

The Bulldog Patrol

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

No. 176. June 2019



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A rare post card franked at Petworth, 28 October 1904.

The message on the reverse reads 'Very disappointed. There are no views of old cottages and quaint corners.' This card is used on the cover of Peter Jerrome, *Petworth through the looking glass*, published by the Window Press this spring. See the enclosed insert for details.

FRONT COVER

The 'Withy Copse', Petworth about 1900. 'The "Withy Copse" along which the footpath runs to the A283 is now a kind of unofficial nature reserve.' (From *Petworth through the looking glass* – see above). An unattributed photograph.

BACK COVER

The Petworth Cottage Museum's Goss china army water bottle of the type used at the Battle of Waterloo, where General Sir Henry Wyndham, the second son of the 3rd Earl of Egremont fought the French. See 'Petworth Cottage Museum's Goss china' on page 8.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

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 £14.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £18.00, overseas nominal £25.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As usual I have tried to offer something for everyone, the emphasis being on the preservation of memory and tradition. I can only reflect that publication gives such fragile material a chance of survival it might not otherwise have.

The Society will visit Mottisfont in June. It may be worth a call to Debbie Stevenson (01798 343496) to check if she has a late cancellation.

Lady Egremont is kindly opening her private gardens for the Society on Sunday June 16. Numbers are limited to 70. Tickets only, which will be available to members at the Society Book Sale on June 8, opening at 10 o'clock. Those disappointed will be given preference if the visit is replicated next year. This will replace the June walk. No charge, but an optional retiring collection for Petworth Cottage Museum.

Debby and Gordon have a second excursion in mind for September: details in the September magazine.

The Society Annual Dinner is on Wednesday September 18. Reception at 7 o'clock with the meal following at about 7.30: see enclosed insert.

You will see with this issue a notice about *Petworth through the looking glass* to be published by the Window Press. 100 copies only, individually numbered. The Window Press is making a donation to cover the printing costs of the leaflet.

Mike Hubbard's *A Postman's Patter* came too late for consideration in this issue. I suspect that by September copies may well be hard to come by.



Part of the rose garden at Mottisfont. The planting is the result of an ambitious project to restore the borders back to the original design of horticulturalist Graham Stuart Thomas, who created them in 1972. A photograph from Wikimedia Commons.

It's magic – of the lantern kind

Keith Thompson

Miles Costello has a collection of a thousand lantern slides. Conversion from candle power to electricity brings with it the danger of melting the slides and burning the projectionist, so the images on the hall screen were not as bright as Powerpoint has led us to expect. Nevertheless, there were many braving the weather for Miles' and Peter's now regular January presentation of local scenes and characters. The lantern slides were chiefly from the mid- to late-19th century from the Petworth photographer, Walter Kevis who himself had given shows which must have excited, informed and entertained his Victorian audiences. We, over a hundred years later, view them from a different perspective, comparing the past with the present day, often amused, but also getting some idea of the lives of our forebears. Should we always talk of 'the good old days'? We saw the familiar streets of the town, strangely empty of traffic, but often full of people, standing in the road, filling the Square, sometimes in celebration of coronations and jubilees. There was the horse bus on its way to the station, the parade of top-hatted policemen outside the important regional headquarters in Petworth, the immaculate footpath 'around the hills', overlooking the Uptons' tennis court and the haymaking in the Shimmings fields – a community event of some social standing.

Some in the audience wanted to know: where is the walk round the hills? Where is South Grove? What was the Iron Room? It's good to know that Petworth is attracting incomers keen to learn about the town and its history. We had a glimpse of the Iron Room from the Square, behind the late-lamented NatWest Bank and then in the process of demolition. Miles puts the emphasis on 'Iron' and Peter, on 'Room'. Who's right?

Peter's slides after the interval, including versions of some scenes already mentioned, also brought in named individuals: a drawing depicting the Sheep Downs in the 1930s by Harold Roberts; the Misses Wootton (sisters) one at the Girls' school in East Street and the other at the Infants' School on the site now occupied by the Public Library; Mr Arthur Hill, later the Headmaster of the Primary School; George Garland in his Sussex yokel costume and Society members 'beating the bounds' with the Town Band and at the open-air Rogation Service.

The commentaries were enhanced by the Hall's new sound system, reaching all corners with superb clarity and the rain had stopped for our journeys home at the end of a most enjoyable evening. Thank you, Peter and Miles, and to the audience who clearly had no regrets about turning out on such an evening.

A job at the gas works

The late Sylvia Welch née Johnson in conversation with Miles Costello

My mum was Mabel Durrant and she probably came from Wisborough Green, as long before I was born she had married a man with the surname Clark who came from the village. They had five children together before he died in his thirties and left her a widow. Mum met my father a Fittleworth man, who had been wounded at the Somme in 1916, and they eventually married and she had five more children including me which was ten in all, five boys and five girls. I should point out that we didn't all live together at the one time as a couple of my half-siblings had grown up and left home by the time I came along. There was another daughter, a twin to Johnny, but she died at just a few months old. Sadly the cost of a funeral was too much for my parents and so she shares a grave with a young Fittleworth girl who I believe died in a fire.

Of the five children by my father there was David the youngest, then Arthur, Johnny, me and Florrie. Only David and myself survive and our step siblings the Clarks have mostly passed away now and we really haven't kept in touch over the years. I have no idea how we ended up in Petworth but we first lived at Hampers Green in one of the new council houses; I believe it was at the top of the hill where the road goes round in a circle. I remember the Hill family and Kath Hill was a good friend, I believe that she still lives on the Green.

When the war was on Dad got a job at the gas works in Station Road and we moved to one of the cottages that went with the job. The house is on the bank high above the road and I recall to this day the long flight of steps that led up to the front door from Station Road. Room was tight in the cottage. The boys sleeping in one room and the girls in another, top to tail. Dad grew all of his own vegetables and he spent most of what little leisure time he had in the garden. On Sunday afternoons he would play games with us and I remember one called 'please and thank you'. Mum went to Chichester just once a year to do the Christmas shopping.

Dad had a nasty accident at the gas works, it was quite a dangerous job and injuries were not uncommon, anyway he was off work for some time and was eventually dismissed, no real workers' rights in those days and to make matters worse we had to get out of the house.

Off we went again and this time we didn't have far to move as we got a council house just across Station Road from our gas works cottage. Dad eventually recovered from his accident and he went to work for a farmer named Mr Balchin at Limbo Farm where he would bicycle to and from each day. I still have a mental

picture of him in the kitchen at home with his upturned bicycle doing essential repairs to it. This was certainly an important task as it was quite a walk from Station Road to Limbo.

My brother Lesley was in the boys' school when it was bombed in 1942. Though he broke both of his legs he was very lucky to survive. Another brother Johnny was off school that day and my other brothers were too young. There was low cloud on the day and I can hear my mum, who was standing on the bank opposite the gas works, say 'what's that noise', of course it was the bomber going over and seconds later the sound of the school being hit. I believe that the pilot was aiming for the military camps in The Pheasant Copse but nobody really knows for sure. After the bombing the authorities opened up a big private house opposite the fish shop in Pound Street as a boys' school. I don't remember the name of the house.

I went to the Girls' School in East Street and before that I must have attended the infants at the top of the High Street though I don't recall it. I was ever so fond of my teacher Miss Wootton and she gave me sixpence a week for collecting her daily newspaper, this was not bad money considering that when I left school my first job was for Mr Caine who had a grocers shop in Pound Street, it was next to the fish shop and would later belong to Mr Jerrome. I was expected to work in both the shop and the house all week for sixpence a day. I was happy with the Caine's but really could not afford to stay there and so at sixteen I went into service as a cook and general for a Mrs Nesbit at Slinfold and never lived at Petworth again.

My sister Florrie who was older than me left school at fourteen but when my time came the government had put the leaving age up to fifteen, I believe it was something to do with the war. Florrie went into service and married very young to Ron Potton and remained in Petworth all of her life until she died a few years ago.

My memory of Petworth is very poor though I do recall the dances in The Iron Room, my sister and I would go and have such fun as we both loved to dance. My father's parents were both Fittleworth people and Grandad and Granny Johnson were still living there when I was growing up. Dad and I would often hop on the bus and go and visit them in their home at Greatpin Croft. Occasionally we would walk to Fittleworth, we did a lot of walking in those days. I think the last time I went to Fittleworth I was fifteen and Granny Johnson died soon after that. Grandad John Johnson was well known in the village as something of a character and a folk singer of note.

Petworth Cottage Museum's Goss China

Gordon Stevenson, Chairman of Petworth Cottage Museum

I was contacted recently by Chris Moorey of the Goss Collectors Club, who had discovered the Petworth Cottage Museum's Goss collection through an internet search which led him to our museum's website. The museum a.k.a. Mrs. Cummings's Cottage is a Leconfield Estate worker's cottage furnished and decorated as it might have been in 1910 when Mrs. Mary Cummings, a seamstress, was the tenant. The museum is run by an independent local charity. The reconstruction takes account of Mary's life as a seamstress, her Irish Catholic background and evidence from those who knew her.

The museum has 40 pieces of crested china, all Petworth related. All but three pieces came from a private collection in 2012. The owner had died without any specific provision for the Goss. The executor was obliged to realise the value of the collection but he wanted the collection to stay intact, and to stay in Petworth. The collection includes a crocodile, a man in the stocks, a boot, a pig, a cannon, a warming pan, a cauldron, a kettle, a chess piece, an egg cup, and assorted vases, urns, jugs and plates.

Before this the museum had just one piece of Petworth Goss, a small peaked hat, donated in 2011 by the Museum in the Park in Stroud, following a review of their collections.

On acquiring the Goss collection the museum's curator wondered if any Petworth Goss might be got on ebay, went online and discovered a Petworth horse shoe. It was the last day of its auction and with no bids outstanding was bought for £15. Above the crest the horse shoe is inscribed, 'May the good old shoe bring luck to you!/Good health and sweet content/And may your path be ever blessed/With peace from Heaven sent.' Below the crest is the story of why horse shoes are considered lucky and how Saint Dunstan extracted a promise from the Devil never to enter a door where a horse shoe was hung.

The Petworth china has two kinds of crest. Most of ours has the Petworth crest adopted by the Petworth Parish Council which shows Gog and Magog. In the Bible, Magog was one of Noah's grandsons and Gog was the grandson of Jacob. In Revelation, they are mentioned as enemies of the people. Despite their negative description in the Bible, since the time of Henry V, these two giants have been considered guardians of the City of London and images are carried in the Lord Mayor's Show. They were obviously considered guardians for Petworth too and statues depicting them are mounted on top of the Petworth House gates. When the



Left. The Petworth horse shoe on which is written: 'The Old Horse Shoe. May the good old shoe bring luck to you! Good health and sweet content; And may your path be ever blessed With peace from heaven sent. The Horse Shoe has long been regarded as of great potency against evil. All Europe believes, in a more or less degree, that the hanging up of a Horse Shoe in the home is significant of good luck. All the Kings of old up to the 13th Century carried out the Custom of having a Horse Shoe hung in the entrance of the Palace. When the great St Dunstan was asked to shoe the hoof of the Evil One, he bound him up so fast and so tortured him, that he had to promise he would never enter a doorway over which a Horse Shoe was hung. Lord Nelson, England's greatest Admiral had a Horse Shoe nailed to the mast of the Victory. Below. A Goss crocodile stands guard over the rest of the Cottage Museum collection.



parish council was formed in 1894 the then Lord Leconfield presented a seal to its members. He was very particular about the design and wanted it done to his exact specifications with the figures of Gog and Magog depicted. The seal was made by the printing company Waterlows. They asked for a drawing or photograph of the figures to work from, and so Lord Leconfield tried to get the statues photographed, but they couldn't get a good image because of the trees behind them so huge white sheets were strung up behind the gates for the photograph. About six of our pieces have the Wyndham/Egremont/Leconfield coat of arms with a chevron between three lions' heads erased or.

The local agent for Petworth Goss was E. Streeter (latterly E. Streeter and Daughter), a jewellers in Church Street and Lombard Street. One of the museum's trustees, Anne Simmons, formerly worked at Streeter's and was able to donate a small poster from Streeters that includes the words 'Agent for Goss China', and which is displayed alongside our Goss.

I had almost finished writing this article when I thought I should just try an up-to-date internet search for Petworth Goss myself. Although ebay had nothing to offer, I found a Petworth piece for sale at Cinque Ports Militaria. It's an army water bottle of the type used at the Battle of Waterloo, where General Sir Henry Wyndham, the second son of the 3rd Earl of Egremont and a relative of Max Wyndham, the present Lord Egremont, took part in closing the gates at Hougoumont to keep out the French. As part of the 200th anniversary of the battle, the Leconfield Estate craftsmen constructed a set of replica gates and travelled to Hougoumont to present and install them. Enough excuse, I thought, to buy the army bottle for Petworth Cottage Museum. On the back of the piece is the explanation of 'Waterlooville', so named because it was the site of the first camp of soldiers returning to England after the battle.

Petworth Cottage Museum is at 346 High Street, Petworth, GU28 0AU. More information and contact details can be found on the website at www.petworthcottageuseum.co.uk

The above article was published in the December 2018 Goss Collectors Club Magazine and the museum subsequently received an email from Linda Pyne who said 'I read your article in the Goss Club Museum, I recognised most of the pieces as I had supplied them to a Reverend who lived in the area over the last few decades, the crocodile being the most memorable.' Linda offered for sale a Goss Maltese lamp with the Petworth Crest which we bought and she has since offered us three more Petworth crested items.

Passed and Passing – Sussex Ghosts

Shaun Cooper

When I was growing up, in the 1960s, whenever there was any talk of ghosts, the general idea seemed to be that ghosts were the spirits of the dead, and that they remained in our world because there was some task they still had to do, like looking for something or someone. But since then, the ideas of what ghosts are seem to have changed, and now the people who are known as ghost hunters say that there are a number of different kinds, the most common of which are those that are viewed as being sort of recordings, like films or holograms, replaying certain events over and over, through the years. We lived in an old farmhouse called Stammers, at the bottom of Bignor Hill, and a friend of ours once saw one of Cromwell's soldiers standing at the top of the stairs in the attic. Another time, I was with my sisters and some friends in the lounge, and we watched as a heavy onyx ashtray moved along the shelf a bit, and then a bit more, and then it went over the edge and fell on the floor. This last anecdote probably concerns the next most common type of what we call ghosts, and that is the poltergeist. Generally, poltergeists are not seen, but they move things around, sometimes violently. However, whether poltergeist or not, the spirits of Stammers seemed quite peaceful and never gave us any cause for concern.

But seeing a headless horse galloping up the lane would definitely be a bit disturbing. Just such an apparition was reported in some Sussex newspapers in the 1930s, after it had been seen along a narrow lane connecting Tillington to Petworth. And in Sokenholes Lane, also near Petworth, a headless horseman was seen. Curiously, headless ghosts have been reported at a number of places in Sussex and indeed, in the rest of the country as well. A headless dog might be encountered at Black Dog Hill near Westmeston; and a headless smuggler was seen at Middleton. These headless phantoms would seem to be 'recording type' ghosts, but it is unknown why they appear headless. Perhaps, if they are like recordings or holograms, the image starts to disintegrate over long periods of time, and it's usually the heads to go first. To me, this seems to be a likely explanation; however it should be noted that over at Racton, a human head was sometimes seen along a certain lane, bobbing around in the air, without its body.

The Middleton ghost just mentioned was a headless horseman that haunted Ashmere Lane. Now what's also interesting about this sort of apparition is the fact that the smuggler's ghost is on horseback. So if this was indeed some sort of spirit who still had unfinished business on the earthly plane, looking for something left

behind, or trying to accomplish some other task, then why would the horse's spirit also be there? Indeed, why does the smuggler's ghost appear fully clothed? Is the spirit of each item of his clothing also present? It doesn't make sense. No, however disturbing the sight may be, these are not spirits, but recordings, and although some might be frightening to perceive, they are nothing to be frightened of. Well, except for Squire Pullet, that is – a headless horseman in St. Leonard's Forest, who leaps onto the backs of other riders and wraps his arms tightly around them.

I mentioned just now that the spirit theory doesn't make sense, and this is worth noting briefly. Whatever ghosts are or aren't, one thing is clear: they are not supernatural. Indeed, they must be quite natural, but they are part of something that we do not fully understand yet. I find the word 'supernatural' a bit odd really, because it can be applied to certain events in fiction, or in films, but (to my mind) could not be applied to anything that regularly occurs in the real world, the earthly plane. Fairies, for example: whatever they were or are, their existence or the perceived memory of them must be a part of nature. Maybe I am being a bit naïve with such notions, though they seem logical enough, but this train of thoughts brings us round to a selection of very odd Sussex ghosts. For instance, there is a pub in Rye called The Mermaid Inn at which the ghost of a mermaid has been seen. Between Kingston and the River Ouse there was the phantom of a goblin who had been cursed to sew charcoal. And at Crowborough, the ghost of a bag of soot was seen wandering around.

A mournful little tale was recorded by Ina M. Stenning in 'When We Were Young' in *Sussex County Magazine*, December 1956. It concerned her nurse's grandfather, who had grown up near the Downs. In his youth he had been the gardener at the Rectory, and was courting one of the maids who worked there. They were the same age, and planned to get married when they were twenty-five. Both had saved some money, and it was agreed that she should hide it somewhere at her home in the village to keep it safe until they needed it. This was decided on a Sunday evening and they parted, as usual, by the little stile that led to the Rectory. However, before the following Sunday, she was dead. In his grief, the young man returned to the little stile on the evening of the following Sunday, and saw her sitting there, as she often had done, staring at him. Then she vanished. He thought he had imagined her, and told no one about the incident, but when he saw her again, the next Sunday, sitting on the stile watching him, he went to the Rector for advice. The Rector said that if the young man saw her again, he should make the Sign of the Cross and ask her what she wanted. Well, the next Sunday evening, he saw her again, sitting on the stile, and he did what the Rector had told him to do, and then she said that their money was hidden under an old apple tree in the garden of her home, and then she vanished, and he never saw her again. But the money was exactly where she had said it was, buried under the old apple

tree. This is not really a ghost tale as such, because it was the girl's token that the boy saw, but it's surprising that even so, she still managed to tell him where the money was hidden.

Another unusual type of ghost is that of a bear seen near the ruins of Verdley Castle, in north-western Sussex. Ghosts of bears are extremely rare in this country, and I have read of only one other county that has such a thing. There are, however, quite a lot of ghosts of more common animals. At Slindon, the ghost of a white horse has been seen, and heard, by various locals, galloping up Mill Lane towards Bignor Hill, and it is believed to be a horse that was used by the smugglers. A phantom doe is said to haunt the ruins of Knepp Castle, and is believed to be the ghost of a young girl who was the victim of a witch in the 13th century. And, though perhaps not so newsworthy, when I was living in Brighton I two or three times saw the ghost of a little mouse in my bedroom.

Slindon is a village that has more than its fair share of ghosts. One of them is that of an old baker, which haunts The Old Bakery, and has been witnessed standing beneath a nearby tree, calling: 'Tuppence a loaf. Tuppence a loaf.' Another cottage has the ghost of a man who smokes a pipe, and sometimes the smell of pipe tobacco is quite strong there. Slindon though also has a very unusual kind of apparition, which is the ghost of an entire lane, complete with cottages and trees, which never existed there.

At Rotherfield in an inn that was formerly a tithe barn, the sound of someone going upstairs has often been heard, usually in June, and one person saw the feet of a teenage girl, just her feet, going up the staircase. Curiously, there seem to be more ghosts of young girls than there are of boys. Pevensey has at least three ghosts of girls, two of them resulting from murders committed in the 1920s; and Herstmonceux Castle has three ghosts of young girls, along with the ghosts of a sailor, a man on a horse, a poacher, a sleepwalker, and a drummer who is heard drumming but never seen.

The ghost of a girl hitch-hiking has been encountered near Horsham and, along with the ghosts of the girls who were killed in the 1920s this brings us round to the subject of ghosts from different periods. The ghost of a Roman Centurion has been seen on the old Roman wall at Chichester, and the ghost of Julius Caesar is said to appear at Chanctonbury Ring. Then there are the ghosts of a war band of Danes who were ambushed, at Kingly Vale; the ghosts of two highwaymen at Winchelsea; and the ghosts of a couple of smugglers in the attic of a pub at Hove, grinding snuff from tobacco. What I am curious about is how is it known that it's the ghost of Julius Caesar who haunts Chanctonbury Ring, or that it's the ghost of the miller John Oliver who haunts Highdown Hill? On firmer ground though is the site of the Battle of Hastings, where the ghost of a very old man who appears there is believed to have been a Druid, or the first Saxon who fell when the fighting began.

The vast majority of reported ghosts are not particularly odd, however, either in appearance or in their actions. At Middleton, for instance, there is the ghost of a grey lady sometimes seen at Ancton Manor, who doesn't really do much except appear in a ghostly manner. And there are also ghosts who seem so real, at first glance, so alive, and not unusual in any way, yet just turn out to be rather difficult to account for. One such a ghost was often seen at the Petworth Antique Centre. Joyce Underwood, an antique dealer, was on her own in the shop one day, when an old woman dressed in black opened the door and came in, then walked up a step into another part of the shop. Mrs. Underwood went after her to see if she could be of help, but when she got there, the old woman had vanished. Mrs. Underwood was later told that this ghost had been seen by other people, and it was thought that she was walking through what had once been the courtyard, and then mounting a step to enter a cottage which used to be there.

Some of the most interesting ghosts are those that appear with others, such as the legions of Roman soldiers occasionally seen along old Roman roads in other counties – though I might add that the sound of marching feet is sometimes heard on the old Roman road in Milland; and also those ghosts who, for one reason or another, quite simply defy all known logical explanations. There are at least two groups of ghosts which appeared in the Milland area, and their stories are recorded in 'Reminiscences of a Country Woman' by Eleanor Boniface, in *Sussex County Magazine*, January 1933. One of these groups consisted of two men fighting with swords, and a young girl in a pink frock watching them in horror: her parents had arranged for her to marry a fine gentleman, but she fell in love with a local boy, and one night her betrothed followed her as she went to see her swain, and he immediately attacked the lad, but in the subsequent fight they both died, and after that the girl hanged herself.

The tale of the Chithurst Clergy ghost is about a clergyman who courted the squire's daughter. One winter evening, the squire and his daughter came to the clergyman's house and later he walked with them back to where they lived, in the neighbouring village. Then, as he was coming home across Gorse Meadow, a man leapt out and brutally assaulted him with a fag-hook and then slew him with a pitchfork. When the murderer was caught, he said that the clergyman had spoken cruelly to him five years earlier. And after the murder, the ghosts of the two men were often seen in their terrible struggle in Gorse Meadow. In the book *Between Petersfield and Midhurst* R. Chatterton-Newman notes that the victim, John Denham, rector of Iping with Chithurst and curate of Rogate, was slain on 3rd December 1757, in a furze field between Iping and Stedham, with a pitchfork stuck in his heart. His killer, who was quickly captured, tried and hanged at Horsham, was utterly unrepentant to the end.

I am not really someone who frightens easily, when, for example, watching

horror films; but having said that there is a story in Judy Middleton's book *Ghosts of Sussex* which disturbed me so much, when I read it, that I had nightmares for the rest of the week. It's about the evil ghost of a farmer, near Madehurst I think, so terrifying that wild animals would be absolutely petrified and unable to flee whenever the ghost came along. That tale brings us back to questions concerning the nature of the supernatural. In books and articles about ghosts, it is sometimes mentioned that animals (usually domestic) have seemed frightened by the presence of particular ghosts. For instance, riders in Slindon have occasionally reported that their horses shied at a certain place along Mill Lane, or seemed aware of the sounds of a horse galloping which the rider heard, and there were similar reports regarding the notorious Sokenholes Lane, near Petworth. This shows us then that seeing or hearing ghosts are not mere hallucinations only experienced by humans. Yet some ghosts at least must be considered to be hallucinations, because they appear to be doing things that are frankly impossible, and this is often particularly the case with the ghosts of witches. Curiously, considering how many alleged witches there were in this country, during and after the period when witchcraft was viewed as a criminal activity, which ended in 1736, there are only a few counties that have reports of any ghosts of witches. Sussex though has at least four.

Near Crowborough, the ghost of a witch hare being chased by a ghostly pack of hounds was witnessed. At Goring-by-Sea there was a witch who took the form of a large black dog after her death, which followed people in the lonely lanes at night. Her ghost also haunted a certain old barn there, and the local children were still avoiding it in the 1930s, and horses frequently refused to go anywhere near the place. Next we come to the ghost of a witch at Loxwood, mentioned in the last *PSM*. The sexton saw the ghost sitting astride a sheep-hurdle and apparently riding it as if it was a horse. He said he had seen her lots of times, and that: 'She was tall and thin, and always wore dark clothes and a veil.'

Now ghosts of witches disguised as animals, or riding hurdles are all very well, I do not consider any of these to be at all natural or even possible in the first place – when the alleged witches were still living, but it has to be said that surely the most spectacular of this county's witch ghosts must be the one that haunted Bedlam Pond, near Cuckfield. In her lifetime, she had been Mrs. Avery the witch of Wiggerry, and this is how her ghost was described in the *Mid Sussex Times* in 1888: 'and it was said of this old pond that on a certain night at the witching hour of midnight an apparition in the shape of a haggard old woman might be seen seated on the surface of the water busily plying a spinning wheel.'

Finally though, a very peculiar Sussex tale that definitely has a supernatural slant, which was in the *West Sussex Gazette* in December 1952, as part of the Mrs. Paddick 'series'. I've read a lot of books about folklore and ghosts, but I've never found anything else even remotely like this account. Mrs. Paddick tells how there

was a cowman who lived in a cottage at the edge of a wood. The cottage was very old and it was decided it should be demolished, but the cowman refused to move out. Then he took ill and later died. After this, his ghost used to haunt the place, and local children were frightened by it, especially those who had to walk near it on their way to and from school. Then one day, Mrs. Paddick's grandfather gathered a handful of earth from the churchyard, and he waited by the wood until the ghost appeared. When it did so, he threw the earth in its face, and the ghost immediately changed into a bull and began to graze. Then Mrs. Paddick's grandfather and another man got a halter round the bull's neck and drew it down to the river, just by the mill, and they shoved the bull into the water, and after that it disappeared and the ghost was never seen again. Mrs. Paddick said that this is because ghosts cannot go across running water.

The Bulldog Patrol

Tony Penfold in conversation with Miles Costello

I can't recall doing the drawing, it was, after all, a long time ago and probably just a bit of fun which ended up in the troop log book. I had joined the scouts at Petworth shortly after they reformed in 1943; the 1st Petworth Scout Troop had more or less disbanded earlier in the war and the final nail came in the Autumn of 1942 with the death of Mr Stevenson the scout master who was killed in the boys' school bombing.

I can still remember the boys in the sketch, it probably dates from about 1945 and the lads were members of the Bulldog Patrol. From left to right are Tony 'Wicky' Whitcomb whose father was for many years the manager of The International Stores, they lived in the cottage at the rear of the shop; Wicky later became well-known in the town as a photographer and was involved in scouting for much of his life. He is followed by Trevor 'Tich' Green, son of the council Sanitary Inspector and they lived at number 20 Station Road; and Chris 'Eggy' Clegg, son of the local dentist. Eggy always got on the bus with egg on his face and Ted Whitcomb gave him that nickname. Then came Norman 'Bunny' Bourne whose father was Sergeant Bourne of the Petworth police, Bunny was a great friend of mine and in the drawing he stands alongside me, Tony 'Scrammy' Penfold. I still occasionally get called Scrammy even though I don't really approve of it; after all I am 87 now. How did I get the name? Well, I was born at what is now Church Cottage in Damers Bridge and when I was a lad I would play on the pavement outside – you could in those days quite safely. I used to wait for Tom Greest who

MAIN WRITTEN SOURCES OF SUSSEX GHOSTS

The Folklore of Sussex by Jacqueline Simpson.
Ghosts & Legends of Sussex by Tony Wales.
Sussex Ways and Byways by Cecile Woodford.
The Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits by John and Anne Spencer.
Mysteries of Sussex by A. M. Green.
Tales of Old Petworth by John Osborn Greenfield.
Slindon – A Portrait of a Sussex Village by J. Duggan Rees.
West Sussex as seen through the eyes of the W.I. by E.S. Anderson.
 'Some Sussex Apparitions' by George Aitchison, *Sussex County Magazine*, 1940.

An article about Mrs. Paddick is planned for the next issue of PSM.



Tony Penfold's drawing of the Bulldog Patrol which dates from about 1945. Having been folded and undisturbed in the scouts troop log book for many years the impressions of some of the seven scouts have been faintly superimposed on others.

worked in the Estate Yard to come by. Tom would always tease me and I would tell him to 'scram' or 'scram off' and so the name stuck. Tom used to play in a local band called 'The Aces' and sadly lost his life serving as an air-gunner in a Halifax during the war. Tom was the son of Harry Greest the High Street blacksmith who had the forge opposite the White Hart. I would occasionally walk up the street and watch him shoeing horses outside on the road. I can just remember men drinking in the pub across the street but I would have been quite young as it closed in 1939. Next on the drawing came a lad by the name of Bristow, I think he may have been David though I am having difficulty remembering him and I don't know why he didn't have a nickname. Lastly there is 'Timer' Whitcomb; Edward or Ted was his real name though I guess that he inherited the nickname from his father who was also known as Timer. Ted was unfortunate in that he, Jimmy Godwin and Bob Willis were walking home having skived off from Midhurst School when they were hit by an army lorry at White House Corner near Tillington. Ted was very badly injured and spent quite a few months in hospital and walked with a bit of a limp from then on. Ted had been a very good sportsman until then but sadly the accident put paid to any ambition he may have had in that direction.

Of course there were other scouts in the Petworth troop such as Jim 'Rusty' Russell whose parents had The Queens Head in the High Street; 'Fluff' Ledbitter who as his name suggests had really fluffy hair. Fluff lived opposite the park lodges at Tillington where his father was gardener to Colonel Sutton at Tillington House. I believe that he later emigrated to South Africa. Then there was John or 'Joby' Weller who was one of the first to be buried in the new cemetery at Hampers Green. John dived into the river at the Tumble Bay and broke his neck. When I go down to the cemetery I look at his grave which is near the entrance and remember him being in the scouts. I suppose that he was about 15 at the time just a year older than me. There were also the Saunders twins Hugh and Ron, senior scouts who were very much older than me. The story goes that when they were young they were occasionally given a penny to buy a gobstopper; unfortunately they had to share it so one would suck a colour until it all went and then the other would take over. I mustn't forget Joy Dabson and her brother Jim; they were also quite a bit older than me and Joy, who was Akela of the troop, played a major part in resurrecting the 1st Petworth in 1943. (See *PSM* 175, page 28). Jim was, I believe, a patrol leader of the Otters, and he and his sister were both very well-known in the town, as was their father who was Chief Superintendent of the local police.

I am sure to have missed out quite a few members of the troop. Some lads joined and didn't stay long and others I have forgotten. As I said, it was a long time ago.

'Go on, Missus'

Christine Bushell, née Nineham

I was born in a tied cottage at Limbo Farm, Petworth, my father being a farmworker. My brother was two years older than I. Mum and Dad took in two evacuees during the war. They were Londoners and Mum told me that when they first came they would not eat our food. When Mum asked them what their mother fed them on they said 'Six pennyworth of fish and chips and pease pudding.' When Mum took us down the farm to see Dad milking the cows and he took a drink of milk from the churn for Mum to drink they said 'Go on, Missus. Milk comes from bottles, not cows.' Leonard and Roy were brothers and they lived with us for a long time. They cried when they had to go back and wanted to stay.

Mum and Dad kept in touch with them until 1960 when they came to see us to say goodbye as they were going to live in Australia.

By 1943 we were living at Fox Hill and there were troops everywhere around Petworth, one camp being in the woods at the Gog. They were Canadian and Dad became friendly with two of them. One was married and had two children of the same age as my brother and me. At Christmas he gave my father a parcel his wife had sent over from Canada for my brother and me. In the parcel were a toy tin plate aeroplane and a toy stuffed dog. My brother took one look and said the dog was his. He called it Sandy. He kept Sandy for many years until he got wet and the wood shavings came out of him. I, of course, was left with the tin plane.

One day in 1944 we noticed lorry after lorry going by in the road. It all seemed strangely quiet: the troops had gone. After a while we went up into the woods, and I remember seeing the names carved on the bark of the trees all around. Then we came across a lovely grave with a headstone and the regimental colours, and the name Zeke, their dog mascot who had been run over by a lorry. Every so often we would go and put flowers on Zeke's grave. It was surrounded by stones and protected with a wire fence. Even after we moved to 294 North Street to live we still came up to the Gog to see Zeke, and when in late 1948 we had to leave Petworth to go and look after my grandmother in Kirdford, we still came from time to time to see if the grave was o.k. The last time I went to see it I saw that someone had done it up and put fresh flowers on it. I can't walk so well now so I haven't been for a while, but it would be sad if Zeke was forgotten after 75 years.¹

Some time after D-day, Dad had a letter to say that both of the soldiers had died on the first day of D-day. It was from the wife of one of them.

1. See *PSM* 173, page 5.

The Hobby Horse

No. 29 in the continuing series of old Petworth traders. Miles Costello

Variouslly described as tea rooms or restaurant, the business operated from the property in New Street now occupied by the interior furnisher Giovanna Ticciati and next to what was then the Red Lion public house. Previously home to The International Stores, before they moved in the 1920s to the site of the present Co-op, the business has almost disappeared from the collective memory of the town. Evidently a popular meeting place it survived the period of austerity and rationing both during and after the second world war, and even in 1942 at the height of hostilities the business can be found advertising for an experienced cake maker. First owned by a rather anonymous Miss Gadd, the Hobby Horse then passed through the hands of a Mrs. Marshall before being sold at auction in January 1958 by the then owner Miss Dixon Box.

The HOBBY HORSE

(Miss Dixon Box)

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Teas - Home-made Cakes - Ices

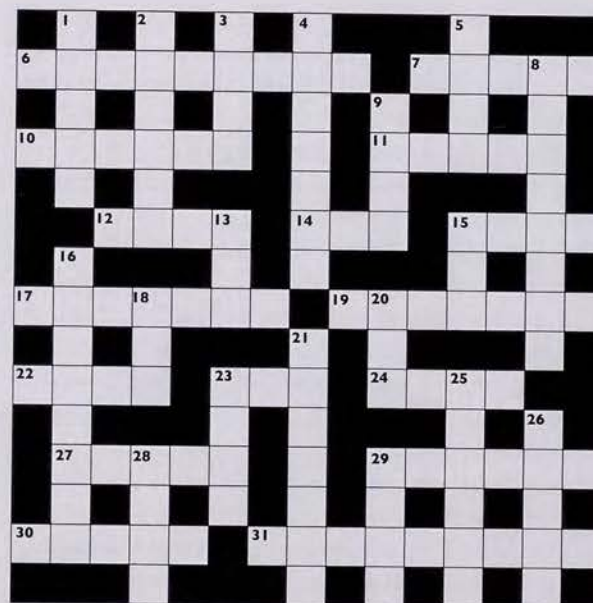
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COTTAGE MUSEUM (MRS. CUMMINGS' COTTAGE) CROSSWORD

Compiled by Debby Stevenson. Solution on page 48



DOWN

- 1 Meat popular in Sussex (5)
- 2 Made to a pattern (6)
- 3 Get a handle on 29 ac. (4)
- 4 Mrs. Cummings' type of sewing machine (7)
- 5 A twist of silk used for trimming (4)
- 8 It played discs before the gramophone (8)
- 9 Have a game of solitaire or snap? (4)
- 13 Spin out the weekly budget (3)
- 15 Mrs. Cummings must have baked quite a few (3)
- 16 Keep food by bottling or salting (8)
- 18 Shy and demure (3)
- 20 Feeling poorly (the bedroom cupboard has a selection of cures!) (3)
- 21 War in which Michael Cummings served as a Farrier Sgt. Major (7)
- 23 Make a good one in 29 ac (4)
- 25 The museum illustrates the rate of this over the last 100 years (6)
- 26 The state of the chimney before it is swept (5)
- 28 Achieve a hairstyle with the tongs (4)
- 29 High, like the longcase clock (4)

ACROSS

- 6 Mrs. Cummings might have scrubbed her laundry on one (9)
- 7 Bundles of brushwood for lighting the range (5)
- 10 It predated the washing machine (6)
- 11 Part of a jacket, near the neck (5)
- 12 Be lazy (Mrs. Cummings was probably never this!) (4)
- 14 Prepare the table (3)
- 15 Head of Mrs. Cummings' church (4)
- 17 A skilled handicraft using one needle (7)
- 19 Fuel chamber of 10 ac. (7)
- 22 The state of the range when the fire's gone out (4)
- 23 A slab e.g. of soap (3)
- 24 Used to trim baby clothes and underwear (4)
- 27 A frill made from 24 ac. (5)
- 29 The most important object on Mrs. Cummings' table! (6)
- 30 The museum provides a good opportunity for children to do this (5)
- 31 They illuminate the cottage (9)

'Here's the key'

Tim Myerscough-Walker in conversation with Caroline Egremont and the editor.
Part one

My father Raymond Myerscough-Walker had a distinguished career as a perspectivist, making three-dimensional architectural drawings accurate to the minutest detail. It was extremely specialised work. Born in Yorkshire in 1908, my father, urged on by my grandmother, started work with an architect at the age of sixteen as did his brother, my uncle. My father was in some ways an impulsive man and very much of an individual. He made decisions in a headstrong way and was somewhat impatient of business matters.

As an author he wrote widely on his specialist subject but also on matters of a more personal interest. He had three children with his first wife, two sons and a daughter, and two sons with my mother – I was the oldest. My earliest memories are of Chelsea just after the war. We were near neighbours of Dylan Thomas and his wife and were privy to the frequent rows between them. I was, of course, too young to understand. Others living nearby were Laurie Lee and John Pertwee with his many cats.

I was six months old when my parents moved from Chelsea, my father borrowing a marquee and decamping to Bosham, a place he always loved, prior to moving his family to a remote cottage high on the Downs above Bepton. I can just remember this. The cottage is now demolished although the foundations are still visible. I was told it was owned by Cowdray but leased to the West Dean Estate. By modern standards, and indeed by any standards, the cottage was primitive, lacking every modern convenience – heating, mains water, electricity, telephone. There was, however, an accumulator radio. The surrounding woods were our playground and there was still wreckage, even an entire plane, of aircraft lost during the war.

The place seemed to suit my parents and we were there for six years. My father would work away at his intricate drawings before rolling them up and sending them away by post. Towards the end of our stay there he was working on a gigantic plan of the re-designed centre of Berlin. As an eight-year-old I suppose I simply accepted the conditions: I had little to compare them with and the journey to school was out of the question. We were taught at home, my mother battling heroically with various different subjects. I do not necessarily regret my lack of formal qualifications but they have certainly influenced the way I look at things. I have always had a desire to learn and move on and I attribute this to my awareness of what I might have learned but never had the opportunity.

In 1959 my father, true to form, perhaps, moved us into a caravan on the edge of the West Dean Estate. Edward James by this time had returned from South America. I never actually met him, but caught sight of him once or twice: a short man with a little beard and a passion for trees, he lived in a beautiful Lutyens house.

At fourteen and nearing the end of our time on the Downs, I was cycling down to work on the West Dean farms Stapleash and Brickkiln, between Chilgrove and Lavant. It was summer and I would do whatever was needed.

I left home at fifteen and went to work for a Mr Howard on a farm at Chilgrove. I would never live at home again. I spent two and a half years living-in – ploughing, haymaking, pigs, chickens, milking. On one occasion two herdsmen left without warning and I had to fill in. Fortunately we were using machines by then. I then moved on to a farm near Salisbury – to work for Major Christie Miller at Clarendon. Similar work and another two and a half years then I was back at Singleton working for Dennis Stay. 'A man's wage for a man's work' was the mantra. 'But I expect you to work overtime when I want.' Arable, dairy and mushrooms sent to Covent Garden. I earned my money without a doubt.

By then I had met my future wife, Judy. It was the harsh winter of 1962 – 3. I remember going with the West Dean Jazz Club to Bognor and coming out of the Royal Norfolk Hotel where we had been perhaps a rather unusual presence, to find the sea had frozen to the pier. Boxing Day it snowed heavily and travelling became so difficult I did not see Judy again until early March. She was working in Chichester at Morants and we would meet at the A.B.C. dances at Petersfield, a coach going over from Petworth. Two years later we would be married at Tillington.

Newly married, we moved to a 600-acre farm at Dulverton in Somerset but after a time felt isolated and looked to come back south. On a weekend at home my father-in-law, Charles Bryder had a word with Mr McHardy of the Leconfield Estate and I was offered charge of Parkhurst Farm, Upperton, late vacated by Mr 'Jock' Moore. It was empty with 'Chub' Holden feeding the cattle. 'Ten pounds, five shillings a week pay. Here's the key.'

We moved in on 14 February 1966, Judy working for Mr Cecil Barnes at Leggatt Hill, Lodsworth. After some years at Parkhurst my nomadic urge returned and I was offered a position as Assistant Farm Manager at Stow-on-the-Wold in Gloucestershire. I took it. It was a bad move. The atmosphere was unpleasant, the manager difficult to work with.

Back in Tillington once again for a weekend I mentioned to John Giffin, who had come to Petworth in November 1965, a few months before I went to Parkhurst and with whom I had an excellent relationship – still have – and of course Mr McHardy, that we were not happy in Gloucestershire. 'Out of the frying pan

and into the fire', Mr McHardy observed in that wry Scots way of his. 'I think there's something here that might interest you.' Mr McHardy and John took me over to Witley. It was May 1972. Parsonage Farm had been bought by Leconfield expressly to help deal with crippling death duties following the death of John Wyndham. I believe the rate of tax was something like 75 per cent on capital and 45 per cent on land. The position was for a farm manager. I had to take off a harvest and prepare the farm for resale. 'Here's a map.' There was an air-strip on the farm but quite unconnected. Here was a challenge I relished – the garden, I remember, had a number of rusting washing machines. Partridge was entirely arable, but I have never encountered couch grass as dense as it was there. I ploughed in three hundred acres but found it had to be constantly turned over to weaken the roots and ultimately exhaust them. I hesitated to use Grammoxone 20, lethal stuff which killed largely on the surface. Roundup was not yet on the market. At the end of the year a crop was taken off (the farm had already been seeded when we came) when it was bought by the Earl of Carrick, and Mr McHardy suggested I stay on for a while which I did.

Our next move was to Ewhurst in Surrey to work for a Mr Hyman at Lukyns Farm – a British magnate who turned the trademark Vyella into one of the great textile empires of the 1960s, where Mr McHardy, now retired, was acting as a consultant. Sheep, beef cattle and corn. As manager I looked after some 450 acres. Ten acres of formal garden were not, however, my responsibility. I stayed five years, something of a record for a manager there, but I was now looking to return to Sussex. I left in 1978. John Giffin rang up to say that Leconfield were advertising for a farm foreman at Stag Park. 'If you care to apply ...'

But that, as they say, is another story entirely.



'A place he always loved.' Raymond Myerscough-Walker, *Bosham Quay with the Raptackle*, 1952, water-based pigment on card, 18 x 24 inches.

The Raptackle is a grade 2 listed eighteenth-century warehouse, built partly on the quay and partly on brick piers over the water. Timber-framed with tarred weatherboarding and a tiled half-hipped roof it would, on a farm, be called a barn. It was once used to service the flourishing oyster fishery in the harbour and as a rope-making and net-repair workshop. The oyster fishery ceased in 1922 when the oysters were under attack from limpets, although they are now returning to the harbour. The Raptackle is now used by Bosham Sailing Club.

Remembering Raymond Harris

From a conversation with Rosemary Harris

In *PSM* 174, we mentioned in passing the role of Raymond Harris as Vice Chairman of the Leconfield Hall Committee. It may be of interest to be a little more specific. The Hall held a particular fascination for Raymond after a long career as an architect. His years did not deter him from climbing on to the roof to explore the fire bells and the clock mechanism, an exploit that held no attraction for Peter Jerrome, Chairman, and a good decade or more Raymond's junior.

The fire bells were still mounted, but the rope would be useless by then as it had belonged to an era when the firemen all lived in the town, being alerted by the bell to attend the fire wherever it might be. Raymond was determined to restore them to use, which he did with a new rope, trying them out with great glee, finding them effective to the edges of the town centre. Of course, the rope could not be left free for general use, so he built an oak cupboard with a good lock, the key of which is kept in Austen's opposite. He had the special privilege of ringing it vigorously at midnight on Millennium night when the square was crammed full with townspeople.

The mechanism for the clock on the pediment facing the square was intact, and in working order, having been checked by local clockmaker John Wilding. However, with no clock-face that was not much use. Raymond determined the Hall would have a clock once more, so he climbed up outside to take measurements from the marks still there, and cut out in hardboard a pattern which he then painted in colour with the numbers in a contemporary style. He had a copy made, mounted, and connected up. The Hall now had its clock back!

The attractive Portland stone steps with cobble inlays in the west face replaced the existing stairs and Raymond chose the light and open bus shelter in preference to a proposed brick one, bringing a sense of unity to that side.

About this time Ann Bradley, flower arranger par excellence had the idea of a place showing life in Petworth past, and was in touch with the Leconfield Estate to provide a venue. When a house in High Street was offered, Peter became involved and sought the help of Raymond for the practical implications of launching a tourist venue from scratch. Raymond's imagination was fired, and he asked Lewis Golden, experienced fundraiser, to advise and become the accountant. This he did, bringing along his archivist wife Jacqueline for expert advice on the historical aspects, and a team got to work planning and realising the plan. They chose the

year 1910, as the period and discovered a mine of information about its occupier, Mrs Mary Cummings, a Petworth House seamstress with private work at home.

Practical details had to be discussed: opening days, price of entry and finding stewards, and Jacqueline Golden became curator. Ann Bradley's dream was coming to fruition. An endowment was provided, a cleaner employed to clean out and renew the fire for the range. Postcards were printed, and Ann Bradley's floral and decorative skills brought very much into play. The Leconfield Estate kindly took on the work of taking the house back in time, helped by several local builders who gave their services without charge. One even built a working copper although without a flue it is not functioning. Raymond's particular contribution was to fit together the Petworth Range, a gift from the Leconfield Estate and install it in the parlour. Lighting would be by gas and finding suppliers of old-fashioned gas lamps, and replacement of those malfunctioning was another task undertaken by Raymond. Layout and use of space was a team effort and Ann Bradley had the expertise to make it all look attractive and used. Original wallpaper from the wall was uncovered, researched and replaced and the Leconfield livery paint of 1910 restored, something that Leconfield would later re-instate generally. Lady Egremont suggested plants for the garden and a line and prop for drying clothes was supplied. A huge mangle was acquired and a tin bath hung on the wall outside.

Together Ann and Raymond scoured junk shops for items of the period and much was given by local people, everything carefully recorded by Jacqueline Golden in the museum inventory.

Entrance was to the rear via the scullery with its stone sink (another Leconfield Estate donation), copper and overhead rails with pulley for indoor drying. A door led off to the cellar while a second door beside it led upstairs. A third door led into the living/cooking room with range, rag rug and Windsor chair, and table laid with fresh flowers, cakes and scones ready for tea.

Upstairs the small room, a flying freehold over the property next door was presented as a sewing room, with a replica of Mrs Cummings at work at the sewing machine. The larger room was a double bedroom over the living room below, containing a double bed and an attractive display of linen and underclothes, cape, hat and winter skirt. The fire was laid ready for use in case of sickness. Roman Catholic artefacts reflected Mary's devotional life and the dressing table furnished with mirror, hairbrush and nail polisher. The attic would not be opened up until a little later. The tiny window afforded an unparalleled view across Petworth roofs and down the High Street.

At opening day Lord and Lady Egremont arrived to perform the ceremony in a beautiful open Rolls-Royce, kindly loaned for the day and a large crowd was in attendance.

FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

Miles Costello

Petworth Windmill, *Brighton Gazette*, 19 August 1852

We were visited yesterday week with a terrific storm of wind and rain, such as has not been known for years, and we much fear that the farmers will experience considerable loss, owing to the immense quantity of corn which has been knocked out. Trees have been blown down in all directions, and considerable damage done to the fruit, most of it being shaken from the trees. A windmill, standing in the town, lost two of its sweeps, and strange to relate, one of them was carried upwards of 30 yards, falling into an adjacent garden. It took the corner of a workshop, in its erratic flight, knocking to pieces a carpenter's bench, at which a man had been working not five minutes before. The rain fell in torrents nearly the whole of the day.

The autumn and winter of 1852 was the fourth wettest on record and over 32 inches of rain were recorded falling on Sussex during the months from August to December. The corn windmill mentioned in the report stood between the High Street and Rosemary Lane on the site of the former infants' school and the present public library. It seems quite possible that the sweeps were not replaced following the storm for just ten years later the windmill had been demolished and the new Petworth National School for Infants had been built. No photograph of the windmill is known to exist but in 1834 John Constable made a watercolour and pencil sketch of the mill with Petworth Church in the background.



Linda and Ian's Pittshill Walk. April 21st.

Miles Costello

The hottest day of the year so far did not exactly encourage walking but nevertheless a small but enthusiastic group set off from the village. The footpath led us almost immediately into Tillington cemetery, detached from the church, with a splendid lych-gate and ancient wooden coffin rest. A notice informs us that war graves are present and we respectfully pass by the rows of headstones with sadly familiar names etched into the weather worn slabs. Leaving the cemetery and heading due west the walk is gentle, passing by row after row of symmetrically planted vines, for this is clearly grape country, south facing we marvelled at the magnificent views across the Rother Valley to the distant South Downs, six, seven or possibly eight miles away.

Across New Road we pass the gates to Pittshill, once Mitford territory, now Pearson, and head towards Dean Dip which we skirt and turn north into the magnificent park that surrounds the house. Distant views of the mansion make the walk all the more worthwhile. Beautifully restored, the white façade of the house reflects the early afternoon sun; the controversy of the diverted footpath seems to have subsided. Time for a breather and a photograph opportunity on a suitably located bench and, refreshed, we say goodbye to Pittshill and turn back east, once more crossing New Road and we eventually enter Upperton.

The village is eerily quiet even for a Sunday afternoon. Our footsteps echo in the silence, no sounds emanate from the gentrified cottages, only the ghosts of past labourers and their families seem to inhabit this once staunchly Leconfield place. A brief stop at the Upperton Gate as we peer down into the Park below and idly reminisce about our childhoods. The almost forgotten Snowhill house, not even the foundations remain, of deer skins and antlers, and hostile gamekeepers. The moment passes and we proceed down the long Upperton Hill, past the football pitch. We hug the Park wall and in the distance our cars glinting in the sunlight appear to be welcoming us back to civilization. A pleasant walk and well worth the effort if just for the view of Pittshill. Thank you Ian and Linda.

Opposite. John Constable, 'Petworth Church and windmill', 13.7 x 23.1 cm., reproduced courtesy of the British Museum, London. This drawing was made when John Constable first called on Lord Egremont at Petworth when he was George Constable's guest. Lord Egremont asked him to stay, and this led to the visit he made to Petworth in the following September. George Constable was a prosperous Arundel brewer and keen amateur artist. He and John Constable were not related.

The odd carrier bag

Miles Costello

While collecting the odd carrier bag of books is as essential as picking up a whole van load it is the exceptional that sticks in the memory. Our first large collection was from the Engine Room at Petworth House. There had been a book sale organised by the National Trust and we were asked if we wished to take the residue. We jumped at the opportunity and really it was those books that gave us the impetus to continue with our own book sales. That collection was followed by literally thousands of smaller ones, far too many to recall, but several larger ones stand out.

There was the bookseller from the Isle of Wight – sadly I forget his name – who had a shop in Southsea, he would travel to most of our sales, catching an early ferry across from the island, collecting his car on the mainland and being at Petworth for opening time, an exhausting schedule. Eventually seeking to retire he asked us if we wished to clear the bookshop. The old bookseller explained that there had been a sale of sorts, the stock well picked over and a certain amount sold but still worth us making the trip. Bill Eldridge managed to get hold of a large van and several hundred potato sacks and between Peter, Bill, Maria, our son Karl and myself we cleared the building of about five thousand books. No mean feat as many of the books were on the upper floor and we soon discovered that potato sacks full of books with hard edges are not the best method of transportation down a narrow staircase. Heavy work but well worth the effort.

Another collection which must rank highly among the most ridiculous was from the Chichester Festival Theatre. A play – I don't recall the name of it – was coming to an end and one of the sets included a gentleman's club, or possibly a library, with shelves of books reaching the ceiling. Perhaps rather foolishly we agreed to clear the set without first seeing it. Arriving late in the evening, the play was coming to an end, the theatregoers streamed out and Peter, Ian and myself entered the fray. We hadn't been told that we were to work alongside a team of itinerant South African set dismantlers who were tasked with tearing down and removing to a row of skips anything that didn't move. The South Africans were clearly well versed at their job and had no intention of making a long night of it. Row upon row of books rained down onto the floor from some ten feet above us as we sought to clear as many books as possible. A single van load was not going to do the job and the small hours were approaching, the dismantlers had finished their work, the theatre was in darkness, and we were left with a huge stack of

books piled up on the pavement outside the theatre. Covered by a tarpaulin the books survived a wet night and we moved them back to Petworth the following day. An exhausting weekend!

A collection that neither Peter nor me will soon forget was the library of the late Duncan Guthrie at Amberley. Guthrie was a philanthropist of international renown who had passed away some time previously and his son, keen to clear the property, invited Peter and me to the house to see if we wanted the books. Well, we couldn't believe our eyes. A large modern architect-designed property, the rooms were literally filled from floor to ceiling with vast numbers of books and of course we wanted them. It took us many weeks to clear the hugely eclectic collection which include a large number of books on theatre history. Possibly the best collection we have made.

Knowles Tooth at Hassocks was once a regular bi-annual collection. A trip to the rambling respite home at Hassocks would be followed by a visit to St. Augustine's Church at Hove where we would clear the residue of their huge book sale. Sadly Knowles Tooth has closed and the piles of *Readers Digests* and *National Geographic* are now just a distant memory.

A surprise collection was the stock of an internet bookseller near Petworth. The books were all brand new but unfortunately stored on the third, or was it fourth, floor of a rambling old farmhouse. This was going to be a huge task and with a lack of storage we planned to carry out the clearance over a period of months. Thankfully the owner kindly left us a key and we just cleared a van load or two when it suited us. While this was a hugely important collection that kept us in stock for several years I still have nightmares about the seemingly endless flights of stairs in the house. Thanks to Jonathan Newdick and Ian Godsmark for their invaluable help with this one.

Fêtes have always been a staple of the book sale and while we welcome the books left over at the end of the day the arrangement is certainly reciprocal as many of the local organisers are unable or unwilling to dispose of large quantities of unsold books. Fortunately this is not a problem for us as after almost two decades the Society has developed a network of willing contractors who are happy to take our unsalable books. Bury, Bignor, Lodsworth and Lurgashall fêtes are all on our regular rounds.

School libraries are also an important source and Cranleigh School is now a regular stop. Text books quickly become outdated or fall out of fashion and need to be replaced and so we are there to clear them. Slinfold College is another large school that we have recently added to our list. The West Sussex Record Office, Chichester Cathedral and The Weald and Downland Open-Air Museum have all been generous donors of large quantities of books.

While the large collections that I have recalled make for interesting anecdotes

the book sales really couldn't continue without the general everyday donations. By far most of our books come in on Book Sale day. The odd box here and a carrier bag there soon add up to a van load of books ready to be moved and sorted and the day following the sale it all begins again.

A very big thank you to all of our supporters.

James McHardy – a memory

A letter from Mike Hubbard

Dear Peter,

I feel I must put pen to paper on the lovely article by John Giffin in the March magazine. I first knew Mr James McHardy in June 1957 when I became his postman at Stag Park Farm, and he had a Land Rover and a lovely black Rover 90 car that he was often sitting in. One day when delivering his mail I tapped on the windscreen and said to him as a joke, 'Do you ever do any work but sit in this lovely Rover?' He got out and said 'Look here, Postman. I have to do all the paperwork for the Leconfield farms and this Rover car is more comfortable than my Parker-Knoll office chair and that is saying something. If you want a comfortable car you 'kna' beat a Rover.' I took his good advice and have had Rover cars for over sixty years and now at 82 years old I still have a Rover 45. It's 18 years old and still going strong.

In the 1960s I did sugar beet trimming for My McHardy at £9.10s. an hour and worked with Len and Dick Dormer, Ern and Sid Carver and Reg Johnson, David Dixon and John Purser. I also had the pleasure every third week of being John Giffin's postman at South Dean. A very nice bloke, his wife played the piano for us several times at Lodsworth Harvest Home Supper when I was with The Petworth Edwardians. Very happy times over so many years.

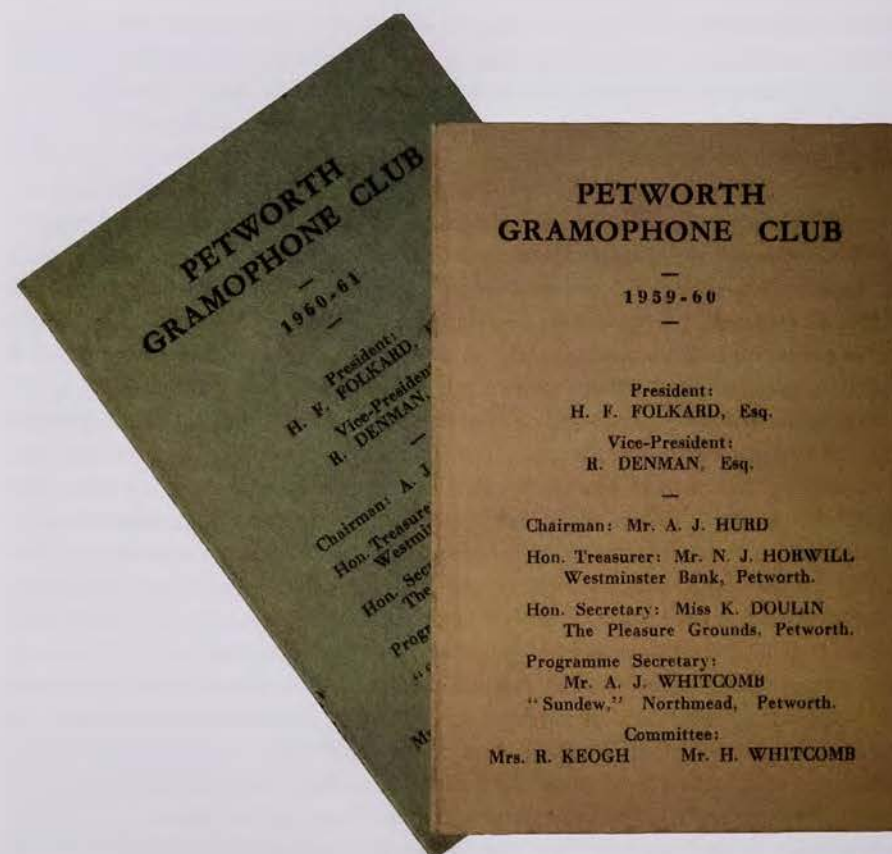
Yours sincerely,

Mike Hubbard (the Singing ex-Postman and Petworth Society Town Crier for eight years).

Mike Hubbard's recently published book of reminiscences *A Postman's Patter*, a large-format paperback of 274 pages, is now available from the Petworth Bookshop at £16.99.

The Petworth Gramophone Club

This apparently short-lived club (we have evidence of its existence only from 1959 to 1961) held nine or ten meetings each year which, beginning in September and ending in June, appeared to follow the scholastic year. Highlights in 1959 were 'A Recital of Stereophonic Recordings' presented by John Denman, Esq., and (members only) 'A Recital in a Christmas Mood by the Easebourne Quartet' (Mrs D. Jones, soprano; Mrs Joyce Cousins, contralto; Mr J. Cousins, tenor and Mr D. Jones, bass).



'Expected to look the part'

Philip Wade in conversation with the editor

It was 1966 when I went to St Michael's at Burton Park as chauffeur and, when available, to help with general maintenance. Previous to that I had worked at the Heath End sand pit, mainly with plant hire: heavy equipment, diggers and dumpers. Eric Sadler had a council contract for such work. My father was in charge of maintenance work at St Michael's, a Woodard Corporation school, and had been there since 1953. My brother Peter was house carpenter, Roy Randall from Petworth was the house painter and Bob Dorey electrician. There were a number of others, not counting the gardeners under Mr McPherson; up to a dozen men tended the gardens making the school to an extent self-sufficient, even sending surplus produce to market. The school would even fatten piglets for the market with left over food, although this was discontinued when new regulations were brought in. Previous to that the pig meal had been boiled up in a special stove. Little, I imagine was wasted.

As chauffeur I had a staff car and a minibus and I was expected to look the part: the school valued its image. I drove in full livery with suit, cap and leather gloves. My peaked cap had an emblem rather in the shape of a thistle. St Michael's was a serious business and I would be driving girls and staff practically anywhere. A time-consuming part of the work was picking up teachers of specialist subjects. Mrs Grant the drama teacher came from Dorking. The cello teacher lived at Pulborough, I remember her purple cloak. there were others. Some days I would make the journey to Pulborough and back seven or eight times. In term I might be on the road most of the day and a thousand miles a week would not be unusual. By today's standards it all might appear rather labour intensive, but not then. One music scholar had lessons with a professional private tutor in Southampton: I imagine the parents defrayed some of the costs but this was nothing to do with me.

A number of girls were reasonably local but others came from a distance and also from abroad and beginning or end of term might often mean a trip to Heathrow. It also meant all hands on deck. Nearly three hundred girls (and staff) in the move and trunks to be retrieved from the cellar. I still remember some of the house colours on the trunks. Red for Kirk, yellow for Lowe, blue for Lyttleton, green for Woodard and purple for Southwell. Lewes, the sixth form house stood apart from the main buildings and was rather different. The trunks had to be manhandled up through a trap-hatch in the floor to be laid in the front hall or taken to Kirk house which was nearer the road. The girls packed the trunks themselves and each, of

course, carried their name as well as their house colours.

Dormitories were simple but not overcrowded, three or four to a room with a basic inventory of a chair each and a chest of drawers and of course a bed each. There was a rota for bath night, girls couldn't just luxuriate in the bath.

Miss Ludlow was the long-serving domestic bursar, but she left some time after I came, while there was a male bursar with responsibility for overall finance. The headmistress, Patricia Lancaster remained for several years prior to moving on and was replaced by Miss Hywell Davies who would after a time return to Wales. There would be other changes at the top before the school closed in the early 1990s. By that time I had long left.

All in all, the school was a significant local employer. In addition to male maintenance and gardening staff, there were a good dozen kitchen and cleaning staff, some local but others Spanish. Some of the local staff I would bring in, others made their own way to work. I'd start at 7.30 unless I had to meet an early train at Pulborough. I wasn't in fact the only driver, Mr Mills from Tillington was another and, like me, he could fill in on maintenance and whatever was needed during the school holidays when there was little or no driving to be done.

In my time the school was flourishing and quite prepared to outlay money on building works: a new science block in the old walled garden and a new hall which could be used for assembly or gym and which had a music room to the rear. In *PSM* 175 there is a picture of the laboratory facilities. This building had, in the time of Major Courtauld the previous owner, housed the estate carpenter's shop. Mr West the science master appears in the picture. He lived in Chichester and drove into work but if there was a difficulty I would go and fetch him. Another picture shows the dining room with its raised platform at the end for the school prefects and a token member of staff – there was a separate room where the academic staff had their meals. Lunch would come in on aluminium trays, each holding ten portions to serve a single table. I'd have my meals with the other staff in a separate room. Assembly was in the school chapel, not in the old Burton church with which I had little to do although I did attend Mr McPherson's funeral service there.

The maintenance staff were expected to help with things like the school play, even a nativity scene in the chancel at Petworth church. I well remember my father mixing colours for a backdrop, and mixing perhaps a dozen. The teacher in charge rejected a number of his efforts. In those days paint needed to be mixed and took a long time to dry. Finally she said 'Just right.' It was the first one he had shown her!

Term time and holiday were as different as day and night. At holiday time the Spanish staff lived in a London convent but remained in house for a time after the school had broken up and for a time before the school returned. it was really the summer holiday when they were off-site for any length of time. Perhaps my abiding memory is of the great building when it was empty. Sandwiches for the

maintenance staff and a silence reflecting the absence of nearly three hundred girls. A silence where everything seemed to echo, particularly on the top floor with its cushion floor that made an eerie squeaking sound in the unaccustomed quiet.

I enjoyed my time at St Michael's, even driving up to Chelsea for the governors' meetings although the London traffic was something to take into account. Perhaps St Michael's wasn't set up for the complexities of a different age, but it was largely a happy place and, I would imagine, carries mainly fond memories for those who were once there.

Pseudonym or otherwise?

Not the March Book Sale. Peter Jerrome

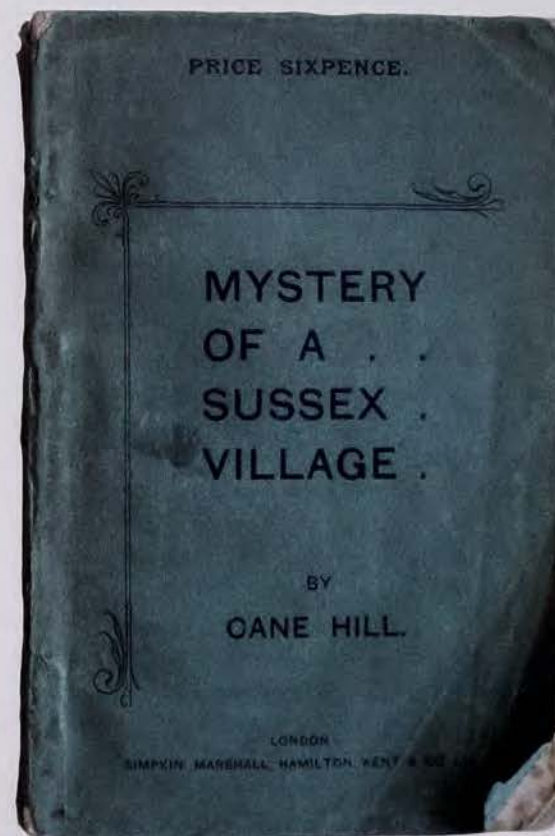
In this section we normally feature some orphan of the monthly Book Sale storm, but this quarter's offering is something of an exception,¹ a volume purchased from the catalogue of Cinderhill, late lamented purveyors of Sussex books in the innocent days before the internet. Shabby now, pages more than 'slightly' foxed and with rusting staples, the book has a certain rarity value. I toyed with the idea of including it in *Eleven Sussex Books*² but felt my complete lack of knowledge of the author and the book's curious lack of unity precluded this.

Mystery of a Sussex Village comprises two disparate and contrasting parts with no obvious connection other than a certain affinity with the Sussex coast. The first, and longer, section consists of a fairly simple detective story, while the shorter appendix 'Reminiscences' is a factual account of coastal fishing practice and rescue work. While not a fisherman by profession, the writer is clearly respected as an outside observer and has an exacting eye for detail. The date of publication is given as 1903 but the writer was in Eastbourne at the time of the wreck of the *Quineda* in 1869.

The opening section is cut in an entirely different cloth, is autobiographical in form, and little more than an expanded short story. It tells how the narrator, in the habit of making occasional visits to an aunt in a remote location 'not a hundred miles from Lewes' receives a letter from his aunt informing him of the sudden appearance of a ghost or, in the local dialect 'ghorst', with fiery orbs for eyes. Investigation is hampered by the spasmodic appearance of the phenomenon, confined to a certain spot near a lonely house rented by the enigmatic and reclusive Mr Smith, a supposed naturalist who evinces no obvious interest in his subject but

makes regular trips to London. A somewhat lightweight plot is bolstered by an account of the narrator's courtship and marriage to a local farmer's daughter and what is described as an 'obvious digression' on the dangers for the inexperienced of being cut off by the incoming tide. The somewhat predictable denouement lends a certain innocence to the story.

Perhaps as intriguing as the contrast between the two sections of the book is the name of the author: Cane Hill. It is also the name of the well-known third Surrey County Pauper Lunatic Asylum, built in the 1860s and taken over by the LCC in the 1880s. It would cater for those mentally scarred in the 1914-18 war and survive later as a small secure unit. Partly demolished in 2008, the remaining building was destroyed by fire in 2010. The name was adopted by a New Orleans heavy metal band at the same time. One is left to wonder whether Cane Hill coincides with the author's real name or whether it is a macabre or even whimsical pseudonym.



1. Cane Hill, *Mystery of a Sussex Village*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., London 1903, price sixpence. Printed by Davies Bros., Printers, 220 Portland Road, Norwood Junction, S.E.

2. Window Press, 2014.

Freelance

Another in the occasional series of opinions not necessarily shared by the editor. Here sculptor Jon Edgar writes on one aspect of the role of art and the artist in society.

I recently sent this press release to the Petworth Society:

Throughout 2019 a new sculpture by artist Jon Edgar (who has large works at Hindhead, Lewes and on the South Downs at Pulborough and Slindon) will be emerging in Horsham. YOU can be involved!

He does not pre-plan the work, letting the stone evolve in response to the people and place. Working on site, by hand, whatever the weather, lets him see and hear some of the experiences and history that we can impart.

The stone is being worked over 60 day sessions and the sculptor has goggles, mallets and chisels ready to give the local visitor tuition in stone carving, so they may get involved in the developing sculpture.

If you wish to carve, see horshamsculpture.wordpress.com for directions and carving dates through the year.

Perhaps with a touch of irony, Peter Jerrome's response was 'But surely, Jon, this is all irrelevant to the *Petworth Society Magazine* readership?'

Well, I'd demur. For a start, there are few artists managing to make an honest fist of living and bringing up children in the south-east let alone in the rarified atmosphere of the South Downs National Park. That people are 'supportive' is great, but it does not get bills paid. So a readership like yours has a responsibility for spreading the word if you want to continue living in a culturally-rich society rather than just a rich area that has a culturally-rich history – assuming that most people don't really get involved in buying art.

Artists have to keep themselves to themselves a bit; protecting their creative 'space', not getting sucked into too many community activities which have the potential to drain the artistic urge. That preciousness creates problems within the household.

Secondly, Horsham is not far away. I'd like to think that as a new project from a sculptor who is living in the area, you will be interested, especially as this is a stone of seven tonnes which will be carved throughout Horsham District's Year of Culture in 2019, and welcomes you to get involved as you were able to at Slindon (See *PSM* 163).

Two links are of interest. The High Wood or Wic Hurst to the south of Broadbridge Heath was probably an Iron Age defensive site, being Wealden

high ground with a third of its base protected by the young River Arun. Its apex is composed from Paludina limestone, our friendly winklestone (see *PSM* 132, 2008 and *PSM* 139, 2010) which, as Petworth Marble, the Third Earl of Egremont marketed in the eighteenth century. Major housing developments in the area have funded extensive archaeological investigations which have debunked the theory that 'very little went on' in the pasture lands of the Weald. The oaks which surround me in the open space next to the river at Highwood lie on an arc which follows an oval around the base of the High Wood and date to Iron Age times – the first ditched enclosure to the hill which now forms the basis of the field boundaries and their remains.

Petworth's 'Capability' Brown has also surfaced close to me at Highwood. Just upstream of the sculpture, a Lancelot 'Capability' Brown landscape once sat, commissioned for the 9th Viscount Irwin, Charles Ingram and his wife Frances. They maintained a second estate at Hills Place in Horsham, then a burghage borough. Rights to vote were attached to the occupation of burghage plots and these enabled the Ingram family to help return Tory/Whig politicians to parliament. The 200 acres was surveyed in 1766 and a plan for alterations made in 1768. It was still being implemented ten years later on Charles' death, with Frances' vision and ambition helping achieve Brown's tree planting, two cascades, false bridge and merging of two ponds into a large lake. Brown created a picturesque 18th-century fashionable landscape at Hills, on a par with Petworth. Chance led to the landscape being razed and returned to farmland. Specifically, the Ingrams' children were all daughters, five of them. In the patriarchal 1800s it was common practice for a son to become head of the family and inherit all assets, because he would be 'more worthy' of the property. Where a woman did inherit from her father, anything within the bond of marriage automatically became the property of her husband, including she herself. So it is a more or less three percent chance (or one chance in 32) that Charles and Frances did not have a single boy, and that probably influenced the fact that after Dowager Frances' death in 1807, the estates were sold in 1811 by her son-in-law – with all those voting rights – to the Duke of Norfolk. And the landscape was lost.

I have the added bonus of Percy Bysshe Shelley having spent his childhood just downstream at Field Place. He probably walked the course of the Arun right past our stone. A conceptual sculpture might play on the possibility of the spirits of these historic creatives, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and Shelley somehow meeting while the former perhaps strayed beyond surveying the watercourse at Hills Place. But art has the danger of becoming cerebrally laden, intellect either leading or substituting for the simplicity of visual form and material texture. Feeling in the work may suffer.

My design-free brief at Highwood is probably a first for a house builder, or

'placemaker' as they now like to be known. Section 106 planning obligations create monies for the community. These have been largely replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a new charge introduced by the government as a means of ensuring that a new development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure that the development will rely on, such as schools, allotments and public art. Under the S106 system only six per cent of all planning permissions nationally made a contribution. With CIL, all but the smallest building projects will accrue funds locally.

I am responding to 'place' by my practice of working on site, involving people in the process. Much public art is designed to a brief (dragons, horses...) but my stone is being worked like a painting, continually changing as the narrative develops and the forms start to emerge. At session 12, I have very little idea of the major compositional elements yet: a vertical disc may become a fulling mill wheel – tree forms emerge. You just never know.

The role of visitors is changing from initially helping me open up the surface of the stone; getting to know the tools. Gradually, as the history, landscape and nature of the area become known, the stone starts to slowly establish its own story in response. Volunteers take on the role of apprentice, helping me move into the depths of the stone and revealing the final form.

I anticipate being there two days a week until late September, so do come and visit or spread the work to those you know in that area. It is a rare and rich experience to be involved in.



Opposite.
The seven-tonne block of Portland stone is lowered gently into position.

Below.
Under supervision, a volunteer begins to work with mallet and chisel on the surface of the stone.



And Sylvac rabbits in the windows

Julia Rablin in conversation with the editor while walking around Petworth

It was 1995 and I clearly remember coming with my mother Esme to talk to Diana Owen and Peter about her time as a housemaid at Petworth House between the wars. A photograph of my mother appeared in Diana Owen's booklet *Petworth – the Servants' Quarters* published by the National Trust in 1997. Unfortunately she is not identified and the image is reversed. Imagine my surprise when on a casual visit to The Petworth Bookshop I came across a copy of *Those that are never seen – below stairs at Petworth House* and found that same photograph in the book, this time the right way round but with my mother still unidentified. I have brought the original picture (opposite) for you to see and the draft of a possible article for your magazine.

In later life my mother simply didn't talk much about her time at the great house, although we often came up from Chichester where we lived, for a visit and, sometimes, a meal. I can remember her talking of putting a feather duster round the nude figure in the audit room and, of course, the famous black and white tiles, one housemaid to each colour, while my husband heard her tell of watching a House ball and one of the dancers passing her a peach.

She would leave Petworth to work in service in Fittleworth. My own name, Julia, she once told me, came from the daughter or grand-daughter of one of the two families where she had worked. If I have never actually lived in Petworth, the town seems part of my DNA and I come to the town as often as I can.

From the early 1950s I would come to Petworth, travelling on the old 63 bus from Chichester once a week, sometimes more, my mother would come up to visit my maternal grandfather, Alfred Ewen who lived on the Duncton straight, 42a Duncton Common, one of two isolated Leconfield cottages. My grandfather, now elderly, had been a woodman, almost certainly on the Leconfield Estate. My grandmother had died when I was quite little and Mum would come up on the bus, cook a meal for her father and have an eye to the house. She'd alight from the 63 at Graffham corner and walk back along the road to 42a. I would stay on the bus to be picked up at the side of the then Westminster Bank in Market Square. It would be the school holidays. My godmother Lily Pullen would look after me for the day. She lived in White Hart Place in High Street three doors up from her sister Mrs Rosie Clark at what is now White Hart Cottage. Obviously I became very familiar with both houses.

Here we are in 2019 walking through to the twitten that once led to the Police



Station. We never used the front door at White Hart Place, always coming in from the back. Mrs Clark had a kind of open yard where she did her washing but it's now roofed over and locked. In the 1950s there was a door to the rear of White Hart Cottage but it's now been replaced by windows. There was then a steep step down to the cottage itself.

Aunt Lil (neither Mrs Clark nor Mrs Pullen were blood relations of mine) prepared lunch for me. I was a fussy eater and the meal would always be exactly the same – egg and chips. I didn't eat meat. Sweet was always banana and custard. In the summer Auntie Lil might take me for a walk round the shops and I might have an ice cream at Pellet's in Market Square (now Dales Interiors). In the winter we might sometimes go into The Four and Twenty Blackbirds on the corner of Church Street for a hot drink, and, if I had been good, a cake. Such as it was, the 'timetable' had been worked out beforehand and Auntie Lil would take me to the Square to catch the 63 bus back to Chichester. The bus ran, I am sure, every two hours. The two husbands, Mr Clark and Mr Pullen were great friends, Mr Dick Pullen a career sailor before the war, he had served in the Royal Navy and after the war had joined the Southdown Bus Company as a conductor with my father Bill Salter. The Southdown was very much part of my life. I can remember going with my father who died when I was very young, on a child's ticket to Horsham, then turning round for the return journey. I sat on the big side seat just inside the lower deck. I certainly needed my ticket: inspectors boarded the bus at the most unlikely places.

My mother's maiden name was Ewen but the other side of the family were Salters from Byworth. My paternal grandfather I never knew. By trade he was a livery tailor, no doubt much of the work was for Petworth House. He had a workshop in Trump Alley in East Street and would sit cross-legged on the floor doing stitching.

Walking as we are up High Street I think of a house at the bottom of the street on the right which had two Sylvac¹ rabbits as ornaments in the window. I would always give them a glance. In fact, there was another house, in Middle Street, that had quite a collection of them.

1. Sylvac (correctly SylvaC with a final capital) was a British ornamental pottery company founded in 1894 and known mainly for their rabbits and Toby jugs.

Edith Cavell.



'A nurse who tried to do her duty'

Keith Thompson

Melanie Gibson-Barton is one of our speakers who so impressed on her first visit (remember 'In Flanders Fields'?) that we were full of expectation for her talk about Nurse Edith Cavell. We were not disappointed.

Her research in this country and Belgium is meticulous and thorough, starting with Edith's birth in 1865, the eldest of three sisters and a brother in Swardeston, Norfolk where her father was rector. During her childhood she drew and painted, skated in the winter and played tennis in the summer. She established a Sunday School for the children of the parish, one of the first in the country.

At 28, she was working in Belgium as a governess. After two years, she returned home to nurse her ageing father, which seems to have inspired her to train as a nurse in London.

In Maidstone in 1891, she was involved with coping with a typhoid epidemic. Graduating in 1901, she pioneered home care visits for discharged patients, soon being invited to become matron of the first Nursing School in Brussels.

On the outbreak of war in 1914, she returned home, but feeling 'at a time like this, I am more needed than ever' she was back in Brussels where she she cared for all wounded soldiers, Allied, German or Austrian, regardless.

This led to her helping to smuggle over 200 Allied soldiers out of the hospital and into neutral Holland. The German officials became suspicious. They arrested Edith among others. For 'assisting the enemy' the maximum sentence was ten years imprisonment, but Edith alone was found guilty of 'treason' and executed by firing squad at dawn on October 12th, 1915. A worldwide outcry ensured that her name would not be forgotten. 'Think of me as a nurse who tried to do her duty'. 'Patriotism is not enough; this foul deed will live when great battles are forgotten' was one comment.

She was survived by her dog, Jack, who was walked from Brussels to Mons and then looked after until he died some years later. His body is preserved by taxidermy in a London museum.

So much interesting information to fill in the bare facts most of us are familiar with, delivered with passion and bringing to an end a moving evening when 'questions from the audience' would have been quite out of place. Nobody moved. Thank you Melanie. Another talk in due time?

Opposite. Edith Louisa Cavell. A pastel drawing by Eleanor M. Ross. © The Wellcome Collection.

Changing Petworth (3)

Petworth swimming pool in what is now the Sylvia Beaufoy car park

Two photographs by George Garland from the 1960s. Below, the pool under construction viewed from what will be the shallow end and, bottom, the pool completed and ready for use.



The Haunted Moustache

Keith Thompson, with apologies for inaccuracies

David Bramwell always gives titles to his talks which will draw in an audience, either because you have to find out what it's all about or because you've heard him before and know it will be unusual, perhaps mystifying and always entertaining – this time autobiographical.

Every good story has a beginning and an end, but what comes in the middle? This one started with David's great-aunt Sylvia's bequest of £1,000 and a mounted moustache. Yes, we saw a picture of it, with a medallion inscribed 'Trust, Absolute and Unconditional'. I'm not sure that we ever learned the exact meaning of that. Great-aunt Sylvia's hands were badly deformed as a result of being burnt in a fire when she was five years old. The thumbs were bent backwards into the palms. David was a frequent visitor to her in Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire. He was intrigued by the framed moustache on the mantelpiece, which he was forbidden to touch.

Somewhat eccentric, Sylvia was interested in all things spiritual and in alternative remedies. Together they went to see films at the Kinema in the Woods outside Woodhall.

Unexpectedly inheriting the moustache when the great-aunt died, the mystery was re-awakened and David searched for clues in the piles of books and magazines awaiting clearance from the house.

In a copy of *Lincolnshire Life* he discovered that the Kinema had originally housed a freak show staged by one Ambrose Oddfellow, who had cultivated the moustache. Sylvia knew Ambrose. He 'blessed' her deformed hands. She loved him, but, having lost his wife in a knife-throwing accident, for which he blamed himself, he could not bring himself to embark on close relationships any more. Giving up the freak shows, he formed a gnostic cult with the motto 'Trust, Absolute and Unconditional'. He removed his flashy moustache and sold it for charity. Sylvia's brother bought it at the auction and passed it to her.

Our speaker, David, depressed with life in the northern towns, moved to Brighton, where he met Hippy Lily. They had a number of experiences with the Spiritual Church there and at the Saltdene Seance. They went to the Zinc Bar which, in view of the characters performing there, turned out to be a modern equivalent of the freak show. The host, Adrian Bunting, asked David to stand in for him while he fulfilled a disc jockey engagement in America. He didn't return.

One of the Zinc Bar's performers was an eccentric called Drako, who had been

the model for Salvador Dali's painting, 'Christ of Saint John of the Cross' (1951). Drako had been visited by an angel who had given him a message – 'Trust, Absolute and Unconditional'. This he had tattooed on his arm before he had met David.

David's fascination with the mysterious has continued. He has visited the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, in particular the section of Oddities, Magic and Witchcraft, housing objects invested with magic. An object, mundane in itself, becomes significant in our minds by its association with a person or event. So it is with the moustache. As David's investigation became more widely known, he was invited to be a judge at the World Moustache Championship. That was a sight to behold and a freak show in itself!

No, David doesn't sport a moustache himself – a trial was short-lived, uncomfortable, messy and liable to become dirty. Come back again soon, David!



Salvador Dali

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS

6 Washboard, 7 Pimps, 10 Copper, 11 Lapel, 12 Idle, 14 Lay, 15 Pope, 17 Crochet, 19 Firebox, 22 Ashy, 23 Bar, 24 Lace, 27 Ruche, 29 Teapot, 30 Learn, 31 Gaslights

DOWN

1 Bacon, 2 Shaped, 3 Pour, 4 Treadle, 5 Gimp, 8 Polyphon, 9 Play, 13 Eke, 15 Pie, 16 Preserve, 18 Coy, 20 Ill, 21 Crimean, 23 Brew, 25 Change, 26 Sooty, 28 Curl, 29 Tall

