

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY No. 148, June 2012

*magazine*



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Coronation night celebrations in High Street. 1953.  
Photograph by George Garland.

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### 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 £13.50 overseas £16.50. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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### WEBSITE

[www.petworthsociety.co.uk](http://www.petworthsociety.co.uk)

FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick. It features a lantern slide attributed to Walter Kevis. Henry Streeter's horse bus is approaching the Swan Corner. The decorations are for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

## Chairman's notes

We offer a retrospect of the 1897 Jubilee celebrations in this issue. Diamond Jubilees are rare indeed. You will also see that Debby has a break this quarter. Her new crossword with solution to 147 will appear in September.

We have had some thought for the summer programme, given that this is a particularly busy period nationally. While we are still finalising the details, it will clearly be skewed somewhat toward late summer/September.<sup>1</sup> We have trimmed the price of the Dover Castle trip as tightly as we can but it does look altogether exceptional. The annual dinner on Wednesday September 5th features a conducted visit to the Old Library with Andy Loukes. The appropriate forms are with the present Magazine.

Jon and Ros Hitchens tell me that the pony featured in the last Magazine was their Welsh cob, kept at Hallgate Farm, Byworth and always up for a trip to the shop for a sweet!

Two notes from our Treasurer:

- (i) As from 2013 receipts will only be given to members who pay their annual subscription in cash and
- (ii) On 22 March a number of members paid their subscription when they attended the Petworth Society meeting. Unfortunately, the Treasurer has ended up with £10 to the good and has mislaid or forgotten the detail of the donor 'giver'. If any member can remember paying their annual subscription on that night would they please contact the Treasurer so that the mystery can be cleared up.

Peter  
April 20th

1. Note however Debby's July boat trip and our guided tour of Ebernoe Common – both in July.

## The Diamond Jubilee

Sunday, June 20th, was appointed as a General Thanksgiving Day, and all the Services in our Church partook of that nature. The National Anthem was sung as a processional at both Matins and Evensong, and special hymns and prayers were used at all the Services. The Congregations were large and the Services bright and hearty. The only drawback was the collapse of the Organ in the middle of the morning Service. Mr. Tesh made the best of the Harmonium, and the Choir exerted themselves to their utmost.

We regret to say that the tuner who came on Monday reports that much in the Organ is beyond repair. He was forced to remove several of the notes altogether, the wood of the reeds being completely eaten away with dry rot. This makes the Organist's task of playing more easily imagined than described.

The festivities on Tuesday were brilliantly successful. Everything went off without a hitch. Thanks to the energy of the Jubilee Committee, and particularly of the Secretary, Mr. Whitcomb, and his coadjutor, Mr. Otway, the arrangements throughout the day were as perfect as they could be. The weather was all that could be desired – true Queen's weather.

The children of all the Schools, bearing magnificent banners, assembled at the Market Place, at 10.15, where the Band of the 2nd Batt. Royal Sussex Volunteers was playing. At 10.45, the Church Choir, in their robes, proceeded to the Market Place, where the National Anthem was sung by the whole concourse of people, accompanied by the Band. The Choir then returned to the Church singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers," followed by the children and a large number of adults. The Service consisted of a Te Deum, the special prayers, and the hymn written for the occasion by the Bishop of Wakefield.

At 11.30 punctually, the children sat down to an excellent dinner, in the Park, to which they did ample justice.

The dinner for the Town's people commenced at 1 p.m. and was very well done.

The Afternoon was spent by most people in all kinds of amusements, but by a large body of ladies in preparing and decorating their tables for the free tea, which commenced at 4.30 p.m.

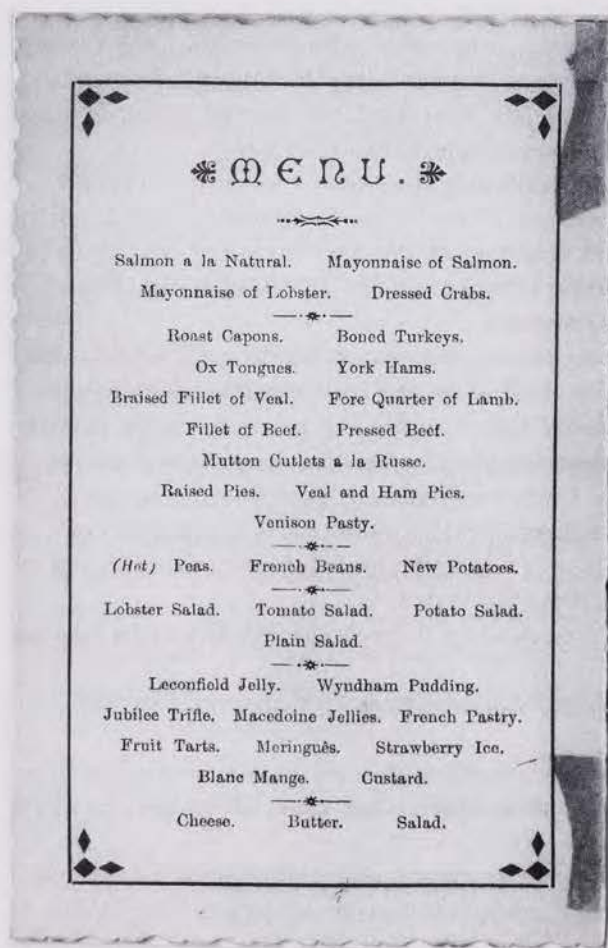
The decorations in the Town were very pretty, and in the evening when the houses were illuminated and the Torchlight Procession paraded the streets, the effect was excellent.

In fact, everything passed off admirably, the only unfortunate occurrence being an accident which befell Mr. Otway, just after tea. In cutting up some bread he cut his thumb very badly. Dr. Beachcroft quickly attended him, and it is hoped that no

serious results will follow.

The day will long be remembered by Petworth people as a most enjoyable one, and the hearty thanks of the Town are due to those gentlemen who took such an infinity of trouble to arrange everything, and who made the festivities the splendid success that they were.

Re-printed from Petworth Parish Magazine: 1897.  
[Capital letters as in original. Ed.]



Dinner Menu. 1897 Jubilee.

## “There on the day”

The B.B.C. radio announcement was portentous if not entirely unexpected. “This is London.” There followed martial music, Land of Hope and Glory. It was the 6th February 1952. George VI, ruler of a vast empire, was dead. Information came almost entirely over the air waves, television sets remained rare. Our radio was upstairs on a mantel piece. It had a kind of trumpet and we children stood on a stool to be nearer the trumpet. Dick Barton, special agent, was missing from his usual 6.45 to 7.00 evening slot.

My father’s job for the printers De la Rue involved a regular night shift, going off to work at five in the evening and returning at six in the morning, leaving my mother with three children overnight. My parents never seemed to me ardent royalists as such but they did have an awareness of the times and my mother decided to take me with my younger sister up to Westminster for the lying-in-state. No light matter, looking back. We came up on the bus from Dulwich in south-east London on a cold damp night. To us children it seemed to be freezing and the fog lay heavy on the river, although, curiously, it was still possible to see the outline of the Houses of Parliament. Lines of waiting people extended on either side of the bridge. There was almost complete silence and the night seemed to grow ever colder. The queue was desperately slow but never completely static. I don’t remember actually entering the great hall of Westminster but I do remember a great feeling of space, almost of emptiness, the coffin in the centre, draped with the Union flag, the guards at each corner with, presumably, the royal standard. It would be easy enough now to check details, but that is no substitute for actually having been there. We neither rushed nor lingered as we filed past the coffin. The lying-in-state went on for five days. The computer tells me that we were just three of the 305,806 who filed past. I think the Hall closed at two o’clock in the morning to allow for private family visiting. It was well into the following morning before we arrived back in Dulwich. Almost certainly I missed school the following day.

The atmosphere on Coronation Day was, of course, quite different. The local authority gave every child a celebratory propelling pencil decorated with the colours of the Union flag and with a crown on top, also a mug. Every child, it seemed, except me. Being a state scholar at Dulwich College, I was technically a fee-paying pupil and hence not eligible. Ours was a small street and the Coronation party would be in the larger adjoining street. The day had dawned grey and dismal and we watched the preparations on the television in a local pub. Most unusually for the time children were allowed inside to watch on the tiny black and white television that they had. All of a sudden, however, we were off to

the main event itself. My father had a 1933 Austin 7 with a cracked and yellowed Triplex windscreen, a layer of plastic sandwiched between two sheets of glass and a top speed of 23 m.p.h. It was the only motor vehicle for about five blocks around, excepting three motor-cycle combinations in our street and Mr Taylor next door to us who had a Lanchester limousine which he operated as a taxi.

We piled into the car and set off, going as far into London as we could, probably somewhere like Vauxhall, then walked. The crowds were stood deep all along the route and we were right at the back. In those days no one ushered children to the front and my father bought us cardboard periscopes to enable us to get some kind of view from the rear. I have to say my abiding memory is of people's backs. Certainly I saw some of the procession but I don't remember the Queen's coach. I was in school uniform, blue gabardine mac, school cap and black shoes with, mercifully, long trousers.

You can call up the information on line and fill in the inevitable lapses in memory over sixty years, but what I suppose you can never replicate is the feeling of actually having been "there on the day."

Roger Smith was talking to David Burden and the Editor:

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## No. 346 – how it was, how it wasn't and how it is

Each edition of the Magazine contains some thoughts issuing from the Cottage Museum, but here was a whole evening giving an overview of the vision, restoration, the ensuing 16 years and what it is like to be a steward in an unusual time-warp of Petworth 112 years ago. More stewards would be welcome and they would find a monthly 'tour of duty' a rewarding and satisfying experience.

Ann Bradley became gripped by a dream of rescuing a Leconfield Estate property before it was modernised beyond recognition. Through her persistent approach to Lord Egremont and his agents in the early 1990s an opportunity arose when no. 346, High Street became vacant on the death of the tenant, Mrs. Slee.

Research revealed that the tiny cottage, which had been brought up to date in the 1960s, had been occupied by Mary Cummings, the seamstress at Petworth House from 1901 until 1930. A research agent was engaged who, by hard work and some fortuitous coincidences, discovered that Agnes Phelan, then living in Walthamstow, had, at the age of ten, spent a fortnight's holiday with Mrs Cummings in 1919.

The Museum had opened in 1996 and, a year later, Mrs Phelan, by then a very lively 87, came down to go round with Peter Jerrome and Raymond Harris, filmed

by Ian Godsmark. What would she have retained as a ten year-old of a summer holiday 78 years ago? A remarkable amount, including sitting on the bedroom window sill to watch the band march past. "They weren't wearing uniforms". It was easier for her to remember what now was not like it was in the cottage then than what was – the cooking arrangements, the furniture, the sewing machine. And there was the primitive toilet and the one cold water tap. All of this was shown to the meeting on the big screen by DVD.

Agnes Phelan died in September, 2011, aged 102.

After refreshments and a raffle provided by the Museum Trust, its chairman, Gordon Stevenson, showed film and slides of no. 346 immediately before restoration and now, as it is thought it could have appeared in 1910, and the presentation of the "Petworth' long-case clock by John Bly (Antiques Roadshow) on behalf of the Friends of the British Antique Dealers' Association Trust. Accepting the gift, Lord Egremont paid tribute to Ann Bradley, Raymond Harris, whose expertise had contributed greatly to the restoration and Brian Baskerville, through whom the presentation had been arranged. Brian was in the street outside and received his thanks through the open window!

The very successful 2011 season had attracted 1503 visiting adults, 134 children and 96 with a free voucher. Group visits by schools and other organisations are already being booked for the coming season.

An interesting and informative evening and an enticement to get involved as a member of the enthusiastic and dedicated stewarding team.

KCT.

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## An aide-memoire for some, a history lesson for others

Timespan, in the persons of Lizzie and Tony Gilks, brought their presentation of life during the 2nd World War. They call it "The Way We Were" and so it was for the majority in the packed audience. For the rest, it was, perhaps, "The Way *They* Were".

There was a wide-ranging display of memorabilia – ration books, clothing, propaganda leaflets, blackout material, silk maps for aircraft crew and much more.

Tony, in Fred Dibnah guise, told the stories behind some of the exhibits during the first half of the evening, including how the song "Run Rabbit Run" came to be written and then the signature tune of Flanagan and Allen.

Lizzie took over after the interval, persuading two members of the audience to 'model' coats, hats, gloves and a fox fur and giving a hilarious account of wartime underwear, much of it made from parachute silk. There were the evacuee stories, the fund-raising events like 'War Weapons Week' and the allotments where the community came together to share the produce.

There was an unopened Air Raid Shelter 1st Aid Kit, which included a tiny bottle of brandy, examples of the weekly rations of food and the whole range of gas masks, from the totally enclosed for babies to the most 'high-tech' version issued to air raid wardens, emergency service workers and local VIPs.

For everyone present, this was maybe an unexpected insight into how much life has changed since the war years and an opportunity to reflect on what we have gained or lost in the seventy years or so.

KCT.

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## Close encounters of the hedgehog kind

If people were itching to learn about the secret life of the hedgehog, they needn't have worried – hedgehog fleas confine themselves to hedgehogs!

Graham Bowring, who ran a hedgehog rescue service in Southampton and now lives locally, provided a fascinating evening of information and entertainment, even allowing 'hands-on' experience with two live performers – Harry and Harvey.

Voted the most popular British wild animal in 2006 by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, there is, nevertheless, still a lot to discover about the nocturnal creature. Finding one in daylight would indicate that it was not well, perhaps having been injured in a road traffic accident or by its chief predator, the badger, or even suffering from pneumonia.

Hedgehogs feed on slugs, grubs, beetles, apples and birds' eggs, but shouldn't be given bread and milk. Goats' milk is acceptable, as well as cat and dog food (without fish), peanuts, bananas (peeled), raisins, pears and digestive biscuits.

At present in decline, they face dangers, not only on the roads, but bonfires, in which they like to hide, from mowers, strimmers, slug pellets, rat poison and being unable to climb out of cattle grids and steep-sided ponds, although they do swim.

Hedgehogs have about 5,000 prickles, they can travel up to 2 miles at a time, hibernate from autumn to spring, waking in warm spells. They breed from April to June, producing 1-7 hoglets (aah!) which the mother looks after for 6-8 weeks before abandoning them. They have poor eyesight, but a keen sense of smell and

hearing. They can live for 5 or 6 years.

Graham's rescue service held an average of 50-60 needy hedgehogs at a time, but there were up to 120 during the foot and mouth disease epidemic when movement was banned in case of cross-infection.

There were plenty of amusing stories arising from his experiences. Midhurst seems to be a place where hedgehogs frequently get into trouble!

We all went home happy, having had the opportunity to encourage Harry and Harvey to uncoil with gentle, careful stroking and even capturing the moment on mobile phone cameras.

KCT.

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## Knives in the soil.

### Good Friday at the Cottage Museum

"When we'd had fish my grandmother would always plunge the knives into the garden soil. 'No better way to clean them' she always said." We're standing in the garden at 346 and it's Good Friday afternoon. The sun's out and the heavy scent of the cottage wallflowers hangs in the air. Bumble bees are humming round the opening flowers and the grey ash on the cinder path is almost white. Last year's dahlias sleep on under a mulch of parched farmyard manure. The newly painted gutters have a lustre that matches the newly black-leaded range indoors. Inevitably I think back to Mary Cummings telling Mrs Goatcher at Duncton Post Office how, eschewing more genteel methods of knife cleaning, she too would simply plunge her knives into the earth.

Inside another lady takes up the conversation. "My mother had a glass washboard just like that one." "They're more usually wooden", I venture. "Yes, but ours was certainly glass, just like that one. When we moved it got left outside, the wooden frame rotted and it wasn't any good. Without the frame you'd simply break the glass. In the end we threw it away. And the copper! We used it for boiling up the Christmas puddings. And the dolly!" "We called it a posser" comes a male voice "it was like the agitator in a modern washing-machine."

Another year at 346. The usual points, or a selection of them, on a very busy afternoon. The gypsy flowers, the gypsy pegs, the Union Jack in the corner, present but not displayed, symbol of Empire but symbol too of the "six counties", 'pimps', faggots or Zip firelighters. Solitaire and the pictorial playing cards on the table. Mr Green the golfer with his family, Mr Dun the pierrot with his, hobby or

career? The latter I would guess. "Why would Mrs Cummings need three different tea caddies? And just the single dull yellow caddy spoon?"

In sixteen years no-one's ever asked that. Children like the Polyphon, I play it for them but with a certain unease. It's Good Friday after all and Mary Cummings was a very devout lady.

P.

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## "As mysteriously as it had come . . ." the March book sale

From a purely economic angle, "religious" books are an awkward and untidy Book Sale category, simply jumbled in with the other non-fiction. They may come in to us in considerable quantity but we are not aware of any great demand for them. They can range in content from the stale piety of an earlier century to the distinctly oddball. Usually directed at one particular subsection of a very splintered catchment, a proportion are removed prior to the Sale, while none will appear a second time. Works of biblical scholarship are rarely seen and in any case too technical to attract the general reader. They date almost before they appear in print.

Here's something of an exception. A rare visitor indeed<sup>1</sup>. I've not seen another copy in eleven years and more. It's old now, and perhaps, for 21st century tastes, a little on the sober side. In its time the book achieved a blend of scholarly and popular that would be virtually impossible today. If ninety years of succeeding scholarship are now lapping at the very foundations of Skinner's presentation, it remains a good general introduction to what is acknowledged to be a particularly intractable biblical book. The subtitle indicates one of Skinner's primary concerns. Stated boldly: is it possible now to establish any kind of link with the consciousness of a man who lived over two and a half millennia ago? Skinner thought it possible.

Why choose Jeremiah? Simply because, on the face of it, the biblical book which bears his name contains material which can be read as the record of an inner life. Under the title "Individual Religion. The Inner Life of Jeremiah"<sup>2</sup> Skinner examines "a series of poetic utterances, which, through a tacit agreement of recent scholars, have come to be known as the Confessions of Jeremiah"<sup>3</sup>. According to Skinner "They lay bare the inmost secrets of the prophet's life, his fighting without and his fears within, his mental conflicts with adversity and

doubts and temptation".

But do they? Skinner's reading of these poems still has its supporters but his analysis has come under increasing critical scrutiny. While in 1922 it was possible to see Jeremiah as a major influence on the psalms, the emphasis now tends to see the influence the other way and to find in the passages in question a formal patterned element behind which the speaker recedes. Is the speaker an individual voice or spokesman for the community? Is Skinner reading two millennia of later (and Western) experience into these texts? Did he perhaps look so hard and so long into the well of time that he began to see there his own reflection?

So what about the March Sale? Proof if any were needed, of the old maxim. "A sale is only as good as the books we're given". After a less than vintage couple of months, we had excellent stock and a corresponding total. And John Skinner? Well, to continue the biblical theme, if, like Elijah, the book had appeared from nowhere, by the end, like that prophet, it had vanished, as mysteriously as it had come.

1. John Skinner: Prophecy and Religion. Studies in the life of Jeremiah (Cambridge 1922 7th Edition 1961). Skinner was principal of Westminster Theological College.
2. Pages 201-230.
3. These are scattered through chapters 12-20 of the book, for example, 12:1-6, 15:10-21, 18:18-23, 20:7-18.

P.

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## David and Ian's Burton walk. April 22nd

"April of a thousand showers." It's not always true but, after a long period without rain, it seems accurate enough for 2012. Overcast, cold and rain always threatening. Through the gate into the Reserve, a bed of lily of the valley immediately to the left, to the right the spring yellow of celandine. Then a posse of sweet chestnut, their tortured boles still bare of leaf. Do they really go back as far as Domesday? Some say so. Safer, perhaps, to think in terms of Elizabeth I and the long Roman Catholic tradition at Burton Park. The great house rises in the near distance, etched light against a slate sky. We branch off left. Memories of St Michaels School gone now these twenty years and more. Lewes Lodge, the sixth form house. On into the woods. Still the odd spots of rain, ruffling the surface of Chingford Pond but not, apparently, a lone swan. Chingford seems an odd name



for a pond at Burton.

There's little colour and no sun. The old waterfall has been diverted and is now forlorn. Bloated hazels in the hedgerow, is that a badger sett across the path? The recent rain on parched earth has made the paths slippery. The bluebells are sparse: some put this down to a mild winter. We come down a steep muddy slope to emerge almost at Sutton crossroads. Some divert along the road back to the Mill, but the main party take the Bigenor Road and turn off at right angles. We look across to Petworth church amongst the grey clouds and, almost lost in the gloom, the Station Road crane. Thanks very much David, Ian (and Linda).

P.

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## “Peddler” Palmer – a Sussex character

Mr C. Davis writes from Bridgend:

“Pedlar” (or Peddler) Palmer was born on the 27th September 1879. He joined the 1st Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment at the age of nineteen and served in Malta, South Africa and India. He was in the mounted infantry detachment whilst fighting in South Africa, when he was thrown from his horse and injured his spine. This ended his military career and he was discharged as medically unfit at Sitapur, India in 1903.

When the 1914-1918 war began he was soon with the Remount Unit in Petworth Park which prepared horses for service in France. After the war he started a fishmonger's business travelling through outlying villages with his flat cart, pony and fresh fish. It was there that he met my mother, a widow, living at Brownings Farm, Kirdford. Her husband, my father, had died just after the war ended. They married and moved in for a while with his sister Mrs Remnant in Grove Street, Petworth.

He gave up his fish business and went to work at the Heath End Sandpit, on occasion filling in as town crier. There are several well-known George Garland photographs of him “crying”. He was then offered a job as “lengthman” with the West Sussex County Council having responsibility for the road from the bottom of Duncton Hill as far as Lyttelton Farm, as a family we would move to the Dog Kennels at the top of the hill. Eventually he took a similar job at Sutton.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 he worked on building the beach defences along the south-coast.

As a stepfather he was the best anyone could have had. He was awarded the South Africa medal and clasp (1901-2) with bar for the Transvaal Campaign.

## Dora Older's diary (6): 1917

*[I have used almost all of Dora's entries. If they are widely spaced and usually made on Sunday, they will reflect Dora's long day at the shop: her brother Arthur's absence on active service obviously having its effect. Ed.]*

### February 11th 1917 (Sunday)

Change in the weather. No frost last night – after eight weeks of sharp frosts 17, 18 or 20° each night. This is the coldest winter we have had for 22 years – there has been skating on the pond in the Park for a fortnight. Hardly a holly berry to be seen this winter.

### Sunday Feby 18th

The enemies' submarines have been so busy sinking all food supplying ships that it has come to food rationing in this country  $\frac{3}{4}$ lb sugar, 2½lbs meat and 4½lbs bread or equivalent of flour per head per week.

The sugar and meat are quite within the limit for us, but the bread we have consumed through the cold of the last few weeks has been a great deal above the limit. We are beginning to feel the pinch of war.

### Saturday April 7th 1917

Sergt Major Whitley<sup>1</sup> – or rather Lieut. Whitley now – who was billeted with us, has been drowned on his way home from Salonika – whether he was torpedoed or not we do not know, his people have had no particulars.

### April 1917

We have had a letter from Arthur: after anxiously waiting for some days. He came through the Battle at Gaza, Palestine, quite unscathed. The 4th Sussex were chosen to lead the attack on the Turks and was in a hot quarter for some hours. They lost their Colonel, one Major, two Captains, eleven Lieutenants and about 200 casualties amongst the men – two Petworth men being killed and several wounded.

### Sunday May 6th

55 ships were submarined last week. Our food supplies are becoming most serious.



Snapshots from Arthur.  
May 2, 1917.

### Sunday 17th June 1917

There are about 800 Canadian soldiers camped in the Park. An ammunition column of the Canadian Field Artillery. Last Thursday they gave a concert in [the] front of the House. Yesterday one was drowned while bathing in the Lower Pond.

### Wednesday Aug 15th 1917

Have been for a bicycle ride to Haslemere and back over the top of Blackdown<sup>2</sup>.

1. See eg Diary 25th February 1915.
2. Dora has pinned in a piece of heather picked close to Aldworth, home of the late Lord Tennyson.

Courtesy Mr Alan Older

## Tramps and gypsies

Tramps, or 'Gentlemen of the Road' as they were sometimes known when I was a child, were once a common sight around Petworth. They would regularly be seen shuffling through the town having I presume walked from somewhere in Surrey, possibly Godalming or Guildford or even as far as London. Perhaps they had a regular route visiting the same towns more than once a year. I would guess that many of them were old soldiers who had not managed to settle in 'civvy street' preferring instead the freedom and anonymity of a life on the road.

Though a common sight none became familiar or recognisable, after all it would have been almost impossible to identify them through their long beard and the layers of road dust engrained into their features. The tramps that I knew usually entered Petworth along the London Road, stooped backs, with their eyes seeming to search the road beneath their feet. None I suppose would have made eye contact even if we had wished them to, which of course we didn't. Laden down

with all their wordly goods they pushed bicycles that they never rode, others hauled prams that would never carry a child, very few were empty handed. Goodness knows why they came to the town, did they even know where they were or where they were going? The old workhouse in North Street with its 'Casual' or 'Tramps' ward had long since closed and there did not appear to be any reason for their visits. Clearly they were just passing through but on their way where? In an earlier time their next stop may have been the workhouse at Sutton or more likely they would make their way over Duncton Hill to take advantage of the better weather and the larger populations along the coast.

We were living at number 83 Hampers Green in one of the wooden houses which stood at the top of the narrow footpath that runs from the estate down to the bus stop on the London Road. Occasionally, perhaps once or twice a year, a tramp would walk up the path and our house would be the first they would come to when they reached the top. I recall coming home from school and finding Mum filling a beaten green tin flask with boiling hot water so that a tramp could make tea, or on another occasion giving a slice of bread or cake to take with him. Gypsy women would also walk up the path, children in tow, selling twists of heather or bundles of clothes pegs. Their stories were always the same and they invariably called other women 'Mum' no matter what their age.

Following these Gypsy visits a strange mark would appear on the garden gate post and we always assumed that it was to let others know what welcome they may expect. A tick would indicate that they may have some success at the house, while a triangle usually meant that the householder could be sympathetic but too many visits had been made. Of course there were other signs such as a row of teeth which warned of a dangerous dog.

I don't recall Gypsy families camping on Hampers Common, instead they would set up on the wide verge alongside the park wall where the new entrance to the National Trust car park has been built. Perhaps the grass there was better for their horses, the common being mown short for football.

By the end of the 60's the tramps had all but disappeared from the roads around Petworth. I guess that the closure of the rural workhouses would have begun their decline and greatly improved welfare and better facilities in the large cities meant that they no longer needed to traipse the countryside. Perhaps those tramps that I recall were just the sad remnants of that tradition of walking from workhouse to workhouse, begging and scrounging along their way.

△ This house has been visited too often.

⚡ Angry dog.

⊙ Risk of police being alerted.

⊗ Kind people

Miles Costello

## Out of time?

Jonathan Newdick's new book *Out of time?* continues the theme of topographical drawing for which he has become well-known. It is also the catalogue for an exhibition of his work, much of which will be seen for the first time, at The Weald & Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton from June 30th to July 12th.

The following extract is from the foreword by Alexandra Harris, writer, critic, lecturer in English at the University of Liverpool and one of BBC Radio 3's New Generation Thinkers.

"These drawings re-invigorate a topographical tradition which has run continuously through English art, from the exquisite draughtsmanship of Paul Sandby in the eighteenth century, through Samuel Palmer's lichened barns at Shoreham, to Eric Ravilious's leaning fence posts in the 1930s. Like his predecessors, Newdick is a recorder of places on the verge of change, but he is not only a recorder. He is an interpreter of the secrets and stories inherent in the landscape, and a creator of forms which might express them.

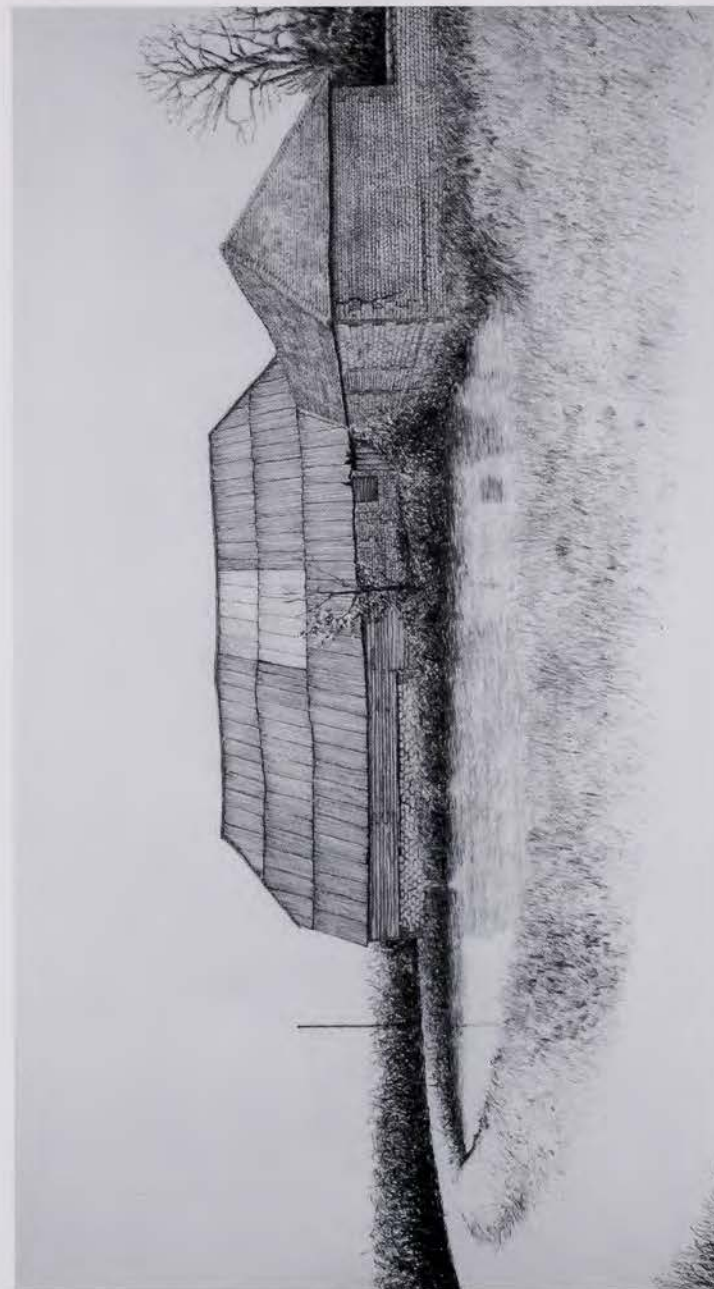
Turning the pages of this endlessly absorbing book I am struck by its spirit of exploration and experiment. Topographical art has a reputation for playing rather safe, but look at the quiet audacity of Newdick's compositions. The focal point is often the gaping black hole of a barn entrance. Not many artists could pull that off. Nor would many take the risk of devoting nearly half a sheet to a stretch of chicken-wire fence, as Newdick does in one drawing, honouring the idiosyncrasies of each little wire hexagon."

The texts which accompany the drawings on pages 19 and 20 are:

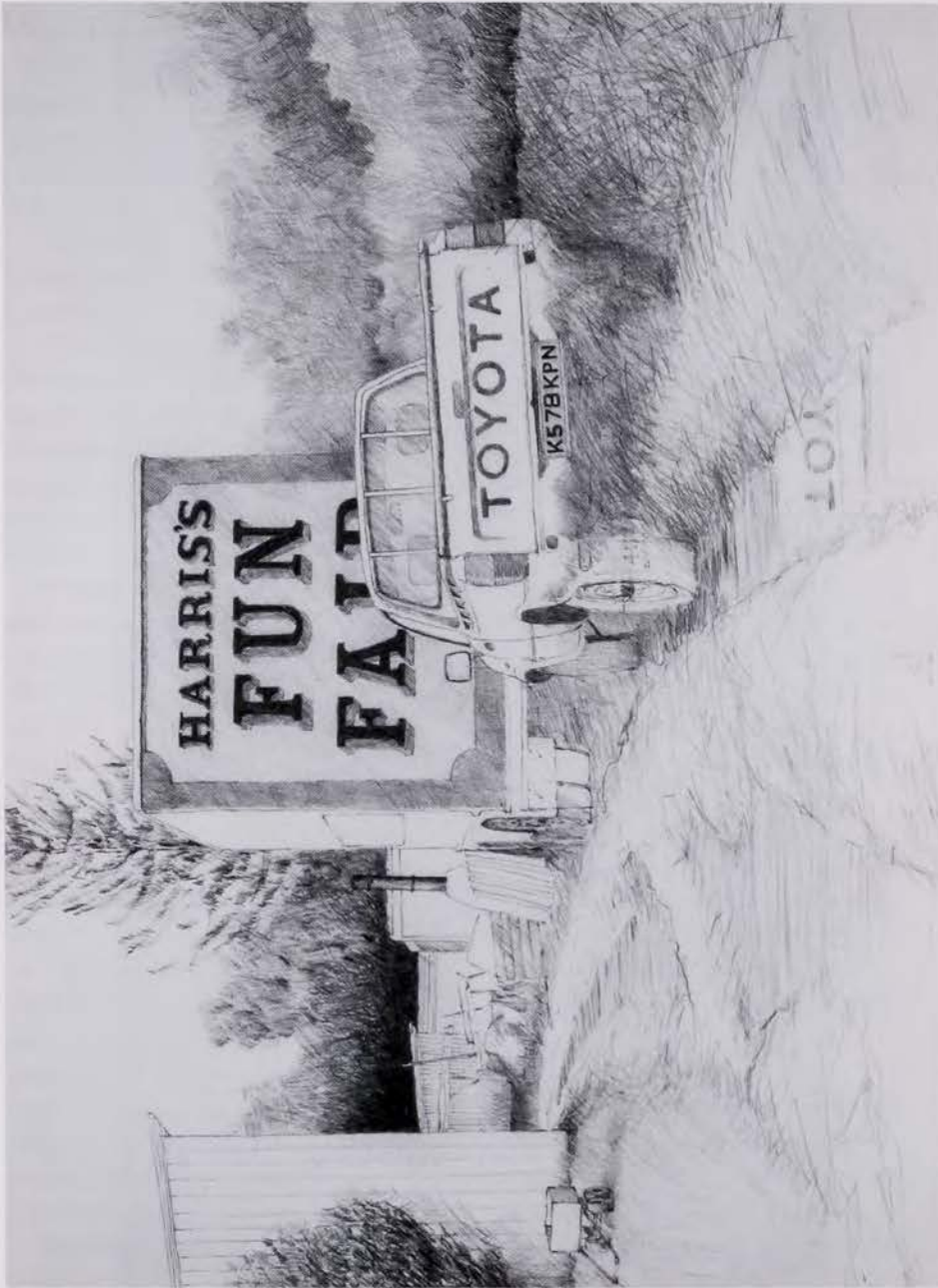
Page 19. *The wind in the wires sounds like a distant musician practising for the Mount Airy Fiddlers' Convention in North Carolina. In a galvanised fence post there are holes where the bolts should be. As it blows across these it reminds me of the Memphis Jug Band on a difficult day. These two together are almost there, but there is no rhythm section. There is rain though and I begin to see the practical value of watercolour over graphite. I pull my coat over my head and drawing board and in my little tent I am given the percussion. Who needs iTunes and a plug in your ear?*

Page 20. *There seems to be a fragile allegory of the new world economy and traditional cultures, the one barring the progress or continuation of the other. Yet the typography perhaps suggests something – the weak ephemerality of the computer-generated and the solid trustworthiness of the hand-crafted. It's a long shot but you never know.*

*Out of time?* will be published on June 30th. A large-format paperback of 152 pages, it contains 66 pencil drawings with accompanying texts and the price is expected to be £24.95. It will be available from bookshops or direct from Jonathan. (Telephone: 01798 342 113; e-mail: [jonathan@jonathannewdick.co.uk](mailto:jonathan@jonathannewdick.co.uk)).



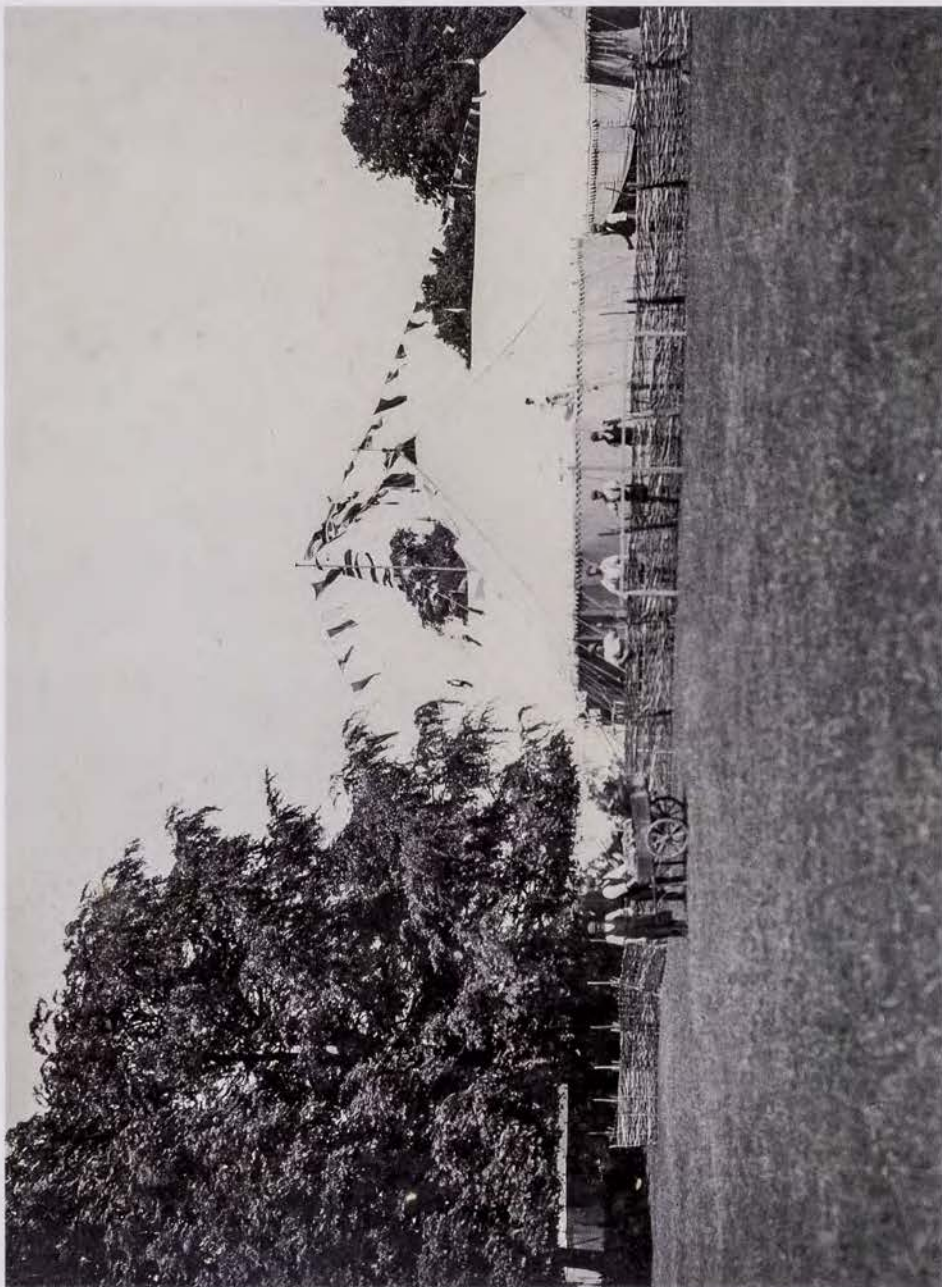
Jonathan Newdick. Barn at Glatting Farm, Sutton.  
Pencil on paper.



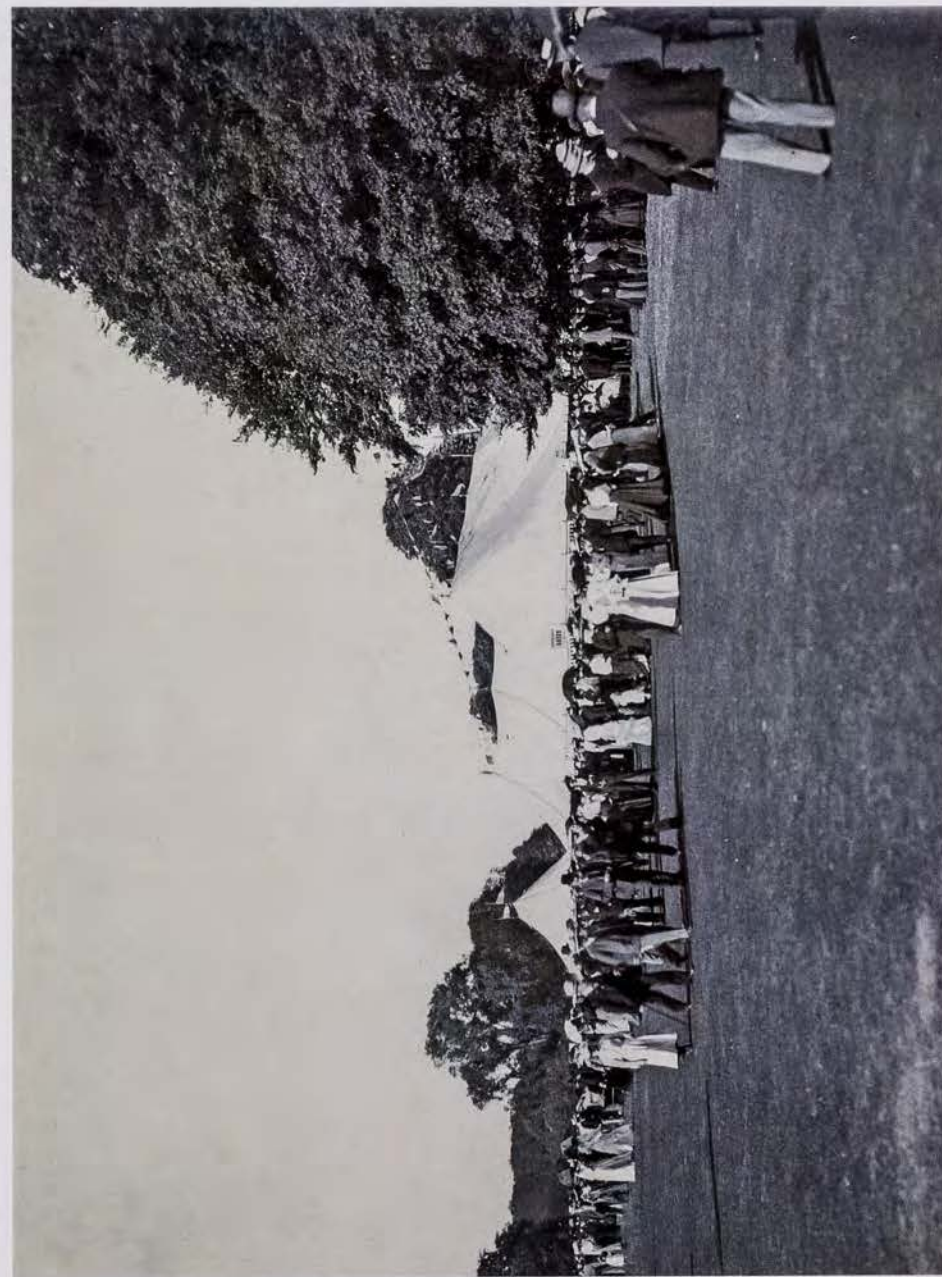
Jonathan Newdick, Harris's Fun Fair maintenance yard at Ashington.  
Pencil on paper.



The 1897 Jubilee: Preparing the marquee for the dinner.  
From a unique mounted print by Walter Kevis. No negative survives.



A similarly unique print.  
Again no negative survives.



Another unique mounted print. The scene in the Park on the great day.

# THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE PETWORTH.

## JUNE 22ND, 1897.

# Programme

OF THE  
EVENTS of the DAY.

### THE BAND

of the 2nd VOLUNTEER BATTALION ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENT  
will meet in the Market Place at 10.30 a.m. and play until 11 o'clock,  
when the children of the various Schools will fall in and march to the  
Park for Dinner.

AT 12.30 THERE WILL BE A

# Public Dinner

in Petworth Park, when the Clergy, Ladies, Gentry, Tradesmen, &c. of the Town and neighbourhood will dine together in a spacious Tent erected  
for the occasion, under the presidency of HERBERT E. WATSON, ESQ., (who has kindly consented to take the Chair). Various

# SPORTS AND AMUSEMENTS

will be provided, which will commence at 3 o'clock and continue until 4 o'clock, when

*Tea will be served Free to all Residents of the Parish of Petworth,*

by their obtaining a Ticket from the Hon. Secretary, which MUST be applied for on or before Thursday, June 17th.

(Tea Tickets 6d. each for NON-PARISHIONERS can also be had up to the same date from the Secretary.)

The SPORTS will re-commence at 6 o'clock, after which

### DANCING and OTHER AMUSEMENTS WILL FOLLOW.

A Steam Merry-go-round, Swing Boats, Shooting Galleries, &c., have been engaged.

# TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION

will be formed on leaving the Park, and will parade the town with the Band.

THE COMMITTEE INVITE THE INHABITANTS TO DECORATE AND ILLUMINATE THEIR HOUSES ON THE OCCASION.

**Dinner Tickets--Gentlemen, 2/6; Ladies, 2/-; Juveniles under 16, 1/6 each.**

which should be obtained on or before Thursday, June 17th, from the Hon. Secretary,

CHAS. WHITCOMBE, Market Place, Petworth.

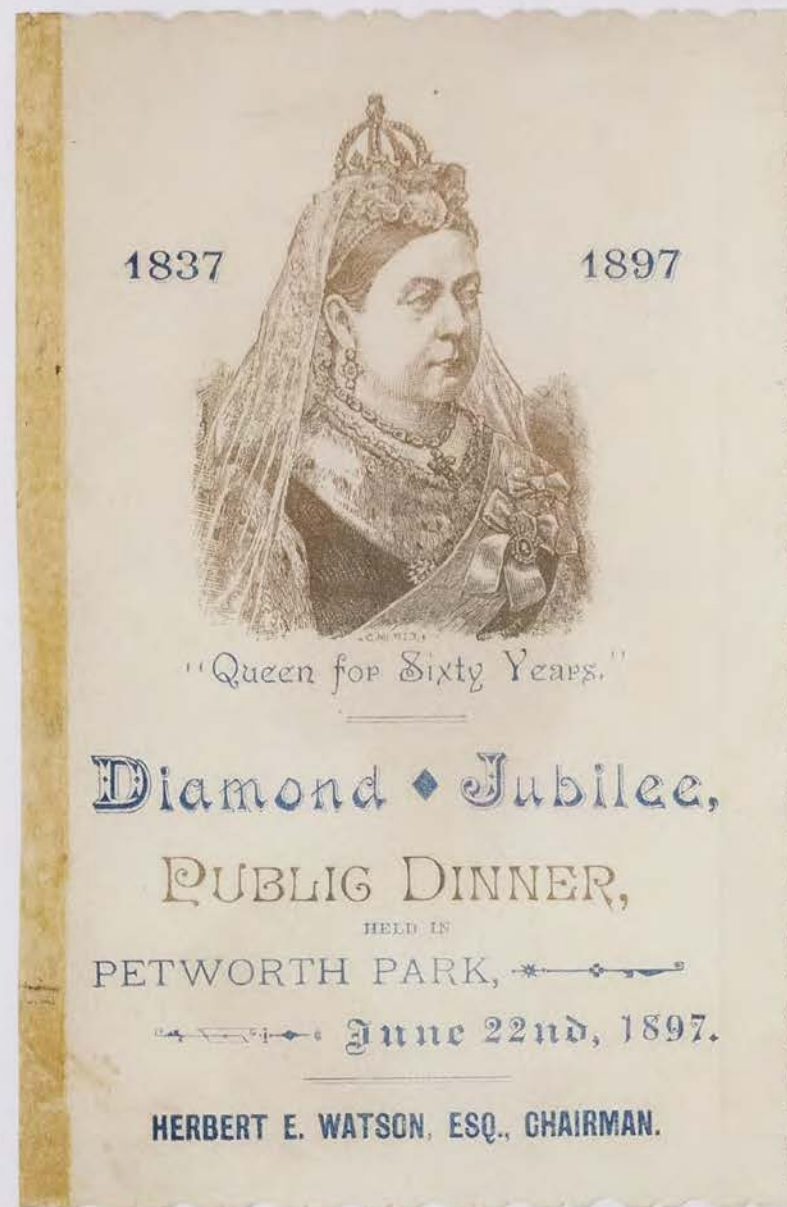
## GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

ARNOLD, PRINTER, PETWORTH.



Mr Otway and fellow caterers.

No negative of this Kevis print survives but one or two original mounted copies are still in private hands.



Front cover of celebratory menu card, only one copy of this is known to be extant, formerly in the possession of the late Mr Fred Streeter.



The scene in Market Square on the morning of the 22nd June 1897.  
Photograph by Walter Kevis.

## Thoughts from a small shop (2)

“That’s got a huntsman on the front too . . .”

Half-forgotten they’d materialise out of an empty street, as if like Melchizedek of old, they had no generation. But they had. We’d received the goods, probably still had most of them, but it was time to pay. At best an awkward bulge in a tight weekly budget, at worst a possible break in the dam. We should have known he was coming, but, out of sight, out of mind. We’d be aware of the regular weekly cheques, but he might be monthly, bi-monthly, or, even more impenetrable, six-weekly. Of course we should have marked their comings and goings on the calendar, but who wants to anticipate a bill? “They” were the few remaining periodic travellers, remnants of a once proud army. If, formerly, they’d proudly represented a single firm, now it might be an untidy contortion of different ones. And the pride was gone; the glory departed. Light years ago, smart-suited, even bowler-hatted, their predecessors would have come by train and stayed overnight at one of the cheaper, respectable hotels. Now there was the company car. Gentlemen all, but bringing with them, if not a sense of doom, at least the feeling that an era was ending.

And it was. He takes his time, patiently trimming the ragged three pence off dog food coupons. We’d never get round to trimming them and the customers would never even think of it. He’d first gone on before the war and retirement was now a whisker away. The next call would be ten weeks. He’d probably have a whole new area. The rounds changed more or less every call now. The last customer had been “offhand”. We’d probably say rude. He can talk easily here, we’ve known him a long time. He smiles. Rude? It seems like pouring custard over a medieval knight.

In retrospect the glorious company of travellers takes on the mantle of the old prophets. Each had his distinctive voice; some almost soft, some strident; all playing a descant on the same theme: the old order passes. “A supermarket sprang up bang next door. Next thing the bailiffs were in. They’ve only got to touch you with the writ and even if it simply falls to the ground, you’re deemed to have received it.” He picks up the empty manilla envelope that held the account and touches my shoulder with it. It falls to the ground. Do supermarkets spring up overnight? Well, only figuratively. But the point remains. I look up the street. It’s empty. And that I suppose is the whole point. Less histrionic perhaps but just as telling.

“This shop on the coast used to buy no end of tins of biscuits from me for Christmas. Last year he got the usual lot in. A week or two later he said to me, ‘I’m not going to shift these – look at them sitting there on the shelf.’ And he



didn't sell them and he's never had tins of biscuits from me since. You can't sell things like you did, and you can't even buy for what the supermarkets are selling at."

Understatement could say more than hyperbole. "We're only doing two tins of biscuits this year. The more expensive one's got a huntsman on the front." "What about the cheaper one?" "That's got a huntsman on the front too." He smiles. Next year they probably won't bother with tins at all.

And if they all had this distinctive voice, most also had a quiet dignity. He comes round the corner, struggling with clumsy show boxes of confectionery. A riot of sherbet countlines, a galaxy of sugar lollipops. A hint of humour that does not impinge on dignity. The café's not what it was, youths larking about. He had to ask for a fork with his piece of apple pie. You shouldn't have to. He's been doing this a long time. "Long enough to know there's no point in pushing. You can see if people already have the stock." He patiently repacks the cases. The order's miniscule this time and he puts the cheque for last time away in his wallet. Dignity. Not for him the programmed glance at the weather, the conscious philosophising, or the slight smell of tobacco as the wallet opens. "It'll be Mr. Bates from now on. I'm sure you'll like him as much as you've liked me." Oh no, he'd never say anything like that. Understatement. That was the hallmark of the old travellers.

Re-printed from *Cucumbers are Finite* (Window Press 2008).

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## Not my initial preference

It was 1960 and, with some help from my father, I bought Burton Park Farm. Jean and I had farmed in Kent in the 1950s but I wanted to expand. That meant, I reckoned, moving every ten years. So much for that, I'm still at Burton Park fifty years and more on.

Burton Park Farm wasn't really what I had in mind but I hadn't seen anything I fancied, while money, of course, wasn't unlimited. Jean's family had farming connections in Devon, but my father was a chartered accountant and there was no tradition of farming in my own family. I'd always preferred working outdoors to the academic, and, rather reluctantly, my father acknowledged this. As I have said, Burton Park Farm wouldn't have been my preference but it certainly had its points. There were two new houses, a wonderful view, and a slightly larger acreage than the normal. I could resell when I had it to my satisfaction. I had seen it advertised in the (now defunct) *Farmer and Stockbreeder*. We saw it on the

Tuesday and had committed by Saturday at a cost of £24,000.

Burton Park Farm was clearly not going to be all plain sailing. All too soon I became aware of a serious problem: the land had an acute trace element deficiency. My first crop of corn yielded 5cwt to the acre against a standard 25-30, while the dairy herd I had brought from Kent had averaged 1050 gallons per cow and, in that first year, was producing less than 600. I lost several through lack of magnesium. A cow would suddenly collapse and before I could fetch the magnesium it would be dead: as simple as that. It would take me some years to address the deficiency, it's a gradual process. I used "impure" or unrefined fertiliser because this contained all sorts of minerals beside magnesium. For phosphate I chose basic slag, a by-product of steel production and for potash Kainit, a proprietary brand strong in trace elements such as copper. Similarly, in spraying for potato blight I'd use a spray with a relatively high copper content. By the third year I was making a definite impression, but the first two years had been very difficult. My father, who had an accountant's world view, said "Well Brian, if you carry on like this, you'll bankrupt the whole family."

By 1970 the farm was up and running and profitable. 60 cows and their followers, fifteen acres of main crop potatoes and some 50 acres of barley. It was time to move on: the bank were prepared to grant a facility on a larger farm but they wanted a guarantor. Dad was on the point of retiring and, by training, very cautious financially. Would such a responsibility cast a cloud on his retirement? I decided it would. He didn't need it.

Time to re-think and re-trench, the price of land was rising; £300 an acre to £1000. I jettisoned the main crop potatoes; it was best to play to the farm's advantages. Burton Park Farm had its limitations but it also had its strong points. It's splendid for early crops: facing south and west it gets the sun while the dark colour of the soil absorbs heat. Anything that can be marketed earlier fetches a premium price and I needed to have my crop in before the soil dried out in the summer. Early potatoes were an excellent crop, or, at least, they were, until a flood of imported potatoes from Egypt and Cyprus destroyed the market.

When I first came, I inherited a significant planting of blackcurrants from my predecessors, but I soon found that here too, prices had fallen. By the time I'd paid local labour tenpence a pound for picking them, then taking them to market, I found tenpence a pound was all I was getting for them wholesale. I think this is a pattern in agriculture; as soon as something becomes profitable, the market becomes saturated and the price falls. You always need to be looking for a niche market. I considered myself a stockman at heart and stopped the main crop potatoes to go flat out for milk production. I've always liked working with cows. I began crossing the Ayrshires with a Holsten bull I'd bought at Reading market.

How did I get it back? Simple. The livestock transporters who had brought stock to the market were waiting there for further commissions. Petworth, after all, had its own livestock hauliers, first Jack Yeatman then "Jock" Woods.

I had added to the acreage part of Duncton Common farm, lately sold by the Leconfield Estate, was steadily increasing the land and had put up a range of buildings for winter lay and feed but Burton Park Farm remained, because of its light soil, particularly vulnerable to drought. 1975 was a dry season and I was soon having to buy in food and continued to do so right through the winter. 1976 was worse and some of the cows became barren. It was a difficult time and not just for me.

I'd had turkeys in Kent; it was not something I was very keen on, but it could be profitable. I had some success with this but again the market proved volatile. It was time to look for something else, and I hit on the idea of daffodils and (initially) tulips – both bulbs and flowers. The big advantage was that the crop would be off the ground before the dry of high summer. A visit to Spalding inclined me very much in this direction. The growers there were friendly and encouraging but I came back rather despondent, realising how shallow my depth of soil was compared with the fen country. It's like the Pevensey Levels and you can stand in the field and watch boats go by in the channels above you. As I transferred from turkeys to bulbs I tried a considerable variety of daffodils but soon encountered a problem – basal rot caused by high temperature and persistent damp. I soon found, too, that some varieties were far more resistant than others. Michael Dallyn at Tripp Hill had had the same idea and we made a shared investment in equipment, a random potato planter suitably modified to use with daffodils and a hot water plant to heat the bulbs beforehand. Planting would be five tons to the acre with the bulbs coming from Spalding. Dutch Master and Carlton were quite successful but I'd later rely particularly on the Ice Follies, a white corona with a pale yellow trumpet which was particularly resistant to basal rot. I grew both for cut flowers and bulb. The medium bulbs were graded and taken out for sale with the biggest and smallest replanted for stock. Toward the end of the 1990s I found costs were rising – pickers, boxes and transportation. Once again costs were catching up!

Brian de Heger was talking to David Burden and the Editor.

## "The officer would shoo her off . . ."

We came to Duncton during the war, my father being a farmworker, had moved the family around a bit. I was born at Hayling Island but we soon moved on to Forestside on the Hampshire border, then to Singleton where I started school. I was five and it was still a few years before the war. From Singleton we moved to Leith Hill near Dorking, to a farm called High Ashes. A change of school again, but our stay would be brief. As I understood it, we left partly because it was such a long walk for my elder brother and me to school at Coldharbour, but also because, although Dad was happy enough with the job, there was an ammunition depot hard by which was a prime target for German bombers.

So the next move was to Duncton. How did Dad find the job? Almost certainly by looking at vacancies in the newspaper. Moving to Duncton wasn't just a matter of putting our furniture in a farm wagon; we had a proper removal van. Our new employer would finance the move: that was the custom.

I can vividly remember our leaving Leith Hill. We had a wire-haired terrier and we were struggling to get a sofa into the van just before setting off when we realised the dog was missing. The keeper, Bill Bishop, was sympathetic but helpless. "I'm sorry I'll have to shoot the dog because of the pheasants." We children were in tears when the dog suddenly appeared around the corner.

Dad was to work for the Seldon family at Duncton Manor Farm but in the event it wasn't long before the tenancy passed to Roy Whitney who would be the last Leconfield tenant. Some 360-370 acres, the farm was based around Duncton village including Redlands and the fields adjoining the church. We were in 64 High Street and next door to Arthur<sup>1</sup> and Ivy Brown. Arthur worked on the farm as did Syd Boddington the tractor driver. We would be there for fourteen years.

A near neighbour was "Dub" Connor, elderly by this time. He was an expert with fruit and had a prodigious memory. He told me he had been to the old Duncton School, a flint building off the Manor Farm entrance at the foot of the hill. He told me too of the old church and adjacent graveyard, now completely overgrown.

Duncton was a typical village school of the time, right up by the parish church with the schoolmistress Miss Botting living in the schoolhouse with her companion. There was also Miss Wilson and Miss Radcliffe who cycled into school from Graffham every day.

As a boy I would pump the organ on church day services, the Rev. Hildebrand officiating, while Iris Court (later Mrs Robbins) played the organ. I was told that the Rev. Hildebrand was a long-standing friend of Lord Leconfield and, indeed, when Lord Leconfield came to Duncton, as he very often did, we had to

acknowledge his passing with what amounted to a salute. Once a fortnight the Rev. Hildebrand would take a service at Upwaltham and he'd pick me up in his old Lanchester. There was a regular pattern: when we reached the bottom of Duncton Hill he'd engage the gears to change down. As often as not there'd be a horrendous grinding noise and he'd try again, eventually crawling up the hill. He prepared me for confirmation. I can remember it as 1943. The service was at Graffham and the church full of children, most wearing white with many soldiers making up the congregation.

There were W.R.E.N.S. opposite us at South Corner and soldiers in Lavington Park, certainly Canadians, but other troops too. We children would go to film shows, walking up the lane across the road from Manor Farm. There were children from Barlavington too and we'd all meet up outside our house in the High Street. One of the two Barlavington families worked, I think, for Greens who had the sawmills at Singleton. Our dog loved going to the pictures but we never really wanted to take her. When she knew we were going to the pictures she'd disappear into the garden, then run across the road (not too much traffic then) and across the field to the headland. There she'd meet us, knowing perfectly well that we couldn't stop to take her home. The films were shown in a Nissen hut next to the cookhouse and the dog always made a beeline for the officers' armchairs at the front. The officers would come in last and the dog would be sitting proudly in one of the armchairs, there was one she particularly liked. The officer would shoo her off and she'd jump back into his lap. I suppose it was up to the batman to clear off the white hairs.

We were already at Duncton when the boys' school at Petworth was bombed. You say it was in the morning, I seem to remember coming home from school and being told of the tragedy. It's all merged now with a memory of a German plane appearing out of the mist and machine-gunning Duncton High Street. We took refuge under the kitchen table although that wouldn't have helped much. My elder brother was up at the farm collecting eggs when the farm was machine-gunned. Petworth Station was bombed about this time, I've heard that a bomb landed on the sidings and bounced over the main road.

The Manor Farm water pump with its incessant thump was a background noise. Sacks were still 2¼ cwt, "West of England" they were called. Dad could turn his hand to most things on the farm and was a competent thatcher. He had two ricks in Beechwood Lane set a certain distance apart so that Wellers the Graffham threshers could put the drum between the ricks and work from either side. It saved moving the equipment. When he was thatching the ricks I'd pull the straw for him while he worked. The corn would be brought in from the fields all round Duncton. Duncton Mill was still in operation and, just the once, we went

down there with a horse waggon and a load of oats. Dad wasn't too busy to be in the local Home Guard, one of the outposts was in a old shepherd's hut. As a sideline he bred rabbits and a man came from London to take them.

There were still tramps on the road. I remember we boys had given one a lot of cheek, he was on his way toward Chichester and carried a David and Goliath type sling. He picked up pieces of chalk and fired them at us. They kicked up the dust in front of us.

Mrs de Fonblanque was still living across the road. She had a large bulldog which would sit at the open window and growl and bark at us children. One day she came to our house and wanted to know if I could mow her lawn. 3|6d for a Saturday morning – good money in those days. The dog was called Dizzy and I was more than a little alarmed at having it in the garden with me. Sure enough it came bounding toward me. I backed away and fell over and it climbed on top of me and began licking my face.

The Mays family lived at Redlands and Mr Mays who had retired from being Lord Leconfield's chauffeur, took boys from the school to teach us gardening. The school had a plot of land right next to the police cottage and on the way to the Cricketers. He'd say to us, "Now what do you think needs to be done?" And we'd say things like, "Those old yellow leaves on the cabbage need to be taken off." He had a golden Labrador called Jill who liked to lie in the garden, "Woo garden Jill" he'd say and Jill would lie on the path instead of the garden. The vegetables were no doubt used for meals at school, I don't remember. I certainly remember however the Ovaltine tablets handed out as a supplement to sweet rationing.

As boys we were into everything. Duncton was a paradise for "scrumpers". There was a big orchard off Duncton Hill on the Sutton road. We'd go into Petworth by bicycle as we grew bigger, although there was a regular hourly bus service, a double-decker which would go on to Pool Valley at Brighton. There was always a connection to Midhurst, just a few yards across the Market Square and, of course, a conductor on every bus. A regular bicycle trip would be to the Regal Cinema in Petworth. The house on the Graffham turning had clusters of grapes hanging on the wall. To us boys returning from an evening at the pictures they seemed irresistible, although in fact the grapes were green and very tart. One night we were quietly indulging our taste for them when we were hit by a cascade of dirty water. We were very wary after that. Often we'd have the Coles boys from Upwaltham with us: their father worked for the Chapman brothers at Upwaltham farm. Very much sheep. Another attraction was Petworth fair, dodgems, darts and a rifle range.

The Turner family at Duncton Mill had a little rowing boat moored on the lake and we were sometimes allowed to take it on the lake. There were naval

personnel at Burton Park and the two lakes were used for Marine commando training with very old canvas canoes. We boys were always hanging about and if we caught them in a good mood we might get a ride. There were deer in the Park at this time but one day in school we heard a series of shots and were told they had been killed for meat.

Duncton quarry was a lot smaller then. The soldiers had a 25 pounder gun with a Bren gun fixed on top of it. They set a bicycle wheel on either side of the quarry face with a rope set where the tyres would have been and had wooden cut-outs of tanks, moved by a man pulling the rope at the side. This was used for target practice, the bullets, of course, going straight into the chalk. The Heath End sandpit was rather quieter: I'd watch the sand-martens digging into the face there.

Prior to D. Day the fields were full of troops and lorries, preparing. I was in the garden at 64 and, hearing bagpipes, went out into the street to see a lone piper leading soldiers marching in full kit, followed by another single piper with another detachment, then a seemingly endless series of individual pipers and groups of soldiers, lorries were passing all the time on their way to the coast. When on the Downs before Arnhem I had seen Dakotas towing gliders.

Aircraft recognition was a part of growing up and Coultershaw Mill, a great square white building, was the H.Q. of Gordon Gwillim who ran the local Air Cadet Corps. He used cigarette cards and other pictorial material to help us. The Air Cadet Corps used the Mill lorry for transport. It regularly delivered flour and this would come off on our uniforms. Church parades might be at any of the local churches but we would make a point of leaving the lorry at a fair distance, dusting each other down, then marching smartly to church. Drill practice was by the lodge on the Midhurst Road. Sometimes Lord Leconfield would come to see us, walking with a stick and with two Labradors at heel. Once we went to the airfield at Selham. We looked at the Walrus planes used for sea rescue and had been promised a flight but were disappointed to be told the weather wasn't suitable.

At one time there had been a lime kiln at the foot of Duncton Hill on the left as you go toward Chichester. Over the years the slag had been tipped over the edge and was visible for miles as a great white heap. Duncton Hill was less wooded then and the mound has been colonised by scrub and now simply merges with the landscape. My sister has a photograph of herself taken in the garden at 64 with the white heap rising in the distance. At that time you could peer down into the kiln, long since abandoned. There was also a small orchard, something to do with "Dub" Connor I think, lovely greengages which we boys could never resist.

Hilaire Belloc's famous poem speaks of "a boy who sings on Duncton Hill". I

was always told that at the very top of the hill you could sometimes hear a choir boy singing. The story went that he had been killed up there in an accident. Whether this was somehow connected with the poem I never found out. My brother Ron, who worked at the quarry, always said that the bank on the left-hand side as you reach the top had a quite different type of grass which had something to do with the mysterious boy. On the other hand it might simply have been connected with a slight alteration in the alignment of the road.

I was fourteen when I left Duncton school and went to work at Rapleys Garage, right the other side of Duncton. The war was just over and I had to serve petrol. The pumps were still operated by hand, a gallon at a time. You'd turn the handle round and round. The pump stopped after each gallon and you'd have to start again. Petrol was still on ration but would gradually (like clothing) become more freely available. The army had a dedicated petrol pump for there were still plenty of lorries about although the war was just over. Petrol was POOL; the oil companies had amalgamated for the war period. I didn't have anything to do with the dedicated pump, a soldier would come in every day at certain times to operate it. I can't think he was there all day.

Steve Rapley was the boss, his son, Jim, being still in the R.A.F. Cycles, the original business, remained an important element and besides serving petrol, I looked after cycles, punctures, mudguards and things like fitting ball-bearings into pedals. Some jobs were periodical like going down to Petworth station to collect bicycles freshly delivered from the Raleigh factory. I'd push them back up the hill to the garage, one in each hand, the pedals of course being still folded into the packaging. These were not for me, I made up my own bicycle from spare parts, the Raleighs were for the showroom. I'd bike up to Petworth to put the takings in the Westminster Bank. Another job was re-charging the accumulators: they were used in radios. Sometimes I'd simply walk out to fetch them, for instance at the Mile House on the Duncton Straight. They were some four inches square with a carrying handle. Rapleys had a stationary engine with a belt-driven generator and large commercial batteries to which we'd connect.

Rapleys employed four fitters. They also ran a couple of taxis, going up to the Benges to pick up children for Duncton School. Mr Francis drove one of them, a big green Morris, while Tom Peacock used to drive a big square Buick with wooden spoke wheels. Before he set out it was the custom to hose the wheels down to stop the wood contracting while the car was moving. It would otherwise make a loud clicking noise. They used to call the car "The Clicky". The official name of the garage was Heath End Motor Works. Decoking was very much part of the work; valves and pistons would become coked up and needed to be reground using a coarse grain paste, followed by a fine one.

I was only on fifteen shillings a week at Rapleys, of which I gave my mother ten and kept five for myself. After two years my mother said I really ought to pay more so I began to look for another job. I found one at Norwood Farm, Graffham, initially at thirty shillings a week, rising to thirty-eight. Although my Dad worked on a farm, I had to learn pretty quickly. Mrs (or Miss) Pink was my new boss and something to do with Pinks Paraffin or so I thought; certainly very much a lady farmer. She had a milking herd of twenty Guernseys which she often milked herself. She also had a land girl working there. I'd go in alternate weekends to give the land girl time off. I'd bike in to work. People were buying motor-bikes, but that was completely out of the question. I did, however, buy myself a new bicycle from John Caine in Pound Street.

In acreage Norwood was a small farm and was largely self-sufficient, growing mangolds to feed the cattle, making their own hay, and harvesting their own corn. When I first went there, they had an old David Brown tractor but this was replaced by a new Ferguson. I would drive both on occasion but the resident foreman did most of the tractor driving.

Don Walbridge was talking to Thelma Briggs and the Editor.

1. See 'No fires in the rickyard' PSM 139 (March 2010) pages 37 and following.



Pearl Walbridge with Duncton chalk pit in background and Duncton Hill with white railings.

## George Garland

*[Although George Garland died in 1978 when this Magazine was in its infancy, I see him as a presiding spirit. In a sense, or so I like to think, the 148 issues so far form a continuation, however modest, of his photographic legacy, if in a rather different medium. In PSM 147 I drew attention to his bound set of the Sussex County Magazine and to the feeling I had of failing to make the use of it that he might have wished. A similar stricture might apply to his "Sussex" books, no great quantity, but the main classic writers. They reflect a parochial interest in the county, east and west, that modern communications have largely dissipated. Here I take a look at an earlier venture into this genre and, by common consent, a very fine example, John Halsham's Idlehurst (1898). When Halsham died in April 1937, the Sussex County Magazine wrote. "Sussex has lost the most distinguished of its interpreters."]*



George Garland in later life.  
Photograph taken by Ivon Hitchens.

## George Garland's "Sussex" books

### (1) Idlehurst

John Halsham was the nom-de-plume of George Forrester Scott, born in 1863, a writer who would spend most of his adult life in Sussex. He is remembered for three classic studies: *Idlehurst* (1898), *Lonewood Corner* (1907) and *Old Standards* (1913)<sup>1</sup>. A lifetime horticulturalist, Halsham also produced a highly individual handbook on the subject<sup>2</sup>, a similar book on *Garden Flowers*, another on *Household and Garden Hints* and a novel.

Halsham has an individual and very distinctive style. Here he is writing on garden pests: "Absolutely abjure and forbid the gun on economical grounds, the shot does as much harm among fruit trees as any birds will, and a garden of ordinary dimensions is too close for bombarding." By all accounts a diffident, retiring, man, Halsham seems to have been happiest with his own company. He wrote regularly for the *Times*, the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Saturday Review*. For the few who knew him, the style immediately disclosed the author, anonymity was in vain.

Halsham is an author whose leisured approach sits less than easily with a 21st century attention span. His is a mind replete with the Greek and Latin classics and with Dante. If, already in 1899, he can write: "The hitch, already real, between the classics and the modern understanding will be widened," in the intervening century and more that "hitch" has become a chasm. Halsham takes no prisoners: a couple of characters at Arnington fair can be likened to carping Damoetas and the hawk-faced Aegon, an allusion which will stretch even the most compendious classical reference book, while few today will feel at ease with his occasional direct quotation from Latin, Greek or medieval Italian. Another possible difficulty is Halsham's easy assumption of the life of a leisured country gentleman. As a vice-president he is an automatic if somewhat reluctant member of High Table at the Arnington Loyal Saxons Club Day. In theory, however, gardening is a great leveller: "I would have all men gardening, then, when treaties are torn up and parties wrecked . . . there would remain a solid ground of satisfaction to each one, cauliflowers that cannot be impeached, pippins whose aroma endures." In some ways a moralist, he is not afraid of the mundane: "Fed on American pith and cotton wool, the public hardly know the taste of a real English pippin or pearmain, anything light, dry, insipid, will serve for the market so it be fairly large and has a shiny skin." Give or take the subjunctive and multiply countries of origin and you have a criticism of modern supermarket culture. He is well aware of wider issues: for instance the apparently terminal decline in

the acreage of local corn. The effects of this will not be merely material: "We shall have to adapt a deal of poetry and apologue, from the Book of Ruth to the Harvest Festival hymns; we shall have to give up Time the Reaper – unless we set him to drive a self-binder on the plains of Dakotah . . . for all the old associations of seed-time and harvest are moralist and monitory in a happy way of their own."

*Idlehurst* is at once a cry of anguish in face of a perceived urban attack on imagination and originality and a retrospect to a harsher, freer, but vanished world. The ever-expanding London (and Brighton) conurbations are a symbol of this malaise. On March 1st the wind goes up "into the north", bringing a canopy of London soot that "hangs over a hundred square miles of flues and streams away on the wind like a vast black flag." All the old people are in agreement in calling the present seasons degenerate. Time was when the grapes ripened on every house in the village and a man attended to the pruning and care of the vines. No more. "There are few years now when the schoolchildren would care to set their teeth in the clusters."

Bish, the gardener, a man of fifty, is a willing victim of the times. "I had supervised Bish's gathering of peas for Lucy<sup>3</sup>, checking that selection of the elderly grey pod filled with hard cubic seeds which are his idea of a nice-eatin' pea, an ideal which he enforces, as many greater folk in larger matters, very cheerfully on the rest of the world. With the Ashleaves he can scarcely go wrong though he shakes his head over the extravagance of them, early they are and of rare succulence."

*Idlehurst* is subtitled 'A Journal kept in the Country' and is not even the story of a year, only of a spring and a summer. That summer is fleeting, never free of thoughts of its inevitable, all too swift, passing. So July 2nd: "There fell today that time wherein the year is clearly at its height, when it has reached the fullness of change and has no greater beauty to unfold. After today it will be all downhill: here beyond question summer turns her face from us." Sweet William, penstemon, the earlier annuals, may be in full bloom but . . . "The summer is of age and of long custom the moment has for me a touch of sadness beyond the forlornest days of early autumn."

If Halsham is essentially solitary, he is never unfeeling. He has no need to philosophise to be evocative. "I could hear the alternate rumble and silence as the carrier Veness made his calls in the street, changing presently into a steady trot as a little cloud of dust travelled up the rise beyond the village, and the piebald gelding was off upon his weekly journey to Lewes."

In late February, having worked an hour or so on a south border breaking up the dry November ridges, Halsham's concentration lapses. There is something he cannot banish from his mind and he sets off for the village. Old Phineas Tomsett's

eighty rheumatic years are getting too much for him and threaten to prevent him continuing his already somewhat marginal hedging and ditching, the old man is already on and off the local "Club", and the grim spectre of the "Union" looms. Once in Arnington, Halsham sees the rector and the two men cobble together sufficient finance to keep the old man out of both hedgerow and "House." The first cold spell of winter, says the local doctor, will render further provision unnecessary.

When Halsham pays one of his regular visits to Phineas, the old man is seated upright, stick in hand, in round frock, long gaiters and an ancient billycock hat. The conversation turns, as it always does, to the ruination of the times. Bad years there certainly were in the old days, but there was always work; the machine has changed that. Taters were cheap and you'd be given bread and dripping. The new-fangled machinery has hastened the decline: corn falls into the cavings<sup>4</sup> and sprouts green. The old farmers would never have had that. Tomsett could remember scything the land when they were building the "Crystal Pallis". The men were allowed the rabbits.

John Avery, 75, is a different man altogether, if from somewhat similar beginnings. Certainly he too has negotiated life's rough places, but with a good deal more acumen than Phineas and is "now his own man and a person in the parish." Again, through an older man's recollection, Halsham is able to descry a harder, clearer, age. Avery laments the passing of the old round frocks "won'erful good they was, they'd keep out the rain better nor any top-coat and that warm acrost the chest against the wind." He looks back another remove: to men who recalled smuggling days and the "Horsham" gang in the days when there were only beadles and parish constables and not many of them. The gentry finally managed to infiltrate the gang and exacted a brutal vengeance.

And oxen. Perhaps a few still work in the more sequestered parts of the Downs but it was the cattle plague that did for them. And working: "When I was a boy, they'd tell us we wasn't to knock off till we could see to count three stars a-shinin'; but, bless you, the chaps nowadays, they'd rather go by their watches. They're a shacklin' lot that's what they are . . ."

Bish, the gardener, is, as we have seen, a younger man, lacking the retrospect and probably, too, the gravitas of Tomsett and Avery. The ruination of the times has penetrated his soul. His obstinate meteorology can occasionally be right, particularly, as Halsham drily observes, if inverted, while his faith in the Almanac is unflinching. The reflection of the fire in a room, gleaming brightly on the window panes is as certain a presage of rain as the visit of a German band. In cold weather he claims to be able to smell the icebergs in the sea. Off sick for a couple of days and with his son working in the garden, a reluctant, awkward and

undistinguished replacement, he receives a visit from his employer. It is an opportunity for Halsham to review some harrowing folk remedies. Mrs Bish recommends turpentine taken internally. "Painter chaps they takes a lot of it." Indigestion, common enough given the heavy local consumption of pork and greens, is caused by "the raising of the lites." These, leaving their proper station, ascend the windpipe. Sparrow shot is the preferred remedy, a dose of five or six once or twice a day. The weight will cause the lites to sink back again. Bish has an aunt who has worked her way through a seven pound bag and still lives!

Solitary as ever, Halsham meditates on smells. Some are common enough, appreciable by any nose: hay or lilac bloom or even a bean field. But there are some smells appreciated only by the connoisseur – a budding quick-set hedge after a shower or moist young bracken or a larch plantation on a spring evening. "I mused of national collections of scents, as our present picture-galleries: of scent-concerts, a fantasia in lime-blossom, a sea symphony, tarry and phosphoric . . ." It is a theme to which Halsham will return in discussing the so-called "open spaces" of Greater London. "I wish that some part of the present care for ancient monuments could be extended to modern landscapes, and that naturalists would expand their right solicitude for birds eggs and ferns into protection for whole heaths, woods, hillsides and flowers." He thinks of a natural museum between Derwentwater, Scaffel and Helvellyn "and certainly one including part of the South Downs and the Weald."

Later, as he sits solitary listening to the click-click of the machine as it turns a corner, and the whirl of the pinions as it comes down the slope. "I dreamed of the years to be, when my plan of museum-counties shall have been discovered and enforced, with Governmental reproductions of the old agricultural labour, historically correct in costume and accessories . . ."

We cannot follow Halsham in detail through his summer. Parties from the rectory piercing the solitude of his retreat, the Rector's wife with her young niece on holiday from India and keeping to her lessons in Hindustani, the annual dinner of the village "Club", a trip to distant Lewes, even a nostalgic few days in Oxford, the August cattle fair, cricket with his visiting nephew, the one-eyed umpire placing a laborious half-penny against the base of the middle stump as each ball is bowled, Halsham's insistence on haying in the old way as opposed to the "scamped" way of the moderns, and his relationship with the Rector. He has a constant feeling of constraint in the latter's presence, admiration but something of an awkwardness, as of being in converse with a courtly angel. If the clergy in general "rely too much on precept" this is a man of a different stamp.

At evensong he observes "the man leaning over his desk between the wavering candles . . . the intensely mental face, grown sadder and older of late, we listen to

the great effort to set the unseen before slow hearts, to lead his people beyond the little hedge of their lives to thoughts of the real beyond." As ever he looks back, to three or four old men. "They will remember the time when there was no organ, but a gallery with singers, a clarinet, and an "octave" and the schoolchildren to help out the anthems; when school was held in the church; when all was done on simpler, easier lines."

We may leave our author in spring when the fabled old lady had let the cuckoo out of the basket at Heathfield and the first nightingales are reported. It's not long before he hears a low chirr from the apple tree. He halts in the grass and stands transfixed.

'Arnington' we are told, is Lindfield. The characters are drawn so incisively that identification may have been rather more than conjectural at the time of writing. Kelly's 1907 Directory offers no inducement to enquire further. A century and more on Arnington has become an imaginary world of its own and John Halsham a free spirit, leading us, if we will, to a flawed but enchanted realm that is all his own.

1. For these see note at end.
2. Every Man his own Gardener (no date c 1906)
3. The cook/housekeeper. Ashleaves is a variety of pea.
4. Husks left after threshing.

Note:

Halsham's second book *Lonewood Corner* (1907) reflects a move to Ardingly while *Old Standards*, published just before the 1914-1918 war, reprints articles from the *Saturday Review*. It is as quintessentially Halsham as the two previous studies. All three classic works are now collector's items, and relatively expensive in the original editions. *Idlehurst* is available, however, as *Print on Demand* as is *Lonewood Corner*.

P.

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## "There's a bloke in the Q. M. stores . . ."

I was born in 1934 just a few doors from where I now live in Pipers Lane. I've always lived in Northchapel but not all the time in Pipers Lane. I love the long view across the Green toward the open fields and the rising ground beyond toward the Frith. I was five when the war started and I went to Northchapel school where I spent all my schooldays. It was still very much a village school, still intensely local. There was a definite emphasis on local produce, not simply a reaction to wartime conditions but very much part of the attitude of such small village

schools even before the war. The canteen made a point of giving pupils, as far as was possible, what had been produced locally. Around the time I left school children from recently closed schools at Ebernoe and Lurgashall were coming to Northchapel – a sign of things to come. There were three teachers at Northchapel.

Some afternoons were spent on the village green, cricket, football or any kind of athletic activity. Once, when we were out on the Green a doodlebug came over and we heard the engine cut out. We all dived into the ditches for cover but it came down on the outskirts of the village. There were gardens at the school where the present playground is and gardening was an important school activity. As children we were very much encouraged to grow our own food. Once we went too far and picked some tiny cauliflower heads to eat raw. Definitely a black mark. (When we disappeared to follow the hunt it was the cane however!) What we grew we'd take down by wheelbarrow to be cooked in the canteen at the old school premises. The old school had closed during the 1914-1918 war. We'd march down and march back, slipping in, if we could, for a couple of hot lardy rolls at the Dependant Stores. Two for a penny. Gardening was taken very seriously and we had adult help, first from Jim Ayling and then from Ern Poste. We didn't just grow vegetables but flowers too. In front of the school was a patch of lawn where, among other things, there was a long jump pit. It's now a Car Park. There were evacuees at the school and some in Pipers Lane but they made only a passing impression on me. The school produced a Christmas play and there was a Young Farmers' Club. The school made a point of getting the children involved. There were football and cricket matches against Petworth and Chiddingfold, home and away. The former played in Petworth Park and these were eagerly anticipated.

A few things stick in my mind from the war years. I can remember watching from our back door a German plane coming down at Roundwick. The crew were all killed and buried at Ebernoe. I believe they have since been re-interred. My lasting impression is of the aircraft spinning as it went down. The World War I cartoonist Bruce Bairnsfather was living in Northchapel, I can still see him sitting sketching the church. It will certainly be during the war. He was famous for his "Old Bill" character. There is one of his cartoons in the Working Men's Club.

Dad was in the Home Guard but eventually called up, although, even then, he was over forty. Obviously my view of the Home Guard was that of a boy looking in but they did seem to cover a wide area. I can remember them out as far as the Tower at Shillinglee. They had a hut at the top of Valentine's Hill.

The village had more shops then than now. Most people will think first of the Dependants or "Cokelers" combination store in the centre of the village. The



women still dressed in their sombre black. There was also a butcher, a baker, a milk round and a shop selling general non-food items, while the Dependants had their own cycle shop on the corner. The post-office was at the top of the Green. If there was an air raid the postmaster would put out a red flag. How would he know? I suppose they phoned from Petworth. You might hear the Petworth siren if the wind was in the right direction but I wouldn't think you could have relied on it.

I was eleven when the war finished. Northchapel had its own band then, brass. I was in the choir at church. The Working Men's Club was an important focus of village life as it still is. During the war there was a big annual Bring and Buy, the proceeds going to comforts for the troops. The Club origins went back to two redundant army huts from the 1914-1918 war, brought to Northchapel and then expanded. As the licensing hours had evolved they were somewhat peculiar. As a working men's club there was no point in being open weekdays or even on Saturdays before 12 noon, when men would look in on the way home to dinner after the working week. Hours would be 12-4 and 6-10. There was an agreement with the landlords of the Swan and the Half Moon about signing in guests and the times this would be done.

The Carter family have been in Northchapel certainly for over a century. Brick laying was a family speciality. My Dad was one of fourteen children, twelve surviving. He was the youngest and had been at the old Northchapel school when it closed during the 1914-1918 war, moving on to the new school which replaced it.

On leaving school I was apprenticed to Chapman, Lowry and Puttick and did a course at Guildford Technical College, cycling to Haslemere initially but then getting a motor-bike. On my way into Haslemere I'd regularly pass someone of my own age in Lower Street. When I was in Germany on National Service a friend said, "There's a bloke in the Q. M. stores who thinks he recognises you." It was the chap I passed every day on my way into Haslemere.

Football and cricket were very much a part of Northchapel life. At one time football was played in a field at Hortons Farm, while Northchapel had a cricket team good enough to take on Sussex Club and Ground. The sports secretary at the time had contacts with the L.C.C. and, in the 1950s, the bus company would bring a team down to play Northchapel at cricket. They'd bring wives and children down with them in two London double-decker red buses.

My grandfather was still doing a "walking" postal round, he would be about eighty. Starting at Hortons Farm he'd go by the Frith as far as Pipers Copse, Old Park (now pulled down), across to Freehold, out to Ebernoe House, down Ebernoe "Street" to cross the cricket field to Colhook, making his way then to Laundry Cottage, Keeper's Cottage and Wet Wood – a circular tour starting about

8 o'clock and a good six miles on my reckoning, winter and summer. My grandmother would become anxious if he was not back by eleven. Sometimes, say at Pipers, he'd leave the post in a box at the end of the road, but if there was something like a large parcel or a registered letter he'd have to go all the way up the lane.

John Carter was talking to David Burden and the Editor.



Northchapel Home Guard.

## Tillington cricket pitches

Tillington has had at least three cricket pitches. The first was provided by the Mitfords in the field just west of Pitshill's south-east lodge with gate to New Road.

'New' when the Mitfords took in the route of the old Upperton Common Road north of Dean Dip, in the early 19th century. Gentlemen could do that providing they provided a substitute at their own expense and agreeable to their colleagues the JPs in Quarter Sessions assembled. Opposite the south-east lodge, the path leads east to Tillington. This field has a natural terrace (rise of ground) to north and west and fine views of the South Downs.

The second was on Upperton Common just north of the road (the New Road's north point), about 100 yards west of the junction with the road to Upperton and Lurgashall. This ground was in use in the 1930s, but has been choked by bracken since or before 1980.

The third is the present, in a field made available by the Leconfield Estate, just at the top of the hill from Tillington Church towards Upperton. It, too, has a fine view of the Downs. Its pavilion was re-built a few years ago after vandals burnt the first one down.

Jeremy Godwin



And it's goodbye from him ... Harry (or is it Harvey?) the hedgehog.

Photograph by Ian Godsmark

