



# THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

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*Magazine*



## Contents

- 2 Constitution and Officers
- 3 Chairman's Notes
- 5 August visitors - The Horse and Bamboo Theatre
- 6 Jonathan Newdick at Petworth House, April 1995
- 7 From Herbalists to Hair Shampoos
- 8 Those magnificent men - and women - and their flying machines
- 9 Life Story
- 10 Writers in a Sussex Landscape
- 11 Simon's Titty Hill Walk
- 11 Legless in Stag Park. David and Linda's Walk
- 12 Re Magazine 79
- 13 Tarring the old-fashioned way
- 14 Marcus
- 15 'Those that are never seen!'
- 20 'Economical with the jam ...'
- 23 'And why the moon looked cold and yellow...'
- 28 An Era of Eagers
- 35 "With lyeing and strange wicked invention ..."?
- 43 The Hoop Shavers. A Garland article from the late 1930s.

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  
AND PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM!

## 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 £6.50. 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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## Chairman's Notes

*I suppose Magazine No. 80 is something of a landmark but I probably say this whenever the number ends in 5 or 0 (and occasionally in between)! Perhaps however a few words on editing are appropriate because this issue has presented me with more difficulty than some. The basic problem is that material is so abundant and of such quality that it is impossible to fit what is available for the Magazine into any kind of space that will balance the cost of the Magazines against subscription income. Choosing what to include and what to leave out has been particularly difficult this time and this of course means the same difficulty (probably intensified) for the next issue.*

*Another editorial task is to achieve a satisfactory mix. Each magazine has a distinctive character of its own and that character depends in its turn on the combination and flavour of the contents. Ideally I like something dealing with a modern "Petworth" issue and perhaps a distinctly "historic" article. These latter have been scarce of late years and the reason is simple enough: given the chronic shortage of space, it you don't need such articles, you don't write them. As it happens a substantial "historical" article is included in this particular issue. Articles on modern themes are difficult to plan ahead: they tend simply to "crop up". There may be two in an issue or there may be none at all. I think that's in the nature of things.*

*One solution to the space problem might be to omit reports on meetings, walks and visits but this would be effectively to cut the Gordian knot. These things are part of the very fibre of the Society. Perhaps the future lies with individual donations, or perhaps we'll just carry on as we are. Am I looking for funds? Well, perhaps I am, or putting it another way, perhaps I'm just airing a few ideas.*

*We don't often offer obituary notices but I feel we should mention the passing of Doris Ashby from Midhurst, not actually a member, but a very great friend of this Society. I first met her when, years ago, a speaker reported sick the day before a meeting. Doris came to help us out and was such a success that she was asked back many times over the years. She always liked the atmosphere in the Hall, 'My kind of crowd', she would tell me afterwards. She would have been asked back again next Spring. At first her unusual delivery seemed off-putting but after a minute or two you'd become accustomed to it and it became part of her charm. Soon you were bowled along on the wings of her boundless enthusiasm, good humour and sheer love of the flowers and animals she described, not to mention her superb photography. A great friend and character who will be sorely missed.*

*We append separate reports on Society events but not on allied events connected with the Leconfield Hall and Petworth Cottage Museum. A word about these will be appropriate here. As you know, the external restoration of the Hall is nearing completion; the renewing of the western steps and relocation of the telephone box will no doubt have been effected by the time you read this. The restoration is a triumph for the Leconfield Hall Committee and its own tribute to the Vice-Chairman Raymond Harris for his untiring efforts on the Hall's behalf. There have been several well-attended Hall events: the Food Fair organised again this year by Juliet Fynes has become virtually an institution. Martin Muncaster's talk on his father's*

life and work aided with slides, film and music from our old friend Fred Shepherd, and the celebratory evening with the Hammer Wood bell-ringers were very full, while Doug and Mary's



Lord Egremont rings the firebells to celebrate the restoration of the Hall. With him are Raymond Harris, Vice-Chairman of the Leconfield Hall Committee and Owen Shepherd, Chairman of Petworth Parish Council.

Photography by Rob Sadler.

(not forgetting their many helpers) food-packed Round the World in Eighty Minutes raised the extraordinary sum of £900 for Hall funds. Pearl and Ian's Petworth Video has now sold over 50 copies and at £7 each (with £1 going to Hall funds) is great value. They're still available from Pearl and Ian Godsmark at 37 Martlet Road, Petworth (342317). The next event is the silent film "Comin' thro the rye". With the expertise of John Simmons silent films have become something of a Hall (and Society) speciality.

You may think Petworth Cottage Museum has ground to a halt. You would be wrong. Charitable status has been attained now and we have a definite schedule of works for house and garden. Plenty of time to get everything absolutely right for an opening in April 1996. The project begins to look very promising indeed. Two fund-raising events in the Leconfield Hall were packed: the Cavalcade of Fashion with Mrs Penny, an old friend of this Society, and a

magical evening with Francisco Ygleria and his Paraguayan harp. I would certainly hope to have Francisco back in Petworth before too long. There is a video of his performance, details from Ann Bradley 343590 or at her new shop in High Street. One last word on the Museum. Does anyone else remember Mrs Cummings the Petworth House sempstress who lived at 346 High Street in the first decades of this century? We would be very anxious to talk to anyone who did.

By the time you read these notes we will have welcomed back the Toronto Scottish veterans for a fifth (or is it sixth?) time. Always a great pleasure for us. A report in the next issue.

David's visit to the RSPB Sanctuary at Wigginholt doesn't get a report. Shortage of space? Lack of interest? Not really. It was a great afternoon but I've lost my notes. Not a particularly distinguished note on which to end I'm afraid.

Peter

1st May 1995.

## August visitors - The Horse and Bamboo Theatre

The Horse and Bamboo Theatre group started in Rossendale, Lancashire in 1978 with a small bunch of enthusiasts and a donkey and cart. Bob Frith has been artistic director from the inception and early tours were in Lancashire, Cumbria and Dumfriesshire. Financial rewards were minimal. After a performance the show would be dismantled, put on the cart, and moved to another village. The pattern would be to travel the alternate day. As the company began to achieve a reputation it was possible to elaborate a little. For obvious reasons tours are in the summer.

The theatre are genuine travelling players and will be on a tour through Sussex. Horse and Bamboo are an unusual theatre, operating invariably with full head masks. It is a non-speaking theatre but with live accompanying music. The music is always live, never recorded. This year it will be percussion led with saxophone, trumpet and guitar. The company's roots are in folk theatre and in folk story-telling: the company often reuse and reanimate local legends and seek to recreate a local landscape to offer a story deeply rooted in local tradition. They have done this with considerable success in the Hebrides. This year's play however is based in Haiti and reflects the religious culture of the Haitian people. The play has been choreographed by the Ludus Dance Company of Lancaster. The theatre will be camping on Hampers Common in August and will come up from the Common to appear in the Leconfield Hall. They will also entertain on their way to the Hall, and give impromptu street performances during the afternoon. Performances are on Wednesday 2nd August and Thursday 3rd August. Profits to the Leconfield Hall. A Leconfield Hall Promotion.

Peter.

## Jonathan Newdick at Petworth House, April 1995

Sir Joshua Reynolds in his "Discourses" quotes the critic Roger de Piles: "If you draw persons of high character and dignity they ought to be drawn in such an attitude, that the portrait must seem to speak to us of themselves, and as it were, to say to us, 'Stop, take notice of me, I am that invincible King, surrounded by majesty...'"

This is a purist ethic which suggests that in the art gallery the pictures should do the talking, that words should not be necessary and that they are indeed an encumbrance. This is, up to a point an argument I find hard to disagree with but it cannot be a generalisation, it is largely impractical and is clearly unworkable. Even some of the most anonymous artworks, the cave paintings of Lascaux or Altamira are not wholly bereft of information. We know more or less when they were made and that compulsive investigative trait within the cultural historian ensures an ever-increasing knowledge or set of opinions even if some of these opinions are constructed around dubious beginnings.

The art exhibition containing nothing but images is a challenging exercise both aesthetically and curatorially and would be a most unusual, even unique event within our society. Even the experience of the conventional art exhibition is an event structured in an unusual way in that it is, while not wholly word-free, an experience heavily loaded in favour of the visual text at the expense of the literal text. Today, at the end of the twentieth century, outside the art gallery almost all imagery we encounter is accompanied by words: the newspaper, the magazine, the advertising hoarding, the film, the television documentary, the video. These are all two-part structures; word and image each a symbiotic dependent of the other. This seems set to continue and increase. The structuralist principle that the world is composed of relationships rather than things finds a compatriot in the principle of the inter-active. It seems not enough for many of us today to be concerned with one type of text: the CD-Rom has given us the ability to experience sights and sounds in all the variations, and taste and smell are conceivably not far behind. The concept of virtual reality is but a short distance from Huxley's "far more real than reality" experience of the Feelies in "Brave New World". Huxley's view is extreme but it is, in its dramatic manner relevant to the problems of the re-presentation of the portrait, concerned as it is with responses rather than actualities. When we look at a portrait, or any image, we cannot form a wholly objective account. In observing we form a relationship and it is this which becomes the basis of our experience of the particular work we are confronted with.

This relationship is difficult to cultivate at Petworth, or indeed anywhere where historical portraits: other genres are easier) are hung en masse in often (necessarily) dimly lit rooms. This is not a criticism of Petworth House, the National Trust, or, for that matter the National Portrait Gallery. It is a reflection on the problems of perception within a given environment. One of the most rewarding exhibitions I have been to was in May 1993 at the Accademia Italiana in London. Called 'Giorgio Morandi: five paintings for contemplation', it was just that. No hype, no catalogue which could double as a door stop, no fuss. Just a rare opportunity to forge a



*Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland by Jonathan Newdick  
after the painting by Sir Anthony Van Dyck. See "Re-presenting the portrait."*



Kitty Fisher by Jonathan Newdick after the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds. See "Re-presenting the portrait."

relationship with five exquisite little oil paintings of flowers and bottles, much, I supposed as Morandi himself would have formed his own relationship as he worked privately and slowly to produce his paintings. This is impossible at Petworth. With so many pictures (705 catalogued in the 1993 guide), many of them portraits, the temptation is always to move along to the next one in the hope that it will perhaps be more interesting than the last. But, like zapping channels it seldom is. Or, to be accurate it is seldom seen to be. Quantity diminishes our sensibilities so that Roger de Piles' wish that the portrait should speak for itself and say 'Stop, take notice of me' simply doesn't work. It is virtually impossible to take notice of an individual in the crowd unless that person is a visual exception or unless we have some prior knowledge of them.

When I first discussed the idea of working from some of Petworth's historical portraits with Dr. Diana Owen, the administrator, it was this function that I wanted to pursue and the aim hasn't changed: to select some individuals from the crowd and introduce them to the viewer in a particular way in the hope that they would be seen as not just 'some ancestor or other'. I felt the best way to achieve this was to combine the existing visual text with a literal one and to incorporate the two within the same unifying drawing style. This marriage of word and image has resulted in a set of pictures to which texts have not been added but which have grown organically, word and image (or text and text) together. It is perhaps a rather obvious solution but within the confines of wanting to do something with pen and ink and paying deference to my history of typography and book design it seemed the correct solution.

As well as functioning on the level of providing information to generate interest the drawings had to work as drawings on a wholly aesthetic level. To achieve this it would not have been sufficient simply to copy the original portraits; I needed to inject some of the spirit of today into a historical image. The drawings are therefore best described as free interpretations which nevertheless exhibit some quality or likeness of the original paintings. It is important for me to produce artworks within a historical context. I don't believe it is possible to make drawings, paintings or any art form without reference either conscious or unconscious to what has gone before. I see my work as part of a long tradition and the Petworth series drawings are thus particularly apposite.

Jonathan Newdick's series of drawings based on the portraits in the National Trust collection at Petworth House will be on display in the House from early July. They were on show at the Exhibition "Re-presenting the Portrait" in April this year.

## From Herbalists to Hair Shampoos

Two years ago, Dr. Nick Sturt's lecture on Petworth's Happy Scholar - Frederick Arnold - had ensured an eager audience for a return visit, and no one was disappointed. Nick's admiration for Peter's choice of titles for his books had tempted him to call his talk "Tread very carefully here" or "Stitchwort - thyme out of mint" but he had finally decided on "From Herbalists to Hair Shampoos" since his historical ramble through Sussex botany started with Turner's Herbal of

1568 and ended in the present with the shampoo firm Timothei's sponsorship of meadowland reserves in conjunction with the charity Plantlife.

There were surprises: woad growing in Rosemary Lane, probably a garden escape but a common wild flower 1000 years ago; wild chamomile in Petworth Park; broad-leaved cudweed being preserved in a Halnaker chalk pit because its use by motorcyclists prevents the growth of more invasive plants; bird's-eye speedwell now a common weed, being first recorded by the greatest Sussex botanist, Edward Borrer of Henfield in 1819; the possible pollination by nose as the speaker's wife enjoyed the scent of butterfly orchids - and got a little too close! Arnold could not escape mention, with his thick-leaved stonecrop still flourishing on Petworth walls, blue fleabane at Heath end, wild liquorice at Duncton and golden saxifrage at the Virgin Mary Spring, together with pictures of specimens from his herbarium. Arnold's sister too, whose initials were put on the facade of the old post office in the Market Square with the date 1883. So while many plants are lost with the demise of old meadowland, woodland and marsh, others come in, such as the rosebay willowherb along roads, railway lines and on derelict sites.

As Peter said, "We like having Nick - both as a speaker and as a member of the Society."

KCT

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## Those magnificent men - and women - and their flying machines

Sylvia Adams, herself a pilot, will be remembered for her infectious enthusiasm which brought her subject of early aviation in Sussex to life with interest and humour.

Centring on the history of Shoreham Aerodrome, she told of the characters and their machines: Piffard, Morison and the three Pashley brothers; the Bleriot, Bristols and Tiger Moths, placing them in their social and historical contexts so different from today. Contemporary newspaper accounts conveyed the excitement of the crowds which quickly gathered whenever an aeroplane flew over or, better still landed, as for example, on the Brunswick lawns at Hove in 1911, when fences were removed to allow Gilmore, the pilot, to bring his machine in so that he could lunch at the Royal Albion Hotel.

The first flights were short, straight runs across a field, barely clearing the grass. Then, from 1909, as cross-country flights became possible, the Brighton, Hove and Worthing Councils co-operated in establishing what is now the oldest fully licensed aerodrome - Shoreham - which is, in fact, at Lancing.

Racing between Brooklands and Shoreham became popular and by 1912 there were water planes which could take off and land on lakes and rivers, such as the Adur. Later models were quite large, with two engines and seating for passengers in the floats.

The First World War intervened, but despite campaigning by Claud Grahame-White, Britain was slow to see the military value of aircraft, eventually having to buy French machines.

Two of the Pashley brothers were killed within a few months of each other 1916-17, but Cecil went on to establish the flying club and teach more pupils to fly (including the speaker) than any other instructor.

Between the wars, joy-flights for the public were popular. Captain Barnard, originally one of the Duchess of Bedford's pilots, brought his "Flying Circus" on tour in 1931 and the Railway Air Service, run in conjunction with the Southern Railway, put on flights to a number of destinations, including the Isle of Man.

Laced with personal anecdotes, the presentation did indeed bring history to life for the younger members of the large audience, while the older ones were once again reminded of the tremendous technical advances that have occurred within their own lifetime. And, as Peter said, "You have to admit, I do get some good speakers"!

KCT

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## Life Story

We had the rare opportunity of hearing about prisons and the prison system from Mr. John Dovell, the Governor of HM Prison Kingston, Portsmouth, the only Establishment in Europe entirely devoted to life sentence prisoners.

Mr. Dovell has an interest in the old Petworth "House of Correction" and had brought with him the record book for the year of operation, 1877-8, which he had discovered when visiting Winchester prison. He had also obtained copies of the Minutes of an 1835 Government Inquiry into the prison service (What's new?!) to which evidence was given by John Mance, Petworth's Governor, one of the few professional prison governors at the time and well-known for his invention of an ergometer for measuring prisoners' work on a treadmill and the water pump connected to it.

The modern prison service exists to keep in custody those convicted by the courts and lead them humanely towards useful lives. Unfortunately, the media are quick to report those things that go wrong, while the successes are less newsworthy. Prisons are now run on business lines akin to Trust Hospitals and the schools, by a Government agency at an annual cost of £1.5 billion for the 52,000 in custody (the highest number ever). This compares with the £1.3 billion spent on legal aid. £3,864,000 goes to Kingston.

Started in 1874 and completed in 1877, the prison was on a green field site 3 miles outside Portsmouth, but the city has now grown to surround it. Constructed of Portland stone, sandstone and Sussex flint, it retains all the original cast-iron work and, with the help of English Heritage and Portsmouth City Council, it is being re-roofed in traditional slate rather than the sheet steel proposed by the prison authorities. Although the prison service was "nationalised" in 1877 (it is now being privatised), Kingston maintains its links with Portsmouth, even in social events such as the annual contest of sport and quizzes between the prison staff and inmates and representatives of the City Council.

Up to the early 1930s it served as the City prison, with male, female and juvenile prisoners

committed at the Quarter Sessions. It was a military detention centre during the 2nd World War, then a Preventative Detention Centre (for "incorrigible rogues") until, in 1962, it became a Borstal Recall Centre. With the abolition of the death sentence in 1970 and a consequent rise in life sentences over the following 25 years from 300 to 3000 at any one time, Kingston took "domestic murderers" and is now a Category B Prison for those regarded as threatening serious danger to the public if they escaped. In fact, there has been only one escape within living memory and that, with outside assistance. An increasing number of lifers will never be released, but for those who are, there is permanent probation and the possibility of recall at any time. However, the latest figures show that, of over 1,100 released, only 14 had re-offended by committing serious crimes. After arrest, there is a period of remand, and, if convicted, assessment before starting the sentence. Kingston normally receives a prisoner after he has served about 3 years of a life sentence. Before release on completion of his "tariff", his case is considered by a parole board which makes a recommendation to the Home Office. The final decision to release can be made only by the Home Secretary. Victims of the crime, their relatives and community are consulted and a programme of 18 months to 3 years in an open prison is devised before release.

In answering a wide range of questions, Mr. Dovell spoke of the value of female officers now employed, the difficulties posed by the closure of the large mental hospitals which had led to an influx of offenders with psychiatric problems, and the building of a special unit to house 30 pensioner prisoners. Mr. Dovell's clear delivery had given us a fascinating insight into, for most we hope, unfamiliar territory, although John Patten, proposing a vote of thanks, thought that, after the speaker, he had spent more time in prisons - in a professional capacity - than anyone else present.

KCT

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## Writers in a Sussex Landscape

No words of mine can adequately convey the weave of poetry, prose and pictures presented by Mike Smith, author and lecturer. The varied beauty of our County has attracted and inspired authors of local, national and international repute for a long time and to hear extracts from their writings while watching colour slides of their Wealden, Downland, seacoast and river valley contexts, stirred the memory and imagination.

Of the guides and interpreters, naturalists and countrymen, we heard of course from Belloc - the Four Men - and Kipling - The Road through the Wood; E.V. Lucas, W.H. Hudson (Kingley Vale), A.E.W. Mason (Stane Street and Bignor Roman Villa), Tickner Edwardes (Burpham), Richard Jefferies (Brighton and Beachy) Esther Meynell, Sheila Kaye-Smith and E.F. Benson (the Rye area), Barclay Wills (the Adur Valley). More surprisingly, perhaps, Graham Green (Ditchling Beacon), Gilbert White (staying in Ringmer) and Dirk Bogarde, writing in his autobiography about a strange casual meeting with Virginia Woolff when fishing with friends in the Cuckmere.

With humour, anecdote and information - such as the derivation of Beachy from the Norman French meaning Beautiful Head, thereby dispensing with the need for adding the additional but customary "Head" - the amply entertained and educated audience was, for once, without questions for the speaker, apart from "When can he come again!".

KCT

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## Simon's Titty Hill Walk

To Iping crossroads then down through Iping village, over the bridge I knew already from Garland photographs, but on to Queen's Corner and the churchyard at Iping Marsh. Unusual territory for us but yet not that far from home. We were right on the north-west Sussex border Simon told us. It was a distinctive time: the bracken at its deadest, no sign of green shoots and everything seeming dried by the biting April winds. The bracken was in parts trodden almost to dust. A mixture of National Trust and common land, but commoning days are only a memory now. In its heyday this area would have been much less wooded than it is now. The lack of grazing land allowed silver birch and ash to colonise. The absence of green made the woods strangely quiet, some catherine wheel fungus on a strangely new-seeming branch was perhaps a relic of autumn. The furze bloomed, the sun shone, but as we climbed it became colder. Small roads intersected the bracken and Sunday drivers made their way to the top and down again. The views became longer as we continued to climb. There were deer in the light brown bracken, moving quickly with their white tails like rear-lights on a car. A good area for snakes but we didn't see any and the biting wind didn't encourage diversions. It was best to keep walking; despite the forecast it was a grey day and becoming rapidly greyer. This was "hurts" territory. The young shoots were showing already on the hillside. Families used to pick them like blueberries. Up to the look-out point and a vast view. Simon pointed out some of the places: Fernhurst, Blackdown, Friday's Mill, Hollycombe, Rake, Wheatham; the eye moved round toward Butser. Time to come down from the heights: out of the wind, over the road at Redford and back to Simon's for tea. The phlox already looked strong in the long border. Very nice indeed. Thank you Simon and Claudia. You made us so welcome you're running a serious risk of a return visit!

P.

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## Legless in Stag Park. David and Linda's Walk

David and Linda had thought the walk out carefully. It was almost two years since we had been, looking then at the tulip trees and it was wet. This time we would start from Stag Park Farm



itself, not visit all the lakes, but we would see the very best of the bluebells. There was a newspaper report that the bluebell was a threatened species because people were digging them up to sell at car boot sales, but we would find there to be plenty left. Anyway, room to park in the farmyard silent now with all the strange quietude of modern farming. With the familiar dovecote on the right we set off through the spring meadow grass and into the bluebell woods. Occasionally as the sun arrowed through the tree canopy it seemed to toast the bluebell scent so that it became overpowering. The colour was intense, so difficult to reproduce on slide or photograph. Jackson's Lake was the first 'stop', the tadpoles black around the edge. Then a glimpse of Whites Green through walls as we passed. Shaven chestnut poles, skeleton-white in the woods, wood spurge and on the way to Figgs Pond the blue spires of bugle. Anglers and three trout lying on the green grass. Figgs, always rather solitary, would have a twin, another reinstated pond. David didn't know it if had an old name. Here was a chance to see it excavated and empty. It would fill naturally with the rain, springs play little part here, David said. There's no liner the native clay suffices. Across to Great and Little Spring and Luffs. How many times have we stood at Little Spring in the sunlight, on the close-cropped grass? On the way again, a slow worm looked like a stick in the grass. A lizard without legs not a snake at all. It didn't seem to mind Ian's video and at last disappeared into an invisible hole in the grass. Back across the spring grass to Stag Park, the battered Scots Pine still keeping a vigil over the barns. The classic Petworth Society walk; the weather cool enough to be pleasant - but never cold. Thanks very much David and Linda.

P.

## Re Magazine 79

Our enquiry concerning Ebermoe Church Monthly met with no response. Surely **someone** has heard of it or seen a copy?

The tennis enquiry elicited a photograph of Mr Lambert and the following note from Dr Shelia Haines:

With reference to the interesting article in the March edition on tennis professionals at Petworth House from the beginning of this century it may be of interest to hear of the tennis played there almost two hundred years ago.

Thomas Sockett, tutor to the 3rd Earl of Egremont's sons, records in his journal for 1805 and 1806 that he played tennis against his pupil, Henry, and his neighbour 'Mitford' from Pitts Hill - 'beat him'. His regular opponent, however, was Carleton, footman to the Earl. Sockett and Carleton seem to have been equally matched; sometimes one winning sometimes the other.

Sockett also played against the 'French Princes', émigrés visiting Petworth. On 17 Oct 1805 at 9 in the morning; 'played at Tennis with the D[uc] de Berry - I had expected to find him a good player but was disappointed'. He was not disappointed, and needed his wits about him, when he played against 'Monsieur' the brother of the executed Louis XVI. 'M has been a particular good player and still plays very well much better than I can, but by playing most of

my balls to the D de B [erry] I contrived de leur faire tete' - I contrived to issue them with a challenge.

In April 1806, whilst in London, Sockett went to see 'a double match at Tennis between Monsieur and Barcellon and Sir John Shelley and Ld Fred Beauclerk'. He does not record who won this Anglo French contest.

Quotation from 'Mr Sockett's Journal'  
West Sussex Record Office, PHA 1679  
By kind permission of Lord Egremont.

Re the travelling Dairy School. The County Archivist writes as follows:

The County Council acquired responsibility for technical education under the Technical Instruction Act, 1890, and a committee was formed in 1891 to consider and report as to the working of the Act. This committee instituted and sponsored a variety of educational schemes: initially in agriculture, horticulture, fruit culture, dairy work, and hygiene, but broadening later into more academic subjects. The schemes were funded by the receipts in respect of beer and spirit duties (levied under the Local Taxation (Customs & Excise) Act of 1890).

The travelling dairy schools were established in 1892 (under the regulations laid out on the enclosed sheets) and ran during the summer months. That appears to be the year in which your grandmother attended, as in 1893 and 1894 the instructress was not Edna Walter, but Mabel Maidment. After this, the travelling schools seem to have lapsed. Transport appears to have been effected by horse and van, since expenditure for these items appears in the accounts for 1892-1893.

## Tarring the old-fashioned way

I worked for the old Midhurst Rural District Council before the County Council took over all roads about 1930. Then I went on for the County Council until I retired. I was always keen on photography and still have a few black and white snaps of those early days when the old RDC's had charge of the small roads and the County dealt only with the main through roads. In the 1920s many minor roads were still simply rolled stone, filled in with earth "slurry". They were very dusty in the summer but became worn down to the rolled stone in the winter. Much of the work was tarring, working usually in a gang of eight. You'd sweep the surface carefully prior to tarring; the barrels of tar having been left in threes or fours at appropriate places along the road. They would be lifted with a block and pulley on to the horse-drawn tar-pot then poured into the tar-pot to heat. When the tar was hot it would be pumped by hand to be sprayed on the road. The horses would be on hire from local contractors on a daily basis. The council didn't keep horses themselves. If it was wet you couldn't tar and we'd be found other work. You could tar however if the weather was windy, then you'd get absolutely plastered with it as the wind blew the hot tar into your face and made your skin peel.

As I say, I was keen on photography in my early days. It wasn't long before the horses were replaced by motorised transport with contractors like Fred Sadler at Petworth. The pictures in the Magazine show it as it was in the late 1920s.

Jack Kingshott

## Marcus .... 1

The wind of early March gusted down over Sugar Knob Hill, all the way sweeping the plain from the North East. We would watch the fires of London town burning, lighting up the night sky, way back in the days of 1940, the days of the Blitzkreig and all the folly of Man at War ... "This Day.. I declare that This Country, Our England, is in a State of War with Germany!" Pompous, but it seemed to be necessary at the time ... Marcus .. knew nothing of such momentous events. He was a very small little bundle of fur, in a not very deep hole. Every now and then a larger bundle of fur had come to bring a warm up and a feed. He could hear the wind howling across the top of the burrow. Only made him snuggle the closer. It did not hold any great dread. There was no need to think survival.

Then came the day. A bolt of sunshine had crept into the hole. Alarmed, a little .. sent his blood racing. "The Four Way Lodge is opened. The smokes of Spring go up to clear the brain. The young men's hearts are troubled. Now The Red Gods make their medicine again!"

Not really knowing much about the Why and Wherefore Marcus crept forth from the burrow and blink-eyed looked at the rolling fields away down to Shimmings Hill .. and then .. he wondered, the warm fur that had been a regular part of his life to date, bringing a feed, had not been around so much of late. Something going on around here? To keep a chap from the pangs of hunger.

Eat Marcus. That grass is good grass. Your cousins in the far corners of the Earth need to stand upon a hillock, watch sharp eyed, for the predators and run as swift to a scrubby bush in the desert sand. All of which, of course, meant little enough to a fledgling hare as the sun came warm, the cold wind dropped and the world lit up, quite aglow: the depths of the hole had been dark and oft times cold.

A thudding in the Earth .. a noise .. a sound .. ringing across the air .. He did not know that it was a Hunting Horn .. it had however, a menace that mere instinct told him Danger .. Scuttle Scuttle .. back into the hole ... Security .. the first tremors of survival were upon him.

## Marcus .... 2

Knew a horse called Marcus. He lived with the vet. Mr. and Mabel Spurgeon. He was a black horse, as I recall. Pleasant sort of a horse. Went quietly about what, as a horse, he was about. He did not give much thought to the world around him, plodding quietly on routine exercise, and the gentle hack out. It was usually on a nice day when it did not rain. Mabel was always smartly turned out, looking very elegant, as the ladies did, in the days of the long riding habit,

polished boots, black hat and riding veil .. what a splendid sight as they rode the now old-fashioned side saddle. A long day's hunting was just a long day that promised a day of rest on the morrow and an extra ration of crushed oats and a little more in the hay net. His mane was ablowing that March day as we climbed the gentle hill, over the brook, down from Barton's Lane, up through the gate. He was quite used to opening gates. His attention wandered out towards the cows that were grazing in contentment of the warm winds of March that blew the slopes. No need to turn their backs to it .. the grass was coming through, they were enjoying the spring feeding.

Have you ever seen two hares boxing? They box! They turn away. They gallop, a few yards. They turn. They gallop towards one another. They stand up on hind legs. They box.

Methinks, to this day, the horse was as enchanted as I. His ears twitched. He tossed his head. He snorted .. I touched him with my heels and he leapt forward in half a buck, which surprised and near unseated me .. and taking hold of the bit he was away up the field like a two year old ...

John Francis

## 'Those that are never seen!'

I was born at Flixboro near Scunthorpe in 1903 and went out to work as soon as I could leave school. My first job was "setting" potatoes in the fields in early spring, 8 o'clock till 5 in the afternoon for one and sixpence a day. And very cold work it was too. I did two seasons setting but only one digging as in 1918 I went to Normanby Hall near Scunthorpe, seat of the Sheffield family, to take the place of a footman who was away at the war. They'd never had anyone of my age there before but my employment was a sign of the drain on the work force that was a result of the war. The better houses were careful, in earlier years, to take on people who already had some experience in a smaller establishment. I fitted in the more easily as my mother already worked at the Hall. As well as general duties I had to double for the absent footman. In fact when the footman did return from the war I was retained and spent some four years at Normanby. At the end of those years I knew it was time to move away and look for a slightly more senior position, that was how you gradually moved up the servants' hierarchy.

My first move was to Wiltshire to work for Sir Ernest Wills, the tobacco magnate at Littlecote, his country house, as third housemaid out of five. I also acted as travelling housemaid when the family went away. There was a certain network of contacts among servants and I already knew the head house-maid at Lord Leverhulme's house, "The Hill" at Hampstead. As she recommended me I had the job without an interview. The house was on the Heath not far from the Spaniard's Pub and funerals would pass on their way to Golders Green. I was always quite adventurous and eager to explore. I remember walking the city walls at Chester while a travelling housemaid and also walking to Marble Arch from Hampstead and then catching a bus back. There wasn't much free time when you were in service so my view was that it was best to use it. Another adventure was to walk along the Embankment in search of the Tower of London.

Most positions came through applying, and an agency would send out suitable opportunities if you consulted them. They'd usually offer you a choice of three. Mrs. Massey's was the agency I used and it was through her that I came to Petworth on trial, change at Pulborough, to be met at Petworth Station with a horse and trap. It was the late summer of 1926.



*Ivy Richardson at Petworth about 1928*

Florence Roper was head housemaid at Petworth at this time, a rather older lady than most of us, but I sensed rather short on experience. I was quite capable of working on my own initiative by this time. Money was paid every three months, the housekeeper Mrs. Counley bringing it round. We had three shillings washing or laundry money a week and it was said that before I came there was half a crown a week beer money. This was now a thing of the past. One small thing sticks out from the earlier weeks and that is hearing and wondering about "the old dirty chapel". I had misheard someone talking of "the old Percy chapel".

I gathered that Mr. Wickham the butler or "house steward" was quite new himself. His son had measles soon after I came and I caught it too. I was rather subject to measles and had had it before. I was put into a room with disinfectant sheets outside. I remember alternately feeling freezing and so hot I could hardly stand it. Lady Leconfield was very put out that she hadn't been told about my illness; she had a great fear of measles and like me had had the disease more than once before. When I was convalescent I used to go out picking dandelions for Mrs. Watson to make wine: she was Scots and her husband looked after the horses. Mrs. Watson and I continued friendly all the time I was at Petworth.

The night watchman would begin the day at six o'clock. Uniform was print frocks in the morning and black dresses with white aprons and black stockings in the afternoon and evening.

In winter of course we had to begin with fires. As second housemaid I avoided the really heavy scrubbing of floors and had a definite territory that took in the North Gallery and the Carved Room, the White and Gold Rooms and the White Library. We used Brasso on all brass lock plates and stair rods and took burnt coal off the steel bars on the grates with emery paper. We'd use fairy paper for the summer and put it in the grates, with diamond shapes cut into the paper to make it look more attractive. Once a week four of the girls would scrub out the Marble Hall. Every three weeks there would be a really good clean, moving the furniture and really getting the dust out of the carpets. We would sprinkle either damp salt or damp tea-leaves into the carpet to soak up the dust, one or the other. It was amazing how black the salt became. Tea-leaves were always carefully saved for this purpose. Similarly we had to save old toothbrushes to clean the wooden carvings. I remember the woodworm destroyed one of the Grinling Gibbons' ducks and "Papa" Hoad had to execute another one. He did it from the life and the "model" began to smell well before he had finished. The paintings we'd dab with a weak linseed oil solution on a very soft duster. Henry VIII is the one I most remember; as with the best paintings his eyes seemed on you wherever you were in the Carved Room. Once a year all the china was taken out of the cabinets and carefully washed. Florence Roper supervised, but we did the actual washing. I can still tell good china just from the feel of it. No, I never broke any and I knew to look for repairs, you didn't wash that part in case you dissolved the gum. One thing I will say, after Petworth I've always had the knack of being able to move very heavy furniture, lifting it off when it had sunk into the carpet. There was, as you can imagine, a lot of brass-cleaning, when I first arrived we used Brasso but latterly Duraglit. The statues we'd sponge with soda, then with soft soap.

Mary Standing was a great friend of mine and was already working as a housemaid when I arrived. She was a local girl and her parents lived down North Street. I'd often go to her home on my days off. Once when we were both down there, Mary and I were offered some very well matured parsnip wine, a few years old. It seemed mild enough, like lemonade, and I took a good tumbler full, then another. Mary too had a glass or more. As we were walking back up North Street the wine began to take hold of us, the pavement seemed to rise to meet us and we could hardly stand. As we swayed about a policeman stopped to ask what we were doing. When we said we came from Petworth House he didn't believe us. It was Mr. Howick in the North Street Lodge who finally had to vouch for us. Mary was learning music and had permission to practise on the Audit Room piano.

After a year or two Drusilla Ford (later Mrs. Greest) came and I became very friendly with her. Silla came from Derbyshire and as northern girls we tended to stick together. I remember taking Silla to London. We went from Brighton and it cost us five shillings. Ethel Drury from Normanby was at Midhurst and I often went to Cowdray to see her. I met other girls from Normanby too. Quite a reunion! We had some fun even at work. I remember Silla "accidentally" tipping a bucket of water down the spiral staircase over someone who had upset her. Curiously, as a Northerner, I found Petworth very cold. I don't think I've ever been so cold as I was at Petworth. It wasn't so much the snow which usually seemed to stop at Duncton Hill, just a feeling of being cold. We cycled a lot on our days off and Esme Ewin, another of our housemaids, had a grandmother on the Cowdray Estate at Ambersham. We'd often go over to see her. I remember the floods coming up one evening so that we had a job to get through on

our bicycles. Esme had stayed too long despite her grandmother warning us! I'd often walk out into the Park and sit on the boathouse to watch the lake, or walk up toward the Gog. Or we might go down the Swan for a drink or walk to Midhurst. We also walked to Chanctonbury. Once we took a bus to Aldershot to see the Military Tattoo.



*Ivy Richardson (2nd left) with other housemaids at Petworth House about 1928.*

I knew Mrs. Cummings, the seamstress, quite well. As I recall she had five shillings a day for mending. She'd mend tea-towels, or things from the kitchen and the staff looked after her very well. She had her own room upstairs and worked from ten o'clock till four. I always thought it a bit unfair that my mother at Normanby worked nine till five and was paid three shillings! Mrs. Cummings had coffee and scones when she came, a meal at mid-day and tea in the afternoon. Mrs. Thompson was another lady who came in to help, she worked with the housemaids. Like Mrs. Cummings she lived out. Sometimes Mrs. Cummings would sit and sew with Mrs. Counley the housekeeper.

We didn't see the kitchen at all except in very unusual circumstances. Certainly the kitchen was no part of our territory and our presence, I always thought, wasn't welcomed. When there were house guests we'd collect breakfasts from the still-room. We had our own meals in the housemaids' sitting-room, looking out over the gravestones in the churchyard. I remember once thinking that I'd seen ghosts among the tombs but it turned out to be a confirmation class coming into church in their white veils. We had main meals in the sitting-room, minor meals like supper in our own rooms.

Lord Leconfield we rarely saw. Remember the old saying that the best servants are those that are never seen. We travelled from the Servants' Block through the tunnels, never across the drive. That would have meant dismissal. If we ever did see Lord Leconfield he was very polite. Once every three weeks we had to clear out his inner "sanctum" near the Tapestry Hall. It was

an unwritten law that everything had to be put back exactly as it had been. In the season Lord Leconfield might be up at four o'clock in the morning to go cub-hunting and he'd be out for two hours before returning for breakfast. My information was that he always carried a revolver and shot the fox when he had caught it but of course I was never at the hunt. I did take some pictures from the House. I can't find them just at the moment but I had them recently. I remember the notice on the Park Gates, "Beware of the bitches". His Lordship would never have a lift, which would have made our work much easier. It was said that he had once seen a child's arm caught in a lift and after that would have nothing to do with them. We hardly ever saw the Leconfields' adopted children, Peter and Elizabeth, and the nursemaids didn't give the impression that they wanted us to talk to them. Earl Spencer, then Lord Althorp, was often down at Petworth with them. His parents were often abroad and he came down to have other children for company.

There were palms in a recess at the bottom of the grand stairs: no doubt Fred Streeter kept a keen eye on these. I remember him being quite annoyed when we picked some daffodils. He said we were spreading pollen to other flowers. Receptions were often held in the House at this time and, obviously, Fred Streeter had to look to the floral decoration. Usually the venue was the Carved Room and there would be some kind of entertainment. Lady Irene Vanbrugh sang there once. We would be in attendance with the urns and refreshments which the footmen would carry round to the guests. While we were working with the tea-urns and there was food on the table, we'd slip the lids off the big blue vases and drop cakes down into them to pick up later when everyone had gone.

The family were away quite a lot; that's when we got the work really done. When they were home there would be frequent house-guests. The lights went off at a certain time and candles would be set out on a table, each guest taking a candlestick from the table. Winston Churchill wanted a fire at seven o'clock for when he got up. I remember Austin Chamberlain and his daughter and Stanley Baldwin. Col. Sir Gordon Carter, Clerk to the Course at Ascot, was a very regular visitor and it was a tradition that instead of leaving a tip he'd treat us to a day at Ascot. Half the staff went either day. We could go anywhere except the Royal Enclosure. We'd start off by leaving our coats at Col. Carter's house and having a sherry. One year there was a thunderstorm that flooded the course. It was a year when long dresses had come back into fashion, and the storm was so severe that the trees were bent almost double. Tea-trays came floating down the track and there were only two races that day. The women had no idea how to keep their long dresses dry and when we arrived at the station we were surprised to see some of these dresses hung out to dry. I went to Ascot on each of the five years I spent at Petworth but I've been only once since. Other visitors? Well I remember Queen Mary coming when the King was recuperating at Bognor. She wanted to see an old edition of Chaucer in the Library. I had an urgent summons to open the Library but found to my consternation that the royal party were sitting on the chest that held the key. I had to ask them to get up!

I left on a foggy November day in 1931. I was supposed to leave on the Saturday but I did an extra day to help Lady Leconfield. She was sorry to see me go and I never saw her to say goodbye. She wrote and thanked me when I got home. She'd seen the cab go by with me in it and realised she'd never seen me to wish me well. I still have her letter somewhere. I'd sometimes looked after her when her own lady's maid was away and she always said she was

very happy with what I did for her. I went back to Normanby where my mother was still working. I was First Housemaid but earning rather less than when I was at Petworth. I have never been back to Petworth but I often think about those days.

Ivy Richardson was talking to Diana Owen and the Editor.

## 'Economical with the jam ...'

I was born at Lickfold in 1899 and grew up there. We moved to Dial Green, Lurgashall when I was 16. I went of course to Lodsworth school. My wife went to Lurgashall school and often talked of Mr. Roots the schoolmaster. Obviously I too had a certain amount of contact with Lurgashall. I'd see Len Farthing the Lurgashall baker who had an old blind pony. She had the habit of shying up at the rear and the shafts had to be so set that the pony couldn't buck its leg over them. Lurgashall Club day ceased when the "Club", a local benefit society, disbanded in 1913 but I do remember going there once. The Northchapel band always played and the bandmaster Mr. Spooner played trumpet with one hand and beat time with the other. That year Tom Smith came out for the Club day fair and as he came up the hill into Lurgashall, his horses, who were exhausted with carrying the swinging boat, fell back against the horses carrying the organ, so that the latter dropped the organ. It made it an expensive outing for Tom Smith. I always wanted to play in the Northchapel band but the Great War stopped all that.

For myself it was Lodsworth school. I vividly remember my first day: Lodsworth, rather unusually, had the Infants school at one end, then the schoolmaster's house in the middle, and the Senior school at the other end. I set off to school with my brother and sister, both older than me and already in the senior school. We took our own sandwiches as we always did. My main memory is of looking round a corner and crying because I couldn't see my brother and sister, they of course were with the seniors. We'd walk the two miles in from Lickfold and then back. Mr. Tydeman was the master there when I went but Mr. Godber took over after a while. The first day Mr. Godber was in charge I was helping Mr. Reeve at Cobdens Farm in Lickfold to take some heifers to Fittleworth for grazing. We got as far as Fitzlea at Selham but the heifers got the "neddy" and we had to stop. One we left at Fitzlea, the remaining five we brought back to Lickfold. I would have been perhaps seven or eight at the time. Another time I drove seven bullocks from Chiddingfold to Witley Station but I would have been a bit older then.

When I was twelve there was the chance to leave school. I went to Midhurst, just opposite the Half Moon, to sit my leaving exam. The essay was about what I had seen on my way there that morning. I failed it. My parents were understandably somewhat put out, because if I had passed, I could have been out earning a living. Instead I had to go on until I was fourteen. I did earn a book prize for being the "Most Popular Boy" in the school. The book was given by Mr. J. H. Bray in March 1913 and I still have it. Actually I was a little surprised at the award: as I remember I was a young devil!

My first job was at Cobdens Farm. I think the Randall family had an interest in it and I

would often open the gate for James Randall. He was the village baker and a member of the Cokelers or Dependants. They didn't have a chapel at Lodsworth and he would go off regularly in his horse and trap to worship at Northchapel. I was told that he'd had the shop built. It was said that he'd started in a very small way, just coming round with things like tea and sugar he'd bought in bulk and packeted himself. In my time I can remember him delivering orders, each tied up with string. Often the string would slip as he picked them up. The order would have been incorrectly tied and this would irritate him: the string had to be taut enough for him to hold the order in one hand and his bread basket in the other. "Winkle" Ayling worked for Randall for a time but left to set out on his own. Winkle, at least in the early days, specialised rather in "smalls" ie cakes and buns rather than bread as such. My brother was always nicknamed 'Doughnut' because he had several spells with Winkle at Lodsworth and another after the bakery moved to Lickfold. Winkle Ayling was a rare joker: there was always a question about his economical use of jam. "Well the pot was on the table," he would say as if the very presence of jam near the pastry was good enough. Some people thought that was as near as it ever got! Winkle sang in Lodsworth choir and bought one of the early wind-up gramophones. He charged us a penny each to go down and listen to his records. "Boiled beef and carrots" was one I remember. Unless I am very much mistaken the picture of him in the last Magazine shows him speaking through the huge trumpet that came with the gramophone. Mr. Edgell the rector was always very curious as to how the buns were shone. "Beeswax and turpentine" was as near as Winkle would go. In fact the custom at Randalls was to use brown sugar and milk, but as regards shining them Winkle certainly had the edge.

The old Reading Room at Lodsworth was under the control of Mrs. Enticknap. We boys used to treat it as a kind of social club and Mrs. Enticknap would make us coffee at a halfpenny a cup. There was a billiard table for us. The Village Hall wasn't built until the 1920s.

As I've said I started work at Cobdens Farm when I left school but I'd already worked there before I left. When Mr. Randall took my brother haying I had twelve cows to look after, ten in milk and two barren. I was under-cowman. When I was sixteen, my parents thought I should have a rise. "How much do you want?" asked Mr. Randall. "Eight shillings a week," I replied. "A boy like you wants eight shillings a week?" "I've got to have it," I said. Well I did get it and stayed on for a while before moving to work for the Phillipson Stows at Blackdown House, as a gardener.

There were some characters about then. A doctor attended at the Bull on the Midhurst Road and a man from Dial Green went there with some ailment. The doctor mixed him up a bottle of medicine. It was a very hot day so on the walk back he drunk it all to quench his thirst! Once my Dad was working at Colchett Farm trimming hedges. When he found a wasp's nest He cautiously trimmed round it. He knew better than to interfere. His mate, (the same man who had drunk the medicine), asked him why he'd left the bulge. When he was told he replied, "You afraid of bloody wopsers?" He immediately cut into the middle of it: he was stung so much his head seemed to swell but he took no notice at all.

Mr. Pain, the Lurgashall rector, was a nice man. My grandfather made shingles, the wooden tiles used on the church spire, I remember seeing his shed stacked high with them. They would be used for the renovation of 1907, I would be eight or nine at the time. Before the weather vane was put on Mr. Pain made sure every child in the school had actually touched it, so that

they could look up at it and know that they had been in physical contact with it. The old Lurgashall maypole was done away with in 1906. Mr. Pain's wife used to play the organ in church, sometimes if he went out to Roundhurst he'd have tea with Mr. and Mrs. Hyde at the farm, then come back through the fields. If it was muddy and he went straight into the church he'd leave dirt on the floor and this used to upset his wife who'd have to clear it up. I remember he had a bike with an old-fashioned string saddle. I was in the choir for a time under Mr. Pain, and I never went to church with my fiancée before I was married. I was always in the choir and she went on her own. Afterwards when I left the choir and we lived at Blackdown, we'd walk in together to church.

I was already working in the gardens at Blackdown House when war broke out in 1914 but was still too young to be called up. I enlisted at Horsham in 1915 but wasn't actually called up until 1917. Most of that year I was training before going to France in January 1918. After landing at Boulogne and a night in the barracks at Arras, we went up to the Front in lorries. The trees were just stumps cut to pieces by shrapnel and we walked to the trenches over duck-boards laid over the mud, with bullets flying past us. It was a world of mud and water. The first night I was put on gas guard, to warn if gas was on the way. The main body of the men were sleeping in the "pit-cave", a large dug-out with sacking over the opening. If the wind was in a certain direction the gas would come up like a fog, but gas could only be used if the wind would carry it. Fortunately on that first night nothing happened.

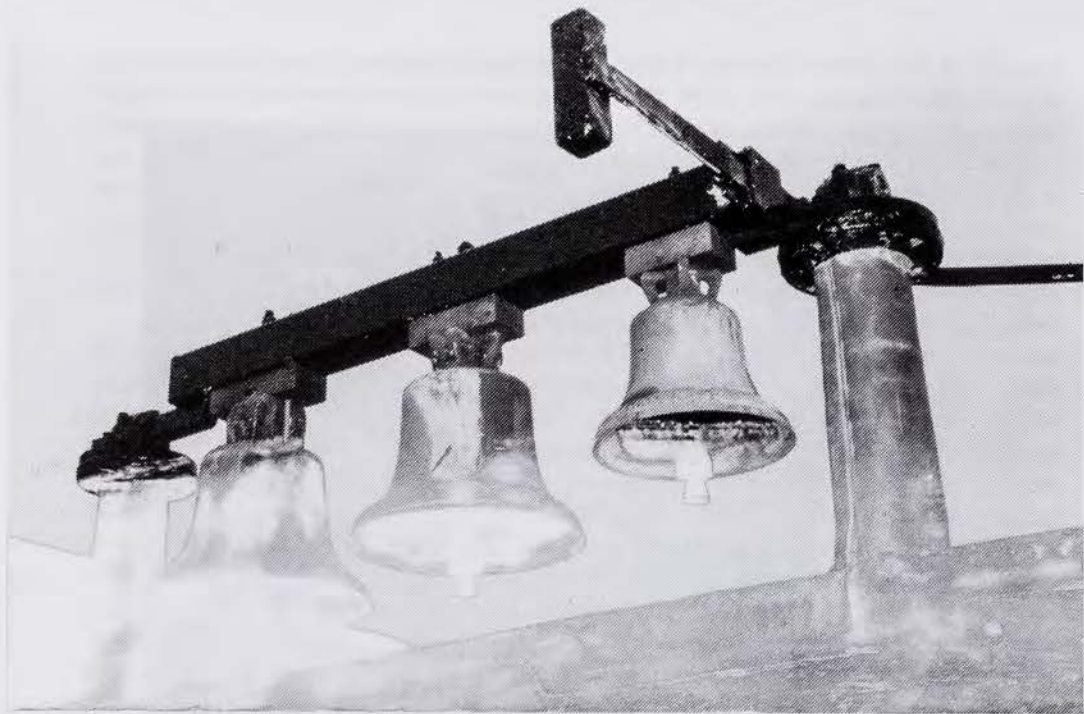
When I returned and married, I bought my furniture from the Dependants at Northchapel and they delivered it to Blackdown by horse and cart. As I had spent £50 with them I was given a little tray. I still have it. You could buy absolutely anything from Northchapel Stores. I had my furniture as I say, but also cooking utensils, frying pans, a tea-pot, wooden spoons I remember were threepence each.

We had been told that if we went to the War our jobs would be safe. That didn't happen and I was on the dole for a time. In the end the official said, "Don't come back here any more, there's a job at Witley. If you do come back you won't get any money." It was a fourteen mile trip on the bike from Ewhurst Lodge to Witley camp. Fifty-five shillings for a full week. If it was wet you had to sit round to see if you could start. If you didn't start you lost the day. The job involved pulling down a camp formerly used by the Canadians. I might be at Milford Station when work stopped at 5.30, then cycle a full seventeen miles home. I remember going into work for the half-day Saturday at 6 o'clock in the morning, then cycling back to Singleton for a football match. For home matches the football team changed at the Noah's Ark and left their jerseys under the benches for the next week. There were no washing machines or detergents then! One last curious incident I remember. A rabbit was being raffled at the Three Horseshoes at Lickfold. Mr. Quick was the landlord then. It was a domestic rabbit so there was a lot of meat on it and in those days definitely a prize worth winning. Someone however had cut off its ears and it looked a bit odd but none the less desirable for that. I laughed so much I fell off the bench and the landlord refused to serve me thinking I was drunk. We didn't win it and when we came out of the pub we couldn't get our cycle lamps to burn. We had to walk back up by Windfallwood. Next day we investigated and found someone had stuffed the ears in our lamps as a practical joke. By the way does anyone remember a sheep with six legs and a double-headed calf at Petworth Fair? It would be well over eighty years ago now.

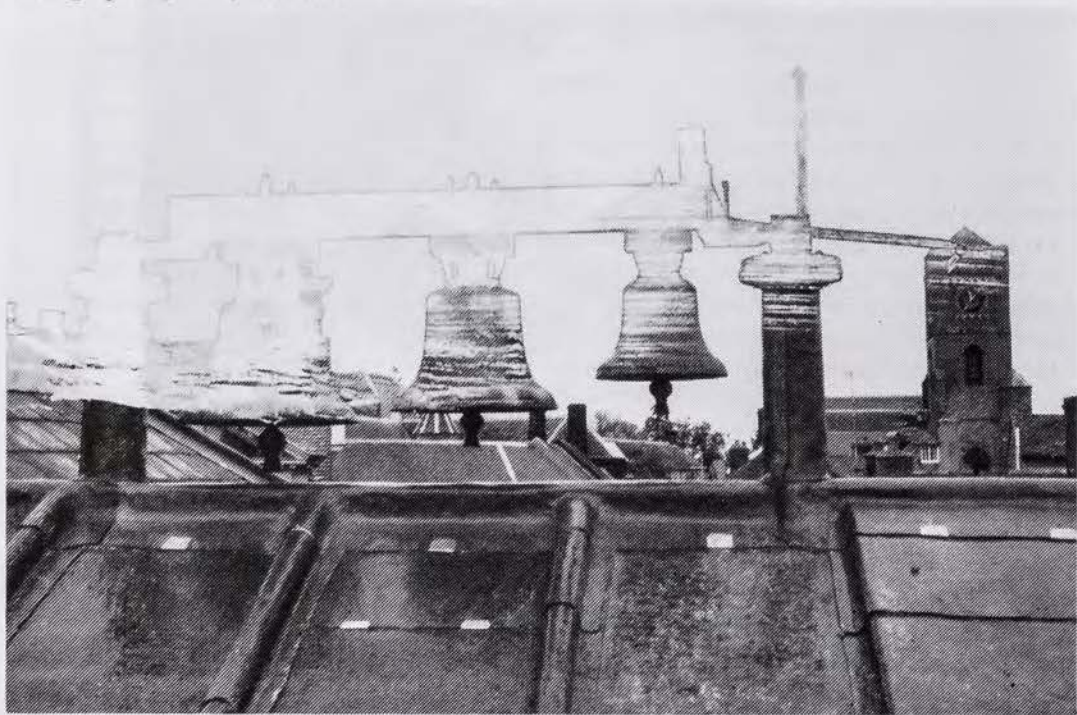
Percy Boxall was talking to Mike Hubbard and the Editor.



*The Horse and Bamboo Theatre take to the road.*



*Two views of the Leconfield Hall fire-bells.  
Photographs by Barry Norman.*



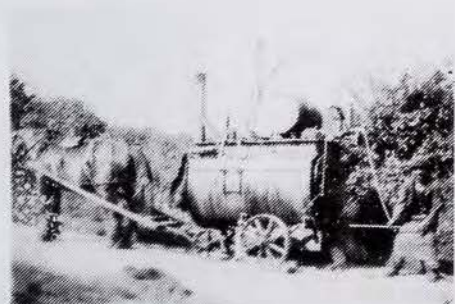
*1. Sweeping prior to tarring.*



*2. The horse-drawn tar-pot.*



*3. Horse cart with chippings  
or sand to use after tarring.*



*4. Spraying the tar.*



*5. View of tar-pot and pulley.*

*Photographs by  
Jack Kingshott.*

*See Tarring the roads 1920s.*

## 'And why the moon looked cold and yellow...'

My father originally worked at West Lavington for Cowdray, I don't know why he decided to work for Lord Leconfield, but he did. From West Lavington we moved to Station Road to live with my grandmother. It wasn't long before a small cottage became vacant, 301 North Street, next to Mr. Peacock the builder. It would be 1927 or 1928. The rooms were small and dark and there was a little black range for cooking, no bath, electric or gas. What my brother and I did have however was a big garden running right down to the fields. As time went on we ventured across to Mr. Nevatt the gardener, I would be perhaps three. He'd give us one of his extra big hairy gooseberries for a treat, or we'd go over to see Mrs. Hill, up the high old stone steps to her back door. Times were hard in the late 1920s and all the gardens and allotments were carefully dug and planted. My brother and I would drive down the garden path aboard a trolley Dad had made up out of an old pram. At the end of the day a candle would guide us upstairs, the flickering light casting long shadows on the pale green distempered walls. Mum would tuck us in and leave a tiny little oil lamp on the chest of drawers. We'd talk until we went to sleep. Breakfast would be porridge, bread and jam - or treacle - butter sometimes or margarine. Dinner-times lots of rabbits and whatever meat could be found at a reasonable price. First experiences of Petworth itself revolved around visits with various uncles and aunts to Gran's in Station Road. The boys going to and fro from the Boys School made us long to be big enough to join them. Our feelings would alter as school came nearer. Once I went across to see Mrs. Hill but there was no one there, went into the shed and explored a strange new world of tools and jars, nails and hammers, dipping my fingers in some of the jars and tasting. Just as well perhaps that I fell asleep. I remember Mr. Powell, the Rector coming and I looked hard at him and asked him what he wanted. Looking back I can still see him looking hurt but perhaps I imagine. My mother had a few words with me. You didn't speak like that to a clergyman. My father too had a few words one evening when I climbed up the ladder behind him when he was picking apples so that he could go neither up nor down. I was never one for ladders, always preferring to climb trees. Now and again Dr. Kerr would stoop to come in at the low door, cod liver oil, Parrish's, camphorated oil ... North Street then was much as it is now, but with one fundamental difference: it was quiet. Just a few cars a day or the occasional steam-engine with threshing drum rumbling by. And always the schoolboys walking up and walking back, a kind of eternal backcloth.

Regular as the schoolboys was the old lamplighter, passing down the street with his long pole, turning the key with one part of the pole, then poking the pole up under the bottom of the globe to near the mantle. A little pop and the lamp burst into life; its bright white light adding a touch of fairyland to a snowy North Street, always with an awareness of Thompson's Hospital, dark and drab next door and of the older and wiser people that lived there. Even then I had a sense of their accumulated years and wisdom, not conscious of course, just there. It was one of the old ladies at Thompsons who picked me up one day and carried me across the road to see the little china doll's head which had been built some eight foot up the wall, three houses down from the south end. It's still there.



*Mr and Mrs Nevatt, North Street. See "And why the moon..."  
Photograph by George Garland.*



Dad's job had improved and to go with this came a better cottage, down Station Road at the other end of the town, at the entrance to the road leading to the Leconfield agent's house at Littlecote. It was the north side lodge. We still had a black range to cook by but this time there was a gas cooker and gas lighting. Winter nights would be brighter and warmer. There was still a tin bath out in the woodshed but that woodshed was now brick-built with a copper. The outside toilet remained however something of an expedition on winter nights when the wind seemed determined to blow the candle out.

Here was a different world. George Garland's studio was next door, newly built although we did not know it. As the boys going up and down North Street had given a kind of pattern, so now did the constant awareness of George Garland taking photographs. We would explore the orchards and allotments, climb the big old apple tree, play on our swing, or go and see Mr. Oliver Stratton who lived opposite and worked for the agent at Littlecote. He had a little girl called Jean. Mr. Stratton also had charge of the agent's horse, an old Jersey cow, two or three pigs and a few chicken. There was a stable and a cowstall on the south side of the garden, close to a lane that led to the allotments. The stable loft was definitely a place to explore. The cow would be milked once a day. I knew where the milk came from, but what about the cream? I could only suppose it came out of the cow's mouth. It was now I had my first ride on a horse, Dad holding me on one side, Olive Stratton on the other. It was also my last, that horse had a will of its own.

But it was coming time for school, something I had looked forward to once in North Street but seeming more threatening now with each day. When the time did come I didn't want to go. I was dressed and coerced into leaving the house, then taken up the Back Lane, half-carried, half-dragged and through the iron gate. That, my mother clearly thought, was that. I was however used to climbing trees with no bottom branches, so that the low school wall was easy enough. I was soon walking nonchalantly home down the Back Lane. Dad was back for breakfast and, to my dismay, not very pleased to see me back. It was back again, safely delivered into the care of Miss Wootton. After one or two other disappearances, I would be handed over to Miss Wootton in Back Lane and school became a part of my life. I've never forgotten the classroom feel, the smell of chalk dust, the posters round the wall, A is for Apple and so on, sometimes a picture or a verse. There was the tortoise stove which would sometimes startle us by puffing out into the class room. Fresh glowing red it would be in the winter. There was the curtain screen between classes and successive piano turners, a blind man who always came with a girl and a dog, or a Mr. Todman. Cupboards too with books and drawings. At Christmas we'd make cards using stiff dark green paper for the Christmas tree, circles of yellow for the moon and cut out stars. These we'd stick in the middle pages with a laboriously written Merry Xmas on the front.

Tennis balls always seemed to be rolling down the roof into the gutters, so as a climber of some experience I would climb up the cement stepped corners of the building to get the balls back. The girls reported that I was climbing again and out would come Miss Bartlett or Miss Wootton worried and concerned. I was in trouble again. Once when I refused to stop jumping on the dustbin a note went to my parents. It was a little while before I was in trouble again! There was a way in which Miss Bartlett said, "John Taylor" that meant trouble even if it was something I hadn't done. Occasionally a written apology scrawled across the blackboard would be enough. The teachers, looking back, were nice, they simply were and in the end it was that spirit that infused everything.

The day began, or so I recall, with All Things Bright and Beautiful, prayers, a reading, then lessons. At playtime there was a little bottle of milk and a clean wheat straw. You pressed the little hole in the cardboard top with the straw. It was local milk of course and you might perhaps have a sandwich, brought from home. Being next door to the Police Station, where the Public Library now is, we could talk to Sgt. Wiseman and the others. Most days playtime would be outside, but on cold, wet winter days we would be huddled round the old tortoise stove listening to a story quietly told, Robin Hood, the Wind in the Willows, Tom Sawyer... You'd hope that the next playtime would be wet so that you could hear some more.

The morning over, it was time for most of us to go home to dinner, but we had to be back by one o'clock sharp. For those that lived too far out, Heath End say, or Gunter's Bridge, it was sandwiches and perhaps a hot drink from one of the teachers, or possibly a visit to a friend's home nearby. For me lunchtime meant going through the allotments across the Pound Meadow, through the hedge near the top of Back Lane and home. The school afternoon was less structured, not so much the morning's reading, writing, history and geography but reading and writing mixed up with story-telling, painting and drawing. Or there might be questions about birds, animals, flowers, the seasons, the sun and rain, the wind, or where the snow came from or why the moon looked cold and yellow or at other times warm and orange - or even how to tell the time by the church clock. There seemed so much to do. Around a quarter or half past four we'd stand and say a short prayer. Miss Wootton would play, "Now the Day is over" on the piano and we'd scuttle off to the cloakroom to collect our coats. Then it was quickly down the Back Lane and home to change before going out to play. Sometimes we might even go back up to the school playground. Eventually we'd realize we were hungry so it would be home for tea; bread and butter, jam and cakes. Then if it were dark, we'd sit by the fire and play snap for a while. The kettle would boil away on the range, we'd have a quick wash, then be off upstairs with a candle. There might be pillow fights or practising somersaults, but too much of that and someone would be up. After that it would have to be "I Spy" by the flickering light of the candle. If we were a very long time going to sleep a cup of cocoa might do the trick.

Often I would be first up and go down on a raw winter's morning to clear the ashes from the little old Petworth range, then light the fire and get a bit of warmth into the room. I might even black lead the range so that it shone and smelled clean. I'd put the two kettles on and go back to the old iron double bed I shared with my brother. Perhaps doing the fire was one way of saying sorry for a particularly bad escapade. Breakfast would be oatmeal porridge, treacle, brown sugar or jam. Sometimes bacon and fried bread if the budget ran to it.

As I have said, George Garland's studio was very much part of our awareness as were the photographs in the showcase. The Garlands' old tabby cat took a liking to us but by this time it was getting on a bit and its coat was coming out. Mrs. Garland used to welcome us cradling the cat in her arms before handing her over to us. One day we crawled through the hedge to find the cat curled up dead. After a few tears we dug a big hole, put her in a box, wrapped the box in an old towel of Mrs. Garland's and buried the cat as near as we could to the holly tree. Howard's Plat, the meadow where the fire station now stands, was also very much part of our awareness. On occasion Brash's old blue mobile fish and chip shop would be parked there and it was across this meadow that when I was home sick I saw them carry Mr. Wootton, the schoolmaster's, coffin away to the cemetery.

After school in summer our playground was the allotment, orchard, and garden land all around us. There were birds' nests everywhere and pigs to unsettle too. Many of the allotment holders still kept pigs at this time. Or we'd be off down to the gasworks to see how they made gas. I can still catch the smell of red hot coals drawn from the fire to be doused with water amid clouds of hissing steam. We'd watch Manny Sadler and the Carvers stripped to the waist, their muscular bodies glistening and sweating, black streaked with coal as they toiled. It was desperately hard work. The coke was wheeled out to be piled high in the yard while more coal was wheeled in to feed the ravenous fires and retorts. A once white rag of a towel around the waist or head to staunch the blinding sweat. A long swig from a nearby bottle and on went the wheeling and shovelling without a break as it seemed. The markers on the three old gasometers would rise and fall like corks on a pond. Here we could marvel at the mysteries of making gas and at the characters of the men who made it. My Gran lived just south of the gasworks so I saw more of it all than most and could hear the men swearing as they worked and talked. People swore a lot in those days, but we children rarely swore.

Hide and seek might take in more than just the environs of George Garland's studio. We might venture out on to Mr. Webber's corn on the other side of the road or into the gasworks yard, tearing round the heaps of coal and coke, often scurrying into patches of soft tar disguised by a film of dust. We'd sink in too low to avoid getting sticky boots, then pick up dust and bits of coke on the tar. A lot of this tended to get indoors. Many times I'd climb the lattice piers round the gasometers to sit on the first ledge and watch the guide wheel run up the rail. Such climbing was frowned upon but if anyone tried to get me down I'd simply disappear over the wall into Fred Sadler's yard and scuttle into Gran's garden. Once indoors I'd have a long drink of milk from the enamel jug that stood on the edge of the copper.

One day when I was about five Gran took me over the fields to see the trains and pick some blackberries in Hungers Lane. We walked across the field behind Fred Sadler's yard where she stopped and talked to old Mrs. Mitchell from Heyshott. The Mitchell family used to go round the farms every year hoeing turnips and roots and picking strawberries. Then on over Frog Farm to Hungers Lane for the blackberries, across and over to Sokenholes and then again across the fields toward Cathanger. Sure enough after a short wait I saw the white smoke shooting up through the trees, little spurts like puffs of white wool. Then out from behind the trees came a tiny little engine, just like a toy, chuffing its way along by Cathanger. Three dainty coaches clicking along behind, over the little bridge by Ladymead Lock and on to Selham. I still like to think of the train stopping at Selham station in that summer of 1931, parcels put on, the clanking of milk churns, the squawking of animals, a groom sent to meet the train perhaps. It would be years before I rode on that train but from that moment I wanted to. It's strange now to walk along the deserted track and think of the monumental labour it took to build.

By 1932 electricity was on its way up from Portsmouth and some of the men digging holes and putting up poles worked from Fred Sadler's yard by the gasworks. We'd annoy them, (or hope we did) and make off to Washington Copse, a good bolthole for Station Road boys. The days of the town's old gas-lamps were numbered, but it would be a while before they dimmed for the last time. Cars and lorries were rare sights except perhaps for weekends and summer holidays or, of course, Goodwood. Goodwood meant coaches and charabancs, big,

often old, and almost always open to the sky. Some still with solid tyres and the body work any colour you could imagine: dark green, red, orange, yellow, purple ... Big black canvas hoods slid back toward the rear. They seemed to me like giant crows with folded wings. As Goodwood fell during the summer holidays we'd watch them go down in the late morning before going off across the fields to play. Sometimes we'd be in Washington Copse, sometimes we'd go off down to the old floating bridge on the river with its barrels bound together with rope and wire. Here were the Scouts' canoes, moored in a little boathouse. Adventurous as we were, we knew better than to interfere with these. Or we might go down a little to the springs in the wood below and drink from the spring that eddied up in a small pool. Clouds of sand made patterns at the bottom of the water which was otherwise quite clear. We'd briefly catch frogs, then watch them swim gracefully away, or climb the old sycamore to see our reflection in the pool glinting below it. A trout might briefly appear, then with a flick of its powerful tail, be gone. We might tinker with the Rotherbridge water-wheel, then scuttle home across the marshy woodland. It was always sensible to keep an eye out for old Mr. Elliman the keeper until we were clear away across the rows of stooks in the cornfield and back into Station Road.

If it were Goodwood, come 5.30 we'd be out on the bank of the west side of Station Road awaiting the return of the traffic. It was usually quite heavy even given that few families owned cars. There was a great proportion of coaches and charas, particularly from London. We were there to cheer them on, shouting to the occupants in hope, anticipation, expectation, or all three at once, to "throw out your rusty coppers". We were never disappointed, at least as I remember. Sometimes a handful of halfpennies and pennies would come flying out, tinkling and clattering as they hit the road and ran into the gutters and drains. We would have to compete with the Red Cross who had their usual white sheet and tennis racquets which they smilingly held up to the passing coaches. While they did that we were scrabbling about to pick up what we could. Sometimes we worked as a group and had a share-out at the end.

In Station Road two large new engines had become regular features. One was a big eight or ten wheel lorry often towing a trailer behind. Belonging to the Rockware Glass Co. it would be heavily loaded with bottles and jars for Shippams paste factory and the big Chichester brewers. It was a regular weekly sight. The other lorry seemed equally massive, sturdy and handsome-looking. It had four wheels at the front and six at the back and belonged to the Friary Brewery. As it came down Pound Street and Station Road it made what seemed a loud rumbling noise. For some reason I took a violent dislike to it. I was still at the Infants' School at the time and with other boys used to run alongside and swing on the back; it was a very slow, lumbering vehicle. Our activities caused the greatest irritation to the driver and his mate who shouted and swore at us. This of course only made us the more determined. One day we were playing in Station Road when we heard the "enemy" lorry rumbling down Pound Street. Already it had reached Caines the greengrocers. I decided to bring the enemy to a halt by lying in the road by the Pound Garage. Given the almost total absence of traffic this was not as bold a move as it seems now. At that speed the driver had ample time to see me and there was nothing else on the road. The lorry juddered to a stop and I ran off up Back Lane. The driver complained to the police, there was a visit to my father and I was made to stay in for a whole week!

Meanwhile the ordered progress of life at the Infants' School continued. A slightly

discordant figure was Mr. Graham who came periodically to check the register and stand at the back of the class to watch and listen. He'd be seen talking to the teachers. My impression was that they were as relieved as we were to see him don his helmet, leather coat and goggles, rev up his green motor-bike and sidecar and roar away. He seemed like a being almost from another world. And we too were rapidly moving towards another world: the North Street Boys School. A time was coming when we would look back with affection on the continuing kindness of Miss Wootton, Miss Bartlett and Mrs. Mac. Infants School days were coming to an end.

Jumbo Taylor was talking to the Editor.

## An Era of Eagers

David's in the Market Square used to be the Eagers of long ago. I was just fifteen in the autumn of 1929, when I commenced my apprenticeship there, to the drapery trade. Not my Mother's choice of a career for me, but that is another story.

Still the same outside, but very different within; one entered a very precise atmosphere. Long dark mahogany counters were situated on either side, from front to back of the shop. The open central space was used for display, and the office was in the far left hand corner. This was forbidden territory to all except the Eagers, and of course the bookkeeper occupant Miss Ballard. On the right hand side were, Haberdashery, Ladies Hosiery, Gloves, Fabrics of all kinds, Household Linens and heavier Manchester goods. On the left was the Gentlemens Outfitting, and upstairs, the Ladies' Coats, Dresses, Millinery, Underwear and Corsetry. My senior, Miss Fuller and I, were responsible for the Haberdashery, Hosiery, and other small things, Mr. Stanley Eager, the younger brother, for the finer fabrics and Household Linens, Mr. Leslie for the Furnishing Fabrics, Gentlemens Wear, and when required, Rugs and Carpeting. Upstairs was presided over by Miss Wilcox. Together with a shop boy after school, and on Saturdays, this was the staff at that time. The boy's jobs were: to sweep up after closing time, empty the rubbish (mostly paper) take the post, and deliver customers' parcels. No customer need ever carry his or her purchase home. All were asked politely, 'May we send it for you?' Parcels for the boy to deliver were put into a large fixture near the office, known as the 'bin'. There were usually quite a number at the end of the day.

Shoppers were looked after very well indeed, and there was good sound quality for money. At that time, the only man-made fibres were the various types of Rayon, (artificial silk) all others were natural, whether by the yard or made up. Pure cotton varied from the finest Nainsook to the heaviest sheeting, silks from filmy Georgette to heavy Shantung, and the whole range of ribbons, laces and pure silk stockings were a delight. Altogether a wide variety of everything.

Strict formality was the order of the day, no friendly use of Christian names between staff, and no gossiping either other than needed for the job in hand, even if the shop was empty of customers at the time.

We were open from 9am to 6 or 6.30 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, until 7pm on Fridays, and 8pm on Saturdays. Wednesday was the half-day closing at 1pm. We were seldom out punctually, for any last minute shoppers had to be properly served, and everything put away before we could leave. There was also a fairly hard sales technique, which I anyway found difficult. We were not supposed to see any customer leave without having made a purchase. Sometimes we didn't have what was required, and if no substitute was acceptable, we had to offer to order it specially. Failing that, one had to refer to the next in command. In my case, that would be either Miss Fuller, or Mr. Stanley. (I was then at the bottom of the pecking order!) Also, we were required to introduce things, quite often there would be a sample pair of good cotton sheets, orders for later delivery were taken, and we were supposed to approach all our customers and attempt to obtain an order. Although a number of sales were achieved in that way, no one, either staff or customer liked it. Indeed, in later years, I heard many an adverse comment on it. But of course at the time, as employees, all business transactions and procedures were strictly confidential, as were also the code letters for both cost and selling prices, which we had to memorise. We each had our own duplicate counter books, two each, one in use, the other in the office, they were changed each day for accounting. They had substantial hard covers, with an inside clip for the tear off bill heads. There were no automatic adding machines in those days, all working out had to be done when the purchase was complete, then the total checked and signed by another member of staff. Receipts and change had to be collected from Miss Ballard in the office, approached from our side under the stairs through a little aperture. Every duplicated bill had to be accounted for, and its corresponding number filled in on an index sheet. Any failure to do it, all too easy when busy, would result in Mr. Stanley's ire. We each had one hour for lunch, at different times, the shop remaining open, a half hour for tea, and 45 minutes on the later closing days. There was no sitting down even briefly; in fact there was no seat behind the counter, chairs in front were for customers only. Neither was there even a lavatory for staff use, any discomfort had to be endured until one's meal break. During slack periods, we had to be 'busy' dusting and tidying although it may well have already been done that same day.

In winter we were bitterly cold, Petworth had no electricity in those days. One inadequate oil heater behind our counter, one in the office, and another upstairs was all. I had chilblains on hands and feet, and we all suffered frequent heavy head colds. Only during one particularly severe winter was some consideration shown for us. Opening off the showroom upstairs, was an almost empty stock room, it had been the former dress-making room, and had a nice Victorian fireplace. For those few days of snow, ice and bitter cold, we would arrive to find a coal fire had been kindled, and that we were actually allowed to run upstairs (at not TOO frequent intervals) and have a warm! The shop was lighted by gas, and an interesting object called a Blanchard Lamp. That lamp appeared to be Mr. Leslie's responsibility, for only he handled it. Some kind of pressure lamp, quite large, it looked both handsome and expensive, having a large glass dome fitted into a widely angled solid brass frame. It burned both air and fuel. Each evening at lights up, Mr. Leslie would pump it, light it and hang it from the ceiling for about half an hour, before carrying it carefully in his right hand, the steps hitched under his left arm, to just outside the shop door, where, he would ascend the carefully opened steps, and hoist the lamp onto a strong iron

hook in the ceiling between the windows, thus illuminating both the doorstep and the window displays. It looked a dangerous performance and I would watch fearfully, expecting mishap, but none occurred. On arrival in the morning, we entered through the back way via Trumpers Lane in East Street, through the Eagers' quite spacious garage, alongside the garden and in the back door. After a very formal exchange of 'Good mornings' with the brothers, it was upstairs to leave our outdoor things and handbags in the stockroom, and the day would begin. I had been formally signed on for one year. I had a lot to learn, and haberdashery was my first subject. It sounds trivial, but it covers such a wide variety of articles, that I had much to remember. It was not a throw away society, in those days everyone mended everything, and there were a variety of threads with which to do it. Chadwick's white mending cotton in various thicknesses, came in little skeins, Knox's linen floss likewise, and as its name implied, for use on good quality household linen. There were mending wools and silks on cards, and in hanks and skeins, and the humble white sewing cotton was available, not only in the well known and used numbers 40 and 50, but also in 60, 80 and 100, in addition to the coarser numbers 24 and 36. These were only a few of the many items that had to be kept in stock at all times. To be out of any 'bread and butter' item would incur the sharply voiced displeasure of Mr. Stanley. Dusting counter displays was the first job of the day, followed by filling show cases of small items from the reserve stock and making note of any shortages. Stock was chosen and ordered in several ways, and fashion and seasonal things well in advance. Fashion garments and warm things for winter would be chosen and bought during the previous summer, either from travellers, or on Mr. Stanley's occasional trips to London warehouses. Routine stock and customers' special requirements were ordered daily by post if no traveller was expected. Almost all our parcels came by rail and arrived by carrier from the station. In those days Petworth had a railway station. About twice yearly, very bulky supplies of things like blankets or eiderdowns, would arrive in an oversized hessian covered bale, the wrapper having been neatly sewn by packing needle and string. The string had to be carefully removed, leaving the hessian undamaged for its return. It took two of us, usually Mr. Stanley and me, one at either end, to fold it from each side to a narrow strip, then roll it tightly, fix the return label and tie it. It was a job I hated, for those wrappers were always filthy from their contact with grimy north country railway stations.

One representative, travelling for an old established and old fashioned firm, would arrive with a large van of samples and a driver! Very correct and courteous to the Eagers and to us, he gave his poor driver a hard time, with brusque peremptory commands, to 'take this away' - 'bring in this, that, or the other' while he took a fairly substantial order for later delivery. Most of those things were for Miss Wilcox's department, being soft woollen underwear, although hosiery too was included. Those suppliers went out of business in the early thirties. For the sake of people living in outlying villages with no bus service, a weekly journey was taken, carrying a varied assortment of things, and to collect from club payers. Anything required but not on board, could be ordered and sent by carrier. Mr. Leslie went on three successive weeks and Mr. Stanley on the fourth. Their quite handsome private car would be filled on each Monday afternoon, journeys being every Tuesday. The Eager brothers were two totally different personalities, Mr. Stanley although the younger, was the dominant character and the undoubted 'boss', whether he regarded kindness and humour as unfitting in a business day, or,

if they had been left out of his make-up was hard to say, but the fact remained, there was no evidence of either in my experience. There was never even an enquiry after a very bad cold, of which we had many. I suspected that Mr. Leslie felt oppressed, anyway he appeared to enjoy his once monthly absence - but, the return home was often less than satisfactory. There was a definite vagueness and uncertainty in his replies to Mr. Stanley's quite close enquiries about his day's business. Maybe he had imbibed a little liquid refreshment with his lunch, or, perhaps been offered a glass or two of home-made wine on his round (home-made wine was very much a country custom, and very potent) anyway that was what it looked like! and Miss Fuller and I, were secretly amused and delighted that the resultant displeasure was for once directed elsewhere.

Two events dominated the drapery year: Christmas and the July sale. Each member of staff had two weeks' annual holiday, if possible at the time of their choice, although none were allowed to be absent during sale time, which was from the first to the thirty-first of the month. The usual good quality stock was supplemented by a fairly wide range of cheaper lines bought in specially for the purpose. These items attracted a number of people with less money to spend, but who thought them to have been reduced from a higher price, but although less attractive than regular stock, were as good as possible for the price. Sale leaflets, with descriptions and prices were printed and distributed in Petworth and surrounding districts. Miss Fuller and I had to do a write up of some of our lines, but confining it to the exact space allocated on the leaflet, not easy, but we managed. The central display, normally elegant, was horrible during July consisting of a temporary low platform, on which were placed in closely packed array, the aforementioned items. However, at the end of that month, when all had either been sold or put away, the floor space was thoroughly cleaned, the whole shop floor polished, and our routine returned to normal, but fairly hectic, since first one, then another went on holiday, and those remaining had to cover. The Eagers themselves took only one week's holiday each. Also each only took half an hour for lunch. It was as though they didn't trust us to function without supervision! If only they had realized, the nervous tension thus created, was far more likely to result in lack of efficiency than a relaxed easy atmosphere. I only felt at ease in Mr. Stanley's absence, Mr. Leslie on his own didn't usually interfere, leaving us to work in peace. With the sale and annual holidays out of the way, routine progressed through the autumn and towards Christmas, with new and exciting stock arriving almost daily. Window and counter displays were changed about fortnightly until November. One annual tradition always observed in the Eager establishment was the Armistice Day ritual on the 11th November. In those days, this was always kept on the day itself as well as a Sunday church service. At about ten minutes to eleven, customers for once taking second place, the shop door would be locked, and the blind pulled down. We were all then shepherded through the house door (behind Mr. Leslie's counter) and into the Eagers' drawing room, where, Miss Eager presided over a mid morning coffee tray, while a large wireless set relayed the Cenotaph Memorial Service. We sat in a little group, regaled with coffee and rather stilted small talk until Big Ben began to strike the hour, and we all kept the two minutes silence. It was an understandable observance, for both brothers had been in France in World War One, and doubtless had their memories of fear and bloodshed. That war had also taken my father, who died in France of pneumonia in 1918, having been in the

trenches, I have since wondered if their experiences could have had a traumatic effect on the brothers' personalities, perhaps hardening the younger, and debilitating the other. It was an unusual household, in that none had ever married. There were also two sisters, the elder lived away in London, having her own job, which had a medical connection, for she too had been through the war in France as a nursing sister. She would come to Petworth for an occasional holiday. Miss Mary, the younger, lived at home, running the house, which, over and then alongside the shop, was a substantial, well furnished middle class home. The antique shop, now beside David's, with fireplace intact, was their former dining room.

Attention in November was centred on Christmas. In addition to the usual array of stock, there was a selection of perfumes and toiletries, and more importantly, toys. There was a good selection of English made 'Triang' toys by Lines Bros., attractive and well made, they were very popular. As well, there was an assortment of small and mechanical toys, they sold well, but from some people there was criticism, due to the fact that they were made in Germany. Not only were they made in that country but were despatched directly from it, and bearing the supplier's name, 'Konstam' on the invoices written in a continental hand. It was a complete contradiction of the Remembrance Day service and its acknowledgement, especially as that awful war was still fresh in the minds of those who had suffered from it. 'Made in Germany' was not a popular phrase at that time. However, it was a kind of tradition that our window was filled with a display of toys for Petworth Fair Day on 20th November. It happened without fail, and was a great attraction, blending well with the Fair, and remained until early December, when it was changed for the usual gift display. By that time, all goods on order for Christmas had arrived. Anything further, needed due to shortage or popularity run, would have to be ordered by post, without selection. One Christmas, quite early in my occupation, there was a little incident which really pleased me. Ladies' scarves were fashionable, long bias cut silk ones, and fine lacy wool ones had been in demand as gifts. With Christmas still two weeks away, we were running short. In consultation with Miss Fuller, Mr. Stanley decided to order two or three dozen from Goodchild Maurice, our usual suppliers. The order was written, but he couldn't resist the pompous touch, and added a footnote, 'Please send good lines' underlined fairly heavily several times. A few days later the parcel arrived, a boxful of beauties, that we may well have chosen ourselves. Tucked between the folds was a slip of paper. Thinking it to be either packing slip or invoice, I straightened it and reading, my eyes popped, and I giggled to myself with delight, it read;

Dear Mr. Eager,

These are not only good lines,  
but damned good lines, take it from me!

The compliments of the season to you.

followed by a signature in a quite distinguished handwriting. I could have hugged the unknown writer on the spot. I was able to show Olive discreetly before Mr. Stanley came bustling up to inspect the goods, and ask for the invoice. I handed him the slip with what I hoped was an innocent air, but he must have known I had already read it, otherwise it would have, as usual, been placed unfolded on the top. He read it himself with a grim expression, flushing slightly as he did so, then putting it in his pocket said, 'I shall take this up to town with me on my next visit, and report it, someone will get into trouble.'

I thought, getting someone, either his own, or other people's staff into trouble, seemed to give him pleasure, and I hated him with all the fervour of sixteen years. I did have good reason, having only shortly before, been on the receiving end of an unpleasant tongue lashing over the trivial matter of a dropped threepenny piece. But that is another story. When the hub-bub of Christmas had died down, came the annual stocktaking, every single item had to be counted or measured, and listed. February was the deadline, followed by the taking down. The latter was Miss Ballard's job, at Mr. Stanley's dictation. He would call from the lists the sums and amounts while she transferred the figures into the stock book for reckoning later. With the daily office work to do, she wasn't always free, and that was where I came in, for once not found wanting! Finding that I could keep up with Mr. Stanley calling at his own speed, it became the usual thing for me to stand in for Miss Ballard and I thoroughly enjoyed doing it. The totalling up afterwards also came my way in otherwise quiet moments. It involved both yardages and costs, also both horizontal and vertical addition. I enjoyed that too, although no chair was provided! Another regularity was the clothing club. A card was given for weekly payments of any amount from a few pennies upwards. In October, at the end of the season, a small interest was added to the total, and goods to the value chosen. The country members would pay theirs on the weekly round, while Mr. Stanley did a small round in Petworth on a Monday morning. A few however not on his way, were given for me to do on a Monday directly after lunch. I liked my little round, to be outside was a pleasure, with the exception of one particular call. This was to a middle-aged lady, housekeeper to one of our local doctors, who being at that time a bachelor and often out, had bought her a dog for company when in the house alone. Rupert was a handsome red setter, but not a friendly animal! I had to approach the house by the garden door in a lane alongside, and I was always nervous, for hearing me arrive, Rupe would set up a ferocious barking, until Mrs. Napper, knowing it was me, would take her dog inside and shut him up somewhere until our small business was concluded and I had gone. However, one Monday, as I reached the garden door, Rupe was making even more racket than usual, as I hesitated with my hand on the latch, he was emitting some deep and throaty growls. I didn't like the sound of it, and Mrs. Napper didn't seem to be coming, what was I to do? There was some road repair work going on nearby, and in the lane some piles of sand and gravel, with several young men using spades and shovels. Seeing my hesitation, one of them called out, 'Goo on miss, 'e won't 'urt yer'. "I'm afraid he might", I replied, "this dog doesn't like women". That was thought to be very funny, and there was much hearty laughter. I was evidently thought to be chicken-hearted, so, trembling inwardly I opened the garden door. Rupert was standing just inside on the path, growling softly but deeply. I murmured his name, holding out my hand. He let me touch the top of his head, so far so good. I put one foot forward to walk up the path - Rupert snarled and sprang! I suppose I must have screamed, for suddenly, like lightening, the young men were in the garden, hauling off the dog, and getting me outside, very badly shaken, and with a three cornered tear in my good tweed coat. My thigh felt sore, and I walked away in a very trembly state. I didn't attempt to return to the shop, but went straight home. Rupert's teeth had penetrated my coat and other clothing and drawn blood. The brothers did show some concern, sending me a doctor, I was suffering from shock, and the bite was cauterised. Mrs. Napper's failure to restrain her dog was explained, she had been in bed with 'Flu' but I privately thought it a feeble

excuse, she did after all have a 'phone at her disposal, and I could have been told not to call.

I never did know who my rescuers were, but I must have had a guardian angel that day, I was very thankful. There was no criticism when I refused to call there again. Shortly after that while Mrs. Napper was away on holiday with Rupe, he attacked and bit a young woman, a friend of her family. He was immediately put down, as being dangerous.

My apprentice time, and a further two or three years passed, and Miss Fuller, became engaged, I had been promised I should have her job when she left. But there were other changes on the way. Shop and factory acts had already indicated that a temperature of 60° should be the minimum in which to work, but the rule was disregarded by many. Whether someone reported the state of affairs to the appropriate quarter, or if it happened as a matter of course, we never knew, only that inspectors appeared, to place thermometers in premises thought to be substandard, Eager Bros being among the latter. The lack of a seat behind the counter was also noted. One had to be installed for female staff. It was done, but with rather obvious bad grace, a minuscule circle of wood, no larger than a dessert plate attached to the wall. It was a flip up or down affair, and we were somehow given tacit, but unmistakable cognition that it was there simply to satisfy the powers that were, and we were not expected to take advantage by actually sitting on it! About that time, in the thirties, electricity came to Petworth. Brought by the Mid Southern Electricity Company, it caused quite a commotion. Eagers premises, both house and shop, were wired to receive it, the then Petworth Engineering Co. doing the work. At long last, it seemed we would no longer be suffering the awful winter cold. Also, Miss Ballard had approached Miss Eager on the subject of there being no lavatory for our use, so a communicating door upstairs, previously kept locked, was then unlocked, so we could go through to the house toilet when necessary. Things were definitely improving. My senior, Olive Fuller and I were good friends, not that we could meet outside working hours as she lived at Duncton, but we could, and did, manage a certain amount of very quiet conversation at suitable moments when working together behind the counter, our shared discomforts also were a bond. We talked of her forthcoming wedding, when she and her husband would be leaving to live in Devon. I was to be one of her four bridesmaids, and I still have the bridegrooms gift, an amethyst crystal necklace, chosen to blend with my mauve taffeta dress. I had a limited time off for the wedding which was on a Saturday, but was not allowed to stay for the whole of the reception, but had to return to my duties promptly at 4pm. Staff wise, the old order was changing, Miss Ballard left, she lived with her parents, who were leaving the area. She was replaced by a young married woman. As there was a fairly quick turnover of shop boys, it left only Miss Wilcox and me of the old group. I stayed on for a while, taking Miss Fuller's job as arranged, and now with a junior of my own to teach, but she was a friendly, very likeable girl. I had been frequently unhappy, and I missed Olive, but I had by that time, learned about all the different merchandise, and could claim to know my job, although the tense atmosphere remained, and I got ill. While away, and during the weeks it took me to recover, I decided to leave. That was in 1937, by 1938 I was working away from home and living in digs. The following year brought the war, an unforgettable time in which all our lives were disrupted.

Nothing, not even Eagers would ever be quite the same again.

Marjorie Alix

## 'With lyeing and strange wicked invention ...?'

Court cases from the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century offer a good opportunity to meet people from that time even if the acquaintance may be fleeting and somewhat distorted by the very nature of the situation in which these people find themselves. After all it is of the very nature of the situation that they are under tension. Most such cases come from diocesan records and reflect the working of the church court, a parallel to the secular courts in some ways but dealing rather with matters of public morality or ecclesiastical law rather than criminal offences. The present case is a little unusual in that, while it has definite moral overtones, it is heard in Star Chamber over which a king's court rather than the bishop's would preside. It is a case perhaps where the breach of public morality is serious enough to lead conceivably to public disorder and hence comes under secular jurisdiction. In the words of the plaintiffs' complaint to the king it concerns: "The slander of merchant tradesmen, that tendeth to the greater disturbance of your Highness most happie and peacable government..."

Sanctions in Star Chamber would usually be financial and evidence taken, as in this case, through commissions in the country, the hearing of evidence being given over to local commissioners by an empowering writ of *dedimus potestatem*. The plaintiff has submitted a formal bill of complaint, making clear the points at issue and seeking redress. The defendant or defendants will in turn reply, denying the complainant's suit and seeking dismissal with costs. Formally the plaintiff will then renew his or her plea with a replication to which the defendant would reply with a rejoinder. In this particular case there is replication but no rejoinder. Replication and rejoinder by his period tended to be something of a formality and to add little or nothing to the initial statement. What survives at the Public Record Office (STAC 8/146/27) is a very considerable but probably incomplete body of evidence. As with virtually all Star Chamber cases there is no record of the results of the court's deliberation, the books recording orders and decrees having disappeared during the Civil War. The case is an unusual one, both in the glimpses it offers of early seventeenth century Petworth and in the amount of material generated. There is an immense amount of repetition but the ribald poem which lies at the centre of the case has no obvious Petworth parallel at this time. As in other, church court cases in this Magazine, the language and emotions are raw. Neither the bishop's court nor the Star Chamber were a refuge for the prudish.

By the late summer of 1608 one George Fry, formerly of Petworth, had been in the King's Bench Prison in London for a couple of years or so as a debtor, having failed to meet the demands of his creditors; he was not a young man by this time for he had been hitherto a mercer in Petworth for some twenty years. Mercers were probably particularly prone to what would now be termed "cash flow" problems because of the sheer volume and range of stock that they needed to carry. Fry himself testified that "he hath used to see and utter divers kinds of wares such as sylke, sattens, taffetyes and stufes and other such like". Given an adequate cash flow a successful mercer could end up as a very wealthy man as G. H. Kenyon's classified trade

inventories for Petworth show clearly enough. Even at this time the regime at a debtor's prison like the Kings Bench was perhaps somewhat more relaxed than at a penal prison. Like its two successors the King's Bench lay south of the Thames in Southwark, but a little further from the grim gaol of the Marshalsea. Edith Morris, wife of the constable of Petworth, Richard Morris another mercer, had visited Fry at Southwark.

Early in the morning of the 6th August 1608, or during the night before, some person or persons unknown had fixed a paper to the large pale or post that stood outside the house of Richard Morris the constable. It is likely that Morris' house was in the Market Square, at any rate it seems to have been visible from the Market Square. The action itself was not in dispute, although here was some controversy as to who was responsible. The office of constable seems to have been a part-time office, the incumbent being elected annually. The constable was responsible to the local Justice of the Peace for the upholding of public order and had a particular brief to look out for vagabonds, already a considerable problem in Elizabethan times. Constable Dogberry in Shakespeare's "Much Ado about Nothing" is a humorous sketch. By the time of the brawl at Petworth House between Thomas Jux and the Ayer brothers (PSM 53) in 1609-10 Edward Morley the cutler has taken over as constable. Several witnesses mention in passing that George Fry himself had once been constable but had been removed at the Open Sessions because of some misdemeanour. The nature of the misdemeanour is not stated and is only incidental to the present case.

The paper had already been attached by 4 o'clock on that eventful morning. Nicholas Morris (36), the constable's brother, had been early about and called his brother Richard's attention to it. The constable's servant Richard Stringer took the paper down. Nicholas remembered Joan Fry, George Fry's sister-in-law standing at her bedroom window and heard her tell someone in her chamber what was happening. It seemed a strange time for a woman to be looking out of her window. Richard Stringer testifies that he brought the paper in to his master to read. Nicholas Hayes, another servant, confirms that he heard his master reading a writing concerning Ann Fry, but as his master was in bed and Nicholas was in another chamber he could not understand it. The witnesses all agree that Richard Morris did not hold the paper for long for, immediately after he had read it, Ann Fry came to see what was written in it. When Morris shewed it her she took it and did not let him have it back. In the circumstances he did not have the chance to take it to any officer or magistrate. It was understandable that Ann Fry was concerned about the paper for it contained 46 lines of scurrilous doggerel couplets, ribald certainly, unflattering certainly, and libellous very probably. They ran thus.

Annys Ffrye her late and pittifull lamentacon for her former lewde life and vile abomynacon

Oh my hart it is so hardened that I cannot repent,  
My life is soe lewde, it makes mee lament,  
I feare God's wrathe uppon mee will sease,  
His Matie soe highe I did wilfully displease.  
My husbands jealousy was the first cause  
Which made mee to breake Gods most holie lawes,  
Whilst hee poore cuckold laye hid in a chest,

(seize)

To be with a knave I made but a jeast,  
And often when my husband was in bedd  
I would abide up to sett hornes on his head.  
At another tyme when I should have byn at prayers,  
I with a knave was taken on the stayres.  
Once I complayned my purse lost in haye  
Whilst I with a wagge had fine horseplaye.  
My husband came once home about midnight,  
Whose sudden cominge did me sore affright.  
Well my mate gott away, but his cloke he forgott,  
I threwe it out at wyndowe and stopped that blott.  
Thus I did contynue as subtyll as a ffox  
Till seaventeene holes at once brake out of the poxe,  
Being lame I contynewed to stirre up much strife,  
And made much dissention betweene man and wife.  
I never respected one more than another  
But caused my husband to sue his owne brother.  
To lye and forswear, I thought it noe sinne,  
My husband of mee to learne did begynne.  
To gett goods in our hands wee never did spare,  
To cosen all men was our cheifest care,  
And then I persuaded him to goe to the Goale,  
While I like a whore might gaine by my tayle.  
By this meanes I did my liberty procure  
Whilst he poore cockould doth prison endure,  
For now I can ryde hackney when I will  
And with all knaves take my pleasure and fill,  
Yea with lyeinge and strange wicked invention,  
Amongst all my neighbours sowe dissention.  
Thus I enfoulded some parte of my life,  
Beeinge very full of whoredome debate and strife.  
In Petworth Towne I am knowne soe well,  
That nowe in London I must needes dwell.  
To Pickhatch, Shorditche, and Colman Hedge, I will resort  
To offer my selfe to all knaves that love that sport  
My last end will I feare bee to begge, at a dore,  
For thats the best end that comes of a whore.  
Some surelie will blame me for wrightinge soe plaine  
I was alwaies shameless and soe will remaine.

Written bye me shameless Nan Ffrye, a whore I was borne and so I will staye.

Quite apart from her understandable chagrin at this poem Ann Fry could hardly let such charges go unanswered, even had she so wished, and there is no evidence to think that she did. Implicit agreement with the rhyme would soon come to the notice of the churchwardens who would be in turn duty bound to report to the church court. Ann Fry's honour needed to be defended. Clearly Ann had a good idea of the identity of her tormentors and determined (or was advised) to seek redress in a civil action in Star Chamber under her own name, her husband's and that of their son Michael. Clearly too there are family tensions behind the feud, the line "but caused my husband to sue his own brother" may give a clue. It is possible that George Fry, desperate for money, had sued his brother Nicholas for recovery of a long-standing debt. As with so much in these documents it is possible now only to guess. For Ann Fry there is no great mystery and she accuses a number of people, some related, some apparently not, of involvement in the libel. They are Thomas Westden, George Windsor, Robert Sadler, Joan his wife, Nicholas Fry and Joan his wife, Thomas Pennell (Pymble) and Catherine his wife and Richard Pytt and Audrey his wife. George Windsor has absconded and does not answer the complaint at all, while Thomas Pennell deposes but has also been missing for a period. Nicholas Fry is George Fry's brother and variously described as "draper" or "mercier". Thomas Pennell is a hatter, but also described as a haberdasher; Audrey Pitt his daughter is married to Richard Pitt a "comfittmaker" living in London. Robert Sadler is a husbandman. Thomas Westden, Nicholas Fry's father-in-law is, at 76 years of age, on the face of it a venerable figure but in fact no stranger either to court proceedings or to intemperate language. He is probably a member of the well-known Westden family from Battlehurst. The keeper of a "common inn" in the town, he had appeared before the Bishop's court as recently as 1603 for calling Joanna Goodman, another innkeeper's wife, a whore and a Greenwich bird. He seems to have been unable to substantiate these allegations and to have offered little defence (see PSM 52). He is not perhaps the patriarchal figure his years might suggest. The temporary disappearance of Thomas Pennell and the apparent flight of George Windsor were clearly not going to help the defence.

Some days later another copy of the rhyme was in circulation, this time bearing on the reverse a head with horns and the initials G. F. The symbolism of this was obvious enough. This copy was thrown through the window of the house of Robert Sadler one of the defendants. Jane Russell (28), a servant, had found the paper while sweeping the house and "delivered it to her dame". Some said that Ann Fry had thrown the paper in herself, others however thought that Robert Sadler had planted it in an effort to distance him and his wife from the original libel. On this, different witnesses conflict.

It was not open to doubt that someone had written the verses and the fact that George Windsor had absconded altogether and Thomas Pennell for a time would lead to suspicion. At this distance in time not all the defendants' explanations appear very convincing, although no hint of final interpretation exists in the documents. According to the Frys' complaint, Audrey Pytt had taken a copy out of Sussex to her house in London. The idea, the Frys alleged, was to have copies printed. Richard Pytt claimed that he kept the poem locked in his chest for a fortnight or three weeks and then burned it. He was alone when he did this. The court pressed Katherine Pennell about her husband's and Windsor's suspicious disappearances. Had they not been persuaded by the other defendants to leave Petworth? Katherine was clearly ill at ease with

Close 1 o'clock on Wednesdays.

Dec 1<sup>st</sup> 1922

Miss Greenfield

Bought of BROWN, DURANT & CO., LTD.,

Grocers, Drapers, Outfitters,

Household Furnishers, Ironmongers & Cycle Agents,

NORTH CHAPEL STORES,

Interest will be charged on overdue Accounts.

1 ea Baths 6/6 + 7/6	14	0
Saucepan	9	3
Ditto 4/6 + 1/9	6	3
1 ea Pails 1/11 + 1/8	3	7
1 ea Bowls 1/11 3/6 3/6	8	11
Kettle	7	6
Ditto	2	9
Teapot	2	9
Fry Pan	1	6
Slice	1	2
Basket	2	3
Can 1/- Tray 4/-	5	0
2 Spoons 3		6
	<u>£ 3. 5</u>	<u>- 5</u>
Dis		3. 5
	<u>£ 3. 2</u>	<u>0</u>

Setting up home at Northchapel Stores 1922.  
Courtesy of Mr Percy Boxall.





*Damer's Bridge, Petworth.  
Drawn by Judy Swain.*

this line of questioning and declined to answer on the ground that this was not actually included in the Frys' bill of complaint. It wasn't, but the point would not be lost on the court. As to the suggestion that Windsor had written the libel she cannot say, nor does she know where he has gone, she can say only that she did not persuade him to absent himself. To the suggestion that her husband Thomas was one of the leading figures behind the libel, in fact "the chiefest and principle deviser and maker" she does not know. The court seem to have met something of a wall of silence but one witness, Robert Bloxton, had actually heard it said that Windsor had confessed to writing the libel. He had also heard Pennell and Windsor read the libel with the horns and letters on the back to Joan Fry and others. There was no doubt that the supposed libel was the talk of Petworth.

There was certainly some circumstantial evidence that the defendants knew rather more than they were admitting. Robert Sadler and his wife Joan had been carrying peas with Antony Westden and had asked him to read the verses to them. Joan Fry had asked Robert Lyall what was the danger of making a libel and when he had replied that it was a pillory matter (ie a matter for the Bishop's court rather than a secular jurisdiction like Star Chamber) she had laughed. John Morris had heard Windsor repeat and publish a great part of the libel. He had indeed repeated it on several occasions with great joy and delight. When Edith Morris commented on the libel, Windsor and Joan Fry retorted that it was an honest man who had done it. Nicholas Morris, as has appeared, had thought it odd that Joan Fry "who did seem to rejoice and take delight in the libel" should be up and about at four o'clock that fateful morning. Most damaging of all, a number of witnesses testify to Robert Sadler paying Ann Fry ten pounds to "compound and agree about the suit". Ann seems to have taken the money but by then the ponderous machinery of the Star Chamber will have already swung into action. Thomas Barnard, gentleman, had in fact been in attendance when Robert Sadler had handed over the money and William Payne had heard about the composition. Eleanor Duppa (84) had been given a message by Ann Fry to take to her cousin, Mistress Drury to the effect that she had agreed with Robert Sadler for ten pounds and all things discharged. Sadler certainly had some reason to be alarmed: Ann Fry was claiming that about the 15th of August he "openly proclaimed and said to one Richards of Petworth yeoman that he would give a copy to anyone who desired one". There were many other occasions when the libel was repeated, so many testimonies from so many witnesses, that it would be difficult to deny it. Several witnesses even claimed that Thomas Westden had read the libel in church to William Mose, gentleman, ironically it would seem, that same William Mose who had been in William Bywimble's shop and heard Westden swearing at Joanna Goodman some fives years before (PSM 52). As late as August 20th Robert Sadler had been reading the verses, showing the drawing to Martin Turges and maintaining the making and publishing of it.

Even given that in these cases it is virtually impossible to sift fact from fiction, claim from counter-claim, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Ann Fry's opponents, whatever justification they may have had for being angry with her, had gone too far and hopelessly compromised themselves. It would be difficult and risky for them to deny everything, and hence their replies tend to concentrate on Ann herself and her behaviour subsequent to the publication of the verses. Could there be a libel at all when Ann Fry had herself published the verses from the beginning? No magistrate in any case had put an embargo on the verses, Ann

had spoken of them not only in Petworth but at Pulborough, Storrington and Broadwater Fair. If she repeated them herself, how were they to know that their own repeating of them constituted a libel? At worst they had acted in ignorance. As to the origin of the verses, well, no one knew who had composed them and there was nothing to connect the defendants with that.

There were after all numerous occasions when Ann had repeated the verses or so claimed various witnesses called on the defendants' behalf. She had told a group of people at Fittleworth, spoken of it as Storrington and at Broadwater Fair. Had not her nephew Thomas Wayes of Storrington made a copy for her? She had shown the verses to Ralph Sparkes and also to Alice Goble. She had gone into the Bywimbles' shop and pleaded with Margaret Bywimble and Margaret Frysell that they hear the verses. When they refused she still repeated much of the poem by heart. It had become a general talking-point.

It appears that Ann Fry is on rather uncertain ground when she denies talking about the libel but the court really had to establish, although this is not mentioned specifically, that the audience for the libel needed to be divided into those who were capable of reading it for themselves and those who were not. Robert and Joan Sadler clearly did not read and needed someone to read the verses to them. Was it disseminating a libel if they, albeit disingenuously, claimed that they did not know in advance what was on the paper? Conversely, it seems doubtful whether Ann herself could read the verses and would need someone to read them to her. She would then learn them by heart. Did asking someone to read the poem to her constitute publishing the libel? Ann obviously thought not. Sympathetic witnesses like Alice Goble had certainly been told of the verses. She said it was a shameful thing and urged Ann to burn them. Ralph Sparkes had been passing Ann's door and, seeing her weeping and lamenting, said it was a shameful act and again urged her to burn them. Did this constitute publishing the libel?

It is not usual to find the result of a Star Chamber case and the outcome of this one is not known. The usual sanction was a fine. The case with its extensive documentation allows a limited insight into Petworth life at this time. The action seems to occur basically within sight of the Market Square. Ann's neighbour is Martin Turges and the traditional seat of the Turges family was the north side of the Square. New Street was not then in existence and Golden Square would be less separated from the Market Square than it is now. Possibly Thomas Westden's "common inn" was one of the taverns in the Square. Certainly Richard Morris' pole seems to have been in general view. One fixed point is Bywimbles' shop on the north-eastern corner of Lombard Street and still referred to as "Bywimbles" in later deeds. Petworth's centre of gravity has shifted somewhat since the seventeenth century with the demise of Church Street and the demolition of the houses in the churchyard. The documents give the atmosphere of a tight inbred community that yet had contact with places further apart. Ann was alleged to have spoken of the verses at Pulborough, Storrington and Broadwater, while Richard Pytt the comfittmaker seems to travel periodically between Petworth and London.

What is not clear is whether there was any financial motive behind the verses rather than a spirit of mischief and rancour. Clearly whoever wrote the verses, whether Windsor, Pennell or someone else, was proud of their handiwork. Financial benefits are less easy to see. Clearly George and Ann Fry had little enough in the way of liquid assets. Conceivably there were a few remaining assets like property, or perhaps business rivalry lay at the root of the dispute.

Petworth was a small, enclosed, community where grievances could stagnate for years. The principals seem basically craftsmen/shopkeepers rather than labourers and it is noteworthy that the additional drawing of the head with horns with the letters GF written "in a large Romaine hand" is expressly designed according to the Fry's Bill of Complaint "to bring George Ffry's name into the greater scorne derision and disdayne even amongst the baser sort of people who doe the better remember and take a greater apprehension of your subejectes fame and reproche it being exposed divulged and expressed unto them bye signes and pictures than by the bare report seeinge readinge or hearinge of the same libel". A definite motif seems to be family division. Thomas Westden was Nicholas Fry's father-in-law and, as has appeared, there are other family interconnections among the defendants. As to whether there was any substance whatever in the verses it is not now possible to say. The more extreme allegations are not substantiated at all, the lesser ones only occasionally and in the most general terms. Ann Fry would not, by the standards of the time, have been particularly young in 1608. She was already married, as will appear, in 1595 and George Fry had himself been in business as a mercer for some twenty years before succumbing to his financial problems. Many witnesses agreed that George and Ann Fry were people of little esteem by 1608 but this may well have as much to do with George's financial affairs as with any immorality. There is some suggestion that George's business practice was a little dubious, he had, it was alleged, sold the same goods twice and there is some talk of "cosinage". Many recall that he had been relieved of his constablenesship. One witness reports a division in the town concerning the Frys, Joan Sadler recalling the forfeiture of his constablenesship adds, "Some loved them and some hated them".

There are certainly indications that the rift between Ann Fry and Thomas Pennell (Pymble) the hatter went back a long time. They are at variance in the church court already in 1595 and curiously William Mose is again involved. The case may be, as such cases often are, part of a counter-suit in the church court. As it stands, it is rather obscure. Richard Morris, apparently that same Morris who would be constable in 1608, but at this time described as a chapman, offers some rather curious evidence. He and Henry Beach had been together in Petworth when Beach who seems to have had a shop on the north-east side of the Square (see Leconfield:Petworth Manor pp 63,126) told Morris that he had bidden one Thomas Pymble to tell Ann Fry she was a "forriden jade" (forriden=far-ridden ie "clapped out"). Why Beach was not prepared to take responsibility for what he said is not explained. Morris quotes him as saying that if the matter came in question it was Pymble who should answer for it, ie that he, Beach, would deny he had offered the insult and accept only responsibility for the legitimate message that Pymble had been given. Morris recalled another time when William Mose had a message for Ann Fry in which Mose was to call her an "arrant arrant". The phrase an arrant thief became so common that arrant became virtually a noun in its own right. Ann Fry seems to have complained in the Bishop's court for there is probably more than a suggestion of immorality in both messages. Recourse to the court may have been partly pre-emptive for the diocesan records have Ann Fry already arraigned for fighting in church with Alice Beach, presumably Henry's wife. Thomas Westden himself was no stranger to the court, his quarrel with Joanna Goodman had brought him here in 1603 and he had been presented in 1597 for drinking at the time of evening prayer. As for the poem itself and whether or not it is the work of George Windsor,

Thomas Pennell or both or neither of them, it is in a tradition of scurrilous popular verse that is certainly not exclusive to Petworth. It is a tradition that is to be found again in the ribald songs John Osborn Greenfield could recall being bellowed out in every tavern concerning William Tyler, agent to the Third Earl of Egremont (see *Tales of Old Petworth* pp 44). For all that, it remains Petworth's own and its own testimony to an inbred Petworth that time has otherwise largely borne away.

Peter (with a great deal of help from Alison McCann)



*Another unusual view from the Leconfield Hall roof.  
Photograph by Barry Norman.*

## The Hoop Shavers

### A Garland article from the late 1930s

In the isolated corners of country places you will find them ... these hoop shavers ... their canvassed roofed or chip-thatched shacks set up where some copse has been cut; or they may be working beneath the sheltering branches of some big tree on common ground beside some sleepy by-road.

They are skilled craftsmen, and their craft is older than the ages of many of us put together; but, alas! for the picturesque side of country life, it is a dying one, and these old-time craftsmen are but poorly paid nowadays.

The underwood is sold by auction in the autumn, at so much per acre, or maybe it is sold privately by the Estate agents of the large estates upon which it stands. The buyer engages his copse cutters (unless he and his sons are master men doing the work themselves) and it is their job to cut the wood and sort out all that is suitable for hoops.

In the old days hoops were used extensively for binding barrels, tea-chests etc., and lately they appear to have come back into favour for this purpose. Hoops are made in lengths ranging from 14ft to 2½ft and are made at a price from 1/11 to 2/9 per bundle according to length and number. The longest hoops, measuring 14ft, are made up into bundles of 60, while the shortest measuring 2½ft. are made up into bundles of 360. The 14ft hoops are tied up into their bundles of 60 with five withs (or bands) while the shortest (2½ft) known as "One Gallons" are tied up into their bundles of 360 with two withs. Then there are the hoops of 13ft (known as "Middlings") which are tied with four withs into bundles of 60. 12ft hoops (called "Long Pipe") are also tied with four withs into bundles of 60, while those of 11ft (known as "Short Pipe") are tied with three withs into bundles of the same number. 10ft hoops appear to have no approved name, but they are made up into bundles of 60, and the price for making them is 2/1 per bundle. 9½ft hoops are known as "Hogsheads" and they are made up into bundles of 90. 9ft hoops again do not appear to have any approved name, but those of 8½ft are known as "Barrel", and are made up into bundles of 120. 8ft hoops also have no name; they are made up into bundles of 120 too, the price for making which is 1/10 per bundle. "Kilderkins" (or "Killikins") are hoops of 7½ft in length; tied with two withs, 120 of them go to a bundle, the price for making which is 2/1. 7ft hoops also have no approved name but the price of making per bundle of 180 is 1/10. "Firkins" are hoops of 6½ft in length ... these are tied with two withs into bundles of 180. Next come 6ft which again appear to have no approved name, and then "Long Pinks" (5½ft) which are fastened with two withs into bundles of 240. 5ft hoops are nameless, and they are followed by "Short Pinks" (4½ft). Each bundle of these contains the same number as "Long Pinks" but is made for 1/- less per bundle. "Tumbrells" are hoops of 4ft in length; they are tied with two withs into bundles of 240, and the charge for making them is 2d per bundle than for "Short Pinks". 3½ft hoops (3 gallons), 3ft hoops (2 gallons), and 2½ft (1 gallon) hoops are all done up into bundles of 360, and, as with all hoops shorter than "Short Pipe" they are tied with two withs. The price for making these ranges from 1/11 for the shortest to 2/3 per bundle for the longest.

The withs for tying up bundles of hoops are made differently to those for tying up faggots. The latter are not rimmed in any way, but the hoop withs are trimmed up, all the frith, (twigs) being cut off, and the end fashioned into a neat eye.

For measuring his poles the hoop-shaver has a number of stumps driven into the ground at various distances from the top of his cleaving post and he measures them by placing them in a diagonal position from this point to one or another of these measuring stumps. The poles are then laid out in order in heaps of various lengths; the big ones will be cleft with an adze into four while the smaller ones will be cleft into only two. This rule applies to all lengths.

For cleaving his poles the hoop-shaver had a double stump driven firmly into the ground. The one stump is about three feet high, and the other one at the side a few inches shorter. Splitting his pole with his adze the craftsman introduces the longer of these stumps between the separated halves, and, pushing the split pole forward, the one side resting on the shorter stump at the side, the hoop-shaver aids the work of splitting with his adze as he pushes the pole forward to its full length. The split poles are then counted and taken to the shaving apparatus, called the "brake", which is an ingenious form of vice controlled by the hoop-shaver's left leg. When shaving, the hoops are all started in the centre and gradually pushed up into the brake until one end is reached; the hoop is then jerked around the other end served in the same way. The operation of jerking the hoop around is a knack acquired only by long years of practice. When finished the hoops are cast out in front in three groups "facers" (the straightest), "seconds" and "thirds". In laying out the bundles the "facers" are placed flat upon a bed formed of two poles. The "seconds" come next and the bundle is completed with the "thirds", the object being that any crooked "thirds" are forced to the centre of the bundle as it is rolled up and thus straightened out. The bundle is now placed in a face-downward position on the two poles two straps having been passed beneath it. The hoops are rolled up into a round bundle and are fastened with the straps, then a double endless rope is placed around the bundle and two levers inserted into each end of the rope are pressed outwards, the operator holding them with his knees, at the same time placing the with around the bundle and fastening it, the finished bundle being perfectly neat and round.

An experienced hoop-shaver working from daylight till dark will turn out about four bundles, thus earning from 7/8 to 11/- according to the length of the hoops.

The hoop-shaving season starts about the end of November or in mid-December and continues till the end of May, by which time the wood becomes too dry for working.

This old country industry, sadly enough will soon, like so many of the other old country crafts, be but a memory of a more placid rural England of other days.

From: Garland - Petworth.

*Note*

We have retained the unusual spelling "with" and "withs" instead of withe.

