

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*magazine*

No. 184. September 2021



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An old and faded photograph of the school-cum-church of St. Michael and all Angels at Bedham. The clear site suggests it was taken soon after the building was completed and before it was occupied. This would date it to 1880. A plaque states it was built 'For the worship of Almighty God in gratitude for many blessings this building was erected by Wm. Townley Mitford, of Pitshill Anno Domini 1880'. See the last paragraph of the Editorial on pages 7-8.

**FRONT COVER**

'Noon rest for men and beast' was the caption for this photograph (of which this is a detail) by George Garland. The date and location are not given.

**BACK COVER**

Part of a carpet of woodland moss (*Polytrichum* spp.) in Flexham Park. See 'A just outside Petworth walk – Flexham Park and Bognor Common on page 22.

## 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 plus the parish of Egdean; 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, anywhere and the annual subscription is £14.00, single or double; postal £18.00, overseas nominal £25.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

### PRESIDENT

Peter Jerrome, MBE.

### CHAIRMAN

Alexandra Soskin, Egdean, Petworth  
acwhockenull@gmail.com

### HON TREASURER

Nick Wheeler, Coppards, Middle Street,  
Petworth GU28 0BE.  
nicholasnwheeler@hotmail.com

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Gemma Levett, 18 Greatpin Croft,  
Fittleworth RH20 1HX. (07917) 375546.  
robandgem@aol.com

### TRUSTEES

Miles Costello, Lord Egremont, Peter Jerrome,  
Alexandra Soskin, Nick Wheeler.

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Gemma Levett, Jill and Adrian Lovett, Sarah  
Singleton, Alexandra Soskin, Nick Wheeler.

### MAGAZINE EDITOR

Miles Costello, 9 South Grove, Petworth,  
GU28 0ED. (01798 343227).  
milescostello68@gmail.com

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### MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

Miles Costello, Claudia Golden, Adrian and Jill  
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### SOCIETY SCRAPBOOK

Debby Stevenson.

### SOCIETY TOWN CRIER

Nigel Flynn. (01798) 343558.

### WEBSITE

www.petworthsociety.co.uk

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Alexandra Soskin

At the Petworth Antiques & Fine Art Fair in June, the Petworth Society shared a stand with the Petworth Business Association in a well-placed location directly opposite the entrance. Our striking new banner stand meant we could not be missed! The Fair was impressively well attended, despite the torrential rain. We had many visitors to our stand, both local Petworth residents and people from further afield, and a good level of interest in membership, which was most encouraging.

In early July, Miles Costello presented a large photo display at the Coultershaw Open Day, with an excellent library of heritage books for sale. As I write, many of the government's Covid restrictions have been lifted meaning we can now look forward to holding more and unrestricted events.

Our monthly book sales restart in August, and in September we will be playing our part in the Petworth Heritage Open Day weekend. This will be followed, on 20 October, by a 'Tales & Tour' event at the Battery House within Petworth House. There is more information about this, and ticket sales, on the enclosed insert. All are warmly welcomed, members and non-members alike.

We are planning to restart the Society's Christmas event this year. Rather than compete with the many pre-Christmas and New Year festivities however, the event will actually happen in January. We hope this will be something to look forward to in those long, dark, mid-winter days, when all the year-end festivities have ended. More information about this in due course.

The last edition of the magazine included a member feedback form. Our hearty thanks to the 57 people who sent us their comments! Given the relatively small number of responses though, the

Alexandra Soskin at the Petworth Antiques & Fine Art Fair in June – cheerful despite the relentless rain. Photograph by Harsha Desai.



following comments are anecdotal rather than 'statistically representative'. We hope you find them of interest nonetheless.

For context: 65 per cent of respondents have been members for more than ten years – over 40 per cent for more than twenty years. Nearly three-quarters live in, or within, five miles of Petworth. About 90 per cent are aged over 65; about one third are over 80; with none below the age of 45.

Not surprisingly, the magazine and the monthly book sales came out, by a head and shoulders, as the Society's most valued offerings. The magazine is clearly much loved for capturing local and family history, with eloquence and humour, and for the archive photography. Peter Jerrome and Miles Costello receive heartfelt praise for this. Members clearly enjoy reading about people, places and events they either grew up with or knew through their parents. For newer residents, the magazine is felt to be a great way to learn about the heritage of this special town.

The Society's talks were the next most mentioned activity, both for the variety of topics and speakers and for the opportunity they offer to meet other members. It is good we can now restart these events. The website was raised regarding its limited content and visibility, and also because it does not currently enable membership and ticket purchases online. I am happy to say we are addressing these points currently.

An important theme is the perceived challenge of not changing what the Society does very well, 'for the sake of change', but also needing to stay relevant to attract a wide audience, especially younger people and newer Petworth residents.

To do this, one recurrent suggestion was that, as 'history' itself moves on, younger people may be more interested in magazine stories covering the Petworth of a more tangible 30 to 50 years ago.

Improving our digital presence will also help. The huge popularity of Miles Costello's Facebook 'Petworth Past' (singled out for compliments in the feedback) shows that heritage can have a wide appeal, if suitably accessible. We are grateful to Miles for kindly agreeing to a link to Petworth Past on our new website, once launched, and hope the accessibility of the digitised magazine will, in due course, also help us reach a wider audience.

On a personal note, I was grateful to see support for re-instatement of the spire on St Mary's church come up – something in which I have a particular interest!

Allowing for the hiatus in events over the last 18 months, it is reassuring to see that, overall, members who responded appear to consider the Society is doing a good job. But we are not complacent. We are grateful for all the comments received; they are all taken on board and we will feed them into our planning for the future.

Finally, a big 'thank you' to the team that so kindly helped with the feedback project – on top of everything else they do for the Society. You gave generously of your time and expertise so that we could provide an opportunity, at a time of social restrictions, for members to tell us what they think.

## EDITORIAL

Miles Costello

When, I wonder, is the best time to write an editorial. Should it be done at the last minute as the publication goes to press, or perhaps over an extended period between issues? While the former would ensure that the piece is current, it could run the risk of being left too late. Equally, the latter may result in the topics being slightly outdated by the time of publication. For a daily newspaper the answer is obvious but with a periodical being contemporary may not be critical. Perhaps I am over-thinking things.

I hope that this magazine is a good mix, though with two lengthy pieces being concluded I have to start thinking how that space will be filled in future issues. Each year almost 200 pages are printed, about the size of an average book, no easy task and yet one that Peter realised for four decades. I am keen that others should be able to contribute to the magazine if they wish to. So if there are any budding writers among the members and you have an idea for an article please do get in touch.

Thoughts are now turning to the book sales, the first, due in early July as part of a Coultershaw open day, was cancelled following the extension of Covid restrictions. Hopefully the August 14 sale in the Leconfield Hall will go ahead though it will be too late to report on in this issue. This is an exciting time with certain reservations, can the book sales be resurrected and will the previously loyal supporters return? Along with the magazine the book sales have long been a mainstay of the Society and it would be difficult to see a future without them. Uncertain times indeed.

The Petworth Society/Petworth Past walk was, I think, a success. It was organised too late to be announced in the last magazine, an omission for which I apologise, but thanks to social media it was probably the best turnout since the beating of the bounds walk of some twenty years ago. For more on the walk see page 28.

Once again we are approaching that time of year when we remember the bombing of Petworth Boys' School. Hopefully there will be an act of remembrance at either the grave or the memorial in North Street. Each year fewer survivors remain with us but the importance of marking the occasion and reflecting on the sad loss of a generation of Petworth boys does not diminish. Next year it will be eighty years since the tragedy and yet the open wound of September 29, 1942 has barely healed in the town.

It is no surprise to learn that once more there will be no Petworth Fair this year, even if restrictions are completely lifted. It is unreasonable to expect the fair people, who have done very little trade for 18 months, to mobilise for what is traditionally the last fair of the season. As a gesture, Gemma and I will once again place the obligatory trestle in the Square on November 20th to mark the occasion. Hopefully 2022 will be different, though I seem to recall saying that last year.

My complete run of *The Petworth Society Magazine* has gone off to be scanned for the new website. Left behind is a large gap on the bookcase in my study. To be honest I feel lost without the magazine as rarely a day goes by without my referring to it. Hopefully they will be returned before too long. This exciting project, financed by a very generous donation, has been developed and skilfully managed by our chairman and has the potential to open up the magazine to a global audience. Back issues of the magazine will be searchable online and once completed the archive will become a valuable resource both for academics and those with a casual interest in Petworth. To preserve the legitimacy of the membership subscription recent issues of the magazine will not be available to view online. Much more on this at a later date.

Petworth Heritage Open Weekend takes place on the 11th and 12th of September. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit places which may not normally be open to the public or which usually charge an admission fee. Information on local attractions that are taking part in the weekend can be found at <https://petworthcommunity.org/petworth-heritage>. If you are planning to enjoy the opportunities that the weekend offers I would strongly recommend that you include a visit to the Church of the Sacred Heart in Angel Street. Possibly one of the town's best kept secrets, the perfectly proportioned Roman Catholic church overlooking the Shimmings was built in 1896 and has a stunning interior which needs to be seen to be appreciated.

On the subject of heritage I can't help but reflect on the awful vandalism that has taken place at the little school at Bedham. A thoughtfully conserved ruin, the school-cum-church of St. Michael and all Angels closed to pupils in 1925 and for services in the late 1950s. Social media and the internet have brought knowledge of the ruin to a wide audience and it is a popular visiting place for walkers and day trippers. Was, as some have suggested, this greater awareness partly responsible for the building being targeted? Possibly. However, should

such places remain secret and the wider public denied knowledge of them in order to protect them? Quite a conundrum indeed.

The remains of St Michael and all Angels at Bedham photographed by Dan Sneller. See also 'Proposals to Build a School at Bedham' in *The Petworth Society Magazine* 126.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Washday, cockroaches and large field mushrooms

Dear Miles

I would like to add my congratulations on your becoming editor of the magazine. I really enjoy my taste of home every quarter and this edition was extra special because of the article by Len Smith. My God-daughter Teresa Charman has told me she asked you about that and possibly told you the Smiths were our next door

neighbours when we all lived in those cottages (whose fancy name I had never heard before). I wrote an almost identical piece on 'washday' in my 'memoirs'. Len didn't mention his mum had to shovel out all the cockroaches in the copper before she could start but I'm pretty sure she would have had to.

When the houses were pulled down and we were all rehoused, the Smith family then lived next-door-but-one to us in Grove Lane and Mum and Mrs Smith could continue their lasting friendship.

I was very confused re the article

because Len was a few years older than me – in fact I hero-worshipped him because once when we were round the hills and saw some cows, he convinced me there was a bull amongst them. I was wearing a red jacket which he said was dangerous and so he gave me his coat. What a hero! As I will be 92 next month (and can't believe it!) I wondered how old Len could be. I am sorry to hear he is no longer with us and please pass on my thanks to his daughter for sending you his memories.

Incidentally, my children all got together and edited my 'memoirs' and had it printed for my 90th birthday and I was able to give each of our five children and six grandchildren a copy. (I'm making sure they don't forget me!)

Thank you again for all the good work you do and please keep it up.

Very kind regards to you and all those involved in producing the magazine.  
Joan Dench (née Herrington)  
Bentley, West Australia.

Dear Miles

After reading the letter in the June Magazine from Jim Potter I just had to contact him. He was so pleased to be in contact with someone from the past after all these years. We have had a lovely conversation on the phone as he is often mentioned when I am speaking to my

sister Jean about our childhood many years ago.

Thank you for an interesting magazine.  
Mrs Pauline Chandler (née Phelps)  
Storrington.

Dear Miles

Thank you for using pieces from *The Old Village Trades and Crafts of Fittleworth*. There has always been a strong link between Fittleworth and Petworth. In 'the old days' it was the fairs, markets, solicitors and lawyers, doctors and dentists and the Rural District Council and in more recent years Fittleworth folk were pleased to have the use of the cinema, the banks, the library and the W.I. market, together with the town band, and a wider range of shops and traders, all well worth the walk or bus or train ride into Petworth.

My own memories come from the 1970s. What joy to go into Moneys the greengrocers in the autumn and buy large field mushrooms, filberts and celery with the dark soil still fresh, and then move on to the side room at Weavers for my children to buy a toy from their display. Petworth is unique, with a place in so many people's hearts; please keep up the good work.

Judy Sayers, Pulborough.

See 'The butcher's boy, 1950' on page 36.

## Billy Hoad at Petworth

Billy Hoad, edited by Tom Prebble, introduction and endnotes by Miles Costello

The final years of the nineteenth century was a period of considerable change at Petworth, very much out with the old and in with the new. The Victorian era was drawing to an end and the heady days of the Diamond Jubilee were soon to be just a memory. Henry, the 3rd Baron Leconfield would survive into the new century before passing away just two weeks before the old Queen. Plans were being prepared for an extensive renovation of the parish church; however the greatest change would be in Market Square where the two principal hotels in the town, both Leconfield properties, were shortly to be demolished. The Half Moon Inn, standing aloof on the high northern edge of the Square, would be replaced by the magnificently baroque London and County Bank while lower down, the old Swan would be entirely rebuilt facing Saddlers Row, having turned its back on Market Square.

Billy Hoad, a Horsham lad born in 1873, was employed as a painter in the building trade throughout Sussex and London. Work was slow in the last decade of the nineteenth century and Billy would have to take whatever was offered him, frequently moving from one building company to another, with periods spent looking for work before finally being taken on. For a while he kept a diary and in the following extract he records a brief period that he spent at Petworth where he had been employed by the Horsham building firm of Rowland Brothers. Billy was to work with a team of painters to decorate the newly completed Swan Hotel in Saddlers Row but, as the diary records, things didn't go entirely to plan. The original diary is in the West Sussex Record Office and this version was edited by Tom Prebble, the grandson of Billy Hoad and can be found on the West Sussex Learning site.

1st to 4th June 1898

Went to Petworth by first train, met Fred Mills<sup>1</sup> in the town, and after getting lodgings, went on the job, which proved not to be at the Swan Hotel which 'we' are building, but at Petworth House, Lord Leconfield's country seat.

I think it's the largest house, bar Hampton Court Palace, I was ever in. Had no small difficulty in finding our way from and to the room where we were working and now even, it's 'risky' to get off our 'beaten track', good deal of which is underground. The basement appears to me like a huge rabbit warren, passages everywhere leading anywhere except just where you want to get to.

The house itself is a rather plain and solid looking stone building. Could be easily mistaken for a jail, in fact I remember doing so myself on one occasion, but once inside the idea changes. Simply grand. Have not seen much of it yet but intend to if possible before we finish. The park is also very fine, well stocked with deer (in good condition too, not skinny like those in Bushey Park). There's a very pretty piece of water studded with islands planted with flowering shrubs, so that the view from the house is a treat, as real English as I can imagine. Beside the Park itself, there's a grand background framed by the South Downs. It's said that my Lord owns all he can see in this landscape with how much truth I don't know. Probably it's only a convenient figure of speech (as the yarn that his income is £1 a minute) though he certainly does own a deal of property round about. Not only does he claim the land but also the people on it. Woe betide any unlucky townsman of Petworth who offends My Lord or his satellites – it means his 'out'. That being so, and the fact of the railway being two miles from the town (My Lord's father caused that I understand), Petworth is a rapidly growing place – only it grows smaller and more village-like. We find it rather tame but don't have much leisure as we work till 8 p.m. making 12 hours. We have started on the 'Cambridge Rooms' and 'Church Room', the two former containing fine tapestries, very high pitched for bedrooms, 17 or 18 feet. As we work till one on Saturday, didn't get back to Horsham till nearly 4 p.m.

Sunday 5th June

Had very nice letter from Arthur from Adelaide S.A. He has gone to sea again, had a very exciting time owing to the breaking of the main shaft. Was promoted to Chief Steward of another boat but, owing to another accident, had to keep on his old job for a time.

Went to tea with Frank Ireland this afternoon. Annie still very weak but much better than she has been.

Week ending 11th June 1898

Monday morning rode to Petworth on my bicycle. Got as far as Five Oaks when it came on to rain and continued to do so all the rest of the way. Took the road through Billingham, Wisbro Green and Strood Green. Very rough and hilly road, didn't arrive till 11 a.m.

Joined the Petworth Institute this week so have now the use of a reading room instead of the 'Public' for the evenings.<sup>2</sup> One morning had a very hurried look over the best rooms in the house. Of course, in that little time, could only have but a glance at each room. Should like to have a day at it. There's plenty to see in the way of pictures, statuary, carving, furniture and decorating. There's also an old family chapel in the house, not used now. The windows are ornamented with

the 'Arms' of the 'Percys' who I understand were originally Lords of Petworth.

On Saturday afternoon rode home again though I didn't feel up to it. Have had a cold these last few days. Very hot climbing those hills and for the first time had a puncture. Got that repaired at Wisboro Green and arrived home fagged out at 5.30.

Sunday 12 June 1898

Not feeling very well (slight cold). Didn't go out till this afternoon when I met Bern and Annie and went to tea with them. Chapel this evening.

Monday 13th June and week

Had much better ride to Petworth this time. From Wisboro Green went via Kirdford and Balls Cross. Better road and not much further round. Have been working in Church Room and Morton's Room this week, both in the new part of the house. Spent most evenings at Institute. Wednesday was 'club day'.<sup>3</sup> Went in the park for an hour but soon got 'full' of that. Thursday evening started to ride to Midhurst. Got as far as Selham and came back again. Roads not good enough for a night ride. Home on Saturday via Kirdford again. Very hot. Found that Mrs Pearce was here yesterday – went to Shipley in our wagonette.

Sunday 19th June 1898

Chapel and School as usual. On Carfax this evening listening to band. They have gone back very much lately. For some reason they are not nearly so strong or efficient as they were a year ago. I see the Jubilee Fountain is now finished and is to be opened by R.H. Hurst Esq. Although most people criticise and deride the affair, I certainly think it looks very well in the Carfax. Don't know that it's much use except as a plaything for the 'nippers'.

Saturday 2nd July 1898

Still working at Petworth House. Have now finished inside and nearly all outside. Have only the three sets of iron gates to do. Wouldn't mind if they were also finished. It's not the best of jobs. I think it's quite likely some of us may be 'off' in the near future. The Swan Hotel is not forward enough for us and there don't appear to be much else in now. I hear most Horsham firms are a bit slack now, supposed to be a Jubilee reaction. Dad only fairly busy. Kate Arthur here today for a short holiday.

Sunday 3rd July 1898

Kate Arthur went to Chapel with me this morning. Sunday School and Evening service as usual. The Sunday School Excursion to Bognor takes place tomorrow.

Workmen at the Swan Hotel as it nears completion towards the end of the nineteenth century. Those wearing white will be painters and decorators, among whom may well be Billy Hoad.



Am not going this time but no doubt if weather keeps fine they will get a good company.

Week ending 9th July 1898

Petworth Park on Monday and Tuesday, but rest of the week at Swan Hotel as we are delayed by paint for gates not arriving. The Hotel is not nearly ready for us yet. Only doing top work while scaffolding is up. The gables are oak carved in an old vine design by a chap named Hoad who works in My Lord's shops as a cabinet maker, carver &c. Very clever workman I believe.<sup>4</sup> No relation of ours I think. Have not ridden bicycle last week or this. Find it too fatiguing especially on warm Saturday afternoons.



Saturday 9th July 1898

Happening to meet Bern this afternoon, went up to tea with him and was very much surprised to find Kate and Lois Stepney there. Of course had to stay then all evening till time to see them off by last train. Tried to persuade them to stay till tomorrow, but finally arrived at a compromise by their promising to come up again tomorrow. After they had gone on, Bern and I arranged provisionally to drive down in the morning to fetch them.

Sunday 10th July 1898

Got up soon after six, got mare ready, Bern came down to stable and off we went. Were rather later in starting than we intended (as a matter of course) and the last part of the journey full expected to meet them 'en route' for the station, but when we arrived at Shipley found the beggars had not yet 'rizz'. After a time they bundled up. Only Kate returned, Lois promising to come up with May by afternoon train. Got back in time for breakfast and then to Chapel. No. 10 for dinner and tea, other two arriving in the meantime. We had quite a strong party for the choir seats this evening. Finally saw them off by last train and then home to work.

Week ending 16th July 1898

At Swan Hotel early part of the week. Afterwards, back to the gates at Petworth Park. Not so bad a job after all. Have had some very hot weather this week but stood it all right. Thursday evening 'knocked off' at tea time and went to 'Fittleworth Club' with Whithington the House Captain and Summersell, Sergeant Instructor of the local Vol. Corp.<sup>5</sup> Had a beautiful walk over Egdean Common, very wild scenery. Found Fittleworth Club. Quite an ideal country club feast. First, the inn (Swan) is a quaint old fashioned place, very popular with 'Painters' (of the Common or Garden variety, not House Painters!) who find plenty of pretty spots round here to transfer to their canvas. Found the band (Storrington) blowing away for all they were worth at the end of a long marquee. Although not strong in numbers or troubled with a 'too musical ear', they were certainly not lazy, especially the Leader whom one could well imagine blowing the leading cornet of a circus orchestra where quantity is of more importance than quality. Besides this, there was the usual swings, roundabouts, coconut shies, shows (for Gentlemen only), shows with performing ponies, monkeys, birds &c. (the cause of untold cruelties no doubt), glittering stalls where, for a shilling or two, one may purchase these vile German vases and glass ornaments, 'Brum' jewellery and cheap toys generally. All sold at a price giving the vendor a profit beyond the wildest dreams of avarice of an ordinary shopkeeper. Then there's the shooting 'Galleries and Saloons' for the benefit of the local marksmen

who, by merely poking to object shot at with the end of the shooting iron, give an exhibition that knocks Bisley into cocked hats. The one thing missing was the dancing ring. The Fittlites went one better than the usual and held their ball in a large room at the inn where there appeared to be some very decent dancing. On the whole enjoyed myself very much, quite a change and rather better company than my mates. After a brisk walk home, just arrived in time for a refresher at the 'Angel'.

Sunday 17th July 1898

Mr Marten being away, the services at Chapel were taken by Mr Humphrey Nash. Mr Sydney Price I learn is very ill again. Very doubtful if the old gentleman will ever get up again.

Monday 18th July

To Petworth again this morning. Expect it will be my last week here as the hotel is not yet ready for us. Shall not be sorry in many respects to get away.

Wednesday 20th July 1898

Another letter from A JB from Sydney. He has, through a row with an official, left the boat he was on and is expecting to be put on the Queensland trip which prospect he doesn't much relish. Great pity as he was doing very well on the 'Buningyong'. Having nearly finished our fence and gates, was sent to Swan Hotel again on Thursday and Friday. As I found I was to finish up on Saturday, took the bull by the horns and resigned on Friday evening thinking perhaps I might get a job on Saturday. Came home Friday by last train.

Saturday 23rd July 1898

First thing this morning started off on my bicycle to try and find a job, nothing doing in Horsham. Tried first at Streets, Warnham, then on to Dorking. No luck. At Leatherhead saw Jim Garman Sen. and on his advice waited about to see Mr Harry Brown, but he couldn't give me a start then, promised to let me know later on. By this time it was no use thinking of trying any more – all shut up. So had an easy spin into Epsom, put machine up and took train to Victoria. Arrived there after a lot of waiting about, had a walk across park to Whitehall and had a look in the United Service Museum.

The principal attraction there is, I find, a fine painted ceiling by Reubens. It was said to be the banqueting hall of Whitehall Palace and said to be all that remains of that building. There is a large collection of arms (ancient and modern) and accoutrements, models of ordnance, ships &c. and relics of great soldiers and sailors. No doubt very interesting to a practical service man. After

‘doing’ the museum, had tea and a stroll down the Strand admiring the pictures &c. in shops until about 6.30 when I looked around Covent Garden and found people already patiently waiting for doors to open, so took my place. Found myself paired with a very nice young fellow, a German from Berlin. We stayed together all the evening and I think each enjoyed the other’s company. After a very tedious wait, we managed to get in by 7.30. The opera this evening was Gounod’s ‘Faust’. The company was nearly the same as I saw in ‘Romeo and Juliet’. A beautiful thing as regards music and ‘mounting’ but should in my ignorance have enjoyed it more had it been in English instead of French.

1. Fred Mills was the long-serving foreman for Rowland Brothers.
2. The Institute. Next to George House in East Street. Billy no doubt took full advantage of the extensive subscription library housed there.
3. Petworth Park Club. A friendly society for Leconfield employees.
4. Harry Hoad. Apprenticed on the Leconfield Estate, Hoad became a skilled cabinet maker and carver and would restore several of Grinling Gibbons’ carvings at Petworth House.
5. This was probably the Sixth Sussex Volunteer Corps.

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## ‘Mondays were always wash days’

Len Smith part two

Petworth fair was a big day for us kids. I would walk down from home passing the fair people’s caravans which were parked all along New Street and already I could smell the steam of the big engines, and feel the excitement of it all. Then as I turned the corner by Bowyers the chemists I saw, over by the town hall, the roundabouts all brightly lit up and in the middle of the square, the dodgem cars, the coconut shies, and the lovely smell of the toffee apple stall. There was another stand where you rolled pennies down, hoping they would land on a square on the table marked with 3d or 4d but they more often rolled right down to the bottom. On the following morning, after the fair folk had packed up all of their gear onto the big wagons and left for another destination, some of us boys walked around every inch of the market square to find a penny or two, if

we were lucky it might be sixpence – but usually no luck.

At last it was Christmas time again, the time of year I have always loved, and the ones spent at Angel Street were no exception. Somehow Mum would always find enough money to buy all the extra things like nuts, dates, figs, oranges &c. I’m sure now she went without things herself to get all of the Christmas fare. The decorations would be put up. I remember helping to make them with strips of coloured paper, glued at the ends with a flour and water paste, to make long chains. The two bell-shaped decorations, one green and one red, would be hung in position year after year on the oak beam running across the kitchen ceiling. The holly would be put over the top of the two big pictures hanging on the wall, one of Dad in his army uniform, the other of Granny.

In spite of all the Christmas fare the one thing we did not have was a Christmas tree. As a young boy I had never seen a tree loaded with presents. We were never a close-knit family and presents were never very plentiful so maybe this had something to do with it. It seems stranger to me now than it did when I was young. At that time children readily accepted things they were told and were severely reprimanded if they dared to question their parents’ wisdom. We always had a good Christmas anyway, and after dinner we would all sit around, either listening to the wireless or gramophone, the oil lamp and candles would be lit, casting eerie shadows on the walls. I think one of the best things happening over the Christmas period would be the party held in the Iron Room in Petworth. Inside the Iron Room would be three or four trestle tables laid for tea and once the chairs were full we could all start our tea. When we had finished, the trestles would be cleared away and the chairs placed in front of the stage, where we would be entertained by the Punch and Judy show and a conjurer with his magic tricks. After the show was over we would sit and sing carols, then to finish, we would form a long queue and on our way out would be given an orange and a sticky currant bun. Then we would race home quite pleased with ourselves.

Going back to school after Christmas saw me in my last year and in the headmaster’s class, where we could sit an exam for the grammar school. We read a lot of Shakespeare, learnt how to make bamboo musical pipes like recorders and had sports events, held on Hampers Green Common, with Mr Crawley. He also taught us excerpts from the plays of Shakespeare, which we ‘put on’ at the end of term. As we had no playing fields at our school all our sports had to be played

on Hampers Green Common. This was not exactly a cricket test ground as during the year, a circus would be held there, the fair would be present, and some people would use it for exercising horses, so when we played cricket or football a lot of holes and ruts left by these people would first have to be filled in. Back at school on a wall of the classroom hung certificates, and in a glass-fronted cupboard were silver cups won at music festivals. Steve<sup>1</sup> informed us that any of the new boys who had a voice worthy of a place in the school choir would be picked to go and keep up the tradition of the school. I was one of the boys picked to go to some of the festivals, I don't remember which ones, but I do still have a photograph taken at one of them, where I am wearing a suit with short trousers. One music festival I do remember going to was at the Royal Albert Hall in London, maybe because all the choirs were conducted on stage by the great Sir Adrian Boult.

In my last week or two at school we sat the grammar school exam. I failed to get a place, and although sorry at the time realised that the expense of the uniform, books, sports equipment &c would perhaps be too much for my parents. I thought I would look for a job instead. The headmaster told the class that boys who had found employment and were over the age of thirteen could leave school at the end of term. I wasn't concerned as there was a local firm needing a school leaver and it was only a hundred yards from our house in Angel Street. Calling into the builder's yard I found Mr Vincent and explained I had come about the job. I was asked a few questions and then he told me my wage would be twelve shillings and sixpence a week, the hours would be from seven thirty to five o'clock, and that after six months, if I showed any promise, the wages may be increased. My parents were quite happy that I had found some employment, because work was very scarce at the time.

In the meantime I had left school and started my first day at work. Entering the builders' yard I was told straight away what I was expected to do. The firm had an old Ariel motorbike and sidecar with the gear change on the side of the petrol tank. I was to sit in the sidecar while 'Snowy' Standing, the painter, put pots of paint, brushes and rolls of wallpaper all around my feet. I could see why I had to sit in the sidecar first – I would never have got in otherwise. One morning I remember sitting in this same position, not with paint pots around my feet, but instead holding on with all my strength to a ladder placed along the length of the sidecar. Going around sharp corners was a nightmare. All the workmen had nicknames, I've already mentioned 'Snowy' Standing, then there was 'Timer' Whitcomb, 'Striker' Randell, 'Scriggy' Baigent, and then Mr Vincent had two brothers, Len who was a plumber and the other brother, whose name I cannot remember. After my first week of work I went home with the princely sum of twelve shillings and sixpence in my pocket, about sixty pence in today's money. I learned I would have to give some of it to Mum for food, so I finished up with about eight shillings.

I remember my Dad losing his job as a gardener, although this was due to the

death of his employer Mr Upton, and not to the depression. He next found work with James Morley & Sons, where he learnt the art of making cleft chestnut fencing. Dad soon learned enough about making chestnut fencing to provide a good living, my brother Fred had also followed in Dad's footsteps. In this work there was a lot of waste wood, so much so that two of my other brothers, Bert and Arthur, decided to buy the wood, saw it into short lengths, put it into sacks and sell it for firewood. This soon caught on with local people who could afford the 6d a sack they were being charged. Especially as the coal merchants were charging 2/3d a hundredweight for household coal. My brothers would collect a horse and cart every Saturday morning, load the sacks of wood onto it and deliver it to the houses. I had the job of holding the horse's head. I also had a big hand truck with iron wheels; this held about four sacks of wood, which I used to deliver up a street too narrow for a horse and cart. This wood delivery seemed to pick up very quickly and my brothers soon bought a small lorry. It was a model T Ford. I remember sitting up in the seat next to the driver, there was no glass in the doors, alright on fine days, but when it rained hard you had to put a sack around your legs to keep dry. There was a long steering column so the driver would have to sit bolt upright, and there was no self-starting mechanism, so we had to crank the engine to start it.

My other brother Les had been working as a taxi driver for Mr Harper at Petworth for a year or two, and he had now managed to buy himself a car, an Austin Seven, a 'Baby Austin' as they were known. I remember Les taking my sister and myself to see our Auntie Nancy and Uncle Charlie and Cousins Dorothy, Iris and the boys when they lived at Cold Harbour Farm in East Hoathly.

It was here that Dorothy taught me to ride a bike, hanging on to my saddle, up and down the lane outside the farmhouse. Since then of course I had bought my own bike from Gray & Rowsell's at Bury Gate. I had managed to get there by sitting on the cross-bar of another bike. I had to pay a deposit to secure my bike and then pay on a card two shillings a week until it was paid for.

In the meantime my Dad had suggested that I work with him, for Morley's instead of Vincent's, because he knew that in the wintertime a lot of men working for building firms would be stood off until the weather improved, without money. But working for Morley's I would be kept busy all winter, pole cutting, and once I had learnt how to use an axe, I could probably earn as much as £1.5s a week which would be a lot more than my 12/6d at Vincent's.

I thought long and hard about this situation. One pound five shillings a week. Well the money was very good and working piece work meant that the more chestnut poles I cut, the more I would be able to earn. So I told Dad that I would like to work with him, but was not relishing the fact that Mr Vincent would have to be told of my decision. Dad said it was partly his decision so he would explain the situation to him.

After giving Mr Vincent a week's notice I started working with my Dad. My first job was to start a fire with all the waste wood and keep the fire going all day. I rather liked this job, because it was always done between the months of October and March, when it was either bitterly cold or raining hard. After a few weeks Dad decided it was time I started swinging an axe to earn my living as he called it. So I began with a four and half pound axe and gradually got better at my work, but I went home very, very tired, especially when Dad insisted I bought a six pound axe, he said it would make cutting easier. I suppose it did, but it also made my back ache, and the cold, wet weather soon had my hands filled with painful cracks. I was simply told I was holding my axe too tight, and to let it slide through my hands.

At last we had finished cutting, the weather had improved, and now it was time to start making all the poles into chestnut pales for fencing. Here was a job I loved doing, partly I suppose because it was not such hard work as pole cutting, but also because it was done in the spring and summertime, when the weather was hopefully better. The poles had to be cut into varying straight lengths from three feet up to six feet, at every six inches. The bark would then have to be removed from these lengths of poles (this was my first job) and afterwards split down to a certain size with a tool called an adze. The resulting pales would then be pointed at one end and tied up in bundles of twenty-five. Eventually they would be collected by lorry and taken to the sawmill where they would be wired into lengths of chestnut fencing. I can remember when my dad worked on his own making about twenty bundles of pales each day and receiving the princely sum of ten shillings. When I worked with him the money had gone up, but not a great deal.

By now I was about fifteen and I, with two or three other boys would go around together. We had no youth clubs then, we were too young to go to the pub or join football or cricket clubs, but we were allowed to have games of billiards at what was known as the Toc H. This was at a big house in East Street. We entered the front door, went straight up the stairs to a room where there was a single billiard table. Also in this room soft drinks and sweets were on sale. The Toc H was run by members of the Talbot House Society, whose main aim was to keep youngsters off the streets. With a lot of boys it certainly worked, myself included, because when we were not at the Toc H we were invariably standing on street corners, or walking around fields and hedgerows with our catapults, taking pot shots at birds, a pastime which I hasten to add, never proved to be very successful.

I failed to mention before, that my mum and dad, Gladys, Les and myself had moved to a council house in Grove Lane, our old house in Angel Street having been condemned. I suppose this omission on my part, to mention our moving, was simply due to the fact that I could not remember when it happened.

1. 'Steve' is Charles Stevenson, the headmaster; who would lose his life in the school bombing in 1942.

## Poor 'Stinker'

Miles Costello

Contributions to the letters page of the *West Sussex Gazette* are wide and varied and over the last 167 years have touched upon an enormous range of subjects and it is no surprise for a single correspondence to evolve into a lengthy discussion stretching over several issues. Claims and counterclaims, comments, assertions and affirmations can be bandied to and fro for some considerable time before being settled. On local matters a debate often begins with a casual observation and slowly develops a head of steam. Such was the case when in early 1955 a Horsham correspondent submitted a list of nick-names that he was familiar with. The response was immediate and continued throughout February and into the spring with further lists of varying lengths being submitted to the editor. On the 3rd of February our own Ted Whitcomb, landlord of the Welldiggers Arms at Lowheath, offered up his own collection for the attention of the editor. While most of the names are unfamiliar I do recognise Sticky, China, Scrammy, Timer, Whacker and Whacky, all of who will still be remembered in the town. Sadly I am unable to even speculate at the origin of most of the names, though particular sympathy should be reserved for poor 'Stinker' and the reason why he received the unfortunate moniker. If you feel able to contribute your own list I will be happy to receive any correspondence.

Bibbey	Cuckoo	Knocker	Tally
Blutch	Daykum	Kochal	Tapper
Boater	Dergey	Markie	Tatty
Bogey	Doley	Pumpkin	Texas
Bolinium	Donkey	Punch	The Colonel
Bonny	Doody	Rammy	The Duke
Boozer	Double Cunnin	Rattler	Timer
Brubby	Flash	Ratty	Tipper
Buffalo	Flip	Scrammy	Tweedle
Bullus	Frickle	Shalleger	Twilight
Bumper	Frizzle	Sharky	Twitty
Bunchal	Frosty	Snowy	Whacker
Buster	Fudge	Spider	Whacky
China	Granny	Squeaker	Yaffle
Clicker	Gudgeon	Sticky	Yorkie
Conk	Klondike	Stinker	

## A just outside Petworth walk – Flexham Park and Bognor Common

Miles Costello

This is a relatively short circular walk of about three miles on woodland tracks in Flexham Park and Bognor Common to the east of the town. Much of the walk is on firm ground with, depending upon the season, the occasional muddy section. The walk takes about an hour and a half at a gentle pace.

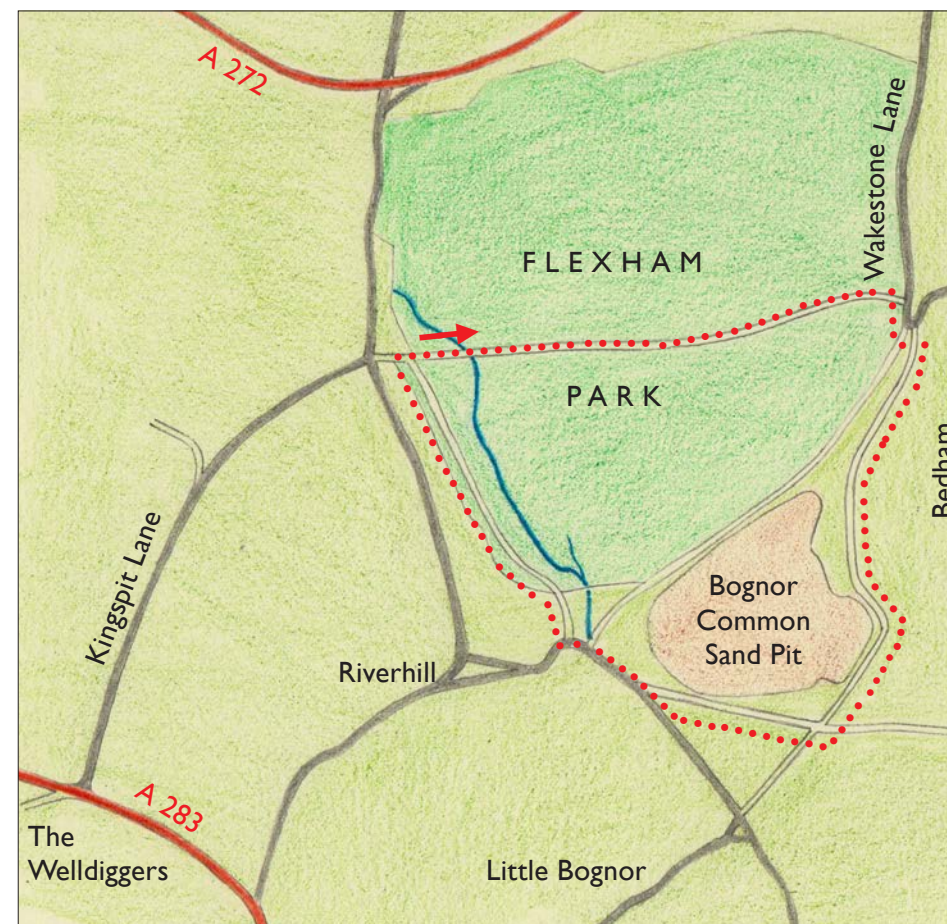
Drive from Petworth along the A283 to the Welldiggers Arms public house. Opposite the pub turn left into Kingspit Lane, the lorry route. At the top of the hill is a junction on the right which takes you to River Hill. Immediately beside the turning is a gravelled track which leads downhill into Flexham Park and to a small parking area at the bottom.

Park carefully as space is limited then head along the track past the metal gate and continue straight on. This section of the walk is part of the so-called Serpent Trail, the 64-mile path which winds its way through the northern part of West Sussex. We have now entered one of the largest managed chestnut coppices in the district. When walking here be aware that this is very much a working wood with extensive forestry operations going on, especially during the winter months when the chestnut is coppiced. In the summer this is a favourite place for dog walkers, horse riders and off-road cyclists and you are unlikely to be alone for long. In winter these woods can appear quite desolate with little sign of life, and if it were not for the oaks which occasionally border the track there would be hardly any variation in the flora. However, with the advent of spring things can suddenly change, for where the chestnut has been coppiced over the winter vast carpets of bluebells spring up and the previously quite barren landscape comes alive.

There is no need to deviate from the trail as it will take you right through the park and eventually out on to Wakestone Lane. Turn right and in 50 or so yards and you will come to two closely-positioned footpath markers; take the second of these. This is an ancient track, once a continuation of Wakestone Lane; it has become overgrown and littered with the carcasses of long-fallen trees. We are on the edge of Flexham Park and have left the chestnut woods behind. The open meadows of Bedham Farm can be glimpsed on our left as we pass through an extensive holly grove. This is Mitford country now and we are following the perimeter of the huge Bognor Common sand pit. Don't worry if you can't see the quarry – it is there and you will get occasional glimpses as we proceed. For the moment the giant hole is almost invisible, separated from the track by just a few yards of spoil heaped up at the edge of the pit. Don't be tempted to investigate, for

the edges can be treacherous and much of the pit is flooded.

After some distance we come to a crossway of footpaths, left goes to Warren Barn and the famous Brinkwells with its Elgar connections, straight on to Little Bognor. We must turn right and continue following the edge of the pit. Some industrial buildings appear on our left with the pit entrances on our right. Remember that this is a working quarry and it is best to be aware that plant and heavy vehicles use the track. Carry on until you come out on to a made-up lane. Turn right and, ignoring the first footpath, cross a stream and take the second path up a tarmac drive with the pretty pink Flexham Park Cottage on your right. Once again you have entered Flexham Park and the chestnut woods. Follow the footpath for a few hundred yards and you will have returned to the car parking area. A pleasant relaxing walk with no difficult sections.

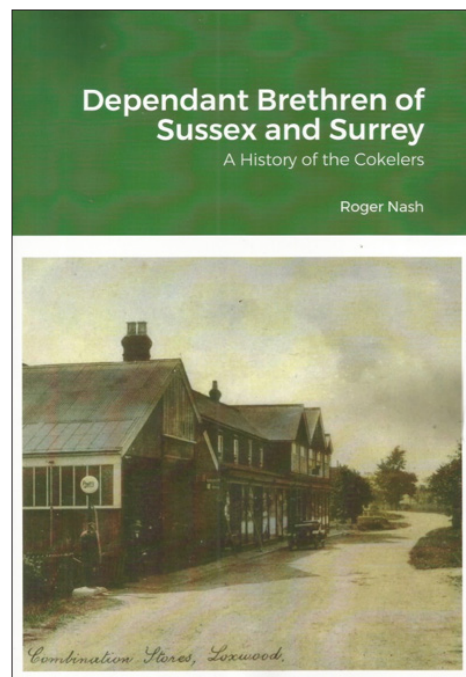


A photograph by George Garland of a wide field of neatly stooked cereals (probably wheat) at the foot of Duncton Hill. It is dated August 1953 and Garland's original caption is 'Harvest time at Duncton'.



## Do you remember the Cokelers?

Roger Nash. Introduction by Miles Costello



It is 23 years since Peter Jerrome published the definitive work on this 'peculiar' religious sect in *John Sirgood's Way: the Story of the Loxwood Dependants*. In this new book Roger Nash has succeeded in adding to our knowledge of the Cokelers without ploughing the same furrow as Jerrome. This is hardly a history of the sect or an analysis of their religious doctrine but more a drilling down to the minutiae that made the Cokelers so distinctive in both their everyday lives and their highly efficient commercial undertakings. This family history of the brethren succeeds in bringing to life many of the leading figures that until now have just been shadows; it adds flesh to the bones of those simple adherents who devoted their lives to spreading the word. If any justification were needed for producing

this book it might come from Peter Jerrome himself who in the introduction to *John Sirgood's Way* writes 'I am well aware that I have paid more attention to the religious thinking of the sect in its formative period than I have to the Dependants' extensive commercial activities. These latter are perhaps a subject for a study of their own.'

Do you remember the Cokelers in Northchapel, or elsewhere? I first embarked on this project over ten years ago, when I received huge encouragement from David Gumbrill of Loxwood who, though not a member, worked for the Cokelers in Loxwood for most of his life. He had amassed a unique photographic record. Likewise, Marion May, from Shamley Green, had mounted an exhibition of her collection of images and artifacts in Guildford Museum in 2003, which attracted huge numbers of people, most with connections through friends or relatives, or

curiosity, from having lived in proximity to these Christian shopkeepers.

My own connection was more concrete: my great uncle Walter Nash had been their leader in Loxwood for thirty years. My own family were not Cokelers, but being brought up in Loxwood, the main centre of the Dependants (to give them the name they preferred), I was never far from them. My father and uncle worked for them on their farms. My great uncle, a farmer at heart, encouraged this side of the business. I was to discover in my research, and to my surprise, just how many others in my extended family tree had been Dependants over the lifetime of the sect, from 1850 to the 1970s!

The evidence for Northchapel's store, known for years as Brown, Durant and Co., is as comprehensive as that of Loxwood, for both of which the minute books survive in West Sussex Record Office. Fortunately, other sources in the form of books, testaments, censuses, and personal stories passed to me, have filled in some blanks. Did you know that the Northchapel 'combination stores' sold just about everything a villager might need, including furniture and china, bicycles, grocery, drapery, and bread from its own steam bakery? As today, the shop (for it is the same shop you can visit today) served everyone, not just Cokelers.

The chapel immediately behind is now a private house, but in their day, local families would have witnessed the women going to Sunday chapel from their communal living quarters above the store and from nearby houses and farms, wearing their sober, dark, and frankly Victorian, clothing.

Their Christian duty of service to others was deeply embedded. Few naysayers could criticise them. As conscientious objectors in two wars, they were sometimes controversial. However, they were destined to die out after three generations or so. Many remained unmarried; many young members drifted away; few new members were joining. John Sirgood (the founder) had died in 1885; no one of his stature and charisma emerged later. There are none alive today, though there are relatives in Northchapel and across the two counties.

This book not only brings to life Northchapel events from the building of the chapel to the sale of the store, but it also describes in some detail the family background of the Northchapel brothers and sisters, including names such as Brown, Durant, Spooner, Pannell, Luff, Caplin, Rugman, Cumber, Richard Hammond's group at Lower Diddlesfold Farm, Charles Holden's group at Goffs Farm, and many others.

There are several chapters on the well-documented Loxwood Cokelers, and further coverage of those at Warnham, Plaistow, Shamley Green (Lordshill), South Norwood, Chichester, Hove and smaller groups elsewhere. Some of the latter are within the ambit of Northchapel: Fernhurst, Lodsworth and Haslemere. The western districts of Cokeler penetration were and are very scattered across several parishes, including Hill Grove, Lurgashall, Ebernoe, Ball's Cross, and

around Fisher Street, and Shillinglee. Early preachers such as Peter Pacy of Ifold, and Sirgood himself, would have used the commons to gather a crowd. The first of eleven chapels was built in Loxwood in 1861.

It is interesting how Sirgood's method had taken him so often to the interstices between the Anglican parish churches, to Loxwood, not Wisborough Green, to Northchapel, not Petworth, to Shamley Green, not Womersley, to the then edge of towns at South Norwood, Chichester and Hove, but not to larger settlements such as Petworth, Horsham, Billingshurst or Cranleigh.

The first of five combination stores was built in Warnham, near Horsham, by 1889, though retailing began earlier in several communities, guided by Sirgood himself. The rationale was that otherwise women in service would be refused permission to attend worship. The store and its accommodation for the largely single, largely female live-in community was an inspired move, and an unusual exercise in equality as women were also, if not preaching, certainly spreading the word, and some became elders (although not taking funerals).

If you are puzzled by the name Cokeler; you will have to read the book! Available from North-chapel Stores, Petworth Bookshop, or online from [www.lulu.com/shop](http://www.lulu.com/shop). *Dependant Brethren of Sussex and Surrey, a History of the Cokelers*, Roger Nash, 2021, p/b, 343 pp, A4, b&w throughout.

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## The first Petworth Society/Petworth Past walk

Miles Costello

Sunday May 30th. Time and place of departure was 2.00 p.m. outside St. Mary's. The hottest day of the year so far in what had been a bleak spring. Thankfully the road had been closed for the Petworth House stable repairs. A great inconvenience for the town but for us something of a blessing as we were able to spread ourselves rather surreally across Church Street which had briefly become an extension of the semi-pedestrianised Lombard Street. Introductions were made, some friendships renewed while others would be established. Connie – my eldest granddaughter – was instructed to count the assembled walkers: 41 in total not including the dogs was reported back. Not bad, a healthy number I thought, for the walk had

relied on social media for publicity as the June magazine would have come out too late.

Navigating the crossing of the treacherous North Street to enter Bartons Lane was logistically tricky but everyone got across safely and we headed off down the lane. The old cemetery wall wearing its customary bonnet of red valerian, an indicator supposedly that Romans had once been here.

With Bartons Lane behind us we made the longer but gentler descent down to the brook. An opportunity to let the dogs cool off in the stream and a chance to prepare ourselves for the climb to the Gog. Very soon the line of walkers began to extend ahead of us, the group only coming together at the occasional kissing-gate or stile. Claire, who knew the route well, was given the thankless task of bringing up the rear and ensuring that none were left behind. Friendly horses accompanied us across a field, not nervous in the least; they must be used to strangers encroaching upon their turf, after all this is a well-trodden way.

At the top we stopped to enjoy the panoramic views. Blackdown, the South and North Downs and of course the town and park. Is there any spot in Sussex that affords such a wide outlook? With the Sugar Knob clumps to our left – were they really planted to mark the Festival of Britain? We made our way into Lovers Lane. A hollow way remarkably similar to Hungers Lane, a few late bluebells lined the banks, survivors of an earlier blush. We continued upwards, leg muscles beginning to burn; the shelter of the canopy of trees was welcoming. We entered the Gog and regrouped. Why is it called the Gog? Where did the name Goanah come from? Was it an ancient way into the town from the east? Speculation and opinions were rife. We passed the dog's grave where the children – as tradition demands – placed stones on the little cairn. Moving on we came upon the Gog Lodges and stood and admired the distant views framed by the huge gate piers. Leaving the Gog behind we began the long descent to Byworth, past the Cottage Hospital – yes we still call it a hospital – and down to the Virgin Mary's Spring, eldest granddaughter choosing to take advantage of the tyre suspended above the brook to enjoy a swing. Refreshed at the spring we began the long haul up the Sheepdowns to Angel Street where the assembled hikers gathered once more, made their fond farewells and slowly disbursed, tired but content. A lovely afternoon in good company in one of the prettiest spots in West Sussex.



## Bending over a Bunsen burner and other Herbert Shiner School memories

Keith Thompson in conversation with Miles Costello

The Herbert Shiner was my second school, the first being at Freshwater on the Isle of Wight where I had taught for five years. With promotion in mind I was advised to take a year's course at Portsmouth Training College, which I did, and following this I learned of a position as Head of Science at a Secondary Modern School which was opening in September 1961. I applied for the post and duly arrived at The Leconfield Hall for the interview. The school at this time was still under construction. There was one other candidate at the interview and by coincidence he had been on the same teacher training course as I at Worcester. For some reason he had never been very friendly towards me and was convinced that he would get the job. He didn't and I did.

Two questions at the interview remain with me; Major Mant, Chairman of Governors and local solicitor asked 'Mr. Thompson, I see you served in the Royal Air Force. To what rank did you rise?' 'SAC, Acting Corporal'. No further comment was forthcoming.

I had been told that until numbers built up I wouldn't only be teaching science. Initially there was an expected intake of 69 eleven-year-olds and I would be taking maths, English, R.E., gardening, boys' P.E. and games, as well as science. This seemed to make the second of the two questions somewhat irrelevant as the County Assistant director of Education probed 'Last Sunday's *Observer* expressed concern that the sciences and arts are becoming increasingly separate in schools. What will you be doing to ensure that this does not happen here?'

I came to Petworth again before the start of term. Robert Stirling, the Headmaster, had a room at Culvercroft in Pound Street, where the boys' school had been since the bombing. I had been promised a council house in Wyndham Road, but like the school, it was yet to be built. I lodged in Midhurst for a fortnight before we were able to move into a rented cottage in Little Bognor. The property was partly converted from two estate cottages and was very cold. Initially I travelled into Petworth by motor cycle – a Velocette LE – though by half term I had a Reliant Regal three-wheeler. I often picked up Robert Wadey on my way to school and one morning we were following a herd of cows down the lane when I got a bit close and received a kick to the front of the car. No damage to either party! My wife Rosemary was not in the best of health and found Little Bognor very isolated with two young children and so after Christmas we moved into the flat above the East Street Dairy where we were made most welcome by the Wareham sisters, the owners.

The first day at the Herbert Shiner School had been in the preceding September and everyone, staff and pupils, were very excited. There were four upstairs classrooms, the art room for assembly and the needlework room as a staff room and office, where the headmaster and secretary were based. Mr. Jack Pinder, the secretary, was recently retired as personal assistant to the director of Plant Protection at Fernhurst. He was a great character, and among other things a conjuror and musician, as well as being both the writer of the school hymn and composer of the tune. All visitors came upstairs – and their first reaction was to admire the view to the Downs beyond the railway line and the shunting goods trains. Beneath us the rest of the school was still a building site and it would be some time before it was finished.

Gradually more rooms became available among which was the science laboratory and that Christmas we were able to hold a bazaar upstairs.

The playing field had yet to be seeded and when it rained all the seed was washed down into the field below. P.E. took place on the playground, rain or shine while games were held in Petworth Park, quite a walk from the school. For cross-country the boys would run across the playing field, into Grove Lane, right at the bottom and along to Station Road before turning up the little path into South Grove. Traffic was not a concern, there being so little in those days, and as long as the boys kept to the side of the road there was little risk to them. It was possible to see the progress of the runners from the upstairs Art Room and there were never any complaints or concerns from parents.

The teaching staff in that first year comprised of the Head Mr. Stirling, Deputy Mr. Astley, Senior Mistress Miss Taylor, French Mr. Roper, and me science and many other roles. Gardening consisted of heavy digging and one particularly hot day I was quite surprised to turn round to see one little girl had taken off her dress, she was digging away quite unconcerned, as were her fellow pupils apparently.

When the Royal Counties Show took place on the field below the school we staged an exhibition in the education marquee. I recall the staff watching from the Art Room being entertained by the sight of the Deputy Head helping a glamorous Art mistress from the Weald School over the adjoining fence.

Heavy snow fell over the Christmas break during the winter of 1962-63 and the thaw didn't set in for six weeks. When school resumed, much time was spent clearing paths and playground. There was no disruption but the school buses each carried a member of staff equipped with a spade in case it was necessary to dig the

'I hope they've given me the right key.'

The Minister of Education, Sir Edward Boyle officially opens the Herbert Shiner School on May the 4th 1963. On the left is Peter Mursell, Chairman of West Sussex County Council and on the far right Robert Stirling, the headmaster. The opening was the main story in the *Midhurst and Petworth Times* on Friday May 10th where the headline read:

*'An important day in the life of Petworth  
NEW SCHOOL FORMALLY OPENED BY  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION  
Tribute to Sir H. Shiner'*

The article began:  
'Sir Edward Boyle, Minister of Education, formally opened the £107,000 Herbert Shiner Secondary School on Saturday, and paid tribute to the work of the man after whom it was named, the late Lt.-Col. Sir Herbert Shiner, chairman of west Sussex County Council from 1946 to 1962. "This school is in memory of a very great public servant, whom I knew slightly when I was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education," he said'.



vehicle out of a snowdrift. I can't imagine that happening today.

There was a time when long periods of rain caused widespread flooding and for a while Petworth was cut off from the outside world. Children within the catchment area could get in but most of the teaching staff lived outside. On one day we had close to 400 children and only five teachers. The Headmaster was away on a course and could get back no closer than Bushey. He was constantly on the phone to see how we were coping. We were also without the Deputy Head which meant that I was in charge. I rang County Hall, who seemed blissfully unaware of the situation, so when I said that we had 400 children and only five teachers; the response was 'Well, carry on'. The teachers took one year group each. I had 100 in the dining room.

Looking back certain things stick in my memory. The time a girl leaned over a Bunsen burner and a sheet of flame shot above her. Those around shrieked with alarm although she was totally unaware that her over-abundance of hairspray had ignited and by the time she realised what had happened the flame had extinguished itself. A lesson learnt. A similar incident occurred at my first school when my hair was singed. I hadn't realised and the class chose not to tell me until I became aware of the tell-tale smell of burning hair.

When I wanted to show a class blood cells under a microscope I would prick my finger with a needle to allow a drop of to fall on to a slide. Once this had the effect of making a boy faint.

My work involved a certain amount of sex education and on one occasion when I asked a class if there were any questions, a hand shot up. 'Yes?' 'Please may I go to the dentist?' When entries were being sought for Sports Day there was an absence of volunteers for the girls' 400 yards race, so the House Captain Mervyn Matthews and I decided to issue a challenge. 'Who thinks they could beat me?' A handful of girls turned up for the challenge and all lined up. We set off and I appeared to be in the lead, but could hear pounding feet behind me. I ended the race absolutely exhausted having been easily overtaken by Mervyn. The girls appeared half a lap behind but at least we got some entries.

One final memory, it was a Monday morning and as I came out of my gate a boy was passing by and said 'The biology lab burnt down last night.' I thought he was joking and walked on. But it was true, and where the lab had been there was a layer of white ash with the brick piers (it had been a temporary building) poking up. Everything had been destroyed. An electrical fault was blamed. As I stood surveying the scene, the biology master turned up, a little late as he had been collecting the school's first gerbils. He got out of his car back first, holding the biscuit tin containing the gerbils. He slowly turned round and I shall always remember the look on his face. It really hit him hard. Biology lessons took place in the dining hall until the laboratory was replaced much later.

## Growing up in Pound Place

Trevor Brash. Part two

I tend to think of my awareness of our neighbours as starting around this 'post shop' era. Mr and Mrs Jarvis had the shop across the alley from our house and the garage opposite our front window. Mr Jarvis took me a few times, in his Morris Traveller, down to his pig sty in Station Road near the corn drier, to feed his pigs. Mr and Mrs Jerome had the shop next to the fish shop. I remember their fruit and veg in crates, packed at a steep angle and Mr Jerome having to come down some steps, in the corner, into the shop. Peter Jerome used to constantly bounce a tennis ball against the wall in his garden and the high walls formed an echo chamber making the noise carry a long way. I liked it but it drove my dad mad which probably made me enjoy it all the more. Our 'next garden' neighbours were Mr and Mrs Harper. Although their shop was around the corner, in Saddlers Row, their garden ran a long way back and the back half was next to ours. I loved their shop. The sounds and smells from the mens' and womens' hairdressers and they had jars of light and dark tobaccos, and pipe smokers could ask for their own preferred mix. One abiding memory is talking to a smart young man through the Harpers' fence. He was a barber and used to go into the garden for a cigarette break and I was fascinated by his very strong Italian accent. Many years later, I went to have my hair cut in a barbers in Haslemere and heard that same accent. I asked the barber if his name was Alex and if he ever worked for Tom Harper. When he confirmed he did, I asked him if he remembered chatting to a small boy through the fence because that small boy was me. He was amazed and told me that he used to talk to me to improve his English because I never laughed at his mistakes.

The beginning of the end. A period of massive, life-altering, changes, at least they were to a child of ten. Firstly, after having attended primary school just over the road at Culvercroft, we had to move down to the new school. Although I remember walking to the new school, I can't remember the exact route we took. I seem to remember passing Mr Garland's studio but also remember going past the donkey field, at the back of the council offices and through the new estate. It would be impossible to do both of these in the same trip so perhaps the route changed as newer, safer, options became available. I remember, about this time, Sunday School moved from the church to the youth club and we would call into Mrs Stacey's and walk across Pound Corner with her as, even at that time, traffic was deemed to be dangerous.

At the end of our garden, there was a rockery up against a stone wall. Beyond the wall was a huge yew tree in Doctor Ball's garden. The bit of his garden near us was rather wild and overgrown, so a great cover for young kids to climb the wall, step onto a short branch of the yew tree, and drop down into adventures among the wild roaming chickens. When I was about eleven, the garden went and became a massive car park. It was quite a while being cleared and tarmacked and so became a great space for bike riding and cricket. It also meant we kids had our own entrance/exit to the house. Over the wall and across the car park was a lot quicker, and more fun, than around the roads.

One year into the new primary school, Mr Hill called me into his study (he never called it his office), and told me that I had passed the 11-plus and would be going to Midhurst Grammar School. This news meant nothing to me but Mum and Dad were quite pleased when they heard. I knew my older brother, Johnny, had gone there, and he survived the experience, so I took it in my stride. What it did mean was early morning starts to get round to the square to catch Mr. Ansty's coach to Midhurst and late returns dropped off opposite the youth club on the way back. It also meant having to play rugby rather than football. Initially difficult for a kid who had to take his glasses off to play; eventually easier when everyone got covered in mud and you just tackled anyone rash enough to come anywhere near you. My eventual separation from Petworth took its first tentative step.

As I was at school in Midhurst, friends in Petworth tended to be boys I met at Boys' Brigade. Every Friday night, aged just eleven, we would walk down to the hut at Hamper's Geen, to start at 7 p.m. then leave at 9 p.m. to walk home again. Tuesday evenings was Bible class in the downstairs room round the chapel. I still amaze myself by answering questions on TV quiz shows that can only come from remembering those Bible classes. I still remember some of the hymns word for word as well 'Day is dying in the west' and 'Will your anchor hold' come to mind.

Once I reached the age of eleven, the rules relaxed somewhat, possibly due to the fact that I managed to get myself to Midhurst and back without missing the bus (at least not often), getting lost, kidnapped or – worse – forgetting my homework books. I would meet with friends, just after breakfast, and come back in time for tea, We would walk to the Gog, go up the park, make camps, poach trout in tumble bay (avoiding Mr Justice sometimes by running like fury), and get up to all sorts of mischief. At about this age I got my first push-bike –

FREEDOM. I remember cycling to Duncton to see a school friend, then on to Sutton and Bignor to see two girlfriends. We went to the top of Bignor hill and free-wheeled down again, down the 1 in 3 hill, scaring ourselves to death as we did so. Later on, I used to ride to and from my part time job at Cheal's nursery near Pulborough. We were young, we were fearless and, thanks to our bikes, we were free.

Another privilege that came with the age of eleven was being trusted to go to the library in New Street, on my own. I loved that place, books, books and more books, my idea of heaven. My parents were both avid readers, particularly of cowboy books by J.T. Edson. I would take my mum's and dad's library tickets up to the desk and explain that they couldn't come and that I was to be allowed to select books for them. The two ladies behind the desk reluctantly allowed me to do this but would cough loudly if they thought I was straying into a too inappropriate area of books. Pointless, really, because by this time, I was reading the same books after my parents had finished with them. Still, the proprieties had to be strictly observed. I remember taking home a couple of James Bond books which my parents thought scandalous and shocking and forbade me to read. As with all young boys, however, where there's a will there's a way and I found them thrilling, even if I didn't fully understand some of the fruitier bits on the pages with marks from the corners being turned over.

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## The butcher's boy, 1950

The third in our short series of articles reproduced from *The Old Village Trades and Crafts of Fittleworth* by kind permission of Judy Sayers. Here, Judy has interviewed a young Eric Kitchener who as a lad had worked for P.H. Durrant, the Fittleworth butcher. Some readers will recall Durrant's other shop which adjoined New Street House in Petworth, and which is now home to an estate agent, and of course even more will remember Eric himself.

Eric Kitchener was still a very young lad when he started work as delivery boy for Durrant's, the butchers in Lower Street, Fittleworth, and now Devon House. In

fact he was only just tall enough to manage the tall trade bike with its basket in the carrier on the front. In the 1940s and 1950s the butcher's shop did a brisk trade, and delivered meat and fish throughout the village, and with a sister shop in Petworth the two vans together with the bike were certainly needed to cope with the many deliveries over a wide area. The Fittleworth shop dealt with orders from Bury, Coates and Sutton, as well as the village itself and neighbouring hamlets. Meat was delivered throughout the week and on Saturdays and the shop was always busy with villagers buying fresh meat daily; and it was nothing to have four or five people at a time waiting to be served.

Bullocks, sheep and pigs were bought in, and during the 1940s pigs were still being slaughtered in the slaughterhouse behind the shop. Fish was delivered to the shop every Tuesday. Packed in ice it was delivered at 4 a.m. on to the pavement outside. The shop's two bestsellers were sausages and dripping, both made on the premises. When involved with sausage making Eric had to stand on a box to ensure he was the right height for the machine! The school canteen had opened in 1944 and most mornings the school cook, Mrs Pennells, walked down the road to purchase the meat for the day's meal. In those days, of course the children were served a proper 'meat and two veg' dinner at midday.

'The Boy's' Saturday delivery round was in three stages. Starting early in the morning, it was off first to the Mill, Hesworth Common and Holly Grove, through to St. Mary's Drive and back down Lower Street, returning to the shop to refill the basket. Next, off to Churchwood, Wyncombe Hill, Hallelujah Corner and Bedham Lane, returning for the last refill which was destined for Sandy Lane.

In his spare time Eric would be out rabbiting, selling all those that he caught to the shop. At that time rabbit was a regular part of the countryman's diet, with rabbit pie or casserole on the weekly menu. In the shop there would be rabbits and hares for sale but it was at Christmas that there was huge display of poultry and game. Christmas time was hectically busy, working all through the night in the 24 hours before Christmas Eve. In the slaughterhouse it was 'all-hands' to pluck and dress chickens, turkeys and pheasants to be delivered on Christmas Eve, and usually the long hours and hard work were rewarded by good Christmas boxes from grateful customers.

## A surprising historical precedent

Jonathan Newdick

For some years now, many of the fields to the south and west of Petworth have been used for the intensive production of salads, frequently iceberg lettuces – a variety nicely named, being cold and almost tasteless. To protect the crop and to speed its growth the seedlings are covered by long strips of fleece. The appearance of this might appear to be particular to our era, but far from it. In the Low Countries in the seventeenth century a flourishing linen industry required the long strips of bleached linen to be laid over the fields to dry. This was recorded in several paintings by Jacob van Ruisdael (c.1628 – c.1682).

A principal difference between then and now is that the linen would keep people warm for years, while the fleece is dumped into big containers with ‘South Coast Skips’ written on their sides to be sent away for (fingers crossed) recycling.



**OPPOSITE** Salad production at Frog Farm, Petworth, Spring 2021.

**BELOW** Jacob van Ruisdael, View of Haarlem with bleaching fields, c.1670 – 75, oil on canvas, 55.5 x 62 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague. ([www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)).



## Wood and water

Mrs W. M. Wandsworth, edited from *The Petworth Society Bulletin* No. 20

We had two wells in the Middle Meadow, one had a windlass and the other had not. The water in the top well was purer, but because of the difficulty in drawing it up we used the lower. It too, was good water, but mother preferred the flavour of the upper. What a labour it was, water for cattle, water for washing – people and clothes, water for cooking, water for brewing, water for cleaning, the need seemed to be endless, and always there was the cry ‘Don’t waste the water’. We grew up having to be careful about every drop used. And the habit became ingrained; even now I am careful with water.

Because father was usually with the cattle, until we were big enough to do it, and while we were at school, it usually fell to mother to draw the water, and in the winter when the downhill path was slippery on the claggy clay soil, it was doubly hard trying to keep one’s feet and carry two buckets of water.

It was not, I think, until the beginning of the last war that water was piped from one of the wells to the house, and we had a cold water tap in the scullery, and what a relief that was. Even then there was no drainage for it to run away, and the waste water had to be thrown away. On a hot summer day an occasional visitor might think that it was romantic to draw up a bucket of cold water from a deep cool well, but to have to do so day after day, year in year out, is quite another story.

When we moved to Grinsteeds there was an old kitchen range stuck into the open fireplace; it was hopeless both for cooking and heating the room, so we had it out. We then had dogs on the hearth with iron bars across, and a jack up the chimney. You could see the sky if you stood on the hearth and looked up. On this primitive arrangement mother cooked for years, and a very good cook she was. Slow roasting of meat in an iron saucepan, and a large oval iron pot in which all the vegetables were cooked – we nearly always had three. Not just thrown in; in those days flour came in linen bags and these were kept, the vegetables put separately into them, and then they were put into the pot. We also had a brick oven for baking bread in the scullery beside the copper. I only remember mother using it once – it ate up too much fuel.

But of course you can’t cook without heat, and wood was our sole source of heat (we could not afford coal) apart from an oil oven, usually at week-ends for making a cake and pies. So, every day wood had to be chopped and brought into the house. Somehow the getting of wood was more interesting than drawing water. Perhaps the different sorts of wood, and the smells of them had something to do with it, and besides it was a dry job unless it was raining, when it still had to be got.

Each of us, I think, as we grew old enough, had to get the morning’s wood chopped the night before, enough to light the fire and to keep it going until after breakfast. We had to have a variety of thicknesses, thin and frithy for the actual lighting, thick for keeping the fire going. This was very important. Of course in the evening we had large logs laid across the dogs and these father would see to. Sometimes we had to help him on the cross-cut saw.

Father would buy part of a copse somewhere and thin it out, and then there would be a large faggot stack to go at. In the summer we would go ‘wooding’, mother would come sometimes. Collecting the dry furze on the common, which, while rather prickly, made marvellous firewood, hot and fierce, but it didn’t last. Ash and oak were our favourite woods. I remember soon after we went to Grinsteeds, the timber throwers came and felled one or two of our oak trees. It was bitter weather and mother had them all indoors to sit around the fire for a warm, and she heated some home brewed beer in a saucepan and gave it them hot with a little sugar.

Poor Mother, she often said ‘I should think I was in Heaven if I had running water and a gas stove’. She had the one, but she never did have the other. But the hard work seemed worth it when we all sat around the lovely blaze in the evenings, all reading. Mother knitted and read at the same time, or sometimes father would play his melodeon and we would all sing together, mostly old songs. Sometimes we might be asked to sing a song that we had learned at school. On other evenings we would sit around the table and play whist or cribbage. The dog and cat would be sitting on top of one another on the hearth rug, the lamp would send out a warm glow, and, just occasionally, I would consciously and gratefully realise that this was home.

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## ‘Cecil might need a bit of a hand’

John Connor

There were two degrees of frost one night last winter and my neighbour made reference to the bitter weather when I encountered her scraping a thin film of ice from her car. Bitter! I nearly replied. Don’t you remember 1963? The sea froze over at Littlehampton that year. But I didn’t say it; I stopped myself just in time, reflecting that my neighbour wasn’t born until thirty years later.

It snowed heavily as Boxing Day 1962 drew to a close and by morning the skies were clear and bright and the white stuff was halfway up our front door. After that the temperatures stayed seven degrees below the average and the snow remained on the ground until early March. My father was the proprietor of W. Payne, the butcher in Lombard Street and a good deal of his business was conducted with the inhabitants of outlying rural communities. Boxing Day was a Wednesday and so, the first working

day after the holiday was – the next day, Thursday the twenty-seventh.

‘Cecil might need a bit of a hand,’ mused my father, pausing in his attempts to excavate the delivery van from beneath a six-foot snowdrift which had covered the garage doors in the yard opening into Park Road. ‘Perhaps you could join him on his round.’ After an hour we had uncovered the garage and half-an-hour later, after further shovelling to obtain access to the roadway and much coaxing of the Austin A35’s engine, we eased out into the town. By driving in the ruts created by other vehicles we managed to slip and slide our way along the main highway, stopping for the occasional delivery as we did so. Now and again we were forced to wait as a snowplough cleared the way ahead or a tractor dragged a stranded lorry from our path. Eventually, well into the afternoon, we reached the turning from Bury towards Bignor. The snow was much deeper there and I was forced to climb out and push each time the wheels lost purchase.

We arrived at last at the stretch of road that runs from West Burton and on past the Bignor Roman Villa to the village beyond. There was no sign of it – the road that is. I climbed up through the snow and on to the bank beside the van. Some way off I saw a figure on a corresponding bank with what looked like a Land Rover half buried beside him – or her. The snow had drifted across from the field and completely buried the lane between us. We waved to each other and clambered back down to our respective vehicles. Then we began to dig and we continued to dig for another two hours, after which we broke through the intervening wall of snow and greeted each other like opposing Channel Tunnellers. Then we dug some more to provide space to pass each other and continued on our journey.

We were heading for Burton Park House and it became apparent as soon as we lurched up to the gates that there was no possible way through the estate. We considered our options. The meat was packed into high-sided, oblong, metal containers. They were built to be stacked one on another and, to provide ventilation in this configuration there was a pair of holes in each of the shorter sides. From somewhere Cecil produced a length of thin rope and threaded it through the holes in two of the containers. This turned them into passable sledges and we set off on foot, hauling them across the snow towards the distant house.

The light was going by the time we reached the kitchen door where, exhausted and frozen to the marrow despite our exertions, we knocked to gain admittance. ‘Ah, it’s the butcher,’ said the cook, without a trace of surprise in her voice. ‘Put it over

there on the side table, will you?’ We might have just strolled in from the stables next door. You’d have thought the amazed and wide-eyed lady might have called out to other members of the household and they would have rushed in to congratulate us and slap us on the back and offer their profound thanks to us: the heroes who had battled blizzard and unbearable cold to bring life-saving provisions to their isolated homestead. But no. We unloaded our fare; looked around expectantly for a steaming mug of tea, found the cook busy elsewhere and, with a muttered goodbye we left.

It was like stepping into a fridge, except that the light didn’t come on when we opened the door. And that was it. The cook wasn’t being ungrateful. In those days, life didn’t come to a stop when there were leaves on the line; everyone got on with it and did their best not to be the one who let the side down. What we need in 2021 is to recover our sense of perspective. When those leaves cover the rails, we should reach for the broom. There’s no likelihood of keeping the track open but as long as we believe there is, we’ll be all right.

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#### FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

Burning charcoal. *Sussex Advertiser*, January 29th, 1838

Saturday night, a distressing and melancholy circumstance occurred at Sladeland, near Petworth, the residence of Major Gen. Wyndham; five of the male servants, the cook and four stable boys, slept in the same room, when they went to bed, incautiously was left a quantity of charcoal burning in the room. The next morning not making their appearance as usual, the gardener went to call them, not getting any answer went into the bed-room, where shocking to relate, found them all in their beds quite dead! The cook lay with the greatest part his body exposed, and one hand raised over his head, but the boys were found lying with the bed clothes undisturbed, and probably died while sleeping. A Coroner’s inquest was held on the bodies Tuesday last, and a verdict may be anticipated. It is to be hoped that this accident may be a warning to servants and others never to go sleep in a room with charcoal burning; the effect is certain death. In addition to the above circumstance, as another of General Wyndham’s servants was proceeding to Ball’s Cross, his horse threw him, when he sustained such injuries as caused his death on Thursday last.



Two woodland photographs by George Garland. His caption for the picture above was 'A tree-bordered lane near Graffham'. It dates from about 1940.



This characteristically contrived photograph, probably, from the late 1930s, carries Garland's original caption of 'Autumn in a woodland roadway at Bedham'.



## Guy Fawkes night at Freehold Farmhouse

David R. G. Johnston

Guy Fawkes night – Freehold Farm – in the late 1950s. How well I recall those cold, crisp autumn days. The icy sun laying low in the sky of a late afternoon, the outlying meadows a wondrous sea of gossamers. Hundreds of millions of those silky webs lay like a bed of lace spread across the grass fields, the cold, cold sun highlighting the strange phenomena with a breath-taking silver tint.

With the drawing in of winter there was always the trimming of garden hedges and the cutting of those odd clumps of shrubbery. The lopped branches of thorns and brambles, we invariably heaped up in a corner of the vegetable plot, as a reserve for bonfire night. Come the 5th of November, the great mound of briers was always well dried and burnt wonderfully.

The very last Guy Fawkes night that I spent at Freehold proved an event I would never forget. For my mother had brought a cheap box of fireworks, that strangely came with the old man's blessing. The assortment, made up of a few bangers, sparklers, rockets, Roman candles and Catherine wheels, was shared equally among my brothers; my selection I deposited in my coat pocket.

The bonfire that evening, fanned by the chill night air flared high, lighting the wild, lonely countryside like a mysterious beacon. I wandered innocently from the family group, round the burning mass and there lingered in the shadows. Then, glancing through the haze of smoke I eyed the old man, who was occupied with the setting up of a Roman candle, opposite me. Feeling safe, I pulled a crumpled Woodbine from my pocket and put a match to it warily, as a schoolboy smoker will. I drew heavily on the cigarette, keeping an eye on old Harry, as I did so. For he knew nothing of my smoking experiments.

Suddenly, he turned and walked past the fire towards me. I panicked momentarily. Then, with a slight of movement that would have made a magician proud, I held the burning butt between my thumb and forefinger, thrusting the innocent looking, cupped hand into my coat pocket in an unsuspecting way. Intent on keeping the fire safe, the old boy wandered on by me, prodding the flaming brushwood with a stick, in his efforts to check the flying sparks. I withdrew my hand and resumed my newly discovered pleasure. The cigarette, still fully alight had burnt to within half an inch, so I took the last few puffs, then threw the smouldering butt in to the bonfire.

It was then that a sudden burst of reports, rattled from the confines of my coat. I knew what had happened; it was instantly obvious. In concealing the burning

Woodbine in my pocket, to shield it from old Harry, the touch paper on the fireworks stored within had come in contact with the smouldering cigarette. All hell broke out, as a series of blasts and booms crackled and mingled with the hissing, spluttering, whistling and whizzing that erupted from my own little fireworks display. Again, I panicked. Then in a moment, I whipped the illuminated garment from my back and threw it to the ground.

Everyone rushed round the bonfire to see the cause of the commotion. And there we all stood, watching with a strangely amused, horror, the dazzling, pyrotechnic display that took place as my coat was blasted to shreds. Old Harry always swore it was a stray spark from the fire that had set off the fireworks in the pocket.

Who was I to argue with him? Not many months after the exploding coat episode, the time arrived for me to leave school. The last day that I ever stayed in the homely old farmhouse, Freehold, has somehow, remained imprinted on my mind. It was a wild, angry afternoon. The wind blew hard and there, in my room, I gazed from rain-drenched windows, fascinated by the fluid lightning that played on the ridge of Blackdown Hill. I watched for some long while. Then slowly the storm abated, and the dark clouds cleared, turning a washed yellow, setting later that evening a pure brilliant crimson. I then soon retired to my bed.

On rising the following morning, I packed my few belongings in a bag, said my goodbyes to the family and strolled up the garden and out of the gate. The lengthy old lane looked beautiful as ever. I turned, waved once again to my friends, and then drew slowly on and out of sight.



David R. G. Johnston is a Sussex author, artist and photographer.

Woodbines, known as 'gaspers' – the favoured brand for the under-aged – you could buy them in packs of five at pocket-money prices.

## The future for the English tea-shop?

Well, we hope not, but it's difficult sometimes to see another. Maisie and Kay at Tiffins in the High Street, Petworth in the summer of 2021. Whatever happens we can be certain that the high, and rather naughty, quality of the cakes will remain. Here, the surreal tea- and coffee-pot lights, each pointing in a different direction, seem to reflect a time of uncertainty while those on the shelves behind suggest the hope for an ordered return to stability. Photograph by Claire Sadler.



