

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY *magazine*



NO. 68. JUNE 1992

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Cover illustration illustrating Gray's Elegy by Gwenda Morgan.
Cover design by Jonathan Newdick.

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Summer/Early Autumn Programme. Please keep for reference.

The result of our traffic questionnaire for the Conference on June 18th is on the final page of the Magazine itself. Our grateful thanks to Mr Stan. Chapman for acting as scrutineer and to our local distributors for taking round the voting forms. There was as you will see a good response both locally and postally.

Anne's Garden Walk is on June 21st (Sunday).
Leaving the Car Park at 2.30 p.m.

On Sunday 28th June. The Society makes a first visit to Heyshott Down Nature Reserve for a conducted tour by the warden Mr Thomas. He can take no more than 16 so the visit will clearly be heavily oversubscribed. The first 16 members to indicate to Peter (42562) or Anne (at E. Streeter and Daughter) their intention to go will form the Society party. It is unlikely in the circumstances that you will simply be able to arrive on the day and join the party.
Cars leave Car Park at 2.15 p.m. No dogs.

July 8th Wednesday. Peter walks round Petworth with the Billingshurst W.I. Society members and others are welcome to join in.
We leave the Car Park at 7.30 p.m.

Sunday July 19th. A visit to Andrew Thompson's bird garden followed by a leisurely stroll along the river Rother. Andrew's talk at the A.G.M. aroused great interest and this promises to be a really good outing.
Cars leave Car Park at 2.15 p.m. No dogs.

Sunday August 2nd. A conducted tour of Shimmings Farm with Richard Chandler, leaving from the Car Park at 2.15 p.m.
I would think no dogs.

SUNDAY AUGUST 16th. VISIT OF THE TORONTO SCOTTISH REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION PRIOR TO THEIR LEAVING FOR DIEPPE.

FOR THIS IMPORTANT EVENT SEE SOCIETY LOCAL PUBLICITY.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13th. Angie's Northchapel Walk.
Cars leave Petworth Car Park at 2.15 p.m.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 8th

PETWORTH SOCIETY APPLE DAY with Dr Joan Morgan and Mr Hugh Ermen. Date is
virtually certain but please check with September magazine.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 22nd - the first monthly meeting of the new season:

Mr John Magrath

on

"King Arthur in
History."

Slides

The Arthurian Legend its beginnings and its dramatic effects on later history.

Leconfield Hall 7.30 p.m.

Peter 22/5/92

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 £5.50. Single or Double one Bulletin delivered. Postal £7.00. Overseas £8.00. 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, 71 Wyndham Road, Petworth.

Hon. Bulletin Sec. - Mrs. B. Hodson, The Cottage, Whitelocks,
Sutton.

Hon. Social Sec. - Mrs. Audrey Grimwood, 12 Grove Lane,
Petworth.

Committee - Mrs. Julia Edwards, Mr. Ian Godsmark,
Lord Egremont, Mr. John Patten,
Mrs. Anne Simmons, Mr. D.S. Sneller,
Mr. J. Taylor, Mr. E. Vincent,
Mrs Linda Wort.

Membership enquiries to Mrs. Staker please, Bulletin circulation enquiries to Betty Hodson 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. Goodyer, Mrs Williams
(Fittleworth).

* Note change of
address.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Once again we have full reports on the Society's various activities, especially well-supported this quarter. The Leconfield Hall has been consistently full for all meetings, the speakers and the refreshments excellent. The walks too have been very well attended. Shortage of space means no separate account of the Litter Clean-Up however. Suffice it to say that we again worked very closely with the Parish Council and probably had the best day for weather since the event began in 1985. A very successful morning with less litter about than usual. Dare we hope the message is getting across?

The Toronto Scottish Regiment will be back in Petworth on Sunday August 16th before they leave for Dieppe. As the Leconfield Hall is booked we shall entertain them at Petworth Primary School. Full details later but we think there will be two coaches and that the Rev. Keith Kiddell the padre who accompanied them in 1985 will be coming. We shall be very pleased to see our friends again on this their fourth visit. You will be pleased also to learn that we have another Apple Day this autumn.

There was a lot of interest in the article on George Garland's humour but only two of the "lost" jokes have been explained. "Fish-face" is simply the well-worn joke of the motorist shouting "Leatherhead?" out of his car window and getting the reply "Fish-face" from an irate rustic. The bull with the bowler hat is a robust anecdote involving Farmer Hayseed's cow, a civil servant and the early days of artificial insemination. A few of the stories seem to go back to newspaper jokes from the 1920s, cut out by George Garland and pasted in a small notebook, then later transformed into yokel stories.

In view of the Conference on Petworth's traffic problems at Goodwood House in mid-June it seemed right that you should all decide the content of the Society's submission on a one member one vote basis. I don't know at the time of writing how you will answer but we will give your various replies to the Conference as our submission. It should be possible to let you know the result on the activities sheet. I am sorry that the time factor ruled out our consulting members overseas.

Peter.

1st May 1992.

THE DIALECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Miles is still collating the replies. He is very pleased to have so many forms returned and we hope to be able to give a summary report in the next issue. If anyone has still to reply we would be grateful if you would. There is still time. We have spare forms if anyone would like them.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Mrs Phill Sadler:

Dear Peter,

I was interested to read the article about Mr and Mrs Earle in the December magazine. As you know, I was born in Lombard Street and remember them both very well, in fact as a child I spent quite a lot of time in the house part of the shop.

My Mother used to send me down for a quarter pound of Liptons Tea and half an ounce of baccy for Dad, Digger Flake was the name. After being served by Mr Earle I would go through to the kitchen or parlour and find his wife and most times was given a biscuit or small cake.

They had a dog called Dusty who I used to play with.

One day I remember Mrs Earle wasn't about when I went through to see her, so I waited in the kitchen and on the front of the kitchen range was a small brass tap, we didn't have one on our range so I wondered what it was for and turned it on. Imagine my surprise when hot water poured out. I tried to turn it off but couldn't so I quickly ran home and of course it wasn't long before Mr Earle was behind me telling Mother all about it. Luckily there wasn't much water so not much damage was done.

PLAISTOW EXHIBITION

Mrs Janet Austin asks if anyone has any information, pictures or recollection for a forthcoming exhibition on Plaistow to be held in October. The exhibition will be on the lines of the highly successful Kirdford exhibition organised by the Ifold Local History Society a couple of years ago and the Ifold Society will again be in charge.

Please contact Janet at 25 Ifoldhurst, Loxwood, Billingshurst, RH14 0TX, Telephone 9/752912, or contact Peter.

The ROTARY CLUB of MIDHURST and PETWORTH

ROUNDED 1964

T.P. Brooks, President,
Sycamores, School Lane,
Lodsworth, Petworth,
West Sussex, GU28 9DH.

27th March 1992

Tel: 07985 248

Dear Mr. Jerrome,

May I, through the Petworth Society Magazine, make an appeal to your readers for help with the major Community Service project that we in the Rotary Club have set ourselves for 1991/1992. We are determined to raise the £5000 or more required to buy much needed specialised medical equipment for the Midhurst and Petworth Health Centres and their surrounding Branch Surgeries. We have the full support of both Practices and a medical adviser has been appointed by each to determine the most needed equipment.

Our project, you may know, is called CHEC - for Community Health Equipment Campaign. Our call is to 'Give a cheque to CHEC'. We believe the project will benefit every one in both towns and in the villages round about, we are off to a good start but because we are a small club of only some 35 Members we need the help of many others in the community.

Hence this personal letter to ask for the support of your readers.

We are asking all clubs and societies, educational and commercial establishments, religious organisations and individuals, young and old, to consider helping our large project with a little project of their own. We believe that, suitably encouraged, your readers could get both fun and satisfaction out of running a small fund raising event to 'Give a cheque to CHEC' or by making a personal donation.

I earnestly hope that many will feel able to participate in our very worthwhile CHEC project.

Yours sincerely,

T.P. Brooks,

President.

RUSSIA AND EBERNOE

Mrs. Ann Tyrrell, Vice-Principal of the West Sussex College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Brinsbury, entertained and informed a large audience of the Petworth Society in the Leconfield Hall with an illustrated talk about her visit to Barnaul in Siberia last June. She explained how, through a mixture of design and chance, she became involved in a scheme to train Russian agriculturalists in Western methods of marketing and distribution. Groups of ten are brought to Brinsbury for short periods over the next two years while remaining in their own key posts and passing on the expertise gained to others, who will in turn train more groups, and so on. The operation will eventually involve 600,000 "students" over 6 years as part of the British Government's aid programme for the newly independent states. British students are also visiting Russia as a part of cultural exchange. Mrs. Tyrrell emphasised that the West has nothing to teach the Russians in agricultural techniques; the husbandry is equal to any found here in its intensity, variety and research and it was important to see the climatic and geological conditions in which they operate so that waste resulting from inefficient storage, distribution and marketing can be eliminated.

These important facts were, however, presented with the light-hearted enthusiasm of any open-minded traveller experiencing completely foreign culture and scenery. The overwhelming hospitality and generosity of the people, as well as the frustrations caused by bureaucracy and unusual plumbing came through as Mrs. Tyrrell described the 3½ hour flight to Moscow and the whirlwind tour of the city, followed by a 4½ hour flight to Siberia, sleepless, since one day ran into the next without a night-time. One impression followed another: the agricultural institute which employed 44 librarians (Brinsbury, half its size, employs one), the horticultural department which has had no students for 10 years, the virtual absence of freezers which means that food is confined to season, a 4 hour flight by helicopter to camp in the Altai Mountains - fabulous scenery, wild flowers, song birds, eagles and the footprint evidence in the morning of wolf and bear that had passed by the tents during the night, the local people who had never seen Europeans from outside the USSR before. Then a stay in a Mongolian village, with a woodland picnic followed by the spontaneous exchange of gifts - cloth, a health-promoting fragrance and crystals for cigars and whisky. Returning by air to

the Crimea on the Black Sea, Yalta, across the Caucasian Mountains and the Caspian Sea to Georgia where the resurgence of religion was already evident, together with the tension building up to the coup which, though a failure, had later repercussions, the tour ended with another hilarious lunch in an agricultural institute.

Any reservations Mrs. Tyrrell may have had about the appeal of her talk or the quality of her husband's photography were dispelled by the response of the audience and the vote of thanks moved by Mr. Peter Jerrome, who expressed the general hope that she would return to speak after a further visit to Russia and others planned for Spain and Poland as Brinsbury College builds up its reputation as the European College of the Countryside.

K.C.T.

OTTERS AND OTHER ANIMALS

Just a year ago, Mrs. Pat. Hill delighted the Petworth Society with her films on foxes and owls and with the appetite thus whetted, there was a capacity audience in the Leconfield Hall for a return visit about otters and other animals. Mrs. Hill had visited Philip Ware's Otter Trust in Suffolk before travelling to Scotland to film in the wild. Sequences showed mating, holt-building and training of the young. Although it takes at least a week of enticement by the parents before the young will enter water, an orphan South American sea otter was shown collecting stones before using them to kill crustaceans, entirely by instinct. The river bank is also marked (sprinted) for distances up to 2 miles. The prominent whiskers are essential as feelers in hunting - without them an otter cannot survive. Those species with wet coats close their nostrils and remain submerged for up to 40 seconds, but the dry-coated species (e.g. the European) absorbs oxygen through the skin from air trapped in the fur and can stay under water for 2 minutes, returning to the bank to eat. Besides fish, including a great many eels, they eat vegetation, fruit, slugs and eggs. Of the 8 species world-wide, the South American sea otter can grow to a length of 6 feet, the European to 4 feet, including tail. From a hide by a Scottish loch, Mrs. Hill filmed bar-headed geese from Russia and otters at play and hunting. They dislike rain but enjoy cold weather, "tobogganing" in groups on snow.

From Scotland to Africa for the "other animals", which included two chimpanzees rescued from the luggage carousel at Nairobi Airport

when en route from Zambia to Spain, destined for the sordid beach photography trade, now spreading to France, Poland and Israel, where the victims may become heroin addicts. After rehabilitation, the two chimpanzees have joined a troupe of 28 being prepared for return to the wild, as a group in Zaire. Lastly, a stay with the late George Adamson in his nature reserve camp 500 miles from Nairobi, where the humans are caged in, with the wild animals outside. Here were snakes, ants, a raven, a hornbill, guineafowl, lizards (useful in the huts to keep down mosquitos), but the emphasis was on the rehabilitation of a 2 year-old lion, originally purchased from Harrods as a household pet, a baby elephant and a young rhinoceros, both orphaned when their parents were shot by poachers. There were also studies of the social discipline within a family of monkeys.

Mrs. Hill's cinematic skills, together with her acute perception of animal behaviour, captivated the audience as pictures and commentary combined in a most informative programme. As Peter said, "Not her final visit, we hope".

K.C.T.

DOWNLAND FLOWERS

Despite the rain, which stopped only just before the meeting, there were still over 70 members to hear Dr. Brian Plunkett's talk about downland flowers. Commenting that weeds were one of his passions in life, he said that they are only plants growing in the wrong place and our native flora is as rich in form and colour as any in the world. He recommended two Collins Guides - "New Guide to Wild Flowers" and "Photoguide to Wild Flowers" among others as being the most helpful in identifying examples.

With the aid of slides, Dr. Plunkett explained how the Downs were cleared of their original woodland by Neolithic man, first for corn growing and then for grazing by sheep, producing the familiar downland turf which is maintained today by the sheep, aided by rabbits. Destruction of the turf for corn production since the 1st World War and fluctuation of the rabbit population due to the introduction of myxomatosis has necessitated preservation to prevent the growth of scrub and the eventual return to woodland. From a low in 1954, however, rabbits were now back to previous levels. In order to conserve the typical flora including juniper,

which are under threat but essential for certain insect and bird life, the invasive bracken and tor grass, inedible by sheep, together with erosion caused by man-made trackways and quarrying, have to be controlled.

There followed slides of flowers by families, of which a few examples must suffice - bird's foot trefoil, named from the shape of the seed pods and providing food for the blue butterflies; yellow rattle and cow-wheat, hemi-parasitic annuals dispensing with the need to put down roots through the dense perennial turf by attaching themselves to the plants and drawing nourishment from them; thyme, specifically suited to growing on ancient ant hills; other herbs like marjoram and basil and, of course, the whole range of orchids, fortunately benefitting from the recent run of mild winters, while other seeds need sharp frosts to aid germination.

An added feature of the evening was the wide variety of downland plants and seeds brought by Dr. Plunkett for sale and your Vice-Chairman spent an even more hectic evening than usual, coping with the enthusiastic customers.

Both the speaker and Peter expressed their appreciation of each other's (and the audience's) "relaxed approach" and the outstanding quality of the refreshments.

KCT

THE SILVER SCREENS OF WEST SUSSEX

Mr. Tony Moss, President of the Cinema Theatre Association, Vice-President of the Cinema Organ Society and author of the newly-published biography of the well-known silent film pianist, Ena Barker, was described by his chief at the BBC as "delightfully idiosyncratic" and so proved to be another excellent speaker for The Petworth Society.

Taking "The Silver Screens of West Sussex" as his subject, he detailed the history of the cinemas from Arundel to Worthing; from the first public showing in London in 1896 to the present situation in which there are few survivors among the bingo halls, supermarkets, garages, auction rooms - even a McDonalds Restaurant; from the travelling shows in village halls to the luxurious 'Odeon' architecture of the '30s.

Petworth's own story is interesting and well-documented, entirely the result of Mr. Stan. Collins' obsession with the cinema. He took over shows at the Swan Hotel at the age of 19, built the Picturedrome at the Midhurst Road junction in 1925, to be superseded by the Regal (now the Sylvia Beaufoy Centre) a few yards opposite in 1937. Mr. Fred. Streeter, head gardener at Petworth House, mounted special floral displays for the opening ceremony. Of special interest was a slide showing the Picturedrome's staff, including Mrs. Simmons, the cashier, whose son became projectionist for many years. Mr. Simmons was in the audience and, with others who had fond memories of both cinemas, joined in with comments and questions, which, in addition to the local interest, included the introduction of talkies and colour, cinema organs and the effect of television. The industry remained somewhat low-key and down-market until the Cinema Act of 1910, enforcing safety conditions, made it respectable and led to the boom after the 2nd World War. It was the Coronation of 1953, for which so many people bought TV sets, that sounded the death-knell, although several companies such as Granada, ABC and Rank, went into TV production or retailing themselves.

KCT

JOHN AND GLORIA'S STOPHAM WALK

Hailstones at 1.45 after a glorious morning - not a good sign. The morning weather had always looked too good to be true. Now there seemed every prospect of getting wet. There were a good number of walkers in the Car Park and more waiting for us at Fittleworth Village Hall. John had permission from the Village Hall Committee for us to use the Car Park. We were soon off down a narrow lane past the breaker's yard, a glimpse of cars piled one on top of another. An apocalypse seen through a winter hedgerow. It wasn't long before we crossed the dangerous main road and were in the woods. The sun shone with a fragile brilliance. Through Walkers Plantation, along a lane and suddenly we were in Stopham, a medieval church, a few houses. John announced that there were cream teas in the Village Hall during the summer months. The problem was that this was mid-February. Past the Rectory and Manor Farm, crocus and snowdrop were in great abundance. Turning left we passed a couple of very old cottages, used, we were told, as holiday homes during the season. Continuing along the bridleway we crossed two fields and were in Fittleworth wood. Before we entered the shelter of the wood we looked away toward Pulborough Church,

Harwood's Racing Stables and the long line of the South Downs at Cissbury and Chanctonbury. There had been extensive coppicing in the woods and David explained that the men were cutting walking sticks, some of which in fact still lay beside a tree stump waiting to be collected. It wasn't long before we were at Churchwood then crossing the road again making for the Village Hall. Just the right length for the beginning of the year and the weather had held up even if the wind was cold. An abiding impression? Very early daffodils in bloom beside an old well - after all it was only mid-February.

P.

DAVID AND LINDA WALK IN NEW ENGLAND

It was mild but with a definite possibility of rain. A large turn out seemed augmented by the mysterious title "New England". Were the Society really putting on a trip to the United States and back in an afternoon? Would the Treasurer approve? Well we had been to Stanmer Park once so it might be possible. It turned out that New England is a popular but old-established name for the wooded area running back from Heath End and in line with the river. The name appears already in early nineteenth century Lavington Estate maps but its origins are obscure. It rarely appears in official map work.

Setting off along the track it wasn't long before we had our first insight into the character of this forgotten land. There had once been a mill but there was little sign of it now. It is clearly shown on the 1875 map and the weir still survives. Further on was the old keeper's cottage, the building gone but the foundations still to be felt beneath a riot of vegetation. David pointed out the Bishop's Ride along which his Grace would walk out from Lavington Park, these are really the marches between Leconfield and Lavington, sometimes shifting between the two spheres of influence.

And this was railway territory too when the line had run through to Midhurst. We walked back along the line, marvelling at the massive bridges now alas beginning to deteriorate, trees growing into the parapets and dislodging the bricks. These were bridges built simply to carry farm tracks but massive by any standards. The Skew Bridge sometimes mentioned by Florence Rapley in her Diary engaged everyone's attention - elaborate brickwork set at an angle to the

track. I remembered being down here with Jumbo and our finding a ridge of ash and shale where the navvies nearly a century and a half ago had camped while they worked on these large projects. They might be on the same site for months at a time. Now all lay quiet. In Florence Rapley's time the train would trundle through occasionally on the one-track line, the key being exchanged at Hardham Junction. Common orchid leaves were already dark green under a red brick bridge and the sun glinted briefly on the river through the sparse late winter foliage. Here was a lost world indeed. Coming back there was tangled undergrowth in a series of depressions, carp ponds once now long dry. Once back at Heath End we looked across to the sandpit - there were the tumuli carefully kept away from the excavator. Neolithic some said. The most evocative walks can sometimes be the nearest to home.

P.

DAVID AND LINDA'S STAG PARK WALK

I've learned not to worry about the weather when it comes to walks. We've done so many over the years that it is inevitable the occasional day will be wet. Usually we're lucky. We've never cancelled a walk - in what - fifteen years? Would we ever? Perhaps if it were a woodland walk and there was a thunderstorm. After all the weather gives a walk its character. Who forgets Jumb's famous Gog walk in a gathering blizzard? So many years ago and still spoken of with awe. It looked as if we might be lucky with Stag Park; it was raining so hard on the Sunday morning that it had to be better in the afternoon. Or had it? A good couple of dozen people in the puddled Car Park - we might have had fifty or sixty on a reasonable day.

Down in the cars to Limbo and the rains came, already dripping off mackintosh capes and down necks and taking the colour from the bluebells, they really need the sun to be at their best. Today they were sombre almost sullen. The sheeting rain forces the party in on themselves, talking where they might be more inclined to look. We skirted Luff's Pond - David and Linda taking a slight variation on the normal route. The rain intensified so David checked whether we wanted to shorten the walk. After discussion we did.

We looked down on the twin ponds Great Spring and Little Spring. A

Toad Entrances into Petworth Park.
The culvert.

All photographs by Debbie Dewhurst.



The Grill.



The stream bridge.



Toad territory - a view of the Lower Lake.



man in a boat was fishing, apparently impervious to the downpour. Even the wildlife seemed to keep its own counsel on such a day, a deer fled briefly across a ride, fish were just bubbles of air on the surface of the water. Sheep ran from us across a meadow. David lifted a huge concrete slab to reveal a system of drains still intact although the camps they served were four decades gone and more. A frog scuttled up one of the pipes. The vegetation was pale and lush by Figgs but we would not see Jacksons or Cocks, the bluebells reflecting in the water, and the great prize of a walk in Stag Park, nor mysterious Chillinghurst. Even Stag Park itself seemed a watery world away, the dovecote lost in the greyness. One thing we noticed, the group doesn't get dispersed on a day like this. There were great puddles in the woodland tracks but sometimes the rain relented and it looked as if it would be brighter. Down the main Pheasant Copse track, then an unfamiliar ride, past Christmas trees with the Lincoln green new growth of spring and there were the cars again!

P.

A CARPET OF "LEAVES"

I have always loved animals but my particular concern for toads came about, to an extent, by chance. I live at Colhook and as I hadn't passed my driving test last year I had on occasion to walk into Petworth along the main road from Northchapel. It was early in the year, late February, early March, that sort of time, and as I walked past Limbo and came roughly in line with the Lower Pond in Petworth Park a good part of the road appeared to be covered with a carpet of leaves. It wasn't autumn of course and the "leaves" on closer examination turned out to be hundreds of dead toads. It was a horrifying sight. Some had been there for a day or two as they were squashed quite flat, while others lay either limbless or unmutilated, not yet completely squashed. Severed limbs lay grotesquely everywhere. I couldn't take the extent of the slaughter in all at once. As far as I knew no one was aware of the carnage, as far as I knew no one was bothered by it either. I determined that the next time I passed that way I would stop and as best I could make a count of the corpses. I did and it came to several hundreds. I found out later that eventually the road clears itself; the flattened desiccated remains of the toads being borne away on the tyres of the hurtling cars to be replaced in their turn by fresh corpses. As spring advanced the carnage lessened but I couldn't get the toads out of my mind. I have to say however that

I had no idea how I might help the toads, let alone how I might reduce this mindless slaughter.

It was going to evening aerobics classes at the Hampers Green Youth Centre that put me on the road - literally as it turned out! Mandy the aerobics teacher comes from Pulborough and operates a well-established toad-crossing there. She also sells "Help a Toad" teeshirts to provide funds for her toad patrol. I offered to help her with the Pulborough crossing rota but she said that what was really needed was to organise a crossing on the A283. The Pulborough crossing was worked on a rota and would continue to be as the site wasn't suitable for a permanent toad tunnel. Situated as it is near the road-bridge it isn't such a fast road anyway.

It was all very well to be put so suddenly in charge of a toad crossing but how should I organise it? I might have floundered but fortunately Mandy was helpful and practical. The first essential was to provide an effective barrier to stop the toads as far as possible from crossing the road on their own. Mandy had some tough stiff white plastic sheeting which had obviously been used before because it had the wooden posts already stapled to it. An incision needed to be made in the ground some two foot or so in from the road verge on the northern side so that the white plastic barrier would rest in it. The wooden posts would then be driven in to hold it. Someone suggested that Brinsbury College might help and they did. A party of students came out to make the long incision in the ground for the plastic barrier, digging down a spade's depth in a straight line. They pushed the spade to and fro without actually digging out the earth. The plastic would sit about a foot above ground level with its bottom edge resting in the incision. It would be secured by the wooden posts - roofing battens some 18 inches to 2 foot in length, driven in with a heavy metal hammer. The barrier would need to be secure; the pull as heavy lorries go by at speed is very powerful and if it were to break loose and blow across the road it would be a hazard. We started at the southern end of the site where the lane from Gunter's Bridge comes out on to the A283, going along in the first instance to the grill in the Park wall on the opposite side of the road. It was a dismal wet afternoon for the students but we put the barrier up and tramped the earth back along the incision to keep the plastic taut.

Previous to setting up the barrier I'd been to the Council depot at Midhurst to see what their attitude was and whether there was

anything I needed to do officially. They didn't seem to have come across this particular eccentricity before, Mandy's crossing at Pulborough obviously didn't come within their jurisdiction, but they couldn't have been more helpful. Yes, it was all right to put up a toad-barrier as long as I accepted liability. I signed the necessary form and was loaned some luminous protective jackets, a very important acquisition as I later found. I also informed Petworth House and the local police of my intentions.

By the 11th February I knew that toads were on the move. I had seen them crossing at Streels at Ebernoe, much safer there of course with the relatively minimal traffic flow. Toads are slow movers and not natural walkers. They do not bound like frogs. Trevor Beebee (Frogs and Toads 1985) says their speed varies between 55 and 150 yards per hour, pausing for a rest after every few steps. The latter habit is clearly a recipe for disaster on the A283. My friend Jemma and I went out on the 14th February and I came out every night after but there wasn't a lot of activity. It was bitterly cold and there was no inducement for the toads to come out. I had been told that the 18th was crucial; it was full moon and there would be more light. So much for what I had been told: there wasn't a toad to be seen. David Sneller often took a turn monitoring the barrier but until the month ended there was little enough activity. It was often sufficient to come out, establish that nothing was happening and go home again. The nights were so bitterly cold it was no use being out unnecessarily. By this time, again with help from Brinsbury College, we had a barrier running from the northern end of the site. Mandy had brought out two boxes of battens and some more plastic sheeting. It still wasn't enough but we made some additional battens out of hedgerow wood. We had now a half mile stretch of road barriered at the north and south end but with a big gap in the middle.

It was now February 27th and remaining bitterly cold at night. Moira and Alan who lived nearby came out and helped; they'd ferried toads across the road in previous years using a bucket but had never had a barrier. I wasn't happy with the gap in the middle but it was the best we could do; we were after all starting from scratch. The 28th saw the weather easing a little and David and I picked up 50 toads, some individuals but some pairs, the smaller male sitting on the female. Equipment is basic - Wellingtons, a luminous coat, a bucket, a good torch and an ability to put up with the cold. Some think a glove is a good idea to avoid burning the

toad's skin, but Trevor Beebee (Frogs and Toads pp 38) doesn't think this necessary. As he says, "'House-trained' toads will climb on to a hand of their own free-will if a mealworm is likely to be the reward and often settle for quite a while with no sign of discomfort". The basic operation is to shine the torch on the inside of the barrier to see if any toads are there. They seem to have the instinct to move toward the centre from either side, i.e. in the general direction of the Lower Pond. The females are a fair size, large enough to squat in the palm of one's hand. It was the much smaller males we had largely seen at the very beginning the females in*general appearing later. You end up with a bucket of toads, not slippery as people think, and surprisingly chubby, a whole range of different dull hues in the artificial light. A curious chirping noise comes from the bucket, something like the high-pitched sound of bats, toads don't croak as a frog does.

You soon learn that toad patrol - at least on this stretch of the A283 - is not to be taken lightly. This is a fast road, the verge is narrow and the traffic relentless. The cars make me angry they seem so uncaring. It's nothing to see a toad on the road, then the lights of a car in the distance. It seems mere fractions of a second before the car bears down on the trundling animal or pair of animals, squashes it and hurtles on. You can only stand by helplessly. Sometimes the wheels will miss the animal and a gap in the traffic enables the toad to be picked up, sometimes though there's a convoy of cars and one of the following vehicles will crush the toad before it can be saved. On rare occasion, if a toad is just into the road, it's possible to shine the torch into the road and get the cars to veer out. You've got to be quick and alert at all times. With traffic moving at such speeds it's not difficult to misjudge distances and it's surprising how long it takes relatively to go out into the middle of the road, pick up a survivor and regain the safety of the verge. You get used to the somewhat nondescript roadside terrain so that, after a while, a beer can half submerged in the rough grass can become a familiar landmark. An irritating hazard comes from branches overhanging the verge and forcing you to step out into the road, another year perhaps we'd look to trim these. The abiding awareness however has to be of the hurtling traffic. You need that awareness and you can never relax.

David counted the places in the Park wall where the toads could get through. There were six in all ranging from a full-blown culvert

to small grills. It's not easy terrain on the Park wall side of the road, particularly in the darkness. Having collected a bucket of toads we'd take them across the road and put them into the culvert or whatever opening was most convenient. We didn't tip them out but carefully took them from the bucket singly or in pairs. The toads would sit and think for a while before making off in their rather deliberate way in the direction of the Lower Pond. They seemed to have little doubt of the direction in which they were going. We found that some of the smaller entry points in the wall led straight into the Lower Lake and after a while concentrated on these.

By this time David had told Peter about the problem so Peter came out, quickly followed by Audrey, Gillian and John. We needed the extra numbers. March 1st was a busy night by any standards, damp and warmer than it had been for some time and toads were moving in numbers. My sister and her friend, David and I ferried 250 across. The next day was colder and I couldn't see a single toad anywhere! It was to be a busy week however for on the Tuesday David and I took across 70 animals. On the Wednesday I was on my own and took across 20. Thursday was a gloomy, wet evening and Peter and I carried 110 over to the relative safety of the grill. Friday we had 50 and Saturday 60. Sunday and Monday however were cold and numbers down again. Tuesday the 10th Gillian, John and I found 20 with a similar number Wednesday, while on the Thursday Audrey and I collected 70. The next week totalled about 150 in all. Numbers were beginning to drop. Usually now there were at least two of us on, sometimes more. It was all so much easier although we hadn't got as far as an actual rota. We don't usually stay out after nine o'clock but of course the traffic would become lighter as the night advanced.

We had a disconcerting find in a still pool off the culvert by the Park Wall. There was a pile of dead toads, some thirty in all and rapidly decomposing. David wondered if there were a predator of some kind in the culvert tunnel. Certainly there were wounds on some of the bodies but these seemed fresh and likely to have been caused by carrion birds. We found four or five sluggish toads beside the heap, their back legs dragging pitifully behind as they struggled in the brackish water. Audrey wondered if the toads had somehow been washed back down the tunnel by heavy rain and then impaled on a large bramble overhanging the mouth of the opening. On balance however we felt that the four or five sick toads

indicated that some illness was involved. The fact was that we didn't know. We all talked about it but we couldn't explain it. It just showed really how much we don't know.

Toads appear to come from a mile or more away to spawn in the Lower Lake, their ancestral home, but we weren't sure whether particular toads had specific routes and would use one entry rather than another. Do they become disorientated when they are picked up and put in a bucket? Do toads from the northern and southern ends of the barrier need to use particular northern and southern entries? Trevor Beebee (pp 68) says that toads probably go to their chosen pond by smell and that "animals deliberately moved from their breeding sites have shown a strong ability to return 'home' so long as the distances are not too great". It may be that our fears on this score are unfounded.

Writing in early April, levels of activity on the road are very low for spawning is in progress in the Lower Pond. A very few toads are already coming back. Trevor Beebee (pp 71) says, "It's much more difficult helping the toads get back again when they have finished breeding because they leave the pond area in dribs and drabs over a long period of time". Mandy says the Pulborough toads are beginning to dribble back, and there are a few stragglers already crossing the A283 from the Lower Pond. Walking in the Park on March 19th I saw toad spawn in one part of the Lower Pond, like long streams of black beads wrapped around the reeds. It's easily distinguishable from frog spawn which accumulates in great lumps. In theory it should be easier to gather the returning toads; the uneven terrain on the Park Wall side of the road would make a barrier difficult but it might well be possible to rig up something to catch the toads as they come out of the six outlets on the wall.

The farmer appeared out of the darkness one night and seemed very interested in what was going on. He reckons the toads are creatures of the rape fields. Rape is a wet crop with plenty of undergrowth and takes a high cut which leaves the toads unharmed. They live in banksides and under stones. Trevor Beebee says they will eat slugs and snails but are particularly keen on ants, woodlice and beetles. Toads are less dependent than frogs on slugs and snails as, despite their presence in the rape fields, their habitats tend to be drier than those of frogs. This variation in feeding habits enables frogs and toads to co-exist in the same territory. The variety at Limbo is the Common toad: Britain's

other native species, the Natterjack, is smaller with a distinctive yellow stripe running down its back. It prefers sandy terrain and its distribution is far more limited than that of the Common Toad.

We have signs warning of a toad crossing at either end of the barrier. Some few drivers slow or even stop to ask but most race relentlessly on. Our next step will be to get the crossing properly registered and put up permanent Toad Crossing signs. It is possible that we may eventually be able to put a tunnel under the road. There are no buildings on either side and we could put up a permanent barrier on both sides of the road to guide the toads into the tunnel. It can be done but it has to be absolutely right or the toads won't use it. Fundraising may be a possibility once we have established the feasibility of this. We will probably try to operate a rota next year as Mandy does at Pulborough but it's important that people accept the voluntary nature of the patrol. It's not something you can dragoon people into doing. The A283 is a dangerous road and the verge narrow. You must want to help the toads and you must keep your wits about you. It's quite exciting when the toads are moving in numbers and you can save so many but the excitement is so often tempered by considering those that get away and are crushed on the road.

From a conversation between Debbie Dewhurst and the Editor.

For further reading: Trevor Beebee: Frogs and Toads.
Whittet Press 1985.

PAYING THE TOWN HALL KEEPER

From the
West Sussex Gazette
of 11 July 1867

WEST SUSSEX QUARTER SESSIONS

A PECULIAR CUSTOM AT PETWORTH. - The next business was a notice of motion by the Honble. Percy Wyndham: - "That the expense of warming the Petworth Court and of the supply of writing materials for the use of magistrates assembled in Quarter and Petty Sessions be hereafter defrayed by the County; and that a committee of three magistrates be now appointed to fix what sum per annum be paid to the officer of the court for that purpose."

We may state that the person performing the above duties is at present paid in the following manner: Each justice attending Petty Sessions and Quarter Sessions pays him a shilling each time. By these means he attains about £5 10s. or £6 a year. He is furnished with a pole about 6 or 7 yards in length at the end of which is attached a small bag. When the magistrates' bench is pretty full, this pole is handed about by the hall keeper in the same way as a man would hold a fishing rod and the magistrates each drop a shilling into the bag.

The honorable gentleman in moving the above resolution stated that the handing about of this pole with the bag was done in the most courteous manner, but he did not think they should continue the practice. Sometimes the magistrates left the court before giving the shilling and they had to be followed into the street. He had taken the trouble to go into the matter and he found that the present hall keeper got about £5 10s. or £6 a year; his predecessor who was of a more pushing character got considerably more than this.

It appears that in consequence of the requirements of the Act, the motion must stand over until the next court.

A DONKEY, A CART, AND A CANDLE

My father (Bill Howick) had so many funny stories to tell if only he had written them down, he used to keep us in fits of laughter, the following happened over a hundred years ago. He (my father) came from a very poor family, I think there were ten surviving children, they used to live in one of the tiny cottages at the bottom of Upperton Hill. It was imperative that he left school and settled in a job as soon as possible. At the age of eleven he sat an exam to make sure that he could read and write. If so he would be allowed to leave school and take a job. This he did and straight away applied for a post at Pitshill House as a donkey boy and was successful. In his one and only decent suit he set forth. The donkey work went off quite well all the morning. In the afternoon the nannie asked him to deliver a parcel at a nearby hamlet, River. As it was near Christmas the days were very short, so complete with donkey, cart and candle in a galley pot, he set forth.

One must remember that in those days none of the roads were done up making the grass verges very soft and boggy. The outward journey went off to schedule, then catastrophe hit the little outfit. It

came on to pour with rain, the candle spluttered out and total darkness descended on them, Dad relating it thus, "The donkey started playing up, the cart stuck in a bog, I hollered and the donkey hee-hawed as loud as it could. Fortunately a lady came along with her cob and storm lantern and offered to help me. She got the donkey out of the shafts and tried to harness her cob to the little cart. In doing so she poked the shaft into her cob's bottom, the cob kicked the donkey, the donkey kicked me and I landed in the mud ruining my precious suit."

Eventually this sad little group arrived at Pitshill, my father's story, "I was given the sack because I couldn't manage the donkey, mum gave me a hiding because I'd ruined my one and only suit, but at least the nannie gave me 3d. my first pay day, which I gave to mum."

K.A. Vigar.

PETWORTH BETWEEN THE WARS

I was born in Station Road, Petworth, in 1922. My father was a local bus driver for the Southdown Bus Company. The garage was then situated in Angel Street opposite to the Angel Hotel and adjacent to the Angel Shades. It is worth recalling at this point the sense of pride which men had in their jobs in those times. My father like his many colleagues was immaculate in the full uniform, white shirt, collar and tie and cap always worn, and white covers to the caps worn during the summer months. The wearing of full uniform whilst on duty was rigidly enforced. They like their counterparts on the railways had pride in their jobs, the like of which we may never see again.

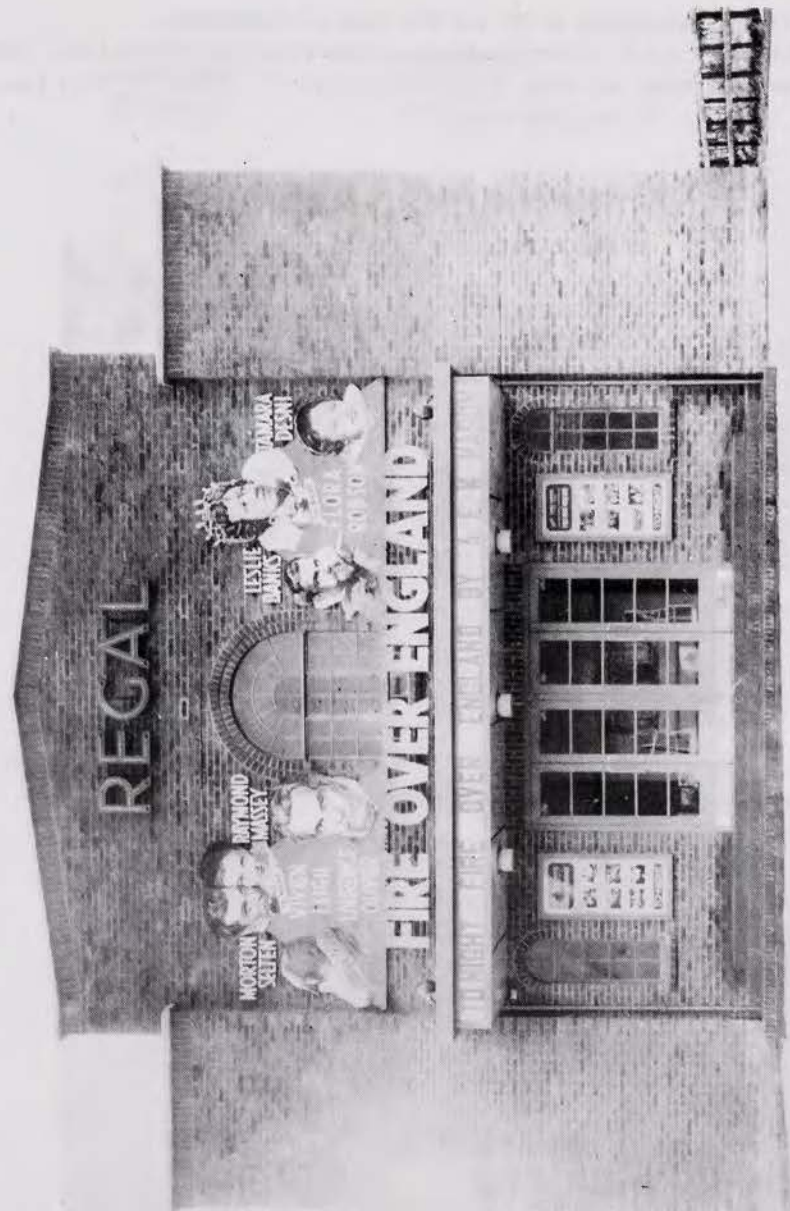
Just prior to leaving school (which was then situated in North Street) I had obtained a part time job some evenings and every Saturday morning at the house of Miss Mary Eager. The house was situated in the Market Square adjoining the premises of Eager Bros. the drapers. Miss Mary Eager of course ran the day to day organising of the house of the Eager family. To those of us serving in her house, Mary Eager appeared to be a very awesome figure, which I am sure she was not. On reflection I think that was merely a sign of the times in which we lived and I think most of us at that time held our employers in awe and respect, outwardly if not inwardly.

My menial tasks were the household duties of bringing in the coal, cleaning drains, cutlery cleaning, sweeping, etc., hardly it would appear the work for a boy, but then the money was good - four shillings a week. One of my many duties was knife cleaning. For those who may not recall, there was a machine for this purpose which was considered at the time to be a very modern gadget. The machine was cylindrical in shape. At the top of the drum were slots in which individual knives were inserted. In each slot was a pair of brushes which then enclosed the knives. Inserted in the middle of the drum was a handle which when turned would activate the brushes thus cleaning the knives.

It seemed to be my delight to turn the handle at a furious speed and in consequence this twisted the knives in the sockets to such a degree that they could not be removed. Try as I may, I could not get them out. The dreaded moment had to come to report this misdemeanour to Miss Eager. Fears of her wrath ran riot in my imagination - the stigma of instant dismissal? Between the two of us, we managed to remove the knives, but memory recalls she "was not amused". In spite of this, I did retain the job.

The day of every boy's ambition came of leaving school, at the age of 14. I was given a job at B.S. Austens in the Market Square, to serve what was then an apprenticeship as an ironmonger's assistant, a job which I retained up to the beginning of the War. The first two years were spent as a delivery boy, taking monthly orders by bicycle to local customers. Amongst other deliveries was that of paraffin, the least favourite of jobs.

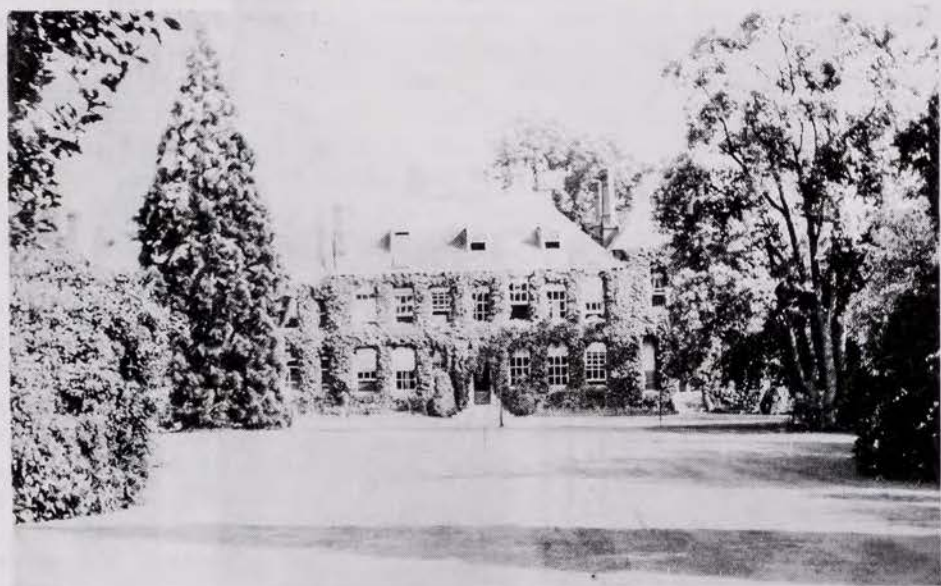
One particular incident will remain in my memory. The lorry driver who was normally employed had fallen sick. A driver from the local garage was therefore engaged to drive the vehicle, and I was told to accompany him to carry the goods to the houses. The driver refused to help or handle any of the goods, saying he was employed as a driver only. Amongst the deliveries were many 5-gallon drums of paraffin which had to be decanted into customers' containers. These drums were so heavy when full that they could not be carried, but had to be dragged. On this particular occasion the delivery was in the wilds of Bedham down a very long extremely muddy lane, in the very depths of winter, which eventually led to a small house in the woods. This lane was too muddy and narrow for access for lorry, so this delivery had to be "boy-handled" down the lane.



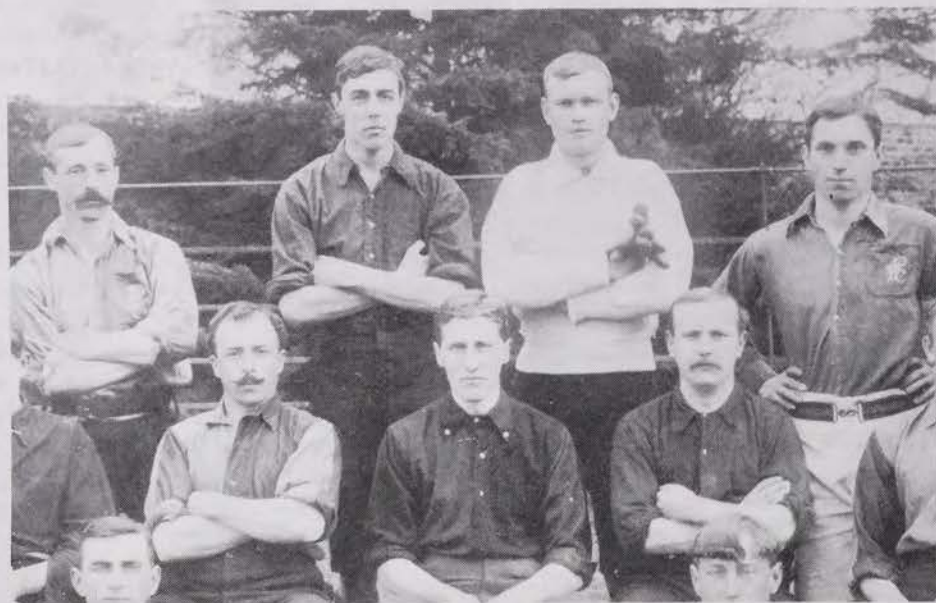
The Regal Petworth in November 1937.
Photograph by G.G. Garland.

Three postcards belonging to Mr and Mrs Knox of Hangleton:

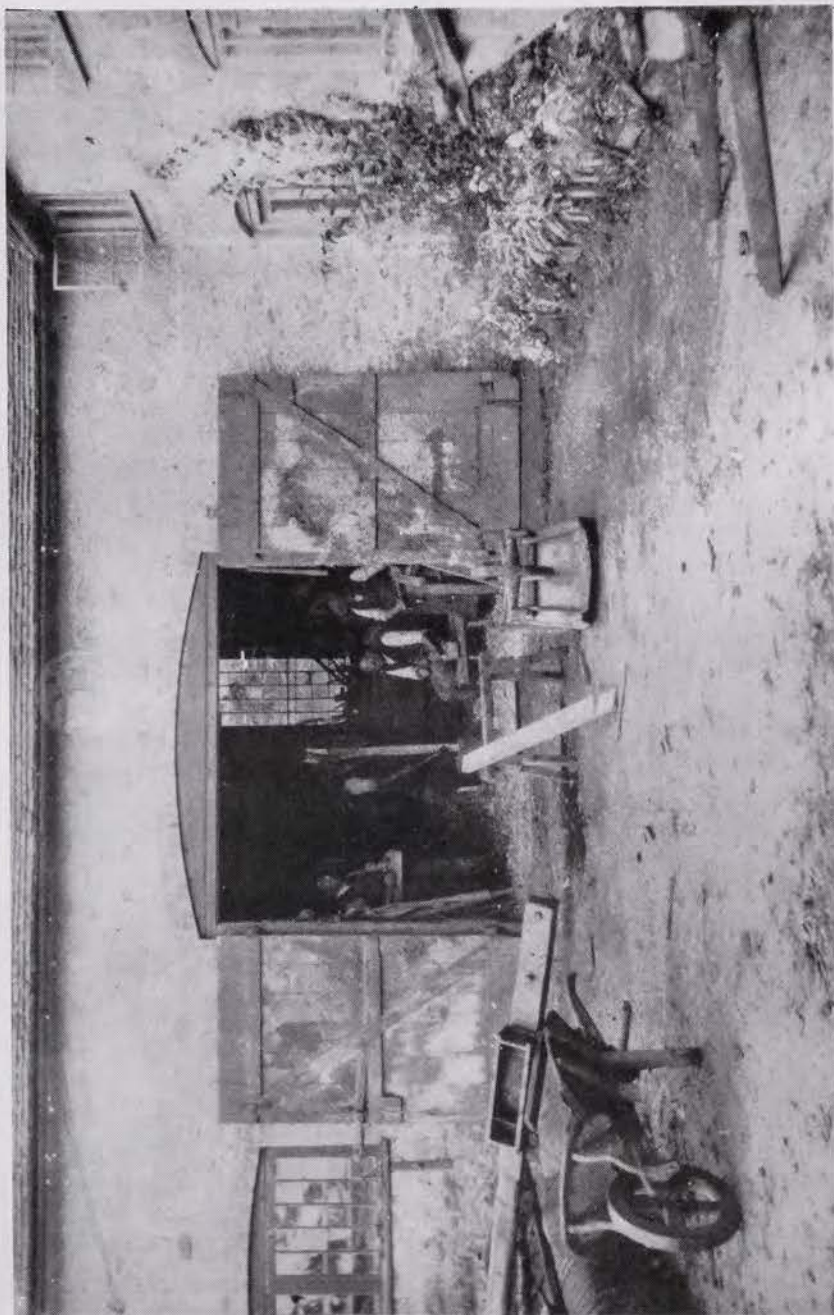
(1) Can anyone identify this card? It is postmarked from Petworth 25th October 1905 and has the message "have you room for this in your collection?" R. de F. Back Lawn. R. de Fonblanque (?)



2) Can anyone identify these Petworth footballers? One or two are known but not all. The date is about 1905. The postcard by Walter Kevis.



3) Mr and Mrs Taylor the publicans outside the Old George and Dragon pub at Halfway Bridge. This postcard was posted in September 1907. Does anyone remember the Taylors or the pub as it was?



The wheelwright's at Fittleworth c1925.
L-R Ralph Ambler, George Goodyer, Harry Goodyer, Frank Dalton.
From a postcard loaned by Gordon Goodyer. See article in Magazine 58.

I remember slipping and falling into the mud, and no doubt sitting with tears of frustration, and eventually after a long time arriving at the cottage door covered in mud, to be greeted by the words "You're late today, boy". By that time I was too weak to decant the paraffin, but at least they did that for me. Then I had to go back along the lane with the empty drum, which in themselves were no mere weight for a boy of that age, for they were made of extremely thick metal, only to be told by the lorry driver who had been sitting waiting that I'd been a long time, and had I been having cups of tea? This must have been my first realisation that the adult world I had now entered could be cruel and unjust. There were many other paraffin drums to be delivered during those few days but fortunately not in quite such difficult conditions. I was not unhappy when the regular driver returned, and I was no longer required to assist.

It is interesting to recall the working hours of that period before the war:

Monday	8 to 6.30 p.m.
Tuesday	8 to 6.30 p.m.
Wednesday	8 to 1.00 p.m.
Thursday	8 to 6.30 p.m.
Friday	8 to 7.30 p.m.
Saturday	8 to 10.00 p.m.

During the first two years I was given 2 hours for lunch to comply with the juvenile laws of employment. A half hour's tea break was also given in the afternoon, which just gave me time to get home, as no tea of course was supplied at work. For the above week's work I was rewarded with the princely sum of five shillings (In today's terms not quite enough to buy a Mars Bar!)

After two years I was promoted to the enviable position of sales assistant. No more paraffin deliveries, and my wages then increased to ten shillings (50p) - riches indeed!

Of personalities at B.S. Austen there were many. Mr. Morgan (Proprietor) was always immaculately dressed and most gentlemanly of behaviour. Bill Tait, the Manager, had been a Sergeant in the Army and he too was always smartly dressed, with brilliantly shining shoes and he walked around with a very straight back in the Army fashion. I remember being enthralled with his stories of his exploits in the 1914-18 war.

Ivy Franklin worked in the office, and Miss Cooper had her own office - she was a very kind lady who always rewarded me generously for running little errands for her, a sixpence here and there and occasionally a shilling.

In those days Austens had a large workshop with its own forge and actually manufactured its products to customers' requirements. Quite a lot of work was done for Petworth House and I remember they made large size saucepans and other vessels to the requirement of Petworth House, and other work was done for the various needs of the Estate. The workshop was managed by Bill Hunt who I recall lived in Byworth, the neighbouring village.

In those days Austens was a very flourishing business. During my period as errand boy I had to make many deliveries to Petworth House, always entering at the Church Lodge, then going on into the labyrinth of corridors which ran under the entire length of the house to the various departments. It appeared such a maze of corridors that I can't recall a time that I did not get lost, or so it seems!

Mr. Morgan's daughter Gwen Morgan had at that time what I considered a very fierce dog (later confirmed). On one occasion I had to deliver something to the back of the house. Upon my knocking, the door was opened and there on a table in the kitchen was this Airedale being brushed and combed by Gwen Morgan, and needless to say barking fiercely. I was assured by Gwen that he was perfectly harmless, but on leaving the house and halfway down the drive, there was a sharp pain in my leg - the dog had got me. Amidst much fuss I was taken back to the house. Mr. Morgan was hurriedly called from the shop, and took me in his car to the surgery to have the wound attended to. I do recall basking in the fuss and attention given to me, and like to think I had the last laugh on the dog!

Mr. Morgan was a favourite of mine, particularly on the day the November fair came to town, when he would give me two shillings to spend at the fair, which I would change into pennies (24) and then proceed to lose the lot on the penny roller stall. First taste of gambling and lesson learned!

The height of entertainment in those days was of course the local cinema then situated in Pound Street (which I now believe is Pound Garage). It had a corrugated iron roof, so that when there was a

heavy rainstorm one can imagine the noise and the difficulty of hearing. A building of unusual design to say the least, its only entrance was from the front, which meant walking through the cheap seats at the front to the posher seats right at the back. There was the inevitable half-time interval when we would dash out to the kiosk for what we called a Penny Diamond which was a diamond-shaped chocolate bar with coconut filling, a favourite of that time. One family of no mean size were regular visitors to the cinema, and during the interval would invariably produce large mounds of sandwiches which they would sit and eat with great relish! A new cinema was eventually built, to the joy of us all. If sandwiches were banned, I do not recall!

There were of course the usual characters in Station Road. The Carvers who ran the gas works - Dickie Carver the gas lamp lighter with his long pole for lighting the gas lamps of the streets. The esteemed George Garland the photographer whose works have left such invaluable records of our past and whose studio was in Station Road. One character who highly amused us kids with his anecdotes was Harry Knight, a tall and very amusing man. Two of his sayings I remember particularly - he would see a large number of cyclists going down the road and would say "There go hikers on bikes, going to Littlehampton or the seaside!" And when he saw an aeroplane going over he would say "That's up a hell of a depth!"

Mr. Newman the local postman was always immaculate in his uniform and always wearing that strange peaked pillbox cap of the period complete of course with collar and tie. He amused us kids with his stories, and he was looked upon as a reliable weather forecaster. He rarely seemed wrong and when we asked him how he did it so accurately he said he always kept a piece of seaweed under his bed. If it was dry, it would be fine, but if it was wet it would rain. We were very impressed and naturally believed him!

The event of the year, at least for Station Road, was the week of the Goodwood Races, when we would await the return of traffic from the races, standing by the side of the road and shouting "Throw out your rusty coppers". Why "rusty" coppers I've no idea. They were a generous lot, these race-goers, and by the end of the week we'd done very nicely. The traffic would be very intense, always nose-to-tail, and sometimes at a standstill, but nevertheless a few death-defying leaps were needed between cars and coaches to collect the money.

Collections were also made on behalf of the Cottage Hospital at the wide sweep of road that exists in Park Road at the lodge gates of Petworth House. As we were the first to greet the returning race-goers, we were taking some of the money that otherwise might have gone in the Hospital collection boxes. The authorities decided that what we were doing was far too hazardous and therefore banned us from collecting money, no doubt to the advantage of the Hospital collectors who were allowed to continue. Their cause, in hindsight, was better than ours, although it did not appear to us at the time! We thought it unfair!

I remember during the slow pace of the race traffic being up close to the Royal car bearing the late King George V and Queen Mary, and in astonishment not knowing whether to curtsy, bow, touch the forelock, or beat a hasty retreat - I imagine I did the latter. They might well have been displeased with one of their apparently disloyal subjects.

One occasion vivid in my memory is the camp in the Park of the Royal Horse Artillery, who were there for summer manoeuvres. The seemingly endless procession of gleaming gun carriages each drawn by six horses with the appropriate riders seemed to go on for hours, on their way down Station Road towards Duncton to take part in manoeuvres. It was a wonderful sight, mixed with the sound of the hoofs of hundreds of horses and the rattle of the gun carriages. They also took part in night manoeuvres, an even more spectacular sight as they poured down the road in the darkness with the gun carriages lit by lanterns. The darkness and the sounds and all the lights of the lanterns seemed to give a very special effect.

The later teenage pre-war years seem rather uneventful - we seemed to spend every Sunday standing on street corners dressed in our one and only suit, perhaps occasionally going for long walks. Other lads from outlying villages would come in to swell the numbers and we would walk around the town and round The Hills in single file. No doubt we were considered loutish by our elders, but we were never offensive, and our conduct was good and harmless.

There was living at that time in Grove Street a Mrs. Ford who thought it might be a good idea to promote dancing classes. Some of us decided to take part, but initially only two of us turned up for the first lesson. We were each given a wooden chair to hold in

lieu of a real life partner. The lessons were held in what was then known as the Club Room situated at the top of High Street, which I think is now the premises of a sign making company. We must have done a good propaganda job on the rest of our friends, for the attendance rose from thereon. The boys were eventually asked to bring their sisters along, and after that life took on a new meaning - real live girls instead of wooden chairs! Mrs. Ford thought we might now be proficient and therefore attend dances on our own. We then began to cycle out to village halls at Duncton, Graffham or Northchapel to land our heavy feet on the tender dainty feet of the unsuspecting local maidens. We must have left an impact, particularly on their feet, for we never seemed to be popular on our second visits.

These are but some of my memories of Petworth. The war came, and one had to go away and fight for King and Petworth! I did return, but not to live in Petworth, but moved away to seek fortunes in other fields.

RON COLLINS

JUST OFF THE A29!

Waltham Farm lies at the very heart of old Coldwaltham; once part of the Stopham Estate, it has a seventeenth century farmhouse with Georgian additions. The old Post Office and shop lay just up the road toward Pulborough and the old Dame School just to the south. Waltham Farm was never Leconfield land I think, although Lord Leconfield was for so long Lord of the Manor, hence Waltham Farm was not included in the great sale of 1957. In the nineteenth century the farm had been in the Neale family but I was told that the last Neale at Waltham had left for Canada in 1911. Father bought the farm just before the Great War but it had a very small acreage then, some twenty acres in all, just the farmhouse and the immediate environs. It would be very considerably extended by the acquisition of more fields in the 1940s. Mrs. Roberts' Post Office and shop I well remember over fifty years ago now, with the Post Office counter on one side and the shop itself on the other. There was no shop window of course; the shop was just a room in the house. Mrs. Roberts kept a couple of cows on a strip of land at the back and rented a field or two as well. I was in there often enough for sweets. After Mrs. Roberts went the shop was empty for a while, then in the late 1930s it became the Piper's Fancy Tea

House, shortlived because the war came not long after the business had started. For a time there was a little shop in a shed at the rear of the Labouring Man; that was before Besants had a shop at the top of the hill. Jack Streeter came out on fine Sundays to cut hair outdoors at the Labouring Man, there was a kind of bench to sit on. What happened when it rained? I don't know: I suppose he used the tap room. I can't remember, nor can I remember whether I actually had my hair cut at the Labouring Man. Jack used the old type hand-clippers; no one bothered too much then about what we would call "styling". Things were much more stable then: people simply didn't move about. I used to know everyone from here to Bury Gate and the only people who did move about - and they did so frequently - were farm-labourers, from one tied-cottage to another. Now even the Sussex accent has virtually gone; I always think that began to decline when the evacuees came to the local school. The old London Road ran right past Waltham Farm at this time but was straightened out in the late 1930s. We now stand back a little from the A29. Just as well I often think!

Many of the farm-buildings are built with Sussex ironstone, a heavy and durable local stone with a characteristic ruddy look. It's the iron it contains that makes it so heavy. Over the years the great difference in the farmyard has been the filling in of the pond in 1942. It took ton after ton of chalk to fill it in for it was a deep pond; you can tell that even now from the depth of the drains. All farms had ponds at one time, after all when there was no mains water a pond was a necessity. In later days cattle were believed to pick up a wasting disease from drinking pond water but the older farmers had no such inhibitions. Oh yes, it did get green and slimy but then all farm ponds did. A subsidiary use was to throw cart-wheels into the water in summer so that the drying wood could swell back tightly onto the metal rims and thus save a trip to the wheelwright. There were also two wells at the farm for drinking water and washing.

My uncle ran the farm in the early years, my father being in business in London. When uncle gave up in the early 1930s to deal in fish at Billingsgate in London, the farm was still just the twenty acres and almost exclusively dairy. He'd take the milk up to bottle it in an outhouse next door to the Post Office and he made ice cream up there too. He delivered with a pony and float and kept a small dairy shop by the Swan in Pulborough. In the early days he would have ladled the milk out of the open churn but

that was before my time. Pigs and poultry we never farmed commercially. "The three P's go together," a local farmer always said, "Pigs, poultry and poverty" and we tended to go along with the saying. Another adage was "Copper or gold", used of pigs it meant that they were a risky commodity, either worth their weight in gold or worth nothing at all.

I was always fascinated by farm life and left school as soon as I was fourteen to work with my father. Even when I was seven I can remember walking behind Prince and Darkie the two cart-horses. We used horses in the 1930s but also had one of the old Fordson tractors you'd start with petrol and then switch over to TVO - tractor vapourising oil - very much like paraffin. I went to school in Petworth for a time: there was a small private school to the left of the Leads in East Street opposite the Post Office, we then moved down to North House in North Street. A final move was further down North Street to the old workhouse premises. Miss Murison had the school then and five or six of us came over from Pulborough in Mr. Moody's taxi.

The farm had an economy of its own, putting back into the ground what had been taken out. There was a right way of doing things too: like clearing the dung out of the calf pen when it had reached a certain height and was well trodden down. You didn't just plunge the fork vertically into it, if you tried to lift a weight like that you'd probably snap the tines; you'd need to take the dung off in layers. Hedges were carefully kept up; they were good wind-breaks, stopped the snow from drifting and combated soil erosion. I very much regret they are so little regarded nowadays.

Dung was carefully returned to the ground, first falling into a special channel in the byre, then piled up in the yard, then moved at our convenience to a much larger pile. The heat the pile engendered would kill off the weed seeds - or most of them! Spreading was very much a job of frosty winter days, loading a dung-cart, taking it to the field, then pulling the dung off with a drag-hook; eight steps of the horse, "Whoa!", pull off the dung again, then eight steps more, "Whoa!", tipping the cart a little higher each time. You'd reckon six stops to a load. The little piles would be left to weather, then spread by hand. As were so many of the old farming jobs it was a heavy and labour-intensive one. Sometimes we'd put a trace-horse on the front to draw the dung cart. I soon learned how to harness a horse to a dung-cart single-handed - not an easy thing to do.

In the autumn the cows might be fed for a time on kale or swede but not for too long because both crops tainted the milk eventually. Turnips were even worse for that and we didn't use them often. Kale was cut and laid stalk to stalk so that you could come along with a pony and dung-cart and fork the kale tidily up on to the cart, the stalks set in such a way that the green leaves came out over the side. The cows weren't brought in until the end of October but it would soon be time to put them on mangolds. Cows liked mangolds for the sugar they contained. The cows would be kept inside at night during the winter, sometimes all day if the weather were particularly bad. Mangolds were the staple winter diet, the big roots being thrown in heaps in the field and the leaves cut almost in one simultaneous movement. When you'd made a pile of roots in the field you'd cover it with the cut leaves to protect the roots from the early season frosts. After a while all the roots would be collected together in a "pie". This could be the width of two or three dung-carts and protected with shavings from the threshing machine. You'd open the "pie" in January or February and gradually cart the mangolds back into the yard. You never see them now: when sugar-beet came in and the pulp was returned to the farmers for feed there was no need for mangolds. They were a labour-intensive crop and if you were growing them you might as well grow sugar-beet; it was no more trouble and a cash crop in its own right. Often enough I've taken a horse-hoe down the mangold rows; you could do the job on your own but you needed a very good horse indeed. Almost invariably you'd need a man on to lead the horse. I could never get on with the multiple row hoes. Certainly they were supposed to save time by doing several rows at once but if you weren't careful they would cut the young plants to pieces.

In later years we expanded the farm to some 120 acres but the economy I have spoken of remained much the same. We employed a man and a boy and sometimes students in later years, land girls in the early years of the war. Milk went to the Express Dairy at Billingshurst. At the end of the war we had German and Italian P.O.W.'s working on the farm; they lived in the old fire station now demolished, largely looking after themselves. We paid them a small wage and paid the War Agricultural Committee something too. The P.O.W.'s had been vetted by the Committee. Some people had trouble with P.O.W.'s but we never did. The language difficulty was always there but the Germans in particular were good workers. We even had one who'd been a farm-worker before. They stayed on for some time after the war. If you showed them what wanted doing they'd soon pick it up.

Roy Cooper was talking to Audrey Grimwood and the Editor.

A MILLER'S DAUGHTER

Chapter 4

A great friend of my father was Mr. Walter Dawtrey who kept a Livery stables in Petworth. With the War over many people began to think about hunting again. Lord Leconfield had been the M.F.H. for many years and the kennels were in Petworth Park, and still are today. The Opening Meet in November was always held at Petworth House, and His Lordship gave a big house party each year. Meanwhile Mr. Dawtrey knew that our old pony was semi-retired, and told father that if I liked to get to his stables at Petworth between 6.30 and 7 a.m. I could go out exercising with his grooms on non-hunting days. This was late August and the horses had all been brought in from grass to get fit for the season. I was still on holiday from school so there were many mornings when I cycled the three miles in to Petworth, had a ride and would be home for breakfast.

Mr. Morrissey, the head groom, taught me a great deal; sometimes we circled round and round the huge Fairfield meadow, which is now the site of Petworth Medical Centre. On other mornings we went to various fields where the harvest was finished. I learnt a lot, was run away with, and was riding proper horses, not an old pony. When Cubbing started I went out several times before returning to school. Those early mornings were glorious, riding to the Meet through the mist and watching the sun rise while the young hounds were put into the first copse to learn how to 'Draw'.

At that time the Price family were living up at Bury Gate, a large house then called 'The Ridge'. All the children rode very well and Kitty Price, the eldest girl became well known for her Show Jumping successes. She too was very kind to me and sometimes offered me a ride when she was passing Fittleworth Mill with two horses. Betting folk may remember Ryan Price who had a training stables at Findon after the second war. When at school he always said he wanted to be a jockey, but grew too large. I discovered quite recently that he went into Normandy on D Day with the first lot of Commandos, and in his pocket had his hunting horn which he blew to give his men 'heart' when they went in to attack.

In April 1923 just before Easter, Coultershaw Mill caught fire and was completely destroyed. It happened on a Saturday night when the

mill had been shut down for Sunday. Nothing was noticed until flames were seen coming from an upper window. The fire was believed to have been caused by a piece of grit getting into the rollers and giving off heat just before shutting down. It was a disaster for father, so much of the mill had been wooden and very old and dry.

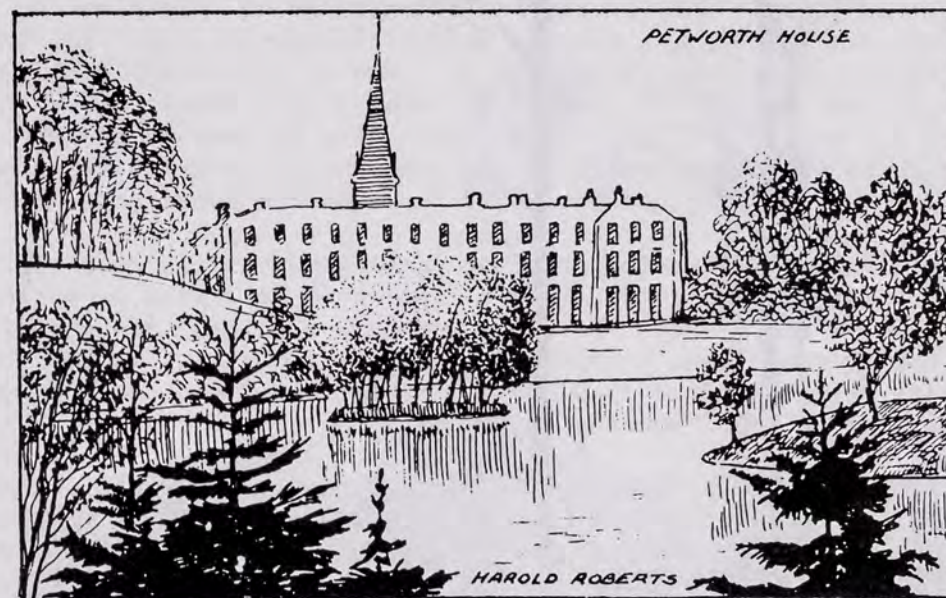
I returned from school a few days later and was taken over to see the smouldering heap. I thought my mother was afraid of father losing his mind with the worry. For a long time all the flour making would have to be carried out at North Mill, and flour 'bought' in too, to keep the customers. Fittleworth Mill took over the packing of bags of flour to help.

Meanwhile Lord Leconfield, the owner of Coultershaw Mill, agreed to help with the cost of re-building, with father helping to design it and choosing all the latest machinery. The following year (1924) he sold Fittleworth Mill, the house and two cottages. This of course helped with the rebuilding of Coultershaw. I was very sad to leave Fittleworth. The Mill was never worked again which too was sad.

That year I left school, and shortly before we moved from Fittleworth my brother took me out on my 17th birthday to learn to drive the Model T Ford which he used for travelling, for the business. It had three pedals, no wind-screen wiper and a starting handle to swing in front. The following day he sent me out on my own saying that I knew how to start and stop, so 'Go and practise'. Roads were very clear in those days and I soon grew confident.

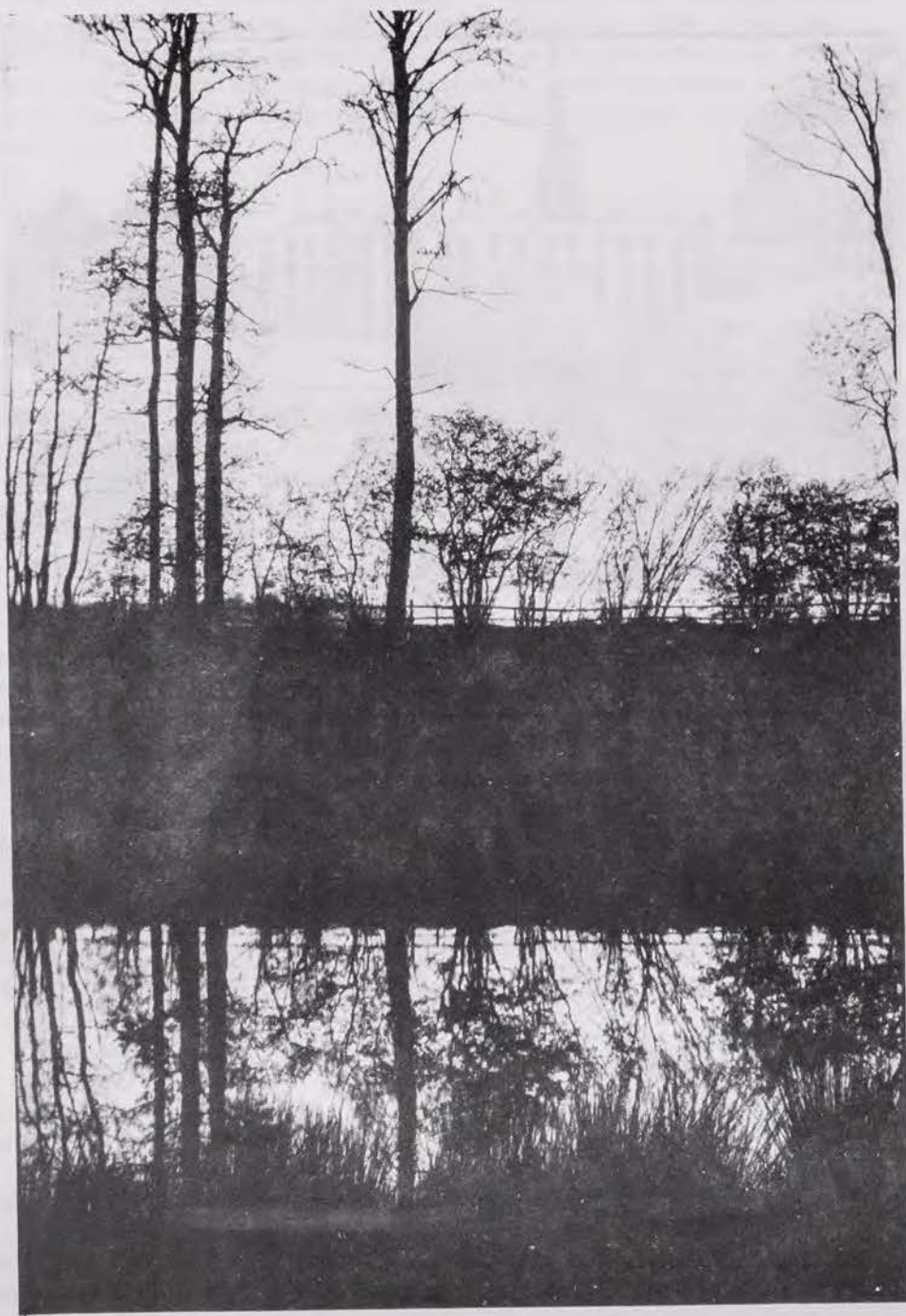
Father had rented a small house in Cross Lanes, where the road goes down from Byworth to Shopham. The house was then called Edgehill and was on the small hill at the cross roads. There was a little paddock for the pony and a few chickens. Since then a house has been built in the paddock. There was a large Chicken Farm behind our cottage, between us and Frog Farm. The birds were in the field all day, but shut in at nights. We had our cat but no dog, mains water but no electricity. I used to walk down to Harry Skinner's farm for milk twice a day.

I have never forgotten the day our old cat brought in a very large rat, not surprising with all those chickens next door. Unfortunately he could not kill it! I managed to shut it into father's little office and fetched a stick, hoping to kill the



Two pen and ink drawings by Harold Roberts - courtesy of Mr D. Foyle, Waterloo vill





Reflections in Stag Park.

horrible thing. He reminded me very much of Samuel Whiskers with his yellow teeth, in Beatrix Potter's book. The cat had wisely departed. Shutting myself in with rat and stick I got him into a corner and struck out at him. He ran up the stick and bit the back of my hand. After that I left him alone. Mother was very liberal with iodene because of his yellow teeth! But I was none the worse. Some hours later my father came home. There was plenty of noise and crashing about but he soon dispatched the poor thing.

We were much nearer Coultershaw now which pleased father as he was spending so much time down there supervising the re-building of the mill. He was driving a Studebaker car now which I was allowed to use if mother wanted to go out. Otherwise I used the old Ford. In very cold weather I had to jack up the back of the car and swing the handle in front to start it up, as she was in an open barn.

When autumn came I joined Petworth Ladies Hockey Club; we played in Petworth Park, Peggy Streeter was our Captain, we had matches at home and away. Blanche Moase played 'back', Peggy in goal. They put me at Wing because I had just left school. Because there was not much room at Edgehill I used to take a basket of washing down to Byworth each week in the Ford to Mrs. Baigent who lived in a cottage almost opposite the bakers. She used to have it all done in a couple of days. Most of the cottages there have since been bought and "improved" by people with money. The old Sussex dialect is gradually vanishing.

Our time at Edgehill was not to last long however. The owner lived at Gore Hill and when he sold up, Edgehill went with it. Then father heard of a larger house to be let from the Estate. This was called Beechfield and was just north over the top of Fox Hill on the main road to Horsham. It had been built some 25 years previously. When I first saw the place I was overwhelmed! There was a large garden, paddock and stables, saddle room and coachhouse. Mains water but no electricity. Over the saddle-room were living quarters for a groom or gardener. We had neither! But once having moved in father arranged for a single man who worked at Coultershaw mill to move into these living quarters and look after the garden when necessary. In the big paddock (now a Nursery Garden) we put the old pony and she had a shed for shelter. In the corner of the front garden there was a little summer house which could be pushed round on a pivot to receive the rays of the sun when it shone. The bus to Horsham passed the house about four

times a day, and they would always stop for us if we waved. Opposite the house there was a gate into a small wood. I could go through here to reach the dusty little road to Kirdford. Father sold flour to Irelands of Kirdford, so liked me to ride over and give them a grocery order now and then, which they delivered by van. Hazlemans from Petworth also delivered bread and groceries twice a week.

P.C.

(To be continued)

PETWORTH 1914 - 1916

My brother Don and his wife Win made a 1992 calendar for me of old Petworth pictures and these set me thinking of my childhood days spent in Petworth. I can not recall the length of time that we lived there, and it would be conjecture to try and put dates to it. However brother Reginald was born there, and sadly my youngest sister Florence who was afflicted with meningitis died there. She was buried under a yew tree in the cemetery situate on the Petworth to Horsham Road, and opposite the row of "Alms" houses. Also it was quite close to the "Senior School" which was destroyed by enemy bombs during the 1939/45 war killing many pupils, and their teachers. My sister Edie, and I attended the "Day Infant School" she was a year senior to me. Access to the school was by the lane which ran alongside grandmother Dummer's house in the High Street, and its playground backed onto her garden wall. This was very convenient for Edie and I, as when the school bell rang for assembly the aunties took us up the garden, hoisted us up onto the garden wall, and then lowered us into the playground. This school is now the "Public Library". The school had two classrooms, one for the very young, and another for the children who were being prepared to join the senior school. Our education commenced with teacher issuing each child with a metal tray containing sand, which we had to spread evenly over the surface. This was achieved by tapping the sides of the tray. Having completed this task teacher then drew the letters of the alphabet on to the blackboard. We children had to copy these shapes into the sand with our index finger, one letter at a time. Teacher would then check our efforts, and proceed right through the alphabet, we were also taught numerals using this same method. We were also taught phonetically the letters, and numbers by repeating the voice sound after teacher. Having learnt the alphabet, and being able to count

to one hundred (100) slates and slate sticks were introduced, and we were taught how to write on the slates. We eventually progressed to drawing on paper for the boys, and simple needlework for the girls. (Due to the war school hours were mornings only, as teacher was required at "Senior School" for afternoon lessons). That is as much as I can remember of the education received at "Petworth Infant School".

One Sunday Edie and myself were taken by Auntie Ethel to Petworth church for the morning service. The church in those days had a magnificent tall steeple. In the afternoon we were introduced to Sunday school. This turned out to be a disastrous occasion for me as Sunday school was held in the "Day Senior School" on the Horsham Road, and as Auntie Ethel walked us through, and between the rows of desks, I noticed little pots sitting in the desks, and being very young, inquisitive, and ignorant I put my finger in, and it came out black, so I promptly wiped it on my new suit that I was wearing for the first time. I received a spanking on my arrival home. Fortune was with me as the aunties were able to sponge the ink out.

During these years the Great War was in progress, and I can remember my father visiting us only on one occasion as he was on active service, serving as an able seaman blacksmith's mate in the Royal Navy and always at sea.

Petworth was used as a training, and staging post for the army recruits before being transferred to the battle fields of France. The soldiers were camped in canvas bell tents in the lower fields opposite to Petworth House, and Park. Those soldiers not resident in camp, were billeted in the homes of the local people. Grandmother had about ten soldiers billeted on her, and one of those was Bugler Roberts. They were bedded down in the large bedroom using hay, and straw mattresses to sit, and sleep on. When their training finished for the day they cleaned their equipment, and rifles in that bedroom, then they were free for the rest of the evening; they made their way back to camp only for meals, and then visited the local inns. In the mornings Bugler Roberts marched down the road, halted outside the forge and sounded off the "Reveille", marched through Sadlers Row and repeated this call, while another bugler at the camp would sound off these calls at the lower end of the town. While the soldiers were preparing themselves for the day such as washing and shaving etc, grandmother



Bugler Roberts (extreme left) with other soldiers and members of the Dummer family
High Street, Petworth c1915.

made a cup of tea for them. This was a bonus for the lads as they were victualled at the camp. Again Bugler Roberts would stand outside the forge and sound off the "Assembly". The soldiers formed up outside the forge, and then marched away to training camp. During the evening about nine o'clock, Bugler Roberts, and the camp bugler would march round town, making a bugle call to summon the soldiers back to camp, and their billets, and then sounding the "Last Post" and "Lights Out". The Duty Officer would visit the billets to ascertain that all was well, and the soldiers were bedded down. The civilian population were not subject to any army regulations, and carried on their normal activities. The officers were housed in a wing of Petworth House, and I remember this because the kitchen was in this wing where grandmother, and mother were employed as head cook, and assistant cook respectively. When mother was on day duties, she took Edie, and myself with brother Reginald in the push chair to the kitchen door, and left Reg there so that the maids could keep an eye on him while she worked, and Edie and I went playing in the Park. We did not stray too far because of the fallow deer grazing close by. The officers used the entrance next to the kitchen to gain access and exit to

Petworth House. They were smart in their uniforms and wearing their Sam Browns, and leather leggings which were highly polished. "Sam Browns" so called! were leather waist belts with crossed shoulder straps attached, and housing a revolver holster and sword.

On one occasion Edie and I made a visit to the camp, much to the annoyance of the aunties who had to find us. To reach the camp we had to go up the lane, past the school, and at the top where the police station, its stables, and the "Prison" were situated, we turned right and into a narrow lane with the backs of the High Street houses on one side, and the meadows on the other. At the bottom was the camp. The soldiers fed us with slices of boiled currant pudding, so we didn't feel like eating the meal that had been prepared at home, so more scoldings, and instructions not to visit the camp again. I think the aunties really enjoyed the visit to camp because they came under the attention of the soldiers. The army struck camp one evening and left as quietly as they had arrived, leaving a section to clear up the camp site, and returning it to its original condition. Petworth was once again quiet, and felt empty. No bugle calls or orders being shouted, no rifle fire, or army horse drawn vehicles rattling over the cobbled streets.

Edie and myself resumed our wonderings, on one occasion encountering the "Petworth Pack" of fox hounds being exercised. As I have said we were very small children, and one of the pack jumped onto my back and Edie tried to drive it off by throwing a bunch of daises at it that she had just gathered. I was rescued by the leading dog of the pack who fought it off, just as the "Master of the Hounds" arrived alongside on horse back. He whipped the hound and called the pack to heel, he asked our names, and where we lived, and then scolded us for wondering so far from home, also he would inform grandmother what had happened. He knew grandmother as they were fellow employees of Lord Leconfield the Lord Lieutenant of Sussex and owner of Petworth House. After this episode we were instructed not to visit the aunties as they were busy at work, but to go down town where people knew who we were, and would keep an eye on us; however we still visited the Sheep Downs when we knew mother, and the other members of the Dummer family were working.

Entertainment during these years was practically non existent. Occasionally there would be a "Magic Lantern" Show (slide projector) where the children attended the matinee, and the adults, the evening performance. These arrangements also applied at cinema

shows. A pianist would entertain at the cinema shows playing an upright piano. These shows were held in a corrugated iron shed quite close to the "Town Hall", and bench seats were provided or you took your own chair. Oil lamps were used for illumination although Petworth House provided electricity for the lantern and cine projector. An occasional barn dance was arranged. There was an occasion when the uncles Arthur, Tom, Jo and Uncle Fred (the latter was courting Auntie Edie) were on weekend passes leave from the services. Uncle Tom and Jo were in the Army, Arthur was in the Navy and Fred was serving in the Royal Marines, the Blues! Uncle Fred was a colour sergeant, and they with the aunties were enjoying a drink in the White Hart Inn when grandmother instructed me to go down and inform them all that lunch had been cooked, and ready to be served, so to come on home. In those days the ladies were not allowed to drink in the mens bar unless they were accompanied by male companions, and they stood well away from the bar. Music was supplied by a pianist.

The army having departed, the household at No.273 High Street returned to normal, with the laundering of soiled clothes, once again carried out on a Monday morning. This washing was done in a separate room at the side of the house which was also used as a wash place. The toilet was housed at the top of the garden, cesspit style. Cesspits were emptied during the night by council workers. Grandmother and mother performed the task of washing the clothes. The linen was boiled in a big copper, and fired by faggots of wood which was supplied by the woodman by horse and cart once a week, the faggots being stacked outside the wash place. The laundry also included soiled clothing from Petworth House, such as shirts and aprons used by the staff, this brought in extra money for grandmother. The washed clothes were wrung out by putting it through the big iron framed mangle which stood permanently outside the washroom and was protected from the weather by covering it with a sack. The ironing of the clothes was done by the daughters in the evening except the shirts. This ironing was the speciality of grandmother, who had starched the collars, separately, and these had to be stiff and smooth ironed. The daughters also made butter from the skimmed off cream from the rich milk. This was achieved by putting the cream into a big topped glass jar, and shaking the jar continuously. The cooking was done on a big range and fed by coke. The coke was obtained from the local gas works and if the stock needed replenishing before the next delivery then a member of the family took the pram and sacks to the gas works, had the sacks

filled with coke then placed in the pram and trundled back home. The home was illuminated by gas lamps, and if there was insufficient light for reading purposes then paraffin lamps were lit.

When grandmother did the weekly shopping on a Saturday she didn't have to carry anything home, she handed in a list of requirements to the grocer, greengrocer and butcher, and the goods were delivered by a delivery boy riding a carrier bicycle, and he also collected payment on delivery. No charge was made for this service, but most often he received a tip. There was also a daily delivery service Monday to Saturday, made by the baker using a covered hand cart, and delivering freshly baked bread and cakes, and then the milkman with his milk float, who filled your milk can or cans from the churn of milk, drawn off the cow the previous day; this was very rich milk. He knew how much milk to leave on your doorstep by the number of, one pint and half pint, cans left on the door step. Once a week the fisherman would call.

After moving back to our home at Portsmouth we always returned to Petworth for our summer holidays. The route taken was from "Fratton" Portsmouth Station, and boarding the steam train of the L.B.S.C. Line (London Brighton and South Coast) travelling as far as Chichester where we changed train which took us on to Pulborough; the horse brake would be waiting for us to complete our journey to Petworth. (i.e. the "brake" was the equivalent to the taxi today), and had to be ordered for non-routine trips; this was through the agent, and the newspaper shop owner. Incidentally I cannot remember living anywhere else other than Petworth before returning to Portsmouth, as Edie and I attended Day and Sunday school, and had numerous friends. One of Edie's friends was Dorothy Holden who was the daughter of the landlord managing the White Hart Inn. Her other friends dwelt in Sadlers Row. My own friends were in the High Street and Grove Street.

Richard Foyce

A NAME PLEASE!

Members will recall our extracts from Florence Rapley's diary. During the year 1909-12 Florence was friendly with her mother's sister's daughter "Nell" (born Ellen Chalcraft) from Brinksole. Nell had a young daughter Raldie or Esme (Esmeralda?) but we do not know Ellen's married name. She did not live at Brinksole Farm itself but somewhere nearby. "Raldie" may have been born about 1895. Can anyone help?

Peter.

THE SANCTUS BELL IN ST MARY'S CHURCH

George P. Elphick in his "Sussex Bells and Belfries" (1970) singles out the Sanctus Bell at Petworth as being of all Sussex bells the furthest from its natural home. Its inscription written in Church Slavonic reads "from the factory of T.G. Olovyanishkov in Yaroslavl." Yaroslavl is on the banks of the Volga some 150 miles north-east of Moscow and was the principal centre of bellfounding in Tsarist Russia. Elphick could not be specific about the age of the bell and suggested that it may have come to England as a result of the Crimean War.

In fact three letters written to Lady Leconfield in 1924 show that the bell came over in that year and that the bell was one of a very great number sent into Russia when the Germans invaded Poland during the 1914-1918 war. The Poles hoped thereby to prevent the Germans using the bells for munitions. The Bolsheviks returned them after the war to their own land and they lay unwanted in a Warsaw churchyard largely redundant because so many Russian Orthodox Churches had been pulled down. The letters do not say what gave Lady Leconfield the idea of having a Russian bell, perhaps a chance conversation with Lady Max Muller when she was a house guest at Petworth as she may well have been. The relevant parts of the first letter dated April 6th 1924 read:

BRITISH LEGATION,
WARSAW.

April 6, 1924.

Dear Lady Leconfield,

I have got the bell - a beautiful one at that! It was quite a hunt to get it, and I am sure that if it could tell its own tale it would be even a longer one than mine. One day when passing a church I saw hundreds and hundreds of bells, and, with the help of our clergyman and the Metropolitan, I found out that these were bells which the Russians had sent into Russia during the German invasion so that the Germans should not benefit by the metal, and the Bolsheviks had now returned them to this country. As so many of the Russian churches here have been pulled down, the Metropolitan told our clergyman that he had no objection to you having the bell as we told him for what it is wanted, and with his kind help it was bought. While transporting it from the Metropolitan's house to our clergyman's abode the poor man, a Pole, was arrested by the police for having stolen church property and

was put in prison for three hours until he was bailed out by our clergyman. I do hope you will like it; I think it is very beautiful, though not as old as some of them, but owing to the way they had been sent backwards and forwards so many of them were smashed. I shall as soon as I can have it packed up and addressed to you at Petworth, but it will have to come by boat via Danzig and may therefore take anything from three weeks to three months.
.....

Your sincerely,

Wanda Max Muller

The "Russians" mean apparently adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church domiciled in Poland.

A second letter reads:

BRITISH LEGATION,
WARSAW.

June 3, 1924.

Dear Lady Leconfield,

Just a line to tell you that the bell has left, and I hope that within six weeks or three months you may have it at Petworth! There have been so many formalities as it was called a work of art, which it is forbidden to export; however, thanks to the kindness of a friend at the Foreign Office, we got it through without any difficulties. I enclose some photographs, as it may interest you to see the place where your bell was found.

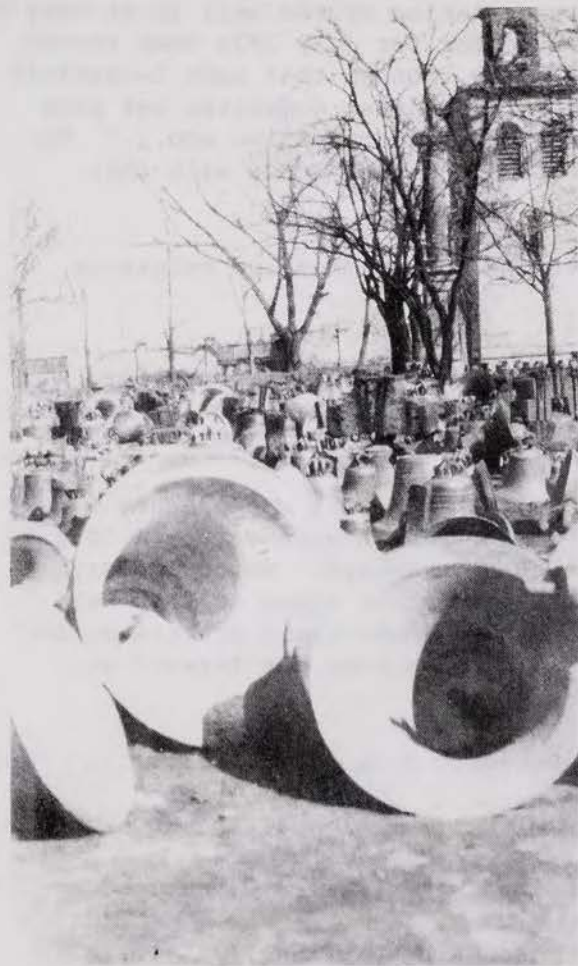
Please excuse a typewritten letter, but I am fearfully busy as I have the King's Birthday party to-day, and I want to get this letter off by the bag.

Yours sincerely,

Wanda Max Muller

There is also extant a letter to Lady Max Muller from the United Baltic Corporation Ltd. confirming delivery and forwarding to Lady Leconfield. The two photographs reproduced in this magazine show the Warsaw Churchyard where the bell was found. One of the photographs has the following written in Lady Leconfield's own hand on the back:

Photo of church bells in Warsaw
 which were sent into Russia during
 the War when the Germans were
 invading Poland. This was on
 their return in 1924. One of these
 I bought through Lady Max Muller
 for 170 millions at 140 millions
 to the Pound.



Church bells in a Warsaw
 Churchyard in 1924 -
 they had been sent into
 Russia during the Great
 War and returned to
 Poland by the Bolsheviks
 after the war.
 Photographs taken by
 Lady Wanda Max Muller.

This photograph of the
 Sanctus Bell was taken
 by G.R. Elphick in
 1962.



There seems no mention of the installation of the bell in St Mary's Parish magazine but the Rector's letter for July 1924 does record "the beautiful new hangings and altar frontal that Lady Leconfield has placed in St Thomas' Chapel. This almost completes her plan for the redecoration of the Chapel begun some months ago..." The installation of the bell would seem to be connected with this redecoration.

I am grateful to Mr G.C. Rix for the Parish Magazine reference.

P.

The Petworth Society Submission to a Conference 'to consider what can be done to tackle the environmental damage being caused by traffic in Petworth' - Goodwood House, June 16th, 1992.

Such a large and representative Society as ours encompasses widely differing views and it will be unfair and unrepresentative to give a single view as representative of all members. We could only, therefore, ballot our members and give their views as they were returned to us. They were asked to indicate their preference for one of the following proposals which have been put forward at various times. The response was:

(a) A surface by-pass through Petworth Park	131
(b) A by-pass through the Park with a tunnel past the House.	181
(c) A by-pass through the Shimmings valley	31
(d) A relief road via Horsham Road, Kingspit Lane, a Byworth link, Haslingbourne and a link west of the Rothermead estate to the Midhurst Road (The 'Speed Route')	304
(e) No action necessary or desirable	18

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Signed: P.A. Jerrome Chairman Keith C. Thompson Vice-Chairman

Date: 11th May, 1992.

List of New Members will appear in next Magazine

