



189, December 2022

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*magazine*

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An abstract tapestry of salads on fields south of Tillington. See 'Changing times?' on page 48.

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**FRONT AND BACK COVERS**

A field border at Frog Farm to the south of Petworth sown with a cover crop of sunflowers, buckwheat, vetch and phacelia. Despite these being non-native species which are sown principally to improve the health of the soil and reduce erosion they can also be beneficial as wildlife habitats and as attractants to birds and pollinators.

Petworth Society Magazine No. 189 |

## 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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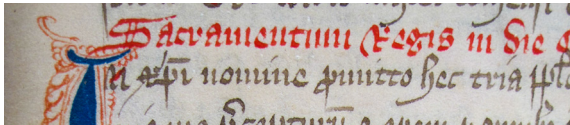

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Alexandra Soskin

I am delighted to say that the book sales will continue. With Miles Costello's retirement from the Society, we were uncertain about their future. Happily, the existing support team, led by Sarah and Mike Singleton, are keen to carry on. The sales are popular, and the revenues from them help to support the Magazine. So this is excellent news. Please do let everyone know that we are now, once again, welcoming all book donations. Just let Sarah or Mike Singleton know (01798 343 083).

There will be one more book sale this year, on Saturday December 10th. We plan four in 2023 – on March 11th, June 10th, September 9th and December 9th.

Sadly, printing, production and postage costs for the Magazine remain under pressure obliging the committee to reconsider our subscription rates. We have taken the difficult decision to move to a single membership rate of £20, with effect from March 2023. We regret this rise but believe it still offers good value.

Events over the summer months included two excellent walks in July and September. Gerald Gresham-Cooke kindly gave us a tour of some of Petworth Park's ancient trees and Henry Wakeford shared some of his archaeological learnings from recent digs in the park. Both walks gave us a fascinating peek under the covers of the park's complex history. An account of the the Ancient Trees Walk appeared in the last issue and that of the Archaeological Walk is on page 34 of this issue. Both Gerald and Henry have kindly offered to conduct the walks again next year – and I heartily recommend them.

As planned, Miles Costello has now retired from the Society, including his role as a trustee. This is clearly a historic moment for the Society, and we plan to mark his central role at next year's AGM. He will be sorely missed.

Taking over editorship of the Magazine, Andy Loukes has his feet well under the table now. Andy is overseeing this 'handover' edition, and his own first edition will appear in March 2023. Hopefully some of you were able to attend Andy's talk on November 25th, both to meet him and to hear some of his thoughts about Petworth as perceived by some artists, both from the past and the present, famous and less well known.

Mike Mulcahy has now fully taken over membership matters after Gemma Levett's retirement from the committee. We are working on completing the members' section of the new website. Once launched, this new section will help with, for example, updating your contact details and buying member-rate event

tickets. Please do contact Mike if you have any membership queries or payments to make. His contact details are on page two.

We are delighted that Sarah Singleton has agreed to re-join the committee as well as taking on the book sales. For the time being, she will also remain as our 'webmaster', for which we are very grateful. Florence Churchill has stood down, having found that work commitments unfortunately did not leave enough time to get involved with Society activity.

Finally, we have revived the Society's display case on the wall outside Allans by the zebra crossing at the bottom of New Street. We will keep this posted with current events and information about the book sales and donations.

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## **JOHN WAKEFORD 1930 – 2022**

Miles Costello

John was not just a friend and a neighbour but he was above all a fount of local knowledge. With over ninety years of living in the same community, indeed in the same house, he had created a remarkable store of memories, which despite my relentless questioning, he would happily share with me. During our regular conversations I observed that while John had a thinly disguised sense of humour he refused to suffer fools gladly, a narrow path which I trod uneasily.

In recent years John's name had become synonymous with the disaster that was the bombing of the Petworth Boys School. He was just twelve years old at the time, yet such was the effect of the tragedy on him that every year he would attend the graveside remembrance service accompanied by an ever dwindling group of fellow survivors. John was acutely aware that time was not on his side but was as determined as ever to remember his young school friends and to commemorate the day, all the more so this year as it was to be the eightieth anniversary. Sadly John didn't quite make it, falling short at the last hurdle.

John truly belonged to an older Petworth, one of the few who could still remember those simpler days before the war. His kind will probably never be seen again, born, educated and employed in the town; he was in every sense 'A Man of Petworth'.

## ‘I paid him the cost of a loaf of bread’

Humanitarian aid from Petworth to Ukraine before the war: Janet Davidson

It was midnight, Ukraine time, when I crossed the Hungarian-Ukraine border for the first time in September 1998. I was carrying £100 in sterling and 600 dollars in a money belt and I had two suitcases stuffed full of hand-knitted baby clothes and warm clothes for children as well as my own survival kit for the next six months, the limit of my visa.

The border at Csop was lit by high overhead floodlights. It was like entering a set for a black and white Cold War film. I was travelling with a Canadian/Hungarian, David Pandy-Szekerasz, who had been crossing the same border for fifteen years, carrying aid and equipment to the Hungarian population, cut off from their ‘homeland’ since the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. In 1993 the Soviet Union had been broken up and the Hungarians were now officially Ukrainians.

David’s ancient van was packed with boxes and books. I didn’t know the details, except after leaving Hungary and before leaving ‘no-man’s land’, David opened a box containing a chainsaw, which he expertly dismantled, distributing the component parts across the van floor, concealing them under blankets. He grinned at my puzzled expression and said it was OK for the chainsaw to leave Hungary but it would be impounded by the Ukrainian border guards to sell it for their own private income. David also pointed out that the guards were still wearing USSR uniforms and were undoubtedly Russian. We had to fill in entry papers (the documents written in cyrillic script). The office was dimly lit, the 60-watt bulbs just below the twenty-foot-high ceiling. As the guards could not read our English details it was vital, David said, to make sure the copy I signed was identical to the first, (no photocopier). The customs officials were threatening. I had been plunged into a different world.

My first night was spent in a Dutch-built children’s home run by the Hungarian Reformed Church. This was to be the first and last modern building I saw in five or six years. After breakfast, when I was served fried eggs and bread fresh from the oven, I was collected by the Bishop in his 10-year old Russian car and driven, on a road constructed of more pot-holes than tarmac, to my home for the foreseeable future, Nagyberég, where I was to teach English in the Church’s residential school (Gimnasium), which had reopened in 1995 after being closed, as were all churches and schools, for the whole of the Communist era.

There were three classes – 15, 16 and 17-year-olds – with a total school-register of fifty-two boys and girls from Hungarian villages in the area between the border and the Carpathian foothills. Within fifteen minutes of teaching my first class, the legacy of the USSR, the legacy of Soviet Communism, hit me like a physical

blow. One of the boys asked me what I thought about something in the text we were studying. I said, 'what do you think?' I shall never forget the expression on the faces of all twelve pupils; astonishment, fear, disbelief. They had never been allowed to think. No-one in the Soviet Union had been allowed to think.

My initial shock was confirmed much later when one of the older pastors told me the rule: Do not think. If you think, do not speak. If you speak, do not write it down. If you write it down, do not sign it. If you sign, don't expect less than ten years in a Gulag .

The children I was teaching were the third generation to live under these rules. Their grandparents had been taken away to prison camps, often because they were betrayed by their neighbours. In Nagyberég I met the well-known weaver, Ilduka. When she was six years old her mother had been taken away to Siberia for ten years. Her crime, she had been keeping a diary. Ilduka said they never knew why keeping a diary had been a crime, nor who had given that information to the police, but it must have been a friend. Maybe the informer had forgotten the rule, 'do not speak', so betraying a neighbour. The lack of trust still affected everyday life. I discovered that I was trusted (the only English person they had ever met). Ilduka trusted me; the school weaving teacher, Marianne, trusted me; but when I tried to introduce them to one another there was an insurmountable barrier. I thought it would take at least another generation to repair the damage done by the authoritarian, stifling regime.

There had been further catastrophic damage when the Russians had left in 1993. The commune system had collapsed overnight. Two generations of farmers, who had supplied the USSR with wheat and livestock suddenly had no machinery (destroyed by departing Russians), no access to markets, either to sell or to buy seed. Unable to harvest, wheat had rotted on the fields. Factories had been shut down, the workforce abandoned unpaid, but worse, all the buildings were stripped of equipment so that production was impossible. Previously 3000 cows in Nagyberég had supplied milk for the whole region, the dairy loading churns onto trains on the single-track railway twice daily and employing 500 men. Milking was no longer possible in the commune dairy, the milking parlour and all the equipment wrecked. Within a day cows had to be claimed back by individual owners, milked by hand, taken to pasture, kept at home. Each cow left home at daybreak to join the herd as it passed along the village street in the control of one man. At milking time the herd returned and the cows went back through the gates into their own byres. If a gate was shut the cow would stand patiently outside waiting to be admitted.

The Rouble had been devalued overnight. I was shown bank books in which money had been saved to buy a small car or an additional room for a newly married son. After devaluation the same sum would purchase only two loaves. I was given a room in a former private house, owned by the Church, which also



housed the school kitchen and the students' dining room. That description sounds very normal. The 'normality' was, for the kitchen: two cookers, only gas hotplates working, ovens not functional, large pans for soup and potatoes. Worktops were covered in plastic, food preparation was all done by hand. Two large tin baths on the floor contained the water for vegetable cleaning. If I do not mention meat preparation it is because there was no meat. For the first three months the only food was potatoes, cabbage and the occasional onion. This was the menu for breakfast at seven o'clock, lunch at one o'clock and supper at seven in the evening. I sat at a table with the girls, the whole school, including the teachers, eating together the very well cooked meals. The three cooks, none of whom had been professional cooks before, were incredibly producing appetising food from the limited ingredients. The one addition to the vegetables was bread which was baked every day in the village. The cooks became my friends, as the kitchen was next to my bedroom. I put all ideas of fire safety to the back of my mind.

I was alone for many hours. I could talk to the school headmaster and one teacher in English. I did not understand Hungarian nor Ukrainian. Ukrainian and Russian was spoken in the shops in the city of Beregszász (Berehova) seven kilometres away. I could leave the village (of 2,500 people) on foot, or wait until the school minibus was going into the city. An early visit to Beregszász revealed neglected buildings, shops with nothing to sell, the former great market halls

An early twentieth-century postcard from Beregszász with the Great Synagogue in the distance.



collapsing. The golden statue of Lenin stood in front of the cultural centre, the building a ghastly reminder of Soviet domination. The cultural centre had been the city's Great Synagogue. The Jewish population had all been transported by the Nazis. The Russians encased the synagogue in concrete. That entombing of a building and a people sickened me.

I went to meet relatives of Hugo Gryn, next door to the house in which he had grown up and from where he had been transported to Auschwitz. In his book, *Chasing Shadows*, Gryn tells the story, which I was to hear from many of my contacts and which explains, I think, the mixed heritage of present day Ukrainians as well as the Hungarians on the border.

'A man from Berehova arrives at the gates of heaven. "Before you can enter", says the guardian angel, "you have to tell us the story of your life." "Well", the man replies, "I was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire to decent and God-fearing parents, received my education in Czechoslovakia and started work as an apprentice in Hungary. For a time I also worked in Germany, but I raised my own family and did most of my life's work in the Soviet Union." The angel was impressed. "You certainly travelled and moved about a great deal." "Oh no", the man protested, "I never left Berehova".'

Ukraine is still a mixture of nationalities. I was able to visit L'vov in 2001. This is a very beautiful city which declares by its architecture, elegant, cultured, designed,

The grand front of the Ivan Franko National University of L'vov which was established in 1661.



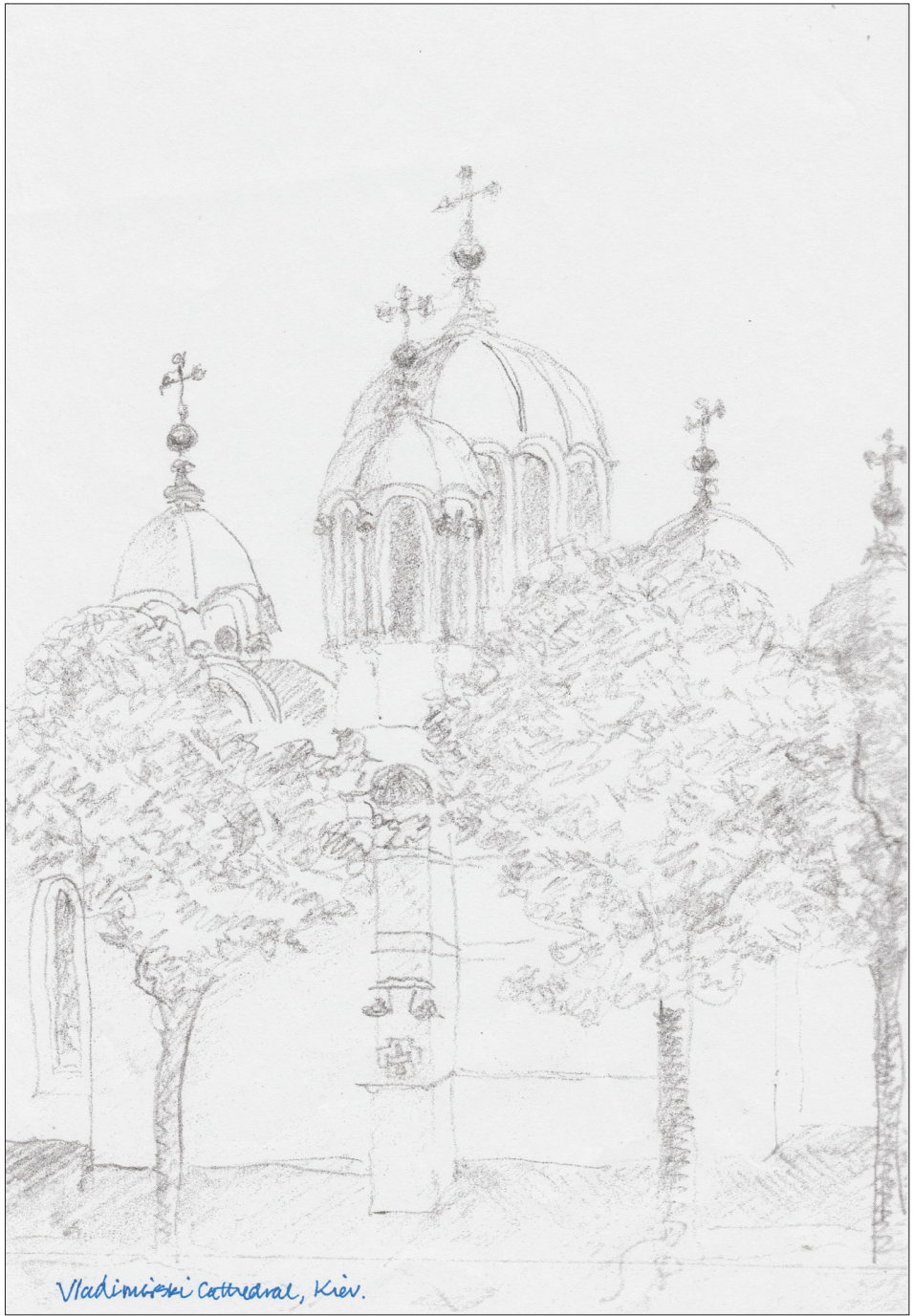
considered, 'I am Polish'. L'vov has a large Polish speaking population and was part of Poland until the Nazi invasion in 1939. My visit coincided with the first joint NATO/Ukraine Manoeuvres. The NATO contingent was the Royal Irish Regiment of the British Army. They were using a recently built military camp (USA constructed) on the outskirts of L'vov. I was able to sit in a cafe and have an hour-long conversation with the army chaplain, who was living at the camp with both British and Ukrainian troops. Ukrainian soldiers were billeted separately and fed separately, but were encouraged to use the British NAAFI. The chaplain told me that, on payday (Friday) British soldiers had given loose change from their pay-packets to the Ukrainian soldiers so that they could buy extra food in the NAAFI. Two young Ukrainian squaddies had been arrested by their officers, who had accused them of stealing money. The British chaplain had been asked to intervene. The accusation reminded me of the 'betrayal' of friends and colleagues during the Stalin era. The legacy of Soviet rule will, I think, live on for a long time.

In the Carpathian mountains, east of the Hungarian plain and the Tisza river, there are German-speaking villages and groups of mountain dwellers who probably speak local dialects unaffected by whoever happens to be ruling the country. Romanians in Transylvania are Hungarians unable to use the main road into Ukraine to join up with the families in Beregszász. The border now divides them.

The long, straight road from L'vov to Kiev (which I was told is pronounced Kif) bypasses all other cities. In 350 miles we never saw another person on the roadside. In Kiev I stayed as the guest of a young couple in a multi-storey block of flats. The building was uninspiring on the outside, loose concrete, Russian poor workmanship, but inside it was comfortable and clean. It had a cooker, but, as in Nagyberég, no oven. Perhaps no-one roasts anything in Hungary or Ukraine. The couple took me into Kiev, using the amazing metro. Shops in the main district were full of western goods; clothes, shoes, furniture, but far beyond the pockets of the Ukrainians. Russian was still the language of the business district. I was told it was 'high Russian', as in 'high German'. Ukrainians were still being oppressed. In Carpathia, where I was based, unemployment was 75 per cent. I'm not sure what it was in Kiev, but I bought a Russian boy doll (early plastic) from an elderly man sitting in the gutter at the edge of a street market. He was selling his whole life possessions. I paid him the cost of a loaf of bread.

I visited the impressive monastery in the centre of the city. The Lavra covers a vast area and has catacombs denoting its ancient history. At the time of my visit a funeral service was being held for one of the fathers. A procession of perhaps 500 people singing and praying as it wound around the monastery grounds, lasted for at least three hours. The Russian Orthodox church worship is cyclical. There

**OPPOSITE.** The writer's sketch of the mother cathedral of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kiev.



*Vladimirovskiy Cathedral, Kiev.*

is no beginning and no end to the liturgy. I spent some time alone, sketching one of the cathedrals, the exterior only. I went inside the building at lunchtime, when many city workers were coming in, singly, standing before the icons in silence and in prayer. They would spend ten or fifteen minutes, cross themselves and leave. I knew I could not use my sketchbook inside the cathedral. It would have been an intrusion.

The Hungarian Reformed Church, with which I was connected, was just reclaiming its churches and schools, which had been closed for the whole of the USSR. The Catholic and the Orthodox churches had all also been closed, some converted into museums of Christianity and unlikely ever to be restored to the church. The famous domes of the Kiev Cathedral were being re-gilded. Across Ukraine new churches were appearing at crossroads, with no apparent access or contact to a village or town. Puzzling.

I visited Uzhgorod (Ungvar) University on two occasions, with students about to start their courses there. The main academic building was a Russian-built five-storey concrete structure. It had lifts, but I was told not to use one to the fourth floor, because it probably wouldn't get there, so we walked up concrete staircases, which would have been condemned under British Building Regulations.

The Village School in Nagyberég, for children from six to sixteen years, was also a Russian built concrete building in a desperate state of repair. The concrete

'The couple took me into Kiev, using the amazing metro.' The central hall of Zoloti Vorota station.



staircase and floors were so poorly constructed that the surface was breaking off continually. The dust coated everything: floors, windows, desks, seats. Despite these conditions the school was very efficiently run. I was introduced to the Headmaster on my first visit, one of the students from the Gimnasium acting as interpreter. The head became a constant, dependable contact for the thirteen years I visited the country.

I had been given money by the United Reformed Church in Petworth to spend as I wished on aid to the Christian School and Church. During the first bitterly cold winter months when electricity was intermittent, (often for only one hour per day) and food was limited, I saw from my window the young children going to their school, poorly clothed, with their mothers pulling younger siblings on sledges through the thick snow. I thought of Christ's command to Peter, 'Feed my lambs'. I knew I had to use some of the money to help the children in the village school, the lambs. So began a continuing link with the Nagyberég School. The Petworth Primary School still sends Christmas presents to the young children.

The school in Petworth was ending school meals; the kitchen was closed. I arranged for equipment from the school kitchen to be transported by road, via Poland, to Nagyberég. Cooking utensils, saucepans, mixers and a large boiler were all delivered to the excitement of the whole village. Later, small chairs and desks were added. The school was receiving nothing from the State. Teachers had not been paid for sixteen months and were buying their own chalk to be able to use the blackboards. Half the staff had been card-carrying members of the Communist Party. I was welcomed very politely by all the staff and at Christmas, was invited to a staff meal, the food provided by individual teachers from their own homes.

I bought football boots and footballs for the schoolboys in the village school. The headmaster was an athlete and encouraged inter-school competition. A student in the Christian school was about to go to Uzhgorod University to study medicine. There were no medical books in the university. A friend in Petworth gave me £300. I bought text books from OUP and carried them to Ukraine. The books became the property of the school, loaned to the student, to prevent them getting 'lost' in the university.

By the end of the first term I had met the weaving teacher, Marianne. The beautiful, traditional weaving of pure cotton in red and black on white, patterns centuries old, was being taught, using wooden looms, also historic. I asked Marianne if they were experimenting with other colours, as the red had been replaced with blue on one of the looms. She said, no, they couldn't buy any more red. It was unavailable. I was about to leave to fly back to England for Christmas. I asked if it would help if I brought her some cotton. I brought samples of the three colours home to Byworth. My Neighbour, Ros, is a weaver. I asked where I could buy this hand-weavers' cotton. She said the Weavers' Design Studio is in Walthamstow, where by happy coincidence we were about to spend Christmas

with our daughter and her family. I was able to buy (with the Church money) cones of cotton in the three colours. Marianne wept when I gave her the cotton. She asked how she could pay and I was able to say it was a gift from the church.

Teaching English in the senior school, speaking and singing in colleges and churches to congregations ranging from 50 gipsies to 2000 university students; talking to men who had survived gulags; explaining democracy to a population who had no idea how to organise a meeting, supervise an examination, hold an election (without corruption); supervising the construction of a new dormitory block for the Christian school, including transporting the money from the UK (£256,000 in cash), kept me occupied for thirteen years of visits, twice or three times a year.

By the time of my last visit in 2010 some of the land had been reclaimed by the descendents of the original owners. Fields were starting to produce crops, although many still had a series of ploughed strips, two-tractor-widths snaking across the vast field, the remainder of the field left to waste, ownership disputed. Banks were opening and it was possible to use a cash machine. Money no longer had to be exchanged in the market. I didn't need a visa, visas having been abandoned when Kiev hosted the Eurovision Song Contest. Roads were being repaired, especially near petrol stations built to Western standards. A new train was running from Beregszasz to Ungvar. The track wasn't visible through the floor, as it had been in the 1950s-built trains I had travelled in. Water was still obtained from wells. Electricity supply was stable. Gas came direct from Russia through the pipeline. Supermarkets were starting to appear. A few factories had re-opened in the city. Bookshops were still poorly stocked. In the village a small factory made goalkeepers' gloves, supplied to every club team in Europe and every national team in the world. I was able to buy direct from the factory a pair of gloves for a boy in Liverpool colours!

Thirteen years after the collapse of the USSR the country was starting to recover from the system of fear and reprisals which had constituted the government. Young people were at last starting to think, to make decisions, to make friends, to talk openly, to travel. The possibility of a democratic election (without corruption) was in the air. Admittance to the European Community and to NATO was still a pipe dream, but the joint exercises between USA, Great Britain as part of NATO and Ukraine armies continued, as far as I know. The destruction left behind by the departing Russians in 1993 had taken twenty years to repair.

How sad that now, in 2022, another ten years on, Russia has invaded Ukraine. The country is being bombed, thousands killed, millions made refugees. However long the war lasts, however long the occupation, Russia will plan to leave the country totally destroyed. Ukraine, Polish, German, Hungarian, Romanian and Russian speaking; an established, democratic Sovereign country, Ukraine is in my thoughts and prayers.

# The cartulary of Athelney Abbey rediscovered

Simon Keynes

Athelney Abbey was founded in the 880s by King Alfred the Great, on the small low-lying island in the Somerset marshes where he had taken refuge from the Danes in 878, where he is alleged to have burnt the cakes, where he had an encounter with St Cuthbert disguised as a pilgrim, and from where he led the recovery which culminated with his victory over the Danes at the Battle of Edington. It was always one of the smallest religious houses in England, yet it survived until its dissolution



King Alfred burning the cakes at Athelney Abbey as envisaged by Wills's Cigarettes in their 'Historic Events' series of cigarette cards issued in 1912.

by Henry VIII in 1539. No traces of the abbey remain above ground, but its site is marked by a monument raised in 1801 by John Slade, then the owner of the land. The site is now a scheduled ancient monument, though it forms part of a private farm, owned by Mr Tim Morgan.

In the early fifteenth century a monk of Athelney compiled a cartulary for the abbey, containing copies of all the charters and other documents which had accumulated in the abbey's archives from the late ninth century until his own day. In the early eighteenth century this cartulary belonged to Sir William Wyndham, of Orchard Wyndham in Somerset; and in 1735 an abbreviated transcript was made of its contents by the antiquary George Harbin.

The cartulary itself was used again by John Collinson, for his *History of Somerset*, published in 1791, but then vanished without trace. The first part of Harbin's transcript (pp. 1-32) was also lost. Parts two and three of the transcript survived, and have since formed the basis of all that is known of the history of Athelney Abbey: a calendar of their contents was published by the Somerset Record Society in 1899, and the Latin texts of four Anglo-Saxon charters in Harbin's transcript



were published by H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester 1964).

The missing part of Harbin's transcript of the lost cartulary came to light in 1993, among papers in the Somerset Record Office in Taunton, and proved to contain transcripts of three more Anglo Saxon charters, including Alfred's purported foundation charter for the abbey (probably fabricated at Athelney in the eleventh or twelfth century, but important none the less as the only indication of the abbey's own tradition about the circumstances of its origins in the late ninth century).

It seemed most unlikely that the original fifteenth-century cartulary still survived, not least because it is difficult to see how a large medieval manuscript could escape notice and attention for so long. It was evident, however, that Charles Wyndham, son of Sir William Wyndham, had taken things with him when he moved to Petworth in Sussex, in the later eighteenth century; and it had seemed possible, therefore, that the Athelney Cartulary had been among them. A letter to the archivist at Petworth in August 1993, asking whether there was any evidence in library catalogues that the Athelney Cartulary had ever been at Petworth, produced a negative response.

In late June 2001 Mrs Alison McCann (West Sussex Record Office), who looks after the archives at Petworth House on behalf of the present Lord Egremont, reported to me (in further response to my letter of August 1993) that she had found the cartulary of Athelney Abbey in Petworth, at the back of a dark shelf in the old Strong Room. By a strange chance, I had been invited to give a lecture in the church of Stoke St Gregory (very close to Athelney) on the 21st of July 2001, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the raising of the Athelney Monument; so with Mrs McCann's permission, and that of Lord Egremont, I was able to take advantage of this occasion to announce the discovery of the long-lost cartulary.

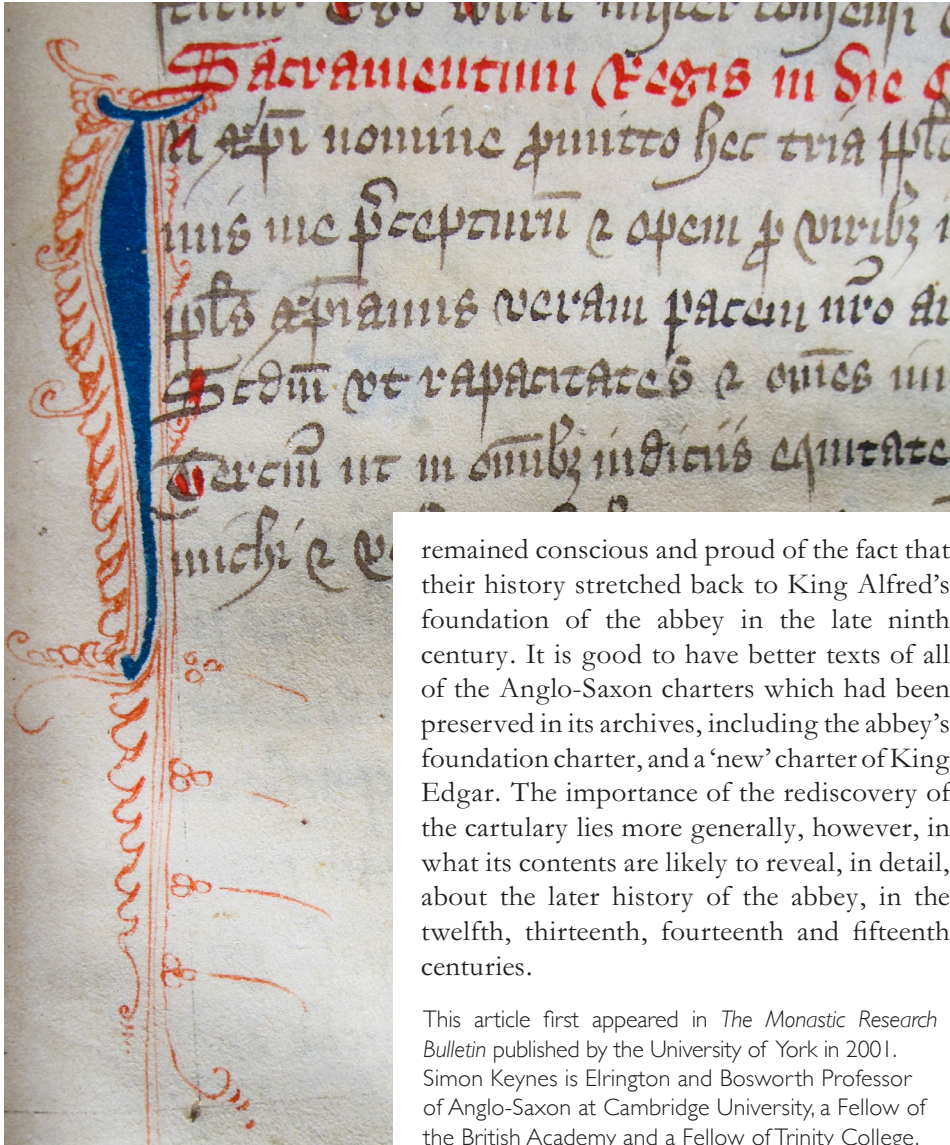
The cartulary (a book of 245 folios, written by a single scribe in the early fifteenth century, with some later fifteenth-century additions) contains 'better' (i.e. fuller) texts of all the documents previously known only from Harbin's transcript; and if only to judge from the fact that it has 490 pages (compared with Harbin's 250 pages), it must contain much more that is not known.

The texts of seven Anglo-Saxon charters were known from parts two and three of Harbin's transcript. The texts of three more Anglo-Saxon charters, including one which purports to be King Alfred's foundation charter for the abbey, were contained in the first part of Harbin's transcript, which came to light in 1993. The cartulary contains better texts of all these charters. It also contains one wholly 'new' Anglo-Saxon charter (full text, including boundary-clause and witness-list): a grant by King Edgar, dated 962, of land at Ilton in Somerset to his thegn Godwine.

The cartulary shows that the monks of Athelney, in the fifteenth century,

**BELOW**

A detail of a typical page from the Athelney Cartulary, reproduced at about actual size. Petworth House Archives, PHA 11,601, reproduced courtesy of Lord Egremont.



remained conscious and proud of the fact that their history stretched back to King Alfred's foundation of the abbey in the late ninth century. It is good to have better texts of all of the Anglo-Saxon charters which had been preserved in its archives, including the abbey's foundation charter, and a 'new' charter of King Edgar. The importance of the rediscovery of the cartulary lies more generally, however, in what its contents are likely to reveal, in detail, about the later history of the abbey, in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

This article first appeared in *The Monastic Research Bulletin* published by the University of York in 2001. Simon Keynes is Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge University, a Fellow of the British Academy and a Fellow of Trinity College.

## ‘The supply of books was copious’

The Petworth Society book sale. Peter Jerrome

Almost twenty years on [2019] the origins seem hidden in a half-mythical past, as if, like Petworth’s ancient fair, it had no beginning. But, of course, it had. A flurry of different initiatives, suggestions and false starts coming together as the old century turned. A book sale had been something Miles Costello had had in mind for some time while there had been the occasional commercial ‘Book Fair’ in the Leconfield Hall. In the summer of 2000 the Petworth Society had held an open weekend in the Hall to include a ‘second-hand book sale’ and a tombola. The former had been sufficiently successful to consider repeating at the November fair. In fact only the latter was repeated, but the book sale idea was in the air. A gigantic National Trust book sale at Petworth House seemed to echo the spirit of the time. The considerable surplus was dispatched to other properties but the Society was given access to some of what remained including a series of unbound psychic research magazines and a number of Penguin Classics. It was time for the Petworth Society to venture forth on its own.

January 2001; private cars ferrying books to a single downstairs room at the Leconfield Hall. No mention of Book Fair, the Society had always fought shy of the title. If ‘Fair’ suggests a certain premium and perhaps a condominium of sellers, the Sale would always have an earthly informal character inseparable from the Petworth Society itself.

It would be three months before the next sale and this, in itself, may have been influenced by the reduction of the Society’s other activities imposed by an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The second Saturday was still to acquire its later, almost canonical status, but it was already possible to sense a tremor of expectation. There was developing too, a rough symbiosis between Sale and Square, something that would intensify over years. The Square remained always aloof, reticent perhaps. It did not encourage familiarity. Alive, or empty, it kept its own counsel. If it might unbend a little on Saturday, it was soon clear that it would not do so on a Sunday. A hesitant foray in this direction was a failure as too a brief experiment with an accompanying Saturday evening talk.

It was soon obvious that the financial arrangement between Book Sale and the Society’s quarterly magazine would become crucial. Income was as important as public presence. In early days a base price per book of twenty pence obtained. It was donors rather than buyers who complained: selling at that price seemed to demean what they had given. Monthly momentum was still not to be assumed.

‘We reserve the right not to open a particular month.’ Looking back this seems to reflect a primeval innocence. By September 2001 all thought of this intermittent had been banished and buyers were coming from a distance, some from outside the county. And that 10 o’clock maelstrom. Was it peculiar to Petworth?, something replicated nowhere else, as it could not be replicated later in the day? By March 2002 it was possible to talk of ‘the best selection so far’, a few at £2, a significant number at £1 or fifty pence with the great majority at a new base price of twenty five pence. The famous ‘Rupert Bear’ table cloths on the ‘elite’ table had become part of a growing tradition while the money was still collected in an oversize plastic bowl. It would be 2004 before the iconic till made its appearance, bought for £10 at an auction – Gledhill of Halifax, No.2 model.

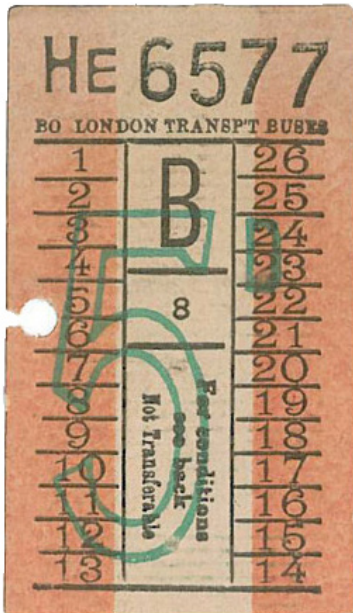
With the years would come a realisation that books were not of themselves sacred, that there a ‘time to live and a time to die’. So many books, creatures of a day, produced ad hoc for a transient market and left stranded when that market moved on. Television spinoffs, faded knights of the kitchen, ghost-written autobiographies of those that fickle fame had briefly touched and then seen fit to desert.

Always that curious interaction with an almost sentient Market Square outside, rarely vibrant, sometimes moody, sullen almost. The afternoon, sometimes lively with visitors, sometimes completely dead. Over the years the ten o’clock queue snaking round the Hall’s east side would be accommodated in the foyer, spilling on to the pavement. A concession to the uncertainty of the weather.

Gradually there came in those early days, a feeling, at first barely conscious, of a kinship with particular books. *Henriqueta and I* might evoke Honduras in the 1920s, with Tegucigalpa still a ‘colonial’ capital, but here it was not recollection of a vanished world that drew my attention, rather a name and address inside in a child’s writing. ‘Camden Street w8’. I had been mere yards away when that was written in 1947. Slightly different might be the occasional fragment of ephemera, originally quite separate from the book that had sheltered it. A 1940s requisition for house railings in what is now Greater Manchester, or a London bus ticket from the same period. Sometimes a book would conjure up a stray memory of a long-forgotten past. Ann of Oxford Street<sup>1</sup> calling to mind one of a series of prose extracts to translate into French. In fact, de Quincey did not find Ann again; one can only wonder what he would he have done if he had. Or more directly, casually turning up a passage on the Muggletonians.<sup>2</sup> No sacraments, no meetings: simply

**BELOW** '... or a London bus ticket from the same period'.

**OPPOSITE** Jacques-Louis David, 'Madame Récamier, née Julie (dite Juliette) Bernard', 1800, oil on canvas, 174 × 224 cm., Musée du Louvre, Paris. commons.wikimedia.org.



the requirement to believe that the two late seventeenth-century founders were the prophets of St John's Apocalypse who would herald the end of all things.

It had long been clear that sheer weight of numbers was not enough. The supply of books was copious, in practical terms, almost limitless. Books left over from fêtes and general sales were a plentiful source. Here we were taking in books once no longer wanted and now rejected again. Our clientele were meanwhile becoming ever more sophisticated, and, might we say demanding? Pre-selection became even more important. Nor would it do to recycle June's sale for July, still less to store it and bring it out in December. Freshness was all, what had not sold one month was hardly likely to sell the next, and a book is not the less heavy for not being wanted. Disposing of unwanted stock would be

an ever-present problem, various expedients being used over the years. Without an outlet of some kind, the sale would simply choke to death. How to decide what will sell and what will not? It has to be to an extent subjective. Sherlock Holme's in Pitman's Shorthand, or Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* in Russian – immensely popular apparently in pre-revolution St Petersburg.

The day itself has always been heavily weighted toward the first hour – more accurately perhaps those first minutes when the edge of the opening stock is irretrievably blunted. It would be a few years before it was decided that four o'clock in the afternoon was a step too far. Three o'clock was enough.

The book sale demands a kind of compulsion to impose order on what would seem to be primeval chaos, a quest for an element of permanency in perpetual flux. Reports of the sale in the *Petworth Society Magazine* would become formalised through repetition and move to focusing on a particular image – an aged Chateaubriand and a world weary Madame de Récamier<sup>3</sup> sitting together of an afternoon after speechless meditation on older glories, or perhaps drifting to

**20** Petworth Society Magazine No. 189



Augustin Meaulnes' <sup>4</sup> ultimately despairing vision of the lost manor. Over time such isolated images have transmuted into short magazine vignettes of particular books in the Society magazine while the standard account of the Sale itself would become a simple formality.

**1.** Taken from Thomas de Quincey's (1785 – 1859) *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), 'Ann of Oxford Street' tells of the writer's acquaintance with a young prostitute, Ann, whose generosity saves his life.

**2.** The Muggletonians, named after Lodowicke Muggleton, was a small Protestant Christian movement which began in 1651 when two London tailors announced they were the last prophets foretold in the biblical Book of Revelation. The group grew out of the Ranters and were in opposition to the Quakers. The last of the Muggletonians, Philip Noakes of Matfield, Kent, died in 1979.

**3.** Jeanne Françoise Julie Adélaïde Récamier (1777 – 1849) was a French socialite and great beauty whose portrait by Jacques-Louis David is one of the highlights in the Louvre. She was the muse of the poet François-René de Chateaubriand (1768 – 1848).

**4.** Augustin Meaulnes is the eponymous hero of Alain-Fournier's (1886 – 1914) *Le Grand Meaulnes* (1913).

This essay first appeared (without end-notes) in Peter Jerrome, *Petworth through the looking glass*, Window Press, 2019.

# Refurbishing the Petworth Cottage Museum

Gordon Stevenson, Chairman of the Trustees.

At the start of 2020 we were actively preparing for a new season in April. We exhibited at the West Sussex Leaflet Exchange and had new posters and tickets printed. The high quality u.v. protection film, installed in 2013 on the advice of textile conservator, Zenzie Tinker, was replaced by SUN-X . (Its recommended life is seven years). A grant from the Golden Foundation covered most of the cost. The chimney was swept by K. R. Ball. The gas lights were being serviced when Chris Warren (Senior), the gas engineer, was called away to fetch his grandchild from her school, closing because of a COVID scare. Impending doom suddenly felt close to home. Lockdown kept us closed. And even if restrictions eased, our visitors and stewards would be vulnerable.

Towards the end of 2020 and thanks to the Petworth Heritage Partnership we gained a Virtual Tour to keep publicising the museum. Thanks to my preparation for this I can now summarise the museum in 90 seconds.

In May 2021, the Trustees met to consider when, if and how the museum might re-open. Various options were explored. We chose to remain closed but started a process of refurbishment, because after nearly a quarter of a century of operation the museum was in great need of it.

Ann Morrill and Carol Pope, our new gardening team, replanted and maintained the garden throughout 2021. The garden and the virtual tour helped persuade Olivia Maiden and her film crew to use the cottage in November as one of the locations for her film, 'A High Price for Ginger Beer'.

The living room wallpaper was not a survival from 1910 but was supplied to the original trustees by Beamish Museum in County Durham. Worn out and dirty after 25 years it has been replaced by a faithful copy of the pattern. A sample from the cleanest area was removed by paper conservator, Geoffrey Major, and reproduced from new artwork by Hamilton Weston. The new paper was printed using traditional wood blocks. The wall opposite the fireplace was found to be lined with hardboard, and warping of the board had contributed to cracking the old paper. This wall was re-lined and plastered by the Leconfield Estate before redecoration.

All the painstaking preparation and redecoration was carried out by local decorator James Hodd and to clear the way for the decorating work the contents of the living room and scullery had to be packed and stored upstairs by the museum's trustees and volunteer stewards. And of course re-instated afterwards.

The house was built in the seventeenth century as a timber-framed building

within external masonry walls. 346 was part of a much larger house that was probably divided in the 1830s when it was owned by William Tyler, the third Earl's land agent. The cottages were sold to the Leconfield Estate in 1854 and numbered 345 and 346. 345 is now named Ricketts Cottage – after the Ricketts family who lived and worked there.

A Fire Service inspection in May 2021 expressed concern for the part of our cellar that lies under the ground floor of Ricketts Cottage. To improve protection the ceiling has been lined with pink plasterboard, and layers of thermal and sound insulation have also been included. To help retain our 1910 atmosphere the final covering has a tongued and grooved timber appearance. The cupboard at the front of the cellar hides our main services and meters. A fire protection lining and a cupboard floor have been installed. All the fire protection work was carried out by the Leconfield Estate.

One of the gas lights in the cellar was in the area affected by the fire safety work and its supply pipe ran across the joists and ceiling. This light was therefore moved to join its twin on the opposite wall. This involved some considerable plumbing work by Chris Warren (Junior) from Warren Gas Consultants.

The museum re-opened in July 2022, when we also welcomed our new house-keeper, Karen Stillwell. As always we must thank our volunteer stewards – both new and returning – for their time and enthusiasm in restarting the museum.



A few of the many cardboard boxes commandeered to take the Petworth Cottage Museum (or some of it) away for safe keeping while the refurbishments were carried out, many of which were the work of local contractors including the Leconfield Estate's building department.

For more information on the museum, including its refurbishment, the virtual tour and the first twenty years virtual exhibition see the website at [www.petworthcottage-museum.co.uk](http://www.petworthcottage-museum.co.uk)

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**PAGES 24 AND 25** Bartons Lane cemetery. An article in *Scientific American* in February 2021 stated that '...even the smallest burial sites could help conserve natural habitats in agricultural landscapes'. They might have written 'do help', as here. Photograph by Jonathan Newdick.

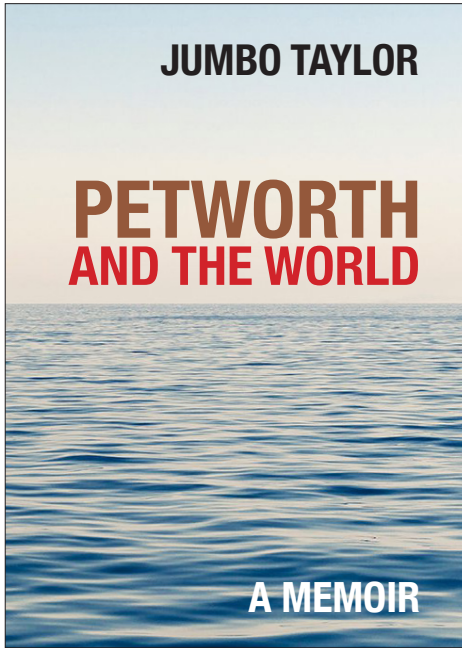






## ‘... a serious social history resource’

Book review. Jumbo Taylor, *Petworth and the World*, 320 pages, ISBN 978-1-3999-2095-7, £16.95. Andrew Howard



I was already halfway through this mighty tome, and mighty it is indeed, when Miles Costello asked me to review it for this magazine.

The book falls into two parts, totally different but each equally fascinating and interesting. The first deals with the author's Petworth boyhood, and the second his service in the Royal Navy in the second world war.

He writes in his own inimitable and highly readable style of his boyhood in and around Petworth, a life of pranks, scrapes and narrow escapes from trouble and the wrath of assorted officialdom. He describes life at the boys school under the direction of Charles Stevenson, who was later to die tragically in the bombing of the school in 1942. The headmaster comes across

as trying his hardest to do the best he could for his young charges. Strict maybe, but what else might a 1930s schoolboy expect – and no doubt deserve! What makes it all so very interesting is that all this is happening in the town I know quite well, and in particular locations I can often identify. His description of working in a war-time butcher's shop is eye-opening! All in all, I feel that have learned and understood just what life was like growing up in a small sleepy market town, at a time that is now fast disappearing from first-hand memory.

The second part of the book describes joining up, under the support and guidance of Lord Leconfield, his father's employer. The concluding sentences of the book pay his tribute to his future employer. Most of the military history that I have read concentrates on details of battles. Jumbo's account is totally different. He describes life as it was for the ordinary sailors, how they lived, what they ate, what they did for work rest and leisure, and the deprivations they endured and cheerfully survived. There is the same attention to detail as in the first part, only

**BELOW** Jumbo Taylor as most who knew him will remember him – white roll-neck pullover; wellington boots turned over at their tops (just visible here) and never too far from his Land-Rover. From the book under review.

he is now describing his travels worldwide. One has to admit that, given that he did survive, service in the Royal Navy gave him an unprecedented opportunity to travel and see exotic sights, particularly in the latter stages of hostilities. I must admit I thought the same of my father's visiting Cairo, the Pyramids, and Rome during that war. Ordinary chaps from Petworth, Chichester, wherever, could never have expected to see the world.

The detailed extent of his memory is quite remarkable, even if it is prompted by notes he had made. His grammar is sometimes a little unorthodox, but that never detracts from the easy readability. What does shine all the way through is his close attachment to his parents. He never uses an unkind word about them, quite the contrary.

In conclusion, I enjoyed the whole book enormously. It deserves to be regarded as a serious social history resource worthy of a much wider readership than Petworth. Buy it, read it, enjoy it, if you haven't already done so. You'll find it in the excellent Petworth Bookshop.



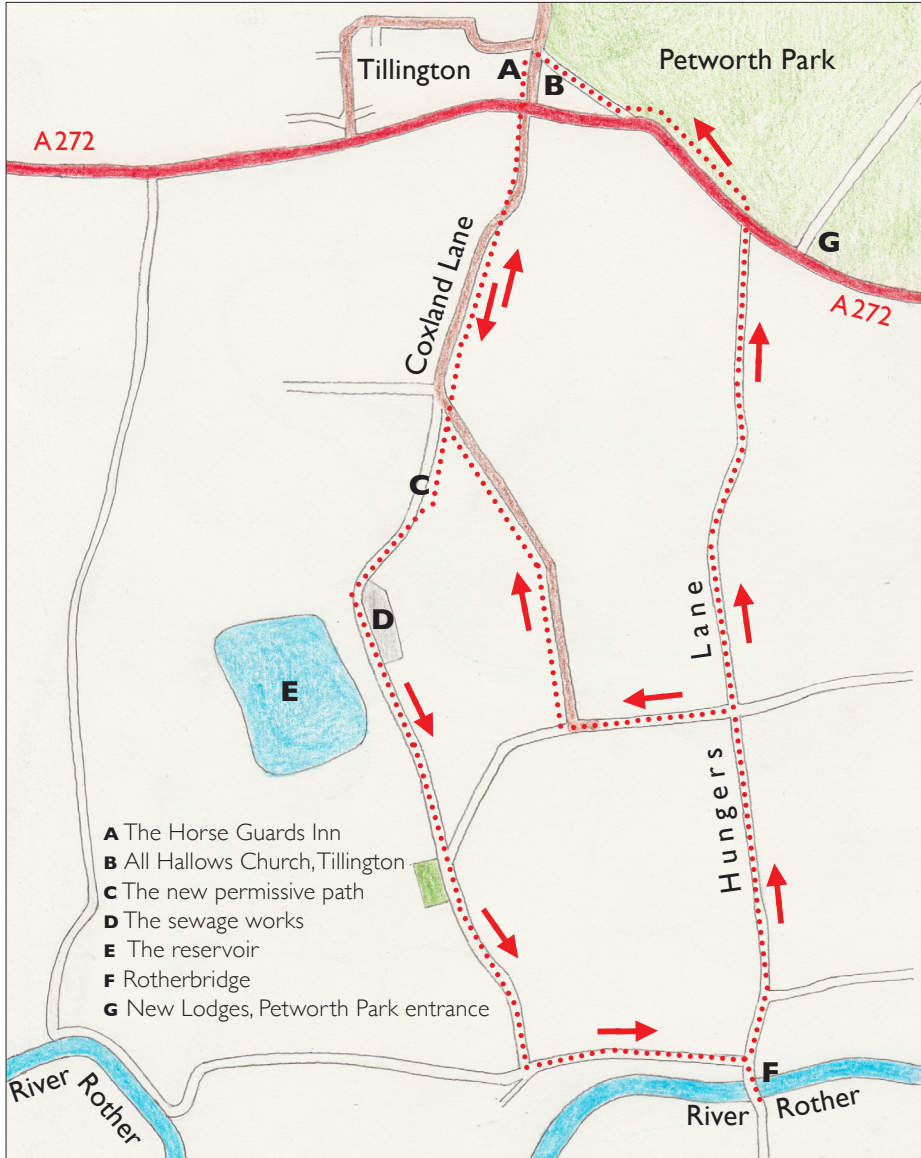
# A walk from Tillington to the Rother

Gerald Gresham-Cooke

This is a gentle three-mile walk down to the lovely River Rother, one mile away. The surface is good, the path is mostly very wide and you may hear skylarks. The wide, open sky is a bonus. Starting from the Horse Guards Inn, Upperton Road, Tillington, walk to the A272 crossroads. Cross carefully, going ahead down Coxland Lane, past the Tillington Stables. Arriving at a little triangle, take the new permissive path straight ahead. After 150 metres take the right fork, and in another 150 metres pass between the sewage works on the left and a reservoir on right, with a pumping station at the end. Continue alongside fields, going straight ahead, until after 600 metres you will reach a junction with a track. The river is now ahead of you across the field. However, there is no access straight ahead – private land, often with a bull in residence, so turn left and walk along the track towards a house and outbuildings. This was once the Leconfield Estate's Rotherbridge Farm.

Walk along the track through their garden, which is a right of way, and at the end turn right towards the fairly new iron bridge. On the bridge, enjoy the river – one of only two to the south of London running west to east, the other one being the Thames. Re-trace your steps from the bridge by a few metres, and either turn left to return the way you came for an easy stroll home. Or, alternatively, for a harder walk, go straight ahead, now on tarmac drive, with the house on your left and after 75 metres, as the road turns to the right turn left into a sunken lane. This is Hungers Lane, known colloquially as Smugglers Lane. Walk up this lane single file, being careful of the very uneven surface, especially when it is wet as the limestone has been worn away. The surface is easier the further north one goes. Imagine smugglers of years ago with their bounty. At the halfway point, where a track crosses, there is a choice of paths. Either turn left along the track, coming across a farmhouse, Sokenholes, on the left. Turn right on a tarmac road for 600 metres back to the triangle (mentioned above). Or, to continue the Hungers Lane route, walk north up the lane which now has a better surface. After 500 metres at the top, you will reach the A272 again but this time facing Petworth Park wall. Cross the road, and for the New Lodges Park entrance turn right, but to return to our starting point turn left on the pavement beside the wall.

At the sharp corner, take the footpath at the right hand fork and continue beside the wall to a footpath up towards the twelfth-century All Hallows Church. You will arrive at the top of the steps in the churchyard, and then walk down the church path to the starting point of the Horse Guards.



# Folk art on the doorstep...

Jonathan Newdick

... or, more correctly, on the door itself.

These photographs of Leconfield Estate house numbers were all taken in the past few years – a record of a continuing but now physically fragile tradition. This system of numbering began on the estate in 1846 and was permanently fixed about ten years later, with new or rebuilt cottages receiving suffixes of A, B, C etc. Almost always the numbers are painted in white on a piece of thin, black-painted metal and are the work of painters and decorators rather than signwriters. This results in some delightful eccentricities which, while not perhaps in the colourful realm of the painted farm wagon, the fairground ride or the canal barge are clearly worthy of recognition and even, despite their anachronism, their continuation.

The few examples here display a variety of styles, with their suffixes either smaller than the figures and above the line (as 356 C below) or the same size as the figures. The painter of 402 A seems to have enjoyed and spent more time on his 2 than on the other characters although his A with its little serifs seems quite refined. Occasionally these metal plates may be used as a direction signs (as in TO 336 G opposite) and this example demonstrates a strange confusion of styles – the two threes with their bulbous terminals would seem traditional but the 6 is distinctly twentieth-century. Also more modern in style is 391B which might owe something to Eric Gill, while 328H (on page 32) is a rare attempt at italics. Also on page 32, 336 F and 336H are clearly by the same painter and both demonstrate a remarkably careful hand: either he (presumably he) had done a bit of signwriting or he simply had a good eye for lettering.

Number 335 on page 33 is something of an imposter here, its numbers being cast in metal (probably in brass) from the hardware shop and screwed to the gate. I have included it here because of its delightful cottage garden (now unfortunately remodelled) and its 'Please shut the gate' which, relying on its single screw, now seems tired and forlorn.



402A

TO 336G

391B







## ‘...what lies under the ground in the park’

Petworth Society Archaeological Walk with Henry Wakeford.  
Alexandra Soskin

In wonderful late summer sunshine we gathered at the entrance to the tunnel into the park. The tour circled the park from the tunnel, past the House, along the drive for a way and then diverted to Colt House (where mares were taken from the main stables when due to give birth), passing along the deer enclosure and then circling back via Lady Violet’s enclosure and Arbor Hill.

Henry first described the different stages of the House’s development, from medieval manor to the grand house we see today. Throughout the guided walk, he referred to the army of skilled people who helped keep the estate going without outside help – farriers, painters, blacksmiths, foresters, carpenters and builders.

Capability Brown’s work to re-landscape the area into what we now know as Petworth Park is well known. What is less well known is how the area developed in the centuries preceding his works. You can still see the deep ditch that was once a continuation of Hungers Lane – the smugglers’ route from the coast (and held to be haunted – see page 28). But what you can no longer see are any remains of Snow Hill House which must have commanded an excellent view towards the House.

‘Arbor Hill’ originally referred to the whole length of the high ground that runs from the House to the outlook halfway up the park. The hill was renamed ‘Lawn Hill’ after Capability Brown created the west lawn in front of the House.

One recurring theme of the walk was the uneven ground. Often attributed to groundworks by Capability Brown, this is not necessarily so. Henry is often asked why the trees on top of Lawn Hill appear to stand on mounds. The answer is that the trees are not raised up; it is the ground around them that was lowered. Lawn Hill, which is solid sandstone, was excavated in the late 17th and early 18th centuries to build the House, leaving the trees on their pedestals of earth.

We are sworn to secrecy as to its location (you’ll have to come on the next walk); but there is compelling archaeological and historical evidence that there was an Elizabethan banqueting hall in the grounds. You can see pictures of a gold ring of the period in the National Trust booklet about the archaeological digs (available at the House for £1).

The walk took a little over two hours and the time flew by although Henry commented that the walk normally takes nearer three hours. We would like to thank him again for his most interesting afternoon, and for offering to conduct another walk next year. There is clearly so much more to learn about what lies under the ground in the park, so we will be looking forward to this.

**BELOW** Carol Singers outside Somerset Hospital in North Street. From left to right Liz and Sue Roberts with Gail and Ruth Costello in about 1964. A photograph by George Garland.



# The Petworth Star

Miles Costello

A wonderful collection of homemade magazines, or newspapers, were sent to the Petworth Cottage Museum a short while ago by a lady in Oxford who had discovered them in her late father's study. He was a furniture dealer, living in the Oxford area, and had left the 'Stars' in a folder labelled 'For Petworth Cottage Museum'. Presumably he found them in an item of furniture which originated in Petworth.

We have tried to find out who the author of these Petworth magazines was, and the family and place they came from. The absence of surnames and the frequent use of family or nick-names made identification difficult; however it would appear that they were written by Polly (Popsie Wopsie) Scadden who, with her sister Amy (Auntie Amy), were evacuated from Portsmouth to Petworth early in World War II. Two spinsters, they, along with another sister May (Auntie May) were members of a well-to-do Portsmouth family. Their father James George Scaddan was the latest in a line of prosperous builders who had taken full advantage of the demand for houses in the Buckland district of Portsmouth during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Living in relative comfort in George Street, the sisters remained in the family home following the deaths of their parents in 1938 and 1939. However, the risk of bombing and the Portsmouth blitz of 1940 and 1941 would have concentrated their minds, and by the summer of 1941 they have been evacuated to Petworth and allocated lodgings with the Parvin family at Shimmings. One might suppose that coming from urban Portsmouth to the rural isolation of the tiny hamlet would have been something of a shock for the two ladies; however they appear to have fully integrated into the community at Shimmings, taking on the roles of matronly aunts in their new family. They were no doubt thankful to have escaped from the almost nightly air raids which were inflicted upon Portsmouth during the early years of the war.

Tenant of a Leconfield Estate cottage, George Parvin had been a gardener for General Burnett at Newgrove in Petworth. At the outbreak of war he enlisted with the RAF while Ada (Missus) remained at Shimmings with their young daughter Rosemary Ann (Lady Rosemary) who had been born in 1940. The seven extant editions of the Petworth Star cover the period from 1941 to 1944 and begin with a Christmas edition in 1941. Who the intended recipients, if any, were, is difficult to know. Could it have been George, away on active service when the little magazines would certainly have been a welcome distraction, or were they for May, the absent sister who remained as far as we know in Portsmouth? We shall probably never know.

# THE PETWORTH STAR.



# XMAS EDITION.

1944

What does appear certain is that Polly and Amy seem to have enjoyed their time at Shimmings and their relationship with the Parvin family continued long after the war ended and the ladies had returned to Portsmouth. The only surviving member of the cast is baby Rosemary, or Ann as she prefers to be known, though sadly she has no recollection of the Petworth Star which suggests that the magazines may not have remained at Shimmings but more likely went to Portsmouth with the Scaddan family following the war. Ann recalls travelling to Portsmouth with her mother and staying during the summer holidays with 'Auntie' Amy. Sadly Polly had not been in the best of health even at Shimmings and passed away before the end of the decade.

While we can only speculate on the identities of a few of the characters mentioned in the magazines the one constant which runs throughout is 'Gyp' – short for Gypsy, the family dog. Other characters flit in and out but the most prominent is George Garland the Petworth photographer. The writer paints an amusing – but not entirely flattering – visit to Mr Garland's studio in Station Road.

Almost childlike in their simple construction and naïve text, some of the writing is faded and difficult to read and in the following extracts I have corrected things a bit here and there, to make sense, but mostly retained the spelling and grammar which is very inconsistent! There is so much in these innocent little books – news, recipes, poems, prayers, lists of people who sent Christmas cards and of presents given and received, visits to the shops and a party or two. Really a step back to the war years.

#### **OLD BILL OR POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN**

Old Bill is a gem so some people think. He is nearly eighty, tall and thin and just like Popeye, hence his name given to him by his friends. We first saw him sitting on a stile in the Sheepdowns in the late summer of '41. In his light grey summer outfit, hat to match, and a beautiful rose in his buttonhole. Not far away is his garden, a picture to behold, with arches of roses and now a mass of spring flowers. Vegetables second to none. He would always speak to us and when sister was in hospital he would send his offering of flowers.

He lives in the Leconfield almshouses alone but he has sisters not far away. He has been helping the victory effort by walking about three miles three times a day gathering sticks in the woods where they are cutting trees down to make aeroplanes. Even today Sunday we have seen him pass the lane window. We think he is looking for sister however time will tell.

#### **BLACKBERRYING**

It was in early August when a happy quartet set out with their baskets to gather the fruit of the bramble which is large and luscious in the woodland known as the Gog. Mummy, Aunties Amy and Poppy, and Ann (now growing into a little girl) and wait I said a quartet and had forgotten our doggy pal Gyp which brought the number up to five.

Up the hill we go through our wood and into the broad fields beyond where a

view of miles can be seen. Then we start work gathering our berries. Ann helping with her own basket from bush to bush she strolls. Then lo she has lost us and then she sings out for mother once more, she finds her and then hangs up in the bush. All this time Gyp is chasing rabbits or at least they chase him. A shrill call from mother and Gyp arrives minus his collar which he has lost in the bushes, a hopeless case. So after minutes of scratching we gathered our baskets of lovely berries we set out for home down the hill again to tea.

#### **HOLLY FOR CHRISTMAS**

For a long time before our Christmas when we wander through woods, lanes and fields our eyes are on the heavy laden holly trees, berries getting their beautiful shades of red. One tree just our field and into the next, a stiff climb but what a glorious view, to the left our wood to the right the town with church and house nestling together and in front miles and miles of downs. But it is to business we come to this tree. It is early to cut yet, so we go occasionally to view, but alas Missus came back with a woe-begone look just a week before we decided to cut and said 'what do you think, someone has taken all our holly'. We all say never mind but wish them joy and we remember some more lovely trees. It is good we keep our eyes open when we walk abroad.

#### **THE BAKER - SHOUBRIDGE AND TICKNER**

In our old guide book there is a picture of Byworth village, it is a very ancient one. There is a young man and some ladies standing around and it would not be surprising if it were not our friend in the village baker Tickner or Tick-tic as the kiddies call him. There right in the middle of the sweet little village is the bakery and one night we had some business in the village and called in to see him and his partner at work. There is always a cheery word when we meet them. They are both tall men dressed similar in brown coat overalls and grey caps.

Our Mr Tick-tic is an ex-service man and many yarns he spins about teasing the nurses etc when they were sick. His wife a very prim lady smart unlike village personnel she is one alone, but he tells us many times how he jokes with her and although many years of married life have been spent together she does not or will not understand his jokes.

Any death birth marriage in the town is reported on his round – where the bump was last night he is a source of knowledge. He is especially good at Sussex jokes a quiet humour which is only noticeable in these parts. He would do anyone in distress a kindly deed. In the meanwhile they still deliver their loaves of crusty farm baked bread for miles around in all weathers up to knees in mud. Sunshine all the time.

#### **MENU AT SHIMMINGS FOR CHRISTMAS DAY 1941**

Breakfast: Coffee and cornflakes, devilled kidneys and bacon. Dinner: Ham and Chicken with Brussel sprouts and mashed potatoes. Dessert: Christmas pudding with mince pies for those who want them. Tea: Blancmange, bread



and butter, fancy cakes, yule log. Supper: Cheese and biscuits.

#### MENU FOR CHRISTMAS 1942

Breakfast: Cornflakes, fried eggs on fried bread. Dinner: Potatoes, Brussel sprouts, marrow, suet pudding, ham and chicken. Dessert: Christmas pudding with cream. Tea: Paste sandwiches, hot mince pies, Chinese figs, walnuts. Supper: Cheese and biscuits, Ovaltine.

#### EDITOR'S PAGE (FEBRUARY 1942)

Another month has gone but one cannot say with it the snow. As far as the eye can reach a magic carpet is covering much that is ugly from view. It is however God's way or nature's way of helping many a young seedling through the cruel bite of frost. Already in the woods the trees are beginning to put on their new coats of green, primroses and violets are poking up through and that lovely little herald of spring with its garland of green and white the snowdrop is here. The evenings are lengthening so all are looking forward to the work in the garden and the long walks. There does not seem much to cheer one these days in the war outlook but on mistakes we build better in the future. God gives wisdom to those who are in high place and Bless Our Cause is a prayer for this month and as spring brings promise to nature so may it to our cause. Editor.

#### OUR PHOTOGRAPHER

It was decided that Lady Rosemary Ann P should have her picture taken before Christmas for her father's pocket diary. So up the hill and along the road through



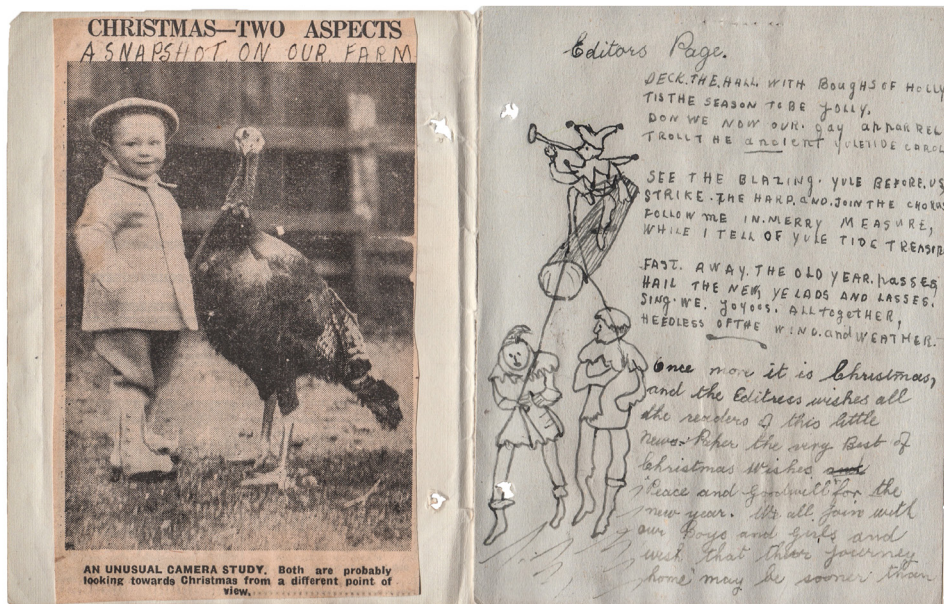
*(This put an idea into the committee's head and on a shopping expedition a purchase of two other heads (which will figure in our story) and some pieces. When we arrived home we found that Amy Elizabeth's injury could be repaired. Off from somebody came the head and Mother replaced the eye which with the aid of a little glue were kept in position. She is now cured but her eyes look at us with a mystic stare (not real) so we have another head to still deal with this all came in Father Christmas's programme.*

*It was one afternoon in late October that we called into the Post Office for letters, a privilege extended to those who do not get afternoon mail. When Mother was handed an air mail from Uncle Joby (Daddy's Brother) and it contained the news that Mummy was not to send anymore mail for he was leaving on his journey home on Nov 12<sup>th</sup> hoping to be home for Annas.*

the Square and down the road some 30 minute's walk to a funny little wooden hut painted in black. Outside which to make it look more professional is a stand of pictures which one has to guess the whereabouts every week. Up the steps between two green hedges and ringing the bell the only modern thing about our studio. What a show beautiful velvet curtains and white background a wonderful sheet with some hem missing, but anyhow the effect is glorious. Even the view from the window is enchanting, the tin dump of the village with a big notice 'Do not throw anything but tin here'. But wait the central figure is our photographer, in cheque suit which was in existence long before coupons were started. Long hair in true artist fashion, big horn rimmed glasses, long lantern face a dirty hanky in his breast pocket, only a smock is needed and he is the true Sussex yokel. We arrive with The Lady very interested in the work and the workman.

On a table in front of the background so beautifully arranged is the instrument of torture. So as soon as Missus and Lady Rosemary are arranged the lens of camera are missing inside out and round and about mixed and unmixed. At last after much screwing we can get in focus. Auntie Polly ever ready stands by camera singing Dad Dad Dad and shush the deed is done. Yet another try and we register our thanks, put on our coats and sally forth to find the carriage, otherwise our pram, rather like

**OPPOSITE AND BELOW** Two spreads from the 'Petworth Star Xmas Edition 1944' showing the holes where the pages were bound using wool or string tied with a knot.



a Noah's Ark it being raining. After a week with no proofs we enquire how the photos are. With great apologies we hear that we broke the camera and make an appointment for the next week. So after a week we present ourselves and after an hour of real work with think we are alright no broken plates this time. Still after a week no answer and we again enquire after its whereabouts and we are again told of its non success. Poor missus with weary feet turns away from the door with sinking heart. Master will not have a likeness of Lady Ann but with a promise of coming again we go for a third time. All is set the beautiful background and lens alright this time then a light goes out then the stand nearly fails and at last Polly brings out Bertie, Lady Ann's beautiful baby, from her bag, what a look of wonderment. At last the deed is done after 6 sittings. We go down and get the photos after all one afternoon before Christmas, what a man.

#### **THROUGH THE NURSERY WINDOW. FEBRUARY 1942**

Snow – snow – snow – when will it ever cease? For nearly a month now the landscape is ever changing from pure white to grey, from grey to green, from green to brown and then again the changing. However life goes on the same, the myriad of jobs a housewife finds leaves us not dull but thankful for a roof that shelters and a fire that warms. We about our tasks. Many things happen and although we are in the country war ever rolling along the highway at our gate. Tanks tanks tanks and still more tanks. Guns guns guns every day rain snow thunder or fine they still roll by.

The buses one can keep time by them in all the bad weather still heroically kept tryst with the travellers like great green giants. Only one occasion did we note a variation in the timetable. This occurred outside our window. The roads were like ice and if at first you don't succeed was the motto. For quite a dozen times the bus would not go on to Byworth but by persuasion and grit at last it proceeded on its way.

#### **PEN PICTURE**

Our Colonel. Quite a Dickens character. A fine stamp of a man but getting on now. Light grey trousers braced up to show about six inches of blue sock a glorious tweed check coat with checks as big as a draught board, a hectic tie and a light grey bowler. He has a large rosy face, and usually he completes his costume with yellow gloves a size or two too large and to help him along over rough cobbles a tall thin cane. A picturesque figure and on sunny days always looking his best. The editor's interview with him took place in the shop in the Cobble Street. He wanted to buy a new pair of shoes and not being extra shy he took off his boots to try some new ones on. What a perfume it could not be the flowers on the counter. However he could not produce his coupons so the shopkeeper well knowing his address he promised to collect the same. He is in the home guard rather a smart figure I guess and can give orders and see them carried out. However we should miss the patter of his little feet on Cobblestone Street and dear old Petworth is richer for his romantic presence even although he cannot find the gold he is ever looking for in its pavements.

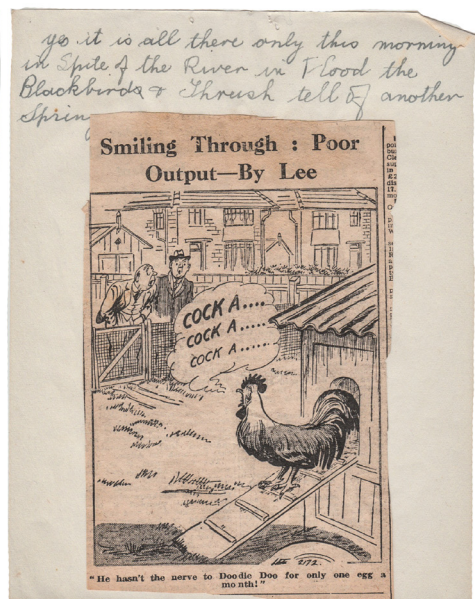
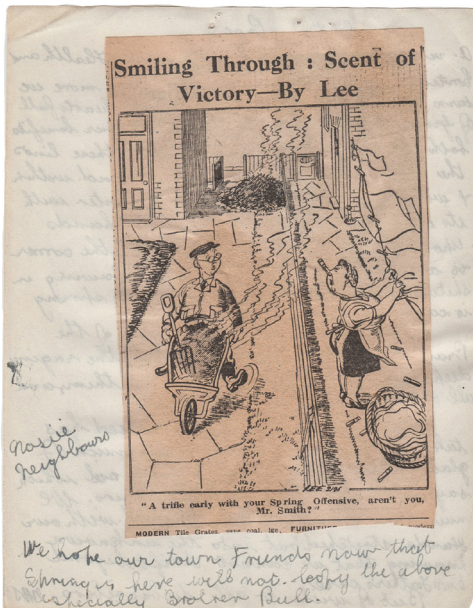
**PEN PICTURE**

This is a story of a little girl who disobeyed.

Mrs Mouse had taken up her lodgings in our larder and cupboard, settled in very well. Day after day went by and still at length mouse escaped capture. Miss Ann had now become very handy in the larder. Moving jars, rattling tins, moving packages within her reach. The warning many times had been be careful Ann or you will be caught in the trip and it fell upon deaf ears many times. It was just after breakfast [when] all of the senior staff being busy Ann went on a voyage of discovery. Oh what a howl of rage came from the larder, turning to see what the noise was all about we were met with a picture of woe. A little girl crying at top of her voice and on her finger a mouse trap. Mummy look what the mouse trap caught. It was quickly removed from her finger which was fortunately undamaged but for a slight sting. From that day to this Ann tells us that the mouse trap caught her. Now the larder is no longer a rendezvous for a voyage of discovery for Ann.

Two pages from the 'Petworth Star', January 1943. The pages measure approximately 7 x 5½ inches but, being cut with scissors, they vary. The 'Smiling Through' cartoons are by Joseph Lee (1901 – 75) from the London Evening News. The series, which began in 1934, was originally known as 'London Laughs', but was re-titled in the early 1940s to reflect the wartime spirit.

The captions, which today seem singularly unamusing, are, on the left, 'A trifle early with your Spring Offensive, aren't you, Mr. Smith?' and on the right, 'He hasn't the nerve to Doodle Doo for only one egg a month!'



## A fated fête?

Nigel Flynn

As Town Crier, I attend a number of annual events in Petworth, but one seems always to have what you might call ‘issues’ for me.

I must first explain that I am technically the Petworth Society Town Crier, and do not come under the aegis of the town council. This is because when the idea of reviving the ancient office of crier was mooted in the 1980s, the council would have nothing to do with it. So the Petworth Society took on the expense of regalia etc and the Town Crier became their official. They did not need to buy a new bell, because by an incredible coincidence they were contacted at just this time by a local solicitor’s office. They told Peter Jerrome, the then chairman of the Society that they had been clearing out some cupboards and discovered at the back what they thought was the 200-year-old crier’s bell. Why they had it they did not know; they had no known connection with the last crier who had retired in the 1940s, but they presented it to the Society and so the historical tradition was maintained.

My technical position makes no difference to my role in the town, and I take part in several annual town events, as well as appearing regularly at the monthly farmers’ markets to advertise the Petworth Fringe, concerts, art shows etc.

On Sussex Day (June 16) I gather people together in the Market Square at noon to sing ‘Sussex by the Sea’, for which I used to be assisted by the previous crier, Mike Hubbard, who had a far better singing voice than I have!

On the Feast of St Edmund, November 20, Petworth Fair is held in the town square. It is the oldest town fair in the south of England, having been held annually since at least 1189. I perform a traditional cry to open the fair at 3 p.m. on behalf of Lord Egremont, the owner of the fair. Petworth was the southern outpost of the Percy family, lords of the north, and Lord Egremont is the descendant of the Earls of Northumberland and Earls of Egremont.

A more recently instituted annual event is the Christmas tree lights switch-on, and it is on this occasion that something has always seemed to ‘come up.’ It is a great event which attracts a huge crowd, held on the first Saturday in December: the shops all stay open for the evening and show off ‘living window displays’, the most popular of which is in the ‘Guilt Lingerie’ boutique! There is a mass of Christmas-themed stalls, a steel band plays in the High Street, the square is closed to traffic, and next to the Christmas tree a

temporary stage is set up, on which local bands and choirs perform.

I have two roles to perform at the event. I lead the nativity procession from the church, through the stall-lined streets, to the stage. Mary rides a real live donkey and is followed by a long line of children, suitably attired. They form a beautiful tableau on the stage; I then act as MC for the culmination of the event, calling on the vicar to lead a prayer, after which I invite up the Chair of the town council, Lord Egremont, with some of his grandchildren and a couple of other local children. The two adults thank all concerned and the children gather round a large button. I ask the assembled masses to join his Lordship in a countdown from ten, and the children then press the button to turn on the Christmas tree lights –and a huge snow cannon goes off to give the scene a festive air.

It all sounds straightforward, but this has not been so in recent years. In 2017, the donkey – named Mr Darcy, who also leads the Easter procession and is normally completely docile – seemed for some reason to be in a hurry to get it all over with. He was constantly butting me in the back to push me to move faster through the crowds – to which I cry ‘Make way for the Nativity Procession!’ And despite my best efforts to control my pace, I did end up going rather faster than usual – and too quickly for the little legs of the angels and shepherds behind. As the numbers are quite large, I can’t see the back of the line with all the crowds in the way. A gap developed in the line and we soon had two separate processions. On arrival at the stage I realised we were depleted in numbers: I had to return along the route to pick up the stragglers, while the first group stood on stage twiddling their thumbs.

The rest of that event passed off well, but I was determined not to let it happen again in 2018. However, I did not get the chance to put things right. Petworth Fair always occurs shortly before the Lights event, and it happened to hit the coldest night of the whole winter. I stayed outside a good deal of the evening, and did not realise just how chilled I had become. I went down with a terrible sinus and throat infection, and was still in no fit state to speak, let alone cry, when the Christmas event came round, so had to cry off.

Unfortunately Mr Darcy the donkey was also unwell. The *Midhurst and Petworth Observer* reported on the Fair in the following way:

‘Both the Town Crier and the donkey were indisposed and unable to play

their usual parts in the event this year.’ Inevitably, people read this as suggesting the two indispositions were somehow connected. Whenever I went into town for some while afterwards, locals would amuse themselves by asking: ‘How are you now, Nigel – and how’s the donkey?’

I was in good health for 2019, and on arriving at the event told the organisers I would make sure the donkey did not hurry me along this time. I was told this would not be a problem, and when I asked why, they said it was because the donkey has recently died.

Now this was a big thing, as Mr Darcy had long been part of the Easter celebrations in particular, and donkeys live for many years. (In George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* Benjamin the donkey says ‘Donkeys live a long time. Few people have seen a dead donkey.’) Although a new donkey was in training, they have to be absolutely sure of its behaviour in crowds and noise before they could use it for processions.

The procession went ahead without the donkey, and on a slightly different route which worked out really well, and the tableau was safely established on the stage. This is when disaster struck. The Chair of the council told me to stop the band from playing any more carols as it was time to get going. I could not catch the band leader’s eye and they were about to start another tune, so I made the fatal mistake of hurrying up the metal steps on to the stage in order to start the proceedings before the band played on.

Whether I slipped on the metal steps, or just missed a step altogether, I do not know. Suffice it to say the tricorne hat went in one direction, the 200-year-old bell in the other, and I ended up in a heap at the foot of the steps, with a terrible pain in my right ankle. But the show must go on, so I hopped onto the stage. I stood on one leg and called up the vicar; he was a temporary replacement, and unfortunately thought we wanted a few seasonal words as well as the prayer, so he went on longer than usual, when all I wanted to do was get off stage and sit down! Eventually he finished, I called up the others, (by now holding on to the side of the stage for support) and the countdown to the lights began. THREE, TWO, ONE . . . and nothing happened!

The Chair ran off to try to see what the problem was – the rumour went round the town later that I had pulled out the plug when I fell down the steps, but this was not in fact true – and I was left to keep things going while desperate

to take the weight off my leg. I adlibbed with comments like ‘Don’t worry, they’ll be on by next Christmas!’

Fortunately, the tree was soon lit up and we were able to leave the stage. I was helped off and taken to the nearest shop, where I knew the people from previous crying duties. Like so many in Petworth, it was an antique shop. They had had a small choir in their living window display who had finished singing, and they helped me into a large armchair in the window, with my foot propped up on an antique footstool, to wait for the St John’s Ambulance staff. The sight of me in the window caused great amusement to the passers-by – including the photographer from the local paper who was covering the event and couldn’t miss the opportunity!

The ambulance people confirmed the ankle was not broken, just very badly sprained. They helped me to the car park where my wife picked me up. I spent the next few days with my foot up as it ballooned to a size more like that of an elephant than a human, and came out in a number of different unnatural colours.

But the story does not end there. On the following Tuesday I was sitting in the lounge with an ice pack on my foot, when I was interrupted by a phone call from a journalist on the local paper. He asked for some quotes about the event, and said he believed I had had a bit of a mishap.

‘Oh you heard about that, did you?’

‘Heard about it? We’ve got a lovely picture of you sitting in the window!’

So on the Thursday when the paper was published, I got my wife to take me into town. Sure enough, as well as a good photo of the procession, there was also a picture of me with foot up, being attended to by the St John’s people.

I went to Augustus Brandt, the antique shop, to thank them for looking after me and to say how I had got them some good publicity.

‘Oh not just publicity,’ they said, pointing to a framed certificate on the wall.

‘We’ve won the Best Living Window Display prize – and we don’t know if it was for the choir or for you!’

This account first appeared in the 2020 issue of *The Crier*, the official journal of the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers.



# Changing times?

Jonathan Newdick

Well, encouraging signs perhaps. Three eastern European farm workers ('Bulgaria. No English') hand-weeding lettuces at Crowsole to the south of Petworth in 2022. Back-breaking work for them but if a trio of Bulgarians costs less than a can of herbicide it can only be a good omen for the rest of us. And for the bees.

