

THE  
PETWORTH  
SOCIETY

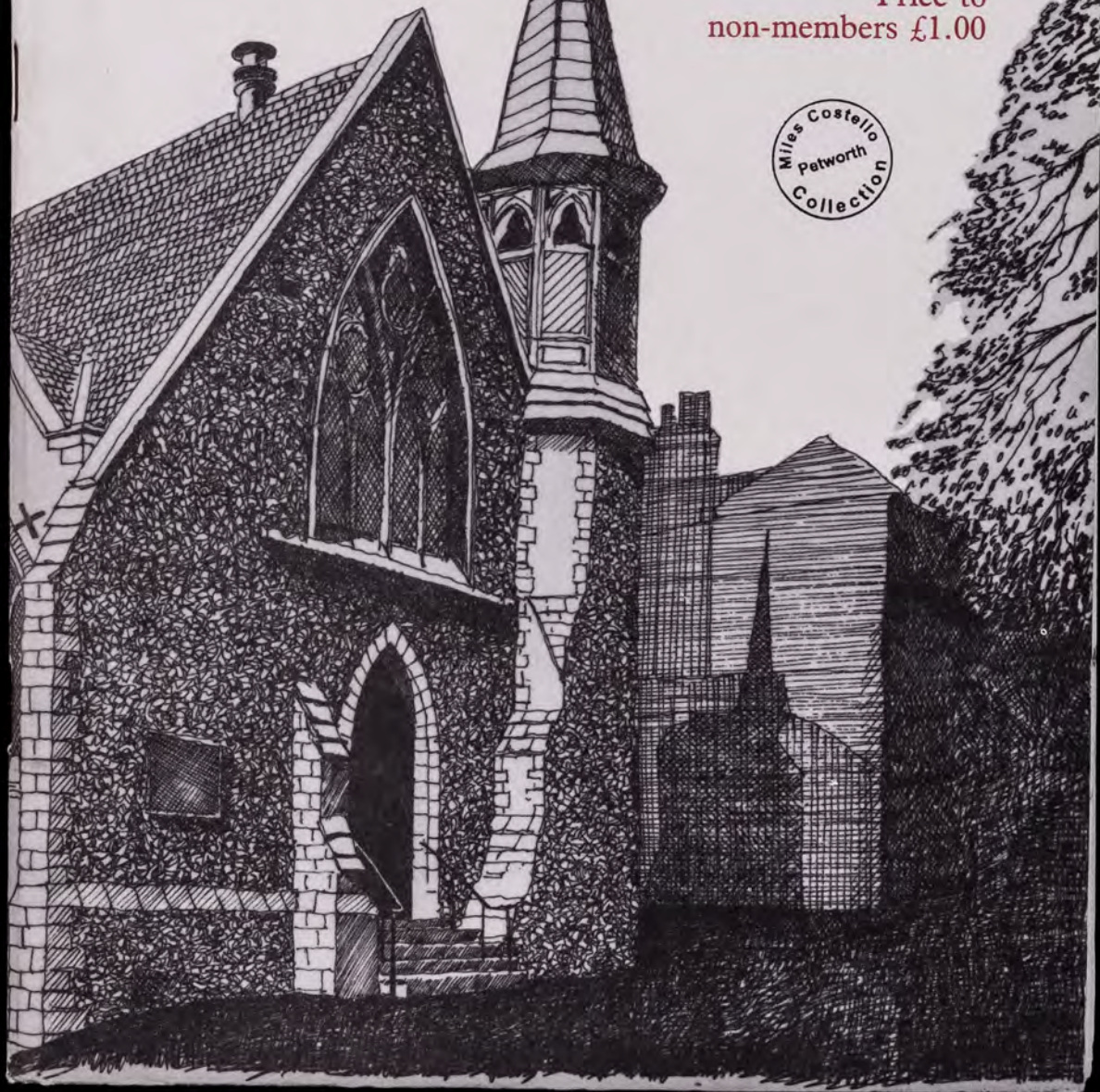
*magazine*

Issue No. 60

June 1990

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Spring Programme. Please keep for reference.

Monthly meetings: Leconfield Hall 7.30 p.m. Refreshments, Raffle.  
Entrance £1

Monday 12th March

Trevor Seddon:

"Over that wall"  
Petworth Park and Pleasure  
Grounds in the hurricane  
and after. Slides.

THURSDAY 5th April

Warden Swinfen  
of Radio Sussex:

"Hidden Sussex"  
Assisted (if available) by  
David Arscott.

Wednesday 16th May

Annual General Meeting  
at 7.15 followed  
by

Maureen Earwicker

"A light-hearted  
approach to family  
history"

Petworth Society's Sixth Annual  
Clean-Up.

SUNDAY APRIL 29th  
Meet Car Park 9.30 a.m.

In association with Petworth  
Parish Council and the Sixth  
National Environment Week.

SUNDAY 17th JUNE. Return of Toronto Scottish Regiment to Petworth.

Mr and Mrs Mynors have invited the Petworth Society to see the gardens at  
Gore Hill on Sunday April 1st. Cars leave Square at 2.15.

Walks: Cars leave Petworth Square at 2.15.

SUNDAY 18th MARCH

Riley's alternative Northchapel Walk.

SUNDAY 13th MAY

David and Linda's Stag Park Walk.

FLORAL PRIDE CAMPAIGN

The Parish Council were delighted with the response to the Floral Pride Campaign last year and are hoping for even better efforts this year. Window boxes, hanging baskets, tubs and suitable containers in odd corners greatly improved the appearance of the town and were much appreciated by visitors.

Judging is carried out by the Chichester District Council twice during the summer and is mainly concerned with the town centre. It not only includes floral displays but general tidiness and appearance. Approaches to the town are also considered. We won the Trophy for the Best Parish in 1989.

The Council look forward to even greater support this year so that in September they may again have the pleasure of receiving the Trophy on behalf of the town.

---

Peter.

THE NATIONAL TRUST AT PETWORTH PARK

Following the success of last year's concert, the National Trust will bring music and grand firework displays to Petworth Park on two consecutive evenings this summer.

On Saturday 30th June the Royal Philharmonic "Pops" Orchestra will return for an evening of popular classics including Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite, Can-Can by Offenbach, Sable Dancing by Khachaturian and Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance. This concert sold out very quickly in advance last year, so be sure to apply early for tickets.

Sunday 1st July will be Big Band Night with Miller Magic, a band presenting the authentic sound of Glenn Miller, Directed by his nephew, John. Also appearing are The Jiving Lindy Hoppers, the hyper energetic dance troupe which has done much to revive the interest in 1940s dance styles. You'll find the music and the mood impossible to resist, so redeem your clothing coupons and bring your dancing shoes!!

Both concerts start at 8pm with the Park open from 6.30pm. Bring picnics, rugs and chairs. We shall provide a licensed bar - and hot snacks. There is free parking in the Park off the A272 which is also the recommended access for the disabled and coaches. If you are approaching the Park from the north or east, please enter via the A283. We would like to keep traffic through Petworth to a minimum.

To obtain tickets, apply with a stamped addressed envelope to the National Trust, Petworth House, Petworth, GU28 0AE. Mark your envelope either "The Royal Philharmonic Pops Orchestra" or "Big Band Night" or "Both Concerts"!

The Box Office opens on 1st April. All tickets are £7 if purchased before June 25; £10 thereafter, should any remain. Please make your cheque payable to The National Trust. We regret that tickets cannot be exchanged or money refunded.

The National Trust will apply proceeds from the summer concerts to the improvement of access to Petworth Park.



THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

Annual Subscription 1990/91

Subscriptions for 1990-91 are due on March 15th and should be paid either to the Hon. Treasurer:

Mr P. HOUNSHAM,  
50 Sheepdown Drive,  
Petworth.

or to the Membership Secretary:

Mrs R. STAKER,  
2 Grove Lane,  
Petworth.

Local members may pay direct to Anne at

E. Streeter and Daughter,  
Lombard Street.

Rates are: Single Bulletin delivered, single or double membership £4

Postal       £5  
Overseas   £5.50

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I .....

of.....

enclose my subscription for 1990-91 £..... cash/cheque  
and (optional) I add ..... toward the Magazine fund.  
(delete if not applicable)

\* If you have already paid for 1990-91 please ignore this reminder.

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Summer Programme. Please keep for reference.

TORONTO SCOTTISH REGIMENT VISIT SUNDAY JUNE 10th

A letter from Jack Nicholls.

TORONTO SCOTTISH REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

16 April, 1990.

Dear Peter:

There has been a change in our original plans. We will be leaving Canada one week earlier. We will leave on June 7th and be in Petworth on Sunday June 10th.

There will be only one bus consisting of 42 people. Our plans are TO ARRIVE about 10:30 am and go to church. After church we would mingle with the residents, and leave about 3:30 in the afternoon.

I am afraid Peter, we will not have a piper with us this time. We are not contemplating to plan any official functions. There is no doubt there will be a few of us who would like to visit the cemetery and the old camp grounds. If this could be arranged, it would be deeply appreciated.

I am enclosing our new brochure, and will phone you before we leave Canada.

Closing for now and looking forward to seeing you on June the 10th.

sincerely,

Jack Nicholls,  
Chairman,  
Co-Ordinating Committee,  
Toronto Scottish Regimental Assc.

We would hope to have the Canadians here just after 10 o'clock. There will not be a formal parade : the Canadians simply walking with Society and Royal British Legion members to St Mary's for morning service. The town band will greet the veterans on arrival and there will be a display of vintage military vehicles in the Square. The Square will be closed to normal traffic. In the Leconfield Hall there will be photographs of previous Toronto Scottish visits and Dr Sheila Haines from the University of Sussex Centre for Continuing Education will have an exhibition on emigration from Petworth to Canada in the 1840s.

After the service there will be a short ceremony at the War Memorial before the Canadians return to Market Square for a lunch provided by the Petworth Society as a gift from the Royal British Legion. Everyone is welcome to come into the Hall to meet the Canadians who are most anxious to meet the people of Petworth once again. After lunch there will be visits to the graveside at Horsham Road and to the old camp sites in the Pheasant Copse. Once again everyone is welcome to join the Canadians on these trips. There may well be additional events. See noticeboards.

Summer visits. This year we are suggesting two Petworth Garden walks as this event is so popular and so heavily supported:

SUNDAY 1st JULY

Anne's first  
Garden Walk

Leave Square  
at 2.30

SUNDAY 5th AUGUST

Anne's second  
Garden Walk

Leave Square  
at 2.30

SUNDAY 16th SEPTEMBER

Riley's Ebernoe  
Walk

Cars leave Square  
for Northchapel  
Village Hall at  
2.15

Evening Visit to Petworth  
Primary School.

Date to be arranged.  
See noticeboards.

Make a note:

Cavalcade of Fashion Saturday 22nd September Leconfield Hall

Details in September Magazine

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**\*\* Re this quarter's Magazine "William" Steer of Byworth should of course be Thomas Steer. This is an error by the Editor who should have known better!**

Peter.

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TANDEM

Can you Help?

This is an appeal seeking help in replacing the Tandem Ambulance which provides support for the disabled and the elderly of Midhurst, Petworth and the surrounding area. Many of our passengers, particularly those confined to wheel-chairs, rely on us to take them from the confines of their homes to visit friends or relatives or to take them on the occasional outing or shopping trip. Tandem's drivers and its committee are resident throughout the area, and their services are given voluntarily and without monetary reward. Our present ambulance, is now coming to the end of its reliable life and we estimate its replacement, including the aids we need in it to help us handle the disabled, will be in the order of £24,000. How about organising something simple like a sponsored walk or swim. Perhaps you could open your home for a coffee morning; fund raising can be fun and bring you in contact with all kinds of lovely people. If you think you can help or would like to come on one of our outings or even drive the ambulance please ring Edith Keys on Petworth 42113.





The new quarterly Petworth Society magazine is now available with 44 pages of text and 8 full page illustrations. Jonathan Newdick's 1990 cover drawing of Golden Square shows especially the United Reformed Church, celebrating its 250th anniversary in June. The Chairman's notes deal with various contemporary issues including the experimental closure of the "Cut", the present condition of Lombard Street and the probable impact of the new uniform Business Rate on Petworth. Norman Thomas, administrator for the National Trust at Petworth House then explains the thinking behind the forthcoming renovation of the North Gallery. There are accounts of the Society's activities over the last quarter, including Petworth Fair, the several monthly meetings in the Leconfield Hall, and the walks. The magazine is first to feature Ken Wells' new poem "Poppy Day" and there is a nineteenth century hunting song from the Petworth area "St Valentine's Day". On a similar theme "with the Leconfield between the wars" looks at life with the hunt and gives also word pictures of Lord Leconfield and his friend the Rev. Hildebrand, Rector of Duncton. "A family tradition", looks at the art of gamekeeping in the same period. Mrs Morrish recalls her father the Rev. E.M. Sidebotham and his wartime stay at Kirdford, including the famous story of the drunken cows, while "I'm sorry you have to be twelve years old", recalls working at Bacon's the shoe-shop in the 1920s.

In "Petworth Preferred", Ena Lee, sister of the late Peggy Streeter looks back to Petworth before 1914 with especial reference to the Clock House in East Street while in a similar vein Percy Pullen in "Growing up in the Gog" remembers Petworth as he had known it before he left to work at Purley in 1912. He gives a marvellous description of a Horsham Road "speed trap" in 1910 and was there when the first aeroplane landed near Petworth. There are the usual short notes including one on the Moore family and among the full page illustrations are a number of Petworth Fair. There are numerous in-text illustrations too.

The circulation of the Magazine, now in its 59th Issue, is at present 850. Many of these are delivered locally but a significant number, (over 240) are sent to Petworth exiles at home and abroad. The Petworth Society while it organises large events such as the return of the Toronto Scottish Regiment to Petworth in 1985, 1987 and 1990! and Petworth Fair, holds regular monthly meetings during the winter months in the Leconfield Hall. On Monday 12th March Trevor Seddon talks about Petworth Park and Pleasure Grounds in the hurricane and after, while on Thursday 5th April Warden Swinfen of Radio Sussex assisted by David Arscott will talk on "Hidden Sussex".

Society walks, almost invariably on Sundays, continue throughout the year. Details of those for the coming quarter will be found in the Magazine. In the summer there will be the usual walks and garden visits but particularly the Gardens walks in Petworth and Fittleworth. The annual clean-up of roads and verges is on April 29th coinciding with the start of the Sixth National Environment Week. We also look after the two notice-boards, in New Street and Lombard Street.

Why not join us? Annual subscription is £4 single or double membership with Magazine delivered locally, £5 postal delivery or £5.50 overseas. Please fill in the form below and return it either to...

Mr. P. HOUNSHAM,	OR	Mrs. R. Staker,
50 Sheepdown Drive,		2 Grove Lane,
Petworth.		Petworth,

alternatively simply bring it in to Anne

at E. Streeter and Daughter  
Lombard Street - (almost opposite the Church).

If you already receive the magazine, please forgive this intrusion. May we simply thank you for your continuing support.

Peter Jerrome  
Keith Thompson

#### The Petworth Society

#### Application for Membership

I wish to become a member of The Petworth Society subject to the rules of the Society, and I enclose a subscription of ..... (min. £4). (Postal Minimum £5, overseas £5.50).

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Full Name (Mr./Mrs./Miss) .....

Address .....

Date ..... Signature.....



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 or residence, who is interested in furthering the objects of the society.

The annual subscription is £4.00. Single or Double one Bulletin delivered. Postal £5.00. Overseas £5.50. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:-

Chairman - Mr. P.A. Jerrome, Trowels, Pound Street,  
Petworth. (Tel. 42562)

Vice-Chairman - Mr K.C. Thompson, 18 Rothermead, Petworth.

Hon. Treasurer - Mr. P. Hounsham, 50 Sheepdown Drive,  
Petworth.

Hon. Membership Sec. - Mrs. R. Staker, 2 Grove Lane, Petworth.

Committee - Mrs. J. Boss, Mrs. Julia Edwards,  
Mr. Ian Godsmark, Lord Egremont,  
Mrs. Janet Ford, Mrs. Audrey Grimwood,  
Mrs. Betty Hodson, Mr. John Patten,  
Mrs. Anne Simmons, Mr. D.S. Sneller,  
Mr. J. Taylor, Mr. E. Vincent

Membership enquiries to Mrs. Staker please, Bulletin circulation enquiries to Peter or Bill (Vincent).

Bulletin Distributors - Mr. D. Sneller, Mrs. Williams (Graffham),  
Mrs. Edwards, Mrs. Mason, Mr. Thompson,  
Mrs. Simmons, Mrs. Watson, Mr. Patten,  
Mrs. Adams (Byworth), Mrs. Hodson (Sutton  
and Duncton), Mr. Vincent (Tillington and  
River), Mrs. Harvey (Fittleworth).

#### CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

*I hope this magazine will appear in good time to warn you that the visit of the Toronto Scottish Regiment is on Sunday June 10th, not as originally planned on June 17th. Obviously I want to give you as much notice as possible of the change; details will be on the Activities Sheet. I must say I am pleased that the change means that the visit no longer clashes with the 250th anniversary services at the United Reformed Church on the following Sunday. Petworth, I know, is looking forward to greeting the Canadians again on this their third trip to Petworth. Our friendship is one forged initially in unimaginable disaster but one which has endured over generations. I am sure that everyone who can will be in Petworth Square to meet them. They arrive soon after 10 a.m. Petworth Town Band will be there to greet them.*

*June 10th will not be like their legendary visit in 1985. This one is private rather than ceremonial and the numbers will be fewer. The Canadians want to go first to Church, then return to the Leconfield Hall and meet their friends, new and old. They will keep open house in the Hall (with the occasional break for refreshment!). A meal will as usual be provided by the Society and the Royal British Legion. As always many of the Toronto Scottish will wish to pay their respects at the graveside in Horsham Road, a number too will wish to visit their old camp site in the Pheasant Copse. June 10th is a real Petworth Day when the whole town unites to meet its greatest friends. They will not always come: probably for some this visit will be their last to Petworth but we shall never forget them.*

*You will see that this magazine features specific items on the U.R.C. and there will be details of the celebratory programme on the Activities Sheet. I am very pleased to have Neil Caplan's scholarly article charting the beginnings of the non-conforming tradition in Petworth. Here, as elsewhere, this tradition remains a vital and continuing part of our common heritage.*

*I am keeping these notes as concise as I can as I am aware that there is a very great deal to squeeze into a limited number of pages: last quarter's magazine was well over standard size and this one may well be too. The summer programme is slightly different owing to the Canadian visit but I would draw your attention particularly to the visit to Petworth Primary School. Close links with the schools are very much a part of this Society's*



plans. Note too the Cavalcade of Fashion evening in September: tickets will be quite scarce I think. You will probably have read that this Society in conjunction with Petworth Horticultural Society and Petworth Parish Council have contributed toward prizes for the best floral display by a private resident and the best by a business premises in the Petworth Floral Competition. Entries are limited to the Petworth Conservation Area. This is part of the Chichester District Council Floral Pride Campaign and you will remember that the trophy was won by Petworth last year. Hopefully we can retain it. Like the clean-up on April 29th this is another example of the Society's increasingly close working with Petworth Parish Council.

Lastly if your subscription for 1990-91 is still outstanding you will receive a reminder with this magazine. If it is still outstanding in September you will receive a second reminder with the September magazine. If it then remains outstanding we will send you a letter in October to tell you that your December magazine will be withheld until payment is made. I know this may only apply to perhaps fifteen or twenty members among many hundreds but please remember late payment of subscriptions does make a lot of work for all of us.

Peter.

1st May 1990.

#### BOOK REVIEW:

#### "Favourite recipes"

Petworth books of whatever kind always interest me and I am pleased to add Olive Fox's collection of Favourite Recipes to that select list. The book has been produced free of charge for the United Reformed Church by the printers of this magazine, the proceeds going to the U.R.C. Building Fund. Olive has collected from her friends a wide selection of different recipes: main courses, snacks and quiches, desserts, biscuits, cakes and pastries, drinks (mulled wine elderflower champagne and lemonade punch) and pickles, spreads and jam. How about luxury Rousse, bobotie, salmon custard or Richmond Maids of Honour? All worth a try. As with all recipe books there are some things you will try just the once while others become a part of your "repertoire" and you have them again and again.

This isn't however just a book of recipes. Half-way through is a list of fifteen handy hints. Did you know your pudding will be much lighter if you mix the suet pastry with warm water? The recipes

are interspersed with reflections and a joke or two. What about the greengrocer and the poisonous sprays? Do you know that one? Or on a more serious note why the sign of the fish was a secret symbol for the early Christians? Or how to write in invisible ink and equally important, to decipher it? In a word, supplies are limited and no Petworth bookshelf is complete without "Favourite Recipes". Write to Mrs Olive Fox at Tally Ho, Sheepdown Close, Petworth GU28 0BP enclosing £2.90 (£2.50 plus 40p. postage). Cheques payable to Mrs O. Fox. All proceeds as I have said to the U.R.C. Building Fund.

Peter



(This photograph loaned by Carole certainly shows some members of the Whitcomb family but there are other well-known Petworthians there too. It comes from about 1920. Does anyone know more than three of the people?

Ed.)

See over page.



### THE WHITCOMB FAMILY

My name is Carole Whitcomb and I have been tracing my family history for some time.

I would love to hear from anyone who has old photographs that show any member of the Whitcomb family as this makes the subject come to life so much more.

My great grandfather was Henry Whitcomb who worked at Petworth House, but I am interested in all branches of the family.

I only wish to borrow the photographs so I can take copies of them.

38 Ardingly Drive, Worthing, Sussex.

### HEDGEHOGS OF OLD PETWORTH(?) FEBRUARY 14th

The cancellation, through the illness of Mr. Steve Harris, of his illustrated talk: "Hedgehogs - Henry and Harriet", led to a last-minute substitution by Peter. His programme of slides was, as he said, "Low on hedgehogs and certainly could not be entitled 'Hedgehogs of Old Petworth'", but it proved to be yet another illustration of the Town's rich heritage of photographs, many of which were new to the members present.

Drawn from the 1850s to the early years of the present century, scenes and portraits by F.G. Morgan, Walter Kevis and others unknown, showed how Petworth has (and has not) changed. It is remarkable that such a selection is available from before the Garland era, which itself provides 70,000 negatives and prints. A fund of anecdotes about the places, events, people in the scenes, contemporary reports, even a ghost story, combined to make an entertaining and informative evening for which Mr. John Patten expressed the audience's appreciation.

K.C.T.

### OVER THAT WALL MARCH 12th

Trevor Seddon, nine years as Head Gardener at Petworth House, gave an audience of 80 members of the Petworth Society a fascinating glimpse "over that wall" when he gave a lecture illustrated with slides of the highest artistic quality, about the private gardens, pleasure grounds and park. He showed a photograph of 26 gardeners and 4 pieces of machinery taken at the turn of the century,



commenting that a comparative group today would consist of 4 gardeners and 26 pieces of machinery. Although he and his staff are designated gardeners a large amount of the work is forestry as is evident from the important collection of trees, native and exotic, on the estate.

Mr. Seddon opened with an historical background to the park and gardens, beginning in the 17th century when a large part of Petworth Town occupied areas now in the park, continuing through the period of Capability Brown's transformation from straight-lined formality to a scene of curves, clumps and vistas, and further evolution to the present day. The hurricane of 1987 when 618 trees were lost, and more recent gales when a further hundred fell, had been devastating, but presented a unique opportunity to open up some of the garden to give two of the original long, straight vistas through newly planted high forest. It had been possible to sell all the felled timber - 3,460 tons, 170 polewagon-loads, offsetting a third of the cost of repair and replanting. 10,000 trees had been planted in the gardens, 9,000 in the park, with a further 5,000 to go in this year. Of these, 3,500 had been lost in last year's drought, almost all, surprisingly, on the clay near Shepherd's Lodge. Slides of the devastation and the subsequent work of burying the huge stumps or grinding them out, levelling, and the effect 2 years on, brought home again the trauma of the event, but there was also the ongoing work of constructing and landscaping the new car park, establishment of herbaceous borders, a rose garden - unusually in grass, and the screening of the wall from within the park to give the impression that there are no boundaries, while preserving the long views of up to 2 miles without field, hedge, ditch or fence, unique in lowland Southern England. The final exquisite slides taken in early morning and at sunset, used the effects of clouds, sun behind trees and reflection in water to emphasise, as Mr. Seddon said, that all this, owned by the National Trust since 1947, is for our enjoyment. After questions, he was thanked on behalf of the audience by Mr. David Sneller for his comprehensive yet moving presentation.

K.C.T.



## "HIDDEN SUSSEX" APRIL 5th

There was a large audience for Petworth Society's April meeting when Warden Swinfen of BBC Radio Sussex gave an illustrated talk on "Hidden Sussex". He, with David Arscott, has published a book with the same title, followed by "People of Hidden Sussex" and "Hidden Sussex, Day by Day". Like the books, Mr. Swinfen's talk focussed on the unusual and little-known facts and legends from Sussex villages. As evidence, few in the audience could identify the subjects of his photographs, even when located in nearby places. From Adversane to Yapton, tales of tragic death, wagers, follies, a child-eating giant, a deserted village and of course, smuggling, followed in quick succession, sometimes sad, occasionally mysterious and often hilarious. Questions and comments from the audience revealed that there can be few lanes, tracks and footpaths not covered by Mr. Swinfen in his search for the unusual in West Sussex, similarly in East Sussex by Mr. Arscott. Signed copies of the books were available and it was good to hear that another is on its way, this time dealing with the less well-known aspects of about 20 Sussex towns. Peter in his vote of thanks, felt that there would be many requests for a return visit from this entertaining and informative speaker. He also reminded members that the final meeting of the season, at 7.15 p.m. on May 16th, would be the Annual General Meeting, at which the genealogist Mrs. Maureen Earwicker would be making "A light-hearted approach to family history".

K.C.T.

## JOHN AND GLORIA'S GRAFFHAM WALK

It was a day to make the most of the spasmodic February sunshine. When the wind blew it was very cold but at times in the woods the sun would shine down like a summer's day. Down the lane from the Sports Pavilion at Duncton across the road and into the fields. Duncton Common so-called. Jackie the dog disappeared into a rick and after an age reappeared at the other side: the wind blew the trees uneasily silhouetted against the top of the Downs and the sky darkened. Sheep plodded in the sodden grass and the earth in the fields had been beaten down by the rain. Pyracanthus fanned out on a farmhouse wall stood out vivid scarlet even on a day as dull and wintry as this. We veered round by Westerlands, through the woods then out on to the Graffham Road just up from Herringbroom. Across then into the woods and walking towards New England, I remembered Jumbo telling me about a fulling-mill here and others knew of it too. Here too are the big ants.

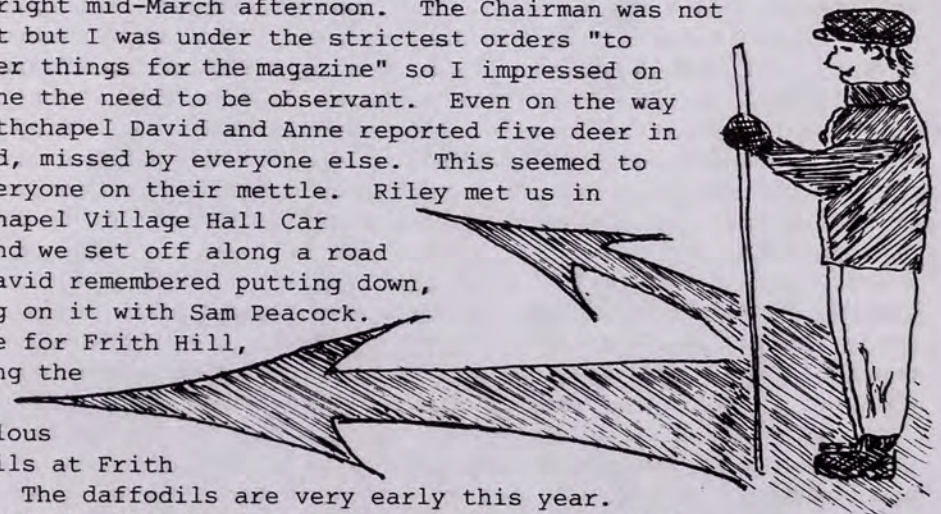
There was damage in the woods, not just the remains of the 1987 storm, but a more recent layer from the January gales. At Heath End we looked over the fence at the platoon of geese, then over the road again and through Burton Rough; here was a plantation of conifers snapped off like matchsticks. They had survived 1987 to succumb this year. A silver birch lay across the track, the bark smooth and shiny. This was, someone said, the old retainers' short cut through to Courtauld's at Burton Park. Again across the road and into Burton Park. The lonely oaks stood in the fields. Were they alive still? Only spring and the green leaves would tell. Up the slight incline to the pavilion, kicking the cartridges that littered the path. How long we wondered would they take to rot away? Just right for February, John and Gloria certainly knew how to put on a good walk.

P.

## RILEY'S ALTERNATIVE NORTHCHAPEL WALK. 18th MARCH

There were thirty-one members and five dogs waiting in the Square on a bright mid-March afternoon. The Chairman was not present but I was under the strictest orders "to remember things for the magazine" so I impressed on everyone the need to be observant. Even on the way to Northchapel David and Anne reported five deer in a field, missed by everyone else. This seemed to put everyone on their mettle. Riley met us in Northchapel Village Hall Car Park and we set off along a road that David remembered putting down, working on it with Sam Peacock. We made for Frith Hill, admiring the

marvellous  
daffodils at Frith  
Lodge. The daffodils are very early this year. We passed the Mill Pond, gleaming in the sunshine on this bright March day. We recalled how different it had been on a drizzling November day more than a year ago, the rain dripping sullenly off a regiment of umbrellas and soaking into the grey waters of the lake. There were Canada Geese, Grebe, Swans and cygnets. Riley said that in days gone by people would swim and





boat in the Mill Pond but now it's used mainly for fishing. We walked in Shillinglee Park, passing the deer tower and Riley told us about the burning of the big house during the war. Sailors burning up old paper were said to have started the blaze. The building is now converted into flats. We went over China Bridge noting the violets growing out of the crevices. Jean had made a list of the flowers we had seen: milkmaids, cleavers, groundsel, chickweed, celandine, coltsfoot, dog's mercury, primrose, bluebell, spurge, periwinkle, greater stitchwort, shepherd's purse, violets, buttercup, dandelion, Marsh marigold and wild strawberry, not to mention blackthorn and wild cherry. John Patten thanked Riley for giving us such a good walk and Riley said he'd be pleased to give us another in September.

Audrey.

#### VISIT TO GOREHILL APRIL 1st

It was a glorious day, full summer on the first of April and the Square was bustling with activity, people waiting in cars or just standing on the east side by Austens. Clearly the idea of a visit to Gorehill was a popular one. A number of members were simply going straight there. We estimated a turnout of between sixty and seventy. It wasn't long before we were driving up the winding tree-lined lane that leads to the house, cars parking tight in the drive in front of the house or wherever else they could find a space. Mr and Mrs Mynors welcomed us and invited us on a circular tour of the garden beginning with the shrubbery on the incline above the road. There were mature plants too numerous to mention, rhododendrons and azaleas, a choisya in full white flower and the dwarf Rhododendron Yakushimanum with its squat habit and flowers already in tight bud. This was probably, said David, one of the early hybrids, each named after a different one of Snow White's dwarfs. Turning at right angles we walked by many other shrubs to come out on the large lawn in front of the house.

Gorehill, built for one of the Upton family, had been begun in 1870 and completed in 1872. I was told that it had been designed by the architect Richard Norman Shaw and that it has some of his particular specialities, distinctive timberwork, leaded light windows with small pieces of coloured glass, windows in the chimney stacks. Swan House in Chelsea is another of his designs. The stones in the middle bay as we looked from the lawn were beautifully cut, tapering slightly as the eye moved between ground and first floors. The weather vane I was told still has 'U' for Upton on it.



Gorehill: The Carriage Drive c 1900.



The 1987 hurricane had caused destruction among the mature trees and the January storms this year had compounded the damage. A tree with the top torn out looked unlikely to survive. Two giant redwoods had gone in 1987; their massive stumps might become a feature as the garden developed. The third and youngest redwood had survived, inclining slightly away from the house with the prevailing wind. Mrs Mynors said she would like some more flower beds but the rabbits were such a problem. There was a nice bed backing on to a stone wall which might serve as a herbaceous border later; already some paeonies looked promising. The lilac walk would be in flower soon, the grass at the side was studded with pink polyanthus. Just beyond the lilac walk were the remains of a sunken water garden, probably put in Mrs Mynors said when the house was built. A platoon of ancient gunneras were just starting into growth, basking in the warm sun like torpid lizards. You could tell from the pattern of the grass that they would cover a great deal of ground as the season progressed.

The walled kitchen garden had had a lot of work put into it, some of it was shared now and part put down to lawn. The greenhouse had suffered in the recent storms; it was one of the old kind, perhaps even original with the house, and had a large vine in the western half. Mrs Mynors had cut it back hard and the new growth seemed to appreciate this. Outside again a clump of horseradish reminded us of the self-sufficiency of earlier days; there were some young lupins beside it now. Once out of the kitchen garden there was the chance go to up into the high field where the water tower stands and look out at Petworth laid out in the sun, it was almost, someone said, like being in a balloon. Soanes looked so isolated among the flat fields and the tower of St Mary's was just visible away among the trees and over the top of New Grove.

P.

**CLEAR LITTER EFFICIENTLY AWAY NOW!**  
**THE LITTER CLEAN-UP APRIL 29th**

It was a very sunny day and a good enough turnout to spread all forces, if a little thinly, over the 25 spots on our list. This year's clean-up was in association with the Parish Council: some councillors came: some didn't. That was alright with me: it's a clean-up not a parade. Les had already done his rounds so the town centre was clear; it was just the 25 places on the list. Cherry Orchard was already done and we had the promise of the Balls Cross



Les Howard at work in the Horsham Road Cemetery April 1990.  
 Photograph by Tony Whitcomb.





Horace White the verger at work in the Horsham Road Cemetery April 1935.  
Photograph by George Garland.

Road in the afternoon. This is the sixth clean-up and the regulars have their favoured spots by now. Soon the base party were left to attack the Car Park, still fairly empty at 9.45 on a sunny Sunday morning. We kept first to the perimeter: it was good to see Herb Robert in full bloom in the old Back Lane wall - happy enough in the bright sunshine. The bottle bank I realized spawns an inordinate number of crushed metal bottle tops.

The box-hedge needed a deal of attention. Cobbett would have waxed indignant at the crisp packets, mineral cans and fast food wrappings that now littered it. The misses Austin, walking through the centre aisle in an early century cool of the day would have been horrified at such carelessness too I thought. It was cool inside the ancient hedge, hot outside.

The 1st Petworth Scout (and Cub!) Group had been dispatched down Station Road to see what was to be cleaned there. A good deal it appeared. The gasworks hedge and verge and the area between the hedge and garages to the immediate north were a disaster. Probably the dirtiest single spot in Petworth. Les was soon trundling back to the Car Park with a trailer-full of miscellaneous metal, some pieces of a very fair size, even a car wheel complete with tyre. The Scouts and Cubs marched on undeterred, clearing the untidy patch of waste just south of the old gasworks.

Jumbo was going round collecting the bags too. We reckoned there were a good 75 large bags, some left in the Car Park to be taken away on the Monday, some gone already. That was my view of the clean-up but everyone will have their own. It was a good morning's work, probably unreported in the newspapers, but quite simply the Petworth Society pleased to clean up the town and its several approaches for a little while.

Peter.

#### EVEN VANDALS HAVE A CARE - AT LEAST I HOPE SO!

The job was much as I thought it would be really. I knew it would take seven days a week to do it properly but that doesn't worry me very much. After I've swept up it looks nice and when people tell me it looks nice then it's all worth it. Particularly at weekends strangers see me sweeping and compare Petworth favourably with their own home towns. They stop and ask me where they can get a lunch and then say, "It's much cleaner here than where we live".



The first part of every day is always much the same but after breakfast the work varies as I will explain. I start about 5.45 or 6.00 but never later than 6.20. Summer or winter makes no difference. Certainly there's more rubbish in the summer, the equation being simple enough: more visitors, more rubbish. It evens itself out however, for in the winter there are the leaves, or in cold spells the salt from the gritting lorries and in spring the pollen from the wisteria in the Square, or the blossom from the tree in the garden of the National Westminster or the tree in Lombard Street. When the pollen's about I may have to sweep the Square twice daily. My first stop is Market Square, very quiet at that time of the morning. Being in the same place early every morning makes you aware of small things that aren't noticed in the bustle of the working day. There may be only four cars parked in the Square and it's amazing how big it looks then. The birds sing very early and it's quiet enough to hear them. The song is so pure you could imagine you were in a wood. As I sweep the Square I often think that.

I sweep the Square itself, then all round the Town Hall, paying particular attention to the steps. There's likely to be a good deal of fast food debris together with bottles and mineral cans. The better the weather the more there's likely to be. The children being on holiday makes a difference: it's definitely worse then. I still sweep even if it's wet. By 7.15 the Square is coming to life, cars stopping briefly for newspapers, the postmen about, a police car comes round and the Estate workers go up the Yard. A couple of buses come in, a few people are walking their dogs and the baker comes to Gateway. I watch the Square come alive.

Next stop is Saddlers Row and the place to watch there is the corner which collects dust thrown up as the lorries take the sharp bend. It's not something anyone else would observe, I imagine, but it's something I've come to expect. I come down as far as the Tasty Plaice, then go back to Damer's Bridge and Golden Square: it's about 7.30 by now. It's quiet at this time in Golden Square but a good deal of debris will have blown down from Market Square during the night, right under the several cars parked overnight in front of Lancaster House. Rosemary Gardens needs a look next; it's not usually too bad in the winter except for weekends, but can become very littered in the summer. People eat fish and chips in there, a Chinese takeaway perhaps, leave the remains, the wrappings and their mineral cans. I clean all that up, often in the summer looking back at mid-day to see everything's alright. I

keep the garden going too; it's not suffered from vandals this year and the daffodils have been left to bloom. Possibly the vandals think someone's really making an effort and leave them alone. Perhaps even vandals have feelings - I don't know. The only misadventure this year was someone pulling up the wallflowers in the basin by the public toilets, but they did leave them lying on the ground. I replanted them and the plants seemed none the worse for their adventure. I don't sweep the Arcade; that's done by a private contractor.

I'm in High Street by eight o'clock, that's not usually difficult. I move on to Middle Street, then go down the south side of New Street and up the north side. New Street collects far more rubbish than High Street: it's more frequented at night by people walking to and from Market Square or coming out of the pubs and of course there's the steady flow of traffic too. East Street collects its fair share overnight and after that it's Lombard Street, more used by pedestrians than East Street. There will be cigarette packets, fast food wrappers and plastic bags and of course dog-fouling. Lombard Street gets a lot of this, New Street very little. There's no point in getting worked-up, if you let it get to you, or treat litter as a personal affront, it all becomes a chore. The cobbles make Lombard Street hard to sweep and I can use the suction machine here as there's virtually no traffic. I can't use it much on the through roads because you have to get out into the road to clean the gutters. The traffic's quite heavy from 6.30 to 7.00 then quieter again until 8.30. Park Road is always fairly dirty because of the parking on the right hand side; people simply "park and eat", sometimes too emptying their car ash-trays as well. After that it's simply up round the corner, down into Market Square, and home for breakfast.

People often say that the Car Park spoils the town but you will notice that I haven't mentioned it. I am paid by the Parish Council and work to their schedule. The Car Park does not fall within their jurisdiction. Its condition directly affects me because rubbish blows out into areas for which I am responsible, and because people think it's my job to clean it. It isn't. The bottle bank is a good idea but it's abused. People just dump rubbish there, not just the cardboard boxes they've brought the bottles in, but kitchen waste, potato peelings, waste food from cafés or even babies' nappies. Talking of nappies, I remember not long ago sweeping outside the Midland Bank when a large car pulled to a sudden halt. A full nappy slapped wetly at my feet. I



suppose whoever it was thought it was a public-spirited action to throw it in the direction of the sweeper! I was so nonplussed I didn't get the car number.

That's the routine every weekday. Sunday however I start about 6.30. I invariably sweep the Square and go round the main streets, picking up stray papers. After breakfast on a weekday the work will vary according to the particular day of the week but an early job is to go up the Tillington Road as far as the bus shelter, collecting rubbish, clearing out the gutters, and tidying the pavements and verges. Pound Street as far as the Garage I reckon to do alternate days, as also Angel Street as far as Mount Pleasant. Angel Street is particularly affected by the wind and very difficult to keep clean when the leaves are falling. Sometimes I just use a paper sack, sometimes a wheelbarrow but I always have the trailer handy in the Angel Car Park.

North Street too really needs to be done alternate days. It's been particularly bad of late with the roadworks. The workmen leave a certain amount of mess and cars halted at the lights throw things out of the window. It's only very few that do but that very few can soon make a lot of litter. North Street is particularly difficult where the road narrows and the big lorries mount the pavement while you're sweeping. The length from Thompson's down to the end of the road I do just once a week. Thompson's is a convenient dividing point because I can leave the trailer out of harm's way in the park to the rear. Grove Street is a weekly sweep - it's by no means the dirtiest of Petworth streets. Station Road as far as the old Gasworks site I do once a week although, strictly speaking, my brief is to go only about half as far.

After sweeping it's time to look at St. Mary's Churchyard. We try to work on it Thursday to leave it looking good for the weekend. If Thursday is hopelessly wet there is still Friday or Saturday and we can still have it right for the weekend. The work involves mowing and strimming round the graves, keeping the paths clear of weeds, cutting back shrubs and maintenance in general. Equipment is a motor-mower and strimmer. One or both of my two helpers will work with me on the churchyard. The churchyard is done weekly. People often ask us questions, not all of which we can answer, such as "How old is this church?" or "Has this piece been built on?" Visitors think the churchyard looks well cared-for and they obviously know of many that aren't. We see them particularly when the House is open. The daffodils were our idea and so many people



Daffodils in Petworth Churchyard.  
Spring 1990.

have told us how bright and cheerful they look. The churchyard takes about four hours and then we go off down to the Hampers Green cemetery, again treated as a weekly job. Before we come back from lunch I always check that everything's reasonably tidy in Rosemary Gardens, at least I do in the summer, it's not so necessary during the winter months. In the summer people go into the Gardens from about eleven-thirty onwards, coming often from quite a way away. Outsiders know and appreciate Rosemary Gardens. I know one couple that bring their grandchildren up from Littlehampton because they like the Gardens so much. It's so compact; the children can play on the swings and don't run off and get lost. People who come into Petworth to work have their sandwiches in there at lunchtime. Again we've planted daffodils and they've been very bright this year.



Hampers Green cemetery is tidied on Friday if we can, bearing the weekend in mind as we did with St. Mary's churchyard. It's a bigger area than the churchyard of course and, on the right where there are no graves, we use the tractor. We go round the graves with a mower and then strim round the stones. The cemetery can't be done in a day and it needs more than one. Arthur uses the tractor while Sue and I start the mowing. It's very clayey down there but I plant with daffodils, tulips and wallflowers for spring, then bedding dahlias I have raised myself for the summer. They flower until the first frost. Hampers Green will certainly take us to late afternoon on Friday even if the weather's good.

Assuming we haven't got behind, on Saturday we can do one of two things, tidy and mow the Horsham Road cemetery or mow the Bartons. We try to cut each fortnightly although, if there's something pressing round the Hills, we might have to give that preference. It might seem that cutting fortnightly in the season is a little excessive but we've learned from experience that if you don't you suffer for it in the end. I don't know whether you can have a favourite cemetery but, if you can, then mine is Horsham Road. It really is a lovely, restful, place. The birds sing and in May there is the beautiful scent from the azaleas. It's secluded, not as open as Hampers Green, and you can hear the birds the more clearly. As you strim round a grave you read the names and, after a while, have an awareness of the different graves and the people they commemorate. Many of the names of course are still familiar Petworth names. We might even have to work on the cemetery Sunday if the weather's been against us during the week: the overriding concern with the cemeteries is that they look their best for the weekend. I don't want visitors coming Sunday and getting the wrong impression.

I don't like the Bartons as I do Horsham Road but it is a lovely view. They used once to put sheep in there to keep down the grass but we put the tractor in. I say "tractor" but it's really more of a ride-on mower. No, we don't hit the stones, it's carefully strimmed out first so that we know where the stones are. It takes Arthur and me five hours. The cemeteries need mowing right up to November and even December, beginning again, if the weather's not too severe, in February. In mid-winter we cut the hedges and do general maintenance. Hampers Green has a lot of visitors, Horsham Road many less, the Bartons is deserted. Tuesday's the day to sweep Grove Lane, Station Road and the Back lane from Rosemary Gardens as far as the Pound Garage. Wednesday I cut the grass in

Rosemary Gardens and fit in whatever else has cropped up during the week. Thursday it's back up to the churchyard again.

An addition to our contract is the care of the footpaths Round the Hills and the Sheepdowns past the Tennis Courts. On the footpath Round the Hills we've cleared the bank back to the wall and planted up with daffodils which will be left to naturalize. People do appreciate Round the Hills being cared for. Only today a lady came up to me and said how nice it looked Round the Hills. She hadn't been round there for years and didn't realize how well it was kept up. She'll go round there much more now, she said.

Yes, I'm all in favour of the Floral Pride Competition won by Petworth last year. I already look after the tubs by the old Swan as a private arrangement and this year there will be tubs by the War Memorial in Church Street. I'd like too to put two tubs on the Town Hall steps between the phone box and the bus shelter to harmonise with the Swan tubs opposite. If someone provided the tubs I'd be more than pleased to plant them up, much the same as I do at the Swan, geraniums, marigold and lobelia in the summer, wallflowers and daffodils in winter, thus making a permanent feature. Of course they're vulnerable to vandals, but even vandals have a care sometimes! Well I hope they have. It's a challenge to me and to them. If I provided the plants myself and they were ripped out it wouldn't be a waste of public money would it?

Les Howard was talking to the Editor.

#### WILLIAM STEER OF BYWORTH

My grandfather was shepherd at Hallgate Farm, Byworth and, deservedly, has been featured in "Men with Laughter in their Hearts". He was far too humble a man to have dreamed that his life and work would have been thus preserved.

He had no education - having started work at a very early age - and he could neither read or write. There was no "wireless" in his life until shortly before his death; and all this means that his speech was that of his forebears with little or no other influences. This seems to explain why he always referred to his ewes as "Yos" (as in yo-yo). He didn't know that ewe was spelt the way it is - his father and his father's father had called them yos. The answer to this, and the possible confirmation of the "purity" of his speech comes from our modern dictionary. Ewe comes from an



Old-English word "eowe" - stretching back to before the Norman conquest. A short search reveals that the language of the shepherd is virtually all Old-English: Hurdle, Stake, Shackle, Fold, Sheep, Herd, Knife, Lamb, Hook are just a few. Another Old English usage was his invariable reference to his jacket as his "slop". This is defined in dictionaries as a loose article of clothing, a "smock". I've read that seamen were kitted out from the ship's slop chest but it is not a word in general use; it must, surely, be an "inheritance" from his father. I like to think that I was listening to a language that had been handed down for centuries.

His work in the sheepfield changed with the seasons - and can be little changed today apart, perhaps, for modern veterinary medicine. He had two basic remedies for fly-blow and for foot rot. It was rumoured that money had been offered for his secret recipe for foot-rot which was a smelly black tarry mix applied with a hazel stick "spatula" to the open tissue after the hoof had been trimmed. One application seemed to effect a complete cure.

Making a point - Fly, Blow, Foot, rot are 100% Old-English.

Trimming hooves makes me think of his mid-morning lunch break. A thick slice of bread, topped with a hunk of cheese which was held in position on the bread with a thumb. In the fist beneath he would grip an onion and then, with his knife (the foot trimming one) he would slice a piece off each in turn and this was conveyed to his mouth pinched between his thumb and his knife.

I spent school holidays and weekends with him and my Grandmother - they lived in "Rock Cottage" which as its name suggests was a stone built dwelling tucked into what might have been an old quarry since there was a high earth and rock bank within eight or ten yards of the back of the house and which was well over roof high. The kitchen was the living room facing this wall and was consequently very dark - particularly as the inside walls were of untrimmed stone and were painted dark green!

The chairs were all the "ladder-back" sort, now much sought after, there was a "carver" type either side of the kitchen range for Grandad and Grandmother - no armchair comforts. Heating was the kitchen range and hot water came from a kettle which was kept boiling on the hearth and this was refilled or topped up as soon as it was used. Lighting was a paraffin oil lamp which hardly penetrated more than a few feet. It was candles to light you up to

bed and, if it was very cold, a brick would be warmed in the oven and wrapped in flannel to take the chill out of the sheets.

The front room was never used but it did have two chiming wall clocks and these were kept half-an-hour apart and this meant that during the night you knew the time at least every half-hour. "Ah! that's the fast one, so it's not four o'clock it's half-past-three."

The water tap was outside by the back gate; and the earth closet was a fair way up the garden. It was not a place to linger because if you topped the bucket up with a sprinkling of ash, then the bucket got full all the faster and thus had to be emptied all the more frequently.

Food was always plentiful and, in particular, "drip" pudding which I remember as being made every day. Is it necessary to add that "drip" pudding is a suet pudding, boiled in a cloth. It was firstly sliced in 1- $\frac{1}{4}$ " or 2" slices and half of these slices could be heated in meat juices and gravy, until it developed a slight crust and absorbed wonderful flavours. This was then served with the meat course. The remaining slices would be served as a sweet course, topped with butter and brown sugar.

Every weekday had a "duty" job. Mondays was wash-day, another day would be "bedroom day" and Fridays I remember was "kitchen day". If it was too wet for the fields I would get involved in this. All chairs were taken out and dusted and piled in the woodshed if it was wet. All mats and rugs were beaten. The floor washed.

I used to wipe-up the washing up - this was before the days of Fairy Liquid and I think "Hudsons" soap powder was used. There was no drain from the kitchen sink - the washing-up water was carried and thrown outside.

During harvesting I would desert the sheepfield and head for the corn fields. This was before combine harvesters; and the corn would be in "shocks" of 6 or 8 sheaves. The binder would deliver tied sheaves and these would have a slanted base which, as long as they were turned with the longest cuts outwards would assist in giving a firm shock. Anyway, up and down the rows with a horse drawn waggon, pausing for the shocks to be pitchforked in. It was essential to warn the men on the waggon before moving so as not to catch them off balance and the shout was "stand hard".



To a youngster this seemed an unusual way of saying "hold tight" but - and I've only just discovered this, "stand" and "hard" are both Old-English.

### A GROVE STREET CHILDHOOD

My earliest recollection of Petworth is when we lived in a small cottage in Whitcomb's yard in Grove Street. I was about 4 years old - my mother said to me "Kathie, sit here on your stool and watch the door - you might have a nice surprise." I sat, and wriggled a bit - then, the door opened and there was my father - walking with a stick and with his arm in a sling (he had been wounded in the First World War). I was speechless with delight - to see him again after what seemed a long time to me! Some time after that I remember standing on the corner of East Street, opposite the Church, waving a little Union Jack - it was Armistice Day and the streets were crowded with people shouting and singing - everyone was so happy. Somewhere between those two events, the lake in Petworth Park had frozen over really hard and I remember Dad skimming over the ice with me in my small sisters pushchair.

I should say that I had an older brother, George, and a younger sister Ivy - Charles was to come several years later and eventually an adopted brother, Fred - a companion for Charles.

At four years old I went to the Infants school and remember being given an oblong piece of leather with eyelet holes and learning to tie my shoelaces. Miss Bartlett was the Infants teacher and Miss Wootton was the headmistress. Vi Gibson was the friend of my schooldays - she is now Mrs Ralph Geldert. There's a vague recollection of a man coming around on Good Friday, ringing a bell and with a tray of Hot Cross Buns on his head - also a fish cart and a cart with fruit and vegetables.

Picnics in the hayfield opposite were a joy - later we moved to the house that is now Muskett Cottage. My father George Muskett, fairly well known in Petworth, I'm sure - he was postman and mail driver for many years - he was the eldest of thirteen children and his father was captain of a merchant vessel - away for months at a time and Gran had to go out to work so Dad was in charge of the younger children - his schooling was limited. He loved his garden - an allotment just along the road. It had a shed with a garage below it. The shed used to smell of apples - lovely smell! Dad had fixed a swing in one of the apple trees and I used to swing in

it and watch him dig and plant - he kept us well supplied with flowers and vegetables and fruit. On Sundays he would take us - George, Ivy and me - around the Sheepdowns. Up through the allotments - a peep at the pigs - and on, through the first field, bright with red poppies among the corn - through the next field - usually there were cows in this one - and on the Sheepdowns. We loved to run down the hill, passing through a gate at the bottom - turning left to stand on the wooden bridge and look down at the minnows in the clear water. Coming back up we walked along to the Virgin Mary Spring - I've never tasted water so fresh as that Spring water! On, through two more fields, till we came out by the waterworks, usually I had a bunch of wild flowers for my mother. Some years ago I took my son Frank and his American wife Maradell on to the Sheepdowns - such a disappointment! We were knee deep in weeds! It was so uncared for, Miss Cooper always kept it so neat.

Another Sunday walk was along Tillington Road and into the Park - such freedom here and the lake was so beautiful. I remember the Bank Holiday fêtes and the fancy dress competitions - and the races - sack races and egg and spoon races! The deer in the park were beautiful and so timid.

I was delighted to see the photo of Andrew Smith in the December issue of the magazine - there was magic in that fair, held in Market Place every year on November 20th - the stalls, the roundabouts - the swingboats and the coconut shies - very nostalgic! With sixpence (old money) in my pocket I was a millionaire.

The Gibsons - Vi, Gordon, Gwen and Monica - were good friends - I still write to Vi and her husband Ralph - it keeps me in touch with the old days. Mr and Mrs Whittington with Joan and Angela lived just across the road from us and higher up, on the same side, were Mr and Mrs Jeffries, with Mollie. These are all friends of my early days - I could write about so many more who come later. I remember too, Fanny Knight's sweetshop - a penny would buy a liquorice stick, two anniseed balls and a sherbet fountain. Mr Steggles, the chemist, too - those lovely big old fashioned bottles in his windows fascinated me.

Christmas was a lovely time - we would wake early on Christmas morning and scramble in the dark to find our stockings - a sugar mouse, an orange, some nuts and several small toys were in them. We would lay down once we had emptied them and sleep. Then would



come Mum's voice calling us to dress and come downstairs. Through the sitting room to the kitchen. Hot porridge and bacon and fried bread for breakfast - we were almost too excited to eat - then we would have our main presents and always there would be a Chatterbox annual between us - we took turns to read it. Midday - and roast chicken with all the trimmings, followed by Christmas pudding - a round one, tied up in a cloth. If the weather was reasonable we would go for a walk in the afternoon - then home for tea. The round table in the sitting room would be covered with Mother's best white tablecloth and in the centre would be the Christmas cake flanked by mince pies, lemon curd tarts, jelly and blancmange and ham - a cracker by each plate. After tea we sat around the fire and Dad would sing to us "When you and I were young, Maggie" for my Mother - "Georgie porgy pudding and pie" to tease my brother. "I'll take you home again Kathleen" for me and "Just like the Ivy" for my sister.

On Boxing day there would be a "meet" and Dad would take George and me. The hounds, the horses and the redcoated riders have left a lovely memory but best of all was the time we saw the fox outwit the hounds! I was delighted - I think that was somewhere near the Gog!

Another memory - Empire Day - and I stood up on the platform in the Iron room with my classmates and sang "Land of Hope and Glory" - I wore a pink dress with a black velvet sash. I was a very plain child but on that day I felt like a princess. When I first went to the Girls school in East Street Miss Whittington was my class teacher and Miss Highley was headmistress - a kind but firm lady. Reading was a good subject for me and one I loved - for some time I was set to teach the slower pupils, when reading was the subject of the lesson. These are my earliest recollections - I could go on but am not sure if those would be of interest. I'm sure that after I have sent this, other memories will come back to me but these days my memory plays tricks.

I would like to say thank you to Ivy Miller (formerly Ivy Peacock) for introducing me to the magazine recently. I am unable to get to Petworth now - although I keep hoping. One day maybe I shall be able to walk down Grove Street again into the town - I know it has altered a great deal since I lived there.

Here on the Isle of Wight it is like another world - so pleasant and peaceful - this year we have had such wonderful weather and the



Byworth in the 1930s.  
Photograph by George Garland.





The carrier at Kilsham Farm, Petworth about 1930. There is chemical damage on the glass negative.  
The lady is Mrs Goodeve but does anyone know the identity of the carrier?  
Photograph by George Garland.



C.H. Spurgeon at Pulborough Market in 1935.  
Photograph by George Garland.





William Steer of Byworth in 1933.  
Photograph by George Garland.

Spring seems to have started in early February. I am surrounded by trees and flowers - and such good neighbours. I must stop - I read this through yesterday and thought "How can I expect anyone else to be interested in this - they are all my personal memories". So - if you feel they are not right for the magazine I shall understand.

Kathleen Street

(Very much right for the magazine we all think! Ed.)

#### MR SPURGEON RENDERS ....!

My knowledge of Charles Spurgeon commenced on a sunny summer day in the early thirties, when on a visit to the farm at Stopham he remarked to my father that he had not sent out his accounts for some two and a half years and that if he did not send them out soon payment of some of them might be in jeopardy. Why the question of accounts came into the conversation I do not know for in those days farming was going through one of its periodic depressions, and for many the arrival of any account was a matter for some concern, and in some cases probably meant an unwanted visit to the bank manager. Having kept the farm account book since leaving school a frequent entry was "per contra account" a sort of barter arrangement between friendly neighbours. In those days a father's orders were obeyed to the letter of the law so between farmer and veterinary I was appointed "accountant" and would attend the Spurgeon home in High Street, Petworth for a period of time necessary for the issuing of those accounts and the receipting of same when they were paid and the 2d. stamp stuck on the receipt.

So on a day in June I boarded the No.22 bus at Stopham Lane and at the cost of a 3d. ticket was deposited in the Market Square to make my way to the surgery and the Spurgeon home. I was given a most friendly welcome by Mrs. Spurgeon (Mabel) and arrangements were made for me to be paid the sum of £2.50 per week, plus coffee on arrival, lunch when CH came home from his visits to the farms, and tea before I returned to Stopham on the 22 bus. I considered this a most generous offer, in particular, for it was more than the cowman and the carter received in those days for a very long weeks work.

Though the accounts had not been issued the day book of entries of visits and medicine had been entered up meticulously and soon I was deciphering abbreviated entries of antiphlogistine which from the

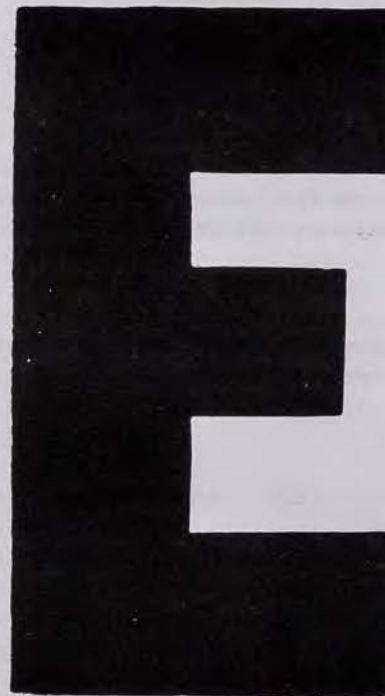


amounts issued must have been the universal panacea for all equine and bovine ills. The visits themselves were charged at prices between 7/6d. and 10/6d. So in a few weeks the long delayed accounts went to the local nobility and gentry and to the many farms in the parishes around Petworth. As could be expected the quite large accounts of the aforesaid nobility and gentry were returned with the quite large cheques in settlement in a very short time, but due to the depression some farm accounts were not so promptly settled. This meant that a second reminder had to go out for "account rendered". An amusing memory is of a local farmer saying to my father that that lad of yours would be better employed on the farm than in sending out accounts which he hoped the vet. had forgotten. In the few weeks of that summer and autumn quite substantial deposits were made to CH'd bank account, and his old bullet nosed Morris was exchanged for the latest Austin saloon. Both Charles and Mabel were keen followers of the Leconfield Hounds and the two new hunters they acquired from Mr. Field of Chichester that autumn must have gratified their assistant Mr. Murray and enabled the riders to lead the field, always of course well behind the Master. Charles and Mabel that same autumn went on a Mediterranean cruise. So all in all that year was a happy time for all concerned with matters veterinary in High Street Petworth, and it was with some regret that I left with their best wishes to commence training for a business career in Edinburgh.

Looking back down the long years to those days with the knowledge now common of a vet's life made so familiar by the TV series about the Yorkshire vet. James Herriot, I realise that Charles Spurgeon was indeed one such vet. in the West Sussex scene. He was always immaculately turned out with hacking jacket shining leggings and his old green Morris was a familiar sight along the lanes and at the farms around Petworth. Mabel was an excellent cook and over many lunches talked of their life in Petworth, and how years before CH had qualified MRCVS in London and in looking around for locations in which to practice had thought rightly that the rich farming land around that delectable little town, albeit a real stronghold of living feudalism, was a place in which to put up his shingle. It took some little time to get established but when asked to call to attend to the stock on the noble establishments and the squirarchy the many farmers who were the tenants of those estates followed suite. At one such lunch CH. was rather quiet and upon his wife asking what was the matter said that he had been affronted by the language and comments of the noble lord. Well said she if you have not got used to the eccentricities of that peer it is time you did

so. Being young and brash, and having recently left Grammar School I said that the poet Cowper had written in respect of Alexander Selkirk - I am monarch of all I survey, my right there are none to dispute; from this centre all round to the sea I am lord of the fowl and the brute. This remark was met with dead silence! I gathered that the life of a vet was not all a bed of roses and often fractious animals could land them in the mire, though CH said that he never had the experience of a fellow vet who in treating a costive cow did not step out of range quickly enough and received a noxious discharge full on the chest! Today such characters do not grace the local scene and we must be glad to have known them when we were young. Their like will never return, and we in West Sussex must be ever grateful to the late George Garland who in his day recorded scenes and people of an age that never will return.

Alastair Grigor





# F. C. ELDRIDGE

## Carrier.

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### THE CARRIER

I wonder what kind of answer you would get from the people of Kirdford if you asked them what a "carrier" was or even how many of them could remember the carrier in Kirdford?

#### **Before the War**

Up until the last war (1939-1945) nearly every village in the land was served by a "carrier" - sometimes more than one. Up to the commencement of the bus service, in rural areas, the carrier was, for many, the only means of transport available for goods or passengers. For goods it was a good reliable service; for passengers a rather drawn out affair with plenty of time to see the country and no comfort.

For many years up until the end of the 1914-1918 war, horses and vans were used but after 1918 motor vehicles started to take their place, mostly ex army vehicles of all sorts of makes and designs. A very few horse-drawn vehicles operated after the early 1920s. I can remember one operating into Horsham until about 1932 and to Guildford perhaps a little later than that. I also remember seeing them in various country areas after that date, but mostly motorised vehicles had taken over. Many of them were operated by ex-servicemen, or sons taking over their father's business.

#### **How the Kirdford Carrier Worked**

Kirdford had a carrier from very early days connecting up the villages in the area with Guildford and Horsham. The carrier was able to pass on goods for other areas to other carriers coming into those centres and operating into the other large towns in the area. Goods for London could be passed on via a Guildford-London carrier, or goods for Brighton could be similarly transferred in Horsham. Traffic was also collected from or passed on to the railways, thus giving a countrywide service.

#### **Life as a carrier**

Life as a carrier was very interesting and varied. There were plenty of long hours, usually 7.30 am until at least 7 pm and often much later. At Christmas time the carrier would often be working up to 10 pm or after. It was healthy - you experienced all weathers, wet or fine, cold or warm, sometimes very cold. There were no heated cabs or even coach built ones as in these days. There was just a windscreen in front and canvas or mikra on the side doors, if you were lucky, and, of course, all open to the back save for end curtains. The vehicle often had to be left open to accommodate lengthy goods such as timber, ladders, chicken crates etc, lime, ice, etc.

#### **Decline of the trade**

"Carrying" for most areas faded out with the last war. Personnel were called up. The pattern of trade changed. The Government formed distribution services for the meat and other trades. Commodities became scarce or unobtainable and what had been for many years an old established way of life for many, just died.



1932/33 Note the wooden wheel spokes.



There was no longer a living in it. One by one those who were left gave up. A very few returned after the war but most either closed down or transferred their interests into other forms of transport such as haulage or removals, or both, which were coming to the fore.

#### What the carrier carried

The carrier would carry or cater for almost everything. There was groceries for the grocer, meat for the butcher and ice for his ice box safe (no fridges in those days) and ice for the housewife wishing to make her own ice cream. Timber for the builder, coffin sets for the undertaker, lime, cement, firebricks and fire bar replacements and glass of all sorts and sizes were also carried. Then there were fruit and vegetables to deliver to the shops in the town from people's gardens. Villagers would also send in rabbits, eggs, blackberries, mushrooms, whatever was in season. The carrier would also have to take boots and shoes to the repairer, and wireless batteries to be recharged in the early days of radio. The batteries were the old type made of glass with two plates and filled with acid. Poultry, eggs and rabbits went to market and even furniture would be moved. You name it, the carrier would carry it. In addition he'd undertake shopping for folk unable to go themselves; grocery, butchery, fish, hardware, clothing, boots and shoes, haberdashery, wool, exchange of library books. Anything not obtainable locally the carrier met the need, and it would surprise you what some folk asked for!

#### Extra services

In addition the Kirdford carrier would obtain chemicals and medicines etc from Boots the Chemist, Guildford Branch at no charge for carriage. A developing and printing service for photographs, boot and shoe repair service, in fact anything you wanted, ask the "Carrier" and it was the exception rather than the rule, that he could not supply it.

If Mother wanted a new hat, a selection would be brought out to choose from. Clothes for the family, more especially the children, including boots and shoes could be obtained in the same manner, or if there were goods to be exchanged, the carrier would do it. there was no need to waste a day or have an expensive bus fare.

#### Other services

The carrier handled a lot of advance luggage to be sent by train. He would buy the ticket and despatch the luggage at 1s. per

consignment for the rail and 1s. for the carrier. You could send a trunk from your own door to anywhere in England for 2s. plus an extra shilling if it was to be delivered beyond the station at the other end. You had no waiting to purchase your ticket before boarding the train.

Regular collections of eggs from farms and cottages were made. They were graded and sold to shops and customers, a regular supply being guaranteed.

There were no regular deliveries to shops by vans selling cakes such as Lyons and Kemps. Lyons used to despatch by rail each week and the carrier would collect from the station and deliver to the shops on his route home.

All the wholesale meat (foreign) from the wholesalers was delivered by the carrier - fore-ends, hindquarters, lamb's livers, etc. Local butchers used to slaughter the local English meat and make their own sausages and they would supply them to the carrier at 1s per lb for him to sell at 1s 2d. The Kirdford carrier used to buy and sell sausages from Mr. Myram at Kirdford and Sopps from Loxwood. They were sold mostly to shopkeepers and their assistants, as was the case with mushrooms, eggs, etc.

When eggs were cheap - 1s to 1s 2d per dozen a large quantity would

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be supplied for pickling and up to 100 dozen would be needed to meet the demand.

The butchers en route would be Lerwell at Alfold, Sopps at Loxwood, Peacock at Wisborough Green, Mr Austin at Kirdford and later, Mr Myram.

#### Carriers Schedule

Carrying occupied four days a week - Monday to Horsham via Plaistow, Loxwood, Tismans. After that the rest of the route into Horsham would be served by the Rudgwick carrier, Mr Francis, later Mr Hempstead.

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays were the days that Guildford was served, the Kirdford carrier travelling via Gunshot, Loxwood, Alfold, Smithbrook, Palmers Cross, Rooks' Hill, Birtley, after which the rest of the route was covered by the Bramley carrier, a Mr Avenal and the Shamley Green carrier, Mr Dibley. Carriers were very loyal and would not poach each other's territory.

Most of the larger shops in the town would use the carrier. In Horsham, they were Hunts, Tanner & Chart, Denby's, Chart and Lawrence, Stephenson's, Hoads and Lanes being the principal ones. In Guildford it was Angel Son & Grey, Gammons, Pimms, Carlings, Whites. The carrier would call on these shops to see if there were goods for delivery. Others would know where to find the carrier if needed - West Street in Horsham and High Street in Guildford around mid-day, 1 to 2.30 pm.

Guildford also had a carriers' park where there was an office at which parcels or messages could be left. There was a name board giving the carrier's name, days of operation and areas served. This board had as many as 15 carriers' names who came in from the areas around. Horsham was not so well served, only having about five making regular service in and out of the town.

On other days, Wednesdays and Saturdays, the vehicle would be used for removals, outings in the summer to the sea, cricket and football matches, and in the early days, funerals or weddings.

#### Other uses

If someone died away from home in hospital, it was the carrier who often used his vehicle after the day's work to fetch them home, and on occasions take them to the church for burial.

Endless were the commissions of a "carrier" and his assistants. All the local carriers are now non-existent but the names often live on in other businesses, mainly removals and coach work.

#### The Carrier's Card

All houses, en route, were supplied with a stiff card with the carrier's initials on one side and particulars of his service on the other. If you required the carrier to call, the card would be placed in the front window or on the gate or hedge. All the shops, public houses and builders' businesses would be called on each journey as well as the larger houses and farms. There would be no need for them to display a card.

#### The Carrier's Day

The days were long, you were on your feet all day and it was not just a matter of riding into Guildford or Horsham, but walking up endless garden paths twice a day and in and out of the shops, warehouses, timber yards etc. and it would amount to quite a number of miles walked each day - often over fields to outlying cottages and farms. The laundries had no delivery service to the villages and quite a bit of laundry was collected early in the week to be redelivered on a Friday. There was a small hand laundry at Loxwood and also one at Alfold. The Alfold laundry was quite an old established business. There was also a main laundry in the towns.

An average day for the Guildford run would have a 7.30 start. The first pick up would be Barkfold for garden produce for sale in Hastings' shop in Guildford. Chickens and eggs from Mr Cooper, the Keeper from Quoits, would be for the market and the carrier would bring back feed for the pheasants on the return journey. There was often a small commission from Hookhurst Farm, either children's clothes, shoe repairs, chemicals and the like, at Brooklands, perhaps rabbits, eggs or a chicken from market; Gunshot Common, there would always be an order from the Puttocks. Beldamland would require a variety of shopping commissions or the library books changing. Other stops would be Flitchfold Farm and Dr. Haygates, the Onslow and Brewhurst Lane, Loxwood Street with Sopps the butchers, Harris's Stores (now Hilltop), Loxwood Post Office and Station Road as far as Spy Lane, Loxwood Stores, Lindon House, Four Houses and Pawley's Farm, Alfold Bars, Alfold Village, Alfold Pound and Alfold Crossways, The Compasses, Simmonds Farm and Hall Place - there was no airfield then - Skithbrook, Leathern Bottle, Palmers Cross, Graffham, Rook Hill and Birtley. You would probably make as many as 50 calls which would mean 50 on the way back, plus the





Brehurst Lane 1931.

brick drying sheds and no-one had water laid on, electricity or main drains. Life was slower, work harder and hours longer. Wages were low - £3 a week was a good wage. No overtime, you worked until the job was done, but folk were contented and happier. One rarely heard grumbling and there was more of a oneness among folk.

#### Good Old Days?

The majority of folk worked on the land or allied to it. There was a blacksmith, general stores with baking, butchers, builders who undertook undertaking in nearly every village, but few garages, being few motor vehicles to repair and hardly any motor-cycles. They were the "Good Old Days", or were they? They were happy ones anyway - no time to grumble or fall out with folk.

F. C. Eldridge.

#### PETWORTH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH from 1949

I came to Petworth on the 15th January 1949, the Rev. Kenneth Boxall then being the Congregational minister. He had come to Petworth, I think, soon after the war and he left in 1952. As a Baptist I went to the Congregational Church as it was at that time because it was the nearest persuasion to my own in Petworth. I remember my wife and I going on our own that first Sunday, one of us in the morning and the other in the evening, so that someone was left at home to look after our young daughter. It was not long

extra shop deliveries you would collect, often taking you off the main road, perhaps up to Scotsland or nearly to Gaston Gate - Tickners Heath and Schumakers.

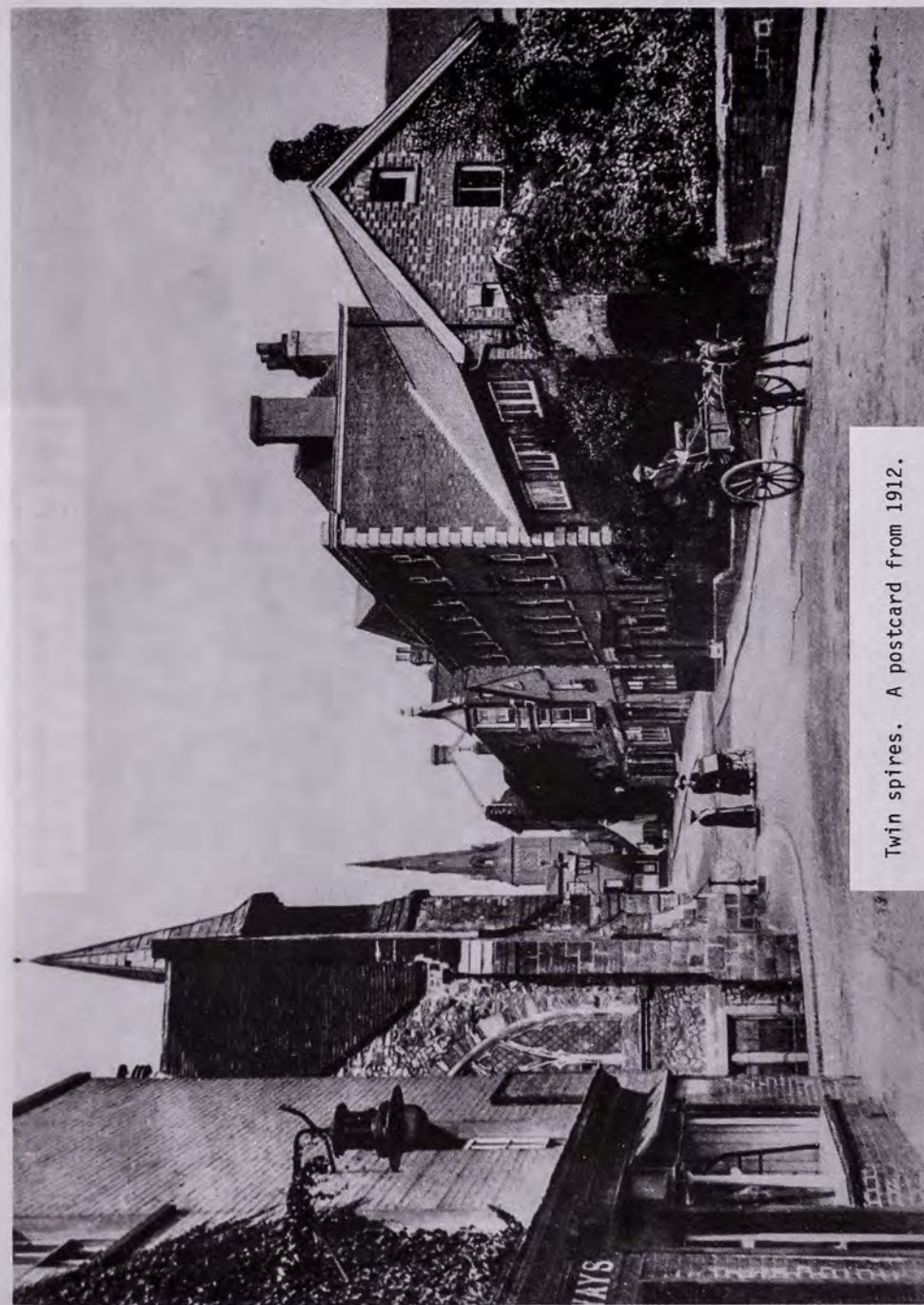
Ifold Estate was just being sold up for development and only had the Lodge, Keepers and Pitchgate Cottage on the Plaistow road. Chalk Road was literally a chalk road and all churned up where timber from the Estate had been drawn out. Foxbridge still had its

before we became much more involved in the church, the next Sunday in fact in the Sunday School! I had some experience of other congregations; first at the West Ham Central Mission, a huge inner city church with a membership in the region of a thousand. There were two hundred in the Primary Department of the Sunday School alone. Then after the war, at Ewell, Surrey, a smaller but still flourishing church with some fifty or sixty members. At Ewell I helped restart the Boys Brigade Company which had closed during the war. Petworth was quite different, not only to West Ham, but also to Ewell. We noticed a certain lack of activity at Petworth compared even to Ewell which boasted not only a Sunday School but a Boys' Brigade Company and a flourishing Youth Club. The Petworth congregation, predominantly elderly and numbering some forty, had a Sunday School, and a women's meeting run by Mrs. Boxall with a membership of some thirty-five. It was a closely-knit country congregation, West Ham and Ewell both being, to an extent, urban. The Rev. Boxall moved soon after we came to Milford, Surrey, and the Rev. A.W. Wolfe, formerly a handicraft instructor at Dr. Barnardo's and Minister at East Howe, Hampshire, succeeded him.

I had never actually joined the Boys' Brigade as a boy, entering first as an officer at the age of eighteen in West Ham but, as I have said, I helped restart the Ewell Company after the war. Dick Fowler however had been in The Brigade as a boy in London. The Petworth Company was founded on the 20th January 1950. I was Captain and Dick Fowler Lieutenant. We met at the Hampers Green Centre which had then only just been opened and we were in fact the first organisation to use the centre. I remember going to a meeting there in September 1949 when the electricity was still not laid on and the meeting was lit by candle. Prior to the foundation of the Company I talked the project over with Rev. Boxall and the Rev. Alan Willmer, the Anglican curate. An integral part of The Boys' Brigade is the weekly bible class, and we arranged for the class to be held during the week so that boys in the choir at St. Mary's and boys who attended our own Sunday School could attend without disrupting either. It was an open company, more non-conforming than Church of England but closely linked with St. Mary's. I have always looked to further inter-denominational awareness. When we founded the Boys' Brigade Company at Petworth I was told it was a good idea but it would only last for six months. It lasted, in fact, thirty-four and a half years. We never had a large group, eighteen to twenty perhaps, but in the end it was the lack of boys coming forward, coupled, I regret to say, with a certain lack of support from parents, that caused us to disband.



The Boys' Brigade is an overtly religious organisation, and must not only be linked with a church, but have the definite approval of that church. It certainly doesn't have to be a non-conformist church. Many companies are, it is true, linked to non-conformist churches but many too are linked to Anglican churches. I do not myself know of any that are attached to Roman Catholic churches. The Boys' Brigade was founded in 1883 in Glasgow, the idea coming to Sir William Alexander Smith when he was serving with the Army in South Africa. He wanted to start an organisation for boys that would cover all aspects of their life but have especial reference to the religious side. Smith himself was a practising Christian and a Sunday School teacher. The object of The Boys' Brigade is "the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends toward a true Christian manliness". At Petworth our weekly bible class was held in the church but we organised also squad drill, marching, gymnastics, first aid, handicrafts in leather and wood, and eventually a band. There was an annual camp too and an annual display first held in the old Iron Room. The bible class was arranged by officers and invited speakers, clerical and lay, and there was a special syllabus prepared at H.Q. with bible tuition and bible stories. Camps could be anywhere, the Isle of Wight, Wales, Dorset and other places but because of school holidays they were always held in August. On a number of occasions we went with the Sussex division, when two or three hundred boys were in camp from most of the Companies in Sussex. We travelled almost invariably by train, once or twice by coach. After a couple of years we formed a Junior Section, the Lifeboys, which was officered by Miss Agnes Dalton a local district nurse and Miss Joy Gumbrell of Byworth. This was very well supported by the younger boys. We started the Boys' Brigade in 1950, as I have said, and I resigned in 1962 to take over as warden of Petworth Youth Club at the old Regal Cinema converted into a Youth Centre, Dick Fowler, my lieutenant took over from me. With Dick in charge the company continued until June 1984. Travelling, say, to Uckfield for an officers' meeting was both costly and time-consuming. I remember taking boys to Brighton for the Brigade A.G.M. at the Dome and going by bus. It was two shillings then for the boys and five shillings for me: I wonder what it would be now. The Boys' Brigade is a definite commitment not only by the boys themselves, but by Dick Fowler and myself. We had to give the Brigade at least two evenings a week. We were pleased to, but it was something you couldn't do unless you really put your heart into it. I remember the Rev. Alan Willmer once saying to me, "It's quite a hobby of



Twin spires. A postcard from 1912.





Petworth Boys Brigade, 2nd April 1950.  
Photograph by George Garland.

yours isn't it?" I replied, "It's not a hobby: it's part of my life". In the end the numbers became too small to be practicable and the Company colour was laid up at a special service in the church when the Company disbanded. We still have the colours and of course the Company could be restarted at any time should suitable officers be available.

We had a very large Sunday School for many years, at times almost seventy children and the School was graded with a group of dedicated teachers. We had wonderful Anniversary Services and concerts and entered the Scripture Examination for many years gaining many commendable results. Unfortunately over the last five years or so attendance has dropped, owing to lack of support from parents, who themselves only attend Church on very rare occasions. We still continue with the work, following lessons from "Partners in Learning" published by the National Christian Education Council.

In the early 1950s Petworth Congregational Church was a single church having the oversight of the chapel at Watersfield. The Rev. Wolfe stayed for five years and then left for Bosham, unfortunately dying before he could take up the post. We were then left without a minister for five whole years, there being at this time a universal shortage of men for the ministry. During this time we were ministered to by lay preachers, retired ministers and local clergy such as the Pulborough minister. We managed very well, keeping up our numbers, improving our finances and holding together in a situation that might well have gone against us. The congregation pulled together with a new unity that adversity had forged. Obviously we could not have continued for ever without a minister and not suffered damage, but we managed the five years and came out stronger.

1961 marks a watershed in the church's life. The Rev. Desmond Bending had been minister at Dartford but was looking for a change, while at Pulborough the Rev. F. Brockis had retired, leaving Pulborough too without a minister. It was suggested by the Congregational Union that the Petworth and Pulborough congregations should come together, with Desmond as minister-in-charge, Watersfield too being in his care. The chapel at Watersfield had been kept going over the five years interregnum: The Rev. Boxall and the Rev. Wolfe had held services on Sunday afternoons but during the interim period I had taken over the chapel and organised speakers. The membership by 1961 was very small and the building



was eventually sold, the transaction being one of the last duties of Desmond before his retirement. It is still used however, as a Church, by members of Coldwaltham Parish Church.

The link with Pulborough meant that the two congregations came to know each other whereas there had previously been very little contact: both churches acting quite independently. Now there were joint deacons' meetings, a deacon being a lay person appointed to help out with finances, building works and pastoral work in the community. In certain circumstances, the minister being absent, a deacon can baptise, marry, bury, and even officiate at Holy Communion. Deacons are now called "elders" in deference to Presbyterian usage but I must say I preferred the former title. They are elected by Church members and serve, in all cases, for three years, and can be re-elected if they so desire.

Desmond Bending was a great influence and entered into the life of both churches, Petworth and Pulborough, as well as involving himself whole-heartedly in the life of the community at large. He was an active supporter of local organisations especially in Pulborough and was Chairman of the Youth Club. He helped start the Lunch Club at Pulborough, enabling older folk to meet periodically and this is still going. I remember when he was about to leave I said to him, "You do a lot of things and we shall need to try and cover them. If you make a list we'll do what we can." When he came back with a foolscap sheet full of his activities, I was amazed. In addition to his work, he ran Christian Aid in Petworth and Pulborough and had a great zeal for Third World and missionary work. He widened the church's horizons and held the congregation membership steady over the years, no small achievement in such an uncertain age. He also established and edited our magazine "The Messenger" which is still printed monthly for our Group of Churches, now by the Rev. Derek Morrill our present minister.

Eventually the Billingshurst ministry became vacant and the Rev. Richard Cox was appointed with the suggestion that Billingshurst link up with Petworth and Pulborough to form what would then be known as the West Sussex Area Ministry. He was succeeded after some years by the Rev. Albert Locke who had formerly been a missionary in Botswana, so respected there that he became the inaugural Speaker in that country's House of Representatives. He lived, as Richard had done, at Billingshurst and worked closely with Desmond. When the Rev. Albert Locke retired his successor the Rev. Derek Morrill elected to live at Petworth so after

twenty-eight years we had a resident minister at Petworth. Derek and his wife Jean have been with us six years.

The Area Ministry has group elders' meetings and members attend each others' functions and have an annual Group Rally. We take turns to host and the Rally, which is held on a Sunday, comprises a service or special programme with Holy Communion and a communal tea. For instance we had a "One World Week" exhibition as part of our programme at Petworth two years ago. The Rev. Brian Wroe has now taken over from Desmond at Pulborough, being inducted last September and lives at Pulborough in the Manse, carrying on the same pattern of ministry in our Group of Churches, with the Rev. Derek Morrill.

Petworth has a very strong Women's Group meeting every Thursday afternoon with a variety of speakers. There is an annual outing and they make a weekly contribution to a fund to help the church. The total is handed over to the church at the Annual Sale and last years was £500, a very good sum, as all except two of the ladies are pensioners.

In order to keep the children of the Church a new organisation was formed about five years ago called the Fish Club. This catered for the leisure needs of the children on Tuesday evenings and is run by members of the Church. The programme includes handicrafts, games and epilogue and the children have raised funds by their own efforts for the Church and various charities over the years. It is divided into Junior and Senior sections, with an activity programme for each, meeting at different times and at the moment there are eighteen children in all attending.

Sometime ago we were introduced to the "Prayer Call" by a former teacher at the Herbert Shiner School, Alan Schmidt, a South African. This is a monthly issue containing requests for prayers for members of the Church, friends of the community and also national and international. This has proved most beneficial to many people, who have greatly appreciated the prayers through times of illness and stress. This year we have taken this a step further by having a Prayer Book, in which up-to-date matters can be entered and used by preachers each week in services.

The Church appoints its own Minister. When a vacancy occurs the church notifies Headquarters and that notification goes to the Moderator. He makes appropriate enquiries. A prospective minister



will then write to us and we may then invite him to preach and to meet the elders. If initial reactions are favourable, on either side, he will preach again and attend a Group church meeting. At a subsequent church meeting, in each of the Churches of the Group, the prospective minister not being present of course, we discuss the matter and the proposition is put to the vote as to whether he should be minister. If there is a 75% vote in his favour from the Group we write to him and ask him if he would like to accept the ministry. It is then for him to decide whether or not to accept.

Anyone can come to church of course but formal membership is equivalent to the Anglican confirmation, a prospective member first talking to minister and elders who then refer the application to a Church meeting for approval by voting. If this is carried the new member is received into Church membership at a Communion Service. Communion is open to all believers and takes place within the context of a normal service. After the sermon there is a hymn during which the minister comes from the pulpit to the communion table, blesses the bread and wine and welcomes the congregation to the communion service. The elders help with the communion, the congregation remaining in the pews. Communion is twice a month, once at morning service and once at evening service. It can be presided over by an elder in the absence of a minister but that elder has to be so appointed by the district. The change from Congregational to U.R.C. in 1972 was the first such link-up in the history of the church's life. The Congregational Church joined together with the Presbyterians, and later a smaller group called the Churches of Christ, to form the United Reformed Church.

The church celebrates its 250th anniversary in June. A celebratory programme is planned. On Thursday the 14th Petworth Town Band will give a special concert in the Herbert Shiner School, while on Friday 15th the Seaford College Swing Band will be in the Leconfield Hall. We are hoping that as many present and past members of the Church, the Sunday School, Youth Club and Boys' Brigade will share in a celebratory supper on the Friday. On Saturday 16th we have a poem and hymn evening in the church, these relating to the period around 1740. On Sunday the 17th the Moderator for the Southern Province the Rev. David L. Helyar, M.A., will preach at morning and evening services, while throughout the whole period ploughmen's lunches, coffee and teas will be served in the hall. We hope too to have some stalls. Any money received will go toward the Restoration Fund. At the moment this stands at £35,000 but our total target is £101,000. The U.R.C. have agreed

to underwrite us, free of interest, and we will pay them back at such time as we are able.

I believe that our Church, over the years, has played a very important and significant part in the life of Petworth, with many of its members being very actively engaged in the voluntary organisations in the Town. Each week the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed from our pulpit, and we endeavour to carry out that Gospel by our witness and work. Our premises are a centre of activity for many local charities and organisations, and following the recent restoration work, present an attractive and dignified centre to the Town. This article gives me the opportunity to thank all those in the Town who have donated so generously to our Restoration Fund and to say how much this is appreciated by us all.

Stan Chapman was talking to the Editor.

#### PROTESTANT DISSENT IN PETWORTH

There is not an absolutely unbroken chain linking the Petworth URC with those who first banded together for public worship in the parish as 'Protestant Dissenters' from the established Church of England. But it certainly is legitimate to regard these 17th century groups as part of the heritage of Petworth URC and, despite periods of decline and shifts in denominational allegiance, there was always in Petworth after c. 1640 a 'Presbyterian/Congregational' presence.

There is plenty of documentary evidence in original and contemporary records to support this view and much of it comes from sources independent of the Protestant Dissenters themselves. These sources are more plentiful before around 1730 than for the period 1730-80 and this may seem surprising but Sussex Dissent was in quite serious decline during that time and many churches disappeared.

The chief interest of any history of Petworth URC must lie of course in the period covered by the church's own records because the real life and witness of a church in times past can be captured and appraised properly only where there are records of Church Meeting, of the 'Sunday School', of the societies and the rest. It is a bonus when there are tolerably good records of the ebb and flow of church membership, births and baptisms because these help to supply a 'quantitative' picture to supplement the vital 'qualitative' picture. But I offer these notes about the story of early Dissent in Petworth with a reminder of that old saying:



'Those without pride of ancestry have small hope of posterity.'  
The spiritual ancestor of the Petworth URC often enough had a far harder time of it in their witness than most of us in Britain today can readily comprehend.

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It is not surprising that there has been this thread of Dissent woven into the life of Petworth for some 350 years because the historic economic and social structure of English market towns was such as to encourage the development of Protestant Dissent. The tradesmen and craftsmen who were gathered together in such towns proved to be the backbone of the early Presbyterian and Congregational churches and this applied here in Sussex also. By Sussex standards, Petworth was a 'large' market town during the 17th and 18th centuries.

There is no doubt that the first substantial group of Protestant Dissenters in Petworth parish were 'Presbyterian.' During the brief period of the Civil War and Commonwealth in the 1640s and 1650s, it was the Presbyterians who dominated the ordering of religion in the town - as in Sussex generally - with the Anglicans excluded by the defeat of the Royalist cause. The Rectory of Petworth was held by the Bishop of Chichester, Dr Henry King, but he was removed from it by 'sequestration' ordered by Parliament for his loyalty to the King and Church of England. Parliament appointed in his place in 1643 a noted Presbyterian minister, Dr Francis Cheynell, D.D., who then held the Rectory until he was removed in 1660 with the restoration of the monarchy. Cheynell was a dominating personality ('domineering' in the eyes of many of his contemporaries) and in the religious ordering of Sussex during this period he was regarded as having behaved as if he had been the Bishop of Chichester.

The Presbyterians in Petworth would have met for public worship in the Parish Church, led by Cheynell or one of his assistants, until 1660 when the Restoration brought the first steps towards re-establishment of the Church of England. We cannot be certain that there was a group of Congregationalists in Petworth at this period. For the most part, the Congregationalists stood apart from the religious establishment of the period and only a very few of their ministers accepted livings. There was a Congregational church then in nearby Midhurst which they could have attended (people walked in those times!)

In 1662, the Church of England was fully established again by the Act of Uniformity. This required every minister to conform to its practice and ordering as laid down by the Book of Common Prayer and Ordering. Failure to conform entailed 'ejection' from his living - the origin of the term Nonconformist. In all, about 65 ministers in Sussex refused to conform and were ejected. The Church of England supposed that with this removal of ministers the Presbyterian and Congregational causes would quickly wither away. In fact, most of the ejected ministers continued pastoral care of their people with meetings for public worship in houses, workshops, barns. More drastic steps were then taken against the Dissenters. The 'Conventicle Act' of 1664 prohibited public worship by Dissenters with very large fines, imprisonment or even transportation overseas for those found guilty of breaking the law (a second Conventicle Act in 1670 eased these penalties but introduced a vicious system of rewarding informers with half the fines levied). Then in 1665 there came the 'Five Mile Act' which provided for huge fines on any ejected minister who came within 5 miles of where he had formerly held the living or who had preached at a conventicle in that place. Finally, all persons who refused to conform to the Church of England were excluded from all public office, the universities and almost all the professions.

The application of these 'Penal Laws' in Sussex was less widespread and harsh than in many other counties but many people suffered for their loyalty, particularly the ejected ministers who were harassed by Anglican incumbents and justices (to their great credit, there were some incumbents who sheltered the ejected ministers when warrants were out for their arrest). Inevitably, some of the laity fell away from Dissent - it called for real sacrifice to bear exclusion from all public office or to accept exclusion of their children from all higher education. But Dissent largely stood its ground in Sussex and this was so in Petworth also. We can chart the continuing witness in the town between 1669 and 1676 in some detail by means of the following official records:

Return of Conventicles, 1669 :

Petworth : one conventicle attended by 50 or 60 persons, some of the 'midle' sort, other 'inferior' (meaning a mixed congregation of tradesmen, craftsmen and labourers). The ministers involved were Henry STAPLES, ejected from Bignor; Thomas WILLMER, ejected from Pagham; and Thomas REEVES. The denomination involved was not given but we



can tell from these ministers that it was a Presbyterian meeting - evidence of a continuing church in Petworth.

Indulgence Licences, 1672 : while Parliament was prorogued in 1672, Charles II issued a 'Declaration of Indulgence' to allow Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters to meet for public worship provided that the meeting was licensed by his officer; when the King was forced to recall Parliament in 1673, he had to withdraw the Indulgence.

Petworth : 3 Licences were issued for meetings in the town in 1672. Two were for the private houses of 'Jeffrey DAWTREE' and of 'Henry PHILLIPS' while the third was for a meeting held in 'a loft over Market Place'. The first two licences were for Presbyterians specifically.

Compton Census : Chichester Diocese Return, 1676 :

This was a survey called for by the Archbishop of Canterbury with the aim of assessing the numerical strength of Dissent and incumbents and their churchwardens had to make estimates of the numbers of adult Conformists (Anglicans), Papists (Roman Catholics) and of Nonconformists. The tendency was for them to understate the numbers of the Dissenters significantly.

Petworth : 1,178 Conformists; 2 Papists; 20 Nonconformists.

We can be confident that there were a good many more than 20 adult Presbyterians still in Petworth in 1676. No information was given as to the place of meeting of the Nonconformists but by 1676 they would most likely have been meeting outside the town itself given the risks of informers there - they would have been less at risk meeting in the more rural setting of Byworth.

We come to the next firm ground about the Petworth Presbyterians in 1690-91. Following the expulsion of James II, and the accession of William & Mary, Parliament passed the Toleration Act to allow Protestant Dissenters a modest measure of religious freedom. The principal effect was to allow them to meet for public worship subject to their meetings being registered with the religious or civil authorities (and that the doors of the buildings were kept unlocked). These Toleration Act registrations are indeed a valuable source of information for Dissent, though we must keep in mind that by no means all congregations complied with the Act and a

number failed to register their meetings. The earliest extant for Petworth Presbyterians is dated for November 1707.

The Toleration Act and a more relaxed attitude to Protestant Dissent made it possible for the various denominations to work openly for the support of ministers and congregations in financial difficulty and to try to help congregations to obtain trained ministers. In the glow of their new-found freedom, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists joined together to set up the 'Common Fund' to raise and distribute money to the most necessitous ministers and congregations - especially to those aged ejected ministers still surviving.

Common Fund Minutes, 1690-91 :

Petworth : Mr HALLETT : Att Petworth, a worthy ejected minister (has) £25 per annum. The highest maintenance is £30 per annum (meaning that the most his church could ever raise for a stipend would be £30 a year).

This mention of Thomas HALLETT is intriguing because his early career was in East Sussex - he had been ejected in 1662 from Streat and he was preaching at Wivelsfield in 1672. We do not know when he went to work in and around Petworth but he certainly was a Presbyterian minister.

The Common Fund aimed to secure if possible a minimum stipend of £30 a year as being 'ye least a minister can subsist on' - remember here that in the 18th century the average Curate in the Church of England received a stipend of only this sum, though he often was allowed to keep the 'surplice' fees for weddings, etc. It is plain that the Petworth Presbyterians could not regularly manage to raise £30 a year for their minister - it was indeed a great sum then for a small and not very well to do congregation.

Sadly, the Common Fund collapsed under the strain of growing conflict over theology between the two denominations and separate Fund Boards were then set up. Initially, the Congregational Fund made grants to Thomas HALLETT in 1697 and 1698 of £5 for each year. Then the Presbyterian Fund gave him annual grants of £4 or £5 until 1707 when he died. The Presbyterian Fund made further grants to Petworth when it had a settled minister. John BUCKLEY was there between 1714 and 1720, receiving £6 a year, and between 1722 and 1726 this grant was made to Jeremiah OWEN for serving Petworth and Thakeham.



OWEN left Petworth after 1726 and the congregation does not appear to have had a settled minister of its own again for a very long time. We know from a survey of Dissent in England & Wales that in 1717 the Petworth congregation had 82 Hearers - a term indicating the numbers present at services rather than of committed church members (the source of this information was the Rev Robert BAGSTER, then minister of the Chichester Presbyterian Church). Only 7 of these Hearers were described as having 'County Voter' status which is an indication that the Petworth membership must have been largely what might be termed 'lower middle class' and 'artisans' quite unable to provide a stipend of £30 every year for a settled minister.

There is an independent check on the size of the Petworth Presbyterian congregation around this time, thanks to the Visitation of Chichester Diocese in 1724 by the new Bishop Bower. Of the 370 families estimated to live in Petworth parish, 21 families were described as 'Presbyterian'. Allowing about 4 persons per family attending services, this would fit in closely with the 1717 figure of 82 hearers. But from the early 1730s on there was a serious decline in Sussex Dissent generally and the Presbyterians were especially involved in this. In part, it was due to the development of Arian theology among the Presbyterian ministers and many of their lay people. This caused the dispersal of congregations as those who held to the orthodox Trinitarian theology left the churches. By around 1780, all the old Presbyterian churches in Sussex had either disappeared or had become 'Unitarian/Free Christian' churches. Petworth also was involved in these conflicts and the Trinitarian members were meeting separately. By around 1780, the continuing 'church' was 'Independent' - the term used originally to describe Congregational churches.

This had brought us very close to the time before the formation of the Independent Congregational Church of Petworth by Covenant Declaration - and the period for which there are specific church records. But we should keep in mind that from around the latter 1770s, and spurred in part by the example of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon within the county, the Sussex Congregationalists under the inspiring leadership of George GILBERT of Heathfield, were active in evangelism. The Congregationalists became the most important denomination in Sussex and by 1809 they had set up the Sussex Mission Society with strong financial support from the new, large Congregational churches in the rapidly-growing coastal towns.

N Caplan, Cuckfield.

PETWORTH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
250TH ANNIVERSARY - 14th - 17th JUNE

- Thursday to Saturday: Flower Festival in the Church based on hymns of the period.  
Morning coffee, lunches and teas in the Church Hall.
- Thursday 14th June. Petworth Town Band in concert at the Herbert Shiner School.  
Tickets £2.00 (Concessions £1.50)
- Friday 15th June. Supper and Concert in the Leconfield Hall with Seaford College Swing Band.  
Tickets £3.00
- Saturday 16th June. A programme of poetry and music from the period of the Church's foundation.  
Tickets £3.00 (Concessions £2.00)
- Sunday 17th June. Special services at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.  
Preacher: Revd. David Hellyar, Moderator of the Southern Province of the United Reformed Church.

THE RAMBLERS

Moses Farm, Lurgashall  
Petworth GU28 9EP

5 May 1990

Dear Mr Jerrome,

With the retirement of Mary Hazell from active service, a number of places in West Sussex no longer have a Ramblers Association Footpath Secretary. The Area Secretary, Ted Ticehurst from Horsham, has been very successful in recruiting volunteers to fill the gap, but has not found anyone to cover Petworth. He has asked me to help.

I wonder if this would be of interest to the Petworth Society which does such good work in protecting and promoting Petworth? Ted Ticehurst would probably wish to explain the work in detail himself, but, as you would suppose, it consists of keeping an eye on the footpaths and bridle paths within the parish, an interesting but not onerous task. The RA apparently prefer that whoever takes on the job of Footpath Secretary should be, or should become, a member of the RA.

I would be most grateful for any suggestions, which I will pass on to Ted Ticehurst.

Yours sincerely,  
Christopher Herdon.



# NEW MEMBERS

- Miss W.E. Adams, Stane House, Bignor, Pulborough.
- Mrs. Baron, New Malden, c/o Mrs. Edwards
- Mr. and Mrs. Baskerville, Saddlers Row.
- Mr. and Mrs. Bell, 11 Maybury Way, Island Bay, Wellington,  
New Zealand.
- Mrs. W. Brown, 42 Hampers Green.
- Mrs. and Mrs. Bynoe, 5 Shirley Way, Maidstone, Kent.
- Major and Mrs. Croxall, Ormonde Cottage, 2 Market Square.
- The Rev. and Mrs. G.A. Evans, The Rectory, Tillington.
- Mrs. H. Evans, The Present Shop, High Street.
- Mrs. Farmar, Shipley Mill Cottage, Northchapel.
- Mrs. Gould, Plaistow Road, Kirdford.
- Mrs. S. Green, 542 South Lane, Tillington.
- Mrs. A. Hoar, 18 Mant Road.
- Mr. N. Hollingdale, 20 White Horse Road, Roffey, Horsham.
- Mr. I.E.G. Miller, c/o Granville Antiques, The High Street.
- Mr. and Mrs. D. Moore, 25A Los Rosales, La Rosaleda, Torreuija,  
Spain.
- Miss K. Pedley, c/o Open Country, Golden Square.
- Mrs. Peel, Limbo Cottage, London Road, Petworth.
- Mrs. Pelissier, Angel Shades, Angel Street.
- Mr. H. Rogers, 8 Coates Castle, Fittleworth.
- Mr. G. Sargent, 329A Grove Street.
- Mr. and Mrs. Sharpe, Angel House, Angel Street.
- Mrs. G. Squire, Leghorn Cottage, Bury, Pulborough.
- Mrs. Street, 37 Marlborough Close, Ryde, I.O.W.
- Mrs. N. Strudwick, Elnor Guest House, 1 Russell Street, Liskeard,  
Cornwall.
- Mrs. S. Thomas, 2 Orchard Close.
- Mr. and Mrs. Underwood, c/o 5 West Side, Tillington.
- Mr. and Mrs. P. Underwood, 12 Warrington Road, Ipswich.
- Miss C. Whitcomb, 38 Ardingly Drive, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing, Sussex.



