

Hus Exall

The Petworth Society

Miles Costello
Petworth
Collection



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Cover design by Jonathan Newdick drawn from a photograph by Walter Kevis. It shows Old Coultershaw Mill burned down in 1923.

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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 £2.50. Single or Double one Bulletin delivered. Postal £3.50. Overseas £4.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:-

Chairman - Mr. P.A. Jerrome, Trowels, Pound Street,
Petworth. (Tel. 42562)

Vice-Chairman - Mr. K.C. Thompson, 18 Rothermead, Petworth.

Hon. Bulletin Sec. - Mrs. V. Sadler, 52 Wyndham Road, Petworth.
assisted by Mrs. J.M. Hamilton and Mrs. D.
Franklyn

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Petworth. (Tel. 42507)

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Mrs. Julia Edwards, Mr. E. Vincent.

Hon. Press Officer - Miss D.S. Gundry, Woodmans, St. Mary's
Drive, Fittleworth.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The summer quarter is usually the quietest of the four and the summer programme by now well tested over the years. The visit to Miss Courtauld's was much enjoyed by those who went and made the more interesting because the gardens were at a slightly later stage than when we usually go. Anne's Gardens Walk again lived up to its reputation of perhaps the most popular event in the Society's programme. We did try to make it a little more compact this year and of course some of the gardens were different as they will be again next year. Jumbo's Chillinghurst and Stag Park walk, while a variation on a well-known theme, included much that we had not seen before and we were of course very fortunate with the weather. J's Bignor walk and Jumb's Rotherbridge walk are to come as I write. The Society plate, perhaps the most attractive of the three, is again selling quite well while the new season's Christmas Cards featuring a drawing of East Street by Rendle Diplock are now available as are also a limited number of the two previous issues.

The monthly meetings begin again in October with a visit from Mr. Len Clark area chairman of the National Trust to talk about the work of the National Trust in the southern area. In November Richard Cox shows his film in Petworth while in December Fred Shepherd returns with his latest film assisted in this case by Martin Muncaster. I should think none of these three gentlemen need much introduction from me.

Peter. 1st August 1984.

P.S. Please note that the adult education class on the History of Petworth begins on Tuesday 25th September for ten weeks. Enrolment for this and other courses is at the Herbert Shiner School 12th September 7.00 to 8.30 p.m.

BOOK REVIEW:

TONY WALES : THE WEST SUSSEX VILLAGE BOOK £4.95
COUNTRYSIDE BOOKS, NEWBURY BERKS.

As Tony Wales, one of our more industrious members, notes in his introduction there is no shortage of Sussex guide-books although I suspect the golden age of the genre was the Edwardian era when travel was becoming easier but remained something of an adventure. This book however determinedly avoids the well-worn details of architecture, natural history or even the best way to get there and

concentrates as the author says "on the traditions, folklore and byways of social history of the villages of West Sussex". The book turns out to be an absolute treasure-trove of curious and intriguing information. Adversane is the first village and we meet Gaus Carley the blacksmith whose memoirs "A Sussex Blacksmith, written by himself" and published in 1963 are now something of a collector's item. The Burpham entry tells of The Rev. Tickner Edwards author of "Tansy" and "The Lore of the Honey-bee", a very well-known writer in his time and whose books are much sought-after by collectors. Nearer home the long Fittleworth entry reflects among other things Tony Wales' friendship with the late George Attrill, a friendship he touched upon when he spoke to us in March in the Leconfield Hall. The Tillington entry tells of the lore of Hungers Lane, and the corona on the church, while the Graffham entry retells a story from this Bulletin among other matters. Petworth fails to qualify - not being a village but I wonder what Tony would have to say of us. Perhaps he could be persuaded to break the village mould and do a special Petworth entry for this Bulletin! Be that as it may, the West Sussex Village Book is a beguiling read and the text is complemented by some excellent pen and ink drawings by David Thelwell artist son of Norman Thelwell. The book is available at any local bookshop or can be ordered by them.

Peter



An old drawing of Tillington Church

J'S BULLETIN WALK

Quite a short walk this time, probably less than 3 miles, a bit hilly in places but the lovely views make the climb well worth it. To reach our starting point we need a car and leave Petworth by the Chichester road, over Duncton Hill past the farm on the bend and on for about ½ mile, on passing a flint cottage on our left we can pull over to the right and park between two farm tracks. Taking the track to the right we pass to the right hand side of the private drive with the cattle grid and after about 200 yards turn right off the South Down Way onto a footpath running parallel with the main road and back towards Duncton Hill, we follow this path for some distance keeping straight on at the turn right and then about 50 yards further on leave the well defined track and bear right at the sign up the hill past some rather unsightly piles of rubbish and on into the field turning immediately left along the headland for about 100 yards and then straight on up the hill into the wood. This wood consists of many different types of trees from sombre yew to lovely white-beam and groves of hazel and we keep to the path as it wends its way through them and so out onto the chalky track. At this point we should turn left but it is worth walking a short way to the right and climbing the bank to look at the view out over the quarry to Petworth and far beyond.

Now back to our route again up the hill passing Bishop's Clump on our right and keeping straight on the lower track we climb steadily upward until we reach the Tegleaze sign-post bringing us back onto the South Downs Way. Let's pause a while here to get our breath back and to take in the wonderful view across the Rother Valley to Bexley Hill and Black Down and way in the distance the North Downs. On resuming we turn left from our route onto the South Downs Way and follow this down the hill and back to the car. Although all of this walk is along the edge of farm land, the area to our left as we make our way up the hill is unspoiled and in fact a real tangle of undergrowth and trees, ideal for wild life and flowers, it is not a long walk so of course there is time to pause and look around, in the Spring this is one of the rare places that the white violet still flourishes.

OF WELLS AND CATAPULTS

I was already able to use a catapult when I left school at 13 to work as chicken boy at Mr. and Mrs. Walker's at Standlands. The

pay was five shillings a week including Sundays. Mr. Walker would say, "Payne, I want you to kill a chicken today", point out which one and leave me to knock him over with my catapult and take him back up the house.

We used to make our own bullets for the catapult using a mould. I had a beautiful one which would make twelve bullets at a time. It had two handles and room for six bullets on either side. You'd close it up and pour the hot lead along the line, then when you'd filled the mould up you got hold of the handles and pulled them and that cut the tops of the bullets. They then dropped out. You would have six of one size as big as a glass alley - the round piece of glass they used to use to seal the tops of lemonade bottles, while the others (smaller) were the size of a marble - a little bigger than an aniseed ball. I would take the smaller size ones out when it was moonlight, looking for pheasants. My customer in Tillington would be ready for me. "Have you got my boots?" she'd say - you had to be careful, people had their ears open then as much as they do now. "Only the one", I'd say if I'd hadn't caught a pair. Even one was worth 2/6d and a brace 5/-. She'd go down the cellar for a jug of parsnip wine and after two glasses of that, helped on by beer at the Horseguards at fourpence a pint I'd have to drag myself home up Upperton Hill like the proverbial "gentleman". Pheasants as I say were five shillings a brace and I remember being down Willett Lane once on a dark misty rainy night, armed with the catapult and glass alleys saved out of lemonade bottles. I saw two pheasants on the bough of an oak tree. I thought this was too good to be true and that I would never hit one in the drizzle. It was a terrible night. Well I fired and dropped the first one off the bough and the other one just went on sitting there, I fired again, missed and lost the alley, then dropped him too with another shot. I stuffed them both into a paper bag and set off for Tillington. A good night's work. A catapult didn't make any noise but guns that came later were a very different thing and could soon have the keeper out. Charlie Wilson and myself were known locally as "Spot'em" and "Catch'em". He'd see it and I would shoot it.

Another way of making bullets was to heat up spare lead at home and operate a little mould making one bullet at a time or you might get a pencil, stick it into some sand, melt the lead into the sand then when it got cold take it out and cut the pieces off as you would with a swissroll. The moulds could be bought from shops as I believe you can still buy catapult elastic now. Everyone had catapults then: I remember fifteen of us from Boxalls working out at Didling putting

up some cattle sheds. Charlie Wakeford, George Gardner and many others. It was 1932 because when we came home from work there were picnickers along the road and they shouted out us, "Who's won the Derby?" "April the 5th" we said and they all threw their hats up in the air, they must have had a bet on the winner.

This place at Didling was absolutely alive with rabbits and twelve of us had catapults. Clicky Clark didn't have one; he had a hammer with a very long handle and he was deadly with it - he could hit a rabbit at quite long range. During lunchtime we'd go out looking for rabbits - certainly not at any other time: discipline was strict on the building and you could very easily be sacked if you were at all out of order. I was walking with Jim Dummer and a rabbit jumped out a good fifty yards in front of us. I had an iron nut with me as ammunition, fired and hit him on the back of the head. "I've never seen anything like that - it was a good fifty yards". Jim said. It just shows you how effective a catapult could be. Almost everyone would come home with a rabbit; the place was absolutely alive with them. You didn't spend your lunch-hour sitting around doing nothing. I have also hit rabbits with a catapult from the back of a moving lorry going home.

When we built this place at Didling, they'd started getting out the foundations before they'd located water which was a bit risky - water had to be located in those days before you could build. I said to Charlie Wakeford and Dick Gardner, "I'll find where the water is". "Don't be so silly", they said, "Jim Boxall's coming up this afternoon bringing a man to find the water." Well I went to the woods nearby and cut a hazel-stick with a fork in it and I walked over the site. I'd spent some time doing this and was just thinking, "There's no water here", when suddenly the stick started to move - I couldn't hold it down at all. There was obviously plenty of pressure down there. Now Charlie Wakeford and Charlie Wilson had a go but the stick wouldn't move for them at all. "Alright", they said, "We'll drive a post in, banged right down into the ground so that no one can see it, and wait for the afternoon". Jim Boxall in fact brought up Mr. Parker from North Street, the council water man. He didn't have my hazel twig of course but cut another one for himself and they didn't notice our stake driven down into the ground, but they located the water precisely where the post was.

Once they'd found the water they'd call in the welldiggers - two men who began to dig and reached a depth of some twenty-five feet. When they got this far they had to get out of the hole quickly as there was so much water. When Jim Boxall came over to see if they'd got

into water. Charlie Wakeford told him they certainly had. The two diggers said to Jim Boxall, "Do you want to go down guvnor and have a look?" - they had a well-kerb in place already and a small seat which could be lowered down, the well mouth would be some three foot or three foot six in diameter. The joke was that when Jim Boxall got down there, the diggers shouted, if you want to come up guvnor you'd better shout "beer". So when he came up he had to go down to the pub and fetch some beer for them.

Well diggers would dig down so far, four or five feet to find a nice level, then they'd start their brickwork and work up to the top - putting iron spikes in all round for footholds. As they deepened the well they'd take another four or five feet and start again from the bottom to where they had begun the first time. The bricks would always meet because they weren't being laid straight anyway, the walls of the well being of course rounded.

When we were working at Codmore Hill, Publorough, Mr. Trussler was the local well-digger and the new Codmore Mill well was a great depth, some ninety feet. Trussler said to me one day, "Do you want to go down there? Get on that seat if you do and when you're down there and have had enough we'll pull you out again". It was an eerie feeling being ninety feet down and looking upward to see the well mouth just a patch of daylight so far away, but it was nice too to see a well newly-made and admire the neatness of the brickwork. Trussler had a mate to help him but basically did the work himself, he'd get so much a foot for digging it out and bricking it and he probably did quite well. When you cranked with your bucket to get water the process was always known as "dip and deeve" but you don't hear the expression nowadays.

Jack Payne was talking to Audrey Grimwood.

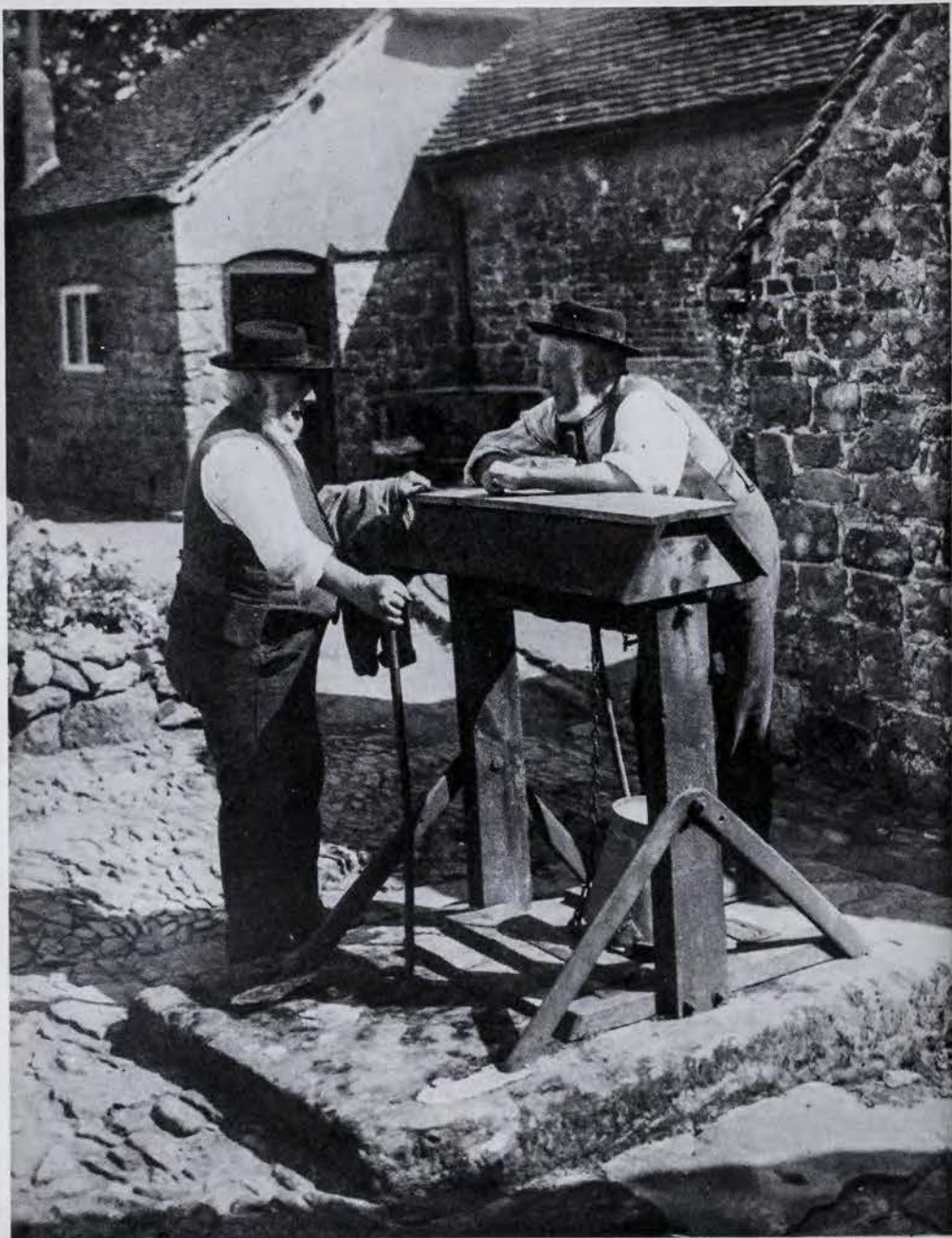
A SHEPHERD'S DAUGHTER ; I BARLAVINGTON

My memories take me back to the heart of Sussex, right at the foot of the downs, at the turn of the century and where I spent all my childhood.

Being one of eight children, I was never short of company or something to do, enjoying the simple things in life, but also having our chores to do for mother, and try as we would to get out of them sometimes, we all soon found it did not pay, for we would have an extra one to do the following day. Mother always seemed to be busy, either housework of sewing, but took it all in her stride.



In the woods at Kirdford 1933.
Photograph by G.G. GARLAND.



A chat at the well. 1936.
Photograph by G.G. GARLAND.

She was one of a large family herself, born in 1870, was the eldest of twelve, "there always seemed to be a baby in our house", she said. they were a very united family and she never tired of talking about them, and, as children, we all loved to hear it. Her own home was in Staffordshire, and as they left school, the boys were all apprenticed to a trade, and the girls went into service living in.

Mother started work in a large house as scullery maid, and told us how nervous she was at first, and how, when she asked the kitchen maid how to do something, she replied "find out, same as I had to!" However, she must have coped alright, for she later became kitchen maid, and eventually, cook, working in the same family for sixteen years until she married in 1900.

Soon after becoming cook, the daughter of the house was to be married, and coming down to Sussex to live. She asked mother if she would come there too and be her cook. At first she refused, thinking how homesick she would be, but then one of her sisters agreed to go as parlour maid, so she then accepted the job.

Her sister soon became homesick and returned to Staffordshire after a few months, mother sticking it out, although she said if she had had wings she would have flown home many a time, she missed her family so much.

My father was a Devonshire man, living in his early days near Exeter. He only had one brother and one sister, and as the youngest, he was the last to leave home after both his parents had died. Then he moved to Sussex and came to lodge with his married brother, who was gardener at the house where my mother was cook. His brother and sister-in-law were very kind to mother, knowing how far away she was from home, and told her she was welcome there on her days off whenever she liked, and that was how she come to meet up with father.

He also became a gardener at the big house, and when they eventually married, settled down to live in the cottage next door to his brother.



The big house at Barlavington.

He loved to talk about the first time mother took him up to her home to meet her people. In those days, in Staffordshire, they ate the sweet before the meat course at lunch and mother had forgotten to tell him this. They arrived there right on lunch time and when the sweet was brought on to the table and handed round, he thought they must have got tired of waiting for them and had started before they arrived and eaten the first course. He took a very dim view of this and when they asked him if he would like another helping, gladly accepted. Then came the surprise, when it was followed by the main course. Unfortunately, he had eaten so much already he did not want much of that.

It was a family joke for a very long time and father had such an amusing way of describing it.

It was into this setting of large families and family service that I was born in 1907.

My first recollection of my childhood was when I was about four years old and my fifth sister was born. I also had one brother who was the

eldest, and twin sisters. My eldest sister told me how she had to walk about two and a half miles through the fields to the next village to take a note to the nurse, who read it, and then told my sister to sit down while she put her coat on, as she was going back with her. She had no idea why she was going back with her, although she was nine and a half years old, however, as they were walking back the nurse handed her little black bag to my sister to hold everytime she had to climb a stile, saying, "take great care how you hold it as there is a little baby in there for your mother". My sister was thrilled and wished there were a lot more stiles.

I also remember her saying how father told her that he went and bought the twins himself, and brought them home in a trug basket, one sitting up each end. These were the days when children actually believed such stories and our parents were only too happy to get away with such a simple explanation.

In those days the nurse used to live in the first week, and we did not like this very much as she was rather strict, or so we thought. She would not let us go upstairs to see our new sister as often as we would have liked, and said mother was to rest, but we understood she was only staying in bed to keep the baby warm. Afternoons she always went for a little walk and then we would watch our chance and pop upstairs quick before she returned.

My brother was not very pleased about the new sister and said "why don't you buy me a baby brother instead of so many sisters." He finished up with seven sisters, no brothers, and when he eventually got married he had three daughters so there was no male to carry on the name, as father's brother only had one daughter and a son, that was killed in the war.

My brother was very good at playing games when we were young, and used to take us for lovely rides on a long plank on wheels. Several of us would sit behind him hanging on to one another. We nearly always finished up in the ditch at the bottom of the hill, but we still enjoyed it, and he would make us super houses to play in by sticking sticks into the ground at intervals, forming a square, then thread dried grass or straw in and out like thatching, to form walls, leaving an opening for the doorway; then would cover the top with a piece of galvanise or sacks for a roof, and we would make mud pies in tin lids, put them in the sun to dry, then turn them out. Sometimes mother would give us some real food if she had any to spare.

They were hard times for our parents, no money for luxuries, but everyone was the same and they expected no other.

My brother and elder sister used to walk to the nearest farm to get the milk every morning before going to school, this was about a mile away, then there was another two and a half miles walk to school through the fields and farther still when the fields were flooded and they had to go round the roads.

The roads in those days were all made up rough with flint stones and it was a common sight to see men sitting by the roadside with a big hammer and a pile of flints, breaking them up ready to spread on the roads. It was all horses and carts, with traps or waggonettes for the gentry to ride about in.

Our father worked on the local farm and we used to love riding in the farm carts or on the horses back on its way back to the stable at night.

There were only about twelve houses in this little village (or rather hamlet), in one of them just up the road lived an elderly lady, well she appeared elderly to us, and she sold sweets and a few other odds and ends, though the only things we children were interested in were the sweets.

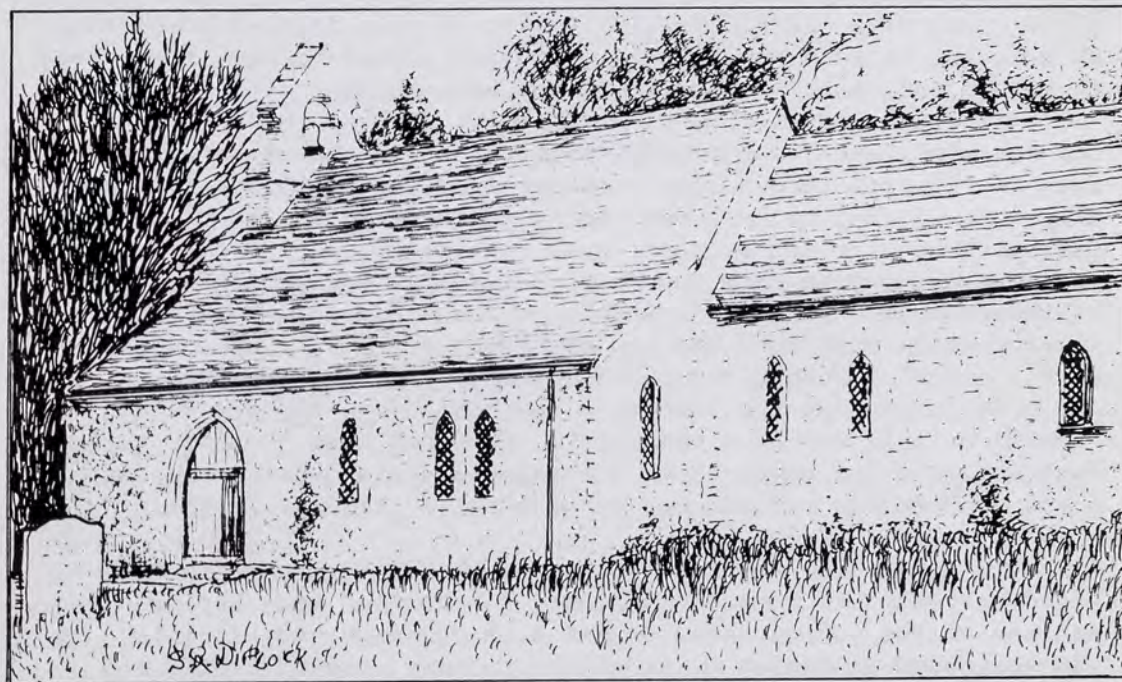
Our pocket money was usually a farthing a week, occasionally a halfpence. We would sometimes spend it there, but mostly we would wait for the carrier man who used to come round once a week taking orders to get goods from the nearest town of Petworth, five miles away. He had a horse and cart and carried a large tin box with shelves in it containing sweets, including some lovely big mint humbugs, we usually chose them because they lasted longer. Another favourite was aniseed balls which kept changing colour as we sucked them and we would keep taking them out of our mouths to show one another what colour they were. I remember losing my farthing one week playing in a stream near by, so no sweets for me that week.

We had no water taps and had to cross the road, dip our water out of a stream with a bucket, carry it indoors and pour into a red glazed pan kept for that purpose. It was filled up fresh everyday and kept for drinking and cooking. Whenever possible rain water was collected for washing purposes.

One day, while we were living there, the gipsy lady made her usual call with her basket of clothes pegs, saucepan lids etc. and when

mother answered the door she asked her if she had any old baby clothes to spare, she usually had a baby in a sling on her back. Mother said she would pop upstairs and have a look, telling us to stay down there, but after mother had gone the gipsy told us to go up and help her look, which we did. When we all came back the gipsy lady had gone, and so had the rabbit which was hanging up in our scullery ready for our dinner the next day.

Mother used to go to a house about a mile away every Monday to do the peoples' washing, the oldest children looked after the younger ones, but she always took the youngest with her, and we would go through the fields to meet her when it was time for her to return, (during holiday times). We especially liked doing this in the fruit season as we had to go through a large orchard of lovely apples. Mother also cleaned the local church once a week and some of us would go along with her to clean the brass for her.



Barlavington Church

Although there were three houses joining where we lived, there were only two lavatories between us, and right at the top of the garden, as they nearly always were, we shared one with next door.

We also had a lot of plum trees in the garden and it was a great temptation to us to pick them before they were properly ripe, and father would often come indoors saying, "which of you little squirts have been at them plums", and we would all try and look innocent.

When the youngest was about two years old she got lost, we all searched the house and garden, including the neighbours, and across the road where the stream ran, with no luck. Eventually she was found just over the garden hedge lying on the grass verge fast asleep and none the worse.

She had another narrow escape one day when my brother was giving her a ride in a box on wheels with handles he had made. He was tearing along like the mad brains he was in those days, and going round a sharp corner, when suddenly he ran into a stone which tipped the box right over, with himself falling on top of it. Instead of getting up quickly, he laid on it while he peeped around to see if her head was poking out, but luckily it was not and she was not badly hurt.

One day when father was poorly, my brother and eldest sister had to walk to Petworth to get some medicine from the doctors. By the time they were walking back it was beginning to get dark and he told my sister to be sure and keep her eyes shut tight or else the owls would swoop down and peck them out. She was really scared and did so, clutching hold of him for guidance, but she did not realise until later that he must have had his eyes open to see the way, (another of his jokes). Mother had promised to go and meet them knowing it would be getting dark before they reached home. She was walking through a field which we took for a short cut when going to town, when suddenly she bumped into something and discovered it was a horse much to her relief, but it gave her a terrible fright.

We had a lodger for a while, a keeper, he was very good to us, we would envy him his cooked breakfast of bacon and eggs and he often had one of the younger ones on his knee, giving them tit bits. He was very good at making Corn Dollies, a very ancient craft, and taught my brother how to make them, but it was not till years later that he took it up as a hobby himself, and also taught it to some of us.

While we were still in this little village my brother and one of my sisters became ill and it turned out to be Polio, or Infantile paralysis as it was then called. My brother came home from school first complaining of a bad head and feeling poorly, then two days later my sister did the same. It affected only one of their legs thank goodness, but for a long time they could not walk, in fact the doctor told mother that they would probably never walk again. I have vague recollections of doctors coming and giving them massage and mother would sit them in the garden on a blanket by the faggot stack when the weather was fine and encourage them to pull themselves up. They also went away for a time to have special treatment, and my brother had irons on his leg for a time. It must have been very worrying for our parents, but thank God they eventually recovered and could walk as well as the rest of us.

Mrs. E.J. Pentecost (to be continued)

PETWORTH CINEMA (9)

The Coming of Electricity in 1930.

In the year 1930 I could see electricity coming to the town over fields, hedges and ditches, electricity high tension poles were being erected and getting nearer to us each day. I suppose I was more interested than most other Traders in the town as I depended so much on electricity to run my Cinema business and I made weekly enquiries to the authorities concerned, asking if they could give me some idea of a date when the mains would be coming also the nearest point from the mains that I could be connected to. All they could say from the layout plan was that the main transformer would be situated in the centre of the town, probably The Golden Square. It seemed ages waiting before workmen started to dig up pavements in the streets for cable laying etc., and my cinema being out of town it could possibly be weeks before I would be connected. The Hall would have to be re-wired to take A/.C. mains. I had a different idea in mind however. To save this wiring expense I could do away with my two motor Petrol engines and substitute for them an electric motor. I could then use my existing wiring in the Hall with electricity from my own dynamo having a low voltage of 70 volts. Workmen started laying cables in Pound Street, and it appeared the nearest point that I could be connected up, would be some 30ft away to the Cinema boundary. In the meantime, I decided to go to London to buy a 400V Three Phase 6HP motor with starting gear. We then started to wire the shed with steel conduit and other fittings and in order not to be held up I paid £17.0.0. for this Brooks motor, and extra for

the starting gear, which was delivered to me the following week. While waiting for the cable to be connected I temporarily disconnected the Douglas engine from the concrete bed and replaced it with this motor. I had to make up some metal packing strips, also a bush to line the inside of the driving flange to fit the motor shaft and key and to channel out holes in the existing concrete bed to cement the holding down bolts for the motor. It took me two week-ends dismantling and fitting the engine back again before I was satisfied there would be no hold up when the time came for the change-over. The following week the Electricity Surveyor came to see me, and measured the distance for the cable laying and a price for connecting, with the engineers testing report. During the cable laying it rained and rained every day, the trenches soon became waterlogged, and work was stopped for several days before much progress was made. It was several days before the weather improved so that the work resumed again. These were anxious days for me. I wanted the change over made to this new power unit before Christmas, so I set myself a target to do just this. After cable tests, I was connected up and ready for everything. The following Sunday morning with my spare time willing helpers again, we dismantled the engine, and placed the Motor on to the concrete bed, and inserted the 4" long bolts which lined up with the Dynamo driving flange. We found that some packing pieces were needed to bring it in line with the dynamo. As this was a floating type of coupling, it was unnecessary to be precise within an 1/8". We soon had the motor coupled up and in position, and we left it overnight for the cement to dry out. The next day being Monday, after lunch, we decided to start the motor. I had the pleasure of being the first to do this, with a sharp downward movement on the handle the motor started to rotate and to gather speed. The next thing to do, was to give it a full load and to strike both arcs in 70 volts 68 amps. The motor responded immediately, so going back into the engine shed, all that I could hear was the humming of the motor and dynamo, this was a sound we had never heard before, because of the usual engine noise and exhaust. The next thing to do was to buy a couple of A/C projector motors, after a scout round the various Cinema equipment stores we found what we wanted, and with some hard hand drilling, I soon had both motors securely fixed, with new wiring for A.C. mains. What a blessing this was, no more car batteries to keep charged, a small D/C converter took the place of the 10 volt exide glass cells another less charging board required. I left the only one car battery at the stage end which supplied the current for energising the speaker field coils. I cannot remember what happened to all those glass exide cells: they were in such excellent

condition but nobody would buy them now as the mains would gradually be creeping in every village around. Things were on the move again so I started to get down to some peaceful business. All that remained now, was to be able to book the films I wanted, but being a small concern I could not possibly just pick and choose, some films had to go in to make up a deal.

T.S. COLLINS (to be continued)

A LECONFIELD ESTATE CHILDHOOD

Memories of Childhood on The Leconfield Estate

I don't know the exact year my father started to work as a gamekeeper on the Leconfield Estate, but I do know it was before 1920 as that was the year I was born at Chillinghurst. We moved to Kirdford two years later so I was too young to remember anything about our stay there. I have been told since that I had a lucky escape once when my brother was pushing me up and down the garden path in my pram and the postman arrived with a parcel "a rare event". The pram was forgotten and he ran indoors. I went hurtling down the path ending upside down in the potatoes. They tell me Dad was most annoyed about his potatoes but my guess is there was more to it than that.

It was quite a usual thing on the Estate to be moved around and a card would come through the post saying that his Lordship wishes you to move and you will be told later as to where and when. Our next home was at Bridgefoot, Kirdford, where we stayed for five years. I can remember going to the creamery there for skimmed milk and also watching the blacksmith at work near the lovely old church where my three brothers were in the choir. I first started school at Kirdford. The two Miss Blyths were the teachers then, and mother had to go and see them once as one of my brothers was having nightmares over a subject called handwork. It turned out to be knitting and where he had got into such a state the steel needles and wool had gone rusty and stuck together. Miss Blyth said it was necessary that he learnt it, so mother said she hoped he would not have to earn his living at knitting. Eventually he was given something else to do. In 1927 we moved to Pallingham Quay. The house was a long way down a lane then up the side of a ploughed field into a wood. My mother said it was the last place that God made. It was a nice big house with a well at the back and a privy down the end of the garden. The front of the house looked out over the fields while to the left was the river and bridge, the old canal and another little stream with a bridge, and when the floods came up it completely

covered not only the fields but the bridges too. We stayed there seven years. To me it was a happy carefree place. The only thing I didn't like was going to school. After living in a village and coming home mid-day it seemed awful to be away from home all day. We had to walk up Bedham Hill just tracks those days not made up, or walk up through Nevilles Wood to the top of the hill. We were then picked up in Bert Sayers bus and taken to Fittleworth School. Mr. Bowyer was the Headmaster. The only thing I did like about it was playing foxhunting on the Common. We who took our lunches hid and the ones who went home had to find us on their way back. It was always a treat at Pallingham to see another person. One of our early morning visitors for a cup of tea was the postman on his way back to Wisborough Green where he had a cycle repair shop. He made my first bike out of spare parts he had there. Another regular was a well sinker named Mr. Trussler from Pulborough who walked miles to work from there past our house and out over the common towards Hawkhurst. Then he had to walk back in the late afternoon. We also had the men from the International at Petworth who brought the groceries that Dad had ordered on pay day and payed for the month before delivery. It was Ron Carter and Fred Greest that came with them. Coal was not easy to get so we spent a lot of time collecting wood especially for the copper Monday mornings. There was a man named Jimmy Keen who had a shop at Burdocks and in his spare time he did underwood cutting, it was a great treat to have a cup of tea out of his tin can a bit smoky but nice and he enjoyed our company.

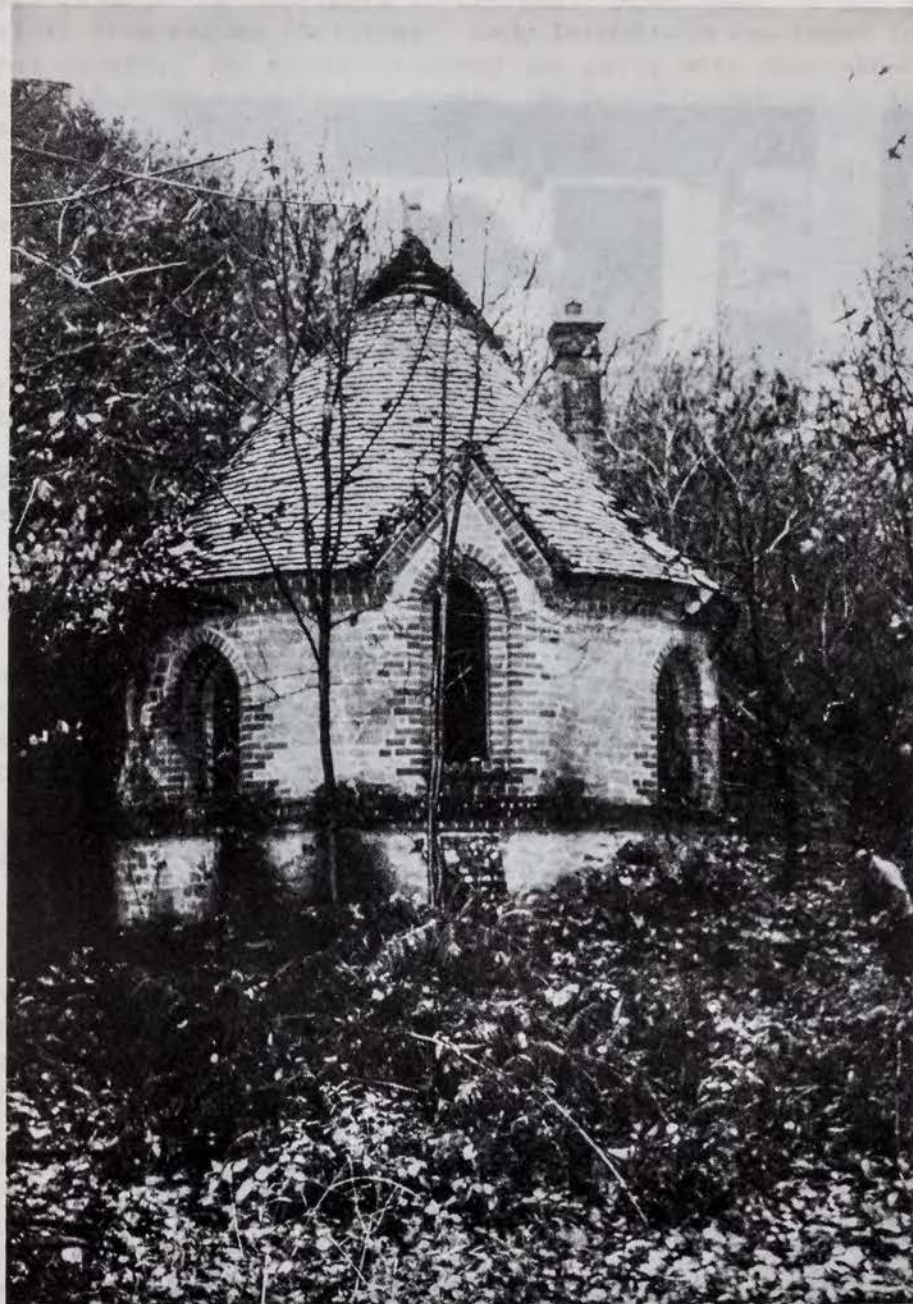
Once a month there was a service at the little church (once school) at Bedham where we met a lot of friends. Some names that come to mind are the Aylwyns, Scammels, Coopers and many more but I cannot remember all the names. The Rev. Lucy from Fittleworth took the service but there were others as well. After church we would walk across the fields to the top of Bedham Hill. There used to be a little sweet shop there then. We would go on down through Nevilles Wood back home past Mrs. Luxford and Mrs. Stenning's cherry tree where you could buy them, they were lovely. On the way home mother would say, "Look at that lovely piece of wood, that will keep the copper going tomorrow". So it was all hand to the wood. I never pass a piece now without thinking about it. I remember Mrs. Adsett arriving from Petworth with his mule cart to deliver dog food and bundles of bracken for their beds, birch brooms and other commodities a game keeper needed and I could not finish without mentioning the lovely Christmas Parties at Petworth House. George Cross came to collect us in the large covered lorry with forms down each side. We arrived in the main hall and walked through what seemed miles of corridors to the large hall of statues where we had a lovely tea.



Autumn leaves. Fittleworth 1935.
Photograph by G.G. GARLAND.



Mr. Bicknell of Hillgrove.
See "The West Sussex Village Book" S.V. Northchapel.
The photograph by G.G. GARLAND was taken in the early 1950's.



Bedham Chapel in 1983.



Petworth Home Guard Medical Company 1944.
Photograph by G.G. GARLAND.

Then back through the corridors to the Audit Room where we had games and a visit from Father Christmas. Lady Leconfield was there looking beautiful as ever. We always finished the party with Roger-De-Coverly then were all taken back to our homes. We moved to Sutton in 1935. Dad also lived at Raffling Wood, Buckfold and finally Grove Street. Sadly Mother died at Sutton in 1945 and Dad in 1975.

Kath Barnett (nee Fermor).

NOT QUITE DAD'S ARMY

I came to Petworth in 1940 to take over from Mr. Blake as house carpenter for Lord Leconfield. The job did not involve general carpentry on the estate but rather repairing and upholstering furniture and mending blinds and curtains. Much of this work had been put out before I arrived. As the war went on I had to do estate carpentry rather than the specific Petworth House work which was considered non-essential and in the latter part of the war I would hang gates or repair bomb-damage. After the war I reverted to the job as it had been in 1940. Not everything however was the same after the war as it had been when I came in 1940. Even in 1940 Petworth House boasted a butler, valet, two pantry-men, a housekeeper, a serving-maid, three in the kitchen and five house-maids, but very few of these remained in 1945 and they were never replaced. Lady Leconfield had a great deal of furniture, much of which had been quite recently bought and we had to store this in the beer cellar for the duration. The pictures in those far-off pre-National Trust days were removed from their frames for stacking in two's, front to front. The canvasses themselves were kept in the square dining-room and the frames in the Chapel. After the war Ted Chaffer and I had the job of fitting back picture to frame and it wasn't easy. While Lady Leconfield, who was very interested in furniture, kept in fairly close contact I saw his lordship rather less often. I remember once being summoned to discuss a favourite chair he used for sitting at his desk. The leg kept breaking off. I had to tell him bluntly that the chair simply wasn't suitable for him to use; he was a biggish man and he had the habit of pushing the chair back as he stood up. There just wasn't the strength in it to withstand this. Eventually he conceded the point and had a stronger chair.

In 1940 an announcement came over the wireless one evening about the proposed formation of Voluntary A&D Detachments. I went straight up to the Police Station and signed on. I had had some military experience just after the Great War with the Essex Yeomanry and had been to the annual camps as a territorial. The Yeomanry were soon to be mechanised but in my time they were still effectively a cavalry

regiment - not something that would help much in Petworth in 1940: The V.A.D. were given armbands but in the early days had no specific uniform. We did however get ex-American Army P14 rifles - very accurate but not modern. The P14 was in fact as good a rifle as I have ever used. We would assemble in the Iron Room in the early days, then later at Red House in Grove Street. Those who were detailed for a particular duty of course did not attend the muster. We would receive training (often from Sergeant Major Roberts from Wisborough Green) on the use of rifles, grenades and such like or on unarmed combat or what to do if we came across an enemy pilot. Later on the parades took place in full military uniform but in the early days V.A.D. armbands worn over civilian clothes were all that distinguished us. Eventually too we had a sten-gun at Petworth and learned how to use that. I suppose the theoretical strength of the Petworth Home Guard itself, leaving out the village platoons like Tillington or Fittleworth, was about fifty. There were many farmers on the roll, exempt of course from active service, and many who had served in the Great War. The Home Guard, as it soon came to be known, was taken very seriously - if you did not come to a muster at the Iron Room you had to explain why. When I was promoted to sergeant I had to be there every time.

Parades were usually held inside the Iron Room itself and there was always one on Sunday morning. If we had a big muster it might be in Petworth Park or in the Market Square. Route marches might move from the Square, down Grove Lane out to Shopham Bridge and round Burton and back - or occasionally the same route reversed. Once or twice we went as far as Fittleworth, stopping at the Swan to have a drink before setting off back.

Exercises were held usually on a Sunday: once, in the latter part of the war, all the area Home Guard went into the Park and we had to crawl in single file down the slope from Snow Hill while a machine-gun splayed fire over our heads from the ridge above. This was to give experience of being under fire. There was a similar exercise on the rifle range, crawling across while shots were fired overhead. It was as well no one put up their head to see what was going on! We used the rifle range in the Park on the way up toward the Monument but we also went to a range over beyond Parham. For bombing exercises with grenades or "stick-bombs" we used the chalkpits at Amberley.

A more elaborate exercise was held at Cathanger where we had a week-end camp. There was a field day when some of the Home Guard were ordered to hide by the bridge at Lady Mead lock on the river and

defend it. Our platoon had to take the bridge and the whole thing was to be inspected by high-ranking officers from the regular Army. Our lieutenant (not from Petworth in this case) was very agile (far more so than we were) and as we crawled toward the bridge got so far ahead that we lost contact with him. By the time we reached the bridge it was all over and the officers were simply waiting for us to arrive. So much for capturing the bridge! The Canadians stationed in the Pheasant Copse would sometimes send out someone to lecture us on military matters in the Park but we had little official contact with them. There was always an element of secrecy surrounding the troops in the Park and after all they used Petworth simply as a resting-place before being sent abroad.

In the winter months route marches were made under cover of darkness. The Iron Room was of course lighted for the musters but was heavily shuttered, while there was no lighting in the town itself. There were two basic pickets operated by the Petworth Home Guard, usually of three or four men working roughly 1 hour on and two or three off. I came to know both positions well. Just to the right of the Sugar Knob on the Gog was the "Shepherd's hut", loaned to us from Bigenor Farm, not galvanised but wooden and in fact not unlike a gypsy caravan. We would patrol from there, armed with live ammunition and looking for any of the enemy who might be at large or for anything suspicious. In the early days we would have had to run down into Petworth to get help but later we had a field telephone. The other basic observation point was on the top of Petworth House: Lord Leconfield had a hut built on the roof itself and from there you could search the sky, alive with searchlights, flak and even, in the distance, gunfire over London.

The Home Guard took a lot of time, especially as I say, after I became a sergeant. I was out most evenings and had to tell those detailed for particular duties about the rosters. There was of course no public notice-board.

Bill Moss was talking to the Editor.

SUSSEX, SUSSEX!

While I had family connections with Sussex, Luke Wadey of Ebernoe being my grandfather, my early acquaintance with Ebernoe was very patchy. My mother had gone to London to stay with her aunt and, while there, met my father who was a craftsman plasterer and not a Sussex man at all. Plastering was a very skilled, but in those days rather nomadic, sort of job and my father might be away for months

on a particular job, not seeing his employer during the whole of that time. He never did anything else: plastering was his craft and that was what he was employed to do. My mother died in 1915 and my father's sister gave up her home to go and look after her brother's family in Liverpool. It was the sort of thing people did in those days but it was only in later years that we children realized the sacrifice she had made. In those early days in Liverpool I didn't think of Sussex as of course I had never known it. It was not until 1919 that we came down from Liverpool for five weeks' holiday with my maternal grandparents at Shop Farm on Colhook Common. There was a police strike in Liverpool and the schools were closed.

This first visit to Colhook made a great impression on me: I remember my grandparents had a great triangular bed of nasturtiums in front of the house and they seemed to me the most beautiful flowers I had ever seen. And there were real live farm animals as well! I don't now remember much of that first visit and the memory is overlaid with other later visits. Did we play darts by candlelight that first time? I seem to think we did but somehow I doubt it. They used to grow corn in the middle of the field and peas round the outside which they would harvest with a sickle. The Ebernoe children would always take a few pods to eat on the way to school. As I have said, it all made a deep impression on me, so much so that when I got back to Liverpool I could talk of nothing but Sussex and in the end everyone got thoroughly tired of it and shouted, "Sussex, Sussex" at me as children do.

Following my father I went as an apprentice plasterer. There were no holidays then in the early 1920's, or more accurately perhaps no paid holidays, although as apprentices we had a week off a year, unpaid. I don't think I came down again to Ebernoe for another ten years but the vision of the nasturtiums and the live animals and the farm with the peas on the edge of the field always remained with me, sometimes pushed to the back of my mind but never quite gone. By 1929 I was well into my apprenticeship and used to biking reasonable distances going from Liverpool to North Wales and Cheshire, taking one of those lightweight tents you could buy for £1 in those days. I conceived the idea of biking down to Sussex with a friend to see the farm again. If we'd realised what we were taking on we would probably never ever had started! It was June and the weather was good but it took us from Saturday morning to Monday night, with just one good night's stop at Coventry on the way. We eventually got to Balls Cross just before dark on the Monday night and stopped at Pipers: both arms of the signpost at High Noons saying North-

chapel. When we finally arrived we helped Len Wadey with the harvesting at Butcherland for four or five days, then my grandfather gave us the money to go back on the train with the bikes stowed away in the goods compartment.

When I married, I was still plastering but based this time in London and working on places like Simpsons in Picadilly. We had a house in Ruislip. Ruislip at that time was hardly urban at all; there were fields everywhere and it was very much an outer suburb. It wasn't rural enough for me however, and I still kept on thinking about Sussex and being so much nearer I could now come down more often with my motor-bike and side-car.

One day I was visiting my Uncle Edgar Wadey at Siblands with my daughter Margaret and I noticed that one of the Shotterland Cottages next door was empty. I asked Uncle Edgar if he could get the cottage for me from the Leconfield Estate. He replied, "If I can get it for you, I don't want you saying in six months time you wished to God you'd never seen the place!" Uncle Edgar did in fact get me the cottage on the understanding that I'd give him a helping hand if required. I worked as a plasterer for a firm at Liphook travelling there and back on my motor-cycle and helped out on the farm in my spare time while my wife helped Len Wadey with the harvest at Butcherland. To move us Jack Yeatman came up to Ruislip with two cattle-trucks and brought us down to Butcherland Farm. From there everything had to be taken out to Shotterland in Uncle Len's tractor. It was February and as we moved in it began to snow.

This was rural Sussex with a vengeance, there was no road to Shotterland, no plaster on the walls, a well outside which after a time we couldn't use, a Petworth Belle grate, a copper by the side of the grate and a big larder. There was also a large wood-shed which we later turned into a make-shift bathroom, digging out the shavings that made up the floor and putting in a cement flooring. As I was working in Jermyn Street at the time I bought an old bath for £1 and had it sent down by Carter Patterson. The carriage cost me more than the bath itself, for the bath had been ripped out of an old house. The difficulty with the new bathroom was simply that there wasn't any running water: we still had to heat the water in the copper. We produced the illusion of running water by using a basin with a rubber tube emptying into a bucket. Once she had a bathroom my wife was happy; as she always said, "You can laugh off an outside lavatory at the bottom of the garden, but no bathroom was a bit too much." We did later have a calor stove but we would always cut wood on the Common as we were entitled to do.

Because the cottage was so small the children's birthday parties had to be held out on the common and for my elder daughter going to school meant a bicycle ride across the Common, a lift from Balls Cross into Petworth, then a nineteen mile bus ride to Horsham. Later she would stay with a friend near Horsham and come home week-ends. Children loved to come and stay with us on the Common although one young lady from Ruislip was soon back in the house complaining there was nowhere to play - she couldn't find any walls to bounce her ball up against!

Howletts from Northchapel left our provisions in the church porch at Ebernoe because they couldn't get up as far as the cottage. It didn't matter in those days if we left them there over the weekend, no one would ever take them.

Wild life of all kinds thrived on the Common; I particularly remember one August Bank Holiday hearing a noise in the bracken as we were out walking. The noise grew louder and as we watched we saw five badgers come marching out just like soldiers, and straight across the track into the bracken at the other side. Father, mother and three little ones in single file. It was only as the children grew older that we realized we would have to leave; water and electricity would never be put on at Shotterland. We left in 1953 and the two cottages were pulled down. We moved to Colhook Farm House at Colhook after Archie Holden died and have lived there ever since. I had arrived home!

George Barnicle was talking to Mrs. Walters and the Editor.

JOHN WILLIAM SIRGOOD

Our Occasional Sheet 322 (January 1975) contained a brief account of John William Sirgood and the sect which he founded at Loxwood in Sussex and called the Dependents, indicating that their lives were entirely dependent upon Christ. The members were mostly agricultural labourers and were an industrious, sober, clean living, God fearing group who over the years have attracted the attention of a number of writers in a variety of journals. Of all these articles the two best are the most recent. "The Society of Dependents" by Dr. Roger Homan in Sussex Archaeological Collections, Vol. 19 (1981) and "John Sirgood's way" by P.A. Jerrome in Petworth Society Bulletin No. 29 (1982), which is illustrated, but no one has provided much detail about Sirgood himself. He must have been an unusual person and an interesting one and it seems to be worth trying to get together all that is known of his life. Those who knew him are now all dead and

the small number of ageing members of his society tend to be unwilling or unable to supply any detailed information. Nevertheless a certain amount can be gleaned from other sources though gaps in the story remain. References to 'tradition' are to statements made by Dependents at various times which we have been unable to check.

John William Sirgood was the son of a Gloucestershire weaver George Sirgood (1794-1865), himself the son of Samuël Sirgood, shearman, of the same county, and his first wife Sarah (1794-1851). Whether he was their only child is not known. He was born in that part of the Parish of Avening which since 1892 has been included in the then newly formed Parish of Nailsworth, and he was almost certainly baptised in one of the Independent Chapels at Forest Green. Such of their registers as remain however are quite unreliable. Inside the front cover of the register of the Forest Green Chapel is a note by the Minister, Thomas Edkins, who had been there since 1816, "Many births and baptisms have never been entered - others but partially. It has always been difficult to obtain from many persons the date of the birth. At a Public Baptism they frequently present children without the previous knowledge of the Minister and depart before he can ascertain the requisite particulars. And at the end of the entries for 1820 he writes, "about 22 Infants and Adults". So no doubt John Sirgood's parents were among those who slipped away un-noticed after the ceremony. There were two schools in the area which he might have attended, and it is quite certain from his sermons, pamphlets and letters to his followers that his education was superior to that of most village children at that period.

The family left Avening in the 'forties and came to London, settling in the Kennington area and on 17 March 1845 John William Sirgood was married at St. Mary, Lambeth, to Harriet Coxhead, of the Oval, daughter of Charles Coxhead, Cabinetmaker, and his Wife Ann. She was born in Godalming and baptised in the parish church there on 14 June 1811. It appears from the rate books that Sirgood was in 1845 a shoemaker, living in Devonshire Street which was on the north side of Kennington Lane and is now called Courtenay Street. On 9 March 1851 his mother died of consumption at York Place, Camberwell New Road, where she was living with her husband George, then a labourer. She was buried in the Lambeth Burial Ground in the High Street and the entry in the Burials Book says the interment was 'from Devonshire Street'. Does this mean that her body had been moved to her son's address before the funeral? If so he was presumably still living and working in Kennington.

Tradition says that he had been working in Clapham and preaching both on the Common and in the houses of sympathisers but had met with little success. Then in 1850, in a dream, he had been bidden to go down to the Surrey-Sussex border. He had therefore piled his possessions onto a handcart and with his wife had walked the 40 miles or so down to Loxwood where he had soon found friends. An embroidered version has it that he sometimes put his wife on the handcart as well, but her photograph suggests that this is improbable. From what we now know it seems more likely that the walk, which there is no reason to doubt took place, was from Kennington and in the Spring of 1851 soon after his mother's death, and that the destination was suggested by his wife who had come from that area. By the time of the Census at the end of March 1851 they were living at Shamley Green, in the parish of Wonersh, and he was described as a boot and shoe maker.

It was in this area and on both sides of the county boundary that he carried on his work as an evangelist and the Dependent's first chapel is said to have been at Shamley Green. It has now been pulled down and a house called Coaklers (sic) is on the site. 'Coaklers' was a name given by local people to the Dependents because of their alleged liking for cocoa. Over the course of the next 20 years the movement grew steadily and meetings were held in private houses until the members had collected the money to build their own chapels. They never borrowed or appealed for money and the meeting houses were built by their own members. There was a good deal of hostility at first, men lost their employment by becoming Dependents and work was often denied them. In a few cases houses were attacked by roughs during the time of services, but eventually as their good qualities became recognised the ill-feeling died out and they became appreciated as valuable members of the community.

The Chapel at Loxwood with the burial ground behind was built and licensed in 1861 and Loxwood became their headquarters and still remains so. It is a very plain brick chapel with a meeting room behind and a small porch in front, and stands in Spy Lane at one end of the village. Inside there are rows of benches, nine on each side of a central passage way, and facing these a long reading desk for the leader and behind this a row of seats for the elders. It is spotlessly clean and well kept but with no ornaments of any kind. In each seat is a Bible and a Dependents Hymn Book. This last was first printed in 1958 and contains 471 hymns, but until this date there were only hand-written collections. They are sung without accompaniment and are all written by members of the Society. John Sirgood contributes 57, his wife Hannah 4, and an otherwise unknown

writer, C.W. Taylor, 41. More than half are anonymous. Behind the Chapel is a large grassy plot, said in 1979 to contain 540 burials. There are no memorials but marker stones at the sides show the position of the rows of graves. A list of these, with a plan, exists but we have been unable to see it. However there is no doubt that both John William Sirgood and his wife Hannah lie there. We know they continued living in the area because on 18th March, 1861, Sirgood received a letter signed by 7 persons (including John Thornton) ordering him to discontinue forthwith "the unlawful congregations or assemblies of persons for religious worship held in your dwelling house". This was delivered to him at Loxwood, but he does not appear anywhere in that district in the 1861 Census Returns. The demand was ignored and Sirgood published a pamphlet entitled "Intolerance in the Rural District of West Sussex. A Lawyer's Notice to a Shoemaker to discontinue religious worship in his dwelling house. The Shoemaker's reply: with a few Incidents connected therewith". It is a well written piece of 12 pages setting out his own case and complaining of the persecution he and his followers had received from some sources both lay and clerical.

Precisely when or why Sirgood returned to London we do not know, but he certainly did so and he appears in Simpson's Directory of Clapham for 1864 as a boot and shoemaker, 4 Bromell's Road, and again in Batten's Directory, 1865. By a curious chance there was a Shoemaker from Gloucestershire, Thomas Gibbs, at 46 Bromell's Road in 1851. A friend perhaps? By 1869 the street had been re-numbered and Sirgood is shown at No.34. By the date of the 1871 Census these premises had been taken over by another shoemaker from Loxwood, James Reeves, aged 20, who contributed one hymn to the Dependents Hymn Book. Sirgood had improved his position and was now a leather-seller in larger premises at 48 Bromell's Road which had a shop built out in front of the house. Here he lived with his wife and a 19 year old maid, Oliver Green. By fortunate chance his house appears in a photograph of the road taken about 1889. He kept in touch with his followers by writing 'pastoral letters' signed Brother John which the recipients copied and distributed, and while at Clapham he produced his second pamphlet in answer to a letter from a local magistrate in Surrey bidding him, as before, to discontinue religious worship in his house. It has 16 pages and is entitled "Religious Intolerance in the Rural Districts of Sussex. A Notice from a Magistrate to discontinue religious worship in a house belonging to him, and a Working Man's reply". It was printed by James Sirgood, 8 Windmill Row, Kennington. Price One Penny. Nothing has been found out about James but he was probably a relative. As on the previous occasion the Magistrate's letter was ignored.

John Sirgood's father meanwhile had married again on 21 June 1853, to a widow named Mary Branan of Westgate Buildings, Bath, where the wedding took place. They returned in due course to Kennington and he obtained employment as an Auctioneer's porter. He died in 1865 while living at 9 Kennington Place and was buried in Lambeth Cemetery, Blackshaw Road, Tooting. His widow Mary died five years later at the same address. After the deaths of his father and stepmother John Sirgood went back to Surrey and took a house at Lord's Hill Common, having disposed of his Clapham business to a firm called Templeman & Chaffey. On his return he has sufficient money to open a drapery business in Loxwood which was then a flourishing community containing a number of businesses owned by Dependents.

On 16th September 1876 his wife Harriet died at Lord's Hill Common at the age of 64 and was buried behind their chapel in Loxwood. They had been married just over 31 years. As a widower he gave up his house and by 1881 was lodging in a nearby cottage, probably the Lord's Hill Cottage where he made his Will in 1883 leaving his property to be divided equally between three women friends, Mary Foster of Loxwood, Hannah Osborne of North Chapel, both drapers, and Lucy Luff, grocer of Warnham. John William Sirgood died at Loxwood, aged 63, and was buried behind the chapel which he had founded. He was mourned by a large congregation of Dependents, one of whom wrote a long panegyric in verse which, printed in double columns, filled 2 foolscap pages entitled "To John William Sirgood who departed in peace and entered into rest October 19th, 1885". He left £575.5.4.

Of other chapels built by the Dependents Northchapel was built 1872 (it bears a dated table) and is still in use, Warnham, 1876 has gone. Two more were founded by migrating members, at Chichester, about 1870, and Hove about 1905. The former has gone, the latter remains in commercial use in Payne Avenue. One is said to be at Upper Norwood but is so far untraced.

Though the tradition that he was a Clapham shoemaker when he migrated to Sussex is unproved, he undoubtedly lived there 1864-74 and so can legitimately be listed among our local worthies. That he was a forceful character and persuasive preacher is certain and the photograph which is still treasured by his followers depicts a man of about 50 with kindly yet determined features and a trim dark beard which would not be out of place today. With the death of their leader the Dependents' evangelistic favour lessened. By 1900 their numbers were steadily decreasing and now only a handful of elderly supporters remain.



Petworth Home Guard 1943.
Photograph by G.G. GARLAND.



Pea-cutting at Butcherland Ebernoe 1939.
Photograph by G.G. GARLAND.

The writer is grateful to a number of people who have helped and particularly to Dr. Arnold Taylor for taking him on a tour of the area, for visiting surviving Dependents and for doing research in various record offices.

[This article by Dr. Eric Smith appeared originally in the information sheet of the Clapham Antiquarian Society Nos. 432 and 433 April and May 1984. Has anyone any documentary record concerning the Dependents' early years?]

MR. BOWNDE'S NON-CONFORMING CURATE, PETWORTH 1592-3

As the sixteenth century advanced the infant Anglican Church gradually began to assume an identity of its own and to distance itself from the unadorned worship of those reformers who during the reign of Mary had fled to teach on the continent. Anglicanism itself was still feeling its way towards its own distinctive outlook but there were many who, without thinking theologically, distrusted what they saw as an unnecessary austerity in the Reformed creed and service. John Strype in the "Life and Acts of John Whitgift" (1822) tells of a butcher who attacked a puritan-minded cleric in the street for refusing to "church" his wife. The Anglican service for the churching of women after childbirth was particularly detested by those of the clergy who inclined toward the continental reformers - it seeming to them a lingering survival from pre-reformation Catholic practice.

For their part those followers of the reformed creed who had returned from the continent under Elizabeth the new queen found themselves to their thinking in a position not dissimilar to that of the Roman Catholics: they no more than the Catholics they detested were able to worship as they desired. To them the Anglican services were little more than Catholicism under a new guise. Elizabeth was herself far from averse to the old ceremonies and no supporter of the removal of images let alone of austerity in worship. Those who looked so longingly toward the simplicity of the form of service established by the refugees at Geneva, objected variously to the claims of the bishops to a superior rank to their presbyters, the set forms of prayer that the Book of Common Prayer sought to lay down, the use of godparents, confirmation, the observance of Lent, the use of the organ, many parts of the liturgy and in particular many portions in the offices of baptism, marriage and burial. Elizabeth however was firm in exacting conformity - those who conformed were given preferment and were in turn directed to see that others conformed. Ear-

lier Archbishop Parker undertook this task with some reserve but John Whitgift had a greater zeal. In the face of this some of the "Puritans" (so called because they sought the utmost purity and simplicity in worship), broke off all connection with the official church and travelled the country, preaching where they could, some gradually coming together under men like Robert Brown as a clearly-defined non-conforming segment of opinion, others remaining as individual dissenters or dissenting groups. Not all Puritan sympathisers severed their connections with the official church however, and many when arraigned before the church courts reluctantly made their peace and conformed.

With the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, Elizabeth who had always carefully monitored the progress of the Puritan strain of thinking within the Anglican church, felt there was no further need to cultivate it as a possible counterbalance to any Catholic threat. Thomas Cartwright and other Puritan notables were taken into custody and efforts were redoubled to enforce the standardised Anglican services and ordained in the Book of Common Prayer. The early 1590's were not a good time for an Anglican clergyman to demonstrate an overt sympathy with the Puritan position.

In 1593 Alexander Bownde had been rector of Petworth for a mere two years or less. He would continue until 1622. A brass describes him as 'a painful pastor of this church of Petworth for the space of thirty years' and while 'painful' is an adjective often used to describe Puritan-minded ministers it does not necessarily mean that Bownde leaned toward the Puritan position. Equally Bownde was a well-known Puritan name in East Anglia but we cannot be sure that Alexander Bownde was a member of this particular family. Certainly there does not seem any surviving criticism of him along these lines. Whatever the rector's doctrinal leanings, his curate William Wilson certainly appears to have sympathised with the Puritan position and to have objected to significant portions of the Prayer Book Services. He was accordingly presented before the church court by some of his parishioners for his failure to conform. Five documents concerning this survive in the Diocesan records: the churchwardens' initial complaint or presentment, two statements by William Wilson in answer to questions in the church court, an entry in the bishop's consistory court book to the effect that if Wilson does not conform he will be inhibited from serving the cure of Petworth or any other cure in the diocese, and lastly a statement by Alexander Bownde and Henry Beech his churchwarden that Wilson has in their judgement conformed as far as possible.

The churchwardens' presentment, dated 7th October 1592, deals mainly

with baptismal matters in which "our curate doth not doo according to her majesty's booke of Common Prayer". He had omitted the Gospel during the service of baptism, as also the following prayer beginning, "Well beloved friends, ye have brought this child here to be baptised....". He had omitted also the Lord's Prayer and the charge to the godparents and had refused also to baptise a child brought by the midwife.

Wilson's statement to the consistory court in fact covers matters other than baptism: there were other matters of observance beside baptism on which the court were seeking to be reassured. Regarding baptism itself he admits to having omitted certain prayers, thus shortening the service. In addition and in line with the Puritan objection to making the sign of the cross, he had simply said, "I do sign thee with the sign in baptism". He had omitted also the Lord's Prayer and charge to the godfathers. The court's next question obviously dealt with the particular incident raised by the churchwardens. A child was brought to the church on a Friday to be baptised. A midwife was present and two women, presumably because the child was sickly. For some reason unexplained, the child was removed unbaptised before the second lesson. No godparents were present. That night Wilson went to see the woman and arranged to have the child baptised the next day but in fact the child died that same night. The episode as it stands remains somewhat obscure. It is not clear whether Wilson had for some reason refused to baptise the child or whether the women had on their own initiative removed the child, objecting to Wilson's conduct of the service.

To a further question Wilson deposes that "he hath preached in the church of Petworth and as yet not licensed notwithstanding he ys a master of Arts." Wilson would seem to be out of order here: while he may have been properly instituted as curate this did not mean that he was licensed to preach. The Elizabethan church was very careful whom it allowed to preach and many of the clergy were considered neither capable or reliable enough to be allowed the freedom of the pulpit. The authorities do seem to have licensed Wilson for preaching at a slightly later date and while he admits to having at his first coming neglected the reading of Scripture, "since he hath and doth rede yt."

As regarding the reading of the bans of marriage, he had usually given notice in the church on three separate occasions that such and such were disposed to enter into the holy state of matrimony. The guarded "usually" would clearly be picked up by the consistory court. As regards the churching of women after childbirth he de-

poses that "he hath churched women in the chancell and without the chancell as a place indifferent and he sayth he hath sometymes omitted parte of ye booke appointed for ye churching of women and sometymes hath observed ye whole forme conteyned in the booke and never used the Lord's Prayer alone and left out all the rest". The court would be well aware here that they were dealing with a Puritan conscience.

A second shorter statement makes some specific points: Wilson had refused to baptise the child because it was on a Friday, there had been no godparents and the child had been carried away before the second lesson. He had married Robert West without a ring because there had been no ring available. Whether the church authorities would have been satisfied with Wilson's explanation of this is doubtful; the Puritans tended to view marriage as a civil contract and protested against the use of the wedding ring as being a mere superstition. When Richard Morris' wife had come to give thanks for the safe deliverance from childbirth he had said, "Here ys the wief of Richard Morris com to give God thanks for her safe deliverance and that she hath encresid the congregacyon of God" - but whether he had used the full service as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer he was no longer able to remember. The consistory court would again read into this rather guarded reply the workings of a Puritan conscience.

The result of this examination is as we have seen to be found in a stern warning in the Court Book of the Bishop's Court. Quite simply if Wilson does not conform he will be inhibited from serving the cure of Petworth or any other cure within the Chichester Diocese.

A final document is a certificate issued by Alexander Bownde the Rector and testifying that William Wilson now adheres to the services ordained in the Book of Common Prayer. One instance of a couple's marrying without a ring is to be attributed to their own negligence rather than any fault of the curate.

Robert Morris.

Whereas at the Court holden laste at Petworthe our Curatt was inquired to observe the booke of Comon prayer as also to certifye the Court at Chichester the next Courte day before the feaste of St Mathew the Apostle: whose names are underwritten, do certifiyng that ye said Curatt doth doe so farre as was in his power to

performe. Butly if it was found that two persons were married without a ring, but not having any fault in our Curatt, for he required a ring as diverse beinge then present can testifie, but could not have it so that the faulte is to be imputed rather to the partie so maryed who shoulde have provided it, then to our Curatt who required it.

This certificate is true for anie thing I knowe to the contrarie.
Alexander Bownde.

Henry Beache Churchwarden

Statement of the Rector and Churchwarden of Petworth regarding his curate's adherence to the Book of Common Prayer.

Transcription.

"Petworthe.

Whereas at the Court holden laste at Petworthe our Curatt was inioyned to observe the booke of comon prayer as also to certifye before the Court at Chichester therof the next Courte day before the feaste of St. Mathew the Apostle: we whose names are underwritten do certifie you that he hathe so done, so farre as was in his power to performe. Onely this, we have had two persons maryed without a ringe but not throughe any faulte in our Curatt, for he required a ringe as diverse beinge then present can testifie but could not have it so that the faulte is to be imputed rather to the partie so maryed who shoulde have provided it, then to our Curatt who required it.

This certificate ys true for anie thing I knowe to the contrarie.
Alexander Bownde

Henry Beache Churchwarden."

We may suppose that William Wilson eventually conformed. A William Wilson (almost certainly the same man) became rector of East Dean in 1606 where he remained until resigning in 1633.

Mrs. Sherwin

Petworth,

1875

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