stems, one side green, purple on the reverse.

(Marian and Peter were walking with Liz and Nick Sturt.)

Beer for the workers! (2)

July 25th 1740. Also by bill for one Weeks Expenses as allowed to the Haymakers instead of small beer from June 31st to July 5 £1=11=0½. (PHA 7816)

Aug 11th 1740. Paid as by Bill for mowing the grass at Chillinghurst & Benifold farms (sic) — at the rate of 1^s 10^d per acre with the usual allowance of 2^d per day for small beer. (PHA 7816)

Aug 5th 1741. Paid a fortnights Bill of Allowance to the Haymakers instead of small beer £3=6=1. (PHA 7818)

Paid John Douglas of Green for 2 doz & 1 Pint of Metheglin for the Rt. Hon. Lady Francis Seymour £1=4=6. Welsh (originally) fermented liquor made from honey. (PHA 7819)

From Jan ye 3 1779 to Jan'y 2 1780. Elizabeth Swan for brewing small beer for his Lordships drink. £0=2=0. (PHA 9574)

J.C. Drummond and Anne Wilkinson (*The Englishman's Food 1939 Revised 1957*) compare strong beer which would soon put a man under the table with the light small beer, little stronger than a modern lager, which was the ordinary table drink even of young children. The Allowance at Christ's Hospital at the end of the 17th century was 30 barrels a week for 407

people i.e. about 2½ gallons per head. It had the advantage of being a good deal safer and probably more palatable than most of the drinking water available.

Brian Rich

See also Magazine 88

Quotations from Petworth House Archives courtesy of Lord Egremont.

Petworth in the 1860s. Some stories from the West Sussex Gazette

Coronation day

All the shops in the town, with the exception of the grocers, were closed on Monday, in commemoration of the coronation of Her Gracious Majesty. There was nothing to attract holiday folks into the town and those who really wanted a holiday had to go elsewhere for one, so that the town seemed entirely deserted, if we except the members of the Albert Institute, who spent the afternoon jollily at the Monument in cricket etc. To enliven their march out and home the members engaged the services of the band of the Sixth Sussex Rifle volunteers. (2nd July 1863).

An unwelcome visitor

Last Thursday afternoon a bullock was being driven to the slaughter house of Mr Gadd in Lombard Street when it took a different turning, and went through the back doorway of one Richard Peters's house, up the passage and into a small sitting-room, where there were two females, one a married daughter of Mr Peters, who had a child lying in a cradle in the corner. The roller blind of the window, which was between three and four feet from the ground, was pulled down, and the bullock, rudely pushing the table on one side, made a leap at the light, and carried with him the whole of the window and frame and fell into the street but he soon made off, and after visiting the garden of Mr B. Challen, looked into the summer-house and was safely secured. It was fortunate that the framework of the window gave way for had the animal fallen back into the room, there is no saying what might have been the consequences. (6th August 1863).

Harvest

The scythe and sickle are now in active operation in the neighbourhood. Never do we recollect the crops in this area looking finer and should we be blessed with fine weather, we may reasonably expect a very fine harvest. (6th August 1863).

Goodwood races

Our town has been unusually gay during the last race week, a larger number of vehicles than usual especially on the Cup Day, having passed through. Capt. Cooper with a large party of friends, including the Duke of St Albans, made Mr Dempster's Half Moon Hotel their headquarters during the meeting. The Swan and other inns in the town were also well

patronised. (6th August 1863).

A bogus clergyman

A fellow calling himself the Rev. Mr Powis, and having all the appearance of belonging to the clergy, went one day last week to the Rev. Mr Holland and induced him from his representations and letters which he showed him, to give a letter of reference to the bank. He said he wanted to rent a house at Petworth, containing not less than 20 rooms and he was going to remove a sum of £2,500 from where it was deposited to the London and County Bank. He drove up to the bank in a four wheel chaise (a hired one) and, having presented his letter, asked for change for a cheque of £100. The clerk, on seeing Mr Holland's letter, readily acquiesced and asked how he would have it. The Rev. Gentleman said he was not particular, he should like a little gold as he had a few bills in the town he wanted to pay. £30 in gold and £70 in notes were then handed over to him for the cheque which in due course found its way back to Petworth marked "no effects". The Rev. Mr Powis had in the meantime "mizzled" and perhaps has by this time done some other bank. At any rate; if he has not, he could have a jolly Christmas from the proceeds of his visit to Petworth.

(31st December 1863)

An alarm of fire

Soon after eleven o'clock on Friday night a man came running into town shouting the alarming cry of "Fire, fire". The engines were soon got out and proceeded to Colhook Common, where the fire was raging. It was found that one of the sheds at the brickyard of Lord Leconfield had by some means caught fire. Happily the devouring element was confined to the shed, although there were several large stacks of faggots standing near. The damage done was inconsiderable. (15th June 1865).

The house of Whitcomb

I must have been about two years old when I was first taken by my parents to my father's home in Pound Street. He was one of the Whitcombs: his name was William. We lived in London then and so we had travelled to Petworth by train. I don't remember anything about that part of the journey, I was probably asleep anyway! But I do remember being lifted up into a horse-drawn coach by my father in the station yard. I think it must have been Christmas time for I can recall the light from the coach lamps being reflected on the snow-covered hedges as we drove up Station Road. As the coach pulled up outside the house there was such a todo. Half the family must have been outside awaiting our arrival. Everybody was talking at once. There was much kissing and hugging as our luggage was unloaded. That first welcome to the House of Whitcomb was something special, something I have never forgotten.

I don't remember anything else about that visit. Although I didn't realise it at the time, the arrival of a nephew was quite an occasion for the family and although I was surrounded by a host of adoring aunts and uncles, and thoroughly spoilt I expect, I was too young to take it in then. Eventually, as the years passed, I grew to know them and love them all.

The Whitcombs were a very happy family and were highly respected in Petworth. When my grandfather (Henry) died I'm told that nearly every shop in Petworth shut. He was well known and was Head of the Leconfield Estate Office in Petworth house. My grandmother (Anne) was a dear soul, a very gracious lady. Apart from my father, several members of the family had already left Pound Street by the time I started visiting. Frank was married to Daisy Thayre, a Petworth girl and still lived in Petworth, in Percy Terrace, and had two children, Chum and Baddy. Arthur and Fred were living in Worthing and Ally worked in Vokins, the milliners, at Brighton. She 'lived in' over the shop in North Street. So that left four sisters (Edie, Mab, Elsie and Gert) and two brothers (Reg and Hubert) at Pound Street.

Edie died when I was very young but I can remember her double chin and a rather large wart which always fascinated me: Mab was the head cook and bottle washer. Elsie worked in the Estate Office for many years and lived all her life in Pound Street. Gertie, ('Gig' to the family), later married Billy Pulling and went to Horsham to live. Reg never married and he too worked in the Estate Office. He was also involved in the Petworth Choral Society, the Bowls Club and other local activities. Hubert was also attached to the Estate for he was Clerk of the Works. He later married Lilian Boxall and went to live in Boxall House with her mother. One thing all the Whitcombs had in common was a natural singing voice.

I think my first reaction to the house itself was of complete bewilderment; I had never before seen such a large and rambling house as this. As I grew older I got to know every nook and cranny. It was ideal for games of Hide and Seek!

There was no pavement; the main door led straight in from the road into the hall. On the right was the Music Room. To the left was the passage to the kitchen and scullery but having crossed that there was a door which led into the Sitting Room. Then came a smaller room in which Gert conducted her piano lessons. Beyond that was the 'Coal Hole' and toilet and lastly what was always referred to as the Coach House. I suppose at one time it probably did house a coach but I only remember it as a garage for Gert's Morris Cowley.

A stairway led off from the hall to the centre of a passage which ran the length of the house giving access to the bedrooms. There was a large alcove opposite the top of the stairs with cupboards where the linen was kept. There was a marvellous view of the garden from there too. One further aspect of the house was the stone cellar. This was cool even in mid-summer and an ideal store for hanging poultry.

During my summer visits, before I was old enough to go out on my own, I probably spent most of my time in the garden. Here too was an ideal place for Hide and Seek! In my mind's eye I can still re-live going round that garden. Up the steps by the kitchen window past the first of the greenhouses on the right and the potting shed (where old Mr Tullett reigned supreme) between beds of roses and a large water butt to a small lawn surrounded by a lattice work of rambling roses (the centre of my young world). Then right by the raspberry canes and the rhubarb patch, left at the fig tree to a sump in the far corner where I looked for frogs. Here too was the second greenhouse and on the east-facing wall (the other side of which was Petworth Park) was an old Victoria plum tree. Going along the top path to a little dilapidated summer house, left towards the very large Christmas pear tree, the third

greenhouse and a colourful display of lupins, down the slope the other side of the central rose bed and back to the house. A nostalgic reminiscence; I wonder what it looks like now!

I have always looked forward to visiting Pound Street but looking back I think it was the Christmases I remember most. They were joyous occasions and the Christmas Day Church Service was always the centre of the festivities. As a child, and because I was the first nephew to stay there, I was constantly the centre of attraction especially early on Christmas morning when they used to crowd into my bedroom to watch me unwrap the presents that Santa had brought me! In those early days I didn't realise just how lucky I was and yet I can only remember two things - my first jig-saw puzzle (a large-piece cardboard picture called The Bluebell Wood in a square red box) and a few years later a Hornby train set which I added to and treasured for many years. By then I knew it had come from Uncle 'Santa' Hubert!

Sometimes we used to go to the Boxing Day meet. I remember one at the Gog particularly because it was snowing and so cold that I fainted. Something that has never been repeated.

One incident I recall, which I think sums up the kind of Christmas I came to expect at Pound Street. The family were all assembled in the Music room which housed a grand piano. Gert was leading carol singing from the piano, a wholehearted effort with all parts blending well. I was sitting with my mother, next to grandmother, when Mab came in from the kitchen and whispered to her that there was a group of people standing in the snow across the road, listening to the singing. Her immediate reaction was to tell Mab to invite them into the hall and to bring drinks and mincepies.

Then there were Lady Leconfield's Christmas Parties. As a Whitcomb I was privileged to receive an invitation from her Ladyship although they were really held for the children from the Estate farms. We all had a present of course but not always from Father Christmas; on one occasion we had a Pied Piper resplendent in a kind of jester's costume who piped in rats of all colours which were attached by strings to the back of his belt. I still have and treasure two wooden jig-saws that was given to me on such occasions.

Then, winter or summer, my parents never failed to take me on The Rounds, as they called it. This entailed visits to other Whitcombs living in the town. Frank and Dais were already living in Percy Terrace and we used to go there to tea and I was able to play with



Leslie Whitcomb in the Pound Street garden.

my cousins Chum (Henry) and Baddie (Pauline). Just down the road, near what is now the Petworth Cottage Museum there was Mary Whitcomb, known as 'Aunt Polly' (actually she was my father's cousin but everyone called her 'Aunt') and her daughter Marjorie. Polly had a little milliners shop in Angel Street. My mother always bought a reel of cotton or a packet of needles when we went there. Win Whitcomb and her niece Gladys (Morley) used to live in the house down the slope, on the left just before where Tony Whitcomb now has his studio. Win was another cousin as were Lou and Bob Whitcomb who kept the Wheatsheaf pub in North Street and later, after Hubert had married, there was always at least one visit to Boxall House.

I soon got to know some of the special friends of the family. The girls (Else and Gert) frequently went on holiday with Peggy Streeter. Her father, Ernie, had an Antique shop opposite the church, trading under the unusual name of E. Streeter and Daughter. He had a marvellous collection of butterflies and moths. One evening I remember Peggy calling at Pound Street. It was just about my bedtime but to my surprise Elsie told me to put my coat on as we were going for a walk! I couldn't believe it but was told that it was alright, they had my parent' approval. So the three of us set off, through the town and the kissing gate by the Rectory, down to the little bridge and up the hill opposite. I think it was the first time I had been out in the country after dark, although it doesn't ever get really dark in the country. I know I was a little scared of the bats at first but was assured that they were quite harmless. I soon forgot them anyway for by this time I had been told that our destination was the Gog where Mr Streeter was hoping to catch a Deaths Head moth and I was getting excited; I had never experienced anything like this before. There was no difficulty in locating him for he had rigged up a large white sheet behind which was a powerful lamp. By the time we got to him the sheet was alive with hundreds of flying insects which had been attracted by the light. It really was a remarkable sight and there amongst the moths was the object of this excursion, the Deaths Head.

Another great friend of the family was Mrs Cownley, Housekeeper at Petworth House where she had her own private apartment. She spent a lot of her off duty time at Pound Street and she often joined us at the Bowling Club or the Tennis Club, where (I think) she was President. At first I must confess I was a little scared of her. I suppose that was partly the austere way she dressed, invariably in black and with a black band round her throat. She also had a moustache! But I soon discovered that this severity of dress was a facade and the stern expression she 'put on' when dealing with the staff soon disappeared at will. I came to know her as a very kindly and considerate person and those invitations to tea were eagerly looked forward to for years. We always had our tea on a small table in front of the window, thinly cut sandwiches, cakes and tea from a rather ornate silver teapot. In the centre of her sitting room was a huge oval table. It was on this that Mrs C. sat and struggled with Lady Leconfield's jig-saw puzzles. These were cut specially for her and, at that time, were the largest I had ever seen. One year I remember helping(!) Mrs C. do one of an oasis. Each palm tree, each Arab and each camel were cut separately. The sky was blue and the ground was sand of course. Pieces didn't interlock in those days. I went up several times during that summer holiday but I never saw it finished.

When I was old enough to go out on my own I struck up a friendship with a boy who lived just across the road. His name was Billy Vincent. It was nice to have someone of my own age to play with. If it was fine we would wander round to the Sheepdowns perhaps or try to dam the Virgin Mary Spring (something we never really succeeded in doing). More often than not we would go in the park. On one occasion we walked right over to the other side, towards Upperton, where we found a square concrete sort of building that had a flat roof. It was easy enough getting up there but it was some time before we could come down again because of the wasps from the nest we had disturbed as we had climbed up the steps. By the time we made our escape it was beginning to get dark and we knew the park always closed at dusk so we had to hurry. Even so, the park must have been closed for quite a while before we came in sight of the first lodge. I had visions of being locked in! Then I noticed two figures standing by the gate. One I recognised at once as my Aunt Elsie, the other was of course Mr Grist, the Lodge Keeper. I remember we got a mild wiggling and after we had explained why we were so late were told not to go so far next time. There never was a 'next time'!

Obviously there must have been some rainy days but only one comes to mind and that was when I was round at Billy's home and allowed to play his mother's phonograph which played cylinders and had a large horn-shaped speaker.

I'm not sure whether the family looked upon George Garland as a friend; he wasn't a very sociable person I'm told. He certainly knew the family for he was often engaged in taking photographs in connection with the musical activities that the Whitcombs were involved in over the years. I remember going to his studio about a magazine we were both interested in but that was after the war.

I was still quite young when I realised it was a privilege to be a Whitcomb! Having such close connections with Petworth House I often had opportunities to witness things that other members of the public would not have seen. I don't know how many times I have had conducted tours of the House when it was closed to the public and 'the family' not in residence. It usually was Elsie that showed me round but I think it was Hubert who took me down to the vaults when some of the rarer paintings were being put away. And I remember Elsie allowing me to peep into 'Lordy's' inner sanctum when some work was being done there. (Lord Leconfield was always 'Lordy', behind his back, but I'm sure he was well aware of that.)

There are two occasions that come to mind in particular and which I would not have experienced if it had not been for Hubert. One was when he took me into the park although it was shut to the public because the upper pond was being drained. I think it was because some of the fish were found to be diseased. Of course it was impossible to remove all the water and I shall never forget the sight of so many large fish flapping about in the liquid mud that was left. The other was when he took me to see the fire drill at the House. This was a serious business of course but I thought it was really good fun to see the firemen running in from the town, getting out the little hand-pump engine, harnessing the horse and galloping round to the front of the House where they played the hose on to an imaginary fire. I don't remember where they got the water from, I suppose it was probably from a hydrant, the pond being too far away. It was all very exciting.

One Sunday morning during a school summer holiday I was walking up the Tillington

road with my father when I noticed a man with two black labradors walking towards us. Father said "Here comes Lordy..... don't forget to touch your cap." This I did, and his Lordship stopped to speak to us. Suddenly he grabbed my arm and pointing across the road said, "Look lad, see that?". And there in the middle of the field, standing erect on its hind legs, was a hare. That was the first and last time I saw Lord Leconfield, it was also the first and only time I have seen a live hare. Then, as we continued our separate ways, my father said to me "Next time you touch your cap to someone, use your RIGHT hand!".

As a young lad I was taken to the kennels to see the fox hounds and being surprised at their size. Once I remember going to St Mary's but instead of sitting with the non-choir members of the family in their private pew, I sat up in the organ loft with Gert. I have happy memories of Petworth Church but there were sad ones too for over the years I have attended many funerals there.

I lost my father when I was fifteen but my mother and I continued to visit Pound Street regularly and I often used to cycle there on my own during the years prior to the war. I always let Elsie know when I was going by ringing Amy Jerrome, Peter's mother, who would pop across the road and find if it was alright for me to go. Amy was a very good friend of the family and of Elsie in particular, who thought the world of her.

Elsie died on 2nd April 1974 and with her passing, having outlived all her brothers and sisters, the House of Whitcomb came to an end and I, together with Baddie my co-executor, had the unenviable task of disposing of the contents of the family house. When it was all done and before I left it for the last time, I wandered sadly through the empty rooms, remembering them as they used to be over a span of nearly sixty years.

In the empty Music Room I saw the grand piano which once had over a hundred cups and trophies on it that had been competed for and won for singing at the various Musical Festivals. On the wall just inside the main door, a row of hand-drawn hunting scenes, the ornate umbrella stand with its assortment of walking sticks, in the corner the grandfather clock and next to it a large black chest with the year 1673 carved on the front of it. Over the passage leading to the rest of the house, a fine set of antlers flanked on either side by cases of butterflies. All gone. So too was the old Westminster chiming clock in the Sitting Room where I was taken as a little boy to listen to it strike twelve o'clock. Then along the passage leading to the kitchen, the real centre of family life. Where I had shared many meals on the long deal table smoothly rounded by years of regular scrubbing; the green dresser that almost covered one wall and over in the corner where Gert used to prepare and ate her own meals (always referred to as Gigs Corner) the big black grate and beside it the alcove where two Persian cats called Moody and Poody lived in grandmother's time, and so much more.....

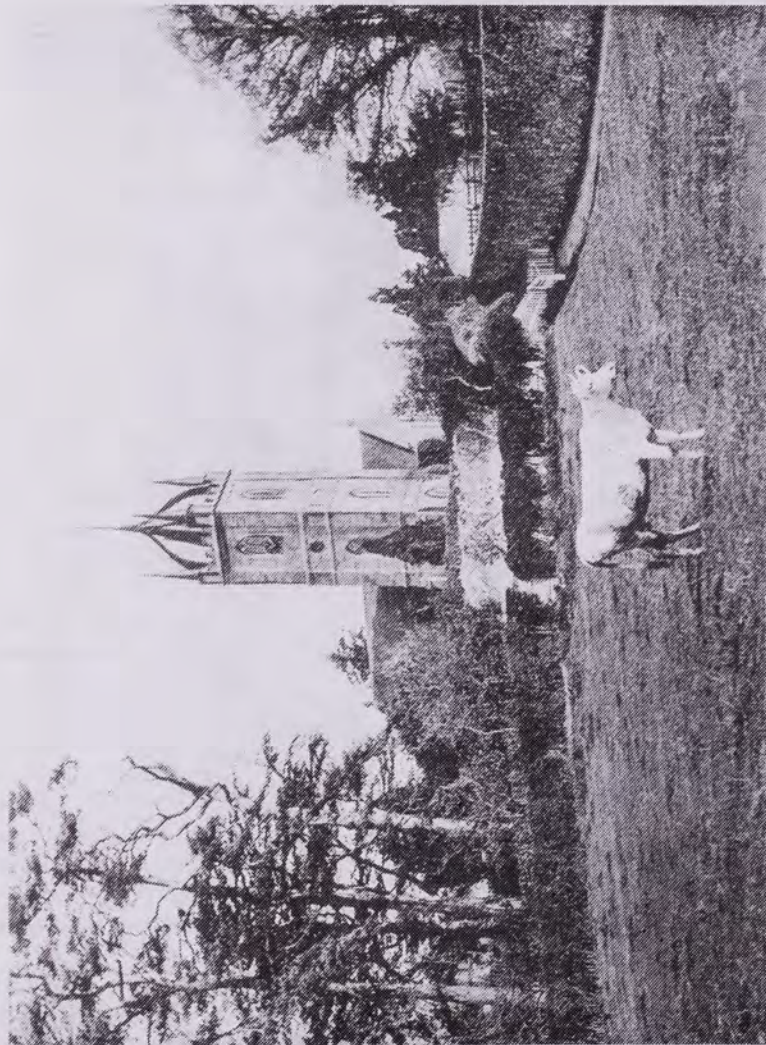
This reminiscing was too nostalgic to continue. I went upstairs for the last time to look at the garden and that bit of lawn half-way up which had been the centre of my young world a life-time ago.

I wonder what it all looks like now and whether the present occupier ever hears the echo of Elsie's rich soprano voice singing Abide with Me, or maybe Bless this House.....

Leslie Whitcomb



*Imps in a rhubarb plant. Surprising what you see on a Petworth Society Walk (October 5th).
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.*



*Tillington Church - a postcard by Walter Kevis.
See A Tillington Childhood.*

An Owl on the Roof

Housewives

When an addition was due in the family, one of the nurses who lived at Wisborough Green, would come to live in for the period before and after the birth. Mrs. Birrell, the Rector's wife at Kirdford, used to collect the nursing fund for this, it was a kind of insurance; the nurse wasn't free. She would sleep in, sharing a room with the mother. We had three bedrooms and father would go and sleep with the boys for the period. The nurse would look after the whole family and wait on my mother. She stayed for about ten days after the delivery until mother was able to get up. She'd do the washing and cooking and look after the children generally. Such women were called housewives rather than nurses. I remember that ours had a pony and cart and that if she had to go home to Wisborough Green to get something she would take us for the ride.

Blisters and olive oil

In normal circumstances, if something happened in the family, my mother had to use her own judgement. You couldn't afford to call out a doctor. When my little brother fell into the fire, it had gone out, but the kettle had just boiled. He hit up against the kettle and the water splashed out all over his arm. All his underarm was scalded and the blisters hung down like great bladders. I can't remember whether mother pricked them, but she bathed the arm with olive oil every day for a week or more. Curiously the blisters never seem to have been sore. I can see the blisters now, all the way up from the elbow. I think that nowadays you would be advised against using olive oil in such a situation but after a week he got better.

King George's Coronation Day

I would be about seven when King George was crowned in 1911. Certainly I would be at school. My two sisters and I had new dresses specially made for us in navy blue for the occasion. My mother paid a relative of hers to make them and we had to go to Kirdford Rectory where the dressmaker's husband worked, to be measured. The dresses were all alike, with two or three frills round the bottom. The material was a kind of silk or muslin, I'm not quite sure. There was a big celebration at Barkfold Park. A woman who lived down the lane from us made some buns. We children were all given one each and then, as there were a few over, the remainder were cut in half and given out to use them up. The older children were given bars of pink and white coconut ice, but I got a piece of chocolate done up in a ribbon.

Toes in the grass

By the side of the house at Great Common was a field of grass and we loved to get out into the wet grass without shoes so that we could feel the water running between our toes. Father didn't like us doing this and said so. One day he caught us in the field. He never hit us, nor did my mother, although she did shout at us on occasion, but this was probably as near as we came. We three girls were running round and round in the grass which was high, wet, and ready for cutting on a dry day. After all we were effectively trampling it down. Father was so angry he got a swishy stick and looked more than ready to use it. We took off with him in hot pursuit, swishing at our legs, we could feel the tingling of the stick. We rushed indoors, half-crying, and upstairs, but he left it at that and didn't follow us.

A cracked trough

As I was the eldest girl Mother often kept me at home to look after the younger ones while she went out to work. She'd go to someone's house and do their housework or, perhaps, the family washing. She might be out all day. She'd do any job to make ends meet, any job that was going. Once an uncle of hers was moving into a cottage and wanted her to scrub it out for him from top to bottom, which she did. My little brother was lying in the pram and my father happened to come home. He saw that the baby was breathing heavily and sent us to get mother saying, "The child's dying, go and get your mother." When I got to the cottage she said, "I'm not going home. I'm finishing here". She knew the child had a touch of bronchial trouble. The uncle bought an iron pig trough from us for ten shillings but, as he was carrying it back to his house, he dropped it and cracked it. He refused to pay for it, saying that it leaked and wasn't any good. Well, he had dropped it after all but we could never get any money out of him. Ten shillings was a lot of money.

Fibs

We were brought up not to tell fibs and I never have. An old lady used to give me a half penny for a can of blackberries but one day she hadn't any change. So she said, "Remind me that I owe you a halfpenny". When I did remind her, she was annoyed and told my mother. My mother treated this as a "fib" and shouted at me. I felt hard done by, after all the old lady had told me to ask her.

My sister worked Saturdays cleaning knives and weeding the courtyard for someone and earned a shilling. I worked for a local farmer and looked after his kiddies, bringing them home from school every night and looking after them Saturdays and all day Sunday but I was only paid a shilling too. Eventually I insisted on more than a shilling but I didn't get it and left. After all I did a lot that the farmer's wife should have been doing, feeding the chicken, feeding the turkeys, churning the cream.

Once I'd been busy working all day and had had no time to go to the lavatory which was across the yard. There were a lot of baby turkeys all over the place and I was in a hurry to get to the lavatory. They got under my feet and I trod on one and it died. The farmer's wife made a terrible fuss and said I'd trodden on it. I claimed I didn't know anything about it. She persisted and so did I. It was the only fib I ever told and my mother never found out!

The boy and girl I used to look after caused me a few problems too. The boy wouldn't do what he was told and I was only a schoolgirl myself. I'd taken them across the fields for a walk when we came across a wasps' nest. I said to the boy, "Don't touch it," but he was naughty. He had a stick and nothing would he do but poke the nest. Out they came but they ignored him and made for me. I flew with them in pursuit and stinging me all over. As far as I remember he wasn't stung at all.

Lights at night

Mother used to walk from Great Common to Plaistow to see her sister and by the time we came back it would be moonlight. Dad would come to fetch us all home together. All along both sides of the road were glow-worms. One night I collected some in my handkerchief and put them in my pocket to use them to light up the front of the house when we got home, they certainly did. When I looked at them in the morning, however, I was very

disappointed; they were just a little old grub. In the night on the grass verge they had shone like a galaxy of stars.

In the middle of the pond at Westlands there was a tree which seemed to shine in the dark. The pond would be quite dark but the tree shone. It unsettled me and I used to think there was something evil in the pond. Grandad said the tree was phosphorescent rather like the sheen you see on fish scales.

Bees

Granny Duncton and I used to go outside the house to listen to the bees and watch them come home. Some had orange legs, some black. We'd see them cleaning the pollen from their legs to take into the hive. At the end of the season there seemed to be a throbbing "kill them, kill them" coming from the hive and we'd see dead bees being carried out to be dumped in the garden. The drones we thought. Every evening we'd listen to the bees. Granny would say "If you're very quiet you'll hear the hive telling them to go". But you had to be very quiet. This was when they were about to swarm. Sure enough the older bees did seem to be telling some of the hive to leave. And, invariably, next day or the day after they would come out of the hive and go off with a new queen.

Once I had to go to Wisborough Green with Grandad Duncton to collect a swarm. Curiously enough the place was called Westlands so we went from one Westlands to another. We duly collected the swarm, put them in a box on the back of the pony and cart, covered with a sheet and roped down. When bees swarmed we used to rush out with saucepan lids, kettles, dustbin lids, anything that would make a tinny noise. If we did this the swarm would settle in the orchard. Grandad Duncton said that if you "rang" the bees they would settle and they always seemed to. Once they had settled in a tree he would get some ashes, put the hive on the ground and swish round the inside of the hive with broad beans soaked in beer. The latter homemade of course. He would then tie his trouser legs and sleeves with string to stop the bees, get the saucepan of warm ashes and keep throwing ash on the beer-soaked side of the hive. As the bees smelled the rising fumes from the beer they would come down into the hive. After a while Grandad would pick up the hive by the handle and put it on its board with the three legs under it. The bees would be crawling all over him and my job was now to take a chicken wing and brush the bees off back into the hive. I didn't like doing this but they didn't sting either him or me. Seeing me hold back, he'd say, "Come on, they won't hurt you," but I wasn't so sure. "Come on, just brush 'em off," he'd say. Wherever there was a hint of the beer they'd cling. My sister's husband used to amaze me. He'd go to a hive and take out a lot of honey without any retaliation from the bees. We used to say, "You'll be stung to death". "No, I won't," he'd say, "I'm not afraid of them," and he was right, it seemed, they didn't sting him.

The last time Grandad Duncton made honey, he was surprised that when the spring sun shone there was no sign of life from the hive. When he opened it up, he found that the bees were all dead. Mice had eaten all the honey and the bees had starved. Grandad gave up after that.

Birds

I was staying with my sister - I think it was at Westergate - when she heard someone breathing harshly. She thought it was her son. She went into his bedroom but he was fast asleep and certainly not making that kind of noise. It was late at night and we simply couldn't

track down the source of the noise. Eventually we found it was an owl, apparently asleep in the chimney and taking great gasping breaths.

Chaffinches used to line their nests with feathers - pigeon feathers it always seemed to me. They'd nest in plum trees at Great Common and the nest opening was so small that you could only get two fingers into it. The eggs were white with pink spots. The nests of moss lined with feathers hung down rather like a swarm of bees. I never saw this after I left Great Common.

A "clever" woman

Granny Duncton was a clever old lady. She used to make her husband cross because in the morning she'd tell him what was going to happen during the day. Once I went with her on the bus to Brighton for the day to visit my aunt. Granny told her husband to be careful that day. "Don't keep on," he said as he always did. This habit of hers infuriated him. Coming back on the bus she said to me, "I don't know what's happened but something's happened to Grandad".

It was arranged that he would come into Petworth with the pony and cart to pick us up. He appeared but seemed a little quiet and when we arrived home asked for some rag. "What for?" asked Granny. It turned out that he wanted it to put round his neck. He'd been to the station that morning, collected a load of timber and somehow slipped down between the timber and the pony's feet. If the pony had moved he would have been killed. As it was he'd simply hurt his neck.

Granny had a sister Clara in Australia who sent a magazine to Westlands every month. Granny said one day, "I'm going to hear some bad news. I shan't be surprised when I hear it because I know all about it already. She's died and I know the very hour". Sure enough a black-bordered envelope arrived from Australia. Granny had been right.

Charlie

Charlie the pony used to bring Grandad into Petworth. He would be unharnessed and put in at the back of the Red Lion while Grandad went in to talk to his mates. Sometimes he brought Granny in to Petworth too. One day he was in the Red Lion as usual and Granny, having done her errands in Petworth was waiting to go home, pacing up and down the street. No sign of him. Eventually she was so exasperated that she set off to walk home, down North Street and right up the Horsham Road to Fox Hill. She was nearly back at Westlands before the pony and cart caught up with her.

A poor cook

Cooking at old Westlands was in a three-legged pot hung on a hook over a wood fire. Granny and the boys went off to church leaving Grandad to cook. The meat and vegetables were already in the pot with the drip pudding. He was told to keep the fire going and the pot simmering. What he forgot was to keep some water in the pot. They came back to a very dry dinner and baked rather than boiled pudding. Sometimes meat and vegetables would be cooked together, sometimes the meat would be put into the pot in a separate dish, the pudding put over the top and the vegetables packed round the side.

Excerpted from a tape of Mrs. Nellie Duncton talking to Audrey Grimwood.
For other recollections by Mrs. Duncton see Magazines 53, 54, 81, 88, 89.

A not particularly temperamental Chef

I went to Petworth House to work in the late 1930s. My father had a job as head carter on a farm just out of Petworth. I hadn't been to school in the area as we had only moved to the farm a year or two before. I didn't apply for the job of kitchenmaid and I wasn't interviewed: it just seems to have been assumed that I was suitable. I had the impression that my father had fixed it all up. After all, as the daughter of a farm-worker I had always had to help with household work. I simply came to the House and met the chef and started work. My instructions were simple enough: to prepare vegetables for the big house and for the servants. There was a difference: vegetables for the big house had to be uniform, cut up in certain ways. Carrots were small and regular, potatoes round and all of the same size. These demands were relaxed when preparing vegetables for the servants.

Well, here we are in the kitchen. It looks the same and yet different. I stood here at the table with the chef to my right, there were one or two people opposite me on the other side of the table. I thought there was a big sink behind me under the east window - perhaps I'm wrong, I can't be quite sure now. The chef's name, being French, was too much for me, he was just the chef. If you say it was Msr. Chassagne I'm not going to argue. I remember him well, he certainly wasn't the temperamental continental character people like to think of, although he did joke about spitting in the soup. It was something chefs were alleged to do, but of course he didn't. He lived actually in London where he had a wife and children. He went back regularly, but never of course, at weekends because that would be when the kitchen was at its busiest. We had the same food as the big house; the chef was most insistent about this, "You've prepared it, you're entitled to eat it," he would say, but this only applied to those who actually worked in the kitchen. We'd have our meals in the kitchen, it was very much our own little world and I didn't venture out of it.

Standing here looking at the kitchen, I can't remember the big spit at the end ever being in use, even at Christmas. Perhaps by the time I came the traditional Christmas gathering had stopped. I never went beyond the kitchen itself. The scullery was very much the domain of the scullery man, it was he who prepared the meat for the kitchen and cleaned the vegetables. My job was preparing the vegetables, not cleaning them. This eastern side of the kitchen I had to scrub at the end of the day - always the same side. These were nervy days, war at first threatened and then actually declared. I have a vivid picture in my mind of the chef sitting on his stool in the kitchen and tears rolling down his cheeks. France had fallen. It would, I suppose, be 1940. He had a special stool to sit on as he worked at the big table.

No, I never went into the chef's sitting room. You've certainly got it looking very comfortable with its wooden floor. I never went into the larder either. The kitchen was my place of work and that was that. If I wasn't there I'd be in my bedroom. In the morning I'd wear a cap, blouse, dress and apron, for afternoon and evening a darker colour dress again with the cap, no hair showing when food was being prepared. Always black stockings. The uniform was provided I'm sure. There was a lot of lifting but I was a strong girl from a farming family and thought nothing of it. There was a little free time in the afternoon and a weekly half-day and alternate Sundays off. I lived fairly locally so I'd bicycle home. As I have said,

while working, I remained very much in the kitchen but once the butler took me into the big house to see the Dining Room set up ready for a meal. He said after a while, "When you put your eyes back, I'll take you back". If you worked in the kitchen you were very much under the chef rather than the housekeeper. I don't even remember the housekeeper's name. I do remember however people talking about Mrs. Cownley a previous housekeeper, also of how the previous chef had simply died one morning in this bedroom.

Christmas was hard work, the evening was a very long shift. No overtime of course and just a short mid-afternoon break. I remember saying innocently to the chef my first Christmas, "I expect I'll be able to go home in the afternoon". "You certainly won't," he replied. Once he said to me, "You're getting on my nerves, here's a shilling. Go to the pictures. Get back in as best you can and I'll say I don't know where you are". I didn't go to the pictures very often I can assure you. The chef spoke English very well and certainly wasn't the usual image of the temperamental foreigner. Quite the reverse. If the vegetables weren't as he wanted them he'd say simply, "That won't do" and give them back to me. He would, as far as I know, do any dish he was asked for. He was a wizard with pastry and cakes but I was never allowed into the pastry room - that was very much the chef's own territory. It was almost as unthinkable to venture in there as it would be to use the chef's own knives. Part of his job was to make food look attractive, I think of whole fish on a silver plate with an elaborate colourful sauce. Occasionally Lord Leconfield would come into the kitchen before supper and say, "Give me something to eat, those courses you serve up hardly fill the plate".

I was sorry when the chef left, I wasn't so happy under Mrs. Miles, his replacement. Perhaps I felt the time was coming when I would leave. I joined the A.T.S. in 1941. It was said that the chef had applied for a rise and not been given it. It may simply be, however, that with Lady Leconfield unwell, the war on and visitors and house parties a thing of the distant past, carrying a French chef simply didn't make much sense.

I am certain that I did not sleep in the Servants' Block but in the big house itself. I had a view across the Park to the Lake. I shared a room with one of the housemaids but the name's gone I'm afraid. It's difficult to place the room now but I know the footmen were down the passage because in return for them scaring us by dressing in white sheets and coming out on us in the tunnel, we'd go into their bedroom, put holly in the beds and sew up the legs of their pyjamas. We could hear them struggling and shouting. Here's Attic No. 13 - it looks like my room. There's the view and the room down the corridor. This is the only possible room. James and Edward we called them but of course people often went by other than their official names. Ivy is my name but I hated it and was always known as Jane. I still am. On the wages list however I'm down as Ivy. We'd see the footmen a lot because they'd come into the kitchen to pick up the food for the big house.

I think the times made for a certain laxity compared with previous years. Staff were already becoming difficult to get. By 1941 they were leaving fast - particularly the men. Once I hadn't dusted my bedroom and I found my name "Miss Wickham" written with a finger in the dust. I had to see Lady Leconfield but had a fit of the giggles. After all I was still not much more than a schoolgirl. It was left that the chef would have a word with me. I don't want to give the impression however that I didn't care if I lost the job. I did. My father was



*Snow at Petworth.
A drawing by Rendle Diplock.*



The errand boy has perhaps just delivered to Mrs Burden (1899).
See What's in the cupboard?
Photograph by Walter Kevis.

Feb 1897

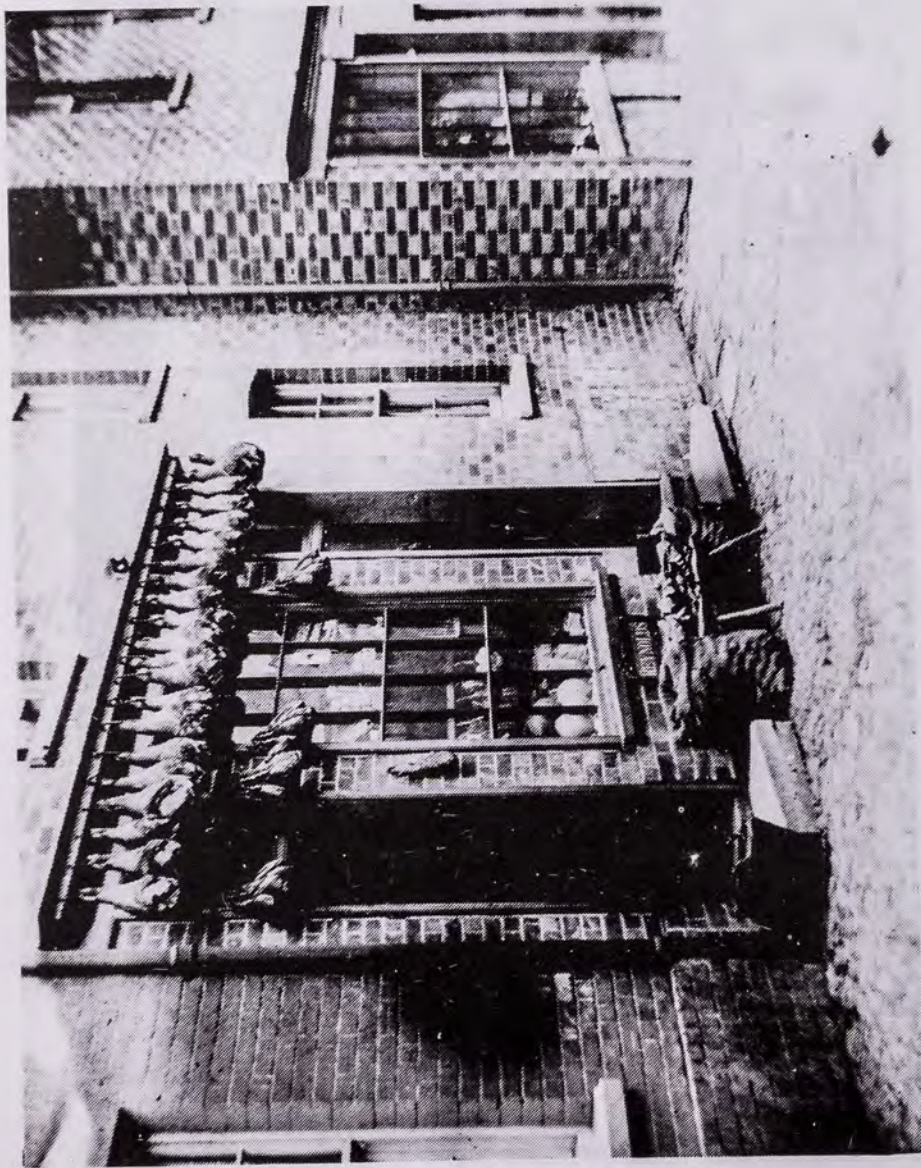
M^{rs} Burden
Bought of G. KNIGHT & Co.,
Butchers,
HIGH STREET, PETWORTH.



Families served on reasonable Terms with the Best Meat.

Jan 26	½ Sho m.	3.1.		2 6½
30	Top Rib	By 2.15	9	2 2½
Feb 2 nd	Roag	By 3.3.		2 5
5.	½ Sho m.	1.5		1 11
8	Beef	5/11	1.6.	1 1½
9	Top Side	3.14		3 2½
13	½ Sho m.	2.15.		2 4
16	Roag	By 3¼		2 8½
20	Mkt.	7. 2.		1 6
	Suet	¼		2
21	Beef	2.2.		1 9½
23	½ Sho m.	2.9		2 1½
25	Roag	By 2.13		2 1
	Suet	¼		2
	Recd G. Payne			1. 6. 3½
	Mar 9 th 1901			
	for Knives etc			with the a/c

Messrs Knights account for meat February 1901.
See What's in the cupboard?



A rare glimpse of the shop that would later be Mrs Burden's, tucked away to the right of Reynolds the pork butchers. Reynolds would move to High Street and the premises for years be Bishops the shoe-shop. This picture was taken by Walter Kevis in the early 1880s. See What's in the cupboard?

very strict and would have been furious if I'd been sent home. Not that the wages went far, a half-day hair-do or a monthly instalment on a dress. I remember being annoyed because I could only afford the dress itself, not the matching shoes and gloves. I paid every month at one of the Petworth shops. I'm not sure that I ever did clear the instalments because I went off to the A.T.S.

These were the early years of the war, and the housemaid and I went out one afternoon on our bikes. A German plane flew over and two sailors who were passing shouted at us and then virtually threw us into a ditch. I heard that in the event of an Axis victory Hitler wanted to have Petworth House and hence didn't want it damaged or destroyed. The air was full of such tales. I left roughly when the Chelsea Day Nursery came. I'd cried when my father had left me there with the chef and I cried when I left!

Ivy (Jane) Still was talking to Diana Owen and the Editor.

(Editor's note:

This is a very interesting account because it is so late and comes from a time when the old régime at Petworth was clearly under considerable stress. Ivy Wickham first appears in the wages book (PHA 9561) in July 1940, Mrs. Miles coming in the August of that year. According to the records, Ivy came almost as Msr. Chassagne was leaving but this seems at issue with the account here. Does PHA 9561 then give the whole story? Perhaps Ivy was paid in some other way? It is difficult to say and memory and tradition can play tricks. Ivy, after all, is recalling a brief episode in the fraught atmosphere of the early war years. She last appears in the wages book in February 1941. After this Olive Tomkin, who had been senior kitchenmaid for some time during the 1930s, returns. A sign of changing times is that, while in April 1938 PHA 9561 lists 22 household staff, by July 1943, just over five years on, there are just six, valet, housekeeper cook, footman, kitchen-maid and still-room maid. No doubt the cleaning would be done by staff coming in, always a difficulty when appraising lists like 9561.)

A Tillington Childhood (4)

Spring cleaning was a very hard chore all those years ago, especially the beds. Most mattresses were feather and they had to be pulled off the beds and fell on the floor in an ungainly heap. The bedsteads were iron and were kept up together by a number of thick tiny laths. These all had to be taken apart to be wiped with a damp cloth. A kind of square key was used and each one of the laths were taken out and then all put back again in a kind of weaving pattern. Each lath had a hole top and bottom, and they were screwed back on the frame of the bedstead to remain there until the next spring cleaning session. A clean undercover was put on the bed and then the feather mattress was bundled back again. It had to be squeezed and pummelled to get the lumps out of it - the pillows were feather too. The

sheets, before ironing, had to be pulled from corner to corner, sometimes my mother used to pull too hard for me and the sheet used to shoot out of my hand and almost hit the kitchen ceiling. Much to the annoyance of my mother I used to go into helpless fits of the giggles.

We used to love going to church. One Sunday, my brother, mother and I went to Evensong. In front of us sat a dear old gentleman, a Mr. Pulling, who always wore a little velvet round hat. Suddenly my brother spotted a caterpillar going up his (Mr. Pulling's) neck. It crept up a little and the old man kept putting his hand up to his neck, then the caterpillar fell down, only to crawl up again. My brother had called my mother's attention to it. Suddenly we were in helpless fits of laughter so had to walk out of the church. The Vicar, a Mr. Goggs, came to see us the next morning to see if we were alright and mother explained our predicament. He quite understood.

As time went on, we know there was something happening. The war was ending and Daddy would soon be home. Later, the Armistice was signed and all sorts of celebrations were held and gradually the men arrived home. I so well remember going to meet my father with my mother and brother. He was in his army uniform with his knapsack on his back. Funnily enough, I felt no pleasure in my father's homecoming as we both had to take a 'back seat'. We didn't share so much with our mother and most of all, I hated this man to be in my mother's bed as I had been sleeping with her. It took quite a while before we once again settled down as a family.

During my childhood, illnesses, long since gone, were rampant, especially 'Galloping Consumption'. That used to take whole families off. I somehow remember that there were tin huts on Heath End Common where the victims used to die - correct me if I'm wrong. Diphtheria was also a killer, and so was measles. These illnesses were very contagious too. My school days were still very happy, our new headmaster being a Mr. Brown. He was very strict, but I remember very fair. We used to sing a song about him.

"Old Mr. Brown is a nice old Man,
He tries to teach us all he can,
Reading, writing, 'rithmetic,
He never forgets to give us the stick,
When he does he makes us dance
Over the hills and into France.
Out of France and into Spain,
Over the hills and back again."

Another nonsense rhyme was:

"Austria, Hungary had a slice of Turkey
Put in China dipped in Greece.
Along came Italy, kicked it into Sicily
In the Baltic Sea."

I wonder why I remember this rubbish at my age - no doubt it's second childhood.

A Miss Bulmer used to call at school every Monday dinner time. I believe she lived at Upperton House. She was terribly crippled and rode in a black leather upholstered carriage with a tiny pony drawing it. I believe Jesse Danniels took charge of the carriage and pony.

Miss Bulmer used to collect shoe and coal money and each home had a club card and parents paid about 3d a week for the above articles so at the end of each year enough money was collected to buy coal and shoes. I remember Miss Bulmer used to hold her pen in between her first and second finger. Her writing was a bit spidery but easily understood and we children loved her - she was a "gentlewoman".

My mother was a very good needlewoman and she made me lovely little dress with a mob cap to match. One I especially remember was a mauve silk with white spots on. She used to go to jumble sales and one favourite was at River House, then home of Lady Cunliffe. It was here that she bought a dress of mauve silk belonging to Lady Cunliffe, and made me my dress as mentioned. I think it cost 3p. She (my mother) also used to buy lovely little lace caps as worn by ladies at that time and I used to unpick them with mother and there used to be yards of lovely lace to put on our underwear - it was real lace too.

We also went to a jumble sale at Mr. Lascelles' house in Tillington. Mum bought one of Mr. Lascelles' deerstalker caps and cut the back peak off and my brother had it for Sundays to wear with the Norfolk jacket, knickers below his knees, and hand knitted socks. The first time he (my brother) wore it to Sunday School, he was called "old deerstalker" so he refused to wear it any more.

Like my mother, I was very fond of needlework. I used to go to a sewing class every Saturday afternoon run by a Miss Pullen who lived round at Hill Top in Tillington. She was crippled and we children used to call her "Hoppy Leg". She knew it but took no notice. She was sweet and we used to sew or knit for the "little black children". None of the class was older than eleven, yet we used to make lovely little garments, especially babies' cotton nighties. Whilst we were busy with our sewing, Miss Pullen used to read to us - a happier class of little girls you would never find. I also belonged to the "Waifs and Strays Society". We knitted and sewed little garments for them - Miss Pullen was our teacher in this as well. Sometimes, during the winter she had her meetings at her house at Hill Top. I loved going there because we used our storm lantern to find our way in the dark. I remember this period of my life as such a happy one.

We had now settled down as a family although it took my brother and I quite a while to get used to my father as we were so used to obeying my mother.

During 1919, Tillington War Memorial was unveiled. I remember it so well and the Bishop of Chichester conducted the service. He stood up in the pulpit and kept repeating "This is a day of joy not sorrow". That so puzzled me as I could hear so much crying and sobbing and not wanting to be left out, I snorted as I knelt down. This so annoyed my mother that she slapped my leg, so in the end I had my cry - not due to sadness but loss of dignity.

One very cold winter in 1919, Petworth Park Lake was frozen over. My brother and I had been sent to Petworth to buy a haddock for Sunday breakfast and we took a short cut through the park and although the danger signs 'Thin Ice' were by the lake, we decided that we'd have a slide on our way back. We purchased the haddock which Mr. Money, the fishmonger, wrapped up for us in newspaper, my brother made me carry it, and off we ran to the lake. We ventured onto the ice and it was like glass. We managed to get to the island in the middle and played pirates. After a while we heard "Kathie and Frankie, come along

darlings". It was our mother. My brother said, "Mum's talking in her soft voice. When we get off the ice she won't half hit us". Knowing we were wrong, we tried to run on the ice - we fell all over the place. All of a sudden the haddock fell out of its wrapping and slithered right across the ice. I hadn't realised that a dead haddock would travel so fast and so far away. I knew that I had lost Sunday's breakfast. We gradually worked our way across the ice - my brother had two bruised and swollen lips and I had a bump on one knee as large as an egg. Needless to say, mother was relieved to see us both safe and sound. I still had the haddock newspaper under my arm, and gave it to her. I think mother must have seen the funny side of it because we were soon forgiven.

Masses of snowdrops used to grow in one of the copses near us and my mother, brother and I used to pick bunches of them. My mother used to bunch them up and charge 3p a bunch, and then we used to walk to Petworth to deliver them to a Mrs. Herbert's shop. I believe it was in High Street. In those days, my brother and I used to be given a halfpenny each for sweets, at that time one used to be able to buy quite a lot for a halfpenny. I used to buy ten aniseed balls and my brother used to love liquorice. Talking about liquorice, reminds me of when we used to have a dose of liquorice to 'clear us out'. It was vile, it wasn't black though, it seemed to be an awful mustard colour and used to cling to our teeth so we had to rinse it away with water.

One day, when we were having tea, our lamp caught fire. My mother put a rug on it, picked it up and flung it through the door and on to the garden. She was very brave. Fortunately, she was not badly burned and for the rest of the evening we used the ever faithful storm lantern.

As I grew older, I realised how beautiful my surroundings were - the lovely fields, copses, and Petworth Park. There were all kinds of wild life; owls, bats, jays, woodpeckers, every bird imaginable. Also the deer in the park, the horses, shires and carthorses, and the foxhounds, the latter being a wonderful sight out exercising with the huntsmen. My father used to walk the beagles. We usually had two pups and they used to bury everything they found. I remember one buried my mother's knitting - socks she was knitting for my father. Many sounds I'll never forget include the deer rut in Petworth Park, especially if it was dusk. They made a most odd sound in their throats and my brother and I used to think they were doing 'beg your pardons in their mouths'. The clash of horns in the distance between two stags fighting was also very awesome. I don't think the sound can be compared with anything else. If we found antlers, my father used to fix them on the wall for coat hangers. He also fixed a pair on the wall, over the kitchen range, on which he laid his gun.

Sometimes, when we went for a walk in Petworth Park, my father would tuck a sack under his arm and he would then disappear behind a tree and come back with something in the sack. We soon found out what it was - a young deer which hadn't long been born. I really do not know if this was a form of culling as the keeper at that time seemed to know (I believe the keeper's name was Hamilton). My mother used to make a lovely roast from this unfortunate little animal and I remember the flesh was very sweet. We children were always told that this dish was rabbit. One day my brother said "Mum, I've never seen a rabbit with such long legs". Ever after the dish was disguised. My father also used to shoot the odd

pheasant. This was dished up as a young pullet until one day my brother said "Kathie, we haven't any chickens with feathers that colour". I don't know what happened to that dish. One day my brother and I went for a walk in the fields and came across a clutch of pheasants' eggs. We picked them up and put them in my brother's cap and brought them home. Mother was horrified and she said "You'll get your Dad the sack - we must put them back". She went with us and fortunately we knew where we had found them, the keepers knew where the pheasants' eggs were, so all's well that ends well.

Once, in one of the copses, we found our cat caught in a gin trap and I have never forgotten it. It had lost two of its front legs and my Dad put it out of its misery - I don't know how.

Mrs K.A. Vigar (to be continued).

What's in the cupboard?

Petworth Cottage Museum plans next year to open to visitors its attic room. It may be guarded by a somewhat unforgiving staircase but certainly no more so than at other similar attractions. The basic motif will perhaps be Agnes Phelan's 1919 recollection of coming to stay with Mrs. Cummings and sleeping with her two friends, the Cummings granddaughters, in the attic with the claustrophobic low beam making an unintended partition. Clearly in Mary Cummings' day the attic was used as a kind of spare room. The view from the window, left to High Street, and right, over to Petworth House, is one of the best in Petworth.

MRS. BURDEN,
Confectioner and Fancy Repository,
LOMBARD STREET, PETWORTH,
HAS A LARGE STOCK OF
Toys, Purses, & Fancy Articles
OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS.
Goods not in Stock procured on the
Shortest Notice.

Mrs Burden takes an advertisement in St Mary's Parish Magazine (1889) - probably on her first arrival in Petworth.

Such thoughts lead to another possible line of development. The cupboard on the left of the Petworth range in the parlour carries a set of china, not used, but then who did use their best china in those times? Sufficient that you had it as a kind of trophy. But what of food cupboards - what sort of thing did people keep in days before refrigerators, when items were packed in plain bags from bulk at the grocer's, and canned food a luxury, at best a treat, at worst something a working family could only dream of? Such thoughts are prompted by the discovery of some four hundred or more domestic and trade invoices for the period 1898-1902 in a partly concealed Petworth cupboard. There is no indication that they were left deliberately; they appear simply to have been forgotten, lying for a century gathering dust. They relate to the domestic and business routine of Mrs. Annabella Burden who ran what Kelly's 1907 Directory calls "a toy and fancy warehouse" in Lombard Street. It is curious that although there are such a large number, with a ratio of private to business of some three to one, the collection as we have it is obviously far from complete. Many vouchers are clearly missing. In a sense the domestic ones are the humblest of documents, basically dockets for goods delivered, stained tickets for meat, screwed up lists of grocery written in pencil, items sometimes obliterated by a scrawled receipt. Documents to last a day not a hundred years. They can be used for what they say, but not for what they do not say, in other words, they cannot speak of what was bought in without an accompanying docket and we cannot argue from that silence. As will appear, this leaves a considerable area of uncertainty. For all that, on a superficial level at least, here is the very essence of turn of the century Petworth, the forgotten round, the everyday world of Walter Kevis and his photographs. Walter Kevis was in fact a yard or two across the road.

Mrs. Burden's shop is now the Lombard Gallery, formerly Nationwide, King and Chasemore, Newland Tompkins and Weavers. Photographs of early century Lombard Street are legion, the attraction being, of course, the steeple of St. Mary's rising above the narrow cobbled gorge of Lombard Street. Mrs. Burden's shop is, in this context, something of a Cinderella, tucked away in the bottom right hand corner of the street. The photographer would have the shop out of vision to his right. And so it escaped the camera's notice; just a single early shot of Reynolds, the pork butchers, in what would later be Bishop's the shoe-shop, catches the little shop tucked in apologetically to the right. Even this is well before Mrs. Burden came to Petworth.

According to the 1891 census, Mrs. Burden was a native of Portland in Dorset; she was thirty-three years old at the time of the census and had a daughter, Jessie, aged six, also born in Portland. In 1891 Annabella was already a widow and it must be doubtful whether Mr. Burden had come with the family to Petworth. Of such matters meat and grocery vouchers can tell us absolutely nothing. A rare, possibly unique, advertisement in St. Mary's Parish Magazine in May 1889 may indicate a rough date for Mrs. Burden's coming to Petworth. An advertisement by Mrs. Heather of Lombard Street, a couple of years previously, may indicate an earlier venture in this field on the site, as also, perhaps, one for Frank Rogers, later to operate as a chemist in the northern part of the present Austens, for a period at this time divided between the traditional ironmongers and a chemists. Mrs. Burden would be in Lombard Street for the best part of twenty years: she appears in Kelly's Directory for 1907



Mrs. Chassagne, chef at Petworth House 1937 to 1940.



*Petworth Gaol rising behind Grove Street. The gaol would be demolished in 1881. See *The Soldier Spiritualised*.*

but not for 1909. By 1913 Alexander Weaver has the shop, offering newspapers and fancy goods. In later years, of course, Weavers would move across the road to what is now Wayletts.

Oral recollection of Mrs. Burden and her shop is virtually non-existent. Her daughter, Jessie, clearly grew up in Petworth and I seem to remember Elsie Whitcomb talking of her. Jessie and Elsie would have been virtually exact contemporaries. Mog Thayre, writing in Magazine 39, recalled Weavers being on the "other" side of the road and their predecessors "Burdens the newsagents". In fact there is no evidence that Mrs. Burden sold newspapers and Mog Thayre may be making a deduction from Weavers' later use of the shop.

In latter years the premises were of three storeys connected by steep narrow staircases and no doubt it would have been thus in Mrs. Burden's time. The 1891 census records two lodgers, Eliza Lucas a widowed dressmaker in her fifties and William Puttick a grocer's assistant in his twenties. Quite possibly they had the two top rooms. In taking the vouchers into account we have to think of the lodgers probably forming part of what was effectively an extended family, certainly as regards meals. Lodgers were very much part of Victorian and Edwardian life. As to whether Mrs. Burden rented or owned the premises, perhaps only the deeds could tell. There are no receipts for rent among the surviving documents.

With the exception of a handful from 1897 and one quite anomalous insurance receipt from 1893 everything comes from the years 1898 to 1902. After October 1902 there is silence. I would think such collections of dockets are hardly rare but certainly a little unusual. Those that survive are often found in solicitors' material. Those I have seen tend to be a little earlier. In a way the distinctive feature of these is their very ordinariness: they are precisely the first thing that anyone would discard. For comparative purposes they fall a little short of the date set for the Museum reconstruction (1910-1912) but they can certainly offer some ideas. To what extent Mrs. Burden and Mrs. Cummings had a comparable standard of living is a moot point. Mrs. Burden may well have had a less pinched way of life than Mrs. Cummings, at the very least, however, it can be said that they shared a common milieu. These dockets can set us thinking and asking questions. We may not always ask the right questions and we will certainly sometimes elicit the wrong answers but we shall be the better for asking.

One great contemporary difference with the world of the dockets is that Petworth in 1900 looked inward. Most shopping was done in Petworth and hence there were shops in the town to cater for virtually every need. And there was competition. Most of Mrs. Burden's specialities could be found elsewhere in the town, often more than once. For grocery and meat people did not "shop around", you "dealt" with a shop and did not use its competitors. Mutual loyalty, between shopkeeper and customer, and vice-versa, was highly prized. This loyalty ran all through the system; many food manufacturers would serve only one shop in a town, offering what in modern terms would be called a franchise. Typhoo Tea was sold only by Nurse Moorman in New Street. Loyalty was not sacrosanct however: Mrs. Burden changed butchers more than once between 1897 and 1902 but it wasn't a matter of shopping round; a change had a sense of permanence about it. What disquiets is the lack in these vouchers of certain staple items, bread for instance, or flour. Probably, like others at the time, Mrs. Burden had a bread book, perhaps at Knights just up the street. Tea is another mystery.

Just half a pound of Ceylon over four and a half years is to say the least a little sparing! Vegetables and fruit are difficult. Occasionally the grocery vouchers make a mention, perhaps they came from friends, perhaps Mrs. Burden went to Mrs. Knight a few steps up the road.

Looking at the vouchers, a first instinct is perhaps to think of Mrs. Burden going shopping and trudging home with her purchases. A moment's reflection however suggests otherwise. This is a world of delivery and of orders taken for the next delivery. Mrs. Burden would not need to leave home at all. Grocery invoices are from Otways Golden Square branch and the first sets the pattern. It is the 9th of April 1898.

2	Lump	4	(Sugar)
10 ozs	Cheese	½/7½	5
1 lb 1 oz	Bacon	1/10	11
½ Gal	Maize	2½	
			<hr/>
			1.10½

Otways notation is a little off-putting but consistent. Cheese is sevenpence half-penny a pound and Mrs. Burden has ordered half a pound. The actual weight delivered is ten ounces, written in later on the left when the order is made up. Similarly bacon is tenpence a pound, Mrs. Burden has ordered a pound. One pound one ounce is delivered and charged. The tolerance between goods ordered and goods delivered is quite high, appreciably more than would be considered reasonable in later days.

The 9th of April was a Saturday and there is a second order on the Saturday fortnight the 23rd. It is likely that there were one or more intervening orders now lost. "Early" marked at the foot of the order is confirmation that we are thinking of goods delivered.

1	Lump	2	2
2½	Streaky Pork	2/8	1. 8
½	Sausages	/10	5
½	Aus fresh		7 (Butter, Australian?)
13 ozs	Cheese	½/7½	6½
½ Gal	Maize		3
			<hr/>
			3. 7½

Otway invoices are the most numerous, in all about 115. Occurrences of items are given below. There is no definite pattern of delivery days. Figures are approximate given the condition of the documents and the certainty that many have not survived. Provisions are perhaps the staple item: bacon 64 cheese 45 fresh (butter) 34 butter 9 (it is not clear whether there is always a difference), lard 34. Unusual items are Gorgon 3 butter cream 1. Meat is represented by sausages 22, lamb 13 (including shoulder, leg, chops and loin), pork chops 4, mutton 1, fowl 1, liver 1, liver and crow 1, corner gammon 2, gammon 2, cooked ham 1, bones 4. 1 set souse is pickled pork in a jelly. Otways were very much a subsidiary source of meat to the Burden household.

Eggs occur several times but Mrs. Burden clearly kept chicken, presumably in a yard at the back, hence maize (usually in gallon measure) 59, barley-meal 34, Sharps 8, chicken groats 5 and Ovum 2. Sharps must be a proprietary brand of some kind. Ovum doubtless helped with egg laying. Indications that Mrs. Burden had a pet canary are the purchase of a brass cage from Austens and canary seed 1, bird seed 1, hemp 2 and bird sand 2. Mixed corn 5 may however be for the chicken. When the hens were not laying Mrs. Burden no doubt had to buy in eggs (12) of which 5 are marked "new laid" and 1 "Danish". No doubt an attempt would be made to store the surplus over winter.

Sugar, packeted, of course, from bulk at Otways, was lump (sometimes called loaf) 56. Demerara 34 was another regular. Moist 1, caster 3 and preserving 2 are also mentioned. Home baking was very much the rule in those days, hence baking powder (often referred to simply by the brand name Borwicks) 17, currants 19, sultanas 1, mixed peel 10, raisins 2. Bicarbonate of soda occurs twice, cornflour three times but there is no mention of flour. xd is the invariable Otway abbreviation for mixed. Milk puddings were fairly popular: rice 7, sago 4, ground rice 4. Cocoa usually "Vi", sometimes Rowntrees or van Houtens, occurs ten times with coffee essence 1, chicory 1. The mention of Ceylon tea looks a rare exception: clearly tea came from elsewhere. Salt and spices were much less cosmopolitan than today's: knob (lump) salt 6, table salt 5, vinegar 6, mustard 5, ground ginger 1, caraway seed 1, white pepper 2. Household items are blacking and black lead 9, soda 7, wax 3, starch 3, matches (safetys) 2, Sunlight 1, Lux 1, Blue 1, yellow soap 3, candles 5 and a bass head and handle. Probably some cleaning materials came from elsewhere.

An order of 31st December 1901 offers a rare hint of luxury:

1 xd Bisc	6
12 Oranges	6
Bot Raisin wine	1. 1
Box Figs	6
<hr/>	
	2. 7
2½ Corner Gammon 2/11	2. 3½
disc.	1
<hr/>	
	4. 9½

Note again the high tolerance allowed; 2 lbs of gammon is ordered, 2½ sent. Unusual, perhaps luxury, items are tins of apricots (2) tins of sardines (2), three mentions of sardines on their own may indicate fish either fresh or preserved in some way. Tins of tongue at two shillings and two and threepence each are clearly a luxury, tins of pineapple at sixpence halfpenny would not be cheap either. Shortbread 1 is seasonal, Guy's tonic 1 presumably medicinal. Eastbourne biscuits occur once, whatever they may have been and other oddments are 2 lbs of haricots, a tin of bloaters and one mention of marmalade. Otways seem to have offered a modicum of greengrocery: so onions 1, potatoes 4 and tomatoes 10.

Butcher's bills offer almost as many dockets as Otways but of course there is much less

variety in the goods. Clearly this was a time when red meat was the rule and joints large and intended to be eaten both hot and cold, a pattern of living that would survive until 1945 and beyond. Presumably Mrs. Burden would cook for her two lodgers, if, as is likely, they were still with her by the time of the dockets. Certainly some of the joints at 2½ to 3 lb are a reasonable size by today's standards. White meat does not figure in the butchers' bills at all, if we except Otways' one mention of one fowl, nor is there any indication of fish, perhaps brought round by travelling men. Ironically Messrs. Knights the butchers occupied the site where Deans would later have their fish shop, Golds in Pound Street and, later, in New Street were butchers who offered fish as well. Again, given the nature of our sources, it is very dangerous to argue from silence. We can deduce only from what we have, not from what we do not have. Knights in High Street presented a monthly account and two of these from February and March 1897 are effectively the earliest documents we have. By 1898 Mrs. Burden has left Knights and is dealing with A. Moase just up the road in Lombard Street, soon to become Boorers. As with the grocery, the meat was brought to the house, and from the stained nature of some of the dockets these were clearly attached to the meat. About sixty dockets survive from 1898 but some longish gaps indicate missing pieces in the series. Meat would seem to be delivered every three or four days. From Moase, Mrs. Burden seems to have moved on to Pollard and Moyer (now Barringtons) in Market Square, returning eventually to Knights in 1900. Then begin monthly - or longer - accounts. For prices the illustration from Knights gives some idea. A manual worker might expect to earn twenty shillings a week, a man with greater responsibility on special duties, like a cowman, a few shillings more.

Of the other domestic invoices and accounts Eagers the Market Square drapers have some 20, a jacket cost 15/11d, an umbrella 11/6d, a sunshade in June 1902 4/6d. Much of the work is millinery, either purchase of hats or, more usually, trimming or adjustment. Eagers carried a resident milliner. Austens the Market Square ironmongers provide a new top for the Premier stove in September 1899. The stove would of course have been coal-fired. Ricketts the coat-merchants have several accounts for coal. In October 1899 the fowl house was covered with galvanised corrugated roofing; with time and materials this came to 15/6d. A brass bird cage purchased at the same time cost 4/9d. Repairs to the shop bell in May 1902 were charged at fourpence. Other small jobs were fixing the top of a pepper box or adjusting the shop scales. Insurance for £100 from Westminster Fire Office remained at 4/6d per annum over the whole period and had been the same in 1893. Petworth Coal Gas and Coke Co. provided gas, rendering accounts at Lady Day, Michaelmas and Christmas. Rental of the meter seems however to have been quarterly with a double meter payment being made in the lighter summer months. In 1901 gas used by Lady Day was 2/11d, for Michaelmas a shilling and Christmas two shillings. Gas would have been used for lighting, perhaps heating in some rooms but one suspects most cooking would have been on the Premier stove. Lighting rate was six shillings a year and a rate for draining collected every six months, rising from a shilling in the pound in 1897 to one and sixpence in 1900. The rateable value of the property was £12. Poor rate was collected every six months, rising from a shilling in the pound in 1897 to one and sixpence in 1900. The rateable value of the property

was £12. Poor rate was collected every six months, varying between £1 in December 1897 and thirty shillings in 1902. These accounts often survive in both demand and receipt forms.

Otherwise there are just the kind of miscellaneous receipts anyone might have and throw out in a periodical clear-up. A carpet and chest of drawers from Death's the auctioneers are set against the proceeds of a violin sold by Deaths on Mrs. Burden's behalf. Perhaps Jessie had started with the violin and decided not to continue. John Tate from Saddlers Row papered and whitewashed a bedroom in 1900 for twelve shillings. Eight rolls of paper were four shillings at sixpence a roll, "size white wash and paint" cost two and sixpence and labour five and sixpence. Craggs the plumbers had done a similar job in 1898 while G. Vincent in Angel Street papered and distempered two bedrooms in 1902. Mr. Cragg renewed gas mantles in December 1901 and March 1902, proof, if any were needed, that lighting was by gas, supplemented no doubt by candles.

H. C. Redward, the Southsea dental surgeon, charged Mrs. Burden £6.15.0 for professional attendance in July 1902, a very sizeable sum in those days and comfortably the largest sum mentioned in these documents. For the rest, one or two dressmaking bills, handwritten on odd slips of paper, a couple of small accounts from Mr. Steggle the Market Square chemist, and two or three doctor's bills. Two accounts relate to music tuition by Miss Fanny Austin at Box Grove, Pound Street. If the Misses Austins' private school were already functioning, Jessie may have been a pupil there. If she was, what we have gives no indication. Jessie also had private pianoforte lessons from Mr. Chandler. The wholesalers' invoices which give an excellent idea of Mrs. Burden's extensive stock will be discussed in the next issue.

For the domestic side of life too much is uncertain to allow more than general impressions. The lack of refrigeration meant a much more day to day household routine than today and there were, of course, many tradesmen anxious to "wait on families daily" as the expression went. Canned goods were still largely an expensive treat as opposed to something you'd keep in the cupboard for stock. There is some evidence of proprietary grocery brands such as Fry's Cocoa, Colman's Mustard, Borwicks Baking Powder or van Houten's cocoa, but most items like sugar, rice, cheese, butter, currants or biscuits were still dispensed in plain bags from bulk. That was the grocer (or "grosser")'s immemorial tradition and justification and it was still largely unthreatened. Pre-packing would not really come into its own perhaps until after the 1914-1918 war. One of the earliest spheres where branding advanced quickly was in soap and soap-related products.

It is difficult to evaluate Mrs. Burden's position. As I have said, there is too much we do not know. On the face of it certainly there is no real evidence of financial stress: she is able to afford such extras as music lessons for Jessie, while the dentist's account while no doubt for urgent and necessary work, would have crippled many a working family and the treatment would simply be foregone. By 1900 Jessie would be fifteen and have spent most of her life in Petworth while Mrs. Burden by accent perhaps, and upbringing, might remain something of "a stranger and a sojourner". Turn of the century Petworth would be slow to integrate the newcomer. Of such matters these documents tell us nothing; they can hint only at the slow external rhythm of everyday life, meat and provisions delivered, roofing the

chicken house or mending the Premier stove or shop bell, papering and distemping a room. In the last resort they offer a glimpse of a closed world that ironically will become the more enigmatic the more we know of it.

P.

(to be continued)

The growth of food packaging, advertising and the change in eating habits is, of course, a study of its own. A useful introduction for a later period is B. Braithwaite and N. Walsh: *Food, Glorious Food. (Eating and Drinking with Good Housekeeping 1922-1942) (1990).*

'The Soldier Spiritualised' - a hitherto unknown Petworth book

It is perhaps a little surprising that John Osborn Greenfield does not mention John Mance, long-serving governor of Petworth House of Correction, in his *Tales of old Petworth*. Mance would certainly have been a well-known figure in the town in Greenfield's time. In fact Mance's standing in the prison service would bring his name to the attention of a world far wider than West Sussex. Appointed to replace William Phillips in 1826, Mance had served eleven years in the army and five with the London Police. In 1826 he was still only in his thirty-fourth year. In a post that in days before vocational training might offer a refuge for the dilatory or the superannuated, Mance was an energetic innovator who would make Petworth gaol a byword for austerity. The regime at Petworth, at least in Mance's eyes, needed to be harsh enough to deter the offender from re-offending, or if he did, to ensure that he thought twice about offending in that part of the country for which Petworth was the county gaol and Mance, at least indirectly, responsible. That was Mance's simple duty to his Sussex ratepayers. It was, no doubt, a rare miscreant who would view a second term at Petworth with equanimity. Mance's prison philosophy is encapsulated in his famous reply to a letter from the Clerk to the Justices at Lewes in 1831. The clerk had queried the significant discrepancy in treadmill and crank work and food allowance at Petworth and Lewes. Put bluntly, Petworth prisoners were doing far more work on far less food. Mance was quite unrepentant: "I have now a notorious vagrant in my custody who declared to me in the presence of the prisoners working on the treadmill that he would rather go three months in Lewes prison than one in this house, and he assures me to my great satisfaction that he will never come into this division of the county again". Mance would look for no higher commendation. The clerk's letter suggests a measure of disquiet, while Dr. Blagden, the prison surgeon, was doubtful about the wisdom of Mance's insistence on removing the communal Day Rooms to facilitate solitary confinement. A suicide and a number of attempted suicides also led to a certain public unease. It should be remembered that long

custodial sentences of the modern kind were virtually unknown at this time, serious crimes bringing either capital punishment or transportation. Prison meant a shorter period of "hard labour". The average number of inmates at Petworth was seventy, including a handful of women, separately looked after by Mance's wife Sarah.

In May 1835 John Mance was one of a considerable number of persons connected in some way with the prison service and called to give evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, looking into ways of making the service more efficient and particularly to seek a greater uniformity of discipline in the country's gaols. John Mance argues strongly for two main points, the first being the necessity of solitary confinement. Petworth was already being converted for this purpose. "I have no doubt," Mance told the committee, "we should not only keep men separate during their meal times and at night but we should employ them separately, so that they will never be together, and in going to and from their cells, they will be at that distance no communication can pass between them; and also when in the Airing Yard it is proposed they shall be at the distance of four feet, march in rank and file so that no communication can pass between them." Mance's basic contention, familiar enough already from the Quarter Session records, was that if prisoners were to be allowed to associate, conversation among criminals could lead only to greater criminality, and the purpose of correction would be hopelessly frustrated. Mance looked for silence in prison and separate compartments on treadmill and crank.

His second point before the Select Committee was the necessity of a uniform system and work requirement in all the country's prisons. At the time these varied wildly, an instance of course being Petworth and Lewes. He had invented a device known as "Mance's Ergometer" (from the Greek *ergon* "work") to measure work on treadmill and crank and which enabled a standard work requirement to be set and measured. All prisons could now in theory set an agreed work programme.

While interesting and important, Mance's evidence before the Select Committee does not basically add to what is already known of him (see PSM 30, 31, 32). For all the extensive Quarter Sessions documentation Mance remains something of a mystery. Certainly he is a man of the highest professional standards, a martinet no doubt, and someone who sits somewhat uneasily with the "enlightened" social conscience of the late twentieth century. But for all that, with his motivation largely unexplained, he is someone of whom we know much and, yet, effectively nothing. He is left for us as a sum without the working.

A sharp insight into John Mance the man comes from an unexpected quarter. United Reformed Church records at Petworth show Mance as associated with the Petworth Congregational Chapel from his earliest days at Petworth. In those days the chapel was in East Street, where the Girls School would later be. Chapel records indicate that John Mance was an "occasional communicant", a term that denotes a member of another non-conforming denomination coming to the Petworth chapel because there was no local place of worship for their own persuasion. It may be that Mance was a Wesleyan; another Wesleyan, William Jacob, the taxidermist and raiser of the Lady Sudeley apple, appears to have come to Petworth chapel a little later in somewhat similar circumstances. Despite his "occasional" status, before long John Mance was chapel treasurer, a position he would relinquish after a while,

the chapel authorities feeling obliged to distance themselves from their treasurer on account of rumours in the town of an alleged "crime". No information is offered on this and after a year or two Mance returned to his old position in the chapel. In 1842, with other donations, the treasurer presented to the elders his copyright on a book "*The Soldier Spiritualised*", with a view not only to instruction and edification, but more practically, through sales of the book, to help with the Minister's inadequate salary. No copy of this book is known to survive but there is in the British Museum a single copy of a second edition, published in 1859, two years after Mance's death. This carries an introductory memoir by Francis George Sharp of Pulborough. The memoir clearly owes a great deal to Mance's own recollection and hence takes on something of the character of an autobiography. Short as it is (eight pages) it is a striking and illuminating document.

John Mance was born at Datchet in Berkshire in 1792. His father was of a somewhat roving disposition and soon after John's birth enlisted in the Foot Guards, leaving John's mother to supplement his meagre army pay by washing for other soldiers. This led to the young John being left very much to his own devices. On one occasion, he strolled into the Park and was lost. Eventually, after three anguished days, he was reunited with his mother, having been retrieved from the workhouse. Matters deteriorated when John's father was posted abroad and his mother's employment disappeared with the regiment. After great privation, she obtained a job with a market gardener, adding to her money by acting as "shed-woman", washing and preparing the vegetables for the market from six o'clock in the morning to the same hour in the evening. The chronicler notes that in the cold weather icicles often hung from her fingers. Once more John was left alone - to keep the kettle boiling and wander the banks of the Thames, collecting chips for the fire. Sometimes men in a nearby timber yard would fill his bag for him.

When his father returned home, the family followed him to Chatham. John was now nine and had had no formal schooling at all. Before long he was attending as an expert waiter in the Officers' Mess, where a female servant taught him to read, "the only secular instruction he ever had," observes the chronicler. The guarded use of the word secular may possibly hint at instruction at a Wesleyan Sunday School or similar institution.

In October 1808 Mance enlisted in the 84th Regiment of Foot and was promptly sent to India. The regiment was equally quickly recalled to be sent on the ill-fated expedition to the island of Walcheren in an effort to break Napoleon's hold on the Low Countries and Mance was at the siege of Flushing. Losses from fever (rather than the fighting itself) were very heavy and Mance counted himself fortunate to be among the survivors. After further service in Ireland and in the Peninsular War he left the army in 1819, serving with the London police for five years before applying for the post of governor at Petworth House of Correction.

Mance's book "*The Soldier Spiritualised*" is an uneasy mixture of evangelical sermon, military lore and reminiscence and social philosophising, the whole bound together by a rigidly black and white world view. The basic literary device is to set forth some generally recognised feature of army life, then transpose it so that it becomes a symbol of the Christian's spiritual struggle. So just as in army life there are guards and sentinels, so too in the Christian

church. If vigilance is demanded in the army when only physical life or death is at stake, how much more should the Christian guard be vigilant when his vigilance is directed to the things eternal! Mance has, as might be expected, a good grasp of army procedure and custom but the argument tends to become somewhat predictable, the pointing up of each military-spiritual parallel ending in what is effectively a short sermon. Mance's exposition is varied by the occasional personal reminiscence or excursus taken from his reading.

A few more examples will give the flavour of the book: recruiting for the national army is usually by voluntary enlistment, a few men from each corps being stationed in larger towns or cities or empowered, sometimes by what are known as "beating orders", to range the country wherever they feel they may obtain recruits. In the same way the Christian army is not exempted from seeking recruits. This duty is incumbent not only on Christian ministers but also on every officer and member of the Christian church. Had it not been so from the beginning when Philip met Nathanael and brought him to the Saviour? The chapter ends with the kind of moral exhortation that is such a feature of the book. "Enter in the army of the saints today lest tomorrow you may be lifting up your eyes in turmoil, deprived even of a drop of water to cool your parched tongue". For John Mance the sanctions of another world are always before his eyes, while this world is essentially a vale of decision.

To take another example. As the guard or picquet prevents the army from being taken by surprise, so in matters spiritual it is the duty of every church member to be on constant guard. How serious has the laxity of sentinels proved in military history! Remember King Alfred coming into the Danish camp in the guise of a minstrel, sizing up the position, then using the carousing of the sentries to break in and wreak havoc. Or mighty Babylon, betrayed by its sentries and now as Isaiah had prophesied a swamp and a haunt of jackals. If the idle sentinel can cause such trouble, think of the duties of the Christian sentinel! Not only must he be prepared to stop the advance of spiritual foes but as a parent or guardian he must keep watch over his children and domestics. If the supreme punishment is inflicted on a military sentinel for the neglect of his duties; to whom is only entrusted the care of the body and the perishable things of time, what will be the adequate punishment to be awarded the Christian sentinel who by his culpable heedlessness permits his own soul and the souls of others to be led away captive by the enemy?

Reveille in the army is a summons to the soldier to rise from his slumber and be ready either to repel an attack or give the enemy battle. The Christian soldier's reveille is the voice of conscience which wakens him in the early morn and calls him from his bed of slumber to holy meditation and sacred song. Similarly with beating to arms: when the drum beats to arms it is intended as a summons for the general assembly of soldiers to parade, drill, exercise or submit their arms and accoutrements for inspection. In the army there is no possible excuse for not obeying the drum beating to arms. How then may the Christian ignore his own drum-beat to arms by staying in his house when he should be in church? The tattoo likewise is the evening sound of the drum, trumpet or bugle warning soldiers to withdraw from the society of their town or village and repair to their garrison. If soldiers make haste to obey, what of those Christians who absent themselves from the evening service of prayer and praise?

As the book develops Mance goes beyond this simple counterpointing of military and spiritual life to offer his own views, often surprisingly liberal. Recalling the summary treatment meted out to a deserter at Bedart during the Peninsular War, he argues against capital punishment. Is it not better for the Christian soldier, even if he is a deserter, to be offered the constant opportunity to repent? Once life has been taken there is an end of all chance of repentance.

Discussing the good work of the Chelsea Hospital for old soldiers, Mance asks why no provision is made for Protestant Evangelical ministers and pastors. Are they not spiritually soldiers as much as any military man? Foreign missionaries return home broken in health by their sojourn aboard but there is no pension for them. Mance suggests a general fund be set up for them. Looking to society at large, Mance sees it as invaded by the whole host of Satan, so many have been led away captive by him and are now his slaves. Thousands subsist by crime and depredation upon property and persons. A little forethought and spending might arrest this process. Consider the cost of prison and transportation. Money spent on elementary education would reap its own reward and frustrate the forces of darkness. The work of Satan to an extent thrives on ignorance. Transportation is the wrong way to look at emigration: would it not be better to send useful and pious persons to the colonies rather than, as now, the scourgings of society? The book ends with a rousing call to arms, "The Gospel trumpet sounds to arms and calls every Christian soldier to his post, stand by your guns - all hell is arrayed against you, 'choose you this day, whom ye will serve. If the Lord be God serve him, but if Baal then serve him'".

"*The Soldier Spiritualised*" is a Petworth book, not in the sense that it deals with Petworth but in that it was almost certainly written here and is the work of one of the most prominent Petworthians of the day. More than that, it goes a good way toward making John Mance a more rounded figure than the Quarter Sessions records allow. His austerity was clearly based on the evangelical religion that was the mainstay of his life, yet that austerity probably left room for a certain kindness. Francis George Sharp can speak of "much firmness, tempered with extreme kindness to the unfortunate objects of his care" and there is no reason to disbelieve him. In some ways, as we have seen, Mance in his advocacy of the abolition of capital punishment, pensions for retired ministers, elementary education for the poor and planned rather than haphazard colonising, is ahead of his time. In his eyes a harsh prison regime might, in acting as a deterrent, do evil that good may come. In a way perhaps this most rigid of disciplinarians may even anticipate the later dissolving effects of the views of reformers like Elizabeth Fry on a rigid doctrine of retributive punishment in the secular field. It would become increasingly difficult to justify a view of God which lagged behind contemporary secular attitudes to misdemeanour and anti-social behaviour. Mance stands at the very beginning of his long and painful process. He may stress the need for Christian charity but finds that charity difficult to reconcile with a God of retribution. "Why should the evil angels have sinned?" he muses toward the end of his book. He asks the question but is completely unable to answer it and stumbles, "It appears to have been the divine will, either for the trial of angelic allegiance or that the justice of Jehovah might appear the more evident, or for some other reason in the divine mind to permit satanic madness to

break out in open war and rebellion". In other words he does not know. From such wonderings and inconsistencies would arise the vision of a greater tolerance in God and man. John Mance might not attain that vision but his book can be seen as a testimony to the struggle for it.

"*The Soldier Spiritualised*" may be a social document but it is also a monument to a virtually extinct species, what Charles Fleet writing in the 1870s called the "self-educated man". John Mance was someone who, virtually without schooling, and swimming very much against the tide of his life, had made himself an articulate and thoughtful man. We may shake our heads at his austerity and his reading and thinking may have been entirely religious, but here was someone who, at least on his own ground, might hold his own with the establishment. Where most succumbed to a situation in which they were excluded from the world of letters there were some who disputed their exclusion. John Sirgood, founder of the Loxwood Dependants is an example, or John Dudeney, ten years older than Mance, who read as he tended the Dowland flock and finally became a schoolmaster at Lewes. Charles Fleet already saw such men as a dying breed. "When the state left children to themselves - and a great many parents followed the example of the State - there was no doubt a great deal of ignorance - a large tract of brain that lay fallow. But then as if to compensate for this, here and there a boy or man took the work in his own hands and educated himself". Mance and Sirgood's motivation was primarily, perhaps exclusively, religious, but Fleet knew of George Richardson the Brighton draper who having learned Latin, Greek and Hebrew went on to study French, German and Italian "not only so as to read, but to speak them with ease and eloquence", as also of Samuel Simes the Lewes journalist. The fact that the "pride and superciliousness of 'Society'" did not acknowledge these men, in no way diminishes their achievement.

I am very grateful to Janet Davidson for her detective work in tracing the apparently unique copy of "*The Soldier Spiritualised*" to the British Museum and obtaining a copy for the Society. The book had never been cut and the Museum staff had to cut the pages for the copy to be made! I am grateful to John Dovell for a copy of Mance's evidence before the Select Commission. For Petworth Gaol see Magazines 30, 31 and 32. For John Mance's relationship with the Congregational chapel see Joy Gumbrell's 1996 history of the church. For Charles Fleet's "*Glimpses of our Sussex Ancestors*" I have used the second edition (Lewes 1882).

P.

'Wash the Boots First...'

We lived at 85 River Hill, our cottage being one of two pairs in River Hill Lane, both now, I think, converted to single dwellings. We lived next door to some people called Wakeford who worked at wooding, thatching, whatever was going, and travelling around with a horse

and cart. A Yorkshireman named Gates lodged with them and went out with them. My father dug stone in Flexham Park, the stone being blown with cordite and then removed. When Flexham began to run out they moved on down to Little Bignor, but my father went to work for the Mitford estate looking after the woods at Bedham. "Bedd'm" we always pronounced it. I can remember him splitting wood with an axe to make posts and rails. After a while my parents lived in the old school house at Bedham.

When I was four I was sent to Byworth school. It would I suppose be 1914. Mrs. Small was the schoolmistress and she lived up by the Well-diggers. She had a rather sputtering way of speaking but my memories are rather hazy. I remember just a single class and the school being used also as a church, but in truth I probably wasn't there long enough to gain any lasting impression. My elder brothers were all going to Bedham school and so it was considered sensible for me to go as well.

Bedham could be nice in the summer, when you'd forget the winter, trudging through the snow crying with chilblains. There were four teachers, three of them pupil teachers, the two Wakeford sisters and Edie Stepney. Unlike Byworth, there was more than one class and the separate classes were divided by a curtain. Bedham had stained glass windows, and, like Byworth, it doubled as a church. When we left on Friday afternoon the seats were turned to face the east and the ink-pots taken out of the desks. We liked to put our fingers in the ink and try to smear the girls with it. Miss Day was the schoolmistress and by this time not young. She was a tiny lady, so much so that to give you the cane she sat on the high chair from which she taught. It was rather like an umpire's chair in tennis (although not quite so high!). When the old Kitchener stove was pulled out last year the builders found a tiny boot in the mock oven with an even tinier black plimsoll wedged inside. For me these could only have been Miss Day's: she had the smallest feet I have ever seen. I probably wasn't very long at Bedham and my departure came about in the following way.

If it was a nice day we'd all go into school as usual. Playtime was half-way through the morning. We had a game where one would be the fox and the others would have to chase and catch him. The fox would have to shout "Hulloa" to give a clue as to where he was. The followers kept him up to this by shouting in their turn, "Hulloa or the puppies won't folla". Well we'd be so absorbed in this we'd forget all sense of time, school or anything else and just take off into the surrounding countryside. No matter that we'd be for it when we got back - it would often be afternoon. The other boys were mainly older than I was, one was killed in the 1914-1918 war - that will give you some idea. We came unstuck however for after one of these adventures we returned to find the attendance officer waiting for us. He took our names and we were all transferred to Fittleworth School. Our reputation as rather rough diamonds preceded us to Fittleworth and we had a pretty cool reception.

Bedham in those days, towards the end of the 1914-1918 war, was almost entirely a village of working people. Residents from outside like Miss Metherell (Rhoda Leigh who wrote *Past and Passing* as an account of Bedham in the late 1920s) had not yet appeared. Ford Madox Ford? No I've never heard of him. Shops? Not at that time except for Mrs. Whittington who used to sell sweets. She would serve them at the door, never more than a pennyworth. You'd be allowed an inch or two inside the door if it was raining. My grand-

mother used to bake once a fortnight, my mother once a week, both using the old brick ovens. If we ran out of bread we used to have to walk over to Pallingham Quay where you could buy a loaf from Benjamin Stone's bakery by the lock-house. If it was flooded you'd shout across and Benjamin would row across with it. Normally of course you'd simply walk over the bridge. Benjamin had been lock-keeper until the canal closed, and rented the shop for a few shillings a week from the Stopham Estate. He was a regular worshipper at the Zoar Chapel at Wisborough Green.

At Fittleworth Miss Baldwin was the head teacher and Mr. "Mokie" Taylor the master. He used to bike daily from Portslade - incredible but true. In the hot summer of 1921 I didn't bother with shoes or socks at all and my feet became so hard that I could walk across a cut hayfield without thinking or play football in the road. When it came to going back to school however I couldn't get my boots on and had to go to school barefoot. The attendance officer sent me home to get sorted out.

A feature of schooldays at Fittleworth was the daily twenty to four race from school, over the road, through the twitten, to the Post Office to see if there were any telegrams. Often enough we would be disappointed. It was now towards the end of the war and telegrams could mean anything, particularly there was the dreaded "missing presumed dead". It was one and sixpence to take one, a huge sum in those days. Mr. Hart the postmaster had a rough idea of where we lived and he'd give it to the boy whose way home was nearest to the telegram's destination - strictly first come, first given that was of course why it was so important to be there first. If the telegram was reply paid, you had to go back to the Post Office with the answer. There was three shillings for this, a rare prize, a labouring man's wages for a day near enough. If you were simply taking the telegram the postmaster gave you the one and six-pence, if it was reply paid you'd have the three shillings when you came back with the answer. You always gave it your full attention; if you didn't the postmaster would soon give the next telegram to someone who would. I suppose most of my deliveries came after the war was over, but as a boy of eight I had no idea of how much the sight of one of us boys scurrying across a field towards a remote cottage was dreaded, and aprons held to faces. After all we had no idea of what was in the telegram, unlike the regular carrier Mrs. Foster who had gone off duty earlier in the day. She knew what was in them. After all telegrams could be quite ordinary: someone arriving at Pulborough by train, although I can't imagine that working people would have used telegrams for such messages.

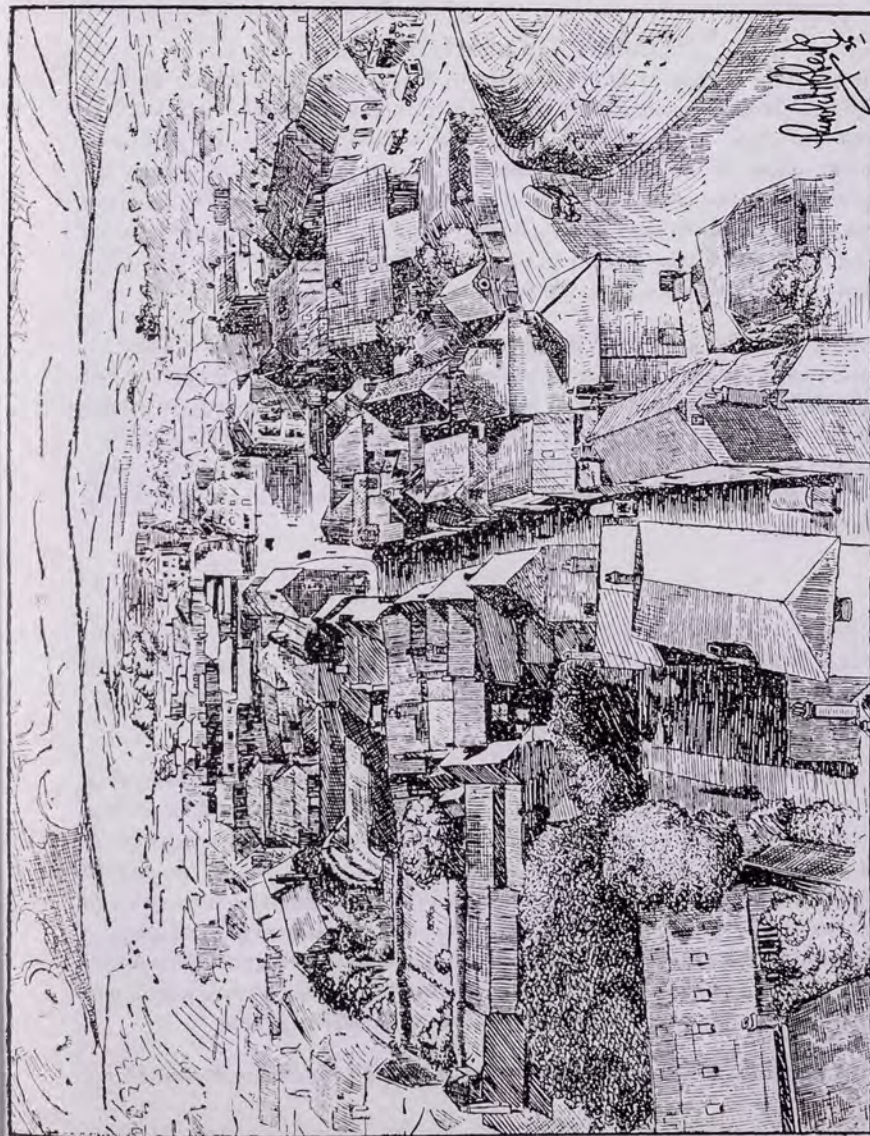
Before I left Fittleworth school I was already working for Mrs. Knight, the grocer at the junction of East Street and New Street in Petworth. It's now a travel agency. I worked there as an errand boy and was expected in from River Hill by eight o'clock in the morning, holidays and Saturdays. People came into the shop, (shopping was very much a woman's job in those days) bought their goods and had them wrapped. They'd be sitting on the chair kept for that purpose in the shop. As the customer got up to go, Mrs. Knight would say, "I'll send it round for you" and you'd take it round, following the customer. This was one way of doing it: another was for Miss Ford who worked in the shop to go out, take the order, and bring it back to be got up and sent. She always had a pencil on her ear ready for this and her order book. I might take several small orders or, of course, a single large (or heavy) one.

Quite often I had to walk right out of Petworth. I remember taking 28 lbs of Demerara sugar to Mrs. Williams at Langhurst Hill farm. She made a lot of home-made wine. She'd ordered and paid for half a hundredweight and it was brought out in two lots. Mr. Keen, "Sonny Jim", as he was called used to deliver for Mrs. Knight too but remember the horse and cart was hired - probably from Henry Streeter. It didn't belong to Mrs. Knight and she didn't keep it. We had it just one day a week, on Friday, and this was used to deliver to the outlying villages, Little Bognor, Bedham, all round. Deliveries in the town would always be on foot. If I wasn't helping at making up orders or taking them out, I'd do whatever else was needed. I particularly remember dogs fouling outside the shop. It was down to me to clear it up. If it was wet I'd wait until it eased off before I went out with orders. If I were caught by a shower, say, on the way to Langhurst Hill, that was just too bad.

Being an errand boy wasn't a job with any great prospects and it was soon time to look elsewhere. It was also time to leave school. I was fourteen and it was 1924. As it happened, a lady came up from the west country and was staying with Miss Ducaine at Fittleworth House. She was Mrs. Guest, some relation to the Duke of Westminster. Miss Ducaine was chairman of the school governors or whatever the equivalent was in those days, what she said, "went". Well, Mrs. Guest wanted a hall-boy to work with the butler, footman and odd man. The hall-boy in effect waited on the other servants. Mrs. Guest suggested that the class wrote an essay on how to clean a pair of boots, with the writer of the best essay getting the job. Well I wasn't at the top of the class but I got the job. Mrs. Guest read all the essays and noted that I pointed out that the first thing to do was to wash the boots. Everyone else had ignored this and Mrs. Guest said this showed they didn't know what they were about. Obviously I did, and she offered me the job. My parents were pleased enough to see one less pair of feet under the table and I was off. My mother took me down to Fittleworth Station and put me in the guard's van with a postcard torn in two pinned on my collar. The first side read "Inwood, Temple Combe, Dorset" and the reverse "From River Hill, Petworth". I changed from the branch line at Pulborough, then went down to Barnham to change again for Salisbury. I never lived at home again, apart from holidays. Wages were £3.5.0 a quarter, £13 a year with washing money and beer money at a shilling each week. I stayed at Inwood for a year but it would be ten years before I really knew Bedham again and by then it had changed.

I'll finish with a strange story. One of my brothers went into the merchant navy when he left school and sailed with the New Zealand Shipping Co. He went round the world, putting in at all sorts of places, like Pitcairn en route for New Zealand and Australia. A voyage could mean a couple of years or so before he got back. He came off one of these trips, left ship at Tilbury and came home. He was walking along the Terrace at Fittleworth when some boys started to stone him. He had to beat a very hasty retreat. Apparently these boys thought that because he'd been away for two years he'd been in prison!

Len Cooper was talking to the Editor.



This sketch of Petworth from the Church spire appeared in a local newspaper in the 1930s. It was drawn by Harold Roberts of Wisborough Green. The newspaper caption observes, "The street shown in the centre is Lombard Street, running down to the Market Square and Town Hall".

Under the Mulberry Tree

The following account appeared in the *West Sussex Gazette* for September 19th 1935 under Southbourne.

INTEREST AT PETWORTH

Members of Southbourne Women's Institute, accompanied by the President, Mrs. Brundrett, enjoyed a delightful afternoon's outing on Thursday when, by permission of Lord Leconfield, they were allowed to explore the gardens and grounds of Petworth House. The party was met by the head gardener, Mr. Streeter, who personally conducted the members through the gardens and greatly contributed towards the pleasure and interest of the tour. The members were shown the mulberry tree round which the children of Katherine and Henry VIII. used to play. The turf round this tree is the same as was laid in the time of Henry VIII. The party had tea in Petworth and looked round its cobbled streets and timbered houses.

The mulberry tree is still remembered by some and one gentleman I have spoken to, remembers wine made from the mulberries. A close relation of his worked at the house. But is the story true? Perhaps it is just a deduction from the known fact that for many years under Henry VIII the manor of Petworth was forfeit to the crown. Henry certainly took an interest in Petworth, apparently constructing a maze on Arbor Hill (see *Cloakbag and Common Purse* pp 17-8). Has anyone any ideas about this? I am grateful to Jumbo Taylor for drawing attention to this cutting.

P.

Same issue of the *West Sussex Gazette* as had the story of the Southbourne W.I.'s visit to Petworth also contains the following under Walberton. Mr. Frederick Ampleford, on a visit to the village from London, had worked a lifetime on the railway. He recalled the old excursion trains thus:

When Mr. Ampleford entered railway service the open top "cattle trucks" for the conveyance of passengers had been superseded by covered carriages with windows, but as at present excursionists may find themselves in carriages (though not uncomfortable) showing signs of "antiquity," so in the 'fifties excursion train carriages often had no windows. Mr. Ampleford remembers that excursions were run to London and back for half a crown and there were to be seen at the station in preparation for the long journey shawls and newspapers hung up by the none too comfortable corner-seat passengers "to keep out the draught." Passengers had then to change from one train to another at Brighton. The Crystal Palace was at that time newly opened, and was one of the special attractions to country people.

Such excursions would be nothing strange to Petworth people - see *Petworth Time Out of Mind* pp 102.3.

