

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*Magazine*

No. 175. March 2019

Bones  
4h



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Changing Petworth. A JCB at work in the garden of Boxgrove in Pound Street preparing for the new car park in 1988. William Cobbet's famous hedge is to the right. In his *Rural Rides* (published in 1830) he writes in August 1823 that he has '...seen a box-hedge, just as I came out of Petworth, more than twelve feet broad and about fifteen feet high. I dare say it is several centuries old. I think it is about forty yards long.' See also pages 21 and 44. A photograph by the Editor.

**FRONT COVER**

A collection of rosettes and awards for the Leconfield Estate Sussex cattle. See 'Go and pack your case' on page five. While these rosettes are later in date than that won by the bull Petworth Concorde referred to in the article they illustrate a long and continuing tradition.

**BACK COVER**

A detail from a sign which would accompany the Leconfield cattle at agricultural shows.

## 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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Designed, typeset and produced by Jonathan Newdick and printed in Chichester by SRP Design and Print.

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

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

### WEBSITE

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

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to a new year and magazine 175. You will be pleased to hear that the subscription level remains the same. Please remit as soon as you can as this saves a great deal of work for Gemma.

The Society has been notoriously reticent in the growing field of social media. We wonder if there is anyone who would like to help us with on-line publicity. Everything is negotiable: simply contact me, Keith or any committee member.

We don't have a regular obituary column but I feel I should record the passing of Ian Christie. Of late years Ian had lived in Churt but he was a great supporter of the Society, coming over with Di for meetings, walks and events. Many will remember Ian's father John from Bacon's the Saddlers Row shoe shop, and too Ian's stepmother 'Bunny' who died last year, and perhaps Ian's mother Joyce. Our sympathies to Di and the family.

The Society will be visiting Mottisfont in June. See details on the enclosed sheet.

Finally, Jonathan Newdick is making a photographic record of Leconfield Estate house numbers. He is particularly interested in the inexpertly but charmingly hand-painted examples such as those below. If you know of any please contact him on 01798 342113.



## 'Go and pack your case'

John Giffin in conversation with Caroline Egremont and the editor. Part one

I came to Petworth on the first of November 1965. I was working at the time at Torry Hill near Sittingbourne in Kent. As a child I had lived in Wimbledon but with the increasing frequency of doodle-bugs, my mother and I, with my sister, relocated to Okehampton in Devon to live with my step-grandfather on a small family farm. By the time I was four I was doing some hand-milking and helping out with a small local milk delivery round. I was also feeding the chickens. At the end of the war we returned to London and I went to school in Streatham.

Okehampton had given me as a city boy a taste for the country life and for farming in particular and my first job on leaving school was at Ashford in Kent milking cows. It was a three year apprenticeship and I was working with Ayrshire cows, part of a government scheme to get city boys like me into agriculture. My father had looked into aspects of the scheme and decided that Kent offered the best opportunities. I had some seventy cows in my care. As opposed to what I had known at Okehampton, this was machine milking.

A curious feature of the job was feeding the cows broken biscuits which came from a factory at Maidstone. I had to pick out the chocolate ones which were reserved for the best cows, the increased sugar content enhanced their milk production. I shouldn't give the impression that the cows were fed exclusively on biscuits; this was a supplement to the normal fodder. In those days cows were kept inside in the winter and tied by the neck. We milked them out twice daily and they would lie down in the stall to rest. We fed them hay, sugar beet and groundnut cake twice a day, mixed in a barrow. The sugar beet came shredded in a sack and had to be soaked overnight. Fish meal might be added as a supplement. There was no silage. In those days before the Milk Marketing Board, the churns were collected by a local dairy, being returned empty the next day.

Grain sacks then weighed 2 ¼ cwt., bean sacks 2 ½ cwt. The beans were grown especially for cattle and sent away to be ground for cattle feed, having first been allowed to mature completely before harvesting. As regards sacks, I felt, probably rightly, that the heavy lifting had been left more to me than the older men so I went to the farmer to ask for a rise. He calmly replied, 'Go and pack your case. I'll look up the time of your train.' It was a lesson I never forgot.

I then had a year as an 'improver' – more experience of arable, fruit and vegetables – we were, after all, in Kent, at the Kent Farm Institute – apples, pears, plums and cherries. I particularly remember the cherries. Early Rivers. I didn't

actually pick but had charge of a huge 34 'stail'<sup>1</sup> ladder which enabled the women pickers to pick at a height. The trees were old-fashioned, full size and the ladder would cushion itself on the branches, the women having picking bags strapped to their waists. They tended to be seasonal pickers from London with a sprinkling of Romany whose menfolk often cut chestnut. It was a shifting population and the women were of all ages. The farm provided sheds for temporary accommodation. We didn't have hops on the farm but there were hops on the adjacent one and I sometimes helped out. The Kent Farm Institute was based at Sittingbourne and I lived in lodgings during my improver years. Studying with me was Tom Harris who had taken a tenancy on the Torry Hill estate at Sittingbourne, owned by Robin Leigh-Pemberton, later to be Governor of the Bank of England.

The farm was predominantly sheep and cereals but much of the work involved taking out old orchards that had become unprofitable. Big old trees often diseased and no longer economical. Times were changing too: buyers like Home and Colonial and Sainsbury's were demanding really good-looking fruit and the older apple varieties were falling out of favour. It was now all Cox with the occasional row of Worcester for pollination.

I missed National Service by 24 days, having been born after the deadline date of 30 June 1939 although possibly I might have been deemed to be in a reserved occupation. I met my future wife Sue at the pictures in Ashford. She was still at school when I first saw her but then we lost touch. When I saw her again she had a dance band in Ashford where she was the band leader. She was a year younger than me. We got married in Ashford.

It was time for me to move on. I put an advertisement in the *Farmer's Weekly* in August 1965. There was a column for people to advertise themselves. Mr McHardy saw it and invited me for an interview at Petworth. He was in overall charge of the Leconfield Estate farms. I then came back to see Mr Shelley the land agent. Mr Shelley, already ailing, was straight to the point: £750 a year and part of the job was to supply the table at the House with poultry products, cream and milk. I didn't realise at the time but I would find Mr McHardy the best friend I have ever had or could wish to have. Clearly he was a fair bit older than I was but strangely, even working with him for so long, I never found out how old he actually was.

My first job at Petworth was to help with the sugar beet harvest. Trailers were loaded in the field at Frog Farm then taken by tractor to Petworth Station. An elevator was used to transfer the beet into trucks which were hauled by train to Kidderminster Sugar Factory. In 1966 Dr Beeching's axe fell on the local railway and our sugar beet quota was withdrawn. This was an important cash crop for the farm and was sadly missed.

I can remember a BBC interviewer speaking to Dr Beeching, who had just retired as chairman of ICI, asking 'What can you possibly know about railways?'

'Nothing', said Dr. B. 'but I intend to read it up over the weekend.'

I would be living at Stag Park, in Lurgashall parish, and would inherit a long tradition, represented by men like Ern Carver and Steve Payne, that went back generations even to the previous century. Steve still worked on the farms but had always been a carter and, even with the horses gone, remained very much a carter at heart. 'Old' Ern Carver<sup>2</sup> so called to distinguish him from his son 'Young' Ern had come through the 1914-18 war and had been noted in his time as a runner, wearing socks, not shoes. Charlie Carver, Ern's brother looked after the famous Leconfield pedigree shorthorn herd at Copse Green. Mr Shelley the agent was from the West Country and liked to be successful at the Bath and West of England Show. He often was. 1962 saw the Royal Counties Show at Soanes and when I came to Petworth it was still a talking point some three years later. The model dairy was a famous exhibit.

At that time part of my job as foreman was to renovate farms that for one reason or another were underperforming. There was an influx of tenants from outside the area. Marshalls was taken over by Edward Lywood, Battlehurst by Warwick Lywood and Mitchell Park by Ted Green. I myself lived at Stag Park for nine years, Mr McHardy living at Sokenholes. Frog Farm was let to George Chandler in 1972 to ease the capital sum paid for death duties, sold to him and bought back later.

Mr McHardy was originally from Inverurie, north of Aberdeen, and had been brought up on a croft. His wife came from Burton-on-Trent. He and I worked very closely together and although long-standing Estate etiquette required those in senior positions to be addressed by their surnames, he and I were soon on Christian name terms. In those days, before mobile phones, we'd meet every weekday evening to plan what we had to do the next day. We each had two pints of bitter and he finished off with a couple of whisky chasers. We would go home but I might have a little more to do. As we didn't want to give the impression that we were regular drinkers we'd go to a different pub each evening – the Welldiggers, the Noah's Ark, the Railway (now Badgers), the Hollist Arms and the Lickfold Inn. I remember Mr McHardy saying to me when I first came 'I'll give you three years, at least when you leave you'll be some bloody good.' He meant that if I applied for another job I'd have a very good chance of getting it. After three and a half years I had the offer of a job on Romney Marsh. I told Mr McHardy and I called in to see him laughing. I was told, 'Stay at Petworth and you will replace Mr McHardy when he retires.'

Mr McHardy had come in 1953 and told me he had had a harsh upbringing on the croft. He told me how they bled the cattle while they were alive, using a spike in a vein to mix the blood with oatmeal to make haggis. It was the only protein. The rest of the diet was neeps and tatties. In the northern climate the cows could

not be brought out until May or June and the bleeding and enforced inactivity left them so weak they had to be helped out into the open air. Moving them out in early summer had a special name – ‘the lift’.

In John Wyndham’s time the rate of tax was a punitive 19s 6d in the pound, meaning that of any pound earned only sixpence went to the estate. Hence, Mr Aplin the gamekeeper’s feed would be supplied in house, with no money changing hands. Exhibiting was more a matter of prestige than profit. The Chievely Report in the early 1970s offered a sharp critique. The estate was being run still on an early-century basis with an emphasis on sporting interest and the supply of money from the north was drying up. In a modern world the estate needed to think commercially. The difficulty was that any capital that might be used for development was systematically syphoned off for death duties.

When John Wyndham died in 1972 I was at Ardingly at the South of England Show. I had just won first prize with the bull Petworth Concorde, when the show secretary came with an urgent message. I must leave immediately. There could be no question of further exhibiting – the cattle would be picked up and brought home separately.

The farmers took turns to stand vigil over the coffin in the chapel. I was with Reg Johnson from Frog Farm, two others I remember were Ted Green and Bob Dallyn.

1. Rung.

2. See ‘Horses, cows and pigeons’ in *PSM* 43, (March 1986).

#### THE LECONFIELD FARMS IN NOVEMBER 1965

Farm manager: James McHardy

#### STAG PARK

Foreman: John Giffin.

Dairy herdsman: Percy Bradford.

Sussex herdsman: Jeff Simpson.

Assistant: Bob New (also calf rearing and dairy calves).

Tractor drivers: Jack Mead and

(Young) Ern Carver.

General farm worker: Sid Carver.

Shepherd: Reg Smith.

Part time: (Old) Ern Carver (milk, cream, eggs).

Steve Payne (general work).

Doris Carver (table poultry, eggs, lamb rearing).

Charlie and Mabel Carver at Copse Green  
(calves and lambs for show).

#### FROG FARM

Farm foreman and shepherd: Reg Johnson.

Tractor / combine driver: John Purser.

Tractor driver: Jim (Dick) Dormer.

Pigs, grain dryer: Len Dormer.

#### SOANES FARM

Walter Baxter.



Above.

Leconfield Farms employees at James McHardy’s retirement party at The Sussex Tavern in 1973.

Back row, from left to right:

John Giffin, Farm foreman; Len Dormer, corn drier and pigs; James McHardy, Farm manager; Jeff Simpson, Sussex stockman; Reg Smith, shepherd; (Young) Ern Carver, tractor driver; David Nixon, just started; Sid Boddington, general farm worker at Marshall’s Farm; John Purser, tractor driver; Jim (Dick) Dormer, tractor driver.

Front row, seated:

Bob New, assistant Sussex stockman; Charlie Carver, retired; Jack Mead, tractor driver; (Old) Ern Carver, retired; Sid Carver, general farm worker and hedge cutter.

The photograph was taken by George Garland who entertained the party and didn’t charge for the photograph, nor for the entertainment.

## On the borders of Fairyland

Shaun Cooper

In my article about Ethel Caine in the last issue, there was not enough space to highlight a certain significant feature described in her book *Some People of Hogg's Hollow* as by Eleanor Boniface. On page twelve of the book a legend about fairies is described. I got the book in 2013, but it took a lot of research to ascertain that it was about Milland; and then, as a brief mention of a flying serpent in it seems to have been influenced by the folklore of Wales, which is where Miss Caine lived for a few years, there was some doubt as to whether the fairy legend described was also of Welsh origin, or true Sussex lore. However when I discovered that Eleanor Boniface was a pseudonym of Ethel Caine, last summer, and learnt that there were mentions of her in *Milland: Living Memories*, I bought that book too, and I was pleased to find that it contains a brief mention of the legend.

Now this fairy legend of Milland is the first 'new' old Sussex fairy legend to have been discovered since *The Folklore of Sussex* by Jacqueline Simpson was published in 1973. In the chapter about fairies in that book, it can be seen that the earliest fairy legend was originally recorded in 1854 and that the most recent was recorded in 1954. So, whether the Milland fairy legend is considered to be the first 'new' Sussex fairy legend to have been re-discovered since 1954, or 1973, is debatable – yet it must be emphasized that this is a significant find nonetheless, not just for Sussex, but for English fairy lore in general. Here is how the legend is described in *Some People of Hogg's Hollow*:

They do say as they began to build the old church in the dingle, but every morning when the workmen went back to work they found the fairies had carried up all the tools and things and the great stones up to the top of the hill, and this went on for years, so then they give it up and built the church on top of the hill where the fairies wanted it.

And here is how it was remembered in *Milland: Living Memories* (edited by Val Porter): 'There was mention of a legend of fairies who took stones from the top of the hill.' Local legends about the foundation stones of ancient buildings (usually churches) being mysteriously moved at night to a different site have been recorded at various places throughout this country, and indeed Sussex has two other such legends, one concerning the church near Hollington and one at Alfriston, but in almost all cases, it was said that the Devil moved the stones (as at Hollington) or that it was the work of some unknown supernatural force (as at Alfriston) – and in

fact the number of other places where it has been recorded that fairies were blamed is very small. Indeed, of the thirty such legends detailed in *The Atlas of Magical Britain* by Janet and Colin Bord, only one place is listed where it was believed that fairies had moved the stones: at Hanchurch, in Staffordshire; and at Burnley in Lancashire, goblins were blamed. Of the rest, there are seven places where it was the Devil who moved the stones; nineteen places where some vague supernatural force was implicated; one place where the stones were moved because of human trickery; and one where the stones were moved by doves.

There are two points worth noting about fairy legends here. Firstly, some counties don't appear to have any; and secondly, all of the Sussex ones concern places that are in the northern part of West Sussex: it is said that the fairies dance round the tops of Tarberry Hill and Chanctonbury on Midsummer's Eve; that a fairy funeral was once seen on Pulborough Mount (Park Mound); and that Harrow Hill was the last home of the English fairies.

In her book *Pagan's Progress* (1954) Nancy Price mentions how she went up Cissbury Hill on Midsummer's Eve once, hoping to see some fairies – and this has led to some people believing that Cissbury too has a fairy legend (including the Bords, unfortunately). But what's interesting about this mistake is the mention of Midsummer's Eve in connection with fairies, because while we here in Sussex associate the fairies with that special night, at two or three places at least, this is not something that is mentioned in books about the folklore of other counties; and so, alas, I cannot explain what the connection is, or, more to the point, what it signifies.

In *The Folklore of Sussex*, Jacqueline Simpson describes some of the tales about fairies that are associated with other places in the county, notably the tale known as 'The Sweating Fairies' – variations of which have been recorded at Washington, Arlington, and Hellingly – and one recorded at Beeding Hill, but these tales about fairies, which are mostly quite long in the telling and contain slightly humorous elements, are not local legends and, almost certainly, they were conjured up at some much later time than the period when the fairy legends concerning Chanctonbury, Tarberry Hill, Pulborough Mound, Harrow Hill, first arose. Interestingly, the fact that local legends of fairies in this county have only been recorded in West Sussex points to a connection between them and the creation of the mid-county boundary.

### THE TWO HALVES OF SUSSEX – AND THE LAND BETWEEN

The mid-county boundary that divides Sussex used to be much more visible than it is today. It was originally created in the Celtic period, and even up until the early 20th century, the roads that connected the two halves of Sussex were little more than tracks along this boundary, and local farmers used to keep very closely to their respective sides: those to the east of the boundary used Haywards Heath as

their market, and those to the west went to Steyning market.

In his article 'The Cleaving of Sussex' in *Sussex County Magazine* in 1941, Stephen Coffin describes how the boundary came about. Beginning around about 500 BC, successive waves of Celts from Europe began coming to our shores and settling on the Downs between the River Arun and the River Adur. The first two waves, known by archaeologists as 'Iron Age A' Celts, mingled peacefully with the indigenous population. The first wave came from the area of Halstatt, in Austria, while the second wave, known as the Wessex Culture, mysteriously came from the west. Then, beginning about 300 BC, Iron Age B Celts from the La Tène valley in Switzerland began settling on the central downland section, displacing the earlier races, who were obliged to move away, west and east. Coffin describes what happened next:

And after the new-comers had conquered, all the fine lands between the Adur and the Ouse were laid to waste. For a hundred years or more this remained derelict and uninhabited, a no-man's-land between the two peoples. Thus was Sussex cloven, and the remains of this cleavage can be seen to this day in the ancient division of the county into East and West Sussex with the River Adur between.

This no-man's-land which Coffin describes was mainly on the Downs. North of those hills was the great ancient forest later called Andredswald (from which the Weald gets its name) – an area of dense overgrown woods and scrub, some thirty miles wide and covering the length of Sussex. But, to all intents and purposes, the boundary zone that separated the conquering 'B' Celts from the retreating 'A' Celts and the earlier race was just this vast stretch of no-man's-land along the Downs between the River Adur and the Ouse. And an interesting aspect about that section of the Downs is that it has no places that have fairy legends.

Just between the River Adur and the mid-county boundary in the Downs there is Devil's Dyke, but there are no other places that have Devil legends between it and the River Ouse. Furthermore, there are places in Sussex that have both fairy and Devil legends. Therefore, it appears that in this county, some sites that have Devil legends have had legends of some sort of being with supernatural powers since the early Celtic period, and that some of our legends that feature the Devil almost certainly had their origins in the achievements of certain Celtic chieftains or their champions. The legend of Devil's Dyke is a good example of how this process may have come about.

The Devil's Dyke was supposedly created when the Devil began digging a trench through the Downs, with the intention of flooding the Weald with sea water. Close by, just east of where the Devil began digging this trench, there is the mid-county boundary – therefore the legend was probably originally about a certain once famous 'Iron Age B' Celtic chieftain, the one who instigated the

creation of the mid-county boundary, which may well have been marked by a ditch at that time, and the story probably began to acquire a supernatural element when the later 'Iron Age C' Celts related it.

Interestingly, some of the clods of earth thrown up by the Devil's spade were flung far and wide, forming Chanctonbury, Cissbury, and Rackham Hill, and another one became Mount Caburn, which is at the eastern end of the no-man's land boundary zone. Chanctonbury is one of those places which have legends of fairies and of the Devil. In another Sussex legend about the Devil, he is also given as being responsible for the creation of Tarberry (Torbury) Hill in the western end of West Sussex, and this too has a fairy legend. Thus it would seem that these legends about the Devil in Sussex originally related how the 'Iron Age B' Celts 'created' far-flung strongholds of the earlier races, when they took over the central portion of the Downs and began expanding their territory along the fertile lands of the Downs as far west as Tarberry Hill.

The legend of Harrow Hill that it was the last stronghold of the fairies of England could well be true, if the original fairies were the earlier races who lived in the central Downland zone before the 'Iron Age B' Celts came and began outlining their borders; yet if so, then the legend actually dates back to a time that ended about 250 BC.

So it would appear that legends about fairies first arose in areas where 'Iron Age A' Celts were displaced by 'Iron Age B' Celts, and thus that Sussex was the first place to have legends of fairies. The three races that inhabited the Downs before the 'Iron Age B' Celts began taking-over correspond to three different types of fairy races most commonly described in folklore: the goblins, the dwarves, and the elves. As dwarves and elves are said to have used metal weapons, then they must be folk-memories of the two 'Iron Age A' races; and the earlier Stone Age race are now represented as goblins. Incidentally, the word 'elf' is far older than the word 'fairy'.

Those earlier races mostly turned west when the new Celts began expanding their territory, and it seems that only a small number of them settled around Mount Caburn. And so we might ask ourselves where those that retreated to the west actually went? We know that they went at least as far north as Pulborough, and at least as far west as Milland and Tarberry Hill, so it seems likely that the original region whose name later became 'Fairyland' might have been somewhere just north of the Downs and west of the River Arun.

**FURTHER READING** A good book about British fairy traditions is *The Vanishing People* (1978) by Katharine M. Briggs. For more information on Sussex fairy lore, see *The Folklore of Sussex* by Jacqueline Simpson, and the following books by Tony Wales: *Sussex Customs, Curiosities & Country Lore* (1990); *Sussex Ghosts & Legends* (1992); and *A Treasury of Sussex Folklore* (2000). Also of interest is *Fairy Paths & Spirit Roads* (2003) by Paul Devereux.



## The Postman's Horn

The December book sale. Peter Jerrome

Sir Henry Sloane,<sup>1</sup> the eminent physician and scientist is writing to his friend John Ray, the naturalist. It is March 9, 1699. Sloane has just seen a large tiger baited by three 'bear dogs' in quick succession. The first dog the tiger dispatched outright, while the second and third dogs each fought the tiger to a standstill. A fourth dog could not, on any account, be induced to approach the tiger, chained in the middle of a large cockpit.

Clearly, whatever the morality of the spectacle, there was money to be made. Premium seats were a guinea each, the cheapest five shillings, itself no trifling sum in 1699. The spectators were apparently monied people. The tiger cuffed his adversaries rather than use his claws and aimed for a danger area around the upper neck.

The 'entertainment' over, the tiger was fed a live fowl, finding some difficulty with the feathers as he plucked the bird. The keeper imparted a note of mystery into the proceedings with a claim that the tiger's foam had so affected the contents of his drinking vessel as to render the contents at once poisonous and 'ropy'.<sup>2</sup> The owner had made some £300 from the show.

To a 21st century mindset, Sloane's account has a curious detachment. He offers no moral judgement other than a half-apologetic envoi, 'I hope you will pardon this tedious narrative because I'm apt to think it is very rare that such a battle happens or that such a fine tiger is seen here.' Ray's reaction is unknown.

Has human nature changed since 1699? We can say only that the tiger's owner has his 21st century counterparts, if their operation is perhaps a little subtler. The letter comes from *The Postman's Horn*,<sup>3</sup> an anthology of later 17th century letters edited by Arthur Bryant, under fourteen headings. It's an 'escape' from the Hampshire Hospital Depot of the British red Cross Society. Last issued on January 8, 1952. Its subsequent history is, as almost always the case, obscure. It shows signs of wear and is hardly likely to find a friend at the Book Sale. In a digital age it raises once more the future of the letter as the cultural force it has been over millennia.<sup>4</sup>

1. Sir Henry Sloane would give his name to the present Sloane Square in London.

2. Forming or developing a sticky, viscous liquid (*OED*).

3. 2nd edition, Home & van Thal, 1946.

4. See 'Open Jaws' in *PSM* 157 (September 2014) pages 8 and 9.

## There's a knock on the door ...

Notes from the Cottage Museum. Peter Jerrome

The rain is silent but unrelenting. It suggests an unpromising late September afternoon at the Museum. The Michaelmas daisies herald a dying season as do the spent pastel heads of clary. The fire's soon crackling in the range but it's unwontedly dark in the parlour: one of the two gas lights isn't functioning. I reflect that the unusual darkness probably brings us nearer to the real 1910. There's a knock on the door, a couple from 'near Uckfield'. They've come a long way to see 346. 'We found the museum on the internet but almost gave up on it. Eventually we saw a sign.' For them, as it does so often, the Museum confounds all expectations. It's a conducted tour. Would they like to hear about Mrs Cummings? They certainly would. For them the familiar is new. They have already bought the Museum guide book.

The old ghosts are summoned to Saturday afternoon life. Michael Cummings, the army farrier, coming to Petworth, then moving on, leaving Mary and the children largely to their own devices. Agnes Phelan, ninety years young in 1998, one final link with life as lived once at 346. Twenty years and more on has the raw enthusiasm of 1996 congealed into a set tradition?

The clock strikes three and our visitors are upstairs, their rucksacks still just inside the scullery door. There's a huge quince on the table, something like a stranded fish. The clothes pegs look alarmingly new but why not? Nineteen-ten doesn't necessarily demand old. The door of the little kitchen cupboard is open. A drum of mixed spice, Kearley & Tonge's Mitre brand, the old International Stores own label. Gateway, Somerfield and the Co-op have followed but there will be some who remember the older names. Our visitors finally emerge and disappear into the twilight of the cellar. They sign the visitors' book and with every indication of reluctance take their leave. The rain collects in shallow puddles on the red bricks of the path outside.

The parlour clock ticks on. Is 1996 now any different from 2018? Sgt. Major Cummings looks out from the photograph on the wall. Aldershot in 1878. To leave the rugged safety of the Army for an outside world that would give him nothing.

Rudbeckia and Mexican sunflowers in a tiny vase, Michaelmas daisies in a jam jar. It's still pouring with rain. This will be our last duty of the year. The afternoon as always brings home the understated power of 346. It is as unique as the town it represents.

## Encore Mr Clarke

Peter Jerrome

Mr Josceline Grove kindly draws my attention to the recently published *Field Guide to the English Clergy*,<sup>1</sup> an account of some eccentric English clergymen, past and present. Unsurprisingly the Revd James Stanier Clarke (1766-1834), no stranger to these pages, receives honourable mention. Leaving Cambridge without a degree, and following an unsuccessful period as a vicar in Brighton, Clarke became a naval chaplain, serving on a patrol boat in the English Channel. Already extremely corpulent, Clarke fell in with the Prince Regent, with whom he had a certain amount in common, neither being noted for their stern morality. While staying with the Prince Regent and his set at Petworth House, Clarke arranged a nocturnal tryst with one of the Earl of Egremont's housemaids. Members of the Prince Regent's circle had meanwhile substituted a donkey for Clarke's intended paramour.<sup>2</sup> Mr Butler-Gallie sketches Clarke's further career including his attempt to 'improve' the style of Jane Austen and his eventual appointment as Canon of Windsor.



1. The Revd Fergus Butler-Gallie, *A Field Guide to the English Clergy*, Oneworld Publications, 2018.

2. Annabelle Hughes writes on Clarke in *PSM* 171 (March 2018) pages 24-5 where the famous cartoon 'The Divine and the Donkey – or Petworth Frolicks' is reproduced in colour. The print, by Charles Williams, was first reproduced in the satirical magazine *The Scourge* in 1815.

Left.  
John Russell, RA (1745-1806),  
'Revd James Stanier Clarke, LLD,  
FRS, Canon of Windsor',  
Pastel, c. 1790.  
Reproduced courtesy of the Victoria  
and Albert Museum, London.

## Before the garden centre!

Messrs Death invite clients to view their postponed plant sale. Lombard Street, 1898.

**POSTPONED SALE.**

MESSRS.

**DEATH & SON**

Begin to announce that the Auction Sale of

**SHRUBS & ROSES,**  
**Postponed from last Monday,**  
Will take place at their  
**ROOMS IN LOMBARD STREET, PETWORTH,**  
**ON TUESDAY NEXT,**  
**December 6th, 1898,**

The Plants having arrived, and they may be viewed at any time.

Catalogues and further particulars of the AUCTIONEERS.

— West Sussex Gazette — Office, 11, Carfax, Horsham.

## 45 years on – the birthday event

Lord Egremont speaks on 'My Life in Petworth' at the Leconfield Hall,  
15 October 2018. Keith Thompson

We have always started planning for the Annual Dinner at Petworth House in March, booking the date, agreeing a menu, assessing the costs, preparing booking forms and receiving replies and payments and issuing tickets, thinking about the preliminary talk or tour on some aspect of the history of the House and Estate and the ongoing work of the National Trust... A lot of hard work.

However, when March arrived this year, it was proving difficult for the Trust and we reached a stage when either another venue and caterer had to be found or consider abandoning the event for 2018 at least. A pity in the Society's forty-fifth year, when Lord Egremont had provisionally agreed to speak.

Leconfield Hall or the Herbert Shiner School? Catering firm or 'in house'? Both floors of the Hall would be needed, the tiered seating for the talk, then everyone downstairs for drinks while the seating was rolled back, chairs and tables brought out and a buffet supper put in place. The School site had excellent facilities on one floor and plenty of parking.

Nevertheless and with some trepidation, a majority on the Committee favoured the hall. Kate Knight and her team accepted the challenge of the buffet (which, in the event they carried out with great efficiency and a first class menu). Good to have local input, too.

Clearly, Lord Egremont as speaker was a great attraction and unsurprisingly the event was over-subscribed with disappointed members who had to be left out.

Max Wyndham grew up at Petworth, then as a post-graduate, spent some time working in the United States. On the early death of his father, he unexpectedly found himself Lord Egremont in charge of the Leconfield Estate at the age of 24.

It was a comprehensive, informative and witty talk, with, when appropriate, convincing American and German accents. It was an account of the last 46 years in Petworth which almost paralleled the story of the Petworth Society. There was mention of Sir Leslie Fry and the by-pass issue – the Park route or the one through the Shimmings Valley. No need to wonder about his Lordship's views on that! Finally, Bert Speed's idea which has come into being as the Lorry Route. Throughout these years, Lord Egremont has followed a productive and distinguished career as a writer on a wide range of subjects.

The future of Petworth? Lord Egremont is optimistic – 'People will always want to live here' – and for him, 'there is no better place to live: beautiful country, nice people'.

People have always looked back with nostalgia: to the time of Lord Leconfield and before that, Queen Victoria's, the 18th century, the Elizabethan Age and so on – easier to forget the bad times and recall the good ones. 'Has there ever been a Golden Age?'

A different sort of event for the Society, a rare one and a very special speaker, hardly repeatable. So what about next year? What do the members think? Opinions will always differ, but your Committee would like to know.

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## George Steggles – a memory

A letter from Robert Longmore

Dear Peter,

Mention of George Steggles, the former chemist in the Market Square (*P.S.M.* 173, September 2018) reminded me of an amusing incident when I was practising as a solicitor in the Square.

We had on the staff a very senior managing clerk, Miss Greta Steggles. One day an elderly retired local farmer came to see me to sign a document. Miss Steggles had prepared it and came into my room with it: I introduced her to the gentleman. He signed it and I and Miss Steggles witnessed his signature. Miss Steggles then left the room with it.

The gentleman then turned to me and asked, 'Steggles? Any relation to the chemist on the corner of the Square long ago?' I said 'Yes, she's his daughter.' 'Oh,' he said 'I remember him, he used to pull teeth at sixpence a time. I suffered many times' The latter with deep feeling!

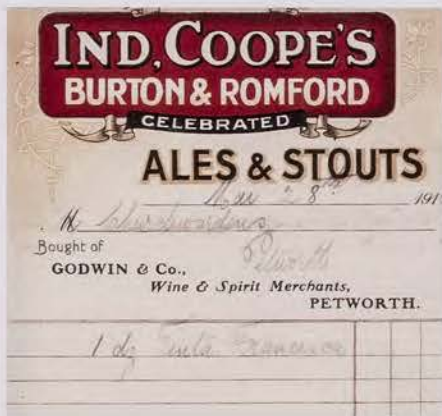
I had visions of the little boy, sat down on a chair, told to be brave, the forceps coming out of a drawer ...

I hope the little boy had a reward afterwards.

Robert Longmore,  
Byworth.

## Godwin & Co., wine and spirit merchants

No.28 in the continuing series of old Petworth traders. Miles Costello



Peter produced a Godwins invoice in the June 2017 magazine which prompted me to dig out this slightly earlier one from before the Great War. Charles Godwin had taken over the long established Lombard Street business from Henry Gummer around the turn of the century. This 1912 invoice addressed to the Churchwardens at Petworth is not a reflection of their intemperance but for one dozen bottles of Tinta Francisca communion wine. A popular wine among the clergy, the Portuguese red had no additives

or preservatives – an essential requirement for communion wine. Long out of fashion it is now making something of a revival.

The enduring business would mutate over the years, occasionally reappearing under a new name before finally succumbing around the turn of this century. The premises were situated near to the top of Lombard Street and the narrow road made deliveries or collections rather interesting as the street would invariably be blocked for some considerable time.

Bill Wareham in *PSM* 105 recalled the time his father was manager at Godwins. 'With the job went the house that my parents and four of us children promptly moved into. The door to the accommodation was where the office is now and I believe that it was number 19 Lombard Street. The shop was much smaller then because there was not the huge range of wines that are available now. We bottled our own beer in the garage, the beer arriving in barrels from Ind Coope or Guinness and being transferred into the bottles. I don't think this practice went on very long as it was not deemed viable. Wine from the shippers was lowered down into the cellar and put up on racks for a week or two before it was filtered and decanted into bottles. The metal ring from which the barrels were anchored as they were lowered into the cellar is still set firmly in the flagstones outside the north end of the building near the entrance to the old surgery'.

## Changing Petworth (1)

Below. Petworth Infants School prior to demolition. The present public library stands on the site. Photograph by George Garland.



Below.

Angel Street c. 1905.

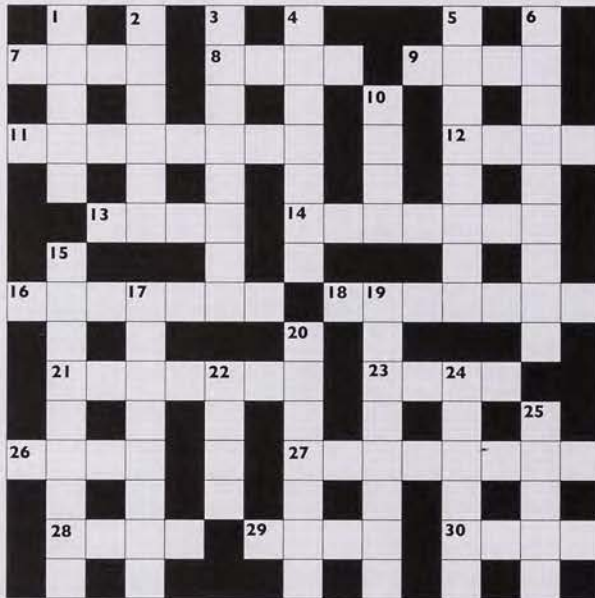
The piece of land with a single tree that lies just off the Sheepdown turning seems at first to defy logic. It is, in fact, a historic survival. It once formed part of the coach turning space for Grays. The photograph shows the alignment of the wall to allow this. There is no record of the work involved in alteration but it must have been substantial.

An Upton family photograph.



## SUSSEX CROSSWORD

Compiled by Debby Stevenson. Solution on page 43



### ACROSS

- 7** — Sewell, author of *Black Beauty*, who once lived in Graylingwell House (4)  
**8** To jump – like 30 across – gives the name of a park near East Grinstead (4)  
**9** Cart for carrying heavy loads (4)  
**11** A college and gardens here – on land donated by Edward James (4,4)  
**12** A particular way of moving (4)  
**13** At one time (4)  
**14** Large areas of privately owned land (7)

- 16** A high point on the Downs above Kingley Vale containing many ancient remains (3,4)  
**18** Country park, house and hamlet next to the University of Sussex (7)  
**21** Summer time - could be too hot for walkies (3,4)  
**23** A smart and tidy cow? (4)  
**26** Slough or remove (4)  
**27** Come November, they won't forget in 25 down (8)  
**28** Noise from 23? Sounds depressing (4)  
**29** A Sussex river (4)  
**30** Herds of these are often kept in 14 (4)

### DOWN

- 1** Small arm of the sea (5)  
**2** Sussex village where it is said people always leave doors open! (6)  
**3** Flowery name for a railway (8)  
**4** An attraction near Chichester where there are butterflies and birds (7)  
**5** Where to see the I 360 (8)  
**6** Village which was once said to have a dragon living in the knucker hole! (9)  
**10** An otter's home (4)  
**15** Garden near Haywards Heath, with woodland and lakeside walks (5,4)  
**17** Downland behind Goring where the smuggling miller John Olliver is buried in his large tomb (8)  
**19** Village famous for its WW2 aerodrome and museum (8)  
**20** Seated on horseback (7)  
**22** There were 100 in Winnie the Pooh's wood! (4)  
**24** Thousands of Sussex oak trees were felled to help defeat this fleet (6)  
**25** Simon de Montfort and his barons defeated Henry III at this battle (5)

## A Christmas celebration in music and words

The Petworth Society Christmas evening, 12 December 2018. Keith Thompson

Yes, it was a very cold night. Yes, it was all happening in Westminster as the Prime Minister faced and lost a vote of confidence. But we were rewarded with a heart-warming programme by the South Downs Folk Singers, complete with an appearance of The Tipteers (see the next page).

Thirty singers and, disappointingly, about the same number in the audience. Anyone admitting little enthusiasm for 'folk-song' were soon put at ease. The songs were tuneful, the singing, unaccompanied, was harmonious, the readings expressively articulated and all ensured a most congenial atmosphere. Traditional carols sung to unfamiliar tunes; poems and prose, some well-known, others less so, but all full of meaning at Christmas and many delightfully humorous.

We don't usually list a programme, but this time it will be of interest in its content and variety:

Carol: 'While shepherds watched...'  
 Poem: 'Christmas' by John Betjeman.  
 Carol: 'The holly and the ivy'.  
 An extract from Hillaire Belloc's essay 'A Remaining Christmas'.  
 'When the Lord in human nature was an hapless creature born'.  
 Poem: St. Wilfred's Manhood Chapel (Selsey) at Christmas.  
 Carol: 'Hark the herald angels sing'.  
 Poem: 'The rose in the middle of winter' by Charles Bennett.  
 The Sussex Carol: 'On Christmas night all Christians sing'.  
 Interval  
 The noisy entrance of the Tipteers with a riotous Mummers' play; 'Mother' Christmas,

St. George, the Turkish Knight ('Slasher') and his 'mother' and the Doctor. Plenty of dangerous swordplay and gory surgery but reconciliation at the end – 'Peace on Earth'.  
 Carol: 'Deck the hall with boughs of holly'.  
 Bob Copper's account of the Mummers' play at his village of Rottingdean.  
 Carol: 'The holly bears a berry'.  
 Poem: 'Wintertime' by Robert Louis Stevenson.  
 Rounds, with audience participation in three parts.  
 Poem: 'Thoughts on winter' by Laurence Wheeler.  
 Carol: 'The master's in his hall'.  
 Carol: 'While shepherds watched...'.  
 Carol: 'We wish you a merry Christmas'

As Peter said at the end, 'A performance to justify a larger audience' and the conductor's reply, 'It was a pleasure to sing to a listening audience.' Our thanks to Debbie and Gordon Stevenson for bringing the Singers to our Christmas evening.



The characters from the Tipteers' Mummings' play, 'Mother Christmas' including St George, Mother, the Turkish Knight (apparently about to draw his dagger and justify his nickname of Slasher), and the Doctor in an unusually calm scene from their performance at the Petworth Society Christmas evening. Photograph by Ian Godsmark.

## A car named Elizabeth Anne

Jim Dabson in conversation with Miles Costello

I was born at Southwick in 1928 and moved to Petworth with my parents in 1943 when I was 15. My father was Chief Superintendent of the Petworth division of the West Sussex Constabulary, a rank above Superintendent but immediately below Assistant Chief Constable. The division at that time included police stations at Petworth, Pulborough and Midhurst along with several police houses in the surrounding villages. Before arriving in the town father had served all over the county including at Shoreham, Chichester and Bognor where he had risen to Inspector. Besides being a Chief Superintendent he was also in charge of the mounted section of the Sussex force, a post that he was suited for having served in the Life Guards prior to joining the police. The horses were I believe kept at a riding school at Rustington and only used at big events such as Goodwood or Brighton Races. The Brighton course had a particular problem with Razor Gangs who would come down from London and cause all sorts of trouble at the races. The long riot sticks or batons used by the mounted section for crowd control were kept at Petworth Police Station.

We lived at the Police House which used to stand almost opposite what is now the public library and [see 'Changing Petworth' on page 21] which was then the infants' school; it was a large Victorian house, very draughty with lots of open fires. Of course both the Police House and the adjacent police station have long been demolished and the land built upon. In fact since then there have been two further police stations at Petworth both of which have now closed. There was a large courtyard and cells for prisoners and a cottage where Sergeant Bourne and his family lived. There were many Constables at Petworth but only two that I recall, they were P. C. Earwicker and P. C. 'Smokey' Funnel.

Beside my parents there was my brother John who was the eldest followed by my sister Joy and then me. Before we came to Petworth John was serving with the T.A. and in 1940 was stationed near The Welldiggers public house at Lowheath manning a searchlight post. John remained with the army following the war and eventually rose to the rank of full Colonel. My sister Joy, whose real name was Joyce, chose to shorten her name to avoid an association with the actress Joyce Grenfell, though I am not at all sure why. Joy began her teaching career at Amberley having trained at Bishop Otter College at Chichester and taught at both Petworth and Tillington schools during our time in the town. She was four years older than me and sadly passed away last year. There may still be some people in

the town who were taught by Joy however even they would be quite elderly now.

As children of a senior police officer Joy and I were expected to mind our Ps and Qs and certainly to behave ourselves. We were a very close family and my parents didn't really socialise a great deal outside of the police force. There would of course be the police ball in the town hall which was a grand occasion, ladies would have their hair done, new dresses bought, and gentlemen wore dinner jackets or uniforms. There was also the hunt ball at Petworth House which Joy loved going to, but father felt it prudent to keep his distance from such local goings on in case it should reflect on him professionally. He was also very careful not to get involved in any form of local politics. His only real interest outside of his work was the garden at The Police House which he loved. It was not unknown for Fred Streeter the well-known head gardener at Petworth House to come down and offer father advice. Of course being wartime the lawn had been dug up and turned over to vegetables. Dad was a respected figure in the town as you would expect. He retired in 1958 and as it was something of a custom that senior officers should move away from the town that they served in he bought a house at Easebourne where he was able to embrace a busy social life both within the church and the community.

Mother was very much the housewife. It was a different world then and her job would have been to raise her family and support father. There were very few modern appliances and so she spent most of her time looking after the house and cooking meals. No she didn't have any help in the house, other than Joy and myself. She was really the archetypal housewife of the time, very much in the background but absolutely essential to the running of the house. Of course things were difficult during and after the war what with the rationing, and of course being the wife of a senior police officer Mother could never be seen to obtain goods from anything but a legitimate source.

Joy had been a cub leader at Bognor and when we came to Petworth she was approached by Maurice Alder and John Murray, who she had once briefly met at a scout or cub do at West Ashling, they asked if she was prepared to help revive the 1st Petworth Scout Troop which had more or less disbanded following the bombing of the boys' school the previous year and of course the death of Mr Stevenson the scoutmaster. Joy was very apprehensive at first and consulted with the District Commissioner who was very supportive and so on April 1st 1943 the troop was re-registered as No. 6443 and a member of the Petworth and Pulborough local association with Joy as Akela. There were three patrols the Bulls, Bulldogs and Otters with me patrol leader of the Otters, John Murray the Bulls and Maurice Alder the Bulldogs. Reg Harper was my second followed by Walter Simmons, Michael Murray, Terry Lucas, Jim Godwin, Chris Clegg and Fred Hall, I would eventually end up as assistant scout master before moving away from the town to begin my career.



Petworth Scouts and Cubs at camp in 1944. Joy Dabson as Akela is the fourth from the left in the second row up.

Father had a car which he named Elizabeth Anne though goodness knows why and he would often ferry member of the troop around to various scout functions or camps. Considering it was war-time we had a huge amount of freedom to wander more or less where we wished and as just about all of the local land belonged to Lord Leconfield it was a huge advantage that we had his blessing just as long as we didn't damage anything. It was not unusual to spend the night up on the Gog or even as far as Duncton Hill. Just set up a camp, light a fire and spend the night under canvas.

I enjoyed a varied social life at Petworth belonging among other things to the .22 rifle club in The Armoury at the junction of the Tillington Road and also the Grove Tennis Club. The courts had been neglected during the war and largely fallen into disuse; however a few of us got together and sorted them out. The pavilion was being used as a mortuary at the time and one evening we went to work there when we noticed an awful smell and discovered that an autopsy was being carried out and we were told to leave. I have no idea why the tennis pavilion was used in this manner but it never put me off and I always enjoyed playing there. Like Father I also had a fondness for horses and knew a racehorse trainer named Jack Holt who had stables at Burton. I would occasionally work with his horses as he was pleased for them to be exercised.

We had a youth club at Petworth it was in the High Street opposite the junction

with Middle Street. It was known as The Club Room and was up a narrow set of stairs above a small building. The room had a stage at one side where local singers and musical groups would occasionally perform. It was really very small and so space was limited. I sometimes played chess with George Garland the local photographer; I suppose it was in this house at South Grove where we are talking now. I remember the house was very smokey and I have a distinct recollection of the smell of cooking cabbage. Mr Garland was a great character and very popular in the town. I particularly liked his Sussex yokel sketches which he performed in a sort of dialect. In fact I can still remember some of his jokes to this day.

## Petworth Fair in 2019

Peter Jerrome

The Petworth Society took over the the administration of an ailing Petworth Fair in 1985. The choice was stark: embrace a dying event or abandon a thousand years of history. Petworth claims to be the oldest surviving street fair in the south of England. For the Society the fair lay, as it still does, somewhat outside our normal terms of operation, but we have stuck with it for well over three decades.

Our support costs us a very considerable sum of money and no income accrues. Public money is not involved: there is no reason why it should be, and every reason why it should not. Since 1986 the fair has had the unwavering support of Harris Brothers of Ashington, the licensee remaining Bensons of Dorking.

The Achilles heel of the fair is, and has over decades, been the short period of effective operation in relation to the work involved in putting up and taking down, often in atrocious weather. Immediately after the war a request was made to increase the period of the fair by an extra day. It was rejected. Such a request in 2019 would be deemed provocative.

The Society revival in 1986 met a mixed response: respect for tradition, local pride, indifference and a measure of opposition. For some in 1986 the Fair had a nostalgic appeal to a fondly remembered childhood and offered an annual opportunity to renew old acquaintance. Such sentiments have been largely supplanted in 2019 by demographic change and the mushroom growth of social media. In the nature of things, the outside fair has remained relatively unchanged, while the Society back-up, designed initially to increase footfall to the outside fair has been forced to re-invent itself periodically. In 2018 we had no presence in the Upper Hall but looked particularly towards younger children. Among the attractions offered were the Petworth Primary School Singers. The traditional



Punch and Judy, conjuring, face painting and free children's books while Petworth Players gave a lively presentation of their forthcoming pantomime. We may not have got everything right but social media reaction suggests we certainly did not get everything wrong either. There is something to build on in 2019.

That said, the fair remains from a Society point of view, something of an anomaly. Continued financial support is possible only through the extraordinary success of the Society Book Sales. The fair, perhaps more than in 1986, is an awkward presence, a porcupine whose spines are the immemorial years of its existence – too old in 1273 for anyone to recall its beginnings, and a time arbitrarily set at 1199, the death of Richard 1.

Disregarded as it so often is, the fair is part of what makes Petworth special and not just another small town. Even the traditional Petworth reserve is integral to the fair's spirit 'I'm pleased to see the fair in again, of course I never go.' Petworth Fair remains a potent mixture of uncertain footfall, uncertain future, anachronism, grudging acceptance, wayward lorry drivers and childhood mystique and memory. It has something that nothing else can either rival or replicate.

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## FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

Miles Costello

Serious Accident, *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 27 January, 1900

On Tuesday, Gilbert Aylwin, second son of Mrs Aylwin, [of] Gunter's Bridge Farm, was taking a waggon load of charcoal from Lurgashall to Petworth Station. As he was trying to stop the horses, who were going rather fast, he fell, and the wheels of the waggon went over his back. He was taken home, and Dr Beachcroft was quickly in attendance. It is feared that there are serious internal injuries. Much sympathy is felt for Mrs Aylwin, who lost her husband a short time ago.

Accidents of this nature were common and newspaper reports frequent. Gilbert Aylwin would survive his terrible injuries only to be killed in action in Flanders on 16 September 1916 aged 32. His death is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial in France but not on the war memorial at Petworth.

## Petworth Polish Camp (2)

Miles Costello

This is the second in a short series of recollections of life at The Polish Camp in Petworth Park during the years following the Second World War. Those former residents who I have met were children during their time at Petworth and all had left the camp before they became adults. Life probably seemed idyllic in the camp, as it did to most children brought up during the 1950s. The war had ended and many families were reunited. In June 1948 the former resettlement camp was officially closed with 33 families still in occupation of half a Nissen hut each. In that year the site was taken over by the local council and officially became the Polish Housing Estate. During the early 1950s rationing was beginning to ease, and in the summer of 1954 it would end altogether. By that time the camp buildings were beginning to show signs of disrepair and the Petworth Rural District Council, aware that the recently completed Hampers Green Estate was now full, approved a budget for renovating 40 huts. The camp had meanwhile taken on an air of permanence and rehousing the occupants was proving slow. The lack of local accommodation was demonstrated by the presence of squatters at the former military camp in the nearby Pheasant Copse and the Polish Camp at Kirdford. Gradually over the next decade the housing crisis eased, more council houses were built and the camp families moved out. The Nissen huts, by then twenty years old, were demolished and the camp closed.

These recollections are those of Stasha Martin (née Starzec) who I spoke to at the Polish Camp picnic last summer. The original article written by her, from which this edited version is taken, can be found at The Polish Camp website [www.petworthpolishcamp.com](http://www.petworthpolishcamp.com)

### Stasha Starzec's Story

We were living in a tied cottage on a dairy farm at Lower Froyle near Alton where Dad was working when my parents heard that Mr Swientons wife had left him with three young boys to look after. Mr Swinton was godfather to my sister Krystyna and a close friend of our family and he had a hut at the Polish Camp in Petworth Park. Clearly Mr Swinton could not manage on his own so my parents made the decision to move to Petworth to help him. I think they told the authorities we were relatives and so we were able to move in with his family at hut 47.

Below, opposite and page 36.

A selection of pages from the registration document of Anna Starzec, Stasha's mother:

The many place names — Andover, Hillingbury, Stockbridge, Eastleigh, Alton, Southampton and, eventually, Petworth tell their own story.

No 822786

**Aliens Order, 1920.**

**CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION**

You must produce this certificate if required to do so by any Police Officer, Immigration Officer, or member of His Majesty's forces acting in the course of his duty.

Nationality Polish  
 Born on 30.5.1920 in Witowice-Polna  
 Previous Nationality (if any) —  
 Profession or Occupation Housewife  
 Single or Married married  
 Address of Residence Polish Camp, Stockbridge, Hants.  
 Arrival in United Kingdom on 13.11.46  
 Address of last Residence outside U.K. Barletta, Italy  
 Government Service —  
 Passport or other papers in to Nationality and Identity. Substitute Form 228 x No. 4902/F NRIC. EET. 2507579.

3

ENDORSEMENTS AND REMARKS.

R/a Hillingbury Camp, Chandler's Ford on 28<sup>th</sup> 47  
 £510.  
 R/a 103 Park Road, Chandler's Ford on 14.6.47.  
 R. Lucas P. 213.  
 Will c/a to No. 1. Bamburgh Lane, Hants. on 5/4/49  
 To Park Petw.

30 JAN 1947  
 7 DEC 1948  
 2 APR 1949  
 EASTLEIGH

5

ENDORSEMENTS AND REMARKS.

Lepais' c/a to Hut. 47. Polish Camps, Relovitz  
 Surrey. on 6/9/52  
 R/a at Hut 47. Polish Army Estate, Petworth. on 6/9/52. £10 10/6

59 SEP 1952  
 PETWORTH

REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE No 822786  
 ISSUED AT Andover, Hants  
 ON 19<sup>th</sup> 1946  
 NAME (Surname first in Roman Capitals) STARZEC Anna  
 ALIAS —  
 Left Thumb Print (if unable to sign name in English Characters).  
 PHOTOGRAPH  
 Signature of Holder } Starzec Anna

2 DEC 1946  
 ANDOVER

2

ENDORSEMENTS AND REMARKS.

at Dover on 13.11.46  
 Permitted to land on condition that the holder registers at once with the Police, does not take or change employment except with the consent of the Ministry of Labour and National Service and leaves the United Kingdom not later than such date as may be specified by the Secretary of State.  
 Will c/a to Polish Camp Hillingbury on 28/1/47  
 R. Lucas

27 JAN 1947  
 EASTLEIGH

4

ENDORSEMENTS AND REMARKS.

Refused arrival at do!  
 Bombers here. Inver Foyle, Alton Hants on 5.4.49  
 R. Lucas

5 FEB 1952  
 SOUTHAMPTON

7

ENDORSEMENTS AND REMARKS.

"Aliens Order, 1960.  
 The holder is exempt from registration with the police, but should retain this certificate."

10 JAN 1961  
 PETWORTH

As you can imagine it was a bit of a squeeze with nine of us in one hut. My parents Jozef and Anna Starzec, myself, my sister Krystyna and our brother Richard, plus of course Mr Swinton and his three boys Andrzej, Michael and Joe. The boys loved our mother just as much as we did and Joe still speaks fondly of Mums chicken soup. Just three rooms, a bedroom, a kitchen and a living room. The toilet was in a block a short walk away. After a while Mr Swinton managed to get a nanny for his children and we were allocated at hut of our own number 64. As youngsters in the camp we were one big family, in and out of each other's homes as all kids do and playing in the wide open spaces of the Park. There was however an extra bond between us all as for most of us our nearest blood relatives were miles away in Poland. This was the only life that we knew and it would stand us in good stead as our parents had after all come to this country to make a new life after the war.

While life may have been idyllic for the children things were much tougher for our parents. Wages were low and there was still rationing. Clothes were mended, socks darned and shoes re-soled. Of course this was true for everyone living in post war Britain, but as immigrants the employment opportunities available to our parents were limited. Every family had a vegetable patch and most kept chickens, rabbits and even pigeons for the table. There were plenty of pickled cucumbers and sauerkraut in barrels. Mr Cichy kept bees, so there was honey. Mrs Szczotka was a seamstress and made Polish costumes with little black boleros and a myriad of sequins for the girls. Our Mum skilfully knitted cardigans and jumpers without the help of a pattern. She also made crepe paper roses. I can picture Mrs Dulas sitting outside her hut in the sunshine stitching away, she made beautiful embroidery, usually flowers – I remember that she particularly liked pansies.

In November 1954 my brother Tadeusz was born making us a family of six. As big sister I had many chores, helping with cooking, ironing and shoe cleaning. The cooking was done on a black solid fuel range and a primus stove which was balanced precariously on a table. Lighting the stove involved paraffin and methylated spirits. The iron was plugged into a light socket and often gave me an electric shock.

We would occasionally go beyond the perimeter fence and walk up the hill to the folly, which you call The Monument, where among the pine trees grew mushrooms and toadstools. We would pick as many as we could carry and brought them back for Mum to sort. She knew which were poisonous and after a while so did we. Some were cut up and threaded on to string and dried over the range for use later in soup and goulash. I also remember the pierogi (stuffed pasta pillows), gołbki (meatballs wrapped in cabbage leaves), a particular favourite of Mr Swinton. Barszcz made with beetroot from the garden, cakes made with fresh yeast, crumbly biscuits using up the soured milk and cream, poppy seed cake and

cheesecake made with homemade curd cheese and lots of eggs. Plates of pancakes and compote with whatever fruit was in season. To this day I never throw anything away from the fridge!

There was a church of course which was always well attended and hymns sung with gusto. I clearly recall a patriotic and roof raising one about Monte Cassino.<sup>1</sup> All of the camp children went to catechism classes and took their first Holy Communion and some of us would later be confirmed. A few of the boys, including my brother Ryszard, were trained as helpers during Mass and I recall him learning the Latin responses. There was a shop selling Polish provisions and I think there was a bar with a billiards or pool table for the men.

Looking back an amazing thing was the Polish school. Run solely by Mr Cisek the teacher, he taught us our three R's as well as some geography and history. Unfortunately our Dad never learnt to read or write, he was the youngest of a large family and his mum died when he was very young and he was bought up by a sister. On the other hand Mum was quite well educated but because she was so busy it fell upon me to take dictation and write letters to Dads many relatives in Poland. Later when we had mastered English we would translate correspondence and some English newspapers. Our parents listened to Polish radio and occasionally were able to buy a Polish newspaper.

Our family was fortunate to have close friends in Mr and Mrs Zajac. Mr Zajac was my Godfather. He was also a good storyteller and was often surrounded by a semi-circle of children sitting listening to yet another tale. I don't remember the stories now but I know that they all had a moral to keep us on the straight and narrow. Mr Zajac was also a very good barber and the men always had their 'short back and sides' done with his hand clippers and cut throat razor. Mrs Zajac would often be found in our hut drinking tea and gossiping. One day as she stood in front of the open grate lifting her skirt to warm her legs it caught fire. There was panic and much wafting as she screamed and ran around. Richard who would have been about five at the time climbed on to a chair at the sink and filled a bowl with as much water as he could lift and threw it over Mrs Zajac to much gasping followed by acclaim.

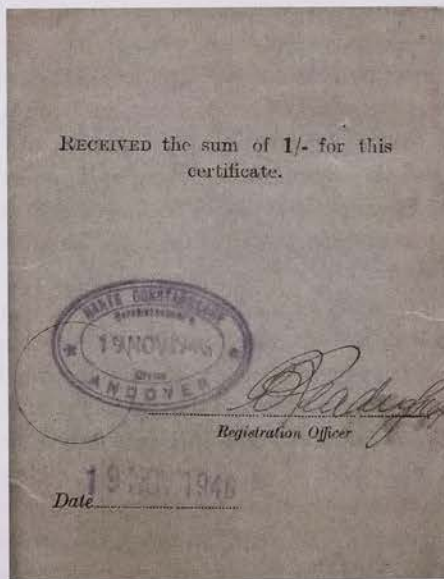
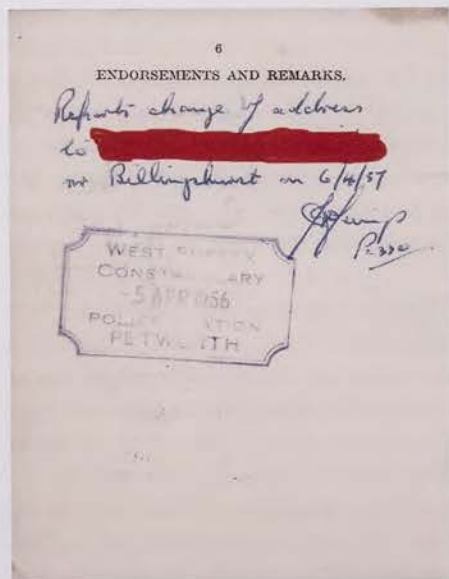
Yes lots of memories of life in the camp. The get togethers with various families where there would usually be Polish sausage and bread, vodka and beer and always pickled cucumbers. There were Polish dancing lessons and performances by the residents and children in the hall. Christmas celebrations and painted eggs beautifully arranged in a basket for blessing by the priest at Easter. Like most children we would make our own fun such as walks in the park, swimming in the lake, and of course we enjoyed going to school in Petworth. There were three schools – one for the infants, and two for the juniors (one for girls and one for the boys.) Looking back, we were welcomed into the community, although there

were some difficulties with language, lots of pulling of our pigtails by the boys and laughter at the beige knitted stockings we Polish girls used to wear where did our parents get them from? All the girls from our school had to walk through the town daily in a two by two line to the boys' school for lunch. We used to walk to Petworth Park too for our games lessons, usually rounders, and for sports day.

Eventually we were all resettled in local villages, and enjoyed our respective lives; I am sure we were all very grateful and have fond memories of the time we spent in Petworth Camp. The Good Old Days! Never thought I would hear myself say that!

1. Probably 'Czerwone Maki na Monte Cassino' Red Poppies on Monte Cassino.

Opposite. Stasha Starzec and Lydia Krawczuk on the day of their first communion in front of Hut 65. Below. Two more pages from Anna Starzec's registration document.



## 'The climate is particularly healthy'

Some pictures of St Michaels School, Burton Park from the 1960s

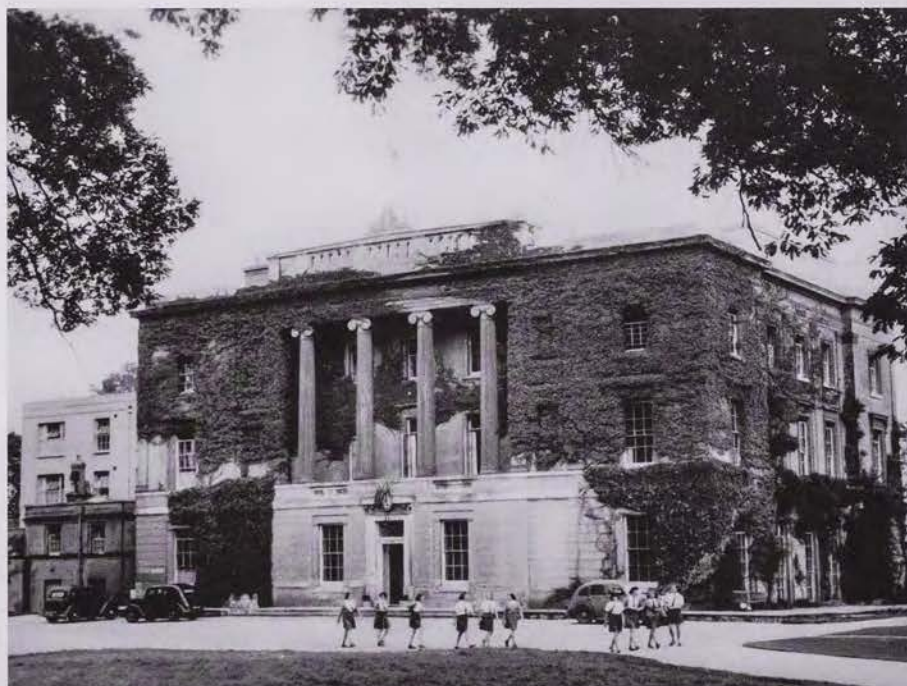
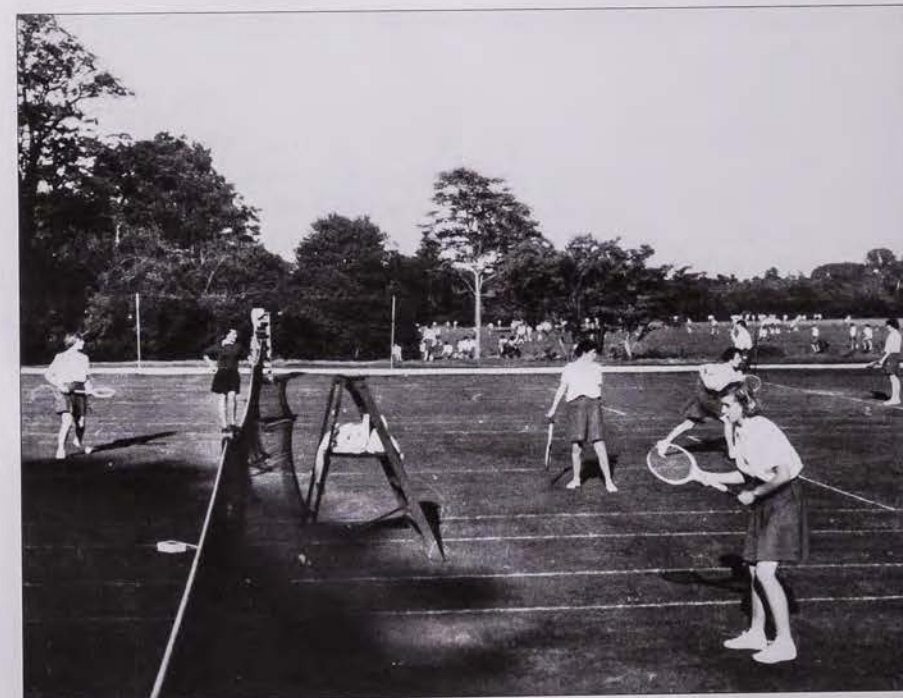
The editor would be interested to hear from anyone who has memories of their time at the school.

Opposite above. The refectory. Was the raised seating area next to the piano at the far end for staff or senior pupils?

Opposite below.

Girls learning to play tennis on some of the eight grass courts. In the background are the five lacrosse pitches.

Below. The west front of the house which dates from 1828. It was bought by Major and Mrs Courtauld in 1919 and, as was so often the case with such mansions, the house and park were requisitioned by the army during the Second World War. After the war the house, gardens and southern half of the park were sold to the Woodard Corporation who created the school. The Woodard Corporation is a charity founded on the vision of Canon Nathaniel Woodard, which provides education in an actively Christian school environment.



27 JUN 1962

## S. MICHAELS BURTON PARK PETWORTH SUSSEX

Girls' School of the Southern Division of the Woodard Corporation.  
Recognised as Efficient by the Ministry of Education.

S. Michaels Burton Park is a Public School intended by its Founders to provide a sound and liberal education on the principles of the Church of England. It was founded in 1844 at Hove by Miss Rooper, and removed to Bognor in 1856 by Lady Caroline Eliot, the first Lady Warden. The property was conveyed in trust to the Reverend Nathaniel Woodard, Founder and Provost of Ss. Mary and Nicolas College, Lancing, in 1865; and was allied to the Woodard Corporation in 1895. After the Second World War, in 1946, it was established at Burton Park.

Burton Park is magnificently situated, with views of the Downs beyond its own lovely gardens. The estate covers over 150 acres, and includes parkland, lakes, playing fields, and large fruit and vegetable gardens. There are five Lacrosse pitches and eleven Tennis courts (three hard). The climate is particularly healthy.



Above. A postcard from St Michaels of four scenes with the accent on the sciences.  
Opposite. The first page of the school's prospectus: 'The climate is particularly healthy.'

## Witch Bottles

Shaun Cooper

We have all dreamed of finding a message in a bottle as we walk beside the sea, or even a secret treasure map, but if you find an old bottle in the garden or within the walls of your house, you should be wary of opening it even if it looks empty. If you live in a very old building in that part of Sussex which is centred around Petworth and Pulborough, then it is quite possible that there may be a witch bottle hidden inside one of the walls, or beneath the threshold of the front door, or maybe under the hearth stones. These will have been put there to prevent witches from getting inside. However, there were other types of witch bottles, and some should be treated with the utmost caution, as they may contain harmful agents.

Charlotte Latham, writing in 1878, told how a lady at West Dean had seen a bottle filled with pins, on the hearth in a cottage. She was asked not to touch it because it was red hot and would spoil the charm. The daughter had had falling fits, and the doctors didn't know why, so her mother had gone to see a wise-

woman near Guildford and had been told to fill a bottle with pins and put it close to the fire: '... till the pins were red hot; and when that came about, they would prick the witch who had brought this affliction on my poor girl.'

Most witch bottles contain pins, sometimes lots of them, maybe all bent too, and they were also filled with, typically, urine, hair, nail-clippings, blood, and bits of paper, or skin, on which curses were inscribed. Witch bottles were in use at least as far back as the seventeenth century, and accounts of them figured in some of the last English witch trials. In the trial of a Farnborough woman in 1682, the parents of a girl who was so ill they thought she was bewitched had eventually filled a bottle with her urine, sealed it, and buried it, in an attempt to alleviate her suffering by hurting the witch who had cast the spell. Their daughter died, but the alleged witch was found not guilty. And as late as 1712, in what turned out to be the last trial of a witch found guilty in this country, a Hertfordshire woman was arrested after being accused of bewitching a servant girl. While the witch was in prison, the girl's employers were advised to put some of her urine in a stone bottle, cork it tightly and roast it over a fire – which they did, until it exploded. While this was going on, the men guarding the witch noticed that she suddenly seemed to be in great pain. However, although she was found guilty, she was pardoned.

Witch bottles, though, were used even more after witchcraft ceased to be legally recognised as real, in 1736, because without the law courts to turn to any more, people had to resort to their own devices in the continuing war on witches. A wizard called Cunning Murrell, who lived at Hadleigh in Essex in the late nineteenth century, used witch bottles made of iron. Once, a Gypsy cursed a local girl, causing her to bark like a dog. Her frightened parents took her to see Cunning Murrell, who heated one of his iron witch bottles all through the night, until it exploded. The next day, the girl stopped barking, and in a quiet country lane nearby the charred body of a woman was discovered. On Orkney, when his cows suddenly stopped giving milk, one wise farmer filled a bottle with cows' urine and corked it tightly. The next morning, an old woman stumbled in agony to the farm, saying she hadn't been able to urinate since the day before. She pleaded for the bottle to be uncorked, saying she would die otherwise, and was made to promise to give up her wicked witchcraft ways before it was uncorked.

The witch bottles described in the previous two paragraphs were of the kind that were made to counter spells on specific victims by individual witches, and it is unlikely you would find one of this type buried some-where. The kind you are more likely to find are those which were put into the walls or foundations of houses, to stop witches from penetrating within, and these will probably be made of stone rather than glass. Of the stone witch bottles, the most common type are those that have the image of a bearded man's head at the neck of the bottle, and these are known as Bellarmine bottles, because the face represents that of Cardinal

Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621). These Bellarmine bottles were made in Germany and have been found mainly in the eastern part of England, notably Suffolk, Essex and around old London, with a few found as far west as Hampshire and Berkshire. One that was found inside a wall of Michelham Priory, in East Sussex, contained pins and what may have been an effigy of some sort. Bellarmine bottles have been found at various places in West Sussex which, like the Priory, are all to the north of the Downs: Cuckfield, Cowfold, Ifield, Botolphs, and Horsegate. In the early nineteenth century, a local builder found Bellarmine bottles buried under the hearths that he was relaying in various houses in Rudgwick and in 1960 a few were discovered in the walls or under the hearths of houses in Pulborough, and one of these contained 200 pins which had been bent or twisted.

Another type of witch bottle is the kind that contains the captured spirit of an old witch – and a photograph of a Sussex one of these is in Ralph Whitlock's book *In Search of Lost Gods*. So, be careful if you find any ancient bottles lying around, and if you do find one, the best thing to do is to put it back, or take it to a museum. But if you think it's all hocus pocus and decide to have a look inside – well, you do so at your own risk.

Recently, while searching through old newspapers, I came across an interesting report in the *West Sussex County Times* from 1938, about the ghost of a witch who haunted Loxwood. Witches are often portrayed riding on broomsticks, but in this country those witches who rode anything at all were more likely to use sheep-hurdles, and this is what the witch of Loxwood had. She lived in Station Road, near the Dependents' Chapel, in the nineteenth century. Mr. J. Bristow, the sexton of Loxwood, once saw her ghost on a cold, clear, crisp December night in the 1890s.

'Yes,' he said. 'It is perfectly true I saw a witch astride a sheep-hurdle. People may doubt it, but I suppose I can believe what I have seen with these two eyes? She was tall and thin, and wore dark clothes and a veil. She was holding on to the front post of the hurdle with both hands, and the hurdle was going along, first one end touching the ground and then the other – like a horse galloping. Of course, I was paralysed. I could not move an inch until she got about eight yards past me.'

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

### ACROSS

7 Anna, 8 Leap, 9 Dray, 11 West Dean, 12 Gait, 13 Once, 14 Estates, 16 Bow Hill, 18 Stanmer, 21 Dog Days, 23 Neat, 26 Shed, 27 Remember, 28 Lows, 29 Adu, 30 Deer

### DOWN

1 Inlet, 2 Yapton, 3 Bluebell, 4 Eamley, 5 Brighton, 6 Lyminster, 10 Holt, 15 Borde Hill, 17 Highdown, 19 Tangmere, 20 Astride, 22 Acre, 24 Armada, 25 Lewes

## Changing Petworth (2)

Building the new Petworth Fire Station in the 1960s



Opposite.

The contractors John G. Snelling Ltd., of Chichester begin by making an access through the existing boundary wall. The long felt-roofed building with a skylight behind the hedge is

George Garland's photographic studio.

Below.

Work continues with low stone walls (from the boundary wall perhaps) acting as a foil to the typical 1960s stretcher-bond brickwork.





## The Rother Cycling Club, 1950

Jim Taylor

I wish I could now remember when I joined the Petworth-based Rother Cycling Club, 1949 or perhaps 1950. It all started for me when I noticed an unusual cycle for sale in John Caine's radio and cycle shop in Pound Street. It was a pre-war model James, a company that, operating on either side of the war, made lightweight two-stroke motor-cycles and auto-cycles. I suppose I would have called my new acquisition a 'drop-handlebar racing bike'. It had a forty degree radius curve on the spindle end of the front forks, the lower third of these being chrome plated. The James was a trifle heavy but strong enough for me to use it to carry tools and other gear; overall, a nicely balanced machine. I think I paid £15 and asked John Caine to have the frame painted a smoky blue, the mudguards being white. At the time I was doing much of my cycling with Reg Wilson who lived further up North Street from 292a, the old school house to which my family had moved in 1946-7. The Wilsons lived down the steps and past the sunken garden where the tall sunflowers grew.

I was still in the Navy and stationed at Lossiemouth when my parents moved to North Street. I had to remember not to make for Park Road where they had been before when I arrived in Petworth. I'd leave Elgin at about 8.30 in the morning, making for Aberdeen to catch the Aberdonian for Kings Cross, arriving in London at 8.00 p.m. – just time to get across London to Victoria to catch the last Portsmouth train. I'd often see the last bus disappearing under the bridge at Pulborough. It was a long walk to Petworth whatever the weather, and there were few cars about at that time of night. Only once did I get a lift, being picked up by an ex-Naval man in an Austin 7 as I was passing Stopham House. It was a fairly quiet and lonely road and the sight of Petworth from the Welldiggers has remained with me during long years away. I still had, of course, the long drag up Shimmings Hill but at 11.30 on a clear still night I could imagine it was a thousand years ago.

Cycling with Reg Wilson meant evening trips as we were both working and this meant lights, something in which, to our way of thinking, the local constabulary took an unhealthy interest considering the volume of traffic and the low speeds involved. I think that, before the war, only a front light was required – to see the road ahead. From the war onward the accent was more on others seeing the cyclist. Over a period I had a number of different systems. There was a kerosene lamp made of heavy-gauge steel and a miniature replica of a carriage light. This meant carrying a box of matches, a piece of rag to wipe the hands and regular

trimming of the wick. After that came acetylene carbide gas lights, far brighter than the oil. The light was well-made and attractive to look at, but you needed a constant check on the state of the calcium carbide and the water level of the reservoir and, of course, matches. Both systems needed several minutes to get them going. Battery lamps were still scarce and expensive.

These early lights were virtually useless, particularly on moonlit nights. As for the dynamo sets, they were more efficient and one could at least see the road but again, the early models that clicked on to the tyre added considerably to the energy demand when pedalling and, of course, on the hills gave little or no light.

In the late 1940s, there had been a great upsurge in the establishment of cycling clubs and the possibility they afforded of healthy competition between members and their clubs. There would be a great variety of available kit to go with a choice of gear ratios. I can think of variable handlebar shapes and design, pedals and toe clips, special shoes, shorts, jackets, socks, hats and sunglasses, capes, gloves and water bottles, not to mention tool kits, spare links and link clips, rivet extractors and sets, spanners of all types and sizes, puncture outfits, Schrader valve keys, dust caps and a good hand-pump. It was important to know the size, type and make of the chain and be sure of the clearances through the chain guides. For all the miles I cycled not once was I unable to make it home. We most certainly averaged with the club, Wednesday evenings or weekends, a hundred miles a week.

The longest continuous ride I made was with my friend Peter Baigent when after a day's work we set off at about 5.30 in the evening to ride 170 miles to holiday with his aunt and uncle in Birmingham. It took us about fifteen hours. We were supposed to meet up with the club at Hampton Court on the way home but bad weather held us up and we came back via Guildford. I had the impression that no one believed we had actually cycled to Birmingham and back. We'd gone up in the dark and returned in daylight. By that time I had a really good machine, a well-gearred Hobbs of Barbican while Peter was riding a heavy steel-framed Raleigh Tourer, internal three-speed hub, some twice the weight of my bike, I reckoned.

Club meetings were generally held in a large upstairs room at the Angel Hotel, although I remember one in John Caine's parents' house in Pound Street. Routes were agreed together, but over the years it would be difficult to avoid monotony. Not a problem for me as I would leave Petworth within a year. The Angel room could be used for table tennis, the odd tot, cold drinks and teas. Once a route had

been agreed, we would go out whatever the weather: Littlehampton, Worthing, Brighton, Devil's Dyke, Devil's Punchbowl, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, the Hog's Back. Once I saw the Long Man of Wilmington; it was on a trip to Eastbourne. The pier was closed in the off season. Once there was a club ball in the ballroom at the Swan Hotel.

This article is taken from notes by the late Jim Taylor at Thompson's Hospital and transcribed by the editor who has omitted some technical details and who accepts responsibility for any inaccuracies.



Above. Members of the Rother Cycling Club assemble by the Leconfield Hall in July 1950. Photograph by George Garland. Below. Head badges from Hobbs of Barbican and James Cycles.

