



T H E B U L L E T I N

No.14

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

This is the fourteenth "Bulletin" and the publication will soon be five years old. It shows no signs of dying and is probably the Society's most tangible production, read as it is by many who are not even members.

We have in the last few issues tried to make for a greater diversity of writers and the present "Bulletin" contains contributions from a number of different members.

We are always pleased to print articles or notes of Petworth interest and would even be prepared to write material given in orally.

This is your "Bulletin" - have you anything of interest to say in it?

It was with very great regret that we had to cancel the performance to be given by the Indonesian Dancers on July 1st.

The Committee wishes to apologise to those who had their evening spoiled or were in any way disappointed.

Owing to the large number of performers involved it was necessary to book a large stage and consequently a large hall.

Financially we had more than covered our expenses but in fact had sold very few tickets.

After much deliberation and consultation with Lady Fry who was the Society's contact with the Embassy it was considered that it would be lacking in courtesy to present such a small audience before The Ambassador for Indonesia who was travelling from London, with his Lady, and a number of dignitaries, to be present.

When refunding ticket monies at the Hall, those of us on duty were greatly heartened by the understanding and sympathy expressed by members of the potential audience; in fact four new members joined the Society there and then!

In conjunction with the District Council and Leconfield Estates we are engaged in endeavouring to restore the Shimmings Valley bridges, which are in a sad state of repair and are actively taking part in recovering masonry which has fallen into the stream.

An account of this project, and the Barbecue which was held to herald the commencement of the work, appears later in the Bulletin.

H.C.O.

PETWORTH RELIEF ROAD AGAIN

The vexed question of the Petworth Relief road remains very much with all of us and we can hardly leave this matter without some comment on the Society's attitude. The position of the Committee is that as a Society we cannot give a definitive opinion on the Relief Road, there being no consensus among our members. We can, as we did in our sub-committee report earlier this year, comment on features of the plan to what we feel attention should be drawn and this we have done. What we as a Society must insist on is a Public Meeting where the issues are fairly and constructively discussed and alternatives or the lack of them are made clear to everyone. It is as undesirable that the plan be rejected without adequate discussion, as it is undesirable for it to be adopted without adequate discussion. For this reason we have not allied ourselves with openly anti-Relief Road groups, nor have we actively pressed for the plan to be implemented. A desire to discuss the plan further does not mean that we endorse the plan and never has done. Petworth must make up its own mind and all we can do as a Society is to try and see that the relevant issues are fairly discussed. There are no easy answers and anyone who claims to find such easy solutions is doing the town no service. With the traffic situation remaining as it is at present Petworth is already threatened; a vote for the preservation of the status quo is no answer at all. The Relief Road itself is by any standards a drastic move and may well lead to the rerouting of additional heavy traffic through the town, nor is it clear what effect such a route would have on the commercial life of the town. Petworth Park is unique and a surface route through it, wherever placed and however disguised is not the less damaging because it is out of sight of the town. The Shimmings valley route too is very destructive of amenity. The Speed route suffers from the uncertainty as to its precise costing and uncertainty as to whether sufficient traffic would in fact use it to render it effective. Perhaps some independent costing could be made to establish once and for all whether this is in fact a feasible alternative? The town would then have to make its own decision in the light of what alternatives then remained.

PAJ/HCO

FROM "THE GREVILLE MEMOIRS"

A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV and King William IV

by Charles C. F. Greville

VOLUME 3

On Monday last I went to Petworth, and saw the finest fete that could be given. Lord Egremont has been accustomed some time in the winter to feast the poor of the adjoining parishes (women and children, not men) in the riding-house and tennis court, where they were admitted by relays. His illness prevented the dinner taking place; but when he recovered he was bent upon having it, and, as it was put off till the summer, he had it arranged in the open air, and a fine sight it was; fifty-four tables, each fifty feet long, were placed in a vast semi-circle on the lawn before the house. Nothing could be more amusing than to look at the preparations. The tables were all spread with cloths, and plates, and dishes; two great tents were erected in the middle to receive the provisions, which were conveyed in carts, like ammunition. Plum puddings and loaves were piled like cannon balls, and innumerable joints of boiled and roast beef were spread out, while hot joints were prepared in the kitchen, and sent forth as soon as the firing of guns announced the hour of the feast. Tickets were given to the inhabitants of a certain district, and the number was about 4,000; but, as many more came, the old Peer could not endure that there should be anybody hungering outside his gates, and he went out himself and ordered the barriers to be taken down and admittance given to all. They think 6,000 were fed. Gentlemen from the neighbourhood carved for them, and waiters were provided from among the peasantry. The food was distributed from the tents and carried off upon hurdles to all parts of the semicircle. A band of music paraded around, playing gay airs. The day was glorious, - an unclouded sky and soft southern breeze. Nothing could exceed the pleasure of that fine old fellow; he was in and out of the windows of his room twenty times, enjoying the sight of these poor wretches, all attired in their best, cramming themselves and their brats with as much as they could devour, and snatching a day of relaxation and happiness. After a certain time the women departed, but the park gates were thrown open: all who chose came in, and walked about the shrubbery and up to the windows of the house. At night there was a great display of fireworks, and I should think, at the time they began, not less than 10,000 people were assembled. It was altogether one of the gayest and most

beautiful spectacles I ever saw, and there was something affecting in the contemplation of that old man - on the verge of the grave, from which he had only lately been reprieved, with his mind as strong and his heart as warm as ever - rejoicing in the diffusion of happiness and finding keen gratification in relieving the distresses and contributing to the pleasures of the poor. I thought how applicable to him, mutatis mutandis, was that panegyric of Burke's on the Indian kings : "delighting to reign in the dispensation of happiness during the contracted space of human life, strained with all the reachings and graspings of a vivacious mind to extend the dominion of his bounty and to perpetuate himself from generation to generation as the guardian, the protector, the nourisher of mankind."

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AT STATION ROAD

At the beginning of July a letter was sent from our Chairman to the County Surveyor's department drawing attention to the unsatisfactory crossing facilities in Station Road.

The Committee felt, as did many other organisations in the town, that it should stand firmly behind the Primary School in asking for consideration to be given towards 'controlled warning lights' for use when children are crossing to and from school; members will recall reading in the local press of the latest "near miss accident" in June and the resulting parents petition for such lights.

The County Surveyor's reply was not encouraging; the present situation, it said, could not warrant the erection of such lights. However, since this correspondence took place, a deputation from the Primary School, led by Mr. Plummer the headmaster, has met with Mr. Pepper from the Roads and Transportation Committee and he was able to give the Petworth party a more hopeful outlook. His Committee meets this month and will report back to Mr. Plummer. If a favourable decision is arrived at the R & TC can overrule the Surveyor's Department if necessary.

Our M.P. Mr. Nelson has also made representation to Mr. Pepper with regard to the crossing facilities in Station Road so all is not yet lost.

S.R.

PLEASE NOTE that subscriptions/membership forms should be handed either to MRS. BOSS or MR. ROBERT SNELLER only.

THE BUS SHELTER, MARKET SQUARE, PETWORTH.

We have read with great concern of the application made for the erection of a Bus Shelter in front of "Wakefords" in Market Square.

To site a Shelter in this position must surely be a hazard for people having to cross a busy through road to board a bus by the Leconfield Hall, as well as an eyesore and disfigurement in a conservation area.

The Parish Council, over a period of time, have suggested a number of sites without result. The Shelter opposite "Harwoods Garage" (now Polaris) which was demolished by the District Council some two years ago, might well have been left as the site has not yet been developed.

We understand that a previous application for a Shelter in the North West Corner of the Leconfield Memorial Hall was refused and logically this would appear to be the proper site as Passengers alight and board buses from this area.

The Society has written to the Planning Officer at Chichester expressing its strong objection to the application being approved.

On a beautifully fine Wednesday afternoon last month, a large band of enthusiastic helpers arrived to assist the Parish Council and the Petworth Society, who have joined forces in the hope of restoring the footbridges over the stream in the Shimmings Valley.

The first part of the work consists of manhandling large slabs of masonry, coping stones and brickwork from the bed of the river, into which they have fallen, and placing them on an adjacent bank.

Once on the bank the stones are graduated in numerous piles to dry off and await the attention of the stone masons, who we hope will be available in the not too distant future to reconstruct and restore the three bridges involved.

Some of the dressed coping stones are of such a size and weight that it has been necessary to borrow a tractor from the Leconfield Estate Company to enable them to be hauled up on to the bank.

The "heavy brigade" under the leadership of Mr. David Sneller levered or manhandled several hundred weights of stone from the river bed, and were joined by ladies from the Estate Office who paddled in the stream, sank knee deep in mud, and hurled rocks with the utmost energy onto nearby banks.

During the afternoon a lot of brushwood and saplings, together with quite large trees which had grown round and through the bridges, was removed and made into a bonfire which was subsequently lit by the Chairman of the Parish Council - Mr. Bert Speed.

Nearby he "barbecued" pounds of sausages which he had generously brought along for the helpers.

It was a most satisfactory evening: pleasant company and a great deal of hard work was put in resulting in the removal of a ton or two of stone which now awaits the next phase of the work.

Much remains to be done. Anyone prepared to help with this really worthwhile project should contact Mr. David Sneller - "DAVIDS", THE SQUARE, Petworth.

H.C.O.

WILDLIFE SECTION

On Wednesday 2nd August a small party visited Bignor Hill for an evening walk but owing to miserable weather only a short distance was covered and little of great interest was seen.

The outing on Wednesday 9th August along the banks of the Rother, although delayed by a thunderstorm, was far more successful and attended by about twenty members. Many plants were in flower including some rarities. Caterpillars of the cinnebar moth were feeding on ragwort which this year seems to be so numerous as to make some fields a sea of gold.

Sand Martins and swallows were feeding over the water and swifts, the last of which were to leave within the week, were doing their aerobatics. A common sandpiper on migration flew off from the river bank and a grass snake slid into a tussock when it realised it was surrounded by many feet. We hope to arrange further outings during the winter.

D.S.

LOCAL HISTORY AND RECORDS

Soon after I last wrote we gave our second large show of photographs in the committee rooms of the Leconfield Hall in conjunction with the Petworth Horticultural Society's Summer Show held in the Upper Hall. As in the previous year the joint venture created a good deal of interest. We attempted, with a measure of success, to pin down a series of unidentified snapshot negatives coming from soon after the end of the first world war. Identification is not easy over such a long gap particularly when some of the photographs may not be local at all but there were a number of positive identifications and hints and tantalisingly some people were recognised and remembered although their names could not be called to mind.

If numbers warrant I shall give a series of ten informal lectures on "Petworth over six centuries" at The Petworth Centre for Leisure Activities, beginning at the Herbert Shiner School on Monday, September 18th. We would hope to give two slide shows at the beginning of the New Year and a smaller exhibition in the Public Library at about the same time.

The Handwriting Group continues its regular meetings. A note by one of the members Miss Elizabeth Johnson on the culture of pears in the mid-sixteenth century appears in this Bulletin. This interesting text comes from PHA 1630 a miscellaneous folio from which come also accounts for the building of a fulling-mill at Haslingbourne, another text we have recently read. More difficult but extremely challenging was a medieval medical almanac found in the Cowfold Churchwardens' book. This dates from about 1485 and is the earliest piece of writing we have read so far. A crucial document for the history of the enclosure of Petworth Park is PHA7407 an affidavit of 1608 by William James of Upperton testifying that as leader of the protesting tenants he had received money from the servants of the Earl of Northumberland to put through the high court of Chancery a false decree favourable to the Earl and prejudicial to the interests of the tenants.

P.A.J.

GROWING PEARS IN THE MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The pear, in 17th century England seems to have been as exotic a delicacy, and as demanding of care and attention, as say, hot house grapes in the twentieth. In the Petworth House Archives we

have full instructions for the "true and singular manner" in which the Bon Christian pear must be planted and cared for, from an unknown gardener whose account some 2½ folio pages long is preserved in the miscellaneous file PH. 1630.

First, last and all the time, the tree must be protected from worms, who find it particularly delicious. To this end, it should be planted "in a place much frequented" and "have the aire of dwellings - though if this is not possible, it will survive "from dwelling houses" as long as it is well protected from the north and east wind, is planted in tender, soft soil, and in the sun, for "these trees are lovers of the full south sonne, and will have no interposition before them".

The blossom demands constant attention: not only must fires be lit to protect it from the frost, but the tree must be violently shaken after rain so that no drop of water remains within the flowers "or top of the button". And this must be done immediately, and "he which loveth this tree will not feare to rise in the night and doe the like", or - more to the point - "cause his servants to do the same". A strong argument for planting the tree very close to the house indeed.

By the time the fruit has formed "of the biggness of your fingers ende", the worms are already at work and each pear must be examined for "little blacke spottes or staynes", each of which must be pricked with a pin to kill the worm within. In August, the tree itself is under attack and any young wood that looks dead must be cut off, "and seeke well in the pith of the said twigge" to find the worm itself, which otherwise will eat through into the body of the tree, killing the tree and growing as big as your finger. This must be done again in August. Meanwhile, the bark of old trees - for "this tree growing old makes a thick bark" - must be scraped and "you shall finde a greate number of worms which infinitlie importune the faire tree".

In November and December the new wood must be cut back "within 2.3 or 4 buttons neare to the heele of the old woode", since "it is not needfull to lett the tree mounte high".

In October, the pears are ready to be picked: "cautiously observe" to touch them only by the stalk, and store them in a cupboard "where neither wynde nor aiere can enter" and where they must be left for another month. And at last they are ready to be eaten - "the best and most pleasant fruit in the world".

Elizabeth Johnson.

NEW MEMBERS

Apologies to the following new members who were not included in the last issue.

Mrs. S.V. Newbolt, Rectory Gate Cottage, Petworth.
Mr. and Mrs. L. Rowdon, Angel Corner, Petworth.
Mrs. P. Sadler, 64 Hampers Green, Petworth.
Mrs. L. Saunders, 65 Hampers Green, Petworth.
New Members joined since last Bulletin.
Mrs. Ashton, 7 Greenfield, Sutton, Pulborough.
Mr. and Mrs. P. Elston, Gorehill Lodge, Petworth.
Mrs. M.K. Gemmell, Edgehill, Byworth, Petworth.
Mr. and Mrs. A.W. Hastings, Manor Farm, Bedham, Fittleworth.
Mrs. E. Hunter, Quarry Hill, Grove Lane, Petworth.
Mrs. H. Randall, Gobles Cottage, Foxhill, Petworth.
Mrs. J. Simpson, 14 Grove Lane, Petworth.
Mr. and Mrs. R. Taylor, Benges Cottage, Upwaltham, Nr. Petworth.
Mrs. R. Watson, Rose Cottage, Barlavington, Petworth.
Mrs. Welman, Haslands, Barlavington, Petworth.
Mr. and Mrs. C. Wood, Brinksole House, Petworth.
Mr. M.D. Young, Deer Tower, Shillinglee, Chiddingfold, Surrey.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. HARRY TREE PART II

BREWERIES, CRICKET, PETWORTH PARISH COUNCIL, ATHLETICS

In the seventies and onward there were three breweries in the district ... two in Petworth and one at Tillington, at the Horse Guard. In Petworth the two breweries were at The Swan, owned by Charlie Dempster whose brewer was Jim Denyer and in High Street owned by Mr. Manning Milton. Mr. Tree says, "It was nice to walk through the town in those days and be able to smell the malt making. We got good home brewed beer at 2d. a pint then, and in Petworth it was generally declared that anyone having two pints of Dempster's "fivepenny" would want to fight all and sundry!"

Petworth had a fine cricket club in those days. They used to play on the top ground near the House. The present ground down by the Cricket Lodge on the Tillington Road was made later. In those days the Petworth Club used to play two day matches against such strong sides as Esher, Brighton Brunswick, Reigate Priory, Brighton Club and Ground and Horsham. Among the celebrated cricket coaches who used to be engaged at Petworth were: Jack Hearn of Middlesex, Alfred Shaw of Sussex and Notts and Scotton also of Notts. They

used to coach the young gentlemen at the big house, and any promising local lads as well.

While he was employed at Petworth Station, Harry Tree was elected a member of the first Petworth Parish Council, under the chairmanship of Lord Leconfield. This would be in the mid-nineties. His Lordship always arranged the time for Harry to attend the meetings when off duty, and always asked him to sit next to him "because" as Master Tree says, "he often wanted to ask me questions about the trains and so on". Through a request made to Lord Leconfield at that time by Master Tree the people of Petworth were granted nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of ground from Frog Farm for use as allotment gardens. The cinema at Petworth was built on part of this land, but part is still used for allotments.

Petworth boasted a good athletic club and sports were held in the Park every Easter Monday.

(Concluded)

We would have liked a contribution from someone on Q13/1 about strange or uncanny happenings in the area, or Q13/5 the Tudor Revels in Petworth Park in June 1938. One or two members have said that they recall the latter. Would anyone like to produce a short note on either of these questions for the next Bulletin?

Q13/4 "pickaxe" ploughing remains for the moment a mystery.

On Q13/2 Mrs. McCann, the archivist at Petworth House writes:

Football was quite commonly played in the late 16 to 17th centuries, and people were often presented to the church courts for playing in churchyards, or during service time. In 1614 one Francis Stradling of Madehurst was prosecuted for selling beer at "a meeting of footballing ... betwixt some youth of Slindon and our parish of Madehurst whereupon the Sabbath day was prophaned and many were absent from evening prayer". Stradling's defence was that he did not usually sell beer on a Sunday, but he had been specially asked to brew $\frac{1}{2}$ bushell of malt for the meeting. I do not know how much beer that would make, but the football match seems to have been quite a big occasion. It would be quite a primitive form of football, I should think, using an inflated bladder as a ball.

On Q13/3 Mrs. McCann thinks the map is related to PHA3586 and dates from C1725-1745. "Mr. Duke" should be read as "my Lord Duke", the Duke of Somerset having bought Norman Place in 1722.

TOWNS MEETING IN CONNECTION WITH
RELIEF ROAD

As we go to press we have learned that the Parish Council propose to call a meeting at the Herbert Shiner School by mid-October.

Notice will appear in the local Press, but we take this opportunity to urge our members to attend and avail themselves of the chance of making their views known.

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 or residence, who is interested in furthering the objects of the Society.

The annual subscription is 50p (minimum) for each adult member, or 25p for those between 13 and 18 years of age. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:-

President - Colonel A.H. Maude, Stone House, Petworth.

Chairman - Mr. H.C. Oakes, Woodpeckers, Sheepdown Close.

Vice-Chairman - Mr. P.A. Jerrome, Trowels, Pound Street, Petworth.

Hon. Secretary - Mrs. B.G. Johnson, Glebe Cottage, Bartons Lane, Petworth. (Tel. 42226)

Hon. Asst. Sec. - Mr. G.P.D. Adams, Byworth Rough, Petworth.

Hon. Treasurer - Mr. R.A. Sneller, 16 Littlecote,
Petworth. (Tel. 42507)

Hon. Membership Sec. - Mrs. J. Boss, North Street, Petworth.

Committee - Mr. J.W. Davidson, Lord Egremont,
Mrs. Sonia Rix, Lady Shakerley,
Mrs. C.M. Sheridan, Mr. D.S. Sneller,
Mr. P.M. Synge, Mr. K.C. Thompson.

