

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*Magazine*



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The wood-engraving on the front cover is by Gwenda Morgan.  
That on the back is of Egdean church.

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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE  
LECONFIELD HALL!



## Constitution and Officers

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

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

The annual subscription is £6.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £7.50 overseas £8.50. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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Mr Vincent (Tillington and River), Mrs Goodyer, Mrs Williams (Fittleworth)

Membership enquiries to Mrs Staker please, Magazine circulation enquires to Betty Hodson or Bill (Vincent).

## Chairman's Notes

*As usual this Magazine has a lot to be packed into it so I'll be as brief as I can. "Tansy" the silent film shown for the Leconfield Hall A.G.M. created enormous interest and we've been asked by so many people to show it again that I'll see if we can get it for early next year. Activities have been extremely varied and you'll find some attempt to record them in the present issue.*

*Some members of the Toronto Scottish Regiment were here in early June and were entertained by those who had made the Canadian trip last autumn. The Toronto Scots who came were basically leading coach parties from other regiments. They will be here in force next year however.*

*The Local History Fair held by the West Sussex Record Office in Chichester on July 9th was a considerable success and likely to be repeated. The Society had a stall and we found it a pleasant and useful occasion.*

*A word of welcome for the new Tourist Office. I'm sure all members of the Society will wish it every success in bringing people and business to Petworth.*

*If you have a subscription reminder with this Magazine please pay promptly. It does help the Treasurer so much if you do.*

*Peter*

*27th July 1994.*

## Progress at the Leconfield Hall

Behind the neat green curtains that hide the Leconfield Hall from view, the Leconfield Estates under Roger Wootton and Richard Stemp and his team, are getting on well. They are removing the worst of the old stones, cutting them out piece by piece, and inserting new stones from a quarry which matches as closely as possible the stone that was used in the 18th century - only better. It is impossible to judge just what you will find needs doing when you open up an old building. All I can say at present is that the extent of work necessary should fall somewhere between our best and our worst estimates.

As I have always said, there can be no question of finding a new Leconfield Hall standing there when it is unveiled in the autumn. That would be not only far beyond our means, but also far beyond the wishes of English Heritage and our architect. But it will be a safe and sound building, with a new south-east corner, and a patchwork of new stones replacing the old where they are structurally unsound or likely to deteriorate further. All the stone projections will be protected with new lead. The rest of the work will be to the roof, some new, some improved, and the reinstatement of the old bells.

After the scaffolding comes down, we shall have to do some extensive repair work to the steps on the west side. This we hope to carry out in conjunction with West Sussex County Council who are proposing a new road and pavement layout with a pedestrian crossing to the



Post Office and a more friendly pedestrian area in front of the entrance to Gateway.

With all these outside works at last behind us, we shall breath a sigh of relief - and turn our attention to the inside; to the lighting of the main Hall, decorations, and other improvements. And mark the occasion with a tribute to the person whose generosity made it possible to contemplate these improvements in the first place: the late Miss Gwenda Morgan.

R.H.

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## Pop into Petworth - a note from the Petworth Business Association

The Petworth Business Association has recently produced a number of car stickers with the wording "Pop into Petworth - another initiative by the Petworth Business Association". It is felt that these stickers may create some interest in Petworth and encourage people to do just that - pop into Petworth. As some members of the Petworth Society have asked how they can obtain a sticker, it was considered worth while mentioning them in the magazine. If anyone would like a sticker for their car, they are obtainable from Annie Hughes at The Covert in East Street or Bob Sneller at Allans in New Street. They are free and, we hasten to add, small and tastefully produced!

**Do help** support the businesses of Petworth by putting one of these stickers in your car window. Thank you.

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## Questions and Answers

The painting of the Horse Guards at Tillington in the last issue is the work of the noted London artist William Havell (1804-1857) and together with other Sussex paintings was exhibited at the Royal Academy. The whereabouts of the original is not known.

I have had several recollections of the Blackman's Concert Party and give two of them here:

Mr Bert Hollingdale writes:

Dear Peter,

Regarding your query of Mr Blackman. He brought his party to Duncton Village Hall on several occasions in the 1930's. As far as I can remember there were 4 or 5 in the party including Mr Blackman's son Geoff who used to sing duets with a young lady. Another played the piano and of course there was Mr Blackman with tales of old Mark. I can still remember one of his tales. The visit was the highlight of the evening's social gathering. We had songs by Mrs Goatcher, Mrs Court, Mr Rowe and Mr Percy Charlotte who was a groom for Major Courtauld. This song was always the same "In the shade of the old apple tree."

Mr "Ken" Kenward writes:

The Concert Party consisted mainly if not wholly of family members and I believe the usual concert party numbered 6 to 8. They performed in most of the local towns and villages, and in the late 20's and early 30's performed on more than one occasion in the Iron Room.

I cannot recall a great deal of the actual performance but it was always very humorous and entertaining and included sketches in the Sussex Dialect and costumes, i.e. smocks, battered hats, straw in mouth and trousers tied with string below the knee.

We have had a number of identifications for the old people outside the Iron room in the last Magazine. I have passed these on to Mr Madgwick. Thanks very much to all who helped.

*Question*

You will see that No. 346 High Street was occupied in 1912 by Mrs Cummings sempstress at Petworth House. Is there anyone who has any recollection of Mrs Cummings - she could have gone on living there for some time - or of course could have left in 1912 or soon after. We'd be very interested if anyone can help here.

Peter.

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## Winning the Cup - see Magazine 76

How well I recall the activities of the Old Boys School and Scout choirs, there was always great enthusiasm to participate in these events and this was fostered by the great pride Charles Stevenson had in these choirs. A number of the boys were also in the Church choir where for some years Stevenson was organist and choirmaster.

The festivals were an annual event and entailed a great deal of preparation and practice, and to become word and tone perfect we would often have to repeat certain parts time and time again. The end result however was always worthwhile.

The School choir entered the Bognor and Petersfield musical festivals and the Scout choir the Scouts Choir Festival at the Royal Albert Hall. A number of classes would be entered in the overall festival programme, and normally there would be a set piece by the organisers in each class and in some classes an item of the choir's choice could also be entered.

Certificates were awarded to the choir in each class who attained the position of 1st, 2nd or 3rd and in some cases there would be a cup for a particular class and one was usually awarded to the choir with the best overall results.

In Ron Hazelman's final paragraph he refers to the even better result at Petersfield and I'm sure a photograph I have (1930/31) showing three cups and the banner was taken after this event.

Regarding the Scout Choir going to the Albert Hall I can recall going on two occasions and on one of these the Rover Scouts also participated (Joe Wilcox, Frank Pullen and others) and we had a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place in every class that we entered and were the most successful



Choir of the festival. That evening we sang with BBC Male Voice Choir, conducted by the late Sir Adrian Boult. The concert being broadcast by the BBC, most people in Petworth tuned into the wireless that Saturday night and we had a rousing welcome when we arrived back in Petworth.

The School choir Certificates were all mounted and hung on the rear wall of the main classroom in the Old Boys School, these would have been destroyed by the bombing in 1942, but I would estimate there would have been forty or fifty of these. Those relating to the Scout choir were in the Scout Room above the stables at New Grove.

Regarding transport for the various events Vic Roberts of Pound Garage helped with this, and possibly organised addition of other transport when the numbers were too great.

F.A. Kenward

## The Cover Design

Gwenda Morgan's drawings, used as the cover for recent Magazines, have created such interest that readers may like to see these extracts from an article written by Christopher Sandford for the journal *The Studio*. They were reprinted in this form in the *Petworth Deanery Review* for July 1960.

"Miss Morgan's roots are planted deep in the soil of that picturesque countryside of Petworth, which inspired the pastoral scenes so sensitively depicted for us in her medium of wood engraving, of which she is a master. In her detailed compositions in which nature flourishes, I seem to see a resemblance to romantic scenes in needlework pictures, embroidery, tapestries. Quaint country folk, who are her cherished neighbours, live their daily lives in fields, copses, keeping their sheep on rolling downs, or congregations going to church. She also illustrates an occasional book, and there is no engraver whose work I would more readily recommend to the publisher of any treatise or novel of country life. She first went to Goldsmith's College of Art, and then to the Grosvenor School of Art under Iain McNab - one of the finest of living wood engravers. I remember receiving a letter from him recommending Miss Morgan as his most talented pupil. Gwenda Morgan adopted wood engraving because it is such a fine medium - "brilliant" and "precise". She has created her own original idiom in art, all her work is first-class, and expressive of her own personality.

She never copies nature, yet many a church, barn, a cottage, a village green, or woodland glade have impressed themselves upon her receptive mind, and have fathered their like within the framework of one of her compositions. This is as it should be. The artist must not copy nature, but can use its characteristic forms in his designs, expressed in the terms of the medium which he is using. Miss Morgan does not copy nature, yet there is none of the abstraction from life which characterises the studio artist. Her symbols of nature suggest nature as it is. There is no suggestion of kinship with embroidery or tapestry weaving or needlework in her drawings. This is, of course, a reproduction of embroidery in wood, yet the wood expresses itself under

her graver in this particular way. During the war years she worked on a farm, and produced a number of her best engravings, though usually so tired by the evenings that only the creative urge which possess the true artist enabled her to settle down to draw or engrave.

Here then is an original and charming artist of nature who lives, observes, and interprets LIFE with acquired dexterity and born genius."

## The Petworth Society visits Shakespeare-upon-Avon

Well, that's what it's like! But to start at the beginning.....

*Friday, 20th May, 8.55 a.m.* All aboard and five minutes early - an indication of the excellent time-keeping throughout the trip. We move off on a dull but dry morning to pick up the Halfway bridge folk and then another eight at South Harting (non-members, but without whom the weekend would not have been viable). An unfamiliar meander to many, hugging the Downs, lush and green after the winter rain. On through Hampshire, past a handkerchief tree in full 'bractage' in Petersfield (Ian was to return to photograph it the following week), an encounter with a milk float, a 'comfort stop' at Sutton Scotney and arrival in Marlborough, spot-on mid-day. Lunch was booked - or was it? We weren't in the diary - Rosemary waved her letter of confirmation - phone calls to bring in staff - a miracle - 39 seats available within 10 minutes and everyone served with their choice - compliments to the chef and all at the Tudor Restaurant. Plenty of time to wander round the town, most of us ending up at the Craft Centre in one of the two parish churches.

Ray Goodall, our driver, had plotted a pretty route through the Cotswolds to Stratford, and the sun was shining.

The Moat House International Hotel was large - larger than anticipated by some - and because no new building in Stratford can be higher than the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, it spreads out - a long way. However, all found their way back to the restaurant for dinner. Afterwards, Rosemary, suffering from a heavy cold and already traumatised by the day's events, retired to build up strength for the next day. Others walked out into Stratford, while a sizeable group enjoyed repartee with the resident pianist in the lounge and contributed their own vocal and dramatic talents, all recorded on video by Ian.

*Saturday.* Breakfast and a fairly early start to see a spectacular sound, light and tableaux presentation, "The World of Shakespeare Experience", depicting life, social conditions and Queen Elizabeth I's progress around the grand houses of Tudor times. Then out into the drizzle, some to the shops, others to St. Peter's Church, the Butterfly Farm, the Avon with its canal boats and even, like Joy Gumbrell, a boat trip. For the afternoon, a local guide came on our coach and gave us conducted tours of Anne Hathaway's Cottage at Shottery, Mary Arden's (Shakespeare's mother) lovely farmhouse home at Wilmcote and Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford itself. We were full of admiration for the way in which our guide managed to slot us into the sites



avoiding the worst of the crowds, and her wealth of background information, especially of the origin of many everyday expressions in the day-to-day life of Tudor England. Note was taken of the possibility of conducting large numbers of visitors through small, low passageways and steep, narrow stairs which made 346, High Street, Petworth look positively palatial!

Back in the hotel - it was pouring with rain now - in time for Joyce Marchant (we had five Joyces!) and June to go to Twelfth Night at the Memorial Theatre and sixteen of the group to see a performance of "Macbeth" in half an hour at the Waterside Theatre. Three actors, recorded sound effects and voices, with clever use of lighting, gave us an "experience" if not a great deal of enlightenment into Shakespeare's play. Fortunately, the two Js returned from their much more expensive evening highly delighted. Dinner was completed by the arrival of Wendy's \*\*th birthday cake, which had been smuggled up to Stratford by Malcolm and accomplices and finally served up by the hotel staff to the usual chorus. Afterwards, more music in the lounge, this time with Rosemary, somewhat recovered, winning a quiz and giving us a snatch of Bach into the bargain.

*Sunday.* Free until 11, the weather improving, some of us caught the Mayoral Procession on its way to church, headed by a military band. Then we were off to Ragley Hall, to be greeted by the head guide waving from the top of the steps to the Grand Entrance - not turning us away as we at first thought - had we driven on to sacred gravel? - but inviting us straight in for a personally conducted tour of the House before it opened to the public. We hadn't booked a group tour but she had come in specially in view of the weather because she was sorry for us! Lunch at the Hall, a group photograph on the steps once Di had been retrieved from the rhododendrons, and another route through the Cotswolds to Woodstock and cream tea in the 16th century Vickers Hotel, served and serenaded by an extrovert Italian head waiter. Perfect weather for the drive home, just a brief stop at Newbury and we were saying goodbye to the Harting folk (who appropriately expressed their enjoyment of the weekend in verse - author "D. Shakespeare"), the Halfway Bridge Six, and the remainder at Petworth. "Where to next year?" was evidence of everyone's enjoyment - but first, the 'reunion' at Netherlands Farm, where all is revealed on video and with slides.

Banquo's Ghost.

## Burpham June 20th

The film "Tansy" the previous Wednesday had stimulated an interest in Burpham and the surrounding downland. Some of the party had been to Burpham before, some never. Tickner Edwardes, from whose novel the film had been made, had been rector there between the wars. Pearl and Ian were taking Bruce and Kathleen back to Heathrow en route for Toronto so I had Ian's slide camera with instructions to get something for the Society records. The problem, as it turned out, was what not to take: it was such a varied walk. Audrey reckoned it would be a leisurely three hours, in fact it took longer. Perhaps we ought to have called it an expedition.

Left off the A27 opposite Arundel Station, down a road that was very narrow at times,



*Facets of Petworth Park.  
These pictures were taken during restoration work on the boathouse and lake in the early 1980s.*





*Petworth Park with part of the lake drained. Early 1980s.*

through the hamlet of Warningcamp. There were a lot of cars coming the same way and it appeared that we had chosen Burpham Village Day for our visit. The village was very crowded, people with red stickers giving them admission to the gardens that were on show. We knew if we started looking at gardens we would never start walking at all! First however a thought for Ticker Edwardes. The church was beautifully decorated and a haven of coolness after the hot afternoon sun. Edwardes' grave was on the east side of the church. We wandered round, clearly this was going to be a leisurely walk. There were two bison up the track in a field we were told but they were rather indistinct brown mounds in high grass.

It was already clear that we were in "Tansy" country. The Downs rose up behind us while across the river valley we could see Arundel Castle dully silhouetted against a hazy sky. Audrey knew the tracks well veering first right along the footpath then away to the left. Common valerian was a distinctive pink presence in the ditches, a much lighter colour than the carmine or white valerian that is such a feature of Petworth's old walls. "A rather unpleasant-smelling common perennial", said the book and in truth the flower heads did have a heavy unappetising smell. Dog rose and sweet briar were at their best in the sunny hedgerows. It was a long walk through wood, meadow and lane, occasionally glimpsing the railway and the sporadic Sunday afternoon trains. There are no through ways up here, North Stoke, for which we were making, being accessible only from Amberley. The Church, it seemed, was used only for the occasional service or concert. South Stoke's spire we had already seen far away over the trees but in fact, as Audrey told us, it was nearer than it seemed. Across a swing-bridge, through a wood, then a stop for sandwiches. South Stoke, it appeared, like Burpham, was en fete. There was a festival service at 7 p.m. It was already six o'clock. Someone was practising their singing in the lane. An Indian bean tree was quite still on the summer evening. In the church the singer we had heard in the lane was now singing Ave Maria with a voice that seemed too strong for the tiny church. It turned out he was nothing to do with the service, he was a visitor who hadn't sung in earnest for two years and had been induced by his friends to give a rendition.

The sun was full out now, a glorious evening. It had been a long walk. Across the railway line and back along the river. We wouldn't be home until 7.30 at least, some of us had half-thought of the South Stoke service. We had had a great expedition into a world that the sun had enchanted. We'll come to Burpham again I'm sure.

P.

## Steve's Graffham Walk

There was no cricket on Graffham Recreation Ground so we hoped there would be no broken car windows. Some couple of dozen members and two dogs. We followed the footpaths round the Lavington Stud, noting the carefully painted black and white rails. Going on we could look across the valley to Petworth with the church tower looking almost dumpy in the distance: how the old steeple would have stood out from here! Looking west Tillington was clear and then the television mast on Bexley Hill. Turning left we made our way up part of the marled scarp



## BIRTHDAY BONANZA DRAW RULES

Please detach and keep for your records

Closing date for the draw is 10th February 1995. First prize is £10,000. Entry is by date of birth within the deadline stated. If more than one entry matches the winning date of birth, a further, tie-breaker draw will take place. The first entry drawn will win the £10,000 cash prize and all other matching entries will receive consolation prizes of £50 each. If the date of birth which corresponds to the winning date is not returned as instructed, the prize(s) will go to the nearest birthdate received within the specified time. The winner/s will be asked to show proof of their date of birth. Any entries that are not legible will not be entered. Consumers' Association accepts no responsibility for illegible entries. The draws scheduled to take place by 14th April 1995. The winners will be notified in writing as soon as possible after the draw. If you are a winner, there is no need to claim your prize - you will be notified. Details of prize winners will be available on request from Birthday Bonanza Draw, Consumers' Association, Castlemead, Gascoyne Way, Hertford X, SG14 1LH after 28th April 1995. A stamped addressed envelope, marked "Birthday Bonanza Draw Prize Winners List BBD/1", should accompany such requests. No employees or suppliers of Consumers' Association Ltd. and its associated companies or their families, and no person under the age of 18, will be eligible to take part in the Birthday Bonanza Draw. Information you supply us with (including your date of birth) might be used by us to send you relevant offers in the future. If you prefer not to receive any such offers please write to Dept. DNP2 at the above Hertford address.



**FREE ENTRY**

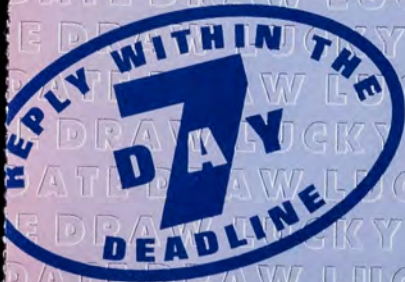
**BIRTHDAY BONANZA  
ENTRY RECORD**

◀ PLEASE DETACH AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS

Please see overleaf

**DATE  
POSTED**

30.8.94



47/5/012436



of the Downs before turning right along the foothills. A bumble-bee nest was interesting, a large hole in the earth it seemed.

Vegetation was mid-summer high beside the path and beginning to encroach. Nettles leaning across the path, dogs mercury a constant feature but the flowers long vanished by this time in mid-July. The small pink-shaped cranesbill heads of Herb Robert poked out wherever it could find a gap while the occasional attractive blue bells of the tall nettle-leaved bellflower would not look, we thought, out of place in a garden. Here too were the first colourings of the flat pink heads of hemp agrimony. We would later see this growing in Graffham gardens - it's very much a plant of the chalk downs. The heavy rain a week previously had washed the earth away from the path so that you could often see the underlying chalk. Coming down out of the Downs the whole of the Rother Valley seemed again spread out before us. The footpath of dried brown grass and bleached chalk led through a field of broad beans struggling with the parched white chalk soil. Finally back into the quiet of a Graffham late Sunday afternoon. Thyme on garden walls and phlox in the borders.

Back to the cars and tea at the Coultershaw Beam Pump. Diane and her ladies with very welcome refreshments. Michael Palmer pointed out the new hydraulic ram, invented originally, he saw, by the Mongolfier Brothers of hot-air balloon fame but not put into practical use until much later. The jet of water on a hot day proved irresistible to some and no one seemed in any hurry to go home!

P.

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## Visit to Watts' Gallery

Compton is the one near Guildford, we were told, not a great journey and indeed it wasn't. A glorious sunny July evening. The idea was to charge members the admission fee of £1.50 and to raise the money for the two minibuses by holding a raffle. Somewhat similar to the expedition to Godalming Museum last year although then we had a coach. Some members went by private car. We had some forty in all. A very few had been before but for most the whole thing was a complete mystery. We would have a picnic when we got there.

It turned out to be an evening that is impossible to describe. These are just a few impressions. The terracotta chapel in Compton churchyard had a hint of Italy about it, whatever anyone thought about it as a piece of architecture it had a presence. No one could deny that. It had been built by Watts' formidable widow, his second wife, Mary, who would survive him by some three decades or more. It was Mary who had stirred up the local villagers to help her build and adorn it. We went inside, looked round the churchyard and looked at the wooded cloister. Across the road a field sloped precipitously down. We hardly seemed in England at all.

Time to move on and have our picnic on the lawn in front of the Gallery itself. The Gallery cat joined us as if he had been a member all his life. He must be postal we decided, nobody's round took in Compton. As for Watts himself and the Gallery I don't know where to begin.

Richard Jeffries the curator told us something of the painter's life, the public recognition and acclaim of his later years, then the swing of the pendulum and a descent into critical ill-favour. His formidable widow, some two generations younger than he, had watched the pendulum swing but never lost faith. "Signor's light will shine again, but not in my lifetime I fear," she had said. "Signor" she always called Watts. There were signs, Richard said, of Watts' reputation now reviving, Watts was born in London in 1817 and had died there in 1904. He had always been delicate and his first wife, also some three decades younger than he, had been Ellen Terry the actress. Not a good match at all. We saw the gallery then the Museum with its vast statues, or casts of them. A clause in Mrs Watts' will forbade charges for admission which made income very difficult said Richard. Income could however be generated if people came, as we had, out of hours. Our host was a mine of information and as witty a speaker as the Society had heard in its twenty years. No light praise! We were drawing the raffle in the darkness and aware that we'd hardly begun. I'd say the evening was one of Ann Bradley's better ideas but that would imply she sometimes has a bad one! I've never come across one. And the raffle? Oh yes that worked out very well - the £12 we cleared when the transport was paid for we gave to the Watts' Gallery!

P.

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## The Leconfield Cottage Museum

### 1) *General thoughts.*

The Leconfield Estate Cottage Museum is on its way. A change of use application for No. 346 High Street is under consideration at the moment but nothing can be done formally until this is obtained. In the meantime much preliminary thought is going into the project. It is hoped that the project will become in time an independent self-administering charity. "346" is not a Society or Estate project; it is a town project and should have, as an additional benefit, the effect of attracting visitors to Petworth and inducing visitors to Petworth House to explore the town on their way to High Street. It should be seen in the context of the opening of the old kitchens at Petworth House and give an idea of how an Estate worker might have lived at a time when the kitchens were at their fullest operation. The word "Museum" can be misleading: "Cottage museum" gives a better idea. Petworth has long thought of a Museum in the strict sense. This is not that Museum. It may have elements of such a museum about it but 346 will not in itself house the extensive material that relates to Petworth's past. That must come later. For analogies to 346 we need to look to the Weald and Downland Museum or the similar development at Buckler's Hard in Hampshire.

If 346 is not a Leconfield project, although it will remain part of the Estate, why the Leconfield slant? As I have often said, Petworth is historically an Estate town. This may be less obvious today, but it has to be said that the town has been shaped by its relationship to the great house and that it is not possible to come to terms with the development of Petworth and how the town appears today without some reference to its formative Estate past. Time was when



workmen in great numbers were locally employed on the Estate and when the ringing of the various Estate work bells was part of the very fabric of Petworth life. A boy growing up in early century Petworth would probably work on the Estate or in conjunction with it: remember that most businesses relied heavily on the Estate for their custom. E.V. Lucas writing in 1904 felt the aura of the Leconfield Estate as present in the very air of the streets as is the presage of a thunderstorm and he will hardly have been exaggerating. Attitudes to this domination could be ambivalent: it was something you accepted or broke away from. If you broke away, then you lived away. Many did. At this distance in time it is pointless to attempt value judgement on this domination. It was there and was good or bad depending on how you looked at life. It could have its benefits in a harsh age. The Leconfield Estate stood in fact for a kind of benevolent paternalism, almost as a prototype welfare state. Housing, health, employment and garden facilities were all provided but it was a conditional provision. Some misdemeanour could bring loss of job, references and tied house. A welfare state with a difference. There was a time when Bacon's corner would be thronged with workmen waiting for the bell before returning to the Yard after breakfast. It was an empire within a town and Petworth needs to remember it. It is a part of Petworth's past and part too of its continuing spirit.



*Leconfield Estate workmen in Petworth Square awaiting Lord Leconfield's return after his marriage. November 1991.*

*From a postcard belonging to Mr and Mrs Knox of Hangleton.*

346 High Street is an ideal site for such a project. It isn't large and can certainly be reconstructed as a Leconfield Estate cottage of the time. What time? We've thought of 1910 when the Estate was at its apogee. None of the great estates would be the same after the 1914-1918 War, they were of their very nature prodigal of man-power and the drain on man-power that the War brought about would never be reversed. For a brief period in the early 1920s it might look as if all was as it had once been but it was a mirage and the perceptive knew that it was. 1910 looks a good date.

At present it's possible to think aloud - to point to some difficulties of interpretation or simply matters about which we'd like to know more. We can even take you round the various rooms and point out the possibilities. Clearly perspectives may change and sharpen as the project progresses. While we can establish some idea of the standard of living of a Leconfield Estate worker in 1910 we'd appreciate advice from anyone who has a memory of that time or, more likely, has heard traditions of that older time before the 1914-18 War. This is very important. Experts can certainly help us but they're no substitute for the actual memory of local people. We don't know whether Estate workers lived better than industrial workers for instance. We suspect that they did. Or on a less general theme: who lived in the Cottage at the time? Estate records may help but local tradition can too. A Mr Jeffries in the 1930s? Before that? The house has clearly been partitioned from Ricketts the carriers next door but we think the partitioning is older than 1910.

#### 2) *The house itself.*

The cottage is approached from the rear, possibly in earlier centuries it formed one large house with Ricketts next door. 346 is timber-framed and is probably late seventeenth century. The small garden has one or two good shrubs and some attractive plants. It needs attention this autumn and might perhaps be used for flowers of the Edwardian period. We may do away with the lawn. We can assume that the tenant had an allotment elsewhere in the town and that the garden would have been used for flowers. It's not really big enough for a vegetable garden and visitors would probably prefer not to be offered a vista of cabbage, potatoes and parsnips! Realism is important but needs the occasional concession. The garden shed is certainly later than our period but it's a good sturdy construction and looks likely to be retained. It may be very useful: perhaps it might house the kind of tools our putative estate worker might have used. A cobbler's last too perhaps, he may well have been a "snob" who maintained the family shoes himself, even though not trained formally as a cobbler. Many men did this - D.I.Y. was an established concept long before the phrase was actually coined.

At the side of the door is an old-fashioned wired food safe, painted Leconfield grey. Entrance is into a scullery, one of two downstairs rooms. Running water would have been available in 1910 we think, although probably an innovation. Florence Rapley at Heath End records the water being laid on at precisely this time. There would have been a simple cold tap over a stoneware sink. The present sink is glazed and metric! The sink would have been built up on brick pillars with a large brass tap in glorious solitude high above it. The sink would be shallow with a draining board and possibly a plate rack. Washing would be a vital part of the week's domestic work: this is obvious, if nothing else, from Florence Rapley's Diary. There would have been a copper, perhaps in a now demolished outhouse, if it were in the present



scullery there's no sign now of a flue. The copper would boil the whites in soda to loosen the dirt, then the clothes would be removed with a paddle and put into a dolly tub with cold water and a dolly peg used to agitate the washing. If a mangle was available it would be set out in the garden. Ironing would be done in the other ground floor room with several irons heating on the range. A single iron would lose its heat quickly enough. A piece of soap would be run along the bottom of the iron to clean it, there would be little point in washing the clothes and then dirtying them again with the iron! Baths, (that is of course, if a bath was available!), would be taken in a galvanised bath in front of the range. Most of the present scullery fixtures will need to be removed with a view to recreating conditions in 1910. Paint is one item that will need careful study; to give an idea we will strip some of the present covering to see what is underneath. We will not be looking to expose beam work as might be done in a modern restoration. It may be that there will be evidence of "graining", making deal look more like expensive hardwood. Certainly the house will have been much more cluttered than a typical modern house, with clothes, boots, even perhaps a pair of "straights" lying about. The floor will probably be uncovered. It's probably cement beneath the present linoleum.

In the other downstairs room fronting onto High Street we'd look to take out the 1950s brick fireplace and put in a kitchen range, a Petworth perhaps or a Kitchener. There is probably an inglenook here and a bressumer. The room otherwise won't need a lot of attention. The present window on the street is out of keeping so we'd like a change there. There would be a table and chairs and an easy chair. We'd need to see what kind of chairs would be in general use then, being guided by contemporary photographs and catalogues. There may even have been a curtain over the mantle shelf. We'd like to have the range working; a sizzling kettle gives a feeling of life. The cupboard in the corner would have been put in at about this period. Perhaps there would be a dresser. The cellar is quite extensive and may well be important as the project progresses.

The stairs are awkward but integral to the character of the cottage. Clearly a handrail will be needed and admonitory sign, even if these are anachronistic. There are two bedrooms upstairs, the left hand one is beamed and probably needs little other than external decoration. It would be furnished as a bedroom and the area would probably be cordoned off so that the visitor would simply enter and look. There might be a wardrobe, an iron bedstead and a counterpane. The room to the right of the minuscule landing will probably be used basically to house exhibitions reflecting different local themes. The fireplace has been much covered up in this century and we would like to take it back, exposing perhaps a Victorian grate. There is a large room upstairs approached by a particularly precipitous flight of stairs. This would not be accessible to the public but invaluable for storage particularly given the possibility of periodic, changing exhibitions.

Fund-raising is under way. There will be details probably on the Activities Sheet with this Magazine. The money raised goes toward the restoration. Money given is really given to Petworth as a town for this is a project that is a real Petworth one and deserves public support. This article has simply floated a few preliminary ideas, we'll look to keep you informed of progress in later Magazines.

From various conversations between the Editor, Ann Bradley, Raymond Harris and the Leconfield Estate.

## The Dialect of Petworth, Questionnaire II The Responses

The 2nd survey of the dialect of Petworth has proved equally as successful as the first questionnaire in that it has established the continued existence of many local terms that had hitherto been assumed to be forgotten. The following lines contain a brief summary of the responses given in the second questionnaire along with a few explanatory notes.

(1) With very few exceptions the general name for a large playing marble is an *alley*, we of course know this to be made of glass, however it derives its name from alabaster the material from which it was formerly made. Also known as a *taw* or *tolly*.

(2) *Emmet* was the popular response to another name for the ant. This word is derived from the Old English *aemete*, and was formerly pronounced *ammut* in Sussex.

(3) Those little bundles of twigs which we used for heating ovens were known as *pimps*, and until fairly recently provided a valuable source of income for the woodsman.

(4) The names for the mid-morning break certainly stirred the memories of those taking part in the survey. Perhaps the most interesting responses were *coager* and *nammich*, also pronounced *cojer* and *nammet*. The origin of the word *coager* is far from clear although in some Scottish dialects cog-and-soup refers to food and drink. *Nammich* or *nammet* is an equally interesting term, impossible now to be absolutely sure of its origin we can only guess that it derives from the Anglo-Saxon word *nonmete*, meaning *noon-meat*. (It should be mentioned that noon was formerly considered to be 3pm, this would suggest that *nammich* originally referred to the afternoon break).

Other responses to this question included: *Bait*, (A Sussex term for the Afternoon break). *Bout*, (A corruption of bait). *Snap*, (A variation of snack). *Piece*, (Probably meaning a piece of bread as opposed to a meal). *Beever*, (A West Sussex term for an eleven o'clock break, it comes from the French *Bever* - to drink). *Tommy*, (Simply meaning bread or provisions).

(5) The shoe mender was often known in Sussex as the *snob*. As opposed to the skilled cobbler the snob was usually a poorly trained itinerant worker who would often travel from town to town offering his services for whatever payment he could get.

(6) The basket or wooden container used for carrying seeds was known variously as a seed-lip, -lepe, -lup, -lop. In Sussex *leap* meant half a bushel which was probably the loaded capacity of the basket.

(7) Most children lived in fear of that invisible person who would haunt the hours of darkness and whose visit would surely result in their abduction. Every region of England has a multitude of names for this evil being whilst in Sussex the *Bogeyman* and *Old Nick* seem the most popular.

(8) Those itinerant caravan dwellers, who seemed to lead such an adventurous life were known variously as *Gippos*, *Pikeys*, *Diddy-kies*, or just simply *Kies*.

(9) In the children's game of *had* or *catch* a child who wished to be temporarily exempt from being caught would cry one of the following:- *fain*, *fains*, *fainites*, *pax*, *pat*, *scranees*,



*scrase, scrases, or scribs*. It would often be customary to cross one's fingers when making the plea. One informant gave the response *cream rose* to this question, this is not in fact a Sussex term but was peculiar to the school children of Portsmouth. It has been suggested that the cry *pax* (Latin for peace) was common to those children attending public schools, an understandable assumption as an ordinary child would be unlikely to have any knowledge of Latin.

(10) The questionnaire asks if you recall the names of any games played when you were a child. The responses were varied to say the least, and included "*flicksies*" played with cigarette cards; *knuckle-bones* (In Sussex the knee-bone of a sheep is known as a huckle-bone); *In and out of the window*; *Sardines*; *Three Men from the Workhouses*; *Poor Sally (or Polly) sit a-Weeping*; to name but a few.

(11) The stump of a coppiced tree was generally known as a *stam* in Sussex (The Old High German for the stem of a plant or tree is *stam*) and most of the responses confirmed this. Other responses included *totts* and *staddles*, both of which can be broadly used to describe a coppiced tree.

(12) In Sussex it was a custom known as *Cuckoo Penny* to turn a coin in your pocket on hearing the first cuckoo, compliance with this tradition would ensure financial prosperity during the forthcoming year. One respondent suggested that the first cuckoo signalled that the time was right for the sowing of a type of oat known as *cuckoo oats*. Another local tradition suggested that an old lady from Ebermoe released the bird from her basket (Haywards Heath was the more popular location of this mythical occurrence).

(13) When counting sheep the shepherd would drive the animals through a narrow gap between hurdles. The sheep would be counted in pairs and so two sheep would count as one, the peculiar form of numbering went as follows:- *Oneerum, twoerum, cockerum, shurerum, sithererum, satherum, wineberry, wagtail, tarrydiddle, den*. Having counted to den the shepherd would cut a notch on his crook or tally stick, each notch counting as twenty sheep. One helpful respondent recorded the numbers *yan, tan, tetherer* as an example of sheep counting known to her, however I am afraid to say that this is a type of counting used by shepherds on the Scottish border with England, perhaps the lady in question had heard a "furriner" to the county using his native dialect and had assumed that this method was common to other Sussex shepherds. Finally out of interest and to show that distance is no barrier to dialect speech, in certain parts of Wiltshire the counting would begin *ain, tain, tetherer*, a style not so different from that used by the Scottish shepherds.

(14) In Sussex as well as some other counties a donkey was known as a *moke*.

(15) The clippings from a hedge may have been variously known as, *brish, brishings, brush, droppings, or frith*. One respondent suggested the term *trrowse* to describe hedge trimmings, while I am unsure that it is a Sussex word I am certain that it is of some antiquity, perhaps the anonymous respondent would like to contact me so as to assist in my research into the term.

(16) *Bread and cheese, or brencheese* was the common response to the question What do you call the leaf-buds of the Whitethorn or Hawthorn?

(17) Sussex folk were always suspicious of strangers and it has been said that you have to live in the county for at least thirty years before you are accepted, I don't believe that story,

thirty years isn't nearly long enough! Invariably the newcomers would be known as the "*furriner*", however just to confuse matters if the stranger really was a foreigner then he would be referred to as the "*Frenchy*" regardless of his country of origin. *Furriner* was the general response to this question.

(18) The local names for the weasel are *futtice* or *kine*. I can find no derivation for either of these names though I suspect that *futtice* is in some way connected with the archaic name for the weasel's close relation the polecat or *foulmart*.

(19) The well-known Sussex game of Stoolball was formerly called *bittle-battle*. The Reverend Parish in his famous Sussex dialect dictionary suggests that the game was originally played by milkmaids, the bat being a wooden milking stool known as a *bittle*. Another theory is that the milking stool was the wicket and that the bat was a wooden hammer also known as a *bittle*.

(20) The brightly coloured insect which most of us know as the Ladybird has a whole host of different names depending on that part of the country it is spoken of. In Sussex it is known variously as a *Lady Bug, Lady Cow, Spotted Bug, Lady Anne, Barnaby, and Bishop Barnaby*. The origin of this last name is now somewhat obscure though in old rhymes the Ladybird is often associated with fire, perhaps *Bishop Barnaby* with his red cloak of office similar to that "worn" by the insect suffered from burning? A further thought is that in the North of England when milk is burnt in the pan it is said to be *bishopped*. Any suggestions on this matter will be welcomed.

(22) During the threshing of corn the dust and fine material left at the end of the process were generally known as *rackettings, cavings* or *tailings*. The job of clearing out the *rackettings* was one of the most unpopular tasks performed during threshing, it was always very dusty and on a hot day the *cavings* would stick to the farmworkers sweat. An interesting response to this question was ravel, after some research I came upon the following quotation, "the raveled is a kind of cheat bread, but it retaineth more of the grosse and less of the pure substance on the wheat." It appears that *ravel* was formerly used in Kent to describe a bread of inferior quality.

(23) The skilled job of the rick-maker involved many important tasks, but it was crucial to keep the completed rick both dry and vermin proof. To succeed in the latter and also to prevent moisture rising up from the ground the ricks were built on a platform, if erected in the harvest field then the *bed* often comprised of a layer of faggots which in east Sussex was known as a *treddle*. If the stack was to be made in the rick-yard then it would stand on a raised platform of heavy beams known as a *steddle* or *staddle*, these timbers would form a framework which was supported by large mushroom shaped stones which effectively prevented the entry of rats and other vermin into the rick. The response to this question varied only slightly and while *steddle* and *staddle* were the most popular entry's, others included: *studdle, steadle, and steatle*.

(24) In the harvest field it was often the task of a child to lead the team of horses which were engaged in drawing the hay cart. This important post was variously known as *stand-hard, stannard boy, rein-in, hen-teaming* [hand-teaming?], *leading-in-between, and lead-boy*. Of course a well trained team would obey the verbal order of one of the labourer's, so making the child's services unnecessary.

(25) All parts of the country had local names for their flora and fauna, and Sussex was



no exception. Beginning with the Sussex names for birds is a list of *some* of the responses from the questionnaire: *Shrite* = Missle-thrush (Shrite is a variation of shriek so called from the cry of the Missle-thrush), *Juggy* = the Wren (Jug was formerly the pet-name for Jenny, hence the more widely known term "Jenny Wren"). *Yaffle* = the green Woodpecker (From its laughing cry, O.E.D.) *Molly Dishwasher* = the Water Wagtail. *Spadger* = A Sparrow. *Spug* = a Sparrow. *Bobby* = Robin.

(26) The final question asked for Sussex plant-names, while I received a great number of responses I suspect that few if any are peculiar to Sussex alone. However I am equally sure that many of them were common in the county. Here is a small selection: *Monkey or Bunnies Mouth* = Snapdragon. *Grannies Bonnet* = Columbine. *Winter-picks* = the fruit of the Blackthorn. *Hertsie* = A good old Sussex pronunciation of Heart-ease, the Pansy. *Grandad-pop-out-of-bed* = Convolvulus. *Lily* = Bindweed.

Miles Costello

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## Drenched in Arcady

It had rained all day. Surely it would relent for the evening. After all, Nick's first suggested trip had been rained off. Every time the rain stopped during the afternoon it came on again with renewed intensity. By 6.15 the rain seemed finally to be over but it was very cold for late May. Then the sun came out. A little evening sunshine was just what was needed. Up Lombard Street, "Et in Arcadia ego", said Nick. In truth there did seem something of Arcady in the quiet sunlit streets. Nick likes coming to Petworth. It was very wet in the tunnel and wet too at the iron gates. I knew from previous experience that where most people just see grass on the Lawn Hill slopes, Nick would be ready with his magnifying glass. "Good Friday grass still flowering at the end of May," he pronounced in his most magisterial tones. There were large mushrooms growing at the top of the hill, rather unusual I thought for late May. It was very wet underfoot and the evening park was quite empty. Strange to think that in just a month Lawn Hill would be packed with picnickers for the National Trust concerts. The umbrellas would certainly have felt at home tonight, the sun had gone in again and great black clouds were already back overhead. Some parts of Lawn Hill were very heavily grazed; others quite rank. We could only suppose, as we had done last August, that some grasses were more palatable than others. On one of the more heavily grazed patches Nick was pleased to find burrowing clover with its tiny flower-heads bent to the earth after flowering. Not a striking plant and easy to miss, it is listed as a rather uncommon plant of dry fields in the south but it is such an inconspicuous clover that it could be more common than it seems.

The dark clouds seemed to hem in the lake and the wind stirred the waters. Not a welcoming evening in any way at all. The birds, sand martins we thought, on the east side of the lake were skimming very low over the islands, the insects were probably very low in the cold atmosphere. Two caterpillars on a grass stem looked likely to be of the blue butterfly. Last August we had been pleased to see chamomile growing in profusion beside the lake, and in

late May it was difficult to find. We had to look carefully to find the distinctive leaves but, once broken, there was no doubt, the clean smell, with no sweetness and no sense of cloying. It was very wet indeed at the lakeside, much more than you would expect in May, you could tread water even some feet in from the edge. We decided not to go round the lake as we had done in August but to skirt the head by the boathouse. Among the browning heads of last year's rush were the creeping dark green rounded leaves of marsh pennywort or "white rot", gypsywort, and the unassuming square-stemmed bog stitchwort, common enough in marshy places. The poisonous umbellifer hemlock water dropwort was already some two feet high by the water edge, "locally common in brackish water" said the handbook. There were some more further along. The wild angelica was another "cow parsley" type flower, this time with a purple stem and larger leaves. Past the boathouse, a black swan seemed unperturbed by the weather, briefly the sun came out, then it grew ever blacker. Nick was interested in the smaller flowers, tormentil and heath speedwell.

Inside the gate to the area at the top of the lake where the swamp cypress grew. First mullein with its woolly silver-grey leaves, then the "sweet" flag. Breaking the leaves to smell the lemon fragrance, at first it seemed to blow away on the strong wind but yes, there it was. Milkmaids or ladies' smock, red campion, then as we moved on, purple toad-flax and ground elder - Nick thought this had come in with some garden soil perhaps - creeping buttercup and forget-me-not. Within the enclosure plants could flourish free from the grazing deer. Out at the other iron gate, and the swifts were circling round, hunting. You couldn't see them catch anything, the insects were invisible but they were flying very low, almost at head height. We seemed to be standing right amongst the swifts and yet completely ignored by them. We never felt there was the slightest chance of being hit by them but we were in a way part of the group. Sombre black wings cleaving the gloomy atmosphere like razors. The weather was getting worse, going across to the Lower Pond the rain blew into us. It was going to be a very wet evening. Round the Lower Pond and back through an empty Park. We'd looked for plants, found a few, but the abiding impression would have to be of standing among the swifts on a day when the sky itself seemed so low it could almost be touched.

Nick Sturt will be talking to the Society in the Hall next February.

P.

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## Some Contemporary Issues in Petworth Park

Some of the trees on the mound to the rear of Lawn Hill are old, very old in fact. We know because the sweet chestnuts here that were blown down by the 1987 hurricane were 280 years old then. This takes them back well before Capability Brown. We are probably looking at



deliberate replanting in the wake of the terrible storm at the beginning of the eighteenth century which did untold damage and killed many thousands of people. Some of the sweet chestnuts on this mound are massive, the greatest girth attained in this country is some twelve foot through the butt and these are certainly a good ten or eleven foot. That giant lying on its side with the branches lopped is a victim of the hurricane that has been left for people to see, it was calculated that the trunk weighed some 45 tons. The mound itself is clearly artificial; when the hurricane tore some of the old trees out, it exposed at the same time all kinds of building rubble in the soil. The mound is in fact an artificial knoll, a kind of man-made pimple on the level surface of the ground.

We're very fond of these ancient trees and almost look upon them as personal friends. The National Trust aim to keep them alive if at all possible. One method of prolonging their life is to take out the tops so that a weak or split trunk is no longer bearing the strain of a great mass of foliage. This reduces wind leverage and of course helps with safety in a public place. We inspect these trees at least annually: you can see the plastic numbering tag stapled onto the tree. As I say, we're particularly anxious to keep the old trees on Lawn Hill and the knoll behind. Look at this sweet chestnut on the edge of the clump. Before the hurricane it had a double trunk. Half of this was blown down in the storm. The tree had to be lopped because the weakened trunk couldn't carry the weight of the top growth. Now, like other trees that have been given a new lease of life, it's a paradise for insects and wild life. Splits, holes, fungi, all these things make an old tree a vital aspect of the landscape. An expert once told me that trees never die of old age. There's always some external cause: drought, wind, fire, fungi. Look at these sweet chestnut leaves. The tree is nearly three hundred years old but the leaves are as fresh and green as you'd find on any young tree. We've a system of inspection for the old trees in which we note down on a form what needs to be done, i.e. lopping of branches that might be unsafe. If you have general public access as we have, you need to take extra care. Yes, the trees on Lawn Hill and the knoll behind are certainly geriatrics but they're really my favourites. This seat commanding the view is new and very stoutly built in Portland stone. When it came it was so white you could almost have seen it from Midhurst but now it's been stained in the old way with permanganate of potash if looks very much part of the traditional scene.

There's a great deal of new planting in the park, much of course necessitated by the hurricane. We have to be careful, though, that we don't have too many trees all coming into maturity at once, a park needs to be a unity of trees in different stages of growth. We're planting a protective screen on the windward edge of the Pleasure Grounds to enhance the feeling of enclosure there. Here's a marvellous view from the top of Lawn Hill looking down on the lake. In winter when many of the trees are bare the orange twigs on the willows stand out beautifully. The swamp cypress trees on the large island are a particular feature. The islands seem to have been put in after Capability Brown's time but no one seems quite sure when.

People don't realise that the causeway at the head of the lake is in fact an artificial embankment, the result of moving some 47,000 tons of soil manually. A further 17,000 tons of clay, probably dug from the far end of the lake bed were laid over the southern end to water proof the base. Bricks for culverts appear to have been made from clay from the Park itself, then fired in kilns near the site of the present boathouse. There are algae on the lake again this year.



*The scullery at 346 High Street.  
Photograph by Barry Norman.*





*An upstairs bedroom at 346 High Street.  
Photograph by Barry Norman.*



*High Street from 346.  
Photograph by Barry Norman.*





*The downstairs sitting-room at 346 with 1950s fireplace.  
Photograph by Barry Norman.*

It's always a problem and is accentuated by the recent spell of hot weather. It's usually attributed to a surfeit of nutrients in the water and may have something to do with the Canada Geese cropping the lakeside grass and then manuring the lake itself. One solution suggested is to clear it by bagging up barley straw, weighting the bags and dropping them into the lake. Quite apart from the labour intensive aspect of this, there is also the problem of littering the lake bed with decaying straw, bricks and netting. It's something that would have to be done whenever the algae appeared. The general consensus is that for the moment it's something we have to live with during the late summer months. It doesn't seem to worry the fish and I've often seen young moorhens simply scoot along the top.

Over on this side of the lake are the reconstituted stew ponds formerly ringed by railings and overshadowed by holm oak and yew. We've kept a few of the older trees but the storm opened the site right out. Rebuilding the dams has replaced the water, the pond beds having been dry for generations. The stews are fed in fact by spring water and their purpose seems to have been to cleanse the taste of freshwater fish by keeping them in clear spring water. Fish caught in the lake itself would probably have a somewhat earthy taste. How long this process would take no one seems to know. The pond lining was originally sandstone but we've now put in granite setts as a lining and are hoping to replace the present metal outlet for the spring with one of stone. The spring water retains a constant temperature of 50° to 55° and although this seems cool enough in mid-summer, if you come out here when it's bitterly cold in winter you can see what appears to be steam rising from the pool surface. We've replanted with oriental plane, one of the original species, as too with the evergreen or holm oak. The warmer water attracts frogs, who come here early in the year in some numbers and can grow to a considerable size. I'd hope it will be possible to reconstruct the bath-house to the rear, fed by the same spring with a sluice on the other side; it had a floor of blue tiles with a windowed building over. A kind of spa really but it must have been very cold. Imagine walking across from the House in a bath-robe! 50° to 55° isn't that warm even if there's steam rising from the surface! Perhaps it was built on a whim and not used very often. No one seems to know when it fell out of regular use.

You'll see that we have added some four acres of woodland in the Arbour Hill side of the lake, taking in land that has been relentlessly grazed for centuries. It was an idea of Lancelot Brown's to have a kind of woodland extension at this end of the lake, although the project was never carried out. Brown's intention is clear enough from surviving plans. Of course it's essential to keep the deer out so we have reworked iron railings from the paddocks. The gates are cut down from old 10 foot gates, and the "P" on the centre stands in fact for the Pirie Estate near Haslemere, once part of the Leconfield Estate I believe. You can see how we've curved the railings round at the lake edge to stop the deer getting in. It was satisfying to do much of the iron work ourselves. These railings being too low were raised and a high tension wire was inserted beneath. I've only known one deer get in since the protection has been put up and it's a complete mystery as to how it gained entry. The gates themselves have the hinges offset and brass rollers which mean they close automatically - very important with so many visitors.

We've deliberately made a meandering path through the new plantation in order that visitors can see all the different types of tree. We've also left a way open to the lakeside in two places. The willows are *Salix alba 'Chermesina'*, notable for their orange stems in winter and



offering a contrast with the more sober stems of the original white willow. We've planted ten more swamp cypress but the bulk of the planting toward the periphery is oak with silver birch to act as a nurse. Grey poplar grows in the wetter ground with crack and the white willow. Between the young trees the vegetation is returning after centuries of grazing. An indication of success is that kestrel hovering overhead, looking for mice: there's a cover here for small animals that's seldom to be found in the Park at large. We've planted a few outliers to break up the curve of the fence. There are some nice wild plants coming in too. That musk mallow by the gate with its green seedheads or "cheeses" is a good example. Altogether we've planted some 3000 trees in four acres.

Over now to the Arbour Hill where again we have old trees with fissures and holes for bats, jackdaws, all kinds of living creatures. King Henry VIII had a banqueting hall here but there's no trace of it now; the view across the Park is magnificent, all the way to the Lower Lake and beyond. As we drive down into the flat parkland the anthills make the Land Rover roll, some of them must be very ancient. I've often seen the green woodpeckers attacking anthills here but I've never managed to get close enough to see them actually eating the ants. The Park is a good spot for woodpeckers. Dead trees are something of a talking point. That tree you can see over there is quite dead but it's being left for ecological reasons to provide a home for all kinds of insect and wild life. We have to keep a balance between leaving this kind of material and making the Park look as though someone cares for it. It's not an easy balance to strike and opinions can differ. Along the Northchapel Road wall we're looking to thicken up the peripheral planting, always bearing in mind the Brown ideal that the landscape outside the Park should merge with the Park itself to make an apparently boundless horizon. The Northchapel Road Car Park itself is very extensively used and often completely full. We may extend it and carry it northward.

We're now moving across from the Car Park in the direction of Shepherd's Lodge. Hard by the wall was once an apple orchard. All the trees are gone now and replaced by oak and other native species but the apple trees seem to have been planted on individual mounds which can still be made out. Cider apples one tradition has it. The mounds were probably raised up as defence against the very damp soil in this area. There's a natural spring here, and a dam constructed in about 1850 to make a sizeable pond. It's certainly shown in contemporary maps. The spring appears to take surplus water from the Pheasant Copse. For next year's centenary of the National Trust we're looking to repair the brick culvert, dredge the present marsh and rush on the old pond bed and recreate the pond. There are two willows of which one will be removed but the other, hunched and gnarled as it is, will add character to a shallow marshy area at the extremity. This shallow area will be home to dragonflies and other similar wildlife. I've never found anyone who can remember the pond as other than the shallow marshland it now is, or anyone who can give it a name. No, we don't know how the dam came to be broken, or when, but the new pond will be a significant feature in years to come. We're thinking of calling it Shepherd's Lodge Pond.

We can move on now to the high land by Snow Hill. The storms ravaged the mature oak and beech hangers but we're replanting now and may well even put a few trees on the bare top of the hill. Personally I think the view from up here across to the Lake and House may be without parallel in Southern England. There is a two mile vista without obstruction of any kind. Some

of the trees in the valley are very old. Look at this massive oak, anchored against the 1987 storm by the clay in which it's rooted. I don't know how old it is, probably it was here when Capability Brown was working on the Park. Could it even go back to those far-off days when the tenants and the Ninth Earl were arguing over emparking and copyhold land? Probably not, but it's tempting to think. It's a huge tree with a stubble of young offshoots coming from the massive trunk. Epicormic growth it's called.

A great problem in the young post-storm plantations on the Snow Hill side (as elsewhere in fact!) is the damage caused by squirrels. We can anticipate deer damage and to an extent control it. Deer are destructive creatures and a thousand deer in some 700 acres can be very destructive indeed. This is a herd of international significance but we can protect young trees from the deer by fence and paling. After all our job is to balance contradictions and growing trees in an area which holds a thousand deer is as big a contradiction as any. Where all equations seem to break down is with the squirrels; they're doing terrible damage to the young post-1987 plantations. Look at these young oak and beech, five years of careful husbandry. We'd even put in some sycamore, the squirrels' favourite but they've ignored these and stripped the other trees of bark. Without their bark the trees are doomed, the weather gets into the exposed wood, it rots and the tree dies. Curiously I've never actually caught the squirrels in the act but there's no doubt that they are the culprits. No one really knows why the squirrels do it. Latest thinking suggests that the squirrel population may have reached saturation point and that this is "deviant" behaviour by redundant young males. They don't do it in America where they come from. Stop! There's a piece of paper blowing up towards Snow Hill, we like to pick up litter as we go round. Thankfully at the moment there's not too much.

Trevor Seddon was talking to the Editor.

## 'Dog Days'

Officially I am Senior Dog Control Officer with Chichester District Council working with the Environmental Health Department but I'm quite happy with the title "Dog Warden". There are two of us employed for an area of some 300 square miles of the District Council's authority, north from Selsey, east to the Arun border, Chichester, west to the Hampshire border, north to the Surrey border. The position came into being with the Environmental Protection Act of 1990 which imposed certain duties on District Councils. The job is affected too by Section 235 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

I have a legal background in the police and many years experience as a dog handler both in South Wales and in West Sussex, at Lewes, Hailsham, Brighton and Hove. I'd already worked in Petworth for some fourteen years when I applied for the District Council post. I liked coming to Petworth long before I lived here and I love the place. Petworth had an establishment for two dog handlers, Mo Penfold being the other one. Each of us of course had our own dog but as far as possible we alternated shifts, rest days and holidays. There were other dog handlers



at Chichester, Bognor and elsewhere but Petworth is a convenient centre geographically to respond to calls north of the Downs. Remember too that in those days Petworth was a subdivisional H.Q. At that time the work would involve using the dog to apprehend suspicious persons or intruders particularly on alarmed premises. There was little work then on drugs or explosives which required special training both for dog and handler. Such duties are far more common now. Quite often we'd cover for colleagues at Bognor or Chichester.

Police dogs don't have to be German Shepherds but often are. I've seen Dobermanns, even the occasional Rotweiler but the German Shepherd is a good all round dog and relatively easy to train. The dog lives at home with the handler and everywhere the handler goes as a police officer, the dog goes too. Dog-handling is a special and specialised job; at that time Sussex Police had some 3000 men with 26 dog handlers. The ratio of handlers to officers in general is probably slightly higher now reflecting an increase in dog handlers and a reduction in manpower in general. The increase in handlers mirrors a growing concern over explosives and drugs.

I trained at Bridgend in South Wales, then at Guildford. Training is initially general then with a particular dog. In my time in the force I had four different dogs and three months' training at Guildford with each of them. Dogs need to be trained as well as their handlers. Dogs and handlers need to be carefully matched and high standards are demanded on either side. Most dogs for police and armed service work come as gifts, usually from people who simply can't cope with them, but the rejection rate is very high, perhaps as much as nine out of ten. A very even temperament is required for police work: in apprehending an intruder a certain aggression is needed but in an hour or two the handler may be talking to a class of school children. The dog must be *completely* reliable. An R.A.F. dog used for compound security will have somewhat different requirements. Dogs usually retire rather than die in service, although some retire early through illness. As a rule a police dog will retire at about eight years old. Remember it's quite a stressful working life, unsocial hours, out in all weathers and in all conditions from busy city streets to remote country lanes, travelling around in a van. Every time you have a new dog it's three months training at Guildford for handler and dog. A handler must be able to work unsupervised. So often it's just handler and dog working on their own as a team. For all that it's never a lonely life, work being a kind of dialogue with your canine colleague in the back of the van. When a dog retires, he usually remains with his handler so it's not unusual to have two dogs at home one working and one retired. I mention my years with the police simply to show that my background both with the legal side of police work and as a dog handler gave me some advantages in applying for the new position as one of two Dog Control Officers.

As Dog Control Officers we are both based in Chichester although I live in Petworth. We use Bedford Rascals as patrol vehicles. The van is clearly marked on the outside. As members of the Environmental Health Department our theoretical priority is to cover the area of greater population, Chichester, Selsey, Petworth and Midhurst and the coastal strip along the old A27. For all that you have to have an open mind. When I get to work I see what emergencies and complaints there are. This will to some extent determine the day's workload. Our task is to enforce the law where necessary but at least as much to educate and persuade. I suppose we have a couple of complaints waiting for us each day on average, often relating to either noise or dog

fouling. Strays are treated as priority rather than as a complaint and we are often called out to deal with them during the night.

As I have said, strays are a priority. We have an overriding duty to seize them. Legally a stray is "any dog in a public place without an owner or keeper." A dog going down to the shop on his own to collect his owner's newspaper is technically a stray. Remember there's a serious danger aspect to stray dogs: a dog loose on the A27, or any road for that matter, can cause havoc and endanger life. A crash caused by a straying dog can easily wipe out a whole family. Our job is to seize the dog and find the owner. It can be relatively easy. Under legislation of 1930, now updated, all dogs have to wear a collar with an identity disc carrying the owner's name and address. The theoretical fine for non-compliance is £2,000 but the legislation is not at present rigidly enforced. I suppose we have a couple of strays a day, 600 or more in the last two years. Of these perhaps some seventy had collars. If there is a collar and tag we can return the dog the same day and there's no charge. Most people want their dogs back. Prosecution isn't easy under the present legislation; we have to prove that a person is "allowing" their dog to be in a public place without collar or tag. It's easy to convict if someone has been seen to remove the collar and tag and there is a witness who is prepared to corroborate this but that's rare. Our usual recourse is to advise and caution. Usually this works and we see the dog just the once. It doesn't always, one dog I have picked up a good dozen times. Straying, to my mind, is an indication of poor ownership. It's not that the dogs aren't loved and looked after, often enough they live in considerable luxury, but there's no leadership. Spoiling a dog is not the same thing as looking after it. Straying often has a territorial aspect. If a dog is allowed to roam it will extend its territory until it comes up against the next dog. On an estate this could be several hundred yards or more.

If a dog is seized and there is no means of identification, we will still endeavour to find the owner. If we fail we keep the dog for seven days. If then we are no further forward we have three legal options, to rehome it (usually by word of mouth), give it to Chichester Dog Rescue, or destroy it (usually only if the dog is seriously ill (ie cancerous), blind or infirm with no hope of recovery). Sometimes with a dog in poor condition we suspect that the owner has abandoned it to avoid paying veterinary bills. A third legal option is to try to sell the animal but this is a complex issue which we leave well alone.

Sheep worrying is something we have to treat as a priority. This is usually a call-out and often out of normal hours. If the worrying is on private land we have to be invited in by the landowner but as it is usually the landowner who has called us out this does not present a difficulty. Quite often we're called in by the police whose duty it is to prosecute if the landowner wishes. The District Council does not instigate prosecutions in this matter. If the case is proved the dog will usually be put down. Once an animal has acquired a taste for sheep-worrying it sees it as a sport. It's basically a response to a natural instinct. The dog is no longer forced to hunt in order to eat but its natural instincts remain just beneath the surface.

Dogs that bite are likely to be put down at the request of the owners themselves but prosecution is a police matter under an Act of 1871 now backed up by the Dangerous Dog Act. Under the old law there was a regulation system in which the first offence was recorded and action taken on a recurrence. This no longer applies. On biting we work very closely with the police and, as always, with the R.S.P.C.A.



Complaints relating to noisy dogs are not uncommon. Often it's simply a matter of incorrect or insufficient exercise and the matter can be settled through advice or negotiation. Sometimes a barking dog is to be found locked in a shed, sometimes the dog is emaciated from neglect. Here we have to work particularly closely with the police and the R.S.P.C.A. Above all we need the authority of the police to enter the shed. Information on such matters is usually privately laid. Sometimes it's misinformed; complaints being based on how people imagine a dog should be kept. We are often told about dogs sleeping outside. In my opinion this isn't necessarily a bad thing: dogs can be happier outside, particularly when it's very warm. Very occasionally complaints can turn out to be tit-for-tat. One neighbour has complained about the noise of a mower, the other retaliates by complaining about the dog. We try to elicit the background. It's not our job to come in on the side of one neighbour against another.

If a stray dog is wearing a collar and tag in a public place we can return the dog quickly to its owner. If the dog is in a private place we can retrieve it if we are invited in to do so. We make no charge for returning a named identifiable dog on the first occasion: it is unlikely that we will see him again. If however the dog is collarless and tagless we have no option but to kennel it. The charge is £31.50 plus £5 a night for kennelling. If we return the dog there's a further charge of £10. In practice most people collect their pets and we encourage this. If the dog is kept for the statutory week the price will be £31.50 plus £35 (seven days' kennelling) with veterinary bills if applicable. If there's been an accident and the dog has been injured these can be heavy. If the owner is on Income Support or Invalidity Benefit there's just the kennel fee. One man had run up a bill of over £100. When he appeared he said, "I can't pay", he then gave us his other dog and added, "I can't afford to keep him either."! Strays even at a rate of one a day are very time-consuming. I may be at Selsey and then have to go to Camelsdale for a stray. Think of the travelling time. How much time would be saved if only dogs were collared and tagged. People often say, "He doesn't like a collar so I take it off in the house." I can't see this: dogs simply get used to the collar and don't think about it at all. Strays are often simply looking for a mate and their owners simply not quick enough to stop them once the dog has decided to go. Deliberate abandonment of a dog is fortunately rare: a farmer working on his tractor at the foot of the Downs saw a van pull up in the distance. A man threw a stick into a clearing, his dog ran after it and retrieved it. The man did it again, each time throwing the stick a little further. At last he threw the stick a particularly long distance, jumped into the van and drove off. A clear case of abandonment. There would have been no difficulty proving that the dog had been abandoned but the farmer was too far away to get the van number. Hopeless. A stray will certainly take upwards of two hours, collecting, travelling to and fro, bedding the dog and caring for it. I implore people to put collar and tags on their dogs. Why don't we prosecute for non-observance? Quite simply, over a period of a month it would completely clog the courts.

Catching a stray can be difficult or it can be easy. You certainly need to glove up. Bites are an occupational hazard but care is sensible. If a dog wags its tail it's usually a good sign. We don't often use poles. Obviously there are dogs and dogs, a domestic pet is not going to be as difficult as a dog living rough on the top of the Downs. Saying that however any dog can be nervous and jumpy in an alien context. The golden rule is always to keep a stray on collar and lead even in the van. Don't try to catch the dog again when it is in the van, the confined space

can only breed fear.

If we've been called out on a dangerous dogs case we may find ourselves challenged as much by the owners as by the dogs themselves. We simply have to stand our ground and we may both go. Remember dogs can be very valuable and no owner wants to lose a valuable dog. A Sharpei or Chinese fighting dog can be worth a minimum of £1,000. Not, it's not a banned breed. An average Labrador can be worth £300, a Jack Russell £150. In the matter of strays it amazes me that valuable dogs can go missing and not be reported. If someone lost their wallet with that amount of money in it they'd soon be making enquiries. People etch their cars or their valuables with security numbers but make no attempt to put any identification mark on the family pet.

Theoretically my colleague and I are on a twenty-four hour call-out. Between us we've had some 800 calls at our homes in the last two years. We have to respond to all of them. Some can be left for the next day and simply noted but as I have said strays have to be considered a priority. Sometimes people will hold a stray until the morning, or the police may hold the dog but in the last resort we have to go out.

Other aspects of the work can involve unsocial hours too. As members of the Environmental Health Department we have to monitor complaints about noise relating to dogs. We may be out at three in the morning to measure noise caused by barking. I have to be where the noise is actually heard. The complainant will give us access but we have to be careful not to trespass on other people's land. I remember being a quarter of a mile away from twelve early morning Alsatians in full voice and I could still hear them loud and clear. If we can prove a statutory nuisance we serve a notice of abatement. Most owners then comply. Theoretical penalties for non-compliance are heavy, £5,000 for the first offence, £5,000 for every day after. Whether a court would levy such fines I'm not sure. Extenuating circumstances may have to be taken into account: the owner might be deaf, or imagine that the barking can't be heard. For an offence to be committed he must be aware that the dogs are actually disturbing neighbouring homes.

Rehoming is part of the job. I need to ask prospective recipients if they're sure they can afford to keep the dog and pay veterinary bills. Feeding a large dog is quite expensive nowadays. I always say, and it's only half jokingly, that you need to look not at the depth of the carpet but at the wear on the prospective owner's Wellingtons. If the heel is worn down it shows he's prepared to go out in the rain. Some dogs do live in luxury and there's certainly nothing wrong with that, only if the dog then gets only a few minutes' exercise a day when he needs a long walk.

Dog fouling? Yes this is an emotive issue and dealing with it is an important part of our work. I like to put it like this:

Drink is the curse of the working classes.

Dog-fouling is the curse of the walking classes.

The only present bye-law relative to this is No.22 brought out in 1981. It is still in force and we still prosecute under it. A 1972 Act of Parliament empowers the local authority to create bye-laws as secondary legislation. The law isn't easy to apply and fresh legislation, said to be forthcoming, is eagerly awaited. As the law stands it's an offence to allow a dog to foul a footway



but that footway must be a "maintained" one. It is not at present an offence to allow a dog to foul, say, a Car Park which is not a designated footway or in the gutter. If the footway is not maintained then no offence is committed. For instance a pathway through a wood would not normally be considered "maintained". The law applies also to adjacent grass verges but not if that verge is more than three meters wide. Roundabouts are not a grass verge and at present do not fall within the bye-law. The current fine on conviction is often £40 with costs of £25 to £30. There may be extenuating circumstances, for instance a man with two sticks can hardly be prosecuted for failing to pick up what his dog has left. For prosecution I like to have a witness because there will be proof that the dog-owner has gone off without clearing up, if I stop him he can make the defence that he was about to clear it up. New laws are going to be much tougher and I have to say that it is the sheer negligence of some owners that have brought this about.

Toxicariasis is a disease spread by contact with dog faeces. It's not prevalent, there are about a hundred cases a year countrywide, but that is a hundred too many for the disease is quite preventable. It's particularly dangerous for children which is why dog fouling around children's play areas should be avoided at all costs. Toxicariasis rightly shouldn't happen at all. It can cause impairment of vision or in some cases blindness and it's carried in the form of roundworm eggs. It can also be spread by dogs licking the face. Incidence would be dramatically reduced if everyone wormed their dogs three times a year. Toxicariasis is not the only aspect of dog fouling although a tragic one. If you asked any M.P. what he receives most complaints about it's dog fouling. It's increasingly seen as an aesthetic as well as a health problem. People feel so strongly that they're increasingly prepared to come forward and give evidence in case of prosecution. If people aren't prepared to give evidence then it isn't much good calling me. I just can't do anything to get a conviction. I'd rather proceed by cautioning but there are times when you just have to prosecute if only as a deterrent. Prosecutions are becoming more numerous and will continue to do so.

In all these matters there are times to prosecute and times to caution and advise. I'm certainly not anti-owner and I love dogs. It's important to try for a correct balance between prosecution and counselling. Of course we are there to make the legislation effective but prosecution is not the only way of achieving this. In a way the more complaints I receive the better I can do my job. Prosecution certainly isn't a token gesture, as you can see, fines can be stiff. I love the job. If I had two specific requests they are these: please put a name collar and tag on your dog, and please be prepared to give evidence against dog owners who allow their dogs to foul public footways. And yes, I'd be very happy to talk to the Society!

John Rosser was talking to the Editor.

John will talk to the Society in early autumn. See Activities Sheet.

## Relating to Dwarves, Comprachicos, and Ebernoe Fair

About a decade ago I wrote a piece for *Sussex Life* (of which a version was apparently published without my knowledge in another Sussex paper) which was destined to cause much confusion and consternation in the country around Petworth and Ebernoe.



*Horn Fair in the early century.*

In the form as submitted to that magazine, it was a serious c1200-word treatment of the trade in dwarves in 15th-18th century Europe, the role of *comprachicos* in that trade (of which more in a moment), with a piece of evidence suggesting that dwarves, possibly 'manufactured' by *comprachicos*, had been bought and sold at Ebernoe in the late 16th century, possibly at a fair (a tentative indication that there may already have been a fair at Ebernoe at that period).

As happens more frequently than many people realise, the article was drastically sub-edited to c700 words to fit a single page, and the paragraph on Ebernoe was 'spiced up' to increase the local interest: the final version saying, or being interpretable as saying, that Ebernoe had been a village specializing in the manufacture of dwarves which were then sold at Ebernoe Fair. As I spend 10-11 months of each year in Southern France and checking on back issues of magazines isn't a high priority when I am home, I didn't see the piece on publication and was



unaware until long afterwards that the published text was so different from my original. So here's a little re-exposition to make things clearer.

First, dwarves were a valuable commodity in 15th-18th century Europe, as valuable, as a luxury item, as pepper or ice. They were in great demand at courts, for wealthy households and as companions for 'ladies of quality' (notably in Spain, Italy and Poland, the fashion dying out earlier in England, France and the Low Countries) and also for travelling fairs and shows. To give an idea of their value, reports in Sussex newspapers of the mid-18th century mention that parents of dwarves were being offered £100 for their offspring - this at a time when the average agricultural wage was c£5-£12 per annum, a carpenter or village schoolmaster earned, maybe, £15-£25pa, and anyone with an income of more than £300pa or worth more than £300pa in land could be regarded as very wealthy. 15th-18th century Italian patricians and Spanish nobles paid the equivalent of 100-500 livres/pounds for dwarves, certainly the equivalent of thousands of pounds in modern currency. Though buying and selling of dwarves went on locally and regionally everywhere, there was a net flow, following the laws of supply and demand, from England and elsewhere in north west Europe to Italy and a Spain still gorged with New World silver and gold.

Part - but only part - of this demand could be met from the natural supply of the congenitally deformed. The high monetary value of dwarves and shortage of the genuine article encouraged the growth of a tributary métier, that of the *comprachicos* or *faiseur de nains*, who specialized in buying unwanted children who, by lack of nourishment and ill treatment and the knowledgeable use of dwarfing drugs such as macerate of walnut leaves and bark or macerate of knotgrass, could be kept undersized, made to look older than their age, and turned into or passed off as dwarves. The métier of the *comprachicos* is abundantly documented in Italian and Spanish sources, and is also referred to by English authors such as Shakespeare; though it is unclear whether these latter are referring to a practice which went on in England, or only to a foreign reality with which, however, they assumed many of their readers to be familiar.

Some 20 years ago, in a last barrou d'honneur as an amateur historian before settling seriously to my career as a biologist, I spent many months working through 15th-17th century source material in the archives of southern Europe in Montpellier and Toulouse, the Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan, Biblioteca Universitaria, Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale, Udine, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Biblioteca Governativa, Lucca, the Archivio di Stato in Modena, Pordenone, Venice, etc. One of my principal interests concerned Francois Rabelais, and this had brought me into contact with his friend and drinking companion in Montpellier, Felix Platter, and thence I had followed through, as a fil d'Ariane, the correspondence and accounts of the Platters, a merchant dynasty with representatives or branches in Seville, Venice, Siena, Modena, Pordenone, Basel, the Hansa, Amsterdam, London etc. While so doing I came across and made mental note of the contents of a letter from the Platter's London representative which referred to buying dwarves from *comprachicos* at 5 places, including 'Ibermost', 'Frantfeild', and Laxford. At the time I took no special notice. On the one hand, though I knew Ebermoe a little (because I had done a lot of field natural history thereabouts) and had vaguely heard of an Ebermoe fair, I didn't know that its history was so problematical or a matter of particular interest. On the other, though at that time I was becoming a little interested in the trade in dwarves (not yet having seen it

mentioned in standard works on the period I was surprised by its importance) I still, on the basis of my elementary Spanish, took *comprachicos* (*comprar*, to buy, *chico*, a child) to be a general term for middlemen who bought dwarves locally from their parents (it seemed likely that the transaction would take place at the time when it first became obvious that the child was destined to be a dwarf) and sold them on both to travelling fairs or to people like the Platters with the right connections and outlets across Europe. It was only two or three years later that I came across the fact which really did fire my interest, namely that *comprachicos* was the standard term for people who bought unwanted children and used plant-derived drugs to turn them into dwarves of 'monsters' - fire my interest because it opened a path from some fascinating history to some equally fascinating biochemistry (what plants had they used? did the plants really contain growth-inhibiting principles and if so what was their mechanism of action? might they have applications as local inhibitors of cell multiplication, in the treatment of cancers/tumours characterized by uncontrolled growth? etc).

The interpretation that I later made of the Platters' representative's words and put down in the original manuscript to *Sussex Life* - namely that he had been to a fair at Ebermoe and there purchased from a *comprachicos* dwarves 'manufactured' via the administration of plant-derived 'hindering' drugs - was defensible - it is the interpretation I still favour today - but not unassailable. First, was *Ibermost* Ebermoe? Here I think the answer has to be yes. *Ibermost* doesn't correspond exactly with any of the ancient recorded forms of Ebermoe, but it struck me as being a foreigner's rendering of Ebermoe (we can presume that the Platter's representative, who was Franco-Swiss, would have heard the name of the place he went to but probably wouldn't have seen it written down in documents - or on a sign post!), with the *-most* pronounced *nôt*. Of course, it could have been somewhere else in England, but I have yet to come across a likelier candidate. And it did cross my mind that it might be somewhere in Normandy genre Livarot, Yvetot, but I haven't come across a plausible location there and it wouldn't fit the context.

Second, did the lines refer to a *fair* at Ebermoe? Here, I'm 50/50. On the one hand, the word 'fair' or equivalent wasn't used (and certainly not 'horn fair!'). On the other, the context reeked fairs (in the original sense of a commercial *foire* or great annual market, rather than a *fête* like the revived horn fair). I knew from my reading of the Rous diaries that Laxford had a major fair c the 1620s. I was sure, too, that I had read somewhere of an important fair at Frantfeild (Frantfield/Framfield) in the 16th or early 17th centuries. I haven't traced that one, but I have come across two mentions of Frantfield Fair in the Walter Gale diaries (admittedly for the 18th century) and your own Katherine Walters has uncovered several references to Frantfeild/Framfield Fair dating back to the high Middle Ages. Apart from my feeling that the context said fairs, the material didn't make sense to me when interpreted in other ways: the only alternative might be that the Platters' representative went to Ebermoe (Framfield, Laxford etc) to buy dwarves from a *comprachicos* who lived there, but that didn't strike me as wholly plausible (I could imagine a *comprachicos* trading his wares at fairs or visiting possible purchasers in London etc, but I couldn't really see him sitting back in a large village deep in the countryside and waiting for visitors; especially as, in England at least, the métier must have been viewed with some suspicion, and was presumably carried out by travelling forains linked to fairs and markets rather than by sedentary tradesmen). And, though I was unaware of this at the time I framed my



hypothesis, in the late 16th century Ebernoe was still a large and prosperous centre of the kind which *did* have *foires*, though whether fairs were actually held there remains to be established.

Third, were the *comprachicos* selling dwarves made via the use of dwarfing drugs, or just dwarves, full stop? (though this isn't really relevant to Ebernoe Fair, especially as my original interpretation didn't include the improbable hypothesis that Ebernoe was a village specializing in the manufacture of dwarves!). Given the *usual* use of *comprachicos* in the 16th and 17th century - it was the standard term in use throughout Europe (even the Italians and French used it in preference to the equivalents in their own language), and almost invariably referred to 'makers' of dwarves and 'monsters' or 'sports' - I believe that the former is the likelier interpretation, but fully accept that the *comprachicos* referred to may just have been traders selling congenital dwarves purchased from heir parents.

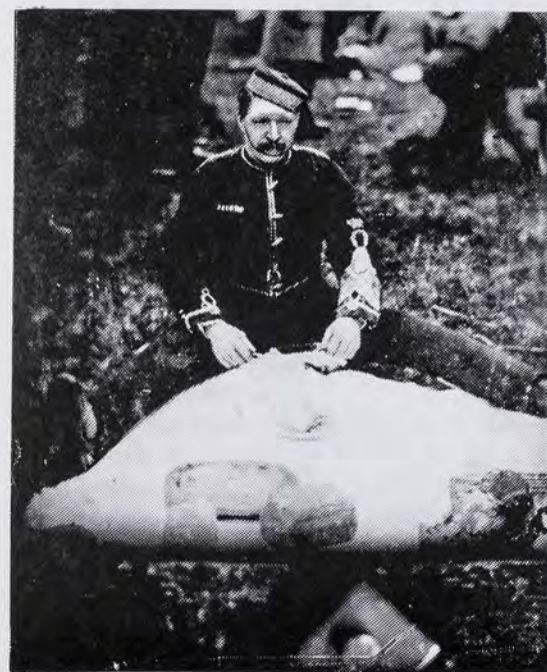
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France.

## Growing Up at Bexley Hill

I was born at Bexley Hill in 1900, my father working as a carter on the local farm. We lived in one of a pair of farm cottages which are still there as far as I know. My father loved horses but lost his job because the horses he had to work had bad legs and were old and he refused to work them. After this he had to do whatever work he could find. He might take the pony and cart into Easebourne to fetch goods for the tiny shop at Bexley Hill, or help with building work. In fact we moved into a house that he had built. Most of all however he liked copse work, making hurdles. It was hard work but he was his own master and he preferred that. Later he would be approached by Mr. Anstey at Lickfold and do work for him. It was farm work again and we moved to a tied house at Lickfold.

I went to Easebourne School, quite a long walk, but we early learned to be independent. My father had been to Easebourne too and had the same teacher but Mr. Singleton was an elderly man by this time. Sometimes I had to go to school by myself and the woods frightened me. I remember once stopping by the road crying because the road seemed endless and a pedlar came up and asked me what was the matter. "I'm frightened of the woods," I said. He was an elderly, greying man and I had no fear of him, only of the mysterious woods. "Come on, you're nearly there," he said and I was.

In fact to live at Bexley Hill at all you had to be familiar with the woods. Mr. Willcock was the vicar then and we used to take his shopping out through the woods to him at Henley. He knew that we were coming and if it was getting late he'd put a candle in a jamjar so that we could see our way in, then leave it there until we were on our way again. At the top of Verdley



*Does anyone know the uniform this gentleman is wearing. Or those of his colleagues? The photographs seem to come from about the time of the Boer war.*





*"Presentation of trophies. Catercross, Fittleworth. Mr. Dacre DuCane."  
Can anyone explain this Garland picture?*

we could see Blackdown and walk up there to pick whortleberries or, as you'd call them now, bilberries. We'd eat them raw or make them into jam.

Bexley Hill was a tiny place, hardly even a hamlet, five farm cottages and a large house. One of the cottages had a tiny shop and there was a little tin chapel there too. My mother was a great singer and the vicar always asked us to make sure she came with us. He came over from Henley on Sunday afternoons but Bexley Hill was so small that the chapel wasn't full even if the whole hamlet turned out.

Sometimes we'd go out to Liphook in the pony and cart to see Granny. She used to make clothes for us. I remember putting two chillies in the parrot's food by mistake and killing him, while my younger brother fell into a bucket of pigswill. Granny must have found us rather a handful.

Bexley Hill was remote but there were travellers then. People with fried fish to be reheated - it had been cooked once already - or winkles, or lengths of cloth. One of the dealers was a bit pushing and I remember my mother saying, "I don't want you to call any more." The travellers would go up the hill and across the common toward where the Hospital now is. Someone would buy the plums on our tree, it was a Balconi, and once they had been sold, we children were strictly forbidden to touch them unless they'd fallen off and were lying on the ground. Gipsies often came up over the hill, they'd buy rabbit skins or sell shoe-laces or pegs. Some of the old ladies I particularly remember with laces and pegs. Mother would give them a cup of tea or perhaps bread and cheese. They usually ate the cheese and threw the bread away which upset my mother who had a large family to feed. I remember as a small child one of the gipsy women taking me by the hand and up into her caravan.

Strangers brought a bit of life to the hamlet, a breath of the outside world. My brother had a boil and the old gipsy woman asked what was the matter with him. My mother said, "He's got this terrible abscess and it's so painful." The old lady said, "There's some cows in the meadow. Get the liquid from a cowpat and put it on that child's abscess and it'll be broken before he has his dinner." My mother thought it was a disgusting idea and refused to do it but my brother was in such pain that he sneaked out and did it. It worked. The gipsies, I was told, used to cook hedgehog, covering them with clay and baking them with the spines. The outer skin and the spines came off when the hedgehog was taken out of the fire. I never actually saw them do this but the flesh was supposed to taste like rabbit.

I remember going to Fernhurst Coronation Celebrations in 1911. It rained all day and my mother had a hat with flowers. The rain dripped off the flowers all day. I remember too walking into Petworth Fair. We might come back virtually with the milk but I had my brothers with me and no one worried.

My mother was always singing. I can't always remember the words of the songs but sometimes when I'm alone they come back to me as if it were yesterday. "Good old Geoff" was a favourite. I think it went something like this:

Good old Geoff has gone to rest  
We know that he is free  
Disturb him not but let him rest  
Way down in Tennessee.



Perhaps it's a negro spiritual and I may not have got the words right but it was certainly a favourite of my mother's. Another of hers was:

Down in the old meadow lane, Mary,  
Where you and I used to roam  
Where we were happy together  
Just you and I and the stars.

Though long years have flown  
Since I called you my own  
Time going in sadness and pain  
Down in the old meadow lane.

My father used to like singing too. He'd been brought up at Verdley Farm and often told of how when he was a boy at Verdley he'd driven a horse and cart over another big cart that was marooned in a snowdrift. His favourite song was:

What is the life of a man  
Any more than the leaves on the tree  
The leaves they will wither and soon fade away.

A man has his pleasure  
And why should he grieve  
Like the leaves on the tree  
He will wither and die.

I'm sure I haven't got it quite right but that's how I remember it.

Edith Ayling was talking to the Editor.

## The Pyecrofts of Petworth

For a short time at the end of the nineteenth century a family of Pyecrofts were the proprietors of three of Petworth's leading hostleries, the Half Moon, the Old Swan and the Railway. Who were they, where did they come from and what happened to them?

Before attempting to answer these questions, I should explain my interest. The head of that family, Thomas Timothy Pyecroft, was my first cousin 3 times removed. His grandfather, also Thomas, was my 3 x great grandfather. What follows is based on the family history research that I and other descendants of Thomas senior have undertaken, although the many suppositions as to motive, etc, are entirely my responsibility. Although TT, as I shall call him, is off the main

stream of our family line, my interest stems from the fact that his father Job Pyecroft was the earliest relative to have settled in Sussex where I now live. A brief summary of the family tree of the main characters mentioned in this article is included in the hope that it clarifies relationships.

Thomas senior was a yeoman farmer in Walkeringham, a small village near the River Trent on the eastern boundary of Nottinghamshire. He and his wife Betsey had 15 children between 1805 and 1828 - perhaps it is no wonder that when Betsey died in 1843 it was due to "Natural Decay", according to her death certificate. Nine children survived infancy and Thomas would have seen it as his duty to ensure that they were adequately provided for. In the case of the 3 daughters, that meant finding eligible young men for them to marry, suitable candidates being offered an appropriate dowry if the girls' own attractions were insufficient and further incentive was needed.

But the boys posed a different sort of problem. Whilst it was good that there was a son to take over the Walkeringham farm, it was not large enough to support all of them, assuming that they married and in turn had children of their own. Thomas obviously did not look on his sons as a source of cheap labour, I suspect that the sense of pride which seems to have been engendered during the Victorian era would not allow a Church Warden, a pillar of the local society, to exploit his offspring in that way.

So if one son was to look after Father in his last few years, and be rewarded for his pains by inheriting the farm, that left 5 others to be provided for. William was fairly easily accommodated, for the marriage of Thomas's brother William had not been productive and he was in need of help by the 1830s to run his holding in nearby Gunthorpe - who better than Thomas's son William, named no doubt for William senior, to move in with his uncle on the understanding that William senior would leave the property to William junior. Which is exactly what happened. There was a proviso that if William junior should also die childless, the farm would pass to another of Thomas's sons. William junior made sure that that clause did not come into effect, he married 10 days after his uncle's death and it may come as no surprise that he had first made sure that his bride was fertile: their first-born arrived only 1 month after their marriage!

John, the eldest of Thomas's sons and from whom I am descended, took over the lease of Manor Farm in Hackthorn, Lincolnshire, some 15 miles from Walkeringham as the crow flies. In view of John's inexperience at that time, his signature was not sufficient for the landowner, so Thomas had to join in the lease and, from an examination of the landowner's records, for several years in the 1830s, the rent for Manor Farm was in arrears - quite possibly, Thomas had to bail his son out in order that John could keep the farm.

Joseph was initially apprenticed to a miller, no doubt at Thomas's expense; subsequently he was set up on his own with a small farm of just 12 acres and a mill about 11 miles from Walkeringham. One of the other boys, Thomas, was with his father in 1851 apparently still a bachelor. I think he died in the area in 1867, and I am sure that when I find out more about him, he will be a farmer with his own smallholding. The "lucky" son was Charles: Thomas selected him to help out and to succeed to the farm. Which leaves Job.

Job was the third eldest surviving boy, and by the time he reached adulthood, it must have



been becoming quite a problem to secure his future. Initially when he married in 1840 he lived on a farm run by a Timothy Bowling in Gunthorpe near his brother William but this didn't last long because by 1845 he was with yet another William Pyecroft on a farm at Enfield Highway, Middlesex. Perhaps he was the only one considered strong enough to be sent far away from home to stay with a relative distant in both meanings of the word?

Whatever the truth of it, Job seems to have been a successful businessman who alternated between being a farmer and a London publican. His eldest son, our TT (Thomas Timothy - probably named for both Job's father and the farmer with whom Job lived during the early days of Job's marriage) was born in Enfield in 1845 and christened there on 27th April of that year.

TT married Sophie Parsons, the daughter of George, on 26 September 1872 and on their marriage certificate Job, George and TT are all described as "Licenced Victuallers". Another record shows that in that same year, TT was manager of "The Ship's Stores" in Greenwich, where his first 3 children were born.

But we have not yet finished with the influence of a father on the place where a son lived and worked. About 1874, Job returned to farming, this time in Sussex, and took the lease of Ecclesdon Farm at Angmering. I am sure that from there Job would have identified the opportunity for TT at Petworth for by 1878, TT was established in the town as the proprietor of the Half Moon, the Swan and the Railway Inn, as well as being a maltster and brewer. The Post Office Directory of that time describes the first two as the principal inns of Petworth and adds that TT ran a coach service from the town centre to the railway station, no doubt to maximise the time that those of his patrons who were travelling by train were able to make use of his refreshment service.

The youngest of TT's four children, Vincent, was baptised at St Mary's on 13th June 1879 but unfortunately TT did not live to see any of his children reach adolescence for he died on 31 May 1883, aged just 38. He was buried in the Horsham Road cemetery on 5 June, the tombstone is still clearly visible even if the simple inscription is now starting to wear away.

After his death, his widow Sophie, to whom TT bequeathed all his worldly goods, continued to run for several years all three inns plus the coach service, although later Post Office Directories do not refer to her as a maltster and brewer. In the 1891 census she was living at The Half Moon with her daughter Ethel but all three sons had disappeared, perhaps to stay with other branches of the family. Sophie was not mentioned in the 1895 directory, and by the end of the century, the two main inns had been demolished, the Half Moon to make way for bank premises, the Old Swan to be rebuilt.

Sophie and her eldest son, Nelson, were certainly in Worthing in 1910 and it was there that Sophie died in 1939. All 4 children were mentioned in her will dated 1936, and Nelson and Ethel were her executors. Nelson had spent some time in the yeomanry, judging by a photograph that Walter Kevis took of him in uniform with his horse in 1894. Ethel was a spinster aged 65 in 1939 and Arthur, the third child, was in Kenya, East Africa when Sophie signed her will, but other than being a beneficiary, there is no more news of Vincent.

I have long cherished the thought that one day I might trace and contact a survivor of Thomas Timothy Pyecroft, but so far all my hopes have come to nothing - perhaps someone reading this article will remember some vital piece of information, just the clue I need. If so,

I hope you will write or phone to let me know and so help reunite a family after more than a hundred years. I can be reached at:

Mick Richardson  
8 Wythwood,  
Haywards Heath,  
West Sussex RH16 4RD.  
0444-452524.

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## A Garland Character. James Ifold of Lavant 1934 Lavant's Grand Old Man. Still working.

At the age of 97 most people have little thought for work, except for the work they did in the distant past. Not so Mr James Ifold, Lavant's Grand Old Man; he is thinking about the work he is going to do as soon as the weather permits him to get out and about.

It is just 88 years ago since he first went out to work, and he has been constantly working ever since, except for during the last two or three winters, when bronchial trouble has stopped him. He has carried on for so long for two reasons - one because he likes working and likes to show that a man is never too old to be a useful member of society, and the other because he needs all he can earn.

He is the eldest of a family of six, his father was a farm-worker in the Petersfield district. At the age of nine he was out all day at the rate of 2s a week leading horses, and at the age of 12 was taking two horses himself on the farm for ploughing.

Now at the age of 97 he claims he can milk as well as anyone else, and can get along comfortably ploughing, harrowing, or sowing.

"Hard work never killed a man yet, and I don't think it will kill me" he told a "Hampshire Telegraph & Post" representative. "I'd be out now if my chest would let me, but I haven't got much breath to do it".

His claims are supported by Mr George Mortimer, of West Lavant Farm, where Mr Ifold has worked for many years.

The last few weeks have been rather trying for this veteran because snow and rain have kept him away from the work he might have been doing. "I can neither read nor write, because I didn't have much schooling, but I can still do a day's work" he observed.

He has never used tobacco, and had very little beer.





*Jimmy Ifold.*

## Quiz. Where would you be? (Within a 10 miles of Petworth)

[Devised for the Women's Institute some years ago by Phyllis Catt]

### *Question*

1. The richest spot in Petworth?
2. Go shooting in the autumn?
3. Take your bowl and wooden spoon?
4. Near Heaven?
5. Step carefully?
6. Might lose your temper?
7. Where might bankers have lived?
8. Where might Oliver Twist have lived?
9. Where should the hunt meet?
10. Where should funerals go?
11. A hot and thirsty traveller should visit?
12. Where would the angels sing?
13. Where would they finish?
14. Where would the poor be laughed at?
15. Where might you feel like waddling?
16. Where should you find deer?
17. Where would you exercise your muscles?
18. Where have the pence been taken care of?
19. What would you do with unwanted possessions?
20. Where might you hear frogs croaking?
21. A miniature seaside town?
22. The rear-end of a pet dog?
23. Baskets full of cabbages?
24. A bloody small mountain?
25. Seeking a supply of water?

Answers over page.



## Where would you be? Answers.

1. Golden Square.
  2. Pheasant Copse.
  3. Plum Pudding Corner.
  4. Angel Street.
  5. Tripp Hill off Fittleworth.
  6. Cross Lanes.
  7. Lombard Street.
  8. Moor Farm.
  9. Fox Hill.
  10. To Bury.
  11. River.
  12. Hallelujah Corner at Fittleworth.
  13. Amen Farm at Fittleworth.
  14. Mockbeggars at Bedham.
  15. Duck Lane at Midhurst.
  16. Stag Park.
  17. Flexham Park.
  18. Pound Street.
  19. Selham.
  20. Froghole (Farm).
  21. Little Bognor.
  22. Pugs Bottom at Balls Cross.
  23. Hampers Green.
  24. Gore Hill.
  25. The Well Diggers.
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## New Members (and rejoining)

- Mrs S. Azis, Cheery Orchard, Bedham Road, Fittleworth.  
Mr L.R. Baxter, "Westgate", Bignor, Pulborough.  
Mrs J. Burlinson, Walnut Tree House, 12 Bury Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk.  
Mrs P. Chandler, 16 Cootham Green, Storrington.  
Mr and Mrs Denham, Moonrakers, North Street, Petworth.  
Mrs J. Elderfield, Monk House, North Street, Petworth.  
Mrs E. Farne, 3, The Mount, Cheylesmore, Coventry.  
Mrs B.H. Fenwick-Smith, Park Gate, Shillinglee.  
Mr and Mrs F.A. Fisher, Spinney Cottage, Church Road, West Lavington.  
Mr and Mrs M. Follis, "Reynolds", Kitchen Court, Petworth.  
Mr and Mrs A.R. Gibbs, 5 Cherry Tree Walk, Petworth.  
Mr and Mrs D. Griffin, Garden House, Gore Hill, Petworth.  
Mr and Mrs G. Hill, 29 Hampers Green, Petworth.  
Mrs J. Hudson, The Hudnalls Cottage, St Briauels, Lydney, Gloucs.  
Mr and Mrs T. Jenkins, 7 Hornbeam Close, Aldwick, Bognor Regis.  
Mr J. Millachip, 62 Sheepdown Drive, Petworth.  
Miss V.L. Nelmes, c/o Nationwide, Lombard Street, Petworth.  
Mr and Mrs B. Norman, The White House, 41 Linkfield Lane, Redhill.  
Mr and Mrs R. Pickford, 6, Complins, Holybourne, Acton, Hants.  
Miss L. Shepherd, 8 Bagshot Avenue, Exeter.  
Mr and Mrs P. Stevens, 10 The Rise, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey.  
Mr and Mrs K. Temple, 79 Hampers Green, Petworth.  
Mrs A.G.H. Thompson, 69 Sheepdown Drive, Petworth.  
Miss Tyler, Easter Cottage, North Street, Petworth.  
Mr Whitmore, 3 Ashley Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.  
Mrs P. Whyte, "Foxley", Kirdford.



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Autumn Programme. Please keep for reference.

**Walks:** Sunday September 18th Audrey's early autumn walk  
Sunday October 30th Ian and Pearl's Balls Cross walk  
Leave Petworth Car Park at 2.15 p.m.

**Talks:** Leconfield Hall 7.30 p.m. £1 to include refreshments. Raffle  
Tuesday, September 27th John Rosser: "Dogs"  
Wednesday, November 9th "In the feast of St Edmund the king..."  
Petworth Fair 1189 - 1994 Peter Jerrome and Barry Norman with slides  
Monday, December 12th The Petworth Society Christmas Evening

AND

THE 4th GARLAND MEMORIAL LECTURE : THURSDAY OCTOBER 6th  
Mr. Kim Leslie of the West Sussex record Office speaks on  
HILAIRE BELLOC

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LECONFIELD HALL EVENTS : IN AID OF HALL FUNDS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th

WHAT? ANOTHER PERFORMANCE?

Variety Concert by Petworth Artistes

£4 to include a glass of wine from David's or on the door.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd PETWORTH HOUSE

UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS EVENING

7 p.m. Tickets £12 - proceeds to Leconfield Hall Appeal and Petworth Kitchen Restoration Project

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21st, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22nd

The Edwardians entertain!

In aid of Leconfield Hall Appeal. £3 from David's or on the door.

Leconfield Hall 7.30 p.m.

Leconfield Hall Food Fair will be held again in January

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PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM, 346 HIGH STREET. Fund-raising event

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26th

Mrs Penny returns with her Cavalcade of Fashion

Tickets £5. Leconfield Hall.



Evening Classes. Herbert Shiner School. Enquiries Petworth 343913

### **HISTORIC TIMBER FRAMED BUILDINGS**

**Tutor: Dr Annabelle Hughes**

Using slides and relevant documentation this course will delve into the historic background, development and possible occupants of timber framed, West Sussex buildings built in the period c1200 - 1700.

P12 Tuesday 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Start 20 September 10 sessions

### **PETWORTH HISTORY**

**A Man Ahead Of His Time**

**Tutor: Peter Jerrome**

George Garland 1900 - 1978. An attempt with slides and written material to sketch the biography of a man who may well be considered the most influential Petworthian of his time. The tutor knew Garland well in latter years, and with Jonathan Newdick has produced several books of his photographs. Attention is drawn not only to Garland's importance as a photographer but to his literary work which places him in line with a consistent Sussex tradition of the early century.

P7 Monday 7.30 - 9.30pm

Start 12 September 6 sessions

### **THE LOXWOOD DEPENDANTS COMMONLY KNOWN AS "COKELERS"**

**Tutor: Peter Jerrome**

Six talks on this very reticent and localised religious community of the West Sussex/Surrey borderland. The speaker has had many conversations with Mr Alfred Goodwin, last surviving elder of the sect and would seek to dispel a number of erroneous notions about this most distinctive of local religious groups. The talks will try to trace the history of the DEPENDANTS from the conversion of their founder John Sirgood, a Gloucestershire shoemaker, in South London in the 1840's, through the struggle to establish themselves in Loxwood and elsewhere, their successful entry into commerce and their eventual decline. The DEPENDANTS, in Mr Goodwin's own words, offered a "salvation for the meek of the earth, the farm-workers and the copse-cutters" and remained always true to their roots.

P6 Monday 7.30 to 9.30 p.m.

Starts 31 October 6 sessions

AND

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 19th**

## **PETWORTH FAIR!**

### **WEST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE LUNCHTIME LECTURES:**

Wednesday 28 September 1994 Sources for Non-Conformity

Wednesday 30 November 1994 Records of the Diocese Chichester



