Miles Costello Petworth Collection

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

magazine

No.141, September 2010

PETWORTH COTTAGE MUSEUM 1910-2010

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Members of the Boxgrove Tipteers en route to give their mummers' play at Goodwood folk dance festival c 1934.
Photograph by G. G. Garland.

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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 objects of the society.

The annual subscription is £10.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £12, overseas £15. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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Cover drawing of an ornamental jug at Petworth Cottage Museum by Jonathan Newdick.

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Chairman's notes

In introducing Magazine 140 I reminded members that this Magazine is not immune to change and I compared Issue 139 with Issue 1. No. 140 offered an altered layout, a slightly different size, another typeface and different paper, while the cover would change quarterly. The lack of colour was purely fortuitous, nothing we had justified the extra expense and the same applies for this issue. Colour remains a definite option.

The new format has been well received. For 141 we have however slightly increased print size and introduced a few more text-breakers. The new paper is retained because it improves picture reproduction. The Magazine's slightly different size was an attempt to reduce postal charges, as yet unsuccessful, although the problem now seems to be one of weight rather than width.

A word about the autumn meetings. The Garland memorial lecture in October will focus on George Garland's very earliest work as a press photographer in the 1920s. I would particularly draw your attention to the November meeting. On the face of it we have a curious subject, the last, unexplained, name on the Lurgashall war memorial and apparently quite unconnected with the village. I heard Mike Oakland talk about this last year and found it one of the most extraordinary talks I have ever heard. I have put it in the week in which Armistice Days falls. If you miss it you have only yourself to blame. The Allsorts in December need no introduction.

Issue 140 was singularly free from misprints but two horrors escaped detection. Dobson for Dabson. Oh dear! My apologies too to Joyce Sleight for another mangling – see Petworth Library page 14.

Peter
18th July 2010

The Tame (AGM) and the Wild (life on the Western Rother)

First, some extracts from the Minutes (unconfirmed) of the 36th Annual General Meeting held in the Leconfield Hall on Wednesday, May 19th 2010 at 7pm.

The Treasurer's Report: . . . "current membership stood at 633 . . . a fall of £800 in interest on reserves was a reflection of the country's financial state. This, with an overspend of over £2,000 on expenditure, largely through increased production costs of the Magazine, had led the Committee to approve a number of steps to address the situation. These had so far included raising subscription rates and withdrawing the Society's subsidy on the Annual Dinner which had hitherto provided drinks at the reception. . . . members had responded with increased donations and (he was) extremely grateful to them . . . the Independent Inspector (of Accounts) had indicated his wish to relinquish the position due to pressure of work. The Chairman thanked Mr Henderson for all the hard work he so efficiently carried out as Treasurer."

Election of Committee: . . . "Mrs Celia Lilly had been co-opted on to the Committee during the year . . . the entire body . . . (was) re-elected en bloc."

Chairman's Report: . . . "Mr Jerrome said that the aim was for one event a month. There were fewer walks but more visits. The fees of special speakers and performers were continuing to rise. The book sales were a valuable and enjoyable, if laborious, feature, income depending on the quality of stock available. In this connection the van was an essential, though expensive necessity. Commenting on the inclusion of pre-dinner drinks in the cost of the Annual Dinner to members, he emphasised that this was a Committee decision, independent of the National Trust. With the printing of the Magazine passing into new hands on the impending retirement of the printer over the past 35 years, it had been completely re-designed in A5 format, which, it was hoped, would save on postage. With a membership of 633, many representing couples, the theoretical total had to be over 1,000. Attendance at monthly meetings, October–May, depended on the weather – too good to be in, too bad to go out. Slides of activities concluded the report: the Palace of Westminster visit, the Annual Dinner, the Flint Walk, the 100th Book Sale, the River Common and Kingley Vale Walks, Fair Night, the Society's Christmas tree for the United Reformed Church's Christmas Tree Festival, Alison Neil as Hildegard of Bingen and local snow scenes by Mrs Janet Gibbs.

Business over and raffle drawn, it was Andrew Thompson's turn to tell us about the 'Wildlife on 4 miles of the Western Rother'. It had been the Chairman's decision to rephrase the title for the Activities Sheet: 'Wild Life on the Western Rother' – somewhat, and intentionally ambiguous, but we had no need to worry about orgies on private yachts cruising our waters.

Andrew is a gamekeeper on the Leconfield Estate at Rotherbridge with three strings to his bow: shooting, fishing and Countryside Stewardship and it was his role in the last area that he described, illustrated with exquisite photography.

The Rother has been under man's influence for many years, notably as a result of canalisation in the 18th century, when it was widened to 16 feet, dredged to an

average depth of 4 feet – although it is as much as 16 feet deep in places – and sharp bends were cut off. It was used during the construction of the railway in the mid-19th century, after which it was rendered redundant and gradually fell into decline.

Andrew paid tribute to the late Charlie Justice, his predecessor, who inspired him as a child with his vast knowledge of the countryside, so that it was his great privilege and the fulfilment of a dream when, on his death, Andrew was asked to replace him.

Much has happened since. It was Lord Egremont's wish that parts of the river be restored and, with the help of the Environment Agency, Ladymead Lock (built 1794) has been partially reconstructed, within Health & Safety limits, and the Shopham Link (1797) removed so that the river now runs its pre-canal course in winding loop, four years in the planning, three months to execute, at a cost of £110,000. A 12 foot drop at Tumble Bay, beloved of boy swimmers up to the 1950s, has been changed with four weirs to assist migrating sea trout returning to spawn, the spawning itself being encouraged by creating gravel riffles.

The river floods six times a year on average and 200 acres of the flood plain have been restored to wetland with sluice gates to control the water level through the year. This has attracted nine species of migrating waterfowl in the winter. There is a herd of around 100 Sussex cattle – a breed developed by the 3rd Earl of Egremont 200 years ago, beautiful beasts.

Entrancing photographs of the area through the seasons, under snow and flood, spring and autumn colours, sunsets, as well as barn owls – there are five empty barns with nest boxes – butterflies, damsel flies, spawning sea trout, chub, snipe and the pests – mink and cormorants which prey on the trout.

Andrew hosts educational visits, mainly for school groups on specific projects. River life differs from that in the more familiar and accessible ponds and he is clearly keen to share experiences of the life he enjoys in such a beautiful setting.

And thank you, Andrew, for bringing something of that into our tame AGM.

KCT

Oranges and lemons

Andy's expeditions, bold as they are, don't always have London as their destination – think of Chatham a year or two ago. We've had Greenwich and the sewers, and last year the Houses of Parliament. This year's foray is to the Royal Courts of Justice. Familiar enough as a backdrop on television news but otherwise existing, as so much television does, in a curious limbo, part of the real world, unquestionably, but at the same time, somewhat unreal.

Through the June countryside at its greenest, to the Surrey border and beyond. Fresh molehills on an early morning lawn at Chiddingfold. The flag of St George draped over tiles, or hanging out of windows. The World Cup will be long over when this Magazine appears. As we approach London from the south the coach slows to the obligatory crawl, Wandsworth, Battersea, one tired shop façade after another, ethnic stores and food outlets, hairdressers, pubs, the occasional estate agent or funeral parlour.

Security at the entrance, something now almost expected. Metal objects placed in plastic trays then retrieved. There will be two parties: one to start more or less straightaway, the second at two o'clock. Time for lunch and a look round – the reverse procedure for the later party.

The RCJ aren't essentially a criminal court although they will hear criminal appeals. Originally mooted in 1840, the intention being to unite a multitude of different courts under one roof, the idea was slow to come to fruition. The complex was built on the site of an enormous slum, bought in 1860 for the significant sum of 1.4 million pounds, the equivalent of 55 million pounds today. 450 dwellings and some 4000 people living in the most appalling and squalid conditions. What happened to them? Our guide himself had wondered but history seems to have left no trace of them. Designed by George Edmund Street, the building was largely funded by cash accumulated from intestate estates. A strike by stonemasons meant that foreign workers were brought in and to escape hostility from the locals, kept on the premises at night, the only exit being a tunnel through to the Strand. The familiar frontage gives no idea of the huge extent of the complex, with its more than a thousand rooms and three and a half miles of corridors. If it looks comparatively empty, our guide observed, at 4.30 you would have some idea of the number of people involved.

We sat in Count No. 4, seat of the Lord Chief Justice himself. Our guide explained the three great civil divisions, Chancery, Queens Bench and Family and their differing jurisdictions. In this court so many notable criminals had appeared on appeal, hence a dock in a civil court. There are cells here but no prisoners are kept overnight. Here too had been high profile civil cases, Max Mosley, Heather McCartney, the Unite Union. A judge sits without a jury except in cases of libel and slander.

In this vast complex are a thousand clocks, while the transcript of a day's proceedings would run to half the length of an average novel. Our humorous and knowledgeable guide took us round the building. Even he had little knowledge of the vast basement, so large that someone had been found "in residence" down

there. We ended up looking at the "Bear Garden", so named by Queen Victoria, disturbed by the rowdy proceedings. The court adjudicates on bankruptcy, hence the phrase Queer Street, a corruption of Carey Street on which the bankrupt would be discharged. An hour and a half – we've hardly scratched the surface and here I've only scratched the surface of our tour.

Time to come out and for the group to do their own thing in a couple of hours or more in London. A recommended eating-place somewhere in the environs of the Inns of Court turns out to be mythical and the two of us settle for a Thai set meal.

An hour and a half to the coach. Covent Garden? But can we get there and back in time? Someone has mentioned Samuel Johnson's house but where is it? After a few blanks a helpful uniformed doorman points us on our way. It's certainly not obvious, one narrow passage off the main thoroughfare, leading into another then round a series of corners. Someone's painting the front door but in fact the entrance is to the side. We ring the bell to find a lady sitting at a table with assorted Johnsoniana for sale – mainly books. £3.50 admission. The lady knows Petworth well; she drives through most weekends. No guided tour, nothing removable. There's a video presentation upstairs. I always wonder about such modern technology in a historic setting but I can see the reason for it. The absence of movables gives a curiously sparse impression and this is probably heightened by the light – it's in no way the dark house you might expect. Another flight of stairs to the upstairs attic room where Johnson and his collaborators worked on the famous Dictionary. Two men in suits are talking in low tones about the redecoration and there's a strong smell of fresh paint. The attic has had a chequered history in the last century: but clearly it is sometimes used for lectures now, there are canvas chairs piled up in a corner behind a screen. A newspaper cutting tells of severe incendiary bomb damage in 1941 and of the role of the Volunteer Fire Service in saving the building. It would be designated as a rest house for the fire services during the war: unlike the Armed Forces they did not have quarters set aside for them. It's time to make our way back.

We've no time to do more than walk past St Clement Danes adjoining the RCJ. "Oranges and lemons" may refer to St Clement Danes or it may refer to St Clement Eastcheap, both apparently, can claim historic connection with oranges from Spain. "The slow bells of Aldgate" and the sinister end of the rhyme, red buses, everyone's on a mobile. It's time to board the coach and retrace that tortuous progress out of London – Battersea, Wandsworth . . .

P.

"When fire burns the old woman's petticoats . . ." or it all depends on the afternoon

A book sale is more than the obvious Saturday event, more than the visible, apparently random, scurrying about with boxes, part of some esoteric ritual, unintelligible to the non-initiate, perhaps a mystery even to the insider. No, it's not a simple monthly extravaganza, it's a continuum; collecting and sorting goes on throughout the month. This particular evening Bill Eldridge and I are driving through the June countryside to pick up the remnants of a book stall at a local fete. The 'A' team if you like, Miles usually drives the van but he's off tonight. It's part of a regular sequence of such summer pick-ups. Bill parks just inside the boundary rope. Banana boxes, supermarket flats, cucumber boxes. As with all fete material, there will be a considerable residue we can't use and, of course, what we have will already have been well picked over. If Dornford Yates novels once had dustcovers (and they almost certainly did) they haven't survived the years. Perhaps not everyone likes dust covers on new books. And does anyone read/collect Dornford Yates now? I suppose, as with so much else, it's hit and miss, a matter of the right person appearing at the right time. The National Trust Handbook for 2007 isn't going to do much for us, nor a travel guide for South America dated 2003. A Time Out guide to Vienna might just make it. Out hosts are pleased to see us, as they always are, we've saved them a measure of heavy lifting. We're loaded up and promise to see them next year.

"When fire burns the old woman's petticoats everyone minds their own business." A particularly inscrutable Chinese proverb.[1] Sorting has its byways but an interesting sideroad is no guide to whether a book will make the select group that is the £1 table. A sale stands or falls on the quality of the £1 table. It's more difficult than it seems. You can't lower the bar, but there must be enough quality to justify a dealer's journey. The same people don't come every month but they are important. And this month (June) the £1 table's a real struggle. It's not a shortage of books. It's a dearth of quality. A book sale's not a horn of plenty; it's not all profit. There's hall hire, garage rent, and the ever present expense of the indispensable van – road fund, insurance, and maintenance. It's S registered and the seals . . .

Saturday with some apprehension. There's not enough on the £1 table but the hall is packed out. By 10.15 the £1 table has evaporated – fortunately we've a stronger than usual 50p back-up. As it happens, too, the town has afternoon visitors, that makes all the difference. We're well up on May and live to fight another day.

P.

[1]Quoted by E. D. Edwards: The Dragon Book (Hodge 1938).

A woodland fiction? David and Linda's July walk

Over the years my accounts of Society walks have sometimes been dismissed as essentially works of fiction, particularly by those who actually participated. "We don't remember that . . ." "That's out of all proportion" etc. Linda and David's July woodland walk presented a particular challenge. I couldn't take part as I would be leading a festival town walk at the same time. Could I push the art of fiction to its logical extreme and write up the walk without actually being there? Only a slight modification some would say, and, after all, someone might write their own account, pointing out my inaccuracies.

Accordingly, a fortnight before the walk I joined David and Linda for a trial run. The walk was a rare opportunity to explore private Leconfield land off the crossroads at Hawkhurst. David had permission from Leconfield and from the farmer at Battlehurst.

Although, like most of us, I'd passed the crossroads often enough without turning right or left off the A272, I had occasionally taken the left hand road towards Kirdford, but the area between this road and Glasshouse Lane running parallel with it from Fox Hill was quite new.

A long spell of sunny weather seemed by the afternoon to have given over to thick cloud and strong wind, but, by early evening the wind had dropped and there were breaks in the cloud. Parking just off the road we caught immediately the heady scent of cut pine wood in Blackhouse Copse. Woods like this often lie largely undisturbed for years but there had been recent felling, the huge machines churning up the drying clay track. Cut pine ready to be moved, then a load of cordwood, oak, silver birch and all sorts. A small heap of charcoal beside the path seemed debris from a barbecue, dumped in the woods. Discarded bark lay on the tracks with the tough stems and yellow flowers of St John's wort at the side. The ruts the machines had left were so deep that the sides seemed almost like walls; no ordinary wheeled vehicle could possibly negotiate them: pink foxglove florets at their last gasp, then briefly out of the woods and across a huge field. We're now walking parallel with Glasshouse Lane. The grass has been cut for hay or sileage then dressed with slurry, the field being treated progressively as the slurry becomes available. Back into the sunlit woods on the further side of the field. This is Glasshouse Copse. Dark leaves of primrose, the unassuming mauve heads of self-heal, ragged robin and enchanter's nightshade with its tiny white flowers and creeping rhizomes. The gamekeepers have filled in the ruts here with rubble and broken tiles flash in the sun. We come out in Glasshouse Lane, the very occasional car reminding us of a snarled-up town – it's the last day of the Festival of Speed. There's another track away to the left toward Marshall's Rough but we don't take it, the timber men have been working there too.

Back into the copse to cross the slurried field again, then to retrace our steps through the woods. Already the presage of autumn, blackberry in flower, holly in small green berry. Past the barbecue residue and down the slope to the car, some blue plastic diesel barrels, left no doubt, by the contractors, a stack of well-rotted pine, disintegrating over years – an insects' paradise. I wonder if anyone will take the challenge and write up the walk in a fortnight's time or will readers of the Magazine have to settle for the apocryphal?

P.

Always a moonlit night

It's very hot. It's the beginning of June and this weather can't possibly last. Friday. 1.45 and I'm stewarding at 346. A couple are making their slow way up the incline. I sense they may have the Museum in mind. A look at their watches and the time on the board. They turn to come back, but some instinct suggests that I'm part of the enigma that is 346. "If you like to go inside until I've lit the fire we'll be on our way." They're staying at the Graffham camp site and are from Leigh-on-Sea. In fact Pam explains while I get on with the fire.

The wood and coal are soon roaring away and the sun's roasting the ranked cosmos plants in the plot outside. The flowers will be carmine, pink and white with blue dot plants of salvia patens. They're suffering in the heat. Will they spread out to give the hazy, lacy effect I'm looking to suggest? For answer the smoke from the newly lit fire casts fast moving shadows over the parched earth. The surviving dahlias from a harsh winter are at last beginning to show through at the rear: they're desperately late this year. Our visitors depart well-satisfied and clutching a bundle of yellow museum leaflets. A long lull ensues.

Time to get out the watering can and have a look at the "annual border" on the right. The problem here is to know what's a weed and what isn't. I can tell candytuft, calendula, clary and annual lupin, also, of course, the Empress of India nasturtiums with their distinctive dark leaves and squat habit. All but the nasturtiums have come from a 33p supermarket packet of mixed annual seed. Mrs Cummings, at least, might appreciate the economy – or perhaps she didn't "do" flowers at all – money was tight in 1910. Perhaps she had a packet or two from Mrs Butcher opposite (see PSM 140), after all the two women were over-the-road neighbours for decades. Perhaps she just saved her own seed, easy enough with calendula, nasturtium or clary. It's a long lull. Pam and I talk downstairs.

The fire begins to lose its glow.

It's well into the afternoon when a young lady appears from Houghton, followed by a couple from Burgess Hill. All seem pleasantly surprised to find that 346 isn't a "museum" in the strict sense. We're late "clocking off". By 346 standards it's been an unusually quiet afternoon. We put it down to the hot weather.

A week before I had been setting out the cosmos plants, Penny and Corinne stewarding for a W.I. visit. Busy. The ladies came in two parties, stopping to chat with the "gardener" on the way out. One lady fastens on to the bricked-up W.C. arch, accessible once to enable the thunderbox to be cleaned. "Always a moonlit night for that, never otherwise".

P.

Not another one – surely!

Was it really such a good idea to celebrate the putative centenary of 346 High Street by reprinting a series of Museum articles from the Magazine? If it seemed quixotic in prospect, it now seems even more quixotic in practice. 100 copies only, each individually signed and numbered by Jonathan and myself and enhanced with twelve black and white drawings by Jonathan of everyday items from the Museum, a pair of shoes, a lady's dress, milk churns, a holy water stoup, James Pearson's clock face . . . the drawings immortalise the everyday and that's, after all, what the Museum's about. Ideally the articles capture the forgotten trivia of the cottage's existence since 1996.

The usual unease at a new book is heightened this time. Who would want such a book? At 100 copies it has to be, in practical terms, expensive for what it is. And will the cover's thin card bend in the heat? Surely there are too many books already without adding to them. Some are good, some less good, some not good at all. We see enough of the last at the Book Sale, or in sorting out beforehand. Media-based, ghost-written, catchpenny works of a moment, tailored for that moment and swept away in weeks or months. A transient demand sees them vying with one another on the fifty pence table. Why float yet another on to that flood? Ecclesiastes[1] had it exactly, "Of many books there is no end." And that was two thousand years and more ago and Caxton not even thought of.

But perhaps there's a difference to be discerned, or perhaps I like to imagine one. Could it be said that Window Press books are not created to titivate a mass market? They don't sit on the fifty pence table clamouring for attention. It's not unknown for them to grow in value over the years – some of them at least. Certainly not recycling fodder. Like so many small private presses the Window Press has one great asset and one fundamental and potentially fatal weakness – it doesn't study the market. Its presiding spirit is the (possibly apocryphal) old man whose mantra was: "It's not what my old guts likes, it's what I likes to give 'em" – or do your own thing by all means, but don't complain at the consequences. A recipe, in publishing terms, if not for automatic disaster, at least for serious financial indigestion. And publicity? We shy away. When was a Window Press book last reviewed? A brief notice in a local newspaper, a few words in the Magazine? Can a publisher eschew publicity entirely? Or, come to that, do people take any notice of reviews and media attention? Is there such a thing as self-effacing or apologetic hype? Over thirty-five years the Press has lived very dangerously indeed; does any small local press do any differently? How many last thirty-five years? And then the final question. "Would the world be a better place if the Press had never existed?" Put in such cosmic terms the question is a nonsense: the world goes its own way regardless. Mind you, I wouldn't put the question to King Solomon (or his alter ego).

P.

[1] Ecclesiastes xii 12. It is usually thought that the writer is assuming the persona of King Solomon – he certainly claims to write in his name.

We have some copies of "We don't do nostalgia" remaining, but not that many. Available from Petworth Bookshop or direct from Peter at £15.

Friends of St Mary's?

Friends can traditionally be fickle or firm. No complications there unless it be to pick one from another. In an internet age the word can even be sufficiently weakened to include followers of some particular website or cult "celebrity". Of recent years, however, "Friend" has acquired a secondary, almost technical, meaning: someone who pledges to support a particular activity or organisation, sometimes with voluntary help, sometimes with a periodic financial contribution – or of course a combination of both.

Petworth is no stranger to such groups, nor, perhaps, are they an exclusively modern notion. Pre-reformation Petworth wills often make mention of the Brotherhood of Corpus Christi, not as some have supposed, a community of

monks, but a lay brotherhood based in St Mary's and providing backing for the worshipping congregation and having particular concern in remembering by prayer and sacrament those who had passed from one world to another. Modern secular counterparts might be Friends of the Petworth Cottage Nursing Home, the Leconfield Hall, the Cottage Museum or the Petworth Festival. Would a Friends of St Mary's be something to work towards? On the face of it the early twenty-first century has a quizzical mindset and a suspicion of the "denominational". The members of Corpus Christi were operating in a harsher, if in some ways, less complex world than ours. A modern "Friends" would need to transcend denomination and belief.

We are not talking "in extremis". St Mary's is not about to fall down, but it is an ancient building and an expensive one to maintain – to keep warm, welcoming and weather-proof. The three w's. It is too easy to dismiss maintenance as simply the responsibility of the congregation and the church authorities. Certainly the church is a denominational building but it is far more than that. The congregation needs to play its part and it does, voluntary contributions are made and reviewed on a regular basis; but for all that St Mary's remains what it is, an expensive building to look after. The church authorities? They have their own difficulties. In common with their secular counterparts, they find that pensions are a drain on finances while any surplus income is devoted to parishes perceived as deprived. Petworth doubtfully falls within this category. Agencies like the National Lottery or English Heritage tend to take a similar line and in the case of the National Lottery, this is a time for prestige projects like the Olympic Games or the reinvention of our industrial heritage. Church maintenance can appear an essentially local issue.

St Mary's is the parish church for Petworth and as such has a claim to be the centre of the town's corporate life. Think of the annual November service of remembrance. In no way can this be seen as the response of a particular congregation. It reflects, rather, a public awareness that transcends creeds, doubt or even determined unbelief. The Book of Remembrance is at St Mary's. The return of the Toronto Scottish Regiment to Petworth in the 1980s and 1990s offered a similar public occasion. Or there is the enduring memory of the Michaelmas bombing in 1942, not only in the book of names and the altar front but in the communal mind of the whole town. Or look upward at the ceiling and the decorated panels given in memory of loved ones a century ago. "Like icing on a Christmas cake", someone tartly observed at the time. Not a sentiment shared by all, but the church has always been a meeting place, a battle ground if you like, for differing opinions. That is as it should be. Think too of the new facilities and the use of St Mary's for concert or drama, for mother and toddler groups, for school services or for christenings, marriages and of course funerals – a haven for the wider Petworth congregation, active or notional.

Perhaps the Brotherhood of Corpus Christi had a point. The church is a living continuum. We cannot attain the certainties of the Middle Ages. In a perplexing world belief is very much an individual prerogative, but when our minds turn to such matters St Mary's is always there for us.

On a less altruistic level. To the casual visitor, and Petworth has many, St Mary's is an ambassador for the town itself. In its commanding position it can be no otherwise. It can never be a mere sideshow. A cared-for church witnesses to a caring community. St Mary's deserves the support of the whole town. A modern Brotherhood of Corpus Christi? It would be at once a challenge and a privilege.

Reflections on a conversation between the Editor and Michael Till.

Cumbrian connection

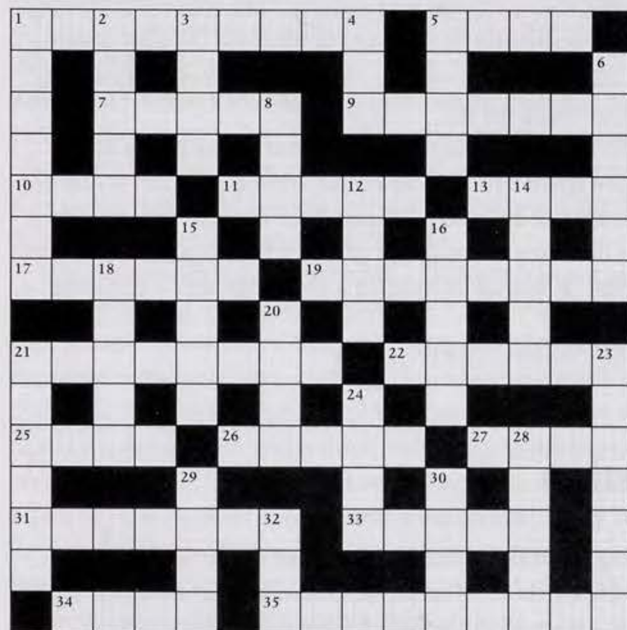
Jeremy Godwin sends a cutting from the West Cumberland Times and Star for 21st May 2010. It relates to Mrs Doris Studholme who died in May in Workington Community Hospital, aged 88. Born in Portsmouth as one of eight children, Doris had come to Petworth at the age of fifteen to work for Charles, third Lord Leconfield.[1] It would be December 1937. There were, she recalled, some interesting visitors. Vittorio Mussolini came to visit during his honeymoon. "We gave the most amazing banquet, we were up for days." Princess Elizabeth would sometimes come to Petworth which was "a popular gathering place for royalty and the peerage who would gather to play or watch polo, and to shoot or hunt."

In the late summer of 1938 Doris went to Cockermouth and two days after arriving saw the great August floods of that year.[2] The castle was not damaged but the staff watched with horror as the river rose. Lord Leconfield himself was summoned back to the House of Lords to hear a briefing by Neville Chamberlain, who had just returned from Berlin confident that war had been averted.

Doris married in 1942 and after wartime service with the RAF remained in Cumbria, working over the years as manager of a butcher's shop, cook and school cleaner. A brief spell in Australia in the late 1940s ended with the couple returning to England. Mrs Studholme had five children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The article does not give Doris' maiden name but the wages book suggests she is Doris Standing, working in the kitchen, initially under Mr Grant the chef. She

DEBORAH'S PETWORTH HOUSE & PARK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Infamous plot which resulted in the Wizard Earl's spell in the Tower of London (9)
5 July event in the Park (4)
7 Elizabeth, Duchess of Somerset, had a large collection of this (5)
9 School of painting which produced Vandyck and Teniers (7)
10 Large water jug (4)
11 Molyneux's is probably one of the first of these to be made (5)
13 Go on talking about the instrument (4)
17 They guard the Tower (6)
19 Admirable piece of sculpture placed on this? (8)
21 & 31 Craftsman who created the Carved Room (8,7)
22 see 29dn
25 Elizabeth Percy's first Lord – one with an eye for the ladies? (4)
26 Powerful family who received the Honour of Petworth in 1150 (5)
27 Straw beehive (4)
31 see 21
33 Roman goddess (5)
34 Youngster you might see in the Park (4)
35 Greek version of the Roman goddess, Venus, her head is all that remains of an early Greek sculpture (9)

DOWN

1 Room in the north of the House, where most of the art is displayed (7)
2 Recess in a wall, made to contain a statue for instance (4)
3 Artist whose paintings hang in the gallery (4)
4 You find him out in the Park, on the football pitch (3)
5 Mr Streeter – the once famous Petworth House "radio gardener" (4)
6 Surviving part of the original C14th manor house (6)
8 Country united with others in a common cause (4)
12 From the Third Earl's Sussex cattle perhaps? (4)
14 Behaved in a certain way (5)
15 Kingdom (5)
16 As one who fought against the king, Henry Percy (Hotspur) was one (5)
18 Style of window (5)
20 Vandyck's portrait shows her with Algernon Percy and their daughter (4)
21 Third Earl's name, handed down through the family (6)
23 Roman god of 32, who looks out from beneath the boat house (7)
24 The ponds were this last winter (4)
28 Military fabric (5)
29 He helped 21 & 31ac with the Carved Room (4,6)
30 Plinth of column or lower part of wall (4)
32 Subject of some of Turner's most famous paintings (3)

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD 140

ACROSS
2 Music, 4 Salted, 7 Nil, 8 Mantelpiece, 10 Impact, 12 Carpet, 14 Dyed, 15 Bloom, 16 Hair, 18 Days, 19 Baste, 20 Flan, 24 Singer 25 Trivet, 27 Grandfather, 30 Ell, 31 Kettle, 32 Befit

DOWN
1 Pins and, 2 Millinery, 3 Can, 4 Suet, 5 Eke, 6 Beater, 8 Mops, 9 Peat, 11 Cellar, 13 Poster, 17 Allotment, 18 Design, 21 Needles, 22 Mend, 23 Aver, 26 Lace, 28 Axe, 29 Hob

was junior assistant to Olive Tomkin and Joan Pine.[3] She continued at Petworth until April 1939 working at this time under a new chef Msr. Chassagne, her colleagues being Olive Tomkin and Dorothy Baigent.

P.

[1]Not Henry, second Lord as in article.

[2]The article suggests that Doris did not return to Petworth but the Petworth House wages list suggests that she went up with the annual house party and then returned to Petworth.

[3]See Joan Pine: Preparing the Vegetables PSM 87 March 1997.

Old Petworth traders (4) Craggs the plumbers

Craggs the plumbers were so much a part of Bartons Lane for so long that the popular name for the lane was "Craggs Lane". The usage has probably now disappeared completely. The best account of Craggs, admittedly late and reflecting the 1920s, comes from John Standing (PSM 57 September 1989) and reproduces an invoice from July 1892 (page 28). John Standing is already thinking of a vanished past; Craggs had, at one time, been a considerable local employer. The very high "strods", enormous steps on which boards were laid to enable painters to work at ceilings or high walls were just a memory, while the enormous pole ladder was used only occasionally for premises like Eagers in Market Square. The old shepherd's hut for tools and equipment now made very rare excursions being towed out by lorry.

Clearly Craggs were well-established by 1879, the 1892 invoice replaces E. Cragg with E. Cragg and Son and adds to the legend "bell-fitting, paper-hanging, hot water and sanitary work." When the younger Mr Cragg retired the business was taken over by an employee, Jack Summersell.

Petworth, 1 Mar 1879

Mr Sherwin

To G. CRAGG,

Plumber, Gas Fitter, Glazier, Painter, and Grainer.

1879		£	s	d
22 Feby	Repairing Gas lights	..	1	.
12 April	1 Square Glass in Picture frame	..	2	6
” ”	1 New Pendant Top in Kitchen	..	2	6
May 31	Cleaning off, sizing and staping	..	..	..
” ”	Ceiling, and papering Do and	..	..	..
” ”	papering room	..	..	..
” ”	Parian Cement	..	1	.
” ”	7 pieces Grey lining paper at 2/	.	14	.
” ”	3 Do White Ceiling paper at 1/2	.	3	6
” ”	1 Do Marble paper at 3/	..	3	.
” ”	30 feet bordering paper at 2d	.	5	.
” ”	1 pail paste	.	2	.
” ”	Sizing & distempering cornice	..	..	.
” ”	½ Gallon distemper	..	1	3
” ”	½ Gallon Size	.	1	3
” ”	1 pint paper varnish	..	2	6
” ”	3½ Days 2 Men at 4/6 each	1	11	6
Sept 13	1 Square Glass in Skylight 21g glass	.	2	6
” ”	Repairing Skyding	..	1	6
” ”	Painting Bath	..	7	6
		£4	2	6

Recd Feby 14th 1880

Ern Cragg

Transcription

1879		£	s	d
22 Feby	Repairing gas lights		1	
12 April	1 Square Glass in Picture Frame		2	6
“	1 New Pendant Top in Kitchen		2	6
May 31	Cleaning off, sizing and stoping			
	Ceiling and papering Do* and		“	“
	papering room			
	Parian cement		1	
	7 pieces grey lining paper at 2/–		14	
	3 Do* white ceiling paper at 1/2		3	6
	1 Do* marble paper at 3/–		3	
	30 feet bordering paper at 2d		5	
	1 pail paste		2	
	Sizing and distempering cornice			
	½ gallon distemper		1	3
	½ gallon size		1	3
	1 pint paper varnish		2	6
	3½ day 2 men at 4/6 each	1	11	6
Sept 13	1 square glass in skylight 21g glass		2	6
	Repairing (?)		1	6
	Painting bath		7	6
		4.	**2.**	**6.**

Clearly payment was a leisurely affair in 1879. The last entry in the account is for September and the account is settled in February 1880. Parian cement is a plaster made with borax rather than alum. (OED). I cannot decipher the second word on the penultimate line. As so often the use of capital letters is not uniform.

*Do = ditto

ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS ASSOCIATION. No2 GROUP

President No.2 Group – Derek Williamson

Paul Wakefield
Membership Secretary
18, Burnham Road,
WORTHING,
BN13 2NN
Tel: 01903 263636

Dear Peter

I am currently researching the Royal Observer Corps in Sussex, including your local post in Petworth, and I wonder if I can ask for your assistance?

The Observer Corps, (the 'Royal' came later), was a voluntary organization, formed in 1925, to report aircraft movements around the country, which, through various control centres, were eventually passed to RAF Fighter Command HQ, where decisions on interception by our aircraft were made.

In Sussex, there were, initially 16 posts, reporting to a centre at Horsham and this figure was gradually increased as new posts were formed. The Petworth post was established in 1929, and local men were enrolled as Special Constables, the service then being under the command of the Police. Later, that command was passed to the RAF, and a much more efficient communication system was created.

I enclose two photographs of the Petworth post members, which I have obtained from the Records Office at Chichester. One is of the earlier 'Specials', and the other is the full crew, taken around 1942, when the Corps had been issued with proper uniforms. By then, of course, the post would have had to have been manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week, hence the number of members. They would all have been local men, and most of them would have had full time jobs, so they could only work a shift on the post in their spare time. I understand that the Petworth post was close to the old cinema, and, during the Battle of Britain, would have been extremely busy, due to the activity in the South of England.

It would be interesting to know the names of the people in the photo's, and their day-time jobs, and I wonder if you and your members are able to help me?

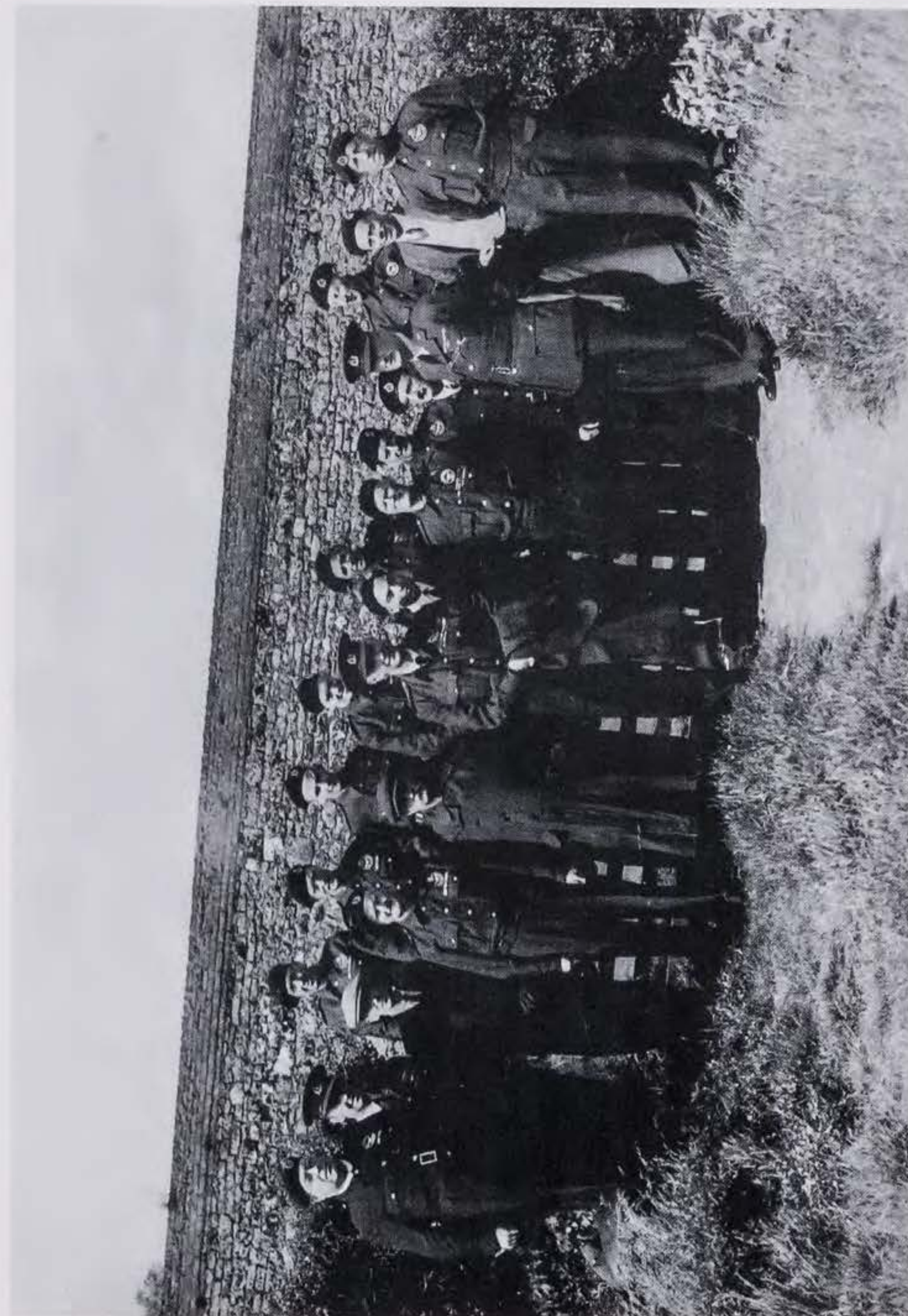
Just for information, The Royal Observer Corps continued in existence until 1992, but, by then, their role had changed, from aircraft reporting, to the monitoring of the effects of a nuclear war on this country, and an underground post was constructed on the top of Duncton Hill, which is still there, but in a derelict state.

I can be contacted by e-mail: paulwakefield18@sky.com, or telephone, 01903-263636, or by letter at 18, Burnham Road, Worthing, BN13 2NN. I look forward to hearing from any of your members if they can help me.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wakefield
8th July 2010

Petworth Royal Observer Corps – an enquiry.



"Throw out your rusty coppers"

I have felt a close bond with Petworth for much of my life, or at least as far back as I can remember. I suppose that my first visit to the town would have been during the late 1920s when I was five or six years old. My parents and I were on a visit from Ceylon where we had been living and where my father was head of the government fire and ambulance service.

The purpose of our trip to Petworth and the many subsequent visits were to see Uncle Fred, Aunt Harriet and the rest of the Lanaway family at their home in North Street. Father, Uncle Fred and their two brothers Edward and Reg had been born and bought up in that house which was built on a steep hill and appeared from the road to be just a single storey, but in fact most of the house was hidden beneath road level and descended down the slope. There was also a more recently built wing in which was the sitting room. This room was strictly out of bounds to children with sticky fingers and dirty shoes and was only used on the most formal of occasions.

My paternal grandfather, whom I never met, had lived in the house and worked on the Leconfield Estate where he was a painter. I understand that he had died at quite a young age from lead poisoning which was not unusual for painters.

Uncle Fred was a partner with a chap called Buckman in a coal business in the town, I am not sure where their yard was but it was most likely down near the railway station where the coal would arrive by train. I believe that Uncle Fred and Mr Buckman eventually fell out and the partnership came to an end.

We would stay at Coultershaw Farm as paying guests during our visits and I would spend much of the holiday with my cousins Gladys, Denis and Cecil as well as some of the Lucas children who lived next door to the house in North Street. Life at Petworth between the wars was idyllic for us children. North Street backing onto the beautiful Shimmings Valley was a wonderful place to play and we children would climb over the stone wall at the bottom of the garden, cross the allotments and race over the meadow to the brook, from where we would invariably make our way up to the Gog or to the Virgin Mary Spring where we would spend the day until it was time to return home for tea.

I recently visited the town and found that the walk around the hills behind the Roman Catholic Church appeared somewhat neglected or at least compared to how I remember it. Similarly the way down to the Virgin Mary Spring was rather overgrown, something that would never have been allowed to happen between the wars. Perhaps these paths are no longer used as frequently as they once were?

My father was apprenticed at the age of seventeen into the merchant navy. An uncle was harbour master at Bosham and he probably influenced his choice and

helped him to get the apprenticeship. Many years later Father would tell me wonderful stories of his life as a midshipman on the four-masted barques or wool-clippers which plied their trade across the great oceans between Sydney in Australia and Liverpool or Hamburg. He recalled voyages around the Horn on at least three occasions and particularly enjoyed Sacramento and would like to have retired there.

Eventually Father gave up the sea and with Mother settled in Ceylon where he finally became head of the fire and ambulance service on the island. We lived on the island until I was about nine years old when we moved back to Sussex and settled in Worthing.

Father had a passion for Petworth and would tell me stories of his childhood in the town. He clearly recalled seeing a skimmity-ride taking place at Petworth and on another occasion a group of mummers came to the town and performed a play. He remembered with great fondness how even before the turn of the century the local children would gather in large numbers on the street corners throughout the town and as the smart carriages passed carrying race goers to Goodwood they would shout at the top of their voices "throw out your rusty coppers" and then scrabble in the dust to retrieve the coins .

Father died in 1967 aged 93 and I myself am now 88 and so between the two of us we have known Petworth for well over a century, and while I have lived in and known many places throughout the world Petworth has always remained my favourite.

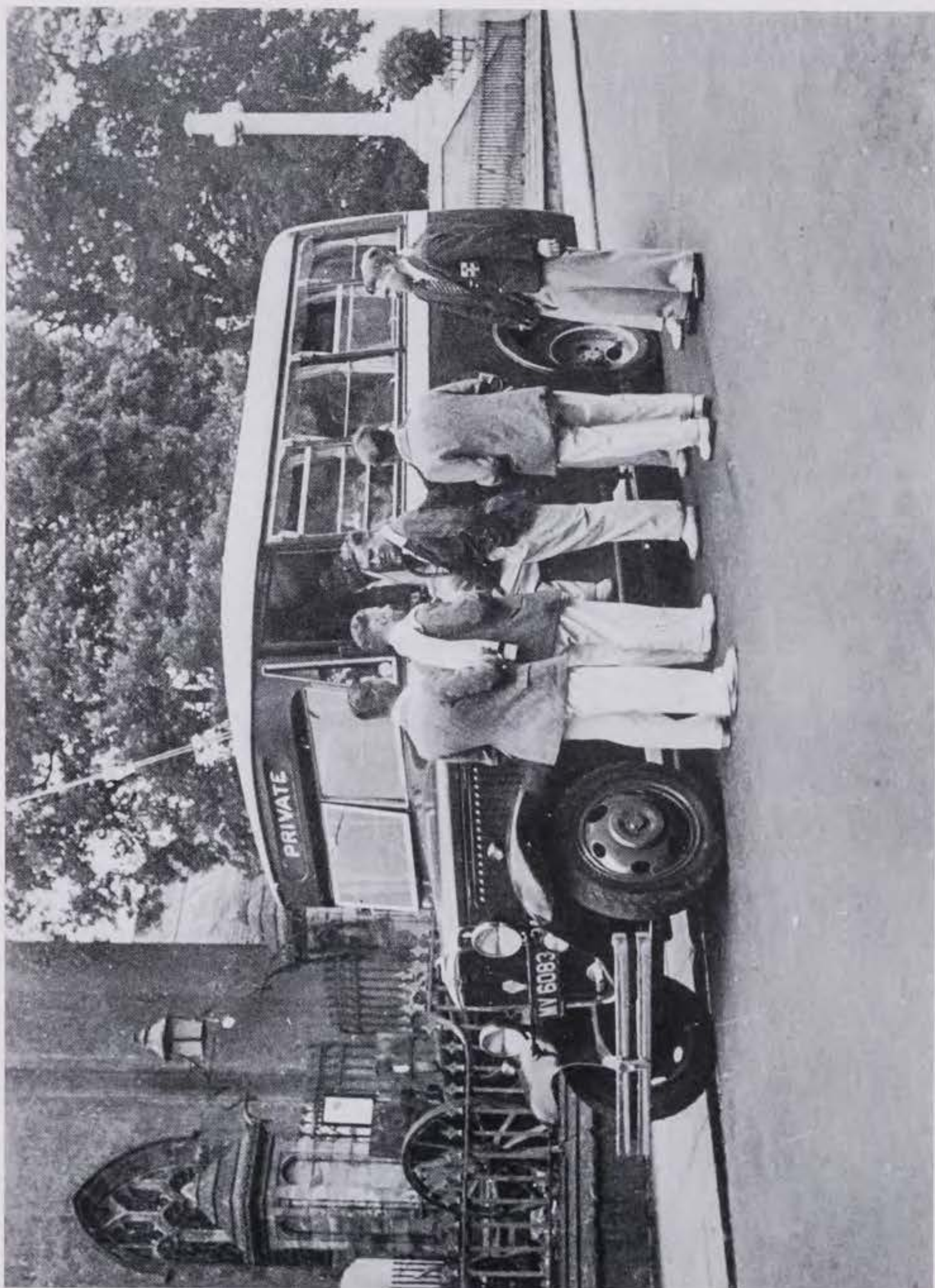
Marjorie Skoumel nee Lanaway was talking to Miles Costello
[The footnotes are my own – Miles]

[1]A skimmity or skimmington ride. Young men elaborately dressed to represent an adultererous couple paraded through the town and past the houses of the guilty pair. The procession would be accompanied by as much commotion or 'rough music' as could be generated in order to draw the attention of the townsfolk to the offending parties. For a brief sketch of a Petworth 'skimmington' see *Tales of Old Petworth*, p.66.

[2]Mummers or tipteers. Groups of local actors who would perform folk plays in the street or occasionally in public houses. The topic of the play would often depend upon the season, though a favourite was one whose characters invariably included Father Christmas, St. George and a Turkish knight. A letter held in the University College London library addressed to R.J. Sharpe from Margaret Upton of the well known Petworth family recalls in 1928 her having seen when she was a young girl a 'tipteer' play performed by a group of men from Upperton. She was also aware of workmen from Mr Vincent's brickyard [Colhook] having performed a play.

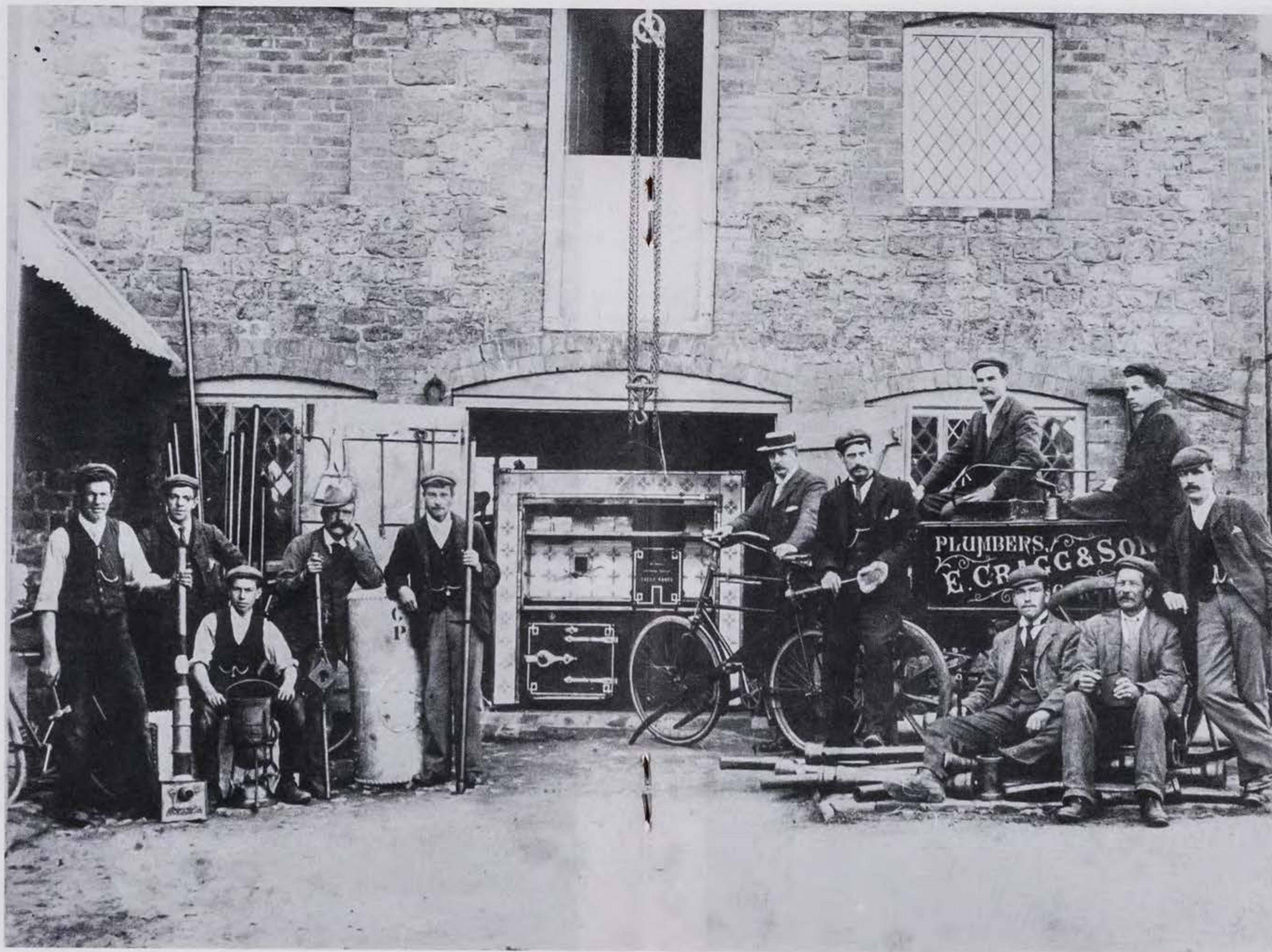
[3]'Throw out your rusty coppers'. This custom was still very much alive in the 1960s. Children would wave white handkerchiefs and cry 'throw out your rusty coppers' as the race goers passed through the town. There would be a great deal of competion among the children for the best places to stand and it was not uncommon for several dozen children to be lined-up at the entrance to the town between Hampers Common and the Horsham Road junction with North Street. Health and safety laws coupled with the increased prosperity of the town children appear to have rendered the custom obsolete.

Vic Roberts' Bedford bus 1930's. See "Fourpence halfpenny a pint."
Photograph by George Garland



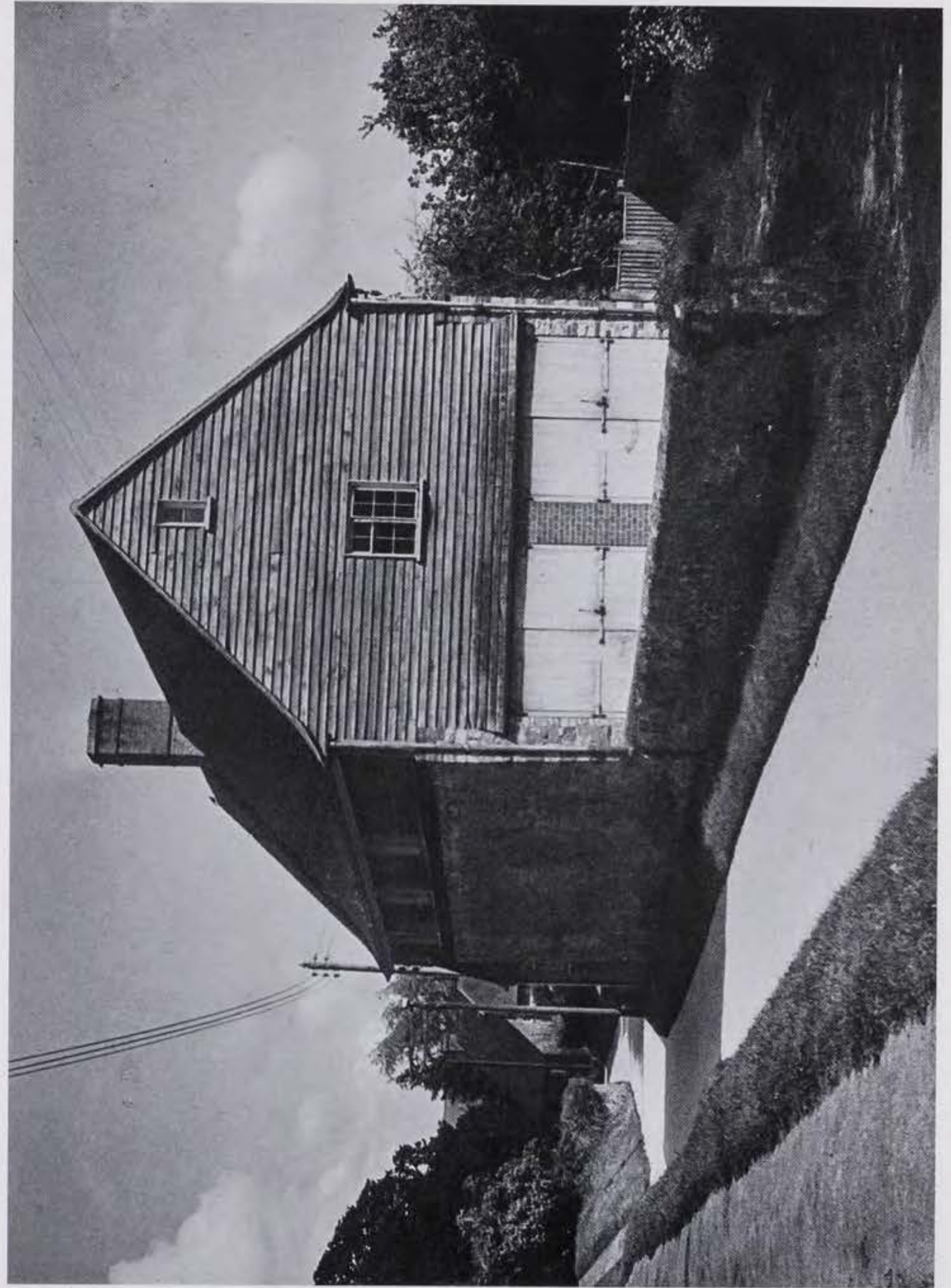
The Bedford transformed. See "Fourpence halfpenny a pint."
Another photograph from the 1930s by George Garland

Kate Sadler's Post Office at Byworth. See "Circus horse to shackler."
Photograph by George Garland



Messrs Cragg the Bartons Lane plumbers about 1900.

Byworth 1931.
Photograph by George Garland



One of the scenes featured in George Garland's newspaper competition "Do you know your Sussex?" in the early 1950s. This one is fairly easy and reasonably local.

Petworth: the Withy Copse about 1900.

This story was among Joy Gumbrell's papers and is interesting not only for its portrayal of Petworth a century ago, but for its curiously relaxed attitudes. Even given a certain heightening over the years the idea of locking a policeman up for the night would certainly not now be treated in the insouciant way that is reflected here. While this story may have formed part of Joy's projected history of Byworth there is no indication that she had proceeded beyond a few preliminary notes. Certainly Joy's various articles in this Magazine over several years seem to represent all that is extant.

P.

I spy

Another story of the Petworth lads who spent their spare time together. This time the year is 1912. With long daily working hours and a six day week, Sunday afternoons and evenings were the sum total of the lad's spare time. This particular Sunday was in mid-winter. The lads decided to spend the evening at Fittleworth Swan. To while away the afternoon they walked there via Little Bognor. When they came to Bognor Common and the stonepit, they saw that a track had been laid from the quarry face to the entrance. On the track stood a wagon used to transport the stone to the waiting transport.

This proved too much of a temptation for the lads and they were soon riding and pushing one another in the wagon, spending the afternoon at the pit before going on to the Swan. The next Sunday when the question was raised, "What shall we do?" the response was unanimous: repeat what they had done the week before.

Unfortunately they forgot to put the wagon back where they had found it. The next morning when the men came to work they spotted that the wagon had been moved and reported it to their boss. He thought that some unauthorised person had been helping themselves to stone and reported the "theft" to Superintendent Fowler at Petworth who agreed to set a trap the next weekend.

On the Sunday P.C. George Broadbent was sent to the stonepit to keep watch. He took up his position in the workmen's hut, leaving the door ajar. Come the afternoon, he did not have long to wait; he heard voices coming through the wood and our group of lads emerged. They were sharper than the constable who had been spotted in the shed. The lads pushed the shed door which slammed shut. They then secured it with a piece of rope that had conveniently been left hanging on a hook. The constable shouted that he would arrest the lot of them – to no avail. The lads simply walked off leaving the constable in the shed. He remained there all night until the workers arrived there next morning. Unfortunately the door was held fast with the rope and there were no windows in the shed. The constable had only recognised one of the lads, Jub. Hill. He was duly summoned to appear before the magistrates the following Friday. Colonel Kennett fined Jub. sixpence which the lads clubbed together to pay. From that time the stonepit was out of bounds for them.

Food from my childhood

Between the ages of eight and eighteen I lived in a small village of forty-four houses on a hill two miles from our local market town of Petworth, West Sussex. (Upperton). There was a little village shop there run by Mrs Wadey and her family, selling a variety of goods from paraffin, peas, butter, beans, even buttons, eggs and elastic, but Petworth was where we shopped and, during the War, where we registered for our rations.

At that time the town had several butchers and a large number of pubs. The biggest shop was the International Stores situated in the town square by the massive Town Hall and just across the road from the Swan Hotel. To me, as a child, the Stores seemed very large; a high room with a tiled floor. On entering, the right side was taken up by a wide wooden counter backed by shelves holding a wide variety of goods. Behind this stood two young men waiting to serve. They were clad in very white jackets over which they wore long white aprons, the top being an inverted v shape with a single buttonhole that fastened on to the top of the jacket.

My mother would bring in a list of her requirements, things like tea, sugar, dried fruit, flour, bottles of sauce. She also bought Camp coffee which with cocoa was a favourite alternative to tea and was made by covering a spoonful of the liquid coffee/chicory with hot water and adding milk and lots of sugar.

An assistant would place a large sheet of strong brown paper on the counter and on it put items from the list. If they didn't have them in stock he would say "Sorry, but have you tried this?"

Sugars and dried fruit like sultanas, currants and candied peel and, at Christmas, large raisins, were weighed on the spot and packed in thick, dark blue sugar paper bags. It was fascinating to watch the men's deft fingers as they folded and secured each bag.

I seem to remember that tea was already packed by the suppliers in 4oz packets. Jams and marmalade came in 1lb and 2lb jars and the cheapest kinds had a high proportion of apple to bulk out the chosen fruit. My mother made a lot of her own jams from the fruit grown in our garden; plums, cherries, gooseberries, also red-currant jelly. For the latter the fruit was cooked and strained through a cloth strung between two kitchen chairs so that the juice dripped into a basin below; an efficient way of dealing with the many pips. Mum also made wonderful jam from dried apricots to which she added shelled almonds. To come in from school and find the little cottage full of the delicious scent of steaming Victoria plums was heaven indeed and fresh bread and warm plum jam for tea was a pleasure to savour.

Breakfast was usually porridge oats with golden syrup or brown sugar in winter and in summer shredded wheat or cornflakes called Force Flakes, that featured a lively Punch-like character on the packet with the rhyme 'High o'er the fence leaps Sunny Jim, Force is the power that raises him!'

At the back of the International Stores was another long counter with a door leading to storerooms, while to the left was a marble counter where butter, cheese, bacon etc. was sold. The butter was in little mountains and patted into smaller amounts with ridged wooded butter pats and packed in greaseproof paper. Having grown up in the First World War my mother had bad memories of the margarine then and so saved margarine for cooking, refusing to serve it at the table. So we had bread and butter or bread and jam or dripping, but never butter and jam!

Cheese I remember being mainly Cheddar and was cut to the required size by stretching a thin wire attached to the counter and ending in a small wooden peg. This effectively cut the cheese and the assistants were clever at judging the exact amount required. One could also buy round boxes of triangular cream cheese.

When we got to the bacon counter I always hung back because I was apprehensive of the big slicers with their shiny round steel blades. The customer would select the type of bacon required and the blades would be set to give thick and thin rashers. So quick were the men that I have expected bits of their fingers to end up in our order but of course they never did.

Looking back to cold meat, I remember a lot of corned beef in square tins which opened with a small key that unwound a strip of tin. This meat turned up in a variety of guises; cold with salad and potatoes, fritters or in an oniony hash enlivened with an Oxo meat cube.

At home, meat-wise, I remember roast joints hot on Sunday, cold with bubble and squeak on Monday and sometimes on Tuesday too. I remember liver and bacon, pies and suet pudding and those great standbys, macaroni or cauliflower cheese. Chicken was a rare treat for a special occasion often a tough old bird past laying.

A small tin of pink salmon was another treat and there was a man with a horse and cart who would come up from the coast to off load a glut of fish. I remember he once brought a load of fresh herrings selling at thirteen for a shilling. Mum bought a shillings worth at the door. Then my Gran, walking up the hill from her home brought us more for our tea. Dad, cycling home from work, came home with thirteen more! Mum found herself with 39 fresh herrings but nothing was wasted. We had those herrings rolled in oatmeal and fried, fish pie, fish cakes and finally soused with peppercorns and all were eaten.

Another food memory is of large blocks of salt. These were sawn off into slices

with the bread knife and then ground with the rolling pin, stored in crockery jars for cooking or served at table in heavy cut glass cellars. Any humidity in the atmosphere was transferred to the salt which could become quite wet. In the winter we spread the salt on doorsteps and paths to prevent them icing up.

Mustard came dry in tins and mixed with water or vinegar as required, usually in an egg cup.

On leaving the International Stores, customers were confronted by a solid glass and wooden construction housing the cashier. By now the assistant would have parcelled up the order into a cottage shaped parcel tied with thin white string and put on the back counter ready for delivery, most of the customers having come to the town by bus, cycle or on foot, for cars were few, our village only boasted two. Two other staples of our daily diet were milk and bread. We lived next door to Whitney's dairy farm so daily our milk can was taken to the farm kitchen door where Mrs Whitney would walk across to the cooling room and measure out the wonderful fresh milk into our can. At a previous home, Dick, the milkman had come round daily with his little milk cart and pony. He had several shiny measures, half pint, pint, quart or gallon. Milk was measured from the churn into our own can and Dick, a cheery man, made it quite a social occasion.

Bread came from Half Way Bridge bakery brought to our cottages by Mr Gamlyn, the baker and his young son, who carried the still sometimes warm bread in scrubbed wicker baskets. I would run to answer the door and was handed the wonderful crusty loaves and must admit that they seldom made the journey from door to bread crock without losing a large lump of their crust into one small tummy. Delicious!

Because we all had gardens and fruit and vegetables, I cannot, despite rationing, ever remember being actually hungry though I suspect my mother may have found the pinch. I look back on those days as being healthy and happy and full of wonderful memories.

Mary Newman Aitchison

"Fourpence halfpenny a pint"

I was born at Petworth, in North Street, although my parents both came from just over the Surrey border at Chiddingfold. We had rooms in North Street but about this time (1924) some of the allotment land opposite the old cattle pound on the Tillington Road corner was being sold. Some of it was bought by Lord Leconfield and would continue as allotments and orchards until the late 1950s. A portion however was sold for development and in fact there was already some development on what would later be the Pound Garage site. Dad had an uncle who was a farmer at Northchapel and he, with my father, Vic Roberts, bought up the portion hard on the corner nearest the town. Dad was in business as a carrier, operating out of the Pound premises, while George Knight would have a garage there. Soon there was a single petrol pump hard up against the wall of the Back Lane.

Dad converted a barn on the site into a house and we moved in about 1927. It was, you could say, an early "barn conversion". George Knight with Stan Goodsell and Bill Wareham continued the garage well into the 1930s. I remember, as a small child, going to George's wedding, but he eventually gave up the garage business. He had connections with the shoe shop in Pulborough called the Golden Boot.

Dad wasn't a mechanic and, in any case, had quite enough to do with his carrier business. Mondays he'd go out to Northchapel and back. Tuesday was Guildford and back. Wednesday was left free for cricket and football teams – the Wednesday half-holiday was an important part of the working week. Thursday he went to Chiddingfold, Friday was Guildford again. The week-end was left free for "bus" work and a hire car business.

In his work as a carrier, Dad had an established rota of possible stops. If someone wanted him to call, they would put a card with R on it outside. He would collect or deliver more or less anything, buy things to order from the market, or pick up and bring back boxes of laundry. We had a big garden at the back, running parallel with the adjacent properties just down the road and Dad would take garden produce to market in season.

I went to the Infants' School, briefly to the East Street Girls' School then to the Convent at Midhurst. I was eleven then, and just coming up to sixteen when I left the Convent. By this time the war had begun and initially I stayed at home and helped Mum with the evacuees we had been allotted. After a while I went to Miss Valenti's at Midhurst as a hairdressing apprentice. Both to school and work I'd catch the bus into Midhurst. I had just finished my apprenticeship when I volunteered for the Women's Land Army. I approached Mr Oliver Cross at Soanes to see whether he needed anyone. He did. When the authorities contacted me to be drafted I said I already had a farm to go to. I was told my action in going to Mr Cross was highly irregular, volunteers didn't decide for themselves where they would be placed, but nothing further was said and I stayed at home, going in to work at Soanes every day.

I did most things on the farm; harvesting, hay making, feeding the animals but one thing I refused to do was milking. I knew that once I got into that, I'd be

doing it all the time.

The war came at a curious time for Dad. He'd invested a lot of money into the Pound premises and the future looked uncertain. He was fortunate, however, in that the Pound Garage forecourt and pumps lay off the road. The pumps at Harwoods in the Market Square were directly on the road. The thinking seemed to be that if pumps were off the road, cars filling up wouldn't impede the free passage of military vehicles through the town. Dad was given the petrol pool – he was the official distributor of petrol and anyone who wanted petrol would need to come to him. Fuel was, of course, strictly rationed and Dad had the effective monopoly for Petworth. I imagine that Rapleys at Heath End, having a pull-in forecourt, continued to sell petrol.

As I have said, Dad wasn't a mechanic and when George Knight left, he simply took on the garage and the men Stan Goodsell, Bill Wareham, and Frank Shepherd from Hampers Green. Dad died in 1950; he was only 52. After a time Mr Ablett took over as general manager.

I learned to drive in 1941 – no need for tests then – and I'm still driving. The Petworth traffic went either way. I always understood that the one-way system was put in to facilitate the movements of military vehicles towards the coast. As a driver I would do some of the hire work. Fred Streeter was a notable customer, he was already working at BBC Radio and would travel to London for his weekly lunchtime slot. I'd take him to catch the train at Pulborough and then pick him up in the evening. Of course, it wasn't always me, it was simply whoever was available. Jim White was another of our drivers. No, we didn't wear any special clothes; as long as we looked reasonably respectable that was enough. Fred Streeter was approachable enough, always prepared for a chat. Given the large garden we had, he'd always be ready to offer my mother a little advice.

Originally, Dad had a Model T Ford but in the 1930s Dad bought a 20-seater coach; football and cricket teams were an important part of the business, he had chairs made which were bolted in but removable. The windows could be boarded so that the van could be used for furniture removals.

One day when I was still at Midhurst, I left the bus as usual in the Tillington Road but arrived home to find everything in chaos. A tank coming down the Tillington Road to turn into Station Road had failed to negotiate the corner and careered into the forecourt area. Seeing some pedestrians the driver slewed off to the right and crashed through the garage doors to end up in the sitting-room. We had people staying with us at the house and the room was in temporary use as a bedroom. Fortunately it was empty but the tank had pushed the bonnet of Dad's bus right through the wall. It was a write-off and after that Dad had a utility vehicle with wooden seats – nothing like as adaptable as the coach.

The bombed school? I heard the plane come over, the bang. I was at home with a cold or something like that, but it was some time before the tragic news came through. After a while at Soanes I suffered a badly sprained ankle and the lady doctor said that working at Soanes was no job for a young lady. In fact this suited Oliver Cross very well; he had two men out on the road delivering milk. If I took over the round he could put his men back on the farm – labour was very scarce during and just after the war. The round was still with pony and trap, although later I did persuade him to go for a motor van. The milk was at this time still ladled out at fourpence halfpenny a pint. The weekly ration was two and a half pints a week and householders had to register with a particular milkman. Two regular calls I particularly remember – to the Four and Twenty Blackbirds on the corner of Lombard Street opposite the church and to Daintrey House in East Street where there was a small Forces canteen run with volunteer staff. I was still doing the milk round when we were married in 1945 and carried on doing it for a year while Ron was in India. Sometimes Oliver's son Cyril gave me a hand. Oliver Cross couldn't have been very old at the time, in his fifties perhaps, but like most farmers and farm workers of his time he probably gave the impression of being rather older than he really was.

Sheila Pidgley was talking to the Editor.

"Peggy Cate lived with her Grandmother"

I was born in 1922 in a little cottage that stands behind the former White Hart public house at the top of the High Street in Petworth and is I believe called Rose Cottage. The present property has been greatly enlarged and now includes what was once our neighbour's cottage. In 1922 the little cottage had only cold running water, nothing strange about that as few if any houses had hot water on demand in those days. It had just one living room and a small scullery attached to the rear of the building. Mother did all of the cooking on an oil stove in the scullery. The toilet was in the yard and we shared the facilities with our neighbour, a widow named Mrs Gill, who kept a small yet frightening dog. It was necessary to negotiate a way past the dog in order to get to the toilet, an experience that I never quite got used to. Not only did we share our toilet with Mrs Gill and her undomesticated dog but the building was attached to yet another toilet belonging to a family with several rather unruly young lads. Trips to the toilet after dark required the careful use of a candle lamp, and what with the dog and the pitch blackness of the yard, visits to the toilet were only ever undertaken as a last resort.

Talking of the White Hart I recall quite clearly watching from my bedroom window in the little cottage a group of men playing quoits in the garden behind the Club Room in the High Street. The walled garden was quite separate from the pub but was ideal for playing quoits. I never went into the pub, or at least no further than the back entrance, and then probably just to call my father who though not a heavy drinker was like most men in those days a regular of one or more pubs in the town. Father had some standing at the White Hart where he was secretary of both the Tontine and the slate clubs.

Father was Harry Wakeford and he was born in 1898. He told me that having passed the standard exam, which proved that he could read and write, he left school at the age of 12. He joined the army at the start of the Great War and served much of the time in Egypt. I suspect that he lied about his age to join up but like so many men of his generation he rarely spoke of his time in the army or come to that his childhood.

During my childhood Father appeared to be out of work as often as he was in it. He did a lot of labouring jobs but then as now that sort of work was erratic. Rather surprisingly his death certificate has him as a quarryman though I never recall him doing that work, I suspect that it may have been an error. Despite being frequently unemployed he was a jolly good poacher and never went anywhere without a catapult which fitted discreetly into his pocket. As a family we often went for Sunday afternoon walks across the Gog fields. Father would whisper a barely audible command and we would freeze while he took aim at some invisible target. More often that not a rabbit would be tucked away into the deep inner pocket of his coat and we would continue our walk. I seem to remember living almost exclusively on rabbit for quite a few years until things began to improve again. During the long summer holidays we would spend days up at the Gog collecting fir cones into big piles which Father would put into sacks and take home to be stored and used as fuel during the winter.

I started school at the age of three at the Petworth infants' school. Miss Wootton was the headmistress and she was assisted by another teacher. Her sister, also Miss Wootton, was at the Girls' School in East Street where she taught classes 5, 6 and 7. Mrs Bowden took 3 and 4 while Miss Bevis taught 1 and 2. Walking home for lunch from the girls' school we would pass Mr Quick the A.A man directing traffic at the junction of East and Angel Street. Mother was friendly with Mr Quick. We children called him 'Izzy', a nickname which I believe came from something written on the side of his motorbike.

On Saturday mornings my friend Doreen Coddington and I would do the shopping for old Mrs Purser a neighbour of ours. Doreen lived next door to the Girls' School in East Street. Saturday afternoons were spent at Brownies which was held in some rooms over Dawtrey's Yard in the Golden Square. All sorts of businesses had bits of the yard and for a while Father kept a Trojan van there which he would drive as delivery man for one of the local bakers. Rhoda Calnan was Brown Owl in charge of the Brownies at this time. On Sundays we went to Church and, following lunch, Mother would go and wash up for the Misses Arnold who had the newsagent in Middle Street. A few years later Mother began collecting daily papers from the newsagents, sorting them at home and then Mother, Dorothy and I would deliver them around the town. On Sunday afternoons Dorothy and I would visit an old lady in New Street, who we knew only as Nurse Moorman, for bible instruction. I imagine that she must once have been a missionary but had long been retired. On Sunday evenings Mother would go to Church and occasionally I would accompany her. During the summer she would often walk to Tillington as she particularly liked the church there. Father never went to church.

Sunday school was very popular when I was a child and we would go before church and afterwards join the regular service. There would be a big Christmas Party at which each child would receive a book but the most popular day of all was the annual treat which was always a visit to the seaside. The Sunday school girls would invariably belong to the Missionary Guild and we would meet once a week at the Rectory where we would knit clothes for the poor and later play games such as charades in the lovely old building.

A very dear friend of mine, Peggy Cate, had the job of opening the Horsham Road cemetery chapel on Sunday mornings, sweeping it out and then locking it up again in the late afternoon. Very occasionally she would not be available and I would go down and unlock the chapel. I didn't mind this at all though I must confess that locking up in the gloom of a winter's afternoon used to petrify me. The chapel was always neat and tidy and I can clearly picture the wide blue coconut mat that ran down the aisle and which, if the door was left open would collect all the leaves as they blew in. The cemetery grounds were looked after by Mr White the sexton at the parish church. Peggy Cate lived with her grandmother in the almshouses in North Street. Her mother had died and her father lived in Halnaker and Peggy was sent to look after her grandmother. She was only about fourteen when I knew her but she had left school and was very well known in the town as she was always the first to volunteer to lend anybody a hand if they needed it.

Dancing classes at The Club Room in the High Street were very popular as I was growing up. A little three-piece band led by Jackie Bartlett played there regularly. I was still in my very early teens when the Palais Glide came into fashion and we girls felt very grand as we taught ourselves the dance.

Peggy Cate at the Horsham Road Cemetery Chapel.

Further down the High Street was the dentist's. I mention this as I had particularly bad teeth and spent an inordinate time there. I understand that the cause of my bad teeth and almost everybody else's who was living then, was the lack of calcium. In those days the dentist just took teeth out, no treatment, just out everytime. I would have an injection and then be sent out to play in the yard for twenty minutes while the anaesthetic took effect. This time in the yard was usually spent hatching a plan to avoid the impending removal; the plan would invariably involve a great deal of shouting and crying and hardly ever resulted in a positive outcome. No doubt the dentist had seen it all before on countless occasions. Mother on the other hand had all of her teeth extracted while I was still quite young. The operation took place at the Cottage Hospital and I can recall her being bought home in a taxi.

Hoops were very popular when I was a child. Girls had wooden hoops while the boys' were made of metal. We would chase the hoops down the High Street past the Co-operative store and into Golden Square, it was great fun but can you imagine trying to do it now? In those days there were a considerable of number of children living in the town though I imaginne that there are few if any living in the High Street today.

It didn't seem strange at the time but there was a Sea Rangers group that met at Fittleworth and to which both I and my friend Peggy belonged. I say strange only in that Fittleworth must be at least twenty miles from the sea and was a most unlikely place to foster nautical inclinations. We did however have our own small boat which we would regularly use on the nearby river Rother. Connie Matthews who worked at the telephone exchange was in charge of the Sea Rangers at that time.

Sea Rangers at Fittleworth in 1937.

My sister Dorothy was a little older than me and when she was eleven won a scholarship to a school in Chichester. The fees were paid but my parents still had to find the train fare and of course a school uniform. I was nine at the time and can clearly recall the struggle that my parents experienced in order to enable Dorothy to take up the scholarship.

Coincidentally it was at this time that we moved from the High Street to The Angel Shades in Angel Street. The Shades was I suppose a beerhouse or 'tap' that went with the Angel Hotel across the road. The business was owned by the Angel Hotel and all of the beer sold there had to be purchased through the hotel. I imagine that was because it didn't have a separate licence to buy liquor. My parents had to find £10 to take on the pub which was a fair amount of money in those days. Fortunately my sister and I had some Post office savings and we were happy for Father to use it. The Angel Shades was now our home for the foreseeable future. The entrance to the beerhouse was at the front facing the road.

As you entered there were two rooms, on the right was the bar room with its cold stone floor and to the left was the only private room on the ground floor. In the bar was a long counter, a sink with cold water, a dart board and a coal fire that was rarely lit even in the coldest weather. The private room opposite the front door was our living room. From this room a short flight of seven steps led up to what we called the loft which ran the full length of the building. The loft had no ceiling and was open to the roof. To all intents and purposes it had as much in common with a barn as a loft. Somehow Mother carried out all of her daily chores in this one big room. A long trestle table stood in the middle, half of which was used for preparing food for cooking while the other half was given over to Father to store all of the paraphernalia and tools needed to mend just about anything that required repairing in the pub. This room stored our bicycles and everything else that the family had accumulated over the years. There was a single sink and the marvellous luxury of an indoor toilet. At one end of the loft were two bedrooms, the furthest of which was my sister's and mine, access to our bedroom was through our parents room. The window in our bedroom had a wide sill upon which I would sit and spend hours watching the goings on in Angel Street. The bedroom was the only really comfortable and peaceful place in the whole house. Downstairs was always noisy and to make matters worse on a Saturday evening our private living room would be thrown open to the wives and children of the men using the bar. Occasionally I would try to find a quiet corner of this room in which to do my homework but it was really difficult.

Charlie Herbert was a regular at the Angel Shades. Most evenings he could be found in the bar and my family became very fond of him. He was the only person Mother would trust to look after the bar if she had to go out. Charlie was the town crier and he would walk around the town calling out sales or such like with his great booming voice. Sadly he was to die in an accident and was greatly missed.

The Angel Hotel across the road from us was popular with commercial travellers and when it was busy I would be asked to help out. I wasn't particualarly good at domestic chores and so I would invariably be left to look after the owner's young daughter. Dorothy on the other hand would be expected to make beds and do general household duties. There were several landlords during our time at the Shades but the only family that I can recall by name were the Wynne-Edwards. Mother in the little spare time that she had would run crib drives at the hotel and these proved to be very popular, I would accompany Mother and soon learnt to play.

Behind the Shades were a row of garages and a builder's yard. We had a small garden which Mother tended and where she grew the most beautiful flowers and

on a Sunday morning she would have a table on the street at the front of the Shades where she would sell the flowers.

When I was eleven I followed my sister in being awarded a scholarship to the school at Chichester. This greatly increased the pressure on my parents who now had to find fare money and school uniforms for two daughters. Mother would often go out and clean for people. I remember one of the jobs was to clean the butchers in Lombard Street on a Sunday morning. Of course the shop would be in quite a state following the busy Saturday when people came in to buy their Sunday joints. Mother was always working, she never seemed to stop. She was a great lover of football and her one form of relaxation was to go and watch Petworth play up at the Park. She very rarely missed a home match and could be found cheering on the team whatever the weather.

My sister Dorothy left school at sixteen, this was quite early for a scholarship girl but I don't think that my parents could afford for her to stay on any longer. She went straight to work as an auxiliary nurse at the Petworth Cottage Hospital on a salary of £12 a year out of which she had to buy her own uniform. There were two wards at the hospital each with six beds. Dorothy would occasionally be expected to do night duties alone which at the age of sixteen was quite a daunting experience as many of the patients were really very ill. Dorothy never liked working at the hospital and I believe that she was only there for a year before she left and went to Midhurst Cottage Hospital where she remained until she married.

Shortly before my sixteenth birthday I was walking along East Street when I saw a notice in the window of the Post Office advertising the position of part-time telephonist. I applied and was interviewed by Connie Matthews the supervisor. Much to my surpise I was given the job and shortly after began work in the tiny exchange which occupied a room at the far end of the Post Office. Along with Connie there was also Joan Tate and another lady whose name I cannot recall working in the exchange. It would have been about Easter 1938 when I started there. The exchange was still manual but the following year it went automatic and soon closed. In the meantime my parents had given up the Shades and taken over The White Hart at Stopham Bridge. I moved with them but cycled into Petworth until late 1939 when Connie and I were transferred to Worthing exchange where I remained until I was twenty and when I joined the WAAF as a radio operator.

Gladys Scott nee Wakeford was talking to Miles Costello

P.S. I would welcome any information regarding Peggy Cate. Does anyone remember her? Is she still alive? Miles 01798 343227

Circus horse to "shackler"

"Elms straddling the road" in the June magazine particularly caught my attention. I wonder if anyone remembers the wall sign (extreme left, illustration page 33)? The reading can't be made out from the photograph but it said London 52 miles, Petworth 1 mile, Sutton 4 miles. It would have been taken down at the beginning of the war and not replaced after it.

I wasn't actually employed by Mr Harnett at Barnsgate, I always worked for the Thorn family at neighbouring Hallgate, but inevitably I came into contact with the Harnetts who would leave Byworth in 1955. Barnsgate was an old-type farm, worked exclusively with horses until after the war. At one time Barnsgate had several men, four horses and a couple of tied cottages, now private property. As so often with farms at the time, there was a considerable turnover of personnel; men would come, not settle, and move on. It was just the way things were. If Mr Harnett was really stuck, I might be asked to go and help with milking. I can only remember one worker staying for any length of time, Bob Merritt. Eventually he moved away and came back to work for Mr Thorne at Hallgate. Mr Harnett could be a trifle "crusty", the old farmers often were. He was already at Barnsgate when we moved to Byworth in 1936, but how long he had been there before that I've no idea. Barnsgate was very much a "mixed" farm, I don't remember sheep, but there were pigs, chicken, turkeys and, of course, the milking herd with its "followers" – heifers who would eventually form part of the herd. It was a good mixture, shorthorns, red polls and Ayrshires, but no Friesians. Hilda Harnett looked after the chicken and turkeys, kept in the back garden.

Mr Harnett with his Standard Ford tractor.

Mr Harnett with his pigs.

We lived in the village until early in the war when we moved out to Frog Hole for a time. I was ten. There were quite a few village lads and, in the season, Mr Harnett would give us a penny a bushel for acorns – the oak tree on the Cottage Hospital corner is still there. As lads we were always eager to get into the farms and meet the animals. Byworth school had closed in 1933 but church services continued there until about 1956. I sang in the choir and as we were living next door we used to help out generally. My mother cleaned the brass for instance. Church of England missionaries still came round, and even after the war, would leave their caravans at the farm. When the church was to be redecorated we boys would climb ladders, scraping off the old paint with pieces of broken glass!

The old name for the farmhouse at Byworth was 'The Elms', an obvious enough name if you looked diagonally across to the clump of five or six elms over the road – probably five. They were cut down when the double decker buses came through the village but I think they would have had to go anyway – they were unsafe. One in particular had something of the shape of a bottle and was hollow inside. You could crawl in at the bottom then climb up inside, emerge from a hole at the top, then come down using the outside branches.

The cows spent their days in the fields over by the Cottage Hospital but stayed overnight in the field adjoining the farm buildings. They'd go back in the morning to the fields, through the village. It was the same, summer and winter: animals tended to stay outside in those days.

I certainly remember the horses. There was a white one which, Mr Harnett said, had formerly been a circus horse. Not unusual, farmers would pick up such horses as sales. This one caused something of a stir in the village. It was drawing a cart and, outside Kate Sadler's post office, then on the same side of the road as Barnsgate and just before the Black Horse, it suddenly reared up on its hind legs and began to pull the cart from that position. In later years Mrs Collins and her daughter, Mrs Long, had the post office on the other side of the road. I remember Kate Sadler's post office well. When we were still living at Frog Hole I'd bike down for Mother's pension and for stamps. The post office was a village institution. You'd push open the door, the bell rang and Kate Sadler would come out to stand behind the desk and serve. The white horse wouldn't do the heaviest work; that would be left to the cart horses. It would do light jobs with a small cart, carrying fencing material or sheep feed. At Hallgate we called such a horse the "shackler" and the work "shackling." They would usually be horses that were too old to pull heavy loads like the dung cart, or to work on ploughing.

The Harnetts, as other farmers, raised turkeys for the Christmas market. Mr Harnett, no doubt, would take them to Pulborough himself in the old Morris 10. Milk was crucial to the farm economy: at one time the churns would be taken out to stand beside the road. When the lorry arrived, the driver would sound the horn and someone would come out to help him load. At 17 gallons churns were a little lighter than they had once been, but they were still heavy. Waiting for the driver to turn up involved a man hanging about for him, especially if the drivers were delayed or even broken down, so a hole was made in the wall at Barnsgate and a construction of concrete and railway sleepers built to a level to allow the driver to load the churns himself.

Hilda Harnett with the white horse.

Even in the early 1950s, the old ways were being challenged. The council didn't like the daily trek of the cows through the village. Nor did they like the buildings at Barnsgate where the cows were being milked. Clearly the future lay with the fields across the main road.

By the 1940s Mr Harnett had a Standard Ford tractor, I've driven it myself. Mr Thorne would ask me to go up to Barnsgate and put in three or four hours ploughing. I'd simply check the petrol, oil and water and start off. The Ford had cleats, effectively pieces of angle iron welded to the wheels to give grip. You can see them clearly on the photograph. Spade lugs were an alternative but they were pointed pieces of iron. Very good unless you became stuck, then it was a job for another tractor to pull you out.

The rick pictures call up memories of older days. Some show the ricks being built, some the combine harvester at work – this would be a job for contractors. Then the rick had to be thatched. Not every farm, particularly at this time, carried a specialist thatcher. Mr Harnett would almost certainly have to have a skilled man in.

Barnsgate in the early 1950s was a farm of small fields with high hedges, many of the hedges would later be taken out and the fields enlarged. The old Barnsgate cart shed still stands, on the right as you go up the lane to the Cottage Hospital. The old cow shed opposite the farmhouse was pulled down in the late 1960s.

Nobby Blackman was talking to the Editor

End of an era. The Barnsgate cows making one of their last trips through Byworth.

Byworth – a drawing by Miss Burton 1969.

Stan Mayes at work in the 1950s.

Missing the trains

I have always worked with horses, always been happy with them. Originally from Leicestershire I did not come to Sussex until 1951. I had already had considerable practical experience and put a Situation Wanted advertisement into Horse and Hound. Of 25 replies no less than five came from Petworth and the surrounding district. I thought it sensible to come down and have a look. I was prepared to work either in stable or farm management. Initially I took the job that offered the best money – not always a good move – and this proved to be the case. With the best intentions on either side, it didn't really work out, and, after a year, I was offered a similar position at Barlavington Stud where Lady Wentworth had brood mares and Arab horses. It was an offshoot of her extensive equestrian establishment at Crabbett Park, near Crawley. Lady Wentworth, elderly by this time, was a popular and considerate employer and I liked her. There were sixty-six acres of paddock at Barlavington and our horses were essentially thoroughbred for flat racing.

Ian Anstruther lends a car for Duncton Carnival in 1961.
May Queen: Helen Thomas
Attendants: Judy and Christine Dallyn

In those days Petworth station was still in existence and it played an important part in our operation. Horses for Barlavington would arrive in the summer at six o'clock in the evening and our job was to take them, brood mares and foals, to Lodge Green in Burton Park where they would stay overnight. They would then move on to Barlavington in the morning. I was at this time living in the bothy at Barlavington. Stud work demanded commitment, hard work and long hours but jobs weren't thrown about in the 1950s.

Lady Wentworth died in 1959. Mr Ian Anstruther was already living at Springs, Barlavington, and it was a time when the Leconfield Estate was facing crippling death duties, and selling their farms south of the river Rother. The farms were advertised for auction individually but on the eve of the auction Mr Anstruther bought them as a single lot. He had no great interest in horses but he did have a great interest in large cars which he would in later years have me drive on occasions. I particularly remember a Ford Fairmile which carried the Duncton carnival queen for her coronation. It was clear that there would be changes at the Stud and I had agreed to take another position near Newbury. Ian Anstruther, however, approached me with a view to my taking over at Barlavington. I agreed to do so, after some hesitation, as I was unhappy about breaking faith at Newbury, but it would only be on my own terms. I needed independence, a free hand, certainly the authority to hire and fire. This was agreed and I was my own man. I remember Saturday and Sunday mornings going round the yards feeding and feeling happy with what I was doing – hard work but satisfying.

The farms were all tenanted of course and Ian Anstruther was perfectly happy for the tenant farmers to continue until they retired. He was looking to create a single, less fragmented entity. The first farmer to leave was Mr Sands at Coldwaltham, then the two Retallicks at Fittleworth. As the process continued my job became more demanding, man management particularly, above all with the workers' rights legislation of the 1970s. No more bowling club for me. Ian Anstruther was prepared to waive dilapidations as farms were vacated and one of the last farmers to leave was Mr Whitney at Duncton Manor. I remember him telling me as he left, "If you want to stay alive, turn left when you come out on to the 285 then turn at the A.A. box at the foot of Duncton hill." It was advice I always followed. Now the access has been altered.

When I first came to Barlavington, it was far less isolated than it is today. I suppose you'd call it "progress". We had a grocer calling three times a week, Les Harland from Sutton. He'd come out with his van loaded right up and the women would go out to the van to do their shopping. He didn't take and bring out orders. Two butchers came out from Petworth and the postman came twice a day by bicycle from Petworth, emptying the Barlavington box on the way. Now despite

council tax rising each year, apart from the postman in his van, nothing. It is a 9.8 mile round trip to the nearest shop. Sixty years ago everything would be delivered to the door.

I've mentioned the importance of the station as a crucial link with the outside world. I remember once sending an oak tree to America to be cut up for timber. The railway was a part of everyday life, making a regular stop near Coates to take on water. And there was Blacker's dog at Coates Castle. It was trained to run from the Castle down to pick up the morning papers, rolled like a scroll and thrown beside the line for him. He would then bring them back up to the Castle. Such informal arrangements were taken for granted.

Stan Mayes was talking to David Burden and the Editor

Keytes and Alfreston

[The history of 346 High Street, the Cottage Museum, is clearly connected with the influential Trew family and the putative date of 1675 for the construction seems to fit with such other information as is available. Annabelle Hughes has been looking at the history of some properties in Middle Street and offers a few suggestions in the following article. I would certainly echo Annabelle's suggestion that a regional accent should be borne in mind in any assessment of the spelling in local inventories. I made the same point in discussing Thomas Gobles's Duncton inventory of 1622 (PSM 33 September 1983 page 36). In fact the corollary is also worth remembering: spelling can give some idea of contemporary pronunciation. As Hugh Kenyon's Petworth Town and Trades 1610-1770 is fairly readily available, I would refer the reader to the relevant pages: J. Denett's inventory is summarised in Part II page 84 while Ralph Bowyer's inventory receives similar treatment on page 99. For Petworth wills and inventories in general see my Petworth from the beginnings to 1660 (2002) Chapters 29 and 30. Ed.]

Recently I was fortunate enough to be asked to carry out research on properties in Middle Street, and I was presented with an invaluable selection of deeds, dating from 1736, and associated with the properties extending from the corner with Angel Street to the western end of Alfreston. These were variously parts of a tenancy called Kitts, although, as so often with early documentation, much was as confusing as enlightening.

Without going into the details, which were laid out for the owners, suffice it to say that connections were made with two Ralph Bowyers, father and son, who were both shoemakers, and as ever, the Trew family were involved. Peter Bridger the blacksmith and then his widow Elizabeth were also in the frame, as well as William Watts, cabinet-maker, John Briggs, butcher, John Talmadge, glazier, James Embling painter and glazier and his son, also James, plumber & glazier.

In 1677, when Peter Bowyer was a tenant, part of the property was described as 'newly built' and this could correspond with Alfreston; a description in a deed of 1751 illustrated the sub-division of the tenement that consisted of both Keytes and Alfreston.

In the process of investigation several relevant transciptions were made; of probate inventories for the two Bowyer shoemakers, the will that survived for the second Ralph, and an inventory for an eighteenth century glazier and plumber, and these may be of interest to those Petworth residents who have not have the benefit of seeing Hugh Kenyon's work on local inventories. The items in John Denett's inventory (1711) are a reminder that a plumber was understood then as someone who worked with lead, which was a necessary material for early glaziers. Probate inventories often contain an amount of creative spelling and are best read with something of a local accent.

Peter Bridger's will (1743) is interesting for the freedom it gave his widow and two daughters as property owners. One or other of them continued to hold the property until 1786.

A true and pfecte Inventory of all and singular the Goodes and chattells of **Ralfe Bowyer** late of Petworth in the County of Sussex **shoomaker** deceased praysed by John Byaullie Gershom Butcher and Thomas Vincent the Foerteenth daie of September in the yere of our lord God **1620** as followeth

In the haule		
Two tables one forme vi loyned stooles and two chayers	ixs	
Three candlestickes		xiid
Twenty pound of pewter	xiiis	iiiid
In the Parler		
One old fetherbedd	xs	
One old flockbedd	vs	
Two olde coveringes	iiis	iiiid
Two chestes	iis	vid
In the chamber ovr the hall		
Two olde bedstedds	iiis	
Seaven payer of sheets & two table clothes	xxiis	
Two pillowbeares & two napkins	iiis	
One table one forme	iiiis	
Five old chestes	vs	
In the kytchen chamber		
One olde flockbedd i bolster & i old covring	vis	

In the kytchen		
One bras caldron ii bras panes i bras pot iiii kettles iii litle skilletts & other smale thinges	xxxvs	
Two tubes iii firkins i payer of tonges i fire pan & other lumbermt	viiis	
Two frieing pannes & one treste	iiis	iiiid
In the Shopp		
Thirtie payer of new shooes	xxxs	
One hide & halfe a bend of lether	xxs	
Tenn payer of leastes & working tooles	vs	
In the barne		
Pease & oates	xxvs	
In the backside		
One little hogg & ii pigges	xs	
In the feilde		
A lame mare	xs	
his wearing clothes	xxs	
money in his purse	iiis	
debts owing him	xs	
Some tot xliil£	**viiis**	**vid**

Proved by Susan Bowyer,widow & executrix

1647 Ralph Bowyer

In the name of god amen the 15th day of July one thousand six hundred forty & seaven I **Ralph Bowyer** of Petworth in the County of Sussex shoomaker being sicke in body but in pfect memory I thanke God Doe make this my last will & testamt in manner following that is to say **First** I bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God and my body to the earth to bee buried in Christian buriall **Item** I give to my two children Mary & Rebecca Five pounds apeece to bee paid them at their ages of eighteene yeares or day of marriage wch shall first happen and if either of them dye to bee paid to the survivor **And** I will that the interrest of the said moneys shall goe towards the educacon of them **And** I make my loveing wife Mary the executrix of this my last will **And** Jeffrey Dawtrey the overseere hereof **And** my will is that my wife shall give for security to my overseere for the paymt of the legacies aforesaid to my said children **In witnes** whereof I the said Ralph Bowyer have hereunto sett my hand& seale the day & yeare first abovewritten................in the psence of those whose names are here underwritten Thomas Barnard, John Cogger, Peter Garland his marke

Proved 24th August 1647 by Mary Bowyer, widow