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THE PETWORTH SOCIETY *Magazine*

No. 157, September 2014



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Forest Fete at New Grove. August 1913. See "Petworth's other Irish seamstress."
Clearly "Peggy" Cochrane will have had a hand in making the dresses.

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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 £12.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £15.00 overseas nominal £20.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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Courtesy Helen Telford.

Chairman's notes

Welcome to a new Magazine. Once again I've juggled contents as best I can within the limitations of available space. Whether we will be able to include another instalment of Sabina Melville's memoirs, Old Petworth traders or other held over material remains to be seen.

The Magazine is appearing a fortnight early to give time for members to reply regarding the visit to Watts Gallery in September. The Alfriston visit is to come as I write and an account will appear in the December Magazine. We have one or two places left for the Society Dinner in September: there seems a widespread impression that all tickets were sold within days of their becoming available, hence there was no point in applying. For this see Activities Sheet.

Peter
12th July

"Eleven Sussex books"

Tickner Edwardes, John Coker Egerton, A. A. Evans, John Halsham, Rhoda Leigh, Edward Martin, Maude Robinson, Edward Synnott, Russell Thorndike, Walter Wilkinson, Marcus Woodward. "Sussex" writers all, each with a distinctive voice. A chorus, if you like, if sometimes a discordant one, covering a rough period from the last years of Queen Victoria to 1939. In writing of them I have taken one particular book, sometimes there is only the one, where appropriate with a sideways glance at other work from the same hand. Nine of the books were left me by George Garland when he died in 1978, two are my own additions to the "canon". I have used Garland's own images to illustrate.

We have again printed just 100 individually numbered copies, standard Window Press policy of late years, despite the runaway success of Miles' treatment of Petworth's Inns and Alehouses, and so many disappointed prospective purchasers.

"Eleven Sussex books" will appear in the autumn.

Peter

40 years on – another Annual General Meeting

Some extracts from the, as yet unsigned minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, May 13th, 2014, with 36 members present.

The Treasurer's Report: "Presenting the Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year up to February 28th, 2014, duly audited, Mrs. Slade pointed out that there had been a rise in income from the members' annual subscriptions and donations, with greater expenditure on hall hire, speakers' fees and Fair Day. No Book Sale was held in January, resulting in a fall in income over the year from that source. Excursions were largely self-financing. No meetings had received sponsorship. Gift Aid on subscriptions and donations could be claimed, which should provide a considerable boost to income.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Slade for her magnificent work, Mr. Hanauer for his publicity for Petworth Fair and all on the Committee, a cohesive and amiable group. No more nominations were forthcoming and so the Committee was again re-elected *en bloc*.

Chairman's Report: "Introducing his account of the year's activities (Peter) commented that Petworth was very different 40 years on from the Society's formation, 35 of which he had been Chairman. In the 1970s, amenity societies were being set up everywhere, but some were now in decline, with the Petworth Society an exception, bound together with its quarterly magazine enshrining Petworth's tradition, and the wider appeal of the book sales.

Slides, many of them taken by Mr. and Mrs. Godsmark, followed, illustrating the range of activities of the past year: walks, to Lord's Piece, Hawkhurst Court, with its Canadian Army associations, Lavington Common and Ebernoe with tea at Osiers Farm; visits to Saddlescombe and Firle Place, Firle village and church; Coultershaw Mill boardwalk, washed away in the winter floods, soon to be restored; the Annual Dinner and Mrs. Godsmark's innovative pictorial quiz; the Cottage Museum garden; Alison Neil as the Fossil Lady of Lyme; Miles Costello's exhibition of photographs and notices of old Petworth at the Fair, which event, (Peter) commented, was a serious drain on the Society's finances. It is a tradition maintained for the town and would continue. A professional jazz band had replaced the Town Band, which had been unfair to the musicians in view of the transient audience and he hoped to have the Town Band back in November. He paid tribute to Mrs. Stevenson for her organisation of excursions and to the memory of Mr. David Wort. A memorial walk had taken place in Stag Park.

Looking back, it is perhaps surprising that the Society is able to maintain such a wide-ranging and popular programme.

KCT

No 9-5 job – it was 9-4am – yes, a.m.

Gill Parker's engaging talk about her ten-year career as a Bunny Girl croupier in Victor Lowndes Park Lane Playboy Club in the 1970s was an ideal choice to follow the Annual General Meeting. Her conversational style immediately engaged the audience and any preconceptions of such a life were soon dispelled.

Gill became a Bunny Girl at 19, partly to change from being a 9-5 commuter, having to stand on the train journeys, to more relaxed travel into London at 9pm and home at 4am, five nights a week.

Her intelligence test on interview led to a month's training as a croupier – a considerable step up from being a waitress whose 'Bunny Girl Dip' (no bending over!) is so well known.

The Park Lane Club, opening in 1966 with its three casinos, was the most successful of more than 40 worldwide, founded by Hugh Hefner in Chicago in 1960. There were 200 'Bunnies' at the Park Lane club, all given names to be used instead of their own. Gill was 'Bunny Bianca'.

At 25, Gill transferred to the exclusive Carlton Club. She was very well paid and there was a non-contributory pension scheme, from which she still benefits. Nearly all the girls had false hair and wigs, held in place by the band bearing the bunny ears. False eyelashes had to be worn on upper and lower lids. They did not dance or take their clothes off and could not touch a customer. No dating. Any infringement of the rules meant instant dismissal.

Items of the costume and a collection of awards were passed round, together with photographs.

Gill met many famous people, including Cubby Broccoli, Roger Moore, Diana Ross, Illy Nastase, David Scott the astronaut and Larry Hagman.

The biggest loss by one man on one day was £450,000 and the largest win, £750,000, but Gill was adamant in not recommending gambling as a hobby or career.

A very pleasant, enlightening end to the evening.

KCT

David's memorial walk. April 27th

Left at Lurgashall crossroads. In at the Raghm Gate. White geese and a pond. When Linda, Ian and I had walked it ten days before, the sun had glinted on the

pond and the geese were in full voice; now, with lowering cloud, the wind puckering the surface water and the virtual certainty of a heavy squall, the geese are huddled in the long grass at the pond side. Moss on an expanse of felled timber. We're on private Leconfield land. How often David would have opened the locked gate and brought his tractor through!

Ten days before, the bluebells were just beginning, now they are in full bloom but the fitful sun makes for a fitful scent. After such a wet winter the ruts have filled quickly with the recent rain. A fallen tree lies on its side having taken its immediate surrounding vegetation with it. Bluebells are fading and dying around the doomed roots: it's surprising how shallow they are. Streams are running full with the morning rain, and the woods are full of dog's mercury and young nettle. A scarlet cartridge case is at once discordant and a reminder of practicalities. A plantation of wild cherry is whitening.

Laughter in the silent woods. David would like that. He has not been mentioned formally but he's on everyone's mind: everyone here would have known him. A gathering of friends, each of us with our own thoughts. Stag Park, David's "home" territory, and the bluebells out. David would like that too.

P

Linda and Ian's Graffham walk. May 25th

It seems a long ride through the village to Graffham church. Paths lead off into the Downs but we turn away to the right, through the stud farm. "Please don't touch the horses." We first see adults running over to us, briefly turning their attention from the lush grass. There's wooden fencing on one side of the public footpath, metal railings on the other, the black and white paint evoking older days. Further on there are yearlings and some foals almost invisible in the Sunday afternoon grass. The whole walk will be a study in green, a brief sunlit moment, seized at the very end of a rainy May. A stile by a stream, a narrow footpath and the flowers of early summer, vetch, buttercup, cow parsley, stitchwort, bedstraw and the rest, even the primeval stems of mare's tail seem almost urbane. We pass black-faced sheep and a lone horse, Appalachian someone suggests. Then the footpath cuts diagonally across a sodden meadow, a couple of deer in the distance take flight. We're heading back towards the church. Our thanks to Linda and Ian and the sombre thought that David had originally walked the route out with Ian. We find the afternoon church open, *All glory laud and honour* one of the hymns – for evensong no doubt. John Bright's weighty *History of Israel* lies in a sunlit

window. One possible “take” on a complex subject, but who’s looking for scholarly nuance this afternoon?

P.

Linda’s Bury Riverside walk. June 22nd

In my experience of some thirty-five years and more, extremes of weather do not make for a good turnout. Bad weather has an obvious effect but really fine weather can do the same. And today the weather is perfect. The Sunday town is awash with casual visitors but we’re off into the country. Down to the former ferry at Bury, no more now than a lingering memory. A certain nostalgia probably shields a harsher reality: the weather would not always be this kind

It’s a walk with echoes of a long past, the more so with Rita Callingham’s funeral in the coming week. Audrey’s “very relaxed indeed Bury Riverside walk.”¹ Was it really twenty-five years ago? Even earlier Tilden Eldridge² had brought the walkers in his “bus”, then bought tea for those who hadn’t realized we were stopping halfway.

Not a cloud in the sky and a gentle breeze. Hardly a soul about. Was that Amberley Castle in the distance across the river? That charcoal black skeleton once an oak? The glint of metal on sunlit oars, flag, purple loosertrife in the side ditches. Two trains cross. It’s not long before we’re inching along with the traffic on the A29 hurtling past us. A leisurely cup of tea as the river glides past. It’s the shortest walk in the canon and we’re already running hopelessly late. We retrace our steps in the mellowing sunlight.

P.

1. PSM 58 December 1989.

2. PSM 51 March 1988.

Open jaws – the June book sale

Foreign language books given or brought in for the Book Sale can sometimes be of superior quality, but the practical view has to be that books are heavy, space is limited and the chances of Japanese, Hungarian, even French or German speakers appearing are problematic. All too often such books disappear into the ever open

jaws of “the collector”. I have an uneasy conscience about this.

It is, perhaps, 1946. Pedro Salinas, Spanish poet and critic, is living in exile in the United States. Like so many he had left Spain in the wake of the Civil War. Like so many he would never return. Grateful as he is for the hospitality he has received, the consumer orientation of his new home disquiets him, as it had his friend and compatriot Lorca some fifteen years before. He stops at a Western Union sign, “Wire don’t write” and falls to thinking about the future of letter writing. Is there one? He thinks of the frisson he had had as a baby in Madrid being lifted up to put a letter in the lion-shaped jaws of the post boxes at the Central Post Office in Madrid. Three heads, one for local, one for provinces, one for abroad. Would those apparently immobile jaws suddenly close on his fingers?

There had been letters in ancient Babylon but for centuries the letter was the exclusive province of the literate, the well-to-do, or a political elite. For the less fortunate absence meant precisely that: absence. The Penny Post would bring the letter into more general awareness. And so Salinas makes his leisurely way through the lore of the letter. He recalls staying at a hotel in Switzerland and meeting a socialite who had rented a room for a fortnight and was holding herself incommunicada so that she could savour the pleasure of writing and receiving letters. He ponders the significance of Madame de Sévigné writing to her daughter from court and perceives a subtle eighteenth century change: as the letters became widely known, Madame de Sévigné became a public figure and her unwitting daughter too. Others see the letter as a means of self-promotion and the original one-to-one intimacy begins to splinter.

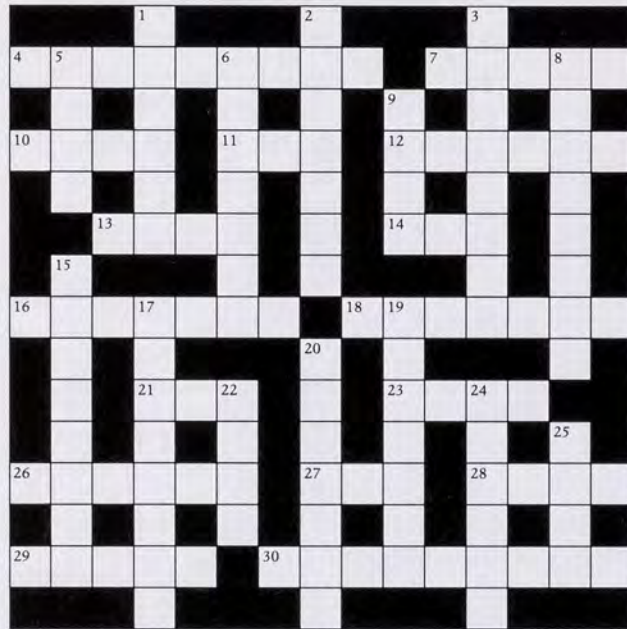
Salinas was a forward-thinking man with a weakness for modern invention and gadgetry but he would perhaps be uneasy about Email, still more the casual, random, superficiality of Face-Book, Twitter and the rest. Nearer home, I think of ‘Kin’ Knight’s weekly “packet” sent to her fiancé in India just before the Great War (PSM 110). These days she’d Skype or Email and we would be so much the poorer.

I have taken a few random examples from Salinas’ *El Defensor*, a wide-ranging almost prophetic survey not only of letter-writing through the ages, but a more general defence of literary culture in general. First published in Bogotá in 1948, original copies are scarce but it has been republished since. I have used an edition of 1991. There is no English translation.

And the June Book Sale? We were hoping to break the June record which has stood since 2008. We didn’t but it was very close.

P.

WEST SUSSEX VILLAGES CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 4** Village where a dragon once lurked in the mysterious Knucker Hole! (9)
7 See 16ac
10 An industry was built upon the production of this in Sussex (4)
11 Mischievous little person from Climping (3)
12 Bacon's not on the menu here! (6)
13 Dry place – heath perhaps (4)
14 Genus of tree currently under attack from "dieback" (3)
16 & 7ac The inn here has a memorial in the garden to albino, Walter Budd (7,5)
18 Famous timber framed house, the ruins of a castle and once a museum of taxidermy all in this village (7)
21 Tool for making holes in leather (3)

DOWN

- 23** Sounds an uncomfortable thing to wear around one's neck (4)
26 Where King Canute proved himself no match for the tide (6)
27 Spare it and spoil the child! (3)
28 Tidy clue! (4)
29 Decorate (5)
30 Where you'll find a community shop built by woodsman Ben Lav (9)
- 1** The Roman Stane Street passes through here (6)
2 William Blake wrote the lines of "Jerusalem" while living here (7)
3 Cardinal Manning was rector in this village before he converted to R.C. (8)
5 Tale spun by a local maybe! (4)
6 Famous for its old houses and annual pumpkin display (7)

- 8** A lot of them lived in Sussex throughout the war years (8)
9 A bright star (4)
15 Village with signpost depicting St. Christopher with the Christ-child (8)
17 Reach land – at 26ac perhaps (2,6)
19 Ornamental screen behind a church altar (7)
20 Famous for the Horn Fair (7)
22 Branch of a tree (4)
24 A large sheep fair has been held here since at least the C13th (6)
25 Old horse-drawn vehicle (4)

SOLUTION TO PETWORTH CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 4 Constable, 7 Trump, 10 Gaol, 11 Fox, 12 Astray, 13 Arab, 14 Sea, 16 Civvies, 18 Laundry, 21 Hay, 23 Iota, 26 Mincer, 27 Lad, 28 Oats, 29 Alley, 30 Coney Park

DOWN

- 1 Ostler, 2 Flexham, 3 Brittain, 5 Oral, 6 Affable, 8 Meanders, 9 Bass, 15 Windmill, 17 Vehicles, 19 Ariadne, 20 Red Lion, 22 Yard, 24 Troops, 25 Stir

Petworth's other Irish seamstress

For years Mrs Helen Telford of Newtownards, in Northern Ireland, has kept a small cache of memorabilia left by her Great Aunt Margaret "Peggy" Cochrane, who died in 1978. A number of items relate directly to Petworth. Helen particularly wondered about a handsome framed sepia mounted photograph by Coze of Midhurst. It portrayed an unidentified wedding group of which Helen could recognise just two faces – an elderly Edmund McNeill, formerly of Craighunn Castle in County Antrim and Great-Aunt Peggy herself as a young woman. Among other items were 27 miniature portraits, unnamed and possibly for identification cards, many marked "Petworth", some half a dozen local postcards including two of the 1912 Stopham Regatta, and a postcard of Aunt Peggy relaxing on the beach at Southsea in 1913. The Coze photograph falls within a narrow time scale, perhaps 1909 to 1913. There were also three curious sepia pictures of ladies in Puritan dress against an unknown background.

With the help of *St Mary's Parish Magazine* for 1911 it was soon possible to pinpoint the wedding of Ernest Frost, at one time curate to Petworth's Rector J T Penrose at Barnard Castle in County Durham. He had resigned a northern living to come south with Penrose in 1906 and, on being presented by Lord Leconfield to the Parish of Kingston-by-sea near Brighton had left Petworth a few years later. Penrose and the younger man would be lifelong friends. The wedding was at Kingston and it is possible to pick out J T Penrose and beside him, presumably, the Rev J Puttick, former Rector of Kingston; both had officiated at the service. It was not possible to identify anyone else other than Miss Cochrane and Mr McNeill, many of course being Kingston friends and relatives of the bride, who was given away by her mother Mrs Thornton.

The ladies in Puritan dress were soon explained: the date is August 13th, 1913. Dora Older writes: "A fete was held at the Grove this afternoon in aid of Parish expenses. Very pretty affair indeed, it really being the copy of an English Forest Fair in the time of Queen Elizabeth. I helped with the lucky tub, my dress being mauve and purple with Puritan bonnet, collar and cuffs."

Margaret Cochrane would leave Petworth in 1915, having come originally as companion to Mrs Penrose. The elderly Mr McNeill had been widowed in 1909 and made his home with his daughter and son-in-law at Petworth. The Cochrane family had worked for the McNeill family for years, Margaret was a very accomplished needlewoman who would move to Glasgow in 1915, making clothes for "ladies of quality" and pursue a similar career when she returned to Ireland². It is inconceivable that someone with Great Aunt Peggy's skills would not have taken a leading role in making the elaborate costumes for the 1913 Fete. The

atmosphere at Petworth Rectory in those last years before 1914 will have been a happy one and Margaret was young. It's hardly surprising that in later years she would retain some mementoes of these days. Like so many of her generation, she did not marry, once observing wryly that "the available were not desirable and the desirable not available".

It's impossible not to make a comparison with another Irish seamstress, Mary Cummings at Petworth House, older than Peggy by some decades. Their backgrounds, religious and social, were totally different. Did their paths ever cross? We can only wonder. Helen Telford writes:

"My great Aunt Margaret Cochrane (Peggy) was born at Craigdown Castle, Co Antrim in February 1890. Craigdown was the seat of the McNeill family for whom Peggy's father was watchman and caretaker. Peggy had contracted polio as a child and walked with the aid of crutches. This may have been a factor in her choice of career – lady's companion/seamstress.

As a child I often wondered why Aunt Peggy spoke like a member of the Royal family – very properly and correctly and with a most polite English accent; this contrasted very noticeably not only with the way the rest of our family spoke and was by and large much more "posh" than many of the rest of the most distinguished members of Northern Irish society at the time. When I asked my mother why this should be, she told me that Aunt Peggy had acquired the accent and mode of speech during her time in England and had clearly decided to stick with it. You could say that Petworth never left her and, in that respect, at the very least she never forgot it. It is probable also that her "posh" way of speaking helped her building her clientele who were from the cream of the Ulster/Unionist establishment if the names and addresses in her account book are anything to go by!"

1. PSM 144 June 2011 page 16. See also St Mary's Magazine for 1913.

2. She is not mentioned in Fanny J Skinner's 1927 memoir of Mr Penrose. Elsie Whitcomb spoke of Miss Cochrane and also of Miss Colquhoun a later companion. The latter visited Petworth in the late 1960's. The regatta pictures probably reflect Mr Penrose's earlier fondness for rowing.

Remembering George Attrill

George Attrill was the County Council "lengthman", responsible for the stretch of road from Little Bognor Stone Quarry to Bury Gate. He'd do this during winter, spring and early summer, but in late summer, while still in Council employment, he would join Fred Sadler's tarring gang, going wherever they were working

locally – Lodsworth, Northchapel, Lurgashall.

I'd first become aware of George as a child, at my grandfather "Winkle" Ayling's Lickfold bakery. George was the first man I ever saw to wear earrings. In the late 1950s, playing for the Post Office cricket team I would get to know George, who had been and still was, a noted cricketer. He was said to have dispatched six consecutive balls for six in 1932 and over the chestnut at the Fittleworth ground while a fete was in progress. The W. G. Grace of Fittleworth he was called, although his distinctive reddish beard contrasted with Grace's darker one. He loved a good sing-song in the pub after a game and was friendly with the Copper family of Sussex singers.

George Attrill had a countryman's sharp wit. When asked whether he would be going to his brother's funeral, he replied, "Well, he won't be going to mine." He always carried with him a small red Bondman tobacco tin containing adder fat and claimed that the application of this would cure virtually anything. When a visitor asked to see this wondrous panacea he saw only what appeared to be blobs of rancid butter.

Like so many of his era, and before, George was a crack shot with a catapult. "What do you want for your dinner?" George would say. "Pheasant, partridge, squirrel?" He cooked outside in a pot suspended from a tripod over an open fire. I once asked him what was in the pot. "Everything, boy," he said, "pigeons, rabbit ..."

With his beard, red neckerchief and Al Capone cap, George was a very distinctive figure. "Do you ever take your cap off?" I once asked him. "Only time I takes it off is when I puts it on," he replied. When asked how he was, he replied, "I'm better than I was before I got better, but not as good as I was before that." I never knew him to be without his pair of rimless glasses.

When working as lengthman he would always contrive to be either at the Welliggers or the Swan, Fittleworth at 12 o'clock. This was something of a local joke, but it should not be thought that this reflected any relaxation of standards. Lengthmen took great pride in their "patch".

George had an old-fashioned alarm watch on a chain and he'd draw the timepiece out of a very deep waistcoat pocket. It would be set for 12 o'clock – lunchtime. "Do you want BBC, GMT or Hesworth Common time?" he'd say. Obviously, when working with the tarring gang he'd have to be more flexible about 12 o'clock!

In some ways George Attrill appears a man born out of his time. His real contemporaries were George Garland's characters from the 1930s, a generation older than he. He died aged 78 in the early 1980s and was buried in Fittleworth churchyard beside his mother Philadelphia.

Some recollections by Mike Hubbard. There is a parallel account by "D.G." in PSM 38 (December 1984) and a photograph of George Attrill with the Fittleworth Mummings on the central page of the same Magazine.

P.

"Imprinted on my mind"

The date 11th February 1939 is firmly imprinted on my mind, as is the smell of 406 Coultershaw, the first cottage up the road from the mill. This was England and I was five. There was a great chasm between this and all I had known before. I had lived a sheltered, privileged life in Germany, ballet, music, everything that the daughter of a successful, wealthy, Hamburg lawyer might expect. A "Jewish princess" I sometimes say. Not that my family were religiously observant, like so many Jews they were very much part of the secular culture of the time and had been settled in Hamburg certainly since the eighteenth century. My father practised in international law and even in the mid-1930s had reason to be uneasy about the future. Leaving Germany had been considered; but we had a lovely apartment, so many friends, so many contacts. "Who needs a German speaking international lawyer in New York?" he would say. "Better to take a chance here than work as a waiter abroad." I would not see my father again after I left. Denounced in 1941 by his neighbours over a trivial dispute, something to do with a coal bill, he would die in the Holocaust. By some legal fiction he had saved my mother by having her "Aryanised" i.e. declared illegitimate and of Gentile descent. Even in Hitler's Germany money talked. My mother would survive the war.

My parents and the Gwillims from Coultershaw Mill at Petworth had originally met as Rotarians and clearly there had been some discussion about my uncertain future in Nazi Germany. Arrangements were made for me to come to England. Gordon and Dorothy Gwillim travelled to see me while my father provided the finance to oil the wheels. War was still months away and flights between England and Germany still operating normally. Gordon had to return home to attend to business but Dorothy stayed behind to bring me back. We would leave on a DC3 with the steps in the middle. I remember being plied with chocolate and orange juice and being sick in the little side basin that was peculiar to the DC3s.

Given the position of Coultershaw, I would always see Petworth to some extent at a remove. I did not go to the local school so my acquaintance with local children was limited. I went initially to the private North End school at the foot of North Street, formerly the workhouse. I wasn't there very long and have very

little impression of it now. Dr Fletcher-Ruff, who lived nearby would take me in with his daughter, the equivalent of a modern "school run". Petrol was rationed of course. It wasn't long before I moved to Bedales School as a boarder. It was a very progressive school for the time and I loved it. I picked up English very quickly, so much so that when I eventually returned to Germany, English was very much my first language.

Unfortunately, at least as I saw it, I sat for the scholarship examination for St Michael's Burton Park and passed. I imagine the scholarship helped with school fees but I knew nothing of that.

At 406 we certainly went into Petworth for shopping; I remember the usual Market Square shops, particularly Pelletts for sweets, Austens, Eagers the outfitters, little more than names to me. Butcher, baker and fishmonger would come out to Coultershaw from Petworth.

Standard wartime food could be grim: pale yellow and pink blancmange sticks in my mind. Austerity encouraged self-sufficiency and we had chicken, ducks and all sorts of animals which we could feed from the mill. My step-parents were in a good position to barter; very much the currency of the time and we could live comparatively well. I would sometimes bring friends home from school to share a meal. We kept two pigs, one for the government, one for us, but as I grew fond of the pigs, as children did, I wasn't at home when they were killed. The mill was a kind of hamlet on the edge of town, almost its own complex. The Moase family had Coultershaw farm, but the mill workers occupied many of the surrounding cottages. I would get to know the workers over time: Mr Dawson the foreman with his daughter roughly of my own age, the Barnetts and others. The mill was a significant enterprise with three big lorries plying between Coultershaw and the docks collecting Canadian wheat.

If Coultershaw might seem isolated, the Gwillims seemed to know everybody from Lord Leconfield downward. George Garland the photographer was a frequent visitor, as was Dr Druitt while the Uptons and the Cleggs were great friends. Mr Upton was land agent for Major Courtauld at Burton Park while Mr Clegg was the Petworth dentist. Lord Leconfield often appeared with his retriever, he liked to walk along the river bank. The mill and the cottages were, of course, rented from the Leconfield Estate. I once went to tea with Lady Leconfield: I don't remember much about it, but I think she was already unwell.

The Gwillims had lived formerly at Duncton and still had many ties there. I think that, at different times, Gordon had been churchwarden at Petworth and Duncton. Gordon certainly took an interest in the local community. He loved gadgets, I suppose you might call him in modern terms a "technofreak". We already had a television in 1948.

406 was cold: this was austerity Britain and the fire was not lit until five o'clock. I would hug the boiler until then.

Having won my scholarship, I much preferred to go as a boarder: it always seemed to me that the best things like drama and music were in the evenings and the day girls missed out on so much. Eventually I was captain of the lacrosse team, while St Michael's even had a girls cricket team who played boys schools like Lancing or Hurstpierpoint. If the lorries were passing the Brighton ice rink, a friend and I would get a ride and be collected on the return journey.

The Gwillims were rarely at 406 during the day time, both working virtually full time at the mill. It had a laboratory and kitchen and some local flour would be blended with the Canadian, but only if it was good enough, sometimes the quality was too poor for it to be used. Dorothy worked in the trial kitchen. Wholemeal flour was new then and I've always preferred wholemeal to white. The office was always spotless and Gordon held A.T.C. meetings there, teaching how to tell one plane from another and much else. He often went to Tangmere and wore an A.T.C. officer's uniform.

Dorothy's parents, Mr and Mrs Moyer, had had a butcher's shop in Market Square between the wars but had retired to Climping and during the school holidays I would go down to stay. They were surrogate grandparents. I loved this and Mr Moyer would take me down to the beach, after the war of course, stopping off at the pub on the way. This was kept as a secret between us and I would have a ginger beer sitting outside, or even, perhaps when the pub was clear, inside.

Gordon's parents lived in Midhurst, his mother said there were Indian Army connections somewhere but, originally from Wales, the family had been in milling certainly for two generations.

St Michael's was "a school for the daughters of gentlemen," I expect as a miller and a force in the local community, Gordon qualified but my father's status as a lawyer certainly fulfilled the rubric. The school had a very strong high-church emphasis, very regular Sunday services, confession and a resident chaplain.

Later I would go on to secretarial college at Eastbourne. The principal had excellent contacts but, as a German citizen, I was difficult to place, clearly the BBC and the Foreign Office were out. I would in time return to Germany.

Ruth Rosberg was talking to Chris Davies and the Editor.

One last summer with Rhoda Leigh

We stood in an open field listening to one of the most optimistic sounds in the world – the song of the ascending lark. The range of the South Downs took on an almost Alpine majesty in the blue mist of the April morning; the gay carpet of primroses by the hedge seemed to be untouched by the grazing ewes and their lambs. Through a gate Farmer Attrell suddenly appeared, holding something in his hand which he regarded with perplexity. As he approached us he held this object out for inspection.

"Jest picked un oop from middle of five acre plough, but how 'e got there be a fair puzzlement."

Hartie surveyed the thing thoughtfully. "It's a dummy-egg, isn't it?"

"Aye, a pot-egg us calls un; an' 'tis one of ourn; but last time I seed un 'twere in the nestie. How it got in plough I dunno, an' that's a fact."

The pot-egg being duly returned to its usual place, sundry hens performed their duty according to custom. In the late evening a commotion was heard and a badger was seen making away with an egg. He was plainly visible in the moonlight, and was tracked across the ploughed field to his home in the bank at the further side. Attrell decided that the mystery was solved.

"No doubt but what old badger took pot-egg, found it weren't no good, and dropped un," he said, adding with a twinkle in his eye, "O' course ef he'd a bin real clever he'd a come back an' changed dummy fer a real 'un!"

This gorgeous little gem comes from the pen of Miss Rhoda Leigh, and was probably written almost as soon as it happened, early April 1933, to go in the May issue of *Sussex County Magazine* under the title 'Last Month in Our Village.' Her book, *Past and Passing – Tales from Remote Sussex*, which was published autumn 1932, received good reviews and, recognising her as a brilliant rising Southern writer, the magazine's editor had quickly arranged for her to become a regular contributor.

Past and Passing was published by Heath Cranton, who brought out a lot of titles concerning the countryside. On the dust jacket, in a sort of introduction, which was actually written by the author herself, it says: 'In this book readers may live for a while in unspoilt country, sharing the lives of Sussex rustics, and their joys and sorrows. The writer herself is Sussex born, and her sympathy with these simple folk and her love of the peaceful, remote district in which they live is sincerity itself ... Those who frequent the Arundel and Pulborough district will have little difficulty in locating the secluded hamlet on the hill where the characters dwell, far inland, yet within sight of the sea. For centuries the same families have frequented this peaceful land of deep woods, and their homely

recipes and customs handed down through the years are of perennial interest...

'Already the number of such rustic characters is diminishing. When they are gone we shall not look upon their like again. Their daily life may be shared in these short tales, and the book is laid down with a feeling of refreshment, and of gratitude for a glimpse of humour and abiding peace in an age of restlessness and noise.'

The book received a glowing review in Sussex County Magazine. 'Here is a wholly delightful book by an occasional contributor to the S.C.M.; but lest the subtitle gives the impression that the author is a writer of fiction it should be made clear that Miss Leigh's "Tales" are actual happenings which she has recorded from the life of a Sussex village of to-day, most of them within her own experience and others from documentary records. Her incidents are linked together with many delightful character sketches of folk of a modern Sussex rural community. She has blended her mixture so admirably that the result is one of the pleasantest Sussex books that have been published for many a long day.'

'The author's title is comprehensive of those subjects upon which she writes so admirably – men and women of an older generation, and the ancients of this; witches; charcoal burners; woodcutters; a rustic wedding; old songs; parsnip wine; superstitions and other such ingredients as go to make that *olla podrida*, a good country dish.'

'Miss Leigh and a friend inhabit a country cottage in West Sussex, and from its garden or its windows the author keeps an observant eye on the quiet world within her ken. The book begins with the early days of the year and ends, appropriately, with the village Christmas festivities. In between these events we have a record of the country of West Sussex which will rejoice all lovers of our country to read.'

The reviewer was 'Blue Pencil' – a pen-name used by the editor. He was one of a small number of people (probably less than ten) who knew that the un-named village featured in the book, was the same place that Rhoda Leigh wrote about in Sussex County Magazine, every month, from January 1933 onwards.

'Last Month in Our Village' was a sort of monthly diary of two women, who lived in an old charcoal burner's cottage which had no electricity, in a little hamlet in the Weald of West Sussex, near the Downs. Many of the characters, like the Attrells, speak in local dialect, and although some of the tales are quite short, others – such as the one about the badger – are followed up. And there are odd little surprises along the way. For example, the February 1934 episode was just a selection of letters, mostly relating to a day in January when two of the locals went to London to see a pantomime, with Rhoda and her friend, who had spent Christmas there staying with relatives. Here is one of the shorter of those letters:

'Dear Miss Leigh,

A Badger hev died at your gate. I tuk him ome an skinned him, but Miss if weather turned green he worn't keep though Helthy but wants curing proper so Mars Halsted be giving him ter Miss Halsted wot will see you an Miss Page on Wednesday. Miss he wud make a Good Rug. Yours Respeckly, Alf Soppart.'

How a badger died by the gate and became a rug is also related in *Past and Passing*, yet most of the other tales in 'Last Month in Our Village' were presented as if real, and could well have been the doings and gossip of many a Sussex village of that time. However, *Past and Passing*, of which to some extent the 'Last Months' were a continuation, is generally more thoughtful, telling about the history of the parish and describing local industries long gone, and traditional customs as well. In some ways it is like John Halsham's *Old Standards*, wistfully recalling a Sussex way of life that was, back then, already passing; but Rhoda Leigh's little sketches often include dialogue, and there are also cottage remedies, old Sussex songs, and even folktales. Items like this next one do not occur in the much more story-like 'Last Month in Our Village' series.

'There were other witches in this neighbourhood in the days of Granfer: one at Wisborough Green, another at Billingshurst, and yet another in the vicinity of Inganise Hill. Granfer tells a tale of witchcraft when he and two friends were mowing near Wisborough. Their scythes refused to cut. In vain the reapers sharpened their tools, the blades were blunted before ever the grass was touched. Granfer looked up and saw a wicked face peering over the hedge. It was long and sharp, with two red eyes, and wisps of hair straggling over the forehead. Shrieks of laughter came from the witch. One of the men cursing it, the face vanished. After this the scythes cut well, and the spell was broken.'

In the review in S.C.M. it said that: 'Only occasionally does a doubt exist in the mind of the reader as to whether or not she has been tempted to adopt a hoary story to her own purpose, as when she relates how, on one occasion she met Giles the carrier, riding in his cart with an enormous bundle on his knee, and she enquired why he carried the bundle instead of putting it in the cart. "Ah," he replied, "'tis too heavy fur poor Jennie, so I carries it for she.'" That story, in another form, is told of one of the Wise Men of Gotham and of an eccentric miller at East Blatchington, but Miss Leigh's book is none the worse for this ...'

At the start of the first episode of 'Last Month in Our Village' in January 1933, there was a short introduction, probably also written by the magazine's editor: 'This is the first article of a series which will record modern life in a Sussex country village. For various reasons the village has been supplied with a fictitious name, though the incidents recorded are actual happenings. All characters introduced will also be given fictitious names.'

Aside from tales of badgers and foxes and local gossip, what makes the 'Last Month' stories so enchanting are the little vignettes of real people living real uncomplicated lives. These next two scenes, from the July 1933 episode, evoke the memory of a Sussex that is long gone now, yet need not be forgotten or unsung even so. Yungalf (i.e. Young Alf) seems to have been a loner who spent most of his time in the woods and fields, watching the life all around him and who, in early episodes, Rhoda only ever saw out in the countryside, when he would mysteriously appear at her side and then lead her off to find some rarely seen marvel. In this way, vivid little first-hand glimpses of the wonders of nature were presented, just as they had occurred.

'In the evening Yungalf appeared, beaming. "I've found fly orchids, one old butterfly, and some bees in bud."

'Without further hesitation we sneaked out by the back door, avoiding the parlour window and the reproachful eyes of Hartie. We struggled up a chalky hill, now we wriggled through a hedge and out on to a sheltered down, where fly orchids grew in abundance. I picked a few before following my guide to a higher slope where several bee orchids were sufficiently advanced to show the striking resemblance to the insects. Alf wandered off, returning in a few moments in triumph with two fragrant slender flowers. "Butterflies," he said triumphantly, "I doubted they'd be over."

"I never knew they smelt so sweet," I commented, sniffing gratefully at the loose clusters.

"They onie scents come evenings," said Alf.'

Notice how Rhoda avoided Hartie's reproachful gaze as she left the house. In another episode, when she comes back late after an evening adventure in the countryside, she knows Hartie will still be up, anxiously awaiting her return. Such odd little details as these give hints about what sort of relationship they had, and how they viewed one another. This next scene, which also features flowers, is set in a charabanc hired by some of the villagers of Latstone for a trip to the Aldershot Tattoo.

'Giles Kenward and his wife, some lads, an elderly woman called Mrs Aspy and her daughter with a young man, completed the little company. Mrs Aspy nudged me and jerked her head in the direction of her daughter and her companion. "They be nearly tokened," she whispered loudly. "I think he'll do, but I can't tell till I've tried the midsummer men."

"What do you mean by that?" I asked, puzzled.

'She then told me that when a couple were courting she always took two pieces of a fleshy plant growing in her garden (probably a sedum) and on Midsummer night thrust them between the laths of the ceiling. If the lovers were to be



Miss Cochrane, "Great Aunt Peggy" on the beach at Southsea in September 1913.

Miss Cochrane is on the right: her companion is unidentified.

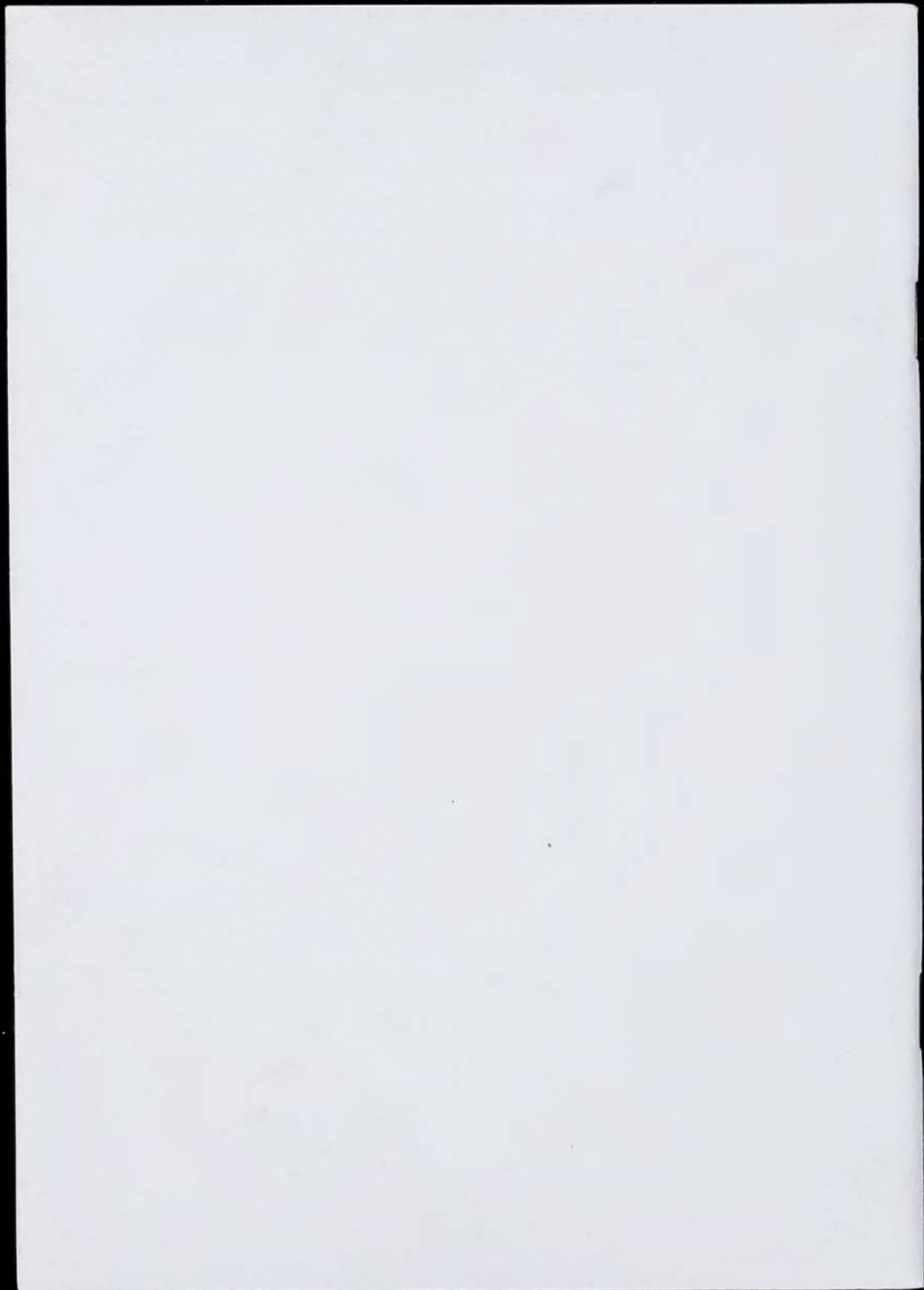
See "Petworth's other Irish seamstress." Photograph courtesy Mrs Helen Telford.



Forest fete at New Grove, August 1913. See Petworth's other Irish seamstress!"
Photograph courtesy Mrs Helen Telford.



George Attrill in the late 1930s. See "Remembering George Attrill!"
Photograph by George Garland.





PETWORTH SOCIETY ACTIVITIES SHEET

Autumn Programme – please keep for reference

WALKS – with Linda and Ian.

Cars leave Petworth main car park at 2.15pm.

Sunday 24th August:

A fresh take on Lord's Piece.

Sunday 21st September:

Gumber Farm walk postponed from July – owing to the heat we walked in the shade of Lavington Common.

Sunday 19th October:

Monument walk with visit to Osiers Farm.

(Programme may vary with the weather)

Wednesday 10th September

Annual Dinner at Petworth House – with archaeologist Tom Dommett.

A very few places remain. See overleaf.

Excursion – Thursday 18th September

Visit to Watts Gallery – see separate sheet.

Petworth Society Book Sales

Second Saturday – Leconfield Hall – 10am-3pm – Admission FREE

SATURDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY 11TH OCTOBER

SATURDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER

Books to donate? Ring: Peter on **01798 342562** or Miles on **01798 343227**

MONTHLY MEETINGS

LECONFIELD HALL – £4 – 7.30PM – REFRESHMENTS – RAFFLE

Two this autumn but we are working on a special spring programme – details in the December Magazine.

Wednesday 22nd October:

The annual Garland lecture.

Peter Jerrome: *Eleven Sussex Books*.

Wednesday 10th December:

David Bramwell: "The No. 9 bus to Utopia."

PETWORTH FAIR – Thursday 20th November

Punch and Judy. Return of Town Band.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

Annual Dinner – 10th September 2014

The Annual Dinner will take place in the Audit Room of Petworth House on **Wednesday 10th September**. As you know there will again be considerable archaeological activity in Petworth Park during the summer. The senior archaeologist Tom Dommett has agreed to return to outline his findings for this second year of excavation. Those wishing to hear the talk should be at Church Lodge by **6.15pm**. Otherwise one glass of wine or elderflower pressé will be served for everyone at **7.15pm**. The meal is timed for **7.45pm**.

The total cost will be **£21.00**, inclusive of gratuities, pre-dinner wine and elderflower pressé, remaining the same as in 2013.

As on previous occasions wine may be purchased at the meal.

The menu is as follows:

Main Course		
Game Pie		[A]
Light Summer Chicken Casserole		[B]
Minted Lamb Meatballs		[C]
Mushroom Stroganoff		[D]
* * *		
Dessert		
Meringue Roulade with Fresh Fruit		[E]
Blackberry and Apple Crumble		[F]
Lemon Posset		[G]
* * *		
Tea/Coffee		

As indicated above, the total cost will be **£21.00**.

Please complete the form below if you wish to attend the dinner. A maximum of 88 can be accommodated and acceptances will be on a 'first come' basis.

I should like to attend the **Annual Dinner on 10th September 2014**.

My/our Main Course selection is **A** **B** **C** **D**

My/our Dessert selection is **E** **F** **G**

(PLEASE ✓) I should like to bring a guest (maximum 1) and enclose £

Cheques made payable to **The Petworth Society**.

Name(s) (BLOCK LETTERS)

Address

Telephone Number:

Please send this slip and cheque payable to **The Petworth Society** to:
P. Jerrome, Trowels, Pound Street, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0DX

No telephone orders, please.

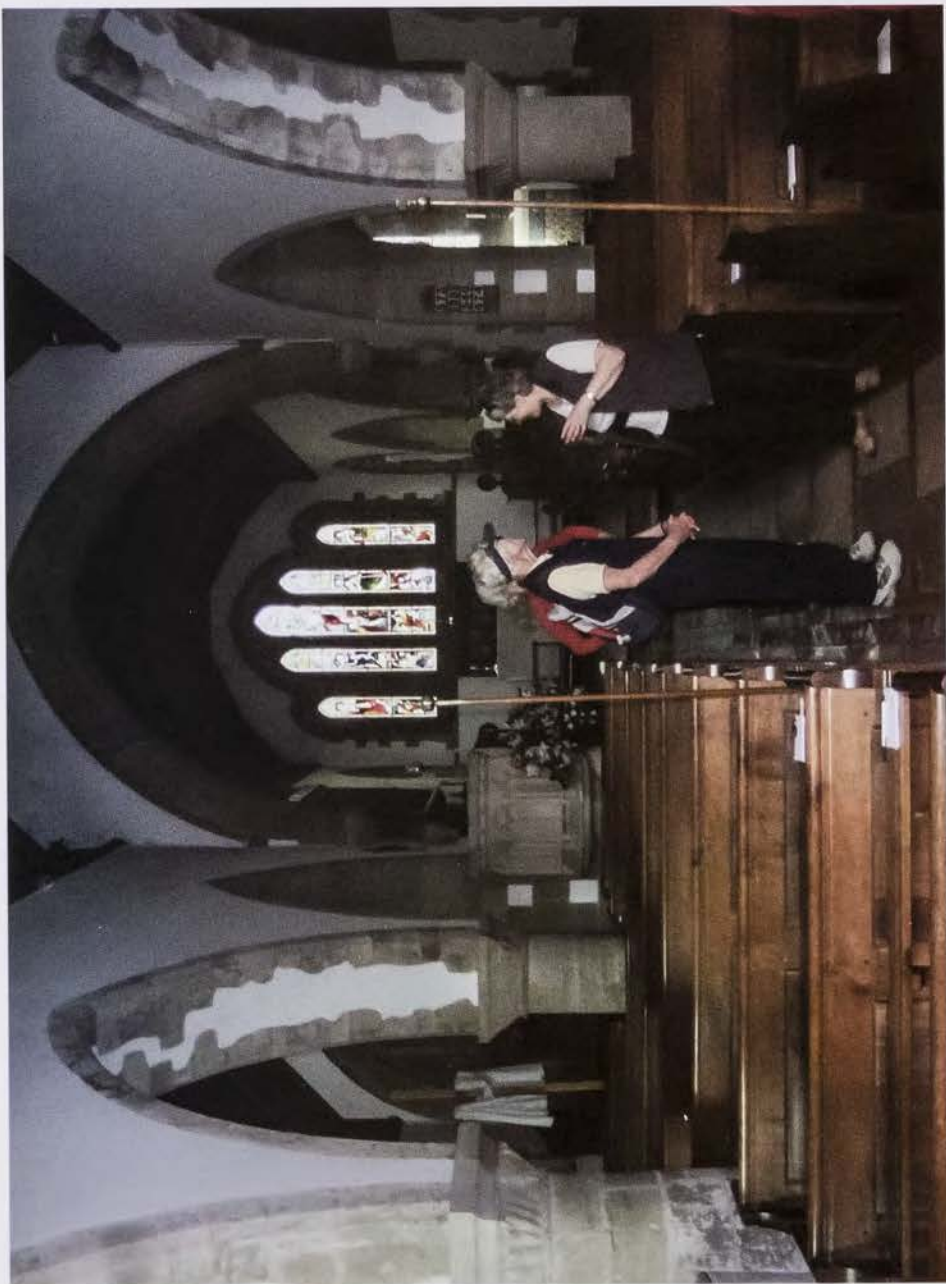
Please ring **342562** to check availability. **NO** orders taken after **Monday 1st September** even if places available.



David's memorial walk.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



David's memorial walk.
Photograph by John Wort.



Linda and Ian's Graffham walk.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



On the river at Bury. Linda's Bury walk.
Photograph by Linda Wort.



The Mure sisters with Maud Wyndham (standing left) at Caldwell about 1890.
See Daisy's diary 1889-1891,
Photograph by Mary Maxse, reproduced by courtesy of Lord Egremont.

married, the sprays would intertwine and flourish; if not they would spread apart and straggle wildly in opposite directions. "I've never know it fail," she said, nodding her head, "an' midsummer 'ull soon be here now."

A home-bred muse beset with graces

This title comes from a poem quoted at the end of the second episode of 'Last Month' – from *To-morrow's Road* by G.M.H. In the December 1932 issue of *Sussex County Magazine*, there was an 'Editorial' which announced, among other things, that: 'The Editor has made arrangements with Miss Rhoda Leigh (the author of that charming book, *Past and Passing*) who lives in a Sussex country parish, to contribute a series of articles on life in a modern Sussex village. In making this arrangement with Miss Leigh it was the intention of the Editor to supply readers of the S.C.M. with a record of modern Sussex country life by way of a contrast with the articles, which appear from time to time, on Sussex of the past.'

Lots of people wrote to the magazine about Rhoda Leigh's stories, and it might be supposed, looking back, that not a few of those letters must have been from readers wanting to know the actual identity of the village portrayed, or maybe even claiming they knew. Certainly, just by using *Past and Passing* and some back issues of *Sussex County Magazine*, it would have been fairly easy to establish exactly who wrote the tales and where they were set. But it didn't happen like that, and so almost all of the people who admired her work, and who followed the monthly stories of *Latstone* never knew anything about her – let alone her real name. Her beautiful little book was only published once, and because of its history, even if you're lucky enough to find a copy it will be costing fifty quid or more. For a long time now, maybe seventy years or so, it has been regarded as a sort of cult classic of the flower of Sussex literature.

These next scenarios are not how it was discovered, but show how it could have been, if someone had followed the clues back then. Firstly, on the dust jacket of *Past and Passing* it says that the setting is a secluded hamlet on a hill, near Pulborough and Arundel; and in Chapter One, that Kirdford church is just to the north, about three miles away. Anyone from that area who bought the book would have realized that it was about the little hamlet of Bedham, near Petworth. However, when it was reviewed in *Sussex County Magazine*, there was no indication at all as to where the book was set. Presumably, if S.C.M. or some Sussex newspaper had said it was about a hamlet three miles south of Kirdford, or even just near Pulborough, many in the region would have bought it immediately. Thus it would seem, with hindsight, that none of the villagers of Bedham who featured in *Past and Passing*, or in 'Last Month in Our Village' ever even saw the book, until well over a year after it came out, and so, almost certainly, that most of

them first came across the name 'Rhoda Leigh' with her monthly tales of the mysterious Latstone, in Sussex County Magazine.

At the start of the S.C.M. review of *Past and Passing* though, the author is described as an occasional contributor. The review was in the November 1932 issue, which also included an item by Rhoda Leigh: 'Armistice Day in Remote Sussex.' Bearing in mind that the sub-title of her book is *Tales from Remote Sussex*, there had been an item titled 'Personalities of Remote Sussex – Mrs Puddock' in the January issue, which although it is not attributed to any author is clearly from the same pen, and this even mentions Petworth. Another item 'Staters' Sunday' was published in March, as by Rhoda Leigh. The first of her little sketches for the magazine, 'Personalities of Remote Sussex – Our Postman' was published in December 1931, as written by Mary C. Metherell. Indeed, in the frontispiece of *Past and Passing*, she notes that that item and 'Staters' Sunday' had previously appeared in S.C.M.

She used the pseudonym for most of the rest of her work, but she was not exactly hiding herself, and although she didn't name the place where she lived in her book, it included lots of big hints – particularly in the blurb on the dust jacket.

Past and Passing was a shining meteor over Sussex, lighting the county with its mirth and wonders, sun-kissed nostalgic and wry – but in the end there could not have been many who knew much about its author. There are perhaps a few other old folk though who, like me, occasionally come across the name Rhoda Leigh, or see a copy of her book, and remember back to a time when those enigmatic words still had the power to conjure up memories of a glorious summer that once, long ago, we might have shared. At the end of her first story, 'Our Postman' Mary wrote: "and after his last round is made we shall not look upon his like again," and this sentiment applies equally to the work of Rhoda Leigh herself. If you want an evocative, wistful song of Sussex, or a haunting paean to some long lost Sussex of long ago, then that is *Past and Passing* and this is what the title means now, to any among us who still remember those two enchanting summer-soaked words, Rhoda Leigh.

Mary Caroline Metherell, born early 1886 in Brighton, was named after her mother. The family lived at No. 34 in the very posh Montpelier Road, near to Colby's Chemist where her father worked. He was from the St. Clement Danes area of London, and her mother was of old southern stock – a family of timber merchants at Littlehampton who had roots and branches throughout West Sussex. Mary's mother was ten years older than her father, and had been a widow with two children when they married. Mary Caroline Butt had been born in 1845 in Littlehampton, the fifth of seven children, and had married John Colby there in 1870 before moving to Brighton, where he was from. They lived at No. 3 New

England Villas and John worked at his father's Chemist shop. Averil was born in 1871, and her brother John in 1875. Alas, their father died in 1877, and two years later, Mary married Kinneard Metherell. Kinneard, born 1855, was also a trained chemist, having begun his apprenticeship, in London, as soon as he finished school. He had at least seven siblings who were younger than him. He and Mary Colby were married in Brighton in 1879, and Kinneard worked at the same chemist shop where John had done, eventually taking the business over from its owner, Mary's ex-father-in-law – though the place was still named Colby's Chemist afterwards.

Besides the five members of the Metherell family, there were two housemaids, a cook, and three male chemist shop assistants living at No. 34 Montpelier Road. Kinneard's father John Kinneard Metherell sometimes stayed there, too. He was a Bar (i.e. law) wig-maker in London. He had been named after his father John Butland Metherell, and after his mother's brother, Kinneard Robbins, a law wig-maker – and it was he who had taught John Kinneard the craft.

New England Villas no longer exists, but it was probably at the bottom of New England Road, near the New England Street junction, or maybe further up, just 'above' the viaduct. If you know Brighton or have a street map of it, you can see that Montpelier Road and New England Road are separate sections of what is basically the same straight road, leading all the way from the sea-front and Western Road, where Colby's Chemist was, up to Seven Dials and straight across it down to Preston Circus. This long road, from Western Road to the Preston area, was the very heartland of Mary's mother's adult life, first as Mrs. Colby, and then as Mrs. Metherell, and her children must have known it well.

The real name of Hartie, Rhoda's companion was Florence Ethel West and she too was a Brighton lass, born autumn 1879 or the year after – possibly in Steyning, though the family were living at 107 Ditchling Rise, near Preston Circus from 1880 onwards. She had a brother a year older than her and another who was two years younger. Her mother Frances Emily Horscroft, born in Brighton in 1851, was one of six children whose parents were both musicians, and she had begun teaching music when she left school. Frances' father was originally from East Blatchington, near Seaford, and her mother's people, the Ogburns, lived at Steyning. Frances married Charles Thomas West in 1878, and they '*worked on own account*' (i.e. had their own business) as Professors of Music. Charles was about ten years the older and had been married before. He was from Hackney and had moved to Brighton soon after finishing school, initially working as a gardener. Ethel, as she liked to be called, grew up to become a Dance Teacher, and her older brother worked as a Music Seller. Their mother's parents, the Horscrofts also lived in the house, and so it must have been a place where there was often music, singing and dancing.

Charles died in 1901 when Ethel was about twenty, and perhaps partly because of this, she stayed at home at least until she was thirty – according to the 1911 Census – and, if *Past and Passing* is anything to go by, probably well beyond that.

It is difficult to pin-point when she and Mary first knew each other, but it's worth noting that there was another family of Metherells, relations of Mary's, who lived very near to the Wests, and in one episode of 'Last Month in Our Village' it is implied that Rhoda and Hartie were distantly related.

In 1890, when Mary was just four, her mother died. Averil and John remained with the Metherells and in 1898, Averil married Kinneard's brother John Metherell, who was likewise London born (1865) and had also trained as a chemist, and they lived just next door at No. 33 Montpelier Road. They had two or possibly three sons, born 1899-1900 – and so Mary became an aunt at the age of thirteen; however, at least two of the boys died in infancy. John Colby got married just after his sister, to Dora Evelyn May and they had two boys and a girl, beginning with John in 1902 – and so Mary was certainly an aunt from sixteen onwards; but in 1913, the family emigrated to America. Averil's daughter was born in 1905, Elsa Margaret, and after the Colbys had gone, she would have been the only one of Mary's sibling's children who she regularly saw.

Mary's father retired in 1900, and then he and one of his sisters stayed at Tunbridge Wells for a while. Later though, he and Mary moved to Talbot Road in the St. Clement Danes area of London where Kinneard was from. They were both living at the house in 1911, but from at least as early as 1915 onwards it was only Kinneard and a housemaid there.

All this suggests then that Mary and Ethel almost certainly knew each other long before Mary left Brighton, which would have been 1910 at the very latest, but may well have been a lot earlier; and thus, that they probably first met in childhood or their teenage years – and, if the story 'Effie' is of any relevance at all, then it's possible that when Ethel found out Mary was stuck in London, she immediately went there and arranged for her friend to come back home to Sussex, to live with her.

Shaun Cooper – to be continued.

Daisy's diary 1889–1891

It is the 19th of February, the year 1889. Constance (Daisy) Mure,¹ now in her seventeenth year, writes, "I went to Harrods and bought this book and an account book. Having paid for them, I forgot to take them and Minnie had to return to Harrods in the afternoon." Minnie no doubt is a maid. It is an inauspicious beginning to an extensive diary that would run with the rare omission of a day's entry here and there and one or two minor lacunae, over two large notebooks² and conclude at the end of 1892.

Constance would be presented to Queen Victoria on 4th March 1891 and the diary is a record of her "coming out" or "dancing" years. There is no indication in the text that it continued beyond the last entry on 31st December 1892. Here is life in a charmed circle seen from within that circle with an innocence that for the 21st century intruder seems at once irritating and beguiling. Here is a gilded life "enjoyed ... not with a consciousness of guilt but as a matter of course."³

Constance's mother, another Constance, a daughter of the first Lord Leconfield had married William Mure an officer in the Scots Guards in 1859. If the family at Petworth had some initial doubts about the match these were largely removed when it transpired that William had been at Eton with his lordship.⁴ The Mures were an old and distinguished Scottish family with an ancestral seat at Caldwell just north of Kilmarnock in Ayrshire. William Mure died relatively young when Constance was a child.

Constance was one of four surviving children, a fifth, Lilius, having died in infancy. The extended Wyndham family was a large one and Constance had almost an embarrassment of cousins. "The size of the family lent a certain amount of variety to the routine, encouraged the social sense and banished awkwardness and shyness."⁵ Here was an intricate world of family relationship, impossible for the outsider to penetrate, dominated by the London season and a constant peregrination from one informal dance or great ball, one formal dinner, one charitable bazaar, one great house, to another. It is perhaps true to say that Constance's spiritual roots lay not so much in a particular place as in an elaborate network of family relationships. In a world of nicknames, Constance was rarely Constance, invariably "Daisy".

Constance records sporadic visits to Caldwell, less protracted, but eagerly anticipated visits to Petworth, the London season and fleeting visits to various country houses, among them "Clouds" home to her favourite Uncle Percy Wyndham, his wife Madeline and daughter Pamela. The diary is not an exercise in introspection and given Constance's tender years there is no reason why it should be.

London, in season and out, is almost a physical presence, a horse-drawn metropolis of livery stables, hansom cabs, "crawlers", "open shans"⁶ and the rest. Of hidden poverty that never rises to the surface, of black fogs and yellow fogs. "We were wretched all the afternoon and evening as the fog got into the house and nearly stifled us." It is a London where on the morning after a dance Constance comes down at 11 o'clock and the thick black fog makes her wish she could have everyone back including the Red Hungarians and dance all day. The Red Hungarians are a (relatively expensive) five man ensemble. The evening fog can be so bad that Percy Wyndham and Constance's younger sister Marjorie continually bump into one another walking home.

This is a London that dies with the departing season. By the 30th July Constance finds the city dismally empty. "I am simply aching to be off. London is now quite deserted and too stifling and dismal for words. I feel sometimes I can almost smell Caldwell." The Shah goes to the opera and a box on the night is £40. Even Constance is reduced to a glimpse of the Shah processing up the Embankment as she makes her way to a charity function.

The Leconfields' summer residence in Chesterfield Gardens is home territory for Constance. Casually looking in she finds Aunt Connie⁷ setting off for Eton; on another occasion they are leaving for the South of France, or "Tiny"⁸ comes round to take younger sister Marjorie to the Gondoliers. Constance rides in the park or rows on the Serpentine, attends the Eton v Harrow match at Lords and invests in an Eton favour. Her mother goes to Mrs Besant's lecture on theosophy but Constance goes to hear Sarah Bernhardt. "She has such a cold that no one could hear a word she said." Paderewski is in town, as too is the Spanish virtuoso Sarasate. Irvine and Ellen Terry act Charles I wonderfully but Constance finds it all rather depressing. She "fishes" for seats in the theatre with her sister and enjoys being drilled by an army major. She plays dumb-crambo⁹ and charades at the Leconfields and the family receive a reciprocal visit for dinner – Aunt Connie, Constance's cousins Tiny and Maud and the superior French governess M'lle. Bouillot.¹⁰ A party for the children of the Duchess of Edinburgh boasts an uninspired conjuror but a first rate Punch and Judy. Unfortunately his performance ends before Punch is eaten by the dragon. Constance feels this obscures the moral.

Constance travels third class on the underground with her cousin Florrie Bourke to skate at Queen's Club and attends water parties on the Serpentine or the Thames at Taplow. Toward the end of the season the Leconfields have 42 to dinner. "We had little tables." After another formal lunch at Chesterfield Gardens Marjorie goes with Cousin Maud and the ubiquitous M'lle to the zoo while Mother, Tiny and Constance go to the New Gallery with tickets given by Uncle

Percy. Sometimes even Constance herself seems perched on the periphery of this glittering world. At a dinner party at home, "Marjorie and I took up our usual positions, she over the banister and I behind the back stairs where I see beautifully! She only sees the tops of people's head." She goes to Covent Garden to buy frogs to give to Cousin Maud, also some "queer fruit" which the family take home and eat without untoward results. She sees Mrs Langtry in Anthony and Cleopatra: "She made me hate her as Cleopatra and I ought to have been fascinated by her." On an impulse Aunt Connie takes her to Petworth for a day or two, giving her only half an hour to pack her clothes. They do not arrive until ten o'clock. On the return journey Aunt Connie sends the housekeeper back with her. As the diary progresses the fashionable cotillion formation dance is mentioned increasingly frequently.

Caldwell is home in a sense that Petworth with all its glitter can never be. One stay extends from the close of the London season well into the New Year, but this is exceptional. In some ways Caldwell is Petworth in a minor key. Constance takes Sunday School in the Servants Hall and buys bullseyes in the grocers' at Dunlop. Her brother William "Bo" is at a crammers in Edinburgh and comes home at weekends. He rides with the Renfrewshire Hounds. Constance's energy is divided between balls and dances, drawing, lawn tennis, riding, the inevitable charity bazaars and the new board game craze – Halma. This particular stay ends with Mother deciding to return to London: there are flu outbreaks at Dundee and (nearer) at Paisley. The family have dinner at six, start at ten to seven, catch the express from Glasgow Central at five past nine and are in London by seven the next morning.

The family will not return to Caldwell until after the London season when shorter stays take in a bazaar at Beith and larger bazaar and entertainment at Caldwell itself. There is racing at Ayr, a ball for the Channel Fleet, a visit to Arran and a full scale ball in Glasgow which Constance has to sit out as a spectator in the gallery. Caldwell has its own tenants' dinner and ball, tenants and friends being called in one by one to take their places in the dining room. Constance is less than pleased to have an outsider rather than a tenant as her partner. At another dance a "romp" of a lancers forces her to go upstairs for running repairs to her dress. The Ayrshire Ladies' Guild divide clothes for the poor. Mother drives to Kilmarnock in the brougham; the servants go to church in the dog-cart. On a wet day Mother reads George Eliot's *Romola* to the children in the schoolroom, another time Constance reads *Westward Ho* on her own. There is snow tobogganing and experiments with cookery – game pie, quenelle and puff paste. Constance and Marjorie's efforts for once give Mrs Loyd the cook an early evening. Returning at Easter Constance finds the weather lovely but the house cold – it's warmer out

than in. The family arrange for the 1.32 from Glasgow Central to make a special stop for Mother.

Visits to Petworth are clearly less frequent than Constance would have liked: with such a large extended family hospitality could not be open-ended. Early in the diary Constance is left in London and has to rely on her mother's account. "They sat in the Carved Room! Had meals in the Square Room and never looked at the dear old Red Library!" Constance is again left in London at Easter, while Mother goes to Petworth for two grand balls. A visit a little later is all too short. There is a trip to Fittleworth woods in the brake to pick flowers. "It was great fun ... sat in the Carved Room after dinner." There is a drive to Cowdray and the Servants' Ball in the evening. Constance leaves for London on the 11.45 train.

She is back in August 1890, strolling in the garden with Anne Bourke¹¹ before dinner at half past seven. "We all dressed before" and dancing began at 10 o'clock. "We all went to bed at about 4." The following day there was a picnic at the Gog and Magog. "24 of us, we boiled our kettle and did everything for ourselves and after tea we played lions, the Duchess¹² and all of us. It was such fun." After dinner Siby Finch and Anne Bourke sang a duet.

On another visit Constance meets up with Tiny in the schoolroom and they play cards in the evening. On an expedition to Plaistow in the brake one of the horses has the "staggers" on the return journey but recovers and they arrive back safely. There is a trip to the Pheasant Copse to pick primroses, while a final day sees a visit to Gog and Magog starting soon after breakfast. "For the evenings we never hardly do anything but play the very deepest games of Halma. It is great fun. They have got three boards to satisfy the cravings." Aunt Connie leaves for Eton as poor Reggy has the measles.

Constance is present for the elaborate coming of age celebrations for George Wyndham in 1890 but her account is curiously muted: there is more in the Petworth House Archives. Intermittently she watches Mr Champion's eleven play a Petworth team at cricket. She goes into dinner with Harold Fitzclarence and attends the evening dance. Eventually the invited guests leave and to Constance's delight only the house party remain. At four in the morning, Bo, Mr Champion and Mr Smith go off otter hunting. "No bed at all", Constance remarks. On the 18th December 1891 she writes: "Hurrah! We are going to Petworth." Mrs Loyd the cook having started preparations for Christmas is horrified. Not so Constance. A week earlier Aunt Connie had intimated that some members of her own family would spend Christmas at Petworth. Clearly there had been a change of plan. Even for cousins Petworth could not simply be assumed.

Constance is at Petworth again in September 1892. As it is raining they play hide and seek all over the house. Then it's golf with Tiny – for the very first time.

Then they are "cooking up" in the nursery kitchen followed by church and long walks. On Monday the Watsons¹³ are at lunch. On the last day Constance goes to look at some trimmers¹⁴ which had been set the previous day. "Got two enormous pike beside a few small ones and an eel. It was great fun." Then the same day back to London and from there straight to a stay in rural Hampshire.

A life so insulated from a wider world would need to be structured; there would be perilous gaps between the round of dances, outings and formal dinners. Here the schoolroom comes into play whether in London, at Caldwell or at Petworth. There would be distinguished lectures to attend, recitals too. Music was at once a pleasure and a social accomplishment. A succession of foreign tutors further Constance's progress as they do Marjorie's but Constance is advised that her voice is not yet strong enough for it to be trained. Both girls play at family dinners. As we have seen, Mother is happy to read aloud, Mrs Thackeray, Dickens, and, apparently for preference, George Eliot. There would be regular church attendance. Nothing in her background would lead Constance to question the religious practice of the day and she is a little disturbed by a visit to the Iron Chapel at Lugton, so near to Caldwell. The preacher is Mr Stuart, a visiting evangelist. "He is an American and the sermon was rather of an extraordinary nature. Like what one would expect to here [sic] in a dissenting chapel. A great deal about conversion. But it was most interesting, so many vivid illustrations. If it had been in an English church or even a Scotch one it would have shocked me but as it was only a Mission Hall it didn't seem quite so bad. The American twang sounded so vulgar compared to the Scotch."

Very occasionally a quite different world breaks in. Ellen the maid is consumptive and has to leave. Constance is genuinely fond of her. With Nana she makes an "interesting expedition" to the heart of Whitechapel. "Ellen was in a ward in the attics and we found her very miserable surrounded by every sort of illness, one woman nearly dead in the bed opposite her and a mad woman screaming next door. She is to be inoculated with Dr Koch's stuff on Thursday and is very nervous about it poor little thing." The visit does not seem to have been repeated but a note on the inside front cover of the account book "City Road Hospital for Diseases of the Chest" in Willesden Lane, Kilburn suggests a continuing interest. A casualty perhaps rather of age than sudden illness is Constance's old nurse Bowler, now in poor health, a visit from Constance is followed by one from her mother. We hear no more. Mary Maxse remembered Bowler well enough as would all the Wyndham children. "In her spotless quilted cap she was a welcome visitor to our nursery."¹⁵

When Whit Monday's weather disappoints Constance reflects: "Such a dull day for the poor holiday-makers and equally dull for us as we had not the feeling that

they were enjoying themselves with which one can generally comfort oneself ...”

We may leave Constance where she is perhaps happiest, worrying about arrangements for a cotillion¹⁶ 21st July.

At a distance of a hundred and twenty years and more Constance's comforting cosseted world has simply disintegrated. It is difficult even to recreate in the imagination. Constance bestrides a system “which was not of her making, which was accepted as natural and desirable in her day and was in any case beyond her power to alter¹⁷.” If to a modern mindset a certain ennui must have been inevitable, if we strain for breath in the rarefied air, Constance never lets it show even in her private diary. She lived a life of privilege and she embraced that life with all her heart. Is it possible to be overly judgmental of someone who sighs on the eve of her nineteenth birthday “I wish I wasn't 19 yet, I haven't had half enough of 18.”?

1. See *Daisy's Baby Book* PSM 154 (December 2013).

2. The second book, more fragile than the first, may well be the account book purchased at Harrods.

3. *Mary Maxse* (1870-1944). Privately printed 1947 page 11.

4. *Mary Maxse* page 4.

5. *Mary Maxse* page 14.

6. A crawler is a cab crawling along in search of a fare. 'Shan' is an abbreviation for "shandrydan" a kind of chaise with a hood.

7. Constance Lady Leconfield.

8. Constance's cousin Mary, later Lady Maxse.

9. Charades with an element of rhyme.

10. See *Mary Maxse* page 13-14.

11. Another cousin.

12. Of Cleveland. Aunt Connie's mother.

13. The Leconfield land agent and his wife.

14. A baited hook used for catching pike. Constance was familiar with this device from Caldwell, where a morning inspection proved fruitless.

15. *Mary Maxse* page 7.

16. The name appears to come from the French cotillion "petticoats" alluding to the flash of colour from the petticoats as partners change.

17. *Mary Maxse* page 10 (slightly adapted).

With grateful acknowledgement to Mrs Mary Bessemer Stewart, to whom the diary belongs, and to Gillian Hookway Jones.

Misadventure on Mercury Bay

Among George Garland's "old Petworth" material was a miniature set of four drawers, cheaply made, perhaps a foot in height. In it he kept various oddments mainly relating to his predecessor Walter Kevis, spare prints, a few sepia mounted groups. It was always worth a rummage. As far as I know, it is still with the Garland Collection at Petworth House. In it was a photocopy of a letter from New Zealand written to inform the recipient of the presumed death of her son Douglas Garland in a boating accident. The letter is dated December 17th 1883. I can remember George Garland talking of it, but I do not think he had any background information save for the letter itself. It may be that his interest in the letter came from the coincidence of surname but he gave no suggestion of a family connection.

The writer informs Mrs Garland of her son's recent marriage to a widow with a family. On the 29th October he had left "the settlement" some twelve miles distant to procure provisions. Douglas was in an open boat and accompanied by one of his stepsons. Having settled their business they had set off back, rather heavily laden, the following day. They have not been seen since, despite an extensive search of the coast. As a personal friend of Douglas Garland, William Meikle, writer of the letter, feels he must acquaint Mrs Garland with the news.

It appears that the widow had a small farm near Opito. It was new and involved clearing work which had left Douglas "considerably in debt" while the widow herself is "enceinte" with provision needing to be made for the new arrival. On that very evening of the 29th October Douglas had said he was expecting money from England. The widow's tenure of the farm is provisional; she is unable to read or write and intends to give up the farm.

Shaun Cooper finds that Blunden Douglas Garland had been born in Petworth in 1845. He had three older siblings. His father Henry, a schoolmaster, was sixty years old in 1851. By 1861 Douglas is apprenticed to a Mr Billingshurst at Midhurst, but in 1862 tried for embezzlement and sentenced to a month's hard labour.

By 1880 Douglas is in New Zealand and working as a barman at Mercury Bay on North Island. It may be that, given his somewhat chequered curriculum vitae, Douglas had decided to leave England for a new life. In a harsh age such situations were not uncommon. We may remember James Row¹ leaving Petworth for Australia in somewhat similar circumstances. As so often we have the bare bones of a story but certainly nothing to flesh out the various characters.

P.with many thanks to Shaun Cooper.

1. See PSM 22 (December 1980) pages 13-16.

Does it matter?



Petworth Congregational Sunday School. "The Paths of Peace" June 1955.
Some familiar faces here!
Photograph by George Garland.

Old Petworth traders (13). The New Street International

The International Stores were in New Street before moving to the site of the present Co-operative at some time in the first decades of the new century. Here Mrs Ethel Place recalls the old "International".

"If, as I have read, the Stores in New Street Petworth were opened in 1892, it was the year before I was born, so I don't know what sort of building was there previously, but I often went as a toddler with Mother and later, on my own, for there was no traffic in the streets then. It was a nice friendly shop, lighted like the streets by gas, but the householders had to rely on oil and candles. Very few groceries were packeted so all were weighed. As you entered, on the left was a long wide counter with one or two chairs for the customer's use, with big drawers running under counter at back containing the goods and some on view on shelves. First were the dried fruits – currants, sultanas, candied peel etc., then the various sugars. A big pair of brass scales in centre of counter and behind the assistant was a glass case showing medical things such as pills, cough cures etc. and on a higher shelf stood big black canisters inscribed in gold paint – CEYLINDO TEA and this was the part allotted to the weighing of it. Price was 4½d. a 1/4 lb. Then at back were rows on rows of big square biscuits tins with the names of contents on them. The favourite ones are much as they are today, but how different the texture. Since the electrical mixers came in the biscuits are so light and thin, one finds many broken ones in the packets, whereas before, they were taken whole from the tins to be weighed, any broken were later put in a tin and children could buy 1 pennyworth of broken biscuits – very popular. After this were the various goods, candles, matches and other household things which were of course packeted."

The full text is in PSM 52 June 1988. See also *Peter Dead Drunk* (Window Press 2011) pages 41-43. PSM 52 also carries another photograph of the New Street premises.

CONFECTIONERY

OF THE

FINEST QUALITY.

Mixed Drops, Acids, Pears, Honey Butter Scotch, & about 20 other kinds, per lb. 4d.

Fancy Balls	4d.
Variety Rock	4d.
Fralines	5d.
Bull Eyes	3d.
Assorted Kinds (in 2-lb. bottles)	per bot. 10d.
Fancy Balls	10d.
Variety Rock	10d.
Fralines	1/-

Jubes :-

Parisian Jellies	per lb. 4d.
Turkish	4d.
Crystal	(in 2-lb. bot.) 4d.
Oriental Delight Jellies	4d.
Liquorice	4d.
Tangerine	4d.
Mixed Fruit	5d.
Best	6d.
Almond Cushions	6d.
Conversation Medals	4d.
"MITRE" Butter Scotch	per pkt. 2 1/2d.
Cough Drops	per lb. 5d.
Barley Sugar	5d.
Peppermints, White	6d.
Extra Strong	8d.
Honey Dates (in 4-lb. boxes)	6d.
Glycerine Pastilles	6d.
Rose	6d.
Liquorice	6d.
Yeicos Pastilles	6d.

Real Fruit 6d.

Candies & Creams :-

Cocernut Candy	4d.
Ice	4d.
"	per bar 1d.
Cream Chips	per lb. 6d.

Creams :-

Assorted Creams, Raspberry, Chocolate, Lemon and Vanilla	per lb. 4d.
Noyeau (Apricot and Raspberry)	per pkt. 1s.
French Fondants	per lb. 6d.
Crystallised Cocernut Chips	6d.
Jap Nuggets	4d.
Cough Candy	4d.
Raspberry Scotch	4d.

Mixtures :-

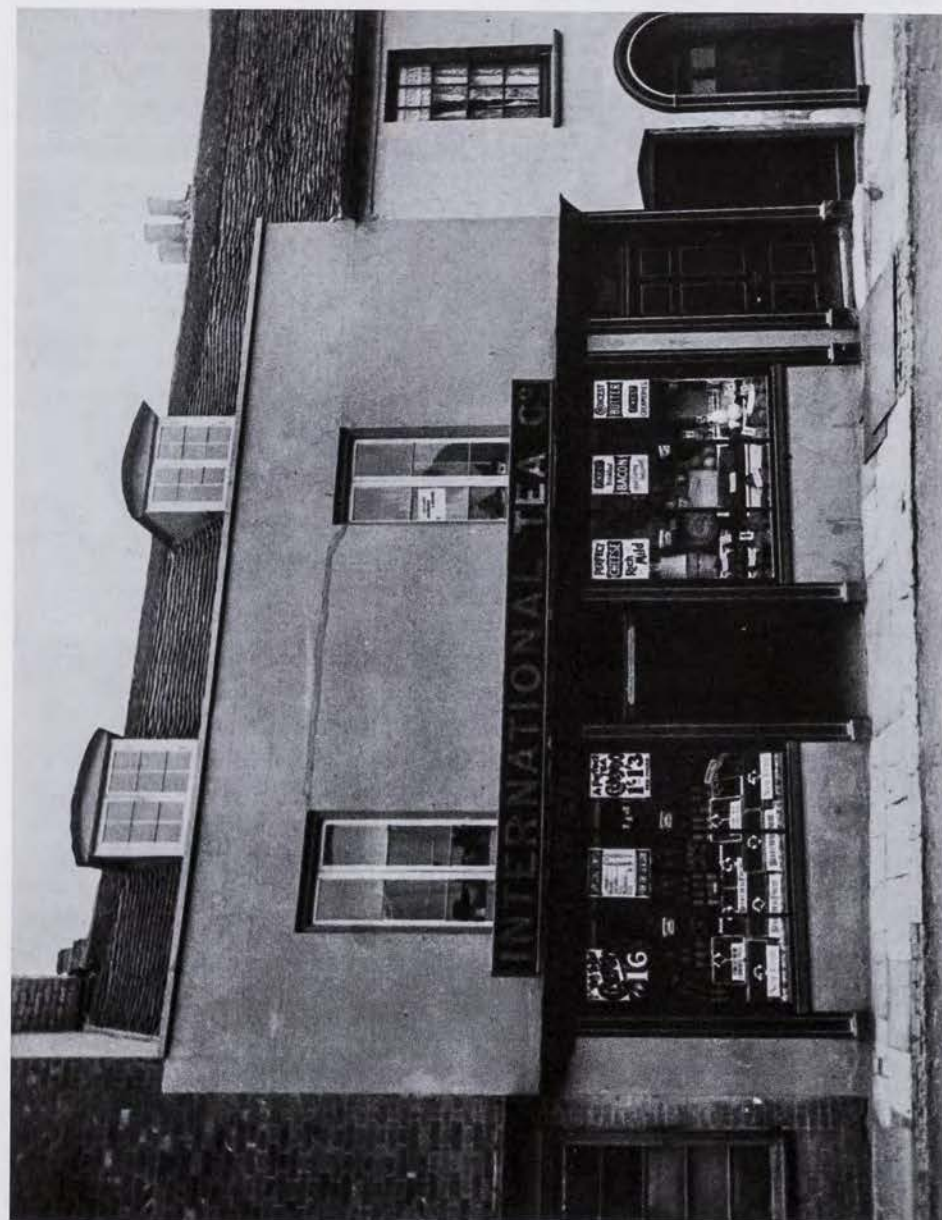
"MITRE"	6d.
"INTERNATIONAL"	4d.
Burnt Almonds	6d.
Almond Rock	6d.
Clove & Peppermint Rock (in 4-lb. jars)	4d.
Rose Rock, Assorted	4d.
Red & White Acid Sticks	4d.
Brown	4d.
Red & Yellow Toffee (in 7-lb. tins)	4d.
White	4d.
Victoria Cushions	4d.
Peppermint	4d.
Toffee Tablets	4d.
Honey Butter Nuggets (in 7-lb. boxes)	5d.
Cocernut	5d.

INTERNATIONAL TEA CO.,

And at 200 Branches throughout the United Kingdom.

[1904.] Printed at the INTERNATIONAL TEA Co.'s Steam Printing Works, Mitre Square, London, E.C.

International Stores confectionery.
Note the date 13th June 1894.



The New Street International about 1900.
The old Red Lion to the left.

An Ebernoe childhood (2)

When I was old enough I joined the Girl Guides with my older sister, and it was our job to clear up the rubbish left behind by Horn fair. We were given sticks with pins stuck in the ends to pick up the paper, then we lit a bonfire on the common, which seemed a good way to end a happy occasion.

Returning to Sundays, dinners always consisted of roast beef, Yorkshire pudding and two veg and pineapples (2 cubes for us) and custard for afters. Father insisted we ate all the fat, which I hated, and he would often watch me to see that I put it in my mouth, and one day this happened, but directly afterwards I discreetly removed it into my hand and fed it to the cat who often sat under the table at meal times. He probably did very well out of it too.

A treat especially kept for Sunday afternoons was playing the gramophone. This was an old fashioned affair with a large horn and a handle for winding it up. The records were mainly ones sang during the First World War which I enjoyed listening to. Later on my elder sister brought home some modern records, one was called "I Left My Sugar Standing in the Rain and My Sugar Melted Away", and another was "When I Asked My Sugar to Tea". I thought these rather sloppy, it seems to have been the fashion in those days for boys to call their girlfriends "Sugar". Many years later I had a small portable gramophone of my own, having bought it for five shillings at an auction. I kept it with me for most of the war years whilst serving with the ATS. Soon after I joined up I was stationed in Bournemouth and shared a room with another girl. This was an attic room of a hotel. Sometimes I would be listening to my records (I only had five at the time) and the other girls on our floor would come in and listen, and one of them in particular used to get homesick, as like many more of them, it was her first time away from home. But after listening to Vera Lynn singing "Yours" and tears running down her cheek, she said she felt much better, having had a good cry. As I had been turfed out of home hardly before I was fourteen, I did miss my mother and the rest of the family at first, but being amongst strangers has never really bothered me.

There were two special occasions which we all looked forward to very much, one in the summer and the other at Christmas, both due to the kindness and generosity of the Admiral. He was retired and lived in a large house not far from the school. He took a lot of interest in the school besides giving us these parties. The first was called the "Parochial Tea", and started with a jumble sale run by the WI in the garden of his house, this would run from 4pm to 5pm then tea would be served outside. The grown ups sat at trestle tables laden with all sorts of dainty sandwiches and all kinds of cakes. We children were seated on the ground by a

large rhododendron bush and how we tucked into all that delicious food. After tea there was entertainment provided by us first, then the WI put on their show. I remember one year we did the "The Mikado" I was one of the "Three Little Maids from School". Our costumes were made of crepe paper and we had fans, and Japanese style hats. All were made of crepe paper, the hats were black and the costumes all different and bright colours. A piano was hidden behind a shrub and played by a teacher, and there was a small garden door which was handy for our entrances and exits. Altogether this was one of the happiest days of the year for us, as life could be rather humdrum at home most of the time. All the children took part in this outdoor concert, some recited or gave little monologues and singing, of course, including a sea shanty besides patriotic songs and plays. The WI put on a show after us but I could not remember anything definite about it. We were very lucky regarding the weather as I do not recall there ever being a need to postpone or cancel this great day out. The sun always shone.

The other special occasion at Christmas was also a memorable one. The Admiral's stables were used, they were decorated with paper chains and holly and there was a huge Christmas tree. Every child had a present, no guesses as to who was Father Christmas. There were tables spread with all kinds of Christmas goodies, which we attacked with much gusto. We sang carols and when we left we each had a dip in a bran tub for a small memento and were given an orange and a bag of sweets.

The teachers usually organised a concert at the school at Christmas time. Our parents and general public came to watch. There was a play which included dancing, and songs. This was all rather exciting as the concert was held in the evening and we were made up and wore fancy dresses.

My sister and I belonged to the Girl Guides for about two years. It was quite a small company, only about eight of us. Our captain was the Admiral's daughter. She was very tall and slim with a ramrod figure, and very rosy cheeks. She had a small car which had a dicky seat, and sometimes she would take us home after meetings. It was quite exciting in those days to ride in a car. One year we went to camp at Emsworth in her car. We slept in bell shaped tents and had our meals in the open. The work was divided up. There were other Guide companies there besides us. Every morning before breakfast we went for a swim in the river. Our path took us through a field with lots of bramble bushes in it, and how the salt water stung our skin after getting scratched, but we enjoyed it all the same. One day we went on a day out to Portsmouth and looked round HMS Victory. We were also allowed to look over a brand new submarine and I was fascinated at the way the sailors ran up and down the ladders, everything was so shiny, being new. I wondered why they did not slip up. Another day we went over to the Isle of

Wight. It was the first time I had ever seen the sea blue, having been used to our muddy pond and brook. I thought all water would look the same colour. Every night we would sit round the campfire singing and drinking cocoa. At the end the flag would be lowered and we would sing "Taps".

One summer we all went to a garden fete at Storrington in Sussex. I remember it was a lovely day and the Downs looked very near, in fact I was tempted to go and climb up them. However, I walked some way towards them and realised they were further away than they looked, so I turned round and hurried back, luckily no one seemed to have missed me. The Admiral took us in his Rolls Royce and I was thrilled to ride in such a lovely car, so quiet, yet we were going fast as I could tell by the way the scenery was flashing past. This probably sounds very ordinary but in those days (late 1920s) it was really something. The chauffeur drove us in fact. The only rides we had in those days were in carts. Nowadays it would be the other way round – I'd enjoy a ride in a cart. It would be a change.

At one time I was allowed to ride my mother's bike to school. This was on Mondays, as I had to stay at home in the mornings to help her with the washing, and it was my job to turn the handle of the big wringer. There was no such thing as water from taps. It had to be all drawn up from the well. The copper had to be filled, and it took eight buckets to do so. Then a fire had to be lit beneath the copper with faggots to heat the water, which had to boil for the bed linen. It was very hard work and drying of course was another problem, especially in the winter. Anyway staying away from school meant that I missed the geography lessons. I was sorry about that because it was one of my favourite subjects. When the exams came I could not answer the questions. At the time it would have meant a scholarship if I had passed but sums were not my best subject and I could never grasp decimals. One day the teacher had me by the side of her desk trying to teach me, she kept saying "push the point on". I hadn't got a clue what she was on about, she was a rotten teacher and she kept thumping me on the back and I was crying my eyes out, but she would not explain so as to make me understand. It was very embarrassing too, in front of the other children. It is not surprising I did not want to go to school some days. However, I was very thankful because she left soon after that, and the teacher we had in her place was much nicer. She was up to date and taught us some of the popular songs being sung at that time. She had a son about my age, he went to another school, but sometimes came with his mother and several of us girls fancied him.

One Monday when we were going home from school, my brother wanted me to give him a ride, so did my younger sister. So at the top of a steep hill I sat him on the saddle (there wasn't a carrier) and with my sister on the handlebars, I stood up on the pedals, and we rode off like that down the hill. There was a lake on one

side of the little bridge and it flowed beneath the bridge and dropped into a pond from which a river started. As it was subject to flooding it had some floodgates near the bridge which were operated when necessary. It was just as we were near the bottom of the hill that we almost ran into a man on a horse. It happened to be the Admiral. It was too late to do anything. The horse shied as we must have given it a fright and we all fell off the bike. Luckily none of us were hurt and no damage was done to the bike, but best of all I was not reprimanded over it. The Admiral being the gentleman he was never made a fuss about it. In any case it shook me up quite a bit and things could have turned out much worse. The name of this place was Wassail Mill, and at one time it was used for grinding corn, by means of a large wheel affair. After this though, I was not allowed to use the bike, but all in all I was let off lightly.

If I had not enjoyed going to school or belonging to the Guides I would have remembered my childhood as being rather uninteresting. Though I must admit we made our own enjoyment from living on a farm. As Father did not like to see us indoors much (he was forever chasing us out) we spent a lot of time outside or playing in the barns if the weather was bad. Of course we had to work as well, and I remember that once we were given the job of ridding a field of docks by pulling them out with our hands. This task took us a week and it wasn't even one of our own fields, and what a hard job it was.

The different seasons brought with them their special activities, working and playing. In spring time we would spend hours looking for birds nests and I remember it was just Alby, my younger brother, and I who spent much of our time climbing trees and looking in the woods or paddling in the ponds searching for moorhens nests. We did not take the eggs out of the nests, it was excitement enough to simply find the nests. The little wrens' nests we found in one of the farm buildings were just like balls of thistledown, made of hair, moss, wool and other delicate materials. Another favourite was the long tailed tits' nests. I made a very exciting find once when I discovered a partridge's nest with fifteen eggs. At the time I was walking by the side of a low hedge idly beating it when all at once this huge bird lumbered out like a jumbo jet. These nests were so well camouflaged that it was possible to look at them without realising they were nests, the colours blending in so well with their surroundings.

Once we found an owl's nest at the top of an old hawthorn tree. A couple of blue tits built their nest once, close to the back door or our house, in spite of the constant activity going on, but they were not worried and we were lucky to see the very first flight which the birds made, just like little woollen balls. Apart from the wild birds we had our own hens and geese. I used to be frightened of the geese as they looked really fierce, in fact they are said to be as good as guard dogs.

Mother had some ducks' eggs hatched out by a hen and I remember how amusing it was to see the ducklings making for the pond while they were still a day or so old, and their foster mother getting very agitated about it, and looking helpless when they went into the water and started swimming about. The pond was one of our favourite places for playing in or around, as in the summer we would fish on the bank. I remember one day when my older sister had a bite (no doubt I was annoyed because I never seemed to catch anything or get a bite), so threw a stone at her fish and frightened it away. She gave me such a thump on the back I had nose bleed. When the water was frozen over in the winter we would have a lot of fun sliding on the ice. My older brothers used to take a long run and it fascinated me to see them slide almost across to the other side. There was a very old and rotten tree close to the bank which was covered in ivy. It was possible to climb to the top though, and once there it was an ideal hiding place. The ivy formed a crown like a large nest and there was a good view to be had.

Sabina Melville – to be continued.

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Ebernoe Horn Fair probably 1920s.

