

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*Magazine*



No. 167, March 2017

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"Round the Hills" ... seen by generations of Petworth people as a hallowed space and a haven of quiet in an increasingly frantic and urbanised world. See Chairman's notes.  
This rather murky Arnold postcard was franked at Petworth July 19th 1910.

## CONTENTS

- 3 Constitution and officers
- 4 Chairman's notes
- 6 Wiggonholt Church: a letter
- 6 Quite a lot to swallow
- 7 A Dickens of a Christmas – it's magic!
- 8 Forgotten Petworth?
- 10 Petworth Fair 2016
- 11 Christmas Eve at 346
- 12 Murder on the common – the December book sale
- 14 The phantom charcoal burners of Bedham
- 15 What is bookbinding?
- 21 Debby's crossword
- 22 Lovely kilts!
- 31 Delicate balances
- 33 On visiting Mrs Adsett
- 37 Bertha Mary had one weakness
- 41 Book shelf
- 42 The Spirit of the Smuggler
- 51 Old Petworth Traders (22) – Charles Older

### CONSTITUTION AND OFFICERS

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

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

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

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### WEBSITE

[www.petworthsociety.co.uk](http://www.petworthsociety.co.uk)

FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick.

Cover picture: It shows "Nan and Gladys" in the Bartons c1926.  
See "On visiting Mrs Adsett." Courtesy Mrs Vivien Clay.

## Chairman's notes

I hope Issue 167 is to your taste. As usual I have enjoyed putting your Magazine together and, as usual, I am spoiled for contents. Our cover picture incorporates a family snapshot from the 1920s. The location, almost a hundred years on, remains instantly recognisable. Moulded by man's presence over centuries, "Round the Hills" is, and has been seen by generations of Petworth people as a hallowed space and a haven of quiet in an increasingly frantic and urbanised world. Am I quite alone in asking, "Does 'Round the Hills' really need 'informative' signage?"

You will see my report on the 2016 fair. While the weather, during the fair itself, if indifferent, was at least tolerable, that for taking down was the worst I have seen in over thirty years. The traditional outdoor playing of "Sussex by the Sea" had to be given up. Harris brothers and their staff spent more than four hours taking down in a relentless deluge followed by a desperate journey back to Ashington on flooded roads and in gale force winds. The Society has made a one-off ex gratia payment to them as a mark of respect for their trouble and in appreciation of their constant good humour and loyalty over many years.

I have to report that our second Book Sale van has finally given up the ghost. We need to buy another. The outlay will absorb income from the first quarter's book sales. Please remember this when paying subscriptions: without the Book Sale there can be no Magazine.

Further to Mrs Sylvia Chandler's query in PSM 166 (page 47) Roger Doran is sure that the photograph is of George Wadey of Roundabout Farm Upperton, and thinks it is not of George's rather more slightly built brother Felix. Both brothers served in the 1914-1918 war. For the Wadey family see Miles Costello in PSM 112 (June 2003) and 114 (December 2003).

Peter  
30th January 2017

## Subscriptions

### PETWORTH SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE NOW

We hope you agree that the Magazines are a unique high quality publication and appreciate that we have not had recourse to using advertisements to fund them. They are intended as a serious, sometimes light-hearted record of Petworth through the centuries up to the present time, articles perhaps to retain and refer to.

I have been aware for sometime that we are heavily subsidizing the Magazines by what we accrue at the Book Sale. Peter has resisted my wish to raise the cost of the Subscription until now, but having been faced with the figures reluctantly realises this has to happen.

Each Magazine costs an average of £3.80 to produce x 4 = £15.20 Local delivery. The subscription has been raised to **£14** from £12.

The cost of Postage has increased every year, currently £1.20 x 4 = £4.80 + £15.20 = £20. The subscription has been raised to **£18** from £15.

International Postal charges are on average £18 + £15.20 = £33.20. The subscription has been raised to **£25**.

As you can see we are continuing to subsidise the Magazine but to a lesser extent.

Sue

## Wiggonholt Church: a letter

Dear Editor

Your edition 166 has just been brought to my attention, in particular an item Linda's Pulborough Wildbrooks Walk 18th September. Linda wonders how many were at Holy Communion that morning at 9am and who they were. There were 12, part of the regular congregation of this Church – not all from Wiggonholt – which has two Services a month, Evensong the first Sunday at 3 or 6 varying with the clocks, and Holy Communion as noted on the third Sunday.

Perhaps you could hasten to let Linda know that Midnight Mass takes place on Christmas Eve at 11.30pm as it has since the 1940s, entirely candle-and-lamp-lit. It is a most wonderful beginning to Christmas. Visitors are extra welcome, but should bring a torch!

Yours faithfully

Janet Aidin, Churchwarden, Wiggonholt Church  
The Old Rectory  
Wiggonholt  
Pulborough  
RH20 2EL

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## Quite a lot to swallow

Fred Delius has much more to reveal in his "Confessions of a sword swallower (retired)". It would appear that he has packed at least two lifetimesworth of experiences into his present span and met, worked for or with so many rich, famous and eccentric people, that to record all the names, not to mention the events, becomes an impossibility.

A disfunctional early childhood, to say the least, became stabilised at boarding school, Brickwall, from the age of six, where the inspirational teachers and a theatre visit with his grandmother, set Fred's mind towards life on the stage.

Joining the National Youth Theatre at 15, when he was only just beginning to learn to read and write, led to acting roles, not only on the stage, but in television: Crossroads, having been introduced to Noelle Gordon by Larry Grayson, then Emmerdale Farm. At 17, he was providing backing harmonies to Elaine Paige in Evita.

Becoming disillusioned with the 'luvvie' acting scene, but still wanting to perform, Fred embarked on busking – into a world of real talent – circus skills, entertaining at parties, including one at Windsor Castle on the occasion of the Duke of Edinburgh's birthday, where he met the Queen Mother. He was Street Entertainer of the Year. Circus work in Europe followed, where state-sponsored arts are the norm, unlike Britain.

Back in England, Fred ran a small circus for seven years, his skills including tightrope walking and, yes, sword swallowing, just a passing reference, no demonstration! His daughter became world record holder spinning her hula hoop the most times in a minute, upside down on a trapeze.

This all came to an end when Fred developed a prolapsed disc, so he now gives talks, such as ours and sings to groups for those with dementia, very rewarding.

He has strong views on social matters and politics, very pro-Europe, believing Britain should strive for good among all countries.

A thought-provoking as well as entertaining evening.

KCT

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## A Dickens of a Christmas – it's magic!

It's three years since Bertie Pearce gave a 'a magical evening' but that was enough to ensure a good and expectant audience for his return. The expectations? Conjuring tricks certainly. Wit, quick-fire reactions to the typically slow responses to his off-the-cuff observations, all delivered with the charm that soon had us 'eating out of his hand'.

But this was much more than a magic show. True, from the start, Bertie engaged the attention and participation of the youngsters (a growing fan club) as well as the adults with mystifying sleight-of-hand. Straight away, everyone was enjoying it.

What had Dickens to do with it? We were soon to find out. Bertie told us of Dickens' early childhood: deprivation, debt, infant deaths – an existence accepted by so many at the time. Somehow, at a very early age, and appalled by the ignorance and want, he felt bound to express the injustice and inhumanity of social conditions, including child labour.

He loved the theatre and music halls, especially the conjurers and escapologists, so that gave Bertie the opportunity for some more tricks, illusions and, yes, escapology of his own, with members of the audience lured into taking part. So it was through his writing that Dickens brought social conditions into the public eye,

eventually influencing moves for improvement. Publication in cheap instalments ensured a vast demand from readers of all classes.

Descriptions of Christmas in a number of books, notably *Pickwick Papers*, *Little Dorrit*, *Sketches by Boz* and, of course, *A Christmas Carol* had the effect of re-inventing Christmas which had been a rather lack-lustre occasion since Puritan times. The introduction of the Christmas Tree by Prince Albert in 1843 added to the celebrations.

Marriage breakdown and a decline in his own health, saw Dickens giving public readings of his works, which were immensely popular. He even had a 'double act' with his friend, John Forster, involving magic. The last performance was in 1878. 58 at his death, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, so great was his fame.

With the talk, Bertie had illustrations from Dickens on the screen as well as his own tricks: handkerchiefs that changed colour and hoops that became linked and disengaged in rapid succession and Mesmerism, when Rosemary's thought processes concerning the identity of a playing card were conveyed to Roger, high in the back row, with the aid of a 'condenser' (which we all thought was an egg whisk). And how was Bertie able to reveal the word which Geoff had selected from the middle of a massive tome of Dickens' works, on the way convincing us that the trick had gone wrong until the final revelation – 'uninitiated'!

It is difficult, if not impossible to convey in a report, the way Bertie's humour, skill, patter and rapport with the audience combines mystery with education, laughter and a deep sense of pleasure

We hope that we don't have to wait another three years for an evening like that.

KCT

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## Forgotten Petworth?

A double bill – Peter and Miles. Both brought back memories: more for some than for others. There is much to wonder about in Petworth – what's that? Why is that there? Who was he?

Peter gets asked a lot of questions and one is, "Why is a Canadian flag hanging in the Leconfield Hall?" He is glad to answer. It once flew over the Parliament buildings in Ottawa and was given to a party of Petworth Society members when they visited. Why?

Approached by two veterans of the Toronto-Scottish Regiment, Jack Bunting and Lorne (Dusty) Morrow on a visit in 1984, about a possible visit by comrades of the Regimental Association, Peter felt it would be an opportunity for Petworth

to begin to come to terms, in however small a way, to the memories of the tragic bombing of the Boys' School in 1942, with the loss of a generation of boys, the headmaster, a teacher and staff of the adjacent Estate laundry.

The Toronto-Scottish, stationed in Pheasant Copse, were quickly on the scene and later, with their transport, for the mass funeral. With such a loss, it seemed Petworth was unable to talk, even think about it, for the 40 years which followed. But for the Canadians, it was as if yesterday.

Peter consulted Audrey Grimwood, for it also transpired that the visit could involve over 250 veterans, their wives, a pipe band and the current Ontario ambassador. There would be a non-denominational service in the Parish Church, a meal (two sittings) in the Leconfield Hall, a march through the town, visits to Petworth Park and Pheasant Copse and 'open house' at the Royal British Legion club.

Audrey and the Petworth Society Committee took on this huge logistical task. From the arrival of five enormous coaches in the Square on the morning of April 28th, 1985, to their departure once all had been brought together again (the Legion had been drunk dry) everything had gone smoothly.

There was much more detail in Peter's talk, which was the introduction to a remarkable record. Rod Tyler had been asked by John Caine to make a video-recording on what was thought to be the first video-recorder to arrive in Petworth only a couple of days before – state of the art – and Rod still has that recording in a somewhat distressed state. It has now been transferred on to a DVD which we were able to see. Quite an experience for everyone present. There had, of course, been questions and comments from the audience during Peter's talk.

A break for refreshments and much animated conversation.

Then Miles spoke about Forgotten Petworth: how street names have been changed and buildings photographed in the 19th and 20th centuries have disappeared and replaced by those familiar today. He could not always explain the changes and their historical context: Foster's Lane, between Gunters Bridge and the London Road is now Frosty Lane. Donkey Row at the bottom of North Street was a terrace of dilapidated cottages, later replaced by the Leconfield Estate. Miles then worked up through the town, past New Road (Horsham Road) and The Villas (Glebe Villas) which had replaced more derelict houses. The top of North Street was Church Hill; Bartons Lane was Cragg's Lane, after the plumbers yard there. At the top of Lombard Street was Ayres Yard, a notorious slum. Houses between the churchyard and the road were demolished as the ground to their rear had become a place for all sorts of illicit behaviour. Down East Street, Blood Alley led past the Little White Hart Inn into the Great White Hart to the Market Square before New Street was built. It became Trump Alley, Trumppers Alley and, quite

recently, Trumps Alley. Into Angel Street, the area now at the entrance to the Roman Catholic Church car park became known, somewhat sarcastically, as Daintrey Park. Beyond that and down into the Shimmings Valley, was the Withy Cope. Back in the town, off the High Street, was Red Lion Yard, another collection of hovels. Along the Midhurst Road, the Cricket Lodge was originally Turkey Lodge. In Grove Street, opposite the entrance to the Petworth Surgery, was World's End. That name, Miles suspects, arose from its proximity to the Petworth House of Correction, the jail.

Again, lots of questions and reminiscences. A very nostalgic evening. As well as two interesting speakers, it was an interesting audience. There were those born and spending their whole lives in Petworth. There were folk whose work brought them to Petworth and there were those who came to Petworth in retirement. 'Forgotten Petworth' has a different meaning, depending on which group you fall into.

Apparently, there is more to tell. There's a book there, Miles. Thank you for stirring memories.

KCT

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## Petworth Fair 2016

"Robert, do you realise we've done this 31 times now?" As soon as I say this to Robert Harris, I feel I've broken a taboo. Reflection can't be the stuff of fairs. Fairs are something you do, not something you think about. The ultimate in the existential if you like. "Whereas during certain hours on Friday November 18th ..." So the familiar formal wording of the closure. The 20th falls on a Sunday this year – hence Saturday 19th.

The Harris advance party are here in good time. They always are. Is it really a year since the last fair? The eddying leaves rustle a confirmation. With Miles and Roger and the Harris volunteers, it's a relaxed beginning. The fairmen keep their yellow truck sideways on as they begin to erect the chairplanes. It's a buffer should anything run down the slope. In the event, of course, it doesn't. Fred Harris, apparently, has his eye on a set of dodgems. Will they ever come here? Certainly dodgems came to Petworth in the long past. There's talk of a stationary engine from Horsham but there's been a late hitch. Next year perhaps. It recalls the element of steam that first tentative revival of 1986, an emphasis on exhibition – static rather than dynamic.

Gradually the remaining cars have moved on. We're already well over the

statutory hour but a warden's been earlier and gone away. At six o'clock the fair's taking shape but one remains. One can only admire their sang froid and wish they were out of the way.

Saturday is a glorious morning, mocking almost in the face of an apocalyptic weather forecast. If only we could exchange morning for evening. The offending car is still there: but we have a clue to the owner. A short trip and a knock at the door. "The penalty for infringement of the said Regulations is a fine not exceeding £1,000." So the closure. Enforceable or not, it has the desired effect.

Doug Harris has kept a watchful eye all night. The 2005 arson attack has destroyed for ever a certain primeval innocence.

Just one really big lorry during the night, broad black tyre marks on the Swan Corner. Rain and high wind to come, the latter more of a threat perhaps. Taking down the Gallopers with the wind funnelling up through the car park can be tricky. The fair's now taking definitive shape: a traffic-themed juvenile is new.

The threat of wild weather seems to make the waiting longer, a feeling of time being lost. At 3 o'clock Nigel opens the fair. Successive criers have had their own style and Nigel imparts a kind of certainty in his opening proclamation. "In the year of our Lord ... Eleanor de Perci." Petworth fair has an austere authority, the venter of the long years.

The Primary School children give a rousing start to Keith's Hall programme. Parents arrive in force and stay for Jonathan Cann's full-blooded Punch and Judy. No wonder he concludes with a homily. Outside the rain becomes more resolute. The tombola's going well. Miles' vintage photographs and memorabilia reveal a surprising, unexpected almost fairy-tale Petworth. Did these houses really stand in the churchyard? The rain's intensifying and the wind's getting up. No Sussex by the Sea to commemorate the arson attack of 2005. Haste is in order, but you can't hurry the taking down. It needs that same military precision with which everything had been set out. "Number 8, Number 9," the horses brought out to a familiar drill. Aloft someone's dismantling the electrics. Even in the blinding rain, everything has to be ordered. "Robert, do you realise we've done this 31 times?"

P.

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## Christmas Eve at 346

Christmas Eve and an afternoon quiet High Street. As the key turns in the lock at 346 the comforting warmth from the night storage rushes out as if to mock the dormant "Petworth" range. It's one of the many ironies of 346 that the range is

called into action only during the warmer months, just as the magical gaslight atmosphere can be captured only on dark winter evenings when the cottage is closed. A handsome Christmas tree dominates the parlour window, a necessary concession to 2016 expectation and the demand for a visible presence, rather than the reflection of a solitary Irish seamstress a hundred years and more ago. 346 must always keep one foot in a pragmatic new century and another in an imagined 1910. Adapters trail red wire across the floor and the usual struggling pot plants take refuge in the stone sink. The stout curving walking sticks sleep on. There's dried stative light as air in an overwintering bowl.

Transported to 2016 Mary Cummings might find Christmas discomforting, even troubling, the old certainties forced on to the defensive. A time to sell as much as to celebrate, let alone reflect; a dance to the background music of the supermarkets or the siren voice of the advertiser. Or would you like a politically correct Nativity? Unease does not have to be articulate, or the less felt for not being so.

And, more than that, Mary would live in 1910 rather nearer to the slow ticking of the clock. No radio, television, telephone, iPad to beguile. If she might have adjusted to "Strictly", "Bake Off" and the rest, she did not have them. "Leisure" was hard won, to be enjoyed perhaps with an illogical sense of guilt. Dark winter nights, not magical, but in thrall to an encrusted sameness, an enforced dialogue with oneself, an unsought privacy too easily conceded in 2016. Mary had the difficult privilege of solitude.

P.

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## Murder on the common. The December book sale

"A man has been found cruelly murdered on Clapham Common, truly the world is very evil it helps us to remember that God is nearer than our breath nearer than hands or feet."<sup>1</sup> Writing on the 5th January 1911 Florence Rapley puts her own gloss on the murder of Leon Beron. Coming in the direct aftermath of a murderous assault on police in Houndsditch and the famous siege of Sidney Street, the possibly connected murder of Beron, aroused a sense of national unease, reflected obliquely by Florence and an unease that still has echoes today. Gladstone's liberal policy of welcoming political refugees from Eastern Europe, if altruistic, was beginning to cause concern. Gladstone was long gone and new

voices were abroad.

Largely settled in London's East End the immigrants had been left very much to their own devices while recent events had clearly shown that there were dissident elements among the refugees. The writer Eric Linklater, a boy of eleven at the time and of a different generation and mindset to Florence, like many others, had followed the saga with interest. Years later he would return to the subject.<sup>2</sup>

The murdered man was an elusive figure. Nicknamed "the landlord" he was a widower of Russian-Jewish origin, had spent his earlier life in Paris, did no obvious work and apparently subsisted on the rents of several down-at-heel East End properties. He did not speak Russian and preferred to communicate in French and Yiddish. He spent most of the day in Alex Snelwar's Warsaw Café, occupying a table but spending little. He was a man of sedentary habits but why he should be on Clapham Common in the early hours of a January morning remained an enduring mystery. Certainly Leon's father was in a nearby home for Jewish Incurables but relations between the two were distant.

Given the level of public unease the police were under pressure to produce a result and the spotlight soon fell on a casual acquaintance Steinie or Stinie Morrison, a dealer in cheap jewellery and small time crook who already had two five year prison stretches behind him. A tall, handsome and, in some ways attractive, figure, Stinie would be tried and sentenced to death but, reflecting widespread public disquiet at the verdict, Winston Churchill as Home Secretary would remit the sentence to a life term. Stinie always protested his innocence and eventually starved himself to death.

The trial was a famous one notable for the incidental light it shone on immigrant life in the East End, at once fascinating and alarming polite society. The alleged motive was robbery but this did not seem consistent with certain almost ritual aspects of the killing, particularly two long 'S' shaped incisions made on the body after death. Almost certainly the police knew more about Leon Beron than they were prepared to admit. The defence was a farrago of dubious alibis, ultimately counterproductive, and dragging in the old Shoreditch Empire, a gallery of pimps, fences and prostitutes, and cabmen offering conflicting evidence. Eric Linklater as others before and after trails through the court proceedings. My own feeling is that public demand for action contributed more than it should to Morrison's conviction and that Morrison, seeing another five year prison stretch coming if some of his other activities were revealed, gambled on an acquittal. Mr Justice Darling presided. He seems to have been reasonably satisfied that Morrison had somehow been involved, but clearly indicated to the jury that the evidence linking him to the Common fell well short of proof. A middle class male jury, anxious perhaps to have done with the affair, quickly returned a guilty verdict.



Eric Linklater's book is largely superseded by Andrew Rose's "Stinie"<sup>3</sup>. Rose had access to previously unseen Home Office documents and has some trenchant comments on the police, judiciary and the two opposing counsels.

And the Book Sale? It simply set the seal on a record year!

P.

1. "So sweet as the phlox is." The diary of Florence Rapley (Window Press 1993) page 101.

2. Eric Linklater: The Corpse on Clapham Common (Macmillan 1971). The book was destined for the "collector" after the December Book Sale but salvaged.

3. Bodley Head (1985). Later in Penguin.

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## The phantom charcoal burners of Bedham

According to a review of *Past and Passing* in Sussex County Magazine in 1932, the author, Rhoda Leigh, lived in an old charcoal-burner's cottage. What seems to have happened is that Arthur Beckett, the magazine's editor, visited Mary Metherell at Bedham Cottage and, presumably, it was she who told him about the history of the place. Indeed, she wrote about local charcoal burners in her book.

However, in the interview with John Hunt in the PSM in March 1991, it says: "*Past and Passing* talks of the charcoal-burners but they never worked the Bedham woods between the wars. Rhoda Leigh's charcoal-burners are out Plaistow way although Mr Kingshott had worked at Bedham years ago before moving northward. Charcoal was certainly made in Bedham Woods during the 1939-1945 war but that was long after *Past and Passing* had been published."

Well actually, the book came out just six years before the Second World War began. Furthermore, in an article 'And so to Bedham-' in Sussex County Magazine, May 1936 (note the year) Vivien F. Hancock paints a very different picture. She writes: "There was no disappointment waiting for me at Bedham, for it is an enchanted place. A few cottages stand on the top of a wooded hill facing a view that takes one's breath away. There are a few more cottages in the woods below. I was told that charcoal burners used to live there, and that the charcoal was sent down the river in barges from Pallingham Quay."

In 'Charcoal Burning: War Revives an Ancient Craft' (SCM 1941) which concerns Charlton Forest, its author Helen Hinkley relates how before the First World War, the numbers of charcoal burners in this country had dwindled to just a handful. Cheap imported coal from abroad was destroying the trade. But the introduction of gas warfare in the Great War created an urgent need for charcoal

again, as the respirators in the gas masks worn by our soldiers contained activated charcoal, a very powerful absorbent. Charcoal is also used in the production of gunpowder, and in the manufacture of Rayon. Incidentally, I believe there was a charcoal factory up at Northchapel. This poem is by Vivien F. Hancock:

Deep in the woods at Bedham, the wind dropped and was still,  
And magic was woven around me by the spirits who guard the hill;  
They lifted the veil of time and space, yet I was not afraid  
When I saw the ghostly charcoal burners tramping through the glade.

High on the hill at Bedham, in the bracken I lay at ease,  
Watching the Weald below me through a gap in the high trees,  
All over the hill faint wisps of smoke went curling up on high:  
The smoke from countless charcoal fires ascending to the sky.

Walking through woods to the river, the wind sprang up again,  
And I saw no more the charcoal smoke and the dark-skinned ghostly men.  
At Pallingham, as the sun went down, vainly I sought the Quay;  
And the barges laden with charcoal slipping towards the sea.

All overgrown is the old canal, and the lock is used no more,  
Though Arun flows between reedy banks peacefully as of yore;  
The quiet reaches by Pythindean are steeped in beauty still,  
And magic lingers upon the slopes of lovely Bedham Hill.

Shaun Cooper

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## What is bookbinding

Pablo Picasso is quoted as saying "Every child is an artist, the problem is staying an artist when you grow up."

### What is Bookbinding?

At its most basic, bookbinding is the gathering together of leaves of paper and converting them into a book. Having assumed that this subject matter couldn't possibly constitute a 2 year course, I have been forced to admit that the study of bookbinding is a lifelong one! In the course of my 23 year bookbinding career, I have learnt different variations of binding styles which include Coptic, Japanese, account book style, raised cord, sunken cord, sewn on tapes, cross structure and thrown out guards and so on! We use the traditional tools of the trade and evolving technology.

### **How did I get into bookbinding?**

I was born in Holland to a Dutch mother and grew up in Nigeria footloose and fancy free, pigeon English being my main vocabulary before the winds blew me into a Dickensian English boarding school in Somerset just before my 9th birthday. Although the school was strict and the very opposite of what I had experienced growing up, it did have a thriving arts and crafts department where I discovered a love of pastel drawing, pottery, weaving and painting.

At the age of 14 I was transferred to a secondary school in Headington in Oxford where, sadly, art and craft were not part of the school curriculum. Not being academic, my Careers Advisor suggested I take up a secretarial course and find myself a husband! I discovered later that opposite my school was a renowned craft bookbinding college which was in the then Oxford Polytechnic; something of a missed opportunity.

After my secretarial training I went to London and was interviewed by the likes of Mohammed Al Fayed and even Michael Winner, but settled for a cosy though lowly paid job in the offices of a Japanese Advertising Agency just off Bond Street. From there I worked for a few other employers, the last one being the now Senior Partner of Strutt and Parker, estate agents and property consultants, just off Berkeley Street. He had the wisdom after a few months to suggest to me that I find a career that would better suit my interests.

A trip to a careers office put me back in touch with my early interest in craft and a glance at the local brochures of courses in my area revealed a course at Guildford College in Bookbinding and Paper conservation with Maureen Duke in 1991.

I was lucky enough to be accepted to undertake my dissertation as part of a work experience programme at Windsor Castle Royal Library and went on to be given a 3 month fully paid work placement at The Royal Bindery. I was even at the great fire of 1992 and helped to form the human chain moving books to safety and was lucky enough to meet several members of the Royal Family. One amazing experience was being invited to meet the Queen Mother on account of binding her vicar's prayer book. By coincidence Prince Philip and the Queen were also present and I was also introduced to the Queen Mother, Prince Philip and the Queen who asked me about my bookbinding. I forgot to curtsy in the unexpected excitement!

### **Early Days**

Now five months pregnant, it was time to move on and concentrate on being a mother. With a baby and only newly qualified, finding local employment in bookbinding proved to be an unrealistic prospect. Bookbinding apprenticeships

had become scarce. I had no choice but to start up my own business whilst continuing to learn and grow my craft skills from home. It takes six years as an apprentice in a trade bindery to hone one's skills and given that my bookbinding course had been only two years, there was still much to learn.

I lived in the village of Ottershaw in Surrey and so I called my business Ottershaw Bindery. Some years later following a house move, I renamed the business Otter Bookbinding.

As time went by, I found that I was being asked to make books for props companies for films, repair antiquarian books, bind theses and create interesting bookbindings and boxes. At this stage I was also still learning. Having never had the advantage of a formal apprenticeship, I was in effect creating my own apprenticeship. I approached other experienced bookbinders and asked for their advice which they gave willingly. I also attended courses both here and abroad.

Gradually, the bookbinding commissions increased. During this time I struck up friendships with some wonderful, kind and highly trained bookbinders some of whom helped out in the bindery and I started running courses inviting them to teach on all sorts of subjects from sharpening the tools of the trade, to box making, paper conservation and gold finishing, as well as elementary book binding. Through this, my own skill base was also much improved.

In time we had enough work coming in for me to be in a position to consider moving out of the front room of my Edwardian home which had once been a post office. I found a rural unit overlooking an air field close by. It was perfect, and for four happy years I bound books and saw little planes taking off!

### **The Business Grows**

Over the years we've had some really varied work. Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen visited me and I featured in ITV's 'House Gift'. We also made up 30 miniature leather bound books that were written and drawn on by famous people and sold at Sotheby's to raise money for the 999 club, a charity helping the homeless. JK Rowling sent her book back filled with descriptions and exquisite drawings of the items Harry Potter needs for his wizardry. David Hockney drew landscapes of his native Yorkshire. Paul McCartney and Madonna did drawings and wrote out the lyrics to their songs 'Hey Jude' and 'American Life.' All the books were leather bound with gold embossed covers except Paul McCartney's which was a vegetarian friendly binding. John le Carré penned a new story – complete with a drawing showing George Smiley coming out of retirement – to give us his views on Bush, Blair and the Iraq war. Britain's greatest cartoonist Gerald Scarfe drew in miniature all the British prime ministers and American presidents since Macmillan and JFK. Mohammed Ali had a specially made book which was larger than the

others because his Parkinson's disease prevented him working in miniature. He filled the book with colourful art. Other famous contributors were Margaret Thatcher, Harold Pinter, John Major, James Callaghan, Seamus Heaney, Tom Wolf and Andrew Lloyd Webber. A total of £140,000 was raised.

We have bound Royal theses and produced a beautiful embossed blue leather book in its own box which was presented to the Queen by the Middle Temple. We've also bound a gold tooled, goatskin leather bound book which was presented to the Duke of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace to celebrate the centenary of the journal *The Naval Review* of which he is a senior member.

We've ranged from binding a book of erotic ivory miniatures for a well known dress maker to creating logbooks and stationary folders for super yachts. We've even bound books for Wimbledon Tennis pros. One of our highlights was when accomplished painter and 10cc singer Lol Creme famous for his song 'I'm not in love' paid us a visit to make a box for his paintings and a book to present to his grand daughter. Other notable clients include Virginia McKenna, famous for her role in the film 'Born Free', Bryan Forbes, a well known film director and Sarah Miles, celebrated for her books *Bolt from the Blue*, *Right Royal Bastard*, and acting in *The Servant*, *Blowup*, *Ryan's Daughter* and *Hope and Glory*.

In 2011 we moved to a house with a wonderful large workshop space attached right in the centre of Midhurst. This turned out to be very fortuitous because Maureen Duke, my former tutor at Guildford College became practically a neighbour! Maureen has been an invaluable help and friend, and, at the age of 88, an incredible woman who still binds books, hosts friends and is a stalwart honorary staff member of Otter Bookbinding. She has just received the British Empire Medal in the Queen's New Year's Honour's list for her lifetime's work as a



Maureen Duke, 88, of Trotton, was awarded a British Empire Medal in the Honours List for services to bookbinding.

bookbinder, a well deserved medal. As a result of this, I have the good fortune to have been invited by Maureen to accompany her to the Buckingham Palace garden party this May.

### Where We Are Now

Today, the type of work that comes in has greatly changed. We're carrying out less thesis binding and more individual commissions. For instance we're producing one-off and sets of books for customers wanting to self-publish their work, with diverse interests ranging from genealogies to plays. We've bound the indenture books for Lord's Cricket Ground and we make Green Fees Visitors books for a supplier to national golf clubs.

We're currently making up two full leather facsimile books for the War Graves Commission which are to look exactly like the other seven volumes in the collection originally bound in 1958 by Roger Powell, a renowned bookbinder who lived and worked in Froxfield near Petersfield and whose father was a co-founder of Bedales, where Roger Powell attended school. There is a certain synchronicity in these two new volumes coming for binding to this area from where the originals emanated. These books contain the names of service men who lost their lives in the last two wars and will be on permanent exhibition in Westminster Abbey.

Old books often come in for repair and restoration too, from Family Bibles to well-loved Victorian embossed cloth cased books. Rebinding, conservation and restoration is of course expensive and the value of the book, whether emotional or monetary, clearly has to justify the financial outlay. Books can be repaired from £50 to a few hundred pounds depending on the work that is required. Some books have damaged interior pages. One Breeches Bible of 1647 was missing a few pages and some were torn in half. I was able to find a copy of these same pages which I printed on to a toned-down acid free paper and used these to repair and replace the torn and missing pages in accordance with the owner's wishes. Although the new repair was evident, it meant that the owner was able to enjoy his book with all the information present within it.

It's an ever changing work flow and so life is always interesting. We took on some early 20th century equipment last year from a retired bookbinder in Worthing which has enabled us to carry out small scale sewing and binding production runs in house. Accordingly we were in a position to sew 100 books as props for the forthcoming film, 'Untitled AA Milne Project'. We will also use this equipment to create 60 leather bound books with slip cases for the famous Carp Fishing Author, Mike Willmott.

Richard Branson aptly said "*A business has to be involving, it has to be fun, and it has*

to exercise your creative instincts." It's an interesting journey and an ever changing one. One of the challenges for me as I grow the business is to remember where I started which was for the love of art and craft.

When a business grows, finding the time to be hands on and the organiser can be conflicting. I've addressed this by recently taking on Anna Prudente-Poulton with her experience in publishing who has proved a wonderful asset in proof reading, keeping an eye on customer emails and estimates and other administrative tasks. Other members of the team include Sara Tupper, Maureen Duke's step daughter, who is a trained book binder and is a stalwart 'can do' person with a positive attitude and the ability to focus on expeditious and efficient delivery and Steve Orriss who is a very experienced bookbinder who trained at The British Library and has also worked for commercial antiquarian book dealers in London. Steve is also an accomplished artist and has recently discovered that he is to be awarded a prize at the forthcoming International bookbinding competition held by the Society of Bookbinders. Marcus, my husband, is responsible for our website and for laying out, typesetting and formatting documents on indesign ready for print either on our in-house Oki laser printer and/or Canon photo printer, or for outsourcing to a print house. Marcus also owns a small publishing company of his own specialising in poetry of soul and spirit. The website is [www.animapoetry.uk](http://www.animapoetry.uk).

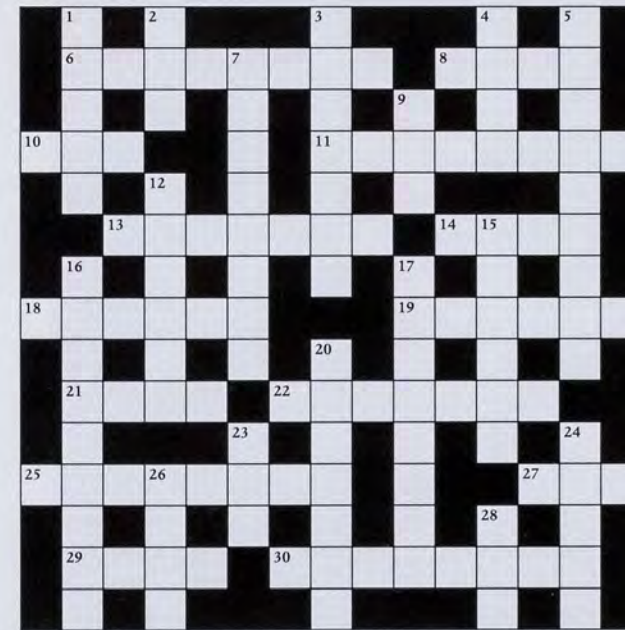
I'm learning about social media and all the ways in which I can connect with my customers and grow the business. I write a monthly newsletter which reaches approximately 1,500 people and I am confident that there is a world-wide market for bespoke and antiquarian bookbinding and so I am heading off to California, U.S.A. with Sara, to exhibit our work at two book fairs, a first!

All our work is hand-made and requires us to have a level of hand skills not easily attainable in today's world. It's gratifying to know that in this digital age, there is a growing appreciation for the craft of bookbinding, and the knowledge that a book beautifully bound today is tomorrow's heirloom to be passed down through the generations. I love my team and the work that is produced in the bindery

I love bookbinding also because it feels like a creative counter balance to mass manufacturing and the age of all things cheap. It is gratifying to know that fine hand made books are still appreciated and valued for their beauty, timelessness and for the expertise and skill that has been put into making them.

Marysa de Veer was talking to the Editor. She will be exhibiting samples of her work at the Petworth Book Sale on March 11th from 10am until 12.15am. She will be speaking at the AGM in June. Marysa can be contacted on [marysa@otterbookbinding.com](mailto:marysa@otterbookbinding.com) and tel 01730 352042. Her website is [www.otterbookbinding.com](http://www.otterbookbinding.com).

## CASTLES CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 6** Ruined Cumbrian castle with strong Petworth connections (8)  
**8** Garment favoured by some of the earliest invaders of Sussex (4)  
**10** It's been our strongest defence against invasion (3)  
**11** Castle, now a hotel, built by order of the bishops of Chichester (8)  
**13** Lots of history books, perhaps (7)  
**14** Supply of ammunition – in short (4)  
**18** Roman goddesses of vengeance (6)  
**19** Small horse drawn carriage – sounds as if it's in a hurry (6)  
**21** Could be the result of a battle injury (4)  
**22** King whose troops besieged Arundel Castle to arrest his rival, Matilda (7)

- 25** Bramber Castle was the seat of this important Norman family (2,6)  
**27** Home of 4dn? (3)  
**29** Jousting move (4)  
**30** Coastal ruin which was a Roman fort, Norman castle and site of WW2 pill-boxes (8)

### DOWN

- 1** Imposing East Sussex castle, built by de Warenne, high above the town (5)  
**2** Provide with 14ac (3)  
**3** He's driven a wrong way to force entry into another country (7)  
**4** Animal symbol of strength, frequently depicted on Anglo-Saxon shields (4)  
**5** Strong point in the castle walls (9)  
**7** The remains of its castle are on St. Anne's Hill (8)

- 9** Retreat slowly (3)  
**12** Classic castle built to protect the Eastern Rother from the French (6)  
**15** Surrounded by water like 12dn (6)  
**16** Dungeon entered from the floor above ... (9)  
**17** ... and one imprisoned there (1,7)  
**20** Soaked – in history perhaps (7)  
**23** The victor did! (3)  
**24** Shows endurance to the end (5)  
**26** Govern (4)  
**28** Wood sometimes used for spear shafts and weapons handles (3)

### SOLUTION TO CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

#### ACROSS

- 2 Hay, 4 Sprite, 9 Cotillion, 11 Eve, 12 Muff, 13 Vessel, 15 Swan, 16 Itchy, 17 Iced, 19 Ludo, 20 Genie, 21 Past, 25 Matins, 27 Stir, 29 Nap, 30 Avalanche, 31 Orange, 32 Ado

#### DOWN

- 1 Buttons, 3 Autumn, 4 Ship, 5 Trees, 6 Scotland, 7 Old Father, 8 Reeled, 10 Noel, 14 Christmas, 18 Charades, 19 Lemons, 22 Tipteer, 23 Anna, 24 Braced, 26 Taper, 28 Game

## Lovely kilts!

Those who attended the January talk in The Leconfield Hall will have enjoyed the replaying of the film of the visit by the Toronto Scottish Regiment to Petworth in the summer of 1985. To many it will have seemed like yesterday and yet amazingly it was 31 years ago. It is hard to imagine now how important the occasion was to the town, and it seems unlikely that anything like it could be put on today. First hand memories of the day are still plentiful, however written recollections, other than in this magazine, are less so.

For a contemporary account of the occasion we can look to Gwenda Morgan who lived at Ridge House in Station Road where the aptly named Morgan Court retirement flats have recently been built. Gwenda, a celebrated wood-engraver, lived with her step-mother Una and regularly corresponded with her cousin Gwen in Oxford.

In a letter to Gwen dated July 8th, 1985 Gwenda recalls:

'Last April 28th (Sunday) is a day that will go down in the history of Petworth. Veterans of the Toronto Scottish Regiment spent a whole day in Petworth (Veterans & wives) 230 of them. They arrived in coaches with their pipe band, and they looked marvellous! The Square was packed with people to greet them with our own town band playing. They were guests of our Petworth Society. During the war we had various Canadian regiments camping round us & it happened that the Toronto Scottish was the regiment here at the time our boys' school was bombed. 25 boys killed, a teacher and the headmaster. Those soldiers were just wonderful in helping to dig out boys and bodies.

Well on the 28th they were all lined up in the Market Square & headed by standard bearers & their pipe band (lovely kilts etc!!!) then to church for a service. Then there was a short service at the war memorial & then the official welcoming by Lord Egremont in the Square. Then a tremendous meal for them in the Town Hall (2 relays as the Hall wasn't big enough for all at once!). During the afternoon they could do just what they each wanted to do, meet old friends, visit their old camp sites, meet at the British Legion hut or watch entertainments put on in front of Petworth House. The weather was absolutely perfect & they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They ended up at our primary school for tea & as well as meeting the present day youngsters they met 5 of the survivors of the bombing. What a day! I must say that I enjoyed it too, especially their pipe band!

Five years later Gwenda writing once again to her cousin is looking forward to the return of the regiment while also looking back to their previous visits:

'Next Sunday (10th) the Toronto Scottish veterans are visiting Petworth. It will be their third visit. During the war the regiment was in camp here at the time of the



Petworth Fair 2016.

"The Primary School children give a rousing start!"

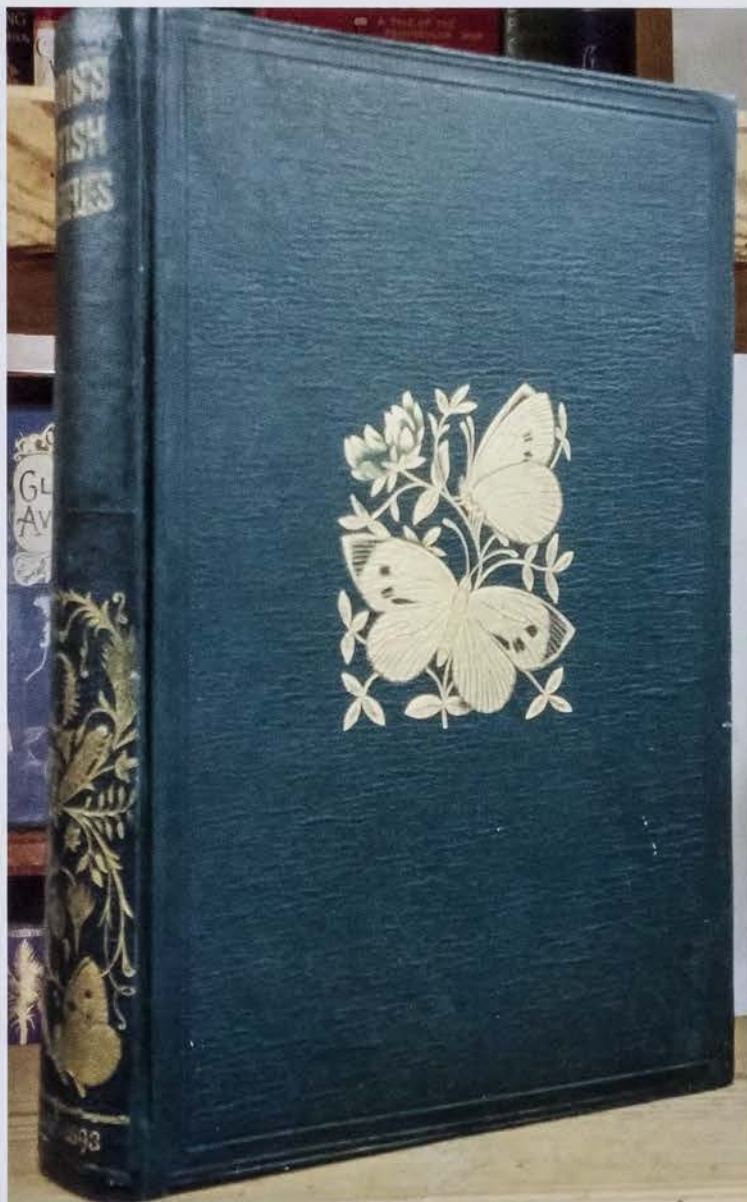
Photograph by Ian Godsmark as are the two following.  
Photograph taken with permission.



Petworth Fair 2016.  
The Southdown Gallopers with the weather rapidly closing in.



Petworth Fair 2016.  
Petworth Town Band in full flow!



**A History of British Butterflies by F O Morris – 1893**

This book came into the bindery in a dilapidated state with boards having come loose, spine cloth partially missing and torn. The book was dismantled, relined, the endpapers repaired and re-assembled with a new cloth on the spine which was toned to match the old. The finished result is a repair that is barely visible.



**A History of British Butterflies by F O Morris – 1870**

This book is a slightly earlier version of the other book illustrated. The covers were beyond repair. The owner commissioned us to re-design the covers and base the new designs loosely on the original artwork. A beautiful smooth vegetable tanned light blue calf skin was chosen and the designs were embossed in silver because the owner wanted a more contemporary look.



Draining and restoration of the Upper Lake, Petworth Park 1983.  
Lord Leconfield's punt has surfaced; it was used for shooting parties on the river.  
Note repairs to the boat house. See "Delicate balances."



A similar picture again in 1983.





The Toronto Scottish Regiment were to return to Petworth several times but never in the overwhelming numbers of 1985. This was their third visit, in 1990, and the Society would visit Canada in 1994. See "Lovely kilts."

Photograph by Tony Whitcomb.

bombing of our local boys' school & those Canadians were marvellous in helping to recover the bodies of the poor little boys. The veterans have kept a friendly feeling for Petworth all these years. Of course they are now elderly & this visit will not be such a big event as were their other ones when they paraded very smartly in the Market Square wearing many medals & had their kilted bag pipe band. Next Sunday they will receive a grand welcome in the Square & have a good meal in the town hall.'

This visit by the Toronto Scottish was very much a restrained affair compared to 1985, and even more so than the weekday stopover in 1987, with just 20 veterans and some 30 members of their families making the trip. August 1992 saw a considerable surge in numbers with 180 veterans and guests arriving in the town and arrangements made for a hugely popular reciprocal trip to Canada by members of The Petworth Society in September of '93. Further visits of the regiment to Petworth were made in '94 and '95.

While each visit was a cause for celebration, and the renewal of friendships, it was invariably shaded by the knowledge that for some of the veterans this would be their final visit to the town.

Miles

## Delicate balances

A comprehensive Management Plan for Petworth Park was drawn up in 2004 and remains essentially in force today. It had an overriding awareness of the Park's international status as a Grade I listed landscape, but retained a continuing concern for the Park's unique ecology. United in a common cause, the two can sometimes be uneasy partners. Take the familiar anthills of the yellow meadow ant, home to billions of the tiny creatures and freed now of the natural control of horse and cattle hoof. To what extent should they be allowed to flourish unchecked? Or what of the habitat of rare species of beetle? Their home is in decaying timber, but to what extent does decaying timber infringe on an ordered Brown landscape? The Park has to be a unity of conflicting interests. Current thinking divides the Park into eighteen separate, almost self-governing "zones" and each zone will reconcile in its own way. To take two obvious examples: the west front "lawn" and the paddocks need to be kept clear of anthills while "scrubland" areas can tolerate, even feature them.

Petworth Park has triple SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) status with ecological features of International, National and Local significance. Some species

of fungi, lichen and beetle fall into the first category, while prominent in the second one are the sixteen species of bat either resident or recorded as visiting. There are only eighteen indigenous British species in all. Some trees, not as species, unusual in themselves, fall into this second category on account of their age and size. Among the third category we might mention some wild flowers like varieties of harebell and flora peculiar to the Park's fresh water habitat.

The presence of geese on the water is an acknowledged pollutant, their faeces producing an unwanted excess of phosphate. Various treatments have tentatively been suggested but without promising an effective solution. The rising population of Canadian and Egyptian geese must give concern: neither species being indigenous. The water however also plays host to the protected Greylag goose, which is. Clearly action, whatever it is, cannot be unilateral: it has to be a joint initiative with other local owners and in conjunction with the Invasive Non-Native Species Forum (INNS). Managing the Park is at once privilege and responsibility but it must also be a matter of discussion and mutual agreement. Another pressing concern has to be the build-up of floating pennywort at the water's edge.

We intend to coppice the trees on the islands with the design ultimately of opening up the classic Turner view of the Lake. Our resident staff will work in conjunction with specialist contractors and we have an 80% grant from Natural England, another example of our crucial partnership with ancillary funding.

It may be our privilege to manage the Park, but it does not generate income other than a modicum for parking, while major works are expensive. As I have indicated we do rely on outside funding with a certain amount of matching funding from us. The park is technically private rather than municipal land and commercial income must yield to concern about the effect of outside activities on a delicate ecological balance. Commercial use has to be carefully considered on its merit and at once monitored and limited.

In spring we will look further and assess what needs to be done about the culverts and drainage channels. Again ambition has to be tempered by the availability of labour and outside funding. With help from the Monument Trust, significant portions of the Park wall have been repaired, another example of interaction between the National Trust and funding partners. Lord and Lady Egremont have kindly offered to redesign and reinstate the magnificent long border outside the old Servants' Quarters, while improvements in the Pleasure Grounds are very much in view.

I should mention that access through the Hampers Green lodge has been slightly restricted as the lodge is at present unmanned and it has been left to the permanent staff to open up. I think we've done quite well but it's only one of their myriad tasks. Automatic gates may be a feature for the future. The Park is a

national treasure and its management has to be an exercise in discretion and cooperation – it's my privilege to be a part of that.

Jo Cartwright was talking to the Editor.  
Jo is Property Manager at Petworth House.

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## On visiting Mrs Adsett

Vivien Clay writes:

7 Nightingale Road  
Woodley  
Reading  
Berks. RG5 3LP

12th December 2016

Dear Peter,

My grandfather Thomas Walter Hampshire regularly visited Petworth, often with family members, and I always assumed he was Petworth born, I then found out he wasn't: he had been born in London, as were the rest of the family. There was no obvious link to the town. On the other hand I clearly remember my aunts and uncles with their children going to stay at Petworth. A photograph clearly taken in the mid 1920s, and reproduced on this quarter's magazine cover, shows my grandmother, Ann Hampshire (1878-1948) walking past the gate of Barton Graveyard with her youngest daughter, Gladys, born 1921. Later Gladys' married name was Mrs Driscoll.

I have two cousins living in Spain, one of whom has a particular interest in family research. Looking through some old papers left by my grandfather who died in 1951, my cousin found some old negatives. When developed these were found to be largely taken at Petworth in the mid 1920s. I can recognise my grandfather, and also, we think, it's my great grand father, John Hampshire, in some of them, but have no idea who the other people are. I just know that several generations visited, as we have photographs from family albums taken from the mid 1920s to the late 1940s and early 1950s.

At the time when the Barton Lane picture of my grandmother and her daughter Gladys was taken, her eldest daughter, Pat, was married with children. Photos from family albums show Pat and her husband, Tom Barker, against what is clearly a Petworth background. There are also images of Pat's daughter, Winnie, and her husband Fred Moore and their two little girls, Maureen and Elaine, apparently taken when they were all staying with Mrs Adsett in North Street, about 1950. The two girls



Not known. Round the Hills?



Tom Barker 1950



Maureen and Elaine with (?)  
Mrs Adsett c 1950

are of course, the great grand daughters of the lady walking up the path by the Barton Graveyard.

Gladys and her husband, Tom were visiting Petworth in August 1950, and they sent a postcard back to the family in London saying "met the lady we stayed with years ago." Was this Mrs Adsett?

I asked the two girls about their memories of the North Street Cottage. The youngest, Elaine, only remembers being startled by her first encounter with a frog when in the garden. She says it has given her a lifelong phobia of frogs. The older girl, Maureen has lived in Australia since the 1970s. She recalls that the cottage backed onto a sloping field with horses, and that it was opposite the wall of the Leconfield Estate. She remembers her grandmother, Pat Barker, sitting at a table with Mrs Adsett cutting up eels that her grandfather had caught. She was told the cottage was haunted. My cousin Eddie had also stayed there with his parents about that time. He thought the cottage was creepy. One night he woke and saw a lady with some sort of head scarf, drift across the room. A child's imagination after hearing tales of ghosts? Eddie would go fishing on the Petworth estate with his grandfather and there was a fishing permit among my grandfather's papers. Years later, an uncle said to him, "If you want to fish in the Petworth Lake, just mention your grandfather at the Estate Office and they will let you fish there."

About 10 years ago, we took Winnie, mother of Maureen and Elaine, to Petworth to see what she could remember. We felt reasonably sure about the cottage in North Street, and soon found the hill in Barton Lane where grandmother and Gladys had walked in the 1920s. "Who took that photo?" we wondered. Winnie, who died in 2011, had no idea why her family visited Petworth, nor why my own parents never came to Petworth. It is even more strange as part of our family, including my grandparents, Eddie's parents, and Gladys and Tommy, all shared a big house in Highbury at the time.

Did Mrs Adsett take in paying guests? It appears unlikely, it seems a less formal arrangement than that.

Another photo is of a patrol scout at his station by the obelisk, in East Street. A random snap perhaps? Another photograph is of the war memorial at Littlehampton, but there is no obvious connection.

Do any of your readers have an old family photo album or memories that would help to identify any of the unknown people in the photos, and help solve this mystery?

Kind Regards,

Vivien

[Obviously for reasons of space I can only show a limited number of pictures but I do include a selection including the Bartons Lane cover. I have left Vivien's enquiry in its original form, trusting that the Magazine will shed some light on what is at present something of a mystery. Ed.]



Not known.



Location?

## Bertha Mary had one weakness

Alfred James Green, my maternal grandfather, had been born at Slindon in about 1883; I believe that he was the son of a wood reeve or forester who may have worked on the Slindon House Estate. Unfortunately I know nothing about his early life in Sussex and it is not until he turns up at Potters Bar in Hertfordshire having joined the Metropolitan Police Service in 1904 that we get our first tangible glimpse of him.

Meanwhile my maternal grandmother Bertha Mary Champion had been born at Wisborough Green in 1886 the daughter of George Champion landlord of The Three Crowns public house. By 1901 fifteen year old Bertha is still in education and attending Emma Chart's school in South Street at nearby Billingshurst. It seems likely that at some point she trained as a dressmaker and worked at Guildford though how that came about is unknown.

Where my grandparents met and how they arrived in Potters Bar is anybody's guess but they were married at Northaw parish church in late August 1917. They soon began a family of four boys and one girl, Vera my mother, Stan, Vic, Osmund and Derek (Babe). In 1926 Police Constable Green is awarded The King's Police Medal for rescuing two men who had been overcome by fumes while working in a sewer shaft. Other than the award Alfred's life in the police force appears to have been quite unremarkable and he retires as a constable in 1929 aged 46 with the princely annual pension of £153.13s. No mean sum then and equivalent to about £8,000 a year today.

Soon after his retirement Alfred, Bertha Mary and their five children move to Byworth and The Black Horse public house. A man named Jones had been tenant there for some time before my grandparents moved in. Why Alfred chose the life of a landlord is unclear, though the location between Slindon and Wisborough Green where their respective families lived was possibly a factor. Perhaps Bertha's connection with the licenced trade played a part in the decision and she may have had a good deal more experience than her husband.

Whether Bertha or the children had ever been to Byworth before the move from Potters Bar is difficult to tell though it seems unlikely. No doubt Alfred and his wife had taken some advice from her father who probably knew the pub quite well as both The Black Horse and The Three Crowns were Friary houses at the time. Apart from the location and the need for a home there is nothing obvious that would have attracted Alfred and Bertha and their five children to Byworth. Yes there were more amenities than today. Byworth School would offer the children an elementary education continued perhaps at Petworth. On Sundays the school was transformed into a church and more often than not a curate would

travel out from Petworth to conduct an evening service. There was a post office at Mrs Long's grocery shop and of course Shoubridge's bakery, both of which were just a couple of minutes' walk from the pub.

The Black Horse was very much a village pub. No passing trade then. Grandad loved his large garden which ran down towards the meadow and where he could be found most mornings. Considering his working life in the police he was very knowledgeable about gardening and was able to coppice with some skill. Chickens were kept and I recall seeing the scullery full of chicks waiting to be moved outdoors. Grandad was a big man, even in old age, as befit a policeman in those days. Size and presence was important and he carried that into his years as landlord. The law was important and opening and closing times were strictly adhered to. None of his young children, and later his grandchildren, were allowed into the bar during opening hours and we had no doubt that any attempt to push against him would receive a brusque response. Grandad was not particularly strict but we knew not to mess with him. Grandad ran the bar while Bertha Mary would be found in the kitchen cooking and washing. This almost rigid segregation of their working lives seemed to suit them well and they rarely intruded upon the others routine. There was no mains water at the pub, fresh water was pumped up from a well beneath the scullery to a big tank in the roof where it was stored and then gravity fed back down to the kitchen. Grandad would pump away and Bertha Mary would shout 'stop pumping Alf it's full!' Cooking was done on a big Petworth Range which was regularly black leaded. I wonder if the range has survived the modernisation of the pub? Once common to almost every cottage in Petworth I doubt if more than a handful exist today. There was no bathroom, or indeed a bath, though one would eventually be installed in a shed at the rear of the pub. The commercial area of the pub consisted of a small tap room, a public bar, the two rooms separated by a wall which would later be removed to create a single bar, and a small private bar known as the 'little room'. For no apparent reason

even after mains electric arrived at The Black Horse the 'little room' would remain lit only by a paraffin lamp, why I don't know.

Like most rural pubs The Black Horse seemed to survive on its 'regulars'. Among them were 'Bumper' Pullen, George Elliott, and Dick and Edie Wadey who would walk in from High Hoes, Don Hunt from down the road, and of course

Mrs Long from the shop across the street. Rolly Salter from Hampers Green kept pigs in the field next to the pub, a distinctly unpopular situation, made all the worse when he would pop in for a drink bringing the stink of the pigs with him. Business was always slow and quite often closing time on a winters evening would come with an empty till, not a single customer having crossed the threshold. Customer loyalty was important and if we were sent to purchase something from Mrs Long we were told not to let Joy Gumbrell – who had the other shop – see us. No point in upsetting either shopkeeper. Times were hard enough without falling out with anyone. Despite the dearth of customers, maintaining the routine was essential and panic would break out if a coach drew up. You see they didn't want it.

Delivery men would usually come from Petworth. Pelletts would deliver the crisps. Coal would be wheeled up the passage to the yard and the big lumps were broken up with a pointed hammer, it may have been cheaper to buy like that. Pinks of Chichester came with their little lorry loaded with soft drinks. Bill Hazelman in his Dormobile van delivering bread, Margaret Hazelman coming in with a fox on a lead, not something seen every day. There was great excitement when the brewery delivered and we would watch with awe as the huge barrels were rolled down the passage, the noise was tremendous.

Bertha Mary had one weakness in her life and that was snuff. I recall being sent into Petworth to Harpers in Saddlers Row to get a packet of 1 and 3. I guess that was the grade or perhaps the price of the snuff though I am not sure. Harpers carried on selling snuff and other tobacco products well into the 70's. It does seem ridiculously old fashioned now. My brother John and I would joke about the possibility of grandmother mistaking the snuff for gravy powder and we wondered what would be the effect on a roast dinner! Bertha Mary still had family living quite locally and she would often catch the bus into Petworth where she would change for Wisborough Green to visit her brother and sisters. We were very conscious of our relatives and had to visit them on occasions. Something I dreaded as I didn't really know them.

My mother Vera was the middle of the five children and her adult life seems to have revolved around the running of the pub. Grandad died in the late 60's and the licence was transferred to Bertha Mary. Stock was often minimal and it was not unusual for Mum to have to catch the bus to Petworth to buy a bottle of whisky at Findlater's off-licence at the top of Lombard Street. This was a time of some tension. Vic, now living at River Common would infrequently visit and somehow disrupt the day to day running of the pub. He was more or less the black sheep of the family. Vera and Stan would try to keep things running smoothly but Vic's visits were not welcomed. Mum had married and was living at Tillington with her



husband Bill and myself and my younger brother John. However the draw of the pub was still as strong as ever and she would make the bus journey from Tillington each day. She was almost leading a double life really but she seemed happiest at Byworth. Such was the bond with the village that I was christened at Byworth Church with water from the Virgin Mary Spring.

After her father died Vera took over the front of the house while Bertha continued in the kitchen very much as she always had. Her brother Stan ran his hairdressing salon from Pelletts in the Square at Petworth. He was very knowledgeable regarding horseracing and even now I can remember Worthing 7201 which was the telephone number of the betting shop that Stan used. Unlike most gamblers Stan was quite successful and I know that he made a good deal of money in stocks and shares. Stan got married for a day, or at least a very short while. He didn't like it and came home to his Mum.

At Byworth our playground had no limits. One day we could be found in the brook below The Virgin Mary Spring while the very next we may wander right up to the council 'clutterpit' beyond the cottage hospital. The world was our oyster. The years went by but the bond between mother and daughter remained incredibly strong and so it was no surprise that Bertha Mary came to live at Tillington with us while Mum and Stan continued to run the pub. Bertha Mary died in 1977 and though Mum and Stan continued for a few more years the decision was eventually taken to give up The Black Horse. Stan meanwhile had bought a house in Petworth as an insurance against the inevitable. Vera sadly passed away in 1989 aged 67.

Chris Vincent talking to Miles Costello.



## Book shelf

It's unusual to have five books to review: a sign at once of individual initiative and the important role of self-publishing and the small press is a rapidly changing world.

David Johnston's "A Sussex Wayfarer" is published by Oak Barn Press at £8.50 and is an invocation to explore the local countryside. It comprises diary extracts from 1987 to 2003, not all years being covered. While David has been sparing with the photography for which he is so well known the diary extracts have the characterful down-to-earth simplicity that set his work apart.

"River" by Andrew Thompson and Dominique Kenway is a more ambitious project and retails at £29.50. As keeper and careful observer and preserver of wild life, Andrew has, over years, made the stretch of the Rother just south of Petworth very much his own. The photography is superb and interspersed with poetry and prose chosen by Dominique. The book reflects Jonathan Newdick's meticulous design skills while the Lavenham Press do their usual consummate job.

John Edgar is no stranger to this Society nor to these pages. "A South Downs Year" tells through the sculptor's own journal the story of the Slindon Stone over a fifteen month period from its arrival in Slindon from Portland to its eventual placement in Northwood. Here we have a definitive library and pictorial expansion of Jon's notable article "Fizzing with history" (PSM 163) and Keith's account of Jon's talk to the Society last year (PSM 164). Belloc, Capability Brown, William Cooper and the present Archbishop of Westminster are just a few who flit through this fascinating odyssey. Limited edition of 300, profusely illustrated. Hesworth Press £10. Something of a "snip" or is this an inappropriate term for a sculptor?

If the three previous books may reasonably be termed local, Shaun Cooper's "British Witch Legends of Sussex" paints a wider canvas. Prima facie the title might seem something of a contradiction but in fact Shaun has interwoven Sussex legends into a wider background, an ambitious but by no means easy task. As Editor of this Magazine I have to be pleased to see a number of references to PSM, to which Shaun has, over a period, been a significant contributor. His command of the often inaccessible, not to say on occasion exotic literature on the subject is masterly, his scholarship penetrating. This seems to me a standard work. Published at £12 by Country Books [www.countrybooks.biz](http://www.countrybooks.biz) or available direct by telephone from Shaun himself on 01275 870604. No doubt the Petworth Bookshop will be pleased to order for you – the three other books will be readily available there too.

Finally I have just received Trevor Purnell's "Village Boys Still" an account of, and tribute to, the thirty-one men from the Parish of Tillington who gave their

lives in the Great War. There's no point in attempting such a project unless you're going to do it properly and Trevor has done a magnificent job, spurred on perhaps by an awareness of Mike Oakland's similar treatment for Lurgashall. It's something that could not be done on a similar scale for Petworth given the difference in numbers. A book of this kind can take in and grasp the very essence of a small community and gauge the effect of the loss. The research is meticulous and the book is illustrated in colour, I cannot praise this book too highly. It seems almost churlish to suggest a title on the hardback spine would have been an advantage. Best to contact Trevor himself on 344040.

P.

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## The Spirit of the Smuggler

Rudyard Kipling, author of *The Jungle book* and *Puck of Pook's Hill*, wrote a poem called 'The Smuggler's Song' which some writers of books about Sussex quote in order to illustrate how frightened people were of the smugglers – particularly with the refrain that occurs at the end of each verse.

If you wake at midnight and hear a horse's feet  
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street.  
Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie.  
Watch the wall my darling when the Gentlemen go by.

This evocative poem is very romantic, even despite the repeated warning to look away from the smugglers, in case you become a witness; but it should be noted that Kipling was born well after the golden age of smuggling had ended, and that he only lived in Sussex, at Burwash, for the last part of his life. Maybe there had been people at Burwash who did look away when the smugglers came by; after all, that village is in the part of East Sussex which is close to Hawkhurst in Kent, where the dreaded Hawkhurst smugglers had their headquarters – but in other parts of Sussex, it was a very different story. In *Tales of Old Petworth*, for instance, it is recorded that the last time a big company of smugglers rode through the town had been on a Sunday morning, and it had been a "wonderful sight" with nearly sixty riders altogether, armed with pistols and cutlasses and each leading two or three horses laden with tubs of brandy and Hollands and bales of silk, and there were even wagons carrying other contraband goods and, being in no particular hurry, the smugglers stopped at various inns, drinking and carousing with some of the townspeople.<sup>1</sup>

In *Memorials of Old Sussex* W. Martin tells how one young girl frightened her parents when she told them how she had opened a gate for the Hawkhurst gang.<sup>2</sup> There is no mention of where this incident occurred, but just because Hawkhurst is in Kent it would be wrong to assume that it probably happened in East Sussex, as the influence of this notorious band of smugglers ranged throughout the whole of the county – and Hampshire as well.

Indeed, the very darkest episode in the annals of Sussex smuggling began when a company of more than 30 smugglers were riding through a village in the New Forest, and many people lined the streets to watch the 'Gentlemen' go by. It was late 1747, and the smugglers were returning from a raid on the Customs House at Poole in Dorset, having taken back a large consignment of tea and brandy of theirs which had been captured at sea by a Revenue vessel. Seven of them were members of the notorious Hawkhurst gang, and the rest were from Rowland's Castle and the Chichester area. One of the men of Kent was John Diamond, and one of the spectators, a shoemaker called Daniel Chater was an old acquaintance of his, and the two spoke briefly, the smuggler giving Chater a bag of tea.

After the raid, a reward of £500 was offered for any information leading to the arrest of the smugglers involved, and so the authorities soon got to hear about the conversation Chater had had with one of them. Diamond was arrested in 1748 and taken to Chichester. Then it was necessary for Chater to go to the Justice of the Peace, who lived at Marden, just north of that town, in order to identify Diamond. At this point the story begins to get very murky. It seems likely that one of the officers at Southampton responsible for ensuring that Chater went to Marden must have been on the smugglers' payroll, because instead of giving this prime witness a proper armed escort, just one elderly Revenue man called William Galley accompanied Chater, and instead of taking the most direct route from Southampton to Marden, which would have involved going up along the old Winchester road, the pair rode through Havant and then went to Rowland's Castle, which was notoriously rife with smugglers, and there they stopped at an inn whose landlady's sons were of that fraternity. She, on discovering what the two men were about, sent someone to alert other members of the gang.

The two men were set upon by a group of smugglers, mostly from northern West Sussex, and were taken into that county the same night, and tortured along the way. Galley was buried alive in a fox earth in Harting Combe, near Milland. Chater was held chained in an outhouse at nearby Trotton, tortured more, and then pushed down a well in Lady Holt Park and bombarded with rocks and fence-posts.

Shortly afterwards, an anonymous letter was sent to the authorities, naming some of the smugglers involved in these barbaric crimes. As soon as those

smugglers were arrested, they named others in order to lessen their own sentences. The following year, eight of the smugglers who had been captured were sentenced to be hanged for the murders. None of them were men of Kent. Two were from the Rowland's Castle gang, and the rest were from West Sussex: Trotton, Stedham, Sidlesham, and Bersted.

Other people killed by smugglers in West Sussex in 1748 include a Riding Officer who was shot by some of the Hawkhurst gang on Selhurst Common, near Up Waltham; and a Yapton man, suspected of having taken two bags of tea from a cache of contraband hidden in a barn, was taken up to the Dog and Partridge Inn on Slindon Common and beaten and whipped to death by one of the Hawkhursts and a smuggler from Trotton.

Accounts such as these are grim, to be sure, but they also tell us much about how smuggling gangs worked together. For example, although the word 'gang' is used a lot when detailing smugglers from different areas, it does not have the same meaning as it does in modern parlance where it is mostly used in connection with teenage gangs. Teenage gangs are territorial and very insular, and 'turf' wars arise when gangs start extending their territory. But the smuggling gangs seem to have operated, necessarily, in exactly the opposite way: they were not insular at all, and members might live far from the gang's headquarters, even in other counties, and so it seems likely that some smugglers belonged to more than one gang, or sometimes they worked for one gang and sometimes with another. Thus, when the Hawkhurst gang needed to raid the Customs House at Poole, they were able to join forces with the Rowland's Castle and West Sussex men, and this explains too why some of the Hawkhursts were so active in the Chichester area.

When one night in 1743 more than four tons of tea was landed on the beach near Middleton, smugglers from Chichester, Arundel, Stopham and Sidlesham, as well as from the Bognor area were there to run it, many of them armed.<sup>3</sup> In 'Sussex Smugglers and Smuggling' the Horsham historian William Albery tells us that "the largest number of smugglers in one gang known in Sussex" was in an incident that occurred in December 1778, when 191 smugglers were seen riding through Henfield at three o'clock one Sunday morning, laden with dry goods and escorting seven Revenue men who they had taken prisoner. However, according to an item in the Sussex Weekly Advertiser in July 1780, about 250 smugglers rode through Ditchling on a night in June of that year.

This subject of large numbers brings us round to some other surprising figures. Over 12,000 gallons of spirits were once seized on Selsey beach, and on a night in March 1784, a haul of 39 bags of tea, 14 bales of silks and 9 horses were seized from smugglers riding up through Petworth, and a few months earlier there had been a skirmish on Horsham Common in which five horses each carrying about a

hundredweight of tea were captured, and a smuggler was killed, shot in the head, and one of Mr Walter's men was injured.

### Walter's Plan

In West Sussex, the war on smuggling was principally led by three zealous men: Mr Walter, appointed Chief Revenue officer at Horsham in about 1781, and his subordinate officers, Mr Hubbard who had been an Excise officer at Pulborough, and Mr Jenden who was at Horsham. They also had about twenty dragoons, and their professed aim was to capture smugglers. In 1783, Walter also organised and trained his own separate cavalry troop of smuggler catchers, and these were fully armed and even had a handsome uniform of blue and silver with round laced hats. They were known as 'Walter's Men' and they operated as far north as Guildford, as far east as Mayfield, as far west as Petersfield, and all along the Sussex coast. In the first two years of their existence, they seized goods from smugglers at Horsham, Pulborough, Petworth, Slaugham, Pyecombe, Reigate and other places. In one seizure alone they captured 300 tubs of spirits and 3 large bales of lace, with a total value of £20,000. That would be a very large sum in this day and age, but back then, when a farm labourer's wages were less than five shillings a week, it must have been a phenomenal amount. As the smugglers could be certain of making a two to three hundred per cent profit on everything they sold, the price they originally paid for those 300 tubs and bales of silk was probably only about £7,000. For centuries, from the medieval period onwards, smuggling was the next biggest business after agriculture in Sussex – and Mr Albery estimates that a third of the total amount of tea consumed in this country during the 18th century was smuggled in.

Walter also used spies and informers, known as Bush Officers, and these were hated even more than the Revenue men. They were described in the Sussex Weekly Advertiser in January 1787 as: "a banditti, whose malpractices disgrace our law and society even more than smuggling. They are composed of the very dregs of mankind, and, being, as it were, commissioned by revenue officers, who keep them in pay to lie hidden and watch the motions of smugglers, they go armed in bodies and under the sanction of their pretended office, commit all manner of violence and depredations, to the great injury and terror of persons living in the neighbourhood of their haunts."

Some smugglers made to escape when they saw Walter's men coming for them, but others put up a stern resistance and violent fights arose. For instance, one summer night in 1783, Mr Hubbard and six men intercepted an armed gang of smugglers at Eartham and immediately attacked them. Hubbard and five of his men were wounded in the skirmish, and the smugglers got away without losing



any of the contraband. On another night, the following year, Mr Jenden and a party of Walter's men charged, without warning, at a band of 150 smugglers and in the ensuing fracas, Jenden slashed one smuggler's head so badly with his cutlass that the man later died, after which Jenden was arrested for murder and put in Horsham gaol. At his eventual trial he was sentenced to death – but of course he got off with a pardon.

Walter's Plan, as it was known, actually saw fewer smugglers getting gaoled than before his appointment, although his men made numerous seizures every month, and as he got a reward for each one, he had soon amassed a fortune. It has even been suggested that perhaps fewer smugglers were imprisoned by Walter just so that they could carry on smuggling and thus generate more potential rewards for him. However, his troop of special smuggler catchers were disbanded after the 1780s – possibly because England and France became at war in 1793, which led to a slight decrease in the amount of smuggling between the two countries.

### History and Legend

Smugglers had what we would call an 'unusual skill set'. They could fight using pistols and swords on horseback as well as on foot; they mainly operated at night and, often travelling long distances, they had a comprehensive knowledge of the lie of the land and of the general geography of the country; they knew how to use cover and camouflage and disguises; they usually worked in teams; they also used secret signalling techniques, and had spies and lookouts working for them. It's very likely that some of Walter's Bush Officers were ex-smugglers, and before them, back in 1779, a Major Holroyd had been going through Sussex specifically recruiting ex-smugglers to join his Corps of Sussex Light Horse.

Smugglers were also very cunning, as the next two tales show. The first was originally told by Mr Wild, who was an Excise man at Petworth, in the mid-18th century. One day just before Christmas, a man who Wild knew was associated with the local smugglers gave him a tip concerning one who the man had recently quarrelled with. Wild learnt that the following night this other smuggler would be walking along Parsonage Hill with two tubs of Hollands for The Mason's Arms, and the informant suggested that Wild and his family could use these during the festive season. So the next night, Wild hid in a ditch near Pond Mead and when, after about three hours, he saw the smuggler coming along with a sack that obviously had two tubs in it, he challenged the man and seized the tubs from him. However, as Wild later found out, during the long time he had been waiting to ambush the one smuggler, many others had taken 150 tubs of brandy and Hollands up through the town; and, on Christmas Eve, when Wild opened the tubs he had captured, they turned out to be just full of water.<sup>4</sup>

Another amusing incident occurred when a ship unloaded a coffin at Dell Quay. The coffin was detailed as carrying the body of a Sussex seaman whose dying wish had been to be buried in his home village; but it actually contained contraband, and once the coffin was safely loaded on a cart the whole cortege set off at a remarkable speed. A similar ruse was used at Shoreham once, but the smugglers were ambushed by Revenue men and all were killed, and afterwards their ghosts were sometimes seen near the churchyard, still carrying the coffin full of brandy and gin.

It was the custom of Excise Officers to dispose of any contraband spirits they seized by pouring it into the gutter. Once, at Horsham, when 2,000 gallons of rum, brandy and Geneva were poured being into the gutter, the street was immediately filled by a large crowd of people who had pots and pans and mugs and bowls, anything to catch the precious liquid in. There were adults of all ages, and even children too, drinking as much as they could. Soon all of them, very much inebriated, were staggering and falling all over the place, and fights began. By then, only about half of the spirits had been poured away, but the Excise men wisely decided to empty the rest out very early the next morning.<sup>5</sup>

Sussex smugglers first rose to prominence in the 13th century or earlier, when it became profitable to smuggle wool out of the country to France, and although the smuggling of spirits, tea, tobacco, lace, and other foreign goods into England later became the bigger and much more profitable business, the illegal export of wool out of Sussex continued at least until the end of the 18th century. These



*A Representation of a Smuggler's breaking open King's Custom House at Poole.*

An illustration from *Smugglers and Smuggling in Sussex*.  
Reprint by W. J. Smith: Brighton of the eighteenth century original.

smugglers who transported wool were known as 'owlers'.

As smuggling was so widespread and lasting in Sussex so some smugglers acquired semi-legendary status, and others were linked to the supernatural. A smuggler at Barlavington had a witch as his wife, and one at Albourne was the father of a witch. A long straight track in St. Leonard's Forest, was called Mike Mills Mile after the time when the Devil came to collect Mills and the smuggler challenged him to a race in order to save his soul. Mills won the race, and some believe he then became immortal. Michael Mills seems a quite common sort of name, but back in the 17th century in that part of Sussex the only man so named lived at nearby Amberley. A slightly more believable tale concerns a smuggler at West Grinstead whose horse was blind. The smuggler, by name of Downer, tied beef-steak soaked in brandy round the mouth of his horse's bit, which made it "go like wildfire and could do sixty miles a day." Downer and another smuggler, named Nailard, made a small fortune out of their trade, and then they drank themselves to death.<sup>6</sup>

Much of the alcohol that smugglers brought into this country needed to be diluted before it was fit for consumption – but not everybody was quite aware why this was so. On a night in 1794, some 10th Light Dragoons were returning to their camp near Shoreham when they surprised a group of smugglers landing a haul on the shore, and attacked them. One smuggler had his arm almost completely cut through and probably later died from his wounds. The 'crop' consisted of 500 tubs of Geneva, which were all captured. Two of the soldiers who found these tubs knocked one open, and drank so much that they collapsed and were unable to move far from the spot, and the next day were both found still lying on the beach, blind drunk. One of them shortly expired. A similar incident occurred at Littlehampton in 1798 when Revenue officers seized a consignment of tobacco and brandy, and after they opened one of the tubs to celebrate the capture, a Militiaman drank so inordinately that he "languished till the next night, and then expired" – as the Sussex Weekly Advertiser reported.

That newspaper regularly recorded seizures and fights with smugglers, and some of the descriptions of naval incidents are so detailed as to suggest that they were based on actual reports from the seamen involved. In April 1787, a Custom House cutter from Chichester chased a smuggling cutter so hard off Littlehampton shore that its crew were obliged to throw most of their cargo overboard in order to get away. The crop of about 200 casks of Geneva and brandy were taken to the Customs House at Chichester. Sometimes the smugglers were prepared for such interference though, and once when a Revenue vessel patrolling Chichester harbour attempted to intercept a smuggling cutter, another one came along, obliging the Revenue men to withdraw and just watch the proceedings

I have to admire the spirit of the smuggler though. The majority of them were just ordinary working men, farm labourers or tradesmen, whose meagre wages more or less obliged them to take on the dangerous work of smuggling just in order to sustain their families. Those who were hired to transport the contraband goods inland were paid five shillings a night, which was more than they earned in a week with their usual jobs. And although during the long war on smuggling in Sussex there were many casualties on both sides, and even among the civilian population, not all of the smugglers who lost their lives back then died in combat or dangling by their necks at the end of a rope. In October 1792 a boat with four Worthing smugglers in it was overturned in rough seas and all were drowned. That same year, a smuggler named Pentecost got lost one night in St. Leonard's Forest, and the next day he and his horse laden with four tubs of spirits were found drowned in one of the Hammer Ponds. And notwithstanding the fact that the killings of Daniel Chater, William Galley and others at the hands of smugglers were indeed dark episodes in the annals of Sussex smuggling, I think the following accounts are by far the saddest and most haunting.

On an icy cold night at the end of February 1791, a number of smugglers from a Thakeham gang rode down to the coast to collect a run. As they came near the beach, they got soaked when crossing through the mouth of a bourn, and then soaked again while unloading the waiting boats. On the way back, one of the men got so cold that he eventually dismounted and staggered to the nearest village, abandoning both his horse and the tubs, the movement bringing a little warmth to his limbs. His horse perished where he had left it. All of the gang suffered terribly from their wet clothes in the intense cold, and five of them succumbed to it before they reached their homes, and were found the next morning lying on different parts of Steyning Hill and in adjoining fields. Three of the deceased were from West Grinstead, one left a widow with four children, another had six children and his widow was pregnant with their seventh, and the other was a widower and so his two children became orphans. One of the other smugglers was only 20 and he fell almost within sight of his home. The other man was from nearby Ashurst and left behind him a widow and one child. Those of the gang who did get back were all very ill as a result of that terrible night, and it was feared that some of them would die too.<sup>7</sup> I have noted details about the families of the men who perished that night in order to emphasize the consequences of any fatalities that happened during smuggling runs. Another tragic incident took place in 1826, near the end of the golden age of smuggling when, as Mr William Durrant Cooper records in his article about Sussex smuggling: some "four or five hundred smugglers were killed whilst swimming the military canal at Pett-horse Race, having missed the spot where it was fordable."<sup>8</sup>

Not surprisingly, there are a number of ghosts in the county associated with smuggling. A phantom horse encountered near Slindon that gallops up the Down is said to be the ghost of a smuggler's horse. A headless horseman seen near Middleton is reputed to have been a smuggler, and in the attic of a pub in Hove ghostly smugglers sometimes appear, grinding snuff from tobacco.

Some smugglers were vicious thugs – that much is certain – but I sincerely doubt that the majority of them were so violently inclined. Many must have just been fathers and sons and brothers who only wanted to feed their loved ones. I hardly ever drink alcohol, but I do like a lot of tea and had I lived a couple of centuries ago, I'd have been somebody buying contraband from smugglers. Indeed I probably would have become a smuggler just in order to get a regular supply for myself and family and friends, and so on the whole I respect all those men who either amassed small fortunes or even gave their lives through working in 'the Trade'. I shall raise a glass to them all, and quote that ancient Sussex toast:

"May the smuggler's heart always be free of the pirate's spirit."

Shaun Cooper.

#### Notes and References

There are a number of books about smuggling that detail the Sussex scene and many articles in Sussex County Magazine also cover the subject, but on the whole these books and articles mostly concern East Sussex and mid-Sussex, as that is where most of the historical reports of Sussex smugglers come from. This was because the Coastal Blockade did not extend as far west as Chichester until the early 19th century, by which time the golden age of smuggling was actually coming to an end, and so there are far fewer historical reports of smuggling operations in Sussex anywhere west of the River Arun really. Much of the background information about Walter and his Plan is from Albery, but most of the specific incidents involving them come from notices in the Sussex Weekly Advertiser, which were republished in Sussex County Magazine. However, to reference every single tale and fact in the correct order here would take up way too much space. This list just gives my main sources.

1. *Tales of Old Petworth*. John Osborn Greenfield.
2. 'The Downland' by William Martin, in *Memorials of Old Sussex*. Ed: Percy D. Mundy. 1909
3. *Smuggling in Kent and Sussex 1700-1840*. Mary Waugh. 1985/1988
4. *Tales of old Petworth*.
5. 'Sussex Smugglers and Smuggling': six articles by William Albery in *Sussex County Magazine* throughout 1934.
6. Blind horse: ditto.
7. Frozen smugglers: *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*; see *Sussex County Magazine* 17 (1943): 46
8. Pett-race canal tragedy: 'Smuggling in Sussex' by William Durrant Cooper in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Volume X. Also included in a reprint edition of *Smuggling & Smugglers in Sussex* which book was originally published in 1749.

Chris Hare will talk to the Society on the Smugglers in April.

## Old Petworth traders (22). Charles Older

Olders in Angel Street were perhaps the quintessential old-type Petworth grocers and the name is familiar enough in the pages of this Magazine. Situated adjoining the present Ryde House it had in late Victorian times been a grain store belonging to the Milton brewing family. The invoice shown comes from the very beginnings in the 1890s. Competition was fierce in an insular town but, once established, Olders would be a part of Petworth life for some sixty years and more. In 1990 I wrote<sup>1</sup> "Still very much remembered in the town as continuing with the traditional paraphernalia of an old-time grocers into an age which wanted no such things, here at least until the 1960s were flour jars, biscuit tins and the smell of coffee beans."

*Tread Lightly Here* page 101.



Olders in about 1905.



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