

# THE PETWORTH SOCIETY



## *magazine*

NO. 88. JUNE 1997. PRICE TO NON-MEMBERS £2.00

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Cover drawing A Country Calendar by Gwenda Morgan (1961) reproduced by courtesy of the Whittington Press. The illustration on the back cover is also by Gwenda Morgan. Cover design by Jonathan Newdick.

Printed by Midhurst and Petworth Printers, 11 Rothermead,  
Petworth (tel. 342456) and Duck Lane, Midhurst (tel. 816321)

Published by the Petworth Society which is a registered Charity

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 £7.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £8.00 overseas £9.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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

### *Society Town Crier*

Mr J. Crocombe, 19 Station Road (343329)

Note: The crier may be prepared to publicise local community events and public notices for you, even snippets of personal news such as births, engagements or lost pets. It is suggested that such personal and business cries be made for a small donation to a charity to be nominated by the crier himself.

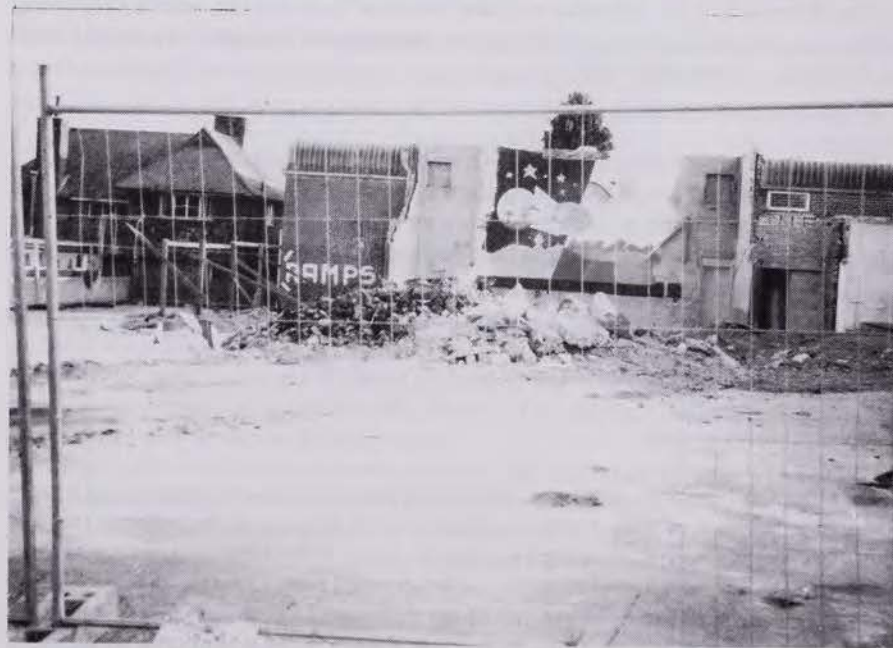
## Chairman's Notes

*I hope this Magazine is a reasonable mix. I'd have liked to have given an outline of the Project 2000 proposals in this issue but perhaps this will be possible in September. There are also, as you know, extensive plans to modernise the interior of the Leconfield Hall. Both projects, of course, need to attract the requisite grant funding.*

*The Society visits to Petworth Cottage Museum and Petworth House in March both went well. The latter brought well over a hundred members. Thanks very much to Diana and her staff. I do not include accounts of these visits in the Magazine.*

*If you received a reminder with this Magazine please help us by paying promptly. With a Society as large as this one is, and over three hundred Magazines going out postally alone, the amount of work saved by members' prompt payment is substantial. Members who have not paid by September will receive only a reminder — not the Magazine itself. You will see from the new member lists that the Society continues to grow but to consolidate that growth we do need of course to retain existing members.*

*It seems appropriate to note here the passing of the old Cinema/Sylvia Beaufoy buildings, so much a part of Petworth's heritage and tradition. The photograph was taken in April by Mike Gane when demolition was in progress.*



*Demolition of Sylvia Beaufoy Centre. April 1997.*



*You'll be pleased to know that John Crocombe is making a good recovery. It's still however (to my mind, not John's!) relatively early days and I will leave it to him to decide what crying he can do.*

*Lastly members will miss the occasional contribution of Marjorie Alix who died in March. Marjorie wrote sensitively and well of Petworth and I know from your comments to me that her efforts were very much appreciated.*

Peter

24th April 1997.

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## Odds and Pieces

Mr Greenfield of Orchard Close identifies the background of the emmet cart picture in Magazine 87 as the Swan Inn at Northchapel, now the Deepwell. He remembers huge piles of ants being brought from the Frith Woods by mule cart, loaded in hessian sacks. The landlord of the Swan between the wars was Mr Percy Lucking.

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Terry Nevitt would like any information of the Nevitts of Petworth (any spelling including Knyvett). The Nevett (Knyvett Study Group can be contacted through Terry at 123 Friary Road, Peckham, London SE15 1PY.

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Does anyone know of Shambles the sheep? An unidentified and undated press cutting reads: Mrs Rogers of Petworth keeps a sheep "Shambles" as pet and guard dog. Mrs Rogers has a "Beware of Sheep" notice on the gate to warn tradesmen of Shambles' tendency to butt people. However Shambles often escapes from the house to butt people outside the front gate.

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In Kirdford timber-throwers photograph (Magazine 87) Mr Clark (4th from left back row) was omitted.

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Christopher Cousins writes:

Holden's the Butcher

My father was a refrigeration engineer. During the war I used to accompany him, on Saturday mornings and in school holidays, all over West Sussex: visiting dairies, farms and butchers' shops where fridges were in need of repair. Of particular significance to me were visits to Holden's shop in Saddlers row because I used to go and play with Don Holden, who was the same age as me, whilst my father got on with his job. This may only have happened two or three times before Don's death in the bombing of the Boys' School, nevertheless my memory of the visits is quite vivid, though possibly faulty.

I recently began to write a sequence of poems centred on some specific aspects of my childhood. One of these stemmed from Don - for some mysterious reason I came into possession of his Meccano set, a rather special one that made aircraft of various sorts. At a period when toys were scarce in any case it was a much-loved luxury and I have a sneaking suspicion that it was one of several experiences that pointed me in the direction of a scientific career.

The reason for this note is to seek help. I recently visited Petworth and instantly recognized the *site* of the shop after I had been guided to Saddlers Row but not its *appearance*. I remember it more like an ordinary house in a terrace, door to the left, leading into a passage from which you turned immediately right into the shop. The shop window was larger than that of an ordinary house and I think that there were ceramic tiles under it with the name Holden embossed. As nearly fifty-five years have elapsed I can well believe I'm totally wrong - a photo would clinch the matter.

Even more import to me would be a photo of Don and his parents. I cannot recall them visually at all and feel this lack strongly. So if someone could help I'd be most grateful. Anything sent to me will be treated with the greatest respect and returned within a short space of time. My address is:

Cubberley House, The Berry, Thorverton, Devon EX5 5NT.

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Bill Gage at the West Sussex Record Office would like to talk to anyone prepared to record their memories of local railway lines. Please phone 01243 - 533911.

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## Nice company - nice crowd!

Peter, proposing the vote of thanks in his usual disarming manner, remarked that he found himself totally unqualified to give an informed criticism of the music of 'Three's Company', but he did know that he had enjoyed himself immensely, so, apparently had the audience, and the performers were jolly nice people, too.

So here were Lynn and Edmund O'Driscoll and Graham Rix, extremely talented singers/actors, presenting songs from the shows of Cole Porter, Lloyd-Webber, Sondheim and others - a new departure for the Society.

For a start, the trio 'hit us between the eyes' with their opening song 'Be our guest' and, after a few introductory remarks from Lynn, we were soon being encouraged to burst into 'spontaneous' applause and even indulge in 'audience participation', which involved placing one's right hand on the knee of the person sitting next-door and asking for a kiss. After that, the invitation to provide lines of the chorus to 'Lullaby of Broadway' almost came as light relief to an audience normally content to restrict overt demonstration to a good clap at the end of a meeting. And didn't the unsuspecting Dougie Price do well? Before he knew what was happening, he found himself playing judge, psychiatrist, social workers and policeman



in another song with the aid of various forms of headgear!

Graham Rix, accompanying at the piano, was brilliant in his timing and original harmonies. Lynn's professionalism and technical skill came over in her rendition of 'Don't cry for me, Argentina' and in a patter song performed at incredible speed, but in which every word was distinguishable. Ed's rich voice too, brought powerful emotion to his songs, while the strong individual personalities, vocal and instrumental skills and cheerful banter blended perfectly in the inter-play of the wide selection of well-loved numbers.

Perhaps the arrangement of the audience around the performers on the floor of the hall, with others in the gallery and on the stage, also contributed to the atmosphere of a very happy evening. What do you think? Comments to Peter, please.

KCT

## Down on the farm - up on the Downs

Applesham Farm, on the Downs within sight of Lancing College, has historic links with Petworth. It was purchased for the Leconfield Estate from the Shelley family in the last quarter of the 1700s and even in the present century the names of Petworth workers such as Peacock, Gumbrell and Puttick appear in the farm records. The grandfather of our March speaker and present owner, Chris. Passmore, bought Applesham from the estate in 1901, at a time when, like him, many farmers were moving their dairy herds up from the West Country, where cheese was the chief product, to take advantage of the liquid milk market in the London area. 'Leconfield' cottages stand out among the other more traditional flint buildings. Downlands farms were larger than those in the Weald, very open and with more arable land than we tend to expect today, with crops of tares, red and crimson clover and yellow trefoil on which sheep were folded at night, spending the daytime on the downland grass.

Mechanisation came early to these farms: mechanical shearing and threshing in 1905, milking machines in 1907. A work force of 24, even during the 1st World War, has now been reduced to three. The combine harvester came in 1948.

Management has to achieve a fine balance between economics and conservation. On 70 acres of unimproved chalk grassland there are over 140 wildflower species and 27 grasses. Seagulls, lapwings, kestrels and barn owls control pests. Uncultivated marginal strips support predatory insect populations which in turn control aphid attacks on crops.

Lots of fascinating facts illustrated by atmospheric colour slides of buildings, the open downland scenery and beautiful flora. The audience still had questions - about dewponds (always man-made), rope-making, partridges, hedges and field boundaries - a book would be needed to do justice to this most interesting revelation of history, farming practice and nature study.

KCT

## Not a common warden - the Commons Warden

Ian Swinney, who grew up in the Pulborough area and went to school at Coldwaltham, Petworth and Midhurst, has been National Trust Warden of Bookham Commons in Surrey for 18 years. A small group of members toured the Commons with him last autumn (see Magazine 86) and he has now spoken at a meeting about the history and evolution of the 452 acre site (300 of them oak woodland), its management and the wildlife.

In prehistoric times this was part of the huge wooded area between The South Downs and the Thames Valley, including the North Downs where wolves, bears, boar and bison roamed. From Saxon times it was owned by the monks of Chertsey Abbey and later, by the Earls of Effingham. In the present century, as the London suburbs spread outwards, the National Trust sought to conserve the Commons as housing, road building and agricultural pressures increased. The role of the Warden is not an easy one. Public access to commons has to be ensured and this includes the walkers, with their dogs, horse riders (2-300 on a good weekend) - mountain-bikers and children. The area itself is in a continuing state of evolution - scrub taking over from pasture and oak woodland from scrub. Each has its own flora and fauna and a balance has to be achieved to maintain populations which could become extinct if a particular habitat disappeared. Coppicing and grazing (at present with two Exmoor ponies) play their part. Ponds need dredging, but not too severely, from time to time to prevent silting which would allow horsetail and then sallow willow to become established and the ponds to disappear.

Slides of ancient maps, aerial views of the Commons, maintenance work and the abundance of wildlife illustrated the talk. Especially fascinating were close-up shots of caterpillars, butterflies, crickets and beetles, showing their camouflage, warning colouration and attraction devices.

Questions included enclosure of commons, the Warden's means of transport, slow worms and tadpoles - and the audience, which included parents of his school friends, one who had helped to provide his school dinners and his "old" science teacher, whose presence, despite initial apprehension, did not inhibit some light-hearted banter!

KCT

## Steve and Diane's Easter Sunday walk

The story of how the Chairman came to place Steve's walk on a Bank Holiday Sunday is too long to be retailed, but is certainly little to the Chairman's credit. A Comedy of Errors you might say. By the time the Activities Sheet had been distributed there was little for the Chairman to do but phone a fairly unperturbed Steve to tell him that the mid-April walk was



to take place on Easter Sunday. The Society, with all its age-old wealth of tradition, had never had a Bank Holiday walk before. Would it work? A couple of dozen intrepid walkers seemed to show it did, and it was, it has to be said, a glorious day.

Off to Roger Cumber's farm at Welham. It was many years since the Society had visited. I don't think we wrote up walks and visits in those days. Roger had his stationary engine working specially for us to see. Intermittent puffs of smoke coughed out of the chimney of a large barn. Time for a leisurely look. It was used for emergency back-up electricity. Stone steddles supporting a black-timbered granary and, by a shallow stream, a carpet of seedlings, difficult at first to see what they were but Jean soon identified the fleshy pink stem of Himalayan balsam or policeman's helmet, those familiar pink wetland giants whose heavy scent toasts on the summer air.

At last away, a genuine swing bridge over the Rother, the planks seemed set at an angle and the whole construction swayed as you went across. Any more than two at a time and the bridge swayed alarmingly. A group walking in step would probably find it impossible to get across. Shula the dog's previously idyllic relationship with the Petworth Society was under strain now and in the end Steve took her round another way. In front of us as we walked along the bank was the old lock, now a fish ladder. We moved on along the bank, it would be head-high with balsam later. A canal ridge with the old tow-path clearly visible but now ivy swayed in the breeze under the arch. It would be very wet here in the winter. You could see where horses had churned up the mud, but all was dirt dry today. Tansy in fresh green leaf by the water's edge, the distinctive smell of the broken leaf.

On towards the Selham road, then over it. An industrial palimpsest if you like. Everywhere signs of the old canal navigation. An alder blocking one channel of a painstakingly constructed brick double arch. Here, where the footpath turns toward Moor Farm Ian and Pearl had produced cold drinks from the bullrushes on a parched summer day. We kept going along the river bank. A swan looked ungainly on the sandy bank but, once in the water, seemed transfigured. The wind blew across the fields of Ambersham — Little Todham, Great Todham, Ambersham Common. Eventually we picked up the railway line, a definite man-made embankment. Again the industrial palimpsest. An adder sunning itself, moving off slowly as its basking was disturbed. It glided noiselessly over a carpet of dead leaves. Black and yellow certainly, but not vividly-coloured. Another bridge on the road with the top broken away to let the traffic through, the brick peeling. Polo grounds on either side of the embankment, the grass here carefully manicured. The overpowering smell of cut turf. Steve said there had been an airfield here during the war with a spotlight battery and Spitfires. Yet another palimpsest, if a later one. Posts where, we supposed, the reserve polo ponies would be hitched, and a water trough. Here the embankment had been cut away. Out on to the road, down to the Farm and away. Perhaps a Bank Holiday walk was a good idea after all!

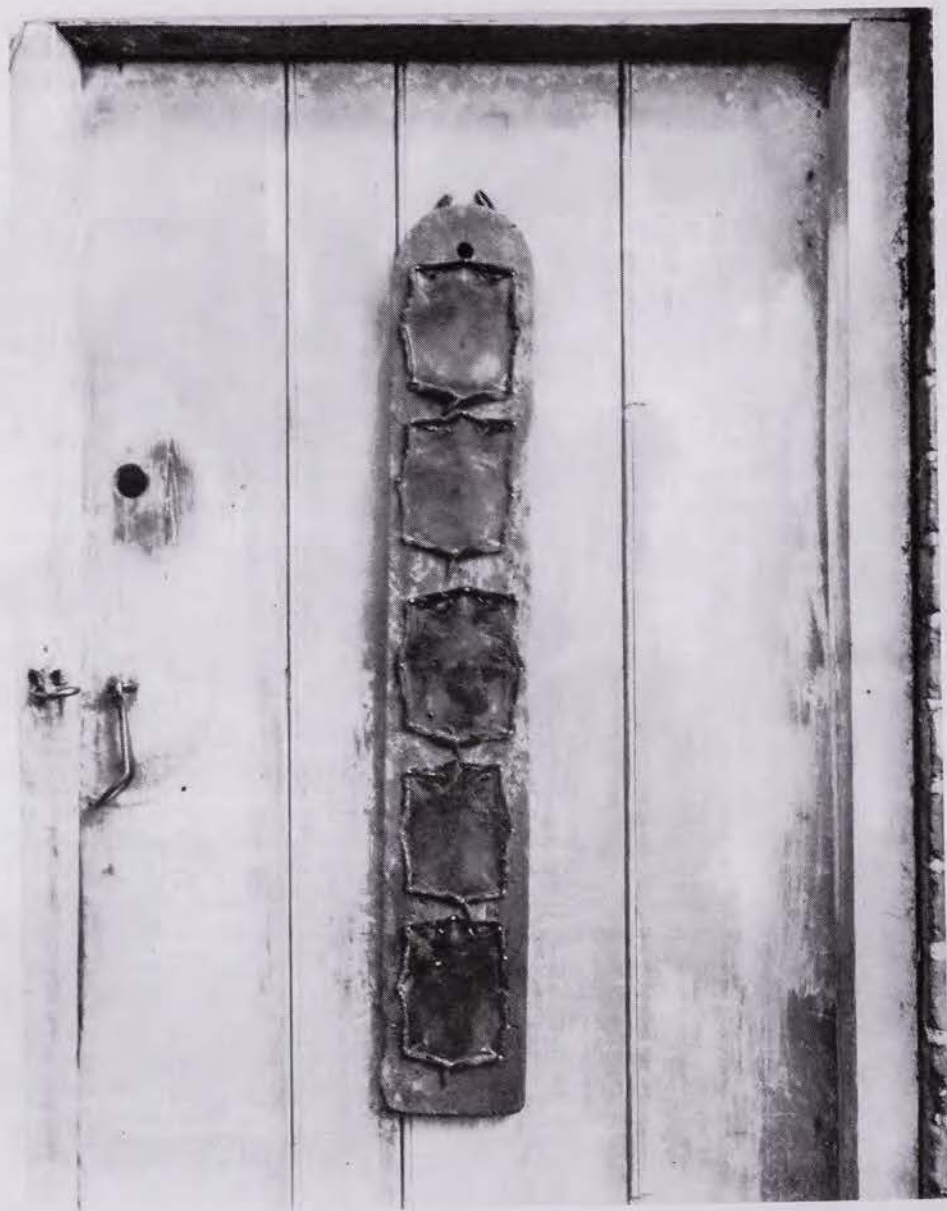
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*On the river! See Steve and Diane's Easter Sunday walk.*

*These drawings come from the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, June 15th 1889.*





*"He'd .... put the skins out to dry on the granary door."  
Moleskins drying in the sun. A photograph from the 1920s by George Garland.  
See "Yes, there were daffodils ..."*

## The Spirit of 346. A Detective Story in Three Parts

### *1) In search of whatever we were looking for.*

I don't really like loose ends, which is really another way of saying that if there's a mystery I can't help picking away at unravelling it. History, of course, is an endless succession of loose ends. You can't disentangle them all, but there are times when you need to feel you've done what you can. Exactly the position we had with the Cottage Museum. Of course, to an extent, the cottage offers a general view of how life was lived in a Leconfield Estate tied dwelling at a particular time (1912), but it isn't simply general. If you know who the tenant was at the time, as we do, general must mingle with particular, and that must in turn affect the way the cottage is presented. The very fact that Mary Cummings, the occupier of 346 from 1901 to 1930 was in her early fifties in 1912, had a grown-up family moved away, lived alone, was a sempstress at Petworth House and a devout Roman Catholic who had come to Petworth as a young wife in the late 1870s, has to be taken into account. After all no one's house can be "typical" in a complete sense, every house carries to some degree the mark of the person who lives there. In some sense the quest of the "typical" is an illusion. Perhaps we should say that if your presentation of the "particular" is accurate you should arrive at the "typical".

Regarding Mary Cummings there were things we knew and a good deal that we didn't. First we had recollections of her from a few people who remembered her. She had moved to Somerset Hospital in 1930 and died there in 1935. Such recollection is collected in PSM 83. Census records had the family in High (Back) Street in 1881, Michael Thomas Cummings, a farrier, Mary his wife and three sons, Michael, Arthur and Alfred, aged six, two and one respectively, Michael having been born in Ireland, the other children in Petworth. The family had been in Petworth from the late 1870s. By 1891 Mary is living in East Street and there are four children, now including Edith, nine, but there is no sign of Michael Thomas. A Petty Sessions case at Petworth in the early 1880s shows him to have had serious trouble with his nerves, and hints at a degree of family discord. Three quarter plate glass negatives taken by Walter Kevis and marked "Cummings Copy" had portrayed the same man in military dress which subsequent enquiry showed to be that of a Farrier Sergeant Major in the Eighth (King's Royal Irish) Hussars and a check with the regimental records showed in turn that Michael Thomas Cummings had held that rank, having served in the Crimea and in India. He had received the Crimea Medal with Sebastopol Clasp, the Indian Mutiny Medal for Central India, the Turkish Crimea Medal and the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Cummings had left the service after 22 years, presumably coming to Petworth soon after his discharge late in 1876, to follow his Army trade as a farrier. During his time in India, he had been reduced to the ranks and put for a time in detention following a regimental court martial, eventually regaining his old position as a Warrant Officer. Michael Thomas would seem from this to have been a good farrier if a little unstable



temperamentally. If, as he claimed in 1883, he had trouble with his nerves, it is hardly to be wondered at; the Crimea and the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny would turn the strongest stomach. Few indeed would pass through such horrors without it affecting them in some way. That was as much as we knew, except that Roman Catholic records showed Alfred as dying young in 1901. The family were then living at Egremont Row, an indication that Mary had already found work at the great house. She moved to 346 in that same year, 1901. And that basically was as much as we knew.

First a lucky chance, well you do need a bit of luck! A roundabout enquiry about Michael Thomas' military background went to the Regimental Museum at Eastbourne. They had nothing to add but the curator asked a visitor, there for the first time if he knew anything of Michael Thomas as he had an enquiry about him. The visitor had concise biographies of officers and men serving in certain regiments in the Crimea, or at least such biographical information as he could discover. The name Cummings didn't ring a bell, but he would check when he got home. He did, and found he had Michael Thomas' inscribed medals, bought at auction in 1978, also an inscribed pipe which went with them, given to Farrier Sergeant Major Cummings by one John Glynn. Contact was made with the present owner of the medals, and he proved a determined and able helper, not only confirming what was known already but also being able to tell us from his own researches that Michael Thomas had been married before, in 1865, and had a child, two or three years old in 1869, Michael Thomas's marriage to Mary was, then, a second marriage, the census records had shown a significant age difference between them.

Who then had sold the medals? One of the Cummings family? 1978 wasn't really that long ago. The auctioneers either could not, or, would not, say. Informed opinion was that the medals had probably not "surfaced" before, and were not part of a previous collection. They were more likely to have been kept by the family.

For the rest nothing. Had Michael Thomas been dead when Mary moved to 346? Certainly no one who remembered Mary had any knowledge of her husband. What had happened to the three surviving children? Might the next knock on the Museum door be one of Mrs. Cummings' descendants? Perhaps somewhere there existed a photograph of Mary Cummings? How often the stewards had been asked if we had such a thing. How often too the stewards had been asked what happened to the family. How often the stewards themselves will have wondered. Was there someone out there who could throw light on all this?

Oh dear, endless questions and loose ends but no answers. I remembered that when preparing the Ebernoe book it had been necessary to employ a professional search agent. Very efficient, but was it a legitimate use of Museum funds? After all we could well draw a complete blank. One way was to find the finances with the Museum reimbursing if the search yielded something. Venture capital you might say. If the search agent could do nothing for us, at least we'd know that there was nothing that could be done. We'd been fair to the stewards and we could say that we'd made every effort. The loose ends would remain. We had by now just one additional piece of information, Arthur, the second son was living at Balham in South London at the time of his mother's death in 1935. A letter to the local newspaper and published by them, elicited nothing however. Not very promising.

The search agent made some initial progress before running into difficulty. Michael Thomas had died at Wimbledon in 1916. It began to look very much as though Michael Thomas and Mary had eventually gone their separate ways. Arthur had died at Balham in 1953 having married Emma Slemmons (originally from Byworth) at Shoenbury in Kent in 1930. There were apparently no children. Edith was proving difficult, the name was sufficiently common to involve a large number of possible certificates with no certainty of being able to find the right one. It was the same with Michael. Michael Cummings wasn't a particularly unusual name. The owner of the medals saved the day. Noting that Michael had been born in Ireland he wrote off to the church in Gort, Co. Galway, the birthplace shown on the Petworth census. Did they have any details on Michael? The parish priest replied from Gort. Michael's full name was Saint Michael Angelo Cummings. That would certainly narrow the field. The search agent soon found a marriage at St. George's Catholic Cathedral in Southwark on 17th May 1899, with Edith and Arthur as signatories. There were two children Veronica and Blanche, born in 1901 and 1904 respectively. Both had died unmarried in the 1970s, Blanche in 1977. They lived together in their parents' old home in Walthamstow. Blanche's will showed no obvious family members, neighbours mainly it would seem, but one lady mentioned, lived just south of Croydon and was still at the same address. The trail was not quite cold. Nothing to do but to write, explain the situation and hope for a reply. Ann rang back the next evening. It was her mother Agnes we really needed to speak to, she would be 88 in February and still lived in the same house and same road in Walthamstow as she had always done. She had grown up with the two Cummings girls, who were a few years older than her. Oh, yes, she'd stayed at 346 in Mrs. Cummings' time. Just the once but it was for a fortnight. She hadn't been back to Petworth since then. Would she come down to 346 and have a look? "I don't see why not," said Ann. "The next time she's staying with me, we'll drive down."

## 2) Agnes at Trowels

It seemed sensible to talk to Agnes once before she actually saw 346 again, then at 346 itself. That way we could avoid the possibility of her recollections being affected by what she had seen in 1997. But it was asking a lot, Agnes had been just ten in 1919. Did Agnes mind Ian's video camera? Not really, although if she'd known that Ian was going to video, she might have dressed a little differently! Nothing much seemed to worry Agnes except the possibility of disappointing our somewhat unreasonable expectations. After all she had been very young at the time. Michael Cummings and his wife Blanche she'd known from a child. Agnes lived on the corner of the road in Walthamstow, the Cummings family in the middle of the road. Both families worshipped at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic church and there was a strong bond between them. Michael Cummings was a carpenter by trade and a real craftsman, bookcases being a speciality of his. The two daughters lived with their parents and did not marry. The Cummings family lived to a set pattern, meals were always at regular times, never out of routine. Money was tight and living had to be careful, but like everyone else in those days, they took a pride in making the best use of scarce resources. Michael's wife, Blanche, was from Yorkshire originally. The family were all good with their hands, "arty" they might be called nowadays but only in a very down-to-earth sense. They'd use holly



to decorate the church at Christmas, carefully stripping off the leaves, then rethreading them to make the wreaths. The two families were often in each other's homes. While apparently reserved with strangers, the Cummings family would relax with people they knew well. Agnes' father had a good voice and both families would enjoy a sing-song round the piano. They certainly weren't "pub" people but the occasional celebratory whisky at home was very much in order. When Mary died in Petworth in 1935 Michael had to scrape the money together to come down for the funeral, that was the way things were in those days.

Arthur at Balham was a very jolly, happy, sort of man whom Agnes liked very much, but Balham seemed a long way from Walthamstow in those days. Very occasionally Michael would go to Petworth to see his mother and then he'd come back and tell everyone all about the visit. Aunt Edie (Edith) was a sweet girl; she had a boy friend called Will. Agnes thought she died relatively young. Of Michael Thomas Agnes knew nothing at all. Mary Cummings never came up to Walthamstow at least to Agnes' knowledge. For the rest it seems best to give roughly Agnes' own words.

.....  
Veronica, Blanche and I always kept together, so I suppose that when they went to stay with their grandmother in Sussex it seemed a good idea for me to go too. It was the summer holidays and the year was 1919. I was ten while Veronica (Sis) and Blanche were a few years older. I don't think the two girls knew their grandmother very well, and I'd certainly never met her at all. After an interval of nearly 78 years you'll excuse me if some things stick in

the mind while others have gone completely. For instance, we must surely have come down on the train from Victoria but I don't remember this at all. What I do remember most vividly is being picked up in a pony and trap, presumably at the station. No, we weren't met by Mrs. Cummings; she was waiting for us at 346. As we came in the trap we were all in high spirits and laughing our heads off. Why, I can't remember, perhaps a piece of luggage had fallen out of the trap but the feeling of laughing is very vivid. It was after all the summer holidays.



L-R  
Veronica Cummings, Blanche Cummings (Veronica's mother), and Agnes in the 1920s. Note the cloche hats!

And so we came to 346, in through a path at the side, the door was at the back. An impression of cobbles, or, perhaps, bricks. Then a dark entrance into a scullery, a mangle standing outside, inside were a copper and a dolly tub. It was spotless in there, but very dark and cold, even in high summer. Candles were used a lot. Gas? I'm, not sure. Certainly an oil-lamp or two. It was quiet. Mary didn't seem to have neighbours calling in. In some ways I had the impression of a rather solitary lady. Her working hours appeared somewhat irregular, although that may have owed something to our visit. Sometimes she went in mornings only, sometimes afternoons only, sometimes all day, sometimes not at all. Sometimes a man came from the House to fetch her. I thought at the time that it was the butler, but it probably wasn't. Mrs. Cummings subscribed to the old view that children should be seen but not heard and we certainly didn't ask questions - even if we'd thought of them. People would deliver sometimes, tradesmen I suppose, and I once went down to the gate to bring in a basket of vegetables, possibly these had been sent up from the Gardens at Petworth House.

The weather was probably fairly fine and the three of us went out a lot. Mary told us where to go, the Gog, the Virgin Mary Spring or elsewhere, and told us when to be back for dinner. If it was one o'clock, then we had to be there at one o'clock. We also hired bicycles from a local shop. Mrs. Cummings was a fine cook; I remember the first meal we had at 346 was liver and bacon. I'd never had it before and I thought it was marvellous. She baked her own bread too. Altogether she was a most competent person, I could see that Michael's methodical household at Walthamstow was run on the same lines as 346.

Once we went to a kind of fete in Petworth Park. I knocked over a coconut at one of the shies and simply couldn't believe I'd actually managed it. We children stuck together and weren't conscious of other children. We walked a lot and bicycled a lot, often approaching the gate of 346 with some trepidation if our clothes were rather the worse for wear after one of our adventures. Meals would be round the table in the parlour. A very vivid memory is of sitting with Blanche on a broad window sill high up and looking down on a band passing beneath us, marching up the incline. We were leaning right out of the window. The band were not wearing uniform.

I think there was one room we weren't allowed in, it may well have been a sewing-room, there was certainly a big sewing-machine at 346. We were high-spirited but sensed that Mary was a lady who meant what she said, she was not a person with whom to take liberties.

No, I don't think Mary had a lodger. She seemed to live on her own. Of course someone may have moved out for the fortnight to accommodate us, but I have no reason to suppose this to be the case. We all slept in the same room, the three of us, Veronica in one bed, Blanche and I in the other. The bedroom floors were wood, not a lot in the way of mats and rugs.

### 3) Agnes at 346

Yes, here we are. This is the gate we'd come in at, dead tired and dishevelled, after cycling not sure whether we'd get into trouble. There was another way into the garden from the houses in Middle Street, obviously it's closed off now. I don't think Mrs. Cummings liked the idea of a right of way and the men from Middle Street taking a short cut to the allotments



tended to use it more if they thought she was out. There was an old mangle standing outside just like the one you've got. The garden I don't remember at all: possibly there was a shed in the left hand corner. The outside lavatory had just a wooden seat and a bucket. The garden seemed darker then but it was high summer when we came to 346 and now it has all the bareness of March.

Going into the kitchen the great difference must be the fanlight. That can't possibly have been there. Actually it's a great improvement, for the kitchen was terribly dark, the darkness pervaded everything. It was cold too, even in the middle of summer. The tap and stone sink look in the right place and so is the wooden draining board. The plate-rack's nice and suitably battered. Nothing was new in places like 346 in those days. The coconut floor matting is again an improvement but my strong impression is of a plain stone or cement floor. Brick you say. Perhaps cement on brick. Mrs. Cummings did some cooking in the kitchen, on an oil-stove perhaps, but more generally on the range, particularly with three extra to feed. The range must have been in the parlour - there's no room for it in the kitchen, but I can't place it in my mind's eye. It may well have been where you have it now. There was certainly a copper in the kitchen but this one's too new-looking - it wants knocking about a bit, or perhaps a coat of heavy dark paint. Everything at 346 was dark and worn. The place was absolutely spotless, but everything lay under the constraint, not so much of poverty, but of lack of money. They're not quite the same thing. Life here wasn't one of desperate grinding poverty, it was more a struggle to attain a kind of respectability, a way of life that didn't allow for the new. There was dark heavy ironware, saucepans, pots everywhere - those iron kitchen scales are perfect. The tap in the sink didn't run very smoothly, funnily enough, when I think of running water I think of the Virgin Mary Spring not of the cold tap at 346!

The parlour. Well I think the range must have been in here. Was it smaller than the "Petworth" range you now have? I can't be sure. The black ironware pots on the range top are absolutely right. The bellows I can still see Mrs. Cummings using even if I can't quite locate the stove. Remember the range still had to be going in summer for hot water and cooking. Bread would be baked in the oven. Curiously the fender wasn't dark metal as you now have it but burnished steel, kept bright by hard work with emery paper. I like the Irish peat kettle: it's old and, of course, the Cummings family were of Irish descent. Mary had been born in Manchester but her mother was from Co. Galway. The range was a Zebo and black lead job - very smartly kept up. There was a lovely old cane rocking chair, "intricate" that's how I'd describe the wickerwork. There was a dresser, too, with china, the far cupboard does duty for that as you now have it. The chenille table cloth and curtains are just right and of course Mary would have made them herself. I think they were maroon. You have green. Rag rugs were a speciality of Mary's, and odd pieces of material would be carefully kept for this purpose. Rag rugs were an essential part of the atmosphere. Mary would be delighted with the splendid one in front of the range. A difference is the wallpaper. As you say it's an early century one and it looks nice, but my strong impression is of drab heavy paint. There were plenty of pictures and these brightened up the drabness of the painted walls. Whether there were pictures of Michael Thomas it's difficult to say, he wouldn't have meant anything to me if there had been. I simply didn't know anything about him. The mantle shelf held

canisters of tea and had a carefully worked border of bombazene, black twill used for mourning but also generally in Victorian and Edwardian decor. The fanlight casts its spell on the parlour also, because the kitchen is now so light it takes away the old contrast between kitchen and parlour and makes the whole ground floor lighter.

I would have thought the stairs had linoleum, although I can quite see that the present carpet is much safer. Upstairs now and I can see the wide window sills. Here Blanche and I sat and looked down on the band, leaning right out of the window. I had been reading a book called Tam-O-Shanter. Probably it was a rare rainy day. You have this, the larger of the two first floor rooms, as Mary's bedroom: it seems reasonable enough to me, but I can't be sure. Certainly the beautiful crochet work on the counterpane would have been Mary's own, she was a marvellous worker in this medium. The Roman Catholic touches reflect her strong religious convictions. We went to mass each Sunday we were here, I had been confirmed earlier in that year. Over in the left hand corner, where you have the clothes, there was a curtain which formed a kind of wardrobe. The mint-coloured paint may well be right if, as you say, you have found it on the wall but it looks too new, nothing was new at 346 - it needs a bit of wear. The iron bed is absolutely right, although I think of brass knobs on the top. Rag rugs again - just right. Certainly no carpet. Samplers? Well, Mary was certainly capable of doing them, the question would here be, "Did she ever have the time?" I'm still not quite sure where we girls slept - I can't quite work it out.

The figure of Mary in the other bedroom - the sewing-room - gave me quite a start. It's very lifelike, you almost feel you could talk to it. I remember grey hair parted in the middle and drawn back in a bun. Did we sleep in this room? It seems a bit small and the sewing-machine was probably in here. Surely this has to be the room we were forbidden to enter, it's the only room that can be made self-contained. The larger bedroom gives access to the room upstairs. There was a door and a long narrow staircase up which we went with our candles. I think we must have slept in the second floor attic, no doubt Mary had it as a kind of spare room. If she did, then our visit wouldn't involve a lot more than putting the spare room into operation for a fortnight. We had to take cold water upstairs for washing.

78 years on and here we are walking those same streets. Not as rough now as they were in 1919. You say that the Card Shop was Morleys the cycle business. No doubt it was here that we hired our bicycles. We're going toward the Roman Catholic church now, walking down past the Angel as we must have done all those years ago. Going into the church makes me think of those far-off days. Now down the slope to walk "Round the Hills". There are the Gog fields again - what a glorious March day. I feel it wouldn't take much for me to set off down to the Virgin Mary Spring again!

Agnes Phelan was talking to the Editor.

Note. We're always interested in potential stewards for 346. Please ring Jacqueline Golden (01798 - 342320) or Peter (01798 - 342562). The video of Agnes' visit can be borrowed from Peter.



Date	Name & Address
March 20th 99.	<p>Agnes. Phelan.</p> <p>I am here after 78 years, It is such a wonderful feeling to return to such a pretty place, to find it is in such good preservation.</p>

Agnes writes her comments in the visitor's book at 346 after an interval of 78 years.

## Perplexing Petworth

This article comes from *St Mary's Parish Magazine* for September 1934. It would seem to have been written by the Rector, the Rev G.S. Provis, who had arrived to replace the Rev Powell in the previous year. At a remove of more than sixty years it remains an interesting and thought-provoking piece.

PERPLEXING PETWORTH.—"Where we are?" as the Frenchman said when struggling with our native tongue. What he meant to say was "Where are we?" Well, of course, we are in Sussex. "Silly Sussex" as some of our less fortunate neighbours describe our mentality. "Slow Sussex" as many of us would be prepared to admit. After all we have been on the map for quite a long time. In Domesday Book our home was called Peteorde, now we call our town Petworth. It has taken us hundreds of years to change one half of our name. During these years too we have helped to transform a good deal of the appearance of the place we live in, and the delightful amenities of Park and Pond were wrested from our native forest.

But like most English people we prefer to make our changes slowly and though we intend to evolve we do so at the cost of revolving but slowly and cautiously.

Thus the welcome given to the Electric Light Company was immediately followed by the renewing of our very old Gas Plant, and there are many who still remain faithful to lamps and candles. And so *ad infinitum*, but let the local reader supply his own facts in further illustration.

On the whole we are a very hospitable, law-abiding and God-fearing community, and we can bring to the solution of our many problems the shrewd common-sense which healthy surroundings and the opportunities of honest work for most of us almost invariably carries with it. The best soil for destructive and bitter ideas of God and man is to be found in the crowded tenements and ugly surroundings in which so many of our fellow-countrymen are forced to live and the "not wanted" feeling that surges up in the minds of those who are out of a job.

One can see the history of our town reflected in the religious life of its people. Let us examine it together, and let the reader either agree or disagree with the picture which is drawn.

The presence of the ancient Catholic Church of England, reformed but unchanged in essentials, is proclaimed by a lofty spire which is seen for miles around. Inside the church the War Memorial window breathes the fierce spirit of the old puritans, but the stone cross of sacrifice outside the building answers it by telling of the ever-new gospel of Christ. No doubt the Church of St. Mary still commands the respect and the affection of a considerable number of the population. Coming much later in history is the interesting building which serves as a place of worship for the Congregationalists, and an unpretentious structure, dwarfed by the high surrounding wall of Petworth House, furnishes a spiritual home for the Baptists.

The end of last century saw the building of a place of worship for the Roman Catholics at the other end of our town in charming surroundings on one side. Eighteen months ago the Salvation Army forsook their travelling motor-van and are now seemingly established in our midst.

As far as one can judge there is little or no friction between these various denominations, but about fifty per cent of the population appear to worship their own household gods but rarely enter any church or chapel and appear to be quite unmoved by outdoor services.

Our town is now the highway to Sea and Downs, and a procession of all makes of motor vehicles passes in bewildering number every week-end. The "Call of the Open Spaces" seems to drown both Church Bells or Salvation Army Band.

Let us enter the Parish Church on a Sunday morning and observe the behaviour of the congregation. We are prepared to find that all the residents among the worshippers conform to what is known as "Catholic usage" for we are told in "The Anglo-Catholic Guide to Tourists" to expect full English ceremonial and Catholic privileges. Some years ago a very beautiful Aumbry was given as part of the Parish Memorial to a well-loved Rector, who became a Bishop of Lewes. The Sanctuary Lamp tells the worshipper that the Blessed Sacrament is Reserved for the Sick or Needy, a Rood-screen and Altar Cross are a further reminder of the Presence of Christ. But with that admixture of ancient and modern which characterises the whole life of the town, the old custom of making a special reverence in recognition of this fact is observed only by the few. There is a real sense of reverence and prayer, but it is not expressed by outward action. Although none now breathes a prayer into his hat before entering the pew (which old custom died when the top-hat ceased to be worn on Sundays) the majority have been content to ignore this revival of the old custom of bending the knee or bowing the head. There must have been in the past a great variety of Church teaching and, of course, we can still have unity without uniformity.

Well might that same Frenchman have said, if he had wandered into S. Mary's after attending his own Mass and remained for Morning Prayer, "These English are a peculiar people, both their language and customs proclaim it."

Our foreign guest might have shrugged his shoulders and easily dismissed the whole question, but those who believe that attendance at a place of worship enriches character and helps life, are profoundly disquieted. It is not the variety of the expression of religious belief,



but the fifty per cent. of the people who seem to have found no spiritual home that makes one think. True there is distrust and criticism of what is called Organised Religion, but at the same time we seem to organise and over-organise almost every activity of life. We demand our specialists for bodily ailments or for the teaching of the intellect, and our training in games or sport; only in matters of religion everyone is his own specialist and needs neither priest nor creed. In reality the religion of the average person is a strange mosaic of superstition and tradition overlaid with a little of what is called New Thought. And further, everyone who attends a place of Public Worship declares by personal example that God still counts in the life of Nation or Town, and that neither Nature spelled with a capital N, nor Humanity with the initial letter underlined is a substitute for Him. Some may still think that our County without Christian Religion would soon be in danger of becoming "Silly Sussex" indeed. It is perplexing—what answer will Petworth give, as this part of West Sussex slowly responds to the changes of our age?

"PUZZLED PARSON."

## William Cobbett and his Trees

William Cobbett is best known as the founder of a weekly radical newspaper, *The Political Register*, and the author of *Rural Rides*. In these Rural Rides William Cobbett often passed through Petworth. He commented on the ancient box hedge, which still grows above the wall between Mr. Jerrome's house and Box Grove. Cobbett counted 50 labourers at work making hay in Lord Egremont's fields, and wrote somewhat condescendingly that Petworth House was "upon the whole a magnificent seat" though the hills "cut the view rather short." On that occasion, August 1823, Cobbett had been riding through farms belonging to Lord Egremont and the Duke of Richmond. He reckoned that both were fair landlords for he had seen "no wretchedness in Sussex."

Cobbett had himself been a landlord. He had moved from London to live in Botley, Hampshire, in 1804 and there he built up an estate of over 600 acres. His first purchase was a mansion house in Botley. Here, in the garden, he planted the seeds of trees which he had seen growing in America, where he had lived from 1797-1800. He was particularly pleased to find his locust trees growing well, for he thought this wood had great potential for all sorts of agricultural uses.

During the Napoleonic Wars, when Cobbett was farming at Botley, most farmers used their land to grow corn and made fortunes in the process. Cobbett however planted his acres with seedling trees, reckoning that an acre of ash would over ten years give him a far better return, and was less labour-intensive.

Cobbett now was sending his newspaper articles for the *Political Register* up to London. He continually attacked government policy and demanded Reform of Parliament. In 1809 he wrote an article criticising army discipline and the punishment of soldiers by flogging. He was charged with seditious libel and imprisoned in Newgate goal from 1810-

1812. But he continued to farm at Botley, sending down instructions to his family and labourers. He returned there in 1812.

The Board of Agriculture had initiated a survey of farming throughout the country and in 1814 Charles Vancouver, their surveyor, visited Hampshire. He was shown Cobbett's trees and noted with admiration his "flourishing seed bed of oaks" and his success at raising unusual varieties. These included "shell bark and common hickory, the honey and common locust, black and white walnut ... sassafras (and) catalpa."

But just three years later in 1817 Cobbett abandoned his Hampshire farms. He was deeply in debt and was terrified that his anti-government newspaper articles at a time when unemployment, distress and rioting was widespread would inflict a further goal sentence on him. He fled to America where he farmed and continued to write the *Political Register*.

In 1819 Cobbett returned to England hoping to be elected for Parliament, but was unsuccessful. He now lived in London writing his newspaper and conducting his aboriginal experiments on four acres of ground round his house in Kensington.

Cobbett had left his 15 year old son, James, on his land in America. James was Cobbett's agent and sent over the American seeds his father asked for. These included 40,000 acorns which were shipped by James, planted in Chelsea and the seedlings advertised in Cobbett's newspaper.

In 1825 Cobbett published *The Woodlands*, an account of his timber-growing. His methods of raising trees are still of value today and on June 22nd this year at Alice Holt Research Station, near Farnham, Dr Andrew Moffatt will give a talk about Cobbett's practical advice on tree planting to the William Cobbett Society. The occasion is the golden jubilee of the Forestry Research Station, and there is much to see including demonstrations of wood crafts and wood growing. There is no entry charge and refreshments are available.

Anyone interested in hearing about Cobbett's methods and meeting the Society is most welcome to come to this talk at 12 noon on Sunday, June 22nd at Alice Holt.

Barbara Biddell

For further details see Activities Sheet.

## New England once more

The article by Ken Baker in Magazine 87 certainly stirred some memories. As children growing up at Heath End garage we looked upon New England as our playground. Not if Toby Clarke the gamekeeper could help it! If he found us in his territory he'd chase us off. He always had a gun over his shoulder and patrolled his patch with the greatest vigilance. After all, that was what the Leconfield Estate paid him to do. We had to be as clever as he was and have an escape route ready. We might even paddle in the stream but always had to have an eye out for Toby. If we heard him we'd make a quick retreat, running up into a field out of his territory where we'd sing:



Toby Clarke, Toby Clarke, keep your nose in your own part.

Once one of my brothers tickled a trout in the stream and brought it proudly home. My father was horrified and said it would be a prison matter if Toby got to hear of it!

My father told a story about the little church at Burton Park. It was Anglican and the Biddulph family who owned Burton Park were staunch Roman Catholics. They used the church as a wine-cellar and had no wish to see it revert to its old use as a church. The door was accordingly kept tightly locked. The situation appeared to be that if a certain time elapsed without sacred use the church would no longer be deemed as consecrated. The rector of Sutton, of whose parish Burton Park formed part, got my father and some other boys to climb in the church window and open up the church for him to hold a service in there, just to keep the church in use.

Edward Elgar's wife was married to Mr Blake, a gentleman farmer who lived at Hoes. In the 1920s I belonged to Gertie Whitcomb's Petworth Choral Society; we used to rehearse in the Audit Room at Petworth House. Once we performed one of Elgar's works and Mrs Blake was invited as a guest of honour. Coming back to Heath End from a rehearsal one evening, I contrived to catch Toby Clarke's wheel as I passed him, we were both cycling, and I tipped him into the hedge. The next day he came into the garage to ask if I was alright!

I remember the great fire at Coultershaw Mill in 1923 and going down there at 10 o'clock on the Sunday morning. The fire had started at just after midnight that same morning. My father took us all over the gutted mill premises - I'm sure you wouldn't be allowed to do such a thing today. What really sticks in my mind is being amazed at seeing tiny green shoots protruding from the grains in the bins. The combination of the heat of the fire and the water from the firemen's hoses had caused it to sprout vivid green in a matter of hours. You've heard the famous saying of Henry Streeter at the Railway Inn when he was asked for refreshments for the fire crew. If he'd been told there was going to be a fire, he'd have got in appropriate supplies!

Our water at Heath End came from a tank in a big barn next to old Duncton church at the foot of Duncton Hill. There was an enormous tank in the roof which was fed by a spring on the Downs. We were relatively remote from the supply so if it was a hot summer we often had no water at all by late afternoon. We kept a big rainwater tank to guard against such emergencies.

Mrs de Fonblanque at Duncton had been a well-known suffragette and her husband rode round the village on one of those old-fashioned cycles where the rider sat bolt upright. Mrs de Fonblanque used to produce plays featuring the village children and I remember appearing in one dressed as a rabbit.

Going to Chichester High School meant catching the train at Petworth Station at 8.30 to arrive at school just after assembly. We were excused. At close of school we had to be off very sharp, going up the road to catch the 4 o'clock home. The next train would go off at 6 o'clock - it was a single line track. I don't think we ever did miss the train but we had to be careful. We had permission to leave school even if homework had not been set.

For a while I worked as a nurse at the Cottage Hospital. Andrew Smith the showman, had his wife in there at the time and he had permission to bring her in gin and whisky! I still

have a temperature chart for Wilfred Holden of Ebernoe. He'd come in, a young man in his twenties, suffering from septicaemia after having a blackthorn burr lodged in his elbow. There was no penicillin in those days and his case seemed desperate for a time. After a while he began to mend. As I had been his nurse during the critical period his family gave me his temperature chart as a kind of thank you. I still have it.

Nancy Kingsley was talking to the Editor.

## Petworth and the college of sad priests

Scratch the surface of Elizabethan Petworth and you will find Nicholas Smyth (Smith), rector for thirty years from 1561. Most wills of any significance have him as a witness, but there is nothing to suggest a personality. Perhaps the bareness of early spring was a good time to think of him, a bright March day, visitors still sparse but the sun peering into corners that winter had left obstinately dark. Spent notices to take down from the Leconfield Hall boards, old coffee mornings or bingo evenings, as surely confined to a forgotten past as Smyth himself.

Contemporary Petworth, largely dependent on visitors and looking essentially to a wider world, would be a far cry from Smyth's small inbred Elizabethan market town, subsisting on agriculture and riven by the bitter dispute between the ninth Earl of Northumberland and his tenants over copyhold law and the enclosure of Petworth Park. Today there were rooks in the cedar by the Rectory Fields and molehills drying in the March sun. Round the Hills has probably not changed much since Smyth's time. Here he might feel continuance of a kind. In his day the field sloping down to the brook belonged to the Rectory manor, the fields rising beyond to the Earls of Northumberland, the incumbents at the great house having a somewhat tenuous permission to come up through the rector's land. As often with such arrangements, when relations became strained, litigation ensued, and in 1655 Chancery were asked to adjudicate. Robert Ward, aged 90, looked back three score years and more to the time of Mr. Smyth and recalled more bush and undergrowth in that rector's time. Others, with not quite such an extensive memory span claimed the "quick frithe" had long made ascent of the hill with carts effectively impossible. There was a stile but no gate. Yes, Nicholas Smyth might relate to 1997 here if not elsewhere.

Daffodils and flowering cherry in the churchyard. If Nicholas Smyth had any abiding city it would be here. The smell of the church interior was pungent as you entered the south door but it soon dissipated. Sparse entries in the visitors' book, after all it was still only mid-March. Nicholas would be comforted to know that Fred Flintstone had visited the church the previous week. I had read somewhere that in Smyth's day, churches were largely open spaces strewn with plants like bedstraw. The congregation simply sat on the floor. Was this true? I had no idea.

Nicholas had left a memorial brass high up on the chancel wall. As a Latin scholar



Smyth would have known Horace's "Exegi monumentum aere perennius..." "I have raised up a monument more lasting than bronze". Would a monumental brass be an unconscious challenge to Horace? Or an admission that Horace's achievement was beyond the measure of ordinary mortals? Neither probably. And, after all, you'd have to say that in 1997, the spirit of Horace is locked away in what has become a specialist's language, while Smyth's brass is still there for all to see. It too however, like the poems of Horace, is in Latin.

Nicholas Smyth had come to Petworth from Eton College in 1561, a man of some forty years with an appreciable academic career already behind him. "A student of either school of Wykeham," he had in other words gone from being a scholar at Winchester (1536) to New College Oxford, then treated as being attached to Winchester. At Oxford from 1541 to 1548 he had become a Fellow of New Collage, then, in 1554 Fellow of Eton. In most of the following years until he came to Petworth in 1561 he acted as one of the College bursars.

Petworth's link with Eton is forgotten now but significant and longstanding in its time. The living of Petworth had been separated from the great house, and forfeit to the crown, as long ago as 1403, after a Northumberland defeat and attainder at Shrewsbury. In 1445 Henry VI included the living with a bundle of others in the endowment of the newly created Eton College, intended initially as a chantry for singing masses for the pious dead rather than as a centre of instruction. In Henry's own words it was to be "a college of sad priests". The living of Petworth would remain in the gift of Eton College until Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, recovered it by a judicious exchange in 1693. The connection with Eton may well have brought to Petworth priests more learned than the general run of clergy. William Baker, dying in 1485, left one book of the Bible in prynte, the Golden Legend in prynte, together with a booked called *Sermones parati* (Prepared Sermons). He also left to Blessed Mary of Petworth one book *De Beata Maria Virginis* to remain perpetually chained in the chancel of the church. The book, probably a manuscript, disappeared, doubtless at the Reformation.

Nicholas' years at Eton spanned a period of unprecedented spiritual turmoil. Henry VIII had died in 1547 just as he was poised to close Eton and expropriate its lands and revenues. The extraordinary behaviour of Nicholas Udall the master would have given Henry an excuse, if he had needed one. Thomas Smith replaced Udall in 1547 and carried on under Edward VI a tradition of aggressive Protestantising that accorded ill with Henry VI's initial vision. Votive masses were halted and the images at the High Altar taken down and carried away. Festivals such as Corpus Christi and the Assumption were suppressed. When Mary came to the throne in 1554 the position was completely reversed. A new provost, Henry Cole, brought back the old Catholic observances. Nicholas Smyth was made a Fellow in the same year. Had he been related to the replaced Thomas Smith? No one knows. Did Nicholas Smyth become a Fellow before Mary entered London? Or after? What little evidence there is may suggest the latter. Mary deprived three of the seven fellows and a fourth resigned. Nicholas remained. In 1558 Cole was removed as recusant by Queen Elizabeth and William Bill a moderate Protestant took over as Provost. Nicholas remained. That is as much as can be said. On gaining the Petworth living in 1561 he resigned his fellowship according to the Statutes. The relevant books and registers for his period as Bursar survive but there is nothing of a personal nature.



*Agnes in Confirmation dress 1919.  
See "The Spirit of 346".*





Farrier Sgt. Major Cummings 8th (Kings Royal Irish) Hussars.  
A picture probably taken not long before he left the Army in 1876.  
See "The Spirit of 346".



Farrier Sgt. Major Cummings' medals, now in a private collection. The medals are inscribed. The Crimean medal (extreme left) was awarded with a total of four clasps to the Army during the Crimean campaign. Men who were present at the battles of the Alma (20th September 1854), Balaclava (25th October 1854), and Inkerman 5th November 1854, received these clasps, but Sebastopol was given to all those who were present before the town at any time between the 1st of October 1854 and the 9th September 1855, when it fell. These medals were originally issued unnamed, but could be returned for naming free of charge.

The Indian Mutiny medal (second from the left) was also issued with several different clasps (in general for particular places) but the clasp for Central India was awarded to men who had served in the region. The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (third from the left) was awarded - as its name implies - for 18 years service with continuous good behaviour. The value of the gratuity that went with it varied with rank, but was usually £5 or £10.

The Turkish Crimean Medal (extreme right) was given by the Sultan of Turkey to the English French and Sardinian troops who had taken part in the war.  
(See "The Spirit of 346".)





*St Michael Angelo Cummings with his wife Blanche and daughter Veronica in August 1903.*

*Photograph by Walter Kevis, Garland Collection.*

*Our thanks for this to Mrs Alison McCann of the West Sussex Record Office, Archivist at Petworth.*

*(See "The Spirit of 346".)*

The benefice to which Nicholas was appointed was a large one, the outlying chapelries of Duncton and Northchapel still forming an integral part. Of Nicholas' time at Petworth nothing definite seems to survive in the way of recollection but his will is of some length and a good deal more interesting than most. He desires his body to be buried in the chancel of St. Mary's near the vestry door. He desires also a monument to be put up to him in the wall on the east side of the door as a remembrance. After the usual bequests to the Cathedral at Chichester and to the church reparations, he makes gifts to Duncton, Northchapel and to Upwaltham - possibly he had some oversight at Upwaltham at this time. Further donations go to the repair of the Petworth conduit and the maintenance of the Market House - an early reference to the ancestor of the present Leconfield Hall. Forty shillings are to be distributed to the poor of the town. William Edmundes is "forgiven" thirty five pounds that he owes Nicholas, along with fifteen pounds for a fine paid to a Mr. Bynwyn - perhaps an admission to a property, along with another ten pounds lent to buy oxen at Storrington Fair. Also "ten pounds he knoweth when and howe and God forgive hym"! Nicholas' sister-in-law, William Edmundes' wife, receives a best gown, a little silver pot and ten pounds. William, her son, a cow and fifty shillings. Nicholas would have been farming the glebe as his predecessors had done. In 1447 the then rector of Petworth had upheld the rector's immemorial right to drive pigs down North Street to their traditional pasturage. Mother Maundfeild receives forty shillings and Nicholas' second gown. The names Edmundes and Maundfeild suggest that relatives of Nicholas' immediate predecessors were still in close touch, probably also in the area. John Edmund had been at Petworth from 1485 and Thomas Mandeville or Maundfeild had replaced him in 1531. Both of course were Eton College appointees. According to Leland it was Edmund who brought water to supply the town. The conduit would be an appropriate subject for Nicholas' charity.

The poor of Bletchley and Stoney Stratford "in Buckingham where I was born" receive the same attention as had Petworth's own poor. "Sir Lancaster parson of Graffham" receives all of St. Augustine's works and St. Jerome's epistles. Mr. Raphe Earle, vicar of Eartham, receives St. Chrysostom's works and Nicholas' Stephanus Latin bible. Among various other bequests we may note forty shillings to Alice Philp "my kinswoman (as she saith), and a gold ring to Mr. Thomas Stanley, steward to Henry Percy." As the friend of Thomas Stanley and also Thomas Smyth (no relation), the Ebernoe ironmaster, Nicholas' sympathies will no doubt have lain with the ninth Earl in his ongoing dispute with his tenants. Twenty pounds is to be distributed to twenty poor maids on their being married within the parish. The remainder is basically to be held as a stock to the use of poor occupiers of the town of Petworth for ever. A generation later the commandeering of this stock to repair the town's water supply would lead to a Chancery commission of enquiry. John Thompson has to sign the will "because the shakinge of my hande will not suffer me to wryte".

A codicil makes the last bequest a specific one of twenty pounds. A second codicil adds a further ten pounds to Sister Edmundes' legacy and deals with some objections by Mother Maundfeilde who has "challenged, chardged and claymed" that Nicholas had promised to give her twenty shillings a year. He had done no such thing.

Nicholas makes no mention of a wife. Likely enough he did not marry. Certainly his



early career would have been a Spartan one. Boys at Eton were woken at five with the cry "Surgite!", "Rise!" and were in school for prayers at six. They would work until nine before stopping for breakfast. Prayer at ten was followed by work then dinner at eleven. School work again from twelve to three, play from three to four, then more lessons from four until supper at five. Preparation took from six to eight with a break at seven. At eight boys would go to bed, chanting prayers as they did so. This was the regime Monday to Thursday, Friday and Saturday were given to testing what had been learned during the week. Friday was also a fast day and the day for boys who had offended against school discipline to be flogged. Not a day to be looked forward to! Boys remained at Eton all year except for the three weeks from Ascension Day to Corpus Christi. Eton as Christopher Hollis observes was like other schools of the time, "a pretty brutal place". Nicholas Smyth's astringent early years at Winchester, Oxford and Eton would always leave their mark on him, but perhaps a little more comfort would seep into his thirty years at Petworth.

For Round the Hills see PSM 15. For the Earl's conflict with his tenants *Cloakbag and Common Purse* (1979). Thomas Baker's will is discussed in *Sussex Notes and Queries* (August 1935) p 199. For the alleged misappropriation of Nicholas Smyth's stock funds see Lord Leconfield: *Petworth Manor* (1954) p 39. For the early history of Eton College see Christopher Hollis: *Eton* (1960). I am grateful to the Eton College archivist for details of the chronology of Nicholas Smyth's earlier career. Nicholas Smyth's will is at the Public Record Office.

P.

## Yes, there were daffodils....

### *Losing the Key*

My uncle had worked at a distillery and reckoned he knew how to make whisky. Grandad Jonas had some beautiful barley at Westlands - just right. It was a matter of keeping it damp for a time. The granary key was huge and always hung just inside the kitchen at Westlands. As a girl I'd get the key, go up the steps, unlock the granary, and take out enough grain to feed the chicken, grinding the grain in a mill. But the key wasn't there. I went to Grandad Dunton supposing that he had it in his pocket. He hadn't. It was an absolutely enormous key and we couldn't get into the granary. By the time another entrance had been made from the field at the back of the granary and another pair of steps put in, the barley had grown long spears and was useless. No whisky. We never did find the key.

### *Snow Water*

When we left the farm at Westlands, I cleared out the cellar and found a sealed bottle half-full of water with a ticket round the neck marked "snow-water". The bottle was cobwebbed and dirty but the water still beautifully clear. It had obviously been there for

years. When it snowed, the old people would gather snow, melt it, and keep the water to ward off chilblains. They would rub their children's feet, legs and arms with it. I've actually seen my mother, sitting by a roaring fire, with baby on her lap and a dish of snow on the table, rubbing snow on baby's legs, and watching the snow melt in the heat as she applied it. Granny Dunton couldn't remember such a thing at all. It must have been her parents who put the bottle down the cellar.

### *Revenge*

The old farmer was a miserable man and the lads on the farm thought they'd get their own back on him. The old-fashioned horse-ploughs were not taken away when you finished work, they were simply left in the field. The lads manhandled the plough into a ditch and left it. My brother Jack didn't work for the farmer but he got the blame for it and always protested his innocence.

### *Old Mark*

Old Mark would sleep rough wherever he could and live off the land and doing odd jobs for farmers. He'd pick mushrooms and take them to the shops. Chestnuts were another crop for him. I remember my sister coming over to Westlands for the day to go chestnutting. We set off, and just inside Flexham Park, we saw half a sackful old Mark had picked. We helped ourselves to a bag-full each. He knew exactly where to find the best and these were real beauties. I don't think he ever realized he'd lost any. When Mark had a little money he'd go on the booze. He had a speech impediment and once when he was carrying on his back a sack with pig's entrails some farmer had given him, he was asked what he had in the sack. "Guts," he replied in his indistinct way. "Ducks?" asked the questioner. "Guts," replied Mark. "Ducks?", answered the questioner. I don't think they ever got themselves sorted out.

The first I ever heard of Mark was when someone told me a tale of how, years before, he'd been shopping for his mother. They lived at Glasshouse out on the road between Fox Hill and Kirdford. Mark had drunk perhaps a little too freely and dropped the sugar on the road. The bag burst and out came its precious cargo - straight into all the dust and muck. You know what roads were like in those days. "What did you do then?", Mark was asked. "I scraped up what I could with all the dust and grit and put it back in the bag," Mark replied. They must have had some pretty gritty puddings! The old houses at Glasshouse became derelict and were empty for years - brambles and thorns grew up among the ruins.

### *"Clever" Women*

"Clever" woman is much better than "witch", such women often had great knowledge of herbs and other lore and could be a great influence on people. On the way to Kirdford there was a cottage and whenever Grandad Dunton had the stone-cart, horse and waggon of course, the horses would stop dead by the cottage. Nothing he did could move them. He was told to take out his pocket-knife and cut a piece out of one of the wheel-spokes on his cart. The horses moved on and the next day the old woman had a cut finger. This was one of Grandad Dunton's tales and he always insisted it was true.

One of my relations had a reputation as a clever woman. She lived a fair way away and sent some flowers to put on her mother's grave. She upset us however by saying darkly, "I'll know whether you've actually put them on" - it was as if we needed to be checked on.



We were so angry we threw them on the fire. Whether she knew this or not I don't know. I wouldn't be surprised if she did. Clever women were not to be under-estimated. We often laughed about it.

#### *Hogs' Puddings*

In those days my mother used pigs' entrails to make "hogs' puddings". She would clean the entrails, there were three skins and you'd pick out the middle one and throw it away, or perhaps it was one of the others, I can't remember now. Anyway, you'd fill whichever one it was with breadcrumbs and currants, a kind of spotted-dick mixture, tie them up rather like a sausage and boil them in water. They were lovely and we children took them to school for our lunch. The other kids would gather round and say, "What have you got there?" The puddings looked just like sausages. "Hogs' puddings," we'd reply. It was quite a joke, the other children had never heard of such a thing.

#### *Pigs*

Every cottage had a pig sty, usually at the back of the woodhouse. This held one or two pigs. If there were two, it was reckoned to sell one to salt the other. Salt was expensive in those days. If properly cured, the pork would end up nice and pink, but the pig had to be killed at the right season. The woman who salted the pig must not do it during one of her periods, for the pig invariably wouldn't take the salt. This may sound strange but was certainly the case. All pieces of the pig were used in some way; the ears were boiled, the face and nose too. These parts were called "soust" and ate like prime pork. Chitterlings were another part of the entrails, first boiled and then fried. They were considered a great delicacy. The melt was a long piece of neck, the colour of liver. I'd double it over, stuff it with sage and onion and breadcrumbs, sew it up, cook it and serve with a piece of heart. The head? Yes, that too was boiled up; there would be fair bit of flesh on that. It was the same with chicken: nothing was wasted. When you killed a chicken, you never wasted the legs, you'd scrub, clean and skin them, pick off the toe-nails with clippers, boil them to take off the scales and uncover the pink flesh beneath.

Even the pig's knuckle-bones would be dried off and used to make five stones, a game that had innumerable variations the stones being thrown up into the air to be caught on the back of the hand. I can't remember the names of the games, one, I think, was called Ducks in a Pond, the fivestones being held between the fingers like ducks on the surface of a pond.

The bladder would be blown up, tied with string and given to the kids to play with. The more you blew it up the bigger it became; it would often be fixed on to a pair of bellows and blown up. I never knew one to burst. The bladder wouldn't be used as a football; it was tied on to a stick rather like a large balloon. My mother-in-law would blow the bladder up to its fullest extent, then cut it open and use it instead of paper to cover her pots of lard.

#### *Bacon Lofts*

This was essentially a "pig" economy and the curing of bacon at home was very much a part of that economy. At Westlands we used the big chimney to cure bacon for other people as well. Andrew Smith the showman killed a pig and brought some hams to put up the chimney and cure. He also brought a dozen packets of pea-meal. I had to rub in this pea-meal all over the hams, which were still damp where they had just been salted. It smelled

beautiful as the hams cured and the pea-meal dried as a clinging powder.

There was a short little ladder that went up into the chimney, quite a normal thing in those days. In the old house at Fountains Kirdford where I lived before I went to Westlands there was a door in the bedroom which you could open and step into the chimney. At this level you were half-way up the chimney and there was a platform on which you could stand and hang up the hooks with the bacon. The one at Fountains was eventually nailed up because it was feared that the old lady who lived there would open the door at night and fall down the chimney. There was a platform at Westlands too which involved climbing down a short ladder. When we were at Montpelier in the Gog, I was out blackberrying and remembered the little old ladder. It was so useful to pick on high bushes. Eventually it was thrown away in a ditch - bacon loft ladders were a thing of the past.

#### *Moles*

My brother caught moles and made a lot of money sending the skins away. He'd skin them and put the skins out to dry on the granary door. The thing was you had to skin them directly you got them out of the trap, and not leave it till the next day because they would stink so. We were never short of moles on the farm.

#### *Jays*

Jays' wings were much sought after for ladies' hats (and to a lesser extent men's). There was a firm I would send them away to, with rabbit skins and horse hair. I had a printed ticket and the firm paid carriage. Bill Barnes used to clip the horses and shorten their tails; they had to be long enough to enable them to flick off the flies. Eventually rabbit skins were fetching only about twopence each and the firm didn't find it profitable to pay the carriage of them. Jays' wings were different, they held a price of something like sixpence, reasonable money in those days.

#### *Carbide*

A local gamekeeper was somewhat on the over-zealous side, always anxious to catch out the local lads. The local lads decided to teach him a lesson. They stole into the woods and on every five-bar gate and on every post they put a bottle containing carbide. They then set each bottle alight and disappeared. Soon the bottles started to explode with a loud noise like a rifle shot. Out rushed the gamekeeper thinking the woods were alive with poachers!

#### *Daffodils*

Yes, there were daffodils at Hilliers in those days, but only the short-stemmed native ones. Jonas Duncton from Westlands rented the field from Mr. Stapylton to put his cows in and mowed it once a year. The daffodils were so thick that the grass only grew with difficulty. Were we allowed to pick the Hilliers daffodils? No need, no need, there were daffodils everywhere; in those days the woods either side of Fox Hill were yellow with them and we had daffodils at Westlands too. I once dug up a lot of them to plant round the big cherry tree at the farm but, instead of planting them as I had thought, I put a triangle on each corner of a square. They went on for years. "Why aren't daffodils so plentiful now?" It's surely because the woods were coppiced in those days and the bulbs got some sun and light. We'd often go to Flexham Park; there were many shades of bluebell there - blue, pink and white and all shades between. The bees had done their work. Strangely, if you found a good hybrid and brought it home it would never reproduce the shade the next time it flowered.



Excerpted from a tape of Mrs. Nellie Duncton talking to Audrey Grimwood. For other recollections by Mrs Duncton see Magazines 53, 54, 81, 83.

## Beer for the workers!

Looking through Petworth House documents of the 1790s and early 1800s Brian Rich, searching for references to Real Tennis, found a number of references to beer being given to Estate workmen on various (somewhat uncongenial) occasions.

*October 26th 1793.* Repairing the shutters round the Tennis Court and Tarring the netts round the Tennis Court.

*November 2nd.* Beer when Tarring netts 1/3d.

Other occasions when beer was handed out were:-

Tyre making

When at work on the engine

Mending the crank rod at the engine

Cleaning windows

*June 13th 1795.* Gave to the men to drink after the cleaning out of the common sewer 5/-.

*November 14th.* Paid the men for overtime and drink when cleaning out the Town well and Privy by the cowyard.

*October 22nd 1796.* Beer for the men it being so far from home the three weeks they were there 15/5d.

*September 17th.* Beer to a man instructing the men to cue oxen.

*January 31st 1801.* Paid for a half pint cup broke when giving the men beer at the ice cart 2d.

*12th September 1801.* For beer in the night to the men at the Pondhead 1/6d.

*7th November 1801.* Gave men to drink at work in the water 2/6d.

*October 9th 1802.* Gave the men for beer when working in the water at Budham Meadow 2/-.

*December 6th 1796.* Mr Sawyer gave the men to drink at Iping 3/-.

*July 19th 1788.* Gave the men to drink when working in the well 1/-.

*March 15th 1788.* Beer binding wheels and making cart nails 2/2d.

*May 17th.* Paid for beer when cleaning of books 1/1½d.

*24th July.* Beer for the men when emptying (sic) the Necessary house.

*March 17th.* Beer when hanging a pair of bellows 2/1d.

*June 5th.* Beer when making strakes and cart nails 3/4d.

*March 7th 1789.* Allow James Austin for beer for tarring for 5 days 1/0½d.

Allowed beer to the men tarring the stables 2/6d.

*March 14th.* Beer to men claying the cistern and tarring hovels 9/4½d.

*August 1st.* Beer to the men forcing water overtime 1/-.

*October 17th.* Beer to the men cleaning out Privy at Sadlers 2/-.

*August 8th.* Beer cleaning the reservoir 7½d.

*June 12th 1790.* Beer when at ye fox earth 5d.

*1793.* James Groundsell (the man that was drown'd at the River)

To a coffin 16s. 0d.

Sextons fees 3s. 6d.

Clerks fees 6d. and Kings Tax 3d. 9d.

Beer to men for stripping him and etc. 2s. 0½d.

I am sure all will be amused at the 1793 entry under Expenses:-

By extinguishing the fire at Lord Viscount Montagues 17s. 5d.

B.R.

Brian notes that he does not know what "cue" oxen means - or the "Kings tax".

Documents cited courtesy of Lord Egremont.

## A Tillington Childhood (2)

My father was gardener groom in those days to Mr. Wilcox who was, I believe, head forester on the Petworth Estate. I must mention that I had a brother born in 1908, Frank. We spent many happy days with Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox at their home at "Snowhill", just a field away from our lodge. In the family there was Philip, Winnie, Monica, and Joe, the latter being a great friend of mine when we were both in the infants. Joe always used to miss R.I. at Tillington School, that was because he was Catholic. That didn't convey anything to me. I used to wish I was one so that I was able to start school much later in the morning, Catholic to me was something special. After a while Joe left Tillington school to go, I believe, to Midhurst Grammar which to me was really "posh". One day he told me that they had experiments in the laboratory. I thought he said "peppermints in the lavatory" and that puzzled me for a very long time.

I remember at one time our headmistress was a Miss Ferguson, a man teacher named Mr. Turner, and a mistress called Miss Mashell. Miss Ferguson was a very stern teacher. She had been rather severe on a certain little boy. One day his mother turned up, tried to attack Miss Ferguson with a horse whip, swore at her and said "I'll cut slices off your ass". I knew Miss Ferguson hadn't a donkey, and if so, why she wanted to cut slices off it. I didn't really understand. I didn't know that 'Arse' meant backside as we children never heard our parents swear or use nasty words.

We played lots of games in the playground. During the winter we played slides and snowballs, and skipping was also popular. I remember one skipping game where one child stood each end of the rope and pulled it, and a third one jumped in the middle and sang:

"Vote, vote, vote for Kathie Howick

In comes Edie at the door.



Edie is the one  
We'll have her if we can,  
And we don't want Kathie any more"

Kathie would then jump out of the rope and Edie would jump in etc. etc.. Hoops were great fun. We girls had wooden ones with a stick and the boys had iron ones with 'skidders', like a large nail with a hook in the end. The hook was to hold the hoop back so that it wouldn't run away. Marbles caused no end of fun. In those far off days we always played in the road, so were able to toss the marbles quite a distance, almost like a miniature game of bowls.

The First World War had already started and one by one our fathers went away to France. We were all too young to realize the seriousness of war, although some of our little friends were made fatherless. Not understanding how sad the young widows used to be, I rather envied my little friends who had mummies dressed in black with black veiling on their hats with a piece hanging down at the back. These, I believe, were called 'widows weeds'. My father was fighting in France and I so well remember my mother, having read a letter from my father to her friend, Mrs. Streeter, saying that Bill (my Dad) had caught a packet on his head and had been buried in a shell hole, but that two 'Queens' (of course, two members of the Queens Regiment) had dug him out. The next day I was so proud when I went to school to tell my little friends that the Germans had thrown a parcel at my Dad's head, he'd fallen in a hole and Queen Mary and Queen Alexandra had come along with their spades and had dug him out. Another letter was received from Dad in which he wrote that there was so much mud and water about that they had to walk on duckboards. I remember thinking, "our ducks are lucky here, they don't have to walk on boards, they have two lakes to swim on", thinking about the lovely stretches of water in Petworth Park.

I never could understand why my Mum was so unhappy when she received a letter from the "front". That is what being in France seemed to be called. I thought to myself, "I love sitting in the front as it's warmer. In those days, all schools had an enormous stove running from the middle of the room like a gigantic land mine. I believe it was fed with buckets of coke. I suppose it had a chimney, I never did fathom the thing out.

The war carried on and we all got on living our own lives. I think my mother had 11/- to keep us on so she had to work very hard. I remember in those days she cleaned the school so my brother and I used to move the desks so that a clear space was left for the room to be swept. The desks, which were light in colour, were made for two with an inkwell each side. We then had to move them back after the floor was clean, it really was a tedious job of work. In those days I suppose I was six and my brother eight. I never remember grumbling about it as we seemed to take everything in its stride. I remember once, four of us were very naughty. Bob and Edie Bryder, my brother and I decided we'd tip ink everywhere in our classroom (we'd just moved the desks and were waiting for my mother to come in with her broom). We slopped it all down the walls, all over the desks, and I remember climbing up the high chair of our mistress desk so that I was able to open the lid of her desk, opening her inkwell and taking the little pot out and pouring ink all over her papers. When we were discovered, all hell was let loose. My brother and I had to wash it all off. My Mother gave us a good hiding, but what shamed us both more than anything was our teacher telling us we

had made Jesus unhappy. In those days, religion was such a large part of our lives. Mum also went to a Mr. Pratt's fruit farm, fruit picking. We used to take our dinner to school and we always had a galley pot of milk pudding. After school, we used to walk to River to meet Mum, a distance of about two miles. In those days children were safe to wander anywhere.

Somewhen about that time, 1916, we all assembled in one room at school and were told about a brave boy named Jackie Cornwall who had stayed at his post until his ship went down. I remember thinking "Why did he have to stand near a post, why didn't he try a door instead". We were all given a postcard photograph of him. If only we had kept all those souvenirs, how we would value them now.

One very hot summer day my brother and I had been squabbling and Mum got fed up with us so decided to walk across the field outside our lodge. We were put to bed early. All of a sudden, we heard a most peculiar hissing noise, looked out of the window and saw a balloon appearing from nowhere and about to envelope our Mum. She started to run. My brother said "I hope it falls on her" and so did I. Anyway, all's well that ends well. The two men in the balloon seemed to fold it up and came in to us for cups of tea - in the meantime, we were allowed to come downstairs.

One evening the three of us were sitting round the kitchen table playing Ludo when my Mum said "Don't look now, there is a face looking at us through the window". (She would never draw down the dark blinds because she said that would be shutting Daddy out). We were so scared. Then all of a sudden Mum laughed and said, "It's a foxhound on its hind legs looking in". She shooed it off and no doubt it went back to the kennels in the park.

Whilst my Dad was in the war, we had an elderly man living with us doing Dad's work. He was a kind old man and had a face like the old man of that time advertising Monkey Brand Soap. He used to have a book called, I believe, "*John Bull*". It was owned, I believe by a man named Horatio Bottomley who swindled lots of small investors of their money. Mr. Harris, our lodger, was one. Ever after I disliked Horatio Bottomley. I don't know why I remember this episode, as I was only about seven at the time.

I used to love toy balloons and one day I found a halfpenny in the cutler drawer. I put it in the garden, dug it up and told Mum that I had found it so I was going to buy a balloon with it. In those days one could do quite a lot with a halfpenny. My Mother answered "You stole that from the drawer. Now you will lose something bigger". I've never forgotten the lesson that I learnt from that one small thing.

My brother and I, with other children, were asked to kill cabbage butterflies. We were given 6 pence for two hundred. We each collected our sixpences and walking across Petworth Park on our way home, went to what we called the watercress pond to take Mum some watercress home for our tea. The pond was very small but had rather a deep drain one end. I bent over and my sixpence rolled out of my pocket into this drain. I immediately thought of the halfpenny I'd stolen - my punishment was then complete. Mum helped me get over the agony by paying me three pence for a 'lovely bunch of watercress'.

We used to go to fetes and cricket matches in Pitshill Park, owned by Colonel and Mrs. Mitford. One day, I was standing close to Mrs. Mitford and I just couldn't understand how





Tho' ever so clean a new broom sweeps  
This tried and trusted servant keeps  
It's one and only situation  
**CLEANSER! POLISHER!** to the nation.

## MONKEY BRAND

is one of the ablest and oldest servants in John Bull's retinue. It will clean and polish the house from attic to basement—do a day's work in an hour—make Copper like Gold—Tin like Silver—Paint like New.

**FOR A THOUSAND HOUSEHOLD USES,  
BUT IT WON'T WASH CLOTHES.**

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Advertisement for "Monkey Brand" from 1915.

she could sit in a stooping position so long without falling over. I tried to and kept losing my balance. I then decided to walk behind her and found that she was sitting on a shooting stick which had been completely hidden by one of her legs.

Mrs K. Vigar (to be continued)

## 'Close your eyes and eat them with Jam...' A view of 1915

A few years ago I was given a virtually complete run of the *West Sussex Gazette* for 1915, Nos. 3133 to 3184 inclusive, lacking only 3164 and 3176. The newspapers are folded horizontally, into three, a little browned, sometimes a little dirty but otherwise in good order. 1915 is a crucial and trying year in English history but not, perhaps, an obvious one to choose if one is seeking in general terms to distil the essence of one particular year: the usual *WSG* coverage is of course much curtailed by war news.

After early experience in 1914 when the Admiralty and the War Office censored news items independently and, between them, suppressed almost everything, by 1915 an official Press Bureau gave out extensive releases that for all their length, discouraged both discussion and incisiveness. Newspapers that followed an independent line, even assuming the information to enable them to do so were available, might expect to fall foul of the ubiquitous Defence of the Realm Act (D.O.R.A.). "Dora" was not a lady to be treated lightly. As other newspapers, the *W.S.G.* worked within the parameters of the Act. It would have been very unwise not to. The paper's editorial attitude may be summed up in this quotation, "Lord Robert Cecil has gone up still higher in the esteem of journalists. When questioned in the Commons about an indiscreet statement made publicly in Croydon regarding the Dardanelles operation, he frankly said the report was true, and regretted the wrong impression it had created". Whatever the merits or otherwise of the attempt to turn the German eastern flank in the Turkish held Aegean, modern historians certainly see, as no doubt Lord Robert Cecil did, much to criticise in the military and naval leadership of the expedition. In 1915 however the "generals" were right, and dissent was seen to weaken national morale.

The *Gazette* was usually at this time of twelve pages, occasionally eight; as such it was larger than its Victorian counterpart, but without sacrificing the time-honoured layout under places that had survived from 1853. To an extent this layout is still with us. Particular articles might be written by staff reporters but the reportage for individual towns and villages was the work of local correspondents, Miss B. Arnold being the Petworth representative.

The first page was invariably devoted, as it had always been, to public notices and advertisements, no banner headlines or coloured pictures in those understated days. Illustrations in fact are almost non-existent except for the occasional diagram; such pictorial representation as there is comes from advertisement line drawing. Page 2 always carried two



large advertisements, one on the top left hand corner, and a larger one on the right. The former would usually be for the International Stores, the latter invariably for a cleaning product of some kind, Sunlight or Lifebuoy soap, Monkey Brand, Rinso or Omo. These would often embody a patriotic theme. Page 2 at this time carried a serial and 1915 began with *The Ivory Child*, an Allan Quartermain story by H. Rider Haggard which would be published in book form in 1916. Printed in small type, *The Ivory Child* continued until May 6th, to be followed by another, contemporary, novel. After this the serial feature was dropped, at least for 1915. Rider Haggard's dark continent is as remote from reality as any creation of modern science fiction, a lost world where the imagination can run free and unbridled. In an age of pragmatic European colonial expansion and rivalry it was already an anachronism, but for many in 1915 it would offer a temporary escape from a nearer, more disconcerting world that had itself become the cockpit for those same warring colonial powers.

The *WSG* was, historically, an agricultural paper catering for an essentially rural population. Vacancies and situations wanted had always been the paper's life blood. The former section would dwarf the latter as 1915 dragged on. The *Gazette* would provide many a working man with his whole week's laborious reading, something with which to pass what remained of a dark evening after a meal and a long day's physical work.

To distil the essence of a year may be possible but it begs the question of the nature of that "essence". What does any newspaper actually say about the life of its time? Think of a present-day local newspaper, to say nothing of a national daily. Certainly there will be little of intimate unremarkable details or worries, the narrow horizon of day-to-day living is not the stuff of journalism. It never has been, and, no doubt, never will be. Newspapers must deal at once with the general application and the unusual event. They can be neither introspective nor individualistic. However, if the right questions are asked, there will be enough indicators to give the flavour of a year that is as grim probably as any in this century. If we do not expect too much, it may be possible to evoke, at least partially, the sense of a period.

The war had not been entirely unpopular in its early stages; when Germany invaded Belgium, great crowds in Trafalgar Square received the news that Germany had not replied to the British ultimatum with a patriotic fervour. Dissenting voices were certainly raised but these soon subsided. No one could anticipate the length of the struggle and well into 1915 the emphasis was on "Business as Usual", the war being in theory still a sideshow. It was a sideshow however that had run out of control almost before it began, but a sideshow that served to divert attention from other destabilising influences; the lurch toward civil war in Ireland, an Ireland of the Curragh Mutiny and the guns of Larne, and a Britain where the industrial unrest of the summer of 1911 still rumbled somewhere beneath the surface, where uneasy relations continued between Lords and Commons, and where the increasingly daring and desperate exploits of the Suffragettes shocked women as well as men.

The area covered by the *WSG* was larger than it is now, Petworth of course being relatively near the paper's Arundel base. Coverage ran to Portsmouth in the west, Croydon and Mitcham to the north, Eastbourne, Hastings and the Kent border to the east. The paper almost invariably carries a Petworth entry but this is often fairly pragmatic. Sometimes, no

doubt, Miss Arnold produced her own report, sometimes she used something she had been given. Local correspondents did not write expansively, nor, no doubt, did the *WSG* expect them to. Petworth news in the early weeks of 1915 is largely concerned with the stay in the town of the 9th Battalion King's Royal Rifles and the 9th Battalion Rifle Brigade. They had arrived for training in November 1914, and the newspaper reports them as "gaining a thorough acquaintance with the country," through their various exercises and manoeuvres. January and February were particularly wet, and there is a tradition that they rechristened their adopted town "Wetworth". By mid-February the talk is of moving on and the *WSG* reports a field day at Witley with the troops marching all the way there and back. The correspondent thought "the damp was all on the surface" as the troops swung up North Street, improvising a new marching song "Home Again, Home Again", interspersed with "Wet Through, Wet Through". One wonders if the soldiers shared the onlookers' detached bonhomie! A Saturday concert at the Boys' School in North Street was followed by another in the Iron Room prior to departure. The *WSG* report laments the loss of "our soldiers" and "a nice set of boys". Looking back, a fortnight later the paper recalled the reading and writing room placed at the disposal of the troops in the Congregational Chapel and the large room set aside for games, smoking and light entertainment. After a service some sixty or seventy men would assemble in the school room and sing their favourite hymns.

Nothing more is heard of the soldiers until a brief note that they are "somewhere in France", a not very informative phrase that was a D.O.R.A. speciality. At Christmas Miss Arnold, or her surrogate, writes, "The Christmas holidays passed very quietly at Petworth, dull indeed, as compared with last year when we had the 9th KRR and the 9th RB billeted in the town. Many of these very nice fellows have sacrificed their lives for their country but their memorable stay in Petworth will be affectionately regarded by Petworth people for many years to come".

Life went on. There were good attendances at the Easter services in Church and the Rector, Mr. Penrose, read out the roll of honour of those serving, "a very long list which was interesting to those who may have thought that Petworth had not been too eager to send its sons to the service of the King". There will be a hint here of existing tensions and of others still to come. In truth bereavement was never far away from anyone and it would not be long before Mr. Penrose heard that his own son was missing in France. A crowd of between seven and eight hundred gathered in the Market Square to hear Mr. Penrose's brother-in-law, R. J. Mitchell, M.P. for the St. Augustine's Division of Kent, speak on England and the war. This was at the end of May; on the 1st July the paper notes: "Recruiting for the army still goes on steadily in this locality and every week sees the number of young men in Petworth decreasing". News items as such are rare and the following incident is one that surprises by its very appearance. "The previous week a horse attached to a hearse bolted from the Half Moon stable-yard and, taking the sharp turn near the Swan Hotel, the hearse struck Mr. Morley's shop window breaking both woodwork and glass". Morleys the saddlers of course would become Harpers and eventually Baskerville Antiques. It is interesting to see the Half Moon name remaining in use; the old inn had been demolished as the century turned to make way for the Westminster Bank. On the 8th July the *WSG* looks forward to the following



Monday when "a band of young ladies will sell button-hole tricolour flags in the streets". At 4pm a procession of the children of the parish led by the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts would make their way to the Square. A call would be made at every house for a contribution to the French relief fund. In the event, the considerable sum of £32 was raised by French Flag Day and there were similar collections in other towns. The money went to help French people made homeless by the war.

By September there is news of the Voluntary Training Corps under Mr. J.B. Watson, land agent to Lord Leconfield. The V.T.C. was the rough equivalent of the 1939-45 Home Guard. Earlier in the year they had been given a red brassard or armband, but in September, at Mrs. Johnstone's Bignor Park Fete, were "neat and soldier-like in their new uniforms". Petworth and Pulborough detachments joined forces for the Fete and, as a finale to the proceedings, staged a practice attack up the slopes in front of Bignor House. A week later the combined V.T.C.'s spent Saturday night in camp at Brinksole Heath the Petworth men marching out of Petworth shortly before 7pm. Instruction, guard and patrol duty were based on Brinksole Farm, to be followed by drill in Petworth Park on the Sunday afternoon. By mid-November there were more rifle exercises in the Park and a bugler "in the supernumerary rank" was announced as the nucleus of a bugle band to be presently called into existence. Of this no more is heard, at least in 1915.

A feature of the early months of the war was the xenophobic hounding of people with a foreign background, particularly those whose names could popularly be construed as Germanic. Such unfortunates might be accused of anything from being enemy sympathisers to spying and such unwelcome and, almost invariably, unjustified and unsustainable accusations might occasion letters of complaint to the *WSG* from those who were suffering in this way and wished to make matters clear. Often the victims were not of German extraction at all, as often as not they had children serving in the armed forces. At Liphook a crowd broke the window of a hairdresser who had a German employee, no matter to the mob that he had been domiciled in England for several decades. Such incidents were not of course confined to the *WSG* circulation area. They were quite general everywhere.

A chance remark somewhat in this vein led to a surprising appearance at Sussex Assizes of no less a personage than Lord Leconfield himself, defendant in a civil action for slander, a Mr. Schweder of Goring-by-Sea, a prominent London stockbroker, claiming that he had been slandered by his Lordship. Mr. Schweder, said his counsel, was of Swedish origin and had two of his three sons in branches of the Volunteer Services and a third still at school. He was seeking to clear his name and protect his reputation. The plaintiff appeared in the khaki dress of a member of the volunteer force. He had been born in England and served with several Territorial Regiments, including five years in the Middlesex Yeomanry. It transpired that Lord Leconfield and a Mr. Somerset of Goring had been watching the Yorkshire cricket match from the Hove balcony on August 31st the previous year when his Lordship said, "I hear there's a dangerous man at Worthing. The police raided his house, but he was too quick for them and destroyed papers before the police could get to him". It appeared that this information had come from Mr. Williams, the Chief Constable, a friend of Lord Leconfield, and someone with whom Mr. Schweder had had a difference of opinion



*Translation:* 'Nicholas Smythe of Buckingham, of gentle birth, and twice a student of either school of Wykeham, in each as a boy, of each a fellow, being then a Master of Arts, and chief procurator of the economic affairs of Eton College (bursar they call it), was promoted to the governance of this church on the 15th day of April, in the year of Our Lord 1561, over which he presided with great credit for more than thirty years. He was a learned and upright man, sincere of heart, kindly, well mannered, hospitable, peaceable; to superiors and men of high position, alike dear, and to his successors he showed himself benevolent and beneficent and did them great service; nor ever once in the whole course of his life did he court the applause of the crowd, fickle popularity, or worldly vain glory, but rather sought ever and sought diligently, as became a man of piety, the things which are above. He died on the 10th day of January, A.D. 1591, having well nigh attained the 70th year of his age.

By the poor greatly regretted.  
Not whence? but who?

*Transcription and translation of Latin inscription to Nicholas Smythe in Petworth Church. Taken from Sussex Monumental Brasses by Mrs C.E.D. Davidson-Houston in Sussex Archaeological Collections 79 (1938) pp 84-5 and reproduced by permission.*





*This North Street snapshot almost certainly shows part of the French Flag Day procession in July 1915.*

*See, "Close Your Eyes And Eat Them With Jam".*

in the past. When Mr. Somerset, who knew Mr. Schweder well, protested, his Lordship suggested that the plaintiff's apparent respectability was simply a front. Mr. Somerset demurred and the conversation got back to the plaintiff, who was left with no alternative but to sue. The judge advised the jurors that if the case was found proved, they should not award punitive damages but a sufficient sum to clear the plaintiff's character. Lord Leconfield was fined £100.

Conscription was very much in the air without as yet becoming law, but there was certainly pressure to enlist. At the end of November the *WSG* noted that the parish of Up Waltham enjoyed the curious position of being without any men at present of military age. The net spread even to gentlemen of the road. At Croydon Union House a sergeant attended every morning to interview all casuals of military age. During a recruiting campaign at Farnham, at a time when the Picture Palace was packed with people "like sardines in a tin", the audience were surprised to find the lights turned on and, in the middle of the stage, the principal of the local Army College, who proceeded to deliver a recruiting appeal. "It had been complained during the day that men of military age had forsaken the public thoroughfares because of the recruiting rally that was taking place but this was a fair capture. They had at any rate to listen to the speech, for recruiting officers guarded the various exits." So the *WSG* correspondent.

Lord Leconfield was a strong supporter of conscription. At a November meeting of the men of Sussex at the Cannon Street Hotel in London, a Bohemian concert in aid of the Comforts Fund for Sussex soldiers, his Lordship, deputising for the President, the Duke of Norfolk, stressed the need for young men to come forward... "it was impossible to go about Sussex and not see that there were still a great many single young men who had not joined..." In fact he had seen able men in Piccadilly under thirty and digging up the wooden pavement. He hoped that those who were fit and did not come forward would be fetched. Without wishing to be political he was an unrepentant believer in compulsory service.

At Midhurst, the newspaper noted a new extension at the Grammar School early in the year. Founders Day in March elicited a patriotic sermon, while the traditional paperchase was dropped in favour of football. The usual round of Sports Day and Prize Giving followed in July and December. The town itself was still without a crier and the *WSG* lamented in March that with the departure of the late Mr. W. Madgwick the ancient "note" had died out of the streets "and the bell mellifluous became silent". From another note on November 18th it would appear that this unfortunate hiatus was no temporary one. "Fifteen or sixteen years ago Midhurst town crier died and the sound of his bell was missed as much as he". Silence still reigned at Midhurst.

In the summer the celebrated Rev. Tatchell installed a small library at Midhurst Station for travellers to borrow for their journeys and either replace or return to the stationmaster, while the gardens of the new vicarage were open daily to visitors and the old vicarage turned into a sort of almshouse where old but respectable people could rent a room for a penny a week. On August Bank Holiday, reports the *Gazette*, the town was very dull, despite a large influx of visitors. The cancellation of the Horticultural Society show and the rough and stormy weather "made the place even more gloomy and the people even more conscious that it is war time".



News of the war, filtered through under Dora's direction, is copious rather than informative, even letters from the front have of course been censored. The impression they give, and were of course intended to give, is one of cheerful courage in the face of adversity. Relayed via the columns of the *WSG* the letters come from a farmyard in Flanders, the water and mud of the trenches, a hospital ship in the Aegean, or a German prison camp. They tell of the danger of getting in and out of the trenches, of shells bursting over the trench and of much else. Another aspect however is given by this sober, factual account from the 11th of April with its unconscious contrast between the Business as Usual attitude of the theatre-goers and the reality of war for the soldiers. "A pathetic sight each evening in London after the theatres are over is to notice the long trail of motor-ambulances and motor-cars waiting for the arrival of the wounded who generally reach Charing Cross or Victoria after half-past ten, though it is more than an hour later - devoted as the interval is to medical attention and the necessary allocation of hospitals - before the first of them are carefully borne away."

Gas begins to be mentioned, but not often, a C.O. writes of a dispatch rider who "had got into some of the gas and was suffering from a sort of chronic bronchitis. His voice was hoarse, he could not lie down with comfort, and at night he woke every half hour". Once coincidence brings together Fred Snashfold of the Army Veterinary Corps and Charlie Greet of the Life Guards, both in the same class at Petworth Boys School a few years before and Snashfold writes back to tell Mr. Wootton their old teacher. A curious feature at this time is the Germans' apparent command of colloquial English. This is a typical instance (2nd September) ... "When one of our bombs landed and failed to explode it was followed by a voice from the German trenches, "Try another, old sport, that was a dud".

Writing from the Front (11th November) a soldier in the trenches describes the issue biscuits ("Army Rock") coming in as a "second course". "We get one and powder it up with a hammer or clean stone, mix it with milk or water then make it into little patties and fry them in some fat. Close your eyes and eat them with jam."

Some events strike a national chord, much as the German shelling of Hartlepool had done in December 1914. The execution of Nurse Cavell or the sinking of the *Lusitania* by a U-Boat are two such instances. Under the Hassocks entry for May 13th a speech is quoted in which the Rev. Dr. Horton tells of a letter from the Front received by a colleague in Hereford and describing an incident in the retreat from Mons. "Part of the British Army on the left wing were exposed to particular danger, and it looked as though they would certainly come into contact with the German cavalry, when they saw a great company of angels, who literally turned the German cavalry back. Our men had expected annihilation but the sight of these angels so dazed the Germans with the guns that they never touched them, and the horses turned round terrified, and regular stampeded, the men tugging at their bridles. Our men had time to get away in safety."

The Western Front had developed almost from the beginning into a static war of attrition, quite alien to the experience of men like Kitchener whose whole concept of warfare was one of fluidity and movement. The early ideas of "Business as Usual" were coming under intolerable strain. By May 20th the *WSG* reports the heaviest casualty lists since the beginning of the war, while after a year of hostilities (August 5th) the paper writes sombrely

of half the world under arms and the dead and maimed numbered by millions. British casualties were already over 321,000, 46,000 in the Dardanelles. An incidental effect of static trench warfare was a decision to abandon puttees for fighting soldiers in the trenches and substitute long boots. Puttees were hot in the heat and cold in the cold. They would be retained for service and marching purposes. As the old lady was heard to say when she saw soldiers waiting on the station platform, "I can't think how they get their legs into those twisted trousers".

"Business as Usual" co-existed uneasily with a fear of invasion which was sufficiently tangible for farmers to receive official instructions to place ricks at a safe distance from buildings so that the ricks could be fired in the event of an invasion. The overwrought atmosphere could lead to farce. At Pulborough (March 25th) "Some really believed that the Germans had come last Thursday evening for the raid signal rang out (the church bells) and big guns boomed in the distance. But later news did not confirm the fears: it was the Bishop confirming the children, it seems, a much happier ceremony". This incident at Longmoor Camp near Bordon is at once farcical and an indication of the nervy atmosphere of the time: "Last week something like a hue and cry took place in the neighbourhood of Longmoor Camp over the two German officers who escaped from the concentration camp at Denbigh, North Wales, on Thursday. While a patrol of the 15th Hussars were out at Temple, East Liss, they came across two men who they thought answered the description of the officers who escaped. The men were kept under observation and it is stated they visited a village shop where it was found their knowledge of the English language was extremely limited. This clinched the matter, and the men were arrested and taken to Longmoor. The news spread like wildfire. No officer at Longmoor could speak German or the awful dialect that seemed to be the mother tongue of the strangers. They were taken to the guard room of the Royal Engineers and there it was found that the men were speaking not German, but Welsh! They had come to join the Inland Transport or the Royal Engineers".

The *WSG* was a newspaper for a rural public and would remain so. Agricultural news might be subsumed under war news during the emergency but it is never completely neglected. On 28th January a poem called "Ploughing: Clymping January 1915" includes the following vignette:

Rimy the grass, frosted the furrows,  
The man, the boy, the three horses,  
Come tramping down the road  
And enter upon their labour.

Silent and still they move, the horses' breathing  
Hangs like a cloud on the air.  
Slowly the team drive onward, the boy to guide them  
Bent on the handles the ploughman  
Follows: the rich earth turns and crumbles  
At the march of the shining share ...



Here is a traditional world, that, on the surface at least, was untouched by war. On the 22nd April the Pulborough correspondent notes the following: "Owing probably to the shortage of labourers, not every farmer has got his oats sown before the cuckoo was heard. According therefore to tradition there will be some 'cuckoo' oats, that is a light crop to correspond with the weight of the bird itself".

The war coverage also makes the *WSG*'s traditional interest in nature, as exemplified in the *Selborne Notes* and small independent pieces, less than in pre-war years. On 24th June a correspondent notes the discovery of a litter of pine-marten in the crags behind Honister Park in the Lake District and observes: "It is not likely that a stray pair will wander into Sussex as pine woods are not to the fore". On July 22nd Mr. Guermonprez of Bognor is given the luxury of an extended note on fumitory, a familiar plant of waste ground. He quotes Culpeper's account and reminds readers that the name comes from the French *Fumeterre* - smoke of the earth, a reference to its pale delicate foliage. It is, he notes, a colonist introduced from the Continent in Neolithic times.

1915 was an extraordinary year for holly; "One can only compare the display of holly this year with the marvellous show of gorse bloom on the South Downs in the early summer of 1913. There has been nothing like it in Sussex for many a long year" (2nd December). The same issue blames the spillage of heavy oil from German U-boats for the death of many sea-birds, a curiously modern-seeming note.

Reminiscence was another *WSG* strength that in these years gave place to news of conflict. There are a few exceptions however, a notable one being a short note celebrating the 96th birthday of Mrs. Jane Remnant of Godalming. Born at Bedham in 1819 Mrs. Remnant recalled that when she went into service her first place was at Clapham. To get there she went first by road to Billingshurst, then, after spending the night there, she left at 5am by the "road waggon" which arrived at Clapham at 5am the following morning. Mrs. Remnant was alive whilst Napoleon was still languishing in captivity on St. Helena, and she could remember, as a girl, people talking of Napoleon and his defeat at Waterloo. She clearly recollected her aunt coming to her mother's house and saying, "The King is dead, we shall have to put on some black". The king was George IV who died in 1830. Sometimes an older world could be pressed into the service of a more modern one. At Houghton Bridge (6th May) three little girls revived the old May Day custom of carrying garlands but put it this time to a patriotic purpose. "Two of them carried a huge garland of the old-fashioned wheel pattern swing on a stick, whilst the third girl was armed with a collecting box". 18/- was collected for the Serbian Red Cross Fund.

If old traditions were under strain so was the traditional life of the fairground. Lord John Sanger's circus with its Russian Cossack display and other attractions might be still on the road and due to visit Chichester, Bognor, Worthing and Brighton in August but the war was taking a severe toll of the fairgrounds. At Lindfield (22nd July) there would be no pleasure fair, "The countryside is in no mood for jollity". Mitcham Fair was much curtailed (19th August). "Nearly 3000 sons of showmen have joined the forces, so have the traction engines which haul the merry-go-rounds and other paraphernalia from town to town. They are mostly now in France in transport service". Fairs at Alresford (October) and Farnham

(November) were severely curtailed. Petworth is not mentioned at all.

Correspondents tend to be anonymous and there is virtually nothing to distinguish the writer of one report from another, casualties, heroes, letters from the Front, court cases - such is the stuff of reporting, above all the feeling is of casualties. Obviously the larger centres like Chichester and Portsmouth receive most attention and attract a weekly report. Some smaller villages appear hardly at all - or perhaps make an occasional statement on the number of eggs collected for the troops. To this general anonymity there is one exception: Slindon. There is invariably a Slindon report, never very long, but having a quite distinctive style. The Slindon correspondent continues in a long tradition of challenging everyone who is prepared to listen on matters horticultural but with a particular animus towards Graffham. Perhaps a remote analogy is the middle Scots "flyting" poetry although the Slindon prose lacks the elaborate poetic rhetoric of the Scots, and the Scots are not concerned with horticulture. The note is struck as early as the 7th January. "Graffham, come and see the lovely roses this day in Slindon." A fortnight later the taunt is, "Rooks are preparing for building in the lofty beech trees adjoining Slindon Park. Flocks of them are seen daily. Have you found a blackbird's or thrush's nest this year, Graffham?" On this occasion Graffham was able to make the testy reply, "A nest of young starlings has been found at Selham a fortnight ago. Yet Slindon are enquiring if even nests have yet been found". And so the "flyting" continues: the first green peas, the earliest Sharpe's Express potatoes, gooseberry tart for Whitsun. Green peas are still a bone of contention in mid-November although this time it is last pickings rather than first. In October Angmering taunts Slindon with a giant sunflower. "How now, Slindon?" On 22nd July Slindon reports a rare atmospheric freak ... "On an evening when some wounded soldiers were having tea on the lawns of Slindon College an unusual sight was seen out over the Channel. The rare conditions of the atmosphere showed up the coast of France as in a mirage. Madame Belloc, who was present, described it as a mirage. She has an old encyclopedia which describes such a scene in 1805 viewed from the Sussex coast and not seen since." Madame Belloc is of course the mother of Hilaire Belloc. On 2nd December the Slindon report looks back to halcyon days of forty years ago, "Slindon was full of farmyards, with fat hogs and the cottagers in those days had plenty of home-brewed beer, home-brewed cider, home-killed bacon and pickled pork and home-made bread and heaps of potatoes for winter. Many and large barns full of corn and orchards have disappeared. Men in those good old times were strong and hard as iron! Wake up England!"

Halcyon days indeed. Slindon is lamenting an older England that was dying even before the war and which the war would dispatch. George Garland might, between the wars, seek to find odd rural pockets of resistance but that England of the 1870s that Slindon evoked was effectively dead and gone. Times were changing. "Khaki speedman fined" is a headline that points to a different world altogether. The war was doing what years of agitation had not done; with labour so short, women had to do men's work and if they could do men's work they could not forever be denied the suffrage. From a female ticket clerk at Horsted Keynes station (17th May) to women bus conductresses at Farnham (18th November), here was one definite change. The old taboos were breaking too: where (1st April) in Littlehampton it was "difficult to get a good cook who did not drink" by 19th August the reign of the all-



powerful cook is under threat. "Some girls, daughters of wealthy parents, have taken over the entire cooking of the household." Indeed "domestic servants in Portsmouth are said to be very keen on tram conductress jobs. They feel themselves, perhaps, in good training for the up and down stairs work. And then the satisfaction of ringing the bell instead of answering it!"

Attitudes might be changing but an older world co-existed uneasily with the new. Goodwood Races and the County Cricket Championship might be abandoned but with the Sussex County Coursing Club meeting, held at Ford in March, it was definitely "Business as Usual". The hares "died up to their reputation", a bon mot that falls on hostile ears today. The *WSG* might be under Dora's exacting tutelage when it came to war news but it could sometimes put in a quiet word in favour of a newer world. When a Midhurst poacher, who had taken six pheasants and been tracked back to his cottage by a police bloodhound, was given six months, the newspaper commented on the hearing that "no facts there elicited seem to justify this sentence". The matter was raised in the Commons but Mr. McKenna protested that his position as Home Secretary did not turn him into a Court of Appeal. In a similar vein, in reviewing a new novel by Mrs. Henry Dewdney, the *WSG* reviewer takes issue with the novelist's categorisation of a rustic harvest festival congregation as belonging to "that order which neither thinks nor feels, which passes from life to death in a state of agreeable undevelopment". "We do not think," observes the reviewer tartly, "that there is any order of human beings that neither thinks nor feels". Reappraisal was the order of the day; in the same issue the Bishop of Chichester noted that "the war had taught the Church, to its shame, that it had little or no hold on men and in regard to the dense ignorance of spiritual things which prevailed those brought up at Eton and Harrow were little better than those in the elementary schools". Reappraisal indeed!

P.

## At Far Pallinghurst (5) The war

The war started when I was 12.

My mother took in two families of evacuees as my brothers were fighting in the war. So they had the boys' bedroom. There were two mothers with two children each. They were related to each other. The Government expected everyone to take in evacuees if there was a spare room. Imagine washdays, mother and two families sharing the copper, and all the water drawn from the well. We all got on very well together. One morning one of the young evacuee boys came in saying "Mrs Wait one of your cats has fallen to pieces." Looking in the woodshed where the cats slept, one had had kittens. What a lovely expression for a little boy.

I remember my brother escaping from Dunkirk in 1940 with the British Expeditionary Force. When we got up that morning Mum says, 'Look who has arrived home in the bed...' It was Harold. It was lovely to see him home.

One day when we were coming home from school, we were stopped by a lady on a bike, and she asked us about our brothers. We scarpered quick. When we got home we told Mum we had met a fifth columnist. "How do you know?" Mum asked. "Well because we didn't know her!" We knew everyone in the village.

When a German plane came down and dive bombed the train on the Guildford to Horsham line, our headmaster's daughter was terribly injured and terribly disfigured by her injuries. Vita Paperitas was one of those injured. There were a lot of local people in the train.

The school had evacuees who came from Peckham in South London. At primrose time I remember that during their lunchtimes from school, they would go across the woods from school, and pick bunches of primroses, and sell them beside the road for a penny a bunch. We kids were amazed that anyone would buy wild flowers, but they did, and we were jealous that they had thought of the idea. There were so many evacuees that we didn't have them in the classroom. They were taught separately by their own teachers who were evacuated with them. In the mornings the locals had the school, while the evacuees went to the Working Men's Club at Bucks Green. In the afternoon we swapped and we were in the Working Men's Club.

After I left school at 14, I wasn't given any choice. My father told me there was a good job going at Lakers Lodge for Mrs McBain. Dad was in the Home Guard, and Mr McBain was in charge of the Home Guard. So I was put to service as under house parlourmaid for four shillings a week (equivalent to 20p). I had to live in and was given one half day off every fortnight. They had eight servants there, all women because of the war. Alice the head house parlourmaid was eventually conscripted into the Women's Land Army. I stuck that job for 18 months. Then I moved on for better money to Burnleigh Guest House at Loxwood for £1 a week living in! Mrs Kennard who owned the guest house was a sister to Bessie Hempstead of the Cokelers. After that I moved on to domestic service with a Jewish family called Jellineck living in Bucks Green. I moved away with them to Buckinghamshire, but I came back to Horsham. After another domestic post, I left to work on the Hants and Sussex buses as a clipper. It was there I met my husband.

My eldest sister Jessica was put into service at Swaynes. Harold, my second brother, went off as a gamekeeper to Mr Wilson at Lakers Lodge, and Mum, my sister Midge and I and the baby, went to see him off. We went with him as far as the bridge at Barnhill on the canal, (now a new bridge, but then a wobbly old wooden bridge) and then watched him going across the fields with a stick over his shoulder, carrying a box of belongings. We were such a close family that Midge and I were bawling our eyes out, but Mum said you will see him again, he is only going to Loxwood.

Midge didn't go off to service because she wasn't so strong. She stayed around and helped Mum, although she did do a couple of hours at Saxs Platt for the Ingles.

It was while the family still lived at Brickkiln, and just before the war started, that Dad had a bad accident. Every Sunday, Mr Miller, the American who owned Drungewick Manor, had a private plane that circled around every Sunday lunchtime. One Sunday, when we heard the plan circling over, my sister, brother, and I asked to leave the table to watch. However when we came back in, my father had had this bad fall. We picked him up but he was in great



pain. Mervyn Maskill, a family friend, was repairing his motor cycle in the garden. Mother ran out and asked him to fetch Dr Nixon our family doctor. Mum paid into a sick club so that we could afford a doctor. Dr Nixon lived at Red House at Bucks Green. Mervyn quickly put his bike together and within a little while, came back with the doctor on his pillion because the doctor couldn't get up the muddy lanes otherwise. My father had broken three ribs and punctured his lung, and from then on suffered ill health. This led to emphysema. He was never well from then on. Mr McAndrew dismissed him through ill health after all those years' service. Dad got a lighter job for Mrs Turpin and moved to Headsfoldwood Cottages where he died at the early age of 58. Then because Mrs Turpin said there was an agricultural covenant on the cottages, Mum had to get out, and she came to live with me for 21 years.

The family left Brickkiln in 1944. They moved down to Ivyhurst on the Loxwood road, again by horse and cart, when Mr and Mrs Bachelor moved away. The Linscott family took over Brickkiln. They were one of the families of evacuees that had been living with us. Mr Linscott started work on the estate then.

I was married from Ivyhurst 19th June, 1948. I was 21, and I cashed my savings certificates which I had been saving since I was nine! By the time I got to about nine years old (and until I was 14) on Saturday mornings if my mother did not want me to do chores, I would go down to Tisman's where the Barnett family and the Reynolds family lived. The children were all boys. I would take them out of the way so their parents could do their jobs. I was paid a few coppers each time. I kept my earnings in a little square box on the end of the old mantelpiece. Each time I saved 15 shillings, I would go to the post office and buy a 15 shilling saving certificate.

After I married we lived in Plaistow and then moved to Loxwood where our two children were born, and where we have stayed ever since. I now have four grandchildren.

To this day I often go up to where the old remains of the house are, and take my grandchildren with picnics, and tell them the tales. It does upset me to see the old ruins where our happy childhood was spent. How many children in this day and age would walk four miles each day to go to school? But it was a safer world we lived in those days. I often think what old Mr McAndrew would say today if he could see what has happened to Pallinghurst House and all the other changes, but we have to move with the times. I think if only we could turn the clock back for a short while on those days - there are no pictures only in my mind of those times past, but they are wonderful memories no one can take from me.

This now concludes my tales of my childhood days as a Pallinghurst Country Gal - I suppose they were hard days and I wouldn't want to see them for this generation - but they were the happier and contented days long gone.

Vera P M Jones (concluded)

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Owing to lack of space the list of New Members will appear in the September Magazine.





Summer Programme. Please keep for reference.

Walks and visits

Tuesday June 17th David and Linda's Tulip Tree Walk.  
Cars leave Car Park at 6.30 p.m.

Sunday June 29th Anne's Garden Walk. The Original Petworth Gardens Walk. First done in 1975.  
Cars leave Car Park at 2.15 p.m.

Sunday July 20th John and Gloria's Arundel Park Walk.  
Cars leave Car Park at 2.15 p.m.

Sunday August 17th Ian and Pearl's late Summer Walk.

Full autumn programme including:

Tuesday October 14th The 7th Garland Memorial Lecture.

Tony Douglass : Stand and Deliver Us. A parson/highwayman legend of the Sussex/Surrey border.

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Just a few activities at the Weald and Downland Open-air Museum.

For details of these and other events 01243 - 811363.

12 August	Shakespeare in the open air - Richard III - 7.30pm
16 & 17 August	Children's Activity Weekend
17 August	Heavy Horse Working Experience Day
19 August	Shakespeare in the open air - The Tempest - 7.30pm
23-25 August	Traditional Charcoal Burning - an overnight out of doors experience!
Starting September:	4-part course "Building in Country Towns" - includes Petworth and Midhurst - led by Marjorie Hallam of Graffham
20 & 21 September	The Out of the Wood Show - crafts of the woodworker - timber-framers, sculptors (including Ted Vincent), furniture makers and many more.

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Cobbett Society Meeting (see main Magazine). Sunday June 22nd is at 12 noon outside the entrance door of Alice Holt Lodge some 4 miles west of Farnham on the A325. The sign and turning for Alice Holt Research Station is a few hundred yards south of Birdworld. All Welcome.

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PRINTERS' PRIZES

Since our last issue of the Magazine we have been very fortunate in winning two more prizes of £25 each in the February and March FREE CASH PRIZE DRAWS run by our printers, Midhurst and Petworth Printers, for their customers every month.

Peter.



**Special Summer Offer from the Window Press!**

[Closes October 31st]

TREAD LIGHTLY HERE : Peter Jerrome

An affectionate look at Petworth's Older Streets.

was £12.95 — till October 31st £6.50.

IN THE FEAST OF ST EDMUND THE KING

Petworth Fair 1189 - 1994 : Peter Jerrome and Barry Norman

was £14.95 — till October 31st £7.50.

NOT SUBMITTED ELSEWHERE

Garland photographs from the 1920s.

was £7.50 — till October 31st £5.00

There are also a handful of copies remaining of Florence Rapley's Diary 1909 - 1912 in a limited, numbered, edition of 250.

was £34.95 — till October 31st £20.00

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Also available :

Cloakbag and Common Purse - The enclosure of Petworth Park.	£3.95
Old and New, Teasing and True Garland photographs 1920s and 1930s	£9.50
Petworth : Time Out of Mind Photographs pre-1920	£5.50
The Men with Laughter in their Hearts Garland photographs 1920s and 1930s	£7.45



