

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
Magazine

Miles Costello
Petworth
Collection

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The wood-engraving on the front cover is by Gwenda Morgan.
That on the back is of Egdean church.

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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE
LECONFIELD HALL!

Constitution and Officers

The Petworth Society was founded in 1974 "to preserve the character and amenities of the town and parish of Petworth including Byworth; to encourage interest in the history of the district and to foster a community spirit". It is non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit making.

Membership is open to anyone, irrespective of place of residence who is interested in furthering the object of the society.

The annual subscription is £6.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £7.50 overseas £8.50. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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Membership enquiries to Mrs Staker please, Magazine circulation enquires to Betty Hodson or Bill (Vincent).

Chairman's Notes

As this Magazine will appear just when the D.Day commemorations are at their height, I include a number of pieces that deal in some way with the years 1939-45. The new cover, again by Gwenda Morgan, replaces the much-admired single issue cover used for Magazine 75. Magazine 75 sold out very early and back numbers will probably be more difficult to obtain than any since Issue 15. Incidentally I do have quite a stock of other back numbers, a little erratic, but available at cost price plus postage, if you get in touch with me..

Leconfield Hall meetings have been very well-attended. We now have posters which we can use to indicate that Hall capacity has been reached and we have come very close to using them this season.

Miles has had a strong response to his dialect questionnaire, more replies than to his previous one already. We would hope to have a breakdown in Issue 77. Please return your form even if you can answer only a few of the questions. Meanwhile Ethel Goatcher's article in this Issue keeps the discussion going.

Regarding the restructuring of local government the Committee felt that the Society could not really make a general recommendation on behalf of members. It was better for individual members to express their views as individuals. The report on possible traffic relief is to hand and needs careful consideration. PERM has always had its difficulties and it may be that the long tunnel avoids the worst excesses of the medium tunnel routes. It's a time to think and think very carefully. It's not a time for dogma or for politics.

By the time you read this work may have commenced on the Leconfield Hall Restoration. The Leconfield Hall Committee has had a good tender and the public response to the appeal has been magnificent. Nearly £27,000 and the money still coming in. The Leconfield Hall A.G.M. is on Wednesday, June 15th and to celebrate we are showing the silent film "Tansy" made in Burpham in 1923 and based on the novel of that name by Ticker Edwardes, rector of Burpham during the years between the wars. We're expecting a full house.

Peter

26th April.

P.S. We have not issued reminders with this Magazine but if your subscription is still unpaid - please spare a thought for the treasurer and save him having to send out a reminder. With such a large Society a minority of late-paying members makes a surprising amount of work.

P.



The Rev. Tickner Edwardes Rector of Burpham with the silent film actress Alma Taylor who took the part of Tansy in the 1923 film which was made from Edwardes' novel of the same name. Shooting was done at Burpham near Arundel and the 74 minute silent film will be shown after the Leconfield Hall Annual General Meeting on June 15th.

Do any of you have great memories of Toronto - 93 - Foolish question!! Or perhaps there may be one of you who missed this event. Fact is I am hoping to join a trip through the Rockies to Vancouver with perhaps a stop-over in Toronto. If anyone is interested I am looking for a travelling companion. All this hopefully taking place in the Autumn. Please ring me on 0903 260078 should you feel like going West.

Charley Edwards

A Query:

George Garland always acknowledged a great debt to the late Dick Blackman of Arundel for giving him the inspiration for this yokel act. Does anyone remember seeing the Blackmans of Arundel perform?

Petworth

A little country town with many fine houses
 A short cobbled street and some nooks and crannies
 A Stately Home with beautiful Park and two lakes
 Is it any wonder "Turner" painted these views for our sakes?
 Four Churches are here within quarter a mile
 C of E, Catholic, United Reform and Baptist as well
 Petworth House is now owned by The National Trust
 A visit to this is surely a must
 The paintings breathtaking and carvings supreme
 Are truly the best that you've ever seen
 There's plenty of shops with gifts to take home
 Plus Jeweller, Post Office, Tea Shops to name but just some
 The Square all so busy with William III looking down
 I really do love this old Country town
 The wall so renowned, the streets Oh so small
 After dark there's a feeling of total re-call
 One can imagine the streets with horses and brass
 Crinoline dresses, gaiters and smocks from the past
 George Garland 'our' photographer was a real treasure
 His photo's so clear of that there's no measure
 He has helped to put our Town in the news
 And the townfolk, farmers and views he pursued
 The County Archives now have his collection
 A remarkable account awaiting selection
 These are often displayed on the Town's notice board
 To remind all the tourists and sometimes our "Lord"
 There's several books about Petworth for people to read
 With often very astute titles indeed!
 The Shimmings Valley so green with fine views over the mounds
 Where many, many peasants used to work on their ground
 The birds sing so sweetly, while the brook flows on by
 Stop - Look - Listen it'll sure make you smile
 Enjoy your visit to Petworth a little Town with big heart
 Its inhabitants are friendly right from the start
 It's not easy to get lost, but if you do stray
 Stop someone and ask them - they'll tell you the way
 Come back again soon for I'm sure you'll agree
 It's a lovely little Town for YOUR FRIENDS to see!

Gloria and John's Walk - Sunday 13th February 1994

Twenty two hardy walkers met in the Petworth Car Park on this cold blustery afternoon and travelled in various cars to the large car park situated at the Whiteways Roundabout. To their surprise this area was very busy with walkers, pedal cyclists, motor cyclists, horse riders all intent on taking their exercise despite the adverse weather conditions. We set off over the main A29 and B2139 roads and entered Arundel Park via the Whiteways entrance, noting that horses, dogs and cyclists were not allowed in the Park itself.

Unfortunately the weather was fairly overcast so that we were unable to take full advantage of the extensive views from this circular walk round the upper half of this extensive park. Whilst passing through a field occupied by numerous sheep the sun did come out for a short period and we were able to enjoy general views of the West Sussex coastline from Selsey to Littlehampton as well as Arundel Castle and Tower.

Once we rounded extensive woodlands we were able to view the Arun Valley in some detail plotting the small settlements of Offham, North and South Stoke, Houghton and Amberley. Further in the distance it was possible to see the larger towns of Pulborough and Storrington. However, due to the adverse weather conditions we were unable to marvel at the gliders which usually fly from Cootham Airfield most weekends to make the most of the air currents over the South Downs in this particular area.

The River Arun seemed to be very high with some flooded fields on either side but apart from an occasional British Rail train there seemed to be very little moving in the valley.

No doubt the majority of the members were pleased to reach the comparative warmth of their transport after their four mile trek but some were heard to remark that they would make a return visit in clearer and warmer weather to fully enjoy the marvellous views and fresh air in this lovely park which is not extensively used by the public, except perhaps for the part adjacent to Swanbourne Lake generally reached from the Arundel direction.

J & G

In the land of the Lent Lily. Peggy's April Walk.

A season of bitter winds day after day. Such a cold April will be just a memory by the time you read this. April more than half-gone and mud in the tracks and the garden soil still cold and sullen. Better to wait for seed-sowing. The wind leaves no place to hide in the car park. Into the cars as if we might drive out of the wind's dominion. Up to the Welldiggers, then left along Kingspit Lane, then left again into the Gog woods. Or what were once the Gog woods. A chance to walk round the moonscape left by the hurricane. A few forlorn disjointed trees but the first

colonisers are at work already, silver birch in pale green leaf, a paradise of brambles. Other trees will come and dispossess the birch but it will be a long process. Round and up past Montpellier then across and into Flexham. Why is it so called? No one knew. Flexham's soil keeps fairly dry but even here there are water-filled ruts. Wood sage is just beginning to shoot by the path and moschatel (town-hall clock) is full out in small clumps by the path. It looks a little like a buttercup without petals. Why town-hall clock? It's because the flowers face outwards on face sides. There are bluebells under the coppice cover. Up to the hair-pin bend at the top of Wakestone Lane we turn off right towards Little Bognor. Some shelter from the wind, the sun glinting off holly leaves; skirting the quarry we come upon the land of the Lent Lily, great clumps of the true wild daffodil of which I had seen so many in Petworth House Pleasure Grounds the week before but now going over. Here at Bedham they grow in profusion as they always have. Back through Flexham by a different route, again quite muddy for April, before long we were back at the cars. Thank you very much Peggy - just the right length for such a cold day.

P.

P.S. A.A. Evans in his *By Weald and Down* (1939) writes (pp 216) of the tuberous moschatel; "It cannot be called common, for it is very partial in its habitat, but when found it is usually present in multitudes. Its flower is a pleasant yellowish green, and the three-lobed leaves of light translucent green. It is altogether a winsome plant. Why called by botanists 'adoxa' without 'glory' I do not know. Professional scientists are not infrequently quite stupid people. Its name moschatel is given because of a pleasant musk scent it breathes out in the evening."

Scuba Diving with Paul Cottrell

"And now for something completely different", we thought. It was, and yet the shots of marine life sat nicely alongside our more usual land-based natural history programmes. Paul is a colleague of Ian at Redland Bricks and so he had an able and fairly willing volunteer to model the wet suit and 80lbs. of ancillary equipment, with David (Wort) on hand to photograph the proceedings.

Generally poor diving conditions around the English coastline necessitate divers training to the highest standards in the world, set by the British Sub-Aqua Club. The aqua-lung, invented by Jacques Cousteau, enables the wearer to breathe from compressed air cylinders at the same pressure as that of the surrounding water, avoiding lung collapse. Paul explained the causes, effects and prevention of decompression sickness (the "Bends") and the way whereby the wet suit insulates the diver with a thin layer of water. With the three instruments essential for safe diving - watch, depth gauge and a meter on the air supply, Ian was fully equipped for the deep!

All were impressed by the colour and clarity of the underwater photography, starting with seals, anemones and wrecks off Oban and the Scillies, the best British diving waters. Then to more exotic locations, the Mediterranean, Kenya, Malaysia and the Red Sea, with brilliant

corals and fish as well as the more menacing rays, Moray eels and sharks.

A donation was made to the housing charity Shelter, which would be matched through sponsorship by Redland Bricks.

KCT.

'You drive, I'll wave' - the Old Silk Route, the road to Beijing

Maurice and Norma Joseph are travel photographers whose work is used to illustrate books and travel brochures. Three years ago they drove a brand new Land Rover along Marco Polo's Old Silk Route to Beijing and then on to Hong Kong. 62 other vehicles, ancient and modern from all over the world, joined in the challenge, including a 1912 Lancia Simplex.

The story of the 11,500 mile journey, illustrated by outstanding colour slides of the diverse scenery and people encountered en route, held the largest-ever audience spellbound at the March meeting.

Sponsored by Land Rover, Harrods, Thorn-EMI and the International Wool Secretariat, the Josephs also raised money for the Save the Children Fund. They set off from Hyde Park, others joined in Paris and all made their own way to Istanbul, then travelled together, looking out all the time for photo-opportunities which would interest their sponsors, such as persuading a Russian soldier to drink tea from a Harrod's mug! We were told of the spontaneous generosity and affection of the Georgians, a statue of Marco Polo in the middle of the desert beyond the Caspian Sea, May Day (now a family occasion and not at all militaristic), Son et Lumiere and the celebration of the anniversary of VE Day in Samarkand, and being brought down to earth by suspicious Chinese officialdom when police escorts were imposed, strict convoy at 25mph and no photography. Refuelling from tankers in the desert was particularly unnerving. When pumps broke down, cans were ferried by cigarette-smoking workers amidst considerable spillage. However, the overpowering friendliness of the ordinary Chinese led to Norma telling Maurice at one point, "You drive, I'll wave". Altogether, the wishes expressed to the visitors at the tomb of Confucius: "May the long threads of your journey wind their way through people's hearts and bring us closer together" seemed to have been well-accomplished.

KCT

Uppark

A special meeting heard Mr. David Sekers, Southern Regional Director of the National Trust give a fascinating account of the effects of the devastating fire at Uppark, the salvage work and subsequent restoration which will lead to the re-opening of the house to the public in June, 1995.

Mr. Sekers expressed his appreciation of the work of the Society and in particular of Peter, our Chairman, in the field of local history and voiced his support for the town's current project to restore the Leconfield Hall.

Uppark was built on the site of an earlier hunting lodge in 1690, when the problem of taking water to it from the valley below had been solved. Twice afterwards, in 1750 and 1812, the interior was remodelled, but it was unusual to have a house and its contents virtually unchanged since the 18th century, when in 1954, the owner, Admiral Meade-Featherstone-Haugh, gave it to the National Trust, while the family retained ownership of the surrounding woods and park. Harting Down itself was later acquired by the Trust. The Admiral's wife, concerned about the deterioration of the original curtains, had developed techniques to conserve fabrics.

Mr. Sekers' slides were in three sections the first showing the house and interior before the fire, and the second, spectacular shots of the fire burning and the depressing aftermath. The resident family and the National Trust Custodian lost all their personal possessions, papers and furniture as their accommodation on the top floor was completely destroyed. Even as the fire raged, firemen were sent in at the risk of their lives to retrieve specific items of priceless value. The following day, the immediate question to be answered was, would the shell and the huge, unsupported chimney stacks stand? 4,000 dustbins were filled with debris to be sieved with the help of English Heritage. Plasterwork, locks, latches, pulleys, wallpaper, glass, broken china all had to be separated. Burnt papers remain in deep freeze pending a decision as to whether anything can be done to restore them. The insurers gave the go-ahead for restoration of the building to proceed if it was thought worthwhile, although several legal cases are still pending. After a great deal of thought and debate, it was decided to accept the challenge, using traditional materials and methods wherever appropriate. It was, however, quite amazing what had survived and how much.

The final group of slides showed the restoration going on and some of the completed work. The task suffered a setback when the storm of January, 1990, destroyed the roof covering, allowing rain to penetrate and cause damage and causing the death of two workmen. By mid-1991 the building was once again wind and weatherproof. Finding craftsmen capable of working by methods long abandoned was always a problem for plasterwork especially, but three firms were eventually considered competent to tender. Ceilings were laid out on the ground in a specially constructed 'hangar' with surviving pieces on a full-scale drawing. Some woodwork was patched, some completely rebuilt. Rewiring was a massive job, involving security and alarm systems, climate and environmental control as well as power and lighting. The original plans for the gardens, possibly by Capability Brown, were destroyed, but these too are to be re-modelled as near to the original as possible. Still to be tackled are the carpets, curtains and paintings. The four-year contract, on target financially and due for completion in a matter of months, is likely to be delayed by only three weeks.

A most explicit account, and yet the audience still had questions. Where did the craftsmen come from? Those that didn't exist had to be trained, many very young. What is happening at Petworth House? The old kitchens are being opened to the public and will eventually be restored, rooms have been repaired and restored and a programme of events in the Park had been

arranged. And the Petworth by-pass report? Only just received and under consideration, but details of the proposal would have to be seen before the National Trust could express a view.

In thanking the speaker for his detailed treatment of a complex subject, Peter was sure that Mr. Sekers had made a further major contribution towards a positive relationship between Trust and Town.

KCT

The Persian Carpet

We could not have had a more qualified substitute for Jonathan Wadsworth, originally booked, than Majid Amini, to give an illustrated lecture on Persian Tribal Rugs. Mr. Amini spent his late teenage years travelling with the nomads, sharing their life and culture, and learning about carpets.

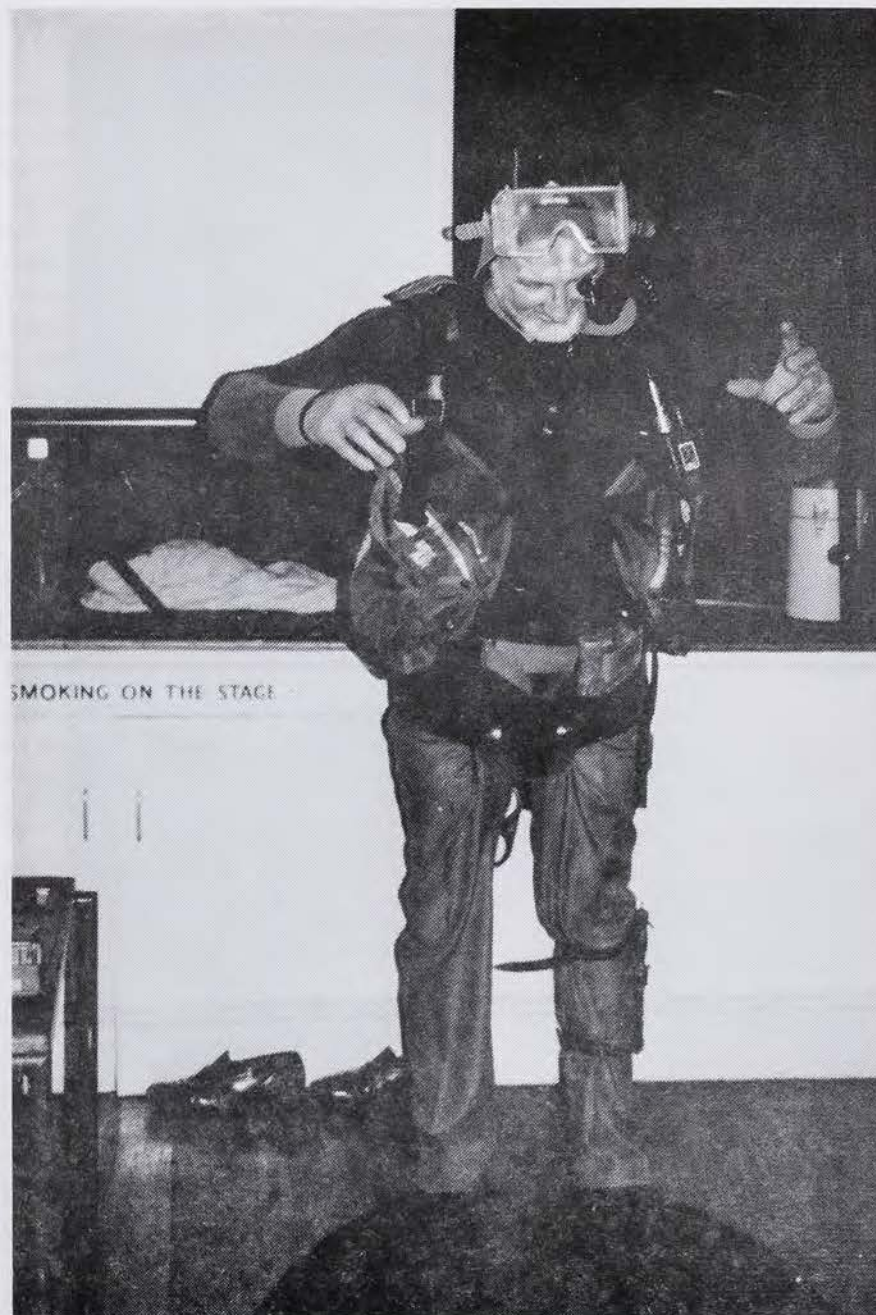
The evening began with a David Attenborough video called *The Tribal Eye - Woven Gardens*, which vividly portrayed the way of life of the colourful people on their seasonal migrations with their flocks and herds; the women in their voluminous petticoats perched on donkeys, ponies and camels according to their wealth and status. As they rode, they spun the woollen thread and when they settled for any length of time, they set up their looms to weave the fabric for rugs to insulate the tent floors, to be used as door screens, to be worn on the camels' flanks and to make bags for their possessions, different looms for the various products. Up to the 1950s, vegetable dyes from plants growing along the migration routes were used, now replaced by modern synthetics.

From the age of ten or younger, the girls learn their craft, using 300 - 400 knots to the square inch, to weave intricate patterns of flowers, birds and geometric designs specific to each tribe and through which their history can be traced.

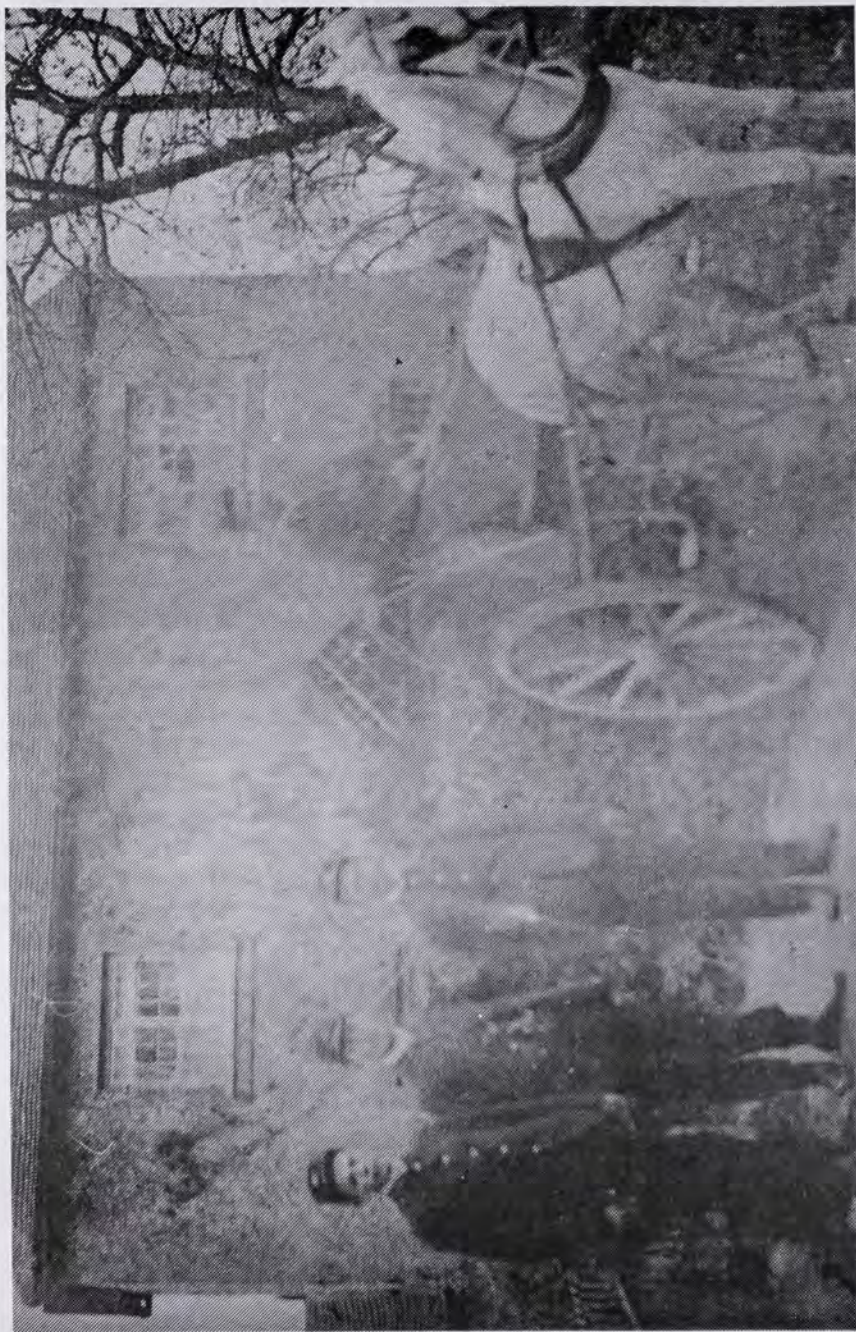
The carpets have been exported westwards to Europe and eastwards to China since the Middle Ages and are depicted in paintings over the years. For ten years following the revolution in Iran, all exports stopped, but they are now being resumed, albeit on a smaller scale than previously. Costs to the British purchaser range from £100 to several thousand for Persian rugs, compared with £30 to several hundred for the less hard-wearing Turkish products. Price depends on how old (value appreciated with age), how good in the quality of fibre and how rare, in design.

Mr. Amini's first-hand knowledge and teasing sense of humour established an easy rapport with the large audience. He declared himself exhausted by the questions which reflected the fascination his presentation had aroused.

KCT



*Ian dressed to go scuba-diving at the Leconfield Hall in February.
Photo by David Wort.*



Postmen and mailcart at Duncton about 1910. The original is badly faded.

Winning the Cup

I left school in 1931 but I well remember the singing competitions the school entered. In fact Petworth Boys won the competition one year. I can remember winning the cup and Mr Stevenson being very pleased but things like how we got there have quite gone. I seem to remember an open-topped Southdown bus picking us up in the Square, it was probably an excursion bus, but whether we went by bus to Bognor or went to Pulborough to pick up the train I've no idea now.

When we arrived at Bognor we went into the Pavilion, now demolished, it was a barn-like building that reminded me of an aircraft hanger. It was very roomy inside with a rounded hut-like roof. The acoustics certainly were good. I don't think we won the first time. We'd only go for one day, the day that our competition was, the class for school choirs. Other days there would have been other competitions. I can't remember what we sang, or whether it was something Mr Stevenson had picked or something that was prescribed for all choirs. The various choirs were each allocated a part of the seating then when it was their turn to perform they'd go on to the stage. The audience were seated all round the stage. We didn't stay there all day, we could walk round Bognor until we were called. The choir included boys from different classes and there'd be a practice in school every week. I seem to remember that when we got to Bognor we reported to the Pavilion and were then told what time we'd be on. We had to come back then. The festival always ended with the choirs singing "Jerusalem".

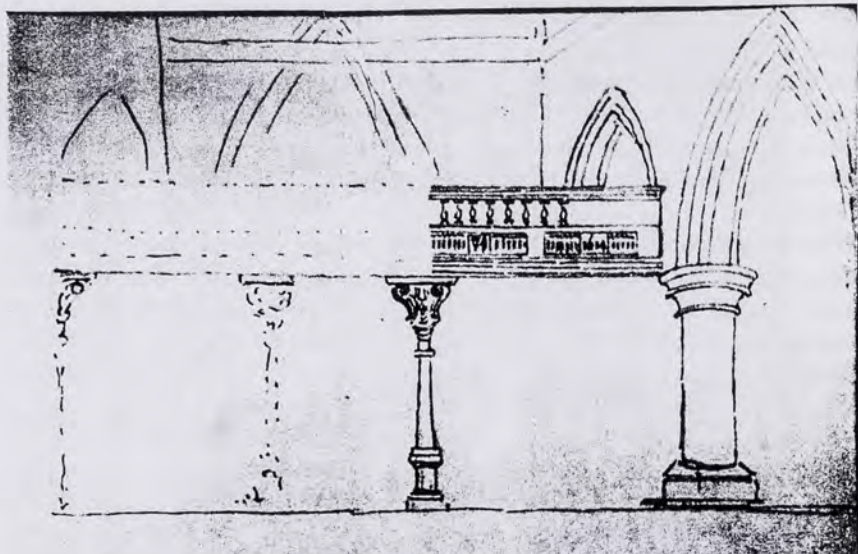
I don't remember going but there was a similar competition at Petersfield and we did even better there, again we won the cup and may have done so more than once. There would be an orchestra and Sir Adrian Boult would come to conduct the marked choirs. Choirs came from all over East Hampshire. The picture shows the choir in 1928. We've shown it round and think we've got all the names - one or two are a little doubtful.

Ron Hazelman

Sketches by John Puckle

John Puckle came to Dover in 1838 as curate at St Mary's and became vicar in 1842. He initiated the restoration of St Mary's in 1843 culminating in the reopening of the church in October 1844. He died in 1894 shortly after resigning the living of St. Mary's. During the time of the restoration he seems to have made a sketching tour and his sketch book survives at St Mary's. In fact while the Petworth and Kirdford sketches reproduced here come from 1844, the sketch book itself was added to until about 1880.

This one shows "Petworth Church from London Road near the Park" and is dated June 1844.



This one probably comes from the same time and shows the early (1614) solid oak, open-seated gallery in Kirdford Church removed during the nineteenth century restoration.

Two other sketches show the lych-gate at Pulborough Church and a window in Stopham Church.

[Our thanks Mrs Dunton of Rothermead for drawing our attention to John Puckle's work. Ed]

'Opening Tigless Gate'

I had a good chance to hear the older Sussex speech when I worked at Duncton Post Office in the 1920s. Many of the old men couldn't read or write but that didn't mean of course that their minds weren't sharp enough. One particular old man couldn't sign his name and I had to hold the pen for him when he made his pension mark, but because he held the pen so firmly he effectively speared it into the paper. I usually had to put in a new nib after I'd finished with him. I worked thirty years at the Post Office until it closed in 1951 and such memories of course come from the earlier part of that time. One old man always used to say at the first hearing of the cuckoo, "Heard the cuckoo today, they must have opened Tigless gate and let him in". Teglease (pronounced Tigless then) is a remote farm high on the Downs beyond the Quarry. Oh yes, we certainly knew the saying, "Turn over a penny when the cuckoo sings," Dad had a similar one about the new moon - he'd come in and say to us children, "There's a new moon, come out and look at it." When we got outside he'd give us a penny.

Elevenses were called cogger. I've often heard the old men mention it in the Post Office. The dictionaries call it Coager and say the 'g' is soft but it was never so in my time. "Cogger" it always was at Duncton. It would usually be a great slab of bread and cheese. "Frail" was the word for an afternoon break. A word not on the dialect questionnaire is skuggies (squirrels). Yes, it refers to grey and brown squirrels. I can only ever recall seeing a brown squirrel once, when I was walking up Burton Hill. As regards magpies, I can't remember the refrain exactly, "one for sorrow, two for joy, three for, four for a boy". Wasps were always wopsies. I can remember the old people calling stoolball bittle battle, not often, but I do remember it. Strangers were furriners, pronounced "ferners". My Dad used to mend shoes, in fact he actually made the first shoes I had. They called him the "snob". I think the difference between a cobbler and a snob is that the former had some formal training.

Duncton was full of characters then. Bill Reed the blacksmith had a room by the Cricketers in early days and then moved down to one below the Roman Catholic Church. Ernie Marshall the undertaker and general builder was down there too. The first World War railway carriage stood down there for years, it was probably something to do with prisoners of war originally. Anthony Connor the verger had a donkey and cart and kept an orchard on Duncton Hill, reached via a path that went off by the old A.A. box at the foot of the hill. It was known locally as Anthony's Orchard and he kept a very protective eye on it. His brother Joe Connor used to work in the woods making faggots and bavins. He had an accident with his horse and cart and never recovered.

Mr. Hildebrand was the Rector then, he was very friendly with Lord Leconfield. He came to Duncton from Plaistow in 1912 and years later would retire and go to live at Shimmings. When Lord Woolavington died his African parrot, which was grey with splashes of pink, ended up at Duncton Rectory. I used to work at the Rectory at odd times and would always say goodnight to the parrot. "Goodnight Polly," I'd say. "Goodnight, you fool," the parrot would invariably reply. The Rector found this difficult to believe and said to his housekeeper: "Next time Ethel comes up I want to hear the parrot say it." Sure enough, when I left next time I said, "Goodnight Polly." "Goodnight you fool," replied the parrot. "Come back, Ethel," cried the delighted Rector, "I want to hear him do it again". The parrot duly obliged. We imagined that the parrot's expertise came from some mischievous footman at Lavington Park.

I've mentioned old men at the Post Office but there were old ladies too. I remember taking the newspapers round to old Mrs. Pullen next door to the Rectory and her coming to the door with two hats on, one on top of the other. Oh, I remember Florence Rapley well enough, I can recall seeing her going to church as well as coming into the Post Office. It was said that on the day she died she woke up, said something about the weather and then lay back and died.

When I first went to school there were effectively only horses and carts on the road and when the road was first tarred it was a good surface for hopscotch and marbles too. I would help in the Post Office as I got older but there were restrictions as to what I could do. For instance I could sell stamps but not sign postal orders until I was sixteen. There were some things too that we didn't handle at Duncton; the telegraph boys at Petworth covered Duncton and in fact we didn't have the telephone at Duncton until 1923. Dad delivered as far as the Benges, Barlavington and Upwaltham in the early days but there was just the one delivery "over the hill", while there were two in Duncton itself. I remember that Mr. and Mrs. De Fonblanque lived at Duncton Cottage, Mrs. De Fonblanque's sister, Mrs. Arnecliffe-Sennett was prominent in the Suffragette movement at that time. A delivery man came into the Post Office once with something for Mrs. Funnycabbage. I couldn't think who he could possibly mean until I saw the address.

The Franciscans used to conduct the services at Duncton Roman Catholic Church. Originally of course they had been at Burton Park. My mother told me that Father Edwin, then in charge, came into the Post Office just after I had been born and asked her what she was going to call me. I think Margaret was the name she had in mind. "But she was born on St. Etheldrida's day," said Father Edwin pointedly. I suppose in the circumstances I was lucky to be called just Ethel! Father Pacificus, a later head, had the usual flowing brown robes and a beard and came into the Post Office one day very pleased. "You look just like Jesus Christ" a little boy had just told him. There were four Franciscans usually and they lived in a cottage at the rear of the church.

There had been a Roman Catholic school at the back of the church and my father, although not a Catholic, was educated there. His brother had had some kind of argument with the teacher at Duncton School and ended up by setting about him. He had to leave school but Mr. Biddulph at Burton Park managed to get the two boys into the little Roman Catholic school. I don't think it did them any harm. In fact they had a good basic education.

When I left school in 1921 a friend of mine used to go down to the Railway Inn and take

Mrs. Streeter, George Garland's mother, out for a walk. After a while I would take Mrs. Streeter out myself on occasion. She was frail by this time and walked on sticks. We'd go out for half an hour or so and then she'd come back and sit in her chair. My brother Bill who was several years younger than George Garland used to go out with him and help with his photography. I think Bill was actually employed although I'm sure there was never much money in the business. When Mrs. Streeter died, Bill came to my mother and said, "George is in a bit of a state, he's leaving home and he hasn't anywhere to go." My mother was very good-hearted and agreed to take him in as a lodger. He stayed with us for more than a year. He had a motor-bike even then and Bill would ride pillion on their trips round the countryside. I don't remember much about George's work at that time but I know that he used to do his developing in a large dark cupboard off the kitchen. There was no running water in there, I suppose he took water in there. I remember how he met Mrs. Garland: we were going to a partner's whist-drive and George hadn't got a partner so we arranged for him to partner Miss Knight, the new supply teacher at Duncton School. Actually George could look very smart if he set his mind to it!

Ethel Goatcher was talking to Miles Costello and the Editor.

Spring in the Pleasure Gardens

The basic layout of the Pleasure Gardens is Elizabethan. In the Middle Ages there had been a cunegeria or rabbit warren, hence the old name Conyger Park. It was Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland, who transformed the Conyger. Treswell's great map of 1610 shows the result of his efforts; a large rectangular plantation, with straight paths and described later in 1706 as the Birch Walks. The indications are that Lancelot Brown did not so much take out the Birch Walks as ease some of the straighter lines in the direction of a greater informality. Although the original trees grew to great size it was basically Brown's plan that prevailed until the hurricane of October 1987. This marked an epoch, removing many trees that may have gone back to Brown's time. It has however given us an opportunity to put back two straight rides again, planted with birch and one with a vista much as in 1610. This looks to the Ionic Rotunda, possibly designed by Matthew Brettingham, but certainly placed in its present position by Brown himself. A second birch walk offers a less expansive vista.

Birch grow quickly and are useful as a regenerative species, quick to establish and capable of suppressing weeds. In the nature of things they give way over a period to other, more permanent, species. We've interplanted the birch here with species like lime, oak and sweet chestnut, all natives, but also with other trees like Turkey and Hungarian oak. In fact we can't be absolutely certain that it was Lancelot Brown who took out the initial birch; Daniel Defoe writes of a violent hurricane in 1703 in which many thousands of people perished and it is conceivable that the 1706 plan is showing us the Pleasure Gardens newly replanted with birch hence the name. As I have said, silver birch are relatively short-lived pioneers, a good example is the present Gog Woods, decimated by the hurricane but now being colonised by birch

which will in time be replaced by bigger, more permanent trees. Over a period we'll thin the birch where it's competing with our final species.

The birch cover some ten acres of what will 150 years hence be a high-timbered forest with woodland walks, some three-quarters of a mile of meandering woodland trail and wild flowers. It's a changing scene and this is precisely as it should be. The main trees are growing well; some three to five feet or more in a year, while individual red oaks are managing six. It's a forest in its infancy and a time to be enjoyed. Forestry isn't just about waiting for things to happen, it's also about enjoying the very process of seeing those things happen, being there at the very beginning. We're looking to close grow and progressively thin the trees. When Louis Simond, despite his name an American, visited Petworth in 1811, sixty years after Lancelot Brown's planting, he found something he had not seen elsewhere in England. The Pleasure Gardens were "planted with the largest trees, close together, something like a heavy-timbered American forest, of which they suggest the idea!". Already in April 1994 there are forget-me-not in the woodland paths and it's only early April and very bleak weather, there will be other wild flowers to come. The early fronds of horse-chestnut look as if they've been frozen by the savage wind but in fact it's just the way they look when they first emerge.

Some trees we want to grow as specimens both in the forest and elsewhere and we take out the double leaders so that they grow upright on a single trunk. They need to be grown in close proximity with other trees to avoid side-growth. You can see this with the survivors of the hurricane: look at that oak, quite straight boled but now making undistinguished whiskery side-growth. When the other trees were there it wouldn't have done this. The ideal is a tree grown tall and straight in company with others, a forest of great spires.

As you know replanting after the hurricane has been extensive: the Pleasure Grounds were decimated. We have used two distinct methods of weed control, both with equal success, one chemical, the other natural. For the first we used Tumbleweed to clear weed growth round the young tree and give it the chance to flourish without competition. You can see simply a mossy ring round the plant to the diameter of the spray. Six foot is recommended but we find about a meter is enough. There's no doubt that the trees respond: the effect of weed-competition in the early stages of growth is very considerable, surprisingly so. With this system we give each tree individual collar protection from rabbits. The physical or natural approach is quite different: here we fence to keep rabbits out, then put down black plastic sheeting to stifle the weeds. As I've said both methods seem to have served us equally well.

We've come now to that side of the Pleasure Gardens that looks right out over the Park and toward the Lower Pond. Blackdown is away in the distance. The car park is hidden by the trees. Lancelot Brown would not have liked the red-brick kennels away to the right; they break up the country scene that should stretch as far as the eye can see and well beyond the actual perimeter of the Park. No walls should be seen: the far confines of the extended Park should simply fade into the distance, with no boundaries and no obvious sign of the hand of man. To protect the garden and give it a winter cosiness we have planted evergreens on the perimeter of the Pleasure Grounds but have retained this view of course. We've put a seat here so that it can be enjoyed. These plants to our left are typical of what would be good on the perimeter, yew and holly, but these are poor specimens starved by the great trees they've seeded themselves

between. Beech is a hungry, surface-rooting tree, drawing all nutrients from the top soil over a considerable area. You don't see much undergrowth in a beech wood.

On this north-facing slope we have decayed rhododendrons but we've completely replaced them with 700 scented azaleas. This is Welsh bark used as a mulch for them. It's acid; it needs to be, but it's no more acid than other bark. You can see bluebells coming up from seed and of course waves of the wild daffodil or lent lily, another native. They're growing well and increasing. Look, you can pick out the one year seedlings, just a thin fragile leaf in the grass. The two year seedlings have a thicker leaf, three years plants a thicker leaf still, while the bulbs flower the fourth year. As regards cultivated daffodils, some of the clumps were planted over a hundred years ago and have interbred extensively. There are hybrids here which would bemuse any expert, and we've had a few down here! Fritillaria is another species which we've introduced. It grows where a natural spring leaves the ground wet, just like its original habitat in damp, west-country meadows. The fritillaries are slowly increasing and the nodding bowed purple-check heads, the usual colour, have now some white or cream sports among them. With so many bulbs mowing has to be carefully planned. It can't be done until mid-June by which time we have a virtual hayfield. The cut material is used to mulch the Pleasure Grounds' shrubs and stifle weeds. It works extremely well. The Lawn Genie can collect 38 bushels at a time. Up here by the rotunda we have planted azaleas in great swathes; Daviesii, Narcissiflorum, Exquisitum, magnificum and the occidentale viscosum species from America - all in pastel shades.

We have planted trees to screen the car park, whitebeam, bird cherry, wild plum, wild service and a dozen or more wild roses from around the world, also crab and hawthorn species from different countries. There's a rose from Mount Omei in China, grown essentially for its majestic thorns. With the setting sun reflecting through the huge blood-red thorn bracts the effect can be extraordinary. The flowers themselves seem quite insignificant in contrast.

We're mounting a new set of steps put in by the rotunda. It's wet where the spring runs and here we have willow, guelder rose and other damp-loving plants. In this wild area too are trees allotted to us by the Forestry Commission from a whole consignment sent over here from America after the hurricane, 20 Canadian canoe bark birch and 100 American ash. Over here's a nice white rhododendron newly planted and some older red rhododendrons shooting up from a supine trunk - probably blown down during the hurricane.

We've hardly started to talk about the Pleasure Gardens but these are just a few aspects of it in spring. It's always worth looking at, if we come in another season we'd find different things to say, different priorities. It's always interesting, always changing and that's why I like working there. For the next issue we'll take a look at some recent developments in the Park itself.

Trevor Seddon was talking to the Editor.

'No Such Undertaking ...'

.... "No such undertaking having been received ... I now declare ... that We are now .. in a State of War with Germany!"

The deep solemn tones of Mr. Neville Chamberlain issued from the wireless positioned on a chair set between the forward pews, just short of the steps leading up into the Chancel.

Sunday. Morning. 1100 hrs. September the 3rd 1939. St. Mary's Parish Church. The silence of the gathered congregation to be remembered. Although, in retrospect, it is doubtful whether the impact of what it truly meant was within the scope of many of Us. As a choirboy, who had been larking about outside the Church mere minutes ago, with a quick dash into the Vestry, a quick dive into cassock and surplice, not to be left behind as the rest of the choir took station in the choir stalls. I am having to think about it to remember. .. Beyond a voice behind me, from the Men's choir stall .. "Folly! Folly! .. Ring out The Dead from this day's work! The World goes into Chaos!"

A tap on my shoulder. Bert Speed, if I remember aright.. "Go .. Boy!" A quiet rush to the vestry. Surplice and Cassock thrown anyhow, into the cupboard. Out and on to my bicycle alean against the Church wall. A near new bike, remembering .. it had blocks affixed to the pedals, it was too big for me to reach comfortably .. I would grow into it! Away with all speed to the Police Station. Feeling very important. I was one of the great Elite drawn from the ranks of the Boy Scout troop. "Messenger" .. At the Police Station I was formally issued with a steel Helmet with a great wide strap to go under the chin. Reckonably, one small boy near disappearing 'neath that! How He was going to ride a large bicycle with blocks upon the wheels?! .. I recall taking a message to Newlands, or perhaps it was the Fire Station in Pound Street .. or was that all about the same place in those distant days? It might make an interesting exercise through the Archives to determine whether the message might be buried under the dust of ... Perhaps "War Declared this day .. Don't go Home to Dinner!"

Chapter 2. By comparison, something boring I fear

Sometime thereafter I was elected to the ranks of "The Firewatchers". I guess that there was some degree of Importance at the prospect .. A number of nights, two or three, spent on duty in Newlands. Cannot recall much more than Heads Down under rough blankets smell of DDT? upon an iron bedstead in an office, become a dormitory room. Do not remember any Companions of The order. Doubtful whether any might just remember me .. but there again, it was 55 years gone ...

Methinks that I must have been promoted on from those earlier days. A further memory runs to a "Firewatch" on County Hall in Chichester. There was a Girl .. Worked in The Department of Finance, or some such. Bit of a Sport .. I must have been growing up.

Beyond that 'tis a memory of sitting in Summer sunshine up on Sugar Knob Hill, watching the Spitfires and the Hurricanes wheeling the skies in Dog Fight, endeavouring to spot the black crosses under the wings of the enemy planes .. of Gentlemen of smart turnout, wearing the black berets and the dark blue uniform of "The Observer Corps" in the streets of Petworth, proceeding on, or off, duty. We must have had the ARP .. maybe I recall these duties were



Back Row L-R
John Vincent, Will Kirk, J. Davis, Gordon Gibson, Basil Lucas, Ted Baker, Mr Stevenson,
George Ford, Ken Boxall, Fred Ward, Victor Hill, Stanley Pullen, Ron Hazelman, Sidney Sheil.
Centre L-R
Ernie Matthews, Charlie Baxter, Henry Wilson, Brian Speed, Fred Standford,
China Sadler, Freddie Laker, Bill Miles (?), Rendle Diplock
Front L-R
Bill Vincent, Verdun Crawley, Geoffrey Bath, Roy Phelps, Reg Baxter, Doug Bartlett.
Petworth Boys' School Choir 1928 see "Winning the Cup".



*Some of those present when the Boys' School memorial was dedicated on the 20th March.
Photograph by Tony Whitcomb.*



*Appropriately enough, a younger generation pay their respects.
Photograph by Tony Whitcomb.*



*In Petworth Park Pleasure Grounds 1950.
Photograph by G.G. Garland.*

carried out by "The Specials" locally recruited to assist the Police .. Of a spell of Duty .. Part Time .. in "Dad's Army" .. Major Jerome .. Manager, Midland Bank .. and dropping the grenade whilst we were being instructed "The Throw!" .. Air Raid sirens howling into the night .. the "Chug .. Chug" "Boom .. Boom" note of the Doodlebugs Over ... and the sudden silence when the motor stopped .. remember feeling like a fool at folks around staring at me picking myself up off the pavement, having read all the instructions of lying flat upon the ground!! in the event of ... the Stirrup Pump was invented at about that time. Proved a useful tool for awatering of the greenhouse .. A hearsay memory .. the chatter of the Bren Gun, from behind the Hunt Stables off The Horsham Road, firing at the plane that had dropped the Bombs .. 'twas said the anguished swearing of the Soldier who was firing the gun! ...! summed up the entire futility of "death in the daytime" ... Our Dalmatian Dog who rode in the Vet's car, galloped Home, bloodied and scared ... We were sent Home from Midhurst. They ran a special Bus. ... The Headmaster's declaration is a vivid memory ... The Boys of Petworth, assembled ...! What was the Question? Civil Defence 1939 and on ...?

From *Under The Tin Hat* ...

John Francis c. 1994

Recollections of an Evacuee (2)

The Military

It should be appreciated, with so many of the Petworth 20, 30 & 40 year men away serving the interests of the war effort, it necessarily followed, if children spoke, or had any inter change with the local adults, that on the majority of occasions this would be with persons of mature age, ie. 50, 60, 70, years of age and even older persons.

Therefore when children had the opportunity to talk with soldiers, who often were in their 20 and 30's etc. the military personnel represented a far closer age group and frequently one was able to more freely or openly discuss matters. I and other children frequently visited soldiers who were camping in the woods and had meals with them out of billy cans all seated around a camp fire. Occasionally I had a ride in an Army truck and even in a Bren gun carrier. The real highlight was to be taken in a sizeable tank all the way from Petworth up to the top of Bury Hill and then brought back. The vibration was quite something, but being unaccustomed to the noise level, this I recall left one with quite a headache.

Different groups of the military were leaving the Petworth area and then replaced by others. The children had very little chance to speak to members of one of the earlier groups, i.e. the Kings Own S. Borderers who were stationed at one time near Petworth. These troops seemed to be constantly training. Opposite St Mary's C of E Petworth Church is a lane and at the easterly end there is a steep hillside. Halfway down this steep slope across the complete width the Kings Borderers had placed three rows of barbed wire. The children watched quite enthralled at the sight of the soldiers running down the hill and at selected places, a single soldier would throw himself on to the barbed wire whereupon subsequent soldiers would then use his

body as a sort of landing platform so as to jump over the barbed wire.

The soldiers then continued running at a great speed down the hill, to the bottom, where a brook was located. They attempted to jump across the brook and normally one foot entered the water before they were climbing up the far side of the bank.

When the troops had left the area, a group of us evacuees had to have a go at this challenge. We accepted that we could not get over the barbed wire, so we found a way around or under this obstacle. We were however determined to emulate our elder brothers by jumping over the brook but one after the other, we all landed fair and squarely right in the middle of the brook and we all got soaked through. It was quite late by the time we all got home to our respective billet homes having tried every means to get our clothes dry.

When the French Canadians arrived in the Petworth area, whilst these soldiers undertook a great deal of training, it seems, each evening they were permitted to leave their camps and they descended in groups on to the town of Petworth. Their behaviour was not to the standard of other military personnel and I recall many cases of fighting, stealing, violence, assaults etc. and clearly the town's police had a very busy time. Generally it was unwise during this phase for children to walk around the streets during the evenings.

Then quite suddenly, every soldier from every camp was placed under confinement to their camp and I can recall the town was quite empty of an evening. Even during the daytime no military trucks seemed to come out of the camps. This situation continued for several weeks and then news broke that there had been an attack upon Dieppe and that the Canadians had been a major part of the force. The Canadians and particularly the French Canadians had mainly come from the Petworth area. It is a matter of record that huge loss of life occurred during this attack.

It was several weeks later that slowly the French Canadians visited Petworth once again but now their attitude was completely subdued and all the previous noise, fighting etc. had gone and their actions were now quiet.

My final words upon the majority of Canadian soldiers, particularly the English speaking troops, would be that they were most generous, particularly to the children, for apart from giving us cigarettes they also provided sweets, chocolate and chewing gum. They were friendly and most easy to talk to.

Meals, Food, Drink, Sweets & Visits

Similar to most growing boys between the age of 8 to 13, then food assumed a major importance. I cannot ever recall an instance when there was not a meal in readiness, throughout my stay with Mr and Mrs Kenward. They were people of humble means, existing upon a small income from Mr Kenward being a gardener.

The fact that there were always generous quantities of food available, did not result from frequent visits to International Stores, the largest of the grocer shops in Petworth, but from the constant and on-going planning, whereby the land would provide produce for our continued well being. Large sections of the garden would be devoted to sowing of potatoes so that their crop ensured that potatoes were available throughout the whole year. So it was with every other crop, runner beans, not only when in season, but also at all other times from large crock jars.

To achieve such a position, this required almost continual work in the scullery-kitchen area, for example, having collected 30lb of wild blackberries, these would then be strained to

make jelly or jam. Other times, tomatoes would be made into chutney or pickle. It seems that hardly a day went by without "kilner jars" being boiled so as to store yet some further fruit, gooseberries, damsons, plums, victoria plums, apples, rhubarb and so many more fruits.

Throughout the whole of my stay with the Kenwards, I doubt if the store cupboard ever had less than 300 jars of preserves, jams, fruits etc. and probably on many occasions the number exceeded well over 500. Such an approach was totally different to that of my parents for in London all food was purchased from shops. This resulted in quite different styles of meals, for prior to my being billeted at Petworth, I cannot recall ever having been provided with Spotted Dick, Suet Pudding, Steak & Kidney Pudding and certainly my London meals would never have contained such a high percentage of fruit when one had a sweet or desert. Prior to visiting Petworth, I doubt if I had ever seen a gooseberry.

To the rear of the house at Foxhill was a wood, in which many chestnut trees were located. At the appropriate time of the year, one had only to walk a few yards to collect quantities of chestnuts and during the evenings we used to roast these upon the open fire and this again was a new experience. During the cold evenings, immediately prior to going to bed, there was the cup of cocoa, which again was a drink that my mother never provided.

On the subject of drink, one cannot ignore the fact that it seemed that many of the menfolk of Petworth, together with all soldiers located in the area, all used to congregate in the public houses in the area. I would imagine that the pubs of Petworth probably have never repeated the level of sales that they achieved during the war years. It seemed that all the pubs were packed out nearly every night. In this category would be the Well Diggers situated just outside of Petworth on the road to Pulborough. I believe that the popular drink of the day was Mild & Bitter, although I recall that the really low cost drink was beverage that mainly consisted of "slops"?

I believe that during this period, the Well Diggers pub was run by a lady and her young attractive daughter, both of whom had engaging personalities. The Well Diggers seemed to be "very basic" and I believe that there was bare floor boards and rather dully dark walls, all of which in the writer's eyes made this pub appear gloomy, but this did not dissuade the many to use this pub. The reality was one could hear the laughter from the Well Diggers a long way off and clearly those serving the beer were extremely popular with the locals and all the soldiers. Although "under age", from time to time, I was provided with a sample of the Henty & Constable beers on offer, which I found quite appalling and this probably accounts for the reason that to this day, I seldom if every drink beer.

Returning back to the subject of food, I recall that "bakeries" seemed to feature quite large in my life. Not too far from the Iron Room, just to one side of Petworth Square was a shop which sold loaves and cakes. Many children would visit this shop during the lunchtime so as to purchase a cake to add to their midday intake. With the passage of time, I and other boys, particularly during the period when the salvage collection was taking place, would include a lunch-time visit to a bakery. I remember this was situated a few doors down. Walking past the shop door entrance down an adjacent alley, one could continue to the back of the shop where the bakery over was located.

I have pleasant memories of entering the really hot oven area during the mid winter cold

periods. The mature bakers would be working hard by pulling away the exact sized lump of dough that would later become a hot loaf. These cheery two bakers would always have something to say to us boys and the visit would normally conclude by the bakers throwing to us boys a fresh, steaming hot, cooked loaf that possibly might have been unacceptable to sell to the public. The smell of this freshly baked bread went down a real treat.

I can also recall that in Byworth there was also a small baker (Mr. George Tickner) who was only able to produce a small amount of loaves and cakes each day because he was constrained with only a small allocation of the government controlled issue of flour and other materials required in baking. This bakery had a unique oven which was several hundred years old and had a style of construction which could only use bundles of hazel twigs and similar types of wood.

The effect of producing bread, cakes etc. all from an oven operated upon timber, was nothing short of pure magic. The owner of this bakery were friends of Mr and Mrs Kenward and occasionally we went on Sundays to tea with them and the highlight was always the serving of "the cake" which was to a standard far higher than any other that was available during the war years.

In recalling weekend visits, then one of real highlights was when we went to see Mrs Kenward's mother and father a Mr and Mrs Strudwick who lived on a farm at Wisborough Green. I remember that upon entering Wisborough Green from Petworth, the green lay to the left of the roadway and running away from this was a small lane, called Three Lanes End. Some half mile or so down on the right hand side of the lane, was a small pond, and on the far side was a really old farm house. The whole of the downstairs consisted of more or less one single room with a scullery located at the entrance doorway area.

This very mature couple, well into their 70's at the time, always made any visitor most welcome and this was particularly the case whenever I went to the farm. They spoke with a very broad Sussex accent and initially often made fun of my London tones coupled with my lack of understanding of country ways and procedures.

The house formed part of the farm yard, on the side of which was a large stables building which housed three very large Shire horses. These gentle working horses provided most of the power to motivate the farming equipment, from ploughs through to nearly every other type of implement. It seemed that every available hour was dedicated to the needs of the land and the farm.

They rose at dawn each day to begin feeding the animals and would then commence working the land until dusk. I can recall that at the end of the day I walked out several fields to where work was taking place and found "Bob (Mr.) Strudwick" disconnecting the horse from some equipment. I then sat upon the horse who would then proceed to walk around each field, by whatever was the shortest route and continue through the appropriate gate right through to the farm yard and then the horse would go straight into his stall within the stables. Throughout the whole journey the horse never received any instruction for he knew exactly the route to take and I was fascinated by the horse's intelligence.

I guess that Mrs Kenward's father was for the writer a sort of most welcomed "war time replacement grandfather" and he always had time for me with cheery remark. This hardworking

old couple were truly very good people, the best that Sussex could produce. I remember helping him in the fields on one occasion by lifting mangles and swedes on a bitterly cold October-November morning and by the end of the morning my hands had turned into blocks of ice. Never-the-less, I have only good memories of all the occasions of when I visited them.

I also recall other visits including going to see a very old couple at Horsham a Mr and Mrs Livermore, after which we went shopping and my memory was that Horsham appeared to be half way between the life styles of the "country" Petworth and that of London. Other visits included trips using the Southdown 22 bus down to Brighton which seemed to take an eternity with so many stops, so that by the time one returned home to Foxhill at the end of the day, then everyone was exhausted. Other trips to Chichester also took place mainly to try and find clothing which was in such limited supply during the war years. My ability to either outgrow, or wear out clothes at which my parents thought was an alarming rate was a continuing problem.

One cannot conclude this particular section without making reference to sweets. During 1940 it seemed that sweets had totally disappeared. Sometime later a scheme was introduced where a sweet shop in the town square (G. Pellett) announced that its allocation of sweets would go on sale, at a set time, on a particular day. The queue would start forming a long time prior to the opening time and it became quite normal once a month to queue for over an hour so as to purchase the one small bag of sweets.

However, if we thought this sweet queue was long, this was well exceeded when it was announced that the small green-grocers shop at the bottom lower level just off of the square was going to allow each child to purchase "an o r a n g e".

But the longest queue of all was when after several years into the war, this same greengrocer announced that each child was going to be allowed to purchase a banana. I can recall that many of the younger children were quite puzzled by this strange looking fruit for they could not recall having previously seen a banana.

Reg. Hough

A Letter from England

Now that the war is over and the censorship removed I thought it would interest you to hear of some of our experiences in Sussex which has been known to you through the Press as Southern England. This is written from a point of view purely civilian as the male side of our family were either too young, too old or maimed in 1914 - 1918 to join the full-time fighting services.

Evacuation, September 1939

Twelve hours notice was given to Wisborough Green to accommodate 350 mothers and children. The previous plans made during the summer became unworkable for a variety of reasons. Our Vicar's wife, who undertook to manage the government scheme, was away on a holiday and I was asked by the rural authorities to take her place.

The 350 arrived from London in motor coaches at the village school. A committee was formed and we allocated the families to the various houses with a very obscure knowledge of their accommodation capacity. By evening, half returned to say they had been turned away or could not bear the isolation of their billets. Cars and scouts were sent out, personal contacts and influences used, and eventually by midnight they were all under a roof.

The reception of billetees was entirely voluntary and no law existed to force their entry into households. This created a vast problem to the Evacuation Officers with no official status to back them. Many people quite naturally held back their spare rooms for relations. There were many cases of sickness - children with scabies, impetigo and infectious diseases that could not be accepted into the local hospitals. The village school rooms were too small to accommodate the London children, and so on ad infinitum.

At Amblehurst we had a communist schoolmaster, my mother-in-law, her sister-in-law, my mother, a Swiss girl Nanny and the two children, in a four-bedroom house!

After the first excitement was over and all the old blankets were tacked up for black-outs we settled down to a miserable form of existence. The strain of living together began to pall, no bombs fell and a trek back to London began. It was a period of waiting and the monotony was only broken by the inconvenience of life generally and the difficulties of rationing. I went into an office at Petworth, our small shopping town, which dealt with government billeting allowances. I had not been there more than a few months when I received a telegram to report to Liverpool for censorship the next day. In 1938 I did a course in London and signed on to go in the event of war with the proviso, domestic circumstances permitting. They did not permit so that experience never materialised. In the early Spring I developed chronic catarrh and indoor life became a misery so I left the office without any plans for future war work. A very kind friend asked me to look after her horse which she could no longer feed. I enjoyed many lovely rides until the single German raiders swooping down made one feel very unsafe once out of the woods into the open fields.

Battle of Britain

Churchill told the world in a very few words, the story of that famous battle.

From our bedroom window you can see the Downs, Chanctonbury Ring and the view of most of the big air battles was unbroken. There were days when you could not count the dropping planes; bits seemed to be falling everywhere. The whine, the diving and the swooping intensified the excitement and obliterated any sense of danger; the effect to the contrary was intoxicating. There were so few Spitfires in a darkened sky of black planes. Personally, I think it was then intelligent people realised the war could be won. I knew a young New Zealander who was shot down five times in the Battle of Britain. He was 21, had grey hair and lamented the fact that at the fifth time he had been careless about jumping from his plane and was consequently wounded.

Dunkirk

For two days the guns rattled the window panes at regular intervals. They have suddenly ceased and there is no news. Surely the Germans must have been driven back or we should still hear the guns. The B.B.C. has played gramophone records all day of all the funeral marches ever written and then Antony Eden's broadcast. The reaction is divided into two groups: the

people who are going to bury their silver and tinned foods, others who are going to give a tea party and open the one bottle of champagne for the first passing German officer. I never did decide which group I would eventually join, though I thought the silver idea good and the tea party, but definitely against the champagne offering.

The L.D.V. (Local Defence Volunteers) was formed overnight and Charles appointed Second in Command, No. 1 Platoon, C Company, Wisborough Green. You have, no doubt, read the official accounts of the early days of the L.D.V. and later - the "Home Guard". My first vivid impression of the threat of invasion was a telephone message at 1.30 a.m. I will always remember the chill empty feeling with which I heard that ring and the message: "Large numbers of parachute landings are reported from Dover" (75 miles from here). It was summer, windows wide open, no blackout up and a very silent night. Half asleep we groped and stumbled in the dark looking for clothes, full of apprehension of what the day might bring forth - a different world. We had fifteen rifles to load in the car of U.S. make that had been stored since 1918. Charles drove and we stopped at every house, waking and calling the occupants to tell them the news. They were told to foregather at all the road junctions and defend with axes, sticks, shot guns, in fact anything they could find which might help to delay the enemy. We then proceeded to make a tour of their positions and assured them ammunition was on the way and at last, at about 6.00 o'clock, word came through that it was only an attempt and the parachutists had been rounded up. I returned to bed with a severe attack of shingles!

All through the summer and autumn the military swarmed around us, training manoeuvres and preparing for the German invasion. Overnight the place seemed to be a military centre; messengers, lorries, tanks, guns, wireless operators, mock battles, dotted the garden, house and fields. Tea and hot water to be given at all hours.

Bombing and the London Blitz began and with the threat of invasion we decided to send the children to a friend near Shrewsbury. They had a hard journey as many others had the same idea, as we knew we could not move once invasion began. I must explain that we did contemplate sending the children to the U.S. with Nanny. There were many reasons against it. I decided quite definitely I could not leave here to go with them and Nanny, who was half Singalese, could not satisfy the emigration authorities in the U.S. on the colour bar, which would bar her entry and probably leave her stranded on Ellis Island. The question of finance too; could we expect others to clothe, feed and educate our children for perhaps years, and would they thank us when they grew up? Incidentally, Nanny played a very important part in our household during the war years. She took over the entire commissariat department as well as looking after the children, leaving me free to take over farm work. She has left me now, but I think the strain of six years has left its mark.

Bombing

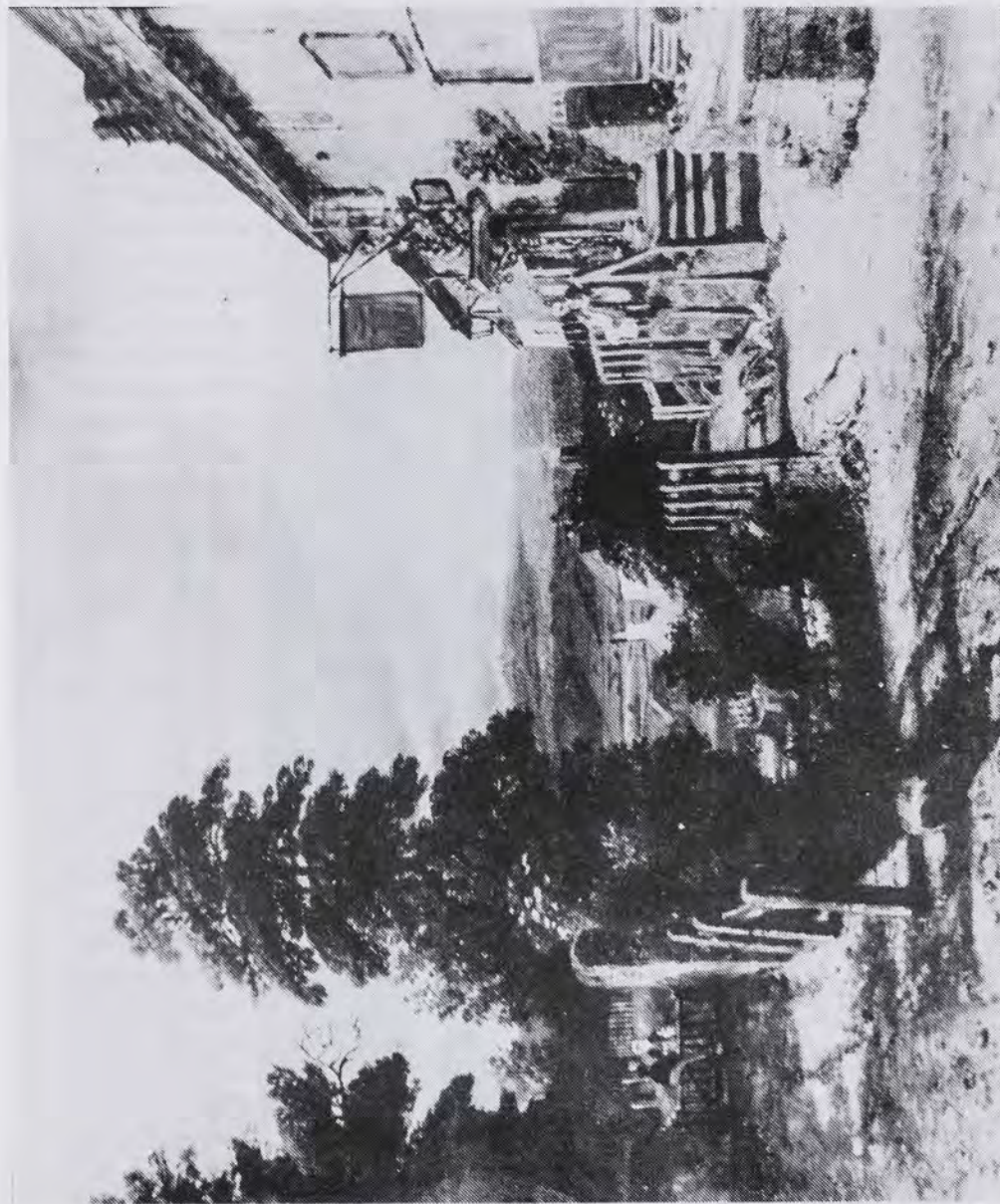
Many say they don't mind and sleep through it; some derive comfort in the warning and still others complain it makes for disturbed nights. Personally it makes me feel rather sick and I do like to see and hear all that is going on and I spend quite a lot of time hanging out of the window, which is rather cold in winter. This is a fighter area and there are no guns and the warning very distant. It is a main route for some of the big bombers stationed in France. Many battles are fought overhead in an attempt to get to or get away from London. Bombs have been

dropped haphazardly in the fields and farms. The intensity of a raid over the capital can be judged by the blaze and flares which light up the whole countryside. The noise is sickening and the vibration shakes the plaster so that in the morning there is a film of dust over everything, which is rather depressing. The incendiaries scattered on the crops and haystacks are a nuisance and makes fire-watching essential, especially in the autumn when so much food is at stake. The sneak raiders came over on cloudy days, machine gunning the roads, the shopping districts and the trains. One sneak raider unloaded a stick of bombs on a school at Petworth and 30 children out of 70 were saved and many of them are blind or minus a limb. After six months in Shrewsbury the children returned home. Richard was six and had to start school. We sent him to Aldro a school of about seventy boys in Surrey. There is a lovely garden, playing fields and a lake. The possibility of that school being bombed was a thought which never left me and turned my hair grey, but after several years of war you soon realise that the normal routine of life has to go on in spite of everything.

The "doodle bugs" passed over a good deal and various defective ones did drop in the district, but the rockets kept a good deal north of here. The former sound like ancient motor cycles missing, you bless the fact you can hear them because it is only when you can't hear them that they fall. I never experienced a night raid in London as it was not my idea of pleasure to spend an evening in that city.

In October 1942 we decided to buy a house cow; the choice was a Jersey. Starlight the 16th and her daughter arrived by train from Somerset. I bought her with some money acquired from the Insurance Company, a claim of £30 for my lost engagement ring. It was very cheap as prices rose sky high the following years. Starlight today is worth about £250, a most beautiful Jersey with a star on her forehead. She was most patient and docile during my apprenticeship and learning to milk. It was most soothing even though it was the early hours of the morning after a harassed night, to see her regular cud chewing and her large doe-like eyes completely undisturbed by war. We think a great deal of her. A few months ago she was very ill and for two days and nights we slept on the straw to tend her comforts hourly. I felt well rewarded when she recovered she seemed so thankful for all that had been done for her.

This was the beginning of the Amblehurst herd, which consists of 10 cows and 10 home bred heifers and a bull. For three years I never arose later than six, and milked twice daily except when I was ill. The herd is attested, which is the highest standard of milk produced under the government scheme, free of tuberculosis and general animal health. The quantity of milk from each cow is recorded daily, butterfat content tested very six weeks. All milking utensils are sterilized twice daily by high steam pressure. The average output of milk per cow for the year 1944-45 was 700 gallons and two cows obtained their place in the register of merit. Cattle cake and high protein feeding stuffs are rationed and rations are given according to the monthly milk sales. Forms have to be filled in and checked, so you can understand why large quantities of milk do not pass into any cow owner's household. I have written at length on this subject because I was rather taken aback one day when ten American Officers came to tea and refused to partake of the milk. I found out later why; there was so much mistrust in the methods of milk production in this country. In 1940 it became a matter under government control, enormous strides have been taken in spite of the lack of finance and depletion of good stock. I think British



This photograph of a painting of the Horseguards at Tillington is something of a mystery. Does anyone know where the original is or know anything about it?



Tony Madgwick asks if anyone recognises any of the people in this Garland picture from the 1930s taken outside the Iron Room possibly for a Silver Jubilee outing.

milk production will be on par with the U.S. within a few years. Here I must mention two names and words of praise to my herdsman, Evelyn Fielder, whom I trained to milk and has in her charge and care the bull Sutton Count Beltona. Her previous profession was cooking. Guiseppa, the Italian prisoner, grooms and cleans and has spent many a good hour preparing animals for sale and the show ring and makes their coats shine like race horses. Mr. Passfield, the veterinary surgeon of the district, is particularly keen on the Jersey breed. He has given me no end of valuable advice and imparted much hard earned knowledge on disease, breeding and general management.

So much for my end of the farm. Charles is not interested in dairy farming. He likes a pretty cow and thoroughly enjoys its artistic value on a landscape. I feel just about the same over the Cox Orange Pippin apple and know less than nothing about it except that it is profitable if you don't get a frost. The public clamour to get them and even H.M. The Queen has her standing order. The experts consider the quality grown here exceptionally fine owing to the clean cultivation and the excellent suitable soil from which they spring. We also have 40 acres of arable at another farm five miles distant. Both farms are run with a staff of three Italian prisoners and three land girls. The female element is not very stable and vary in quantity and quality. The prisoners live here in a garden hut and collect their meals on trays prepared in the house. They are excellent workers; they have not been spoiled and don't stop until the job is done! Joyce Mann is my 18 year old cook who has been with us five years. All her experience has been gained with little to cook with. Sometimes we are as many as 12 for meals and anything from 15 to 20 casual workers for tea in the summer months, so you can well understand why we are worn when winter comes.

Written in October 1945 by Mrs C.F.O. Master.

Editor's note: The reference to Petworth Boy's School is not quite accurate but I have left it as it reflects knowledge at the time.

A.R.P. at Byworth

In 1938 with rumours of war an air raid warden and three auxiliary firemen were appointed for Byworth. Ted Harper, gardener at Gofts House as warden, my Uncle Fred Shoubridge village baker, Horace Death chimney sweep, and Alf Green publican, as firemen. They were each equipped with a service respirator, a pair of Wellingtons, a long black mac, and a steel helmet with the letters A.F.S. They were also given a stirrup pump and two buckets, which were kept in an out-building at the Black Horse and remained there until sometime after the war started. Horace Death was informed that if a ladder was needed, the one he owned would have to be used. They were given no training in fire-fighting but told that if a fire broke out at Byworth they were to tackle it and hold the fort until the brigade arrived. They were only to deal with fires in Byworth itself and not outside the village; they would not be called upon to help with fires in Petworth.

The first taste of enemy action must have been in 1940 when a high explosive bomb dropped at Foxhill and a bread basket of incendiary bombs fell on the Sheepdowns between

Byworth and Petworth. It was thought that the German plane spotted a faint light from the 10 p.m. bus to Pulborough as it went up Low Heath Road. From Byworth it looked as though Petworth was on fire, and from Petworth it looked like Byworth. My Uncle left the house to join the other firemen, but when they found Byworth was safe they remained in Byworth as instructed, though some Byworth men joined men from Petworth and kicked the fire-bombs into the stream, and it was not long before all was dark and quiet again and Uncle returned to bed. In the morning he discovered that one of the bombs had missed his stack of two thousand faggots by only yards and burnt itself out.

The following week the first fire drill was held in Byworth. The air raid warden came round and told everyone to assemble at Hall Gate farmyard. The next afternoon a chief warden and fire officer came from Petworth. Ted Harper shepherded everyone into a semi-circle and a bale of straw was placed in the centre. This was to be set on fire, while our three auxiliary firemen demonstrated the correct way to put a fire out, even though they had not had any fire training. It was like the blind leading the blind. Uncle was on the pump, Alf Green, the less active member of the team, on the jet, and Horace Death kept up the water supply with the spare bucket with water from the horse trough. Everyone gathered round to watch; Uncle started pumping vigorously but no water came out of the jet and the fire burned away. Mrs. Montfort Bebb came closer to get a better look and disaster struck. The hosepipe was perished and it perforated into many holes. Mrs. Montfort Bebb was treated to a shower-bath all over her Red Cross uniform. Uncle just kept on pumping until a cry went up, "end of demonstration". My aunt said my Uncle had done it on purpose, this he denied. Mrs. Montfort Bebb was a good customer of ours and my aunt said she would withdraw her custom; this did not happen however. After this a new hose had to be fitted to the pump but there were no more demonstrations. Instead the three firemen had to visit every house and tell the occupants to fill a bucket with either sand or soil and place this, along with a coal shovel and a metal dust-bin lid, on the upper floor of their house. The idea was that if a fire bomb came through the roof, one held the dust-bin lid in front as protection and covered the fire bomb with the soil from the bucket. When the fire was completely covered they were to place the dust-bin lid on top and then call the firemen. I well remember being instructed in this technique; later in the war this procedure was banned as the firebombs now contained a small explosive device. People were then told to call the fire brigade.

I don't know what would have happened if any bombs had fallen in the day time. My Uncle was out of the village for several hours each day doing his rounds with the van, also Horace Death covered a large area sweeping chimneys. Alf Green asked them what he was supposed to do if there was a raid in the daytime and there was a fire. The other two told him to keep it burning till they got back - there was humour even in the war time.

About two years after the war started Ted Harper was called up for military service and Uncle was appointed warden in his place. He was given another pair of Wellingtons, another steel helmet with A.R.P. on it, an armband, a rattle, a whistle and a first aid kit, along with a number of books and charts. I think Buff Hill took Uncle's place as a fireman but can't be sure. Just before Ted Harper left, it was the winter after Dunkirk, soldiers arrived in Byworth and put up at Hallgate farm. Owing to loss of equipment at Dunkirk they were poorly equipped and

had no means of getting anything hot so they came round the houses asking for hot water. Sometimes they would bring a dixie with a handful of tea in it and ask for it to be filled with water and boiled up. I can't think what the tea was like but at least it was hot, and the weather was very cold. One day one of the soldiers brought a dixie to auntie containing potatoes, turnips and some brown stuff. She was asked to add water and boil it up. She did not reckon much of their stew, so she added some carrots, onions, seasoning and thyme, some flour to thicken and some dumplings of sorts. She made these with flour, dripping and water. They voted it the best stew they had had for a long time and said she was their favourite cook. During their ten day stay in Byworth they asked her to make several stews. One day one of their Bren Gun carriers went down the drive beside the shop: in those days it was a grass track and the gun became stuck. It was two days before a lorry came to tow it out; while it was there the soldiers with it could not leave it. Equipment was so short, they did not dare to let anything happen to it. As they were on very short rations they would come to the bakehouse when the bread was coming out of the oven and Uncle would give them a new hot loaf to eat. They were short of money so could not pay for it, they were not getting paid while training. At that time bread was not rationed, it was only rationed after the war.



Byworth - a George Garland photograph from an original painting.

When the Army left Byworth they told us that if they returned we would know the Germans had landed as they were the second line of defence. It was only after the war that Uncle told us, in the papers he had been given when he became warden, there were instructions to evacuate Byworth. Everyone was to go to Petworth where there were defences of sorts. It was surrounded with barbed wire and there were concrete tank traps on all approach roads. These traps were manned by the Home Guard at week-ends, and all the older able-bodied men and the young ones who worked on farms (a reserved occupation because food production was important) were in the Home Guard. One Sunday we were walking to church and we were stopped at the top of the hill and asked to show our identity cards; we laughed at this as the Home Guard who asked us was our neighbour who knew us well, and also where we were going but he would not let us pass until he had seen our cards.

After Uncle became warden he often had to visit every house to give out new instructions or to check gas masks; an extra extension had to be put on these at one time. He also had a supply of spare ones including the pram type for issue to new babies, and then, when they were old enough, he would change these for the Mickey Mouse type. Another job was to check no lights were showing. From time to time he would walk through the village after dark, varying the times so that no one knew when this would be. The occupants of Causeway Cottage were notorious for showing a chink of light; Uncle gave them a number of warnings. One evening when he was making the dough for next day's bread, he heard a commotion outside, it was one of the ladies from Causeway Cottage; she stormed over to the bakehouse and blamed Uncle for throwing a bone through the bedroom window. This he denied; she did not believe him and for several months after this would not speak to Uncle. He did however know who the culprit was; on his way to the bakehouse he had seen a figure in the shadow of the barn opposite Causeway Cottage and though they had not spoken he recognised who it was. The outcome was that no more lights were shown.

When the bombing intensified two fire-watchers were appointed to watch each night during the hours of darkness. One Byworth pair were Arthur Pullen and his neighbour Bill Wakeford. It was asked if they were both looking in the same direction as they both only had one eye. Uncle had to go to bed early during the week to get up early to bake the bread. So sometimes the siren would sound after he was in bed. Auntie would wake him up; he would listen for a moment, say he could hear nothing and then go to sleep again. We got weary of trying to wake him; so every time the siren went after he had gone to bed mother and I would put on our outdoor clothes, go outside the front door and watch and then only wake Uncle if anything got close. One humorous incident came one evening during the winter: there was a raid in progress on Portsmouth that could be plainly seen from our house. Uncle had gone outside and joined Bill Clark, our neighbour, at the front gate while mother and I went outside also to see what was happening. Then in the reflection from the searchlights we spotted the two men by the gate. Uncle had on a long grey overcoat, Wellington boots and his steel helmet; this did not fit him very well as he had a peculiar shaped head so he always wore the helmet on top of his cloth cap. Bill Clark had a long khaki scarf over the top of his jacket, his Home Guard steel helmet, and slippers with one trouser leg inside his sock. It was too much for mother and me, she nudged me and said, "England's last hope." We both laughed and got into trouble from the

two men. They told us to go back indoors as they could not hear the air raid with us laughing. One of the lighter moments of the war.

One scare we did have in Byworth was when the flying bombs started and one came down at Gore Hill. It was between four and five in the morning when one came in low below the radar screen. No siren had sounded and the first we knew of it was a loud explosion that shook the beds and rattled everything. Uncle was already up and dressed and having a cup of tea and a snack before going up the road to start work in the bakehouse at 5 a.m. He immediately got his steel helmet and armband and set off down the road to see what had happened. He could tell by the sound that it came from the south end of the village. When he got as far as Trofts he met two soldiers from the searchlight battery that was in the field up the lane and just beyond Southover. They were in a terrible state and asked if the village was all right. Uncle assured them that the part of the village from where he had come was all right - but what about the further end. They told him they had checked and it was all right also. It appeared they had shot the bomb down with their Lewis Gun and from the position of the searchlight it looked as though it had fallen on the village. They vowed never to shoot down another. Uncle came back and proceeded to work. It was only later in the morning that we heard it had dropped at Gore Hill and blown up their private water supply. There was quite a lot of superficial damage in Byworth; most houses had cracked or broken windows and a number of ceilings had cracks appearing in them. Some time later officials came round to assess the damage. After the war was over we found out that Uncle knew all about the flying bombs before any dropped on this country. He had attended a meeting at Chichester when all the wardens had been briefed and given diagrams of the bombs; one time when British Intelligence was on the ball.

A few weeks before D day a mystery pile of stones appeared at Byworth corner as they did on all main roads. We thought this strange as the war had stopped all but essential road repairs due to lack of supplies and manpower. Unbeknown to us Uncle again knew their purpose. It was thought that German Intelligence might pick up the Army movements and bomb the main roads to stop all movement of troops. Uncle's brief was to keep the road from the Welldiggers to Petworth open at all cost. He was told to get any able-bodied men and women and fill in any bomb craters with the stones. One thing we did question was his insistence on leaving the wheelbarrow with a large fork outside the shed. He said there was a job that he urgently needed to do in the garden when he had a few minutes to spare, and did not want to waste any time getting the barrow out. All became clear after D day when he revealed to us the purpose of the pile of stones. I think they were eventually used after the war when Bailliewick Lane was widened.

We threw out all the old A.R.P. things when we moved house just after the war, glad to see the back of them after six years. Uncle had found the boots very useful when it was wet weather doing this bread rounds. Wellingtons were unobtainable during the war, and he had been issued with two pairs. The only things I have left are the triangle bandages.

I will mention one or two amusing war-time incidents, though not strictly connected with A.R.P. Uncle had gone to bed early as was his wont on working nights. My aunt, mother and myself were in the sitting room when we heard anti-aircraft gunfire. It seemed strange that the siren had not sounded but it seemed obvious there was a raid going on upon Portsmouth.

Mother went outside to see how close it was and if we should wake Uncle, only to come back and report all quiet and everything in darkness. A few minutes later there was more gunfire; this time I went out to look. It was the same thing - all quiet and dark and I came back in. Then the same thing, more gunfire. This time Auntie said she would wake Uncle as something strange was happening; she opened the door to go upstairs and find the source of the supposed gunfire. It was Uncle snoring. He thought it was a huge joke being confused with the Portsmouth guns. Another night I well remember; it was November 10th 1940, the night of the blanket bombing of Coventry. The German planes came from the Normandy airfields so they came over the south coast and it sounded as though every one came over Petworth. We could hear the planes as they made their way to the Midlands and again on the return journey. As well as the bombers we could hear the sound of the higher pitched engines of the night fighters trying against all odds to divert the bombers. We had been sleeping downstairs, what little sleep we could get. This saved us getting up every night when the siren went soon after dark. Most nights there were bombing raids on the industrial heartland of England. Moonlight nights were the worst. We did not bother to undress. Those folk who had large wooden kitchen tables would put the children to sleep on a mattress underneath, so the night of the Coventry raid we were all downstairs. We had a small blackout lamp. The joke was we discovered it had been made in Germany before the war. The planes vibrated the house and as the night went on there was a strong smell of soot, and in the morning we discovered that the vibration of the planes had brought all the soot down from the chimney and mother, who was nearest the fireplace, was covered in soot; all we could see were her eyes peering out of the soot.

Another incident later in the war was when the Canadian soldiers were doing exercises on the Sheepdowns after dark. They were shooting the small parachute lights into the air and firing at them with their rifles. Mrs. Jones came outside with a lighted candle to see what was happening and got fired at as it was mistaken for one of their parachute lights. Uncle was making dough at the time and he had to leave it and go and sort it out, and give her another warning about showing lights. At one time Mr. Harnett had a cowman working for him who lived just above us with his mother, sister and her child. Every time the siren sounded at night they would leave the house taking the small child and go up through the village and up the lane to the Cottage Hospital and shelter in the tin-roofed cart shed.

Joy Gumbrell

The 20th Annual General Meeting

95 members, a record for the AGM, heard Peter give his 16th Chairman's Report at what he described as the Society's 20th anniversary celebration. The range of activities - walks, visits, talks, the Fair and the magazine, would have surprised even the most regular supporters. Few societies could boast of sending a party of around 40 to Canada - and bringing them back! - as well as another group to Bath, and of meetings rarely attracting fewer than 100 to hear speakers

of such high quality. He was anxious to keep up the memory of George Garland with the annual Memorial Lecture, the next subject being Hilaire Belloc. The Fair had been re-established in a strong position and was nationally recognised, which was good for Petworth, but it was the magazine that, as Editor, he was most proud of - a storehouse of tradition, a refuge for threatened memories.

Slides taken through the year by Ian and Pearl Godsmark illustrated the report in an interesting and entertaining way. It was difficult for the audience to keep pace with the succession of shots: tulip trees in Stag Park; the queue for the special tour of Petworth House following the restoration of the North Gallery; the dog Zeke's grave in the Gog Woods, regularly maintained in memory of the Canadians' mascot; Stag Park lakes; the derelict chapel in the Horsham Road cemetery, badly in need of attention; the Bath trip; the Town Gardens Walk; the visit to the Jekyll exhibition at Godalming Museum; walks at Fittleworth, Little Bognor, Balls Cross and the famous Langhurst Hill Farm tea, the Arundel Park; the new memorial on the site of the Boys' School; the toad tunnel and crossing and the unveiling of the replacement William III bust on the Leconfield Hall; even posing the question - where has the Dawtrey (Corn Merchants) sign from the Old Bakery gone?

The Hon. Treasurer, Philip Hounsham, was congratulated on "a magnificent job in controlling the Society's finances" which were in a healthy state despite each member being subsidised to the extent of 42p above subscription by income generated at the monthly meetings. The Hon. Auditor, Mr. M. Wood, was also thanked and re-appointed, as was the Committee en bloc, described by Peter as a truly working committee. The 9 scrapbooks of local press cuttings since 1977, compiled by Julia Edwards, were on display and following a request from Mr. Dave Budden that they should be made more accessible to members, Mrs. Anne Simmons offered to keep them at her shop in Lombard Street (E. Streeter & Daughter, Jewellers).

The dramatic appearance of Long John Silver (alias member Patrick Hargood) in costume complete with "parrot" in a highly successful promotion of his sponsored hop around the Squares in aid of the Macmillan appeal the next day, was one of the surprises for the evening, as was the presentation of slides of a Leconfield Estate cottage, 346, High Street, which, subject to planning consent, might be preserved as a typical worker's home of 1912, open to the public, providing a welcome link between Petworth House and the Town and a boost for traders on the visitors' route. With the showing of an historic piece of film of the last train through Petworth Station in the '60s, slides of Leconfield Estate employees at the turn of the century, views of Petworth from the church tower and under last February's snow and the Society's visit to Canada, refreshments of the usual high standard and a raffle, mainly of local prints and water colours, the Petworth Society's "At home" had been a happy, and relaxed and informative occasion.

KCT



Long John Silver, (said by some to resemble Patrick Hargood of Nationwide), extorting money for the MacMillan Appeal in Lombard Street. He would later terrorise the Society A.G.M. Some say he has escaped from the forthcoming Petworth Festival Production of Treasure Island but we believe this to be an idle rumour spread about by those relieved of their cash by Long John - a sum of some £300 has been mentioned.

Photograph courtesy of Midhurst and Petworth Observer.

David and Linda's 'Not Stag Park' Walk. May 14th

A really wet Saturday and a poor forecast for the Sunday. In fact it turned out a glorious afternoon. 28 walkers with some dogs, all in the Car Park waiting to go. The walk had taken on something of the air of a mystery tour. If "Not Stag Park" then where was it? In the event there wasn't far to drive, past the entrance to Rothermead then turn right past the old corn dryer to park in the shadow of the bales by the Frog Farm silage pit. Down through Trumpers Lane still wet in the ruts after the hard rains of Saturday, the branches creating a green canopy overhead. By tradition this was the old smugglers' route. Had there been a headless horseman? someone asked. I remember George Garland telling me that it was a cow with its head stuck in a hedge. Two young girls visiting a relative at Rotherbridge had come home terrified. Or perhaps it was a rumour put about by the smugglers to discourage late night activity in the lane, rather like the famous "Drummer of Herstonceux". Or perhaps, there actually was a headless horse, if there was he was not about today.

Out into the dazzling light at the end of the lane. Some of the lush growth appeared to have been bulldozed away to make more car-standing, the scar looked fresh, bleeding almost. To the left a donkey in a field of green and buttercup gold. The breeze puckered the water. We went off to the right, not taking the footpath to Perryfields but going along the river bank. David explained that the footpath doesn't actually run along the river but probably no one would stop you unless you left the gates open and the cows got out. It was hot, close almost, and everything was suddenly green after a cold April and an uncertain start to May. Through to Perryfields, once farm-houses now just large barns and an iron bridge across the river. Once over the river across the lush meadow grass and through the crop following the track left by a tractor to find the railway track. It ran quite straight here, stretching off in either direction apparently to the limit of vision. It was along here the train we had seen on the film at Thursdays AGM had run. The track itself was still quite recognisable, part canopied overhead, part open. There were wild flowers in profusion at the side, not yet lost in the choking bracken that would appear later on. Bugle and the last primroses, spurge and campion. Were there orchids here? I knew the common orchid grew in the lush grass down by the railway bridge but I could not see any here. But stop! Someone had seen an orchid, although on a superficial look it was just a piece of dead plant. The bird's nest orchid just one spire of pale brown. It's called in the books a saprophyte, a kind of parasite having no chlorophyll and growing on dead plants or animal matter. The "bird's-nest" comes from the dense tangled roots that look like a bird's nest. "Rather rare", says the book and with a faint fragrance. We tried to smell it but there didn't seem much fragrance, only perhaps a "doggy" kind of smell. Was it Oscar the dog? Oscar looked disdainful.

We had gone under the great brick bridge, now the skew-bridge, built at an angle to the track, then the viaduct one. We wondered about the track itself, surely an artificial causeway but if so what a feat of earth-moving. A chiff-chaff called. Off the track and down through Kilsham farmyard, left along the lane, speedwell, stitchwort, vetch and campion, the flowers of

late spring. Mareetail was growing along the side where the ditch had been drained and the soil put on the side. The donkey was still in the buttercup field. Up Rotherbridge lane and left at Crosole. Soon back at the cars. Thanks very much David and Linda.

P.



Does anyone know the occasion celebrated in this picture of North street?
At a guess the banners may welcome troops returning from the Boer War.
Photograph courtesy of Audrey Grimwood.

