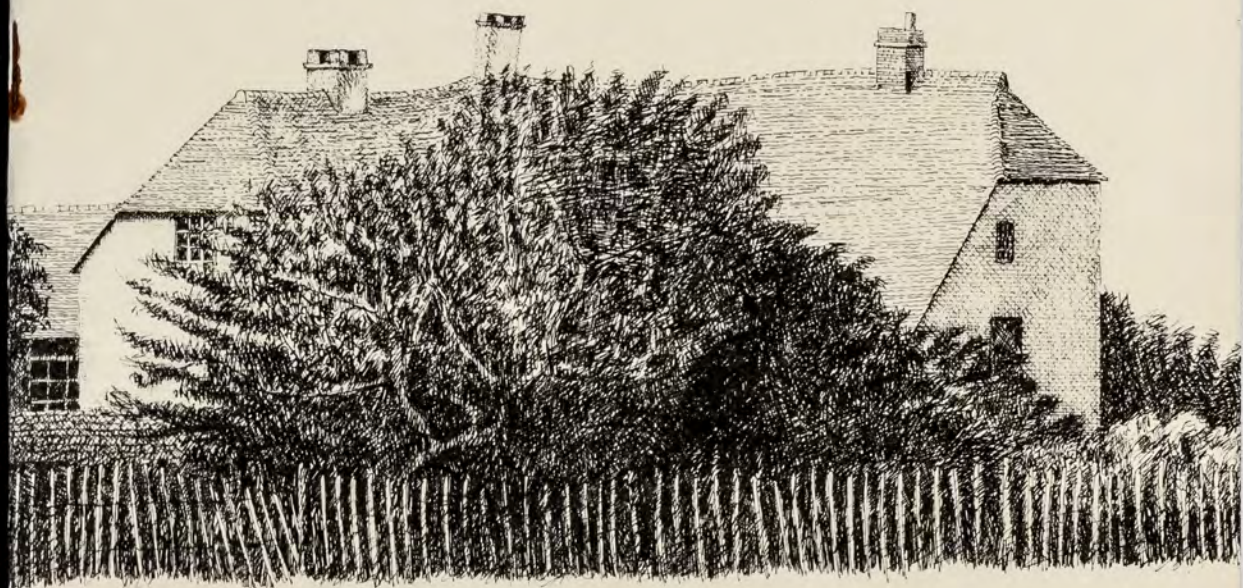


Grimwood & Egmont

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
Magazine



NO. 132. JUNE 2008



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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE
LECONFIELD HALL,
PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM
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 £15.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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Chairman's Notes

You should find inside a fair conspectus of recent activity. Note the separate sheets for the September dinner and the visit to Michelham. By the time you read this the Chatham trip will be almost on us. It's fully booked but it's always worth checking with Andy to see whether there have been any last minute cancellations. With the September dinner very much in mind we have tried to synchronise Magazine distribution to give postal members the same chance as local members. As you know anything less than reply by return is unlikely to be successful.

You will remember our intention to put the money raised at Jack Rapley's memorial service to a special use, I would hope to outline what we intend on the Activities Sheet.

Peter 20th April

Leconfield Estate Open Day, June 10th

Throughout the year, the Leconfield Estate provide escorted educational access for interested groups and schools – some members will already have been on visits along the River Rother.

One day in particular is geared for local schools, when 9-12 years-olds from our area are invited to come and learn how a large rural estate works today.

All the Estate departments – farming, forestry, game, buildings and fishing have working displays set up in and around Stag Park, with staff on hand to demonstrate their work, involve the children and answer questions.

This year, the Estate is offering an opportunity for Petworth Society members to also come along – around 2.30pm, when the children have left (details later). The "tour" will probably take about 2 hours and some walking is involved, although transport can be provided in special cases!

The Estate need to know how many members will be attending, so please let Peter know by 8th June – 01798 342562.

[Obviously the trip will depend on sufficient numbers replying to justify keeping access open for us. This would appear a unique opportunity. P.]

The Sweet Chestnut Story

The sweet chestnut – introduced to Britain by the Romans, used in grand avenues via France from 1660, a tree of amazing durability and a wide variety of uses.

As we already knew, it takes a Chris. Howkins, the only 'ethno-botanist' in Britain, to startle, inform, entertain and even shock his audience with the apparently 'dry as dust' subjects of his talks. Without slides or films, without notes, he is a speaker one would cancel prior engagements and travel miles to hear, whatever his theme.

And so we were treated to a host of facts, tales of political and religious association, uses ranging from chestnut paling to shipbuilding and the prevention of furring in hot water pipes and imaginary conversations between King Louis XIV of France and his head gardener and John Evelyn, the English writer of 'Sylva – a discourse of Forest Trees' and other treatises on sculpture, gardening and architecture.

We were told of the planning behind the parkland avenues to give an impression of space and therefore, wealth and status, of how it was not only the Royalists, but also the covert republicans 'hedging their bets', who indulged in the fashion.

Introduced into England from France, ideas that were deemed Royalist and Papist by the republicans were overcome by adopting new, smaller scale developments from Holland. So religion and politics were expressed through landscape gardening.

Specimen trees, the oldest in England, near Bristol from around 800AD and recorded in the Domesday Book, the oldest recorded planting in Scotland in 1550, as well as those in Cowdray and Petworth Parks, came under review. The Cowdray Estate today is the largest producer of chestnut timber in the UK, the bulk being used in the manufacture of 60,000 walking sticks a year. "How do 60,000 walking sticks get lost every year?" asked Chris.

Following the demise of the hop pole, fencing continued to employ those in the industry and today, 48 occupations use sweet chestnut in some form or another. During World War II, chestnut paling tracks were rolled out in front of tanks negotiating sand dunes.

Inevitably, question time produced more trivia, which Chris. introduced in his unique style, which, with contributions from the audience frequently reduced everyone to helpless laughter.

Audience and speaker went home with some very happy memories of a good night out.

KCT

Chile – but warmer later

It is a long time since we had a travel talk, but this was far more than a journey down the longest and narrowest of countries.

David Lang gave us birds, flowers, mammals and magnificent scenery in quick succession with a perceptive commentary. The meeting attracted the botanists, the travellers and the curious and all were entranced by the photography.

I suspect that most, like me, had no first-hand knowledge of Chile, described by my geography teacher as 'three thousand miles of wind' — it is only 120 miles across at its widest point. Wind there certainly was and extremes of temperature, with plants and birds to be found

in the most unlikely places. The home of the familiar monkey puzzle tree, it is also where many of our pot plants and garden flowers grow wild in great profusion: alstroemeria, calceolaria, orchids and lilies, many of which look like orchids, too. For the bird lovers there were condors and penguins, brilliantly coloured woodpeckers and finches, gulls and petrels, some so tame that David could not only touch them but encourage them with a gentle prod into a more photogenic pose.

We learned that in 1421, Chinese junks were crossing the world's oceans before Magellan and Columbus, leaving evidence in the form of the remains of ships and plants from the Chinese mainland now growing, in this case, in Chile.

There were also warnings, not only of the increasing effects of global warming, but of thoughtless introductions of exotic species such as beaver and mink, destroying habitats and the resident wildlife, warnings equally applicable here at home.

Not many questions at the end; the talk had been so comprehensive that there was little need. Our thanks to Nick Sturt, who had recommended David to us as well as putting us on to our next speaker, Arthur Hoare.

And the pun? We are still getting used to the new heating system, which works well as long as no one interferes with the thermostats!

KCT

Visit to Lavant House

Numbers restricted to 20, somewhat reminiscent of our visit to Cittaviveka in the spring of 2006. With one or two dropping out late we were in fact short of a full complement. Just as well as it turned out, there were times when we could see why 20 had been an absolute maximum. Lavant House, right at the sharp bend as you pass Lavant Church on the way to Chichester, then out into the open country, has been a school since 1952, but the House (and extensive grounds) are eighteenth century. We could only surmise with our knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide, Terry Carlisle, what might have been its fate had it entered the 60s and 70s as a private house. Earliest mentions are eighteenth century, and these are confirmed by the barrell-arch cellars with their huge built-in wine bins, where the wine would lie encased in hay, preserving an optimum temperature.

Pupils were already returning for a new term as Terry introduced us to previous occupiers of the great hose. Notable in early days were the Miller family, so prominent in eighteenth century Chichester. The house was bought by the 3rd Duke of Richmond in 1791. From 1806 the occupant was the Duke's protégée Henriette Ann le Clerc, later Mrs Dorrien, followed from 1847 by a succession of retired military men with their families. The line was broken when Lavant House finally passed from the Goodwood Estate to a Mr Morrison who had made his fortune in nitrates. Two more military men with their families were to follow. A curious casualty of staff shortages and economies during the 1914-1918 war was the famous 'Waterloo' vine from which the first bunch of grapes would, by tradition, be sent to the Duke

of Richmond. During the second war the House was used for German and Italian prisoners of war, then sublet, eventually being bought by Mr and Mrs Green in 1952.

We looked at the House from the great lawn at the rear, daffodils outlined behind us along the top of a shallow haha. Then a tour of the House itself, the out-of-term dining hall, chairs on tables and some early 20th century flowered panel paintings. Then the morning room – the present school, it soon appeared, is a palimpsest on the old gentry house. We noted the porte-cochère from the 1840s, so typically affording protection to the passenger rather than the coachman, the mezzanine floor, Georgian lead pipes, the old kitchen, kept away from the house because of the risk of fire, the connection being via an underground tunnel. We saw the remains of the walled kitchen garden, then, upstairs, the dormitories evoking a world in which Christine Chaundler would have felt at home.¹ So much to see, so much to think about. A great start to the new season.

P.

¹ See Book Sale report in the present issue.

Hounslow play in red and black - the March book sale

Over the years March has been a reliable Book Sale month, giving some of our highest totals. But is the queue not quite as long on the Hall's east side this month? The throng just a little less "thronged"? Even if this is so, the Book Sale gives the Square an unfamiliar Saturday morning buzz. There's the Marmalade Sale in the Red Cross Rooms and another event at the URC.

In fact, first impressions are, as so often, deceptive. Five minutes into the sale and the Hall's jammed. You just can't move: most of the "sets" are gone now and the £1 table's demolished. Could this be the day we actually break the £800 barrier? You'd need a really brisk morning and a following wind in the afternoon i.e. visitors coming in to sort through what the morning people have left. It's a difficult combination to achieve. And why the determination to reach £800? Hardly avarice, the money, less expenses, will go into this Magazine. I suppose it's two things: the feeling of doing something well, and an ancillary feeling that the considerable work that goes into preparation deserves a commensurate reward.

You remember that the Chairman had a few words about relevance in the last Magazine.¹ I didn't take a lot of notice, he has his ideas: I have mine. Here's something that's really going to wind him up. A match programme for Hounslow Football Club, fallen out of a book presumably. It's August 1986 and the first home game of a new season. Hall's

¹ "Petworth - a realm of the spirit ..."

Brewery Hellenic League, Premier Division. Rayners Lane are the visitors and the next two home matches will be against Fairfield Town and Abingdon United. Hounslow play in red and black; Rayners Lane in yellow and green. The season has already got under way with an away win at Wantage, 1986 having seen a largely revamped Hounslow team from the previous season. How did the season go? Where are they all twenty two years on? The Chairman will pronounce such thoughts irrelevant but the programme encapsulates the romance of the Book Sale.

Now here's something that should pass that crucial test of relevance. Christine Chaundler: *The Chivalrous Fifth*. Christine lived at Fittleworth for many years and died in 1972.² The book has some nice period illustrations by Anne Rochester and seems to have been published in 1928. Christine had been born in Biggleswade in 1887 and spent most of a long life in writing and publishing: in early days with Cassell, then with James Nisbet. By the early 1920s she was sufficiently successful to be able to live from her book royalties. Where formerly she had lived with her mother at Haslemere she now had a cottage built on Wyncombe Hill in Fittleworth. Christine was a prolific author of Girls' School stories (also, to a lesser extent, of Boys' stories) and also produced innumerable magazine pieces and short stories on a similar theme. *The Chivalrous Fifth* is perhaps her most popular and widely distributed book, and plays a curious, ironic and in some ways ingenious descant on a familiar theme. It contrives to satirise some aspects of the rather artificial world of the Girls' School without ever breaking the tacit suspension of belief that holds the whole framework together.

Jane Smith, a mysterious new girl suddenly appears in the Fifth, her mother having come to a special arrangement with the somewhat Olympian headmistress, Miss Graham. Jane has an almost adult self-assurance and, as compared with the rather sheltered Fifth, a disconcerting familiarity with a wider world, as evinced by her use of fashionable slang and her expertise in French, dancing and general knowledge. It appears, however, that her mother is a dealer in second-hand goods and it is a natural assumption that, despite Jane's superficial sophistication, her background is a poor one; her mother trailing round the streets with a battered pram, collecting old clothes. Given Jane's unfortunate background, the "Chivalrous Fifth" feel is their duty to treat her with a special consideration. It is pretty clear to the reader (if not to the Fifth) that Jane is not all she seems to be, and she is, indeed, quite prepared to go along with this. Various adventures ensue, revolving around Jane's single-minded determination to support a young mother and her baby, about to be evicted from their cottage and sent to the workhouse. The young mother's husband is serving a short prison sentence for poaching. There is a valuable chair in the cottage which Jane spots and is prepared to sell on for her. In pursuit of her purposes Jane even hijacks a doctor's car. A complex plot resolves itself in the end and an irate doctor becomes medical adviser to the school while the "old clothes lady" is revealed as a viscountess specialising in high quality antiques. Predictable as in some ways it is, the book holds a mirror to an idealised but now vanished society and to a mindset time has almost forgotten.

Well, you'll say. How did the afternoon go? Absolutely dead. No one about, the Square

² See Miles Costello in PSM 128, page 16 and PSM 129 pages 15-16

at its most stubbornly reticent. We remained within striking distance of £800 but live to fight another day.

The Chivalrous Fifth has been frequently reprinted. Details of Christine Chaundler's other books and a summary of her career can be found in Sue Sims and Hilary Clare: *The Encyclopaedia of Girls' School Stories* (Ashgate 2000), an invaluable guide.

P.

Tincture of myrrh, tincture of arnica - Easter at 346

Easter Day with unconvincing snow and shallow frozen puddles quickly thawing. Scaffolding on Whitehall as you approach High Street. Red and white warning tape flapping in the wind. No one would have bothered with tape in 1910. Daffodils in the garden at 346. The wind's piercing but the frost not enough to bow the golden trumpets - or perhaps they've recovered. Definitely not a day to hoe the winter out of the cinder path. Summer seems a different dimension on a day like this. Easter, early this year, is a four day island, we're closed again until April 1st. Anticipation of a new season, some fresh stewards, a considerable publicity drive. Does leaflet distribution correlate in some mystic way with visitor numbers? We have to suppose that it does.

Lighting my first fire of the year. It doesn't take long to get back into the swing of things, slough the close season scales. Some visitors are returning, you can't write off 346 as a one-visit wonder. People like a trip to Petworth and the Museum can be part and parcel of that. Different stewards, different perspectives. What's that large Union flag doing huddling up against the clock? Mrs. Cummings had been born in Manchester but came over from Southern Ireland. Echoes of half-forgotten conflicts, bitter in their time, still smouldering embers. Carson and Redmond, guns smuggled into the port of Larne in 1914. One wonders what Mrs. Cummings would have made of it all. Kept her head down no doubt, concentrate on the daily round. Quite enough to think of as it was. Look to the piece of seeding kale in the sink, the green too pale to augur well, but not to be wasted, "Lord Leconfield, it was said, had seventy hunters so, on leaving the service in 1878, Petworth was not perhaps too surprising a destination for an experienced farrier like Michael Cummings." Was it really seventy?

Tea on the table, fruit cake, scones, and there's that curious jug with a miniature Napoleon hanging from a gibbet and the legend, "God speed the plough". Different things strike different visitors. The door of the medicine chest's half open, smelling salts, the bottles remind of tincture of myrrh, "Dab it on for mouth ulcers, it worked a treat." And tincture of arnica, "I can't remember what we used it for - I think you can still get it in some form or other."

"It's so comfortable here, it's almost as if it's your own house." It's so cold outside that it's easy to be carried away. But the fire would have to be lit in the morning, while the other rooms would be bitterly cold. "The ash dead seeming, then it would set the old tin dustbin

on fire. You might look down the road and see smoke billowing from several dustbins". Talking, that's what 346 is about. Call it museum, call it cottage, it has to be a reciprocal experience. Unique is a much misused word, but perhaps, just perhaps, it might apply to 346.

P.

"Waste not, want not!"

An abiding attraction of the Cottage Museum is its ability to evoke a way of living and an attitude of careful shepherding of scarce material resources that was still very much alive in the 1940s (to say nothing of 1910) and which would survive at least into the late 1950s. This was a way of living centred on economy and re-use, partly dictated by economic pressure, but partly a feeling of order, pursued as an end in itself, a period when looking after a house on a limited budget was almost an art form. Part of this pattern of life, particularly perhaps between the wars, was the study, and, often, selective retention of recipes or household hints from newspapers and magazines such as *Enquire Within*. Sometimes simply kept as loose cuttings, they would often be pasted into scrapbooks. Such books are not uncommon survivals and provide a kind of commentary on 346 High Street. Here are a few from just such a book. There is no indication of provenance although the name of the reader submitting the hint or recipe is sometimes given. These I have omitted. If attention shifts sometimes to the treatment of minor ailments, this reflects a period when a visit to (or from) the doctor was something to be avoided if at all possible. A home remedy would relieve another imposition on a stretched household budget. The adage "waste not, want not" may have become something of a cliché but it was a living watchword for these days and, we may suppose, no less for 1910.

P.

Parsnip Tea - wash and scrape three large parsnips and cut them fine. Put them to simmer with a quart of water for three hours and boil for five minutes. This also is a useful remedy for retention of urine, which attacks old men, and generally affords considerable relief. This remedy was told by the Sisters of the Poor, those devoted women who give their lives to the solacing of the very aged.

Hint - If you have any tins which have contained pineapple, or any fruit, boil them in strong soda water and they will make capital cake tins.

Ambrosia - A pretty dessert dish. Six or eight oranges, peel and slice them, sprinkling the slices with sugar. Arrange them in a glass dish. Take the inside of a cocoonut, carefully peeling off all the brown rind, grate it, then spread it over the oranges until they are completely covered.

Potted Chestnut Meat - Take two pounds of chestnuts, boil until the skins burst open. Take off the skins, add two ounces of fresh butter, three tablespoonfuls warm water, a little nutmeg, pepper and salt to taste, and a few drops of lemon juice. Place in the oven for a few minutes

then beat altogether to a smooth paste, press into meat glasses, and cover with melted butter.
For the Chest - Put six new laid eggs into a basin, cover with lemon juice, and let them remain until all the shell is dissolved. Place three-quarters pound lump sugar into a jug, then strain part of the liquid on to the sugar. Break the eggs, and beat well with the rest of the liquid, then strain into the jug. When the sugar is dissolved, add one gill of the best rum, and bottle it. Brandy or wine may be used in place of rum. Dose:- A wineglassful to be taken every morning before breakfast. Shake the bottle first. For a cough or weakness after an illness this cannot but do good.

A Boot Hint - Old brown boots can be made equal to new by using a piece of rag dipped in petrol and rubbed well into the boots. Afterwards polish in the usual way with brown boot polish.

To Boil Beetroot - To keep it a good colour, touch any broken part with a red hot poker.

To Bake Damsons for Winter use - Choose sound fruit, pick off the stalks, and to every pound allow half a pound of fine sugar. Put the fruit into large, dry stone jars, sprinkling the sugar amongst it. Cover the jars with saucers, place them in a rather cool oven, and bake the fruit until quite tender. When done, cover the top of the fruit with a piece of white paper cut to the size of the jar. Pour over this melted mutton suet about an inch thick and cover the tops of the jars with brown paper well tied down. Keep the jars in a cool, dry place and they will be good at Christmas.

To Banish Flies - Take half a teaspoonful of black pepper in powder, one teaspoonful of brown sugar, and one teaspoonful of cream, mix them well together, and place them in a room, on a plate, where the flies are troublesome and they will soon disappear.

To Test Milk - Half cup boiling water, half cup milk (mix); if the milk settles at the bottom of the cup in lumps it is not fit for use. It saves a lot of trouble in boiling to see if it is good, besides the risk of burning saucepans.

A Hint for Baking Day - If the oven will not brown; sprinkle a handful of brown sand on the bottom shelf of the oven, and you will find everything tinged a nice brown - (told me by a friend).

Substitute Currants¹ - Sugar sprinkled lightly over elderberries (very plentiful just now) while drying slowly in a cool oven gives them the real currant flavour. Without it they taste "flat".

¹ From the early 1940s

A contemporary search for Petworth Marble

In the early 1800s, *Petworth Marble* rivalled many of the stones which were routinely imported from the continent, in both beauty and quality. A kind of shell marble occurring in the Wealden clay at Petworth, its quarrying was concentrated on the Egremont estate at Kirdford and there are accounts of industry at nearby Plaistow.

Also called *Sussex marble*, it was used in several chimney pieces at Petworth House and further afield at Westminster Abbey in Edward the Confessor's Chapel, the tomb of Edward III and of Richard II and his Queen are both in 'grey Petworth Marble' (*The Saturday Magazine Supplement, May 1834 p.212*); and Canterbury Cathedral, where the archbishops chair is an entire piece of the stone. (*Useful Knowledge: Or A Familiar Account of the Various Productions of Nature: Animal, Vegetable and Mineral which are chiefly employed for the use of Man (1821) Volume I, William Bingley*)

Winkles's Architectural and Picturesque Illustrations of the Cathedral Churches of England and Wales Volume II (1851) documents embellishment of the nave of Chichester Cathedral in both Purbeck and Petworth marbles, the latter making up pillars of the upper triforium which then showed some decomposition of the shelly particles.

These facts are now little known, but they are interesting to me as a sculptor having returned to West Sussex to live in the former home of BBC *Dick Barton* Special Agent star and Antarctic explorer, Duncan Carse. I am intent on sourcing interesting local stones to carve; Fittleworth ironstone is harder than granite whilst Horsham stone looks promising. I would be interested if anyone has information on the whereabouts of a quarried block of Petworth marble, or indeed on any of the old quarry locations where some stone may be partially covered and still-undecomposed. New work produced after some 200 years gap would be a fine outcome!

Jon Edgar 01798 865478 - Orchard House, Fittleworth.

[For Sussex Marble at Plaistow see Darcy Ayling in PSM 67 page 13. Ed.]

Solution to 131

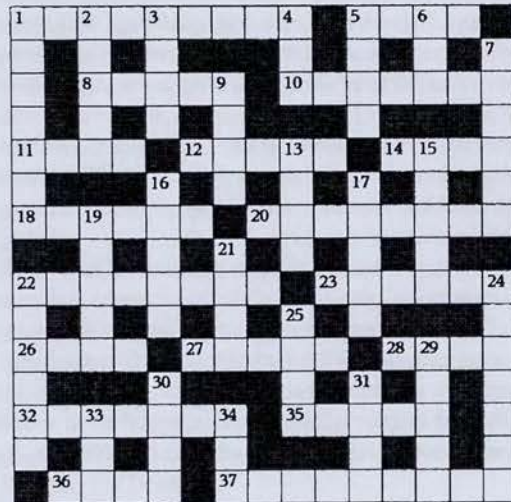
Across

1 Arboretum, 5 Fred, 8 Roses, 10 Morello, 11 Seed, 12 Harps, 14 Amok, 18 Messel, 20 Somerset, 22 Streeter, 23 Mildew, 26 Ruby, 27 Snail, 28 Well, 32 Topiary, 35 Lupin, 36 Adam, 37 Water Lily

Down

1 Alyssum, 2 Borde, 3 Ruse, 4 Mum, 5 Fern, 6 Ell, 7 Rocket, 9 Seat, 13 Pool, 15 Mused, 16 Fetes, 17 Resin, 19 Shrub, 21 Bean, 22 Sprite, 24 Wallaby, 25 Hill, 29 Ennui, 30 Palm, 31 Spur, 33 Pod, 34 Yew

Deborah's Crossword



Across

- 1 Turn over finer clod where crop is grown (9)
- 5 see 8
- 8 & 5 Members of this local group aim to enjoy themselves (5,4)
- 10 & 35 Its community centre celebrates its lasting success this summer (7,5)
- 11 Lazing about in the middle of the bridle path (4)
- 12 Romps about in the park – there'll be music and fireworks (5)
- 14 Area of church (4)
- 18 & 23 Petworth land girl famous locally for her war diaries and engravings (6,6)

- 20 Petworth's branch organises an annual open garden event (3,5)
- 22 & 24 dn Petworth artist who draws many local scenes (8,7)
- 23 see 18
- 26 Song for several voices – sounds happy! (4)
- 27 & 9 dn Owner of Petworth House remembered for his generosity and patronage of the arts (5,4)
- 28 Pick the winning raffle tickets (4)
- 32 He strides over the Downs at Wilmington (4,3)
- 35 see 10

- 36 Inn at Balls Cross (4)
- 37 Go forth with a pick to find agricultural implement (9)

Down

- 1 Preparing to fire at downland village (7)
- 2 Type of area for 1 ac (5)
- 3 Flute (4)
- 4 The keynote (3)
- 5 Ancient site like the Trundle (4)
- 6 Find purpose in the river Ouse (5)
- 7 Fools take time to make items of value (6)
- 9 see 27 ac
- 13 Assemble for a hunt (4)
- 15 The point of 37 ac (5)
- 16 Sit Ed down while he makes corrections (5)
- 17 Member of the Petworth Players perhaps (5)
- 19 He might bring you money (5)
- 21 C19th architect famous for transformation of Royal Pavilion (4)
- 22 Dexterously entertain (6)
- 24 see 22 ac
- 25 Sussex basket (4)
- 29 Music with a recurring theme (5)
- 30 Some smugglers feeling complacent (4)
- 31 Netting (4)
- 33 Hard fruit (3)
- 34 Summer siesta? (3)



Petworth Station Spring 1955. Courtesy of John Hitchens.

A Petworth Workshop

I liked the article in the December Magazine by Mary Aitchison nee Newman in which she tells of her father Arch Newman starting the Tillington Social Club and Nomads concert party. Arch Newman also started a workshop for young people in Petworth. I think it was just after the war ended. As I recall it was held in a work shop on the side of the house next door to the Ebenezer Chapel one evening a week.

I attended these workshops with Kathleen Hunt the older sister of my neighbours, with about six other young people. We made articles out of offcuts of clear perspex, a material used to make aircraft cockpit covers during the war. We would measure and etch out the designs on the sheets of perspex with a sharp pointed tool then cut out the pieces with a fretsaw. Next we filed and rubbed down the edges with sandpaper to make them smooth. Patterns could be etched on the perspex, a favourite was bunches of grapes, easy to do.

The perspex could be bent and twisted into different shapes by holding it over a naked flame till it became soft. Once it was cold again it held its shape. The pieces were joined together with a toxic resin, I think it contained ether, but we were not allowed to do this: Arch Newman always did the joining up.

When finished we paid a few pence for the perspex. I made three articles, a pair of book ends, a dressing table trinket tray and a table lamp. I still have the lamp and book ends but sadly in pieces after all these years; its bonding has given way.

I wonder does anyone else remember these workshops and know exactly when they were held and for how long they ran. I think it may have only been for one winter.

Joy Gumbrell

For the convenience of the public!

I well remember the famous Harold Roberts cartoon about which Shirley Stanford writes (PSM131 page 17). It commemorates the opening of the first public lavatories in Petworth and comes from the mid-1930s. The presentation, appropriately enough, is pictured as taking place outside the new lavatories, situated where the Red Cross Rooms now are, and adjoining the stables for Henry Streeter's fly which ferried passengers to and from Petworth station, the horses doubling as those needed for Petworth fire brigade. Even at this time however motors were replacing the horses.

The two central figures are, on the right, Mr Letchford from Bacons, the Saddlers Row shoe shop and Mr Parker, sanitary inspector for the old Petworth RDC. The setting is of course imaginary: to my knowledge there was never a formal opening of the new lavatoires. In fact, the whole idea was controversial. Who was to pay? The parish council, no doubt suggested here by Mr Letchford, did not see why Petworth people should. Petworth people didn't need public lavatories. They would simply go home. If the higher authorities felt there was a



View from North Street c.1990. Photographer not known.

need then they should pay. Petworth did not reckon to cater for visitors, few and far between in those days. I don't know who actually paid in the end.

In the cartoon Mr Parker has the dubious honour of being credited with the innovation. I was friendly with Mr Parker's son, a little younger than I, and I know that Mr Parker didn't see the funny side of the cartoon and was quite put out. It was very widely distributed and the new lavatories were not popular. The wings no doubt represent the motor-cycle on which he travelled the local farms testing dairy equipment for hygiene. He'd also come out to blockages at the local council housing, assess the situation and get someone to deal with it.

George Webster

“But, Dorothy, it'll be very hard work”

I was most interested to read Aunt Ethel's¹ note in the last Magazine. I can remember the second verse of the song, in fact I'll sing it to you over the telephone:

Here comes the bride
Forty inches wide.
Who's the old lady
Who walks by her side?
It is my mother
She's turned ninety three
I am her daughter
Pledged to support her
Dear sir, will you marry me?

I was working at Petworth House in those years immediately before the war when the Nomads were in full swing. I went there as a young girl. It would be 1937. I was already very familiar with the great house as my father worked in the kitchens and had done so for years. He would often take me up there with him as a child. I remember that Mr. Grant, the chef, gave me a big picture book of *Alice in Wonderland*. I still have it, kept safely in a box. When I first went to work at the house I was under housemaid working with Phyl. Thompson who came in daily from High Street. We didn't work in the House itself but in the servants' quarters. I'd always wanted to work in the kitchens but there was no vacancy when I first went. As a little girl I remember saying to Lady Leconfield that I wanted to work in the kitchens. Her ladyship replied, “But, Dorothy, it'll be very hard work.” After six months there was a vacancy in the kitchen and I had my wish. Joan Pine had arrived in 1937, she was, like me, quite young, and Olive Tompkins was our senior. Mr. Grant was the chef. Olive would marry Herbert Robertson, the second footman. They later moved to Lowestoft and kept up with my sister until she died some five years ago. Herbert was, of course, called up when the war came,

¹ Ethel is wrongly referred to as Sylvia in PSM 131, page 16

as too was Richard Hume, another footman. Underfootman then was Ashley Jones while Stanley Laidlaw carried the food across from the kitchen. They, like the others, lived in. In September 1939, Olive, Herbert, myself and Mr. Ward, the chauffeur were in the north for grouse-shooting when we all had to return in a great hurry. We had to give up our own bedrooms to make way for a children's nursery, myself and the Swiss stillroom maid, sleeping in the Belzamine Room. I couldn't seem to come to terms with all the changes and left to work for Colonel Sutton, Master of the Cowdray Hounds, at Tillington House. It wasn't long before I went in to the Air Force where I served for four years.

Dorothy Digby was talking to the Editor.

Dorothy's reflections on working in the kitchen are to be found in PSM 73. Joan Pine's are in PSM 87.

And all that Brass!

“Club Day” was effectively Petworth's village day. Open house for Lord Leconfield's Friendly Society – a lifesaver in those days before Lloyd George's pre-1914 National Insurance Acts and something that would cling on tenaciously to the Second World War and even, if faltering, for a few years after. In its heyday Club Day would involve a church service, procession through the town, banner held proudly aloft, pavilions and hospitality in the park, dancing at night, and all the fun of the fair. Here was Harris Brothers' original Petworth connection – they did not have a concession for Petworth's November Fair.

And, of course, there were the brass bands. What event could be credible without them? Not simply the Town Band, an integral part of the town procession, but at least one other. Exactly a hundred years ago Henry Whitcomb is writing from the Estate Office to elicit quotations from local bands for an appearance at Petworth on June 10th 1908 – a Wednesday. He has four replies. D. Dinnage writes from Amberley Brass Band to say that he can provide 12 performers, including all expenses, for £7.10.0. On behalf of the Ramsnest Rangers and Northchapel Band, Arthur T. Ridgewell writes that he is prepared to bring 16 players and himself as conductor for £7.0.0. This to include “a trap to convey our men to and from Petworth”. As for the Midhurst Amateur (Prize) Brass Band, T. Soane can offer 15 performers for £8.5.0. or 18 for £12.0.0. “This of coarse (sic) would include our trap fare which is rather expensive and all other expenses. I would like to mention that the Band has greatly improved since we made our last appearance in Petworth, has (sic) we have now the addition of a few Reed Instruments.” Graffham Brass Band, (E. Howick, Secretary) writes to say that a committee meeting would be called “at our earliest”. They were as good as their word, for three days later Master Howick writes to say that a band of sixteen “performers” would be prepared to play at a cost of £7.0.0.

It is not clear from the documents which (if any) of the bands were retained, nor is it clear on what grounds the tenders would be differentiated. Would it be the lowest quotation,

the number of players, past experience of the bands' expertise – had Midhurst been a disappointment on their last visit? Whatever the criterion, it is clear that many villages before 1914 had their own band. Lurgashall, not mentioned here, certainly did.

The period between the wars saw the demise of many local bands. George Baxter, so long a stalwart of the Petworth Band, interviewed in 1987¹ recalled dire days in the 1930s. 'Albert Leale, an ex-band sergeant in the Royal Marines, took us for a while and one evening he said to me, "George how much money in the funds?" "About £8" I replied.' "Well", he said "Let's all have a beef steak supper in The Angel and pack up". We didn't but that was how things had got with us.'

Ephraim Holden at Ebernoe was 72 years old in 1938 and attending his 62nd Horn Fair. He too could look back on brass band days, long, long before 1914. In the old days he said, it was customary for publicans to bring their own brass bands with their booths. He could remember two such booths, each with their own brass band, set up on Ebernoe Common. His father had told him that, at one time, as many as four booths and four brass bands might be in full swing at the fair. A memory such as this may go back virtually to the revival of the fair in 1864, even possibly earlier days.²

For George Baxter the 1914-1918 war seemed a great divide. The war had cut off the years before almost as if they had never been. Petworth Band had been disbanded at the outbreak of hostilities and only resumed when its surviving members returned. "The recollection of those that survived seemed to be mainly of playing in different regimental bands during the war... reminiscence...concerned Army days; the war had been like an earthquake in these men's lives and they were changed men because of it." George Baxter sensed a great chasm between those who had been in the war and those who had not.

P.

¹ PSM 47

² See *Not All Sunshine Hear* (1996) pages 101-2

The disappearing corn field

I was intrigued with the full spread in the centre of the March Magazine, showing Mr. Webster outside his East Street greengrocers' shop. I had heard a number of stories about him from my uncle, the most famous the story of the disappearing corn field. Mr. Webster rented the field and adjacent barn north of the Black Horse, Byworth. In earlier years this had been leased to the Byworth Tanyard, the barn being used to store the prepared bark for tanning and the field to grow fodder for the horses. About the time the tanyard closed down in 1845 the owner of the property died, and it fell into the hands of the Luttmann-Johnson family in payment of a debt owed by the deceased. Mr. Webster rented it from the Luttmann-Johnsons. He divided the field into two, the part nearest to the Byworth road he planted as an orchard, apple trees and a few cobnuts, the western part became a cornfield. It was still a cornfield in the 1930s

when I was a child. The then mature apple trees still produced a good crop. The trees were dug up some thirty odd years ago when they had come to the end of their useful life.

The footpath that runs along the northern perimeter of the field leading to the Shimmings Valley and the Sheepdowns was always referred to by the residents of Byworth as 'going down Webster's orchard'.

My uncle, Fred Shoubridge, came from Horsham to Petworth as a young man in his teens to work for Sid Harris at the bun shop in the Market Square. He was one of two young bakers employed by Mr. Harris, the other being Harry Clems. As neither Fred nor Harry were Petworth residents they lived in on the job. They soon chummed up with a group of some twelve to eighteen local lads and went around together in their spare time - time that was at a premium. It was a six day working week and long daily hours so their only spare time was one or two hours late evenings and Sundays.

The date of the story of the disappearing cornfield was some time between 1907 and 1911, before my aunt and uncle became engaged in 1912. The time, one moonlit early September evening, possibly a Saturday or Sunday. Payday was Saturday and wages less than one pound a week, so weekends would have been the only time the group of young friends would have had a few pence to spare to visit one of their favourite watering holes, the Black Horse at Byworth. They were all in the bar that evening, when at about 9.15 in walked Mr. Webster. He no sooner arrived than he said that no one would ever play a trick on him. The group of young friends left a few minutes later to walk down to Petworth. Mr. Webster stayed until time was called at 10pm. He lingered over his last drink till a quarter or twenty past ten, then walked back to Petworth by the way he had come, the footpath at the north of his field and the Sheepdowns. All was well till he came to the cornfield. Then to his amazement in the moonlight he could see the field was bare. His precious sheaves of corn that had been standing in stooks had disappeared. He was furious. First thing next morning he was at the Police Station reporting the theft, and he said he knew who had taken his corn, it was that group of lads who had left the Black Horse as he had arrived. When asked by Police Sergeant Beecher what time this happened, Mr. Webster replied that the corn was there when he passed through the field on his way to the Black Horse about 9.15pm but when he returned little more than an hour later it was gone. Sergeant Beecher then said it could not have been that group of lads, they had not time to remove and dispose of the corn, as at 9.45pm they were all walking up the hill into Petworth. He then accompanied Mr. Webster to the scene of the crime, only to discover in the light of day that the sheaves of corn had been stacked up in the spreading branches of an oak tree on the furthest side of the field. Mr. Webster said he knew it was those lads, most of whom were known to him and he wanted them punished. "Oh no," said Sergeant Beecher, "we can't do that as I have personal evidence it was not them". Sergeant Beecher lived in one of the cottages overlooking the Petworth Sheepdowns, the one nearest the road going up the hill into Petworth and at 9.45pm the previous evening he had heard this loud noise of singing and shouting in the roadway behind his garden and he had come out to find it was that group of lads. He told them to make less noise - it was time they got off home and they had all shouted, "Good night Sergeant."

In a way both Sergeant Beecher and Mr. Webster were right. What neither man knew

was that the group of lads split into two, half of them going to the cornfield, the other half walking to Petworth and as they approached Sergeant Beecher's cottage, they made as much noise as possible so he would think it was the whole group, which, of course, he did.

One thing that was certain was that none of those lads ever dared to ask Mr. Webster for a job.

Joy Gumbrell

[Sgt Beecher eventually moved to Bognor, and lived to be 100, becoming, at the time, the oldest pensioner in the West Sussex Police see PSM 33 page 7. Ed.]

M.H. on M.H. (and some others)

On Valentine's Day last year I went to see Maurice Howard, an old friend, and, at the age of ninety-two, still full of fun and a real Petworth character. I had known Maurice for over fifty years. He was born, one of a large family, at Hill Top, Tillington on the 6th August 1914, mere days after the declaration of war. I first met Maurice in March 1957 when I was a novice postman on the Raffling Wood round, some twenty country miles on a very heavily loaded Post Office cycle. No three speed in those days and a heavy old bike loaded up like a pack mule. One of the older postmen gave me a tip, "Get along the London Road just before 7 a.m. and Maurice Howard will take the mail for Mr. McHardy, the Leconfields' farm bailiff at Stag Park, also for Sandpit Cottages and the farm cottages at Stag Park Farm, where Mrs. Carver did her shopping very much by post, receiving fairly heavy parcels quite regularly. Maurice was a godsend to us postmen as he took the post along with the papers and milk. 7 o'clock was the time and you could effectively set your watch by Maurice.

In fact I would rendezvous with Maurice just before 7 when I would set off down to the Wardrop family at Osiers where a cup of tea would be waiting for me. The Wardrops' daughter, Jessie, did a milk round in Petworth in the 1940s and 1950s. Old Mr. Wardrop was a lovely Scottish man, then in his eighties, who used to sit beside the Rayburn wearing his trilby hat and smoking Condor tobacco. He would always greet me with a "Grand wee morning, postman." Mrs. Wardrop, Scots too, always had a cup of tea for me and some of her homemade Scottish shortbread. She would often be peeling potatoes for dinner, and her lovely big black and white cat would be sitting beside her eating the potato peel. I have had cats all my life but have never seen another one that would eat potato peel. Jessie told me one day that he lived until he was nineteen, so clearly the peel did him no harm.

The day I went to see Maurice last year he was cooking his dinner and sitting on his chair by the fire - he could have been Ronnie Corbett's twin brother, about the same size with a cheeky face and a smile. Even in his nineties he still dressed as smartly as he had always done. I took him four bottles of Guinness as I knew this was his favourite drink. He said he always had a bottle at lunchtime and a whisky before going to bed. "It does one the world of good, Mike," he told me. Even at 92 Maurice still had a wonderful memory. "Your old Granddad

'Winkle' Ayling was a lad wasn't he? My mother used to have twelve loaves and those lovely lardy rolls and 'Winkle' was always cracking jokes. My mother thought the world of him and he called at Hill Top every Tuesday and Friday." I felt proud that Maurice and his Mum thought so much of my granddad.

In later years Maurice was butler at Petworth House. By all accounts he was not only very competent but very popular, very much so with the famous people who stayed at the House; Harold Macmillan, Bing Crosby, James Stewart and Lester Piggott being just a few of them. In pride of place in Maurice's house was a photograph of Maurice sharing a drink with the Egremont family. I told him it was a great pleasure to see him again, and he asked me to return before too long. He said his neighbour Betty Banting, was very kind to him as was his nephew Les Howard for whom nothing was too much trouble and who came every night and morning without fail.

My own memory of Maurice in later years was of him driving his old Hillman car, always as sparkling as he was himself. Immaculately dressed with waistcoat, white shirt and bow tie, highly polished shoes, smart hat and walking cane, he would come up North Street from the Horsham Road corner to walk round the town with a cheerful word for everyone. Most Petworth people knew Maurice and his cheerful presence will be sadly missed. Before my wife June and I met, June tells me she delivered newspapers to Maurice and that he was one of her very favourite customers!

Mike Hubbard

Redroofs. Red flags

I was most interested in Gordon Goodyer's reflections regarding P.H. Padwick in the last Magazine. Such recollection as I have, and it is limited, is rather later and less direct, but I certainly remember Mr. Padwick, very much a local character, but always very reserved. By the time I knew him, he was living at Red Roofs, Tripp Hill, no longer in the Bedham Road. I cannot remember the actual building of the wooden Studio, but it lay at the very top of a field which is now the site of the Greatpin Croft estate. We lived at 3 Council Cottages (now 16 Greatpin Croft) opposite the old thatched pavilion on the Recreation Ground and on my way to the old village school in the 1930s I would pass the field, which went with farmer Lines' Street Farm opposite the Swan. The farmer's cows were always in the field. I remember a rough hovel at the top of the field roughly where the Studio now is. Fittleworth's annual fair, with roundabouts and other attractions, was held in this field. At this time Mr. Padwick was merely a name for me - if that.

My father was the local postman and did jobbing gardening in the afternoon, collecting a cluster of customers in the Tripp Hill area. Mrs. Leggatt, an elderly lady by this time, lived at Barn House with her companion, Miss Forster, and the two Miss Chowns, Esme and Cicely, who would later move up to Wyncombe Close. It would be well before 1941 when, as a boy of fourteen, I went to work with Petworth Engineering Co. in East Street, Petworth. My father had me working with him at Redroofs, hand weeding on my hands and knees. It wasn't long

before he had another job for me! Mr. Padwick had an electric servants' bell with the rooms indicated by red flags. When the bell rang, the red flag, indicating the room where attention was needed, would fall. Electricity was provided by separate cells, each probably of two volts. As I remember there were four jars, probably square rather than round, but, otherwise, very much of the proportions of the old 2lbs jam jars. The positive centre cell was of a porous substance, while the negative cell consisted of a zinc rod rather like a large biro. Both cells had brass screw terminals at the top to hold the wires. The batteries had a relatively long life, but would eventually become exhausted. Then, of course, the system of bells and flags would cease to function. When this happened, it was my job to empty the jars, buy sal ammoniac from Austens in Petworth, remix and refill. The board itself stood over the kitchen door leading to the dining room. Mr. Padwick's housekeeper was a Miss Surby, a very pleasant lady indeed, who would later be Mrs. Lenton. She always referred to Mr. Padwick as "Pad". Sometimes I would see him when I was at the house. He was pleasant enough but never had much to say. Miss Surby was very kind to me and cake and biscuits very much the order of the day.

Ron Thatcher was talking to the Editor.

...to all intents and purposes he was a squatter

I suppose that the surname Eldridge has for one reason or another become synonymous with Kirdford for the better part of the twentieth century. Not a great length of time really in the history of the village, though I like to think that the family has made something of an impression whether it be through our connections with the chapel or our businesses in the village. Our claim to fame is really through the family haulage firm which became well-known over a large area of West Sussex and no doubt much further afield. After all the lorries were the ideal form of advertising as each vehicle carried the company and village name to just about every part of the country. I used to often wonder if many of our customers actually knew where Kirdford was, somehow I doubt that a Liverpool docker would have the faintest idea, even if he had been interested in knowing in the first place.

My paternal or Eldridge grandparents had been missionaries working for the American Presbyterian Church in China and the Philippines. I suppose that Grandfather was a Baptist but they didn't really put labels on their religion in those days. Father had been born in south east London and was only six weeks old when his parents took him to the Philippines. Later he was educated in Dulwich where he lived with an aunt, though occasionally he would spend time with his maternal grandparents who were members of the Weller family from Loxwood where they owned the village Post Office. This side of my family were also non-conformists and they had moved down from south east London. My grandparents regularly attended Plaistow Chapel and were probably among the first to worship there. In those days the

Loxwood area was a bit of a haven for non-conformists. I suppose it still is to a certain extent and the abundance of chapels certainly would have encouraged people like my grandparents to settle in the area.

As his parents before him, Father was very religious and never worked on a Sunday or allowed any of us children to do so. He was a lay preacher and would do the circuit of the local chapels including the Zoar at Wisborough Green. I was certainly expected to go to chapel on a Sunday all the time that I lived at home and it was not until I joined the army to do my national service that I was excused the obligation. One of my earliest memories is of the travelling evangelists who would regularly set up camp at Kirdford and generally preached to the already converted. These itinerant preachers would often be members of the C.C.A. and later the Home Evangelists would take their place. There were also the Christian Colporteurs and the 'Counties Workers' who would occasionally bring their style of Calvinistic evangelism to the village and set up their tents and attract quite large congregations to their services.¹ I particularly recall George Gaunt being a 'Counties' preacher and he would travel round the chapels with his horse-drawn caravan which Father allowed him to store in his yard at Malthouse. I imagine that Mr. Gaunt only used the caravan in the summer months. Much later he would have a modern style caravan which he towed with a car, but that was shortly before he retired.

Mother's family moved up from Devon during the agricultural depression and her father got the job of manager at Drungewick Manor near Loxwood. Mother moved away from the village and trained as a telephonist though later she was asked to move back to Loxwood to work at the exchange there. Anyway Mother and Father met and they had a prolific marriage and ended up with three boys and seven girls. A handful indeed! Such was the size of the family that when we were living at Orchard Cottages, which had been built in the garden of Black Bear at Kirdford, Father built a metal shed in the garden and we three boys slept in it as there wasn't room in the house for all of us. As you can imagine bath time was something of an experience with ten of us kids. The tin bath would be carried into the scullery and Dad would set up a primus stove underneath to warm the water. The last child probably came out dirtier than it went in after the rest of us had been washed. It was something of a race to get in first. Until 1942 when the well ran dry every drop of water had to be pumped up to the kitchen. After that we went on the mains and I believe we were one of the first houses in Kirdford to do so as the water had been laid onto the village just before war broke out. I believe that we rented the cottage but eventually the family would buy it.

Though I was born at Orchard Cottage the family had been living at Malthouse where father had a garage with a yard from which he operated his carrier business and where his

¹ The 'Counties Workers' may well have been members of The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion a dissenting evangelical group particularly strong in the south of England. There are still several CoH Connexion chapels in West Sussex. I am unsure of exactly who the CCA were, however Keith Thompson suggests that they may have been members of a group called the Children's Caravan Association. I would be happy to hear from anybody who can offer any information on the CCA or the 'Counties Workers'. M.C.

vehicles were stored. The cottage at Malthouse had become too small for the family and so they moved to Orchard Cottage though Father still kept the yard there. I was about ten when one morning I went to open the garage door to get out my push bike when there was an almighty explosion which threw me backwards about a dozen feet over a wall and into the moat. Fortunately I was unhurt apart from a few grazes but the workshop was burnt to the ground, only the front of the building with the doors remaining. Father cleared the debris of the workshop and never rebuilt it, just using the place as an open yard. No one knew what started the fire but it seems that it had been smouldering for some time and it was only when I opened the door and allowed the air in that it exploded. Kirdford had a fire service of a kind in those days and Father was in it. The pump was stationed at Kirdford Growers and Father and several of the children were down at Snelling's garage when the news of the fire reached them. Dad rushed off with the fire engine and the children ran as fast as they could back to the Malthouse to see what was happening. Father fought the fire as best he could and the Canadian soldiers stationed at nearby Barkfold came and helped but really it was all too late as the damage had been done to the building by the time they put the fire out. Still it could have been worse, though I suppose those people who had put their furniture and possessions into store were none too pleased about it.

Eventually Father was given notice to quit the yard and with nowhere immediately available to move his business he had to act fast and he moved everything lock stock and barrel to the old Leconfield Creamery. The move wasn't official by any means and to all intents and purposes he was a squatter, but then he had little choice as he had nowhere else to go. Fortunately the Creamery was no longer in use having been vacated by the previous tenant South Eastern farmers and when their lease ran out Father took it over and eventually he purchased the property freehold from The Leconfield Estate.

Father had built up his business rather piecemeal with seemingly little direction but as each opportunity came along he was quick to seize it. Having started as the village carrier he bought an egg delivery round and several other similar small businesses. Over the years Father had countless vehicles from charabancs with canvas sides which could also be used for haulage to a removals lorry which had a Luton back that had been designed and built by Mr. Glue the village blacksmith. The Luton back could be lifted on or off the flat bed of a lorry so allowing the vehicle to be used for various purposes.

I suppose that in the end it was the establishment of Kirdford Growers that really got the firm going and convinced Father that he could make a go of the haulage business. The first manager at 'the Growers' was Fred Penny and he was followed by 'Chalkie' White. Fred was there for donkeys years and I have a feeling that he may have lived in Bartons Lane in Petworth. Father had a very good name for being a reliable haulier and Kirdford Growers had an equally good reputation for supplying only the finest fruit and their produce was always in demand at the markets. It wasn't unusual for the buyers to employ scouts to wait by the old Kingston bypass and when they saw an Eldridge lorry go past they would telephone ahead and inform the buyers to which market the lorry was going. Usually the fruit would be heading for Covent Garden, Borough or Spitalfields. Quite often the load would be sold before it even reached the market. Even as the business grew Father would continue to drive. He usually



Grand Entrance 1891. If the photograph is of Club Day it will be the oldest known. The club banner (still at Petworth House) was not given until 1907. See "And all that brass!"



Matron in the garden of the Cottage Hospital about 1890.



This photograph (by Coze of Midhurst) is thought to be of Midhurst Band a hundred years ago. See "And all that brass!"

drove an old BMC and would work all the hours there were. I recall one day when we passed each other at Shoreham Docks, I was going in as he was going out. When I had got my load of imitation leather I headed off to London and passed Father fast asleep in a lay-by at Crawley. Anyway he must have been absolutely exhausted for I unloaded in London and did the return trip to Shoreham for another load. As I went once more through Crawley he was still asleep. When he eventually woke up and caught up with me he wasn't best pleased but I knew that if he was that tired it was best to let him sleep.

There were a lot more cottages in the village before the war and of course a lot more families. You see most of the 'posh' houses were several cottages in those days, and each cottage could easily have half a dozen kids in it. There were three cottages and a house that just went with the Creamery and then all of the cottages at Bridgefoot as well as those at Gownfold. In fact what is Bridgefoot House was three before the war. Mr Hook lived in one, 'Skikey' Elliott in another and someone else in the third. We never went to Church, always Chapel, unless it was with the school and then only on Ascension Day or Empire Day. I never really understood the service in the parish church and the Chapel always seemed simpler which I suppose made it more popular with the kids.

During the war Father worked for the Ministry of War Transport with his own lorry and had to do whatever was required of him. One day he would be carting bombs or other ammunitions while another time he would be carrying prisoners of war from the camp at Marringdean to Henfield brickyard where they were put to work. This latter job was quite good for once he had dropped the prisoners off he just had to wait round until it was time to take them home again.

No, Father did not fight in the war. As I have said he was a religious man and held strong convictions and could never have killed anybody. Fortunately having a lorry and being of considerable use at home he was never made to join up. On several occasions he had to go before a tribunal and explain his reasons for not enlisting and on each occasion his call-up was deferred. He agreed that if necessary he would enlist but only as a non-combatant. I know that father had to wrestle with his conscience on this issue and there were people in the village who did not think that it was fair and we children did not entirely escape the effects of Father's decision.

Now and again during the war Father would get us children to make known around the village that he was taking his coach out for the day and many of the village children would pack a picnic lunch and he would invariably take us all up to Bedham where we would spend the day playing in the woods. It was a welcome break for the children and no doubt for the parents.

In 1949 the business was nationalized and Father became manager of the Kirdford depot of British Road Services. For some reason Kirdford Growers would not hire nationalized transport and so Father applied for two contract 'C' licences which would then allow him to work solely for Kirdford Growers. Later he would apply for and receive seven more licences which permitted him to work for other important businesses such as Clapham Brick and Tile Works near Worthing and Marley Tiles at Storrington. He received very little compensation for the three lorries that he had and years later when transport was denationalized he had to buy them back for more than he had received in the first place. Struggling to keep the business going after denationalisation Father went to work at the bomb disposal depot at

Broadbridge Heath. It was a huge yard covering much of the area where the Tesco supermarket now stands and Father would help maintain the vehicles there. This extra income enabled him to keep the haulage business going during this lean period and as the growers only operated for 9 months of the year it was always essential to get other work. Another important contract was with the Westminster Bank where a cousin was transport manager, I clearly recall the day that I drove a lorry across London with over four tons of gold bars on the back. A burly police officer kept the gold company as we travelled through the traffic but fortunately there were no incidents and we arrived at our destination without any mishaps. Certainly somewhat different from the normal load of apples from Kirdford to Covent Garden.

Mother was always busy, in fact she was the driving force behind the business and besides bringing up us children she also kept all the books and business records. Father was a fastidious record keeper and demanded to know exactly how much oil a vehicle used, what the average fuel consumption of any particularly vehicle was on any given journey. If he felt that a driver was being a bit heavy on the accelerator he would check back on previous records and then perhaps move the driver to a different vehicle. These figures were all taken into account when Father worked out the costing of any given job or contract and so he would be able to tell if the business was making any money. Father was not a practical man, not mechanically inclined which is rather surprising considering his chosen career. In fact I don't ever remember him being able to take a tyre off a rim or any other quite common job which took place around the Creamery. He would always delegate these tasks to one of the drivers or to the fitter. He insisted that the lorries were kept spotless to such an extent that the drivers would joke that they could eat their meals off the chassis if they wished to.

Father had no end of licences and permits to drive all types of vehicles and fortunately we have kept most of them — he never threw anything away, thank goodness. Some of the public service licences date back to the twenties and thirties when he first had a single deck bus and in 1933 he obtained a permit to drive a Chevrolet PSV single decker on a lorry body with a seating capacity of 14 persons. The vehicle was not new then and had been first registered in 1928 as PX 9186. The earliest driving licence we have for Father is July 1927, signed by The County Treasurer and issued by County Hall it was valid for just a year in those days. Dad gave up the lorries in 1969. He still drove, however, and his most recent licence was issued in 1972 to run until 1975.

Bill Eldridge with Jane Terry were talking to Miles Costello

Petworth Cottage Nursing Home

A short history

The story begins nearly 150 years ago when the Lady Leconfield of the day gave to the people of Petworth a small farmhouse, to be used as a Cottage Hospital. A Committee of Management was appointed who, according to their first report dated 7th April 1868 'lost no

time in fitting up and preparing the Hospital for patients', the first of whom was admitted on 20th November 1867. He was a 19 year old labourer from Coates who had injured his pelvis. He is recorded as 'discharged, cured' the following February. He was closely followed by a painter from Petworth, a clerk from London and a labourer from Tillington among many others - the list is varied, as are the complaints for which they were treated, some having had "operation under chloroform" and many discharged "relieved" or "cured". So it went on, year after year, major and minor illnesses, accidents and operations, all cared for in that little farm house on the Fittleworth road in what today would be considered almost primitive conditions but fulfilling such a need for the people of the area.

After the first World War two wards and a small operating theatre were added thanks to local benefactors and to this day there are those who remember going there to have their tonsils removed or a wound stitched.

All this was to change, however, when the National Health Service came into being in 1948 and the Hospital, among many others nationwide, was threatened with closure. Despite much local opposition the Hospital was closed down in 1971, stripped of all its furniture and fittings and put up for sale, despite the fact that a very active League of Friends had, over the years worked very hard to raise considerable funds to buy equipment, china and cutlery and other amenities for the patients. A band of stalwart supporters attended the sale, led by Mrs Margery Keogh-Murphy, the wife of a Kirdford apple grower, who had for years campaigned in the effort to keep the Hospital going. She was determined to buy the building for Petworth but, as she said later, had not a clue where the money was coming from, until a voice behind her said 'I'm backing you' and an anonymous bidder closed the deal with £20,000. It was only after her death in 2003 that the public were to know that the generous Miss Jeanne Courtauld had saved the day.

Of course it was no longer a hospital, but the Trustees and the Board of Management had it re-named and registered as a charity whilst an energetic Appeals Committee raised £17,000 to make the necessary alterations and to buy the necessary equipment to turn it into a Nursing Home "for the elderly living in Petworth and the surrounding area" - thus the Petworth Cottage Nursing Home was born.

As a charity, the Home is not and never will be run solely for the creation of profit, but neither can it be run at a loss. It is a registered Nursing Home, regularly inspected by the Health Authority and must comply with all the Authority's rules and regulations, which at times may require instant and often costly compliance. In 1998, for instance, the banning of wards to be replaced by single rooms for each patient meant the initiation of a costly building programme for which money had to be raised, and again in 2002 plans had to be made to include more rooms, each with their own bathroom, a new and enlarged kitchen, a larger lift and added space for a diningroom, a large and sunny sittingroom and other costly innovations, as well as re-decoration throughout. Work started on this ambitious rebuilding plan in February 2005 and lasted until May 2006. To pay for this work a special Appeals Committee was formed and given the task of raising one million pounds. In 2008 this was achieved after a great deal of very hard work promoting fund-raising events of many and various kinds and procuring donations and legacies from many generous donors, among which mention must

be made of Pat Crichton-Smith who had supported the Home whole-heartedly from the beginning: on her death she left her home in Wisborough Green to be sold for the benefit of the Appeal Fund. As a result, Petworth has an up-to-date Nursing Home where 32 rooms are available, some used for short stays (recuperation after an operation or giving a break for those who normally care for their relatives at home) and the majority for those who need twenty-four hour nursing and who will be looked after with compassion and care to the end of their days.

For such expert care a trained and efficient staff is of course essential. To this end Matron, (Mrs Chris Barber), leads a team of fully qualified and experienced Sisters, ably assisted by Care Assistants whose training is thorough and on-going; there is an extremely good cook who, with the assistant, caters for all kinds of diets, likes and dislikes, and who always sees that each patient's birthday is celebrated with a specially baked cake; and a handyman, an all-rounder who also drives the car which is fitted to take wheelchairs and is often used for outings. They all work hard and long and of course must be suitably paid. To save a little on the wages bill a loyal band of volunteers come every morning and afternoon to give non-nursing help, and an equally dedicated team come regularly to tend the flowers and plants which give so much pleasure to patients and visitors alike. All the volunteers give their services gladly, adding to the feeling of friendly care and understanding which many feel marks the Home as a rather special place of which Petworth can be justly proud.

The day to day running of the Home is financed by patients' fees, donations, legacies and fund-raising events which, over the years, have been many and varied, including fetes in Petworth Park, Strawberry Teas, period costume evenings at The Manor of Dean, concerts, Grand National Sweepstakes, garden openings, exhibitions and a host of other ways of raising money, the success of each one depending on the co-operation and generosity of people of Petworth and the surrounding area.

Fees have of course altered with the years. In 1868 patients were asked to pay from 3/6d to 7 shillings a week, rising to 12/3d for some, although those receiving parochial relief were paid for by the Overseers of the Parish to which they belonged. In 2008 the charge for a room, including all nursing and other costs, varies between £700 and £900 a week, but in cases where the Social Services are involved this may be considerably reduced. Every patient receives the same compassionate care, but individual consideration where fees are concerned.

Having started with the gift of a building, the Wyndham family has through the years taken a great interest in its progress and development, the present Lady Egremont having become Patron when its role changed from Hospital to Home. All those concerned with the Home's running and management trust it will continue one of Petworth's success stories.

Mary Ashby

Ninth time lucky!

We always thought that the Avent family came originally from France, possibly, like so many, as refuges from religious persecution, but I have no definite evidence for this. My middle name is Avent with emphasis on the first syllable but my grandfather is often referred to as Sergeant Avant with a second "a" and the accent on the second syllable. In fact his army rank had been company sergeant major. I have to say, however, that my grandfather's military documents do spell the name "Avant". However this may be, there is no doubt that, although not in origin a local man, my grandfather was one of the most recognisable Petworth personalities of his time, and that for a good forty years. Brought up in the East End of London, he was one of a family of fourteen. Curiously, he did not keep up with his ten brothers but remained close to his three sisters, Polly, Betty and Emma. His education would have been minimal, for he left school at eight to find work with a builder and plumber in Woolwich. One night, bitterly cold and in a London pea-souper, his workmates went off home without realising that my grandfather was still on the scaffolding. Fortunately one of the men, sitting at home having his tea, suddenly realised that "little Jimmy" was unaccounted for. He rushed back to the site. Just as well he did, as in later years my grandfather recalled that he wouldn't have survived the bitter cold much longer.

Granddad had always wanted to join the Navy but, when they looked at his hands, he was told the Navy was not for him. Years of sandpapering and rough preparation on building sites had left him with "broad fingers" as the expression went. At 17½ he went to join the Army but the recruiting sergeant told him he was too young, the minimum age being 20. Granddad looked so despondent that the sergeant said, "You're really twenty aren't you?" My grandfather readily agreed. It was a fiction that



Army days.

would give him much disquiet in later life. His real age was always two and a half years behind his official age.

Just after the last war, in search of my roots, I went up to look at the old family home, 9 Daniel Street, Bethnal Green. It's a typical two-up, two-down, terrace house and I wondered how, Mum, Dad and fourteen children could possibly have fitted in. It appears that they did! Some of the family were still living on the Isle of Dogs and I had an address. I hadn't seen them for years, if, indeed, at all, but they knew immediately that I was related. As far as I know, from such a poor background, the brothers did well. In the late 1920s I remember visiting one at the new house he had built in Leicestershire. The family even employed a housemaid!

Grandfather's regiment was the Royal Artillery and he was initially stationed locally in Woolwich. He had enlisted on the 20th June 1872, giving his date of birth as 1852. He married his cousin Elizabeth at St. Matthew's Church in Bethnal Green on Christmas day 1879, his aunt being his new mother-in-law! A first child, James William, was born in 1881 and died of pneumonia later in the year. In 1882 James was posted to India with the regiment. My grandmother was in the early stages of pregnancy but said nothing. She would otherwise have had to remain in England; once on board that was that. A daughter, my mother, Emily Elizabeth, was born in Murar, India, in August. Murar was in Northern India, looking toward the Himalayas. It was a curious irony that in later years my mother, who had been born on the sub-continent, should return there in the course of her work. Initially taken on as lady's maid to a Mrs. Simms, she was then employed by Mrs Simms' niece, Mrs. Oliver Hoare, whose brother-in-law, Sir Samuel Hoare, was at one time Foreign Secretary. She twice travelled to India with the Hoare family although to the south rather than the north. Mrs. Hoare kept in contact even after Emily had left her employ and following Emily's premature death just after the 1914-1918 war continued to write to Emily's mother, my grandmother, sending a beautiful doll for my third birthday.

I have no real information about the years in India apart from a few sepia photographs. Grandfather seems to have spent some nine years in India, returning in the early 1890s. Certainly he recalled arriving at a snowy east coast port - something of a shock after India. He was discharged at Scarborough in 1894. Even "officially" he was still only just over forty and he had to decide what to do with the rest of his life. He had no skilled civilian trade and appears to have found whatever work he could, returning, it appears, to the East End of London from where he had started. Everything changed when he ran into a former acquaintance who had some advice for him. "You should join the commissionaires." This seems to have been a kind of agency for ex-servicemen, having their own uniform and, I would imagine, a fairly strict code of conduct. It would be perhaps, 1898. "Would you be prepared to live in the country?" my grandfather was asked. "I'll live anywhere if it means a regular job," he replied. "We'll send you down to Petworth. It will probably be a wasted journey as we've already sent eight people down there and Lord Leconfield has rejected them all." This would be the 2nd Lord, father of Charles the 3rd Lord who would succeed early in the new century. As it happened, the initial gloomy prediction was wide of the mark. His lordship took to my grandfather and the latter was given the job of showing visitors round the House to view the picture collection, both the normal one hour tour and the longer connoisseurs' tour. He

would wear his commissionaire's uniform for his duty. He would also assume caretaking duties at the Iron Room (not built until 1904) and the Town Hall, including the Wednesday Magistrates' Court. There was still a holding cell at the Town Hall. Cleaning and heating were part of his responsibility.

So Grandfather moved to Petworth to live in Cherry Row where he would stay for some forty years. He was commissionaire for over 38 of those years and eventually had to be persuaded to make way for someone younger. It was a position he had made his own. With him came my mother, then aged thirteen (chronology is a little uncertain), my grandmother and my grandmother's sister who was, of course, Granddad's mother-in-law. My mother attended Petworth Girls' School, then trained in needlework with Mrs Summersell in Pound Street, serving a four year apprenticeship. When she left she went to Eagers, the Market Square drapers, where she spent her first morning picking up pins. My mother was a spirited lady, so she gave her notice. She hadn't trained for four years to pick up pins! She answered a job advertisement and was taken on by Mrs. Simms. It was while travelling to India with the Hoare family that she met my father who was working as a steward on board ship. He used to do this, then, at the end of the voyage, leave the ship and work for a time in the country of arrival, often clearing virgin forest. In this way he spent time in Australia, New Zealand and even Hong Kong. When my mother married she moved back to her London roots, but like so many others she died in the great influenza epidemic at the end of the war. We all had the 'flu but I recovered. I was only three in the August and my mother died in December. I do have some recollection of her, coming up the step from the kitchen in her distinctive apron. I remember the house too. My mother was 39 when she died. After the funeral it was decided that I should come to Petworth with my grandparents for a while. I can dimly remember waiting for the train at London Bridge and our eventual arrival at Petworth station.

Grandfather had fixed times for his duties at Petworth House, Tuesday and Thursday 11 to 12, 12 to 1, 2 to 3 and 3 to 4. People came from all over the world to see one of the finest (if not the finest) private collections in existence. Grandfather lived at Cherry Row and I always supposed the houses had been built on the site of a former orchard. Cherry Row comes where High Street joins Grove Street. The first house in the row as you come from Petworth was Mrs. Greest's who had taken over from Mrs Maybank, the latter moving down to the Middle Street corner. Then there were old Mr. and Mrs. Whitcomb with their daughter, Polly. Polly kept a sewing shop in Angel Street more or less opposite Ryde House or Olders the grocers.



Sgt. Advent about 1930.

NOTICE.

PETWORTH HOUSE will be open to Visitors until further notice on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Parties, not exceeding 30 in number at one time, will be shown round at the hours of 11 a.m. and 12 noon, and at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. on each day.

It is particularly requested that no gratuity be given either to the Commissionaire who shows the House or to the Lodge Porter.

ENTRANCE AT THE CHURCH LODGE.

LECONFIELD.

AUGUST, 1899.

Next came the Ingold family: Mr. Ingold with his sister and sister-in-law; they tended to keep themselves private. I believe he had some connection with the Congregational Chapel. Then us, then Mrs. Baxter, then another Mrs. Whitcomb. The gardens and sheds stretched back toward the Angel. Just down the road were two more cottages but I don't remember who lived there. Then Rickett's Yard, then 346 - now the Cottage Museum. A little old lady lived there and I would sometimes pass the time of day with her but nothing else. I suppose this would have been Mary Cummings. I can certainly remember Mrs. Jeffries at 346, I think she moved from Grove Lane, but as you say, that must be after 1930.

My father, something of a "jack of all trades", as my grandfather once wryly observed, came down to live with us for a time but work was difficult to find and he eventually went back to London. I think he made some iron gates at New Grove. He married again but had only been married a month when he had a brain haemorrhage and collapsed and died in the street. He'd suggested I go and live with him and his new wife but I was so happy with my grandparents that I asked if I could stay on in Petworth for a while.

Growing up in High Street I became friendly with Gladys Boxall (later Mrs. Connor) whose father worked in the stables at Petworth House for Lord Leconfield. One of his jobs was to take Lord Leconfield's spare horse to the Hunt so that his lordship could have a fresh horse halfway through. We all went to the Infants' School, effectively just across the road from us, where the Public Library now is. From the Connor home in Middle Street it was possible to come out of the back and into the garden of what is now the Cottage Museum; there was some kind of right of way, a short cut taking out the Middle Street corner.

Club Day, an annual celebration for the Petworth Park, Lord Leconfield's Friendly Society, was the great Petworth day at a time when holidays and celebrations were few and far between. We very much looked forward to it, as we did the annual November fair. When I was growing up in Petworth, you not only knew everyone but you knew where they lived. Everyone was effectively Petworth-based. Singing was a great community activity between the wars and Mr. Stevenson, headmaster of the Boys' School, was very active in this field. One year a wide range of Petworth organisations, the church choir, Guides, Scouts and others, some nine in all, were hugely successful at a competition in Bognor. I can still remember a banner headline in the local press, "Petworth sweeps the board."

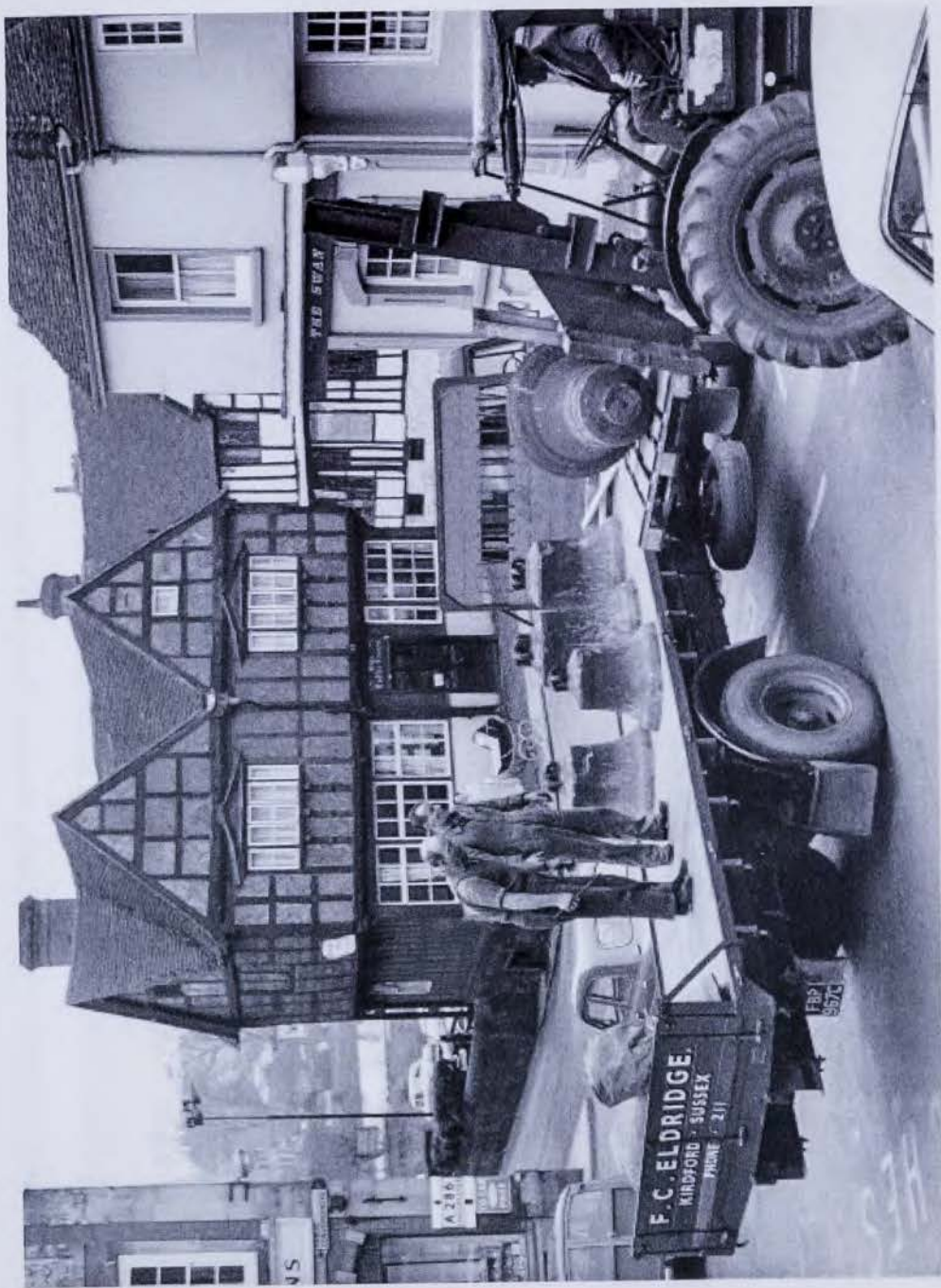
The Petworth doctors were Messrs. Druitt, Kerr and, in my earlier days, Dr. Beachcroft. I can still think of Dr. Beachcroft lifting me up when I was ill at home, to look out of the window at Cherry Row to see the Armistice Day parade passing on its way from the British Legion. Another "must" was following the Hunt at the Boxing Day meet. And there was the Leconfield Estate children's party at Christmas. I can still see Lord Leconfield coming in with his adopted daughter perched on his shoulders. She would have been very young then. Or we might simply walk up the Tillington Road and into the Park.

In the school holiday I was allowed to go up to the House with my grandfather and pull up the blinds for the visitors. The blinds were otherwise kept down to prevent the sun from fading the carpets. The tour started in the Audit Room and took an hour.

Church was very much part of a Sunday, the rector I particularly remember being Valentine Powell. On some saints' days we would be given a day's holiday. After my



Petworth roofs. A panorama from the Cottage Museum. Photograph by Roger Newberry.



Midhurst church bells off to London in the late 1960s. Photograph by Charles White. See "To all intents and purposes."

grandmother died, I was let out of school every morning at 11.30 to come home for Granddad's dinner. The Leconfield Estate lunch hour was 12 to 1. It's not something, I imagine, that would be approved today!

Kathleen Hayes was talking to John Connor and the Editor.

Coultershaw Heritage

We all know of the Coultershaw Beam Pump on the road to Chichester. Some may have visited the pump house when its fountain is operating. But not many are aware of the importance of Coultershaw as a part of Petworth's heritage. It has been the site of several corn mills; the beam pump was added in 1782, the Rother Navigation had wharves and a lock at Coultershaw in 1800, and in 1859 Petworth railway station was built at Coultershaw. Coultershaw is an important example of 18th century industrialisation in a rural area.

The early development of mills at Coultershaw is lost in the mists of time. Coultershaw Mill was recorded in the 1086 Domesday survey, valued at annual rent of 26 shillings and a bucket of eels, and again in 1240, when it was given to Schulebrede Priory by William de Percy, who owned Petworth Manor at the time. Early mills were for grinding corn but later records are of fulling mills and a dyeing pit. The mill was initially located north of the present bridges



probably driven by an undershot waterwheel set in the original river which in due course became the Navigation. Later the sluices were built and the river was diverted into the Pike Shoot branch, which was probably man made, enabling the mill to be sited on the east bank.

The mill building on this site was originally built of stone with clay-tiled roofs in a traditional Sussex style and was a popular subject for local artists (see The Petworth Magazine December 2007). Sadly in 1923 the mill was gutted by fire and rebuilt the following year as a not so beautiful but comparatively innovative steel framed reinforced concrete building.

In 1907 the Coultershaw Mill had been leased to John Gwillim, a young miller from

Herefordshire, who had earlier taken over North Mill at Midhurst. He modernised the plant, removing the grindstones and wooden machinery and installed steel shafting and rollers. In 1910 he improved the power source, replacing the waterwheel with a water turbine. In 1914 a new warehouse was added and in 1919 Gwillim built an engine house on the west side of the sluice, to house a diesel engine to supplement the turbine. At this time Gwillim also ran the Mill at Fittleworth and was able to regulate the flow of water in the Rother between the three mills in his control. A second turbine was added at Coultershaw in 1922.

John Gwillim died in 1929 and the business was continued as a private limited company by his son Gordon: the lease was renewed for a further 21 years in 1944. Gordon Gwillim who worked at the Mill for 48 years, died in 1970, leaving no successor apart from his widow Dorothy who continued the business with Brian Oxford as mill manager until 1972 when the lease was surrendered. The unsightly building, now disused, was demolished the following year by H Geall Ltd, contractors.

Visitors to the beam pump have included several who worked at the Mill. We have learnt that Gordon Gwillim was an unusually considerate employer and used to hold staff meetings at his house (Four Winds, Graffham). Depending on demand (and breakdowns) the mill worked three eight hour shifts, each shift being operated by only two men. A day was set aside for maintenance. There were 14 employees – 6 shift workers, 4 drivers, 2 girls filling bags, Ron the odd job man and Peter Carter the foreman. The output was about 500 sacks of flour (60 tons) per week. Gordon Gwillim also wrote a comprehensive treatise (*'A Smaller Miller's Reflections'*) in which he deals with best practice in all aspects of a milling business, buildings, equipment, processing, flour manufacture and treatment, trade hazards, staff training and remuneration. It is an insight to a very unusual man.

The beam pump is described in an earlier issue of The Magazine (March 2001). It was erected in 1782 – nothing to do with the corn mill but attached to it – in what eventually became a basement of the mill. Its purpose was to pump water to Petworth House and town. The water came from the Rother and was unfiltered, and not fit to drink – but it was drunk, giving rise to the story that there was more typhoid in the town after the pump was installed than before. When the mill was demolished the basement was filled with rubble and the machinery would have been lost forever but for the efforts of members of the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society (SIAS) who dug it out and restored it to working order in 1980. The pump house seen from the road today is a wagon shed re-erected from the Goodwood estate. The pump was Scheduled as an Ancient Monument in 1980 and now supplies a local fountain.

The Rother Navigation was built by the 3rd Earl Egremont between 1791 and 1794. The Navigation ran from the River Arun at Stopham to Midhurst; there were eight locks one of which is at Coultershaw; the remains of the lock can be seen north of the road bridge. The construction of the Navigation at Coultershaw involved the removal of a meander in the south and a straight cut from the mill pond to the north, possibly along the original line of the river before the sluices were constructed. The work also involved connecting the river above Coultershaw to a small stream to the west below Kilsham Farm, as a flood relief measure with a fixed weir. The stream acts as a by pass to Coultershaw and connects back to the Rother at Petworth station: over the years it has become the main flow of the Rother.

Coultershaw was a busy place handling half the traffic on the Navigation. There were coal wharves on both banks (Petworth gas works opened in 1836), chalk was imported for burning in local kilns for fertilizer. Exports probably included farm produce and timber. Warehouses and a stable building survive on the east bank. The hey day of the Navigation was from 1823 to 1859 until the railway was extended from Pulborough to Petworth. Commercial traffic ceased in 1888 and the Navigation formally abandoned in 1935. The cut to the north of Coultershaw is largely filled, we understand, with rubble from the demolished mill and local landfill.

A Petworth to Chichester Turnpike was established in 1757. It followed the route of the A285 south of Petworth, then turned west along Rotherbridge Lane, crossing the river at Rotherbridge Farm. South of the river it continued past Kilsham Farm to meet the present A285 at Heathend. The road to Coultershaw was a dead end although there was a track – Mill Way – across the fields to the Turnpike. In 1800 the Turnpike was diverted to cross the Rother on two new bridges at Coultershaw, probably because the miller was allowing traffic to cross the weir at Coultershaw and avoid the payment of tolls. South of Coultershaw the Turnpike continued on a new alignment up straight up the hill to Heathend crossing the flood relief stream on a bridge constructed from stone from Rotherbridge, which had been demolished. A toll gate and cottage were constructed on the Turnpike west of the bridge cross the Navigation. The site can be seen today but the building is no longer there.

The line of the Turnpike south of Coultershaw was interrupted in 1866 by the construction of the railway. The road from in front of the forecourt of the Badgers was realigned slightly to the west, crossing over the flood relief stream and the railway on identical bridges. The present access to the station remains as part of the Turnpike, together with the original Rotherbridge. The Turnpike ceased to be a toll road in 1877; the road was taken over by the West Sussex County Council.

In 1859 the London Brighton & South Railway Company extended its railway from Pulborough to a new terminus at Petworth. The station was sited at Coultershaw to be not too close to Petworth House and Park. The line was extended to Midhurst in 1866. The railway was closed to passenger traffic in 1955 and to goods traffic in 1966. The original station building was demolished in 1889 and replaced by the building which survives today. Bed and breakfast accommodation is provided in four restored Pullman coaches. Guests sleep ensuite in the coaches and have their breakfast in the old ticket office. The building is Grade II listed.

The Badgers public house at Coultershaw was purpose built as The Railway Hotel in 1860. Horse drawn transport was provided into town. Following the demise of the railway it was renamed first The Race Horse, to attract Goodwood traffic, and more recently The Badger and Honeypot, now called Badgers. George Garland the photographer spent part of his childhood at The Railway Inn where his mother once lived.

The Coultershaw Trust was established jointly by The Petworth Society and the SIAS in 2002 to maintain and operate the beam pump and to promote further restoration of the Coultershaw site. The Trust's objective is to promote Coultershaw as a Heritage Site accessible to the public as an archive and an educational resource. In April 2006 the Trust was awarded a Project Planning Grant of £31,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the cost

of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) of the Site. Richard Andrews of Carden & Godfrey Architects London was appointed conservation architect and Lead Consultant. The CMP Report was received in September 2007.

Outline plans include the refurbishment of the beam pump visitor centre, the repair of the sluices, new access to the Rother Navigation and the restoration of the engine house and four warehouses. The estimated capital cost of the work is £822,500.

A substantial part of the cost arises from the repairs to the sluices. Over the years scouring has undermined the apron and the walls and there is a serious risk of partial or complete collapse of the structure. The consultants recommend the installation of temporary cofferdams upstream and downstream to enable the water level at the sluices to be pumped out below the level of the scour. The underpinning of the apron and sluice walls will then be carried out 'in the dry'.

Access to the site will be improved including special routes for the disabled. A new footbridge over the river above the sluices will provide access to the engine house and the Rother Navigation. In summer it will be possible to enter the lock on the Navigation by walking under the road bridge. There will be additional car parking at the north end of the site.

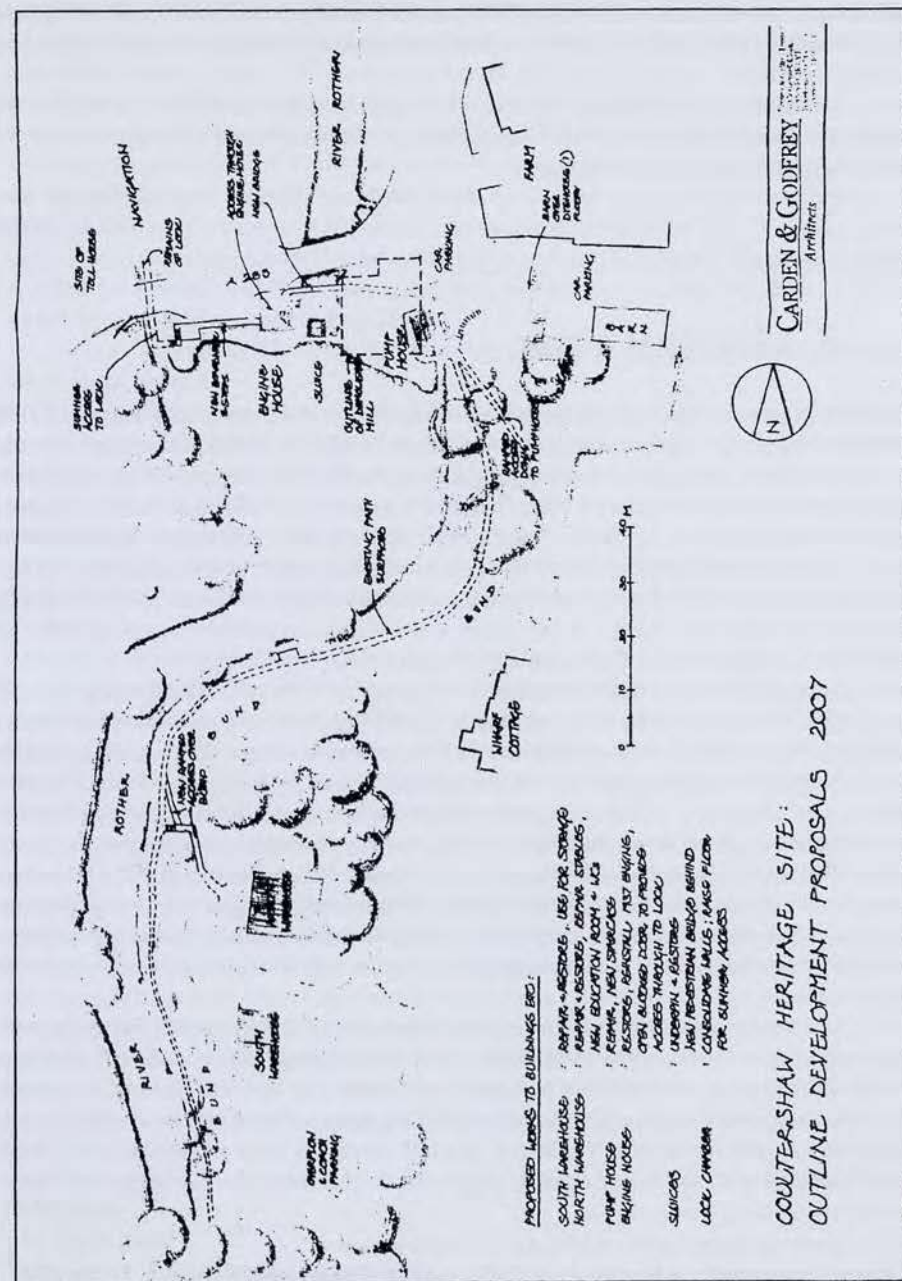
One of the warehouses will be converted into an education room with toilet facilities. The steep staircase in the existing visitor centre will be replaced and the exhibition interpreting the site improved. The engine house will be restored with windows as originals. It is hoped to reinstate a 1937 engine on its original mounting. A new viewing platform over the millpond is proposed.

An Audience Development Plan suggests that Coultershaw will remain a local attraction, mainly dependent on passing traffic for visitors, but that visitor numbers could at least double to 2000 per annum. Subject to the provision of appropriate facilities there is potential for an educational programme for local schools relevant to their curriculum. Coultershaw could be marketed as a destination combined with visits to other local attractions.

The Trust is now consulting stakeholders and interested parties on the Outline Development Proposals prior to seeking further funding and formal approvals for the work to be done. The funds required are considerable and outside the level of capital grant that might be available from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We are seeking other sources of grant-in-aid and partnership funding. We are reviewing the plans to reduce costs and maximise the work that can be done using local resources and by volunteers. Members of The Petworth Society are invited to contribute by becoming a Friend of Coultershaw.

Finally we have recently established that it is feasible to put a modern turbine in the old turbine pit to generate renewable electricity, which could be sold to the National grid. As well as providing the project with an income, the turbine – a reverse Archimedean Screw – would add to the educational value of the site. Subject to the necessary approvals being obtained, a proposal will be added to the Development Plan.

The Trustees welcome the continued interest and support of members of The Petworth Society. We welcome you and your friends as visitors to the beam pump. We still need additional stewards (male and female) to show visitors round on Open Days (1st and 3rd Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays). We need a lady? to look after our publicity and liaison



with local schools. For the enthusiastic DIY man there are interesting tasks on Working Party days. Members and friends are invited as usual to the annual Opening Evening on Wednesday 16 July from 6pm.

This article is largely based on the Conservation Management Plan Report 2007. For further information contact Robin Wilson, Chairman, The Coultershaw Trust 01798 865 774 or email rlwconsult@compuserve.com

Robin Wilson Chairman The Coultershaw Trust
20 April 2008

A Minstrel Friar

In PSM 124 I mentioned a visit by the Laresol Society to Petworth in the early autumn of 1908. The Petworth clergy assisted with several services in St. Mary's and the accent was very much on the musical. Relying on a surviving programme of events (reproduced PSM 124 pages 14 and 15) and a report in St. Mary's Parish Magazine, I observed, "It is clear that the Congress, while having a definite religious weighting, was a leisurely affair, offering a week in Petworth in very relaxing conditions. Clearly the visitors will have been in relatively easy circumstances and socially well-connected. Visits are planned to Petworth House, to Fittleworth (by train) and to "Kirdford Priory" where tennis and a woodland tea-party are promised. The week closes with a Garden Concert and Fête, again at Kirdford Priory."

Kirdford Priory seemed something of a mystery, but in PSM 125 Janet Austin was able to clarify. She drew attention to a postcard identifying the Priory as Brownings Farm at Kirdford. It appeared that from 1908 to 1910 Brownings had been temporarily leased; the Nicholls family having removed to Hawkhurst Court to care for Benjamin Nicholls' mother-in-law, Mrs. Osmaston. At the request of the incoming tenant, a chapel had been built and the tenant had renamed the farm buildings as "Kirdford Priory", a name perpetuated by inclusion in the 1910 update of the Ordnance Survey map. Henry Nicholls told Janet, "The tenant was male, but the sect only seemed to attract women. They left behind some very strange literature about early marriage practices in various races." The last two sentences, spanning now almost a century, are important as constituting effectively the only independent evidence that we have.

The new tenant was Ernest Newlandsmith, born in 1875, and initially best known as a somewhat precocious musical talent. *Who's Who* for 1908 lists him as violinist, conductor, author and composer. In 1906 Newlandsmith had founded the Laresol¹ Society "to promote the higher realisation of the artistic vocation, looking at the matter from the standpoint of the religious life, and the definitely directed love and service of God and humanity."² While Newlandsmith was, and would remain, very much an individual, he did attract well-heeled

¹ The precise connotation of the word Laresol remains unclear

² Ernest Newlandsmith: *A Minstrel Friar* (1927) page 39. Henceforth MF

support. By 1906-7 he had enrolled some two hundred followers, but it was clear that to progress further the Society needed a base, and it needed it badly. In Newlandsmith's own somewhat emotive prose,³ "It seemed as though the Society like its founder - must die to live." How Newlandsmith came to hear of Brownings cannot now be known, but in his own words,⁴ "Eventually in 1908, assisted by some sympathetic friends - I succeeded in establishing a Country Hostel (Kirdford Priory) in Sussex, to serve as the Headquarters of the Movement. To this quiet Retreat House were invited those in need of rest and a suitable environment - apart from the noise and clamour of the world - for progress in the Spiritual Life. In the grounds of the Hostel was a little Chapel known as the Oratory of the Holy Spirit. The place was ideally situated for Retreats and Quiet Days, and the country around contained some of the most beautiful woodland scenery in England."

As an indication of his love for Brownings, Newlandsmith quotes some observations taken down at the time:

"It is morn! The sun has risen over the hills, the dew is glistening like a sea of light, and the joyous songs of the birds fill the quiet air with harmony and gladness. As I look out from my lattice window, the view - for miles around, o'er hill, and dale, and wood, and common - fills my soul with blessedness and joy unspeakable. See the young rabbit playing round the old-world sundial on the green lawn below! How happy he looks! And now the sound of the distant bells, floating in at the open casement, calls me to the Holy Eucharist. Oh! Greatest of all things in the whole wide world - to meet my Beloved in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar!"

"The quiet service is over; but it is joyous to linger in the little church, ere strolling homewards through the sunlit fields. Then a little rest in the beautiful Priory grounds, amidst the dear kind trees, and the birds, and the flowers. Hear them all singing - singing, in tune with my own glad heart, their morning hymn of praise and thanksgiving! Ah! Thrice-blessed is he who dwells in quietness and peace with Jesus!" The "little church" may possibly be identified as Bedham.

In practice Newlandsmith's sojourn at the Priory seems to have presented him with something of a spiritual dilemma: should he remain in the idyllic surroundings of the "Priory" or take his mission into a wider world? No doubt his taking of vows as a friar in November 1908 heightened the dilemma⁵ "I began to wear the usual cassock and cord in my public work; and on the handbills announcing my autumn concert in London, I published a fervent Apologia, setting forth Jesus Christ as the one test and valuation of all that is, and explaining that (as an artist) I meant in future to devote my Art and life solely to the furtherance of His glorious Kingdom. This Apologia was such a remarkable document that I thought it would cause sufficient comment in the Press to rouse up followers in every sphere of life." Newlandsmith would be disappointed. Effectively nothing happened. Such, perhaps, is the lot of the visionary.

³ MF *ibidem*

⁴ MF pages 39-40

⁵ MF page 41. Capitals retained as in original



Ernest Newlandsmith

By August 1909 brother Ernest SLG,⁶ while still based at Brownings, was setting off on his first pilgrimage, “and as I wandered over hill and dale, in the woods and by the sea, my experiences, both at this time and afterwards, were romantic and wonderful to a degree.”⁷ Any theoretical conflict between rural idyll and outer world was abruptly resolved when, in the summer of 1910, the Priory had to be abandoned, “as the use of the property was required by the owner.” Brother Ernest established a “Mission Hall” in North Devon. Two lengthy extracts from the *Ilfracombe Gazette*⁸ testify to the considerable crowds attracted by Brother Ernest’s mission.

Brother Ernest left North Devon in 1911 and established a temporary Retreat House at Felpham near Bognor. This was a time of continued movement and travel, concerts, an elaborate mystery play with music entitled “The Vision of the Holy Grail”, lectures and general missioning, often in Kent and Sussex but also taking in the Potteries, Reading and Oxford. Brother Ernest was certainly not one to delegate and this strenuous activity led to a breakdown in 1912 - one of several over the years.

By Christmas 1913 the Mission was up and running again. There were several weeks based at St. Wilfred’s Church, Bognor Regis and at Berstead (sic), culminating in a new headquarters, “Seaford Priory”, having its own private chapel, miniature theatre and even a small printing press. Providence again proved unkind. In the midst of Brother Ernest’s summer school, war was declared. It was August 1914. “This played havoc with the work and after a Military Camp of 30,000 soldiers had established themselves at Seaford, the Priory was found to be no longer suitable as a Retreat House, and the place was accordingly given up.”⁹ Quite.

War conditions and, particularly, a lack of funding pre-empted some rather grandiose plans ... “I should have liked while yet my powers were spared me to have established an Ideal Theatre and to have staffed that theatre with Orators, Singers and Players all devoted to the Spiritual Life. To secure such artists I would have founded a School, where the children were taken quite young and trained on truer principles of education than are in vogue at the present time.”

Brother Ernest seems to have been relatively quiescent during the early years of the war, but, operating concurrently with the Anglican National Mission, by 1917 he would be particularly active in Portsmouth and Southsea. At this time, “I succeeded in forming an ‘Angelus Choir’ of ladies’ voices to minister at these devotions. Robed in white albs, with virgin-blue girdles, and small Quaker caps.”¹⁰

Mission work continued after the war, including preaching in Birmingham Cathedral and other venues in the Midlands and London. On St. George’s Day in 1920 “when the ‘world’ was preparing to attend public dinners, and to hear its favourite speakers discourse on the glories of England in general and the genius of Shakespeare in particular, a scene of very

⁶ Society of the Love of God

⁷ MF page 45

⁸ MF pages 45-47

⁹ MF pages 55-6

¹⁰ MF page 60

different character was taken place at the Queen's Hall after music for violin and organ, solo singers and an Angelus Choir of Voix Celestes, I gave a brief oration in which I dealt with the prevailing degradation in our popular literature, drama, music and pictures, and the godless indifference of the people to the higher and nobler issues of life."¹¹ Brother Ernest then made a call for national repentance, laying the British flag at the foot of a large cross standing at the back of the platform. Despite the apparent enthusiasm of his audience, Brother Ernest would once more be disappointed. "But in connection herewith I was confronted with an astounding fact - a fact that makes one gasp with astonishment. I had hoped that by means of the Press reports of this gathering my message of re-kindling would go forth to all the world. But it was not so."

Brother Ernest had over-taxed himself and a long period of illness was to follow. Late in 1925 a testimonial provided some much-needed financial help, but the Mission, essentially a one-man enterprise, lay dormant. In 1926 Brother Ernest felt a compulsion to travel to the Holy Land where he became involved with Zionism and eventually with the music of the Coptic Orthodox Church, his association with Ragheb Moftah (1898-2001) leading to the transcription, preserving and documenting of this liturgical heritage. This work is probably his most enduring legacy.

Brother Ernest wrote several books, now extremely scarce. Of these I have seen *The Temple of Love* (1906) published by the Laresol Society at the Sign of Laresol, in the City of London, *A Minstrel Friar* (1927) and *A Musician's Pilgrimage* (1932). The last is a reprint of the 1927 volume with a lengthy supplement *Message from Mount Carmel* giving an account of Brother Ernest's sojourn in the Middle East and a caustic critique of contemporary mores. I would judge that Brother Ernest's earlier work has not worn very well. *The Temple of Love* is an extremely slight offering, a good deal less than thirty well-spaced pages and rather in the style of the immensely popular Michael Fairless. To a modern view it teeters uneasily between the precious and the self-indulgent. The two later works are autobiographical and do not allow for a view in the round. The internet offers a celebration of the work of Ragheb Moftah (from *Al Ahram Weekly On-Line* (Issue 791) and the text of a lecture by Brother Ernest at Oxford University in May 1931. It is entitled "The Ancient Music of the Coptic Church." Whether, as Brother Ernest suggests, Coptic music has its roots in the ancient religion of the Pharaohs may well be questioned by more modern scholarship.

We are left with Henry Nicholls' tradition. Clearly the Nicholls family thought their tenant and his followers, to say no more, a little out of the ordinary. This fairly typical passage from *The Temple of Love* seems, at least, partially, to bear out his comments:¹² "Let not men or women who have never known the joy of a true marriage in any way repine; for even the most perfect marriage - and how few there are - can never in itself bring the completeness, the peace, and the joy of Perfect Love.

Truly, marriage may be the stepping stone that passes certain souls through the Wicket-Gate; but the Wicket-Gate stands open to all, and the stepping-stones, yet those that are

¹¹ MF page 71

¹² *The Temple of Love* pages 29-30

unmarried frequently have more time to search for and find this Way of Life than those who are married; for the latter generally either become absorbed in innumerable worldly duties connected with their position in life, or else are too apt, when their union is true and happy, to mistake this shadow - beautiful and inspiring as it is - for the full and true Life of Love."

On the face of it, the theatrical, histrionic personality of Brother Ernest seems light years away from the sober Dependants or "Cokelers", so near to Brownings, at Northchapel and Loxwood. Light years possibly, but there are some curious similarities. While Brother Ernest did not actively discountenance marriage, neither (contrary to popular belief) did the Dependants. The Laresol Society and the Dependants were at one in their conviction that while marriage did not disqualify, it was likely to impede progress in the spiritual life.

P.

Shimmings Thoughts (2001)

An age of cyber communication and (for some) regular and varied air travel, does not take kindly to constraint or restriction, but these unpopular concepts can sometimes come into their own. During the outbreak of foot and mouth disease a few years ago, dog walking in any normal sense became out of the question, locally only the tarmac path "Round the Hills" being available. While its precise status always seemed a little elusive, it did remain open and at the same time offered a tantalising view of the forbidden fields of Shimmings. A daily immersion in a very restricted landscape occasioned a few thoughts which I have reconstructed here....

12th March: - The indefinable smell that is March. Snowdrops fade in the Bartons as the cold air retreats. The Museum is ready for a new season but still dormant. The oven door on the range swings drunkenly on its hinges as if determined never to close again but it does. Dry pots, straining succulents and a calendar already set at March 31st.

13th March: - Looking to the forbidden fields. It's raining again and the Brook is swollen brown. Magpies are gathered round the fallen oak. The lost fields. Old men remembering them three score years on, the Earl of Northumberland and his retinue sweeping down these slopes. A palimpsest of memory but we are now 350¹ years further down the road. Is time a road? And where does it lead? Along the tarmac path and past the notice forbidding entry, then up the steep hill, the high bank and wall of the Barton's graveyard on the left, to the right the stone wall of the Rectory garden. Cut branches thrown against the stones. The wild anchusa will have to fight through these next month. The gate to the graveyard is off for repair and a muddy track leads across to the yew. Soon the cow parsley will be looking over the parapet towards the Shimmings valley. The graves insist that an earlier age was quieter and more rooted. Some of the stones have been propped up against the Hermitage wall. Dogs, it seems, treat cemeteries as anywhere else; it's not a good time for the gate to be missing.

¹ See PSM 15

14th March: - Fir cones on the tarmac path. A piece of the path breaks away and rolls slowly down the slope. Apparently it's the tarmac surface that allows continued access. An earth path would be different.

22nd March: - The first daffodils. The Brook once more in light brown flood. Have I ever seen the land to the left of the stone bridge so flooded? A landscape swept clear of people – were the ban not in force no wind would perform the same function. The rooks' industry has created a layer of detritus on the tarmac. Leaves of lords and ladies, dark green, spinach-like, but flecked black. Polyanthus behind the seats or growing in the mossy wall yellow and puce. The three seats are like stations, something that would not occur to you were you not confined to the tarmac.

22nd March: - Rain: the Brook is a blown, brown lake, the fallen tree seems almost adrift on it. There's shining brown water in the Rectory fields. Almost four centuries ago Rector Montagu might have felt the same, but so much worse, hemmed in by the all-pervading plague². There are skeletal figs in the Presbytery garden.

P.

² See *Petworth from the Beginnings* (2002) page 147-148

New Members

Mrs. J. Adsett	2, Littlecote, Petworth, GU28 0EF.
Mr. V. Constable	Coppers, 9a, Westside, Tillington, GU28 9AL.
Mrs. A. Cook	Landscapes Farm, Ticehurst, East Sussex TW5 7HG.
Mrs. T. Haley	26, Hampers Green, Petworth, GU28 9NW.
Mrs. E. Kyle	The Gallery, North Street, Petworth, GU28 0DD.
Mrs. C. Lily	Stringers Hall, East Street, Petworth, GU28 0AB.
Mrs. J. Pope	Snow Hill House, Upperton, Petworth, GU28 9BG.
Mrs. S. Slade	Hungers Corner Farm, Byworth, GU28 0AB.
Mr. and Mrs. R.C. Streeter	21, Meadowside, Storrington, RH20 4EG.
Mr. G. Tabbner	c/o 20, Meadow Way, Petworth, GU28 0ER.
Mr. S. Wall	The Gatehouse, Lidsey Road, Woodgate, Chichester, PO20 3ST.

