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Vice-Chairman - Sir Leslie Fry, Gore Hill House, Petworth.
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- Committee - Mrs. J. Boss, Mr. J.W. Davidson, Lord Egremont,
Mr. P.A. Jerrome, Mr. H.C. Oakes, Mrs. Sonia Rix,
Lady Shakerley, Mrs. M. Sheridan, Mr. D.S. Sneller,
Mr. P.M. Synge, Mr. K.C. Thompson.
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THE BYPASS : BACK TO SQUARE ONE?

After long discussion the West Sussex Council has decided in favour of a tunnel route through Petworth Park for the Bypass.

The Petworth Parish Council had in vain requested it "to reaffirm its previously declared preference for the surface route through the Park, for which there is an overwhelming degree of support from the people of Petworth," and to make recommendations to the appropriate Government Department on this basis; but at a recent meeting the Parish Council decided to take no further action and to "await developments".

The National Trust have announced in no uncertain terms that they will fight to the last ditch in Whitehall and Westminster to prevent any intrusion into The Park, so it looks as if Petworth may have to give up hope of a bypass, at least for some time to come.

Meanwhile it is important that both alternative routes in the Park should be clearly staked out before "battle commences", and that the stakes should remain for all to see until a final decision is reached. Perhaps also we may hope for some action to divert outside lorries from the town.

We are likely to hear much this year (often from people with little or no local knowledge) about Lancelot Brown and his undoubted "capability" as a landscape architect. If in the absence of any viable alternative the park he designed must be invaded, one cannot help

wondering which route he would have preferred - a short tunnel some thirty-five yards in front of Petworth House, approached by long open cuttings through the Pleasure Gardens and the playing fields; or a surface route entering and leaving the Park much further from the House and town, mainly hidden by contours and trees, but providing glimpses of the house and the park itself to thousands who now never see them.

Library Extension Plan

The proposal for an extension to the Petworth public library building for the use of this Society and to house its collection as the nucleus of a local museum has been accepted in principle by the Library and Archives Committee and the Land Resources Sub-Committee of the West Sussex County Council.

The exact terms of a licence have still to be settled, but we can now set about getting more detailed plans and estimates of the cost. This will have to be raised from voluntary sources, since no grant from the local authority can be expected at the present time.

PETWORTH FAIR, NOVEMBER 20, 1975

Bulletin No. 5 informed members last September that to promote interest in the Annual Fair and in the hope of raising funds for the Society, Lady Fry and her group of helpers were planning to run a Coffee Shop in the Leconfield Hall for three hours on the evening of the Fair.

The experiment proved so successful that long before closing time the group were put to the embarrassment, forgivably tempered with a certain satisfaction, of explaining to latecomers that the home-made cakes, jams and honey had all been sold; and by 9 o'clock the "white elephant" bric-a-brac and the children's books and toys had gone the same way.

Throughout the three hours a steady stream of people of all ages came into the Hall for coffee and biscuits, returning refreshed to the Market Square for another bout on the Dodgem.

The organisers of the Fair, with whom the group had been in touch well in advance of the event, afterwards said how glad they were to have this supplementary attraction, and expressed the hope that it would be available again in 1976. A tentative booking of the Hall has accordingly been made for Saturday, November 20.

Not the least pleasing feature of this exercise was that, in addition to helping the Fair and giving useful publicity to the Society, it brought rather more than £61 into our funds.

L.A.C.F.

THE SOCIETY'S LETTER-CARDS

These were on sale at both the Annual Fair Coffee Shop and the Christmas party and proved very popular. Over 600 have so far been sold. They show sketches of, respectively, Damer's Bridge and Middle Street, admirably drawn by Miss Frances Burton of Byworth. Each kind may be had in two forms, one on paper which may be used for a brief letter and the other on card printed "With best Wishes", to which the sender may add an appropriate ending, for example "for a speedy recovery", "for your birthday" and so on.

All cards, with envelopes to fit, are on sale at fourpence each and may be had from the Honorary Treasurer, Mr. R. Geeves, at Messrs. Anderson, Longmore & Higham, The Market Square, Petworth. It would be appreciated if some short notice were given to him by telephone at Petworth 42391.

The Society is greatly indebted to Miss Burton for her beautiful sketches.

Annual General Meeting, 1976

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at the Leconfield Memorial Hall, Petworth, on Wednesday, April 21st, 1976, at 7.30 p.m.

Photographs taken for the Record Office Survey will be exhibited and coffee and biscuits will be served afterwards.

"THE YOUNG PETWORTH SOCIETY"

Since November, a small group of children at the Herbert Shiner School have been holding weekly meetings with Mr. Keith Thompson to pursue interests in Petworth. They call themselves the Young Petworth Society, although links with the parent group are as yet somewhat tenuous. They visited the photographic exhibition in the Public Library, have held quizzes, looked at the Police Station and what remains of the old gaol, heard an interesting talk on the Petworth House of Correction and its treadmill from Mr. Kim Leslie of the County

Records Office (with photographic evidence supplied from the Society's stock by Mr. Peter Jerome) and cast a critical eye over that perennial eyesore, Washington Copse.

CHRISTMAS PARTY, DECEMBER 19th, 1975

'Mothers of large families, with claims to commonsense,
Will find a party well repays the trouble and expense ...'

No prize is offered for guessing the source of that quotation; but it was neither of those two favourites, St. Paul and Shakespeare. Wherever it comes from, however, its admirable sentiment surely applies to the Petworth Society. Our groups pursue their individual interests, from a (sculptured) bust and the 'Secretary' hand to conservation of all kinds, photography and the reduction of litter. Yet clearly it is essential - not merely desirable - for us to come together from time to time purely for social purposes, and to get to know each other better.

The Society's second Christmas party, at the Leconfield Hall on Friday, December 19, was on much the same lines as its predecessor. The Christmas trees and decorations contributed much to the welcoming atmosphere; the choir of twenty-five young carol singers provided a happy opening to the proceedings; and later, after a break for refreshments, the Petworth Edwardians performed with their customary elegance. A life-size dummy figure of a Shaikh presided over a competition to strike oil and other minerals in Petworth, the tombola and raffle did a brisk business and the Bar had no cause to complain of a lack of patronage.

A notable contribution was made to the party by members of the Girl Guides, the Red Cross and the Youth Club, some in Edwardian dress, who served food and coffee to older people seated at tables. In a graceful speech of thanks to all who had organised and helped at the party our Chairman said he believed that the Society was now firmly established and would go from strength to strength.

The number of those present at the party was in the region of 140, of whom an encouragingly large proportion were young. It is not designed of course to be a profit-making event; all prices were kept to the bare minimum consistent with the obvious need to cover expenses and ideally to provide a little extra towards the cost, for example, of producing the Bulletin. The balance paid into the Society's general fund came to £19.

L.A.C.F.

GROUP REPORTS

Architecture and Conservation Group

Leader: Mr. John W. Davidson, A.R.I.B.A., D.A. (Edin),
North House, Petworth. (Tel. 42145)

The most important of recent applications for planning permission concerns the Railway Station at Petworth. An assessment of the proposal is currently being made but any member of the Society who would like to comment should do so through Mr. Davidson (Tel. 42145).

Members may wish to know that even in cases where 'outline' approval has been given by the District Council, any objections or comments will still receive consideration.

There has been some doubt as to what is meant by "Tree Preservation" and this has been clarified as follows:- In a Conservation Area (e.g. Petworth) Planning Permission must be obtained before trees are lopped or felled. In other areas only those trees on which there is a Tree Preservation Order are subject to Planning Control.

The photographic survey which was carried out during last year is to be exhibited at the A.G.M. and it is hoped that some selected photographs of old Petworth may be also on view so that comparisons may be made. Members may be interested to know that seven USA students will be arriving in March for a ten week period to study architecture following the successful study programme held last year.

J.W.D.

PETWORTH OLD AND NEW : A CRITICAL YEAR

Never at one time in the past half-century has the future of so many of Petworth's older and most interesting buildings and properties been uncertain, at least so far as the public has yet been informed. Some were mentioned in our last bulletin, among them the Rectory, Thompson's Hospital, Somerset Lodge, Culvercroft, The Hermitage, and the Girl's School in East Street.

Others near the very centre of the town are the Swan Hotel, Harwood's Car Park, the former Co-operative Stores in part of Lancaster House, and Old Bank House in the Square. Also in the Conservation Area are several cottages at the top of North Street; Trowels Cottage in Pound Street; Denman's and Streeter's shops in

East Street, and the former Servants' Quarters of Petworth House.

It is not only the internal appearance and character of the town which is in danger, if planning is not carefully controlled and unauthorised action is not stopped at once, for it takes less time to demolish a building or cut down a tree than to build or grow a new one. In the coming months the whole view of Petworth across the eastern valley could be spoilt by unsuitable development on three main sites - the Sheepdowns (where plans for a second batch of four houses and garages have now been submitted), and the grounds of the Hermitage and of the Rectory.

Countryside and Amenities Group

Leader: Mr. Patrick M. Synge, M.A., V.M.H., Byworth Edge. (Tel.42471)

Rothermead Estate

A meeting on the site was held between Mr. Parker and Mr. Albrecht of the Chichester District Council and Mr. Synge, when further planting was discussed. Particular attention was paid to the shielding of the gas cylinders. It is expected that this will be carried out during this spring and when the trees are mature they should have a considerable effect on the amenities of that part of Petworth. In spite of the difficulties of a very dry summer some of the trees of the previous planting have survived and we hope will make some good growth during this year. A blue cedar, Cedrus atlantica glauca, is being planted in the vicinity of Cedar Court as the generous gift of members of the Petworth Women's Institute.

Garden Visits

A meeting of members of the Countryside and Amenity Group was held in the day Centre on 14th November, 1975, and a programme for 1976 was discussed. It was decided to try to arrange some further garden visits in the neighbourhood for the spring and possibly a tour round some of the small gardens of the town that are not visible from the road. The Action Group still has in mind repairs to the Hunting Bridge. Further volunteers would be welcome. Some tree planting was made in Egdean churchyard and among the trees planted were a scarlet oak, a cut-leaved beech, two Turkey oaks, three ornamental cherries, a Garrya elliptica, and by the church door a myrtle.

Fallow Deer in the Park

A most interesting talk on deer conservation and the wild life of

the Cannock Chase Forest was given in the Audit Room, Petworth House, on October 18th by Mr. Gerald Springthorpe, a Forestry Commission Head Ranger, and he showed outstanding pictures of the wild life there and also of different species of deer in Britain and explained the significance of the rutting. He had also arranged a small exhibit of heads of different deer. Lord Egremont introduced the speaker and after the meeting the audience walked across the Park to see from a well chosen vantage point part of the famous herd of Fallow deer in the rutting season. We were fortunate in having a beautiful sunny afternoon and members enjoyed greatly the view of the herd and a few battles which took place. We were very privileged to be able to have a talk from such a distinguished expert.

Patrick M. Synge.

NATURAL HISTORY FILMS

At the request of the Amenity Group Miss Violet Maxse of West Burton will show to members of the Society two of her outstanding Nature films taken in the Petworth area. The meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Friday March 5th, 1976 and will be in the Leconfield Hall.

The films will be: "The long-tailed tit at West Burton" and "Summer on Swan Lake"

Owing to Miss Maxse's generosity it will be possible to admit Members of the Society free on production of membership tickets. For Non-Members and additional guests admittance will be 25p.

THE LECONFIELD HALL BUST

Honore Pelle's bust of King William III has now been taken down and is at present housed in Petworth House through the kindness of Lord Egremont. The metal supporting bar was found largely to have rusted through and the bust was clearly unsafe in its position. All the top of the bust is about an inch deep in hard guano left by the pigeons and enquiries are now being made and estimates sought for the cleaning and repair of the bust by a suitable expert.

Local History and Records Group

Leader: Mr. Peter A. Jerrome, M.A., Trowels, Pound Street.(Tel.42562)

The Exhibition "Petworth at the Turn of the Century", held in the Public Library from November 1st to 20th was the first exhibition that we have mounted with the new Mailer-Haley screens and they helped make this the most successful display we have mounted so far. They did suffer at one point from a collision from a member of the public and

if any member made a fruitless trip while the screens were in disarray we must apologise. Once again Mr. J.M. Newdick's captions gave the whole an air of distinction, and once again I am much indebted to Mr. E. Vincent for his help in putting the exhibits together.

At the last general meeting of the Group in the Leconfield Memorial Hall in early autumn I gave some indication of the work being done by the group with archive material, usually Petworth House material. As usual the Group put on an impromptu exhibition of items likely to be of interest. The handwriting group, meeting regularly on Tuesdays at Trowels, has made great progress since then. We have completed our study of the 1623 poaching file, looked at relevant portions of the famous survey of 1575, and read a number of Petworth inventories, including a detailed one for Trowels in 1680, when it was still a tavern.

Latterly we have been occupied with a file concerning the famous dispute in 1593 between the Earl of Northumberland and his tenants over enclosure. While much remains unclear because the documentary material is incomplete, we are certainly now in a position to supplement Lord Leconfield's account in "Petworth Manor in the Seventeenth Century" (pp 58ff) in important particulars, even if we are not able to tie up all the loose ends. We have not yet produced a report on this file, but there is available an eight page Xerox copy of our investigations of the poaching case which can be borrowed if members care to ask me. For interest we append here an ultra-concise account to show the sort of material that can come to light. While this kind of work is by no means the only task of the Local History Group, it is in some ways the most rewarding in that it makes available material not previously known, or forgotten for many centuries. When we finish the 1593 file we may have a look at some easier 18th century smuggling documents. Anyone is very welcome to come to the meetings; the atmosphere is informal and there is no obligation to appear every week. As an experiment we propose to hold a quick course for beginners on three consecutive Tuesdays in February, starting at 7.30 p.m.

I mentioned in the last report the urgent need to reprint the anonymous "Tales of Old Petworth". The book is already 'on the stocks' and should appear at the beginning of May. This is a private venture by Mr. J.M. Newdick and myself, but under the auspices of the Society. I suppose that having "declared an interest" it is hardly fitting for me to recommend the book, but I do feel it promises to be a useful edition, worthy of the 'Tales', well illustrated and reasonably priced. More of this, however, nearer the time.

Many members of the Group attended the series of lectures by Mr. Kim Leslie of the West Sussex Record Office at the Herbert Shiner School during the late autumn. These were provided by the Centre for Leisure Studies, but obviously of great interest to the Society. Mr. Leslie dealt with various aspects of Local history as relating to Sussex and the Petworth area in particular. One may mention iron-working, farming, Frith's postcards, roads and turn-pikes, and work-houses. The speaker's obvious enthusiasm often led members of the audience to reciprocate with pieces of local information of general interest. It is good to know that Mr. Leslie may be able to give a similar course next year.

I know that many members particularly appreciate the questions and answers section of these bulletins. Latterly we seem to have had more questions than answers. This time, thanks to Mrs. McCann's researches in the County Record Office and Mr. J. Taylor's extensive local knowledge, we have been able to redress the balance a little! There will be a meeting of the whole Group in the early spring.

P. A. Jerrome.

Poaching in The Park in 1623 : A brief note

These documents (PHA 5558-67) are a series of a dozen or more examinations of persons suspected of poaching in Petworth Park. Most were connected with River Park (see A5/7). Deer, never very numerous in the Park, as we can see from the survey of 1575, were disappearing and a search of River Park house had revealed stolen venison locked in the Warrener's Chamber there. On this discovery a number of the principals fled. William Luff, for instance, was given a mare and "ten shillings to bear his charges". Months later he was apprehended by the Lord Chamberlain's men at Lavington.

A typical expedition would involve (5561) shooting a black pied buck, carrying him on a barrow out of the Park and "breaking him up" for distribution among the hunters. This would take place in a secluded copse some miles away. A favourite haunt of the poachers was one Leeve's alehouse at 'Loddesworthe'. Another haunt was the widow Skeet's at Heyshott. In both places the poachers would "spend" their venison - i.e. exchange it for drink or goods. The meat was eaten almost invariably in the form of a "fatt pastye", each "pastye" evidently a meal in itself. Initially the poachers probably shot over the low pale of the Park with guns, bows or in one well-known case with a huge crossbow, entering the Park only to retrieve their quarry. Later, growing more daring, they hunted clandestinely within the Park

itself. One, it is reported (5562) when told of the Earls anger at the activities of the poachers, swore with a great oath that so far from stopping, he would get all the dogs in the county and bring his waggon to Upperton Hill and there load it with deer. Venison was divided as we have seen, and there was a network of clients at places as far apart as Lodsworth, Blackdown, Duncton and Chichester. Venison regularly found its way to London. Often it appears to have been kept for quite long periods by our standards, and was sometimes parboiled - presumably to keep it.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q6/1 What was the "Grona Fair" where two of the poachers met before going to Thomas Weybroke's house at Tillington to eat stolen venison in 1623?

Q6/2 Everyone knows of a well somewhere in Petworth, but how many actually are there?

Q6/3 When did the Petworth Park Friendly Society hold its last procession? Would anyone care to describe the procession as they remember it?

Q6/4 Arnold (1864) talks of a small weekly market being held in The Market Square. It was apparently still going in his time. When did it stop?

Q6/5 Colonel Maude was given a replica of a poster by the Record Office to mark his ninetieth birthday. The poster, dated December 2, 1800, is a unique example of the work of the Petworth Prosecuting Society in the early nineteenth century, when private persons formed societies to finance the prosecution of alleged criminals. There must have been many more of these posters in Petworth, but this is the only extant one. Would anyone know of another such poster or indeed anything about this society in the later nineteenth century?

Q6/6 The 1882 manorial map gives old names for properties and streets in italic capitals. Among these are:

The Dye House - on the site of the present International Stores.

Bull Inn and Mansers - on the site of the Star.

Britain's - one of the left hand houses in front of the Church demolished in 1896. Once a school room?

Sowter Ditch - for Damer's Bridge. (Incidentally - why Damer's Bridge?)

Does anyone know the history of these names?


Q6/7 An agreement of 1798 between the Earl of Egremont and William Phillips, keeper of Petworth Bridewell, gives Phillips tenancy of "all that piece or parcel of Meadow Land called the Fair Field" - subject "to the use and liberty of keeping and holding Fairs in the said meadow according to Ancient Custom". John Mance made a similar agreement to allow "the standing and penning of sheep and other cattle there on the fair day on the twentieth day of November yearly". What else do we know of the rather misty history of the Fair and when was it moved from the Fair Field?

Q6/8 Old farm leases often require the tenant "to rear up and preserve all the TELLOWS in the coppices and hedgerows". What was a tellow?

ANSWERS

A5/1 Local Tradition relates that the stone at Tillington commemorates a child who fell from the top of the wall and was killed. Perhaps, however, this was just a cautionary tale to discourage children from climbing on the wall?

A5/2 Mrs. Alison McCann writes:-

The Northumberland Oak is one of the boundary marks on the boundary between Petworth and Tillington parishes. According to the 1779 map, the boundary ran (within the Park) from the Beelzebub Oak - Northumberland Oak - Old Oak - Old Lime Kiln, and straight on down, to the Midhurst Road. Only the Northumberland Oak is marked on the 1610 map, although there is shown, in two places "A Standinge ". The Lime Kiln is not on this map, so at some time between 1610 and 1779, it appeared, became dis-used, and therefore the "Old Lime Kiln".

Big, free-standing trees were often used to mark boundaries, as were standing stones, and notable features such as lime-kilns, sand-pits etc. On the other hand, the Cecil Oak, also in the Park, was said to have been planted to commemorate the marriage of Algernon Percy, 10th Earl, with Anne Cecil in 1629.

The Beelzebub or presumably Devil's Oak marked the parish boundary. "Limbo" clearly marked on Treswill's map of 1611 lay outside the boundary and hence "beyond the pale". A wall plaque still commemorates the Beelzebub Oak.

A5/7 Mrs. McCann writes:-

"My Lady Gerrard" was Mary, daughter of Sir William Dormer. She married first Anthony Browne (1553-92), son of the 1st Viscount Montague), secondly Sir Edmund Uvedale (d. 1606), then Sir Thomas Gerard (d. 1621). She came to live at Riverpark, where she died in 1637. Although her third husband was of a Lancashire family she chose to make Sussex her home, possibly so that she would be under the protection of her influential son, the 2nd Viscount Montague. Lady Gerrard was a staunch Catholic, and indeed harboured priests in her house.

A5/9 We are informed by Mr. J. Taylor, that the old Tanpits still survive at Shimmings and can be made out as slight depressions in the turf. They lie west of Shimmings Old Manor House in the S.E. Corner of OS 526 (old sheet).

An agreement of 1826 mentions specifically the "Old Tanyard situate at Shimmings".

MORE SUSSEX BOOKS

Willard, Barbara - Sussex

B.T. Batsford Ltd., London 1965
208 pp. £1-50.

Meynell, Esther - Small Talk in Sussex

Robert Hale & Company, London 1954. Reprinted 1973
174 pp. £2-50.

Straker, Ernest - Wealden Iron

David & Charles Reprints 1969