Miles Costello
Petworth
Collection

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY *magazine*

No.146, December 2011

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"Very disappointed there are no views of old cottages and quaint corners".
This postcard by Arnold of Petworth is date-stamped 28th October 1904. It probably reflects haying in the Upton fields away to the right of the group.

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NEW MEMBERS

Mr & Mrs K. Lintill, 2 Downview Road, Petworth, GU28 0EU
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Mr M. Charman, 92 Old Buddington Lane, Easebourne, Midhurst, GU29 0QW
Mr & Mrs P. Tout, 3 Torton Hill Road, Arundel, BN18 9HF
The Hon. C.J.G. Guest, Hilland, Balls Cross, Petworth, GU28 9JX
Miss D. Manutius-Forster, Galeria Galileo, Virginia Cottage, Lombard Street, Petworth, GU28 0AG
Mr J. Watson, 100 Embleton Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 7DG

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 objects of the society.

The annual subscription is £10.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £13.50 overseas £16.50. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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SOCIETY SCRAPBOOK

Mrs Pearl Godsmark.

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FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick after a Walter Kevis photograph of Saddlers Row, Petworth about 1890.

Chairman's notes

From a purely personal point of view, the quarter was notable for the publication of *Peter dead drunk* in an edition of a hundred individually numbered copies. A distillation, no more, of what we have in Magazine recollection for the period from 1900 to 1939. It's something I've wanted to do for years. Will there be any copies left by the time you read this in early December? I've no idea. If we sell the hundred out, we might just break even, rather as we did last year with *We don't do nostalgia*, a less adventurous (and expensive) foray into the unknown. Window Press 100's may be a way forward in an increasingly testing economic climate for local books. All being well, we'll try again next year.

We have the, now almost obligatory, new cover for the new issue and accounts (or photographs) of Society events. The memorial concert for John Grimwood was not, of course, a Society event, but one of which the Society was particularly aware, making a donation towards John's memorial seat. Andy and Annette's BBC trip is to come as I write. Nothing on Florence E. Pullen in this issue (see PSM 145) but I will address this in 147.

The winter programme had a flying start with the welcome return (after sixteen years!) of Alan Readman (see Keith's report). Chris Hare talks of smugglers in November, while Rohan McCullough gives us the Tale of Beatrix Potter in December. If you loved Alison Neil, I think you'll love Rohan too; she comes on Alison's recommendation.

To end on a sad note. Agnes Phelan died on the 14th September. She was 102. Not a Petworth person, Agnes lived in Walthamstow. In a long life she will have seen extraordinary changes. With Agnes what is effectively the last link with Mary Cummings has gone, although Dorothy Wright still has childhood memories of Mary at a somewhat later date. Agnes had actually lived in the cottage in High Street with Mary and Mary's two granddaughters in 1919 – for a whole fortnight! She came down to Petworth at the age of 89 to share her memories with us. She did so with boundless enthusiasm and good nature. As long as the museum exists and, with attendance up again for another year, the immediate future looks secure, Agnes lives on as part of the spiritual fabric of 346. The photograph of Agnes in the Museum Guide as a girl of nine in her confirmation dress is a reminder not only of the remorseless passage of time but also of an infectious personality that once met was impossible to forget.

P.

Agnes Mary Phelan
5th February 1909 – 14th September 2011

The Petworth Society quiz
Petworth House
Wednesday 7th September 2011

1. Who was the first king to live at Buckingham Palace?
2. Who said that an army marched on its stomach?
3. What and where is Lyonnesse?
4. What brand of cigarette was advertised by pictures of a butler named Jenkyn?
5. Who was the first man to swim the Channel?
6. Who or what is John Dory?
7. What is a Nippy?
8. What is a Siberian crab?
9. Who was Robin Hood's lieutenant?
10. Jack's mother threw her beans out of the window. The next day an enormous beanstalk had sprung up. How had Jack come by the beans?
11. Who said, "Curiouser and Curiouser"?
12. What colour are the buds of ash trees?

13. When was khaki generally adopted as the field service uniform of the British Army?
14. Which flowers first in England – primrose or cowslip?
15. Who painted the Rokeby Venus?
16. Who said, 'Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward'?
17. What was Tintoretto's home city?
18. Which of the following fish are found in freshwater?
    Bass, Mullett, Perch, Pike
19. From which poem comes the line 'Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood'?
20. Who was Aramis?
21. What is the highest card in a 'Yarborough' hand at bridge or whist?
22. Which of the New Testament writers is said to have been a physician?
23. Who lived in a tub?
24. What is Bristol milk?
25. What is peculiar about the way in which Pepys refers to his wife all through his Diary?

Taken from George A. Birmingham: Can You Answer This? Benn May 1927

"And so to mimsy Petworth". Reflections on Peter dead drunk

"The housekeeper at Petworth had given me detailed instructions about coming from my home in Derbyshire, down on the train to Kings Cross, then by taxi across unknown London to Victoria. I had the exact time of the train to Pulborough, where I had to change to go along the branch line to Petworth, watching at each of the little stations to see which would be Petworth. There I would be met. And so I came to Petworth – just a name to me then. The other travellers alighted and disappeared, the train moved off and I was left alone. After about five minutes a horse-drawn carriage pulled up and a voice said, "Are you the new housemaid for Petworth House?" I would know the driver later as Bill Barnes. We set off for Petworth House up the slight hill from the station and into the old town."

It was 1981. The Magazine was something new in a Petworth context. It was still the "Bulletin". A television crew had been to Petworth House to make a programme about servant life in the 1920s; suddenly such topics were fashionable. And Cilla Greest had actually been there. Fifty-five years ago, sixty perhaps. It's all now eighty-five years ago, ninety perhaps. Would Cilla talk for the Magazine? Melicent Knight was a friend of Cilla's but doubtful if she would agree. We could but try. Cilla was above all a private lady bemused that anyone should be interested in what she could remember. She'd ask her husband, but, no, she didn't think so. Come back in a week. Not particularly optimistic, Melicent and I set off across the road from Percy Terrace with some misgiving. Cilla couldn't see that it would do any harm. And so we began.

It's 2011. I'm having a newspaper photograph taken to publicise *Peter dead drunk*. Kate, the photographer, and I walk across a sunlit Market Square. Is Petworth changing, losing its distinctive character, becoming like everywhere else? Certainly everyone seems preoccupied, wrapped up in their own affairs. Kate recalls photographing the greengrocer sitting out in the Square to protest about a bus ferrying people to Sainsburys. I remember it too. Twenty years ago? It must be, but in Petworth time, just yesterday. Reviewing a local hostelry, a newspaper critic[1] takes on Petworth itself. "And so to mimsy Petworth . . . an agglomeration of antique shops and estate agents . . . I didn't like the town". Mimsy doesn't appear in the two volume Shorter O.E.D. so I have to get out the magnifying glass and consult the Compact O.E.D. Mimsey – there's an 'e' and occasionally 'z' instead of 's'. Prim, prudish, contemptible. Can you divine Petworth's primness or prudery on a lightning visit? Perhaps he just means contemptible. I suppose the answer is that Petworth is as 'mimsy' as its people make it. I would like to think, too, that those who have some feeling for what went before will be better equipped to shape the present, even perhaps the future, than those who are too "busy". That, if anything, is the enduring message of *Peter dead drunk*.

P.

1. A. A. Gill. Sunday Times.

P.S. *Peter dead drunk* would probably make a good Christmas present – if, at £33, a trifle expensive. At the time of writing I have no idea whether I will have any left when the Magazine appears. Please ring me on 01798 342562.

A review reviewed

Like most of us, Peter seems to prefer people to make their own judgements on his work and so this is not my review, nor a report on a Petworth Society lecture, but something of Peter's own presentation of the launch of his latest book, *Peter dead drunk*, published at the Window Press.

The eye-catching title gives little away about the book's contents and is in no way a commentary on the author's lifestyle, but refers to public reaction to the performance of a crude play by a travelling theatre company in the Market Square in 1875. Townspeople wrote to Lord Leconfield in the hope that he would stop it; a situation inconceivable today.

It is a big book, drawing on some 500 conversations, starting in 1981, between Peter, Miles Costello and local people whose memories went back to the last years of Queen Victoria's reign.

The first interview, triggering a series which has continued for 30 years now in the Petworth Society Magazine, recorded the impressions of a young, newly appointed housemaid travelling alone from Chesterfield and arriving at Petworth railway station in the early 1920s. By 1980, public interest, previously focussed on the aristocracy and gentry, was moving into life 'below stairs'.

Frequently, people asked for their memories don't think they have anything of interest to say, but the book proves otherwise.

There follows 36 chapters, starting with 'Schools', 'Shops' and 'Work'.

The launch evening included slides of photographs, some from the book, some not, illustrated by Peter's comments and anecdotes, reflecting his passionate interest in the remembered tradition of Petworth.

The audience had questions and comments, the most notable of which came from Marian, Peter's wife, who recognised her own grandmother in a photograph of a large group of ladies in the early 1930s. Peter could only guess at the event portrayed or, until that moment, who any of the ladies were.

As with all Window Press books, the presentation, designed by Jonathan Newdick, is immaculate, accounting to some extent for the cost of production. At £33, it may be considered expensive, but it is another important book to add to Petworth's historical and social archive and one to be treasured by the fortunate owners – just 100 numbered copies have been printed.

"Diogenes".

Sweets, chocolates, cigarettes?

Anyone remembering the invitation from the usherettes at the cinema a generation ago would have wallowed in the nostalgia generated by Alan Readman's presentation of vintage film from the 10,000 items now held by the West Sussex County Record Office.

Moving pictures give an added dimension to the photographs, written documentation and spoken records of history.

The first films were made in 1896, but the first cinema did not open until 1910. There were very short comedy films which soon had the audience rocking with laughter. Scenes of crowds at the beaches, racetracks, cricket matches and carnivals were popular, especially when people could see themselves on the screen. To us, the fashions and the care everyone took with their appearance on holiday or at special events were in contrast with today's casual approach.

It was interesting and perhaps surprising to learn that one of the first local cinemas was built at Graylingwell Hospital, seating 600 inmates, as it was felt, ground-breaking at the time, that films would help patients with mental illness – 'good therapy for the insane'.

As techniques improved, films became longer, often based on classic stories.

The Shoreham Film Studio (1919-23) was a huge glasshouse, using daylight for indoor scenes with remarkable success. Film stars, such as Joan Morgan, the 'English Mary Pickford', emerged.

World War II training films, not only for the Home Guard, but also for schoolchildren in the handling of gas masks, may cause amusement today, but were very serious at the time. Then there were the VE Day celebrations, a 1955 Shippam's commercial and a 1963 Sussex travelogue.

One of the last films of the evening was shot in 1955 on the closure of passenger train services between Pulborough and Petersfield. The journey along the line, with the sound of the steam locomotive, brought back memories for many, together with the scenes of extensive sidings at stations, Midhurst in particular, with the brickworks in the background – now all no more.

An excellent programme from Alan, through the latest development in projection – PowerPoint. Most fitting.

KCT.

Ian and David's Ambersham Common walk

Heather in profusion and all in late August bloom. Ambersham, apparently, once doubled for Scotland in a Dr Who adventure. Harebells too. Ling has the larger bells, the common heather is smaller. White heather is predictably sparser. The weather's perfect, bees on the heather. We look back a year or two. Ambersham Common: the only time the Society has ever cancelled a walk. The car park under inches of water, Station Road a cascading flood.

Dry sandy paths, golden gorse, silver birch and young conifers apparently self-sown. To look across from the edge of the common to Tillington rising in the distance. A grassy field with the edge dense with the flat white heads of yarrow. The apparently bland surface of the heathland landscape is an illusion, fortunately Nigel is on hand to probe a little. There at the side of the path is the distinctive lair of a funnel web spider. No sticky secretion here but a series of taut threads. The lightest touch will signify possible prey, a heavier touch the spider will ignore. We note several such thrums; the funnel web spider is very much a heathland species. There's a colony of slavemaker ants, large ants capturing smaller ones and making them and their offspring work for them. Worlds within worlds beneath that "bland" surface.

David Wort snaps a funnel spider's web among the heather.
David's original picture is in colour.

We see no one as we walk the paths but there are definitely people about – somewhere. Some dowdy late stems of agrimony, a stray ragwort; rush and deep ruts remind that this parched landscape can sometimes be a very wet one. Back across the road, a determined-looking posse of walkers carry on down toward the Heyshott crossroads. The black and red berries of what appears to be a dogwood briefly detain us. Nigel points out a woodpecker hole in a dead silver birch stump. The bird will probably return next year. The swathes cut for pylons may be unpleasing to the eye but have an unlooked-for benefit – they offer permanent glades for butterflies and other insects to flourish out of the heavy shade of the woods. Back to the cars. The information panel tells us we've visited a SSSI. If there's been no sign of the Dartford Warbler or the rare sand lizard, we've certainly seen a little beyond the superficial. Thanks very much Ian and David.

P.

"Pale brown acorns". David and Linda's last walk of the season

Turn right off the London Road for Osiers. We draw up in the golfers' car park. Perhaps the last of a succession of glorious mid-October days. Scuffing pale brown acorns across a dry autumn path. Cascades of scarlet holly berries; apparently birds from Germany are coming over to feast on British berries. How did they find out? Sloes in sombre profusion. Does anyone pick them now?

If we keep to the footpath we'll end up on the Balls Cross road, but with tea promised from Osiers, David leads us off the public footpath and up towards Palfrey, a century ago a Peachey Estate outpost. There's a large expanse of grass on our left, perhaps, David suggests, once used as rick standing. To our right, the high reeds of Palfrey Pond, used, no doubt by the farm carters. We leave Palfrey to our right and look over the green autumn fields. Is that a buzzard high in the distant clouds, or a kestrel? It hovers like a kestrel, or is it a bigger bird? A buzzard, short legs, long wings. "Chunky".

We're on the edge of Ebernoe Common; as we move on Palfrey appears in different aspects, virtually hidden through the trees, or in clear view to the right across the fields. Look the other way and there's the tower of Petworth church rising in the distance like a gaunt tree stump, but too uniform to be natural. To the right there's high ground in Petworth Park. A balloon appears overhead, seeming almost motionless in the still air. Back up the path, through the woods,

Tea at Osiers.
From a colour photograph by David Wort.

then a warm welcome from Janet and Chris at Osiers, cups of tea, homemade jam and scones, apple turnovers and a selection of cake. Chairs in the sunlit mid-October garden. Janet's white nicotiana have transmuted into giants, dwarfing the border. Nicotiana sylvestris, says Tom, with myriads of tiny brown seeds.

No one's in a hurry to leave the garden or our genial hosts. Walking back to the cars, I think, can you really describe a buzzard as "chunky"?

P.

Rehabilitating Tobit's dog – the September book sale

"Over the monthly sale cycle hundreds, probably thousands, of novels pass through our hands, hardbacks, softbacks, some old, some new, outrageous, thoughtful, formulaic, or all of these things . . ."

So I wrote in the last Magazine. Just occasionally something seizes my attention, but not very often. This quarter however, I find Stella Benson's *Tobit Transplanted* (1931).[1] I read it years ago, although I suspect it finds only the odd reader now. Generally thought to be Benson's best novel, it was also to be her last; she died at Tonkin in 1933 at the early age of 41. It's a retelling of the story of Tobit in the biblical Apocrypha but transmuted both in time (1928) and place (Manchuria). The characters are no longer Jews exiled to Assyria, but White Russians, fleeing from the Bolsheviks into Manchuria and what is now North Korea. Relying on her extensive travels in the region Stella Benson produces an entertaining tour de force.

The book of Tobit, usually taken as a romance[2] rather than sober history, was written, possibly in Babylon and, probably, originally in Aramaic. The storyline has always attracted readers, writers and artists. Tobit, living in exile in Nineveh, has a prestigious position with the king of Assyria, a position he somehow contrives to combine with strict adherence to his ancestral faith. Inevitably his religious observance brings him into conflict with his employer, but on the king's death Tobit is reinstated through the good offices of Ahikar, his nephew. Unfortunately the situation recurs, through Tobit's insistence on burying the mortal remains of one of his countrymen. Worse, while doing this, he is blinded by contact with sparrow dung, and it is left to his wife Anna to keep the family from destitution.

Tobit, dejected to be brought low by his good deeds, prays to die, as does Sarah, daughter of Ragael, whose seven husbands have all been killed by a demon. The prayers arrive simultaneously at the heavenly court and the Archangel Raphael is dispatched to earth to sort matters out.

Tobit has money in trust with Gabael a relative, but at a considerable distance. He needs it badly and sends his son Tobiah to fetch it. A "man" is hired to accompany him on the journey, Raphael incognito, while Tobiah's dog joins the party. Attacked by a giant fish, Tobiah kills it and is instructed by Raphael to remove the heart, liver and gall. The gall will clear film from eyes and smoke from the burning heart and liver will drive away demons. Meeting Sarah on the way, Tobiah falls in love with her, marries her, banishes the demon with the burning fish offal and stays with Sarah's family while Raphael travels on to collect the money. Returning with Sarah and her dowry he uses the gall of the fish to heal his father. Despite appearances to the contrary, God looks after those who observe his law.

To transfer all this to Manchuria/Korea in the late 1920s requires a certain ingenuity but Stella Benson never loses her nerve. Wilfred, Chinese-speaking but trained in England as a lawyer and struggling with a Wesleyan conscience, takes the role of Raphael and, with some help from providence, brings everything to a satisfactory conclusion. The author is helped with the maelstrom of different

languages by Wilfred's command of English and the Tobit and Anna figures, having, somewhat conveniently, spent time in England, Anna as a governess. "There is a lake in Kensington Gardens where Betti and I sailed a boat – sometimes many hours that boat went round foolishly in the lake and we wait on the shore . . ." Stella Benson manages to keep the humour of the original and the affectionate portrayal of the characters, at the same time upgrading the role of Tobiah's dog, so marginal in the original story that some have seen its presence there as a survival from an older, different, story. Like much, but by no means all, that passes almost unnoticed in the monthly flux, Tobit Transplanted deserves better.

But, you will say, Tobit's dog was not at the September Book Sale. No, he wasn't, but he might have slipped in and out of the August sale without being noticed. Of our 123 sales, this was the second busiest – almost within sight of that legendary £3 a minute. September was steady enough but had to be anti-climactic. Clammy weather and a sluggish Square. I think August spoiled us.

P.

1. Published in the United States as *The Faraway Bride* (1930). Reprinted in the Vanguard Library (Chatto 1974).
2. See Carey A. Moore: *Tobit* (1996) the standard commentary.

State of the cosmos. A September afternoon at the Cottage Museum

September 3rd is always a significant anniversary; this year the 72nd since the declaration of war in 1939. A glorious September Friday but eerily quiet on the Museum front. Put it down to the marvellous weather, simply too inviting to be inside. With a Saturday stewarding in prospect, there was reason to be a little apprehensive; the pendulum would surely swing back. It did. The fire once lit, there was not a break the whole afternoon, wave upon wave, one tour fading into another – and another – and another. Have I explained about the flat irons, the need for the fire to be going, the "Petworth" range, the Pearson clock, the furled Union flag, the "pimps", the rag rugs, the chenille, the 1878 photograph of Michael Cummings with his colleagues from the 17th Lancers? Agnes Phelan in her confirmation dress in 1919, still going strong at 102, that last fragile link with the real 346, the real Mary Cummings. Guide books sell without any persuasion on my part – if I had the time.

But the Museum's essentially a reciprocal experience: the hands-on approach to stewarding demands that the visitors play their part, that they are not simply passive spectators. On an afternoon like this 346 is awash with talk and laughter, upstairs and downstairs. A lady from Basildon came with her husband two years ago, was enchanted, she's returned with her sister and her husband who live in the Cotswolds.

The usual garden introduction. "A cottage on Lord Leconfield's estate as it would have been in 1910." Then the primal dilemma; anonymous working family or Petworth House seamstress? Vegetables? An allotment up the road. The 2011 garden cosmos? Disappointing this year. It seems a common problem. If ours are indifferent several visitors have lost theirs completely. At 346 some are still blooming but a number have succumbed to a silver-white film that looks as if it has been sprayed from a paint-gun. A platoon of intense blue salvia patens brought in as reinforcements is still finding its feet. As if to make up, the Japanese anemones at the side of the back path have been superb.

And, inside, the objects seem to bask in the glow of the visitors' interest, from the empty bird cage to the battered Staffordshire figure on the chiffonier, or the rusting iron hoops against the brick wall of the W.C. And, of course, the brick copper in the scullery, that shibboleth that divides the generations. "Set pot we call it in Yorkshire." I've never heard the expression, but such stray information is what the Museum's about. For so many, guide book or no guide book, 346 will be the abiding memory of a visit to the town.

P.

Old Petworth traders (8). A.G. Morley

A.G. Morley the saddler would occupy the site on the corner of Angel Street (now Donovans) for generations. He was certainly there as the old century turned (see invoice dated 1898). Kelly's 1907 Directory lists Morley as saddler but also as assessor and collector of taxes, clearly a responsible position. By 1918 Kelly's simply describes him as "saddler". His long tenure would give rise to the popular name "Morley's Corner" still in occasional use. Another name was Amen Corner – the junction of Angel, Middle, East and New Streets. A, M, E, N.

I was once told that Morley's (two?) children left Petworth and possibly went abroad. The business was eventually divided between Morley's two employees, Mr Sadler who continued the leatherwork and Mr Yallop who dealt with cycles.

Agnes Phelan stayed at 346 High Street with Mary Cummings' two

granddaughters in 1919. She told me that the three girls hired bicycles for their holiday from Morley's. See further: William Albery: The hard fate of the Country saddler. *Sussex County Magazine* 5 (1931) page 167.

EAST STREET & ANGEL STREET
328 A
ALL STABLE REQUISITES SUPPLIED

PETWORTH, 30th Sept 1898
SUSSEX.

Miss Blagdon

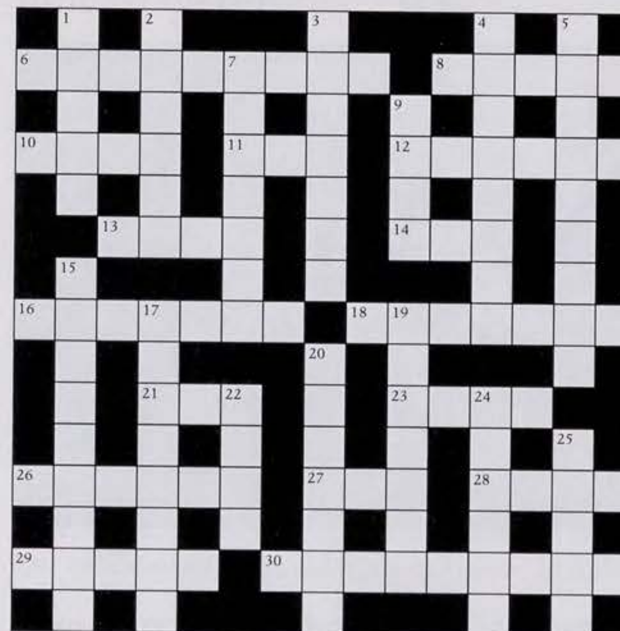
Dr. TO A. G. MORLEY,
Saddler & Harness Maker,
PORTMANTEAUS, GLADSTONE BAGS, &c.
AGENT FOR CYCLES, PERAMBULATORS & SEWING MACHINES OF ALL KINDS.
Machines Cleaned, Repaired & Re-adjusted.

FARM WORK DONE BY CONTRACT OR OTHERWISE.
WHIPS, HORSE CLOTHING, BRUSHES &c.

1898			
Jany 31	New neck Straps	1	.
March 24	Chamois 2/6 Compo 1/- 1 Blacking 1/6	5	.
May 9	Felt & string for trace		6
25	New Checks & billets with pipe loops & bridle	6	.
July 2	1 Summer Sheet 11/6 1 Roller 6/6	18	0
	Saddle Soap 1/-	1	.
5	Chamois	2	6
29	1 Bot. Blacking	1	6
Augt 6	1 Umbro.	2	6
9	Last		3
20	1 Bro	1	6
		£ 1 . 19	9

East and Angel Street,
PETWORTH
No. 17/10/98
Received on account of
A. G. MORLEY the sum of
£1.19.9

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



ACROSS
6 & 25dn TV duo to wrestle – arriving on Boxing Day! (3,6,5)
8 A very busy time of year for him – or her (5)
10 Used when stuffing the Christmas bird (4)
11 Have a little nip (3)
12 Perform your party piece perhaps (6)
13 Might be clapped out after Christmas and New Year! (4)
14 Enjoy a bit of a boogie (3)
16 Piled up – like gifts under the tree (7)
18 Trying to decide what gift to buy can be this (7)
21 Little donkey (3)
23 Frosted over (4)
26 & 28 Australian magician who usually appears at Christmas! (6,2,2)
27 Little girl hiding in the salad (3)
28 see 26 (4)
29 They might play big parts in 5dn (5)
30 Sounds like ex-naval man making merry (9)

DOWN
1 "The playing of the merry organ, ----- singing in the choir" (5)
2 Turn the tables for Jesus's birthplace (6)
3 Hunt for it at party time (7)
4 Traditionally, you make a wish for each one you eat (8)
5 Point ma and me to the entertainment (9)
7 New Year's the time to do this (7)
9 Focal point of nativity scene (4)
15 They hang around on Christmas Eve (9)
17 Popular party game (8)
19 "When ------- hang by the wall And Dick the shepherd blows his nail" (7)
20 Oratorio by Handel popular at Christmas (7)
22 A good mixer (4)
24 Ox etc I find bizarre (6)
25 see 6ac

SOLUTION PETWORTH CROSSWORD

ACROSS
7 Workhouse, 8 Oakum, 10 Stew, 11 Tar, 12 Austen, 13 Trug, 14 Kin, 17 Laundry, 19 Rectory, 22 Gem, 24 Espy, 28 Sowter, 29 Ode, 30 Gaol, 31 Stave, 32 Streeters

DOWN
1 Lofty, 2 Skewer, 3 Cottager, 4 Astride, 5 Bassinet, 6 Queen, 9 Back, 15 Gas, 16 Urn, 18 Negative, 20 Ebenezer, 21 Toronto, 23 Mary, 25 Pigsty, 26 Route, 27 Lorry

An uncertain view

This etching attributed to the artist David Strang is simply called 'Petworth' and dated 1901. If indeed it is a view of Petworth it is difficult to be certain as to the exact location that the artist is attempting to record. There is nothing to suggest that the view is anything but accurate though of course the drawing may possess a certain element of 'artistic licence'.

I would welcome any thoughts on the location of the view. My instinct is that it may be North Street looking south but there is no sign of the church in the distance, or the Park wall. Perhaps the rather wild foreground is simply intended to frame the view and so may not be of any relevance. The small building in the centre which appears to be straddling the fence could perhaps be the famous 'wooden-legged house' which Lady Constance Leconfield refers to in a Petworth Parish Magazine of 1931. She describes the building as "a house in North Street, the upper part of which, supported by wooden posts, stretched over the path into a garden. At an open window, over the doorway, a shoemaker used to sit, plying his trade."

If you recognise the view or have any suggestions please let me know.

Miles Costello.

Dora Older's diary (4): June to December 1915

Inevitably Dora's thoughts are very much with her brother Arthur. In June he returns for four days' leave before returning to his regiment at Bedford. By mid-July he leaves to join the Mediterranean Field Force, bound, apparently, for Alexandria. His fiancée arrives in Bedford just in time to see him depart. On August 3rd the family hear that he has passed through the Bay of Biscay. "This has been crossed out by the censor," Dora observes, "but not enough that we can distinguish it." On August 12th the family receive a postcard to say that he is at Alexandria. By mid-September he is in hospital at Alexandria recovering from fever. Writing in early October he reports his first walk (about 100 yards) to see if he has any letters. He finds only a parcel. The next post reports that he has received thirteen! By now he is convalescent but still very weak, and on November 13th back in England at Graylingwell Hospital, Chichester.

With Arthur very much in mind, Petworth takes a back seat and Dora leaves long gaps between entries. She is never in any sense a dedicated or introspective diarist. Once again I have omitted minor entries and regularised the use of capitals.

Wednesday June 23rd
Alexander (*sic*) Rose Day in all big towns, I have been to Chichester today where they were selling roses in aid of the Military Hospital there. The roses are sold in towns for charitable purposes, started a year or two ago by Queen Alexander.

Wednesday July 14th
The 126th anniversary of the taking of the Bastille was set apart in England for selling French flags in aid of the Destitute of France through the war. Wednesday being an unsuitable day in Petworth it was kept on Monday the 12th.

Monday August 2nd
Bank Holiday.
Have been to Worthing today for a blow by the sea.

Sunday August 15th
There was a Fruit and Vegetable Service in the Church this afternoon for the children of the parish to bring offerings to be sent to the sailors in the North Sea.

Thursday Sept. 2nd
[*Cousin Ephraim*] has a new motor cycle and side car.

Friday Nov. 12th
A Hospital Depot has been started in the Audit Room Petworth House – for making splints, bandages, dressings, swabs. I have been three afternoons this week. The Depot is open three days a week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

[In November the family make several visits to Arthur in hospital at Chichester. "He looks rather nice in his hospital suit of saxe-blue flannel, white flannel shirt and a scarlet tie. This is the regulation dress of all soldiers in every hospital." On December 9th Arthur is home for six weeks' furlough, and Dora is able to give more details of Arthur's illness . . .]

He has lost his stripes, and is reduced to a private through staying too long in the trenches in the Gallipoli Peninsula, when he was too ill to carry out his duties, and the consequence was, when an order was given to Stand To, an officer found him without his equipment on and his men in disorder. Of course, a very serious offence if he had been in good health.

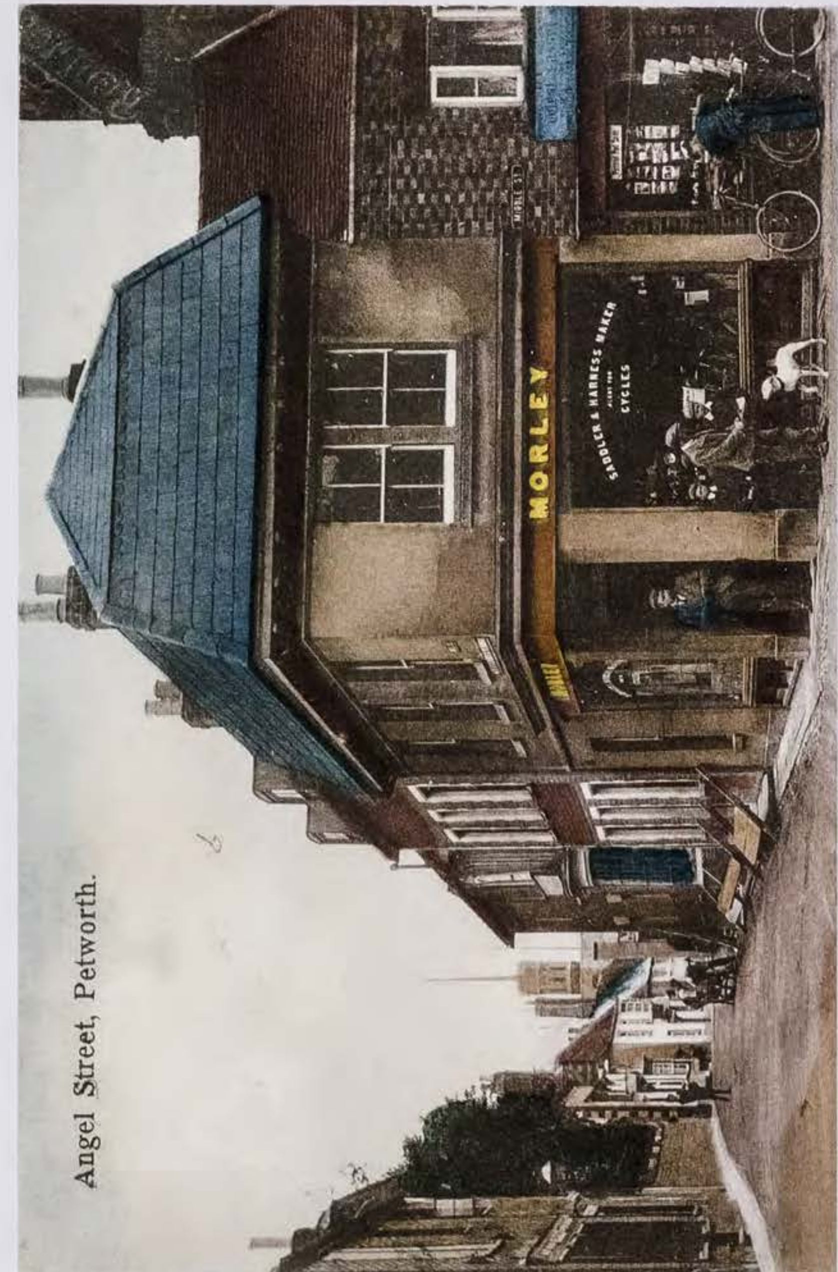
We are very much put out but his great mistake was in staying in the trenches until he was unable to carry out the responsibility of looking after his duties.

. . . in the evening he was sent to hospital sickening with fever and of course the knowledge of being reduced from Sergt to Pte went very much against his recovery.

Courtesy of Mr Alan Older.

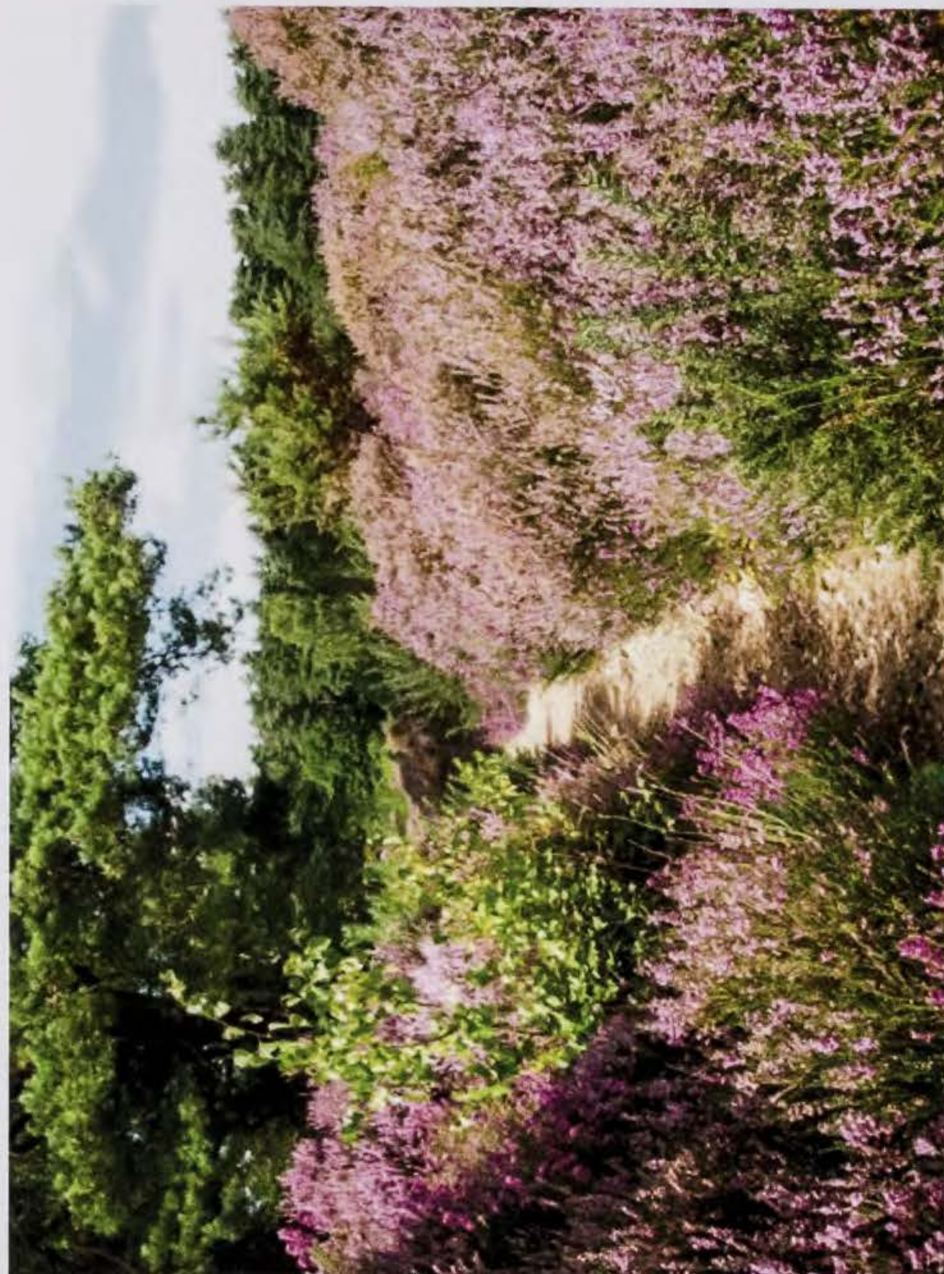
"The farm on the hill"

The war was at an end. I would be eight or nine. If, perhaps, I'd once been taken to Southsea, I'd never otherwise left Fishbourne. The site of the Roman villa was my playground, the "tide" as we called the sea, within easy distance. Mr Ledger, the farmer, still cut his lawns with a scythe, while the hay in the fields, no longer hand-scythed, was still turned by horse. Corn was stooked the old-fashioned way and threshed in winter with the big, double barn doors east and west thrown open for the wind to carry off the chaff. The railway was a quarter of a mile away and we'd walk up the single track, officially trespassing of course, but the track wasn't electrified then. No-one bothered too much if we picked up the charred corn where the sparks from the locomotive had caught the field alight and brought the seed home for the chicken. What our mothers did object to was our insistence on



Morley's Corner a hundred years ago. Presumably the figure in the doorway is Mr Morley himself.
A hand-coloured postcard by Arnold of Petworth, postmarked 27th March 1911. See Old Petworth Traders (8)

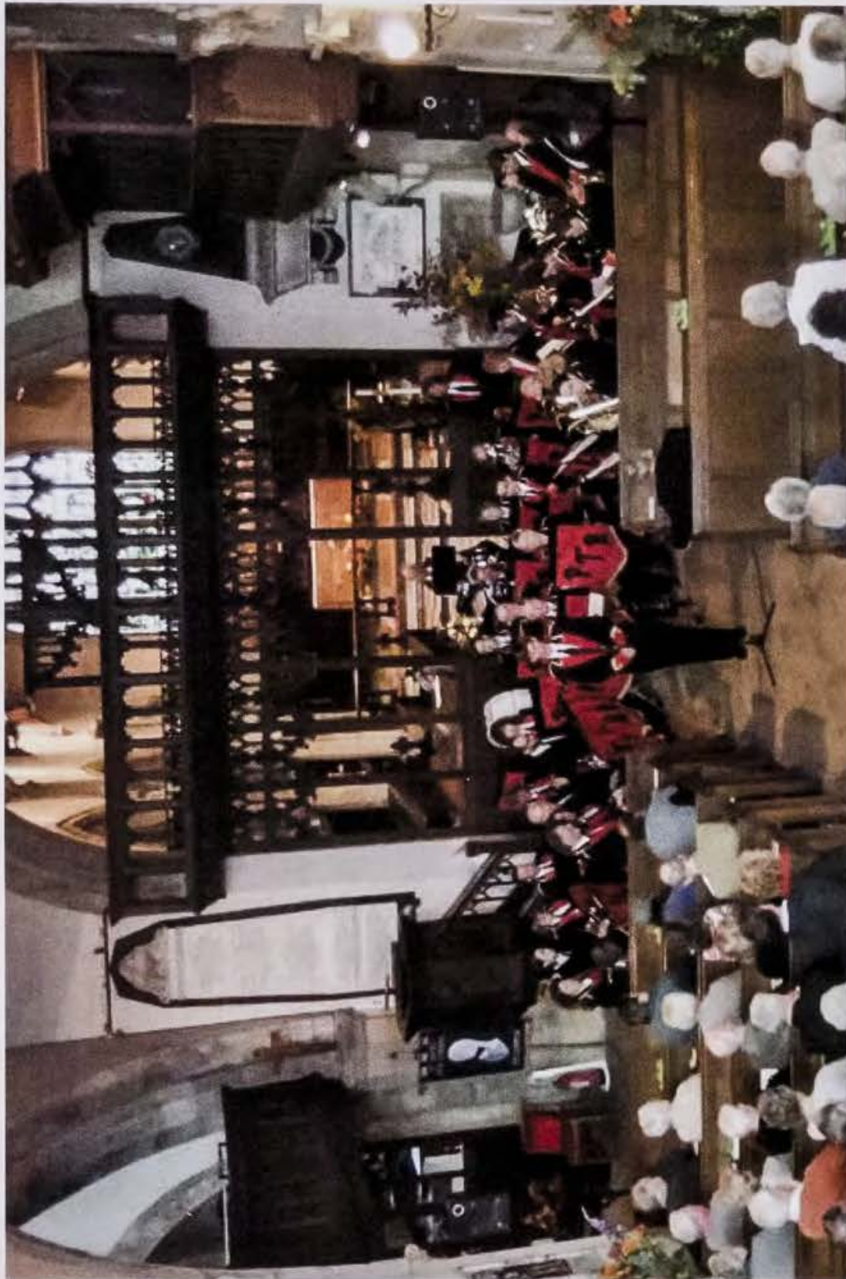
Lifting Andrew Smith's tombstone in Kirdford Churchyard with the help of Andrew;s descendants.
L–R are Mick Maguire, Albert Ayling, Brian Clarke.
Photograph courtesy of Tony Sanders.



With(out!) the Petworth Society on Ambersham Common in August.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.

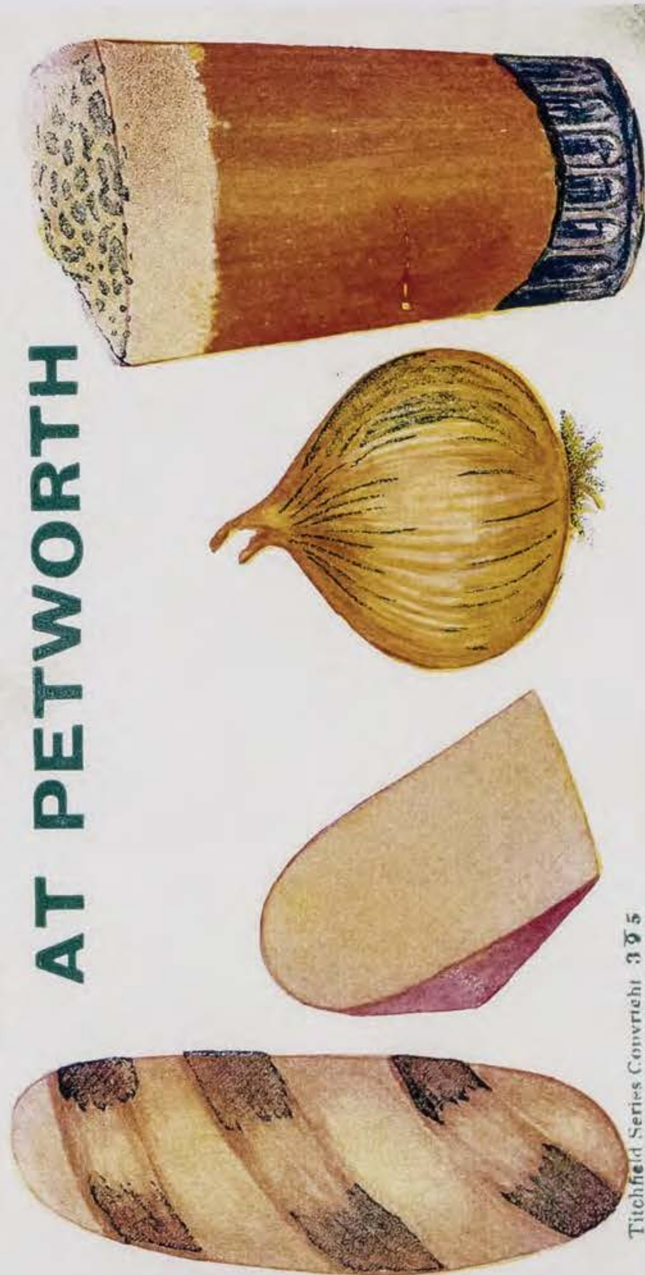
The audit room at Petworth House set out for the Society's Annual Dinner in September.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.

Peter's town walk in September.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



The John Grimwood memorial concert in October. View from the balcony.
Photograph by Pearl Godsmark.

Lord Leconfield? Harold Roberts offers no identification.
This study from the 1930s has clearly been torn from a board or mount.



A humorous Petworth postcard probably dating from between the wars.

standing on the bridge over the railway where the track forked to Midhurst to wallow in the smoke that rose from the shunting engines. Bread and jam sandwiches and we could be out for the day.

But here I was, alone on the service bus to Petworth. I had been put on at Chichester and would be collected at Petworth. Why the change of scene? Looking back, I suspect that Mother was having another baby – not a subject for an inquisitive eight year old in 1945. Petworth. It's as vivid to me nearly seventy years on, as it is difficult to recall in any detail. It remains simply an over-powering impression. Names are long gone except for Lily Hall with whom I was to stay. Her husband worked as a cowman on the farm and there was a son named David who was roughly my own age. Rightly or wrongly the farm is indelibly fixed in my mind as being on a hill. Whenever I think of it I think of Jack and Jill and of the water being drawn from the well. The bucket as it came up seemed alive with "pollywogs" which I understood to be mosquito larvae. I imagine the water had to be boiled before use. I don't know. I didn't ask, and no one was going to tell me. At Fishbourne we children were quite used to drinking stream water when we were out playing.

My abiding memory of Petworth is the hill to the farm and the cobbles. Petworth meant cobbles. I'd never come across such a thing before and I can still feel the strangeness of first walking on them. My mother had given me sixpence spending money but I think this had to last for the time of my stay, some three weeks. Once I went into the chemist's to spend some of my sixpence on Horlicks tablets. Unlike ordinary sweets they weren't on ration. It was while at Petworth that I learned to play cards – rummy, but what I did otherwise I can't remember. I certainly never became involved with the farm; I never saw the cows being milked – by hand then of course. Women tended to stay at home in those days and I was probably kept largely indoors.

I have the idea that Mother and Lily had met when they were working at Goodrowes in Chichester with farm machinery. Not unlikely with so many men away at the war. There was a field next to Goodrowes where a circus appeared periodically. I never liked circuses.

The Petworth weeks passed and it was back on the bus and Fishbourne again, and the evacuees, "refugees" I tend to call them. They were a little older and a little wilder then I was. Fag cards in abandoned shelters, standing them up against the wall and flicking cards at them. What you knocked down would be yours. Or "flicker" which depended on how far you could flick your card with the index finger. In addition to pre-war cards, there were "Turf" cigarettes from which you'd cut out the blue back on the inside packing to make your card. Footballers and other personalities of the time. The evacuees had "acquired" a real bow and

arrow. I remember someone being shot in the chest and falling over with the arrow sticking out. Fortunately the shot had hit the breast bone. Fortunately, too, the "archer" had not been strong enough to stretch the bow to its full extent.

And then there was Kingley Vale, familiar enough to Petworth Society excursions, reached either across the fields, or, the longer road way through Lavant. Jam sandwiches, a bottle of water, and out all day. The military had only just vacated and you could find among the battered yews bullets and all manner of discarded ammunition, some live. We experimented and it's a wonder we didn't kill ourselves. And the Devil's Clump. If you could run round without drawing breath, the Devil would appear. But, of course, you couldn't. Just as well perhaps!

Dave White was talking to Jean Gilhooly and the Editor.

Madame de Gilibert recalls (3) . . .

This concluding extract from A. M. W. Stirling's *Life's Little Day*[1] should be compared with J. O. Greenfield's account of Lord Egremont and his grandchildren (Tales of Old Petworth pages 79-80). Madame de Gilibert was the Third Earl's granddaughter, her mother Charlotte Henrietta, Mrs Wyndham-King, being the Earl's eldest daughter. Garland is the Earl's housekeeper and a dominant presence in his later days[2]. 'The dear King' is of course, William IV. A.M.W. Stirling writes:

Mrs King's daughters were as much at Petworth as in their own home. Lord Egremont, despite his notorious faults, was a man of extraordinary fascination whom young and old alike adored. Moreover, he was devoted to children, which was perhaps fortunate as he had an unusual number. Legend, indeed, credited him with having left seventy-two illegitimate children at his death, and it was rumoured that the Egremont nose could be traced all over Sussex. Be that as it may, he was never so happy as when surrounded by young life. "Come on – come on – all the children and all the dogs!" he would cry, and his grandchildren, the little Wyndham-Kings, flocked eagerly to him, secure of a lively time and of his ready connivance in any escapade. One typical incident Madame de Gilibert used to recall:-

Strange to say, they all loved cheese – presumably because, being considered to be indigestible, it was forbidden to them. Lord Egremont therefore kept a fine Stilton hidden in a drawer in his sitting-room, and, assembling them there secretly, fed them with this forbidden dainty. One day they were all seated round the table munching their peculiar repast, when there came a loud rap at the door, and they knew it was the housekeeper Garland come to collect her brood. In an instant the cheese had vanished into the drawer and the children had disappeared under the table, so that when Garland put her head in at the door, she found only Lord Egremont seated there alone reading. Satisfied that her charges were elsewhere, she withdrew with many apologies, and in an instant out came the cheese upon the table and out came the children from under it!

When Charlotte King was about seven or eight, she went for a drive along the Steine at Brighton with her grandfather, perched up beside him in his high phaeton. They drove to a little house in the Old Steine, where Lord Egremont got down, and she trotted after him. They were shown upstairs to a bedroom where there reclined in bed an old lady called Mrs Fitzherbert, who had a sweet face and who welcomed them graciously. Lord Egremont seated himself by the bedside and told Charlotte to play about the room; but while she did so, childlike, she kept an ear open for the conversation of her elders, and heard what she was not intended to hear.

"The dear King[3] came to me," she heard the old lady say, "and he went down on his knees to me, and begged me to be a Duchess, but you know, my dear Lord Egremont . . ." Then the two old heads bent closer together, wagging with the earnestness of their conversation, and she failed to distinguish what followed.

Afterwards, when they were driving home again, Charlotte ventilated the question which was uppermost in her mind. "Grandpapa," she said, "why wouldn't that old lady be a Duchess?" "Because she was an old fool, my dear," quoth Lord Egremont. But next time when he took Charlotte with him on a visit to Mrs Fitzherbert, he carefully left her downstairs, and, summoning one of the footmen in attendance in the hall, bade him play with the child and keep her amused. "What would you like to play at, Miss?" inquired the lackey obediently when they were left alone together. Charlotte eyed him critically. He was a tall man, who, she decided, would make an excellent target. "You stand over there," she ordered, pointing to the other end of the hall, "and I'll throw cushions at your head!" And she did.

1. Thornton Butterworth November 1924. Second Edition January 1925.
2. See P. Jerrome: *Petworth from 1660* (2006) page 123.
3. George IV was, of course, dead.

Dad was second chauffeur

How we ended up in Petworth goodness only knows. Dad had been in the RAF for quite a few years and I suppose that having been demobbed he needed a job and we needed a home. After a stay in Crawley, fate, or whatever, would see us move the twenty odd miles to Petworth and the Leconfield Estate.

Dad had successfully applied for the position of mechanic and second chauffeur to John Wyndham at Petworth House and we duly moved into 307 North Street. The house was a rambling property over four floors if you included the cavernous cellar, which with its open fireplaces had clearly once been an inhabited part of the house. I was six when we moved to Petworth and the youngest of four children, two boys and two girls. Our arrival at 307 was not auspicious. Mum had brought her cherished cat with her and on entering the house she opened the basket and the cat flew straight up the chimney. The rest of the move must have been relatively uneventful as that is the only recollection that I have of it.

We children loved 307 as there was so much space, especially having moved from the small modern semi in Crawley. The third floor of the house was almost given over to us children except for one room where Mum and Dad kept cases and odd pieces of furniture that had travelled with them around the various military bases that had previously been our home. Our parents didn't really come upstairs at all and we were very much left alone to enjoy ourselves just as long as we behaved.

307 was immediately next to Thompsons Hospital and the vehicle entrance which now serves the almshouses and several other North Street properties was once part of our garden, I must say that it is sad to see so much of our lovely wild plot buried under tarmac, but then I guess that is progress. Our garden ran down the hill towards the Shimmings Brook at the bottom of the meadow, Dad kept chickens and rabbits in the garden and there was a pigsty with an old copper for cooking up the swill. At the foot of the garden was a small orchard of fruit trees. Our garden was joined on the north side below the almshouses by beautifully tended allotments where Mr. Fowler the Leconfield Estate carpenter, Charlie Peacock the builder and Harold Cobby who worked in the Petworth House gardens, could be seen on most evenings.

The neighbouring property to the south, or the town side, was Springfield House where Mr Hamilton lived, I can't remember what he did for a living but no doubt he worked on the Estate as did most people in North Street in those days. I wonder if there is a single Leconfield employee living in the street today? Past Springfield House there lived the Clarks, Granny and Granddad Playfoot, Mrs Wakeford and Mr and Mrs Whittington. Mr Whittington kept a smallholding at Flathust on the Horsham Road, completely disappeared now but every year the most beautiful daffodils still pop up in the hedgerows surrounding the plot. An annual reminder of what once had been.

North Street was really quite insular when I was growing up, everybody knew one another and quite a few children lived in the street. Serious mischief was impossible as any bad behaviour would soon be spotted and reported back to our parents. The long hill up North Street was a natural deterrent to any venture into the town though of course there was the daily trudge to the Infants school, or occasionally with Mum to the shops, but social trips into the town were scarce. At that time my brothers were at Culvercroft in Pound Street and my sister at the East Street Girls' School.

The North Street year would begin with pushing an old pram out to the 'dilly woods' near Fox Hill to pick huge bunches of daffodils which we would bring home and sell for pennies to our neighbours or passing locals. Bluebells and primroses were picked closer to home in the hedgerow by the Shimmings Brook. The school summer holidays would mean leaving home early in the morning and going off on what seemed like endless bike rides to Gunters Bridge or as far as Holland Wood on the Balls Cross road. Remember I would only have been about ten and my accompanying brother only fifteen months older than me. Can you imagine children today given that sort of freedom?

Our favourite playground was much closer to home and was the Shimmings Brook which ran along the bottom of the meadows behind North Street. We would spend hours building huge dams of mud and wood, making camps and defending imaginary islands from our older brother. Bullheads and sticklebacks were caught in the brook and proudly carried home in jars as trophies to show our parents. While all this merriment went on we children were always on guard for Mr Scriven the farmer at Shimmings. I don't recall having a rational fear of him, perhaps it was just that he represented the only authority that would occasionally intrude into our lives. Much the same as a parent, or policeman or teacher. Anyway we were terrified of him and any sign of his approach would send us children scattering in search of a hiding place.

July was perhaps the most important month of the year for us. Not only were the school holidays beginning but equally important it was Goodwood races and the opportunity to get some pocket money. Each morning and evening we would stand by the front gate waving handkerchiefs and yelling at the top of our voices "throw out your rusty coppers" to the endless stream of racegoers who passed along North Street. The morning stint was worth doing but not usually that productive. Clearly most people were saving their money for the races. The evening session however was different, this would be when we would put all our

efforts into waving and shouting. Pennies, thrupenny bits and tanners would shower from the cars and coaches. We children were under strict instructions not to rush into the road to collect rolling coins but invariably the temptation would be too much, anyway such was the weight of traffic that the cars rarely got above a crawl and most drivers were well aware of the hazards having already been assailed by children at Hampers Green or Station Road depending upon which end of the day it was.

Petworth fair day was the other red letter day for children. Sadly the fair had been rather neglected for some years but still seemed an important occasion to us. You see it was really quite unusual to be in the town after dark and what with all the shops staying open late and such bright lights the whole town seemed to be alive with excitement. Eager's would of course have their traditional Christmas window display on show and the arrival of the fair would herald the festive season.

Carol singing was usual at Christmas. Not organised, but just a few local girls would sing as a group. I remember one year we were singing outside Somerset Hospital in North Street and George Garland took a photograph of us. I can't remember if it had been arranged beforehand though I wouldn't have thought so.

A North Street child carries a badge of honour throughout their life, for only one bought up in the street would know exactly where the china dolls head looks out from the pointing in the Park wall. It really is amazing that the doll has never been vandalised, though clearly the builder who placed it had the good sense to put it just out of reach of children and chose a head so small as not to be easily seen by the unacquainted passer-by.

As I said earlier Dad was a mechanic cum chauffeur at Petworth House. The workshop was at the top of the Cowyard in North Street. There Dad worked with Jim Martin the other mechanic and Mr Roberts who was the principal chauffeur and in charge of the workshop. Mr Roberts lived with his family in the garage flat just across the yard from the workshop. Sometime later they moved into the house at the bottom of the yard.

The workshop had three pits and so could take quite a few vehicles at any one time, and next door there was a smaller workshop that was not used very often, though I seem to recall that the precious four-wheeled drive Halflinger truck was stored there out of the weather. This vehicle had been quite a revolutionary purchase by the Leconfield Estate when times were really tough and was the talk of the town. Evidently they could drive through just about any conditions though I don't know why it was brought to Petworth or how successful it was. To the right of the workshop was the building where the old Leconfield fire engines were kept. I seem to remember two of them then but they would soon disappear and I was told that they had been sold.

Further down the Cowyard and on the right against the North Street wall were small workshops in various states of disrepair, while on the left behind the garages were huge drainage pipes stacked up against the Pleasure Ground wall. We would climb up onto the pipes and sneak into the gardens and then the park. At that time the Cowyard was a busy place with workmen and machinery coming and going all of the time, the footpath through the tunnel was not open to the public and the gates were usually locked. The tunnel was used as a store for building materials and home to dozens of bats which we were told would get tangled in our hair if we were foolish enough to enter.

At harvest time Dad, like many Estate employees, would help on the farms and he could often be found driving a combine harvester. I imagine that this was quite useful as he was a very good mechanic and the machines were always temperamental, especially those that were only used at harvest. John Baigent would usually drive the tractor and trailer that collected the grain from the combine. He would let me sit in the huge high sided trailer as it was being loaded, this wouldn't be allowed today and was really quite dangerous. I used to love harvest time but invariably went home with sores over my legs from the chafing of the grain.

Dad would often be sent to the outlying Leconfield farms to mend a tractor or get some piece of machinery working. Remember that even in relatively recent times many of the farms still generated their own electricity and even after they went on the mains it was important to keep the back-up generators in working order. Moor, Stag Park and Mitchell Park were important Leconfield home farms and Dad spent a lot of time out there.

Dad had a saw bench which he towed behind his car and he would take it out to The Pheasant Copse at Limbo where he would saw up logs to get us through the winter. Goodness knows how he managed to tow the bench as it was a heavy unstable machine and you certainly would not be allowed to tow it on the road today. Dad loved cars and was always tinkering with them. Our garden at North Street always seemed to be home to several vehicles in various states of repair or more usually disrepair. There was an old Standard Vanguard and a very old black London cab. The latter had just one seat in the front and an open area for suitcases and such like. Dad, being a Canadian, had a fondness for American cars and I particularly remember a huge one with big fins on the back. Needless to say we children would eventually commandeer these vehicles once Dad had given up on them and we would have great fun.

Another job where Dad could earn overtime was sheep-dipping. I don't remember it but my brother recalls seeing hundreds of sheep penned by the side of the road in the Pheasant Copse and a long concrete pit which was filled with

dip. The sheep would be thrown in at one end and driven through the pit to the other sloping end where they would stagger out into a holding pen. Dipping was a dirty, unpleasant job for those who took part.

Dad being second chauffeur would occasionally have to drive the Wyndham children around if Mr Roberts was busy with John Wyndham. I remember Dad taking Harry Wyndham, his Nanny and me down to Littlehampton for the day where the family had a beach hut. This was quite a regular occurrence during the holiday season and a great treat for me. On another occasion it was my birthday and we went off to Horsham so that I could choose a new dolls pram. On the way back the pram was stored in the space between the driver and his passengers and it seemed so grand. I suppose that may have been an old fashioned Rolls Royce though I can't be sure. I do recall that it was Lady Egremont's own car.

Growing up in North Street was really quite special. It was a time of great change in Petworth though of course we children were not aware of it. The old Petworth was disappearing rapidly and the advent of television and the huge increase in the volume of traffic would speed up that process. New schools would shortly be built to replace the Victorian buildings that we have such fond memories of, and eventually I and most of my friends would leave the town. Much has changed and I haven't lived here for many years, however I can still walk through the town and chat to people that I knew then, and if I close my eyes tightly I can still see a group of young carol singers and Mr Garland setting up his camera on a cold, clear Christmas evening in North Street. Happy days.

Gail Huggett was talking to Miles Costello.

"No tractors in the 1930s"

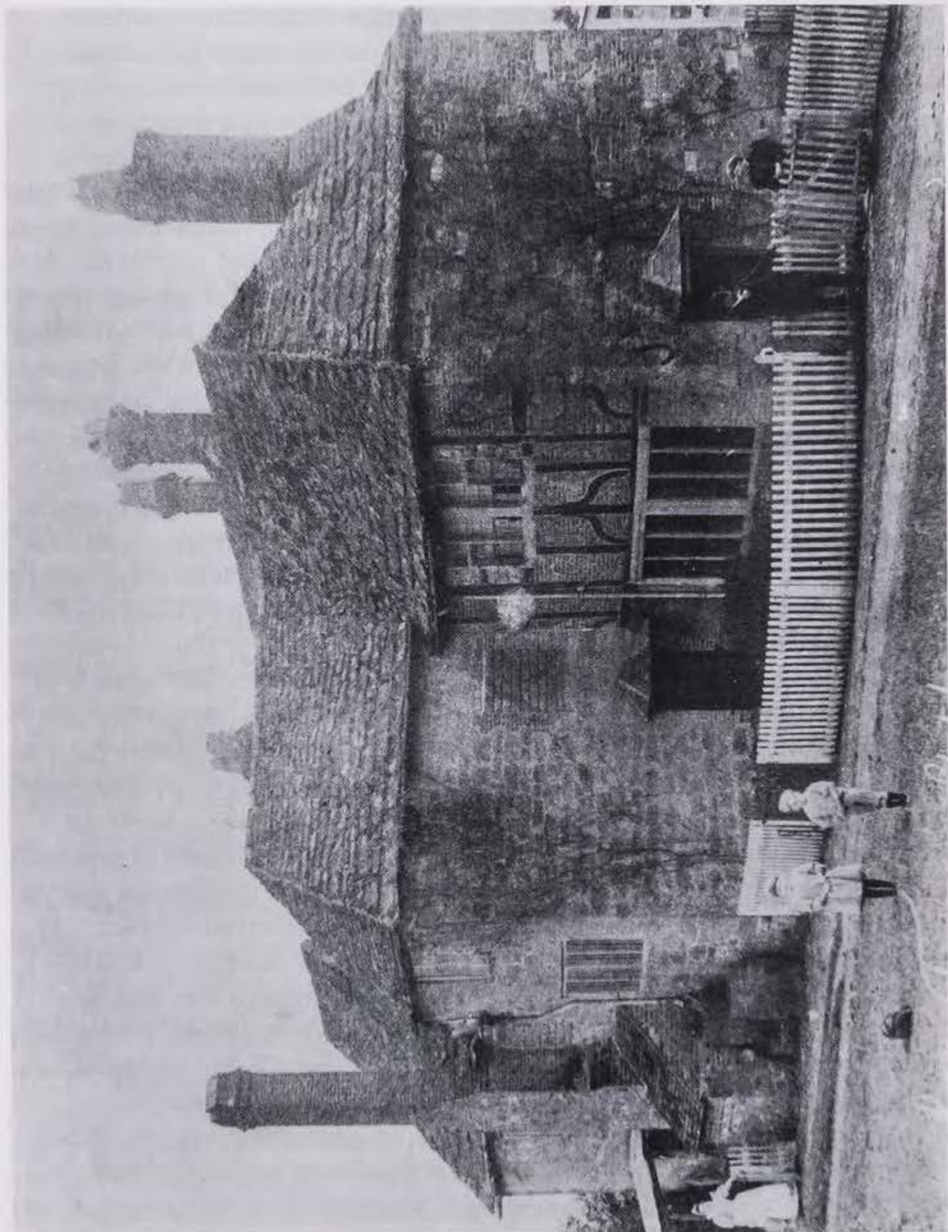
I was born in 1930, the eldest of four children. I suppose I started to notice things at a fairly early age – something to do with living on a farm perhaps. My parents Jim and Mary weren't the moving kind; they were well settled when I was born and would remain at Lea Farm, Stopham for many years. An early memory is of my first trip to the old Fittleworth School. Dad was carting stone from the pit at Little Bognor for some building work at the farm. It was lunchtime and he picked me up and put me on the cart. I arrived with my clothes liberally sprinkled with stone dust and Mr Bowyer the headmaster, something of a disciplinarian, was apparently, less than impressed.

Lea Farm with its Horsham slate roof, was part medieval, and farmed by Hugh Retallack with his brother Ivor. The brothers lived in the farmhouse with their elderly mother. Dad was the carter, a crucial role on a farm that, at that time, relied entirely on horses. There were no tractors at Lea in the 1930s, but there were five or six horses for which Dad was responsible, even to dealing with anything other than really major ailments; you did not call the vet unless the situation was desperate. Dad was no great one for letters but he was shrewd. Like so many of the old countrymen, he kept a huge amount of practical knowledge in his head.

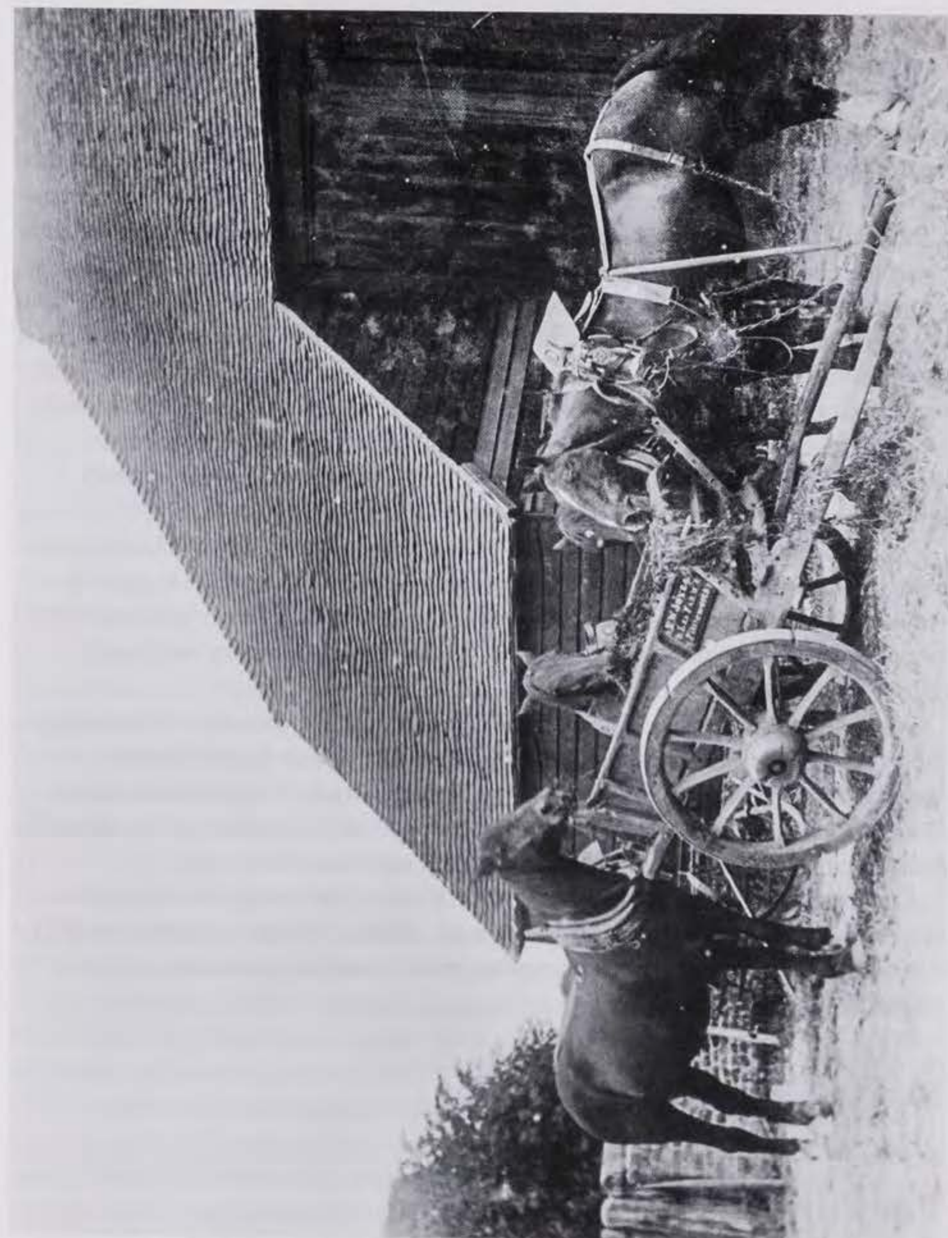
In the summer months, after working with the horses all day, Dad would get them back to the stalls, groom them, feed them, water them and thoroughly clean them. I would be on hand with the curry comb. At about six o'clock he'd turn them out of the stable into the field. They needed no second invitation. Once out in the field they'd run around and relax. They'd worked hard all day. Quite a spectacle, half a dozen big farm horses running round in the field. They'd stop out all night. Dad would have his meal, then go out into the garden; like everyone else, we grew all our own produce. Finally he'd walk down to the Swan, he, like his horses, had had a good day. The Swan would be packed with working men playing shove-halfpenny, darts, and cards. Like most working men Dad liked a drink but I never knew him drink to excess.

He'd be up again at five o'clock. A cup of tea, then down the lane to the farm. The cottages were a few hundred yards from the main farm buildings. The horses would be waiting for him and he'd open the field gate for them to go into the stable to be fed and groomed. No need to tell them what to do. They'd have an hour to digest their food; horses need time to digest before going to work. Dad would go off to breakfast at 6.30. By 7.30, winter or summer, he'd be with Hugh Retallack going over tasks for the day. Dad was a competent man and his boss would invariably go with his judgement. If, for instance, he reckoned a field too wet to be ploughed, Mr Retallack would concur.

Yes, the horses had individual names. I can't remember what they were now, but they did seem to answer to them. Names tended to be somewhat predictable farm to farm – Captain, Prince, Major, that kind of thing. All the Lea farm horses at this time came from the same dealer, I think he came from Barnham. Remember that a farm might have half a dozen horses but they wouldn't all be active at the same time. A mare might be in foal or an old horse might be kept on just for odd jobs. No, we didn't use the term "shackler", there wasn't a special term for the "odd job" horse. Horses would be bought over the telephone and the dealer would bring the new horse to us. Someone would go off with one of our horses for part-exchange and meet the dealer on the way. I've done this myself. Another job was to lead the horse up to the Parfoot brothers smithy in the village.



Lea Farm, Stopham in 1896.
A photograph by John Smith of Fittleworth.
The article 'No tractors in the 1930s' reflects life at Lea some forty years on.



Horses at Lea Farm, Stopham in 1896.
A photograph by John Smith of Fittleworth.

Henry and Jack certainly didn't see eye to eye but they were both first-rate smiths. Going back to Lea, I'd as like as not, run into George Attrill the roadman at work. Winter and summer, he'd cook his meal outside in the old-fashioned way with an iron pot over an open fire.

Horses could only be turned out into the field in the summer: from October to spring they would stay in the stables at night. Shorter days, however, didn't mean a shorter working day. Dad would be out with them all day, bring them back and clean them, they'd pick up a lot of mud working in the winter. He'd give them something to eat then go home for his meal. At seven he'd be back down the farm to groom them before setting off for the Swan. The horses' feed was of course grain from the farm, Lea, like its neighbours, was essentially self-sufficient. Feed was kept adjacent to the stables, and always clean and dry. It was no economy to be careless with the horses' feed. Often enough I've worked the chaff cutter, winding the great handle for the farm-grown oats. Carting was in the family. I understood the family were originally from the Brighton area.

My father was a good man at his job – no question about that. He had no wish to leave Lea and equally the Retallack brothers had no wish for him to go. He wouldn't be an easy man to replace, while Lea with its long view over toward the wetlands was an attractive place to work. The Retallack brothers, too, were considerate employers.

Sundays were special days. The Retallack family, while certainly not imposing their religion on their employees, were devout. They went to church every Sunday, probably at Stopham. No non-essential farm work was ever done on a Sunday, even at a crucial time such as harvesting. Dad, of course, had to see to the horses, but they didn't work and they probably appreciated the rest.

Lea was, at that time, a Leconfield farm. I remember seeing Lord Leconfield, but I didn't realise who it was until I was told. Even at the age of seven or eight I was a big strong lad and I'd be cutting the grass round the farmhouse or in the orchard.

Henry Wadey was talking to David Burden and the Editor.
(to be continued)

They'd wear full hunting gear

In the 1930's Mr Mays the chauffeur would drive Lord Leconfield out to the meet while the grooms would hack out to the venue. Usually at eleven o'clock. A hunt might be anywhere; high on the downs, out beyond Storrington, or reasonably local. Lord Leconfield's pack was a private one and the grooms directly employed by his lordship. My father had the task of going ahead to ensure that the gates opened and there was no barbed wire, hence he acquired the nickname 'John the Baptist' as one who went before the lord. The grooms all wore full hunting gear in order to merge with the hunt of which they were an integral part. Later in the day his lordship would have a fresh horse waiting, another if Lady Leconfield were with the hunt. The grooms would have a pretty good idea of where the fresh horses should be: they knew the terrain and knew, too, that the fox would follow the wind, enabling them to locate where the fresh horses were needed with some exactness. They'd also listen out for the sounds of the hunt. They weren't often wrong.

In those days before motorised horse transporters, it was the grooms' job to bring back the spent horses, either afternoon or evening. In winter, it could be pitch dark, the returning groom shining a lantern to warn traffic. This would be attached either to one of the groom's boots or to his saddle. I heard of a curious incident at Oldham Copse, just off Fox Hill, when horses were being changed. The fresh horse was a big white one. Lord Leconfield mounted the saddle, the horse reared up, threw off his rider and promptly dropped dead.

At some time in the 1930's the practice of hacking to the meet was discontinued, his lordship having commissioned Jack Yeatman to take the horses and hounds. They bought him a transporter and gave him the Bailliewick by the Cottage Hospital, with a large outbuilding opposite, at a very advantageous rent. Yeatman could carry on business as a cattle transporter, but his lordship had first call on his services. With or without hacking the Hunt meant a long day for the grooms. My father would take a bottle of cold tea and toasted cheese sandwiches. No tomato sauce in those days! Dad's main meal could be very late indeed. Many local boys and girls, myself included, would run with the hunt until we tired. We'd then make our way home from wherever we were.

The Hunt would jump ditches and hedges while barbed wire was forbidden on Estate land. My father always rode with a pair of secateurs and wire cutters. The offending tenant would receive a sharp letter from the Estate Office. Farm rents were comparatively low but they did assume permission for the hunt to ride virtually at will. Compensation could be claimed for damage to crops, the loss of young birds or of course, the depredations of foxes and ground damage. The practice was to keep as far as possible to the headlands.

When the grooms were back at the stables, the day was by no means over: the horses had to be cleaned, fed and brushed. It could be eight o'clock at least before Dad was back at the stables, let alone thinking of going home. If we were very lucky he might be back and finished in time to take my brother and me to the

pictures, more often we'd go up to the tack room after tea and help clean mud and dirt and wipe off the leathers.

Hunting went on after war was declared in 1939, stopping, I would guess about 1941. Henry Webber, the head groom, also lived in the stable complex. As the war progressed, the stables themselves tended to be used by the military for storage and the few horses that remained went down to Flathurst on the Horsham Road.

Bill Barnes, who, in the 1930's, had driven Lady Leconfield as required, and taught the Leconfield 's two adopted children to ride was called up, but Dad who had badly ulcerated legs caused by long years of breaking in horses, was declared unfit for service. By this time he was driving for his lordship but the shortage of petrol restricted Lord Leconfield's driving to essential meetings around the county and, with the stables largely dormant, Dad worked in the Gardens when Bill Barnes was called up. I was often up in the Gardens myself and would take Mrs Streeter her Sunday papers. She had a kind of aviary at the back in what, I believe, had once been an old dairy.

Mrs Barnes and her son Mervyn remained in the stables flat, and I or my brother Jim would sometimes stay the night up there to keep them company. I suppose I would not long have left school at this time. The war had brought great change: up to 1939 the stables had been fully occupied by named horses, many bought by Lord Leconfield on trips to Ireland; he would select them personally and have them shipped over. The agent for this was Harold Field, a corn and seed merchant who had premises where the motel is now just off the Westhampnett roundabout. Dad would sometimes meet Field at the meet, although the latter wasn't a regular supporter, and they would exchange notes about how the horses were progressing. Dad's involvement certainly didn't end there; the horses, when they arrived from Ireland, needed to be broken in and this was no light matter. He and Bill Barnes did this together out in the Park in front of the House.

With the war ending, Dad would resume as chauffeur and inevitably this would lead to a certain bond between master and employee. Lord Leconfield remained pretty fit until his last illness. At this time his lordship bought one of the then new Land Rovers and either Dad or Mr Cross would take his lordship out, say to Annie Blaker high on the downs at Tegleaze then leave his lordship to make his own way home with his dog, looking in on his tenants or his workmen on the way.

Jumbo Taylor was talking to the Editor.

The Petworth Society quiz – answers

1. George IV
2. Napoleon
3. A sunken world off the coast of Cornwall
4. Kensitas
5. Captain Webb
6. A fish
7. A waitress in a Lyons Corner Shop
8. An apple
9. Little John
10. He'd sold his mother's only cow
11. Alice
12. Black
13. During the Boer war
14. Primrose
15. Velázquez
16. Job
17. Venice
18. Perch, Pike
19. Gray's Elegy
20. One of the Three Musketeers
21. Nine
22. St Luke
23. Diogenes
24. Sherry
25. He never refers to her by her Christian name

George Dearling – a Sussex character

"Our most colourful local carrier was George Dearling who died in 1939. He lived with his brother William at Fogdens (now Boxfords), where their mother ran the little sweet shop, and where the children would buy four bags of sweets for a penny.

George had very defective sight and was obliged to place a coin into the corner of an eye to attest its value, but he relied chiefly upon feeling the coins, and he was seldom at fault. Many stories are told of his almost uncanny detection of people who attempted to take advantage of his affliction, either by extracting eggs or vegetables from his cart, or in the matter of change. Invariably George was one too many for those who tried detestable tricks upon him. He called at all the houses in Bury once a week, and never made a note nor forgot a commission. He helped his memory with coloured cards which he could see dimly. He first plied his living on foot between Bury and Arundel and picked up his various orders for a wide assortment of commodities, varying from elastic to joints of meat, and carried a basket on either arm.

After winning a bag of nuts at the village fair, he was able to buy a handcart. He sold the nuts by small handfuls, thus enabling him to buy the cart. He returned from Arundel with his wares at any time up to midnight, singing lustily, and often the worse for wear. On one occasion he upset his truck on Bury Hill where a barrel of beer he was carrying, rolled its own way down. Eventually Mrs Currie of West Burton promised to give him a horse if he would give up beer. He agreed and was eminently sober from then on. The years went by and the horse died, and he then had a donkey, and in his last years was back at the truck he had started with. He was never known to make a mistake with the goods or the money and continued to work until about the 1920s.

He was a typical Sussex character, with a pure and true dialect, demonstrating that delightful inflexion which often carried his voice into the upper register. His songs, of which he had an extensive repertoire, were also "real Sussex" of the good old fashioned sort. He was always singing and would sit at his cottage door singing "Buttercup Joe". Each Wednesday he collected the local paper from Arundel and delivered it on the way home. Many folks wished to have their papers as quickly as possible after publication in order that they might try and be the first to apply for an advertised job. The song George sang as he came down the hill into Houghton was "If I were a Blackbird", and on hearing this the villagers would come out of their cottages to meet him and collect papers.

After his death, his widow told how, one day, she was reading a book to him and the words "Content to live, not afraid to die" came into the story. He looked up sharply and said 'That's nice, I like those words. I'd like you to say that of me when I die.'"

Courtesy of Bury W.I. Centenary Book and Bury News.

This may be compared with the following recollection by Jim Turrell in PSM 26.

Farm employment was difficult in the 1930's and it was then that West Burton began to change as the old labourers moved away to work on larger farms – or in the town factories – and new people came in to buy the old cottages. An old village character was George Dearling. He had a kind of sweet shop cum private house at Fogdens where his wife Alice sold striped "bullseyes", but he really carried on business as a carrier. He'd go twice a week to Petworth and twice a week to Arundel with his box cart with wooden wheels. When his donkey died he couldn't afford another one but pulled a hand-truck. He would collect eggs and butter from local farmers for his inward journey; he might take in forty or fifty dozen eggs. For the return he would buy goods for you in town and charge you a penny or two-pence commission on each parcel. This meant that many people never left the village at all despite the absence of shops! George Dearling's eyes were upside-down so that he would look upward to look at the ground and turn his watch upside-down in order to read it. Except for the house with the jar of striped sweets West Burton never had any shop in my day.

John Crocombe, Society Town Crier

My acquaintance with John Crocombe goes back a good quarter of a century. I first met John when I had the shop and was delivering to Courtlea (now Rotherlea). John had come to Petworth, as I understood, after a career in teaching. My impression was that John helped out voluntarily at Courtlea, I may be wrong, but if he did it would certainly have been in character. John liked a chat and I gradually came to know him better. At that time I was a parish councillor and I ventured to moot the idea of reviving the ancient office of Town Crier. To employ a cliché, the lack of response to my suggestion "could have been cut with a knife". Jane Hunt, however, reporting for the Midhurst and Petworth Observer approved of the idea and featured it prominently in the next week's issue, possibly as an oasis of reportage in an otherwise uninspired meeting. Jane and I were not, however, entirely on our own. The subject came up when I was talking to John. The Petworth Society would take the initiative and advertise the (unpaid) post.

The sticking point, of course, was obvious: would anyone be brave enough, some would say misguided enough, to volunteer? "Advertise", said John. "And if no one applies I'll have a go".

From such tentative beginnings the old office was reborn. No one, of course, applied. Owen Bridger had located the historic crier's bell in a solicitor's safe, while Harold Cobby, representing the Knight family, formally handed the bell over to the Society. John insisted on his own distinctive "garb" without the usual trimmings. Petworth had a Society crier, no burden on the rates, and available for non-Society functions by arrangement. Years later, when failing health caused John to give up crying, Mike Hubbard would take over and the Society provide the full regalia.

Dealing with him as crier I had a much greater awareness of John and the rocklike religious faith that would stand him in such good stead during a long and debilitating illness. My enduring remembrance of him is of how generous he was with his time. If he could help anyone, he would, taking them to hospital, waiting for them and bringing them back. He helped us enormously with the Book Sale, itself a major exercise in logistics. Many a time John and I have driven to Northchapel after a sale with rejected books. When that arrangement changed he'd still help us put up and take away. Even when too ill to be active, he'd insist on bringing his car up for us to load and unload. His spirit never seemed to falter; when I visited him and Pat, John seemed able to laugh through the pain. Knowing John Crocombe, I always thought, was my privilege.

P.

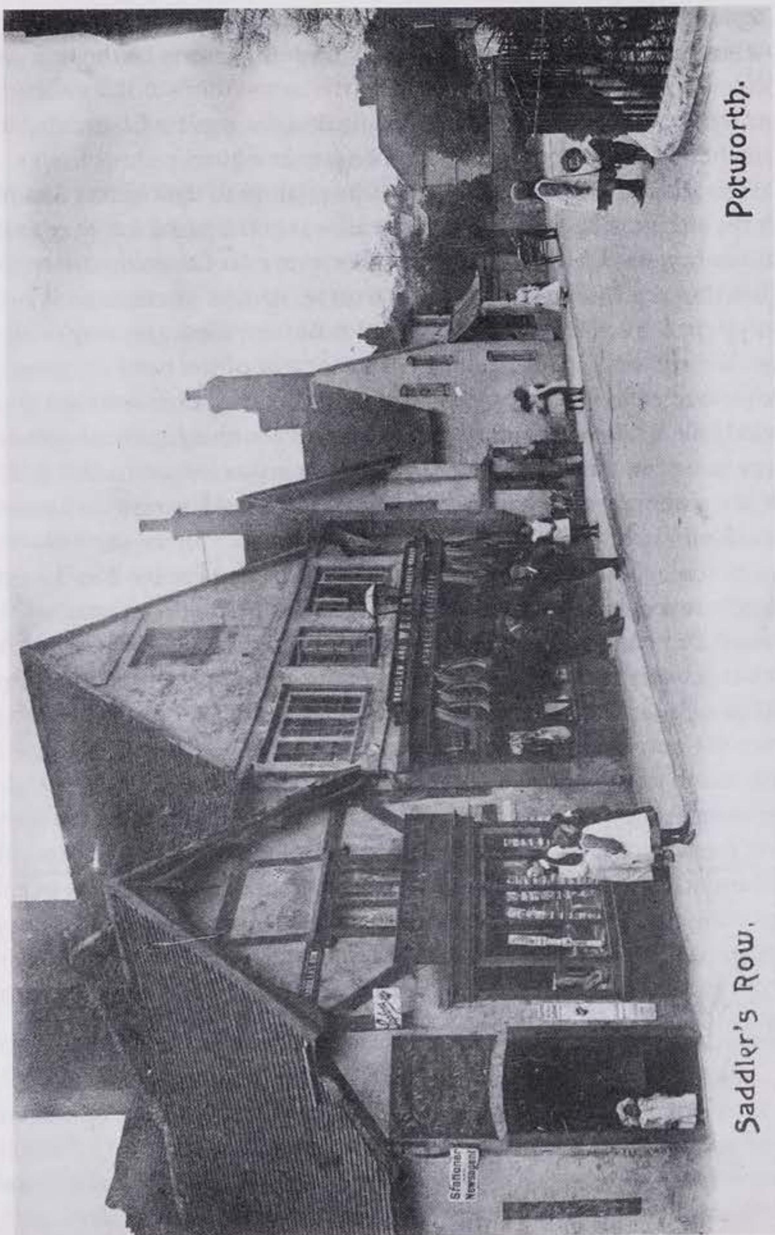
"Strictly" Petworth Society

Putney Bridge, not our usual way into London. The river at low tide, mud flats and rowers like insects on the shining water. Then the massed high street fronts, ethnic food outlets seeming to predominate. It could be Battersea again. Hammersmith Broadway seems smaller, more congested, than I remember it, going to school on the 27A bus. Left into Shepherds Bush road and one house cum "hotel" after another. At each corner a vista of terraced houses stretching away. Shepherds Bush Green seems to have shrunk too, the geraniums still in blazing late October scarlet. The huge block of the Westfield Centre rises before us, a kind of temple to the consumer. Then the BBC television centre, itself, in transition. Much of the operation is moving to Salford Quays, partly to regionalise / decentralise, partly to cut the property portfolio, partly driven by the need to replace what was once cutting edge technology. News programmes will move to a smaller centre near Regent Street. Over the course of the tour our two genial guides have Pip and Margaret reading the news from autocues, Betty giving a weather report, Janet vanishing into thin air, and the hapless Chairman far behind Janet and Carol in pressing the red buzzer in a quiz.

The studio for "Strictly" seems to bear little relation to the coming Saturday although the steps can be seen. Jules Holland was in last night and they're clearing away. Studios are let out by a BBC holding company, profits going towards the licence fees. No one hires a studio longer than is "strictly" necessary – it's corrosively expensive. The technicians are not BBC employees – they're all freelance. We see a studio for Room 101 and are told of the need for a live audience for comedy. 300, accommodated in retractable raked seating á la Leconfield Hall. Then out into an open centrepiece with a gigantic fountain. It doesn't operate now, but it did once. So much time was lost in the WC's. It's the sound of the rushing water our guide explains. You could bring a car in too but that's forbidden. H.M. The Queen, Jeremy Clarkson in a model car and an intransigent U.S. superstar share the distinction of having broken the "taboo".

We're now in a dressing room occupied last night by Coldplay, but over the years occupied by such luminaries as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. It's unlike its theatrical counterpart in that television requires very specialised make-up which needs to be applied elsewhere. A "rider" is a list of requirements which can range from the outrageous to the mundane. "Celebrity" status does not necessarily mean an inflated ego but it can. A life size figure on the Pope, the complete redecoration of a room for a forty minute stay, then return to normal, but not on the licence fee – or simply a packet of ginger biscuits or a bowl of fruit, ivy for adherents of Kabbalah. The tour, well over a hour, seems gone in a flash. Then exploring the Westfield Centre and the trip back, the sun pouring into the coach. Pigeons thick on a park green. Witley, Chiddingfold, squally rain lying in the furrows and shining amongst the green corn. What will Andy and Annette come up with next year?

P.



A rather more expansive view of Saddlers Row than on our cover picture. It may be a few years later in date. G. Pellett has the shop on the corner. The postcard carries no attribution.