

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*magazine*



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DECEMBER



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'Warning. Bridge dangerous. Keep off'. Rotherbridge, possibly in the early 1950s. Hungers Lane is just out of shot to the right. See 'Fatal Accident at Petworth' on page 47. Photographer unknown.

**FRONT COVER**

Soldiers on Bury Hill in about 1900.  
A late Victorian lantern slide.

**BACK COVER**

A facsimile of an advertisement in the *Farmers Weekly* in 1975. See page 33.

## THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

### 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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The Petworth Society supports the Leconfield Hall, Petworth Cottage Museum, the Coultershaw Beam Pump and the Friendship Centre.

### WEBSITE

[www.petworthsociety.co.uk](http://www.petworthsociety.co.uk)

## CONTENTS

	The Petworth Society	2
	Chairman's notes	4
Rosemary Thompson	Thank you for the music	5
Miles Costello	Epitaph	5
Joan Fines née Seldon	Scrumpling was seen as quite daring	6
Shaun Cooper	'Making sweet music' – when howlers charmed the orchards	11
Debby Stevenson	Petworth Society Crossword	19
Keith Thompson	Horticulture and the Regency lady	20
Old Petworth traders No. 31	Cockshutts and the Bun House	22
Peter Jerrome	Has the <i>PSM</i> taken on advertising?	24
Michael Wall	Petworth was full of 'aunts'	26
Roger Wootton	'If you could draw it you should be able to make it'	33
The September book sale	'I wasn't hit. I was at Salonica'	38
Peter Jerrome	Stansted, September 30th	40
Miles Costello	From Facebook	42
Photographs	The Petworth Boys' School Memorial stone dedication	44
Keith Thompson	A day in the life of a film extra	46
	From the National Newspaper Archive	47
Photographs	The Petworth Society annual dinner	48

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I have sometimes allowed pictures to speak for themselves, hence there is no formal account of the Society dinner at Petworth House, returning after a brief absence. I hope the slightly adjusted format will become a pattern for future years. Similarly, I give no detailed commentary on the rededication of the Boys' School memorial, 77 years to the day since the tragedy, the service was beautifully conducted by Father Mark and there was a very large attendance in indifferent weather that mirrored that of the day itself in 1942. While not technically a Society event, there was a particular resonance for many Society members.

We do not normally make formal recognition of the passing of members but I feel an exception should be made in the case of Jenni Leslie. For some years Jennie with her husband Kim have made the monthly journey to Petworth from their home in Middleton to receive books brought in on the day of the Book Sale and box them ready to be sorted for the next month. It was appropriate that three Book Sale regulars made the journey to Middleton for the funeral service. The Society has lost a great friend and a regular attender at meetings and walks. It is good to know that Kim says he is prepared to continue to come up and help us.



4 Petworth Society Magazine No. 178

## Thank you for the music – the songs we're singing

Rosemary Thompson

We understand that singing is good for us, not only for its physical benefits, but when singing with others, the social aspect can be important too.

Choirs have sprung up everywhere in the last few years, but the Tillington Funsingers are a bit different. They are actually not a choir, but just a group of people from Tillington and the surrounding area who said that they loved to sing but weren't very good and only wanted to sing for fun. Now, four years later that small group has grown and they still meet to enjoy their music, refreshments and each other's company. They do not 'perform' (except last year for the Petworth Friendship Centre) but are going to entertain us at the Society's Christmas Evening on December 16th, along with contributions from other talented friends.

Come and join them for entertainment, raffle and refreshments.

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## Epitaph

Miles Costello

The following elegy appeared in the *Birmingham Journal* of 21 May 1864. I wonder if anyone can shed light on the whereabouts of the tomb, or indeed the identity of either Honest John Crump or the anonymous author of the lament.

Petworth Churchyard.  
Once ruddy and plump  
But now a pale lump  
Beneath this soft clump  
Lies Honest John Crump,  
Who wished his neighbour no evil,  
Although by death's thump  
He is laid on his rump,  
Yet up he shall jump  
When he hears the last trump  
And triumph o'er death and the devil.

---

Opposite. Petworth Boys' School gardening in about 1917. See page 44.

## Scrumping was seen as quite daring

Joan Fines née Seldon in conversation with Miles Costello

My father was badly wounded and taken prisoner during the Great War; shot in the arm he was unable to do any supposedly useful work and so became eligible for a prisoner swap and was fortunate enough to be sent home. Once back in England he slowly began to recover from his injury and before he was demobbed was given a crash course in hairdressing. An unlikely choice of occupation considering his disability but in the event it did enable him to earn a precarious living. In fact Dad went on to do many different types of jobs beside hairdressing. I forgot to mention that he was also almost totally deaf as a result of his injuries and could only hear with the aid of a large box-like amplifier that was strapped to his chest.

Mum was Mabel Wilson and her father had been head groom for Lord Leconfield at his London House. Why he came down to work for his Lordship at Petworth is unclear but he and his wife and three daughters, Mabel, Ethel and Daisy settled into an estate cottage in Cherry Orchard.

I understand that my parents met when Mabel was working in the mill at Coultershaw. Dad's family, the Seldons, were farmers at Duncton and he would have to get up early to help milk the cows and then load the churns on to a cart and take them to Petworth Station to be put on the train. I suppose that the mill being close to the station they had met on occasions and things went on from there. They were married at Petworth shortly after the end of the Great War and moved into a house in the High Street belonging to Mr Hazelman. My mother gave birth to seven children and all but one were born at that house. There was John the eldest followed by me born in 1921, then Daphne, Dennis, Joan, Derek and lastly Evelyn who was born at this house in South Grove.

I went to the infants' school in the high Street where my teacher was Miss Wootton; her sister was also a teacher though she was at the East Street Girls' School. Living in High Street we would wait at home until we heard the big school bell ring and then run as fast as we could so as not to be late, not difficult really as the school was less than hundred yards away where the library is now. In 1930 we moved to South Grove into one of the brand new council houses and I began at the East Street Girls' School. Meanwhile my brother John had gone on to the Boys' School at the bottom of North Street. I was quite lucky as he had much further to go than me and would have to walk all the way back up North Street and through the town for lunch before returning for the afternoon.

Probably three or four miles a day in all weathers, no school lunches in those days.

We girls played stoolball in the Park. The wickets were kept at Miss Wootton's house in Pound Street. She had apple trees in her garden and we would often scrump one or two apples when we went to collect the wickets. Scrumping was seen as quite daring and very naughty in those days. Of course now there are hardly any fruit trees around to scrump from.

Besides hairdressing Dad did various other jobs. He drove a lorry for Mr Sadler and a tractor at Frog Farm. He always seemed to be working at one place or another and in the evenings he did the hairdressing. It was mostly shaves in those days and he charged thrupence. (*3d*, i.e. three pence, a little more than one decimal penny). Mum would stand in the kitchen waiting for Dad to finish a customer so that she could send one of us off to buy food. Dad got eight shillings a week from the army, I suppose it was a pension or maybe for his injury.

There were two International Stores when we lived in High Street and when I was sent to get something from the 'Inters' I would ask Mum if it was top or bottom meaning the one next to the Red Lion or the one in the Square. Whethams were the closest to us in High Street being where the little café is now. Olders were in Angel Street. I would take a jam jar and get *3d* of treacle for Mum to put on the suet puddings that she made, which were cheap and filling. Opposite Olders was a little shop run by a Miss Whitcomb.

Sunday school was in the East Street Girls' School. We would walk over to the big church halfway through the service. Most of us went just to be able to go on the annual outing which would be Littlehampton one year and Bognor the next and so on. Many of the girls had never seen the sea until they went on the outing. Every Sunday evening Dad would go to the Congregational Chapel and I don't recall him ever missing a service. Sometimes he would pop into the Red Lion for a pint afterwards, something that Mum strongly disapproved of, and which led to more than one row. His parents, who came from Chichester, were very religious and if we were visiting them we were expected to attend church twice on a Sunday.

The cinema was at the junction of Pound Street and Station Road. It had a tin roof just like the Iron Room and if it rained during the film you had a job hearing the actor's voices above the rattling on the roof. Mr Collins from Grove Street ran the cinema and I think that he had the new one built, where the youth centre

is now. I used to attend the dancing lessons given by Miss Whitcomb at the Club Room in the High Street next to the White Hart pub. I remember learning the Charleston there with a girl named Vera Curtiss who lived in Middle Street. We had to perform our dance in the Iron Room where Vera was dressed as the man in top hat and tails and me as the lady with a long red wig and flowing dress. I still had the wig until very recently as well as the record player that we used. Miss Whitcomb lived in Percy Terrace in Grove Street.

When we moved to South Grove the houses were brand new and Mum chose the one that I live in now. The green in front of the houses was tarmac in those days. All of the tenants were local families – there were Tipladys, Charmans, Garratts, Smiths, Wakefords, Savage, Talbot, of course Georgie Garland, Ball, and Bartlett just to name a few, of course there have been many other families come and go over the years. After all, I have lived here for ninety years and seen many changes. When we moved in, there was hardly anything between us and the town. Wyndham and Dawtrey Roads and the 'new' estate across the road would come much later.

When South Grove was built there were no electric lights or gas in any of the houses. In fact we had a large oil lamp which father had brought with us from the High street which he had used when hairdressing. There were two black stoves in the house for cooking and heat and a copper in the corner of the kitchen for heating water for washing clothes or the bath.

The old gasworks were just across Station Road and when a dog was put down by the vet it would be sent to there to be cremated and you knew when it was happening because we could smell it at South Grove. Ern Andrews, who lived next door to us worked there. We bought our coke from the gasworks where it had been already used once and we would push a pram down and Mum would try to work out who was on that day, as if it was a friend they would put a sack of fresh coal in with the coke.

When I left school at fourteen it was a Saturday and the very next day I started work at Daintrey house in East Street. The house was divided into two in those days, the Daintrey's having one part while the other was occupied by the two Miss Hastings who I worked for. The job was live-in and I was expected to do all of the housekeeping and cooking, a lot of work for a still young girl and for which I was paid eight shillings out of which I had to give my mum some as she did my washing. I was really quite lonely and so occasionally my sister Daphne would come and stay the night to keep me company and we would sleep top to tail in my bed. My employees did not know that Daphne stayed over and probably would not have approved so we would rise early and she would be gone long before the rest of the house were up and none the wiser for it. On a Saturday I was allowed company for tea if I liked.

After about eighteen months my employers informed me that they were moving away and asked if I wanted to go with them but of course I was still young and I didn't want to go, so I looked for another position. There was nothing local so I applied for and got a job at Henley Common near Fernhurst. Well, the house was a good couple of miles off the main road and quite some walk just to get there. I had to be up at 6 o'clock each morning and have everything out ready for the cook. I was a between maid or a 'tweeny' as they are sometimes called and not much more than a skivvy. It was hard work but once a year the family would have a week away and I would go with them. The first year it was Hayling Island and the second the Isle of Wight, it was quite a treat. Because the cook didn't come I would do the cooking which I suppose was something of a promotion even for a short while.

When the second world war began on we had an evacuee move in with us while Dad went and stayed with a relative of his in London. Dad had learnt to lay bricks and so he was helping to repair bomb-damaged buildings. I remember him saying that most of the damage was to corner buildings which were quite often public

'Shortly after the war broke out I was told that I would have to go and work at Harwood's shell casing factory at Pulborough. I was really quite nervous and on the first evening – it was night work – I kind of deliberately missed the van that was sent to pick me up.'

Joan Fines (on the right) and some of her colleagues in the canteen at the shell casing factory during the second world war.



houses. On one occasion they had finished rebuilding a pub and had a customary pint to celebrate completing the job when the following day the building was down to the ground again after a night of enemy bombing.

My brother Derek was in the Boys' School when it was bombed in September 1942. He was lucky to get out alive though he suffered from his injuries for most of his life. I was in bed having done a night shift when my mother came up the stairs shouting 'Joan get up. The Boys' School has been bombed.' Derek had been rushed to Chichester hospital and so we got a taxi from Harwoods Garage in the Square. When we arrived at the hospital we couldn't find Derek and I was convinced that he had died. Eventually we found him in a huge long ward. Of course the boys who had been taken from Petworth were all black with soot and dust and we didn't recognise him until a voice rang out 'hello Mum' and we were so relieved.

Shortly after the war broke out I was told that I would have to go and work at Harwood's shell casing factory at Pulborough. I was really quite nervous and on the first evening – it was night work – I kind of deliberately missed the van that was sent to pick me up. The following evening I pulled myself together and got in the van and went every night from then on. The van, it was yellow, funny how things stick in your mind, had forms in the back to sit on and if the driver – a man named Morris – went too fast around a corner we would be flung all over the place. The factory was very noisy which made it impossible to speak and we used quite heavy machinery which meant that accidents did occur. I remember a large lady who was working next to me caught her sleeve in a machine and her arm was pulled in. I managed to stop her machine but she was quite badly injured. There was no real consideration for safety and certainly no first aid. I think that the incident went to court but I wasn't called because if I had I would have told the truth and the management didn't want that to come out. It was certainly a dangerous place. Each day there were two shifts of twelve hours and we were paid piece-work for what we did. One day Wally Harwood, knowing that I had experience as a cook, approached me with the idea of providing the girls with a meal during their shift and wanted me to be the cook. I agreed just as long as I was paid the same as the piece-rate girls as it was good money. Wally agreed and so a canteen providing hot meals for 8d a head was set up. The factory was by the railway line in Pulborough but there are houses built on the site now. The shell casings would be moved at night by train and there was a constant chug, chug, chug of the engines as they pulled up the slope by the factory. Now and again there would be a cry of 'Buckets!' We would have to rush out and extinguish the bank fires caused by the sparks from the engines. If the fires had managed to take hold they would have alerted enemy bombers and the factory would have been targeted.

## 'Making sweet music' – when howlers charmed the orchards

Shaun Cooper

Towards the end of 1865 the *Brighton Herald* published an article about Sussex superstitions which notes that: 'Apple howling is a charm supposed to increase the fruitfulness of the orchard, in which a number of lads congregate, and, surrounding the tree, sing a rural song.'<sup>1</sup>

And in an article concerning old Christmas customs, in the *Eastbourne Gazette* in December 1882, it is stated: 'The wassail bowl that once played so conspicuous a part at the Christmas banquet, has become obsolete...'<sup>2</sup>

In the *West Sussex Gazette* in January 1891, it was reported that at Duncton, on the eve of Old Christmas Day: '... the strains of a song were heard. It turned out to be the young bloods of the village wassailing the apple trees to the tune of "The Mistletoe Bough". This is the invariable custom here. One old inhabitant recollects it has been observed for 50 years. It is supposed to have some effect on the apples, which are used to make cider.'<sup>3</sup>

These quotes refer to the ancient custom of wassailing which used to take place during the festive season, usually between Christmas and New Year's Eve. Both featured groups of people congregating at a house or farm and then moving on to the next one, and so on, until they had covered the whole parish. The wassail bowl was traditionally accompanied by some of the women and girls of the village, or by all the members of one family; but the wassailing of the apple trees, also called 'apple howling' in Sussex, was only performed by men and boys – although at a few places, for example in Devon, a girl might also feature in the ritual.

So, in Devon at least, the custom probably would have involved some kind of sexual activities in ancient times. The word 'wassail' comes from the Anglo-Saxon phrase 'Waes Hael' which means: Be of good health – but rites to encourage the fruitfulness of apple trees arose long before the Saxon period. Apples had strong connections with fairies and witches, and apples feature in some mythology and folklore, often in connection with fertility (think of Eve, Aphrodite, Avalon, Dionysus) – so yes, it is quite likely that in ancient times the rites of urging fruit trees to bear more fruit probably did feature a certain amount of licentiousness; indeed, when we read of a young maiden pouring a bottle of cider over the roots in such quaint old rituals, we can be fairly sure that in earlier times, at least in Devon, this was not all that was spilled upon them.<sup>4</sup>

But here in Sussex there are, alas, no mentions of any girls in the reports and reminiscences of apple howling – although some memory of those ancient aspects

of the custom can perhaps be found in a certain old southern song, which was still being sung by wassailers at Christmas in the mid-19th century:

Good master and good mistress	Send out your eldest daughter,
A-setting by your fire,	If you will be so kind;
Remember we poor wastlers	Send out your eldest daughter
Have trudged through dirt and mire.	With strong beer and some wine. <sup>5</sup>

The earliest references to wassailing in this county seem to be in a diary of Revd Giles Moore, Rector of Horsted Keynes, when he wrote for 26th December 1670 that he had given the 'howling boys' six pence;<sup>6</sup> and in the Accounts of Timothy Burrell at Cuckfield, December 1687, where he wrote: 'Howlers, 1s.' (one shilling)<sup>7</sup> The custom survived at Horsted Keynes until the 1880s.<sup>8</sup> This was about the time that it died out in other parts of Sussex too. In her article 'Wassail the Trees' in the *Sussex County Magazine* in 1951, Miss L. N. Candlin noted that the old custom of wassailing fruit trees had been kept up in Sussex until about fifty years earlier, and she added that the last place where apple trees were 'worsled' had been at Duncton, around about 1900. She noted that the rite was always performed on or before 6th January (Old Christmas Night) and that it began when the men met at a pub, to choose the leader and a trumpeter to blow the cow-horn. Then they would go to the nearest farm and ask the farmer if he wanted his trees charmed. Standing around the biggest or oldest apple tree, they recited the wassailing verse, and then all would cheer and make lots of noise, hitting the tree with their sticks, blowing the cow-horn – which was known as 'making sweet music' – in order to drive out any evil spirits that might be hiding there. Then, for the good spirits, pieces of toast were put in the branches, and cider or hot spiced ale was poured over the roots. The article includes a typical example of the wassailing verse from West Sussex, and one from 'out mid-Sussex way'.<sup>9</sup>

Apple howling or wassailing may well have taken place all over the county – but it's got to be said that the surviving evidence does not support that idea. Almost all of the extant references to the custom concern places which are to the north of the Downs. This may in part be due to the fact that apple trees grow better in the Weald than they do in the Downs or near the coast. Horsted Keynes, which is north of Lewes, is the most easterly place in Sussex where we know howling was definitely carried out; and Northchapel is the most westerly place – and there are just about a dozen places in total where it is actually reported to have occurred.

In a long and well-researched letter about wassailing, in the *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer*, in December 1915, it is stated that the custom only occurred: '... in the western part of this county'.<sup>10</sup> That this was written from a Bexhill point of view is interesting, because Bexhill is in the eastern part of East Sussex where there is

no downland. Furthermore, the western part of the Weald, which lies north of the Downs, is where the vast majority of the old varieties of Sussex apples were grown. Also worth noting is the fact that although the Nonā Rolls of 1341 indicate that cider was then being produced in eighty parishes in this county, only six of them were in East Sussex. So, one reason why the extant reports of apple wassailing in Sussex have only come from places west of Horsted Keynes, is because the western part of the Weald is where the best orchards were.

The verses the howlers recited or sang were mostly of the same kind in Sussex, but of the surviving versions, remembered or reported at various villages, all are slightly different in the actual wording, and this is even true of places that are near each other. For example, below on the left is the verse that was used at Northchapel in 1913, and the one on the right was sung at Duncton in 1917.

Stand fast root, bear well top,	Here stands a jolly good old apple tree.
Pray God send me a howling good	Stand fast root, bear well top.
crop;	Every little bough bear apples enow!
Every twig apples big,	Every little twig bear apples big.
Every bough apples enow;	Hats full! Caps full! Three score sacks
Hats full, caps full, full quarter	full!
sacks full! <sup>11</sup>	Whoop! whoop! holler boys, holler! <sup>12</sup>

In December 1919 there was a letter in the *Daily Mail* from 'A Sussex Woman' asking whether Apple Howling still took place. She wrote that in her early days it had been a regular New Year's Eve event. Boys and lads, called Howlers, some wearing the smocks known locally as 'round frocks', beat the trees, singing a verse, which she quoted. This was similar to the variant used at Northchapel, except that the first two lines were:

Stand fast at the root, bear well at the top.  
Pray that God send us a howling good crop.<sup>13</sup>

And in an article titled 'Disappearing Sussex' in the *West Sussex Gazette* in May 1922, the writer, who lived at Horsham, gave the second line as: 'Pray the gods send us a howling good crop' and noted that the words of the whole verse were emphasized with blows against the tree trunks.<sup>14</sup> This was to frighten away any evil spirits that might be hiding in the trees, and indeed in other parts of the county, guns were also fired at the branches of the trees, for the same reason. In a letter published in the *Sussex County Magazine*, a man from West Chiltington gave the local version of the wassailing verse and said that: '... deliberate emphasis was laid on each word and right hand uplifted and circled at the last line.'<sup>15</sup>



In those places where the wassailing verse began with a line like 'Here stands a jolly good old apple tree,' the name of the actual variety might be included. For example, one old Sussex apple variety was the Curltail, which was grown in the area of Rudgwick, and so when the howlers came to one of these trees, they might say something like: 'Here stands a jolly good old Curltail tree,' or a Nannyapple tree, or a Hangdown, or a Bossum – this latter variety was grown at Petworth.

In a letter about the Duncton wassailers in the *West Sussex Gazette* in 1906, their chief is described as wearing: '... a grotesque patchwork of all the colours of the rainbow, surmounted by an indescribable hat with a huge red apple in front.' He was Mr Richard Knight, and had been the chief wassailer for fifty-four years by then. He said it took them four hours to work their way through all the orchards in the parish: they started at 6 pm and finished at 10 pm in The Cricketers Arms – and, incidentally, they probably entered the inn through the back door and came out of the front one, an element of the tradition that harkened back to the old custom of the wassail bowl, which was always brought in through the backdoor of the farms and cottages it was taken to.<sup>16</sup>

The wassailers of Duncton dressed up to go wassailing, and the letter in the *Daily Mail* in 1919 mentioned that the howlers used to wear smocks, but none of the other Sussex articles and letters on the subject mention special clothing being worn – unlike similar accounts of tipteerers or mummers, whose odd costumes were always remembered and sometimes described in great detail. This suggests that, at least by the end of the 19th century, most apple howlers did not wear special clothing or costumes, even though this may have been done in earlier times.

In a letter in the *West Sussex Gazette* in 1920, it was suggested that the word 'howling' was: '... a corruption of 'yowling' or 'yuleing' as the custom was observed at Yuletide,' and this seems to be the most likely derivation.<sup>17</sup>

There were yet more letters about wassailing in the *West Sussex Gazette* in 1951, following a description of Apple Howling that was given in one of the Mrs Paddick articles in early January. Mrs Paddick said that her grandfather had told her that: 'They used to join hands an' sing it dancin' round the tree. An' then they'd pour cider on the root and goo on to the next tree.'<sup>18</sup>

Then, in a letter in the 18th January edition of the paper, a man who had grown up at Thakeham described how once when he was a boy, in the late 1870s, he heard lots of shouting and blowing of horns coming from round the back of Stoney Barn House, and when he went to investigate, he saw that a group of boys were howling (or 'whostling' as it was called in Thakeham) and they '... did not dance or leap about, but just took hold of the tree by its branches and shouted at it: 'Here stands another, as good as his brother; Stand fast root –' &c. &c.<sup>19</sup>

In a letter in the newspaper on 1st February, it was noted that the wassailing used to take place on New Year's Eve and it was accompanied by: '... throwing

toast from the wassail-bowl over the trees, by firing guns amongst the branches, by beating them with sticks, and by music, as well as song and dance, and by cow-horn blasts from the howlers.'

One reader then assumed that there would be more letters on the subject, and when this did not happen, he decided it was up to him to record what was missing. His letter was published in the 1st March edition. He wrote that he had grown up in the once isolated district between Petworth, Northchapel and Kirdford, where the wassailing was carried out by '... a troop of local young men and boys' and that:

A witch had to be asked to attend or the whole thing was fruitless in more ways than one. The witch was behind the whole thing. She had to be asked, but always made some excuse that she was unable to attend, but if you crossed her hand with silver everything would be okay. You can see now why the howling and from where the superstition came. I knew three of these women that professed to practise witchcraft. I remember them collecting sixpences from many of the cottages of the district.

Below this extraordinary letter, the editor of the column wrote: 'Mr Newman's contribution is the more interesting because it is the only reference we have to witchcraft in connection with Apple Howling' – and he was right. Indeed, what may well be the only other reference to witches with wassailing, concerns a *revival* of the custom which took place at Dunkeswell in Devon, in 1954, when the evil spirits in one tree were represented by two people dressed up as ugly witches; but that's not the same thing at all.<sup>20</sup> Yet, to return to the assertion that a witch had to attend the wassailing: it is difficult to determine whether this was an aspect of wassailing that had mostly died out before people began writing about the custom, or if it was just something that arose in Sussex – or maybe only in this region.

These evil spirits, and the good ones, mentioned in some accounts of wassailing, are ancient relics of the dark heart of the tradition – as we see in some descriptions of it by old Sussexians. In an article detailing the origins of Christmas customs, one writer noted: 'There is nothing more pagan than the rite of wassailing or wishing health to the fruit trees,' – and this is probably true, but it's the hitting the tree with sticks, not the singing of the song, which was the important aspect. Another writer says that this was to frighten away the evil spirits, and it was also why guns might be fired at the branches; but somebody else writes this was done to awaken the spirit of the tree from its winter sleep so that it will be ready for the spring. And yet another view was that beating the trunk with sticks and shooting at the tree are to ensure that it has a *violent* death, so it will be: '... re-born with renewed vitality... The tree must die in order that the tree may live.'<sup>21,22</sup>

Another interesting letter, also written in response to the Mrs Paddick article,

The Knight family wassailing at Duncton, c. 1890. Photographer unknown. This unique photograph, not surprisingly, has been frequently reproduced.



was published in the newspaper, 3rd May 1951. It concerned a man who lived at Turners Hill, near Crawley, who used to have his orchard wassailed in the spring. This cannot be an anomaly, because in an item in the *Worthing Herald* in 1926 about a band called The Downland Musikers, it was reported that they played the old Sussex Wassail song: '... which was sometimes sung at the 'wassailing' of the orchards in the spring.'<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, apple trees were also wassailed in the spring at the Surrey village of Newdigate, which is just about eight miles from Turners Hill. These three references are surprising, because books about folklore say that wassailing only took place in midwinter, between Christmas and Old Twelfth Night; and yet, around Crawley at least, it was carried out in the spring, on both sides of the Sussex-Surrey border.<sup>24</sup>

Curiously, although wassailing disappeared in most parts of Sussex (and Kent) in the late 19th century, it continued to be carried out in some places in the other cider-making counties, such as Devon, Somerset, and Herefordshire. The custom was maintained at Duncton until about 1919, and in nearby Sutton a group of boys went wassailing in January 1922, to help raise money for a certain local hospital.<sup>25</sup> But elsewhere in Sussex, for example at Pulborough, the term 'wassailing' had, by then, generally just come to mean carol singing.<sup>26</sup>

In 1935, an article in the *Sussex Agricultural Express* noted that: 'During Christmas, the farm labourers of the western part of this county, after the day's toil is ended, assemble in a group for the purpose of wassailing the apple trees,'<sup>27</sup> – but it seems now unlikely that this was still happening in the 1930s, and I think the *Eastbourne Herald* was probably being wildly optimistic when, as late as 1940, it said that the tradition had '... lingered in Chailey parish and possibly lingers still.'<sup>28</sup>

The beginning of the end of wassailing had begun more than a century earlier, when Napoleon Bonaparte was defeated at Waterloo in 1815, and suddenly there were all those French wines coming to Britain again. Cider apples had been the principal crop of rural West Sussex for about five hundred years by then, especially during the wars with France – and big orchards needed lots of workers. But following Waterloo, the demand for cider dropped, many orchards were sold and levelled to be used for more profitable crops, and so the number of labourers working on the cider farms began to fall. Indeed, by the census returns of 1841, there was nowhere in Sussex where cider was still being made on a commercial scale; and when the old gang of wassailers at Duncton went out, on what was to be the last round of the orchards they ever made, in the winter at the end of 1919, there were only three of them left, and their chief, the son of Richard Knight, no longer even lived in the parish.<sup>29</sup>

This winter then, of 2019, almost certainly marks the passing of a hundred years, since the last time the orchards were wassailed the old way at Duncton, or

indeed anywhere else in the county. The orchards there had been famous for their cider apples – and other farms in the region, at Kirdford, Wisborough Green, and Bignor had all had equally significant orchards, and so it seems likely that if wassailing had not survived as long as it did at Duncton, then it would have been last recorded at some other village in this part of the county, between Kirdford, Northchapel and Sutton, because, clearly, this region has the best farmland for growing Sussex cider apples.

WSG – West Sussex Gazette

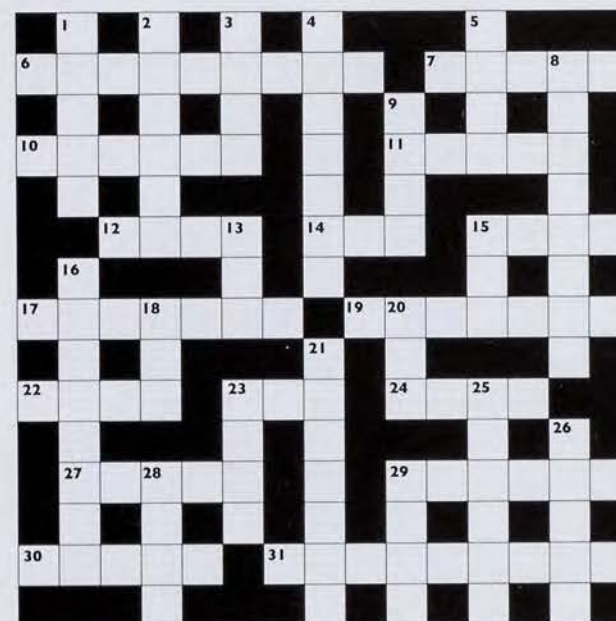
With the exception of the items in the *Sussex Daily News* and the *Daily Mail*, all of the information from newspapers here comes from the British Newspaper Archive online.

1. *Brighton Gazette* 12 October 1865.
2. *Eastbourne Gazette* 27 December 1882.
3. WSG 15 January 1891.
4. *The Folklore of Devon* by Ralph Whitlock, 1977.
5. 'Adventures of a Quiet Man' by Arthur Beckett, in *Sussex County Magazine* Vol. 4, page 233; and also in his book with the same title, published in 1933.
6. My source was *Mid Sussex Times* 22 July 1890.
7. 'Of Howlers and Howling' by W.J. Dore-Dennis, in *Sussex County Magazine*, Vol. 26, December 1952, page 572.
8. Still at Horsted Keynes early 1880s: WSG 4 March 1920.
9. 'Wassail the Trees' by L. N. Candlin, in *Sussex County Magazine* Vol. 25, December 1951. The phrase 'making sweet music' was also often used by huntsmen to describe the discordant sound of the cries of hounds, mixed with shrill hunting horns, as they pursued the fox or a deer.
10. *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer* 25 December 1915.
11. WSG 25 December 1913. The word 'enow' means enough.
12. *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser* 2 February 1917.
13. *Daily Mail* 24 December 1919.
14. 'Disappearing Sussex' by Miss E. Kensett, in *West Sussex County Times* 20 May 1922.

15. *Sussex County Magazine*, Vol. 15, January 1941. The man was born in 1836 and grew up on Kings Farm and Princes Farm in West Chiltington. The letter was written by his son.
16. WSG 11 January 1906; 'yowling': WSG 29 April 1920.
17. WSG 29 April 1920.
18. WSG 4 January 1951. The Mrs Paddick articles were written as by 'A Sussex Woman' – the same one who wrote about howling in the *Daily Mail* in 1919: Lilian F. Ramsey.
19. WSG 18 January 1951.
20. 'Apple Tree Wassailing' by M. Large, *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* Vol. 93, 1971, pages 252-257.
21. pagan: WSG 24 December 1931.
22. tree must die: *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer* 12 January 1924.
23. *Worthing Herald* 8 May 1926.
24. Newdigate: *Dorking & Leatherhead Advertiser* 16 November 1901, which quotes *Black's Guide to Surrey* (1883).
25. *Chichester Observer* 10 January 1923.
26. There was a letter in WSG 6 January 1910 about children in Pulborough who called themselves wassailers when they were just carol singing.
27. *Sussex Agricultural Express* 20 December 1935.
28. *Eastbourne Herald* 28 December 1940. At Chailey, trees were wassailed on Christmas Eve.
29. *Sussex Daily News* 8 January 1919. According to a letter in WSG 3 May 1951, the last time the trees were wassailed at Duncton was in 1919.

## PETWORTH SOCIETY CROSSWORD

Compiled by Debby Stevenson. Solution on page 47



### DOWN

- 1 See 4 (5)
- 2 Times to come – should we worry? (6)
- 3 Retreat for men in community garden (4)
- 4 & 1 A magical show revealing the past, given us by Miles (7, 5)
- 5 Early source of water (4)
- 8 & 11 across Game in a coppice in Petworth Park (8)
- 9 Measure of land 6 across would be familiar with (4)
- 13 Old measure hidden in the bluebells (3)
- 15 Politically incorrect nowadays to be unsparing with this! (3)
- 16 Impressive stately home famous for extensive servants rooms and a rare chapel (8)
- 18 An intellectual with a head! (3)
- 20 Native tree now at risk of disease (3)
- 21 See 23 (7)
- 23 & 21 Very important building featured in the March magazine (4, 7)
- 25 Delicacy not on the menu at the Society's dinner (6)
- 26 Nearly finished the crossword – this is just the beginning! (5)
- 28 London gallery which on occasion has links with Petworth House (4)
- 29 Throw a line – to the Petworth Players perhaps (4)

### ACROSS

- 6 Farm worker gets the hump a long way down the field ... (9)
- 7 ...and feeling very down in this place (5)
- 10 First patron saint of England commemorated on 20th November (6)
- 11 See 8 down (5)
- 12 Toronto Scottish dog mascot buried at Brinksole (4)
- 14 Herb of regret (3)
- 15 & 19 Mottisfont Priory is famous for these (4, 7)
- 17 Church feature lost in 1947 (7)
- 19 See 15 (7)
- 22 Cosy corner of a pub (4)
- 23 Suitable clue (3)
- 24 Animal's leg joint (4)
- 27 Thomas Sockett's role at Petworth House in C19th (5)
- 29 See 30 across (6)
- 30 & 29 Heroic First World War nurse – subject of Society lecture (5)
- 31 An unusual haunted feature in David Bramwell's lecture (9)

## Horticulture and the Regency lady

Keith Thompson

We had a number of titles for Kate Felus's talk to the Society in September...

The posters announced 'A Lady Gardener of the Eighteenth Century', the Activity Sheet 'The Eighteenth-Century Lady Gardener' and when she started, Kate put up 'Humphrey Repton and Horticulture as recreation for the Regency Lady' on the screen.

The last time Kate came to speak for us was in the bi-centenary year of Capability Brown's birth. Humphrey Repton is considered Brown's successor and last year was the bi-centenary of his death. But the ways in which they worked were very different, Brown sending in his own team and seeing a project through personally. Repton, making sure what his clients wanted, created his 'Red Books', with 'before and after' pictures, often with overlays inserted following discussions with his clients. He was a gifted watercolourist, depicting polite society in family garden settings with children being given important roles, being allocated their own plots, chiefly for growing vegetables, and, it was hoped, being taught patience, as was fishing.

What about his lady gardeners, who were newly liberated in a changing society? They wore appropriate clothing for their hands-on work. Botany was in their educational background. New plants were coming in from all over the world. The pursuit often made up for something lacking in their lives caused by dissolute husbands or deaths. 'Pink Feasts', precursors of the later flower shows were increasingly popular.

Among the eighteenth century gardening ladies were Charlotte, Countess of Bridgewater and Georgiana, Duchess of Bedford. Her Duke had commissioned quite a modest project for his first wife, but Georgina received a lavish Red Book depicting Italianate terraces and water features. Their holiday retreat in Devon, Eastleigh Cottage, was on a smaller scale, quite different from Woburn.

Their legacy lives on today. There is the Duchess of Northumberland's grand-scale garden at Alwick. Lady Exeter's at Burghley, the Duchess of Norfolk's at Arundel and, of course, Lady Egremont's at Petworth House, all worked by hands-on lady gardeners.

Our thanks to Kate for her thoroughly researched talk and for answering questions afterwards, setting us up for the Annual Dinner at Petworth House the following day.



Left.

One of Humphrey Repton's Red Books. This one, measuring 22 x 28.5 mm., is now in Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery.

Below.

Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire. A detail from page 220 of volume 1 of *The County Seats of the Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*, by Francis Orpen Morris (1870). Original held and digitised by the British Library. Both pictures from [www.commonswiki.org](http://www.commonswiki.org).



## Cockshutts and the Bun House

No. 31 in the continuing series of old Petworth traders. Miles Costello

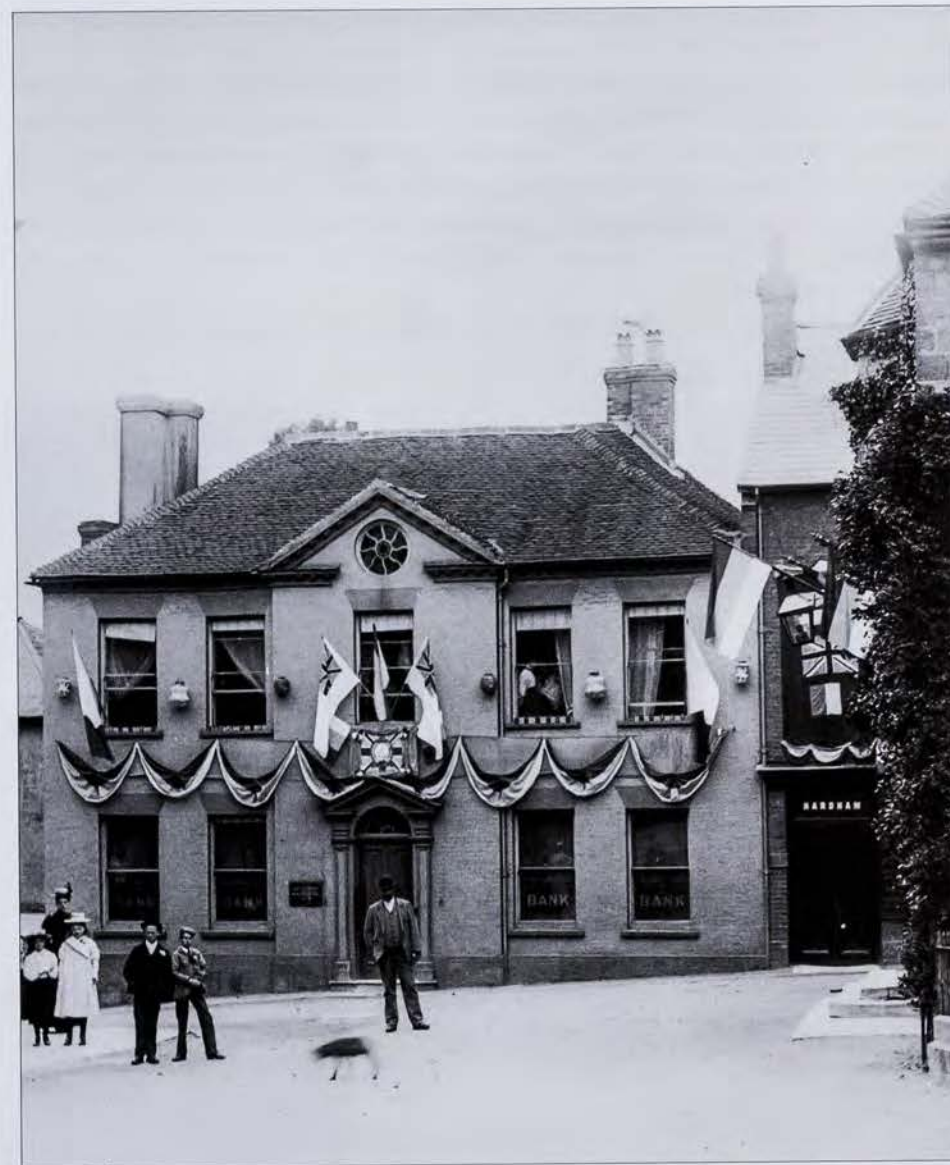
Echoes of The Bun House no longer resonate around the Market Square and the scent of freshly baked bread which once hung thick in the air has long since disappeared. The building on the west side of the Square is now an art gallery but is still fondly remembered by older inhabitants as Knights Bakery. Knights were the last in a line of bakers stretching back a century who had traded from the premises. Charles Richardson can briefly be found operating as a confectioner with 'refreshment rooms' from his Market Square shop in 1878 though he is swiftly followed by one Edgar Barlow who has added beer and wine retailer to his list of occupations. Barlow's tenure may also have been short lived for just five years later Frank Hardham is plying his trade from the property. Unfortunately Hardham is as anonymous as his predecessors though he is commemorated in a photograph which shows his name clearly displayed above the shop door.

The early twentieth century saw Sidney Harris take charge of the bakery and the adjacent beer house, though at the outbreak of war he enlisted into the Royal Army Service Corps where he spent the duration appropriately working as a master baker. Sadly like so many of his fellow servicemen he didn't make it home for he was caught in the influenza epidemic of 1918 and died in a military hospital at Hastings. His daughter Faith was born after her father's death and Alice his widow carried on the business for a short while before selling it to Robert Cockshutt.

The new owner clearly saw potential in the business and a period of investment culminated in 1928 when extensive alterations were made to the property. It is likely that it was following these improvements that the bakery became known locally as The Bun House or as Mr Cockshutt proclaimed in a local newspaper advertisement 'Ye Olde Bun House'. The Cockshutt reign ended when the business was sold at auction in Petworth in October 1936. The sale particulars described it as a 'licensed premises with an old-world style and elevation to the Square and considerable frontage. An extensive property with bars, tearooms, shop, bakery, and living accommodation, in the possession of a six-day beer and wine licence. Offered as a going concern, with vacant possession.' The auction would result in the property being divided and the beer house purchased by Tamplins the brewers who would continue with Cockshutts olde-world theme by calling the newly acquired business The Old Square Tavern. The sale would also bring master baker Fred Knight to the Market Square and with him stability for the next four decades.

The west side of Petworth Market Square decorated for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897. On the far right is the Half Moon inn and the name 'Hardham' is discernible above the black door to the right of the London and County Bank.

A photograph by Walter Kevis who may have been able to persuade bystanders to remain still for the long exposure, but the ghostly shape in the foreground suggests he had no such authority over the local dog population.



# Has the *PSM* taken on advertising?

Peter Jerrome

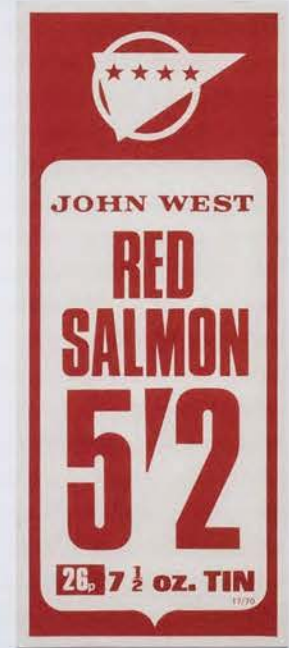
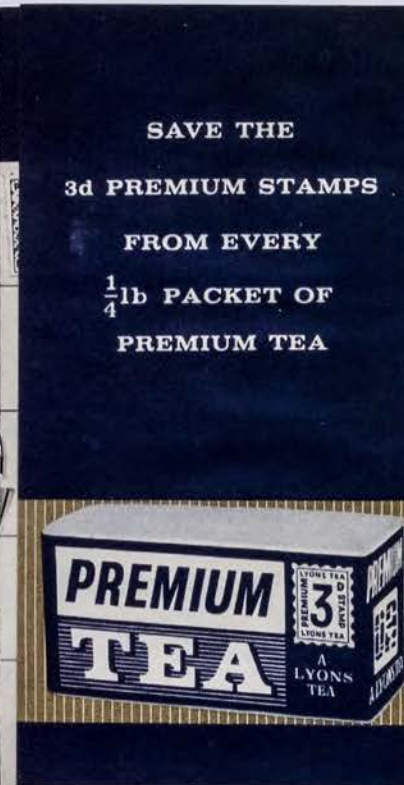
Strictly speaking an ephemeron is something that lasts only a single day but the use of the word has been extended to describe something that despite its 'ephemeral' nature, has survived to become of interest. Falling perhaps into this category are a large number of 'special offer' tickets ranging from the immediate pre-decimalisation period into the 1970s and '80s. Why have they survived? Not with any view to posterity, but simply because somehow they were never thrown away: that's the point of ephemera. In this case they were kept to be used again, or, more likely, with the specific product name cut off, the numerals might be used to promote something else.

Some years ago the then Chichester District Museum used some of this



material in an exhibition. Of their very nature these promotions have a certain cachet. Almost half a century on, they reflect the last throes of the old pre-decimal coinage and, indirectly, the inflation that would follow. Much of it is Danish Bacon Co. material, the Pound Street shop<sup>1</sup> (now Kissed by Betty) operating under the company logo 'Maid Marian'. The Lyons Premium Tea coupon will be a separate promotion.

1. See Peter Jerrome, *Elegy for a Small Shop*. (Window Press, 2015).



## Petworth was full of 'aunts'

Michael Wall in conversation with the editor

I have never actually lived in Petworth but it is never far from my thoughts, particularly the town I knew as a boy of four or five in the early 1950s. My maternal grandfather Frank Whitcomb was one of twelve children born to Henry Whitcomb, my great-grandfather who had died years before I was born. I was told that he had a senior position in the Leconfield Estate office, certainly his name appears frequently on legal documents. Some of the large Whitcomb family still lived in the old family home in Pound Street (much later named 'The House in Pound Street') and now no longer a part of the Leconfield Estate. Three sisters lived there when I first knew it, the youngest, Elsie with Gertie and Ally. Mab, a fourth sister had recently died.

A visit to Pound Street would be very much part of my visits to Petworth with my mother and brother Steve to stay with my grandparents in Percy Terrace. The Pound Street home still echoed the Victorian era in which the sisters had been born – the fox's head in the hall, glass cases of butterflies, while each of the sisters had a separate room. Aunt Elsie was still working in the Leconfield Estate office. I was told that, in earlier days, she would go off with a pony and trap to collect Estate rents from outlying properties. The Whitcombs were a very musical family and had been the backbone of a very successful choral society in Petworth between the wars. Gertie (Mrs Pulling) taught music to private pupils and was a church organist. Another member of the family, Hubert, was Clerk of the Works to the Leconfield Estate and lived with his wife at Boxalls in East Street. It had a huge garden, now very much reduced in size. His handwriting was almost a work of art and I have seen beautiful illuminated scrollwork done by him. Curiously what I remember most vividly are the beetle traps in the large cellar in Pound Street. they had the appearance of an ash tray, with a tipping platform, on which some substance would be placed to attract the beetles, it would then tip over and pitch them into the base of the tray.

The Whitcomb family appeared a very extended one. There were innumerable uncles, aunts and cousins – Petworth, someone said, was all pubs and Whitcombs. In addition, there were numerous 'aunts', either indirect relatives or simply not related at all. Gladys Morley, whose parents had kept the Wheatsheaf inn in North Street was a cousin, she, too, was very musical. In the early 1920s Auntie Glad had accompanied silent films for a portable cinematograph show with which her family toured the surrounding district in an ex-RAF Crossley truck. She later

played at Pound Corner Cinema and even ran her own small jazz band. She had married Tom Morley from the timber contractor family at Selham. After Tom died she went to live at Arnops Leith in Angel Street with her 'Aunt' Wyn (Winifred) Whitcomb, her late mother's sister. All three of them were similarly outgoing.

My mother's maiden name was Daisy Thayre, her father, my great grandfather, was a blacksmith by trade who had set up in premises at the top of North Street, a shop frontage with a yard, forge and stables to the rear approachable from Rectory Lane or in the day from the shop. When my great grandparents died in the 1930s the business, P. Thayre and Sons, passed to my uncles Reg and George. Reg went to Africa and George kept on the forge. George's wife 'Mog' ran the shop. In 1985 Mog described her little shop in North Street as more perhaps a miniature general store than anything else – 'cigarettes, some greengroceries, sweets and, kept to one side, paraffin' (*PSM* 39). Mog's window had faded replica Mars Bars and similar items, but it was the crimping machine that fascinated me. Pages were folded then crimped to make bags for the sweets as they were weighed out from the jar. You'd then tear the crimping apart to take out your bullseyes, toffees or whatever. Their life was shattered by the loss of their son Paul in the school bombing in 1942. Paul was not buried in the communal grave in the Horsham Road cemetery: he was buried with his grandparents in a neighbouring plot. I can vividly picture Uncle George sitting in his cap beside the Kitchener range in the gloomy back room of the shop. I also remember overhearing the hushed tones describing his suicide. Mog would always sign her Christmas cards as 'from Paul's mother'. I can see her handwriting now. In later years she would leave Petworth to live as companion to a lady in Portsmouth.

When we came to Petworth my mother and the two of us boys would stay at 328i Percy Terrace where my grandparents had lived since they were married just after the 1914-18 war. My grandad Frank had been fortunate to survive at all, having been badly injured in the battle of Boar's Head, a diversionary tactic to take German attention away from the imminent advance on the Somme. Casualties were so heavy that it was popularly known as 'the day that Sussex died', the Royal Sussex Regiment having suffered so many losses. Frank Whitcomb had not been expected to survive his injuries, he had a terrible shoulder wound, dangerously close to his heart. Even in the 1950s pieces of uniform would still emerge from the scars.

Below.  
'Mrs' Counley, centre, a long-standing house-keeper at Petworth House in the early part of the twentieth century. Her two companions are certainly members of the Whitcomb family but are unidentified. For 'Mrs' Counley (Mrs is a courtesy title) see P.Jerrome, *Those that are never seen – below stairs at Petworth House*, Window Press, 2018.



Below.  
Another photograph of 'Mrs' Counley, probably taken at the Whitcomb House in Pound Street. Again, the identity of her companion is unknown. Both photographs courtesy of Michael Wall, photographer unknown.



A time-worn photograph of Mary Thayre's shop in North Street, Petworth. In the doorway are her daughters Minnie, left, and Daisy. Photograph courtesy of Michael Wall, Photographer unknown.





My mother's brother 'Chum' worked as an architectural draughtsman in Portsmouth but later emigrated to Canada with his wife. My mother was always called 'Baddie' – not her correct name of course, or a reflection on her behaviour as a child, but because her brother when he first saw her cried out 'Baddy' instead of 'Baby'.

A lasting memory of staying at Percy Terrace is the swifts circling over the open space between the old courthouse and the British Legion. They seem to have gone now. They'd nest in the eaves at 328 I and by sliding the ventilator covers to one side we could glimpse them on their nests. There was a siren on the roof of the Court House opposite and separate bells in the houses of individual firemen. Jim Baxter may have been a volunteer fireman. When the alarm sounded we liked to see the firemen rush out of their houses and make off down to the fire station. Yes, we knew about the carved initials and dates in the wall built of bricks that had once been part of the cell wall at the old Petworth prison.

The houses in Percy Terrace had, and still have, long gardens. At this time there were only outside lavatories and the slop pail was a morning ritual. Not every house had a bath, but ours did and the Misses Austen who lived next door would come in for a bath, taking it in turn – no running hot water – the other sitting with Grandad listening to 'The Archers' while she waited. 'Auntie' May played the organ at Hardham church and had a dark blue Austin Ruby. We never knew whether she couldn't work the reverse gear or whether it simply didn't work. Every Sunday morning we'd watch the two sisters push the car backwards from their parking place over the road before setting off for Hardham. Auntie May and her sister Nellie were great collectors for the Red Cross; they had a particular station for 'throw out your rusty coppers' at the foot of Duncton Hill when Goodwood races were on. Their father Percy 'Perp' Austin at one time had a market garden in Station Road and also the little shop (now the Place) which would later be John Caine's television and radio premises. As children we were always fascinated by the slightly rude suggestion of 'Perp'. I think that in those days people had more awareness, interaction perhaps with neighbours than now. There were the Baxters; we loved their beautiful cat Patchy. Reg Puttick and his daughter – they would take us for long walks over the Gog with their dog and there were Dick and Val Fowler. Dick was a carpenter on the Leconfield Estate and was making an ash framed shooting brake body for a Fordson van in the garden, it was a real work of art. Another person I remember from the 1950s was Mrs Butler. I always associate her with asparagus. Now a widow, her husband had worked in the gardens at Petworth House. The story was that Lord Leconfield always insisted on straight asparagus but a scheme was devised to make some of it grow crooked so that it was rejected and ended up at Percy Terrace. I always picture Mrs Butler with a felt cloche hat. In the early

1950s women didn't usually remove their hats even when dispensing jelly and blancmange at children's parties.

At some point in the past my grandmother Daisy had taken over 'Dolly' Westwood's shop in Lombard Street. It may be that she had worked there. Dolly's real name was Agnes and that was displayed over the door. Her husband 'Daddy' Westwood with his white whiskers was a familiar figure in the town. There was another ladies-wear shop in the town in New Street which was a little confusing as it was run by Miss Westlake. Westwood's dealt in haberdashery and women's clothing and requisites generally. Structurally it was two shops combined and on slightly different levels. On the first floor the two rooms were connected by a door with several steps into the adjoining one.

We'd arrive from Findon Valley on the bus, excited as ever to be coming to Petworth. The bus came down by the old Iron Room and turned into the Square, then reversed into its allotted parking space. We'd look over to the black window-tax spaces at the solicitors and the real window where Grandad would be working as clerk to the solicitors.

Once off the bus we'd go to Fred Knight's at the Old Square Tavern for his famous lardy rolls, then set off for Granny's shop in Lombard Street. It had a little parlour to the rear: this was always a thrill because we'd never know who we were going to meet there, and everyone made such a fuss of us. Daisy ran a little dancing school and had a wide circle of friends. We always liked to go into the rooms upstairs. There were all sorts of things Daisy used for her 'entertainments' in connection with the dancing class. I remember a kilt and sporran which were supposed once to have belonged to Dr Kerr at Culvercroft, piles of *Farmers Weekly* magazines – I have always been fascinated by tractors – and large volumes of the *East African Journal*, full of fascinating pictures and so big that we had to lay them out on the floor to read them. Reg Thayre, Daisy's brother, had worked for a long time in Africa. In the parlour we were likely to find Doris Robertson, wife of the Estate forester and a very fine needlewoman, also Mary Newick, a stalwart of the Ebenezer Chapel in Park Road. Mary came in the morning to clean. But it wasn't the regulars only, all sorts of people, women of course, popped in for a chat.

From the shop we'd do a round of other tradesmen in the town. Kathy Meachen's shop on the corner of East Street was a particular favourite. Technically a greengrocer's, it also sold toys; lead farm animals I particularly remember, and a kind of machine which could turn out Plasticine sausages! Weaver's just across the road from Dolly Westwood's (now the Post Office) would give us out-of-date magazines.

Granny took entertaining us very seriously – whether we were with Mum or not. She'd often take us out on the bus or sometimes we'd go out in the car with Mr Bryder from Tillington. It was certainly informal, although Mr Bryder wore

a peaked chauffeur's cap. I think there was a dual purpose: to deliver goods from the shop and give us boys a ride out. Some of the calls seemed very remote. I particularly remember a visit to Mr and Mrs Bagg, miles from anywhere, or so it appeared. Mr Bagg had been a keeper at Shillinglee. As soon as we arrived tea was on the table and time was completely irrelevant. Mr Bagg walked on two sticks and we were told that he had fallen down in the woods and had to roll home.

Another visit was to Mr and Mrs Ward at Colhook Brickworks. I believe that Mr Ward owned the brickworks. This time we'd go out on the Aldershot and District Traction bus. Another London Road bus visit was to Mary Newick and her father at Scrases Hill lodge. I remember the enormous long strip of garden with not a weed in sight. Mary was a devout member of the Ebenezer Chapel. It always fascinated me, probably because I never managed to see into it. The stuffed red squirrel as you entered as you entered the house at Scrases Hill is something very fixed in my mind. Another bus trip, in another direction was to visit the signalman at Hardham, alighting from the bus we would have a long walk to the signal box and then a long walk back, looking at the wall paintings in the church on the way.

For us, and for most people in the town, Petworth Fair was the highlight of the year. We'd come up on the bus from Findon specially and stay overnight at Percy Terrace. The fair was already built up when we arrived. Bensons had a big Ark towed by a Scammell lorry. Straight off the bus we'd go up to the shop in Lombard Street, greet Mrs Hammond, a widow then, make our way upstairs so that we could look down through the skylight into the Hammond's living van. Hence we called this room the 'caravan' room. Granny would always eat brandy snaps with her old friend Brenda Knight on fair night, such tradition seemed to bond everyone together.

Part of the fair and, looking back, a very important part for the two of us, was the journey from Findon. As we came to the Welldiggers pub on the bus, we'd look across to the West Sussex County Council steam roller parked to the right, a cheering sight after the disappointment of finding Plum Pudding Corner had no one selling plum puddings. Benson's Ark was the major ride in the Square accompanied by their two Scammell haulage tractors which also provided electricity for the whole fair.

## 'If you could draw it, you should be able to make it'

Roger Wootton in conversation with Caroline Egremont and the editor. Part one

My family and I moved to the South Coast from Cambridge in 1970 where I had, on leaving school, obtained one year's provisional employment plus a five year apprenticeship with Simplex Agricultural Engineering, part of the General Electrical Company, as an engineering draftsman where the policy was (as the general manager stated) 'If you could draw it, you should be able to make it'. To do this I had to spend time on the workshop floor, the machine shop, sheet metal, welding, research and development, and time and motion departments. I remained with Simplex until I joined the Sussex-based firm of Langmeads at Selsey in 1970 whose company manufactured farm buildings. At the time Mr Brian Langmead had one of the largest dairy farms, milking 648 cows three times a day.

I joined Langmeads as a Contract Manager to the Farm Buildings department responsible for the manufacture and delivery of their farm buildings which were erected throughout the UK. The firm expanded by taking over another woodworking company near High Wycombe which manufactured timber buildings including bungalows and this business was then transferred to new workshops in Monmouth and Llanwern in South Wales. I was responsible for overseeing this operation, including the labour force, but none of the staff wished to relocate. At the time I was travelling between Selsey (home) to High Wycombe, High Wycombe to South Wales, twice a week together with other destinations in North Wales and Lancashire. At one time my family moved to High Wycombe to be with me as my employer believed that families should be together. All this travelling with family commitments such as schooling resulted in my looking for alternative employment.

On seeing an advertisement in the *Farmers Weekly* for a Buildings Surveyor/Clerk of Works on the Leconfield Estate at Petworth, I applied, and was invited initially to see Sir Charles Wolseley, the Leconfield Estates Land Agent at Petworth. This was followed by a letter inviting me to a formal interview at Smiths Gore's London office ten days later, where I met Lord Egremont, Sir Charles and Mr Fleming Smith who was then senior partner at Smiths Gore. In January 1976 I was offered the position to succeed Mr Charles Wales, Clerk of Works since 1950, who was retiring that year.

I joined the Leconfield Estates on February 2nd 1976 on a salary of £3,500 a year with the use of a Morris Marina car. Although we had the offer of Fred Streeter's old house in Petworth House gardens it needed considerable restoration work. Mrs Streeter had died some years previously and Fred Streeter lived latterly in a

sitting room with a kitchen and downstairs bedroom. He did not venture upstairs. I travelled up daily from Selsey, agreeing a lunch arrangement with the Golden Waggon (now Oakapple) at 68 pence for a three-course lunch. We ate upstairs and it was a first-rate meal. Dining was arranged in shifts – the Leconfield Estates staff at the first sitting, followed by the staff at the town's two banks and office workers. We moved into Gardeners Cottage on completion of restoration in June 1976.

Once I was established in Petworth, my day would start at 7.30 to see the men as they reported for work. I would give instructions for any particular project, then go home for breakfast before returning to travel around the various projects in hand. Much of the work was put out to local contractors.

My position on taking over from Mr Wales covered his ongoing maintenance programme and other projects: Moor farm for instance, new cattle building projects and also the Estate's almshouses, one of which was Somerset Hospital, the only Petworth almshouse functioning at the time, Thompson's and Egremont being uninhabitable. Somerset Hospital was full with eighteen widows or spinsters. Single rooms with three tenants sharing a single bath and W.C. Adequate pre-war perhaps but hardly appropriate at the time. I would soon make the acquaintance of Mrs Smith, the characterful warden, and begin the process of modernization which included the early improvement of a lift.

When he started on the Estate in 1950 Mr Wales (who had come from Stratfield Saye, the Duke of Wellington's Estate) had inherited more than 1,000 cottages, spread far and wide over an estate which was then much bigger before its enforced reduction due to the onslaught of two tranches of estate duty taxes. Most of the cottages were without running water, had no internal baths or toilets and were without electricity – just a kitchen 'Petworth' range for cooking and hot water. Mr Wales upgraded these properties to provide internal running water, electricity, bath and toilet with hot water facilities. After the 3rd Lord Leconfield had died in 1952 some of the cottages were either pulled down as being uneconomical to upgrade or were sold. The Estate now has approximately 300 cottages, all of which have modern-day facilities as a result of a continuous refurbishment programme including central heating, new kitchens and bathrooms and double glazing where appropriate.

During Mr Wales' time the initial programme for Petworth House concerned a major project of interior refurbishment, following the death of Lord Leconfield and before being re-occupied by the late Lord and Lady Egremont. This was undertaken by the building department staff under Mr Wales and the house was re-occupied in 1954. I inherited some excellent senior craftsmen under Ron Parsons, the long-serving foreman: three skilled joiners, three carpenters engaged in outside work such as fencing, and four plumbers, also bricklayers and decorators.

We were nearing the end of the night watchman period at the House, the evening assembly in the Butler's Pantry for the nightshift. Patrolling was by torchlight.

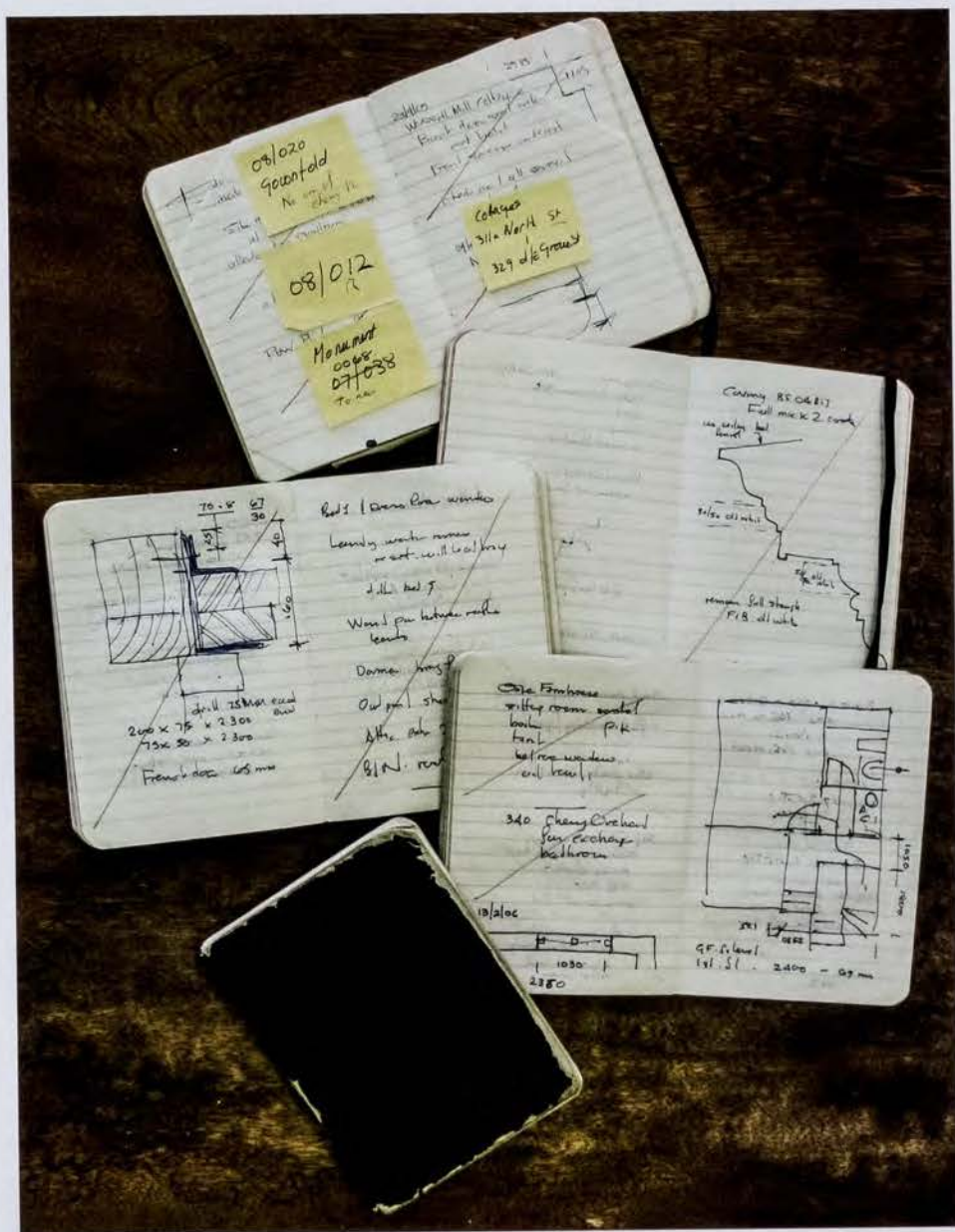
If the watchman dozed and failed to report, the alarm would activate. Patrolling could be an eerie business. Up the stairs to the Old Library the torch would linger briefly on a picture of the two princes in the Tower and their assassins. Macabre, I always felt. The Great North Room had a chilling feeling, something I had not noticed myself but Reg Wakeford, a marvellous locksmith and worker in metal had a particular dislike of the room together with other night watchmen.

One of my first projects in 1976, was Carlyn Wyndham's wedding on the 2nd of May which was to be held in the chapel at Petworth House. Carlyn, of course, was Lord Egremont's sister. It was an event for which there was no obvious precedent and it would be necessary to provide seating in the gallery of the chapel. If servants had once attended service in the chapel they would certainly have stood. To overcome this, we designed and erected staging in the chapel gallery to take stepped seating. Having been told of a cinema that was closing down in Coventry and looking to dispose of a number of 'lift up' cast iron-framed plush seats at a token price of £1 each, I sent a lorry up to collect them and erected them on the staging to take the stepped seating and it all worked well. After the wedding they were put in store but the plush became damp and moth got into the fabric. They had to be discarded but they had served their purpose.

The chapel in Petworth House has no music; to overcome this, the Dowager, Lady Egremont and I visited Chichester Cathedral to see what organs were available and finally a suitable one was hired and was placed in the small corridor at a high level alongside the chapel. As a temporary measure we took out a small window (plain glass, not stained) so that the organist, Mr Gervase Jackson Stops, a family friend, could look down into the chapel, but even so, we found in rehearsals that he was playing too quickly so that he was almost through when the principals had hardly reached the chapel. We deputed ushers to relay signals to the organist of the exact position of the principals as they walked to the chapel. We catered for 131 guests of whom 60 would be in the gallery.

Fireworks on the far side of the lake would light up the evening, together with a bonfire and a fountain. The fountain was placed in the lake, near the statue of the dog, which provided a 'fleur de lis' display lit with coloured lights, this being done by placing coloured film over lamp-lights, which could all be seen from Petworth House. The fireworks were provided from a chemistry master at Kimbolton School in Huntingdon. He did not attend the site himself but gave very detailed instructions on how to set up the firework display. Fireworks are classified as explosives and are dangerous and on collecting the consignment we were advised that we could not travel through the Blackwall Tunnel, such material not being allowed, and a circuitous route had to be taken. Incidentally, at the event someone accidentally tripped over one of the wires and the much of the display unintentionally went off at one go.

A few of Roger Wootton's black pocket-books in which he has kept notes of the various projects he has been involved in, both for the Leconfield Estate and the National Trust.



(Lady Egremont's words) 'My husband Max was working in the US during the time that the wedding preparations for his sister were taking place. He remembers his mother ringing him up in Washington with the words "I've found this marvellous new man." Max's first thought was that his mother might have a possible husband in mind. This was not the case: she had found the new Clerk of the Works – Mr Wootton'.

Another event in my first year was the Sussex Cattle Society Show on the 15th of June 1976 described by John Giffin in the last magazine. It was the famous hot summer – so hot that I remember the bulls being hosed down. There was a definite South African/ Rhodesian slant and it was a very ambitious and successful event. The marquees and refreshments were provided by Sussex Cattle Society.

By the mid 1970s with rising agricultural rents, tenant farmers understandably wanted corresponding farm improvements which were encouraged by government grants available at that time. Major investment was needed, new buildings for overwintering cattle, silage facilities, grain stores, beef units, and the rest. Only a few tenants insisted on sticking with what they had always had but they were very much in the minority. A programme of upgrading of farms was instigated: Battlehurst, Butcherlands, Buckfold, Fisher Street, Hallgate, Crawfold, Marshalls, Keyfox, Hortons, Kilsham, Limbo, Mitchell Park, Moor Farm, Osiers, Parkhurst, River Park, Strood, Soanes Farm, South Dean, almost all needed some attention. The Estate would itself be the main contractor but we would use independent local contractors extensively.

In 1976 Petworth House was being run with Lord Egremont's secretary Miss Gordon Williams acting as co-ordinator, supervising the opening of the house and passing the takings to Mr Brownsey the Leconfield Estate accountant and thence to the National Trust. Also, in that year, we discussed with the National Trust Architect Mr Bevil Greenfield the condition of Petworth House roof, which was leaking in several areas particularly over the Turner Library. This I recollect had 46 water buckets strategically placed to catch the water, and all the bookcases were shrouded in protective polythene.

Petworth House roof was an assortment of different areas, the outer visible roof slopes were clad in green Cumberland slates while the inner unseen slopes were clad in Welsh slates or tiles which discharged water to valley gutters which in turn led to downpipes or parapet gutters. A programme of works was instigated starting with phase one over the Turner Library and work commenced in 1976 providing a new roof in the form of a crown flat over a complete area in aluminum with all the surface water discharging to the perimeter parapet gutters and downpipes solving the leak problem to the Turner Library and the chapel underneath it. Over the ensuing 15 years or so a programme to undertake the complete Petworth House roof repairs in phases was developed to which I will refer in future articles.

## 'I wasn't hit. I was at Salonica'

The September book sale. Peter Jerrome.

'Caraway seed?' she enquired. I thought we'd probably still got some in stock. But the old man was already wading through fields of the stuff in Salonica. 1917 perhaps. 'Looks like a carrot when it's growing but the smell stuck to us for days, puttees, everything.'<sup>1</sup>

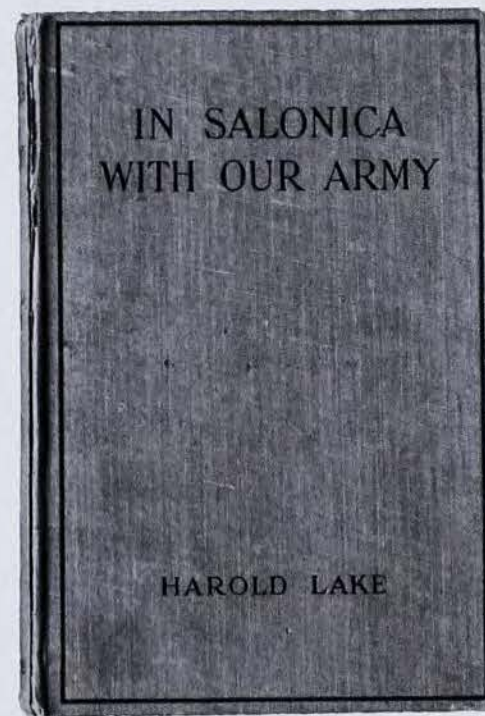
A familiar if somewhat frustrating feature of the monthly book sale is the unpretentious volume that would cost upwards of £20 to buy but lies forlorn on the £2 table when time comes to clear up.<sup>2</sup> The spine is beginning to detach, some pages are uncut and others damaged through careless opening. The paper is browning and has a musty smell. We have a piece of wartime memorabilia too measured and reflective to be dismissed as propaganda.

Here is an account of war in a situation quite contrary to that of the Western Front. The battleground, such as it is, is Macedonia and the front-line enemy Bulgar and German. It is a land where constant conflict has destroyed any sense of continuity and you may find the bones of a dead soldier bleaching on the top of a low hill, a land where you can look across to distant Olympus, home of the gods.

The writer is clearly of commissioned rank and has an avuncular concern for those in his charge. He has some connection with the supply chain and as such is hardly likely to 'suffer from neglect'. He sees Macedonia in terms of a recurring contrast between bleak present reality and unrealised potential. Camped beside an orchard of pomegranates, figs and apricots, he is among those kept awake by the raucous cries of bull-frogs. Someone hurls a Mills grenade into their midst. Is the result more disturbing than the original problem?

It is crucial to distinguish between spring and contaminated stream water while he is disconcerted, coming from Egypt, to find corrugated bivouacs as substitute for tents. There is the pointless lottery of war: a Bulgar fires a random shot into the air and causes serious injury to someone drinking a cup of tea behind the lines. The real enemy is fought with mosquito nets and daily quinine. 'The deplorable insect that sits on the side of the bivouac hanging its head so sheepishly in the morning when it has spent all night in taking blood out of one's body and putting poison in.'

Endless journeys across an unforgiving terrain have offered the tantalising prospect, always denied, of eventually facing the enemy. Thinking of home, why



are those who are wounded put on a higher pedestal than those the land itself has damaged? The exchange, 'Oh, I thought you were wounded,' jars. 'I wasn't hit. I was at Salonica.' 'And that kind of thing is irritating to a man who knows that every few weeks for the rest of his life there will come a time when he will wish with all his heart that he had lost a leg or an arm rather than endure the misery which is his portion.'

And there was the constant movement, apparently for its own sake and with no obvious relation to the fighting. A long march, and then to be told, 'You won't be needed now, but we've got heaps of blackberries here and perhaps you chaps would care to make some jam...' 'You may find it hard to believe, but it is written in the history of the regiment that "we

settled down in that camp and proceeded to make jam."

Time to look at the hospital ships as they pass, green and white with a great red cross, wishing to be aboard one of them but aware 'that there is the widest possible difference between realising that a thing is desirable and setting to work to obtain it.' Hospital ships still had free passage.

In the end the writer is invalided home via Malta, 'not through any skill of the enemy but through the nature of the land.' Presumably he had been in Macedonia since the autumn of 1915 helping with the retreat of the Serbian army.

1. Peter Jerrome, *Elegy for a Small Shop*, (Window Press, 2015).

2. Harold Lake, *In Salonica With Our Army*, (Andrew Melrose, July 1917, reprinted November 1917).

## Stansted, September 30

Peter Jerrome

A leisurely trip to the Sussex/Hampshire border, rather shorter than some. Down through Chichester, back through Harting and Midhurst. Time to negotiate a giant cheese scone in the Pavilion tea room at Stansted. Channel Island lilies (naked ladies) pink beside an old wall, a border with the bumble-bee heads of helenium and the pink daisy flowers of echinacea still defying the dying season. Uncertain weather, but we're soon exploring some extraordinary trees. A huge cedar, long dead, smooth of bark, is like a piece of statuary and home to a bat box. A giant sequoia with its cardboard-like corrugated bark, a Tibetan cherry tree from China, a giant tulip tree from America... In no time at all it's time for the volunteers to open up – it's one o'clock. Through the Dutch garden to the chapel with its curious mix of Jewish and Christian symbolism. The steward tells of a short-lived college at Rowlands Castle, but the times were not ripe for such a fusion of faiths.

Into the great house, the upper storey let out, finance is crucial. A rebuild in the original Queen Anne style with cement infilling between the bricks as a present memorial and practical reminder of a disastrous fire. Books in serried ranks in the library. I always think them somewhat forlorn, leather-bound decor. Books cry out to be read but so few are. On to the boudoir, a fur coat laid with casual artifice on an ottoman in front of the hearth. The music room with a table set for dinner, and the Earl of Bessborough (*c.* 1907) portrayed in black chalk, looking on. Thirty-five children from Portsmouth were here during the last war we are told. Then the revelatory servants quarters, the second footman's list of duties, the red and black livery. Spartan single beds in cramped bedrooms. The housekeeper's spacious room, Mrs Counley would have appreciated that at Petworth, the copper, a machine for ice brought in from the ice-house. Last day of the season, Christmas to come, but first Halloween – great houses now have to appeal to any taste. Too much to take in, so much missed in a single visit, I take away the feeling of a pleasant relaxed atmosphere, understated you might say. Another Debby and Gordon excursion. Do I need to say more?

Opposite above. The red brick house at Stansted with its Portland stone quoins dates from 1902-3. Designed by Arthur Conran Blomfield, it occupies the precise site of an earlier house dating from the fourteenth century which was destroyed by fire in 1900.

Opposite below. An ornate range, a more modern electric oven and glazed brickwork in the early twentieth-century kitchens. Photographs by Ian Godsmark.



## From Facebook

Miles Costello

From the June issue of the magazine I have been posting photographs on Facebook in the hope of engaging with the wider local community who may have an interest in the town but are not comfortable with joining an organised group such as The Petworth Society. As a result of the Facebook posts I regularly receive comments regarding the photographs or perhaps an observation I may have made. I have selected three of the posts which seemed to me to be of particular interest. I have also made a deliberate point of identifying female correspondents by their maiden as well as their married names.

### THE HOBBY HORSE

The June issue of the *PSM* had The Hobby Horse tea room in the series 'Old Petworth Traders' and while it was still relatively fresh I decided to reproduce on Facebook the illustration that had accompanied the article, just an advertisement from a post-war directory. The response was as expected rather subdued; however, the following comments represent a tiny glimpse into this once popular but now almost forgotten business which traded next to The Red Lion in New Street.

Margaret Grimwood née Connor remarked 'I lived opposite the Hobby Horse for the first few years of my life and used to queue outside once a week for cake if you were lucky as rationing was still on. I stood in the queue whilst my mum kept an eye on me from across the road. Sometimes I was lucky sometimes not.'

Liz Evans née Salter added 'I worked in the Hobby Horse tea rooms for a short time, A Miss Box ran it, she was very particular, you had to butter and cut each slice of bread separately, no cutting several slices at once, which was my time-saving tip. She did not want butter on the back of the slice. My friend Joan Boxall got me the job. She lived almost next door to the tea room.'

### THROW OUT YOUR RUSTY COPPERS

Goodwood Week prompted me to ask if anyone remembered the custom of standing by the road and crying 'throw out your rusty coppers' to the passing Goodwood race-goers. I didn't expect anyone under sixty to respond and I was right. The custom at Petworth appears to date back to the beginning of the twentieth century and probably died out toward the end of the 1960s. Where it originated from and whether it was peculiar to this area is unclear, the police were certainly aware of it but took no action. The practice was light-hearted and despite

the risk to children from the traffic it was quite harmless. Coaches seemed to offer by far the best reward as the heavy queues of traffic made their slow progress through the town, to the waiting children the bored passengers were easy targets and offered rich pickings. David Grimwood observed that one year he made thirteen pounds during Goodwood week, a not inconsiderable amount when in 1963 the average wage was less than fourteen pounds a week.

Sarah Singleton née Parsons was the first to respond; her recollection was of volunteering at the official collection point at the junction of the A283 and the turning to Goodwood. 'I used to stand up at The Benges with the Red Cross and catch coins in sheets and old tennis racquets that had little bags sewn to them instead of strings.' Mike Gane, Mick Wakeford, Nick Taylor, Deb Torode née Hodd, Rose West née Dormer and Trish Golkowski née Clake all recalled standing in Station Road as the racegoers returned through the town. Amanda Briscoe née Tidey commented 'Yes, I knew it as "rusty coppers", I was there with Tim Simmons and my mum was not amused when she found out! I guess we were about 11 so it was about 1969.' Robert Spreadbury and his younger brother lived at Coultershaw in the farmhouse by the side of the road. The narrow bridge provided an ideal spot for waylaying the coaches as they were forced to slow down and even stop to make way for approaching traffic. Unfortunately their mother did not approve of their entrepreneurial venture and banned them from 'begging'.

Steve Moorey was living with his parents in a cottage at Burton Corner at Heath End. Oh yes! We used to stand by the road just down from Rapley's Garage at Chalet Corner. 'My mum never found out (I think).' Hampers Green was another favourite spot and Liz Evans née Salter recalled standing by the park lodges on the London Road, 'It was always very exciting running for the pennies. One year a little boy was killed, I think he came from Station Road does anyone remember?'

Kathleen Bridger née Williams had a spot outside the hunt kennels near where her family lived. The line of children would stretch up North Street past Thompsons Hospital, taking advantage of the long line of traffic making its slow climb up to the town. 'We stood by the big Cow Yard gates in North Street' remembers Elizabeth Brown née Roberts. It was close to home for Elizabeth and her sister as their father was chauffeur to Lord Leconfield and they lived in the garage flat at the top of the Cow Yard. One can only imagine what his Lordship made of groups of children seemingly begging on the streets of Petworth.

### THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

A photograph of the interior of the former Congregational Church in Golden Square bought a flurry of comments from as far afield as the Channel Islands. Elizabeth Brown née Roberts recalled that 'Me and Susan went there every Sunday

when we were younger, in our best clothes Mum made us wear, with money for collection and I think there was a downstairs as well where I went, can't possibly tell you what we did with the collection money.' Her sister Sue Roberts had a slightly different take with Sunday school '...the Reverend Bending taking the service then halfway through children filed out and went to the hall for Sunday School good old days.' Sue felt it was important to mention that following Sunday School it was a family tradition that she went to the nearby Golden Café where she would buy a block of Cornish ice-cream to be had with their Sunday lunch. Trevor Brash had memories of a foot-pedalled harmonium and a bible class which always finished with the same hymn that went:

Day is dying in the West / Heaven is touching Earth with rest / Wait and  
worship while the night / Sets the evening lamps alight, through all the sky.

'Shows how often I must have sung it.'

## The Petworth Boys School memorial stone dedication

September 29, 2019



Below. A young bugler and people of all ages thoughtful around the memorial.  
Opposite left, from left to right. Tony Penfold, John Wakeford and John Brash.  
Opposite right. Peter Jerrome delivers a short speech, watched approvingly by Lord Egremont.  
Photographs by Ian Godsmark.





## A day in the life of a film extra

Keith Thompson

Well, a good many days really.

Jonathan Cann has been a good friend of the Society for a number of years as our Punch & Judy man on Fair Nights. Your Chairman and Vice-Chairman have always made sure of seats at his shows, which have had children totally gripped and responding to the story which, perhaps unusually, always had a moral. A pleasure, too, to be able to understand the dialogue which came over so clearly in a variety of voices without the distraction of a 'swazzle'. Parents were just as involved, if less vocal in their advice to Mr Punch.

This evening's talk was about Jonathan's other life. He holds an Equity card, acts in pantomime and is at the end of the phone ready to respond to his agent's offers to be an extra in film shoots and TV recordings. Never sure of a booking until the last moment, he may be told what to wear of his own clothing or have costumes provided.

Filming often takes place out of season and so summer clothes will be worn in freezing or wet weather and thick, hot winter attire in a heatwave.

Early starts, a nine-hour day, sometimes longer, for £89 plus expenses. You can't be late for make-up and costume, then you just have to wait your turn. Occasionally a whole day can be spent doing nothing apart from reading or playing cards. But the catering's always good. And there are always retakes.

At the end of the day, 'Wrap' is called. That means Wind, Reel and Print.

Manpower (the crews) is huge – see the credits at the end of a programme – all adding to the cost.

Among the many films and programmes Jonathan has appeared in, as well as the commercials, are 'Holby City', 'Eastenders', 'Jonathan Creek', 'The Generation Game', and the Paul Daniels magic shows. The new 'Mary Poppins Returns', a great experience, in which he really is a Punch & Judy man, left Jonathan with an appreciation of Walt Disney's attention to even the minutest detail.

We can now understand why extras are never people just pulled off the street.

The talk included many photographs of the characters Jonathan has portrayed, often quite unrecognisable through the wonders of make-up.

This brief report can never include the stories behind the facts, the great laughs, and family atmosphere. We do hope that this is not the end of our association with Jonathan – he's available for childrens parties with his Punch & Judy, magic and balloon modelling.

## FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

The *Sussex Advertiser*, February 1, 1859

### Fatal Accident at Petworth

A most melancholy accident occurred on Tuesday, in a narrow lane, near Tillington, called Hunger's Lane, by which a lad named William Sherwin lost his life. He was proceeding down the lane with a waggon belonging to Mr Henry Hammond, miller, of Duncton, and it seems was leading the horses (the waggoner being behind) when they started, throwing the poor boy down, the waggon passing over his body and head, crushing it in so frightful a manner that death must have ensued almost instantaneously. He was removed to the workhouse, where an inquest was held on Wednesday last, before R. Blagdon, Esq., and the jury recorded a verdict of 'Accidental death'.

This is just one of several unexplained incidents that have taken place in Hunger's, or the Haunted Lane over the years. Usually connected to the strange behaviour of horses, the lane is to this day generally believed to be the haunt of ghosts and witches and even now any local even of the pluckiest nature would be unlikely to use the lane after dark.

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The *West Sussex Gazette* December 25, 1913

From an article about Northchapel, by a man who was born there in 1831

In those days, when a deer escaped from Petworth Park, it was the custom to allow the villagers to hunt it. About the year 1838 or 1839 I saw one deer across the pommel of the village butcher's horse; many of the other local tradesmen were there with their dogs. The conclusion of this rustic hunt was celebrated with a venison dinner at the principal inn. The local poet blossomed into verse in honour of the occasion. Part of a song lustily rendered at the feast was as follows:

On the fourteenth of December, being a very frosty morn,  
The hounds of Northchapel met at the sound of the horn.

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### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

**ACROSS** 6 Ploughman, 7 Dumps, 10 Edmund, 11 Copse, 12 Zeke, 14 Rue, 15 Rose, 17 Steeple, 19 Gardens, 22 Snug, 23 Fit, 24 Hock, 27 Tutor, 29 Cavell, 30 Edith, 31 Moustache.

**DOWN** 1 Slide, 2 Future, 3 Shed, 4 Lantern, 5 Pump, 8 Pheasant, 9 Acre, 13 Ell, 15 Rod, 16 Stansted, 18 Egg, 20 Ash, 21 Station, 23 Fire, 25 Caviar, 26 Alpha, 28 Tate, 29 Cast.

## The Petworth Society annual dinner

Petworth House, September 18, 2019. Photographs by Ian Godsmark.



## **BUILDING SURVEYOR/ CLERK OF WORKS**

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