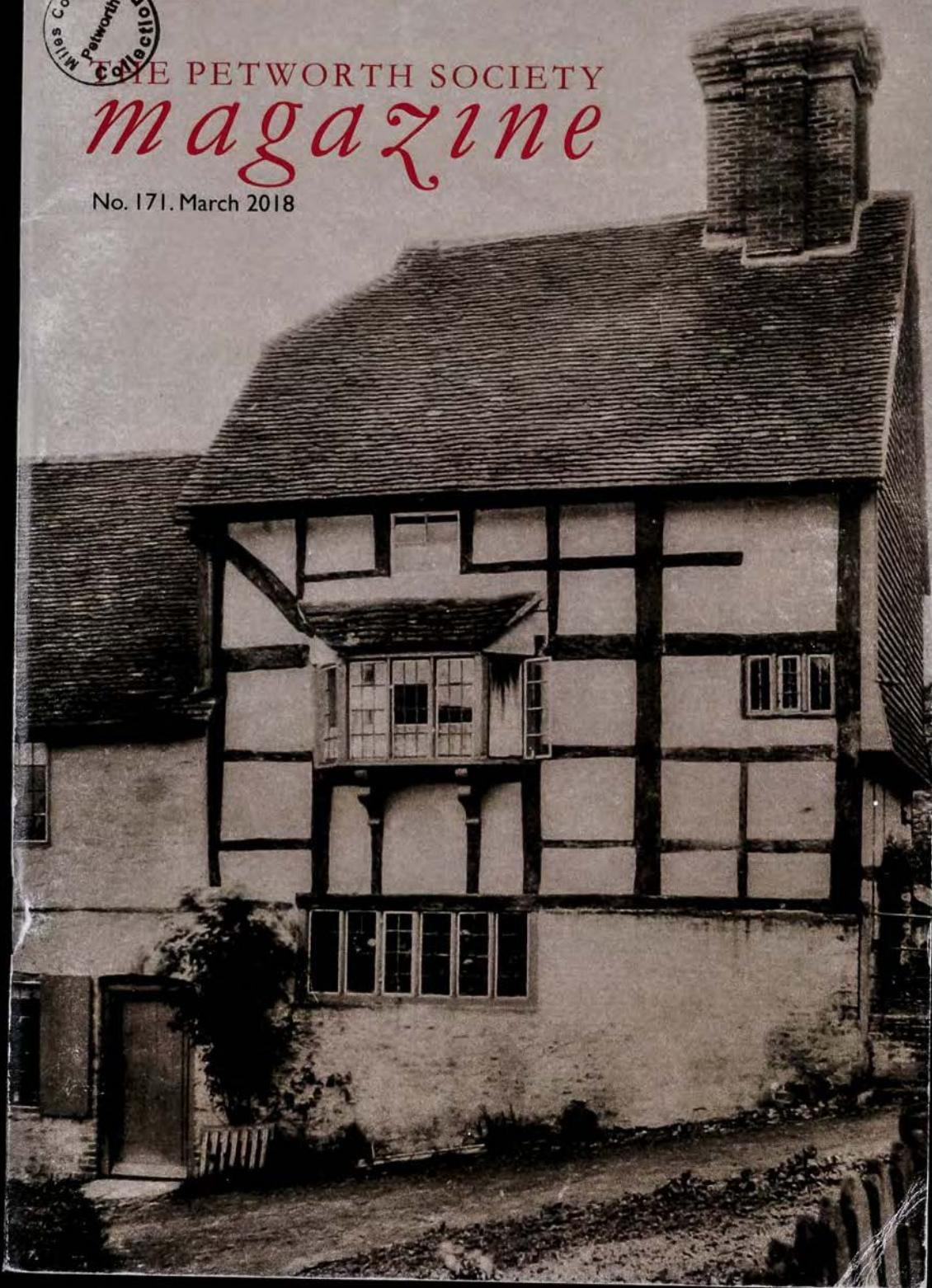


Miss Costello
Petworth
Collection

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
Magazine

No. 171. March 2018



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Nigel Flynn, the Society town crier, opens Petworth Fair as the Harris brothers make final adjustments to their Gallopers, 20 November 2017. Photograph by Ian Godsmark.

FRONT COVER

Seventeenth-century cottages in North Street, Petworth. Reproduced from W. Galsworthy Davie and E. Guy Dawber, *Old Cottages and Farmhouses in Kent and Sussex*, B. T. Batsford, 1900, plate 21.

BACK COVER

A hitherto unknown wood engraving by Gwenda Morgan. Its subject remains obscure but it was used as a bookplate in Gwenda's own copy of *Cranford* by Mrs. Gaskell. Reproduced courtesy of Chris Vincent.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

CONSTITUTION AND OFFICERS

The Petworth Society was founded in 1974 'to preserve the character and amenities of the town and parish of Petworth including Byworth; 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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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I have to tell you of some significant changes in the organisation of the Society. Mrs Celia Lilly will now be honorary treasurer while Mrs Gemma Levett has taken over as membership secretary and will join the committee. Please help her by being as prompt as you can with subscriptions. Gemma will attend the March and April book sales as will Mrs Lilly. Messrs Austens have again kindly agreed to receive subscriptions. Sealed envelopes please: Austens cannot give change or answer subscription enquiries.

Bexley Printers, who have produced the magazine since 2010 are leaving Petworth so the arduous task of preparing the magazine for publication will be taken over by Jonathan Newdick on the same basis. It has been a pleasure to work with John and Sally at Bexley and we wish them every success in their retirement.

This magazine is one of a series which stretches back to 1974. Ideally, successive issues reflect a distinctive Petworth tradition that takes account of those who once trod these ancient streets and do so no more, while at the same time looking to strike a chord with some at least of those who walk those same streets today. It is presumptuous to hope that some in the future will engage with these pages. I can say only that they are there.

Every small town has been moulded by its individual history: every small town has to adapt to change. No small town will comfortably reconcile the two. If I sometimes feel 'Can we have our Petworth back?' I am only one in a chorus of different voices.

Barton Lane or Bartons Lane? If the former is the preference of the residents there can be no quarrel with that. For many, however, the name Bartons for the road to the Bartons graveyard, consecrated in 1805 on the very eve of Trafalgar, will remain the preferred choice, the plural Bartons being found at least as early as the 1570s. Rather similarly, 'Round the hills' will, for Petworth people, still be popular parlance, following the usage of generations. I would once more plead for this area not to be littered with unnecessary and obtrusive signage: the urbanisation of Round the hills would strike at the very heart of Petworth's distinctive character.

CORRECTION

The photograph on page 31 of issue No. 170 was of William and Emily Sebbage's diamond rather than golden wedding.

Inside out – an alternative view of Petworth Fair

Miles Costello

It seems slightly surreal spending the afternoon and evening in the hall, after all, the proceedings are part of the fair but can equally feel quite separate from it. The cheap bunting hanging from the ceiling is bright and gaudy but hardly compares with the coloured lights outside. No music to compete with the canned tunes of the rides – perhaps something to be considered for another year. Indoors the weather is irrelevant and yet is everything to the showmen outside.



A colourful detail of Harris Brothers' Famous Southdown Gallopers at Petworth Fair.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.

Fortunately it appears to be quite mild. However, I turn the heating up; the hall can feel chilly even on the warmest day. I am of course concerned, will people turn up, what if the primary school choir are late, what if, what if? The date of the fair has always made success something of a lottery. Too late to catch the Indian summer and too early for the pre-Christmas frenzy. As the showmen call it, 'a back-end fair'.

Perhaps unwisely I had taken upon myself the task of helping to organise the entertainments for this year's fair day in the Leconfield Hall and had suggested a break with tradition from the usual charity stalls in the lower hall. My plan was to use the space to provide free children's entertainments, a decision not without its detractors, but one that I hoped would not only reduce the huge cost to the society of hiring both floors, but more importantly would break the cycle of sameness that had afflicted the event for many years. The theory behind the move was that if you can attract a generation of younger children to the fair then it may be possible to instil in them a sense of tradition, a practise of fair-going which hopefully they would grow up with and eventually pass on to their children. Of course the scheme is experimental and success far from guaranteed, which means of course that the result can be judged only at some time in the distant future.

I open the window shutters to allow the spirit of the fair to infuse the hall, only to be met by the sight of fairground trailers completely blocking any view. Best keep them closed if only for aesthetic reasons. The town crier (a greatly undervalued resource) mingles with the primary school children – 'Are you a pirate?' one asks? An elderly lady is disappointed at the absence of Father Christmas – have we ever had one? Punch and Judy, outrageously non-pc, bring howls of laughter from a packed audience. I am sure that there must be a moral to the story but it escapes me for the present. The humour is ageless as witnessed by Keith and Peter, who watch the performance, mouths agape, entranced by the eternal theme of good and evil.

Two shows of Punch and Judy and of course the recent addition of a magician. Do I detect a certain rivalry between the artistes? Unwarranted of course as each is a huge success. Face painting, once again an introduction, but I am told very popular. Evidently if I have my face painted it will encourage others to follow suit. Judging by the queue, my participation is hardly necessary but I settle, however, for a tastefully painted Christmas pudding on the back of my hand.

A straw poll among a few committee members declares the day a success. Any suggestions for next year would be appreciated. Perhaps something upstairs financed by other groups or a joint enterprise? Just a thought, suggestions welcomed.

Corridor of uncertainty – Petworth Fair 2017

Peter Jerome

I suppose the ancient office of portreeve or clerk of the market, transmuted into modern terms, has two basic functions: to preside over the town's annual fair and, in so doing, keep alive a tradition set in 1273 and dating back at least to 1189. In 1273 Petworth Fair was deemed to be from time immemorial: no one remembered its beginning. At one time the clerk received an endowment and had some civic duties, varying at different periods. The clerk might collect dues at regular markets, or act as town crier, Arch Knight still fulfilling this function as late as the 1930s. Now, except for a few formalities like applying for the necessary closure, and preparing a risk assessment for the Petworth Society back-up, the clerk isn't troubled from one fair to another.

The town's attitude to its ancient fair is equivocal. It can be fiercely defensive: it can be one of simple bewilderment. Reaction can depend on the weather, or stray into the illogical. 'It's good to see the fair in again. Of course I never go.' For the clerk the fair is a thirty-six hour visa into a corridor of uncertainty. What if a wayward articulated lorry ignoring, as some do, all warning signs, becomes ensnared on the Swan corner? It's not, of course, a problem unique to the fair or to the clerk of the market: any function that closes the market square and opens the cut to traffic has the same problem. Only two this year, one successfully negotiated early on, but here's a driver with limited English, obviously no stranger to Petworth's narrow streets but wishing he hadn't accepted the challenge of fair day. The imperturbable Robert Harris coaxes him nervously round.

'Corridor of uncertainty.' The clerk can never be complacent. One helpless eye will be on the vagaries of the weather. Think of last year: an indifferent day but then the Harris brothers taking down with the rain falling in cascades and a howling gale. A nery trip back to Ashington with high-sided vehicles and flooded roads. Or sitting with Fred Harris on the steps of Teelings in the Market Square. It's 2005 and it's a gloomy day. Who would anticipate that arsonists would torch the Gallopers? A disaster that might have broken the Harris brothers' bond with the town seemed to make it only stronger.

To return to 2017. Two of our metal signs have gone missing. Hardly casual vandalism – you'd need a cutter to remove them. Useless, one would think, unless to service some alternative Petworth Fair in a parallel universe. As ever, we end up with cars (two this year) illegally parked within the closure. There at eleven,

expected to leave at noon, still there at dusk. It's a Sunday mockery of the one hour limit. I've known one remain throughout the fair, engulfed in the equipment, and, for the day, irremovable. Miles has given the Society back-up an overhaul: the lower rooms at the Leconfield Hall are standing room only and there is clearly scope to be more ambitious next year. A vibrant town hall infuses the outside fair. Nigel the Society town crier gives the fair a rousing start and later tells me that a visiting aficionado of bells says that the bell is made (something of a tautology) of bell metal, bronze with a rich admixture of tin, while the cast iron clapper is a replacement. That's why the bell doesn't sit squarely to the ground.

Time to walk round and talk. Billy Benson's here today. I haven't seen him for a year or two but the refreshment stall always comes. Billy, The Harris brothers, Keith and I are all survivors of that first hesitant revival in 1986. Is it really our 32nd fair? Fred Harris later reflects that in the 1960s Mr Benson senior would spend days preparing for Petworth: think of logs and wedges for the sloping terrain. Harris Brothers were not part of the fair then but their Petworth credentials are impeccable. Had they not been retained for events like Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897?

The bungee trampoline seems to be doing well. Robert, who knows about these things, says there are long intervals while the gear is readied for the next set of customers. I never thought about that. Thirty years and the clerk's still learning.



A showman's engine at Petworth Fair in 1987. Photograph by Keith Sandall.

That's the way to do it!

The Petworth Society Christmas evening. Keith Thompson

One has to wonder if our Christmas evening had been billed as 'The history of Punch and Judy' what would have been the response?

It was a cold night, only a week before Christmas Day itself and the lift in the Leconfield Hall was out of action. But the poster said 'It's magic – Bertie Pearce entertains' and that was all that was needed to pull in fans from far and near.

No mention of Punch and Judy at the start – just the familiar remarks about the venue, certain characters present and previous engagements in Fittleworth, Midhurst etc., together with sleight of hand trickery, all of which immediately captured the attention of everyone, especially the youngsters, who became involved with the destruction of the *Daily Telegraph* and its restoration to its original pristine condition.

It was the *Daily Telegraph* which published a list of 'Englishness' in which Punch and Judy came twelfth. Every year there is a gathering of 200 Punch and Judy men in Covent Garden on May 2nd to commemorate Samuel Pepys' recording in his diary in 1662 of watching a Punch and Judy show. But the roots go back hundreds of years before that. There were buffoon actors in Roman times wearing masks which remind us of Punch today. Travelling players in Naples are recorded as featuring Punchinella, a dishonest miller. The universal clown character was adopted by countries all over Europe with their own versions. Punch was a string puppet, originally, and his wife, Joan (not Judy) was based on Mrs. Noah.

These were dark shows, performed for the upper classes, with the authority figures depicted as objects of amusement, but they became disaffected and the 'inferior' members of society responded to the appeal in huge numbers. Punch and Judy 'brought the house down' – down to the stalls from the bar up above when the performance resumed after the interval for refreshment.

New characters were added to the plays: a lover for Punch, a hangman and the beadle and, gradually, others more sympathetic, such as Joey the clown, the policeman, Toby the dog and, of course, sausages. *Punch* magazine was founded in 1841 with Mr. Punch on the front cover.

Then there is the swizzle, the curious device placed in the operator's mouth to produce the distinctive voices. Interestingly, Jonathan Cann, who brings his Punch and Judy show to Petworth on Fair Day, does not use a swizzle, which does make the dialogue easier to understand!

There had to be more tricks than banter. Peter, unsurprisingly, proved to be a difficult accomplice when it came to cutting up a length of rope with Debby's nail scissors. Bertie can always be relied upon to give the impression that a trick has gone wrong, only to prove, in spectacular fashion, that there is an unexpected climax.

Finally, there was the versatile hat, convertible to various forms of national dress, accompanying an apparently inexhaustible supply of six playing cards, demonstrating not only Bertie's amazing dexterity but his convincing command of foreign tongues.

He seemed to enjoy himself – we certainly did! That's the way to do it!

I've only got ten minutes

Notes from the Cottage Museum. Peter Jerrome

The Petworth Cottage Museum, tucked away in a road leading relentlessly out of the town's commercial centre, demands of its potential visitors a certain illogical perseverance, obstinacy almost. Something more than mild enquiry, a readiness to come to grips with that chameleon word 'museum'. In short, a willingness to arrive half expecting to be disappointed.

It's the last Saturday of the season. The museum's final opening will be on Tuesday. As so often, the range is scarcely lit before there's a knock at the door, hesitant as it usually is. My hands are still black with ash from the grate. I'm unwilling to wipe wet hands on the pristine white roller towel in the scullery. Is it for use or exhibition? I'm never quite sure. A husband and wife from Croydon, both 'in nursing'. The museum isn't quite what they were expecting: 346 High Street never is. They're going on to Petworth House, but once in the scullery, all thought of moving on seems to vanish. Almost immediately they are friends rather than visitors. The copper, the glass wasp-catcher, the stone sink, the empty bird cage, all work their usual spell but it's the smoke from the newly lit range that gives the seal of authenticity. They are almost reluctant eventually to leave the warmth of the kitchen to look upstairs.

The museum relapses into Saturday afternoon quiet. Saturdays can be busy, take on something of the character of a French farce, but not today. Visitors can have our individual attention. Sitting beside the glowing fire I look towards the green chenille table cloth set out for tea. A jar of gooseberry jam, idly, I think it should be green rather than red but 346's resident bushes, Whinham's Industry,

bear red fruit. For a good twenty-two years they've stood sentinel outside, winter and summer. The afternoon sun glints on the marbles on the solitaire board, not Mary Cummings' sort of thing, perhaps, but then winter evenings could be long and company unlikely. The gas lamps reflect in the mirror: twenty-two years almost and what once were disparate objects have become part of a familiar, almost vibrant team.

It's long past three o'clock and our visitors finally emerge from upstairs. They've been here well over an hour and spend a while writing in the visitors' book. The previous day someone had written that, having travelled to museums all over the country, 346 was the best. Overall or best of its kind? And with what might you compare 346? It's difficult to evaluate comments like this. I remember John Bligh of 'The Antiques Roadshow' saying much the same when he came to present us with the Pearson grandfather clock. Perhaps he was just being polite. I didn't think so at the time. Our visitors seem as reluctant to go as we are to part with them but there's another knock at the door.

'I've only got ten minutes.'

'I can't charge you £4 for that. It's a guided tour – longer than ten minutes.'

'What if I give you £2?'

'Let's put it in the box, not bother with a ticket. Why don't you just look round and ask me anything you like?'

'Oh, I just love this.' The extra £2 is pressed into my hand. 'This isn't a museum, it's my whole childhood re-lived. My grandmother's parrot with its baleful eye, glowering at our lettuce and tomato at tea time. He wasn't a very nice parrot. And Grandmother always refused to shut his cage door. He didn't like that. At most she'd put a blanket over his cage. Gas lamps, of course, and nettle wine but you had to pick the young tender shoots in early spring. And Christmas, an orange in a sock, a rolled-up comic and a little tin of Sharp's toffee.'

It's four o'clock already, and the conversation has become more general. Another quarter of an hour and our new friend is busy writing in the visitors' book and I glance at the previous visitors' entry: 'Best teleportation device ever.' Is teleportation a word?¹ Anyway, I know what they mean.

1. Teleport. Verb (especially in science fiction). Transport or be transported across space and distance instantly. *OED*, 2003.

Those that are never seen...

A new title from the Window Press

Readers of this magazine will be aware that for several years it has been the practice of The Window Press to produce a small local book, in a limited edition, usually of a hundred copies and individually signed and numbered. As the Press sells virtually at production cost there is no margin for bookseller's discount and the books are available only from the Press itself. Presentation is meticulous, the books carry no ISBN and are strangers to the internet. They do not re-appear at the monthly Petworth Society book sales.

Those that are never seen... seeks to examine life below stairs at Petworth House from 1880, but for the period from 1918 has the backing of interviews conducted in the 1980s and '90s which were featured from time to time in this magazine. Lady Egremont contributes a perceptive foreword. We have not this time produced a limited edition but the initial printing is of 100 copies, leaving open the possibility of reprinting. We would like local members, if they so wish, to have the opportunity of buying copies from the first printing and there is an order form on the enclosed Book Sales sheet.

Egremont's Countess

The late Sheila Haines, a longstanding Petworth Society member put an immense amount of work into researching the life of Elizabeth Ilive (her surname is variously spelled), sometime wife of the Third Earl of Egremont, and mother of several children by him. Sheila had already written extensively on the Petworth Emigration Scheme and on Thomas Sockett in collaboration with Leigh Lawson. For the present project Leigh enlisted Alison McCann with her unique knowledge of the Petworth House archives and Jonathan Newdick whose distinctive presentation skills are very much part of an impressive biography.

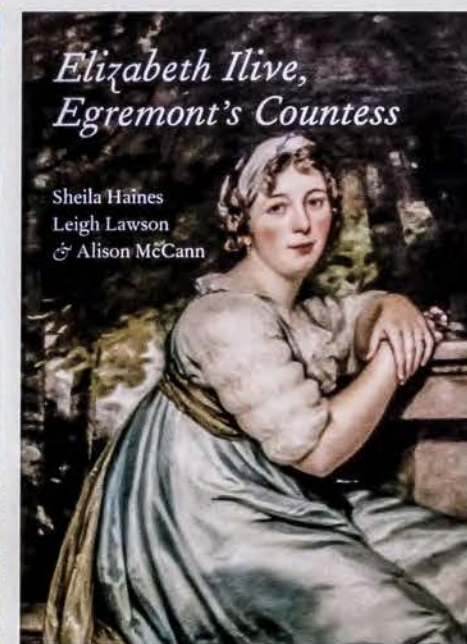
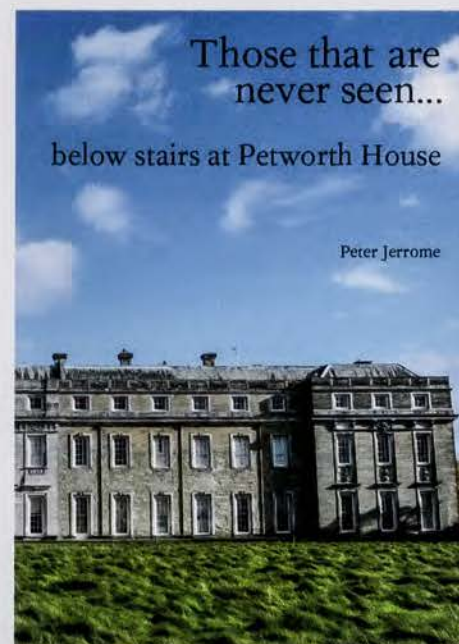
If the Third Earl of Egremont is a somewhat enigmatic figure historically this owes as much to his character as to the fact that much personal material pertaining to him was destroyed following his death in 1837. Hitherto, his consort Elizabeth has proved even more elusive and, to an extent, she still so remains. Certainly she was not an obvious partner for an immensely powerful and vastly wealthy

nobleman like Egremont, and important details of her early life remain resistant to research. Did she spend part of her early life in a London workhouse with her mother? Where did she acquire whatever education she had? Her father, a London printer, was in his sixties when she was born and seems to have played little part, while a somewhat feckless brother would be little help in later life. Elizabeth was not an actress or singer, sometimes a way into an aristocratic marriage. She would somehow meet Egremont while in her teens and quickly have several children by him, not all surviving, and she would be in her thirties before Egremont finally married her in 1801. The couple formally separated two years later, the suggestion being that Egremont's constant philandering caused the split.

The couple would never live together again; Elizabeth continuing in some style in London, although some contact remained. She died in 1822, well before the Earl himself, almost a generation older.

The book draws attention to Elizabeth's scientific acumen, almost unknown for a woman of her time and something encouraged with some reservation by the Earl. Her invention of a cross-bar lever would be awarded a silver medal by the Royal Society of Arts, while her work on the cultivation of potatoes was well in advance of her time.

It is a strange story and the authors have thrown as much light as they can



on this extraordinary woman. Much remains obscure. 'What is certain is that Elizabeth's connection with the Earl gave her the chance to exercise her intelligence and pursue the interests that she had' (page 105). Particularly attractive are the illustrations: much use being made of material from Petworth House Archives to reflect Elizabeth's dealings with various London commercial houses. Beautifully reproduced, they are very much a feature of the book.

Elizabeth IIve, Egremont's Countess (ISBN 978-1-9997421-0-2) is available from the National Trust shop in Petworth House and from the Petworth Bookshop. It is priced at £14.99.

Perryfields

I was living at Portsmouth during the war but had been brought up with my parents and three brothers at Perryfields, a remote settlement a mile or so up river from Rotherbridge Farm. Because of the bombing I came back with my two children to live at home with my parents. The settlement was two small cottages joined together with separate washrooms at the back and a bucket lavatory in the shed.

To get to Petworth we'd walk in line with the river to Rotherbridge, up the lane and on to Station Road. Groceries would be left at the farm for us to collect: Mr. Jarvis from Pound Street¹ delivered. Coal came the same way, left at the farm for my brother to bring up with the horse and cart. Mr. Whitney at the farm was always very helpful.

Our neighbours at Perryfields were Mr. and Mrs. White. Water had to be fetched from a pump, reached by walking across a field. My father didn't work for Mr. Whitney but as a gardener at Gore Hill, Byworth. There was a bridge over the river at Perryfields (now replaced) and I remember it being closed off once a year and padlocked. For that day no one could go over it: I think it was something to do with the Leconfield Estate.

Perryfields was lonely but there were more people walking about in those days. Yes, we'd go shopping in Petworth but it was a long way. Mum and I would walk in with the pram. The copper had to be filled with water and the washing left out on the line to dry. It was possible to cross the bridge to Cathanger, over the railway line, and walk up the lane and into Graffham but I can't say I ever did this. There was a huge garden running along the river. When Perryfields was demolished about 1970 the garden was taken back into the farm.

¹The shop is now a Chinese takeaway. Jane McFarlane was talking to the editor



Three silverpoint drawings made by Jonathan Newdick in the barn at Perryfields: carpenter's marks on a post and brace by the north door, and two hinges which once held the same door.



A Blockhouse called Dryazell

The December Book Sale

Books coming into the monthly sale usually have no obvious history. The flood of paperback novels is resolutely anonymous: read once and passed on. Occasionally an older book suggests otherwise. A pencilled note of price, decimal or otherwise will indicate a change of owner; there may even be a name, an address, a gift inscription or a school prize plate: '3rd prize (equal), English session 1920-1.' 'How we baffled the Germans, the exciting adventures of two boys in South West Africa. Four colour plates. Nelson's Library for Boys.'¹

If the 1914-18 war can be seen as a clash of European powers, it would be fought over a wide area and German South West Africa (now Namibia) was a long way from the Western Front and the mud of the trenches. The terrain, however, if different, could be equally unforgiving, a barren landscape of 'kopjes', low mounds of sand, pointed or flat-topped, and in the 'rainy season' prone to stifling heat, heavy rain, and, illogically, periods of severe drought. A wilderness broken only by the occasional 'blockhouse', concrete or wooden, one appropriately called 'Dryazell'; and 'outspan', isolated patches of rough grazing.

It's 1914 and news of the outbreak of war in Europe reaches the farm where Jimmy Walch and Freddie Moore are working for Stein, a bullying German farmer. Memories of the Boer War will be fresh, attitudes probably ambivalent: understandably, the author does not expand on this. Stein is implicated in a plot to annex part of the Union of South Africa and incorporate it in a German client state, Stein's two former employees playing a role in frustrating him. The two 'boys', actually in their late teens, are introduced without preamble and remain essentially cyphers to reflect the adventures to follow. The plot develops with a number of set piece episodes that look forward to the later Biggles stories. Often separated as they are, coincidence, reasonably disguised, brings the boys together from time to time. The author, clearly himself well-acquainted with the background, has to explain the unfamiliar setting to his young readers. A map would perhaps have helped.

If the book is very much of its time, it is in this that its interest lies. In a sense it reflects a vein of post-1918 triumphalism that blends uneasily with the stark horror of the war years. The 'clear eyed, bright faced' Jimmy and Freddie grow

Opposite: 'It was a foolhardy thing to do to race for the blockhouse in full view of the approaching horsemen' – a typical full-page watercolour illustration from *How we baffled the Germans*.



up rather too quickly in a 'kill or be killed' world. The author seems half aware of this and makes a token effort to soften the transition. Knowing of a German train hurtling towards a broken section of rail, Jimmy struggles with his conscience to light a warning – only to discover that his altruism has saved his own comrades. Unknown to him, Freddie Walsh had hijacked the train.

Some of the dialogue would be impossible in the 21st century. 'Good egg', the indispensable 'by Jove', 'cut along', 'waiting in a fume' or the enigmatic 'by the Lord Henry'. 'Put the kybosh on' is a survivor. As so often in the literature of the time, tobacco is a staple. After a desperate trek through the dunes Corporal Venter's first words are 'Have you got a smoke?' Seconds later he is 'puffing very happily'. Freddie Moore is still young enough to wonder about the corporal's sense of priorities. The war itself has an almost beguiling innocence, bloody as it often is. A solitary German, flying in a big biplane breaks the monotony by his regular early morning sorties over the camp. 'Before the sun was well up because his engines were not powerful enough to carry him far when the sun was blazing at full power.' Jimmy and Freddy are left at the end waiting for passage to Europe to fight 'for the Empire that stands for freedom and justice.'

1. Eric Wood, probably 1919.

Very dangerous

This article by Harry Burgess and the following two form a postscript to those in *PSM* 169, (September 2017)

At the beginning of the war we started to see dogfights between the English and German planes, as we were living just behind the South Downs so we regularly heard gunfire and explosions. I first started school at Henfield where my father worked on a farm so my brother and I were excited to see concrete gun posts and concrete road blocks being set up on the main street. At that stage the air raid warning was given by a bell on the steamroller being driven down the main street.

We lived approximately two miles from the school, sometimes having to be carried over the floods by my father to get there. An incident that happened when my mother, my brother, my sisters and I were out picking blackberries in late summer was that a German fighter plane came over very low and was firing a machine gun at us. We all jumped into a ditch and were fortunate not to be hit by the bullets. In September 1940 the farm was sold so my father got a job in

Petworth. The house was at Gunters Bridge, about two miles from Petworth itself, the farm where my father worked about half a mile further on. My eldest sister had left school so she worked there too in the dairy and looked after the calves. My younger sister and I went to the infants' school; my eldest brother who was ten years old at the time went to Petworth Boys' School.

By this time we were seeing more war planes, which my brother taught me the names of such as English Spitfires, Hurricanes, Flying Fortresses and Lancasters; and German planes like Junkers 88s and Messerschmitts. Often they were chasing each other in dogfights. Tangmere Aerodrome was not too far away so we could always hear them day and night taking off when there was a raid on.

War rationing had started so I sometimes walked into Petworth with my mother and queued for food. My father joined the Home Guard even though he worked long hours with the cattle. One incident he told me of was crawling up an embankment in Petworth Park with the Army firing live bullets between them as practice. At this stage there was a build-up of many soldiers, mostly Canadian and English getting ready for D-Day. There was a large camp in Petworth Park and another in the woods opposite the farm where my father and sister worked, the soldiers using some of the fields as a firing range and for mortar firing.

When we were not at school my brother and I spent a lot of time with the soldiers, for instance they often marched in columns with a band on the road past our house so we would join in behind them marching and march with them to their camps. In the camp close to where my father worked they seemed to welcome the local children, letting us sit in their lorries and giving us peanut butter sandwiches and sweets. I remember one time when we were getting in a lorry to just sit at the front when my young sister got her finger badly bruised in the door, I think it was my fault.

There was plenty of rifle and mortar practice going on in the fields which we were able to watch and hear. When the soldiers left the fields my brother and I would go in and find the empty shells and mortars. Most of these were empty blanks but we were able to find a number of live blank bullets, as well as a few live ones that weren't blanks! My brother would pick some of these up to take home with us where he would then show me what to do with them. There were three things we could do.

Either go across a field to an old barn where he would open them up and empty the cordite out in a trail across the floor with a heap at the end. He would then light the beginning of the trail which would quickly blaze along the length and ending in a small explosion at the end. Very exciting to me! Or he would jam one of them in a gatepost and with a nail, hammer or stone he would fire the bullet. Very dangerous! Or he would light a small fire and drop the bullet in, then run like

hell! You can see why I looked up to him as my hero.

My brother also taught me things about the countryside; birds nesting was one as egg collecting was allowed in those days. Petworth Park had one large lake near the road but we could not get in because of the wall so he showed me how to. The lake had an overflow that ran through a pipe under the wall and road coming out into a small stream. The pipe was large enough for us to crawl through which we did, coming out near the edge of the (very private) lake. I often wondered what would have happened if they had decided to lower the water level which they could have done while we were in the pipe, it was a long pipe.

Harry Burgess's brother died in the school bombing. (See PSM 169, September 2017).

29th September 1942

It was a drizzly September morning in Hampers Green and I remember my mother calling out that I had left my handkerchief behind. Men had been working on the school roof and, sitting at my desk, I idly watched a few particles of dust falling. Perhaps the men had come back. Hardly time for the thought to register. I'd glimpsed a plane flying low over the school, the window being strapped to prevent splintering. 'It's a Jerry,' I thought, or perhaps muttered to the boy next to me in the double desk. I can't remember who. Miss Weekes, the junior school mistress shouted for us to make for the wall on the eastern side but there was no time before the roof fell in. All in a split second. I cannot recall any sound. Curiously the east wall remained standing.

I was trapped under a beam and couldn't move, except for my fingers which I waggled about trying to attract attention while I shouted, or rather squawked for help. I was seven. It seemed hours before I heard a voice say 'There's one here.' I can still hear it. Jack Townsend, the postman and Augustini, a Canadian from the camp were pulling the wreckage off me and my mother was looking anxiously on. I knew Augustini from parties given to the local children by the Canadians and would know him well afterwards. I was soon on a stretcher, put into an army ambulance van and taken to the Red Cross in East Street, then on to the Royal West Sussex Hospital at Chichester. As I remember, Terry Lucas was there too. Other boys were sent to Petworth Cottage Hospital. I was kept in for a week.

Reg Withers.

It was so sudden that I can remember virtually nothing. I was knocked unconscious and in hospital for several months, eventually going away to recuperate. I do know that several people left the town in the wake of the bombing – they simply couldn't bear to keep passing the site.

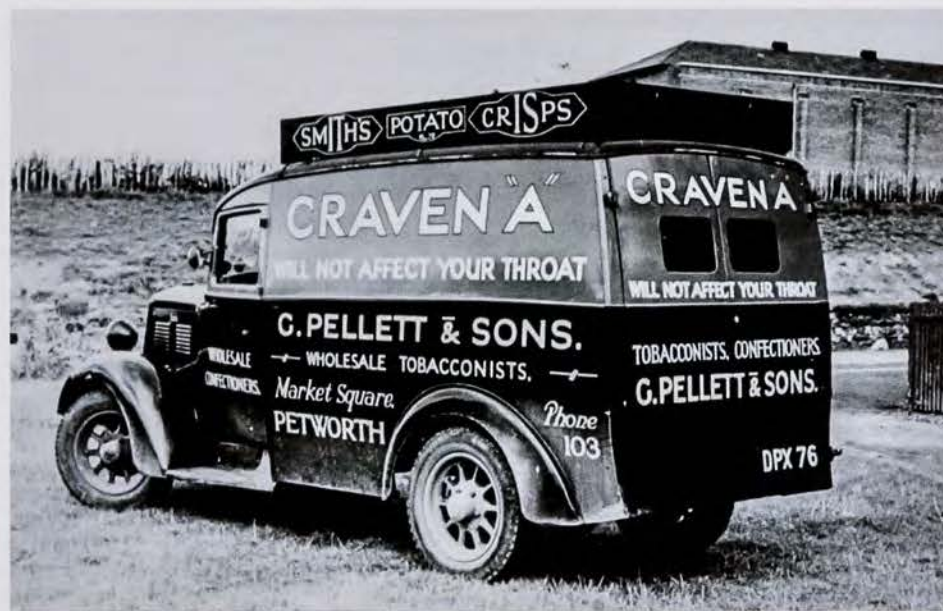
Peter Carver.

Reg Withers and Peter Carver were talking to Janet Duncton and the editor.

Hot lunch or packed meal?

Sue Wass (née Pellett)

When the bombs fell on the boys' school in 1942 it made our house at North End temporarily uninhabitable. My parents Reg and Sue Pellett ran G. Pellett & Sons, a wholesale and retail tobacconist and confectioners. My Uncle Albert, a partner in the firm, was in the army. The shop lay between Bowyers the chemists



A wealth of signwriting on G. Pellett & Sons' delivery van in 1938. Photograph by George Garland.

on the corner of Market Square and Austens the ironmongers. It would continue as 'Pelletts' for years.

My maternal grandfather ran a garage at Heath End to the south of the town and I went to live with my grandparents for a while, becoming a pupil at Dunton school. My parents boarded firstly at the Star public house in Market Square before moving to Heath End while our rented North End property was being repaired.

Much to my dismay I did not go to the East Street Girls' School and was thus separated from my former friends at the infants' school. Instead I went to North End School, a short distance south of the Mason's Arms. Reading the memories of packed lunches in *PSM* 169, I think the fact that the school provided a hot lunch influenced my parents, an aunt who had been living with us at the time of the bombing no longer did so. The school building was formerly housed in the Petworth Workhouse.

After the bombing I heard that Nazi propaganda claimed that the laundry chimneys adjacent to the school had suggested a factory. It was only much later when I visited the communal graves that the effects of the bombing on the town came home to me. Much was kept from me, as it was from other children and I knew nothing of the role of Canadian soldiers on the day, or of the funeral procession. I see the Petworth Society's September magazine as a memorial to those who died, survivors, bereaved, rescuers and to the devastation caused by war.

The Old Rectory, Tillington

Annabelle Hughes

When the pluralist James Stanier Clarke arrived at Tillington in 1816 to take up his position as rector, he clearly did not think that the accommodation came up to scratch, especially not for a man who had been appointed in 1799, as 'chaplain to the [royal] household' and six years later as librarian to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent. This in spite of the fact that in 1724 the 'mansion house and outhouses' had been 'in good repair.' But then, the rectors during the intervening century had been career clergy with several irons in the fire at once, and who probably spent little time in the parish, leaving the pastoral work to their curate. At least two had also been rectors of petworth, which offered a much more attractive 'tied' residence.

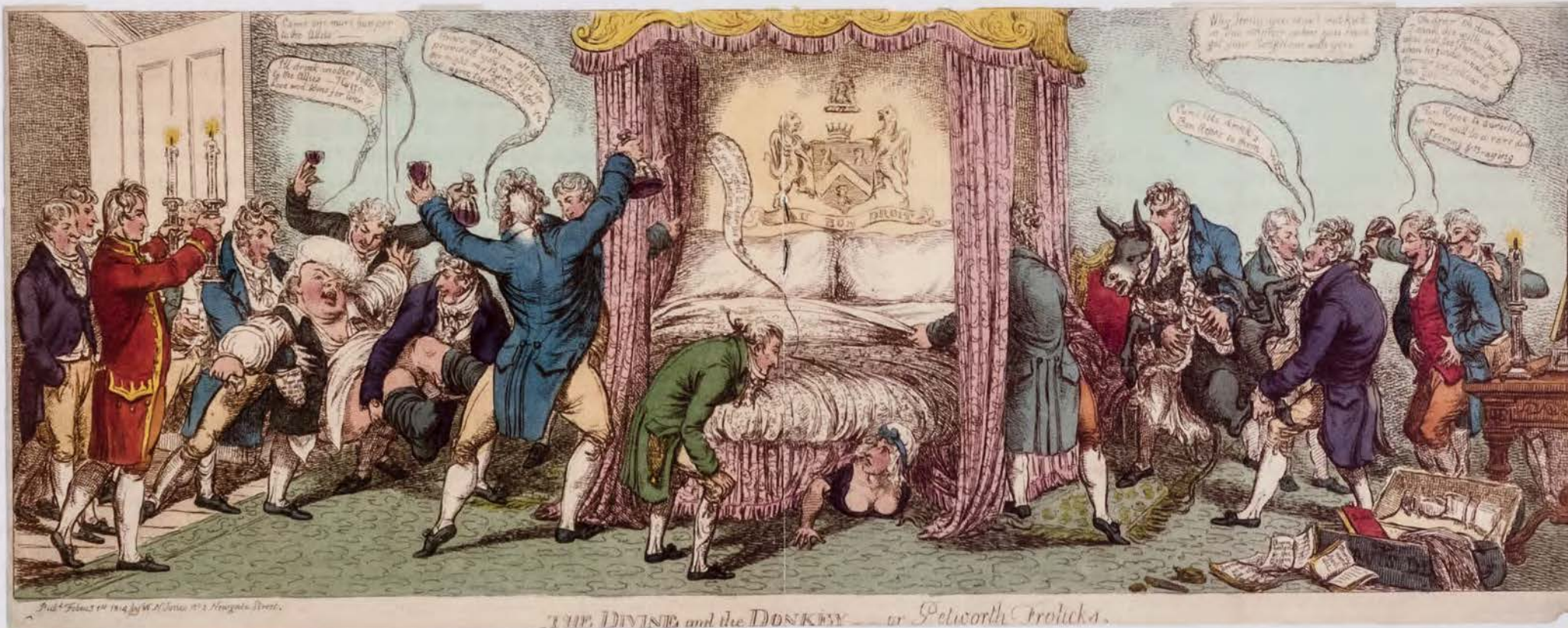
Clarke's entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, together with a decent portrait, suggests a pretentious and smug young man, and this is backed up by

the story of his brush with true greatness. The prince ordered Clarke to show Jane Austen around the library on one of her visits to London, and in subsequent correspondence he suggested that she write an historical romance based on the house of Coburg, or use a version of himself as the subject for a future novel, as 'a clergyman who divided his time between the metropolis and the country, fond of & entirely engaged in literature – no man's Enemy but his own.' This prompted her to write a parody to amuse her family – 'Plan of a Novel According to Hints from Various Quarters' – not published until after her death. Perhaps he did give her the basis for Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*! The *DNB* is scathing about Clarke's own literary efforts, describing his *Life of King James II* as 'a servile attempt to portray James II in heroic colours', and his *Life of Admiral Lord Nelson* as 'a work badly written, with letters and documents garbled to suit his ideas of elegance, and hearsay anecdotes mixed indiscriminately with more authentic material.' Another reference must be worth further research: 'A drunken prank played on Clarke by the Prince Regent and his circle was the subject of a scurrilous print 'The Divine and the Donkey – or Petworth Frolicks' (1814). The print is reproduced on pages 24-5.

When a colleague and I were surveying the early buildings in the parish, we had to set aside the Old Rectory at Tillington, now divided into several occupations, as there was nothing about it that particularly caught our eyes. However, we were pressed to view some curious internal features, so recently made a long-delayed preliminary visit. Although it still seems to be largely outside our remit, apart from a rear wing which needs a closer look, investigations at the Record Office, as ever, have turned up some intriguing material.

Within a year of Clarke's appointment the finances and plans were in place for a comprehensive rebuilding, costed at over £3,000. The architect/surveyor was London-based H. E. Kendall, and his drawings, schedule of works and many of the tradesmen's bills survive among the episcopal papers at Chichester. A year after Clarke's marriage in 1824, Elizabeth Gibson of Sandgate, near Storrington, whose sketch books are held by the Record Office, made some competent pencil drawings of the Rectory, one of which was worked up into a water-colour, recently offered on-line for sale. These need studying more closely in relation to the existing building. Clarke's portrait monument (1834) is on the north wall of the parish church.

While there does seem to be a reasonable explanation for the eighteenth-century deterioration of the building, it is more difficult to account for the records of extensive 'repairs and refurbishment' dated to 1840-42, also in the episcopal archives. Was Kendall's building so shoddily constructed that Revd Robert Ridsdale, who had moved from Northchapel, felt this was necessary after a mere twenty-six years?



'The Divine and the Donkey – or Petworth Frolics', reproduced here courtesy of the British Museum, London.

This cartoon by C. Williams was first published by W. N. Jones at 5, Newgate Street, London on 1st February 1814 and it appeared in the satirical magazine *The Scourge* in that year. When reproduced in black and white in this magazine (No. 128, June 2007) the following text accompanied it: 'The Prince Regent and his friends are portrayed as playing an elaborate and boisterous joke at the expense of the then Rector of Tillington [James Stanier Clarke], himself no stranger to the Prince.'

Reading from left to right the text in the speech balloons is as follows:

'I'll drink another bottle to the Allies – Huzza love and wine !!'

'Come one more bumper to the Allies!'

'Bravo my Boy – we have provided you with an Allie for the night my Buck. I hope you will agree together'

'What Margery – did you want to hear the News from the doctor's lips'

'Come let's drink a Bon Repos to them'

'Why Jenny you must not kick in this manner when you have got your Bedfellow with you'
Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall die with laughing! What will the Parson say when he finds what a strange bed fellow he has got'

'Bon Repos to ourselves for there will be a rare duet of snoring & braying'

The spelling and punctuation is unchanged from the original.

Caring for a Brownian landscape

Martyn Burkinshaw

As Landscape Manager for the National Trust at Petworth I have two responsibilities involving what are, in effect, two quite different disciplines. I might almost say my job description is Head Ranger for the Park and Head Gardener for the Pleasure Grounds. Here I am looking to discuss the part relating to Petworth Park. At a later date we may return to the Pleasure Grounds.

In the Park we are operating within the terms of the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement signed in 2014. The HLS is an agreement between the National Trust and Natural England (government conservation agency) to act to conserve the land for its wildlife and historic value. This has the effect of binding the Trust, as landowner, to a set of legal stipulations regarding conservation in return for aid in completing work in the form of grants. The grants are a great boon to the property as we are able to complete vital conservation work which we might not otherwise be able to afford but it does restrict what we can and cannot do within the park. For example, we do not drive vehicles in the park unless for the purposes of undertaking management of the park. Obviously we have to use vehicles in our work but travelling across parkland of national importance has to be justified. Sometimes we have to transport heavy equipment such as excavators; we must always be ready to justify such potential damage to a fragile landscape against the necessity to do works to maintain them; in these cases we must apply for special permission. A similar situation exists for park events where permission must be sought. To the layman some restrictions may at first appear illogical, for instance we are restricted in the usage of fires to dispose of small timber and brash from trees. The reason for this restriction is that ash improves soil nutrient value. Soil improvement may not be in the interest of the grasslands because many wildflowers can only flourish in impoverished soil as it reduces the competitive nature of the grasses that would otherwise swamp them.

There are other restrictions within which we work, for example the Forestry Commission for permission to fell trees in the park, the Environment Agency for water quality and reservoir safety, Historic England and the local planning authority for any works which may affect the listed landscape or listed buildings. All of the works described below have been carried out between January 2017 and October 2017.

As a conservation charity, the Trust acts in accordance with best practice for

conservation whether historical or wildlife. For example, controlled felling of trees is something that can be a very emotive subject but is also very necessary. An operation we carry out regularly is the 'thinning' of areas of tree plantation, mostly in areas overplanted after the 1987 storm. Thinning means the reduction in the amount of trees within an area and is done in order to give the retained trees more space in order to grow. Trees growing too close together results in very straight elongated trees, which is great for timber production but restricts individual trees. In the park we have over 700 Ancient and Notable Trees and we hope that young trees we have today may join these ranks in the future. Another side effect of trees grown in dense plantations is that they are more vulnerable to the effects of wind. The lead tree in direct wind might be strong but, once that one falls the other trees which were protected from the winds are more likely to fall. But, by thinning trees out, we can expose them to more wind stress and allow them hopefully to grow a little stronger. The situation is similar with the islands on the lake; self-sown alders and silver birch, protected from the direct force of the wind, were potentially at risk and in severe conditions would keel over and take the stone edging and the islands' soil with them.

Returning to the HLS: work on the lake began in January 2017, coppicing the islands followed by an application of Phoslock, the commercial name for a puddled clay so treated that it does not expand when exposed to water but instead attacks excess phosphate in the water. Once the Phoslock has attacked the phosphate it sinks to the bottom of the lake and holds the nutrient in the silt layer. Not a permanent solution but offering the chance for the lake water to recover from years of pollution and for us to work to improve the condition of the lake for the future. A lot of the phosphate comes from the faeces of the geese which can grow to immense numbers on the lake in the summer months but we also have to think of more historical pollutants. Nitrogen (another pollutant) may trace back to the park's wartime use. An old cesspit may be leaking into the water of the Tillington Tunnel causing nutrient issues which need to be addressed. A decrease in the excess of phosphate in the lake has already led to a decrease in the amount of algal activity in the lake and in 2017 there was no algal bloom. A further measure has been the introduction of 24 metal gabions purposed as wildlife refugia, filled with the brash that has been created in the felling of the islands and sunk into the lake to act as a home for zooplankton (very small animals) and fish fry. The cages are more numerous towards the deeper southern end and care must now be taken when on the lake that our outboard motor keeps clear of them.

Control measures have not been implemented regarding geese but efforts have been made to estimate numbers. A rough approximation is 400 Canada geese and the same number of greylag geese on one day in late August 2016. There

On a dull winter's day smoke rises from bonfires during clearance work on the islands on the Upper Pond. These were the last islands to be completed.



appears to have been a slight decline in numbers in 2017 where the most recorded at any time was approximately 100 Canada and 200 greylag. Greylag geese are a protected species whereas Canada geese are officially designated as a pest species. We have trialled a couple of humane deterrents to try to scare the geese away with no success. Sonic repellents have been tried, broadcasting distressed goose noises to scare geese away without success. Laser repellents have also been trialled. However, the birds were not fazed by the laser but, rather humorously, the longer we stood at the lake testing the laser, the more geese and ducks came over to see what we were up to. The geese are, in Petworth terms, 'nomadic', roosting in the surrounding lakes and watercourses and seemingly are knowledgeable about the times when visitors are more likely to be in the park. In my office at the House I can hear when they arrive, flying over in time for 10 o'clock in the morning. One of the reasons they are likely to be attracted to Petworth will be due to some visitors feeding them bread, a standard British pastime. However, bread isn't a natural foodstuff for geese or ducks, having a very low nutritional value to the birds beyond a sugar rush. The RSPB have produced a much more nutritious feed which you can feed to waterfowl instead of bread which is better for them and can be bought online. Obviously though, for our purpose of looking after the lake, we would prefer that our visitors didn't feed the geese at all so as not to encourage them. Though numbers of geese decreased in 2017 we will be monitoring their numbers going forward.

Much of our attention in 2017 was given to the repair of the Tillington Tunnel. This is one of the major water sources of the Upper Pond and is essential to the management of the water quality of the lake. The tunnel is fed by springs which rise where there is a join between the sandstone and clay-based bedrocks in the park. The tunnel captures this water and directs it towards the Upper Pond via the two stew ponds adjacent to it. Four years ago the tunnel collapsed in a section where the sandstone tunnel joined on to a brick-lined section. There was a weakness in the tunnel wall caused by a build-up of water behind it. Many regular visitors in the park may remember the heras fencing which surrounded the sink hole that resulted from the collapse. Repair works were undertaken in 2017 with extensive excavation of the collapsed materials and walls and then the rebuilding of the walls and roof of the tunnel. This has had a crucial effect on the water quality of the tunnel as it has reduced the amount of silt (from the collapse) entering the lake and improved water flow rates. Contrary to popular legend the conduit was not built as an escape route for the great house.

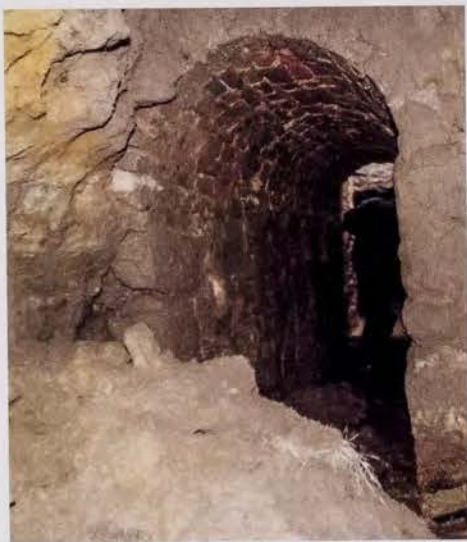
The lake is, of course, not a natural feature at all; it is entirely man-made and it is not our prerogative to represent it otherwise. As a major feature in the designed landscape we are doing our best to restore it to its full glory. The marginal edges

were originally clearly defined with granite stone pitching. By October last year works to repair the stone pitching across 25 per cent of the circumference of the lake were completed. The islands too, are made in much the same way as the lake edges with stone pitching. Works to repair the stone pitching around the lake will be ongoing in the years to come as we work to address the damage caused by the pressure of past cattle, vegetation growth, and visitors throwing stones. Luckily for us, the stones which had been thrown into the lake were able to be recovered, cleaned, and reused in our repair works. Allied with this work has been the repair to the historic boat-house of the Upper Pond. The sides of the boat-house were being undermined by the wave actions of the pond as the stone pitching by it had fallen through. This undermining was threatening the foundations of the boat-house; on one side the undermining extended to 1.5 metres under the side of the boat-house. Remedial works have been carried out with the stone pitching to repair the building and ensure that the structure is stable. Works were hampered by the discovery of a brick-kiln underneath the boat-house. The brick-kiln is in surprisingly good condition considering that it has been used as the foundation for the boat-house. We called in archaeologists to record and take samples of the kiln for testing to see if there was a correlation between it and Henry VIII's hunting lodge on Lawn Hill. We are awaiting the results now.

Other works we completed last year include the installation of a number of scrapes in the park. Scrapes are shallow depressions in the ground which collect water during the wetter months of the year and act as a haven for wildlife. They are important for many invertebrates and spawning amphibians which, by extension, makes them an important food source for birdlife and batlife (of which we have 16 of the 18 UK species). These scrapes, being wetter than the surrounding land, change the very local vegetation that surrounds them to make them more amenable to rushes and sedges which act as cover for birds and invertebrates too.

Finally, floating pennywort, an invasive North American water plant, is present in the Upper Pond. It is a very difficult plant to work with as it creates vast mats of vegetation which outcompete our native water flora. The plant has very shallow roots, only 1 to 5 centimetres deep and part of its strategy for dispersal is to create a mat of vegetation and, in strong wind conditions, detach from the bank and float across to another bank in order to set down new roots. Floating pennywort is a very tenacious invasive species and though aquatic, can survive for four years out of water, during which time it might be picked up and dropped back into the water by any passing animal or human. You can see some of the floating pennywort in the silt which was dredged from the edges of the Upper Pond. Here it is growing with the grasses and sedges which surround the pond, though not as successfully as in water. We are seeking permission to use a

Below. The collapsed Tillington tunnel on the left and, on the right, the tunnel after being rebuilt. Bottom. The commercial puddled clay, Phoslock, being applied on the Upper Pond. Photographs by Martyn Burkinshaw.



herbicide to control and reduce the presence of this plant which, if left unchecked, can cause vast amounts of damage to watercourses. Last year, in order to ensure that we were able to work on the stone pitching and undertake dredging, we had to drop the levels of the lake. As a result the pennywort had a much harder time, which is why no herbicide was applied. We also have another invasive species in the lake, which is a sweet flag iris. Although this has been in the UK for a couple of hundred years and can be considered 'naturalised', in the Upper Pond it causes an issue as it also outcompetes native flora, in this case mostly because the geese find it unpalatable compared to truly native flora. The aim for the management of flora around the lake will be to reduce the invasive species and reintroduce species which have been lost to the lake. There will always need to be a certain amount of vegetation within the lake in order to help filter the water to improve its quality and also to act as a habitat for the invertebrates (such as dragonflies), fish, and zooplankton which live in the lake. It is possible that there may need to be another Phoslock treatment in the future to help keep the water quality good but, ideally by fixing the inputs to the lake, we may be able to negate the need for this.

Of Sheila Kaye-Smith and Easter Eggs

Shaun Cooper

'It has been Sheila Kaye-Smith's virtue to make her novels timeless. She deals in timeless things, the soil, trees, rivers, corn, food, and drink. She has timeless themes, birth, death, love, jealousy, patience, maternity, friendship. But best of all, she is a creator of a little world. If there is one certain passport for a novelist towards immortality, I think it is this – that in these books is created a world with its own towns, streams, roads, hills, farms and ancient houses, a world whose citizens have a cosmic life of their own, a life related to other worlds but coloured uniquely in their own colour.'

This quote by Hugh Walpole, in 1928, is on the back cover of a recently published biography of the author, *The Shining Cord of Sheila Kaye-Smith*. She was known as a Sussex writer, perhaps the best who ever wrote about the county, the author of more than thirty novels, most of which are set amongst the fields and farms of the Sussex weald or that of Kent. Her novels were translated into many different languages and read all around the world. She also wrote a few non-fiction books, including two about Jane Austen, as well as three collections of poetry, many short

stories, and articles for various newspapers and magazines of the day. Some of her stories were adapted for the stage, and one of her novels was made into a film.

Quite early in her childhood she decided to become a writer, because she wanted to be able to convey to other people the beauty of the Sussex countryside she loved so much. Yet she was not satisfied with just randomly making up fictitious villages and farms, she wanted to use real Sussex names, and so she researched the county's history and its industries, learnt all she could about farming and hop-growing, made copious notes about the way the country folk talked, their dialect and provincialisms, and studied the flora, the beliefs and local customs, and everything else she needed, in order to produce authentic country stories set in her beloved Sussex. Most of her fiction is set in periods which were, back then in her lifetime, in the past, and this gives her rural romances a wistful and nostalgic quality which, along with the occasional drawl of Sussex speech from some handsome farmer or the squire's hoydenish daughter, is very appealing to those of us who love this land we live in yet can't help looking back to a golden time, long ago, when it was more peaceful and there were fewer machines.

Susan Spray, for example, more properly known as *The History of Susan Spray the Female Preacher*, is set in the last half of the 19th century. When the farm he works on changes owners, Susan's father takes her and the other children to Horsham, but on the way there, he dies. Young Susan bravely leads her siblings to Horsham and they are taken in by the Colgate Brethren – a fictitious sect which Sheila made up from her vast knowledge of Wealden history and religion. Almost all the other sects mentioned in the novel are real, and there were indeed many such groups in the Weald, some peculiar to that area, and a lot of them had bases at Horsham. Susan becomes a preacher for the Colgate Brethren; but when she's older she starts her own sect, the Church of Jehovah-Jireh. Other local sects she comes into contact with include the Quakers, Baxterians, High Haldenites, and Beemanites. In an article in *The Gleam* (the journal of the Sheila Kaye-Smith Society) in 1999, the Revd Tom Chatfield notes that the Colgates may have been loosely based on the Cokelers: 'The two did have some things in common, but the Cokelers' rigorously ascetic lifestyle contrasted sharply with the Colgates' emphasis on procreation.'

Sheila herself wrote about the Cokelers in her article 'St. Dominic' in *The Sign* (February 1952) where she compares them to the Albigenses, though hastily adding that 'not a breath of scandal ever attached itself to the young farmers who, denied a wife, engaged a Cokeler 'sister' to keep house for them' – and noting, perhaps a little regretfully, that 'the sect was still in existence at the end of the first world war, but has apparently failed to survive more recent changes and catastrophes.'

In an article about her in the *Sussex County Magazine* in 1932, it said of Susan

Spray that 'the scene is laid round and about Horsham, and no better guide book could be found for that particular district than this novel'.

Sheila's parents had been a widower and a widow, each with one daughter already, when they married in 1883. They lived in St. Leonards-on-Sea. Sheila was born in 1887. Her father's first daughter, Dulcie, was nearly twenty by the time Sheila was born, and her mother's first daughter, Thea, was then about twelve. Mona, Sheila's younger sister, was born in 1889. Their father was a doctor, whose first practice had been at Battle, and their mother had written at least one novel. Every summer, the two of them went abroad for their holidays, while most or all of the four girls stayed on farms in the countryside just north of their home town. These were farms run by families their father had come to know when he had had his practice at Battle. For maybe six consecutive years, beginning when Sheila was three, these summer holidays were at Platnix Farm, Westfield, and it was this time and that place especially which inspired Sheila to make up stories about it which, as a child, she remembered and recited, and then later to write them down and, gradually, become a writer. Platnix was initially a sort of warrior queen in some of her childhood fantasies, but later the farm would be more like a muse to Sheila. However, it was not her only muse. There was another, much closer than Westfield and, like the more usual sort of writer's muse, this one was a woman.

She began writing her first proper novel, *The Tramping Methodist*, shortly after finishing school and it was published in 1908, receiving a few almost good reviews. In *Three Ways Home*, which one researcher has described as Sheila's 'spiritual autobiography' Sheila wrote of these surprisingly goodish reviews that: 'The reason is no doubt that they were quick-witted enough to realize that my characters were really villages and farms and fields and lanes and my plot was a map of the Kent and Sussex borders.'

Her next novel, *Starbrace*, published in 1909, is about highwaymen, and this was followed by *Spell Land – The Story of a Sussex Farm*. Then came *Three Against the World*, and then *Sussex Gorse* (1916) which is the first of the best of her novels and was written after one of her fans, the writer W. L. George, had introduced himself and began showing her how to write more efficiently. *Sussex Gorse* is about a farmer who throws away everything and everyone in order to obtain a certain parcel of land and tame it. Another of her best novels is *Little England* which came out towards the end of the first world war, and tells the story of a Sussex family as they lived through the war. Alas, nobody really wanted to read about the war once it was over, but to my mind *Little England* is one of the very best of Sheila's novels, and if you have never read anything by her and now feel you would like to, then I would recommend that one to begin with; or even *The Children's Summer* (1932) or, if you already know something of her life and the great mystery which haloes

Right. Sheila Kaye-Smith as she appeared on a 'Famous British Authors' cigarette card produced by W. D. & H. O. Wills in 1937. Each card carried a portrait on the front with a brief biography of the author on the reverse. Sheila is in good company – also in the series of 40 cards are H. G. Wells, P. G. Wodehouse and Somerset Maugham, although there are others who could now now be called 'famous'. Opposite. A studio portrait of Sheila (on the right) with her sister Mona from around 1897, when Sheila was about ten years old.



her time at Platnix Farm, *The Lardners* and *The Laurelwoods* (1947).

The Children's Summer, and its sequel, *Selina Is Older* (1935) are about Sheila's childhood, particularly the summer holidays on Platnix Farm. In both books, young Selina is very obviously based on Sheila herself, and her sister Moira on Mona. Thea appears as an older girl who lives next door to them, her real name is Una but the two children call her Baa, and she even comes to stay at Platnix with them. Indeed, if you read the text closely enough, it can be seen that Baa was going to the farm long before Selina first went there. However, Sheila's other older sister, Dulcie, is not mentioned or even implied in either book, although, almost certainly, she must have been going to Platnix long before any of them. Sheila began writing the two short stories which later became *The Children's Summer* just after Mona's premature death in 1924.

The reason why that last paragraph is a bit confusing is to do with the great mystery of the Sheila Kaye-Smith story, which is, that, bearing in mind she and her sister(s) had so many happy holidays at Platnix Farm for maybe six consecutive years and Sheila clearly loved the place very much, then why did they suddenly stop going there, and the following year go to a different farm instead? From reading all of her books, it seems that Sheila herself did not discover the real reason until well into her adult life, yet she never states in any of her autobiographical work what it was that happened. Rather, it was the end of the time they had their

holidays at Platnix which upset her so much and inspired her to become a writer, and all of the novels and stories she wrote before the deaths of her parents, in the early 1920s, were, to some extent, about Platnix and Westfield, though disguised under different names, and her characters the people she had known there. Then, from the mid-1920s onwards, elements of the real story of what had happened that fateful summer's day in Westfield in the 1890s began to appear in her fiction and, judging from recurring themes in some of her last novels, notably *The Hidden Son* (1941) and *Tambourine, Trumpet and Drum* (1943) it would seem that Sheila may have finally gained the full account – probably from Thea – and perhaps also, in realizing that she herself had not been to blame, after all, her redemption.

The Lardners and *the Laurelwoods* is also about a genteel townie family who used to spend their summer holidays on a Sussex farm, and Sheila started writing it shortly after Thea's death in 1943. This wistful and precious novel begins when the Laurelwood children, who are all now adults, return to the farm with their mother, twenty-five years after their last childhood holiday there, and meet the old friends they haven't seen for so long. My theory that as the Laurelwoods clearly represented the Kaye-Smiths, and that as K and L are next to each other in the alphabet, it followed that the real Lardners probably had a surname also beginning with K initially met strong resistance from the upper ranks of the Sheila Kaye-

Smith Society, but after more research I managed to make good my case and even produced a K-surname that, in a surprising variety of ways, appears a lot throughout Sheila's fiction. Indeed, though I have to blow my own trumpet as it were, my biography of Sheila actually has a lot of new previously unknown information about her, and her sisters.

I hadn't meant to give away so much about the great mystery here, but in many ways it is so bound up with Sheila's life and work that it is almost impossible for me not to. But now I'm running out of space, and so here are some last brief notes. She was very religious and the subject of religion occurs in many of her novels, notably *The End of the House of Alard*, which is regarded by many as her best, and *The View from the Parsonage* (1954) which was her last published novel. Two of her non-fiction books are *Quartet in Heaven*, which is about saints, and *Anglo Catholicism*. She and her husband eventually became Roman Catholics, and with the money she made from her books, Sheila had a church built, at Northiam. John Hampden wrote: 'Her skill in telling a story is equalled by her power in creating men and women, and by her deep sense of the influence of surroundings on human character. Sussex lives again in her pages.'

The Shining Cord of Sheila Kaye-Smith is a paperback with 209 pages, and it includes a bibliography of her work, lists of her stories and articles, and of the many articles about her and books that discuss the writer and her work. There is also a full-colour Picture Gallery, showing some of the dust jackets of her books, illustrations for her stories, and pictures and photographs of Sheila herself and some of her family. Among the many other highlights, there are descriptions of all of her books and most of her short stories, quotes from book reviews and articles about Sheila, and from interviews and fan letters, and also plot-descriptions of two of her unfinished novels, including the one she was writing at the time of her death, in 1956.

The book also includes a short article about how I came to write the biography, and there are three 'Easter Eggs' as well, which are 'hidden' surprise Bonus items – and curiously it seems to be one of the first books to have such items, maybe even the first, although Easter Eggs and Bonus Items have been included in various console games and DVDs for well over a decade now. All I will say about the Easter Eggs is that two of them are in fact quite easy to find, being in a book, and that all of them were created by Sheila herself.

The Shining Cord of Sheila Kaye-Smith is available from the Country Books website, for £12.50; but members of the Petworth Society can get it direct from me and signed for just £10, postage and packing free, by making out a cheque or postal order for £10 to Shaun Cooper and sending it to: 1, Chipping Cross, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 5JG.

Revisiting Mrs Adsett (2)

Miles Costello. An open letter in response to 'Revisiting Mrs Adsett' in PSM 170

Dear Peter,

I found the article 'Revisiting Mrs Adsett' in PSM 170 very interesting as it brought back fond memories of my North Street childhood. You see, we moved to number 307 in the early 1960s long after the Adsett and Madgwick families had moved out and when 307a and 307b had become just one property. The house, which stood immediately south of Thompson's Hospital, was unusual in that it had a large two-roomed basement that was not accessible from the main house and which had its own exterior door. We suspected that at one time the cellar had been a separate dwelling as it had an open fireplace and even had the appearance of having been decorated at one time. The basement was unused during our stay except for storage and by Dad as a kind of workshop. There was a large workbench upon which once a year an old fashioned mincer was clamped and which Dad used to prepare the Christmas stuffing.

Upstairs in the main part of the house were three floors each of which had three rooms. The kitchen faced east and looked out over the meadows to Flathurst and beyond to the Sugar Knob and eventually The Gog. No. 307 had a front door which opened out on to North Street and faced the high Park wall, but like many houses in the street it was rarely used. Upstairs were three bedrooms, one for my parents, and another for my two sisters and the last for my brother and I. The third floor was also three rooms but was completely bare, uncarpeted and unfurnished. One room was supposed to be out of bounds as it was used to store suitcases and other paraphernalia that my parents had accumulated during their travels around various RAF bases in England and France. Another room was given over to my sisters as a playroom and the third to my brother and I for the same use. The view from 'the third floor' (as it was known by all the family) was amazing. Looking down at the long garden which stretched into the meadow below one saw to the right a long brick wall that separated our garden from Mr Hamilton's at Springfield House. The wall was high and something of a challenge and it would be quite some time before I mastered the art of walking along it without falling off.

The garden at 307 was roughly divided in two, the top part being more or less cultivated while the lower portion was left to run wild, with a pig sty and sheds in varying states of dereliction and ancient fruit trees interspersed with old

Liberated Edwardian ladies spinning down North Street on their bicycles in the early years of the twentieth century. No. 307 North Street is the building with six chimney pots behind the leading cyclist. Photograph by Walter Kevis, Garland Collection.



abandoned cars. The cars had been driven up into the garden by way of a somewhat unauthorised track across the fields beyond the allotments. Dad was a mechanic cum chauffeur on the Leconfield Estate and could not resist finding a home for these timeworn vehicles, most of which would find 307 their final resting place. Among the undergrowth was an old London cab, the type that was open at the front to allow the storage of luggage. An old grey Standard Vanguard was another resident of the garden, no doubt one of Dad's projects that never really came to fruition. Sadly, the garden has all but disappeared under the tarmac entrance to Thompson's Hospital along with the driveway built to allow parking behind the North Street houses. The low garden wall that fronted the road has also gone and with it the memories of the many children who had sat upon it and waved to the passing Goodwood traffic.

Immediately north of our garden was Thompson's Hospital. It was, like Springfield House, beyond a high wall and really a mystery to us children. The only inhabitant that we were aware of was Annie Benham who lived in the nearest room that overlooked our garden. She seemed ancient and always wore black. We rather cruelly convinced ourselves that she was a witch and would avoid her at all costs. Beneath the almshouses were the now sadly lost allotments for which the bottom end of North Street was well-known. There was Mr Fowler and Mr Cobby, Charlie Peacock and Mr Pratt the bandmaster, at least one of whom could always be found working on their allotment, though they were strictly out of bounds to us children.

Our part of North Street was very much Leconfield Estate territory in those days and there were only a few privately owned houses. I may be mistaken but I believe that there is now only one Leconfield house in the entire street, that is between the junction of the Horsham Road and the Rectory Gate, a real change in quite a short time. Many of the inhabitants seemed very old to us, which was not surprising as there were three almshouses and very few children. It was however a wonderful place to grow up and in those days seemed quite remote from the town which of course it really wasn't.

On an unrelated note but associated with the same article you published a photograph of a man with a sandwich-board advertising a dance at the town Hall. The photograph appears to have been taken in the back garden of our present home at 9 South Grove, which by coincidence is where the Petworth photographer George Garland was living at the time. The photographer is unknown and it does not seem to be by Garland, however, according to my neighbour John Wakeford, who has lived here all of his life, the subject may be a Mr Warner who lived at number 8 South Grove before the second world war.

Miles.

Jesse was one of thirteen

Edna Anderson (née Howard) in conversation with Miles Costello

I was born in one of three cottages at Limbo just across the road from Mile House which was then two cottages with two families living there, the Peacocks and the Standings. I believe that it was Roy Standing and his parents in one, Roy would eventually move up to Limbo Lodge where he stayed for many years. After a while we moved over to one of the Mile House cottages having done a swap with the Peacocks. I have no idea why but that sort of thing was quite common on the Leconfield Estate, perhaps the cottage was larger.

My father Jesse was one of thirteen children, several of whom I never met as they had grown up and moved away long before I was born. Now and again I would bump into an uncle or aunt in a shop in Petworth and I would recognise them. My memory is not so good now but I believe there was a Tom, Arthur, Arch, Laura, Lil, Dorothy, Mercy, Maurice, Harry, Perce, Harriet and of course Dad. I have forgotten one but no doubt their name will come back to me. Uncle Maurice is probably best remembered as he went on to become butler to Lord Leconfield at Petworth House and was very well-known in the town, while Uncle Harry was manager at the International Stores in the Square for many years.

My mother Edith was a Pullen from Byworth. We had quite a few relatives there and once a year we would visit them for Christmas tea. It was a long walk from Limbo to Byworth and the journey home seemed even longer. No doubt it would have been very cold at that time of year. I was the youngest of four children. There was Norah, who will be 96 on Christmas Eve, then Horace, Leslie and finally me.

There was very little traffic on the road in those days though I do remember a car window being smashed when we were playing cricket on the common at Limbo. I would imagine that the verge is quite overgrown now as nobody keeps cattle to graze it as they used to. During the war soldiers were billeted all along the road between Limbo and Petworth and of course even more in the Park and the Pheasant Copse. My father Jesse was a foreman in the woods department on the Estate. His boss was Mr Wilcox who I believe was a very strict man. Dad, who never learned to drive a car, would drive Mr Wilcox around in a horse and cart; you see much of their work involved measuring timber which would require the hands of two people. If Dad had to go and do a job on his own then he would go by bicycle and I have known him cycle as far as Goodwood where Lord Leconfield owned property.

Maurice Balchin had Limbo Farm while his brother Percy lived across the road in Limbo Lodge; I seem to recall that he had a disability and used to repair boots and shoes for a living. Joyce Balchin, who was about my age, was usually driven in to school at Petworth while the rest of us Limbo children had to walk in all weathers. Of course by the time we got to school we were a large group having been joined by the children from Hampers Green and then North Street. I have few recollections of the girls' school though I do remember the two teachers at the infants, there were a Miss Bevis and Miss Wootton. Miss Wootton's sister was a teacher at the girls' school and their father had been head teacher at the North Street boys' school.

Nancy Cross and I were great friends as was Dorothy Bryder and we did most things together. We all went to Petworth Fair, and of course the cinema. Not the Regal but the one run by Stan Collins down by the Pound where the garage used to be. The Regal was built in 1937 so I must have been quite young.

I left school at 14 and went to work for General Burnett at The Grove at Petworth. Just as a dogsbody really, cleaning and such like. There was a housekeeper and several other maids but I was right at the bottom and had to do any job that was required. No I don't recall talk of the house being haunted but I am sure that the other maids would have spoken about it if they had known.

When I left The Grove I went to work for Dr Picton at the surgery though I wasn't there long as he joined up just after war broke out in 1939. Then I went to work at the International Stores in the Square where Mr Whitcomb was manager. There was quite a number of staff in those days, far more than now as everything was done by hand. There would be a dairy counter, a meat counter and various other ones. None of the assistants handled money at the counters and you would settle up with the cashier before you left the shop. Joan Willis was cashier when I worked there. I believe that Mr Whitcomb's wife worked in the shop as did Edgar Steer from Egdean. Of course there were many more whose names I can't recall now. The Whitcomb's lived in the cottage at the back of the shop which is now a storeroom.

My husband Ted and I met at a dance in the Iron Room at Petworth. Ted was a Pulborough lad and had come home from the war in 1946. He belonged to a dance club and he and several friends would come over to Petworth for the Saturday evening dances. They would catch a bus over and the landlord of the White Hart at Stopham who ran a taxi service would take them home. The dance band was always a local one but I can't recall the name of it, though Jack Bartlett and George Baxter usually played in it.

Ted and I married soon after the war and we moved to Pulborough and so my connection with Petworth was broken.

Village boys still

Trevor Purnell. A continuation of 'From the Armoury to Gallipoli' in *PSM* 170

Although a number of Tillington soldiers fought at Gallipoli most were posted to the Western Front. In researching the lives of these men I was helped by a number of soldier relatives who were prepared to share treasured family items with me, for which I am grateful. These often gave me a deeper understanding of the soldier's life and personality. Here I offer brief glimpses into the lives of three of the thirty-one soldiers researched.

Private Reg Pratt from River wrote many letters home and they have survived within his family. Some recount his period of training while others tell of his time in the trenches. Joining the 14th Reserve Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment at Chichester in the wake of the Derby Scheme early in 1916, Reg notes that 'all the artillery was closed; there was the Cavalry open. I did not want to go in that and the Engineers was only open for trades so I thought it was no good trying for that. Nearly all the chaps have been put in the 14th Sussex today'. Issued with 'the karkie and the whole kit' he sent his civilian clothes home via Selham station. After a short training spell in Northampton he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, for good reason nicknamed 'the Suicide Squad', training at Belton Park in Lincolnshire. On arrival at the park he was given his hut number but when he eventually found it there was no bed of any kind. The next morning after a night on the floor he was given a sack and told where he might find the straw to fill it. His letters from France often gave a hint of the Sussex dialect. After several failed attempts to control lice with powder sent by his mother, perhaps in desperation Reg wrote to his sister, Violet. 'The vermin powder that Mother sent don't seem much good, Harrison's pomade is good stuff they say. I shall not be sorry when I can get rid of them things, if you get clean clothes on, it is just as bad in a day or two, the only thing to do is to kill all you can see'. At the age of twenty-two Private Reg Pratt was killed on 17th January 1917 while serving in the trenches; there are no details of his death but he was one of only two soldiers from his company killed during the month.

Before the Great War Percy Yeatman, from Upperton, was a solicitor's clerk but in 1916 at the age of nineteen he joined the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) and trained as a front gunner on the original Handley Page O/100 bomber. This aeroplane was the result of the Navy's Director of the Air Department asking Handley Page for a 'bloody paralysing'. They responded with a biplane with a wingspan of 100 feet. After training Percy was posted to RNAS Dunkirk and it was



A Handley Page O/100 bomber from 1916. A photograph from Wikimedia Commons.

from here that he flew on bombing missions, usually over occupied Belgian ports, aerodromes and railway heads. The front gunner's cockpit was literally just behind the front of the aeroplane. In this position a gunner was not only exposed to enemy gunfire but also to extreme cold. On missions Percy would wear a helmet, goggles and an oilskin coat. His hands were protected with thick gloves and his face with grease. To release the bombs Percy would lean over the side and drop them. Once all the bombs had gone the pilot would fly low and the front gunner would strafe the area with his machine gun. The enemy would return this fire from the ground with artillery, machine guns and rifle fire. On the night of 25/26 August 1917 seven bombers set off to attack the aerodrome at St Denis Westrem in Belgium. Aircraft HP 3137, carrying Percy and two other crew, was brought down by enemy fire near Ghent. Being in the exposed front gun position Aircraftman (1st Class) Percy Yeatman was killed on impact whilst the other crew members survived and were taken prisoner. Percy was twenty years old.

George Peacock was born in Petworth and soon after his eighteenth birthday in 1903/4 he joined the 1st Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment (LNLR) for a period of twelve years (seven years with the colours and five in the reserves). At the time of the 1911 census George was with his regiment in India in his final year before being posted home to the reserves. It is likely that in 1914 he was mobilised and returned to the 1st Battalion LNLR. By the 21st August of that year he was marching towards Mons in Belgium where the battalion expected to be in 'a bloody battle on the morrow'. Instead however, they were ordered to retreat in what became the famous retreat from Mons. British troops continued pulling back at great speed until they reached the River Marne, close to the outskirts of Paris, where they stopped and with renewed spirit they began moving forward, forcing the Germans to retreat. Close to the River Aisne the enemy halted and began to dig into trenches. So began the horrendous trench warfare that lasted to the armistice. The LNLR was replaced by French troops and they made their way to

an area close to Ypres in Belgium. On the 27th October the battalion was ordered to the front and became part of the First Battle of Ypres. During the fighting there were many casualties and the war diary records 'we are not strong enough to counter-attack yet, so have abandoned all our wounded.'

George was one of the wounded left behind and was taken prisoner by the advancing German troops. After a harrowing rail journey, in one of several cattle trucks, lasting three days he was imprisoned at a prisoner of war camp at Gustrow in Northern Germany, some 450 miles from Ypres. The winter of 1914-15 was biting cold with heavy snowfalls. George was among the first prisoners at this camp and had to endure this weather in a leaky tent with only a thin blanket for warmth and with inadequate food. It is not surprising that after only five months on foreign soil Private George Peacock succumbed to pneumonia and, without drugs, George died on 29th December 1914.

Village Boys Still is available direct from Trevor at £14.95. Telephone 01798 344040 or email trevorpurnell@btinternet.com. The Petworth Bookshop also has copies.

It is impossible to read the detail in Trevor's book without feeling the horror of those days. It is a strange irony that while those who lost their lives have a memorial of a kind, those who survived, perhaps physically wounded but certainly mentally scarred, came back to a bleak, harsh, anonymous civilian life.

George Garland – forty years on

Peter Jerrome

Born in 1900, George Garland died in 1978, forty years ago this year. Once known to everyone, he is now, for many, a name, perpetuated in the Garland Collection held by the West Sussex Record Office – thousands of glass negatives augmented by the extensive surviving work of Walter Kevis who left Petworth in 1908. The two Petworth photographers are remembered in the two downstairs rooms at the Leconfield Hall.

In some ways perhaps a solitary man, particularly after the death of Mrs Garland (Sally) in 1965, George Garland's public face was convivial if a touch eccentric. His fund of Sussex stories would be a feature of many a local variety show in the early days of television and before. 'GG' had a somewhat lonely interest in an older Petworth but a post-war town stunned by the school bombing

was probably in little mood for reminiscence or retrospection.

As a young man George Garland had an ambition to write freelance but he soon found that his work was more likely to sell if he could illustrate it, and soon his focus was on picture rather than word. He gradually established a rapport with individual newspaper and magazine editors. By the 1930s he was working for the *West Sussex Gazette* and the Brighton sister papers the *Southern Weekly News* and *Sussex Daily News*. He did little work for the *Midhurst Times* (now the *Observer*). Reporting was very territorial, and Garland's working area, if a little diffused, tended to extend east from Petworth and towards the coast. Sally, who he had married in 1927, collaborated both with writing reports and photography. She was particularly skilled as a photographic printer. George had an instinctive sympathy with older people and some of his best journalism is to be found in late life recollection or obituary, whether written by him or his wife. Either way, the Garland newspaper reports are a treasure trove of, often Victorian, memory and anecdote.

'GG' took little active part in the Petworth Society's early years although I went with him to its inaugural meeting in 1973:¹ his health was already failing fast. He had given up active photography and his interest in an older Petworth had become perfunctory. A prize possession was a, then unique, galley proof of J. O. Greenfield's *Tales of Old Petworth* rescued from certain oblivion on the bar counter of a local inn. To his great satisfaction the *Tales* would be issued in book form by the Window Press in 1976.

Garland's classic period as a photographer would probably be considered the 1930s: the post war period saw a limiting of horizons. His contact with the national papers was becoming intermittent and his work settled into a localised routine. Personally, I have always preferred his hesitant vision of the 1920s when he was struggling to make an impact.² There is an almost claustrophobic sense of the local fields and the men who worked them, as also of the rigid social divide still de rigueur, on the borders of which Garland, tolerated as an observer and recorder, operated. He would sell society pictures to the 'shilling weeklies', *Tattler*, *Live*, *Bystander* and the rest as readily as he would studies of men working the fields to the agricultural and daily press. A whole independent world lay between the two extremes, the one as captive to its social context as the other.

In later years the old humour would surface but it looked back to the vanished Petworth Garland had known as a young man. In somewhat unfair and irreverent retrospect he would talk of the old Petworth Fire Brigade, summoned by the Town Hall fire bells, waiting impatiently for the station bus to return to the Market Square to release the horses, or the separate Leconfield Estate Fire Brigade, even more tardy than the town men, turning back because the captain had forgotten his pipe or perhaps the famous story of the fire at Coultershaw Mill in 1926 when

a request for refreshment was refused by mine host of the Railway Inn³ on the grounds that prior notice had not been given.

I suspect that Garland was too much of an individual to have felt completely at ease with the Petworth Society, although his long association with Petworth Lawn Tennis Club, Ebernoe Horn Fair and the famous Lodsworth Chess Club may suggest otherwise. Certain fixed calendar dates were almost sacred to him: the ploughing matches at Petworth or East Grinstead or Horn Fair. And, of course, weddings. Was there a couple for miles around who had not experienced Garland's leisurely insouciance? It is difficult to evaluate his influence on the 171 issues of this magazine. It will go far beyond the cover presentations of classic Garland photographs. I like to think of him as a presiding spirit.

1. In *Petworth Most of the Time* (Window Press 2016), I dated this in error to 1974.

2. See *Not Submitted Elsewhere* (Window Press 1980). Reprinted 1986 and the only Garland photograph book still in print.

3. 'mine host' was George Garland's stepfather, Henry Streeter.



George Garland at work in about 1960. Photographer unknown.

