

Miss Costello  
Petworth  
Collection

The Post House  
of Custom & Usage  
Podmore was big in  
Champagne



NO. 104. JUNE 2001.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*Magazine*

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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE  
LECONFIELD HALL  
PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM  
THE PETWORTH PARISH MAP  
AND THE COULTERSHAW BEAM PUMP.

## 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 £9.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £11.00 overseas £13.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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### Society Scrapbook

Mrs Pearl Godsmark

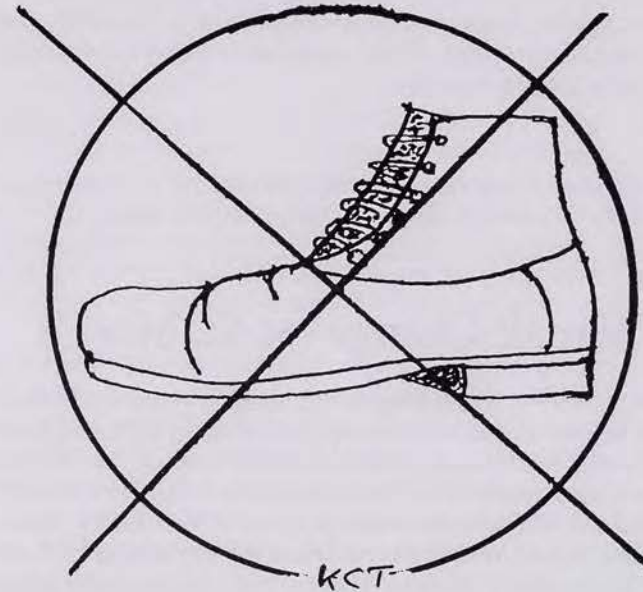
For this Magazine on tape please contact Mr Thompson.

### 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 have to report a certain enforced inactivity owing to the recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease. I know that only a fraction of our large membership go on the walks; but many members take an interest in our accounts of them. Without them the Society seems just a little short of breath. Perhaps it's just my over-active imagination. As I write the position does seem to be easing slightly. The two garden visits in June and early July should certainly go ahead, as should Jeremy's River walk on July 22nd now the first*

*walk of the season. Ian and Pearl's walk will be on August 26th. In over twenty years of walks and visits, sometimes in decidedly eccentric weather, this is the first time we have had to cancel. Miles' Rogation Sunday walk was one of casualties of foot and mouth but the Society's two large boundary markers are now in place at the top and bottom of Hungers Lane, and other, smaller, ones are being put up. As Rogationtide is the appropriate time for bound-treading our first essay in this esoteric art will be at Rogationtide next year.*

*The bimonthly book sale looks a fixture, and is going from strength to strength. It no longer needs the support of an official Petworth Society evening to follow it. It's a very enjoyable chance to meet people and indeed a somewhat robust occasion altogether. If you'd like to help just let me (or Miles) know. Don't forget to come to the Leconfield Hall on June 16th and please let us have any books you no longer need.*

*I mentioned in the last Magazine our intention to forge closer links with the Coultershaw Beam Pump. Discussions are proceeding with the view to Petworth Society representation on a new committee. If you would be interested please let me know – or simply drop in at Coultershaw when the pump is open to the public. You'll be surprised. Please note a special event in association with the Petworth Festival. One Wednesday July 18th the Beam Pump will have a special Open Day to mark the 21st anniversary of the Restoration. From 11-5 the attraction will be open with free admission to Society members. At 12.30 Lord Egremont*

will officially commemorate the 21st anniversary at a short ceremony. Refreshments are available from 12 o'clock to 1.30 and everyone is welcome. The Beam Pump is very anxious to welcome Petworth people to what is very much a part of historic Petworth.

You'll see we have rearranged the Sutton and Duncton Magazine delivery rounds. Our thanks to Betty Hodson for doing this for so long. Jill Biggs and Nancy Dallyn have now taken over and we are most grateful to them for so doing.

Peter 14th May

*P.S. We carry no report of Dennis Bright's excellent talk on Animals of the Countryside, February 7th, Keith being away. We shall, hopefully, be hearing Dennis again.*

## More than 'Small Change' at St. Mary's

Another appeal? Changes to St. Mary's? What's going on? It's probably a good idea to know what we're talking about. Whatever our stance it's obvious that a building that has survived since, perhaps, the twelfth century, needs constant maintenance and attention. St. Mary's is a large building in a small town: it is almost the size of a small cathedral, and reflects Petworth's historic importance as second only to Chichester among the towns of West Sussex. Before we even think of alteration and improvement we have to ensure that the building itself will survive. Fortunately there are no serious structural flaws but there are the usual niggling problems – stonework, minor roof works with difficult access, gutters and downpipes; these are mostly items costing a few hundred pounds each, but, left for a few years, such niggling problems turn to major expense. If you like, money spent now is a saving for the future. This is one crucial part of the equation.

A second fact will inevitably receive more attention and because of its apparent novelty, strike a less familiar chord: we have to anticipate future use of the church. It needs to be more accessible to different users, more convenient. It must attract. A third facet also has the future very much in mind and is intensely practical: we need to have money available for future work – effectively an endowment fund. The ideal would be to make this a once and for all appeal.

It's important to realize that it's not possible simply to proceed to internal improvements without first dealing with remedial work. The ecclesiastical authorities would rightly object that this was putting the cart before the horse. It is no use building on flawed foundations: the new additions cannot coexist with continual emergency repairs. Two recent ones come immediately to mind: urgent works to the baptistery window and the south aisle window. We must begin from a solid base. We've estimated that we need £250,000, a third for necessary repairs, a third for the new works and a third to provide a fund for the future.

I want to be quite specific about the new works. St. Mary's is a large building but it has no modern facilities. There is no space for a meeting room, nowhere that can act as a servery for tea and coffee after services and social events, no lavatories – the last almost incredible in the

twenty-first century given a building of this size and with considerable usage by a relatively older section of the community.

We should not underestimate the balancing act required here. St. Mary's is that comparative rarity, a Grade I listed building; in this it is on a par with Petworth House itself. Grade I status is an acknowledgement of the building's classic medieval cruciform shape, the fine chapel dedicated to the martyred Becket and installed perhaps within a decade of his murder, and the unique gallery used by the patron and his family. In the early nineteenth century the building was remodelled by the young Charles Barry, later (with Pugin) architect for the new Houses of Parliament. Grade I status is, however, at once a privilege and a responsibility. Any alteration has to be shown to enhance and not detract from the existing character of the building; whatever is done at St. Mary's has to preserve these historical features, and in no way detract from them. Ideally it should enhance them. English Heritage, the Victorian Society and the Diocesan architect all need to be convinced of the suitability of our proposals.

A hundred years ago, during extensive renovation, a large gallery was constructed at the west end of the church, creating a somewhat gloomy space as you enter from that side. The new work will basically be constructed beneath the gallery and will have no impact on the architectural integrity of the building. The gallery, of course, will remain, as will its wooden supporting pillar. All doors will be retained or, if necessary, renovated. Any new work will match the old, but there will be some minor alterations.

As one enters via the west door, and bridal couples will have vivid memories of this, there will be a much enlarged lobby, giving access to a meeting room which could be used as a Sunday School. On the south side will be two WC compartments, one adapted for disabled use. At present St. Mary's has effectively no disabled facility at all and, as I have said, not even minimal toilet facilities. There will be a small servery accessible from the church itself. The whole of the south aisle will have the seats removed, the floor will be carpeted and a moveable screen put up to divide it from the body of the church so that visitors entering from the south door can relax in a welcoming space which is not an immediate part of the "worship" area. This space will be used for social gatherings and will have access to the servery via a hatch.

Inevitably the changes to the south aisle will lead to some reduction in present seating capacity but a screen will enable that space to be used for larger events; Remembrance Sunday perhaps, the occasional large funeral, or some Petworth Festival events. To say this however is to think rather in terms of past use than of future. We need above all to think in terms of St. Mary's potential for the future. We believe that the changes proposed will greatly raise the profile of St. Mary's, increasing its flexibility for all kinds of future use, making it once more, as it has always been historically, the very centre of the broader community.

Even given the present lack of facilities, there are already signs of changing attitudes. Some weekday gatherings take place in the church. For the future let's think about the Sunday School for instance: with the road crossing to the Rectory being so perilous, it can no longer be held. The new meeting room could bring it back by providing a totally suitable venue. Again, for events lasting more than an hour it is at present necessary to install temporary toilets in the churchyard, a "wholly unholy" expedient if I may say so, yet even this is more acceptable than clandestine activity in the churchyard, however excusable!

Ideally the changes and the expenditure would justify themselves in increased use. It's not a pipe-dream – other than Chichester Cathedral itself, St. Mary's is perhaps the largest building in the immediate area and it's underused. Certainly its capacity is far greater than that of the busy Leconfield Hall. The Petworth Festival couldn't exist without St. Mary's.

The £250,000 appeal has been running since the beginning of February and initial response has certainly exceeded our initial expectations. While we have to raise a lot more, this is a good start and enables us to approach national and other charitable funds to assist us. This is currently being considered and relevant applications made.

We are hopeful of a positive response from several appropriate charities, but the burden must and should fall on us, the local people, and all those who look to Petworth as their local centre. Fundraising activities will continue throughout this year and into next.

English Heritage have given their approval to the scheme and we have hopes of a grant from them toward repairs to high level roof and stonework. For the next twelve months, however, we cannot think of lottery funding. What money is available is being deliberately scheduled to specific areas of the country known as "areas of deprivation." Petworth, whatever we may think, is not yet one of them.

Raymond Harris was talking to the Editor.

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## Truly Yours, C.B.

Originally scheduled to arrive at the Leconfield Hall at 3pm, it filtered through that Alison Neil had brought the time forward another half-hour and so it was that I, rather doubting, turned up at 2.35 to find her and Fiona, her lighting assistant, waiting outside, with a loaded van parked on the double yellow lines.

Loaded is an understatement. We packed the lift two and a half times with frames, rods, lights, rolls of fabric, cables, boxes, bags and a mysterious package to be kept "that way up and don't put anything on top". I guessed it was a hat, but it later transpired to be a length of red velvet which played various parts in the performance – a tablecloth, the Duke of Wellington's uniform jacket, Charlotte Bronte's cloak...

Yes, the Traffic Warden did come along, but Peter's genial greeting seemed to disarm him and he walked on, looking over his shoulder, somewhat bemused.

Then there were the dresses, wig, an iron and more bags and boxes to go into the Kevis Room which Alison would use as a dressing room. This, incidentally, explains why the evening's wine and 'nibbles' were served in the rather cramped confines of the Garland Room and why 'they' couldn't open up the dividing partition – sorry, folks!

It was gone 4 when Alison and Fiona were left to set up the set and the lighting which added so much to the presentation. The house lights were lowered and extinguished. Then, from complete darkness, the stage revealed Charlotte, already in place, to greet the audience. At various stages, Charlotte was in a spotlight to one side, at her desk, writing, or sitting in

in the glow of firelight with, in our imagination, her sisters and brother around her. Again, at the interval and at the end, the blackout added to the drama far better than drawing the curtains.

Nothing I could write in recounting the story of Charlotte Bronte's life could do justice to this portrayal of the happy, though Spartan upbringing in the Rectory at Howarth, the failures and successes, the frustrations, romance and tragedies. The detail put into the set, costumes and story never ceases to amaze, not to mention the feat of memorising and delivering a full evening's authentic dialogue.

The time passed all too quickly. Rarely has a Society event ended with so much applause – curtain calls, even.

And then it all had to be packed away: seating and set, costumes and lights, back into the lift, down to the entrance hall, out into the van. By now it was raining (of course!) and quite windy. Alison made two circuits of the town trying to find her way from the car park to the hall and then arriving in the Square facing the on-coming one-way traffic!

Alison knows the place of each item: "Next, the little white box", "Now, the table". It was 11.40pm. The rain stopped. We went home – 500 yards for me. For Alison and Fiona, in separate vehicles, up to 50 miles.

A satisfying evening over.

KCT

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## Book Sale 7<sup>th</sup> April

Not everyone goes on the Society walks by any means but walks do seem to fill the Society lungs with air. Reading about them is a kind of vicarious exercise. The Chairman's wildly inaccurate accounts have a certain following among the discerning (or so he likes to think). With the visit to Petworth House cancelled and Audrey's Clymping Walk decidedly problematical, the Book Sale and accompanying talk have become the main plank of the Society's April activity. Saturday probably isn't the best of nights for a talk but the idea is, effectively, to help the Book Sale by having everything set up for members in the evening. It's the third time we've done this and will probably be the last time we'll make it coincide with a talk: the Book Sale is perfectly capable of standing on its own feet. In fact it has all the signs of becoming a regular Society event. "When's the next one?" We're often asked.

It does involve a considerable amount of lugging about - bringing books to the Hall, early on Saturday morning, the Hall having been booked on the Friday night. Getting out the tables, piling the boxes first into the entrance hall. Platform boxes coming into their own, once holding Iceberg lettuce, broccoli, bags of satsumas or peaches. This time we've both downstairs rooms, Andy, Miles, Phil, Derek and myself. Steve and Di are away on holiday but will be back to help take them away tomorrow.

Something of a race against time for a ten o'clock opening, tables up and down either side of the two rooms. We can't get everything out to start with, it's going to be a matter of

replacing stock from boxes under the tables. 20 pence as a basis price. Children and cookery on the north side, basically fiction up the east side and not all paperbacks. Will there be people in the Square? The Saturday Square is an erratic animal. The weather's uncertain but then it usually is. Quite busy to start with – Roget's Thesaurus, Hardy's Trumpet Major, Apuleius' Golden Ass, novels by George Orwell, stamps of the Faroe Islands, gardening handbooks from the war years, the old orange "mainstream" Penguins, some are pre-war, the staple chubby "blockbuster" novels. Quite a flurry. You really need a quantity of books to sell at £1 and some members have been very generous. There's a fairly brisk trade in these. These are early Book Sale days, every book we have is cared for, without thought of a cull. No doubt there are books you just can't sell but what are they? Is there a definition of an unsaleable 20p book? Someone buys a box of Readers Digest novels to use as décor. Some customers are local, some are strangers, visitors to the House perhaps, it's their first day open.

Lunchtime is dead – it usually is, then trade picks up again in the afternoon. The aim is to empty all the boxes on the floor on to the tables. With a bit of pushing we just about manage it. Saturday evening, refreshments among the books, as I've said, it's probably the last time we'll combine the two. Clearing out Sunday morning, see you in June.

We made a profit, met people, gave the Society a presence on the ground, enrolled several new members. Some books hopefully have found appreciative new homes, others, no doubt will come back to us.

Next one is June 16<sup>th</sup> – don't forget we do need books, phone me (342562) or Miles (343227).

P.

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## Paperbacks and Parsons, Books and Bishops

The day started off, very early, with the books. This was the third of the Society's second-hand books sales, and, from the official start at 10, it was evident that the bi-monthly events were becoming well-established and anticipated. Just as well, considering the vast collection which needed transport from storage and which now took up both the Kevis and Garland Rooms in the Leconfield Hall. And there was the packing up next morning to follow.

Financially, the sale not only paid for itself, even with most books selling at a flat 20p, but it also providing something to interest those who came to Peter's evening talk. It was a subject that had been squeezed out of the January presentation on the Lords of Petworth 1527–1748 by the wealth of material discovered and a wish to do the Rector/Bishops of Petworth due justice.

Ever innovative, Peter started with a Wesley hymn, thankfully not sung, which introduced us to the Church life at Petworth before the Reformation. Our only clue to this is

the occasional reference in contemporary wills and what we know was general practice at the time. Masses for the newly departed might help them through Purgatory. "Saints on earth" were very much in touch with their counterparts across "the narrow stream of death". The awareness of the Real Presence in the Host made the ceremonies of Palm Sunday, Easter and Rogation re-enactment as much as commemoration. At the Reformation, people were very reluctant to abandon their age-old beliefs, but, whatever their own views, rectors like Nicholas Smyth and Alexander Bownde, appointees of Eton College, itself founded as a chapel to sing masses for the dead, brought in the reforms at Petworth.

The three Caroline Rector/Bishops were all national figures. Richard Montagu, Rector from 1623 was consecrated Bishop in 1628. He contrived to upset Catholic, Puritan and Parliament simultaneously. He was, however, on good terms with the "Wizard" Earl of Northumberland, at the time released from the Tower, and his letters to his friend, John Cosin, later Bishop of Durham, reveal a more human and humorous side to his nature.

Brian Duppa, as well as being Rector, was also tutor to the children of Charles I, including the future Charles II and so spent little time at Petworth. In the effective absence of the Bishop of London he was the senior Church of England bishop during the Commonwealth period. Duppa had moved to Salisbury in 1638, but his letters from 1650 to 1660 reveal a pleasing character and a self-deprecating wit.

Henry King had a Calvinist background. He was a poet whose verses circulated originally only in manuscript. He published a popular translation of the Psalms into rhymed couplets. In some ways almost as confrontational as Montague, he also had his more sensitive side, most vividly revealed in his poem 'The Exequy', written following the early death of his wife and regarded as one of the finest in the English language. In it, he looks forward every second of the day to meeting her again in the General Resurrection.

Somehow, Peter seems to be on personal terms with these figures of the past, be they rectors, bishops, lords, monarchs, or the ordinary people, the result, no doubt, of the extensive and meticulous research which he puts into his 'hobby', but also, a real gift.

KCT

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## Solution to Deborah's Crossword Issue 103

### Solution

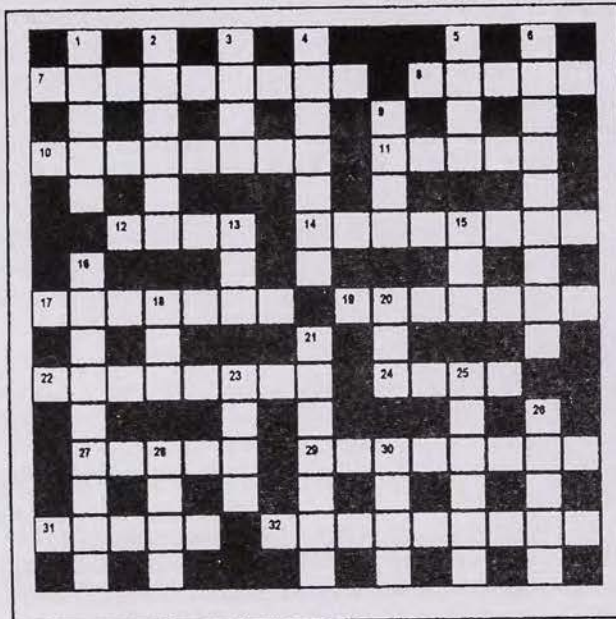
#### Across

4 Antler, 6 Iron Room, 7 Pigs, 8 Buds, 10 Terriers, 11 Rare, 13 Drag, 14 Frog, 17 Nave, 18 Streeter, 21 Marl, 23 Bust, 24 Cummings, 25 Uppish.

#### Down

1 Library, 2 Lombard, 3 Fred, 4 Amber, 5 Elgar, 7 Prison, 9 Stag, 12 Ernest, 14 Farm, 15 Garland, 16 Penrose, 19 Trump, 20 Torch, 22 Alms.

# Deborah's Crossword



**Across**

- 7 Tossed shoe about next to the lake (9)
- 8 Petworth cottage restaurant (5)
- 10 Forebear (8)
- 11 Ancient – Petworth square with something missing! (5)
- 12 Engrave on metal with acid (4)
- 14 Artist who painted decorative murals for the grand staircase in Petworth House (8)
- 17 & 26 down Sounds like an ideal spot for picnics, in north Petworth (7,5)

- 19 Craftsman named in local Row (7)
- 22 see 23 down
- 24 Time gone by (4)
- 27 Blissful rustic scene (5)
- 29 Nickname for members of local religious sect (8)
- 31 & 30 down Sweet Petworth landmark, ravaged by 1987 storm (5,4)
- 32 Awarded an honour or title – such as an MBE! (9)

**Down**

- 1 & 2 Stomp along here with 20 shillings to retrieve your livestock? (5,6)
- 3 Author of "A View of

- Edwardian Lurgashall' after pruning (4)
- 4 All sorts like to take a wander round (1,6)
- 5 Coagulated milk (4)
- 6 Mr. Crocombe – he'll shout at you (4,5)
- 9 One of many performed for our delight by 22 & 23 (4)
- 13 Watch out for a female hiding in Cherry Row (3)
- 15 To conclude – a Heath south of Petworth (3)
- 16 Wise enough to complete this crossword (9)
- 18 A friend from Pallingham (3)
- 20 Current unit from 17 across (3)

- 21 Piled up the hay? (7)
- 23 & 22 across Glitzy entertainers who put the Petworth Society in a festive mood (4 & 8)
- 25 Where Three Moles live near the old station (6)
- 26 see 17 across
- 28 Dry earth reveals a passage of time (4)
- 30 see 31 across

*Magazine 103 Crossword Apologies for omission of clue to 7 down, which should have read "House of Correction"*



Alison Neil "is" Charlotte Bronte.  
Photograph taken at Petworth by Ian Godsmark.



*Polish camp interior drawn by Zygmunt Schramm. This is an important drawing but will be difficult to reproduce because of its original water colour presentation. See "The Polish Camp : a recollection."*

## ‘Can we stop for tea?’

### Good Friday at the Cottage Museum

Good Friday, the fire crackling away in the "Petworth" stove and people in from the beginning. Younger children like the Polyphon, the new things like the eggs in Isinglass in the crock on the cellar table or the wooden flowers in the parlour or the pristine new pegs in the kitchen are for the adults. "The Gipsy's called" means nothing to them, nor perhaps the Easter card thoughtfully tucked into the parlour mirror, nor the thought that even if Mrs Cummings had a Polyphon, she would hardly have it played on a day such as this.

It's iron cold. The gas lights with its defining "pop". A child comes up from the cellar and insists, "I think it's too dark. I think it's too dark." A day when the fire is needed and the hiss of the gas lamp is comforting. It's more winter than spring.

Visitors talking. Mrs Cummings' wax in the sewing-room would now be in a small plastic container, you pass a whole thread through it, then iron the wax into it. Mrs Cummings would have worked with twelve such lengths of thread, ready waxed and prepared for sewing. The wax apparently made the thread move easily, thread more easily and strengthened it too.

Briefly into the garden. The cycle ready to begin again. Daffodil, grape hyacinth and catkins in the watering can outside. The perennials are appearing again, almost like Noah after the flood. London Pride budding, the half-wild columbines will be in flower next, the buckler sorrel, so-called from its shield-like leaves; they can be used in salads – but sparingly as they have a slightly acid taste. The trollius looks to be appearing again – the sunny dryness (if it ever comes) of the garden doesn't seem its natural habitat but it did well last year. The heleniums have been cropped by slugs. What do you do? Blue pellets would be a hopeless anachronism, we have tried egg shells in the past. Probably they used ashes in 1910 if they used anything. Rhubarb growing well, aubretia flooding down the wall, but the dominant colour this windswept afternoon is the pale blue of forget-me-not and Brunnera, or the mottled blue-pink of lungwort.

The curtains are drawn across the scullery window for privacy. For a bath the tub would need to be brought in from outside and the copper put on. People talking again: the cribbage board, two teams of two, red and white pegs and holes.

Sergeant-Major Cummings coming to Petworth in 1876 to work at the House, following the only trade he knew. Going into Gordon Knights on the East Street corner to buy tobacco. The battered ledger still survives and records. Still the pattern of people talking, it isn't just the stewards, it's very much a two-way thing. The perils of being an evacuee, placed with the strictly religious, not to sing or laugh under pain of two hours' silence in the corner, the Museum has the effect of loosening the memory. The big black kettle is boiling on the hob – it had been quite cold at 1.45. A glance at the visitors' book for the preceding week! "I liked the way the music box went." "I like the attick and the sellar." Stone sinks and wooden plate racks don't mean much to children. "A fascinating visit made all the more interesting by those welcoming us." A roomful just when the afternoon seemed to be fading: that's the



essence of the Museum. People still upstairs at 4.40. It's been a good day with hardly a break. "Can we stop for tea?" someone asks.

P.

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## A Barlavington Query

17 Chesham Court, Trinity Road London. SW18 3SJ.

10th April 2001

Dear Peter,

May I please ask if you happen to be familiar with the geography and layout of Barlavington village.

The reason I ask this is because one of "my men", Thomas Kimble, is shown in the 1881 Census Return as living in Pond Cottage, Barlavington, Sussex, a Coachman, aged 49, born in Old Windsor, Berkshire, with his wife, Henrietta, aged 50 and born in London City Road, Middlesex. No family are shown. There were two houses in Barlavington in 1881 occupied by people who might have employed a Coachman. The first was Richard Temple Godman, a Colonel in the Army, who lived at Burton House, with his wife, Eliza, 6 children, and a retinue of no less than 16 household servants of various categories, three of these being grooms. A Coachman, (Domestic) lived in the Bailiff's House, as did a Farm Bailiff. Pond Cottage must have been a number of cottages as agricultural families besides Kimble lived in them.

The other was Charles Willock Dawes, a Gentleman, who lived in Burton Hill, with five servants, none of these being shown as a Groom, but a Groom, (Domestic) lived in Burton Hill Lodge, with his nine children, The Bailiff's cottage being next recorded to it, I can only presume it was part, or close to Burton House and the Coachman as being employed there, and Burton Hill Lodge would have formed part of the Burton Hill property.

My question therefore is this. Were Pond Cottage(s) – if they still exist, close to a village pond, and to which of the two main houses were they closest to. My feeling, apart from this, is that both coachmen were employed at the larger house. Anything you may possibly be able to tell me will be of the greatest interest, but please also accept my apologies for troubling you.

It is of note that Richard T Godman was the second son of the thirteen children of Joseph and Caroline Godman, born at Hatch End, Hascomb, Surrey, in 1832. Becoming a Cornet in the 5th Dragoon Guards in 1851, he rode (as a Lieutenant) in the Charge of the Heavy Brigade, was a Major General in 1885 and died in 1912. He had married Eliza de Crespigny in the 1871 at the age of 39, she being only 21, and there were later four sons and two daughters in the family. His letters home to his family, published in 1977 as "*The Fields of War*" and edited by Philip Warner, are some of the most descriptive existing of life and conditions in the Crimea of the day.

Yours sincerely, James Boys

[Mr Boys in researching the lives of men involved in the Charge of the Light Brigade. Ed.]

## Petworth Station remembered

My Grannie used to live in Henfield so we always used to go by train to visit her. When my brother and I were very small, as we were living at Tillington Lodge, Mrs Bryder used to take us by horse and trap to Petworth Station, I believe the fare was sixpence. I'm talking now about 1914 during the First World War. Dad came with us once I know but not then for years as he went to France at the beginning of 1915. How excited we were as we drew in at the Station, I can hear the clip clop of the horses feet now.

The Station waiting room always had such a lovely cosy fire in winter and a certain smell to it something like tar and smoke, it was such a thrill when we bought our tickets. I remember they were a kind of green thick paper. Oh what joy we were now on the way to see Grannie. We must have visited Grandad too, he died in 1917, but funnily enough I don't remember much about him, I know I worshipped my Grannie. As the train drew into Petworth Station it passed under a bridge, its smoke billowing upwards. As a matter of fact I was scared of it with the spitting sounds, the crunching and clashing of the wheels as it drew to a close. It was to me like a monster. I remember I hated the gap between the train and the edge of the platform. Having at last taken my seat how happy I was, **we were going to see Grannie**. The carriages were always well upholstered with pretty photographs of seaside places adorning the walls.

As we got older we walked to the Station, down Hungers Lane, over the floating bridge which was in three parts on barrels. The first part you had to take a high step to get on it, the second part was much wider, the third part was the same width as the first, there was only a small rail to hold each side and the bridge swayed in all directions, all this terror was well worth it as we were on our way to Petworth Station. Getting off the bridge we had about another half a mile to walk, as we neared the Station, that's when the thrill and the excitement took over again, down umpteen steps, we used to go by a small brick wall under which a stream flowed then down to dear old Petworth Station to wait for our train.

Kath Vigar

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## Arundel Fairs of yesteryear – a Petworth parallel

This letter appeared in the *West Sussex Gazette* on August 30th 1973. Although it concerns Arundel there is much that is relevant to Petworth and in fact we have nothing similar for Petworth. Petworth had a gingerbread stall – at least until the 1914–1918 war, while Joe Matthews was a regular here. He may well have used his dynamo at Petworth too.

"Towards the end of the last century, it was a big day in Arundel on May 14 when the fair came, eagerly looked forward to by the children, who had been saving up their coppers; also elderly folks as well. The tradesman did not welcome it much, for people spent their

money at the fair and he had to wait for his.

A kindly gentleman who lived at Sefton Place, Warningcamp, by the name of George Sefton Constable, used to pay a penny for every queen wasp killed at the beginning of May, as the wasps used to spoil the sugar used for brewing the beer. But the real reason was for the youngsters to get a few coppers to spend at the fair, for money was scarce in those days.

It was a good fair — a full size roundabout in The Square, coconut shies, and numerous sideshows which sold almost everything. It was surprising what you could buy. One stall sold lovely ginger nuts and ginger bread and a special treat — brandy snaps. No child left the fair unless he was blowing a trumpet, but the best thing was the monkey on a stick. An Italian Romany lady told fortunes. She had a budgie which picked out a folded piece of paper with your fortune on it. I had one and how true it was, for it said work all your life or starve.

The fair was usually run by a nice old showman named Joe Matthews. He always had the big coconut shy at the back of the old town pump, seven balls for sixpence, children half-way. Joe came a good many years and knew the Arundel people quite well. He had a big family and they all took part in the fair. One daughter drove a big engine that hauled the fair tackle.

Joe had the idea of fitting a dynamo on the front of his engine to light the fair up with electric light, which was just coming to Arundel at that time. The Duke had a power house built in London Road.

People came to see the fair all ablaze with lights and Joe fitted coloured bulbs to his one thousand pound organ. What a change it was from the dirty and stinking naphtha lamps that used to light it. A picture of the engine appeared later on a book of stamps.

I think the most interesting part of the fair was Beckett's Boxing Booth run by Mrs. Beckett and her two sons George and Joe. They took on all comers, the old woman as well, for threepence a session, several times an evening. Joe Beckett won the British heavyweight title but lost it to the French champion Carpentier.

Arundel had another fair in September, but this was only a small affair. One evening when the fair was on, a very grand funeral passed by. I suppose such a thing had not been seen in Arundel before or ever will. The hearse was draped in velvet with plumes, and drawn by two beautiful horses, and the bearers had top hats trimmed with crepe. The fair was stilled, the organ stopped, all removed their hats. It was conveying the body of Cardinal Howard, Bishop of Frascati, in September, 1892, to be placed in the vaults of the Fitzalan Chapel.

Fred Prince

Arundel Hospital

## A tale of two posters

*Ron Pidgley writes:*

From 1949 I had the good fortune to maintain G.P.O. Telephones in the Petworth and Lodsworth areas when many overhead wires adorned poles on the roadways in every direction.

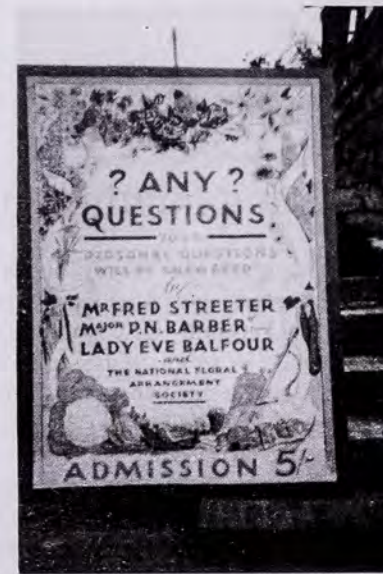
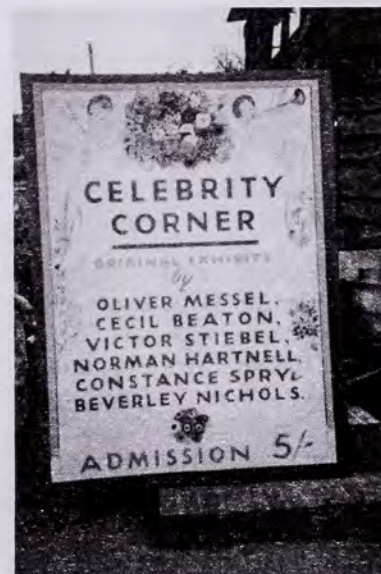
The Petworth Telephone Exchange stood where now the vacant Doll Museum awaits a new occupant. Lodsworth had no mains electricity at that time so requiring a petrol engine to charge the batteries twice a week.

The petrol was drawn from a pump in the Post Office yard and carried in two gallon Shell cans. The P.O. was a Head Post Office at this time, the correct procedure, signing and storage was essential.

My duty there was maintenance of the stamp cancelling machine, scales, clocks, lights and at times the Ascot gas heaters.

The Police Station was the centre for the Petworth Police Division, Supt. Dabson in charge and Fred Everest the Station Sgt. They had the number 2222, the Doctors 2248, Cottage Hospital 2106, Square Kiosk 2101 and Petworth House 2207.

When a fault had been troublesome I made it my duty to contact Miss Harris, The Secretary at Petworth House, entering through the Church door known as the Barnes Lodge. Mr Barnes was door keeper and groom; their son was training in horsemanship with the Royal Horse Artillery. I always enquired as to his progress, it seemed a wonderful job.



*Ron's two posters for the English-speaking Union's Exhibition June 1955.*

On one of these excursions, I met and waylaid Hugh Wyndham, the recently elevated holder of the Leconfield title. It was to ask if I could use the Family Coat of Arms as the centrepiece of a Pictorial Map I had planned for the 1951 Exhibition, a national function soon to come. Agreement was reached, but, in return for taking a vellum showing Petworth House

c1560 and being commissioned to draw same with a twist in perspective to show the Rose Garden in better light. The drawing did appear in Hugh Leconfield's book *Petworth Manor in the Seventeenth Century*. No payment, no sign of publication. The wife of a friend withdrew the Book from Shoreham Library and thought that the R.G. Pidgley must be me. It was the first I knew of it. A note to Mr. Hugh resulted in same from the Publishers with Author's compliments. The book has since been lost.

Without doubt news got round that a keen amateur was anxious to make his mark and although I forget the actual encounter, I spoke to Mr. and Mrs. John Wyndham who requested that I produce two posters for the National Floral Arrangement Society. I was promised two hardboard sheets to be delivered by Estate vehicle.

The job was completed soon after and Mr. and Mrs. John Wyndham walked down to Hampers Green to approve – or otherwise, promising £8 which I gratefully received and acknowledged in due course. Fame at last I thought, little knowing that thirty years later the jobs would come in quite often.

Although Sheila, myself and small family left Petworth 41 years ago – on 19 Feb. 1960 – it is great to keep in touch, we owe a great deal to the strange town that welcomed a Commando Troop in 1943.

*Note:* The National Floral Arrangement Society Exhibition was sponsored by the English-speaking Union.

## Doing anything today Jack?

I was born at what is now Trowel Cottage in Pound Street, next to Mr. Caine's the greengrocers (now Roughshed). My father, George Smith, was originally from Middlesex and worked as a postman at Petworth. He was always known as "Jack". My mother came from Ebernoe. Memories of these very early days (the 1920s) are hazy indeed: "helping" Mr. Caine next door to make his ice cream, going down some stairs, possibly into a cellar, being allowed to lick out the bowl when he'd finished. I suppose the most vivid memory I have concerns the steep steps to our cottage and the sharp corner half-way up. I had been born with rickets and until I was about ten had to be pushed in a wheel chair. Dad used to pick me up and carry me down the steps, then my sister Eve could take me out in the chair. It may seem strange now, but I can't remember being particularly concerned about all this: rickets was a part of life, something I had, and, as it happened, something I grew out of in time. My Mum and Dad used to take turns in rubbing my legs, an hour at a time on each leg.

Like any other child I went to the infants school (on the site of the present public library) but nothing particularly stands out except watching for my aunt, who lived opposite the Police Station houses, looking down over the wall into the school playground. At playtime she would throw me down something to eat.

My father was very friendly with Mr. Browning at the Star in Market Square and we

children had a gymnastic club in the old Iron Room also in the Square. We had a proper "horse" and other equipment. Mr. Browning ran the club and while he was taking it my father would look after the pub for him. Sometimes if Mr. Browning wanted a half-day off he'd say, "Doing anything today Jack?" and Dad would take over the pub, perhaps for an evening. If Dad was working (or even if he wasn't!) we were allowed to go in through the kitchen at the back. My Mother never drank but she might (like me) have a lemonade.

Other amusements? There would be swimming at the Tumble (down towards the Mill) then playing ball in the fields, or going to the pictures. The Regal in Tillington Road wasn't built until 1937, but I went to the old cinema at the Pound where, when it rained on the tin roof, you couldn't hear the music, dialogue or anything else. My father was quite strict: in later days when I came out of the Regal at eleven o'clock he'd be waiting there to escort me home. In fact, being a postman, he had to be up very early. Rounds were fairly regular then and, as far as I know, he always did the same round, down North Street, right into Horsham Road, up to

Hilliers and then on to the farmhouses like Medhone that lay off Fox Hill. It was very rural and I remember him recounting how he had been chased by a straying bull and had to be rescued by the farmer. He'd start about four in the morning and when he came home late morning he'd bring the newspaper with him. He was a great gardener, as was my Mother, and, if he could, he'd spend the afternoon in the large garden we had at 15 South Grove whither we'd moved from Pound Street when I was seven or eight. It would be about 1930 and the house was probably new when we moved in.

Petworth Fair was a great occasion – no really big machines but a lot crammed into the Square. Amusements and music were always old-fashioned – that was what we liked about it. Throwing hoops and rolling your pennies down, you were lucky if you got the better of the fair people! No, I'm sure the Town Hall was kept closed on Fair night. We weren't normally allowed in the Town Hall – plays and shows were always in the Iron Room.

I was always known in the family as "Titch", not because I was particularly small, but because I was the youngest in our family. I had brothers and sisters anything up to twenty years older than I was. From the Infants I went to the East Street Girls School. I remember



*Eileen with Mrs Smith at 15 South Grove about 1938.*

Miss Wootton and, particularly, Miss Bevis, who seemed a very good teacher to me. I walked to and from school and home for lunch. Again, memories are fairly dim now; Betty Dean was a great friend of mine, but we lost touch during the war. I left Petworth in 1940 and have been back only very rarely since.

An early job was with Dr. and Mrs. Druitt, first at the Old Surgery, now George House, then, when they moved to Quarry Lane off Grove Street in their new house. I'd Hoover, make the beds, wash up, but I didn't do any cooking. Whether Mrs. Druitt did this herself or someone came in I can't remember. Dr. Druitt was the family doctor and I just slipped into the job because he knew me. I liked it there and I liked the spacious new house. It was only the war that moved me on.

Late in 1939 I had a letter to say that the job I was doing didn't contribute sufficiently to the war effort and suggesting that I went to Petworth House. The Chelsea Day Nursery had come down from London and needed domestic help. Obviously I had no nursing experience and nursing was not expected of me. I laid the breakfast, washed up, helped generally with the children. It was amazing how often they'd want their coats buttoned up! There were a lot of babies as I remember. The children sat at long tables for meals; I can't remember however whether this was in the Audit Room or not. I went up the House every morning and worked all day, eating at home. I can't remember a thing about how I was paid. I'd leave at five or six in the evening, that sort of time. I never saw the Leconfields and virtually nothing of the House staff who seemed very much preoccupied with their own affairs.

I didn't stay terribly long with the Day Nursery, going to London in 1940 to work on munitions. I had certainly been some time in London when the school was bombed in 1942. My job was to check .303 and .505 bullets as they came out of the machine. Eventually I moved to a factory making dynamos and I remained there until the war ended. I would never live in Petworth again.

Eileen Taylor was talking to Diana Owen and the Editor.

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## Fatal stupidity and other matters

Nancy Smith sends us the following Petworth pieces from *The Times*, found while browsing through newspaper files for family history purposes:

*From The Times 4th January 1855:*

*"Fatal Stupidity.* - Great excitement has been caused in the town of Petworth, Sussex, and the neighbourhood, from the following circumstances:- On Tuesday, a boy named William Elcombe jun., eight years of age, who was employed to tend birds for Mr. Brown, of Hoes Farm, saw a man in a field called Nine Acres, about half past 7 o'clock in the morning; he had a stick, and appeared to be poking at a rabbit hole; he remained there all day, and the lad left him there in the evening without having spoken to him. He sat there a great part of the day, and when the lad went to the field the next morning he saw the man sitting in the same place as he left him the previous evening. He continued in the field all this day, and the lad again left him there at night.

On Thursday, when he went to the field, the man was sitting about 10 yards from where he was the night before, and he had moved about a little during the day, but did not get up to walk about. The lad again left him there at night without having spoken to him. On Wednesday evening he (had) told his parents, who worked for the same employer, of the man being there, but had said nothing to them since.

When he went to the field on Friday he did not see the man; but about 1 o'clock he thought he saw something in a ditch which was near; and upon looking into it from the top of the hedge he thought it was a man there. He went within 10 yards of him, and then left to attend to his birds. There was a hat in the field, about 15 yards from the ditch. The lad went home about half past 4, and told his mother he thought the man was dead. Nothing, however, was done. On Saturday morning he went to the field as usual, but did not go to see if the man in the field was in the ditch until about 12 o'clock, when his sister, who was older than himself, came into the field, and they went to the ditch together and saw the man. His sister then went home, and he went to tend his birds until half past four, when he also went home. His mother sent him back to find some of Mr. Brown's men, and having succeeded in doing so he took them to the ditch, where they found the man lying on his face quite dead.

The body was removed to the workhouse, and a coroner's inquest held on it. A *post mortem* examination was made by Mr. Boxall of Petworth, and that gentleman stated that the muscles of the chest and abdomen were very emaciated and the stomach collapsed and entirely empty. Death was caused by inflammation of the lungs and *pleura*, aggravated by want of food and exposure to wet and cold. The unfortunate deceased was at the Swan Inn, Petworth, about half past 9 o'clock on the previous Monday evening, and offered to sell a worsted comforter he had with him, but could not dispose of it; he remained in the tap until the ostler closed it for the night and told him he came from Romford in Essex. His dress was above that of a common man. He took no refreshments at the inn, and the comforter was the only thing he had with him. The jury returned a verdict, that "the deceased died from inflammation of the lungs and *pleura*, aggravated by want of food and great exposure to cold and wet." The deceased appeared to be about 50 years of age. No clue has been obtained as to his identity." *From The Times 4th January 1844:*

"At West Sussex Quarter Sessions held at Petworth on Saturday the Duke of Richmond brought forward a singular charge against a man named Hack, who had for nearly 15 years past filled the office of paid constable for the parish of Washington and adjoining parishes. A man had on the previous Thursday been sentenced to be imprisoned and whipped as an incorrigible rogue and vagabond, he having been 13 times before an inmate of the Petworth House of Correction; and the prisoner deposed that the act for which he was taken (snaring game) was instigated by Hack, who gave him the wires and knife to set them with. An investigation took place into the circumstances, which ended in a full corroboration of the prisoner's statement; and the result was that the prisoner was discharged, and the constable dismissed."

*From The Times 14th September 1841:*

"At Petworth fair an old trick was played of by two London thieves on a carrier named Collins. Collins had a horse and gig for sale which one of the sharpers pretended to bargain

for, the other suggested that it was stolen, and recommended his companion not to purchase. Collins talked of his respectability, when one of the party bet him that he could not produce 50 sovereigns. The carrier went home for the money and joined the two fellows at an inn, where they agreed to complete the purchase. After partaking freely of wine, one of the thieves offered to put Collins' bag into his pocket for safety; in doing so, they changed the contents for a quantity of new farthings, and immediately left the room. The bag contained between 50 and 60 sovereigns with which they got clear off."

*From The Times 17th October 1798:*

"Yesterday se'nnight the following melancholy circumstance occurred in Petworth: Mrs. Gould, wife of Mr. Gould, Carpenter, of that town, finding herself somewhat indisposed, applied to a shopkeeper in the place who sold drugs, for a small dose of Magnesia Alba; but the shopkeeper, owing to his window shutters having been left up, went to a wrong drawer, and served Mrs. Gould with a dose of White Mercury, instead of the simple medicine she had applied for. The unfortunate woman, on mixing and tasting the deadly potion, thought it unlike Magnesia, and referred it to her husband, who likewise tasted it, and had his doubts; she, however, swallowed remainder, and was shortly after seized with dreadful convulsions, which, in spite of the best medical assistance, brought about her dissolution early on the following morning. The husband, from the small quantity he had taken into his stomach by taking the dose, was exceedingly ill for several hours, and is at present inconsolable for his irreparable loss. Mrs. Gould was in a state of pregnancy."

## Gwenda Morgan's Diary 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> November 1939

*November 1st.* Pigs have gone. Swilled down the empty sty, also cleaned other lot of 11. Hens. Then Nobby Blackman came along and he was helpful in emptying the barrow onto the dung heap. Went mangling. Milked in afternoon and cleaned sheds.

*Nov. 2nd.* Hens. Pigs. Cowsheds. Mangels. They are almost finished now. Helped Blackman drive a heifer up to another meadow. He and Stoner gave another heifer a dose of something ~ a whole bottleful of nasty red liquid stuff he had made from red powder. Milked and cleaned sheds. Usually manage to catch a 'bus home at 5 o'clock now, and sometimes at 12 o'clock too but that usually means running hard all through the village much to the amusement of two workmen near the corner. It was my cake day. Every Thursday Knights' van comes round with cake and the young man looks into the cowsheds to see what we want, and we take it in turns to pay. It seems very hot in the sheds this afternoon and I felt very sleepy, and just longed for a nice cup of tea.

*Nov. 3rd.* Hens. Cowsheds. Very warm and sunny, like September weather. Held sacks while Stoner filled them with cake mixtures for the cows. Spread leaves up on the mangel field. Mangels are all pulled now, but not all carted. Milked, cleaned sheds. It's quite



*A late nineteenth century view of Fittleworth Church.  
See Miles' article on the Fittleworth pew dispute.*



*Wilson Hill in the garden at Stringers Hall.  
See "Wilson Hill : a recollection."  
Photograph courtesy of Christopher Holland.*



*Publicity photograph by George Garland  
for Northend House School, about 1950.  
See "Wilson Hill : a recollection."  
Photograph courtesy of Christopher Holland.*



*Wilson Hill's predecessor as chemist.  
He took over the East Street shop in 1937.  
See "Wilson Hill: a recollection."  
Photograph courtesy of Christopher Holland.*

a game trying to hurry the cows out after milking, before they mess up the yard. Una took Margaret to Dr. Picton about the styes on her eyes.

*Nov. 4th.* Hens. The 11 pigs have now gone away. Am glad to have seen the last of that dirty lot. Cleaned out the empty sty. Swept up barn, then helped Stoner fix up hurdles and straw and hay round the shed where the mangels are being stored. Peter Thorne home for half term weekend. M and A had little fireworks in the scullery.

*Nov. 5th.* Sunday. Lovely day, windy but clear and sunny. Church.

*Nov. 6th.* Hens. Leaf spreading again. Milked, cleaned sheds. A man came from W.S.C.C. to take a test of the milk.

*Nov. 7th.* Hens. Helped Parker to fork out dung from the barn in the rickyard where the 4 little calves are. Poured with rain. Mr. Glover gave me a lift home from Byworth Corner at mid-day. Milked, cleaned sheds. Barbara Blackman brought me a bag of chestnuts.

*Nov. 8th.* Hens. Leaf spreading. Went down Frog Hole way with message for Callingham "If you hav'nt done the cattle, will you do them." Heaven knows what it meant, and all Callingham said was, "Yes, I've done 'em." Milked, cleaned sheds. Mr. Nosey Parker came round to inspect sheds etc.

*Nov. 9th.* Hens, sheds. More dung forking with Parker in barn. We use long handled forks with 4 prongs, and Parker calls them "spuds". Poured with rain. Milked, cleaned sheds, "helped" by Sandy and Barbara Blackman. Last night there was an attempt on Hitler's life after his speech in Munich.

*Nov. 10th.* Hens. Leaf spreading. Lovely morning at first. Bright with mists rising in the distance and lovely deep colours and the high wind had dropped, but rain came after a while. Went over to the field they're ploughing at Frog Hole with some tobacco for Mr. T. Milked, cleaned sheds. Una took M. again to surgery, but found Dr. Picton has joined up. Saw "Sanders of the River".

*Nov. 11th.* Saturday and Poppy Day. Hens. Leaf spreading. Finished all the leaves (except where they've not yet carted the mangels) and returned to farm yard. Place quite deserted and only 25 mins. to 12. Everyone must have "knocked off" early finding Mr. & Mrs T. and all gone out!

*Nov. 12th.* Sunday. Church. New curate, Mr. Mumby, preached.

*Nov. 13th.* Hens. Filled up some of the holes the pigs have made in the first meadow. Milked, cleaned sheds. To tea with Miss Austins'. A rat killed the baby bantams in the coop in the rickyard. The mother bantam is now in with the other fowls in the meadow. They are a very mixed lot. Brown cocks, bantams, small white hen, tiny brown chicken, some sort of piebald speckled hens, some small dark things like game cocks, very perky, and one guinea-fowl.

*Nov. 14th.* Hens. More filling up pig-trenches in the meadow. Pigs have had rings put in their noses now so won't be ploughing up the grass any more. Milked, cleaned sheds. All the heifers in the second shed are going to have calves within the next month or two. Buttercup's is due in 4 weeks. She won't be milked after today. Haircut.

*Nov. 15th.* Hens. Filled tractor up with paraffin. Filled up more pig holes in the meadow. The Storrington beagles came on the farm. They turned out a hare and a lovely

greyish coloured fox quite close to where I was standing. Didn't catch either of them, thank goodness. The fox looked lovely dashing along with his brush straight out behind. Milked, cleaned sheds. Wet day.

*Nov. 16th.* Poured with rain all day. Hens. Turned over some corn in the barn so that it shouldn't get hot or smelly. Swept out barn. Cleaned cowsheds. Milked, cleaned sheds again. Every afternoon after cleaning sheds I scrub a piece of wall and they're looking fairly clean by now. They soon get into a filthy mess if not done regularly, but the cowmen never seem to get time. Bought blue wool to make a jersey for Robin for Christmas.

#### Notes

Gwenda is still working as a land girl at Hallgate Farm, Byworth.

*3rd Nov.* Una is Gwenda's step-mother. Margaret an evacuee staying with Una and Gwenda at the Old Bank House.

*4th Nov.* A is the Morgan's other evacuee.

*7th Nov.* Mr Glover – from the bank?

*8th Nov.* Mr Parker from Petworth R.D.C. not to be confused with Parker working for Mr Thorne at Hallgate.

*10th Nov.* Mr T – Mr Thorne farmer at Hallgate.

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## Trying to set the record straight on the Pest House

There appears to be a case for supposing that at different periods in the history of Petworth there were two separate properties that went by the title of 'The Pest House'. The earlier reference is to be found in a collection of documents relating to a burglary in 1817 at a cottage known as 'The Pest House' that was the home of one William Wackford near Flexham Park in the Parish of Petworth. The items stolen in the theft appear to be the stock of a small draper so it is quite clear that the property was not operating as a pest house or isolation hospital by this time. In 1830 'The Pest House' appears on a map of Petworth parish. The building is shown quite clearly as standing in a field on the right hand side of the A272 (Horsham Road) over the brow of Fox Hill and only a short distance before the lane that runs down to the small settlement of Selscombe on the edge of Flexham Park. This is clearly the same property mentioned 13 years earlier where William Wackford lived. Moving on to 1871 the building appears on an ordnance survey map in the same position and is once again marked as 'The Pest House'. These consistent references extending over a period of some half a century are a clear illustration of how a property can retain its name long after the reason for its existence has long since disappeared. We now enter a period in which a 'Pest House' is recalled in the memories of people who are still alive today, however in these modern recollections the property is no longer near Flexham Park but still on the Horsham Road leading out of Petworth. The property stands alone in the field on the right hand side at Flathurst. Certainly by 1907 the

house was known as 'Pest House' though in effect it was a hospital for patients with contagious illnesses such as diphtheria. We have a record of two young boys being admitted to the 'Pest House' suffering from this highly infectious disease; this was before the first war [see PSM no. 73 page 20]. Evidently a trained nurse and a helper staffed the hospital, but we have no official records to substantiate this. We have now identified the sites of the two Pest Houses at Petworth but several questions remain unanswered. When did the Flexham Park 'Pest House' close? It was obviously prior to 1817, but did we have a successor to it elsewhere before the Flathurst hospital opened? When did the 'modern' 'Pest House' close, someone must remember it, or perhaps was a patient there? Was it connected in some way to the Cottage Hospital? We have a few financial statements relating to the Cottage Hospital for the end of the nineteenth century but the 'Pest House' is never mentioned. Any suggestions or recollections would be appreciated.

Miles Costello (343227)

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## The Polish Camp – a reminiscence

This has taken me nearly a year to get down to and write. I can only plead laziness.

Having been to Petworth for the first time in over 40 years...after all, it is only 30 miles from where I live...My mind went back to the time I used to live there.

My parents were born in pre-war Poland, but their lives were forever changed by Hitler and Stalin. They were deported to Siberia, trekked to the Middle East and later my father fought in the British Army at Monte Casino. Finally, they ended up at Liverpool Docks in 1947 – as displaced persons and refugees.

In 1948, after an unpleasant time living in a basement flat in London (a Victorian type as described in Dickens' novels), where my mother and I were nearly gassed by a faulty cooker (that's another story), my parents decided to move to Petworth. They had heard that there was a Polish Family Camp there. It did not take long to find a small lorry to take our few possessions, and us.

The Camp was about a mile outside Petworth in the grounds of Lord Leconfield's Estate. My Aunt also moved to the camp. Her hut was very close to the lake, and one of my cousins was born there.

On arrival, we found an ex-military camp of approximately 100 Nissen Huts (semi-circular pods made of corrugated iron sheets). Things looked bad!! However, when we were shown the hut allocated to us, my parents were pleasantly surprised. It was quite comfortable. The hut was divided into four parts, so that it was possible to have a kitchen, with a sink, a living room and two bedrooms. Petworth Council had waterproofed the huts and allocated each family their own toilet in a separate block.

There was a small shop on the site and a cafeteria – where we could meet and talk, and even a small church. People kept chickens and rabbits, for eggs and dinner, and we had a dog as a pet (not a meal).



Many of the women at the camp worked in a small factory, owned by a firm in Brighton, making shirts, and at the right time of year they also picked fruit, which I remember the children "helping" with. A lot of men worked in a brickyard, near Chiddingfold. They were picked up and delivered back by lorry every day. Others worked for the Southern Electricity Board digging ditches for cables. It was hard work, but seldom did anyone complain. One or two of the children (including myself) went to Northend House School. It was a private school for which my parents had to pay about £5 a term. That was a lot of money! I don't remember much about my time there, except that I hated PE and reading my reports; it seems I was not the most co-operative child there.

In time, as people found other work, and life improved, people began to move out of the camp, which was eventually closed. Some stayed in Petworth, having found jobs and housing locally. We moved back to London, when my father worked as a architectural draughtsman.

As I remember it, our time at Petworth Camp was very pleasant, and after the upheaval caused by the War, my parents called it a small paradise, and even now, after all these years, only ever speak of their time there with very fond affection.

I enclose a copy of a sketch of the inside of our hut, which was drawn by my father.

Anna Hughes

## Wilson Hill : a recollection

*Christopher Holland writes:*

My Grandfather, Wilson Hill, came to Petworth in 1937, together with my Grandmother Harriet Hill, and his two daughters Marjorie (my Mother) and Kathleen, who lived in Petworth until May 2000. Wilson Hill bought the East Street pharmacy, and leased Stringers Hall from Mrs Grey of Torquay. He came to Petworth from Westgate-on-Sea where he owned the pharmacy in St. Mildreds Road. (This property is still owned by my Mother and Aunt, and is leased to Boots the Chemist).

Marjorie Hill married the Reverend Jack Holland, who was a Chaplain in the Royal Navy, in May 1937. Kathleen Hill was a qualified music teacher and taught at many of the private schools in the area, as well as taking in private pupils.

*Stringers Hall in the late 1930s. The iron gates were removed in 1940.*



Marjorie returned to Petworth in 1939 and worked in the then Westminster Bank in the Market Square until 1942. Her husband, Jack, was serving as Chaplain on H.M.S. Formidable, an aircraft carrier.

My mother, Marjorie and father Jack, returned to live in the flat at Stringers Hall in 1952, whilst my father was serving on H.M.S. Devonshire. During this time I was sent to school at Northend House (I enclose the brochure of the school which I thought might be of interest).

Wilson Hill was, for a number of years, sidesman at the Parish Church and a member of the Parochial Church Council and was also a member of the Masonic Lodge.

Wilson Hill died on July 20th 1956 and was buried in Petworth Cemetery. My Grandmother Harriet sold the business to Mr Moss (who later also bought Bowyers the Chemist in the Square).

My Grandmother then bought Rowans in East Street where she lived with my Aunt Kathleen Hill until she died in August 1972. Kathleen Hill continued to teach piano to private pupils until she finally retired aged 80 in 1994. Unfortunately she now suffers from Parkinsons Disease and had to go into a Nursing Home in Littlehampton, in July 2000. Rowans was sold in December 2000, and thus ended 65 years of the Hill family's connection with Petworth.

I, personally, still feel a very strong connection to Petworth as I spent quite a lot of time in Petworth during my childhood, living for a short time at Stringers Hall, and also at Rowans, whilst my parents were abroad.

## 'Podmore was big in champagne...'

I was born in 1912 at Culvercroft in Pound Street. I suppose that looking back to my childhood my sister Anne and myself had something of a privileged upbringing though we were not really aware of it then. There were of course strict social divisions in the town even in those early days following the end of the first war, somehow though those unspoken rules seemed only to apply to adults and during the innocence of childhood everybody was classless.

My father Dr. Kerr was a well-known sportsman and in that respect he influenced both my sister and myself. I was very fond of horse riding while Anne loved tennis and golf. Father, Anne, Harry Knowles and myself would often ride out before breakfast, through the town, on down Bartons Lane, past Mr Cragg's workshop and the graveyard, out into Rectory Fields, then on up to the Gog. On the return journey we would occasionally call in at the Cottage Hospital to check on one or other of Father's patients. I can't say that we were suitably attired for hospital visiting having just ridden through the mud and over the Shimmings Brook but no one seemed to bother about such things in those days. My first pony came from the Star Inn, I would have been about ten then. During the summer holidays Jean Brydone had hired the pony while she was down from London, at the end of the summer Father bought it for me. Tommy the pony was actually more suitable for driving a governess cart, as he could be rather naughty and it wasn't long before Tommy had company with the arrival of a New Forest pony named Dinah that we bought from Mr Dallyn at Shopham Bridge.

Father particularly enjoyed playing billiards and real tennis and could often be found at the Petworth House court in Park Road. As a rule ladies did not play real tennis, however I have known occasions when my sister Anne took part in matches. Mr Lambert the tennis professional at Petworth lived in an estate house in Egremont Terrace.

Besides my horse riding I also enjoyed tennis and hockey. I was for many years a member of the Grove Lawn Tennis Club and also played for the Petworth Ladies hockey team. The latter had a pitch in the Park near the pavilion. Dora Gadd was a very good friend of mine, she was a niece of Mrs Walter Dawtrey, and she also played hockey for Petworth, as did Peggy Streeter, Rhoda and Monica Calnan – whose father had the Petworth Engineering Company in East Street where the Antique Market is now –, Phil Gwillim from Coultershaw, two Hardy girls from Fittleworth whose Christian names escape me for the moment, and of course my sister Anne. Colonel Mayne would coach us and run the line and we played some quite good teams from all over.

Getting back to Culvercroft, yes we did have domestic staff. Mother was very particular about how they were treated and would claim that her maids only ever left to get married, though I suppose that many employers repeated that same boast. When Mother came down from Scotland to marry my father she brought with her a cook and a parlour maid, they were sisters and Maggy the cook later married Arthur Older the grocer in Angel Street while the other sister returned to Scotland. 'Old Gill' was the gardener though I don't suppose that we ever called him anything but Mr Gill to his face. Maud White was one of our housemaids; she lived in Grove Street in one of those cottages near the path that led up to the Infants' School. Dorothy Burdock cooked for us for a time and then she left to go and work at Orchard House for Dr. and Mrs Brydone, I think that Dorothy lived in one of those cottages next to the Girls' School. Jack Underhill was our chauffeur, he would clean Father's car every morning, and he remained on duty until Father had finished his rounds, which may have been eight o'clock in the evening, a long day even for those times. We also had a groom by the name of Taylor who was the father of Dickie Taylor the football coach. When Taylor senior retired Dickie took his place for a short time, though after a while he moved on. I recall him turning up many years later as a postman when we lived at Lurgashall.

Just over the garden wall from Culvercroft was the home of the Whitcomb family. They were an important Petworth family though it is difficult to place them in the social hierarchy; they were just there and seemed to be involved in everything that went on in the town. They were a very musical family and appeared to dominate the church choir; at Christmas they would always do the rounds of the larger houses singing carols. Hubert Whitcomb lived in the house opposite Denmans in East Street, I can recall straw spread across the road to silence the horses' hooves as they passed the house, I suppose that someone in the house must have been dying.

I never went to school but was educated at home; Molly Wootton the headmistress at the Infants School would come in and instruct me in copybook writing. She perhaps did it to earn a little extra to supplement her income but I'm not really sure, I was after all very young then. Agnes Daintrey came as our nanny cum governess but our first proper tutor was a Miss Wardle who ran the Missionary Guild at the Rectory as well as teaching in the boys' Sunday school.

Agnes was the niece of the misses Alice and Constance Daintrey. They had two brothers one of whom went to Canada while the other who was named 'Duke' or Marmaduke took holy orders and had a living at Holmwood near Dorking. Miss Alice Daintrey never had a proper bath in the house and there was no running water on the upper floors of Daintrey House. When Miss Alice wished to bathe, the maids would have to carry the water upstairs to fill a hipbath for their mistress. She was a wonderful old lady but rather old fashioned even then.

I suppose because of Father's work we knew many people in the district even as far out as Sutton and Northchapel. Though any of my father's patients were quite important people and lived in the largest of houses, my parents were certainly not snobs, and I was allowed as a child to mix with whom I wished. I remember a Mrs Whitehouse who had once been the matron at the cottage hospital. When I knew her she had retired and was living at Somerset Hospital with her maid Hannah Eade. Hannah would later become cook to the Shakerley-Ackers at Hilliers. It seems that one way or another most people had some sort of connection, if it wasn't through marriage then it was through their servants. Dr. Eardley-Wilmot and his wife lived in Preyste House in North Street opposite the entrance to the Cowyard, I do believe that her name was Gwyneth and that she was Welsh. Anyway the Eardley-Wilmots had two sons, one of whom was the father of Lady Shakerley-Ackers at Hilliers while the other married Mrs Eardley-Wilmot of Newlands in Pound Street. This last lady had a rather tragic life, her husband died in the Great War and her son Anthony in the second. To compound matters her daughter Joan, who was a great friend of mine, lost her husband Tom in the Bermuda Triangle.

It's strange how after all of these years memories of certain people seem to be preserved in one's mind for no apparent reason. For instance I recall a Miss Houseman who used to give me drawing lessons. She was quite an accomplished artist and Mr Lezell built her a house, which she called 'Moss', and which stands on the high bank opposite the Black Horse public house in Byworth.

Mr Pugsley was master of the workhouse in North Street. Father knew Mr and Mrs Pugsley quite well as he occasionally attended to the inmates and it became something of a tradition for Father to carve the turkey for the workhouse Christmas dinner. Although I don't ever recall going into the workhouse I do have a recollection of the male inmates dressed in brown corduroy trousers, I suppose it was part of their uniform and I may have seen them around the town.

There was a Reverend Beech who lived at Kitchen Court in High Street; he was the rector of Barlavington, Burton and Coates. I never could understand why he lived in Petworth though perhaps no rectory went with the living. I do believe that Mr Beech had two daughters one of who was named Marjorie and who is buried at Burton. The other daughter – whose name I cannot recall – married the author J.W. Fortescue who gained immortality with his book '*The Story of the Red Deer*'. Following their marriage they went to live in Provence where I think that she took up writing as well.

The Podmores were a very well to do family and lived a grand life at Petworth. I believe that Podmore was big in champagne though by the time that I knew the family he was no longer involved in the business. Cecil Aldin the famous artist and author worked at one time as

secretary to Mr Podmore, though this must have been long before he became well known. The family seemed to move around quite a bit as I remember them living variously at Newlands, Newgrove and Tillington Hill. When they were at Newgrove Mr Podmore would drive a 'coach and four' to Goodwood races. The horses would arrive a month before Goodwood in order to get them fit to draw the coach. Clara the eldest Podmore daughter would take it upon herself to exercise the horses and occasionally she would, as a great treat, let me accompany her. We would drive out to Halfway Bridge and past Morley's wood yard before coming back past Dunton Common and Heath End and on to New Grove. Clara went on to take charge of placing land army girls in the district for the duration of the war. During Goodwood week Anne and I would stand on the high bank at Culvercroft which overlooked Pound Street, we were able to see Lord Leconfield's coach leave Petworth House and come down Park Road toward us, as it passed by the entrance to Culvercroft Mr Podmore's coach would pull out of Saddlers Row and swing in behind his lordship's. I'm not sure whether this was an act of deference on Mr Podmore's part though I suppose it may have been. Bob, one of the Podmore sons was evidently rather a good huntsman though sadly he died when still quite young. His death deeply affected the family, and his name became revered, and consequently one had to be careful how one referred to him. Jack the other son was a rather sickly person but he survived his youth, outlived his three sisters, and eventually died at the age of 92 at Tillington Hill. I have mentioned Clara the eldest daughter, and then there was Gladys, she was mentally unwell and I don't really recall much of her. 'Berry' was the youngest daughter. No, I don't know how she came to be called 'Berry', though her name may well have been Beryl. 'Berry' was the only one of the Podmore children to marry and then it was not until quite late in life that she married a widowed Rector of Tillington.

November 20<sup>th</sup>, Petworth fair day was incredibly important to us children. The excitement and anticipation was overwhelming. We knew exactly where every ride would go before it was even put up. The swing boat always stood outside the tailors at the top of the Square while the hoop-la had to go outside Austens the ironmongers. Of course I remember Andrew Smith who doesn't? He always called his wife 'my lady' and once when she was rather ill Father sent her to the Cottage Hospital where she was soon on the mend and before long she was back in their little cottage at Stroud Green. Andrew was extremely grateful to father and from then on I was always allowed to stand a little closer than other children when trying to win a coconut on his shy. Mother was rather an outgoing person who did not always observe the rules, and when one year she declared that she was going to the fair it was greeted with amazement by most of her friends. Mr Stubbs, the manager of the Westminster Bank, was rather friendly with Mother and he offered to let her watch the fair from an upstairs window, which she did. However this did not satisfy Mother and the following year she had to go to the fair itself and she even went on the roundabout, which really was not the done thing for a lady to do. Sometime later Mother bumped into Lady Leconfield who congratulated her on her spirit and declared that she was so pleased with Mother as she herself could now go to the fair. One other thing that sticks in my mind is the sight of a 'nigger' walking on broken glass at Petworth fair. He performed his act down by the side of Otways where the entrance to the car park is now. Of course by next morning the fair would have disappeared as though it had never been.

I can of course remember many of the tradesmen in the town though as a rule they would call round to Culvercroft, collect their orders and then deliver the goods later. Mother preferred dealing with Mr Older for her groceries though of course there was a plentiful choice in the town in those days. Either Mr Baxter in Park Road or Mr Greest at the top of High Street would shoe our horses. I suppose that it was quite sensible to share one's custom around but I'm not at all sure that this was done consciously.

The surgery in those days was in George House where Father was in partnership with Dr. Beachcroft and later Dr. Druitt. Dr. and Mrs Beachcroft and their daughters Maud, Lala, Joan, Ruby and Diana lived at George House. Father was very fond of Joan and was terribly upset when she died young. Maud the eldest daughter had the job of driving her father around the district as he visited his patients. During the first war Father went to work at a hospital in Chichester looking after wounded soldiers, one grateful patient painted a portrait of Father but Mother thought it was so awful that she had it destroyed. When Beachcroft retired Dr. Druitt took his place though he lived at North House and later had a house built near New Grove.

Finally just a few fleeting afterthoughts that have no connection with anything in particular but which have somehow escaped the ravages of time.

Opposite George House stood the Obelisk as it still does, an RAC scout by the name of Madgwick would direct the traffic from here, and this was of course before Petworth had a one-way system.

Joan Eardley-Wilmot and I used to pick mulberries from the tree that stood in the garden at Newlands. We would sell the fruit to Mrs Bowdidge the fruiterer in Lombard Street. With our gains we would buy bacon and eggs from Mr Older, go off to the Gog on our horses, and cook breakfasts for ourselves.

Once a year there would be a tennis tournament at the Grove Lawn Tennis Club and at the end of the week there would be a dance in the Swan ballroom. It was generally a rather cheap and cheerful affair with Gladys Morley playing her piano while her mother Mrs Bob Whitcomb played the drums. It was great fun for us girls.

Amen Corner. This was the name we gave to the junction of Angel, Middle, East and New Streets. Think about it. Take the first letter of each of the street names and what do they spell. I also knew it as Morley's Corner, which was probably the more usual name.

Does anyone recall the name of that large field which runs from near the Bailliewick down to the Shimmings brook? I always knew it as 'Big Phillip' and I would be interested to know if anyone else remembers it by that name.

Bunty Musson nee Kerr was talking to Miles Costello

Both Bunty and I hope that we have not offended any reader by including the term 'nigger' in the text. While we of course find the use of the appellation to be derogatory and quite unsuitable, this was not always the case, and to exclude the word would be a patent denial of an historical fact. M.C.

## Justice Lacaita

A significant figure in the Petworth area, Charles Carmichael Lacaita JP built Selham House and lived there from 1893 to his death in 1933. He was the son of Italian Sir James Lacaita MCMG, and the father of Captain Francis Lacaita MC, whose lives have been outlined in earlier contributions to this magazine.<sup>1,2</sup> These and the present article were prompted by Frank Lacaita's posthumous bookplate in *'The True Method of Dieting Horses'* by William Gibson (1731).

Born in 1853 in Scotland – at Castlecraig, near Peebles – Charles Lacaita barely survived his first few days of life. His mother, Maria Clavering Gibson Carmichael, died of puerperal fever soon after his birth. His godfathers were William Gladstone, the statesman who was a close friend of his father – and Francis Nevile Reid, his uncle, a wealthy Scottish landowner who had settled in Italy.

Most of Charles' childhood was spent in Scotland living with his widowed grandmother, Lady Anne Gibson Carmichael until her death when he was ten years old. His father wrote of her in his diary 'Her home was my home; my sorrows and joys were hers; my child was her own beloved child. She never let him feel that he had no mother. She was a rare woman!' <sup>3</sup> Sir James lived in London and travelled to Italy on business and for political purposes, visiting Castlecraig from time to time to see his son and Scottish relatives.

During childhood, and throughout his life, Charles stayed at the home of his Uncle Francis and Aunt Sophie in Italy. They had lovingly restored the Villa Rufolo – a picturesque and historic palazzo at Ravello on the Amalfi coast. Charles' lifelong fascination with botany may have begun there.

Little is known of his early education – although he wrote of schoolmates who were '...at Mr Davis' school at 'The Braddons', Torquay, with me, in the winter of 1863-64.'<sup>4</sup> Charles could have gone there following the death of his grandmother in 1863. He entered Eton at the age of fourteen, and was an able pupil, excelling in Italian and winning the school racquets championship towards the end of his time there. He claimed that he obtained only the medal (second prize in the Newcastle scholarship examination) because he had taken part in the racquets championship earlier on the same day.<sup>5</sup>

From about seventeen years of age, in addition to staying at the Villa Rufolo, Charles was able to visit Leucaspede, a 3000-acre olive farm acquired by his father on the heel of Italy.

He was an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford from 1872 to 1875, performing with distinction in mathematics and in classics, obtaining double-first-class honours in these subjects and, subsequently, the degree of Master of Arts. He won the tennis racquets championship and played cricket for the University.

In 1875 he entered Lincoln's Inn and qualified as a barrister in 1879. Soon, however, Politics became more attractive to him than Law. In 1885 he was appointed assistant private secretary to Foreign Secretary Earl Granville, a former Liberal Prime Minister.

Charles' Scottish background was helpful to him as Liberal candidate for one of Dundee's two seats in Parliament. He was the youngest of four seeking election. The local



Bunty with Mrs Kerr at Culvercroft probably in 1915.  
The tennis court is marked for the new season.  
See "Podmore was big in Champagne."



*Lord Leconfield (left) presents Dr Kerr with a book signed by Petworth residents to commemorate his years of work in the town. A Garland photograph from the early 1940s. See "Podmore was big in Champagne."*

press described him as an ardent supporter of Mr Gladstone, having his son, Mr Herbert Gladstone, and Lord Dalhousie as college friends. A verse from an election pamphlet announced:-

'For high upon that record then  
 Were seen the names of Liberal Men,  
 And at their head, who bears the crown –  
 An honour to our good old town –  
 LACAITA!' <sup>6</sup>

He was elected one of two Liberal MP's on 25 November 1885 with 8,261 votes – the highest number cast.

1885 was a busy year for him. In addition to taking up his seat in Parliament, Charles married Mary Annabel Doyle, daughter of Sir Francis Hastings Doyle – a contemporary of Gladstone at Christ Church, Oxford in 1830 and his lifelong friend. Sir Francis became Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1867 and was a Fellow of All Souls. When in London it is possible that Charles and his wife may have stayed at his pied-a-terre at 11, Upper Brook St, W.

In 1886 he voted in support of Gladstone's unsuccessful first Bill for Irish Home Rule. Its aim was to create a separate and autonomous parliament for the whole of Ireland, which would continue as part of the British Empire. Later, Charles found that he could not support his godfather's Irish policy. He wrote that Gladstone had: 'shattered the Liberal party.'<sup>7</sup> (The notion of Home Rule for Ireland was subsequently resurrected and abandoned by Commons and Lords over the years until 1921, when Eire and Northern Ireland finally separated). Charles became a Liberal Unionist, then, in 1887, resolved that Parliament and an active role in politics were not for him. Sir James wrote to Gladstone: 'You may well imagine what a great disappointment Charlie's retirement from political life is to me! I do not like to think, and much less to write about it. My only hope is that probably it will be better for his health.'<sup>8</sup>

He can have had little need for his salary as a Member of Parliament having been 'put on the board of the (Anglo-Italian) Bank' by his father in 1883, following him 'in the chairmanship for rather over ten years.'<sup>9</sup>

It is uncertain what led Charles to choose the Petworth area as his home for the rest of his life. Apparently the Lacaitas set up house at a property named Hurlands near Selham,<sup>5</sup> after his exit from politics. The family name appears under Lodsworth in the 1891 census returns for the Midhurst District.<sup>10</sup> At this time Charles must have been much occupied with the building of his new home at Selham and the planning and development of its fine gardens.

His daughter, Sidney Guendolen, was born in 1886 and his son, Francis Charles, in 1887. The Petworth photographer Kevis took pictures of the Lacaita children as infants. His negatives are currently at Petworth House in the care of the West Sussex Record Office. There are similar photographs in the family album of Sidney's son, Brigadier Windsor-Clive of Ludlow. Little is known of Sidney and Frank as youngsters at Selham – except that they rode with the Petworth House-based Leconfield Hunt.<sup>5</sup>

It seems probable that Charles' children would have had a tutor and/or a governess at Selham House. Margery Burn – currently of Midhurst – whose father Alfred Sherman was

employed by Charles as gardener and farm worker, lived in No.1 Fir Tree Cottages, down the road from Selham House. She recalls an old lady next door called Miss Granville, who may have been involved in the upbringing of the Lacaita children. As a young child, Margery remembers Charles as 'a kindly old man with a pointed white beard.'

Charles' grandson recollects a Mr Sewell, (known as 'Tuey') a well-loved butler at Selham House; a footman called Albert; a Mr Fraser who was head gardener and a chauffeur named Mr Robbens.<sup>5</sup>

Charles' godfather and uncle, Francis Nevile Reid, died at Ravello in 1892, his Aunt Sophie in 1908. The presence in the town of his uncle and aunt and their contribution of a water supply and roads to the mainly peasant community was of enormous civic benefit. On the death of Sophie, the Town Council gratefully acknowledged their help by having a plaque inscribed and set into a wall of the Villa. It states that they 'commemorated to the world the glorious name of ancient Ravello...'

His uncle left Charles the Villa Rufolo. He also inherited from him the local Ravello guidebook<sup>11</sup> and edited it with the assistance of a lady named Allen. He wrote in it of the so-called Sigilgaita bust – which once may have graced the ornate pulpit of the cathedral in Ravello. It was believed by some to represent the wife of Nicola Rufoli who ruled the area in the 12th Century and lived in the Villa. The booklet contains a photograph of the bust and several more of the monuments and buildings of Ravello. These were taken by Luigi Cicalesi (1853-1931) a former Garibaldini, employed by Francis as gardener and general factotum, and taught by him how to use a camera. Luigi eventually became mayor of Ravello and renowned as a local photographer. Members of his family are known to have been living at the Villa Rufolo as late as 1950.<sup>5</sup> The current guidebook – still in English as edited by Charles – but with copious and erudite historical observations in Italian appended – boasts a foreword by the best-selling American novelist Gore Vidal.

Charles' heirs sold the Villa Rufolo after his death. Now the property of the State Tourist Board of Salerno it functions as the European Universities' Centre for Cultural Heritage,<sup>12</sup> being used mainly as a pianoforte training school. Seminars, courses and conferences are held there regularly. A plaque in the magnificent gardens indicates that they were a source of inspiration for Wagner – in particular for Klingsor's Magic Garden in *Parsifal*.

Sir James died in 1895, leaving Leucaspide to his son, together with other assets, goods and chattels in Italy and England. Charles continued to maintain and stay at both of his Italian properties throughout his life.

One of the fullest pictures of Charles is found in the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of London*. He joined the Linnean Society in 1882, and was vice-president for 1921-2. He was a member of the Italian Botanical Society from 1902. After Oxford he travelled in Spain, the Pyrenees, the Maritime Alps, Switzerland and Greece. He made collections of plants that 'brought him into contact with Continental botanists of repute.'<sup>13</sup> In January 1914 he addressed the Petworth Church Mutual Improvement Society on 'The Mountains of Sikkim', speaking 'in a most interesting way of recent travels in India.'<sup>14</sup> He also journeyed to Tasmania for botanical purposes.

In later life Charles botanised in Spain, making five visits from 1923-28 and following them up by writing papers. He produced several valuable critical articles of interest to British botanists, which were published in the *Journal of the Linnean Society*. Boraginaea (especially *Onosma*, *Echium* and *Pulmonaria*), Compositae and Labiatae were his favourite plant families. He grew *Pulmonaria* extensively at Selham. He was an especially accurate taxonomic botanist. Keen and energetic, 'he realised the importance of bringing critical forms to the test of cultivation... His wide knowledge, coupled with his alert and logical mind, gave great weight to his opinions on questions of taxonomy, and the soundness of his views and the fairness with which he would weigh evidence in argument, rendered discussions with him a privilege to be appreciated.'<sup>13</sup> Charles gave his name to the *Lacaitaea* Brand. His collection of fine botanical books was sold at Sotheby's and his herbarium was given to the British Museum of Natural History.

He was Justice of the Peace for the Western Division of the County of Sussex from 1894 to 1933, and although he may have been sometime Chairman of the Petworth Bench of Magistrates, Kelly's Directory observes that no regular chairman was appointed for the Petworth Petty Sessional Division.<sup>15</sup> It appears that Charles also functioned as a Tax Commissioner in the area.

Charles was listed as 'Director of United Limmer and Vorwohle Rock Asphalte Co.' and described as Chairman of this Company, also as a director of the Val de Travers Asphalte Paving Company Ltd<sup>16</sup> which had its Head Office in Finsbury Circus, E.C.2 and branches in Birmingham, Liverpool and Newcastle.<sup>17</sup> Although it has not been possible to obtain translations of *Limmer* and *Verwohle*, it would seem that he was conscious of the coming Age of the Motor Car, astutely selecting road-surfacing as having a promising potential for investment.

He owned a motor car and maintained a chauffeur, although it is uncertain whether he himself drove. Mary Annabel, his wife, died in 1924. In 1929 he married Antoinette de Courly (1900-1989) and bequeathed his motor car to her. He ordained that should he own more than one vehicle at the time of his death, then she should have 'such one of them as she shall choose.'<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately a motor accident in 1931<sup>13</sup>, when he was 78, finally prevented Charles from playing tennis, to which he had been devoted all his life.

At the time of his death on 17 July 1933, Charles' assets in England alone would, at present values, have been worth more than £4,000,000. His Will was witnessed by Mr H. Pitfield, Solicitor, and by Mr Frank W. Whitcomb, Clerk to Messrs Pitfield and Oglethorpe, of Petworth.<sup>18</sup> Charles' daughter Sidney was the main beneficiary. He left annuities to his manservant – William Christopher of Graffham – and to his wife Antoinette who returned to live in France, near Vichy, later marrying a M. Tallon and having two children. Charles left the Villa Rufolo to her for her lifetime – although his heirs sold it in the 1950's, with her agreement.<sup>5</sup>

Selham House was sold to the Dowager Lady Cowdray who took up residence there. Alfred Sherman, the father of Margery Burn, continued to work for Lady Cowdray for a time. He eventually became the landlord of *The Three Moles* at Selham – a King and Barnes house, where Margery was barmaid. His tenure lasted for 20 years. She lived in Selham Priory, which had been turned into flats.

Selham Priory had formerly been the home of Col. Arthur Hill who had two granddaughters, Christian and Alison. In his Will, Charles left the girls the sum of £100 each, 'if and when they shall respectively attain the age of twenty-one years or marry under that age.'<sup>18</sup> Could they have played tennis as Selham House?

Although a moderate amount of data concerning Charles' status and achievements can be obtained from public documents, not a great deal is known of his social life and personality. He had much to say about his father in this respect and very little about himself. However, in an autobiographical aside in *An Italian Englishman*, after first observing that Sir James, '...undoubtedly valued what the Italians call *relazioni*, as a road to influence in life,' Charles remarked that he 'would often complain to me when I was young of my remissness in hunting the social hare.'<sup>19</sup>

Charles could afford to be less gregarious than his father. He contrasts sharply with him. Sir James was the very model of a self-made man. His background was one of relative poverty. It was necessary for him to capitalise upon his acquaintance in order to survive in a strange land, and, ultimately, to live well there. His knowledge of Italy, his friendship with Gladstone and his lack of domestic ties facilitated the forging of close contacts and relationships with significant and powerful people who were often major figures of state.

Perhaps Charles' more restrained nature was reactive to the up-front, intensely personally-oriented lifestyle of a father who influenced the course of political events in Italy and prospered in business there. Similarly brilliant and capable, Charles had no need to follow exactly in the footsteps of a father he admired. He was accustomed from birth to a fine home, money and prestigious connections. His educational opportunities were substantial – and his exceptional abilities allowed him to make good use of them.

His background pointed towards a career in politics – which he came to find was not to his taste. Perhaps a convergent thinker to whom business skills came easily, he may have been more comfortable with commerce. A sense of noblesse oblige may have produced Charles' involvement in magistracy and in taxation. What seemed to absorb and to please him most was the quieter, more impersonal world of botanical discovery and research – the travel entailed by this, and the returning home to Selham to scrutinise, classify, describe and cultivate his finds.

Charles' daughter Sidney is reputed to have described botanists somewhat irreverently as people who 'spend all their time face-downward in bogs, looking for weeds that they can never find!'<sup>5</sup> Charles, too, was capable of making gentle fun – of the family pride of the Rev. Robert Blackburn, Rector of Selham – which led to his having installed in his church as his own expense, a large number of stained glass windows. These display the armorial bearings of the various royal ancestors from whom his wife (nee Eliza Jane Clutterbuck), was descended.<sup>20</sup>

Following Eton and Balliol, Charles' son Francis joined the 17<sup>th</sup> Lancers in India in 1911 at the age of 23. He became the specialist machine gun officer of the regiment before being transferred to France at the start of the First World War. Sadly, after an exemplary and courageous military career, he was unfortunately killed on the Somme in 1918. His estate was left to Mary Annabel, his mother.

In 1912, aged 26, Charles' daughter Sidney married George Windsor-Clive, a Coldstream Guards officer from the Ludlow area. A descendant of the first castellan of Windsor Castle and of Clive of India, he had served in the South African War and became Conservative MP for Ludlow from 1923 to 1945. Sidney had three sons – who followed military careers – and one daughter.

Tragically, Francis, the only son of Charles, died in the service of the country chosen for exile by his grandfather, Sir James. The Lacaita line in Sussex ended with the death of Charles in 1933. Plaques in the Church of St James at Selham commemorate the lives of Charles, Mary, Sidney and Francis.

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Keith T Pickup, February 2001

## Of Custom and Usage, or A Fittleworth Pew Dispute

As has so often been my experience in the past the *West Sussex Gazette* has proven to be a valuable source of information concerning the daily "goings-on" in the district. The reports entered in the weekly Petworth column are more often than not quite routine and by their nature rather parochial, however the regular sittings of the petty and quarter sessions in the Town Hall have invariably thrown up examples of court intelligence which offer the modern reader an opportunity to delve a little deeper into the eccentricities and curiosities of the Victorian age.

An exceptionally interesting account of the proceedings of the petty sessions held at Petworth on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1863 is to be found in the *Gazette* of the 24<sup>th</sup> of the same month. It appears that a father and son by the name of William and Alfred Gardner have been brought before the magistrates accused of the extraordinary offence of "riotous, violent and indecent behaviour" in Fittleworth parish church on the Sunday of the 6<sup>th</sup> of December. The charge against the two defendants certainly sounds serious, however the facts as told to the assembled magistrates reveal an almost farcical event, ludicrous and bizarre, and yet quite possibly amusing to the neutral observers gathered in the court. Clearly the defendants were the aggressors on the day and while their guilt seems beyond question it is perhaps useful to take a closer look at the background to the events, and while doing so it is important to try to understand and unravel the intricacies of ecclesiastical law and traditions which, along with countless civil customs, predate the written laws of this country. The matter outlined below is complicated indeed. Constantly changing laws made the prosecution of offences that involved both the church and civil codes perilous for those concerned. Magistrates quite often appeared to be out of their depth when considering such cases and depended largely upon the advice of expert witnesses who often tended to put their own bias on evidence. In the case in question the bench appears to have managed to avoid the pitfalls, separate ecclesiastical laws from civil, and arrive at a just yet unresolved conclusion.

A native of Oxford, little is known of Henry Barnard prior to the 1861 census, which records him as a retired tailor of 36 years. Living in the village with his Fittleworth born wife, Barnard appears to be a man of not uncertain means though it seems likely that his income came from his wife who was considerably older than her husband. Ten years later the couple

reappear in the 1871 census and Barnard's age has rather curiously increased by twelve years over the previous ten and both he and his wife are described as annuitants living in Petworth Road, Fittleworth. For a Churchwarden he was relatively young, and yet he appears to have a more than adequate understanding of the responsibilities and benefits attributable to his situation, which was far in excess of that usually expected of an officeholder in a rural parish. A regular churchgoer – as of course his position required – he had a couple of years earlier adopted for his own use, as was quite customary in those days, a particular pew; and as it is today amongst creatures of habit he continued to use the same pew at each service. Barnard jealously guarded what he had begun to consider as his exclusive entitlement to the use of the pew, and was clearly unhappy when in 1861 a common agricultural labourer living in a cottage owned by a member of the Peachey family at Hesworth laid claim to the seat. For reasons never fully explained Barnard was forced to relinquish the seat to the unnamed labourer. Discontented with this turn of events the Churchwarden appealed to Bishop Gilbert at Chichester and he was granted repossession of the pew. Having got his way Barnard held the privilege unchallenged until early in November 1863. While clearly having no absolute right to the unrestricted use of the pew he was – when challenged – quick to refer to the authority of the Bishop. If this was not enough to deter any pretender he could fall back on his right as a Churchwarden to the sanctioning of the privileged use of seating. This favoured treatment, a gift of the Churchwardens, usually occurred at times of diminished congregations when it was not uncommon for certain well to do families to make voluntary donations in the form of an additional church rate for which they may have been rewarded with the exclusive use of a pew. While this bias had no legal standing it was often repeated over several generations and would invariably become part of the accepted tradition of both the church and the families concerned. The application of preferential treatment was all well and good until circumstances altered. Perhaps for some reason the congregation had increased in number and at the same time the size of the family using the supposedly 'private' pew had decreased for one reason or another. It would seem to be quite in order for the Churchwardens to appropriate the vacant seats in the 'private' pews for those members of the congregation who were unseated or who occupied less favourable positions. This action invariably led to conflict, with the incumbent pew holders laying claim to their generally non-existent prescriptive rights while the unfortunate Churchwardens would have the difficult task of enforcing the law for the benefit of the congregation at large. In the Fittleworth case it appears that Barnard was using his authority as a Churchwarden to lay a claim, for his own use, to a pew that he rather subjectively decreed had become vacant or under used, while at the same time he chose to ignore the continuing claims being made on the pew by fellow parishioners. While it is unclear exactly who, if indeed anybody, held the right to the disputed pew it seems likely that the Peachey family had some form of entitlement to the use of it. Although no written authority existed to substantiate their claim the Peachey family were keen to invoke the ancient *prescriptive right of custom and usage* and contended that the disputed pew had belonged to a farmhouse owned by Mr Peachey whose brother was a local magistrate (who had retired from the bench as the case was heard) and tenanted by John Knight who was the employer of the two defendants.



An important local example of this right of *custom and usage* may be found in the tenets upon which the annual fair at Petworth survives. No ancient charter has ever legitimised the fair nor has there ever been any need for one. To apply for a charter would be to concede that the validity of the fair was indeed challengeable. By simply affirming that the fair must exist because it has always existed makes its right to continue quite beyond question in English law.

This same *prescriptive right* that on the one hand has guaranteed the survival of Petworth fair, was on occasions used to lay claim to the privileged use of church seating. Parishioners could demonstrate ownership of a certain pew by proving that their predecessors had always, or at least beyond any living person's memory, used that particular seat. In an age when there was a legal obligation for parishioners to attend all Sunday and holy day services, there was an equal duty for the church to accommodate – with a convenient seat – any householder so wishing to attend. This right to seating could often lead to conflicts between the Churchwardens – whose responsibility it was for ensuring that all parishioners were accommodated – and those parishioners who felt that they had a *prescriptive right* to a certain pew. It was in fact only following the Church Building Acts of 1818 and 1819 that newly built churches were allowed to allocate a proportion of their pews for rent. The income of this rental could be used variously to pay toward the minister's stipend or the salary of a parish clerk. In ancient parishes such as Fittleworth these acts did not of course apply and the payment of money for a seat was illegal. In the case of these older churches it was not possible to lay claim to a particular pew other than in a private chapel except by the authority of a Bishop or other senior churchman, or in cases where this permission could not be proven to have been given then a claimant could defend his right to a pew by way of *prescription*, which as in the example of Petworth Fair could be justified by it being generally known that the seat had been used by a particular person of family 'beyond memory of man' or at least beyond the memory of any living man. These *prescriptive rights* were uncommon indeed and could often be confused with the sanctioning by the Churchwardens of the privileged use of seats. Of course there was an important difference in that the right granted by the Churchwardens was only temporary and could be withdrawn at any time, while a *prescriptive right* was, if proven, unchallengeable and as such was valid in perpetuity.

Having regained the use of the pew Barnard would have been aware that whoever had instigated the initial effort to have him ejected would probably make another attempt. It would appear that Barnard was well aware of the intentions of the Gardner duo and it also seems quite likely that the confrontation had been coming to a head over a period of time, and he was clearly prepared to defend what he saw as his right to use the pew. Having arrived at the church early for the start of the afternoon service, Barnard was able to use his position as warden to gain entry to the church at this early hour and in doing so he was aiming to prevent anyone else from having access to the disputed seats. He had only been seated for a matter of minutes when the defendants arrived and attempted to enter the pew; they were prevented from doing so as Barnard was holding the door firm from the inside. Unable to gain access this way the elder Gardner entered the row in front and began to climb over into the disputed seat. Barnard was still defending the pew door against the attempts behind made by the younger Gardner to enter when his father launched himself at the Churchwarden from the adjoining pew. Overwhelmed by this sudden attack Barnard was forced to surrender his grip on the door and the younger

of the two assailants was able to join his partner in the disputed pew. After a short scuffle the three combatants became spread along the length of the pew with Barnard refusing to surrender his seat and all three locked firmly together none prepared to make way for the other. This situation continued for some time, the defendants making crude comments concerning their state of closeness and all the while the time for the beginning of the service had come and gone. Even as this outrageous farce was being acted out the Churchwarden's wife and nephew, who normally shared the pew with him, had arrived and seeing the situation had called for a policeman, who, on assessing the circumstances had refused to become involved. Meanwhile the parish clerk had attempted to make the defendants see reason without success. At a quarter to three Thomas Drake the vicar had entered the reading pulpit and made it known that he wished to proceed with the service. Barnard in his evidence to the magistrates recalled that on considering the apparent discomfort of the Vicar and not wishing to see him embarrassed further he concluded his defence of the contested pew and left the church.

The case when it came before the magistrates would have appeared to be quite conclusive. An act passed only three years earlier had given Churchwardens the right to apprehend any person "acting in a riotous, violent, or indecent manner in a church, whether during divine service or at any other time." It seems however that the constable called to the church was unaware of this authority or that it was his duty to assist Barnard in detaining the defendants. The magistrates were clearly as uncertain as the police constable in how they should proceed, at least with regard to church law.

Finally having taken advice they decided that it was beyond their authority to judge the question of the right to use the pew and resolved only to try the case regarding the riotous behaviour of the defendants. Mr Downer the Petworth solicitor representing the defendants repeatedly attempted to introduce the question of the pew into the case though the bench continually rejected it. Barnard in his prosecution of the case had formed a powerful union with John Turner Rawlinson of Horsham. An authoritative orator, Rawlinson had some years earlier contested and won a celebrated action against two Horsham Churchwardens who had attempted to prevent him from using the pew of his choice. Rawlinson appeared at Petworth in his capacity as an expert witness and with some ease he managed to persuade the magistrates that they should ignore the matter of *prescriptive rights* and concentrate solely on the issue of brawling in the church. Having taken Rawlinson's advice the bench declared that while they supposed that the defendants genuinely believed that they rightly had a claim to the pew their behaviour was unacceptable and they were each fined 25 shillings including costs. The *West Sussex Gazette* correspondent noted in the conclusion to his report that the case had the potential for doing great damage and causing considerable pain to the parish and he hoped that the contention and bickering at Fittleworth would soon come to an end.

Whether the disagreement over the pew was ever truly resolved is unclear. In all probability it just faded away, perhaps one or both of the protagonists died and with them went the bitter jealousies that seemed so often to be at the root of such disputes.

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[Some names should have appeared in an earlier Magazine. My apologies. Ed.]

