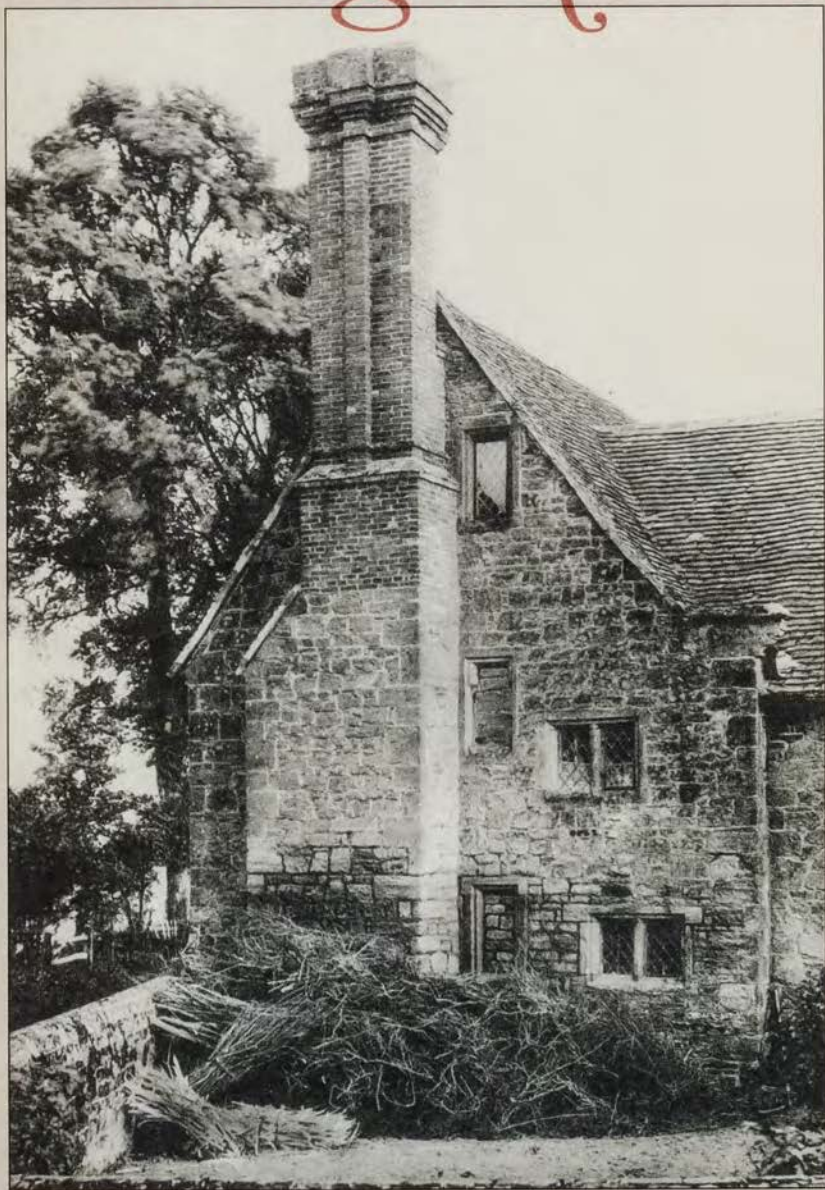


Miles Costello
Petworth
Collection

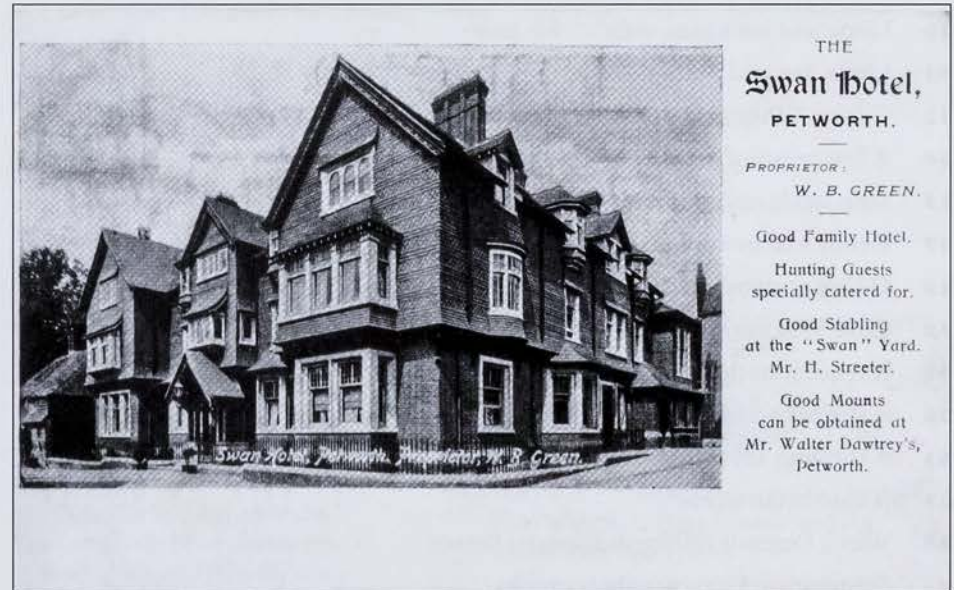
THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
Magazine



No. 165, September 2016

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THE
Swan Hotel,
PETWORTH.

PROPRIETOR:
W. B. GREEN.

Good Family Hotel.
Hunting Guests
specially catered for.

Good Stabling
at the "Swan" Yard.
Mr. H. Streeter.

Good Mounts
can be obtained at
Mr. Walter Dawtreys,
Petworth.

The Swan Hotel before 1914. The postcard is franked 7th April 1912.
See Chairman's notes.

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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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Bean Lodge: Petworth about 1900.
A photograph by W. Galsworthy Davie.

Chairman's notes

An extremely full Magazine. I have simply included what I have room for. The September dinner sold out very quickly as did the Water Cress Line/Gilbert White excursion. My commiserations to those who were disappointed but I did stress the need for an early reply.

I trust the response to the local plan questionnaire will repay the considerable effort put into the preparation. No doubt the National Park authorities will wish to have a degree of influence.

Speaking personally, and in these notes I can do no other, I would endorse the Town Council's concern about the continuing inactivity at the important Swan Hotel site. Whatever the outcome, there is no doubt that Petworth needs an upgrading of supermarket facilities and, ideally, a few everyday retail facilities for those who have no private transport. That said, we shall not see again the old jungle of private greengrocers, bakers, grocers and butchers.

Again, speaking personally, I am uneasy about plans to "improve" Round the hills. We must be careful not to fall into creeping urbanisation of an area that has been almost sacred to Petworth people for generations. 'Round the hills' is and remains part of Petworth's "folk" heritage, as vivid to those who have left the town as to those who remain.

I should note that the Society have funded the defibrillator on the western side of the Leconfield Hall.

Peter
21st July

Petworth – Most of the Time

The Window Press published John Osborn Greenfield's *Tales of Old Petworth* in the summer of 1976, reflecting a Petworth still innocent of the photograph. The Press itself was an ad hoc creation for the book. Some two dozen books later our survival as a small independent press is itself something of an achievement.

Although quite separate from the Press, this Magazine has always worked closely with it. A consistent feature has been the gentle probing of local recollection. In *Petworth – Most of the Time* I have tried to convey my own impressions of a lost Petworth that appears to be receding further with every minute. Mindful always of Master Greenfield, I have found my old friend's insular perspective impossible to replicate and have occasionally been forced to travel, hence the title. I have however so far followed J.O.G. in leaving a good generation between my recollections and the present day: I do not proceed beyond the early 1980s.

100 individually numbered copies: I already have some pre-ordered. There is an order form (detachable) on the Activities Sheet. To celebrate 40 years of the Window Press we are making a donation toward the production of the present Magazine.

Peter

The Annual General Meeting

It was the 42nd Annual General Meeting and the 37th for Peter in the chair. He commented that he had taken over 'temporarily' on October 31st, 1978 when Hilton Oakes had unexpectedly moved away to Eastbourne. The idea was that someone else would be appointed following the 1979 AGM, but that didn't happen and it hasn't happened since.

Fifty-one members – the best attendance for several years – received the report of the Independent Examiners which revealed that although there had been a slight fall in subscriptions, donations and even book sales receipts, while printing costs, garage rents and hall hire had risen, the financial situation was sound. The increase in hall fees was largely due to the Society being charged, for the first time, for the day preceding the Fair, when the Harris brothers needed to be present for reasons of security. Charitable giving was up, notably to the Town Council for the provision of a defibrillator. Visits arranged by the Society are self-financing.

Income from book sales was essential in maintaining the quality of the Magazine and it was hoped that the current year's would be considerably greater as indicated by the last three months' record takings.

Almost inevitably, it seems, the Committee was re-elected en bloc in the absence of further nominations. Peter said it was a hard-working Committee who got on well together. Petworth needed such a cohesive body.

In his report as Chairman, Peter reflected on the changes undergone by Petworth over the past 38 years, including the evolving Petworth Festival and Fringe. Membership had increased, bound together by the Magazine, a lifeline for 'postal members', who numbered more than 250. It had never carried advertising. If that was found to be necessary, it would mean a reduction in the number of features in a different format, but there was always so much material available.

The usual review of the year's activities, recorded on slides by Ian Godsmark, featured walks in Stag Park, Slindon and Bignor Hill, Ambersham Common, Kirdford, with tea at Osiers Farm and Upperton, all with exquisite photographs of the wildlife. There was the Cottage Museum garden, Coultershaw Beam Pump Open Evening, the Annual Dinner, Fair Night, the Christmas evening with Cotillion, Chris. Hare and Ann Feloy's folk songs, "Lady Connie and the Suffragettes" performance, "Petworth As You Like It" with Petworth porches, the raffle ladies and Jon Edgar's sculpture of the Chairman in progress.

The speaker for the evening was Jo Cartwright, the newly appointed National Trust's General Manager at Petworth House, who gave a comprehensive presentation of the problems, challenges and plans for the Trust, together with proposals for the House and grounds in the coming years, which, in addition to exhibitions, included coppicing the islands in the upper lake, controlling invasive plants and improving views.

In thanking her, Peter recalled the legacy of Jo's one-time predecessor, Diana Owen, who had achieved so much in bringing the House and Town together and he looked forward to Jo continuing the good work with the support of the Society.

Finally, there was the welcome return of Jon Edgar, who explained the thinking behind the large sculpture on the Downs, depicted in the review, which had involved hundreds of people making their own contributions to the carving. He showed pictures of his posthumous head of Capability Brown, which he had sculpted following research into the few paintings of him and the characteristic features of Northumbrians today. The completed head was about to go on exhibition in London. At last, he unveiled in quite dramatic fashion, the completed terracotta head of Peter, our Chairman, to great acclamation. Now, everyone wants to know, where will that go on display?

KCT.

Petworth en fête. Sunday 12th June

Lord Egremont likes Petworth to put on a good "do". Not perhaps the great extravaganzas in Petworth Park for which the third Earl of Egremont was famed, but public occasions of which Petworth can be proud. It's a long tradition celebrated in sepia and black and white by Walter Kevis and George Garland. With her Majesty's 90th Birthday celebrations, falling as they did within wall-to-wall coverage of Euro 2016, it might be appropriate to see his lordship as the wily manager of the organising team. In the jargon he "went for experience" – very much the same team that had helped with the Millennium celebrations sixteen years and more before.

It was, of course, a different occasion, uncertain summer rather than December midnight. No darkness for lighted torches. Was it really sixteen years on? There were differences: a morning church service, and no Harris Brothers carousel, but the fabulous Fugg band were certainly a constant – given perhaps some changes in personnel.

Supposed to keep an eye on the Square during the service, I found that Tony Sneller and John Riddell had everything so much under control that I could retire. The morning weather was less than promising: water cascading from rusty drain pipes. All fairly quiet before the three o'clock street party. Chairs and tables at the ready. Only in clearing up did I realise the scale of it all. St Mary's church, the Hampers Green Centre, the Hall itself, and no doubt elsewhere, Janet and Chris with a trailer of garden furniture, John and Tony no doubt similar.

"Bring your picnic." Petworth people, not normally responsive to the imperative mood, did just that. Tea, cakes, time for conversation, the strains of the band, children's entertainers and Jonathan Cann's Punch and Judy show with a wildly involved audience. Hot food for those who wanted it. Rosie Singleton giving a smooth transition to the increased volume to come. Nick Herbert the M.P. scheduled to appear but clearly detained elsewhere.

The weather holds, even brightens. There is an almost imperceptible shift in the audience composition as the volume and tempo quickens. The secret no doubt is to appeal to different audiences. Those Restless Knights and the Fabulous Fugg.

And then the dreaded clean up. Jean, Janet and Chris, Eileen, Anne, myself – (have I left anyone out?) and the (surely tired) Tony and John, with various impromptu additions. You begin to realise how hard Harris Brothers work after a long day's fair. Black bags, barriers, signs, tables and chairs, the hall kitchen. Some just stand and watch, fearful perhaps of intruding on the chosen few.

Going round the town on the Monday morning, everyone seems to have been there. "Lord Egremont wanted to give Petworth a millennium to remember" (PSM 99 March 2000). Make the appropriate changes and you have it exactly.

P.

The Silver Jubilee of 1935

[The following recollection of the 1935 Jubilee came from the late Joy Gumbrell and may interest readers. Ed.]

As a schoolgirl I remember the Jubilee celebrations. On the day we were given tea in the Iron Room¹, catered for by Arch Knight². Afterward we were marched down Pound Street to the cinema, the old one on the Pound Corner. I don't remember the films: there were two of them but I do remember that the entrance to the cinema was at the front near the screen and that the floor and seats sloped up from there with a central aisle and that, at half time, someone came round and sprayed the air with an air freshener from a contraption like the old Flit Guns used for flies. I still remember the distinctive smell.

After the films we were marched back to the Iron Room to collect our cups and saucers. I still have mine. It must have been the following Saturday there was a carnival in the Park, an occasion when the public were allowed to use the Grand Entrance. I still have the photographs of all the Byworth children in fancy dress – two girls with a pram representing a box of King George chocolates or the Bisto Kids, or a bride and groom, roles reversed. Don Hunt was the bride and Jean Clark the groom. June was, in fact, the taller of the two. I also remember the wonderful effort of Austens: their van was turned into a gipsy caravan, the painting done by Gwenda Morgan, and the Willis family dressed as gipsies. Mr Willis was Austens' van driver. The only other float I remember was a car, probably an Austin Ten. It was completely covered with frills apart from a small hole at the front which allowed the driver to see. This formed the skirt of a crinoline lady and a girl sat on the roof of the car to form the head and shoulders. There were a number of men with large comic heads but the rest has faded with time.

I can remember the Sugar Knob³ without trees. It was planted for the Jubilee celebrations.

1. The Iron Room stood slightly to the north of the present NatWest Bank premises. It was a corrugated building put up to house the congregation of St Mary's while the church was being renovated in 1903-4. The Iron Room survived until 1963.

2. Arch Knight had a baker's shop in Lombard Street.
3. At the top of the hill that leads to the Gog/Magog lodges.



Silver Jubilee 1935. Courtesy Mr John Connor.
Almost certainly by George Garland.

Another 'Capability' Brown/Petworth connection: (in a sentence)

While of course we all know that Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the bi-centenary of whose birth is being celebrated this year, designed Petworth Park as we have it today it is worth noting that the great man's influence on the town did not cease there but extended through several generations down to the town's rector (from 1859-1896), the Rev'd Charles Holland, whose father Lancelot was so christened because his mother Bridget's father was the great designer himself.

Simon Watson (great-great-grandson of the Rev'd C. Holland; see Petworth Society Magazine no. 160: 'A Holland Family album' p. 36)

Linda's Flexham Park walk.

15th May

Flexham Park. Right off the A272 at the top of Fox Hill, then left off the lorry route as the side road turns to River Hill. A small parking space and a metal gate, then up hill all the way. The track is dried by the May wind and the wind stirs the still water in the ruts. Despite the new foliage the wind makes for a bleak landscape and there has been considerable felling. Clearly excess rain can come down the slope with some force: there is a kind of channel at the side to take some of the surplus. It's still half full of brackish water. Fencing in quantity, then sweet chestnut coppice, the cut wood a rain-soaked orange. The bluebells have the sombre darkness of season's end.

Off the main track, into the woods and we're on the hairpin bend at the top of Wakestone Lane. We were here in the autumn of 2012¹ but we hadn't come by Flexham. Ignoring the lure of Bedham, we take a path that had been impassable then, forcing us to take a lower one. Nearly forty years of walks have created a kind of communal tradition: few walks are exactly the same but there is often a recycling of old memories, half-familiar scraps of older excursions. It's totally silent in the woods: a grey afternoon in May with the sun gradually gaining confidence. We have seen no one, and we shall see no one. Two huge mossy slabs deter motors, but who would bring a car up here anyway? A motorcycle might just be manoeuvred here, further on a rubber tyre has forced the tiny early falling holly leaves into the mud. Yellow azaleas in a garden, snatches of conversation. On what surface would the old pub game of quoits be played? Hardly grass, surely the heavy metal rings would destroy it, anything else and the din would be horrendous. We're walking through the eerily silent stone quarry, circling round to the cars. Thanks very much Linda.

P.

1. PSM 151.

Linda and Ian's June walk.

19th June

No cars, a revisiting of the familiar. Through the Arcade, up High Street with a

wave to busy Tiffins, Middle Street, Angel Street and we're already skirting the Withy Copse. Carefully across the road and we're on the Sheepdowns. Some of us remember the bracken being cleared and the pasture briefly returning, but now the diagonal track down is hemmed in by high summer growth. Shining pink banks of campion amongst the rampant bracken, with briony, stitchwort and the rest nearer ground level. A slight detour to take in the Virgin Mary spring. Was it really a place of medieval pilgrimage, a prehistoric halting place? Is the water really an eye-salve? It's easy to forget the volume of water cascading from that pipe. My grandfather, who knew about such things, was reported as saying that the water came from Belgium. Did he? And was he right? It all seems strangely deserted, the spring no longer echoing to the cries of local children. The countryside is no one's playground now.

Over the concrete bridge, surely I remember it as wood. Then up the stepped path between high vegetation and wire fencing. Byworth Harbour? A little along the road perhaps. Was it just the cry of one whimsical bus conductor? A fading memory just like that of the green Southdown parcel office sign at Fittleworth and the lady leaning out of the window to hand over to the conductor.

Over the road and up the hill toward the Cottage Hospital. The old cart shed on the right has gone. We veer off to the right, uphill all the way and have the classic view of the town framed in the trees. How will 144 new homes affect this? Time for the "Puff and Pant" brigade to catch up. It's not a long walk but a kind of festival of gradients. The coarse smell of rayless chamomile fills the air as we move on. It's been a wet June and ruts in the Gog lanes are still full of water. Down Lovers' Lane, passing beneath a massive horizontal trunk across the path, then down the slope. Can I feel the medieval ridges beneath the long grass of summer? Over the Shimmings bridge, the last steep gradient and we're in Barton's Lane, a magnificent white arum against the cemetery wall. Familiarity breed contempt? Not in Petworth it doesn't.

P.

Linda, Ian and Betty's Rotherbridge walk.

17th July

Sunday afternoons in the 1960s and 1970s. A more than passing acquaintance with Charlie Justice the keeper. It was a solitary landscape, like something out of Le Grand Meaulnes. Rotherbridge farmhouse empty and derelict, remote Perryfields

still inhabited and lost along the river. A walk in this landscape is now to tread on a palimpsest of older memories. Or further back into the 1940s, my father and Mr Whitney digging in the yard at Rotherbridge for worms. Fishing was casual then. Today the fishermen have been warned to expect a party of walkers – private land and nothing casual now.

Past the ongoing works at Rotherbridge, the hedges in the lane to Perryfields seem taller every time I pass. We're soon at Perryfields but don't turn off to see what remains but carry on, ignoring the bridge over the river. Along the late summer bank: it's a clammy day. The lock at Ladymead, long stripped of function, meaning or dignity and stranded in the long grass. Remains of a stone bridge over the river. When we were here last, there were cows; now the steep sides of the bank seem to forbid. Sounds of a camp away to the right. We cross the fisherman's bridge, skirt a field and we're on the railway track. Pink seems the colour of passing summer – balsam and rosebay at Ladymead, clover, centaury, pink convolvulus, knapweed, stachys and the rest. A deer bounds away in the yellowing corn. On into the shade. The marvellous, but ultimately abortive brickwork of the bridges, the embankment itself, a monument to idealism and the brutal hard work of Victorian navvies. Through Kilsham, over the bridge and into the cars. Ian, Linda and Betty had "pre-walked" it for us on Friday. As a local walk you could hardly ask for better.

P.

Gilbert White and the Watercress line. 6th July

The Petworth Society loves an outing – or should it be excursion? There is something at once exhilarating and alarming about seeing the Society hordes swarming over some innocent outpost and transforming it into a miniature Petworth. We were fortunate with the weather and at Alresford in good time. A chance of coffee for those who wanted it. We had a reserved carriage while a party of tots from Sheet Primary School had the next one to us. A study in high-viz and a sign of the times. A volunteer railway is always spotlessly clean with abundant cheerful staff, no computer ticket machines and of course a plethora of vintage advertising signs: Boar's Head tobacco, Pratt's petrol and oil "on top in all road tests", Spratt's Bird Seed, "packet and tin only", Batey's lemonade and the rest. Random reminders of a lost past – Old Calabar dog biscuit and poultry feed.



Gilbert White.
Photograph by Gordon Stevenson.

Stopping at Ropley and Four Marks; the children alight at the former.

On to Alton, a short stay then back again. Sparse poppies in a field of barley, a wagon painted with "not in common use", apparently redundant churns and wicker baskets, a volunteer lovingly tending a piece of topiary, fields of broad beans, steep sides of the cutting freshly scythed down. The children wave from the Ropley picnic area as we wait in the station. Until the 1970s the line had served to send water-cress to the London markets. Speed was of the essence.

Returned to Alresford we rejoin the coach for the trip to Selborne, compact enough for even the Society not to get lost. Some make for the church to see the famous stained glass, others are already in the local pub or the café. All very leisurely: we're almost late for the talk at Gilbert White's. It's an amalgam of two quite different parts: relicts of the Oates family with tragic polar echoes and, of course, the home of Gilbert White, parson and naturalist. We've two and a half hours until the coach leaves and we spend ages in the garden, talking to Rose the gardener, she has a row of tithonia, the Mexican sunflower, not yet in bloom but echoes of Lewes last year. The trompe l'oeil wooden statue of Hercules, the acres of grass, melons in frames and a base of straw, a giant helianthus. Rose even unearths two battered tithonias. "Oh, you can have these." If everyone talks like we do, how does Rose ever get anything done? Wait until the House closes at five apparently. Preoccupied with garden matters I haven't even mentioned the house. Definitely a Debby [and Gordon] triumph – no surprise there.

P.

A few wisps of smoke. Saturday at 346

Three visitors right on opening time and the fire uncharacteristically sluggish. More wood and another firelighter. Gazania in full bloom under a leaden sky. It is June after all. An Edwardian flower that seems somehow too exotic for its period. The treasure flower. Two local ladies have brought another from the West Country to see 346. She's making her annual visit to the nuns at Midhurst Convent. Her father worked for Fred Streeter in the House Gardens, leaving finally for Goldrings at Easebourne but Jean was very young then. Something to do with Violet Lady Leconfield and Special Constables. Tensions in early wartime Petworth. A child's memory of Shimmings, Ken Sadler¹ as a neighbour weaving wicker baskets. She promises to tell more on her visit next year. Someone with

that slow burning, slightly reticent remembrance that is the best. The Convent in the 1950s, familiar names reverberating from an already terminally distancing past. An older fragile Petworth. The fire's going away now, extravagant almost, a few wisps of smoke escape into the room. It may be high summer but it's no day for the fire to seem irrelevant, and, of course, at 346 it never can be. One of those afternoons when the time passes quickly and one is hardly aware of the clock. Suddenly it's a quarter to four; other visitors have come and gone. Debbie and I sit in the parlour, the sky is black, the thunder rolls ever nearer. Surely no one's going to brave the storm and the now scudding rain.

Thinking back to the earlier afternoon. It's easier talking to people with local background and long memories. Unusual and suggesting a quite different approach. No need to explain who Lord Leconfield was, still less what a copper does. Mrs Thompson worked at Petworth House between the wars, assisting or perhaps organising the young housemaids. She will certainly have known Mary Cummings. The Pearson clock came from her house at the bottom of High Street. Mrs Curtis in Middle Street was her sister. I can remember Mrs Curtis buying tomatoes in the shop. Years ago now – fragments of memory turning to ash like dying embers from a fire.

P.

1. See "Seeing some different scenery" PSM 45 September 1986 with photograph "Shimmings between the wars" PSM 47 March 1987.

Strip fields and samovars. The June book sale

Sixteen years and counting should have taught me not to be sentimental. They probably have, but this article like its predecessors, is a kind of quarterly qualm, a nod to the Book Sale genie, unearthing some gem that might otherwise be lost in the monthly avalanche.

Rothay Reynolds¹ was in imperial Russia in the early years of the last century, clearly as a journalist. It was a Russia already on the brink and symbolised in the popular imagination by two contrasting, yet in some ways related, figures: Saint Serapion and Marya Spiridonova. The former had forsaken late eighteenth century life to live as an ascetic in lonely prayer in the forest, while the latter represented the very spirit of revolution. With revolver hidden in her muff, she had shot dead an unpopular provincial governor and made no attempt to escape.²

As befits his calling as a correspondent, based largely in Petrograd (St Petersburg) Reynolds is a keen student of Russian custom. Anticipating the American Agnes Repplier's later enthusiasm for tea (PSM 164), he notes the Russian insistence on fine China: it never became bitter from protracted brewing. He hymns the omnipresent samovar. "Fresh tea is made from water boiled in a samovar, an urn heated with charcoal from the house fire, the tea itself brewed in a very small pot stood on top of the samovar... They [the servants] used to set it on the table in my room every evening at eleven whether I was in or not. It was pleasant to know, as one drew near home, that the samovarchik, the dear little samovar was industriously humming in the little pot sitting on the top."

While based in Petrograd, Reynolds makes a point of visiting the country districts and witnesses the gradual decay of the old land tenure system, dependent on the polosa, a strip or piece of ground, one of many into which the communal land was divided. These narrow strips might vary in breadth from four to ten feet but could be a verst³ long, each strip often at a considerable distance from others in the same tenure so that precious time would be spent travelling between them. "I know cases in which one peasant has had more than a hundred strips of land, some as small as four feet by ten and as far as twenty miles from his home." The septennial redistribution frustrated initiative as one who had neglected his own land might benefit from the efforts of one who had not. Have we here in Russia an echo of the unrecorded history of our own ridged fields in the Shimmings Valley?

And the June sale? Highest total ever for June but a little down on May. The accepted wisdom "in the trade" is to avoid having sales in June, but whenever did we take the path of accepted wisdom?

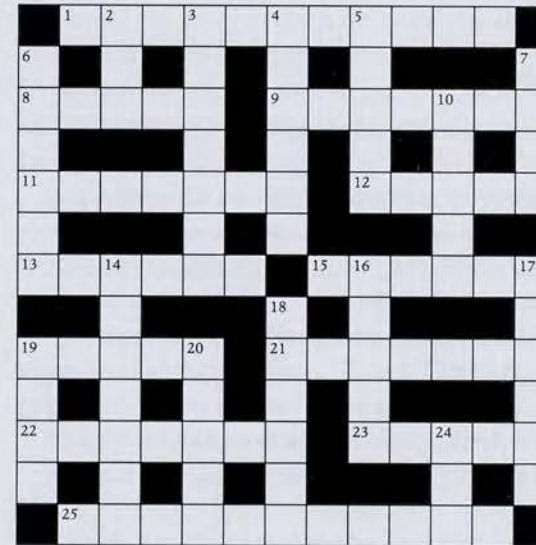
P.

1. Rothay Reynolds: My Russian Year. (Mills and Boon 1915). A "Popular Version" abridged from a longer, profusely illustrated, book published in 1912. The volume is too unassuming in appearance to have much chance in the rush of a Book Sale.

2. Marya would be released from prison in 1917 but fall foul of the authorities and be murdered on Stalin's orders in 1941.

3. Just over a kilometer.

AUTUMN CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1** They used to provide the power to bring the harvest home (5,6)
8 Fruit of the oak – pigs foraged for them in local woods! (5)
9 Something to aim for on 20th November (7)
11 In a state of hibernation (7)
12 Too many to count at Findon's annual fair (5)
13 The Third Earl's favourite apple? (6)
15 Fairy led the way – stripped bark off (6)
19 Chichester's October fair is named after these fruits (5)
21 Cinderella's coach! Buy one from Slindon's famous autumn display (7)
22 How you feel after a Harvest Supper? (7)

- 23** The willow gives its name to a Petworth farm. (Society walkers have enjoyed autumnal hospitality here!) (5)
25 The lads who organise November 5th activities, especially in East Sussex (7,4)

DOWN

- 2** Me – hiding up in the gods (3)
3 A nice wine – or an old car travelling from London to Brighton (7)
4 Greek goddess of magic and ghosts (6)
5 Thatched hay stacks (5)
6 Room for storing preserves etc. (6)
7 Seal the barrel (4)
10 The less well off, must not be forgotten at harvest time (5)

- 14** Zodiacal sign for October – November (7)
16 Another local farm – not sure where we go from here! (5)
17 They give to 10dn perhaps (6)
18 Did I hear a nobleman suddenly arrive ... (6)
19 ... to find his villein maybe (4)
20 A bundle of corn (5)
24 Ground or poison? (3)

SOLUTION TO WRITERS & COMPOSERS CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Cold Comfort, 7 Holst, 8 Dickens, 10 Woolf, 11 Tiger, 12 Just So, 14 Spiral, 18 Parry, 20 Keats, 21 Ireland, 22 Ennui, 24 Forsythe Saga

DOWN

- 2 Owl, 3 Duteous, 4 Facet, 5 The Raj, 6 Tsar, 8 Deft, 9 Elgar, 13 Serve, 15 Planets, 16 Larkin, 17 Eked, 18 Pain, 19 Yeats, 23 Nag

D-Day remembered by Noah Stansmore one of our members.

From the Bognor Regis Observer 9th June 2016

"Two D-Day heroes have shared their experiences on the anniversary of the famous Normandy landings.

Friends Jack Paige and Noah Stansmore, both 91, were only 19 when they and many thousands of others stormed the beaches of France on June 6, 1944.

Monday marked the 72nd anniversary of D-Day, which began the successful Allied liberation of France and then Western-Europe.

"We're great mates after meeting at the Bognor bowls club and playing for many years," said Mr Stansmore.

"He's 92 on September 15, and I'm 92 on August 16 so I'm just a little older."

Mr Stansmore was part of the Royal Artillery 103 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Mobile Regiment and in March was awarded the Légion d'honneur, the highest honour for those who helped liberate France.

He said: "We went ashore in a landing ship tank which went aground about 60/70 yards from the shore.

"The command came: 'Everybody over the side in battle order' and when my feet touched the floor I was up to my neck in water.

"I waded ashore, past bits of bodies. The Germans were firing shells, mortar, machine guns, you name it. You didn't hang about."

After the success of Operation Neptune, Mr Stansmore was part of the Allied push through France and Holland and was in Belgium when hostilities ceased. He joined the military police and remained in Germany for three years. After leaving the army in 1948, he was a policeman for 31 years, as village bobby in Middleton and then as a coroner's officer in Bognor."

From an article by Steve Pickthall. With thanks to Mr Pickthall and the *Observer* series.



Noah Stansmore, 91, with his Légion d'honneur medal awarded this year.

Clive Wilkinson's "Nerve"

Reference the story in the June Magazine about the River House raid led by Clive Wilkinson I have another amusing example of Clive's "Nerve". Sometime in, I think, the 1950s Clive, then living at Houghton, invited two friends, Michael Welman then of Sutton and Edward Woolley, later the solicitor in Golden Square, Petworth, to a day's rough shooting on the Amberley Wildbrooks.

They duly met, ranged during the morning over various parts of the Brooks, shot a few pheasants and adjourned to the George and Dragon at Houghton for lunch. After lunch they continued and finished up in the gloaming fighting the duck and generally had an excellent day.

At the end Mike Welman said to Clive: "How lucky you are to have shooting rights over so nice an area." To this Clive's reply was: "Shooting rights? I haven't got any shooting rights."

They had been poaching all day!!

T.R.W.L.

A request to the Petworth Society

My name is Wendy Jones and have been a member for years. I have lived in North Wales since the late 1970s. I was born in Duncton in 1944 at High Street in the house of my mother's parents, Ernest and Charlotte Knight. Ernest was one of the sons of "Spratty" Knight a leading member of Duncton's pre-1918 wassailers. At the time my parents and other brother Jerry were living at Old Park, Northchapel.

My father's people were originally from Dorset but were living at Wilmington in East Sussex when my father was born in 1903. They would later move to Teglease and then to Sandrock, Graffham. My brother would be born at Popple Hill, Graffham in 1933. My parents lived there when they first married. My father was the third of four sons and his two brothers went to the 1914-1918 war. The oldest, William, survived and stayed on in France working for the War Graves Commission tending the graves. He married Jeanne, a French lady. The second son, Sidney, was a talented artist who also wrote poetry. He wrote marvellous letters home to his parents and illustrated them himself, but none have survived. His parents were distraught when he died. The only thing I have is a photograph.

Sidney was wounded in France and shipped back to hospital in London where he died. His mother was taken to see him and this caused her to have a physical

and mental breakdown. She became semi-invalid and died in 1930. My grandfather just shut off, I think, and it was left to my father, then sixteen years old, to hold the family together. His brother Ernest was only six so my father had a hard time. He had left school at twelve to work on the farm when his brothers had enlisted. The experience certainly made him an excellent cook. Ernest enlisted for the 1939-1945 war but was held in Germany as a P.O.W. After the war he worked as a painter and decorator at Seaford College. When I was a teenager he'd take me to all Portsmouth home matches and died young, aged 50, probably as a result of his years as a prisoner of war.

My request is this: I can no longer come to Sussex from North Wales on a regular basis. My brother has died and my daughter and her family do not live locally. I hope someone could occasionally go to Graffham churchyard and pay their respects, perhaps after Remembrance Day. Sidney deserves to be remembered and I believe his is only one of three dedicated war graves in Sussex.

Wendy Jones

26 Ffordd Naddyn, Glan Conwy, Conwy, North Wales, LL28 5NH

01492 580839

[I am sure we can help Wendy. Ed.]

A sleeper across the track

The Corden family has long been established in the local area. My grandfather came to Pulborough as chemist on Easter Monday in 1887. He had served his apprenticeship in Cowes where the family had served Queen Victoria. My grandfather, father and brother would be the Pulborough chemists for 107 years. When my brother finally retired a new pharmacy was included in the London Road shopping development and given the name "Cordens". As the younger brother I was commissioned in the Regular Army and served for 30 years in the Royal Corps of Signals before working with Marconi Space and Defence Systems prior to retirement.

At the age of five I went to a small preparatory school in the old Swan Hotel complex at Pulborough, but the threat of bombing would eventually cause the headmistress to shut the school down. By the time I was eight I was at Midhurst Grammar School where my father and uncle had also been pupils, while at least four of the masters had taught my father. My elder brother was already attending

the school. We travelled by train from Pulborough, stopping at Fittleworth, but I cannot remember boys joining the train either at Petworth or Selham; there was, of course, a bus from Petworth. The journey was half an hour each way and involved a mile and a half walk from the station to school, passing South Pond, the Spread Eagle and Knockhundred Row. It was, of course, a steam train: two carriages with separate compartments and no corridors. There might be eight or ten of us in each compartment, perhaps as many as twenty in all and we could be boisterous. We would arrive at school just in time for assembly, taken by Mr Lucas, the headmaster, or Mr Jackson, his deputy. Ian Seraillier, the English master, already perhaps known for his children's books, would play the piano, as might Mr Jackson. I would be eleven years at Midhurst, leaving when I was nineteen, and being a boarder for the last two years.

Mr Lucas was careful to keep the boarding house pupils occupied at the weekend and the school worked Saturday morning. There were talks on art, Mr Lucas was a friend of Paul Nash the painter, had some of his work and Nash would come to the school occasionally. There were debates and I played a lot of cricket. Mrs Lucas gave an occasional "social awareness" course – how to behave with a girl friend, that sort of thing, much needed in an almost exclusively male environment. Returning to play cricket for the Old Boys against the school I had my two front teeth knocked out and I still have the replacements. Talking of that reminds me that playing football for Pulborough Boys in Petworth Park I ruptured a cartilage in my knee and never played again.

Bombing was very much in people's mind in these early days of the war. I remember "safety practice" and going out of the side gate of the school to sit in the lane outside – the thinking seemed to be that if you were to an extent in the open you were less likely to be hit by flying glass or pieces of debris. I was, of course, at Midhurst when the Petworth Boys' School was bombed in 1942. On the afternoon of the next day Mr Lucas called a special afternoon assembly, told us of the tragedy and sent us home for the day. The school had some half a dozen refugee boys in the boarding house. One, I remember, could never pass through a doorway without touching the sides and the top. "Dig for Victory" was part of the ethos of the time. Mr Gunner from Graffham created a pond by the swimming pool but during the war the quadrangle in the centre was put down to vegetables.

The school had a scout group and a cadet corps. We had carbines from the 1880s which we never fired but were fine for drill and practice. The carbines had been intended for cavalry and the school for some reason had 150 of them. I imagine they were worth a fair sum but I don't know what eventually happened to them.

Meals? I think that, as day boys, we brought sandwiches, but "Ma" Barnes in the little shop across the lane from the school made little rock cakes with currants and

raisins for a penny and long finger buns with pink icing. No, I don't think we ever ate there: the shop was simply too small for that.

As a chemist, my father was in a "reserved occupation" but he was in charge of the Observer Corps at Pulborough "Obo3" reporting all the time to the Centre at Horsham. During the war he came into regular contact with Fred Streeter at Petworth House "the Radio Gardener", as did my future sister-in-law who worked at Stopham House. The walled gardens at Petworth would be opened two or three times a year after the war and Mr Streeter would sit in a large wicker chair with an equally large hat, answering questions about the plants.

My wife and I were married in Petworth Church in 1958, the Rev. H. O. Jones and the Rev. Royle from Pulborough officiating. My father-in-law was Mr Frank ("Nick") Folkard manager successively of the Westminster Bank at Pulborough and Petworth. George Garland took the wedding pictures, I remember him having a pair of steps. It was a pouring wet day and we made our way as best we could down Lombard Street to the reception in the Town Hall.

Lord Leconfield I well remember coming out to Pulborough in his chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce. To me, as a boy, it seemed huge. The Rev. Royle was very popular in Pulborough but had some difficulty with a minority of parishioners. As patron of the living his lordship was very much to the point. "Do you want to get rid of him?" No one did. "That's alright, then," he said, clambered back into the Rolls and was off.

One of my main memories of the war is the bombing of Petworth Station – but curiously it doesn't seem to be remembered in Petworth itself. It was 1942 and we were catching the 4.45 train from Midhurst. There was German air activity. Our train pulled out of the station and "hid" in the tunnel just outside. After five minutes we resumed our journey. As we approached Petworth we came to an abrupt halt: there was a sleeper across the railway line and a ganger with a red flag. We had to get out of the train and walk round a bomb crater, then along the line to the station. A bomb had hit the platform by the cattle pens, bounced over the road bridge (bringing down the telephone lines), slithered down the cutting and blown up on the track. While we were waiting for cars to come from Pulborough to collect us, we played football (with a tennis ball) in the Station Yard. We heard the roar of a plane flying low, and a Heinkel flew northwards over us: we could see the pilot clearly and the black swastika on the wings. As we watched we could see the bomb doors open and the bombs come out. They must have landed somewhere to the south of Petworth.

Gerald Corden was talking to the Editor:

1. But see Philip Hounsham in PSM 21 (September 1980) page 14.



The "head" seems less than amused! At the A.G.M.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



Not everyone can get round the Virgin Mary Spring! 19th June.
Photograph by Janet Austin.



Medstead and Four Marks station on the Water Cress line. 6th July.
Photograph by Gordon Stevenson.



Deep in the gardens at Gilbert White's House. 6th July.
Photograph by Gordon Stevenson.



"Long stripped of function, meaning or dignity." The lock at Ladymead. 17th July.
Photograph by Linda Wort.



"The marvellous but ultimately abortive brickwork of the bridges..." 17th July.
Photograph by Linda Wort.



In Graffham Churchyard. A Sussex war grave.
See "A request to the Petworth Society."



PETWORTH SOCIETY ACTIVITIES SHEET

Autumn Programme – please keep for reference

DINNER

Wednesday 7th September:

Please note there is a slight change to arrangements. The response is such that the projected visit to the Capability Brown exhibition is not practicable. We have reverted to the traditional West front format and a talk on Capability Brown. Entrance Church Lodge at 6.30pm to 7.15pm. Dinner at 7.45pm. And, yes, there is a Quiz.

As you will see we have given details of forthcoming speakers on page 52 of the main Magazine:

Thursday 20th October: Kate Felus

Monday 7th November: Fred Delius

Friday 9th December: Bertie Pearce

Date to be fixed.

January/February:

Miles and Peter: Petworth: As you like it? (2)

“How can they get away with this?” [Petworth resident]

2nd March: David Stephens personifies Hilaire Belloc

Details in December Magazine.

ADMISSION £5 – LECONFIELD HALL – 7.30PM – REFRESHMENTS – RAFFLE

WALKS

Leave Petworth Car Park at 2.15pm. Usually cars.

Sunday 18th September

Sunday 16th October – with traditional visit to Osiers.

*PETWORTH FAIR

Saturday 19th November

The Petworth Society Book Sale Calendar 2016
Second Saturday – Leconfield Hall – 10am–3pm – Admission FREE

SEPTEMBER 10TH

OCTOBER 8TH

NOVEMBER 12TH

DECEMBER 10TH

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

Note:

Members will have observed with dismay the forthcoming closure of the Tuesday tip. I am a little surprised at official Petworth's apparent acquiescence in what appears a fait accompli. But then were "consultations" ever more than that? P.

The Window Press celebrates its fortieth year in 2016: see celebratory brochure with this Magazine.

Petworth – most of the time is now available either direct from the Press or from the Blackbirds Bookshop.

Odd copies of the “100” titles may still be available, but we have no stock of the Garland photograph books except for *Not Submitted Elsewhere*.

PETER JERROME
Petworth – most of the time



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at the special price of £35. Enquire of the Window Press or pre-order from Petworth Bookshop. Not suitable for postal ordering.

The Window Press have, to celebrate their anniversary, contributed to the cost of this Magazine and have, of course, financed the celebratory brochure.

P.



Cockermouth Castle: an atmospheric view.
See "A Cumbrian world."

A thrilling adventure to liberate Petworth's 'discarded' artworks

Our first child Jessica Mary Wyndham was born in April 1979. The name Jessica has strong associations with the family and the house since Turner's unusual painting of that name was bought by Lord Egremont in 1831 and hangs today in the North Gallery.

The christening took place on a lovely day at the end of July when the family and godparents gathered in the chapel where the baby was christened by the Rev. John Greene the rector of Petworth.

The silver Queen Anne Monteith bowl placed on one of the 17th century carved walnut stands, made for the Kangxi oriental jars, made a beautiful baptismal font.

Jessica aged three months dressed in a long starched christening robe seemed unimpressed by the proceedings and yawned throughout the ceremony.

The town band played afterwards while we had tea in the Marble Hall and outside in the sunshine on the terrace.

It was in 1983 that we first invited Alec Cobbe to stay with us. Alec, a friend, had a reputation for judgement and taste and was known to be brilliant at hanging pictures in an imaginative and architectural way.

He had grown up at Newbridge an 18th century Irish house outside Dublin. While his uncle was out of the house shooting ducks on the seashore, the young Alec set to work rearranging his family pictures.

After the great boom of the punt gun's one and only shot rang out he knew it was time to stop and set the rooms back in order before his uncle's return.

This early experience together with training in picture conservation at the Hamilton Kerr Institute made him the perfect adviser.

Alec's visit proved to be of immense importance.

It started in train a reorganisation of the picture collection which continued for the next twenty-five years.

We wanted advice as to where we could hang the two Andrea del Sartos which had been returned to us after 15 years of restoration at the Courtauld Institute.

Alec remembers looking at the splendid quartet of Van Dycks in the White and Gold Room and a few other interesting pictures and assumed this was all there was and that the rest of the family collection had been given in lieu of tax to the National Trust.

After lunch we started to plan where the Del Sartos might hang and he asked if there was any odd unhung picture which could be used in the new arrangement.

We hardly dared to tell him what was upstairs.

Alex remembers "that we set off up the tall narrow family stairs, along the dark upper corridor emerging into the dimly lit central chamber which opens on to the family bedrooms.

We walked through the large door which leads onto the landing of the Grand Staircase, decorated by Laguerre towards a matching locked door.

A key was found and this led us into a long corridor off which were a whole series of very dark, disused shuttered bedrooms seemingly without end.

These rooms with exotic sounding names on enamel plaques on their doors – Belzamine Room, Trellis Room, Cigar room, Hertford Room – were piled high with furniture and densely hung with paintings. Stacks of pictures on the floor sometimes six deep, rested one against another, mingled with the heaps of furniture.

A door at the end of this corridor brought us out onto the top landing of another staircase, (the oak staircase) after which was another locked door.

The process of finding a key was gone through again and this door gave onto another long run of dark disused rooms.

This passage opened out into a huge space at the foot of another tall staircase where more paintings hung haphazardly and pictures were propped against the walls. Half way up these stairs was the room Turner and others had used as a studio.

This was filled with bookcases and further stacks of paintings. On went our pilgrimage with further suites of rooms beyond and the same scene – stacks and stacks of pictures.

This storage of pictures was on an unimaginable scale. We returned to the calm of the Red Library.

One thing was clear to me; Petworth could be transformed if these scores of discarded paintings were deployed in the proper manner."

Alec's description of these rooms is exactly as I remember them at that time.

What did those forgotten rooms reveal? Why was so much of the collection there? It appears that Anthony Blunt, when advising on the picture hang during the 1950s, had argued against what he considered 'the Victorian muddle' in the rooms downstairs.

He was a connoisseur from an age that believed in a measured, academically organised arrangement of pictures – Van Dycks all in one room, Turners in another and above all not too crowded.

His idea, shared by many museum directors, was that pictures were best seen in sparsely hung spaces at eye level.

The belief that picture arrangements should relate to the architectural

proportions that contained them was not held then as it had been in earlier times.

Blunt's advice therefore led to over two thirds of the family pictures being consigned to storage, out of sight in the unused parts of the house.

We took Alec's advice and decided to embark on a thrilling adventure, a great rationalisation of the picture collection at Petworth and the subsequent rehanging of almost every room in the house.

Caroline Egremont

[This article appeared originally in the, now discontinued, Petworth House Spaniel. I have retained the paragraphing of the original. Ed.]

A Cumbrian world

I spent much of late July and most of August away from Petworth during my childhood in the late 1950s. My parents wanted to get the children out of the way before Goodwood races at the end of July to make room for a huge house party. So we went first with nanny to stay in a boarding house on the north Norfolk coast where we ran about on windy beaches, swam in freezing seas and were very happy. Heat and sun weren't thought to be vital for a holiday in those days – and to go in search of them was thought to be quite decadent.

After several weeks in Norfolk, we came briefly back to a warm Petworth before going further north (to more cold, with added rain) to join our parents. For they were now in Cumbria, at the family house at Cockermouth.

Cumbria seemed a foreign land to me when I was a small boy. My nanny, baby sister, a huge pram and I went by train from Pulborough to Victoria before crossing London in a taxi to the magnificent neo-classical Euston, then glorious before its tragic demolition in the 1960s and replacement by dreary mediocrity. From Euston, a huge steam engine pulled us northwards to Carlisle from where we were taken in a large car to the Cumbrian town of Cockermouth. The long journey and darkening weather made a frontier between two worlds: north and south.

Why does my family love Cockermouth? The town, a charming and harmonious place, with some fine buildings of different dates, is right on the doorstep of our Cumbrian house so there is a similarity to Petworth.

But the atmosphere is quite different (which gives the place a special thrill for us). Our house there is set in a medieval ruin and among the high walls and bastions there's a sense of an earlier, more violent, age – although romance has

taken over from any real threat.

The house was built at the start of the 19th century, along one wall of a castle that originated in the 12th century but was battered into ruins during the Civil War. After passing through huge wooden gates studded with black spikes, you enter a courtyard, with the “new” nineteenth century house along one side, early 20th century estate office buildings on another side and medieval walls ahead.

Cockermouth Castle came to my family through a marriage in the 15th century. Since Norman times, there’s been one purpose: to keep out the Scots – which failed in my case as I married one. The castle wasn’t visited much by its owners until the early 19th century, when the new house was built by the 3rd Earl of Egremont. Then, from the 1840s, one of the 3rd Earl’s sons, Henry Wyndham, or General Sir Henry Wyndham, went there as his military career neared its end.

Henry had served in the Peninsular War, where he’d led the cavalry squadron that captured the baggage train of the King Joseph (Napoleon’s brother, installed by the French tyrant as King of Spain), finding a rich hoard of pictures and silver much of which is now in London at Apsley House as it was given by the Spaniards to the Duke of Wellington. At Waterloo Henry helped to stop the French capturing the key strategic farmhouse at Hougoumont. His last appointment was as commander-in-chief in Dublin.

Henry’s wife died in 1820 and he subsequently took up with a French woman called Letitia de la Bêche even though he’d spent much of his life fighting her compatriots. Cockermouth was perhaps a place to which Henry thought he and Letitia could escape. But he may have felt that he should do something so became Member of Parliament for West Cumberland, not often attending Westminster for his name scarcely appears in parliamentary records.

Letitia’s firm signature can be seen in some of the books in the castle, although prim descendants have cut it out of others. Part of her and Henry’s library is now stored in the estate office, near the mass of plans, leases, rent rolls, ancient ledgers and correspondence with tenants that show how important the Cumbrian property was to my family.

It was from here that our wealth came, particularly after the industrial revolution. The Cumbrian mines and quarries – their iron ore, slate and coal more profitable than farming – not only let my great uncle Charles Leconfield hunt his private pack of hounds but also paid for the upkeep of the huge house at Petworth before we gave it to the National Trust. These places, no doubt grim and dangerous for the miners who worked there, have poetic names, painted on the drawers of the high cupboards in the Cockermouth estate office which still hold their records: Honister, Ullcoats, Beckermet, Hodge Close, Frizington, Florence.

Many were working during my childhood when the iron ore went a short

distance to be turned into steel in a huge mill in the town of Workington. Gradually, however, they closed. It’s cheaper now to import the ore, steel and coal – and most of west Cumberland’s industry and the Workington steel mill have also gone.

Whitehaven, a historic Georgian port, had a chemical works and factories making Quaker Oats, British Leyland buses and a silk mill: all now closed. Kangol berets came from Cleator, Derwent colouring pencils from Keswick; these are also no more. Whitehaven’s biggest employers are now the hospital and the local council. The port, once (like Workington) a bustling outlet for industry, has become a marina for small pleasure boats and yachts.

What remains, however, is the beauty of the Cumbrian landscape, celebrated by Wordsworth, who was born in Cockermouth, and the other lake poets. We love walking and climbing across the fells, even swimming in the lakes (those early Norfolk summers and my wife’s Argyll childhood means that we like cold water), staying in Bed and Breakfasts, ignoring the rain.

Another part of Cumbria is the fishing on the river Derwent which flows through Cockermouth. Early on I was told that one had to be good at this, or at least try to be, and should begin as soon as possible. So during my first visit to Cockermouth, when I was aged about 6 or 7, I was handed a small rod and rowed out in a boat on to Lake Bassenthwaite where I caught an immense number of perch or roach. Could I eat them, I asked? The answer was yes, accompanied by a warning not to expect too much. Sure enough, they turned out to taste of mud and be full of bones.

My mother enjoyed fishing and my father felt that he should enjoy it. They went most days to the Derwent to try to catch a salmon: she cheerful, he silent and glum. There would be talk between my mother and the kindly Scotsman Mr Sinclair, who accompanied my parents on their fishing expeditions, about the best fly to use that day. Would it be a Hairy Mary, a Black or a Silver Doctor, a Jock Scott, a Stroat’s Tail or a Grouse and Claret? I listened in awe. Clearly this northern world had a language of its own.

My father did not join in these conversations for he used a spinner, not a fly rod, as, tending to get into the most tremendous tangle, he was thought more likely to catch a fish with this. To fish with a spinner is scorned by experts as a dreary and artless process. “Spinning” involves chucking a huge metal “spoon” into the river and slowly reeling this in as opposed to the skill of casting an artificial “fly” and drawing the line over pools where the fish might be.

The heavy spoon hurtles out on a long line, making a high whirring sound. Once my father got his right across the river on to the opposite bank where it attached itself to a cow, the creature plunging up and down in efforts to get rid of

what it may have thought was a vicious insect. Mr Sinclair cut the line with his small scissors, leaving the nylon fluttering in the wind and the metal spoon glinting on the cow's backside. "There's few people that can throw a spoon like your father," the loyal Mr Sinclair told me later.

The Derwent, however, should be treated with respect. It can (with its tributary the Cocker) rise fast, bursting out of its banks, becoming quite different to the quiet flowing waters where you can cast your fly. During the last ten years, terrifying and dangerous floods have roared down Cockermouth's broad High Street, surging around the pollarded lime trees and the statue of my great great grandfather Lord Mayo, into the shops and houses, causing a salmon to be seen in Boots the Chemist and threatening the walls of the castle itself. The courage of those who live there, faced yet again last year with wrecked businesses or devastated homes, is extraordinary. I know how hugely they appreciate Petworth's generosity and concern.

Why do such natural disasters happen? Is it climate change or too much building on flood plains? Has the steady treading down of the banks by cattle and sheep over years made it too easy for rain water to flow off the land into the river? Certainly Cockermouth weather is much more intense, more unpredictable, than in the soft south and can still surprise me. So I'm not yet a Cumbrian. Like my childhood self, I always leave for the north in a state of excitement, as if I am travelling to a foreign land.

Max Egremont

Witch Legends of North Western Sussex: Witch-hares

"They talk about witches and witch hares at Plaistow," George Aitchison wrote in his book *Sussex*, published in 1936 – a mere 80 years ago. The belief in witches survived until relatively recent times in some rural areas of Sussex, and here, as in the country as a whole, the most common type of witch legends are those which revolve around the belief that witches could transform themselves into animals. In Britain, witches were mainly believed to change into hares, but there were some who turned into other animals, and these were also mostly small ones like cats, dogs, rabbits, toads, and foxes – although in a few places there were witches who changed into cattle or deer, and there were also a handful who became trees. Sussex had two witches who disguised themselves as cats, two who changed into

dogs, one who could take various animal forms, and a couple who could even become birds, but the vast majority of the county's witches who shape-shifted were those which transformed into hares. And one of the parts of Sussex with the most recorded (published) accounts of witch-hares is the region which lies west of the River Arun and north of the Downs.

The belief that witches could turn themselves into hares goes far back in time, long before the rise of Christianity, and was to do with the fact that a shape seen on the moon when it is full resembles a hare, and that the ancient goddess of those type of worshippers who later were called witches was Hecate, who was a lunar deity. The most common tale concerning witch-hares is rather like the one recorded at East Harting: a witch-hare was chased all the way to the cottage of an old lady, locally believed to be a witch, and just as the hare entered the cottage, through the drain or an open window, a hound that was chasing it managed to bite one of the hare's hind-legs. Then, when the huntsman opened the door, he saw the old woman inside, with blood pouring down one of her legs. Similar tales, about witch-hares being wounded just as they get back into a witch's cottage, have been recorded in many villages throughout this county, and there are also variant tale types – such as the hare was only chased, and the old witch was just seen panting afterwards; or even that the hare was mortally wounded, and a woman who was reputed to be a witch later died of similar injuries – but mainly in tales of witch-hares, the hare is chased and injured, and, surprisingly, there are very few accounts of such uncanny animals actually being killed.

However, there is no record of the witch at Bury being chased or wounded while disguised as a hare, indeed the only thing that has been written about her is this: "Why 'she' has been seen running at night off Westburton Lane. Turns herself into a white hare, she does, like a ghost!"

And near Up Waltham, another witch who disguised herself as a hare was not chased either – although she did get injured. The following account was published in *Sussex County Magazine* in 1931 – the first witch legend that the magazine carried. Much of what we know about Sussex witches comes from *S.C.M.*, which continued to publish tales and articles about them throughout the Thirties and Forties. This tale was told by an old woodsman called Moses, who lived up over Eartham way, and 'ooman' was his way of saying 'woman'.

My mates and me were resting under a hedge nigh Up Waltham, 'aving our dinner, when a hare comes hopping along. Darky Trussler sez "That bain't a hare, it's that – old ooman down along under' (speaking of a village where we was lodging). I takes up a stone an' throws it an' it catches that hare. She didn't half holler, letting out a screech jus' like an' ol' ooman; an' then she goes a-limpin' away. That night, when we was

down in the village, ol' Sary Weaver, wot people said could make a cow run dry by lookin' at 'er out 'er cottage – folks said she were a witch – cums 'obbling outer 'er cottage. When she sees we, she lets out a screech, same as hare did, an' goes a limp in' off, for all the world as if she were that there hare. She were lame in the same leg wot the hare was! but she 'an't been afore.

The vast majority of the Sussex witches about whom there are recorded legends, tales, or anecdotes, were women. This is also true of the country as a whole, but an interesting thing about its male witches is that hardly any of them were reputed to be able to transform themselves into animals. This is the case with wizards as well. But the north western part of Sussex has a lot of local legends, and a lot of unusual ones, and so it should not be surprising to find one here of a wizard who became a hare, *and* got wounded – and yet, it is surprising, because no other county seems to have any records of such an individual. This strange tale was first published in PSM 27, in 1982.

At Fox Hill there used to be a public house called The Fox and the man that used to keep it they called him a wizard. The innkeeper went out one night and turned himself into a hare and ran across a meadow and a gamekeeper saw this hare and shot at the hare and hit it in the hind-legs. The innkeeper turned himself to a man again but was very lame. The gamekeeper followed him and called at The Fox Inn and when he saw the innkeeper and saw how lame he was, the innkeeper said "You nearly had me tonight, hit me in the legs."

Besides the landlord of The Fox, Petworth also had a witch, but there seem to be no records of her doing any shape-shifting – nor of any of the witches known to have lived at the following places changing themselves into animals either: Henley, Gunter's Bridge, Balls Cross, Billingshurst, Pulborough, Kirdford, Rudgwick, Inganise Hill, Burton Park, Bishop's Ring, Wisborough Green, and Fittleworth which had two.

However, it should be noted that the large number of places that have witch legends in north western Sussex does not mean that there were indeed a lot of witches in the region from the mid-1700s (after witchcraft stopped being a crime) to the mid-1950s. No, it's unlikely that many of these women even considered themselves to be witches. What it is a reflection of is that there were many people in this part of Sussex who were very superstitious. Witch legends did not arise around a person who was reputed to become a hare, or fly on a broomstick, or stop the milk from churning, etc. but instead, the beliefs about witches were taken from the pamphlets and ballads about certain notorious witch trials which had

taken place in the 16th and 17th centuries (when witchcraft was a crime) and these beliefs were spread round the country by travellers, carters, and Gypsies, and were grafted onto those individuals who, for one reason or other, were feared or shunned by their neighbours, in various villages. A certain cranky or ugly old woman, who lived on her own near the edge of a village, might become known to be a witch simply because someone had told somebody else that she became a hare at night, or could lame a horse just by looking at it askance, or that she had even killed a neighbour with her witchcraft – all of which activities had previously been reported in pamphlets and ballads based on the witch trials of the earlier period when witchcraft was still a criminal offence. Another point worth making is that although so many places in north western Sussex had witches, there is no indication at all that any of them were in covens. Indeed, covens are hardly ever mentioned in British folklore.

Most books about the folklore of this country (but none of the Sussex ones) tell that it was widely held that only silver bullets could harm a witch. However, almost all silver bullet tales actually feature witch-hares, or other shape-shifters, rather than any witch in her normal human form. It is odd too that so many folklore books mention how silver bullets were used against witches, because there do not seem to be that many recorded witch legends involving them. This next tale, which is one of the very first that I captured, comes from an article by Rev. G.P. Crawford, 'Slinfold Fifty Years Ago' published in S.C.M. in 1932.

I will begin with its belief in witchcraft. It had not quite died out in my time. I remember one day when I was ministering to a chronic invalid, Beccy Farley, who lived in the cottage just opposite the Rectory, that she gave me a rambling statement concerning a witch who came through the hedge and ran through her garden in the shape of a hare. I have no clear idea of the matter of her story. But it is confirmed by another story which I think concerns the same hare as Beccy Farley's, and which was confirmed to me recently. The Squire had then a field adjoining Beccy's cottage, and his keeper, George Andrewes, a believer in the same cult, decided to kill it, and rid the village forever of this supernatural pest. But he said from what he had always heard it was no use to try and shoot a witch with lead shot: it must be silver, and so he broke up some silver coins into small pieces, loaded his gun with them and shot the hare. I have an idea that it was a white one.

Tales of witches being shot, with any type of bullets, are curiously uncommon in this country, and those that tell of witches getting killed, whether disguised as animals or not, are quite rare. Generally, in the few tales that there are of witches

being killed, their death came about at the hands of someone else, usually a white witch – and so, although the vast majority of witch legends were grafted into place, from other sources, which is why there are many that are similar to each other, this next tale, the sad account of how the Stedham witch met her end, may well be unique. Certainly, I haven't found a similar tale from anywhere else.

There is the story of the witch at Stedham who... had the power of turning herself into a hare at will, and was torn to pieces by foxhounds when in the form of a hare.

Another unusual type of witch legend is that where a witch-hare is actually quite aggressive and doesn't get chased or hurt at all. Even in Sussex, tales of witch-hares doing anything else other than being seen, chased, and injured, are not common at all. Yet there was a witch at Barlavington who, in the shape of a hare, went after a man on horseback and so bewitched the horse that its rider was thrown off, and then the hare just sat and watched him as he lay in agony. The full account of this incident is recorded in *Tales of Old Petworth*. The witch had strong connections with the local smuggling fraternity, but the most notorious witch of this area – indeed, of the whole county – must have been the one at Graffham, to judge from the many tales there are about her.

Taken collectively, these tales seem to indicate that she lived at least as late as the 1930s. Not only could she transform herself into a hare, but she could become other animals too, including birds. But the most interesting thing about her was that although she could transform into a hare, and she could immobilize wagons, she could also immobilize wagons while she was in the shape of a hare. There were just three other witches in Sussex who were powerful enough to immobilize a wagon while in the shape of a hare, and one in eastern Hampshire too – but I've yet to find any other county where there were witches who could do both of these activities at the same time. The reason for this is almost certainly because the belief in witches survived until relatively recent times in the South, and that the storytellers who told such stories about certain old women were well aware that tales of witch-hares and wagon-stoppers were the two most common types of witch legends in the country as a whole. The subject of witches immobilizing wagons will be covered in Part 2. This next tale, of the Graffham witch, is from *Sussex Ghosts & Legends* by Tony Wales:

On another occasion a cart stuck on the hill near her cottage, and the carter was unable to make it move. He struck at the wheel with a piece of metal, and a hare ran out straight into her cottage. When this happened a second time, dogs were let loose. The hare darted up a drain pipe outside the witch's cottage, but one of the hounds caught it

by the leg and drew blood. Mother P---- was later found upstairs in her bed, with blood flowing out under the bedclothes.

It was widely believed that drawing the blood of a witch, either from her being bitten or wounded, was a sure way to break her spell, and this is why in many tales of witch-hares, it is always the old woman who is seen bleeding inside her cottage, and the hare is never recorded as being in there as well. And whoever conjured up this tale about the Graffham witch, also knew that the spell over an immobilized wagon could be broken by the counter-charm of cutting or whipping the wheels.

I mentioned the storytellers just now, which is the term I use to describe the people who originally told all these old witch legends about one or two of their neighbours, and it is important to understand that although I tell of quite a lot of local witches in this article, it is much more concerned with these storytellers than it is with any real wicked old hags we may have had in the region, once upon a time. I'm not writing about witches here, so much as I'm describing the many superstitious beliefs that were imported from other places and grafted onto certain old Sussex women in the area by local storytellers. This part of Sussex may well have had a lot of witches, or none at all – but it certainly had an unusually wide selection of storytellers with rich imaginations. And some of those people were proud of the villages they lived in, and wanted the public to know that these villages had history and legends that made them distinct from other places. Indeed, there are many witch legends that end with some sort of emphasis concerning the truth of the tale, where the person telling it added a comment which implies that he is telling the truth, whether it was something which he personally experienced, or something that an older relative or friend had originally said. A good example is this next tale, which is another of those about the Graffham witch. It was related to George Aitchison, who also lived in Graffham, and published in Sussex *'Notes & Queries'* in May 1933.

An old man, well over eighty, hearing witchcraft described as 'all rubbish', got very excited and exclaimed "All rubbish! It ain't. Why, I knew a witch myself in this very village. Her daughter's alive still. I'll tell you what happened to me once." The old man told how he went to fetch help for a sick person very late at night. "By that hedge over there I saw the dark form of a woman. On getting up to her I saw it was Mrs. --. I says 'Why, Mrs.--, you ain't got no call to be out so late as this!' And I tell you, as true as I am sitting here, she vanished, and instead of her I saw a hare running through the gap in the hedge. I saw it – and you could have knocked me down with a feather. I shall never forget it, not to my dying day.

This is an interesting and unusual tale in that it was related by someone who actually saw a woman transform into a hare. There are hardly any accounts of witch-hares getting chased, and maybe wounded, and then being seen as they transformed back into the more usual human appearance, and so, as is often the case with witch legends of north western Sussex, there is a twist in the telling.

I have been talking about north western Sussex here as a region that is quite distinct from the areas around it, and it is. Besides its many witch legends, the region has a dragon legend on Bignor Hill, fairy legends at Pulborough, Milland, and on Tarberry Hill, and there is also a very unusual legend concerning the Devil at the far western end of the county. However, the eastern border of this region is not the mid-county boundary that divides West Sussex from East Sussex, but along a line formed by the River Arun and Stane Street. The region east of the River Arun, as far as the mid-county boundary, also has some fairy legends, on the Downs, and a legend of the Devil, and of a dragon, near the Surrey border, but only three witch legends. One of these concerns a shape-shifter at Dial Post who could make herself invisible, even in daylight. But the point here is that some areas of the county either have very few recorded witch legends, or none at all, and yet there are also regions, like north western Sussex, where these archaic traditions and superstitions survived for much longer than anywhere else in the country, and were actively maintained and adapted by the imaginative wealth of our own very local home-grown storytellers.

Shaun Cooper – to be continued.

Other Sussex Sources:

East Harting witch: *Highways and Byways in Sussex* by E.V. Lucas.

Bury witch: *All About Bury* by Lilian E. Brown.

Stedham witch: *Sussex County Magazine* 1939 (p.725) by John Knight.

Barlavington witch: *Tales of Old Petworth*: by John Osborn Greenfield.

Pulborough witch: *Sussex County Magazine* 1947 (p.34) by A.N. Spong.

Henley witch: *Fernhurst* by Alice Tudor.

Burton witch: *A Shepherd's Daughter* by Evelyn Pentecost.

Fittleworth, Rudgwick, Kirdford, & Dial Post witches: *Sussex Ghosts & Legends* by Tony Wales.

Fittleworth witch: *The Story of Fittleworth*. The Hon. Lady Maxse.

Balls Cross & Gunter's Bridge witches: *Petworth Society Magazine*.

Inganise Hill, Wisborough Green, & Billingshurst witches: *Past and Passing* by Rhoda Leigh.

Milland witch and fairy legend: *Some People of Hogg's Hollow*, by Eleanor Boniface.

Dragon, fairy and Devil legends: *The Folklore of Sussex*, by Jacqueline Simpson.



Shimmings 1900.
An Upton family photograph.



"Part of Petworth's folk heritage."
Round the hills about 1900.

Lombard Street

Lombard Street in the late 1930s was a focus for the town's commercial life, the famous cobbles and the long view to the spire of St Mary's could almost symbolise the town itself. Here were a number of old-established family businesses. Three times a day I would go up and down, morning, lunchtime and afternoon. Some shops I could relate to, others remained remote.

Tucked in as it was on the immediate right, I had little awareness of Newland Tompkins and Taylor, auctioneers and estate agents but Mr Bishop retailer and repairer, was a familiar figure, as much or more concerned with workmen's boots as with shoes and brads, wax and thread. Not everyone wanted his services! The old three-legged last was still a feature in many households, while old car tyres might be pressed into service to extend the life of soles and heels – often outlasting the cheaper types of leather.

Beyond Mr Bishop a house broke the succession of shops as it does now. Then Mr Tom Dale maker and retailer of clocks and watches. The shop's large window and trade display would mean little enough to a boy of my age and would in any case be beyond my parents' means, let alone mine. The five bob Woolworth's timepiece might be the working man's choice, that is if he carried such a thing at all. A silver "job" was usually a once in a lifetime purchase, or, more likely a present or presentation item. Many in Petworth took the time from the church clock or such other clocks as might be on public view. A wrist watch was a sign of money. For the home a single cheap but robust alarm clock fulfilled most functions. In fact for many time was regulated by the Leconfield Estate bell hung from a cradle fixed to the wall at the north end of the Grand Entrance lodge and rung by the incumbent keeper Monday to Saturday morning at seven o'clock.

Mrs Westwood's wool shop would be next with its wonderful array of colour dominating the window. Woollens might be unpicked and re-knitted several times before finally being laid to rest. No doubt Mrs Westwood also sold buttons, bows, coloured cottons and silk thread – not something with which a schoolboy then would concern himself.

Mr Bowdidge the greengrocer was a different matter altogether, very much a physical presence for me. In fact his shop was something of a paradox, here was a greengrocer from whom working people didn't buy vegetables let alone fruit, if they could possibly grow their own. Sound economic reasons, of course, but also a matter of personal pride. Nothing deterred, Mr Bowdidge sold them their seeds, vegetables rather than flowers. In a frugal age, why didn't people save their own seed? Probably it was because seed suppliers were offering certified stock. I can still feel that sense of self-importance as a ten year old being sent into Bowdidge's



Lombard Street a classic Garland view from the 1930s.

to buy seed for Dad. It might be half an ounce of this, an ounce of that. No colourful packets but weighed in bulk from a sack, cotton or jute, into the brass pan of Mr Bowdidge's small balance scales on the counter, then into a small brown envelope 4 inches by 1½. Mr Bowdidge would then write the name of the seed carefully on the packet. A few pennies, perhaps, but all done with a grace that perhaps reflected the later importance of the crop in a family's economy. Seed potatoes perhaps were rather more tangible than seeds, certified stock gave greater confidence, blight or some other disease could cost a family dearly.

Then Arch Knight, baker extraordinaire. At the heart of so much in Petworth and a kind of unofficial mayor. Town crier still, Captain of the town Fire Brigade, and involved with so much more. His cottage loaf would be the basis of a workman's midday meal but for a boy in an ordinary town family the cheaper, more functional moulded loaf would be standard fare. And the lardy rolls, lardy cake and fairy cakes. To someone living abroad, as I would in later years, the taste, looking back seemed hardly of this world at all.

Godwins the wine merchants were next in line, but the shop was hardly the territory of the working man, although Godwins did sell beer. It seemed a place for masters rather than men although I sometimes wondered if the former kept away from the shop lest, being seen there, it might weaken their position when they berated some hapless employee's weakness for the bottle.

Lastly the shadowy figure of Colonel Maitland at the Blackbirds Tea Shop – definitely no place for a boy of ten from a working family.

Down the hill to begin again. Slightly less dense on the left hand side. Weavers first: newspapers for adults but fairyland for children. A shop for birthdays, Christmas and Guy Fawkes days. No bought decorations for Christmas but coloured strips from Weavers to be made into chains, a wonderland created for the cost of a few bits of coloured paper and a spoonful or two of flour and water.

The bay window of Mr Earle's shop projected into the street. I'd rarely walk up Lombard Street and not see him standing there in the shop doorway. Schoolboys seemed rather beneath his notice. Dark clothes, white apron tucked into his waistband. No need for us boys to look in the shop window, he knew that well enough. Just a few pipes and cleaners and postcards in a showcase standing outside the door.

Then a couple of Leconfield Estate cottages, followed by a peculiar premises that seemed to alternate as plumber and fish and chip outlet, perhaps one after the other chronologically. I can't be sure. A few steps up were Boorer and Payne the butchers. Was the "shop" window put in in a rush, reflecting an impromptu change from house to shop? The shop itself was a fair size with large carcasses of meat hanging, sometimes poultry. The slaughter house was at the rear of the

shop, approached, I always supposed, from Park Road. No argument about the meat being fresh! And, almost eighty years as I write the famous "Beef's Head tile" is still there.

Lastly E. Streeter and Daughter, antiques, clocks and watches, very shadowy to a schoolboy, certainly not a children's shop. Well after I'd left school I bought a couple of cheap wrist watches and a novelty pipe lighter. Why? I hardly smoked at all. I also remember buying my first ball-point pen from Streeter a French "Biro" that was the size of a normal fountain pen, with the ink reservoir tube within the body, bent like a hair pin and fairly small in diameter. Mr Streeter himself had a work room facing the church and we boys would press our noses up against the small window. He didn't like this: small wonder as we were blocking his light. Four times a day we'd go up and down.

[The gist of this article was found among the papers of the late Jim Taylor of Thompson's Hospital. I have lightly edited it and cast it into the first person. Leaving Petworth for New Zealand in 1950 and returning to Petworth only in the 1990s, Jim Taylor retained an awareness of the Petworth he had left unmixed with later recollection. Ed.]

"In a cab in a fog"

This piece appeared in St Mary's Parish Magazine for January 1887 with the by-line "A Country Parson." An educated guess would suggest the writer is Charles Holland, the rector. It offers a good parallel to Constance Mure's virtually contemporary diary (PSM 157 September 2014) particularly with regard to the London fog, black and yellow. "We were wretched all afternoon and evening as the fog got into the house and nearly stifled us" or Constance's reference to Percy Wyndham and her younger sister Marjorie "continually bumping into one another as they struggled home."

Fogs are not pleasant things anywhere, but I suppose they are worse in London than in the Country. My short but disagreeable experience in one of the worst that has been known in that city, a short time ago, may possibly be of use to some of my readers who, like myself, are not accustomed to such experiences, and may help them to escape that which I through ignorance encountered. It was about 6 o'clock p.m. that I had to pay a visit to a Surgeon in the West End, somewhere near Bryanston Square, and when I came out of his house at about 7 and wanted to find my way to quite a different part, at the other end of Chelsea – a drive in a cab or a 'bus of generally, I suppose, five-and-twenty minutes. We all know that there are plenty of 'busses running to and from all parts, and to travel in these is

by far the most economical plan of proceeding, unless you are in a hurry or, like myself on this occasion, enveloped in such a fog that when I came out of the Surgeon's door I could not see a yard before me, and felt utterly at a loss to know how to proceed in order to get hold of any kind of conveyance.

The servant that let me out, not knowing the exact state of things, assured me that a whistle would bring me a cab directly. So it would on an ordinary night – but this was an extraordinary night. Cabby might hear the whistle plain enough, but where it came from and how to get to the whistler that was a problem even cabby with all his "cuteness" could not solve. So cabby moved not from his place. My kind servant next proposed to go and see if she could find one, and after first depositing me under a lamp where she might find me again, she went forth, not quite in the dark for good fortune discovered near at hand a boy with a big lantern in his hand. How they found it I know not, but a cab with two flaring lamps did suddenly appear not far from where I was standing, into which I gladly jumped and thought all my difficulties were over; I should after all get home in time for the dinner to which I was expected. Vain hope! My troubles were only just beginning. "Where do you want to go to?" I heard cabby call out in somewhat querulous tone – "King's road, Chelsea. Oh! dear me, I can't get there – can't see a street or a house – I really – well, I'll try." Well I thought a regular London cabby was accustomed to this kind of thing, and could find his way in the dark anywhere. I thought he was only anxious I should duly measure his difficulty and consider his fare accordingly. But I soon had reason to change my view, and think of this extra thick fog as something not to be met with so very often even in London. We soon came to a stand still, and shouts began which, more or less, lasted all the journey, "where are we," "what's this street," &c. Thus crawling, and crying, and turning about, in and out, here and there, I began to doubt whether we had made any progress at all in the quarter of an hour or so we had been on the move. Nothing at all could I see but what appeared like a white wall on each side of the cab, and now and then a gas light, of which there are some very bright ones with three burners, and when we got to one of these they served more than ever to show the almost desperate predicament we were in. For there at such spots were collected no end of vehicles of all kinds, boys with torches, Policemen, swell mob, drivers of omnibuses, all calling out to know where they were, and why someone didn't move on. It seemed a perfect babel of voices, and all I could see from the windows by the light of the gas, was a bit of a 'bus, or a horse's head quite close, or a dark figure close to my window. Somewhere about this time my cabby got down and appealed to me as to what he was to do, he "couldn't see nothing, and didn't know how to go on." – "well," said I "you must get on somehow – try your best." Now at this juncture help came. It might have been

very different, as was the case with someone in like circumstances, of whom I heard, who when a man tapped at the cab window, opened it and put his head out to ask what was the matter, the stranger simply took the gentleman's hat off his head and carried it away, knowing no one could possibly see the act of theft. Not so in my case, the man who called to me was asking where I wanted to go, and on learning where, without a word, beyond replying "allright," took out one of the cabby's lamps and going to the horse's head led the horse all the rest of the way. Not that this was easy or soon done; we came to many a standstill, many a wrong turn – and often to one of these great lights in some more open space, where every driver was asking every body where he was, and which way to go.

Still we did get on, snailpace, and I now had some hope of a dinner, though it might be a late dinner, and felt thankful to Providence I should not have to sleep all night in a cab.

On one occasion cabby got off his seat and disappeared while the leading hero stood by – "He's gone to ask where we be," said he in a confidential tone. He was so long gone that I could not help surmising he had been attracted by some well-lighted drink shop, where a lively glass might give him a little more internal heat, for it was very cold and the fog seemed to get inside one, and make one's eyes quite sore. Then when cabby did come he took occasion to assure me that "this ere job was no ordinary one, and he should expect a crown for his pay, and this ere other chap he would – yes, chimed in the chap "I shall want five shillings." All I could say was, "do get on and get me home," not saying what I inwardly felt, it would be worth my while any how to pay handsomely to get home, and I must expect to pay. Thus we went on again and I was soon relieved at last to see we were somewhere in the King's road, where the fog had lifted enough to reveal shops and houses so that I knew I was not far from my friend's house. And glad enough I was to find myself sitting down at his table, in a warm room where the great enemy could not eclipse the lights, nor interfere with enjoyment of a good repast.

Now to one who lives in the country and seldom visits London, this was quite a little exciting adventure, and the result of my experience which I add for your benefit, if you are in such a fog, this is, get into the nearest Underground Railway, and so have but little street to go through, and pay three pence instead of ten shillings as I had to do, and yet hardly satisfy my guide and driver – and do in a quarter of an hour what it took me well nigh an hour and a half to perform.

[Swell mob. Pickpockets who assumed the appearance of wealthy people to avoid detection. Ed.]



Mr Holland with his curates 1893.
Photograph by Walter Kevis.

Don't miss these!

You will see from the Activities Sheet that we have an extremely powerful line up of speakers for autumn. We have raised admission to £5 to cover fees and hall hire and also to reflect the quality of the speakers. On October 20th we have Kate Felus with a timely talk on Lancelot Brown and his contemporaries. 2016, of course, is the tercentenary of his birth. Kate writes:

'Talking 'bout my Generation':

Lancelot Brown and his Contemporaries in the Golden Age of Landscaping

This year – as many will know – is the tercentenary of the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, arguably the most famous British landscape designer in history. He probably worked at well over 200 sites across the country, from Devon to Northumberland. It has been calculated that the combined acreage of all his commissions equates to the size of an average English country, and he may reasonably be said to have changed the shape of our countryside. His reputation was partly built on his prolific output and partly on his seeming ability to get on with men and women of all classes of society. He understood the lot of the humble gardener and he could converse at ease with the grandest Duchess. Another reason for his success was his address book. His decade-long stint as Head Gardener for Lord Cobham at Stowe blessed him with social connections that he was later able to convert into jobs. Here, in the 1740s he was one of a coterie of young men who were something of a golden generation. They included politician William Pitt and gentleman-architect Sanderson Miller; both of whom laid out landscapes of taste. While writing her recent book *The Secret Life of the Georgian Garden* (I.B.Tauris, 2016), historian Kate Felus was struck with how many of the figures she was writing about were born in the few years either side of Brown's birth in 1716. Her talk will discuss these other movers and shakers in landscape design, professionals and gifted amateurs; describing the men and women and their gardens, as well as touching on how they used them.

In November we have Fred Delius with his "Flying Circus". I have called this, "Confessions of a sword-swallower (retired)."

In December Bertie Pearce returns after a three year absence with variations on a conjuring theme. Did he mention Dickensian characters? I have to say that in almost forty years of monthly meetings – Bertie's appearance was one of those I remember most vividly.

We can only put 'em on – if you miss these, you miss them: it's as simple as that.

Petworth Fair is on November 19th this year. It is expensive for us to stage – tombola prizes please to Peter (342562) or Linda (342712). No, I'm serious: we really do need them.

Peter

