

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

No. 163, March 2016



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Sunken garden built by Fred Streeter at Petworth.
Unattributed photograph. 1950s?

20 Charmandean Road
WORTHING
BN14 9LQ

PETWORTH PARK JOINT SPORTS 100 CLUB – UPDATE

We have just completed our third year at the end of November and thought it an opportune time to thank those members of the Society who have supported us through the year. During the year Society members have won a total of £300 made up of two prizes of £75 and three second prizes of £50. We in turn have donated a further £70 to the Society and will continue to do so for each member who joins.

During the year we have had to meet expenditure of over £2000 for very necessary drainage repairs. All this money was raised from the 100 Club, and this is the perfect illustration of the value of the 100 Club in supporting our efforts to keep sport in the Park.

The Joint Sports have an important year ahead as our Lease is due for renewal with the National Trust. It is essential that we should be in a sound financial position prior to these negotiations.

Prize money may not be of Lottery proportions, but believe me, you stand a better chance of winning something. Should you feel able to help us, and the Society, by joining for £5 per month, please give me a ring, or email, **01903 207436 / vandbphillips@hotmail.co.uk** and I will send you all the relevant details.

Vincent Phillips
Secretary

[Please support. I've had a win myself! Ed.]

The Petworth Society Book Sale Calendar 2016

**SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
10-3 – LECONFIELD HALL – ADMISSION FREE**

March 12th

April 9th

May 14th

June 11th

July 9th

August 13th

September 10th

October 8th

November 12th

December 10th

Books to donate?

Call:

Miles on 01798 343227

Peter on 01798 342562



PETWORTH SOCIETY ACTIVITIES SHEET

Spring Programme – please keep for reference

WALKS

Cars leave Petworth main car park at 2.15pm.

Sunday 17th April:

Linda and Ian's first walk of the season.

Sunday 15th May:

Linda and Ian's late spring walk. The David Wort memorial walk.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Wednesday 9th March:

The Cambridge Devised Theatre present:

LADY CONNIE AND THE SUFFRAGETTES

LECONFIELD HALL – 7.30PM – ADMISSION £8 – RAFFLE – REFRESHMENTS
(ON DOOR ONLY)



Tuesday 19th April:

Chris Hare and Ann Feloy bring:

TRADITIONAL SONGS OF SUSSEX AND THE SOUTH DOWNS

LECONFIELD HALL – 7.30PM – ADMISSION £4 – RAFFLE – REFRESHMENTS

The Annual General Meeting will be in early June – speaker to be announced.

The Petworth Cottage Museum will be twenty years old in May. On Saturday 9th April there will be a celebratory exhibition upstairs in the Leconfield Hall to coincide with the Society Book Sale.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY – Registered Charity No 268071

Subscription **RENEWAL** March 2016 – February 2017

Local delivery £12 Postal £15 Overseas £20

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Subscriptions can be paid at the Book Sale on 12th March
There will be a special desk in the Foyer from 10am-12 noon in the Leconfield Hall.

Subscriptions may be left in a sealed envelope (cheque or exact cash) at Austens in Petworth.

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CONSTITUTION AND OFFICERS

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

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

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

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Printed by Bexley Printers Limited, Unit 14,
Hampers Common Industrial Estate, Petworth
Telephone: (01798) 343355.

Published by The Petworth Society which is
registered charity number 268071.

The Petworth Society supports The Leconfield
Hall, Petworth Cottage Museum and The
Coultershaw Beam Pump.

WEBSITE

www.petworthsociety.co.uk

FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick.
Fred Streeter head gardener at Petworth about 1960.
Original photograph by George Garland.

Chairman's notes

In December I sought to welcome new voices and new ideas while pleading that they "engage with the spirit of the town." I do not propose to labour the point: we shall see. I am pleased to have two members Mike Pope and Nigel Flynn keeping the Society informed of Neighbourhood Plan discussions.

For the rest I am concerned above all about Magazine space. Event reports excepted I already have sufficient material for June let alone September. I can only see this as the sign of a healthy Magazine and all the more reason for articles to be suggested and submitted, we again have 52 pages.

As I write these notes I have news of the passing of Ian Jupp. As proprietor of Midhurst and Petworth Printers Ian produced the first 139 issues of this Magazine overseeing its development from very ordinary beginnings. I can only say that the Society has been extremely fortunate in the two printers we have had since 1974.

Immediately following these notes is a tribute to Raymond Harris, an example to all who would wish to "engage with the spirit of the town." This is just one of several tributes at his funeral and seems the one of most direct relevance to the town.

Peter
23rd January

Raymond Harris – a personal perspective

Raymond Harris had already had a distinguished career when he "retired" to Petworth. The word "retired" certainly needs qualification in this context. I can only offer a personal and Petworth view of a complex and multi-faceted man: even then there were activities where he and I went our separate ways.

My first encounter with him was memorable. I would like to take you back a quarter of a century to the lower rooms of the Leconfield Hall: it was standing room only. A Mr Harris from North Street had expressed an interest in the Hall but no one seemed clear as to what that interest was. He and I would be competing for the poisoned chalice that was the chairmanship of the Hall, the previous incumbent leaving the town. I was elected on a swell of popular feeling.

Petworth had rejected Mr Harris. But had Mr Harris rejected Petworth? That seemed another matter entirely. "Would the meeting like him to work with the new chairman as his vice-chairman?" It was a measure of the man that he made the offer. That is, and remains, my abiding memory of Raymond.

I had been fortunate. The Hall was in desperate straits, its licence hanging by a thread. On the outside tons of stone rubble needed attention while massive renovation was required inside. Even the symbolic fire bells had languished for years in a cupboard.

In the short time I have I cannot begin to outline the restoration. Suffice it to say that Raymond was soon at work, the new chairman trailing in his wake. There was the roof, the lift, a trip to Portland to order the stone for the steps on the Hall's west side. Negotiations with English Heritage and other bodies, a very successful local appeal for funds, the lottery application which Raymond delivered in London by hand and the crucial personal link with Lord Egremont, Simon Knight, Roger Wootton, and through them, with the Leconfield Estate workforce and Stemps the builders. I'd sometimes say, "Look here, Raymond, you're doing all the work," and he'd reply, "But you know everybody." I think even Raymond could be a trifle disingenuous at times!

Raymond could be firm when he needed to be. Years at the top of his profession had demanded exacting standards but he never had a bad word for anyone. It's a cliché, of course, but it was probably as true of Raymond as of anyone I've ever met. The posturing, the self-promoting and the petty were simply not part of his make-up.

The 1990s were the great days of my cooperation with Raymond. Ann Bradley's long-cherished dream of a Cottage Museum was at last coming to fruition. We had Jacqueline and Lewis Golden on board, Ann herself, Raymond and myself and Anne Simmons. Once more Raymond threw himself into the

project. He was at once advisory and hands-on. Relations with Lord Egremont and the Estate workforce were again crucial.

I saw less of Raymond in latter years. It was ironic that a fall on those same Portland stone steps he had installed should impair Raymond's mobility as he grew older. Whenever I saw him his face lit up as if to recall those marvellous days when we had worked together.

Petworth holds an uneasy balance between local and incomer. It always has. If I may say so, Raymond was the perfect incomer even if in thinking of Raymond the very word seems to jar. His selfless work lives on in the town he had come to love and which in turn will always remember him as one of its own.

P.

The Garland lecture, October 2015

Another year, another Garland lecture – and another fascinating glimpse of the Petworth of old. People enjoy these talks of Peter's, and especially the accompanying photographs. Newcomers learn something of Petworth's history and the "true" Petworthians enjoy "people-spotting": "Do you remember him? ..."

This time, Peter took us on a tour of the shops; taking us back to a time when Petworth wasn't awash with antique emporia, but filled with a rich variety of businesses, each one dedicated to serving the needs of its customers – and, in many cases, equally devoted to the guardianship of its finances! The careful proprietors, respectful of their customers, spent long hours running their businesses, balancing their books, managing their stock and avoiding waste. We heard of the sweetshop owner who would experiment with shapes and sizes of dolly mixture in order to achieve an exact weight measurement when serving. Another lady resorted to cutting a raisin in half with the same aim. No pre-packed bags in those days; the customer of old specified the measure.

Another "measure" of the times, was the fact that the Petworth shops of old, usually family-run, remained in place for many years. Customers relied on a steady supply of goods served by familiar faces in familiar locations. Times have changed.

As have costumes! An interesting feature of the photographs is the insight into more formally dressed times – another piece of social history to add to our store of knowledge. We learnt a lot this evening, and enjoyed the process – thank you Peter!

CL

The man who posted himself – and other things

It's not often that you hear of a harmless practical joke these days. Practical jokes, maybe, but when they involve the victim being immersed in water or something else extremely unpleasant, harmless is a rather inadequate description.

There is something satisfying for the trickster, the witnesses, even the subject of a really harmless, imaginative practical joke. So it was a great joy to have David Bramwell back again to tell us about "The man who posted himself" – amongst many other things.

It turned out that it wasn't only 'the man', but several men from Victorian times up to the present day, including the speaker himself, who have been to great lengths and derived immense pleasure by subjecting the postal services to ingenious tests of their willingness and ability deliver the most unlikely of objects, which David has termed 'Mail Art'.

It was Charles Webb, author of 'The Graduate' who, lamenting the lack of imagination in art, rejected copyright and ownership of his work and, financed by his wife, Fred, offered a prize of £10,000 to any artist who had a truly original idea.

The winner, Dan Shelton, a performer who regarded his body as art sent a copy of himself to Tate Modern. Sadly, it was 'returned to sender'.

Ray Johnson is regarded as the creator of Mail Art in the 1960s. He would send out 'pop art' in various forms.

A bit later, a Japanese man posted himself to his fiancée and there have been several more examples of enterprising individuals packing themselves up in crates to be dispatched across the world at risk of life and limb

In the mid-19th century, the master Mail Artist was Reginald Bray. He was a keen cyclist and started off by sending up to 30 letters from points on his tours to his many lady friends.

In 1898, he was able to obtain the Post Office Guide (intended for employees) from which he ascertained what the Royal Mail undertook to do and presumably, the loopholes waiting to be exploited.

He then proceeded to send 30,000 items through the post, including seaweed, an onion, a turnip, a bowler hat, a cigarette, crochet work, none of them packeted, but with the addresses, often represented pictorially on the objects themselves. Then came living objects: a dog and himself on a bicycle. He was an avid collector of autographs, obtained by writing to eminent people of the day. He wrote to every one of the inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha.

Today, letter writing is a dying art, but David and a friend decided to spend a year sending each other items, addressed on the surface, inspired by Reginald Bray. With pictorial and numerical addresses, there have been a slice of toast, a

highlighter pen, mirror writing, a leaf, an extraordinary French bean, false teeth, a pair of underpants (which the Post Office obligingly put into a plastic bag) and a microscope, on which the address could only be seen through the eyepiece.

All of this has resulted in a congenial rapport with the postal staff, showing the more human side of officialdom when the service is more often subjected to criticism. A personal example – a postcard taking a fortnight to reach Birmingham from Norfolk, having travelled via Thailand!

Now there is a movement to send Facebook messages by post! Thank you David, for giving us an evening of harmless fun!

KCT.

Who says, “We don’t do nostalgia”?

Well, Cotillion gave us plenty at the Society’s Christmas evening.

Cotillion? The dictionary tells us: – One of various French dances with elaborate steps, figures and ceremonial. We didn’t see much of that. Four singers with guitars, violin, recorders, tambourine, bells and accordion brought us ‘A Sussex Christmas’.

Voices blended in traditional carols, including the County’s own ‘Sussex Carol’; old ones to unfamiliar tunes and ‘While shepherds watched ...’ with the chorus, ‘Sweet bells, sweet chiming Christmas bells’, even with the bells tinkling in the background. A moving rendition of ‘O come, O come, Emmanuel’. Poems by Sussex poets – one giving a very cynical view on the present day commercial Christmas.

The programme was linked together with memories of Christmas weather, carol singing and working conditions, not so long ago, perhaps, delivered with a strong Sussex accent – remember the frost *inside* the bedroom window?

With mulled wine and mince pies in the interval and an excellent raffle, it was a heart-warming time when everyone had their own memories of Christmas as it was and can be.

Lots of hard work behind the scenes. Thanks to Roger for organising the mulled wine – of a kind which allowed all to drive home safely and to Linda and Sue, who were on their knees with dustpan and brush afterwards. Is there an answer to crumbly mince pies? And thanks to Gordon for putting us in touch with Cotillion.

KCT.

Petworth: As You Like It (?)

Peter had thought up a title for Miles’ talk without any idea of what it would be about. Shakespeare provided a number equally non-committal: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Comedy of Errors*. He was pushing it a bit with *Two Gentlemen of Petworth* and *All’s Well That Ends Well* was rather doubtful as we met in darkness due to a power ‘outage’. Thankfully, the lights came on as we were about to start. It turned out that it was Petworth: As Miles Liked It, full stop.

He thought his presentation needed padding out, so Peter had been up in his attic and brought out a number of items that he’d been persuaded to give a home to over the years: ploughing match notices, a Trotter tile, a rare framed Kevis photograph of Lord Leconfield’s stable staff, 1890s, a piece of pottery marked Benjamin Challen, sheep and cow bells, Petworth rulers made by Mr. Johnson, the last hand-made ruler maker in the country, late 1920s, two recorders made by pupils at the Boys’ School at the time of the bombing, 1942, a Toronto-Scottish Regimental Association presentation pen and holder, 1980s, a Lyons Maid ice cream price list and price tags from other grocery items. Tales about them all.

The ‘padding’ ended with a series of slides depicting what Peter euphemistically termed ‘Petworth Porches’ – various gaps, openings and doorways around the town, a mixture of Garland character studies and finally, a Morgan portrait of the Revd. Thomas Sockett, the rector who organised the emigration of Petworth men to Canada. He died in 1859, so, a very early photograph.

After the interval, Miles, with photographs of Petworth people and places which have special meaning for him and, judging by the murmurs of appreciation from the audience, for many of them, too.

But first, there was a piece of wood, cut from the counter of Fox’s outfitter’s shop when it closed in 1987. Marked on it were the initials of all the assistants who had worked there under Mr Colin Fox some of whom were in the audience.

Photographs of Fox’s; Bacon’s shoe shop, inside and out, with Mr Christie, just before it closed; the Polish Camp for refugees in Petworth Park, the doll’s head in the mortar of the Park wall in North Street; the Angel Shades alehouse; 15 Leconfield gamekeepers (now, two are employed); Culvercroft, with its association with Dr Kerr and later as the replacement for the Boys’ School until 1963 when the new Primary School was opened; a portrait of a young Joy Gumbrell (see her later contributions to the PSM) and South Grove at its building in 1930. Miles lives at no. 9 now, which, he discovered to his amazement after moving in, was once George Garland’s home.

A report like this will raise more questions than answers, especially from the more recent Petworthians. So, if you’re more intrigued than you were when you

first read 'Petworth: As You Like It?' contact the speakers, Peter Jerrome and Miles Costello, to whom we are indebted for a most convivial evening.

KCT.

Ian and Linda's Osiers walk.

18th October

The huge off-yellow fungus beside the path shook like a jelly. It had a kind of white dusting on the top. Returning by that same path I would notice another opposite almost at a diagonal. We were still near enough to the London Road to hear the traffic hurtling past. We're soon on a tarmac track that will lead eventually to Ebernoe Common, but we will bear off left. This is a leisurely stroll we've done, certainly once, before, skirting Palfrey on the right and coming round in a rough circle. The fields are October empty and the daisies are white among the stubble. An indistinct dark patch in the distance will be a deer. As if to confirm it bounds off into the adjoining wood. The noise of many engines comes from somewhere beyond the wood. Scramblers perhaps. It's currently still, mild and quite dry underfoot. Perhaps the cloud cover has limited the morning dew. Suddenly a barn owl clatters across the path: a buzzard would not have those white underwings. We're bearing right and right again. Is that old gate leaning against the hedgerow an eighteenth century survival? Someone's trying to sabotage the fabled accuracy of these notes. To look left over the long fields to Keyfox and a darkling Hampers Green. Hemp agrimony streams in faded grey-white seedhead from the hedgerows, sure sign of the dying season. Before long we're being welcomed at Osiers. That familiar hospitality, to say annual would seem to presume. Janet and Chris in great form. Apples for those who would like them; it's been a good year. A happy memory for Linda, Ian and the rest of the party to carry over into a new year.

P.

Petworth Fair 2015

The Society has managed Petworth Fair since 1986. I use the word "managed" advisedly. As Society Chairman I hold the medieval office of "clerk of the market", Keith Thompson taking charge of the crucial Leconfield Hall back-up as he has done also since 1986. As clerk my duty is not so much to promote the fair as to administer it on behalf of the Leconfield Estate. From the time of Eleanor de Perci in the 1270s and indeed long before, the fair has been in secular hands and a perquisite of the great house: medieval fairs were more frequently held by the church. In the 1270s Petworth was too old to be chartered, the king's justices-in-eyre taking its beginning back to a nominal 1189, the accession of Richard I. My personal feelings are irrelevant, the ancient role of the clerk is to ensure that the fair goes on, not to express partisan views about it. This year one great problem, not present in the 1270s, seems to have been obviated. Efficient road signing, Miles working in conjunction with Mike Dare and Joel Sykes of the West Sussex County Highways halted the flow of HGVs through the Cut.

A feature of the 2015 fair was the transfer of the ancient office of town crier from the long-serving Mike Hubbard to Nigel Flynn, Nigel making an assured debut in opening the fair.

The event coincided with a change from unseasonable November mildness to cold northerly winds, but fortunately the evening was crisp, cold and fine. Everyone knows that Petworth fair weather can be villainous. The Leconfield Hall was in lively action from three o'clock but the outdoor fair, as it usually does, was concentrated in a brief hectic spell from roughly six to eight. The fair soon falls away when the crowd has gathered to hear the Town Band play on the Gallopers. This has itself become a tradition that largely transcends its origins as a cry of defiance directed at those who had fired the Gallopers in 2005. It has become instead a reaffirmation of the tradition of the fair and the continuing vibrance of an older more robust Petworth in changing times.

For the clerk the fair is a kaleidoscope of meetings and memories. Ted Harris almost invisible under the chairplanes – they're due at East Preston the following day. Christmas itself is a quiet time for the fairmen, Petworth a rare winter slot. To meet again the familiar unpaid helpers, known faces year on year, all seemingly revelling at being at Petworth. "Ammo" has a rifle stall, for the present out of action, and a long career as a mechanic with London Transport behind him. He's simply one of a small army of volunteers, each with his own skills. Robert Harris has snatched the odd hour of sleep during the night, shades of 2005 of course, but he's also on the look out for rogue lorries attempting to negotiate the Cut. None do, a tribute to the new signage. Only a few boys playing about in the Square.

I meet the Red Cross crew up from Worthing. We can't have local volunteers now. Talk of Leek in Staffordshire re-enacting the old medieval Pie Powder court for the millennium. The court of the dusty-footed, pious poudrees convened to administer summary justice to wandering miscreants before they can move on. Petworth will have had such a court but it's lost in the fair's immemorial but unwritten history. Roger's yellow-coated stewards watch the crossings while Jonathan Cann's limbering up in the hall, twisting sausage balloons into shape. This is a no-holds barred, gloriously incorrect politically, Punch and Judy with a homily at the end – the last, it seems, a very unusual feature. The children at the front scream and chant in a way no virtual display could possibly make them. I've missed the Primary School singers, apparently a great success. A lull after Jonathan's two performances but it's still busy downstairs: The over-sixties are doing the refreshments for us this year. Upstairs the Society tombola is busy. Then the band and the coming together of faces and memories upstairs and outside that is a part of the fabric of the fair. Like it or loathe it, nothing has the fair's tradition or its peculiar flavour, the South's oldest surviving street fair remains as a reaffirmation in changing times of Petworth's essential and eccentric character.

P.

It's not Manchester City ...

It's the week before Christmas. The Museum's closed and quiet. In May it will have been open twenty years. There's a Christmas tree in the window and a thick orange wire trailing across the parlour floor. The tree is more a nod to present-day Petworth than a reflection of Mary Cummings living in the cottage in 1910. What would she have made of life a hundred years and more on? Strictly and the X-factor. In her 1910 persona she would have been bewildered, shocked perhaps by the gladiatorial excess of it all, but once schooled in the ways of a different age, she might have relished that chance to soak up those dim lonely hours of evening.

The clock's stopped at 6.15; but it's just after two in the afternoon. For me, perhaps, it's on days like this that the Museum is at its most real. Alone with the objects – hardly exhibits – few of any value, yet each now with a patina of awareness. Thousands of people have marked them and moved on. I open the loft cupboard. Field Marshall Roberts – the ultimate irrelevance if you like but he seems to command the whole motley crew. Museum has always been a misnomer: 346 is a glorification of familiar objects – of the unassuming.

A mild south wind gusts round 346, standing as it does on a kind of eminence

... 20 years on: few would have given the Museum twenty years – certainly not those “qualified” to advise. In football terms 346 High Street is not Manchester City, it's not Arsenal, it's even perhaps, non-league, but it has a stubborn will to survive. And it has.

“We Don't Do Nostalgia” (Window Press 2010) is an account of the Museum from its inception in 1996, as reflected in this Magazine. The book is notable for Jonathan Newdick's inspirational drawings of unassuming Museum objects. Like other Window Press “100's” it is no longer available but the County Library Service should have a copy if requested.

P.

Lurcio and the uppity cooks. The December book sale

It's probably come in on the day of the Sale.¹ £3.50 pencil marked inside. Many pages uncut: it's clearly done the rounds. Privately printed by Blackwell for individual subscribers, some 140 names appear inside. Privately printed doesn't, in itself, equate with valuable: copies are readily available on the Internet for a pound or two. Five Latin plays by Plautus translated into English verse. Something of a tour-de-force, something too, one suspects, of a labour of love. And who reads the classics now?

Plautus (about 180 BCE) is the oldest Latin writer for whom complete works survive. There's nothing refined or *recherché* about him. He's robust, crude at times, but approachable in translation even if you sometimes miss a finer point. Humble birth, moving to Rome from the country, struggling, then making money in commerce, losing it, working as a flour grinder, then gravitating toward the theatre.

Biographical details are as fluid as they are sparse, rearrange them as you like. Open air theatre with minimal (perhaps imagined) scenery: two houses and a shrine, or the sea coast of Cyrene, and a rough-edged audience with a minimal attention span, easily drawn away to gladiators and acrobats.

Begin to read and you're plunged into a robust world where coincidence reigns supreme, peopled by stock figures – miserly old men, spongers, freeborn girls sold into slavery and looking for lost parents, pimps, crusty fathers returning from abroad to confront dissolute lovelorn sons, uppity cooks on the make (plus *ça change*). Above all, however, mischievous slaves treading a narrow line between

manipulating their betters, miscalculating, and being banished to mill or mine. The ingenious slave is the engine of the plot, persuading a father returning from abroad that his house is haunted or the earthy fisherman slave Gripus rescuing a trunk from the deep and trying desperately, to gain some advantage from it. We even have Frankie Howerd's Lurcio² from Up Pompeii. Plautus can make the implausible appear almost normative, so the two identical Menaechmi twins are reunited after years to create improbable havoc.

Plautus was writing on the basis of lost Greek originals, how closely is arguable. The long lost Menander has resurfaced in the last century in fragments, some sizeable, even in binding for a mummy case. Followers of these notes may recall the apocryphal Gospel of Judas (PSM 154). Reading what remains of Menander is an eerie feeling like walking in a ruined house. At least some of the plays of Plautus survive in their entirety.

Oh, I thought you'd never ask, "What of the December Sale?" We're still riding the crest of last year's wave. Just as well with a Magazine of this size and no shadow of financial help.

Available in Penguin classics:

Plautus: The Rope and other plays.

Plautus: The Pot of Gold and other plays.

Menander: Plays and fragments.

Yes, they can appear at the Book Sale, but you can't rely on it.

.P

1. J. B. Poynton: Five plays of Plautus (1973).

2. In "The Swaggering Soldier" (Miles Gloriosus).

Remembering George Barker¹

I can't comment on George Barker being at Box Cottage, Balls Cross in the late 1930s. It was before my time. In the 1940s and 1950s I always knew him as "Gran" an abbreviation of his middle name Granville. My very earliest memory of him will be from 1945, perhaps at the Ebernoe V E Day celebration, perhaps at Horn Fair. It may be that he came to both. My father had a consuming interest in puppetry and had booked the well-known puppeteer Panto Puck – possibly for both events.

"Gran" was a family friend but with a penchant for evenings in the local pubs. As perhaps befitted a "professional poet" he was invariably flat broke and he and his entourage would take ages over a single drink before moving on to the next hostelry. My parents were at this time living at Hollands on the Balls Cross road.

At some time in the late 1940s or early 1950s "Gran" rented an ancient cottage belonging to Herne Farm just below Roundhurst. I often went there and finally collected a few books he had left when he departed. He was living at the time with "Betty" but not married to her: his first wife, Jessica, a devout Roman Catholic living in the United States would not countenance divorce. There was a "bust-up" at the cottage and very beautiful Betty went off to America with another, younger, member of the Barker clan. The Barkers were a large family and Gran's mother was Irish and a very considerable influence. I never knew Elizabeth Smart, someone Gran never married although he would have several children with her. Gran's parents had a large London flat and I think he may have stayed there on occasion. Gran was a career poet effectively without a "day job" and he had a considerable literary following in the late 1930s. He and Dylan Thomas were the most discussed of the avant-garde poets of the day. It was said that Thomas was envious of Gran's growing reputation.

I liked Gran very much, although I'd have to say that he could be truculently Irish in his cups. We would see him particularly at apple-picking time when what appeared to be the entire Barker clan would come and pick in my father's orchards.

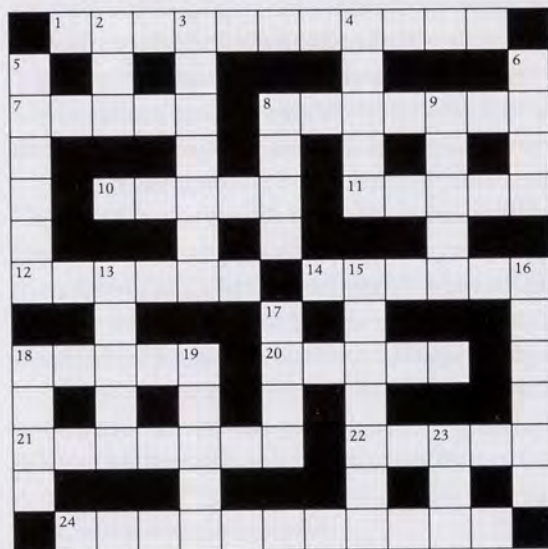
In those days I was "The Champion Boy Magician" – and did many shows with George Garland's excellent Concert Party. I had a fascination with the Circus – something that has never left me. So, having completed my National Service, with a year to spare before Oxford, I went to audition for Lord George Sanger's Circus at their winter quarters at Horley – and, to my amazement, was taken on for the season! Gran insisted on coming along to this audition – and was entranced by the animals and performers! The last time I saw him must have been in the early 1960s at the opening of an Ivon Hitchens Exhibition at the Waddington Gallery, to which he accompanied my parents.

I had been very fond of Gran – but I never saw him again after that.

Richard Gill was talking to the Editor:

1. See "Irate tradesmen at Balls Cross" PSM 162.

SUSSEX WRITERS & COMPOSERS CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1** Bleak Sussex farm where Aunt Ada Doom saw "something nasty in the woodshed" (4,7)
7 Composer buried in Chichester Cathedral (5)
8 His novel "Dombey and Son" is partly set in Brighton (7)
10 One of the Bloomsbury Group who lived at Charleston Farmhouse (5)
11 Animal contemplated in Blake's famous poem (5)
12 Exactly! Rudyard Kipling's book of children's stories (4,2)
14 Ever decreasing circles (6)
18 He orchestrated Blake's "Jerusalem" (5)
20 Poet who wrote "The Eve of St. Agnes" while staying in Chichester (5)

- 21** Composer whose greatest inspiration was the Sussex Downs (7)
22 French weariness (5)
24 Written by John Galsworthy, it became a popular TV drama in the 1960s (7,4)

DOWN

- 2** He sat in the belfry, "warming his five wits" in Tennyson's poem (3)
3 Obedient (7)
4 One aspect (5)
5 Period of Indian history when Kipling was born in Bombay (3,3)
6 Russian emperor (4)
8 Neatly skilful (4)
9 He composed the Cello Concerto while living at Bedham (5)

- 13** "They also ----- who only stand and wait" (5)
15 "The -----", cosmic composition by 7 ac (7)
16 He wrote "An Arundel Tomb" inspired by a FitzAlan memorial in Chichester Cathedral (6)
17 Made a little go a long way (4)
18 Author of "The Rights of Man" cut short and in some discomfort (4)
19 Irish poet who lived in the Ashdown Forest (5)
23 Black Beauty? Keep going on about it (3)

SOLUTION TO CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 2 Two front, 6 Cage, 8 Magi, 9 Exiled, 10 Hat, 11 Tiny, 12 Handel, 13 Eyelid, 15 Paying, 17 Briggs, 20 Cove, 21 Ten, 22 Troika, 23 Gold, 24 Sloe, 25 Portrays

DOWN

- 2 Wearily, 3 Fairy, 4 Orchard, 5 Teeth, 6 Chimney, 7 Geese, 14 Log fire, 15 Prancer, 16 Novelty, 18 Rural, 19 Stamp, 20 Cigar

A gigantic waste of time? (2)

In 1978 when I came to Petworth two thirds of the walled garden had been grassed and turned into paddocks. The crumbling Victorian glasshouses, once expertly tended by Fred Streeter, the head gardener who became famous as a BBC radio broadcaster, had been taken down in the 1960s as no longer economical to run. A vegetable garden remained together with a couple of greenhouses, an abandoned tennis court and a sunken garden designed by Fred.

I loved these old walls and wanted to spend time inside them. As you go through the arched doorways the air feels different, the wind calms and there is an immediate sense of enclosure. I had no idea other than to plant climbing roses all over them. The ancient wiring which once had held espaliered pears was still in place, with some of the lead labels attached. I had never ordered a rose and did not know one from another. A catalogue of Murrels Roses was given to me in which there were a few sketches but no photographs. Beguiled by the descriptions and a thought that buff, cream and white roses would look best against the brick I ordered a dozen which included - Paul's Lemon Pillar, Reve d'Or, Jeune d'Esprez, Mermaid, Gloire de Dijon, Seagull, Alistair Stella Gray and Marechal Niel. Marechal Niel soon died but the others are here after 30 years. They like the soil, dug deep for many years by Fred Streeter and his men.

From this uncertain beginning I slowly made a series of garden rooms within these walls, trying to keep a sense of place and scale and to give a different atmosphere to each one. Atmosphere in a garden, that intangible sense is something one remembers from other gardens and notices if it is not there.

A tennis court, perfectly fitted within the walls and the scene of tennis parties during my husband's childhood had become pitted with holes. We decided that we had played enough tennis so took it away. In this space I have made a place for reading in a newly named Cloister garden. A pair of pergolas of Wisteria sinensis underplanted with cream camassia form two sides of a square gravel garden planted with iris, lavender, cistus, romneya, yucca and Gallica roses. A spring, redirected from the park bubbles in a pool in the middle.

John Brookes, the designer and author of many books, with whom I once studied and worked gave me this idea. He persuaded me that Mediterranean plants loosely planted thrive in gravel and it is good to walk among these rather than gaze sideways at massed blocks of plants in a traditional herbaceous border. Some such as verbascum bombyciferum seed randomly in the gravel and give a jolly air of chance and asymmetry within the framework.

The long walk from the house presented a challenge. How could I make the scale more intimate and more interesting? Laurence Fleming, a writer and garden

designer who was staying with us just after we married, came up with the solution. Take out the gravel paths, make huge sweeping curves of longer grass with mown paths cut through, plant thousands of bulbs and reposition three 18th century urns. With Laurence's help and drawings, this is what we did. His judgement was perfect. The urns which define the space are in the right place, the balance of long and short grass seems right and children love running through it. I have been lucky to have the space to plant many bulbs from snowdrops and aconites in January through to camassia and narcissus poeticus in May. Not to inherit any large yellow daffodils was a blessing. A friend who does not like their gaudy company has, in despair, taken to blazing them with a blow torch with little success. We planted trees to allow this area to blend with the 18th century park over the wall. Some of these, now 60 feet high cast enough shade to grow big circles of cyclamen at their base. I look at them now and they make me feel old.

One of many good things about gardening for a long time in one place is that there has been time to undo mistakes. I have tried to take out as many as I can of the 'superior' purple Dutch crocus put in with such enthusiasm at the beginning. It is nearly impossible to dig up 1000 naturalised Dutch crocus but this last wet year has been helpful. Not only charmless crocus but brutish docks have come out like well extracted molars, complete with foot long root attached.

It is lovely to live close to the South Downs, those ancient rounded hills that come between the Weald and the sea. To make a focal point I cut a round hole in a boundary hedge and discovered that I had opened a clear window on to the Downs. In the foreground figures in white can sometimes be seen playing cricket. This lively picture makes a good contrast to a solemn urn or immobile statue. I have not gardened all of the walled garden and let a small flock of Southdown sheep keep half an acre. These woolly creatures with teddy bear ears and smiling expressions belong to this part of Sussex. They keep the grass down, eat the spare apples, snooze under the trees and are generally no bother in their restful glade.

In 2001 we made one of the biggest changes. On the south facade we turned a window into a door and built a bridge out to a grass terrace. This new terrace, designed by the architect Peter Inskip and built from local stone by our estate craftsmen, gives us more pleasure than I could have imagined. It links the house, park and garden in a new way. We have more outdoor life and it is convenient for small children and dogs. To give shade to the terrace our architect son in law Adam Richards has built a painted arbour, modelled on a design by Soane. Now festooned with jasmine it is perfect in scale and a masterpiece of elegance.

Two years ago I remodelled the kitchen garden. The large area under cultivation was unmanageable. To reduce this we dissected the space with brick lined paths of Breedon gravel and grass and placed a 19th century fountain basin

in the middle. The large granite basin, which had once been on the South Lawn, was found abandoned in a shed. It is now filled with flowers rather than water and makes a sturdy central feature. Artichokes and crown imperial lilies give it structure, Eremurus lilies shoot up like rockets and *crambe cordifolia* foams in the centre. Round the edge an annual mix of Pictorial Meadow gives us beloved cornflowers in jolly mixed colours at eye level.

As I grow older and watch the garden mature and grandchildren running about, I know I have been very lucky to realise a childhood dream. A stone disc set into the daisy covered brick wall, a birthday present from my husband, is carved with a line from Andrew Marvell's poem. His words 'Fair Quiet Have I Found Thee Here' seem to hover in the air as the bees buzz around them.

Caroline Egremont.

Editor's note

[Northwood on the Slindon Estate, had been deforested by logging during the 1914-1918 war, then ploughed up for the War Effort in the early 1940s. The Estate is now in the hands of the National Trust and run essentially as a sheep farm. As regards Northwood specifically the Trust have an active policy of restoring the former woodland area as it had been before deforestation. It will be used for recreational purposes.]

Society walkers noticed at Bignor Hill this summer a large block of limestone, on our visit unattended. On several days, however, work had been proceeding there and people have come, often in some numbers and either casually or by intention to help begin work on it during the summer and early autumn. This block, weighing some three tonnes, has journeyed from Slindon village to Gumber Farm on the Slindon Estate, thence to Bignor Hill, on to Eartham Wood and into Northwood itself. Such journeys are no light matter; they involve the heaviest of farm equipment and the help of several experienced hands.]

"Fizzling with history"

As a professional sculptor I like to work on these larger pieces, although not, of course exclusively. I find them a challenge and, as in this case, they can offer the opportunity of mingling my own input with that of many others in the finished work. Their contribution helps "open" the block in a random way. I find work that is not pre-planned attains greater visual power.

In this particular case I've been commissioned by the National Trust but often with these larger pieces there's an element of uncertainty both as to commissioning and ultimate location. I have others for instance at the Devil's Punch Bowl and outside the R.S.P.B. Centre at Wigginholt, while when the Society visited Lewes at the end of September many will have noted my 2010 "Lewes" Glory in the gardens of Southover House. This is on loan to Lewes District Council. The stone seen at Bignor will be sited eventually in the re-created Northwood at Slindon and commemorate restoration of the 200 acre site as preservation and amenity land and the bequest that made the restoration possible.

Sculpture has to be a vocation and intermittent work on a large stone can extend over a period of at least a year or more. These large pieces are a challenge both in the carving and in the homing and commissioning of them. They are certainly not 'comfort zone' pieces and do create a lot of debate. For a natural material worked in a very conservative manner with no overt political or conceptual message, the forms must have sufficient power to do this alone – which is satisfying for the artist. Sculpture as a profession has an element of the precarious and many slip towards the production of smooth, garden sized pieces which can offer a degree of financial security. Likewise, many stay with the wholly representational where there is also some demand – dogs, people and horses – where skilled observation is required but the results often do not really have anything to say. I have tried as far as I can to avoid what I call the "gallery circuit." I feel that as a sculptor I need to have a certain restlessness, artistic selfishness if you like.

What the National Trust are seeking for the Northwood site is a work that evolves or has evolved through the contribution of many different hands and provides a celebratory marker to the "Rise of Northwood". It's my sculpture but it's also the sculpture of innumerable people who have taken or even simply expressed an interest: some merely formal or polite, others very much "hand on". There is no age barrier. I don't have a fixed concept in mind, a preconceived model. I'm seeing what may evolve. My own contribution and that of many others will coalesce. Is that already the dim outline of a father and son – or that the gnarled trunk of a beech from the lost pre-1914 wood? I must not, however, allow the imagery to run riot and become discordant. A dragon would be as much out of place in this essentially factual context celebrating woodland and growth as would modern machinery. I must steer the forms, rejecting those that are inappropriate or weak, selecting those which are rich, warm and strong. I am not artistically compromised by others' involvement, but have embraced it in my working practice.

The original stone was delivered from Portland. Chalk would be easily worked

but, as the Goldsworthy works have shown, will deteriorate in a matter of years. Limestone will endure for several centuries. From Portland the stone was brought to the forge in Slindon in November 2014. I had requested it be a cubic block with definable faces. It would be part cut, part ripped, from the rock face with the help of a large stone chainsaw. From Slindon village it moved for the new planting season, firstly to Northwood itself, where it was a centrepiece for the community planting events for which it is, and will be, an enduring symbol. It's something tangible to which the visitor can physically relate. In a sense it's everyone's stone but I have a special care for it. Everyone has the chance to contribute to its continuing evolution. For some this may be a formal tap with the mallet before moving on, for others it's a real chisel and goggles job (risk assessment and health and safety then become part of the essence) – physical rather than cerebral: the physical element must loom large. A student of sculpture has made three trips from London to contribute.



Jon Edgar in his workshop.
Photograph Anne Purkiss.

I don't work exclusively in stone. A recent carving has been of a large piece of lime at an exhibition in Herefordshire. I stayed in the extensive gardens, living for a fortnight in a cottage in the grounds. I've also made sculpture from sections of Prince Charles' Highgrove cedar.

I also create works directly from observation; the head is an enduring test for the sculptor and all of a person's character can be conveyed without recourse to decorative arms, legs and other visual props. Some local heads include the triptych Sussex Siblings; brothers and sisters all well into their nineties at the time. More prominent sitters have included Wilfred Cass and Nicolas Frayling, both sitting as part of a collection of heads exhibited at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. 2016 will see the tercentenary of the birth of Lancelot "Capability" Brown. He never physically sat for sculpture but I'm creating a posthumous head working from existing portraits. It will be in terra cotta using "red marl" clay from Stoke-on-Trent. British busts tend to have a darker hue than the apricot tones of Italian clay.

I build the work up with irregular clay pellets – each the size of a bean – on a simple head peg armature. Keeping the clay loose and airy allows corrections to be easily made in response to intense observation of the subject (or the documentary secondary material, in the case of a posthumous sitter, where the process is a little more forensic). What develops is then hollowed akin to a boiled egg. The hollow head is dried completely before firing at 900 degrees C in my own small kiln in the studio, where many terra cottas remain in the archive if moulded and cast for bronze. Brown did come to Uppark while the connection with Petworth is obvious.

To return briefly to Northwood. The Slindon project fairly "fizzles" in my own words, with history. Think of William Cowper and William Hayley meeting there for the last time and Cowper's carriage rolling away toward London – or the constant echoes of Belloc travelling on horseback from Slindon to Gumber – or simply those trees sacrificed for the war a century ago.

Jon Edgar was talking to the Editor.

Jon is talking to the Society on Wednesday February 17th when he will also give a demonstration of modelling in red marl.

[For deforestation in the 1914-1918 war compare A. C. Tyson's poem "The Warrior Pine Wood" (PSM 99 March 2000). It reflects the cutting of pines at Cooper's Moor, Duncton to make trench props. A. C. Tyson was a pen-name for George Aitchison on whom see Shaun Cooper: "George Aitchison's Sussex" in PSM 160 June 2015.

Linda and Ian's walk in September 2014 took in Gumber. See PSM 158 page 7 and pictures page 25, 26. For the Lewes visit see PSM 162.]

P.

LADY CONNIE AND THE SUFFRAGETTES



The Leconfield Hall

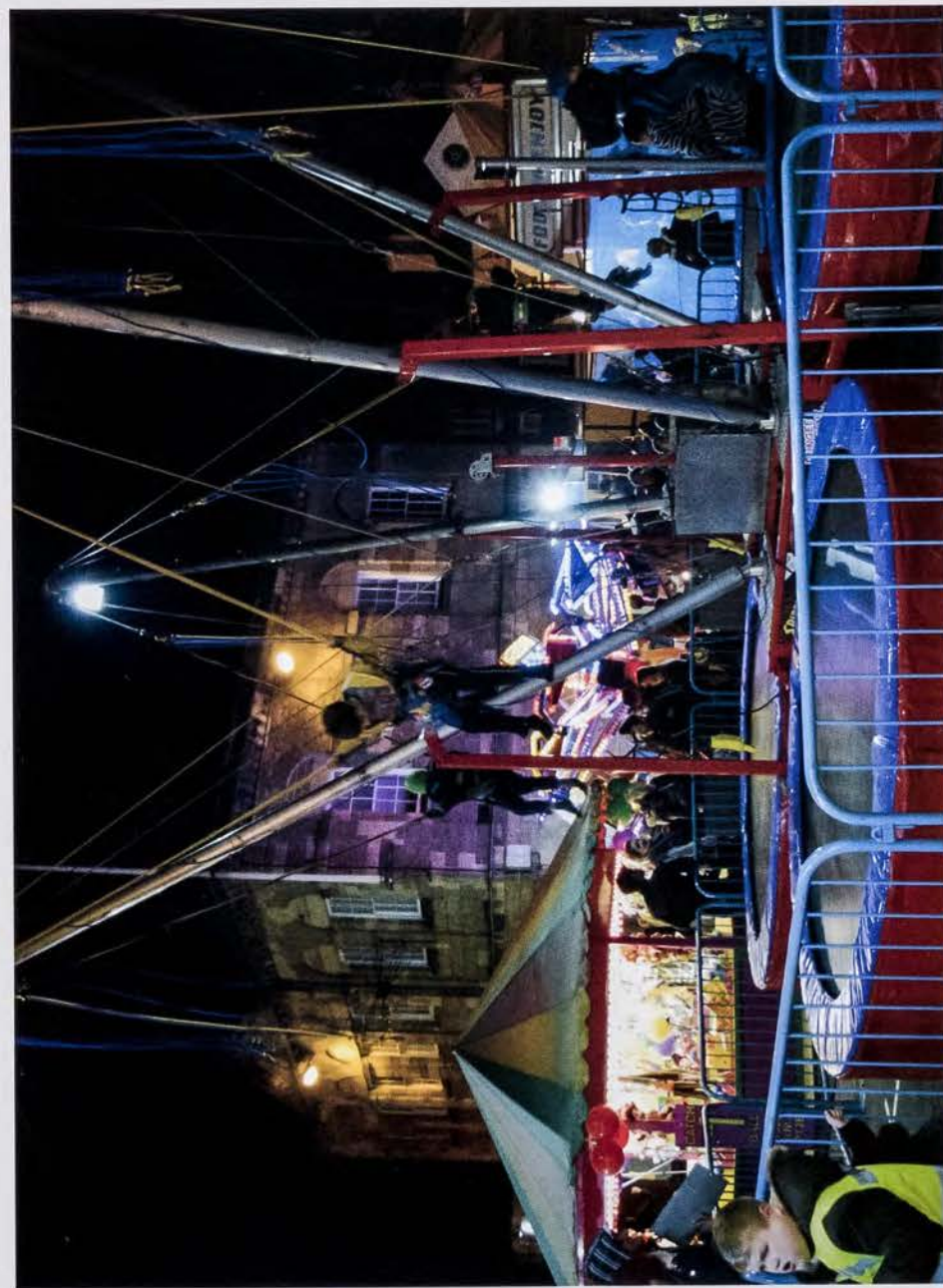
Tickets: £8 on the door, including refreshments

Time: 7.30pm Date: Wednesday 9 March





Janet and Chris welcome the walkers! See Linda and Ian's Osiers walk.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



Petworth Fair 2015.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



Cotillion at the Leconfield Hall in December.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



The Cottage Museum celebrates its 20th anniversary in May.
Photograph taken at the opening 4th May 1996. Raymond Harris on extreme right.



"A view to the Downs." See "A gigantic waste of time!"



Joint concert with Cockermouth Mechanics' Band held at Christchurch Cockermouth supported by Lord and Lady Egremont, the Cockermouth Lady Major, and Councillor Julie Laidlaw. Martin Streeter representing Petworth Town Band. See The Band in the North.



Petworth Town Band with Lord and Lady Egremont at the entrance to Cockermouth Castle October 2015. See *The Band in the North*.

The band in the north

The Petworth Town Band has been part of my life for more than sixty years. There were winter nights before Christmas when as a child drifting towards sleep I heard the reassuring carols being played in the town, perhaps outside the Somerset Hospital where the band had gone to give the residents a treat. It seemed an essential part of home. So did the march "Sussex by the Sea". I still cannot hear it without rising emotion.

There was no difficulty during the 1950s in getting bandsmen as brass or silver bands flourished in West Sussex towns and villages. At the annual November 5th parade through Petworth down to the bonfire at Hampers Green organised by the miller from Coultershaw, Mr Gwillim, several bands came, from Haslemere, West Chilington and even Midhurst although that town, always Petworth's rival, was looked down on as a place of little culture. We carried torches with live flames. Fireworks exploded in the night sky.

How strong a part of Sussex life those local bands were: not perhaps as long in tradition as in the north of England but still apparently deeply entrenched. Then at the start of the 1960s they began to fade away, even the West Chilington Silver band, until Petworth's was one of the few left. That is why one of the town's heroes should be Bert Pratt. A tall, thin, slightly stooping, bald and cheerful man, Bert, an excellent trombone player, worked for the West Sussex County Council. It was he who kept Petworth's band going during the lean times.

Why did the decline happen? Could it have been the huge emphasis on youth culture at that time which precluded brass band music? Bands were perhaps associated with militarism which was not popular in an age of protest against (for example) the Vietnam War. During these years the November 11 Remembrance Day parade was attended by fewer people than today, even though many veterans from the Second and even the First War were still alive, with glinting medals that included several MCs and DSOs. The band led the parade, in thin ranks. Always there were the same loyal players: fine musicians such as Fred Standen, skilled on the accordion as well as the cornet, and John Grimwood who achieved a beautifully mellow cornet tone. Fred's son went on to play in the band of the Royal Marines.

Then as now the band rehearsed in the stables at Petworth House so I could hear their progress. "Sussex by the Sea" never daunted them; and it was usually thumped out at the start of the session. Then might come "The Teddy Bear's Picnic" or another march (often "Imperial Echoes"), perhaps some carols to prepare for Christmas, before pieces that gave trouble: often medleys about places or seasons such as spring or Paris. These could start well with a blast of cornets,

backed up by the deeper brass and high clarinets: a powerful sound.

Had Bert coaxed them up to a higher level at last? Gradually, however, one became aware of a certain falling off. John Grimwood or Fred Standen had probably led at a good pace but some players clearly could not keep up, the wrong notes proliferating into an agonizing discord. I imagine, although I was too far away to hear, that Bert Pratt, finding the pain too great, must have banged his music stand and shouted "Stop" for the sound ceased in a slow descent into silence. A piece called "Bouquet de Paris" gave particular trouble, perhaps because it involved quick changes of pace such as the fading of a rip roaring Can Can into a slow melody evoking the city of love. The Marseillaise was in there somewhere as well.

Bert Pratt not only taught youngsters but also took the band out of Petworth to play at functions such as the Gold Cup at Cowdray where the Queen is said to have asked who they were. He stayed the course well into old age when marching must have been a trial. The band survived because of his hard work and patience.

Later came the revival under Paula and Martin Streeter. Theirs was a band romance; we wondered if Martin would ever ask her to marry him and he was frequently told to get a move on. Paula and Martin's children have inherited their parents' talents. One of the great achievements of the last two decades is to have enlisted many young people in the band and to have kept up a programme of teaching.

It was perhaps hearing the band from the top floor of the house that inspired me to learn an orchestral instrument, particularly a brass one, so for some five years I played the trombone. There was something about that rich sound that captivated me, bringing a sense of heroic deeds, especially when the tune was "Sussex by the Sea" whose words I learnt early on: "Now is the time for marching/ Now let your hearts be gay": then the moving last two lines "You may tell them all that we stand or fall/ For Sussex by the sea".

Written in 1907 by William Ward-Higgs, a solicitor who came to live in Sussex, at South Bersted, it shows unrestrained Edwardian patriotism and a romantic view of the Sussex life ("We plough and mow and reap and sow/ And useful men are we") which was darkened seven years later when to march could mean the start of a journey to the western front and death. Ward-Higgs must have had a depressive temperament for he killed himself in 1936. The tune and its words have had many admirers, including Rudyard Kipling and the late King Hussein of Jordan (for whom it was played on his visits to Britain). This is the Sussex county anthem, inseparable from the Petworth Town Band.

In October 2015, it was played in a concert that featured its Cumbrian equivalent, "Do Ye Ken John Peel" – for the band had gone north, to

Cockermouth and Egremont in Cumbria, on its first tour. My family has had property in Cockermouth since a marriage in the fourteenth century so we were delighted that these two great English tunes would be played at the same concert, bringing north and south together.

There were two concerts in Cumbria – the first at Christ Church in Cockermouth (one of the town's two churches) and the second in the hall at Egremont, about fourteen miles away. Petworth played alongside the Cockermouth Mechanics Band at Christ Church and the Egremont Band at Egremont.

We were in brass band country. All the instruments in the Cockermouth and Egremont bands are brass, in contrast to the woodwind such as clarinets (one played with huge energy by the conductor Paula) that are part of the Petworth band and have been for as long as I can remember. This makes the sounds of the bands different, the solid brass giving a depth and smoothness, like velvet, that the addition of woodwind makes more shrill, although perhaps widening the range.

"Don't expect a big audience," a Cockermouth bandsman said to me. The crowd in Christ Church, however, was not thin, even if it included few young people who could be found outside the Wordsworth pub round the corner in the High Street. Petworth played first – some marches, including "Sussex by the Sea" of course, and other quick numbers before Cockermouth took to the stage with music of a similar atmosphere. Cockermouth's star piece was a wonderful arrangement of "Do Ye Ken John Peel" in which the band sang some of the song's words, building the melody up to a terrific finale. Then the two bands played together: Petworth and Cockermouth on the first night and Petworth and Egremont on the second.

I'd heard "Do Ye Ken John Peel" many times. It is an unashamed celebration of foxhunting – the version pursued often on foot over Cumbrian fells and torrential becks. John Peel was in some ways a deplorable man – drunken, extravagant, neglectful of his family: quite different to the prosperous and melancholic Ward-Higgs, the author of "Sussex by the Sea". Peel lived in earlier times, from 1776 until 1854, dying probably from a fall out hunting for he sometimes rode a horse or pony, leaping off to follow hounds up a crag or through a bog, letting off great blasts of his horn.

During the winter of 1829, Peel was drinking in an inn in his home village of Caldbeck, discussing plans for hunting with his friend John Woodcock Graves. Excited by imagined sport, Graves felt moved to write five verses to an old Cumbrian "rant" or tune, turned later into the present version by William Metcalf, the choirmaster of Carlisle cathedral. The first line has long been a subject of controversy. Should it be "Do ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay" or "coat so

grey"? Grey could refer to the wool of the Cumbrian Herdwick sheep. But Peel was said to wear scarlet, like most huntsmen. Who knows which is right?

Graves told Peel that the song would be sung long after they had both been forgotten. He was partly right; but who now remembers the author of "Sussex by the Sea"? In fact Peel is better known than William Ward-Higgs (he is, after all, the subject of the rousing verses) whereas few people have heard of Graves.

In 1929 the newspaper the *Scotsman*, venturing south of the border, carried a report of the centenary celebrations of the song that were held in Caldbeck. Those present included Peel's 68 year old granddaughter, with others who had known the legendary huntsman. One ancient contemporary descended into nostalgia, speaking of "a wild rider and a fine man ... There isn't his equal here today, nor will there ever be."

The high point was a hunt on foot. Followers took their hats off as they passed Peel's grave in Caldbeck churchyard; and a fox quickly got up, pausing cheekily to wash in the river before easily outrunning the pack and the sound of the hunting horn once used by Peel. The day ended with the company gathered round a massive cauldron filled with a stew made from two Herdwick sheep and several sacks of potatoes. The local vicar stayed away, decrying the exaltation of "one who neglected his farm and impoverished his family by his unrestrained pursuit of hunting". In 1977, as if to echo this, Peel's grave, its headstone decorated with carved horns, a resting hound, and floral motifs, was desecrated by anti-hunting protestors.

Did my family know Peel? We have his hoof pick mounted on a wooden shield, apparently obtained from Ruthwaite where he passed his last years. I wonder if this came to us through the last Wyndham to make his main home at Cockermonth – General Sir Henry Wyndham, the younger son of the 3rd Lord Egremont and a veteran of the Napoleonic wars.

The General once hunted his own hounds round Petworth while living at Sladlands, a mansion which stood on the road from Balls Cross to Kirdford before the misguided decision to demolish it in the 1960s. But Henry ceased to hunt in Sussex after quarrelling with his older brother George who also had a pack. Moving to Cockermonth after his retirement, he became Member of Parliament for Cockermonth and West Cumberland from 1852 until his death in 1860; Peel died in 1854, still hunting to the end.

One of Henry Wyndham's feats as a young officer was to have been involved in the closing of the gates at Hougoumont, one of the key farm houses on the battlefield of Waterloo, keeping the French out, with the exception of a few, led by an axe wielding giant called Le Gros, who were dealt with in an appropriate manner. In 2015 the anniversary of the battle, our craftsmen on the Leconfield

Estate, led by John Staker and the then clerk of the works Roger Wootton, remade a pair of Sussex oak gates to take to the place of those that had become rotten.

Henry Wyndham, a keen hunting man, may have known Peel. The General's last years were spent in Cockermonth castle with a French mistress, his wife having died a long time ago. Their books are still there, her signature cut out of them by his prim descendants. There is a brass memorial to him in All Saints, Cockermonth's Victorian parish church and companion to Christ Church where the bands gave their concert which he might have enjoyed, particularly, as an old soldier, the marches and, as a hunting man, "Do Ye Ken John Peel".

So the concerts at Cockermonth and Egremont brought out some ghosts: Peel the old huntsman; that melancholy lover of Sussex William Ward-Higgs; and a General who as a young officer had helped to defeat Napoleon. As ever, music-making showed how it could cross the centuries. Those ghosts will be with us again when the Cumbrian bands come south, as is planned for 2017. Let us give them a great welcome.

Max Egremont

The lost country of Eleanor Boniface

"Oh, of course we has ghostes here, we knows that, but they seem good uns, and not spiteful like those at Burnt Oak 'cept that old witch Mus' Chalcroft; she were spiteful when she were alive anyways!"

The last issue of the PSM included excerpts from *Some People of Hogg's Hollow*, by Eleanor Boniface, from which the above quote comes as well. This book is entirely narrated in dialect, and although it reads like fiction, there is no overall plot, no story or journey. Instead, a handful of 'characters' (for want of a better word) almost certainly based on real people, deliver long monologues, chatting about their families, neighbours and other villagers, reminiscing about the past, or even telling tales of smugglers, ghosts, strange phantoms, and witches – covering periods from the 18th century to just after the Great War. It seems to have been Eleanor's first book, and as such, it is a stunning achievement. There is nothing else quite like it, and although the book is essentially about Milland, west of Midhurst, and, to a lesser extent, Trotton, Stedham, and Chithurst, its importance to the subject of what one might call 'historical Sussex literature' goes far beyond the borders of that particular region.

However, Milland and those other places are not named in the book, and the

few villages that do get mentioned seem to have made-up names, nor are there any clues as to which part of Sussex it is set in – all of which suggests that Eleanor was living in Milland when it was published, in 1924. But, sadly, the vagueness about the setting of the book is probably the main reason why she was never known as a Sussex writer. There is nothing about her on the Internet, nor is she even mentioned in any books about Sussex. Indeed, the general impression is that after her book was published, it sank without trace, and now it is very rare – and that is a great loss to Sussex, because Eleanor Boniface must be, quite frankly, one of the finest writers this county has ever produced.

In February 1932, Sussex County Magazine had her 'Reminiscences of a Country Woman' – followed by further instalments in January 1933 and February 1934. These are all narrated by Mrs Jolly, who is also one of the main narrators in *Hogg's Hollow*, but the difference is that these reminiscences contain mentions of real places, namely Trotton, Iping, Rake, and Chithurst, and Eleanor even wrote in the Foreword to the first instalment that she and Mrs Jolly lived in a small hamlet near Midhurst. In the quote below, from *Some People of Hogg's Hollow*, Mrs Jolly describes that place a bit – and note that here the word 'wonderful' means 'very' and that 'lightening' is the Sussex dialect pronunciation of 'lightning'.

"That Burnt Oak be a wonderful haunted place. No, I don't know why 'tis called Burnt Oak; I expect an oak was burnt by lightening there sometime or other. But there's a 'normous gurt old holly there that's pretty nigh dead and all hollow in the middle, and there's an oak that's grown in the middle of 'un, slap up in the middle, and it always has a tremendous lot of acorns. Oncet when we lived near there in a cottage that lays back-like in a sandy bottom I was gathering 'em for the pigs and it come on dusk, and sudden the oak begins to bend and groan – though there weren't no wind in the other trees – and I sees two lights glaring at me out of the holly and then – woosh! a gurt thing like a calf rushes past me and I just scritch'd and dropped all my acorns and run all the way home. That night I tells Jolly about un and he didn't larf like I almost expected he would, but he says quite serious that he'd seen the lights there too and didn't know what to make of 'em ... But 'twarn't only the oak and the holly, 'twas the whole place round there."

Eleanor was not just a Sussex writer, though. From October 1927 to October 1928, she wrote Welsh fairy tales for the Welsh Outlook magazine (monthly, in English) and in 1929 these were collected together to form the book *S'Nellie's Welsh Fairy Tales*. She had more tales in the magazine, and some poems, 1932-1933; and then in 1935, Pepler and Sewell of St. Dominic's Press at Ditchling

published a slim volume of her poetry, *Welsh Ways and Days*, which is incredibly rare, as only 450 copies were printed. In 1936, she had another slim volume of poetry, *Old Holy Things of Wales*, published by Welsh Outlook Press. Almost all of her tales in the magazine seem to have been written for adults, but a few were broadcast on the Children's Hour radio show, throughout the Thirties.

S'Nellie's Welsh Fairy Tales is well worth reading, for the extraordinarily vivid style and immersive power of Eleanor's writing – it's like sitting on the back porch while a beloved grandparent or wizened neighbour tells you the lore of the land in a true old-timey storytelling way. Below is the evocative opening scene of 'Tango and the One-Eyed Fox', followed by the strange beginning of 'Lost in the Forest' – which was one of the tales broadcast on the radio:

I am sure something is moving about up there in the bracken! die anwyl! But I hope if it is a hare, it won't be crossing our path.

Hares, they are not very lucky, no indeed! And if they cross your path you had better make sure that they are hares, for indeed sometimes there are things, that are looking like hares, that are not hares at all. Better not say what they are!

Sometimes they have long manes of what looks like human hair, and they run by in the moonlight screaming with a pitiful human cry, and if they cross your path, or you are trying to help them, then what happens after is dreadful, too dreadful to speak about – Tewch! there it is again in the bracken. Oh, it is only old Llwynog (fox) after all!

I can see his red coat, and his red tail with white tip to it.

Ha! Hai! Syr Llwynog, have you seen Tango lately? Yess? you may well slide away. You know, Tango was a sheep dog, and a great favourite with his Master ...

Lost in the Forest

One bright morning, Ngeneth i (my little girl) was standing by the cottage door – no! not you! you aren't the only Ngeneth i in the world, though sometimes I am thinking, you think you are! Well, this Ngeneth i was quite different, and she was standing at the cottage door, looking out across the garden and the field, to where the sunshine was shining on the forest, making it look all green and gold, with great black tunnels between the trees, where the shadows lived.

Very well then! if you are sulking like that we will be calling her Catrin and not Ngeneth i at all ...

In some of her Welsh tales and poems, Eleanor writes as if she actually considered herself to be Welsh, and in the first story in *S'Nellie's*, 'Bones and Buttermilk', it is implied that she grew up in Wales – but she was really from Sussex. She was born

14th August 1880, at No. 1 Cottage Milland Marsh, though the family later moved to Milland Lane, and then to Milland Road. Her father, Thomas Boniface, was from nearby Trotton, and her mother Rebekah (Palmer) came from the neighbouring village of Chithurst, and they had married in 1861. There were nine children, born 1862-1880, of whom Eleanor was the last. The others were, in order: Thomas, George, Mary, Jesse, Eli, Emily, Walter, and Dorcas. However, George died in 1884, aged twenty. Most of Eleanor's siblings left home during her childhood: Mary moved to Iping in 1880; Thomas got married about 1883 and lived in No. 2 Cottage Milland Marsh, but later moved to Godalming, Surrey; Emily married in 1885 and moved to Lambeth, London; and Walter moved to Ewhurst around about 1888. Indeed, by 1891 when Eleanor was eleven and the family were now in Milland Lane, Dorcas was the only one of her siblings still living at home.

Their father seems to have been a general labourer for all of his life. Thomas junior became a bricklayer, and George had been a hoop-maker, but Jesse and Walter worked as labourers, and Mary, Dorcas and Eleanor went into domestic service. Dorcas was parlour-maid at the Vicarage in Milland, and did not leave home until 1905 when she married. Eleanor herself was working as housemaid in Liss by 1901, and by 1911 as parlour-maid in Lynchmere. In 1918 though she was living in Iping or Chithurst, and was not working at all. On 8th August that year, she married Edward Jones, at Iping Marsh Church.

Edward was from Mardy in Wales, but when they moved to that country and how long they lived there is very uncertain. Just a few months after their wedding, Eleanor's father died, and so it could be that the couple stayed in Milland, looking after her aged mother. *Some People of Hogg's Hollow* was published in 1924, and according to the Foreword of the 'Reminiscences', these were written in 1926 and it is also implied that Eleanor was living in Sussex when they were published – 1932-1934. In her first poem, 'Hiraeth' (Welsh Outlook Sept. 1933) she writes: "Indeed indeed I must go back to my Country/ I can't bear with this old England anymore," which also might suggest that she was living in Sussex at that time. Another uncertainty is which part of Wales they moved to. All of the places mentioned in *S'Nellie's Welsh Fairy Tales* are in North Wales, especially in the area of Llangollen and Gwytherin, and the places named in *Old Holy Things of Wales* are mostly near Aberystwyth, on the west coast – but Mardy is in the south.

Sadly, it is unlikely we will find out when she left Sussex, and where in Wales she lived, and if she did come back, until the Census of 1921 gets published, and then those of 1931 and 1941. All we do know for certain about her whereabouts after her marriage is that by the start of World War Two, she and Edward were living in Godalming, where Eleanor's brother Thomas still lived.

In the end, though, what we of West Sussex will remember her most for is her valuable and fascinating first book, *Some People of Hogg's Hollow*. Pages and pages of people talking in dialect may not be everybody's idea of a good book, but what's important about *Hogg's Hollow*, aside from the folklore and local history recorded in it, is the very fact that it is all narrated in the West Sussex dialect. You've only got to read *A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect* (ed. Helena Hall) to realize that the vast majority of the words and phrases described therein are of the East Sussex dialect, with quite a lot of mid-Sussex ones, and only a very few of West Sussex. You might suppose I am just splitting hairs by differentiating between West and East Sussex dialects, but reading books about the county's folklore will show that West Sussex is very different to East Sussex: all of the places in Sussex which have local legends of fairies, or about dragons, are in West Sussex, but East Sussex has none of these. Furthermore, such books show that the region of West Sussex which is west of the River Arun, and in particular that which is north of the Downs, has far more places that have local legends than any of the surrounding areas. And the dialect is a part of this old southern heritage of the region – we may not use it much now, but the old South Country language is still with us, and can be found in various place names, and old surnames, and also in the county's motto: 'We wun't be druv.'

The most well known of Sussex writers, Sheila Kaye-Smith, who put dialect speech in much of her work, had studied it carefully and noted how it was used, but she lived all her life in East Sussex, and the language of her characters is that of East Sussex; and most of the few other writers who used dialect in Sussex books were also from the eastern part of the county. Indeed, most writers who put characters speaking Sussex dialect in their books had themselves not grown up using dialect, as they had either lived in towns (Kaye-Smith, Rhoda Leigh) or not even been born in this county (Marjorie Hessel Tiltman, Jeffery Farnol) whereas Eleanor was from a very rural area of Sussex and, almost certainly, had used the local dialect long before she learned how to speak proper. So *Some People of Hogg's Hollow* and the 'Reminiscences of a Country Woman' are important to West Sussex, and to be regarded as of historical value, because in these Eleanor has recorded the little known (and much less written about) dialect of northern West Sussex; and, in writing this tribute to her, it has been very difficult to choose which sections to quote from, because so many of those tales, whether about supernatural entities or not, are fascinating to read, as they contain various dialect words which, quite apart from the fact that they are not to be found in other Sussex books, are worth noting just for their enchanting sounds and the almost lyrical and sometimes wayward flow of the speech – words such as: jibber, tremmiling, terruble, cliney, rhody, ravellings, hems, scammeling, fandangling, and cruddles, none of which are recorded in *A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect*.

But to end this article though, here is one of my favourite tales from *Hogg's Hollow*. It is narrated by Mrs Jolly, and concerns the witch who lived near Burnt Oak, and it is easily the most creepiest of Sussex witch legends ever – and also one of the most unusual, not just because of the way the witch acted, but because the setting is in winter. This just has to be Eleanor Boniface at her very best.

“Mrs Chalcroft, she were a witch, they do say. Yaas! And my husband's brother one night in winter – 'twas snow too – he saw she a-crooching in the lane by the copse. What she doing out then, that time o' night, twelve o'clock and in the snow too? He walks on, he do, and about half a mile on he sees her again, crooching in front o' he. How she'd got there then? She hadn't passed he, no! Then he goes on again, and presently there she were in front o' he a-crooching, and no footmarks in the snow neither, and this time – woosh! she runs into a drain-pipe side o' the road and disappeared. Oh, my husband's brother he got terrible afraid, he did. Ah, she were a witch right enough; they do say sometimes she were a gurt black dog, but I doane know 'bout that.”

In 2014 I contacted Val Porter, editor of the Milland News magazine. She had not heard of Eleanor Boniface, and I wrote a short article about *Some People of Hogg's Hollow* for the September issue. Before she bought the book, and before she learnt of my interest in witch legends, Val wrote in an email that there has long been the story that a witch who lived near Borden Lane, in a now vanished cottage, used to frighten horses, and that even today horses still get a bit jumpy as they pass near the place where the cottage stood! Borden Lane joins with Burnt Oak Lane near Hogg Lane, which leads to Trotton Hollow; and so all this shows us that the old witch of Burnt Oak was not just some character from Eleanor's imagination, and that Mrs Jolly's strange tales about her and of the various phantoms and ghosts in *Some People of Hogg's Hollow* must indeed have been part of the oral lore, of this once upon a time so magical region – of West Sussex.

Notes on Eleanor and her siblings – and about reading her work

Thomas 1862: he married Frances R. White (born in Southsea, Portsmouth) around about 1883 and they lived at No. 2 Cottage Milland Marsh. By 1891, they had five children: Arthur, Frank, Leonard, Ada, and Mary. About 1892 they moved to Godalming, Surrey, and Thomas became an insurance agent. Two more boys were born: Jesse, & Christopher. Then in 1897, Frances died, and shortly afterwards, Thomas married Mary Fairfield (born in Godalming) and they had a son: Ernest. **George 1864:** he worked as a hoop-maker, but died in 1884. **Mary 1866:** she left home in 1880 and moved to the Rectory of Iping & Chithurst, where she worked as parlour-maid. In 1896, she married Christopher H. White (brother

of Frances White) and they moved to East Teignmouth, Devon, where he became a coastguard. Daughter Ethel was born in 1900. Also living with them in 1901 was nephew George E. Boniface, born in 1896 in Godalming, and he was still with them in 1911 when they were at Parkstone in Dorset. **Jessie 1867:** he married Cora or 'Esra' (born at Lyminster) in 1897 and they lived in Harting Coombe, and by 1911 had four boys and a girl: Chris, Thomas, Eli George, Mabel Lona, and Frederick. Jesse worked as a labourer and as a milkman. He died in 1915. **Eli 1869:** he was living at home in 1881, but there seem to be no more records about him until his death, in Milland, in 1900. **Emily 1872:** in 1885, she married Walter Elliot (born in 1871 at West Norwood) and they moved to Lambeth, London, where he worked as a postman. Their first child, Mabel Rosa was born in 1897, and by 1911 they had five more children: Walter, Ernest, Frederick, Phyllis, & Winifred. **Walter 1873:** he moved to Ewhurst roughly between 1887-1890, where he was lodging with the Hayner family in 1891, and working as a farm labourer. Ewhurst is near Godalming. **Dorcas 1878:** she was parlour-maid at Milland Vicarage and continued to live at home until 1905 when she married James H. Funnell, who was from Chiddingly. They moved to Seaford, where daughter Gwendoline was born about 1909, but were living at Newick, near Lewes in 1911.

All the stories and poems Eleanor wrote for *Welsh Outlook* can be read on the *Welsh Outlook* website. Many Sussex libraries have *Sussex County Magazine*, and you can order photocopies of the 'Reminiscences of a Country Woman' from them, or from the library or the Records Office at Chichester.

Shaun Cooper:

“You can take that straight back ...”

I was born at South Grove, my parents having recently moved to the town from Peterborough and settled in one of the recently built council houses there. The rent, then, in the early 1930s was 10/6d a week. My father had come to Petworth for an interview with Mr and Mrs Harper, the hairdressers and confectioners in Saddlers Row. My father would work there until he retired.

I don't remember much about early school days. I went to the Infants School where Miss Wootton was the mistress. The school stood on the site of the present Public Library. North Street Boys' School was rather different. It was a long walk from South Grove in all weathers. A highlight of the journey was a visit to Mrs Tyrrell's tiny sweet shop in North Street. She made her own sweet bags of greaseproof paper, rather like an ice-cream cone. I can't remember taking

sandwiches so I must have walked home and back for lunch. The school certainly didn't provide it. It seems a long way looking back.

Of course, the essential Boys' School memory as far as any of us who were there at the time, was the school bombing on Michaelmas Day 1942. Details may differ slightly in eye-witness accounts but that's hardly surprising given how young we were and the magnitude of the event. My abiding memory is of sitting in a lesson and Mr Stevenson the headmaster at his desk a few feet in front of me. There was a crump and falling debris. There was a partition between classrooms and almost without thinking, I made my way to the "traitor's gate" in the partition. It had a recessed lock with a ring handle. I was now standing before the massive iron-studded front door that opened out on to North Street. It had a huge iron lock and a big iron ring, as big as a tea plate. I had hold of it and was about to turn it when a slightly taller pupil pulled me back. I would not see him again.

As I understand it, the blast from the next explosion blew the door inwards so that it collapsed on top of me. I knew no more until I came round in Pound Street in the back of an army lorry just outside the timbered cottage just south of Boxgrove. Mrs Adams' washing-up bowl appeared, I was sick into it and then taken on to hospital in Chichester. Like other survivors of the tragedy I have an irrational feeling of guilt that I should have escaped when so many others did not. It's not logical of course and it seems to come on only at times. When it does its onset is gradual and it lingers.

With the school destroyed, there was a brief period in the corrugated Iron Room in Market Square with the evacuees, then Culvercroft in Pound Street just off the T-junction with Saddlers Row. I think the evacuees came with us (remember that many of them had gone home by this time). The Canadians who had helped so much when the school was bombed – the Ordnance people at Flathurst had been first on the scene, then those from the Pheasant Cops – had gone to Dieppe. I seem to have a vivid memory of some of them trudging back up into Petworth from the station after the raid – but I may be wrong about this.

The Americans seemed to us wartime boys to come from another planet. They lived like the proverbial fighting cocks, and even then they still seemed hungry. They'd give us money to go to the International Stores for Shippams paste and broken biscuits both being off ration. We boys soon fell in with the Americans and joined them in the Pheasant Cops hunting pheasants in the woods. I was even offered a Luger pistol and holster to buy but it was £5 – an unimaginable sum for a boy in those days. We'd make up makeshift bikes and sell them to the Americans who would pay us in U.S. currency. We'd change this at the Westminster Bank. We became such a nuisance changing the money that the manager said he'd only do it on Tuesdays. Evenings after school we'd be down the camp, the Americans had

chocolate, sweets and cookies. A particular friend was Eddie Lucas who had a wife and young family back home. We'd have him down to tea some Sundays at South Grove.

The lower lake in Petworth Park had a flat area beside it and a landing strip, while an adjacent hill was packed with vehicles. I remember collecting money as usual to buy things off the ration for them, then someone saying, "Don't bother to come back, we won't be here." "What about the money?" "Don't worry, just keep it." And we never saw them again. Eddie Lucas wrote once from France. It was in a tiny envelope and for years I kept it as a bookmark. I seem finally to have lost it.

There is an old story and probably true, that Lord Leconfield went to the Limbo gate to enter the Pheasant Cops. He was with his dog. The guard asked him what he was doing. "I'm walking my dog." "Where's your pass?" "I don't need a pass. I own the Pheasant Cops." After a brief spell in the guard room all was cleared up and his lordship saw the funny side.

The Americans had got hold of a car chassis, just the engine, no seats, no brakes, simply a piece of 4" by 2" in the middle with which they contrived to stop the car by pulling up the strut.

One Saturday lunchtime two bombs were dropped on Petworth Station. I remember the clear view from South Grove – we were standing outside. A Heinkel flew up from the station and I could clearly see the pilot in the cockpit and a glint of sun on powder blue paint.

On another occasion we were in the garden at South Grove when a couple of bombs fell in the fields just south of the Mile House in Station Road and, on another occasion a Spitfire came down with engine trouble in a field just beyond Washington Cops. The pilot was quickly picked up and the plane left waiting for the big R.A.F. loader that would come to pick it up. The wings would be separated from the body which would be put on the loader and the wings tucked in beside it. My father's employer Mr Harper, a special constable, was in charge and I managed briefly to get into the cockpit. When my friends wanted to do the same, Mr Harper quickly decided that enough was enough.

We boys would go round collecting scrap metal, old saucepans, anything for the War Effort. Motts the butchers in the Market Square (now Barringtons) was empty for a time and used as a collection point. We'd been in there with a load and saw two World War I bayonets complete with their scabbards. The back door was one of those two part stable doors and entry was easy enough. We were back in the evening to claim them. "What have you got there?" my Dad asked when I got home. "You can take that straight back where you got it." Metal was in demand: the two field cannons and two Vickers machine guns which had stood outside the church in the 1930s were already gone.

Once we went from South Grove to play on a rough piece of ground on the site of the later Herbert Shiner School. We were thinking about going home for dinner – it would be late summer and there was stubble in the fields. A German plane flew in from the direction of Grove Lane and fired a machine gun burst. Quite enough to send us home pretty quickly. I'd had the offer of a place at Midhurst Grammar School, places were made available to those who had been in the bombed school. I didn't want to go and somehow my parents didn't come to hear of it.

I left school and went to work for Mr Whittington the High Street plumber and later I worked for Ernie Card also in High Street. Obviously as soon as I was of age I was called up, but by that time the war was over. I remember having to replace a lightning conductor on Petworth House using the old Petworth House Fire Brigade ladder and the Estate workmen having to come back early on their bicycles to let the ladder down. Mr Whittington would take me to work in his Austin 7 – it had a tiny roof window which would be opened up to allow a long piece of piping or length of wood to protrude from it. He'd never be late collecting me from where I was working as the lights on his car were somewhat temperamental. Jack Slee who worked on the firm might take me in his motorcycle and sidecar. All very well except that the sidecar was always crammed with equipment and I had to perch where I could.

Mr Card was an ingenious man. He decided to renew the shop floor at his shop in the High Street (now Red Card) and bought some telegraph poles. He took them to Mr Leazell's yard at the rear and asked George Boxall to make them into floor blocks. He laid them, then finished off with a blow lamp and a bucket of hot pitch. He couldn't wear ordinary shoes and always had open sandals, and managed to spill some of the pitch on his feet. Not to be recommended. He bought the first power sander to come to Petworth and it was a very cumbersome machine indeed.

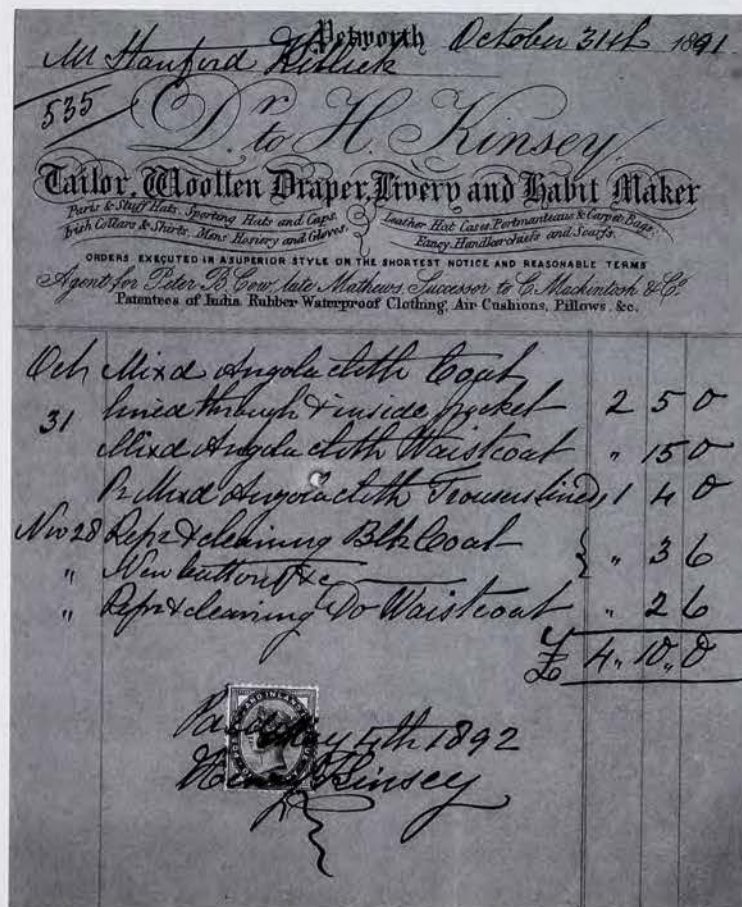
For years I've gone down to the boys' grave in the Horsham Road cemetery. Regardless of any service I make a point of being there at the very time of that first crump. 11.50 is firmly in my mind although others fix the time a little earlier. This year I was pleased to see the grass mown and the surroundings tidy but regretted that the mowings had obscured the names of the boys. Just a little extra work with a brush would have meant so much.

Tony Ball was talking to Tony Turland and the Editor.

Old Petworth traders (18).

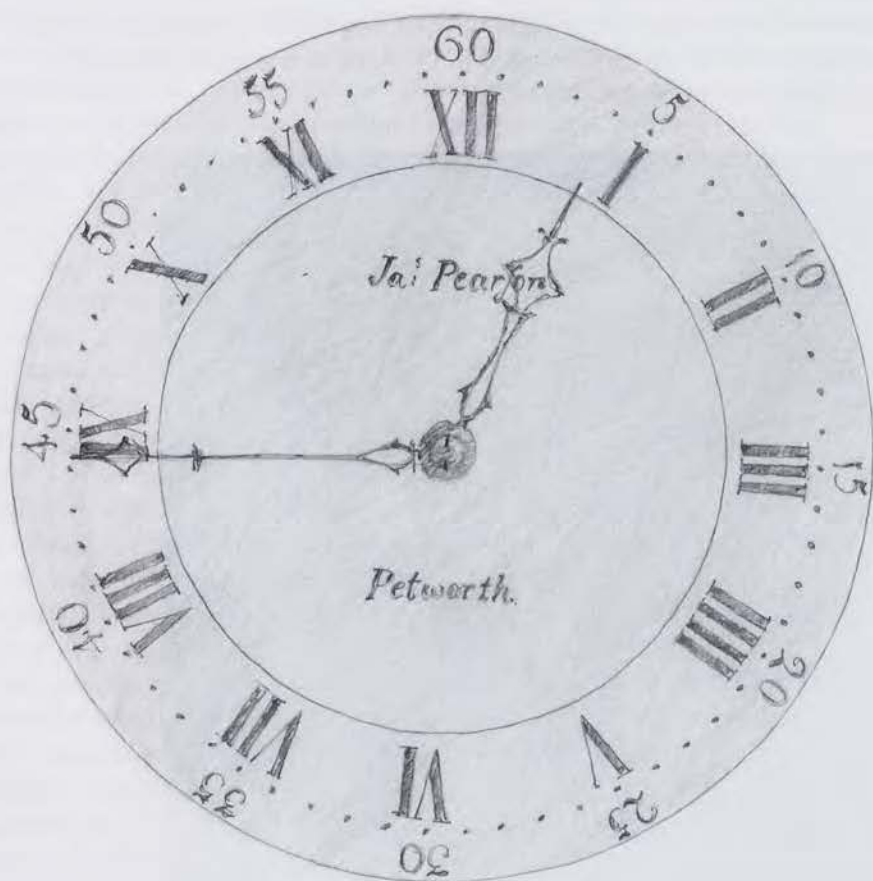
Henry Kinsey

Kinseys the New Street drapers would be one of those defining shops that seem inseparable from an older Petworth. Kinsey's tenure of the shop (now Allans) would last for decades, giving way to Samuel Dancy as the old century turned. Dancy would be another fixture. Henry Kinsey, originally from Suffolk, was a busy man: Kelly's 1891 Directory lists him also as "assistant overseer and collector of rates and clerk to inspectors of lighting." Stanford Killick, an amateur artist of considerable ability, lived in some comfort at Ryde House in Angel Street. Accounting was a trifle leisurely in 1891!



20 years 1996-2016

Even at 346 High Street time doesn't stand still! One of Jonathan Newdick's inspirational drawings for "We don't do nostalgia" – the story of Petworth Cottage Museum (Window Press 2010).



Jonathan Newdick 2010

John Laurence and the Riddle of Wraye

From time to time this magazine describes a work of fiction in which Petworth features. Until recently, in terms of books I have actually read, there were only two – one of the Jeeves stories by P.G. Wodehouse, and *A Fortnight in September* by R.C. Sherriff – both of which contain no more than passing references. Recently, however, whilst researching some items in New Zealand archive newspapers, I stumbled upon *The Riddle of Wraye* in the *New Zealand Herald*.

The Riddle of Wraye announced itself on 18th April 1931 as "A SPLENDIDLY TOLD STORY OF MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE by John Laurence, Author of *The Pursuing Shadow*, *The Double Cross Inn*, *Mystery Money* etc. etc." It was serialized daily until 13th May 1931, 21 episodes in all, and was followed in July by Mr Laurence's *The Mystery of the Pearls*. I see it was also serialized in Australian newspapers and, one assumes, in English ones, though I have not checked.

The story is not set in Petworth, although Petworth is frequently mentioned. The action takes place in "the little Sussex village of Wraye". Wraye Hill is "that long steep hill near Chichester" and seems to be on the Petworth-Chichester road, suggesting that Wraye is probably intended to be Duncton. Much of the action takes place at a pub called "The Lair of the Badger", or "The Badger" for short, though from a description of its garden this seems to correspond not with the current pub of that name at Coultershaw (which went by a different name in 1931) but with The Cricketers in Duncton. There, frustratingly, any similarities between Wraye and Duncton seem to be at an end, as there are references to lanes that do not exist on the map, and another pub called "The Wheatsheaf" which is "on the other side of the hill" – in Upwaltham one assumes. Much of the mystery surrounds Attray, the occupant of a large, white, Elizabethan house on the right at the foot of the hill.

The story is less of a whodunnit, more of an adventure in the style of Bulldog Drummond, with plenty of fast cars and characters who resort to the use of firearms with casual disregard for legal requirements. Actually, the expression 'fast cars' should be read in context, for in the course of the inevitable car chase, a police tender:

"... was doing forty up the hill and sixty down it. As they came over the ridge, the lights of a car could be seen about three miles ahead. [Some artistic licence here]

'What is she?' asked the Inspector.

'An old Bannock,' answered the lawyer. 'She'll do forty-five at a push, but that's her maximum.'

'We'll overtake her in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour at the most.' said the

Inspector confidently. 'I got seventy out of this once when we were after the Midhurst burglars.'

But what of Petworth? We learn that one of the characters is staying there at 'The Lion' and that two others decide to drive into Petworth because:

"... we have got our eyes on a wonderful tallboy that will just go in our hall.'"
I wonder which shop was selling it.

The hero Martin Shellwood ("... a Colonel before he was 22 and holds every decoration for bravery in the air except the Victoria Cross ...") finds one day that his car won't start (actually it has been sabotaged) and tells the local garage man:

" 'Must be in London shortly after ten. What do you suggest?'

'There's only one way sir.' replied the garage owner. 'That will be to drive to Guildford. There's fast electric trains from there, and if you're lucky in catching one you'll just do it. It's no use trying from Petworth. The service is bad, and you'll have to change at Pulborough in any case, and perhaps at Horsham.' "

So Duncton runs to a garage which rents out cars. Was that ever the case?

The plot is too complex to describe here, but suffice it to say that a sort of crime wave overtakes Wraye when Attray and his three criminal domestic servants are visited first by Daggs, a sailor on the make, and then by Latimer Parslow, a rascally solicitor, both of whom want the £250,000 in securities which were hidden somewhere in Wraye by the man whom Attray locked away in a priest-hole and later murdered. Martin, who has presumably given up flying and is now a doctor, is joined by barrister Temple Fortune KC (conveniently a cipher expert) and between them, by means too far-fetched to explain, they thwart the criminals and recover the missing £250,000. (Four constables are sent from Petworth Police Station to assist.)

Romantic interest is provided by Faith Merrion, daughter of the man who was murdered, who just happens to be spending her holiday in Wraye. Needless to say, in accordance with the conventions of the genre, she gets herself kidnapped when pluckily trying to help, but is rescued by Martin.

John Laurence was the nom de plume of John Laurence Pritchard, born in London in 1885, who died in Reigate in 1951. He wrote fifteen mystery stories, all of them out of print and not even readily available second hand, though one copy of *The Riddle of Wraye* is currently for sale on the internet. In 1920 he became editor of the *Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society*, and in 1925, the Society's secretary. Clearly he knew the area well enough to describe the surrounding countryside, and to know the shortcomings of the railway service. He does not, however seem to feel any need to base Wraye too closely on Duncton, and this may be because he wanted to avoid embarrassment. The villainous Attray's house could have been identified with Lavington Park, for instance, but by moving it

slightly and describing it as Elizabethan, Laurence avoids identifying the owners of Lavington Park with his fictional master-criminal. He also needs to avoid too close an identification of The Badger with The Cricketers as the publican of The Badger is yet another of Attray's retinue of villains.

After such a lapse of time it is unlikely that anyone will now have any recollection of the aeronautical Mr Pritchard visiting the district, but might there perhaps be, somewhere on a Duncton bookshelf, a signed copy of one of his works to show that he did, in fact, stay there?

Andrew Brooke

To read *The Riddle of Wraye*, search the New Zealand 'Papers Past' website, entering 'The Riddle of Wraye' in the box marked 'Exact Phrase'. Then ask for the search results to be sorted into date order so that the episodes all follow on from each other. As a result of a printing error, the first part of the eighth episode (27th April 1931) has been placed after the second part.

"Can't it go faster than that?"

I was born at Northchapel in 1936. My father had been called up and was serving with the Grenadier Guards. He was killed at Monte Casino when I was eight. I can remember being at Northchapel School but very little about it. I had a short spell with my grandparents in Scotland then went to a small school at Chiddingfold. I was then given a place at King Edward VII school Witley, my mother now being a war widow.

My strong recollection of those days or perhaps slightly earlier is of a school under naval discipline. Certainly we wore cadet uniforms. I have two postcards of the school marching apparently marching from our quarters at Hambledon Park just down the road from King Edward VII and others of myself in cadet uniform. Discipline was strict and bugles seemed to rule our lives. It was at this time that I learned to play the bugle. Why? Simple. If you played the bugle you had extra rations. I'd play in the morning and for lights out at night. I was a boarder, separated from my mother, and it was an austere regime for a small boy. Up early and washing in cold water. Was this King Edward VII or a naval school attached? I'm not clear about this. Perhaps someone reading this will know.

The war over, things began to settle down, I was now definitely at King Edward and living with my mother at Cylinder Cottages, off Fisher Street, no longer a boarder, but going in daily, picked up in an ancient bus which ran from Northchapel.

On leaving King Edward, now long back to normal, I went to Haslemere to the

Employment Exchange, when I returned my mother said, "Mr Barlow will give you a job, I'll take you to see him." The Barlow family lived locally and Mr Barlow was Master of the Hunt. "I know you," he said. "You can have a job. I've seen you in the fields." He was right. At weekends and after school I'd been working as casual labour. I remember cycling in that first day to report to the foreman. I was sent to pick up sheaves that had been stooked and then blown over by the wind. They needed to be stood up again to dry before they could go through the machine. I went home as I would regularly with a quart of milk hanging from my handlebars.

I went on to general work in the fields, cutting sugar beet and mangel "pieing" the roots, the top would be expertly "thatched" with the leaves, and feeding the animals. Mr Barlow kept a number of dogs and on weekends I'd go in specially to feed them and lend a hand in the kennels. Very soon I was on a tractor. Mr Barlow soon said to me, "You'll need to pass a test." The examiner came out from Guildford on a motor-bike. It was a bitterly cold day and he wanted the tractor to go more quickly. It wasn't that kind of tractor – it took a very long time to warm up. "Can't it go faster than that?" he asked perched behind. "I'm frozen stiff." He made me turn left and right, then alighted while I reversed. He then made off. I'd passed. Funnily enough I eventually acquired the tractor and kept it for years.

I worked for Mr Barlow until one o'clock Saturday and then went off to cut wood for Lintotts the Haslemere walking stick factory. I worked with a much older man who taught me a lot. Lintotts rented some of the local copseland and Mr Barlow would see me working at weekends. He didn't mind. I never fell out with him but I was already thinking of moving to Lintotts full-time when I had to help with a stud bull that had broken loose. (Nothing to do with me!) Somehow that seemed to mark the end of my time on the farm. Making walking sticks was a craft that really appealed to me. I worked at Lintotts for several years before going to work in haulage with Mr Britton. But that, as they say, is another story!

Pat Currell was talking to Mike Hubbard and the Editor.

A mid-nineteenth century account (c 1845)

10th May.	William Berryman and Mrs Palmer's executors.	
May 1st, 2nd and 3rd.	Taking in beasts at the fair	1.12.1
	Sold for them Hay 41 Trusses	4.2. -
4th	Ton of Hay sold to Saml. Mann	3-10 -
7th	W. S. Wright 5 Trusses	8.9
	For Sow sold	1.12.6
	5 Fowls at 1/3 ^D	6.3
		11-11.7
Gave Berryman back		
	Pannell trussing – 2 tons at 2/6 ^D	5
	Turnpike Gate and Boy helping to drive	7½
	For Welchmen to drink	1 6-7½
	Net money to me	11.4-11½
	J. L. Ellis	

[Mrs Harriet Palmer from Avenings died in the late 1840s. A member of the influential Blagden family, she owned extensive farmland on the east side of the present Station Road, later allotments and now developed. William Berryman the long-serving farm bailiff renders account to local solicitor J. L. Ellis who is dealing with Mrs Palmer's will. William Stoper Wright the Market Square tinsmith is a familiar nineteenth century Petworth figure. Would the beasts be sold in Petworth's "Beast Market" Golden Square? The "Welchmen" are presumably drovers. It was obviously thirsty work!]

10 th May. William Berryman			
and			
Mr. Palmer, Secretary			
May 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd .	Taking in beads at the Fair	1	12 1
	Sold for the May. H. Traps	4	2 -
4.	Box of May sold to Capt. Mann	3	10 -
7.	W. S. Wright - 5 Traps	"	8 9
	For box sold	1	12 5
	5 Traps at 1/3 rd	.	6 3
			<hr/>
	Gave Berryman sack	11	11 7
	Permitted trapping - 2 Traps at 3/6	5.	
	Transferred Capt. Hogg's traps to me	7 1/2	
	For Williams to do up	1	
			<hr/>
	Kit money paid to me	11	4 11 1/2
	W. S. Wright		
	End of 11.8.		

William Berryman's account.

