

Miles Costello  
Petworth  
Collection

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*magazine*

No. 144, June 2011



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Gog View, Petworth.

"The Gog view." An unusual presentation of a fairly standard subject. This postcard comes from about 1910.



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### NEW MEMBERS

Mrs N. Brankin, 3 Egremont Almshouses, Horsham Road, Petworth GU28 0DW  
Mr G. Bristow, 24 Toronto Road, Petworth GU28 0QX  
Mrs K. Chatwood, 328i Percy Terrace, Grove Street, Petworth GU28 0BB  
Mr M. Farrow-Smith, La Gautrais, Laplenty 50600, France  
Mrs P. Madgett, 7 Spierbridge Road, Storrington, RH20 4PG  
Mr A. Pearson-Smith, PO Box 30444 SMB, Georgetown KY1-1202, Cayman Islands  
Mrs Sheffield, 4 Thompson's Hospital, North Street, Petworth GU28 0DL

### 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 objects of the society.

The annual subscription is £10.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £12, overseas £15. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

#### CHAIRMAN

Mr P.A. Jerome, MBE, Trowels, Pound Street  
Petworth GU28 0DX.  
Telephone: (01798) 342562.

#### VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr K.C. Thompson, 18 Rothermead, Petworth  
GU28 0EW.  
Telephone: (01798) 342585.

#### HON. TREASURER

Mr A. Henderson, 62 Sheepdown Drive,  
Petworth GU28 0BX.  
Telephone: (01798) 343792.

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Mr A. Henderson, Mr T. Martin.

### SOCIETY TOWN CRIER

Mr Mike Hubbard  
Telephone: (01798) 343249.

For this magazine on tape please contact  
Mr Thompson.

Printed by Bexley Printers Limited, Unit 14,  
Hampers Common Industrial Estate, Petworth  
Telephone: (01798) 343355.

Published by The Petworth Society which is a  
registered charity.

The Petworth Society supports The Leconfield  
Hall, Petworth Cottage Museum and The  
Coultershaw Beam Pump.

Cover designed by Jonathan Newdick. It shows a corner of East Street about 1900.  
Photograph by Walter Kevis.



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June

Leconfield Hall – 7.15 N.B.

Admission FREE

Followed by:

Neil Sadler: "A Policeman's lot . . . can be quite an interesting one"

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE AND SPEAKER FROM  
PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED PROGRAMME**

## Chairman's notes

You will note the now customary cover change. I hope you like the new one. For the central illustrations I have used seven sepia studies by Walter Kevis taken from a softback booklet of views published by A. Weaver probably about 1910. Copies of the booklet are now quite rare and the pictures perhaps deserve the wider circulation offered by inclusion here.

You will find the order form for the Annual Dinner with this Magazine. Don't despair if you're a little late replying but we do operate on a strictly first come, first served, basis. Andy's Greenwich trip was hopelessly over-booked. He plans a quite different London trip in the autumn, details in September.

It's early perhaps to comment on the car parking situation. Predictably the Sylvia Beaufoy, once underused, is no longer so. We shall see.

Peter  
21 April

## "I see no ships" – it's the Royal Navy Air Station in Cowdray Park

As if to prove the point Peter made at the previous meeting, there are very few people now who can tell of the wartime airfield at South Ambersham and Tania Pons has done a great job in researching what records there are and tracking down some of the personalities involved.

What is more, she is an outstanding speaker, bringing to life the facts, figures, photographs and stories to engage the audience's rapt attention throughout.

The private airstrip was created by Lord Cowdray in 1937. As war broke out and invasion was threatened, anti-glider posts were erected. In May, 1940, the newly-formed Local Defence Volunteers (later, the Home Guard), with a branch at Selham, were patrolling the airfield. It was requisitioned by the Royal Navy as a satellite to the base at Lee-on-Solent to receive aircraft temporarily withdrawn from service for maintenance and repairs. It was raided in April, 1941, whether intentionally or in error is not known and around that time, German aircraft dropped leaflets announcing Britain's imminent defeat!

At least 25 Dutch barns were erected to serve as hangars, each holding a single aircraft – Walruses, Swordfish and Albercores. 45 men were in quarters at Ambersham Farm, with others billeted in the surrounding villages and Midhurst.

Lysanders made secret night-time practice mail pick-up runs, of which local people and even some on the base were unaware. The operation involved picking up mail from agents in France by lowering a hook on a rope without the aircraft landing.

Local ATC cadets were trained in various activities and with others from further afield attended camps on site. At this point, Peter, our Chairman, was able to name Petworth cadets in a photograph which had appeared in PSM 134. Another group photograph included Jock Clark, a sailor from Petworth.

Football was popular, as were the daily dances, attracting local girls, and Dig for Victory vegetable plots were cultivated on the edge of the airfield along the Selham road.

Tania has been helped in her researches by John Moffat, who arrived in 1943 as a test pilot and remained until closure in November, 1945.

Now, all that remains on the polo grounds are 200 hangar footing posts, one hangar and some concrete strips in the centre of gateways which provided firm ground for aircraft tail wheels. Aircraft on site at the end were burnt and the scrap buried in a huge hole in front of the present clubhouse. A plaque has been installed as a memorial at Swath Moor Farm.



An enthralling evening for the large audience, which included many fresh faces. The Midhurst Society will be helping in the publication of a book when research is completed.

KCT

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## “A tale of Two Rivers” – and much more

You have to be at Dorene Taylor's talks to enjoy the enthusiasm, humour and insight she conveys when relating her adventures in the remotest parts of Africa. For her very welcome return visit, it was a tale of two rivers – the Kafue and Zambezi in Zambia this time.

Appropriately dressed in safari kit, she told how she and her husband, John, set off, unusually without being able to book ahead and prepared to go wherever their camper van could take them – a wise approach, it turned out, as Zambia's only oil refinery was closed for maintenance and fuel supplies, if any, were located far from the wildlife reserves. Motoring around in them would have to be limited and there would be plenty of walking. Nevertheless, they covered 3042 miles in three weeks.

Crossing the rivers on a very dodgy ferry and an even more precarious hand-winch pontoon, provided some anxious moments, but these led to beautifully sited camp sites and close encounters with the animals.

Game Management Areas are financed by allowing game shooting at the boundaries, elephant, leopard and female lions excepted, but this results in animals running away from approaching vehicles, limiting photo opportunities.

In the Chobi Gameviewing Area however, Dorene did take superb photographs for slides of antelopes, crocodiles, hippos, elephants, buffaloes, lions, a large monitor lizard, a fish eagle and the outstanding sunsets.

Zambia is a green and beautiful country of lovely people, with 80% of children in education. Sadly, with the majority living at subsistence level, very few can afford to shop in the city malls.

Especially for the many in the audience with their own experiences of life in Africa, this was an entertaining, as well as an informative and inspiring evening.

KCT

## Where have all the old men gone?

They used to sit in the pubs, yarning, playing cribbage and dominoes – and drinking. Now, it seems, the pubs are full of the under-30s and loud music.

That's how Miles Costello started his talk about Petworth's inns and alehouses – and how he ended, still without an answer.

Petworth has a reputation for its many inns, taverns, ale and beerhouses, partly because their names changed over the years and also because it is easy to assume, wrongly, that they all existed at the same time. In the 16th century, Petworth was granted a licence for two inns, Midhurst, three, but it is likely that there were many more, unlicensed and unofficial, then.

In the 18th century, safe drinking water was difficult to come by and expensive. Alcohol, notably gin, was cheap, resulting in the problems depicted by Hogarth in London. Although Petworth may not have been known for the squalor of the big cities, it had its troubles. In 1799, the Vestry Meeting was concerned with out-of-hours drinking, on Sundays in particular, and public disorder, punishable by fines and confinement in the stocks. Things were not much better by 1816.

Miles then started a pictorial tour of the town, starting at The Queen's Head on the London Road, first recorded in 1753, but no doubt in existence earlier. Now known as The Stonemasons, it has been Vinsons, The Trap, The Masons' Arms, but always the same building.

Coming up North Street, there was The Running Horse (1840-1847) a beerhouse connected with The Masons' Arms, The Wheatsheaf (1851-1959) with its stream running through the cellar from a spring in the Pleasure Grounds of Petworth House, The Queen's Head at the top, not to be confused with a later one in the High Street and The George (1597-1791) where a wall painting is still preserved. Such pictures identified rooms for patrons who were unlikely to be able to read names such as might be used today. Opposite the church was The Crown (1576-1693) and The Little White Horse (1672-1750). Down East Street was The Red Lion before reaching the crossroads – another one opposite came later. The Angel Inn (1795) to the left in Angel Street is presently under renovation. Tales of its ghosts seem to be recent inventions to encourage custom. Opposite and part of the business was The Angel Shades, running as an alehouse from 1910-1950. Back into Middle Street, at the junction with the High Street was The Fighting Cocks, later, The White Hart (1779-1939).

Hardly half way round and the time had gone. The second half of this absorbing story will surely have priority in planning next season's meetings. This is more than a list of buildings and dates. Miles' extensive researches have revealed a changing Petworth across at least 300 years, socially, architecturally and



commercially. An absorbing evening for old Petworthians and newcomers alike.

KCT

## Cactus in the garden of Eden?

### The March book sale

In some ways the Society Book Sale becomes busier than ever. "Book Sale Saturday" must impinge a little on the awareness even of those who never venture in, never perhaps, even open a book at all. March always raises the spirits: the promise of moving stock in the light, warmer weather, possible visitors in the Square. It's wildly busy again, but, with some dealers short, we're building a total through individual rather than quantity sales. As I observed in the March issue "certainly possible but a different thing altogether." Whatever the perspective, the Sale is an occasion, 2nd Saturday Petworth would not be the same without it.

A quick look round before 10 o'clock. Of the patricians on the £1 table, perhaps 95% will leave us. The plebeians on the 50p tables will dwindle, fiction particularly, but a significant proportion will remain. But aren't we forgetting something? The unheralded, unsung heroes in the 20p boxes. Smaller items that it seems a shame to discard but that would look incongruous placed with their larger counterparts. Mini-dictionaries, children's booklets, all sorts packed in those flat shallow cardboard supermarket trays used for strawberries, blueberries or, perhaps, mangoes. Better not to use the deeper trays; people like to fish a pond rather than an ocean. I favour a studied disorder, items laid flat for the inquisitive to explore. And they do, all five or six boxes. Ordered disorder isn't for everyone: people ransack, sort, regiment and restack. Time and crowded room permitting, I restore the preferred contrived disarray.

Here's a random selection from a single box. Don't expect to find any of these in June: this is an essentially floating, nomadic, population existing always on the edge of an abyss. As might be expected, the Football Fan's Instruction Book (£4.99) offers wry comment on the football scene. "Lord Lucan is alive and well and living in your team's trophy room." Rather less is the Lourdes Prayer Book. Peggy Bunt's *Sussex Long Ago* is a lively, if inevitably superficial, romp through the centuries. Did you know that smuggling was a Sussex forte even in Norman times? There's an official text (1960) of the Oberammagau Passion Play in English – there is always a religious, as there is a children's substratum in those shallow boxes. The Russian text of *Taman* (1946), excerpted and adapted from

Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, is a workmanlike introductory Russian reader with some ink staining (the last perhaps something of an anachronism in a digital age?)

Victorian Jingles, collected by Dorothy Baker, combines the familiar "Feed a cold and starve a fever" with the slightly less familiar, "Mackerel sky, never long dry" with the admonitory "Parsley won't grow where the missus is master" to the edged:

"In the Church's field of battle  
In its warfare and its strife  
You will find the Christian soldier  
Represented by his wife."

A rather battered Gowan Nature Book (No. 8) *Our Trees and How to Know them* (1909) offers some sixty glossy photographs by Charles Kirk and looks excellent value at 20p, as does a rather later (hardback) *Cactus Growing for Beginners* (16th Edition 1952).

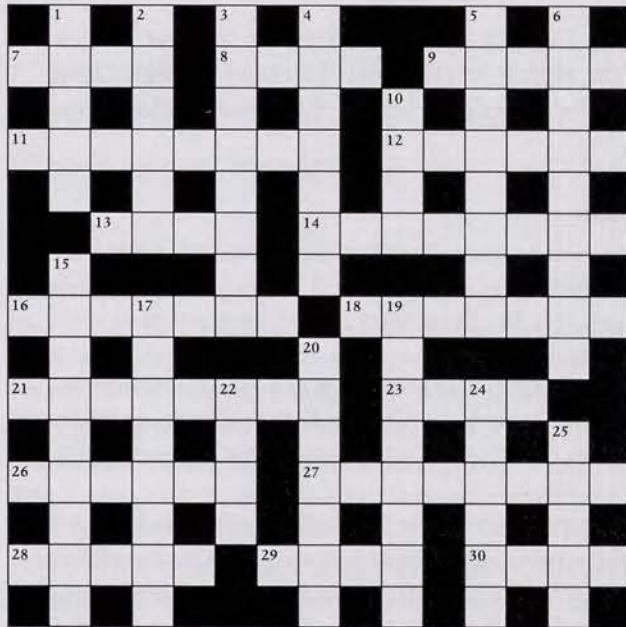
A small hardback, colour picture, guide to the Seychelles, printed in France with an English text informs that General Gordon located an original Garden of Eden in the Archipelago. Professor Hoffmann's *Puzzles for the Parlour* may well predate the 1914-1918 war, less likely, it reflects the early 1920s. Section I offers Puzzles with Counters, Section II Puzzles with Lucifer Matches and Section III Quibbles or Catches. "Take one from nineteen and leave twenty." Easy enough: "Write number nineteen in Roman numerals – XIX – remove the I and you have XX twenty." The book may be a promotional item for Armour Beef cubes, advertising for which adorns front and back cover.

The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom offers Greek text with facing English rubric and appears with the approval of the Most Revd. Archbishop Metropolitan of Thyateira, possibly now of happy memory. Lastly we have an attractive colour brochure for the Beth Chatto Gardens at Elmstead Park, six miles from Colchester, small horticultural items are another staple of the shallow boxes. Why bother with the £1 aristocrats, the workaday 50ps? For a pound or two a shallow box can keep you amused right through to the next Sale.

P.



## ROYALTY IN SUSSEX CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 7** Monarch's position in Church of England (4)  
**8** Richard I had the heart of one (4)  
**9** Elizabeth I left hers in Northiam where they are still preserved in a glass case (5)  
**11** Prepare to do battle (3,5)  
**12** Beheaded more likely than kissed in historical context (6)  
**13** Canute proved he could not turn the tide but the answer's there if you can! (4)  
**14** Wife of William IV who lived in St. Leonards after his death (8)  
**16** Saint, in a disturbed reign, is relaxing (7)  
**18** Reigning (7)  
**21** A Sussex town favoured by royalty (8)  
**23** Respectfully remove hat (4)  
**26** see 20dn

- 27** West Sussex town where Edward VII opened a sanatorium (8)

- 28** Give three of these for a right royal welcome (5)  
**29** See 5dn  
**30** Family pedigree (4)

### DOWN

- 1** A battle was fought here, between Simon de Montfort and Henry III in 1264 (5)  
**2** The Queen's third son – the first king with this name rebuilt Winchelsea to save it from flooding (6)  
**3** Prince Charles rode in a flat race here in 1980 (8)  
**4** Local large estate where Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I were all entertained on a grand scale (7)

- 5 & 29ac** Destroyed by a gale in 1893, Victoria and Albert disembarked here in 21ac after a visit to France (3,5,4)  
**6** Warding off attack (9)  
**10** The name of the Princess Royal – and the last Stuart monarch to visit Sussex (4)  
**15 & 24dn** King most associated with 21ac (6,3,6)  
**17** Now William and Kate are joined thus (8)  
**19** Edward briefly confused in Morden makes royalty only skin-deep! (8)  
**20 & 26ac** Could it be seen in my tea? The outcome of the battle for the victors! (5,2,6)  
**22** Pavilion (4)  
**24** see 15dn  
**25** Court official (5)

### SOLUTION TO HISTORIC PETWORTH PEOPLE CROSSWORD

#### ACROSS

- 2 Third, 4 Gwenda, 7 Edward Elgar, 9 Parish, 11 George, 13 Eros, 14 Swain, 15 Cart, 17 Sash, 18 Drill, 19 Xmas, 23 Rapley, 24 Starch, 26 Photographs, 29 Harold, 30 Maude

#### DOWN

- 1 Penrose, 2 Thompsons, 3 Dew, 4 Garb, 5 Dog, 6 Ernest, 7 Earl, 8 Ewer, 10 Seward, 12 Violet, 16 Almshouse, 17 Seraph, 20 Sockett, 21 Hero, 22 Arts, 25 Fred, 27 Ova, 28 Pam

## Old Petworth traders (6) – A world outside

If Mrs Burden's invoice for John Tate's decorating\* is local, invoices for stock for her little shop at the bottom of Lombard Street reflect a less insular world. Here is one for confectionery. Charles Taff and Co were but one of a number of Mrs Burden's suppliers, many of whom combined confectionery with fancy goods. This invoice comes from 1901 and is continued on the reverse. There are 17 different items, most fairly clear. 5 jars and 2 bottles are returnable and a deposit is required. ¼ gross of fresh almond rock is short-loaded and to be credited, the whole invoice coming to £2.8.4d. Despite the equine activity pictured, the goods probably came to Petworth station and were brought up by the carrier. We reproduce only the front page of the invoice.

\*See PSM 143





## Bargain hunt 1918 style!

In September 1999<sup>1</sup> I wrote an account of Lady Leconfield's Grand Fete and Gift Sale in Petworth Park in 1918. It was held on Bank Holiday Monday, four years almost to the day from the outbreak of war. Despite very poor weather, the event raised the huge sum of £1,500, distributed to three of Lady Leconfield's war charities.

Donations, and they were extensive, were divided into several categories: local produce live and dead was a major item and reflects, of course, a way of living that remained to an extent self-sufficient. Section A "Antique stall to consist of antique articles. Jewellery, Plate, Engravings etc." raised £151-7-9, a total exceeded only by the much more heavily subscribed local produce stalls. China, pottery and glass were allocated to a smaller Section C, although the boundary between A and C seems to have been something of a marcher territory.

In 1999 I took account of reports in the *West Sussex Gazette* and the *Sussex Daily News* but regretted a complete absence of photographs. I was therefore delighted to receive recently from Shirley Stanford a photograph of the Antique stall, Section A, situated somewhat apart from the Park events and in the Marble Hall at Petworth House. Given the weather on the day, a wise precaution. The photograph shows (second left) Ernest Streeter from Church Street, doyen of the older Petworth antique dealers, and (fourth left) his wife Constance. The original caption has been cut away a little at the bottom.



Section A was certainly not oversubscribed, attracting, it would seem, some twenty entries, far less than the other sections, but I noted in 1999 some tantalising items, of which a number, I suspect, would now be very expensive indeed. It

seems safe to see the entries as reflecting more or less the social divisions of the time, and two distinct types of donor – local gentry and local tradesmen, the latter group including one or two small individual donors. No doubt the local gentry would both be expected to support the cause and also themselves wish to be seen as supporting it. It is among these items that the modern bargain hunter would wish to look first.

There can sometimes be a frustrating lack of precision: so Mrs Matthew Taylor (Fisher Street) simply donates, "Gold and silver." In sharp contrast, Lady Princep (Byworth) offers "a carved cocoa nut mounted in silver done by French prisoners of war." On occasion the description indicates a certain confusion in the mind of the organisers; for instance, when Miss Bulmer (Westbrook House, Tillington) offers a Japanese lacquer tray, an embroidered table cloth from Canton, and a table cloth worked in gold and beetles from South America, there is a note: "The above are curios sent from abroad and we do not know in which section to place them."

The Leconfield land agent J. B. Watson's "hunting piece from the Duke of Beaufort's hunt" needed no such commentary, neither does Mrs Leslie's (West Burton House) gift of a plated tea and coffee set. Mr Buchanan's (Lavington Park) donation of a number of framed prints, water colours and oils is, unfortunately, not otherwise specified. He gave also an antique inlaid chair. Mrs Simpson at the Red House in Petworth, perhaps unsurprisingly, given her late husband's Indian Army background, offers a piece of old Indian work." Mrs Arthur Nattali at Tillington donates an old mirror an old Bruges brass pot, and (refugees from Section C?) a China Bruges flower pot and a China jug.

Trade and private gifts are a little more mundane, although Mr Charles Denman's "Antique Chippendale" chair sounds interesting. Mrs Weaver the newsagent offers some stationery items and Herbert Earle, Walter Kevis' nephew and successor in Lombard Street, a cabinet photograph frame. Unusual is Melicent Payne (later Mrs Knight) with her two pinpointed d'oyleys – clearly of sufficient quality to grace Section A.

Given the innumerable contemporary antique/auction based television programmes. I suspect that there were items on display in the Marble Hall in August 1918 that would create something of a stir in a modern saleroom. It is only natural to wonder how many of the items have survived to 2011 and where they may now be. The only certainty is that, at a distance of over ninety years, we can never know.

With thanks to Lord Egremont for use of material from Petworth House.

P.

1. PSM 99 pages 35-41. "The world and his wife will be there."



## Dora Older's diary (2): 1913 to the outbreak of war in 1914

[As I indicated in PSM 143, Dora is in no way a dedicated diarist, nor is she an overly introspective one. What we have, almost a century on, is an artless, sensible account of living in Petworth from a girl just out of her teens (Dora was 21 on February 1st 1914). While I have omitted a few minor entries, I reproduce here some 70% of the total. Courtesy of Mr Alan Older. I have regulated the use of capital letters to some extent and put my own comments in italic. Ed.]

**Wednesday Jan 1st 1913:** Pantomime in the Iron Room 'Beauty and the Beast' by the Petworth Dramatic Society.

*The Iron Room in the Market Square, was erected while St Mary's was being renovated at the beginning of the century. It was eventually pulled down in 1963. The Petworth Dramatic Society no doubt disbanded during the war.*

**Wednesday Jan 8th:** Old People's Tea in the Iron Room. Blackman from Arundel entertaining them throughout the evening.

*The Blackman family from Arundel provided local entertainment for generations. George Garland in his famous yokel act looked consciously back to them.*

**Wednesday Feb 5th:** Hockey match at Fittleworth. Petworth winning by 6-1.

*Dora notes another match at Billingshurst on March 5th, Petworth winning 2-1.*

**Thursday Feb 20th:** Have been to the Picture Palace that has been opened here, very good pictures and quite the taking thing here at present.

*Probably Mr Barratt's travelling cinema, see Stanley Collins in PSM 28 and photograph opposite page 5 in PSM 29 (September 1982).*

**Tuesday Mar 18th:** Red Cross lecture in the Reading Room at Sutton at 7.30. Mrs Lambert had a few tickets, five of us went. But a misfortune occurred on the Sutton Road, the horse went down, frightening us very much, the strap (sic) of the cart was broken so we had to walk the rest of the way making us late for the lecture. Which was very good. And Streeter's motor came to fetch so we were little the worse for our adventure.

*Henry Streeter, George Garland's stepfather from the Railway Inn, was proprietor of the station bus. Motor cars were still rare and unusual: Dora no doubt appreciated her trip in one of the new-fangled machines.*

**Sunday May 25th:** The Surrey Yeomanry came to the Park today to camp out for a fortnight.

*The Surrey Yeomanry were a territorial unit and a number of pictorial postcards of their visit are extant. The whole area was very popular for summer camps and manoeuvres. Two Edwicker brothers from Wandsworth were with the Yeomanry and were clearly friends of the Older family. Dora records a church parade on Sunday 1st. While there was a family supper with the Edwicker brothers on Tuesday 5th. The camp ended with a sports day on Saturday 7th.*



The Surrey Yeomanry at Petworth in May 1913.  
Photograph courtesy of Mr & Mrs Knox, Hangleton.

**Thursday June 12th:** Circus on the Hampers Common. Very tame.

**Friday June 13th:** An aeroplane passed over here today – this only the third I have seen. The first aeroplane I saw was about two years [ago] just as I had entered Tillington Church one Sunday evening. I rushed out for it had descended in Col. Kennett's meadow, for it was Col. Kennett's son, he had brought it over for people to see.

*There are other accounts of this, or similar incidents by, among others, Florence Rapley, Percy Pullen and Henry Whitcomb. The pilot is invariably Col. Kennett's son.*

**Monday August 4th:** Have been to Southampton with Father by steamer from Southampton, lovely day, very enjoyable as it's the first time I have been to Southampton.



*With Sundays as church days. Bank Holidays were virtually the only days when the family were free of the demands of the shop. Dora, her father and brother would make a point of utilising the holiday to the full. Dora's mother and sister were less adventurous.*

**Wednesday August 6th:** Agricultural Show in the Park.

*For this see Petworth Time Out of Mind (1982) pages 140-143.*

**Wednesday August 13th:** A fete was held at the Grove this afternoon in aid of Parish expenses. Very pretty affair indeed, it really being the copy of an English Forest Fair in the time of Queen Elizabeth. I helped with the Lucky Tub, my dress being mauve and purple with Puritan bonnet, collar and cuffs. About £100 was raised altogether.

*There is an account of the fete in St Mary's Parish Magazine.*



"The dress being mauve and purple with Puritan bonnet, collar, and cuffs."  
August 13th 1913.

**Saturday August 16th:** Mrs Mitford gave a Garden Party at Pitshill to the members of the Red Cross detachments in the neighbourhood. A Conjuror and Ventriloquist were the greatest attraction of the afternoon.

**Wednesday February 11th 1914:** Choral concert in the Iron Room, Faust being rendered. The orchestra was lovely. The Room was simply packed. Arthur and I gave our seats up and stood at the back.

*Arthur is Dora's brother. The Iron Room could accommodate an audience of two hundred or more.*

**Sunday April 26th:** This is Rev. Knyvett's, one of our curates here, last Saturday. He hoped the school children would remember him by this verse:

Sing a song day by day  
Sing a song of gladness,  
Sing a song and sing away,  
Sing away your sadness.

*Carey Knyvett (later bishop of Selby) was a great favourite with Florence Rapley and often mentioned in her diary. (So Sweet As The Phlox Is 1994). Dora would be a lifetime Sunday School teacher at St. Mary's.*

**Friday June 19th:** Sunday School children's excursion to Bognor.  
*Slightly less accident-prone than the previous year, see PSM 143.*

**Wednesday June 24th:** Stoolball match in the Park with Heyshot (sic) 209 runs for Petworth against 48 for 5 wickets for Heyshot.

**Sunday July 18th:** Stoolball match at Pulborough. Had a lovely view of an Airship passing along the Downs while cycling there. This my first sight of an Airship.  
*During the war years the sight of an Airship would have more sinister undertones.*

**Sunday August 2nd:** War declared between Germany and Belgium. The German Army wanting to go through Belgium to France, the Belgians will oppose them and, if it continues, England and France will have to help.

**Monday August 3rd (Bank Holiday):** Every-thing unsettled. Trains with troops and ammunition being carried to the coasts in readiness.  
*No Bank Holiday outing for the Older family!*

**Tuesday August 4th:** People everywhere in a panic frightened of the Germans stopping our ships coming in and out of our ports. A day such as this has never been known. I shall never forget it, the Shop has been packed with orders from the time we opened at 7.30 and at eleven o'clock tonight we have had to leave numbers for tomorrow. Some people have in enough stores for 3 months. Afraid of a siege and mines laid in the sea.



## Unspeakable things in the cabbage

I suppose I have a good memory. I was six and a half when I first came to Petworth in the late summer of 1939, but I have clear memories of living in Peckham, even of my grandmother who died when I was two and of her trying on slippers. Once in Petworth, however, Peckham Rye became largely a memory. The school was in Whorlton Road, Peckham and we were off "to the country". Not a lot of explanation, the decision was hardly ours. Petworth began with being left on the platform at Pulborough station. I'm certain it was Pulborough even if Garland photographs show Peckham schoolchildren arriving at Billingshurst. It was a warm day and there was fresh tarmac on the platform. I put down my carrier bag and it stuck to the tarmac. We were taken to Petworth, unknown to me then, and on to Grove Street, to a hut-like building that must have been the present Royal British Legion H.Q. – certainly not the Iron Room<sup>1</sup> in Petworth Market Square.

There Vi Geldert, just a few yards down the road, was helping, probably with the W.I. and took me home with her. I had done well. Vi's husband, Ralph, not yet called up, was manager at Hazelmans the Middle Street bakers. I might well have stayed with the Gelderts for the duration, but Ralph Geldert went into the R.A.F. was wounded, and invalided home. Vi needed to give him nursing care. Vi was well known locally for her singing, usually I think, songs from the musicals, and was one of a local entertainment troupe.<sup>2</sup> On occasion I would go to see her on stage at the Iron Room in Market Square. It was Infants School first (on the side of the present Public Library) with Miss Margaret Wootton and Mrs Bell, who, with her husband, had come down from Peckham with the school. From there it was on to a second Miss Wootton at the East Street Girls' School. The girl evacuees were quickly integrated with the Petworth girls while, to begin with, the boys were largely taught apart. There was Air Raid drill and the constant carrying of gas masks. As everyone else, I remember the erratic warmth of the big tortoise stove and the milk. I am sure there was an oak tree in the East Street playground – or was it a horse chestnut?

Happy as I was with Vi Geldert, I had, as I said, to move on; a little further down Grove Street to Grove Lane. Mr and Mrs Herrington knew the Gelderts from Hazelmans where "Duckie" Herrington worked in the bakery. There were two children, Joan and Bill who tragically lost his life in the school bombing. I was with the Herringtons for a while but then moved back up the road to Mrs White who lived on the left-hand side of the present Windmill House, then two cottages and virtually opposite the present Cottage Museum. Mrs White had another Peckham evacuee, Sylvia Duchesne, while Sylvia's sister, Rita, a little delicate, lived

with one of the local nurses. I still have a letter from Sylvia written in 1959 but I have since lost touch with her.<sup>3</sup>

As could so easily happen, I was less happy with Mrs White than I had been with the Gelderts or the Herringtons and after a while I moved to be with Mrs Alf Lucas in North Street. Such arrangements were, by modern standards, remarkably casual, Mrs White, Mrs Lucas and Mrs Bartlett (mother of Jack Bartlett who would later be postmaster at Petworth) played cards together and it was all more or less arranged over cards. Although North Street was largely new territory for me, I already knew and liked Mrs Lucas. My new home was just down the road from the Wheatsheaf pub (now a private house). You stepped from the street straight into the living room. There was an outside bath house with a copper that had to be fired for bath water, a coal cellar with a paraffin stove, the latter used in hot weather when the coal fired range wasn't in use. I think the Wheatsheaf (which closed in 1959) had a small orchard at the rear.

Petworth, of course, was now more immediate to me than Peckham. The tradesmen didn't change and, to a child, everyone in Petworth seemed related to one another. They weren't, of course, it just seemed so. Vi Geldert was certainly related both to Mr Bishop at the Lombard Street Shoe Shop and to Knights the bakers in Lombard Street. The cobbled street echoed the rhyme:<sup>4</sup>

Of Petworth streets the most elite  
Assuredly is Lombard Street,  
For in its precincts left and right  
There dwell a Bishop, Earle and Knight

I would be sent into Mr Earle's for tea: he had an agency for one particular brand. I was always told: if he asks you about anything, you must always say you don't know. I never did fathom the reason for this. Tanks would make their way down Lombard Street and this always involved repairs to the cobbles.

I was soon a member of Mrs Daisy Whitcomb's dancing class and we'd go out to perform at local army camps, being picked up and taken there in army lorries. I once spent a fortnight or more at Hilliers in the Horsham Road, which was in use as a makeshift hospital. It was daffodil time and I remember walking in the daffodil field and helping Lady Shakerley to paint some chicken houses. A regular errand was to Cards in High Street to get the accumulator charged, being very careful about how I carried it. When I was eleven and towards the end of my time in Petworth, I had a job at Eagers, the Market Square drapers, doing little local deliveries. Five shillings a week.

I can remember the bombing of the school, although I was too young really to take in the full tragedy. Lists of dead and injured were put in a glass-fronted case



outside the Red Cross offices in East Street. By this time, Michaelmas 1942, I was with Mrs Lucas in North Street and there was fear that there might be another bomb on the site – at least that was what I was told. For the night I was sent down to Mrs Bartlett's in Station Road. We children were not allowed to attend the funeral, but we did see glimpses of the procession from the trees in the Rectory meadows – or thought we did – the leaves were still on the trees. We were familiar enough with the Gog woods and the cherry tree by the Welldiggers pub – we used to think of it as the Cherry Tree pub.

During the war there was double summer time and very long evenings before it got dark. I remember being got out of bed to see the Northern Lights, obviously it would be dark then. I wonder if anyone else remembers doing that. Every so often my aunt would come down from London and take me to the Swan Hotel for lunch. My friends thought this a little “over the top” and took great pleasure in telling me what (they claimed) went on in the Swan kitchens. In the end I came to dread my aunt's visit and eating somewhere where they put unspeakable things into the cabbage. All quite untrue no doubt.

For D-Day gliders were going through all day and the roads were jammed with traffic. Incredibly, my bedroom in North Street being hard on the road, I looked out to see a soldier fast asleep on the window sill.

Most of my friends had returned to Peckham by this time but I was in Petworth for V.E. day. I was in Peckham for V.J. day. Although I'd started school at three years old, by 1945 I'd spend a good half of my life in Petworth. I left school at fourteen and went to work for the Royal Arsenal Co-op Society in the office.

My stepfather and I didn't get on and I came back to Petworth to stay with Mrs Lucas in North Street. For a time I worked for Spiro-Gills in Petworth, before moving to Pulborough, then returning to London to work in the West End. My future husband was a local man and it wasn't too long before I was back in the Pulborough/Storrington area. As with all evacuees, while we had had no choice in the matter, going off “to the country” had been a life-changing experience.

Pam Madgett was talking to the Editor:

1. On the north east of Market Square, demolished in 1963.
2. See “Fiddlesticks” poster PSM 119, page 34.
3. See also PSM98 (December 1999), pages 16-19 and opposite page 38.
4. PSM 100 (June 2000), page 21.



Andrew Smith as portrayed by Harold Roberts in the 1930s. See “Kirdford's famous resident.”

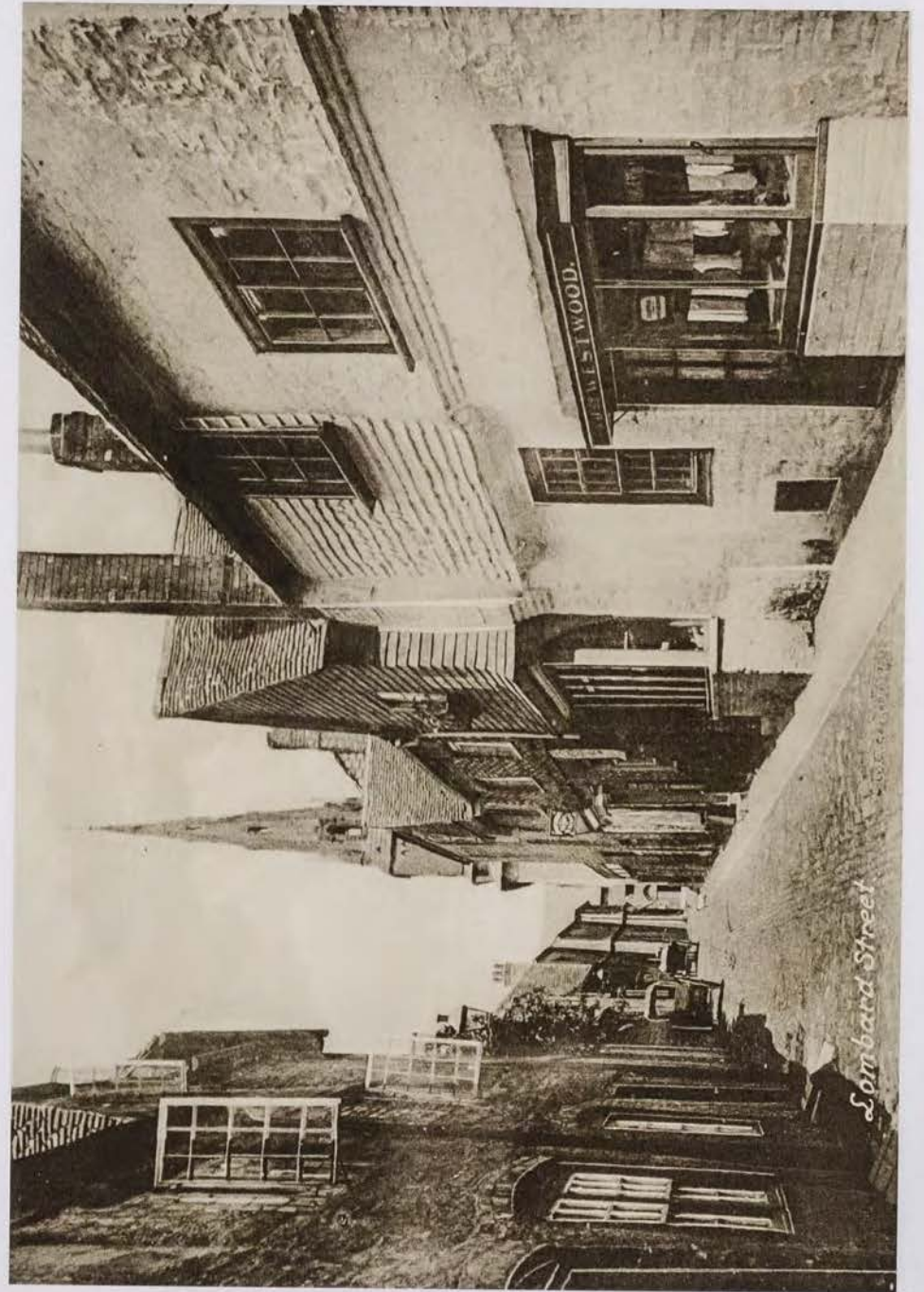




Seven sepia views of Petworth by Walter Kevis, published in a booklet by A. Weaver, Petworth, about 1910.















## Snow Hill

I don't think that I had been to Snow Hill before, though I suppose I knew that it was where my grandparents lived. I was really quite young, certainly not at school yet, when Mother and I came to stay at Petworth with her parents. You see we had been living at Bognor, where I was born, but what with one thing and another Mum and Dad had separated and while I was left with Mum my two older sisters remained behind with Dad, at least for the time being.

My mother had been a Blunden before she married and it was with Gran and Grandad Blunden that we moved in at Snow Hill. I am not sure whether Mum was born at Snow Hill but she was certainly raised there and was one of seven children brought up in the Park.

Snow Hill was a large house in Petworth Park that was demolished in the 1970s. Grandad was a park or deer keeper though he would do any jobs that needed doing such as cleaning the ponds or repairing the roads that ran through the park. Once a year he would have to hoe the road right through the Park to the Pheasant Copse, quite a task really for one man with a hand-hoe. He would also look after the deer. I say look after but much of his job seemed to involve either culling them when they became weak or old or killing fawns if too many were born in a season. It was a strict rule in those days that the Park should not have a herd of more than 400 deer. I suppose that was considered the maximum that could be sustained on the ground, though I can't help but think that there are more deer in the park now than there were then. Grandad would have to take a head count of the deer and I would often help him, this was not a simple task by any means. Another strict rule was that Lord Leconfield would only allow one white deer in the herd, and so Grandad had to destroy any white fawns that he found. He would spend hours walking the park looking for newly born fawns and tagging their ears so that they could be kept track of at a later date. Finding the fawns was never easy as they would be hidden deep in the reeds and tussock grass and would stay absolutely still if somebody approached them. Needless to say Grandad knew exactly where to look for the newborns and there weren't many that escaped him.

Snow Hill was a large house and may have had more than one family living there before us, or perhaps even had servants living in. I have heard that Mr Wilcox the head forester on the estate had lived there with his family at one time. It always seemed remote and isolated but really wasn't much more than 300 yards from the Tillington Lodge. There were no mains water or electricity at Snow Hill and only candles or lamps were ever used. Water was from a tank which was filled from a spring that rose in one of the paddocks behind the house. This lack of facilities was quite a culture shock to us girls having come from Bognor where we





had it all. It was especially difficult for my two older sisters who found themselves more or less cut off from everything that was familiar to two town dwelling girls. I had not been to school until we came to Snow Hill and so I began at Tillington. This would be a walk across the paddocks and through Tillington Lodge where I would have to ring the bell to be let out. Later I would move on to Midhurst which meant a walk out to the main road to catch the bus. Mrs Dicker lived at the lodge and she would let me leave my boots under an old tank and I would then change into school shoes. On Coronation Day Mum and I walked down to the lodge and watched the celebrations on Mrs Dicker's black and white television set.

The front of the house was never used, the door being blocked off and several of the windows being blanked. The rooms were huge, the scullery had a flagstone floor which always kept the room cool even on the hottest day, and there was an old pump in the corner which was no longer in use. The living room was equally vast and in the winter was extremely cold unless you were fortunate to get a space near to the open fire, a place which was strictly reserved for Grandad. The front, or piano room was only used on special occasions such as Christmas and was very much out of bounds at all other times. Granny played the piano and the family would sing songs. Gran and Grandad slept downstairs though I can't remember why as there were plenty of bedrooms. Two of Mum's brothers Uncles Charles and Bert, who had both worked in the Petworth House gardens under Fred Streeter, remained at home and both my elder sisters Daphne and Marilyn had joined Mother and I at Snowhill. There were two bedrooms on the first floor and a bathroom with an enormous bath that was never used as it would have been a colossal task to carry the hot water upstairs to fill it. Up another flight of stairs

were a further two bedrooms which may once have been servants quarters.

Grandad was very strict and believed in absolute punctuality. Mealtimes were right on the dot and we all had to be quiet as we ate. Certainly no giggling, which was hard for three young girls. The only sound was from the radio which Grandad had on for the news. If anyone else wanted to listen to the radio they had to ask permission. He never took a stick to us but only had to give us girls a sideways glance and we knew instinctively that we had to behave. Gran had a stroke when I was really still quite young and most of my memories are of her in a wheelchair. Mum's sister Edie Baker lived at Preyste Cottages in North Street and would often visit us at Snow Hill.

Snow Hill had a huge garden which Grandad tended faithfully. There were apple and plum trees, gooseberries and all kinds of vegetables, in fact there was more ground than we really needed. Like most families we kept a pig. I can recall Grandad lifting me over the side of the sty and sitting me on the pig. It did seem rather strange treating the pig like a pet yet knowing that it would soon be sent off to be slaughtered. Chickens would have the run of the garden and the Killing Paddock during the day but were always called in at dusk.



Leconfield keepers at Snow Hill c. 1965.

Back row l-r. Charlie Justice, Wally Baverstock, Frank Coombes, John Boxall, Eric Silvester, Alf Brown, Les Southin, John Bird. Front l-r: Ray Brown, Tom Fermor, Harry Eade, Jim Aplin, Arthur Hamilton, Bill Wakeford, Ronnie Brett.



There was a coach-house and a stable block which was not used in our time. The paddock behind the house was known as the 'Killing Paddock' and this area was strictly out of bounds to us girls owing to the language used by the men there. The paddock had slatted fences all around it where men with rifles stood to cull the deer that were driven in once a year.

We left Snow Hill in about 1961 and Gran and Grandad moved down to Tillington Lodge. Grandad had retired by then but was working for Mr. Shelley the Leconfield land agent down at Tillington Cottage. The lodge had electricity and running water which was a godsend to Mum who hadn't had either since we had left Bognor. Apart from the odd visit by soldiers who used to come down and camp in the paddocks the house was boarded up and left derelict until it was demolished some years later. There was a story that the house was being sold or leased out a bit like the Monument but the cost of putting on mains water and electric was prohibitive and would have put off any prospective occupier.

Wendy Brown and Daphne Booker were talking to Miles Costello

## Dean the Fishmonger

I never knew my Father for he was killed in the Great War when I was barely 6 months old. It was 1916 and Mother and I lived on in Croydon with my maternal Grandmother until she died and we then moved to Bognor where we remained until my Mother also passed away. I was only eight years old at the time and having lost both my parents was now an orphan. There was no alternative but to go and live at Petworth with my paternal grandparents the Deans.

Home at Petworth was above the fish shop in the High Street, and Gran, Grandad, Aunt Gladys and myself lived together. Aunt Gladys had never married, and as the youngest daughter was expected to stay at home and help with the house and the shop, a situation that was not uncommon in those days, especially if you were in trade, after all it was cheaper than hiring somebody in.

Clearly my arrival was rather unexpected for my grandparents were getting on in years and Aunt Gladys had not planned to have a child around, however I soon settled in. I never went to the Infants' school at Petworth but went straight to the Girls' school in East Street. Miss Wootton was headmistress.

Grandfather had an errand boy in the shop by the name of Frank Howick. Frank came from Grove Lane and would deliver local orders on his bike. Grandad would serve the customers while Aunt Gladys sat at the cash desk in the shop and took any orders and collected the money. You see it wasn't right for the

fishmonger to touch the money, I can't help but feel that this practice is dying out today which is surprising considering the so-called improvements in hygiene that we are told about. I believe that Grandad had served an apprenticeship with a butcher named Gold who had a shop in New Street. When he left, Grandad had to agree not to set up in business as a butcher in the town, and so he became a fishmonger instead.



Mr Dean the Fishmonger.

Most of the fish that we sold came by train from Billingsgate market in London or very occasionally Grandad would buy direct from a wholesaler in Grimsby. All of the ordering was done by post and I don't think that we ever bought fish locally, say from Littlehampton or other places on the south coast. Of course there were no refrigerators then and so the fish were stored in a big chest which I think was made of lead. Ice was bought from Guildford and the chest had to be drained regularly and kept topped up with fresh ice. The fish were kept at the back of the shop in what had once been a slaughterhouse. Grandad would sell game as well as fish before the war.

Grandad was very well respected in the town and like all good tradesmen belonged to the Petworth Club in Lombard Street. In those days it was known locally as the 'Gentlemen's Club' and membership was reserved for better off tradesmen and professionals. It certainly wasn't open for Leconfield Estate workers or suchlike.

Grandad died during the war and I returned in 1945 having spent sometime in the services. My Grandmother and Aunt carried on the business with the help of



Frank Howick who had left some years earlier to work as a fishmonger up country but returned to Petworth. Frank would drive the delivery van and do much of the heavy work as it was required.

High Street was a much busier place between the wars than it is now. All the shops were just local tradesmen trying to make a living. Mr Greest the blacksmith was at the top on the opposite side of the junction with Middle Street. There were two butchers in High Street at the time, Mr Biggs and Mr Lerwill. One of them would be taken over by Mr Speed but I don't recall which. Across the road was the Queen's Head pub, Mrs Henley was landlady at the time, she would stand at the steps and glare out at us children playing in the street, I was scared to death of her. Behind the pub there was a big yard with garages and a slaughter house which I assume belonged to one of the butchers. The yard was infested with rats and the owner would borrow our dog to try to keep them down. Up from the Queen's Head was Mr Spurgeon the vet. There was also a cobbler named Stevens but I didn't know much about him. Then of course there was Whethams the grocers and further down in Golden Square there were several other shops, the Co-op, and a bakery which I believe belonged to Mr. Knight. Everywhere was such a bustle in those days, you see people didn't travel out of the town much to do their shopping, there was after all no need as just about everything that was required could be bought locally.

There were big days at Petworth when I was young, obviously the fair was important and it would extend right down into Golden Square and was clearly visible from our shop doorway. All of the fairmen had their regular spots and they would return to the same position each year. Andrew Smith was very well-known and he would always set up his coconut shy in the little courtyard by the side of the Congregational Chapel. I can still picture him now sitting by the side of his shy on a wooden stool wearing a bowler hat and handing out the hard wooden balls. Another regular was the chair-o-planes, these were my favourites and I would always make a bee-line for them when the fair opened. They were always set up outside Eagers at the top of the Square. Lord Leconfield's Club-Day in the park was also great fun, it would be a fete and have amusements for us children. I believe it was really for Leconfield employees but everybody used to go.

All of the tradesmen in the town would receive a brace of pheasants from Lord and Lady Leconfield at Christmas. Grandad used to laugh about it as it seemed rather a strange gift seeing as we sold pheasants in the shop anyway.

Kath Dean was talking to Miles Costello

(This is a rather abridged version of an interview I did with Kath in 2003. Sadly the tape recording was very poor and parts of it were lost – Miles).

## Kirdford's famous resident

The parish of Kirdford cannot lay claim to many famous ancestors. In fact we only now have celebrities living here. But in the 19th Century it was different and we had living amongst us someone who was famous (and notorious!) throughout Southern England. His name was Andrew Smith and he was a Showman with his base in Strood Green. He was in the old tradition of traveller and was well known for organising fairs. He died in March 1937 and St. John the Baptist Church Kirdford was packed out with mourners at his funeral, with gypsy vans from the whole of the South of England parked throughout the village. Large obituaries appeared about his life including the national press and even books have been written about him.

Andrew was born in Hastings in 1851 to John and Priscilla Smith, part of a family of travellers who could trace their involvement in fairs back 300 years. They were listed in the 1861 Census as living in Hampton Wick and the family then comprised the parents with three sons and four daughters. Clearly they moved around from place to place and they were well known by the travelling community throughout the South. Their occupation was always given as "hawker" or "pedlar" but they were really showmen who moved from fair to fair running sideshows. Andrew grew up in this environment and when old enough specialised in the coconut shy where his familiar cry would ring out above all the general din – "Every one a good un."

Andrew married Amy in Pyrford Church, Surrey in 1871 and they lived a long but not always happy life together for 62 years. On four occasions he was taken to court for beating her but it did not seem to affect their relationship. In fact, Andrew had a particular management style when a rival moved in on his pitch. He never swore but slowly took off his coat and floored his opponent with a single punch. He was well known to all the local magistrates but often became very friendly with the local police!

His main claim to fame was his support for the old Charter Fairs. These went back to ancient times and were authorised by a Government Charter. The Petworth Fair is a good example of one and it is about the oldest in the country. They could not lapse otherwise they lost their Charter status and even the permission to hold a fair. He maintained in the courts the right of a showman to hold a fair when the local authority was intent on closing them down. He often won the court battle but in the case of Guildford, Haslemere and Crawley he witnessed the last Charter fairs to be held in these towns. He became famous over the whole of Southern England and was known as the Charter Showman. One of the fairs he organised was at Windsor and he always claimed that royalty



patronised his stall including Queen Victoria.

Around 1910 he established his "winter quarters" on a piece of land he had bought at Strood Green for £100. On it he had an old railway carriage and other buildings and he started to enjoy a static life for the first time. The site is still there on the A272. He had a large open hearth on which food was cooked and he always had chickens, dogs, goats and horses around him. He particularly loved his horses and had regularly attended horse fairs in the past. His favourite was Billy-Colt who could always be trusted to deliver Andrew and Amy back home from the pub when both were too drunk to drive themselves. There are people in the parish who will remember them. When Reg Thompson's parents ran Kirdford Stores, Andrew commissioned Reg's father to make him a suit in a special heavy-duty black cloth to a pattern already archaic. He was never seen, summer or winter, without his suit and black bowler hat on. He used to set up a stall on Butts Common to sell pots and pans. Sometimes he set up his coconut shy there, on his own. Many will remember his funeral and the gathering of gypsies in the village.

Andrew died in 1937 in Strood Green. The national obituary stated that he was 100 years old and was the oldest travelling Showman in Britain. From his birth and death certificates he was in fact 86 years old. Amy had died in 1933. Gypsies from all over Southern England came with their caravans decked in flowers to Andrew's funeral which was taken by the Vicar, the Rev. Godfrey Wells. He was buried in the graveyard alongside his Amy and the family erected an enormous headstone in their memory. It was by far the largest in the graveyard.

The sad ending to this story is that this headstone was blown over in the 1987 hurricane (of course – inscription side downwards!) and now lies neglected and holding its secrets to itself. Attempts to find the family since then have been unsuccessful as they still are travellers. If sufficient people in the parish were keen to promote this bit of parish history I am sure the stone could be raised.

Tony Sanders

[It seems a trifle bold to quibble with an authority like Andrew Smith, but Petworth has never been a "charter" fair. It is a fair "by prescription." When Edward I demanded it be chartered in the 1270s, Eleanor de Perci, owner of the fair, refused on the grounds that its beginning was beyond the memory of any man then living. See P. Jerrome: *In the Feast of St Edmund the King* (Window Press 1994). Ed.]

## No man's land

While as a family we have lived in Northchapel for a hundred years or more our origins in fact lie outside the immediate area. My paternal grandfather was born at Middleton-on-Sea and my grandmother came from Beckenham in Kent. My grandfather had no schooling at all and ever afterwards had a decided aversion to any kind of book learning, still less school attendance. Like many labouring families of the time, he tended to move from place to place, making it very difficult for the education authorities to keep track of the children. My grandfather never learned to read or write. At one time he was working on Tower Bridge as a navvy and in the 1890s helping to build the new London underground in the Tottenham Court Road area. My grandmother came from Kent, as I have said, and when my father was born he was baptised at the Congregational chapel there.

For some reason, possibly shortage of work, the couple came down to live at River Common where, presumably, my grandfather worked on the farm. The connection seems to have been a relative who lived in Petworth.

On leaving River Common Grandfather seems to have worked as a roadman, covering the stretch between Fisher Street and Shillinglee. There was a cottage at Lickfold and then another in the woods behind Boxalland on the road to Haslemere. Eventually the family settled in a cottage in Cylinder Lane almost on the crossroads at Fisher Street.

Born in 1896, my father was six when the family moved to River Common in 1902. If his first schooling may have been at Lodsworth, he was soon at Northchapel school where Mr Ridgewell was headmaster. The school would be replaced during the 1914-1918 war, long after my father had left at the age of twelve, probably in 1908.

My grandfather was anxious for his son to get out to work, but for the boy to leave school at twelve he had to pass the "Labour Examination", otherwise the leaving age would be a year or more later. For some reason the relevant papers did not arrive and there was no examination. My grandfather and the other parents were having none of this and simply withdrew their children from school.

Soon after coming into Sussex my grandparents had joined the influential localised religious sect of Dependants (widely known by non-members as "Cokelers"). My father's first job was with Bill Pullen, a member of the Dependants, hoop making in the woods. Hoops for barrels were much sought after and were something of a local industry. It was piece-work and the two worked long hours in the woods. Mr Pullen was invariably already at work when my father arrived. One morning he got up very early at five o'clock thinking he



would be there when Mr Pullen arrived. No luck, he was already there! Perhaps he worked a season with Mr Pullen, perhaps a second but he eventually joined his father working on the road – not perhaps the best of ideas. Already as a young man he was beginning to find the unvarying regular pattern of chapel somewhat restricting. Sunday service was morning, afternoon and evening and there were evening prayer nights during the week.

Without, I suspect, telling his parents, he saw a job advertised at Farnham, applied, and was accepted. It was domestic service as hallman in a large household. The house was in the Bourne and was the home of Mrs Tetley, a wealthy American lady. My father clearly impressed, for, after a while, he was approached by Mrs Tetley with a view to his becoming chauffeur. He would have a six week course at the Sunbeam Motor Company in Birmingham where he would learn to drive and study the mechanics of the car. Having completed the course, he went to Scotland Yard in London for a test. A policeman came out, climbed into the car and told him to drive around the block. The policeman, it appeared, did not himself drive and knew nothing about cars, but he judged my father competent to drive. On his return to Farnham there was a newly bought Daimler for him to drive. It was a big car weighing over two tons. It would perhaps be 1913 and my father 17. Soon he was able to take the Daimler up to Scotland where his mistress and her people were staying near Oban.

He was to take the big Daimler up from Farnham with two maidservants, stopping at Wakefield in Yorkshire on the way and picking up two more maidservants. Once over the Scottish border, the roads were just stone with no attempts at tarring. I think he quite enjoyed himself up there, spending much of his time fishing and making occasional trips into Oban. By the time he was back in Farnham, war was imminent. His employer simply instructed her staff to go to Guildford barracks and volunteer. My father was sent to train at Grays in Essex.

While some of those who returned from the war never spoke of it, my father was not so reticent. I think that men either tried to block the war out of their minds, or felt a need to talk about it. Either way, their reaction reflected an experience that was beyond anything they could have imagined or would ever experience again. As told to me, my father's memories are impressionistic, not forming a coherent account. They are more a series of separate rounded units having the battle of the Somme as a kind of centrepiece. Moulded as they perhaps are by later reflection, these memories come from someone who had lived the experience and had been in a way shaped by it. He will often have reflected that his very survival had been little short of miraculous.

After several months in Essex, he went to Codford St Mary on Salisbury Plain. With some others, he applied to join the Flying Corps, but these plans were soon

set aside by an accident with a lorry. One of his platoon claimed he could drive the lorry. He couldn't, and ran it into a ditch. The whole group were dismissed as incompetent and it was back to the infantry and the 9th Battalion the Queens. By the early summer of 1915 he was in France.

Certainly he had gone "over the top" on more than one occasion. On one foray he became separated from the rest of his regiment, meeting up with some other men who had become lost. From higher ground he could see German troops forming for a counter attack, running back he noticed little puffs of soil, bullets lifting the ground, as he scrambled back to the trenches.

Trench life was savage, he had known of officers shooting men if they turned back and even of an officer being shot by his own men. No one gave the offender away. Life was something from day to day and given the slaughter, difficult to set a value on.

One day an officer came to the platoon and said, "I have a man here who does night-time reconnaissance. I want a volunteer to go with him". No one came forward. The officer seized my father by the tunic and said, "This looks a good volunteer". The other man simply said, "Don't worry you'll be excused day duties". The task was to crawl out into no-man's land between the trenches to listen, establish where the enemy machine gun posts were, and generally glean information. While my father tended to keep flat to the ground, his comrade made a point of staying upright, looking in the darkness as if he were as old post. He looked certain to be picked off, but he never was. My father's biggest scare came one night. Lying flat as usual, he could hear footsteps approaching. They came closer and closer and it seemed as if the unknown figure would stumble over him. He passed within a yard. My father was armed with a revolver but knew that any shooting would itself draw fire. Perhaps the unknown figure had seen him and knew this too.

After a short, quieter, spell near the Swiss border, with just the odd rifle shot, perhaps at a chamois high up on the mountains, it was back to the trenches. My father would happily have spent the rest of the war in the mountains.

One night my father was on look-out duty, looking out into the darkness from the parapet. He felt his eyebrow itching, but didn't take much notice. The next day one of his mates told him his face was smothered in blood. When the M.O. saw it he said, "You're a lucky man, a bullet has just skimmed your eyebrow." The mark remained with him.

On his week back from the trenches, he would often attend the burial of friends who had been killed, and the inevitable thought would go through his mind, "Next week it could be me".

The mood in the trenches could be sullen in the face of severe punishment not



simply for alleged cowardice but even for disobeying orders. Once a major assembled the troops in the village square to read out the conviction of a young soldier. He was to be shot at dawn. The assembled troops fired their rifles in the air in protest. The major simply dug his heels into the side of his horse and rode off up the road with the soldiers firing over his head. My father felt that incidents like this led to a slight relaxing of summary discipline.

The Somme was meant to end the war. The German lines had been pounded for three days prior to the attack on the 1st July 1916. Given this preparation, it was all to be relatively straightforward. It was not. At the given signal everyone scrambled up over the top toward the German trenches and the machine guns opened up from the other side. Men were mown down as they tried to cross no-man's land and my father was hit by a bullet which went straight through his leg; bleeding badly he crawled along the ground and into a shell crater. There were already twelve men in there and it was a hot summer's day. The sun beat down and there was no shade. No help came and he lay there in the heat. One by one the men with him died of their wounds. As they did he took their water bottles, as with the heat and the loss of blood he had become very thirsty.

The day was passing and he was beginning to lose consciousness. He had been twelve hours in the crater and he decided to crawl to the surface. A man with a wounded arm was walking toward the trenches. He helped my father with his good arm and the two dropped back into the trenches. A corporal with two German prisoners appeared. They were carrying a stretcher. The corporal wanted them to go on but the Germans didn't understand, so the corporal settled for picking up my father. He was taken to a casualty clearing station then to Rouen. His war was not over, but he would not return to France.

From written notes by Ivan Talbot and a conversation between Ivan, David Burden and the Editor.

To be continued.

## Widow Jane Hayler, a seventeenth-century innkeeper of Petworth

Widow Jane Hayler was running one of Petworth's inns in the mid-17th century. Her will and probate inventory reveal much information about her lifestyle, though the name of the inn is not revealed. There is no surviving account, the third probate document needed to give a rounded picture of her financial status. Her inventory total was £145.18s. 8d., but she may have had debts that are not listed on this document. However, she seems to have been a lady of some character, as the following details show.

Jane Hayler made her will on 5th April 1667, in the reign of Charles II, when she was 'sicke & weake in body but of good & p[er]fect mind & memory'. She requested burial in the churchyard at Petworth 'nere the North doore where my husband was buried'. No Hayler headstones can now be seen, but the Petworth Parish Registers show that she was buried at St. Mary's church on 22nd May, her husband Thomas Hayler having been buried six years previously on 22nd July 1661.

She only made a mark on her will rather than a signature, though this could have been because she was very weak, and might not have indicated illiteracy. The will was witnessed by three men, one of whom, Walter Blanch, was a Petworth vintner. Blanch himself died a year later. Hayler's will reveals that a Mr. Thomas Stradling (or Strudling?), gentleman of Petworth, was the owner of her inn, and he was one of the four appraisers of her goods and chattels. John Johnson, another of the appraisers, was probably the innkeeper at the Great White Hart. The will was proved on 18th May 1667.

She bequeathed personal items to 32 named people, as well as an unnamed number of godchildren. Some extracts are given below:

To Mr. William Bennett, a loving friend, 'my instrument of musicke called a Tenor'.

To Anthony Bird, her godson, 20s. 'to bee paid into the hands of his Godfather Thomas Hosyer by him to bee employed towards his schooling.'

To Margaret Holland, maidservant 'a payre of old sheets & five shillings.'

To Thomas Hosier, a loving friend, 'my Two and Twenty shilling peece of gold, & Two of my biggest silver spoones'.



To Mary James 'my silver bodkin'.

To Elizabeth Juden, maidservant, she gave £20, 'my biggest gold ring & all my best wearing apparrell both Linnen & woollen' as well as a share of her goods and chattels.

To Mrs. Pitman, 'my two litle Cheyney [china] dishes, my painted glasse, one little cheyney flower pott & one of my least gold rings'.

To Mr. Paul Stevenson, 'my litle round Table in the Parlour'

These are just some of the 32 named and several unnamed people to whom Hayler left items – her mother-in-law is not named, though 20 shillings was left to her. All the godchildren (the will does not reveal how many she had) were left 12d. a piece, though two were named, Anthony Bird, above, and John Hampton who was left a silver whistle. She had a reasonable amount of silver: her inventory lists six silver spoons, three bowls and two cups, but the will shows that other items had already been bequeathed, such as a silver bodkin, a little dish and the whistle. She had at least seven gold rings, one of which was a seal ring. She named and requested six of her 'loving [male] friends' to carry her corpse to its interment, giving them each a pair of gloves, as was the custom; but she gave a warning to one of them, to whom she had left her biggest silver bowl:-

'... in case the said Mr. Lorphelyn (if hee bee in Towne at my funeral) shall refuse to help carry mee That then hee shall not have my silver boule above given to him'.

One wonders whether she was a very heavy lady, or whether Mr. Lorphelyn felt strongly about the carrying of her coffin. She may have suspected he would be difficult, so perhaps the bequest of her biggest silver bowl made sure of his attendance.

The tenor bequeathed to one of her coffin-carrying friends, Mr. William Bennett, was a type of violin. Jane Hayler presumably played it herself to entertain friends and customers at her inn. The 17th century music scene in Petworth is waiting to be uncovered, and hints emerge from other documentation. Geoffrey Goodier of the George Inn had a pair of virginals listed in his probate inventory in 1675, and victualler Edward Tupper of Northchapel, not far away, had 'musical instruments' in 1669. A Petworth resident (not an innkeeper) Henry Trash, left his cousin a tenor violin, a treble violin, base viols and music books in 1622, so music was obviously appreciated in the area.

Hayler's unnamed inn had a parlour, hall and buttery (the latter used for storage rather than just for 'wet' goods in butts), she was brewing her own beer, and the two cellars contained plenty of it. There were five bedchambers, and one of these

doubled as the billiard room with a billiard table, leather chairs, other furnishings and a fireplace. There was also a 'shopp roome' which sounds like a small drinking room, though some other trade may also have taken place there. Many innkeepers kept shops at this time. With plenty of linen for the beds and tables, a barn containing three hogs, hay, straw and wood, as well as a garden, Widow Hayler seems to have been leading a comfortable life for the six years of her widowhood.

Documents can often open the windows to a glimpse of history, and the idea of a 'Petworth Merry Widow' – Jane Hayler – her fingers laden with gold rings, silver bowls on the sideboard, playing her tenor in a Petworth inn for the entertainment of her customers soon after the Restoration of Charles II, is one that taps at the door of the imagination.

Janet Pennington

[Much of the above information has been extracted from: J. Pennington, 'The Inns and Taverns of Western Sussex, 1550-1700: A Regional Study of their Architectural and Social History', (unpublished PhD thesis, 2003, University of Southampton). Copies can be seen at the West Sussex Record Office, Chichester; Worthing Library Local Studies Section; Steyning Museum; Sussex Archaeological Society Library, Lewes et alia. The probate inventory and will of Jane Hayler can be found at the West Sussex Record Office, EPI/29/149/130 and STCI/23 f.35]

## A Petworth House ghost story

Volumes of last century reminiscence are not uncommon, staple Book Sale material. At first sight there is little to distinguish A. M. W. Stirling's *Life's Little Day – Some Tales and Other Reminiscences*<sup>1</sup> from a host of other such books, except perhaps for this particular copy's relatively pristine condition. A glance at the index suggests otherwise, offering, as it does, "Petworth House, 131 et seq." Clearly worth a quick look.

The aristocratic authoress had obviously been on excellent terms with Madame de Gilibert, granddaughter of the Third Earl of Egremont. Madame de Gilibert's mother, Charlotte Henrietta, was the Earl's eldest daughter, "to whom he was specially devoted. For many years she presided over his household and when she married Mr John James King, her father insisted on her living at Coates Castle in the neighbourhood of Petworth."

It has to be said that A. M. W. Stirling has something of a penchant for ghost stories but this one has a certain amount of circumstantial detail and evokes the sombre atmosphere at Petworth in the Third Earl's last days. Mrs Garland



Halliday Greenfield, the Garland of the story, is as Egremont's trusted house-keeper and confidante, inseparable from these years "I never left his room; everything was brought to me that I wanted, and I never left it night or day<sup>2</sup>."

A. M. W. Stirling writes (pages 140, 141) "... one of the most interesting stories which Madame de Gilibert used to relate was as follows:

One day at Petworth, when she was about eleven or twelve years old, she set off to visit the housekeeper Garland, who had a little sitting-room near the basement, where she kept an alluring store of candies. Charlotte had no intention of walking down-stairs – she invariably adopted the more congenial method of sliding down the banisters, and on this occasion she was all ready to start off, and was standing with her little body pressed hard against the rail, and her legs outstretched ready to give the necessary impetus, when her attention was suddenly arrested by the approach of a stranger. The flight of steps which she was about to descend led from a little landing on which were some bedrooms – one an empty room and another occupied by Lord Egremont, who was then seriously ill. But the door belonging to his room was always kept locked, for invariably he made use of one which did not open on to this flight of back stairs.

Great was the amazement of the child, therefore, to see a lady whom she did not know come out of the empty bedroom on her right, and walk straight towards the closed door. She stared at the stranger and noticed that she was very tall, that she was dressed in a gown of stiff brocade, and that she had a curiously hooky nose; but what attracted the child's attention more than anything else was that she was wearing a very peculiar head-dress – a scarf of old lace gathered in a point on the top of her head like the quaint head-dress in which the Duchess of Hamilton is represented in her famous picture.

The old lady walked towards the closed door of Lord Egremont's room, and Charlotte, seeing this, called out to her: "You can't get in there – that door is locked!" But the lady took not the slightest notice. She went direct to the door, which was under an archway, passed through it, and disappeared!

Amazed at what she had seen, Charlotte tore down to Garland full of the news. "There's a lady gone into grandpapa's room by the locked door!" she cried.

"What was she like, Miss Charlotte?" questioned the house-keeper.

"She was like Mrs. Bower, the laundress," replied Charlotte.

"She had a nose like a beak, and she had such a funny arrangement on her head!" But when she began to dwell once more on the strange fact that the lady had passed through the locked door, Garland became cross and told her not to talk nonsense.

Shortly afterwards Lord Egremont died, and fourteen years later Charlotte,

then a young woman of about twenty-five, went to Paris to stay with his aunt, Madame de Vallemer. Hanging upon the walls of Madam de Vallemer's boudoir was a picture of the latter's sister, Lady Carnarvon, who was depicted wearing a curious head-dress of lace tied in a peculiar way over her hair. Now, the only pictures of Lady Carnarvon at Petworth represented her as a young woman, differently dressed; and as Charlotte's gaze fell on this portrait she stared at it in amazement. "Why," she exclaimed, "that is the old lady I saw at Petworth when I was a child, and she was wearing the identical head-dress she has on in that picture." She thereupon related to Madame de Vallemer the story of the strange apparition which she had seen pass through the locked door into Lord Egremont's room shortly before he died. "Ah, my dear," exclaimed Madame de Vallemer, "my sister came to fetch your grandfather!"

1. Thornton Butterworth November 1924. Second edition January 1925.

2. See P. Jerrome: *Petworth from 1660* (2006) page 123.

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## Guilty – with qualifications – or rats in the rick

In talking over the years to those who were growing up during the 1914-18 war, I have the impression that food was, if anything, shorter during these years than it was in the 1940s. Possibly children's perception was sharper. First hand oral experience of those years is now unobtainable, but certainly the later years of the war, with the draconian Defence of the Realm Act (D.O.R.A.) in force, would be febrile. A curious case coming before the Petworth bench in November 1917 casts an ambiguous light on conditions at the time. It is reported in the old *Sussex Daily News*.<sup>1</sup>

The case was untidy, clear enough on the face of it, but with very blurred parameters. The defendant, Henry David Davidson, is manager of the Sussex Trading Company, successors to the almost legendary Otways on the site of the present Cooperative, the International Stores still being in New Street. Davidson is summoned for trying to impose a condition on the sale of sugar at Petworth on the 5th of October.

Prosecuting on behalf of the police, Mr J. A. Morris Bew claimed the bench had before it a "not this without that" type of case.

"It was a very crying mischief, as poor people, with only a limited amount of money to spend, who wanted some particular article, were refused that article, which the tradesman had in stock, unless they purchased something else which they really did not want. That was bound to create a great hardship on the poor people who were forced in that position – one might almost use the expression black-mail."



The facts were hardly in dispute:

*“Lena Gribble, a bright little girl, aged 10, stated that on 5th October she went into the shop and asked an assistant: “Have you any sugar?” She turned round and repeated the question to Mr Davidson, who asked: “Who is it for?” The assistant replied: “Mrs Gribble.” Mr Davidson remarked: “Not unless she buys something else. It would not be fair to other customers.” Mrs Ellen Thurlow, of London, who said she had been staying with Mrs Gribble for four weeks, corroborated.”*

Mr Davidson did not challenge the little girl’s statement, which could in any case be corroborated by four or five other customers in the shop at the time. Mr Burley, defending, pointed out however that an essential principle of the prosecution was not being met. Did the Gribble family fall into the category of “poor” people? Mr Gribble, after all, was the Petworth postmaster. Mr Davidson was well aware of this and if Lena had come from a poor family such an answer would not have been given. The point at issue was a different one altogether. It was rather that Mrs Gribble’s consumption of sugar, a commodity already in limited supply, was out of all proportion to the family’s apparent needs. Davidson had already stopped calling on the family because of their excessive demand for sugar. He was not trying to force them to buy other items so much as trying to stem the drain on his supplies of sugar.

*“He wished to avoid them having a grossly unfair quantity of sugar, but he did not want to tell them point-blank that he was not going to supply them. He was placed in an extremely awkward position. A technical offence had doubtless been committed, because they could only construe the statement made in one way; but he asked the Bench to consider that the intention was not to force people to buy something which they did not want.”*

If the defence argument was somewhat convoluted, it had a certain force. On consulting his order book Mr Davidson was able to show a considerable disproportion of sugar and sugar-related items like jam and marmalade. Of 70 items supplied to the Gribble household since 1st July, 40 (including jam and marmalade), were sugar related, leaving only 30 which were not, and of these 14 were soap, soda and other household items. Upon the basis of ½lb of sugar per person per week the Gribble family were having a little over double. Alluding to the defendant’s statement, Mr Thurley asked, “Was it with the intention of getting other goods sold out of your shop?” Davidson replied, “Most certainly not.”

Mr Bew responded that it would have been more honest and straightforward simply to have said that he could not supply them with any more sugar. The fact remained that he hadn’t.

The bench felt that they had, on the evidence presented, no alternative but to convict, even if Davidson’s intentions were arguable:

*“It was the first case which had come before them, and they did not wish to press very heavily upon Mr Davidson. Therefore he would only be fined £2, but it must not be taken for granted that they*

*would treat other cases with the same leniency. Defendant was also ordered to pay 10s. 6d. advocate’s fee.”*

The impression given is that if the practice complained of were indeed widespread, the relevant authorities might have chosen a rather more clear-cut case to highlight it. The Gribble family were hardly Society’s victims and, in straitened times, were certainly using more sugar than most.



Petworth Post Office probably during the 1914-1918 war. Is Mr Gribble the postmaster the figure in the foreground? Photograph courtesy of Shirley Stanford.

Mr Bew was the prosecutor at another case before the same sessions, this time proceedings against two Pulborough farmers Messrs. Fell and Holland. Their farms are not named. They were summoned “on two informations for permitting wheat to be damaged by exposing it to the weather and for permitting wheat to be wasted, which might otherwise have been used for seed or the manufacture of flour.” If Mr Fell was allowing wheat to be wasted, whether by pure carelessness, or for whatever reason, he was in breach of the law. Visited by two local policemen – presumably as a result of information received, the defendant showed them two ricks both “growing very green”. The ricks had not been thatched, although there was no shortage of straw. A man had been asked to come and thatch them. It appeared that while one of Mr Fell’s employees was able to thatch he would not get on the ricks. Straw might have been placed on the top of the ricks to keep off the rain but this had not been done. Some 20 sacks of corn had been spoiled.

The defendant disputed this estimate of the damage; in fact the corn had not suffered any material damage:

*“At the time the corn was carted a number of sheaves which were in a part of the field under some trees had not dried, and they were put on top of the rick to afford protection to the rest. He intended to have the ricks threshed immediately, but the firm he approached declined to take on any new*



customers. His man had been kicked on a knee and was unable to go on the rick. No improvisation of defendant's would have kept out the rain. His straw was limited, and he saved it for the use of the skilled thatcher. When he found he could not get the rick threshed he ordered it to be thatched, but the man was too busy to come at once. Defendant also produced a sample of the corn, which he had pulled out from under the eaves of the rick. Only about two ears showed any sign of sprouting."

Mr Bew suggested using rick cloths, but in a sharp exchange Mr Fell objected that these would have cost £16 and there was no prospect of borrowing them. "If the Food Controller wants me to provide rick cloths he must pay for them."

Samuel Hurd, a neighbour, confirmed that damaged sheaves had in fact been placed on top. He reckoned the spoiled corn came to just two sacks. Mr Hurd asked his own thatchers to work on Mr Fell's rick but they would not stop. He had himself urged Mr Fell to get someone to do the work; but it wasn't easy, he had himself had to wait three weeks.

The magistrate dismissed the case. While the defendant had been a little careless, there was no evidence of gross or wilful offence. The case might however serve as a warning to other farmers.

Mr Holland had Mr E. H. Staffurth defending. The circumstances were similar, although one of the ricks had been partially protected with straw. A second rick was infested with rats:

*"P. S. Harwood said one of the ricks was only partly built. The corn was growing green and very wet and a large quantity of rats were right in the roof of the rick. On the unfinished rick there was a quantity of straw on the top. Witness produced a sample of the corn. Defendant said he was going to get the ricks threshed, but as it had been so wet the threshers could not come. He wasn't aware there were so many rats."*

Here again the farmer had had the greatest difficulty in having the ricks threshed and thatched. He guaranteed he would get 110 sacks of good milling wheat from the ricks. Again the case was dismissed. It may be that the two prosecutions had served their purpose as a warning.

The cases of Mr Davidson and the two farmers illustrate similar aspects of the later stages of the war – the feverish atmosphere, the severe shortage of food and the perceived need for careful shepherding of resources. A contributory factor in the prosecution of the two farmers was evidently, and unsurprisingly, a shortage of skilled labour. Clearly the threshers were in demand. Kelly's 1918 directory gives James B. Fell farmer as at Hulls Farm and Walter P. Holland farmer at Pythingdean. Neither appear in Kelly's 1907 directory.

P.

1. 15th November 1917.



