





THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
Magazine

No. 169, September 2017

Contents

Uniquely in the history of this magazine, we are devoting practically the whole issue to one subject: the bombing of the Petworth Boys' School on Michaelmas Day 1942 – seventy-five years ago this autumn.

In another break with tradition we have made the perhaps radical decision to omit the title and date line from this issue: often the phrase 'a picture is worth a thousand words' is merely a cliché. In this case it is not.

We have used a mixture of photographs – some from the Garland Collection at WSRO, some contemporary press pictures and others from members of the Toronto Scottish Regiment which were taken at the time.

Peter Jerrome and Jonathan Newdick

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PAGE ONE

The convoy of coffins makes its way at walking pace along North Street to the cemetery. Two coffins are placed with flowers on each 3-ton Chevrolet Canadian Military Pattern truck provided by the Toronto Scottish Regiment whose soldiers were among the first on the scene after the bombing and who rescued many of the boys.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

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 £14.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £18.00, overseas nominal £25.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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WEBSITE

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FRONT COVER

Final prayers are said by churchmen and mourners over the coffins at the cemetery.

BACK COVER

A Petworth Boys' School cycling permit from the 1940s. Only pupils from a distance would, in normal circumstances, be allowed to cycle to school.

The narrow stream

A personal view of the 75th anniversary of the school bombing.

On the face of it a purely random event, the bombing of the North Street Boys' School on Michaelmas Day 1942 would be a determining moment in the town's long history. I was not yet five at the time and attending Petworth Infants' School (on the site of the present Public Library) and I would be in London within a year. The full impact of the bombing was largely kept from me. When I returned to Petworth in 1951 it was to a town still stunned by the tragedy, beside which the removal of St Mary's church spire in 1947 appeared only as a side issue. The third Lord Leconfield died in 1951, having presided over House and Town for half a century.

If echoes of the bombing were muted, they were very much present. Petworth was changing, slowly, but too many wounds still lay open and bleeding. In the nature of things some survivors, as too, parents and siblings, moved away. All tended to keep their own counsel. The return of the Toronto Scottish regiment in 1985 broke what was effectively a spell. The regiment with other Canadian forces had been early on the scene that fateful day.

Every September 29th I have an awareness of the ever-diminishing group gathered at the Horsham road graveyard but I have always hesitated to intrude on a very private grief. Those who remain, no longer parents, but a handful of survivors and siblings, seem bound indissolubly together by the event. We cannot enter a unique experience. We can think of them, feel for them, but we cannot join them. Am I right in thinking this? I simply do not know.

If this Society has any role, it must be to keep faith with 1942 in whatever way seems appropriate. The Society hosted the return of the Toronto Scottish Regiment in 1985 and their several subsequent visits, while the various issues of this magazine carry virtually all the surviving personal recollection of that day. Issue 69 (September 1992) commemorated the fiftieth anniversary. Twenty five years on we revisit some of this material but add other recollections with some disturbing pictures of what must always be a very disturbing scene.

The boys who died would find Petworth in 2017 a disconcerting, even alarming place as compared with the town from which they were so suddenly and cruelly taken, while the remorseless passage of time has also taken the Canadians from us. I think we were never nearer to that lost generation than when, with those who as young men had scabbled so desperately in the rubble and returned

forty years and more later to pay their respects, we sang the old Wesley hymn that seems to run like a red thread through the troubled Petworth of the last century:

One family, we dwell in him,
One Church, above beneath;
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

If seventy five years on, the old certainties are questioned, there remains something that defies analysis. This hymn had been sung when the men returned from the war in 1918, at the memorial service for the boys in November 1942 and several times when the Canadians returned in the 1980s and '90s.

In 2017 a changing town must pay its respects as it considers fit. This Society can ask only that everything be subordinated to the memory of those who died and the feelings of those who grieve still. This issue of the magazine is the Society's tribute to them.

Peter Jerome

In Memory
of those who lost their lives by enemy air action on
MICHAELMASS DAY
September 29th, 1942.



[Reprinted by kind permission of "The Times" newspaper.]

CHARLES STEVENSON
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SYDNEY RALPH HAMILTON
DENNIS ALBERT RICHARDS
CHARLES JOHN CARVER
EVA STREETER

'You'll have to run between the drops ...'

Adapted from notes made by the late Jim Taylor at Thompson's Hospital

Petworth children attended mixed sex schools until the age of seven then transferred either to the East Street Girls' School or Petworth Boys' School at the bottom of North Street. The boys' school had standards 1 to 8, the same perhaps at the girls' school. I never knew. In practice there were never more than two pupils in Standard 8, just there for a few months in their final year. There were three teachers, Mr Crawley for Standards 1 and 2, Mr Court for 3 and 4 while Mr Stevenson was responsible for 5, 6, 7 and 8.

I was just seven when I started at the end of the Easter break in 1935 and was fortunate to have my older brother already started in school, halfway through Standard 2 but still in the same room. It had a very high ceiling and large windows set fairly high in the walls. The place was cool in the summer but bitterly cold in the winter: The only heat source was a single medium-sized 'Tortoise' stove of cast iron and sheet metal in each room. It burned wood and coal.

The school area comprised one very large room that was daily divided into two by means of a screen of a large folding/sliding type glazed about four feet up from the floor. The screen was in two parts: one against the west wall, the other against the east and was drawn from either side to fasten in the middle of the room. Drawing out the screen was part of the daily routine and a duty entrusted to certain privileged students.

The classroom had individual two-seater desks and seats with cast iron frames and wooden top, seat and back support with a shelf about five inches below the top for storage of books. There was an inkwell for each person, a wooden pen with replaceable nib and a piece of blotting paper: text books and exercise books were all supplied. There was also a basic foot rest, a piece of wood fitted into cast hinges giving the rest two possible positions, so that a mismatch in leg length could cause not only friction but noise. Too much and there might be a painful rap on the knuckles with the wooden pointer wielded by the teacher. This could

OPPOSITE

St Mary's Parish Magazine, December 1942.

This issue, which the Revd E.T.H. Godwin introduces as '...mainly a Memorial Number...' was necessarily printed on war economy standard paper. This page, however, which was pasted in as an additional fronticepiece, was printed on good quality art paper.

be very painful on a frosty morning. Remember that pupils walked to school and in winter were often cold when they entered the building. For many, clothing and footwear were of poor quality, often well-used hand-me-downs. We did, of course, have the third of a pint of free milk and Mr Stevenson the headmaster would, on very cold days, take advantage of the Cow and Gate Malted milk tablets. An occasional bonus in a similar line were Horlicks tablets given out as advertising material. Preparing these was something of a ritual. A large polished copper jug was filled with water and placed on the cast iron top of the stove. As the water heated, a quantity of these squares of fudge-like milk and chocolate mix were put into the water and stirred with a special plunger. As I recall it was a fairly weak and watery chocolate flavoured drink, but it was at least a little warming.

There was very little corporal punishment in my seven years at the school, Mr Stevenson thought that reward and personal encouragement achieved better results. I was told that he had served as a machine gunner in the war and had reservations about military discipline. Good attendance might bring an ice cream in summer, or perhaps, an orange in winter. He held extra classes for those who wished, a couple of nights most weeks in the summer months. An hour and a half to two hour session, English and maths.

That first year when I was in Standard 1 about a square yard of ceiling fell on to the desk next to mine. It showered several of us with dirt, dust and fine particles of lime mortar. Fortunately that particular desk was unoccupied at the time.

A welcome break from routine was an advertising initiative set up by the Marmite company in the form of a shop display of food and general household items such as soap, matches, candles, kerosene and lamps, boot polish, scouring materials and, of course, Marmite in several pack sizes. All items were priced and we 'shopped' for the week, listed the cost and worked out what we had spent.

Few boys, certainly up to Standard 6 had bicycles and if they did they would have been made up at home from spare parts. Parking in the school racks was allowed only if there was a specified distance to travel or perhaps some special reason like a necessary journey after school. We might have an overcoat in winter but usually we just ran to and from home with a jersey. I think the expression was 'You'll have to run between the drops.' Jackets were too much of a luxury for most families. In the summer we were not allowed to wear exposed braces but were supposed to wear a school belt. This was beyond our means so my mother cleverly overcame the problem by sewing small slots in our shirts to let the strap of the braces attach to buttons under the shirt.

The school lavatories were dark and gloomy, full of dust and home to spiders,

a visit meant a walk out of the main building and almost out of school. They lay next to the bike rack and the coal and coke store.

The school gardens were slightly detached, a little down the Horsham road and next to the Horsham Road cemetery. We learned to dig, rake, sow and harvest, the main concern being vegetables. Now I can only remember the Brussels sprouts and artichokes, as too, the old cast iron water pump in the sunken paved area in the middle of the plot. I sometimes wonder what happened to the pump. There was a lighter side to this. The garden being too small to have Standards 5, 6 and 7 down there together, the master in charge had to go back to school at intervals to check on those left in class. This gave the gardeners the chance of a little water and clod throwing before he returned.

The school inspector made regular visits, more stressful to teachers perhaps than to us pupils. I remember he looked more like an undertaker than a teacher!

Other visitors were the Band of Hope Union and the Army. The former didn't just go through the motions. They gave real tuition, even an essay from everyone in Standards 6 to 8. Clearly Mr Stevenson backed their efforts and I received a certificate of approval for my own essay. Once the Army recruiting department paid us a visit. It gave an opportunity to learn a trade and, with the school leaving age being fourteen, opportunities for further education were otherwise non-existent. There was one competitive 'Taylor Scholarship' to the grammar school but even had they been successful, attendance was completely out of the question financially for most boys at the school. In fact boys coming up to fourteen were eager to leave and earn a wage, however poor. Some I would imagine were allowed to leave a little before they reached the statutory age.

Memories of the 1914 war were never far below the surface. For a time we had a teacher who had been shell-shocked in the war. He would be half way through a sentence, then suddenly be frozen in time, bereft of speech and movement. Often he recovered quickly, sometimes not, in which case Mr Stevenson was called for. He would take him off to rest somewhere and recover in his own time. No doubt Mr Stevenson remembered his own experience in the conflict.

Petworth was a Church of England school and Mr Stevenson took over as choirmaster at St Mary's and also ran the Petworth Boy Scouts. Singing, scouting and an interest in church architecture became, in a sense, part of the school curriculum. These activities also took us out of school, taking part in various church functions in and around Petworth.

We might also travel further afield. I remember us going to a singing competition at the Conway Hall in London. We enjoyed the day but I don't think we actually won anything. Another trip to remember was to Bosham in

Petworth Boys' School Concert.

Tuesday February 16th 1937 at 7pm.

Programme,

1. Extract from Shakespeare's Henry IV. Part 1.
"The Adventure on Gadshill."
2. Demonstration of Physical Training.
(under the direction of Mr. R. H. Court)
3. Burlesque Mime.
"The Tall, Tall Castle."

by Margaret Macnamara.

[A certificate was granted in 1933-4 at
the West Sussex Drama Festival for the
presentation of this Mime by the School.]

4. The Puppets Band.
A Concertina Solo.
5. Cantata "The Walrus and the Carpenter."
composed by Percy Fletcher.
[assisted by the Petworth Orchestral Society.]
6. Toy Symphony on British Airs
by Hellen Nicholls.

God Save the King.

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

The programme for an evening concert at Petworth Boys' School on February 16th 1937. See page 12—'...I remember Robin Hood and Tall, Tall Castle.' Courtesy Mrs S. Stanford.

the summer of 1941 when we sang in a hall near Bosham church. We also had a conducted tour, being shown the casket where the remains of King Canute's daughter were interred, also the marks cut into the stone framing of the door. They had been made by the knights after their vigil on leaving for the Crusades.

I enjoyed playing in the school band as I did the making of the instruments. We made treble, alto, tenor and bass from bamboo, also drums and tap boxes, kazoo, nightingale warbles, castanets and triangles, even flutes. All music was transferred from note to number. This made such an impression that even today when I hear a piece of music being played I have an inclination to convert to number. I can remember now the notation for Tallis's *Ordinal* 53345422343112312 as I can that for Shakespeare's *Mistress Mine*.

In 1937-8 a film was made of the pipe band, presumably at Pinewood or Elstree. I don't know what happened to the film and I certainly never saw it. I was at school when it was made but would only have been in Standard 4 – the wrong side of the screen!

Another activity was making finger puppets from Plasticine, coating them with newspaper and flour paste, then completing the head with paint and varnish. We would then make the clothing, even wrote our own play and made a theatre complete with curtains and put on the show. A great event was the Annual school play at the end of the summer term. I remember Robin Hood and 'Tall, Tall, Castle'. I had to play Maid Marian. Not a big part mainly consisting of searching for something in a large basket and saying, 'Clothes, clothes, nothing but clothes.'

I think the rhythm of the school was affected by the threat of invasion and the coming of the evacuees from Peckham. I remember going out and helping with the harvest on local farms, an extension perhaps of what we had done during the school holidays – in peacetime. In particular there was the sugar beet harvesting, 'whopping' as it was called. The beet was pulled out by hand or simply ploughed up, then picked up by the leaves, and the root chopped away with the other hand with a tool rather like a handbill. The tool came in various forms and was, and had to be, sharp enough to demand respect. We often cut after a frost and it could be quite miserable in the fields.

A sideways perspective on 1942

Over many years George Garland, the Petworth photographer, and his wife Sally kept scrapbooks of newspaper cuttings, not perhaps so much with a view to posterity as with a view to record articles and reports submitted and sold to the press. In fact, Garland's contributions to the *Midhurst Times* (now the *Observer*) were unusual: his main outlets were the Arundel-based *West Sussex Gazette* and the Brighton-based *Sussex Weekly News* and its sister paper the *Sussex Daily News*. Before the war Garland had been a regular contributor of pictures and, less often, copy to the national press but this virtually ceased after 1939. Pieces appearing in different newspapers were usually, in practice, identical but all were meticulously chronicled by the methodical Sally who ran the Station Road studio. A scrapbook might run over a period of a year or two and entries for 1942 are contained in a volume running from the summer of 1941 to the spring of 1943. The Garlands kept two types of scrapbook simultaneously: one with press reports, another with press pictures.

On the face of it here is an entrée to a lost Petworth but, while irreplaceable, the books offer a curious, almost distorted view. Items had, in the nature of the case, to be newsworthy where the historian would prefer to gauge the tenor of everyday life. The Garlands' great strength lay in their gentle probing of older memories, whether in formal obituary or landmark family celebration. The scrapbooks reflect life seventy years and more before as much as they do 1942.

There are, of course, contemporary notices. Weddings, often between service personnel, are a staple and carry much more detail than would be the case today, when weddings and funerals attract at most a brief announcement. Funerals particularly will include a long list of mourners and reflect a much more inward-looking society than today. There is a certain terminology that seems almost de rigueur: for instance local brides are invariably 'popular'. Reference to wartime conditions is often indirect and allusive, while reports of whist drives, dances and local entertainments look back to the 1920s and 1930s rather than forward to a television era. At a Tillington social for evacuees George Garland himself appeared in a varied bill with 'Stories in Sussex dialect', something he would do again for Fittleworth Home Guard supper a week or two later. At the same time the Tillington Nomads concert party were at Lurgashall, while Chichester Oddfellows annual meeting saw Mr D. Crawley representing Petworth's Angel Lodge. Petworth Rural District Council were zealously collecting waste paper while some

left out in the rain at Lodsworth had become sodden. We learn that the average attendance at St Mary's for Holy Communion was 41 on Sundays but minimal for weekday celebrations. At Duncton some 69 children enjoyed a Christmas party given by Canadian soldiers, with Santa Claus giving each child a present of two bars of chocolate, a bag of peanuts and a four shillings savings stamp. This was followed by an educational film on harvesting in Canada, and, perhaps more to the children's taste two Popeye cartoons and another depicting the antics of Flip the Frog.

Inevitably the bombing of the North Street Boys' School would dominate the year and the Garlands' usual outlets carried extensive coverage of the tragedy. Wartime conditions dictated that initially neither the name of the town, nor the name of Charles Stevenson the headmaster, appeared in print, simply 'Mr Blank, I cannot disclose his name.'

'Halfway through the morning ...'

Joyce Ifield (née Balchin) talks to the editor

My cousin Maurice William Balchin, known in the family simply as 'Boy' lived just across the road from us at Limbo Farm. We lived in Limbo Lodge. From my very first days at Petworth Infants' School I had walked in along the London Road. It was just a fact of life and of course there was little enough traffic along the road. By 1942 I was still at Petworth Infants' School and walked in with my friend Vera from Adelaide Lodge just a little further along the road. Maurice would of course walk in with us, sometimes we'd meet up with other children, from Hampers Green perhaps. Sometimes not. I said goodbye, as I always did, to Maurice at the Boys' School just south of the Masons' Arms, little thinking that I would never see him again.

Halfway through the morning we heard a terrific bang and the walls of the school visibly shook. It was obvious that something had happened but we would learn only gradually that the school had been bombed. After school we set off for home as usual. Whatever we had been told it was obvious that the school had been hit, the building was in ruins but some tidying had been done and there was a semblance of order. No arrangement had been made for us to by-pass the site and not knowing the full scale of the disaster we walked by with a half-stifled look at what had once been the school. As a child I wouldn't take in the enormity of what had happened.

In the last resort it is the obituaries of an older generation that re-echo over the years. George Peacock of Burton had been a keen cyclist even at the age of 85. He had formerly lived in North Street and attended Petworth Boys' School, being then apprenticed to Mr George Cragg in Bartons Lane. He had spent the great part of his working life as electrician on the Burton Estate. Some forty years before he had driven the late Captain Douglas Hall to Goodwood races, the first person to go there by motor car. On the return journey the de Dion broke a front axle and precipitated chauffeur and employer into a ditch at the bottom of Duncton Hill. In no way deterred Captain Douglas Hall travelled to London for a spare axle and had the car ready for the Thursday meeting. When the intrepid pair arrived at Goodwood they found they were not alone: another car had appeared.

BELOW '...some tidying up had been done and there was a semblance of order.'



'I just sat and cried.'

From a letter from Nancy Pilmoor (née Cross) in Canada to her younger sister, now Vera Jenner

Now, once again I will try to tell you what I remember of the North Street bombing.

I do remember taking your hand and telling you not to look. I can visualise the whole thing. Yes, that is right. It was lunchtime, it was just over, we were all going back to our class. I was standing on top of a desk winding up the window: it banged shut as the bomb hit. Miss (Bunny) Wootton and Miss Bevis were talking just outside the room. They came rushing in and told us to get down and a few minutes after we all went into Mrs Bell's classroom. I am not sure how long after that we were allowed to go home, probably after the All Clear was announced.

I remember you and I trying to get by the school. There were, of course, a lot of people, police, firemen and others. I still remember very well a poor lady all dressed in black standing on the corner, near where you turn to go down Horsham Road: the lady's name was Mrs Penfold. She lost her twin boys. She was always very quiet. I don't know why she stands out in my mind so vividly, but she always has, maybe because she looked so forlorn.

Remember Maurice Balchin was lost, Mr Stevenson the headmaster and, of course, many others. Remember how you and Brian took me to see the graves in the Horsham Road cemetery, if I remember there were 24 graves.

Our mum and dad were very sad, of course, but relieved that John was up in the town with the class doing carpentry.

A few years ago I was sent on my computer some pictures of the bombed school, I just sat and cried. I guess it never leaves you.

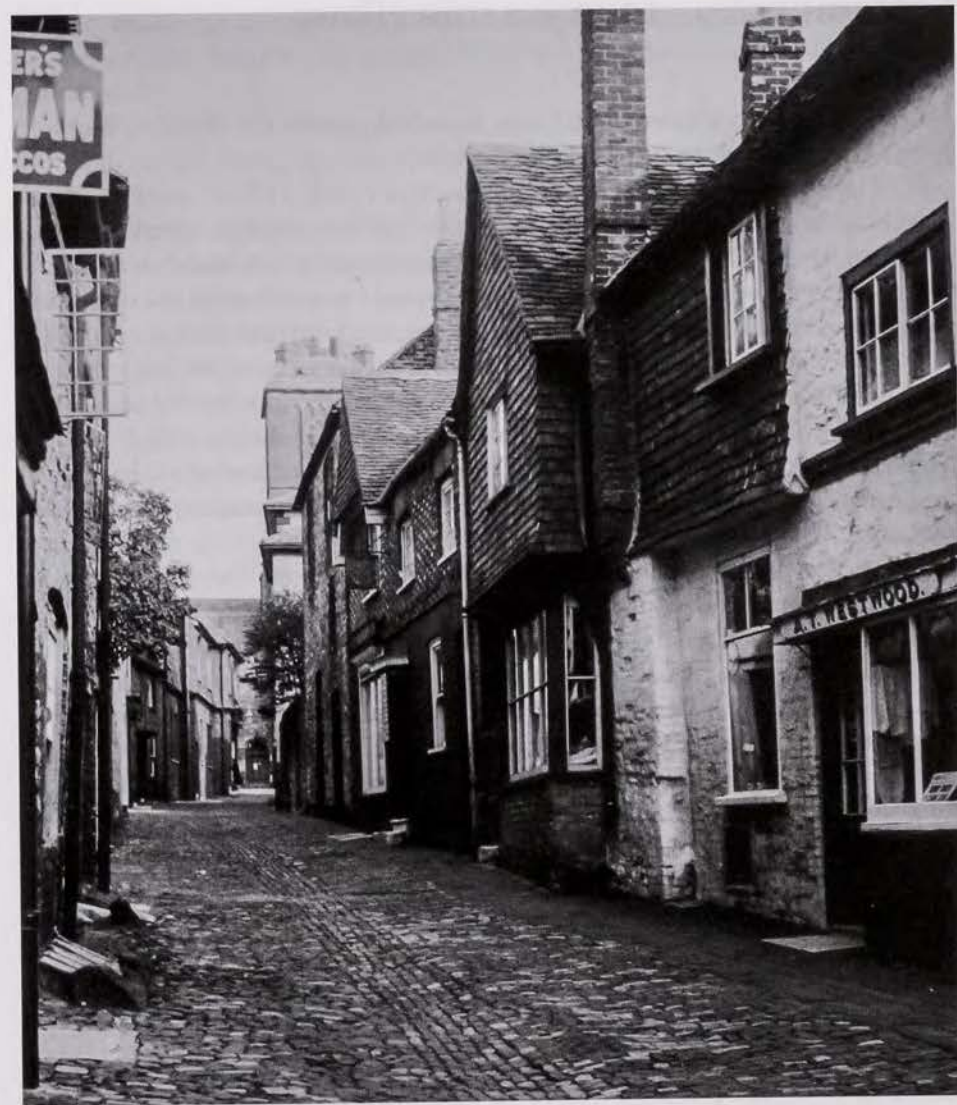
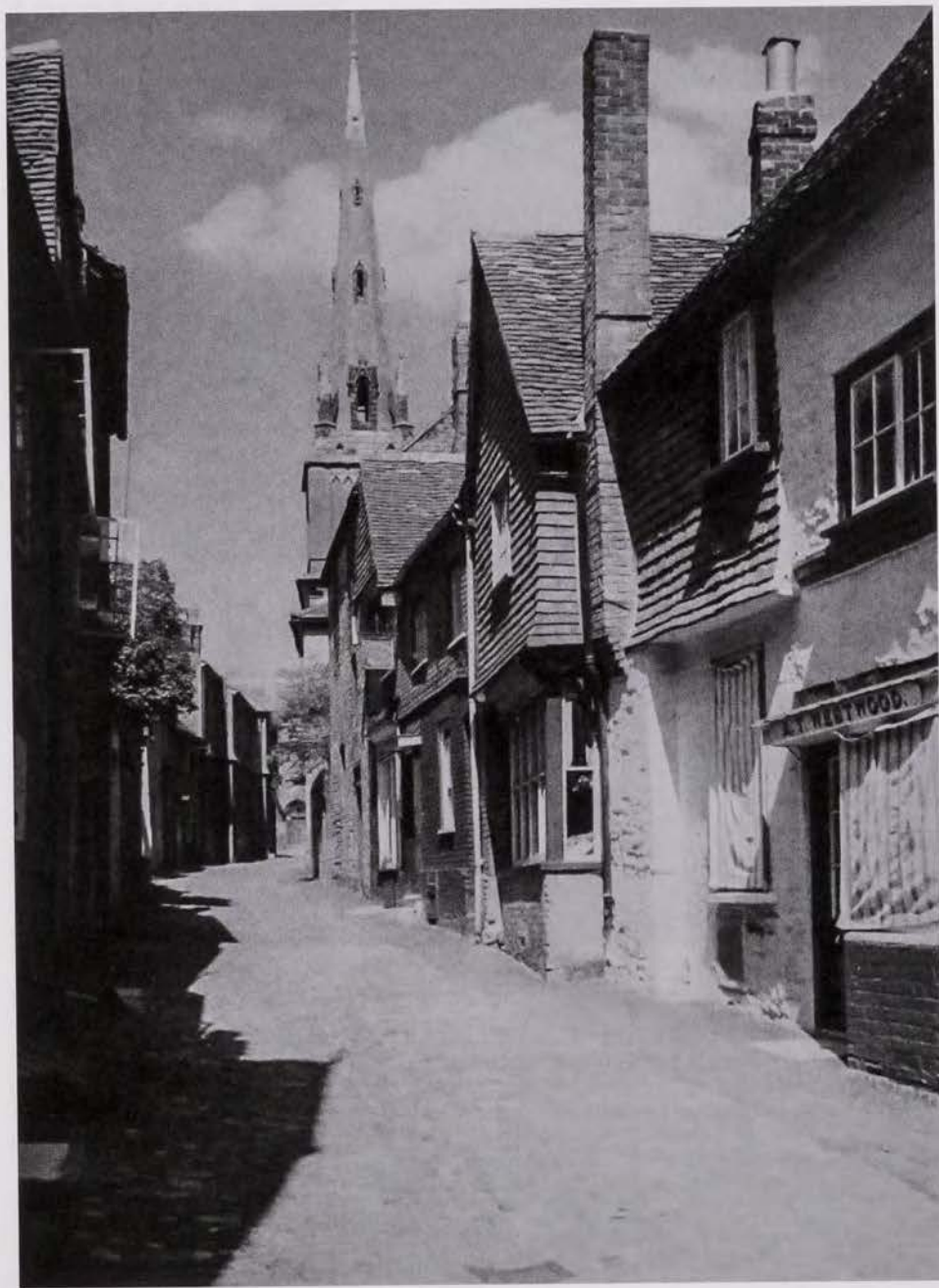
Nancy was a pupil at the East Street Girls' School.

Mrs Penfold, later widowed, spent her last years at Edmonds House. Every week I would deliver her groceries. We never discussed the bombing but obviously we were both aware of it. When the Toronto Scottish Regiment returned to Petworth for the first time in 1985, it was arranged that the pipers would play for Mrs Penfold outside Edmonds House. Mrs Penfold was a diminutive quiet lady with a humble dignity I have never forgotten. — Ed.



ABOVE

Rescue workers, both civilian and military, continue to sift through the rubble and debris but seemingly with an air of resignation that there is little hope now of finding any survivors.



OPPOSITE AND ABOVE

Two photographs of St Mary's Church taken from towards the bottom of Lombard Street. One is the last picture taken of the spire before its removal in 1947, the other believed to be the first taken after its removal. What the parish magazine described in 1948 as 'like the stump of an amputated limb which has not properly healed' might have been the talk of the town were the town not still stunned by earlier events at the bottom of North Street.

September 29, 1942 – a miscellany

1 A version of an oral account that John Wakeford gave for the Wartime West Sussex Project in 2011, edited by Miles Costello

I was born in the house at South Grove, where I still live, on 16th September 1930. My father worked for the council as a bridge builder, while my mother was a cook at Petworth Primary School for a good many years. I was nine years old when the war started and my earliest memory of that time was when the evacuees arrived. My parents had three boys allocated to them but they didn't stay for long, most were homesick and they gradually drifted back to their parents. We did keep in touch with one of the evacuees and Mother treated him like a son though he did have a family in London. He was in his thirties when he died and would have been the same age as me had he lived. Being an only child it was strange to have other children in the house but we all got on OK.

The evacuees didn't generally go to the same school as us. They had their own teachers who had come with them from London and Portsmouth. Sometimes we shared the school, for instance we would have it in the mornings and they would have it in the afternoons. We would often go out into the fields collecting berries and stinging nettles for the war effort but the war tended to curtail our activities and we were encouraged not to roam quite so much as we had. Every wood around here was filled with either Canadian or American soldiers, mainly Canadians. It was them, the Toronto Scottish, who helped dig the boys out of the school after it was bombed. They used to visit Petworth long after the war ended but I don't suppose there are any of them left now.

The 29th September 1942 started as a wet day. I rode my bicycle to school as it was quite a distance, a mile each way, which was four miles a day as I always came home for lunch. A lot of boys didn't go to school that day because of the weather, after all some of them lived three or four miles away and they trudged in day after day. They couldn't go home for lunch so would bring sandwiches in and eat them in school. Apart from the rain it was really just a normal day. It happened so quickly, one second a school, the next nothing. It was break time and being so wet nobody much went out to play. I had stayed at my desk while some of the boys played by the outside toilets. After that I don't really know what happened. The building just began collapsing, it happened so quick that I didn't realise that a bomb had hit the school. The headmaster was standing just a few feet from me reading his newspaper. He shouted 'Under the desks', followed by 'Run for it.' I

leapt up and began to run but was trapped, I don't know how long for, but I knew I had to get free and away. It was just a pile of rubble; I don't know how anybody got out really.

It was nearly all the younger boys that were killed, the new lads that had just started that September. The juniors were at the south end of the school that took the main impact of the bomb. There were only three classrooms, with the big room divided by a glass screen that was pulled across following morning prayers.

I heard some time later that Reg Bushby had managed to get himself free and ran barefooted to his home at Hampers Green where his mother clipped him round the ear for losing his shoes. I managed to get out and decided that I ought to run home, I was covered in blood and dust but I wasn't frightened at all, I just wanted to get home. I grabbed a young lad with nothing on his feet and we started to walk up the road, his name was Ronnie Parsons and he lived quite close to me. As we passed the headmaster's house his wife came out and told us to go inside. I argued with her and refused to go in, but I then remember seeing my mother running down the road and I can still see the look of terror on her face. She had been told the news in the town and had run all the way down North Street. We remained at the headmaster's house for a while and then I was taken up to the Red Cross rooms in the town where I was cleaned up and had my leg stitched. The doctor wanted to send me to hospital but Mother wasn't having that so I was taken home. I didn't hear anything about the boys who were injured or killed. Everything was hushed up and nothing was said. I could hear whispering when relatives came to visit but still the bombing wasn't spoken about. You see death wasn't really talked about in those days, especially to children, and it was a long time before I really knew exactly what had happened. I stayed in bed for a couple of weeks and by the time I was well enough to get up the funeral had taken place.

I went back to school in the January following the bombing, Though now it was to the Iron Room up in the town which we shared with the evacuees until a new school was found.

2 A misty, murky, grey day like so many others in the shadow of the war. 'Jumbo' Taylor, still too young to serve in the armed forces and working for Mr Payne, the Lombard Street butcher, was cycling to Frog Farm a mile or two out of Petworth on his way to pick up some live chickens to bring back to the shop. Gwenda Morgan, the wood engraver, was doing war work in the Land Army and waiting to help him, as she usually did, to collect the birds. 'Jumbo' recalled:

I heard the roar of an aircraft coming up from the direction of the river, over

the hill to the left and just visible over the hedge on the skyline. As I watched the plane appeared out of the rain. It was flying low, about 150 feet, and, even on a misty day like this seemed to cast a huge black shadow. The plane was a Junkers 88 but painted jet black, quite unlike the camouflaged planes we saw normally, the black set the white crosses under the wings into relief and there was a swastika visible on the tail fin. I could see the port underbelly quite clearly ... as the roar of the engine receded there was a 'crump.'

3 In Pound Street Marjorie Alix thought the weather too dull and miserable to put her three-month-old son outside. In 1996 she did not recall the misty rain that had caused some of the boys at the North Street school to be kept at home. It seemed an ordinary morning in wartime. A solitary densely black and sinister-looking aircraft was flying low over the Pound Street chimney pots. There was a glimpse of Nazi insignia as the plane disappeared northward. A crump was followed by a second, heavier one. Suddenly there was movement, people running, voices calling – the grey morning quiet now broken into activity, two or three women were running up the road, tugging on their outdoor things as they ran.

4 Mrs Godwin, the wife of Harold Godwin the rector later recalled:

Sitting at his study table facing the window looking up to the church the rector noticed a plane fly past the church spire. Hardly had he seen it when there was a terrific explosion which shook the whole rectory and caused the study window to swing inwards.

The rector rushed out as he was in his cassock and was almost the first person on the scene.

The school was a complete shambles. He immediately tucked up his cassock and began trying to succour those who were hurt and trapped by the falling masonry. He was soon joined by others and by some Canadian soldiers from a nearby camp. He remained for a considerable time and helped to lift out the bodies and ministered to those who were in extremis.

As more help arrived and the children were put in the ambulances he went up to the cottage hospital and helped to lift them on to the floor of the hospital, comforting them all the time and helping the doctor while he gave them injections prior to their removal to Chichester.

Sister Magdalene Mary was a wonderful tower of strength during this time.

Continued on page 34

EMPIRE NEWS . . . September 30

05.30 As ninety boys were having their lessons in a South of England school yesterday a German raider wrecked the building with a bomb. Two out of every three boys were either killed or injured. Up to a late hour last night it was known that eighteen schoolboys, the headmaster, and a woman teacher had lost their lives. Of the injured, twenty-eight have been taken to hospital. It is feared that a few pupils may still be trapped beneath the wreckage of the building, and rescue workers are continuing to dig among the ruins. A class of sixteen boys escaped unhurt thanks to the presence of mind of a woman teacher. When she heard the whistling of the bomb she quickly gathered her class around her close to a wall. The wall was the only part of the building left standing

. . . October 1

12.00 The headmaster who gave his life to save some of the boys in the village school that was bombed on Tuesday is to be buried with his dead pupils in a communal grave. The death roll is now twenty-nine

. . . October 3

17.00 Here in Britain another boy has died from injuries he received in the recent bombing attack on a village school in the South of England. This brings the total death roll up to thirty-two (twenty-nine boys and three adults). This afternoon the headmaster of the school with twenty-eight of the boys killed with him were buried in a communal grave. The Bishop of Chichester conducted the memorial service in the parish church. Earlier, people from outlying villages joined in a procession to the churchyard to place their tributes upon the grave. Wreaths and crosses were sent from civil defence and military units, and there were little bunches of field flowers from young boys of the dead boys

18.00 The search is still going on today among the ruins of a South of England boys' school that got a direct hit from German bombs yesterday. The death roll now stands at twenty-three, and about thirty others are in hospital. Eighteen boys are still missing. When one of the bombs fell on the school it lodged in a fireplace before it exploded. The headmaster saw it and shouted to the boys to run. Some of the boys ran, and were saved. The headmaster stayed, and was killed



A boy who escaped describes his experiences

Three press cuttings from *London Calling*, under the headline 'It Happened in England', undated but probably from the issue of November 1942. *London Calling* was a now largely forgotten monthly magazine published by the BBC. It was directed towards overseas listeners to the BBC World Service and contained programme listings for the service. It was generally known as *The Overseas Journal* of the BBC. The technique of giving the paragraphs a date and time has a parallel with today's television news attempts at immediacy by flagging reports with the words 'Breaking News.'

The indecipherable text from the first cutting reads: 'It is feared that a few pupils may still be trapped beneath the wreckage of the building and rescue workers are continuing ...'



PAGES 24-5

Two of the convoy of Canadian army trucks with four of the coffins ease their way past the remains of Lord Leconfield's laundry on their way to the cemetery.

BELOW

A copy of a damaged and fragile sepia photograph of the Boys' School taken in about 1905. The photographer and the identities of the boys are not known.





TOP Boys from Petworth Boys' School, now located in Pound Street, visit the graves on the first anniversary of the bombing.



ABOVE Many of the boys in this photograph were part of the junior class.



TOP Mr Stevenson with the school pipe band about 1937.



ABOVE Petworth boys of an older generation working in the school garden, possibly during the 1914-18 war.

Bombed Boys (continued)

Holiday Hospitality

LIVE POULTRY

HERE'S 3-WAY HELP IN ONE SPARKLING

ZESTFUL—its Autumn tang, its appetizing and sprightly, its delicate.

PURE—made from the purest of New York State apples, its crisp, old-fashioned cider makes.

SWEET—its wholesome, its can be enjoyed by all.

ONE OF THE FAMOUS **MOTT'S** BRANDS

THE SIGN OF **MOTT'S** 1847 BETTER TASTE

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ASTE

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The wreaths were several inscribed, "To my best friend. . . ." One mother dropped a single red rose on her son's coffin. Among the survivors at the right were nine older boys who had gone to a woodworking class in another part of the village.



Mothers and mothers of the dead boys follow the coffin to the grave in the heavily smoky churchyard. In a village so small nearly everyone was related to at least one of the dead. None of the children at the school was an orphan from the bombing.



This empty space was where the school once stood, built against a hillside. The school was built on the site of a school that was destroyed during the bombing. The school was built on the site of a school that was destroyed during the bombing.



Among the wreaths were several inscribed, "To my best friend. . . ." One mother dropped a single red rose on her son's coffin. Among the survivors at the right were nine older boys who had gone to a woodworking class in another part of the village.

OPPOSITE
Two of the surviving bamboo pipes made and played by the boys of the school (see the upper photograph on page 29 and 'You'll have to run between the drops' on page 7). The pipes are photographed on a page from *Life* magazine, November 2nd 1942. This single surviving page from the magazine had been kept for years as a sad memento by an anonymous survivor of the bombing.

ABOVE AND PAGES 32 AND 33
The three photographs with captions from the page from *Life* magazine reproduced opposite. The magazine had a circulation of over four million and, while the bombing of a school in England may not have had the same impact on its readers as the attack on Pearl Harbour will have done, such coverage will have gone some way towards the backing of America joining the conflict.



Fathers and mothers of the dead boys follow the coffins to the grave in the lovely country churchyard. In a village so small nearly everyone was related to at least one of the dead. None of the children at the school was an evacuee from big cities.



This empty space was where the school once stood, backed against a hill meadow. Of some small boys, only scraps were found. Scattered among the rubble were several dog-eared picture books, dolls and one child's book called *The Deeds of Heroes*.

It was a great shock as he knew all the boys personally, many of them being choir boys. He helped to lift out Charlotte Marshall, the teacher who had half her face blown away. Mr Stevenson, the headmaster must have been killed instantly but appeared unscathed. The rector had the unhappy task of breaking the news to Mrs Stevenson who never ceases to be grateful to him.

5 Mr Turner, manager of the Westminster Bank in Market Square:

I heard the sound of an airplane engine, immediately followed by three explosions. I thought the bombs had fallen a good way off as the explosions were not loud, neither was the concussion pronounced. I was talking to the O/C of the Petworth Flight, Air Training Corps who had come into my office at the Bank about the possibility of obtaining for Mr Stevenson, the headmaster at the Boys' School some woodwind instruments for the ATC band. Little did we know that poor Stevenson was, at that moment, being killed.

Mr Turner made his way down North Street to the school with Mr C.D. Martyn, the A.R.P. officer.

On arrival I found a number of people searching in the ruins of the School: among them some of the boys' parents and also the Rector. The latter, whose cassock was smothered in dust and stained with blood was carrying an injured child to the road side to await an ambulance. A cloud of dust still hung over the place and the smell of detonated explosives was strong.

6 Reg Bushby (1991)

My brother Fred didn't want to go to school but, very unusually, I did. My mother had to be very firm with him. What with my mother's firmness and my own wanting to go he was finally and unwillingly persuaded. It was a dull drizzly September morning. From our house at the top of Hampers Green we'd simply go round the corner into the road and down the hill. I think we used to call it 'Dark Hill' or was that further up towards Keyfox? Anyway the trees tended to meet overhead and it was dark. On the opposite side of the road from the Masons Arms was a street light, not used of course at this time because of the blackout but fitted with a red bulb to warn of air attacks. It could be seen quite clearly from the front door of the school. It wasn't far from the school which lay beyond the Masons Arms just back from the road junction. Lord Leconfield's laundry lay right on the corner.

It was a day like any other. We waited in the playground at the back, damp

rather than wet after walking in the light drizzle. There were the usual lessons up to eleven o'clock, then playtime. I don't remember what the lessons were. Miss Marshall gave me a sharp rap over the knuckles with a ruler but there was nothing unusual about that. No doubt I thoroughly deserved it. At playtime we remained inside; it was too wet to go out. It was time for milk; everyone was entitled to milk, specially packed for schools in distinctive small bottles holding a third of a pint each. You couldn't buy them in that size, they were exclusively for schools. They had round cardboard tops with a hole in the middle through which you put a straw. It was the milk monitor's job to push in the straw. I suppose the reasoning was that if we did it ourselves we'd make a terrible mess. My brother was sitting next to me in the double desk, one of the old-fashioned kind with metal legs and ink-pot with sliding metal cover.

I didn't hear anything. There was an explosion but I didn't hear a thing. There was a feeling of blackness and I was no longer in the desk, no longer with my brother. I was with Miss Marshall. 'It's all right Bushby,' she said, 'It's only thunder.' With that there was another blackness and then another. There was no noise. I heard no one cry out. I heard nothing but I must have known it was a bomb.

Someone was crawling up the sides of a crater with me. Melvyn Kitchener said, 'Hullo Busher, I'm going up the Surgery, are you coming?' 'No,' I said, 'I'm going home.' I was some twenty feet from where I had been sitting in playtime, diagonally across into the playground behind Miss Weekes' class. The school was basically a single room partitioned. Mr Stevenson's top class was nearest the Masons, we were in the middle and Miss Weekes' juniors were on the Horsham Road side.

I set off at a great pace up the Horsham Road. I had gone some two hundred yards when I realised I was going the wrong way. I came back past the school but I didn't see the building at all, no rubble or anything. When I got back to the Masons Arms opposite where the street light was, there was a car parked in the road with Leonard Hamilton, who was hurt, and Arthur Hill. We all lived at Hampers Green so the car took us home. Later an ambulance came to take us to Petworth Surgery for a check-up.

7 Tony Penfold (2014)

I can remember walking down North Street on the way to school. It was raining but otherwise, a normal day. I think it was before the siren had been put on the police station (or was it the courthouse?). There were red bulbs in the light

holders and one fixed in the wall by the Horsham Road junction. Whether they were shining on this particular day I cannot remember. There had been some talk of using the laundry tunnel from the House as a makeshift shelter and we had been trooped into the tunnel with a view to this but nothing had come of it. As we reached the Horsham Road turning we'd pass Steve's (Mr Stevenson the headmaster) house on the corner of North Street then cross the road to go into school.

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

I can't now remember that morning's lessons at all. It was a perfectly normal day. The only unusual feature was the number of boys kept back at home because of the weather, while some seniors were at a carpentry class in the town. It was break: some of us were drinking milk, some perhaps tootling on the bamboo pipes which were a particular speciality of the school. I can remember Mr Stevenson sitting at his desk: his invariable custom was to break up a raw egg in a glass of milk and drink it.

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

I could still feel things dropping round me and could see that I was trapped under debris and, I think, one of the beams. I couldn't move but I could see a chink of light. Then I saw Reg Bushby, shorn of shoes and socks: he was climbing out of a crater.

8 Terry Lucas (2014)

I always walked to school: some came by bike, and one or two by bus, but very few. That September day was dull and rainy, with a cloud base no more than 400 feet. As I understand it, the bomber came in from the south west, and jettisoned his load. At that height, instead of landing nose first the bombs hit the ground flat somewhere between Petworth House and Park, and bounced. One landed on Lord Leconfield's laundry at the Horsham Road junction, one on the school, one on the playground, while another landed in a field. With the plane travelling at 150 to 170 knots, the bombs went straight back in the air to come down nose first. The aircraft had been flying very low.

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

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

9 Tony Ball (2014)

My abiding memory is of sitting in a lesson and Mr Stevenson the headmaster at his desk a few feet in front of me. There was a crump and falling debris. There was a partition between classrooms and almost without thinking, I made my way to the 'traitor's gate' in the partition. It had a recessed lock with a ring handle. I was now standing before the massive iron-studded front door that opened out on to North Street. It had a huge iron lock and a big iron ring, as big as a tea plate. I had hold of it and was about to turn it when a slightly taller pupil pulled me back. I would not see him again.

As I understand it, the blast from the next explosion blew the door inwards

so that it collapsed on top of me. I knew no more until I came round in Pound Street in the back of an army lorry just outside the timbered cottage just south of Boxgrove.

10 John C. Hatt, 7th Canadian Anti-tank Regiment

It was a cloudy day and I was on duty at Battery Headquarters and remember hearing a plane in the sky overhead. It was normal to hear and see our own aircraft flying around Petworth, so I took little notice of this plane until the pilot made the run on his target. His engine became louder and louder and louder, and soon was in clear view at tree-top level and so close to my position I could see the pilot in the cockpit and the insignia and other marking on the plane. It wasn't difficult to determine he was one of the lone raiders we so often had heard about, and his line of attack was directly toward Petworth. It was only seconds later I heard the explosion from the stick of bombs dropped.

Within a short period of time the Regiment received word that the school was the target and immediate assistance was needed to dig out the dead and wounded. A detail of men was quickly gathered and sent to the site to help in the search for the children and teachers.

11 Gwenda Morgan (1942)

September 29. Horribly wet again. Poultry twice. Cleaned henhouses, German plane dropped bombs on Boys' School & Laundry. A terrible thing. We don't know yet how many boys are injured or dead. Many still to be accounted for. Mr Stevenson & one of the girl teachers are dead. Afraid the list of casualties is very high.

A distinguished wood-engraver, Gwenda Morgan was working as a Land Girl.

12 Rosemary Fox, formerly Streeter (2017)

My late husband John Streeter was a survivor of the bombing of Petworth Boys' School. He was born on 21st November 1936 at Tillington Post Office, the only child of Elsie and Henry Streeter.

On the day of the bombing John should have been at the infants' school on the other side of Petworth. Due to the bad weather his mother decided to keep him home for the day. John, his mother and his grandmother, Eva Streeter, were all in Laundry Cottage which was at the bottom of the school playground.

John heard the aircraft coming and went outside to see what was going on. His grandmother made a dash for the door and just managed to get him inside before the bombs were dropped but she didn't make it in and was killed by the full force of the bomb. After some time John was found sitting on the side of a 100-foot crater, very badly injured. He had one eye blown out and when he reached hospital they found he was blind in the other eye. He also had many other injuries including a great big gash going from his right ear all across his neck to his right shoulder which came within a quarter of an inch of his windpipe. His mother was found in the kitchen of the cottage and she, too, was badly injured. Both she and John were taken to St Richard's Hospital in Chichester where they spent many months. Elsie never really recovered from her many injuries and died in 1956 at the age of 52.

While John was in St Richard's a Harley Street eye consultant, Mr Williamson Noble who knew John's grandmother, came down and operated on his right eye and, thank God, was able to restore a little bit of his sight.

While this was going on John's father, Henry, was away serving with the 8th Army in North Africa. He applied for and was granted compassionate leave but was told that until the paperwork arrived he was not to go outside the confines of the camp. Sadly, the message was not passed on to his sergeant who sent him out on patrol and he was captured. The next day the paperwork arrived but it was too late – he spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of war and didn't arrive home until 1945.

After his discharge from hospital John was sent to special schools for blind and partially-sighted children, first in Brighton, then to Newark in Nottinghamshire and finally to Blatchington Court in Seaford. He left school at the age of fifteen and went to work in the gardens of Petworth House under head gardener Fred Streeter. I met John and his wife, Brenda (née Butt), who sadly passed away in 1975 at the age of 37, in 1970 when my mother became warden of Lantern House in Tillington. We married in 1976 and bought a house in Aldwick as John was then working for WSCC in Chichester.

In 1989 John needed a new left hip: he was only 52. In those days the NHS would not consider you for a hip replacement until you were 70 years old but John went to The Royal Masonic Hospital in London for his operation. The consultant was amazed at how badly worn John's hip was and when they did X-rays and scans they found his whole skeleton was out of sync and they put that down to the bombing.

John died in 1999 aged 62 followed five weeks later by his father. They were both cremated and their ashes placed in the grave of Elsie Streeter in Tillington cemetery.



OPPOSITE ABOVE

Six survivors of the bombing photographed in Petworth Market Square on the second visit of the Toronto Scottish regiment in 1987.

OPPOSITE BELOW

Members of the Toronto Scottish regiment pay their respects at the war memorial by St Mary's church, Petworth, also in 1987.

LEFT

The front cover of the Petworth Society's programme hosting the return of the Toronto Scottish regiment in 1985.

BELOW

Pipes and drums of the Toronto Scottish regiment march down East Street, Petworth, also in 1985.



PETWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Your Ref:

14 Grove Lane,
Petworth
GU28 0BT

7th May 1985

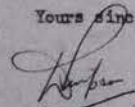
Dear Peter,

The Parish Council have asked me to express their thanks to you and the Petworth Society on two counts - the clean up of the outer area of the town and the visit of the Canadians.

Firstly thanks are due for the excellent job done by the Society in organising their members and other members of the public to carry out the cleaning up exercise. One can only hope that the attention drawn to the effort may leave a little impression on those who are not so litter conscious.

Secondly the visit of the Toronto Scottish Association. Again the congratulations of the Parish Council for an excellent and thoroughly enjoyable day, one to be long remembered. The event seemed to foster a community spirit which Petworth has not seen for a long time and the Society can be proud to have taken the responsibility for the visit.

Yours sincerely,



Clerk.



Queen Elizabeth inspects the Toronto Scottish regiment. Probably 1942. Her Majesty had lifelong links with the regiment.

Mr D. Simpson, clerk of the Petworth Parish Council, conveys the thanks of the council for the Petworth Society's leading role in the return of the Toronto Scottish regiment in 1985.

PETWORTH SCHOOL
 28 BOYS KILLED
 HEAD MASTER
 ASSISTANT TEACHER
 APP 10.30 AM.

MEMBERS OF 6th BDE W/K/S/H
 2ND DIV CAN ARMY
 STATIONED AT FLATHURST
 SEPT 29 1942
 PICTURE TAKEN
 MID AFTER NOON

1 NORM LANSDELL
 2 OSCAR WIEGAND
 3 FROSTY JOHNSTON
 4 GARNET PIERCE
 5 ED FOX
 6 PUDDICOMBE
 7 TOMMY FITZGERALD
 8 ALEX PURVIS
 9 BUCK OLVER
 10 CHARLIE LAFORGE

OPPOSITE

The back and front of a dilapidated photograph taken by a Canadian soldier at mid-afternoon on the day of the bombing. The numbers stuck on the front tie in with those on the back which identify some of the Canadian rescuers. Photograph by Norman Lansdell.

BELOW

The funeral procession leaving St Mary's Church.



The Whistlers' Room – a text for the time?

Inevitably this has to be a sombre Magazine. A Magazine that has to confront the ultimate pointlessness and tragedy of war. It seems appropriate to reflect on a book that came in for the Society sale a while ago and for some reason I held back.¹ It is set largely in one room of a German military hospital 'with a glimpse of the Rhine in the distance'. It is perhaps, 1916. The Whistlers' Room houses three very different German soldiers with a common problem: they have all been shot in the throat. Initially left hopelessly to die at the front, against all odds, they have somehow made their way back to Germany. Recovery would be fraught and death never more than a step away. Natural healing was ironically the patients' problem: the new flesh growing on the inner side of the windpipe with an exuberance such that it blocked the passage of air and the patient suffocated. The hospital surgeon needed to make an incision below the old wound and insert a tube into the windpipe, allowing air to enter and leave the lungs. The tube had to be kept scrupulously clean and be checked several times a day. It was covered with a white muslin bib, which gave the wearer a distinctive almost clerical appearance. The three inhabitants of the room, bonded by the shared problem, were known as the whistlers because as they breathed quickly or laughed, they made a squeaking noise; this, their halting speech and white bibs set them apart. Pointner and Collin were mature soldiers, but 'Benjamin' was a boy of seventeen. Benjamin was not his real name; vice quarter master Joseph had brought him in as one of eleven severely wounded men from his battery, most of whom died on arrival. As one of the biblical Joseph's brethren the nickname had stuck. Initially left largely to his own devices, Benjamin gradually became an integral part of a trio, almost fused together over months, years perhaps, and veterans of innumerable games of cards or chess, whether as participants or onlookers.

All changed when the trio were unexpectedly joined by an English prisoner of war. Harry Flint of the Gloucesters. As an enemy he had nothing in common with the others, only that he too had been shot in the throat. Shocked at the intrusion, the trio's first reaction was to leave the room and Harry to his own devices. Harry had the regulation tube but it was insecurely fitted. When the whistlers returned, Kollin silently fitted a white bib on Harry's chest. Harry had brought with him a tiny bundle 'about the size of a head of cabbage' that was all. He rummaged in the

bundle and provided a stick of chocolate. Wordlessly he offered it to his room-mates. Wordlessly they turned away. Food was desperately short in Germany but Harry received regular food parcels via Switzerland, two, perhaps three, a week. He offered to share: the whistlers, if sorely tempted, steadfastly refused. Sometimes the parcels had been a long time on the road. Even tinned goods might be damaged, bread inedible. A chance for the hungry whistlers to rejoice that his country had let Harry down. On the other hand Harry felt that for the honour of that country he must eat everything good or bad, to prove that all was good. He would sometimes pay dearly for his patriotism. Benjamin had a little schoolboy English and gradually the whistlers evolved a kind of hybrid German/English.

Time elapsed: Pointner was sinking fast and Harry would sit with him for hours. Pointner was so ill that he could not refuse the white flour cakes that came from England. Harry would break them up in milk and give them to him on a spoon.

In the end the spell broke. Sister found, secretly beneath each German's bed clothes part of a piece of enemy shortbread. All three had nibbled at the honour of the Fatherland. The whistlers had given in and Harry would now admit if the butter was rancid or the bacon bad. He had lost his cap, but Pointner's proudest possession, from which he would never be separated, was an English sniper's cap. Conscious of his coming end, he presented the cap to Harry. Collin faced a last critical operation. He did not survive. Benjamin and Harry however had the silver pipes withdrawn from their necks. They were 'whistlers' no longer.

Harry's departure was sudden. He was being 'exchanged'. At a half-hour notice he would entrain for Rotterdam. Almost reluctantly he pulled off his hospital uniform to put on the battered khaki in which he had arrived. The two surviving whistlers simply did not know what to say. There was a knock on the door. They both stood up at the same time and blushed crimson. They then stepped out quickly between the beds, met in a clumsy embrace, and kissed each other.

1. Paul Alverdes, *The Whistlers' Room*, Martin Secker 1929, translated from the German by Basil Creighton. A short novella with the air of a fable. A few copies are available on the internet. Clearly the book is, at least partly, autobiographical. 'It is both fact and fairy story, both memory and imagination.' The last sentence comes from the dust jacket.

Saddlescombe in May

The Petworth Society doesn't do second visits but Saddlescombe is different. Was it really four years since we were here last? In 2013 there had been a feeling of impending change, new tenants awaited. Now Roly and Camilla had time to settle and Roly came out to meet us before we left. As last time, there was simply such a lot to take in let alone describe in the confines of the Magazine. The weather forecast had been apocalyptic, a soaking assured, but in fact it didn't happen: the rain came on the way home.

Formerly an outpost of the Leconfield Estate, but sold in the 1920s, Saddlescombe can still boast the old, enigmatic estate numbering, a comforting feeling for a Petworth group. As before, we are divided into three for a guided tour and, as before, we have a kaleidoscope of impressions and an almost unimaginable historical time span. The Knights Templar followed by the Hospitallers, then a succession of prosperous farmers, the Quaker Robinson family here for generations as Leconfield tenants. Brighton Corporation, then the sale to The National Trust in 1995. Threshing barns aligned to the prevailing wind, but Saddlescombe was always a sheep farm, employing three shepherds but with some arable too. Throwing into the air for the wind to blow the chaff away, a process endlessly repeated. You couldn't do it on a still day. A milking parlour from the 1950s, a rare survival. The long Quaker tradition, strictly no alcohol but unstinted lemon barley at harvest. I always feel the Robinson presence here – the boot room where a boy was employed endlessly cleaning boots. Sound economic sense: boots were expensive. Oxen, the donkey wheel, a secret drawer in the farm manager's desk, a coke fire, a rattle for the boy who spent the day frightening off pigeons ... where do you start? where do you finish? Into the garden, returned to what it once was. Saddlescombe is a special place, the more so for me: Maud Robinson's *A Southdown Farm in the Sixties* was one of my *Eleven Sussex Books*. (Window Press, 2014).

Thanks very much, Debbie Stevenson (and Gordon of course).

Petworth for non-Petworthians

Peter's Petworth walk

That's what Peter said, but was it?

It was an interesting mix of twenty-two: some, residents of long standing; some more recently arrived but wanting to unearth the 'hidden Petworth'; some from towns and villages further afield and a few who had grown up in the town but had moved away and were now returning for the walk, slightly fearful of the changes that have consigned experience to memory. Peter managed to satisfy all parties, judging by the fact that no-one slunk off on the way round.

Moving from the car park into the Old Bakery Arcade (Dawtrey's Yard, a granary) and Golden Square – The Beast Market but later, like Lombard Street, named after London streets. Why? Past Damer's Bridge – the original Dammer seems to have been a saddler there, but not a nice name.

The more formal introduction was in the Leconfield Hall, where Kevis, Garland and Morgan are acknowledged for their contributions to Petworth's history, with the Canadian flag, presented to the town by the Toronto-Scottish Regimental Association to mark the regiment's relationship forged on the occasion of the bombing of the Boys' School in 1942. Outside, the bust of William of Orange. Why? The Market Square, forever associated with fair day, though not the original site but there's no telling where that was. Here, Peter recounted a record from the 1560s concerning the hardship caused by extortionate fines being imposed on copyholders.

The Causeway (Causey), an open sewer down the main shopping area, became genteelly renamed Lombard Street. Here, another record, from 1607, of conversations which took place at the top shop, resulting in a woman, accused of whoring, taking her case to the Church Court to preserve her good reputation.

Over the road, past the church, in front of which shops had stood until the late nineteenth century, and the obelisk, celebrating the arrival of gas in Petworth in 1837 – but some would say, Queen Victoria's accession.

Down Barton's Lane into the cemetery with the Leconfield vault and along the Jubilee Walk overlooking the Shimmings Valley. In the afternoon light, a clear view of the medieval field system on the far side. Past the Roman Catholic church into Sheepdown Drive. A new flower bed rather hides the turning circle for coaches entering and leaving The Grays in Angel Street. Behind terraces of estate cottages with their distinctive chimneys, the walk emerged at World's End and continued down Grove Street, passing the site of the notably important Petworth House of Correction, into the High Street and ending at the Cottage Museum.

'Tales of Old Petworth' all the way, so much detail that, even given space, it would not be appropriate here. These walks are important for connecting Petworth's past with the present. Look out for the next one. And, it is rumoured, Miles Costello has one up his sleeve too.

Keith Thompson

Forty-three years on

A somewhat depleted attendance for our 43rd Annual General Meeting on a very hot evening in a very hot week. A big service for Corpus Christi in St. Mary's and a Town Council meeting too.

The business included acceptance of the Financial Statements which showed a very satisfactory increase in the Society's funds over the year. There was one question, from Mr Henderson, about the hire of a raised platform. In the absence of Mrs Slade, the Treasurer, the Chairman explained that it had been required by the Cambridge Devised Theatre for their performance of 'Lady Connie and the Suffragettes' and had been hired from the Leconfield Estate. On behalf of all, Peter expressed his extreme gratitude to Mrs Slade for her proficient work in a difficult job.

Almost inevitably, the Committee was re-elected en bloc. The Chairman would convey the meeting's sympathies to Mr Ian Godsmark, who was finding it difficult to play as active a role as in the past, but whose experience continued to be of value to the Committee. Mr Gordon Stevenson had taken photographs of events previously covered by Mr Godsmark. Mrs Betty Exall had been taking on a number of tasks, proving herself a reliable member and was duly elected to serve on the Committee.

The Chairman's Report as recorded in the Minutes:

Reviewing the year's activities, Mr Jerrome said that the evening meetings had covered a wide range of subjects; walks tended to be of a local nature; visits, brilliantly arranged by Mr and Mrs Stevenson, were extremely popular. The Annual Dinner was again fully booked, and that in the coming September promised to be equally so.

Mr Jerrome outlined changes proposed for staging the Fair, with no stalls or entertainment upstairs on the upper floor of the Leconfield Hall and entertainment with children in mind, including Punch and Judy, on the ground floor. These were difficult times and it was largely a question of how long the Harris Brothers could carry on, keen as they were to maintain the tradition. Mrs Wilson asked whether November 20th was a date set in stone. As far as the Chairman knew, it was, since 1173!

Mr Stevenson ended the report by showing slides he had taken at the visits to the Watercress Line, Selborne (Gilbert White and Lawrence Oates Museum and church) and Saddlescombe Farm (the donkey wheel and poachers' jail); walks to Pitshill and around Petworth Town, finishing with the contentious 'bridge' at the Virgin Mary Spring, shortly to be removed following protests. A talk by Marysa de Vere from Otter Bookbinders about the research and techniques required in her work ended the evening. She showed examples of the paper and leather used, edging, gilding and tooling, referring in particular to a project for the War Graves Commission to add two new volumes to the seven kept in Westminster Abbey, listing the war dead and to include civilians killed overseas. A ceremonial service would be held in the Abbey on completion of the work. Plenty of questions, indicative of the interest aroused and a congenial evening, all in all.

Keith Thompson

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An enlarged detail from the photograph on page 17. While the identity of the rescuer is unknown his apparent attitude of despair and weariness seems to sum up what this issue is about.

The Society in Stag Park

As space in this issue is so limited, I wasn't expecting to write anything on the Society's walk in Stag Park. There seemed no need to take notes and I didn't. Now a short space is available. Lord Egremont had given us permission to stray off the footpaths, always with the proviso that dogs were on leads and fishermen were undisturbed. Of the latter we saw only the one and him at a comfortable distance, his dog taking infinitely more interest in us than his master.

Through Lord Egremont's kindness we've walked here for years, it's unusual for a year to pass without a Society walk, or even two. I can remember the 'ponds' when some had not been reinstated and were dry and choked with trees. Jumbo Taylor and David Wort spring immediately to mind. Without David we struggle to remember their names – Luffs, Figgs, Upper and Lower Spring – but which is which? We can only explore three or four and Glasshouse is not on the itinerary, nor Jackson's, up beyond Upperton. Stag Park must always be redolent of troops encamped here during the war. From here the Toronto Scottish regiment raced to the stricken North Street School in 1942. We'd passed the last surviving hut as we came in through Limbo Lodge. Once off the footpath we were admiring the tulip trees Violet Lady Leconfield had planted in the 1930s, now coming into yellow-green blooms, some original, I believe and some replaced. Thanks very much Linda Wort and Betty Exall.

Peter Jerrome.



The dovecote at Stag Park, 2010

A drawing by Jonathan Newdick. Pencil on paper; 29.3 x 44 cm, private collection.

The Society in Stag Park

The Society in Stag Park





No.

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY
COUNCIL

Education Committee

Conditions & Restrictions

CYCLE PERMIT

1. This permit, which is not transferable, must be produced whenever required by the Head Teacher, and is renewable in ... of each year. All ...

... described form obtainable from the Head Teacher of the School which the holder attends.

2. This Permit is valid only if the holder continues to reside at the address stated overleaf. Change of address must be notified immediately to the Head Teacher.

3. This Permit will be withdrawn if the holder disregards the appropriate rules of the Highway Code, or cycles on the school premises.

(Parent's Signature)