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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY *magazine*

Miles Costello
Petworth
Collection

Silver jubilee year 1974-99

A Tale of Petworth Workhouse



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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE
LECONFIELD HALL
AND PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM!

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 £8.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £9.00 overseas £10.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

Chairman

Mr P.A. Jerrome MBE, Trowels, Pound Street, Petworth (Tel. 342562) GU28 0DX

Vice Chairman

Mr K.C. Thompson, 18 Rothermead, Petworth (Tel. 342585) GU28 0EW

Hon. Treasurer

Mr P. Hounsham, 50 Sheepdown Drive, Petworth (Tel. 343461) GU28 0BX

Hon. Magazine Secretary

Mrs B. Hodson, 56 Wyndham Road, Petworth GU28 0EQ

Committee

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Mrs Audrey Grimwood, Mr Andrew Henderson, Mrs Anne Simmons, Mrs Ros Staker,
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Mrs Goodyer, Mrs Williams (Fittleworth)

Society Scrapbook

Mrs Pearl Godsmark

Society Town Crier

Mr J. Crocombe, 19 Station Road (343329)

Note: The crier may be prepared to publicise local community events and public notices for you, even snippets of personal news such as births, engagements or lost pets. It is suggested that such personal and business cries be made for a small donation to a charity to be nominated by the crier himself.

Chairman's Notes

I suppose my main concern at present must be the continuing work at the Leconfield Hall with its repercussions for the programmes of this, as for so many other societies and organisations. Renovation is proceeding continuously but it is a massive task. By the time you read this work will be further advanced, but already the strengthening beneath the building over the old water tanks is complete, the lift shaft is at first floor level, the old proscenium stage is gone, the new kitchen is taking shape and the gallery extension is completed - the old wooden stairs leading off the stage are gone and the stair well covered over. Gone too are the old spiral stairs. The upstairs floor will be replaced. Our first event in the new hall should be Petworth Fair on November 20th followed by Ron Smith's return on November 22nd.

As often happens with the best ideas, the audio tape project for those who cannot read the Magazine has made a slow start but it is now under way, we have tapes covering issues 95 and 96 and there will be a tape for this Magazine. A single tape will usually record a very significant proportion of the quarter's Magazine. For enquiries please ring or write to Keith Thompson (342585).

The A.G.M. elected Miles Costello to the Committee to fill the place left by the much lamented Bill Vincent. Miles' scholarly interest in local (and other) dialects, and in all matters relating to Petworth made him an obvious choice. He also (dare I say it?) belongs to a slightly younger age group than some of us. Miles has two articles in the current Magazine and has at an advanced stage of preparation a Select Bibliography of books and articles relating to Petworth and the old rural district. He has also produced a complete name index to the first 90 issues of this Magazine - a massive task - and already a valuable asset for reference. More of these projects in a later issue. Meanwhile I'm delighted Miles is now a committee member.

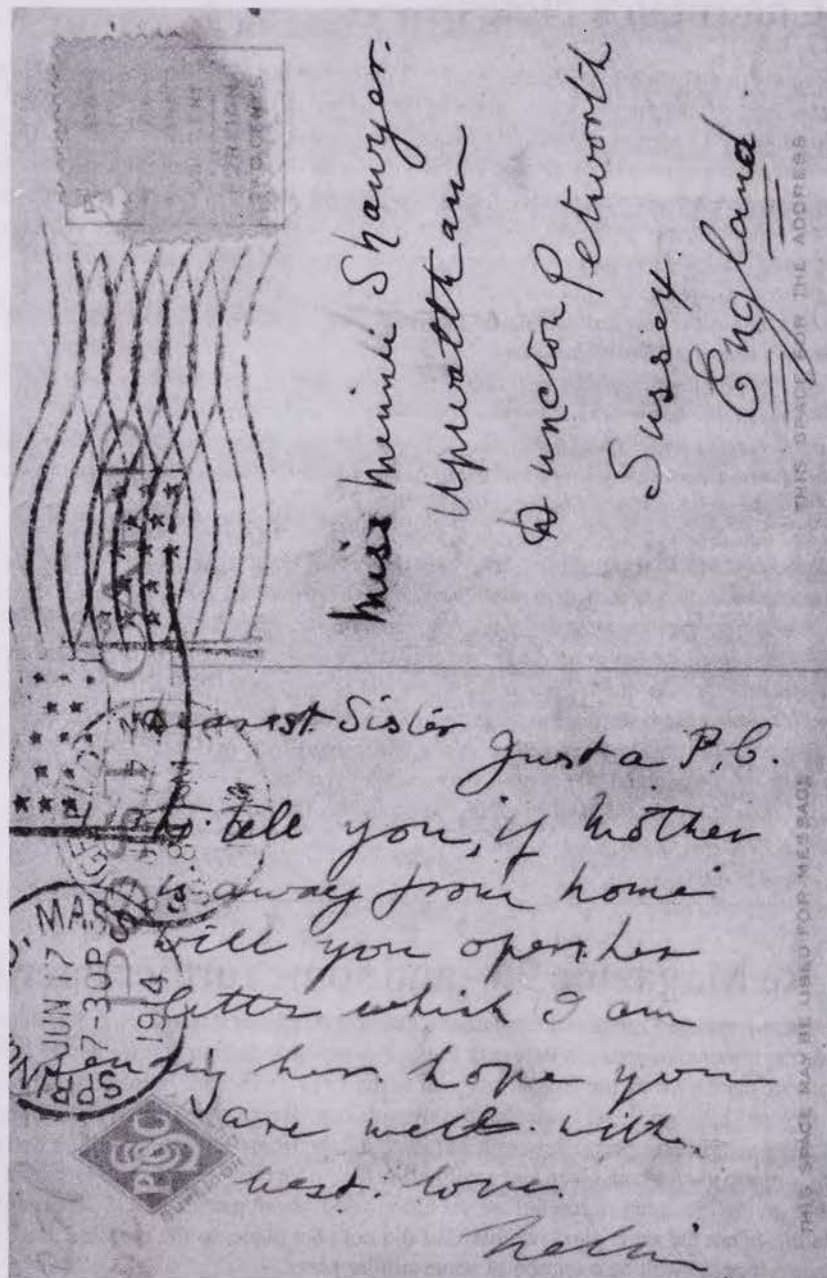
If I have more on the Hall I will include it in the Activities Sheet.

Peter

20th July

Re Magazine 96 - and some further queries

The postcard on page 6 remains unexplained. You will recall that it features a group standing outside the ornamental gates in Petworth Park. It is possible though that we have a section of a private party visiting the House just prior to the 1914-1918 war. In the summer of that year, Colonel Rawson, Lord Leconfield's father-in-law, arranged for a party of a hundred political secretaries to come to Petworth and go round the House and Gardens. They wished to have a group photograph taken and would bring their own racquets for lawn tennis. It was felt that giving the courts a run before the Goodwood house parties would be beneficial. While this is not the same party, as this visit did not take place, as the postcard says, on a Thursday, it could well be a section of some similar party.



A postcard from Springfield Mass. See Re Magazine 96

Meanwhile John Bleach sends from Lewes another postcard. It is unusual in that the picture (not reproduced) is of Cemetery Avenue, Springfield, Mass. (U.S.A.). As so often happens the stamp has long ago been torn away, as so often, too, the legend is allusive; it reads:

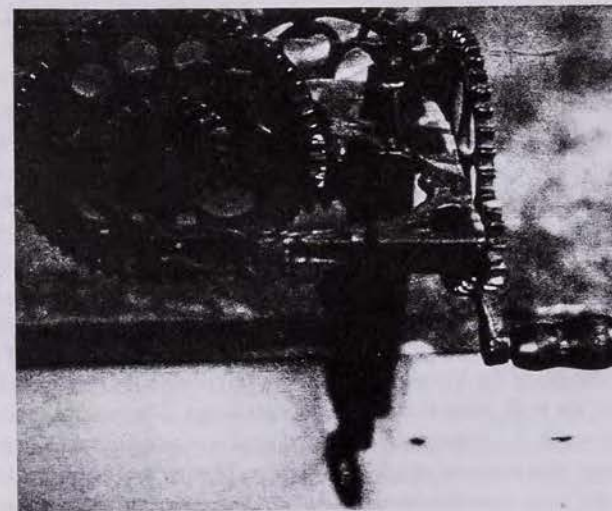
"Dearest Sister,

Just a P.C. to tell you, if mother is away from home will you open her letter which I am sending her. Hope you are well. With best love. (?) Nellie."

Clearly (?) Nellie was now living in America. Why Mrs Shawyer should be away from home is not clear.

[The written side of the postcard is reproduced as an illustration in the current Magazine.]

James Alleston asks if anyone can identify the machine illustrated. Reproduction may be a little difficult as we have a rather dark photocopy. He thinks it might be used for fruit - or something to do with turnips. Has anyone any ideas?



The article on Mrs Leversuch's cookery book elicited this most interesting letter from Mrs P. Payne of Minehead:

"As one who knows a little of life in a big house, I was most interested in "A Housekeeper's Lore" in Magazine 96. The housekeeper and her stillroom maid or maids was responsible for preparing afternoon teas while the kitchen staff took two precious hours off before the marathon of dinner.

She would have to provide sandwiches, hot buttered toast in winter, scones and cakes. As you say, every big house had its own special scone, and yes, I do know Sir Charles Forbes' cake. It eats like a thick shortbread. It was supposed to be Austrian in origin, according to a Musselburgh lady who fought unholy war with the Viennese chef. "He ca's that, shortbread!"

It seems odd not to add even a dash of vanilla, lemon or spice but, remember, not all was written down! "I don't know what Mrs Leversuch does but the recipe never tastes so well as at Petworth."

Early Good Housekeeping recipe books show plates of little cakes baked to a basic recipe, cut or shaped into fancy shapes and iced and decorated in differing ways and colours.

The still room was sometimes responsible for dessert fruit - the frosting of grapes or currants, red and white, though the head gardener was responsible for delivering the dessert fruits freshly picked, so soon as tea was out of the way.

Mrs Leversuch was lucky her maids did not have to make the polishes, soap and such household things - only sweet bags and pot pourri. I suspect Mrs L. may have taken over the cooking for those of the staff left behind while the family were away and the house being cleared from top to bottom. The recipes quoted sound like Staff teas or Nursery Recipes, another possibility. The Nursery was usually at war with the kitchen. Head chef said, 'Either she goes or I do?'"

Kath Vigar writes:

I often reminisce and think of the happy times during the 1920's when I lived at the lodge in North Street. I remember there was a large board nailed to the wall in our sitting room by the front door, it must have had at least two dozen keys hanging from it all leading to Petworth House, workmen used to come and go borrowing the keys for a while, imagine keys being in such a vulnerable place these days!

The great big dark old building next door was always piled high with coal, an old man named Jesse Clark used to wheel coal up to the House. Hundreds of pimps were there too, bundles of wood to start a fire going, my dad was always allowed to help himself. I remember we had an enormous tunnel key. This tunnel always had to be locked at 4pm. The tunnel led from this greater coal cellar. There was also another entrance under the servants' windows. How I used to hate going to lock up, the lighting in the wall was so dim and eerie.

The dairy was along the Horsham Road. The dairyman used to drive a little horse and trap and delivered the milk, mum was allowed a pint a day. Going back to locking up there was a small door inside the large gates leading to the cow yard this had to be locked up at 4pm. We were never able to go out as a foursome as my brother and I had to take turns looking after the lodge especially on a Sunday as mum and dad used to love a walk across the Park to Snowhill. It's hard to think that's all gone. When Mr and Mrs Wilcox lived there it was so well kept. Mrs Wilcox had a maid who was a local girl from Tillington.

I also remember a plane coming down in the same field behind Tillington House. That would be about 1916. I had an old snap of it but unfortunately left an envelope of old snaps on the 22 bus when I was travelling back to Brighton years ago.

Now to mention Colonel and Mrs Kennett, although a small child I remember the sadness caused when the boys were killed one by one. I think the boys have their names mentioned on their parent's memorial over the grave. I wonder if it's still there. It was like a wooden door not made of stone, near the footpath. I remember it so vividly as Mr and Mrs Stringer's little son, (Tillington's headmaster) Jackie died of meningitis, died in 1916. We all went to his funeral. He was buried next to the Kennett grave that's why it stands out so in my

memory. I think we children used to hear so much sorrow in those days that it made us grow up so quickly.

How interesting I found Iris Shew's (Wareham) account of her life in Petworth. I used to dance the maypole on the lovely Rectory lawn, I remember Mr Powell well. I have a Bible signed by him presented to me at Sunday School in 1923. I remember Tilly too, she was a Miss Tiller, she lived in a little cottage almost opposite our lodge. My memory of her was a jolly hard clout on the head with her umbrella, I was afraid of her. Mrs Tyrell's shop was almost opposite, I loved her, I always called her 'Auntie Fanny'. Dr and Mrs Druiitt first lived in the large house at the top of North Street, I remember them having the one built in Grove Street.

*I loved the Sheepdowns and when the 22 bus went down Shimmings Hill and up the other side the one thought then that entered my mind was **home**."*

Building bridges crossing borders

Extracts from the Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting on May 26th, 1999 (unconfirmed) and a review of Janet Davidson's talk which followed.

Mr Peter Jerrome, MBE, welcomed 46 members The Hon. Treasurer, Mr P. Hounsham, presented the Independently Examined Summary of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet for the year ending 28th February, 1999 (copy attached to the Minute Book), which showed an increase of some £200 overall. The Chairman thanked Mr Hounsham on behalf of the Society for his hard work on an extensive task, pointing out that prompt payment of annual subscriptions greatly assisted in the smooth running of affairs. Making mention of the death of Mr 'Bill' Vincent during the year, the Chairman placed on record his valuable work for the Society over many years. He also paid tribute to the hard-working, harmonious Committee, without factions, the strength of the Society. The remaining members of the Committee were re-elected on bloc The vacancy was filled by Mr Miles Costello in the absence of any other nomination. The Chairman pointed out the valuable work being done in the Society by Mr Costello, as evidenced by his Magazine articles and his display at the Silver Jubilee Exhibition. Summarising the Society's activities during the year, Mr Jerrome said that the walks had gone well, with attendance ranging from 12 to 40. The Magazine was approaching its 100th issue. It remained the only reason for a postal membership of well over 300 and with readership extending far beyond that, the Society's influence was considerable. The Silver Jubilee Exhibition had been a great success and it would be repeated in 2000. Meanwhile, due to major reconstruction at the Leconfield Hall, meetings would be restricted and thanks were due to the United Reformed Church for the use of the hall for the annual General Meeting. Mr Godsmark showed slides of the year's activities to the Chairman's commentary. These covered walks at Bury, Petworth (Town gardens), the Downs, Applesham Farm, Lancing, Woolbeding Common, snowdrops at Northchapel, daffodils at Bedham, Cowdray Park, Byworth; Fair Day (Petworth Edwardians), Ann Bradley's much-appreciated displays for meetings, the Petworth House Open Evening,

Alison Neil's portrayal of Mrs Beeton, Leconfield Hall caretaker, Mr Owen Bridger's retirement presentation, the Town Crier and scenes from the Silver Jubilee Exhibition.

Peter had shown how the Society is 'building bridges' in the community, links between people and places, between individuals, between House and Town. Now Janet Davidson was to speak about 'crossing borders'.

Disturbing, challenging, humbling - these were the adjectives that sprang to mind as Janet, an elder of the Petworth United Reformed Church, told the story of her call to teach English at a school for 15-18 year-old students, run by the Hungarian Reformed Church in the Ukraine. In a country where the economy and infrastructure have collapsed since the fall of Communism 8 years ago, people used to being told what to do and when and how to do it, even what to think, struggle to exist from day to day. Shops are empty, industry has closed down, electricity supply is, at best, intermittent, unemployment is 90% and even those in work often go without pay.

Yet the Christian faith of these young Hungarians in the Ukraine shines through in their unselfish concern for each other, their touching appreciation of such help that Westerners can give and their generosity in their poverty.

So many borders - between West and East, East and West, physical, national, cultural, emotional. Janet looked forward to the day when joyful anticipation of the crossing would replace the present depressive apprehension.

One also had to admire the support given by the people of the Petworth, Billingshurst and Pulborough Churches of the West Sussex Area Ministry of the United Reformed Church in terms of finance and basic equipment over the past year. Janet invited the audience to participate in contributing, for which she had lists of the most essential items required by the schools if they are to continue to provide education to the rising generation.

Disturbing, challenging, humbling

KCT

An Expedition to Moor. David and Linda's May Walk.

So often looking at the fields, a five bar gate with the Hampers Green cemetery on the immediate left. Not really thinking of walking there: there's no public right of way and, crucially, it doesn't seem to lead anywhere. Today however David has permission from the farmer to open the gate. We walk through the high meadow grass, through another gate at the end and then along a path to the left. We soon reach a large barn with chestnut fencing in neat piles, woodworkers seem a tidy race. Ashes are (we think) warm from a recent bonfire. Yellow bedstraw in the hedgerow. We're walking roughly in line with the Balls Cross Road. The May winds are already cracking the clay soil. We're opposite Keyfox by now and looking over to the back of Ratford.

Now a wood and a field. All the paraphernalia of pheasant rearing. Bracken and bluebell in the wood, the latter going over now. Pheasant egg shells on the track, magpies are the culprits it seems. Orchids almost shine in the relative gloom of the woods. There's a late primrose all on its own.

On through to Moor Farm. David has a surprise for us so we may be a little late. Silt on the fields, dry and cracking in the rainless weather, fresh mussel shells sticking out, probably age-old, the occasional plant has taken root in the rich mud. Memories stirred by Moor: clock golf years ago with the Chapel Sunday School. Miss Longman. Moor is an old foundation but much of the present house is modern. Now David's trump card: Richard Chandler, no stranger to this Society, is going to show us round the reinstated ponds. Moor was the ancestral home of the Dawtreys, a manor in itself, and they had a town house opposite the church. Remembering vaguely something about the Bishop of Llandaff in the eighteenth century, the farmhouse passing to him, a distant relative and being as soon sold on. Something like that anyway. Richard has a large copy of a 1760 map to show us; field names surviving to some extent from that time. Daffadown Dilly Wood, Little Ox Pasture, Roxall's Copse, hints from which a partial history might be reconstructed.

The derelict ponds have come back to life. There were once three and there are three again. One had been drained for rough meadow a hundred years and more ago. In another, carp were no longer breeding because of lack of oxygen. Richard worked closely with the Conservancy. We walk round, from this perspective the church tower seems not altogether where one might expect. Cars pass on the distant Horsham Road. Back over the crackling stubble, past the field with the three-day foal, the bluebells have the unhealthy mottled blue of spent flowers. Retracing our steps, tea and biscuits in David and Linda's garden, a little late but well-pleased with our afternoon.

P.

Walkers will be very upset to learn of the passing of Elizabeth "Liz" Howell at the early age of 48. Liz had been unwell for a while and we had not seen her or Peter much over the last year or two. They lived at Witley and had joined a Gardens Walk many years ago as casual visitors. They had seen us setting off and asked if they could come. Over the years they made very many Society friends and they visited Petworth very frequently. Although living away from the town, Peter and Elizabeth seemed to embody the very spirit of the Society. Our very sincere thoughts are with Peter and the family.

P.

Visit to Duncton Mill Farm July 4th

The weather forecast had been apocalyptic, and Wimbledon Finals day, kites in the Park, much else too no doubt. A piece of bad programming? Well, you could say that of virtually any mid summer Sunday. At first the Car Park looked unpromising but soon people were

materialising from all directions, and more were going straight to Duncton. Cars parked in the orchard and visitors now well over thirty. Jill Ray, one of the Turner family, so inseparably connected with Duncton Mill in the early century had come a long way to see the farm where she had so often come to see her grandfather. She had brought an album of sepia snapshots pasted close together rather like cigarette cards, some showed part of the farm. Duncton Mill had been part of the Leconfield Estate for some two hundred years prior to its being sold in 1962. In the eighteenth century, and perhaps before, it had been part of the Goring estate at Burton Park. The present house was built for the miller in 1767 but occupation of the site could well go back to Roman times and before. The Goring estate has left no records.

Tom Bishop told us that a significant number of trees remained from Turners' extensive orchards. Cox, Bramley and many other varieties, some difficult even for the expert to identify. The Bramleys are of the old type with the red spot not bred out of them. For today's supermarkets cooking apples are green, eating apples are red. The Duncton Mill russets are still very much present in force.

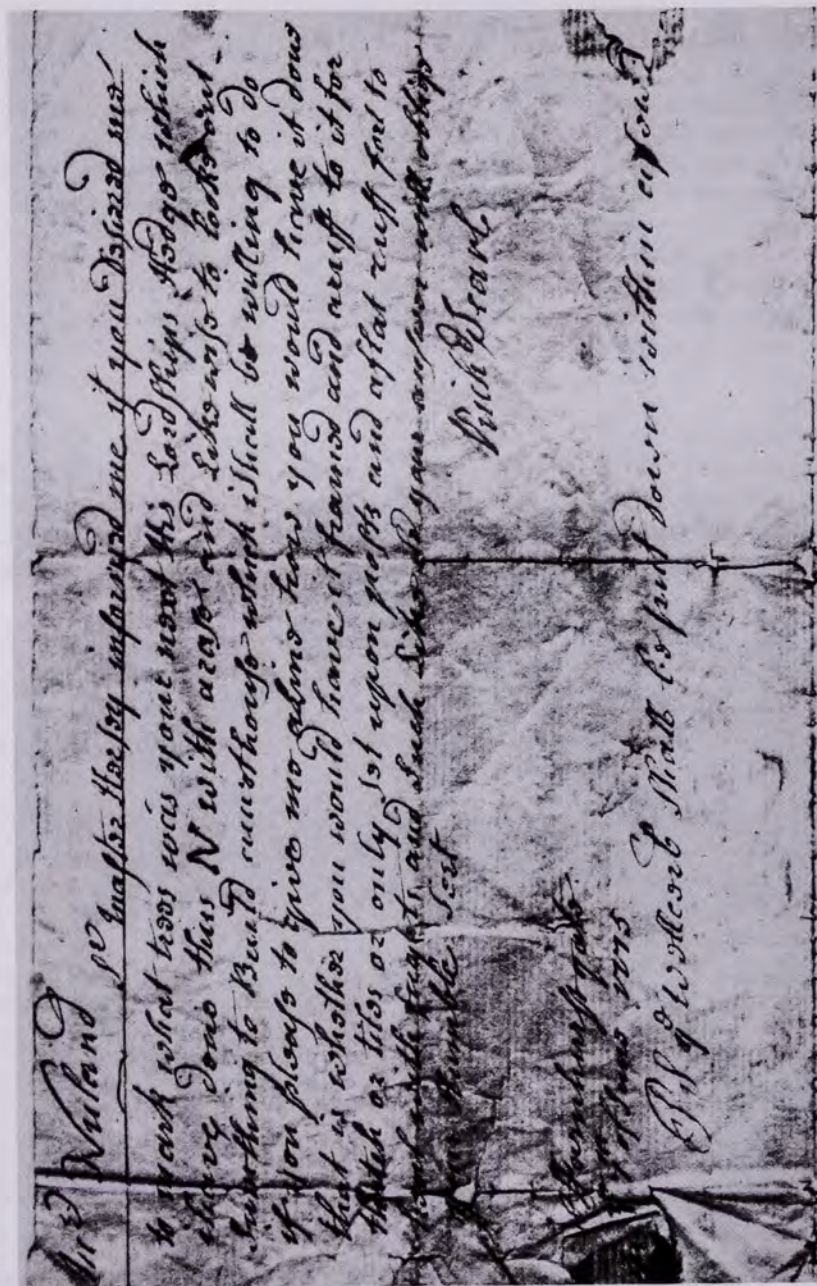
Tom was prepared to let us wander about or we could have a conducted tour. The mill itself is listed and still has much of its original machinery "albeit in a dangerous and dilapidated state" as Tom pointed out on the helpful information sheet he had prepared especially for us.

Trout, not apples, are the farm's staple now. Duncton Mill with its unrivalled clear water is a significant producer of brown and rainbow trout, brook and the hybrid tiger trout, some species indigenous, others coming from North America. We saw the great tanks, washed by the millstream, where the life cycle began. Then walking along a path lined by high marestail, almost like explorers of a lost primeval world, we made our way to the pools where the fish grow on. Trout are aggressive creatures and need to be sorted into peer groups. Aggressive as they are, they are themselves vulnerable to herons (from Burton Park) but also, in the fishing lakes, to crows, cormorants and kingfishers. An extensive netting system over the pools deters the herons to some extent but Tom reminded us that herons are determined and resourceful birds quite capable of bouncing about on netting in search of a meal. Tom threw in some feed and the quiet surface of the water became a thrashing, foaming mass to subside as soon again.

Round the buildings. There had been a sixtieth birthday party in the black Sussex barn the previous evening. The barn is certainly older than the present house as is the cart shed with the former apple loft above it.

So much to see. The clear waters of the fishing lakes. The weather forecast fortunately turns out, in this case, to be quite wrong. Tea in the garden, big fish in the lake by the house not even bothered to rise to the surface for food. Dark outlines in transparent water. No one is in any hurry to leave. Sheila provides a seemingly endless stream of cups of tea and shortbread biscuits. The Indian bean tree is one of the largest of its kind in England: there are all kinds of unusual trees on either side of the valley. Tom doesn't know what some of them are and neither, it seems do any of us. Coming up to five o'clock, the self-catering cottages are booked but perhaps some members are thinking of bed and breakfast? Eight acres of fishing lakes and half a million trout a year. Quite a visit and I've left out far more than I've put in. Thank you very much Tom and Sheila.

P.



Letter to Mr Nuland from Richard Searl 1775.

Mr Nuland's new building

Most archival material mentioned in these pages has a "home" of some kind. It may be the West Sussex Record Office, Petworth House Archives, or, occasionally, it may be in private hands. Stray items of any age are a little unusual. The following small document appeared in a book catalogue and was acquired by Miles Costello. The date is clear, 7th June 1775 and the sender and address clear too. For a document of this age it is relatively difficult to read. Richard Searl has a good hand but perhaps found writing relatively difficult and laborious. Mr Nuland (Chirurgion) "surgeon", almost certainly builder of "Newlands" in Pound Street, is the recipient but, as you will see, some obscurities remain. The letter seems to deal with an unidentified building, possibly, but not certainly at Petworth.

Text:

Mr Nuland,

S^r Master Hersey informed me yt you desired me to mark what trees was your next His Lordships Hedge which I have done thus N with a raser and like wise to looke out something to Build house which i shall be willing to do if you please to give me aline how you would have it done that is whether you would have it framed and a ruff to it for thatch or tiles or only set upon posts and a flat ruff to heal with faggots and such like so your answer will oblige your humble sort

Rich^d Searl

Farnhurst Gate
7th of June 1775

P.S Ye wellcerb shall be put down within a few days.

Notes:

Yt = that. Searl has marked Newland's trees with an N, rather in the same way that two hundred years and more before a man first finding a windfall on the common "marked it with a cross or a perecke with an axe and then yt was his owne." (*Cloakbag and Common Purse* p61). The boundary, presumably, was with the land of the Earls of Egremont. The interpretation of the letter basically turns on what Newland is planning to build, the uncertain word may begin with the indefinite article 'a' or even 'an'. Carthouse, outhouse, even oasthouse, none quite seem to fit. "Ruff" = roof. Searl needs to know whether to build a timber-framed house or some less ambitious structure.

MC/P.



Mrs Cleaver of Shieling Cottage, North Street has been asked by a friend to find out if anyone has any knowledge of these two pictures. Both are painted by S. Bowers. The top one is marked "Near Byeworth", the lower one "Near Petworth". Can anyone either identify the places or offer some information on S. Bowers? The light pastel shading of the paintings may not reproduce well here but the printer will do what he can.



Duncton Mill was a favourite Garland haunt between the wars.
This is a somewhat stylised picture from the 1930s.

An equestrian gander

The following happened to be reproduced on a photocopy of a newspaper cutting relative to Petworth. It concerns Rogate but is such a good story that it seems worth reprinting here. It comes from the *West Sussex Gazette* of 17th January 1861.

— Perusing the very interesting anecdotes in last week's *Gazette*, delivered by Mr. Jesse, at the Fisherman's Home, Brighton, brought to our mind a circumstance which happened in the neighbourhood of Rogate one day last summer. An agricultural friend of ours was in possession of an old gander, which had been in existence, we suppose, long enough to become tired of the world and all its inhabitants, for he had grown desperately spiteful, and often would vent his spleen by driving horses, cows, a poor old goat, or any other description of animal around his master's farmyard; or should a strange visitor of the human kind venture within his domains, with a terrible hiss and flap of the wings, the intruder was soon sent to the "right about," or, woe betide him, a terrible pinch in the legs soon followed the hissing and flapping, if he did not soon make his exit from Mr. Gander's precincts. Now, one day his royal gandership was in a worse temper than usual, and a pony being in the yard, he coolly flew upon the back of the animal, and there settled. The pony was frightened, and soon galloped round the yard with the speed of a racer. At length over some fencing into a meadow the affrighted quadruped leaped; gander was too good a horseman to be dismounted, whereupon the pony went off at the top of his speed, the teasing old gander sat fast, flapping up and down his wings just to manage his equilibrium. At length, by some lucky effort, the horse dismounted his rider; but gander was determined to be "plucky," and waited another opportunity on some future day to take a morning ride. So on one of the few fine mornings of 1860, the usual occupants of our friend's farmyard were basking in the sun, enjoying themselves to their hearts' content, when suddenly, with the agility of a tumbler, gander alighted on poor pony's back again, and went a few times around the yard just by way of prelude, frightening in his rapid course pigs, dogs, poultry, &c. (just as they did before John Gilpin, when performing his memorable ride.) Soon over the fencing into gander's fancied "Rotten-row," and safely as any jockey ever sat his favorite horse, was gander. At length faster and faster galloped poor pony, louder and louder flapped the wings of his rider, till the steed became as much frightened as the heroine in Bloomfield's beautiful poem. "The Fakenham Ghost," as there was no hopes of dismounting the feathered equestrian. At length pony tried another scheme, by jumping at a stile, but with no better success, the front feet came in contact with the top bar and back into the meadow fell the bewildered steed. Gander still sat as fast as ever, so round the meadow again in a style which was a sight Mr. Wm. Cooke would never have forgotten had he witnessed the scene! At length our friend, the owner of both gander and pony, to the chagrin of the former and release of the latter, "stepped in," and put the performance to an end for ever, by taking poor gander to a lock-up to end the rest of his days. Pony now enjoys himself in the yard or meadow, without fear of molestation by such a terrifying neighbour.

"Died and Gone to Heaven" - At Large in the Cottage Museum

Lewis and Jacqueline are away for a fortnight, so this week I'm looking in at the Museum in the mornings, collecting any post, seeing if the guides need replacing - that sort of thing. I'll do this week, Anne Simmons the second week. At last a sunny spell, coming up to midsummer and very quiet in High Street just after seven o'clock. Very much the postman's time. Time too, to realise that there's quite a slope and that the pavement is beribboned with innumerable service excavations. Pushing open the brown painted garden gate of 346, ferns and yellow foxgloves in the shaded house side of the brick path. There's a bee on an opening mullein floret further up the garden. Clearly it's a self-sown "immigrant" as mullein with its large grey woolly leaves and tall yellow spire, so often is. Crunching along the garden path; thinking the Museum is a hospitable place for strays, objects as well as plants. Once there, though, they do have to form part of a team. There are always one or two old-fashioned grannies' bonnets in the garden, the old, unimproved, dark purple kind, but this year's flowers are over now and the green seed pods are beginning to brown. Columbines may be uninvited visitors but they seem to go with the crunching path. Who makes such paths now? A line of candytuft is coming into flower at the side of the path, white, pink and mauve. Dahlias are already in bud. At first they seem incongruous for a garden of 1910 but then one thinks of Florence Rapley tending her dahlias at Heath End in the same year. Pretty conclusive. Phlox too I always associate with Florence. When the garden was first laid out, Lady Egremont rightly insisted on the tall, rangy phlox of the early century, not as large-flowered as modern varieties, but taller, and, surprisingly, far less liable to break off at the bottom of the stem. They sway with every change of the breeze.

We're moving away from the idea of mixing vegetables and flowers. Mrs Cummings, we now know, had an allotment. This year the garden is a riot of annuals. A spinach beet seedling from last year is a stranger that doesn't fit in and won't long escape the gardener's eye. I hope another refugee from last year does escape though. It's a self-sown strawberry spinach, minuscule leaves you can, in theory, use as spinach, and fruit that suggests Alpine strawberries or at least if you go with the seed packet. A favourite, the packet said, of the monks. Reality was, perhaps, a little more prosaic, the leaves were, in truth, very small indeed and the "strawberries" very small too and rather insipid. Something of a disappointment: perhaps the monks were better at growing them than I was. A huge poppy with a great purple cross athwart the open petals, another survivor from last year. Do I give the impression that the garden's made up of fugitives, a kind of horticultural Foreign Legion? Well, it isn't. Here too are clarkia, love-in-a-mist, cosmos, marigolds, I can't name them all. Herbs at the house end, lemon thyme, oregano, sage, lemon balm and dead nettle for flower arranging. Not forgetting the house-leek colony on the roof which, they say, wards off lightning. A few gooseberries are turning blood red, that fine old variety, Whinham's Industry. But what am I doing, chuntering on about gooseberries and grannies' bonnets, lemon balm and poppies? It's time to open up.

Turning the key in the brown painted door, clutching the inevitable circular left in the meat safe. The paint on the door doesn't blister as its pre-1960 counterpart seemed to. Perhaps it's been applied more carefully. I always used to stick my thumb nail into the brown bubbles. The characteristic smell of exhausted gas, the pilot lights remain on all the time. There's no fire at the moment, the damper plate with "Petworth" embossed on it has broken. "An accident waiting to happen," said Roger Wootton surveying the breakage, the practised eye quickly picking out an age-old crack in the cast iron. Cast iron's not easy to rework, it's not at all malleable. Some plates, rumoured to be at Chillinghurst have proved unsuitable, either not damper plates, the wrong size, or the wrong fitting. It's probably a matter of plating. Fortunately the crack isn't across the "Petworth" lettering. Anyway no fire. No doubt in this weather the stewards won't miss the fire much, but without it, of course, Mrs Cummings has neither cooking facilities, nor, crucially, hot water. All those cakes on the table and no water to make the tea! This is the pre-electric age. Winding the clock, the long ratchet draws up the heavy weight.

The indeterminate, slightly astringent, upstairs smell. "Mrs Cummings" sits in the sewing-room: the chair with the tumbling block pattern is still waiting to be mended. So often you hear Mrs Cummings mentioned, as if we presume to know her. Perhaps she'd be a little put out; never, in her life-time, someone to court publicity. A very private person, no doubt, an Irish Catholic in early century Petworth. A life without publicity, but not a life without traumas, early days in Ireland, training as a milliner. Did she in later years think wistfully of Ireland? It's very unlikely that she ever went back. Marriage and the end of Michael Cummings' service in the Hussars, coming to Petworth, he to work as a farrier for Lord Leconfield, the children, Michael Cummings' departure from Petworth, rent arrears to make up, one son dying young, the other children moved to London, long quieter years at 346, the consolations of the Catholic faith, long evenings, shortened perhaps by going early to bed, no television, no telephone. The children probably visiting rarely, such were the economics of the time, sparse wages didn't run to train fares. But above all, the feeling that had she not lived in this particular cottage we would never have bothered with her. That's the rub. Our interest is fortuitous. People taking her name in vain. Mrs Cummings this, Mrs Cummings that. What right do we have? And all these people tramping about in the bedroom... It's not the figure in the sewing room that's Mrs Cummings - that's for visitors. It's more the presence in the empty bedroom. It would be nice to explain it all to her. Feelings transcend the fortuitous now. You could explain it all - I think. The uneasy battleground between our conception of Mrs Cummings and the real thing. Here's her entry for Lady Leconfield's 1918 Fete and Gift Sale (courtesy of Lord Egremont) ... the only tangible remembrance of her that we have:

*I Mary Cummings of High St Petworth
wish to give for entry for the above Fete and Sale the following:—*

PARTICULARS OF ENTRY	SECTION OF SALE
<u>Donations of all kind of saleable articles will be welcomed.</u>	
<i>One Boys Overall</i>	13

.... Sitting upstairs, Friday stewarding. I don't often "do" upstairs but Ethel's in excellent form downstairs. Sitting in the chair in the corner, hearing the sound of voices downstairs and the soft hiss of the gas jet just above me. Visitors come a bit like London buses, several and then a long gap. Perhaps London buses aren't like that any more. Soon the room will be full. "We've tried to portray the Roman Catholic influence." "Mrs Cummings could certainly have made a sampler like this, but she may not have had the time," (or perhaps the inclination). "She might well have made a Sunday bonnet like this; after all she had been a milliner in Ireland." The visitors, three couples, look round. I say the usual things, we chat for a while, they go up into the attic, admire the view from the top window and go off downstairs again. All very relaxed. Silence again. After a while a Scots lady visiting her grand-daughter locally comes in. Have we used the lemon balm to flavour cooked peaches or nectarines? She tries to explain where she lives in Scotland, somewhere toward the west coast. What's the nearest football team? "Ayr United I expect, but I don't really know much about football dear." The Scots lady's the last visitor this afternoon. Looking at the visitors' book, the usual 'time-warp', 'fascinating', 'well thought out'. Last time I was on a visitor from Birmingham put, 'Died and gone to heaven'. Someone who'd fallen in love with 346, and, no doubt, Petworth too, on a sunny Sunday afternoon in summer.

P.

Memoirs by Hugh Whitcomb (concluded)

3) *Early days in Petworth (continued from Magazine 96)*

There was one ancient custom to which none of us objected. When the tenant farmers went to the 'Big House' to pay their rent bi-annually a really royal feast was laid on. There were so many farmers involved that it took two days to collect their dues which meant that two huge meals were provided. And that is where I, with five other choirboys and six choirmen, came into the picture because we supplied choral accompaniments on both days.

The banquets took place in the huge audit room and started at 3 p.m. lasting until the last farmer or choirman staggered out which was usually about 7 p.m. It was almost a point of honour for the farmers to get drunk and they did not have to bother about "drinking and driving" as there were no cars. Most drove a horse and gig while others rode horseback and some even cycled or walked.

Proceedings were presided over by, in my day, Mr J.B. Watson, the Steward (nowadays called Agent) who sat at the head of the long line of tables, seating I suppose something like 60 or 70 farmers - possibly even more. There were bowls of tobacco on the tables and a churchwarden (clay) long curved stem pipe along side each place setting. In addition there were bowls of exotic fruit most of which found its way home in the pockets of the diners. The principal, if not only, beverage was strong ale. There may have been wine or even spirits but as a small boy I did not take particular note of the drink partaken.

We choirboys had our meal in a small side room and our drink was real syphons of fizzy

lemonade - quite a novelty. We used to drink glass after glass of the stuff and how we managed to sing afterwards I cannot imagine. Which reminds me that we had some competition in providing musical "entertainment". Two or three of the older farmers inevitably sang some old, what we would call to-day, folk songs. I seem to recollect that one at least referred to the Napoleonic wars.

There was a gallery at the back of the Church, which was reserved for the professional classes such as solicitors and doctors, although one or two other families were allowed to join this "upper circle". They were usually people of independent means, often retired military or naval men - of high rank of course.

Now we come to the body of the Church. On the left of the central aisle facing the altar were the pews of the people rather lower in the infamous class structure, subdivided from front to back, the highest rank in front, the lowest at the rear. The Estate Steward occupied the front pew and behind him came the biggest tenant farmer, then several different grades of shopkeepers and tradesmen. People sitting on this side were called the "Sheep" and paid pew rent, their name cards being fixed to the end of the pew. Woe betide any stranger who unwittingly sat in one of them; the verger, always on the lookout for interlopers, would quickly evict him or her who would be guided to the right-hand (or free) side. This was the side of the "Goats", the people who could not aspire to any of the classes sitting in the remaining parts of the Church. None of the so-called Christians responsible for this state of affairs seemed to remember that Christ was the son of a carpenter and probably one himself. I do not include the Rector (John T. Penrose) in this category as he obviously did not like the petty snobbery going on as evidenced by the following. The Rector's wife was the sister of a Government Minister, Ronald McNeil, (afterwards Lord Cushendun) who with his wife often stayed at the Rectory. Invariably when attending a Church service with Mrs Penrose, these nice people ostentatiously sat in the middle of the "Goat" side of the centre aisle!

Incidentally Lord Cushendun (a Northern Irishman) when an MP, achieved fame by throwing a book at Winston Churchill who had annoyed him with some remark. His aim was good, the book hit the target.

4) *Lawrence of Arabia*

It might be of interest that I met more than once, on a business footing, the famed Lawrence of Arabia, otherwise Colonel T.E. Lawrence, who became a legend in his own lifetime.

Lawrence, dressed as an Arab and riding a camel, led them on a number of spectacular raids on the German built Baghdad railway and gave some quite useful help on the right flank of General Allenby's forces operating in Palestine, but, of course, it was the brilliant generalship of Allenby which defeated the Turks.

Lawrence himself, in the books he wrote, gave the impression that he was a romantic figure much revered by the Arabs. I fear the true facts will never be known. After the war when the terms of the Peace Treaty were announced Lawrence considered that the Arabs had been treated unfairly, his promises to them having been only partly fulfilled, so he decided to retire from public life. He, therefore, changed his surname to SHAW, joined the RAF as a ranker and was known for the rest of his life as Aircraftman T.E. Shaw. The odd thing about

it was that this fact was no secret, so when he walked into our City Office and insured his Brough Superior 900 cc motor cycle I recognised him at once.

This visit took place on 1st January 1930, the date of which the first Road Traffic Act, which compelled motor vehicle owners to insure against injuries to third parties, became effective.

Lawrence, alias Shaw, was a short, far from imposing looking man, who expressed disapproval of this new law in scathing terms and when I gave him his insurance certificate he scribbled over it like petulant child, exclaiming "that is what I think of this nonsense." He then argued about the premium which he said was too high. This was £1.50 per annum. For this trivial amount we could have incurred liability for thousands of pounds, and what is more, save him from paying such damages out of his own pocket!

Finally he said he would pay no more than £1.25 which I accepted rather than wrangle over 25p. Lawrence then searched various pockets and eventually handed me the agreed amount, at the same time remarking that he had not enough cash left to pay his bus fare back to the West End so would have to walk. I at once offered to return his £1.25 suggesting that he send a cheque at his convenience. He declined this offer and left. Glancing at the form he had completed I noticed that his address was given as c/o George Bernard Shaw, Bruton Street, London S.W. It has, after 49 years, only at this minute dawned on me that this was probably the reason why Lawrence took the name of Shaw.

A year later when he called to renew his policy he said, "As I haven't injured anyone and am never likely to, although I might kill myself, I am not paying more than £1 this year." We settled on that basis. My memory fails me here but I think he came again for the third time. However, he eventually killed himself whilst avoiding a group of children on a country road near Bovington in Dorset.

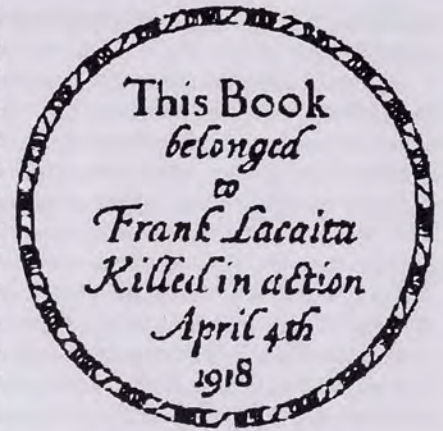
By a strange coincidence I read in to-day's *Telegraph* that only yesterday a monument to Lawrence, erected near the scene of his death, was unveiled.

Half a League - Better than None?

I was intrigued by a bookplate in *'The True Method of Dieting Horses'* (1731), written by William Gibson and bought by my son from a Ludlow bookseller. The plate said: *This Book belonged to Frank Lacaita - Killed in Action, April 4th, 1918*. Why, I wondered, should anyone wish to add a bookplate, post mortem, saying how and when the former owner met his death? Was it intended as a remembrance to the future borrowers or buyers that he had known? To encourage those he had not known to find out more about him?

Killed in Action, April 4th, 1918 implied Young And World War One. The title of the book suggested that its owner was sufficiently interested in horses to want to know how they were cared for some two centuries previously. A vet, perhaps, seeking to enlarge his knowledge of the history of his profession.

So my first queries went to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. The Secretary was most helpful in providing references in respect of William Gibson and his book. This antique veterinary classic was written by a qualified medical practitioner who served with the cavalry and became more interested in treating horses than men. He was one of the first reputable vets at a time when farriers (who had no recognised training and were often charlatans) struggled ineptly with the ailments and injuries of horses. Gibson's book appeared around sixty years before the RCVS was established. The early history of veterinary practice made very interesting reading. Frank Lacaita was not, however, known to the College.



Frank Lacaita's bookplate.

My son was inspired to use his computer to check the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Their Website told us that at the time of his death on 3 April 1918, Frank Lacaita was 30, and a Captain in the 17th Lancers, who had been awarded the Military Cross. His parents were given as Charles Carmichael and Mary Annabel Lacaita of Selham House, Petworth, Sussex. Frank was buried at Arras, where the War Graves Memorial commemorates his death.

The Regimental Museum of the Queen's Royal Lancers (with whom the 17th Lancers had been amalgamated) supplied further details from the published history of the regiment¹. Frank served and died on the Somme. He specialised in machine gunnery and was decorated in 1916 for gallantry in supporting infantry. According to these records, in April 1918, 'while riding out to reconnoitre an exposed flank, he was shot through the head and killed.' It was noted that he went to Eton in 1902, and later to Balliol College, Oxford.

Balliol Library generously provided additional information about Frank.^{2,3} He was born on 19 October 1887, entering Balliol in the Hilary term 1907 and leaving in 1910 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Chemistry. He joined the 17th Lancers in India as a Second Lieutenant in 1911 and became interested in machine guns. He was put in charge of the two guns belonging to his regiment, and, in 1914, was sent to France a month before his comrades, to get to know the new machine guns that they would be using.

He continued as regimental machine gun officer until 1916, when he became second in command of the newly formed 10th Machine Gun Squadron. He fought with them in the Battle of the Somme, winning the Military Cross in November 1916 for courage and coolness when 'reconnoitring a position and bringing his machine guns into action.'² In January 1917, he was given command of the 1st Cavalry Machine Gun Squadron, and on the day of the great German attack of 21 March 1918, the discipline and dedication of his squadron enabled British infantry detachments to withdraw successfully. A former comrade wrote: 'I saw them working their guns as if they were practising on the range, and not a man stopped, in spite of

very heavy shellfire. His work will be remembered as a very gallant action when things were going wrong.¹²

Frank Lacaita was promoted to the post of Divisional Machine Gun Officer some ten days later. At his headquarters, on April 3rd, he heard that his own 1st Squadron, who had been ordered to hold a position at Hamel-sur-Somme at all costs, had been forced to give way. He mounted immediately and rode to their support, but, sadly, 'was killed by a shell fragment whilst he was dismantling a gun that had been abandoned.'¹²

His father, Charles Lacaita, godson of Liberal Premier W.E. Gladstone⁴, entered Balliol in 1872, obtaining firsts in Mathematics and in Literature and winning Oxford University Tennis Racquets in 1875. He qualified as MA in 1878. In 1879 he became Barrister-at-Law of Lincoln's Inn. He was appointed Assistant Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary Earl Granville, and elected Liberal MP for Dundee, 1885-87. He was Director of the United Limmer and Vorwohle Rock Asphalt Company, Chairman of the Petworth Bench of Magistrates, a Fellow of the Linnean Society and an authority on the crocus. He published several papers in Italian botanical journals. His club was the Athenaeum, and his Italian residence the Palazzo dei Rufoli, Ravello.³

Frank's grandfather, Sir James Lacaita, KCMG, also known as Giacomo Fillip Lacaita, had been a practising lawyer in Naples when Mr W.E. Gladstone visited the city in 1857. Having been imprisoned in the dungeons of Naples for his Liberal principles and set free due to representations made by the statesman, he left Italy, moving to Edinburgh, and then to London.^{4,5} In 1859 he was knighted for services as secretary to Mr Gladstone. James Lacaita is 'remembered for his successful intervention with Lord John Russell at a critical moment in the struggle for the unity of Italy,'⁵ at a time when this Prime Minister could have opposed Garibaldi's liberation of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

Frank had a weak heart, which prevented him from taking an active part in games at school and college. At college he was 'quiet and retiring with gentle and pleasant ways, showing little sign of the development of mind and character that came later.'² He was no academic, having obtained a Fourth in Chemistry. Could the business interests of his father have guided his choice of subject? But it would seem that he had no qualms about becoming a career soldier. He had always wanted to join the Army and he worried in case he might not pass the medical examination. A soldier's life was 'the life he longed for,' and, 'the only calling that attracted him.'¹²

He joined the 17th Lancers, a crack cavalry regiment whose valour was celebrated by Tennyson in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. They were known as 'The Death or Glory Boys' and recognised by their distinctive death's head regimental emblem. As a soldier, Frank 'developed the keenest interest in everything, soon becoming a very competent officer and a conspicuous personality.'¹ ²Although he could be diffident, it was said that everyone in his squadron would have done anything for him.

Frank Lacaita served at the Front at the same time as such writers as Siegfried Sassoon, Henry Williamson and Robert Graves. He must have had experiences similar to those which they described so powerfully. His commitment and sense of duty were, however, probably greater. Frank was a profession soldier from a distinguished and prominent family. One cannot

see him throwing away his Military Cross, as Siegfried Sassoon is said to have done. Although Frank was a cavalryman at a time when the machine gun made nonsense of the cavalry charge, he sensibly saw the writing on the wall. Many cavalrymen must have wished that this advance in military technology had never happened. He became a machine gun expert. But it was as a horseman that Frank went to the assistance of his men and was subsequently killed.²

According to Eric Margolis, 'In both Titanic battles (the Somme and Verdun) military technology had far exceeded the generals' 19th Century military intellect. In both battles, the flower of German, British and French society were cut down, robbing these nations of their future.'⁶

Frank's mother died in 1924, and his father in 1933. He had a sister, Sidney Guendolen, who married Lt-Col G Windsor-Clive KCMG, a descendant of Lord Robert Clive of India and Conservative MP for Ludlow from 1923 to 1945. Sidney died in 1935. Frank's mother and father are buried in the grounds of St James' Church, Selham. Inside there are tablets which commemorate their lives and that of Frank. Sidney was buried at Bromfield, just outside Ludlow. Her son, Brigadier R.C. Windsor-Clive, lives near Ludlow.

Except for the ornate volume of the poems of Thomas Gray - a leaving gift to Frank from his headmaster at Eton, which had a similar bookplate to that which led to this article - Brigadier Windsor-Clive did not know of any other books with it. He generously showed me his family album, which had charming photographs of Frank at about six years of age, dressed up for a party as Henry VII, and of Sidney and Frank together at a similar age. One photograph was of Frank, resplendent in the full dress uniform of an officer of the 17th Lancers, and another of him in France, relaxing by a large open-topped car with fellow -officers who had been detached from other regiments to form the 1st Machine Gun Squadron. It would seem that Frank rode with the Petworth House-based Leconfield Hunt.

This is almost all I know of Frank Lacaita. I continue to be absorbed by the bookplate, clearly a rarity. Several more of his books doubtless had them. Frank's mother was tremendously upset by his death. It is thought that she may have had the bookplates printed and attached to his books. But what happened to them? One possibility could be that his mother gave them to friends and relatives - and that an executor may have sold off the Gibson book as part of the estate of a deceased friend.

I know nothing of Selham House, except that Charles Carmichael Lacaita had it built, keeping his vast botanical collection there. I know almost nothing of the life of his son at Selham. The Lacaita line ended with Frank. The bookplate has taken us a moderate distance, and half a story may be better than none. But is there anybody in the Petworth area with knowledge of the Lacaitas of Selham?

Is there more to be told of this privileged and tragically unlucky family? And of the gallant cavalryman someone wanted to be remembered?

Keith T. Pickup

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Acknowledgement is made to the Master and Fellows of Balliol College, Oxford, for their considerable assistance in providing source material for this article.

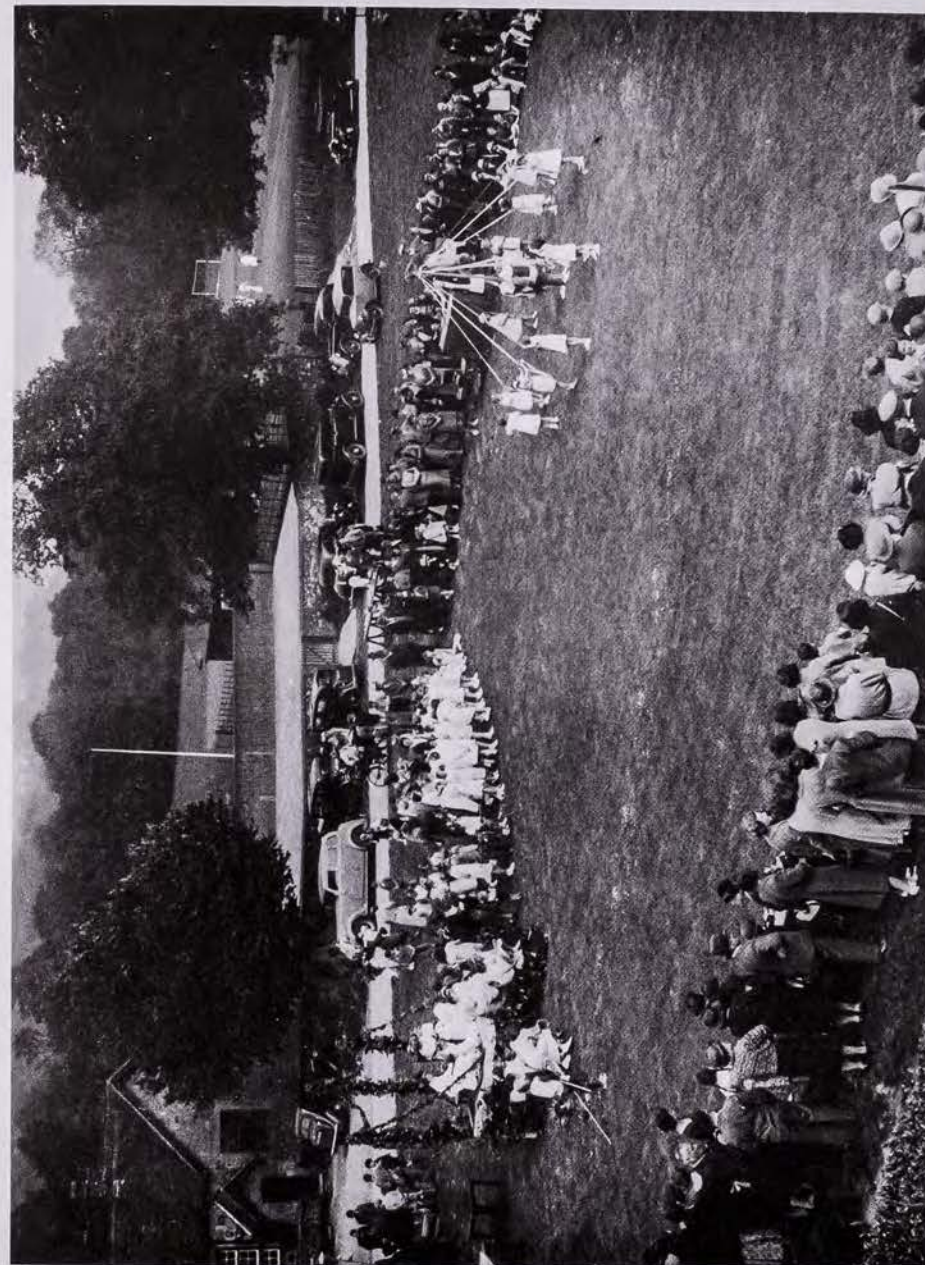
Wisborough Green Church Fire or, Constable Smith Saves The Day

At about half past twelve on the afternoon of May 2nd, 1857 a bolt of lightning struck the weather vane upon the shingle covered spire of Wisborough Green parish church. The vane and the lead covered cross upon which it stood were thrown down onto the Horsham stone of the church roof and from there they fell to the ground. The great strength of the roof saved the church from any damage which may have resulted from the falling debris, however the oak upright which had supported the cross at the point of the steeple was ignited by the lightning. The ensuing fire may have smouldered for some half an hour before it was noticed by a servant of the Reverend Doctor Thornton who had been in the garden of his house. The alarm was immediately raised and a man on horse-back was despatched post-haste to Petworth for assistance.

The first fire-engine to arrive at the scene was that belonging to the Petworth parish, though in the course of its journey it had shed a wheel near Battlehurst Farm and thrown the nine police constables who were riding on board to the ground, mercifully there were only slight injuries to the constables although a man named Jupp suffered a broken rib. The road worthiness of the engine must be a matter of speculation, though at the time of this incident the appliance was almost fifty years old, having been purchased - along with another engine for his own use - by the Third Earl of Egremont in 1808. Emergency repairs were carried out and the engine continued on to Wisborough Green, arriving shortly before Colonel Wyndham's appliance which would have been manned by Petworth estate employees. A contemporary account of the battle to save the church gives a striking description of the condition of the aged engines used to fight the fire -

"The first engine to arrive was the one belonging to the parish and began to work on the fire as soon as it could be got into working order (parish engines never do work well till they have had a good deal of coaxing)."

With both engines now working efficiently and with Mr Napper the local magistrate directing the efforts of the constables and local residents the fire could be tackled without further delay. The engine belonging to Colonel Wyndham was used to pump water from the large pond by the workhouse and so supply the parish engine which could then direct a continuous stream of water onto the fire. The workhouse was quite possibly the so-called



*Fernhurst May Revels - a Garland photograph from the mid 1930s.
See "Revels and Carnivals ..."*



This photograph, taken in the audit room at Petworth House in 1916, comes from Mrs Cowley's scrap book (see Magazine 86). It almost certainly shows the H.S.D. ladies at work. Presumably they are wearing sterile clothing as they are preparing bandages and similar items. A unique picture. See "The World and His Wife will be There".

GRAND A FETE & GIFT SALE

IN
PETWORTH PARK,
ON
MONDAY, August 5th, 1918,

IN AID OF The Officers Families Fund ;
The Sussex County Prisoners of War Fund ;
The Petworth War Hospital Supply Depot.

In addition to the various attractions already announced at the above
Fête there will be a MOUNTED

GYMKHANA

SUPPORTED BY THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE
CANADIAN RESERVE ARTILLERY.

ENTRIES WILL BE TAKEN ON THE GROUND.

There will also
be a

FISHING CONTEST

in the UPPER LAKE,
Entrance Fee: ONE SHILLING

Entries to be made before SATURDAY, August 3rd, at the ESTATE OFFICE, PETWORTH, where entry Forms and
Conditions may be obtained.

DANCING in the Evening when the Band of
The 21st CANADIAN RESERVE BATTALION
WILL ATTEND.

THE FETE WILL BE OPEN AT 12 NOON.

G. ROYCE, Printer, Salisbury, etc., North Street, MIDWINTER.

A poster for Lady Leconfield's Grand Fête and Gift Sale 1918. Courtesy of Lord Egremont.
(See "The World and His Wife").

12/5

Entry Form for Lady Leconfield's

Grand Fête and Gift Sale

TO BE HELD IN

PETWORTH PARK,

On MONDAY, AUGUST 5th 1918,

IN AID OF

:: :: THE OFFICERS' FAMILIES FUND :: ::
 THE SUSSEX PRISONERS OF WAR FUND,
 THE PETWORTH WAR HOSPITAL SUPPLY DEPOT.

1 Hon. Mrs. G. Lascelles of Tillington House, Petworth
 wish to give for entry for the above Fête and Sale the following:—

PARTICULARS OF ENTRY	SECTION OF SALE
17 E Donations of all kind of saleable articles will be welcomed.	E
Pen of 1917 Light Sussex Fowls (Live Stock)	
also some embroidery (Egyptian & Japanese)	B
12 Childrens Overalls & 6 Sun bonnets	B
1 dog Egg	

PARTICULARS OF SECTIONS.

- A—Antique Stall, to consist of Antique articles, Jewellery, Plate, Engravings, etc.
- B—Needlework, Frocks and Millinery.
- C—China, Pottery and Glass.
- D—Petworth Town Stall (No. 1) for Dead Poultry, Rabbits, Meat, Eggs, Butter, etc.
- E—Petworth Town Stall (No. 2) for Live Poultry, Pigs, Rabbits and Live Stock.
- F—Fruit, Flowers, Vegetables, Plants, etc.
- G—Miscellaneous.

This Form should be sent to Mr. H. WHITCOMB, Estate Office, Petworth,
 not later than MONDAY, JULY 15th, 1918.

Entry form for Lady Leconfield's Grand Fête and Gift Sale 1918. Courtesy of Lord Egremont
 (See "The World and His Wife").

'workhouse for children' which is mentioned in the 1851 and 1861 census, one can quite easily picture the excited children watching the events unfold before them and probably expressing a slight tinge of regret that the fire was not more extensive. Meanwhile the fire had gained a hold in the shingles of the spire and notwithstanding the efforts of those manning the engines a hero of the day was called for and constable George Smith having ascended the structure directed the fire-hose at the seat of the blaze with considerable effect, and with no little risk to himself. *The West Sussex Gazette* correspondent describes the dramatic appearance of constable Smith from the smoke filled church -

"When he descended he certainly looked anything but a newly rigged 'Peeler'. He had worked without hat and coat for all the world like a chimney sweep".

The actions of constable Smith were later rewarded by a parish subscription which raised the sum of one sovereign and which was presented to him by Mr Napper. The fire was eventually extinguished at around half past six some six hours after the lightning strike, the damage to the church was evidently not considerable though the fabric of the building would certainly have suffered from the effects of the water played onto it.

The efforts of the newly created West Sussex Constabulary in the form of Superintendent John Kemmish and his constables were acknowledged in the columns of *The West Sussex Gazette*, and the possible implications of the accident at Battlehurst where the engine overturned forced the Inspectors of the Petworth parish engine to issue an assurance that the appliance would be put into an efficient state - which included a provision for the purchase of new and stronger axles for the carriage - as a preventive to a similar accident.

In conclusion it would seem that the availability and training of the West Sussex Constabulary played no small part in saving the church from serious damage. The sight of the uniformed and disciplined group of constables would have provoked almost as much interest amongst the onlookers who had gathered at the scene, as the fire itself. The interest generated by the embryonic police force is best illustrated by yet another extract from *The West Sussex Gazette* which appeared in the newspaper just five days after the fire at Wisborough Green.

"Petworth May Fair - There was one spectacle at the fair which was quite a novelty, viz. a number of policemen in uniform. The Chief Constable and Superintendent Kemmish were also upon the ground, and thanks to their vigilance, we believe that there was not a single case of robbery or the least disturbance whatever, which certainly is saying a good deal for Petworth Fair."

Miles Costello

Gwenda Morgan's Diary : September 19th to September 24th 1939

Sept. 19th. Began to clear out milking sheds, then went with Mr T. and Stoner up to the hayrick we finished on the 8th and we made a fence round it with stumps and nails and two

rows of barbed wire. After dinner took the 'bus up to the Welldiggers and went up the big field and helped to take down some old fencing and wire netting. The netting had got completely buried under the grass in places and was very hard to get up. When Mr T. came with Rover I went with him to see the sheep rounded up and counted, and on to another meadow where he is keeping some sheep from Kent for the winter. Rover rounded these up and we counted them. All the sheep seem to be better of sores and maggots now. Went back to farm in car and helped to clean up Peter's bicycle. He wants to have it at school and Mrs T. didn't like it to be sent so dirty, and she came out with Brasso to put the finishing touches to handlebars etc. After this Mr T. and I put a fence round the dung-pit as it is dangerous without one and a cow fell in this morning. (It was rescued all right. This happened before I arrived in the morning).

A calf was born during the night, the cowmen carried it in on a sack, it is very weak and they think it may not live. Another cow walked behind and so close to the head cowman that he turned round and said "Ere, it's no use you lickin' me, I ain't yer calf."

Sept. 20th. A lorry came and backed into the fence round the dung-pit, and has broken one of the rails. Tied up another row of raspberry canes, then went with Stoner in the cart (the horse's name is "Sailor") up to the place where we took down the old fence, and put all the stumps etc. into the cart and took them down to the rick behind Lawson-Waltons, and made a fence there. As this fence is to keep out sheep (and not cows as the other) we used wire-netting instead of rails and barbed wire. When we'd finished we drove Sailor and cart back to farm along the road. Sailor is a nice cart horse but seems to be troubled with wind. There was a shining thing up in the sky which a man said was an observation balloon. In the afternoon after tying up the raspberry canes (I made a mistake that was this afternoon, not this morning) I helped to pitch a little straw into the barn and then filled milk churns with water, on the top of the trolley. (Don't know what this was for, I ought to have asked. I supposed it was for the cattle, but they seem to have water tanks in all the fields. Anyway Mr T. took the trolley-load of churns away with the tractor). After this I pulled up ragwort in a field until 5 o'clock. Then home. There are glorious views from all the fields on the farm. It stands high and you can see a lovely stretch of Downs on one side, and over to Petworth on another. At 2 o'clock Mr T. took me to see the ten little pigs that had only just arrived. Dear little things and very lively. The calf is still alive.

Sept. 21st. Swilled out milking sheds, and then helped Stoner to give the big shed a spring-clean. A very dirty job standing on a step-ladder brushing the cobwebs down on to oneself. Got covered with dirt and plaster, but Mrs T. let me wash at the sink before going home to dinner. In the afternoon had a shot at milking. What a hopeless business! Blackman says everyone finds it difficult at first so praps I'm no worse than other people, but all I could get was about a breakfast-cupful from Rose, and nothing at all from Queenie. Blackman says that a heifer is not a cow until she's had two calves. Swallows were collecting on telegraph wires this morning.

Sept. 22nd. Spring cleaned the other two sheds. Not quite so dirty as the first. In the afternoon had another shot at milking. Managed a bit better than yesterday but the milk in my pail looked very unhygienic with hairs all over the top. Nobody seemed to think this mattered

however as it all gets strained after going through the cooler. The amount from Queenie weighed 4³/₄ lbs. and when Stoner came along to finish her he only got about a teaspoonful. I was very pleased. It's funny to see the cats come along and sit near the cows at milking time. The cow Tulip has most peculiar feet, her hoofs turn up to a point and make her look sort of Oriental. Blackman says he has to saw them now and then.

Sept. 23rd. Saturday. Went to clean out the styes and it was very funny. I got the barrow and spade and went into the first sty and tried to scrape up the mess there, and the pigs just wouldn't let me do it. They clustered round and tried to eat the spade handle and then began to catch hold of my overall hem. Could hardly move for them. When I managed to get out of the sty I went to find Stoner to ask how he managed to clean them out and he came and gave them some food and this took their attention off us. Afterwards we went up to clean out the sheds where the baby pigs were. One had got trodden on by his mother and died while we were there. After this Mr T. came along and we did sheep's feet. At least, they did them while I held the bottle of stuff. Some were in a dreadful state with rot and maggots. In the afternoon did my Church windows. Margaret's brother came to see her ... Many tears when he had to leave.

Sept. 24th. Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday. Took the children to Church with us. Washed Cymru with Soapex hoping it will get him free of the few fleas he seems to have picked up. [Mr T. Mr Thorne, Hallgate Farm, Byworth. Ed.]

Revels and Carnivals - a Garland photographic genre of the 1930s

A somewhat neglected part of George Garland's output, but very much a feature of his work in the 1930s, is his summer portrayal of May Revels and carnival fetes. Some events, like the May Revels at Sutton or the Revels at Pulborough, he attended regularly. Others like those at Fernhurst, he seems to have attended intermittently, perhaps when they did not clash with something nearer home. Some like those at Henfield, rather a long way from his usual territory, he may have attended just the once. Among the very numerous offprints at Petworth House such pictures rarely figure at all - a reason for this will be suggested later.

Many local villages, but by no means all, had May Revels, many, too, had summer carnivals. Petworth did not have a May Revels and no regular summer carnival. Perhaps such events had a "village" feeling about them unbecoming to a market town. Perhaps. Sutton's was perhaps the best known locally, owing no doubt to the national prestige of the Sutton folk dancers. Sutton's earliest ventures in the field go back to the 1914-1918 war and Garland's early work in this genre to the mid-1920s. It might be used by newspapers, local and national, as a reminder to an increasingly urbanised readership that the "Merrie England" they lamented as vanished was still alive and well. Garland's need was to sell his pictures but it is doubtful whether the demand for them on this basis gave him much profit on the effort he expended.

They are much more plentiful in the 1930s and the reason for taking them then seems to have been less to record these somewhat transient events for posterity as to generate some much needed income by selling prints depicting the participants - usually, one assumes, to proud parents, in the case of May Queen pictures. Garland would produce a specimen set of prints and leave them with the local shop for people to order from them. Prints, other than the specimens, would not be taken off "on spec"; they would be taken off as they were ordered (or in the case of a lack of interest, not taken off at all). Money was tight in the villages and photographic record a luxury rather than a necessity; hence the lack of offprints at Petworth House. Taking such pictures was certainly no short cut to riches. Charles White, for a while Garland's assistant at this period, once told me that people would sometimes order prints and then fail to collect them. On one occasion Garland took out a County Court Summons against a village shopkeeper, looking to be reimbursed for pictures ordered but not collected or paid for. Not unreasonably, the shopkeeper refused to pay out money he had not received. The Court's direction was simply that the disputed prints should be returned to Garland! A pyrrhic victory we might think. Such photographs were usually printed as true postcards and can sometimes be found at postcard sales. They are of the usual excellent Garland quality and can fetch premium prices.

Such thoughts are suggested by the accompanying picture lent for this article by Barbara Grisdale. It shows a group at Fernhurst May Revels in 1935, a celebration remembered as being somewhat special as it coincided with the Silver Jubilee celebrations for King George V.



Fernhurst May Revels 1935. Barbara is standing bottom left. Photograph by George Garland.

Barbara is standing immediately to the right of Joyce Berry, that year's May Queen. Fernhurst's May Revels, despite the inevitable uneasy moment over the years, still survive. Many other such celebrations have fallen by the wayside.

As was customary elsewhere, indeed almost inevitable, the local school was very much involved, the May Queen being elected on a vote by her schoolfellows. Once elected she chose her "maids of honour" from among her school friends. Barbara remembers that her father worked for Mrs Hollist at High Building, a smallholding-cum-farm then and that the trolley used as the May Queen's platform was in regular use during the year for collecting pea-sticks, bavins and other things. The important thing was its flat surface. It would be Barbara's father's job to tidy up the trolley, give it a lick of paint and have it ready for the Revels. A back would be added, adorned with ribbons and greenery and it would be set up on the Green to await the arrival of the procession.

Such an important village event could not be left to chance. Although the school was very much involved, Barbara remembers going down to Miss Alice Tudor's house, Heart's Delight, on the Midhurst Road, to rehearse. The May Queen would be crowned by the previous year's incumbent. Every year former May Queens would be invited to a special tea in the school house. This custom still prevails, although no longer in the school house, now a private residence.

The procession would begin just after lunch from West Close and come to the Green on foot. Flower scatterers with little baskets would strew petals along the way. In those days everyone directly involved in the celebration would wear white, very much the colour of May Revels. St George would be in attendance to protect the Queen against the dragon, sword at the ready. He would prance around the perimeter of the field on his imaginary horse. St George would be a young lad, nine or ten years old, from the Boys' School. Then too there was the maypole, not as easy as it seems, and needing careful rehearsal.

"I went to the Revels this year after an interval of perhaps fifteen years, maybe more. There may have been difficulties over the years but these were not obvious. Most of the old traditions are still there after sixty-five years and I met some who had been part of the celebrations in the 1930s. Obviously Fernhurst itself has changed, everywhere has, but, if I just closed my eyes for a moment, I could have been there in 1935, Maid of Honour to the May Queen."

From a conversation between Barbara Grisdale and the Editor.

A Tale of Petworth Workhouse or The Sorry Fate of Alfred James Moore

'Even the workhouse has charms, it is the only pretty workhouse I remember: with exception perhaps of Battle, but that is however, self-conscious.' E.V. Lucas describing the Petworth Workhouse at the turn of the century.

return

December 24, 1859. Apprehended Harriet Moore at Petworth Workhouse on suspicion of poisoning her illegitimate child.

This short entry in the Sussex Constabulary occurrence book by Superintendent Kemmish at Petworth began an investigation that would, over the ensuing months, grip the imagination of a large proportion of Petworth residents, and would lead to heated, and often anonymous exchanges in the columns of *The West Sussex Gazette*.

On December the 26th an inquest into the death of the infant Alfred James Moore was opened at the Petworth Workhouse in North Street, and as is usual in cases of suspicious death the inquest was promptly adjourned to await the results of the police investigation.

Augustus Shout, the chief medical officer at Petworth carried out a post-mortem on the infant on the day of the adjourned inquest and removed the internal organs from the body. The following day Superintendent Kemmish was dispatched with the organs to the London laboratory of Dr. Alfred Swaine Taylor a professor at Guy's Hospital and an expert witness in poisoning trials. On December 28th Kemmish returned again to London with a portion of the stomach of the deceased infant.

The inquest was reopened on December 29th and once again further adjourned to the 5th January when the coroner Dr Blagden began questioning witnesses. Dr Augustus Shout gave his opinion that an irritant, possibly white precipitate, had been administered to the child. The jury went on to hear the evidence of a trusted inmate named John Remnant who was employed as a porter and messenger at the workhouse. Remnant claimed that he had been asked by Moore to obtain a 'cipity' powder in order 'to do her head with it'. Just what exactly the accused mean by 'to do her head with it' remains unclear, though one could imagine that it was perhaps a deterrent to lice or some other infestation common in the workhouse. Evidently Remnant obtained through another person a small quantity of precipitate from a lad named Whitcomb who was apprenticed to Mr Morgan the chemist [Francis Gaudrion Morgan had a shop in Church Street which stood along with other properties in what is now part of the churchyard]. It was not made clear whether the substance had been obtained by legitimate means, but Remnant was paid one penny by Moore for his trouble.

A nurse by the name of Mary Holden was called to give evidence. She claimed that the child had cried out from the pain of large swellings on its stomach, these swellings were again noticed by the witness when she measured the child for its coffin, the nurse also claimed that she had previously given the child gin and water in an attempt to alleviate its suffering.

Another witness Eliza Eames claimed that Moore had confessed to having attempted to murder the child at the Guildford Union Workhouse, and since being at Petworth Eames had prevented the accused from smothering the child with a shawl and bed-clothes.

Following further evidence from witnesses the coroner and the jury removed to the workhouse to take the evidence of John Smith who was sick in bed and who agreed that he was the person who had obtained the fatal powder from Whitcomb.

The inquest was adjourned until the following Monday the 9th of January. The resumed sitting was held in the Market Room at the Swan Inn, as it was expected that there would be a large attendance, it being known that Professor Taylor would be giving evidence. William Morris a local surgeon gave evidence at the resumed sitting that he had assisted Mr Shout at

the post-mortem examination carried out on December 26, and he confirmed that in his opinion the child could not have died from natural causes. Professor Taylor was called to the stand where he gave an expert and dispassionate description of the condition and contents of the infant's internal organs, and he confirmed that he had discovered a quantity of white precipitate containing traces of mercury in the stomach and other organs of the deceased.

Following the summing up the West Sussex Coroner Mr Blagden advised the jury of its duties, stressing that if they had the slightest doubts concerning the evidence which they had heard, then they must return a verdict which reflected those doubts. The jury then retired to an ante-room to consider their verdict. After an alarmingly short retirement of just a quarter of an hour the jury returned to the hushed court room where they announced that a verdict of wilful murder had been reached. It seems unlikely that the Coroner would have had the authority to commit the accused for trial and so it may be supposed that following the inquest Harriet would have appeared before a magistrate who would have carried out the formalities of committal to the Assizes.

No formal record exists concerning the Coroner's opinions of the case, however it may be supposed that Blagden was not entirely satisfied with the regime which existed at the workhouse, for shortly after the committal of Harriet Moore to the Assizes Blagden sent a letter to the Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Petworth Union with which he enclosed a copy of the depositions taken before him at the inquest. In the letter Blagden suggests that an enquiry into the conduct of the workhouse officers and the mode of keeping their books should be initiated as soon as possible. On January 17th the Board of Guardians held their fortnightly meeting at Wisborough Green workhouse where, on hearing the contents of the letter from Mr Blagden they agreed to form a committee of enquiry to investigate the Coroner's concerns. Only four days later on the 21st January the investigating committee met at Petworth Workhouse where they announced that the investigation was complete and that '*The committee having enquired minutely into the subject to which their attention has been called by the letter of Mr Blagden mentioned in the minutes of the last meeting of the Board are unanimously of the opinion that no imputation of negligence is justly attached to Mr Shout [the Medical Officer], who brought the suspicious circumstances of the case under the notice of the coroner.*' The report goes on to suggest that the only failing may have been on the parts of the Governor and Matron who perhaps could have informed the Medical Officer of the dangerous illness of the child earlier.

The verdict of the Coroner's court instigated a heated debate on the morality and benefits of capital punishment. The columns of *The West Sussex Gazette* offered a platform to the opposing sides who were adamant that theirs was the just cause. For those against capital punishment Mr Arthur Daintrey of Petworth was the sole contributor, he reasoned that if the purpose of any punishment is to reform a prisoner, how could this be possible during the brief period between the sentencing and subsequent execution of the offender? He goes on to argue that the threat of capital punishment can hardly be a deterrent to the committed criminal as the case has been proven that most of those convicted of capital crimes would rather choose the hangman's noose than face the prospect of perpetual imprisonment. This initial letter by Daintrey continues with a lengthy diatribe on the sanctity of life and the

denouncement of a system that promotes collective and judicial murder whilst bringing to bear the full terror of that same system onto individuals who act outside of the law. Daintrey seems a surprising exponent of such a liberal view towards capital punishment, we might suppose that being a member of a long established, influential and highly respected Petworth family and indeed by profession an attorney and solicitor he would have been more supportive of the traditional view of an eye for an eye. However, Daintrey was not alone in supporting this apparent liberalism which was more likely influenced by religious ideals rather than any sense of a social conscience. Just a decade or two earlier we find in Petworth another unlikely opponent of the death penalty in the person of John Mance, governor of the Petworth House or Correction. Mance was certainly no shrinking violet, and could not be described in any way as a liberal reformer when performing his duties, he proudly boasted a reputation for presiding over a strict and austere regime at the prison, where solitary confinement, subsistence rations, and hard labour were considered essential to concentrate the mind, and reform the character and soul of the convicted offender. Mance firmly believed in the need for all sinners to repent, and like Daintrey he considered that opportunity to be lost if the prisoner were to pay the ultimate price for his crime.

In response to a further letter from Daintrey an anonymous writer who simply signs himself 'Brevis' aimed to strike a mortal blow by directing his attack at the integrity of Daintrey himself -

Sir, I do not intend to enter into the controversy respecting the right or wrong of capital punishment. I merely wish to point out the inconsistency of Mr Daintrey's writing against the punishment of the crime of murder, at a time when he is engaged by the Board of Guardians (for whom he is clerk) to get up the prosecution of Harriet Moore for child murder. Petworth, 1860 Brevis.

Daintrey was forced to reply to this personal attack, and in his defence he claims that at the time of his initial letter he had not been instructed to pursue the prosecution of Harriet Moore. Fortunately we can corroborate Daintrey's assertion of innocence by reference to the minute book of the Board of Guardians of the Petworth Union, where it is evident that the prosecution of Harriet Moore was no foregone conclusion, an appeal by the Guardians to the Secretary of State to institute a government prosecution proved fruitless, and even a further appeal to Henry Wyndham (later the 2nd Baron Leconfield) their Member of Parliament brought no success so that finally the Board decided to '*conduct the prosecution at the expense of the Union*'. It remains unclear why the state chose not to proceed with the prosecution of Harriet Moore, the evidence submitted at the inquest would seem at a distance of one hundred and forty years to be quite conclusive; one may only suppose that either the Board of Guardians failed to submit a valid case for prosecution, or that the government considered the Guardians to be capable, both in terms of financial resources and expertise of conducting their own prosecution.

The flurry of letters slowly abated and finally ceased with the publication of yet another anonymous epistle from a correspondent who signed himself 'An Eye-Witness'. He directed his displeasure at the *West Sussex Gazette* reporter who, during the inquest noted the apparent lack of emotion shown by Moore following the verdict of wilful murder. 'Eye-Witness' then

turns his attention to the reliability of certain witnesses at the inquest - '*It was very apparent the female witnesses, one excepted, were her enemies, and the thought of a journey to Lewis (sic), with several holidays from the Union, caused a satisfied expression to rest on their countenances*'.

The West Sussex Gazette, like all newspapers, reserved the right to the final word on the matter, and following a stirring defence of the female witnesses, their correspondent adds the intriguing revelation that Harriet Moore is '*the illegitimate daughter of a tradesman of this town, but her conduct being such that he would have nothing to do with defending her*'.

At last we have a tiny glimpse into the background of Harriet Moore, we are able to hazard a guess at who her father was, a certain licensee of a Petworth public house would certainly fit the bill, however after a century and a half of anonymity would it be fair to speculate on his identity now? - I think not. No sooner is the door slightly opened than it is once again shut and the correspondent seems to lose interest in the case. The final report comes from the Sussex Spring Assizes held at Lewes on Tuesday the 20th March 1860, where following a short trial, lasting only two and a half hours, Harriet is found guilty of the wilful murder of Alfred James Moore and sentenced to death.

On April 19th 1860, the capital sentence is commuted to penal servitude for life, and in July of that same year Harriet is removed from Petworth House of Correction to continue her sentence at the Government Prison at Millbank, London.

In looking back over the previous four months it is apparent that little attempt if any was made to understand why Harriet Moore should murder her child, we understand from newspaper reports that she had at some time worked as a prostitute, it was also apparent that recently she had spent a considerable time in workhouses, it is known that her father lived at Petworth, but that Harriet was probably brought up elsewhere as she does not appear in the 1851 census as residing in the town. There are several unanswered questions which would help fill in the missing pieces of this sorry tale, no mention is made in any of the documents of relatives other than her father, who clearly wished to remain anonymous. What became of Harriet Moore, did she die in prison? Perhaps we shall never know, though I cannot help but suspect that this is not the last we shall hear of her. Perhaps the most unsettling aspect of the whole tragedy must be that only a century and a half ago we had a judicial system in place which allowed a young girl of only 20 years of age to stand totally undefended in a courtroom on a charge which carried the death sentence.

Sources:

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For further references to John Mance see - PSM 90.

Miles Costello

"Don't Lean on the Bench!"

I went to work in the gardens at Burton Park in 1937. Since leaving school at Wisborough Green I'd worked at a local house, The Elms, with just myself and a senior gardener. I had a home background in gardening for my father, who was an upholsterer by trade, had for a long time combined this with a certain amount of commercial gardening, even when we lived at Kirdford. Then when we moved to the Kirdford Road in Wisborough Green, he built a larger greenhouse, did more gardening, but still continued with his upholstery, using a shed on the premises. At The Elms I had to turn my hand to anything that needed doing; with just the two of us there would be none of the specialisation of the larger establishments. Most days I milked the cows that provided milk for the house.

Why did I leave? Well, that was the way of things in those days. You needed to "improve" yourself, gain more experience in a larger context. An advertisement appeared in the *West Sussex Gazette*: it was for an "improver" in the glasshouses at Burton Park. "Improver" is a word you don't hear now, but it was in regular use sixty years ago. It denoted the opportunity to pick up experience before moving on, in theory, to ever more responsible positions.



The church at Burton Park c1938.

I was interviewed by Mr Sayers, the head gardener, and taken on to the staff. There were thirteen gardeners and I was the most junior of all, except for the garden boy himself. There were seven greenhouses at Burton Park but my immediate concern was just two of them - under supervision of course! One greenhouse was basically for peaches, the other for mixed shrubs and flowers for use in the big house, effectively a kind of conservatory. Burton Park also grew their own grapes but this wasn't my responsibility. There was always something to be done in the peach house, even if the work was basically seasonal. Shoots had to be thinned and tied, the trees had to be sprayed, and the floors kept dampened so that the warm pipes underneath caused the moisture to rise like a mist. Windows had to be opened and shut. The peach house was shaded with a pale green substance which would, after a time wear off and need to be redone. The man I worked with was the "inside" foreman. As in other such large establishments, there was a clear distinction between "inside" and "outside" gardeners. As "inside" men we had nothing to do

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W. Gibson's manual on dieting horses. The frontispiece.
See "Half a league - Better than none".



Frank Lacaita. [Courtesy of Balliol College, Oxford.]
See "Half a league - Better than none".

with what went on "outside" and the "outside" men were not expected to deal with crops under glass.

As in other large establishments too the young unmarried gardeners lived in a bothy, in this case attached to the head gardener's house. We started work at seven o'clock and, of course, simply walked into work. A lady came in and cooked breakfast and we'd come back for this at eight o'clock. We probably had half-an-hour, I can't certainly remember. She cleaned up generally and prepared the dinner for us. We wouldn't see her again during the day. After dinner we were on our own. The bothy had a communal kitchen and dining room and separate bedrooms.



The Bothy at Burton Park c1938.

For the time, I would imagine, we fared pretty well. There were three of us, myself, Bill Grieve, a Scotsman who worked on the lawns and trees of the Pleasure Gardens, and Leslie Sparrow, the "inside" foreman, who worked with me. Leslie was in overall charge of the bothy and it was up to him to supply the food. We paid him about five shillings a week for this. We received £1 a week to include our accommodation, out of which of course we found the five shillings toward the food. At weekends we looked after ourselves. Normally one or two of us would be away at the weekend, but someone had to be on duty and this was, by custom, one of the bothy men: the other gardeners, who lived locally, had the weekend free. Remember that we all worked until half-past one on Saturdays. Basically weekend duty involved looking after the boilers and keeping an eye on the greenhouses. Yes, it was something of a responsibility, but with my home background, I was no stranger to boilers and took it all in my stride. Another weekend duty, although a very intermittent one, was to light a fire in the church if there was to be a service. This didn't happen all that often. There was a little open fireplace and I'd have to wait until I was sure the fire had really got going. Even when it was blazing away, it was still far from warm in the little church!

Major Courtauld had died before I came and it was a relatively quiet time at Burton Park. Mrs Courtauld and Jeanne were living there in those years just before the war. My contact with the big house was simply that of occasionally bringing plants over to the big house for decoration. Sometimes, not very often, I'd have to bring shrubs or flowers up from the greenhouse, accompanying the head gardener. I remember coming across the great hall and wondering what would happen if I dropped one of those great containers in those hallowed surroundings. Otherwise, as a very junior gardener, I never went near the front of the house.

There were quite a number of servants but we gardeners never really saw them; I didn't even have a lot to do with the other gardeners. As I have said, "inside" and "outside" were effectively separate departments subject only to the overall control of the head gardener.



Deer - a snapshot taken from the Bothy c1938.

What did we do evenings in the bothy? Well, there wasn't really a lot to do. The radio of course, sometimes we'd cycle into Petworth, go to the Regal perhaps. The Collins family in Station Road were very kind to me, Ron Collins' father being a bus driver. I'd often look in there for a cup of tea. John Dean, the garden boy at Burton Park, cycled in to work from Petworth, and he too, I think, lived in Station Road. Bicycles were very important in those days

and even such an elevated figure as the head gardener had only a bicycle as transport.

Along the back of the greenhouses was a long line of potting sheds. Here Mr Sayers, Leslie Sparrow and myself would pot up things like chrysanthemums, John Dean bringing up more soil or more plants as they were needed. I remember Mr Sayers looking along the bench, "Don't lean on the bench. Stand up straight". Head gardeners were men in authority but Mr Sayers was always extremely fair. There was some arrangement that surplus produce went to London on a small lorry apparently owned by the estate.

Other people in the gardens? In truth I didn't see a lot of the other men. There was no communal hut or anything like that. The Trusslers, father and son, came from Earham and cycled in. I often used to think of them biking home up Duncton Hill in all weathers. There were two girls working in the garden but we hardly saw them at all, and a Mr Knight. Mr Sayers, the head gardener, had been at Burton Park a fair while, I gathered.

One thing I remember. I changed my weekend with the indoor foreman in early November, then, rather later, found that this put me on duty at Christmas! In fact I wasn't too put out: it simply meant I wasn't at home on Christmas Day. If I was off duty at the weekend I'd bike home Saturday afternoon. If I was on duty at the weekend, I'd bike home on Friday night and if I left home at 5.30 in the morning I'd be back in time for work. Duncton itself I hardly ever saw as I'd go out of the lodge on the Burton Road and home via Heath End and Petworth.

I was at Burton about eighteen months, quite a short time really. It was 1938 and my brother Percy, who was at home, had an interest in another nursery and wanted me to come

home and help out. The situation generally was unsettling. It was a sign of the times that we were all issued with gas masks at Duncton Village Hall. I suppose this short period remains vivid in my mind because it was the first time I'd been away from home. Strangely enough I met Bill Grieve, who had been in the bothy with me, at R.A.F. Halton during the war. I walked into the Dining Room and there he was sitting there. I only saw him once more; he had just arrived and I was on the point of being posted on.

Ron Clark was talking to the Editor.

"The World and His Wife are Sure to be There". Lady Leconfield's Grand Fête and Gift Sale. 5th August 1918

For a significant proportion of Petworth public events over the years it is possible to provide some kind of photographic illustration. Walter Kevis (fl.1878-1908) or George Garland (fl.1922-1970) being on hand, to say nothing of a number of gifted amateurs, particularly in the early years of the century. Kevis was rather more selective than Garland, tending to deem only royal or national events and celebrations as worthy of his camera's attention, while Garland was more flexible, reflecting perhaps changing times, attitudes and equipment. Even given imponderables like these, it has to be said that the period between Kevis leaving Petworth in 1908 and the first Garland pictures in the early 1920s is somewhat thin in this regard. Images there certainly are, but there is no consistent source like Kevis or Garland, and what survives often takes the form of unique copies: there are no negatives. One large event from this period, for which, as far as I know, there is no pictorial record at all, is Lady Leconfield's Grand Fête and Gift Sale in Petworth Park on August 5th 1918, Bank Holiday Monday, and four years and a day after the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. The war was still continuing of course, and austerity the keynote, but the balance was beginning to swing away from the Kaiser and his allies. An armistice would be signed in November.

The most obvious reminder of the fête is an illustrated booklet running to some thirty-six pages (including a little prestigious advertising), and featuring as frontispiece the well-known de Laszlo portrait of Lady Leconfield. There are contributions in poetry and prose from a number of Sussex literati of the period including Rudyard Kipling, Hilaire Belloc, Alice Meynell, E.V. Lucas and Sir Sidney Colvin. Some of these contributors of course lived in the immediate area. Petworth was something of a centre for literary folk at this period when the Leconfield Estate had a select list of houses to rent and people of a certain status tended to rent rather than buy. A little surprisingly, there is no piece from A.E.W. Mason - perhaps the novelist's art was less adaptable to the genre of short festive contribution. Entitled "A Petworth Posie" the booklet sold at a florin a copy (tenpence), but of course a florin was a fair amount then.

A PETWORTH · POSIE ·

Arranged by
LADY LECONFIELD
for the Petworth Park Fete, 5th
August, 1918, in aid of the Sussex
County Prisoners of War Fund

PRICE ONE FLORIN NET

A Petworth Posie - front Cover.

Copies can sometimes be found today but are relatively expensive. They certainly justify the overworked phrase "collectors' item". The cover is reproduced in this Magazine.

From early in the conflict Lady Leconfield had taken a keen interest in the welfare of prisoners of war and she had the means and the influence to make some impact. An early venture in this field was her appeal for funds for Russian prisoners in Northern Germany. By 1915 there were some 100,000 subsisting in desperate conditions and receiving no fresh food from home to supplement the meagre fare that was available for them. "As there are happily at present very few men from the Sussex battalions in the hands of the Germans, we hope that there may be some in our country who will be ready to extend help to our gallant Russian allies." A letter appealing for funds and signed by Lady Leconfield and Mrs Ridgeway, wife of the Bishop of Chichester, was prominently featured in the national press. In fact, of course, as the war continued, the numbers of Sussex men detained in Germany and elsewhere, began to grow, while, much later, the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 would make attitudes toward Russia somewhat problematic.

Petworth's war effort, on the home front, was initially channelled very much toward the billeting of two battalions in the town, one from the Rifle Brigade, the other from the Kings Royal Rifle Corps. In February 1915 St. Mary's Parish Magazine notes, "Everyone is much occupied with the additional household duties laid upon us by the big family of soldiers we are privileged to take care of ..." 'Privilege' it may or may not have been but in March 1915 the Parish Council in discussing any further billeting of troops asked the relevant authority not to send two battalions again. There had been considerable overcrowding.

Even given the demands made by billeting, St. Mary's Magazine for November 1915 recalls that, at the very beginning of the war in 1914, a committee of ladies had met at the Rectory to arrange "for buying materials and setting out garments to be made at home by a large number of workers who preferred to help in this way rather than by coming to working parties". The committee members would fetch ready-made garments and bring them every month to the Rectory for dispatch. A second committee was soon formed to operate alternate months. The Magazine, having drawn attention to the activities of the Rectory ladies, goes on to announce that a "War Hospital Supply sub-depot" is to be set up in the audit room at Petworth House, dependent for its materials on public subscription, with eight separate departments and some eighty members. The superintendent would be Miss Gray. The HSD (as it would be known) would work side by side with the Rectory ladies. The former would provide no garments, the latter garments only. Behind the studied clarification of roles we may perhaps pick up either some misgivings from the Rectory ladies at the sudden introduction of such a prestigious newcomer, or, possibly, a desire on the part of the Rector, Mr Penrose, to tackle a potential problem before it had actually arisen. The HSD would, as its name proclaimed, concentrate on hospital supplies and meet three times a week. Already, by December, the Parish Magazine could report an output of 2,711 articles, some sent to the local depot at Horsham, some to a hospital in Alexandria.

The progress of the HSD, as to a lesser extent, the Home Work committee at the Rectory, can to an extent, be traced through the occasional notice in the Magazine. On its first anniversary in 1916, Lady Leconfield invited some 300 people to Petworth House for tea,

subscribers, HSD workers, Home Workers and Girl Guides. The Rectory ladies were at this time particularly concerned with a request for mufflers and mittens. In March 1917 the HSD announces, "The heads of the Slipper Table will be grateful for gifts of any woollen or cretonne pieces suitable for making tops and old felt or linoleum for soles. They will gladly look over any old pieces sent to them and those not useful for slippers will be used for cutting up to fill cushions." Clearly the HSD was working to some purpose! In September 1917 it is reported that the preceding six months had seen the dispatch of 151 bales, 94 cases and 35 crates. Destinations were mainly casualty clearing stations in France "and we recently received a large order for a fortnightly consignment for a field ambulance." Later references suggest working at the Town Hall, probably in addition to the Audit Room. In December 1917 there is a report on the year's work - October to October. The Home Workers were still meeting regularly at the Rectory and had sent out in quantity various sleeping, night and helpless case sheets, bed jackets and pillow cases as well as refugee garments and gifts of clothing, collected by the committee and redistributed by them. The HSD in its turn had averaged forty to fifty workers per day and long practice had increased production. Division of work between the two groups was strictly adhered to; the HSD producing bandages of all kinds, splints, slings, swabs, pneumonia jackets and slippers. 52,732 articles in all, as opposed to 46,492 in the previous year.

Such is, to an extent, the context for Lady Leconfield's great fete of August 1918. The HSD needed funds to buy in raw materials and funds were needed too for the Officers' families fund and the Sussex Prisoners of War Fund, both being charities particularly supported by Lady Leconfield. Nothing, except, of course, the weather, could be left to chance. The fete would be a success. The Parish Magazine anticipates: "Lady Leconfield's Fête on August 5th promises to be a great success ... the world and his wife are sure to be there."

Some indication of the extensive preparations for the event comes from a file of material at Petworth House, clearly now incomplete, and concerned basically with items offered for the various stalls at the fete. There are some 200 forms offering items for sale and there were probably more. They do tend, of course, to be somewhat repetitive. There is also a poster for the event and entries for the Goat Show and the Sheep Dog competition. The original concept, largely adhered to in the event, was a division into seven sections, summarised here but set out in detail on the printed form - reproduced in this Magazine:

- A. Antiques Stall
- B. Needlework, Frocks and Millinery
- C. China, Pottery and Glass
- D. Town Stall 1) for dead stock and provisions
 2) for live animals of all kinds
- F. Local produce
- G. Miscellaneous

In the event, section B was subdivided and section G merged with the other stalls. Confusion was possible, particularly between A and C and sometimes it was left to Henry Whitcomb at the Leconfield Estate to decide the category. An occasional note will read, "Sent from abroad and I do not know in what section to place them", or something similar. Only

one entry for C is extant, but as there is a tally for this section, it is to be assumed that these forms have been lost or misplaced.

There are some twenty various entries in Section A and some tantalising items - often from the occupants of larger houses. Even in 1918 the sum raised here was considerable: in today's terms some of the items would no doubt be very expensive indeed. Some of them are tantalising: Charles Denman offers "An antique Chippendale chair", Mrs Simpson from Red House, "1 piece old Indian work", a relic no doubt of years in India; Colonel Simpson had been in the Indian Army. Miss Bulmer from Tillington offers, among other items, an embroidered table-cloth from Canton and a "table-centre" from South America worked in gold and leather. Mrs Nattali from Tillington an old mirror and a Bruges tea-pot, Mrs Prinsep from Byworth a "carved coconut mounted on silver done by French prisoners-of-war", Mr J.B. Watson "1 hunting-piece, Duke of Beaufort's hounds". Mr Buchanan of Lavington Park has a number of prints and oils. There are other gifts of this calibre but some, of course, are a little humbler.

Section B, as we have observed, was sub-divided, and of its nature, gives more scope for individual effort: so Mrs Penfold from Pound Street offers 12 rag dolls, 6 small garments and 24 gollywogs - political correctness was a distant view in those days. Mrs J.B. Watson has a "gardening costume" and six gardening hats. Duchess sets occur more than once, strictly "duchesse" sets of covers for a dressing table. There are a medley of aprons, pinafores, Humpty Dumpty hassocks, overalls, hemstitched towels and sideboard cloths, sometimes condensed to "needlework" or simply "something". As we have said, only one printed form is known from section C, a blue and gold jardiniere, which only fails to appear in A because it would be of china. Section D has entries 1-66 and 107-109. Presumably the intervening entries are missing or perhaps Henry Whitcomb started a second notation. Beside the inevitable chicken and rabbits and even a pigeon, the regiments of eggs and butter, in dozens and pounds, reflect not only home production but a certain sacrifice in a time of austerity. A cooked ox tongue comes from one local butcher, 2 lbs of sausages at 1/7d for another. "Pkt Quaker Oats, 1 pkt Cornflour" suggests a look in the cupboard, as does "cocoa and baked beans". A salmon is rather more exotic. 1 lb of Lipton's Tea from Mrs Earle in Lombard Street recalls the tobacconist's concession to sell tea, still continuing in the 1940s. B.S. Austen and Co. offer a 17 gallon railway milk churn with dust-proof lid and name plate attached, or 50/- if it does not reach that figure. Of its ultimate fate we know nothing, but the suggestion seems to be of some kind of auction as much as straightforward sale. John Pitfield's offer of a Ransome Lawn Mower, as also Mr A.G. Morley's gramophone and records seem to cohere a little oddly with the butter, eggs and rabbits, but who are we, at the distance of more than eighty years, to cast doubts on Henry Whitcomb's categories? Section E suggests a brisk trade in smaller animals, poultry (Rhode Island Red, Light Sussex and White Leghorn), rabbits, ducks, even ewe tegs, a store pig, and a pure-bred Spaniel dog puppy. Other animals are simply for show and not for sale. Section F again supplies opportunity for labour rather than capital, this was still a society as happy with exchange as money. The latter was neither lightly earned nor lightly expended. "Vegetables" or "baskets of vegetables" is a typical entry here. Potatoes may be a bushel, a gallon or a hundredweight. Shallots is usually spelled with an initial 'e' for some reason. There are a few flowers and individually named onions, peas, turnips, beet, cabbage and vegetable marrow.

So to the great day itself. This time the Parish Magazine fails us, as, for reasons of economy, Mr Penrose was including local news only bi-monthly and there is nothing for September 1918. Such are the quirks of history. Mr Penrose's economy soon bowed to public demand and monthly news was reinstated. There are however accounts in the *West Sussex Gazette* and the *Sussex Daily News*, the former rather the fuller. Both newspapers hint darkly at indifferent weather: but, despite this, the *Gazette* reports that, well before noon, the official opening time, there was a waiting crowd and the town approaches to the main gate were alive with visitors. The band of the Royal Horse Guards were playing in the private grounds of the House and "charming the crowd". Entrance, clearly, was not as often, via the Cricket Lodge.

The premier stalls were on the house terrace. Lady Leconfield's own stall, "A Petworth Posie" was superintended by Mr J.B. Watson and Miss Rawson. This would seem to be Section A. On the terrace too were Mrs Kenyon Mitford's frocks and millinery and Mrs Buchanan's china, glass and crockery. The Petworth town articles were housed in a large marquee, and fruit, vegetables and flowers displayed in a tent, under the guidance of Mr Pull, house gardener. A little to the south was grouped the collection of livestock, poultry, rabbits and others animals. On the north side were the shies at the Kaiser, the coconuts and skittles. "How busy, how creditably energetic and successful in enticing visitors were the stall-holders", observes the *Gazette*.

In the North Gallery, the Imperial War Museum had mounted an exhibition. The *Daily News* reports that visitors "had an opportunity of viewing the world-famed collection of paintings as well as the war relics". The *News* devotes a considerable portion of its report to these, mostly German, but one or two Turkish. A machine-gun from a Zeppelin, a double-barrelled gun from a German gunboat, a grenade-thrower, a gas alarm bell, a searchlight, and a captured enemy flag with propaganda written in broken English. Such exhibits might well have been particularly poignant for those, and there were many, who had lost friends or family in the conflict. The Imperial War Museum did not have a permanent home in 1918: its exhibits were housed in different parts of London until the Museum was officially opened at the Crystal Palace by the King in June 1920. Lady Leconfield would no doubt have been well-known to members of the Museum Committee, particularly to individuals like Lady Mond and Lady Norman who sat on the Women's Work sub-committee.

The fishing competition attracted some 39 entries and the Goat Show 18. The tea tent was spacious enough to seat 600 guests and two dozen local people took a table each with two friends to assist them. "Although the tea was rationed", reports the *Gazette*, "and sugar conspicuous by its absence, this was certainly a 'beehive' department as some 1500 people gratefully accepted what was so pleasantly placed before them." Spectators stood eight deep for the mounted gymkhana on either side of the ropes. This, says the *Gazette*, supported chiefly by the Canadian Artillery Reserve, which had been encamped in Petworth Park since Saturday afternoon, was a particularly attractive feature.

At five o'clock, Lady Edmund Talbot tried her hand at auctioning some of the livestock, to be followed by Mr Newland Tompkins, several items being bought and then re-sold. The band of the 21st Canadian Reserve Battalion provided music for dancing, which, owing to the rain, was held in the Marquee that had been used as a tea-tent. "At 9.30pm", reports the

Gazette, "this most enjoyable and successful gathering was brought to a close with the National Anthem."

The Fête clearly raised a good deal of money. It had been well-planned and successful. It would also have given everyone something of a lift at a period of great strain, local and national. A rough note of the takings may be of interest; the newspapers make no mention of these.

Section A	£151.17.9	
Section B	44. 2.3	
Frocks	27.10.0	
Section C	35. 3.6	
Section D	157. 0.2	
Section E	261.16.6	
Section F	40. 6.4	
Imperial War Museum	24.18.6	
Petworth Posies	22.18.1	(229 sold?)
Gate	158.10.2	(1590 paying on the gate?)
Fishing	2. 4.3	
Teas	48.12.6	
Kaiser Bill	9.18.3	
Coconut, skittles, etc.	21. 4.1	
Cycles	5. 7.0	
Carriages	1. 1.0	
Programmes	4. 5.9	(I have not seen one of these) 1 penny each?
Boxes	13. 8.5	
Dancing	12. 6.6	

Total are clearly provisional, a pencil note adds £26.11.8 for refreshments.

Eighty years and more on, we have the bare bones of a large occasion, not quite perhaps on the scale of the huge Bignor Park Pageant in 1912, but still a significant event. We have also a different Petworth, wartime of course, but there is much more here than a contrast between war and peace. Here is a society far more aware of social taboos than ours - the incumbents of the prestigious stalls on the terrace of Petworth House are there very much by invitation and the incumbency would be very much a social cachet - or, put another way perhaps, almost a natural right. Here is a society functioning much more as a unit than it would today, a society still inclined to look inward as much as outward, divided rigidly along social lines, but one that could take these divisions as effectively assumed and unite on that basis.

Looking back over eighty years at the forms, few of the names are unfamiliar. Petworth people tended to be Petworth people, and so remain. Mobility there certainly was, but people did tend to remain in one place more than they do now. This is a society where home production was still important, farmers and some householders produced their own milk, butter, cheese and eggs and most people grew their own potatoes; this was very much the age

Then there was the tall, hard-hatted and frock-coated ironmonger; he would walk outside his shop, always ready to tell any casual person: "The man on the far side of the street owes me a lot of money." He had few bad debts.

My thoughts went on (or back) to the chestnut-moustached chemist, in immaculate morning coat and pin-striped trousers, a buttonhole, fresh from the florist's each morning at nine; he was a type that has disappeared for ever.

He was respected by all classes. When members of the gentry paid him a visit, he would carefully place one hand in the small of his back and the other on his tummy and bow so low, one could not see him behind the counter.

HUMBUG

He had quite a lot of money when he was called, but why did these characters have to pass on? Couldn't we have kept the best, and rid ourselves of the cruelty, snobbery and humbug of that age? Or do we sit still on iron seats and let things happen, go by us, willy-nilly, and we do nothing? Couldn't we have halted just one little town 60 odd years ago?

These dreams, this reverie, these foolish thoughts, came to an abrupt end as the bus drew up to take me from my home town.

The thoughts may have been foolish, and the dreams were of the stuff all dreams are made of. But it was like a sip of good wine, or a glimpse of a masterpiece.

[This article by Arch Newman appeared originally in the *West Sussex Gazette* August 22nd 1968. As another century turns it seems extremely appropriate. Ed.]

1898	Miss Blagden	£ 1 2
Oct 17	To Geo Lamboll	
	1 load cord wood	1 0 0
Rec ^d With Thanks		
Oct 18 th 1898		
J Lamboll		

Why did Lamboll's firewood yard have to become a garage? This invoice from George Lamboll is made out to Miss Blagden in East Street. See Petworth at Turn of the Century.

