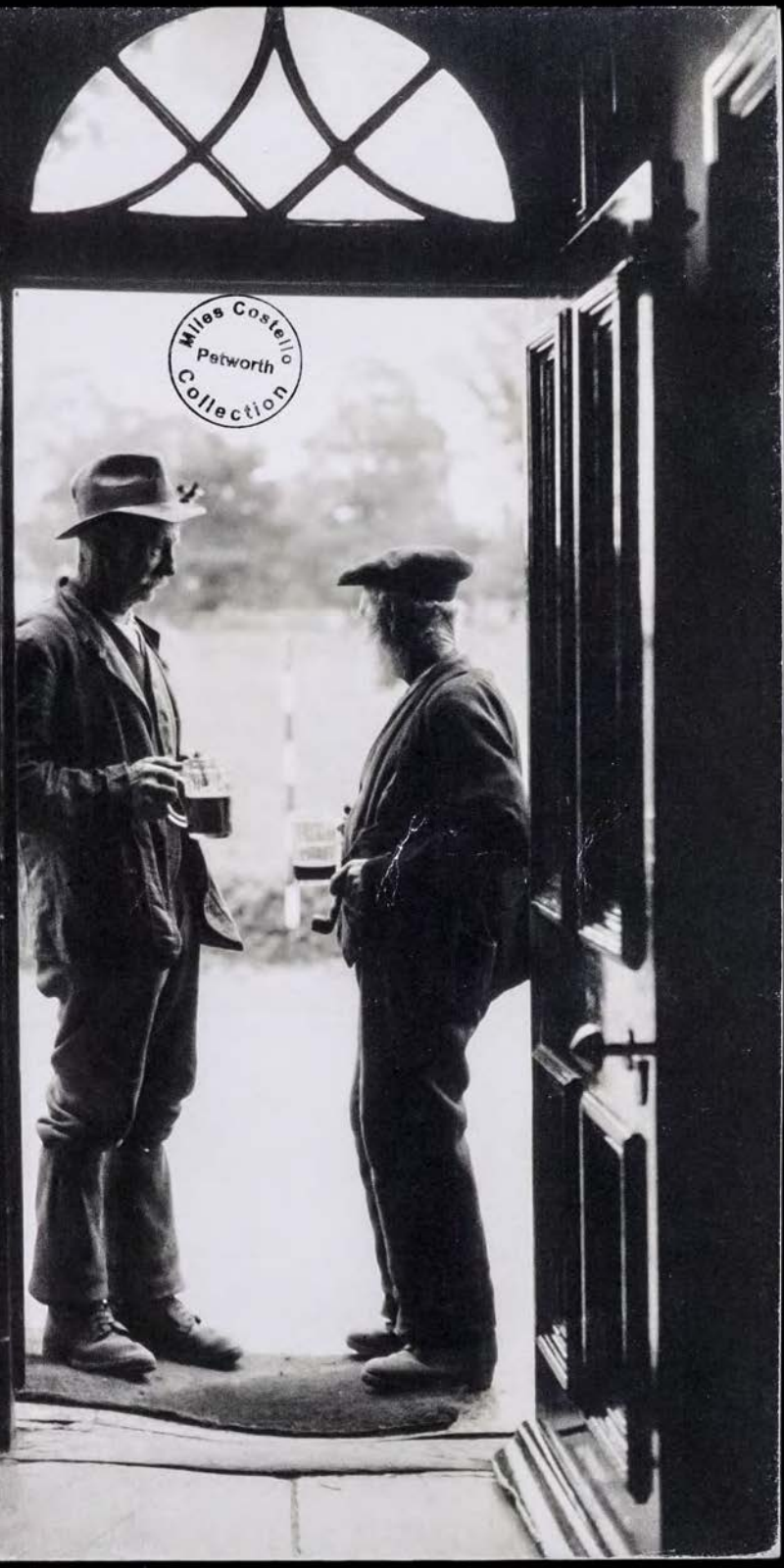
No. 161, September 2015

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY *magazine*



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A George Garland study from the 1930s.

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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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WEBSITE

www.petworthsociety.co.uk

FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick.
It shows a scene at the Frankland Arms, Washington in the 1930s.
See "Murder" in George Garland's Washington. Original photograph by Garland.

Chairman's notes

With Michaelmas in sight by the time this Magazine appears, I include two eye-witness accounts of the school tragedy in 1942. Such remembrance, fragile now, is part of the very fabric of this Magazine.

At the same time I reproduce the leaflet "Whither the Book Sale." Whether you attend the Book Sale or not, this is a reminder of the crucial role of the Sale in the continuing life of the Society. Neither Petworth Fair nor this Magazine attract outside funding of any kind: without the continuing support of the Book Sale, we would have a very different situation.

You will see with this issue a flyer for "Elegy for a Small Shop" ready early autumn. 100 individually numbered copies. The book is designed by Jonathan Newdick.

Space, as ever, is at a premium in PSM. The second and concluding part of 'My mother 1874-1978' (PSM 160) will appear in the December issue.

Re the Queen's Head darts team in the last Magazine. Mr Stansmore writes to say that, while he at one time played darts with Arthur Connor, it was for the Star. The gentleman on the extreme left back row (PSM 160 page 13) is Mr Karlo Kitchener from Fittleworth.

Identification at a distance in time can be precarious and I have to say Mr Stansmore was very understanding, I might almost say jovial!

Peter
29th July

We are actively looking for an understudy for Mr Mike Hubbard the Society crier.
No previous experience needed. Phone Peter on 342562 or Mike on 343249.

Bonfire Boys once more

The "Bonfire Boys" postcard in the last Magazine elicited more comment than enlightenment, the postcard not, in fact, being uncommon. It would appear however that the "Boys" are now beyond any kind of remembrance. The picture was clearly taken just up from the Swan Inn at Fittleworth. I have, however, found a related picture, carrying the date September 7th 1910 and the legend Fittleworth Carnival. It may again be by White of Littlehampton, or perhaps, more likely, Fittleworth's own John Smith.

Who's in charge?

Tessa Boase has written a book 'The Housekeeper's Tale – the women who really ran the English Country House'. She came to speak to us about two of the five housekeepers whose stories she researched.

Literature has always tended to portray housekeepers in caricature: the sinister Mrs Danvers in Rebecca, the enigmatic Mrs. Hughes of Downton Abbey. Tessa

wanted to learn about the real women, not only their work and responsibilities, but their thoughts and feelings and their relationships with their employers and fellow servants.

The archives at Hatfield House contained advertisements for a housekeeper which attracted 189 replies, but the first woman to be offered the post turned it down, feeling herself inadequate to the demands. The advert had not mentioned Hatfield House as it was felt many would be overawed at the prospect of working for such a high-ranking family.

Starting in 1926 at the age of 32, Ellen Penteth's amazing five years' service at Erdigg in North Wales involved providing lavish catering for large numbers of guests and visitors, day after day, but incurring debts, amounting to £28.000 in today's money to local traders, which she tried to cover up by suppressing accounts.

Upon discovery, she was instantly dismissed and sent to prison pending trial. The jury must have appreciated the impossible situation the extravagant entertainment costs had placed Ellen in, while being unsympathetic to Mr Capper, the Estate Agent's largely unfounded accusations, which included theft and drunkenness.

She was discharged without penalty and ended her days as a cook in a Manchester hotel, dying of a stroke at the age of 63.

Starting at Charleston, near Lewes, as a maid in 1921, Grace Higgens became the nanny, then housekeeper until 1971. She kept diaries, now in the British Library, which reveal her close relationship with the 'family' of Clive and Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Virginia Woolf – the Bloomsbury Group.

Hers is a tale of almost excessive loyalty as she lived in the unheated attic, even after marrying in 1934. Electricity was laid on in 1933, the first vacuum cleaner arrived in 1948 and television in 1950.

Although regarded with great affection and accompanying her employers on trips abroad, Grace was always a servant, 'owned' by the family.

Tessa ended her talk by comparing those lives with the lives of the present team at Holkham Hall in Norfolk. Nicky Garner is the Head Housekeeper for Viscountess Polly Coke, with whom she has a close and warm rapport and whose work is vastly different from that of the housekeepers in the heyday of the English Country House.

The difficulties in researching the lives of the workers 'below stairs', the majority anonymous, became clear. Tessa took on a gargantuan task in producing her book and from it, a fascinating talk.

As with so many of our meetings, there were so many facts and stories which have to be left out of our reports through lack of space. A good number of those on the evening took advantage of buying a signed copy of the book which also features Mrs Wells of Uppark, and mother of H.G.

In thanking Tessa, Peter called to mind two housekeepers at Petworth House, Mrs Cownley and Mrs Leversuch both of whom have figured prominently in the Society Magazine over the years.

KCT

Whither the book sale?

Beginning as an experiment toward the end of 1999, the Petworth Society Book Sale has, over the last fifteen years become a "second Saturday" Petworth institution, with a character all its own. It is run, as it has always been, by the Petworth Society, a Registered Charity, while income from the sale subsidises a quarterly Magazine that with 48 pages, 8 in colour, carries substantial articles on Petworth itself and on wider local issues. It is a production that could not otherwise be funded without a prohibitive rise in subscription levels. Book Sale finance means that the Magazine, now in its 160th issue, does not, like so many others, carry advertising.

Our expenses, while not obvious to the casual visitor, are considerable, and must come out of Book Sale income. There is hall hire on the day, rental for storage space, and above all perhaps, insurance, licensing, maintenance and fuel for the van, the second in our fifteen years, vital not only to fetch books on the day, but also to take away what remains. Less apparent, but equally crucial is its use for collecting books from private individuals, fêtes, and general sales. The day is long past when private cars could be commandeered for this purpose. It will not be too long before we are confronted with the major expense of replacing the present vehicle.

It may surprise to learn that the "second Saturday" is only a small part, and that not perhaps the most significant, of a process of collecting and sorting that continues through the whole month preceding the Sale. Only a proportion of what comes in on the day or during the month will eventually appear. What is no longer of interest to donors, may well be of no interest to anyone else. Quite apart from the pointless labour of carrying heavy boxes to the Sale and inevitably bringing them back again, our ambition must be to render the Sale as attractive as the month's input can make it. We have to judge what will enhance the Sale and what will not and remove the latter. It is a matter of principle that only books on the "Rupert Bear" tablecloths at £2 or more will return for a second time, often at

a lower price level.

Over the years we have found that rejected books become an alarming presence that can grow virtually by the day. This backlog is not as easy to dispose of as once it was, and is very much at the mercy of fluctuation in the price of waste paper. On rare occasions we have had the experience of hiring a skip to remove surplus material, a situation that we have fortunately been able to avoid latterly, but one that can always recur.

Material brought in on the day, as too, that collected from fêtes and similar events can vary wildly. Damaged books, most ex-library material, part works, encyclopedias, magazines, ghosted celebrity autobiographies, outdated text books, shabby cookery books, all come our way in quantity and tend to disappear through the virtual trap-door. This detritus becomes our responsibility. It is probably fair to say that the local fêtes from which we collect would think very seriously of risking a book stall without the insurance of the Petworth Society's white van.

The future? From July this year we propose a flat rate of £1 a book, retaining the traditional table of books at £2 and sometimes more. A flat £1 does away with the endless rummaging in the till for 20p pieces and should streamline the till operation. We will still compare favourably with other regular sales while our distinctive atmosphere will remain. No one seems to think the Petworth Sale is quite the same as any other. And, in the last resort, if you think a book's worth buying, it's worth £1, if you're not sure, then better leave it with us.

Peter, Miles and the "Second Saturday" team
13th June 2015

Sheffield Park – 12th May

A grey overcast day with a hint of rain: no sun to bring the May greenness to life. Cowfold, Haywards Heath travelling east. Then Sheffield Park station, advertisements for Virol, cigarettes and motor oil, property suitcases piled on the station platform and going nowhere – first stop Horsted Keynes. A second platform used for Downton Abbey – not just them perhaps: when I was teaching the school made a film. It reflected a war-time move from Hampstead and the Bluebell Railway fitted the bill. The Sharpthorne tunnel, explained a jovial guard had the reputation of being haunted. "Don't be surprised if one of your number disappears." No one did. The tunnel, he said, was the longest in private ownership in the country. Bluebells and green countryside, the former still in flower and concentrated in woodland pockets. On to Kingscote – the track, newly installed we were told at a cost of £3,500,000 would take us on to East Grinstead, the last stretch running in a gully through East Grinstead's former rubbish pit: we could see the protective cladding on the steep sides. Presumably vegetation will grow through in time.

A chance to stretch legs at East Grinstead. No turntable: the engine separates, reverses back along a small stretch of double line track, then reverses again to join the train, built, we were told, in 1936. Then back the same way, smoke funneling behind, farmed deer looking tiny from a height, a lone metal pig sty with no sign of the occupant either way.

Then a brief coach ride to Sheffield Park itself and an extremely leisurely lunch, so leisurely that I didn't really do the gardens justice. Some marvellous rhododendrons, but I didn't take in all the lakes. Too long spent looking at plants in the shop and not buying any, breaking into a chance conversation about the availability of a certain brand of instant coffee; your correspondent talking as if he had all the afternoon to spare, when he should have been exploring on your behalf. Then a ride home in the strangely confident sunlight of late afternoon. A complicated and intricate trip for Debby (and Gordon) to organize but hugely enjoyable and appreciated.

P.

Linda and Ian's Kirdford walk. 16th May

Linda had anticipated it might not be easy to park in Kirdford on a Sunday afternoon and so it proved. The Village Hall car park looked temptingly empty but it seemed something of an imposition for interlopers from Petworth to take over so we didn't. Finally parked we walked out on to the Wisborough Green road before turning off on a footpath through a quiet Sunday Normandy stables, noting a building away to the left. An exercise ring for horses we were told. The footpath took us into a bluebell wood: close up they were going over but at a distance they still offered serried ranks of blue, the dominant flowers being now the harsh white of stitchwort – quite a combination a week ago I would have thought but still impressive.

A stop to admire and make friends with some horses over a fence, an enormous common orchid with its trademark black spotted leaves. Royal blue bugle in

quantity, bricks in the path and a slow worm apparently frozen in the path, waiting it seemed for us to pass. Up a made-up track with Dounhurst at the top hidden away to our left, sometime apple land. Janet Austin[1] writes of a thirteenth century John de Dunhurst and a cartoon of Charles I unearthed in the old house. The continuing footpath divides Dounhurst from the neighbouring Chandlers Barn. We were fortunate enough to encounter the genial occupant of the former mowing the footpath. Iconic green plimsolls (sandshoes), and while we were talking a deer crosses the path we have just taken and disappears. Leaving our new friend we cross a field of wheat and make for the woods, a bridge over a sluggish stream, several stiles, a vista of buttercups and the spring smell of cow parsley. We could imagine later in the year this route might be somewhat overgrown. Fresh territory for most of us and as good a walk as I can remember.

P.

1. *Kirdford: The Old Parish Discovered* (1989) page 117.2. 2 Samuel i 20.

The David Wort memorial walk. 21st June

Midsummer day. Left off the Northchapel Road over the cattle grid and into Stag Park. Crops mid-season high, sheep, the dove-cote and Stag Park Farmhouse away in the valley. Private land and we have special permission from Lord Egremont. Jacksons and Cocks won't be part of the itinerary and we shan't see Chillinghurst; there are so many Stag Park permutations. We're lucky with the weather today. Cars parked, we're soon at the two Springs, lower and upper. Someone asks about the names of the lakes: Luffs, Figgs, Jacksons and the rest. There doesn't seem to be an answer. We meet one solitary angler but otherwise seem to have the landscape to ourselves. For newcomers the lakes are a revelation. For me, as for many of us, it's familiar through many visits over the years. Which pond is which? I should know, but I see the familiar through a haze. David always knew. Pink water lily, high yellow flag, dragonflies, the occasional plop of an unseen fish breaking the surface, a rhododendron in full flower, a massive gunnera and some towering reeds, "the rushes by the water to gather every day," not now I suspect. Steel blue damsel flies alighting on a blackberry leaf and as soon away.

To look across the lake to see the white shirts of those ahead reflected in the water. We divert to see Lady Leconfield's avenue of tulip trees, some from the 1930s, some replaced. It takes time to distinguish the waxy pale yellow flowers from the foliage. Long grass studded with common orchid. David's not formally mentioned but his spirit seems to infuse the afternoon: so much of a working life spent here. David would pull it all together; give it a context. Without him we simply walk and observe. Stag Park, as I have said, has so many permutations.

P.

"Murder" in George Garland's Washington. The June book sale

Between the wars, the village of Washington on the way to Worthing would be a regular port of call for George Garland the Petworth photographer, making a leisurely progress to the annual Findon sheep fair or, perhaps, to the sheep country around Angmering. Working, as he did, very closely with the Brighton-based "Southern Weekly" stable of newspapers, Washington was quintessential Garland territory. Inevitably his base would be the Frankland Arms and his impressions of the village mediated largely though the "country" characters he encountered there. If other "Washingtons"[1] existed he was not looking for them. For Petworth people in general the village was notable largely as a stopping place on the occasional two hour bus journey to Brighton Pool Valley.

Such thoughts are evoked by a mint copy of the 2015 reprint of John Bude's classic "The Sussex Downs Murder"[2] brought into the May Book Sale. It's very much a book for the connoisseur of the great age of crime fiction and notable for its disposition of imagined characters in a very real downland setting. There is even a map of the area. It is as if John Bude has vacuumed the existing inhabitants from the scene and replaced them with a cast of his own. If the ingenious plot creaks a little toward the end, the final denouement, given the very limited number of characters, has a twist that is all its own.

As so often with fiction from between the wars, we are never far from the comforting smell of tobacco while we are soon immersed in a slower, less frenetic world that dimly mirrors our own. Here is an investigation that proceeds at its own pace and has its own momentum. DNA is unknown, finger-printing a peak of forensic science and the study of different touches on the same Remington typewriter integral. A very pertinent skeleton is reassembled not in a police laboratory but at the Worthing sea-front home of a conveniently retired professor of anatomy. A mysterious telegram handed in at Littlehampton at 6.50 p.m.

arrives at Washington post office some thirteen minutes later and is delivered that evening to a remote downland farm. Murder notwithstanding, a substitute has to be found for the Washington Flower Show committee meeting the next day.

Enquiries move to neighbouring Bramber. "Little village this side of Steyning," explains a pragmatic inspector whose tranquil domestic life contrasts somewhat with that of many of his modern television counterparts. "Got a bit of a castle there and a museum of natural freaks." Enquiries at the "South Downland Omnibus Co" in Brighton elicit sightings of "a queer old josser who often gets on outside the Shoreham cement works." These are days of driver and conductor working in unison. Miss Kingston, proprietress of the Bramber post office and shop[3] is a mine of information and prepared to discuss everyone's business, even, it appears, her own.

If Washington appears through a haze of tobacco smoke in the Frankland Arms[4], sober reportage was not the agenda for either Bude or Garland. Each has his own private vision and we see the village in the 1930s through a kind of stained glass.

The June Book Sale? Invariably the quietest month of the year but we still had our hands full. "Whither the Book Sale" outlines our present position. No Book Sale, no Magazine may be a slight exaggeration but it's uncomfortably near the truth.

P.

1. "A considerable proportion of this parish is downland; there are also large numbers of market gardens." (Kelly's Directory 1918 s. v. Washington).
2. Skeffington 1936. A British Library Crime Classic. John Bude was a pseudonym for Ernest Elmore (1901-1957).
3. No post office is noted in Kelly's 1918 Directory.
4. The "Clandon" Arms in John Bude's village.

"Petworth should not lose touch with its past … a sense of continuity"

We don't do 'formality', but once a year we have to try.

It was the 41st Annual General Meeting and although Peter has been chairing for 37 years, a lot has changed – Petworth itself and the Society with it.

Presenting the report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year up to February 28th 2015 … Mrs. Slade commented that it had been a good year financially, thanks to Gift Aid tax returns of £973 and rises in income from Book Sales and membership subscriptions, although there were rent increases on the book stores. She thanked the helpers at Book Sales, especially Mr Costello. It was proposed to donate up to £500 towards the cost of defibrillators, one to be installed outside the Leconfield Hall, and £200 to the Coultershaw Beam Pump Trust.

As there were no further nominations, the Committee was re-elected. It was diverse in its membership but held together very well and it was important for Petworth to have such a stable body. The Vice-Chairman expressed his particular gratitude to the organisers of the Society's walks and outings, while Mrs Slade wished to record her thanks to non-committee members who distribute the Magazine.

In his report as Chairman, Peter voiced his concern that "Petworth should not lose touch with its past, while looking very much to the future. There had been an awareness of the centenary of the start of the 1914-18 war, while Miles Costello's book on Petworth Inns, beautifully designed by Jonathan Newdick had been very well received. The fair had had the usual traffic problems which should be eased with improved signage. Mr Hanauer would liaise with the Town Council. Outings involved much work for Mrs Stevenson but had been popular and successful. The annual dinner continued to draw in members from all over the country, while the Society Magazine gave a sense of continuity. Walks covered very varied scenery, while, for some, the Socierty was defined by the Book Sale. The Society maintained its links with the Cottage Museum and the Coultershaw Beam Pump.

Slides, taken by Mr Godsmark and Mrs Wort, illustrated the Society's activities during the year: walks – the Arun, Lavington Stud, Graffham, Coates, Gumber Farm, Osiers Farm, Kirdford. The David Wort Memorial Walk had been postponed until June. The Annual Dinner at Petworth House; the Society scrapbooks, now maintained by Mrs Stevenson following the retirement of Mrs Godsmark; Petworth Fair, featuring the Town Crier (who paid tribute to the Harris brothers), the Town Band on the Gallopers and the Channel Islander who visits with his fairground organ; a trip to Ingrams Copse charcoal burning and cruck house, the Bluebell Railway and Sheffield Park Gardens.

Business over, Gordon Stevenson, current Chairman of the Petworth Cottage Museum Trust, related the story of the Museum from its inception in 1996. It was Ann Bradley who, against all advice, took her idea to Lord Egremont with the result that the cottage of Mrs Cummings, the Petworth House seamstress in the early 20th century, 346, High Street, was made available for conservation in its 1910 form.

So we were shown photographs of the cottage as it was prior to the

reconstruction and stages of the work in progress up to the opening.

Lots of events along the way: the visit in 1997 of Agnes Phelan who, as a child, had stayed with Mrs Cummings in 1919; the 10th anniversary in 2006; an exhibition marking 100 years after 1910; the book 'We don't do nostalgia' by Peter Jerrome and a new guide book; photographs by Rene Ehrhardt now used in posters and postcards; a book presented to Ann Bradley on her retirement as a trustee; Christmas window displays. A website was set up in 2005.

In the beginning, it was all about nostalgia for the visitors. Now that aspect is fading and the stewards are there to explain. Stewards are an essential element.

This is not a museum in the usually accepted sense with displays and labels, but there is now a need for some refurbishment – repairs to the range, redecoration and conservation. There is room for additional trustees, stewards – and visitors.

Gordon's enthusiasm and dedication, shared by Deborah his wife, made this an absorbing part of the evening. As Society members, they, with Peter, are ensuring that "Petworth should not lose touch with its past".

KCT

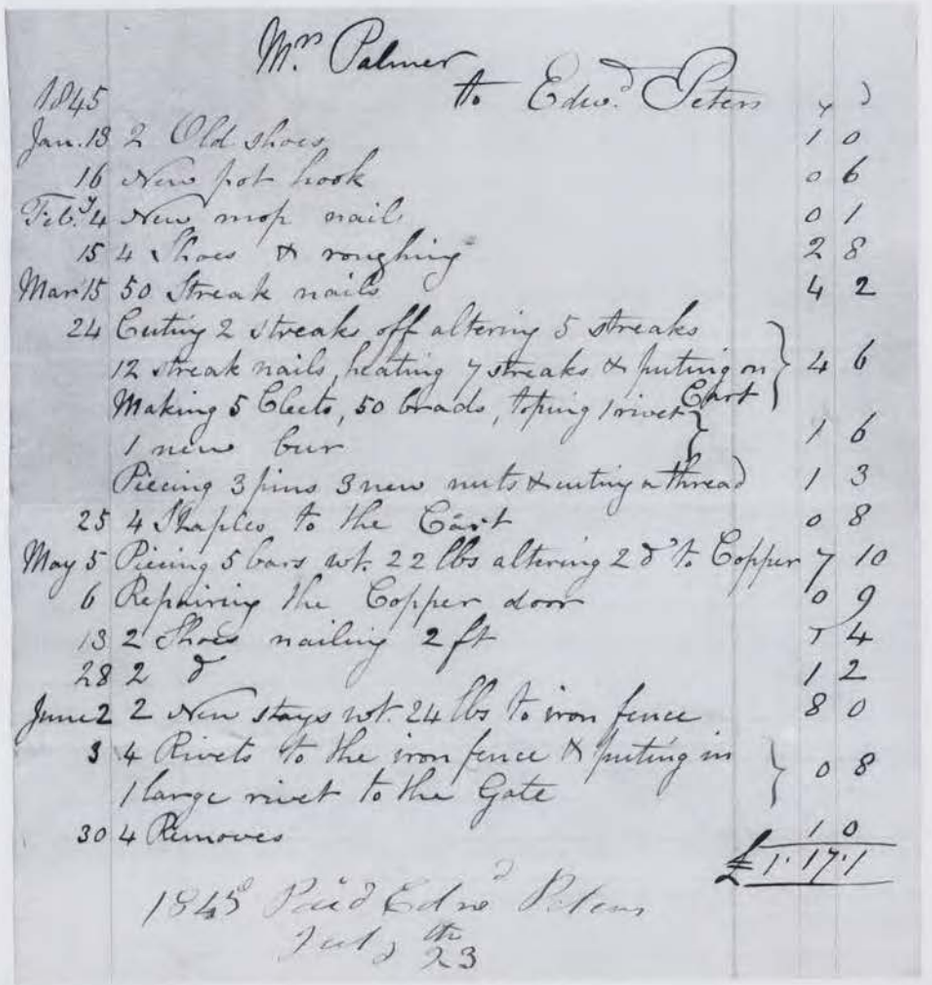
Old Petworth traders (17). Edward Peters the blacksmith

The further one retreats into the nineteenth century, the rarer printed billheads become, confined perhaps to larger and more ambitious concerns. Simple handwritten invoices predominate. This quarter offers a particularly fine example of the last. Written in a clear confident hand, the account is made out to Mrs Harriet Palmer at Avenings, an elderly widow of comfortable means. Edward Peters clearly rendered on a six-monthly basis. The content is reasonably transparent given its somewhat technical nature.

Streaks would appear from the context to be longer pieces of metal, but I have been unable to confirm this usage. Cleats are familiar enough, certainly in a agricultural context, often a wedge bolted on to the wheel of a cart, but less, probably, to the bodywork. A brad is a particular type of nail with a lip at the side rather than an orthodox head. A bur is a drag-chain for a cart, while remove means replacing a shoe, either putting on a fresh one or repairing an old one. In the entry for March 24th I was unable to read the word preceding "1 rivet". Clearly Mrs Palmer had the almost universal "copper" for washing clothes, something she would clearly not have operated herself.

Edward Peters the blacksmith, born locally in 1803, appears already in Pigot's 1826 trade directory and is a fixture in succeeding census returns from 1841. In 1881, at the age of 78, he appears as a master blacksmith employing three men. He is consistently located at Bunkers Hill at the top of Shimmings on the outskirts of the town but the precise site is not established. The census records suggest that he lived there with his wife and children. Another blacksmith, Richard Peters, can be found in census returns of the time. Born also in 1803 Richard was perhaps a twin brother of Edward.

P.



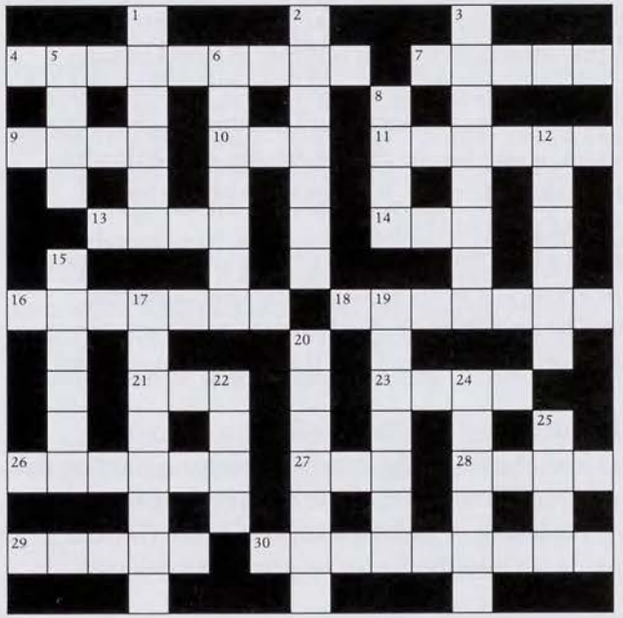
Mrs Palmer to Edwd Peters

		£	s	d
1845				
Jan. 18	2 Old shoes		1	0
16	New pot hook		0	6
Feb. 4	New mop nail		0	1
15	4 Shoes & roughing		2	8
Mar. 15	50 Streak nails		4	2
24	Cutting 2 streaks off altering 5 streaks 12 streak nails heating 4 streaks & putting on Making 5 Cleats, 50 brads, topping 1 rivet Chart		4	6
	1 new bur		1	6
	Piecing 3 pins 3 new nuts & cutting a thread		1	3
25	4 Shoes to the Cart		0	8
May 5	Piecing 5 bars wt. 22 lbs altering 2 d° to Copper		7	10
6	Repairing the Copper door		0	9
13	2 Shoes nailing 2 ft		1	4
28	2 d°		1	2
June 2	2 New stays wt. 24 lbs to iron fence		8	0
3	4 Rivets to the iron fence & putting in 1 large rivet to the Gate		0	8
30	4 Removes		1	0
		£	1	17 1

1845 Paid Edwd Peters July 4th 23

1930s Bramber. See "Murder" in George Garland's Washington.
Photograph by G. G. Garland.

FARMING CROSSWORD



8 Farm specialising in raising tadpoles? (4)
12 Property held by agreement with land owner (6)
15 Temporary livestock fence (6)
17 The 3rd Earl's model farm (4,4)
19 Small stream (7)
20 Sounds like a Roman Villa but it's a Petworth farm! (7)
22 Female 29ac (4)
24 Nod at boy – though he may not be a VIP! (6)
25 It flies straight, it's said (4)

ACROSS
4 Keeping the furrows straight is the important part of this annual match (9)
7 Petworth farm which exists in a state of suspense (5)
9 Sir Edward Elgar lived at this farm before moving to "Brinkwells" at Bedham (4)
10 What the rabbit must do to escape the 26ac (3)
11 Dye used to mark sheep (6)
13 Pivotal part of a cartwheel (4)
14 Said to get 29ac started (3)
16 The Earl of Egremont's apples ... (7)
18 ... treated thus to extract their juice (7)
21 Point the gun (3)
23 Grown in yards (4)
26 His main role is to raise game birds (6)
27 Snake-like fish which migrates here from the Sargasso Sea (3)
28 Old name for cow shed (4)
29 Powerful horse, once used for 1ac (5)
30 See 1dn

DOWN
1 & 30ac Our very own sheep (6,9)
2 Catch in a trap (7)
3 Small fry – not much of a catch (8)
5 Wool from 1dn might end up on one of these (4)
6 Time of celebration in the farming year (7)

SOLUTION TO BESIDE THE SEASIDE CROSSWORD

ACROSS
6 Lido, 7 Eric, 8 Punch, 11 Bosham, 12 Idler, 13 Omen, 14 Ice, 15 Oily, 17 Felpham, 19 Kipling, 21 Head, 22 Rye, 23 Lick, 26 Seven, 28 Beachy, 29 Cycle, 30 Stay, 31 Edit

DOWN
1 Pilot, 2 Hotham, 3 Helm, 4 Wilfrid, 5 Gull, 9 Caroline, 10 Ride, 15 Owl, 16 Pevensey, 18 Pad, 20 Regatta, 22 Rent, 24 Coates, 25 Chain, 27 Volk, 28 Boys

"Nothing that would seem out of place ..."

Up through the departing Farmer's Market, high-viz jackets and an emptying street. Looking toward July, that pivotal time when summer in John Halsham's words "turns her face from us," and spring begins to feel a long way away whether we look forward or back. If we have a quiet start at the Museum it'll give a chance to look at the garden – additional stakes for the dahlias, hoeing – it's difficult to keep the central bed of annuals clear of weeds. It's easier on the side border. "Nothing that would seem out of place in 1910."

I have to say that I've cheated a little this year: certainly the gazanias, exotic as they may seem, are authentic enough, if refusing to open in today's sunless, almost imperceptible drizzle. The erysimum "Bowles mauve" are a new variety but have held the side border together since April and the long racemes are still in flower: certainly not out of place.

A chance to fit in some late cornflower and clary seedlings, some more advanced clary are showing a hint of colour. The drizzle is becoming steadier; the rain beginning to glisten on the long handle of the hoe. The two long serving gooseberry bushes are slowly reddening. A nothing afternoon so far. One can imagine Mrs Cummings looking out into the garden on just such a dull mid-summer day as this.

In their own time visitors will come out of the quiet afternoon, looking perhaps for the cottage garden of their imagination. Get it right and it may unlock the door of memory. A car pulls up in the street outside, a couple alight and make off down the road. Twenty-first century noise is different, more constant, more accepted, more matter-of-fact, than the random non-silence of a century ago.

P.

Soft drinks and a few sundries

We came to Petworth from Kent, possibly something to do with my stepfather – he was an Army cook. The war had been over for a year or more but our family background was very unsettled. We were to be re-housed in a Nissen hut in Petworth Park. I would be, perhaps, eight. We were not actually in the Pheasant Copse but near the lower lake on what would later be the site of the Polish camp. Entrance was from the London Road on the left as you leave Petworth but before Limbo Farm to the right. The entrance has since been walled up.

Memories of the Nissen hut are hazy and we weren't long at Petworth. I can remember swimming in the lower lake and a tiny shop as you came in from the London Road. It sold cold soft drinks and a few sundries. The hut itself comprised one large room. There were pictures of girls, film stars perhaps, on the wall, presumably done by previous occupants. My mother divided the living room quarters, such as they were, from the bedrooms with string hung from the ceiling and then the individual "bedrooms" themselves in a similar manner. There were six of us, boys and girls, and obviously there was not a bedroom each. The huts otherwise appeared largely unoccupied.

A burly man with a big army greatcoat and a prominent scar on his face appeared to be some kind of caretaker. There was a great heap of rusty bicycles from which we'd pull out pieces to reassemble and try to ride them. The tyres, of course, had long perished. The family broke up and the children were separated. We left Petworth and would not return.

This snatched conversation with a visitor to the town reflects a twilight immediately after the war when the huts that would later accommodate the Polish camp were still vacant: the Canadian troops had gone and the later American troops too. The huts seem to have found limited occasional use for social re-housing. Ed.

Petworth will always be more than just a house

I came to live at Petworth just after we married in Argyll in April 1978. Two weeks later we came back from our honeymoon in Crete and began to set up our life together here. My husband Max was 30 years old and I was a year younger. He had already started his life as a writer. His first book 'The Cousins' was published the year before we were married.

My widowed mother-in-law, the Dowager Lady Egremont, had been living here with Max since her husband, the late Lord Egremont, died in 1972.

She had been making preparations to live in London and Cockermouth Castle for some time.

She and her husband came to live here in 1954, two years after the death of Lord Leconfield.

When Lord Leconfield died in 1952 the house had no central heating, very few bathrooms and a rather forlorn appearance. Lady Leconfield had ceased to take any interest in the house since before the war.

The ailing 80 year old Lord Leconfield had had his bedroom moved downstairs to the room that is now our dining room.

He ended his days in that room with a hunt servant sitting by the bedside reading aloud his meticulously kept hunting diaries which allowed him to dream of past days riding with his beloved hounds while holding a pair of reins attached to the foot of the bed.

My husband remembers him in that room and how the pictures by Reynolds and Gainsborough had been taken down to be replaced by large studio photographs of his favourite hunters whose names all began with the letter P.

Over the 22 years that they were here my parents-in-law made the house very comfortable and elegant.

As well as installing a marble chimney piece in the White Library (from the old family London house), replacing the ceiling and making new bookcases for the Red Library they put in a wonderful central heating system, large bathrooms and basins in the guest bedrooms.

My mother-in-law ran the house beautifully with a full staff in the house and gardens.

So when I arrived in 1978 the house was in full swing.

There was a cook, Daphne Turner, who was also my mother-in-law's lady's maid, a butler Maurice Howard, two cleaning ladies and much loved Nannie Parke who came in the holidays to be with Harry, my brother-in-law who was still at Oxford.

I had grown up in a cold, damp house on the west coast of Scotland.

I found coming to Petworth House was not in the least daunting mainly because Daphne, Maurice and Nannie Parke welcomed us with great friendliness and looked after us as if we were a couple of school children.

I relished the warmth of the house, the Sussex light as it streamed into the west windows in the evening and the bliss of having our meals cooked for us.

In those days the nursery rooms were particularly cosy because Nannie had spent so many years up there and it is where the children felt most relaxed and at home.

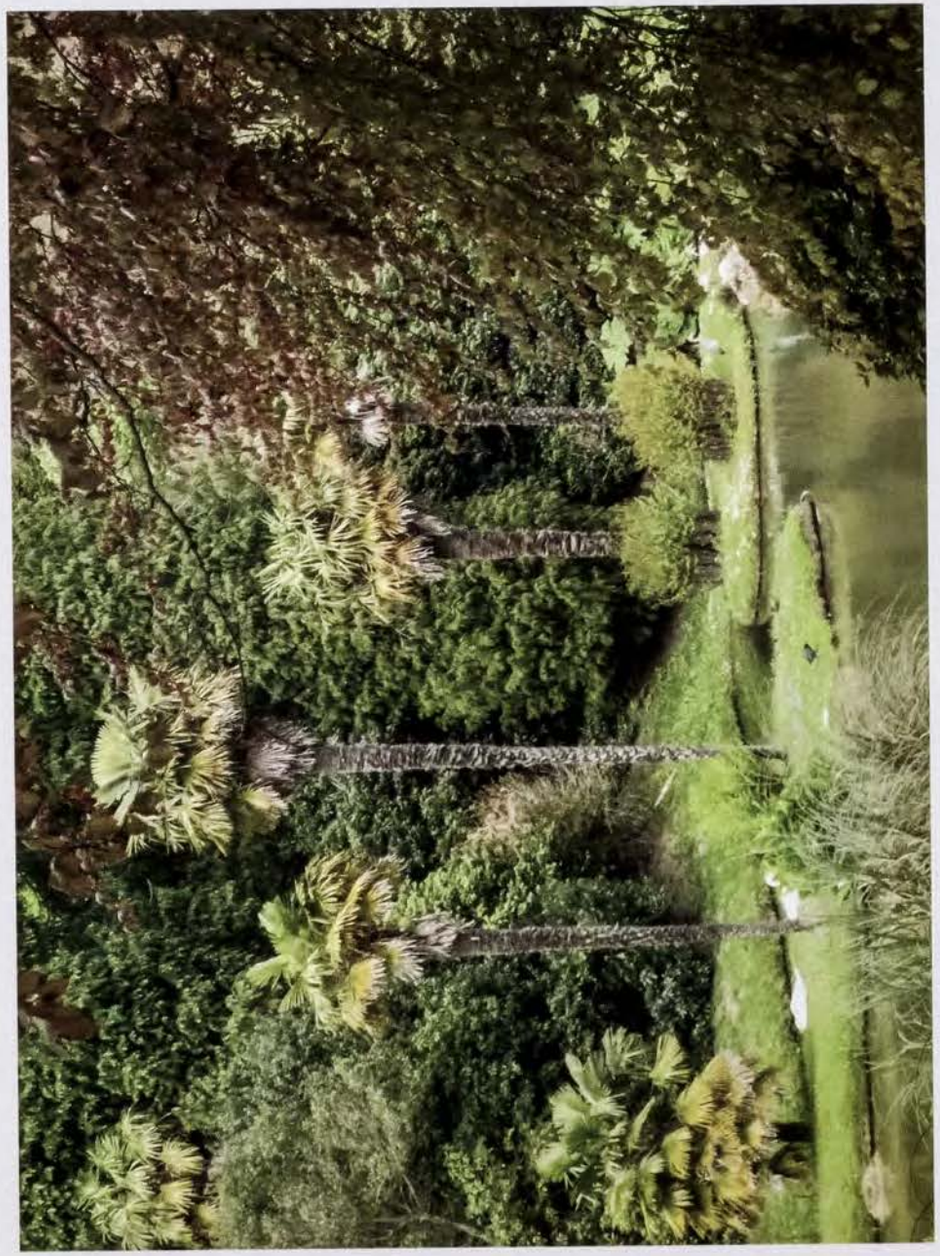
They regarded those nursery rooms as a refuge from the more alarming grown up life downstairs.

Soon our first daughter Jessica was on the way and so with great excitement we decided to re-decorate the nursery.

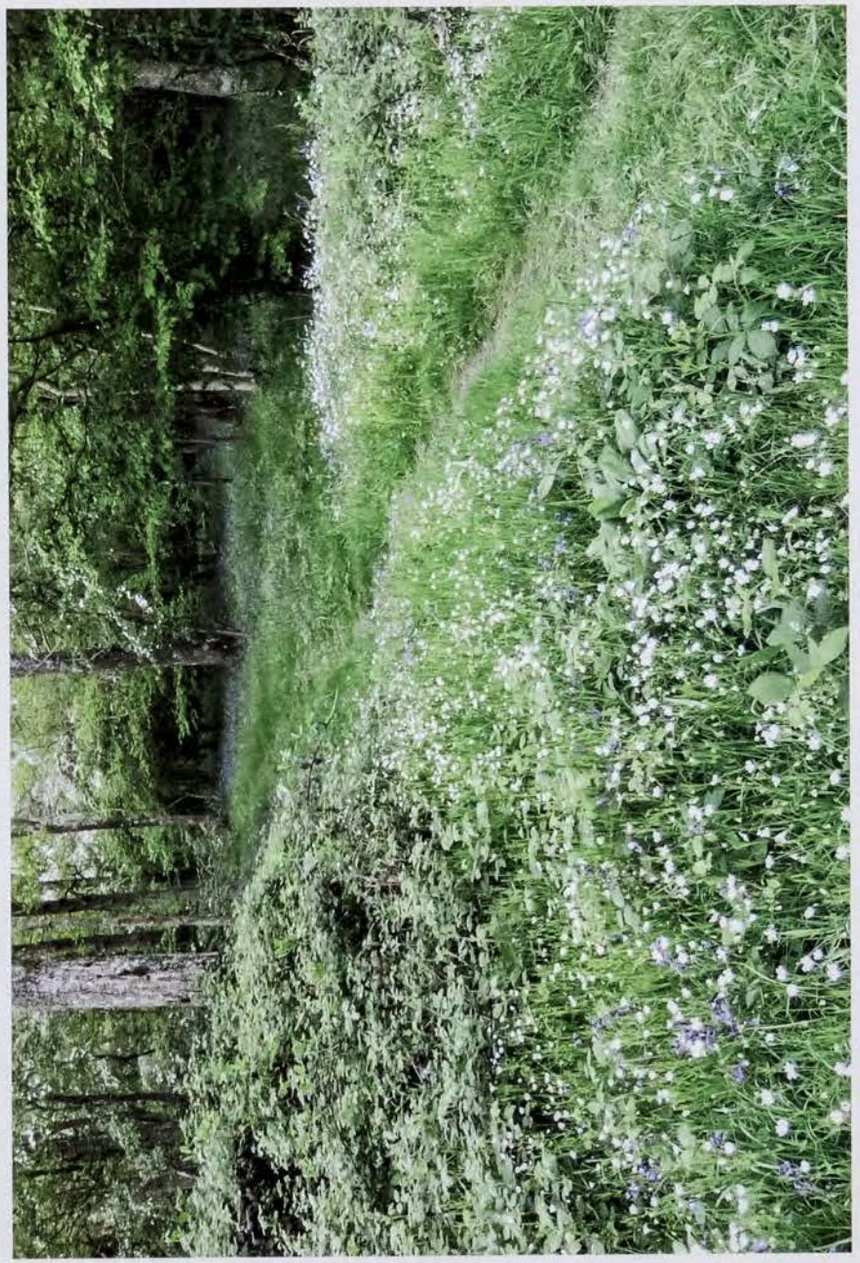
We wallpapered the day nursery in a pretty pattern of blue and yellow pansies which is there today and the 'sewing lady' Mrs Harrison, a Swiss woman who was driven over once a week from Tillington to mend linen and napkins, made new blue curtains on an ancient Singer sewing machine.

The ancient baby Belling stove on which Nannie had cooked all the nursery meals was replaced by an electric oven and to her delight an airing cupboard was

With the Petworth Society on the Bluebell Line 12th May.
(Gordon Stevenson)



Exotics in Sheffield Park 12th May.
(Gordon Stevenson)



The path through the woods Kirdford walk 16th May.
(Ian Godsmark)

"We seem to have the landscape to ourselves ..." Stag Park 21st June.
(Ian Godsmark)

Stag Park 21st June.
(Ian Godsmark)

"The gazanias are authentic enough ..." Petworth Cottage Museum.
(Ian Godsmark)

Sir John Falstaff in conversation. See "Agreeable whimsies all ... ?
From *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* Illustrated by J. Finnemore and F. L. Emanuel.
(Raphael Tuck and Sons 1900).

Sir John in the laundry basket.
Another illustration from the *Merry Wives*.

made by enclosing a hot water towel rail in the bathroom.

She had aired all those endless nappies in front of the fire by hanging them over the fireguard.

Caroline Egremont.
Re-printed from the *Petworth House Spaniel* July/August 2012.

[I have left the paragraphing as in the original. Ed.]

Agreeable whimsies all … ?

Mr John Dawtrey died in April 1936. He was in his eighties. Petworth born, he had lived most of his life away from the town. The 1891 census finds him in Brighton and, in later years, he had a building business in Reading. His Petworth roots remained deep, however, and he returned frequently to his home town, "where his engaging personality made him a very popular figure." A brief notice in the local press recalled that during a recent harsh winter he had arranged for the birds to be fed daily at his expense. The food was laid on his wife's grave in the old Petworth cemetery[1]. Almost as an aside, the writer observes that, as a keen antiquarian, John Dawtrey was also the author of a book about Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff, entitled the Falstaff Saga.[2]

While not of inordinate value, the book is certainly rare and having the chance to procure a copy, I did so. Clearly Master Dawtrey is a determined and resourceful wanderer in history's byways, as familiar with the Rotunda at the British Museum as he is with the more arcane recesses of the Bodleian, aristocratic private collections and the Barbican Library at Lewes. He would fit in such excursions with slack periods in the building trade and holidays.

Dawtrey's initial interest seems to have been to carry his extended family back to Sir Thomas Moore, author of Utopia, but, this failing, he began desultory enquiries into the Dawtrey and allied Hawtrey families. In time, one particular figure emerged from the shadows, "a kind of Sussex Falstaff." Sir Nicholas Dawtrey, an old soldier of Queen Elizabeth, was known by his letters and a long petition to the Queen seeking a pension. In this, after years of abject poverty, he would eventually gain limited success.

Equally famous for his fractious relationships with his superiors as for his corpulence, Nicholas held at one time the position of Seneschal of Clandeboye, in the chaos of warring factions that was Elizabethan Ireland. This being a direct appointment by the Queen herself, his superiors were powerless to remove Sir

Nicholas but adept at making his position as difficult and insecure as they possibly could.

Well versed in the dark arts of espionage and political assassination, the Seneschal lived dangerously. Arrogant, indolent and extravagant, on more than nodding terms with James VI of Scotland[3], Nicholas abandoned his position in Ireland in 1585 to seek easier pickings at Court. It was a decision Nicholas would come to regret. Ensuing commissions were few and his trenchant opinions too often ignored. He was often right: Hampshire's preparations for the Armada were indeed slipshod, while official policy in Ireland lacked any kind of forward vision. It would be years before a pension was finally granted, long years of poverty and undignified pleading and rebuff, exacerbated by his own refusal to cut his cloth accordingly. Here is a figure to some extent in the round if neither particularly attractive or significant. Has the sideways look at Falstaff made John Dawtrey a little hard on his subject? It is difficult to say.

The figure of Sir Nicholas once descried, John Dawtrey takes an imaginative leap into the icy waters of academia. Is Shakespeare's Falstaff a portrait from life with Nicholas as his model? Certainly in the goldfish bowl that was the Elizabethan court, it is likely that the two will have crossed paths. But did Shakespeare draw from life? A modern critic thinks not[4]: "Enthusiasts have ... sought Falstaff in historical persons, Tarlton the clown, Chettle the dramatist and Captain Nicholas Dawtrey ... agreeable whimsies all."

The thesis remains a possibility, if remote and impossible of proof. The abiding impression is of a gentle scholar in a bleak 1930s winter thinking of the suffering birds of his own home town and no doubt, too, of his dead wife. We may think too of some gallant surrogate trailing faithfully up to the Bartons[5] daily to fulfil Master Dawtrey's instructions. Petworth can remember its kindly scholar with affection and more than a hint of pride.

P.

1. Presumably the Bartons. The article, more a short comment, would be written by George Garland or, perhaps more probably, Mrs Garland. See PSM 112 (June 2003) page 51.
2. Routledge 1927.
3. Later James I of England.
4. A. R. Humphreys: New Arden Shakespeare: King Henry IV Part 1.
5. Or, perhaps, the Horsham Road cemetary..

A Garland postcard from the 1950s

This Garland postcard shows comic footballers at Hampers Green in the early 1950s.

Suggested identifications:

Back Row (L-R):
Peter Emmett, Charlie Saunders, Bert Purser, George Withers, Peter Sadler (to rear), Reg Bushby, "China" Sadler (to rear), John Standing, George Baxter, Bill Hill, Mr Parrott.

Middle Row (L-R):
Doll Purser, Reen Bushby, May Standing, Grace Salter, Phyl Sadler, Edie Smith, Sue Humphry.

Front Row (L-R):
Josie Bristow, Ivy Bristow, Mrs C. Saunders, Pam Bushby.

Courtesy Mr A. Penfold.

Adder fat and snow-water

During an idle period, I had, for no meaningful purpose, been reflecting on the changing contents of the Magazine. It seems to me that most present day contributors are looking back to the war years and even after, recollections from the fifties and early sixties have become part of the fabric of the Magazine as that generation reaches seniority. I have also detected that there has been a move away from country topics towards recollections from the town itself, no surprise there considering the great changes in farming and the decline in the agricultural workforce since the war.

Looking back, what stands out most of all among the contributors to the Magazine are the really distinctive recollections of a number of women. Without exception they were country women, most of whom had been raised in large close-knit families where the passing of oral traditions and the art of storytelling were second nature to them. Maternal links were incredibly strong among these women and the linking of hard learnt experience from one generation to another was instinctive. After all a young girl, barely more than a child, would upon marriage be required to set up home and manage the household without any of the modern aids enjoyed today. Remembering what her mother told her could on occasion be the difference between life and death for herself or her children. An adder's bite or a bad scald would rarely result in a call to the local doctor, for such visits were costly and to be avoided if at all possible. While survival was the main priority, huge importance was given to understanding the unexplainable. The belief in witches and the fear of old women had such moral or social worth that it was considered essential to educate children in these matters from their earliest years.

I have reproduced from the Magazine a few oddments which really do illustrate the importance of retaining these recollections and the significant contribution that this Magazine has made to preserving them. I hope that you enjoy them. Incidentally I don't believe that I have exhausted the stock and a more thorough search should reveal many more.

Boils
My brother had a boil and an old gipsy woman asked what was the matter with him. My mother said, "He's got this terrible abscess and it's so painful." The old lady said, "There are some cows in the meadow. Get the liquid from a cowpat and put it on the child's abscess and it'll be broken before he has his dinner." My mother thought it was a disgusting idea and refused to do it but my brother was in such pain that he sneaked out and did it. It worked. Edith Ayling. PSM 77.

Jaundice
Dock root tea. Docks are bitter and it was usual with the "tea" made of boiled dock roots to add liquorice to make it more palatable. The tea was made of roots not leaves. It was used as a drink to counter excess bile in the blood. Nellie Duncton. PSM 89.

Talking of liquorice, reminds me of when we used to have a dose of liquorice 'to clear us out'. It was vile, it wasn't black though, it seemed to be an awful mustard colour, and used to cling to our teeth so we had to rinse it away with water. Kath Vigar. PSM 90.

Cramp
The old people used to carry a nutmeg in their pocket to ward off cramp. Nellie Duncton. PSM 89.

Sore Throat
Granny's sister had a sore-throat which wouldn't clear up and Granny gave her an orange and told her to chew up the entire peel. It cured her sore throat. Nellie Duncton. PSM 54.

Colds
A candle would be melted and the tallow allowed to run all over a sheet of brown paper. The paper would then be put on the child's chest and back. Nellie Duncton. PSM 54.

Goiter
When I was a child I got the 'gorgers', in fact everybody got them at some time or another, and mother gave both me and my sisters a piece of black velvet to put round our necks and it had a press-hook at the back to hold it tight. I think it was to stop our glands from growing out. Nellie Duncton. PSM 109.

Rheumatism
In later life I used to get rheumatism in my hands. When I went walking anywhere I'd pick dandelions from the hedges and squeeze the milky juice over my knuckles. Nellie Dunction. PSM 81.

My knees were so bad I couldn't bend my leg and I was always falling about. When I went to bed I found a big fresh cabbage leaf and tied it over my knee, holding it with string above and below. In the morning I went to take the cabbage leaf off and it was like stiff brown paper, all the moisture had gone out of it. It cured my knee and although I am now 94 I still have no trouble. Nellie Duncton. PSM 89.

Toothache
If anyone had a toothache they'd go to Plaistow to an old lady who for half a crown would take the nerve out of the tooth. She had a berry of some kind, a clay pipe and a bowl of boiling water. She'd put the berry in the water and place the pipe over the bad tooth, then look in the water and say, "There's the maggot!" I can only think that the berry was used to deaden the nerve and the pipe drew it out by suction. Nellie Duncton. PSM 53.

Sores and cuts
Periwinkle ointment was made with periwinkle using both leaf and flower and homemade lard. It was used for sores and cuts, also for healing the teats on our cows when these were scratched. Nellie Duncton. PSM 53.

Jonas would bring the adder home, cut it open and remove the fat. It would then be stood in a cold cream jar in a saucepan of boiling water, and strained through a piece of muslin into a bottle. It was applied with a feather and was widely esteemed for its healing properties. Nellie Duncton. PSM 53.

Warts
First ask the person how many warts they have. That's important. I remember someone had a lot and miscounted, then wondered why, after I'd charmed them, she'd got a big one left on her hand. If the number's wrong then you're not going to cure them all are you? One way is to buy a piece of beef, or you can count out a number of peas, to the exact number of warts, say the exact number and throw the peas so that they disappear, in the same way so the warts will disappear. I've done it and it works. Nellie Duncton. PSM 81.

I had several warts that covered my hands. Her remedy, she told me, in her rather high pitched voice was to, "Go out in the garden, turn over a few large stones till I found a white slug. Then rub it over the ailment. Don't tell anyone; and don't wash the slime off." I carried out her instructions and within a week or two they had disappeared. David Johnston. PSM 85.

Childbirth
My mother always went to be "churched" after she had had a child and before she'd go into anyone's house, as a thank you that she was safely delivered. Nellie Duncton. PSM 83.

Burns
My little brother hit up against a kettle and the boiling water splashed all over his arm. His underarm was scalded and the blisters hung down like great bladders. I can't remember whether mother pricked them, but she bathed the arm with olive

toil every day for a week or more. I think nowadays you would be advised against using olive oil in such a situation but after a week he got better. Nellie Duncton. PSM 90.

Chilblains
"Snow-water". When it snowed, old people would gather snow, melt it, and keep the water to ward off chilblains. They would rub their children's feet, legs and arms with it. Nellie Duncton. PSM 88.

Hazelnuts
I can remember the old people saying that the number of double nuts that you picked was always the same as the number of twins in the village. Nellie Duncton. PSM 110.

Trees
I can remember a huge walnut tree in the garden and Mrs. Henly would sell the fruit to make a bit of extra money. For some reason we had a bad crop one year and mother-in-law asked me to give the tree a good thrashing. She gave me a stick with a chain attached, I climbed up the tree, I must have cut a strange figure indeed, me up in the tree beating the branches with the chain. Anyway it must have done some good for the following year the crop was not only improved, it was better than ever! Ned Pearce. PSM 109.

Holly
Mother would never allow holly into the house before Christmas Eve. Joy Gumbrell. PSM 116.

Vegetables
Petworth tradition has it that seed potatoes should be planted on Good Friday, spring cabbage seeds sown on 25th July, Horn Fair day and broad beans on Petworth Fair day, November 20th. Phil Sadler. PSM 108.

Good Friday was always a gardening day and it was time to plant the first potatoes. I suppose that most people still carry on that tradition – I certainly do. Christine Bushell. PSM 128.

Turkeys
It was a time of homespun remedies if at all possible. My mother made a concoction of chopped onions for the turkeys; they tended to get "shooting red" a serious gullet disorder which might come when they were just "feathering". Christine Gillmore. PSM 85.

Pigs
A slaughtered pig should not be salted by a woman during one of her periods. The salt wouldn't take and the pork would ruin. Nellie Duncton. PSM 88.

Horses
Joe had a horse which we thought had cholic. Well it was said that you shouldn't let a cholicy horse lie down so Joe was walking it in the field in front of the house when it dropped down dead. I always remember it because there was an oak tree there and where the horse dropped dead the grass never did grow again. Nellie Duncton. PSM 109.

Turpin the horse used to get a mite in his feet which made him kick all the time, against a post or a beam. For this my father would boil a pound of tobacco in a saucepan, let it go cold and apply it. Christine Gillmore. PSM 85.

Rabbits
Rabbit brains. Dad had bought in some rabbits, we skinned them, and then I had to put my finger through the soft bit of bone on their skull and pick out the brain. It was very good for young babies and even one-day old babies would be given it off the finger. Nellie Duncton. PSM 110.

Bees
When bees swarmed we used to rush out with saucepan lids, kettles, dustbin lids, anything that would make a tinny noise. If we did this the swarm would settle in the orchard. Once they had settled in a tree he would get some ashes, put the hive on the ground and swish round the inside of the hive with broad beans soaked in beer. He would then tie his trouser legs and sleeves with string to stop the bees, get the saucepan of warm ashes and keep throwing ash on the beer-soaked side of the hive. As the bees smelled the rising fumes from the beer they would come down into the hive.

Wasps
If you were stung by a wasp, the remedy was to rub onion juice on the sting. This would take all the pain away. Nellie Duncton. PSM 89.

Cattle
Blackleg in cattle was a notifiable disease, an infectious gangrenous affliction that was usually fatal. To fend this off it was the custom to put a piece of wire and string through the jutting piece of cartilage in the cow's throat. I don't know how effective this was but we did it. The idea was that if the wound in the cartilage festered a little, it gave protection against blackleg. Christine Gillmore. PSM 85.

There was a young white calf which was having a fit. This was dealt with by slitting the ear and letting some of the blood out. Christine Gillmore. PSM 85.

Witches
"Clever" woman is much better than witch; such women often had great knowledge of herbs and other lore and could be a great influence on people. One of my relations had a reputation as a clever woman. She lived a fair way away and sent some flowers to put on her mother's grave. She upset us however by saying darkly, "I'll know whether you've actually put them on" – it was as if we needed to be checked on. We were so angry we threw them on the fire. Whether she knew this or not I don't know. I wouldn't be surprised if she did. Clever women were not to be under-estimated. Nellie Duncton. PSM 88.

On the way to Kirdford there was a cottage and whenever Grandad Duncton had the stone-cart, horse and waggon of course, the horses would stop dead by the cottage. Nothing he did could move them. He was told to take out his pocket-knife and cut a piece out of one of the wheel-spokes on his cart. The horses moved on and the next day the old woman had a cut finger. Nellie Duncton. PSM 88.

When the children of that day ... , saw the old woman apparently intending to get over the gate [in Petworth churchyard], which had a broad wooden step on each side, they would often say to each other, "Let us stop the old witch from coming this way and make her go round by the horse chestnut tree;" and then they would put two sticks, or two pieces of straw, or even two pins, in the shape of the cross, and immediately the poor old creature came near, long before, as they said, she could possibly see the cross, she would suddenly turn away, mutter a curse or two and crawl round the other way into the town. Mrs. Sharp. PSM 62.

I have heard that if a man or woman who is bewitched gets a horse's heart and sticks it full of pins, saying the Lord's Prayer all the time, but nobody must speak to them, while they are at it, and then writes the witch's name upon a piece of parchment, and stuffs it into one of the holes at the top of the heart, and burns it to a cinder on a wood fire, and then, when it is all in a scrump pounds it fine like dust, and throws it into a stream of water, which runs in the direction of the witch's house, that the person will get well. Mrs. Sharp. PSM 62.

Adultery
Father had a passion for Petworth and would tell me stories of his childhood in the town. He clearly recalled seeing a skimmity ride taking place at Petworth and on another occasion a group of Mummers came to the town and performed a play. Marjorie Skoumel. PSM 141. [A skimmity or skimmity-ride. A boisterous

procession of elaborately dressed young men parading through the town and past the homes of an adulterous couple in order to draw attention to the offenders. For a brief sketch of a Petworth 'skimmington' see *Tales of Old Petworth*, p.66.]

Miles Costello

The Sussex books of Marjorie Hessell Tiltman

The name of Marjorie Hessell Tiltman is perhaps mostly known now through the prize of £2,000 annually awarded by PEN, for the best non-fiction history book, from £100,000 that she bequeathed in her will for this purpose. A list of those authors who have won the prize, which has been awarded every year since 2000, can be found on the Internet, yet there seems to be no information on-line about Marjorie Hessell Tiltman herself. In West Sussex though, there may be some people who remember that she lived in the Pulborough area, and maybe a few who have one of her most well known books, *Cottage Pie*.

Cottage Pie is one of the books I keep on my bedside table. It is the sort of book I like to just dip into, choosing a page at random, taking more or less pot-luck in what I'll end up reading about. It may be about how to make chutney, or how friendly sparrows can be, or a description of the old almanacs and odds and ends to be found in a farmer's office, or details about the construction of Stane Street, the Roman road near which she lived.

Cottage Pie is set out in twelve chapters, each covering a month – beginning with June and going all the way through to May, and it is a sort of story of the year which would seem to be exactly how Marjorie lived it. There is talk with the neighbours, discussions on how to arrange the garden and what flowers to plant where, with asides on the nature of the different plants, including the weeds, and nearby trees, and the crops in the fields, and all manner of what one might call countryside subjects. Here is an excerpt, chosen more or less at random.

> The making of marmalade is one of the happy, the exhilarating experiences which prevent January in the kitchen from being frankly dull ... Searching for an explanation to account for the term "marmalade" being equally applicable to a conserve made with quince or peach or pear or apple or pineapple or marrow or melon or prune or apricot, we discovered the derivation of the word in the Portuguese term for "quince"; and in 1778, to only two recipes for marmalade made with oranges, the famous Mrs. Glasse, in her *Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, added marmalade of quinces, of cherries, of eggs, or white or red marmalade.

After which, she gives a recipe for orange marmalade, and then one for Marmalade of Eggs The Jews' Way – for which you'll need the yolks of 24 eggs! This is the kind of book I love, and it's set in Sussex too. There are little stories in *Cottage Pie*, mostly revolving around the Johnsons – Dad, Mum, Lucy and her two sons – and We Are Seven, the seven daughters of a neighbouring farmer, and there are other locals too, many of them bearing fine old Sussex names, like Boniface the gardener, and Farmer Puttick, and whether the author is naming real people, or using particularly Sussex surnames to hide their true identities it doesn't matter. Along with the occasional breaks into dialogue, much of it very local and involving dialect words, everything just builds up into a colourful immersion of the epitome of Sussex – its people, its history, the plants and the birds and the farms and the woods and the Downs.

It's unlikely I'll ever read the book cover to cover, from start to finish, and so there may well be parts of it that I never get to read, but that doesn't matter, this just adds to the sense of mystery in turning the pages, and I just enjoy having such a book that I can dip into, without having to remember what happened before, or think about what might lie ahead, but to just experience the time the author describes, and learn something maybe about some countryside subject, old or new, which she turns to where pertinent.

Reviewing it in *Sussex County Magazine* Arthur Beckett notes that the author describes her book: 'as hash, like cottage pie, but one that is made of fresh meat, and in their blurb her publishers explain that this 'meat' consists of useful advice about flowers and vegetables and herbs and seeds and bulbs, of original cookery recipes, of strange sorts of sewing, of the inimitable Johnson family, who look after her, and of odd (but always interesting) bits of information about the neighbouring country. That country is the Arun valley, where the cottage was built. Here Miss Tiltman kept a diary in which she noted many pleasant incidents which, at a later date, she transferred to her book. This she has done in a very effective way: little snatches of conversation, thumbnail character sketches, brief descriptions of the surroundings and so on. It all makes a very pleasant literary pabulum.'

A review in *The Times* said that 'she writes of the countryside with much wisdom and charm' and in *Good Housekeeping*, where some of the material was first published, the reviewer declared that 'to all who have ever owned a cottage in the country or who are lucky enough still to possess one, this book will be a joy.'

Cottage Pie was published in 1940. In 1944, Marjorie brought out a sort of sequel, titled *A Little Place in the Country*; and then in 1952, she made them into a trilogy with a third book in the series, *The Birds Began to Sing*. All three books are much the same sort of thing – which is to say: very good – and all have black-and-

white illustrations. The second and third books are illustrated by Gwenda Morgan, who was one of Marjorie's friends and lived near her, and *Cottage Pie* has illustrations by C. Walter Hodges.

In her Preface to *A Little Place in the Country*, Marjorie writes: 'This book, although complete in itself, is a continuation of *Cottage Pie* in so far as it tells of the same cottage and the same village ... The record is a true but not a historical one. That chronologically it is inaccurate is the fault of the English climate. Since the first volume of *Cottage Pie* was published, we have had three Januaries. One was the coldest for nearly half a century, one the warmest. Rather than choose either one or the other, I have preferred to make my particular January the apotheosis of many Januaries, and my June of many Junes. Let no sharp-sighted reader write kindly, then, to point out that in March the intruding cows are eating broccoli which the frosts had already destroyed the preceding February.'

> For those with gardens, June can still lay claim to being a gourmet's month, mostly on the strength of young vegetables. Tiny carrots, new potatoes, early peas, incomparable salads – all, with judicious trimmings provided by the herb garden, are worth to take the table unsupported by the gross aid of the butcher's shop...
>
> The fields are bestrewn with wild flowers – ox-eyed daisies, poppies, my lady's bedstraw, fool's parsley, hedge garlic, wild carrot, meadowsweet, hogweed, goosegrass and great bindweed. The garden brims over with annuals. Canterbury bells, candytuft, larkspur and clarkia, cornflowers, poppies and love-in-a-mist.

Writing in the *Glasgow Evening News* Compton Mackenzie described *A Little Place in the Country* as 'A delightful book ... I settled down to enjoy Marjorie Hessell Tiltman's admirable reproduction of Sussex speech and her equally admirable delineation of the Sussex landscape. The book is consistently entertaining through every month of the year.'

The author's maiden name was Marjorie Hand, and she was born in 1900 in Stourbridge, Worcestershire, where her father was a draper. She was the first of a handful of children. The family later moved to Birmingham, and then to Hampstead in London, where Mr. Hand worked as a Fine Art Dealer. A sound knowledge of fine art informs a few of Marjorie's novels. She trained to become a journalist and at the age of 18, began working for *The Pictorial* magazine. In 1925 she married Hugh Hessell Tiltman, who was a foreign correspondent for *The Guardian*. They moved to The White Cottage, which an architect friend had designed and built for them, in Brook Lane in Coldwaltham, West Sussex, and this is where Marjorie began writing articles for *Good Housekeeping*, *Homes and Gardens*, and *Country Life* and later for farming magazines as well. Some of these articles would eventually become parts of *Cottage Pie* – but this was not her first book.

Her first book was about missionaries, *God's Adventurers*, published in 1934, and the following year she had two books published: *Women and Modern Adventure*; and *English Earth* which is about farming and, amongst other things, has a fascinating chapter on the history of cider-making in this country. Then in 1939 her first novel was published, *Quality Chase* which was partly inspired by her father's early life. It received good reviews and was the *Evening Standard* book of the year. One reviewer noted that *Quality Chase* is 'that rare thing, a book that has written itself straight from the heart and a singular experience' and added that it 'has done for fiction what Chippendale did for furniture.'

Her second novel, *Mrs. Morel* was published in 1942, and much of this is set in West Sussex. After *A Little Place in the Country*, 1944, she wrote *Goodbye to Lilly House* which is a semi-autobiographical novel inspired by the period when the Hands were living in Hampstead.

Her husband also wrote books, mainly about foreign politics. He was abroad a lot, working in America or China, and Marjorie sometimes went to spend a few weeks with him. But in 1951, he decided they should move to Tokyo, and the house in Brook Lane was sold and Marjorie went with him. She wrote a novel about five women living in Japan during the Allied Occupation, *Born A Woman*, published that year. However, she was so upset by social conditions in Tokyo, that just months after moving there, she left, returning to her beloved countryside in West Sussex, where she bought a house at Pulborough. Her next book, published in 1952, was *The Birds Began to Sing* which completed the *Cottage Pie* trilogy; and it marked an important turning point for Marjorie, because when she had left Tokyo, she and Hugh had effectively separated, and although she would spend the rest of her life in Pulborough, he never again lived with her.

After *The Birds Began to Sing*, she stopped writing non-fiction books and concentrated on novels. *Cock's Nest*, published in 1954, is a curious story about a woman at a party who mistakenly takes home a coat far more expensive than her own, and the effect this incident has on herself and other people. Then the following year, the sequel to *Quality Chase* was published: *Quality Chase's Daughter* and this too had many good reviews. *Master Sarah*, published 1959, is set during the Opium War in China, and *The Bridge of Love* (1963) and *Fanny's Farewell* (1967) are romantic novels.

Few of her novels are set in Sussex, but one that is, *Mrs. Morel*, is interesting because of the large number of fictitious place names which occur in it. In the *Cottage Pie* trilogy, Coldwaltham appears under the name 'Colbourne' which looks very Sussexy. But in *Mrs. Morel*, the book which came out after *Cottage Pie*, the village goes by the odd name of 'Fotherham'. There are far too many fictitious place names in the novel to try identifying here, but from the mention of The Angel Inn on page 75, I would assume that 'Fairhurst' is more likely to be

Petworth rather than Midhurst, as it would make sense for the archaeologist in that part of the story to stay at an inn which is near Fotherham. Some of the other places are easy to identify: 'Camchester' which has a cathedral is almost certainly Chichester; but what Sussex place is hidden with the peculiar name of 'Girdles' is anybody's guess – though I suspect it is somewhere near Horsham.

The story is a bit complicated. It begins with a widower doctor moving into the village, who becomes attracted to an archaeologist he once met, Kate Morel, who spends much of the novel working on an excavation abroad. The doctor himself is interested in archaeology, and there is also a male archaeologist involved – the one who stays at The Angel Inn, in Fairhurst. Interestingly, with all these archaeologists around, there are odd little pseudo-histories of some of the fictitious places. For example, in Chapter 4, we learn that the 'Missals' estate, which is just outside Fotherham, was transferred to the monastery of Feotherhum' by an Anglo-Saxon princess named Aelfthryth, according to the Charter, and that in Norman times it was called 'Mysules'.

In a long review of the book in *Sussex County Magazine*, it says that: '*Mrs. Morel* is an unusual novel of real distinction. Its authoress has obviously a well cultivated mind and writes clear and delightful English. This is only her third (*sic*) novel, yet she writes with the skill of a veteran, and her work holds great promise for the future ... The action of the story moves steadily, and the interest of the reader is retained throughout. *Mrs. Morel* may be warmly recommended to all who enjoy a well written and well constructed novel.'

Incidentally, 'Morel' is not given in any of the surname dictionaries I have. In one of the *Cottage Pie* books – I don't know which, as none of them has an index – I learnt that morels are a little honeycomb-like fungus, which can be used in cooking, and that they could be found near a certain track between Bury and Sandy Lane. The three books are all full of odd little gems of information, and I must heartily recommend one or all of them to anybody who lives in the countryside, and especially to those fortunate enough to be living in the Weald of West Sussex. And so to end this Sussex tribute to Marjorie Hessell Tiltman, here are two quotes from the winter chapters of *The Birds Began to Sing*. The first is set in November, and the second, from Christmas time, is the very last paragraph of the book.

> But it was a different landscape that remained – a beautiful skeleton, picked clean by the frost and the breezes, washed by the rains, yet so far neither withered or marred by bleakness or decay, but decorated still with berries. One hedge of thorn on the way to Chanctonbury had exchanged its leaves for a crown of rubies eight feet high, round and unpolished but crimson-red in the setting sun. Its opposite neighbour was wreathed with smoky tangles of the traveller's joy. Chain upon chain these hedges stretch until they rise with the upwards swelling of the land towards the Downs, whose hard chalk and rough winds thin them to sparse and solitary trails hardly sufficient to break the wind, but significant, perhaps, for their marking the sheep tracks or ancient pathways.
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> Collecting my lists, strolling from the garden into the paddock, I all but stepped upon an unexpected lark. It rose up sharply from under my feet and began almost instantly to sing. As the divine carol rose higher and higher towards the gate of heaven a hedge sparrow in the thorn below it echoed it with its own modest twittering, and an imitative robin sent up a sudden trill from a nearby apple tree branch.

Some of the biographical information comes from *Notable Sussex Women* by Helena Wojtczak.

Shaun Cooper

Michaelmas 1942

I can remember walking down North Street on the way to school. It was raining but otherwise, a normal day. I think it was before the siren had been put on the police station (or was it the courthouse?). There were red bulbs in the light holders and one fixed in the wall by the Horsham Road junction. Whether they were shining on this particular day I cannot remember. There had been some talk of using the laundry tunnel from the House as a makeshift shelter and we had been trooped into the tunnel with a view to this but nothing had come of it. As we reached the Horsham Road turning we'd pass Steve's (Mr Stevenson the headmaster) house on the corner of North Street then cross the road to go into school.

We never used the front door but came from the south side by Lord Leconfield's laundry and into a cloakroom, ready for the 9 o'clock assembly. The senior school was divided into two by a partition of wood and glass which separated Mr Stevenson's senior class from Miss Marshall's middle class. The partition would fold back for assembly and then go back. The smaller junior class was independent of the two senior classes in a small detached annexe at the south (laundry) end.

I can't now remember that morning's lessons at all. It was a perfectly normal day. The only unusual feature was the number of boys kept back at home because of the weather, while some seniors were at a carpentry class in the town. It was break: some of us were drinking milk, some perhaps tootling on the bamboo pipes

which were a particular speciality of the school. I can remember Mr Stevenson sitting at his desk: his invariable custom was to break up a raw egg in a glass of milk and drink it.

There was a huge bang and all the glass in the partition blew out and there were clouds of dust. My first thought was of a gas attack and I instinctively held my breath. Seventy three years on it is still as if it were yesterday. I looked at Mr Stevens. He said, "Get under your desks boys." In fact I was already making my way toward the never used front door. Suddenly I felt myself going up in the air and then falling down again with debris showering down on me. This was a second bomb. I think that what saved me was, curiously, being right next to the blast which went up like a cone. I was only in Miss Marshall's room, having come from the senior classroom.

I could still feel things dropping round me and could see that I was trapped under debris and, I think, one of the beams. I couldn't move but I could see a chink of light. Then I saw Reg Bushby, shorn of shoes and socks: he was climbing out of a crater. The next I knew was Bill Parsons the Petworth ambulance driver freeing me of the beam. I began to pick my way over the rubble into North Street. I didn't feel particularly hurt except that my neck seemed to be "bubbling" on the left side. I was setting off home to Cherry Orchard, four Leconfield cottages of which we lived on the end, in 350 F. I didn't get far. I was picked up by a Canadian, almost certainly one of those based at Flathurst on the Horsham Road, and slung over his shoulder. I vividly remember that the back of his overalls was covered in blood. He bundled me into the back of a lorry and I was taken up to the Cottage Hospital. I can't remember if anyone was with me in the lorry, nor do I remember being taken into the hospital.

I was put into a room with Terry Lucas another survivor. I can distinctly recollect my mother and Mrs Lucas looking at us through a window. They didn't come in – probably they weren't allowed. After that we were taken down to the hospital where there were some R.A.F. personnel from Tangmere. My wound had been caused not by shrapnel but by a piece of flying brick, and the wound was packed with gauze.

In 1955 I complained about feeling something in the side of my face, and a piece of glass, no doubt from the partition was removed at the Royal West Sussex Hospital. It had been with me all through National Service. For years I kept it in a small glass jar but it has gone now. There was a picture of me with Bill Parsons in the local newspaper at the time.

It may be of interest that I was in the Gog Woods when I came upon a Czech-Canadian soldier burying his dog Zeke who had been run over by an army lorry. He fenced off the grave, and put a piece of inscribed sandstone with the divisional flashes on the grave as a memorial. He and I talked about it. I think I am right in saying that there were only the two of us, I had come upon the scene quite by chance.

Tony Penfold was talking to the Editor.

One standard higher

I was born in 1932 at 3 New Street, virtually opposite the butcher's. The shop is now an estate agents. Living next door was Miss Bartlett, a teacher at the Infants' School (on the site of the present Public Library). My mother had, at some time, worked at the International Stores (now the Cooperative) but now took in relief workers as weekly lodgers. They worked at the Stores and usually went home at the weekend. They tended to be regular and I would get to know them. I particularly remember Len Jarvis who would later have his own premises in Pound Street (now a Chinese takeaway). I was about three and a half and was told to get him our of bed: it was time for work. I had a little toy mallet and hit him on the head with it. It was something he would recall even years afterward. When the war came he was called up: I believe he was in Burma.

My mother being so busy, Miss Bartlett suggested I went to school although I was not yet four. At least it would get me out from under my mother's feet if for half a day, mornings only. Having some eighteen months' advantage over my contemporaries, when I "officially" arrived at the Infants' School I was put up a stage. In fact as I continued, maths and English books would be sent up for me from the North Street Boys' School.

Next stop would be the Boys' School itself at the bottom of North Street, and I went straight into the second group in the juniors, missing the first year. I did not know it then; but this would have important consequences. The Junior School was slightly detached; the main school being one big classroom divided for lessons by a moveable seven foot wooden screen topped with glass. It would be pushed back daily for occasions like assembly when the whole school gathered.

I always walked to school: some came by bike, and one or two by bus, but very few. That September day was dull and rainy, with a cloud base no more than 400 feet. As I understand it, the bomber came in from the south west, and jettisoned his load. At that height, instead of landing nose first, the bombs hit the ground flat somewhere between Petworth House and Park, and bounced. One landed on Lord Leconfield's laundry at the Horsham Road junction, one on the school, one on the playground, while another landed in a field. With the plane travelling at

150-170 knots, the bombs went straight back in the air to come down nose first. The aircraft had been flying very low.

It was a normal morning break: some of us, certainly I was, drinking a third of a pint of milk through a straw. I was standing to one side of the partition at the end of Standard 5 (there were 7 in all). There was a brief moment as the bomb came through the roof before the explosion and one of the boys put his hand on the fin of the bomb, vaulted over and ran. The bomb didn't explode on impact. No doubt it had a delayed fuse of some kind. I was within twelve feet and what saved me was that the falling roof was held up by a fifteen inch beam which had fallen across the piano and kept the worst of the falling debris off me. Mr Stevenson the headmaster? I was only aware that he had been at his desk.

The big beam was also held up by the fireplace and rubble was still falling if only lightly. I wasn't hurt but I couldn't move. I had the strange feeling that my inner body could move but my skin couldn't. Difficult to explain. I lay there perhaps an hour or more, occasionally drifting into unconsciousness. Eventually I could hear muffled voices; someone moving the rubble and I distinctly heard someone saying, "This one's alive." Standards 3 and 4 had taken the worst of it, Standard 5 of which I was a member, rather less. I had good reason to be thankful to Miss Bartlett.

Soon I was slung over the shoulder of a Canadian soldier and at the Cottage Hospital. I was lying on a stretcher in the hallway and Norman Bourne, my nearest neighbour at school, was beside me. He lived at the Police Station; we had moved to Grove Street in December 1939. I couldn't see him very well as I had mortar and rubble in my eyes, fortunately not glass. Suddenly my father appeared with another man, carrying a stretcher. I was covered in rubble and dust and he didn't recognise me. I remember saying to him, "Aren't you going to speak to me?"

After a while we were checked over then taken in a Ford Airfield Royal Naval ambulance, not to St Richards's where the children's ward was full, but to the Royal West Sussex, then operating very much as a military hospital. The soldiers would give us a bar of chocolate every morning which suited us fine. At the end of October I was transferred to the Schiff Home at Cobham, a rest home used for people who had been bombed in London. One of the governors was Mr Morley Fletcher who lived near Petworth. Fortunately for me one elderly Czech surgeon was on the staff. I'd been in for four days when the nurse became very concerned at my rapidly rising temperature. The surgeon diagnosed acute appendicitis and operated immediately. He almost certainly saved my life. I came back from the Schiff by ambulance. It was Christmas Eve 1942 and I was kept in bed from then until mid-January under the care of Dr Druitt.

The corrugated Iron Room behind the Westminster Bank in Market Square was being used as a temporary school for evacuees and, for a while, the Boys' School moved there too. It worked on an open plan system with long trestle tables, no partitions and a cacophony of different voices. The disused forge just to the north was used for carpentry lessons and Standards 6 and 7 had been there when the bombs fell. I was told that the blast shook down all the rubbish accumulated on the beams on to the boys' heads. Carpentry, I say, but the material was in fact Perspex. I remember later making a toast rack.

Obviously we had been unsettled by our experience and this had had its effect on our scholarship results. It was felt in the town that we had had a raw deal and eventually eight of us were offered an interview at Midhurst Grammar School. We all went over and were accepted: it was early September 1945 and we would go in from Petworth on the bus.

I left in July 1948. There was a definite boarder/day divide and we Petworth boys stuck together. I remember one particularly belligerent boarder being pitched over a low wall by several of us. He didn't trouble us again. I'd barely been two hours in school when I was called into the headmaster's study. Mr Lucas said, "I don't want any trouble with you," referring apparently to the fact that we had the same surname. I never did quite see what he was getting at.

I think that what we Petworth boys had been through gave us a relative maturity for our age. Mr Cox our form master once said to me, "How is it that you and your friends seem more adult that the others?" I muttered something about the school tragedy. He didn't agree or disagree. I have to say, however, that I wasn't one of his star pupils.

I didn't take my school certificate but went straight to work with G.P.O. telephones. My father knew Ron Pidgley who worked for the G.P.O. and he took me round the Exchange to familiarise me a little with the equipment. I went for an interview with the head postmaster at Worthing. I would be an apprentice at Horsham, leaving Petworth on my bike at 6.50 a.m. to catch the train at Pulborough. I had an arrangement with the Fittleworth coalman (Mr Tullett?) for him to leave his tailboard down as he came out of the yard at 10 past 7 and I'd hang on to the tailgate of the lorry while he pulled me up the hill, tooting as he reached the top. It was something to be kept from my parents.

Two earlier memories:

From the Iron Room the Boys' School moved to Culvercroft in Pound Street: it may be that the evacuees were no longer taught separately, many had already gone back to London. I had a newspaper round before school, ending up in Petworth House Gardens with Mr Streeter the head gardener. I remember him having some huge peaches growing against a wall and him asking if I would like

some. One fell off the tree and hit him on the hand. He seemed to think I'd thrown it at him, but anyway he was as good as his word.

During the war we had commandos billeted with us in Grove Street. One, Jimmy, was a very burly man who had been a fireman on the Royal Scot. He had a mate, Vic. They asked me where was the best place to go fishing and I suggested downstream from Rotherbridge. I was soon on the back of a motor cycle with Vic in the sidecar. We arrived down at Rotherbridge but I couldn't understand why they had a large box with them. Vic disappeared toward the river bank and there was an explosion. They'd let off a depth charge of some kind. Soon we were in pursuit of a huge pike stunned on the surface. "Wait till it gets to the bend!" I then had to lean on an overhanging branch with Vic holding on to me and Jimmy holding both of us. I had my nose in the water. We had the pike but still had to pass the keeper's cottage. There he stood 12 bore in hand. They were carrying me for some reason both feet off the ground. "We'll soon fix him," said Jimmy eyeing the keeper. "We caught this pike basking in the shallow water," he said and we marched past the keeper. Nothing more was said. Two weeks later my father said to me, "Have you been fishing? I don't mean with rod and line." Clearly the story had got round. We ate the pike half for us and Vic took his half away with him.

Jimmy was a dispatch rider going out in the morning to get the orders and returning, usually with a pheasant or a rabbit. He was so big that he'd stand in the Grove Street doorway and it was as if someone had turned out the light.

Terry Lucas was talking to the Editor.

Another view of Bramber.
See "Murder" in George Garland's Washington.

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