

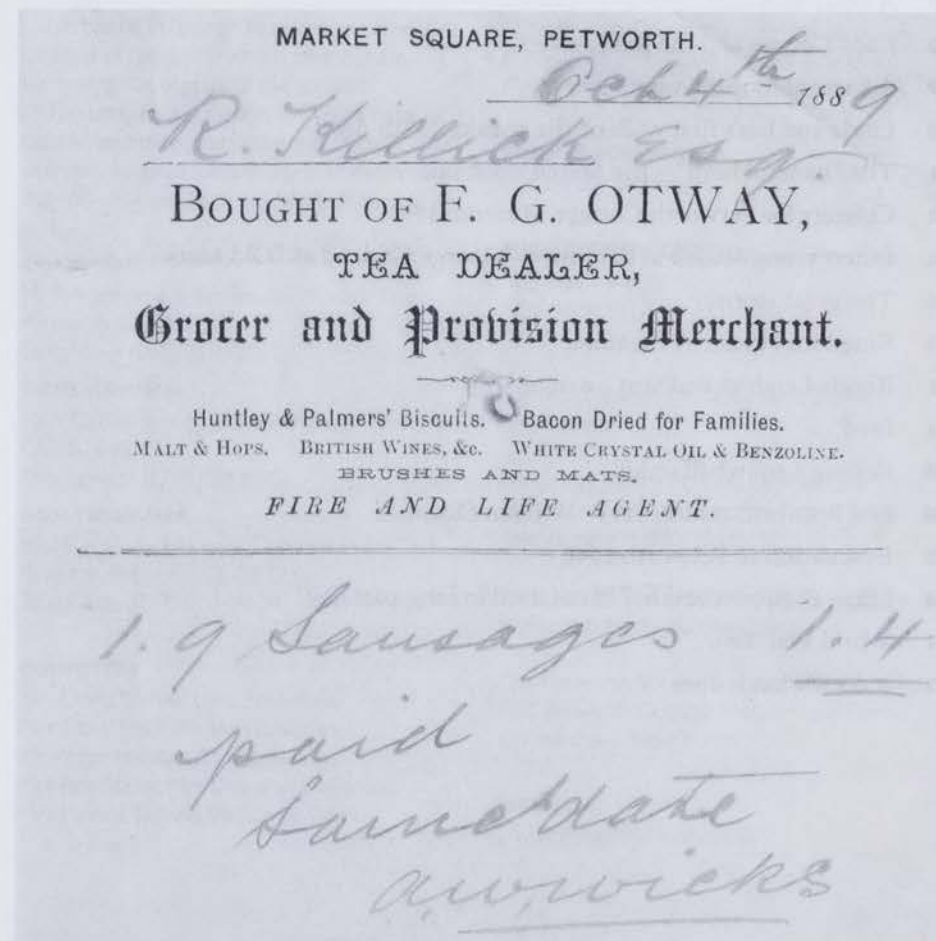
THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine



No. 164, June 2016

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A receipt from F. G. Otways Market Square branch – now the Co-operative. See the picture on this quarter's cover. There is a detailed account of late nineteenth century Otways in *Tread Lightly Here* (Window Press 1990) pages 186-194.

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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 £12.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £15.00 overseas nominal £20.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick.
It uses a promotional poster for Mazawattee Tea
issued by Otways of Petworth in the 1890s.
See also page 1 and "the baneful herb".

Chairman's notes

We have again a very full Magazine with extensive material held over for September. I remember being told after Issue 15 early in 1979 that the Bulletin (as it was then) was admirable but given Petworth's size material would be exhausted by Issue 20. Almost forty years on, we may suspect this is not the case.

Please find forms for the September dinner and July outing. First come, first served. Don't just throw them to one side for later! No crossword this quarter, Debby will be back in September.

Peter
25th April

Your help please:

A letter written in the immediate aftermath of the Boys' School bombing gives an account of that terrible day in September 1942. The recipient is LAC John Kirk of Petworth, apparently training as a pilot at RAF Debert in Nova Scotia. The writer (probably male) is working in a Petworth office. He has with him Joyce (possibly his wife) and a Miss Peile who is cleaning exhausted "anti-splinter stuff" from the office windows.

Does this mean anything to anyone? It might establish the identity of the letter writer.

P.

A manageable experience? Or enriched not overwhelmed?

I started as General Manager at Petworth House in April last year, so this is the end of my first year here. I had previously been at Tredegar House, a smaller National Trust property in South East Wales. I was told privately that Petworth might be a challenge – a very special place certainly but one that needed help to realise its full potential – not because of a paucity of interest and ideas but rather their very richness. Potential isn't just a matter of increasing visitor numbers, important obviously, but sometimes more complex and intangible. A landscape

evolving over a thousand years, an art collection unrivalled, a sense of history. Think of what we have, and try to match it elsewhere: a baroque palace. Did not Charles Seymour, sixth Duke of Somerset live in princely splendour? The rooms now open to the public are state rooms with all the flexibility that this implies and none of the "domestic" aspect of, say, Chartwell and Polesden Lacey. William Haley, a local patron of William Blake, called Petworth "the friendly palace". Petworth is Turner of course but it's so much more. We need to dig more deeply – echo the full history of Petworth, help people to see Turner but not stop there, come to terms with the myriad of different things which make up the spirit of the place. If the West Front is Petworth so too is the back – or the matchless stained glass in the chapel. I like to stand with visitors in the sluice looking up to the pipe that once carried the town's water supply and just think. Ideally I'd like to involve the people of the town more closely with the house, pleasure grounds and park. We all need to work together to ensure that this special place is here and open for future generations to enjoy. The National Trust is a charity and at Petworth we have to make our own money in order to afford our conservation work.

The opening of the kitchens has given visitors a rapport with the House we cannot always have with the pictures. Everyone cooks a meal; not everyone commissions a Van Dyck. I don't envisage changes to the kitchen in the short term. Obviously it would be good to talk about food, even have the smell of cooking on a regular basis but that's for the future – we have more urgent matters to resolve first.

Part of the "difficulty" is the sheer scale of what the House has to offer; to try to ensure that this translates into a manageable experience. Many of our visitors feel overwhelmed when they come to Petworth. Not everyone has a degree in the History of Art, nor can everyone spend an afternoon with a knowledgeable steward. This isn't a criticism; simply a desire to make a good experience better and enjoyable for all our visitors. Who notices the Titian in the Red Room? Visitors sweep by with Turner in mind, hardly conscious that what they're passing is something that elsewhere would justify a visit on its own. Or take the Chaucer Manuscript, one of the finest books in the entire National Trust collection. How many pass it without a glance? Or the sculpture in the North Gallery, probably the most important surviving example of Grand Tour purchase – other collections have been dispersed long ago. Ceramic and furniture can be easily overlooked. A Petworth cabinet is not just any cabinet; we have one that was made by André-Charles Boulle, a craftsman who worked for Louis XIV. Such artefacts are part of the people who originally bought them – a living link with their tastes and choices. Ideally there is a need to establish the same rapport as we have found in the kitchens. It's a paradox that the fact that we have so much can seem to equate with

having very little in terms of visitor response. Our aim should be to have our visitors enriched, inspired, to go away with some of the magic rubbed off on them.

Jo Cartwright was talking to the Editor:

The Society Dinner on September 7th will be a Capability Brown evening with special access to the Brown Exhibition and other items celebrating his tercentenary – details on separate sheet. Jo has kindly offered to give a brief talk at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday June 15th.



Petworth House and Lake.

"A landscape evolving over a thousand years."

Walter Kevis took this study over a hundred years ago. He left Petworth in 1908.

A head start

Jon Edgar, as you will have read in the March Magazine, is a sculptor. He is also a very accomplished speaker. As he wrote in his article, he covered various aspects of his work, leading up to a quite unexpected climax.

Jon's plan is 'no plan', which may be why we started with a view of South Georgia and a portrait of Duncan Carse, the actor and adventurer, whose home in Fittleworth Jon looked after. There he met Peggy Synge and her sister, Ann Wilson – now 101 – and modelled heads of them both, fired in terracotta.

300 years since the birth of Capability Brown, designer of Petworth Park, Jon turned to painted portraits of the landscape designer, with the problem of deciding their authenticity. To model the head of someone dead, at a distance of 300 years, one has to work forensically, researching descendants and the characteristics of present-day Northumbrians – the eyes and long faces for comparison. Brown was born in Kirkharle. Jon was to be working on the head at Uppark in March. And there is a Petworth interest in Brown.

Another link is Petworth marble, examples to be seen in columns in Chichester Cathedral and St. Augustine's chair in Canterbury Cathedral (1350), reputedly carved from a single huge block, but clearly of cleverly assembled sections, since the seam is only inches thick. Members of the audience knew of the font in Kirdford Parish Church. It's a fragile stone, difficult to carve, which is why Jon prefers Portland stone.

So to the Downs and North Wood Slindon in particular. Attempts by others to carve large blocks of chalk have not lasted more than ten years. Jon aims at permanence, hence the massive Portland limestone block and 'a plan which is no plan'. Many people, especially children, were invited to chip away, which enabled Jon to see a sculpture emerging and make the final contribution.

Interval time and we returned to see a stand set up for a head to be modelled in clay. A volunteer from the audience? The obvious sitter was present – but Peter didn't exactly volunteer! Here was a master class in sculpture, but hardly ideal circumstances for either sculptor or sitter.

The sitter must be made comfortable, physically and (preferably) mentally. There is a central wooden peg for the clay to be built up in small amounts with certain datum points in mind: chin, nose, lips, ears, first from each side, then from the front: ears again and lastly the neck, always looking for new profiles. The more the sculptor can engage with the sitter, the more will the characteristics emerge. Jon doesn't take measurements. He won't allow calipers in his classes!

Was Peter's 'head' recognisable after 20 minutes? I wasn't near enough to be

able to say and it was quickly wrapped up in cling film to prevent it drying out. Can we hope that there will be further sittings – in private – and a final firing? Is there a plan after all?

KCT

Lady Connie and the Suffragettes

A big night. A professional company requiring special staging and lighting effects. Could we cope, let alone provide an audience such a costly production merits?

After an early arrival in the afternoon for preparation, everything seemed to be going well. From 7 o'clock seats were filling, we were going to be alright.

Everyone has some idea of the fight for women's suffrage – hunger strikes, violent protests, forced feeding, the protester who flung herself under the King's horse at the Derby.

This play told us of the women involved, notably high class, and Lady Constance Lytton was certainly that. Her dominant mother became a Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen. Born into privilege in Vienna, with a full social life, she was nevertheless, shy, but uplifted by music. She gradually became aware that women had no place or influence in addressing the social issues of the time.

At 25, Connie did obtain work on the *Realm* magazine, but had to give up on demands from home.

A legacy of £1,000 enabled her to found a society to improve the lot of women. A visit with the group to Littlehampton brought her into contact with Suffragettes, with whose aims she sympathised, but their militant actions she did not, initially. She visited Mrs Pankhurst in prison and eventually became committed herself for 'disturbing the peace' at a demonstration.

With her rank came privilege and she did not suffer the more severe punishments meted out to women of a lower class. She therefore adopted the persona of 'Jane Walton' and was treated as a common woman, refusing hard labour, going on hunger strike, being forcibly fed. Her bedding was removed. All this stopped when her real identity was discovered and she was released, though seriously ill. She died at the age of 52.

Emma Spearing played the emotionally draining part of Lady Connie, a powerful performance, with subtle costume changes, word perfect and on stage throughout. Julia Stone's music, violin, piano and song provided pleasant continuity. Apart from occasional amusing points, there was absorbed silence from start to finish. New stage lighting was unfamiliar to Ian, but who would have

known? It was most effective.

Jenny Culank, Artistic Director of Classworks Theatre, took questions at the end, during which members of the audience were able to express their appreciation of a truly outstanding presentation.

KCT.

A harmonious evening

Surveying the gathering audience, it became clear that the regulars were being joined by folksong aficionados, all establishing an expectant and genial atmosphere. Chris Hare is, of course, an old friend of the Society – remember his talk about Sussex smugglers, when, at one point, he burst into song? Signs of things to come. Now, he and his wife, Ann Feloy ("We are married, just different names") are singers of "Folksongs of Sussex and the South Downs".

We may have our own preconceptions of folksong and folksingers. Maybe some were dispelled during the evening. Traditionally, the songs had no instrumental accompaniment and no harmonising, so Chris and Ann do not play the fiddle – or guitar, or bagpipes, but to make life more interesting, Ann adds her own harmonies.

The origins of the songs are lost in the mists of time, only appearing in writing in the 18th/early 19th centuries. All had been passed down through the generations by word of mouth by ordinary, often illiterate people getting together in homes and inns. From the mid-1800s, more well-to-do collectors of folksongs and folklore wrote down the words and tunes, such as Charlotte Latham, the widow of a Fittleworth rector, the Revd and Mrs Lucy Broadwood and, later, Hilaire Belloc, who also wrote songs in the folk style himself. We had his "Sussex Bells".

Many of the songs featured conversations between a man and a woman, young and old, meeting and parting, full of "homespun philosophy". Scanning is somewhat tortuous, but Chris and Ann dealt with that hurdle smoothly, their voices blending seamlessly. Fans in the audience familiar with the choruses, joined in spontaneously and harmoniously, notably in Bob Copper's favourite on wealth and poverty, "Thousands or more".

In between, we had an extract from Charlotte Latham's "Collection of Relics of Popular Antiquities, &c", Rudyard Kipling's poem deploring the demise of the countryside and the background to the very old songs.

From the very start, Chris and Ann were perfectly at ease with each other and

the audience, and the audience with them, so much so, that when Chris couldn't, and didn't, remember the words of a song he had sung only a week previously, he then went on to sing, word perfectly, one he hadn't sung in years. It all seemed so natural.

A delightful evening. Thank you both so very much.

KCT.

Linda and Ian's first walk of the season. 17th April

A good crowd in the car park. Sunday morning had seen a rare break in the dismal April weather but after lunch the sun was more reticent. The March and June Magazine reports span the long winter lay-off with the memory of Janet and Chris' October hospitality to take us over to a new season. We park in the already congested Upperton Road and make our way through to the cemetery then right and across the narrow single track lane to walk up the incline towards the vineyard. No time to pay our respects to the resting place of Thomas Seward¹ that indefatigable conscience of late Victorian Petworth. The vines are still in brown winter quietude.



Snow Hill in the 1930s.

Right again and we're walking through the Hollow and into Upperton. The Parish Notice Board has no notices but a profusion of rusting redundant drawing pins. We take the high lane that shields pedestrians from the narrow road: primroses and daffodils are still in bloom. We're soon splashing down into an unwelcoming April park with the view across to the lower lake and the deer in full possession of the lowland. Snow Hill² was once up on the rise but who remembers it now? Certainly not the Sunday visitors passing by. Once home to the Leconfield woodward then to successive families of gamekeepers, it hosted a large gnarled buddleia, taken out no doubt when the house was demolished. I remember the house as cool dark and empty, windows broken and deer skins drying in the loft and a pair of chaffinches in the buddleia. 1971 perhaps.

This end of the park can be solitary but not today, we look over the paddocks to the corona of Tillington church. It's an unusual view, possible perhaps only in the barrenness of winter. We stop at an unusual square brick structure protected by a series of grills. Something to do with the lake? We're soon at the Second Lodges, Hungers Lane to the left but we continue along the main road then up the lane and up into the churchyard. It's a walk where familiar and less familiar overlap. We think we know the local, but not perhaps as well as we think we do.

P.

1. For Thomas Seward see *Tread Lightly Here* (1990) page 57-59.

2. For Snow Hill see PSM 44 June 1986 and PSM 144 June 2011.

The "baneful herb?" The March book sale

The Book Sale cannot be an exercise in the sentimental. Appearance is certainly not all but it does matter. No dust cover, title worn away and spine hanging off. A prime candidate for the dreaded figure of the "Collector". "To Think of Tea" by Agnes Repplier¹ is a collection of interlinked essays which becomes a hymn to tea. After paying due homage to immemorial China, we begin with tea's first appearance on these shores, a little before Samuel Pepys, our author insists. And was the fragrant leaf more beneficial with an egg beaten into it? Or the food at Westminster School so grim that spent tea leaves added to the standard bread and dripping gave the latter an added zest?

William and Mary's punitive import tax would lead to a century and more of smuggling and the inevitable casuistry. Here was an offence in law that bore little

or no relation to any known moral code. And what of Dr Johnson, tea-drinker extraordinaire? Who else would have any use for a teapot that held two quarts?

Tea was the "baneful herb" that parted the American colonies from the mother country, and that same herb would be William Cowper's solace when he closed his door for the night, safe at last from unwelcome contact with the outside world. "No telegram, no telephone." One doubts that the Internet would have appealed. Hazlitt, Sydney Smith, De Quincey, Lamb, names evocative of a literary past more than half-forgotten but dedicated tea-drinkers all. Did some heretic suggest making tea with holly leaves? Economy gone mad. As the writer drily observes, holly can grow anywhere with encouragement, it can also "as a matter of fact, grow in defiance of encouragement." Here's a quintessentially English book with an American author. American tea-houses of the 1930s she finds a contradiction in terms. "Jade and ivory" sandwiches filled with alligator pear and cream-cheese – but tea? Only grudgingly. One last vignette of a forgotten England. "In fancy we can see all England raising her tea-cups when the clock strikes five." No more perhaps. "No dust cover, title worn away and spine hanging off." Not good enough for the Book Sale, but a brand plucked from the burning, nevertheless.

And the March sale. I thought you'd never ask ... highest total in sixteen years by some margin. [Comfortably exceeded in April. Ed.]

P.

I. Jonathan Cape 1933. First U.S. Edition 1931.

Agnes Repplier (1855-1950), is known as a leading exponent of the "discursive essay."

Concert for Petworth Cottage Museum 1995

The Cottage Museum is now very much a feature of modern Petworth, as the recent 20th Anniversary Exhibition showed. It was not always so. This press release, not published in its entirety at the time, reflects those heady days when the Museum lay halfway between dream and reality. March 1995. [Ed.]

Newly painted Leconfield Hall was packed on Friday evening (17th March) with a highly appreciative audience to hear the brilliance of the Paraguayan harp played by virtuoso Francisco Yglesia.

The hall and stage were bedecked with flowers by the obvious artistry of Ann Bradley, who organised the concert.

Francisco Yglesia, formerly a member of the well known group 'Los

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Paraguayos', in his introduction mentioned that the harp was traditionally accredited with magical properties – there was certainly magic in the air that evening.

Starting with the haunting Peruvian 'Condor' most of the works played were from South America. Glissando followed glissando as Francisco displayed the versatility of the harp. A Paraguayan milk train was musically portrayed as were the tubas in a marching band. Other well known tunes followed, 'La Cucuracha', 'Rancho Grande', 'Besa me Mucho', 'Amor' and many others. In his wide ranging voice, Francisco sang many of the songs, also inviting audience participation.

At one point he performed the amazing feat of playing two harps at once, one on either shoulder. Then came the soulful 'Don't cry for me Argentina', followed by more sweeping arpeggios in 'Bell Bird'. Finally, as it was St. Patrick's Day, Francisco played 'Danny Boy' and 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling'.

During the interval the audience enjoyed a glass of Pimm's. The concert was in aid of the Petworth Cottage Museum Trust. Peter Jerrome, Trust Chairman, thanked Francisco for his brilliant performance. In the understatement of the year he said – "I think they liked it". Mr Jerrome also thanked Ann Bradley for organising the concert and for the beautiful flower arrangements. He stated that the Museum Trust had just been accorded charitable status. They were aiming to open the museum next Easter – a thrilling project.

Entertaining Sussex in the fifties – George Garland as “Old Mark”

George was a long-standing friend of my father David so, over the years, we heard a great deal of George’s inexhaustible repertoire of Sussex stories. These usually concerned the doings of “Old Mark” and his decrepit friend “Old Bill” – and they were always told in the authentic Sussex dialect of which George was master.

Indeed, he was regarded as THE authority on Sussex dialect – and some of his stories of village life were recorded for the BBC archive of vanishing dialects. This was probably in the early fifties. I well remember George coming back from a recording session at Broadcasting House and telling us all about it. My parents lived at Parkhurst, so our home was a handy – and perennial – stop for George on his way back from Haslemere station.

But George also appeared on stage as “Old Mark”, complete with shepherd’s smock, gaiters and boots, pipe or straw in mouth, a very battered hat and a shepherd’s crook. He had only to appear – very slowly – and owlishly regard the audience in apparent bafflement for the laughter to begin. And he knew exactly how to “milk it”, for a good minute, before he actually spoke!

I saw his act on many occasions for it was “Top of the Bill” in the Concert Party that George set up in the forties to bring “Old Mark” to a proper audience. The Concert Party ran for years and was very popular. By the mid-fifties it was playing all over the Weald and a long way up into Surrey. I know – for I was lucky enough to become a part of it.

In the early 1950s I was The Champion Boy Magician – and had a silver cup to prove it! My conjuring tricks were much in demand for WI events and Old Folks Suppers and Harvest Homes in all the local villages. I also helped my father, David, with his splendid Marionette Show – which was hugely popular around Sussex for years. I still have his beautiful marionettes, meticulously dressed by my mother, Elizabeth, and lifelong friends to me. I can still remember the Running Order of the acts.

Marmaduke was the Compere (his voice fruitily recorded by George Barker, the poet). Then came Lapsang and Suchong, the Chinese Bell-Dancers – Bertie the Boy on the Flying Trapeze – The Maestro (Pianist of International Repute) – The Parade of the Tin Soldiers – Freddy on his Unicycle (always operated by me) – Pongo the Dog with a Need (for a lamp-post!) – Billy Bones and his Graveyard Friends – Bingo the Boy Balancer – Hiccuppy Henry and his Juggling Sealions – Professor Weights, the World’s Strongest Man – and Madame Chiffonelli, hitting the high notes in Extracts from the Opera ... It was a skilful and delightful show –



David and Richard Gill at the Petworth Darby and Joan Party Iron Room December 1951.
Photograph by George Garland.

but it took a whole day to set it up and another whole day to take it down, so it only came out on very special occasions! My mother manfully provided the music – first on a wind-up gramophone and then on an early Grundig tape recorder: tears were not unknown in the Technical Department. And I was not only the Assistant Operator – but would usually do my Magic Act as a warm-up before the Marionettes.

George knew the marionettes well. Wonderfully, he offered me the chance to join his Concert Party with my little Magic Act – and so, aged about 14 to about 17 – I took my first faltering steps into the world of theatre ...

There were usually four or five of us in the Party – an excellent girl Accordionist, her name now sadly forgotten, one or two Singers and a Pianist, my Magic Act – and always “Old Mark” as Top of the Bill. My parents were very trusting – for George would keep his stories going for as long as the audience demanded (!) – so we often returned quite late from these adventures, with school to face in the morning. But I learned a tremendous amount from George on these first excursions into the world of theatre – and remain immensely grateful and I was paid three guineas every time I joined in – a handsome sum in those days!

In theory George’s dialect recordings should still be preserved for posterity in the BBC archives. If so, I think we can be pretty sure that “Old Mark” still lives on among them.

Richard Gill

Editor’s note.

George would be proud to know that Richard grew up to write 47 plays, build POLKA, Britain’s first Theatre for Children, direct it for 21 years – and win the Lord Mayor of London’s Prize for his “Outstanding contribution to the cultural life of the nation”.

The great storm

What happened on the night of the 15th October 1987 changed the way we think of our weather and our weather forecasts. Michael Fish from the BBC said to us that evening that high winds were on the way but that there was no threat of a hurricane. During that night we experienced the greatest storm for 285 years. The previous one to match it in ferocity was in 1702. 15 million trees came down in one night. Here on the Estate on that Thursday evening several people said they felt that something strange was in the air.

Gerald Webb, the Woods Foreman, was in the Noah’s Ark pub in Lurgashall

playing darts for the Royal British Legion. He came out at 11pm and found it was pouring with rain and the wind was quite loud. Driving out of Lodsworth he noticed that the road was covered in a carpet of moving acorns. Tim Wardle, the Estate accountant also came home at 11pm and noticed something strange. The mirror in his bedroom was steamed up, later explained by a build up of pressure in the atmosphere. Both Gerald and Tim slept soundly that night but everyone in the Building Department was wide awake.

At 2.15 am when the windows of the house began to rattle, the alarms sounded in Mr Wootton’s house. Mr Wootton, our Clerk of the Works was worried. He knew that the roof of the south end of the house was encased in a framework of scaffolding. His men were still on Phase 4 and 5 of the immense task, begun in 1978, to re-roof the entire house in lead. They were working under a canopy of corrugated iron with walls of plastic sheeting to protect them. Mr Wootton called out his team, Jack Enticknap, Roy Dunston, Michael Stubbington, Nobby Wadey and Cory Baker. The power had failed in the house and so, with torches to guide them, they assembled in Attic 8 where the sound of the wind was increasing. The great gusts of wind across the roof from the south west were momentarily held by the plastic sheeting which acted like a sail. This had to be cut urgently to release the pressure on the scaffolding. At the same time the corrugated iron sheets above them began to lift from their fixings and peel back, making a great rattling sound. At first the men tried to hold the sheeting down with poles but they couldn’t keep this up against the force; as one sheet came loose then another followed, each one flying off into the darkness. After this the brave men retreated to the roof space where they spent the night telling stories. Mr Wootton remembers someone saying ‘Now I know what it must be like to be depth charged in a submarine’. In the morning very few iron sheets were left on the roof, the rest scattered throughout the gardens and one was found at Moor Farm two miles away.

There were no casualties as no-one was about at this hour. It was at 4am when the balustrading above the School Room started to buckle. Mr Wootton began to worry that the heavy coping stones above them might cave in and fall through the ceiling of the bedroom below. This was the room where George, our four year old son was asleep. Mr Wootton knocked on our bedroom door (the Geranium Room) and said that we should waken the children quickly and take them downstairs. I remember the frightening roar of the wind and realised its unusual force when I saw that one of the windows of the dressing room had blown in and the china and photographs from the chimney piece opposite were smashed in pieces all over the floor. At first we could find no candles so we lit a fire in the Green Room downstairs and Max remembers ‘a medieval scene of semi naked children in their night clothes cavorting about in the firelight’. They were aged 2,

4, 7 and 8 and they thought it was terrifically exciting to be up in the early hours with their parents. In the morning Mr Wootton was so worried about their safety that he suggested the children should leave the house for the Leconfield Hall. We resisted this idea.

The lights stayed out for at least a week. People told me that the Rayburn stoves in the cottages were a Godsend at this time because they could be fuelled with logs. In the morning the sight outside made me speechless; this is a cliché but it was true. The landscape had utterly changed. A tangle of uprooted trees had crashed to the ground all round us, as if felled by some giant hand. Some of these trees were over 100 years old and had huge root plates which ripped great circles out of the lawn. We lost 730 big trees in the Park and Pleasure Grounds. Someone remembered the poor man who had been doing an acorn survey in the Park and been camping under a large oak tree. In the morning his tent had gone and the tree was flattened. We were relieved to hear that he survived. The Littlehampton Weather Station recorded a wind speed of 111 miles per hour. This was not necessarily bad for all. After a heavy storm fish come in to feed off the disturbed food on the shore line. Steve Hunter, from a family of coastal fishermen put to sea that morning in 35 foot waves off Littlehampton in his father's Hastings beach boat. Half a mile out, just off the river Avon father and son caught 200 large sea bass. They sold for high prices in the Littlehampton fish market the same day.

Caroline Egremont

[This article appeared originally in the, now discontinued, Petworth House Spaniel. Ed.]

Kingdom House: A Preamble

I had found my holy grail only to have it snatched from my grasp. I had been looking for Kingdom House for almost a year and been led up several garden paths without any real hint of success. For some time I had been certain that the Manor of Dean near Tillington was my journey's end. It fitted the bill almost perfectly but unfortunately this was just another one of the disappointing paths that I had trod.

I had heard the story about the Nazi sympathisers at River many times before but none of those I had spoken to actually knew where the house was, or at least if they did they weren't letting on. Perhaps it didn't exist at all. Was it just a local

legend to disguise some kind of nefarious activity? It was certainly beginning to look like it. If I could only find the house then I would have something of a scoop on my hands. Certainly the editor of the Magazine had shown an interest in my search but what little standing I had with him was now hanging by a thread. After all Peter had heard the stories too. Suppose he beat me to it? Who knows if someone would knock on his door at any time and spill out the whole sorry tale? Clearly there was no time to lose.

Having discarded Manor of Dean I began looking at other substantial properties in the area and before long my enquiring eye alighted upon River House. If this was Kingdom House perhaps it may be worth writing to the occupier to see if they knew anything about the Nazis. I had little expectation of a reply. Within a week a response came through my door and it was so bitter sweet. Yes I had found my grail, for the owner confirmed that his home had once, for a brief time, been known as Kingdom House. My delight at the discovery was short lived, for not only did this gentleman know the story, he had stolen my thunder as well! He revealed, to my dismay, that he had researched the Nazi occupation of the property and, as if to rub salt into my already tender wound, it had been published in the *Tillington Parish Magazine*. This was the final straw, my exclusive had vanished, I had been gazumped, beaten to the post, I was a runner up, call it what you will there are no prizes in this race for coming second.

However, I'm not a bitter man, and I felt that it was important that the story should still be told and so with the permission of the author and with acknowledgement to *Tillington Parish Magazine*, here it is.

Miles

River House – the raid

By the late autumn of 1945, war weary Britain was struggling to re-adjust after six years of conflict. The new Labour Government had been swept into power on the promise of Nationalisation but were being accused by the Tories of some serious failures, namely not concentrating on the conversion of industries from wartime production to that of peace, not providing housing and not procuring the steady release of the vast numbers still within the Armed Forces.

But not everyone had agreed to fight in 1939. A total of 61,000 refused and became known as conscientious objectors or "conchies". If the objector was suspected of being a Nazi sympathiser, then he or she were interned in prison without trial under Regulation 18B of the Defence (General Regulations) Act

1939; there were 5,500 such internees. These internees were released more speedily than those in the Armed Forces and a group of them formed the League of Christian Reformers. One of its leaders, a Captain T G St Barbe Baker, came to live at River House in 1945. The house had just been derequisitioned (having been used during the war for re-housing civilians from the South Coast) and was reportedly placed at the disposal of the League by a Mr Geoffrey Barlow of Kingsley Green, Fernhurst, who had himself been recently released after five years internment under Regulation 18B. The house was renamed Kingdom House and was occupied by a group of disciples of the League.

According to the *Daily Express* of 28 November 1945, Captain Baker described the League as a purely Christian movement where the talking of politics is absolutely barred. There was however a far more sinister side, for the organisation also believed that, quoting from the same article, "Hitler is a divine being" having been "sent on Earth to scourge the World".

Meanwhile, in London, the furniture and effects of the former German Embassy were being auctioned; one of these was a substantial granite bust of Hitler which was bought by a Captain Canning for £500. Canning too, notwithstanding a First World War Military Cross, seems to have been a member of the League as, by 29 November, the *Daily Express* was reporting that, once someone could be found to transport the bust, it was to go to Kingdom House (or "Hall" according to the newspaper).

No doubt not helped by daily stories appearing in the *Daily Express* which seemed to have a reporter encamped in the driveway of Kingdom House, the locals in the Petworth area began to remonstrate. The villagers of River were reported as protesting against the setting up of a "Hitler cult". Protests were planned to be made to the local MP, the Church authorities and to Lord Leconfield, the Lord Lieutenant of the County. This brought a reaction from another occupant of Kingdom House, a Mr Arthur Schneider, a further ex-18B detainee and who seemed to be running Kingdom House. All callers were turned away.

By this time, the *Daily Express* reporter was clearly becoming bored, for, under the headline "Pink Shirt", he wrote (on 29 November) "on a clothes line beside the main entrance hung a man's pink shirt, some woman's woollen stockings and a pale green silk slip"! He also reported that the local vicar had been given a pamphlet by Mr Schneider which said that Hitler was the second Messiah. Apparently the vicar was so shocked that he took it to the police and warned his parishioners "to be on their guard".

By 1 December, the continuous press articles were having an effect. It was reported that a convoy of Gunners had halted on the road outside Kingdom House shouting "Is this the Hitler house?" and "What have you done with the

bust?" A further incident occurred on the same day when a sailor tried to get into the house via the cellar door (as it happens, an impossibility as the cellar can only be entered from one outside door) but this attempt was clearly quickly defused as he was spotted and promptly taken inside and given a cup of tea. Two days later, Kingdom House received further visitors. The first appeared to be an erstwhile supporter, namely a Mrs Littlejohn, who claimed to be a former militant suffragette. She went away with a copy of the pamphlet. Her visit was followed by Lord Leconfield himself (plus his black Labrador), both having walked over from Petworth. He commented to the *Daily Express* reporter "I have read about these people. I just came to have a look at them but they are really not worth bothering about". The reporter went on to comment "and he then walked back to his castle again" – which shows that even in 1945, you should not believe what you read as there is no castle in Petworth.

Visitor number three was a preacher who arrived in a car, played "Jesus, Lover of my Soul" on a gramophone, read twelve verses of St Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians through a loud speaker and then preached a sermon. For his pains, he too was given a cup of tea by Mr Schneider.

By this stage, the Editor of the *Daily Express* had probably realised that there were far better things for their reporter to do than investigate the League and Kingdom House so the articles ended. However, meanwhile, a fuse had been lit amongst a group of bored naval officers who were based at the then Carrier Trials Unit at Ford Naval Air Station (now Ford Open Prison) and were simply waiting to be de-mobbed. A cunning plan was hatched and the Editor of the *Daily Express* was forewarned.

The leader of the raiding party was Clive Wilkinson who had been brought up locally at West Burton and, pre-war, had hunted with the Leconfield and had partied and cricketed with the Mitfords at neighbouring Pitshill. The raid had three objectives. Firstly, Mr Schneider was to be debagged and deposited in Petworth Square. Secondly, the League's papers were to be taken in order to ascertain who were its "disciples" and, thirdly, the bust of Hitler was to be daubed with graffiti.

In 2001, many years after the event, Clive Wilkinson wrote to the owner of River House (at the instigation of his niece who thought, quite rightly, that the owner would be interested in the story), sending copies of the *Daily Express* articles and saying:

"We dressed in civies so that, if necessary, we could pass ourselves off as RAF Officers from Tangmere. We drove to River in four cars; my sister being one of the getaway drivers in the family Wolsey. A chap called Bailey and I led the fleet in a 1920 open 4½ litre Bentley. The operation had been planned to the extent that everyone had an

allotted task.

After cutting the telephone wires, we knocked at the door which was opened by a fascist thug, Schneider. Bailey and I danced a three man tango with him into the kitchen. We crashed into the dresser which toppled over. The iron man was eventually subdued and hogtied on a floor littered with shards of broken crockery.

Elsewhere, a couple of chaps sat on Baker and others ransacked and unlocked drawers of the study desk for enemy intelligence.

With us was a mild mannered Observer – a dab hand at radar calibration but not cut out for the rough stuff. He was appointed guardian of the priestesses who were on their knees in the library praying to Hitler's bust. One of them grabbed a phone from a sideboard and began to phone for the police. Her screams were effective in so much as to give the impression that the law was on its way. Everyone scarpered, leaving Bailey and I to tote the roped and writhing Schneider to the Bentley and thence to Petworth Square where he was debagged and photographed”.

The successful raiding party had celebrated in a pub at Bury for sometime before it was realised that the Observer was missing. In the rush to get away, he had been overlooked, not least because he had discovered that he could not achieve his task which had been to daub the bust of Hitler in green paint – he had forgotten to bring the tin of paint!

The raid – but not its ultimate conclusion – was faithfully placed on the front page of the *Daily Express* of 14 December. The raiding party had to return to Kingdom House in order to see if they could negotiate the release of the hapless Observer who, by this stage, was in the arms of the local police. Mr Baker agreed not to prosecute if the League's documents were released, which they were, having been copied. The Commanding Officer at Ford decided to treat the raid as a school boys' prank but forbade any further communication with the press. However, those in the raiding party were grilled by MI5 agents who appeared convinced that the young naval officers were Communists.

The stolen papers revealed one big surprise in that Air Chief Marshall “Stuff” Dowding (the commander of RAF Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain) was revealed as a disciple. And what happened to the bust of Hitler? Who knows, perhaps it is buried somewhere in the garden.

This story was originally written in January 2011 by me, the then and current owner of Kingdom/River House. Three years later, I was approached in our driveway by a middle aged lady with a Canadian accent who enquired “was this Kingdom House?” Luckily, the name she gave for the house was familiar. She turned out to be the youngest daughter of James Battersby who, having been



The Petworth Society hosts the return of the Toronto Scottish Regiment to Petworth in April 1985. The Regiment would make several return trips to the town while the Society made a reciprocal visit to Canada. We were greatly helped by the Royal British Legion. The Toronto Scottish had been among the very first on the scene when the North Street Boys' School was bombed in 1942.

The Memorial Service at the Church.
Both photographs by Tony Whitcomb.



In the Square.



Lady Connie and the Suffragettes.
The Cambridge Devised Theatre in action – 9th March.
Photographs by Ian Godsmark as are all the following.



Lady Connie and the Suffragettes.
Actors and Director discuss the production with a very interested audience. 9th March.



Strict instructions not to smile! Despite appearances the reluctant sitter very much enjoyed his sessions with Jon Edgar. See "A head start".



Linda and Ian's first walk of the season,
10th April.



Upperton invaded!
16th April.



Chris Hare and Ann Feloy in the Leconfield Hall.
19th April.

interned during the war, came to live at Kingdom House as one of the disciples of the League of Christian Reformers. She was undertaking research about her father (who had sadly committed suicide some ten years after the raid) and his time immediately post war with a view to publishing a novel and having a film made based on her father's life and his internment.

Malcolm Ring

When Mary Metherell (Rhoda Leigh) first moved to Bedham

In 'One last summer with Rhoda Leigh' (Part 2) in PSM 158, Dec. 2014, I wrote that Mary Metherell and her friend Ethel probably moved into Bedham Cottage around about 1920 – due to the fact that in *Past and Passing* (1932) it says they had moved there eleven years earlier, and because Ethel's mother had died about 1918. However, a bit more information on this point has come to light.

Last year I bought Phyllis Catt's autobiography 'A Miller's Daughter' which was also in the PSM 1991-1992. In Chapter 2 (PSM 65) she mentions *Past and Passing*, telling how she met Elsa Metherell at school in Brighton, and Elsa had said she often spent holidays at Bedham. Phyllis states that Elsa wrote *Past and Passing* – but as I've shown, it was by Mary Metherell; and Elsa was the daughter of her half-sister. Mary's mother had first married John Colby, in 1870, and they had had two children, Averil and John. Their father died in 1877, and Mrs Colby later married Kinneard Metherell, and Mary was born in 1886. Her mother died in 1890, and in 1898 Averil married John Metherell, and they lived next door to Mary and her father, in Brighton. Averil's daughter Elsa was born in 1905.

Phyllis Catt writes she caught flu in 1917, and left her boarding school in Hove the following autumn to begin at one in Brighton. "In my first term a senior girl sought me out (she was a day-girl) and told me she often spent holidays at Bedham. Her name was Elsa Metherell ..."

So the implication is that either Elsa spent her holidays with Mary, in Bedham, or stayed with relatives of her maternal great-grandmother, who had been born in Kirdford – although if *Past and Passing* is anything to go by, it's more likely that she stayed with Mary. According to the 1911 Census, Mary and her father were then at 18 Talbot Road, London; but from at least as early as 1915 it was only him and a servant living there. As Elsa said she often spent holidays at Bedham, it seems she had been going there for years, and so all this suggests that Mary and Ethel were

probably living in the area, though not necessarily at Bedham Cottage, from about 1915 onwards. It may be that they moved, from coastal Brighton into the western Weald, because of the war. Almost certainly, Elsa was one of the "two nieces imported from Brighton" who stay with Rhoda and her companion for Christmas, at the end of *Past and Passing* – and the other was probably Ethel's niece, Nancy. After she finished school, Elsa joined the Navy and became an officer, who served on one of the ships of the D-Day landings in 1944.

Shaun Cooper

Fred

There was a notice in Friday's *Daily Telegraph* announcing that on 23rd January, Fred Saigeman, a lover of wild animals and cats, had died. I was in the neighbourhood not long before, and could easily have made the effort to see him. Now it is too late.

I first met Fred shortly after I had moved into a bungalow a hundred yards from his back garden. After hearing a strange mechanical noise one evening, I went to investigate. Hidden at the end of a track was an ancient house with a deep thatch. A dishevelled old man appeared (he must have been nearly fifty), and invited me into the garden which was laid out with big rectangular beds of tall country flowers and well-trimmed box hedges. There were, perhaps, half a dozen mature fruit trees and beyond these was the little River Fleet, which divided the garden of about an acre from Fittleworth Common. The heady smell of ripe apples was in the air, and the noise I had heard had come from an old cider mill, which stood in an outhouse. It was like a giant mangle with metal teeth. After being milled, I learnt, the apple pulp was put in 'cheeses', sacks which were stacked in the press worked by a huge spanner. The juice was then carried in a bucket to the old barrels which stood against the hedge where it matured into cider. After explaining the process, Fred invited me into the house to try some. There was a low scullery with a stone sink and cold tap, a battered cooker with a gas cylinder beside it, beyond which was 'the kitchen', in which a log fire burnt. This, he said, was kept in all year round to ward off the damp. On a table was a pile of books guarded by the biggest and fiercest looking tabby I ever saw. I was formally introduced to Tiger, who, after an uneasy relationship lasting many years, I was to bury in the woods behind the house. Would I drink sweet or dry? So began the first of hundreds of visits to Fred's house. He had been born in it.

I learnt that Fulling Mill Cottage was well known to all the youngsters of the

district. If you were sitting by the fire for an hour on a Friday night, half a dozen visitors would be sure to call in for a glass. The lads from the council estate came throughout the year, but during school holidays the children of the local elite would turn up, having come home from their grand boarding schools. For them it was all rather daring. Once he had settled them in their seats, he would join in their laughter but say little; he liked to listen to their banter. Boys could, if so minded, impress the girls by holding out a cannonball, while somebody timed them. If they needed to relieve themselves, they could do so in the garden; young ladies could use 'the voyeurs' loo', a downstairs jakes which was screened from the hallway by a plastic sheet. It was a place I never visited. At some stage he had been advised by the council to install a bath, but, he said, he would have no use for one as he already had somewhere to keep the coal, and he could use the stream if he needed a wash.

At this time, Fred taught history in a grammar school, and, by coincidence we both worked in the same town, some thirty miles away. I sometimes used to see him sitting in his green van, which was parked near the gasworks, eating a sandwich. I deduced that his job was uncongenial to him, and, if I recall correctly, he was offered retirement at fifty. This he accepted. His mother, who had been an invalid for some years and had occupied a back room, died at around this time.

Fred took up thatching. He collected reeds from the banks of the River Arun, made hazel spars and spent days up a ladder on the long slope of the roof. This was picturesque, but turned out not to be a great success. The rain came in, and twenty years later, a large area of roof over the stairs collapsed. 'The first I knew of it,' said Fred, 'was when the cats darted out in the middle of the night.' It seems that they had had a premonition. Some structural work was done by a builder, but Fred had let the thatching go, and things continued to get worse.

When I moved to a primitive house in Stopham, Fred helped by giving me tons of wood for our fires. This he got from a furniture factory, and he also began to supply me with increasingly vast loads of old fruit and vegetables, which came from a greengrocer friend. These were useful as I had started running a stall at Farmers' Markets, and could use a small proportion of the produce that came my way to make chutneys and jams, but I had nightmares about the quantities. I even tried to stop him altogether, but Fred would have none of it. The supplies kept coming. As a result of his bounty, I sometimes made strawberry jam with fruit that was 'turning' until well after midnight, and was forced to have weekly bonfires on a huge scale to burn the surplus wood (and the fruit boxes) once I had filled up every available outbuilding and shed, and I colonised some waste land to establish a giant compost heap. If ever I went away, the deliveries still came, and I would return home to find stacks of rotten produce in the yard. Eventually, when

it became too heavy for him, Fred was kind enough to give me his old Ford pick-up truck, which turned out to be an excellent vehicle.

Suddenly, Fred stopped making cider, explaining that he'd never liked the taste. Not long after this changed order of things had started, he took up a new role, as 'the cat man', delivering meals-on-wheels for stray cats. When a farmer threatened to shoot some, Fred moved them home. Fred did not believe in having them neutered, and they bred profusely. Then cat flu struck. This is a nasty disease and causes a build up of mucus behind the eyes. If untreated the cat can lose an eye, but Fred didn't approve of vaccination, although he spent thousands of pounds on vets bills. It became my job to bury the dead, and I would be asked to search through the gloomy house for dead kittens. One-eyed cats were everywhere; the place had reverted to its mediaeval roots. Then there is the story of Tiger's testicles: Fred's favourite tom was kidnapped and returned minus his parts. 'He's been car-straighted', announced Fred. He was furious and a lengthy and expensive court case ensued. Fred was a formidable enemy as well as a formidable friend.

Fred's diet would not be everyone's choice. I remember calling in one wet day and finding him standing in the scullery eating pilchards from a tin as rainwater dripped onto his coat. Large quantities of salad rejected by his friendly greengrocer would be consumed. His own food bill was negligible, but if you caught him stooping over his trolley during his daily perambulation around Sainsbury's he would tell you what he was taking home for the cats: fillet steak for some, chicken breasts for others. No expense was spared where they were concerned. At first they all had names. Lucy was one. Then there was the Duchess of Abercrombie, so named because she was a great swearer. Later, most of them tended to be anonymous. Not infrequently fierce cries could be heard both inside and outside the house. Perhaps the cats were mating, or maybe Blackie was rolling a rival in the dust. When the roof became covered with tarpaulins they liked to race up and down between the plastic and what was left of the thatch, something which made Fred chuckle, though it didn't help keep out the rain.

Thirty years after we had first met, and after I had moved nearly two hundred miles away, I called to see him. The roof had long since fallen in, and an unsightly patchwork of blue plastic tarpaulins had replaced it. The garden, once so lovely, had become a junkyard. Squeezing past his van and the overgrown hedge I disturbed half a dozen cats which shot off in all directions, knocking over saucers of milk as they fled. I trudged through deep mud to the back door. 'Come in,' said a querulous voice. I pushed the door open and edged my way in. A heap of empty tins and aluminium packets reached from floor to ceiling. At that time, I recall asking Fred how many cats he had. 'Probably thirty-five to forty' was the answer. The evil-smelling tins and packets had once contained their food. I had long been

used to wearing a hat inside the house, to avoid leaving with sooty cobwebs, which hung in swags from the low ceiling, in my hair, but now things were infinitely worse. Cat excrement had to be dodged and bluebottle flies buzzed around. Piles of books lay about the place, but they were steadily rotting and would have already become illegible. Fred was a learned man, an Oxford graduate, who had won a scholarship from the village school. Not long before, I had helped him carry the sixteen volumes of the DNB up a ladder and through a window to the upstairs room he used as a library. They had cost him £6000, which would have been better spent, I thought, in fixing the roof. But his priorities were not of the usual order. 'My grandmother's coffin came through that window,' said Fred as I passed in the heavy books. 'They couldn't get it down the stairs', and he went on to tell me that her rule over the house had been absolute. She had decreed that while she was alive there wouldn't be two Mrs Saigemans in the house. On her death, Fred's father (then, in his forties) had gone hot-foot to Brighton to propose to his sweetheart, and they were married soon after.

I last saw Fred just over a year ago. He had shrunk dramatically, and held out his hands and wrists for me to inspect. They were twisted and swollen from arthritis. His stoop was more pronounced and his sparse hair hung in lank coils. We had a chat and when it was time to leave, he came out to see me off, using a broom handle as a staff. He was wearing an old velvet jacket over two thick pullovers, all much encrusted with grime. Leaning on the staff with his thin limbs, he looked like a hermit from a painting by Crivelli. When he waved me off I wondered if he would last another winter in a house where rainwater ran down inside the walls.

I don't yet know how he died. He used to talk of country people 'turning their faces to the wall' when they had had enough, and I learnt from him that being crushed by a falling roof was a common cause of death in mediaeval times. I know he had his fears about being decrepit and alone, and that he tried to get used to using a mobile phone after a fall a few years back, but he didn't want anything to do with officialdom. He told me that if anyone came to take him away he would knife them. All I can say is that I hope his death was an easy one.

There is a rumour that his house will be dismantled and re-erected at the museum at Singleton. It might perhaps be the best thing. No doubt a close of 'executive homes' will be built in the garden, which would reduce the house to a mere suburban feature. When I first knew the place, it was a kind of paradise. There are no paradises other than the paradises lost.

Stephen Carroll (2011)

Rolling a snowball uphill

I was born at Petworth Cottage Hospital but we lived at Bignor where my father worked as head cowman on Mr Tupper's farm. He would be there almost twenty years. We lived in Malthouse Cottages ours being one of a terrace of four tied cottages going with the farm and standing at the top of Bignor Hill. They are now two private houses. From Bignor it was Sutton School where Miss Howard was in charge, but I went first into the Infants under Miss Cooper who'd cycle in from Coldwaltham. The Infants was a separate room divided from the rest of the school by a glass partition. It was a fair walk to school but I was never alone and we'd come home for lunch, not provided by the school. Up and down Bignor Hill but in fine weather we'd go to and fro via the fields. These were blackboard days and Miss Howard took the Seniors herself. Grades 1-6 being designated by appropriate desks.

A highlight of the school year was the outing, usually to Bognor. As the charabanc was leaving Bognor I put out my arm without thinking and accidentally knocked off a policeman's helmet. I got a real telling-off but by that time the policeman was well behind us. Once when I was still at school I picked up a £1 note, a fair sum in those days between the wars and my mother told me to take it to Mr Newman the rector at Sutton. He said he would hold on to it and if in three months no one claimed it he would return it to me. No one did and my mother bought me a new pair of plimsolls. These were "hand-me-down" days and of putting in cardboard when the sole wore through; you had to change the cardboard pretty often but no one thought anything of it. Something else usual at the time was to wear grown ups socks over our footwear when it was icy to stop us sliding about – very necessary on Bignor Hill. I remember three of us rolling a snowball up the hill. It grew larger and larger and we left it beside a cottage at the roadside. It seemed to remain there for months.

With so many children we had to sleep four to a bed and make our own entertainment. We'd take the brass knobs off the bed, put the sheet over the resulting spike and play tents. If Mum wasn't happy the damage was done and we could do it all again using the holes we had made.

Petworth? Well, if we had to go in we'd walk but it wasn't very often. Mother shopped at Grinsteeds at Bury, taking the bike and bringing the goods back in bags on the handlebars. No delivery. Before she married she'd been in service at Slindon House and we have a photo of her with her apron outside. I remember breaking my arm riding a bike – I was trying to ride without hands but I never told my mother this. I was in the Royal West Sussex at Chichester for three weeks and Dr Picton came out from Petworth. I remember when we came out, Mother hadn't

enough money for the bus to take us through to Bury so we had to go to Slindon and walk home across the Downs. Oh yes, the shop in the old house at Bignor, so popular as a subject for George Garland, was still operating and we'd get sweets from there. It was a kind of general store run by Mrs Neal.

I left school on a Friday to start work the following Monday. I was fourteen. I was to work at Elmlea, a guest house some fifty yards from where we lived. It was a live-in job and I had a small room right at the top of the house. I had to clean the fireplaces, the floor, and help the cook, on her day off, Sunday, the meal being left for me to put in the oven for such guests as there were as well as the family itself. The guests seemed to be holiday makers and I imagine the business was very largely seasonal. I was there a few months but left to help Mrs Bertram in the village and her younger children. The war was in its early stages and Mrs Bertram's work with the Resistance was in full swing but of course I knew nothing about that and as a girl of fifteen was hardly likely to be told! I was only helping out at Mrs Bertram's and needed to find some paid work so I applied for a job at the NAAFI. Someone came out to interview me and I had to make out that I was sixteen, the minimum age. No one checked this and I was told to make my way to Carlisle Road, Eastbourne. I would be making tea. I sometimes think when making tea at the over-60's that I've come full circle!

I left the NAAFI in 1944 to get married. I'd been happy enough and finished up helping on the beer counter at Firle where we were under canvas. Our wedding reception was at the Swan Hotel. My husband worked for Streeters the East Street electrical business but did a Friday delivery round for a local butcher. We were due to go to West Kensington for the weekend; my husband had a Wolseley 9. Approaching Northchapel thick clouds of smoke began to belch from the engine. We opened the bonnet and found that one of his mates from the butcher's had laid sausages all along the top of the engine. We got them out and threw them into the hedge.

Our home would be present Pannel's Cottage in High Street where we lived with my husband's widowed mother – my father-in-law now dead, had been one of the local carriers. We were there for 21 years. There was no garden only an abandoned air raid shelter, reinforced concrete with a corrugated roof. I was determined to do what I could with this and collected enough rubbish to fill the shelter. I broke up the concrete, got Sadlers at Heath End to drop a load of topsoil, levelled it off, and gradually brought back enough turf from the Sheep Downs to make a lawn. I used a two pound jam jar to make a drainage gully while the concrete surround was still wet.

By the mid-sixties I was working at Harwoods, now Market Square garage. The old Iron Room opposite had been pulled down and the site was in use as a parking

lot. Harwoods had put in a makeshift W.C. there. I went across to the W.C. but when I tried to get out I couldn't open the door. I'd left the pumps open: it was seven o'clock and I could envisage being there for the night. I clambered up on the pan and peered out of the narrow slit of a window. The garage had closed, the others wondering why I'd just gone off and left everything. There was no one within earshot. Just when I was resigned to a long night, Fred Knight the Market Square baker appeared to park his van and managed to force the door open.

Flora Parrack was talking to Betty Exall and the Editor:

Old Petworth traders (19)

William Dixon

It's unusual to turn up a Petworth invoice from the late nineteenth century that carries an unfamiliar name. Shops tended to last longer and be more anchored in the local community than they are now. This invoice from William M. Dixon is a real survivor; the pencilled customers name, description of goods and price charged have disappeared but the acknowledgement of payment is just visible at the bottom.

Miles Costello writes:

By their very nature invoices are ephemeral, of use simply as evidence of payment made or received, and to be retained just as long as required by an accountant or the Revenue. Why so many have survived is difficult to say, possibly it was simply that they were just as easy to keep as dispose of. Certainly the Victorian trend of retaining such documents has now all but disappeared, and with the introduction of modern till registers dispensing characterless receipts the fashion for issuing decorative bill heads has died out altogether. In the case of the Dixon invoice we have no idea who the customer was, it appears to indicate that the bill had been paid, but little else, and scarcely any more is known of the trader.

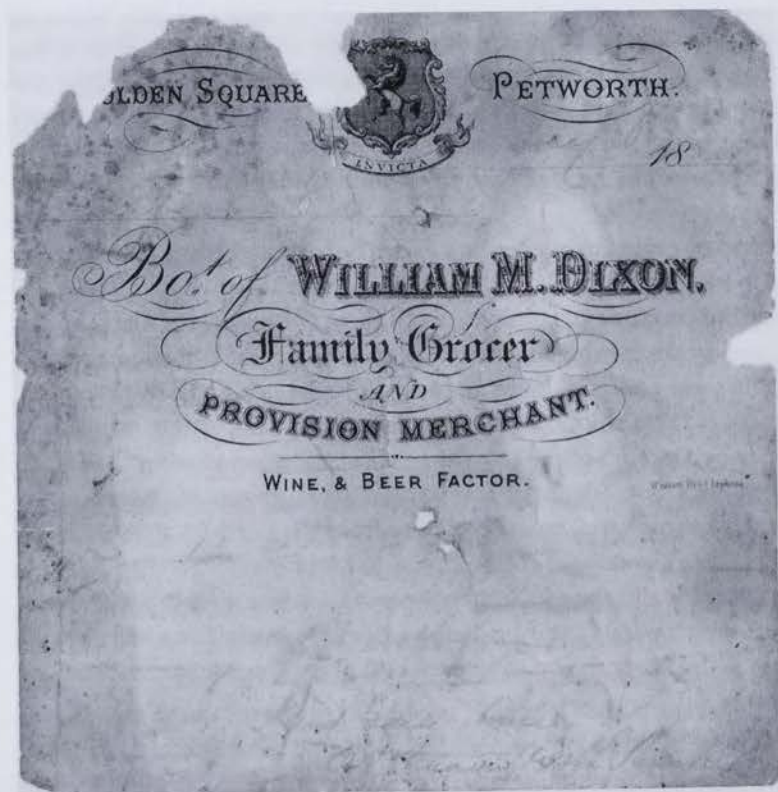
The Golden Square in 1880 was somewhat busier than today, an appendage of the High Street, it was difficult to tell where one started or finished and as now it was hardly a square at all, just a rather inconvenient bend in the road. Mrs Charlotte Burnett and her fancy goods warehouse is there at the time of the 1881 census as is James Bronham the draper. Stanford Killick the wealthy artist / farmer had moved into Golden Square from Shipley where he had been to all intents and purpose benefactor of the parish. Killick would have lived in some style with his

family and domestic household and very likely established their home at Whitehall on the corner of the Golden Square and High Street. A later census would find him relocated to Ryde House in Angel Street. The lower corner of the Square known until very recent times as Dawtreys Yard was traditionally used for stabling and more recently by a baker and various other small trades. The adjacent west or lower side of the square was for much of the nineteenth century occupied by grocers or provisioners. The property, now sub-divided into several small shops, had a long connection with the Challen family of grocers. Beginning with Benjamin and ending with his grandsons John and Thomas, a substantial business was built up over the middle part of the nineteenth century. In 1881 the two brothers described themselves as wholesale grocers and corn merchants and between them employed 'six hands' at the Golden Square premises. The shop with its long façade and double windows looking directly up the High Street made the location one of the most prominent in the town. By 1880 the business may have been in something of a decline. Competition was fierce; Otway's in the Market Square were no doubt the dominant grocers in the district as evidenced by the large number of invoices that survive. Their business flourished and was for a period hugely successful: however having expanded into three shops at Petworth and one in Haslemere the company would eventually dissolve into bankruptcy and the properties be sold at auction in March 1910. Another grocer, The International Stores, situated near to the top of New Street in an elevated position somewhat aloof from their rivals would eventually triumph in the bitter battle for custom in the town.

1881 saw a period of rapid change in the Golden Square as the two Challen Brothers appear to have withdrawn from their business and Samuel Jukes takes over the premises and continues to trade in much the same fashion as his predecessors. Significantly the slogan 'Late Challen Brothers' would be proudly displayed above the shop door, no doubt an indication that nothing had altered apart from ownership. Jukes sojourn in Golden Square was short-lived; probably less than a year, for by December of 1881 *The London Gazette* announces that bankruptcy proceedings have begun against Samuel Jukes, grocer of Golden Square, Petworth. Jukes may well have been gone from Petworth by that time as the creditors proceedings were held at Edmonton in Middlesex. Unbowed he again tries his hand in the trade this time in St. Leonards-on-Sea where he is a partner in a grocery business which would itself be dissolved in 1884. Just three years later Jukes reappears as he boards a ship at Liverpool bound for Quebec and the start of a new life in Canada.

Somewhere towards the very end of 1881 our man William Minter Dixon appears on the scene and takes up residence at the shop. Dixon is even more

elusive than Jukes. What fair or ill wind blew him into the town is impossible to say, he was probably born at Ashford Kent in 1853 but somehow manages to evade the enumerator's pen during the subsequent years for no record is found of him in any official record until he appears in Kelly's Directory for 1882. It seems improbable that Dixon tried to set up a business in the Golden Square in direct competition to Jukes, times were hard enough as they were, without taking on one of the largest grocers in the town. We can somewhat cautiously assume that William Minter Dixon took over the business from Samuel Jukes and continued trading much as the earlier owners had. Whether Dixon was any more successful than Samuel Jukes or indeed the two Challen Brothers before him is doubtful. Otways in the Market Square had outgrown their premises and were looking to expand, the vultures were circling. Dixon probably lasted a couple of years but hardly more and no doubt he disappeared as quickly as he had arrived for by 1887 he has given up being a grocer and is found operating as a wine, spirit and beer merchant in the High Street of Sevenoaks in Kent and with that ends our miserably inadequate knowledge of William Minter Dixon.



A classic piece of George Garland whimsy from the 1930s.

Original Caption:

"This batch of week old chicks threaten to emulate the children of the famous nursery rhyme."

Evacuation to Petworth 1940

My name is David Bourne and I was born in 1933. In 1939 we were living in Gillingham, Kent. My brother Eric and I were evacuated initially, on 2nd September 1939, to Deal in Kent. When our school was planned to move to Wales in May 1940 our parents said we were not to go and they arranged a private evacuation to Petworth via our Uncle Luther Bourne who was a sergeant of police there.

In late May or early June we arrived at Pulborough rail station where we met our uncle who drove us to Petworth. There being insufficient room in his police house he had arranged for us to be billeted with Mr and Mrs Wakeford at 10 South Grove where we were taken by him. Mr Wakeford was waiting by the back door when we arrived and my first impression of him was that he was a man of few words and none of them were to be disobeyed. Our room was facing the Downs and it was a very impressive view. John was the son of the house and Bill Pardoe from Peckham another evacuee was also living there.

My brother was eleven and was in the process of completing his eleven plus exam. At that time this comprised three exams; the Preliminary which he took during our first evacuation; the Written which he took on our return to Gillingham prior to our move to Petworth; and the Oral which he took at Midhurst Grammar School. He was granted a place at Midhurst starting September 1940. All against the background of war and evacuation. Needless to say I laugh when today I hear of the stress for children taking the eleven plus! ! !

Eric did not go to school until the September. I was not allowed into the local school but had to join the London County Council School Peckham which had been evacuated to Petworth and was set up in the Iron Room. The headmaster Mr Mickleborough, and his deputy Mr Crow, made me welcome. The school classes were arranged around the hall with gaps between each class. I was in a class half way along the right hand wall as you entered. The Iron Room was a large hall which also doubled as a theatre with a stage. I watched a very good pantomime there at the Christmas 1940.

One of the groups of men I saw, when we arrived, wore arm bands with LDV on them. I asked who they were and I was told that they were Lordy's Dirty Vests. They eventually became the Home Guard. My uncle had the job of taking in all the shotguns from their owners as they were to be used officially. They were held in the air raid shelter underground which was to the left at the top of the police station yard. We went to see the guns and there were some beauties with stocks of very attractive wood and also some very good engraving on their metal parts. I have often wondered if the owners ever got them back.

The most obvious signs of the war were the various troops who were under canvas in the Park. The 24th of Foot, the South Wales Borderers were there in my time. They had provided the troops who defended Rorkes Drift which was the subject of the film "Zulu". On Sundays they marched to church to the tune "The Men of Harlech". Very stirring stuff for us young lads. The Sussex Regiment were also there, subsequently, and of course they marched to church to "Sussex by the Sea" which has always been one of my favourites. It was also played by our band when I was an apprentice in the RAF (1948-1951). Another surprise was when an RAF "Queen Mary" carrying a dismantled Airspeed Oxford arrived at the garage opposite the end of the Tillington road and it was taken off and stored there in pieces. On one occasion at night we went into the back garden and could see the sky lit up in the direction of Portsmouth which was burning under an attack by the German bombers.

One of the surprises arranged for us children at Christmas was the showing of a three dimensional (3D) film at the cinema. We were issued with the red and green glasses as we went in. It has taken a long time for that type of film to catch on. However we were also required to play our part in the war effort. As a school we went up to the Gog where the foxgloves were in bloom. We stripped them of their leaves which is a source of digitalis, a heart medicine, and of obvious use for the wounded. In the winter we used to skate on the Upper Pond in the Park but we were not allowed on the ice until it had been tested for strength using a large iron ball on a chain.

Mr Wakeford used to go after rabbits with his catapult. This was large oak perfect U shaped prong with half inch catapult elastic attached. You could buy the elastic at the hardware store in town. He made his own lead ammunition using a crucible on the fire in which to melt the lead which he then poured into a mould to form spherical shot about half an inch in diameter. Eric went with him on occasion to catch any rabbits not killed outright.

For my 1940 Christmas present my father sent me a RAF jack knife which was very sharp. It was too big for me and I managed to badly cut my left index finger with it. I was in the shed at the front of the house but Mrs Wakeford would not let me into the house and I had to run from there to the Police Station where my mother was visiting. She took me to the First Aid Station which had been set up just down from the Station where they sorted me out; but I still have the scar.

To be fair to Mr and Mrs Wakeford they took us in but we were not happy there for various reasons. In particular I was very keen to get home to the Isle of Sheppey to where my mother had moved. Eric was keen to stay as he was enjoying Midhurst Grammar School. In the end, in a moment of extreme exasperation, I was very rude to Mrs Wakeford and we were shuttled quickly up to

our uncle and home to Sheppey. I still remember Petworth as a very interesting experience if not always an enjoyable one. I have visited Petworth several times in the last few years and it always brings back so many memories.

Lilian E. Brown and her life as lived in long-past day

Bury had at one time a windmill. It stood on Bury Hill and the site – easily found – is a little distance south of Whiteways Lodge and a few yards west of the main road. This road replaced an old track – sunken and grass-grown but still plainly seen – which was in use (so I learned from the Arundel Estate Office) up to some eighty or a hundred years ago. The mill was nearer the old than the present highway. The site is interesting: it is on a “bowl” barrow. Also, when a year or two ago I was writing a little history of Bury and trying to discover if any of the tumuli on Bury Down had been opened, Dr Cecil Curwen wrote he believed that none has as yet been examined, adding (and this is the point): “the most noteworthy one carried a windmill, in the ditch of which I found one of the best scrapers I have ever found.”

This extract comes from a long letter by Lilian Edith Brown, published in *Sussex County Magazine* in 1934. The ‘little history of Bury’ she mentions was written as a Women’s Institute ‘Village Record’ – after the West Sussex Federation of Women’s Institutes had suggested, in 1932, that its members should send in local histories of their villages to help preserve records of the county’s communities.

Over the following years, Lilian continued her research, adding much more information, and in 1948 it was published as a book: *All About Bury – A Beautiful Sussex Village*. “It is everything a local history should be;” Tony Wales writes in *The Villages of West Sussex*, “detailed and yet highly readable and written with such an obvious love of the subject – the village of Bury.”

Lilian must have been very pleased with it, because as the *West Sussex Gazette* once noted, she always seemed to have a copy of the book with her, which she would give to anybody she met who expressed an interest. However, as her many letters to *Sussex County Magazine* demonstrate, Lilian Brown was not just all about Bury – not by a long chalk. From 1930 until it finished in 1956, *Sussex County Magazine* published over twenty of her letters, and a few articles too. Three of the letters are indeed about Bury, but most of the rest concern aspects of local history from other areas of Sussex. In the first, though, May 1930, she tells of two old toll-boards in the museum at Haslemere.

“One of the boards comes from Chiddingfold, but the other – and older – comes from Northchapel (five miles north of Petworth), so is pure ‘South Saxon’! Each board gives scales of charges for man and beast, while the vehicles mentioned charm by their infinite variety...”

The letters she wrote cover a wide range of subjects, including: field names, flaskets, old farmers, shepherds’ crooks, sheep shearers, and smugglers, and she also wrote letters or articles about Eliza Cook, Hilaire Belloc, W.H. Hudson, and others. However, so far as her own life is concerned, these letters in *Sussex County Magazine* are very interesting because they all indicate where she was living at the time she wrote them, in some instances even giving the full address, and a few also include personal details, such as memories of her childhood. When she wrote about the toll-boards, she was living in Petworth, and when she wrote about windmills in 1934, she was at Pulborough. And from 1930 to when she moved to Pulborough, she lived in Tillington for a couple of years.

Lilian was an artist, and according to pictures in her sketch book (held at West Sussex Records Office) she also went to Canada in 1932, and then to Wales the following year. Her house in Pulborough must have been newly built when she moved into it – as can be deduced from a letter in 1940, which begins: “The interesting article in the July *Sussex County Magazine* recalls the appearance in my garden at Pulborough – seven years ago mere meadowland – of unexpected plants...” These were mostly poisonous plants, such as Deadly Nightshade, Henbane, Black Nightshade, and even “Thorn-Apple, one plant attaining great dimensions. The large leaves, funnel-shaped flowers and prickly egg-shaped – also egg-sized – fruit first reminded me of quick-growing vegetation seen in Canada.”

While on the subject of unusual plants in West Sussex, here is part of another letter she wrote, in 1935, which shows how her interest in flora stemmed from her father’s passion for botany. “In the April number the Rev. A. A. Evans writes of the Wall Pennywort and laments its scarcity in Sussex to-day. I do not remember seeing it in our county at all recently, but in the ‘eighties (and perhaps much later also) it grew to the north of Worthing, about Broadwater or Tarring, on stone walls bordering lanes which ran between parklands. We were living in Worthing then, and my father, who was keen on botany, always pointed out to his children, however young they might be, any unusual plant noticed during our walks...”

These wistful memories of her childhood also echo something she wrote in the long letter about windmills: “When I was a child in the 1880s my parents lived in Worthing, and I well remember the old miller who brought flour and chicken’s corn from Salvington. In cold weather my mother saw that he had a hot cup of cocoa or bowl of soup, and we children loved to slip into the kitchen then...”

Notice the odd wording at the start of the first sentence, which implies they had

not always lived in Worthing. This is proved to have been the case by a comment she made in a letter about shepherds' smocks, published in *Sussex County Magazine* in 1941, on the much debated subject of whether they were called smocks or frocks, where she adds: "I have searched my memory and remember hearing only of 'smocks' during my childhood – passed in Pulborough and the downland district of Worthing during the eighties and nineties."

She wrote more about her childhood in Worthing, in a letter to the magazine published late 1951, when Lilian was herself living there again. "In the September *Sussex County Magazine* appeared an article on Sussex shipping, interesting even to one nautically ignorant... When the author mentioned the 'luggers' still seen at Hastings and elsewhere along our Sussex seaboard, he opened a door of my memory. I saw a line of huge black boats lying high on Worthing beach. This would be in the later 1880s, ranging perhaps into the 1890s. It may be that these boats of the bygone return more clearly to me by reason of a water-colour of my father's done within the same period, and which, though not seen for years remains in my affection as reflecting beauty not before appreciated."

It is unclear when she moved back to Worthing, as her only contribution to the magazine from 1944-1950 was a poem in 1946. Presumably, during the first half of that period, she was collating her notes and writing *All About Bury*, which she began about 1939. She had five poems published in *Sussex County Magazine*: two about Bury, one each of Lodsworth and Storrington, and the last titled 'Sussex and the U.S.A.' These poems are well-written, and with her vast knowledge of the local history and flora of Sussex, one could wish that she had also written fiction, but this does not seem to have been the case, and the closest we get to anything more prosaic from Lilian may well just be the oddly long introduction to her article about Eliza Cook, in 1952 – although in this extract, she is actually relating something an old friend had told her:

"In 'those days' too there were "many, many more wild flowers everywhere than now; in lanes and fields, woods and commons; and oh! the daffodils that grew in the Quells, near Petworth." A quell, or quill, is a spring of water, says the *English Dialect Dictionary*; the word is used in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire. I have myself been told of no less than three patches of swampy ground in West Sussex, each known locally as 'The Quells.' "

She also contributed to other periodicals and newspapers though, and this next item, which concerns an inn at Houghton, originally appeared in the *West Sussex Gazette*. "A few days ago I was told an amusing story. A tramp called at a Sussex inn – the 'George and Dragon' – but was sent curtly away by the inn-keeper's wife. Presently he re-appeared. "I told you I didn't want your sort here," said the lady. "Yes," replied the man, "but this time I want to speak to George."

In 1953, Lilian had two long letters in *Sussex County Magazine*. One of these concerns a petition printed in the 1840s. "When, a few years ago, at the request of Pulborough's Women's Institute I was compiling a small history of this little old market-town, two ladies, belonging to an old Pulborough family, showed me a leaflet entitled 'Sunday Trading' which they had found among family papers..." (The leaflet, a copy of which appears at the end of the letter, was made by Phillips, a printer at Petworth.)

The W.I.'s 'A Pulborough Scrapbook' came out in 1947 and must be, alas, very rare. The other letter she wrote in 1953, which is about Bury sheep shearers, also has some details concerning her own life, in the first few lines.

"When in the February *Sussex County Magazine* I read the interesting article on the history of the Shearers' Charter my mind went back to a certain afternoon of the mid-nineteen-twenties. I was living in Bury at the time, and the local branch of the Women's Institute had honoured me with an invitation to give a talk at a monthly meeting; the subject chosen was Old Sussex Industries..."

Clearly, she was already well-known as a local historian as far back as the early 1920s, indeed probably before then. According to a note in *All About Bury*, she had moved to the village in 1922 – when it still had no gas or electric lighting, or even main drainage, and everybody had to get their water from wells.

She also gave talks at villages in other parts of Sussex. On the W.I. page of an issue of the *Southern Weekly News* in 1938 there is a report of a talk she gave at West Wittering, again about the old industries of the county. "The speaker was Miss Lilian Brown, of Pulborough, who delivered an entertaining and informative lecture on old Sussex industries. Beginning with the Stone Age, when flint scrapers and flint tools of every description were made, the speaker took her listeners right through the different ages up to the present time when trug making at Herstmonceux and pottery at Tunbridge and Dicker are such important local industries. Miss Brown also exhibited an interesting map, showing the different iron-smelting furnaces which had burnt in different parts of the Weald."

From her book then, and some of her letters in *Sussex County Magazine*, we know that she grew up in Pulborough and Worthing in the 1880s and 1890s; that she was living in Bury in the 1920s; that she was living in Petworth in 1930, and then moved to Tillington later that year; that she lived at Pulborough again from 1933 to 1943 at least, and that by the start of the 1950s she was back in Worthing. Her last letter to the magazine though, published in 1954, shows that she was then living at Cuckfield. So to learn a bit more now about her life as lived in long-gone days, we must turn to old Census forms, birth records, and so forth.

She was born on 12th May 1875, at Pulborough. When she was christened, though, a month later, it was in Croydon. According to the Census of 1881, her

family were living at the school in 'Upper Street, Pulborough', and Lilian had two younger sisters, Ethel Matilda, who was born in 1878, and Winifred, in 1880. Their father was a Schoolmaster, and the family had four young boys boarding with them, who, presumably, attended the school. Lilian's parents, Joseph Earnshaw Brown, and Matilda Jane (Scott) had both been born in 1849 in Stepney, London, and they had married in 1874 at Croydon.

By the time of the 1891 Census, the Browns were living in Broadwater, north of Worthing, and Joseph was working as an artist who used water-colours. As well as Ethel, there were now also Kate Madelaine, Florence E., and Reginald Earnshaw. As Kate was born in Pulborough in 1882, and the other two were born at 'Worthing' in 1885 and 1889 respectively, it seems the Browns must have moved to Worthing shortly after Kate's birth, and then gone to live in Broadwater at the end of the decade. Sadly, there is no mention of Winifred in this Census or any after. Lilian was not with her family in 1891, but staying with two of her father's siblings in Croydon, where she was a 'Scholar' aged 16 and probably attending a school in that area.

Soon after she finished at school, the family moved to Portsmouth. In 1896, her father died, aged just forty-seven. The Browns stayed there at least until 1901, by which time Lilian was working as a 'school governess', Kate was a photographer's assistant, and Reginald was still a Scholar – in Slough. So it seems that Lilian may have been a teacher, like her father. A governess is someone who teaches children privately in their homes, and a teacher teaches them at school. On the Census form though, her Occupation is 'Governess', but above this, in different writing, is the word 'School'. Furthermore, they were living in Nightingale Road, opposite the entrance of the Portsmouth High School for Girls, and one of the people who boarded with them was its Headmistress. All this suggests that Lilian became a teacher, possibly at Portsmouth High.

By the time of the 1911 Census though, the Browns were in Croydon, and Reginald had finished school. Besides two lodgers and a maid, there was also a nurse, who attended an elderly relative that was living with them. Although the nurse was called Florence Brown, she had been born in Croydon and was not Lilian's sister. Sadly, there seem to be no records of Florence E. Brown after 1891. Ethel was now working at a Nursing Home in Bournemouth.

Reginald worked as a clerk in the Stock Exchange, and I mention this because Lilian and Kate did not have jobs when the 1911 Census was taken. And, noting that the family, and later just Lilian by herself, moved house quite a lot, and that her one in Pulborough was newly built when she moved into it, and that she went to Ontario in 1932 (to see Kate, who had married a Welshman there, in 1928) and then to Wales the following year, and had also been on holiday in Devon in 1912

(according to a letter in *Sussex County Magazine*) and that she and Reginald at least had gone to schools far from home, one gets the impression that the Browns must have been fairly comfortably well-off. And yet maybe all this travelling, and the fact that she had never stayed long in any place, caused Lilian to often recall the lands of her childhood, when her father had still been alive.

This frequent need of hers to keep moving on may have been something that was in her blood, because both of her parents had grown up in families who had never stayed in one place for long. Although her mother had been born in Stepney, in 1849, the Scotts had lived in Sydenham, Surrey, during the 1850s, where three more children were born, before moving to Croydon where they were for the 1861 Census. And Lilian's father's family had been all over the shop! His parents had married in Kirkburton in 1839, and then moved to Ecclesfield the next year, where their first son was born; but by 1841, they were in Wargrave, Berkshire, where two more boys were born; then in Stepney, where Joseph was born in 1849; then to Battersea, where a girl was born, before going to Brighton, where another was born in 1853; and then they were in Ashford, Kent at the time of the 1861 Census, and in Croydon for that of 1871; and then three years later, Joseph married Matilda and the two of them came down here to Pulborough.

Incidentally, Joseph's father was an Excise Officer, and later worked for the Inland Revenue. And Matilda's father was a Chocolate Maker and Coffee Roaster, who employed four assistants – which suggests he probably had his own shop.

It could be that Lilian's interest in local history and the countryside began when she was living in Portsmouth, or later at Croydon, and that she often found herself looking fondly back to her childhood in West Sussex. Interestingly, on this point, it's perhaps worth emphasizing that, as an adult, she lived in Pulborough for a number of years and then went to live in Worthing again – almost as if retracing her earlier life line through the county. I imagine that in Portsmouth and Croydon, she had always been on the look-out for any unusual flora, during her walks, like her father would have been, and that she had noticed that such plants often grow in very old undisturbed places. She writes:

"Study of the history of a county or community, cottage or church can become very absorbing. To look into the past is often to understand the present; we may learn reasons for sayings and customs still among us; discover when a track or boundary came into existence, the age of a building and how it got its name. Since each year brings changes that make it more difficult to find our way back into the past it is well for the sake of generations to come not to delay taking note of points of significance. By piecing together 'bits' collected from personal observation, written records, stored memories of friends it may be possible to form pictures of places and people right down the centuries, to discover names of

fields and farms and families that link themselves in friendly fashion with holdings and persons known today."

That extract is from the first chapter of *All About Bury*. The book includes a couple of photographs of Bury, and over thirty sketches by Lilian of sights around the village. There are many chapters, dealing with such aspects as the church, roads, field names, mills, farms, shepherds, the school, Bury Hill, ancient customs and so forth. It is all well researched, utilizing ancient records and documents, books and pamphlets, as well as the memories and anecdotes of people who lived in the parish. The book also has a Foreword by the writer Mabel Constanduros, who had moved to the village in the late 1920s, and there is one of Eleanor Farjeon's locally set tales from *Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard*.

There is a whole page of Lilian's sketches of the poisonous plants she saw around Bury, such as Deadly Nightshade, White Bryony, Cuckoo-pint, and Henbane; and other rare or unusual plants she found there were Meadow Rue, Wild Liquorice, Skull Cap, and Scaly Hart's Tongue. This part of West Sussex, especially on the Downs, is prime orchid country, and she writes: "Among *Orchidaceae* I have found the following: Pyramidal, Early Purple Marsh, Spotted, Sweetscented, Butterfly, Bee, Tway-blade and Bird's-nest, also, I think, others. A friend took me to see four specimens of White Helleborine – but just beyond our boundary. Several years ago I found Field Garlic in a meadow near the School; and subsequently in a grassy border of Westburton Lane."

I have been referring to Miss Brown by her first-name, yet it may be that most of her friends knew her as Edith, as other people of that time often went by their middle names. She was seventy-three when *All About Bury* was published, and when she died, early 1966 in Worthing, she was ninety-one.

Her poem 'Bury Village' is in the book – but the version given below, published in *Sussex County Magazine* in 1942, is subtly different throughout and the ending so much more eloquent here.

Bury Village

By Hill it nestles, calm and neat;
So old, 'twas held in Saxon day
By Princess Goda whom we greet
In Domesday Book; while next we meet
The Norman monks, sent from their seat
At Fecamp's Abbey to hold sway.

The Street has generations known,
So, too, the deep-cut Hollow Way
The river busy trade did own;
O'er Church eight centuries have flown;
Of manor-house its very stone
Could tell of Courts, with justice shown,
And life as lived in long-past day.

Thanks to Peter Jerrome for the *Southern Weekly News* item.

Shaun Cooper

World War Two

Everything was rationed during the war. We had ration books issued to us for each member of the family. We had to register which one shop to buy our food and were only allowed meat, butter, cheese, sugar, lard and one egg per person. Clothes were rationed too we used to paint our legs brown to make it look like we were wearing tights, my friend made a lovely coat out of an old blanket. We recycled lots of things and had to collect aluminium, pots and pans, cardboard and paper. No church bells rang they were only rung as a warning. When children were evacuated from Chichester to the village I helped to take them to their new homes. We only had half a day at school and we would have to help at home or we would have to work on the farms or sew at the hospitals. I remember embroidering R.W.S.H. (Royal West Sussex Hospital) on pillowcases, sheets and blankets at the hospital in Chichester. Just as we finished 60 sets of sheets for one of the huts I remember a Red Cross train full of wounded soldiers arrived. Burton House, Lavington Park, and later Burton Park were all filled with wounded soldiers. I was in Petworth when the Boys School was bombed and also three bungalows were hit at one time by Petworth Station. Now only the Signman's house still stands on the hill. A man used to come round daily with a hand cart to deliver milk; he would ladle it out into our jugs we did not have milk bottles then. We used to keep chickens and rabbits for meat and eggs. There were a lot of Canadian, American and British troops based around this area. We had great dances and parties in the Village Hall.

Mrs Cronshaw from Duncton helped me with my homework.

By Jessica Weedon

28 September 1999

Wendy James writes from North Wales:

"This essay is from my granddaughter aged 11 when she was attending the 'Herbie'. She interviewed Mrs Jean Cronshaw (née Mayes) as a project on WWII in Duncton."

It does what it does

First stewarding of the season and already it's the last day of April. Sunshine and showers. Time for the garden if weather and visitors permit. The sun glints on a fragment of blue earthenware. I'm soon driven in by a shower. Richard's upstairs with two visitors. It's just gone three o'clock and I look round the "parlour". Does anyone use that word now? With the sun gone in, it's dark and even the fire fails to warm the room. I like the Victorian kerchief newly framed on the wall opposite. That's new. For years it had been unframed, largely unnoticed, in the exhibition space on the stairs. Ella Lee had handed it over to me with strict instructions to look after it. I had, but only after a fashion: this is much better. Ella had been a housemaid at Petworth just before the war, married one of the gardeners and gone back eventually to Burnley. I look round: the heavy Staffordshire horseman has been with us from the beginning – twenty years now. So have the two postcards on the mantle shelf. I pick one up. I've never looked at the back, neither, I suspect, has anyone else. "Dear Beat." It's sent from Winchester, Christmas Eve 1906. "Thanks for letter and pretty card, first I had this year. Rose wants to know what has become of you, it is so long since she heard from you. I am afraid we are going to have a miserable Christmas. Christmas wishes from your loving Kate." Servants talk perhaps. Other people's lives. We'll never know. Perhaps that's how Kate would have liked it. Why should Christmas be miserable? An electronic message might have ended up in the "Cloud" and answer the question. Better not perhaps. The card has £1.50 pencilled on the back and has clearly done the rounds.

Our visitors have come downstairs and broken into my reverie. They like the comforting sound of the clock. A call to order in an increasingly frenzied world. Pearson of Petworth. "Never out of High Street in two centuries." I wonder. Pearson clocks are unusual. The former Boys' Institute in East Street had one in the early 1930s. What happened to it? Everything was cleared – perhaps with the coming of war – perhaps a little before. A few of the library books ended up in the cellar at Petworth House. The inanimate can ask questions but it cannot answer them. Back into the garden, the sun's out again. The wild columbines are full of pale green spring vigour. All too soon they'll be a nuisance. Last year self-sown calendulas were everywhere. This year there isn't one to be seen. Pulling out speedwell, an early candidate for "weed of the year". Last year's winner was shamrock. Love in a mist, candytuft, clary to come. The little girl hasn't flushed the W.C. I tell her it doesn't matter. The Cottage Museum does what it does, as I hope the Petworth Society does too. Next Wednesday 4th May the Museum will be 20 years old.

