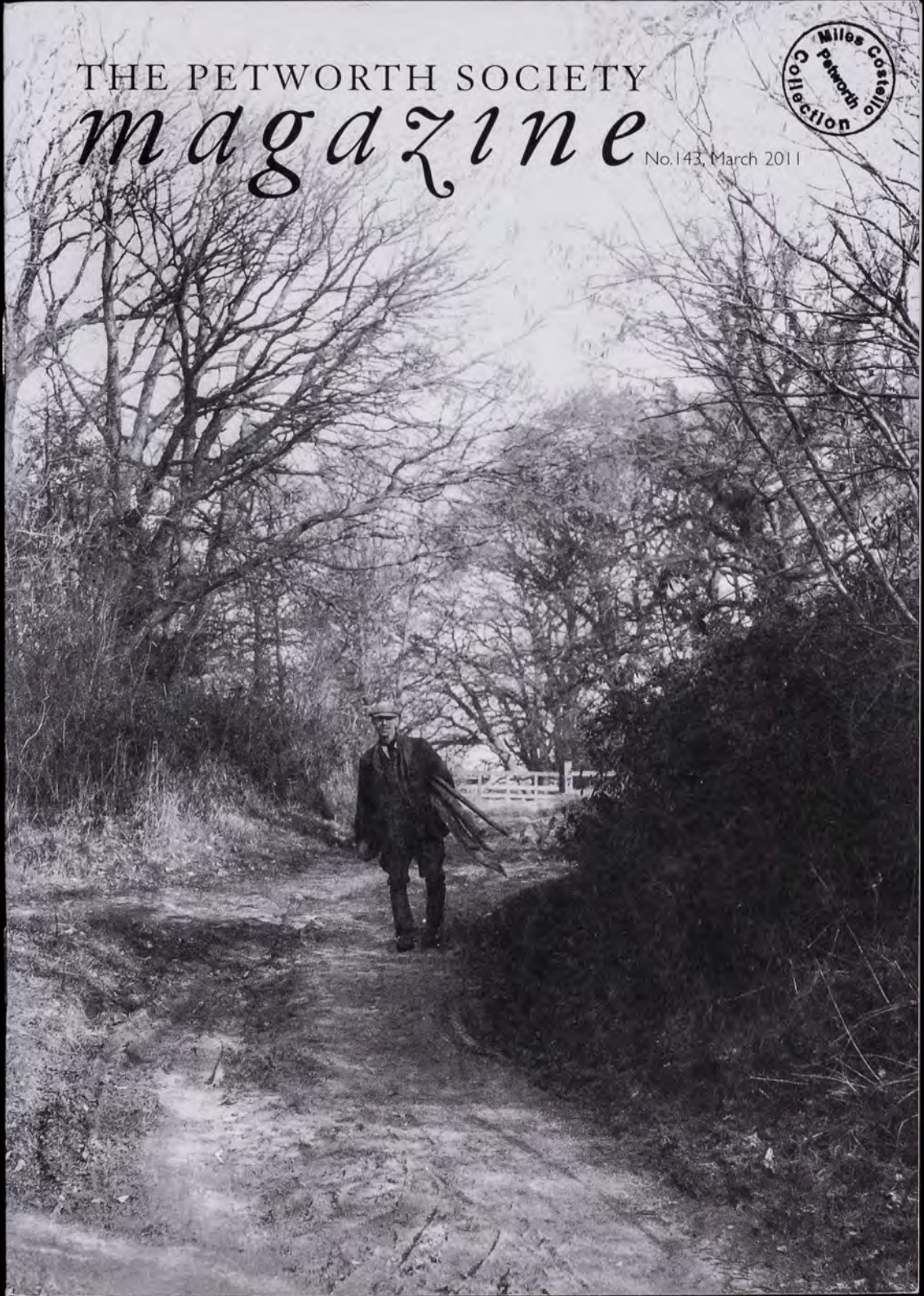


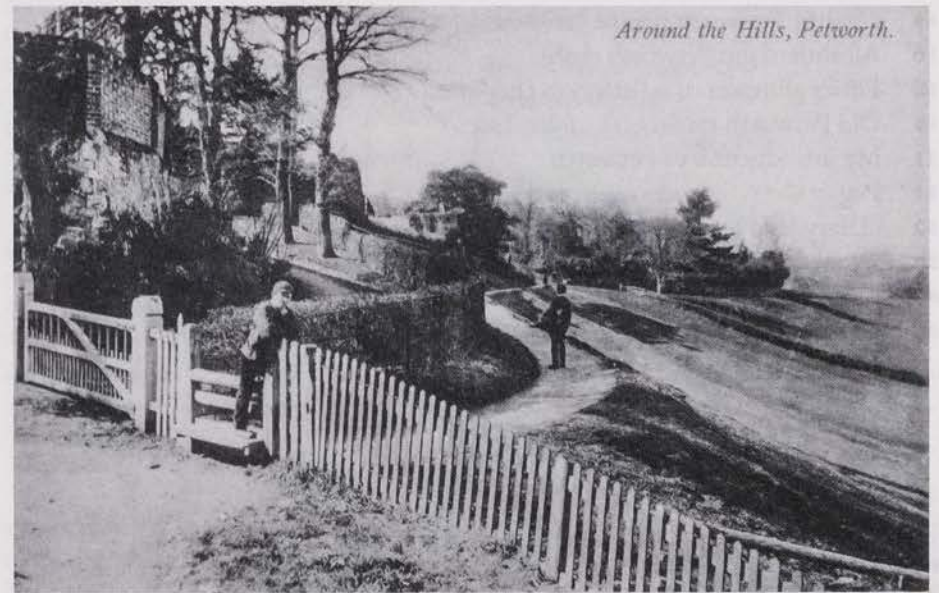
THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

No. 143, March 2011



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Around the Hills, Petworth.

About 1900. A postcard by Walter Kevis, issued by his nephew Herbert Earle about 1910. Kevis left Petworth in 1908.

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NEW MEMBERS

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Mr C. Davis, 66 Bishopswood, Brackla, Bridgend, Mid-Glamorgan CF31 2LY

CONSTITUTION AND OFFICERS

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

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

The annual subscription is £10.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £12, overseas £15. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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Coultershaw Beam Pump.

Cover designed by Jonathan Newdick using a Garland photograph from February 1936.
"A lane at Strood".

Chairman's notes

Welcome to a new year. You'll see we have a new cover and an all-colour centrepiece, a hint of brightness after a long winter and, for our legion of postal members, a glimpse of contemporary Petworth. If four pictures of the Allsorts evening may seem a little excessive, I wish them to illustrate a particular point. Monthly meetings (now held in the summer) have been going since the late 1970s. It would be a little while before Keith offered a regular Magazine report but these have been a feature now for many years. The original thinking was to bring members together in a way that the Society had not hitherto attempted, and, familiar as it may now seem, the monthly meeting format was in its time something of a Petworth innovation.

The beginnings were not propitious: it was an open question after the first as to whether we should continue. The second, a talk on Lady Jane Grey, (remember?), set us on firmer ground and we never looked back. Early refreshment was generous to say the least but has been scaled down over the years while the essential format remains. Visiting speakers say that, thirty years and more on, it's more difficult than it was to get people out of an evening and hence many former venues have simply faded away. In winter there's television or computer, in summer there are other things. The Petworth Society, however, remains. All speakers are aware of their inability to attract a younger audience. I suspect this is nothing new: it was always so. Another generation will go its own way.

A serious difficulty with a thirty-year tradition is that newcomers, of whatever age group, are reluctant to penetrate what must appear something of a private circle. There simply isn't anything we can do about this except reiterate that everyone is welcome. The last thing Petworth needs is exclusivity; the Society has always battled the easy slip into "them" and "us".

As to material, I think that, over the years, I can detect a subtle change: it's more risky than it was to offer something that's similar to what is already available in television or DVD – public curiosity about a larger world is, to an extent, sated. Live performance will certainly draw: think of Alison Neal or the Allsorts but these tend to be one-off and something to afford perhaps once a year. For the rest we are beginning to look at a niche market, offering what is not readily media-available, and that tends to mean local. Miles speaks in April about Petworth inns, while there is a definite local connection for the AGM. Dorene Taylor in March is certainly not talking on a local subject but she was so good last year that she just

had to come again. I am working on the 2011-2012 programme with "think local" very much in mind. I would be interested in your thoughts.

A word to mark the passing of John Grimwood M.B.E. bandsman extraordinaire. John's connections with this Society were subtle but profound. J's Bulletin walk was a feature in the early years, but at his request the identity of "J" remained a closely guarded secret. His recollections of the "Prairie Plumber" enlivened the triumphant return of the Toronto Scottish Regiment in 1985. In later years I would speak to him about his years in the band: "It takes a good bloke to blow quietly" (PSM 116) John's considered view of the band since 1946 was a fitting companion to George Baxter's classic view of the years between the wars. John will be sadly missed.

Peter

22 January 2011

Subscriptions

We have held subscription levels this year but even with the Book Sale income margins are very tight. Postage costs make the £12 subscription for Magazines sent rather than delivered barely adequate. If you can add a little to the Magazine fund when you renew it would be appreciated.

Gone – but now, not forgotten

It will be impossible to convey the atmosphere in the Leconfield Hall when Mike Oakland returned to give a masterly presentation about the 'missing soldier' named on the Lurgashall War Memorial.

Three years ago, for the Garland Lecture, Mike had given an account of the lives of thirty-two of the thirty-three who had given their lives in the Great War, but he had drawn a complete blank on Captain Henry Reginald Gill, M.C. A book followed and, within weeks of its publication, an Australian requested a copy. It transpired that he knew of Gill, had medals and letters and this amazing stroke of luck led to further research and a final chapter to the story.

Mike started by asking us to imagine ourselves as the soldier, leading wire-cutting patrols at night across No Man's Land between the trenches of the Allies and of the German Army. He described in detail how the operation was carried out, the feelings and emotions, how discovery very nearly led to disaster and how this led to a change of plan and Reg (as he was known) leading a raiding party the next night.

For his outstanding leadership and bravery he was awarded the Military Cross, presented to him by King George V on November 22nd 1916, when he was in England recovering from a fractured wrist sustained during another raid. A picture appeared in the Daily Mirror.

So what had brought Reg to this point in his life? He was born in London, but went to school in Ovingdean on the outskirts of Brighton. On leaving, he joined the Naval Training Ship Worcester, moored in the Thames. 'Worcester' had given Mike problems – the city of Worcester? Worcester College, Oxford? No, the N.T.S. Worcester. From there he worked for two shipping lines, latterly, P & O, as an accountant, eventually settling in Freemantle, Australia, where he married. In 1913, he volunteered for the Australian Army as a 2nd Lieutenant, but resigned the following year. However, in 1915, he applied for a commission in the Australian Imperial Force and in 1916 had travelled to France via Egypt and was soon on the front line, seeing action described earlier. After that attack, he was sent to England on leave and again after the assault in which he was injured for hospitalisation, then re-joining his unit to take part in the Battle of Menin Road, 20th–25th September 1917. Ironically, it was during a bombing raid behind the lines that he was fatally wounded. He is buried in a war grave near Ypres.

To establish the link with Lurgashall, we have to go back to his English roots. His mother died only days after he was born. Mr Gill senior remarried, but his new wife became ill and needed nursing care. She died too and Mr Gill married

the nurse. They retired to Lurgashall, buying the Malthouse on the Green in 1914. So it was there that Reg spent a week's leave after the raid in 1916 and again following his stay in hospital and during training on Salisbury Plain afterwards.

So Lurgashall became his English home and Lurgashall gave him an entry on the War Memorial.

There were, of course, questions straightaway, but there had been so much to ponder and now, one wonders, what about the wife back in Australia? Are there descendants? Is there yet more research to be done?

A memorable evening but a very inadequate report, I'm afraid.

KCT

We faced the music – with The Allsorts

It was a full house for the Society's Christmas entertainment when the local concert party, The Allsorts, made a welcome return visit with their new show, "Let's Face The Music".

From the opening overture to the grand finale, the indefatigable Anthony Hancock at the keyboard provided the musical backing for the songs and dance of the '20s, '30s and '40s. The costumes were spectacular. Director, choreographer and performer, Lena Hill, brought experience, pep and personality into the show. Charles Wood's exceptional tenor solos and duets with Lena, Irene and Jo will long remain in the memory, as will Michael Clenshaw's character roles, of which his rendition of Pam Ayres' "Battery Hen" in full pantomime costume 'brought the house down'.

There were flapper girls, cheer leaders, Ovaltinees, corny jokes and tap dancing; nostalgic portrayals of George Formby, Shirley Temple, Laurel and Hardy, Marlene Dietrich, Carmen Miranda, Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn and Flanagan and Allen. Our Chairman, Peter, was particularly delighted with Charles Wood's inclusion of his second favourite, "And a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square".

With mince pies and a first class raffle in the interval, all agreed that it had been a heart-warming start to the festive season.

KCT

The missing negatives – part 2 (see PSM 142, December 2010)

George Garland, the Petworth photographer, had died in 1978, leaving a collection of 70,000 prints and negatives, now in the care of the West Sussex County Records Office.

Peter, our Chairman, gave the second part of his lecture about 'the missing negatives of the 1920s'. He had been able to fill in many of the gaps with prints, postcards and newspaper cuttings from Garland's own scrapbook and through conversations with people during research for his book 'Not submitted elsewhere' in 1979.

For the book, produced in collaboration with Jonathan Newdick, it was difficult to write captions for the photographs without the memories of those who knew the people in them, but today, there are comparatively few who can recall characters earlier than the war years. The photographs themselves lack details such as events and names.

If Peter were to do another book to add to the six already published – there are plenty of photographs to choose from – he would have to provide captions to them on his own.

Photographs taken in the 1920s reflect an insular Petworth which no longer existed ten years later. As a 'press photographer' at the time, Garland had to work within the accepted divide between gentry and the ordinary people and this is evident in the photographs, especially in the sheer hard work demanded of agricultural workers before mechanisation.

Until 1927, when the wooden studio was built in Station Road, Garland had no work base, unlike his Petworth predecessor Walter Kevis, chiefly taking portraits in his Lombard Street studio. He is even reported as washing off prints in a horse trough!

With a wide variety of photographs, expertly copied by Ian Godsmark for projection on to the large screen, this was a fascinating resumption of last October's Garland Lecture.

KCT

Petworth fair 2010

It's six o'clock Sunday morning the 21st. The fairmen have gone, the Hall key left on the mat at Trowels. The clerk of the market has a year's redundancy leave. The Square is completely empty, of cars and litter. Have you ever seen that? The early morning quiet is unnatural.

Four days and more ago Robert Harris and I were putting up a banner to warn against parked cars staying on into the time of the official closure. One remaining car can play havoc with setting up and as the District Council now have jurisdiction on parking rather than the police, moving an illegally parked car could be difficult. Five o'clock in the evening and children are being shepherded into four-wheel drives. Bonnets encroach on the narrow pavement on the Hall's east side. Two men fumbling with a banner can be ignored. I look across the Square into the brightly lit interior of Austens.

This is the 25th fair since the revival. 1986 seems a long way away and one fair fades into another – photographs will confirm, but from memory, Harris Brothers brought over only the Chairplanes. It would be 1987 before we saw the Gallopers. Those early days had a brief emphasis on steam and an element of exhibition – traditional fairground organs with the engines.

Sharp on eleven o'clock on the 19th. The Hall clock may say 12 noon but closure orders have something of the draconian about them. The heavy iron bollards from the Cut are already lying prone – so many corpses on a battlefield. They probably haven't been disturbed since the last fair day, grass at their feet testifies to that. The last two obdurate vehicles are about to leave and it's still only 11.35. The yellow District Council cones stand guard over the square. Banner, posters and hi-viz jackets have done their job.

Fred Harris recalls the last time we had sun to set up, sitting on a shop step at the top of the Square and soaking up the improbable sun of November. It's almost as good today. 2005 the year of the fire. The memory casts its own shadow on the sunny Square. Petworth of all places. Now, no tilt is kept on the Gallopers and the night before is a watchful one . . .

Six o'clock on the evening before. All is set up, only the smaller stalls to come in tomorrow. A slow cold November rain has set in but too late to trouble the fairmen. The shadow of the Chairplane rails reflects in the Square's damp surface.

And so the long morning. At three o'clock Mike opens the proceedings and the Gallopers spring into action. Petworth fair, an aristocrat among its English peers, is under way. Ancient fairs allied the exotic with the pragmatic: modern fairs eschew the pragmatic: they are in theory at least, an exercise in make-believe, a foray into a dream. But this is no push-button, 'virtual' world. Putting up or

taking down the big machines in the teeth of a roaring gale (not, thankfully, this year) can be reality at its harshest. If the fair's particular reality can be on occasion bleak, cruel even, in that I suppose lies the eternal triumph of the real over the virtual.

P.

On the road with the "Petworth boys"

The Knowles Tooth Book Sale was held over last year. To an extent, I imagine, it had outgrown its venue at Hurstpierpoint, to an extent also, it probably impeded the normal routine at Knowles Tooth, respite care for children. Proceeds of the sale go to children's welfare. We certainly missed it and were pleased to learn that it had been reinstated on a trial basis in a new venue – All Saints, Eaton Road – Hove's parish church. A little further than Hurstpierpoint but by no means out of the question. Clearly, a job for the "Petworth boys."

The two-day sale was over, finishing on the Saturday (Petworth fair day) and we would buy a proportion of what remained. Miles and myself in the blue Society van, but, crucially, Ian and Bill in a hired 2-3 ton transport. Anything left then would be taken away at 9am on Monday. For the Sunday morning service All Saints had put back the chairs in the centre aisle and shifted the remains of the sale to either side, fiction on the right non-fiction on the left. We were to be there for two o'clock. Bill was a veteran of several trips to Hurstpierpoint, Ian one of the original Festival Theatre "boys".*

Leigh from Knowles Tooth was already there. A little less than usual, he said, but it looked imposing enough to us. It's a given that the dealers will have left nothing of any value – this carcass will have been picked very clean indeed, but it's well worthwhile taking the remaining fiction or some of it, mainly paperback. At first sight the non-fiction's depressing: sheer dead weight and all the usual suspects.

While the others load the big van with fiction I scan the non-fiction then rummage in what appears to have been rejected pre-sale, and scavenge among the wreckage of what had once been a table of individually priced items and sets. Here the dealers have been absolutely merciless. It's dark at the back of the church, a kind of gloomy underworld of books already confined to the shades. Even the boxes seem to have abandoned hope. A minor Graham Greene first edition, no dust cover, might just make the £1 table. Ian, Miles and Bill are making uncomplimentary comments about my efforts on their behalf. But is rummaging

the sinecure they claim it is? Travellers' guides to exotic countries, a decade or more out-of-date, six-bottle wine boxes with odd volumes of encyclopaedias or dictionaries, casualties of a digital age. Sometimes I seem to be wandering in a maze where I meet a Readers Digest at every turn. Gradually I fill several boxes. And haven't I already seen this one before?

The others keep loading. I'll finish when they do. I've one or two possibles for the £1 table in December. Time for a quick word with Leigh before the Petworth boys are away. It'll be pitch dark when we get back and there's some serious unloading to be done. A busy and, in its own way, a very satisfying afternoon.

The Society was pleased to make an appropriate donation to the Book Sale proceeds.

P.

*See our trip to Chichester Festival Theatre in 2006. (PSM 125).

"You need a bigger hall!(?)"

"The dealers were merciless." A shade harsh perhaps; everyone has to make a living. Books and sentiment don't necessarily go together. Dealers come in assorted variety. I'd hesitate to say "in all shapes and sizes." Sometimes ladies, more often men, buyers in quantity or simply cherry-pickers. The same ones don't come to every sale but there are usually several, appearing Elijah-like out of the morning and, as mysteriously, vanishing. What they all have in common is a ferociously good eye. They can be anonymous or almost aggressive, straining at the ten o'clock threshold, or, on the surface at least, relaxed. They'll either make for the jostling £1 table or seize on some "set" glimpsed through the window from outside. I've known them disclaim professional status "some big shelves to fill up at home" but that's unusual. More often nothing is said. Some have approached us to open for "the trade" half an hour early but this is completely alien to the spirit of the sale as we see it. I know some fetes allow this. It's perhaps a relic of older days and antique dealers rummaging through jumble sales – themselves now echoes of a half-forgotten past consigned with whist drives to the shades. Most dealers we like and we've no illusions about their importance. Some of our regular local supporters object to buyers in quantity, taking the stock before they've had time to browse. It's a misapprehension; dealers are crucial, the glue that binds the Book Sale together. Given our expenses, selling in quantity is all, building a total by individual sales is certainly possible but it's a different thing

altogether.

December isn't traditionally one of the stronger months. Christmas shopping perhaps. The record total goes all the way back to 2002 and we're hardly likely to challenge it this year. The stock's adequate but hardly world-shattering – if 85% fresh. We've been lucky with the weather, a brief intermission in the intense cold and the snow's finally gone. But there's not an obvious dealer in sight. We're on our own. The Hall's packed at ten o'clock but last month had been something else. In ten years Miles and I had seen nothing like it. Not that bustle necessarily equates with hard cash. Some of the dealers simply couldn't handle it. "You need a bigger hall – it's outgrown the venue". It occurs to us that we wouldn't want to fill a bigger venue – four vanloads in cold weather is enough for anyone. Or perhaps "bigger venue" is dealerese for "there's not much here I want and I'm not going to jostle to get it". Perhaps. They'll be back. Dealers tend to have particular interests – good quality paperbacks but no hardbacks – older hardbacks, particularly novels, children's books – but never cooking and gardening.

At the Knowles Tooth sale I was surprised by two scarlet liveried bound Parish Magazines, 1897 and 1901 – in superb condition. They might even be Petworth; they certainly have the same monthly inserts, but in fact they are from Hughenden just north of High Wycombe. Clearly no one wanted them at the sale. Why were they kept? 1897 was the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. 1901 the year of the Queen's death. The 1897 magazine carries a souvenir feature on the marriage of Mr Coningsby Disraeli M.P. to Miss Silva, the bridegroom being nephew and heir to Benjamin Disraeli. A glance at the parish notes suggests a passing and quite fortuitous local connection with the influential Blagden family at Petworth. The Rev. E. W. Carew Hunt is new to the parish, while at Petworth Charles Holland is at the very end of a long tenure. "A few last notes before I finally cease to be your Pastor". Fittingly he echoes St Paul's farewell address to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus (Ach xx). The curate Mr Watson will write the parish notes pending the arrival of a new rector. At Hughenden Mr Hunt's August letter illuminates some late Victorian attitudes:

MY DEAR FRIENDS

Bad customs, like weeds, take a lot of killing. When one imagines they are dead they suddenly crop up again in all sorts of unexpected ways. Now, the object of the Reformation of the Church in the 16th century was not to create a brand new Church – there was no need and no desire to do that – but the aim was to reform the old Church, i.e., to sweep away a great many bad customs which had gradually grown up. The Reformers, like other people before and since, made some mistakes, but for many of the things

they did we owe them a great debt of gratitude. One of the greatest reforms which was gradually effected was connected with the public services of the Church. In olden days the services were said in Latin, and so the people, for the most part, were unable to take any part in them. But now for 300 years they have been said in our mother tongue, and all the services of the Church are so constructed that both the priest and the people shall take their proper share in common worship, both in prayer and praise. But the old custom which used to prevail with regard to all the services, though it no longer prevails with the services of Holy Communion and the daily offices of Matins and Evensong, still unfortunately lives on with regard to what are known as the Occasional offices, such as the Burial Service, the Marriage Service, and the office for the Churching of Women. In all these services it is intended that the congregation should take their part; as a matter of fact they do not do so. This is quite clearly a mistake. Take the Burial Service and you will see that it is intended, not only as a form of Christian burial, but quite as much as a service of hope and consolation for the mourners. They should therefore join in it, and not remain silently seated during the psalm as if the service was something done for them by their parish priest in which they themselves had no personal share. The word "clerks" in the rubric refers, not to the parish clerk, but to the choir. All present should therefore join in the psalm, and in the responses and the Lord's Prayer at the graveside, and follow silently the lesson and the prayers. So also at a wedding, those who are in Church ought not to regard themselves as spectators who have come simply to look on, but as co-sharers in the service as privileged to take their part in offering up to God their united prayers that He will be pleased to bless and hallow the wedded life of the bride and bridegroom. The same thing applies to all the Occasional Services. I am quite sure that these services, coming as they do at important moments in the lives of those most nearly concerned with them, will be found much more helpful and real if only we will all do what our Prayer Book means us to do, and will join in them with our lips as well as our heart.

1901 sees the passing of the Queen and, almost simultaneously, the 2nd Lord Leconfield. Herbert Jones, the Petworth rector, approaches Lent in appropriately chastened mood. "The sad events of the past month must have brought home to us the importance of redeeming the time and preparing for our own end. Lent brings a call to self-examination, repentance and newness of life to which we must not fail to listen."

Hughenden's relations with the late Queen were rather more intimate, Mr

Hunt offering some extracts from previous Court Circulars. It had been the custom since 1881 for the Queen to send a wreath of primroses on Primrose Day to be laid on Lord Beaconsfield's grave. Mr Hunt notes: "When April 19th comes round, how strange it will be not to see that wreath in its accustomed place." He echoes his Petworth counterpart: "With hearts chastened by a great national sorrow, we have entered upon the solemn season of Lent. Lent is the Church's annual summons to the soldiers of the Cross ..."

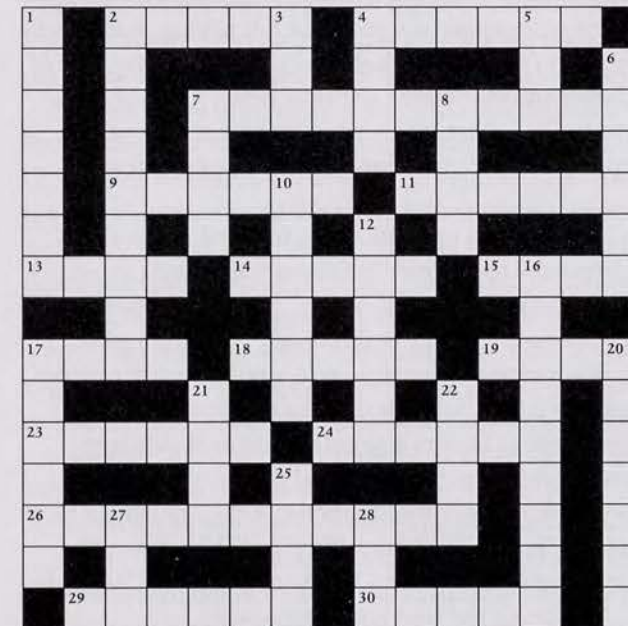
Would anyone like the two volumes? If not, I will include them in the April sale.

P.

An Upperton query

Mrs Anna Arnold writes concerning the Pitshill "Home of Rest" where the Mitford family are buried. With his father, her husband Simon used to look after the burial ground, sited on Upperton Common. She writes, "We have spent years looking for it, but it seems to have vanished." Perhaps some one can help by contacting Anna at 55 Newfield Gardens, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 1JR or Peter.

HISTORIC PETWORTH PEOPLE CROSSWORD



and outspoken liberal who founded the Albert Institute in 1860 (6)
12 The 3rd Lord Leconfield's wife, remembered for many acts of kindness (6)
16 see 2dn
17 A new phrase for an angel (6)
20 Rector and aide to the Wyndham family in C19th (7)
21 Certainly 1dn was one (4)
22 Creativity encouraged by 2ac and 7dn (4)
25 see 6dn
27 Egg cells of plants and animals (3)
28 The 6th Lord Leconfield's wife, shortly! (3)

ACROSS

2 & 7dn Patron agriculturalist and philanthropist (5,4)
4 Miss Morgan – wood engraver and war diarist (6)
7 Composer who lived at Bedham in the early C20th (6,5)
9 Ecclesiastical area (6)
11 Mr Garland (6)
13 God of love, hidden in 1dn (4)
14 ... may have fired an arrow at this lovesick youth (5)
15 Don't put the horse before it (4)
17 Tie round a girl's waist (4)
18 Sowing machine (5)
19 Season when 2ac and 7dn gave away hundreds of pies and beef to the poor (4)
23 Florence -----, diarist who lived at Heath End (6)
24 Stiffens the laundry (6)
26 Morgan, Kevis and Garland left collections of these (11)

29 ----- Roberts, draughtsman and painter best remembered for his cartoons (6)
30 Colonel who founded the Petworth Society (5)

DOWN

1 Rector during WW1, he died trying to save a drowning girl (7)
2 & 16 Spoon, hot ham and mussels at this charitable home? (9,9)
3 Turn up to be married and the ground is damp (3)
4 Brag about one's clothing (4)
5 Carew's sculpture in the lake marks where 2ac and 7dn's favourite one drowned (3)
6 & 25 two Mr Streeters – one horologist & jeweller, and one head gardener (6,4)
7 see 2ac
8 Large water jug (4)
10 Controversial high churchman

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD 141

ACROSS

1. Gunpowder, 5 Fete, 7 China, 9 Flemish, 10 Ewer, 11 Globe, 13 Harp, 17 Yeomen, 19 Pedestal, 21 Grinling, 22 Selden, 25 Ogle, 26 Percy, 27 Skep, 31 Gibbons, 33 Diana, 34 Fawn, 35 Aphrodite

DOWN

1. Gallery, 2 Niche, 3 Opie, 4 Ref, 5 Fred, 6 Chapel, 8 Ally, 12 Beef, 14 Acted, 15 Realm, 16 Rebel, 18 Oriel, 20 Anne, 21 George, 23 Neptune, 24 Iced, 28 Khaki, 29 John, 30 Dado, 32 Sea

All aboard the Petworth Tardis

The Museum season began conveniently with a new visitors' book and ended with just a couple of pages left. A high proportion of our 1502 adult paying visitors will have made an entry, as too the many free voucher holders in April and May, and of course, children, less inhibited than adults. "I liked the cella best." In PSM 138 I tried to use the visitors' book to analyse what had been a very successful year at 346 and I do not propose to replicate the exercise here, simply to offer a few impressions and comments.

The book has four columns, the first two obvious enough: name and address, the latter often, in practice, abbreviated to town or in the case of visitors from abroad, home country. The last column "Your Comments" needs little initial explanation. The third column "How did you hear about us?" is an attempt to sharpen the focus on publicity. It's interesting, useful up to a point, but in practice a fairly blunt instrument. The truth is that, while leaflet distribution is crucial, Museum attendance owes a great deal to factors beyond our control. Visitors clearly come to Petworth, wander round, perhaps see local publicity or simply stumble on the Museum as they explore the town. Sometimes they're helped on their way: "A man down the road." "A man in the small antique shop down the road." Sounds like Max Bradley! Unusual is, "Saw it from our cycle" or "Walked past when you weren't open." Visitors to the town can be resolute.

Some outlets are a little surprising: "Saw info. at Aylesford Priory, Kent" or "Leaflet in Havant library. "Leaflets are cheap enough and, over and above our normal distribution, happy visitors are usually more than happy to take them away with them. Many will fall on stony ground but a few will reach "the parts other leaflets fail to reach." Pubs, doctors' surgeries and clubs.

One small but not insignificant catchment comprises local people who have been meaning to come for years and are pleased when they do. "Live locally (West Chiltington) and finally made it." It's not unusual to find a Petworth entry along those lines.

The word 'Museum' is, of course, something of a millstone. "Mrs Cummings' cottage" probably serves us rather better, but the word "Museum" isn't going to go away. A stray comment like "Fascinating, keep on collecting," places undue emphasis on the Museum aspect. In fact additions to Museum stock, while not out of the question, are unusual now and each carefully considered on its merits.

Another minor category, but an important one, comprises visitors who have some kind of Petworth background and who return, sometimes just the once, sometimes on a more or less regular basis. If a hurrying town, full of new shops, can appear reserved and even alien, 346 High Street offers a kind of compass

point. I may even be called up to meet some visitors, although more often the visitors' book simply offers a tantalising note. "I used to live in Petworth as an evacuee. I have only happy memories of days gone by." Or the lady from Argentina with a very Petworth maiden name, Spanish speaking but a teacher of English, whose paternal grandfather left Petworth to work on the railways and remained in South America. She is supposed to be writing.

Visitors come from all over the UK. The book is a microcosm of visitors to Petworth over a season. There is clearly a bias toward Sussex and the Home Counties but no area of the UK is unrepresented. Among visitors from abroad probably Germany and the United States have numerical superiority this year but another year will be different. The old Dominions have their share as too most European countries, with Qatar, Tunisia and of course the lady from Argentina.

What do visitors expect? Here the "Your Comments" section comes into its own. They come to see a "Museum" but "what a wonderful hidden secret" suggests surprise at the end of the journey. "Far better than I imagined" strikes a similar chord. "Wonderful experience and beautifully preserved – the highlight of my holiday" hints at rather more than an array of exhibits. Break through the hard outer crust of "Nostalgia", "Step back in time" "Time warp" and you arrive at "What a journey through time, the Petworth Tardis."

"Lovely Museum, had a great time talking to curators", suggests another dimension. It's clear that the essential Museum experience is the interplay between visitor and steward. 346 is not self-explanatory. The very first entry for 2010 sets the tone. "Lovely visit, really enjoyed the tour round. The Guides were excellent." The initial comment sets a recurring theme for the year. "Made special by two lovely ladies." "I have really enjoyed looking around because of the lovely people of the house showing us round." "Absolutely fascinating, super Guides."

Two last comments: "À recommander. Une belle tranche de vie Anglaise" and my favourite of them all: "Wonderful Guides. Beautifully restored." Botox at 346? Surely not!

P.

You don't need to be "beautifully restored" to join the "A" team at 346. Simply ring Peter at 342562.

Poetry is always something of a difficulty for an Editor. This Magazine demands a definite Petworth slant and probably a reflection of our large wider catchment. Margaret Green seems here, in the popular phrase, "to tick the correct boxes".

Fifties Glimpses of a Petworth Childhood

Cycling to my friend's house was always a treat
On a long hot summer's day
As tarmac blistered in the heat
Wheels of my bike bursting bubbles on the way.

Mickey the dog would greet me
As quickly to the barn we'd flee
To see the newborn kittens
Nestled warmly in the hay.

Or we'd lose ourselves on the many paths
In woods they called The Gog
But find our way out when we came across
The grave of a little dog.

Sometimes my mum would come with us
And we'd gather twigs and sticks
To build a roaring campfire
So that bacon and eggs she could fix.

We felt as free as the birds above
Without a thought or bother
As we walked down to the Swinging Bridge
Across the River Rother.

Then the Swinging Bridge would rock n' roll
And send through me a shiver
With rotting planks and a great big hole
That could drop me in the river!

Margaret Green

[Margaret has kindly given us some very attractive note-cards featuring different aspects of "Fifties Glimpses." They will be on sale at the March Book Sale – proceeds to the Society. Ed.]

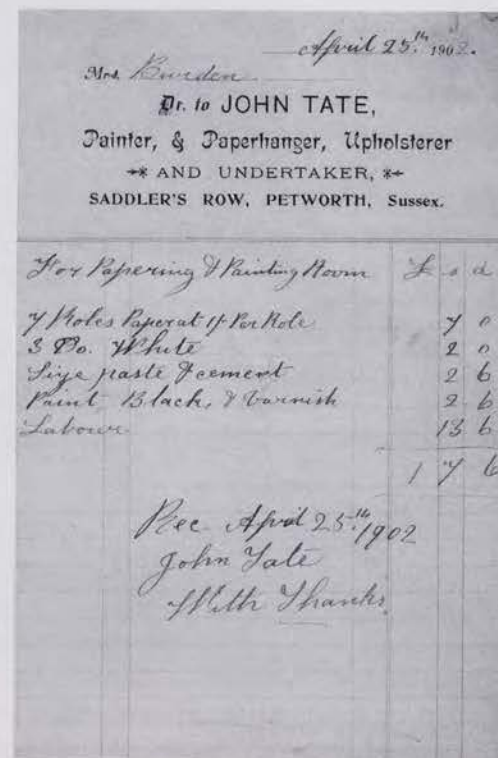
Old Petworth traders (5) – John Tate (Saddlers Row)

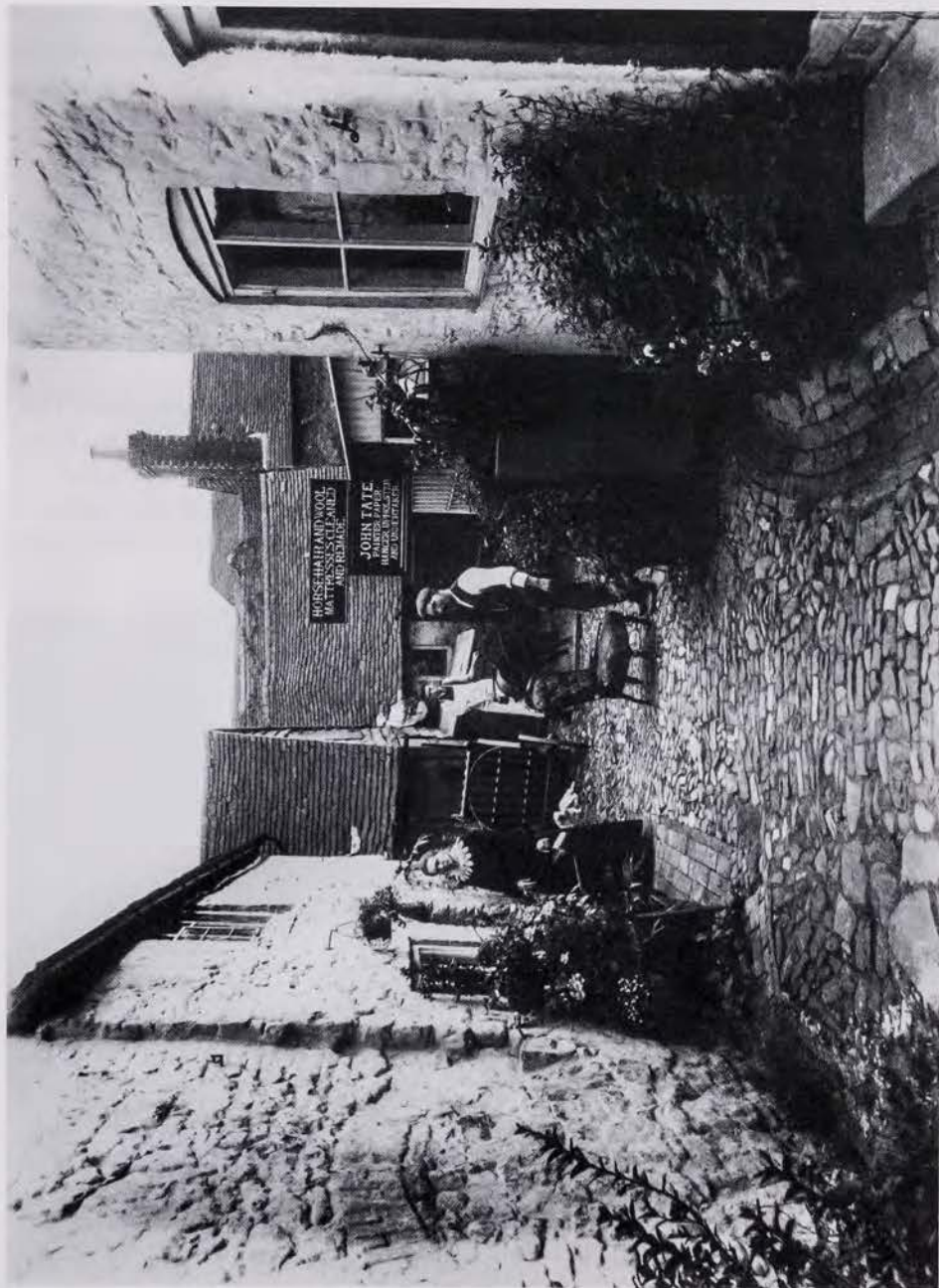
Bill Ede had worked for Tate in the 1920s. The business was a combination of upholstery work, decorating and undertaking. "He would re-stuff mattresses, emptying the case, then putting the contents (which had got hard and lumpy by this time) through what was called a "devil-killer" a drum with a set of fearsome spikes, something like a chaff-cutter. This would break-up the flock material and get rid of the lumps. You had to be careful or the thing would chop up your hand as well."

Mr Tate operated with neither horse nor motorised vehicle and decorating jobs involved the two men packing a heavy hand-cart with tackle, even to the outlying villages; it would be the same with coffins. During Bill Ede's time there was a move to High Street and an additional activity – picture framing. At the Saddlers Row premises John Tate kept his prize rabbits in hutches to the rear. (PSM 32 and 34).

George Garland went to see John Tate on his Golden Wedding in 1935. "He was doing a jig to the tune of some distant band coming over the wireless. The set had been a Golden Wedding present." (PSM 112, page 50).

[I have not transcribed the invoice as the handwriting seems clear enough. Ed.]





John Tate: Saddlers Row July 1905.
 Photograph by Walter Kevis.

My introduction to Petworth

When my father, a regular soldier in the Coldstream Guards, died in 1926, my mother and I moved to Sussex when she took up the position of cook/housekeeper at a farm near Kirdford called Brownings, this was my first memory, I cannot remember my father at all. I started school at Kirdford but it was not for long as my mother met a travelling fishmonger called William "Pedlar" Palmer; after months of courtship they married and we all moved into Petworth and stayed with Auntie Remnant in Grove Street, I think the number was 333, it was from there that I went to school near the police station, by that time my new Dad had sold his fishmongers business and was doing "normal" work, in between times acting as Petworth town crier, I have a photo of him taken by G. Garland outside the old Post Office, his father, my new grandfather kept a sweetshop in Golden Square, a source of a few aniseed balls whenever I called in. Our stay in town was not long as Dad had a job as "lengthman" with the WSCC, his "length" was from the bottom of Duncton hill to Lyttleton Farm along the combe bottom towards the hamlet of Upwaltham. We moved into one of the houses at the top of Duncton hill, a little cluster of just eight dwellings, here to settle down for the next ten years.

The move to the top of the Downs was a move into the country outback with no electric or gas, no running water. We had a well for drinking and cooking and rain water for baths and washing, no coalman called, heating and cooking was done on primus stoves or on an old wood-burning stove complete with oven, the baker called twice a week and a van with general stores, paraffin and methylated spirits once a week, other than that you had to be self-sufficient. It was a rather lonely life as there was only one other boy the same age as me, but it was a life of freedom. All of the Downs was my playground.

My new school was the Duncton C of E, the head mistress a Miss Botting, the total number of 'students' fluctuated between 90 to a 100 divided into three classrooms. The lessons were rather basic, but the teachers were very dedicated, the children along our valley were bussed into school, the driver a man called Sandy Peacock who was not averse to stopping, taking a 12bore out of the cab and getting a rabbit for his dinner.

I left school at the age of 14 and started work as an apprentice flour miller at Coultershaw mill, a 45 hour week, a 5 mile cycle ride and a starting wage of about 37p (7/6) as a working 'man' I now started to explore Petworth, having my haircut at Pelletts, ice-creams at the dairy, dance classes where I met my first love Peggy, and at least twice a week to the cinema in the old tin hut at the end of the twitten opposite the Midhurst Road. It was here that Mrs Streeter played the piano to

accompany the silent films, but as time went by the new talkies, and the new cinema was built on the Midhurst road, and from time to time a circus would set up on Hampers Green and in November the annual fair in the town square with its noise and smell. By now I was in my teens and would attend the 'flannel' dances in the Iron Room getting to know the girls, Joan Dale the watchmakers blonde daughter, Aggie Adsett and the true love of my life then, Peggy Cate. By this time we had moved to Sutton, then the war came and I went to serve with the Royal Sussex Regiment. I did not marry my teenage sweetheart but a girl from the north. I finished my time in the army and having done over 22 years and reached the rank of warrant officer, I was accepted as a member of that select band known as The Yeoman Warders of The Tower of London usually known as the Beefeaters, living in the Tower for the next fifteen years and reaching the rank of Chief Yeoman Warder and awarded the honour of being made a member of the Victorian Order by the Queen.

I now live in South Wales with my two daughters and son, my lovely wife of 57 years passed away in the year 2000 and though I have a happy life here in Wales, Petworth and the South Downs hold so many happy memories.

Supernumerary Chief Yeoman Warder C 'Pop' Davis M.V.O.

[Compare a parallel account by Mr Davis in PSM 23 March 1981 pages 10-12. Ed.]



Mr Davis with his late wife in 1973.



Petworth Fair 2010.
Photograph by Keith Sandall.



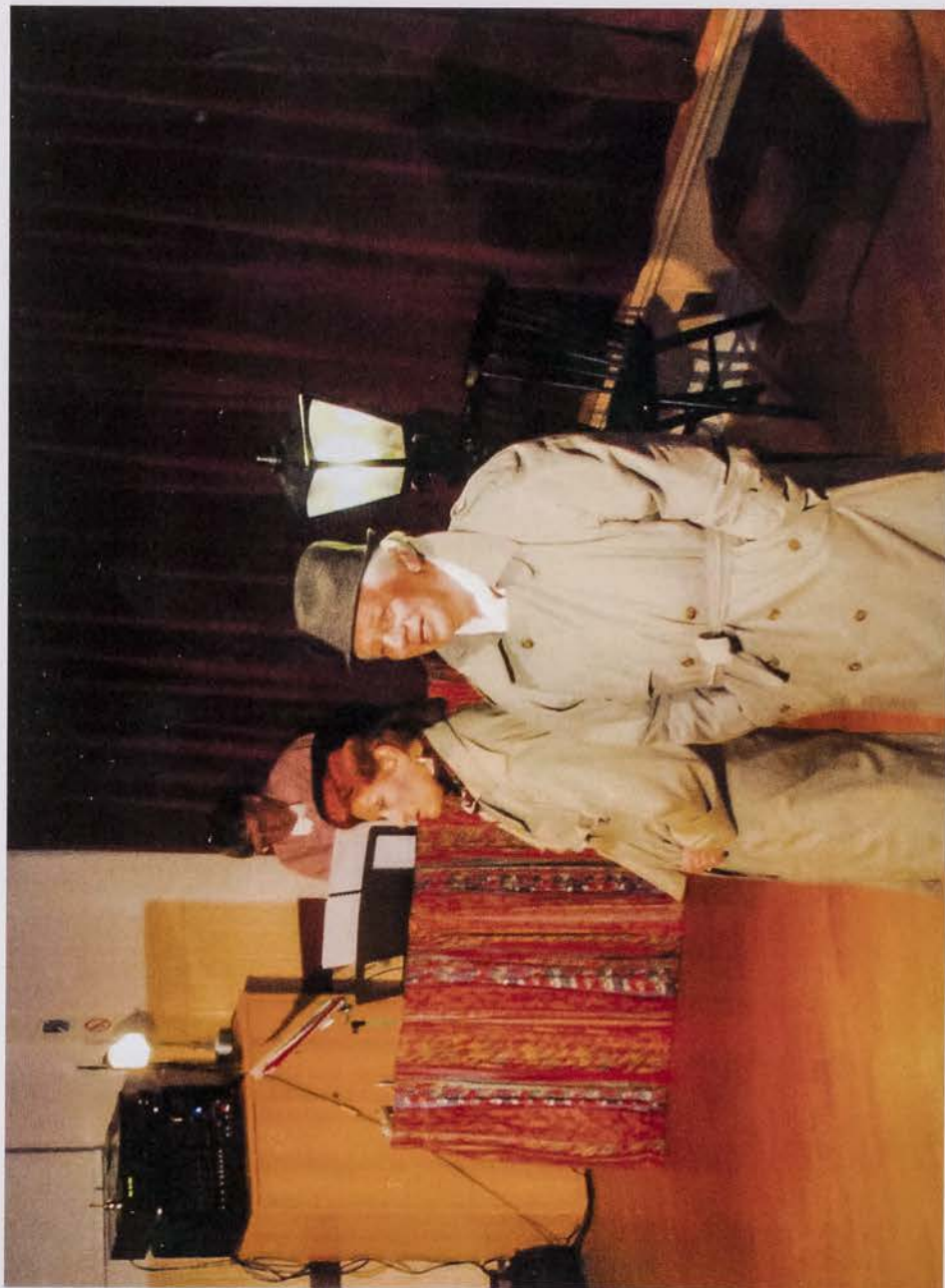
Petworth Fair 2010.
Photograph by Keith Sandall.



Four photographs by Pearl Godsmark of the Allsorts at Petworth.
The first shows part of the audience.



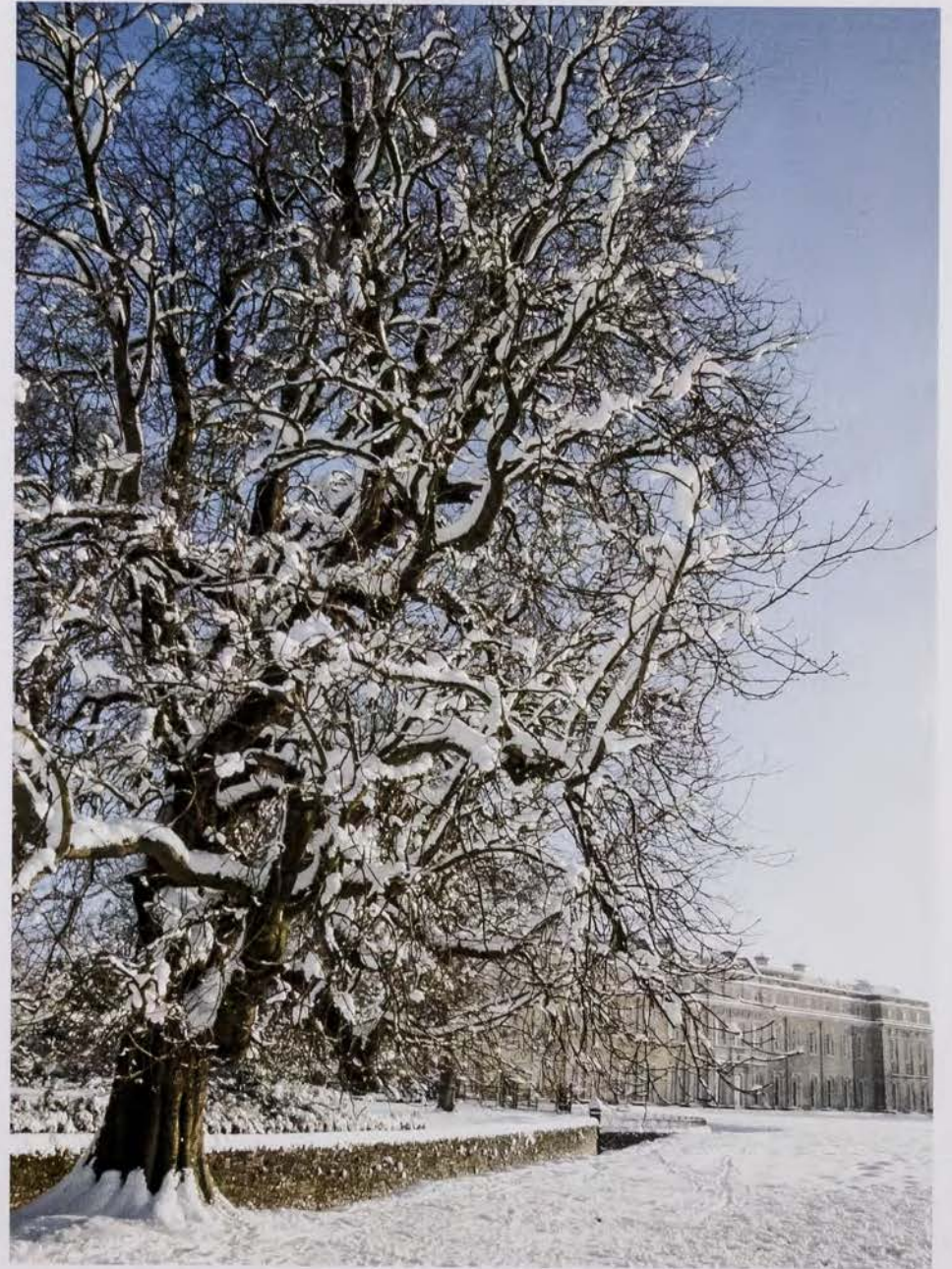
"Battery Hen."



"Lily Marlene."



"Carmen Miranda."



A Petworth Park snow scene.
Photograph by Tim Wardle.



The National Trust Christmas tree 2010.
Photograph by Tim Wardle.

Peggy Cate

In September last year I spoke to Gladys Wakeford about her time at The Angel Shades in Petworth (see 'Peggy Cate lived with her Grandmother', issue 141). Gladys spoke fondly of a friend of hers named Peggy Cate with whom she had lost touch many years earlier and wondered if she was still alive, or indeed whether anybody remembered her. Considering the length of time in question it was not really surprising that the response was negligible until out of the blue came a 'phone call and the following letter.

Miles

Bridgend,
South Wales

Dear Miles,

Ref. our talk on the 'phone, here are some facts that I can recall about Peggy Cate and I hope that they will fill in a few gaps.

Peggy was born on 25 December 1920 and christened Margaret Noel Cate. The family lived on the Bognor Road at the end of the Tangmere airfield. When Peggy left school at the age of fourteen she came to Petworth to look after her grandmother at Somerset Hospital almshouse in North Street.

I first met Peggy at Mrs Streeters dance at the White Hart in about 1936. From there we progressed to going to the pictures together in the Iron Room where entrance was one shilling. Some of the films were silent and so Mrs Streeter played the appropriate music on the piano.

By this time things were beginning to get serious between Peggy and me so I took her to meet my parents in Sutton and then to meet her father and brothers. In May of 1938 I joined the army and later that year I went to meet Peggy at the annual Sea Rangers camp on the Foudroyant a wooden hulk moored in Portsmouth harbour, she was very serious about her commitment to the Rangers.

At the start of World War Two I was moved with my unit to various locations and our only contact was by letter and the very occasional weekend

leave. It was during one of these visits that Peggy and I decided to get engaged but not to marry until after the war. The next time that we met was on a short leave before Dunkirk and by this time she had joined the WRNS. It was after this that I am sorry to say that we began drifting apart and the engagement ended in 1942. The following year I married a northern girl and the marriage lasted 57 years, sadly my lovely wife passed away in 2000.

Peggy and my wife were the only two girls that ever mattered to me and I never forgot Peggy. There is a saying that goes something like 'you don't marry the girl you love, but you love the girl you marry'.

In about 2003 I contacted Peggy's brother who lived in Chichester and he told me that Peggy had sadly passed away.

All the best,
Pop Davies. M.V.O.

"Diary" is a little misleading

I suppose that any Petworth resident of a certain age, if asked to name one quintessential Petworth shop, might reply "Olders". Certainly there were many others, but Olders, slightly off the beaten track in Angel Street, had something indefinable, an aura almost. Perhaps it was Dora Older herself, slight but seemingly impervious to time, presiding over butter, sugar, cheese and tea, all from bulk, and of course the coffee that gave Olders its distinctive fragrance.

Talking to me in 2005 (PSM 120) Alan Older found family roots in agriculture rather than grocery. There were eighteenth century links with River Park Farm at Lodsworth and later with Upperton. In the 1930s there were branches of the family at Tillington, Upperton and Petworth, while the Angel Street shop had been run by the Older family since the 1890s. There were three children, Arthur (b. 1890), Amy (b. 1892) and Dora (b. 1893). In 2005 Alan mentioned a diary although "as diaries often do, it simply tends to chronicle outside events rather than giving Dora's personal reaction to them."

Following a second visit by Alan and his wife Jennifer, it is now possible to offer a more considered account of Dora's "diary." It runs to two large notebooks, the first covering the years from 1912 to 1955, the second, rather smaller, from 1955 to Dora's death in 1980. "Diary" is perhaps a little misleading; Dora does not confide and there can be very long gaps between entries. I would guess that when Dora

began working in the shop, probably when her brother Arthur left for the war in 1914, opportunity for reflection was very limited even if Dora had been so inclined. Sundays were usually church days, and Bank Holidays a day to be grasped with both hands, a pattern that continues over the years. Alan recalled in 2005, "She (Dora) was a great traveller and had a distinctive small leather suitcase which she always took with her. She made a point of visiting galleries, theatres and other places of interest. Usually in later years, she travelled alone. Dora might be very polite and self-effacing but underneath her quiet exterior was a determined lady with considerable verve."

Despite the huge time scale 1912 to 1980, Dora might lay her book aside for long periods. There is virtually nothing from the 1920s and complete silence from Trinity Sunday 1922 to the August Bank Holiday of 1931, nor is there anything of Florence Rapley's intensity¹. Perhaps Dora's book has more affinity with Mrs Cownley's² scrapbook (PSM 86) although Mrs Cownley's book has virtually nothing of the personal.

In some ways Dora's diary, if such it can be called, is most significant for the impression it gives of Petworth's transformation over the period from the close-knit, inward looking class-divided essentially nineteenth century community it was in 1912 to the freer outward-looking less compact society of the 1960s and 1970s let alone that of 2010. It is pointless to attempt value judgements, it can be said only that the two Petworths are utterly different. I would judge that the years from 1912 to 1919 will be the most living part of the book for the modern reader, although Dora's occasional reflections on the later demise of Olders as a shop offer a sad commentary on changing times.

The book opens with a rather amateurish pencil drawing of the Titanic and a note in ink "RMS Titanic, largest most luxurious liner in the world, sunk in mid-ocean through collision with an iceberg April 15th 1912. About 1600 lives lost. White Star Lines." Clearly the note is contemporary and relies on information immediately available. Dora is nineteen.

The last entry records a visit to the hospital for sick children at Brighton and an "interview" with the matron. Whatever the purpose of the interview, nothing seems to have come of it. The entry may reflect simply Dora's membership of the local Red Cross detachment. On May 6th Dora records a great fire at Hardham Priory with a photograph taken a day or two later, presumably by Dora or a friend. A year or so earlier Kin Knight (PSM 110) had cycled with friends to Bury in the wake of the Petworth Fire Brigade for a similar fire.

On Whit Monday Dora goes with her father and brother to London on a sight-seeing tour. It takes in the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, the Albert Hall, the General Post Office and the Albert Memorial.

Dora observes, "Went through Hyde Park, saw children paddling in the Serpentine." Later the Olders went to the Military and Naval tournament at Olympia.

A Red Cross display at Pitshill, Tillington, involved Dora having an imaginary compound fracture of the thigh, while her life-long commitment to St Mary's Sunday School is reflected in the presence at the annual treat at Bognor, "A few minor mishaps occurred as train sickness and falling into the sea. One did this so successfully that she had to be taken into a house to (be) put to bed whilst her clothes were put in the oven to dry." On July 3rd Dora records the famous Bignor Park pageant "giving all the historical events that happened in the neighbourhood starting from the Druids . . . also a most interesting part, of the Dragon of Bignor Hill approaching a Saxon encampment, driving the frightened inhabitants into the woods." The description would suggest that Dora actually attended.

On August Bank Holiday Dora goes to Brighton Cricket Ground, again with her father and brother. "Asked Ranji the Indian Prince for his autograph which is now in my album." Clearly the Older family were determined to make the best use of their rare bank holidays.

August 7th sees the Agricultural Show in Petworth Park. "Very poor day, showery, and no cows, sheep or pigs admitted through an outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in Surrey." The weather also affected the Primrose League Fete in Petworth Park later in the month, Dora having a tea table with Rose Ricketts. On the 15th Dora visits Arundel Castle and Cathedral with her New Street neighbour Nurse Moorman and niece Kitty.

Early in September Dora picks 9lbs of blackberries at Upperton, "sold them to Mrs Knight for money to help buy a canary."³ Next day Mrs Mant's Jumble Sale at Avenings realises £18. A day out at Guildford ends unexpectedly. "Had such a misfortune coming home, had no idea the four o'clock train came through Pulborough without a change. We got out and the train steamed out so we had to walk. But when we got to Fittleworth I saw an empty motor coming along and asked for a ride, which I got to the top of Shimmings Hill and we arrived home about the same time as if we came by train."

Dora did not work regularly in the Angel Street shop until war came in 1914, but she does seem to have cycled out to take customers' orders, a crucial part of Olders' operations that would continue well into the 1950s. So, on October 1st, "There have been terrific rains here lately everything is under water down by the river. I went to Heathend for Mrs Rapley's order, having no idea of the water over the Station Road, and, of course, instead of turning back I cycled through it, the water came up to my knees in the middle, being about two feet deep, I never had such an experience before. I absolutely could not face riding back so had my

bicycle put on to the top of the bus and rode back."

A rare glimpse of Petworth's enduring class divisions comes on October 9th. "Arthur and I have been to a concert in the Iron Room, very enjoyable, but very poor attendance owing to people not patronising a concert in aid of the Grove Lawn Tennis Club which consists of the Gentry and ought to get out of many difficulties without a concert."

Wednesday October 30th sees Dora playing hockey at Fittleworth and, in the evening, attending a Tariff Reform meeting in the Lion Room. "Lady Leconfield in the chair – this the first meeting where Lady Leconfield has attended here." On the next day the Bishop of Chichester dedicates the new vestry and organ. In November Dora is busy with the Red Cross and on the 27th November has an enjoyable Social at Tillington School "had every dance" Dora notes.

On December 17th Dora hears a lecture on China. It is Ladies Night at the Men's Mutual Improvement Society. Christmas and Boxing Day are both wet. For the former Dora and her mother are up at 5.30 to go to St Mary's with Arthur, before walking to Egdean to take presents to relatives. So ends 1912.

P.

1. "So Sweet as the Phlox is" – the diary of Florence Rapley 1909 to 1912. (Window Press 1994).
2. Housekeeper at Petworth House. The scrapbook covers some fifteen years to the early 1920s.
3. Mrs Knight was the Lombard Street greengrocer: 9lbs of blackberries is a huge amount. I am not clear about the canary – something to do with the coal-mines? or perhaps Dora simply wanted a pet canary.

Avoid the Bartons Lane dandelions!

I have never lived permanently at Sutton but I was, in fact, born there, my mother Stella Smith coming from the village. My father was from Petworth, the son of Florence Knight, universally known after her husband's early death as Mrs "Gordon" Knight. She kept the grocery shop at the junction of East Street and New Street, which is now a travel agency. My parents had eloped to Devon, presumably in the face of parental disapproval on one side or the other. We lived at Barnstaple.

My mother, in particular, felt leaving West Sussex to be a great wrench and would return to Sutton at the slightest opportunity and stay there as long as she reasonably could. Hence visiting Sutton became an integral part of growing up for myself and my sister, who is four years older than I am.

My father, Cecil, was very much at ease with the questing spirit of the times and one of the first in Petworth to own a motor-cycle. On leaving Midhurst Grammar School he worked at the Norman Thompson Flight Company at Shoreham but returned to work for Mr Calnan at Petworth Engineering Company in East Street and also to assist his cousin Stanley Collins in his fledgling cinema venture. Leaving Mr Calnan, he soon had a local hire-car business. It was a time when private car ownership was still relatively uncommon. He was also a natural musician. He never learned to read music, being entirely self-taught, but he would pick up virtually any instrument and play by ear. For a while he played with a small dance band formed by Gladys Whitcomb (later Mrs Morley), then he branched out on his own, having a band like Miss Whitcomb's that played for local dances. He had the advantage that his hire car, being of a fair size, could act effectively as a small coach. The band was no passing hobby but a significant supplement to his income. I think my grandmother would have preferred a more sedate profession; Cecil's brother, my uncle Percy, had a position in the Westminster Bank rising to manager.

As I have said, my mother's undying attachment to Sutton would play an important part in our lives and we would see a great deal of our maternal grandmother. In 1939 our summer stay at Sutton was cut short by the impending crisis and in 1940 we didn't come up at all, leaving us children with an unending sense of bitterness toward Hitler. 1941 saw the establishment of a pattern. Every Easter we would come to Sutton for the entire school holiday, then, even better, we would come up for the summer holiday. We'd leave Barnstaple on the 8.46 for Exeter, change at Salisbury where a wait of 1½ hours gave us more than nodding acquaintance with the Cathedral. It would be my mother, my sister, and I. My father's car hire business suffered from a series of very wet Devon summers, and,



of course, petrol would be rationed during the war. He wanted to join the R.A.F. but was rejected on grounds of age; eventually joining the Petroleum Board. The work entailed a lot of travelling and he was away from home a great deal, although not as much as if he had been a serving member of the armed forces.

Jane Smith, my grandmother, would meet us at Chichester station in Frank Harwood's car. This doubled as a milk van and there was a residual odour of spilled milk, which I didn't appreciate, although this came to be an integral part of our returning to our Sussex roots. Sutton was wonderful. My mother was something of a stickler for education and in Devon was inclined to dwell on anything less than satisfactory in our school reports, but once she was back in Sutton she relaxed and we heard no more. If Sutton was wonderful, so was Granny Smith. She would have saved all her threepenny pieces for our visit, and all her sweet ration. When we arrived she'd share out her store between us. Money and sweets and Sutton – what more did one need? My sister and I were still very young in those early war years and Sutton seemed relatively undisturbed.

The pattern of visits continued after the war, although by the late 1940s I was in my teens and my sister was at Reading University. Sutton never meant any lack of interest in our numerous Petworth relatives and our frequent trips to the town would be made on foot. There were all sorts of ways to come into Petworth; up to Byworth corner by the Cottage Hospital and down by the Virgin Mary Spring, time meant little enough, or the long haul up the Station Road. In 1940 Granny Knight was 70 but she rose to the challenge of rationing and all that entailed although her daughter Brenda helped deal with the ration books every Saturday evening. They lived in the house just by the Post Office entrance, Brenda gave piano lessons and Granny Knight's sister, always known as Auntie Ted, who had joined them to do the cooking and look after the house after Gordon's death kept it all immaculate with the aid of Mrs Grimwood. The shop itself had a fair staff; I can just remember the Baxter boys before they joined up – then there were two

lady assistants, Louie Baxter and Florence Keen. Florence's father, Jimmy, worked in the shop and did the delivery round. We never walked home after a day in Petworth, either we had a taxi, or, more usually, Jimmy Keen would run us home in the shop van. It would be a different matter once the buses started. Granny sat at a high desk to the left as you entered the shop. There was a back room with zinc lined drawers used for spices and a cellar presided over by Jimmy Keen. He was always known as "Sunny" Jim after the character on the Force Wheatflakes packet.

Father didn't have a band in Devon, that finished with his Petworth days, although he was always in demand for pub sing-songs, perhaps he never quite recaptured the zest of Petworth days in the 1920s.

My Petworth grandmother had been a Collins, very much a Byworth family and Petworth seemed full of relatives. Her brother Tom Collins at the dairy in East Street, further toward the church than the later dairy premises, had died before my time but his widow Gertie was still alive. I remember hearing that my father's 21st birthday celebrations were cut short by Tom Collins dying on the same day. My father thought this a little inconsiderate!

Gordon Knights was an old-established business, which had been founded by Gordon's father, James Knight. When Gordon died of diphtheria in 1906 Florence put in a manager, Mr Simmons, but when he was called up in 1914 she took on that role herself. The shop was rented from the Leconfield Estate and Jimmy Keen lived in the house next door. Between 1898 and 1906 Florence's parents and parents-in-law, her husband and eldest son died and a further blow at that time was that her home and the house next door were left to Alfred Knight, Gordon's younger brother. They had to be bought back from Alfred who left Petworth to set up the West Surrey Athletic Company which made tennis rackets.

Another relative was Peggie Streeter at the Clock House at the corner of Church Street and Lombard Street. My father had taught her to drive. Peggie's mother Constance was Granny Knight's sister; she suffered from arthritis and tended to stay upstairs in the Clock House. Her husband, Ernest, was a very ingenious man; he had a wonderful collection of butterflies and another of coins, each scrupulously kept in cabinets he had made himself. Petworth seemed full of relations. Some "aunts" were not really aunts at all, like Dollie Westwood in Lombard Street who had a wool shop. We were familiar visitors at shops like Weavers the newsagents, or Knights the Lombard Street bakers with their famous lardy cakes or the Misses Arnold in Middle Street, another newsagent. Or we might pop into the East Street dairy by the corner of Trump Alley for an ice cream, Granny's threepenny pieces would be burning a hole in our pocket. We had a set route, focussed on the town centre, High Street always seemed off our

route. Perhaps it was because our relations were concentrated in the town centre. One thing was regular unless the weather was bad: in summer we'd walk over the Sheep Downs of an afternoon. The Knight shop operated very much on the order and delivery principle and had a strict routine from which, as children, we were not excused. We had to be back from the Sheep Downs by four o'clock sharp when Louie, Flo and Mr Keen were brought tea. Then Florence would return at 4.30 for her own tea. There was a lock-up shop adjoining New Street House which was not manned but opened up for customers as requested. It sold crockery and similar items. There was a garage in Trump Alley which went with the shop, housing initially a horse and cart but later the shop delivery van.

Sutton, of course, didn't have Petworth's variety of shops or relations but we had our particular village round too. A regular trip was through the churchyard to Old Gates where my mother's cousin lived in one of three cottages. I can still visualise the old tin bath outside and the black beetles in it. We were often up at the Rectory where Mr Newman would be replaced in turn by the Rev. March and the Rev. Daintrey. Granny worked as housekeeper at the Rectory while Mrs Cattell was the cook. I never knew how her name was spelled. I have a very dim memory of a stone-covered mound at the back which housed two servants' W.C.'s. each having its own tiny individual entrance. W.C.'s? – it was more probably the traditional thunderbox. My sister went to the Rectory to play with Peter, Mr Newman's grandson. They had coconut cakes for tea, which she didn't like.

Petworth's November fair fell well outside our "Sutton" times but when I was at Bishop Otter College I came up for it. Auntie Brenda was very keen on stalls where you could win something worthwhile in rather austere times, and she was often successful. On one occasion we won an electric iron – not something to be sniffed at in those days.

Petworth in the 1940s lay very much in the shadow of the school bombing. I heard about it in North Devon of course, but it would be Easter 1943 before I was back in Sutton – it had happened on Michaelmas day 1942. Auntie Brenda heard the explosion and realised it was in the direction of the school. She set off for North Street in her Red Cross uniform but there was nothing she could do. In later years, the bombing was still with her and she would wake up in the night crying "fire". I am sure she was not alone in that.

Auntie Brenda was an assiduous maker of wine, particularly dandelion, and we children were dispatched to go out and pick dandelions. It wasn't a job we liked because of the sticky white juice. We were told on no account to pick dandelions in Bartons Lane, itself, I seem to remember being told it was too near the vets, but I imagine it reflected people's practice of walking their dogs down the lane. I

always thought dandelion wine was pretty awful but Auntie Brenda made a fair quantity of it.

Florence, Brenda and Auntie Ted kept autograph books and these go back to the 1914-1918 war and before. I still have them. Many contributions are from members of the Rifle Brigade billeted in Petworth at the end of 1914. They would leave in February of the following year. They did not come back and many, of course, were killed, but friendships were formed which in some cases survived long after the war was over.

One last piece of family history. C. J. Daintrey the solicitor, who lived opposite Florence in East Street was prosecuted for misappropriating clients' funds. The Knight family had been among several substantial local losers. Auntie Brenda once told me that she had heard that an effigy of the offending solicitor was paraded round the town to the accompaniment of banged dustbin lids and then burnt, a variation of the old theme of rough music, more usually employed to castigate a man suspected of beating his wife and children.

Shirley Stanford was talking to the Editor:

[Illustrations for this article courtesy of Mrs Stanford.]



Ena Lee defies the Kaiser! Petworth January 6th 1915.
Courtesy of Shirley Stanford.

“The tiger was named Raj”

It was 1957 when I began working at Duncton Quarry having previously been employed at various garages in the district, work however was rather uncertain at the time and I needed something more permanent. Fortunately I had gained a good working knowledge of both cars and tractors and knew my way round most engines. In addition I had just completed two years national service spent in Germany working on Centurion tanks. This know-how would prove very useful at Duncton as almost all of the repairs to vehicles and plant were carried out in-house and much of the plant required a good deal of attention and maintenance just to keep it running.

Most of the moving equipment was military surplus. Left-over from the war the lime spreaders were six-wheeled drive former U.S. army lorries with left hand steering. Lime spreading on the farms was a gruelling job for any type of vehicle and while these lorries were extremely sturdy their engines needed reconditioning on an almost annual basis. The loading shovels essential for keeping the kilns and crushers supplied were mainly British built Muir-Hill and Chaseside. Like the spreaders these vehicles were extremely temperamental and had probably seen their best times some years earlier.

There was no mains electricity at the quarry when I arrived. In fact it would not be put on until the 1970s. All the power needed to run the crushing plants was generated by a huge and ancient blast engine situated in the brick built engine house. The engine was a Mirlees Bickerton & Day which, like most things that arrived at the quarry, had seen a previous life, in this case on a private estate at Middleton. The engine operated at 250 revs and produced 130 kw of power which was ideal for running the crushers. Maintaining the Mirlees Bickerton was a task in itself. There was virtually no information regarding the workings of the huge contraption; however I was fortunate to have the help of the chief engineer at Graylingwell who had two of the engines in operation at the hospital. The Mirlees was started by compressed air which was stored in two large tanks. Of course it was crucial to keep the tanks full at all times in case the engine had to be stopped for essential maintenance. Should unfortunate circumstances contrive that the engine did not start at almost the first go then the air would be exhausted and it would be pointless making further attempts. The empty tanks would have to be taken down to Graylingwell where the hospital engineer would refill them from his engines. Goodness knows what would have happened if all three engines were stopped at the same time and none of them restarted. Fortunately this never happened.

The Mirless Bickerton was certainly the biggest engine that I had worked on.

To give an indication of its size the fly-wheel alone weighed in at over 7 tons and the maintenance engineer would carry out his inspection on a raised walkway which surrounded the engine. Besides providing power for the quarry plant the generator was also used to light the engine house; however light for the rest of the quarry being provided by a smaller generator.

Duncton quarry was quite a major employer in the Petworth area when I started there. In 1957 there were fifteen men working at the quarry, when I left the workforce had been reduced to just three of us. Stan Thom was manager when I began, however he would soon move on to the Duncton Oil and Heating side of the business only to return some years later. Maurice Faulds took over from Stan and was himself eventually replaced by Brian Glazier. Henry Hawker was foreman, a position that he would retain for many years, and it was only he and I who held the important licenses that allowed us to use explosives at the quarry.

Air-powered drills were used to drill the holes deep into the chalk to place the gelignite. It was important to achieve the correct depth in placing the explosives or just the chalk face would be blasted and a huge amount of shrapnel-like chalk would be spread about the quarry. This was not only wasteful but could also be exceedingly dangerous, not to mention the damage that could be done to nearby plant. Attaining the correct depth with the drill was no easy matter as Duncton chalk contains a large number of flints; if one of these were struck by the drill then the hole would have to be abandoned and a new one begun. The temptation was to save time and effort and use the shallow hole – the decision to do so could invariably have as I explained quite serious consequences.



A Garland photograph of Duncton quarry c.1951. The primary crusher is in the foreground while the kiln loading area can be seen in the centre.

As I said flints were common in the Duncton chalk and while they were a nuisance in blasting they did have a certain commercial value and were popular for building. Now and again a chap would come over from The Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton to collect flints for knapping. His visit was always well received not least as he would invariably bring a gift of home-made cider with him.

Besides the lack of mains electricity we had no mains water until well into the 1970s. The only source was rain water and this was collected in large tanks. When I first arrived I discovered that the men made their daily tea with the water that cooled the huge Mirlees engine. Clearly this was not a good idea if only for health reasons and so Stan Thom the manager began bringing in drinking water from his home in Duncton.

There were two chalk crushing plants at the quarry. The primary one operated at the upper level while a smaller plant was situated lower down the site near to the kilns. I believe that the lower crusher may once have been powered by means of a steam engine for when I arrived in 1957 there were two old engines still in place, one a stationary and the other wheeled. Both were in a dilapidated state of repair but quite clearly had been in use at some time. This lower plant was used for crushing and screening the quick or burnt lime which had been produced in the adjacent kilns. The lime would eventually be mixed with crushed chalk and most of it was spread on fields. The primary and largest of the two crushers had been installed by the St. Pancras Engineering Company from Chichester. This plant would shake violently when operating and eventually the foundations had to be rebuilt. The general feeling was that the crusher had been installed incorrectly and that the mechanism operated in reverse which caused the extreme vibrations. I was once told that the big drive-wheel on top of the crusher had been part of the gear that was used to winch in the R101 airship at Southampton. This primary crusher took the raw chalk from the quarry and by way of a series of screens and crushers removed any vegetable matter, soil or flints before grading the chalk into different sizes. Kibble or 3/8" chalk was mixed with peat and made an excellent growing medium for mushrooms. It was not unknown for Lindfield Mushrooms at Thakeham to order 150 tons of this at a time. Unfortunately the growers discovered that sugar beet waste was equally good and as it was somewhat cheaper than the kibble mix our orders gradually dried up. Hard rubble was another by-product of the screening process and was often used in the construction of farm tracks and paths. Such was the strength of this material that it was used in the building of the Chichester by-pass.

There were two conventional kilns at the quarry; these were loaded from the top with football sized lumps of chalk while layers of old pallet wood and coal would be added in the charging process. As the kilns burned, the quick lime could be drawn out from the bottom while new chalk and firing materials loaded from

the top. This constant charging would keep one man permanently busy and could be more or less continuous, or at least until enough lime had been burnt. Besides mixing with chalk for use in agriculture this lime could be used in building products or when slaked for whitewashing or in plaster work. Later the construction of a drying plant would allow much greater quantities of garden lime to be produced, girls would be employed to fill seven and fourteen pound bags for distribution to retail outlets. Larger half hundredweight sacks were filled in the lower sheds, each sack being loaded from a hopper, weighed and stacked in a seemingly endless quest to achieve targets and fulfil orders. This heavy and dusty work was a much appreciated source of overtime for the quarrymen and would often mean working late into the night. Another good seller was a mixture of lime and magnesium which was popular with local apple growers who liked to spread it in their orchards. This dryer was installed near to the foot of the old lime kilns and was powered by a Paxman Ricardo engine which had formerly powered a WWII motor torpedo boat. Eventually the dryer would be converted to mains electricity but not until the late seventies.



Jim Blackman at Duncton quarry c.1951.
A Garland photograph.

The quarry as you would expect was really quite isolated and little happened to break the monotony of the daily routine. I do however recall one event that was certainly out of the ordinary. It would have been in the early 80's when Chipperfields brought one of their circus tigers up to the quarry for a photo shoot. The photography had to be done at night as it was important to get the reflection of the tiger's eyes in the picture. Such was the occasion that several of us men

remained after work to watch the event. The shoot was for the famous Esso 'Tiger in Your Tank' advertising campaign and if I remember correctly the tiger was named Raj. Strange how these things stick in your memory. It was a spectacular sight to see that huge animal standing proudly above the chalk boulders with the reflection of the camera lamps glimmering in its eyes.

Life was tough at Duncton and numerous men would come and go. When the weather was bad it was extreme. After all just above the quarry was Tegleaze and this was generally considered to be the highest point on the South Downs in Sussex. I retired in 1998 having completed just over forty years at Duncton. Sadly the quarry is but a shadow of its former self and large scale quarrying is a thing of the past. The best chalk has long been exhausted and much of the site is now being used as storage.

Brian Verrall was talking to Miles Costello

A Reflection

Talking to Brian about his time at Duncton bought back memories of my own. You see I had worked at the quarry myself for a period during the early 70's. I certainly remembered Brian, or more particularly I recall the distinct pop-pop of his motorbike as it made the long climb up from the main road each morning. Brian would appear out of the mist like some ghostly apparition clad in an ex-army great coat, goggles and round helmet.

For some reason or other Stan Thom the manager decided that I was suited for operating the lower crusher and drying plant. Why he came to that conclusion I don't know. Perhaps it required little skill or more likely it was a job that no one else wanted to do. A solitary job, it was not unusual to spend the whole day without seeing another person. I might occasionally hear the quarry siren followed by a muffled explosion, or a loading shovel filling the huge hopper above my head that fed the crusher, but human contact was at a minimum. As the plant operator it was important to keep the crusher fed at all times and to ensure that the drying plant maintained the temperature required to produce good lime. It was not a difficult job and required only brief periods of intense activity. This suited me down to the ground and by the light of a single bulb my pile of books gradually grew until it threatened to overcome the operator's platform where I sat. This strange library soon become covered in layer upon layer of lime dust as each completed tome was added to the teetering pile. I am sure that Stan Thom disapproved of my reading however I imagine that he overlooked this failing in the

knowledge that it would be an inconvenience if he had to replace me.

Workers came and went with some frequency. You see the quarry was viewed locally as something of a stop-gap job. Useful for those between jobs, the money was an agricultural rate with none of the benefits of farm work. Of course there were the regular employees who for one reason or another had turned up and never moved on. I have mentioned Brian Verrall, with whom I have now become reacquainted after getting on for forty years, and then there was Henry Hawker the foreman, an imposing man but gentle and kindly by nature. He seemed to me to have remarkable patience, especially when dealing with me. There was Stan Thom the manager, shaven headed, he ran the local swimming club in his spare time and lived at Willetts Close in Duncton. Richard Card operated the primary crusher, a clever and deeply sensitive man who seemed to thrive at this uncomplicated and mentally undemanding work. Perhaps it was Ernie Camp who I remember clearest of all. Ernie was a great bearded countryman who would cycle in from Fittleworth each day and did most jobs around the quarry.

One winter evening I was working overtime alone in the quarry, it was pitch dark and Ernie had just left. All I had for company were the huge shadows created by the burners of the drying plant and the rather uneasy knowledge that the nearest human being was probably a good mile away across the fields at Dog Kennel Corner. This was not a period I enjoyed. Suddenly I could hear the panting and cursing of some strange creature making its way up the steep track to the quarry. Out of the darkness and much to my relief appeared Ernie Camp, on foot and minus his push bike. Breathlessly he explained that he had got halfway down Duncton Hill freewheeling at full speed when a deer had foolishly flung itself under the wheels of his bike. The collision had temporarily unseated Ernie but more importantly it had concussed the deer. Seeing an opportunity for several free meals Ernie had trapped the beast under the old cycle but was lacking anything with which to deliver the necessary fatal blow. Recalling that I usually carried a rather blunt penknife Ernie had returned for the weapon which I delivered to him and he went off to carry out the deed. My knife was returned the next morning with a command to get it sharpened before it was required again. Evidently having eventually killed the deer Ernie had slung the animal across his cycle and then pushed the bike the four miles home to Fittleworth.

My time at Duncton was relatively brief, certainly no more than a year or two, perhaps less, but remembered with a fondness that was absent at the time. Such jobs I believe are wasted on the young.

Miles

Grasping the nettle

Close season at the Cottage Museum and an opportunity for reflection. Not simply, and predictably, on the visitors' book as it emerges from another year but on a certain ambiguity that lies at the Museum's very heart. The original notion was to portray a house on Lord Leconfield's Petworth estate in 1910. The house would be "typical". But typical can run easily into anonymous. To be "typical", paradoxically a house must not be typical at all. To be a recognisable entity a house, clean or cluttered, opulent or poverty-stricken, must mirror those who live in it. Could prospective visitors relate to a house wiped clean of the personal? One solution might be to tie the house in with the 1910 occupant, in some way having typical and particular in tandem.

Here however the dilemma really begins to bite. Mary Cummings, tenant of 346 in 1910, was living alone, apparently a widow, of Irish extraction, devoutly Roman Catholic at a time when that congregation was small, and, seamstress at Petworth House, ever so slightly elevated in the hierarchy of servants. She could not be treated as a bird of passage and another, easier occupant substituted; Mary was a solid presence at 346, bestriding the years 1901 to 1930. We either "adopted" Mary or simply abandoned the historical provenance altogether. The decision was to grasp the nettle: Mary Cummings it would be, sewing room, a little private work, chenille curtains, flatirons, the Roman Catholic tradition.

Enquiry suggested that Michael Thomas, Mary's husband was dead but it was difficult to be sure. He was Mary's senior by a good quarter of a century and of an age with Mary's mother who was living with them.¹ Not, on the face of it, ideal. It was Michael's second marriage and three Kevis copy negatives showed a man in uniform, a farrier sergeant-major in the 8th, the Queen's Royal Irish, Hussars. Military records showed that Michael having attained Warrant Officer status, had been court-martialled, placed in detention and reduced to the ranks. No reason is given. By his discharge after twenty-two years' service in 1878 he had recovered his old rank. As a young recruit he had been sent out to the Crimea, just after the Charge of the Light Brigade. He had then gone to India in the wake of the Sepoy mutiny. He will have seen sights that would live with him over years. One of the tasks of an army farrier was to sever a hoof from a horse killed in battle for the purposes of identification. If the unexplained glitch in his Army career might suggest temperamental instability; Michael Cummings was clearly good at his job.

In 1878 he would still be a comparatively young man and with a wife and young children to support, Petworth with Lord Leconfield's extensive stabling would be an obvious place to come. There was work and a house. By the census of 1891,

Mary is on her own with the children and Michael has disappeared. There, for a while, the matter rested, until the chance discovery of a court report in the West Sussex Gazette (24th July 1884) raised some insistent questions.

Michael Thomas Cummings, of Petworth, farrier, appeared before the Petworth Bench in the custody of the police, charged with attempting to commit suicide by cutting his throat with a razor. On consideration of the evidence he was bailed to appear at the next Petty Sessions, on doing so he was discharged. At the earlier hearing the prisoner stated that his mind was very much troubled and had been for years; he had a very uncomfortable home.

Perhaps, then, Mary was not, as we had thought, a widow but the couple had simply gone their separate ways? Once more the matter rested. The Museum photographs of Michael remained where they were, as did the Crimean war jugs, and the print by the fireplace of the farrier's shop. If they sat a little uncomfortably with the newspaper report no one was particularly disturbed. We now knew that Michael had died toward the end of the 1914-1918 war and had been buried in an unmarked communal grave at Wimbledon. Agnes Phelan, returning to 346 High Street after an absence of 77 years, had an intimate knowledge of the Cummings family but no awareness of Michael at all.

Listing uncatalogued material in Petworth House archives² earlier this year, Alison McCann was able to fill out the story a little. By the 18th of July 1884, Lord Leconfield was clearly aware of the suicide attempt. He writes to Mr Ingram his agent:

I am very sorry to hear about Cummins.³ Could nothing be done through the R.C. priest at Burton to get rid of the stepmother, who Lady Leconfield and I think Mrs. Holland, agree with you in considering to be the source of all the trouble?

The man is a very useful man in his present capacity, or at least was, and possibly if his home was less irritating, he might recover his nerve.

Clearly his Lordship, with Constance Lady Leconfield and Mrs Holland, the Rector's wife, were sufficiently impressed with Michael to make concerned enquiry and even to put up with a certain amount of inconvenience to keep a good man. Stepmother would appear a misunderstanding, presumably Mary's natural mother is intended.

A measure of sympathy and good intention was clearly not sufficient. On 21st July Lord Leconfield writes again:

If Cummins cannot go on, it will be better at once to seek for a fresh man... I thought last winter that Cummins was failing, as he was unable to shoe a horse I bought... and I had to send him into the town to be shod.

There is a certain inevitability about Mr Ingram's letter to Michael dated 29th July 1884:

29 July 1884 W.H.Ingram to Michael T. Cummins

Michael T. Cummins

When you called to see me last week, I told you that it was under consideration as to whether Lord Leconfield would retain you in your situation. His Lordship has thought the matter over and has come to the conclusion that you must give up your situation; after what has occurred he considers that on your own account it would be better that you should leave Petworth and seek employment elsewhere. I consider that it is due to you that you should know this as once, that you may lose no time in looking out for another place.

While his erstwhile employer might have a measure of sympathy, Michael's position in a pragmatic age would be desperately precarious. In modern terms Michael needed help and support and that would not be proffered in 1884. Clearly unwell and about to lose home, family, and employment, his infirmities and previous record would work against him being easily re-employed. Michael simply disappears. He does not figure in the 1891 census but criminal records at the Public Record Office show a Thomas Cummings convicted of housebreaking in 1892 and sentenced to twelve months imprisonment, while in the 1901 census a Thomas Cummings, age 62, born in London, shoeing smith, is in Portland Convict Establishment. It seems likely enough that in both cases the reference is to Michael but it is impossible to be sure. If nostalgia is a key word in the visitors' book at 346 High Street, Michael's story administers a sharp dose of realism.⁴

Clearly Mary Cummings' life had its fair share of frustration, sadness and mixed memories. One son had died before she came to High Street in 1901. She would know what it was to be solitary and to be an outsider in an insular town. Easy talk in 2011 reflects no sort of reality. If nothing else Michael's painful story illustrates some of the difficulties inherent in the "personality" approach.

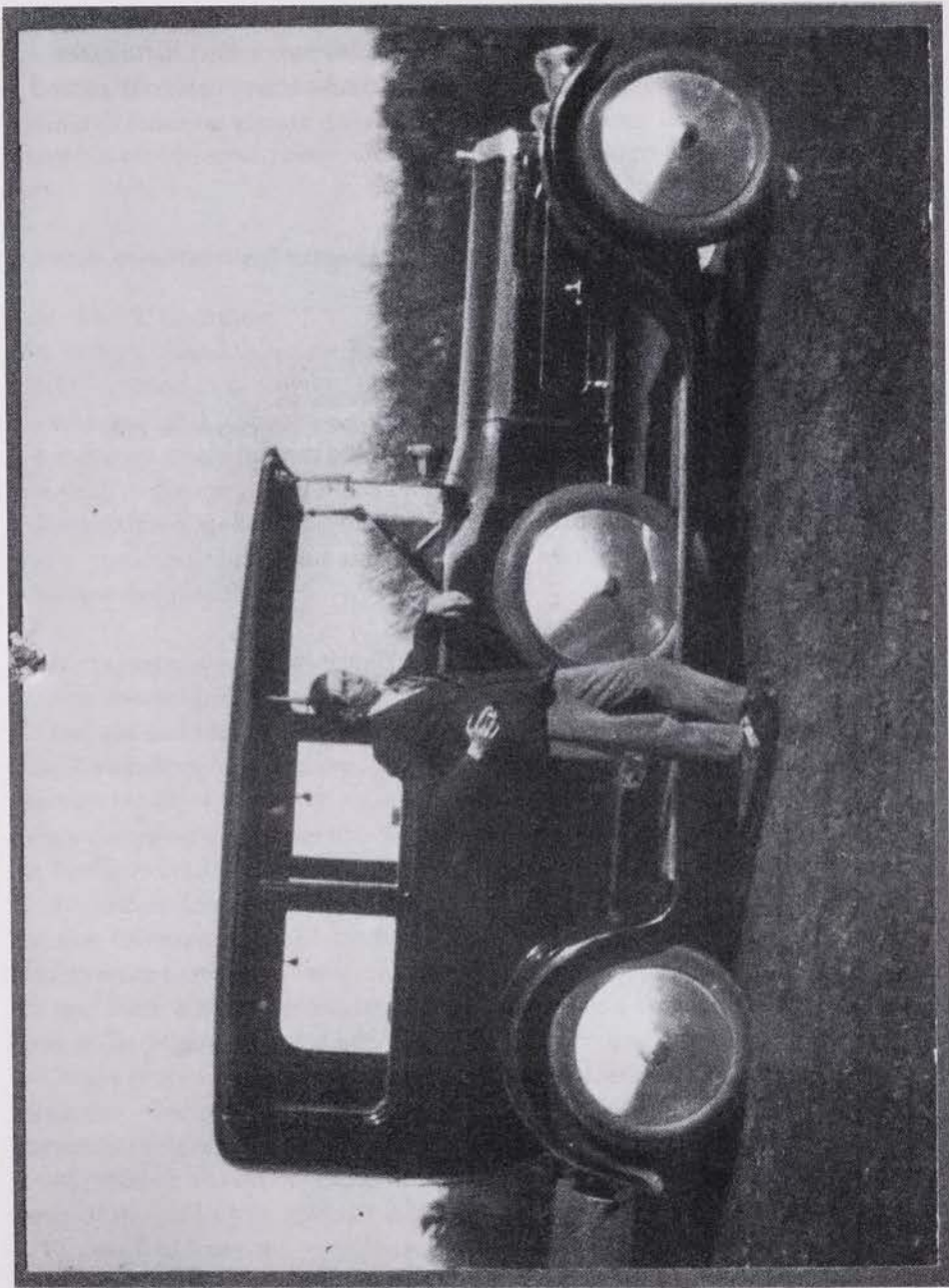
Visitors find it reassuring to identify with Mary Cummings, or to imagine that they can, and this has to be an integral part of the Museum experience, but in the last resort, the Mary of all our imaginings is a cipher, a myth of our own creation, a convenient symbol on which to focus some indefinable need that we have to

identify. A hundred years and more on we can only feel for Michael Cummings as he becomes another victim of an uncaring society. We may reflect that life for Mary and Michael Cummings was more complex than we may care to think and that both are, in practical terms, people we can never remotely presume to know.

P.

My thanks, as so often, to Alison McCann and also to Lord Egremont for permission to reproduce uncatalogued material from Petworth House Archives.

1. Census of 1881.
2. Uncatalogued box 1010.
3. Cummins and Cummings appear interchangeable in the documents.
4. See Susan Martin's seminal article 'A very ordinary lady' in PSM 138 December 2009 page 19-23.



Cecil Knight with hire car 1920s.
Courtesy of Shirley Stanford.

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million (15.5% of the population).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of older people, and the Government has set out a strategy for doing this in the White Paper on *Ageing Better* (Department of Health 1999). This paper sets out the Government's strategy for addressing the needs of older people, and the role of the health service in this.

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