

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

No. 170, December 2017

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The Upper Lake Petworth Park 1929.
Photograph by George Garland.

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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 £14.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £18.00 overseas nominal £25.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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Mrs Betty Exall, Mrs Carol Finch,
Mr Ian Godsmark, Mr Roger Hanauer,
Mrs Celia Lilly, Mrs Ros Staker,
Mrs Deborah Stevenson, Mrs Patricia Turland,
Mrs Linda Wort.

*As at the Annual General Meeting, Mr Hanauer has now left the Committee, while Mrs Sue Slade is kindly continuing only in the short term. See March Magazine.

FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick.
Cover picture: "Round the Hills" January 1940.
Photograph by George Garland.

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Chairman's notes

Not, perhaps, surprisingly there was a very considerable response to Magazine 169 both by telephone and letter. As you know we took the unusual step of making extra copies available to a wider readership. Given the subject matter, my feeling is that members considered this to be in order. I have included a selection only of your comments. I have to say that the two Penfold boys were not twins but simply brothers, while coincidentally the *Whistlers' Room* has been reissued in paperback, published by the Casemate Press.

We have used the same cover picture as for PSM 142 although Jonathan's presentation differs slightly. Taken in 1940, it highlights the changeless nature of Round the Hills, unpretentious but essentially Petworth, a surprise for the casual visitor but for local people the gem it has always been, simply, itself.

Peter
24th October

The annual dinner

The Annual Dinner was, as ever, overbooked but we did manage to squeeze in an extra table. I do not give a formal account except to say that Andy Loukes and the "three Petworth Blakes" were on sparkling form as were Anna, Sven and their helpers; not to mention the convivial company assembled. I do include Nigel's Quiz. Clearly his talents extend well beyond town crying. How one table got them all right I cannot imagine. The Chairman's table struggled to a lamentable 14 out of 30 and failed to answer No.1!

Petworth Society Dinner Quiz 2017

Places in Sussex (not just towns and villages)

1. Where you would find out the value of your dog or cat (8,5)
2. Heavy ploughing (10)
3. "Flog the briny, William (6,4)
4. Actor Dominic rambling on (4,9)
5. Put a weighty biscuit in your coffee (7)
6. Where to leave a brewer's cart pulled by an unusual draught animal (7,4)
7. It's not a marsh and it doesn't belong to the king. It's neither ... (6,5)
8. Outside French cured meat (7)
9. Oriental churchman (4,4)
10. Making a mess of! (7)
11. Tell people there's danger (7)
12. Churchman going off (11)
13. The church 'oop tha (11)
14. A quiet place to stay in safety (10)
15. Descended from a haddock (10)
16. A boat crew gone wild (6)
17. Secures the forest (7)
18. JMW's high ground (7,4)
19. What Morse would shout (5)
20. What Poirot would say (8)
21. There'd be a lot of arguments over clothes and boyfriends! (5,7)
22. Fine golf club (8)
23. Sixpenny pocketful (3)
24. Discover working (6)
25. Where Roux and Ramsay might graze (9)
26. Shining on Lord Egremont (8,4)
27. Car crossing (4)
28. Jack and Bobby (8)
29. Where poultry roam (8)
30. Creepy- (7)

Magazine 169 – a selection of comments

From Jean Lucas:

Dear Peter,

Many thanks for your kindness in sending the Magazine to me, I much appreciate it, and am not ashamed to say I shed tears while reading it, as we knew so many of the boys who lost their lives.

* * *

From Harry Burgess:

I moved on from the Infants' School to the Boys' School where my brother went as well, at this stage he was 12 years old and I was 8 years old. On September 29th 1942 it was raining so my mother said to the three of us we could skip school that day as it was too far to walk, but my brother said he was going anyway so I said, "If Albert's going, I'm going."

Late that morning some of us looking through the window saw a German Junkers 88 coming towards the school, it was just before eleven. After that my memory becomes a bit hazy. I can just remember our class teacher calling us under the shelter of one of the walls, after that I can recall a soldier, Canadian I believe, getting me out of the rubble. He seemed to be having a lot of trouble getting one of my feet out and I always thought that was when I got a large cut on one of my ankles. The next thing I remember is lying in the ambulance with a lot of screaming going on, and then arriving at the hospital.

It was thought that the plane that bombed the school was not one on a raid to bomb Petworth, but was being chased by an English fighter so decided to eject his bombs over a suitable place. Maybe he was aiming for Petworth House which was nearby, one bomb hit the school and the others landed in open ground.

I have very little memory of what happened when I arrived at hospital as I had very severe face and head injuries, with a severe wound to my top and bottom lip cutting right through and damage to my teeth. This resulted in the whole of my head being bandaged. They put me in a bed on my own and I can remember screaming as I always slept with my brother, I believe one of the other boys slept with me for a while.

For a time my parents believed that I was killed like my brother Albert, which I was unaware of. When they did finally realise I was alive I asked them, "How is Albert?". Fearing it would make my recovery worse they told me he had gone to the weekly carpentry lesson with the other older boys and was okay.

I still have no idea how long I was in hospital but I am guessing it was a long time because of my facial injuries. Please note that my parents or family never discussed the school bombing.

I finally went home and the first thing I asked was, "Where is Albert?". They told me he had been killed which left me screaming and crying, something my sister told me in later years.

I think I went back to school after Christmas that year which was now held in the Iron Room in the centre of Petworth. I found out from my sister later in life that my mother never recovered from the loss of Albert (there being no counselling those days), with it not helping that she had to pass the ruins of the school most days when going shopping. For that reason it was decided that my father would look for another job further away.

* * *

From Don Simpson:

Congratulations on the Society Magazine recording the Boys' School bombing. I hope it will serve to remind everyone of the importance of the event in the history of Petworth.

Although a little late but just for the record you may recall that I was one of the lucky ones at the woodwork class. This was held in a small room at the rear of the old forge, the front part used as storage for bundles of newspapers collected for the war effort.

On the day of the bombing we were sent home at lunchtime. I was not allowed to go down North Street but had to go home via Cricket Lodge, across the park to Kennell Lodge.

Missing a great deal of school through illness from age 6-11 I didn't make any real friends, living at Chillinghurst in Stag Park the only time I came into Petworth was fair day or the surgery. My memories of school are making and playing pipes or gardening. I do not recall any lessons. Some years after the event I was given a tenor pipe which had been recovered, it turned out to be one that I had made and painted. Some years later I put it in the props box of the Drama Group, but was later told there was no sign of it. I would love to know if it is still around.

* * *

From John Tilbury:

You asked me to send you a note following my reaction on receiving and taking in the front cover of the Petworth Society Magazine. It brought tears to my eyes.

To give you my reasons for my reaction I set out a little detail of my life up to 28th September 1942.

I was born in The Nag's Head Public House, Chichester in 1933 my father being the landlord. At the outbreak of war in 1939 the family were running The Royal Hotel, Hayling Island and everyone was advised to leave the Island owing to its close proximity to Portsmouth. (The golf course, I believe was lit up to attract German bombers to thinking it was Portsmouth).

At about this time my parents divorced and my mother went to London to find employment.

It was decided that I would live in East Street, Petworth with my mother's sister and brother-in-law Lilian and Hubert Whitcomb and my grandmother Mrs Emma Boxall.

I was 9 years of age and attending the North Street Boys' School. On Monday 29th September 1942 I complained of feeling ill and it was decided I would stay at home in bed.

Lying in bed I heard the explosion but did not of course realise what had happened and that many of my classmates had been killed.

My uncle, Hubert Whitcomb, worked in the Leconfield estate office, and left the house before I left for school. When he heard of the bombing of the school he went there and spent a long time searching for me. Not until he returned home did he realise I had not gone to school that morning.

I seem to have written a great deal but you will appreciate that the terrible event is never far from my thoughts.

* * *

From Shirley Wass (née Pellett):

One of my earliest memories was passing the Boys' School walking to and from our house hearing them singing hymns.

I was born and lived with my parents in a house called "Hillside". This was situated on an unmade road/lane which ran between the Boys' School and the Mason's Arms Public House.

On September 29th 1942 I was six years old. I was a pupil at the Infants School in the town but was at home on that day owing to illness. An elderly aunt was looking after me. She and I sheltered under a strong pantry shelf during the bombing. I remember a pot of raspberry jam falling off another shelf and breaking on the floor.

Afterwards splinters of glass were found in the rice pudding recently cooked which was on the kitchen table. The front door was blown into the hall passage.

The next thing I remembered was my father looking terrified coming to rescue us. We were both uninjured. He told us that he had come through the garden at the back of the Mason's Arms to reach us owing to the pile of rubble blocking our lane.

Following this when we reached the Main Road I was aware of many vehicles and much activity there and of the pile of rubble obstructing the entrance to our road.

From Alan Reed:

My father's memories of the actual bombing, he being 5 years old at the time, are very vague. Though much like other survivors he remembers "parents talked of the event in hushed tones in other rooms" and recalls there being a strong sense of sadness. Especially when being asked to write "poetry notes and the sending of flowers".

He can also remember being "farmed out" to Duncton school with a Ms Botting (head teacher) and a Ms Ratcliff, and strongly missing his school mates. He also said an over-riding memory is feeling that "there was a pointlessness" to what happened.

A much stronger recollection is of the other bombing (the railway station) to affect Petworth and of the American gun emplacement.

With the station, he recalls some council housing (near the old signal box and water tower) being bombed. It was above the station and there's a house there today. He remembers that the signalman - Mr Ayling and a Myrtle Coles - both survived that bombing.

The gun emplacement was located in the woods twixt the signal box and the garage at Heath End. From his description this was a clearly well established facility with a AA battery, slit trenches, tin troughs for the troops to wash in and Nissen huts. Something the local children obviously appreciated as they used to visit the emplacement to get sweets from the soldiers!

After the war when the battery was abandoned, he said children would play there and find things such as the more superior American entrenching shovel - which was soon pressed into service by their parents, bottles of coke-a-cola - and less fun for them - dumped boxes of carbolic soap.

However, a less welcome find was the large quantity of German incendiary bombs that were dropped on the fields which his Grandfather (a protected worker) worked on at Herring-broom. These being dropped with the deliberate intention of burning our nations food supplies.

He said he also recalls a post war attempt to retrieve - or defuse - a very large unexploded bomb near Ladymead Lock on the River Rother. An attempt that was hampered by the bomb constantly sinking into the mud and he remembers them "using pipes".

From his description of "pipes", this suggests the engineers would be attempting to wash out the explosives (after removing any detonators) leaving the inert munition behind. However he cannot recall if they were successful or not.

* * *

From Vera Jenner:

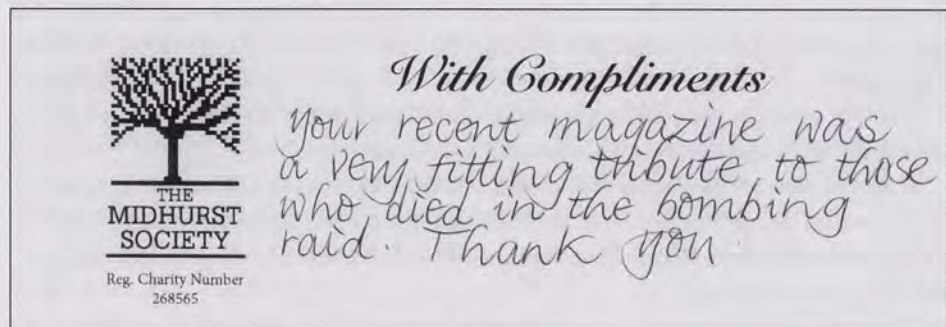
Thank you so much for sending the Petworth Magazine, I have sent a copy to my

sister Nancy in Canada, she was delighted to receive it.

What an impressive edition of that tragic Michaelmas day, so much thought and care went into that production, it was lovely to read of others' memory of it, especially those poor people who were there, a tremendous nightmare for them, I have read it through twice now and still find myself in need of a few tissues.

* * *

From The Midhurst Society:



* * *

From Jumbo Taylor:

"There they are, coming up over the hill!"

It was the Royal Show. 1937 perhaps, or even 1938. The King and Queen were there. A group from Petworth Boys School went up in Vic Roberts' van cum coach. Windsor Great Park. We were there to demonstrate how to make the bamboo pipes that were such a feature of the Boys' School. Visitors would stop and watch as we worked on making the pipes. We used mini-hacksaws, files and drills and were overseen by 'Steve', the headmaster Mr Stevenson. Not that anyone called him Steve to his face of course. Our pipes were more correctly known as whistle pipes, played from the end rather than, as with flutes, from the side. When we left school some of us would graduate to Mr Gwillim's ATC band but that was a formal pipe and drum band with proper flutes. Mr Stevenson ordered in the bamboo we needed and it was delivered straight to the school. It was then for us to make the pipes under the headmaster's supervision. The mouthpiece was of cork: you can see from mine and my brother Jim's that both corks are worn and to an extent eroded from use. These are the larger, tenor, pipes; those portrayed in Magazine 169 will be of the two smaller pipes: alto or treble. They would of course produce a slightly different note. The larger holes would be drilled to Mr Stevenson's precise instructions: he was a leading member of the Pipers' Guild in London. We would take great trouble in decorating the exterior, and you can see where the paint has worn away at the mouthpiece. Mr Stevenson could play the

piano, while the violin was taught after school, Miss Hurd helping with this. I remember "Twinny" Saunders and Maurice Alder having violin lessons and there were others. In fact the school had a very definite "community" feel about it. Those who had recently left for instance would return for extra tuition in preparation, say, for entering the Army or the R.A.F. What the school didn't really have were sports facilities. There might be rounders in the playground, or Den Stillwell and I might go down to Hampers Green and faghook enough grass to clear a way for cricket, even perhaps some football. A favourite game was "Hot Rice". You'd stand on a bucket, cricket bat in hand, with four or five round you, at a distance of several feet. They'd throw a ball with the object of hitting the bucket, while you'd fend the ball off using the bat, trying to defend the bucket. Oh, and the school also had a percussion band, the instruments given by local people. I played the triangles, wary of coming in fractionally wrong and incurring Mr Stevenson's rather alarming gaze.

Yes, I well remember Tall Tall Castle. The castle was made of ply and putty, the moat blue plasticine, but only at the front where it was visible to the audience. I remember Ray Carfrae as the ogre. Costumes had been put together by parents from oddments. Frankie Best had just two lines of which I can now remember just the one. He was announcing the arrival of the Norman army. "There they are, coming up over the hill." I was the Prologue, setting the plot at the beginning. I had my trousers rolled up but as I spoke I could feel one leg sliding down. There was nothing I could do but continue. The dragon was made of hoops and sacking. 14 feet long, there were three or four of us inside. Rehearsals were never in school time. We'd come back to school in the evening. Mr Stevenson lived on the Horsham road corner just by the school.

The headmaster wasn't only interested in music. Poetry and drama were very much part of the curriculum. I can remember the Merchant of Venice and Alice in Wonderland in a play version. Mark Twain was a favourite author and the school paid great attention to reading and spelling as also arithmetic and logarithms. It was nothing to be sent home with a dictionary and told to write out a page from it.

I was never in the Scouts; it always seemed too regimented for me but the school kept two boats on the river at Rotherbridge and there was a school camp annually that was quite independent of the Scouts.

But the shadow of war was never far away. Mr Stevenson had fought in 1914-1918. He had a running ear which he would dab with a handkerchief. I always assumed this was something to do with the war. He'd sometimes say sadly that another war seemed inevitable. As if in fulfilment of his words, I'd sometimes look out of the old "picture" window to see the searchlights playing across the sky.

Filling the gap

What are we to do when we find we're without the scheduled speaker at 24 hours' notice? Well, 'the show must go on', and in the Petworth Society, we go on with Peter and Miles.

There can be an 'Old Petworth' slideshow but we really want more and someone remembered that Trevor Purnell had recently published a book about the men of Tillington who lost their lives in the Great War of 1914-18. Could he talk about it the next evening?! A tall order, but the answer was that he would do his best. Bearing in mind that the intended subject was to have been "In Flanders Fields", what could have been more appropriate?

We have no idea of how many decided not to turn out having seen the brief notes attached to the posters in the town: "Speaker indisposed. Alternative programme with Peter, Miles and Keith". No time to add "Trevor Purnell".

Those who did come, some in ignorance, others always glad to hear Peter and Miles, were promised money back if too disappointed.

Trevor certainly saved the day with an accomplished presentation and an audience well-rewarded with a programme of local interest.

Trevor had been intrigued by the memorial in Tillington Parish Church to the thirty men, headed by three brothers of the Barrington-Kennett family. He tried to imagine the impact of their loss on the parents. He embarked on research into the background, early lives and service careers of the three, which led him on to an exhaustive investigation into the twenty-seven others named.

Remarkably, he was successful in building up an exhibition with detailed information about all of them, including the Petworth doctor, Charles Wilson, buried in Etretat, which went on show in Tillington Church. As a result of an appeal, postcards, letters, medals, presentation gifts and Basil Barrington-Kennett's RFC logbook, came forward.

It was inevitable that a book would follow: 'Village Boys Still'. The fascinating stories of those soldiers from Tillington are all there, too much to record here.

After the interval for the usual refreshments and raffle, Miles showed late 19th and early 20th century slides, most not included in previous talks. Starting in Byworth, he had a range of shots round Petworth, with his informative and entertaining comments, supplemented by Peter and that other fount of local folklore, Michael Hubbard in the audience.

As far as could be judged, a well-satisfied audience, thanks to Trevor, Miles and Peter, with the hope that the intended speaker can be booked in 2018.

KCT

Linda and Betty's West Mare Lane walk. 20th August – or, a Long Way up and a Long Way Down

Completely new territory for me. We park the cars at The White Horse pub on the Storrington road as you leave Pulborough. A coolish day thankfully, my first society walk for several years, hopefully a gentle stroll to break me in. How wrong could I be?

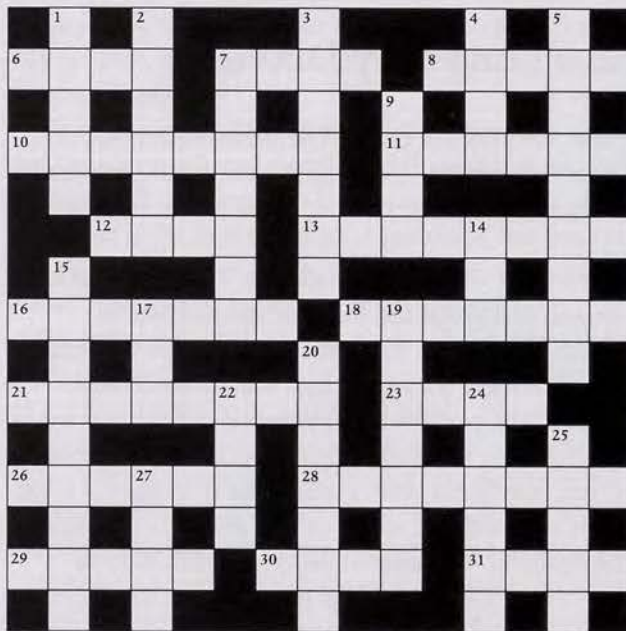
Across the main road into Batts Lane which itself leads into West Mare Lane and then follow the signed footpath into fields and for what seemed like an eternity we head uphill. Betty with her two ski sticks should have been a warning. Onwards we went at what seemed to me a brisk pace, past the sad shell of the once flourishing Broomers Hill Nursery, past the now infamous rabbit hole that Linda put her foot in when reconnoitring the walk. Apple trees in the hedgerow bearing surprisingly delicious fruit, surely not wild, perhaps the remnants of a lost orchard? Wild Honeysuckle, or is it Woodbine, winds its way around a wild dog rose the two competing for the sunlight? We pause at Broomers Hill Farm to admire the ancient garden wall, curved ashlar stone cut to avoid a harsh corner, a sign of prosperous owners now long dead. At last the summit by the reservoir and a view across to nearby Bedham hill and Toat Monument then distant Blackdown and even further to Leith Hill. Quite possibly the best view in West Sussex and certainly worth the climb.

Now downhill, harder on the legs than the ascent but welcome all the same. Out of the fields opposite Redfold Farm and into Nutbourne Lane, solid ground for my rapidly tiring limbs. Through a vineyard amid rows of vines with seemingly immature grapes. Not as good as mine I recall thinking but probably a later variety. Llamas in the field serenely ignoring our passing. Pretty Agrimony with its spike of delicate yellow flowers in the verge. Blackberries consumed with a passion. Convivial company all the way. Did you know that Betty was once a baker's delivery girl? I didn't and I suspect that there is a story there. Perhaps another day.

Back out into West Mare Lane. The whole walk I am told was about four and half miles. Thank you Betty and Linda for an enjoyable afternoon but please excuse me while I slip into my Radox bath.

Miles

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 6** Container for 5dn (4)
7 He or she decides on the Christmas menu – will it be 29ac or 1dn? (4)
8 Santa's favourite teddy bear perhaps (5)
10 Sirs in pain? Take these for your hangover! (8)
11 Early copyist of manuscripts (6)
12 And so it was (4)
13 What the angels brought to the shepherds (4,4)
16 See 21ac (7)
18 Canine support for the Christmas logs (4,3)
21 & 16 Stand with a firm stance to get wrapped up warm with these (5,3,7)
23 Used to send Christmas greetings (4)

26 Stand surrounded (6)

28 Dasher, Dancer, Comet and Vixen etc. (8)

29 Christmas poultry – wearing headgear! (5)

30 ---- in Royal David's city (4)

31 This saint's day is 13th December (4)

DOWN

- 1** It's getting fat at this time of the year (5)
2 Closely connected to 28ac (6)
3 Written in 23ac (7)
4 Don't forget them at Christmas (4)
5 Fluffy insides of baked apples added to ale for the traditional Sussex wassail drink (5,4)

7 Colour of Santa's coat (7)

9 The Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is a gift from this city (4)

14 E'en confused for a maiden name (3)

15 Fruity, sweet ingredient for pies which originally contained beef (9)

17 Black as pitch among the stars (3)

19 You need a steep one for sledging (7)

20 Worshipping – as the shepherds did the infant Jesus (7)

22 She sings sweetly in the choir (4)

24 Something to puzzle over in your Christmas cracker (6)

25 ----- on earth – what we all ask for (5)

27 A little of what you fancy! (4)

SOLUTION TO ROYALTY IN SUSSEX CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 6 Magi, 7 Lion, 8 Lewes, 10 Disarmed, 11 Albert, 12 Polo, 13 Amberley, 16 Hunting, 18 Paunchy, 21 Invasion, 23 Cuff, 26 Stuart, 28 Midhurst, 29 Grant, 30 Head, 31 Tree

DOWN

- 1 Cadiz, 2 Mikado, 3 Cowdray, 4 Herb, 5 George The, 7 Lampoon, 9 Garb, 14 Ran, 15 Furniture, 17 Tea, 19 Acceded, 20 Enemies, 22 Iota, 24 Fourth, 25 Usher, 27 Anne

Frith Wood guided walk. 23rd September

Just north of Northchapel on the busy A283, a tricky turning on a fast road but the gate is open for us and there is the luxury of ample parking. Neil Humphris the Leconfield Estate Head Forester and his wife Teresa are there to greet us. An enthusiastic group of sixteen, including five year old Connie and two dogs were given a mandatory safety talk, and then we set off along a narrow path into the woods. In truth it was hardly a path at all, just a winding trail occasionally marked by a splash of red bio-degradable paint – perhaps a precaution in case one of the group became separated? I lengthen my stride to keep up, no dawdling here in such unfamiliar territory.

I had anticipated that the walk would be interesting though I never thought that our guide, with a very useful portable microphone system (please note Chairman), would assail us with such a cornucopia of arboreal facts from the very word go. Neil explained that the woods had been Leconfield until the early 1970's when they were sold but bought back again – relatively unscathed in 1995. Like Flexham Park the wood is dotted with old quarry pits which can be a hazard for forestry workers and unwary walkers alike. We halted in a plantation of young oaks, age is relative when talking about trees and these were 21 years old, self-sown from acorns where they fell. Neil tells us that it was a rare example of nature rather than human intervention creating a valuable parcel of woodland.



'An enthusiastic group...'
Photograph by Gemma Levett.

We move on and learn about the considerable damage caused by the grey squirrel and how they are rather unsuccessfully managed. Neil explains that the woods are popular with the locals who by their presence help to discourage the deer population from causing too much harm to the young oaks. I guess that is a positive consequence of the opening up of these great woods to the public.

The walk is relatively easy, if a little muddy in places. Connie entertains herself collecting and identifying leaves, while the two dogs, now off their leads head for the nearest mud hole. We pass clusters of the edible mushroom *Craterellus cornucopioides* better known as Horn of Plenty. Ideally suited to broad leaved woods they appear in the dappled light to be almost black which probably helps explain their Italian name of Trumpet of the Dead.

Climate change can be a problem explains Neil, planning for tomorrow is difficult enough but when planting a crop that will not be harvested for 150 years it is impossible to make a judgement now. Perhaps our native trees will no longer be viable then and this is a potential problem for all foresters. It requires a selfless attitude to manage woodlands for the next generation.

We come out into the ride besides the most valuable tree in the wood a huge telephone mast, only 20 yards away yet skilfully disguised so as to make it almost invisible, worth a considerable sum in rental income to the estate. Imagine what you could do with a whole wood of them.

There are far too many facts to recall let alone space to record them here but thank you Neil for an enjoyable and informative stroll which hopefully will be repeated before too long.

Miles

Standen – October 12th

There is perhaps nothing that so quickens Society pulses as an outing. Even the dog-eared Chairman takes a perverse pleasure in seeing some quiet watering place inundated with people you might see any day on a Petworth street. This year we've been to Saddlescombe very early in the year and to Standen near East Grinstead very late, mid-October. Pumpkins orange, pumpkins green, snake-like stems with leaves now autumn brittle. Standen once home of James and Margaret Beale, now National Trust, dates from the 1890s and reflects the Beales' close association with the architect Philip Webb and Morris and Co the designers. The reconstruction is from the 1920s a good decade and a destructive war after the Cottage Museum. If we had wondered whether there would be enough to see, we

were soon to learn otherwise. Where to start? A piano and Eric Satie's *Gymnopedie No. 1*. The tune's haunting and familiar but I had to ask the pianist for the name. She's on till 1.30, then, not surprisingly, someone else will take over. A donkey engine once provided electricity, large taps on a large bath, but would the pipes now stand turning the water on? The morning room to which the ladies would retire, embroidery, newspapers and conversation while the men used the billiard room. A vintage Wilkinson razor. Candles alight for an evening meal, the fruit course, figs and finger baskets. The dogleg corridor to the servants' quarters, Mrs Last the near legendary cook. And I've not even mentioned the gardens. You'll have to go to Standen yourself. And everywhere the echoing words of William Morris: "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." Another Debbie and Gordon triumph.

P.

A hypnotic read

Fiction has to be the lifeblood of the Book Sale. £1 each where you like. Serried ranks of it as the centrepiece, and a constant need to refill. Our clientele do not expect to see gaps; still less the same book next month. In fact one month's selection is much the same as another but change and constant renewal are crucial.

So many voices crying out for attention. Here's a rather tired copy: paper starting to brown, with that dark spotting at the top that suggests a measure of neglect somewhere along the line. In all a less than promising title. Why single out this one?!

Born in 1889, Ivy Low came from a prominent Anglo-Jewish family, writing two very early novels and regularly for the *Manchester Guardian*. Her father was friendly with H. G. Wells and Ivy knew D. H. Lawrence and others. In 1916 she married Maxim Litvinov a Russian exile living in London. Maxim would return to Russia after 1917, with Ivy soon following. She worked as a translator while Maxim moved quickly up the communist hierarchy. He and Stalin had shared a house in London in the early century. Maxim Litvinov would be Soviet foreign minister from 1930, giving way to Molotov in 1939, the Germans being unwilling to deal with someone of Lithuanian-Jewish descent. He would be Soviet ambassador to the United States from 1941-3, leading a charmed life through successive Stalin purges to die in his bed in 1950. Ivy eventually retired to Hove where she died in 1977.

Ivy desperately wanted to write another book but she just couldn't. She read Trollope, Mrs Gaskell and the rest in a cache of Tauchnitz editions.² The Litvinovs shared comfortable party quarters with others of the Soviet elite, among them a Professor Vogt, reputed to have the ability to hypnotise. Could he help Ivy in her quest? The Professor and his wife, also a hypnotist, agreed to try. Ivy was to wait until her husband had left in the morning then sit at her writing desk. She had had no acquaintance with detective novels since Sherlock Holmes at boarding school but the new book would be of that genre and the background the contemporary Moscow that she knew so well. Tree lined streets, with the freezing ravens as their fruit, droshky drivers in their quilted coats, horses so cold that the hairs in their nostrils were frozen into needle-like spikes – a night watchman half-awake guarding a condominium of flats and houses. Even District Procurator Nikulin feeling it a personal affront for a murder to take place in the early hours of Sunday. Sunday should be a day off. The plot encompasses the Bolshoi Ballet, ragged street urchins, illegal dealing in platinum, the white Russian rising at the end of the 1914-1918 war and much else, but the Moscow background pervades everything. "A tender crimson crept into the early sunset, daily growing later, and the cawing of the noisy rooks began to mellow and soften ... and then the snow came down thick and fast again ..." If the denouement seems a little forced, the evocation of 1920s Moscow triumphs. One feels with that background Ivy Litvinov could have written another book altogether. She did not try detective fiction again.

P.

1. Ivy Litvinov; *His Master's Voice*. Virago 1989.

First published as by Ivy Low (the author's maiden name) Heinemann 1930; reissued with corrections 1973.

2. Unavailable in Great Britain for copyright reasons.

"What's your English like?"

The Museum copper can mystify some: it can also stir memories. I remember the lady who, as a child, would clamber in and "sail the seven seas." I assume it wasn't in use at the time! My grandparents always told me a story of the little boy who had climbed on to the copper, fallen in and been scalded to death. True or not, the thought always kept me well away from the steaming almost sentient monster. A present visitor rolls up his sleeve and says, "Look at these scars: I was badly burned playing near one of those." No, he didn't actually fall in, he was playing with the

dolly and somehow splashed the boiling water over himself.

The sun's brought the gazanias into full open flower. What a strange plant they are, fragile and tropical seeming, hardy as you like but sullenly reticent under cloudy skies. Clary is already in full, bloated flower head. The Iceland poppies have been spectacular; but are not a late summer flower, they needed dead-heading every morning and they've finally given up. Have them another year? I'm not sure. It's relatively quiet today, last time we were on it was manic. That's the Museum's way. A melting pot of different nationalities. Two jovial Icelanders and a Dane all domiciled in London. "What's your English like?" "Better than yours." "We won't talk about football." "No point, we always win." The Museum rings with laughter as it so often does, upstairs and downstairs. Our present couple have been to Petworth House, looking to avoid the traffic. They mention Goodwood and the New Forest. They're going back to Winchester. We suggest Uppark on the way home. There's an onion rotting in the metal handbowl in the sink, I put it on the range and it gives out a faint smell that suggests cooking. Some bargain August geraniums have replaced one line of Iceland poppies. The tithonia, the Mexican sunflower, are in full bloom. An anachronism? Perhaps, but the brilliant orange flowers justify everything, even the somewhat lacklustre foliage. I remember first seeing them in the grounds of Lewes Castle on a Society visit two years ago.

Busy or quiet, the Museum doesn't just surprise people: it makes their day. For so many it's the lasting memory of Petworth that they take away with them.

Red squirrels in the Pheasant Copse

My family were very local: my mother, formerly Violet Greest, had been born on the east corner of Middle Street, opposite what would later be Hazelmans the bakers, while my father came from Balls Cross. He had been so crippled by polio as a boy that his movement was severely restricted and he could not join his two brothers Maurice and Toby in farming. The Balchins farmed at Limbo just across the road from Limbo Lodge where my family lived.

In no way cowed by his disability, my father was an ingenious and determined man, who had become a skilled shoemaker and repairer. By agreement he was a marvellous craftsman and had a wide clientele who came out to him at Limbo. He worked in a kind of caravan just across the path from the Lodge itself. Lord Leconfield would have no one else deal with his shoes and I can see him now seated waiting in the car while the chauffeur saw my father. I would often sit with my father as he worked: shoemaking was a solitary trade. I loved to watch him hand stitching. He had a Ford 8, DPX 197, which he had specially modified with

wooden blocks to enable him to reach clutch and brakes, and another adjustment for the accelerator. As I have said, the difficulty he had with movement had made him both ingenious and determined. I remember him putting in a generator to replace our Aladdin lamps while he made our toys for Christmas, also, once, a pram with wooden wheels, rubber being virtually unobtainable in wartime.

I would be five or six when the war began and troops came to the Pheasant Copse. The South Wales Borderers first, then a New Zealand regiment. My friend Vera and I were terrified by a Maori, the first black man we had ever seen. Then came the Canadians and the Americans. Sometime there were Italian POW's. We always felt a little sorry for them as they were kept behind barbed wire. The Guard Room lay immediately across the track from our lodge and there was a manned sentry box at the gate. Entry was restricted but was no problem to me as a little girl.

Vera and I walked into Sunday school every Sunday morning. We were given attendance stamps and, at the end of the year, a medal. I still have mine. No, we didn't cycle – it was the familiar walk in from Limbo but there was, of course, little traffic on the London Road. On the way home we'd visit Aunt Bessie (Greest) at Somerset Hospital and an old man who lived in Thompson's Hospital. It was all to do with Mother, but we loved our visits. And there would be the maypole at the Rectory fete. I think Sunday school was before the morning service which as children we did not attend. On the way back we'd pick primroses and daffodils at the roadside for Mother, even a few primroses to sell by the road. We didn't have much luck but the occasional car would stop. Yes, I had my photograph taken by George Garland, most people did, but I was feeling ill on the day and don't remember much about it. And the cinema, on the Tillington Road, the funny thing was that we could never see the end of the film because the Aldershot and District bus left sharply at 9.25 and Limbo was a long walk home.

By the time the war was over I had left the East Street Girls' School to go to St Margaret's convent at Midhurst, catching the bus in to Petworth, then waiting for the connection to Midhurst. By this time my father had an extensive newspaper round, taking in Hampers Green, Ebernoe and the local farms. I'd go with him Saturday morning, getting out of the car to collect the weeks' money.

Even during the war Vera and I had been free to roam all over the Pheasant Copse, among the Nissen huts, we didn't always like what we saw. I particularly hated seeing the grey squirrels, shot and hung up to dry on the fence. Sometimes Vera and I would go into the Park itself and walk up the steep incline to see a family friend who lived alone in the Monument. We were allowed to go right up to the top and look out over the surrounding countryside. I should mention that in the early days I had seen red squirrels in the Pheasant Copse.

I remember going to the Christmas parties given by Lady Leconfield for Estate workers' children. It would be, I'm sure, in the Audit Room. Lady Leconfield seemed a rather remote figure, but his lordship never appeared. For all that he never seemed remote to me, always in a sense approachable. We'd sit at tables for tea and take home presents. The troops, Canadian and American, in the camps were very kind to us, both Canadians and Americans were generous with food that otherwise we could hardly dream about.

Joyce Ifield (née Balchin) was talking to the Editor.

In search of the Byworth Spout

Like the nearby Virgin Mary's Spring the Byworth Spout has gained an almost mythical status in recent years, occasionally mentioned on old maps and in local recollections it has - unlike its well-known neighbour - joined the fabled Byworth Harbour as perhaps little more than a figment of local lore. It was however, the recent controversy concerning the Virgin Mary's Spring that once again ignited interest in the whereabouts of the Spout, what it was and whether it was in fact lost. So on a wet August evening in the company of Ray Hunt and Chris Vincent, both of whom had grown up in the village, we set out to solve the mystery.

Ray recalls "Yes I remember the Spout though it is difficult to pinpoint its exact position now. You see there have been so many changes over the last fifty or sixty years. Mains water came to the village and the lane down to the Spout has been tarred and the cottages modernised. Cess pits have been put in which unfortunately have contaminated the spring and now the beautiful clear water is probably no longer fit to drink. Such a shame for we village children would play in the water on hot days and no doubt I've drunk my fair share of it. We used to sing a little rhyme 'by the Spout where the devil jumps out'. My father once told me that there used to be a pond by the lane where the farmer would water his animals but that was before my time. Mrs Gumbrell had the bakery when I was a boy and there was no tap in the bake house so quite often we children would come down to the Spout with her and help carry water back up the lane."

We walked down the lane by the side of the old bakery and came to the back of the cottages that stand on the street; the old ram which once pumped the water for the village can still be found at the end of Fred Shoubridge's garden. Ray tells us that another used to be in the rew at the bottom of the meadow. He briefly pauses and glances around clearly trying to get his bearings and to cast his mind back some six decades. "So much has changed," both Ray and Chris reflect with



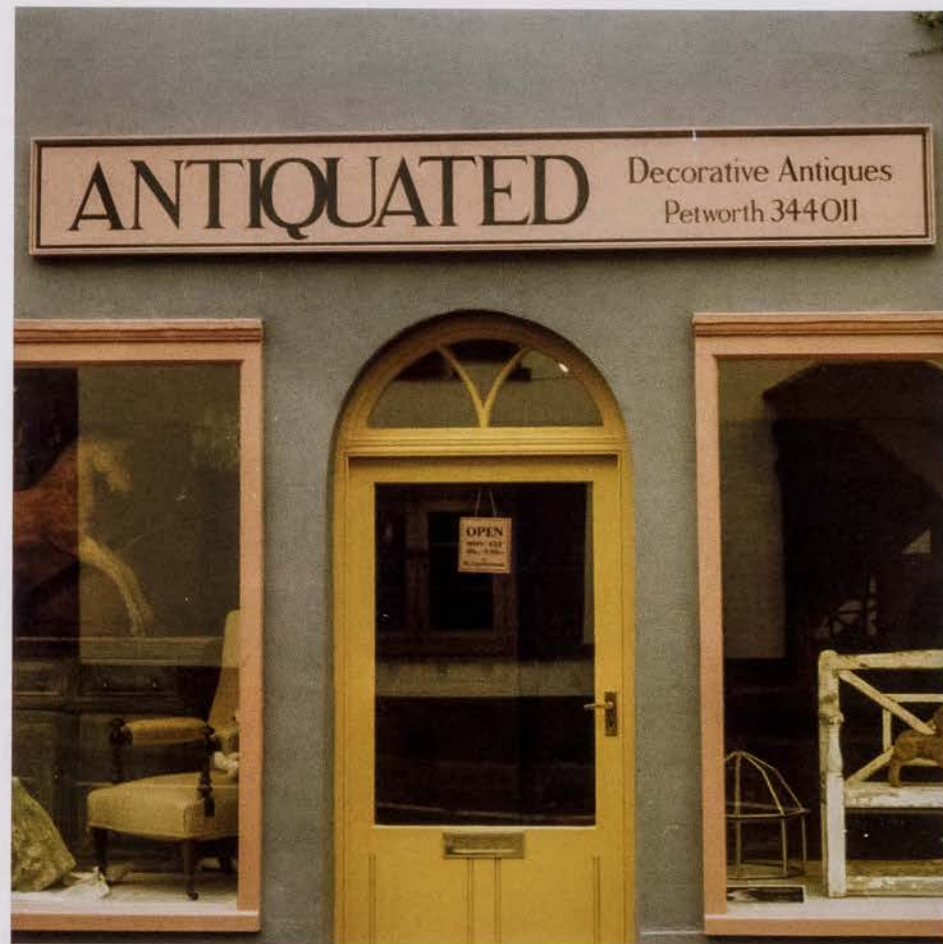
4. Lombard Street.



5. Middle Street.



6. Swan.



7. New Street.



8. Middle Street.

Evidently at one time local people fetched the water straight from the Spout but in more recent years it was pumped by hydraulic ram to a holding reservoir in a field up above Barnsgate. From there it would be fed to the cottages in the village and a good deal beyond. The ram needed a good head of water before it would pump and occasionally at milking time when the coolers would be working hard the farm would draw off more water than could be pumped which meant that some of the cottages went dry. Despite the inconvenience it would still be possible to collect water from the basin by the Spout. Above the spring and built into a roadside wall an archway is the only evidence of a tap which once fed the cottages and provided refreshment for passers-by or perhaps pilgrims making their way to The Virgin Mary's Spring.

Ray reflects on his childhood in the village.

"Byworth was very much a community in those days, though as now rather spread out. Horace Death the chimney sweep lived in a cottage by the Black Horse and my Uncle Bill Hunt and his wife Melissa lived in one of the cottages on the road. My sister and I now live in number 375, which in Leconfield numbering is also 374 as it was the old bakery and shop, next door is 376 where we were bought up so we haven't moved far in our lifetime. There was Mum and Dad, my brother Don and my sisters Kath and Valerie. Kath married and moved to Brighton. She was the eldest and Valerie the youngest by seventeen years, quite a spread out family. Dad was a carpenter and worked for Boxalls the Tillington builder. Mum was a Sebbage and her family lived at Churchwood at Fittleworth.



William and Emily Sebbage celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary at Churchwood, Fittleworth in 1952.

A Garland photograph.

Dad wasn't much of a drinker and rarely used The Black Horse, but once or twice a fortnight he would walk up the footpath to The Welldiggers at Lowheath where he was friendly with the landlord Jack Holden. Mrs Long had the post-office and general store across the road from us; it still has the pillar box outside. Her son Colin was a good friend of mine and I spent no end of time in their house. Mrs Long's sister was Margaret Streeter who had the shop in East Street almost opposite the old girls' school. I went to Sunday school at Byworth Church; it had long closed as a school but still held regular Sunday services. Quite often Mr Manners the curate at Petworth would take the service. If I remember correctly he lived at Fawley Cottage in Angel Street. And yes I clearly recall Chris being christened in the church as both Colin Long and I were altar boys at the time."

So the evening is concluded and the three of us go our separate ways. Sadly we did establish that the Spout no longer exists, though thankfully the spring still flows, albeit somewhat polluted. Furthermore the exercise proves that such things that we often take for granted are so very fragile and far too easily lost.

Miles Costello in conversation with Ray Hunt and Chris Vincent.

Penny a length

My long suffering parents were keen to see me gainfully employed but had no idea what to do with me. By good fortune, or possibly not, Dad worked on the Leconfield Estate and through the grapevine got to hear that a woodsman was looking for a lad to work for him on a self-employed basis. This man had spent much of his adult life working alone in the woods, a solitary existence, but one that he had grown accustomed to and with which I guess he was satisfied. Each year he would buy a few acres of standing sweet chestnut from the Estate, fell it, and produce everything from fence posts, to paling, to clothes props, from the coppiced wood.

The woodsman didn't really want a lad or indeed anybody else working alongside him, he was by character a loner and liked it that way. He had learned the skill of coppicing from his father who had been taught it by his. Little had changed over the generations, yes now he had a chainsaw which made the felling quicker and easier, but the tools for working the chestnut were the same as his father's and his father before him. The woodsman worked with the seasons, felling in the winter while the sap was down, often with a covering of snow on the ground. He never carried a watch as he had no need to know the time. In the short dark winter days he simply worked from dawn to dusk.

Even in the woods times were changing. Health and safety rules were making working alone increasingly difficult, the woodsman was finding it impossible to get insured, his was after all a dangerous occupation. A slip with the chainsaw could be disastrous and with no one to hear his cry the result didn't bear thinking about. The Estate were not happy with the situation and were putting pressure on him to find a solution which to his irritation was quite obvious, he had to find someone, anyone, to work with him, at least in theory if not in practice.

And so I was introduced to the woodsman. It didn't go well. It was barely an interview in the customary sense as I was paraded before him. He barked contemptuously that I didn't look up to the job. He was right of course for I was scarcely five feet tall and skinny as a rake. Dad, who had accompanied me, didn't appear at all hopeful, however I had one crucial factor in my favour, I was cheap, really, really cheap.

The woodsman was cornered, it was a difficult decision, if he rejected me he would have to find someone else, probably at a greater cost, winter was rapidly approaching and he was desperate to begin cutting chestnut. Begrudgingly he agreed to take me on a trial basis and made it clear that as long as things went smoothly I would be tolerated, but only just. I was to be self-employed and paid for the work I did. The woodsman provided me with a light axe, and a bill-hook for trimming off the frith, the cost of which would come out of my first earnings. One of the most important pieces of equipment was a makeshift measuring stick incised with deep notches which were used to determine what could be made from a length of chestnut, it was important that the calculation was correct in order to minimise waste. Over the next weeks and months I would spend untold hours searching for that blessed stick, for once put down it became just another chestnut pole and blended into the background as well as any chameleon.

On the job training was rudimentary at best; however I soon began to learn the potential of a length of chestnut. Was it right for splitting to make posts or rails or maybe cleft again for paling? Little was wasted; smaller wood could make broom handles, bean poles or even clothes props. Every piece had to be trimmed and stacked according to size ready to be worked during the summer months.

Our workplace was Flexham Park at Petworth, a great wood bounded on the west side by Kingspit Lane and to the east by Wakestone. Dense with chestnut and occasional native trees the wood is nowadays popular with dog walkers and ramblers but until quite recently it was possible to spend a month out there without seeing another person, no right to roam in those days. Then the place was thick with an almost physical sense of isolation. It was easy to become disorientated with no visible landmarks and in winter months no sun to get ones bearings. Only the occasional hum of the distant A272 would give a degree of

direction.

It was not long before it became obvious that the woodsman was only just tolerating me. He was missing the solitude that he had previously enjoyed and was beginning to work further away from me. Now I would only see him once or twice a day. The noise of his chainsaw would get fainter and I would be left to clear an area after he had felled all of the standing chestnut. Huge bonfires of frith and underwood would light up the late afternoon gloom making the blackness of the surrounding woods encroach menacingly into the clearing. It was important that nothing was left on the ground as the Leconfield Estate would check in the spring and unburnt frith would be frowned upon.

Summer months would be spent at the camp set up in the woods close to a ride with access to a road. The temporary shelter would be built with tarpaulins, stretched across chestnut poles or attached to large trees, which gave some protection from the weather. Great mounds of chestnut would be stacked around ready to be worked; the screech of the saw bench and the dull thud of the mallet on the froe would shatter the peace of the woods. Endless piles of shavings and sawdust dotted the area around the camp. Palings would be stacked ready to be collected by the fence maker, they and their lorry a rare but welcome intrusion into our lives. The solitude of the winter months evaporated as necessity forced the woodsman and I together though there was still little or no affinity between us, as before it was simply a working relationship and no question of any rapport.

Winter would come again and now the woodsman would drop me off in the morning and I would not see him again until it was dark and time to go home. The work was arduous and the solitude disheartening, what's more the penny a length I received for cleaning the chestnut and burning the frith barely paid my keep and after a couple of winters I gave it up. I am not sure that I was happy; I think the woodsman probably was.

Miles

Revisiting Mrs Adsett

In the March magazine we reproduced a letter from Mrs Vivien Clay concerning her grandfather Thomas Walter Hampshire. He had been a regular visitor to Petworth and there was a little documentation suggesting a connection with the Leconfield Estate. Vivien assumed he had been born at Petworth and was a little surprised to find that this was not the case. Vivien knew of her family visiting Petworth at intervals from the 1920s and there was recollection and specific

photographs from 1950. Vivien's cousins Maureen, Elaine and Eddie could remember staying with Mrs Alice Adsett at 301A North Street at that time but Vivien never did. There was no obvious family connection and the link with Mrs Adsett was unexplained.

If we have not resolved the query we have stirred echoes of a long-forgotten Petworth, courtesy of the Adsett and Thomas families. Brian Adsett, as a boy growing up at 3 Preyste Cottages in North Street, some three hundred yards up from Mrs Adsett visited his grandmother at least twice a week. An Aunt Nell (Mrs Hill) lived nearby. "Granny" Adsett would move to Grove Street in the early 1950s and die, aged 83, in 1960.



Walter Adsett.

In 1939 Mrs Adsett was living with her husband and daughter Marjorie, later Mrs Pottington, at 307a. Mrs Adsett would be widowed in 1943 and move to other Leconfield accommodation in Grove Street at some time after 1950. Her husband worked on the Leconfield Estate and had sustained shrapnel wounds in the 1914-1918 war, his mouth being slightly drawn on the left hand side. It would appear that disability had led to him being assigned a position in Lord Leconfield's laundry where he was popularly known as "Father". It is uncertain when he began at the laundry but he was at work there when the bomb fell on the school in 1942,



This photograph preserved in the Thomas family seems evocative of an era. South Grove in the background mid-1930s. The figure with the sandwich-board is unidentified.

he was badly injured and died in April 1943. His grave and that of his wife adjoins that to the boys killed in the school and is a designated Commonwealth War Grave. His grandsons Norman and Ron Thomas visited him at Roehampton Hospital in 1943. As was the custom of the time children were not allowed entry but he came to the door and gave each of them a wartime orange. A family memory is of him going to the butchers to buy blood to feed the pear tree which went with 307a and grew immediately adjacent to Thompsons Hospital. Extensive allotment and orchard land then lay to the east of 307a and 307b.

307a is now incorporated with what was once 307b and the garden entrance on North Street has now been absorbed into the entrance to Thompsons Hospital. 307b was home to the Madgwick family and a photograph of a Patrol Scout standing by the Obelisk in North Street is of Mr Madgwick.

Some of the photographs surviving with Vivien Clay and her family show the War Memorial at Littlehampton (newly renovated in 2017). An Ernest Madgwick appears on this and it would seem that members of the Adsett and Madgwick family visited soon after the memorial was erected. Photographs of the memorial and unidentified family and probably friends come from soon after the war.

Born at Portslade in 1885, Ernest Madgwick had served in the 3rd Battalion, East Kent Regiment and died at home (presumably of wounds) on the 15th December 1916. It seems reasonable to suppose that Ernest was related to the Adsett's neighbour Mr Madgwick.

Photographs preserved in the Thomas family evoke a close-knit working Petworth that has all but disappeared. When first married, both the Adsett and Thomas families appear to have moved into the newly built "New Cottages" in Station Road, popularly known as "Lloyd George" Cottages. This would be on the eve of the 1914-1918 war. A photograph from the 1930s of an unidentified man with a sandwich board advertising a Whit Monday dance in the Town Hall suggests a Petworth before television of cards at home with neighbours, whist drives and the rest. At the very least we can dimly sense how the 1914-1918 war impacted on the lives of ordinary people.

From the Armoury to Gallipoli

I have lived in Tillington since 2000 and have a background in research although not in history. It all began, I suppose, with attendances at All Hallows on Remembrance Sunday. In those days Jack Holloway, Tillington through and through, would intone the names of those who fell in both wars. His deep voice gave me the impression that these men had been his personal friends. In the literal

sense, of course, most could not have been. He would begin the list of Great War dead alphabetically with the three Barrington-Kennett brothers, no more than names to me then. Three brothers from a single family! I wanted to find out more, beginning with the eldest brother, Basil, thinking that the research would make a short piece in the Parish magazine.

I soon found that Basil had a definite place in history: In 1912 he was appointed the first Adjutant of the Royal Flying Corps. Before long I was on the trail of the other two brothers only to find that there were in fact four brothers. The two younger boys, Victor and Aubrey, fell serving their country with the Royal Flying Corps and the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry respectively. The fourth, Godwin survived. He joined the 4th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment in 1909 with the rank of Second Lieutenant, but by 1914 he had found his way to East Africa and was serving with Ross's Scouts, a private cavalry regiment operating along the border with German East Africa. This outfit was soon disbanded and Godwin spent the rest of his war with various African regiments.

It was now 2012 and I realised that in another two years we would be commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War. I quickly knew that I wanted to remember our parish soldiers by mounting an exhibition in 2014 in All Hallows' Church. If I was to do this, however, I could not research some men and leave out others, so I studied the names on the two memorial brass plaques either side of the nave. Thirty in all, and I would add another, Captain Charles Wilson, Royal Army Medical Corps. He was the Petworth and district doctor, living in North Street, but spent a good deal of his time tending the sick and needy in Tillington Parish. He was much loved and his memory is kept alive with a memorial tablet on the north wall of our Church. Now I knew that I had to research all thirty-one men.

I began to search the census and local church baptism records at the WSRO in Chichester, military history sites on the internet and spent long hours in the National Archives (TNA) at Kew. I purchased perhaps too many military books and visited RAF bases and museums. Together with my wife, I visited twenty-six Commonwealth War Graves and Memorials in France and Belgium. I had several interesting conversations with Yvonne Noakes (née Dummer), Bill Bryder in Tillington and Melvyn Bridger in Petworth and managed to make contact with a surviving relative of the Barrington-Kennett family (living in Indonesia).

Whilst the TNA held excellent records for officers of the Great War, there was a limited amount of information for 'other ranks'. Their records were housed in London and during the Second World War an enemy bomb destroyed the building and most of the contents. What remained was designated the 'burnt records'. I was only able to find records for nine soldiers out of the twenty-seven other ranks.

Medal Index Cards and Battalion War Diaries, however, proved to be an excellent source for individual details such as army number, regiment and date of entry into a theatre of war. The diaries provided a daily record of battalion movements and battles fought.

Local men enlisted at the Petworth Armoury in the Tillington Road (opposite the Sylvia Beaufoy car park), a building that easily goes unnoticed and few people appreciate its place in the history of Petworth. I often think of the eager young men passing through the narrow hallway to wait excitedly on the small square of grass, just inside the park walls. The recruiting sergeant received two shillings and sixpence for each man enlisted, a sizeable sum in those days, and one which perhaps encouraged a 'blind eye' being turned to under age recruits. Lord Leconfield was an ardent and active supporter of recruiting and promised that any Estate worker who enlisted would have his old job back when he returned. As we know, of course, many did not return.

Most local young men enlisting at the Armoury joined D Company, 4th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment. This battalion originally had eight recruiting centres throughout the county (Companies A-H). The regiment was part of the Territorial Force and as such early recruits only signed up to fight on the Home Front. This was 1914, when there was a widespread fear that the Germans would quickly invade the south coast of England. After some six months training the battalion was stationed in Newhaven on coastal defence duties. It soon became evident that an invasion was not imminent and the 4th Battalion was needed overseas. The men were 'invited' to sign the Imperial Service Obligation which released them from the 'Home Front only' agreement and allowed them to be posted overseas. For the 4th Battalion, overseas was to be Gallipoli where they landed on 9 August 1915. Churchill's idea was to open a new front to attack Germany from another direction. He did not, however, take into account the mountainous terrain on the Gallipoli peninsula and particularly he grossly underestimated the fighting qualities of the Turkish Forces. In addition the insanitary conditions quickly brought disease and it is said that this was a more deadly enemy than the Turks. Of 213,000 casualties, 145,000 were attributed to dysentery and gastroenteritis. By December 1915 it was clear that the situation was hopeless and the troops were withdrawn to Egypt. The 4th Battalion remained in this area until 1917 when they travelled by sea to Italy and on to the Western Front.

My early research did indeed lead to a successful Centenary Exhibition (between the symbolic dates of 4 August to 11 November 2014) where, I like to believe, all thirty-one soldiers regained some of their personality and could no longer be just names on a brass plaque. For their sacrifice the least we can do is to

make sure they are never forgotten. My own tribute to these brave young men was to write a book, made more special by the exciting photographs and information given to me by relatives of the soldiers during the course of the exhibition.

Trevor Purnell was talking to the Editor – to be continued.

[I reviewed Trevor's ensuing book *Village Boys Still* in the March magazine. Trevor has a limited number of copies remaining at £14.95. They are available direct from Trevor on 01798 344040 or trevorpurnell@btinternet.com or Tudor Cottage, Tillington, GU28 0RA or at the Petworth Bookshop.

A factual commentary is provided by the extracts from Dora Older's diary published in PSM in 2012 and 2013. Her brother was with the Royal Sussex at Gallipoli. Ed.]

The happy phantom of Arthur Bell

If you have *The Book of Sussex Verse* (1914) or *Another Book of Sussex Verse* (1928), or *The Sussex Bedside Anthology* (1950) then you may have read some of the poems of Arthur F. Bell. His 'Song of Praise for West Sussex' mentions Midhurst, Petworth, Pulborough, Storrington, the River Arun, and Chanctonbury Ring, delineating just indeed which part of West Sussex it was that he held so dear. 'On Bury Combe' describes the same region, also noting Washington and Steyning, among others, and the poem 'A Home-Coming' adds Thakeham and Duncton to the list of his favourite places of northern West Sussex. His beautiful little poem 'A Sussex Shepherd's Song' is also set in the western weald, and it is a Sussex take of the Tam Lin story, telling how once a man has kissed a fairy maiden his old life becomes meaningless and he just yearns to hold her again.

'Up above Sullington, there as I lay,
Came on me unaware
A maid stepping out on the Arundel way
With the sunshine hot on her hair.'

Arthur Bell had just one collection of his poems, *The Dear Land of the Heart*, published in 1913 by Combridges of Hove who also published the two books of Sussex verse. Indeed, Arthur was one of the main people who helped produce *The Book of Sussex Verse* and he wrote the Foreword for it. He was also the author of *Leaders of English Literature*, published in 1915, and he wrote the Introduction for *The Poems of Gray* which came out in the same year. But sadly he seems to have only begun writing quite late in his years, and the shining light of his life and work

glimmered for a just a few blessed summers in Sussex before his death at the age of forty-three.

The first poem in *The Dear Land of the Heart* is 'The Happy Phantom' where he writes that 'My ghost shall go on a North wind, To the combe of a Sussex down, And hover about a homestead, Where the thatch is old and brown' and:

'Young girls that dream of evening
When the end of dusk is near
Shall think my breath the night wind
That flutters at the ear
My foot the fall of a reddened leaf
That has outstayed its year.'

There is a tender melancholy to many of his poems, coupled with a joy for life and also an eternal love of Sussex and its people. He was friends with Hilaire Belloc to whom Arthur dedicated his 'Sussex Drinking Song' which sings the praises of Storrington beer, and other poems are dedicated to Belloc's wife and daughters. Indeed, 'A Home-Coming' was written for Eleanor Belloc, and with its lines such as 'Land of my heart, friend, bride, and mother, Dreaming of Sussex, we meet again' it could be deduced that Arthur was indeed quite fond of his friend's eldest daughter; and the long poem 'At the Other Bar' is also about a young girl he liked who was just seventeen. Yet perhaps we can forgive him his wistful dreams, even in this day and age, when we consider that Arthur could never have gone a-courting in his youth, much less walked out on a Sunday afternoon with some sweet country girl; and anyway, the one who loved him longest was about twelve years older than he was.

Arthur Francis Bell was born in the first quarter of 1875, in Titchfield on the Hampshire coast. His father William had been born in Bombay and had married there in 1833 Ann Richardson Thatcher, who had also been born in Bombay. They had two children, and William worked in the civil service. Then, sometime after the birth of their second child in 1844, in the 1850s probably, they moved to England and came to Titchfield. Ann died in 1864, and two years later, William married Mary Brace, who was some 27 years younger than him. They had five children, of whom Arthur was the fourth. Between his birth and that of his younger brother in 1877, the family moved to Brighton. Just before or just after this move into Sussex, Arthur suffered a terrible accident which left him lame in both legs for the rest of his life. I think I read somewhere that the incident occurred in his father's stables, but I'm not certain about this. His friend Maude D. Petre writes:

'The accident which befell him in infancy, and which marked his whole life with a vein of tragedy, did also contribute to making him the man he was; a fighter, who wrung from life all that she might so easily have withheld; one who joined a manly acceptance of his handicap with a virile resolution to miss as little as possible through that handicap. And did he really lose much? Did he draw less delight, either physical or aesthetic, from nature, as he followed her by-ways in his little pony cart, than the stout walker with his sense of bodily exhilaration? Was he less of a cricketer, as he attended the field on crutches or in a bath-chair, than those who held the bat, or cast the ball? Did anyone of them enter more ardently than he into the ethical issues and technical glory of the game?

'His brilliant, many-sided mind was of those from which anything might have been expected, for his range of perception seemed almost unlimited. "To be imperceptive" – this, as he would often say, was the supreme offence; it was not given to all to do things, but not to see and feel them was to let life itself slip by unused. Perhaps he understood and cared for too many things to follow the narrower path of achievement – poet, essay-writer, highly-gifted teacher, last of all, painter of the scenes he loved so well – he did, in each thing, enough to prove that he realised the possibilities of the craft; enough to mark his work with a note of personal distinction ...'

Those last two paragraphs are from the Introduction Maude D. Petre wrote for *The Happy Phantom*, or *Sussex Revisted*, a tribute to Arthur Bell that was published in 1919, a year after his death. This gorgeous little book includes poems and essays by him, some stories, and even four of his drawings of local Sussex scenes. Born in 1863, Maude Petre had become a Roman Catholic nun, and later a writer and critic for the 'modernist' movement within the Church. She was the great friend of George Tyrrel (1861-1909) – an Irish Jesuit priest who was expelled from the Society in 1906 for his modernist views, and later ex-communicated. Maude had a cottage built for him in the garden of her house in Storrington, and stoutly supported him for the rest of his life. Indeed, her house became a sort of commune for other modernist thinkers of that time. Arthur knew them both well, and one of his poems is titled: 'In Memoriam George Tyrrel' and another, 'Last Night' is dedicated to M. D. Petre. When Arthur died, he left all his money to Maude, and he was buried beside George Tyrrel's grave in Storrington churchyard; and when Maude died, in 1942, she was buried beside Arthur's grave.

I think Arthur Bell is probably mostly remembered now, if even at all, as a Sussex poet, yet in fact it is his stories which show him at his best as a writer. Some of his poems were originally published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other such periodicals just before the Great War, as he notes in *The Dear Land of the Heart*, but there is no indication in *The Happy Phantom* as to whether any of his stories had

previously appeared elsewhere. An all too brief part of the first one, 'A Home-Coming' is set in Petworth, on a journey through to Storrington (which is where Arthur lived for the last quarter of his life) and it is an enchanting little gem. Yet there are others in the book which gleam brighter still, especially the four or five stories that feature a man called Laker who worked as a gardener – almost certainly Frank Laker, who was Hilaire Belloc's gardener at Shipley for many years. Alas though, *The Happy Phantom* is a rare book to come by – but I hope that it might get published again, because the stories in it are all very evocative and mostly of Sussex, and Arthur Bell deserves to be read much more.

Shaun Cooper

By Hurston Mill – a story by Arthur F. Bell

In every year there comes a day which is the first day of spring, not by the foolish rule of calendars, but by the sound decision of wise men who watch closely the seasons. To us folk of the Weald this day comes mostly after rain and much wind, and begins with a great stillness before dawn and a queer singing of thrushes, not like their usual jolly singing at all, but low and choked and passionate, as if they said "My dear, my dear!" to the young spring, and then got so near to tears in their tenderness that they could only say those best and tenderest of words over again, "My dear, my dear!" And waking early to get sense of this stillness and this strange way the birds have in it, I year by year form the same resolution, and start forthwith to carry it out. I rise very quickly, collect a few necessaries, and then set forth to find old Laker, and tell him that it is the first day of spring and we must go to catch trout at Hurston.

Old Laker is a very wise old man indeed. Once, long years ago, being a seafaring-man, he was cast away with a few companions on a very unpleasant island, and came near to starving, but this he has very properly forgotten or merely recalls to make an impression on strangers, and he spends his days gardening in Storrington town for such people as are too rich or idle or silly to garden for themselves. In no way does he show his wisdom more excellently than in his refusal to call any man master, or to contract with any man for regular service. For a day or two, if there is gardening to be done, he will dig and hoe manfully, and then will take a spell of pleasant idleness, talking well with all and any who are likewise disengaged, and drinking often of the brown beer they sell at the "White Horse." He is an old man of middle height and wonderfully upright, with shrewd, small blue eyes, and a great tawny beard that has flecks of white in it.

On these still mornings, when I go with my talk of spring and Hurston trout, he is always ready to fall in with my plans. "I had promised to give the Rector a day's digging," he says; "but I reck'n that 'll stand over. Best o' gardening is what you don't do one day you can leave till next."

And so, after a spell of preparation, we set off together, out on the road past Parham Park, where the herons are busy building and the trees are misty with coming leaves, thus over Wickford Bridge, where the water runs shallow among beds of cresses, then off towards Chiltington and the marshy meadow-land that is called Muck Mead, till at last we come in sight of Hurston Mill and its mill stream. Nowadays the mill runs no longer. Storm and time have shattered and stripped the tiles from the granary roof, broken the glass of the granary windows, and rotted the planking of the granary walls. A rich neighbour bought and carried off the great wheel some years ago for a mill of his own. But the stream abides, the merriest, noisiest stream in all Sussex. Downhill it runs to us as we face the outworn building, with a brabble and clatter like that of some brook of the north, rippling and swirling under overhanging brambles, alders, and bushes of thorn. On either side of it the grass is rich and full of flowers, clumps of primroses, fragile grey ladies' smocks, and violets. Just below the mill two great elms lie felled and stripped of their bark, their branches looking like the feelers of some giant polypus. Upon the trunk of one of them I sit, and begin to fit together my tackle.

Now, I suppose at my gear the "well-found" fisherman would raise a hullabaloo of foolish laughter, and I am quite prepared to admit that an eight-foot rod of two joints, with an old-fashioned wheel, is not calculated to strike awe into the heart of any man. But no way am I concerned with the "well-found" man or his chiding. If I were I should not fish at Hurston at all, for of nothing would the "well-found" man so stoutly assure me as of the fact that in Sussex there are no trout worth the taking. I know enough to discount that statement, and I know enough to be sure that for Sussex trout there is no deadly lure but the clean red brandling I attach to the tiny hook that finishes my cast of finest Hercules gut. Then I creep behind the shelter of an overhanging clump of bramble, and begin casting up stream, letting the current carry my bait down to and past me. Twice I repeat the operation without attracting any attention, and then scarcely has the worm been in the water a second before there comes that sharp and sudden tug that is always a fresh experience, always a new and inspiring thrill through a man's hand and arm to the very heart of him. A turn of the wrist makes me sure of my capture, and then follows a splendid couple of minutes while he tries my resource and skill to the utmost. In open water the odds against him would be overwhelming, but they are diminished nigh to vanishing point by the density and continuousness of the overgrowth on the banks. Once suffer him to bore to this side or that and my line

must inevitably be fouled inextricably, and his escape made certain. We must keep the fight in mid-stream or I have lost him. We must keep the fight in mid-stream even if I have to risk one of his leaps or rushes snapping at my cast. And in mid-stream we keep it till he begins to show signs of weariness, and old Laker, ambling up to inquire if I've "ketched e'er a one yet," deftly whips him out with the landing-net. Clean and fat, he is well over a pound in weight, and gives the right lie to the "well-found" man and his carping.

And meanwhile around us the spring day waxes, windless and blue and balmy. The colours deepen, and the light mists, that hung over the lowlands as we came, disappear. High overhead, in the clear sky of noon, I see the first sand-martins whirling, fore-runners of all the tribes of swallows. Like a sudden line of light a white-throat flashes past me, perches on a spray of hornbeam a score of yards away, and begins his pretty series of short flights, dashing off into the air a dozen times and always returning to his original resting-place. Far off, from over Parham way, I fancy, the first cuckoo rings out his two notes, and far off on the other side of me another cuckoo answers.

After this comes a lull, and we move off up stream. As we go we talk of men and matters, and I hear again from old Laker the meaning of many mysteries he is always glad to unfold to me – as, for instance, the cause why Pulboro' folk are a mean race compared with the men of Storrington, and why the people of Amberley are reputed to be web-footed, and a many suchlike wonders. To a stranger old Laker would talk differently. Most likely he would tell him of his seafaring days and promise as a favour to show him some day the printed account of it he has, framed, in his cottage, and in which he is really not at all interested. But old Laker and I are friends, and as such we know that the only true talk of one man to another is about homely things. An hour after noon we lunch, not off "a piece of powdered beef and a radish or two," as Walton advises, but off white bread and red cheese and the bonniest of brown beer, which is all of it the fare of right-thinking people. Sometimes we catch more fish, and very often we do not. But we are always sorry to go home, because this day at Hurston comes but once a year, and the years of a man's life are pitifully few.

Petworth Society Dinner Quiz 2017 – answers

Places in Sussex (not just towns and villages)

1. Petworth House
2. Tillington
3. Selsey Bill
4. West Wittering
5. Duncton
6. Cowdray Park
7. Bognor Regis
8. Horsham
9. East Dean
10. Cocking
11. Warnham
12. Rottingdean
13. Northchapel
14. Peacehaven
15. Fishbourne
16. Rogate
17. Loxwood
18. Turner's Hill
19. Lewes
20. Hastings
21. Seven Sisters
22. Goodwood
23. Rye
24. Findon
25. Cuckfield
26. Brighton Pier
27. Ford
28. Charlton
29. Henfield
30. Crawley

Linda and Betty's end of season walk.

22nd October

If an incentive was needed to complete this walk it would surely be the expectation of the traditional refreshments at Osiers Farm later in the afternoon, but that was still to come, first the walk. Twelve plus two dogs, parking at Hampers Common, home territory for some of us. We skirt the bonfire which is rising slowly like the metaphorical phoenix from the ashes. The 'Trust' car park is abnormally busy, evidently the stag rutting has brought in more visitors than usual. Needless to say the deer are conspicuous by their absence.

In the Park we follow the wall past the kennels, the hounds ignore us. The weather is mild and dry though the clouds are 'scudding' and there is always the danger of a brief shower. Past the Polish Lake – do people still call it that? No evidence now of the nearby Polish Camp. The Beelzebub Oak, probably not the original, but certainly ancient. A fallen tree, perhaps a photo opportunity here. It is possible at this point to have one foot in Petworth parish and the other in Tillington, a reminder of the Beating of the Bounds walk, was it really fourteen years ago?



Photograph by Kim Leslie.

The line of walkers is stretching out, some are chatting oblivious to the others striding on ahead. Linda suggests a short cut, eagerly taken and we walk back around the lake, this time we get a glimpse of the deer in the distance. The Park seems full of people where once you could walk for hours and not see another person. Progress I guess.

Back through Hampers Common Lodges and to the cars for the short trip to Osiers. The rain is just starting as Janet welcomes us in. The table is laid with freshly made sandwiches, scones, and of course the cake. Coffee and tea (Earl Grey for Peter) is consumed in quantities and everyone settles down to ruminate on earlier visits. Peter doesn't think that the Bramley in the garden has produced as many apples as other years, but he still manages to fill a bag with windfalls. The rain is heavy now and the cottage is comfortable, no incentive to leave, but time is getting on. John B. is going to a show in London and needs to get home. Appetites sated the walkers bid their fond farewell to Osiers.

A nice walk, by no means arduous, but once again the company was first-class. Thank you Linda and Betty and a very belated happy birthday to Janet D.

Miles

Old Petworth traders (24). Mrs Gordon Knight

The 170 issues of this Magazine cover a period equal in time to that between the death of Queen Victoria and the end of the Second World War: if that had been a time of unprecedented change, it would be paralleled or exceeded by that since the Society's first tentative "Bulletin" in 1974. For those early issues Colonel Maude, the Society's founder and a nonagenarian, was, like George Garland, still alive. Garland died in 1978.

If there are few now who remember Gordon Knights the grocers on the corner of East Street and New Street, there were many in 1982 who had known Gordon Knights as a going concern. Like so many of the older Petworth shops, the premises on the corner were part of the defining fabric of a post-war town apprehensive of a problematic future. Later Talbots, continuing the tradition, then Quest, a marvellously inventive gift shop, then a travel agent, it is now Hut.

Brenda Knight, daughter of Mrs Gordon Knight¹, could cast her mind back over the best part of a century, and remember the Knight premises extending down New Street to take in New Street House (now to let) and what is now an estate agents, this originally serving as Brenda's grandparents' kitchen. J. L. (James Loten) Knight had used an upstairs room at New Street House, home to the Knight family, to blend Messrs Knights' own brand of tea "packaging it all himself

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The Coronation
June 26/02 Committee

Bought of **JAMES L. KNIGHT,**

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25	Tea	1/10	£ 2. 5. 10
28	Butter	1/	1. 8. 0
65	Loaf	2 1/4	12. 2 1/4
			<u>£ 14. 6. 0 1/4</u>

902

Gordon Knight
July 5/1902
J. Loten

With Thanks

and using the distinctive spouted tea-maker's vessel." There had been no shop on the premises before J. L. Knight's time. Brenda herself never worked in the shop but retained a hazy recollection of bacon hanging on hooks to smoke and of the slow fire beneath. Perhaps she was simply reflecting family tradition. Her father had died young and her mother had had to take over the business, employing a manager and a male assistant. Competition, if fierce, was friendly enough. Petworth was an insular town, and groceries bought locally. Provisions were Knights' speciality, bacon particularly, if no longer smoked on the premises. Packaging was, of course, from bulk and greengrocery essentially local. Suppliers like S and W would have a single exclusive outlet in the town, and S and W products were something of a commercial asset. Brenda remembered particularly the distinctive "long branch" pineapple cut in long rectangles. Another supplier was Warren and Reynolds. Their cheese was much in demand for the audit dinner at Petworth House, the company traveller selecting the cheese himself. Knights, like other stores, ground their coffee in house. Mrs Knight didn't think much of the shop celery, one of the children being regularly dispatched to Egdean for the family supply. Brenda remembered the Rifle Brigade and the Kings Royal Rifle Corps being billeted in the town in the winter of 1914-1915. The latter's outdoor kitchen being in the grounds of The East Street Hermitage.

P.

1. See PSM27. March 1982..

Petworth ex libris

There are many rewards for being involved with the monthly book sale, not least the unlimited supply of reading material, and of course the good-natured company enjoyed on the day of the sale. But there are other less obvious perks, one of which is my collection of bookplates which I have managed to put together over the last twenty or so years. Numbering several hundred they are contained neatly in files, ready along with so many other things to be researched when I eventually find the time. Some of the plates came from books that were destined for recycling, usually damaged beyond saving, however others were found in books that remained perfectly saleable and from which by use of a good kettle I was able to remove the label in much the same way a philatelist would steam a stamp from an envelope.

It seems natural that as the books are sourced at Petworth there should be a few

local bookplates, in fact there are not as many as one would think, perhaps no more than a dozen in the whole collection.

Of them all it is likely that the Elizabeth Wyndham label is of the greatest interest. The adopted daughter of Charles, 3rd Baron Leconfield and his wife Violet Elizabeth was a close friend and confidant of Quentin Crisp. Considered a great beauty she was an accomplished linguist who worked for a period at the top secret Bletchley Park. The bookplate, a seemingly hurried



sketch, was designed and drawn by the celebrated Irish artist Jack Butler Yeats, brother of the poet W.B. Yeats and printed by the Cuala Press at their Dublin workshop. Surviving Cuala bookplates are difficult to come by as they were only produced by the press when work was quiet. Like this one they often depict rural Irish scenes, though in this instance the drawing has clear similarities to Yeats 1925 oil 'The Hackney Car'. It seems likely that the bookplate was printed sometime during the Second World War and certainly before 1946 when the press closed, this would also explain the poor quality paper on which it is printed.

Perhaps the most prolific user of bookplates at Petworth was Violet Lady Leconfield, a somewhat unconventional character. There are at least four

individually designed bookplates bearing her name, mostly formal they include this one showing a currently unidentified crest. The artist is also unknown.

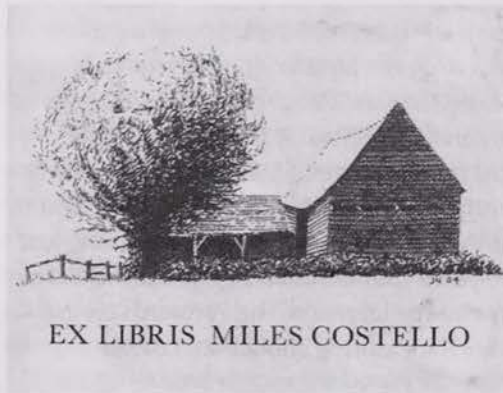
Another Violet Leconfield bookplate is one illustrating the long front of Petworth House and the famous 'Tijou' gates. The design is in the hand of William P. Barrett bookplate artist to the Prince of Wales and future King George V, produced in 1913 it is the earliest of the Violet Leconfield bookplates coming just two years after her marriage to the 3rd Baron. It is also the largest of the Petworth House ex-libris measuring about 9 x 11.5cm.





Besides those from Petworth House there are also several mass produced bookplates found in school or church prize books generally awarded for attendance or excellence. Examples include Frank Penfold at Petworth Boys' School and Mary Thorpe at the East Street Girls' School both awarded for regular attendance in 1911 and another for Dora Hill who received the Rectors Prize at Petworth Sunday School in 1927 that label carrying the signature of the Rector V.P. Powell.

There are others that I would like to show but space is limited, and so finally my favourite bookplate. This is my own, designed and drawn by Petworth artist Jonathan Newdick it now decorates special books in my library including many on



local subjects. Jonathan has succeeded in producing a miniature art print of Wassell Mill Barn at Ebernoe a version of which can be found in Peter Jerrome's book *Not All Sunshine Hear*. Many readers will have seen similar drawings in the artists seminal work on redundant farm buildings *LP: Leconfield Petworth*.

Miles



PETWORTH SOCIETY ACTIVITIES SHEET

Winter Programme – please keep for reference

MONTHLY MEETINGS

ADMISSION £5 – LECONFIELD HALL – 7.30PM – REFRESHMENTS – RAFFLE

Friday 9th December:

Bertie Pearce: Charles Dickens with magic!

[Don't miss this! P.]

Wednesday 25th January:

Miles and Peter: Petworth: As you like it? (2)

[Some surprises! P.]

On **2nd March** David Stephens will portray Hilaire Belloc in person.

Details in March Magazine.

BOOK SALE – Saturday 10th December:

For next year see reverse.

WALKS AND VISITS

Begin in spring.

We do have some remaining copies of "Petworth: Most of the Time". £15. Post free direct from the Window Press, Trowels, Pound Street, Petworth, GU28 0DX or at the monthly Book Sale, also at the Petworth Bookshop. If ordering direct please make cheques payable to the **Window Press**.

The special offer for Peter Jerrome: "Petworth from the beginnings to 1660" and "Petworth from 1660 to the present day" is available until 31st December but stocks are now low. Also at the Petworth Bookshop – not suitable for postal ordering.

Peter

November 22nd

The Petworth Society Book Sale Calendar 2017

SECOND SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

January 14

July 8

February 11

August 12

March 11

September 9

April 8

October 14

May 13

November 11

June 10

December 9

Books to donate?

Call:

Miles on 01798 343227

Peter on 01798 342562

