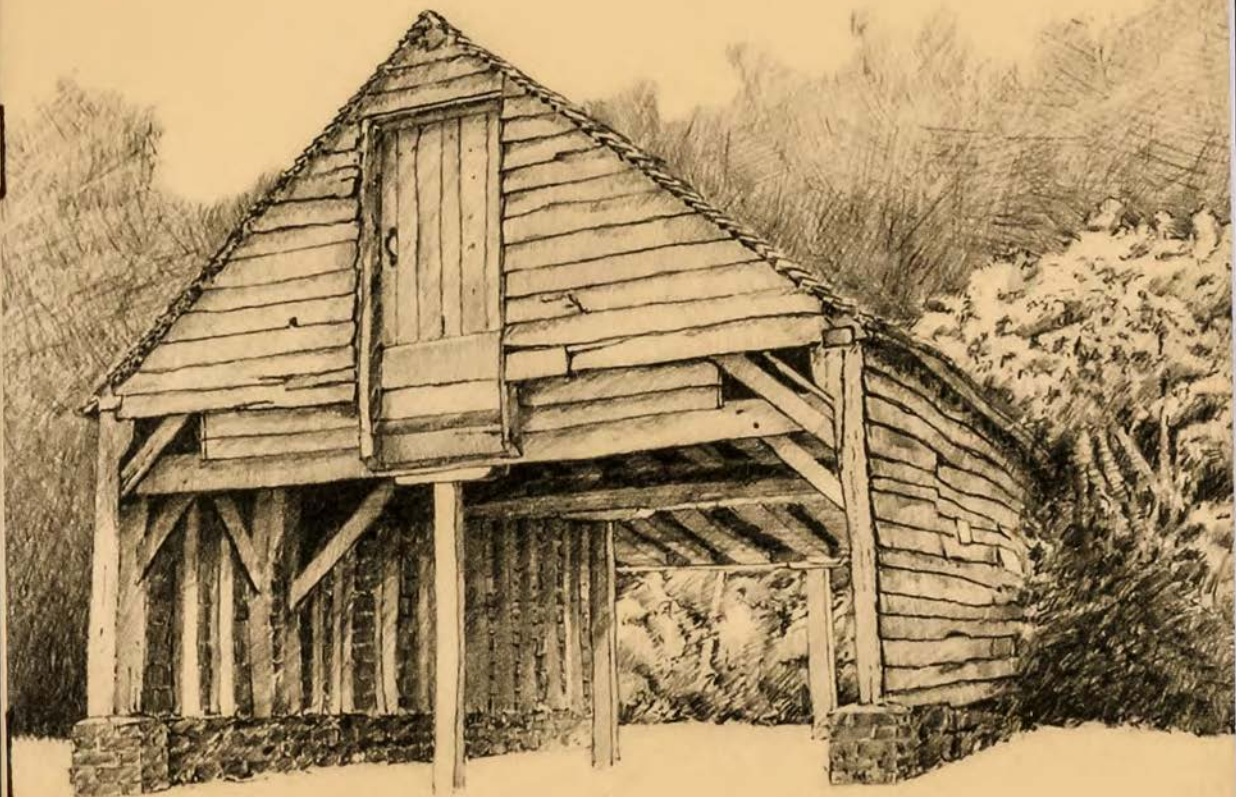


Miles Costello
Petworth
Collection



THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
Magazine

NO. 137. SEPTEMBER 2009

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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 £15.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following:

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Mr Philip Hounsham, Mrs Anne Simmons, Mrs Ros Staker, Mrs Deborah Stevenson,
Mrs Patricia Turland, Mrs Linda Wort

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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 Mike Hubbard 343249

Chairman's Notes

Magazine 137. It's tempting to echo the 137th psalm "By the waters of Babylon". Almost as many Magazines as there are psalms. Who would have thought it in the mid-seventies?

Several people made fleeting oral identifications for the centre spread in the last Magazine. No one wrote anything down. Does it matter? I don't know. As an editor however I have to see it as an opportunity lost.

Perhaps the old sage was right after all:

*"There is no remembrance of former things,
Nor will there be any remembrance
Of later things yet to happen
Among those who come after." Ecclesiastes i 11.*

Perhaps.

On a quite different note I would imagine myself to be quite safe in offering the Society's unqualified opposition to Car Parking Charges in the town. Such an imposition, at this time, indeed at any time, seems short-sighted in the extreme and in the last resort probably self-defeating.

P.S. Does anyone know the location of the old Petworth W.I. Scrapbook? I last saw it in the late 1970's.

P.P.S. Petworth Fair Friday 20th November

Health and Safety Regulations require stewards on duty while the fair is open. We simply do not have a comfortable number – we do need a few more this year. For the future of the fair please help.

Peter

27th July

**THINKING OF STEWARDING
AT THE COTTAGE MUSEUM
NEXT YEAR? FOR A NO
OBLIGATION INTRODUCTION
PHONE PETER ON 342562.**

The Annual General Meeting and Chris. Howkins – Oak, eh!

It was the 35th AGM. A 7pm start was advertised so that our popular speaker, Chris. Howkins, would be able to start his talk soon after 7.45 and have plenty of time for his talk.

The earlier start, together with counter attractions such as the Annual Parish Meeting and a theatre trip to Worthing, meant that there was a fairly low turnout. Nevertheless, a total attendance of 36 was achieved in the first $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour.

Extracts from the unconfirmed minutes:

'Treasurer's Report. Mr. Henderson drew attention to the £500 increase in income from the book sales, the purchase of the Town Crier's costume and donations to the Coultershaw Beam Pump Trust towards a seat in memory of the late Mr. Jack Rapley, a valued member of the Society and for a new staircase. Mr. Michael Hubbard, the Crier, added his own appreciation of the costume, saying that he had received many favourable comments from the public. Membership stood at 645, a fall of 26. Subscriptions had been pegged and the quality of the Magazine maintained by the success of the book sales.

'Election of Committee. The Chairman paid tribute to the service of Mr. 'Jumbo' Taylor and Mrs. Audrey Grimwood. the remaining Committee members were willing to continue and their re-election was proposed seconded and carried.

'Chairman's Report. Mr. Jerrome, reporting on the year's activities, said that the emphasis at monthly meetings had moved towards performers rather than lecturers. There had been fewer walks, with the earlier ones more popular than those later in the year. The Annual Dinner was again very successful and over-booked, as was the coming visit to the House of Commons, which it was hoped would be repeated in 2010. The book sales, time-consuming, but enjoyable and financially beneficial.

The Magazine had built up an important record of reminiscences over the past 30 years, but finding people to talk to was increasingly difficult. Fair Day had come under Health & Safety restrictions, but had gone well. The Cottage Museum had become a prominent Petworth attraction, supported by the Society, as was the Coultershaw Beam Pump Trust, with Society representatives and the Leconfield Hall.

Excellent photographs by Mr. and Mrs. Ian Godsmark had projected on to the large screen illustrated visits to Chatham Dockyard and Michelham Priory, local walks, Fair Day and the presentation of the memorial seat at Coultershaw. Scenes of other events, people and places – bluebells, a rainbow and the forced landing of a glider brought the business to a close.'

Ten to eight had been the aim for Chris. Howkins to speak and at ten to eight he began in his familiar, uninhibited style.

Those who came expecting a similar treatment of 'The Oak' to his previous exposition of 'The Sweet Chestnut' – its history and the qualities and uses of its timber, were, perhaps, surprised but not disappointed that this was to be a different approach. Uses of oak were barely touched upon. History, yes, but folklore and legend arising from the oak's durability, strength and resistance to dampness and temperature fluctuations.

The Norse God, Thor (Thunor in Old Saxon, from which we get 'thunder', the sound of Thunor's hammer) had the oak as his token. In fact, from Neolithic times the chief gods were associated with oak trees. Oaks struck by lightning were evidence of messages from the gods, although the perception that oaks are more vulnerable to lightning strikes than other trees probably arises from their resistance to fire and therefore their survival when other trees would burn up.

Early Saxons measured seasonal change only as summer and winter. Time was measured in winters, not years. The oak, the last tree to lose its leaves and then coming into bud five or six months later, marked the seasons. Much later, the spectacular reappearance of green leaves led to the oak becoming the symbol of resurrection in many religions.

Coming nearer to the present day, we have Gospel Oaks, often on parish boundaries, under which itinerant evangelists, notably, John Wesley, excluded from the parish church, would preach to large crowds.

Symbolism continued with 'England's wooden walls' and today, the oak leaf is the logo of the National Trust – read into it what you will – and new rituals are being invented.

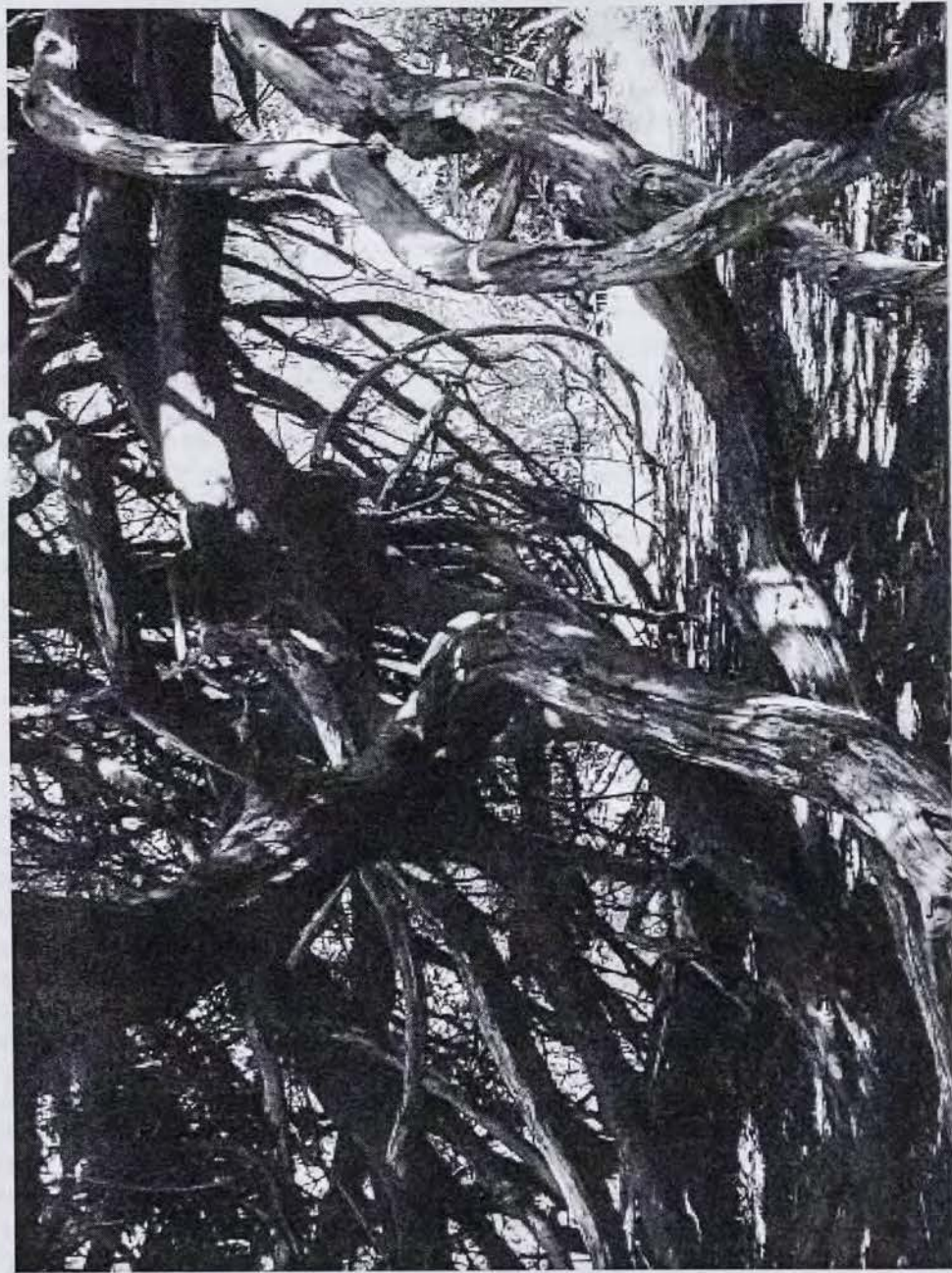
We had just a hint of the talk many of us expected: the uses of oak trees and the wood, when Chris. explained its qualities which make it more serviceable than steel as frames for buildings, but that does not mean that we had not been fascinated by the stories and entertained by a very colourful personality and expert speaker.

KCT

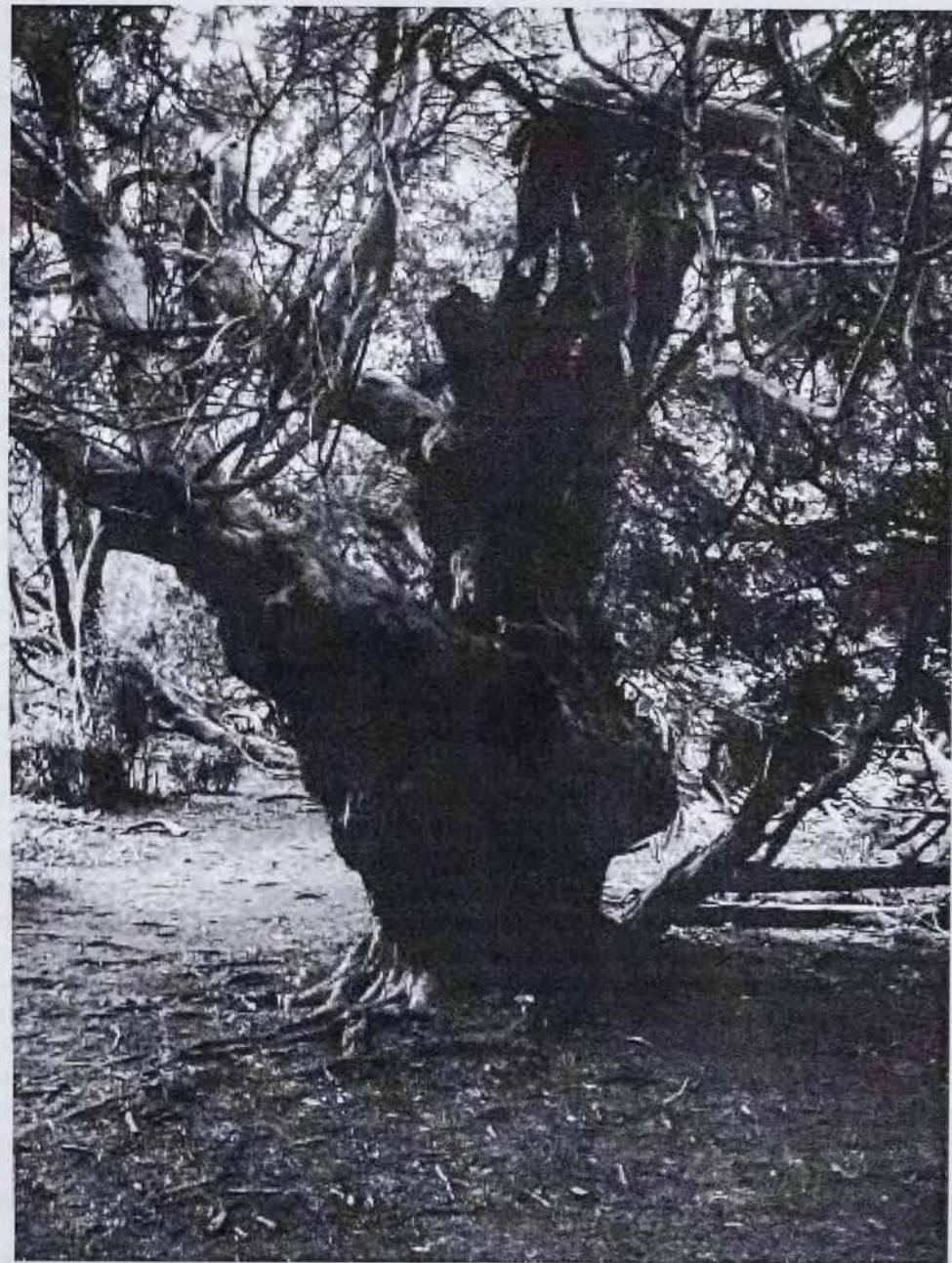
With Debby and Gordon at Kingley Vale

To Lavant then on down the sunny road to West Stoke, passing the turning to Lavant House School on the left, with its memories of a visit there a year ago. Through West Stoke village and into the church car park. Then a long lane bordered by fields. It's hot and it's a fair distance. Nigel hears rather than sees a yellowhammer, bedstraw, buttercup and mugwort are May fresh at the lane side. We arrive at the Reserve's small, open, Information Centre. Yews, it seems, have grown here for five hundred years at least. Beyond that it's anyone's guess. Some say they were planted to commemorate the murder of a Saxon King, Sigbert, by a swineherd. Perhaps five hundred years old is a fair consensus. Yews are certainly durable, even surviving second world war target practice with mortar shells.

Into the forest, the finest yew forest in Europe. It's not the greenery that strikes first, it's the darkness and the sprawling distended trunks. The occasional giant lies on its side with large pieces of chalk embedded in the exposed roots. We step over fallen branches. As with other trees, yews shed branches with age. A glade in a yew forest is a subdued place – can you have a glade with this degree of cover? Yew is the dark tree, sacred to Mecate the goddess. It's a hard wood, durable but laborious to work, and demanding a constant resharpening of tools. We come out briefly into the open; with the spring flowers gone and those of high summer still to come, late May is also mid-season. We plunge back in the woods to the lair



In the yew forest. Two



photographs by Gordon Stevenson.

of the pot-bellied, almost personified, trunks. There's virtually nothing on the forest floor; the poisonous yew needles see to that, but there are several clumps of the stiffly upright parasitic butcher's broom. In places where branches have fallen even the most tenuous connection with the parent bole will result in continuing growth; sometimes the offshoot will simply root again. In the presence of these monsters, concepts of time seem almost redundant, the voice of the psalmist the only appropriate comment "like a watch in the night" "a stranger and a sojourner as all my fathers were".

The area of old yew is, by "forest" standards, not large and we soon move out into the more open part of the reserve. There's younger yew forest in the distance, and we haven't the time (or, perhaps, in the heat) the inclination to climb the steep chalk scarp. Is that a red kite circling over the woods? More likely a buzzard. Looking south it's possible, even from the height we've reached, to see the sea dazzling in the sun. Nothing grows on the verge of the new yew woods, and the chalk gleams in the sun. Back down the slight slope, we pass painted lady butterflies flying fast. There's an invasion this year, visitors from Morocco and Southern Spain. The long journey has bleached the wings of much of their colour. Rain over France, travelling relentlessly northward they'll lay eggs on the way and the new "native" brood will have a much fuller colour. Coming off the slope there are brimstones fluttering over the brambles, the yellow, some say, gave rise to the generic term "butter fly". Soon we're back in the shade of the forest.

Along the path again, the afternoon fields to the side. It's been a long afternoon and it's still hot. Time for a look at West Stoke Church, St Andrew's. The remains of an early thirteenth century wall painting of the Crucifixion and a splendid Elizabethan monument to Adrian and Mary Stoughton. They had sixteen children "some of whom having predeceased them are shown as skulls being carried by their siblings" – so the Guide. A definitely Jacobean touch.

There is a comprehensive account of the wildlife in the mid-1970s by Richard Williamson but I also look at my copy of W.H. Hudson's "*Nature in Downland*" (1923 edition). It seems to have started life at the Catholic Lending Library, 404 Commercial Road, Portsmouth. Does the Library still exist? 1923 is a lateish edition and Hudson in fact takes us back a good hundred years and more. Clearly the yew forest was age-old a thousand years ago. "The belief is that many of these yew trees are two thousand years old." Perhaps. Hudson had been particularly impressed with the throngs of missel-thrush. "This bird loves the yew-berry above all other fruits and there is one spot where he can feast on it as he cannot do anywhere else in the kingdom."

Incidentally what a pity that Hudson did not come to Petworth during his travels. His account of a visit to Midhurst, duplicated for Petworth, would be enlightening. Midhurst, "in its rough-paved, crooked, uneven streets, ancient timbered houses, its curfew bell and darkness and silence at night, seemed to have suddenly carried me back into medieval times." Read his explanation of why Midhurst was so lacking in hostelries, and of the lone landlord's supper of bread, cheese and raw onion in a darkened room (pages 249-251).

P.

Wi' a hundred book sales

"A funny old game", traditionally said about football, but equally applicable to book sales. Similar stock, or apparently similar, can give widely varying returns month to month. Does it matter? Well, actually it does, given that this rather ambitious Magazine is so heavily subsidised by the book sales. There must be some correlation between quality of stock and takings but it's not something that can simply be assumed. An unknown factor is the presence or absence of particular buyers: the bigger buyers have especial interests and these need to coincide with stock. Not every one of our "regulars" comes every month. They're often travelling long distances. It's June and we're pondering such abstruse matters in the light of the May sale. This went off the graph completely, eclipsing even February. June has to be a little anti-climactic.

But then how would you define a "good" sale? Solely on the money taken? That has to be important. After all, there's always the hire of the hall, the van and storage – the romance of books isn't everything. Or perhaps success is the obvious shrinking of stock as the afternoon approaches, or the feeling that what was worth preserving has found a home, temporary or perhaps permanent. But what's the criterion for "worth preserving"? The absolute rubbish is removed before the sale for recycling. Two van loads of books left over from a fete can be dispiriting – they can also be heavy. You must never say no but book sales are as much about sifting as about money.

Or perhaps success should be measured in terms of attendance, bringing people to Petworth. That heady period just after ten o'clock when you can hardly move and there's the eerie quiet that comes with concentration. For our clientele, once a month, Petworth is the centre of the universe. The sale can't be unique but from our cloistered viewpoint there's nothing like it. Other such worlds may exist somewhere but we cannot locate them.

Perhaps you might use other, more arbitrary standards. The initial height of the £1 table at ten o'clock as opposed, say, to twenty past ten, or even the length of the queue on the Hall's east side. Cogitate as you will: some facts are inescapable: virtually nothing of quality will survive the first half hour and no one will pay more than fifty pence for modern fiction even 2009 vintage.

October will see the hundredth sale. A centenary of steady evolution but evolution hasn't taken out the sheer physical effort. And boxes. The sale has to be about boxes as much as it is about books. "A funny old man wandering about with empty boxes". Today Ian follows me home with some more. Is it contagious? Perhaps Petworth itself will evolve – into a town full of people, endlessly, apparently aimlessly, wandering about with empty boxes.

And how to celebrate the centenary sale? The Chairman with "Songs from the Shows"? "Is it a celebration or a wake?" someone asks. A Rupert Bear theme with helpers dressed as inhabitants of Nutwood? The problems could be more than logistical. Watch this space.

Oh, and you wanted to know about the June sale. In truth a curate's egg of a day. Furiously busy to start with, then an afternoon in the doldrums. However busy the morning, it does help if you have a following wind in the afternoon. This time the sunlit Square is as

unforgivingly dead as only Petworth Square can sometimes be. The very personification of emptiness. In short a good sale, but, as we anticipated, always in the shadow of May.

Book of the quarter? A slightly contentious choice I would imagine. *Selected Passages from the Sermons of John Donne*.¹ Sombre, redolent of mortality and verging at times on the macabre. A foray into that uneasy Jacobean world we'd briefly glimpsed on the Stoughton monument in West Stoke church.² The copy once belonged to Violet Lady Leconfield and comes from the same source as last quarter's chef's recipe book.³ Best read a little at a time, it's strong, demanding stuff. Her ladyship perhaps felt the same; not all the pages have been cut.

P.

¹ Ed. Logan Pearsall Smith (Oxford 1919).

² See Debby and Gordon's Kingley Vale walk in this issue.

³ See Crustaceans, Frustrations PSM 136.

Someone has espied Charles Clarke

Andy's occasional London expeditions are the stuff of legend. Who forgets the sewers two years ago? Formative, you might say, with our treasurer as a kind of wry variation on the Pied Piper. His latest effort was ambitious, hopelessly overbooked, and, as it turned out, the more characterful for the occasional glitch. A 7.45 start, then the long drive out of Sussex and through Surrey, before being drawn remorselessly into the rush hour London traffic. Wandsworth and Battersea, the weary facades of fast food outlets, ethnic and otherwise. Huge hoardings announcing an offering by one Lady Gaga, a singer, or a pizza offer, buy one, get one free. BIG IF. The big if. Do we need two? Someone has espied Charles Clarke. Seems definitive – we're here. It's the fourth anniversary of the July 7th bombings and the security at the mother of parliaments is a constant reminder. Finally we're through security, keys and other metal objects scanned, photographs taken and into the huge West Hall — far the oldest part of the ancient Palace of Westminster.

Two separate parties of 21. One with the Treasurer, the other with the Chairman, the latter easily identifiable by the trademark hat. But no – a gentleman usher appears. Does one wear a hat in a palace? It seems not. At a stroke the Chairman's identification is swept away. We meet our guide. On his own admission a tour is nothing like enough to take in everything – four would be inadequate.

The West Hall, originally erected by William Rufus was, at the time, perhaps the largest building in the world. It is certainly a survivor. It escaped the disastrous nineteenth century fire which destroyed the rest of the Palace. William IV had in mind to rebuild on a scale befitting a growing empire but had died before a brick was laid. Progress came with the accession of Queen Victoria and a competition to design the new houses of parliament won by the up and coming Charles Barry. For a few brief years he shared work with Augustus Pugin, the former taking responsibility in broad terms for the exterior, the latter for the interior.

Pugin would die young in 1840 but not before he had left his very considerable mark.

Fourteen bombs destroyed the "new" House in 1940 but again the historic West Hall escaped. The Commons chamber was rebuilt between 1945 and 1950. Once embarked on the tour, rooms followed in bewildering succession, given that the Palace covers a rather smaller area than imagination might suggest. We saw where television news shots are taken, always the same place. Then the Robing Room used for the official opening. The state crown weighs a full four pounds. Pictures of the chivalric virtues and elaborate embroidery from the Royal School of Needlework, familiar enough to us from the Cottage Museum exhibition at Petworth House a couple of years ago. Come to that Charles Barry too is familiar enough to a Petworth audience, think of the old spire of St Mary's, taken down in 1947, and the East Street obelisk, lacking some of its gas lamps but like the West Hall, very much a survivor.

And, over everything, a pervading sense of history and constitutional evolution. In retrospect and particularly in the light of recent developments, a clearer air – but of course distance can deceive. The Magna Carta, the principle that a reigning monarch cannot raise tax without the approval of Parliament, the voice of the people. And Charles I with his head-on challenge to this. Kings, his father James had said, were God's lieutenants on earth, and had something of the quality of gods themselves – had not the psalmist said as much? Charles' attempt to take the five members by force and the Speaker's resistance. We had seen a facsimile of the King's death warrant, the original being still extant and carrying, it is thought, the fold lines from being kept in a pocket. Certainly the fold lines were clear enough even on the facsimile. In the great fire of the nineteenth century, records were saved by being thrown from windows. The Victoria tower now houses the Commons Record Office.

Into the Lord's Chamber, the gilded throne where the sovereign sits, set a little above the consort. Just once has there been strict equality, under William and Mary, and this at Mary's insistence. It is clear that our guide has considerable respect for the work of the Lords as a reviewing body, work unsung and too often casually dismissed. For some reason the benches of the bishops, the lords spiritual, have arm rests at the end, no other benches do.

Into a division lobby for the Commons. MPs have eight minutes to enter the lobby before the Speaker cries, "Lock the door". When majorities are tiny, the discussion lobbies can be tense places. Green bound volumes of Hansard line the shelves here as they do the Chamber itself. Hansard has to be in print by 8 o'clock the day following a debate, reporters taking notes in shorthand.

Then into the Chamber itself: in the afternoon it will come alive. To feel the familiar green benches, so often seen on the television screen, so rarely viewed otherwise. Mornings, our guide tells us, are taken up with committees. It's all too easy, he explains, to look at the empty benches and assume that nothing's happening.

The lasting impression has to be of a long history. Charles I, Cromwell, figures of modern parliamentarians, Alec Douglas-Hume, Harold Wilson, Margaret Thatcher, then, receding a little into memory, Churchill and Lloyd George. Back into the West Hall, hat back on, but nothing escapes my friend the usher. A gentleman does not wear a hat in a palace. Is the card yellow or red? It's time to leave.

Outside it's raining and it's raining hard. The Jewellery Tower, our next venue, apparently closes Tuesdays. It's news to Andy. In any case it's getting very near to lunchtime. We later learn that an intrepid trio from our party do gain admission but for the rest of us it will remain a mystery – this trip at least. It's tiring in the street: wave after wave of tourists, mobiles, cameras and flailing umbrellas. On the bridge a piper plays and visitors are photographed with him. There are hot dog stalls, cold drinks and the rain slants into the grey river.

It's not long before we're at the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, our final port of call. Again not exactly as anticipated; we've certainly booked in but a last minute (and, I would imagine very remunerative) booking has skewed the arrangements. The upstairs room with the extraordinary Rubens ceiling is being set-up for a Japanese fashion show on the next day. As it happens, watching the cat-walk being assembled has an interest all its own. And Charles I stalks the paths of history here as he did during the morning. He it was who wanted somewhere for the elaborate masques he delighted in, and sometimes appeared in. Inigo Jones and Ben Johnson collaborated here. Ironic that in 1649 he would walk through the room to execution on a scaffold erected outside the very building on which he had lavished such attention. No guide here. I'm handed one of those contraptions where you can press a number and listen to a commentary. To be fair, some of our party find them useful – I simply hand mine back.

And so down Arundel Street to the waiting coach on the Embankment. The rain's erratic, but savage when it comes. It later appears that some places in London have had rain so intense that the like had not been seen since 1865. It pours into the uncovered upper deck of sight-seeing buses and river craft. Then there's the long war of attrition, coming out of London. Battersea, Wandsworth, wondering, as one always does, what lies behind those crumbling shop facades. The rain sweeps the road ahead of us. All in all quite a day.

I have given a longer than usual account partly because there was so much to report, but partly, too, because so many members wanted to make the trip and were disappointed. I believe Andy has some kind of repeat in mind – but with variations.

P.

Deborah's Crossword 136 Solution

Deborah is taking a well-earned rest for this issue but the Crossword will be back for December.

Across 2 Digs, 4 Martyr, 8 Oak, 9 Mount Caburn, 11 Lewths, 12 Gumber, 14 Serf, 15 Soars, 16 Ashy, 18 Ouse, 19 Gnats, 20 Bees, 24 Findon, 25 Plough, 27 Ancient Ways, 29 Roe, 30 Bignor, 31 Yews.

Down 1 Flowers, 3 Southdowns, 4 Myth, 5 You, 6 Skylarks, 7 Energy, 9 Mows, 10 Arun, 13 Fritillary, 17 Shepherd, 18 Offham, 21 Sisters, 22 Yoke, 23 Tups, 26 Star, 28 Chi.



With the Petworth Society in the West Hall of the Palace of Westminster. Andy instructs his group, centre of picture. Photograph by Pearl Godsmark.



Thirty very short stories — continued.

Jonathan's article in the last Magazine created considerable interest and we are pleased to have this image of the rarely used upstairs fireplace at the Cottage Museum as a further example of the process pioneered by Robert Rauschenberg and used for the book illustrations. We also take this opportunity of reproducing the corresponding short story, essentially in the form in which it appears in the book.

THE POET

New Haven, Connecticut, USA

ONE WINTER AFTERNOON A YOUNG AND QUITE SUCCESSFUL POET SAT WRITING at his desk. Although it was not yet dark outside, the light shining on to his papers made it seem so and, from the window, his garden appeared black except for a red glow which was the reflection from a fire of coals burning in the cast iron grate.

The doorbell rang. At first the poet ignored it but when it continued he replaced the cap of his fountain pen, walked through the hall and opened the door. On the paving stones stood a woman. A woman so lovely that, uniquely, the poet could find no words. She said 'Good evening', walked up the steps, crossed the hall and sat on a chair opposite his in the study. He closed the door, followed her and sat facing her. He had never seen her in his life before and at first he took her to be Ingrid Bergman but this was foolish: beside the star this woman was a galaxy.

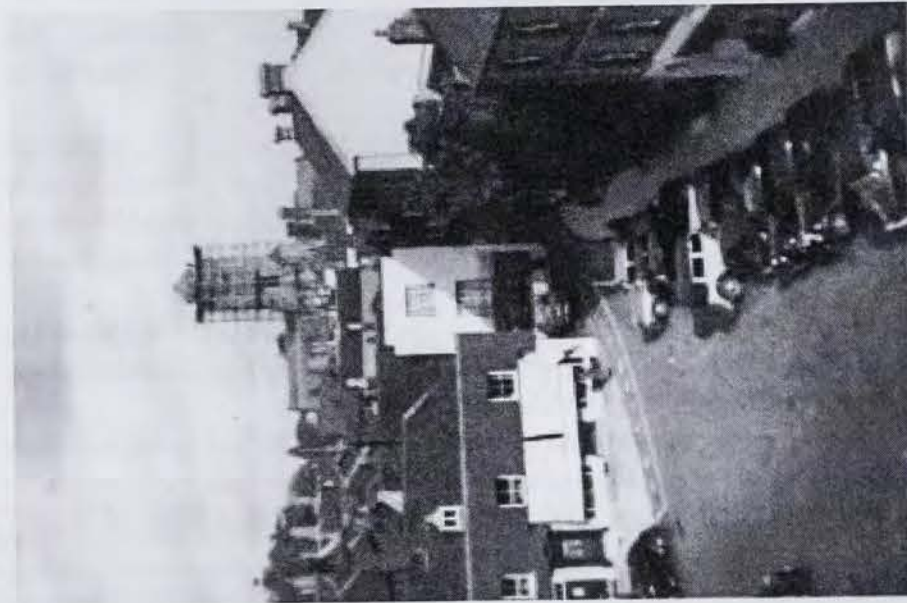
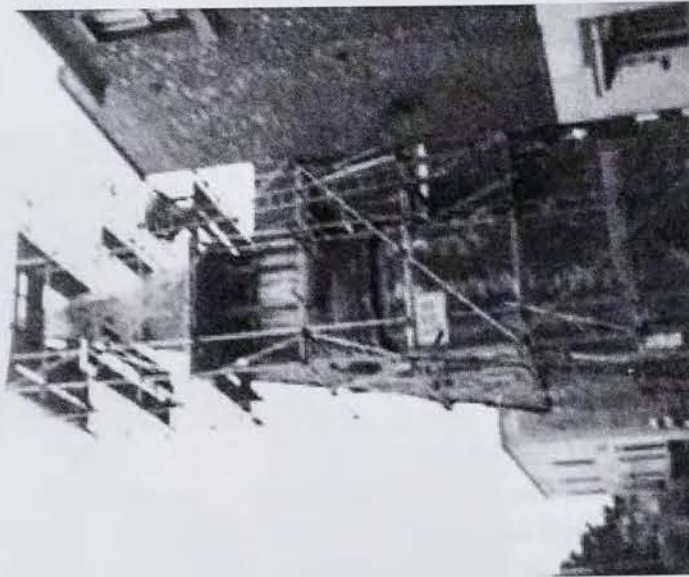
She sat perfectly still, apart from looking around the room and then back at him. She kept her coat buttoned to the chin but the poet knew that underneath would be the finest cotton and underneath that such silks that no man could touch with his hands.

When she began to speak it soon became clear that she was telling her life story. Tears formed in her eyes and she took a white handkerchief from her coat pocket although she did not dry them. After some time (it could have been an hour, or even more) she stood up, looked at the poet one last time, turned, and left the house, closing the door quietly behind her.

The poet sat anaesthetised and the coals grew cold in the fireplace. He began to think it had been a dream until he found a white handkerchief on the floor. He picked it up, held it to his face and wept.

For days after this he tried to write down what he had heard and what he had seen that late afternoon but it was all a long way beyond words and eventually he burned all his papers and he never wrote another word of poetry again.

Editor's Postbag



Mr Roy Standing sends these two pictures of simultaneous repairs at St Mary's and the URC in 1951.

Email: 16poynter@miltondrive.fsnet.co.uk

5 Milton Drive, Shepperton, Middlesex ST17 0JJ Tel: 01932 56023017

June 2009

Boxall Ancestry – Petworth/surrounding areas

Does anyone have details of a Mrs Boxall whose name appears on a staff list outside the Blue Room at Petworth House dated 8 November 1911? Her initials/position.

The Petworth Magazine for June article "Poor Relief" a Mrs Boxall bequeathed her cottage to the Church Wardens at Luggeshall in 1679. Does anyone have more information of her/family? On Page 15 of the Magazine, there is a picture of 2 Boxalls at Lodsworth brickyard prior to 1914? I believe the family lived in Red Lion Yard at some time.

Any news on the Boxall family would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mrs B Poynter (nee BOXALL)



? RU AVEC NOUS

Nick Taylor has found a button bearing this coat of arms. Can anyone recognise it from drawing and inscription?

Gordon Strudwick writes:

Dear Peter,

Leconfield House – Australia

While on holiday in Australia Nancy and I noticed a winery named Wyndham near where we were staying in Maitland N.S.W. and as it was a name of wines we have enjoyed drinking in England we decided to visit it. Soon after leaving the main road we passed a sign advertising a Bed and Breakfast accommodation named Leconfield House. We found this intriguing thinking about our roots in Petworth, Petworth House and the Leconfields. At this stage we still hadn't made the connection between the winery and Petworth.

At the winery while talking to one of the owners we mentioned the house we had passed and he then told us that the original Leconfield homestead, near the winery, was built for the cattle and sheep station (farm) and nearby coal mine in the early 1800s. The old house is now

owned by the Australian National Trust and in some state of decay, the cattle and sheep have been partially superseded by the winery. They were fully aware of the Leconfield/Wyndham connection and there is a Leconfield Room in the winery but little or no reference about Petworth House.

We told this chap about our connection to Petworth and he phoned the owner of the B & B we had passed and arranged for us to visit, which we did. The owner was very welcoming and showed us round his lovely house including a book of Wyndham genealogy.

For a chance visit during our six weeks spent touring Australia it turned out to be most interesting with its home town connection.

Where is it in Australia?

Maitland is N.W. of Newcastle which is just north of Sydney. Then take the New England Highway again travelling N.W., the nearest town is Branxton on the edge of the Hunter Wine Valley.

Mr Colin Dawson writes from Westoning, Bedford:

Dear Mr Jerrome,

Ebenezer Strict Baptist Chapel Petworth

The recent announcement of the closure of this Chapel, together with my reading of the two articles you printed in the June and September 1987 issue of your Bulletins, has jogged a few memories. I remember preaching in the Chapel on some Sunday afternoons during the 1960s, having driven over from Horsham.

The congregation was small, consisting of four ladies plus any friends that accompanied me. Miss Edwards was the leader of the group, and the official "correspondent" for the church. Then there was a Mrs Remnant and her daughter "Edie," who I think played the organ if it was used. Finally there was Mary Newick, who has outlived all her contemporaries, and with whom my wife and I have remained in contact till the present.

The ladies all wore sober dress, and were adorned with hats "according to the Scriptures." Although few in number they were not always united, as the following incident illustrates. During the period of my contacts they had evidently discussed the possibility of holding a service on a week evening in addition to the Sunday services. Some asserted that they could not afford it whilst others wanted to go ahead. In the end it was agreed that they would ask me on the understanding that I would receive no payment from the church funds, but if there was anything put into the collection box that would be given to me. I duly went and at the end of the service the box was emptied, and the contents handed over — considerably more than what would have normally been given!

The form of service was always plain and reverent, with reading from the Authorised Version of the Bible, the singing of three hymns from Gadsby's Selection, extempore prayer and of course the sermon. I cannot now remember the names of any of the preachers who used to go, apart from Mr George Ward who was pastor of "Hope" Strict Baptist Chapel in Horsham, and Mr Reuben Mercer who pastored a church in Redhill. Both these gentlemen have long since passed away, but Mr C A Wood, who preached at the Centenary Services in 1987 is still with us, and has only recently retired from his pastorate in Croydon.

The chapel belonged to the "Gospel Standard" group of Strict Baptist Chapels, which

was so called after the magazine of the same name, which was introduced in 1835. At that time there were some 274 churches in this denomination, but in common with many other groups it has witnessed a decline in numbers. In 1950 the number of churches was reduced to 246, and by 1987, when "Ebenezer" celebrated its Centenary there were just over 150 chapels left. Today the number is reduced even further to 102, a sad reflection of the increasingly secular Society we are now living in.

The name of "Remnant" borne by two of the ladies in the congregation of my early visits seems peculiarly appropriate to the present time — aptly describing the fewness of those who still continue to worship with the Strict Baptists. The Apostle Paul in his day referred to "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11 verse 5). One of the hymns in Gadsby's selection, which was written by the Church of England clergyman John Berridge, and no doubt sometimes sung at "Ebenezer" contains these plaintive lines:

"A remnant small of humble souls
His grace mysteriously controls
By sweet alluring call"

And also

"One of this remnant I would be
A soul devoted unto thee
Allured by thy voice"

Will this denomination see better days? There are still those who believe that a return to the standards of the Word of God is what is needed in our Society today, but as in previous times a God sent revival is the only thing that will achieve this. If that occurs then someone will have to build a new "Ebenezer" in Petworth. It would be great to be able to record that in your pages!

Beryl adds some further thoughts in a letter:*

21, Park Avenue, Bideford EX39 2QH

Dear Peter,

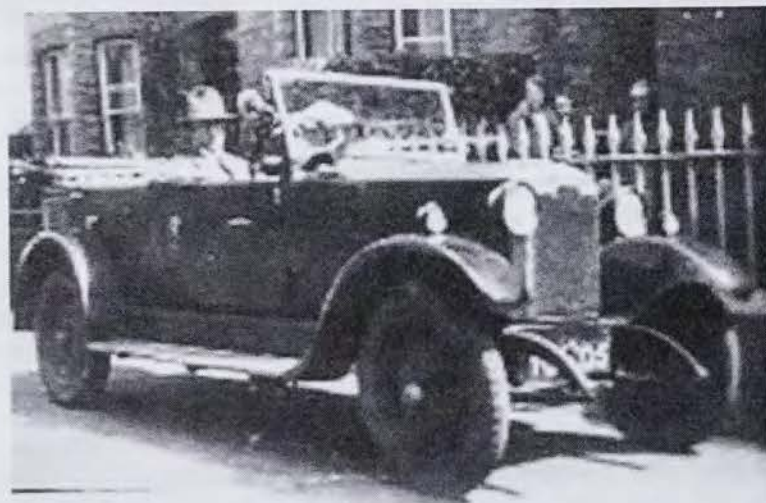
Thank you very much for your letter and the extracts from the Petworth Society Magazine concerning Christine Chaundler. The notes highlighted have solved a problem. I could never make out why we frequently went to Fittleworth and I was so intrigued as to what, of interest, was there that after visiting the museum on Thursday, 9th July, I asked my son to drive me to Fittleworth. All we found were some cottages and houses, and the Swan Inn (where we booked up to have our evening meal). I now realise Christine Chaundler's stay at Grove House would have been whilst waiting for her cottage to be built in Fittleworth. I have always gathered that my parents and Christine were on quite friendly terms so no doubt our many trips to Fittleworth were to visit her in her new home. It was probably at Christine's cottage in Fittleworth that my sister Daphne stayed, whilst I was sent over to Mr & Mrs Whittings to "sleep on the landing". I think I mentioned that Christine was very fond of my sister Daphne (2½ years older) who was a pretty child with shoulder length wavy hair — and a great "chatter box", (that must have endeared her to Christine). I seem to recollect that the book given to us, written by Christine, was called "Judy the Tramp" — a large book with quite

* See A White Enamel mug page 20

large print. I was very jealous as it had a character called 'Daphne' in it. Sadly this was destroyed in the London bombing with all our other possessions. My son is going to try and get me a copy.

Regarding my nights stay at the Whitings; I often wondered where Mr & Mrs Whiting and their two daughters, Joan and Angela slept, completely forgetting there were two flights of stairs.

I enclose a photograph of my father sitting in his Rover car - (hood down) and seem to remember my mother having other photos of Petworth - one in particular of sister Daphne and I sitting at the back of the car in our "Sunday best" and waiting for toddler Pamela to be dressed and then we were off for our usual Sunday afternoon picnic. It seemed in those days we had very warm sunny summers, but cold snowy winters.



Mr Pardoe with Rover car in London 1920s.

Neither Daphne nor I went to school in Petworth but I do recollect our mother teaching us our 'Numbers' and 'Letters' each day.

I think the reason my parents moved to Petworth (after sharing my grandparents Woodward's house at 95 Chettenham Road (or Grove) in Southend, was due to the shortage of houses after the 1914-1918 war. They managed to get the house in Petworth after my father was discharged from the Army. They probably rented Grove House which was usual in those days. My mother always spoke fondly of Petworth and, I think, very reluctant to leave (I can quite understand why), but my father was very anxious to start up his business and move nearer to London. They were only able to do this by exchanging houses with a retired school master.

Yours sincerely,
Beryl H. Bent
née PARDOE

MacNamara's Band and other matters

Jack Bartlett was a very sociable man and well known in Petworth a few years ago. Always happy to take his accordion out to different local events, he was very much to the fore with any local activity or entertainment. Working, as he did, at Petworth Post Office in East Street he was a senior clerk when the Office was officially downgraded, Freddie Dean continuing as postmaster. Jack Bartlett took a postmastership at Attleborough, a long way from Petworth and when Mr Dean retired, applied for the vacant position. He was successful and returned to Petworth.

It was typical of the man that he should look to start a Social Club at the Post Office, members paying sixpence a week to cover hall hire and general expenses. Jack's son John has lent Keith Thompson a number of photographs of the Social Club and the Scouts, the latter being another of Jack's particular interests. Don Simpson, working at the Post Office, and a member of the Social Club, is in a good position to comment. The photograph we reproduce shows Phil Sadler, clearly "doing" Marie Lloyd (note the bird-cage), Mrs Margaret Bartlett



with a Scottish song while the other two figures are Ern. Thomas and a heavily disguised Don himself. "I can't remember what was happening here but I do remember one sketch "MacNamara's band". We had accumulated all kinds of musical instruments and I was standing in the centre of the Old Iron Room conducting. I had a cardboard podium which would eventually collapse under me. Audiences were family, friends and anyone who cared

to come along. Another initiative was the Post Office darts team. Phil Sadler was an excellent caterer and there would always be excellent food at the end of the evening.”

P (with much help from Don Simpson)

The article is suggested by a number of photographs lent to Keith Thompson by Jack Bartlett's son, John.

A white enamel mug

I was born at Grove House in Grove Street in 1922, the house was not then, as it is now, divided into two. I left Petworth in 1927 at the age of five and, until today, have never been back. Here I am, however, eighty years and more on, sitting just up the road from Grove House in the Cottage Museum and talking to you. I don't really know how or why my parents William Percy and Constance Hilda Pardoe came to Petworth and, in fact, by Petworth standards, their stay in the town was relatively brief, just a few years in the 1920s. As I say, Grove House was then undivided, but two rooms were let to Christine Chaundler, the children's author, who would, you tell me, live later at Fittleworth.

Mrs Whiting came in from across the road as housekeeper for us. She had two daughters, Angela and Joan, who were a little older than I was. Mr Whiting worked in the woods for the Leconfield Estate. I remember one night when both my parents had to be in London for some reason and I was to sleep across the road with the Whitings. My younger sister Daphne would stay at Grove House with Christine Chaundler. Another sister, Pam, perhaps went with my parents to London. For some reason I got the idea into my head that I would have to sleep on the upstairs landing and I made rather a fuss. The next thing I knew was waking up in the morning nicely tucked up in bed in one of the Whitings' bedrooms.

As I say, I've no idea why my parents came to Petworth, only that Dad went to London a great deal, he had a Rover car with a hood top. Accommodation was difficult to find after the war and in 1927 we exchanged houses with a retired schoolmaster at Mitcham in Surrey.

I remember going out of the house and down the road with the Whiting girls, past the pig sties, then turning left to go down to the Virgin Mary Spring: the water was always so cool and clear. We had a white enamel mug which we used to hide by the Spring for the next time we came. Another memory is of going with Mother for her to have a dress fitted. I can still see the large square table covered with material – possibly in a private house.

I didn't actually go to school before we left Petworth. When we moved, my father started up a business making leatherette and other bags. It went well until the war, when the material he used, imported from the United States, became unobtainable.

Beryl Bent was talking to the Editor.

A Look Back with Pleasure

I am going to tell you of another encounter with a railway porter on the Petworth-Petersfield steam railway line. This took place in the 1940s war years. My first tale Petworth Society Magazine 136 June 2009.

This time travelling in the opposite direction towards Petersfield. In fact one of many visits to my granny's house at Midhurst.

I was with my evacuee pal Keith, who at this time was living with his mother in the flat over the garage at Sutton End House. We had cycled to Petworth railway station by way of Burton Park, (impossible today,) as it was the shortest route.

At the station we left our cycles at a porter's cottage, (the porter was an old friend of my parents,) saving the six pence parking fee.

Upon the arrival of the train we were delighted to meet Fred in our carriage. Fred was one of Keith's London evacuee pals billeted near Fittleworth with a family that had a small holding. He explained to us, at great length how they were nearly self-sufficient, growing their own vegetables, chicken for eggs and the table. With excitement he told us about two very large Wessex saddle-back pigs that in the very last week had gone to the local butchers; one to be sold, the other to return as meat and bacon for the family.

By the time Fred had told us of his experiences the train had arrived at Selham station, half our journey over.

Upon leaving the station we all moved to the right hand side of the carriage eager to see if any of the Fleet Air Arm squadron of Vicker Supermarine "Walrus" flying boats, (used at this time for reconnaissance in the channel,) were to be seen on the Ambersham airfield. The fields are now one of Cowdray Parks polo grounds; however some of the airplane hangers still remain to this day (Dutch barn style).

After our visit to Granny's (fortified with cake and Eiffel Tower lemonade,) we went on a spending spree in the town, purchasing catapult rubber, rabbit wires and fishing line.

Then followed half a mile walk back to Midhurst railway station. Fred, also returning from his visit to Elstead, had his head out of the carriage window, he was just visible to us through the steam.

After observing the airplanes again at Ambersham, the train slowly pulled into Selham station. The porter, a short stout man with flag in hand, ran alongside the platform and greeted the train in a very very slow voice "Anyone for Sel-ham Sel-ham Sel-ham?". Fred leapt from the opposite side of the carriage; opened the window (held by a very wide leather strap,) jovially shouted to the porter "We don't sell-ham but we do sell-bacon". The porter just smiled continuing in his loud voice "Sel-ham Sel-ham".

This of course was not the first time I had heard this greeting at Selham railway station.

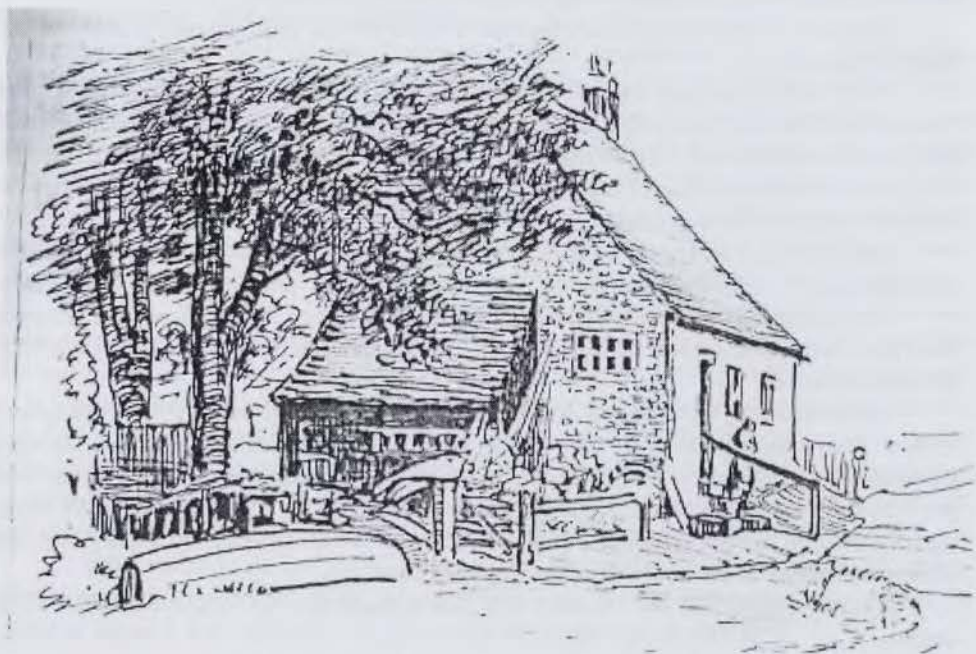
Brian Verrall

Another View of Bury

Once again the PSM has turned me to my keyboard! Reading Jenny Dover's memories I was spurred on to share what I have found in explorations of Bury (and West Burton) roofs, and from outside observations of those houses I have been unable to access so far.

I have been able to examine twelve buildings in Bury itself in some detail, one in West Burton and outlying Horncroft, as part of a project for the Barlavington estate. Of these, five in Bury proved to be medieval types (pre-1550) four (including a puzzling barn) are transitional (1500s) and three dated from the 17th century and later. Crossways or Old Cross Street Farm in West Burton seems to fit the 1634 date over its door, and Horncroft is a complex building with origins in the second half of the 1500s.

The oldest building I have recorded in Bury is the old Black Dog, and this can probably be placed within the 1300s, although it has suffered innumerable modifications over the centuries. Fogdens is the only example with a crown-post roof, and one of the type known as the 'wealden', like Yeomans at Bignor; Old Cottage (East and West), Street Cottage and Smiths were all built before 1500 with open halls but side-purlin roofs. Kesters, Copyhold and Hollow Farm were also built with open halls, but after 1500.



*An impression of Ferry Cottage at Bury in Bob Dudden, the last ferryman's time.
See PSM 136. Courtesy of Bury WI Centenary Book 1958.*



"Off to market". West Burton in the 1930s. Photograph by G. G. Garland.



*This uncaptioned picture probably reflects Petworth's Japanese Bazaar September 1901.
See Petworth Time out of Mind page 85 and 86.* Can anyone recognise the location?
* (Window Press 1982).*



William Percy Pardoe outside Grove House, Petworth about 1925.
Photograph courtesy of Mrs Beryl Bent. See: A white enamel mug.

From external observations, Lillywhites and Sydenham Cottage in West Burton would appear to be the oldest properties, with five others dating from the 1500s, and another seven from 1600 onwards. However, I am always prepared for surprises!

The Arundel archivist Heather Warne and I have compared notes on Bury, as she has examined some of the early manorial documents held among the Castle muniments. From these studies and early mapping, backed-up with my understanding of the buildings, it looks as though medieval virgaters (the upper echelons of manorial tenants) were living out at West Burton, with mainly cottagers and labourers clustered in the village, working on the open fields that surrounded them. This situation seemed to be perpetuated when the upwardly mobile Cooke family established themselves at West Burton by the early 1500s, surrounded by those who wanted to emulate them and perhaps be swept along on their coat tails. When a survey was taken at West Burton in 1669 there were 29 houses and 15 barns. This compares with 27 in Bury, with seven cottages and 27 barns.

This is a huge simplification of a complex process that developed from before the time that 'Beri-minstre' was granted to the Abbey of Fécamp by William the Conqueror, the year before the Domesday survey of 1086.¹ The name hints at the existence of pre-Saxon significant (?burial) 'mound' and an Anglo-Saxon minister as a base for a group of priests who served the peasants in the surrounding countryside. Petworth was almost certainly the site of another of these minsters. The Domesday estate included areas up in Coldwaltham, Fittleworth and in Wisborough Green, with some seventy households and a church- successor to that minster. West Burton was the subsidiary hamlet or settlement (*ton*) to the west of the mound (*burgh or bury*).

A.F. Hughes

¹ The Abbey held English estates before the Conquest, and its English headquarters were at Steyning, where there are the remains of their splendid church.

The Victoria County History – new perspectives

The Victoria County History (VCH) started in 1899 with the laudable and ambitious aim of providing a definitive history of every single parish in England. A lofty ideal and a massive task. The work, a century and more later, remains ongoing. The Sussex project was quickly in hand, two general volumes for the county were published in 1905 and 1907. This was to be followed by a single VCH volume for each of the six "rapes" or ancient historical divisions of Sussex. Lewes, Hastings and Chichester were published between 1935-1953 but work then lay in abeyance for 20 years.

When the new West Sussex County Council was formed in 1974, it was felt appropriate that the new Council look to the conclusion of the work. Arundel, Bramber and Pevensey rapes remaining to be completed, Pevensey, of course, lying outside the Council's remit.

From 1974 the County Council has financed the post of Sussex editor for the VCH. Dr Tim Hudson was the first appointee and he worked first on Bramber rape which included the large settlements of Worthing, Horsham and Crawley. That successfully concluded, he moved on to Arundel rape, a first volume appearing in 1997. This dealt in detail with the town of Arundel and a number of the immediately surrounding parishes.

Technically employed by the University of London Institute of Historical Research who are responsible for the VCH countrywide, the Sussex editor was based at the County Record Office at Chichester and allotted office space, an obvious provision given the nature of his task. Dr Hudson had started on a second Arundel volume, Littlehampton and its environs, and researched some dozen local parishes, when he retired. He was succeeded by Dr Chris Lewis with the arrangement remaining as before, the County Council paying the editor's salary, and the Record Office providing a base. Chris Lewis' remit was to conclude the Arundel rape in four volumes, the Arundel town section being already in existence. When Littlehampton was concluded he would then proceed to Volume 3, the north-east segment including Billingshurst, Kirdford and Pulborough, and then finally to Volume 4, the north-west segment centred on Petworth and its environs.

It would be idle to pretend that a work completed over such a long period, a good century and more, will not have a certain unevenness of tone. The early volumes must have the presuppositions, the prejudices even, of a bygone age. They would not be written in the same way now. But the VCH is a sturdy survivor: it is written to a formula, is strong on fact, and eschews excessive theorising. Certainly scholarship does not stand still, and research interests have changed. Conditions too are different. A century ago, records held in private collections were often either uncatalogued or of limited access: much has become available in the intervening years. There is a significant corollary: more material means more research, more research means more time, more time means greater outlay.

Inevitably, too, there comes a change of perspective, the early VCH volumes reflect a more leisurely world of scholarship. When the VCH pioneers were writing, there were matters that now seem of interest to us that did not seem so important to them. It's a matter of emphasis. Industry and education are obvious early twenty-first century focal points, certainly not ignored a century ago, but more likely perhaps to be relegated to the periphery. No doubt there are the same dilemmas today. We have to prioritise but we can be wrong. What will a historian a hundred years on see as epoch-making? The setting up of a first Cyber café or the coming of Broadband?

And there's an overriding issue. The current financial climate and the general tightening of purse strings. It's become no longer possible within increasingly strict budgetary guidelines to finance a VCH editor. Chris Lewis' contract ends in September this year. It will not be renewed. Funding the Record Office's budget has become increasingly challenging and something has to go. With immense regret it has to be the VCH editor. Quite understandably Council Tax payers want rates kept as low as possible given that the WSCC has an acknowledged responsibility for the county's heritage. We are then left with a conundrum: how can we continue to support the VCH project without employing an editor? If you like, how can we have our cake and eat it?

We have a few ideas. Simply to abandon the project at this stage is defeatist. One suggestion is a VCH Sussex Trust, raising sufficient funds to employ an editor or editors on a piecemeal basis. The VCH is, and has always been, uniform in treatment, formulaic even, volumes following a certain set pattern. Idiosyncrasy must be left to individual parish historians operating outside the VCH. The VCH has no wish or prerogative to render such initiatives obsolete. Among other things, the VCH will look at medieval references, historical connections, schools, religious development and significant local agricultural variations. A typical smaller parish may be covered, say, in 25,000 words, larger settlements, Petworth, Pulborough, Billingshurst, at greater length. To give an example, the Arundel volume devotes some half of the book to Arundel town.

Obviously direct financial subvention would cut the Gordian knot. It would need, however, to be generous: it would need also to be altruistic in the sense that there will be no speedy return. A lapse of a few years certainly. Direct subvention of this kind is an ideal, but it may be that we have to look at the project in a different way, raise enough money to employ someone for a year, perhaps to cover a designated parish or a couple of adjacent parishes. A potential donor might specify a particular parish in which he has an interest or perhaps a family connection, perhaps, such funding might be a tribute to a loved one. Initially the work might be published as individual volumes, later to be incorporated into the appropriate VCH volume. Someone might say, "Here's £25,000 write the history of to VCH specifications." It's by no means out of the question.

A defining change of perspective could be the perceived need to engage with existing local historians, to build on the already considerable work that has already been done and continues to be done, and with the agreement of individual writers, expand that work and accommodate it to the existing VCH formula. An individual historian is unlikely to write to that formula. It may be that the technological revolution will offer a completely different perspective, a village history put on line and asking for suggestions for expansion rather on the Wikipedia principle – a draft for consideration. Some small parishes might be particularly amenable to such an approach, building up from what is currently available – perhaps as little as a pamphlet on the parish church, the "editor" being someone who brings material together as much as someone who starts from scratch. After all the O.E.D. definition of editor is "one who edits a text."

Richard Childs was talking to the Editor.
Richard is the County Archivist for West Sussex.

The Herbert Shiner School 1961–2008: R.I.P. (3)

Mr Barnett moved on to become headmaster of The Manhood School, Selsey and Mr Gristwood was acting headmaster until the appointment of Mr Mayo.

Mr Barnett's time as headmaster was memorable for many reasons. He was a hard taskmaster but a good friend. On one occasion, a notice he had placed on the staff notice board had a spelling mistake, which was corrected in red by an anonymous member of staff. Mr Barnett was not pleased and questioned everyone, myself included – an obvious suspect. Eventually, to defuse an increasingly awkward situation, a male teacher, who was not the culprit, confessed and was told he would be 'logged'. As far as I can ascertain, this did not happen. The true culprit remained undetected and silent – and it wasn't me! But it could have been!

The other side of Mr Barnett's nature was always evident at staff dinners, hilarious affairs, featuring sketches, speeches and poetry recalling recent events and the headmaster's faux pas at assembly. He was targeted mercilessly, but always took it in good part, often in like vein, a stark contrast to the daily routine.

He was always keen to encourage his staff to better themselves, seek promotion and take up new developments. Through him, the Nuffield Maths. and Science Projects were adopted, attracting considerable funding to equip the teaching of biology, chemistry and physics as separate subjects instead of General Science and increased timetable and staffing allocation. I had been trained with an emphasis on biology, but with the appointment of a biology specialist, I switched to chemistry and physics and for the first time began to understand the basics of the two subjects I had failed in at Higher School Certificate.

And those pot plants. It was accepted that anyone performing an extra duty such as producing a play, presenting prizes or sports trophies, providing a piano accompaniment for singers, judging a competition, could expect a pot plant in appreciation. And the little notes, too, about three inches square, inside a set of reports, with words of thanks and sometimes sympathy at the difficulty of finding the right expressions of criticism with encouragement.

Although the age range of the Intermediate School was a delightful one to teach, without many of the problems associated with older pupils, it was all too brief and we missed the satisfaction of seeing potential fulfilled. Now, it is usually the ex-pupils from the Secondary days who retain and express their affection and appreciation of their time at the school, its standards, values and family atmosphere.

Mr Mayo was a gentleman in every sense of the word. I hope his pupils remember some of the things he said at assembly, such as when, on his first day at the school, after he had said that his study door would always be open for anyone who wished to talk to him and a small girl had appeared, just to say, "I hope they are kind to you". Then there was his talk about sincerity and how the word meaning 'without wax' in Latin, originated when cracked statues were patched up to look perfect with wax. The flawless statues were 'without wax'. Mr Mayo was a sincere person – 'without wax'.

The ethos of the school was changing from the wish to stimulate and challenge children with subjects taught by specialists in their field to a general approach similar to that in primary schools, but the range of activities continued with annual field trips to France and the Isle of Wight, educational cruises on alternate years, public speaking contests and so on.

Occasional crises occurred: financial restrictions - an 8½% cut in capitation allowance for school funding in 1981, industrial action resulting in a heating oil shortage - heating

switched off at mid-day in January, 1979, with children told to wear warm clothing, a break-in overnight in July 1980 when the staff room was trashed, two pieces of equipment (tape recorders) and a theatrical make-up box stolen, all eventually recovered from the hedge between New Grove and the playing field. Another in May, 1982, when a video-recorder was stolen.

The Evening Institute, started soon after the school opened with Mr Sandall in charge, came under centralised control and was gradually wound down. No evening classes in Petworth today.

By the '80s, children of ex-pupils were being admitted. In October, 1983, the educational cruise to historic sites in the Mediterranean was cancelled on the cruise ship S.S. Uganda being commandeered as a hospital ship during the Falkland Islands conflict, but instead, the school party – and I was one privileged to be a member – flew to Israel for a fortnight's tour of Biblical sites, kibbutzim, the Negev, Dead Sea, Elat and the Sinai.

At the end of the school year in 1984, Mr Mayo retired, to be succeeded by Mr Michael Mattinson and I took early retirement in July, 1987. Events which followed, leading to the closure of the school in December, 2008, may be recorded by those involved.

Things are very different in the teaching world today, I'm told!

K.C.T. (Concluded)

“We kept the pub”

Born at Wisborough Green in 1926, the youngest of seven children, I was in fact quite young when we moved to Graffham, 1 Fir Tree Cottages, adjacent to the Three Moles pub. More Selham than Graffham you might think, but actually just inside Graffham parish. Memories of Wisborough Green are hazy; I didn't start full schooling until we had moved to Graffham, but I do remember going for some reason to the Zoar chapel, perhaps there was a little Sunday School there. Fir Tree Cottages' position inside Graffham parish would have repercussions for me: my Selham friends Pam Longman and Daphne Hunt would go to Lodsworth school and eventually to Easebourne, while I would do all my schooling at Graffham, cycling to school as I got a little older. There was, of course, no school at Selham. My father was a farm worker and handyman and no doubt the cottage at Wisborough Green had been tied.

When we moved to Fir Tree Cottages he went as farm worker and handyman to Mr Lacaita at Selham House. I remember Charles Lacaita as a kindly, bearded, elderly gentleman. Among much else, my father, who had a donkey and cart to assist him in his various jobs, looked after the gardens, Mr Lacaita's Rhode Island Reds and his three Jersey cows. When one of the Jerseys calved successfully, Mr Lacaita was delighted; previous cows had always succumbed to milk fever. As this was Mr Lacaita's first Jersey to give milk, he made a presentation to my father with a gift of £20, a very considerable sum in those days and perhaps as much as the cow was worth. When his wife died, Mr Lacaita married again, a rather

younger French lady, I think, who would survive him. At that time Fir Tree Cottages went with Selham House as a tied property. When Mr Lacaita died, Selham House was sold and the Dowager Lady Cowdray lived there, my father continuing there in her employ. In course of time he had the opportunity of taking over the Three Moles where he would remain as landlord for over twenty years. He did not, however, give up the day job: pubs like the Three Moles were hardly profitable in those days. It was always said that we kept the pub rather than that the pub kept us. My sister was in service at Guildford. She was seventeen and biked home to find where we had moved to. On the way she became lost and a gentleman cyclist took a great deal of trouble in guiding her all the way to Selham. It was something she has never forgotten. As she is now 93 this would fix the date as 1931/2. Another sister, Dorothy, was soon working behind the bar, but I was of course far too young at this time. Pub hours were strictly regulated in those days – weekdays 10.30 to 2.30 with 6 to 10.30 at night. I'm sure it was 10.30 rather than 10 o'clock. Sunday hours were 12 to 2 in the morning and 7 to 10 at night. I definitely remember Sundays : Selham station was the hub of Selham village. Fishermen would come down from London on a Sunday for a day's fishing. We'd see them hurrying down from the station in the morning to the Rother. Come the evening, my sister had to be ready to unbolt the door sharp on seven o'clock to enable them to have a "bevy" in time to be out to catch the train at 7.30. It was not unknown for the train to be a fraction late pulling out of Selham station! Once she'd unbolted the door, my sister had to rush back to get behind the bar. What I particularly remember is the sight of the fishermen crowding the steps of the Three Moles and pressing against the glass of the door. When my sister married Bert Evans, a porter at the station, in 1939, it was a double wedding, two sisters on the same day, and quite an event for tiny Selham church. I went behind the bar as soon as I was almost sixteen, near enough and it was, after all, wartime.

Selham station was no backwater, it was the life blood of the little community. Sugar beet would go out in quantity as of course the milk churns, morning and evening. During the war when there were a number of evacuees in the area, parents would come down from London at the weekend to see them. Many of the evacuees went to Graffham school and were billeted locally. Every Saturday I would cycle into Midhurst for additional groceries : we did have a delivered wholesaler at this time but we would still run out of things like cheese if we were particularly busy. Bread, cheese and pickled onions were standard pub fare. Dad was still doing his other work, although the pub would get much busier during the war with so many troops billeted around. The Fleet Air Arm was at Ambersham, while there were Canadian and American troops locally.

The Three Moles could hardly reckon on passing trade, at least in peacetime, so the locals needed to be carefully nursed. People who lived nearby were important as were, for instance, the "fettlers" who looked after the railway line. I remember George Blunden, Jack Bridgewater from Heyshott and Chris. Till from Midhurst, the head ganger. They'd walk the line every day, two men working in tandem, one each side of the track, carrying their tools on a flat cart with four little wheels, light enough to be tipped and taken off the rails if a train was coming. It was a single track line of course and the coming of a train was not only predictable as to time but also a definite event, part of an unchanging daily routine. I loved to pick wild

strawberries on the steep banks and I knew well enough when the train was due. I would then lie down, hidden from sight. Technically I was trespassing on the railway. The fettlers would reckon to finish off their inspection with a quiet pint at the Three Moles before setting off back again.

Father kept chicken at the rear of the pub where the ground rises sharply. I can see him now, struggling up the hill with feed. Every Saturday morning I had to deliver twelve fresh eggs to the Rev. and Mrs Davis at the rectory and a boiling fowl to Colonel Hills at the Priory – the Hills were great friends with Mr Lacaita. The Rectory is now Glebe House. Mrs Davis would invariably give me four farthings for my trouble. Delighted with this, I'd bike off down to Graffham to spend my riches on sweets. Mrs Boxall at the garage was less impressed; she put up with the farthings for some time, but eventually said she wasn't prepared to take them. I was somewhat disconcerted by this but eventually solved the problem by going home to change them in the till, and then cycling down to the garage.

Sunday evenings my mother went to evensong at Selham, she would be back just about in time to help behind the scenes at the pub. Like many pub landladies at the time, she was suspicious of alcohol and while she was indispensable to the whole operation, she could never be induced to pull pints at the bar. The pub offered bed and breakfast, having a kind of bed-sit upstairs and guests would often go into the bar of an evening, my mother sitting with them for a chat. Dad had served in the 1914-1918 war and, like so many others, had been gassed. The pub interior was often blue with cigarette smoke in those days and it can't have been good for him. Sometimes he'd have a gastric turn and go quite yellow. Like so many others, he never talked about the war. I remember, though, seeing a large framed photograph of Dad in soldier's uniform with my older brother and two older sisters.

The village hall stood in the grounds of the Rectory. It's still there but on private ground. It hosted village activities like Sunday School parties. I can still visualise it although I haven't been inside for years. It was small, but compact, with a kitchen area, storage and even five or six tables for whist. My mother would play whist and sometimes return with the comment, "I got the booby tonight". I preferred the social side of things; there might be fancy dress at the rectory or something like that. The village hall had a coal fire and its own set of crockery. For all I know, the crockery may still be there.

The pub was demanding and as young girl I didn't always want to help with the chores. I'd steal out the back to play with my friend, when I should have been helping my sister wash glasses. Dad was always busy and not just with the pub. He'd still have his other job but he'd also help out on local farms at busy times like threshing – all steam then of course. My sister joined the Oddities a Lodsworth-based concert party. There was a stage at the Selham hall but it was small and I don't think they ever played there. During the war I was in Red Cross Detachment Sussex 572 with Miss Podmore from Tillington in charge. We had training evenings at Lodsworth House, bedmaking, first-aid, things like that. Times were changing and after a long time at Selham, the Rev and Mrs Davis left, to be replaced by Dr. Shaw. It would be the last time Selham had its own rector.

Other memories : the scissor-grinders coming to the pub. For a child they were alarming figures, almost from another world, weather-beaten wandering people. To hear "the scissor-

grinders are here” was almost sinister. My parents, of course, had no such inhibitions; sitting chatting with them in the pub over a drink, once sharpening was over. More welcome for me was the ice-cream man on his bicycle. “Stop me and buy one.” There was Walls’ Sno-frute or Eldorado ice cream - the bicycle had a cold box. The Three Moles was somewhat off the beaten track and we’d often feel (and correctly) that he wouldn’t be along today. What a joy to see him come under the archway (now demolished) that carried the railway.

The area was sparsely populated before the war, but as I have said, during the war, there were troops everywhere. The Fleet Air Arm were at Ambersham and there were Canadian and American troops all over the place. There was a searchlight battery in Mr Lacaita’s field. As the train trundled through Ambersham, the troops would often flag it down for a ride. We’d be selling by this time crisps, biscuits and lemonade at the bar, but some locals would still come as they had always done to the back door, with their own containers, to have a quart of bitter to take away.

Stoolball was always a passion. Even at the age of nine I’d bike down to Graffham and sit on the grass waiting for the game, praying that someone wouldn’t turn up and I’d be drafted in to replace them. As often as not my prayers were answered. I played stoolball for some fifty years, latterly, when I had moved to Midhurst, I played for Stedham. Petworth Park was certainly familiar territory for me.

Dad had pigs up the hill behind the pub. I’d often see him trudging up the slope with his yoke of pig feed. Behind us, looking down from the hill lay the station. I can remember every particle of dust in that station – it was Selham’s very life. There was the railway arch just beyond the pub (now demolished) and there were people coming from Graffham to catch the 7.30 morning train for London, leaving their bicycles, or perhaps, their cars at the station – change at Pulborough. The train also carried boys to and from the Grammar School at Midhurst.

Even as late as the war years we were still collecting our milk in person from Hurlands farm. There was no delivery. Even after we had stopped collecting from Hurlands, the large can remained in the family for a time. Monday was washing day at the pub, remember that the Three Moles offered a limited line in Bed and Breakfast. A local lady came in to help with the washing and she would be at the pub most of the day. There was no running water until the 1950s and hence no taps at the Three Moles – water was pumped and the pump had to be primed - rather like a church organ - to get some suction into it. A big copper stood in a kind of kitchenette at the rear. The pub had a kitchen range and the family cooking was done on this. It was all hard work but it had been harder once. As the baby of the family I was forever being told: “You never knew the hard times. Marjie”.

During the war there were regular dances at the Empire Hall, Graffham while the pub remained very busy. There was never any trouble at the pub, the soldiers called Dad “Pop” and there was now “entertainment” – a piano! Mr Jeans from Midhurst even came periodically to tune it. I had a few lessons and could play a little, but there would always be someone among the troops who really could play. Then there would be a general sing-song. I often think of those steps outside the pub and wonder that no one, coming out a little merry, ever fell down them.

Eventually Dad gave up the pub and my brother Joe took it on for a couple of years, then it passed into other hands.

One particular wartime incident stands out – it was for me the scariest moment of the entire war. There was an open-air fête at Königs farm – they had taken over from Mr Bridger at Hurlands not long before. I suppose an open-air fête in wartime was a trifle bold. Suddenly a German plane came over and began to spray the fête with gunfire. I dived with others under a cart. I remember nothing about the fête itself only the sheer terror. Sometimes I think it was just a bad dream, something I imagined but you say you have a parallel account.

Busy as the pub was during the war, we knew that things would eventually revert to what they had been. At somewhere like the Three Moles, it was and would always be, the locals who were the pub’s bread and butter. It sometimes happened during the war that the troops drunk the pub dry. At that time we’d put up “NO beer” signs on the pub door. However we still kept some back for the locals — there would come a time when only the locals would be there for us. The pub belonged, certainly at that time, to the Mitford Estate and when there were Mitford Estate shoots before the war we’d get in a ham to make sandwiches for the party.

My future husband was Canadian and we were married in 1946, going out to Canada on the Aquitania, but the employment situation in Canada wasn’t good. After sixteen months and a spell working in the tobacco fields we decided to come back to England. My husband found a job locally and I went back to the pub for a time. The Cowdray Estate had turned the Priory into four flats and we were fortunate enough to have one for a time.

Margery Burn was talking to Rob. Smith and the Editor.

We append Ron Probert’s account of the Hurlands Farm attack for comparison. It comes from PSM 96.

Early on in the war Mrs König decided to have a fête, no doubt to help the war effort. It was well-advertised and in a field to the side of the hump-back bridge on the Selham Road, not far from Morleys’ saw-mills. Marquees were put up, white and not camouflaged, after all it was broad daylight. It was early afternoon and all appeared to be safe enough. To everyone’s consternation, however, an enemy plane appeared suddenly out of the clouds and dropped three bombs. It was fortunate that he had seen the marquees so late, for the bombs in fact slewed away in the direction of Lodsworth and a Spitfire appeared out of the cloud too. Perhaps the enemy pilot thought the marquees were a military encampment. As a child I was quite excited by all this and stayed on at the fête hoping for more excitement. Mrs King however was very put out that I hadn’t come home immediately. I remember going to Lodsworth the next day on our bikes and seeing a tree festooned with dead chickens, a bomb had landed among the birds. Another bomb had landed in a field and buried itself in the ground. We retrieved the nose cone and for many years Mrs King used it as a doorstep.

Ed.



Collecting books for the Book Sale can throw up all sorts of allied material. This is one of a series of twelve animal studies mounted on thin brown card possibly from a book. Spotting may indicate a certain age. If, in reproducing this particular study, we have infringed someone's copyright we will redress this in the next Magazine. There is no obvious signature.



*Downstairs at Petworth Cottage Museum.
A photograph by Louise Adams for the Chichester Observer series.*



Petworth Buffs outing 1945/6. The Friendly Society movement in Petworth had a long history. Note "Morley's Corner" to the rear. Photograph by G. G. Garland.

Five years and four months short!

My father was born at Dales Farm, Northchapel in 1896 and attended the old school in the village which closed in 1916 : Dad had left long before that, at the age of twelve. As my grandfather was the tenant at Dales, a Leconfield farm, it was natural that Dad would himself go to work there. It wouldn't be too long, however, before Dad was called up for the 1914-1918 war, while his elder brother, Charlie, remained at Dales. Charlie had been rejected for service because he had varicose veins, a wise precaution in the event because my father talked of forty mile route marches in France in a single day. I still have a scroll commemorating his service in the Machine Gun Corps from 1915 to 1918. Like so many of his generation, Dad was reticent about the war. He had seen too many good men blown to pieces to wish to dwell on it. When he came back he returned to the farm. Uncle Charlie's son was in the army in the second world war but was less fortunate than Dad had been. Shot in the ankle he had died of complications.

My grandfather I cannot remember at all, but I can still see my grandmother - sitting in the front room at Dales. She was short and rather stout. When my father married he moved to Hammer Cottages off Pipers Lane. They were tied : one went with Upper Frithfold, the other with Dales. He would remain there until 1941 when the family left Dales, selling all the stock. Dad had worked with horses from a boy and always preferred to work with them if he could. In early days at Dales he and his brother had even bred their own colts. Horses were Dad's life you might almost say. I remember one old man telling me of seeing Dad on the road with a waggon and a pair of horses. He was only fourteen. It would be 1910. A horse was part of the family and, of course, the use of horses was universal then. At Shillinglee, when the estate was in its heyday, Lord Winterton had twelve horse-drawn dung carts and twelve waggons. Dad could use a tractor but, as I have said, horses were his preference.

Next stop from Hammer Cottages was Mitchell Park Cottages, again tied. Dad was now working for Mr Dadswell and from here I'd walk into Northchapel School - thought nothing of it - and as soon as I was old enough I'd bicycle in. Gardening was my favourite subject, I've always loved gardening. Mr Jimmy Ayling would take us on Tuesday afternoons. At that time the school had gardens to the rear and allotments where the playground now is. A couple of boys would be allotted a particular piece of ground to look after. I never liked being shut up in school, I suppose I'd always been used to the open air. There was a junior Young Farmers Club at the school and I joined the local Y.F.C. when I left. It would later fold. As far as I know Ebernoe is the only remaining Y.F.C. which is reasonably local. Mr Willmer, the rector, was a great stalwart of the Y.F.C. and he would always be present at any local event.

I left school in 1948 and went to work at Mitchell Park farm, Dad being already there. When the cowman left a year later. Mr Dadswell, the farmer, suggested I replace him, which I did. A further move was to Charlie Moss's Peacocks Farm where I continued as cowman until the farm was divided up, with Mr Moss moving to Hortons Farm. I stayed at Hortons for twenty five years. Had I not been forced to retire through arthritis I'd have had some fifty years milking cows. As it was, I was short by some five years and four months.

Milking I had first learned at Mitchell Park when I was thirteen. There were forty shorthorns, still milked entirely by hand, although by the time I left school in 1948 the milking machine was already taking over. Milking was something you picked up; you couldn't really learn it. There was a feel, a knack, a rhythm you had to work into. Some cows could be more than a bit lively. Even when the milking machine was in general use there was still a need for hand milking. One or two cows simply wouldn't have the machine and still had to be milked by hand. Some cows had tougher udders than others, some made you wait for the milk to come. Working every day with the same cows, you soon came to know what to expect. Milking by hand would be called for also if you had a cow with a bad leg on her own in a loose box. With modern milking machines one man can do thirty or forty cows in an hour, where formerly a skilled man might do eight or ten in an hour. A milking machine is essentially a bucket with a pulsator at the top, a liner inside the metal shell squeezes the teats while a vacuum holds machine to teat. The pulsator on the bucket lid squeezes at regular intervals. Alfa Laval. Forward ... there are a number of different makes, all operating on the same principle and all variations on a theme.

At Mitchell Park we had forty cows housed in two single rows of thirteen with a double stall of 14. Each bucket of milk would be tipped into the cooler and the lorry would collect every morning. The day began at six in the morning with milking. Breakfast would be at 8.45. I'd then go back with a wheelbarrow, the cows having been put out into the field, and bed them out with clean straw. Before I'd gone to breakfast I'd have given them something to eat. It might be kale, it might be swede or mangold, cut up in a machine. There would be half a bushel each tipped into the manger. One bucket would do two cows but a bushel bucket would be heavy. I'd carry it on my hip. Looking back, I think that that's got a good deal to do with my arthritis.

Summer was appreciably easier than winter because the cows could stay out in the field at night. Sometimes in severe winter weather the cows might remain in their stalls all day but this was a little unusual. In summer they'd be given grass nuts with magnesium. If they ate too much lush grass they'd get "grass staggers", fall down and even lie down as if they were drunk, sometimes for a whole day or even a couple of days. Staggers was essentially a summer thing. In winter a trip to the field might leave them up to their necks in mud and they'd really need a wash once they were back in the barn. About three o'clock it was time to bring them back to stand in pairs in the byre, held with a neck chain. It would be time for the second milking. When you'd done that you'd give them some hay, they'd have already polished off their half bushel of kale or root. The hay would come in large bales, three bales feeding some forty cows. A portion of hay would be put in between each pair and each cow would tend to pull it towards her. You had to check that one cow didn't take all the hay. All in all, as I have said, summer was a good deal easier than winter.

I stayed where I was but cowmen tended to be somewhat nomadic, moving on frequently. They might hear on the grapevine that one farmer was paying slightly more than another. Tied cottages might be rent free but they could also be primitive and remote. We were at least on a road. At Hammer Cottages Mother had groceries from Mrs Gordon Knight at Petworth, delivered by Mr Keen, "Sonny Jim", who continued at least until the early years

of the war. I can also remember him going up to Aunt Lucy at Dales. Mr Powell delivered for Durrants the Petworth butcher and when he packed up she had Mr Legg the Northchapel butcher with Ron "Bingo" Harding delivering. No, I didn't go into Petworth to the cinema, or only very rarely, films didn't greatly appeal to me, but we'd always bike in from Northchapel for Petworth fair – this would be just after the war. Evacuees? Yes we had several in Northchapel. I think they all came from Peckham and a teacher, Miss Buffton came down with them. I always felt she gave us local lads rather a hard time. Lord Leconfield? Well, Dales had been a Leconfield farm, but I was still quite young when he died. I saw him twice: once soon after I'd started at Mitchell Park when he came round on a tour of the Estate farms, and once when he unveiled a memorial to those from Northchapel who had lost their lives during the war. My father told me he was a great fox hunter – but this of course was general knowledge.

Norman Dabbs was talking to the Editor.

A long trek from the station

"Petworth! I had just left my job at Amberley School for a transfer to Petworth and I was still carrying the bouquets and farewell presents I had been given. But no one had told me that Petworth station was one uphill mile out of town. There was nothing for it but to struggle in. I would be teaching at Petworth Infants School under Miss Wootton. My father had just been transferred to Petworth Police Station with the rank of superintendent and we were to live at the Police Station in what we always called the Magistrates' house. The sitting room would be upstairs as Dad kept a downstairs front room as an office. Everyone, he said, should make a sacrifice in war-time. He had served in the 1914-1918 war. Some of those who came in and out of the office were shrouded in secrecy. Later we heard of a famous pianist, about to be dropped into occupied France, who was on his way to Tangmere. He certainly survived the war, because I later saw a poster announcing a concert recital by him at the Royal Albert Hall."

"With Dad as superintendent, I sometimes had a rather privileged perspective, although my mother on occasion had her reservations. For a boy in his mid-teens there could be a certain excitement about wartime. There was the doodlebug that landed just on the Petworth side of the Haslingbourne road. As it fell in a kind of valley, it didn't do the damage it might have done. Dad was called out and I went with him. The R.A.F. were already there taking parts away for inspection. What remained was essentially the large tail pipe. The only apparent damage was to an auxiliary water pump. What I remember most vividly is an owl looking on the scene, hours after the incident, with a fixed stare. Perhaps he had been dazed by the explosion."

"If I had had a long walk up from the station, I certainly didn't have far to go to work. The old Infants School was on the site of the present Public Library. Air Raid precautions were on the rudimentary side, children getting under the desks when the alarm sounded. At least desks in those days were really solid pieces of furniture.

I had come to Petworth just after the school bombing in 1942 and the Boys' School had moved to Culvercroft in Pound Street. I remember going to a teachers' meeting there and walking through the old kitchens with their huge jet-black stoves. Mr Mickelburgh, the headmaster, had six seed trays on the stove tops. "What do you think of these?" he said, pointing to the growing plants. Small things that stick in the mind after so many years, like seeing the trestles put out in the Square to perpetuate the tradition of Petworth's ancient November fair.

I'd been a cub mistress at Bognor, but I'd really no intention of doing anything similar at Petworth. Nor, in the early stages, did I. Camping at West Ashling with the Bognor cubs, I'd had casual contact with the Petworth group, but certainly no more than that. One day, however, two of the boys came to see me. Could I revive the Scout troop? Morale was desperately low after the bombing. I wasn't sure and said I would need time to think about it. Dad's reaction was typical: "You must."

Scout memories. V.E. day comes immediately to mind. The Scout hut in those days, as it had been for years, was an upper room in the stables at New Grove. Wherever and whatever a Scout H.Q. is, it's always a hut. We had flags and candles everywhere, it's a wonder we didn't celebrate with a fire at H.Q.

V.J. day was in fact rather more of an event. The Scouts put a great deal of effort into erecting an enormous bonfire on the Sheepdowns. We turned the trek cart into an impromptu coffin, draped ourselves with curtains, leaving only eye-holes - at least black-out curtains were readily available - carried flaming torches and marched up Lombard Street to the sound of a single drum. It must have been an eerie spectacle and there is a famous Garland photograph of the procession in Lombard Street. We attracted a pretty fair crowd and did a war dance round the bonfire to celebrate this funeral of the Axis powers. Then amid the sparks and crackling from the bonfire, a strange thing happened, something I'll never forget. Gradually a glorious voice began to dominate. We were singing Land of Hope and Glory and everyone stopped for the voice. A well-known opera singer happened to be in Petworth. We heard her out in hushed silence."

"The trek cart deserves a mention. It's a real piece of Petworth history. It was unusual in that it could be taken to pieces for ease of transport. It could be packed into a lorry or even taken on a train. I was at an event in Petworth Park a year or two ago and Petworth Scouts were in attendance. I looked and thought, "That's our old trek cart." And sure enough it was: it still had a mark that I remembered. I've never seen another quite like it and it had been beautifully restored."

"The war did not mean an end to camping. I remember two New Forest camps toward the end of the war. Once we joined with some 400 Scouts and to help the war effort spent much of the time cutting pit props. A water diviner found a good spot for us to pitch camp. We watched the U.S. bombers going over from a nearby airfield. A second camp coincided with the bombing of Hiroshima."

"Did we go the whole way to camp on a hired lorry - or did we take the lorry to Petersfield and then go down on the train? It's difficult to remember."

"Fred Streeter, the Petworth House gardener, was in charge of the Special Constables

during the war and was often up at the Police Station with Dad. Once he came up with the most beautiful orchids. "You have them, Miss Dabson," he said, "The line's been bombed and we'll never get them to London." Lord Leconfield took a friendly interest in our activities, and seemed to know a thing or two about scouting. We'd built a temporary bridge and had had to cut out squares of turf eighteen inches square to take the posts. Afterwards we carefully replaced them. His lordship, with gaiters and black dog, suddenly appeared and clearly approved. "I see you did it properly", he observed.

My father was speaking to his lordship and I remember his lordship saying, "Mr Dabson, you'll have a hot meal at half past six. I won't. By the time it gets to me, it's always cold." He was referring, of course, to the long distance at Petworth House between kitchens and dining room."

"There was a battle H.Q. at the Police Station. Part above ground, part below. It was hard up against the wall and, during excavation, some said the bodies of executed criminals had been found. Just another Petworth legend, I think. There were no executions at the Old House of Correction."

"Skipper' Richardson was a scouting stalwart. He was stationed at Parham and had been a keen Scouter in Canada before the war. He really was a breath of fresh air and made the time to come over to Petworth as often as he could. He was also a great admirer of Mother's home-made soup. 'Gee, Mrs Dabson, I do like your soup'. It was made from marrow bones and vegetables.

When the troops left about the time of D. Day, he brought over a wooden plaque with the names of the regiment's N.C.O.s inscribed in enamel. "If I don't come back, look after it," he said. In fact he never did come back for the scroll, although he survived to return to Canada. After a while we wrote to the Canadian Embassy about the scroll and they sent a staff car down to collect it. Many of those mentioned on it had not returned.

The Scouts put on several shows in the old Iron Room. Anchors Aweigh was one I remember. There was, too, a spoof ballet with the senior boys in blond wigs and pink tights as part of one of the programmes. It had been meticulously rehearsed and it would be two or three minutes before the audience tumbled to what was happening.

I remember, too, a game where I was given a quarter of an hour start and dressed up as a spy. I darkened my face, put on a trilby hat and false moustache and carried an attache case. Surprisingly my pursuers failed to penetrate the disguise and no one took much notice except for two Canadian soldiers who passed me outside Wilson Hill the East Street chemist's. They made a disparaging remark about Italians."

"With soldiers in the town, nights could be lively. The Military Police did not stand on ceremony. Drunks would be picked up and literally thrown on to the lorry for transport to the cells at the Police Station then back to their camp. No physical damage because the bodies would be completely limp. Once our police sergeant was roughed up by some soldiers. Their officers were extremely embarrassed and made a formal apology. Looking back it's easy to be judgemental, but difficult too to recreate the pervading sense that these were desperate days, and life needed to be lived to the full, the future being so uncertain."

"I was fifteen or sixteen and would sometimes sneak into the Iron Room dances. I didn't

usually stay too long. There would be French Canadians, other Canadians, black and white United States servicemen and Commandos. It could be an explosive mix and arguments would often reach a conclusion in the cells.”

“After the war I taught at Tillington School until it closed, then returned to Petworth to the new Primary School where Mr Arthur Hill was in charge.”

Joy Deacon-Ford (née Dabson) and Jim Dabson were talking to the Editor.

The Old Blue: The story of a Petworth Friendly Society

7) A lingering death 1867-1909.

[In PSM 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, and 53 I attempted to reconstruct the story of the “Old” or “Angel” Blue, Petworth’s oldest friendly society, established in 1794. I left the story at the point where the Old Blue was coming under concentrated pressure from the new federated societies - in Petworth at this time the Oddfellows and the Foresters. Miles Costello’s article on the Oddfellows in PSM 134 has prompted me, at a remove of more than twenty years to conclude the story.

P.

The years from 1861 to 1866 had been turbulent ones for the Old Blue, with an overall decline in membership of over 30%. A roll of 122 had fallen to 94 in just five years.¹ The Old Blue’s problem in these years was not so much a failure to attract new members as an almost total inability to retain them. This must reflect competition from the expanding federated societies, at this time the Oddfellows and the Foresters.² The pattern would become a familiar one: new members enrolled, warned about non-payment after a year, then formally expelled at the following year’s A.G.M. The old village “steward” system appears to be no longer in place and membership, once relatively strong in the outlying villages, begins to contract into Petworth itself. That said, the Old Blue will retain a significant postal “dispersion”, members, often of long standing, living and working away. There is, too, the occasional surprise. A sudden influx of new members from Sutton will surely reflect the collapse of a small village society, but the Old Blue fails completely to keep this new blood. Financial stability was crucial, particularly for members of a previous club that had failed. The Old Blue also lacked the conscious bonding that was part of the very fabric of the new federated movement. It may be that the Old Blue still had that paternalist aura about it which was its late eighteenth century birthright. In a rapidly changing society this could well be a disadvantage. Over the years,

¹ Figures slightly corrected from the table in PSM 53 page 36

² The Oddfellows, much to the chagrin of the Old Blue had established their base at the Angel, the latter’s base since at least 1822. The Old Blue had originally been based at the Half Moon Inn in Market Square

the Old Blue’s honorary members, paying a guinea a year, but with no benefit accruing, reflect the higher echelons of Petworth society: the federated societies sought no such help and would probably have dismissed it as condescension. There is, however, in these middle years, no sign of subvention from the great house as there had been two or three decades before. Clergy, gentry, the occasional successful tradesman: no doubt the social gradations within this group would be as rigid as in any other sphere.

The 1860s saw also a perceptible loosening of the once tight discipline of the Old Blue. By 1866-7 the annual dinner, once the keystone, is shrinking, both numerically and, it would seem also in terms of importance. In 1866-7 potential diners were down to 76 of whom some 53 attended. A few local men were ill, but members made the journey from Dalston in London, Dunsfold, Woollavington, Dale Park, Bosham and Horsham. Unsurprisingly, rather more of the outlying members did not make the journey, Plymouth, Fairlight, Macclesfield, Wimbledon and Chiswick being among the more exotic locations. We have at this distance in time no way of penetrating the bare statistics, loyalty leaves no obvious mark on written records.

The decade from 1860 had been crucial. Whatever impetus the Old Blue had once had was now irretrievably lost. From now on there is the occasional defection, probably the result of straitened circumstances in later years, the even more occasional new member, often quickly defecting, and the roll slowly contracting through the inexorable drip of mortality. Membership falls to 54 in 1880, 46 in 1890, 35 in 1900 and 24 at the Society’s dissolution in 1909. It is the money that members have already invested that binds the Old Blue together. At the same time the old financial worries recede; investment income copes fairly easily with out-payments and there are periodical capital transfers.

The Minute Book records the occasional minor point but is generally uninformative. Likely enough, there was little to report. For a year or two there is a rise in the cost of the annual dinner, two shillings to two shillings and sixpence, because of the unusually high price of meat. In 1870 George Kinchett suggests that the five shilling fine for members absent from the annual dinner be remitted. He finds no seconder and the proposition is not put to the A.G.M. This view would soon prevail however at least in part; it being resolved that the fine be remitted for members living ten miles or more from Petworth, or for members prevented from attending by volunteer corps³ duty. Surplus of income over expenditure permitted a rise in benefit from seven shillings a week for casual sick to eight shillings and twopence and from three shillings and sixpence to four shillings and a penny for permanent sick i.e. those who had spent an unbroken year or more “on the club”. Claims at this time seem fairly equally divided between casual and permanent. Among the latter are cases of broken leg, palsy, old age and blindness. The committee met regularly every month at the Angel to consider claims, William Melville, the Church Street tailor, an exiled Scotsman, usually chairing the meeting in the absence of the President.

Contraction continues to tighten its grip. At a special A.G.M. held at the Angel on 26th October 1874 the fine for non-attendance at the annual dinner was finally abolished “nor shall

³ Effectively Territorial Army

a payment be made from the funds of the Society for band, favours, dinners or other expenses from the Annual General Meeting, that attendance at the Parish Church for divine service and to hear a sermon be discontinued for the present” “For the present ...” it would be forever; the old pomp of the Angel Blue was gone and would not return. A brief shift of the annual day to Trinity Monday, probably because of competing events which called on the attendance of members, turned out to be a temporary expedient. It was only a year before the decision was reversed. Unusually high sick payments in 1879 led to the sale of some 3% Consols but this seems to have been a minor blip: the Old Blue’s problems were not in essence financial. Committee meetings in the summer were put off to eight o’clock; business must have been perfunctory. In October 1879 there were just three certificates both longterm, in November just two.

A sign of the times was an application in May 1883 for the Society to pay a doctor’s bill. The committee ruled that they had no power to allow such a claim. In 1885 the financial year was altered to run January to January and the Rules revised. Provision is made for widows living away from Petworth to produce once a quarter a certificate from a clergyman



*William Melville, the Church Street tailor, a stalwart of the Old Blue in later years.
Photograph by Walter Kevis.*

attesting that they are still alive. The records are largely silent on widows, suggesting that a separate book existed which is no longer extant. We may assume that the new regulation is a relaxation rather than the contrary.

There are a handful of new members but these are very much pillars of the local community. A.A. Knight, the clerk at Brydones the Market Square solicitors is one, there are some members of the influential Whitcomb family, James Weekes the saddler, the Maybanks,⁴ father and son, Mr. Eager the Market Square draper and towards the end, Henry Streeter mine host at the Railway Inn, proprietor of a livery business in East Street and Frank Rogers, churchwarden at St. Mary’s and chemist in Market Square.⁵ The impression is of a rather exclusive club coexisting a little uneasily with the long-established essentially working-class older members.

In 1886 a deputation from the Old Blue was instructed to consult re the Old Blue joining the Amalgamated Friendly Societies in the town for the annual day. Clearly the Old Blue, mindful perhaps of its distinguished past, had hitherto held aloof. The end is in sight but it would be a lingering death. By 1900 membership is in the low thirties with only one member in the 20 to 30 age range. Curiously, however, although a number of members have survived from the 1860s, a handful even from the 1850s, only one falls within the 70 to 80 age range. The Old Blue struggled on until it was wound up in 1909, the funds shared out strictly according to seniority and some widows receiving quite significant sums. The Old Blue was at last no more and Petworth had lost a significant piece of its history. Ironically the Old Blue had expired exactly at the time when Lloyd George was introducing his new Insurance Acts.

P.

⁴ See PSM 134, pages 49, 50

⁵ His shop formed the north side of the present Austens

New Members

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Mrs. J. Deacon-Ford | Orchard House, High Path, Easebourne, Midhurst GU29 9BD. |
| Mrs. M. Enticknap | ‘Belmont’, Harborough Drive, West Chiltington. |
| Mrs. J. Gadd | Fitzleroi Farm, Fittleworth. |
| Mr. & Mrs. A. House | 18 Orchard Close, Petworth. |
| Mr. F. Humphrey | ‘The Bungalow’, Adversane Lane, Adversane, Billingshurst RH149JN. |
| Mrs. E. Lockwood | 5 Boderton Mews, Burton Park, Duncton GU28 0LS. |
| Ms C. Nash | Oat House, Home Farm Court, Shillinglee. |
| Mrs. P. Poynter | 5 Milton Drive, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 0JJ. |
| Mr. & Mrs. K. Smith | Woodmans, 1 Tower Place, East Wittering, Chichester PO20 8QT. |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. Sullivan | ‘Shambles’, Rothermead, Petworth GU28 0EW. |
| Mrs. D. Wadey | 32 Churchill Grove, Newtown, Tewkesbury GL20 8EL. |

This curious, anonymous, poem clearly comes from the mid-late 1930s and reflects a privileged, enclosed world that at a distance of seventy years begins to look very remote. Perhaps, although he was very much an outsider, George Garland's lens is the best commentary we have. Some of the allusions are still quite transparent, others (to me) completely obscure. Perhaps some readers will help annotate it. Ed.

A Hunting Alphabet

- A is the Admiral
So dashing and gay
Where ever the hounds
He's not far away
- B is for beastly Botany Bay
When hounds get in there
You're done for the day
- C is for C.....e
The chaperone's fear
A child's guide to knowledge
Also we hear
- D 's for the D _____s
His Lordship gives vent to
If you get in the way
And do what you're not meant to
- E 's for the Earths
Where refuge is sought
Now don't dig them out
And do be a sport
- F is for Florence
A rare good sort
She gets given horses
So they needn't be bought
- G 's for the girls
A light hearted throng
So don't be too hard on them
If they do wrong
- H is the "Hope you'll come soon" Brigade
They head all the foxes
And to jump are afraid

- I is for Ifold
The seat of the Earl
Who thinks he's no end of a dog
With the girls
- J is for Joan
Who rides remounts you know
She's a bit of a card
And a good'un to go
- K 's for the Knuts
Alas! they are few
They're not wildly exciting
But we make them do
- L 's for his Lordship
Our Master so kind
He rides such good horses
They go like the wind
- M is for Muzzy
He is such a dear
We all hope that he
Will be Master next year
- N 's for Ned Farmer
Though he holla & shouts
Of his skill in the Kennels
We none of us doubt
- O are the Obstacles
Though they abound
Cheer up! good people
They're always pulled down
- P 's for Pe
A heavy old buster
Who lays down the law
And thinks he's a Thruster
- Q is the question
Who's the Master to be
Why! who could be better
Than charming Muzzy

- R is for Rowcliffe
He is a good sort
When hounds meet at Stovolds
We do see some sport
-
- S is for St. John
By some known as Frank
A Master of Harriers
Quite without swank
-
- T 's for the Thrusters
Good luck to them all
They show us the way
Though they ride to a fall
-
- U is for Us
The writers of rhymes
With both packs we've had
Some jolly good times
-
- V is the Voluntary
Once cut by us all
So don't be down hearted
Pride must have a fall
-
- W 's for Will
With voice piercing & shrill
Lor' he do make a noise
When he thinks they will kill
-
- X are the excellent runs we have had
There's nothing like hunting
To make the heart glad
-
- Y is for you¹
Oh! why does it leave us
We all have our day
So don't let it grieve us
-
- Z is a letter impossible quite
Our brains are exhausted
No more can we write

¹ So Ms. Youth?

