

# THE PETWORTH SOCIETY *Magazine*

No. 188. September 2022



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



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

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DENNIS ALBERT RICHARDS  
CHARLES JOHN CARVER  
EVA STREETER



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Burton Pond, captioned as 'Burton Lake' on this Edwardian post card, looking south from the road near the mill. See 'The waters at Burton Park' on page 35.

**FRONT COVER**

Dramatic skies behind storm-damaged Scots pines on Wiggonholt Common. Photograph by George Garland.

**BACK COVER**

'In memory of those who lost their lives by enemy air action on Michaelmass Day, September 29th, 1942.' Photograph courtesy of *The Times* newspaper. See 'Eighty years on' on page 44.

Petworth Society Magazine No. 188 |

## 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 and 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 £16.00, single or double; postal £20.00, overseas nominal £30.00. Further information can be found on our website: [www.petworthsociety.co.uk](http://www.petworthsociety.co.uk)

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Alexandra Soskin

In the June issue I wrote about the lovely Spring weather, which has followed through into a glorious summer. This provided perfect conditions for our excellent 'Ancient Trees' walk kindly guided by Gerald Gresham-Cooke. Having some of Europe's oldest trees in the Park is another reason Petworth is so special. Gazing on these magnificent structures and pondering the ups and downs of life that they have witnessed over the hundreds of years they have been there certainly puts things into perspective.

Continuing the theme of the passage of time, I am sad to report that Miles Costello has decided to retire from the frontline of the Society at the end of this year. He has borne two considerable responsibilities: the book sales and the magazine, latterly as Editor. His knowledge of the people and places of the town is extensive, and he has fed this knowledge into the pages of the magazine for members to enjoy. Miles will be sorely missed by the Society. We owe him a great debt of gratitude for the many ways in which he has provided edifying and entertaining service to members and non-members alike. But he is not off just yet, and you will see him at the September book sale and in his editorship of the December issue of the magazine. Miles will also continue as a trustee so will remain involved in that capacity.

Miles's departure raises the question of who will run the book sales. The last of these on Miles's watch will take place on September 10. We have a team of dedicated helpers who are keen to continue, and we are now looking for a team leader. If you, or someone you know, loves books and would be interested in finding out more, please contact me ([info@petworthsociety.co.uk](mailto:info@petworthsociety.co.uk)) by September 30. If we have not found someone by then, with great regret, we will discontinue the book sales. However, given their popularity, I am hopeful of interest!

Regarding the magazine, although Miles will be a hard act to follow, we have, thanks to the kind and helpful intercession of Lord Egremont, secured an exciting new editor: Andy Loukes. I am delighted to welcome Andy, who is Curator of the Egremont Collection. Andy has an impressive background, described in more detail in the box on page 8. At our November 25 talk, Andy will introduce himself in person, giving members a chance to meet him and find out more about the new man at the helm of the magazine. There are more details about this event on the enclosed insert and on our website. I hope many of you will be able to join us!

Nick Wheeler has now handed over the treasurer role to Phil Stephens. I'd like

to thank Nick on behalf of the Society for his years of dedication and thoughtful help. He has done battle with bank bureaucracy on many occasions – and we all know how trying that can be – and worked conscientiously with the Charities Commission and other bodies to ensure our various formal obligations are properly met. I am delighted he is remaining a trustee as well as staying on the committee. And a big welcome to Phil!

We have pressed ahead with the handover of the membership secretary hat and Mike Mulcahy is getting his feet under the table. You'll see Mike's contact details on page two. We ask members – and prospective members – please to contact Mike on all matters concerning membership. You can pay membership subscriptions via BACS (please note our new bank details on page two); but if you prefer to use a cheque, please now send this to Mike (rather than the treasurer). Once again we'd like to extend enormous thanks to Gemma who has given to the Society so generously of her limited time!

Although it took place before the June issue appeared, because of the copy deadline schedule, I was unable to mention until this edition that in May we held our first face-to-face AGM since the pandemic. It was wonderful that it was so well attended. This may have had something to do with the presentations made to Peter Jerrome and Keith Thompson. It was an historic moment to recognise very long years of exceptional service to the Society. Although Peter was, unfortunately, not able to attend, Keith made a speech that was well appreciated. Miles has kindly written about the event, and captured Keith's comments, on page 17.

## **PETWORTH SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Alexandra Soskin

I am delighted that the 46th Annual General Meeting of the Society is taking place this year face-to-face.

The year 2021-22 was my first full year as Chairman, having taken up the mantle on Peter Jerrome's retirement from the role at the end of the previous year. Whilst our activities remained curtailed by the pandemic measures at the start of the year, the quarterly magazine continued and were able to re-launch our events programme mid-year. We also made progress in other respects.

Significantly, during the year we worked on a new website and this was launched just before Christmas 2021. The website has been working well and now facilitates event ticket purchases as well as providing up-to-date event and Society information. The website also provides a showcase for the Petworth Heritage sites we support, in particular: Coultershaw Beam Pump; The Petworth Cottage Museum; Leconfield Hall; St Mary's Church; and Burton Mill. By negotiation, the new website build was carried out at no cost to the Society.

In parallel, we arranged the digitisation of the full magazine archive. Dedicated to Peter Jerrome, the archive now sits within the new website. We are very grateful to Jonathan and Claudia Golden who kindly sponsored this project. We are delighted that this unique record of Petworth life has now been preserved for posterity, thanks to their generosity.

When lockdown finally lifted we were, at last, able to re-commence our events programme. In June we had a presence at the Petworth Antiques & Fine Art Fair. After a preliminary book sale at the Coultershaw Beam Pump July celebratory event, our monthly book sales re-launched in August. Judging by attendance, our loyal fans were glad to see them back again and sales were brisk. Towards the year-end, it was decided to reduce the frequency of the book sales to four a year. These are onerous events to organize and this was felt to be appropriate to ensure the sales overall continued.

In September we participated in the Petworth Heritage Open Day weekend. In October, our first re-launch ticketed event took place: a 'Talk & Walk' in Petworth House. Held in the Battery House and in Petworth House itself, we were greatly assisted by the National Trust team. The event sold out and was generally considered a success.

To avoid the pre-Christmas diary crush, we decided to hold our Christmas event in January. It was very unfortunate that pandemic measures meant this had to be postponed (and it was successfully held in May 2022). We were thwarted again in February by Storm Eustice. Power cuts meant Miles Costello's illustrated talk 'Beyond Living Memory' was unfortunately unable to go ahead.

We continued to engage and build relationships with other organisations in Petworth. We joined the Petworth Business Association; participated in the Petworth Annual Town Meeting; were represented on the steering group of the Petworth Heritage Partnership; engaged with the National Trust team at Petworth House;

with Petworth Town Council; and with Petworth Vision. These relationships are important as we seek both to further our own objectives as well as to support and co-ordinate with other organisations that share our objectives.

We have been conscious that, without activities, opportunities to attract new members have been reduced. This impact on our membership numbers has been compounded by a natural attrition rate due to the older demographic of our membership.

Standing at around 430 currently, we aim to increase our membership. Measures to help include introducing a contactless capability that facilitates signing up new members at events; greater visibility via the enhanced website and the magazine archive; and attending third party events, such as the Petworth Fine Art & Antiques Fair, with a stand to attract new members.

We are also working on a facility on the website to enable new memberships, as well as renewals, to be transacted online. It is hoped our new digital facilities will help attract younger members. Miles Costello kindly permitted us to add a link on our website to his popular Facebook page, Petworth Past. There is no doubt the page helps the Society, and we are grateful to Miles for this support.

In the absence of events at which to engage with members and hear their thoughts, we added a members' feedback survey to the June 2021 issue of the magazine. The outcome of this was reported in my Chairman's Notes of the September issue. Suffice to say here that, whilst we are not complacent, the feedback indicated responding members felt the Society was performing well.

We continue to re-build the Management Committee. Sadly, Nick Wheeler has indicated his desire to retire from the committee at the end of August 2022. We are immensely grateful to Nick for his conscientious and capable work as treasurer, and for his wise counsel on the committee. However, I am delighted to welcome Phil Stephens as his successor. I am also delighted that Nick will remain a trustee.

Gemma Levett has also indicated she will step down, at the end of 2022. As membership secretary, Gemma has given invaluable service managing our membership affairs. We will miss her support and sage contribution greatly and would like to thank her very much for juggling this not always straightforward task with the many other demands on her time.

Mid-year, Sarah Singleton joined the committee. Sarah also took up the role of the Society's webmaster from Gordon Stevenson who has looked after the website



for many years, and to whom we give great thanks. Sarah has already made a great impact further developing and managing our new website, by which we set great store.

Since the year-end, we have also welcomed two further committee members: Mike Mulcahy and Flo Churchill. Mike will take over as membership secretary on Gemma's retirement. Flo has picked up the Events hat. We are very grateful for Mike and Flo's fresh enthusiasm and support and look forward to working with them.

### Andy Loukes, magazine editor from March 2023

Andy Loukes (pronounced 'Lowx') moved to Petworth with his wife Charlotte and son Henry in 2009 and has worked here for thirteen years. For many of those years Andy worked for the National Trust as House and Collections Manager at Petworth House. He was responsible for curating many large scale and successful exhibitions including those of three artists particularly associated with Petworth J.M.W. Turner, John Constable and William Blake, for which he wrote the accompanying catalogues.

Andy also led on collections conservation at Petworth House, including such projects as the restoration of the magnificent Edwardian fire evacuation ladder. He also contributed to the 'Junior Curators' programme, aimed at Petworth Primary children and their families. He has appeared on numerous television documentaries and been interviewed by the likes of John Humphrys, Alan Titchmarsh and John Craven. In 2013 he advised on Mike Leigh's film 'Mr Turner' and was responsible for supervising the scenes shot at Petworth.

Since March 2021 Andy has worked for Lord and Lady Egremont as Curator of the Egremont Collection. Prior to moving to Petworth, Andy was a curator at Manchester Art Gallery for ten years and at Tate Britain for three, and is a former Trustee of Turner's House, Twickenham. While he has broad-ranging historical interests, he is an acknowledged specialist on British art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and has written and lectured widely, including for the Petworth Society.

## EDITORIAL

Miles Costello

A Sussex smock, a billycock hat and two shepherds' crooks all with one thing in common: they were owned by George Garland, the Petworth photographer and used both as props and occasionally while performing his legendary 'Old Mark' comic routine in which he entertained local audiences with his portrayal of the archetypal Sussex rustic. I doubt that they had seen the light of day for over half a century and yet Peter had entrusted them to me. What should I do with them, perhaps return them to a wardrobe, not really a long-term solution? Coultershaw, appreciating their importance offered some sanctuary. The crooks will be permanently displayed alongside a selection of Garland photographs while the smock and hat have thankfully been offered a permanent home in Mrs Cummings' sewing room at the wonderful Petworth Cottage Museum. While I am grateful to both Coultershaw and the museum it raises an issue that has long been unresolved at Petworth. Where can items of interest to the town be preserved and possibly exhibited? I don't suppose that it is a problem that will be addressed with ease. Suggestions or thoughts on the matter please.

All things being equal, Petworth Fair will once again return to the Market Square later this year. Last held in 2019, a new fair committee has been formed who will work sympathetically with the showmen to develop the fair and add to the existing attractions. Much emphasis will be placed on retaining the cultural significance of the event while at the same time ensuring that it remains relevant to the current generation of local people. The fair will take place on Saturday November 19 and will include the turning on of the Christmas lights. See the local press and social media for further details.

I am sorry to say that the next issue of the magazine will be my last as editor. While I have enjoyed my relatively brief period as custodian I very soon discovered that there is a world of difference between writing occasionally for the magazine and having to produce four entire issues a year. It is, simply put, too much. The pandemic brought great change to the Society. For Peter it was an opportunity to let go of the magazine and I was undecided as to what was the best way forward for myself. I offered to help on the condition that I would take it one year at a time. I confess that I have found it challenging.

What is clear is that Petworth has changed dramatically during the time that I have been involved with the magazine. Most of that older generation who provided a rich bounty of recollections in the period leading up to the

millennium have now passed on. The much loved Joy Gumbrell from Byworth and Phil Sadler from Hampers Green both of whom I cut my writing teeth upon have long gone. Bill Wareham, Reg Withers, Faith Jarvis, Bunty Musson, Mabel Boakes, Mary Boyt, Maurice Howard, Jim Taylor, Bridget Connell to name just a few. The list is strong in women and they were not likely to take fools gladly; looking back I now realise that I sometimes sailed close to the wind when interviewing them. A few like Joy Gumbrell were keen to share their memories while others such as the delightful Faith Jarvis had to be teased, albeit gently, into revealing their stories. Some of them were already old as I was growing up in the town and all of them had such wonderful stories to tell. It really was a privilege speaking to them.

The magazine may well take a somewhat different direction under a new editor. I guess that is inevitable – after all we are now living in an outward-looking and increasingly transient Petworth. People no longer spend their entire lives in the town and many have little historical connection with it either personally or by way of their extended families. That is not a criticism, it is just the way it is.

I also feel it is an appropriate time to stand back from the book sales. Peter and I began them 22 years ago and they continued monthly until the pandemic forced a closedown. Re-starting the sales was difficult. The momentum had been lost and while there is clearly still a demand for books I no longer have that pre-pandemic enthusiasm which had carried me through those two decades. Hopefully the sales will continue in one form or another and I would like to thank all of the volunteers past and present who helped make them such a huge success.

September 29, Michaelmas Day will be the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Petworth Boys School. While the disaster is slowly fading from our collective memory I hope that as many as possible will be in church on the day to remember all those who lost their lives in the tragedy. I have taken the liberty to include in this magazine a recollection of the day by Jumbo Taylor which first appeared in issue 69.

What can I say about the Happy Days Band evening? If you were there then no description will do the event the justice it deserves. If you weren't then hopefully there will be a repeat performance in the not too distant future. An almost full Leconfield Hall witnessed one of the best Society evenings in recent years. The band had the place literally swinging with such favourites as 'In the Mood' and 'Wonderful World' and the vocalist had to be heard to be believed with her inimitable version of 'Hey Big Spender'. Thank you Happy Days and of course Sarah Singleton, who organised the event.

I must also mention the excellent display of photographs put on by Graham

Whittington at the May AGM. Graham is a talented photographer and has an eye for contemporary images of Petworth that I am sure will, like his illustrious predecessors, stand the test of time. I am sure we will see more of his photographs in the not too distant future.

### Petworth Library

For those of us who still remember using the old public library in New Street it is difficult to appreciate that the present library will be 50 years old on November 29 this year. Built in place of the former infants' school that so many of us attended, the site was bought from the Leconfield Estate for £5,000, with the new building costing a further £15,000 to complete. The opening ceremony was performed by Mrs Pennicott, Chairman of the County Library Committee and its initial claim to fame was that it was the first public library in West Sussex to have a carpeted floor. Looking back we have been fortunate indeed to have such a wonderful facility in the town and I only hope that it will still be open to celebrate its 60th anniversary.

## Petworth Heritage Weekend September 10-11

Gerald Gresham-Cooke

Petworth is fortunate to have over six heritage sites each of which has its own unique story, most of which are open throughout the year. In the second weekend of September Petworth participates in the National Heritage open days when entry at each site is free.

Information about this and opening times can be found at:

<https://petworthcommunity.org/petworth-heritage>

Here you can also find details of the one hour self-guided walking tours.

There is also a 'Digital Experience' of places of interest around the town that will bring to life many of the stories about Petworth. Visit:

<https://www.360panoramicvirtualltours.com/virtualtours/tourism&travel/petworthheritagepartnership/index.html>

Regular updates can also be found on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/PetworthHeritageWeekend>

Sites open during the heritage weekend include Burton Mill, Coultershaw Heritage Site, Petworth Cottage Museum, Church of the Sacred Heart (Catholic), Petworth House, St. Mary's Church and United Reform Church. The weekend is supported by Petworth & District Community Association, The Petworth Society, Petworth Vision and Petworth Town Band.



## Elizabeth Wyndham: a redoubtable figure

Miles Costello

The telephone rang. ‘Are you still taking in books?’ An all too familiar enquiry, certainly not unexpected and always welcomed. ‘I have quite a few and will be passing through the town this week, can I drop them in. Just let me have your post code.’

Five or six bags of books arrived accompanied by a rather well turned out gentleman in a smart suit and a neatly folded handkerchief protruding from his breast pocket. It turned out that Simon May, a retired head of classics at St. Paul’s School, had travelled down from his home in Kingston-upon-Thames to deliver the books. A brief chat and Simon was about to leave when he remarked that perhaps he ought to join the Society as he had an interest in Petworth, and so I saw him off with a back issue of the magazine and a membership form.

The next day I received the following email.

Dear Miles,

It was a great pleasure to meet you yesterday. Thank you for taking in the books. I hope they will find good homes. Thank you too for the magazine you gave me. I read it from cover to cover at Petworth house, sitting amongst bluebells. An excellent magazine!

Prompted by it, I browsed for a while on the Petworth Society website last night and found an article, I think by you, from December 2017, which was about bookplates. In the article was a reference to Elizabeth Wyndham (adoptive daughter of the 3rd Baron Leconfield, and, among other things, ex-Bletchley.) I should think this must have been the EW who was my parents’ next door neighbour in Chalfont St. Giles (my father looked after John Milton’s cottage there from 1989 to 1992). Elizabeth was a redoubtable figure, with many a colourful story to tell! I seem to remember she also piloted Spitfires from factories in the north of England down to where they were needed in the south.

Simon May.

Dear Simon,

Yes it was good to meet and what a coincidence that you came across the bookplate piece that I wrote. I recall that following Elizabeth’s death, the remains of her library were brought back to Petworth and left in an old

**BELOW**

The sixteenth-century Milton's Cottage in Chalfont St Giles where the poet and his wife moved to in 1665 to escape the plague in London. Simon May's father was the warden at the cottage from 1989 to 1992.



stable at Petworth House. After the books had been pillaged by all and sundry we were offered the remainder for the Society's book sale which gave me the opportunity to pick out some wonderful bookplates for my collection. I was indeed very lucky.

Would it be OK with you if I used your email as a letter in the September issue of the magazine? I think that it may stimulate some reaction from the readers, many of whom will never have heard of Elizabeth, or indeed her adoptive brother Peter.  
Miles.

Dear Miles,  
An amazing coincidence about the bookplate article and Elizabeth

Wyndham. I didn't know that her library came back to Petworth.

Do quote from my email for your September magazine. She was an amazing lady and I was very fond of her. She was a generous host to my parents when they came to Chalfont St. Giles to run Milton's Cottage – and to me on my visits up from Hammersmith where I was living at the time. She told me once that she used to play as a girl with the then Princess Elizabeth. On one occasion she was taking some flowers to King George V, who was ill, and had to preserve them from Queen Mary, who thought they were for her: 'they're not for you, they're for the poor King', responded EW with girlish finality!

Simon May.

As I knew very little about Elizabeth Wyndham and even less of her adoptive brother Peter I felt that it would be fitting to share an obituary which appeared in *The Times* of June 21, 2008:

'In 1922, according to Henry Yorke (Lord Leconfield's nephew, the novelist Henry Green), Lady Leconfield asked her doctor to find her a beautiful baby girl to adopt. A boy, Peter, had already been adopted, but he had a bad squint. So Betty Seymour was selected and was transformed into Miss Elizabeth Geraldine Wyndham, though since she was not of the blood no courtesy title was bestowed on her.

She and her brother therefore inhabited a sort of no man's land, not appearing in any of the books of lineage that were the bibles of their peers. It was only at a children's party when another child said to her 'You're not the Honourable Elizabeth Wyndham because you're adopted' that she woke up to the distinction that so subtly separated her and her brother from their relations and contemporaries, and which would disqualify Peter from inheriting his adoptive father's title and the right to live at Petworth House after his death.

Elizabeth to all intents surmounted this difficulty and found her own way in life. Indeed, she only once ruefully reflected on how things were so different in Italy where adoption into the aristocracy was unconditional, as with her friends the Doria Pamphilj family in Rome. With her beauty Elizabeth had a bonus in that she came with a very good brain, and Lady Leconfield saw to it that she was well educated. Violet Leconfield was more than a little eccentric and she insisted that Elizabeth learnt to do everything possible using her toes, lest she lose an arm.

She also had the black sheep in the park at Petworth painted white for a party, and on another occasion entered the lift in the Savoy during an air raid as a naked Valkyrie, having remembered to put on only her helmet to which she had attached horns.

Elizabeth Wyndham was a brilliant pianist, and a fearless horsewoman, but it was her command of French and German which qualified her to be of use at the government decryption centre at Bletchley Park during the war, though she never spoke of her role there. Soon after the Italian surrender she moved to Rome where she worked for the British Council on educational projects.

Mario Praz was a friend; the pianist Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli would play for her, something he would do for no others. On one occasion, according to Ann Elwell, (an MI5 officer in Rome to read captured documents, who stayed at Elizabeth's flat in Piazza Montecitorio) he threw himself before Elizabeth declaring: 'For me you are the eternal woman.'

From Rome Elizabeth managed to get to Berlin after the end of the war to be with the man she had fallen in love with at Bletchley, and she worked on education projects for the Allied Kommendatura in the city. The parties, at which she is remembered as an awesome figure, were incredible, with the victorious Allies striving to outdo each other in opulence of entertainment; there were mountains of caviar, and armed guards concealed behind curtains behind every chair.

Ultimately, Elizabeth had to return to Petworth, leaving her great love behind, to look after her now ailing and aging adoptive father. She was 26 and Lord Leconfield 79. She married briefly a charming but inappropriate man. Her divorce she later celebrated with a silver divorce party. Through her aunt Dolly Bruntisfield she worked doing public relations for the Order of St John.

In 1955 she travelled in Spain with Peter Wildeblood, Kenneth Tynan and his wife, the novelist Elaine Dundy (obituary, May 9, 2008), joining Tennessee Williams in Valencia where he filled his bath with mineral water and gin as there was no running water.

Dundy was so stunned and upstaged by Wyndham, whose voluptuous beauty – a hybrid of Ava Gardner and Anita Ekberg – electrified bull fighters and Gypsies alike, casting Dundy into the shade, that the novelist transposed her almost exactly as she was into the character Angela in her book *The Dud Avocado*. Years later, on a trip to London, Dundy said to a mutual friend: 'For Christ's sake don't tell Elizabeth you've seen me. She could still sue.'

In 1955 Wyndham was recruited into the Information Research Department of the Foreign Office which was set up to counter Soviet propaganda. On the Africa desk she served as women's affairs officer and had postings to Khartoum and Léopoldville. While driving to Mali from Congo she was briefly kidnapped and beaten up by guerrillas, but with her considerable courage she intimidated them to such an extent that they eventually let her go. In Khartoum her success in bringing forward local women was overshadowed by her amorous successes with local men. Her glamour was enhanced because she briefly kept a cheetah.



In later life Wyndham retired to Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire to be near her friend Ann Elwell and her family. She was active in village life, serving on many local committees and working at the village information centre until shortly before her death.

Elizabeth Wyndham, socialite and civil servant, was born on December 15, 1922. She died on May 13, 2008, aged 85.'



Elizabeth and Peter Wyndham with Lady Leconfield awarding prizes at the 1929 Petworth Ploughing Match. Photograph by George Garland.

## Peter and Keith: a double act

Miles Costello

Tuesday May 17 saw our first AGM since well before the pandemic. We had expected it to be a low key affair held in the Garland Room at The Leconfield Hall. How wrong we were, with almost 40 attendees seating and space was strictly at a premium. The official part of the meeting was conducted by our chairman and treasurer whose reports can be found elsewhere in this issue. The occasion also involved the awarding of scrolls to Peter and Keith in recognition of their 47 years of service to the Society. Keith on being presented with his award read out a prepared speech which I have reproduced below. Unfortunately Peter was not able to be with us on the evening and so I had the honour of receiving the scroll on his behalf. I felt slightly uneasy at the thought of making a speech and instead chose to read out the following letter sent in 1997 to the Honours Nomination Unit at 10 Downing Street, the result of which Peter was awarded an M.B.E.

Dear Sirs,

Having known Peter Jerrome for upwards of 25 years and aware as I am of the great contribution he makes to the community, it gives me great pleasure to write in support of any proposal to accord him due honour and public recognition.

He has always had a scholarly interest in the local history from earliest times to the present century, researching material, transcribing documents, ensuring through books, papers and lectures that permanent records are made available to the present and future generations.

As his business and family responsibilities have decreased he has taken an increasing part in the affairs of the town, taking key offices which have enabled him to participate in local initiatives and to foster community spirit. Evidence of public regard was reflected in his heading the poll in the Parish Council elections.

Although he has his own views on such issues as Petworth's traffic problems, he is always keen to ensure that the public is fully informed on both sides of any debate. As chairman of the Petworth Society he is very conscious that there can be many views, and has been careful never to forward his own as Society policy.

Under his guidance the Petworth Society has become one of the most active in the county, linking old Petworthians throughout the world with

their home town, and for residents in Petworth and the surrounding district, providing social contact through various activities and functions, together with knowledge of Petworth life, past and present. It is largely through him that the Society has instigated the restoration of the Leconfield Hall, the establishment of the Petworth Cottage Museum, a rapport between The National Trust at Petworth House and the townspeople and, through visits, official and informal, by veterans of the Canadian army helped the people at Petworth to come to terms with the loss of so many young boys in the bombing of the school in 1942.

A man of pleasant eccentricity and humour; Peter Jerrome would be a popular choice for an honour.

Keith however, just three weeks short of his 90th birthday, accepted his scroll and went on to deliver the following short speech:

When Colonel Maude and Peter set up The Petworth Society in 1973, I thought it rather an elite bunch and didn't give it much thought: I hadn't realised the vision.

By December, 1974, Arthur Hill, the Headmaster of the Primary School and Secretary of the committee, had died; just as he was due to retire. I was asked to replace but not as Secretary. I was 42 and Peter even younger. When I look into the mirror today, I still expect see me as a thirty-year-old. Where have the years gone?

Gradually I became more involved and what has happened since has left so many memories – happy memories.

But what are those memories? Setting out the chairs in the Leconfield Hall for all those talks by experts, many of them known through television and their writings, on subjects such as history, travel, the cinema, and even telegraph insulators! There were the remarkable portrayals of women, famous in history. The first meeting was in this room on the subject of car maintenance and attracted an audience of sixteen! There were variety shows, especially at our Christmas evenings, day visits and walks around the town and in the countryside.

Then there was the great debate about a bypass for Petworth. Of the four options offered one was for a road through the centre of Petworth! The memorable visits by the veterans of the Toronto Scottish Regiment complete

with pipe and drum band, when food was laid on in the hall by our committee. And of course the Society's revival of Petworth fair Day.

So it's nice to know that there are still folk I can share these memories with, including events like this one today. I'm sure that Peter would feel the same and of course he is in our thoughts tonight.



Jonathan Newdick's presentations hand-lettered with collage on antique hand-made paper. They each measure 11 x 8½ inches and are signed by Lord Egremont, Alexandra Soskin and Jonathan.



## Awarded for lemon cutting

Miles Costello

There is little doubt that Walter Dawtrey was an enthusiastic horseman, not only did he ride to hounds with the Leconfield but he was also a highly respected breeder and dealer at a time when horses were still very much a necessary element of both commercial and private life in the town.

Living at Lancaster House – now Spriggs Florists – he was at the very heart of trade in Petworth. Owner of a prosperous corn and feed store conveniently located next door to his home in what became known as Dawtrey's Yard, he also ran busy stables in the Golden Square and the nearby High Street where he kept a number of hunters and hackers available for hire.

Born in 1860, Walter was evidently the latest in an illustrious line that it was claimed could be traced right back to a Norman family who came to Britain at the time of the conquest and who had established themselves at Petworth and the nearby Manor of Moor some eight hundred years ago. There were even suggestions that an ancestor Sir William Dawtrey had started Petworth Fair and yet another was supposed to have been immortalised by Shakespeare in his character Sir John Falstaff.

Of his earliest years little is known, however he clearly enjoyed a wide-ranging social life. A keen member of a local black-faced minstrel troupe, Walter, accompanied by several other local tradesmen, could be found on many evenings entertaining audiences throughout the district with their popular musical routine. His great passion, besides horses, were field sports which included, but were not restricted to, hare coursing and fox hunting. By 1887 Walter had joined the Middlesex Yeomanry, a volunteer cavalry regiment with a troop based at Brighton. It is, however, unlikely that he saw active service with the Middlesex and he retired in 1901 having reached the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major.

His retirement was short-lived for later that year he enlisted in the newly reformed Sussex Yeomanry which had been raised by his good friend Lord Leconfield and where he served once again as Regimental Sergeant Major before finally hanging up his spurs in 1915. During his time with the two volunteer regiments Dawtrey gained a reputation as a renowned sportsman having taken part in and winning countless mounted competitions including wrestling on horseback, tent-pegging and lemon-cutting, the latter two requiring a considerable amount of skill with a sword and sabre. <sup>1</sup>

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As tenant of Hoes Farm to the south of Petworth, Walter inherited the role of Surveyor of Highways on the death of his father William. He was a regular host of the Petworth and District Ploughing Match at Hoes and it was there that the competition was revived in 1919 having being suspended during the war. Such was his fondness for field sports that it was reported that in 1913 he hosted a crowd of some four hundred spectators who turned up to see hares being coursed. The grand old man of local agriculture passed away in October 1939 at Petworth Cottage Hospital.



**I.** Lemon cutting (left, from an early twentieth-century post card) involves a rider galloping past a lemon hanging from a string which he has to slice neatly in half. In the game of tent pegging the horseman rides at a gallop and using a sword or lance has to pierce, pick up, and carry away a small ground target, often a tent peg.

**BELOW LEFT** The silver cup, now a little worse for wear, awarded to Walter Dawtrey for lemon cutting. The front is engraved with 'Middlesex Yeomanry Cavalry' and the reverse with 'Lemon Cutting Serg<sup>t</sup> Dawtrey'

**BELOW** The only known photograph of the painted sign on the gable end of Walter Dawtrey's store close to Lancaster House. Difficult to decipher from this image, the sign reads 'DAWTREY'S CORN, MALT & SEED STORES'. The sign's whereabouts are unknown.



## Edward Webster

No. 35 in the continuing series of old Petworth traders. Miles Costello

Little is known of Edward Webster, farmer, shopkeeper and entrepreneur, and but for a single photograph (detail below) by Walter Kevis, combined with the occasional entry in post office directories, his obscurity would have been complete. Yet it was hardly more than a century ago that like so many provincial smallholders he was helping supply essential food to the metropolis. The coming of the railway to Petworth in 1859 had opened up a whole new market to small farmers and while Webster was certainly not among the first flush to take advantage of the opportunities offered by rapid transportation he was certainly not backward in jumping on the metaphorical bandwagon.

Advertising seemed to be the key to Webster's success and from his base at Glebe Farm on the Horsham Road he was by way of both the local and national press soon offering huge quantities of fresh vegetables to both local and London wholesalers. 'Carrots at £5 per ton, cabbage plants: Early Rainham; Enfield Market; Flatpole Drumhead and Red Pickling 10,000 upwards. Contracts offered'. As if the farm were not enough Webster also had a market garden and orchard at Byworth, hard by the Black Horse pub, from where he would issue boxes of apples, pears and summer fruits. He was not only able to supply his distant clients but also saw an opening to establish an outlet for local customers and by the turn of the century he had taken on a property in East Street, now The Covert, where he was able to provide seeds and potatoes to local farmers along with agricultural and domestic sundries. Each December Webster would buy large quantities of laurel and holly from the Leconfield Estate sending out gangs of men to cut and bundle it before sending it off to the London markets in time for Christmas. Webster was in every sense an entrepreneur.

It is difficult to know how long the business continued but it seems to have closed not long before the Great War.



# Round the Hills

Peter Jerrome

‘Round the Hills’ is a surprising rural presence, a precarious reminder of an older Petworth that at once defies and dreads twenty-first century urbanisation. Rename it ‘Jubilee Walk’ (1977) or ‘Queen’s Walk’ for another jubilee, but with every respect for the Sovereign, the old name will return. What long forgotten voice, one may wonder, first coined the phrase ‘Round the Hills’ and made it an indelible part of Petworth’s folk tradition?

There are physical and historic links between the sloping fields of the Shimmings Brook Valley and the town itself. ‘Unique’ is a word all too often misused but Petworth is at least unusual in retaining that immemorial link with its old townmannesfield, arable fields of the lord’s demesne, <sup>1</sup> divided into individual strips, the cultivator owing service to his lord as required. Such fields defy written record and predate the piecemeal opening up and settlement of the intensely forested Weald: the latter being ‘assarted’ or broken in by enterprising individuals rather than as part of a manor. Peter Brandon writes:

We may plausibly suppose that the plough travelled along the contours of the strip fields on the flanks of Shimmings Hill. The imprint on the ground itself corroborates this assumption. In the view from the edge of the town due east of the parish church and beyond to the first two fields beyond the observer a fine ‘staircase’ is visible of sharp breaks of slope (‘risers’) alternating with wider and more level areas which might be called ‘treads’. The cultivation of strip fields on the relatively steeply sloping hillside gradually caused the breaks of slope to occur at the junction of strips, the plough action causing soil to be washed downwards from the upper edge of a strip to the bottom. In this process a steep bank was eventually formed called a lynchets which continued to gain in height whilst ‘contour’ ploughing was practised. This pattern is visible as a deeply-scored imprint across the higher part of the western flank of Shimmings Hill as far as the clumps of fir trees planted on the summit. The summit and the eastern face are also marked by shallower lynchets which are also probably part of the town fields. Lynchets are also observable on the western face of the hillside beyond.<sup>2</sup>

With the passing of the old field system, the town fields became pasture and the distinctive lynchets an integral but no longer functional aspect of the landscape. Certainly, by the time of Ralph Treswell’s great estate map of 1610, the Ideshurst or Hideshurst taking in the old communal fields, is clearly marked





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**BELOW** Round the Hills. The view eastwards from an Edwardian post card.



as the demesne land it had always been but now as pasture. Treswell even ventures a few stylised cattle.

A Chancery dispute in 1655 between Francis Cheynell the rector intruded into the living memory of Petworth during the Civil War, and Algernon 10th Earl of Northumberland illumines to some extent the situation in the early seventeenth century and, in passing, at the close of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> At the distance of a good generation it rakes the embers of a long running disagreement between House and Rectory over access to Petworth via the Shimmings Valley and up the steep path of Parsonage Hill. The origins of the controversy go back to the time of Alexander Bounde, ‘that painful pastor’, rector from 1591 to 1622 and continue into the time of Dr Bounde’s successor Richard Montagu, Bishop of Chichester, holding the living ‘in commendam’. Montagu had retained a pied-à-terre in Petworth.<sup>4</sup> Chancery proceedings, apparently inconclusive in 1655, would be renewed in the 1670s and the issue resolved once and for all by the later purchase of the land in question by Charles Seymour the 6th Duke of Somerset and its transfer from the smaller Rectory manor to the great house.

Ralph Treswell’s map sets out the situation as it was in 1610 clearly enough. The Ideshurst was demesne land while the steep scarp up from the Shimmings Brook was part and parcel of the smaller, independent Rectory Manor and at the disposition of the rector of the time, the brook forming a natural boundary. It is clear that there had been at one time a tacit agreement for the Earl and his servants to proceed from the Ideshurst via the bridge and then up the hill, thus avoiding a long detour via Shimmings Lane. The latter route ran well to the side of the present A283 and was at once circuitous and time-consuming.

Public access seems to have been limited at least: simply an ad hoc concession to the Earl granted by Dr Bounde the rector. There is no reason to doubt that the alternative paths up the steep scarp are not, substantially, much as they are today, the one shorter, steeper and more direct, the other veering left to take the hill on a wider arc, thus allowing a laden cart the easier climb.

It is clear that, in the opinion of Dr Bounde, the terms of the agreement, such as it was, had been infringed. In 1655 Nicholas Morris,<sup>5</sup> looking back to the time of Dr Bounde, recalled the Rector’s barn being burned: the rubble had, for a time obstructed the path before being eventually removed. Indeed, John Parker, testifying at a second hearing in 1677 had heard tell how, over half a century before, in the time of Dr Bounde, William Satcher, carrying a cartload of charcoal, had halted at the barn to fetch the keys of the gate from the rectory: obviously crossed the bridge over the brook. Unbeknown, however, to Satcher and his companion some of the charcoal was not properly cooled. Satcher’s companion, one William Gale, abstracted some sticks and hid them in the rector’s barn to collect later. They ignited some straw and set the barn on

fire. Even today there is a small plateau a little way up the hill on the curving wain way and tradition has it that a barn stood in this position in the nineteenth century. This seems a reasonable suggestion for the site of Dr Bounde's original structure.

Looking back in 1665 Henry Chandler remembered a gate standing where the two territories meet, Nicholas Weare having a key to open the gate. Perhaps each gate had its own key. John Hardham, a schoolboy in Petworth in the early century, had seen the Earl's servants driving horses and taking cows to be milked, and one Bridger, the Earl's servant, driving his waggon that way. Nicholas Alderton also remembered the gate and had even seen Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, come through with attendants, coaches and horses.

It was difficult to dispute such direct testimony and the rector's deponents are reduced to suggesting that the circuitous route via Shimmings Lane was the normal way into Petworth and that access via Parsonage Hill was unusual. Gerson Butcher even went so far as to claim that the hill was so full of woods and bushes so that no one could have brought a cart up that way but the claim is not echoed by the rector's other deponents. There follows a silence of almost two centuries until a mid-Victorian engraving shows the alternative paths up the hill much as they are today. Two fashionably dressed figures stroll through a manicured landscape.

The area bordering the present A283, clearly showing signs of the original strip cultivation, did not, apparently come under consideration in 1655. Two centuries and more on, it had become the exclusive preserve of the influential Upton family at Grays in Angel Street, the rear of the property overlooking the Shimmings Valley. For generations the Upton family had been administrators at the great house. They had had a private tennis court, long abandoned now, but in outline still visible as a rectangular depression in the ground. It seems possible that, while access to the Parsonage Hill area was open at this time, the Upton family enclave was to an extent private. There is an unverified tradition that written permission for entry was needed and, true or false, it certainly appears likely that dogs would be kept well clear of the Upton family tennis court. The field immediately adjacent to the modern A283 could be used for hay and, in the socially stratified Petworth of the early twentieth century, the Upton haying would be something of an event. There would be a certain social cachet in joining the Uptons and their household staff in getting in the crop. The Upton family sold Grays in 1926, the land reverting to Lord Leconfield, the Upton tenancy becoming void.

The steeply sloping 'Withy Copse' along which the footpath runs to the A283 is now a kind of unofficial nature reserve. Luxuriantly overgrown as the 'withy' is, access, even if permitted would be in practice out of the question. The 'Old Quarry' might be a more suitable name than the present 'Withy Copse' which



may or may not be an ancient usage. A century ago the Upton family farmed these man-made and precipitous slopes, clearly as a private fief rather than as a commercial enterprise. Even pleasure farming here would be a tour de force. The remains of a ruined byre can still be made out amongst the tangled vegetation at the foot of the slope. Private Upton family photographs confirm the existence of the little farmyard, something that in their absence would defy belief. The earlier history of the site appears unrecorded, although it would be reasonable to suppose that the workings of the quarry would have some connection with the Upton family, given their long dominance at the great house.

The possible obtrusion of 'informative' signposts will have the unfortunate effect of taking away that indefinable feeling of mystery and surprise that still casts a spell over this part of Petworth, like the very name 'Round the Hills', part of Petworth folk tradition and as beloved of Petworth people present as it is of Petworth exiles. That said, Round the Hills has for some a strange feeling of emptiness, tangible almost but perhaps reserved for those with a perspective of years. It is not the loss of the oak tree that once stood just across the brook and to the right of the bridge. The oak's demise if regrettable was a natural event, winter flood waters so undermining the roots that the tree fell into the waters it had watched over as long perhaps as anyone could remember.

The silence is a belated realisation that the brook is no longer the haunt of children. No one tries to dam the brook at the bridge. No one plays there until the light fades. No one bowls large stones down the scarp trying to reach the brook, a practice that painful pastor Dr Bounde would certainly have eschewed.

So many happy hours playing with mud, water, stones and tiny fish trying to hold back the ever-flowing brook . . . or in imagination half-expecting the mad coachman of legend to thunder down the slope from the Ideshurst, or play in the 'Alder Moor' with its wet and boggy ground, hiding among the holly thickets. An eerie spot as dark came on and it was time to trudge back home up the hill. <sup>6</sup>

1. Manorial land.
2. *PSM* 34, December 1983.
3. *PSM* 15, February 1979.
4. See Peter Jerrome, *Petworth from the Beginnings to 1660*, Window Press, 2006, chapter 23.
5. *PSM* 15 as before.
6. Echoing some notes by the late Jim Taylor who left Petworth a few years after the 1939-45 war and lived in New Zealand for many years. He would eventually return to Petworth and live in Thompson's Hospital, the almshouse in North Street.

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**OPPOSITE** 'A most valuable country residence'. Nos. 91 and 92, Leconfield Estate known as Froghole Cottages as advertised for auction in 1969. [REDACTED]

£ 7000

**Lot No. 10**  
**FROGHOLE COTTAGES (Nos. 91 and 92)**  
**Near PETWORTH**

Together with the Farm Buildings.

£ 8700



Lying well back from the road this exceptionally attractive Pair of Period Cottages are very favourably situated being surrounded by farmland and only about 3 miles from Petworth and Pulborough.

They enjoy outstanding views to the South Downs on one side and to Low Heath on the other side and provide ample scope for improvement and conversion into a most valuable country residence.

**DIRECTIONS:**

From Petworth take the Chichester road, after about ½-mile turn left at first cross roads, continue for about 1½ miles and the property will be found on the left hand side before Froghole Pond.

Built mainly of stone, partly of brick and partly weather tiled with a tiled roof, the accommodation, on two floors, is as follows :

**COTTAGE No. 91**

**BEDROOM** (E.), 11ft. 9ins. square, with fireplace.

**BEDROOM** (W.), 10ft. 9ins. x 9ft. 3ins., with fireplace.

**BEDROOM** (W.), 11ft. 6ins. x 8ft. 7ins.

**SITTING ROOM** (E.), 11ft. 4ins. x 9ft. 2ins., with fireplace.

**LIVING ROOM** (W.), 11ft. x 8ft. 11ins., with brick fireplace and sink.

**LARDER** fitted shelves.

Front and back entrance lobbies.



## A cartload of fish

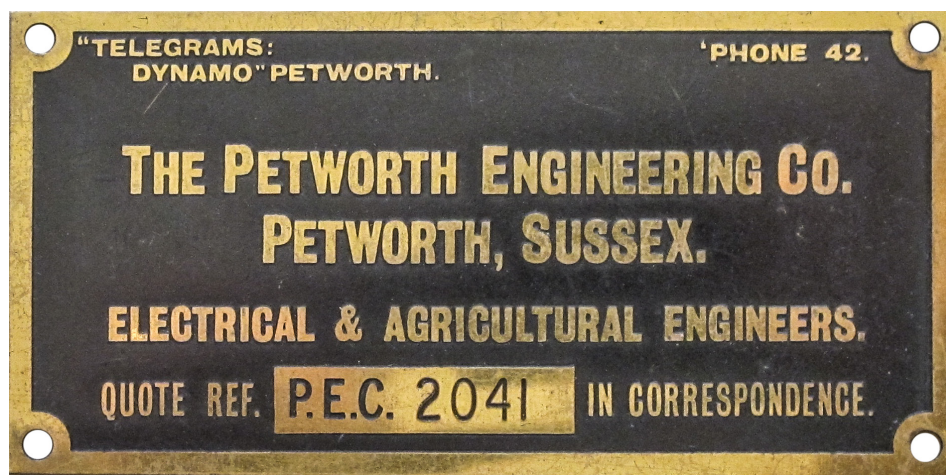
A selection from early issues of *The Petworth Society Magazine*.

The fishman (Mrs E. Place)

A visitor we were always pleased to see was a man from the coast with his cartload of fish when there had been a huge catch of herrings and mackerel. He would ring a bell and the women would run out with their dishes. Herrings were eight a shilling and mackerel five a shilling all sparkling and fresh. Mother had a sort of wire cage and when the herrings had been cleaned and washed she placed the fish between the two wire sides and fixed them together. This was then hung by its two hooks to the top bar of the open kitchen fire. It had a little tray at the bottom to catch the drips. When one side was cooked the cage was reversed. Herrings or bloaters were lovely.

Petworth Engineering (Jack Holloway)

I started work at fourteen with the old Petworth Engineering Co., later to become S.C.A.T.S. and latterly the Petworth Antique Market. They dealt in all manner of machinery, tractors particularly, and specialised in country house electric lighting, installing and servicing the engines that drove the plants. It was a very diverse business which included well-work and this latter was my main job, working with Cecil Puttick and also Charlie Grace from West Chiltington. We would go down to repair the pumps, sometimes descending seventy or eighty feet on a winch with



a seat attached. We would drop a candle down to see what the air was like, if it went out we'd plunge a sack of hay up and down to create a current of air, then try the candle again. Alternatively we might pump fresh air down a hose pipe using one of the big old fashioned blacksmiths' bellows. If you could see a haze as you looked down the well you'd know better than to go down.

#### The milkman (Pam Cate)

When I first went to live at Tillington in 1938 Mr Whitney the farmer from Upperton used to deliver milk twice a day with a horse and cart and a great big brass milk churn, from which he would fill the milk pails. In 1947 his daughter Vera and I did the milk round just once a day and with a van but using the same brass churn and milk pails. We had lots of fun and have remained good friends ever since.

#### Paynes' The Butchers (Melicent Knight)

There were a number of butchers in Petworth then. Us in Pound Street, Boorer's in Lombard Street, Hounsomes in Golden Square, Moyers in the Market Square and, a little later, Messrs Stevens in Saddlers Row. If we were short we would usually go to Moyers, it was the nearest to us in Pound Street, but in practice all the butchers co-operated with one another. It wasn't too long before my father moved again – this time to East Street to a shop vacated by Mr and Mrs Denman and afterwards the dairy. After a short while we removed again to Mr Boorer's Lombard Street shop. Mr Boorer was not well and he and my father went into partnership. Mrs Boorer continued to do the accounts. I went to school at Midhurst, but left at the age of thirteen when mother was ill. At that time it seemed quite natural to leave school to go and help one's parents. About this time a central slaughterhouse was established in Trump Alley, every butcher had previously had his own slaughterhouse. Trump Alley became to be nicknamed Blood Alley.

#### Duncton Post Office (Ethel Goatcher)

The Post Office was open Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. except for Wednesday when we closed at 1 p.m. There was a delivery and collection Sundays, bank holidays, Christmas Day and Good Friday. The only day off was Boxing Day. Christmas Day was busy; there was a tendency to deliver Christmas cards on the day itself and there was a collection on the day. Local cards needed to be held back and delivered. My father often didn't get back for his Christmas dinner until 3 o'clock. I did a Christmas round myself for several years and can confirm that there was lot of mail. Christmas now seems a quiet day but at that time it was much livelier. Cards, as I have said, came on the day itself and there were parties everywhere. I might spend a good hour on Christmas Eve franking the cards with the hand-stamp.

### At Old Westlands (Nellie Duncton)

When my mother-in-law first married Jonas, everyone ate fat pork and drank cider for breakfast. Granny insisted on stopping this and introduced tea. James Duncton having become elderly and somewhat infirm was pushed around the farm in a wheelchair and a daughter back from holiday had been entrusted with this. To reach the orchard involved cutting through the hog house, a shed with a door at each end where the pig food was kept. It was full of lumber like tubs and barrels and had three great coppers too. When the girl pointed out that she couldn't push the chair through all this, the old man replied, 'Course you can', got out of his chair, manhandled all the obstructions out of the way and sat back in his invalid chair!

When the family were still at Kirdford, if anyone had a toothache they'd go to Plaistow to an old lady who, for half a crown (a tidy sum in those days, would take the nerve out of the tooth. She had a berry of some kind, a clay pipe and a bowl of boiling water. She'd put the berry in the water and place the pipe over the bad tooth, then look in the water and say, 'There's the maggot!' I can only think the berry was used to deaden the nerve and the pipe drew it out by suction. She picked the berry out of the hedgerow but the secret died with her.

### Burton Park (Jeanne Courtauld)

What a house the size of Burton demanded above all was staff; without staff you simply could not operate such a house. The house staff alone under Mr Rayner the butler numbered ten or more at any one time, two footmen, an oddman (I was never sure what the oddman was supposed to do) and a boy. There were also a cook and three young kitchen maids, the latter often very miserable and homesick in such a faraway place. Mr Rayner was imperturbable, a butler of the old school. I remember one of my father's changes was to take a stove out of the hall and replace it with a log fire. One evening he was not long home when Rayner appeared and announced in his usual voice, 'Excuse me Sir, the house is on fire'. It was indeed. The log fire had caught one of the beams and flames were licking up behind the sideboard. We soon set to and put the fire out.

On another occasion a housemaid had left cinders in a wooden box and the box ignited. The house was certainly large but perhaps not quite as huge as it seems. There was a big central hall which took up a lot of room. There were a dozen bedrooms which were in fairly frequent use as guest rooms. My father liked having people; there were shooting parties and, on the Thursday of Goodwood Week, a dance. Other people used to bring their own house parties and I remember one particular lady from Chichester appearing with a coachload!. A distinguished visitor was Queen Mary, at Burton House for a few hours, and I remember walking nervously across the lawn with her while in her

rather Germanic tones she asked me things like, ‘Had I come out?’ Burton Park had formerly been part of the territory of the Leconfield meet but was now part of the Cowdray. The Cowdray would meet at Burton Park from time to time, I don’t recall it as a particularly frequent occurrence; the number of George Garland photographs of this event suggest the Cowdray came more often than it did. Burton Park provided a very photogenic backdrop which Garland used whenever he could. Other staff? The enormous gardens needed ten or more gardeners. There were two chauffeurs and Mr Pullen who drove the farm lorry and van when they were needed.

#### A chauffeur on horseback! (Henry Whitcomb)

When Arch Gibson was chauffeur to Lady Leconfield it was his task one day to collect her ladyship at last lodges in Stag Park where the Leconfield hounds had been due to meet. To her chauffeur’s consternation her ladyship kept the appointment at the lodge but jumped off her horse, told Arch to hold the reins and then drove off in the car. ‘What shall I do with the horse my Lady?’ ‘You can do what you like with it,’ came the terse reply, ‘I don’t want it any more.’ With that her ladyship drove off. Well, there was nothing for Arch to do but get on the horse, still of course in his chauffeur’s livery complete with peaked cap, and ride back into Petworth, all along the London Road and up North Street to the stables. Even the ladies at Somerset Hospital turned out to see a chauffeur on horseback. It was a good thing that Arch had some stable experience that enabled him to deal with the situation but he had to deal with some good humoured banter from the stud grooms.

#### Life at the wheelwright’s (Gordon Gooder)

Before my grandfather had a steam-engine, trees had to be cut to planks over the saw-pit, a large pit in the ground. He’d put a couple of bearers across the pit and roll the tree on. He had a long saw, and one man would stand on the log while another would be down the pit. It was still there when I left, twenty foot long, five foot wide and six foot deep. The saw itself was between eleven and twelve feet in length with a handle on each end. The saw cut only on a downward stroke and was shaped at the end like parrot’s beak so that when it came up it pulled the dust out. It was the job of the man in the pit to pull the saw down; the man at the top had much less control over the cutting operation, he had to make sure the alignment was right and pull the blade up after the downward cut. Planks would be hand-cut by this method. The cutting line would be marked on the trunk with a line and a piece of chalk. If the bark had been removed they’d mark the line with a piece of charred wood. A line so drawn was known as the striking line. As the cutting progressed you’d move the bearers along. A band saw was used to cut curves; it

was later mechanised, but in my grandfather's time it was turned by hand and very hard work it was too.

We later had a saw bench which was driven by a portable steam engine and would convert timber to planks. The last one we had was a Marshall 10 h.p., a somewhat larger machine than its predecessor with each flywheel weighing a good ton. All our waste wood and offcuts would go for the steam engine; we never bought coal for it. If there were any really big trees that we couldn't handle, they would be taken down to Coultershaw where, once a year, Mr Bourne from Storrington cut larger trees for the Leconfield Estate with his portable saw-mill.

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MACHINES.**

**CORN GRINDING  
MILLS.**

**SAWING  
MACHINERY, &c.**

<p>Munich ..... Gold Medal Hamburg ..... Large Silver Medal Chambery ..... Large Silver Medal Chorley ..... " " " Ashton ..... " " " Preston ..... " " " &amp;c.                    &amp;c.</p>	<p>Doncaster ..... First Prize £50 Market Bosworth ..... First Prize Peebles ..... Three First Medals Melling ..... First Class Medal Donedin ..... Honorary Certificate Warrington ..... Large Silver Medal</p>
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**ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUES post-free on application.**

An advertisement from the late nineteenth century for a Marshall portable steam engine similar to that bought by Gordon Gooder, although this example has only one flywheel.



# The waters at Burton Park

Jack Garwood

As a resident at Burton Park; yea, as a resident of Burton House, I recognise that the history of this corner of Duncton may pass many by. I had the privilege of writing a contribution to a residents' newsletter and, in discussion with Miles, sensed that it may interest a wider local audience.

So here it is.

Burton Mill and Chingford ponds are probably known to readers. Trout Pond is a small silt-collecting pond that is to your left if you descend into Burton Park on the footpath from Folly Lane as the path passes between two sets of water.

In less than three miles, two streams issue from out of the Downs (one near Seaford College, the other above Duncton Mill), and join to create water features in Burton Park, being Trout Pond, Chingford Pond and then leaving to form Burton Mill Pond before flowing into the River Rother just upstream from Shopham Bridge.

The two streams' confluence is just shy of Dye House in Dye House Lane (the lane's entrance is a stone's throw before The Cricketers). This road and its now lost continuation used to be a major route into the park skirting to the north of Trout Pond and on up to the House. This was all before the current entrance to the park from Duncton village was created in the early nineteenth century. Dye House did what it says and was one of the many working facets of the old Burton Park estate.

The lakes have been a continuing source of eels. I have talked to two people who fished for them (whether legitimately or not) with the Netherlands being a ready market for the catch. The Domesday Book notes the payment of 280 eels for the Bothechitone manor (since corrupted to Burton), so ponds have been a feature here for many a long year.

Trout Pond could have been a major feature in the grounds. Humphry Repton, a renowned landscaper, proposed a waterfall into the pond in his design in 1797. However, this did not materialise and we are left with something less imposing but still a charming, tranquil idyll.

Chingford sports many features that could be the influence of Capability Brown's eighteenth-century design for the park: the deceptive arms that entice the viewer though they lead off to nowhere in particular; the round island at the far corner by the footpath over the dam to spark one's imagination that the waters continue beyond. Capability Brown designed so his works could be

admired from the first floor of his patron's manor house (in this case it would have been the previous building that sat on a similar footprint to its current successor). Brown dammed small, unassuming streams, like that trickling down Dye House Lane, into impressive major bodies of water, like Chingford.

Chingford also had a working role. The arms probably ended up with hidden stew ponds where live fish were corralled so they could be easily caught to feed the House. Also, we have lost the more recent floating oil drum bridge that the Bright Young Things would have wobbled on in the 20s and 30s stretching from the rockery over towards a Japanese-style pavilion on the south side of the water.

The current, early nineteenth-century cascade (with its fun grotto underneath), that takes the outflow from Chingford, appeared after Capability's time here. The waters then flow on to Burton Mill Pond which had formerly been part of the estate.

An invisible line now makes its presence felt. In times past, all timber twelve miles from the coast was at the call of the Royal Navy for the construction of the Hearts of Oak. This included Chingford but not Burton Mill Pond. The latter formed the first of a string of hammer ponds that ran north to Kirdford. This whole area was a centre of iron and glass production for the nation until the eighteenth century when coal, rather than charcoal, became the fuel of choice. Why 'hammer ponds'? Because the water wheels of the mill pond drove the hammers that beat the iron and they pumped the bellows of the furnaces that smelt, hardened and tempered the metal.

The current mill building is an eighteenth-century flour mill that worked through to the end of the following century. The machinery was then replaced by a turbine which provided somewhat unreliable direct current electricity to Burton House from 1900 until the house was connected to the National Grid in the 1930s.

After the mill, the outflow from this lake has a short journey to merge with the River Rother and on to the River Arun before finally it flows into the sea at Littlehampton. But even over this last short stretch to the Rother, its path was crossed by the steam trains of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway running between Petworth and Fittleworth stations.

**OPPOSITE** A map showing the waters in and around Burton Park

**A** Burton Mill Pond

**B** Chingford Pond

**C** Trout Pond

**D** The footpath from Folly Lane to Burton Park

**E** Shopham Bridge

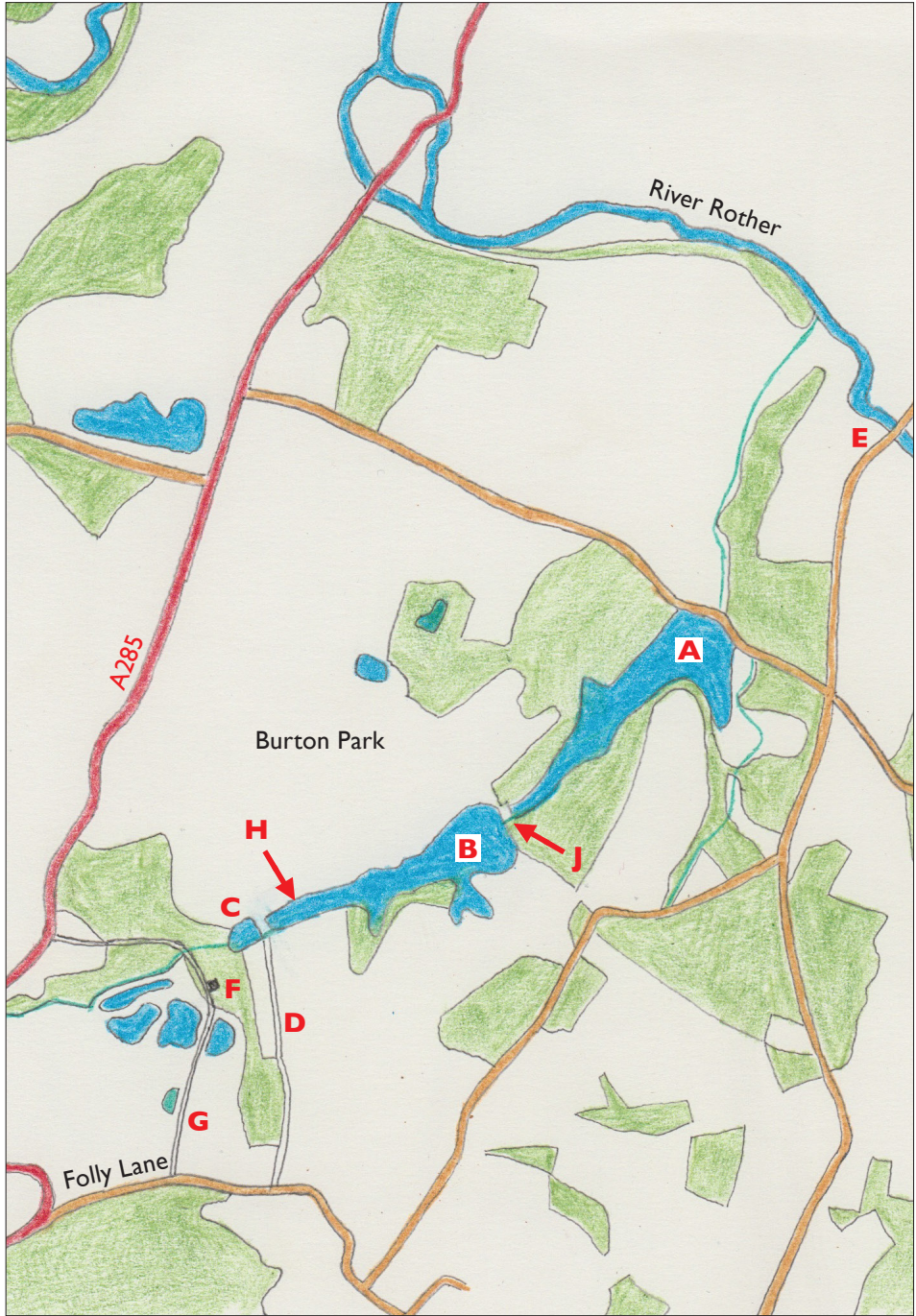
**F** Dye House

**G** Dye House Lane

**H** The site of the floating oil drum bridge

**J** The early nineteenth-century cascade

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# The war and Audrey

Joan Dench, part three, concluded

Life potted along happily for Audrey and me. We joined the Youth Group, and I seemed to spend most of my time there playing the piano whilst the others danced. One of the youth leaders was very impressed with my piano playing. Because I could play all the latest tunes by ear and also play classical pieces that I had learnt from memory, he thought I was brilliant which was very far from the truth. He lived in a village a few miles from Petworth, and when they were having a social evening in the village hall, he invited me to go along and play the piano. He said he had told everyone how good I was and that I could play anything! It was the very last thing I wanted to do and I tried to get out of it, but eventually gave in and went over there, with Audrey providing moral support. I remember feeling physically sick with nerves, and when I tried the piano and found half the notes didn't play – and those that did were out of tune – I felt even worse. Unfortunately, the ground didn't open up and swallow me, and somehow we must have survived the evening, but it was a very embarrassing experience and certainly cut me down to size.

My Granny Knight wasn't too well, and Mum used to visit her as often as possible. One day as Audrey and I were coming down Grove Lane, we met Mum who was on her way to Tillington. She asked me to warm up Dad's tea and told me where to find it. I only half listened as Audrey and I were in a hurry to get over the fields to see if there were any primroses out in bloom. We spent longer over there than we intended, and had a rush to have tea and get off to the Youth Group. I saw a saucepan on the gas stove and, as Mum and I had enjoyed a delicious stew for lunch, and this looked about the same, I warmed it up and gave it to Dad for his tea. I was a bit surprised that there was a bone in it, but assumed the meat must have fallen off into the gravy. Dad seemed quite happy with his tea although I did hear him say to the dog, 'Here Bob, you'd better have a go at this bone. I can't get any more meat off it.' After I had gone to the Youth Group, Mum came home and asked Dad if he had got his tea all right and he said, 'Yes.' All was well until she went into the larder and saw Dad's tea in a dish on the shelf. She said, 'Your tea is here! What did Joan give you?' He said, 'A bally great bone and some gravy.' Mum exploded and said, 'That was the dog's dinner for tomorrow.' And Dad's reply was, 'Well, he had most of it anyway.' Of course it was pointed out to me what I had done, but Mum was more cross with Dad for thinking that after all these years of cooking him good meals, he would think that was all he was getting for his tea. I never lived it down. Dad told all his mates at the Red Lion, and I was always

being asked if I'd served up any dog's dinners lately.

As time went on, there were quite a few changes in the air. Arthur Stevens, who had a shoe-repairing business in town, came to board with us. Also, Audrey started going out with John Grimwood whom she had met at the Youth Group, and I started going out with John Willis who was Joan's brother. John was now the organist of St Mary's Church, and I used to sit up in the organ loft and watch him practise for the Sunday services. I was always intrigued by a plaque at the bottom of the stairs leading to the organ loft. It reads, 'In memory of George Frederick Handel Arnold, organist of this parish.' I believe his father was also an organist but, even so, with a name like that he couldn't really have chosen any career other than music.

Whilst I was in the choir, there was a big social evening held in the Iron Room to celebrate the 25th anniversary of our rector's ministry. The choir was going to sing a group of songs, and during our practices someone always came in too early in one bar of 'O Who Will O'er the Downs with Me?' I don't think we ever sang it perfectly, and this used to irritate me quite a bit. When the great moment came, and we were all dressed in our best and up on the stage, everyone sang it perfectly except me who came in too early. I felt an absolute fool.

So I also did, later, while I was deep in conversation with Audrey and a choirboy handed me a plate with some iced cake on it. I took the plate and he said loudly, 'Not all of it.' I then realised I was supposed to take one of three tiny pieces. Worse was to come, though, because when the official part of the evening was completed someone came and asked me to play the piano for dancing; this often happened at social gatherings. I would sometimes be surprised at wedding invitations I received, until I spotted a piano in the corner of the reception room and it all became clear as to why I was there. No-one bothered to ask beforehand if I would play. Usually, once I had got used to the idea that I would be spending the rest of the evening up in a corner with my back to all the fun and games, I didn't mind. This time, though, I was overwhelmed with guilt because my old music teacher, Miss Knight, was there – and I wondered what she would think of me playing by ear. I never did find out which is probably just as well.

One of the friendliest weddings that Mum, Dad and I were invited to was Gladys Smith's. We had been friends with the Smiths since they were our neighbours in Angel Street. I sat next to a very nice girl and when I commented on what a lovely



wedding it was, she said, 'Yes, it is, and they have someone coming who will play the piano for dancing.' I heaved a big sigh of relief and really enjoyed the excellent meal. Afterwards I found Mum and told her the good news, and she said, 'It's you. They asked me if you would do it and I knew you wouldn't mind.' What a letdown for me!

One of my shortcomings that bugged Audrey was the fact that I had never learnt how to ride a bike. She felt this situation considerably curtailed our adventurous life, so it was something she was determined to remedy. It took her years and lots of patience because I had no confidence at all. Before I would even attempt to get on by the barn in Grove Lane, the road had to be completely empty of cars, bikes and pedestrians – no chance these days! I fell off all the time and often took Audrey with me. I would much rather have given up and dreaded the lessons, but she was determined I was going to learn. I still remember the evening I managed to wobble to the end of the lane and she shouted, 'Turn left!' and we whizzed down the Waterworks hill and went for a long bike ride. A whole new world opened up to me then. It was absolutely magic. The roads were much quieter in those days, and I really enjoyed discovering all the lovely villages around and about Petworth. I also came to realise what a hilly county Sussex is, especially on an old-style bike with an uncomfortable saddle and no gears!

Granny Knight's health deteriorated even further and she needed constant nursing, so Mum went to stay at Tillington full-time for the next three months, leaving me in charge of the housekeeping. It was very difficult because, as Mum was such an excellent cook, I hadn't needed to do much. It made more sense for me to help with the other domestic chores. The biggest problem, though, was that food was still rationed and I had an awful job to make it go around. All tinned food was on 'points' and by the end of each month we had run out. At one stage I can remember being pretty desperate to know what to have for breakfast, but found there were several tins of baked beans in the cupboard, so for a few mornings we had baked beans on toast. We began to get sick of them, and I remarked to John that I felt sorry for Dad and Arthur having to put up with my housekeeping. He said, 'Oh, it can't be that bad. I saw Arthur this morning and he looked full of beans.' I said, 'He is!' We ran out of soap, too, which was also rationed; I remember using Dad's shaving soap to have a wash.

Once again, Mrs Willis came to my rescue. For the entire time that Mum was away, she cooked us a meal every Tuesday. It was a great relief to know I didn't have to cook that night. I used to go to Tillington on the bus every evening to visit Granny and catch up with Mum, so it was a very busy three months. Mum and Mrs Willis really hoped John and I would make a match of it, but that didn't happen and we parted good friends. By this time, Joan had married Bob Dallyn and produced a little son, Roger.

Granny passed away in April 1948 and Aunt Syb, Uncle Len and Marion moved into Hill Top to live with Grandad. We were all thankful to have Mum back in charge of the housekeeping again, but I became very restless and felt I needed to get away from Petworth. I didn't know how, where or even why. I had a very happy life and loved my family and friends, and had never felt the urge to travel. There just seemed to be something driving me to go further afield.

Audrey and I had lots of wonderful times together; I cannot imagine my teenage years without her. We ran to work every day, mainly because Audrey always overslept; and we ran to the Youth Group, which started at 7 p.m., because we just had to hear the last bit of 'Dick Barton, Special Agen' before we could leave home. A housebound lady in Grove Street once said to my mother, 'I love to see those girls go past. I watch for them every morning. How they manage to talk, laugh and run all at the same time, I'll never know!' Without Audrey I would have missed some of the happiest times of my life, but probably would have read a lot more books!

One day in 1949, someone lent us some magazines; and I saw an article about a Domestic Science course one could do in Croydon, and thought that might give me the opportunity to make the break. I applied and got into the course. It was only a six-month course and I had no idea what I would do after it. My main concern was breaking the news to my family, Audrey and other friends who were absolutely stunned that I wanted to go away.

I left Petworth in August 1950 and went away to work. I shall never forget how awful I felt when Mum came to see me off on Pulborough Station. If I could have changed my mind then, I would have done because I couldn't understand why I was making my family and myself so miserable. Audrey and I kept in touch with letters and always got together when I went home for weekends so, thankfully, this was not the end of our friendship.

Although I was living away from Petworth, I didn't entirely escape from playing the piano. Whenever my weekend at home coincided with a darts match at the Red Lion, Mrs Dean, the publican, asked Mum if I would go and play for a singsong. I usually did, and remember some of the people by the tunes they asked me to play. One evening Charlie Penfold, one of Dad's old schoolmates, was raffling a couple of (dead) rabbits in aid of the Darts Club. When he tried to persuade me to buy a ticket I said, 'But I don't like rabbit, Mr Penfold.' He said, 'No my dear, nobody does, but you might not win them.' I couldn't resist such logic. Actually Harry, the old chap who boarded with us for many years, won the rabbits. They didn't look very appetising, and I believe Mum cooked them for the dog.

When the Darts Club was having an outing, one Saturday, to Bertram Mill's Circus in London, they agreed to pick me up on their way. I caught a bus from Farnborough, and then they picked me up on time at an arranged spot with no

**BERTRAM MILLS' CIRCUS**

AT OLYMPIA GRAND MALL DEC. 22 TO JAN. 27

**DAILY 2.30 & 7.30** 3 SHOWS EVERY SATURDAY AND DEC. 27 & 28 AT 2 — 5.15 — 8.30

*Driscilla Kayes and her Lions*

The poster features a central illustration of a woman in a white, fringed circus outfit with a large white feathered hat, looking up at a lion. The lion is perched on a metal stool. In the background, several other lions are on similar stools, some roaring. The scene is set on a circus ring with a purple and yellow background.

problem at all. We were a bit late arriving, so the coach driver dropped us at the entrance to the circus. Bertram Mill's Circus was one of the best circuses in the country, and we all enjoyed the show.

On the way out, we strolled away from our group: mainly because I saw a stand advertising a Flea Circus and persuaded Mum and Dad to stop and have a look. I don't remember what it was like, but we quickly realised the others had moved on and we tried to catch up with them. This was impossible as there were crowds of people milling around. We did, however, come across Mr and Mrs Lodge, an elderly couple who lived in a farm cottage further down Grove Lane from us. They were holding onto each other and were absolutely terrified. Mr Lodge kept saying, 'We got cut off!' They were very relieved to see familiar faces, and we all struggled towards the entrance where, I suppose, we imagined our coach would be waiting. It wasn't, of course. I went and asked an official where the coaches were and he gave me some very vague directions. We wandered up and down becoming more and more anxious and, at one point, I wanted to investigate a wide lane, but Dad was quite certain no coaches would be there. When we were at desperation point, though, we tried it and met a couple of policemen who asked us if we were from Petworth. When we shamefacedly admitted that we were, they said, 'Well, there's a coach load of people waiting for you.' We were very relieved to have found the others, but wondered what kind of a reception we would receive after keeping them waiting for so long. It wasn't too hostile, mainly because everyone was very worried about Mr and Mrs Lodge, and they were thankful we had found them. The organisers also realised they should have told everyone where to assemble after the show. Best of all, from our point of view, was the fact that there was still one young couple missing. We were booked into a restaurant just outside London for supper and, after waiting a short while, we drove there and discovered the couple waiting for us. Fortunately, they knew the name of the restaurant and when they hadn't been able to find the coach, they had taken a taxi there. After that evening, we couldn't ever walk by Mr and Mrs Lodge's cottage without Mr Lodge coming out and re-living that night at Bertram Mill's Circus when they had been 'cut off' and we had rescued them.

Years later, I began to realise how difficult it must be for live performers in these days of mass television. My neighbour and her family went up to London to see Bertram Mill's Circus, and I asked her if they had enjoyed it. She said, 'Yes, but we've seen much cleverer acts on TV. There was a woman lion tamer and all she did was muck the lion about a bit, and then put her head in his mouth.'

**OPPOSITE** Priscilla Kayes and her Lions. Here glamourised and romanticised by the poster artist, Priscilla was one of Bertram Mills' star attractions in the 1940s. Although she had retired from the ring when Joan visited the circus she was still training the lions for Bertram Mills at that time.



## Eighty years on – September 29, 1942

Jumbo Taylor

I had worked as an errand boy for Mr. Payne, the Lombard Street butcher before I left school but now, two years out of school, I was working there full time. Days at the butchers followed a steady routine: Monday was a light day of scrubbing out including the clean-up of the shop, slaughter-house and the refrigerator. I might be asked to make a few sausages – that is if any bits or pieces were left. Meat, not scarce in the very early years of the war, was now becoming scarce and this affected the regular routine at the butchers. Meat was delivered in bulk at Durrant's slaughter-house in Trump Alley whence it would be allocated to each butcher according to the customers that he had. Sometimes we simply waited around for days for the meat to come in. I would then go to Trump Alley and bring back Mr. Payne's share in a wheelbarrow. Meat might be frozen beef or lamb, tins of corned beef or tins of offal, like liver or heart. Fresh meat might be parts of an old bull or cow or mutton. Corned beef came basically in seven-pound tins, often unusable, in that when you opened the tin there would be a hiss of gas, a foul smell and the meat inside would be green and rotten. The tin would have been improperly sealed or damaged in transit. Such cans had to be carefully kept for credit. Meat was short and getting scarce, and any source of supply was welcome in 1942. Rabbit and any old scraps with blood for colour might be used for sausages and the occasional pig, sometimes kept unofficially, might be killed. We might get one or two 'telescoped' frozen lambs from the Durrant's delivery. These were so called because the legs were stuffed up into the trunk to enable more carcasses to be packed on the ship. When I started Tuesday had been a relatively busy delivery day, involving a bicycle round to Lodsworth, River, Sutton, Bignor, Duncton, Byworth and Graffham, but now there simply wasn't the meat to justify such a round. In any case there were few enough who could afford meat twice a week, even if they had the coupons. What meat there was tended to be delivered at weekends, half a pound, three-quarters perhaps, and a slice of corned beef, some by bicycle but the more outlying calls by van. All butchers then had a van and a delivery round. Petrol rationing to three gallons a week effectively meant only one delivery.

As I have said, the Tuesday round had dwindled virtually nothing with the shortage of meat but Mr. Payne had an arrangement with Mr. Webber at Frog Farm to take half-a-dozen chickens a week. They were very useful additions to a frugal supply. It was my job to take my bicycle down to Frog Farm to pick up the

chicken and I did this every Tuesday. The chicken were usually Rhode Island Reds and kept in the lower field at Frog. Gwenda Morgan was working at Frog farm as a Land Girl and together we would put the birds in sacks, three to a sack, for me to bring back to Paynes in the pannier of my trade bicycle. The chickens were definitely a luxury and as such were not only restricted to those who could afford them but also allocated on a rota basis, often the birds were cut in half. Once back at the shop they would be killed, plucked and hung ready for the weekend.

September 29 was such a Tuesday, a damp, drizzly morning. I left the shop in Lombard Street at 10.45 to go down to Frog Farm to collect the chicken. Gwenda would be there to help me and it was a familiar errand by now. I was half-way down Frog Farm Lane and in the hollow that the track forms there when I heard the roar of an aircraft coming up from the direction of the river, over the hill to the left and just visible over the hedge on the skyline. As I watched the plane appeared out of the rain. It was flying low, about 150 feet, and even on a murky day like this seemed to cast a huge black shadow. The plane was a Junkers 88 but painted jet black, quite unlike the camouflaged planes we saw normally. The black set the white crosses under the wing into relief and there was a swastika visible on the tail fin. I could see the port underbelly side quite clearly. I stopped the bicycle and sat in the saddle with my feet on the ground. I twisted round to watch it. As a member of the A.T.C. I was trained to observe and recognise. For two perhaps three seconds I watched. It seemed a long time and it occurred to me that this was not the sort of day to expect low flying aircraft; the weather was only suitable for specific air-raids. It was drizzly and overcast. As the roar of the engines receded there was a crump. It was perhaps four or five seconds since I had first seen the JU 88 and it had disappeared completely from my view. Another couple of seconds and smoke and dust could be seen at the back of the Arbour Hill to the north, two distinct black curtains drifting lazily across the overcast sky. It would be an attack on one of the camps to the north of the town, Holland Wood perhaps. There were camps at Pheasant Copse and a new camp in construction at Lower Pond. The smoke however seemed to be drifting from the east. It was something to note but this, after all, was wartime and it was not too unusual.

I carried on down to the farm, caught the chicken with Gwenda and put them in the two bags in the panier at the front of the bicycle. I then cycled back to the

shop. This would take some five or ten minutes and I would be back at the shop around 11.15. Bombs were certainly not routine but they were not that unusual either. When I entered the shop Mr. Payne took me on one side and said he believed the school had been hit. Everyone was doing what they could but there was no pint going in down there, rescue work was in full swing. By 11.45 just about an hour from when I had first seen the plane, I had killed and plucked the chicken. I set off down North Street toward the school. There were broken tiles and timber in the street but I didn't know that the school had been destroyed or that anyone had been hurt. It just seemed one incident in a number of wartime incidents. I was, I supposed, concerned but unaware. However the further I went down North Street the more obvious it became that the dust and smoke that I had seen were the result of a direct hit on the building. When I arrived on the scene, it was a picture of complete devastation, a cliché if you like, but that is the only way I can describe it. I could judge the scale of the disaster from my knowledge of the building. After all, I had left only two years previously and I was due there for night school that very evening. The building was never planned to cope with an incident like this. The site was literally crawling with people involved in rescue, tunnelling under the rubble and moving timbers. Over everything hung the suffocating smell of cordite and masonry dust. There were Canadian troops, local volunteers, police, anyone who was available, all sorting through the rubble. As I stood there, one or two boys were being brought out on stretchers, rescuers talking quietly to them. I had a feeling of hopelessness I had not previously had – no would ever experience again.

There was nothing to do but go home. We lived then at 318 Park Road. First I went back to the shop and told Mr. Payne I was going home. My mother didn't know about the disaster and I didn't tell her but my father came in about 12.20, put his arm round her and broke the news. My brother was missing and unaccounted for, but there was so much uncertainty during those first hours. He might easily be in hospital and as yet unidentified. We could only hope. This first day was one of total uncertainty. We clung to hope all that day and with increasing desperation in the days and weeks that followed. Perhaps my brother was wandering somewhere suffering from loss of memory. Sometimes even now when I pass the site and the old cemetery the thought comes to mind although I know it's impossible. The first day we waited and prayed for someone to come and say that he was alive. Mr. Godwin, the Rector called late in the day to say that Keith had not been found but still there was no certainty. That night the drizzle continued, we could only lie in bed and listen to the drip of rain through the leaves, wondering if there was any hope for someone still lying under the rubble. Perhaps my brother was still lying unidentified somewhere in hospital. By Wednesday evening it was hope against hope. On the Thursday or the Friday

an attempt was made to identify belongings and pieces of clothing. My father recognised a belt and part of a jumper but it still wasn't final, there was still the desperate hope that it was all a mistake and that someone would come along and say they had found my brother wandering somewhere. That hope persisted for months, years even. I don't think my parents felt any hatred, just loss. Certainly at the time there was a charged atmosphere but ultimately the bombing only exposed the futility of war. No one would have done this deliberately and no one could take pride in such a disaster. I am sure no one did. Neither the pilot nor crew could have anticipated the tragic result of their mission.

This article first appeared in *PSM* 69. A similar account is included in Jumbo's recently published memoirs, *Petworth and the World*, which will be reviewed in the December issue.

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## The Ancient Trees walk

Gerald Gresham Cooke

On a perfect summer afternoon, Saturday July 2, fifteen Petworth Society members learnt about the ancient trees of Petworth Park.

The park has 153 ancient trees and the first being seen when walking south from the Deer park car park was the Beelzebub Oak. This English oak (*Quercus robur*) is shown and named on maps of 1779 when it helped mark the parish boundary between Petworth and Tillington. The territory outside the parish was considered spiritually suspect, that is, where witches were buried, hence the name 'Beelzebub', or Prince of Devils. The tree is marked with an iron name plate on the park wall (below). Approaching the Lower pond on the right, there is another English oak, thought to be about 360 years old and next to the pond's edge on the right is one of the park's many old sweet chestnuts (*Castanea sativa*).

Further on, we passed on our right two clumps of trees planted in 1968 and 1972 to hide the intended bypass through the Park. At the top of the gravel track at the back of the Pleasure Gardens, there is a very old and gnarled sweet chestnut, some 500 years old (a young tree in Tudor Britain). Further on the path on the right is possibly the oldest tree in the park, another oak. This ancient tree is estimated to be 940 years old, so a sapling around the time of the Norman Conquest.

We headed towards Arbour Hill, where on the right are some sweet chestnuts between 300 and 600 years old. Their gnarled forms make a magnificent sight, some of the trees bearing witness to lightning strikes.

Our final bonus for the day was sight of an adder, sunning itself on the pathway. Needless to say he slid away pretty quickly as the group gathered around.



## TREASURER'S NOTES

Nick Wheeler

It was pleasing to give a positive report on the Society's finances for the 12 months to February 28, 2022 at the AGM. Our income had held up very well, so with the generous donation from the Golden family to cover the cost of the digitisation of the magazine archive, plus the return of book sales following the end of lockdown, we received £15,678 (2021 – £8,443). On the outgoings, we ended up paying to produce five magazines in the accounting period, plus we had the digitisation costs, so total outgoings were £16,992 (2021 – £10,736). The overall outcome was a negative £1,314 (2021 – (£2,293)). The deficit was however more than offset by Gift Aid of £2,950 received very shortly after the year-end. The Society's assets at February 28, 2022 were £29,175 (February 28, 2021 – £30,489).

The positive financial position has continued into the new financial year and as at August 1, 2022 our total assets stood at £34,500. Remember, this is when the Society's coffers are at their best with the subscriptions in, but with the costs of a couple of magazines still to come.

A couple of other financial developments to mention. Firstly, we now have PayPal linked to our website, and secondly, we can accept contactless payments at book sales and other events.

Please note the change of bank our account. Following on from some difficulties with NatWest, the decision was taken to move the Society's bank account to the Co-operative Bank. Please make any future payments to the Society to the new account – Sort code 08-92-99, Account number 67245837. The renewal notice and other documentation will be updated with the new detail.

Finally, after five years in the role, I am standing down as Honorary Treasurer. Phil Stephens will be taking on the mantle from September 1, 2022. Phil's contact details appear on page two. I will be continuing as a trustee of the Society and as a member of the management committee. I am very pleased to be handing over the Society's finances to Phil in such good shape.

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## FINALLY

In the June issue we included a photograph of a moorhen's nest on the Rother with the observation that it was only just above water level and that the parent birds would need to keep their fingers (or wings) crossed for no storms of heavy rain for a week or two. Well, we needn't have worried. All the eggs hatched successfully within a few days of the photograph being taken.

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