

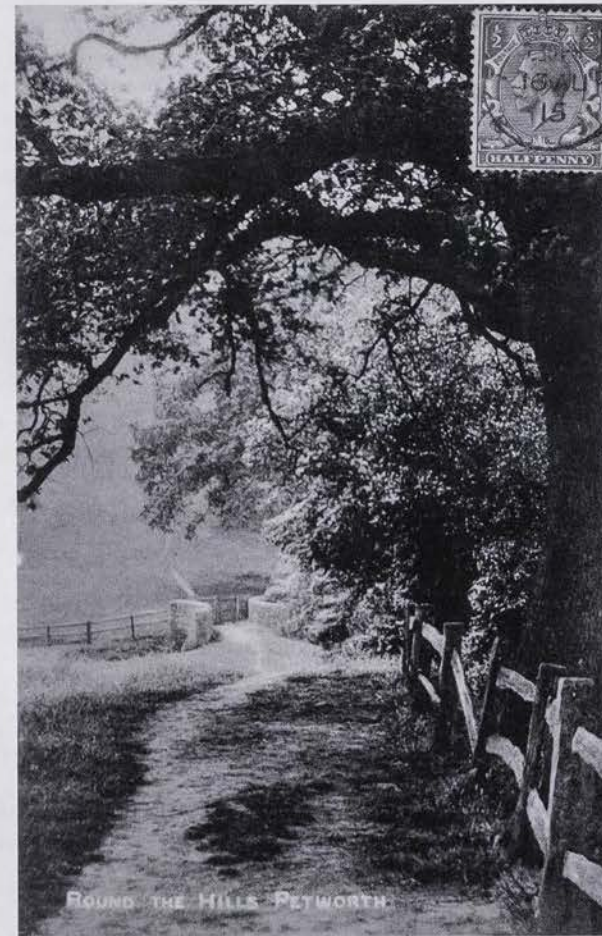
No. 145, September 2011

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine



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Round the Hills, Petworth. A postcard by A. Weaver, Petworth.
The stamp is postmarked 16th August 1915.

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NEW MEMBERS

Mr E. Symonds, c/o S & B Accounting Services, Solar House, New Street, Petworth GU28 0AS
Mr & Mrs S. Twite, 2 Grove Lane, Petworth GU28 0AB
Mr & Mrs P. Thomas, Haven Cottage, East Street, Petworth GU28 0AB
Mr M. Charman, 92 Old Buddington Lane, Easebourne, Midhurst GU29 0QW
Mr & Mrs P. Tout, 3 Torton Hill Road, Arundel BN18 9HF

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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Mrs Carol Finch, Mr Ian Godsmark,
Mr Philip Hounsham, Mrs Celia Lilly,
Mrs Anne Simmons, Mrs Ros Staker,
Mrs Deborah Stevenson, Mrs Patricia Turland,
Mrs Linda Wort.

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Mr David Burden (Duncton).

SOCIETY SCRAPBOOK

Mrs Pearl Godsmark.

COULTERSHAW BEAM PUMP

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Hall, Petworth Cottage Museum and The
Coultershaw Beam Pump.

FRONT COVER Pencil drawing of the dovecote at Stag Park by Jonathan Newdick taken from his recent book of farm buildings on the Leconfield Estate.

Chairman's notes

I hope you will find something of interest in September's mixed bag. The Magazine is, I suppose, a kind of journalism, and, like journalism, essentially of the moment, read or not read, and, as quickly, set aside. Or, just possibly, might it sometimes be a little more?

I'm thinking of the Magazine's continuing emphasis on remembered tradition. Since 1978, we have published perhaps five hundred interviews and memoirs, probably more rather than less, pertaining to an older Petworth. Does this matter? Possibly not, but, as editor of this Magazine, I have to insist that it does.

Such thoughts are suggested by the Window Press producing "Peter Dead Drunk" in September. I have tried under thirty six headings and with a running commentary, to set out a proportion of the remembered tradition of Petworth and its immediate environs as we have it from the last years of Queen Victoria to the outbreak of war in 1939. Such a book makes no economic sense whatever and I am initially printing 100 individually numbered copies, with a theoretical capacity to print additional copies as required. These latter would not be individually numbered.

Why 1939? I think the book should be seen as a beginning rather than an end. Remembered tradition never stops, even if, in a cyber age, it will on occasion gasp for air. The curious title? It reflects an uncouth play put on by itinerants in Petworth Market Square in 1875, to the sheer horror of local tradesmen and gentry. Remembered by a single passing (and hostile) reference, Peter Dead Drunk stands as a memorial for all that has been lost. Further details on the Activities Sheet. There will be a presentation evening at the Leconfield Hall in September – see Activities Sheet.

Peter
20th July

Audrey Grimwood – a tribute

Audrey was born at 12 Grove Lane and, with one short break, she would live there all her life, until her last years at Rotherlea. Even when it was clear to others that she would not return Audrey always insisted that 12 Grove Lane was her home, inevitably adding the postcode. It was after all next door to her loyal friend Rita. Audrey went to school in Petworth and was in school when news came of the bombing of Petworth Boys' School. It would have a particular resonance for Audrey because of the disproportionate loss of young life in Grove Lane itself. It was appropriate that Audrey would, over forty years later, play such a big part in welcoming back the Toronto Scottish Regiment, among the first to arrive on the scene of the tragedy.

Audrey would, on leaving school, work locally, marrying John in the early 1950s, and perhaps feeling at times that she had also married something called the Town Band. There were three children, David, Judith and Stephen and, of course, her much loved grandchildren. If illness dogged Audrey's latter years she had a full life.

When I first came to know Audrey it would be the late 1970s. On the face of it, we did not have a great deal in common. Audrey would be in her mid to late forties with a growing family and an unusual interest in the local community, a tireless collector for the Royal British Legion and the Red Cross: in recognition of her efforts she would be invited to a Palace Garden Party in 2008. Audrey would still be active a quarter of a century on, the millennium daffodils that still adorn the Grove Lane verges are a lasting memorial.

The Petworth Society, founded in 1974, was in the late 1970s still finding its feet. I had taken over in 1978 with Keith Thompson as vice-chairman. George Garland had died in the February of that year. With his interest in Petworth tradition, he had seemed at times a somewhat solitary figure in a rapidly changing world. Perhaps the Petworth Society could carry on his work? Should members meet on a monthly basis? Try to explore Petworth's long history? These were all aims that Audrey could identify with. I wrote in the Society Magazine at the time, "Audrey Grimwood has agreed to join the committee and I know she will be a great help to us." I didn't actually, but I spoke better than I knew. You could almost say that the Society and Audrey were made for each other. I had slowly come round to the idea of talking to local people about their memories of an older Petworth, but there were also monthly meetings, walks, refreshments, in later years, the revival of Petworth Fair. Audrey was looking to organise. There might be some who didn't wish to be organised, there might be some like myself who were constitutionally incapable of being organised: if Audrey bruised the odd fragile

ego it was, in what almost became a technical term, "all in a good cause."

As I say, I was already talking to local people for the rapidly growing Magazine but Audrey knew people I didn't. Looking back in the Magazine I'm amazed at how many classic interviews were with Audrey and myself working as a team. Sometimes Audrey would give me a tape to work on. Mog Thayre would be as early example of this.

Audrey had a quite different sense of time to mine. I remember us going to see Jack Purser at Bennyfold – we were there before seven in the evening. At ten I politely suggested it might be time to go. I had no support from Audrey and Jack was aghast, "You've hardly got here. There's eggs and bacon for breakfast." And walks: Keith's drawing on today's service sheet recalls Audrey's very relaxed indeed Bury Riverside walk. The secretary to a local newspaper editor rang up and said her boss was interested. He had just returned from walking the Pennine Way. I explained it was a mile up the river a lengthy stop at the café and a mile back. I don't recall seeing him.

And there was Nellie Duncton, an open door into a world that had completely disappeared. Jonas and his mate, the latter a little merry are trudging home. The owls were making a noise that sounded like "Who are you?" "Who are you?" Jonas' mate stops in his tracks shouts his name and adds, "I thought you would have known that you b...y fools."

And the Toronto Scottish. Two men coming to me to suggest a return forty years after D Day, and with an eye to looking up former lady friends. I rang 342452 and Audrey was down in no time. The rest you know 250 men, a pipe band, the Ontario ambassador and a return trip to Canada. I could continue. Audrey was Petworth in a way that is now almost impossible. A larger than life character in the way that Bill Vincent was. I fear we shall not see her like again.

P.

Read at Audrey's funeral in June.

The Annual General Meeting and . . . a policeman's lot . . .

A change of date, a change of speaker and a Monday evening were a combination likely to result in a smaller audience than usual, but a respectable number came along to witness the usual mix of formality and confusion for the business session and to be rewarded with an entertaining and enlightening talk by a very

accomplished speaker with a novel approach to engaging his audience.

The Treasurer, Andy Henderson, presented a very positive Statement of Financial Activities, explaining that the previous year's deficit of £2173 had been turned into a surplus of £335. Interest on investments was down, in line with the national trend, but donations had held up. Activities had been well supported. None were subsidised and the previous cost of reception drinks at the annual dinner was now included in the price of the meal. Peter expressed appreciation of the tremendous job carried out by Andy, saying that the Society owed him a great debt of gratitude.

No nominations for a place on the committee had been received and so the current members were re-elected.

In his Chairman's report, Peter began by announcing, with sadness, the death of Mrs Audrey Grimwood a few days previously. She had been a tireless worker for the Society in many roles and a committee member from the 1970s until prevented by failing health in 2005.

Reviewing the year, walks, talks, visits and the annual dinner had been well attended. It had been a privilege to use non-public paths in Stag Park. Regarding talks, the aim was that they should be chiefly of local interest – Miles Costello's on Petworth's inns and alehouses had proved extremely popular, together with Mike Oakland, Tania Pons and two using Garland photographs. While it was increasingly difficult to get people out in the evening and speakers were finding venues were drying up, with one, more expensive event such as the Allsorts concert party at Christmas, the Society was doing well.

The Society's revival of Petworth Fair Day had continued for the 25th year.

Mr. Michael Hubbard, the Society's Town Crier, appeared at all public events – at which point Mike, in his inimitable style, injected a request for replacement socks, size 11, black, the originals showing signs of age after nearly four years' service.

Monthly book sales, which made possible the production of the extremely high quality quarterly magazine, were holding up well, despite fewer dealers attending.

The annual dinner was an event to be recommended and bookings for the next in September were approaching the limit of 88.

The magazine had reached its 144th edition and was of great importance in preserving the oral tradition of the area, with early recollections going back into the last years of Queen Victoria's reign.

The Society continued in its support of the Leconfield Hall, Cottage Museum and Coultershaw Beam Pump Trusts.

Ian Godsmark and David Wort's slides of activities completed the report, together with views of the Cottage Museum garden and stages in the demolition

of houses in Station Road to make way for the building of a retirement home.

The raffle followed, during which it became clear that our speaker for the rest of the evening, Neil Sadler, a retired police officer, had so enjoyed the eccentricities demonstrated over business, that he was able to establish an immediate rapport with his novel approach to delivering his talk. It could have been so different!

He explained how, after teaching and a spell in the Civil Service, he went into the Police, rising through the ranks from a start in Bognor to various overseas and staff college posts and back to Bognor.

Then he distributed lists of topics to some people in the audience and asked them, one at a time, to select a subject for him to talk about.

So it was that we heard about the two-year old who wandered off from her parents at Whiteways. A search involving 140 police and 700 volunteers, some of whom got lost themselves, lasted three days before she was found, alive and well, two and a half miles away.

Neil was among those called in when the IRA targeted the Grand Hotel, Brighton, during the Tory Conference and recalled the chance discovery of the perpetrator later, in Glasgow.

At Gatwick Airport, a phone call led to a security alert. Not a bomb, however, but an embarrassed Middle Eastern gentleman trying to cover up for his illicit weekend with a royal princess who had overslept. A hefty fine and a term of imprisonment resulted when he was found out, again by chance.

Human stories of the vulnerable: the lady who had just taken delivery of her first automatic car, but without any instruction. She drove straight into a Bognor cake shop. The elderly lady disturbing neighbours, eventually wandering naked and resisting rescue, attempting to bite Neil on the neck. The eleven-year old, given cannabis by her father to sell at school and asking for her 'pot' back. No, not the drug, but the Kinderpot it had been in.

And the recently discharged prisoner, homeless and cold, who threw a brick through a shop window and begged to be taken back into custody.

Yes, a policeman's lot . . . can be an interesting one and we look forward to hearing a lot more of those interesting stories another time

KCT

David and Linda's bluebell walk

Would the bluebells still be in flower after the hottest April on record? In some places, it was said, not. Stag Park we soon found, was in full flower and freshened by a rare overnight shower. In some ways this walk would be the obverse of the autumn one which took in those ponds which lie within comfortable distance of the London Road. This time we would begin at Raghm Lodge at the far end of the single public footpath that runs through from Limbo Lodge.

A convoy of cars, some thirty walkers and we were soon on private Leconfield land and well away from the footpath. The bluebells were in dense drifts but there was neither sight nor sound of the cuckoo David and Linda had seen on their trial run. Just the quiet of the bluebell woods supplemented by various speedwells and bugle giving a variation on blue with the occasional pink campion and yellow archangel.

Soon the first pond, Jackson's Lake, largely given over to coarse fish rather than trout and offering also a little winter fishing for those who want it. And the eponymous Jackson? No one seems to know. Cocks the next one. Again a mystery. Sporting a plastic heron? Suddenly the motionless figure takes to the air. It's difficult to imagine these ponds as they were in the late 1960s – still planted with Christmas trees, still awaiting revival in their old role as "stews".



Stag Park 1st May.
Photograph by David Wort.

The sluggish water at the tail of the pond was black with tadpoles drifting along with the almost non-existent current. Campion and hemlock at the water's edge. These, David said, are rainwater ponds, the contribution from springs being minimal. Whites Green and the lone outpost of Chillinghurst. How long since we were here last? The curious moat hidden away amongst the spring greenery. Sheep in the fields, wool on the wire fencing, back to the footpath to see it winding white uphill on its way to Limbo. Sussex cattle in the field, the Stag Park dovecote appearing and disappearing with the undulations of the walk. "A rare opportunity" the posters had said. Quite. Thanks very much, David and Linda.

P

"The dogs decide" – Debby and Gordon's Lodsworth walk

A very heavy shower at 2.00. A flooded car park. The wind blows the surface water and there are jet-black clouds to the west. Ten potential heroes and Freya the dog materialise out of the gloom. And Freya's not alone. Is thirteen going to be an unlucky number? Do we go? Who has the casting vote? Freya and Co? At 2.15 the rain has stopped and we set off. At Tillington, the heavens open: it's almost impossible to see ahead but we battle on and by River we're through the cloudburst. To part of the old A272 at the rear of the pub at Halfway Bridge. Have we been here before? No one seems quite sure.

Up an incline between fields and we're in River Wood, summer green, with the steep sides of the valley falling away sheer to the left, the protective fencing long since collapsed and crumpled. A fortnight ago Debby and Gordon had seen the electric blue of a kingfisher, but not today. Is that rusting mass of metal at the foot of the slope an old army vehicle or a redundant farm implement? A great branch of fallen oak across the track seems a cynical tribute to the summer weather.

We've been gradually climbing but now it's time to descend and, given the thin veneer of mud, it's tricky. David advises to keep to the rough stones in the middle where the rushing water has washed away the soil. On the right a track leads off to River but we don't take it. We're soon at Eel Bridge. Apparently, older Lodsworth residents would catch eels here. Below us the Lod flows strongly, framed in dark green alder and lighter green hazel. Across to our left there's a large maple. A few yards in and we can see Lodsworth ahead of us. St Peter's well

"of ancient origin", as mysterious no doubt, in its own way, as Petworth's own Virgin Mary Spring. And are those yellow flowers Jerusalem artichoke?

We're soon in the "new" cemetery adjoining the old churchyard. Mole, Ratty and an easel adorn the tombstone of E. H. Shepard. Winnie the Pooh, says Gordon, recalls a teddy bear named Growler, once belonging to Shepard's son. Shepard is buried here with his second wife. He had been introduced to A. A. Milne by E. V. Lucas in the 1920s.

On into the church, a heavy smell of lilies and roses on the mild damp air. An intermittent sun shines in through the stained glass windows. A list of rectors from 1536. I wonder why there were three successive rectors in the brief period 1919 to 1921. On through a very quiet Sunday afternoon Lodsworth; it's the only afternoon the very distinctive community shop is closed. The rain still holds off; astonishingly we haven't seen a drop. We walk back down the slope to Halfway Bridge. Fortune, at least today, seems to favour the brave.

P

River Common – a query

Margaret Yao sends this poem on River Common. It comes from *Poems of Sussex* by Florence E. Pullen, published at Ilfracombe* in 1961. Has anyone any knowledge of the writer and her possible local connections? Ed.

IN SUSSEX

River Common, you look so sad,
The sky is grey, there is no sun
To shine upon your face today,
My lonely one.

The wind blows high,
And being the Wind – flowers Master,
Tells her to dance faster,
Faster, faster, and even faster.

The wind gains strength,
And the oldest Wind – flowers sigh;
On they dance to their Master's will,
Then sighing die.

Hours have passed by,
The wind has died down;
And left you the gift
Of a white petal gown.

But the Fairies will steal it
In the moonlight tonight;
For their Queen needs some sheets,
To the spider's delight.

Oh! Give me a smile,
When I wake up tomorrow;
For my Home's with you always,
In sunshine and sorrow.

*Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd.

Greenwich June 30th

We're on the river aboard a Thames Clipper. I think of Florence Rapley writing in her diary of "the treat of a lifetime", travelling by steamer down to the sea at Southend via Greenwich, Woolwich and Gravesend. "We saw the old wharves by water's edge where Dickens loved to put his rogues"¹ A hundred years on it's a little more opulent. We're only going as far as Greenwich.

We came here in 2007 but time was limited as we were going on to the sewage works at Crossness.² This time it's Greenwich only and some of our party will take the guided tour; the rest will simply explore. Marian and I have arranged to meet Julian Watson, for so long archivist and librarian at Greenwich.

Time for a leisurely coffee, some recollections of Little Bognor, then a walk beside the light brown river, and lunch at the Cutty Sark pub. Very relaxed indeed; the day's flying by. With someone as knowledgeable as Julian it's difficult to take

everything in, almost every stone seems to echo a long history. Two needle memorials remind of abortive attempts to find the North West Passage and the New Zealand war against the Maoris respectively. The foundations of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester's fourteenth century palace deep beneath an expanse of grass. And the Thames is at full tide, like an animal licking up against the protective wall, sending up the occasional warning spurt of spray. We stroll into the famous covered market, stalls with shops on either side. You could comfortably spend the day here. I buy a postcard of Fittleworth Bridge (see main pictures). Julian tells an extraordinary story of a one-legged sailor clobbering King George IV with a rock. On to St Alfege's Church, a classic Hawksmoor building, the back has been cleaned back to the original white, funds permitting, the front will follow. A funeral cortege is waiting outside so we do not go inside. Julian recounts the story of the saintly Archbishop's death at the hands of drunken, and the next morning almost contrite, Vikings. Up the steep slope by Greenwich Park to the Observatory, with London spread out before us, and to our right preparation for the Olympic equestrian events. Heavens, we're due back at the coach at 3.45. Ice creams in hand we're strolling up the road as if we've hours to spare. Is anyone surprised the Chairman's back last? Apparently not. A really good day, thanks very much Andy and Annette. I suspect a prompt reply for the BBC visit in the autumn might be wise.

P.

1. So Sweet As the Phlox Is (1994). July 23rd 1909.
2. See Greenwich and Crossness – a Society epic PSM 129.

Soldiers of Salamis – the June book sale

If I'm quite honest (am I ever?) I don't have much in common with T. S. Eliot. But there is something: I heard somewhere that Eliot rarely read modern novels. Neither do I. Over the monthly sale cycle hundreds, probably thousands, of novels pass through our hands, hardbacks, softbacks, some old, some new, outrageous, thoughtful, formulaic, or all of these things. 'Now a major film', 'International best-seller' the whole publishers' gamut. It's a floating population: I suspect that once read, a novel is more likely than, say, a biography or travel book to be on its way.

All the more surprising, then, that my attention should be caught by a small paperback.¹ Even more surprising that I should begin to read, and alarming

perhaps that I'm now on a third reading. Perhaps it's going to be one of those lifetime books that like *Treasure Island* or *Le Grand Meaulnes* you always return to, the latter now in translation. My fascination goes back to reading it in the original French at Midhurst. Nothing to do with the syllabus, I think Vera Lucas just loved reading it.

As a novel *Soldiers of Salamis* is disconcerting in that the self-deprecating Cercas writes in his own name. Is the narrator really Cercas himself or a persona? Does he really have an improbable, racy and, on the face of it, most unsuitable girl friend named Conchi who holidays in Cancún and tells fortunes on a cable T.V. station? We have to take the narrator on trust.

The book turns on a single historical incident in the last desperate days of the Spanish Civil War. It is the end of January 1939. The defeated Republican troops, fleeing toward the French border put fifty prominent Franco supporters before an impromptu firing squad. Somehow the greatest "prize" of all, Rafael Sánchez Mazas, fascist ideologue and senior surviving member of the Falange² is only grazed by the rain of bullets and makes off into the woods. A search ensues and one of the firing squad finds Mazas, looks him straight in the eye shouts "There's no one here", and turns away. An aristocrat, living rough in the woods, hardly able to see because he has broken his spectacles, Mazas is befriended by three Republican deserters, survives to be promoted to Franco's cabinet, and with a curious inconsequence, is thrown out because he fails to attend.

But who is the mysterious soldier? Sixty years on Cercas finds the three "forest friends" are still alive and prepared to recall their time with Mazas but the soldier's shadow hangs over all. Why did he act as he did? Is he still alive? A chance conversation with an expatriate Chilean novelist leads to an unlikely search for him. But is Miralles, a sick man in a Dijon nursing home, really the soldier? The earthy, laconic, Miralles, neither confirms nor denies. The incident itself is perhaps dissolving into historical uncertainty. Miralles will however contribute to a desultory discussion on heroes, a status certainly not claimed by, or accorded to Sánchez Mazas. Is Miralles, who had fought across North Africa with the Free French and, as the war ended, been blown almost to pieces by a mine, a hero? No, Miralles insists, the only heroes are dead heroes, dead as those ancient Greeks who defeated the Persian fleet at Salamis in 480 BC. An extraordinary amalgam of the earthy, the facetious, the enigmatic, the farcical and the heroic, yes, I think *Soldiers of Salamis* almost but not quite joins *Treasure Island* and *Le Grand Meaulnes*.

Heroism of a different kind is to be found in Christine Chaundler's *Bunty of the Blackbirds* (1926).³ As a local author Christine Chaundler is no stranger to these pages.⁴ Spine loose, and pages browned, the copy that has come in can only be saved from the Salvation Army collectors by the local authorship. *Bunty of the*

Blackbirds is competently plotted but a little predictable and rather improbable, something hardly likely to trouble its young intended readership. The *Blackbirds* are a school guide patrol and it's clear from the outset that the terminally incompetent Bunty will be the heroine. It's a curious and sobering thought that the imaginary members of the patrol, held in a time-warp by the browning pages, would, if alive now, be ladies in their mid-nineties, while Mexton House School with its rigid loyalties is the stuff of dreams. The plot turns on an incompetent attempt to kidnap the infant son of Lord Rosmere but the kidnapers turn out to be pantomime villains who end up by helping Bunty to rescue the little boy from the waters of a quarry. They are offered positions on Lord Rosmere's estate after the obligatory prison sentence. The uneasy tension between abduction and kindness is a kind of fault line through the book.

Spanish Civil War and Mexton House School – when all you wanted was a couple of sentences on the June book sale. An initial queue snaking down the east side of the hall and into the Cut and a record total for June. I make no apology for the emphasis on books: Book Sales have to be about books and if people didn't read them and come to us and buy them, this plump juicy Magazine would be a scrawny old bird indeed.

P.

1. Javier Cercas: *Soldiers of Salamis*. Translated from the Spanish by Anne McLean (Bloomsbury 2004).
2. Fascist organisation allied with Franco's rebels.
3. Re-print by The Childrens Press (no date).
4. See Miles Costello in PSM 128 (June 2007) page 16, PSM 129 (September 2007) pages 15-16 and my discussion of *The Chivalrous Fifth* in PSM 132 pages 7-8 (June 2008).

For everything . . .

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."¹ Here's our old friend the Preacher making another of his rare cameo appearances in this Magazine. The "relevance" on this occasion? Simply change at the Cottage Museum. After fifteen years I have handed over the reins to Gordon Stevenson, but as gardener, trustee and steward I am still, I like to think, very much part of the scene. The Museum is now firmly established as an essential Petworth institution and, with a rather less unitary, more "team", ethos well set up for the future. June, the traditional "off" month has been busier than usual and group visits are much more a feature than they were in earlier days, with visiting W.I.'s,

U3A and historical groups particularly prominent. Nowadays it's virtually unknown for stewards to spend time waiting for a tap on that miniscule door knocker. Quite the reverse in fact; if the steward's lot can be a fairly happy one, it can also be a pretty busy one.

Diane's on holiday this week, Debby and Gordon are away too, so it's an unusual week of emptying the ashes, laying the fire and tipping the white ash onto the cinder path. After fifteen years as chairman, a slightly less hands-on role is something of an adjustment. In the quiet of the early morning, everything seems much as usual. The marbles gleam dully in the solitaire board, the browning newspapers flop half-out of the holder. The curious set of "antlers" over the mirror in the parlour is as enigmatic as ever.

It's mid-summer day and it's cloudy and cold. The pansies, up to now too colourful to move, are going over. The inter-planted cosmos will need some back-up when the pansies come out. The sullen skies point up the harsh orange of the rampaging calendulas, the dahlias are still to come. I hoick out an insolent milk thistle. Cosmos and calendulas need constant dead-heading. Will the annual border to the right flower on into the autumn? Calendula, clary and candytuft with the odd self-sown scarlet nasturtium. We shall see.

P.

1. Ecclesiastes iii 1

A response to "Kirdford's famous resident" PSM 144. Andrew Smith

A few weeks ago one of my cousins drew my attention to an article published in the Kirdford parish magazine. The topic referred to the grave of Andrew Smith at St. John the Baptist's church, Kirdford. The article, by Tony Sanders, hypothesized that Andrew Smith was probably the most famous person interred there. Most certainly the grave has a very large head stone and is fashioned from particularly good quality marble but it is, unfortunately, laying face down on the grave. Mr. Sanders' article explained why he considered Andrew Smith was famous and, even notorious, in a brief account of his life. The last paragraph of the article suggests that as Andrew Smith's descendents were probably untraceable and if sufficient people in the Parish were interested, the head stone could be raised in order to promote a little Parish history.

The only apparent inaccuracy in the article was that Andrew Smith's descendents were probably untraceable. Well, his article came to our notice and I can confirm that we have now been traced, alive and well, and interested! Certainly most of us, the grand children of his son Thomas, left the world of "travellers" many years ago. Most are still living in Sussex in houses they have long since paid for and not the former caravans of yesteryear. However, we are still proud of our connections to the Fairground world and are prepared to be involved in raising Great Grandfather Andrew's head stone.

I have in my possession a photocopy of Andrew's Will bearing "his mark" and it shows that he had two properties, one in Stroud Green and another in Cranleigh. His son John inherited Stroud Green and his daughter, Amy, the Cranleigh property. His other son, Thomas, was totally excluded. According to family folk lore it appears that Andrew and Thomas did not get on, both having very strong personalities and they even fought on the odd occasion.

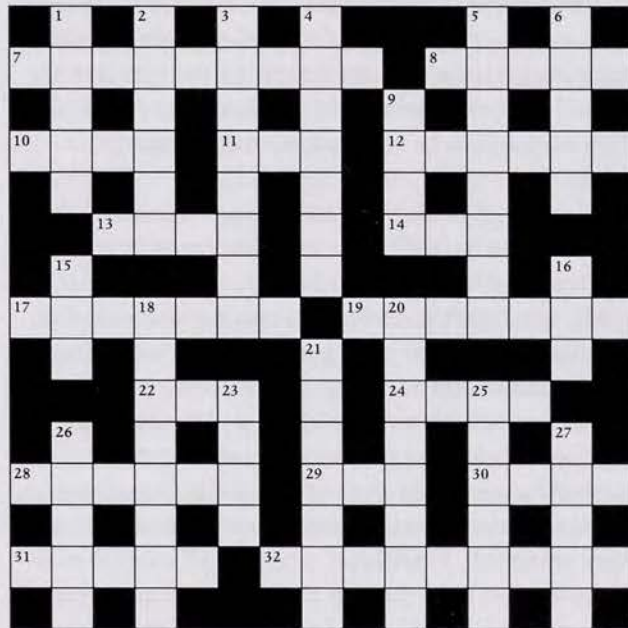
Whatever the truth is, maybe it was considered that Thomas, who had become a very successful "machine man" and "held" many Sussex fairs during the summer, did not need it. He owned a very large piece of ground in Shoreham where all his equipment, a very ornate steam roundabout, packing trucks, lorries and steam traction engines were wintered. In addition, a retinue of more distant relatives, who owned the side shows, also lived there in their caravans and were the vital labour force for the transporting, build-up and pull-down of the rides during the summer months. Their ground rents on the fairground sites were appropriately reduced of course. During the winter months they all sold logs, chop wood and also dealt in scrap metal.

As the years passed, Thomas Smith's grand children inherited, from their parents, ownership of the Shoreham site. With only one exception, none were any longer involved in the fairground business and it was decided, when all the parents had died, to sell the property for re-development. It produced a substantial amount.

Both my great grandfather, and grandfather were illiterate but they both acquired valuable property at a time when very few could do so. Their "Showman" activities also made a considerable mark on local society and brought pleasure to many. I suggest that the lesson to be learnt is that cunning intelligence supersedes all. Not bad for a couple of gypsies!

Brian Clarke
Ashington.

PETWORTH CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 7** Home to the destitute, once located on the northern edge of Petworth ... (9)
8 ... and something the women picked there (5)
10 Small ponds in the park, once used for cleaning fish (4)
11 Jolly old sailor (3)
12 Petworth ironmongers for nearly 200 years (6)
13 Traditional Sussex basket (4)
14 Nearest to you, relatively speaking (3)
17 They used to work up a lather in this North Street building (7)
19 Where to find Mr & Mrs Wright! (7)
22 You could see plenty of these in 32's shop (3)
24 Catch sight of (4)
28 ----- Ditch, an early name for Damer's Bridge (6)
29 Lyric poem (3)

30 Grim building which once dominated Grove St. (4)

- 31** Part of a wooden cask or a staff (5)
32 Family who ran a jewellery shop in Church St. throughout the C20th (9)

DOWN

- 1** Proud like the Duke of Somerset, or just tall! (5)
2 Butcher's long pin (6)
3 He led a simple country life (8)
4 How to sit on a horse (7)
5 Baby's wicker cradle (8)
6 & 23 Regal customer who famously patronised 32's shop (5,4)
9 An early name for High St. was ---- St. (4)
15 Early form of lighting - still used in the Cottage Museum (3)
16 The 3rd Earl had a stone one erected on Lawn Hill (3)

- 18** In denial, but could produce a positive result for Kevis, Morgan or Garland! (8)
20 Recently converted chapel with Hebraic name (8)
21 New road named in honour of a Canadian city regiment (7)
23 see 6dn
25 3dn may well have had one in his garden (6)
26 see 27dn
27 & 26 Let our Rory travel around Kingspit Lane (5,5)

SOLUTION TO ROYALTY IN SUSSEX CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 7 Head, 8 Lion, 9 Shoes, 11 Get Armed, 12 Necked, 13 Edit, 14 Adelaide, 16 Resting, 18 Regnant, 21 Brighton, 23 Doff, 26 Beaten, 27 Midhurst, 28 Cheer, 29 Pier, 30 Tree

DOWN

- 1 Lewis, 2 Edward, 3 Plumpton, 4 Cowdray, 5 The Chain, 6 Defending, 10 Anne, 15 George The, 17 Together, 19 Endoderm, 20 Enemy Is, 22 Tent, 24 Fourth, 25 Usher

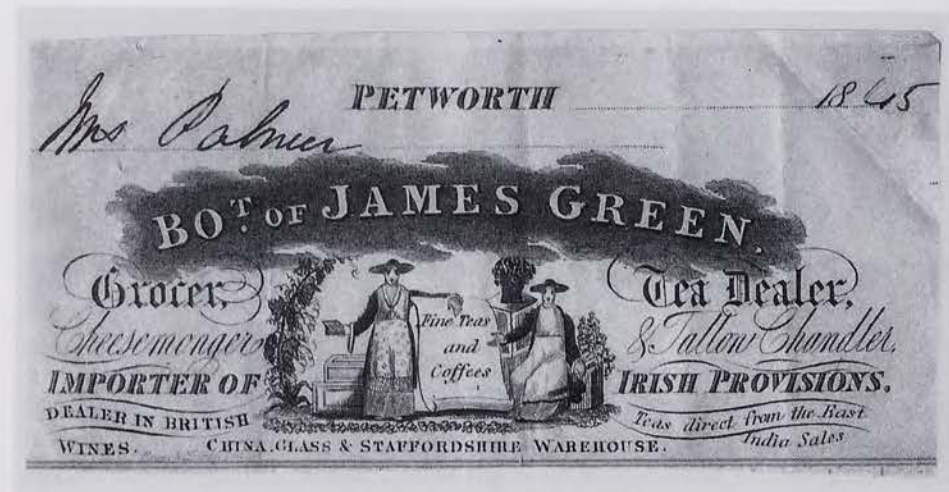
Old Petworth traders (7)

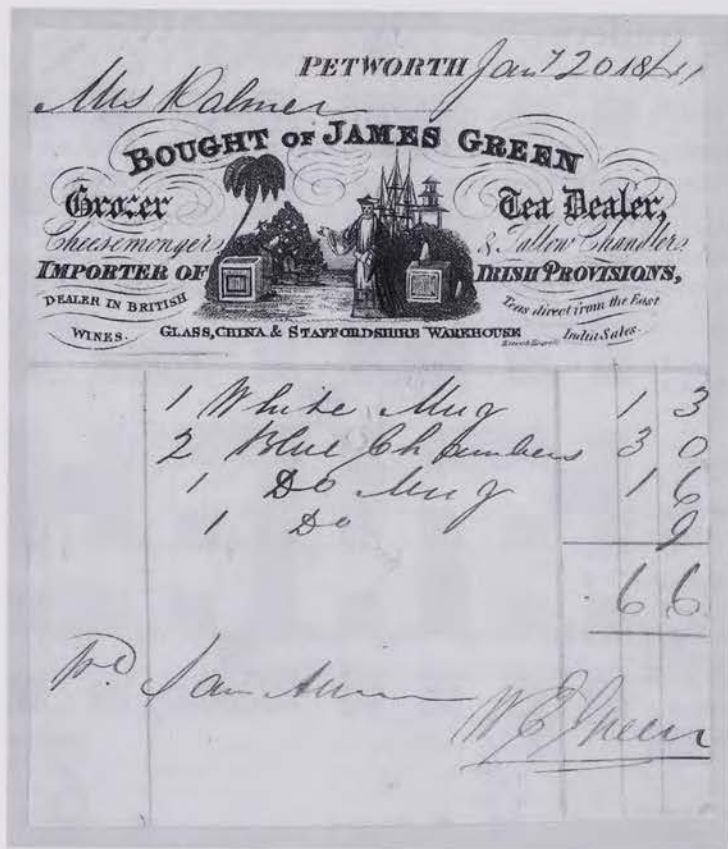
Greens the Grocers were a fixture on the east corner of Lombard Street for most of the nineteenth century. They would later be taken over by Otways. Their early billheads give some idea of the wide range of goods stocked by one of Petworth's long-established and prestigious shops. For their date the billheads appear somewhat avant-garde as befits a leading grocer. Smaller outlets tended still to rely on hand-written invoices. Both invoices reproduced here are for china and the billheads seem to have been used interchangeably. I transcribe that for the 20th January 1841:

1 White mug	1.3
2 Blue Ch[ina] tumblers	3.0
1 Do. mug	1.6
2 Do	9
	6.6

I reproduce only the top of the 1845 invoice. Mrs Palmer, widow of the wealthy draper Robert Rice Palmer, lived at Avenings in Market Square.

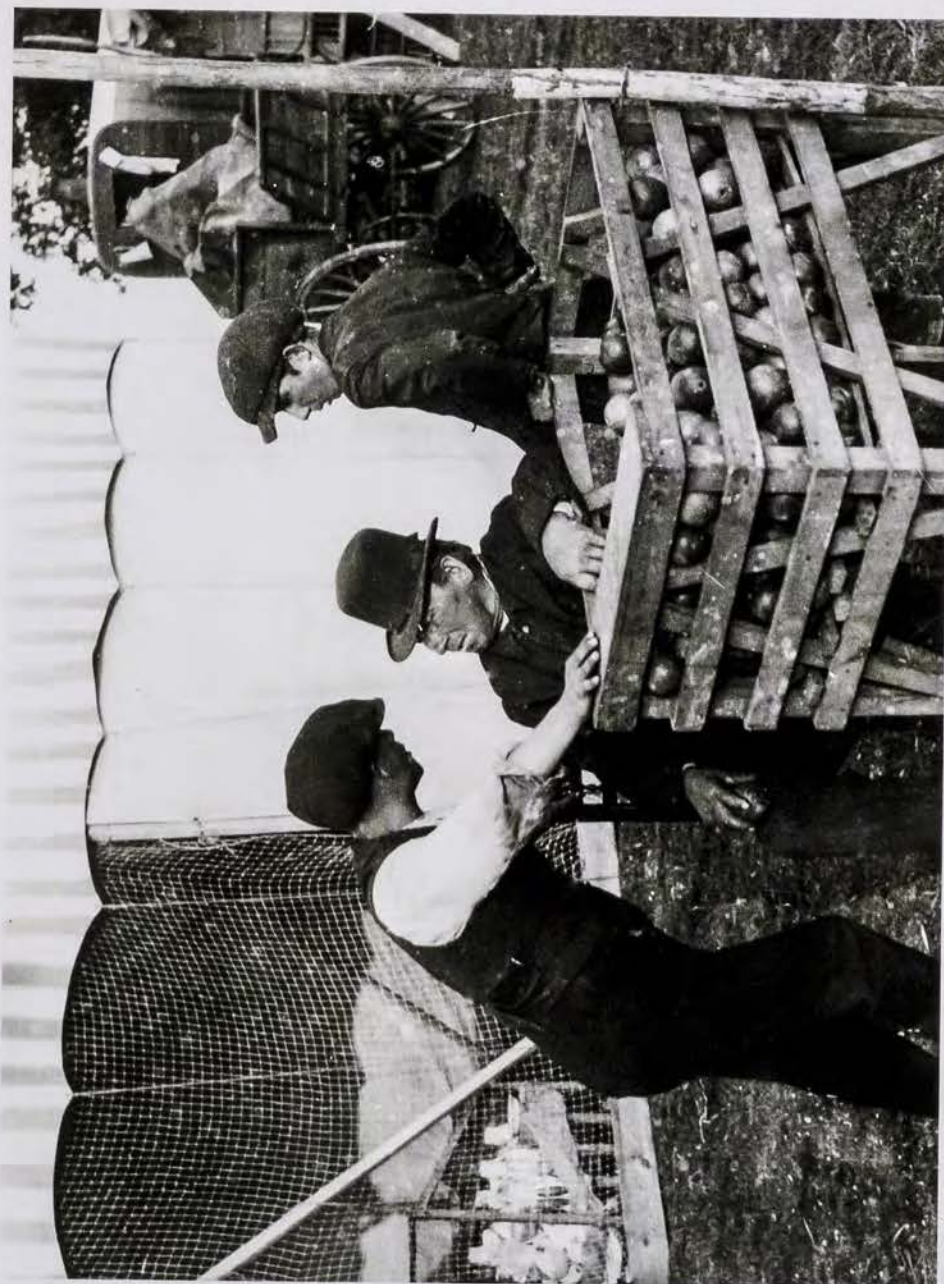
For Greens see *Tread Lightly Here* (1990) pages 30 and 31.





Dora Older's diary (3): The early months of the war

With war declared in August 1914, Dora's brother Arthur had to leave the Angel Street shop and join his regiment. Possibly he was already a Territorial. Understandably, Dora records his various moves – first to Newhaven putting up “barbed wire entanglements” along the coast, then guarding the railway and docks. On the 29th August he volunteers for the front, but on November 15th he is still in “very comfortable quarters” in the fort at Newhaven. By the 23rd he is a Lance Sergeant in 7 Company of the Royal Sussex, mainly Arundel-based. He has three days home leave in January 1915 and the troops are then prevented from leaving Newhaven by an outbreak of measles. By April he is billeted in a room at



Andrew Smith in consultation.
A Garland photograph from the 1920s.



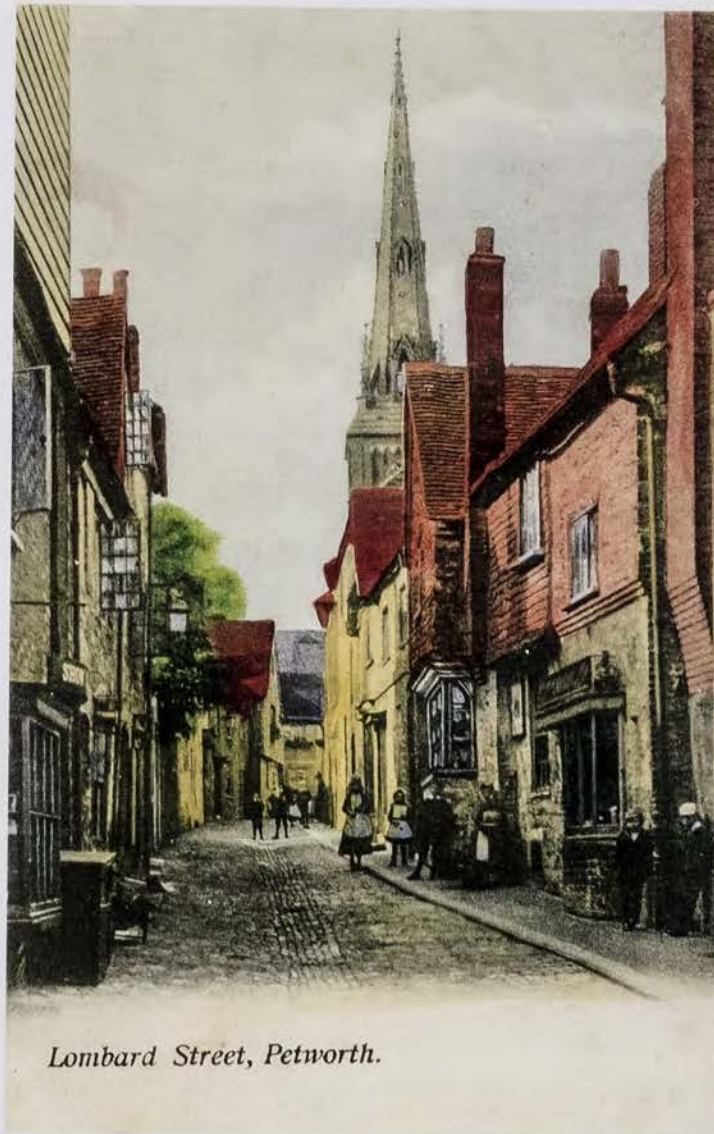
Lodsworth Church, a photograph taken by Walter Kevis in 1887.
See Debby and Gordon's Lodsworth walk.

A selection of early century coloured postcards.

The first, hand-coloured, shows some sort of commercial premises, second left, and seems to predate the great fire at Remnants' Bakery in 1899, see top left. A Walter Kevis postcard.

These are all slightly enlarged from the originals.

For this see "Under the radar in Lombard Street".



Lombard Street, Petworth.



Petworth Church.

Published by Kevis, Petworth.

Another early Walter Kevis postcard.
Postmarked February 28th 1905.



River Rother, Fittleworth.

A postcard published by A. W. Lapworth, Stationer, Arundel.



LORD LECONFIELD'S
"OLD TIMES COACH"
1914

International Horse Show.

BRIGHTON AND LONDON

On and after 1st MAY, 1914.

LONDON TO BRIGHTON
Monday, Wednesday & Friday.

BRIGHTON TO LONDON.
Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday.

Miles.	Time.	Miles.	Time
Hotel Victoria, Charing Cross	10.15	Brighton, Hotel Metropole	10.45
8½ *Roehampton (King's Head)	11.10	7½ *Newtimber	11.35
14 Worcester Park (The Plough)	11.45	12½ Henfield (White Hart)	12.0
17 *Ewell (Spring Hotel)	12.5	13½ *Mockbridge (Bull Inn)	12.15
18½ Epsom	12.15	16½ Cowfold (Red Lion)	12.35
27½ *Dorking (White Horse) arr.	1.10	21 *Manning's Heath (Dun Horse)	1.5
(Lunch, 40 minutes)	+1.50	23½ Horsham (King's Head) arr.	1.20
31 Holmwood (Post Office)	+2.20	(Lunch, 40 minutes)	12.0
36 *Kingsfold (Wheatheaf)	2.50	28 *Kingsfold (Wheatheaf)	2.30
40½ Horsham (King's Head)	+3.15	33 Holmwood (Post Office)	+3.0
43 *Manning's Heath (Dun Horse)	3.30	36½ *Dorking (White Horse)	+3.25
47½ Cowfold (Red Lion)	3.55	45½ Epsom	4.20
50½ *Mockbridge (Bull) arr.	4.15	47 *Ewell (Spring Hotel)	4.30
(Tea, 10 minutes)	4.25	(Tea, 10 minutes)	4.40
51½ Henfield (White Hart)	+4.35	50 Worcester Park (Plough)	5.0
56½ *Newtimber	5.0	55½ *Roehampton (King's Head)	5.35
64 Brighton, Hotel Metropole	arr. 5.50	64 Hotel Victoria, Charing Cross	arr. 6.30

* CHANGE HORSES.

† NEAR RAILWAY STATION

FARE 15s.; BOX SEAT, 5s. extra.

Intermediate Fares are charged 3d. per mile, not less than 1s. taken.
Passengers taken up or set down at any part of the route.

BOOKING OFFICES.

LONDON: HOTEL VICTORIA, Northumberland Avenue.

BRIGHTON: HOTEL METROPOLE.

STABLES: MESSRS. C. S. WARD & SONS, 66 & 101a, Brompton Road, S.W. and
Messrs. ALLEN & SONS, Norfolk Mews, Brighton.

For Further Particulars apply to E. K. FOWNES.

1914. Presumably the outbreak of war in August would take the "Old Times Coach" off the road.

Leconfield Estate Coy

Estate Office (Copy)
(W.C. French)

Feb 11th/49

To whom it may concern

Patron

Walter Charles French has been employed on this Estate for 14 years as Gamekeeper & Vermin Killer. He has a wide knowledge of rearing, Dog training, and has also assisted with the Deer in the Home Park, being able to skin & dress the carcass. French has held a game License and has shot when required. He has always been always willing and interested in his work.

The reason for his termination on this Estate was

due to complaints of Rabbits by the Agriculture Executive

Committee. His Lordship will not have complaints. I

personally think he was hasty in His decision. I have known French

for about 20 years he is very respectable & polite

also his Family. His bag of Wild Birds this season was

135 Pheasants 25½ Partridges

I will gladly give any further information required

R Stewart Robertson

Head Forester in Charge of Game

R Stewart Robertson's testimonial for W. C. French in February 1949.

See "We stood outside Last Lodges".

Courtesy of Tony French.



Mrs French, Drusilla and Walter pictured at Raghams in the 1940s.
See "We stood outside Last Lodges".
Courtesy of Tony French.

Trinity College, Cambridge and in May he leaves for Bedford. Home at Whitsun, he reports that he is very comfortable there "with a Mr Dewdney whose wife was a Miss Leppard who used to live in Petworth." Dora's other entries are sporadic but do give some idea of Petworth in the early months of the war. On this occasion I have simply transcribed from the diary without adding comment: I have however slightly regularised the use of capital letters.

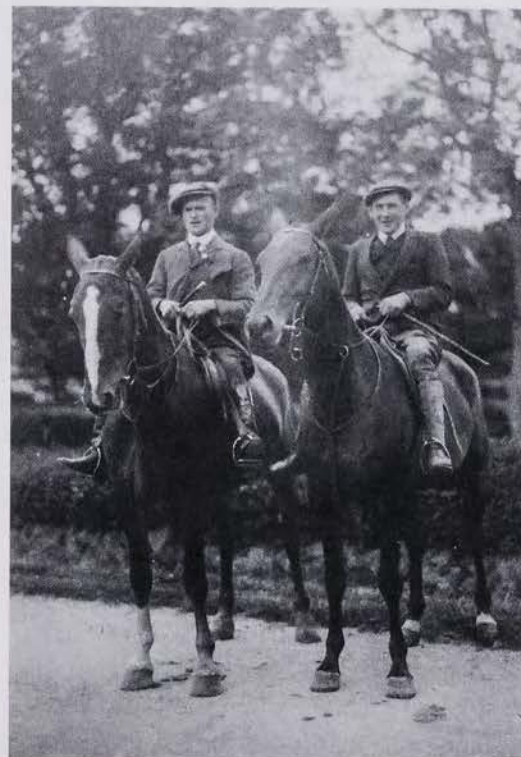
Saturday Aug. 8

The provisions at the shop are coming in gradually, the railways are over done with carrying troops and transports.

Changed the first £1 note tonight. (£1 notes are being used instead of gold, gold being kept back in the banks).

Sunday Aug. 15 (sic)

The Park is closed to the public as horses are to be put there as a depo (sic) remounts for the front.



Taken at the Remount Depot in Petworth Park: 1915-1916. Horses that had been requisitioned were prepared for duty at the Front. See Sunday Aug. 15.

Saturday Oct. 10

This dreadful war. We have just heard that Antwerp has fallen. The Germans had 200 siege guns against the city.

Monday Oct. 12 1914

Sixteen Belgian refugees came tonight by the 7.12 train, they are being put into the Swan Hotel. Hundreds of Belgians are being brought over to England.

Tuesday Nov. 10 1914

The Belgian girls are giving French lessons. They were in the cellars of their houses in Malines when the Germans were shelling the town.

Friday Nov. 27 1914

2000 soldiers have come to be billeted in the town today. Two battalions of the King's Royal Rifles and the Rifle Brigade. We were to have had two, but we made the rooms too comfortable, and so we have a Sergt. Major.

Sunday Nov. 29

Last night was a memorable night. At twelve o'clock just as everyone was asleep, the bugles sounded for mobilisation of the soldiers in the square. 400 of them were picked to be sent at once to the front for service. Our Sergt. Major was one of them, he came home for sandwiches, his servant came to pack his boxes, and they started but at 3 o'clock home they came, it was all a farce, they had been nearly to the station and then were marched back again.

Father and I went to the Square to see them off, such a lot of people saying Good-bye to soldiers they had only for one night.



Arthur Older's Christmas card for the family. Christmas 1914. Courtesy of Mr Alan Older.

Tuesday Jan. 25th (1915)

We are beginning to feel this dreadful war now. We are to have no lights in the streets or on vehicles for fear of showing up to Zeppelins where the towns and villages are.

I had to go to Upperton . . . and it was quite an experience riding without a light, luckily there was a moon, for I couldn't start until 9 o'clock. We are very busy, the trade at the shop has nearly doubled.

Thursday Feb. 25 1915

The soldiers have all left the town today for Aldershot, after having finished their course of training here (trenching etc). We were sorry to lose Sergt. Major Whitley he was so very nice. We shall have a little rest now, it has been a three months rush. I have been to the Red Cross Hospital every Sunday (Christmas day included) to help look after the sick ones. The hospital was at Belle Vue the house of Mr Pitfield.¹

1. The Market Square solicitor.

Snow Hill, Petworth Park

The article on Snow Hill (the house) at page 28 of the June 2011, edition 144, of the Petworth Society Magazine made very good reading because I already have an interest in the place from my wife's family history research, but its actual position on the Petworth Estate wasn't mentioned so I wondered where it had been located. Also, from the photographs shown I was fascinated to see if I could establish when it may have been built.

The two pictures in the article offer immediate clues bearing in mind the additions on either side appear to be later than the original. Firstly the three storey square footprint shape, of what is likely to have been the original build, with the chimneys at the sides seems to date it in the latter half of the 1600s. Secondly the blocked in windows suggest it was built before the imposition of the "Window Tax" in 1696 and which lasted in various forms until 1851, being applicable to all dwellings except cottages.

The actual location, described in the magazine article as "wasn't much more than 300 yards from the Tillington Lodge", may well be that identified from Map XV of Lord Leconfield's "*Petworth Manor in the Seventeenth Century*" on which the name "*Snow Hill*" is recorded in italics, indicating that it was pre 1610, well before

the wall on the western side of the park was built. Furthermore 100 yards or so from the position of that title, on the roadway from Tillington Church to "Snow Hill", is a building marked as "*Thomas Brooker*", also in italics so, at first glance, it would seem to have been built, according to Leconfield, pre 1610.

Although the house at Snow Hill discussed in the article was, in the latish 1900s, very much behind the times with its lack of mains water and electricity, the overall look is one of an imposing property originally built for someone of means. When the Hearth Tax (1662 to 1670 in the Arundel Rape) was in place Thomas Brooker was charged for 6 hearths. It could well have had many rooms on its three floors with ample space for both the resident family and their servants.

Now we come to the family connection. An uncle by marriage to the Reverend Thomas James, a Nonconformist Presbyterian Minister, Thomas Brooker, born in Richmond, Surrey, in 1623, married a 35 year old Petworth lady, Widow Frances Gibbs, in 1666 in London. Thomas Brooker was employed by the 9th then 10th and 11th Earls of Northumberland at Petworth House, rising in rank and importance to be Auditor to the Percy heiress, Elizabeth, the Duchess of Somerset. Leconfield suggests that Brooker started working in the gardens and states that "He was living in retirement in his house in Tillington" when he made reference to letters Brooker had written in 1693/4 regarding a dispute over property. Frances Brooker was buried at Tillington in June 1694 followed by her husband, Thomas Brooker, in 1698/9

The Reverend Thomas James, while ministering in Kent, wrote letters to his aunt and uncle, Thomas Brooker, at Tillington and nineteen of these dated between 1689 and 1696 were located in the Petworth House Archives (PHA 683) and transcribed by my wife, Sue, née James, (with help from Alison McCann, WSRO Archivist). Sue's family connections almost certainly go back to the "tenant's champion" William James of Tillington (well known for his lengthy 16th century Star Chamber legal dispute with the 7th Earl, as detailed so well by Peter Jerrome in his "*Cloakbag and the Common Purse*" published in 1979). Sue is of the opinion Thomas was of the same wide James family but he was orphaned when an infant and brought up by his mother's sister, his aunt, Widow Frances Gibbs, who had married Thomas Brooker., his uncle by marriage. Full details of the connections and the letters are included in Sue's *Thomas James, Minister of the Gospel "Without Tombstone"* published in 2002.

My guess, from all the information to hand so far, is that the Snow Hill house of the article was the same property and, most likely built for Thomas Brooker sometime after 1666 when he was amassing his land purchases and progressing in his employment, but before 1696 when the window tax was first claimed. There may well have been an earlier building on the site which is behind the Tillington

Church but I am of the opinion the dwelling in question was not built before 1610, as has been suggested.

There may well be additional information available about the old Snow Hill property and I would be pleased to hear more, or to be corrected, on any of my assumptions. If my research and thinking is correct the house occupied by the Blundens would have stood for about 300 years before it was demolished in 1970.

David J Coward

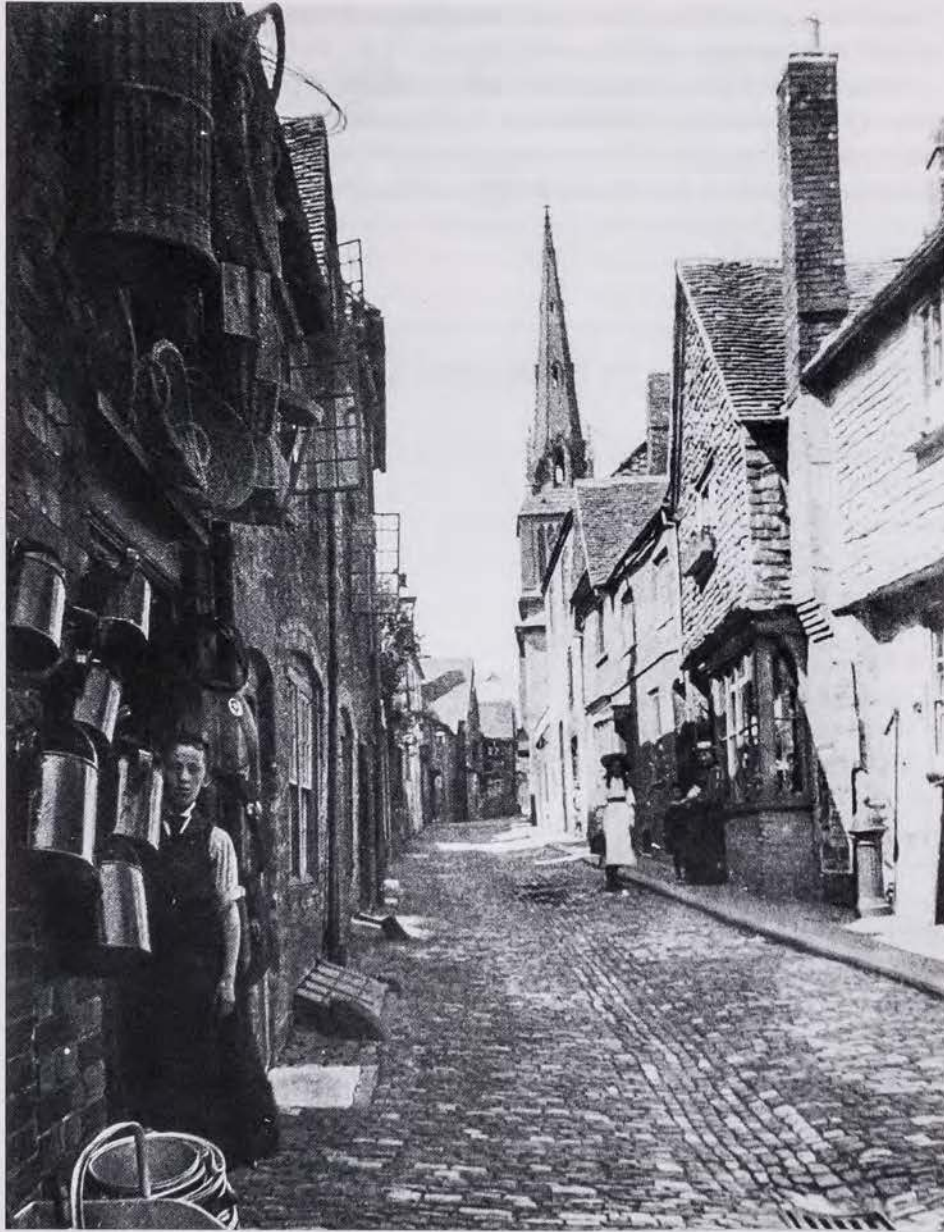
Under the radar in Lombard Street

"Perhaps Lombard Street's most distinctive era was the early part of the century and the late years of Queen Victoria. A cluster of small shops on the east side, some too on the west side, effectively made it a village in its own right, a village set in the very centre of a small town." So I wrote in 1990¹. As recently as the last Magazine I recalled the old rhyme:

Of Petworth streets the most elite
Assuredly is Lombard Street,
For in its precincts left and right
There dwell a Bishop, Earle and Knight

Traders like Bishops, the two unrelated Knights, baker and greengrocer, Herbert Earle carrying on seamlessly from his uncle Walter Kevis but without the photography, or, rather later, Mr Dale with his clocks or Dolly Westwood with her wool must have seemed almost to defy time itself. It was not, however, a permanence accorded to all.²

On a recent conducted tour, I was asked about the Cullis family, early century traders in Lombard Street. John Christopher William Cullis, aged 23 in 1906, is described on his marriage certificate as an 'oil salesman' with an address in Lombard Street. He married Jane Overington (25) a nurse from Guildford, at the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Godalming. Derek had a (very late) Kevis photograph of John and Jane with Derek's mother Audrey as a baby, it was taken probably in the autumn of 1907. Walter Kevis left Petworth in 1908. By the 1911 census the couple are still in Lombard Street and John is listed as a general hardware dealer. There are two more children. John would later move, with his family, to Dorking where he worked as an insurance salesman with the London and Manchester Assurance Co., Redhill District. He died at Dorking in July 1939.



This photograph by John Smith of Fittleworth taken in 1895 seems to show an ironmonger's shop in the position of the present Petworth Club premises. See "Under the radar in Lombard Street".

In 1911 the family had one "domestic general servant" Sarah Ann Standing aged 14, born at Scrases Hill near Petworth.

But where was John's place of business? Presumably a shop premises of some kind. The difficulty is that while photographs of the famous "Steeple View" are relatively numerous, no one was interested in the shops that line either side of the street. Worse, the optimum position for the classic view tended to cut out the shops at the lower end of the street altogether. Certainly it is possible to make out some kind of commercial premises immediately to the north of Walter Kevis, in the position occupied today by the Petworth Club. The present brickwork would certainly suggest a conversion. Just one photograph is more explicit: taken by John Smith of Fittleworth in 1895, it depicts a young man presiding over an assortment of pots, pans and wicker baskets.³ A predecessor of the Cullis business? It seems quite possible. John Cullis would have been only 12 at the time of the photograph. Kelly's directory for 1907 makes no mention of the Cullis business nor does Bennett's rather less comprehensive listing of 1901.⁴ And what did an oil merchant do? Travel round with paraffin? Mr Franklin the yeast merchant raises a somewhat similar question.

P.

1. *Tread Lightly Here* (1990) page 45.
2. Many years ago, I was asked about a Mr Franklin, yeast merchant. There was no doubt he was in Lombard Street in the early century, but how, exactly did a yeast merchant operate? He remained elusive.
3. See photograph in main pictures.
4. For Bennett's Directory see PSM 30 page 10 and 11.

Madame de Gilibert recalls . . .

Readers of "A Petworth House Ghost Story" in the June Magazine will remember that A. M. W. Stirling¹ had been on excellent terms with Madame de Gilibert, granddaughter of the Third Earl of Egremont. With her mother Charlotte Henrietta, the Earl's eldest daughter, presiding over the household and living locally at Coates Castle, Madame de Gilibert would, as a girl, be often at Petworth, in the sombre days of the Earl's last illness and the obscure period that followed. If the following stories do not, perhaps, shine a direct light on Petworth, they certainly enshrine a period and an attitude. A. M. W. Stirling writes:

Madame de Gilibert, *née* Charlotte Wyndham-King, was a personality not easily forgotten. She had a face full of character, and was an excellent raconteuse.

"I was not good-looking as a child," she used to say, studying an old picture, "but I believe I had a very fine figure." At the date when I stayed with her she used to wear her white hair turned back over a high cushion like a French marquise, and what enhanced the resemblance, she usually carried a stick; when she told a tale, she gave special emphasis to her remarks by tapping with this stick sharply on the parquet floor. Her anecdotes, even when slight, had value as the picture of that bygone world of which we of the younger generation thought with awe, so stately it seemed to us, so ceremonious, so obsolete!

Madame de Gilibert, was a great friend of the gorgeous Lady Blessington. One evening at a brilliant party given by the latter in Kensington Gore, a Frenchman who was present paid his hostess a graceful compliment. Raising aloft a cup of tea, he observed: "Mes amis, dites-moi, pourquoi cette tasse ressemble-t-elle à milady, nôtre belle chatelaine?" No one replying, he added: "Parce-qu'elle est pleine de bonté (bon thé)."

A vulgar man who was present noted the jest and determined to utilize it personally on the first occasion. A few nights afterwards at a party, he therefore raised aloft a cup of coffee and exclaimed: "My friends, why does this cup of coffee resemble our elegant hostess?" No one replying – "Because, quoth he, "both are full of good coffee!"

Madame de Gilibert's many good stories connected with the bygone life at Petworth brought it vividly before one. Her mother, Charlotte Henrietta, she told me, was remarkable for a dignified manner and an absent mind. She was very learned and read Hebrew fluently, besides many profound books, so that the common things of existence were apt to be ignored by her. A characteristic tale recorded how, when she first married, she and her husband, on returning from their honeymoon, went to Lord Egremont's house in Grosvenor Place. When dinner-time arrived, the bride descended to the drawing-room and waited for the meal to be announced, but the welcome tidings did not come. At length, waxing hungry, she summoned a lackey and demanded to know when dinner would be ready. "Dinner, Madam?" echoed the man in consternation. "None was ever ordered, so we thought you were going out!" "Does dinner have to be ordered?" exclaimed Mrs. King in mild surprise. "I thought it was a thing that came up of itself!"

One day she left her carriage at the corner of Piccadilly and walked up Bond Street to gaze at the shops. She held up her silk skirt in a fashion which must have shown her pretty leg unduly, for a passer-by shortly stopped her and politely informed her that there was a hole in her stocking. "Is there?" inquired Henrietta with scanty interest, and sauntered on. Ere long, another lady stopped her with the same information. "Thank you!" said Henrietta again, indifferently, and

continued her way. But when near the top of the street a third lady arrested her progress and remarked: "I trust you will forgive me, Ma'am, but I think you may prefer to know there is a hole in your stocking," Charlotte Henrietta's patience evaporated. Drawing herself up, she turned upon the astonished offender with flashing eyes. "And if, Madam," she exclaimed wrathfully, I *choose* to have a hole in my stocking, what business is that of yours?"

One day at Petworth she was reading a learned book which required close attention, when a small boy arrived who had been invited to luncheon. Now, Henrietta had an especial aversion to small boys; moreover, this particular boy she felt was about to interrupt her reading in which she was absorbed. So when he approached remarking civilly, "How do you do, Ma'am?" she waved him away. "Not so near, little boy – not so near!" she murmured. But the boy came on. "Not so near!" repeated Charlotte Henrietta hurriedly. "Keep away, little boy!" But the boy apparently did not understand, and she felt it necessary to be more explicit. "I don't like little boys," she said. "They have clumsy boots and something nasty in their pockets. Now, what have *you* got in *your* pocket?" "Only gentles, Ma'am," replied the little boy meekly, and putting his hand in his pocket, he pulled out and held towards her a large handful of wriggling maggots ready for fishing-bait.

1. *Life's Little Day* (Thornton Butterworth November 1924. Second Edition January 1925).

Seakale and ermine

I was interested in Mrs Arnold's query about the Mitford cemetery in the March magazine. I remember it well – at the top of the hill and to the left of the lane at the back of Pitshill. As children in the early 1950s we would often clamber over the wall and play among the gravestones.

I haven't lived in the Tillington area now for years but I have vivid memories of a spell working in the gardens at Petworth House. I left school at Midhurst aged 15 in 1958 and was advised by the doctor to take a job in the open air. Fred Streeter was head gardener and Mrs Streeter still alive, she had at one time been a teacher. I remember her sitting in the house, visible through the window, Florrie Hamilton coming in to help. My grandparents had worked on the Estate and this probably helped me get the job. Mr Streeter, then very much a media personality, seemed rather remote and I took my instructions first from Bill Steer, then from his successor Mr Spencer. I can still see Mr Streeter, setting off bowler-hatted for the London train and the BBC.

I did the usual gardening jobs, digging, planting, sowing, and would take vegetables up to the House in a wheelbarrow or on a kind of four-wheeled cart or trolley with a flat top. I'd go up into the kitchens: the chef at that time being foreign, German I thought, but I could be wrong, I never enquired. As often as not, I'd simply hand over to Bert White, the handyman, who lived with the Pullen family just behind us at Tillington. Occasionally if work was behind in the Pleasure Gardens, I'd be sent to work with Bill Harrison, a Scotsman, who had, I believe, a Swiss wife. Essentially I was there to tidy up, broken twigs and branches that sort of thing. Once, after a big freeze-up, with snow on the ground, I saw an ermine, a stoat turned white. I've never seen one since. I remember too a particularly hard spell when I had to chop out brussels sprouts to feed the deer in the Park. I can still see Harold MacMillan walking round the gardens, as, too, an elderly man whom I took to be one of the old Lord Leconfield's brothers. A particular job was cutting sweet peas for the Chelsea Flower Show.

Bullfinches were very troublesome, destroying the apple crop by attacking the buds. Mr Spencer would go after them with a 4-10, would that be allowed today? I don't know. Pears grow, as they still do, on espaliers as you entered the gardens. They were carefully pruned by Mr Spencer and Reg Withers. My role was picking up the prunings.

Potatoes were stored in sheds under straw and it would be my job to remove the straw covering and take what was required for the kitchen. I remember a rat getting into the shed. We put a "springer" over the hole, a piece of stick with a knot on the end tied with a piece of cord, making a running noose held by a little peg driven into the ground. We caught him.

A particular task was making marrow beds using manure brought down specially from Stag Park. There would often be tiny young adders in the manure. I'd turn the pile from time to time but it generated so much heat that it would almost burn through my Wellingtons.

As I have said, Fred Streeter seemed a little remote and I didn't see a great deal of him. As I recall he had an office in what had once been the bothy, where the young gardeners had once slept.

The heated houses weren't really for me but I might sometimes fill in if required. I might spray the brick floors so that when the water evaporated it would create a suitably humid atmosphere. I would also pollinate, using a long stick, with what I understood was a rabbit's tail on the end. It was certainly fluffy. It wasn't cotton wool because that's something to which I'm allergic. We grew peaches, nectarines, grapes and figs. I didn't cut grapes for the House; Mr Spencer did that. Otherwise there were the usual vegetables and plenty of variation, asparagus, kohlrabi, chicory, different coloured potatoes and tomatoes, perhaps

more of a novelty than now. And seakale, blanched either in waist-high upturned terra cotta pots, or knee-high domes. Rhubarb was similarly forced.

I wanted to go on a course to further a career in horticulture but Mr Streeter was discouraging, "You're a working man, you don't need to go to college." I was disappointed and it wasn't long before I went in with Boxalls the Tillington builders.

From a telephone conversation between JH and the Editor.

[This is a rare account of working in the Gardens at Petworth House. The only comparable one is from Bill Westlake a good twenty years before (PSM 86 December 1996). The bothy was at that time still in active use. Neither Bill Westlake nor JH were in the Gardens for any great length of time. Ed.]

No west wind . . .

I came to Petworth in the late 1920s because Dad had switched jobs from Cowdray to Leconfield. I don't know why: wages were uniformly low and hours long. Originally we stayed with my grandmother in Station Road, but a small cottage became available in North Street. It was No. 301 and adjoined Mr Peacock the builder, just down from Thompson's Hospital.

The rooms were dark and there was a little black coal-fired range. No bath, electricity or gas. It wasn't long before I was finding my way around the house, even up the winding staircase to the attic; I soon had a baby brother for company. Our neighbours all worked on the Leconfield Estate and a large garden led down to the fields below.

We soon made the acquaintance of Mr Nevatt who would give us one of his giant hairy gooseberries to eat. Money was tight and all the gardens and allotments were planted. Dad made a trolley out of an old pram and it wasn't long before we were riding down the garden path. Young as we were, we'd go to bed at the end of the day tired but happy, a candle lighting our way upstairs and casting long shadows on the pale green distempered walls.

Breakfast was bread and jam with the occasional butter or margarine or, perhaps, treacle. If, eighty years on, the appearance of North Street is little changed, there is one essential difference: the quiet. Just the occasional car, the rumble of a steam-engine pulling threshing drum or straw baler, schoolboys on their way to or from school. We'd watch them going past and sometimes wish we were old enough to join them. North Street might be hot and dusty under a summer sun but this had nothing to do with cars. Gus Wakeford's milk cart might

be parked on the road, perhaps outside the Wheatsheaf pub, the old horse head down into his nose-bag, patiently waiting. Sometimes we'd give him an apple.

When winter came there was the old lamplighter with his long lighting pole, cigarette in the corner of his mouth. He'd turn the key to the gas lamp with one part of the pole, then poke the pole up under the bottom of the globe close to the mantle. A little "pop" and a bright white light added a touch of fairyland to North Street as it sheltered under the big high wall of the Pleasure Grounds with its tall firs. No west wind bothered us at 301.

We were there for some two and a half years. One day one of the old ladies from Thompson's Hospital picked me up, carried me across the road and showed me the little China doll's head that had been built into the Pleasure Ground wall, about eight feet up.

Dad was given a new, better, cottage in Station Road, one of two at the entrance to Littlecote Drive, then leading up to the house, Littlecote, where Lord Leconfield's agent lived. Cooking was still with an old black range, but there was also a gas stove and gas lighting. Winter nights were brighter now and warmer, and there was a tin bath in the woodshed. From where we lived we could see George Garland in his studio and Brash's mobile fish and chip van, big and blue in Howard's Meadow (now the Fire Station), or visit Mr Stratton who lived opposite and was gardener to the agent at Littlecote. Part of his job was to look after an old Jersey cow, two or three pigs and some chicken. There was a stable and cowstall in the garden and the cow, of course, had to be milked regularly. Watching this, I remember asking Mr Stratton if the cream came out of the cow's mouth. It was here that I had my first (and last) ride on horseback, Dad holding me on one side and Mr Stratton's son on the other.

When we moved to Station Road I was near Gran's where we had been when we came originally to Petworth. She lived near the Gas Works, there was the ever-present smell of gas and smoke and flames belching out of the retorts as they were fed with huge shovels of coal, or the steam seeping through the slates on the roof as the men threw buckets of water on the hot ash raked out for coke; you could almost feel the sweat and dust on the bodies of Manny Sadler and Harry Knight as they toiled away.

Petworth fair day in the 1930s was still a determining point of the year. The fair took up part of New Street and all of Golden Square and Market Square. There were two or three paraffin-lit coconut shies, with the paraffin flaring and smoking. There were midgets, fat ladies, boxing booths and Mr Hammond's hand-wound children's roundabout. To me he seemed immortal. And, of course, there was Andrew Smith with his coconuts; he did a round during the summer with a tired old horse and cart, selling pots, pans, mats and brandy snaps. For the fair he

always had the pitch opposite Motts the butcher, while old Mr Hammond would be up at the top of the Square. The Matthews family then had the fair rights and brought three steam engines to draw the waggons. These were painted in dark red and gold. Considering their power, they were almost silent on fair night, the huge glistening fly wheel endlessly spinning to drive the belt for the generator.

We'd look in on the way to school, then at dinner time, and again on the way home in the late afternoon. We'd watch the fairmen set up with the old crates, boxes and planks that built up the platforms until finally the old steam roundabout organ would sound and tell everyone that all was ready.

November 5th was another important day. For the two or three weeks up to the 5th we'd collect all manner of waste material from shops and homes. Every year we hoped we'd have a bigger fire than the previous year, then put our money together to buy as many fireworks as we could between us. We'd bake potatoes, even apples, and go on until ten o'clock.

Oh and there was the cinema, still at the Pound in the 1930s. I'd watch the cigarette smoke rise blue in the beam from the projector and curl slowly into the dim recesses of the roof.

From written notes by Jumbo Taylor.

"We stood outside Last Lodges . . ."

As a farm bailiff toward the close of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the last, my grandfather seems to have moved around. When my father Walter Charles French was born in 1891 my grandfather was at Biggleswade but he had moved to Sussex by the early century, my father leaving Warnham School in 1905. It would appear that by 1907 at least my father was working on the Luton Hoo Estate in Bedfordshire. He gives his address as the Kennels. During the 1914-1918 war, as working on the land, he was in a "reserved" occupation. By 1920 my grandfather was working at Arlington near Hailsham in East Sussex with my father working under him. A letter from his former headmaster at Warnham school supports an application to join the "City Police". A truncheon, belt and handcuffs among his possessions suggest police work of some kind but by the late 1920s he is game-keeping in the Essex/Hertfordshire area, finally moving to Sussex to work for Lord Woolavington at Lavington Park. He would move to the Leconfield Estate in 1935¹ where he would stay some fourteen years, most of the time at Stag Park. In 1949 he moved to the North Warwickshire Hunt, then on to Somerset with the Duchy of Cornwall. In later years he would work part-time in

a factory at Wolverhampton, finally retiring at the age of 70. He died in 1980. I was not born until my father left Petworth but my two elder sisters remember Petworth and the elder sister can remember Tegleaze on the Downs in the 1930s. In later years we would occasionally visit Petworth, but, as so often happens, it was only when my father died that I began to think about his life.

He had left behind some nineteen "diaries", half a dozen estate memoranda from the 1940s, a photograph of my mother and father with my younger sister, Drusilla, apparently taken at Raghams, Lurgashall in the 1940s, an Estate tally of rabbits killed in the thirteen Leconfield Estate game beats between 1st November 1936 and 1st March 1938, and an almost impenetrably dark postcard of Dad and Bill Wadey feeding pheasants at Chillinghurst Copse in Stag Park in August 1939,



"An almost impenetrably dark postcard of Dad and Bill Wadey feeding pheasants at Chillinghurst Copse ... in August 1939."

just before the outbreak of war. "Diaries" is definitely an over-statement; they suggest a measure of introspection, whereas what we have are tiny notebooks intended to be carried in a waistcoat pocket and used to make notes of things like the first pheasants to hatch. One comes from 1907 but otherwise the series begins in 1929 and runs through with the odd omission to 1949. They do not venture beyond the first few months in Warwickshire. For 1907, 1929 and 1931 we have

the Gamekeeper's Pocket Book, from then on the Shooters Year Book. My father was certainly no committed diarist, large sections being left completely blank. Clearly, at Tegleaze on the Lavington Estate the keeper captured wild pheasants and kept them in aviaries to lay, something Lord Leconfield would not countenance²: as master of his own pack he had no wish to antagonise his neighbours by encroaching on their territory for birds.

Curiously, the 1934 notebook has the only connected piece of narrative that remains, clearly prepared for an impending court case. At 3.30 on a Sunday afternoon WCF heard a dog hunting in Tegleaze wood, and a terrier burst from a hedgerow. WCF came upon a man and a woman sitting on a stone. He asked the man if his dog had been hunting. "No," he replied, "the dog has not been off the lead." The woman was busy picking burrs off the terrier and the dog had its tongue out as if it had been running. It was breathing fast. WCF told the pair that he had seen the dog come out of a hedgerow. When asked to identify himself, WCF replied that he was keeper to Lord Woolavington. The man refused to give his name and the woman became aggressive. WCF left them at four o'clock.

By March 1935 WCF is on the Leconfield Estate. He looks round Stag Park on the 2nd and moves in at Raghams, Lurgashall within days. The coal arrives and the family unpack. On Empire Day he sees a red squirrel, clearly something unusual. At the end of August he notes troops passing Raghams all day, the Petworth area being widely used for manoeuvres between the wars. Hunting is stopped in the late autumn of 1937 by foot and mouth at Egdean and there is a further outbreak at Bigenor. WCF goes to Brighton in 1938 to see Sussex play the Australian touring team and notes the feverish atmosphere at the time of Munich. He goes to Lurgashall village hall to have gas masks fitted. Snow causes the Christmas shooting to be called off while Mr Long, the farmer, complains about rabbit damage to his corn.

The beginning of the war sees an evacuee from London come to Raghams, but except for a few days in the hospital at Easebourne the notebooks make no further mention of her. WCF takes over the adjacent Westland Copse and a barrage balloon comes down in Chillinghurst Copse. WCF is planting potatoes. When Arthur Hamilton joins up, the Ebernoe beat is given to "Young Elliman" but he is to be supervised by WCF. There are bombs at Wet Wood, Northchapel and a plane down at Chilsfold, while WCF is digging out an air-raid shelter at the bottom of the garden. There are more bombs locally, while in May 1942 a Stirling Bomber comes down in Wall Field at nearby Gatehouse Farm and burns out. A second crash kills a pilot and damages the farmhouse. Michaelmas Day sees the bombing of Petworth Boys School and laundry "at about 10.45 in the morning." In December WCF's boss, the long serving, disciplinarian, Augustin Wilcox dies.

He is 72. He is replaced as Woodreeve by R. S. Robertson. Also in 1942, the Toronto Scottish Regiment are in the Pheasant Copse and are inspected by the Queen at Pitshill House. WCF catches a Canadian in Chillinghurst Copse carrying a rifle. He cautions him.

By July 1943 WCF is "on the carpet" with Captain Briggs, the Leconfield agent, about ride trimming and the next day receives a formal letter from the Estate Office. Predictably, the next few days are spent ride trimming, but there is also time to attend a fire precaution lecture at Lurgashall Village Hall. By early 1944 there are American troops along the road at Parkhurst and doodlebugs at nearby Windfallwood and elsewhere. One comes down at Butcherland, Ebernoe. In March 1945 begins the demolition of Lodge Farmhouse in River Park and in April the black out comes to an end and there are 'roumers' (*sic*) of an end to war. A sign of returning normality is Master Peter Wyndham with keepers French, Bryer, Elliman, Whittington, Cross and Pateman, partridge shooting at Hallgate, Byworth. The bag is four and a half brace. In November five hens are killed by a badger and darts are a regular Wednesday evening outing.

In April 1946 Mr Long, the farmer, reports a fox caught in a trap. A (no doubt uncomfortable) interview with Lord Leconfield follows. Then the keepers as a body are "on the carpet", this time about rabbit control. WCF goes to Brighton to see Sussex play the Indian touring team. It's wet for Petworth fair on the 20th November. Did WCF come up from Raghams? He doesn't say.

WCF has been at Raghams since 1935. Clearly the old Leconfield policy of moving game-keepers at regular intervals has, to an extent, lapsed. By the spring of 1947, however, WCF is moved to Rotherbridge. All keepers are again summoned to the Office to be warned about copse cutting. WCF confiscates a gun from a local poacher on Dunton Common and he and Merrydew, presumably his assistant, have to attend at the Office, the case going before the local bench. In September 1948 he is accompanying Lord Leconfield in assessing possibilities for partridge shooting at Perryfields. Poachers are again active on Dunton Common; they are apprehended and heavily fined. On 21st February 1949 WCF has notice to quit from Mr Shelley the new agent, a letter arriving by registered post the next day. There follows a cluster of job applications and visits to the Labour Exchange at Midhurst. WCF's Sussex sojourn was at an end.

Clearly the main purpose of the notebooks was to record significant events in the keeper's routine and compare year on year. WCF does this to some extent but so much is left blank that the notebooks do not provide in any sense a coherent narrative. Impressionistic certainly, but hardly more. A gamekeeper's prime concern would be the shoot and the hunt. Chillinghurst was pheasant territory, Perryfields partridge. Vermin had to be controlled and a keeper was expected to

display tangible evidence of his success. Rats, grey squirrel, weasels, rooks and magpies could all threaten the economy of the beat, to say nothing of foxes. Rabbits were at once a source of food and a pest. Uncontrolled, they could decimate a standing crop. Of the thirteen Leconfield beats in 1936-1938 WCF has the highest rabbit count, 1157 over eighteen months, averaging just under two a day. The notebooks abound with references to wiring; the wires being strategically placed on headlands and carefully watched. Pheasants too, could leave large spaces in fields where they had pulled up the green shoots of corn to get at the seed below. Severe damage might justify a claim on Leconfield, but rabbit damage might mean questions for the appropriate gamekeeper. The occasional beagle hunt might provide a pair of rabbits for the cottages. There are references to deer shooting, wild roe at Chillinghurst, or fallow to control numbers in Petworth Park. The keeper needed to know his foxes: to stop up holes when the hunt required, or to dig out a fox that had gone to ground, dig out cubs or provide a fox as necessary. Or hunting might be more mundane, so 24th February 1939. "Mouse hunting – killed umpteen mice in woodhouse."

7th May 1945. "We stood outside Last Lodges and heard the war was over in the nine o'clock news." What the notebooks offer is a fleeting impression of a man and of a period, but too much is lacking to provide an orderly account. Why the sudden notice to quit in 1949? A keeper might expect a job for life and WCF was hardly on probation. Economy measures on the Estate? Unkempt rides? A difference with Mr Shelley the new agent? WCF will have known but he does not confide.

And lastly, particularly for those who have walked with David and Linda in Stag Park, the notebooks are a reminder that an area like Chillinghurst is a living continuum. The reinstated ponds might surprise a returning WCF but change is the very essence of that continuum.

From a conversation with Tony French, a look at the notebooks and advice from Jumbo Taylor: Factual inaccuracies are the Editor's.

[Since our conversation Tony has found a letter from R. Stewart Robertson outlining the circumstances of WCF's departure. Clearly he had a considerable measure of sympathy for WCF. We reproduce Stewart Robertson's letter – which is, in practice, an open testimonial. See main pictures. Ed.]

1. An open testimonial from F. Stuckey retired head gamekeeper at Lavington Park gives the reason as "to improve his position."
2. See Arthur Bryer in PSM 59 (March 1990) page 20-21.

Two ox-shoes, but not a pair

I've always been in agriculture and have now lived in Kirdford for years, but my earliest memories are of East Sussex, of Selmeston between Lewes and Eastbourne. My maternal grandparents had lived in the village for generations and family members are celebrated by brass plates on the floor of the chancel in the parish church. The local farm was just up the road, and even for a very young boy before the war, there was always something to do. These were days of horse and binder and one job was to hand cut the perimeter of the field. The horses were "inset" i.e. set at an angle to the binder. Obviously if they were directly in line they would trample the crop they were cutting. Hence, the perimeter, remaining uncut, had to be dealt with by hand.

Gleaning was a kindred job for a boy and offered some very useful money: the practice had largely declined between the wars, but wartime conditions changed all that. Chicken feed was scarce and a bag of ears might fetch as much as 1/6d. Another source of income was rats' tails at a penny each. While it had always been usual to fence off the rick when it was threshed to prevent the rats escaping, wartime legislation was introduced to make this compulsory. Chicken wire would be used and a couple of terriers would dispatch the fleeing rodents. We then cut off the tails and took them into the Council Office at Hailsham, wrapped in newspaper. When we deposited the bundle on the counter, the girl behind the desk opened the package and promptly fainted! We got our money however.

Milk came from the farm, some hundred yards down the road and I would go down every morning for the family milk as everyone else did, if you were early it would be straight from the cow. I don't remember the following story myself, because I would have been very young indeed. The farmer had one Friesian in a herd of Guernseys. I went to collect the milk and the farmer said he'd get it from the Friesian. I wasn't having any of that: "I don't want black and white milk," I protested. It was a typical small dairy farm of the time, with perhaps 25 cows, the milk being tipped into a receiver and then into a corrugated cooler. Everyone had



Stacking sheaves at Plumpton 1947.
Photograph by Robin Stepney.

their own vessel for milk and the farmer could identify each individual one. Another harvest job was "stooking" and in a wet summer we might have to go round again, pulling the sheaves apart to prevent the haulms growing together.

I had, then, an agricultural background of sorts, but perhaps little more than any other boy growing up in somewhere as rural as Selmeston. Five years at school in Lewes and it was time to think of a career. Following a school friend I opted for agriculture. He ended up as an agricultural engineer, I as a livestock officer, spending some years abroad. We both went to Plumpton Agricultural College, founded in the 1880s to serve the needs of the County Councils of East and West Sussex. After a year I was offered a job with agricultural work and stayed on until 1952, milking and working with horses, sheep and pigs. R. H. B. Jesse who had been in charge of food production during the 1914-1918 war for the Ministry of Agriculture in East Sussex, suggested I went to college at Writtle in Essex, just outside Chelmsford. I then returned to Plumpton as warden, with charge of students and combining part-time teaching and lecturing with agricultural work.

While working here, I met my future wife, Rita, who had been seconded to Plumpton with the Women's Land Army to teach ex-army officers hand-milking. They had been offered training on demobilisation and six of them had chosen dairy farming. I was living in a tied cottage and realised I would have to move on.

I applied to the Crown Agents for a job in Zanzibar, was accepted and in active contact with the A.A. about getting there by motorbike. In the end my application was blocked because I hadn't done National Service, but I would eventually spend some years in Nyasaland (now Malawi). It was the time of Suez and communications severely disrupted.

My first settled home was a large house formed from putting together several native huts. It was certainly a change from Plumpton. Cattle were corralled to protect them from lions and hyenas. Tailless cattle were a relatively common sight where their tails had protruded through the stockade and provided some hyena with a tasty meal. Cattle dipping was on a monumental scale, 28,000 every week in dip tanks not unlike an English sheep dip, but on a very different scale and with a ramp for the cattle to emerge. A man had to duck heads under the water. The cattle were a great attraction for ticks, carriers of East Coast fever and Red Water fever and the cattle were effectively a means of locating and killing the ticks. Rabies was endemic and a serious business. One team would come out to vaccinate all dogs in a village and a second team would come out a week later to shoot any dog that did not have the identifying collar and tag. Harsh perhaps, but not when you have seen the effects of rabies. Sleeping sickness – I remember inmates from the local jail being released to do inoculations – and foot and mouth

were other problems. A Scotsman exported beeswax to a printer in London, but the Portuguese authorities over the border had a blanket ban on exports from Malawi. The Scotsman was incensed, "Have you ever seen a bee with foot and mouth disease, laddie?" The logic might have been indisputable but there was nothing I could do. Then there was the Hungarian with starving cattle sitting on 2000 tons of absolutely first class silage who claimed it wasn't fit for his cattle, or the college principal who had a new herd of Friesians, carefully planned new buildings and had forgotten to include a bull in his ensemble.

After several years in Malawi I came back to work at Brinsbury with a particular responsibility for Young Farmers Clubs.

You may like a look at these mementoes of a life in agriculture. These two ox-shoes were ploughed up at Brinsbury. They're not a pair but both from the same foot, presumably the corresponding ones are still in the field. An ox, of course, is cloven-footed and would need two separate shoes. Here's a sheep bell used by my grandfather when he worked as a shepherd at the back of Firlie Beacon and an indented fag-hook from the 1880s that will cut dry straw. These pig scales are capable of weighing a carcass of several hundredweight. It has a smaller scale attached that will measure pounds and ounces. And here's a mould for lead shot for a revolver or even a catapult.

Mention of shot takes me back to Selmeston during the war. A German plane crash-landed, the pilot being taken prisoner. It had suffered damage to the undercarriage but was in relatively good order. R.A.F. officials came out from Farnborough and took away what they wanted, leaving the rest in the middle of a harvest field. The guard was fairly casual and we boys went off with the machine gun and ammunition. News must have got round because the local constable had a word in my ear, "Drop that machine gun quietly outside the local Home Guard depot – they haven't got one."

Robin Stepney was talking to David Burden and the Editor.



Sowing oats with a drill Plumpton 1946.
Photograph by Robin Stepney.

Meliss Costello
Fetworth
Collection

