

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

No.150, December 2012



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Petworth about 1910.
A postcard by H. Earle, Petworth.



PETWORTH SOCIETY ACTIVITIES SHEET

Winter Programme – please keep for reference

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Please read "In search on the 'unmissable'" in the current Magazine. It gives some idea of our current thinking.

Monday 10th December:

The 22nd Garland memorial lecture:

Peter Jerrome: St Edmund Smiles – Petworth Fair revived.

An evening with (hopefully) a Christmas flavour.

Entrance £1 to include refreshments. Sponsored by Austens Home Hardware.

Monday 28th January:

Visit to the Turner Exhibition at Petworth House. See form below. To include guided tour of the Exhibition and a two course dinner. Meet Church Lodge at 5 o'clock. Tour begins at 5.30. Supper 6.30. Numbers are limited, more so than for the Annual Dinner and acceptance will be on a 'first come' basis.

I should like to attend the **Turner Exhibition and Dinner** on **Monday 28th January 2013**. Cost – **£25.00**.

(PLEASE ✓) I should like to bring a guest (maximum 1) and enclose £
Cheques made payable to **The Petworth Society**.

Name(s) (BLOCK LETTERS) _____

Address _____

Telephone Number: _____

Please send this slip and cheque payable to **The Petworth Society** to:
P. Jerrome, Trowels, Pound Street, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0DX

No telephone orders, please.

BOOK SALES:

Leconfield Hall. 10am – 3pm. Second Saturday in the month.

- **December 8th 2012**
- **January 12th 2013**
- **February 9th 2013**
- **March 9th 2013**
- **April 13th 2013**

Books to donate? Call **Peter** on **01798 342562** or **Miles** on **01798 343227** or bring them to the hall on book sale day.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS:

Monday 25th March:

ROHAN McCULLOUGH in

MY DARLING CLEMMIE

BY HUGH WHITEMORE

Monday 29th April:

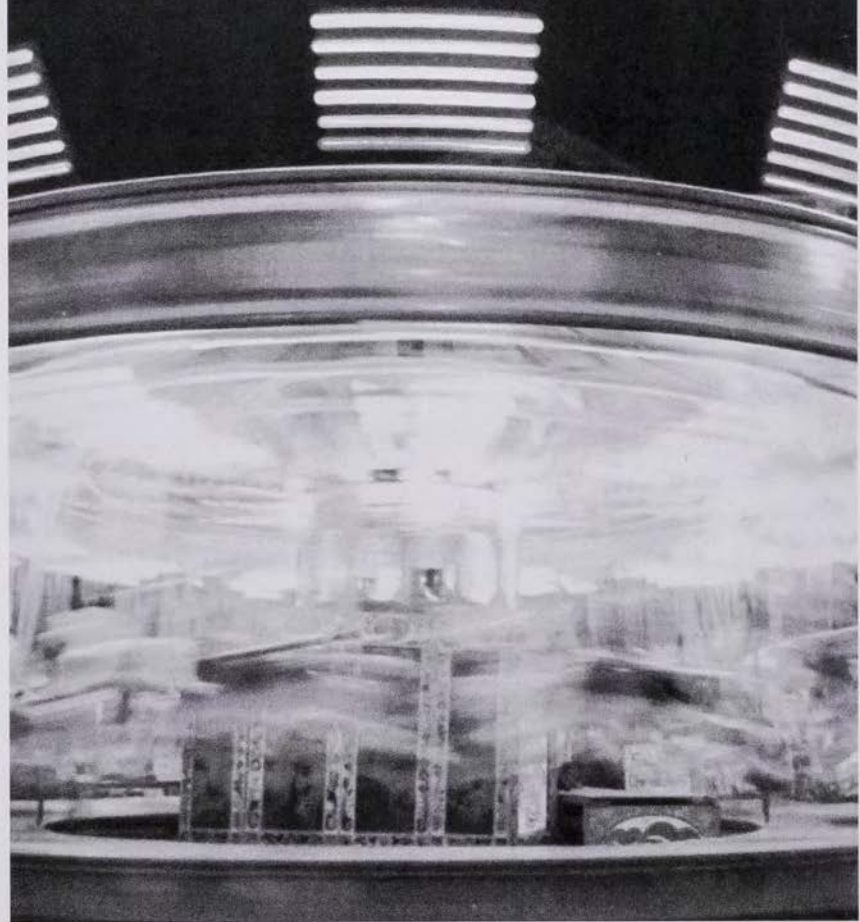
Return of the Allsorts!

Peter

ANNOUNCING:

PETER JERROME

St Edmund smiles



Cover in full colour.
Original photograph by Tony Whitcomb.

St Edmund Smiles is a collection of reflections on Petworth's ancient November fair originally published in the quarterly magazine of The Petworth Society. It chronicles the quarter century and more since the Society rescued the fair from apparently terminal decline in 1986. Possibly the oldest surviving street fair in the south of England, Petworth has an uneasy present and a problematic future and *St Edmund Smiles* mirrors the dilemmas posed by all modern fairs. As an in depth study of a particular (if unusual) modern fair the book is probably unique. Certainly it will have a wider than purely local resonance.

120 individually numbered copies. Coloured cover £12.
Publication early December.

ORDER FORM

To the Window Press, Trowels, Pound Street, Petworth GU28 0DX. 01798 342562.

Please supply copy(ies) of *St Edmund Smiles* at £12.00 each.

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NO.

I enclose a cheque payable to the **Window Press** for £

- I will collect at the Book Sale on 8th December.
- I will collect at the Christmas Evening/Launch on 10th December.
- I will collect from Trowels.
- Please send by post. I add £2.50 for post/packing.

Please ✓

Peter Dead Drunk (2011) is sold out but we have 6 numbered copies remaining of *We Don't Do Nostalgia*: Petworth Cottage Museum 1996 to 2010 at £12.00. Also the 2 volume history of Petworth. Special price £50.00. Please enquire by telephone.

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NEW MEMBERS

Mr & Mrs R. Bence, 1 Market Square, Petworth, GU28 0AH
Mrs K. Coughlin, White Cottage, Sandy Lane, Watersfield, Pulborough, RH20 1NF
Mr R. Evans, The Coach House, Pound Street, Petworth, GU28 0DX
Mr & Mrs C. Heywood, 70 Wyndham Road, Petworth, GU28 0EQ
Ms N. Jones, Daintry House, East Street, Petworth, GU28 0AB
Mr D. Mansell, 65 Rusper Road, Horsham, RH12 4JB
Mr B. McIntyre, 70 Clapham Common, North Side, London, SW4 9SB
Mr R. Thorp, 339 Cherry Row, Petworth, GU28 0AX
Mrs L. Kane, 28 Chantryfield Road, Angmering, BN16 4LZ
Mrs D. Smith, Bourne End, Nutbourne Road, Nutbourne, Pulborough, RH20 2HD
Mr & Mrs R. Stiles, 67 Sheepdown Drive, Petworth, GU28 0BX
Mr & Mrs Bound, Tanyard Cottage, Cylinders Lane, Fisher Street, Northchapel, GU28 9EL

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.

CHAIRMAN

Mr P.A. Jerrome, MBE, Trowels, Pound Street
Petworth GU28 0DX.
Telephone: (01798) 342562.

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Mr K.C. Thompson, 18 Rothermead, Petworth
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Telephone: (01798) 342585.

HON. TREASURER

Mrs Sue Slade, Hungers Corner Farm,
Byworth, Petworth GU28 0HW.
Telephone: (01798) 344629.
With Mr A. Henderson.

COMMITTEE

Mr Stephen Boakes, Lord Egremont,
Mrs Carol Finch, Mr Ian Godsmark,
Mr Philip Hounsham, Mrs Celia Lilly,
Mrs Anne Simmons, Mrs Ros Staker,
Mrs Deborah Stevenson, Mrs Patricia Turland,
Mrs Linda Wort.

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

Mr Henderson, Mr Miles Costello,
Mr Thompson, Mrs Simmons,
Miss Callingham, Mrs Stevenson,
Mrs Angela Azis, Mr Turland, Mr Boakes
(Petworth), Ray and Valerie Hunt (Byworth),
Mr P. Wadey (Sutton and Bignor), Mr Bellis
(Grafham), Mr Derek Gourd (Tillington and
Upperton), Mr Poole (Fittleworth),
Mr David Burden (Duncton), Mrs Brenda Earney
(Midhurst/Easebourne).

SOCIETY SCRAPBOOK

Mrs Pearl Godsmark.

SOCIETY TOWN CRIER

Mr Mike Hubbard
Telephone: (01798) 343249.

For this magazine on tape please contact
Mr Thompson.

Printed by Bexley Printers Limited, Unit 14,
Hampers Common Industrial Estate, Petworth
Telephone: (01798) 343355.

Published by The Petworth Society which is
registered charity number 268071.

The Petworth Society supports The Leconfield
Hall, Petworth Cottage Museum and The
Coultershaw Beam Pump.

WEBSITE

www.petworthsociety.co.uk

FRONT COVER pencil drawing by Jonathan Newdick of the barn at Hallgate Farm, Byworth (detail). Private collection. See "Quiet audacity" on page 6.

Chairman's notes

Pressure on Magazine space is now so severe that we will probably have to hold over three more or less regular features: Old Petworth Traders, George Garland's Sussex Books and Thoughts from a Small Shop. These, with other material, will have to appear as space becomes available.¹

By the time you read this two of the celebratory Garland memorial lectures will have been given – the third, introducing the new Window Press book *St Edmund Smiles* is on Monday 10th December. There is no specific Christmas meeting this year. We hoped to have the Allsorts but it proved impossible to find a night when the hall was free and the Allsorts had an evening available. They will now appear in April.

After 14 years our treasurer Andy Henderson feels it is time to assume a rather less active role and Sue Slade is taking over, only the seventh treasurer in the Society's nearly forty years. Book Sale regulars will already know Sue and the transfer will be a measured one, taking full effect in March. Andy has asked for "no eulogies." I can only say that Andy (and Annette's) contribution over fourteen years is so evident that any "eulogy" from me would be superfluous.

Peter
14th October

1. Janet Austin's further thoughts on the old wash house (see PSM 149) are one of several other casualties. We would hope to have this in PSM 151.

In search of the "unmissable"

Your committee has been giving a lot of thought to the monthly meetings, an institution going back to the 1970s. Most local organisations would, I think, settle for our attendance figures, but our discussions reflect an increasing realisation that to draw a significant audience on an inclement winter night, you do need to offer something a little different. Our tentative suggestion is slightly less regular meetings but to try for the "unmissable". It's not a cheap option. We shall have Rohan McCullough back in March with her one-woman "Clemmie" Churchill show and, as I have said, the Allsorts return in April. What of January/February always a tricky season? We have a visit to the Turner Exhibition at Petworth House, to include a "Turner cocktail" on arrival, a guided tour of the Exhibition and a two-course dinner. I have negotiated a special price of £25 inclusive of the £10 admission charge, but there is a limitation on numbers. Full details and booking form on the Activities Sheet.

P.

St Edmund Smiles

St Edmund Smiles is a collection of Magazine reflections on the fortunes of Petworth fair since the Petworth Society rescued it from apparently terminal decline in 1986. Petworth may well be the oldest surviving street fair in the south of England and the book mirrors its uneasy present and problematic future. As an in depth study of one particular (if highly unusual) fair the book will probably have a wider than purely local resonance. There will be 120 individually numbered copies, initially available to Society members on a pre-publication basis prior to the official launch at the talk on the 10th December. See order form on Activities Sheet.

P.

Quiet audacity

BOOK REVIEW

Jonathan Newdick. *Out of time?* 156pp. ISBN 9 780057 240407. £24.95

This book seems to appeal to professors of English. Alexandra Harris (University of Liverpool and one of BBC Radio 3's 'New Generation Thinkers') has called it 'endlessly absorbing with [a] spirit of exploration and experiment.' Maggie Humm (University of London) has likened its drawings to those of Andrew Wyeth and to the photographs of Bernd and Hilla Becher in the Saatchi collection.

Newdick's works which Humm refers to are reproductions of 68 pencil drawings, made over a period of about two years, of vernacular buildings most of which are in the Petworth area and which will be known to many readers of this magazine. But most people won't see them in the way that Newdick does, for these are not just drawings of buildings in the landscape – anyone with a bit of training can do that – these encapsulate the spirit of place in an indefinable way. As Alexandra Harris writes in her foreword to the book, topographical art has a reputation for playing rather safe but Newdick's compositions are made with what she calls a quiet audacity.

She is right. Another aspect which sets this book far above others of the genre is that each of the drawings is accompanied by a piece of text, often written on site as the drawing was being made. These texts are highly personal and their theme is often memory, although Newdick is too skilled a tactician to confuse this with nostalgia. Each is a piece of poetry, mostly observational but at the same time autobiographical. A low flying Chinook will take his thoughts to Afghanistan while at other times his mind will drift back to his father or a primary school teacher, both in their different ways clearly loved.

Newdick has written a long introduction which he begins by likening his task to that of the artists working for 'Recording Britain', a scheme set up during the second world war to record buildings which were thought to be under threat from enemy action. There is an obvious parallel: all you need to do is replace 'enemy action' with 'time and change'. He argues that although it is sad, sometimes heartbreaking, you can't keep every piece of the past. Harris agrees, saying that 'rural England has no duty to be a museum of its past'. It's controversial, and so it should be. He also, at some length, explains his way of working and in a post-script suggests why it is that almost without exception barn conversions are ultimately demeaning and insulting both to the original building and to the landscape in which they lie.

This is a beautifully produced book which should be on the shelves of anyone with an interest in, or a love of traditional buildings and of the Sussex landscape.



Jonathan Newdick.
Redundant stable near Petworth (detail) from *Out of time?* Private collection.

Thirty-eight years of PSM or moths in the pew cushions

"I have long seen the Bulletin as a potentially valuable organ for making available information about Petworth and I think it right to be adventurous at this time." So I wrote in a new look "Bulletin" in February 1979. It was Issue 15 and the Bulletin had already run for four uneasy years from 1974, slowly evolving from an original four page information sheet. The new venture was unlike anything Petworth had seen before and it certainly touched a nerve. Society membership rose quickly, but there were cautionary voices. "Very good but Petworth is a small place. You'll exhaust your material in a couple of issues." Possibly, but the main priority would be the next Bulletin.

In a sense the revamped Bulletin was simply functionary: the Society had done some work on Petworth's history and wanted to make it available. I had an article on Round the Hills and another on Poachers in Petworth Park in the seventeenth century. For PSM 15 I had also an article by Mrs Clarke of Bedhampton, recently sent to Petworth Library and containing traditions surviving in the Milton family, owners of the Stag Brewery in High Street but long departed the town.

"Eccentrics and personalities abounded in the area, one hundred years ago . . . In Angel Street there lived an old lady who had thirty cats, each with their own little chair and dish, with which they sat with her at table, napkins tied around each neck, and each with their own little bed, in neat rows in a bedroom." It could have come straight out of the Tales of Old Petworth.

Uncertain as it was, a receptacle for traditions of this kind was something George Garland could have used in the 1930s. How much might have been preserved which is now lost for ever. The time, perhaps, had not been right. Bulletin 16 was essentially a matter of consolidation. There was the poachers article, while Jumbo Taylor could write of the reinstatement of the old Stag Park stew ponds then nearing completion. We had too a brief piece by Mrs Helme from Wisborough Green recalling the Tudor Revels in Petworth Park in 1938, pictorially covered extensively by George Garland but over-shadowed in popular memory by what was to come. Put together with various other smaller pieces we had Bulletin 16.

Looking back, 16 seems an assemblage of what was available rather than a coherent whole. We were beginning to attract material of quality: Keith Smith's article on Petworth Station springs immediately to mind. I still felt, if dimly, a certain lack of cohesion: something that would draw disparate elements together. Having said that, the new look Bulletin, complete with cover by Jonathan

Newdick, was creating interest and its own momentum, particularly with Petworth "exiles" among whom it was being passed around. Thirty years and more on, it still is. A correspondent from Northampton, Mrs Winifred Wadsworth, was moved to write of her childhood at Grinsteeds on the London Road, the family having moved there in 1922. "I think it was 1927 when the first buses ran from Haslemere to Petworth: Mother was out with the cows! one day when the bus passed her going towards Haslemere: sometime afterward, there was a poor woman hurrying along the road and, as she passed, she asked Mother if the bus had gone. Mother said it had. 'About half an hour ago.' 'Do you think I shall catch it?' was the next question."

We were still very reliant on historical items and on re-printing vulnerable material from other sources. A long article on the early history of Egdean church was an original for No. 20 as was another on the 10th Earl of Northumberland's equestrian expenses in 22. Not, on the face of it, to everyone's taste but we still had a certain latitude. Warts and all, the new look Bulletin was "Petworth" in a way that was different to anything the town had seen before. 22 also carried an essay by Trudy Foley on attempted arson at Petworth's November fair in 1830. Not originally written with the Bulletin in mind, it was clearly well worth preserving. Mrs Wadsworth meanwhile continued with her reminiscences. Thirty years on I can remember looking at 22 and feeling we needed something more. Mrs Wadsworth's contribution was coming to an end. The vein of recollection was clearly attractive but grudging, like a reluctant tap. Perhaps people felt there was a certain presumption in burdening others with what was their own personal experience.

Despite this Ena Lee was stimulated to write a short piece to ask if there were still memories of the Misses Austens little private school at Box Grove in Pound Street. "I left in 1908 to go to school in London but my two sisters Peggy and Irene spent all their school days at Box Grove . . . In our break time if the weather was fine, we were allowed to go into the garden and play croquet, go on the swing and play "He" in and out of the double hedge."

Other slight pieces of this kind suggested that seven years on from its hesitant first issue the Bulletin was beginning to tap a communal memory. So a drawing by Charles Orr-Ewing of the 1930s character "Pickle" Hammond in December 1980 elicited a "Pickle" anecdote from Phyll Sadler the following March, while a year later "Pickle" was recalled by Betty Bevis who picked up a wisp of tradition on Petworth's elusive clock-makers. Had James Taylor's workshop really been in the large first floor room over the Lombard Street newsagents?

We were still happy to use previously published material: Alison McCann's substantial article "the Smugglers and the Press Gang" came from West Sussex

History. I remember my first contact with Jacqueline Golden came when I wrote to her as editor for permission to re-print. It would be a decade or more before our paths crossed again, this time at the Cottage Museum.

If history was the Bulletin's mantra, I still felt the composition a little brittle. Bulletin 24, however, would be determinative for the future: instead of responding to incoming material, it was now time to take the initiative. It was again a diffident and uncertain beginning. A television crew had been to Petworth House where there was an emerging interest in the Servants' Block. If the documentary, given the ephemeral nature of the medium, is now forgotten, its consequences for the popular, but still fragile, Bulletin were far-reaching. Cilla Greest had been interviewed for the programme as one who remembered, more perhaps than remembered, had actually experienced being a housemaid at Petworth between the wars. "Why not see what Cilla has to say?" Not, on the face of it, an unreasonable question or an improbable idea. George Garland had died in 1978 and there was a renewed interest in his work; the Window Press had produced a book of his photographs from the 1920s² and we had another in preparation. The extensive captioning owed everything to those who had been part of that receding world of the 1920s.

The problem was that I didn't know Cilla, by all accounts a retiring lady. I did however know Melicent Knight who was a friend of Cilla's. "Well, Peter, we can only try." Cilla, predictably, was doubtful. In the first place she had nothing to say and would be wasting my time, while she would be thrust into a limelight she neither sought nor desired. "I really don't think so, but I'll see what my husband says when he gets home. Come back in a week, but I don't think I will." When Melicent and I returned after a week, Cilla was still very dubious. We agreed that if she didn't like the piece it would be scrapped. In fact it was the first of perhaps five hundred separate pieces. While Bulletin would not change to Magazine until No. 50, direct recollection would give the coherence that had been lacking.

Thirty years on, with the present issue, PSM 150, the Magazine is a vast storehouse of recollection echoing hundreds of different voices. Some material hangs together, such as domestic work at Petworth House, or the evacuees, but much is simply random. The Salmon Tin Rovers at Colhook, Yankee Ayling's temperamental donkey in North Street, the District Quoits League, the coming of the silent films, spearing rats with bayonets in the trenches of the Somme, the band playing for dancing on grass and the grass deadening the sound, children picking rose-hips for Lady Leconfield in the Pleasure Grounds, the Centenary Service at the Ebenezer Chapel, the fall out from the 1987 hurricane, toads being crushed on the London Road, breathing a prayer into one's top hat on entering St Mary's; or "Auntie" saying to her husband, "There are moths in the family pew

cushions. What are you going to do about it?"

It seems invidious to mention individuals but a few can stand for all: Ethel Place, a centenarian and quite deaf, painstakingly writing out what she remembered of Petworth in the last years of Queen Victoria, I never met her. Kath Vigar enlivening a series of magazines with her childhood in Tillington as Nellie Dunton would do with life at old Westlands. Ethel Goatcher on Dunton Post Office a hundred years ago or Greta Steggle walking round Petworth shops in 1920. Marjorie Alix's masterly study of Eagers the outfitters between the wars, Susan Martin's outline of the chequered life of Rose Jane Boxall, or Miles' two dialect questionnaires.

And the panorama of local life that stalks these pages. Mr Pain, the rector of Lurgashall, having every village child physically touch the church weather vane before it was put back during the restoration of 1907. Petworth Scouts walking with their trek cart to West Hampstead in 1920 before embarking on an excursion to the war-ravaged fields of Northern France, Mrs Cownley the housekeeper at Petworth House and her scrapbook, the provincial aura of the rhyme:

Of Petworth Streets the most elite
Assuredly is Lombard Street
For in its precincts left and right
There dwell a Bishop, Earle, and Knight

Or fire patrol in the 1940s "hard work [from Burton to the Sutton Crossroads] a lot of walking and it could be very cold in winter." Through these pages flit figures like Elgar, T. E. Lawrence, Queen Mary or Clunn Lewis the showman and sometimes we have the harsh breath of a different world entirely.

"It was the 28th March and we had been travelling since the 10th of February. Siberia is vast and we were beginning to realise how vast. As last we were released from the wagon. Not everyone had survived but our family was intact. Now it was to be open trucks. Smoke was rising from them . . . Each individual truck ran on its own power, gas generated by birch chips. No, I don't understand it. I didn't understand it then and I don't understand it now."

Or simply voices: "Remember the pictures? Heavens no. We were kept too busy to look at pictures. I do remember Henry VIII though." Gladys Brasington who left Petworth House in 1921. "Dear Mr Pitfield: they tell me that I chose too difficult a book for Sunday School, the children not taking to Jeremiah. Therefore the book has gone back . . ." Carey Knyvett, newly curate at Petworth, in December 1912, later Bishop of Selby. "We are not going to have a Rectory Fete. After all these years of fete-ing, it is time we gave it a rest." Valentine Powell,

rector of Petworth 1931. "I remember playing once at Tillington fete when an old man collapsed. It upsets you when that happens. When the bandmaster was told he just said 'I'm not surprised the way you lot have been playing.'" George Baxter reflecting on Petworth Town Band between the wars.

Since PSM 100, which appeared in 2000, the Magazine has been heavily subsidised by the book sales initiated by Miles Costello. Like it or not, and perhaps unconsciously, the sales have left their mark on the fifty issues that have followed. You simply cannot deal with the flood of books we "process" every month without this rubbing off on the Magazine, which has now a "literary" flavour it might not otherwise have had. The quarterly Book Sale report picks out some random item from the swiftly passing torrent for a little further consideration, while the current series on George Garland's Sussex books offers an insight into a wider Sussex world.

If purely historical articles are less frequent than in earlier days, recollection remains a key ingredient, operating, as it does, at an optimum remove of sixty years and more. Where once we could pick up echoes of the last years of Queen Victoria, the spotlight is now firmly on the 1940s and early 1950s. Even the period between the wars is fast disappearing from view. It may be that, as culture becomes more uniform and modern communication dissolves old boundaries, recollection will seem all too parochial. Perhaps, what we already have is irreplaceable.

A completely unlooked for by-product of editing the Magazine, is that the Editor, or his persona, becomes something of a public figure, at least to his readers, particularly if as the mantra "contributions are as welcome as they are rare" usually means it's down to the Editor not simply to put the materials together but see they're there in the first place.

Nowadays the Magazine has a confidence and a coherence that has evolved over years. It is structured by variation on a framework of recurring features such as Keith's accounts of the monthly meetings, the Book Sale report, the Society walks, the Museum report and the Crossword. Others continue over a set time like Dora Older's Diary or the current series on George Garland's Sussex books. If it was hard work thirty years ago, the Magazine now has a momentum of its own, the key being to have the next Magazine comfortably in mind before the new issue appears. If the Book Sale came to an end, PSM couldn't be financed without a suicidal increase in subscriptions; with additional finance it could almost effortlessly be larger than it is. Its finances remain somewhat hand to mouth. The window of opportunity will not, I suspect, be open forever.

One last point. Most writing consciously or otherwise, is directed to a particular audience. The Magazine addresses itself to those, who, whether

living in the town or, as is often the case, at some distance from it, have a connection. Within this limitation we have, however, a wide range of tastes and interests. Selection of content, or "Magazine mix" isn't something we take lightly but we can't always get the balance right. Some items have a minority appeal but are not to be discarded simply for that reason. No. 150 seems more of a landmark than No. 100. Here's to No. 151.

P.

1. *Grazing the roadside verges.*
2. *Not Submitted Elsewhere* (1980).

Three walks

1. Ebernoe Common walk – 11th July

On the face of it, a really attractive prospect, a guided tour round the Nature Reserve with Petra Billings from the Sussex Wildlife Trust. Wednesday afternoon instead of Sunday was unusual but the real problem was the weather. A sodden July and apparently incessant rain. If this affected our numbers, it didn't seem to worry Petra. Meeting in the Car Park under leaden skies we were soon in the churchyard to see the last of the early summer flowers: common spotted orchid, seeding cowslips, the light mauve heads of prunella or self-heal. Such places can be a last refuge for plants of the old hay meadows.

Off down the familiar winkle stone steps to Furnace Pond and the perennial difficulty of relating this apparently quintessentially rural scenery to its sixteenth and seventeenth century industrial past. The trees, yew and beech especially, are less primeval than semi-natural and reflect the activity of man. We move through the woods to pick up the path from the Church. Periwinkle and monbrietia are two indicator plants for previous habitation. Golden Knob stood once on the bank to the right. Further on Petra points out a wild service tree, its bark like a chequers board. Not a rare species but yet hardly a common one. We bear right up the broad track that will lead to Siblands but before that we turn off into a glade.

Here is the hawthorn under which Ebernoe schoolchildren would sit to have their lunch. Sixty years and more ago now. The ground is bumpy with anthills. Are they inhabited? Petra taps the grassy top. If there's anyone at home they'll come to the door. No one answers at first but finally some sentinels appear. The tower's inhabited alright. It can be home for the blue butterfly, the ants feeding off

secretions from the caterpillar and in return offering safe refuge.

We squelch; it really is that wet and it's mid-summer. Rush and water-pepper are indicator plants for damp ground but how wet do they like it? Rush was used for lighting; Petra peels away the pith to show. A free-standing oak in an open situation grows out rather than up, another, less fortunate, has had the bark stripped from it but refuses to die. The intention is that the decaying trunk become a home for beetle and woodpecker. Soon we're skirting Sparkes to reach the area where formerly cultivated arable land is being allowed to revert to woodland. At last the sun comes out. We splash on through the flooded woods to emerge opposite Golden Knob. Thanks very much Petra.

P.

2. David and Ian's Ambersham walk – 19th August

Down the narrow Ambersham road off the A272. We stop not far short of Heyshott Crossroads and pull into the Car Park. We've been here before and it's hot. There's no one about. This time we cross the road; clearly we're to explore the western segment of the Common. The shade under the trees as we walk the paths through the bracken is more than welcome. After a while we come across signs of habitation, well-weathered brick neatly laid into the track and two houses. A lady tells us that we're at Little London and that the bricks have been put down to make access easier. We might have thought the work rather older. We pass under one of those monumental brick railway bridges so familiar a mile or two down the line in New England and think of the army of navvies bivouacking on site that would have built it. A stagnant stream, with an unhealthy metallic blood red tinge and we're moving toward South Ambersham. We pick up a tarmac road which, David says, winds on to Midhurst, it's originally a cattle road.

Soon we're in South Ambersham, dozing through a somnolent Sunday afternoon. Except for the lady at Little London, we haven't encountered a soul. Hydrangeas in the sun at Little Todham. And where's North Ambersham? Is there such a place? When I get home I look at Kelly's Directory for 1907 and it appears that North Ambersham and its southern counterpart were both outliers of the ecclesiastical parish of Steep in Hampshire, incorporated into Fernhurst and Easebourne respectively in the time of William IV. In 1907 South Ambersham boasted three farmers, a beer retailer and a blacksmith. By 1918 the Directory

notes that the identities of the beer retailer and blacksmith had changed and that Lord Cowdray had replaced the Earl of Egmont as principal landowner. In the early 1930s the wandering puppeteer Walter Wilkinson¹, passing through, observed, "South Ambersham turned out to consist of one house, one inn, a barn and shop open only two days a week." He did not consider it populous enough for a show.

We pass a workshop where polo mallets are made and repaired. Perhaps, someone suggests, the proprietors are plying their trade at some distant event. Ambersham is a polo centre but the game is also played at Knepp and elsewhere. Or perhaps they've got the day off – it is Sunday after all.

Up a shaded slope then sharp left. The deeply rutted lane still has standing water. We pick up the tarmac road again. A bridge over a stream, then a bridge over the river. We bear off left. Docks are in full rich red seedhead. There are fishermen below us on the river bank but only the rods protrude above the pink balsam. A line of alders mark the opposite bank. The footpath runs through a field of flourishing clover. Back into the woods. David and Ian seem to know where they're going. I certainly don't. All of a sudden, we're back with the cars.

P.

1. *A Sussex Peepshow* (1933) page 90.

3. John's Northchapel postman's walk – part 1

Bill Carter's morning postal round was rural. It was also a walking one. No doubt it would have been timed for walking, not cycling, and paid accordingly. From the road outside Northchapel Village Hall we look up over the A283 to where the Post Office was, the very beginning of the round. Bill's grandson John is going to recreate the first (Pipers Lane) part of the round, with the second, more rural, part to come next spring. John should know the route; he'd accompanied his grandfather more than once during the war.

Pipers Lane runs from the junction with the A283 right through to Balls Cross, but the postman's route veered off at Lower Frithfold across the fields. We are soon at Hortons on the corner, with Garlands, then a farm cottage, on the right. Peacocks, now a private residence, was then a working farm. To our right again is the oddly named "Midhurst" radar station, apparently crucial for incoming aircraft.

At this point the postman would have gone left to a couple of cottages across the fields, but we approach Mitchell Park along the road, farm, cottages and a



Pipers Bridge 1934. See John's Northchapel walk.
Photograph by George Garland.

sepia pond with ducks. From here the postman would walk up to Dale Farm, but we simply look up the road. Here too is the bridge that was the scene for the iconic Garland photograph of George Stevens with his donkey. 1934 I think. This must be the bridge, although it's probably been reconstructed since. There's a big dip to the stream below which comes down from Shillinglee. The bridge is overshadowed now with overhanging foliage; there was a much clearer aspect in 1934.

We move on, a Lancaster bomber flies over, something Bill Carter would have seen often enough in the 1940s. Two former farm cottages, and the road turns as sharply as it did at Hortons. There are boxes for Chilfold and Upper Frithfold, no doubt as there were then.

John recalls walking across to Plaistow from here, also seeing a German plane crash into these fields, being, as a boy, carefully kept away from the scene. We continue along the road to Lower Frithfold before doubling back. It's a nice day, plenty of opportunity for the postman to reflect, plenty of time too, in indifferent weather, for him to get very cold and wet. Perhaps the bluebells will be out in the woods next spring. Thanks very much John.

P.

Neglected but not quite forgotten. The September book sale

I wrote earlier of the Book Sale's role not only financially, but in terms of Magazine content. Once a quarter I pluck something out of the maelstrom of books that pass through my hands every week of the year. A conscious self-indulgence? Perhaps. Possibly too, a feeling that while so much that disappears through the salvage collectors' trap-door deserves oblivion, this is not universally true.

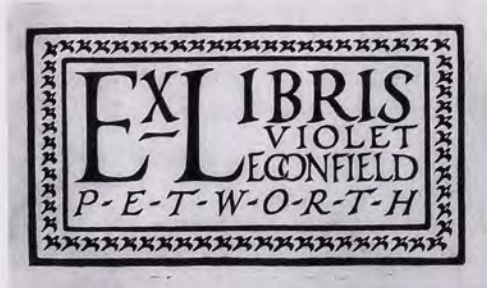
Readers of these notes may recall that a year ago I drew attention to my re-reading of Stella Benson's *Tobit Transplanted*.¹ The author had transferred the biblical romance of *Tobit* to the Far East. The same writer's "The Little World"² is 1920s journalism, articles reprinted from various magazines and chronicling Stella Benson's experiences travelling in the United States, Japan and elsewhere and her life married to a civil servant working in China. Her sharp wit, it seems, occasionally threatened to compromise the gravitas of her husband's position. Here is an oblique view of a teeming life outside a Europe that, ninety years on,

appears itself unrecognisable; an underlying China, even now, perhaps, half alive if submerged under the weight of Communist orthodoxy, here, too, is Indo-China under French Colonial rule. "Time is nothing to Annamites. One . . . had a phantom watch tattooed upon his wrist. No doubt it successfully registered all the time he needed."

Working temporarily in a Chinese hospital she writes of the almost endemic civil wars in China. No one understands, but they are none the less vicious for all that. She has watched the dead bodies floating in the Yangtze, face downward "in procession, but not in triumph." She has attended the ceremonial burning of a mountain of confiscated opium and still looks back on a different world. "Few tragedies in life are so shocking as the inevitable bursting of the green balloon bought at the gate of Kensington Gardens."

A particularly vivid chapter, if perhaps the shortest in the book, is the account of an excursion from the boat taking her back to the Far East – a picnic in Aden (Modern Yemen). The land is so parched that the dry desert seems to imitate water "shimmering on all sides but without reality . . . there is no water really and its semblance intensified the glare." The trippers come across an "embryo zoo", featuring three gazelles, four dog-faced baboons and a porcupine. "You can distinguish the rainy season from the dry season by the fact that during the former, distant thunder can be heard twice a week."

Neglected but (perhaps) not quite forgotten. What's it got to do with Petworth? I thought you'd ask that. Well, the copy I have carries the bookplate of Violet Lady Leconfield, coming in with a small cache of books from the late Elizabeth Wyndham.



And the September sale? I nearly forgot. Have you ever tried refilling the fiction at 10.25? Don't.

P.

1. Rehabilitating Tobit's dog. PSM 146 December 2011.
2. 2nd Edition with illustrations by the author. Macmillan 1925.

The Society Dinner – 5th September (or confessions of a failed quizmaster)

Well, it was a magnificent evening. The usual full house, a chance to meet old friends, talk to new. 6.45 for the Old Library visit, 7.15 otherwise. Courtesy of Lord and Lady Egremont: the library isn't usually open. And it's clearly something everyone wants to see. By 6.30 the foyer is packed. Do all 88 or so want to see it? It would almost appear so. 34 for the first visit, then a similar number. I'd been told a maximum of 30. And Andy Loukes in fine form, the Old Library's not to be hurried though. Time for the rest of us to admire a Turner sunset from the west front steps. Plenty to talk about. If dinner's a little late, well the sun's still shining.

Eventually I join the second group. Up the grand staircase and right with a glance at Thomas Phillips' massive equestrian portrait of the Prince Regent made for the visit of the Allied Sovereigns in 1814. Then into the Old Library. I'd last seen it during the restoration. The struggle against death-watch beetle and ultimate victory. An incommunicable smell of leather and dust. Some books are extremely old, a few relatively new and there are very many of them. Confronted with books on this scale and of such an age "Kindle" and such novelties seem suddenly almost an irrelevance. Some volumes, says Andy, were collected by the 9th Earl, confined in palatial style in the Tower by James I. A century later the imperious Charles Seymour would press the work on. Andy's an enthusiast, revelling in being on Turner's home ground. The artist was encouraged to use the room as a studio. The magnificent east light window, with the view now to the desteepled church tower. Turner's 6" and 9" sketches were done from memory, in reflective mood and reimagining the east window. And the friend who learned the Earl's secret knock: the artist did not encourage visitors. He liked to work very early in the morning and take the rest of the day off fishing.

Off down the stairs. Time for another look to the sunset park and we're off to dinner. A jovial informality is part of the very spirit of the evening. However have I come to be doing the quiz for a second year? Do we need a quiz? Are the questions old-fashioned? I'd rather be answering than setting. It's difficult for a quizmaster to avoid seeming pedantic. Fortunately no one seems to take it all very seriously, more a kind of knockabout entertainment. A top score of 14 out of 24 suggests I haven't got the mix quite right. Perhaps readers who weren't present can do better?

P.

Petworth Society Dinner Quiz Wednesday 5th September

FIVE LOCAL:

1. Where would you exercise your muscles?
2. What would you do with your unwanted possessions?
3. Where would you find a miniature seaside town?
4. Where might you find baskets full of cabbages?
5. Where might you lose your temper?

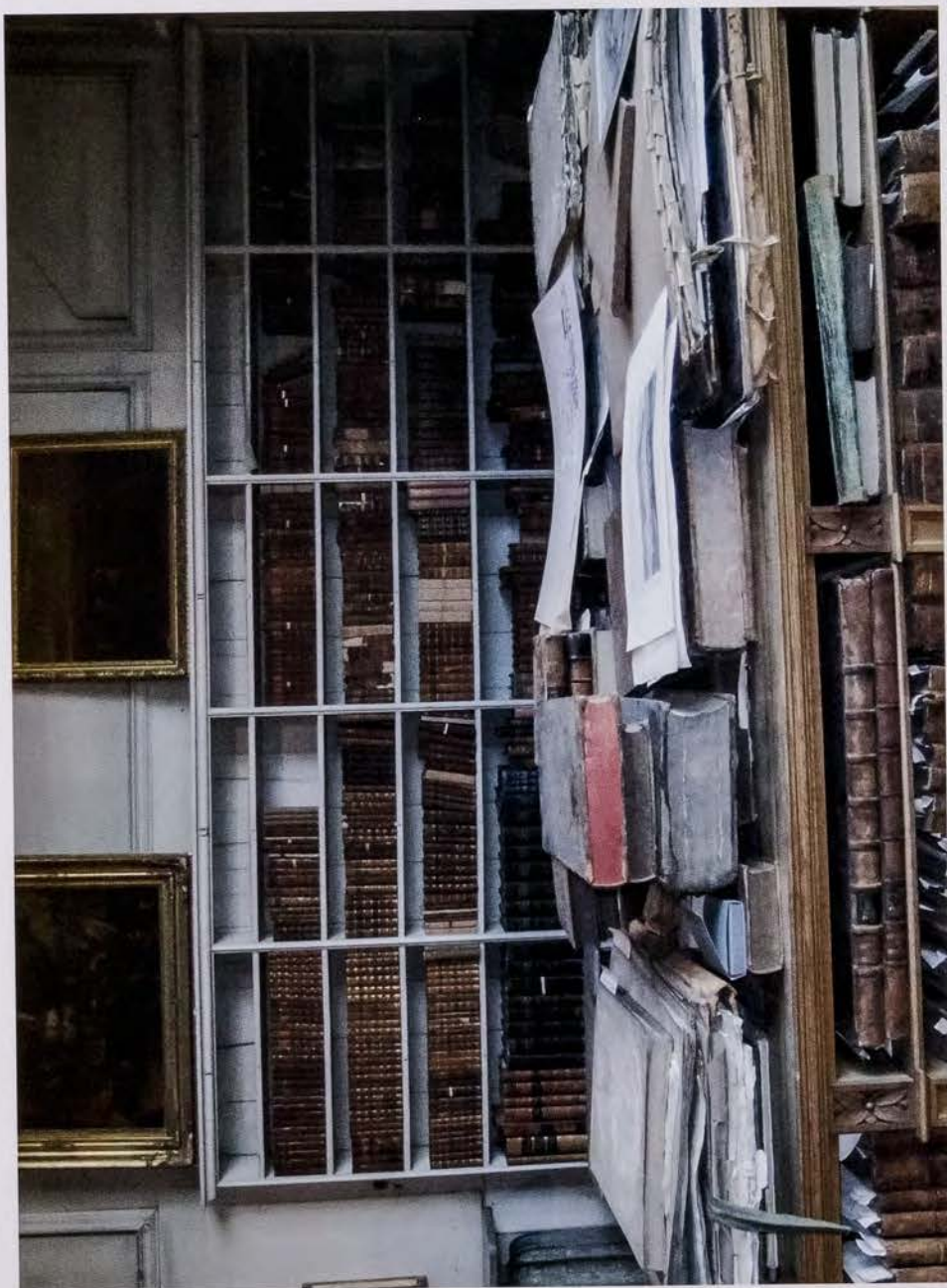
TWENTY GENERAL:

1. Who was carried away by a roc?
 2. Of whom was it said, "She sometimes counsel takes and sometimes tea"?
 3. Who wrote 'The Speckled Band'?
 4. On whose tomb is written "Here lies one whose name is writ in water"?
 5. What did Fatima find in the room Bluebeard kept locked up?
 6. Who was the last English king to fight in a battle?
 7. What order of monks was called the Black Friars?
 8. What was a prairie schooner?
 9. What is a calumet?
 11. Who saw the vision of the dry bones?
 12. Of what nationality was Queen Alexandra?
 13. How many sides has a bee's cell?
 14. Who founded the Society of Friends?
 15. What is a young hare called?
 16. What animal is connected with the Marquis of Carrabas?
 17. What king is associated with the feast of St. Stephen?
 18. What is the next line of "Come into the garden Maud"?
 19. With what historical event would you connect the song "Marching through Georgia"?
 20. Why did Circe turn Ulysses' companions into hogs?
10. Tie-breaker: (not used).
Of what nationality was Prince Henry the Navigator?

With acknowledgement to an old Petworth W.I. Quiz (1-5) and
George A. Birmingham: Can you Answer this? (1927)



Railway bridge at Little London. Ian and David's August walk.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark as are the following six.



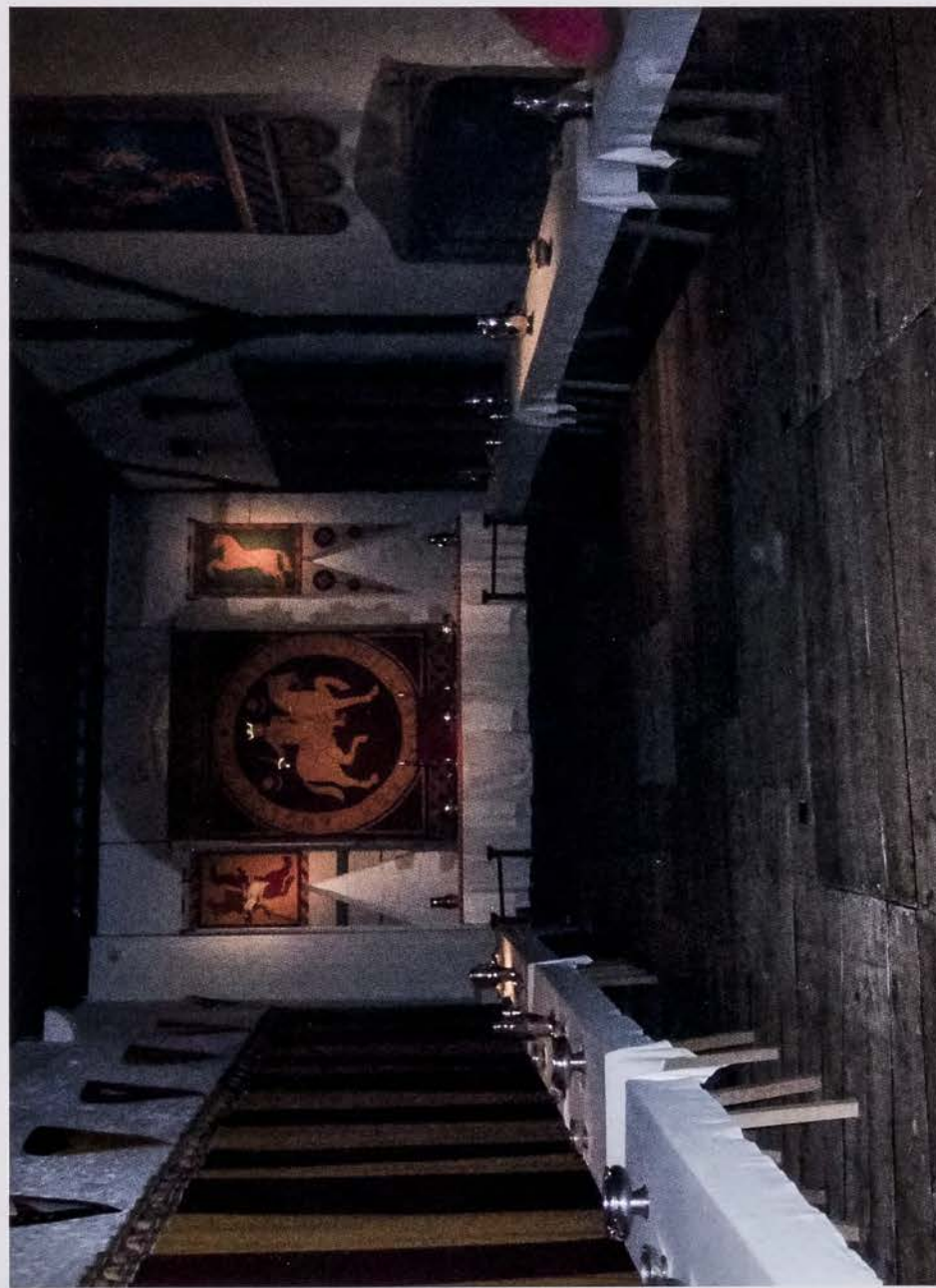
In the Old Library at Petworth House.
5th September.



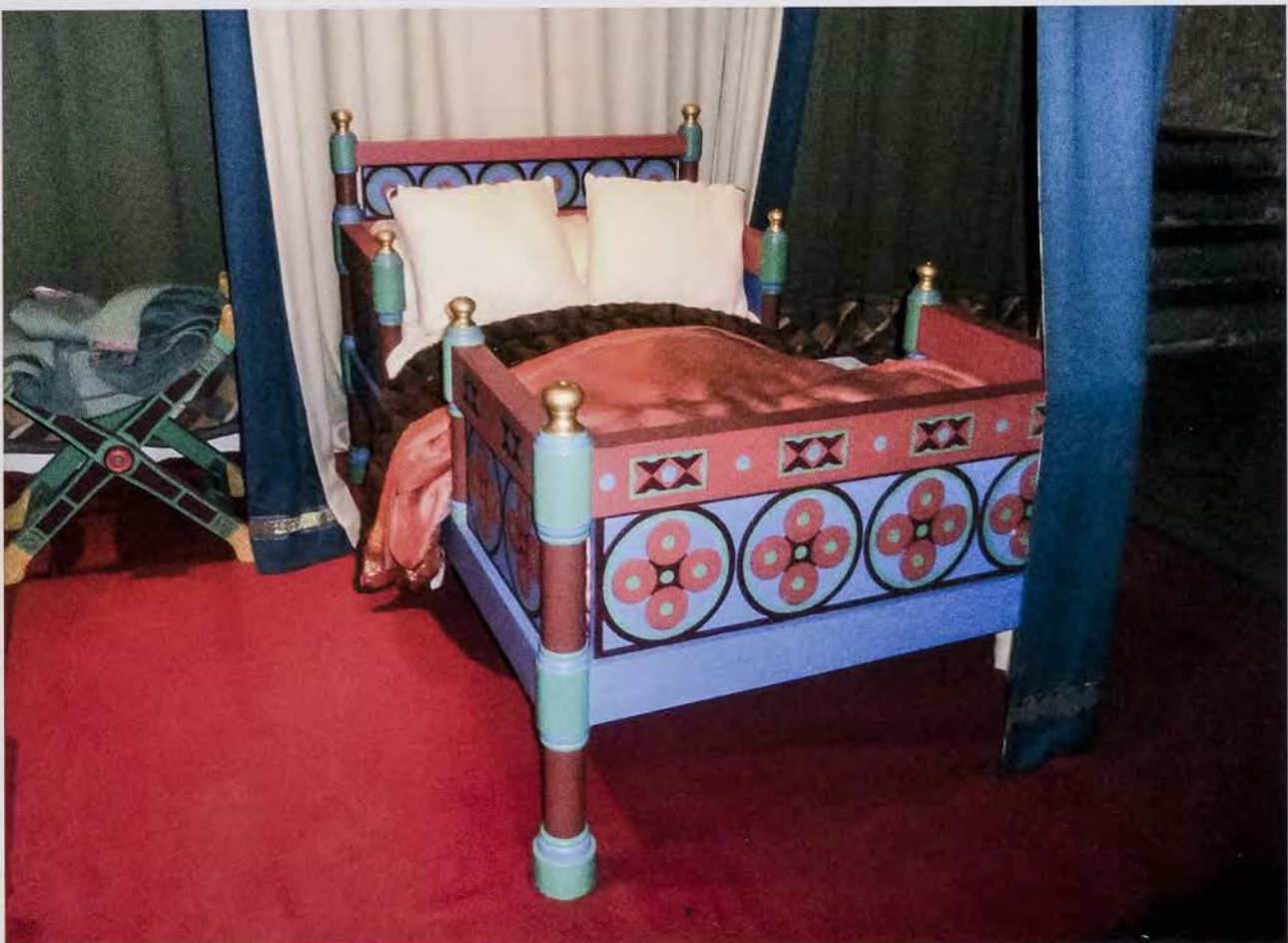
Quiz time at Petworth House.
5th September.



Dover Castle – 11th September:
Ground floor of the castle.



Dover Castle: the Banqueting Hall.



Dover Castle: a bedroom:



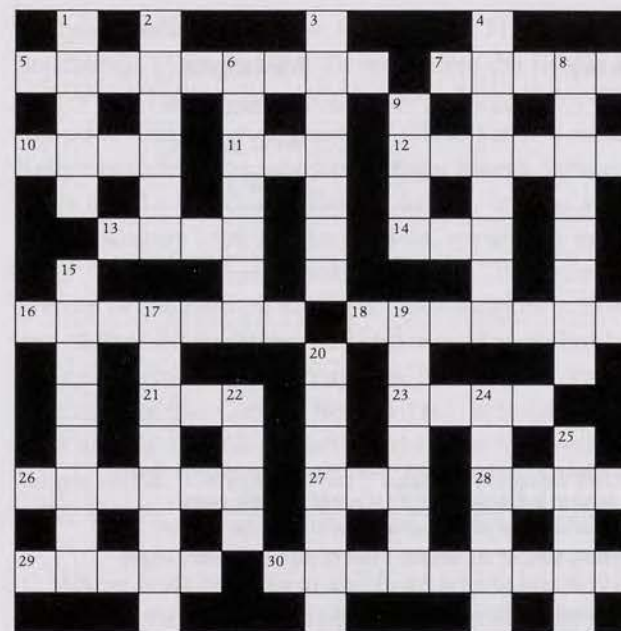
We've lost most of them!

John Carter's Northchapel postman's walk at Pipers Bridge in September:



Our jovial crier, pictured by a German visitor at the Treve Cottage Art Show in the summer.

PETWORTH SOCIETY 2012 CROSSWORD



- 9** How it looks when the Yule log's burned away (4)
15 & 25 Daily mail delivery – John Carter led us on the old Northchapel one (8,5)
17 Nickname of early member of the Austen family (2,6)
19 Had a Christmas drink or two (7)
20 David and Ian led a walk from here to South Stoke (7)
22 Number of ladies dancing a few days after Christmas (4)
24 Thomas -----, philanthropic Petworth businessman (6)
25 See 15dn

ACROSS

- 5** Extracts from her WWI diary have been in recent issues of PSM (4,5)
7 & 30 Our chairman inebriated? No – a Window Press publication! (5,4,5)
10 Near the bank – a memorial to John Grimwood (4)
11 Have it between the teeth to get control (3)
12 One who spoke as the shepherds watched their flocks (6)
13 Control water in a weird way (4)
14 Yes – (O.E.) (3)
16 Petworth Society's annual stall on Fair Night (7)
18 How one should tread the streets of Petworth (Window Press 1990) (7)
21 Not much of it this summer (3)

- 23** Come on – don't beat about it (4)
26 Miles explained there used to be many more than one of these "in the town, in the town"! (6)

- 27** The gist of the matter (3)
28 Cross threads make the dog bark (4)
29 Incidental remark (5)
30 See 7ac

DOWN

- 1 & 2** Crack codes and travel to find where the Society went in September (5,6)
3 Miss Potter, brought to life by Rohan McCullough (7)
4 Show disapproval of agent with fish! (8)
6 Generous (7)
8 Skilfully (8)

SOLUTION DEBORAH'S SUSSEX CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 7 Gridshell, 8 Speed, 10 Novium, 11 Anvil, 12 Deer, 14 Oak, 15 Oats, 17 Shelley, 19 Stadium, 22 Blot, 23 Spa, 24 Amex, 27 Royal, 29 Wigwam, 30 Adorn, 31 Lavington

DOWN

- 1 Prior, 2 Admire, 3 Whim, 4 Slindon, 5 Spiv, 6 Belletout, 9 Jack, 13 Rye, 15 Old, 16 Shulbrede, 18 Let, 20 Tea, 21 Hardham, 23 Silo, 25 Engage, 26 Manor, 28 Yard, 29 Weir

Petworth ambulance 1955-1960

Tel. 01243 544178

email momo121bj@btinternet.com

23/9/2012

Mr P A Jerome MBE
The Petworth Society
Trowels
Pound Street
Petworth
GU28 0DX

Dear Mr Jerome,

I am a retired Sussex Ambulance Service Paramedic, and I have been researching the history of the first aid and ambulance services in the county of West Sussex for many years, compiling a large archive of both written and photographic material along the way. My intention is to publish a local history book on the subject, a part of our social history largely ignored by up to now.

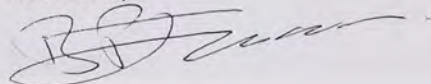
I thought I had found most locations that had an ambulance until I recently came across a reference in a West Sussex County Council report from 1960 that stated that there was an ambulance stationed in Petworth between the years 1955 to 1960. The report by the counties Medical Officer for Health states that the ambulance carried 688 patients in 1959 and travelled 18,134 miles in the process, so I can only assume that it formed part of the 'front line service' operated at the time by the voluntary aid societies under an agency agreement with the county council. I have been unable to find any other record of this, but a ex Midhurst ambulance man thinks that this was the case, and that he believes the ambulance was operated by the Red Cross Society and kept in a building, possibly a commercial garage premises, close by the present roundabout at the junction of the A272 Midhurst Road, the A285 Station Road and Pound Street.

I understand that many members of the Petworth Society have an interest in the history of the town, and I wonder if any of them has any knowledge relating to 'the Petworth ambulance' that would aid my research.

I realise that this is a long shot, but perhaps you would be so kind as to pass this request on to your membership at one of your meetings or via your newsletter.

I look forward to hearing from you in the, hopefully, not to distant future.

Yours Sincerely,



Brian Janman

45 Elmcroft Place
Westergate
Chichester
West Sussex
PO20 3XL

The Ewens family in Tillington

William Ewens was born at Hambledon, Hants in 1845, his wife Emma at Southwick, Hants in 1854. At some time the couple managed the Horse and Jockey pub halfway between the two villages. Possibly for financial reasons they moved to Tillington as tenants of Glebe Farm, a mixed farm with a dairy business. Kelly's Directory for 1907 has William Ewens, farmer, with an address at Hill Top, while in 1918 Mrs Emma Ewens, farmer, appears at the same address. William died in January 1909, Emma lived on, apparently in Tillington, until she died in 1931. The couple are buried together in Tillington churchyard, almost at the bottom of the path on the right. Two daughters, Beatrice and Ellen born in 1875 and 1878 respectively married and moved away, but Lillian who died unmarried in Kent just before the war, may have lived on at Tillington with her mother.

It appears that George, born in 1881, managed the farm throughout the 1914-1918 war but the loss of parts of the farm for development made the business no longer viable. George started a haulage business with a steam engine and steam roller but the enterprise failed, he eventually became a farm bailiff.

1. Where was Glebe Farm and from whom was it rented?
2. Did Emma continue living at Hill Top after the sale of the farm in 1920?
3. Has anyone any recollection of the Ewens family?

Please contact Peter or direct to:

Mr John Taylor, 38a Compton Road, Brighton BN1 5AN.

“Do you have your gabion with you?”

Dover Castle – 11th September

Dover's a fair distance, a coach journey of over two hours, and Dover Castle covers a fair area, measure it by space or in historic time. The Roman pharos or lighthouse still stands, used in later years as a belfry for the ancient garrison church of St Mary in Castro “the finest late Saxon building standing in Kent.” The sheer scale of the site means that the “land-train” put on by English Heritage is as much a necessity as a convenience.

I don't think that in the current phrase I quite “got my head round” everything. There's a lot to take in over some five hours, including a leisurely meal in the sunlit Regimental Institute (NAFFI) restaurant, and a later (unscheduled) stop for

ice cream. Arthur's Hall had an audio-visual introduction to Henry II, builder of the castle, his feuding sons and the collapse of the extraordinary empire he had somehow cobbled together. It is suggested that the lavish castle he built at Dover would offer pilgrims on their way to the shrine of Thomas á Becket of Canterbury some comfort. It was at least a partial atonement for his role in the prelate's death. The tunnels excavated at this period were used by troops loyal to King John in 1216-7 and much enlarged almost six centuries later when there was a perceived threat of invasion by Napoleon. Trafalgar made the preparations unnecessary and the tunnels would not be fully needed again until 1940. Here at Dover was the ancient prison of the Cinque Ports: those who owed the king money were detained at his pleasure – effectively until they paid up.

Wherever you go there are views of sea and port, and hazily, the coast of France. It's a glorious day, the town of Dover is spread out beneath us, but it has to be said that the wind blows shrewdly round the old buildings. Our friendly land-train drivers point out the luxurious 1857 barracks for young officers, built to receive the Prince of Wales: he never came.

No visit to the castle site is complete without the sixty minute "immersive" Operation Dynamo exhibit. "Rescue from Dunkirk," master-minded from Dover, but we didn't find time for the Underground Hospital visit, while the sixty minute Battlements Walk never came into consideration.

Oh and the gabion. There's a huge piece of ordnance in the NAFFI restaurant. It has a curious blue green sheen. Despite its ascription to Queen Elizabeth it's older than that, a gift to Henry VIII from his friend Maximilian of Egmont. Made in Utrecht, it somehow ended up in Cornwall during the English Civil War. A print shows it in action, the gunners protected by high wicker baskets filled with earth, gabions. It's the sort of word you long to drop casually into the conversation, but it's not easy to see how. Thanks very much Andy and Annette.

P.

"Twirling the dolly."

Hot day at 346

It's the hottest day so far of this uncertain summer. August 18th will, they say, be the hottest day of the year. The sun beats into the Museum garden; soaked earth and predatory snails seem a distant memory. The hot weather could make for a quiet afternoon. First a decision on the fire. How often have I repeated the old

mantra "Without the fire the cottage is dead. No cooking, no hot water. The fire is the very spirit of 346." True enough, but it's already stifling in the parlour. The marbles in the solitaire board gleam in the sun. The paradox of 346 is that in winter when the fire would be at its most evocative and it's dark and cold outside, there's no one to savour the atmosphere. In seventeen years of stewarding I've never previously failed to light the fire, but today I have to say it wouldn't be fair on the visitors. I'm not happy about it, but that's it.

Time to dead-head, cosmos, calendula, African marigold, dahlia. It needs doing most days. One thing about clary, the pink, white and mauve bracts look after themselves. It's indisputably old world and the bees (and our visitors) love it.

But soft! That familiar tentative peering round the corner from the brick path. Father, mother and two children, both old enough to be enquiring. Father's finding it very hot outside let alone taking in the parlour. A couple of rather anaemic runner beans are posturing in the scullery bean cutter. The temptation is irresistible: Sophie has a turn of the wheel. Amazingly the contraption works. I've always been rather dismissive, talking airily of mangling the beans. In fact it does work although you'd need to destrung the beans first and it cuts rather small. Someone later suggests that runners in 1910 were not as long as they are now.

Even fireless, it's still stifling in the parlour. The family eventually make their way upstairs – it's fresher up there. The next visitors are from Worthing but having a few days at Boxgrove. They're joined by two ladies from Somerset. They ask about Mary Cummings and her family. I touch on those old far off things that are now part of the perceived fabric of 346, evolving all the time, half history, half conjecture. Even after seventeen years it takes a little while to warm up – like the first uncertain flow of a stiff tap. "You'd twirl the dolly round in the copper," I nod as if I'd always known this – in fact I've never thought about it before. The door's wide open on the garden. With everyone for the moment upstairs I can look out on the annual coreopsis in their yellow black-centred bloom. Have I time to get out the hose?

P.

Dora Older's diary (8): 1918

[I have used the majority of Dora's entries which are very sparse: no doubt reflecting Dora's long hours in the shop. Dora's brother, Arthur, is still in Palestine with the Royal Sussex Regiment. I have regulated the use of capital letters. Ed.]

Tuesday Jan. 22nd 1918

We heard from Arthur today he is on the north side of Jerusalem. He has passed through Bethlehem.

On the Sunday before Xmas Day they had a Church Parade in a Church that the Kaiser had built on the Mt of Olives.

Arthur was one of the few to go into the Garden of Gethsemane.



Easter Sunday March 31st 1918

Special childrens service in Church for gifts of flowers and eggs for military hospitals.

Thursday April 4th

Dance in the Swan Room – gorgeous affair – Canadian soldiers came over from Bramshott camp.

Food rationing: ½lb sugar, ¼lb butter or margarine, 5ozs bacon or butcher's meat, 4 x 5ozs coupons in one week. 5ozs supplementary ration given to manual workers.

[Dora pastes in samples of the various coupons but the precise amounts allowed are not entirely clear.]

Monday July 8th 1918

The 4th Sussex Regt has been sent to France from Palestine. Arthur has not come he is left behind in a trench mortar battery.

Monday July 15th 1918

Food ration books came into force today.

Monday October 21st

War rationing and economy agree with me for on being weighed today I find I'm 9st 3lbs.

Shops are closing now at 6 p.m. Fridays 7. Saturdays 8 since the 14th to save gas.

No lights in the streets at all this winter.

Monday Nov. 11th 1918

The Germans signed the Armistice at 5 o'clock this morning for fighting to cease at 11 o'clock.

11 o'clock 11th day 11th month (19) 18 = 51 the exact number of months the war has lasted.

This glorious news reached Petworth at 1 o'clock when church bells were rung and flags flown.

Thanksgiving service was held in the church at 7 o'clock.

Saturday November 16th

The Germans have surrendered their Navy to the Allies.

Sunday November 17th

Had a letter from Arthur – he is in hospital in Egypt recovering from an attack of Malaria.

Courtesy Mr Alan Older

Duncton memories

Pop Davies wrote to me recently from Bridgend in response to the interview with Don Wallbridge which appeared in the June issue of the magazine. Pop has included a few of his own recollections of growing up in Duncton between the wars and I have reproduced that part of his letter in full. Miles Costello.

The article by Don Wallbridge brought many boyhood memories, I went to school with Iris Court, she lived opposite the school, her father owned a lorry I think, we sat 11 plus together, three passed, Iris Court, Iris Naldrett and myself. Iris Court left for higher things that left just two of us, our parents couldn't afford to send us to grammar school so we stayed on with Miss Botting, she did try to get us to the Petworth school but transport wasn't available.

The view of Duncton Hill was one that I was very familiar with, leaving school at Easter 1935 at the age of 14 I started work at Coultershaw Mill as a flour packer and apprentice miller, a 48 hour week, Monday to mid-day Saturday. Starting wage was 7/6d, take home pay 5/9d, leaving home at the Dog Kennels at about 6.30 am, finishing work at 5 pm and then the long slog up Duncton Hill, getting home at about 6 pm.

Pre-war the Downs were used for army exercises and for a schoolboy these were exciting times. The fields at the bottom of the hill were full of tents and soldiers, the cottage was small and the family growing bigger, Joe was the eldest followed by Bill, Arthur, a daughter and a baby I think. By now we had moved to

Sutton and our house had three bedrooms so Mum agreed to let Bill lodge with us, he worked for the council I believe. Bill and I joined the T.A., at the outbreak of the war I stayed with the Royal Sussex but Bill got drafted into the Recce Corp in Burma. He survived the war and married Gladys Cole who lived in the converted railway carriages in Duncton.

Just a couple of small points, if I remember my mill training a bag of flour was 140 lbs, two bags to a sack, and so a sack of wheat was 280 lbs.

Pre-war Sandy Peacock would collect the flat accumulators for Rapleys at Heathend to re-charge.

I could rattle on but I think that it is time to stop. Finally the peculiar patch of grass at the top of Duncton Hill, in my day the story was a sailor had been murdered there on his way to Portsmouth.

Pop Davies

“We sighted Alexandria . . .”

Older members will well remember Miss Heath at Ebernoe House, a leading figure at Ebernoe and in the district generally for many years until her death in 1970. The Peachey estate at Ebernoe had been bought by Lord Leconfield in 1912 but his lordship had declined to buy Ebernoe House itself. It was eventually bought by the Elin family, Russia merchants, who would be adversely affected by the revolution of 1917. The long Heath family connection with Ebernoe came quite by chance; Admiral Heath liked to motor out into the country to his brother at Coldharbour near Dorking and saw that Ebernoe House was for sale. The Admiral himself was on the point of retirement and still living at Portsmouth. He made further enquiries and went ahead. It was 1923.

Miss Heath took the keenest interest not only in local activities, but in London too. She pioneered a Girl Guide group in Ebernoe, starting with seven girls. Camp cost 17/11d of which each girl was expected to contribute nine shillings. The group was soon reduced to five, as village girls left to go into service. It was a problem that would continue. One of the Guides' jobs was to clean up after Horn Fair. In later years Miss Heath would run the Kirdford and Plaistow Guides. In London she took an active part in slum regeneration in the Lambeth area and her annual Girl Guide camps would always contain a number of London girls.

With George Wakeford, Miss Heath was instrumental in forming the Wisborough Green Bee Keepers' Society and George is recorded as saying that he sold his first hive of bees to Miss Heath for half a crown, carrying the hive full of



Miss Heath.

bees on his back across Ebernoe Common to the house. A lifelong supporter of Ebernoe church, Miss Heath was at one time church warden and treasurer. Church fetes were held in the grounds at Ebernoe House and she is remembered as standing on the steps, ringing a hand bell and making announcements. During the war she drove an ambulance in the London blitz.

Although Ebernoe School closed in the early 1950s, the Heath tradition of care for the village children continued with the annual Christmas party at Ebernoe House. It was immediately after one of these parties that Miss Heath died suddenly in 1970.

The following reminiscence offers a glimpse of her life before Ebernoe and makes a fascinating contrast with Leslie Ernest Sprackling's account of army life in Egypt see "Is your father's name Dick?" (PSM 135 page 25) and Arthur Older's letters to his family at home (see in the present Magazine). See also Tickner Edwardes: *With the R.A.M.C. in Egypt* (Cassell 1918). Edwardes was later Rector of Burpham near Arundel.

"At the outbreak of war, I was a nursing member of the V.A.D., Hants 14, and worked with them at Branksome Red Cross Hospital for the first year of the war. Our sixty beds were generally pretty full, mostly with convalescents, and though we had a few serious cases in times of stress, the general atmosphere was cheerful, and, I am afraid, unprofessional, certainly a change from the Military Hospital from which our cases came. After some months at a Red Cross Hospital at 13, Grosvenor Crescent, London, and a long spell of enjoyable leave, I was appointed in November 1916, under the W.O. scheme to Beaufort War Hospital. The work

here was very interesting, but after living for a year in the work-house, standing in the grounds of the converted lunatic asylum, where we worked, I jumped at my first chance of foreign service, and in December 1917, embarked for Egypt.

Very few of our party had ever been abroad, but a succession of harassed Red Cross officials and R.T.O.'s (Railway Transport) shepherded us and our bulky kits safely through Boulogne, Paris, Turin, and Rome, and landed us exhausted and amazingly dirty, in an Army hut at Taranto.

My memories of the rest camp are – Christmas dinner, wonderfully provided by the resident staff, and an endless splashing on inefficient “duck-boards” through the mud between our sleeping hut, mess hut, and the so-called bath hut. Certainly no one was sorry when we embarked in H.M.T. Osmanieh. I do not think we were much alarmed at hearing of the many occasions on which she had been chased by enemy submarines, or that she would sink in three minutes if hit. The life belts we kept ready by us day and night, and the frequent boat-drills were certainly taken as a mild joke, and nurses, officers, and men, spent the two days passage basking peacefully in the Mediterranean sunshine.

On the morning of December 31st, 1917, we sighted Alexandria, and were slowly approaching the harbour, three or four mine-sweepers ahead, our escorting Japanese destroyers on either beam, when I went below to finish my packing. Then – a crash, a rush of water, a sudden stillness . . . I snatched up my life-belt, and ran for the companion; this and the slanting deck were already crowded, but voices shouted “Ladies first,” and “Make room for the nurses,” and I soon found myself among the white-faced troops lined up opposite our boat. We scrambled in somehow, and were lowered away, in a succession of nerve-racking jerks. I had just time to feel thankful that we had reached the water, when suddenly the boat capsized. Something clutched my shoulder under water, and we went down, but in an instant I was free again, and felt my life-belt pulling me to the surface. The sea was littered with overturned boats and odds and ends of wreckage, and I and the inevitable cheerful Tommy were soon steering a bit of board, and gasping to each other that “we were all right now.” I had very little idea of time on that day, but imagine that it was about a quarter-of-an-hour later that I was hauled over the Jackal's side, and sent, very unwillingly, down to the ward-room, where a kind-hearted but agitated steward fed us on rum and cocoa.

Some good Samaritans had rigged up a shelter on the quay, where they provided us with dry clothing of sorts, and by the time we arrived at No. 19 General Hospital we were sufficiently recovered to jeer at each other's appearance – trailing up the steps, each attired chiefly in an Army blanket, clutching in one hand a dripping bundle of our own belongings, and in the other a bag of Red Cross treasures. At that time we imagined that the missing members of the party



The photographer's spelling seems a little shaky!



Almost certainly a Petworth group about 1930.
Unattributed snapshot, possibly by Miss Heath.

had been picked up in some other vessel and not yet landed, and it was not until the next day that we realised that eight out of twenty-seven nurses on the nursing staff, and an unknown number of troops, I believe about 200, had been lost.

My fifteen months stay in Egypt was comparatively uneventful. No. 21 General Hospital, where I was stationed, was on the outskirts of Alexandria, right on the sea, so that the heat was never unbearable, and we had eight months of glorious bathing in the year.

As to our duties, it was a relief, after English hospital life, to find that all the heavy work was, at least in theory, done by Tamargies or native orderlies. Although too far from the fighting line to get many wounded, we were kept fairly busy with malaria and dysentery, and made up for slack time by occasional rushes of work, particularly after the final advance in Palestine, when every corridor was lined with beds, and hospital ships arrived daily – crowded with a few out of the cases waiting in thousands, sometimes on stretchers on the bare ground at Tripoli, Haifa and Beirut.

After the Armistice, the one thought of patients and staff alike was – HOME, but the months dragged on, and though I was among the lucky early ones, it was not until March 31st, 1919, that I landed at Southampton, and was demobilised the following day.”

A sporting summer

I'm drawn at the end of this wonderful sporting summer to look back at my own introduction to sport in Petworth.

It was the best of places in which to be a boy in the Fifties. So much safe space in which to enjoy hour upon hour of play time. Populated by kind people encouraging and channelling our youthful energies. Football and cricket were my sports – still are. My childhood featured countless hours of running, kicking, throwing, bowling, batting and catching. Mainly we practised and mucked about in Petworth Park just inside The Lodge, quenching our thirst from a free standing cold water tap mounted against the wonderful Park wall.

My first memories of being organised into teams with football kit and referees was playing right wing in games for the town against Hampers Green Boys. We played against the Wallis brothers and their mates alternately in The Park and down on Hampers Green itself. Vince Phillips, Martin Dadswell, the Adsett brothers were among my team mates. One autumn we hosted a German boys team from Dresden who stayed with people in the town. We had their manager to stay and I went out one evening with the German lads to a youth club. I discovered

it was easier to talk to local girls if I pretended to be German! That's adolescence for you. I think that exchange process continued for a while though I couldn't afford to go to Dresden.

Next came a wonderful man called Roy Randall who managed the Petworth 2nd XI. He ran the line, washed the kit, and knocked on the door each week to organise me to play. And so I lined up with Reg Withers, Norman Horton, Cyril Baigent, Micky Wallis and the rest in the Hut at the edge of the Park amidst crepe bandages, nailed boots, chewing gum wrappers and a heavy stink of embrocation. Adolescence is such a whirlwind of experiences but I still remember those moments of excitement and trepidation before a game in the company of these battle scarred foot soldiers.

We played in a variety of designs of red and black over the seasons – a fine colour combination I have always thought. We trained through the winter in the Iron Room on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Just before the season started we would practice in the Park and run around the Lake. It was all great fun and very slowly made men of us boys.

And then – gulp, swallow – I was picked for the First XI! Up to then I'd only watched those titans from the sideline, joining some twenty odd followers, some direct from preparation in The Tavern in the Square, on a Saturday afternoon. Jackie Cresswick, Geoff Phelps, Pete Wadey, Brian Standing in goal, Fred Faulkner, Reg Bushby in his hairnet, Bert Scammell and Big John who scored a hatful of goals at centre forward. And one blissful winter a man who had played for Arbroath in the Scottish League 1 turned out on the left wing, having fallen for a local lass. He was good for the West Sussex Premier Division! I remember the great rivalry with Midhurst and Easebourne Utd and one 5-2 victory at Rotherfield in particular, and The Gingell Cup when the Fernhurst keeper broke Den Stillwell's jaw one evening when he had turned out for us instead of Horsham.

I played only four games for the Firsts. Serious, demanding, unfriendly matches against Portfield, Rustington, Emsworth and Graylingwell. Two goals and then I left to be a student in London and that was that!

Cricket in the Fifties in Petworth was also thriving although there was only one side and no boys team. The driving force behind Petworth Park CC in those days was the aforementioned Denis Stillwell. What a player. It was said, by my Dad, that had Den come from a more fashionable part of the County, or indeed gone to a public school, he would have played for Sussex. As it was he opened the batting, kept wicket, captained the side and lovingly tended the pitch in the Park. He loved scoring runs and hated being dismissed more than any cricketer I ever met. I once gave him out before lunch in an all day game having been pressed into umpiring as the team's junior member. He was leg before wicket, I was 14, but if looks could



Mick Robertson receives a bat given by Fred Streeter "The Radio Gardener" for most promising young player in Petworth cricket team. See "A sporting summer", Club chairman Clarrie Linton (left), F.A. Thompson (secretary) centre. Photograph by G. G. Garland.

kill that would have been the end of a brief life! However Den was a wonderful skipper and role model. He taught me that sport isn't worth playing unless you try to win, but having won or lost you enjoy the memories and companionship of the game.

Petworth CC won more than they lost in those days. Den and Pete Wadey were a formidable opening batting pair making frequent three figure opening partnerships and to open our bowling were the cut and thrust of Roy Pottington and the grunting pace of Reg Hillier. And with Brian Temple and Derek House in the side and Den cracking the whip we took fielding on that big windswept outfield more seriously than was fashionable at the time. Len Cross, Dan Chalcroft, Vic Beesly and many more characters enriched the team and made the Club a focal point for our community.

And that's why I've chosen to write of Petworth sport 50 years ago. It brought me a focus, identity and pride in my town. Those people who gave of their time to support the teams in those days have my thanks and thoughts for that inheritance and for passing on a lifelong enjoyment of sport. Two of these feature in the photograph of a bat presentation in about 1956. Mr Linton (Clarrie?) was our Chairman, Mr F. A. Thompson was my coach and mentor and sometime batting partner, and the bat was donated by Mr Fred Streeter. I'm the one with the big grin!

Mick Robertson
[Mick hopes he's got all names correct! Ed.]

Leave the peaches alone!

My mother originally came from Durham to work in service at Burton Park as under housekeeper for the Courtauld family. I believe that she had worked previously with the housekeeper there and they may even have come down to West Sussex together. I suppose it does seem a long way to move but I understand that this was not at all unusual as the big houses preferred to employ servants from far away in the belief that as they were not local they would be less likely to pass on any gossip picked up at work.

My father was Arnold Hill and as long as I remember he had worked at the Petworth Cottage Hospital as a gardener and handyman. I think it most likely that it was the only job that he ever had and like myself, who apart from National Service also only ever had one job, never felt the need to look elsewhere for a living. Grandfather on my Dad's side moved with his family from the North of England in the hope that the milder air would relieve him of the consumption

from which suffered. The change of air must have done him good for not only was his condition greatly improved but he went on to live to eighty seven.

Dad was able to turn his hand to just about any job that needed doing at the Cottage Hospital. Of course in those days it was a functioning hospital complete with an operating room and an X-ray machine. An important and time consuming task for Dad was keeping the boilers lit; this was all the more necessary in the winter as the old building, situated high above the Shimmings valley, was exposed to everything the weather could throw at it. Dad would have to bike up to work six days a week to make sure that the boilers kept going. No rest either on Sundays as the whole family would trek across the Sheep Downs in the evening so as Dad could tend the boilers.

The Cottage Hospital was generally quite a busy place, patients coming and going and minor operations being carried out. I recall an accident that befell me during a gymnastics rehearsal for a show in the Park. The evening had been very damp and the vaulting horse had become really slippery, the result was me with a broken arm and a trip up to the Cottage Hospital where I was greeted by Dad who promptly held my arm in position while Dr Ball carried out an X-ray and no doubt put my arm in a cast. I know that both Doreen and I had our tonsils out at the hospital and I should imagine that countless other local children also had the same operation. The hospital had a huge kitchen garden in those days which Dad spent a good deal of his time tending. He used to reckon that the hospital was just about self sufficient in vegetables at certain times of the year. No mean task if the place was full at the time.

I was born in Pound Street in a small cottage that stood behind the houses which face the main road. The cottage was reached by a short alleyway between two houses. The entrance to the alley is now closed by a high gate and is probably part of a garden. Our little house backed onto the long garden of South Cottage which then stretched from where the public toilets now are to the back wall of Newlands which was of course the council offices until quite recent times. South Cottage was home to Dr Ball and the cottage and garden would disappear with the construction of the car park in the 1960s. Mum had left her service at Burton Park when she married Dad and by the time that I came along she was working for various people around the town. There were the Lunds at Red House and Dr Ball at George House. Dr Ball was very fond of Mum and she and Dad would move in to George House when he was away. By the time I really got to know Dr Ball well he had been in the war and invalided out with some type of severe arthritis. In fact you could say that he was medically in a worse state than most of his patients. He was a very good doctor and extremely popular about the town.

I went to the boys' school in North Street and I was eight years old when war

broke out. By that time we were living at South Grove and I was at home when the school was bombed in 1942. We boys used to walk up and down North Street in all weathers and it was very unusual to have a day off school; however on that particular occasion my brother and I got up ready to leave as usual when Mum said that we shouldn't go that day because it was pouring with rain. Needless to say we didn't need telling twice and looked forward to a day off. Our sitting room at South Grove faced out across the fields and we saw the German bomber being chased by Spitfires. Very shortly we heard the bang but we had no idea what, if anything had been hit. I'm not sure how long it was before we knew that the school had been bombed. Dad would have been among the first to know as he was at work at the hospital and the casualties were taken there. He would have been in a state, on the one hand helping as best he could while at the same time checking each victim to see if either myself or my younger brother were among them, of course he wasn't aware that we had not been at school that day. It was my class, the middle class, that bore the brunt of the casualties, and apart from myself there was only one other boy that survived that day.

South Grove was a little community on its own in those days, it wasn't surrounded by the big estate of houses as it is today, in fact it was really quite separate from the town much like Hampers Green, Grove Street and the old council houses in Station Road were. We knew all of our neighbours well and many of the children were our closest friends. Next to us were the Smiths, he was retired from the Post Office and taught me to play draughts, under his guidance I became quite an accomplished player. Then there were the Andrews and the Seldons, the Barnards, Ron Barnard is fondly remembered as the local road sweeper, probably the last one to live in the town. There was Wally Ball and his family, the Wakefords who of course still live there. Old Mr Wakeford would go off most Saturdays during the war rabbit shooting. George Garland the photographer, Mr Parsons the ambulance driver, Mr Savage the bandsman, Mr Smith the RAC man and his family. There were others such as the Strudwicks who I believe lost a son at the school and the Garretts who may have come sometime after us but I'm not sure now.

School resumed quickly after the bombing but it was now in the Iron Room behind the present NatWest Bank. There were three classes each occupying a corner of the building while the fourth corner led to the toilets and the stairs to the stage. My class had effectively gone as there were only two of us left after the bombing and so we were integrated with another class. It was at the Iron Room that I first developed the interest in carpentry which would last all my life. Behind the building there used to be a blacksmiths shop and between that and the Ebenezer Chapel was a largish room in which carpentry classes were held. I can't

remember the teacher's name though I do recall that he lived just this side of Stopham Bridge. We probably weren't in the Iron Room for very long as we were moved to Culvercroft at the top of Pound Street opposite Sadlers Row. I was probably 12 or 13 then but still not in the top class. Mr Browning took our class and he lodged at The Star in the Square, Mr Mickelburgh the new headmaster, who had replaced poor Mr Stevenson who had perished in the school, took the top class. Mr Browning had the strongest voice I have known and was a deadly accurate shot with a piece of chalk. Culvercroft had kitchens and there was the daily ritual of the pupils from the East Street Girls' School parading around to have their school lunch there. I always went home for lunch and never had school meals and even at the old Boys' School I took sandwiches or sometimes I would run home to South Grove for lunch.

Like most children of my age I had a morning, evening and Saturday job. Morning was delivering newspapers for the Misses Arnold who had the newsagents and stationers in Middle Street. Evenings and Saturdays I was at Syers the gentlemen's tailors in The Market Square. I would leave school at four o'clock and go straight to the shop until 6 o'clock. My job included delivering parcels to customers around the town. Indoors an important task was to sprinkle a type of sand over the wooden floors and then sweep it up, I was told that it was to stop the dust rising. Another job was to take regular cups of tea to Mr Syer who was nearly always in a workroom upstairs. I worked there several years but in all of that time Mr Syer never spoke a single word to me. Saturday mornings was window cleaning. Mr Syer was a gentleman's tailor and not for the ordinary working man who would be more likely to go to Eager's just a few yards across the Square. Arch Standen was the shop manager for Mr Syer and many people thought that he owned the place. Mr Syer lived in Easebourne and came in on the bus each day. Arch Standen was a good friend of Fred Streeter the famous head gardener at Petworth house. The two men would go shooting together and I would often be sent to the gardens with a note for Fred. Arch would let me go early, perhaps a quarter to rather than six o'clock which was the usual finishing time. Anyway Arch did me no favour as the detour was a very long one down to Mr Streeter's cottage and then I would often have to search all through the greenhouses until I found him. On one occasion I had to pass a whole row of peach trees with their fruit just ripe to eat. I resisted the temptation to try one but knew that the return journey would be difficult. I eventually found Mr Streeter who having taken the note warned me 'to leave the peaches alone as I have counted them and know exactly how many there are'. This warning was enough to reinforce my will and the peaches remained on their trees.

I left school and went straight to work for Bryders the Tillington builders. I

started on the day after Boxing Day in 1946 and I would be 15 the following week on the 31st December. I was not a bound apprentice but was taught the trade as I went along. Fred Summersell was a bricklayer for Bryders and had got me the job as he and Dolly his wife had been a friend of my parents for years. There were three Bryder brothers, Charlie, Toby and Bob and I suppose they were all middle-aged when I started on the firm. Bob was a bricklayer and he died fairly young, Charlie being the eldest was the boss and he did all of the estimating and the office work though he was a carpenter by trade. I didn't know old Mr. Bryder who had started the firm but his wife who we all called 'Gran' lived to be 100. The business really was a family firm and I was treated like a member of the family from day one. I was keen to learn and had always wanted to be a carpenter. Bryders did a lot of work for the Leconfield Estate at Petworth as well as building quite a few posh houses around Hindhead, school work was another speciality of ours, something of a contrast to the big Hindhead houses. There was a time when all of the Leconfield houses were being modernized and we were one of the firms selected to carry out the work, as you can imagine that kept us busy for a very long time. We built some fine houses over the years including the new Petworth Rectory.

Like most building firms in those days Bryders were also undertakers. Charlie Bryder would brush polish the coffins after they had been stained. The coffin wood was generally elm and the stain was mixed with a powder which filled the grain ready to be polished. Oak was very occasionally used but only when requested as it was much more expensive than elm. Each coffin was individually made for its occupant. Measurements would be taken and we could make the coffin and get it ready for polishing within a day, in fact usually within the afternoon. I have made many coffins over the years at least until we had so much building work on that it became easier to buy them in ready made.

I recall one rather unusual job that Bryders were employed to do. It was 1964 or 65 and a film company were producing a film called Darling with Julie Christie and Dirk Bogarde in starring roles. Anyway we were asked to carry a coffin up the hill and into Wisborough Green churchyard, we took several takes but the director was not quite happy with us. Of course the reason was that the coffin was empty and it is very difficult to simulate a full one, so without further ado the film crew were directed to remove the batteries from their vehicles and load them into the coffin. A grave had been dug previously and we lowered the coffin into it. This weight of the batteries made all of the difference to us bearers and the filming was successfully completed. Sometime later Doreen and I went and saw the film at the cinema, it was a bit racy but not bad.

I was with Bryders full-time for over 50 years having started in April 1957 and

have never completely retired as I still do some bearing though I must confess that I tend not to do the difficult ones, or where it is a bit difficult to manoeuvre the coffin into place. Not that I can't do it but rather I would hate to make a mistake or slip up. It is one of those things that you could never live down. I was carrying regularly until I was 80 and have done a few more since then. There aren't many churches around here that I haven't carried into, in fact most on many, many occasions. A funeral is such an important occasion and we bearers take our duty extremely seriously.

Bryan Hill was talking to Miles Costello

Petworth Society Dinner Quiz – answers

FIVE LOCAL:

1. Flexham Park
2. Selham
3. Little Bognor
4. Hampers Green
5. Cross Lanes

TWENTY GENERAL:

1. Sindbad the Sailor
 2. Queen Anne
 3. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
 4. John Keats
 5. The heads of his previous wives
 6. George II
 7. Dominicans
 8. A settlers' wagon
 9. A Red Indian pipe
 11. Ezekiel
 12. Danish
 13. Six
 14. George Fox
 15. Leveret
 16. Puss-in-Boots
 17. Wenceslas
 18. "For the black bat night has flown."
 19. The American Civil War
 20. Because they ate like hogs
-
10. Portuguese

