

No.200. September 2025

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY  
*magazine*

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Elements from a traditional cricket scoreboard celebrating the 200th issue of this magazine.

**FRONT AND BACK COVERS**

The last overs of a cricket match at Petworth as the sun goes down behind New Lodges – a contemporary scene to complement J. M. W. Turner's *Petworth Park, Sunset* on page 23. Photograph courtesy of Petworth Park Cricket Club.

# 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 £20.00 for UK addresses and £30.00 for overseas addresses. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

### CHAIRMAN

Mike Mulcahy, Westbury, High Street,  
Petworth GU28 0AU. (01798) 345160.  
mike@themulcahys.org

### HON TREASURER

Phil Stephens, The Old Meeting House,  
22 Pound Street, Petworth GU28 0DX.  
(01798) 342016. philstephens61@aol.com

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Mike Mulcahy (as above).

### TRUSTEES

Lord Egremont, Mike Mulcahy, Alexandra Soskin,  
Phil Stephens, Nick Wheeler.

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Mike Mulcahy, Ron Parsons, Beverley Sewell.  
Mike Singleton, Phil Stephens and Ian Yonge.

## MAGAZINE EDITOR

Andrew Loukes,  
c/o Petworth House GU28 0AE.  
andy.loukes@leconfieldestates.co.uk

Designed, typeset and produced by  
Jonathan Newdick and printed in Chichester  
by SRP Design and Print Ltd.

## MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

Claudia Golden, Jane Henderson, Tim Marchant-Lane, Elly and Mike Mulcahy, Ron Parsons, Sarah Singleton, Phil Stephens and Pat and Pete Turland (Petworth); Alexandra Soskin (Byworth); David Burden (Duncton); Gerald Gresham-Cooke (Tillington and Upperton); Ted Liddle (Midhurst) and Carol Twite (Fittleworth).

**WEBSITE** [www.petworthsociety.co.uk](http://www.petworthsociety.co.uk)

**EMAIL** [info@petworthsociety.co.uk](mailto:info@petworthsociety.co.uk)

### SOCIETY TOWN CRIER

Nigel Flynn. (01798) 343558.

### BANK

NatWest Bank  
Sort Code 60 16 27  
Account No. 89087186.

The Petworth Society supports the  
Leconfield Hall, Petworth Cottage Museum,  
the Coultershaw Beam Pump and Petworth St  
Edmund's Day Fair.

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Mike Mulcahy

I would normally start my notes with recollections of recent past events and general comments on the weather over the last few months and how all of this has impacted on Petworth. Instead, in this 200th edition of our magazine I would like to comment on the recent sad death of Peter Jerrome MBE and his invaluable contributions to this Society.

Peter was there at the start of the Society, in *Bulletin* No. 1 – May 1974, he was listed as leading the 'Local History and Records' group of members. He expressed concern that there was so much historical information that the first task was to 'whittle down their numbers to manageable proportions'.

Pretty soon he was vice Chairman of the Society and by 1978 he was Chairman, and over the best part of four decades in that post he directed the Society towards what we have today. Only the Covid pandemic appeared to slow his enthusiasm.

In 1976 Peter and Jonathan Newdick published *Tales of Old Petworth* and followed this by many other publications including Peter's enormous tome *Petworth. From the beginnings to 1660* and this was followed by an equally large but rarer *Petworth. From 1660 to the present day*.

There will be more tributes to Peter elsewhere in this issue, but the Society do intend to honour Peter with a memorial lecture, probably one evening in the new year. We would hope to capture the importance of his impact on not just the Society but Petworth, the people, and its historic surroundings. Rest in Peace Peter Jerrome MBE.

### A SARDONIC CROW

When Peter Jerrome became unwell earlier this year we began working on what would become our final book together. *A Sardonic Crow and Other Observations* is an anthology of his responses to the monthly book sales which appeared initially in this magazine. As it is our 33rd book together I have decided to limit it to just 33 numbered copies. Full details will appear in the December magazine.

JONATHAN NEWDICK

## EDITORIAL

Andrew Loukes

This edition is one of both sadness and commemoration as we mark the passing of Peter Jerrome with our 200th issue. Had it not been for Peter's extraordinary intelligence and commitment the magazine would never have come close to reaching such an impressive milestone, nor would it have developed into the treasured and respected publication it has undoubtedly become.

Mike Mulcahy leads the tributes to Peter and we are grateful to Miles Costello for sharing the transcription of his warm and revealing eulogy delivered at a predictably well-attended St Mary's funeral on Tuesday August 5. Readers may also wish to revisit Lord Egremont's article 'A richly contemplative mind – An appreciation of Peter Jerrome and his work for the Petworth Society' from *PSM* 183, reprinted in the Society's 50th anniversary publication 'A Petworth Miscellany' (*PSM* 195).

The remainder of *PSM* 200 is a fitting mix of material. Ron Parsons carries on our rich tradition of oral history by capturing the recollections of Petworth's most enduring shop-owner, Cynthia Caulder, whose entertaining memories will strike a chord with many. Meanwhile, the scouting diaries of another town stalwart, the fondly remembered Tony Whitcomb, evoke a 1940s Petworth teenage boyhood, thanks to Miles who introduces and shares the entries.

Elsewhere, Ian Yonge neatly collates the most interesting local and national newspaper reports covering the death in 1837 of the third Earl of Egremont, whose major commission of a cricket picture from J.M.W. Turner is the subject of the third in a series of picture notes commemorating the 250th anniversary of the artist's birth. Egremont was also of course a great patron of British sculptors as well as painters and could not have anticipated that the sculpture gallery he had built in the 1830s would be turned into an audit room by his heir, Colonel Wyndham. The role of this room in the payment of Estate rents during the 1920s featured in one of Peter Jerrome's classic interviews; that this should have prompted a follow-up article in the present issue is just one small example of Peter's ongoing legacy.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Andrew,

Re. 'Moderate refreshment on stipulated terms' (*PSM* 198): just a minor comment on another election which arguably set in train the greatest English novelist of the nineteenth century. The 1832 Reform Act did not stop the shenanigans at subsequent elections. Charles Dickens, in his first novel *The Pickwick Papers* uses his experience as a journalist at the Northamptonshire North by-election of 1835 to great comic effect. But, writing to his fiancée, he said he had 'never seen anything more sickening and disgusting', describing the Conservatives 'as a ruthless set of bloody minded villains... led by clergymen and magistrates.' (quotation from victoriancommons.wordpress.com) John Fitch, Petworth.

Dear Editor,

Re. 'Light and Power – the redevelopment of the Cowyard in the early 1900s' (*PSM* 199): prior to transcribing the Agent William Tyler's correspondence with his master, the third Earl of Egremont (the basis of my recent *PSM* articles), I worked on the records of the Estate's Building Department during the early 1780s. Surnames were often familiar to me.

In 1786 work on 'the new Cow Yard' was a regular feature. The accounts show weekly wages paid by name and project. The following extract is an example covering just one week:

Building a wall from the north end of the House between the Park and Pleasure Ground, and a wall from Upperton Common along the west side of the Pheasant Copse, also walling on each side and turning an arch over the road leading to the new Cow Yard:

Mills, Thomas, 7 days 14s.

Sharp, James, 7 days 12s. 10d.

Lucas, James, 7 days 12s. 10d.

Randal, John, 7 days 12s. 10d.

Stert, John, 6 days 11s.

Belchamber, George, 7 days 12s. 10d.

Smith, John, 6 days 11s.

Mursel, William, 7 days 12s. 10d.

Hoad, Richard, 7 days 12s. 10d.

Whether these wages were typical of their day I know not; possibly not too bad, as an agricultural labourer might well have been earning only ten shillings. A week's wage in 1786 is the equivalent of £130 today. Remember also, they will have walked to and from the site in all weathers. Still, the sick pay, the holiday pay, the pension, and other perks will have been welcome.

Andrew Howard, Petworth.

**BELOW** A detail of the plan of the Cowyard from August 1839, annotated by Thomas Sockett, showing the proposed new Bailiff's House (now Butler's Cottage) with its planned entrance from North Street. Petworth House Archives 14923. See the letter from Andrew Howard.



Dear Editor,  
I was very interested to read the article about Bertram Shore's canoe trip down the River Rother. The subtitle suggests that this was undertaken in 1923. However, unless the intrepid Bertram and his friend did the journey during the winter or very early spring of that year, this is very unlikely. The mill at Coultershaw was totally destroyed by fire on the morning of April 8, 1923, so would the 'lady miller, the miller and the lorry man' have been there to help them 'over the portage', as the mill was not functioning? So, I suggest

the adventure was undertaken in, or before, 1922.

I was intrigued that they had difficulty through the reeds from the mill pond into the river – this suggests that it was high summer. Even in the ten years or so, that I have been involved at Coultershaw, the mill pond has changed shape as part of a continuing process of erosion and sediment deposits and growth along the banks. It is an ever-changing environment; partly man made, partly nature at work.

Tony Sneller, Trustee,  
The Coultershaw Trust.

# An enigma, impossible to fathom

Peter Allison Jerrome, 1937-2025. Edited from Miles Costello's funeral eulogy.

It would not be possible for me to summarise Peter Jerrome's life and accomplishments in a few short paragraphs. Instead, I will try to share a few facts about Peter that some readers may not be aware of.

Most assume that Peter was a Petworth boy through and through. Not so, he was in fact born at Gidea Park in Romford, Essex in 1937. His connection with Petworth was, however, quite impeccable, at least on his mother's side, for his grandfather Arthur Allison was a much-respected foreman on the Leconfield Estate. No sufferer of fools, Allison doted on his grandson and the affection was fully reciprocated by the young Peter.

While his family remained in London the phoney war years gave Peter the opportunity to fully embrace life at Petworth. A lengthy and formative stay at York Cottage in Pound Street with his beloved grandparents, glorious hours spent at the nearby allotment, his grandfather's shed, school at Culvercroft, an outbreak of ringworm, eventually followed by a return to life in London.

Back in the capital Peter led a remarkably carefree life. At just eleven years old he was able to catch a London bus and travel about the great city on his own. These were post war days when a child travelling alone deserved nothing more than a second glance. It was at this time that he developed a passion for football, and his beloved Queens Park Rangers, which would accompany him throughout his life.

Living now at Campden Hill Gardens in the west of London, the family continued to make regular visits to Petworth and in 1951, fortune, or otherwise, brought the small family of four – a younger sister Jill having been added – to Petworth permanently, where his parents purchased the small grocery in Pound Street for which the family are so well remembered. Having left Midhurst Grammar School, Peter's life transitioned smoothly into a period of National Service where he trained as a Russian linguist in the intelligence service. Finally demobbed, he eventually went up to Cambridge where he studied theology before moving on to University College London with brief visits back to Petworth where he helped around the shop.

The death of his father in 1966 and with his mother struggling to keep the ailing business afloat Peter made the difficult decision to return to University

College and continue his academic life while returning each Wednesday to make up shop orders prepared for delivery. Some readers will recall Peter's Morris Minor parked outside the shop ready to be loaded up. This period reminds me of a line that Peter once wrote 'If you have the choice, don't have a small general shop on a busy road leading out of a small town, certainly not with an alternative route to the rear that is shorter and avoids the traffic.'

Pressures of work eventually forced Peter to return permanently to Petworth and having taken up a teaching post at a girls' school near East Grinstead he would make the daily commute while helping in the shop after work.

In 1974 the Petworth Society was formed and just four years later Peter took on the role of guiding the fledgling organisation as it found its feet. Having removed himself from academia he threw himself into local history and, with Jonathan Newdick, published over thirty books through their Window Presss, many of them illustrating the works of his good friend, the photographer George Garland. It was Peter who then took on the role of editor of the much-acclaimed *Petworth Society Magazine* which he continued through some 180 issues before retiring shortly before the Covid crisis.

Peter married Marian Gane in 1994 and became step-father to four sons and a clutch of step-grandchildren. Marian was the love of his life and she slipped smoothly into the role of supporting Peter when he was engaged in one of his many positions in the town. Awarded the MBE in 1998 for services to the Petworth Society, Peter dedicated the award to the town he had not been born in but which he had grown to love.

Peter never got over the loss of Marian who passed away last year after a long illness and he leant heavily on his great friend Ian Godsmark for comfort.

Peter was an enigma, impossible to fathom, his mind functioned at a level far beyond that of most of us. He was a brilliant teacher, writer, academic, and theologian. Mildly spoken and instinctively shy, Peter was a leader. Where he went others followed. He disliked with a passion gossip, driving, and music. He was an insatiable reader, an accomplished poet and spoke Russian, Greek and Spanish fluently. But most of all Peter was a friend and I have no doubt that he will be missed by all those whose lives touched upon his.

**BELOW** Peter and Marian Jerrome in 1998 on the occasion of his award of an MBE for services to the Petworth Society.



**BELOW** Peter at the door of his shop in Pound Street in the early 1970s.

**PAGE 12** The front cover of a catalogue of Window Press books produced in 2016 to celebrate forty years of publishing.



[illegible]

# A life in hairdressing and sport

Cynthia Caulder was talking to Ron Parsons

Cynthia Caulder is, we believe, the current longest serving shop-owner in Petworth, having run her hairdressers 'Cynthia's', in Pound Street for over 65 years. This is her story.

I was born at number 29 Hampers Green in 1940; my parents were May and John Standing. Dad was a plumber and a Petworth fireman. Mum was a Bryder from Fittleworth, and she was a proud founder member of the Hampers Green Drama Group which is now Petworth Players. Both of my grandads worked on the Leconfield Estates. Dad's father, also called John Standing, worked with horses and carriages up on the estate at Cockermouth in Cumbria, which is where Dad was born, but they moved down here to work on the estate at Petworth. I did not see much of Dad's parents as his dad died quite young and I never met my nan. My other grandad, Arthur Bryder was a gamekeeper. He and Nan lived at Fittleworth but eventually moved into one of the Park lodges at Hampers Green and he lived to a good old age.

I had an older brother, Brian, who was three years older than me. We didn't really get on as youngsters and when he was old enough he left home to join the Royal Air Force. He became a successful businessman and a millionaire, but he has sadly passed away now. I don't remember very much about the war as I was very young. We were at Hampers Green when the bombs fell on the boys school, but I do remember Mum pushing me under the bed for safety. I used to have a bedroom downstairs during the war and when the fire alarm went off, we all woke up and the whole house was bedlam because we had a very loud bell right outside my bedroom door. When it went off Mum used to take me upstairs, maybe she thought someone was going to break in and attack us or something. She eventually made me and Brian swap rooms, so that I was upstairs and him down.

My dad didn't go to the war because he was a fireman, a reserved occupation. I have always felt sad for my dad, especially when they had reunions, like when the Canadians came back over. He must have felt left out of it all because he didn't go to war, but I never knew if he felt that way. We didn't go hungry during the war because we had big gardens and everyone used to grow their own vegetables.

**BELOW** Cynthia Calder's delightful hand-made sign outside her hairdressers in Pound Street.

I had a very happy childhood down at Hampers Green. Dad was secretary of the Hampers Green community committee that organised all the events and they used to have their meetings in our house. They arranged all sorts of things on the Green, I remember fancy dress competitions and we used to have football, comic football, and parties there. I've still got the photographs here; I lent them to Peter Jerrome once and some of them have been in this magazine. Looking at them now, they always remind me of my dad.

We had a lovely, happy community and I used to know everybody down there. That was mainly because Dad used to send me round selling draw



tickets. Our immediate neighbours at one stage were Arthur Duncton on one side, he worked in Denmans in East Street, and Mrs Poddington the other side. The Salter brothers and Mrs Hunt also lived along the long path where we were. Households changed from time to time, and I still recall the Carters, Wendy Smith, the Humphries, Withers, Stakers and Sadlers. You used to know everybody and I'm so glad we did.

I still remember when we got a television, it arrived on my birthday, but the awful thing was all the other kids were more interested in the telly rather than my birthday. We also had a telephone, but as hardly anyone else had one I used to have to run round the Green with messages or to call people to come to the phone. Later, we moved to number 79, one of the nicer houses down the posh end, where Johny Stanton and Phil Sadler both lived.

When I started school, I went to the old infants school where the library is now. The headmistress was one of the Miss Woottens and when I went onto the girls school in East Street, her sister – the other Miss Wootten – was headmistress there. I always remember them both because one was big and the other one little. They used to live in one of those big houses next to Pound Garage where Morgan Court is now. I don't remember my other Petworth teachers' names though. During that time, I was a Brownie and then I joined the Girl Guides.

Later I went on to the new school at Midhurst, the Secondary Modern School; we must have been some of the first ones there. I was in the school hockey and rounders teams, and I tried for the netball team but wasn't very good at it. My best friend, Ann Speed (now Denly), was much better at sport than me; she is Maria's mum – Maria who works with me now. I always remember Mr Stirling, everyone remembers him – 'Bomber' Stirling. He was a teacher there and he also taught Maria many years later at the Herbert Shiner School.

He took us on our first school holiday to Switzerland. Funny enough, Janet Duncton brought that trip up recently. She said the first time she went abroad was with me, it was a school holiday, and we went to Geneva. We were only allowed £5 each to spend – that was a lot of money in those days, and I bought lots of souvenirs back. I can still remember this, but Janet doesn't: she had more money on her than we did, she shouldn't have done this, but she

took us out for tea while we were there, which was really nice of her. We flew back home from there, the first time I'd ever been in an aeroplane. But I don't remember how we got there; it must have been by coach I suppose.

When I was growing up, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I certainly didn't think I would be a hairdresser for all these years. When I left school, I went apple picking; I used to cycle out to Kirdford every day. I remember once this girl told me to pinch some peaches and put them in my bag, then a bit later the farmer came and told me I could take some of the peaches home. Oh, I felt awful because I had already taken some. One of the girls I worked there with was Susan Moss.

Then a job came up at Pellets in Market Square with Mr Talbot. I worked there for three years and remember I used to earn £1. 3s. 6d a week and every six months it would go up by about five bob. That's where I learnt to be a hairdresser. Mr Talbot's wife had a small shop on the corner of East Street where an antiques shop is now. We had to go and buy all our tea-bags and other things from her. Of course, everything's now antiques in Petworth.

After that I worked in Arundel for a bit, then I went to Valente's in Midhurst, still hairdressing. After Midhurst I went to work in a small town near Portsmouth for a while.

I learned to drive when I was 19. Dad taught me in his Morris van, it had air-conditioning, a big hole in the floor [laughing] and our feet got wet when it rained. I took my driving test at Chichester and third-time-lucky I passed. I started in my shop in 1960, after Dad bought two cottages from Mr Whitcomb – the Welldiggers Whitcomb – this one and the one next door up the street towards Bacon's. I think he paid £500 for them and had to take out a mortgage. Dad, Jack Enticknapp and Mr Harwood all worked together to do the cottages up. He wanted me to open a hairdressers and live in the lovely flat upstairs, but I really wasn't keen on that idea, I thought I was too young. Anyway, Dad persuaded me, and I am still here now 65 years later, an 85-year-old.

I might now be the oldest and longest running shop-owner in the town, but I think I was also the youngest when I started. I can't think of any shops that have had the same person running them this long. I mean Austens and shops like that are still there, but they're not run by the same people. The lady from Austens, Mrs Morley I think, used to come round selling stamps when I first started. I used to collect them and then use them to buy Premium Bonds. I also bought them for my son Lee.

I worked on my own when I first started the business here. My first apprentice was Yvonne Andrews; she's Yvonne Kitchener now. Then I had

several other girls, but to be honest I can't remember them all. Jane Hamilton, was Haynes, was one; Christine Hamilton was another and Daphne McCall worked here too. Jane got married while she was working here – she had her breakfast and got ready from here on her wedding day.

Maria Wakeford, then Denly, started as a Saturday girl and still works with me now. As I said, Maria is my friend Ann's daughter; Ann's dad had Speed's butchers shop in the High Street. Anyway, we were playing stoolball at Amberley, I think, and I asked Maria if she fancied a Saturday job. I remember she just grunted, 'Can do', I never let her forget that. She started here at 14 and did Saturdays and holidays, then went to college for two years and when she finished there was a full-time job here with me.

While at school and working part-time she saved up and bought herself her first pair of jeans, but did she get told off by her mum that day! Maria and I have been working together now for 49 years since she started as that young Saturday girl. I used play tricks on some of my young apprentices, I hope they won't mind me telling you this. I told one of the girls that John next door, in John's Stores, had lost his 'banana bender' so I sent her off to try and find it. She started in Mrs Jerrome's to ask her then went round other shops looking for that banana bender until she went in one where they finally told her it was all a joke.

Another favourite was the 'budgie licence'. One of the girls said one day 'I've just got a budgie'. I asked, 'Have you got a licence for it?' She said, 'You don't have to have one, do you? Who would know?' I said, 'Well I know, and I could tell somebody else, and then you could be in trouble.' So, she went up to the Post Office to get one. When she was served, the girl on the counter asked her 'What colour is it then?' Oh, we laughed when she came back, but she was really angry with me. I also sent one of them off to Austens to buy a tin of striped paint. Oh, I am terrible aren't I?

I got married to John Butcher in the early sixties and my son Lee was born four or five years later. When Dad retired, he put the shop and flat in my name and soon after that John got the shop next door. It was Mrs Jarvis's stores for years, but then Mr and Mrs Ayers leased it from her. When Mr Ayers died, John took it over and it became John's Stores.

Around that time, Shirley Taylor and I went to see poor old Mrs Ayers and she had a lovely cream-coloured carpet; unfortunately, I knocked a glass of red wine over it. She got down on her hands and knees and started scrubbing it, she was so angry with me and said, 'If you hadn't done that, I wouldn't have got so angry'. I'll will never forget that.

We went off to live in Cornwall in 1980, but not hairdressing. John and

his brother Brian bought a hotel together in Launceston, so Lee and I went with them to help run it. Lee would have been about 14 at the time. John's Stores finally closed when we went to Cornwall. I think Chris Hiron, the bookie, took it over but I don't think it did very well and now it's the Chinese takeaway. However, I was so unhappy with things down there that Lee and I came back to Petworth to carry on in the shop and John stayed in Cornwall.

While I was away Ann Chevis from Midhurst ran the shop for me; her husband also had a hairdressing shop in Midhurst. However, Dad had been on about me selling the shop if I didn't come back and run it myself. When I came back from Cornwall, I bought a distinctive mustard-coloured Mini from Scammell's Garage at Balls Cross. It used to belong to Eric Morrish's



The Petworth stoolball team in the 1970s. Front row, right to left: Eileen Tupper, Ros Tupper, Sheila Scammell, Doreen Dunton, Cynthia (Capt), Ann Denly, Stella Dummer, Sarah Taylor and Evonn Noakes. Back row, left to right: ? Wakeford, Sharon Dormer, unknown, Irene Spicer, Mr. Dunton, Mrs. Bushby, Dick Denly, Margaret Temple, unknown, Penny ? and Sue Fordham.

mum who won it in a mustard company's competition. It cost me £500 and I later sold it for £300.

I used to play a lot of stoolball and I've got an album of photos and newspaper cuttings of all the teams I played with. There are so many faces in all the stoolball pictures that I can't put names to them all now. I remember playing with Ann Speed and Maria of course, Shirley



Taylor, Sue MacDonagh (she worked here too for a while), Doreen Duncton, Margaret Temple, Mrs Bushby, Bridget Ireland – she was very good and so was Ros Tupper. There were lots of others that came and went too. I started off playing for Hampers Green, 'City Slickers' as I called them. But one day, Petworth were short and Bobby Dadswell from Ebernoe and I stood in for them playing at Barnham. Bobby and I went in at number 5 and 6 and we had a good game and won it for Petworth. After that they wanted us to join Petworth. Bobby didn't join but I did; I liked playing for Petworth as it was much better stoolball.

Peggy Cross was the Petworth captain then. No one wanted to be captain – it wasn't a popular job; once you took it on you had a job to get rid of it. We were Sussex champions one year, 1966 it was, the same year England won the World Cup. Oh, we were good, really good. Many of us got picked to play for Sussex too. When the Petworth team packed up, I played for Ebernoe for a couple of years. I don't remember when Petworth finished but I know we were still playing as late as 1977.

Stoolball was a big part of my life and when I stopped playing I took up bowls with Petworth. We had a good laugh up there because they had a bar you see! We were quite good at bowling too and we won several cups. Looking at my photos I can't remember what they were all for but look at those silly hats we wore. We were Sussex Bowling champions some years too. My name was on the honours board up the bowling club; I don't know if it's still up there because I haven't played since I was 70. I had to give up because Mum and Dad were ill; you can't do everything and there's not enough time in the day is there? I think I played for 17 years, and they presented me with a lovely bowl when I packed up.

There's been lots of big events in Petworth over the years, but I can't remember them all. There was a big do when the Canadians came back to

Petworth. I also remember, and I've got some photos somewhere, we did a big procession through the town following the Town Band. We dressed up as the Beverley Hillbillies for the stoolball club and sat on straw bales on the back of a lorry. I don't remember what the occasion was, maybe a Jubilee but it was a really big event.

I've never really been involved with the other shops in the town or the Business Association, I don't think many of the hairdressers' shops have either. I've seen a lot of the shops change and some hairdressers come and go. John Bentley, the TV actor, had a shop in the town, on the corner of Middle Street and Angel Street, he opened it around the same time as we did. John Bentley phoned Dad one day and asked if I would go and work for him to stop another hairdressers from opening. Dad told me not to go there didn't he, and I think he told John Bentley where to go too! Mrs Hamilton also opened a hairdressers around the same time, where Déjà Vu is now in the High Street, she was very good and did well. I don't think there were any antique shops around when I started and the first one was up Lombard Street. Mr Boss it was; he lived in a place at the top of North Street. I remember he had a son and daughter, the son Tim played cricket for Petworth. Then antiques shops started to spread; they seemed to take over the town. I once knew every shop in Petworth; I recall Godfrey Hill and I sat in my shop one day going through all the old shops, I certainly couldn't do it now.

I married my second husband, Sandy, in 1984. I met Sandy down the Masons Arms where I was working part-time as a barmaid. He worked on the buildings and used to keep coming down from London at weekends and kept on asking me out. However, I thought I'm not getting involved with him as I had lost interest in men at the time. He persisted and I finally agreed to go out with him, and we eventually got married. I couldn't do without him now as he is so good to me. We lived in the shop, in the lovely flat upstairs until 2010 when we bought a house in Littlecote. We didn't move in straight away but rented it out for about eight months before we moved in. I've got no real plans to retire but to be honest I'm starting to struggle as my legs are a bit wobbly at times. I still enjoy the company of Maria and all my customers, but many of the older ones have passed away so it's much quieter in the shop for me now, but Maria keeps busy. I will probably carry on until my health finally stops me. I have a bit of time off coming soon to have an operation on my arm. I will have to rest up for a while, but I really want to come back to it, the job I love.

# The unchanging rhythm

Lord Leconfield's audit dinners. Andrew Loukes

Peter Jerrome began his definitive history of the town, *Petworth – from 1660 to the present day* (Petworth, 2006), by explaining his sources for chronicling the 1900s: 'for the last century I have made considerable use of oral tradition, "that living and abiding voice", as it is preserved in the *Petworth Society Magazine*, now in its 124th issue. It is a measure of the depth and richness of this archive that extensive quotation here hardly disturbs its surface.' One of the interviews referenced in his book was that which he had conducted with Greta Steggle for the 100th anniversary issue of the *PSM* (June 2000).

Greta Steggle's parents ran the chemist shop in Market Square, where it is today, and her vividly recalled memories of the town in the 1920s include an interesting perspective on Estate rents: 'Petworth was still very much an Estate town, seeming to run with the unchanging rhythm of the Estate workers going to and fro to work. My father was on excellent terms with the Estate hierarchy and the Estate was an important client. Here too there was a rhythm, seasonal this time. When the annual rent audit came round we experienced a sharp drop in takings; people were finding their annual rent. Conversely, the farmers' audit brought people into the town and we had a noticeable rise in takings. The two audits were quite separate.'

The 'farmers' audit' incorporated not only the Estate's farm tenants but also those of the larger houses and business premises owned by Lord Leconfield. As with the cottage audit, rents were usually taken in two instalments: one in late spring (Ladyday) and another in late autumn (Michaelmas). Each biannual payment, made at the old Estate Office in the Servants' Quarters, was marked with a complimentary meal in the adjacent Audit Room (now the National Trust café), originally built in the 1830s as a sculpture gallery. The farmers' audit dinners were particularly grand and provided a clear incentive to pay the rent on the allotted days. Over 200 tenants were fed across two sittings on consecutive evenings, with the extensive catering requirements requiring the cooking to be outsourced to the Swan Inn for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An example of a menu for one of these hearty six-course dinners, from the period described by Greta Steggle, is in the uncatalogued material in the

Petworth House Archive, and is reproduced below.

A feature of the dinners was the toast, for which a pro-forma list of those to be honoured was printed each year. While that for the May dinner of 1920 does not survive, the example for November is shared here. When it came to toasting the clergy and agriculture a different local clergyman and farmer were named each time. The toasts were punctuated by songs led by the Petworth Glee Singers, who were paid a total of £3.10.0*d* for their attendance at the May and November dinners of 1920. The proprietors of the Swan Inn – then Trusthouses Ltd. – received £232.4.0*d* for the catering. The ‘farmer’s audit’ for 1920, largely taken on the days of the four dinners held in May and November, amounted to £20,146.1.2*d* – some £585,000 in today’s money. (Payments and rents recorded in PHA 11568.)

TELEPHONE  
NO 8 PETWORTH.

Estate Office,  
Petworth.

Thursday 25th November, 1920.

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TOAST LIST

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The King

The Queen, Queen Alexandra, the  
Prince of Wales and the rest of  
the Royal Family

Glee

Bishop & Clergy coupled with the  
name of

Army & Navy

Lord & Lady Leconfield

Glee

Success to Agriculture coupled with  
the name of Mr

The Chairman

Lord Leconfield's Audit dinners - May 25th & 26th, 1920.

M E N U

Oxtail Soup

Boiled Salmon & Cucumber.

Filleted Plaice - Anchovy Sauce.

Roast Beef - - Horseradish Sauce.

Roast Leg of Mutton - Currant Jelly.

Boiled Leg of Mutton - Caper Sauce.

Vegetables.

York Ham.

Roast Venison - Red Currant Jelly.

Plum Pudding - Brandy Sauce.

Gooseberry Tart - Custard.

Fruit Jellies. - Blanc Mange.

Compote of Pears.

Cheese - Salad.

## PICTURE NOTE

Andrew Loukes

*Petworth Park, Sunset*, by Joseph Mallord William Turner, c.1829.

Oil on canvas, 62 x 146 cm. Tate.

Around 1827 Turner was commissioned by the third Earl of Egremont to provide four landscape paintings for the Carved Room in Petworth House, which had been converted into a large dining room in the 1790s. By the late 1820s Egremont had already bought fifteen paintings by Turner, for whom the Carved Room project represented a rare opportunity to provide work integral to a particular interior and at the request of a patron whom he liked and respected enough to collaborate with in the development of such a scheme. Over the next two or three years some six different subjects were sketched in oils and tried in different positions, with the final arrangement of finished paintings settled and installed by 1830. These comprised two views of Petworth Park plus others of local engineering projects which Egremont had backed financially: the Chichester Canal and the Brighton Chain Pier.

While the paintings may be seen in their original positions today, their visual impact has changed significantly as the third Earl had painted the panelling of the room white before reconfiguring the Grinling Gibbons carvings of the 1690s as part of his conversion of the original room. This scheme was stripped in the 1870s, when also the Turners were removed – they were returned only in 2002. Turner's full-size preliminary oil sketches survive as part of the Turner Bequest at Tate, which has also owned the Carved Room works since 1984 following their acceptance in lieu of inheritance tax in 1956.

The *Petworth Park, Sunset* was not among those subjects initially tried in-situ. It replaced another view of the park from the house which featured the third Earl heading out for a walk with his numerous dogs (Tate). There is little documentation chronicling the overall project and so the reason for this swap, and others, is not recorded. The prominent introduction of a cricket match is, however, entirely consistent with the general theme of the group in representing the patron through his actions rather than by portraiture.

Egremont was a popular patrician landlord who introduced many social and farming initiatives, often to the benefit of his tenants, and his generosity extended to the encouragement of local sports (see Timothy McCann in



**BELOW**

J. M. W. Turner, *Petworth Park, Sunset*,  
c.1829. Oil on canvas, 62 x 146 cm.  
© Tate, 2025.



*PSM* 182, March 2021 for the third Earl's particular support of cricket at Petworth). Louis Simond, a visiting Frenchman, noted with astonishment that the third Earl '...suffers the peasants of his village to play bowls and cricket on the lawn before his house', while in a broader sense, the historian G. M. Trevelyan has highlighted the benefit of landowners sharing their tenants' interest in the game: '...if the French noblesse had been capable of playing cricket with their peasants, their chateaux would never have been burnt'. Indeed, on the day the Paris mob stormed the Bastille, July 14, 1789, Lord Winchelsea was out twice without scoring while batting against the bowling of William Bullen, a commoner from Kent. (See Stephen Green, *The Fine Art of Cricket*, 1997).

Turner could have witnessed cricket matches during the course of his many stays at Petworth and would have noted it with interest: the game features in three more of his pictures, including an early watercolour of Wells Cathedral and a later one of the Thames from Richmond Hill (both National Museums Liverpool). The third, a large oil painting of the latter view was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1819 (Tate), celebrating the fête held on Richmond Hill in honour of the Prince Regent's birthday on August 12, 1817 and showing cricket being played by the distant riverside. In this context the quintessentially English game adds to the patriotism of that scene, which would have accorded with Egremont – a friend of the Regent – and could have been a factor in its inclusion in the Petworth view.

The parallel which Turner created between the cricketers on the left of his composition and the two white deer locked in combat to their right occasioned the painting to be subtitled 'Fighting Bucks' in the twentieth century but the simpler title used throughout the nineteenth century is retained here. This narrative feature is a typically Turnerian piece of visual poetry: in reality the deer herd would never have come so close such frenetic human activity. More accurate are the artist's inclusion of black pigs, known to have grazed the park at this date, and the topographical details of Tillington Church and the Upperton Monument in the distance.

# Mr. Churchill spoke over the wireless

A personal record of scouting in Petworth, 1941–47.

Edited by Miles Costello

Tony Whitcomb was on at least nodding terms with most people; always smartly dressed, he was until recent years a familiar figure about the town. Born in 1928 at 11 Grove Lane he was the only child of Harold and May Whitcomb. When his father became manager of The International Stores in the square the family moved into the cottage at the back of the premises which is now part of the present Co-op. Educated at Midhurst Grammar, Tony had a long involvement with the Boy Scouts Association in West Sussex, eventually becoming an Assistant Commissioner. An enthusiastic actor, he was a member of the local amateur dramatic group for many years and a founder member of the West Sussex Philharmonic Society. A relatively short stint with the Ordnance Survey in London was followed by National Service in Egypt with the Royal Engineers. Tony married Jean Cargill, a local girl, in 1956 and they remained in the town, eventually settling at Leith Cottage in Angel Street. A sometime churchwarden and parish councillor, his career as a professional photographer began with Charles White of Midhurst followed by Walter Gardiner at Worthing before finally working from home where he was always available to take passport photographs.

His scouting diary, now housed in the archive at Coultershaw, passed to me along with other Boy Scout ephemera by his niece, is titled 'My Personel [*sic*] Log Book of Scouting and Cubbing'. It is a ruled A4 cloth-bound journal typical of the period. Immediately inside is pasted a Scout Progress Record Card which begins on August 30, 1940 when Tony joined the St Mary's Petworth Scout Troop at the age of thirteen. Despite the war, the first few months passed uneventfully, merit badges were awarded for saluting, wound dressing and woodcraft among others, and culminated in his investiture as a full Second Class Scout in the spring of 1941. The log gives a vivid impression of endless carefree days when Tony and his friends were able to wander far and wide enjoying a freedom almost unimaginable today. With the district teeming with soldiers and military hardware and the country preoccupied with war, little attention was paid to children. The Gog above Petworth was open for camping and campfires with no obvious concerns for the blackout.

Nights away from home sleeping under the stars with no adult supervision appeared to be the norm. Those halcyon days would be brutally interrupted in the autumn of 1942 by the loss of Scout Master Charles Stevenson and a generation of children in the bombing of the North Street boys school.

#### ST GEORGE'S DAY 1941

The St Mary's Petworth Troop Boy Scouts today met at St Mary's Church Petworth to commemorate the death of our founder and Chief Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell. After the service we went into the choir vestry where I was invested into the brotherhood of Scouts by Mr. C. Stevenson.

#### TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 1942

At approximately 11 a.m. today a two-engine German bomber swooped out of the clouds over Petworth and released several bombs, one of which made a direct hit on the boys school and another on the laundry next door. At 12.45 at the Midhurst Grammar School all boys who live at Petworth were informed by the headmaster Mr Lucas of the tragedy. He also informed us that Mr. Stevenson had died while protecting some of his boys. Altogether thirty two persons were killed including boys and masters. May they rest in peace.

[This short account of the bombing is incredibly matter of fact. Tony would surely have known many of the casualties and yet he reveals no emotion. The troop is effectively leaderless for six months and there seems little appetite for scouting, a situation reflected in the mood of the town following the tragedy and one which would last for many years. The spring of 1943, however, sees the revival of the troop under the banner of the 1st Petworth and the leadership of Joy Dabson, a surprise choice but one supported by the District Commissioner].

#### FRIDAY MARCH 19, 1943

This is the first meeting of the reformed 1st Petworth Troop. A few weeks ago Miss L. J. Dabson visited me, and informed me that she was willing to run the Scouts in Petworth. Since then, Miss Dabson, myself and several other Scouts

## BELOW

Two of Tony Whitcomb's drawings in his scouting diary. Above, his impression of the fireworks on V. E. Night, May 8, 1945 (see page 34) and, below, the scene at the Pioneer Camp on April 19 and 20, 1945 (see page 33). Both illustrations are in watercolour, ink, pencil and coloured pencil. The V. E. Night drawing is 17.5 cm wide and the camping scene is 13.5 cm wide.



have been cleaning out Scout headquarters at New Grove and preparing in general for this day. I have also been collecting a few recruits who came along tonight.

The meeting opened with a game called bag-touch to get all newcomers at ease. Among the newcomers were Jim Russell, Walter Simmons, Trevor Green and Norman Bourne. Next we all gathered round while the troop rules were read out. Then the twelve Scouts and recruits were divided into A and B teams and moved to their corners. This evening's wide game was Paratroops versus Homeguards. This lasted from 7.30 until 8.15. During the game Reg Harper made a wild dash through the defenders and I'm sure that they must have thought they were being attacked by a herd of wild elephants. The game was won by the paratroopers by three points.

[So ended the first meeting of the troop since early in 1942].

#### SUNDAY MAY 2, 1943

Church Service for St George's Day and in Commemoration of Baden-Powell. About ninety Scouts and Cubs from this district attended a service in St Mary's Church at Petworth. The boys formed up at New Grove H.Q. and marched from there to the church. They came from Billingshurst, Wisborough Green, Plaistow, Tillington, Lurgashall and Petworth. The service was conducted by the Revd Godwin who also gave the sermon.

#### FRIDAY JUNE 4, 1943

Troop Meeting. Meeting opened with flag break and notices. Great doings resulted after the latter due to the formation of a new patrol – The Bulldog Patrol. The members of the patrol were in this order:

Maurice Alder – Patrol Leader, Myself – Second, Ted Whitcombe, Alfred Gumbrell, Trevor Green, Norman Bourne, John Grimwood.

And the other patrols were:

Bulls

John Murrar – Patrol Leader, Peter Hill – Second, Jim Russell, Neville Green, David Claise, Bob Willis, Ray Woodmore.

Otters

Jim Dabson – Patrol Leader, Reg Harper – Second, Walter Simmons, Michael Murray, Terry Lucas, Jim Godwin, Chris Clegg, Fred Hall.

#### FRIDAY JUNE 25, 1943

A few days ago I met a Canadian soldier outside the youth centre after practising for the youth rally. He asked me where our Scout Master lived so I

took him to the Police House but nobody was in. Later, when I had left him, he went back to Miss Dabson's house and as luck would have it she was in. Tonight the troop had the honour of meeting for the first time S[tanley] A. Richardson 16th London Troop, [Ontario], Canada. During the evening, he proved himself a great help, by helping to build a covered waggon for the forthcoming youth rally.

#### **SATURDAY JULY 3, 1943**

Youth Rally. The troop with the help of five other local troops staged a display of bridge building in Petworth Park. The 1st Petworth and 1st Tillington troops surprised the whole audience when with revolver shots and shouts they charged in the arena with covered waggons to attack the bridge builders. They charged around the arena picking up the enemy and putting the dead in the covered waggons (trek carts), one of which was being pulled by the two stalwart horses James Russell and myself. The rest of the rally consisted of displays etc given by various youth organisations in the Petworth district.

#### **FRIDAY OCTOBER 22, 1943**

Tonight proved to be a great night for me, because being made Patrol Leader does not come every week, and being made the leader of the Bulldog Patrol is a great privilege. Tonight, Second Green was also made Patrol Leader of the Bulls.

The meeting consisted of cleaning the [Scout] room. During the evening, while we were dusting the walls etc several explosions shook the room. Everybody fell flat on the floor. All the candles were miraculously dowsed during the silent dive to the floor. After a while we began to sit up, and then a small voice started singing 'Oh! Jemima Look at Your Uncle Jim'. The troop Leader went downstairs to keep a lookout. The bombs were dropped near Shopham Bridge.

#### **FRIDAY APRIL 14, 1944**

Trip to Town. We met in the Square at 8.30. I had previously in getting up almost broken my neck, but nobody worried about that. Left Petworth 8.30. Patrol Leader Whitcomb tore his pants. Left Horsham 9.42. Arrived London 10.32. Went to Scout Shop, ordered dinner then we proceeded to the S.S.E. until 11.45. We then came out to the Scout Shop and went on to the roof. Then had dinner of shepherd's pie after that we had rubob [*sic*]. We then took the tube to S. Kensington to the NHM [Natural History Museum]. Akela and I walked round the museum. We lost Chris, Bunny and Bags. We came out of there and went to Westminster by tube. We then had our tea under Big Ben and then went to the *Discovery*. After that we

came back to H.Q. by tube and then to the News Theatre.

**FRIDAY MAY 19, 1944**

Tonight we heard the sad news that an hour ago Jim Godwin, Bob Willis and Timer Whitcomb had been injured in an accident. Jim and Bob received cuts and lacerations to their faces, Jim also having a fractured pelvis. Timer is the worst having very bad injuries to his legs. At the moment he is dangerously ill, mine, and I am sure all of the troops thoughts are with him in this critical moment, and we pray that he will recover. God be with him. The boys were walking in the road near Tillington when an army lorry, swerving to avoid the group, overturned and struck them. All of them recovered after a period of convalescence.

**SATURDAY MAY 20, 1944**

This afternoon Jim Russell [Rusty] and myself whitewashed the billiard room at the Police Station. We were working to bring in money for the 'Boy Scouts Relief Abroad Services'. We earned ten shillings between us. The rest of the troop also did odd jobs, some very odd. The Bull patrol earned 12s. 5d; the Otters 17s. 6d and the Bulldogs 15s. 11d. With the Cubs effort the grand total was £5.0.0.

**TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 1944**

Bulldog patrol meeting. Tonight, after a lot of preparation by Akela, second Penfold and myself we held a treasure hunt. We began the meeting with inspection by Akela, after which instructions and small plans were given to the patrol for the hunt, then off they went. The hunt included the hunters being chased by cows and hiding behind a poplar tree in which they found a clue. When at last they reached the spot where it was buried (where the doodlebug fell) they started digging frantically with their fingers in the earth and the rubble. What a sight in the moonlight 'Scrammy' second Penfold was the lucky man, eight threepenny bits in a casket were his reward. We made our way home singing our song 'Show your Strength ye British Bulldog'.

**THURSDAY DECEMBER 21, 1944**

Bulldog patrol meeting. I opened the meeting with the usual flag break followed by inspection. The rest of the meeting consisted of practising Christmas carols for our Christmas good turn and for the short sketch we are putting on at the troops' Xmas party. Previously we had decided that after the meeting we would pay a visit to Akela and present her with a Christmas present from the patrol. But sorry to say after singing a carol outside her house, Mrs Dabson came out and informed us that Akela was out. However

she said that she enjoyed our singing immensely and offered to give us some money, but being good Scouts we declined (wishing later that we had not). After we had left there we decided to go carol singing there and then. The proceeds were to go to our Second, Edward Whitcomb who is still in hospital recovering from his accident in May. We sang outside several houses in Grove Street and were asked in to one. The grand total was 15s. 6d. which was given in the form of savings stamps.

#### SUNDAY & MONDAY DECEMBER 24 & 25, 1944

Christmas Eve. Not exactly Scouting but worth writing about. At approximately 11.30 p.m. the bells of St Mary's church started ringing out their peals of joy and happiness for Christmas. I was one of those ringers and I think that it was one of the most memorable moments of my life to be ringing the Christmas bells. Another Scout ringer is John Weller.

#### CHRISTMAS DAY

The bells were also calling the communicants to midnight mass which was conducted by the Revd Godwin. It was a beautiful service, the church being decorated with holly etc. Some Scouts also attended the service at 7.30.

#### THURSDAY & FRIDAY APRIL 19 & 20, 1945

Pioneer Camp. About 7.30 on Thursday evening on hearing that the Bulldog patrol, now under the leadership of P. L. Green, was camping in the Gog I decided to pay them a visit. When I arrived at their campsite I found that Akela was already there, keeping them company. After I had been there about half an hour Akela suggested that I should go home and with my parents' permission collect a pup tent, blankets etc., and come and camp the night with them – to keep Neville company.

When at last my little camp was standing – under its own power, it was perfectly dark, and I actually finished putting the pegs in with Bunny Bourne holding a torch. After a bite to eat and some cocoa we had a short sing-song with the accompaniment of my bamboo pipe, a relic from the boys school. After this it was not long before we were all in bed, of course Neville and I had to have a discussion before we went to sleep; there are so many things to talk about these days!

It seemed ages before it began to get light, and when it did I didn't want to get up, so when one of the little puppies let my tent down on me I crawled in with Neville who also didn't want to get up, and together we made the menu for the day! When at last we did get up we found a nice fire burning so Neville set to to prepare the breakfast while I re-erected my poor little tent. The rest of the day was spent mostly at cooking the dinner and playing various games

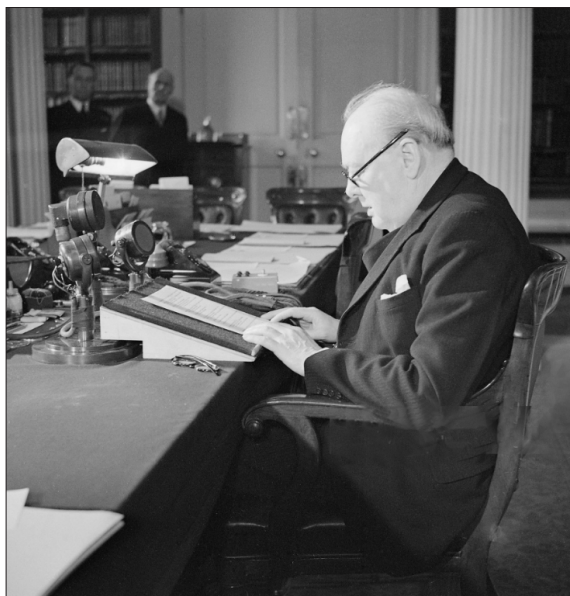
in the woods. About 4.0 p.m. we started to pack up, starting with us having a wash! When we were all ready we piled on our bikes with all our kit. When we reached H.Q. it was about 6.30 and the troop meeting had just started and the Bulldogs were just in time for the presentation of some badges. I scuttled off home as soon as possible. It was a grand camp and we had some grand fun. Trust the Bulldogs every time. Those present were: Neville K. Green, 'Bunny' Bourne, Ronald Parsons, and myself, senior Scout A. J. Whitcomb.

**TUESDAY MAY 8, 1945**

V. E. Day. At three o'clock this afternoon Mr Churchill spoke over the wireless, announcing that the war in Europe had come to a victorious close. After his speech there was a terrific noise in the Square, shouting and cheering with a few thunder flashes thrown in! The finish of Mr Churchill's speech was the signal for all the bell ringers to make their way to the church. When eight of us were assembled in the tower we began to ring the Victory Peal.

At 7.30 I went with John Weller to the Scout Room, which had been festooned with flags. There we met several members of the troop. We then proceeded to the Gog where we at once began to build a bonfire. While we were building the fire we heard girlish laughter and lo and behold several guides appeared out of the wood, so they decided to join us.

When at last Reg [Harper] put a match to the fire it was nearly dark and getting a bit chilly so we were glad of some heat. It was not long before someone thought of the fireworks, and then woosh BANG!! Everybody took turns at letting one off. It was about 10.30 when at last we made our way home. Guides and Scouts singing to the accompaniment of Joby Weller's mouth organ who was working behind the rest with Patrol leader Joan Green and myself. When we arrived in the Square the sight set before my eyes was something I had never seen before, and I don't think I'll ever see again. The square was floodlit and packed with dancing people. Joan, Joby and myself walked around the town together looking at all the illuminations including the church steeple which was floodlit by a film projector from the cinema. It was about 11.30 when I said goodnight to Joan and Joby and also to a most wonderful day of rejoicing and thanksgiving.



'Mr Churchill spoke over the wireless'. The Prime Minister speaking from the Cabinet Office on May 8, 1945, and the jingoistic broadcast as depicted by Frank Bellamy in *The Eagle* comic in 1957. 'The German war is at an end. Our gratitude to all our splendid allies goes forth from all our hearts. Advance Britannia! Long live the cause of freedom! God save the King!'



#### FRIDAY MAY 25, 1945

Troop Meeting. This is my last meeting before I leave Petworth to take up my post as a draughtsman in the Ordnance Survey Office in London. As I left I was given a bravo by the troop.

#### MAY 9, 1945

V. J. The World is at Peace. It was on V. J. + 1 that Petworth woke up. It was in the afternoon of this day that Akela, her brother [Jim], Reg, Myself and several other Scouts, Guides, Cubs and other gathered together and made a bonfire. I had to catch the 7 p.m. bus and so I could not enjoy the events of the evening which consisted of a torchlight procession through the town to the Sheepdowns where the bonfire was lit and songs sung.

#### SATURDAY JULY 14, 1945

After receiving a telegram from my father to say that John Weller's funeral was to take place today, I obtained permission to leave the office early so that I could attend his funeral. I was also in the team of bell ringers who rang a half muffled peal for him.

#### SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 1945

Victory Bonfire. About 7.15 Reg [Harper], Neville [Green] and myself met at Akela's, from there we walked to the Sugar Knob where there was a huge bonfire. It was lit just after eight o'clock and was soon a lovely blaze, but as there was not much doing on the spot several of us walked up round the Gog. When everybody had gone back to the Square to dance we sat by the fire and sang songs which brought back happy memories.

#### SUNDAY APRIL 28, 1946

Kirdford Church Parade. At 2.15 I arrived at Roberts's garage. I climbed into the coach amidst shouts of Baloo! Baloo! from the Cubs. We were soon off, and, after stopping at the square to make sure that nobody was there we were soon whizzing along the road to Kirdford and it was not long before we arrived at our destination. We all piled out and assembled the Cubs on the side of the road. As soon as all the packs and troops had arrived we all formed into a column of route and marched to the church. The service was conducted by the Revd Sidebotham, Vicar of Kirdford.

#### SATURDAY JULY 20, 1946

Stags. I arrived at H.Q. with Jim Dabson at about 6.20. We waited outside in the yard for Neville [Green] to bring the key, and whilst we waited the other members began to arrive, among them was 'Scramy' Penfold who was attending his first senior patrol meeting. By this time Nibs [Neville Green] had arrived but as he had forgotten the key he had to go back home to find

it. While he was gone another new member arrived named Peter Carmichael from Lurgashall. He had just moved to the district from Suffolk. This was my last meeting as a Senior Scout and Patrol Leader. I have left the Stag Patrol because I am now waiting for my call-up papers for national service. I have had some good times with them, and I wish them success and happiness in their senior Scouting of the future.

#### **SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 1946**

At three o'clock I started off with fourteen Cubs for a walk down to the river. We went via the water works and Strood keeping to the fields all the way there and coming back by road. At Strood we halted for a rest, Kenny Temple fell in the brook and got himself thoroughly wet so I sent him home with Allan Jamieson to keep him company.

So we proceeded with the twelve remaining Cubs through the woods and over the fields until we came to the River Rother. I pointed out the canal and the lock, and after making sure that no one fell through the hole in the bridge we made our way along the river to the road where I held a short inspection to see who had the most mud. As several Cubs seemed to be in a fighting mood on the way home, I made them walk in single file. We arrived home at about six o'clock.

#### **SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 1946**

Reg Harper has received his call-up papers and has to go tomorrow, so we decided to make a day of it today. We picked up Akela and Nibs, got on our bikes and cycled down to the railway; but it did not go as smoothly as that because owing to a misunderstanding Nibs and myself were separated from Akela and Reg for about an hour, which I think rather annoyed Nibs. When we did find each other we crossed the railway, leaving our cycles on a bridge, and made our way along the bank of the river, all the time making nasty remarks about one another, and Akela even suggested murdering me.

We eventually came onto a path leading back to where we had left our cycles so we followed it until we reached our bikes. That was the end of our short but very pleasant outing. On the way home we made arrangements for the afternoon. Just after two o'clock Reg and I called for Neville, we cycled to Pulborough where we hired a boat out on the River Arun. Everything went according to plan until we spotted an inlet. We made our way in, when I say we, I mean Reg and myself, Reg rowing and myself steering while Neville was lying in the prow.

Well, to cut the sad tale short Neville told Reg that his rowlock was the

wrong way round, so Reg lifted the oar to put it right and in doing so pulled the rowlock out as well, splash! That was the last we saw of the rowlock. We talked of tossing-up for the one who should go in to try and get it. The water was only about four feet deep, but in the end we decided no one would go in, as we had not anything to dry ourselves with. So we started on our journey back with one oar tied to the side of the boat, then to our horror we found that the tide had turned and was now against us. Reg, who by the way was still rowing, had to pull his hardest to make us move at all. However, we did eventually reach the last bend, and when we rounded that it was as much as Reg could do to stop the boat from going backwards, and it was as much as Nibs and I could do to stop ourselves splitting our sides with laughter; poor old Reg. We did, however, try to help him with his task, by paddling with the foot rest, I don't know if it did any good but anyway we said it did!

On reaching the mooring place we dobbed up five shillings with a half-crown extra for the rowlock. We then cycled home against a head wind!

#### **SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 1946**

I attended this morning a special commemoration service at Holy Communion for Mr Stevenson and the boys who lost their lives in the bombing of the boys school four years ago.

#### **SUNDAY OCTOBER 20, 1946**

At 3 p.m. James, Nibs, Mike [Murray], Scramy and myself arrived at No.1 camp of Polish troops in Petworth Park. It was not long before we were inside their recreation hut, playing table tennis etc. We did not find the language difficult as quite a few of the Poles could speak a certain amount of English. We spent a very interesting afternoon with them. During the tea, which was kindly provided by our hosts, we talked about Poland and the international situation. I (as usual) had to leave early, so as to be able to get back to London that night.

#### **SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23, 1946**

Opening of Polish Scout Troop. After meeting Jim Dabson, Stephen, and Akela at the latter's house we four were driven by Supt. Dabson in his car (Elizabeth Ann) to the camp because it was raining very hard. On arriving at the camp we had to find the particular hut in which the ceremony was taking place. Stephen tried speaking French, German, Rumanian and Hebrew to find out where it was but they only spoke Polish so that was no good. But in the end we did succeed in finding the hut, and we were just in time for the raising of the standards.

It was a very impressive ceremony and I was very surprised when the Polish boys saluted in the Nazi fashion, only with two fingers.

After flags had been hoisted we had to dash through the rain and mud to another hut, where we had dancing, singing etc. Some of the Polish boys gave a display of their national dancing which was very interesting. We also witnessed some of their singing which was very beautiful. The boys who had ages ranging from 14 to 18 were very quiet, some of them spoke a little English. A noticeable thing about them was that they wore very short shorts, a fact which the Rangers remarked upon!

While we were having fun and games Neville arrived soaking wet, he had cycled and gone off the track into a ditch. He changed into some clothes lent him by the Poles. After one of the Polish dances we English folk (some of us) gave our version of B.R.A.V.O. the only thing we could do!

The party ended about 11 p.m. with flag-down, taps and the National Anthem. We came home in a lorry provided by the Poles. This evening proved that languages are no obstacle in international Scouting. So let's go ahead. CZUWAT!

BE PREPARED!

**CHRISTMAS 1946**

This year we were unable to ring a peal of bells for Midnight Mass because of the condition of the steeple. However at eleven twenty five I put on my server's robes and entered the church with full choir behind me. After a procession and the blessing of the crib we began the normal communion procession. One hundred and fifty people attended the service.

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 22, 1947**

Received my calling up papers today.

**THURSDAY FEBRUARY 6, 1947**

Joined up!

**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 28, 1947**

At 6.30 I went to our Scout headquarters to bid my official farewell and to hand over my warrants.

**DECEMBER 1947**

I had been on my embarkation leave and on Wednesday – sorry Tuesday the 23rd I came home for a few days Christmas leave. Of course at 11 on Christmas Eve I was ringing in the festive season and followed by Midnight Mass. Christmas was spent in the proper place – home. On Boxing Day the family went out visiting friends and the next day at ten past one I got on the bus for Petersfield and said goodbye to Petworth.

# The end of an era

Newspaper coverage of the final year and death of the third Earl of Egremont in 1837. Ian Yonge

This article focuses on how the third Earl of Egremont's death was covered by the press of the day. The reports below are largely taken from the nineteenth-century newspaper collections held by the British Library and the online British Newspaper Archive. The apparently random mixture of publications simply reflects what has survived.

Many London and regional newspapers carried the same identical reports – they were obviously syndicated or simply ‘copied and pasted’. Editors also shared news and opinion by exchanging their papers with each other. In this way news could travel across the country quite quickly. For example, the Earl died on the evening of November 11 but his death was reported in *The Derby Mercury* by the fifteenth. At that time, before there was a national railway network to deliver London papers around the country, the regional and provincial titles carried both national and non-local news.

Interestingly, few of the reports refer to the Earl's role as a patron of the arts and none to his role as an agricultural reformer. His relationships with women are only occasionally hinted at. The fact that his eldest son was illegitimate is covered but really only in the context of how and why the title passed to a nephew. Many refer to his benevolence in the county of Sussex. Mark Anthony Lower wrote in *The Worthies of Sussex* (1865): ‘It has been stated that in the course of 60 years he spent in acts of charity & liberality upwards of up to £1,200,000.’

Obituaries had featured in newspapers since about 1750, but it was rare before the second quarter of the nineteenth century for a death to be marked by anything more than a simple announcement. At this time, newspapers were sold to booksellers and hawkers. Hawkers collected them and sold to coffee-houses and other resorts of the reading and the ‘chattering’ classes. The tradition of delivering newspapers to private addresses had not yet started.

It is possible that *The Morning Post* and *The Brighton Patriot* – the two main papers covered below – had a ‘stringer’ in Petworth who was engaged to report on parties and balls at the big house. Or, it could indeed have been the Revd Sockett. In their biography of Sockett, *Poor Cottages and Proud Palaces*, Sheila Haynes and Leigh Lawson record that he was informed of

the Earl's death at midnight and that he undertook the task of writing many letters concerning it. Sockett was the Rector of St Mary's, Petworth for many years and the Earl's confidant.

George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont, was born on December 18, 1751, the eldest son and heir of the second Earl Egremont. He succeeded to the title at the age of twelve on the death of his father. As a young man at the family's London residence, Egremont House, he associated with the macaronis, noted for their eccentric dress and excessive dining and gambling. Later in life he grew tired of London society and largely withdrew to Petworth. He sold Egremont House in 1794.

There are many references below to the Earl's physician, Sir Matthew Tierney. In 1816 he had been appointed Physician in Ordinary to the Prince Regent and continued in the role after the accession of George IV in 1820. In Brighton, he was known for his introduction of a smallpox vaccination scheme for the town as the Earl was in the Petworth area. Egremont owned some 37,000 acres of land around Petworth, mainly tenanted. The reports portray him as a benevolent country landlord of old England in a world which was rapidly changing.

*The Morning Post* November 29, 1836 <sup>1</sup>

The Earl of Egremont has been distributing food and clothing to the poor with unsparing hand at Petworth, Cokermonth and Orchard Wyndham.

*The Southampton Herald* December 24, 1836

On Monday evening last, the Earl of Egremont gave his usual Christmas Ball to his tenantry and their friends, at his seat at Petworth. A new ball room was fitted up expressly for the occasion, brilliantly lighted by eighteen gas burners. The whole of the arrangements were made upon the most liberal scale. About 700 persons were present, who tripped it on the light fantastic toe till day-dawn. Refreshments, attendance, and every thing that could add to the comfort of the guests, were plentiful. On the venerable, generous-hearted, and highly esteemed nobleman visiting the ball room, he was most enthusiastically cheered; and the sight of so many happy faces, made so by his liberality and condescension, must have been a proud and gratifying sight to him. The members of his Lordship's family, joined the company, taking a part in the dancing and rendering themselves polite and agreeable to all the company. This is the sort of urbanity and good feeling that should exist between a landlord and his tenantry. It makes a nobleman beloved and respected by all around him; and the Earl of Egremont

may proudly be held up as a pattern of English nobility, delighting to do good and to see those around him happy.

*The Southampton Herald* January 28, 1837

We regret to state that the Earl of Egremont has been ill for some days. His Lordship has been visited several times by Mr J. Tierney [*sic*] and we are happy to learn that the latest accounts of his Lordship's health are favourable.

*The Morning Post* February 2, 1837

It was currently reported here yesterday that the Earl of Egremont was dead but we are happy to contradict it and to be enabled to state that at ten o'clock last night his Lordship was better.

*The Morning Post* May 28, 1837

The venerable Earl of Egremont has arrived at his lodge in Rock Gardens.<sup>2</sup> We are happy to state that his Lordship's health is much improved.

*The Morning Post* June 10, 1837

The Earl of Egremont – We are happy to state that the venerable Earl's illness which proceeded from a cold, is far from a serious nature and by a letter received in town yesterday afternoon, we are informed that his Lordship was recovering as fast as possible.

*The Standard* June 14, 1837

The Earl of Egremont is, we are happy to state, so much recovered he is able to dine with his family.

*The Southampton Herald* June 17, 1837

The Earl of Egremont gave his annual fête at Petworth Park on Saturday last, when upwards of 4000 of the poor of the town and neighbourhood were regaled at the venerable Lord's expense. The day was devoted to all kinds of field sports, and was closed in by a splendid display of fireworks by Jones. The Earl himself was not present on the occasion, having been recently suffering from severe indisposition; but we are happy to add he is now much better, and is at present sojourning at East Lodge, Brighton.

*The Morning Post* August 28, 1837

The venerable Earl of Egremont after passing nearly a week at Brighton,

returned to Petworth yesterday. An elegant portrait of his Lordship, subscribed for by the inhabitants in honour of the Noble Earl's munificence to the several institutions at Brighton, was hung up to the Town Hall yesterday morning.

Sir Matthew Tierney and family will return to Brighton next Wednesday. We believe Sir Matthew will visit the Earl of Egremont prior to his return.

*The Morning Post* October 5, 1837

The Earl of Egremont was in town last we, and so well he was able to mount his horse without assistance. Since then his Lordship has returned to Petworth.

*The Morning Post* November 9, 1837

We regret exceedingly to state that the Earl of Egremont has been taken seriously ill. An express arrived at Brighton at two o'clock yesterday morning for Sir Matthew Tierney, who immediately drove down to Petworth.

*The Morning Post* November 13, 1837

Death of the Earl of Egremont. An express from Petworth reached Brighton at ten o'clock yesterday morning, announcing the death of the venerable Earl which took place at eleven o'clock on Saturday night: Sir Matthew Tierney, who had been indefatigable in his attendance, was present at the occurrence of this melancholy event. His Lordship was in the 86th year of his age, having been born on the 18th of December, 1751. He succeeded to the title on the 21st of August, 1763, and in his turn succeeded by his nephew, Captain George Francis Wyndham, R.N.

The name of the late Earl is associated with universal benevolence to the poor, and munificence in the encouragement of art. As a relation and a landlord he was all that a relation and a landlord ought to be; and it is not a mere commonplace to say, that his death will be a deep and heart-felt regret to all who felt the public spirit and private worth that were combined in the character of this 'fine old English Gentleman'.

*The Brighton Patriot* November 14, 1837 <sup>3</sup>

The Death of the Earl of Egremont. It is with feelings of unfeigned and universal sorrow that we record the demise of this venerable and universally revered nobleman, which event took place on the night of Saturday, the 11th inst, a few minutes after 11 o'clock. Mr Matthew Tierney [*sic*] was in attendance on his Lordship in his last moments having been sent to attend his Lordship on Wednesday last. On Thursday his Lordship was somewhat better

but continued from that time gradually to sink and expired at the hour we have named above on Saturday last. His Lordship was in the 86th year of his age.

It is but seldom that a nobleman or a person of inferior condition be he what he may, ceases to exist, whose loss will be so severely felt and whose memory shall be so much and so long respected as that of the Earl of Egremont. He was not eminent as a statesman or a warrior, nor illustrious for elegance of genius, he was remarkable for one quality alone and that was immense benevolence. To do good seemed to be his great characteristic and as other men are raised for their figure or rank, their wit or their splendour, the Earl of Egremont was praised and praised universally for his generosity. He seemed to delight in giving as other men delight in accumulating and to do good in him was the mere instinct of a noble nature.

Fortunately for the Earl of Egremont and more fortunately for that portion of mankind of the county of Sussex and the neighbourhood of Petworth, he possessed a princely fortune and long life. These enabled him to indulge to upmost his charities and his gifts and allowed him to perform a long succession of useful notions to his fellow creatures.

In the early part of his life he was gay and splendid, loved and indulged in expense without extravagance or without impairing his fortune but he detested gambling and drinking and injured his estate or constitution neither by one nor the other.

Nature has been bountiful to him in form and face. He possessed a good but not a lofty figure and his features were regular and handsome. His manners were easy, simple and unaffected and if he possessed the pride which usually accompanies exalted rank and splendid fortune, it was never shown in haughtiness of demeanour or roughness of conduct.

He never took, we believe, any part or interest in politics. It may be supposed from the rank that he held in society, that his political leanings inclined to Toryism for in his youth, Tory principles were held in honour and it was quite sufficient to be noble, rich and exclusive, to be respected by the high and venerated by the low. But if he held high Tory principles and was intolerant and overbearing in his opinions respecting his own rank and persons of his own class, he never obtruded them on public notice and was content in keeping 'the even tenor of his way' unmolested and unmolested.

In truth he never meddled in policies or appeared – if we may form an opinion from his conduct – to understand them; he might despise them or he might not or which is more probable – he might think that actions are more sincere than words and that instead of making long harangues respecting

**BELOW** 'He possessed a good but not a lofty figure and his features were regular and handsome' *The Brighton Patriot*, November 14, 1837. An engraving of the third Earl of Egremont by Henry Robinson after the painting by William Derby, published on September 1, 1826 by John Phillips, Petworth.



the means of making mankind happy the better way was to do them some immediate and effectual good. He certainly had more to do with the poor than the rich and received a greater satisfaction in seeing a thousand hungry persons enjoying a hearty meal at his expense than in making a vapid discourse to famished multitudes respecting the means of existence.

We might cite a thousand examples of public and private charity without enumerating a twentieth part of his good acts and fill pages of useful deeds and yet have pages to fill. To all public and charitable establishments he was a donor and no person in want ever went out of his presence unassisted. He might sometimes give imprudently but he always gave. We cite the following acts of generosity because we have heard them from the best authority:

Lord C., a venerable and respected nobleman, was known to be much embarrassed, and a subscription was opened at White's to relieve him. Lord Egremont was applied to and he gave an indefinite answer. A few days afterwards he called on the receiver of the subscriptions, and putting a check for £1,000 into his hands, said, 'There, put my name down for 500, and say nothing about the rest'. Dr. B., a physician well known at one time in Brighton, was much involved. 'How is it,' said Lord Egremont, when he happened to see him, 'that I hear so much of your debts and difficulties? Here, take this,' putting a thousand pounds into his hand, 'pay your debts, and let me hear no more of these things.'

We might accumulate instances of this sort and swell out an article to an unnecessary length upon these and similar generous actions of his Lordship but the mention of them would be superfluous in a county where his character and deeds are so well known.

The family of Egremont as is well known is ancient and illustrious and connected by descent with some of the most eminent English and Irish families. The title of the Earl of Egremont passes to the late Lord's nephew in default of legitimate children and part of the estates also, it being generally understood that the late Earl had the power of bestowing the greater part of his large estates and other property on his children by the late Countess of Egremont previous to their marriage.

The death of the Earl of Egremont will leave a gap in English Society which will not easily be filled up. He was we believe almost the only example left of that old English nobility which regarded themselves as accountable stewards of their own wealth, as a depository of immense riches for the benefit of mankind. If he had some errors in his youth he repaid them all by the regularity and virtues of his advanced life. It was said of Augustus 'that it would

have been well for mankind if that he had never lived or never died.’ This was said of a man who did much evil in his youth and much good in his age but Lord Egremont was consistent throughout for no one ever accused him of doing evil. His life therefore should have been eternal as an example and a blessing:

His life as gentle and the elements  
so mixed in him that nature might stand up  
And say to the World, this was a man

[This account was reproduced and credited in *The Times of London* on November 15 under the words: ‘The following panegyric has perhaps one or two exceptionable passages but in the main is just. The deceased peer was certainly a noble specimen of the best breed of English gentlemen.’]

### *The Derby Mercury* November 15, 1837

Death of the Earl of Egremont. George O’Brien Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, Baron Cockermouth, and a Baronet, was born December 18, 1751, and he died at Petworth House, deeply lamented, on Saturday night at eleven o’clock, in the 86th year of his age. Sir Matthew Tierney was in attendance upon his Lordship from the time he was taken seriously ill – namely, on last Tuesday morning, till he died.

### *The Times of London* November 15, 1837

On Saturday night, the 11th inst, died George O’Brien Wyndham, Earl of Egremont and Baron of Cockermouth, after a short illness, at his house at Petworth. The decease of this nobleman, at the great age of nearly 86, has been attended by the deepest regret of his relatives and numerous friends, and his memory is accompanied by the esteem and regard of all classes; and more especially in the county of Sussex, where his liberality, benevolence and urbanity have during his long life, been more immediately exercised.

### *The Standard* November 16, 1837

It is said that the late Lord Egremont has left the bulk his vast estates in Ireland and England to Colonel Wyndham his eldest son; the Cumberland estates to General Wyndham his second son; a small estate in Sussex to his third son; and the Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Devon, and Cornwall estates to his nephew, the present earl. The legacies are few, and no other members of the family are mentioned in the will except in distant reversions of entail. The executors are Colonel Wyndham and Sir Charles Burrell.

*The Preston Port News* November 18, 1837

Death of the Earl of Egremont. George O'Brien Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, Baron Cockermouth, and a baronet, was born December 14, 1751, and he died at Petworth House, deeply lamented, on Saturday night, at eleven o'clock, in the 86th year of his age. Sir M. Tierney was in attendance upon his lordship from the time he was taken seriously ill. This excellent and munificent nobleman, whose name is associated with almost every institution of the country, of which the object is to increase the sum of human happiness (vide Baxter's *History of Sussex*,) was a liberal patron of the arts, a generous benefactor to the poor in the neighbourhood, and for miles around Petworth, by whom his death will be sincerely and deeply felt. He succeeded his father Aug. 21, 1763, and was for a great number of years Lord Lieutenant of the county. His health during the last year or two had been rapidly declining, and his lordship when last in Brighton was heard to say that he should not go through another winter. He is succeeded in his title by Capt. Percy, R. N. The Earl and Countess of Munster were at Petworth when the venerated parent of the latter breathed his last.

*The Morning Post* November 19, 1837

The Earl and Countess of Munster, since the death of the Earl of Egremont, have been residing here. It is expected that his Lordship will be present at the funeral, which is fixed to take place next Tuesday. The decease of Lord Egremont has produced a general gloom and unfeigned grief in Petworth and its vicinity. The shops of the tradesmen have been partially closed ever since the lamentable event; and so truly was his Lordship beloved by the poor that hundreds of the peasantry are expected to be present at the funeral of their deceased patron and friend.

Reports of the third Earl's funeral will appear in the next issue of the *PSM*.

**1** Originally a Whig paper, from the late 1700s *The Morning Post* became a moderate Tory organ. A number of well-known writers contributed, including Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb and William Wordsworth. Its circulation in the early 1800s was around 4,000.

**2** This is a reference to Egremont's Brighton house, East Lodge.

**3** Some of the most detailed reports are from *The Brighton Patriot* which seems to have been the main newspaper covering Petworth. This weekly paper was intended for a readership of middle-class liberal and working-class radicals and was published between 1835 and 1839. The edition of November 14 was of five sheets. Most of the front page was taken up with official notices, which was quite common. The death of the Earl of Egremont was reported in the fifth of six columns on page two.