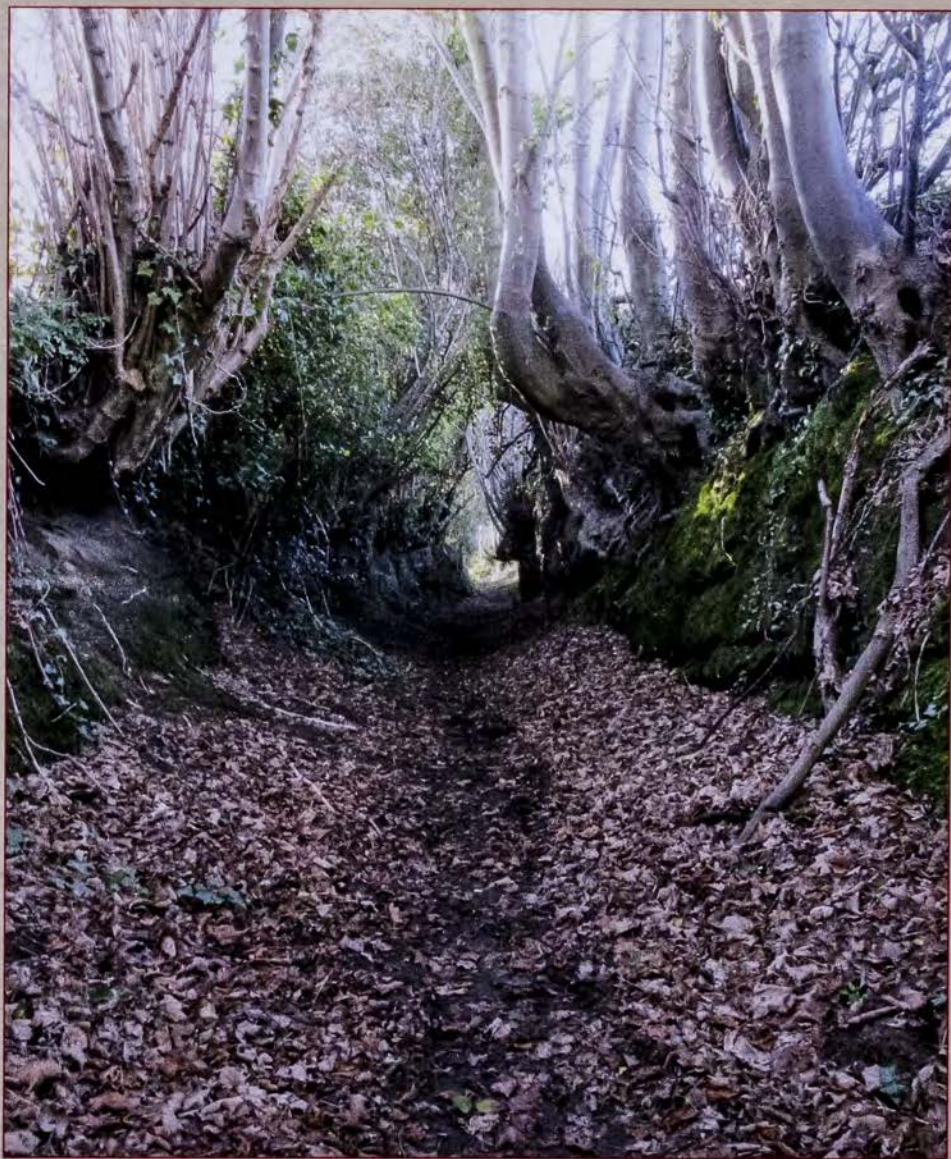


THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

No. 183. June 2021



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There are times when a picture doesn't need a caption. There are times also when it is the simplest of things that give hope for a future in days of uncertainty.

FRONT COVER

Looking south in Hungers Lane. See 'Hungers Lane and Sokenholes walk' on page 11.

BACK COVER

A Petworth parish boundary marker. See 'No shrinking violets' on page 44.

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 plus the parish of Egdean; 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, anywhere and the annual subscription is £14.00, single or double; postal £18.00, overseas nominal £25.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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EDITORIAL

Miles Costello

This is the second issue of the magazine since Peter retired earlier in the year and I have once again tried to continue with the mix of articles that he so successfully promoted. Lord Egremont, who worked closely with Peter for many years, kindly agreed to write a piece on his contribution to both the Society and Petworth in general, which can be found on page eight. Peter was a constant, not just in the Society but also in the wider community and he was involved in so many things, often behind the scenes, that he will be difficult, if not impossible to replace.

Space or lack of it is always an issue, however I feel compelled to thank Jonathan Newdick who designs this magazine and sees it through the publication process. It is his experience and eye for detail which I hope makes reading the magazine an enjoyable experience. Without him it would be difficult to produce a journal of anything like the present standard. Our new chairman Alexandra is finding her feet and making useful contacts with other organisations in the town. That is something that may have been overlooked in recent years, not deliberately but just the way it is. The Society cannot, and should not, exist in isolation, for that would be a recipe for decline. In addition to having a boundless enthusiasm Alexandra brings a fresh perspective to the Society.

Membership renewals are still coming in: however, a number remain outstanding. It is worth remembering that you can pay at Austens in the Market Square; simply pop a cheque into an envelope marked The Petworth Society and hand it in. Alternatively, you can post it to our hard-working Membership Secretary Gemma in Fittleworth or simply pay by bank transfer using your name as a reference. Non-payers will not receive the September magazine.

There appears to be light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel and it is just possible that we may be able to resume the book sales before too long. As a diversion from our normal programme there will be a warm-up book sale at Coultershaw Heritage Site on the weekend of July 3rd and 4th. This will coincide with their open days and will give us an opportunity to test the public response to resuming the sales. I have provisionally booked the Leconfield Hall for further sales but they can be cancelled if circumstances change. Please see (and keep) the insert with this issue for the dates.

The lockdown seems to have given birth to a number of new ideas and resurrected some old ones. Among them Petworth Town Council's proposal to

purchase the former NatWest Bank for a mere £600,000. As with most things in Petworth opinion is divided. Another idea, equally ambitious but still very much at the talking stage, is that the Parish Church should once again have a steeple. A hugely audacious project, it would probably require support on a national or possibly even international scale. If achieved, it may perhaps return to the town a certain status that was sadly lost in 1948. For more on the famous steeple see 'The Rise and Fall of Petworth Spire' by David Parsons on page 18. Finally, the issue of the Horsham Road Cemetery chapel rumbles on with apparently little sign of progress. This fine Victorian building has been allowed to deteriorate to a state where it is almost beyond repair. Ownership or at least responsibility appears to have been broadly settled but restoration would be hugely expensive and it is difficult to see a future use for the building. Over the years various suggestions have been made from completely restoring the building and turning it into a children's day nursery to removing the roof, lowering the height of the walls and making it into an open seating area. It will be interesting to see if a new initiative is any more successful than earlier ones. (See *Petworth Society Magazine* 119, March 2005. 'The Horsham Road Cemetery: a brief account of its establishment and current state').

2021 is the centenary of the Royal British Legion. Early recollections of the Legion at Petworth are rare, old soldiers hardly ever spoke to outsiders, but it is hoped to have something for the September magazine.

You may or may not have heard of the Petworth Heritage Partnership although you probably will over the coming months. The Partnership is a loose collective of heritage-focused organisations and attractions in and around Petworth. While several of the sites are open all year round others have specific open days. One occasion when all of them are open to the public is the National Heritage Open Weekend which takes place each September and for which entry is free. The group is made up of The Petworth Society, Coultershaw Heritage Site, Burton Mill, The National Trust – Petworth House and Park, Petworth Cottage Museum, St Mary's Church, Petworth Vision and the Petworth and District Community Association. This year the weekend takes place on the 11th and 12th of September and further details can be found on the Petworth Heritage Partnership website or on their Facebook page.

Finally an appeal. The Coultershaw Heritage Site relies heavily on volunteers to maintain, develop and open the site for visitors. Covid-19 has not only impacted on visitor numbers, but also reduced the number of active volunteers, several of whom have been shielding or isolating. Can you help keep alive the story of Coultershaw and its part in the history of the rural life in the Petworth area?

Volunteers with the following skills are needed: knowledge of engineering to maintain the beam pump and machinery; building and DIY skills to help maintain and restore the buildings; gardeners and groundsmen to take care of the beautiful riverside setting; stewards to open the site and welcome visitors and guide them to explore Coultershaw and its heritage. If you are interested visit www.coultershaw.co.uk Email admin@coultershaw.co.uk or ring Barry Flannaghan on 01798 667244 or Tony Sneller on 01798 343124.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Alexandra Soskin

Since the last issue of the Magazine appeared 'unlocking' has started and we are, at last, able to start planning events for later this year. You will find enclosed an Activity sheet beginning with the re-launch of the monthly Book Sales in August and including a 'Talk & Tour' event at Petworth House in the autumn. We look forward to seeing members at these events. Please do bring non-member friends, particularly if they might be interested in joining the Society.

As last year, the measures imposed to combat the pandemic are presenting logistical challenges to the holding of our spring AGM, which the Trustees have therefore decided to hold over. The Treasurer will include an annual financial summary in the September Magazine, and if members have any questions they wished to raise at the AGM they are welcome to contact me.

As I write, the re-development of the Society's website is well underway. Alongside this, we are pleased to report that we have commissioned the digitisation of the Magazine archive. Digitisation will help preserve the archive for posterity, and the search functionality will enable researchers and the casual browser alike to mine this unique repository of Petworth history that stretches back over a century. We anticipate the launch of the website, enriched with the Magazine archive, this summer.

Finally, you will find a member questionnaire insert in this edition. As we re-start event planning, it will help us greatly to know what you think about the Society's offerings. We would very much welcome your feedback.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Congratulations, recipes and curses

Dear Miles

Congratulations on becoming editor of *The Petworth Society Magazine*. Your first edition was a triumph, full of the kind of photographs and social history my wife and I enjoy. Keep it up!
Michael Brown, Sutton.

Dear Miles

'A Petworth Workhouse Recipe'. Yes I did attempt the recipe in the latest magazine, with slight adaptations. With two and a half hours slow cooking some shin of beef from the freezer became very tender. No oatmeal so I used porridge oats to thicken, and no leeks so celery. The dried peas were yellow split peas. The result was very tasty, but then I was brought up on old fashioned stews. Would the younger generations have appreciated it so much?

I was interested in the comment that only a pint of water was lost. We can easily forget that they wouldn't have had water on tap. Every pint probably hauled up from a well would have been precious.
Susan Martin, Walsall.

Dear Miles

Congratulations on magazine 182. I found it full of interesting articles.

On 'A Kirdford curse', page 22: if you've got a copy of my book on Kirdford, on page 101, my late contact

Mrs Nineham tells the same story that the old folks had told her except it was the keeper who was shot not the poacher! The blood was in the shape of a cross.
Janet Austin, Ifold.

I have taken the liberty of reproducing below the relevant passage from *Kirdford: The Old Parish Revisited*. 'Mrs Nineham was told by Mr Pip Matthews that at some time before the Barwells owned Barkfold, one of the keepers was killed by a poacher. The legend was that, on the spot where the keeper was found, nothing would grow. The bare earth was in the shape of a cross. When Pip Matthews was young, he had been shown the cross by the keeper then living at Peaty Crawts. Years ago Mrs Nineham says all the old folk were adamant about the story of the cross' (Ed).

Jim Potter, a member now living in Christchurch in Dorset wrote wondering if by chance anyone in the town remembered him. He was evacuated here from Portsmouth during the war and remembers the Wakeford, Sadler and Phelps families. He can be contacted via the editor.

We welcome your letters, which should be sent to the editor by email or post using the addresses on page two.

'... a richly contemplative mind'

Max Egremont

I first heard the name Jerrome some sixty-seven years ago, when, as a child out walking with my nanny in Petworth, I saw Peter's father outside his shop in Pound Street. 'Look,' Nanny said, 'that's Mr Jerrome – don't get in his way' and I stepped to one side to avoid a quick-moving, purposeful man in a long khaki warehouse coat, obviously in a hurry as he filled his van with deliveries.

This was during the 1950s, in a different Petworth, when there were several food shops, a variety of butchers, green-grocers and a fish-monger. What was on offer took the form of good plain fare, with the occasional new excitement. I remember a window display in Meacham's of a neat pyramid of Heinz baked bean tins livened up by the latest gastronomic breakthrough: Baked Beans mixed with Pork Sausages.

My family mostly bought our provisions from Hazelman's, on the corner of Middle Street and High Street, where The Hungry Guest is now. I do remember, however, that Mr Jerrome was popular and respected in the town, one of Petworth's notable figures. The family had a link to the Leconfield Estate through Peter's grandfather Arthur Allison who had been my great-uncle Charles, Lord Leconfield's water bailiff. Not until later, however, did I get to know Peter although there were tales throughout my childhood and youth of Mr Jerrome's son who studied at Cambridge and his intimate acquaintance with the biblical languages.

Before my father died in 1972, I was away from Petworth much of the time, at boarding school or university: then working in London, the north of England and the United States. It was my father's death, when I was twenty-four, that changed everything. The estate was faced with a huge tax bill that threatened its survival and I had to come back to Petworth to try to find a way forward. It was about this time, I think, that Peter also returned to help with the shop.

I found that I faced not only the tax authorities but a divided and angry town. Because of my father's work for Harold Macmillan, the Prime Minister of the time, my parents had often been in London during the twenty years of their control of the estate, after my great-uncle Charles's death in 1952, leaving the management in the hands of insensitive agents.

The anger became clear in the early 1970s when the West Sussex County Council (which had money in those days) tried to solve Petworth's traffic problems by building by-pass. Two possible routes – both horrific – were proposed: one through the Shimmings Valley, the other across the park. A battle commenced, with each route having its partisans, and a group was formed to save the Shimmings Valley.

This called itself the Petworth Society and was narrow in its aims, one of which was to put the bypass through the park. It had little interest in local history and was controlled by a retired ambassador who was said to have been upset that my parents had seldom invited him and his wife up to the big house.

The National Trust did a splendid job in defending the park, showing that we had been right to have given the park and house to the Trust in 1947. But it became clear that my family was a liability. One chairman of the County Council clearly disliked us, saying with glee 'I'm afraid that new roads always hurt someone and this time it's you.' What solved the problem was not the County Council's vast Highways and Planning departments but the local butcher Bert Speed with his proposal to improve existing roads for the re-routing of lorries: much cheaper and less damaging to the landscape than the previous ideas. The divided town, however, remained.

As the bypass row faded, the Petworth Society found itself stranded. What was its purpose now? Some of the campaigners died, others moved away or found different causes, doubt arose about its future – and this was Peter Jerrome's hour. How he achieved his dominance I'm still not quite sure although I now know the mesmeric effect of Peter's immense learning, his humorous charm and quiet yet firmly persuasive personality.

He changed the Society into a much more broadly based interpreter of Petworth's character and past. For Peter Jerrome saw that Petworth – the town and the community – was a fascinating and unique place. To make the town realise this, he had to carry its people with him and avoid the Society becoming either a narrowly based pressure group (as local conservation bodies often are) or a collection of dusty antiquarians. The past should be brought into the present, to explain the town. No group consisting mostly of those who'd come recently to Petworth could do this, for 'old' Petworth would turn away from it.

He showed himself to be natural leader who could win everyone's respect. As Jumbo Taylor, who was also immensely knowledgeable about Petworth (and, alas, died recently) said, 'Peter's genuine.' Peter's books and the increasingly unusual and interesting Society's magazine helped; an early work, *Cloak-bag and Common Purse*, about enclosures and copy-holders in the sixteenth century, showed that he was no landlord's puppet, as it revealed my sixteenth-century ancestors in a far from flattering light. A series of books followed: histories of Petworth and of Ebernoe, of Petworth Fair, photographs from the collection left by George Garland, the town's

Hungers Lane and Sokenholes walk

Miles Costello

A circular walk of about two hours which takes in part of the Petworth/Tillington parish boundary and includes the haunted Hungers Lane and Sokenholes. Suitable for all ages and mostly on reasonably firm ground apart from parts of Hungers Lane.

Leave Petworth by the A272 Midhurst Road and follow the Park wall until we reach the double or New Lodges just before Tillington. Almost opposite is a footpath marker: caution is needed when crossing the road for this is a dangerous and busy spot, particularly on Sundays when the bikers are out. We now enter Hungers Lane, an ancient road which is the Petworth parish boundary with Tillington and was once the highway from Petworth to Chichester. Follow the sunken lane south while being aware that the way is reputed to be haunted by dead men's bones; this is not a walk to be done after dusk. Take care with your footing, for in places the lane is seriously eroded. Carrying on until we reach a cross-lane, turn right at the footpath marker and continue for a short distance until we come upon the lonely Sokenholes farmhouse which, like the lane, is also supposed to be haunted, though in this case by a headless rider on a grey horse. Take in the fine old building which certainly predates by centuries the inscribed 1664. Turn right at Sokenholes and we begin the second part of our journey. Heading north we pass Coxland, the grand old house long since demolished – replaced by a pair of undistinguished cottages. Now in Coxland Lane we are walking parallel with Hungers Lane until we reach Tillington proper and the busy A272 again. Crossing the road we continue uphill past the church with its splendid Scots Crown steeple and The Horseguards public house. The village school, established in 1838, (see *PSM* 180, pages 24 and 25) has long since been demolished, but the foundation stone is preserved in the wall of Linton House which was built on the site of the school. The pavement stretches out before us and the walk could almost be tedious if it were not for the occasional backward glance that enables the walker to take in the magnificent distant views of the South Downs. With the Park wall on our right we carry on upwards towards the appropriately named Upperton, once a staunchly Leconfield village, with almost all of the properties now privately owned. Passing the recreation ground the road veers to the left and in a short distance the Park wall disappears to the right. At this point we follow the wall down what appears to be a hidden path and we enter the Park through a small gate. Keeping the wall on our right we can walk into the Park until we reach a

photographer from the 1920s to the 1960s and an old friend of Peter.

The interviews conducted by Peter, latterly with my wife Caroline, will be invaluable for historians. He never uses a tape recorder but makes rapid notes of the conversation, always accurate and getting the flavour of the subject and how he or she speaks. Such conversations were often made easier by Peter remembering the subject's parents or grandparents or other members of the family, showing yet again his deep knowledge of Petworth. To find the servants who'd worked in Petworth House, he and the National Trust's administrator Diana Owen often had to travel to distant parts of the country to meet retired housemaids, gardeners, farm labourers or footmen. The book about them – *Those that are never seen* – shows a vanished way of life, the people interviewed apparently having no bitterness or regret.

Among Peter's other works is an account of his own eight favourite books that includes novels in Spanish and French, *My Antonia* by the American writer Willa Cather, the essays of Montaigne, St John's Gospel and the Old Testament Book of the prophet Jeremiah. Also, who can forget Peter's charming reminiscences of life in the shop or his own poems? These personal writings show not only his familiar humour and sympathy but also a richly contemplative mind.

But the Society needed more than scholarship to keep it going. Those who know Peter realise that from behind that gentle façade can come an occasional flash of sharp steel, always in a good cause. He showed his will-power and administrative talent in arranging the moving visit of the Canadian veterans of the Toronto-Scottish Regiment who were stationed in Petworth during the war, in the opening of the new Cottage Museum in Grove Street (and research into the life of its earlier resident Mrs Cummings), in the yearly struggle of organising Petworth Fair and in supervising the book sales that are so important for the Society. Marian and he also provided a haven for meetings and discussions in their book-filled house in Pound Street.

Is this farewell? We must hope not. Petworth needs Peter Jerrome and those who live here must not allow him to move too deeply into the shadows. The town must know that the lights are still on during winter evenings in the Pound Street house, that the door might suddenly (or perhaps gradually) open to reveal a familiar stooping figure in a woolly hat as Peter emerges to call on someone or to check the accuracy of some statement made about a landmark in the town, or simply to go for a walk. It is essential for us who live here to be able to feel for as long as possible that Petworth can still benefit from the most reliable interpreter of its character and its past.



track marked in the turf. We are now on Snow Hill where we are able to enjoy the expansive views of the Park and beyond; keep following the track right and after a while a choice of ways is clearly laid out before us and all quite visible and obvious. We can return to the town through one of the lodges on the A272 Midhurst Road or carry straight on past the Upper Pond and eventually into the town by way of the Cow Yard in North Street. A simple but most enjoyable walk.



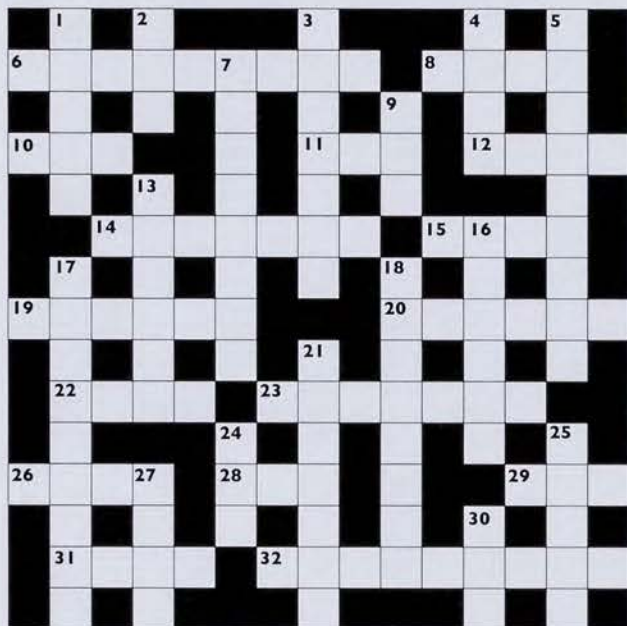
ABOVE Coxland in the early 1930s. At this time, towards the end of its life, the 'grand old house' had been divided into two, or possibly more, 'cottages'. This is suggested by the door on the extreme left with its tell-tale estate number and which is clearly an insertion replacing an earlier window. The house was stylistically very similar to Coates Manor a few miles away which dates from the early seventeenth century and which was once known as No. 24 Leconfield Estate.

BELOW Sunlight on a tangle of exposed hazel roots in Hungers Lane.



LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN CROSSWORD

Compiled by Debby Stevenson. Solution on page 48



ACROSS

- 6** Edwardian garden near Haywards Heath (5, 4)
8 Fete? (4)
10 & 4 down. Ancient downland paths (3, 4)
11 & 14 across. Broken hearts mend in these downland villages (3, 7)
12 See 18 down
15 Might hear one being played at the Petworth Festival (4)
19 Habitat for wild flowers (6)
20 Arrive unannounced? (4, 2)

- 22 & 30** down. Childish creation on the beach – not very tasty (4, 3)
23 Arts and Crafts home with William Morris interiors (7)
26 Spiritual atmosphere in the countryside (4)
28 Neither to be found in Northchapel (3)
29 Lengthy one near Wilmington (3)
31 Went in for a dip (4)
32 Look out for wild life from these (4, 5)

DOWN

- 1** Ornamental garden building (5)
2 8 across perhaps? (1, 2)
3 Criticising roofing at the Weald & Downland Museum (7)
4 See 10 across
5 Tree lovers' garden at West Dean or Winkworth (9)
7 Sir Frederick Stern's chalk garden near Worthing (8)
9 & 24 & 27 down. Enjoy a relaxing trip on this old canal (3, 3, 4)
13 See 18 down
16 ...and he is in control of your trip (6)
17 Stately home and gardens just in Kent (9)
18 & 13 down & **12** across. Stately home's annual event, popular with the green-fingered (8, 6, 4)
21 Perfect night for astronomers on top of the Downs (7)
24 See 9 down
25 Aroused from sleep at Gilbert White's Selborne home (5)
27 See 9 down
30 See 22 across

Almost Just William



The Dunstan family in Station Road in 1965, looking as if they could be on their way to audition for the part of William Brown in one of the many film and television adaptations of Richmal Crompton's series of stories. They are awaiting only their caps and ties from the props dept. The first William book of short stories (inset) was published in 1922 and the prospective thespians are, from left to right, Roy, Paul, Peter, Jim, their friend Steve Brash on the trike and Mum in the background.

Cow-dung gathered in May

Miles Costello

Over a year has gone by and the book sales are still very much in abeyance. Will they restart? perhaps they already have. I have had my fist jab and booked my second for early May. Schools have re-opened and spring is in the air. There really does appear to be light at the end of the tunnel this time. I am, however, writing this in early March and who knows what will have happened by the time you receive this magazine. June seems such a long way off and yet this period of enforced idleness has enabled me to have something of a sort out. For the first time in twenty years the books are all stored in one place, and very loosely sorted by categories. Rubbish has been cleared and piles of broken cardboard boxes taken to be recycled. I am very satisfied with the reorganisation while fully aware that if or when the book sales finally restart the present state of order will mean nothing, and chaos will once again ensue.

While sorting I came across a badly damaged book, *The Family Magazine. Being a Compendious Body of Physick; Succinctly Treating of all the Diseases and Accidents Incident to Men, Women and Children*. Published in 1741 it is on first sight a dreary volume of medicines and cures. Theoretically quite a valuable book, the broken covers and missing pages meant that it was destined for the recycling pile. However, on impulse I began to flick through the dusty yellowing pages. It had clearly been well-used; perhaps a previous owner had been a doctor or a chemist. Who knows? The author was one Arabella Atkyns, which according to the preface was a pseudonym. Why she, or indeed he, should want to keep their identity a secret is no surprise as the book is full of the most bizarre potions and so-called remedies many of which are more likely to kill than cure. What is more, the author makes no claim to being an expert on medical conditions but simply qualifies her advice by revealing that her brother is a doctor. Many of the remedies appear to rely upon copious amounts of animal dung which I assume had the benefit of being cheap and readily available at the time. For those of you with an adventurous spirit and an urge to experiment I would suggest avoiding any of the following cures.

For headaches Arabella suggests that peacock's dung and millipedes are helpful, while epilepsy can be cured with the aid of a human skull, which I guess should be powdered and not taken whole. The book is a cornucopia of quackery offering advice on almost every ailment and injury imaginable. For example, should you wish to know how to remove gunpowder marks from the face then the

cure is simple – just 'take fresh cow-dung, warmed a little [isn't fresh cow-dung quite warm already?] and apply to the part affected'. For a nose bleed the author advises 'Take a dried toad, sew it in a bag and wear it at the pit of the stomach'. In case that fails she wisely offers an alternative 'Take the moss that grows on a man's skull, and use it in the same manner: it will infallibly stop the bleeding'. For headache 'Take green hemlock, that is tender, and put it in your socks, so that it may lie thinly between them and the soles of your feet'. After reading several similar 'cures' it is necessary to consider whether the author actually believed what she was suggesting. I assume that they had been tried and found to be efficacious and yet most of them appear absurd to the modern reader.

For pleurisy her advice is to 'put some he-goat's blood in a silver porringer and dry it to a powder in an oven before mixing it with wine or cordial water.' Evidently this 'was never known to fail'. For night-sweats 'Take snails bruised with their shells, three pounds; fresh orange-rinds, three ounces; brook-lime, water cresses, cleavers, each three handfuls; whey, three quarts. Distil in a cold still'. The cures go on; no ailment is spared the benefit of her knowledge. For fevers and agues 'take troches of vipers, one drachm; Virginia snake-root, half a drachm and mix'. For hysteric fits 'take burnt feathers, or woollen cloth, set on fire: hold it under the nose during the time of the fit'.

Afflictions of the nervous system demand that the sufferer should 'take earth-worms, well washed, and cut to pieces, six ounces; olive oil, a pint and a half; boil them together, till the wine is exhaled; and lastly strain off the oil through a piece of canvas'. Not for the faint-hearted I would suggest. 'For Pleurisy take pennyroyal, hyssop, and chamomile-flowers, of each one handful; balls of stone-horse dung, number eight: steep them together in a close vessel three or four hours over the fire, with barley-water and white wine, of each one pint; then press it out hard, and to the clarified liquor add compound horse-radish water, four ounces; and syrup of five roots, two ounces: mix and keep them for use'. One assumes that the radish-water might be an attempt at concealing the taste of the stone-horse dung. For the rheumatism: 'Take cow-dung gathered in May; put it to one third part of white-wine, and distil it. Give the patient four ounces going to rest. It is likewise good against the gout, stone, and stoppage of the urine'. 'A medicine against wind: Take Stone-horse dung fresh made in a morning early, and distil it in a cold still; then put this water to fresh horse-dung, and distil it over again: two days after take a gallon of this water, and put it to an equal quantity of feverfew, rue, southernwood, and red sage: cut all these herbs together small, and put as many of them into the still as the water will cover; then distil it: when all is drawn off, mix it together, that it may be of equal strength'.

The book is a litigant's paradise. Released today it would certainly carry a warning excusing the publisher from any responsibility for the rather dubious

outcomes that may result from taking the advice literally. But as a handy reminder of how far medical knowledge has progressed over the last three centuries it is a remarkable survivor and so perhaps it just may be saved from the recycling bin.

One drachm equals one eighth of an ounce; a troche is a small lozenge; a stone-horse is a stallion and a porringer is a small bowl.

If you have books to donate please call Miles on 01798 343227. milescostello68@gmail.com

The rise and fall of the Petworth spire

David Parsons

The spire of St Mary's, Petworth, was first mentioned by John Leland in his *Itinerary*, which recorded his observations during his travels between 1535 and 1543. He claimed that it was built by 'Parson Acon', but no-one of that name figures in the list of rectors. The identity of this clergyman was established sixty years ago in a note published in *Sussex Notes and Queries*: he was John de Acome (Acomb), and he held the living from about 1382. By 1399 he was referred to as 'late parson of Petworth', so if he really was responsible for having the spire built, it must have been done within the less than twenty years of his incumbency – somewhere around 1390, a date which is consistent with what we know about the style of the spire.

What we know is dependent on a number of drawings made in the late 18th century, most famously by Samuel Hieronymous Grimm in 1789, who showed it from the north-east, with St Thomas's chapel in the foreground (opposite). Grimm also included a distant view of it in his picture of Petworth House in 1780. J M W Turner also drew a view similar to Grimm's 1789 watercolour, which is known from what appears to be a pupil's copy, and did a watercolour of the north side of the church around 1792 – 94, which shows part of the base of the spire. Turner's well-known view of the spire, showing behind the façade of the House in the 'Dewy Morning' painting, is not that of the medieval structure, however. The sketch for this picture, taken in 1809, does not show a spire: there was none at this date. The finished picture, exhibited in 1810, was later retouched, and shows the spire added by Charles Barry 1827 – 29.

The medieval structure was of timber, covered with shingles; according to most authorities they were of lead, though firm evidence is lacking. In 1803 it was decided to remove it, to raise the tower by 12 feet and to add pinnacles. A specification for the work was drawn up in December of that year, but it was not



Samuel Hieronymous Grimm's 1789 watercolour of Petworth Church from the north-east with St Thomas's chapel in the foreground.

carried out until 1804. The watercolourist Henry Petrie visited Petworth in the following year; of his two views of the church one clearly shows the new parapet and pinnacles above a string course. An 1803 diagram in the Petworth House Archives confirms that the distance between the string and the top of the parapet was in fact 12 feet.

The new arrangement did not last for long, however, because the architect Barry was brought in to extend the church by adding a south aisle and building a new spire. Work was begun in 1827 and Turner has provided a dramatic view of the spire under construction in that year. The work was apparently completed by 15 October, but it was found that the wall of the tower was cracked; it was declared unsafe and the church closed from 30 December until October 1829 while remedial works were carried out. The foundations were reinforced and a new arch built between the base of the tower and the nave of the church. Meanwhile, church services were held in the Leconfield Hall. Apart from the topmost section the spire was built of brick and covered with stucco ('Roman cement') according to the summary account presented to Lord Egremont by Barry's contractor. Among the materials listed in that account there were over 340,000 bricks, some of which were presumably used elsewhere in the church. There has been some debate about the origin of the spire design. When Barry began work at Petworth, his new church in Brighton, St Peter's, had just been built. He had proposed to add a spire to the tower there, but it was not carried out for lack of funds. Several drawings of the proposal survive, and it has been suggested that the unused design was used at Petworth. A recent discussion of the question was inconclusive, but made it clear that as the design for St Peter's was used at Petworth it must have been somewhat adapted. In 1827 Barry exhibited at the Royal Academy a 'View of the new steeple now being added to the parish church of Petworth' (cat No. 496); this drawing might have settled the question, but it is unfortunately missing.

Less than one hundred years later the spire was already giving trouble. On 9 August 1904 the *Mid-Sussex Times* referred to 'the much-needed restoration' having been carried out. On 19 September 1935 the *West Sussex Gazette* reported on the collapse of scaffolding in the course of repairing the spire, said to cost in the region of £800. On 24 April 1947 the *Gazette* carried a report on the dangerous state of the spire and on 15 May referred again to this report and to fund-raising activities to defray the anticipated cost of the spire's removal (£10,000). According to the church log book the spire was finally condemned in April 1948. It was then demolished, though a stump remained until 1953; the top of the tower was made good and given the present pyramidal cap in 1954.

OPPOSITE An almost filigree construction of scaffold planks during repairs to the spire of St Mary's in July 1935. Photograph by George Garland.



From Facebook

Miles Costello

As of the middle of December the group membership of Petworth Past stood at just over 900.

I posted a Garland photograph of a Petworth football team along with a visiting German team and added a cautious date of 1969. The response was immediate and extensive with fifty-nine comments being recorded. There was a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing in an attempt to identify as many players as possible when Jane Adsett crushed all of the competition by naming the entire Petworth team and for a brief moment I thought that she was also going to name the visiting Schwarz-Weis-Duren players. Incidentally, no one got around to confirming or questioning my rather random dating of the photograph.

OTWAY'S AND THE INTERNATIONAL

A photograph dating from about 1890 of what is now the recently refurbished Co-op seemed very topical at the time of posting and got a conversation going. The photograph showed Otway's Store which later became The International Stores and then Gateway, followed by Somerfield before finally becoming the present Co-op. Linda Wort recalled working in the International Stores before it became self-service. Harry Howard was manager and the floor was covered in black and white tiles which sadly got covered in lino. Trevor Brash posted 'I still remember the dark brown wooden counters in the old "inters" and people who weighed stuff out and served you'. Various other comments ranged from 'Miss Morrissey in the kiosk', to 'No plastic carrier bags then, just a cardboard box'.

MR KAHANE AND THE FAIR

Petworth Fair is a perennial topic and if there were such a thing as a 'no news day' on Facebook then the fair is sure to provoke a comment. Despite there being no fair last year it didn't stop a photograph of the 1987 event appearing and Liz Evans responded with 'what a great picture, reminds me of my childhood and what an exciting event the fair was, we never had much money for rides, but always had a great time with our friends'. As usual, the comments went slightly off-topic when a photograph of Mr Kahane's fair day sign from 1964 advertising gold-fish food and encouraging Dad to plant his broad bean seeds appeared. Tony Sneller pointed out 'that would have been the first Petworth Fair I saw. My family arrived

in Petworth just before Easter that year'. Mr Kahane was the owner of Money's, the little green-grocers shop in the corner of Golden Square. His niece Eilidh Webster recalled that 'he always gave us relatives the slightly-off fruit when we popped in, but we loved him anyway'. While his son Tim, also a member of the Facebook group, replied tongue in cheek to Eilidh 'he was generous like that. I didn't know what fresh veg was until I left home'. Tim continued 'At the end of the day Dad would often stand outside the shop and shout so half of Petworth heard there were last minute bargains. If anyone has other photos of his shop it would be great to see them'.

PRINCE AND GRAHAM

This wonderful photograph posted by Graham Berry of himself as a young boy sitting astride Prince, a shire horse with Mr and Mrs Bill Holden at their farm on Ebernore Common. 'I lived with my grandparents at Balls Cross, and my grandmother and her two sons and daughter, my mum, used to go over to Sparkes Farm on the common and that's how I met the Holdens, I ended up going to see Mr Holden (Bill) quite frequently and I would walk round the fields with him when he was working, they came into Petworth just once a year, a lovely couple from times past'. (See 'From Lambeth to Balls Cross' on page 35).



Changing Petworth (7)

Jonathan Newdick

The photograph opposite, darkened with age on the right hand side, was taken, probably by George Garland, in the 1960s. The location is Crosole Field, Frog Farm which is being treated with the (then) latest sprayer of artificial herbicide. The timber-framed barn beyond the tractor was destroyed by fire in the late 1970s but away to the right on the horizon, Stony Hill Cottages keep watch. About this time Houghton Mifflin published Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* which brought about the widespread reform of the use of agricultural chemicals. Our operator appears to be wearing sunglasses as if hoping for some protection for his eyes. The driver of the contemporary sprayer, in almost the same position, will have no such concerns: his air-conditioned cab is fitted with DAB radio/DVD player with 6" LCD touch screen, including Bluetooth phone system and MP3/USB connectivity. The vehicle carries 4,000 litres which are delivered via a 36 metre boom. Should you wish to buy one of these it will cost you, according to *Farmers Weekly*, £134,000. One wonders what Rachel Carson would have made of it all.



'Mondays were always wash days'

Len Smith

My father was born at Collins Marsh, near Wisborough Green and attended school in the village and later, a tiny school at Bedham situated deep in the woods. I believe the full attendance there was about fifteen pupils. At the age of eleven he left school and started to work as a carter's boy on a farm; the wages were very low and the hours long, working from seven o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night for 6d a day. Later he went and worked for Mr Killick a Wisborough Green baker, which also meant long hours. His next job was again as a carter, he often said how he loved horses, and this time it was in the employment of Mr Basil Osmaston at Rowfold. Here he received sixteen shillings a week and a house. It was often the case in farm work that the workers had a house that went with the job, of course it was to the farmer's advantage, if the employee decided on other employment he would lose his house. It was at Rowfold that he married my mother, Sarah Anne Scammell, who was cook housekeeper at the same farmhouse.

Oddly enough, I do not know so much about my mother's younger life. I do know that she was born at Shepherds Bush in London, and that she was the eldest sister of three, my Auntie Nancy, who with Uncle Charlie farmed Black Robin Farm at Beachy Head, Eastbourne, and mother's youngest sister Auntie Rose, who migrated to Canada after the 1914-18 war and married Uncle Ernie. Mother also had two brothers, Arthur Scammell who lived at, and was the landlord of, the local public house at Balls Cross, and Walter Scammell who lived at Petworth and worked at Bedham Farm. It was here that my grandmother and grandfather resided after moving out of London. After a few months of marriage my mother and father moved to Petworth, where my father worked for ten years as a gardener for Mr Upton and had a house in Angel Street.

I was born at Petworth in September 1921, the youngest child of seven; I had four older brothers and two sisters. The house of my childhood was number three in a block of four. There were two stone steps, which led up to the back door, indeed the only door to the house. I can well remember sitting on these steps in the long hot summer days, reading my comics, or playing some ball game with my sister.

The house had two downstairs rooms, the first room we entered was the scullery, the floor was brick and very uneven. In the right hand corner stood a stone sink, in the other corner and on the same side, built onto the wall sat the copper.

On the opposite side of the small room was a latched door leading down to the coal cellar. Coal of course was always put in the cellar, which was also used (at least in my father's case) to store three wooden barrels containing such beverages as dandelion, parsnip, elderberry or potato wine. Although I was always a bit dubious about the flavour of these concoctions, we often had friends of my father who would gladly accept a glass. In the small scullery there was an equally small window so it was quite dark. We had no water taps in the house, our supply coming from a stand-pipe a yard or so from the back door. Our hot water came from the kettle that was always kept full on the stove in the kitchen.¹

Mondays were always wash days; it seemed everyone did their washing on Mondays. For my mother it started with having to fill the copper with water from the standpipe. She would then add soap flakes, put in the dirty clothes and put on the heavy wooden lid. In the space below the copper a fire would be lit with bundles of faggots. When the water got really hot, the clothes would rise up and force the lid off. I liked to push the clothes down again with a big copper stick, especially on cold days. After some time the clothes would be taken from the copper and placed in a big galvanised oval shaped bath, filled with cold water, and rinsed. It would then be transferred to a similar bath, where, in this water would be placed a small bag of 'Recketts blue' powder. This apparently was to give the clothes an added whiteness. It was then taken from the bath and wrung through a big heavy wooden mangle.

If after all this performance it rained then mother would put up some strings in the scullery to hold the washing, and she would keep the fire burning to dry the clothes. Of course with our big family she would often have two or three copper loads of washing, it would often be after tea before she was finished. She worked so very, very hard to keep the family clean. I often wonder what she would have thought about our soft and easy way of living we have today.

The big flat irons were put, one in front of the fire, and another two on top of the stove, then I have seen my mother pick up one of the irons, wet her finger and lightly touch the base of the iron, if it went 'phissst' she would be satisfied and the ironing would begin on the big wooden table in the kitchen.

The only other pieces of furniture in the room were a cupboard and sofa, with the kitchen chairs at the table. In one corner of the room was another latched door leading to the bedrooms. The house was always nice and warm because we relied so much on the fire, it was often dim, and if I wanted to read my comic I

1. The house in Angel Street was probably part of a small terrace that was known as Bowling Green Cottages. The row stood at a right-angle to the main road very roughly where a property named Arnops Leith was later built. Belonging to the Upton family who lived at nearby Grays, the cottages were condemned as uninhabitable and demolished in the 1930s.

would have to sit at the table, beneath the paraffin oil lamp.

Outside of the house at the bottom of the garden, joining on to the houses, stood another building which housed four separate toilets, in this respect we were indeed very lucky because they were flush toilets, nothing very elaborate, just wooden partitions between each toilet and a cistern which always had to be covered in winter with sacking. The toilets at that time usually consisted of a small wooden building halfway down the garden, complete with a wooden seat and large bucket. It was equally as important to have a large garden where one had to dig a hole to dispose of the contents of the bucket. When my father asked why we had water outside but no tap in the house he was told that the water would soon be connected. Of course it never was.

The main Petworth to Brighton road ran parallel with the other end of the block of houses where we lived and it was here where my sister and I played. We would mark a set of stumps on the wall in chalk and I had a bat fashioned like a cricket bat. I didn't like playing cricket with Gladys; often she would argue that she wasn't out. Then she would throw the bat down and go and sulk.

Mr Courtney from Tillington delivered milk to us for a penny-halfpenny a pint. He would take our jug and fill it from a tap at the bottom of the churn. I knew that the jug was more than a pint but he would always give us extra. He was very generous. The milk would be kept on the top step of the cellar with a saucer covering the jug. It was coolest there.

Eventually it was time for me to start school. Mum of course took me on my first day and I found to my relief that my sister was not in the same class. I remember the little iron gate opening on to a small playground and across the other side of the playground was the front door. Inside were three classes and at the desk of the top class sat Miss Wooton the headmistress. At the front of the classroom stood a tall round stove and at the back of the stove was a pipe to take away the smell of the burning coke. In the wintertime I found this added greatly to the warmth and comfort of the classroom.

I suppose by the time I had reached the age of nine or ten, I had progressed to the bigger school for boys, situated at the bottom end of North Street. It had three classes, the lower class being taught by Miss Marshall, the middle class by Mr Court and the top class by the headmaster, Mr Stevenson, or 'Steve' as he was called, sometimes affectionately, sometimes not, but in any case only when he was out of earshot. Our classroom had a big room divider consisting of a glass top and a wooden lower section which was pulled across to separate Mr Court's class from the headmaster's class. Mr Court would walk around with a stick in his hand and when asking any lad a question he would invariably poke this stick into the ribs of the unfortunate boy. It certainly provoked the boy into having a quick, if not always correct, answer. In my school days I had often

seen boys caned, and on occasions, if the culprits did not live too far away, they would go running out of school and go home. This would invariably lead to a heated confrontation between the headmaster and a very irate mum, who would threaten to report him for use of the cane.

Situated in North Street and on the roadside was a small sweet shop owned by Mr Tyrell and which being on the way to the boys' school I naturally visited when I had a penny to spend. By the time I had reached the age of twelve or thirteen I already had a newspaper round at Weavers the newsagents, situated at the bottom of Lombard Street. One evening a week I had a job cleaning the windows of a drapers shop called Dancy's in the High Street. While on Saturday mornings I worked at a café called The Four & Twenty Blackbirds opposite St. Mary's church. My job was to scrub down the pavement outside the café. I suppose the three jobs earned me about two shillings a week. I would also do gardening for Mrs Death who lived at the top of Shimmings Hill.

I always loved Saturdays, maybe because we were kept busy. I well remember when the fields known as the hills and the Sheepdowns, would be covered with

a carpet of dandelions, Mum would ask Gladys and me to go and pick as many flower heads as we could find, this of course we knew, would be for wine making. I always liked collecting the fruits for jam making. Dad had an allotment where he not only grew vegetables, but had a couple of blackcurrant bushes, a plum tree and an apple tree. So by the time Mum had finished jam making she had a shelf in the larder loaded with produce. When the apples were picked they were placed on big sheets of cardboard and pushed under the bed in Mum and Dad's bedroom. They were looked at periodically to remove any bad ones.

To be continued



The Smith family in their doorway at Bowling Green Cottages in the 1920s. Despite the fact that within a decade their cottage would be condemned as uninhabitable they appear happy. Perhaps the photographer insisted 'say cheese'.

Growing up in Pound Place

Trevor Brash. Part one

I remember, or at least have mental images of, when our family still owned the fish shop together with numbers 1 and 2 Pound Place in Pound Street. We lived in number 2, Uncle Jimmy Atkinson and my cousins Alan and 'young' Jimmy lived in number 1, and Nana Brash lived in the flat over the shop. We always thought of it as a fish shop, rather than a fish and chip shop and there was a massive ice shelf on the right hand side as you entered the shop which held the wet fish sales. The shop level was at the street level in Pound Street, the wet area was one level up but at ground level with the Pound Place yard, above that was Nana Brash's flat.

I have mental images of my dad, standing at a table in what later became the restaurant area, filleting the fish with Nana Brash mixing the batter on the next level. She always put a bottle of light ale in the batter mix and, occasionally, allotted me a very important job. I had to put my hand over the top of the bottle, give it a good shake, and pour the frothy ale into the batter. Many years later I saw a 'celebrity chef' extolling the virtues of beer in a 'modern' batter recipe and remarked, indignantly 'Hah, Nana Brash was doing that in the early 1950s'. Just goes to prove the old saying 'there's nothing new under the sun'.

I used to spend a lot of time with Nana Brash in the time before I started school, as Mum and Dad were busy with the shop from very early in the morning. The fish was delivered packed in ice, from Grimsby and had to be prepared for the wet slab or the fryers. The fryers were wood and coal fired. They had to be lit on a very low fire to get the solid blocks of beef dripping to start to melt slowly without burning, and then built up gradually over several hours to cooking temperature. Nana Brash cooked the best breakfasts, like porridge made with water and salt or, my favourite, slices of cold pease pudding fried with an egg on top. She also made an incredibly good sweet pudding 'clootie dumpling' boiled in a cloth and held high in the pan with the washing tongs through the top of the cloth and resting on each side of the pan. This was served with a knob of butter, which melted down into the hot pudding, and brown sugar which slowly dissolved into the butter. Hardly healthy food but we never seemed to get overly fat. Nana used to tell me about when she did bed and breakfast lodgings above the fish shop. We still have the visitor's book with names from all over, especially Canada, and all giving glowing references.

About this same time, I remember Dad working part time as a driver for

SCATS [Southern Counties Agricultural Trading Society] in East Street where the Antiques Market is now. I used to go with him to the shop and sit on a big bag of dog biscuits and wait for him to load up, then we'd visit all the local farms. The farmers' wives seemed to take a shine to me and it was rare not get a freshly baked biscuit or bun. While sitting in the shop, the young junior assistant, Ray, used to give me a bone-shaped dog biscuit which I ate with glee. Ray used to tell me it would give me strong teeth and glossy hair and, of course, I believed him. Years later, I went into the granary in Midhurst and saw an older version of the same man. I asked him if his name was Ray and, when he confirmed it was, I asked him if he remembered giving young boy dog biscuits to eat in SCATS. He did and, in true Ray dry humour, asked me if I would like one now. I politely declined.

I don't remember the shop being sold – hardly surprising as I was only four or five years old. My only impression of that time is 'Nana Brash used to live in the flat and now she lived with us'. Undoubtedly she would have sung to me and told me poems in her flat but I don't have any memories of that. My abiding mental image is taking her up a cup of tea, in her room in our house, and her singing and reciting poems to me there. The stairs in our three-hundred-year-old house were steep and rickety and most of the tea ended up in the saucer. That wasn't a problem as, like many people of that age and era, Nana used to pour the tea into the saucer and drink it from that. The songs, poems and stories were all from her childhood in Sunderland and included songs such as 'Dance for your Daddy', 'Bladen Races', 'Bobby Shafto' and poems such as 'Hoorah for the postman' and 'The Lambton worm'.

Starting infants school was an eye opener. Due to living in town and being under five, I never met many other children, other than my cousins, who we saw occasionally. Most of my pre-school time was spent with Nana who taught me to read basic words from the bible or from texts on her daily calendar. In the first year of primary school, Miss Waller thought it strange that I could read so well but I never raised my hand when she held up the word cards. She realised I couldn't see them, so my eyes were tested and I started a long association with NHS spectacles. Primary school was just over the road from home, at Culvercroft, with the early years spent in Miss Bale's class upstairs and the later years with Miss Slade downstairs. My memory of Miss Bale is that she was a tall, slender, warm, caring, lady whereas

my memory of Miss Slade isn't quite as fond, but I'll leave it at that. The highlight of the morning was the milk break. The milk monitors in Miss Slade's class were responsible for bringing the crates in and distributing the milk. In the winter, the milk either froze or got attacked by blue tits. Frozen milk was defrosted by the big belly cast iron stove, the milk attacked by birds just got drunk, microbes and all. The natural antibodies in children from that era must have been off the charts. Lunches were served in a large room with parquet flooring and I remember Mrs Bridger as a cook and Mrs Stoner as 'dinner lady'. One strange memory is of my running out of school, and over the road to home, because they were forcing me to eat lion. Mum promptly marched me back and showed me that the blackboard actually said 'stewed loin'. Obviously it was time for another trip to the opticians in Haslemere to renew my dreaded NHS spectacles.

The school had a small tarmac playground to the rear and a grass 'sports field' to the road. Woe betide anyone caught playing on the grassy bit when they weren't supposed to. You just hoped Miss Bale caught you and not Miss Slade but, again, I'll leave it at that. I remember Mr Hill used to take us to the park to play football. We used to access it through a gate in his garden. He was very much of the old 'get stuck in' school and this was the era when football boots, invariably bought from jumble sales, were made from stiff leather with nailed-in studs and wooden toe blocks. Despite this lethal footwear, sliding tackles were still permissible; in fact they were encouraged and admired. It was also still legal to shoulder charge the goalie and ball into the net to score a goal, another tactic Mr Hill was fond of teaching us and yet I don't remember any serious injuries. Minor injuries, that would see some of today's professionals carted off on a stretcher, would get your hair tousled and a jovial Mr Hill laughing and saying 'wow you've been in the wars, that'll be a scar to be proud of.' I remember being invited to two 'non-family' birthday parties around this time, which was unusual given that we lived in the middle of town. At one of them, Mum took me to the house only to be greeted with surprise as the mother knew nothing of the invitation, mainly because it wasn't the boy's birthday, but even so I was invited in for tea and we had fish-finger sandwiches. The other was an invitation, along with some other boys, to Francis Maude's, (who went on to be a government minister and is now Lord Maude of Horsham) birthday party at the big house opposite the dairy. Francis was in Miss Bale's class for a short while and I shared one of the upright two seater desks with him. I remember we played 'sardines' where we all had to pack into a massive wardrobe and then we played 'tennis', on the lawn in the garden, using a contraption made of elastic ropes and a tennis ball. All very exotic at that time, especially the lawn, given that our garden was exclusively used for producing a lot of vegetables and a few flowers.

To be continued

The carter and the builders' merchant

Judy Sayers

In the March magazine the article on George Attrill, the well-known Fittleworth roadman and folksinger, was reproduced from Judy Sayers' *The Old Village Trades and Crafts of Fittleworth*. With Judy's permission we have taken yet another of her essays. This time there is a very personal connection between writer and subject as Judy is the widow of Jim Sayers who ran the company of Sayers and Son from their yard in the village. The article can be seen as a homage to the small family-run businesses that once thrived in every village and town and which in the main have succumbed to the stranglehold of the multi-nationals and the disproportionate value of the land upon which those businesses were built.

In 1920 Bert Sayers threw some planks over the ditch and drove his horse and cart into the yard at the end of School Lane. At that time the property consisted of two cottages, the land and a few outbuildings. He had been working for Mr Line at Street Farm as carter and coalman but with his wife expecting a baby he decided it was time to set up on his own. So with a loan from his father-in-law he had bought the horse and cart and paid the rent on the property. These humble beginnings eventually developed into the company of Sayers and Son (Fittleworth) Ltd., Builder's Merchants running a fleet of lorries, coaches for private hire and school transport, and operating a sandpit and brickyard.

At first Bert worked just as a coal merchant, the coal coming in trucks to Fittleworth station where it was offloaded into sacks with shovels. Business must have been good, as in 1924 he was able to buy his first lorry, a new Ford Ton truck at a price of £140, followed in 1925 by another, a High Speed Ton truck this time, complete with extras for the huge sum of £251. 13s. 2d. The extras meant that his vehicle could be transformed into a 14-seater coach by adding benches and a canvas tilt. It was at this time that Bert was approached by West Sussex County Council to transport the children from the outlying areas to Fittleworth School. The agreement, signed on 19th May 1925, began a contract which was to last more than fifty years, serving not only Fittleworth but schools at Thakeham, Petworth and Midhurst.

The business had now begun to diversify. A sign outside the larger of the two cottages read 'ALBERT SAYERS, COAL MERCHANT AND HIRE CARTER', and general haulage began to take over. There were plenty of goods to transport, milk churns from farms, sugar beet and fertilizers, general

building materials and, of course, house removals. Agricultural labourers tended to move quite often within the area, with everything piled into the lorry including the faggots and the ferrets! Faggots themselves were a regular load from Bedham to the bakery along The Fleet. Additional vehicles were purchased and the older ones replaced.

Son Jim, born in 1920, had now grown up and Bert expected him to join the business. Jim, however, had other ideas but Bert was a wise countryman and knew how to get round this problem by offering to buy his son a car. Now, at this time there were very few cars in Fittleworth and certainly no young man of Jim's age possessed one, so within a very short time he was the proud possessor of an Austin Seven costing £100 and was part of the business and the workforce! Business was good. Then the war came and so did changes. The freehold of the land was purchased and the smaller property, which was in a poor state, was demolished. Local labour was in short supply, but work came in the form of the Home Guard who needed to be transported to points of duty and rifle practice. Jim was serving in the Royal Air Force and when he returned home a lease was taken on Coates Sandpit. Sand was dug and delivered to local builders and the new building work at Crawley. Concrete blocks were manufactured at the pit and another coach was purchased. Three coaches were then used on the school runs, for taking the football, cricket and stoolball teams of both Fittleworth and Pulborough to their fixtures and for outings to the seaside and the London shows.

The business then became a limited company and a fully-fledged builders' merchant. When Bert died in 1964 there was great sadness as the many cards, letters and tributes from the village and beyond testified. For the business was part of the village, employing so many local people and taking so many local children to school. Jim carried on running the company, taking on the lease of Ashpark Brickyard. The school runs continued but not the private hire coach business. A fleet of ten Bedford lorries delivered sand, ballast and gravel, bricks, tiles and drainage goods, and tons of cement over a wide area for another 20 years.

The lorries and the business were sold to another company when Jim retired in 1985. The familiar sight of the dark blue lorries returning to the yard at the end of the day to be washed and cleaned ready for the next day's work was no more, and it was the end of an era that had lasted for 65 years.

From Lambeth to Balls Cross

Graham Berry

I came into this world by caesarean section at St. Thomas' Hospital, London. The background that I was born into was dysfunctional to say the least, largely because of my dad whose mental health affected the whole family.

Dad is present in my earliest memories of our life in Coldharbour Lane in London, where we lived in a third-floor flat overlooking the local laundry. We had a line and pulley system running from our kitchen to the laundry wall on which we could hang our washing. Mum was a very talented seamstress and used to tell me stories of having worked on dresses for Gracie Fields and other popular wartime entertainers. When Dad was home he would take me to Ruskin Park about a mile and a half away. Even before I started school I can remember him having difficulty running because of his leg. I would be charging around in the park but he wouldn't join in. I learned later that he'd had a serious accident falling through a roof when he was eighteen. They'd operated on his ankle but he couldn't use it properly again and this led to difficulties in his life. Dad passed away when I was nineteen and I can't say I missed him that much as he had spent long periods of time in hospitals and I spent great lengths of time at my grandmother's at Balls Cross.

Before Dad got really ill I remember good times in London with his parents who lived over in Lambeth. On Sundays we would take the tram to see them at 10 Doris Street in an area that has now been pulled down. It was a hive of activity with all of the sights and sounds of traditional old-time London from the rag-and-bone man with his horse and cart, to the jellied-eel man. When the tram service was upgraded to a bus service, locals would dig up the tar-covered wooden blocks which the tram lines rested in and take them home as firewood.

We played in the streets of Lambeth on scooters which we made at home, using ball bearings in the wheels. Since there weren't as many cars in those days, we whizzed around, up and down the roads and alleyways. There was a general feeling of exuberant happiness in those days, with the war finally over and everyone still talking about the victory and telling stories not just of the recent war but also from World War I. Nan Berry, my dad's mum, would tell me of her brother John who, when he was aged just eighteen, became a war hero when he was killed in action. He was awarded the Military Medal for staying at his machine gun post while his comrades escaped. My grandad,

Two views of Elliott's Stores in Balls Cross, c. 1890. The photograph opposite is by Walter Kevis; below unknown. The pond (and street-wise poultry) are now long gone, although the land where the pond was still lies low and



Albert Berry had also fought in World War I, and he had a story that I loved hearing, from when he was stationed in Palestine. During a quiet period of fighting, he had fancied a cigarette, so he and a pal had covered themselves with canvas to have a quiet smoke. However, they couldn't light their cigarettes, so grandad had slowly pulled the canvas down to have more success at lighting a match. Predictably, a sniper was watching and instantly shot at them, hitting grandad in the foot; it wasn't a serious injury but it resulted in him being out of front-line duties until it healed.

Of course this story is really about how we ended up at Balls Cross. My mum's mother lived in Ivy Cottage at Ball Cross. I had a great affection for her. She was tiny in stature and not to be messed with, with four foot eight of

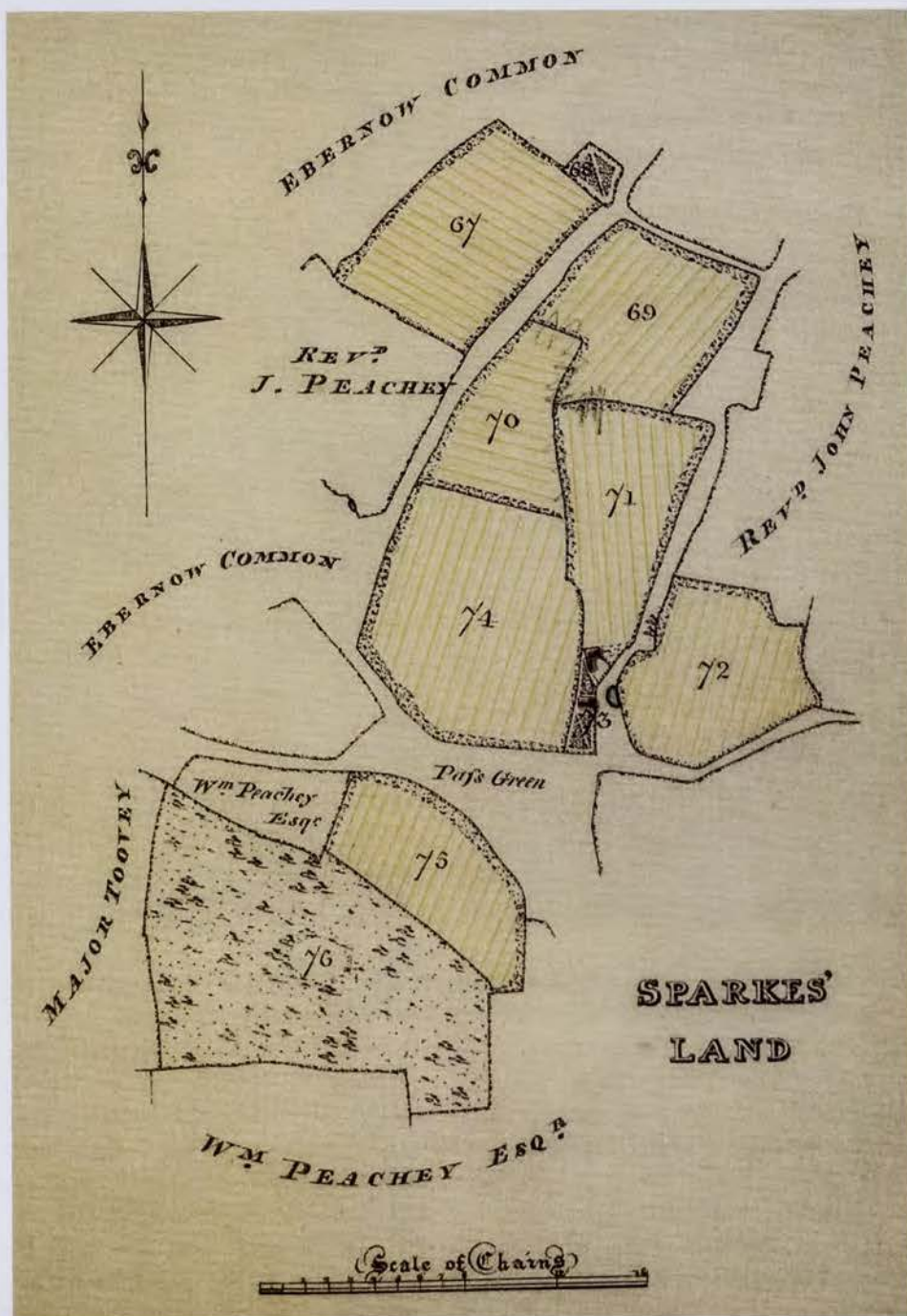
damp, with flowers of ladies' smock in the spring. The building which housed Elliott's, with its attractive alternate courses of red and grey brick, remains. Now a private house, it goes under the name of 'The Old Post office'. The

white signpost at the left of the house in the opposite photograph points to Pipers Lane, now a tarmac road along which is Ivy Cottagen



Irish Catholic background in her, she was quite a character. Take the time at my cousin Alison's christening, when I shoved my finger into the cake. Her grandfather grabbed my hand and gave it a slap but Nan wasn't having it and promptly marched over to confront him, punching him squarely on the nose.

Before moving to the countryside, they had lived in London, my Nan and my grandfather, Robert. She had worked for the nuns at a local Catholic medical clinic but she didn't particularly respect the Mother Superior's authority. Nan was a real powerhouse, industrious, with a great capacity for work. While she was still at the clinic during the week, she also worked weekends at the home of the elderly Admiral Heath at Ebernoe House in Sussex. By the time Nan began working at the house, the Admiral was in his seventies. His daughter, Miss



Heath, was so impressed with her that she decided to offer her a permanent position. This required all of the family moving and needing accommodation. Nan found Ivy Cottage, a farm cottage in a poor state of repair and requiring a great deal of renovation. It seemed like a risky decision when she borrowed £300 from Miss Heath to buy it but it actually proved shrewd, since it came with two acres of ground and a large garden, land that would accrue in value in later years.

By the time I had started school both of my parents had become very ill and were spending long periods in hospital and so by the age of six I was living with my grandparents at Ivy Cottage in Balls Cross. School was at nearby Ebernoe, though sufficiently far away to require a daily taxi ride that was arranged for me by the local farmer's daughter Judy Morrish. Life was full of fun in Sussex and I have loved the countryside around Petworth ever since. I remember as a young lad walking across the common from Nan's house to Sparkes Farm, run by Bill Holden and his wife Annie [see page 23]. I would look forward to seeing his two shire horses Prince and Damson. I watched them ploughing, pulling the hay carts and hauling the wheat binder. There were of course cows that needed milking, chicken and pig feeding and endless other jobs. Amazingly, Mr Holden was still sowing crops with a seed fiddle that he would hang over his shoulder and which would broadcast the seed as he walked forward. This was an extremely skilled job but was considered really old-fashioned even then. Mr Holden would travel the few miles into Petworth just once a year for supplies, though more often to the Stag Inn at Balls Cross for a couple of bottles of beer, or maybe to Ansell's the village shop. There was also the garage where he would take his wireless accumulator to be charged so that he could listen to the radio.

It was wonderful coming from London to the countryside, not least because the local lads were impressed with my stories of the big city. I told them about Buckingham Palace and the changing of the guard, about seeing Spitfires and Hurricanes on display on Horseguards Parade. These boys accepted me, letting me hang around with them as friends. I remember being puzzled when one of the boys told me the story of coming off the back of one of his dad's tractors and falling under the roller that was being towed behind it. He insisted that the

OPPOSITE A plan of Sparkes Farm (Sparkes' Land) taken from *The Revd John Peachey's Estates Surveyed and Delineated by William Bridger, Petworth 1829*. Reproduced from Peter Jerrome and Jonathan Newdick *Not all sunshine here* (1996) and reproduced courtesy of Haslemere Educational Museum. The names of the numbered areas are: 67 The Three Crofts, 68 Garden adjoining the Three Crofts, 69 The Four Acres, 70 Jackalant Field, 71 The Barn Field, 72 The Pound Field, 73 The Homestead, 74 The Eight Acres, 75 The Hooks, and 76 The Hook Coppice.

ground was so soft that he was pressed into the earth without being hurt. In my childish mind I couldn't get over how he should have been rolled out longer, like pastry under a rolling pin.

While staying at the cottage Dad began to be allowed home for visits and eventually we moved into a flat at North House in North Street, Petworth. I thought that this was great as the house had a huge garden which I could escape from by climbing over the back wall to get to the local hills and my beloved countryside. North House was made up of four flats; two upstairs where the Widdens and Rendells lived. Downstairs there were us and Mr and Mrs Talman, who didn't think much of me. This could have been something to do with me joining the town band where I was given a flugel horn and told to learn it. When my parents were out I would try to play 'God Save the King' or 'The Last Post' in our kitchen which backed onto the Talman's rooms. They would bang on the walls and shout expletives at me. Although at this time I was in and out of my grandparents' lives at Ivy Cottage, it is important to mention that my grandfather, Robert Whatrup, never spoke to me, not once. I have often wondered if it was his experience in the two world wars that affected him.

The move to Petworth meant that I had to leave Ebernoe School and enrol at the infants' school which stood where the library is now. The headmistress Miss Evans did not believe in the cane but she had another punishment which was to make miscreants sit under her desk. Unfortunately this was my regular location at school. When I was about seven I moved to Culvercroft School in Pound Street and at that time, depending on Dad's health, I would be moving to and fro between North House and Balls Cross. Life at Culvercroft was okay but I was unable to concentrate and my interest in learning was non-existent. I survived through my love of football which we played endlessly in Petworth Park using our coats for goal-posts, charging all over the place and running and running without ever getting tired. Mr Rivet was the teacher of our junior class and he could be a frightening man, particularly when the dreaded slipper was brought out. On Mondays I had the job of collecting the dinner money from the girls' school in East Street. The headmistress there was Miss Slade. It was my duty to knock on her classroom door and wait to be called in. Each time she would bellow out the command to 'enter!' and I would gingerly enter, all nervous with the girls from the senior class staring at me.

My next move was to school at Midhurst. Although academically I don't think I set the world alight, I was given an extra year at school and from that point I found the ability to study in depth, which enabled me to pass some serious thought-provoking exams, but that is another story.

'The bus ride cost tuppence'

Steven Elliott. Part two

Gran and Grandad had a radio up on a shelf and they would listen to 'Housewife's Choice' or 'Music while you work' something like that, and I must have heard 'Elizabethan Serenade' by Ronald Binge at some time because, whenever I hear that piece of music it takes me straight back to Gran's kitchen in Petworth with a feeling of nostalgia. Sometimes, they listened to 'Ron and Eth', 'The Glums' as I now know, which I found very confusing because the adults used to talk about what had happened in the show, and I wouldn't know whether they were talking about Dad's friend, Ron Baker or not. On one occasion I stayed longer than usual in Petworth while my mum was in hospital at home. So that I didn't miss school, I was enrolled at the Infants just off Grove Street. It must have been during March because on my birthday I was so busy playing with a present that I was late to school and got told off. Gran must have told the school that I knew Anne Baker because they sat me next to her. I remember it being an old building and in the cloakroom there was a stone or brick floor on which one of the children was sick one day. The things you remember!

The Baker family, Ron and Eadie, and their children, Anne and John, lived in North Street; I remember that I went round their house to play. My Dad and Ron Baker were the same age and great pals, and whenever we went down to Petworth, Dad and Ronner, as he was called, would meet up and Dad would give him a hand at work. Occasionally, I would go out with them. It didn't always work out well. One time we went to a fruit farm at Kirdford where we walked through a big shed where several people were sorting apples. I remember the strong smell of those apples to this day. We went outside to a big field; Ronner was probably there to mend a piece of machinery. In the middle of this field there was an old engine lying on the ground. I ran over to it thinking, 'I can jump that', well, I tripped just as I got there and bashed my forehead on it. There was quite a bit of blood, so I had to be taken back to Petworth to the doctor's surgery opposite where East Street meets North Street where I was patched up and then dropped off back home, rather subdued.

Usually, Dad and Ronner would have a pint at lunchtime and if I was with them, I would be sat outside with lemonade and a packet of crisps. Ron Baker was an agricultural engineer and had a big shed in Kingspit Lane, just off the

Fittleworth road opposite the Welldiggers. The shed was full of oily smells, tools and the odd vehicle with the bonnet up. Out the back there were pigs in a sty, and sometimes a big container with food in it would be boiling up, swill for the pigs. The smell was ... let's say very distinctive. I used to like watching them being fed, fighting over each other. Also, at the back was a tractor and an old fire engine with 'West Sussex Fire Brigade' on the side, which surprised me because I thought that Petworth was in East Sussex, where did I get that from?! There was also a horse-drawn caravan that was lived in by a chap with a big beard but I cannot remember his name. He used to heat his water up in a big copper kettle which must have been given to Dad at some time, because we had it at home. We still have a copper drip tray that hung from the pumps at the Welldiggers. On one occasion John and Anne Baker, were there as well and we had great fun clambering over the tractor pretending to drive it. I used to love riding on a tractor with Ronner and remember the long flat trailers that were used to carry hay or straw bales that we could run up and down on. Life in the country was so much more fun than living in a town. Years later Mum and Dad were very saddened to hear that Ron Baker had died in a road accident on the way back from Chichester.

The Sheepdowns were just the greatest place for a child to play. I would join in with a few local children and we would go out to play. I knew the Virgin Mary Spring; we would play on the footbridge and run all over the Sheepdowns. Running through the ferns with their distinctive smell, and dodging the cow pats although one local friend was tripped over as a joke and fell into one. But a massive fascination for me was the brook. It was just so much fun to follow it along through its twists and turns probably going under Shimmings Hill Bridge and beyond. Proper childhood exploration. Our family used to go for a walk after tea on a Sunday evening along the Sheepdowns pretty much in our Sunday best; it was a really nice thing to do even for a child. Once I remember hearing a steam train and was disappointed never to hear it again.

Grandad Jim had an allotment on the plots as you walked up the approach path to the Sheepdowns and I would sometimes go there with him. Grandad didn't say much but he was a kindly person that is until you did something annoying and he would quickly tell you off. He had a shed in which he kept his tools including cobblers' lasts, as folks used to more often sole and heel their own shoes and boots. Grandad was a quiet person; when he was reading his newspaper you couldn't see whether he was looking at the paper or looking at you. In the sitting room was a cabinet wall clock with roman numerals on the face. Grandad used to wind it every day and would oil the mechanism using a feather with a touch of oil on it. He used to pronounce the word oil, like 'aisle'. I used to like hearing the clock chime. It is still in the family but it hasn't worked

since Grandad died. He had a dog called 'Sally'. Evidently he loved that dog though I'm not sure that I did: one Christmas I was given some foil-wrapped chocolate soldiers as a treat, but I was not allowed to eat any until we had had our Christmas dinner in the kitchen. When I was allowed to get down from the table I went into the sitting room only to discover that Sally had chewed most of them. I was inconsolable.

Grandad died of angina on the 5th May 1959, aged 67, probably hereditary as his mother died young of heart disease too. Mum said that he didn't have angina until late in life but had to retire early. It didn't help that he had too many fried meals when working away in the war building airfields. He came from a family of steam engine drivers, John, his father, and he, worked for Prewetts' Mill in Horsham, the town where he was born. He had uncles who worked on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway as firemen or drivers. He towed a hut and a water bowser behind the steam roller when moving from one place to another with the road gang. When he retired it coincided with the council giving up steam-rollers so he had to drive it up to Strood, near Rochester Bridge, to hand it back where they built them and that must have been a very sad journey for him. The trade mark Invicta brass horse from the front of the boiler is still in the family, fixed to a brass 'farm gate' made by a family friend, and acts as a fine door stop.

It was Gran who came up with all the family stories and from her that I got my interest in family history. For example, Gran said her father, John Harvey Holden, used to take friends to the races in an open-top car and he would say 'Hold on to your hats boys I'm gonna take her up to 30' [miles an hour]. She told me about her grandfather Henry Streeter running buses to the station, her grandfather John Holden being the brewer for Petworth House. She was certainly a great influence. She had known George Garland as they were the same age and her grandfather, Henry Streeter, had married George's mother. We visited Ivy Sleas, an old friend of hers that Gran used to stay with after she left Petworth. We then went across the road to George Garland's cottage because I said that I would like to meet him but he was not there and his housekeeper told us that he had not been well. I missed my chance.

Over the last couple of years I have taken my mum to visit Petworth and Tillington, one trip with her sister Celia. It was nice to have lunch in the Welldiggers, I had told the manager that Mum and her sister used to live in the pub so we were assured of a table near the window and the staff chatted to us and took our pictures outside the pub. My only regret was not taking a photo of a group picture on the wall showing Mum's grandfather, John Harvey Holden, because we do not have a photograph of him. Mum and Celia recognised him straight away.

No shrinking violets

Miles Costello and Keith Thompson

Is it really possible that it is twenty years ago that the Petworth Society was preparing for the re-introduction of the ancient Rogationtide custom of beating the parish bounds? Sunday 27th May 2001 was firmly pencilled in. The town band would see the walkers off from Petworth with as much hullabaloo as possible. This was no occasion for shrinking violets. As much a civil as religious occasion, the aim was to mark the parish boundary and deter any intrusion by opposing Tillington bound-treaders. The walk would include Hungers Lane, Rotherbridge, Perryfields and the former railway line. Robust oak marker posts had been installed prior to the walk, landowner permissions granted and then that awful plague struck. No, not covid 19 but foot and mouth. The countryside went into lock-down; millions of animals were destroyed and mass graves dug. Ironically, Cheltenham Festival was cancelled that year as was our Rogationtide walk. Footpaths were closed and farms went into isolation. Could anything like it happen again? It seemed unlikely but with viruses you never can tell.

A full year later the walk went ahead. Foot and mouth had quickly been forgotten by the general public and the countryside was open once again. Some sixty walkers led by Father David Pollard were seen off from New Lodges on the Tillington Road. The town band played 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' followed by 'Harbour Lights'. Everyone in an extremely good humour. Sticks were waved but no trouble from the Tillington lads who appeared to have joined us. At Rotherbridge the riotous mob found the band waiting with a welcoming 'Sussex by the Sea'. New territory, not usually open to the public, water meadows, the skew bridge and the railway embankment. A lengthy walk, though not by Society standards, was interspersed with the traditional Rogationtide blessing of the crops. The boundary markers were dutifully beaten and the parish boundary firmly established. A thoroughly enjoyable, if somewhat surreal occasion. Could it be repeated?

A footnote by Keith Thompson from *PSM* 109, September 2002.

Suppose that you live in Brighton and that you like to drive out on Sunday afternoons to the more remote parts of the county, park the car and then walk one of the many prescribed routes available from the tourist information centres, in all likelihood with the title 'Rambling in West Sussex'.

Today you've left the car in Petworth, walked down Grove Lane, turned right

A Petworth parish boundary marker among celandines. Its oak post, now firmly part of its landscape, seems set to outlast its fading plastic lettering. This one is half way along Hungers Lane. See also the back cover of this issue.



into Haslingbourne Lane and then, grateful for a footpath, followed Station Road to the Badger pub (or is it Badgers now?). After a leisurely lunch there, you cross the road and go down Kilsham Lane. It peters out at Rotherbridge, so you cross the river and ... can you believe your eyes?

There's a uniformed band playing 'It's a long way to Tipperary' watched by about fifty people in various garbs, some with sticks, most with contented smiles on their faces, a baby in a buggy, a few dogs, even one chap on a bike.

It's like one of those dreams in which ordinary happenings take place in incongruous places. What's going on? Why here? Does it happen every Sunday? We seem to be miles from anywhere – where does the band come from?

Someone calls out, 'One more piece' and the band obliges. There's a ripple of applause, and the players carry their instruments back over the bridge. 'Right then, we move on' shouts one of the men with a stick and the crowd follows, then veers off to the right along the river bank, even further into the country.

You'll be glad to know that the chap with the bike was able to answer most of the questions, but whether he was able to give assurance that the people of Petworth are not in urgent need of psychiatric help was not clear.

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'Obey the Laws and Wear the Gauze'

Miles Costello

It was the final year of World War I and the spring of 1918 when Spanish Flu broke out across Europe with devastating effect. The pandemic, which the experts tells us may have begun in the United States, was fortified by the vast movements of troops across Europe and which created the perfect storm for spreading the contagion. Soldiers, already weakened by years of living and fighting in appalling conditions were particularly susceptible to the grip of 'The Spanish Lady' as they called it. Often wounded and with lungs damaged by the effects of gas, the virus spread rapidly through the opposing armies.

Of course, as soldiers returned home wounded or on leave the disease became established among civilian populations and hardly any country was spared. West Sussex suffered almost 400 deaths in 1918 alone and, like today, the county was hit by three waves; the second, which struck in the autumn and winter of 1918 was by far the worst. However, unlike today, it was adults in their thirties who appeared to be worst effected and, with no National Health Service, quack remedies became the only option for many. 'Obey the Laws and Wear the Gauze' was the phrase used to try and persuade people to wear face masks.

At Petworth Sid Harris, a baker by trade, had left his Market Square business and enlisted as a master baker in the Royal Army Service Corps. Well away from the front he would have considered himself one of the lucky ones. What is more his wife Alice, who was pregnant with their first child, could carry on the business while living with her parents at Coultershaw where her father was foreman at the mill.

Faith was born in the spring of 1918, just as the flu pandemic broke out and she and her mother moved back to the Market Square premises where before long they learned the news that Sid, like thousands of other soon to be demobilised soldiers, had been struck down by the virus. By the time that Faith was six months old the father who she had never met was a patient in St. John's Hospital at Hastings. Run by the Red Cross, the hospital had been set up to treat soldiers with minor injuries but was quickly overrun by flu victims. Sadly, Sid would never return to Petworth alive or indeed see his new child for at the age of 39 he succumbed to the virus and was buried in the Horsham Road Cemetery at Petworth, his name recorded on the war memorial becoming just a single statistic in an epidemic which would take an estimated 228,000 lives in Great Britain and a staggering 20 to 50 million worldwide.

FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

The Health of the Town. *The Sussex Agricultural Express*, May 9th, 1893

The reports respecting the small pox in Petworth have been greatly exaggerated. A case occurred in the tramp ward at the Workhouse and two other inmates failed. These were at once isolated, being taken to Flathurst Cottage, a place quite away from the town and set apart for patients with infectious diseases. One patient, an old man over 70 years of age, who had been ill with congestion of the lungs, died, but the others are almost well. No one from the workhouse is allowed to come into town. These are the only cases which have occurred, there not having being a single case in the town.

Petworth House Fire. *St James's Chronicle*, November 21st, 1846

Petworth House was in imminent danger of being destroyed by fire last week. On Tuesday evening some of the domestics discovered a quantity of smoke and a smell of fire in Miss Wyndham's sleeping-room, but, attributing the circumstance to a screen having been placed too near the fire no further notice was taken of it at that time. About three o'clock in the morning Miss Wyndham awoke, and, finding the room full of smoke, called up her maid; but after setting the window open, and seeing no cause for alarm, she again retired to rest. In the morning, the smoke continuing to increase, with at the same time a strong smell of burning, a further search was made, when the smoke was seen to issue from under the stove. Mrs. Wyndham went, with great presence of mind, to the servants' apartments, and gave directions that water should be taken up in buckets and the engine got out. On the floor being cut away, it was found that a large piece of timber, technically called a 'girder', was on fire and nearly burnt through. Three engines had in the meantime been got ready in front of the house, and one of them having played on the burning mass, the damage was confined to a very small space. Half an hour more, and we have very little doubt that a great part of the mansion would have fallen before the devouring flames.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS 6 Borde Hill, 8 Fair, 10 Old, 11 The, 12 Show, 14 Mardens, 15 Oboe, 19 Meadow, 20 Turn Up, 22 Sand, 23 Standen, 26 Aura, 28 Nor, 29 Man, 31 Swum, 32 Bird Hides

DOWN

1 Folly, 2 A Do, 3 Slating, 4 Ways, 5 Arboretum, 7 Highdown, 9 Wey, 13 Garden, 16 Bargee, 17 Penshurst, 18 Stansted, 21 Starlit, 24 And, 25 Wakes, 27 Arun, 30 Pie

