

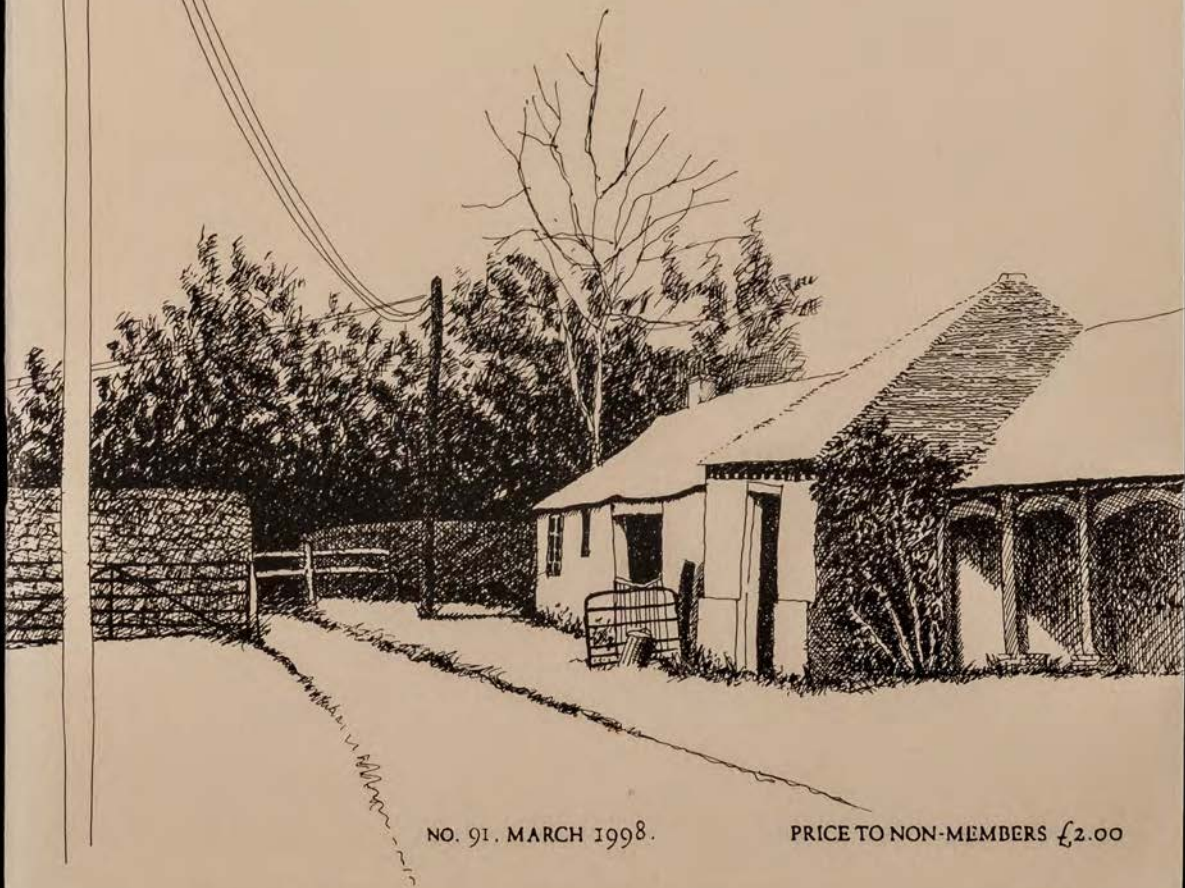
THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*Magazine*



WITHIN WALLS

Jonathan Newdick's year at  
Stag Park

Petworth House, March 28 - April 15



NO. 91. MARCH 1998.

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The drawing on the back cover is of a door in the wall at Parkhurst Farm -  
also by Jonathan Newdick.  
Cover design by Jonathan Newdick.

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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE  
LECONFIELD HALL  
AND PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM!



## Constitution and Officers

The Petworth Society was founded in 1974 "to preserve the character and amenities of the town and parish of Petworth including Byworth; to encourage interest in the history of the district and to foster a community spirit". It is non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit making.

Membership is open to anyone, irrespective of place of residence who is interested in furthering the object of the society.

The annual subscription is £7.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £8.00 overseas £9.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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### *Hon. Magazine Secretary*

Mrs B. Hodson, The Cottage, Whitelocks, Sutton

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Mr Andrew Henderson, Mrs Anne Simmons, Mrs Ros Staker, Mr J. Taylor,

Mr E. Vincent, Mr Graham Whittington, Mrs Linda Wort

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Mrs Williams (Graffham), Mr Vincent (Tillington and River),

Mrs Goodyer, Mrs Williams (Fittleworth)

### *Society Scrapbook*

Mrs Pearl Godsmark

### *Society Town Crier*

Mr J. Crocombe, 19 Station Road (343329)

Note: The crier may be prepared to publicise local community events and public notices for you, even snippets of personal news such as births, engagements or lost pets. It is suggested that such personal and business cries be made for a small donation to a charity to be nominated by the crier himself.

## Chairman's Notes

*In recent issues I have tended to keep these notes as short as possible but on this particular occasion there are a number of things to discuss with you. First, however, a welcome to our new cover "Outbuildings at Stag Park" heralding Jonathan's forthcoming exhibition in the Education Room at Petworth House. It runs from Saturday March 28th to Wednesday April 15th. You can draw your conclusions as to the quality of the work from our cover and centrepiece. Admission is free.*

*Subscription levels are held again this year but it's tight. The Magazine takes almost all subscription income and the profitability of the Society's various activities is, in this context, important. This brings me to a central issue: Anne Simmons' decision to retire from the Lombard Street shop. I expressed my own, (and I suspect) the feelings of almost everyone in the town in the February edition of St Mary's Parish Magazine.*

### *"E. STREETER AND DAUGHTER*

Readers of this magazine will have noticed something missing in the town this January. They will know what has happened but it will not have sunk in. Anne's shop in Lombard Street isn't operating any more!

With just a short break Anne Simmons has been an integral part of the shop with the unusual title (so much commented on by visitors) for well over forty years. Peggy Streeter, (no relation in fact), would have been proud of the way her father's name and her own had been carried forward over the years since her death. As someone who also ran a shop for a very long time I know that Anne must be feeling torn in two quite different ways. One side of her will rejoice at losing a great tie, a responsibility that in these bureaucratic times becomes more onerous with every year. Another side will miss the day to day contact with all sorts of people that a small business involves. Multiples and large stores do not engender the same feelings and of course many people just popped into Anne's for a chat.

For Petworth people there can be no such division. Anne's departure is a terrible loss to the whole town. Some consolation is that she is still in Petworth and still as anxious as ever to do all she can for Petworth. She will!"

*Anne's going is not simply a loss to the whole town but also something of a watershed for the Society. So many local members have paid their subscription at Anne's for more years perhaps than we care to remember. Please consult subscription renewal form for our new arrangements. Indications are that we will have someone in the Leconfield Hall on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings in **March and April** beginning on Thursday March 5th from 10.30 to 12.00.*

*This Society is a very large one indeed and extremely well-supported but if it becomes complacent it is dead. A Society such as ours almost needs to grow to stand still. It certainly cannot afford to lose members.*

*You will be aware that the Society committee is not only a very hard-working one, it is also a very stable one. Changes on its composition are unusual and the A.G.M. seems happy enough with this. Two members however, after many years' service, have decided*



that other commitments mean that they can no longer give their usual undivided attention. Julia Edwards has been on the committee since at least the early 1980s, has kept the Scrapbook, liaised with the Kirdford Players and helped in all sorts of different ways. David Sneller has an even longer pedigree. He is a founder member and it was he that first brought me into the discussion in those far off days when the very idea of such a Society was still being mooted. It would be patronising even to try to assess his contribution over the years. He will know and we know. Suffice it to say that Julia and David will always be part of that extended committee that include members old and new. Our thanks to both Julia and David for all their help over the years. Pearl Godsmark has kindly taken over the Scrapbook.

We gave a great deal of thought to their replacements. Joining a committee that has been together for such a long time and works together so well isn't easy. Andrew "Andy" Henderson has come to live at Sheepdown and he hasn't been in Petworth very long. He was amazed to be asked, but it's precisely because he comes to Petworth without presuppositions that he is so helpful. The Petworth Society may act as a focus for Petworth tradition but it must also address itself to those who, while sympathetic to an older Petworth, have come to live in Petworth in the nineties. As someone new to the town Andy will have this perspective. He also works very hard, we found this at the November fair. Welcoming him, we also welcome his wife Annette, already a great support to us as are so many husbands and wives of committee members.

The other new committee member is Graham Whittington, certainly no newcomer to the area, but representative of that slightly younger age group that we do need to attract and that everyone finds so elusive. Graham is a great supporter of everything we do and makes his debut as a walk leader (with Steve's excellent advice) in May.

Two other important points : as you know the Leconfield Hall Committee has made a bid to the National Lottery for £132,000. If successful, and assuming the requisite collateral funding, the Hall will have a massive renovation inside, incorporating a lift, a new kitchen, a disabled toilet facility, a new stage and much else. A possible point in our favour may be our recent successful transformation of the Hall exterior. An announcement on the success or failure of the bid is due in March. For the moment we can only hope that the tremendous amount of work put in by Raymond Harris in making the application will have the reward it so richly deserves. From a Society point of view, an increased capacity in the Upper Hall is important : the 150 limit is coming under increasing pressure as those who have come to our December and January meetings will be well aware. Certainly the balcony has very much come into its own!

The Petworth Cottage Museum flourishes. Some three thousand visitors last year and we are confident of increasing that this year. The attic room will be open this year. Please consider a little stewarding for us, you'll enjoy it. After all we wouldn't retain our stewards if they didn't enjoy it, would we? There's a Stewards' Evening at the Leconfield Hall on Wednesday March 18th with entertainment and refreshments. Admission is free. You're most welcome to come and hear about the Museum and there's no obligation at all. There will also be some afternoon/evening sessions at the Museum

itself for prospective or fairly new stewards. Please come on March 18th, or ring me on 342562 or Jacqueline Golden on 342320. The enjoyment visitors get from the Museum and share with stewards is one of the very best things in 1990s Petworth.

You will be aware of the current discussion on the future of the South Downs and its possible designation as a National Park. I imagine that there are differing opinions among some members and that most of us are simply confused. I cannot honestly say that I am able to offer any clear lead even if you wanted one. Most arguments I have heard personally seem in favour of the status quo but this probably means only that I have not heard whatever arguments there may be for change. We can only hope that, if there is to be a change, that change will not come, as so often nowadays, merely for the sake of change.

Lastly the MBE. In receiving it I can only be conscious that there are all sorts of people who do all sorts of things, often wearying or unpleasant and receive no recognition whatever for what they do. I can think of several people in Petworth itself. After all I enjoy what I do (well most of the time!). There are, I am sure, people who are more deserving but I don't decide these matters. It's just as well that I don't. I think that to get a perspective it's important to remember all that this Society does. Nothing could be done without the support of the members and that's you. Think of the three hundred postal members who pay their subscription every year (we rarely lose a postal member) yet for most of whom the Magazine is their only contact with us. Or those who come so regularly to the Leconfield Hall, or the walkers, or those who help with catering, addressing envelopes, all sorts of things, in fact everyone who makes the Petworth Society what it is. As I see it, the medal is as much as anything a tribute to this Society and the enthusiasm of its committee and members.

I'm sorry to have take so long, but hopefully there will still be a little room for the usual Magazine material!

Peter 25/1/98

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## The Petworth House Mulberry

Regarding Henry VIII's children and the mulberry tree (Magazine 90). Douglas Price confesses to a certain scepticism and points us to Alan Mitchell's *Trees of Britain* (1996). There is no evidence that individual mulberry trees attain any great longevity, certainly they do not seem to survive for four hundred years or more. They are quick-growing with a relatively short life-span. The traditional mode of propagation is by means of truncheons "five foot lengths or mature branches sunk two feet into the soil." These sprout into a low fruiting tree after a few years while the central trunk decays and is covered by the new growth. It is possible that in this manner a mulberry can continue on the same site for centuries, one tree being replaced by another.



## Colhook - a note by Mr Ron Hazelman

I was interested in the account of the fire at Colhook in the 1860s in the last issue. I well remember Colhook common brickyard going back to the 1920s. I would be about twelve years old. My father had the baker's business in Middle Street and Bill "Duckie" Herrington worked for him. Father and Duckie used to make the bread, doughnuts, buns and other things, then one of them would load the van and would deliver bread and grocery around the countryside — Tillington, Upperton, River Common, Whites Green and Last Lodges along the London Road among other places. Sometimes I would go out with the van. Coming back from Last Lodges about half a mile on was Colhook. Duckie's mother and father lived there and we used to have a short break while Mrs Herrington made us a cup of tea.

I was intrigued to watch the men making bricks by hand. The brick kilns were fired by faggots then no doubt much as they had been in the 1860s. They were a fire red colour with dark grey ends. You see such bricks a lot in Petworth and they will probably be from Colhook or one of the other local brickyards. At this time the brickyard was run by Major Vincent and his other enterprises included a filling station and a tea-room, both at Colhook, he also added some nice features, probably with a view to advertising brickyard products like brickettes which were used for building fire-places. One such feature still remains, to the left of the filling-station. I remember when it was built. As a boy I marvelled at the workmanship, it's still there!



An advertising postcard for Colhook from the 1920s.

## A message from the National Trust at Petworth

20 January 1998.

Dear Peter,

*The National Trust*

*Opportunities for Volunteers at Petworth House.*

Petworth House is a magnificent late 17th century mansion set within a 700 acre deer park and landscaped pleasure gardens. The House contains the Trust's finest collection of pictures, with works by Turner, Van Dyck, Reynolds and Blake, together with ancient and neo-classical sculpture and wood carvings by Grinling Gibbons.

Volunteers play a major role in enabling us to open Petworth House to the public for five afternoons a week throughout the summer months. We have more than 200 volunteers who give their time on a regular basis, but we are anxious to find more volunteers to undertake Room Steward and Visitor Welcome roles, particularly as we shall be reopening the Chapel and more rooms in the Servants Quarters during the 1998 season.

Please could you help by advising the members of your Society, through your newsletters and at your meetings, of the opportunities for volunteers at Petworth House. I enclose copies of our leaflet for you to pass to any of your members who may be interested in helping us by giving one afternoon every week or fortnight from April through to October. Membership of the Trust is not obligatory and, as you will see, there are a number of benefits available to volunteers including free entry to National Trust properties and discount in the Trust's shops for those volunteers who complete more than 50 hours work each year.

Those of your members who are interested should either return the form on the back of the leaflet or telephone Nicky Ingram on 01798 342207. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me should you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Diana Owen

Property Manager

## Living - in the past

'Materials for a history of Petworth' - not an inspiring title for a lecture. Who but Peter, our Chairman, could draw a capacity audience, close to a hundred, to hear it?

There was an air of anticipation and expectancy as Peter began to pose the questions which anyone (and he stressed 'anyone', though few would believe him) setting out to write a town's history needed to answer.



The Revd. Frederick Arnold wrote the last history of Petworth more than 130 years ago. It continues to stand the test of time, but is bound to be incomplete and out-of-date in some aspects today. Events and developments have meant that life has changed immeasurably in the last 50 years.

Pre-Conquest sources are few and difficult and even Petworth House Archives are not strong before 1550. Nevertheless, the history of the Percy family is strongly linked with Petworth. There are the Public Record Office and West Sussex County Record Office documents, court rolls, newspaper articles and photographs, of which Petworth has a rich inheritance. Petworth Fair has run continuously since before 1189.

All this can be very dry, scholarly stuff if treated in a dry, scholarly manner. But Peter is not like that. Scholarly, yes, but most of all, he wants to know how people thought and felt, spoke and behaved and how they lived their lives. He has a gift for drawing this out of wills, inventories, court cases, even household bills, and communicating it in language we can all understand, so that we find ourselves sympathising, struggling, laughing, with our forebears: living - in the past.

Our anticipation and expectations were amply fulfilled and rewarded. Mr. John Magrath voiced all our feelings when he said in his vote of thanks that we look forward to Peter's second talk on the subject in January and, hopefully, in due course, to his History of Petworth.

KCT

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## All change for Christmas

"It's got to be different this Christmas", Peter told the Committee. The question then was, "How?" Peter had details of the Gilt and Gaslight Theatre Company, who were touring with their musical tracing the history of the cinema "When Movies were Movies". That sounded promising, but what if they couldn't come? And would people be prepared to pay £4?

Well, they were available. They sent some publicity material. If our previous venture into the realms of touring groups with "Three's Company" was anything to go by, they should be good, but we had no first, or even second hand reports and there was remarkably little indication from our members regarding their enthusiasm for the new format Christmas evening.

Due at 5.30, the players arrived at twenty to seven. By 7.15 the hall was virtually full. So two questions had been answered: the Company could and had come, and the members were keen to see what they had to offer.

They weren't disappointed. Versatility, quick changes and truly professional performances were the features of the fast-moving show as Dean Fowler and Rhiannon Meades unfolded the story of the silver screen with convincing portrayals of Al Jolson, Groucho Marx, Jessie Matthews, Noel Coward, Gertrude Lawrence, Carmen Miranda, Fred. Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Gracie Fields, Max Miller, Mae West, Judy Garland, Elvis Presley, et al.

Song followed song, woven together by the 1950s usherette, Flo., played by Dymrna

le Rasle, reminiscing with Charlie, a journalist (Christopher Whitehead) who also turned out to be a master at the keyboard, producing, it seemed, all the sounds from honky-tonk piano to full orchestra, not forgetting the mighty Wurlitzer. Such was the atmosphere, boosted by the lighting in the hands of Miguel Ribeiro and the wine and mince pies (not everything changes) in the "intermission", that, whatever we say about our memories, the old songs are always there.

One problem remains: what do we do next year? As Peter said from the gallery at the end of the show, "I can't follow that!"

KCT

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## Petworth - Living in the Past: Part II - Plus

Peter's second talk on producing a definitive History of Petworth was also an opportunity to congratulate him on his M.B.E., awarded in the New Year's Honours List, so it was no surprise to see the Leconfield Hall bursting at the seams with a record audience.

Peter prefaced his programme of slides by reading reminiscences of Petworth written over the past 150 years, some favourable to the Town, its buildings and its people, others, quite hostile, depending on the reaction of the writers to the over-riding presence of the great house and its owners. This was largely a world which may seem strange to us today, one which has changed radically, particularly in the last 50 years. We laughed, but these were serious comments at the time.

The past is not quite dead and in Petworth we have a place where people can come to see what that life was like, although to have experienced that life will from now on be largely a matter of conjecture.

The photographs, many of them new to us, certainly went back at least to 1859 and were not only from the professionals such as Kevis and Garland, but also by well-to-do residents for whom photography was a hobby. The quality was generally outstanding and was enhanced further by the new big screen.

A magnificent spread of refreshments, of course, but wine replaced the usual coffee and it was a chance to reflect on Peter's own contribution to the life of Petworth, not only as Chairman and Editor of the magazine, but through his researches into local history, his interest in the Town's photographic legacy, his work with the Parish Council, the Leconfield Hall Committee, the Cottage Museum, the Governing Body of the Herbert Shiner School and the annual Petworth Fair. Everyone drank to his future good health and happiness, an occasion on which all seemed to share the pleasure generated by the Honour.

At the end of the meeting it was entirely appropriate that Tony Whitcomb, himself Petworth born and bred, a professional photographer whose career started under George Garland and himself a Parish Counsellor and member of the Society, should express the appreciation of all present.

KCT



## 'Proud Petworth' . . . floating an idea

Proud Petworth, poor people.  
High church, crooked steeple.

On 13th May 1238 Thomas De Falconberg was instituted as the first Rector of St. Mary's, Petworth, and it would seem that the spire is almost as full of history as the church itself. Stretching back many centuries the spire of St. Mary's was one of the finest and best-known landmarks in Sussex. Standing 185 feet high it perched proudly on the tower, which surmounts the tall hill around which Petworth is clustered. Guiding many a weary pilgrim, and seen from every direction, it commanded an unrivalled view over the Weald and rolling South Downs.

The old lead spire of Petworth church, as the rhyme suggests, had for centuries been celebrated as being "out of the perpendicular", and was expressly described as such in 1630. A lead clad timber structure, the oak framework had clearly warped and twisted over centuries. In 1800 it was removed and for twenty-seven years Petworth had no spire at all. Contemporary illustrations suggest a heightened tower crowned with a crenellated parapet and four pinnacles. In 1827, however, the Third Earl of Egremont decided to build a new spire on the old fourteenth century square tower. It so happened that in response to a competition to design a steeple for St. Peter's church at Brighton, a design by Charles Barry was available. It had proved too expensive to be used at St. Peter's, and was purchased by the Earl of Egremont for Petworth. It was soon apparent however that the weight of the new spire had caused a crack in the tower and once the spire was finished Barry took down the tower immediately beneath it and reconstructed it, leaving the spire underpinned by scaffolding in the meantime. St. Mary's was closed from December 1827 to October 1829, services being held in the Town Hall until the tower was effectively strengthened. It is interesting to note that 'Dewy morning' painted by Turner in 1810 from Petworth Park clearly shows Barry's spire in place, seventeen years before it was built. Often the subject of Turner's paintings, in this case the newly constructed spire was considered a worthy addition to the previously completed painting. Ian Warrell of the Tate Gallery verified this, adding that revision of paintings by Turner was not uncommon.

For one hundred years it seems that the spire stood without major mishap or incident. However, in 1927 the spire was again found to be out of the perpendicular above the second row of windows; and repairs, executed in 1928, cost £365. Defects in the tower added a further £58.10s. to the bill. In the Jubilee celebrations of May 1935 an iron bar, embedded in the stonework, was discovered to have rusted and split the stones. Alarming, when the steeplejack's ladders were fixed, the capstone could be rocked with one hand.

The spire survived the War, five years of blackout, and Petworth's darkest period in history: a direct hit on the school. During the evening victory celebrations of 1945 the spire, caught in the beam of the local cinema projector, symbolised the national spirit of resilience, faith, peace and hope. Yet in 1947 the spire was dismantled. Suffering its final indignity, the spire and pinnacles were reduced to forlorn stumps. It was not until 1953 that the tower was finally finished off with a simple brick parapet and pyramidal roof.



"Round the Hills" - showing the spire of St. Mary's.  
(From a nineteenth century guide-book.)

When our family moved to Palfrey Farm in 1978, I became fascinated by the area's history but the church seemed to have something lacking as a building. When I saw Garland photographs of St. Mary's steeple taken down in 1947 it seem to be conspicuous by its absence. I had always hoped that one day someone might suggest putting it back.

When I first came to Petworth as a boy I could do nothing but as a qualified architect I feel the loss even more now. For me, putting the spire back is a real possibility - at least technically.

I would imagine a relatively light weight steel-framed spire requiring minimal maintenance, itself resting on a subframe slotted into the top of the tower. The lower frame would be mounted high in the tower and could actually strengthen the tower, a complete contrast to the immense weight of Barry's spire. The new construction would, in effect, bind spire and tower together. Obviously all of this would be subject to detailed investigation, consultation and feasibility study.

Barry's famous spire could be reproduced in modern materials to look very similar to the old steeple but without the weight. But should it? Remember that Barry's spire was not originally designed for Petworth and, it could be argued, is not well suited. It's a matter for discussion as everything else is. Why choose the Barry spire? The pre-1800 steeple could not be faithfully reproduced owing to subsequent heightening of the tower. Petworth has an evolving history of spire. A new design for millennium could always make reference to this varied past.

Might not another design be more appropriate? Is exact reinstatement the answer? Ian Nairn, writing in Pevsner's account of Sussex architecture in the 1950s, thought that the Barry steeple was "a rather monstrous spindly spire".

Such is my proposal. It follows Barry's proportions in order to remain true to Turner's paintings of the Church. It's essential to stress that, at the moment, it's at the discussion stage. Initial response seems favourable, but the town may decide it prefers the tower as it is. Local opinion needs to be clear before any positive move is made. Funding of course is something else but remember it's not simply an ecclesiastical matter. The proposal seeks on a wider front to restore the church's historical position as the visual and spiritual focus of the town and indeed of the wider West Sussex Weald. Something for the local community and visitors to the area.

I must stress that the concept model should not be misunderstood. It is there simply to demonstrate the proposal and the principles on which the construction might be based. It is not meant to indicate what the spire would actually look like. As I have already explained,



that is part of what I hope will be an ongoing discussion. What do you think? It is important that views are expressed, for or against. There are many complex issues that need to be fully considered and resolved. There's a special book and concept model on show in the church to enable opinions, favourable or otherwise, to be recorded and suggestions made. Or contact me at Corner Cottage, Middle Street, Petworth.

Andrew Harris was talking to the Editor.

## Missing vegetables

From "Museum News" in the news letter of the Toronto Scottish Regimental Association Autumn 1997.

"Let's move on to the next war for a minute and touch on an unusual topic dealing with pilfering the local gardens in Petworth in July 1943. I found reference to this in the War Diary. As everyone knows we have a great relationship with the people of Petworth, Sussex even to this day, but in 1943 did you know our boys were accused of stealing vegetables. This problem was brought to the attention of Act/L/Col Johnson and he responded with a terse statement for all ranks. Act/Captain and Adjutant, G.L. Mitchell, put the CO's response on paper. He wrote:

**The local police advised that a considerable amount of petty pilfering is going on in gardens and allotments near the camp. These allotments and gardens are being maintained by simple working people and constitute their winter supply of vegetables. They are maintained by these people in their little spare time, and, to them considerable expense. If the gardens are pilfered it means that they must purchase extra food for themselves which is obviously an expense they cannot afford. Personnel in the services are fed a great deal more liberally than civilians and it is most unfair to rob hard-working people of food which they cannot afford to replace. All ranks are warned that such pilfering cannot be allowed, and severe disciplinary action will be taken against members of this unit who so misbehave. (War Diary - June '43).**

I'm sure it was not Tor Scots doing this. It must have been other units in the area. If it were Tor Scots, the people of Petworth have surely forgotten, because I have yet to hear any vegetable pilfering comments during my two trips there or from the people we hosted here a few years back."

[No, I haven't either! Ed.]

## Looking for the Stars. Petworth Fair 1997

19th November a.m.

Khaki leaves on the pavement in Pound Street, cars backing in the Market Square. At 10.40



Anne Simmons at the shop door. (See Chairman's notes).  
From a slide taken by Pearl Godsmark.





*Shopkeepers from Lombard Street watching troops in Market Square in 1902.*

*It is just conceivable that Mrs Burden is the lady on the left.*

*See What's in the cupboard?*

*Photograph by Walter Kevis.*

there's no sign of what is to come, just a few orange posters corrugated by rain beneath their protective cellophane envelopes. The rain sweeps in with an almost conscious determination and the wind blows the wisteria. Who is so impudent as to defy the old gods by having a fair on November 20th? And who should complain if that impudence receives its inevitable retribution? The temporary bus-stop leaves its year-long resting place in the Leconfield Hall to make its ritual appearance in New Street. At the moment it's waiting outside the Hall. It's very heavy indeed with rusting, jagged metal round the base. Douglas Price is in the Hall setting up the lighting equipment for tomorrow evening's entertainment...

The weather can only improve. Or can it? The yellow no-waiting cones have still not arrived. Apparently they're loaded on the Police Land Rover which has had to answer an emergency at Bignor. Jim, the traffic warden, takes it all very calmly. The Harris advance guard appears, jumping out of a different Land Rover, cheerful as ever. At least now we've got the Society's own red cones even though the official yellow ones are needed for the closure. Robert Harris has checked the day before that the bollards in the Cut can be moved. At 12 o'clock the closure takes effect; the Square empties of parked cars and traffic goes gingerly on from New Street - in some ways, of course, a more logical flow. People looking across to the emptying Square, a local swears through an open driver's window. Perhaps people like something to complain about - a comforting feeling of fighting the world. Talking to Peter Thorne by the wind-agitated wisteria, anorak already sopping wet. "It's nice to see them again, but is it worth their while?" It's probably not quite the right question. Taken as a general question, the answer is probably 'no'. Taken as a particular question for each particular year the answer is perhaps a more qualified 'no' - perhaps an even more qualified 'yes'. Equipment brings in nothing kept in store does it? Income is crucial but it's not everything. Petworth is a fair that commands respect. Tradition dies hard at Petworth.

The chair-planes are always the first to built. The familiar figures of Robert Harris is coming up from Golden Square, past Avenings. The imperturbable spirit of fairs present. The rain relents for a while, as if gathering breath before another assault...

*19th November 10.30 p.m.*

Robert talking in the kitchen, then up to the Square in the mild calm of the night. A still world of pale green canvas. The occasional boy walking in the forbidden city, as boys have always done. If the equipment gets a real soaking it will have to be dried out, part by part when they get back to Ashington. The forecast is rain moving in and going north. Cars coming down New Street and looking left, clanking over the iron caps on the bollard holes in the Cut. It's been a quiet Wednesday for traffic: very little big stuff to take the Gateway corner. One clap like thunder, turned out to be exactly that - thunder - not an articulated lorry in disagreement with Gateway. Otherwise quiet. Where to site one of the generators? Not at the bottom of Lombard Street. Important not to get into discussion of rights and consequent set positions. Compromise is all, confrontation a disaster. Of course you can't keep everyone happy all the time. It's the clerk of the market's job however to try and to keep trying. Once matters are beyond compromise it's difficult to retrieve old positions. There's a slight alteration in the stalls this year. Garry Main's not here, a regular since 1986. Chance for someone else to come in. Earlier the committee put up the Society tombola in the Hall.



Very few cheap fillers this time - wine, chocolate, a shrub or two, amaryllis and daffodil bulbs, packets of mints and boiled sweets. We're pleased with it.

Waiting ... the theme of all fairs.

20th November Afternoon

To open the Hall at 1 o'clock. In fact Keith's there anyway. The tombola of course is already set up. Looking out of the upstairs Hall window. Two men wiping rain from the seats of the chairplane. One line of seats is red, the other yellow. The weather looks very uncertain. Mild but punctuated by the occasional stinging shower. Here comes a big artic. Unusually there are two men on and one gets out to guide the driver through the Cut and round. Keith is talking to a stallholder who turns out to be a granddaughter of Joe Matthews. She never knew him for he died before she was born but she could look back to earlier days in the mid-1950s when Matthews were the incumbents of the fair. Remembering a regular round as a child, venues like Adversane and Harting now long gone. Remembering Petworth too, now a survivor among a host of casualties. She's come with her husband and daughter from near Rochester. Two side-stalls. It's very important for them. Fairs are a living not a hobby. Fair people can't be romantic, you can't be romantic with a living. Romance is the prerogative of the outsider who has another living. Fair people have to be realistic, living as they do astride a contradiction. What to the public is a luxury, an inessential, is to them a livelihood. The contradiction makes them reflective. "You can't expect people to pay for something that's not essential. Fairs aren't essential, they are a pure luxury - at least for the public." The lottery has drastically affected the English fairground tradition, taking money that might be used for "pure luxury" and diverting it elsewhere. The daughters will not follow the fairground tradition; there's nothing there for them.

Three o'clock and time for the proclamation. To find Brad Mitchell and ask him to turn off the music for the while, then down to the fairground organ outside the chemist's to request the same. Even John Crocombe's vocal chords are not equal to that kind of competition. The proclamation is slightly modified from last year; it's a matter of working toward a definite version. Not too many to hear it: the fair's still quiet. A few fairmen look bewildered, a few visitors enthralled. A casuist's point: does John shout just the once, or go round the town? Strictly speaking, you can only open a fair once but if he gives it a shout round the town it can't do any harm. I think the latest form of the proclamation may be just about right. In the middle ages the lord's seneschal would have dropped a glove perhaps, or perhaps rung a bell. Probably John's use of Arch Knight's old bell is enough.

*"In the year 1276 Lady Eleanor Percy of Petworth convinced King Edward's travelling justices that Petworth fair was by prescription and from time immemorial. Its beginning was beyond the memory of any man living.*

*This fair is being held today, as it has been for nearly a thousand years, in the feast of St. Edmund, and commemorates the 1128th anniversary of the death of this Saxon king, martyr and saint.*

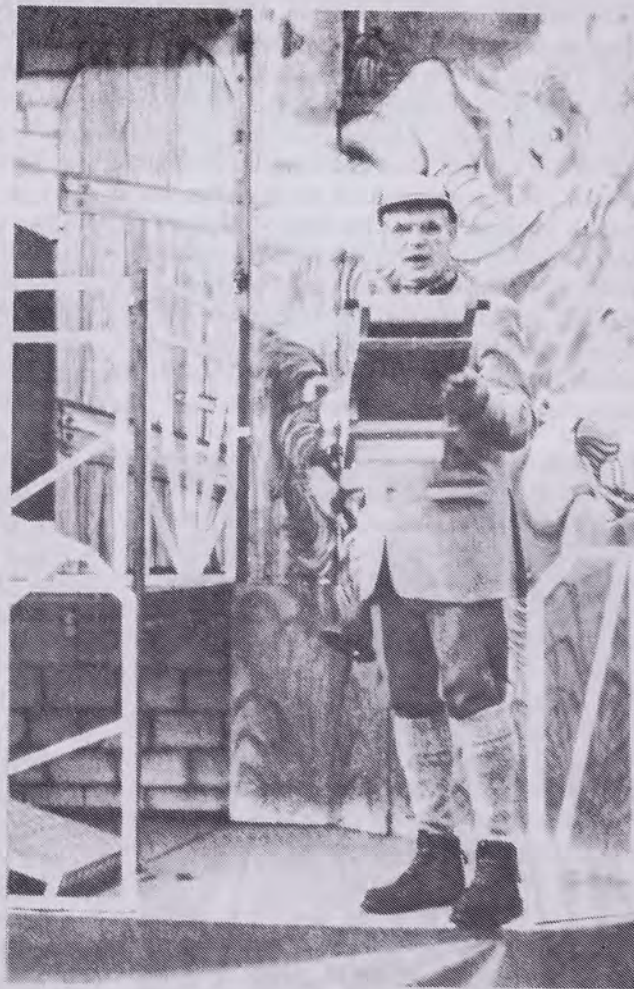
*By order of Lord Egremont, owner of the fair, I declare the festivities open. Let the merriment begin."*

How honest is all this? Has the present fair really any lineal connection with something as faraway and unknown as Eleanor Percy's ancestral fair? A fair that for practical legal purposes King Edward's justices would have taken back to 1189, the accession of Richard the Lionheart. No one in 1276 could effectively remember the reign of Richard's father Henry II. Henry, whose ill-omened outburst had led to the death of a recalcitrant archbishop, and in so doing, created a legend. Petworth fair and Thomas' Chapel are part of Petworth's twelfth century roots. And what of Edmund, murdered by the Danes but encrusted with legend and even more difficult than the murdered archbishop to see in the round?

4 o'clock

Still quiet. A good tombola. Still the weather holding and it's certainly not cold. The Primary School children are clog-dancing with a medley of

colourful flags, then the Brownies are on stage. I watch the former but am outside for the latter. People come up to see the children. A sharp shower outside. A big lorry inches round the Gateway corner; for the driver a late twentieth century version of a medieval ordeal. Some seem positively to relish it - but not all - and we do have extensive warning signing. If a driver keeps his nerve even the thirty-eight tonner can get round without too much worry and we had one or two again this year. The smell of cooking from the refreshment stall evades



*John Crocombe, the town crier, opens the fair.  
Photograph by Keith Sandall.*



the new Hall fire doors and comes in. Upstairs some members of the Benson family look through the book on the fair. A Garland picture of several generations of the family in the 1950s. Thomas Benson senior, his son Tommy who died in a stabbing at a fair on Clapham Common. Modern fairs can be harsh, a whole world away from Petworth's turn of the century music and atmosphere. Modern fairs have modern music and machines that can be put up at the flick of a switch, short-circuiting the cruel physical work that Harris Brothers put in, but lacking too the camaraderie, the spirit that that work brings. Or is this once again an outsider's romantic view? The Benson relatives seem to like the Petworth atmosphere. Pinner is another famous street fair, but the atmosphere is quite different. They know it well. Priscilla the fortune-teller is looking at the Benson picture. The memories well up. It's been a relatively quiet day for her. She'll see us next year, God willing. A lady in her late seventies. The uncertainty about next years suggests she doesn't forecast her own future. A wise policy, perhaps. Familiar faces in the upper Hall - people who come to Petworth every year. I've already met Peter Hammond from World's Fair. The fair's beginning to come to life as it



*A motif on Harris Brothers' chair-o-planes.  
Photograph by Robert Sadler.*

becomes dark. The fairmen look anxiously to the dark sky. If you can see the stars there's less chance of rain. A few are visible through the cloud rack. It's the same inside and outside: Money's tight and you have to work for it. What you have on the stall has to be attractive, has to compete.

*Evening.*

By the time the Town Band appears, the Society tombola is on its knees. More than three hundred prizes reduced to a mere handful. You have to call it off when it gets really low, you can't catch game fish in a puddle. You never clear everything. A few non-perishable items remain for next year, one or two oddments might be makeweights for a raffle. The Town Band are playing with a confidence born of successful latter years. The Edwardians give the polished performance that is such a feature of fair night and the Kirdford Players are hilarious. Hardly long enough; the Edwardians and the Players could

have gone on for hours. And all free! Well a packed house didn't seem to be objecting!

Forget the outside if you like, this is the other side - Petworth at home. An old-fashioned village day straight out of the 1930s.

With the entertainment reluctantly at an end, it's time for the denizens of the hall to "break camp". Outside, the rain still holds off and it's mild. The smaller stalls begin to pull down. They've had a reasonable night. They've had to work hard for the trade but it's been worth coming. Nothing, after all, comes easily at a fair. The Hall is emptying; the Committee clearing up.

*20th November Midnight.*

Harris brothers with their helpers are still working. The big machines are truncated monsters in the darkness but they're still in position. The occasional vehicle rattles through the Cut. There's little chance of anything really big coming through at this time of night. Les Howard, Fred and Robert Harris and I pick up paper and debris. Les is going to put the tables up now for the W.I. Market in the morning. Filling up black plastic sacks to take away. In truth there isn't that much rubbish ...

*21st November 2 a.m.*

Coming up to two o'clock and we're about ready to go. The Harris brothers and their helpers in the Arcade, mugs of soup coming thick, beany and warming from the dark interior of the living-waggon. Helpers who come because they want to. Romantics with a sense of reality. They know it's hard work but it doesn't knock the wonder out of them. Hard work and disappointment are part of the equation. In fact this has been a good fair. Reasonably busy and a good atmosphere. Petworth, too, can never be muddy underfoot. They recall a summer fair that was awash with mire. Putting the bollards back in the Cut, the sockets are full of water. A last look at the Square cleared completely of cars and swept clean. It's not a sight you'll see any other day.

*Saturday 22nd November.*

At Gateway someone says, "Going in at 7 o'clock yesterday morning the Square was beautifully clean". Robert looks in, going round taking down the A.A. signs. Coming back on Friday morning they'd seen lightning flashing over the coast but for them it remained a still clear night. Dragging up Egdean Hill at ten miles per hour or less. The tarpaulins are still wet. Having hung them out to dry it's rained ever since!

P.

## One man's view of Stag Park

From "*Excursions through Sussex*" (1833). Apparently anonymous.

The rear of Lord Egremont's noble seat, called *Petworth House*, opens into the church-yard; but the park-wall of this extensive demesne includes a circuit of 12 miles. One of the greatest improvements, it was observed by Mr. Young, that had for many years been undertaken in the county, was that effected in the stag-park by his lordship. Not much more than 40 years back, it was an entire forest-scene, overspread with bushes, furze, some timber,



and rubbish, useless except for the purpose of annually rearing a few miserable ragged cattle. The timber was sold, the underwood grubbed up, and burned into charcoal on the spot. Every part has subsequently been drained in the most effectual manner, and the whole inclosed and divided into fields. It is also thoroughly stocked with Sussex, Devon, and Herefordshire cattle, and flocks of the South Down, Spanish, Leicester, and Romney breeds of sheep; besides which his lordship imported the Calmuck and Astracan kinds of the latter animal, whose chief peculiarity is, that instead of a tail, they have a large projection of fat, or rather marrow, of exquisite delicacy; and also the shawl-goat of Tibet, from the fleece of which the most valuable manufactures of the East Indies are produced. One grand object with Lord Egremont being to encourage the rearing of oxen in preference to horses, he pursued his system in this particular with unabated spirit and success; but at the same time did not neglect to stock his park with deer and game. It altogether presents an interesting scene, and besides commands very fine views of the Downs both of Sussex and Surrey.

## A sense of history in Stag Park

*And should we go to Chillinghurst?*

There are sheep in the road at Stag Park. We pull off and park on the verge. Out of the wind the shepherd's blue Land Rover appears. Everyone at Stag Park knows Jonathan by now, he's been in and out since last spring. The shepherd moves the sheep on. It's like suddenly coming across troops being drilled on a mid-morning parade ground, the flock thinking more of a sheep's equivalent of N.A.A.F.I. than the matter on hand. They recede into the far distance; just the occasional shout from the parade ground, the canine drill sergeant just a black speck in the green field. It's soaking wet, having rained all night. A line of stakes marks a resurrected stream, a wadi in a land of rain. We walk on along the track, tiny rivulets of clear water discharging into a chocolate silt puddle. Into the wood. The rain has swollen the brown streams here too, a holly branch judders in the unusual torrent, and hangs on grimly. Through the wood and into open land again. We're on the track to Raghams Lodge. The road from Upperton is a reminder that Stag Park is not illimitable. This is a world with definite boundaries and a definite end.

Gas canisters are an orange addition to the landscape, an intrusion perhaps, or a welcome flash of vivid colour in a pastel world. A pond in a hollow, possibly another sudden resurrection. Oak axe-clippings darkened by the rain, sodden and rank-smelling. Heavy wooden posts lying unseasoned. This is a pheasant economy to an extent, a barn with large wooden boards, netting and feed tins. A pheasant economy is a fragile one, dependent on sudden death, but then, this is the tapestry of things. Disentangle the tapestry if you will, but another one may be difficult to sew. Raghams Lodge has a large garden, square beds tidy in mid-winter rest. It's December 10th. Doors of Leconfield brown, the old colour newly reinstated, the next house still has the grey.

And can we go to Chillinghurst? Jonathan thinks not. Fortunately we meet Reed the

keeper and he says there's no shoot today and it's only when it's very cold that visitors disturb and unsettle the birds for another day. It's extremely mild. A worm is inching his way across the track from under the Land Rover. As we talk he writhes out of the line of the big tyres. Reed moves on and the worm continues his tortuous progress.

Across a sloping field. The rain's stopped. Maize heads are dark brown now and rattled by the wind. They've obviously been left as cover for the pheasants. Advancing diagonally on Chillinghurst across the fields. The settlement merges with the trees, the barn is hardly visible. Tyre ruts are full of water some shining sky-blue, some an unrelenting brown. The cottages have been empty since - when? 1960? Exposed outside timberwork with brick cladding. It's old and it's fine. The inevitable rusting Petworth stove, a doorway painted a shocking pink, peeling now, startling perhaps when new. Older residents did not perhaps have our reverence for the timber-framed. In the depth of winter you can walk in the garden: the undergrowth is temporarily in abeyance. In late summer Jonathan had seen the damsons heavy on the trees but the undergrowth so high you could not get near them. And who **should** get near them? Not Jonathan, a guest in a magic land, not one to abuse his status as a sojourner. And so no one took them at all. A ladder left to rot, bright lichen on the rungs. Who would just leave a ladder to rot? An outside lavatory with a thunder-box. It's half-tiled now and hence half-open to the elements. The eternal mystery of the moat encircling a flat island. Why put a moat round an unfortified flat piece of land? Bottles from the 1950s, heavier perhaps, more utilitarian than their cousins of today. Corrugated paste jars. Shippams? No, Harris of Calne. Is the brick facade original? One wonders. Numbers 156 and 158, the middle number is quite gone. 157 one would suppose. On to the barn, Jonathan warns to avoid the flight path of the bees. There's a solitary hive by the path and some activity in the sudden sun. A pheasant lumbers away in the undergrowth.

*In the barn at Chillinghurst*

"As an artist I like something that is physically defined. And a wall defines. Some think it limits the spirit but for me it lifts and distils that spirit. What is within becomes its own country, a fortified territory almost. I knew Stag Park only cursorily before Lord Egremont gave me permission to wander effectively as I wished: public footpaths in Stag Park are few. My first explorations were made without the drawing-book, just looking, absorbing the atmosphere. I came first in early spring and since then I've come as often as I've been able, initially making pencil drawings which I'd work into finished pieces at home.

After the first phase I would progress to larger pieces of paper, often simply laid out in situ. No matter if they carry the mark of the wind, the rain or even a smudge of Stag Park earth. To share the physical presence of Stag Park is no bad thing. Working with wind and rain will forge you and a subject together. It's quite the opposite of hobby painting. I have made, I hope, every attempt to dissolve the feeling of the voyeur, the consciousness of the external observer. To be an observer is not enough. I need to feel an essential part of the place, as much as Reed throwing down corn for the pheasants is part of the place. Physically, and artistically, I cannot be at odds with the landscape.

We're sitting here in the dilapidated barn aware that this is the central symbol of the whole project and trying to explain how all is in some way bound up with a feeling of history.



The barn has lost one side and is effectively open to the elements. Today the sun's shining and as we look out of the side, it could be virtually any time of year. Time becomes relative: should one think of the barn as it now is, ruinous, or in full use and a crucial part of the farm economy? Or perhaps as in process of building, even not yet built or perhaps vanished altogether? A drawing is not a photograph and may impart any of these awarenesses into a drawing of the barn as it is now. I can't work without a sense of history and of different periods coming together. My drawing needs to reflect this feeling. History in this sense doesn't mean that if someone produced a Ph.D. on the history of Chillinghurst and I immersed myself in it, I would produce a better drawing. It's nothing like that. It's more that I need to have a sense of history and to construct that history. It need not be accurate but it does need to be true - in the sense of being true to the spirit of the place. This sort of history isn't a novelistic peopling of old Chillinghurst with imaginary characters. It may reflect a reading of letters of Charles Seymour, 6th Duke of Somerset in the eighteenth century, or owe something to my attempts to draw him in the past; it may even reflect Matthew Taylor coming here to farm in - what was it? 1720? It doesn't matter much. All this is simply to replace what is unknown by something else that is unknown. I have to conjure the spirit of the place, the genius loci if you like. It doesn't have to be factual, but I'm sure that if my sense of history is wildly at variance with the real history the vision will be distorted. Not that my evocation has any other than artistic authority, or can be the only possible one. Someone else may have a different vision, different to mine but still valid.

Another artist might take more interest in the animals, the ever-present sheep, the pheasants, the horses, even that sparrow-hawk over there in the grey sky. My landscape does not treat them as determinatives: I like the lines of hedges, ditches, paths, even pylons. I like things that make lines, but above all it is the coherence of building and nature that is for me the essence of the landscape. The buildings spring from the ground and are in no way an imposition on it. The bricks, timber and stone are simply a re-arrangement of things that have always been here.

What then of the barn, dilapidated now and redundant? A home for the occasional pheasant. Can it be that in our contemporary pre-occupation with heritage we seek to frustrate the natural order of things? In nature there is a time to be and a time to depart. I love this barn and would love to see it reinstated. But to what purpose? It would break my heart to see it a house. Certainly it cannot remain as it is. If it is not reinstated it will fall back to the ground from which it came. A ruin cannot, of its essence, be permanent. A ruin is but a building on the way to dissolution. Ruin has a logic of its own.

I have drawn the famous Stag Park dovecote but for me it does not have the central significance of the barn. It is not a coherent part of the landscape in the way that the barn is. The dovecote makes a statement: it's an obvious landmark, the sort of thing an art-class would draw as an exercise. There's certainly nothing wrong with that: it's simply not the way I've seen my work here."

#### *Stag Park Farm*

Squelching over the sodden fields to Stag Park Farm complex, the administrative and geographical centre of a kingdom in miniature. A snipe rises into the wind-blown sky and



*The barn at Cosegreen.*

*A drawing by Jonathan Newdick.*



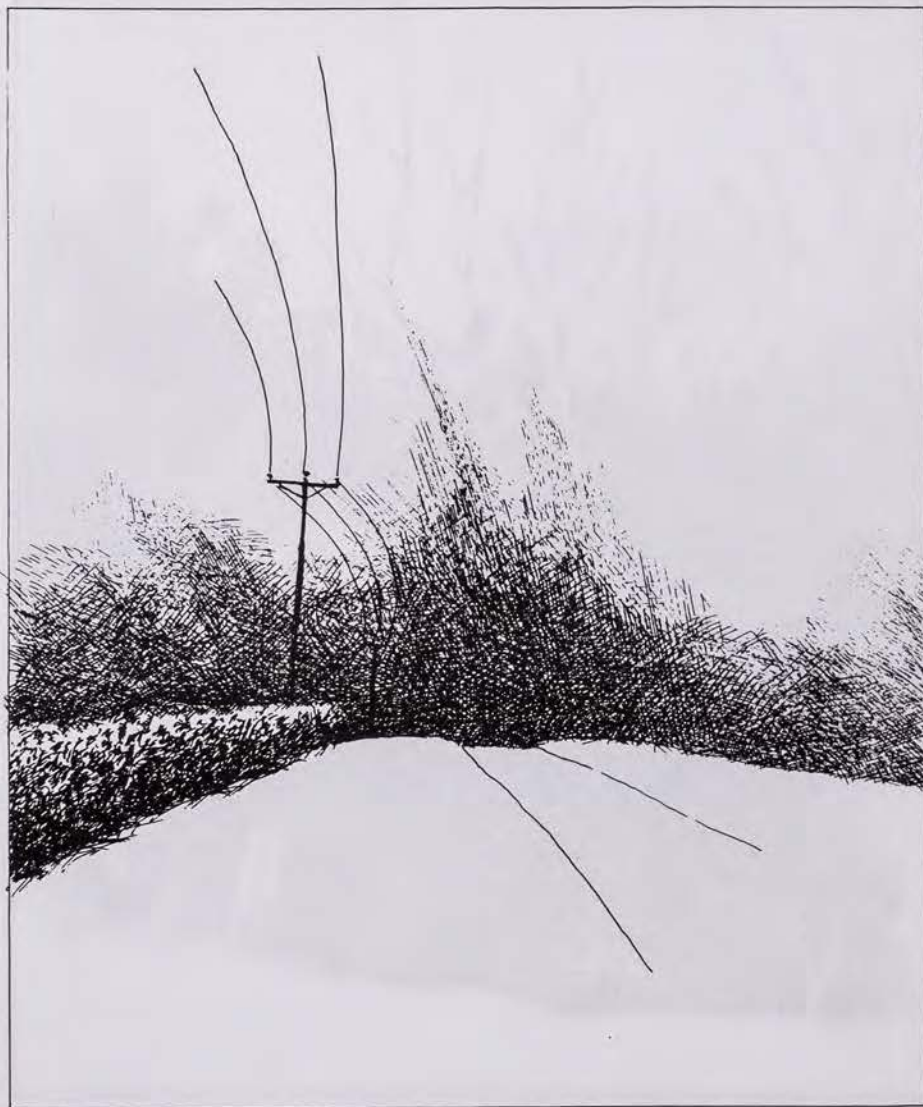


*Chillinghurst.*  
A drawing by Jonathan Newdick.



*An ivied corner at Chillinghurst.*  
A drawing by Jonathan Newdick.





*Stag Park. Middle road looking north.  
A drawing by Jonathan Newdick.*

the same wind hustles the cloud rack. Stag Park Farm, built by the Third Earl of Egremont as a model farm in an age of intense manual labour, seems solitary now. Like the dovecote, the great barn is a statement; in ecclesiastical terms a cathedral as opposed to the humble chapel that is Chillinghurst. A dozen bays and sawn beams where those at Chillinghurst are wedge-split. Even high windows at the barn end. "Beware of the bull." In fact the lunchtime bulls are sitting quietly, in their stalls, oblivious of the multi-coloured 1980s show prize certificates pinned up on the outside. Palmy days before prime beef came under a cloud. Stag Park has a distinguished history of which the Third Earl could be proud. A metal gate swings to and fro as if to emphasize the solitariness. I recall Sid Scriven, who farmed here between the wars, saying that Lord Leconfield was, in some ways, as solitary man: his lordship would feel at home here. Jonathan points out RS 1722 carved in large letters on a beam in one of the outbuildings - probably a beam resited during the Third Earl's great building programme. Chillinghurst lives more comfortably with the new solitude perhaps; Stag Park was made for many men and seems ill at ease without them. Jonathan turns the Morris round on the steep slope and reflects that if we turn the vehicle over it will make a dramatic ending. We don't.

Jonathan Newdick and the Editor were in Stag Park. Jonathan Newdick's Exhibition runs from March 28th to April 15th in the Education Room at Petworth House. Admission free.

## A Tillington childhood (5)

We used to keep pigs and sometimes we had a home cured pig indoors - it was always so enjoyable. "Pig Sticking" as we used to call it was a great event. Mother used to get the copper heated (the copper was in an outhouse those days) and then a Mr. Standing from "Pheasant Copse Lodge" in Upperton (now demolished) used to come and perform his gruesome task. We children were always shut in the kitchen, but used to hear the screams of the pig. One day we crept out and peeped through the fence in time to see the pig being bled. We were both upset, but seemed to take it in our stride. The pig was cut down the middle and its insides taken out and thoroughly cleaned. The liver was saved and also the 'crow', a piece of fat which used to fry up very crisp to have with the liver. It was lovely, but crow is a thing of the past. Chitterlings were lovely and my mother used to clean them thoroughly, lay them in salt water over night and then wash them again. She used to plait them. They were then cooked and we either had them cold or with a rasher. The bladder was dried and my brother used to use it for a football after it was blown up. The carcass, I believe, was immersed in the copper and then the hairs scraped off until it came out a pale pink and sweet smelling. I remember my mother made a lovely brawn from the pig's head and various odds and ends. Those were the days before artificial feeding was introduced. We lived so close to nature in those far off days and it was so much a part of our lives. There used to be a wonderful dung heap (manure) a little way from us where each day during the season, we would pick a lovely basket of mushrooms. They were delicious. What is nicer than a piece of fried bread, fried in home made lard from a home cured pig, a lovely rasher and a pan of mushrooms freshly picked - oh happy days.



Our school summer holidays used to seem weeks of lovely warm weather. What fun we children had in the harvest fields - we always used to take picnics. We were put on the backs of the lovely shire horses and would sit there for ages whilst the horse went round and round working the elevator. We were very stiff when we were taken off the horse's back. When the mowing machine was at work cutting the grass for hay, the field was started from the outside and gradually worked to the middle. The rabbits always ran to the centre, never outside and, consequently, they were terribly mutilated. All the grownups had cudgels and used to wallop the rabbits on the head 'to get them out of their misery'. We children used to see all this and still not take much notice. Many cottages had rabbit for dinner during harvest and haymaking time. What lovely hayricks used to be built. We loved to climb on them until they were too high for us.

My father kept ferrets to catch rabbits and again that was very cruel. He used to come home with a line of rabbits tied on a stick. I believe that my mother got 3d each for a rabbit skin from the rag and bone man. At that time we all enjoyed rabbit - myxomatosis was an unheard of plague.

A very happy memory is that of Petworth fair day held in Petworth Market Square, I believe on the 20th November. Oh, the excitement as this wonderful day drew near. We children used to save our 'fair money', we had about one shilling to spend in those days. A shilling was quite a lot of money and it was made up of farthings, halfpennies and pennies. We used to leave home for the fair about 4.30pm, it being rather a dark time of the year. We would take our old faithful with us, the old storm lantern. Even if it wasn't lit, I remember the lovely thrill I had when carrying it to hear the squeak of the metal handle as the lamp swung to and fro. As we drew nearer to Petworth, we heard the faint sounds of the fair, the round-a-bout music, and the screech it made. Another few hundred yards and there it all was - The Fair. The round-a-bout was lit up with innumerable flares which glowed with a hazy light in the November gloom. We had one or two rides and gripping my horse tightly with the brass rod going up and down in my hand I really imagined I was on some kind of fairy horse. We then had a swing - I liked going high so used to go up with my father who stood up. All too soon the swing came to an end and Dad sat down. The plank was put under the swing to stop us and I can still feel the shudder as wood hit wood and slowly we came to a stop. Dad always used to win us a coconut - that was another joy. We were not able to buy them in the shops at that time. The stalls were lit up by flares which spat and spluttered and when the wind blew, they (the flares) were blown into all shapes and sizes. They showed off a ghostly grey blue haze in the gloom of that November evening. Water pistols were much in evidence and we were squirted quite a bit. My brother and I were told to turn up our collars in case we caught 'our deaths of cold'. Hoopla was a great favourite and my Dad won me a tiny doll, and my Mum won my brother a game of Ludo. I believe I still have it.

All too quickly it was time to go home so Dad lit the lantern and Frank and I took it in turns to carry it. We used to swing it and it cast horrible long shadows on Petworth Park wall. On our arrival home Dad made the fire up, Mum took the kettle off the hob, and we all had a cup of cocoa with bread and butter - we used to dip in the cocoa. We called it 'dipping in', but it is now called 'dunking' if a biscuit is used in tea. After a very happy 'fair day' we

went to bed tired and contented.

Another happy day was the fete held in Petworth Park and that also included a fair. All sorts of sports were held for the whole family, racing, sack race, egg and spoon, wheelbarrow, tug of war etc. etc. I remember there was a competition in which the competitors were blindfolded, a brace of rabbits were tied on a rope stretched from pole to pole, the competitor was turned round and round and given a stick and then tried to hit the rabbits. It was really funny as the competitors were going in all directions hitting in mid air. Another funny game we enjoyed was pinning the tail on the donkey. I think this fete day had some kind of banquet as a marquee was put up, and the night before my Mum and Dad used to scrape a bath of new potatoes. When the sports were over we spent the rest of our time at the fair and had our usual swings and round-a-bout rides etc.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Harris had a lovely horse-drawn caravan - that was another fairyland to us. We walked across the park to our home at Tillington, gradually the sounds of the fair grew more dim. We didn't need the lantern as the evening was light and the weather very warm. We usually had home made lemonade to drink before we went to bed in the summer, two very happy children.

One day, my brother and I and two brothers named Gilbert from a nearby lodge decided to meet after school to have a smoke in one of the copses. We managed to collect some brown papers and matches and all sat down under a conker tree and prepared, for what we thought would be a great adventure. If only we knew. We crushed up some dead leaves and rolled this mixture into spills of brown paper, set light to them and smoked. We all had blood shot eyes and singed eyebrows (we were only about nine and ten) and then the agony, we were all violently sick. I remember the feeling to this day, I could have crawled in a hole and died. We managed to get home feeling relieved but dreading it. We were told "serves you both right". The worse thing was, we had to retrace our steps with Mum and Dad to find the matches and make sure we hadn't set the copse alight. I don't remember being smacked - no doubt we had punished ourselves enough.

Once, while walking back from Petworth my mother, brother and I were caught up in a most awful wind. The sky was almost as black as night. In a field next door to Tillington House stood a hayrick and suddenly it took off. First the top went up in small quantities and then half the hayrick went and we were covered in hay. When it came tumbling down, I remember my mother calling it a whirlwind. It frightened the life out of us, but the sky cleared as quickly as it darkened.

There came a time when my father wanted a larger garden. He spoke to the powers that be and he was given a piece to work in with his present garden, a length of the field across at the end of our garden. Another fence was put up so Dad got on digging it up. The year was about 1921. It was hard work and we children used to have to go stone cart after school. We both had small iron pails and used to fill them up three times with stones. Now this is where, if only we'd known, we must have struck a treasure trove because we found quite a number of old coins. Not knowing anything about treasure troves, we took them to school and shared them out. I found one in my mother's button box about twenty years ago and sold it for £3. No doubt we let a fortune slip through our fingers and I've often wondered if any were found



when Tillington Village Hall was built. Still on the theme of treasure, we were spending the day at Littlehampton one lovely summer's day when I started digging the sand and unearthed pennies and sixpences. I found 2s.7½p altogether and shared half with my brother. I felt so very rich as that was a lot of money in those days. I remember buying my Dad a 6d pipe at Woolworths out of the proceeds.

One job of work I used to loath was picking the cottons off the coconut matting which everyone had on the kitchen floors. It was a horrible beige colour and was very rough if knelt on with bare knees - it was rough on the feet too.

Sometimes my mother had lodgers (paying guests now) and they used to have the best bedroom and our sitting room as well. Some came from quite well to do homes. One day, Mum had made a very special trifle (she was a good cook) and told my brother and I not to ask for a second helping until our guests had been served with theirs. As you may guess my brother forgot and asked for a second helping. My mother tried to put him off by enlarging her eyes at him, (we knew that sign). Frank then said to our guests, "Look at Mum making eyes at us." He knew poor Mum would be annoyed but I don't think he was punished though.

During the war, we children used to pick up conkers and acorns with mum. We did this all through the seasons as did the whole school. We were all helping the 'war effort'. We also picked pounds of blackberries which I believe were used for some kind of dye, perhaps for camouflage, I'm not sure.

During the autumn of 1920, my brother and mother were busy preparing for their confirmation. I was a little envious as we usually did everything together, but I wasn't old enough to be confirmed. Looking at my mother's records, I see it was December 4th. I felt very proud of my mother despite the fact that she was the oldest at the confirmation. She reminded me of a bride. I remember we went to the Tillington Vicarage of that time and were given a most lovely tea by Mrs. Goggs, of course, all prepared by the staff.

My granddad died in 1921 and I missed him a lot. He had cancer of the throat and all those years ago, there was nothing to alleviate the pain. My mother nursed him for weeks and I used to sit outside his bedroom door to keep my eye on him to give Mum a rest and I could call her when needed. I always read a book while I was watching granddad. It was all rather sad, but didn't seem to really harm me. I think my mother was worn out when granddad died. When he was so ill, I didn't realise that he was suffering from cancer. I thought I heard the word 'canker' so when granddad died, I was furious with Jesus so I told him in my prayer that when my cat had canker Mum put powder in her ears. "Why didn't you put powder in granddad's ear, I'm not going to talk to you for a fortnight." I had a black and white checked dress for granddad's funeral and my brother had a black band on his arm. It was all very solemn. He was conveyed to the cemetery on a kind of trolley - I've forgotten what it is called. I remember we went home to a lovely spread. It was not too sad as granddad has suffered so and I was quite glad my stint of nursing had come to an end - poor granddad.

Mrs K.A. Vigar (to be continued).

## With the Chelsea Day Nursery

In the earliest months of the war I was near Epping, working with the W.V.S. at a kind of half-way house for people from the East End who had been bombed out of their homes. We had to provide temporary accommodation for them and also ensure that families were able to get together again: if a shelter was hit, for instance, in the confusion families might be temporarily broken up and need to be reunited later. I remember a large board with names on it. After a while it became evident that even Epping was uncomfortably close to the bombing and the centre closed.

I had been trained at the Maria Grey Froebel College in London before the war and was a qualified kindergarten teacher and also an approved lecturer in child psychology and other subjects for the N.N.E.B. nursing examination. In the early autumn of 1940 I came to join the staff of the Chelsea Day Nursery which had been evacuated to Petworth in the very early days of the war. The Chelsea Day Nursery was effectively an amalgamation of two quite different bodies, the Chelsea Day Nursery itself which catered for children from two upwards and whose staff wore a green uniform, and Lady Melchett's school, whose staff wore a mauve uniform and catered for babies and young children. Official outdoor nursing dress, long mauve overcoat, with tall purple velours hat which had been designed for more leisured days, nurses pushing prams in London parks, was hardly now seen at Petworth. Uniforms were a confusion of mauve and green. With everything so short, particularly coupons, you wore what was available. I didn't wear an official uniform at all. Children were supposed to leave when they reached the age of five, but for various reasons they didn't always do so. Such matters depended to an extent on Chelsea, the local authority, and all sorts of other imponderables. One boy I remember moving on to a residential home near Tonbridge. Parents would come to visit as and when they could, especially when the father was home on leave. We never knew when they were coming.

Lady Melchett herself still made personal visits to Petworth, especially in the early years. She would arrive, chauffeur-driven, of course, in an enormous car. She was a tiny, elderly figure and it always seemed a little incongruous for such a diminutive lady to arrive in such a huge car. As the war went on and the petrol shortage intensified the car shrank to an Austin 8 or 10, again of course chauffeur-driven. Lady Melchett was by this time extremely deaf and the only way to communicate was by shouting into her ear. We soon learned that it was easier to write! She was often trying to find Lord Leconfield, who, in turn, usually appeared to be out!

The Day Nursery was, as the name implies, a children's nursery, and the children in some ways, of course, the priority. It would however, be misleading to think exclusively in those terms. The Chelsea Day Nursery was effectively a training establishment for nurses, who, having qualified, would move on to positions elsewhere, or, perhaps stay on at Petworth. At any time, the Petworth establishment could have as many as twenty trainee nurses. Miss Brookes, the matron, was an S.R.N., sister was a qualified nurse and, as I have said, I was a qualified kindergarten teacher and lecturer. The nursery's overriding purposes was to train. The arrangement with Lord Leconfield was on a business footing. Billeting was a



government arrangement, for the war. Anyone who lived in a so-called "safe" area and had spare rooms, was required by law to accommodate evacuees, as necessary. Thus the Nursery occupied much of the servants' block and a few rooms in the main house. As time went on I used to make up the billeting accounts; Lord Leconfield being paid for his "guests". As I remember it was 7/6d. a week for the adults and 3/6d. for the children. There was nothing unusual in this; it was the way things were done. Occasionally Lady Melchett would send her secretary down, more often I was left to make up the fortnightly return myself. I'd take it to the Billeting Office. If everything was alright there might even be time for me to pop into the Four and Twenty Blackbirds for a cup of coffee!



*Kay Amos with some of the Day Nursery children at Petworth House.*

Nursing courses lasted a minimum of two years, more usually two and a half. They ran basically autumn to spring with examinations in May and November. The examiners came down from London. With so many student nurses there was an excellent care ratio. I gave my lectures in the evening and in my upstairs bedroom in the House itself, spending

the day with the children. The upstairs bedroom was one of several that looked out on to the Park. The local Observer Corps also had a room up there and a look-out post on the roof. Their upstairs room was a kind of Common room cum rest room. Crucial to our welfare was the large coal bunker for the use of the Observer Corps. The bedrooms were so cold that we were allowed a fire and the precious fuel came from the Observer Corps bunker! The nursery had 44 children whom we divided into twelve babies, twelve toddlers and twenty older children. A supply nurse came in for three consecutive months in the summer to give each of the three senior staff a month off in succession.

Visits from the Nursery School committee in London were always well-advertised. This gave us a chance to see that everything was just right, aprons starched, everything in place. Once, however, one of the committee, appeared unexpectedly. Matron and sister had a large room in the Servants' Block and were sitting in there having tea and chatting. I didn't want the committee member to find them so I had to make out they were somewhere else.

When we came everything seemed in a muddle - or to put it another way - the Nursery needed an order imposed on it. The previous sister had left and the matron, who seemed to have been very competent, had gone off ill. It was a matter of sorting things out in rather bleak conditions. A new matron had arrived two days before I did and a new sister came a week or so later. It was down to us to impose our own order on things. As the centre of our operations the Audit Room was hardly inspiring. It held rows of big old leather-bound books or ledgers, fortunately far too high up for the children to get at. We boxed these in with plywood. The room was festooned with antlers - red deer as far as I could judge. There were also a number of large clay models of bulls, cracking and flaking now and presumably some relic of cattle shows long gone. Certainly not toys for the children. There were no pictures, and the whole place had, to say the least, a somewhat sombre air. There was even a great rhino horn and a number of statues. All these adornments had one great virtue: they were marvellous when it came to hanging up balloons at Christmas. The big old trestle tables used for audit dinners were still in situ, there were some little chairs and a couple of enormous fire guards. Just up from the Audit Room on the same side of the corridor was a laundry room and a cloakroom where we could bath the children on the two days when we had hot water. We had with us a sewing lady who had come down with the children from London. She had a child of her own at the nursery. There were still periodical audits of some kind when we had to give way to the Estate but these were no doubt on a very reduced scale as compared with earlier years. There were barrels of beer in a little ante-room, a link with pre-war audits. It's a smell I have never liked. There was brown lino on the audit room floor and the boards were very suspect. I can remember one child putting her foot right through one of the floorboards. For teaching we kept the twenty children in the Audit Room and took the younger children upstairs in two groups.

We had a cook for the children and someone to cook for us, but it was grim, two ounces of butter a week if we were lucky, and the same of cheese. Fortunately one of the lodge-keepers let us have eggs. There were mice too and black beetles. If you came down in the middle of the night and put on the light there was a great scurrying and scampering. There was no working with the great house, as evacuees with a business arrangement we were on our own.



Relations with the great house were something of a mixture. I became quite friendly with Lady Leconfield's companion Miss Paton, a very nice lady who arranged Lady Leconfield's Red Cross work for her and held a monthly helpers' meeting in the Marble Hall. It must have been bitterly cold in winter. Sometimes Lady Leconfield and Miss Paton would be sitting outside talking and her ladyship would say, "Bring the children over". Lady Leconfield was very often away; she had a flat somewhere to the back of Selfridges. Miss Paton did not go with her, but stayed at Petworth. The wife of one of the lodgekeepers was in the W.I. and she conceived the idea that it would be good for the children to put on a little entertainment for the W.I. in the Iron Room, the children basically reciting and singing nursery rhymes. I remember one child had a new pink party dress and caused some merriment by refusing to sit down on the stage when her part called for it. "I can't sit down on the stage," she explained to the audience, "it's too dirty. It'll spoil my dress." Her ladyship made a special trip upstairs to find my room and thank me personally. When the bombing in London was really bad, the housekeeper and head housemaid from the London house came down to Petworth for a while.

Lord Leconfield would often be about. In the early days he still rode round the estate but as the war went on the stables grew emptier and he tended to go about on foot. In a way he was quite approachable: "Do you know why I wear these cream gaiters?" he asked me once. I didn't know. "So that people who owe me money can see me coming and get out of the way," he chuckled. I think he was essentially a kindly man. The point was that the Day Nursery were simply tenants and quite separate from the House. To an extent the House had prepared itself for the lean years by putting a lot of produce into frozen storage at Guildford and at least, at the beginning, this provided a kind of cushion against rationing. Things like strawberries came into the House kitchen in large quantities but none found their way to the Day School. It was simply a matter of two quite different administrations. In a similar way we were aware of the celebrations for Elizabeth Wyndham's 21st birthday party but were no part of it. It was natural enough. I remember once Lord Leconfield giving me five nectarines from the gardens, slightly damaged by wasps. I always thought it was strange how his lordship used to sit in solitary state in the gallery of St. Mary's, but then that was Petworth. We didn't take the children to church, they were too young. I remember that the curate had left, presumably for the war, and that Mr. Godwin the rector was assisted by a deaconess who dressed all in black, very much like a nun. When out with the children we encountered this lady and one of the children blurted out in a loud voice, "There's a witch. There's a witch!"

The bedroom as I have said was on the top floor of the House itself and while it was bitter in winter, did have a nice view. It was almost over his lordship's ground floor study and in the summer when the windows were open, the smell of cigar smoke would come in: I'd know that Lord Leconfield and his friends would be sitting on the terrace outside the study after dinner. The bedroom had a single bed and, in those halcyon days before the war, had been a visiting valet's room. It had the valet's big wardrobe, a bell on the wall for the valet to be summoned and a plug for an iron. In the winter the austerity and the cold took their toll. The inadequate rations and the cold made me feel so ill once that I couldn't do the 97



*Two of the many different stalls at Petworth Fair.  
Photography by Robert Sadler.*





*Entertainment at Petworth Fair 1997.  
Photography by Robert Sadler.*

steps up to my bedroom. One of the house staff bundled me into the lift, like a piece of furniture or cleaning equipment and hauled me up on the rope. There was a window out of which we could get out on the roof and if the weather was right, we'd dry cardigans on the roof, wrapped in towels.

We didn't see that much of the house staff. I think that people like Mrs. Doble the housekeeper probably felt we were a nuisance - or, more accurately perhaps, a threat to a well-ordered routine that they remembered from pre-war days. Mrs. Doble had a room in the Servants' Block just up from where, as senior staff, matron, sister and I had our sitting-room. Coupons were few and we were all conscious of looking shabbier and shabbier. When shoes went through the soles, we couldn't get them repaired and put cardboard in the bottom. This would pass muster on dry summer days. I remember coming up to my room unexpectedly one morning and finding the housekeeper rummaging through my drawers. Heaven knows they had little enough in them. Did she expect to find the family silver? I don't know. The bedroom had some very sombre pictures, badly spotted with damp. They were so depressing that I took them down, wrapped them carefully in tissue and stacked them away. Mrs. Doble noted their removal and said, "I'll tell her ladyship about this." Needless to say, I heard no more. I think, and have already said, that the housekeeper's job was about maintaining a routine, and the Day Nursery was really about disrupting that routine. The footmen we saw quite a lot. They were very young; as soon as they were eighteen, they were called up, to be replaced by someone not of military age. My memory is of them rushing about with food under a silver cover, to be put on a hot plate when it reached the dining room. We soon learned that the time to have a bath or even have a look round was when the servants were at supper.

I became quite friendly with Elsie Whitcomb who worked at the Estate Office. She was kind to me and introduced me at the Tennis Club. I used to go with a lady who worked at the George House dispensary. Even going across to George House we might be "propositioned" by soldiers sitting on the benches in front of the churchyard, or run the gauntlet of a few tipsy soldiers when we were coming back. We often played tennis until quite late; double summer time made for very long, light summer evenings. Church Lodge wasn't locked until 11 o'clock but we did have to be in by then. I remember that the lodgekeeper at Church Lodge used to go to the East Street post office to collect the mail.

On a typical day the children would be up at eight for breakfast. I came on duty at nine o'clock, took them out and gave them lessons. Lunch was at twelve and the children would rest for an hour after lunch. I'd be back on duty at two o'clock, finishing at six when they went to bed. Usually I'd give lectures in the evening. The children did a lot of walking in the Park if the weather was suitable. A favourite activity in the season was collecting acorns and chestnuts. These were made into a mash for the deer. Mr. Wilcox the head forester paid us a few pennies which went into the children's sweet fund. The children liked dragging the little truck we had for the acorns and chestnuts.

Between the House and the lake was a barbed wire "maze". The idea was that if paratroops landed, the barbed wire entanglement would impede their speedy progress to the House. There were also piles of logs placed in this area to prevent planes (or gliders) from landing. In the summer we found them useful to sit on when the children were out for walks.



Sometimes we'd go right across the Park to the Monument. Or, again, we'd walk to Tillington, going outside the wall and then back through the Park, or the other way round. Anything to ring the changes, or we might go down Pound Street to the fire station: the children liked to see the gleaming red engine. The forge in High Street was another favourite spot, or we might walk past the Infants' School, where the Public Library now is. Essentially we welcomed anything that might vary the routine and give the children something to think about. Sometimes they went down to see the Hounds, later in the war these were transferred, I think, to the Old Surrey and Burstow but there were still about forty in 1942. Hunting ceased during the war. Regarding the barbed wire, I remember one visiting inspector who had been somewhat difficult and insisted on going with us on a walk across the Park. We had to negotiate the barbed wire but when she got as far as the Upper Lake she decided it was too muddy and would go back. Much later when we'd had our walk and returned home we realized that she was still trying to make her way through the barbed wire maze!

Occasionally we'd go to Midhurst on the bus, but half-days were rare indeed and any I had I'd try to save for a home leave. If I could, I'd go home to Eastbourne for the weekend. Catch a 22 bus to Brighton, then another from Brighton. I don't actually recollect spending a Christmas at Petworth, I think I always managed to go back to see my parents. Like other girls with my background I wasn't accustomed to sweeping and cleaning but in my three years at Petworth this became almost second nature to me. If I were going home for the weekend I'd buy a dozen carnations from Mr. Streeter in the Gardens to take with me.

I was here when the Boys School was bombed in 1942. The tail fin of a bomb became embedded in the lawn and we had to live underground for a week before the bomb disposal people confirmed it wasn't dangerous. The children had to be kept in the tunnels. It would be difficult to imagine anything more comfortless and after a few days I felt we simply had to have some air, regardless of the consequences. We had to move the children's little stretcher beds and all the bedding into the tunnels. Do I remember the mulberry tree on the lawn outside the Servants' Block? Oh, very well.

One fire drill the chauffeur had a small motor pump, while the old steam engine used by Lord Leconfield's private fire brigade had to be stoked and got going, not a speedy process by any means. The House fire brigade wore navy blue tunics with red trim and wore berets rather like the old-fashioned matelot's cap. There was a great cheer when the chauffeur couldn't get his new-fangled motor pump to work and the tried and trusted steam-engine was first into operation.

I spent three years in Petworth and though they were hard years, I've always liked the town. Going down the stairs into Rosie Ricketts' sweet shop to spend our few coupons, going into Eagers in Market Square on the rare occasions when there was a chance for new clothes for the children, even the rare visit to the Tillington Road cinema, or the snatched break at the Four and Twenty Blackbirds. The Day School was still in operation when I was moved on so in fact I didn't see either its beginning or its end.

Kathleen (Kay) Amos (née Higgs) was talking to Diana Owen and the Editor.

## Not just the back end of a horse!

It was the summer of 1929, I was suddenly out of a job and I was sixteen. The Alfred Marks Bureau in London interviewed me and found me a position as junior footman at Lord Leconfield's summer house in Bryanston Square. He had other property in London but, like others in his position, tended to rent a London house for the "season". The next year he rented a house in Grosvenor Square. The salary was £30 a year and after the three month London season I would go for nine months to Lord Leconfield's country seat at Petworth. The junior footman could be called either the third footman or the stewards' room boy - probably stewards' room boy gives a better idea of what I basically had to do.

My basic task was to attend to the senior staff, an élite among the servants, effectively a small, tight coterie consisting of Mr. Wickham the butler, Mrs. Cownley the housekeeper, Mr. Coddington his lordship's valet, and the head housemaid Florence Roper. Whether in London or at Petworth my job was the same: to take care of their meals and their dining room. For this I had my own little pantry with its own sink. The pantry is now the passage that runs through to the main house past the entrance to the National Trust shop. I might be just sixteen or seventeen but this was my little kingdom. I'd be up about 7.30 and bound down the stairs just in time to get the fire going in the dining room. I'd fetch faggots from the kitchen, just outside the chef's sitting room. I don't recall them being referred to as "pimps" but then I may have forgotten. I wore a clerical grey morning suit but for this early part of the day an old worn one. "Scruffy" I used to call it. Assuming the fire was going my first task was to serve breakfast to the senior servants. I'd collect it from the kitchen. It was always cooked: bacon and egg, smoked haddock, kippers, something like that. The food was excellent. The chef was a woman at this time but I also seem to recall a Belgian chef. There is, as you say, no sign of him on the wages lists for servants, so perhaps he just came in for special occasions.

Serving at the senior staff table was in principle the same as serving in the great house. You'd serve at the left shoulder. For things like vegetables the diner could either help himself or be helped. Vegetables were in tureens with a long spoon. The crucial instruction was never to go backwards, always keep moving to the left. Breakfast over, I'd wash up, polish the glasses and make sure everything was clean, including the silver. The same process would happen at lunch, although by that time I would have changed into another, smarter, grey suit. Again I'd wash and clean up. Dinner for the stewards' room would be taken before dinner in the great house. I'd wash and dress, this time getting a menu from the kitchen. The senior staff had a formal menu and I needed to know what it was so that I could lay the table properly. There would be no wine, just soft drinks. Full dress for a footman was a yellow and blue striped waistcoat, white shirt front, jacket of navy blue with silver buttons, smooth "doe-skin" trousers and black patent leather shoes with a buckle.

When there were guests in any number my job in the stewards' room took on another dimension in that it had to be combined with acting as footman in the House itself. Normally the two senior footmen, the butler and the under-butler would deal with dinner without any help from me. The meal would be served in the Square Dining Room and there might just be Lord and Lady Leconfield on their own, or a few house guests, very much a private party.



The Leconfields, however entertained, and were, no doubt, expected to entertain. Very large dinner parties could not be accommodated in the Square Dining Room but were held in the Carved Room, the table running lengthways two or three table cloths with the Leconfield crest being put together. The table you have in the Square Dining Room is certainly capable of being expanded and may well be the one used. The fire-places are certainly different, you say they were altered in the 1950s.

To go into such a gathering as a young man of sixteen or seventeen was in a word "overwhelming". The butler stood behind her ladyship at the head of the table, watching **everything**. The under-butler, (Frank Bailey in my time) would deal with the drinks. Everything would be silver. I never saw china plates used in the House itself. And here was the secret: the plates were hot and, being metal, kept hot. We wore white gloves to protect our hands from them. The flower arrangements would be stepped from floor to ceiling, I remember the hydrangeas particularly. The flowers were Mr. Streeter's province of course. There would be candelabra on the table, the ladies in evening dress, the gentlemen with bow-ties and white shirt fronts, some perhaps in pink or scarlet hunting dress.

The rule was, as in the Stewards' Room, to serve at the left shoulder, keep going and never retrace your steps, moving always to the left. For such large occasions waiters were brought in from outside, sometimes as many as twenty. By a strange coincidence I had previously done a certain amount of waiting at the Greyhound at Croydon and it was from there that the waiters came. They'd stay overnight in the Servants' Block, sleeping four or five to a room. Mr. Dearing, the son of the catering manager at the Greyhound, would usually be in charge of them. Were the guests ever rude? Well, very occasionally, but you just had to pass that off. I can certainly remember the present Queen and Princess Margaret, both of course very small then, at one of these dinners.

I'm glad that you've got one of the wooden trays we used here on show in the kitchen. You can see how big it is and also the size of the silver covers. The tray must be a good three and a half feet in length and two feet across, all solid wood. The food would be on hot plates just inside the kitchen and, as I have said, the silver plates were hot. I didn't know anyone complain that the food wasn't hot. We're following the route now, out of the kitchen, down the stairs into the tunnel, past the well where the pony still at this time drew water, then up these winding twisting steps. No, I never dropped a tray.

When the family were away, there was spring cleaning to be done, cleaning window frames, getting the curtains down, in short whatever the butler told me to do. We **never** worked with the housemaids, "fraternising" of any kind was strictly forbidden, although I have to say I've seen a senior footman more than once making his way furtively in that direction!

I had a whole day off a week and the very occasional weekend. We used to get down to the Swan Hotel when we could. A favourite trick was to inhale a little gas from a mantle, then light it. Not to be recommended. Darts was a much safer pastime. There were great fancy dress parties at the Swan in those days. Once I got a pantomime horse costume from Force Flakes. Another footman was the front, I was the rear. I won a pair of antique candlesticks in the form of snakes - after all it was my costume!



*Horace Arnold (extreme right) with fellow footmen at Petworth House in light-hearted mood (1929-30). The photograph has suffered badly over the years and reproduction will be poor.*

A few odd memories of the House. The butler changed when I was here, Mr. Warrington, a tall imposing man took over from Mr. Wickham. The latter was a somewhat portly gentleman and, I would think, had been there a fair while. Mrs. Cownley the housekeeper was still there. We used to mutter about her but I can see now that she had a job to do. She had her office and little store in the Servants' Block. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Warrington used to smoke a pipe with Wyvenhoe tobacco. Mr. Coddington the valet I knew fairly well, he lived out but had his meals in the Stewards' Dining Room. The night watchmen each carried a key and patrolled inside and out. They had to turn the key in a clock at certain pre-set times to indicate that they were where they should be. I remember a man out in the yard at the back constantly making faggots for the House, chopping and clamping them. My bedroom was on the north side of the Servants' Block, looking out toward the North Street battery house, I shared with the odd man who looked after the ordinary servants. Some people did have single rooms I think.

Opportunities to explore were limited. There was no great problem going into the kitchen and the rooms in the chef's domain, and I well remember the Audit Room set up for Audit Day with the long trestle tables and huge whole cheeses on the tables, all along the wall. The tenants helped themselves. Christmas too I recall, the children's party and the garlands made of leaves and threaded on thick string. Lord and Lady Leconfield I saw very rarely, as a very junior member of the household staff my job was to keep out of the way.



The two senior footmen were more likely to see them, opening car doors or putting rugs round feet. Once I was in the library and saw a limited edition copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, still with pages uncut. It was privately printed in Holland and I have the idea that the edition was of 29 copies only. Can this be right? As a Croydon boy I was always a little uneasy of the hounds. They could certainly be boisterous. The mulberry tree outside the Servants' Block? No, I don't remember it, but I do remember the high box hedge. Sometimes in the summer we'd come straight across that way to the House instead of through the tunnel.

As you will have gathered this was only a stop-gap job for me, hardly a career. After a couple of years I gave in my notice to Mr. Warrington and went back to Croydon. I still did a bit of waiting in my spare time and still saw the waiters from the Greyhound, who would come down on special occasions to Petworth.

Well, here we are on the lawn looking out through the railings to the Park and the Lake, with the winter sun shining on us and the grass still wet. It's difficult to think it's almost seventy years since I was first "overwhelmed" by it all and that, while memories are so vivid, it's almost a lifetime ago.

Horace Arnold was talking to Diana Owen and the Editor.

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## What's in the cupboard? (2) Mrs. Burden's trading stock

While the invoices from local tradesmen discussed in the December Magazine gave some idea of Mrs. Burden's day to day domestic routine it was clear that a great deal must be uncertain. Too much remained unaccounted for to justify a picture that would be more than impressionistic. Certainly there were some four hundred or more domestic dockets but there was no check on what came into the household without a docket and no recognition of everyday items like bread, milk, flour, vegetables or even fish. Clearly it cannot be assumed that all such items were not bought. In the final resort we could only suggest tentatively that Mrs. Burden's standard of living at the turn of the century compared favourably with that of Mrs. Cummings, Lord Leconfield's sempstress, in High Street in 1910.

This second attempt to deal with the surviving material covers a much smaller number of dockets (92) as opposed to the very considerable number of household ones. This smaller number relates to Mrs. Burden's commercial activities as proprietress of the little shop at the foot of Lombard Street which is now the Lombard Gallery. They range from the merest summary statement, through invoices for a few out of stock items delivered later, to long wholesale lists, sometimes containing as many as seventy items or more. These longer invoices, often protruding from the main pile, have, over a century, suffered damage at the extremities. On occasion part of the invoice has been completely destroyed, in other cases what is left can no longer be read with confidence. As with the household dockets, a number

of invoices are clearly missing so that once more precision is impossible. What we do have, however, will probably offer a very fair overview of the stock Mrs. Burden was carrying. Obviously not everything mentioned over a roughly five year period would be in stock at any given time, but the frequent re-occurrence of many items is a fair indication that much of Mrs. Burden's stock would remain fairly constant.

The survival of what we have looks, as is usually the case in such matters, something of a stroke of luck. Betty Bevis, who lived in the Lombard Street premises as a child and whose father Alexander Weaver took over the premises from Mrs. Burden, writes as follows: "I have just one recollection of my parents' connection with Mrs. Burden. When we moved across the road in 1923 and my father was clearing out he came into the room with a bundle of papers in his hand and told my mother they were Mrs. Burden's receipts which he had found "upstairs", where I do not know, but he had a stock room for his goods in a small room on the first floor which was lined with wooden packing cases, on their sides, in which stock was stored and it may be that the receipts were behind these. I don't know what happened to the documents but I expect they went the way of all the other things which were disposed of in the move."

There is no reason to suppose that the documents Mr. Weaver found are those that have come down to us. Mrs. Burden's "receipts" would have been of little enough interest in 1923. They probably dealt with the later period of her tenure. We have no invoice later than the autumn of 1902 and she seems to have left around 1908.

Looking at the premises now, there is no indication that Mrs. Burden's shop was of any great size. Probably there was a kitchen at the rear on the ground floor. Alexander Weaver's use of an upstairs room for stock may well perpetuate Mrs. Burden's own practice. Certainly the shop carried an enormous range, a good deal of which must have been kept in store - it would have been physically impossible to display the whole range in such a limited space. In any case modern ideas of display and point of sale were light years away. In those leisured days customers would ask for what they wanted and wait while Mrs. Burden unearthed it. Money was too tight for "impulse buying". It seems likely however that Mrs. Burden must have had a counter for her extensive confectionery selection: room to show her jars and chocolates and of course a set of scales.

Of the ninety or more commercial documents all but about ten relate to four primary wholesalers: A.M. Grist of Windsor Street, Brighton with 33 deals in stationery and sundries, James Campbell and Co. of North Road, Brighton (28) trades as a wholesale confectioner and tea merchant. The invoices here are for confectionery only: Mrs. Burden did not sell tea. The two London wholesale houses are Arthur Parke of Houndsditch "Importer of Pipes and Tobacconists' Fancy Goods" (14) and Charles Taff of the Grove, Hackney "Wholesale and Export Confectioners" (6). Grist and Parke to an extent complement one another, as do Campbell and Taff. Other wholesalers with single invoices may have been used by Mrs. Burden to inject variety into an already extensive stock. Novelty was at the very core of the little shop in Lombard Street. In all cases detailed invoices lie cheek by jowl with summary statements and small make-up orders, often relating to goods temporarily out of stock when the order was sent. A fair average total for an invoice is £5 but some total over £10. Items



are usually priced in dozens or fractions of a dozen. Smaller multiple items are by the gross or sometimes half gross. Orders for the two Brighton wholesalers tend to be smaller and more regular than the London ones and the receipts are monthly, with the same signature. Grist and Campbell no doubt each sent round their own commercial traveller to take orders and collect payments. The Angel Hotel was noted at this time as a base for commercial travellers each using Petworth as a base for several local calls. Interpretation can be difficult on occasion and some particularly difficult words are appended at the end for readers' suggestions. Very occasionally a word is quite illegible, more often the passage of time has simply obliterated part of an invoice.

For toys and sundries I have put together Grist and Parke. Marbles come in boxes or loose and there are blood allies, china, electric and glass. Dolls are nankeen, bo-peep, jointed, floral, dressed and rag. Balls are ordered and re-ordered constantly and can be coloured, grey, terra cotta, orange, solid, compo, air and coloured India rubber. Hoops come in iron, wood and a cheaper unspecified variety. Music is catered for by Jews harps, mouth organs (some with slide), drums, trumpets, whistle pipes, musical toys and music cases. Probably "sets of 4 bells", should come into this category. "Scales" may refer to musical notation of some kind but, more likely, to children's toy scales. Models can be relatively expensive: boxes of trains, boxes of engines, bell engines, trains and gilt soldiers. Toys and games comprise tiddlywinks, game of china, ludo, dominoes, snakes and ladders, trap bats, string bats and cube games. Toy guns seem to have been very popular and are frequently re-ordered: pop guns, boars' split shot (?), rifles (lads) assorted, pistols, ball guns and a Jones gun (with shot). Caps are re-ordered constantly. Miscellaneous toys are musical and road rollers (?), India rubber (IR) toys, bricks, cubes, tin toys at 1/6d. a dozen and tin swords. Horses, assorted animals, swans, boats, and ships are probably model figures of some kind. For seaside trips and outdoor pursuits we have buckets and spades, beach horses (?), coloured pails and butterfly nets. Buckets may well also be the real thing for Mrs. Burden's stock took in wooden and iron spades, watering cans, wheelbarrows, tonquin canes, bamboo rods, assorted cane sticks, acacia sticks (?) and nine foot ash rods. Sport is catered for by cricket bats, polished bats, wickets, shuttlecocks, table tennis sets and skipping ropes, and fishing by gut hooks, gimp hooks, reel hooks, eel hooks, fishing rods and fish nets. One wonders whether Mrs. Burden dealt in maggots too! Obscure items are corruzettes (coming by the gross), Angola assorted, furnished lines and china teas - the last perhaps cheaper tea-sets of some kind.

Sundries are again very much the province of Grist and Parke. String includes water cord, middle string, whip cord, twine and sidling twine. Combs are a standing item and come in all shapes and sizes, on card and as separate items, metal, pocket, tooth, side, forehead, dressing: these rub shoulders with hairslides, hairbrushes, hairpins, invisible hairpins and hair bands. Purses similarly come in myriad sizes and forms usually indicated simply by a Parke stock number. Frames (no doubt for photographs) are simple "frames" or midget frames - presumably a very small size. Cake frames of course are a different thing but also part of Mrs. Burden's varied stock. Pegs can be of ordinary wood at twopence a dozen or of box wood at four times the price. For baby there are rattles, soothers and teats. Thimbles

are steel, maids' or childrens'. Shaving sets are a staple item; along with brushes, glasses and plates. Baskets come as closed or open. Clothing accessories are tapes, blouse pins, button hooks, buttons and hatpins. Brushes are tooth, clothes, paste, nail, gun and black paste. Studs come in white, lever, pearl, collar and table top. Cutlery is represented by knife and spoon sets and bone spoon sets. Bone rings, a frequent item, are presumably for serviettes. Watches and jewellery are represented by wheel and star watch keys, solitaires, watch-stands and watches. Probably Mrs. Burden offered rather more in cheaper jewellery than the present invoices suggest: George Aubrey "Stationer and Jet Ornament Manufacturers" of Hull seems to have called occasionally in person. There are two "invoices" - in fact no more than indecipherable pencil jottings that probably reflect Mrs. Burden's purchase of ornaments from Mr. Aubrey, the jottings do not seem to reflect stationery; something Mrs. Burden's other wholesalers were more than capable of supplying.

Scents are lavender and Eau de Cologne, probably at the cheaper end of the market, the shop in Lombard Street was not exclusive in any way and seems to have catered for all tastes and pockets. "JU clips" would appear to be the "modern" Jubilee clips, but "J pins" are obscure. Mirrors are hand, plate and groom (ing). Xylmit in this connection may be a trade name. Miscellaneous sundries are plush bags, china mugs, bird dishes, sponges, boys' satchels, sash tools, boxes of beads, spectacle cases, ash trays, luggage straps and brass double hooks. Runs and mavods have eluded me completely, but rug straps, wall portraits, string bags and scissors present no difficulty.

Three single invoices suggest that Mrs. Burden made occasional use of other London wholesalers, probably as I have already suggested, to give added variety. The Lombard Street repository depended on a certain air of novelty. These invoices also raise, as do those of the two London wholesalers, an allied question: did Mrs. Burden go to London to see and order her goods or did she perhaps order from a catalogue? The former seems perhaps the more likely alternative but on this the documents are completely silent.

Henry Jones and Co., General Merchants, of Stewarts Road, Wandsworth supply glove boxes, slate pencils, sponges, King toothers (?) (in two sizes and each by the quarter gross), jap dolls and pin trays. The date (28th October 1901) suggests acquisition of stock for Christmas. Goods are despatched by rail. E. Hassell of Stratford in East London, have an invoice for May 1899, clearly in this case not a Christmas order. The range here duplicates other wholesalers adding only horse at 1/6d. a dozen and donkeys at the same price. Presumably these are toys or models. Cricket bats at 8/6d. a dozen are an unusually expensive item. The loss of the first page of an invoice from James Wisbey of Houndsditch in East London "Wholesale and Export Warehouseman" specialising as "Continental and American Importers" is unfortunate. This was a large invoice, coming to over £14 in total (including 8/- deposit for the packing case) and probably featured larger toys: the second page accounting for less than a fifth of the total cost. (Clearly it is a Christmas order (16th November 1898) and what remains of it features "trumpets", "runs", guns, bones (?), swords, universal blocks, scrap books of different kinds, and tin broughams, railways, farms and musical rollers. What the first page contained it is now not possible to say. Delivery was perhaps by carrier.



Stationery is largely the province of Grist although a single invoice from John Thridgould and Co. of Sidney Street, Commercial Road E. for 24th November 1899 has Christmas cards either by the dozen or in cheaper packets at a penny, twopence or sixpence. Quantities are small by today's standards, just eight dozen in total of the individual cards. There is some notepaper, some penny stationery, three dozen Old Moores for 1/3d., apparently to sell at a penny each, some scrap books and a gross of pens. Goods are despatched by rail on receipt of Mrs. Burden's remittance.

Playing cards come as cards unspecified, Delamere and the cheaper Pantalouns, also crib pegs and boxes as accessories. There is no further mention of Old Moores but, while not a bookseller as such, Mrs. Burden kept a small stock of song books, prayer and hymn books, and separate hymn books. Other items are luggage labels, tie-on and otherwise, red sealing wax, Bonds marking ink (a rare mention of a brand name), black, safety and blue black ink, gum, pencils (Nickel, HB, telephone, King and Queen (1902 probably for the Coronation), copying, cedar and others simply referred to by stock numbers. Other items are slates and slate pencils, rubbers, rulers, blotting paper, pencil boxes, pencil protectors, penholders, crayons (Raphael, blue and solid), paints and easels, job cards, jampot covers, confetti, transfers and transfer slates, exercise books, AC memo books, pocket books, draft memo books, and white and red tissue. Notepaper and envelopes are of all kinds and clearly a heavy seller, reflecting an age before the telephone was in everyday use. Grists' own Vellascript notepaper and envelopes occur frequently, and notepaper comes too from other wholesalers often simply with a trade reference. BB bond is another frequently ordered item. Other envelopes are imperial, courier, marble and Albert Club. A small invoice for Walter Gillett of Brighton, "Wholesale Stationer and Printer" from 1901 is probably for printing. It carries the firm's telephone number - 216.

Like stationery, confectionery was a crucial segment of Mrs. Burden's business, items coming from James Campbell of Brighton boxed by rail. Some 28 documents refer to dealing with Campbells but a significant number are not more than summary receipted statements. For some reason nothing comes from the year 1900. The invoices may simply have been lost: probably a commercial traveller came round monthly. Invoices for the the main confectionery wholesaler, Charles Taff of Hackney are fewer, six in all, but run through from August 1898 to August 1901. The copperplate handwriting here is exceptionally clear but some have suffered badly from exposure to damp. Goods from Taff may well have been delivered by carrier, Mrs. Burden's payment being by postal order. Campbell and Taff are effectively alternative suppliers, although most jars and bottles come from the London warehouse. Confectionery gives the first real sign of that insistence on branded goods that would become such a feature of the new century. Fry's chocolate was clearly a heavy seller for Mrs. Burden, coming regularly from both wholesalers. Assorted chocolate (15 times), plain chocolate drops (15), small creams (12), sweet chocolate (9) and chocolate cream bars (5) are all Fry's products, cream tablets (3) may be the same as cream bars. Peters' milk in penny and twopenny bars is a less frequent proprietary name. Nonpareil is another Fry line. Rowntrees pastilles and eating chocolate also make an occasional appearance. Other popular items are Red X Caramels (4), Express Japs (3), My Queen (4), Almond Rock (2), Choc. Mix (2),

Buttered Dates (4), London Mix (2), Buttered Almonds (2), Our Pets Mix, Nutmeg Almonds, and Best Choc Almonds, Jars are Pine Drops (4), Almond Hardbake (3), Pear Drops (2), Raspberry Drops (3), Rose Buds (2), Coconut Nibs, Sugar Drops, Honey Drops, Blackcurrant Lozenges and Barley Sugar Drops. In bottles are Acid Drops and Acid Seals. Vienna Creams are half a gross for four shillings, to retail at a penny each, are no doubt what in modern terms would be called a count line.

Half a gross of halfpenny Nougat Sticks would yield three shillings on two, while the Peters' milk chocolate bars would yield three shillings on two and threepence. Clearly profit margins would vary. Some countlines would have been very small: Express Japs sold at eight a penny, presumably also at two a farthing. Some orders from Campbell are exclusively for Fry's chocolate (28th March 1901), or sometimes for Fry and Rowntree products only (8th November 1899). Other items are LL (?) Lozenges, Chlor. Lozenges, Valencia Almonds, Mint Lozenges, Coltsfoot, Conversation Lozenges, Glycerine Gums, Penny Cachous, Jordan Almonds and Blackcurrant Ovals. Gelatines are probably some kind of sweet rather than simply the substance.

Four other documents should be mentioned. A West Sussex Constabulary Weights and Measures certificate is for shop weights - at this time a responsibility of the local police. A two shilling account from Petworth County Court probably refers to action to recover a bad debt. An explosives certificate from October 1902 is a licence to keep and deal in fireworks, again a matter for the local police. There is a summary account from Brocks relating to fireworks and, in Mrs. Burden's own handwriting in black ink on the back of a Parke's invoice, notes for a firework order to include 6 dozen halfpenny crackers, 3 dozen golden rains, 2 dozen flower pots, 6 dozen stars, 3 dozen b(lue?) devils, 7 dozen penny crackers, 8 dozen sun wheels at 1/2d. 1d. and 2d., 2 dozen Roman candles, 2 dozen halfpenny feathers and 13 dozen squibs of various kinds.

How on earth did Mrs. Burden pack all this into such small premises? As we have suggested, much of it must have been held in store, waiting for someone to ask for it. Such was the custom in those days of attentive shopkeepers. At a distance of almost a century from the invoices, they probably give the most tangible entrée we have into a Petworth shop of the times. Of Mrs. Burden herself, however, they give no remembrance, she flits through the paperwork like a phantom. Is she the lady Walter Kevis captured watching the troops in the Market Square in 1901? Certainly some of the other Lombard Street shopkeepers have come out to watch. We can say no more. We are left with this recollection of Mr. Weaver's tenure of the shop during the Great War, almost a decade since Mrs. Burden had moved on. (Kath. Vigar in PSM 86):

*"Despite the war, Weaver's shop was a regular Alladdin's cave to us and it always had a particular smell to it. I remember a gas jet sputtering in the corner, the smell of papers and magazines and a kind of smoky smell which I never fathomed. Perhaps it was printer's ink in the newspaper.*

*While we children were looking round, Mother was at the back of the shop. She told us that she had given Mr. Weaver a letter written to Mrs. Christmas. After our visit and aglow with anticipation we would set off home again."*



While Alexander Weaver's venture into newspapers may have given Mrs. Burden's old premises a slightly different smell and aura, this is perhaps as near as we will get to recreating the atmosphere of Mrs. Burden's tiny emporium, an atmosphere that, as Christmas approached, and neighbouring Eagers in the Market Square put their toys in the shop window on Petworth Fair Day, could only intensify until the great day arrived. For children Mrs. Burden's fancy depository was a veritable Mecca!

*Note*

I have done what I can with Mrs. Burden's varied stock but I would appreciate comments either on the following or on misinterpretations in the text.

Bell engines, Games of China, Jones Gun, Musical rollers, Road rollers, beach horses, corruzettes, Angola assorted, furnished lines, China teas, sidling twine, J pins, Xylmit mirrors (?), runs, Mavods, Water cord, King toothers (?) and LL lozenges.

Peter

West Sussex Constabulary.

No 54

1<sup>st</sup> October 1902

Received of Mrs A Burden the sum of  
Pounds One

shillings for registering premises under Explosives  
Act at Lombard St Petworth

L. H. Read Supt

Mrs. Burden's firework licence for 1902 signed by Superintendent Read  
Petworth Police.

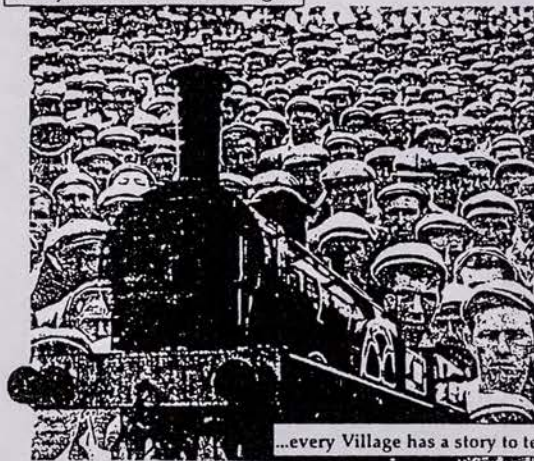


# The Petworth Society

Spring Programme. Please keep for reference.

Monthly meetings Leconfield Hall 7.30pm

...every Town was once a Village...



...every Village has a story to tell...

Thursday 26th February

Brad Bradstocke and the Off the Rails Company

A Glance from a train

with songs and real life characters

A Glance from a train tells the true story of a Community faced with traumatic upheaval - including two world wars. Just when everything looks back to normal, hard-won skills are needed no more.

Admission £3 on door. Refreshments and raffle.

[Just in case the Magazine is early.  
This was of course advertised in  
the December Magazine.]

Monday 30th March

Reg Smith

"Edwin Lutyens and  
two lady gardeners"

£1.50 Refreshments, raffle

Thursday 23rd April

Dr Nick Sturt

returns to the Society with  
"Wild flowers of old Sussex"

£1.50 Refreshments, raffle

Annual General Meeting. Thursday 7th May at 7.30 p.m.  
followed by Peter Jerrome

"Some unusual pictures by George Garland."

Walks - leave Petworth Car Park at 2.15 p.m.

Sunday 22nd March Peggy's Harwoods Green walk.

Sunday 5th April David and Linda's Stag Park walk.

[To accompany the Jonathan Newdick exhibition 28th March to 15th April].

Sunday 10th May Graham and Steve's May walk.

Don't forget you can pay subscriptions at the Leconfield Hall - Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings 10.30 to 12.00 from March 5th. **March and April** only.

## £200 BOOST TO OUR FINANCES

Members will be pleased to know that the Society has won the Special Cash Prize of £200 for December from the monthly Draws made for their customers by our Printers, Midhurst and Petworth Printers.



