



Miles Costello  
Petworth  
Collection

*The Star*  
*The Shepherd Psalms*  
*Sherbert Fountain etc*  
*The Neighbourhood is very beautiful*

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*Magazine*

NO. 113

SEPTEMBER 2003

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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE  
LECONFIELD HALL  
PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM  
AND THE COULTERSHAW BEAM PUMP.

## 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 £9.00. Single or double one Magazine delivered. Postal £11.00 overseas £13.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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### Society Scrapbook

Mrs Pearl Godsmark

### Coultershaw Beam Pump representatives

Mr S. Boakes, Mrs J. Gilhooly, Mr A Henderson, Mr T. Martin.

For this Magazine on tape please contact Mr Thompson.

### 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

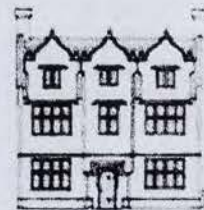
*Like all our Magazines this particular issue has a distinctive feel about it. I've tried to reflect a busy and highly successful summer of activity, as well as our usual reflection on an older Petworth. An interest in the past can be justified only by a meaningful present. Once or twice in this issue I have also, if very tentatively, ventured a glance toward a wider Sussex. No doubt Issue 114 will be quite different again.*

*With full reports on everything except the highly successful Somerset Lodge visit in early July I have no need to duplicate here. As regards Somerset Lodge we had a glorious day, a full take-up of tickets, Mr and Mrs Raymond Harris were their usual welcoming selves and the Cottage Museum benefited by over £200.*

*Not too much to report on the two "question" photographs in Issue 112. I'm afraid the Men's Bible Class largely defeated everyone. We do have a few names for the Leconfield expedition to the Brighton Metropole. In Magazine 59 Ena Lee recalled her father Ernest Streeter going on such a trip "Lord Leconfield had a coach "Old Times" and he would, on occasion, take selected tenants for an outing. I remember Dad going once to the Metropole at Brighton. A tenant? Yes, although he'd bought the Church Street property he found the going difficult in the early years and sold it to Lord Leconfield. For a time he was an Estate tenant. When things picked up again my sister Peg. suggested he approach the agent to buy it back and Leconfield sold it back to him!"*

*All in all, a good summer for the Society, entering its thirtieth year in 2004. You'll see we have an attractive winter programme for you.*

*Peter 20th July*



**SOMERSET LODGE**

**Petworth Society**

**Open Day**

**6 July 2003 2pm - 6 pm**

**Admit.....** *Mr P. Jerrome* **.....**

**Please pay £3 per person at the door**

**All proceeds to PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM**

# All this – and Africa too – the 29th Annual General Meeting

First, some extracts from the Minutes of the meeting (unconfirmed):

Peter, in the Chair, "welcomed 54 members. The Honorary Treasurer, Mr Andrew Henderson, presented the Independently Examined Financial Statements for the year ending February 28th, 2003, copies of which had been given to members. He reported that there were currently over 600 members: 363 local, 297 receiving magazines by post, of whom 19 lived overseas. Attendance at monthly meetings had fallen somewhat, resulting in a decrease in income from that source. Interest on deposit accounts had also declined in line with the national trend. Book sales, however, had risen, which had financed extra pages and photographs in the magazines. A second garage had been rented for the storage of books for the sales. A recent increase in postal charges would show up in the current year's accounts. .... In the absence of fresh nominations the Committee was re-elected. In his Chairman's Report, Peter "listed the many activities of the Society over the past year, including several new ventures such as the Jubilee Dinner and a memorable visit to Shulbrede Priory, which had been outstanding successes and both over-subscribed. It was, however, a matter of regret that, in common with all similar societies, there was a problem in failing to attract younger people. There was the need to fill the hall in order to pay for quality speakers and performers. Apart from the financial benefit, the Book Sales brought the Society to the attention of people who would not otherwise come into contact. (Peter) thanked Mr and Mrs Godsmark in particular for maintaining the Society scrapbooks and providing a photographic record of activities, which were then shown and included Petworth trade tokens, the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations with the Harris Bros' gallopers in the Square and an exhibition of memorabilia and the Garland scrapbooks in the Leconfield Hall, the Jubilee Dinner, the visits to Shulbrede Priory, the Wey and Arun Canal at Loxwood, the Bluebell Railway and Sheffield Park Gardens, walks around Slindon, Burton and West Chilton, Fair Day, the Christmas entertainment by the Time of Your Lives Music Theatre and Alison Neil's one-woman portrayal of *The Sixth Wife* – Catherine Parr."

Our own Philip Hounsham rounded off the evening with a most interesting talk, illustrated with slides, on Zimbabwe – the Victoria Falls, the scenery and wildlife and the mysterious Zimbabwe Ruins – and a rail journey down to South Africa.

Although the views of the Falls were sometimes obscured and sometimes enhanced by the ever-present rising mist, no photographs could convey the heat and the deafening noise. Besides shots of buffalo, zebra, elephant and giraffe, there was the crocodile farm, where collected eggs are hatched and the young raised, some to be released into the wild, others to provide leather for handbags and shoes. It was somewhat frustrating to be shown the massive and mysterious Zimbabwe Ruins of precise, mortarless stone construction, 900-1000 AD or perhaps later, windowless, gateless, a maze of narrow passages, all of unknown origin and purpose: fortress? palace? a holding station for the slave trade? Some similarity with

techniques used in India, but nothing else like it in Africa.

Then we were taken down by rail to South Africa, starting with the beautiful scenery on the Mozambique border and ending in the mountains around Cape Town and the stunning beaches of Durban – although Philip described that city as "the Blackpool of South Africa"! South Africa was probably visited by the Phoenicians in around 900BC but not colonised until many centuries later.

As well as answering questions, Philip (and Dilys) had staged an impressive display of maps, photographs and books, so that no one hurried away, even though it had been the AGM. And the refreshments, also provided by a Sheepdowns team, had been equally satisfying!

KCT

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## Busy Weekend

### 1) But what of Beelzebub?

A very healthy turnout for the second Society bound-treading walk. Some have sticks to ward off attacks from Tillington. Don't believe that stuff about tapping the boundary markers. In fact there are Tillingtonians present. "If you can't beat them, join them ....." Or is it all some sinister plot? They seem amiable enough. Diagonally across from the Double Lodges, then we stop in view of the Paddocks. The somewhat superannuated ditch in front of us is the continuation of Hungers Lane into the Park. The "new" Petworth to Tillington road has robbed it of all significance, all self-respect. And what about its abrupt end? It would appear that Capability Brown took out the remainder of the sunken lane when he landscaped the Park. All in all it seems an appropriate place for Keith to offer a couple of apposite, but quite different, prayers:

"Bless the night and bless the day.

From Somerset and all the way.

To the meadows of Cathay."

Are there meadows in Cathay? Perhaps the poet didn't know either.

Actually crops in the Park weren't much of an anachronism. Harry Tree reminiscing in the 1930s could recall corn being grown inside the Tillington Road wall and the heads blowing in the wind. On towards Snow Hill, up the central lane. It's difficult now to imagine the house that once stood here. It will have been gone a good thirty years. I suppose that, left, it would have become a target for vandals. I remember straggling, unpruned buddleias in a neglected garden and the paraphernalia of deer farming, stretched hides and antlers.

We descend from the eminence of Snow Hill and make across the valley. The Monument is high away to the left. Ahead of us the wall of the Northchapel Road and the constant roar of traffic. The Beelzebub oak marks the parish boundary. Clearly an old tradition, but how old? Clearly, too, there has been a succession of Beelzebub oaks. A

metal plaque in the wall commemorates. But what of Beelzebub? The Lord of Spirits guarding the far-flung frontier of the parish? Or a racehorse? It was a common enough name for a racehorse. And then again, Rogation and bound-treading are certainly intimately connected, but not necessarily the same. Pre-reformation Rogationtide involved the large parish cross, three days of activity, the ringing of handbells and the banishing of evil spirits into foreign parts (like Tillington). And a dragon standard. On the last of the three days he would be tailless, symbol of parish victory over the powers of evil ....

Past the "Polish Lake", to the Upper Lake and then diagonally back to the Double Lodges. Egdean next year Miles announces in authoritative terms. Thanks very much to Steve and Miles.

In response to a number of requests we append the text of Keith's Rogation day prayer.

*An Old English Rhyme*

God bless the field and bless the furrow,  
Stream and branch and rabbit burrow,  
Hill and stone and flower and tree,  
From Bristol town to Wetherby –  
Bless the sun and bless the sleet,  
Bless the lane and bless the street,  
Bless the night and bless the day  
From Somerset and all the way  
To the meadows of Cathay;  
Bless the minnow, bless the whale,  
Bless the rainbow and the hail,  
Bless the nest and bless the leaf,  
Bless the righteous and the thief,  
Bless the wing and the fin,  
Bless the air I travel in,  
Bless the mill and bless the mouse,  
Bless the miller's bricken house,  
Bless the earth and bless the sea,  
God bless you and God bless me.

Read at the second Rogation Day walk, Petworth Park, May 25th, 2003.

2) **Hidden Gardens**

Back from the walk and up a sunny Sunday High Street to World's End, a hive of very varied activity. A flourishing raffle with some significant trade contributions. A rash of stalls. Meanwhile Bill Wareham is entertaining a succession of appreciative audiences at the Police Station. Teas are going well at Ricketts Cottage. Perhaps we've taken High Street's traditional hint of aloofness and turned it to our advantage. People like to penetrate the secrets Petworth chooses to withhold.

*Monday Bank Holiday*

A table on High Street. Sitting behind the fluttering scarlet and white scaffolding safety ribbons. The table guards the approach from Middle Street. Necessary, although in fact, most

people come up High Street from Golden Square, a steady stream, clutching their admission maps. One lady (from Camberley I think) is sufficiently carried away to come over by taxi. She'd visited Petworth on the Sunday and been too late for the Hidden Gardens, but she was determined to return. Her husband, lacking her resolution, was only prepared to come and pick her up. She's last seen making for the Police Station where today it's Miles rather than Bill in charge. Jacqueline replaces me in High Street and I go off to see what's going on at the Police Station.

The sunken garden is at once sobering and thought-provoking. A squat wooden peg driven into the centre of the plot is a symbol of far-reaching and irrevocable change. The wood looks obscenely new. A hundred years ago this was the garden of Mr. Pitfield, the Market Square solicitor. Who would have been the last person to use it as a private residence? Dr. Menell perhaps in the early 1950s. A stout metal rose arbour might go back to Pitfield himself. Steps lead down into the garden. Trees now block out the southward view, while the inevitable overgrown buddleia hides the middle distance. A feeling of sadness and of passing time. People had once come from all over Sussex to see Mr. Pitfield's roses. Miles has a copy of a letter about failing calceolarias, the nurseryman apologises to Mr. Pitfield. It's been such a hot summer and calceolarias do best in damp cool summers.

A look up at World's End, then Ricketts Cottage. No, I never got to see the gardens. Over £1,400 for the Cottage Museum endowment fund. I think that's called "a result."

P.

Hidden Gardens, of course, was organised by the Committee of the Cottage Museum.

## A Society Trio

1) **Visit to Shimmings and Moor June 15<sup>th</sup>**

A good turnout at the car park is swelled by a surprising number in a sunlit Bartons Lane. Clearly the prospect of a guided tour of the two farms is attractive. Nothing is too much trouble for Richard, ably assisted by Flo and Mark. So much happens, and there's so much to be seen in almost four hours that impressions can only be fleeting. Richard starts halfway up the slope with the pros and (considerable) cons of beef production. Ear-tabs, price falls, BSE, the lot. In fact the beef cattle in the field belong to someone else. Equestrian use is an important element in farming Shimmings, the course on the higher slopes, polo ponies in winter. We move on up the slope towards Pest House Cottages. Here's something quite different: fish farming, the raising of coarse fish to restock faraway ponds, and the utilisation of a previously largely ignored marsh area. Coarse fish as opposed to trout require much less oxygen. Carp can live up to sixty years, they can also attain a great size. Few actually do. "Ash" appears and explains. He shows how to distinguish "ghost" carp from others. The life of a fish is precarious; many leaving here will fall victim to cormorants travelling inland in search of food, to say nothing of the heron. Carp are a staple diet in Eastern Europe, but don't greatly appeal to palates further west.

Time to mount a trailer with bales of straw as seats. Perhaps the last time we did this was at Costrong several years ago now. Down the track towards Flathurst and across the A272, then up the track to Moor. A welcome drink in the blazing heat. Richard explains the huge capital input needed for modern farming and shows examples of different commercial crops.

Reinstated ponds at Moor, now used for amenity. Then on to the trailer again, swaying away toward Elkham, echoes of Alf Duncton. Oxeye in full white flower in clumps along the way. Redundant farm-buildings gone over to industrial use. Finally the return journey, back over the 272, to end up where we began. It's well past six o'clock as we make our way up the slope. A real chance to see "Petworth's lungs" as they really are, not as we half-imagine them.

P.

### 2) **Midsummer Night's Eve Dinner June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

A mellow evening, another sell-out but without the enormous over-subscription of last year. In some ways, perhaps, that's better. A sunlit, almost quiet Park Road, entrance by Church Lodge. This time there isn't a conducted tour, just freedom to look round and stewards available to answer questions. Not everyone comes at 6.15. Some simply arrive for the reception at 7.00. Keith is at Church Lodge welcoming guests. Through the long passage and across. The west front is bathed in sunshine, there is the classic view across to the lake. Harriet's playing the harp. The accepted wisdom is that you don't play against a background of people talking, but the acoustics are good and the harp mingles with, rather than confronts, the many voices. I'm sure the harp contributes considerably. There's no hurry to make our way to the Audit Room - I suppose we should say Restaurant.

All set up - for a capacity of 88. People have come from long distances, people have come from just round the corner. A chance for old friends to meet, unexpectedly, after years. Older residents, newer residents, Petworth expatriates, the Petworth Society ideal. So many looking forward to the same again next year. Lorna and her staff are on top form: venison, salmon-en-croute and the rest, piping hot plates, red cabbage, old-fashioned spiced swede. Does everyone remember what they've ordered? Anyway it works out all right. Andy and Annette's quiz is becoming something of an institution and the chairman's table wins again - this time in a tie-break. The old boy makes a speech - of sorts - mercifully it's fairly short. Some claim not to have heard it. Those that did congratulate them on their good fortune.

All in all an occasion to savour.

P.

### 3) **Peter's Rotherbridge Walk (replacing Jeremy's Upperton Walk, Jeremy having a prior engagement)**

Cars turning off up Kilsham Lane, just past Badgers, then left through Kilsham farmyard and on to the railway track. Gates to be opened and closed. Along the railway track and into the fishermen's sacred territory. Infidels you might say. In fact the fishermen almost appear an endangered species today. Down wooden steps to stand briefly on "Taylor's" wooden bridge, then back again along Andrew's neatly strimmed path. This is very much Andrew's territory and he's effectively leading the walk. Himalayan balsam are already high but not yet in their late summer ascendancy. Just a hint perhaps of that aggressive scent.

The cricket bat willows to the right won't be very good, Andrew says, grey squirrels nipped out the tops of the young trees.

Along the river bank towards Perryfields, effectively the hub of this reticent empire. Across the bridge. The familiar foundations of the old farm cottages, the ivy on the big barn we'd seen chopped off a foot or so above the ground is dead now, leaves dried a pallid brown. The old Victorian iron bridge is still in the field. There were houses once behind the barns. Before the canal was put through some two hundred years ago, the river took almost a right angle turn here, you can still see where it ran. The approach was either from Rotherbridge or from Willetts Lane, once called Upper Mead Lane. There was a lime kiln at Rotherbridge, chalk brought up the river in barges for burning. Andrew points to the vivid red tiles on a barn. Up to this year it had been covered in ivy.

The old stable where the horses once were, re-roofed in the 1930s, says Andrew. It was part of Mr. Whitney's Rotherbridge farm then. Owl pellets on the floor, "Majestic" chalked on the stall probably reflects later usage for potatoes. The adze hewn bars of the feeding racks, still as solid as when they were put in. One stall seems isolated from the rest by high wooden walls. Perhaps for a problem horse. Tallies on the wall in pencil - perhaps something to do with the potatoes. A cobbled floor. This is a solid place - built originally with care.

Back toward Ladymead. A field of rye on the right. The high upright stems and the characteristic bluish tinge. South Dean Farm, almost at shouting distance. Aspen rustling by the lock. Andrew explains the plans for partial restoration. Forgotten skills in stone and lead. As with the Shimmings visit, almost too much to take in. Another very successful and informative trip, thank you Andrew.

P.

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## Book Sale June 14<sup>th</sup>

A book sale on a hot day, surely a recipe for disaster? Well, it's certainly a recipe for hard work on the afternoon before, even if John hits on the idea of bringing the platform boxes straight in through an open window. In fact the weather doesn't make any obvious difference, except that visitors possibly outnumber locals in the ten o'clock melee. You don't need too many old-type hardback novels in the 25p: people are looking for the "snazzy" paperback. The 25p, once set out, receive a fair bit of Friday afternoon attention. They look pretty good now. That said, you can still permutate Kipling and Cookson, Galsworthy and Wilbur Smith. Even the occasional obscure Arnold Bennett. Someone said recently that he was at Amberley for a while.

The dealers seize their ten o'clock prey and disperse, we negotiate the first manic quarter of an hour. Yes it's been as crowded as ever. A traveller's guide to the Yemen, Strindbergh's plays in two hard-back volumes, Lytton Strachey on the Victorians. A mixture of good and bad surviving precariously from a fête. Some of it will have to be "liquidated". There's no real lull as there was in the early days, just a quieter pulse at lunchtime.

# AII STAR CONCERT

Sunday 12 th August at 2100 Hours

at

**Zum Kyffhäuser • Harburgerstr.**

The following Stage and Screen Stars who are making a Film here for Ealing Studios have invited the B. L. A. of Stade to an impromptu show.

Michael Redgrave

Mervyn Johns

Basil Radford

Jimmy Hanley

Guy Middleton

Karel Stepanek

Frederick Schiller

Ralph Michael

Jack Lambert

Frederick Richter

Derek Bond

Sam Kidd

Steve Smith

Billy Russell

and

Jack Warner

**Admission free**

**Guests may be invited**

**Car Park arranged**

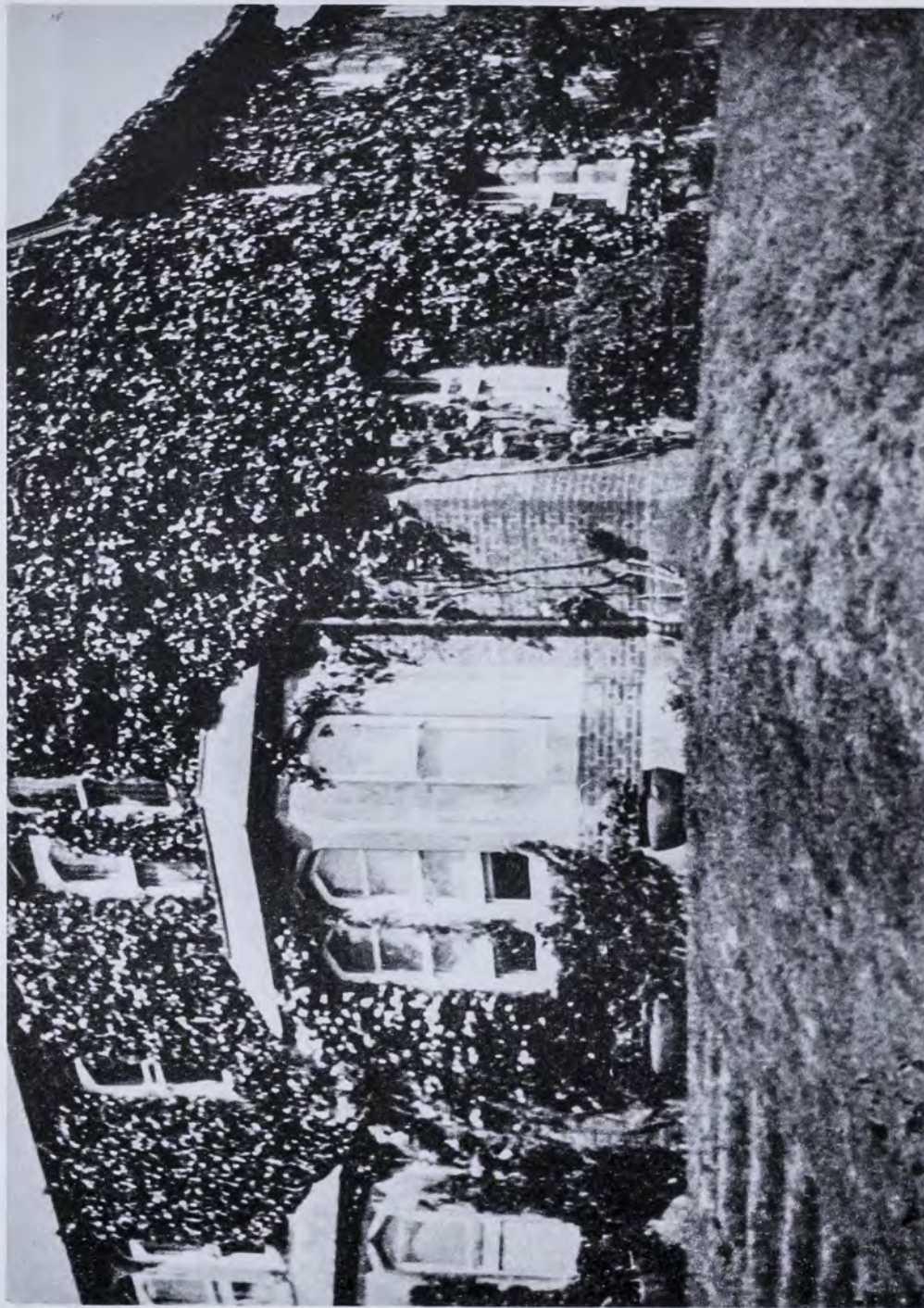
**Smoking allowed**

F. Habersath, Stade

*Flotsam from the Book Sale. Nothing to do with Petworth – but it must have been quite a concert. Any ideas as to what film?*



*Arch. Knight's Lombard Street. A photograph taken by Leslie Whitcomb in 1933. See "In search of the Master Baker."*



*Bellevue/Westways about 1920. See "The neighbourhood is very beautiful" also Hidden Gardens.*

The 10.15 piles behind the counter are gone now, but to make financial sense you simply have to keep things moving, you've only six hours at the most.

Afternoon. No one realises (for the moment) that I'm sitting in the kitchen looking out on the summer Square. Five minutes of this and on my return to the maelstrom I'll be greeted as some Petworthian Rip van Winkle. Five minutes and people have forgotten who I am. Cars manoeuvring outside, a space appears and as soon disappears. Cars pouring down New Street. A child's voice through the closed hatch. "Can we have these puzzles?" The Art section has been steady this time: the £1 table has effectively no survivors. There were far more 50p than usual this time and they're still here in some strength. One or two customers seem a little querulous with their 25p's. Perhaps we spoil them, perhaps it's just my imagination.

P.

## Visit to Ditchling

It's a full coach and the hottest day of the year so far. In fact the temperature will be exceeded the next day and the following. Coolham, Cowfold, Hurstpierpoint. The telephone numbers on shop facades begin to carry the 01273 Brighton telephone code. Ditchling – I've never been here before. A village pond, a large open space and the church before us. The party is divided into four groups. "Shorter" or "longer" walks are a device to stagger the tea arrangements. The coach has 58 and four have come separately. The open space was a farmyard until the 1960s, then bought by the village to pre-empt development. We pass the flint fundaments of a still-remembered barn. Up steps to the church. It's very hot indeed. An organ playing inside. The manor belonged originally to Alfred the Great. The church, like so many others, has suffered a Victorian restoration: part however is twelfth century, whilst the high English arches reflect the fourteenth. Just one effigy. Ditchling, our guide tells us, was never a grand place, always under the sway of non-resident landlords. Links with the Warenne family and the Cluniac monks from Lewes just a few miles up the road. Ditchling, of course, was home of the artists, from the time of Eric Gill's Edwardian flight from Hammersmith. A sundial commemorates the coronation of King George V in 1911. The distinctive Gill lettering, quirks like the swirl on the figure 7 and the running on of names for artistic effect. Not everyone's choice for lettering a war memorial.

Wings Place opposite, like the church listed Grade 1. An accumulation of historic styles. Tradition links it with Anne of Cleves. Certainly she owned the manor at one time, but did she actually live here? And at Wings? or is her alleged tenure the whim of some last century estate agent? Wings? The house was built on land belonging to the Widow Wing. There's a distinctive flight of steps at the side put in for a Victorian village library. Borrowers did not then trudge through the house itself. A few weeds struggling to survive on the baking steps testify to a later public library age. Past the White Horse, a smell of beer, Sunday afternoon pub voices. A house down the slop on the right was bought by Sir Frank Brangwyn, painter, muralist and etcher. A story of huge murals transported by horse and cart to the





House of Lords then as laboriously returned. They are now, for some reason, at Swansea. Ditchling flower show the oldest in the country, a passion for gooseberries, a village hall on the site of a burned out private school. An elaborately ornamented stench pipe. The peace of the Unitarian Chapel, built originally as Strict Baptist. There has been a proliferation of non-conforming causes in Ditchling, a testimony perhaps to the absence of a single great house. Nowadays the Quakers meet, curiously enough, in a former slaughter house. At one time, our guide tells us, they met in the front row of the cinema at Burgess Hill. The cinema manager was himself a Friend. Donald Sinden the actor was brought up in the village, his father being the local chemist. Smugglers and tunnels, Ditchling and Bolney.

And so through the churchyard, the smell of grass roasting in the sun. Amy Sawyer's grave, an artist of note, who, when she injured her hand, took to writing plays in the Sussex dialect. Tea at the Museum, a quintessential cottage garden at the back, scarlet Maltese Cross and godetia at the front of the border, and the Museum itself is a tribute to the Ditching artists. I've hardly started – the cake's really good, almost justifies a full article rather than a report. Yes, Miles, I think you could say we all enjoyed it. Thank you very much for arranging it!

P.

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## Copsford, an excursion of the mind or an exercise in the fortuitous?

Any society like ours needs to be determinedly insular; local history doesn't usually travel well and to spread too thinly, too widely is to court disaster - or at least to fall between stools. This magazine is unashamedly insular: it must be. However, its own spiritual fortress secure, it should look occasionally to a wider world - if only a Sussex one. George Garland, the Society's spiritual mentor, was adept at holding the two opposites together but in tension. A Petworth patriot he still had a great interest in Sussex books and Sussex lore. He had however, no book by Walter J.C. Murray, never mentioned him as a Sussex writer, and, for all I know, had never heard of him.

My acquaintance with Murray is quite fortuitous. Tidying up the 25p non-fiction after a book sale last year, I came upon his *Copsford*, complete with dust cover. For some reason the book caught my eye - there were hundreds of others and for some reason I began to read. I'd found a Sussex classic (see magazine 110, page 21). I asked then if anyone knew of Murray or the book, but my enquiry elicited only silence. At the next sale I found, forlorn amongst the cheap non-fiction and in danger of the dreaded "cull", Murray's later work (1954) *A Sanctuary Planted* - this time bereft of dust cover.

So far so good. This magazine is full of rods in pickle. Dead ends most of them - but not all. Then on some whim which will forever remain obscure, a lady from the Observer Series asked if I would answer a short literary questionnaire to go into their Weekly Supplement.



Things like my most abiding influence - well that has to be Mr. Greenfield, retired host at the Angel Inn, the very soul of good humour and Petworth to the core. My favourite book, no problem there, Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes*, translated into English as *The Lost Domain*. Reading it first at Midhurst in the 1950s. With *La Princesse de Clèves* it must have been Vera Lucas's favourite book too. We read them both but neither was set for examination. You thought I'd say Rupert Bear? Well I was hardly going to go into print with that was I?

Another question flooded me - almost. What book would I most like to see made into a film? I don't know much about films. I do remember Bill Haley and "*Rock around the Clock*." It seems a very long time ago. Suddenly it struck me. *Copsford*! What a film. No overt sex, only the vague figure of the "Music Mistress", no drugs, no nudity, except perhaps where the sun demanded removing a shirt, no bad language. It was after all 1938, fighting the rats, a derelict cottage, searching the woods and meadows for herbs to dry, foxglove, agrimony, yarrow, eyebright and the rest. Man against the elements "I had heard of such a place: no one had wanted it for twenty years. The open country surrounded it like the southern ocean about a coral island." Oh, Murray could write.

And so I paraded my literary predilections before an indifferent public, silly old fool. Ah, but not quite indifferent. A letter appeared the next week in the Midhurst Observer. My advocacy of Walter Murray had indeed struck a chord. Beverley O'Connor, an expat from Murrayland, now living in Midhurst had known of Murray and shared my "Copsfordism". So here's Beverley's "outtake" on a quintessential Sussex book. "Outtake" - is it a word? Well I do **try** to be trendy.

P.

### Copsford

Should Walter J.C. Murray's book '*Copsford*' be made into a film? Well, two of us think yes, it should. Peter Jerrome who came upon the book whilst browsing in a book sale at Petworth and me, Beverley O'Connor who lived and loved Horam, knew a little of Walter Murray and read his book because it mentioned my home, Hooks Farm.

Copsford was the name of a derelict cottage near Horam in East Sussex to which the author, Walter Murray, fled after tiring of the chimneys of London. Mr Murray, then a young man, sought to make a living by collecting local herbs and selling them to Culpeppers. The tale is of his forays into the locality: what he saw, who he met, and efforts to keep himself and his herbs dry and his battle with an army of disgruntled resident rats.

Let me tell you about Horam. A small village near Heathfield which expanded around the railway station largely used to despatch fresh produce and chickens to London. Horam now boasts a population of 2,000 and is the home of the Merrydown Cider Company. The railway has gone, Merrydown is still there but is not quite what it was and the people of Horam remain much as they always were, dry and taciturn. When Walter Murray came to the locality he already knew at least one of the inhabitants; described in his book as The Music Mistress. This enigmatic lady appears to have been the reason for his flight from London to Sussex before the second world war.

When Murray arrived in Horam he found a semi-derelict cottage, Copsford, located about a mile from Hooks Farm which was itself half a mile from the main road. The cottage

was situated at the top of a hill and reached by a good hike across track, field and stream. It was in ruinous condition, cold and dreary and if the dust jacket is to be believed, ugly and very very lonely. The young man trekked over the rough ground to the village and purchased cleaning materials to attack the dirt and fabric of the house. The ensuing story is of his battle against the elements and a ferocious army of rats who would not give up their tenure.

Walter Murray wrote descriptively and with humour of his time at Copsford. He travelled across fields, down little used tracks and byways all the while recording the wildlife, photographing his finds and collecting herbs for what he hoped would be a profitable sale to a London herbalist. His quiet prose filled this reader with admiration for his endeavour and is the reason why I think this would make a good film. The elemental story is, perhaps, how we might all like to get back to basics, live off the land, enjoy the simple pleasures of storm followed by sun and warmth, a good day's labour and satisfying rest. I think many people today would empathise with such simple ideals.

If my memory serves me correctly Walter survived Copsford for one summer only. The house declined into further ruin and by the time we bought Hooks Farm it had disappeared apart from a few grass covered bricks. We lived at Hooks for fifteen years and met a number of people who made a pilgrimage to the site, fortunately most of them came on nice days and brought a picnic, few people experienced the atrocious weather described so effectively by Murray, but I did and the worst thing was, you could see it coming.

Mr Murray lived to a good age, his home very near Copsford – as the crow flies. Many times I watched him and his wife take an afternoon walk along the Little London Road, he very smartly dressed in a long dark overcoat and wearing a trilby hat. By the time he died he was an author, a naturalist, an artist and possibly other things besides but he will be remembered in Horam as running a small private school with his wife, the Music Mistress.

I never knew Mr Murray and I only met Mrs Murray once but I am quite sure they were an exceptional couple and I wish I knew more of them. The Murrays' house had a wonderful garden (about which another book was written *A Sanctuary Planted* (1954)) unfortunately about the time of his death the property was split and a bungalow was build onto part of the site. I believe Mrs Murray remained in her home until her death approximately 12/14 years ago.

All the above is written from memory, which is not what it was. The book 'Copsford' is buried in a box, in storage, waiting for me to find a home for it and us.

Beverley O'Connor

## Letters to the Editor

5, Woodchurch, The Crescent, Crapstone, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7UX.  
8<sup>th</sup> June 2003 Tel. 01822 - 855966

Dear Mr Jerome,

I have been given information about the Petworth Society by Judy Excell of the Sussex

Family History group and I thought that perhaps you could advise me on my family history research which has come to a halt in Petworth.

My husband's great great grandfather William Boxall gave his place of birth on the 1851 Census as Petworth Sussex. The I.G.I Index shows a William Boxall baptised on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1826 mother Elizabeth Boxall but no father given. The 1841 census gives William Boxall aged 15 as Ag. Labourer at Byworth which would fit the age and I believe he left to work on the laying of the railways as he married in Leicestershire 7<sup>th</sup> September 1847 father of the bridegroom given as Luke Sayers. I have found a Luke Sayers living at Midhurst Sussex with the same occupation (Tanner) on the 1851 census, maybe he acted as guardian to Luke or even was his father.

It is possible that William was left an orphan as an Elizabeth Boxall aged 26 was buried there 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1829 no marital status given.

I wonder if your Society could help me with any background information of the period, if Elizabeth was on her own with a child she may have been receiving assistance from the parish.

Yours Sincerely, Linda Boxall

Phill Sadler writes:

1 Oakwood Court, Petworth, GU28 0LW

Dear Peter,

Last week I went to lunch at Petworth House arranged by the Lunch Club. On arriving at the Church Lodge I asked a National Trust Steward if lunch was to be served in the Audit Room, she replied "No" and told me which room to go to and then asked me why it was called the Audit Room.

I told her I remember when I was a little girl I lived in No. 313 Lombard Street, a Leconfield Estate cottage with my parents and eleven brothers and sisters.

The rent was paid once a year and the Cottage Tenants would go to the Audit Room to pay. This included thirty rod of allotments at the Sheepdowns. I have enclosed the last receipt for the rent Mum paid after Dad died and she came to live with me.


No. 313

Received the 27<sup>th</sup> day of ~~November~~ <sup>October</sup>, 1956, of Mrs. Simpson

the sum of five pounds eighteen shillings & anna

for 53<sup>Week's</sup> Rent of a Cottage and Garden due to THE  
LECONFIELD ESTATE COMPANY, up to 29<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1956.

£ s. d.  
5 . 18 . 9

 LEY,  
AGENT  
Steward.

Every week Dad brought home his wages he put aside the rent which was two shillings and nine pence when I was a child but I think it increased a few pence later years, he put it into a cash box which he put into a large oval tin box, I was told gentlemen kept their hats in these. He locked it and put it in a cupboard in my parents' bedroom. I've still got the tin box, must be an antique now.

I remember Dad would tell us children, "If ever the house was on fire be sure to get out the tin box."

After paying the rent the men were served a delicious roast lunch, a pudding, mince pies and apples and nuts and after the meal they were given a cigar to smoke while the St Mary's Church Choir sang Carols.

Our cottage had four bedrooms, a small front room, (only used on Sundays) a very small kitchen. Mum and Dad sat either end of the table at meal times, five children sat on chairs on one side and the others sat on a form on the other side as that took up less room than a chair each.

There were two rooms over the scullery which we shared with the neighbours next door No. 314.

In the top room Dad stored the potatoes, onions and apples which he grew on the allotment and Mum dried the washing in the lower room if the weather was too wet to dry outside. We shared the copper and sink but did have a mangle each. We had a toilet each in the small back yard.

We used to go Round the Hills and up to the Gog to play, we daren't play ball in the street in case we broke windows as apart from our cottages and two others they were all shops and an off licence. I'll never forget those lovely shops, the smell of newly baked bread and cakes, the leather, the fruit and veg, the butcher, the wool shop, the newsagents and toys, tobacco and cigarettes. We were such a happy family, Dad kept pigs and chicken on the allotment and Mum was an excellent cook so we never went hungry. They were good days to be alive.

*Mr Leslie Whitcomb writes:*

63 Dudley Road, Brighton BN1 7CL

Dear Peter,

I always look forward to reading the Petworth Magazine; sometimes nostalgic, always interesting. The June issue was no exception but there was one article in particular that made me think! I'm referring to the excerpt from the 1947 Southern Weekly News. On page 28 the writer, speaking of Lombard Street, refers to "this narroe street with the church steeple framed at the top." I thought it was a pity that the view shown on the opposite page was from East Street (not Lombard Street) and the church shows the steeple as it is now. I knew I had taken this view; it was in my very first album. It was just a question whether I could find the negative. Well, you know now that I did find it but I had difficulty in finding a firm that would do a print from it. Not surprising I suppose when you consider it was taken in 1933 on an Ensign Box camera! Eventually I was lucky to find a professional trade photography firm who made this enlargement for me. So if a similar occasion should arise you now have a genuine record of this particular historic view and you may use it at any time with my blessing.

I am also enclosing a view looking across the Sheep Downs. I took it in 1953. I wonder if this view has changed in fifty years?



*Shimmings 20<sup>th</sup> September 1953. Photograph by leslie Whitcomb.*

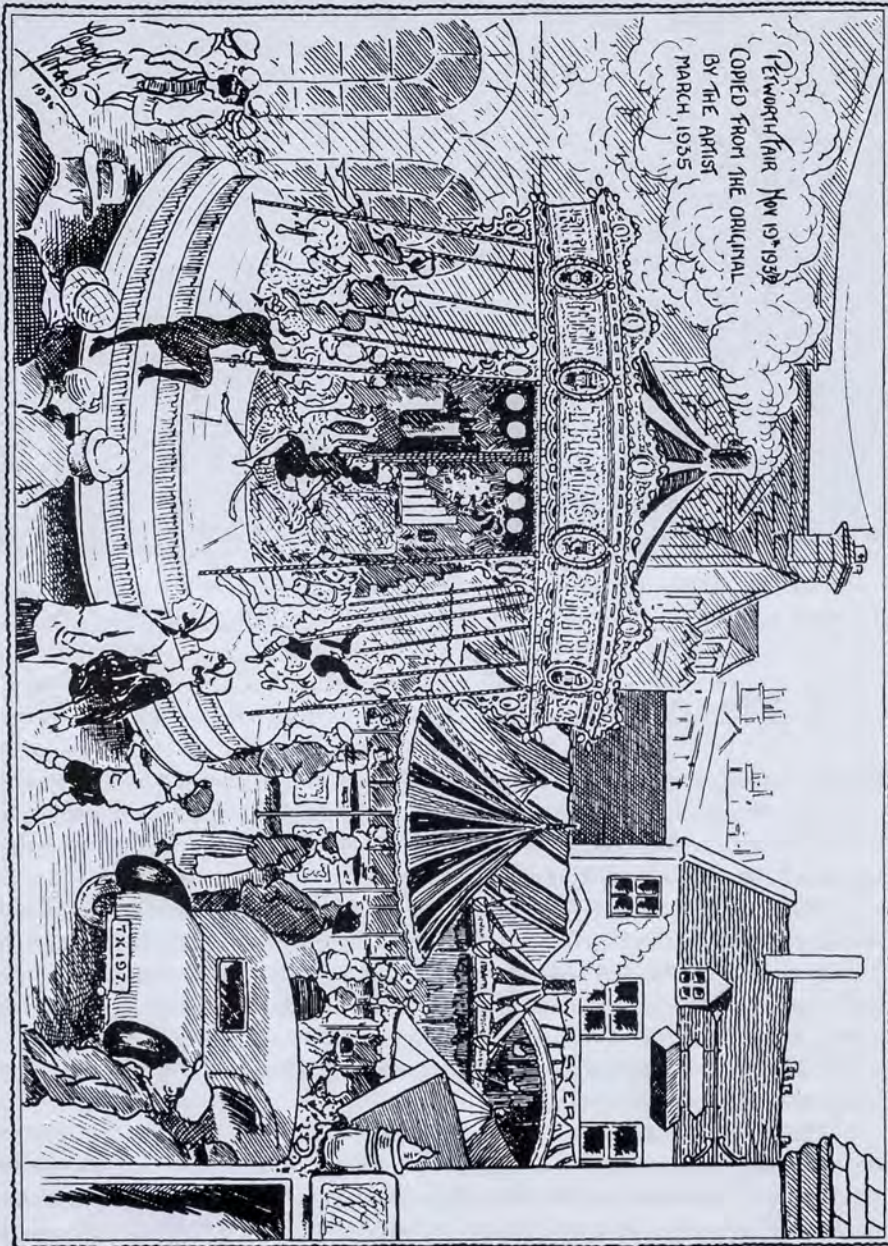
## Egdean Fair 1831

Mrs Walters passes on this rare account of Egdean Fair. It comes from the *New Sporting Magazine* December 1831 less than a decade before the fair was finally abandoned. It may be that the fair owed its demise to the death of the Third Earl of Egremont a passionate supporter. His son Colonel Wyndham may have had less enthusiasm for it.

EGDEAN FAIR, NEAR PETWORTH, SUSSEX. (*Show of three yrs. old, half-bred Colts.*) THIS fair was held on the 5th of September, and was the third year since that munificent and patriotic nobleman, the Earl of Egremont, commenced his annual donation of a Cup value twenty guineas, or the same amount in money, to the breeder of the best Colt, and five guineas to the second best. The Colts are chiefly got by his lordship's racing stallions, and the qualifications are, that they shall stand fifteen hands and one inch high, and shall not exceed three years old.

There were fourteen candidates, and the prizes were awarded by Mr. Richard Lawrence, late of the Staff Corps Cavalry. To the best of our knowledge, there is no other similar plan in England for encouraging that most important branch of our national œconomy, the breeding of horses. In Germany, and other parts of the Continent, it is the custom for those of the nobility who are great land-holders, to keep stallions for the use of their tenants, but with all the expense and trouble which they undergo, they are still far behind us.

Michael Mant sends this marvellous Harold Roberts drawing of the 1932 Petworth Fair. I have seen a large number of Harold Roberts drawings but never this one. [Ed.]



They import as great number of English stallions it is true, but their mares are generally inferior to ours, more especially in speed.

For the last year or two our political œconomy have been lamenting the scarcity of valuable horses, and the neglect that is manifested in not keeping up the breed. The scarcity (if any) arises from the numerous purchases made by foreigners, who are regardless of price, and consequently are the best customers. But however the numbers may be diminished by this foreign demand, yet there is no apparent deterioration in size, form, and action, as may be seen by looking at the cabriolets (not those used for hire), and at the mail coaches, in both of which may be found some of the finest horses in the world.

But whether this be the fact or not, it must be evident that there is no more trouble and expense in breeding good stock than bad, and we would suggest to our country friends, that it is the best policy in the end to make a good selection in regard to the size and properties of the mare, and to pay a more liberal price for a stallion, by which course those mongrel weedy-legged brutes, that are led about the country, would soon be superseded by a better and more lucrative breed. Surely nothing can be more unreasonable than for a breeder to expect a hundred guineas for a four years old Colt, when the getting him cost but one; yet such is the case, as may be proved at any of the country fairs in the kingdom. On the whole, however, the best and surest way of getting good stock is that which the Earl of Egremont has adopted, and we should be happy to see so good an example followed all over the country.

Among the candidates, was a bay horse got by Mr. Theobald's Norfolk stallion. His form and action were undeniable, but unfortunately he wanted a quarter of an inch in height to qualify him for the show. It is therefore evidently necessary to keep up to the stipulated size (fifteen hands one inch), if any benefit is expected by the breeder; and it will, at the same time, convince him it is the best policy to feed a Colt better than is usually practised by those penny-wise and pound foolish gentry, who think that every penny expended on an animal that is not old enough for labour, is so much thrown away, and never to return.

The first prize was adjudged to a grey mare belonging to a Mr. Coppard. She was got by Mr. Theobald's horse, Cydnus, out of a half-bred mare, and is well formed, with remarkably fine action. An attempt was made to pass a four years old for a three; but it did not succeed.

[The foregoing ought to have appeared earlier, but the manuscript was mislaid. — EDITOR.]

## Solution to June Crossword

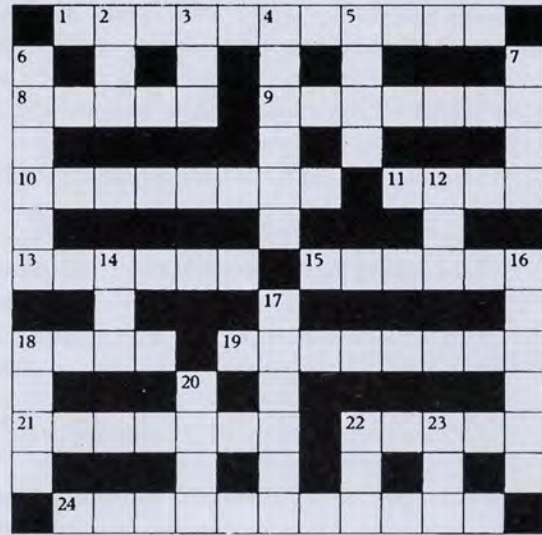
### Across

7 Shulbrede, 8 Henry, 10 Heyshott, 11 Cranny, 12 Mary, 13 End, 15 Lightly, 16 Flaxman, 18 Cow, 20 Bury, 22 Bounds, 23 Cloggies, 25 Skill, 26 Status Quo

### Down

1 Sheep, 2 Alms, 3 Priory, 4 Edition, 5 & 6 Wey and Arun Canal, 9 Acre, 14 Fireworks, 17 Toccata, 18 Candle, 19 Wash, 20 Bronte, 21 Venue, 24 Gush

## Deborah's Gardens Crossword



### Across

1 Red hen grabs areas for culinary or medicinal plants (4,7)  
8 see 19  
9 Love-in-a-mist (7)  
10 Gardens near Chichester famous for a 300' long pergola (4,4)  
11 Water feature (4)  
13 Term applied to wooden arches, trellis etc. (6)  
15 Elizabethan house with walled gardens near Storrington (6)

18 County known as the "Garden of England" (4)  
19 & 8 The gardens of this 350 year old Petworth property are open each summer (8,5)  
21 The third Earl cultivated Russets in his! (7)  
22 You'd certainly find it growing in 1 ac.  
24 A refuge for the lion-hearted! (11)

### Down

2 Reach a conclusion in the rhododendrons (3)  
3 She likes to keep busy in the garden! (3)  
4 Short-lived plant we look forward to each year (6)  
5 Thinks it's really cool & groovy – gets busy in the garden! (4)  
6 & 17 Bod flew in error into the herbaceous bed! (6,6)  
7 Confusing feature of gardens at 15 ac. (4)  
12 May be used as fertiliser (3)  
14 It helps the flowers to grow (3)  
16 Traditionally given flowers on her special Sunday (6)  
17 see 6 dn.  
18 Intricately designed formal garden (4)  
20 To achieve the perfect one is many a gardener's dream! (4)  
22 Variety of lettuce (3)  
23 Formerly collected from 11 in winter and stored underground at Petworth House (3)

## The Neighbourhood is Very Beautiful

The following report, which I have transcribed in full, appears to have been produced by Newland Tompkins and Taylor the local auctioneer and land agency, and describes in quite some detail the property that we now know as Petworth police station but which was then called Bellevue and later Westways. The details in the report would have been made available to potential new occupants of the property, and the intention was to 'sell' the tenancy in order that the outgoing tenant might recoup much of the annual rent which he had only recently paid. The lengthy description makes an important contemporary record of a late Victorian middleclass residence, such as which are quite scarce in Petworth.

The building as we know it today has remained virtually untouched since the last private occupier moved out. Until that time it had probably had only three tenants in the years following construction in about 1882. Built on the site of Petworth prison the house was initially home to the Chief Constable of Sussex, though by the end of the nineteenth century it was in the hands of John Pitfield the prominent solicitor and Conservative agent who had moved from the nearby South Cottage. Mr. Pitfield, the outgoing tenant at the time of the report, departed in 1916, and until its reincarnation as a police station the property became known as Westways.

The house is certainly not unrecognisable today from that described in the report, though the garden which once boasted a huge collection of dwarf and specimen roses has sadly been neglected in recent years and is in a state of considerable disrepair. The fine view of the South Downs can only now be seen from the upper floor windows of the house and any attempt to improve on this would necessitate the demolition of much of the southern end of modern Petworth.

The "popular neighbour" referred to in the report is Lieut-Col. Simpson occupier of Red House, which along with Bellevue was built from bricks recovered from the former Petworth prison. Red House would itself fall victim to development and would eventually make way for the modern Lund House complex.

The grammar and punctuation of the report is somewhat naïve, however, I have not made any changes to it.

### "Bellevue" Petworth

The house referred to in the advertisements inserted by Mr. Pitfield in last Saturday's issues of the "Times" and "Morning Post" is that in which he has resided for the last 17 years. It belongs to Lord Leconfield who lives at Petworth, and owns most of the property there, and is held on a yearly tenancy, from Ladyday. It is not the practise to grant leases on Lord Leconfield's estate, but tenants are not disturbed so long as they pay their rent, and keep the premises in good order. The house is close to the town being within 5 minutes walk of the Post Office and 7 minutes walk of the Church but it looks on to the country and commands a fine view for miles along the South Downs. The approach is over a private road owned by the County Council, who keep it in repair. It is somewhat circuitous but there is this advantage that the house & gardens are free from noise and dust.

There is a large entrance hall which might be used as a lounge and keeps the house airy. Back of the main drawing room and dining room has a large bay window and is 14ft or 15ft square. The Library is 12ft or 13ft square. All three rooms are lofty, and the windows face south or west.

Over the drawing and dining rooms are the two principal bedrooms, which would be of the same size as the rooms below were it not that there is a small dressing room between them.

There are two smaller bedrooms near, another drawing room and bathroom and w.c. On the same floor, but shut off from the rest of the house, are four more bedrooms. One of these is a good sized room, facing south, and was used by one of the family of Mr. Pitfield's predecessors but is now used as a sitting room by Mr. Pitfield's housekeeper. The other three rooms are used as servants bedrooms.

There is also a w.c. downstairs, the offices are convenient and there are two capital cellars. In the stable there are a large loose box and two stalls. There is a loft over, and a large coach-house which if desired could be used as a motor garage if the tenant wished to keep a motor car, as well as horses, a garage could conveniently be built on a corner of the garden adjoining the stable yard.

The garden is a feature, it is not large, covering about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre including the lawns and it is not expensive to keep up. There is a good deal of high wall for the size of the place and this is well covered by fruit trees which are now in good bearing. There is a rose garden in which are more than 300 carefully selected trees and the tennis lawn is one of the best in the neighbourhood. There is no greenhouse but there is a convenient place for building one.

Gas is laid on but is at present used only in the kitchens and other offices, hall and passages. The drainage is connected with the town system. It has recently been tested and found to be in perfect order. The water is obtained from the town supply which is of excellent quality and never failing. A telephone can be connected if desired.

Petworth is more than 100 feet higher than the river from which it gradually rises, and "Bellevue" is on the highest part of the town. The sub-soil is clay, partly rock. The surface soil is very good for gardening purposes. The property is bounded on two sides by the garden of a retired Colonel, who is a tenant of Lord Leconfield and, with his wife are most pleasant neighbours they have been there for about 25 years.

At Petworth are the kennels of Lord Leconfield's foxhounds which will be hunted during the coming season notwithstanding the war, and that Lord Leconfield will be absent most of the time. Within 5 minutes walk is a lawn tennis and croquet club and within three miles there are golf links, Petworth Park which is close to the town is open to the public. Lord Leconfield has a private tennis court and keeps a marker. Some of his tenants and others are allowed to play on it free of charge.

The neighbourhood is very beautiful and it is a favourite district for riding and motoring. The town is a mile and a half from the railway station. Public conveyances meet the trains. Motor cars and carriages may be hired and it is not necessary for a resident to keep a motor car or horse.

Mr. Pitfield has much improved the premises during his tenancy but does not propose to ask for any premium. When he entered he paid for the outgoing tenants fixtures and he

proposes that his shall be paid for at a price to be agreed, or by valuation in the usual way also that if the garden is to be left as it is and the gardener's wages to be paid until possession be given he shall be allowed some amount to be agreed for the plants, seedlings &c. to be left many of which are for planting out in the autumn.

Mr. Pitfield will be leaving for Devonshire tomorrow (the 12<sup>th</sup> August) and will be away until the 30<sup>th</sup> inst. During his absence the local agents (Messrs. Newland Tompkins and Taylor) will represent him and will arrange to show any proposing tenant over the premises.

Also of some interest is the following handwritten note, which like the above report was found among the documents of John Pitfield the Petworth solicitor. The lawn for which the formula was intended was almost certainly the one at Bellevue. The recipe most likely dates from around 1900. The inclusion of the sand would suggest that the lawn is poorly drained, while the combination of the sulphate of ammonia and common salt may have acted as a weed killer. A photograph taken in 1901 shows the lawn to be rather patchy which probably explains the need for the dressing. Perhaps one of our members may be able to throw some light on the efficacy of the potion before I go making my rather wretched lawn even worse.

*A procedure for making up a lawn dressing.*

*Sulphate of ammonia - 1 part.*

*Common salt - 3 parts.*

*Fine sand - 6 parts.*

*Scatter lightly on the grass from time to time.*

Miles Costello

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## Quiet Sunday at the Museum

Columbine have dominated the May garden, but they're over now, over in two senses, for the wind funnelling down into the garden has flattened the tall stems. Best to let the purse-like seed pods ripen and scatter, the Museum columbines are essentially self-sown. Looking to the sieve on its nail up against the red brick wall of the W.C.; last year's runner bean sticks have been pressed into service with sweet peas. On reflection they were used like this last year too. A forgotten loganberry flourishes on the west wall where the rain never seems to reach. The ox-eye daisies are at their best now but hardly compete with the vast clumps on the roadside verges. The bay tree and the rough plants battle for space under the pink rose against the north wall. The curiously reticent rhubarb, and the lemon balm that will take on virtually anything – and win! The wind blows the oregano and hustles up and down an apparently empty High Street, pointlessly clattering the metal "open" notice on the gate. The wind torments the ox-eyes but a thick-set verbascum, chunky almost, stands his ground. Pulling out the last flowers of the wild anchusa, a coarse invasive wild plant, but the blue is marvellous. However, hard you pull it out, it'll be back in force next year.

Upstairs Mrs. Cummings keeps her solitary sewing-room vigil. The Paris Journal and

fashion. It's very quiet today. The wind has blown Petworth clear of visitors. To what extent did Mrs. Cummings follow fashion? To the extent that her work obliged her to, one would imagine. Thinking of the oak-leaf spray Ann has thoughtfully placed outside on the water-barrel. How many will have made the connection? Shig-Shag day, the restoration of Charles II. What would an Irish Catholic make of this? A Catholic in early twentieth century Petworth. Late century days with the priest coming from Duncton for Mass, fasting. Later there would be a house for him in Golden Square. The Catholic church was not then built. The mysterious Charles Willcock, later Charles Willcock Dawes, why the change of name? And whence the almost limitless wealth? How well would Mrs. Cummings, humble member of a small congregation, have known Dawes – if at all?

We sit by the fire. It's not the warmest of early June days. The wind beats the metal sign against the gate. Waiting for the knock on the door – hesitant or peremptory ....

Looking out in the garden again. Next door's eucalyptus sways outrageously in the wind. Voices in the street but they're of people walking straight down. The lonely solitaire board inside by the fire, it will need some old-fashioned marbles or "alleys". Sealed in a bag for safety – the endless permutation of old and new. No one would have bothered once. The rosemary flowers seem already past. "The flowers of the rosemary, Isabel my child, are blue today – tomorrow they'll be honey." And that's it – the museum is a joust with time.

P.

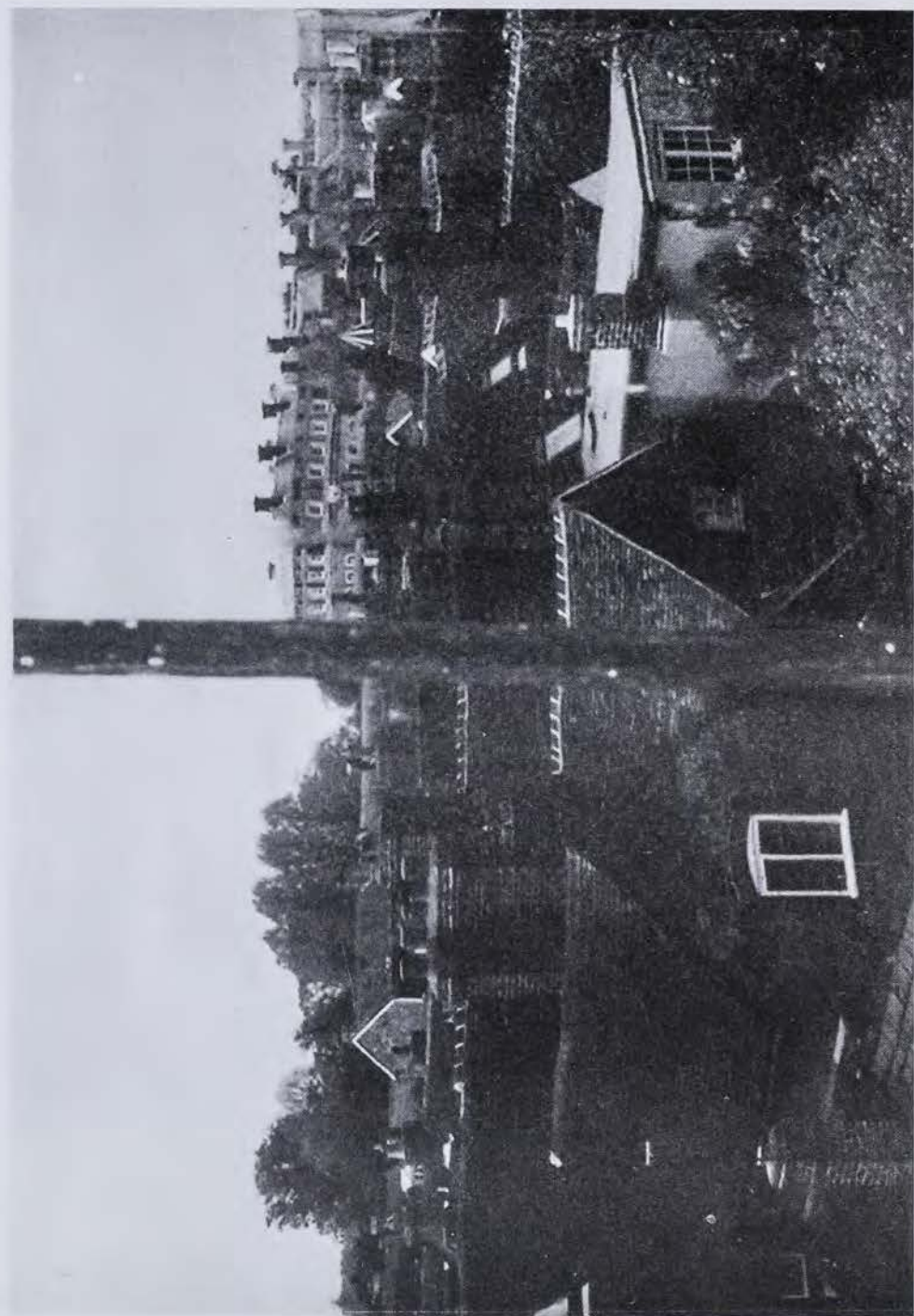
## The Black Bull / Star Inn, 1591 – 1945

The Star Inn in the Market Square is not an imposing building by any standards, huddled beneath the shadow thrown by the great south wall of the Leconfield Hall the inn hardly invites further inspection, except perhaps to escape from the hot summer sun, if one is guaranteed anything in The Star it is shade.

For such an unexceptional building it is all the more remarkable that the inn has survived longer than any other in the town. Perhaps the very ordinariness of the place has been its saviour, compressed between The Cut and the Independent Chapel, the property will have offered few opportunities to those speculators whose eyes would eventually alight on the neighbouring Swan and Half Moon Inns, which with their extensive coaching yards and associated outbuildings offered much greater rewards for the late Victorian entrepreneur. The very success of these coaching establishments would eventually lead to their demise, not a problem that would afflict the unassuming Star which through a lack of aspiration or simply by accident has retained the soul of an urban public house, always knowing its place in the strict pecking order of such establishments, it has not only survived its betters - it has outlived all other town centre competitors.

*'Very Ruinous'*

There is little doubt that The Star is not the ancient sign of the inn, for the hostelry began life as The Bull, or Black Bull. We know that in the last decade of the sixteenth century one



The classic Cottage Museum view of Petworth. Photograph by Ian Godsmark.





*"A hint of rain?" On the Rogation walk in Petworth Park. Photograph by David Wort.*



*At the Society dinner. Harriet's harp to the left. Photograph by Ian Godsmark.*



*On Taylor's bridge. Peter's Rotherbridge Walk. Photograph by Ian Godsmark.*

Edward Heath purchased a 21-year lease on the property, known then as the Black Bull, from Henry Percy the Ninth Earl of Northumberland for the princely sum of forty shillings a year.

In 1612 John Dee takes over the lease of The Black Bull for a further 21 years and the authoritative Miss Beck in her unpublished notes on the inn<sup>1</sup> suggests that Dee renewed the lease on its expiry in 1633, and the property remained in that family at least until 1650 when William Dee appears on the rental. It would appear that Dee the elder was something of an establishment man and at various times took the role of ale-connor in the town<sup>2</sup>. Of this somewhat conflicting role, more will be revealed. By 1654 the lease is held by a tailor named Thomas Pritchard to whom a reduction is made in the rent to take into account the repairs that he has to make to the property, which is described at the time as being "very ruinous". Clearly the hostelry is going through a difficult period which is not easy to explain at this distance in time, though it may be fair to say that the effects of the recent Civil War may still have been felt at Petworth, for the town would not have been insulated from the political and economic fall-out which resulted from the bitter conflict.

#### *'Unlawful Measures'*

Despite the painfully divisive war, and the sporadic eruptions of pestilence, the seventeenth century saw a startling increase in the number of citizens making their livelihood from selling beer. Most of this new business population were common speculators taking advantage of a sudden laxness of the licensing regulations and they would be operating on the very margins of the laws. Women, taught to brew and bake at an early age, were the time-honoured masters of the trade, and with this new freedom from regulation they found that they could supplement their incomes by throwing open their doors and offering a service which the established businesses could never hope to compete with. As evidence of this proliferation in beer sellers we only have to look to Lord Leconfield<sup>3</sup> who observes that the manorial court struggled continuously with tenants who were selling beer 'with unlawful measures', and indeed the situation became so bad that by 1670 the court appears to have given up the fruitless struggle against this illicit traffic, for even the elected ale-connors whose duty it was to regulate the trade were often unequal to the task and frequently flouted those very laws which they had been elected to enforce, an early example of the failure of self-regulation, if ever one were needed. How exactly The Bull survived during this period is unclear. All that we can conclude was that while it was an exceptionally difficult period the inn did survive.

#### *'Bull and Mansers'*

Quite early in the eighteenth century The Bull and an adjacent property known as Mansers were united under the same ownership, and from this point the two properties became essentially linked by title, and we find that most future references describe the property as 'Bull and Mansers'. Miss Beck<sup>4</sup> observes that the present building appears to be 18<sup>th</sup> century which of course means that The Bull must have occupied a much earlier structure on the site, the freehold of that early building remaining under the control of the ruling Percy family until 1666, the year of the great fire of London when the property was sold for £85.

Of this eighteenth century inn the few records that have been passed down to us offer only meagre scraps and there is some confusion over ownership. For any clues we must once again turn to the research of others and this time look to the observations of the

Reverend Frederick Arnold<sup>5</sup> who taunts us with an unidentified tax assessment which he claims dated from the reign of Queen Anne (1700-1714) in which The Bull is apparently mentioned. Unfortunately the reverend gentleman fails to elaborate on this source and we are left none the wiser as to the whereabouts of the assessment. By 1721 we have a probate inventory compiled on the death of one John Edsaw, distiller. The inventory includes a quantity of beer, brandy and distilled waters, as well as items of equipment clearly used in distilling. Edsaw, a man of some means, formerly of Bury, and his wife Anne, who was a member of the influential Petworth Boxall family, each had £50 in cash in the house at the time of his death.

Described as a distiller in the inventory it is unclear whether Edsaw ever actually ran The Bull, or as seems more likely the property was just one of several that he owned in the town and may have just been an outlet for his liquid produce. Mr. Kenyon, who describes the inventory in his much-undervalued work,<sup>6</sup> observes that Edsaw left his Petworth possessions, including The Bull, to his son Robert who held the property until his death in 1790, thus ending the Edsaw connection with the property.



*The Star Inn about 1900. Town Hall to the right.*

#### *'The Star'*

As the eighteenth century closes, the issues concerning the name of the inn begin to become clouded, the difficulty being that while The Bull traded in The Market Place another inn named The Star operated in The Beast Market or, as we know it now, The Golden Square. That earlier Star appears to have ceased trading around the beginning of the eighteenth century for we have no later record of it. The Bull meanwhile was by 1792 under the ownership of Edward Puttick, an Arundel brewer who no doubt wished to use the inn as an outlet for his brewery. The 1792 land tax assessment reveals that Puttick not only purchased the Bull but also the White Hart (which would later become the Red Lion), as well as the Fighting Cocks in High Street (which later became the modern White Hart) that stood almost opposite the junction with Middle Street.<sup>7</sup> It seems likely that soon after Puttick took over the business in 1792 he changed the name of the inn to The Star, and if supporting evidence was required an entry in the court book dated 1793 records that Edward Puttick made recognition at the court for a tenement 'formerly the Bull, now the Star'. The inn remains in the Puttick family until 1818 when the three heirs of Edward Puttick sold the property to Thomas Slater.

It would seem that during the period when the Puttick family owned the inn they let it to tenants, for a handbill from 1813 advertises a sale by order of the Sheriff of Sussex of the household goods and stock in trade of Thomas Edwards at The Star Inn, Petworth. The stock in trade included a beer engine and four casks of beer. Clearly Edwards' tenancy of the inn had not been altogether successful and the issuing of the Sheriff's order would signify the beginning of the end of the Puttick reign at The Star.

#### *'Corporate Ownership'*

Thomas Slater having purchased the inn from the heirs of Edward Puttick heralded in a period of relative stability at the inn. Well respected in the town, Slater had reached the heady heights of membership of the committee of the leading Petworth friendly society, the 'Old Blue', which held its regular meetings at the Angel Inn. Thomas, along with his son Edward, ran The Star for 35 years until 1853 when it was sold to George and Robert Henty of the Chichester brewing family. These new owners appear to have made some improvements to the property for George Pulling, the Pound Street builder is found quoting for the construction of a 'Privy at the Star Inn'. Pulling includes in his estimate the digging of a cesspool 4 feet deep which, along with the privy, would cost £4 10 shillings including labour.

While the first half of the nineteenth century was reasonably uneventful the second half would be the opposite. Under the new corporate owners the Star appears to have suffered dreadfully from a lack of stability in its administration. A succession of tenants and managers would oversee the gradual decline of the inn until it became notorious for the low persons who frequented it. In 1860 Henry Hoar is occupier of the inn, rapidly followed by Alfred Challen, James Bennett and John Binstead. Most of these tenants are remarkable only for their anonymity, what little we know of them is gleaned mainly from slim references in constabulary records, their names become familiar to the accustomed eye, frequently illuminating the reports of the magistrates courts regularly appearing in the columns of *The West Sussex Gazette*. Binstead's successor, Cornelius Creed takes over the licence of the inn on May 5<sup>th</sup> 1883; just four months later he appears before the magistrates and is charged with permitting

drunkenness in his house. Creed was found guilty as charged, though fortunately for him the magistrates chose not to endorse his licence. This was something of a let off for Creed, though clearly George Henty & Son the Chichester brewers and owners of the inn considered that their tenant was something of a liability and his days were numbered, for just two months later, in what was a quite commonly used ploy to placate the magistrates, the licence was transferred to a new tenant one Walter Linfield. 1890 sees Thomas King of The Star being summoned for non-payment of poor and other parish rates. King is unable to pay the demand and so a distress warrant was issued against him and his card was effectively marked by the magistrates, for by the May of that year he has gone the way of his predecessors when Superintendent Ellis of the West Sussex Constabulary based at Petworth appears before the court to object to the granting of the licence to King's replacement Henry Howard.

*'Low Characters and Convicted Thieves'*

Superintendent Ellis bases his objections on the grounds that the inn has become the resort of low characters and convicted thieves. He declares that the lowest class of persons would go to the Union Workhouse; the next lower to the Star. On considering the matter, the magistrates offer the new tenant a bitter pill to swallow, for they agree to the transfer from King to Howard - who had previously held the licence of the White Hart in High Street - but declare that the licence would not be renewed at the next annual licensing day. True to their word, on the very next licensing day Henry Howard and Henty's solicitors stand before the magistrates at Petworth and despite a strong case put forward by their solicitors, the magistrates refuse to renew the licence. Superintendent Ellis, who attended court agreed that Mr. Howard had taken considerable steps to make the inn more acceptable to the town, though he felt that Petworth with a population of less than 2,000 was already well served by 11 other fully licensed houses and a beerhouse, and he felt that establishments such as The Star were really not needed in the town. The magistrates agreed and the licence was not renewed. Hentys announced their decision to appeal and it would seem that it was successful, for shortly afterwards the licence is granted to one William Collins who begins his tenure at the inn. The new landlord heralds in a period of steadiness at the inn and a concerted effort is made to divest the establishment of its unwanted reputation. The Star is even advertised at this time as a good cyclists' and artists' inn offering excellent accommodation and stabling. Collins, having broken the mould established by his predecessors, remains at the inn for at least ten years and was still remembered many years later. Henry Whitcomb the former licensee of The Welldiggers at Lowheath recalls "Mr. Collins, the landlord of the Star, used to keep chickens in the stabling at the side of the pub. Every morning he'd let his chickens out to scratch about under the horses and carts. Imagine doing that now."<sup>18</sup> By 1913 it is in yet newer hands with Joseph Lovegrove at the helm, followed in the 1920s by George Rich and then Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Browning take over in the 1930s. Mr. Browning is remembered as a genial host and following his death his wife remains at the Star until the 1950s.

"Mr. Browning was the landlord of The Star Inn in the Market Square. We used to watch through the open door men playing bar skittles and shove halfpenny and dominoes. Every Christmas Mr. Browning gave his customers a cigar, a real treat for them. The only other time the men had a cigar was when once a year they paid the Leconfield cottage rents in the Audit Room up at the house."<sup>19</sup>

Owners or Licensees of The Bull / Star Inn with indicatory dates

Edward Heath 1591	Alfred Challen 1876
John Dee 1612	James Bennett 1881
William Dee 1650	John Binstead 1882
Thomas Pritchard 1654	Cornelius Creed 1883
John Edsaw 1721	Walter Linfield 1884
Robert Edsaw 1721? - 90	Thomas King 1890
Edward Puttick 1792 - 1814	Henry Howard 1890
John Redman 1793	W. Smith 1903
Thomas Edwards 1813	William Collins 1904
Thomas Slater 1845	George Rich 1924
Henry Hoar 1860	Alfred Browning 1938
Sarah Hoar 1872	

<sup>1</sup> WSRO Miscellaneous papers 1367

<sup>2</sup> Leconfield. *Petworth Manor in the Seventeenth Century*

<sup>3</sup> Leconfield. *Petworth Manor in the Seventeenth Century*

<sup>4</sup> Some Petworth Inns and Alehouses in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 99

<sup>5</sup> Arnold. *Petworth: A Sketch of its History and Antiquities*. 1864

<sup>6</sup> Petworth Town and Trades 1610-1760. *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 96, 98, 99

<sup>7</sup> WSRO Add. Ms. 2735

<sup>8</sup> Petworth Society Magazine Issue 33

<sup>9</sup> Unpublished recollections of Phil Sadler

Miles Costello

## The Wood Engravings of Gwenda Morgan in the Art Gallery of Ontario

### Background

Shortly after moving to Toronto in the spring of 2002 I began working as a volunteer in the Department of Prints and Drawings (P&D) at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). The volunteers take turns to make fortnightly presentations to a group of Friends of the gallery relating to works in the collection. These talks go under the general title of *Striking Impressions* (SI).

The first step in preparing such a talk is to decide on the subject. With 17,000 works on paper in the collection, there is plenty to choose from. For the SI talk I was due to give in June this year, I began by looking through the boxes containing works by English printmakers active in the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I chose this period as one with which I had some familiarity, as I had grown up in London during the 30's and 40's and later worked as a doctor

at St Bartholomew's Hospital for many years. During my initial trawl, I came across a box containing 15 wood engravings by an artist called Gwenda Morgan. All were noted as having been given to the AGO in 1990 by the artist. Who, I wondered, was Gwenda Morgan (GM) and what led her to make such a generous gift to the AGO?

I started my quest in the well-resourced reference library of the AGO. GM's name appeared in a couple of works relating to English women printmakers but few details were given. I then went to the internet where I learned that GM had been born in 1908, in the venerable Sussex town of Petworth, where she lived until her death in 1991. I also discovered that a diary of her time as a Land Girl in the county of Sussex during WWII had been published posthumously by the Whittington Press in 2002.

When I went to the UK in April of this year I telephoned Mrs Bird, the librarian at Petworth library. She was extremely helpful: she sent me a copy of GM's obituary written by John Randle, the owner of the Whittington Press, which had appeared in *The Independent* in January 1991 and she suggested that I contact Peter Jerrome (PJ), the chair of the Petworth Society. He in turn suggested that I approach John Randle to ask for a photocopy of the biographical note which he, PJ, had written for her diary. John Randle went much better and kindly donated a copy of the diary, containing over 20 wood engravings, to the P&D's book collection, together with some family photographs.

It was time to visit Petworth and, if possible, meet PJ. It was on a perfect sunny June day that PJ greeted me at the railway station. He then took me on a totally diverting, and extremely well-informed, tour of the very attractive small town which had been such an integral part of GM's life.

#### **The artist**

GM was described by John Randle as 'one of the most accomplished and original wood engravers of her generation'. He considered that her wood-engravings of the Sussex countryside, where she was born and lived all her life, were 'brilliantly conceived and executed, showing a sureness of line and an understanding of pattern'.

She studied at the Goldsmith's College of Art in London, from which she graduated in 1929, before going on to learn the specialised technique of wood engraving from Iain Macnab at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. Macnab thought so highly of GM's abilities that recommended her to Christopher Sandford of the Golden Cockerel Press, describing her as his 'most talented pupil'. She illustrated four books for the Golden Cockerel Press, including *Gray's Elegy* (considered by John Randle to be her 'masterpiece') and *Grimms' Other Tales*. Her gentle wood engravings of downland farms and villages, which have been likened to 'romantic scenes in needlework, embroidery and tapestry', depict a way of life that all but vanished shortly after WWII.

In the 1930's, GM established a close working relationship with Joan Shelmerdine of the Samson Press who published her first book *Pictures and Rhymes* in 1936. GM illustrated relatively few books because, as she later told John Randle, she preferred to do prints for exhibition and to work for the Samson Press who commissioned her to print greetings card and other small items until it closed in the early 1960's. GM stopped engraving in 1970.

#### **The person**

GM was born in 1908 at Petworth where, apart from her art school years she lived

continuously until her death in 1991. The family home was Old Bank House, a handsome early Victorian house situated on Market Square directly opposite 'Austins', her father's ironmongery store. G lived there for most of her life, at first with her parents and then, after her mother died, with Una, 'her adored step-mother' who had nursed the first Mrs Morgan during her final illness. Una, being only a few years older than Gwenda, took on the role of a surrogate elder sister and manager of the household.

According to those who knew her, GM's outstanding personal characteristic was extreme shyness coupled with a self-effacing modesty and a reclusive life style. She never married and, as far as is known, never had a close personal relationship with anyone outside her family.

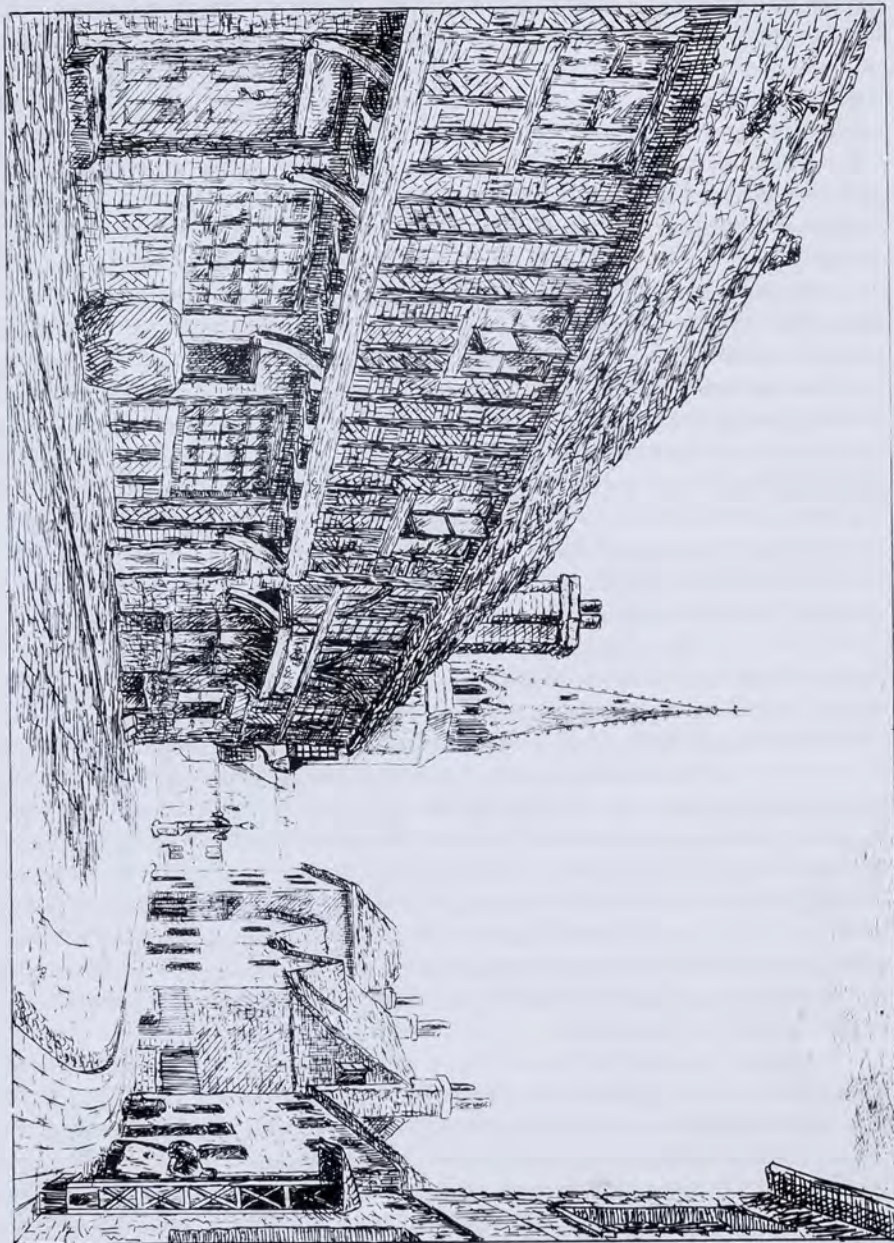
#### **The gift**

In 1990, Mrs Betty Clark, who was GM's agent, offered a selection of 15 wood engravings by GM to the AGO. After due consideration and examination they were considered worthy of adding to the gallery's collection, where they now reside and where I came across them 13 years later. My question remained, why the AGO? I had originally assumed, before learning more about GM, that there were three possibilities. One was that GM had visited Toronto, where she had been impressed by the AGO's collection of prints. Unfortunately, GM was never known to have been in Toronto. Another thought was that G had some family or close friends in Toronto. However, no family members were known to have been in Toronto nor was G known to have had a romantic attachment of any kind, let alone to a Canadian. In fact, in her diary, writing of a Canadian soldier station near Petworth during WWII, who had asked if she would accompany him 'to a show'; she tersely remarked: "I declined". A third possibility was that her gift was related to the close links the Toronto Scottish Regiment had maintained with Petworth since WWII. As GM explained in a letter to the then curator of prints and drawings at the AGO: "You may be interested to know that there are great friendly feelings between Petworth and Toronto. During the war, the Toronto Scottish Regiment was in camp here when our local Boy's School was bombed with the loss of about 30 boys and the head master and another teacher. The Canadians were wonderfully helpful in recovering the bodies of the poor little boys. They have kept this friendly feeling for Petworth ever since, and this next Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup> the Toronto Scottish Veterans will be making their third visit here. I thought you may like to know of this friendly feeling between our towns." Today, a Canadian flag occupies a position of honour in Leconfield Hall, the 18<sup>th</sup> century town hall in which nine of her prints are hung on the wall of the first floor, now named the Gwenda Morgan Hall. However, these links, though strong, were not the primary motive behind GM's gift to the AGO.

The real reason turned out to be more prosaic than any of my romantic suppositions. In a letter written in response to my request for further information, Mrs Clark explained: "I was Gwenda's agent until her death and suggested to her that we offer selections of prints to all the notable art galleries who had an interest in prints and particularly wood engravings. She was a very shy person and said she wouldn't dare doing anything so bold, but I insisted. I feel she is now well represented around the world as a result of these gifts."

Trevor Silverstone

[I very much enjoyed my afternoon with Trevor. Ed.]



## In search of the master baker. A Petworth quartet.

Knights the Lombard Street bakers were perhaps the quintessential Petworth shop, their lardy rolls still a half-remembered delight. Arthur Knight, universally known as "Arch", master of the tolls and member of so much else, seems now the very embodiment of an older, working, Petworth. Here are four different, but related attempts to evoke the spirit of Knights the bakers, Arch himself, and to an extent, Arch's Petworth. The first two are the direct recollections of his great niece Janet Chisholm, of Slinfold, the third is Janet talking to Peter, the last an account in the Midhurst Observer from November 1952. Arch Knight died in 1954.

P.

### 1) Behind and Beyond the Shop 1932-1940 and occasionally after.

My paternal grandfather Harry was eldest son of William Knight, Master Baker of Lombard Street, Petworth, Sussex. William had married Mary Strudwick (of Pulborough, we believe) and would have been running his bakery in premises lower down Lombard Street when Harry and his many siblings were children. My father and I were to grow up enjoying the greater freedom of holidays at the house higher up the hill, where first William and then a younger son Arthur were to run their business. Arthur was always known as Arch so from henceforth that is how he shall be named.

My father Henry George (known as George) b1899 and his young sister Winifred b1907, spent all their holidays with their grandparents in Petworth. They would have the company of Mog, Dad's cousin, who was just a little older than he and great company that would have been. They were lifelong friends though only seeing one another on those brief holidays. Grandfather Knight's youngest boys were Jim and Tom. Jim was a romantic figure serving in the Life Guards as a farrier and Tom, who was nearer Dad's age, was at Midhurst Grammar School when Dad was at Sir Walter St John's in London. In Dad's boyhood, Grandfather Knight kept one or two ponies for deliveries to outlying villages and Dad and the baker boys would race off down Barton's Lane to fetch them from the fields. There must have been quite a lot of racing about. Dad broke his front tooth on Lombard Street's cobbles.

Dad remembered riding out with the delivery man. By the time I was exploring the yard and premises at the bakery the brick stable was used as a root store and the hens held sway in the timber stable. Jim had retired from the Life Guards, Tom was a Chartered Civil Engineer and Dad had joined the Civil Service. Mog? Mog was newly married to Uncle George Thayre.

It is obvious that visits to Petworth meant a great deal to my parents. We spent three holidays a year there until demands of term-time reduced them to two longer holidays. There was an undercurrent of mounting excitement as the time for these trips drew near. We travelled by train to Petworth and Uncle Arch would arrange transport for us to Lombard Street. Dad and I would get down at the Iron Room so that we could savour every moment of joy as we walked into Lombard Street, past Weavers the newsagent cum toy shop on the left and up the cobbled way to the passage leading to the yard gate and bakehouse. Mum would

have popped into the shop (ping went the bell!) to alert Aunt Alice of our arrival and to leave our luggage at the foot of the stairs until Dad could take it up. In the early afternoon, Aunt Alice would have come down from her nap, spruce in her dark dress, clean white apron, silver hair neatly combed in a bun and her cheeks rosy from a fresh scrubbing. Uncle Arch would be stirring from his sleep on the top of the big dough bins in the bakehouse. His day was long and he would yet have to prepare the dough for the next day's bread, ice the fancy cakes for the afternoon, make the Swiss rolls and cream sponges. He had the help of Adie (Adrian Simpson) in the bakehouse and in the gardens. In his father's day there had been a squad of baker boys who lived with Grandfather William Knight, sleeping in the end bedroom known as "the barracks".

The welcome would be warm. There was Aunt Fan to help Aunt Alice. She was one of Arch's sisters, a buxom woman, full of fun, somewhat suppressed by Alice who could be very sharp in tone. Fan had been in service at Alwick Castle while Grandfather William Knight had been alive (like Jim, assisted to a good post by Lord Leconfield). Hovering in the

background would be Gwen Carver who worked in the house, cleaned the shop, made the jams for Uncle Arch, served teas in the tearoom and, if she appeared to be having a rest, was quickly found another task. She was very young and pretty, stone deaf and so kind. She was my favourite Petworth person with Aunt Mog a close runner-up. Later in the day there would be Adie to see and the delivery man returning from his round, long after we had all had the main meal of the day and been dismissed to the long room. Aunt Alice's nephew Harold Cobby always dropped in to see his aunt so we'd meet him again. He worked in the gardens at Petworth House as an under-gardener with Fred Streeter in charge. In the meantime, off we'd set, up Lombard Street and past the church and over North Street to see Mog in her cottage. Mog had a little general shop but we always approached through the archway and into a communal garden and then past the row of outside W.C.s and past Mog's stable into the kitchen. I can hear Mog's lovely Sussex accent now, calling to us from the dark of the shop and then see her gradually coming into the light of the sitting room and then she'd be there hugging us all and maybe asking us to dinner the next day.



*Gwen Carver ... "My favourite Petworth person ..." pictured with Janet and her dog on the steps of the old hay barn.*

Our human contacts made, and a pattern beginning to re-emerge for settling into life in Petworth, we'd take Gyp, the dog, for a walk to check on our favourite spots. Our activities were undemanding and simple. Dad was a newly diagnosed diabetic, dependent on twice daily injections of insulin and regular meals. He had been very ill and his holidays would always be spent walking, resting and reading and annotating his books. Mum and I loved the countryside and were happiest strolling along the hedgerows identifying birds, trees, flowers as we went or settling down to sew or to read.

Our haunts were any one of Uncle Arch's three "gardens". There was one on the Sheep Downs where vegetables were grown. Mog had a garden there so we might meet her. I loved the stroll to that garden, past the Angel over to the Sheep Downs track and down to the cottages which looked over the Shimmings and then along the track as though to the Virgin Mary Spring (which we'd visit later for a drink and a paddle in the pond nearby). That garden was very open and hot in summer. There was a garden called the Rectory garden which we reached via Bartons Lane and a stile on the left, through a big meadow towards the Wisborough Green road. It lay just below Harold Cobby's cottage. Our favourite garden was the "pig garden" which we reached by the lane which rises to the police station. It is covered in houses now but then it was a cosy orchard behind low hawthorn hedges. Uncle Arch grew fruit and asparagus and new potatoes there and at the end of the garden were two fine pigs which lived on swill from the bakehouse and other goodies. The rhubarb grew tall and shady beside the styes. There was a good-sized toolshed in that garden and we treated it as our summerhouse. When we bought our spaniel Bruno Dad slept in the shed with him until we went home a few days later.

## 2) The joys of Petworth

Petworth Park was our favourite afternoon destination. Armed with our books and drawing gear we'd walk up to the first gate on the Tillington Road and across towards the Upperton gate. Many a drowsy afternoon we spent watching the herds of deer lying in the shade of the great trees, flicking their tails and ears against the flies. Lying in the fine grass amongst the harebells, trying to catch a grasshopper, sketching or reading, we'd soak in the joy of being in Petworth. One of my favourite views is from the park to the South Downs. In those days no cameras, picnics or dogs were permitted in the park by Lord Leconfield so, once Bruno came into our lives, we returned to walks "round the hills" down the long, steep slope to the stream and on up to the Gog. The foxgloves were beautiful in the woods there. Halfway up to the Gog there was a field gate and the bank of the hedgerow was excellent as a backrest for a reader or seamstress. We spent many afternoons there too. A later dog, a dachshund, enjoyed excellent rabbiting in the burrows along there! That was how we spent our holidays, though my mother always tried to help Aunt Alice a little.

Routine in the household was governed by the shop. At the end of a long day, Aunt Alice would sit at the huge kitchen table to go through the round with the delivery man. No one might interrupt. The money would be counted and house by house, Aunt Alice would want to know what the customer had bought and what had been ordered and if not why not. It all sounded very fierce but no doubt Alice and her employee understood one another. Arch would wind the clock, a beautiful old grandfather in the "long room" and go off to meet his

cronies for an hour or so. The "long room" was a parlour with a large dining table, a side board, a couple of armchairs and a horrid little grate. Behind the grate which Aunt Alice had had fitted there lay a magnificent old fireplace, later uncovered and enjoyed when the house was sold.

My parents and I were on holiday in Lombard Street in August 1939. My father was asked to return to work but was advised to leave us in Sussex for a while. We were all in the "long room" when we had a phone call from my father to say that we should listen to the radio for news. We were there to hear the declaration of war with Germany. In ten days I would need to be back at school, the evacuated children were arriving in Petworth. Aunt Alice said that I could stay with her until I could board at the convent in Midhurst while things settled down. By this time we were living in Mansion Flats opposite Battersea Park to reduce Dad's journey to work and their height and position near the Thames could make them vulnerable in an air raid. I spent a very happy year under the care of such lovely caring people as Reverend Mother Ursula and Sister Martha in the boarding house and postulants Lucy and Agatha. By the summer of 1940 my father had moved us back to New Malden, still relatively rural and with a Grammar school within cycling distance for me. I am very grateful for the memories of those kind people.

### 3) Further reflections

Knights were caterers as well as bakers. There were marquees kept up in the loft above the bakehouse. Tablecloths, white crockery and cutlery were kept in ancient cupboards in the kitchen and lining the passage. I particularly remember the thick wooden doors and the big bun feet of those cupboards. The knife-cleaner stood alongside.

Maize for the hens was kept in a tin on top of the cupboard just inside the kitchen door and there was often a visiting hen peering inside hoping for a scattering of corn. Instead, a wave of a duster would send her scurrying away. The yard was well above the level of the kitchen and sloped up towards the stables. Uncle had Wyandot and Leghorn as well as Light Sussex hens and always a fine cockerel strutting about his yard (or chasing me when I was knee-high).

A catering job was an important event and preparations would start very early in the morning. Gwen Carver always helped Aunt Alice to make the sandwiches. Uncle Arch would be out supervising the erection of the marquees and such preparations. Pitts Hill sticks in my mind as one particular venue for a cricket tea. The catering ladies were expected to wear black dresses and aprons in the style worn by Lyons "Nippies". Aunt Mog, now resident in North Street, would be called in to ice the cakes. She knew the routine. There would be dainty little Genoese sponge cakes and Madeleines.

Aunt Alice, herself, had nothing to do with the bake house. She and Gwen ran the retail part - the tea room and the shop. The tea room catered for cyclists and visitors and meant quite a lot of extra work for Aunt Alice, particularly after Aunt Fan went off to live with Mog's mother in London. Aunt Mog's mother and Fan were daughters of Grandfather William Knight and Fan always had the little room nearly over the stairs. Remember that what is now two houses was in those days a single property. Aunt Mog had probably left school at twelve but she was one of those people you would find in those days who had somehow acquired a reasonable education without formal schooling in her teens. She had a good knowledge of

natural history, loved poetry and wrote beautiful letters. She was a keen Guider in Petworth. I never knew Mog's parents but they lived near Clapham Junction.

Adrian (Adie) Simpson helped Uncle Arch in the bakery, both men starting extremely early. Dough-punching they called it, after kneading it was left to rise in the long wooden dough-bins covered with cloths and then with a lid on the bins. In the afternoon Arch would take a siesta lying on the dough-bins; he was rather portly and his stomach rose in a hump above the half door. Adie was responsible for the pig-swill tub, taking the swill up to the pig-garden by the police station.

On Sundays Arch would leave church early. People brought their Sunday dinners to be cooked in the bread oven. I never quite worked it out, after all they didn't bake on a Sunday. Perhaps the ovens were still hot from the day before. I certainly remember the faggots for the ovens stacked in the yard, hefty bundles of twigs they were. Sunday dinners might be joints or pies, brought out on the peels as customers called for them. On weekdays, if the oven was too hot, and it could be, we might be given burned bread to eat.

Lady Leconfield very occasionally came into the shop and, of course, monopolised attention. Aunt Alice was a great "touch your forelocker"!

As a girl, Mog used to go up to the House kitchens regularly with fresh yeast. In Lombard Street milk was delivered by a man with a small cart, which was hung with measures. In the early morning, Aunt Alice would open the big front door for the day and go out to the cart where milk would be measured into a large jug and cream into a smaller one. Then, back to the dairy she'd go. Gwen would arrive and clean the step and polish the door-knocker ready for the day.

The handsome front door with its big brass knocker opened into a lobby with the glazed shop door with its bell to the left and a tongued and grooved varnished door opening by a latch into the "long room" to the right. In front, was another door behind which rose the steep staircase to the bathroom, drawing room and four bedrooms. When the shop was open this door had to be locked and the front door swung across the way into the sitting room. Behind the shop there was the tea room but to the right a door led to a dark flagged passage which served the private quarters of the house. In effect the tea room was a half-basement; you could look out onto a wall with ferns growing in it and what, in London terms, would be called an "area" and up to the yard. Uncle Arch kept bantams and occasionally one would get down into the area. Arch was a big man and had considerable difficulty in retrieving the bird (and himself) from a confined space; eventually wire netting would be placed over the open space.

Every weekday, Aunt Alice would prepare the main meal in the evening. Formerly, she had used the range, but as time passed she had a gas oven. It can't have been long after that that the bakehouse ovens were converted to gas. I remember oil lamps and candle sticks there when I was a very small child but certainly electric lighting by the mid-thirties. The feather beds were warmed with copper warming pans until the range was no longer used (source of hot coals) then big stoneware hot water bottles went ahead of us to the bedrooms. The copper warming pans hung in the kitchen and were another of Gwen's polishing tasks. She didn't often grumble but she muttered about those.

After supper, the big deal table would be cleared, cloth folded and a big baize cloth



spread over. We would be sent off into the long-room. Aunt Alice would now be closeted with the delivery man. Deliveries done, his day was still not over. Until 1939 he wore the "regulation" brown overall. By the late 1930s he had a motor-van instead of a pony and van but otherwise everything went on as it had always done. I remember the hay for the pony still being up in the loft at the back so the change must have been relatively recent. The delivery man's return was a kind of ritual: the money would have been laid out on the table and he and Aunt Alice would go over the round house by house. The delivery man was more than just that, he was also a salesman, rehearsing by rote what was available for his next visit, item by item. Aunt Alice wanted to know what customers had ordered and, particularly, what they hadn't and if they hadn't, why they hadn't. She could be very sharp. (Alice was not her name, she had been Mary Cobby). I remember particularly Ebernoe and Bedham as forming part of the round.

Harold Cobby was Alice's nephew. He worked in Lord Leconfield's gardens with Fred Streeter in charge. His father worked for the hunt. I believe his father moved on to the Melton Mowbray Hunt. Harold remained in Petworth. While Harold's father was still in Petworth I remember going to a barn, near Upperton I think, where antlers were stored: they were sold in quantity for use as knife handles. It all seemed very romantic to me as a child. I imagined they simply picked up the antlers in the park.

End of the Day. Uncle Arch would go down to the Swan for a drink on weekdays, while Aunt Alice was counting the day's takings. Before leaving, he'd always check his watch with the house clock in the long-room. He knew better than to be late and he never was. By 9.30 all was quiet, ready for an early start the next morning. There was no television of course, but they did have radio and the telephone.

#### 4) Persons In The News

##### Mr. A.A. Knight

With the annual Petworth fair gone for another year what better person to introduce to this series than Mr. Arthur "Arch" Knight, at one time Petworth's unofficial "mayor", who was largely responsible for the running of the historical event?

Like his father before him he was "Tenant of the Lord of the Manor's Tolls" for 15 years from 1925 when his father died until he resigned in 1940.

Every year the fair came to the town he was responsible for collecting the toll money.

Other rights he had under the centuries old custom were that he could claim a penny from every hawker selling fish in the streets. And vegetables sold from a barrow in the square on a Saturday meant an extra 2d. in Mr. Knight's pockets.

He was born in Petworth in 1880 the sixth son and 12<sup>th</sup> child of Mr. William Knight, a baker. There were 14 children in the family, altogether eight boys and six girls.

His career was supposed to have been in the Post Office. He started work as a telegraph messenger in the eastern district of London. "I was only there a year - I wanted to be a baker, so I came home," he said.

The year 1896 saw him start his training as a baker and for the next two years he gained experience at London and Littlehampton. When he returned home he was employed by his father as a foreman.

From that day he carried on with trade in Petworth until he retired in May last year. He took over the business when his father died in 1925.

Mr. Knight, who has always been as strong as an ox, said that, until recently, he never knew what it was to be tired. Despite treacherous winters he never seemed to feel the cold.

But he did not spend all his time in the bakery. Soon after he had become a member he was appointed junior vice-president of the Sussex County Master Bakers' and Caterers' Association. Then he became senior vice-president, and in 1937, was made President.

He attributes his successful and good class baking and catering business however, to his hard working and business-like wife.

He was married on September 30, 1907, to Miss Mary Cobby and both have been extremely happy together. Mrs. Knight is now 73.

During the 1914-1918 war Mr. Knight was the platoon sergeant in charge of the local volunteer force. After the armistice he joined the Special Constabulary and gained the long service and good conduct medal. Strangely enough he lives in the old police court in Lombard Street, although it was used as a court long before his time.

Mr. Knight has always been a keen churchman. Since 1915 he has been a sidesman at Petworth. Recently however, he has been unable to attend.

In 1899 he joined the bell ringers and can remember ringing a muffled peal for the death of Queen Victoria, a peal for the Coronation of King Edward VII, and victory peals after the South African War and World War I. He officially retired in 1925, but was asked to help ring during the celebrations after the last war.

One of his greatest treasures is an illuminated address given to him by the Petworth Bell Ringers on the occasion of his marriage.

For some years he used to sing with the Petworth Choral Society.

He also served for a great number of years with the Fire Brigade as Chief Officer.

For hobbies, Mr. Knight puts gardening and walking at the top of the list. He still does a great amount of gardening and until a few years ago went for long walks by himself.

"I still love walking," he said. "I used to walk miles in the woods with my dog and I am very interested in everything that happens in the country."

Looking back over his 72 years of life, Mr. Knight has no regrets. He is a man who has thoroughly enjoyed every hour of the day. He is still perfectly fit and has numerous memories of success and achievement.

From Midhurst and Petworth Observer 29<sup>th</sup> November 1952.



Arch Knight with faggots for the bread oven.

## De Shepherd Psalm

The following short notes concerning the Sussex dialect have no connection with Petworth other than in the broader sense that a form of the dialect was spoken in this district as much as anywhere else in the county. The dialect is however of greater interest now than ever, for like anything that is lost and unrecoverable it has gained a certain sentimentality, particularly among those who until relatively recent years have viewed the study or appreciation of it as somewhat vulgar.

The loss of our dialect has not gone unrecorded in this magazine, though it is almost a decade since the Petworth Society carried out our second and final survey of the Petworth dialect. Just nine short years ago and yet it would now be impossible to replicate the survey, or at least we would certainly not be able to obtain the quality of responses that we did then. Many terms in the questionnaire sent out with the magazine were all but extinct then and often elicited only a single response. To try and trace a local person who still used beever, cojer or nammet to describe snack breaks would now be difficult or perhaps impossible. If asked for another name for the aphid eating beetle so popular with gardeners, would anyone now call it a Lady Bug, Lady Cow, Spotted Bug, Lady Anne, Barnaby or Bishop Barnaby, all names once common in Sussex? Local bird names featured strongly in the survey and we received such marvels as Shrite, Juggy, Molly Dishwasher, Spadger, Spug and Bobby. I wonder how many people would know the name for the odd or spare horse on a farm? What about an orphan lamb reared on a bottle? How many would call the unploughed strip around the edge of a field a headland? Most would, and yet in West Sussex it was invariably known as a sideland. Out of 43 respondents at the time of the last survey only 2 called it by the traditional name.

The dialect is all but gone and that is to all intents and purposes the end of it. However, it is still of interest to many and by simply reproducing written examples of the folk-speech it may just possible to obtain responses which prove that the odd term still exists.

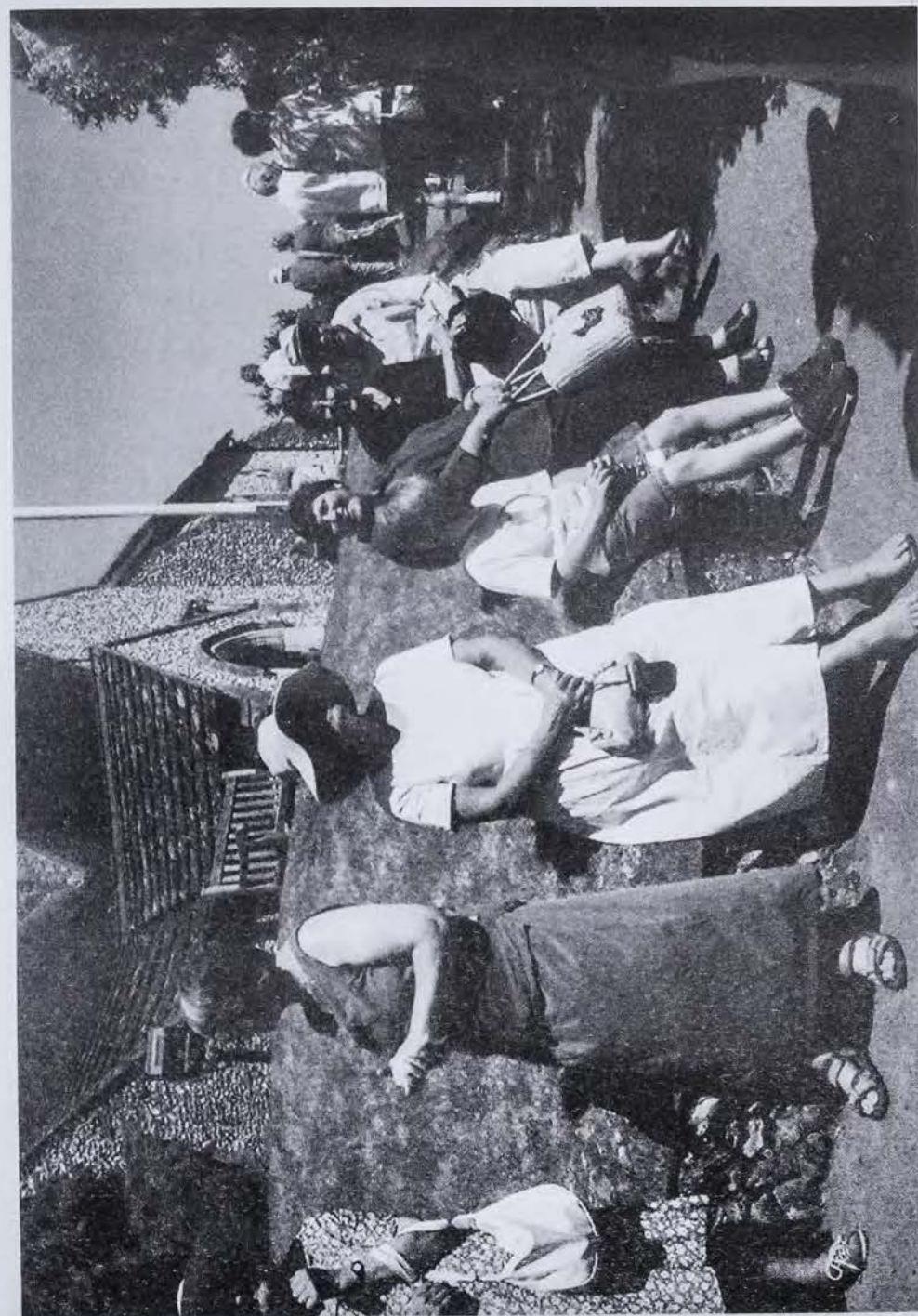
I have reproduced below an interpretation – for want of a better word – of Psalm 23 in the Sussex dialect. The song, instantly recognisable to most Christians, is an ideal tool for comparing Standard English with the Sussex dialect, for it allows a reader with little knowledge of the folk-speech to understand and appreciate the text.

The writer of the verse is of almost equal interest as the content of the psalm, and is certainly worth a short mention. James Richards was a Sussex man, born and bred at Hailsham (Helsum) in East Sussex, who ended up living just over the county border at Tunbridge Wells.

*At Helsum, I was born, ya kno  
In eighteen sixty six.  
I cum three months afore my toime,  
Wich maad a purty fix.*

*'Bout Me. Verse 1*

An Evangelical Methodist preacher, skilled photographer and shopkeeper, he produced by means of a small hand operated press a number of Bible and biographical pieces in the Sussex dialect. Each publication had to be laboriously typeset by hand and few of the finished



*With the Petworth Society at Ditchling Church. Photograph by Ian Godsmark.*



*In the Museum teashop at Ditchling. Photograph by Ian Godsmark.*

booklets appeared in editions greater than a hundred copies. This limitation on production resulted in the works becoming very scarce and they are now worth several hundreds of times their original value.

James Richards sadly died in 1949 aged 83 and I never got to meet the old master. An elderly niece of his once described him to me as a kindly old gentleman who would walk great distances preaching the gospels; indeed Richards himself once claimed that he had visited every church in Sussex, an heroic task indeed!

Richards left no record of ever having visited Petworth, though in his epic autobiographical poem *'Bout Me*, published in 1929, he mentions Chichester and Ar'ndel and Bosham. Clearly his great love was for his native East Sussex. The Rother mentioned in the following verse is not our own but its larger cousin which rises in Ashdown Forest and flows into the sea at Rye.

*I've been to Ar'ndel an Chuck Hatch,  
To Bosham an to Brede;  
To Battle an to Bishopstone  
An o'er de Rother's Tweed.*

*'Bout Me. Verse 92*

Richards's dialect writings very much reflect the speech of the Hailsham district where he was born and should not be taken as a rigorously accurate example of the dialect as spoken in the western districts of the county. Indeed, dialects knew nothing of political boundaries; more likely great natural obstacles such as rivers or ranges of hills affected them. At Petworth we historically looked west towards Chichester rather than to the thickly forested Weald and consequently our speech was very much allied to the dialect used in eastern Hampshire as much as that spoken by our East Sussex cousins.

Few of the words in the psalm will prove difficult to the reader unfamiliar with the Sussex dialect, however the uninitiated will soon realise that 'th' is invariably replaced with 'd', a mannerism not commonly replicated in West Sussex. I should also explain that in Sussex a bat is generally a stick of any type, though in the main it implies a walking stick. A Pyecombe crook is of course a shepherds crook peculiar to that district, every neighbourhood having a recognisable characteristic in the way their crooks were made.

Miles Costello

#### **De Shepherd Psalm**

**Put into de Sussex dialect by Jim Cladpole**

De Lord my Shepherd be;  
Surelye I shall not lack.  
He leads me into fresh green grass  
(Along de daily track.)

And where de waters sweet  
Flow gently, gently on  
He leads me; (and He maaks me feel  
Dat I be He's own son.)

My soul He does restore:  
And in right paths does guide  
For He's naame's sake; (and so dat I  
Doant wander from He's side.)

Yea, though I walk 'tween hills  
Da shaades of death all through;  
Of evil I wunt be afeardt  
Acos I walk wid You

Your kind of Sussex bat,  
Your kind of Pyecombe crook,  
Dey Comfort me; (and 'sure me I  
To you for help can look.)

A table You've prepared  
Dere I may set and feast  
Where enemies be all around;  
(You'll see dey doant molest.)

You've poured oil on my head  
(As ef I was a king:)  
My cup of joy runs over loike  
A ever bubbling spring.

Goodness and marcy too,  
Shall sureley follow me,  
All through de days of earthly life  
Wherever I may be.

And surelye after dat  
In de house of de LORD  
I'll live forever. (For dat be  
According to He's word.)

M.C.

## Three Letters from the 1940s

Christopher Holland writes:

1, Moatlands Cottage, Vowels Lane,  
Kingscote, West Sussex. RH19 4LL.

Dear Peter,

I enclose the three letters written by my grandmother, Harriet Hill, to her daughter, my mother, between October 1940 and February 1943.

At the beginning of the second world war, my mother, Marjorie Holland, was living in Dunfermline where my father, Jack Holland, was chaplain of HMS Caledonian, a navy training ship. In 1940 my father was posted as chaplain to the aircraft carrier HMS Formidable and my mother came to live in the flat on the top floor of Stringers Hall, the home of her parents Wilson and Harriet Hill and her sister, my aunt, Kathleen Hill, who taught piano playing to many Petworth people from 1937 until 1994. My mother lived in the flat from 1940 until October 1942, during which time she worked as a cashier in the Westminster Bank in the Square.

In the March 2001 issue of the Petworth Magazine, there was an article written by Clive Muncaster describing what happened to his mother and himself on the day of the bombing of the boys school. I read this article to my mother, who was sadly blind, and she remembered being with Mrs Muncaster on that day. Apparently she was friendly with Mrs Muncaster and she used to baby sit for Clive and his brother. At the time that the bomb hit the school my aunt Kathleen Hill was teaching music at Northend House School, and my mother feared for her safety, and followed Mrs Muncaster, on foot. My aunt, in the meantime, had gathered up all the terrified children in her class, and had hidden with them under the grand piano. As a footnote to this, I myself was a pupil at Northend House in 1951/1952.

*Wilson and Harriet Hill with  
their daughter Kathleen in the  
garden of Stringers Hall.  
About 1938.*



Editor's note.

These three letters are of extraordinary interest, giving a vivid feeling of the time. Christopher and I have made some light explanatory notes but suspect that other readers will have their own personal knowledge. If so, please let us know. The first letter is complete, the second has some minor omissions, while the third has some more substantial omissions, largely of family news. Harriet Hill's husband Wilson Hill owned the chemist's shop in East Street, almost opposite the old Post Office, now Mrs Rabone's dress shop.

LETTER 1

Stringers Hall, Petworth, Sussex.  
Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1940

My darling Marjorie,

We loved having your nice long letter this morning. I am so sorry I have only had time for such scrappy notes lately, but what with Nancy's slowness in the mornings - having to take the B's out after tea, and having to get supper for five (six Wednesdays and Sundays) and ironing one or two evenings a week, I seem to have no real period of leisure except perhaps after lunch some days, when I am usually feeling sleepy after a broken night. We had an alarming time on Sunday night. K. was called out just as we were finishing supper and there

were ominous "crumps" all round about. I felt awfully uneasy about her having to turn out in it, one particularly loud explosion which rattled all doors and windows, sent us all scurrying down to the cottage cellar. When the bangings started, Daddy went to ask Thear to come in to us, and Brown, of course, was here so we were quite a party. There is still a lot of rubbish to be cleared out. Daddy gets so little time these days and it is awkward doing a job like that in the dark. Anyway, there is plenty of room to move about. The timber Daddy ordered when you were with us to shore up the front cellar, hasn't arrived yet, but I really prefer the cottage cellar to being underneath the shop, with all its inflammable stuff. We were down in the cellar for perhaps ¾ of an hour (B's and all) and when things quietened down a little we came up into the dining room. I reheated the coffee and we were drinking that at 12 o'clock. Brown went home about 12.30, and soon afterwards the crumps started again, though further off. We collected various odds and ends, in readiness to go down to the cellar again. I sat in the kitchen where it was warm - most of the party dozing. We eventually decided to go to bed towards two, but had two alarms after that, when Daddy and I jumped out of bed and got into warm clothes. Our little town certainly had its "baptism of fire" that night all round and by a miracle, for which are very thankful, all the incendiarys (sic) which were dropped, fell on ground round the edge of the town and burned themselves out without doing any damage, except in one case up in the woods at the tops of the "Gog" where there was a big blaze (ricks I think) and I believe the big bang came from there too. We saw all the little burnt patches across the Sheepdowns down to the brook at the bottom of Shimmings. We didn't look out ourselves, but many did, and said it looked like a ring of fires all round, when the incendiaries were all blazing. The town has such a number of people who have come from more dangerous areas. They must have thought they had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. Kath only got home in time to get a drink and go round to the report centre at 8. Luckily there were no casualties to collect so she was able to sleep after midnight. As I was struggling to finish the ironing on Tuesday night, a crump came which made the kitchen outer door rattle and we thought the game was beginning again, but it wasn't followed up by anything else near. Last night, or rather at nearly one o'clock, we had just dropped off, when we were wakened up by a bang and jumped out of bed and into a few clothes, but, after sitting on the edge of the bed and not hearing any more sinister sounds we undressed again and soon dropped off to sleep. Why on earth they hang about this neighbourhood so much, I can't imagine. Sunday was a fairly quiet day till after dark. It was the Harvest Festival and Daddy and I went to the 11 o'clock service. It was a very cold day and cloudy. About 4.30 we set off in the car to go to the "Come to Tea" cottage near Horsham. Just as we were getting into the car at the front door, we heard the sound of planes up above the clouds, and it sounded as if there was a scrap going on up overhead. I felt a bit nervous about setting out but the sounds went further off and we decided to risk it. Brown went with us but Mr and Mrs C had to take her mother out. I told them they could bring her back to tea which they did. We came home by some side roads which eventually brought us out east of Pulborough. I was glad to get back without incident. Yesterday, Daddy went to his installation ceremony at 3 o'clock and K. and I went by car to a concert held in the Parish Church for the relief of air raid victims in London. It was a very nice programme indeed. There were three artists, (local talent I believe) an organist, a lady violinist, and a baritone -

all very good. We enjoyed it. After it was over, we met Brown and he took us to tea at Rosemary's Parlour.

Mr and Mrs Crowe slept round at Mrs Hunter's digs last night. The woman's husband was on "Home Guard" duty all night and she was too nervous to be left alone with an old lady who is deaf so she asked Mrs C. to go round to sleep with her mother and Mr C. decided he must go too. They were back here bright and early for breakfast and left as soon as supper was over last night, so she got out of helping with the washing up. She usually helps to wipe the things, except on Monday after breakfast when she goes round to her mother's digs to do her bit of washing. Wiping up and dusting her bedroom are all she does. I feel very peeved to think they have never once asked me if it was convenient for her to stay on here.

I must close - it is post-time.  
With fondest love to both of you,  
Ever your loving  
Mother.

Can't find Lansley's bill just now. It is 2/6d for altering skirt. Pa and I sent Doris and Ron an electric kettle, hope its get there all right.

Notes:

This letter is written to Mrs Holland shortly before she came to live in the Stringers Hall flat. Nancy helped in the house. The B's were two Cairn terriers belonging to Kathleen Hill. Mr Thear rented the cottage adjoining Stringers Hall. Mr Brown worked in the chemists for Wilson Hill. Mr and Mrs Crowe are not known. Doris and Ron are friends of Mr and Mrs Wilson Hill. They lived at Westgate-on-Sea.

LETTER 2

Stringers Hall, Petworth, Sussex.  
Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> 1942

My darling Marjorie,

.....  
What a nightmarish week last week was. Jack's wonderful news on Wednesday morning made us forget everything else for a time. Even now, it seems almost too good to be true. I wonder what you will think of Malvern. Do hope you have got a comfortable place to stay and that your back is feeling better.

The funeral on Saturday was a very big affair. The shops all closed for the greater part of the afternoon. I didn't go, because I just felt I



*Harriet Hill (writer of the letters) in the garden of Stringers Hall with Dora and Friv, (the Cairn terriers) and Bruce. 1939.*

couldn't bear to see all the poor parents in their terrible distress. Daddy went with the "Fire Guards". They were standing round by the wall of the stables, nearly opposite that house called "Gleneagles", for the best part of an hour, in the hot sun and Miss Eager fainted and had to be taken home. I have never seen such crowds in Petworth. Kath and I went up to the church between ¼ and half past two to look at the wreaths and flowers which were being laid on the grass in the churchyard in the morning, but there was such a crowd both inside and outside the churchyard that we came straight home again. The Bishop of Chichester took the service both in Church and at the cemetery. Somebody told Daddy that the church service seemed most uninspiring, but that might have been just their personal opinion.

Mrs Streeter was buried today. I met Mrs Watson coming away from the service in church. Margaret saw the little grandson in Chichester Hospital yesterday and said he was very bright and cheery. His eyes were bandaged up. We heard a few days ago that even if he recovered he would be blind, but now there is a slight hope that the sight of one eye may be saved .....

Kath and I went to the cemetery before lunch yesterday to see the flowers. They were all laid in rows on the grass, as the filling in of the grave was not quite completed. There must have been many hundreds of bunches of flowers.

Saturday was a most lovely day, so warm and sunny and yesterday up to the middle of the afternoon was just the same. We got the 3.10 bus up to the Goodwood turning and walked over the Downs to Bignor. As we got near to Duncton it began to look dark and threatening and the top of the Downs proved to be shrouded in a thick sea mist which didn't clear at all and of course blotted out all views. We had tea at "Thatched Eaves", but as we didn't reach there till turned five o'clock and wanted to get the bus home from Duncton at about twenty to seven, we hadn't to waste much time over tea. We walked back to the bus through a fine drizzle or Scotch mist.

It was showery this morning and has been an indoor drying day again. I washed my striped Macclesfield and my black and white crepe-de-chene, ready to put away till the next warm weather. It is sad to think summer is over (or has it been at all).

Did you see in the papers that the clothing coupons on the card must be used before or by this coming Saturday? Had we better post the ones you left with Kath, for you to use in Malvern or district. Am finishing this just in time for Tuesdays a.m. post. I must finish or will miss it. Fondest love to you and to Jack from all of us.

Yours loving,  
Mother.

Notes:

This letter reflects the aftermath of the bombing of Petworth Boys School at Michaelmas 1942. Mrs Streeter is not related to the gardener at Petworth House. Mrs Watson, widow of Lord Leconfield's stable groom, was a Scots lady with whom the Petworth curates often took lodgings. In latter years she would live at Stone House, finally returning to Scotland. A feature of the letters is the extensive walking undertaken by the family. Neither Harriet nor Wilson Hill would have been particularly young at this time.

LETTER 3

Stringers Hall, Petworth, Sussex.

Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> 1943

My darling Marjorie,

If you have read in the papers today about the scattered raids on South East England yesterday afternoon you will probably have wondered if we had been affected. We certainly had a very unpleasant time, but we haven't heard of anyone in Petworth being injured. It was a miserable Wednesday afternoon - low cloud and intermittent rain - Jerry's favourite weather conditions. I had been resting in the lounge till about four o'clock, and then went downstairs wondering where Daddy had disappeared to (he was clearing up the cookery room after the decorations) and whether to make tea or wait until Kath came home at six and have a high tea-supper. I don't know just what time it was when the first crashes came. They sounded much too near to be pleasant and I flew into the dining room and under the table. The B's were barking furiously. As soon as the noises ended, I ran up to the bathroom and while there various bangings started again. I snatched up my coat from the bed and ran downstairs again. The Eliots also came down into the dining room, and after a few minutes of silence Mr Eliot went out to see if he could find out where the bombs had dropped. He went down to the Square, and had to take shelter with several other people in that narrow passage between Eagers and the auctioneer's office, because one of our planes had rushed up and was firing at the enemy. We felt pleased when he came back with that news and felt that he (Jerry) would be driven off and all would be well again. One of Mrs Knight's windows in New Street was broken and one of Eagers, but whether by blast or by bullets we haven't heard yet. About half past five I thought some tea would be very acceptable and had just carried the trays up to the lounge when I heard a plane tearing along at a terrific rate and very low. It went right over this house and a second or two later more bombs dropped .....

I think the second raider must have come back this way, because at some point which I am not quite clear about I heard what sounded like very big hailstones rattling on the house and it didn't occur to me at the time that he was machine-gunning us. Just before the second raid, I had seen Mrs Brydone go up the drive with Mrs Stevens and when Pa met her coming back shortly afterwards, she told him she had seen the bombs drop in a field beyond the cemetery. I then began to wonder if Northend House was alight, but Kath came in before we had time to find out about it and set our fears at rest. One bomb fell near the gate we go through to get on the Horsham Road after walking behind the rectory and another in a field beyond the cemetery. The first bombs fell near the station and the stationmaster, porter and the lame man who drives Harwood's van had to lie flat against a wall to shelter from machine gun bullets. We have a lot to be thankful for. It was simply miraculous that so little damage was done. Midhurst had a raid with casualties and a lot of damage to shop windows. Mrs Bracewell was in a hairdressers there when the window went.

[Ed. The next paragraph gives more information on local bomb damage, but has been struck out by Harriet prior to sending the letter with the note. "This isn't correct."]

.....

Frank took us out to lunch on Sunday to Old Priest's House. We caught the 12.55 bus

to Pulborough and walked from there, arriving about 2 o'clock - rather late, but Mrs Grace said it wouldn't matter when Daddy phoned her. It was a fine day and we thoroughly enjoyed the change. In the later afternoon Frank and Kath walked to Bignor and had tea at "Thatched Eaves" and Pa and I walked nearly to Bury, came back to tea at Old Priest and walked to Pulborough to catch the 5.47 bus, which to our dismay, we saw crossing the end of the road before we had crossed the bridge over the river. We didn't want to hang about Pulborough for an hour, so decided to walk on towards Fittleworth. About half a mile beyond Stopham, Harwood's taxi overtook us, on its way back from taking a fare to Pulborough Station. Old George drew alongside of us and asked if we would rather walk or ride! What a joy to ride home! We were both beginning to feel a bit "leggy" and I thought Frivol was getting a bit tired.

.....  
 Kath has just been phoning Mrs Turner to ask how things were with them after Wednesday's upset. Mrs T said nearly all the shop windows were blown out (or in) and Kimbells is closed but the British Restaurant is all right as far as she knows. One bomb dropped at the back of Woolworths. K is going there tomorrow morning to give lessons so we shall know more when she comes home .....

It has been another showery miserable day today and we had a warning about mid-day but nothing was heard. Everybody seems a bit "jittery" since Wednesday. ....

..... There was a red light on and Miss Lee rang up to see if Kath could go, but she was on duty at school this afternoon and so could not go to Newlands .....

Olders had some tins of that curry powder a few days ago, and if one is still available will send it on to you. I bought a tin of peas (12 points) and a tin of grapefruit (9 points) at Knights this week, also a bottle of cherries and a bottle of plums (no points). Ask your grocer if he has any - they aren't very plentiful so he may not show them.

..... About porridge - it says on my Scotts Oats box - to one cup of oats add 2 cups of cold water, then add 2 cups of boiling water and boil briskly for 5 minutes (or more).

Kath didn't see a lot of bomb damage in Chi this a.m. apart from broken windows. One fell in some cottage property behind Woolworths, I suppose in that street up behind the Dolphin where we pay "calls". She said a black and white timbered house in Midhurst, near Petersfield turning and next to that chapel in the corner with pillars in front



*Marjorie Holland (née Hill) recipient of the letters, pictured on the bridge at the bottom of the Shimmings Valley in 1940.*

*All photographs courtesy of Mr Christopher Holland.*

looked badly knocked about and lots of windows were boarded up. Must rush to get the 4.15 post now. Fondest love to you both. Take care of yourselves.

Your loving Mother.

Notes:

Mr and Mrs Eliot had the flat at Stringers Hall recently vacated by Mrs Holland. Olders are the long-established grocers in Angel Street.

## Sherbert Fountains and other random recollections



*An older Byworth*

### *Earliest Memories*

I suppose that my very earliest memories are from when I was about fourteen months old and Mr Hanger was quitting Hallgate Farm. Mrs Steer - who was my surrogate grandmother - had taken me up to the farm where they were turning the old stuff out of the house. We had gone to the backdoor where there used to be a trap under the kitchen window which went down to the cellar, all sorts of junk had been thrown up out of the cellar but I can remember quite clearly there being lots of brightly coloured fancy biscuit tins, why they have stuck in my mind all of these years I will never know but that was certainly my earliest memory.

Jimmy Knight was carter down at Barnsgate when Mr Ragless had the farm; he lived in what is now Oades Cottage and once when he was putting the horse away in the stable he picked me up and gave me a ride on top of his big cart horse. I was very young and don't suppose that I really knew what was happening, though I have disliked horses all my life.

*Gran Steer*

I say Gran but really she was no relation at all. Mrs Steer's husband Tom was shepherd at Hallgate and they were good friends of my grandparents for they had moved to Byworth at about the same time. I never knew either of my grandmothers and as Mrs Steer had helped the doctor at my birth I suppose that she just became Gran to me.

To be continued.

Joy Gumbrell was talking to Miles Costello.

---

## New Members

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Mrs. L. Barham         | 2, Theadore, Cottages, Upperton, Petworth.                           |
| Ms. A. Blythe          | 27, The Leys, Fernhurst, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 3JY.                |
| Mrs. R. Bryant         | Alfriston House, Middle Street, Petworth.                            |
| Mr. & Mrs. B. Chandler | Laughton, 22, Birkenhill Place, New Elgin, IV30 6EX.                 |
| Mr. M. Cronshaw        | 1, Willett's Close, Duncton.   |
| Mr. & Mrs. T. Dommett  | 56, Sheepdown Drive, Petworth, GU28 0BX.                             |
| Mr. L. Howard          | 3, Hanover Court, Fox Road, Easebourne, Midhurst,<br>GU29 9BH.       |
| Mr. D. Nicholson       | Somerset Hospital, North Street, Petworth, GU28 0DG.                 |
| Mr. & Mrs. M. O'Dell   | 12, Somerset Hospital, North Street, Petworth, GU28 0DG.             |
| Mr. & Mrs A. Older     | 29, Plough lane, Purley, Surrey, CR8 3QG.                            |
| Mr. H. Wakeford        | 350F, Cherry Orchard, Petworth, GU28 0BS.                            |
| Mr. & Mrs. R. Woodard  | Waterton House, Byworth, Petworth, GU28 0HN.                         |
| Mrs. A. Worthington    | 5, New Street, Petworth.   |
| Mrs. E.M. Anderson     | 7, The Spinney, Pulborough, RH20 2AP.                                |
| Mrs. E. Dolton         | 8, Tregarland Close, Coats Green, Launceston, Cornwall,<br>PL15 7NE. |
| Mrs. P. Mellish        | 17, School Close, Fittleworth, Pulborough, RH20 1JO.                 |
| Dr. A. Poole           | Sayers House, School Lane, Fittleworth, Pulborough, RH20<br>1JB.     |
| Mr. C. Rayner          | 12a, Union Bank Lane, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 5XB.                      |
| Mrs. J. Harvey         | Ivy House, Fittleworth.  |
| Dr. A. Golding         | 12, Clifton Hill, London NW8 0QG.                                    |



