THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine
No.197. December 2024

A rustyback fern, *Asplenium ceterach*, growing in a wall at Fittleworth churchyard. See 'Matters of grave importance', page 38. The fern is so called because the backs of its leaves are the colour of rust. 'Native, occasional. Most records are from garden walls and churchyards with a few on railway brickwork. Sussex is the eastern limit of its British range'. (Frances Abraham et al., *The Flora of Sussex*, 2018).

FRONT AND BACK COVERS
Frosted sedges in early-morning mist. See 'A frosty morning near Petworth', page 28.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

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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, anwhere 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.

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Mike Mulcahy

I am sitting here in Petworth looking out on a damp cold day realising that autumn has arrived. At least we have the season's programme of events to look forward to – the events insert is enclosed. The summer programme is almost over, with just the deer-rutting walk before the evening talks continue.

There have been a number of contentious issues that the Society has to note. The first and most important is the closure and potential loss of the much-loved United Reform Church. One of our members, John Riddell, writes:

'The Society naturally has a concern about the closure of the URC. While for many it has meant a great loss to Petworth of the amazing community activities that took place there, the Society will also be concerned about the loss of any potential loss of the heritage and history of this vital part of Petworth's tradition and architecture.The Southern Synod of the URC are keen to enter into the conversation, and while they feel duty bound to realise the market value of the property (under Charity Commission rules) they would look sympathetically towards Petworth acquiring it for a future community project.

One option would be a Petworth Community Hub, which could include space for the Foodbank and Baby bank, weekly coffee mornings, the Lunch Club, consultation rooms available to care agencies, and a community meeting space. All of this would require project leaders, fundraisers, grant applications and reports on building conditions. It may be that this all leads nowhere but as this concept has been rumbling on for several years, the URC closure has triggered the conversation once again. Yet, we need to be careful about raising the hopes of the people of Petworth too soon before this has been thoroughly researched.'

The other issue that I must discuss is the cancellation of the St Edmund's Day Fair in its current format. A forum will be held on the day of the fair in the Leconfield Hall where its continuation in some form will be discussed. The organising committee were faced with costings of many thousands of pounds to even get the rides we all know and love to attend. November in Petworth is hectic with five events, most causing traffic disruption and – although the fair is now more than 800 years old – sponsorship, volunteers, organisers and general helpers are needed. I hope we will know more after the meeting on November 16 on a future way forward for the Fair.

EDITORIAL

Andrew Loukes

'No man is an island' John Donne famously reflected 400 years ago, and that sentiment of 1624 is echoed in two of this edition's articles bringing neighbouring Fittleworth into our sphere: Jane Verrell's history of her branch of the Williams family covers their time in Petworth, Fittleworth and elsewhere, and Jane would welcome any memories from readers who might remember her ancestors.

The Fittleworth thread continues in Deborah Wright's exploration of the churchyard of St Mary's, Fittleworth, which not only introduces a site of surprising antiquity and enduring appeal but also offers a wide-ranging history of Christian burial, enriched with references to other local churches and graveyards, including Petworth's.

I am grateful to Nick Taylor for sharing his late father's notes, written in Jumbo's inimitable style, on an extraordinary co-operation between the Leconfield Estate and the military to recover an unexploded bomb in 1969 – a tale made all the more gripping by the author's introductory recollections of wartime Petworth.

Earlier Estate business is brought to light by Andrew Howard, who has worked extensively to transcribe letters written 200 years ago to the benevolent third Earl of Egremont from his less popular Agent William Tyler. Not only does this small sample of selected correspondence demonstrate the extent of Estate matters beyond Petworth in those days but also gives glimpses into town life, most notably in recording a dreadful accident.

Thanks are also due to Miles Costello for sharing a wonderful set of photographs with accompanying explanations to demonstrate the traditional local skill of pimp-making, and to Anne Simmons whose album made by S.W. Hannant offers an entirely unique and extremely creative set of Petworth images from the 1940s, blending humour, nostalgia and no small amount of artistic ability. Jonathan Newdick has likewise once more found inspiration in the locality through a fittingly frosty series of photographs entirely appropriate for the season: a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers!

The Rotherbridge bomb

Jumbo Taylor (from notes written in 1969), courtesy of Nick Taylor

On a fine moonlight night with the moon trailing a light mackerel sky and odd flecks of white wispy cloud, it was a warm pleasant evening after a fine sunny Sunday in early May 1941. Being a clear evening as this, usually meant only one thing – a visit in some form or another from German bombers, either hunting for targets or on a special task. At the time I was only fifteen; Vic Carver was about the same age. To us the war up to now had been a very interesting and exciting game. What with dog-fights and visits to bomb craters and crashed planes, we always seemed to look forward to fine days and nights like this with eager anticipation. There had been one or two small raids today and tonight looked promising, so we as usual went out after dark, came home about 8:30 and separated and went indoors.

About one and a half hours later the thump of anti-aircraft fire from guns over the Downs drew us out again. After a while the crash of bombs signified the approach of several bombers which were flying singularly looking for troop camps that were stationed all around Petworth. There were several crashes which sounded close, but in fact were miles away and a few flares and incendiaries. Around eleven o'clock a single plane headed our way, came over the town from the south swinging away west then north leaving a visible vapour trail, then turned south and then west towards Portsmouth. As Vic Carver and I watched him go, we thought that was where he was going. Whether the barrage from Pompey which was engaging other enemy planes made him change his mind or not I don't know, but as we watched the smoky trail up among the light mackerel sky, he did a U-turn back towards Petworth. We both sprinted for the balcony around the old tennis court; we got breathlessly up. We looked back in the direction we last saw him and picked him up again, just as he veered slightly south-east.

All of a sudden there was a shrill whistle which changed to a horrible rattle, like a train over points. We both ducked, a couple of heavy explosions and then the sudden flare of incendiaries over the south-west corner of the town. The plane vapour, gradually disappearing as we dived and ran for home, was soon lost to us. Around 11.30 on Monday morning we discovered that the bombs had fallen by the river at Rother Bridge; two 500-pounders

The author's original note-form text has been largely retained, with occasional changes in punctuation to aid readability.

landed close to the old Whitney's Cows bedded down by north-east corner of Budham wood, killing around twenty and injuring an old carthorse that had to be destroyed. A casket of incendiaries had scattered from the fields up to the farm, but no damage; a third 500-lb bomb landed some ten feet west of a big ditch and 25 yards from the hunting gate in the north-east corner of the field by the wood. So, on Monday afternoon we did as usual, made off to investigate. Cutting across the fields we slipped by the usual policeman and signs. We had no trouble finding the craters; bits of cows had been scattered for yards around. There were two eight-foot craters which marked the point of explosion; the third, the one that we were interested in, had left a hole some twenty feet across which by then had gradually filled up with water and shingle, and was now only two feet six inches deep; we poked around with a stick but didn't find anything, so just made our way back.

On our way we picked up two live incendiaries which we stuffed in our shirts and walked out through the farm and went home. Old Streeter, Lordy's head gardener, was a special constable then, so having been told off by our parents, we took them to him. He nearly went up the wall and lectured us something cruel, telling us to take them back and not let them get wet, so we hid them behind the gas meter in Frank Gowan's coal shed by the building yard gates for the night and took them back the following afternoon. The temptation to get them wet proved too much, so we lay them down and wet on them. Disgusted that they didn't go off we hurried to the river and slung them in above the old floating bridge, still nothing happened. Every time after that when we were walking that way we paid a visit to the hole of the unexploded bomb and watch the whole gradually slide in.

In 1946 or thereabouts the bomb disposal made an attempt to recover the bomb, but at six feet decided to abandon due to water, leaving behind a shallow depression which over the years gradually grassed over, but was never forgotten.

Early this spring (1969), we – the Leconfield Estates – made out a scheme to improve the carrier ditches from Coultershall [Coultershaw] to Cathanger on both sides of the river. This particular bomb was too close to the ditch for

my liking. So, in the interest of safety and for the safety of the contractors, I contacted the Bomb Disposal, and as a result of that call the operation to defuse the bomb started in May. The B.D.S moved in to locate the bomb by means of water injections; this was successfully done and they left leaving three markers. On July 20, equipment was brought down and stored in our workshops. On the 28th the crew came down and started to set up, first the large pump and dewatering tackle, then an overhead gantry erected. The template for the dig was set out.

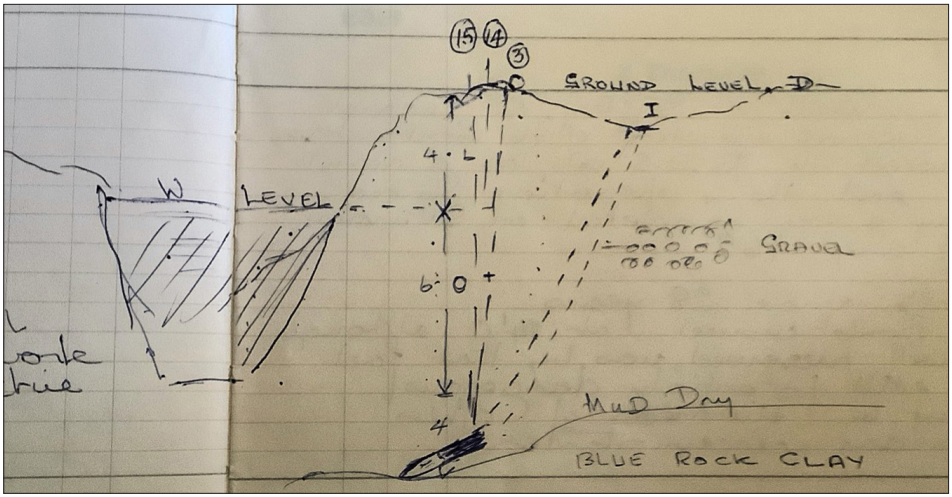
The shaft digging commenced on the fourth of August. The first day they went down three feet; the second day another two feet which produced a lot of water; third day another two feet, again a lot of water; fourth day three feet – less water; fifth day three feet more, more water again. The ninth of August one foot six, found fins, dug three feet around to clean bomb, all four fin sections recovered, but still lightly attached to bomb. Then dug around and cleaned sides to fuse pocket. Major Nichols from bomb disposal Maidenhead arrived about five p.m, whole crew bar four were cleared from area, Sergeant Major Hambrook and Major Nichols worked on bomb.

The fuse was injected with a salt solution to stop the clock. Only one fuse which was clockwork. I took drinks down to the boys while the other four worked on the fuse, this took just over half an hour; although the bomb was in pretty good shape it had started leaking nitro glycerine and it became rather a hazardous operation. The fuse was left for 45 minutes while the solution took effect; during this time Sergeant Major Hambrook and Major Nichols returned to the vehicle parked by side of gate to field and also had a drink. At the end of 45 minutes the whole crew returned to the site to prepare and execute the job of steaming out the explosive charge. The plant required to carry out this work was sent down on short notice, the actual operation of steaming out could not have been very easy. The backplate of the bomb unscrewed very easily, steam hoses then worked inside melting the explosive causing it to run out into the water at the bottom of the shaft, this was then collected and put in sandbags then burnt away from the site. This job took far longer than was thought, as the explosive would not run out. Steam houses had to be removed and they had to rake out

BELOW
A sketch by Jumbo Taylor indicating the position of the bomb at fourteen feet below ground level, which demonstrates the difficulty of removing it.

the explosives by hand – not pleasant. The job in fact was not done until after 12 p.m. then the bomb was hoisted out.

A menacing operation was carried out, a four-inch hole was cut in the side in order to remove the fuse pocket. This was then removed, carried to few yards from the shaft and a pound of jelly (explosive) attached and destroyed the fuse. The whole operation from finding of the tail to the complete disarming of the bomb would be something in the region of nineteen to twenty hours. I returned to site about 7.30 pm. Sergeant Major Hambrook was alone on duty and very tired after a 24-hour day, very wet, up to his knees and very hungry but at least well satisfied. I think all remains now is to backfill removing all timbers and watering plant and clean site. This sees the end of a very well executed operation. By means of: 1, initial location; 2, accurate location during early May; 3, movement of Plant to site from base; 4, setting up Plant; 5, excavation to bomb; 6, diffuse and remove quarter ton charge; 7, backfill and cleanup; 8, removal of plant and personnel. The whole operation could not have happened without the expertise, experience and bravery of all who took part, irrespective of rank or age.



An occasional job for woodmen

The traditional pimp-making process. Miles Costello

Pimps, or bavins as they were sometimes known, are small faggots or bundles of mainly birch brushwood traditionally used as firelighters. Large estates and country houses would use many hundreds of pimps over a winter and even into the summer for lighting ovens and open fires. The much larger faggot, from which pimps are cut, would be in demand by bakers for use in commercial ovens. Pimp- and faggot-making was until recently an occasional job for woodmen who having cleared the land of underwood would then use the surplus 'brish' or 'brush' in the faggot-making process. The woodman pictured is Peter Wakeford and he is seen working at Palfrey Copse alongside the London road from Petworth in 1983. See also *PSM* 34.

1 Preparing lengths of string to tie the pimps. Tarred twine is often used.

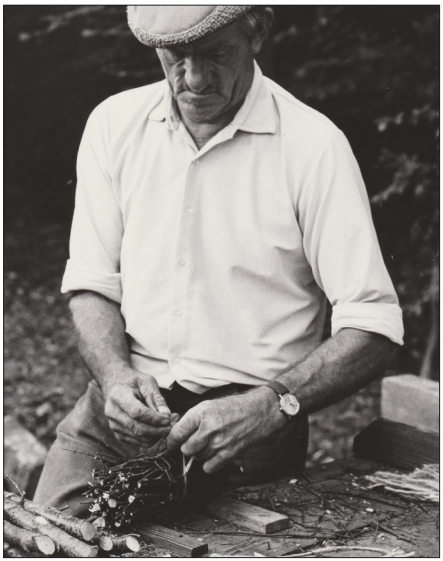
2 An already prepared birch faggot laid out on the 'boy' is cut to the desired length of ten inches.

3 The cleaver, surprisingly heavy, is the essential tool of any pimp-maker.

4 The pimps or bundles are pressed using a chain and are pulled tight beneath the table.

This sequence of photographs has been captioned by Chris Letchford, a Pulborough pimp maker who supplied the following instructions for lighting a fire with a pimp.

Place crumpled newspaper underneath your pimp with small split logs on top before you light it. The natural oils in the birch will ensure instant combustion and produce a great heat to build the base of your fire.



5 The pimp is tied with string.

7 The firmly tied pimps are placed within the pimp machine.

6 A strap attached to a handle mechanism compresses the bundles together inside a circular iron frame called a pimp machine.

8 The pimp machine when filled holds 25 pimps.

9 Once pressed, the pimps can be tied together as a single bundle.

10 Released from the frame, a short-handled bat or paddle is used to pat the brushwood down to make a neat finish.

11 And so the process begins once more. We are told that a good woodman working on the Leconfield Estate could make up to 250 pimps a day using eight brushwood faggots.

The bricklayers will keep their pledge

Some letters from Mr. W. Tyler, Land Agent, to George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont written in 1824.
Andrew Howard, with notes by the Editor

For the six years prior to lockdown I visited the County Records Office to transcribe correspondence between the third Earl of Egremont and his agent William Tyler (W.T.), plus other records. Overall, it gave me great insight into how a very large estate was being run across the period between 1780 and 1830, evidenced here by just a few sample entries from the spring of two hundred years ago.

The correspondence is held in letter books, as copies of letters sent to the third Earl, which are generally formed of replies to specific questions from Egremont. The Earl's letters are not included. The destination is always stated: if it is not Petworth itself, Egremont's London house at 4 Grosvenor Place (long demolished) is the most common destination, although Brighton is sometimes shown. Tyler is usually in Petworth although he does sometimes go to London, and just once to Cockermouth Castle, his employer's house in Cumberland (now Cumbria). For more on William Tyler (*c.* 1764-1835) see Alison McCann in *PSM* 115.

SAMPLE ENTRIES

Direct transcriptions are given within quotation marks and with original spellings and punctuation, otherwise the entries are summarised highlights.

April 6, 1824: *From London to Brighton concerning the acquisition of 'the Bramley premises'.*
'Everything about the house is in indescribable confusion in consequence of the work; tho' the work itself is going on rapidly.' Tyler reports that 'decayed timbers have been retained to show your Lordship' and notes it remarkable that there has not been a collapse. There were also issues with the tithes.

[The third Earl had acquired land and houses at Bramley, Surrey, partially in order to divert water from the mill pond to the newly opened Wey and Arun Canal in which he had an interest. The buildings included the dilapidated Bramley House, a mansion on which he spent large sums. This was ultimately occupied by his nephew Capt. George Francis Wyndham (who eventually inherited the Earldom of Egremont, although not Petworth, and

left Bramley on the death of his uncle in 1837). The contents were sold in 1845, and following further extensive repairs by the third Earl's heir Colonel Wyndham, Bramley was leased to Captain Edward Jekyll in 1849 – it was the childhood home of his daughter, the gardener Gertrude Jekyll. The house was demolished in 1951.]

May 4, 1824: *Tyler writing from London to Petworth regarding Grosvenor Place:* 'The Bricklayers will keep their pledge . . . your Lordships House will be quitted by them at the end of this week'. Two maids from Petworth will assist with the clean-up and the plasterers will finish next week when the house will be ready for occupation by the family.

'The Lady Marsham's house will require the continuance of the workmen . . .'

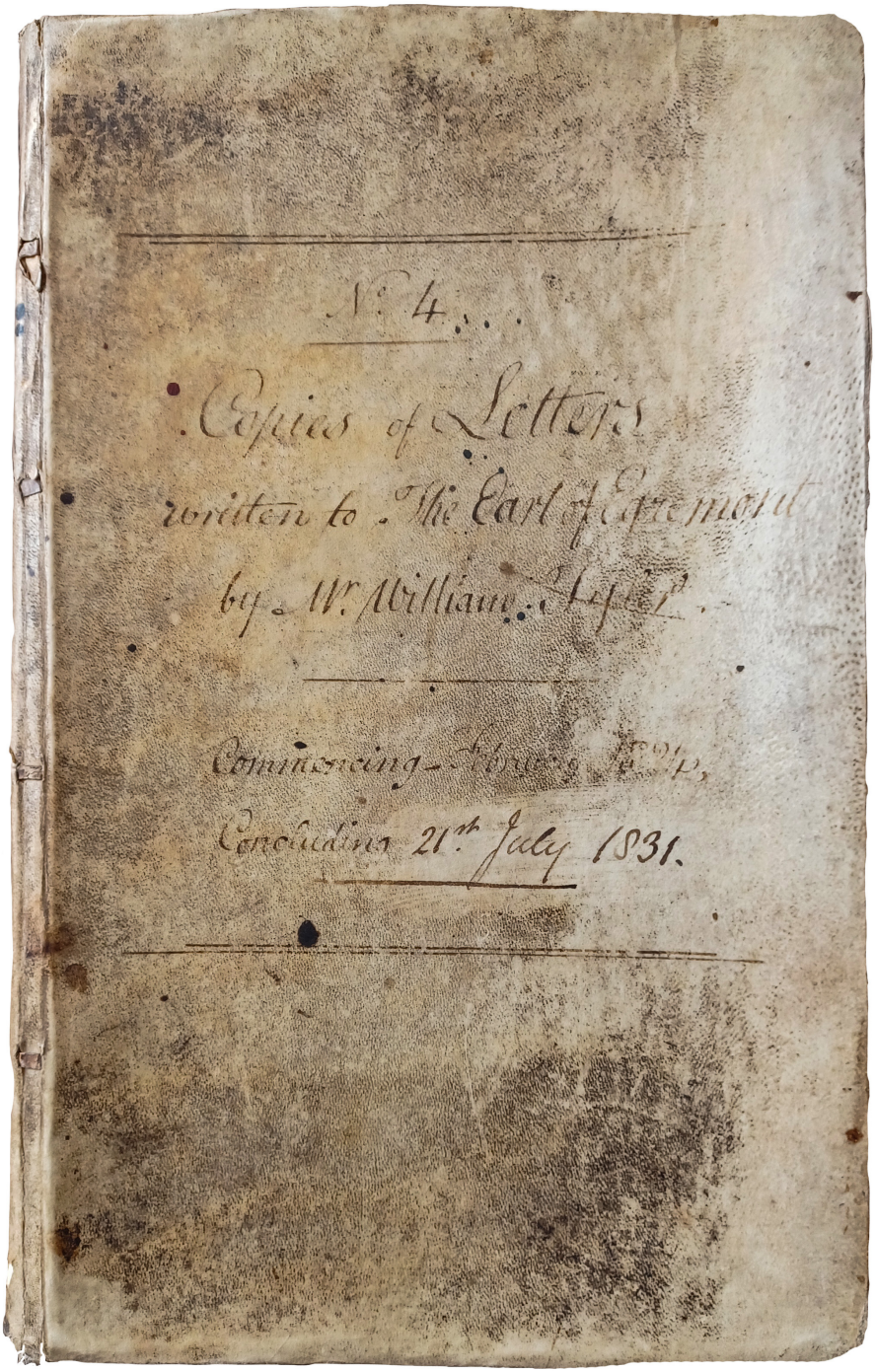
[Lady Marsham was the widowed daughter of the third Earl's sister, Frances. Her husband, Sir John Buchanan Riddell, MP for Linlithgow, had died insolvent in 1819 and Egremont – typically – became involved in resolving affairs for his niece.]

James Richardson, brother of Joseph, has been a satisfactory watchman, and 'seems now disposed to engage as a Footman; and as he is cleanly and used to Horses, and has also had some experience in waiting at table' he will do very well. Tyler has been gratified 'rather unexpectedly as I had some prejudice against him' by Charles Kemble acting as Falstaff. 'If the Drury Lane Box is not occupied on Thursday evening, I shall be much obliged by the order for it'.

[Following Tyler's recommendation, James Richardson appears in the servants wage-books hereafter. Tyler was often given permission to use Lord Egremont's seats for the London theatres, although it is unclear why he should have been prejudiced against the portrayal of Falstaff in Shakespeare's Henry IV by this member of the famous Kemble dynasty of actors.]

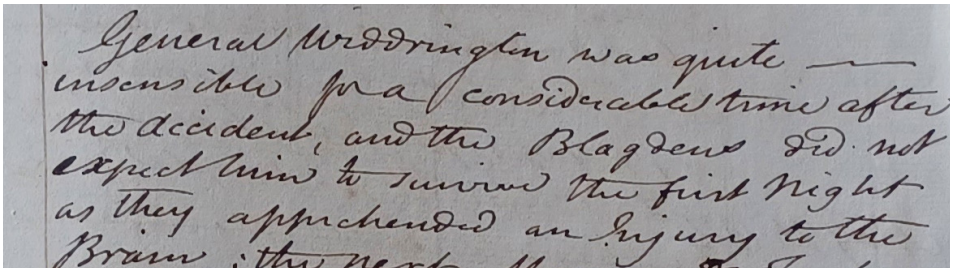
May 6, 1824: *Written from London to Petworth. 'Sandgate near Storrington is advertised for sale by auction'.*

W.T. will bring the particulars to Petworth. 'I shall return tomorrow if I can get a place on the Chichester coach'.


No 4.
Copies of Letters
written to The Earl of Egremont
by W. William Esq.
Commencing 4th Oct. 1830,
Concluding 21st July 1831.

OPPOSITE AND BELOW

Letterbook No. 4. *Copies of Letters written to The Earl of Egremont by Mr William Tyler.* The front cover and two pages from May 1824 with a detail of the script – 'General Widderington was quite insensible for a considerable time after the accident and the Blagdens did not expect him to survive the first night as they apprehended an injury to the brain . . .' Petworth House Archives No.12020; courtesy of Lord Egremont.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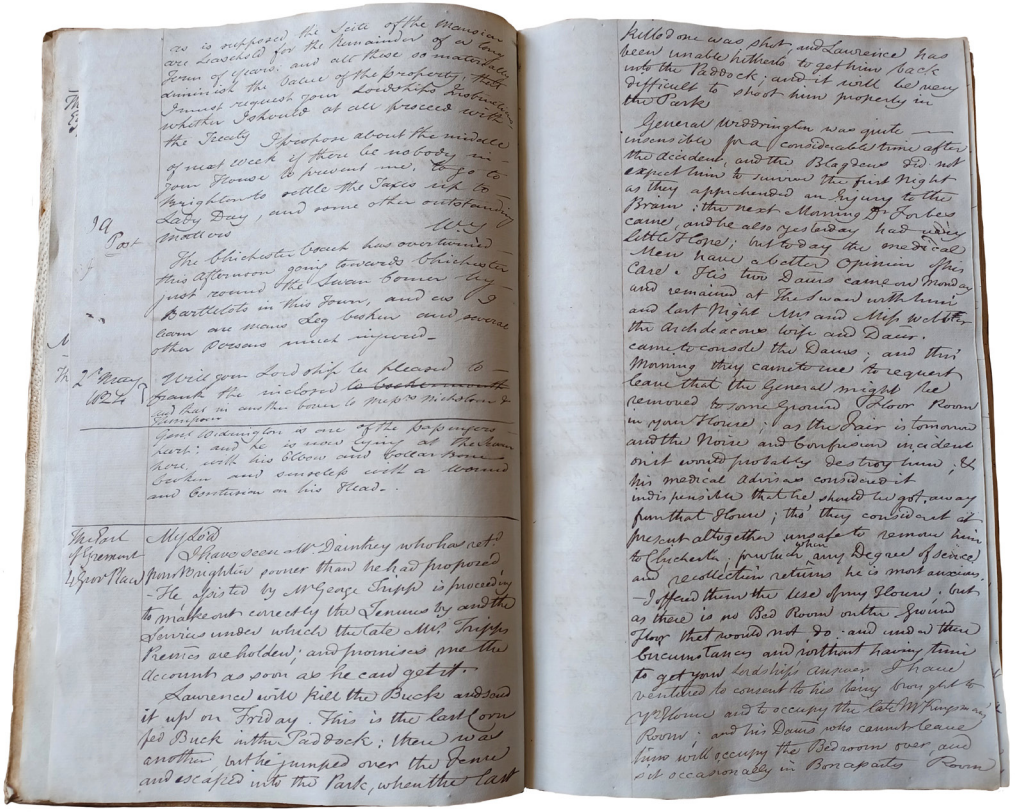
Brain; the next



[Despite this interest, Sandgate Park was never purchased by the third Earl, who in 1789 had acquired nearby Sullington Farm.]

May 10, 1824: *Both Tyler and Lord Egremont are now in Petworth.*
W.T. writes about Dromsallagh, the premises of Austin Butler. Questions of fact and leasehold details regarding measurements and so on are discussed.
[Meanwhile, at Petworth] the newly married Elizabeth Knight will do well to keep her husband away; his visits before their marriage were noted to have been too frequent. Lawrence will kill the venison. Should he send up the shoulders this time? Water has been high in the neighbourhood.

[The Dromsallagh premises relates to Egremont's estate in Ireland: the letter references Mr (Thomas) Crowe who was the third Earl's agent there. The Irish estates were sold in the 1920s. Elizabeth Knight, listed as a residential Housemaid in 1819, is listed as 'now Oldrey' in the servants wages for 1823 and her continuing service over the coming years suggests her husband did indeed keep away; Thomas Lawrence is the only one of the third Earl's servants for whom no job title is given in 1819 – the only year from this period when roles are specified – but clearly Lawrence held responsibility for estate venison.]

May 19, 1824: 'I will request the favor of your Lordship to sign (with 'Egremont' alone) the two notices, inclosed in the letter to Mr. Robert Bickers of Tadcaster…and in another cover, to Mr. Claridge, at Jervaux Abbey or wherever else he may be; and which relates to the tithes at Newsham claimed by Mr Green's tenants.'

[These requests relate to Egremont's Yorkshire estates, sold in the 1950s.]

'Mr. Upton has hitherto received no information of any damage to the Rother Navigation by the floods.'

[Thomas Poling Upton was the third Earl's Clerk of the Works.]

May 20, 1824: 'As I do no not know who, under Mr Tripp's will are the parties competent to contract; and as I wish also to know whether any further information has been obtained respecting the Heriots I wrote to request Mr James Tripp to come over'.

[James Upton Tripp (1749-1801) had been the Estate's legal agent before Tyler, who had begun as his understudy; Tripp's son was also called James. 'Heriots' were death duties. There is continuing correspondence over the period connected with the Tripp family's sale of property at Bedham and Little Bognor to Lord Egremont.]

'The Bundle of Title Deeds of the advowson of North Scarle are in the upper part of the Bookcase standing the Room which I used to occupy: and your Lordship or Mrs Knapman has one of the Keys.'

[The living of the church at North Scarle in Lincolnshire had been purchased for £2000 by Egremont in 1811 for the Rev. Thomas Sockett, formerly tutor to Egremont's sons and Rector of Petworth from 1816. Tyler is referring to a bookcase at 4 Grosvenor Place, where Mrs Knapman was the housekeeper.]

May 23, 1824: *From Petworth to Grosvenor Place.*
Edwards the bailiff is going into possession with the Executor against Brockhurst, late occupier of the house and smith's shop at Benges Gate.

[This refers to Estate property at Upwaltham.]

May 24, 1824: George Tripp has declined entering into contract regarding the sale of his family's property, referring W.T. to Mr Daintrey, currently in Brighton for the benefit of a warm sea bath. Tripp has sent a letter regarding twenty acres of copyhold land in the Manor of Bury, and two or three copyholds of unknown size in the Manor of Bedham, plus thirteen acres attached to the mansion. W.T. is proposing to go to Brighton next week to settle the taxes there up to Lady Day.

[George was another of James Upton Tripp's sons, although it is the name of his younger brother, Charles Upton Tripp, which ultimately appears on the deeds. The family's mansion was The Grove, Little Bognor. (NB Tyler's own mansion was Stringers Hall on East Street, Petworth.) The transaction with the Tripps eventually went through the following year for £36,600. George Daintrey was one of the notable family of Petworth solicitors who practised in the town from at least the 1780s and throughout the nineteenth century; George was himself a tenant of the third Earl before the family moved into Daintrey House, so-renamed, in the 1860s.]

'The Chichester coach has overturned this afternoon going towards Chichester just round the Swan Corner by Barttelots in this town, and as I learn one mans leg broken and several other persons much injured . . . Genl. Widrington is one of the passengers hurt; and he is now lying at the Swan here, with his elbow and collar bone broken and senseless with a wound and contusion on his head.'

[Richard Barttelot was a saddler who supplied the third Earl. The accident occurred on what is now Sadlers Row. The casualty was presumably Lieutenant

General David Latimer Tinling-Widdrington (1757-1839) of the Seventeenth Foot; his son, Major Widdrington was killed at Vitoria in 1813.]

May 27, 1824: 'I have seen Mr. Daintrey who has returned from Brighton sooner than he had proposed. He, assisted by Mr George Tripp is proceeding to make out correctly the terms by and the services under which the late Mr. Tripp's premises are holden; and promises me the account as soon as he can get it.

'Lawrence will kill the Buck and send it up on Friday. This is the last corn fed Buck in the Paddock: there was another, but he jumped over the fence and escaped into the Park, when the last killed one was shot, and Lawrence has been unable to get him back into the Paddock; and it will be very difficult to shoot him properly in the Park.'

'General Widderington was quite insensible for a considerable time after the accident, and the Blagdens did not expect him to survive the first night as they apprehended an injury to the brain.' Other medics, clerics and the General's daughters join him at The Swan '...and this morning they came to me to request leave that the General might be removed to some ground floor room in your house; as the fair is tomorrow and the noise and confusion incident on it would probably destroy him ... I have ventured to consent to his being brought to your house and to occupy the late Mr Kingsman's Room; and his daughters who cannot leave him will occupy the Bedroom over, and sit occasionally in Bonaparte's Room.'

[The Paddock is the part of the Pleasure Ground below the Rotunda and to the west of the National Trust car park. The surgeon Richard Blagden and his wife Harriet lived at Avenings in Golden Square. William Long Kingsman was a barrister and an MP in Ireland who was given rooms at Petworth sometime after the death of his wife in 1814; his portrait by Thomas Phillips is still in Petworth House. The description of his room suggests it was the one to the right of the Oak Hall entrance, which is now the National Trust entrance to the house and is traditionally known as the Lame Room. Bonaparte's Room was so-named because it housed Phillips's portrait of Napoleon; it subsequently became known as the Somerset Room.]

OPPOSITE The captions on this page of *The Petworth Book* read 'The first "Stop Me and Buy Some" wagon – I have been unable to discover why so many stone walls were simultaneously built around houses in Petworth – So an "Oldest Inhabitant" and I decided that as neither of us were there at the time, one explanation would probably be as unlikely as another, and by "stretching a pint [?]" modern costumes could illustrate "What Might Have Been– !"'And the walls of Petworth are 'not to be confused with Walls of China – Walls of De-Ice fame or Walls of the Soss Age.'

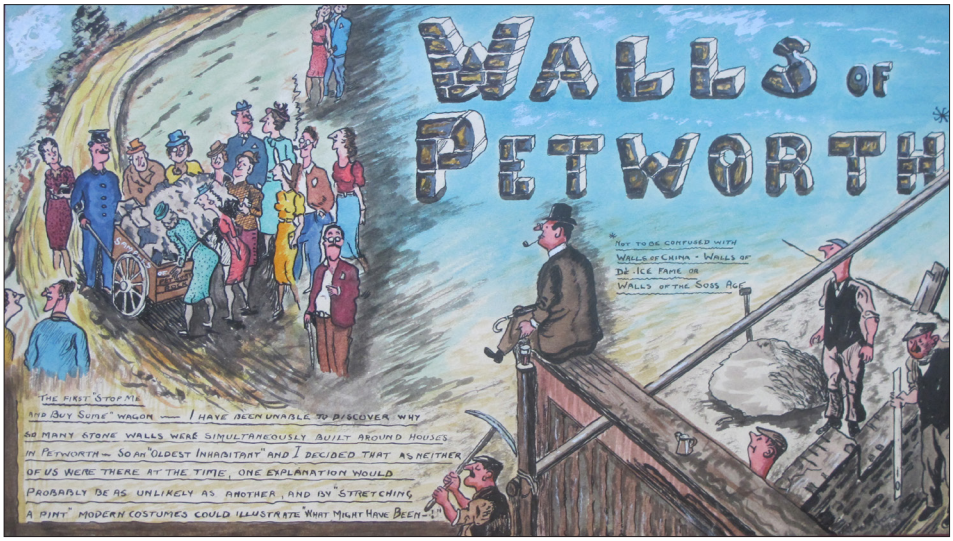
The Petworth Book

A unique and light-hearted look at Petworth in the early 1940s.
S. W. Hannant

The Petworth Book is a unique, hand-made and humorous look at Petworth in the early 1940s. According to a note on the back endpaper it was 'designed, made, and bound by, and is the property of S. W. Hannant, ~~The Pound, Pound Street, Petworth~~ 21/4/42'. Altered to '23, Roderick Av., Peacehaven. 1955'.

On the page headed 'Bits and Pieces' (see page 23) S. W. Hannant describes the book as an 'An endeavour to put together some Picture Postcards in a "something different" way to convey an impression of Petworth and District trusting that criticism will be kindly when it is remembered that variety in surface colour and perspective made the task more dificult – the designer hopes that the result will be as quaint as Petworth and nearly as pleasing!'

The book, which measures 14 by 10½ inches, is a curious combination of watercolour and collage, sometimes using photographs, often producing apparently impossible panoramas. The humour is typical of the period (see the caption on the opposite page) and would not have been out of place on the BBC Light Programme of a few years later. The book now belongs to Anne Simmons and we are grateful to her for introducing us to it.



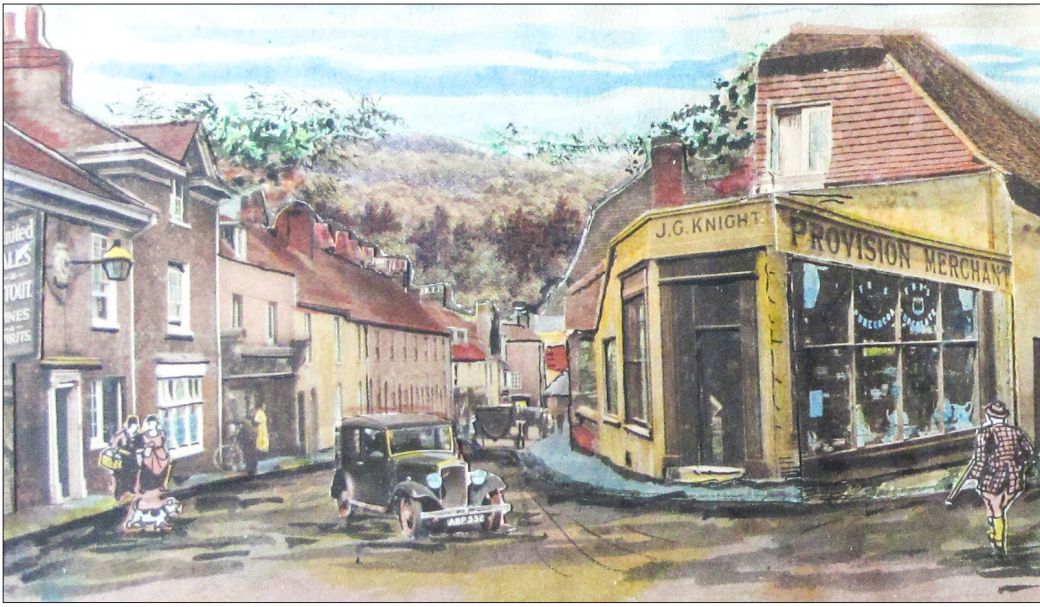
BELOW The title page of the book.

BOTTOM 'An impression of Lombard Street'.

BELOW 'Bits and Pieces' forms the introduction to the book. The wording is transcribed on page 21.

BOTTOM This snow scene is captioned 'Some old Petworth Houses brought together in an appropriate setting. A memory of the old days.'

PAGES 24 AND 25
'New Street, East Street and Angel Street' (above) and 'The junction of Pound Street and the Midhurst road' (below).


J.G. KNIGHT
PROVISION MERCHANT


Petworth


Petworth, Railway Station etc
COULTERSHAW
MILL
AND BRIDGE


PANORAMA
OF THE SQUARE
AS IT WAS
NOW
THE
INTERNATIONAL
STORE
THIS WAS CHURCH ST AND TUDOR HOUSE
LOMBARD
STREET
LORD
LECONFIELDS
FOX HOUNDS
"Petworth House, Entrance Gates, 'Gog and Magog'"

OPPOSITE ABOVE The Railway Inn (now Badgers), Pound Street, Petworth and Coultershaw.

OPPOSITE BELOW Nine views in Petworth including Lord Leconfield with his foxhounds.

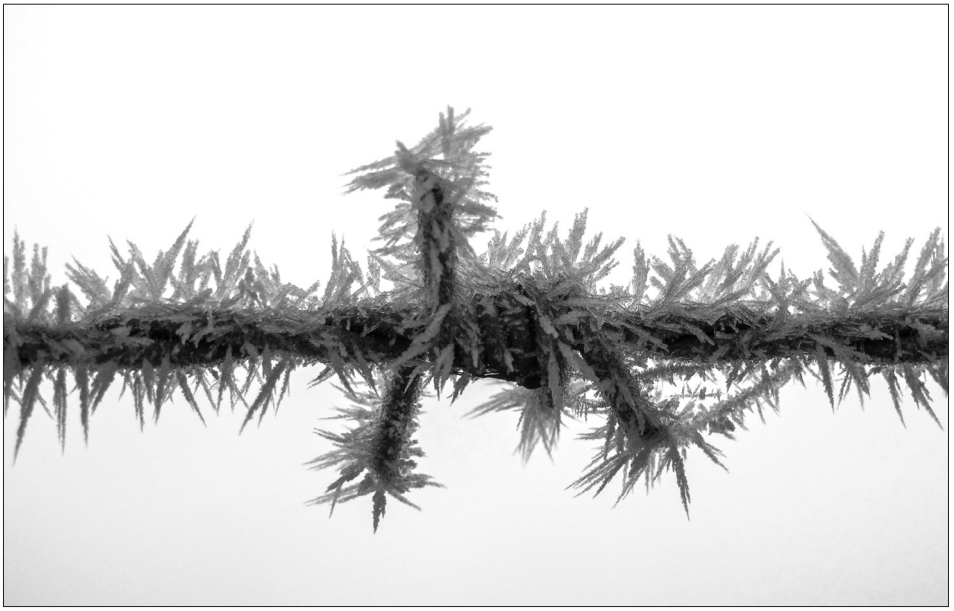
BELOW A panorama round the hills with Byworth moved to centre stage.

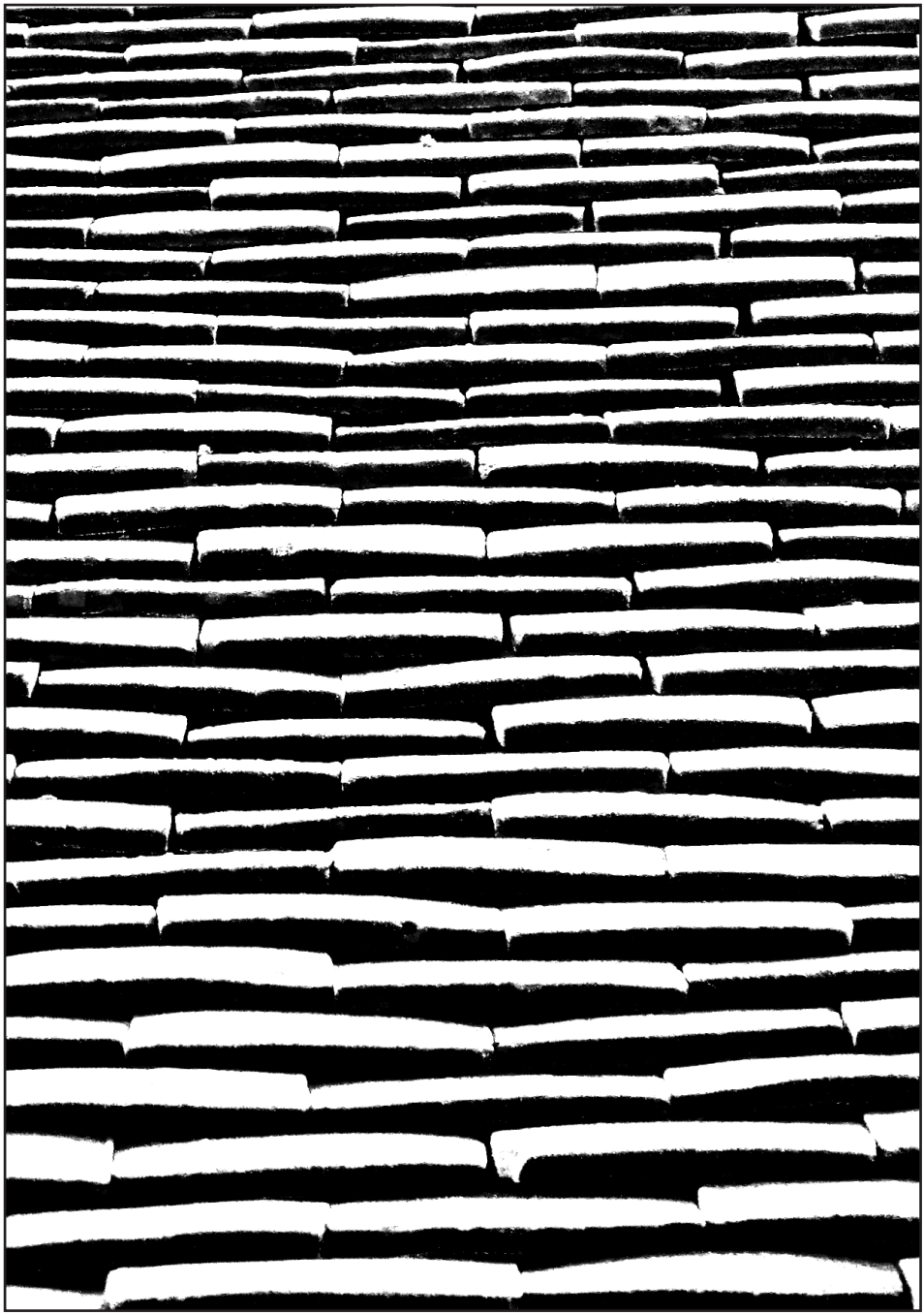
BOTTOM Burton pond, Stopham bridge, Burton waterfall, Fittleworth smithy and Angel street, Petworth.

A frosty morning near Petworth

A set of photographs taken around Frog Farm and Sokenholes.
Jonathan Newdick

In the days of photo-journalism, a genre now largely given over to the moving image, these pictures might have been called a 'photographic essay' but I prefer to think of them simply as pictures made on a frosty morning. The only two that might be captioned are the one at the top of page 30 which shows a section of barbed wire where the spears of frost are mimicking the barbs of the wire, and that on page 32 which is a section of frosted tiles on a barn roof.





‘You won’t have a cushy number’

Some notes on the Williams family. Jane Verrell

The Williams family name was entwined with the landscape of Petworth and Fittleworth for over sixty years. On my visit to Fittleworth churchyard in Spring 2024 I had a chance encounter with Peter Fines, a local resident, who said ‘you look just like a Williams.’ Notebook and pen in hand he pointed out various names on headstones and recalled stories and anecdotes from times past. He remembered the names of my grandparents and their grandson Norman Williams and had in recent times spoken to Norman’s daughter Lynne Grimwood who lives in Storrington. Because of my spiritual and ongoing family connections with West Sussex I want to share my family story.

My grandfather William Williams was born on November 6, 1880 and despite extensive research it has not been possible to ascertain his parentage, making his early life from birth to aged ten somewhat of a mystery. Various documents record him being born in Bow, Lambeth, Hampstead and Petworth. His father was recorded on William’s marriage certificate in 1903 as a tinker (deceased). A noted conversation between my mother and grandmother Annie suggests William was born in Leatherhead, and in the 1891 census he is living as the nephew of Mary Ann Rumsey and her brother James Hewitt in Leatherhead. Further evidence inscribed in one of my father’s books, *Great War Stories for Grandchildren*, states that William was ‘born out of Surrey’. But who was Mary Ann Rumsey?

From my research it is clear that William was an educated man. In the 1901 census he is still living with Mary Ann Rumsey, James Hewitt and a lodger called Walter Wheeler. In October 1899 William had joined the employ of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway at Epsom Station, Surrey, as a Porter earning fifteen shillings a week. I have archival records of his employment history. He met his future wife Annie Louise Hoare around this time. She was born in 1879 in Portobello Road, London. Annie was in service as a nurse and domestic servant. As Mary Rumsey was a laundress is it possible that William went with Mary to deliver clean washing or did they meet at a dance or indeed at the railway station?

William and Annie Louise Hoare were married on November 28, 1903 at St Mary’s Parish Church, Beddington, Surrey where William was living at Orchard Villas, Wood Street, Beddington Corner. William was working as a Porter at Box Hill station, and a man named Henry Sanders of unknown origin, presumably a

friend, witnessed Annie's signature. My father did refer to Henry Sanders as Uncle Harry in one letter I have dated 1937 and he was born in Fetcham, Surrey and when married lived in Farnham.

After their marriage William and Annie Louise went to live in Warnham, West Sussex, three miles north of Horsham, where William worked as a signalman at Gun Barn Crossing and lived in one of the Gun Barn Crossing cottages. In 1904 they had Joseph James, in 1906 Dorothy Elizabeth Mary and in 1909 Ronald William, and during that year William left the railway and joined the Prudential Assurance Company Limited. He was soon to move up the ranks, with a break of service during World War I, selling life insurance and becoming a Superintendent.

The family had now been in West Sussex for eight years, where in 1911 they are living in one of the houses named Norwood Cottages, Fittleworth, but soon they were on the move again. My father, Frank, was born in School House, East Street, Petworth on June 18, 1913. However, the world stage was looking very uncertain and at the outbreak of war William was already a St John's Ambulance Brigade instructor. There was a Recruitment and Remount Centre in Petworth Park and, at the age of 34, on May 17, 1915, William volunteered to join the Royal Army Medical Corps and spent some time training in Fleet, Hampshire.

The following extract is taken from the introduction by Major Frank Williams R.A. to the facsimile of William's diary *My Tour through Germany*:

> William was told 'you won't have a cushy number.' After signing his Attestation form, he was told to report back at 8 a.m. the following morning and returned home to tell Annie. He was to serve in the 92nd Field Ambulance Unit RAMC on the Western Front and was awarded the Military Medal for Gallantry and Devotion whilst serving with the 32nd Division during the final advance from Amiens to Avesnes between August 8 and November 11, 1918. By the New Year of 1919 plans were in hand to send Medical Search Parties into Germany to repatriate unaccounted prisoners of war and those on trial or under sentence and Sergeant William Williams reported to Cologne with a small party of 92nd Field Ambulance. He bought a brown kid leather pocket notebook to record the events which followed.

In July 1919 William returned to sleepy Petworth and with Annie and the family occupied a house in Glebe Villas, North Street, between 1918 and 1925. My father attended Petworth Boys School and family reminiscences say that Dorothy went to the now derelict school of St Michael and All Angels at Bedham.

The 1921 census shows that Joseph, 17 years and 2 months, was a plumber's

mate for Mr Cragg in Middle Street, Petworth, and Dorothy a pupil teacher at the Girls School. By 1926, William and Annie were living at Wayside, Tripp Hill, Fittleworth; this house was to be lived in by members of the Williams family for a further sixty years. 1929 finds them at Hillview, Fryern Road, Storrington and, in the 1939 Register, living with Dorothy, their daughter and her husband Percy Greenfield after their marriage in 1935. Percy's father owned Greenfields of Storrington. I have been very fortunate with the permission of the owners to visit and soak up the atmosphere of both Wayside and Oaklynn, and Wayside had a very special feeling of 'time standing still.'

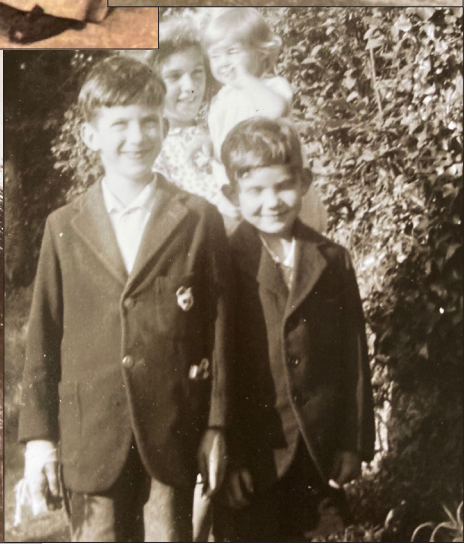
William's eldest son, Joseph and his wife Ruby, née Enticknap, were living at Wayside when the 1939 Register was taken, together with William, Annie and Norman Williams. Joseph and Ruby were to have three children: Norman, Barbara and Kenneth (John).

During World War II William and Annie lived in Storrington at Oaklynn with Dorothy Greenfield, née Williams, and her son Godfrey, while Joseph and Ruby continued to live at Wayside, Fittleworth. Following Joseph's death in 1953, Ruby and her son John continued to live at Wayside until January 1959 when Ruby remarried. Around this time Norman, Betty and their family lived at Wayside and Norman passed away in 1986. Betty was a distributor of the *Petworth Society Magazine* in the 1990s and 2000s before she passed away in 2012 and both Norman and Betty are buried in Fittleworth churchyard.

After World War II, William and Annie moved from Fittleworth but were back at Wayside during 1953 and 1954. Annie passed away in Thanet, Kent in 1956 and William in Bognor Regis in 1958.

When my parents Doris and Frank retired from Bromley they returned to Petworth, where my father always held his roots, and bought a house in Sheepdown Drive in 1979. They were happy back in West Sussex revisiting old haunts. I spent many a happy hour with them walking round the streets of Petworth where Frank would recount tales; how I wish I had asked more questions. He recalled singing in the Parish Church choir as a boy and pushing the bellows in the organ loft. Sadly, his eyesight was failing and in 1982 they moved to Portsmouth where my sister Angela had been born in 1942 and my mother's parents lived from 1926 to 1955.

William, Annie, Joseph, Dorothy and her son Godfrey Greenfield are buried in Fittleworth churchyard, and Ruby Williams, née Enticknap, her son Kenneth (John) Williams, my cousin Elizabeth Soal, née Greenfield, Godfrey's daughter and Norman and Betty Williams all have plaques there. It has been and continues to be a fascinating journey into the world of the Williams family and on every visit to West Sussex I seem to uncover some more history and anecdotes.



Some Williams family snaps, clockwise from top left. The Williams family, *c.* 1915; William, Doris Greensted and Annie Williams, *c.* 1938; Norman, Barbara with baby sister Angela and John, 1944; Doris, Annie, Barbara, Joe, Ruby and John, 1944.

Matters of grave importance

Fittleworth churchyard from Saxon times to the present day.
Deborah Wright, Churchwarden of St Mary's, Fittleworth

I wonder how many readers like wandering around in Fittleworth churchyard. Do you sit on a convenient seat, given in memory of a loved one? Or do you walk through briskly, maybe with the dog? Are you late for church, or using it as short cut. We hurry all the time, but I hope that this article will make you want to visit again, to slow down, reflect, and look more closely at this beautiful place.

Fittleworth Church is very ancient indeed. Although official records date back only to 1200, there is evidence that there was a church here in Saxon times, possibly right back to the seventh century. We are certainly talking about a thousand years of history in this place.

Our splendid yew tree is probably nearer 2000 years old, which suggests that this was an ancient sacred site, long before Christianity came to Fittleworth. It was very appropriate that a second yew was planted in 2000, to mark the beginning of the new millennium. It is propagated from the Tandridge Yew in Surrey which is estimated to be 2500 years old.

Fittleworth stands at the crossing of two ancient roads and the road from the south, crossing the river Rother and up Bedham Lane, is an Iron Age greenway, possibly one of the oldest tracks in England. Pre-Roman flint-heads have been found along the track and the yew tree may well mark the spot where pagan gatherings took place. When Christianity came to Fittleworth, possibly in the eighth century, a small wooden church may well have been erected, close to the yew tree. Ancient pagan sites were popular with the early Christians as echoes of earlier beliefs lingered on. A rough stone cross, cut in low relief, and now re-sited on the outside wall of the vestry, has been identified as an early Saxon consecration cross, dating from before the Norman Conquest.

As early as 590 A.D, Gregory the Great recommended churchyards as burial grounds so that worshippers would walk past and remember the dead. An acre was often marked out around the church, hence the term God's Acre, with wooden crosses at the corners, and by 1066 a hedge or wall may well have enclosed the churchyard. Most churches are sited with a smaller area to the north and this is because burials were originally on the south side of the churchyard. The north side might be used for secular activities, a meeting place, a children's playground, the site of a fair, somewhere to play football. On the south side, the nearer the path

BELOW Sunlight streaming into the south porch of St Mary's, Fittleworth, looking out towards the ancient yew tree.

BELOW St Mary's 2000-year-old yew and (inset) the yew which was propogated from the 2500-year-old Tantridge yew in Surrey and which was planted to mark the new millennium.

OPPOSITE The sepulchral slab which once formed the lid of a Saxon coffin and is now placed in the south porch of St Mary's.

and the entrance to the church the more important you were, and the long path up to the church lined with graves, was to remind people of their mortality. The north side was often where suicides, criminals or unbaptised babies were buried. Of course, all this changed over time, so that the north side of our church is full of late eighteenth and nineteenth century gravestones.

Gravestones in churchyards are a relatively recent way to commemorate the dead. But here in Fittleworth we have something very special indeed, a Saxon gravestone. The sepulchral slab, as it is properly called, today lies on its side in the south porch but it would once have been the lid of a Saxon coffin. The word coffin comes from the Saxon word 'cofa' meaning a cave. Stone coffins do survive from the eleventh century and they were a single block of stone hollowed out to hold the body and sealed with a stone lid or slab. They weren't buried deeply so would have been very visible in the churchyard. The simple cross on our slab is thought to predate the Norman Conquest. It survived only because it was incorporated into the wall of the old vestry as a useful piece of masonry and was discovered when the

new vestry was built. The person buried there must have been very important to warrant such a tomb.

From medieval times, rich people would often be buried inside the church which was known as 'breaking of the ground'. Fittleworth church has no impressive monuments but the priest and the lord of the manor might be buried in the church. Thomas Mathewson, the vicar in 1557 specifically requested to be buried in the 'Chancel of Fittleworth'. In Stopham church there are wonderful brass monuments on the floor of the nave marking the graves of the Barttelot family, the earliest being to Sir John Barttelot who died in 1426, and Sussex has an impressive number of brasses which survive. Rather more gruesome is the origin of the phrase 'stinking rich' which refers to the smell which would waft up from the floor of the church, where too many bodies were buried.

Out in the churchyard the ordinary people would be buried with only a simple wooden cross to mark the place – which would soon disappear. Until the early nineteenth century, churches and churchyards were the only places where people could be buried, so imagine how many thousands of bodies lie in Fittleworth churchyard. In some parts the land is much higher than the church footings because of the sheer number of bodies.

In medieval times some wills stipulated that people wished to be buried in the churchyard of 'Our Lady of Fittleworth'. After the Reformation, just 'in the churchyard' became the usual request. Before the seventeenth century the poor were simply wrapped in a shroud, tied hand and foot and lowered straight into the ground. In 1678 an Act of Parliament required everyone to be buried in wool, to support the woollen trade, unless a £5 fine was paid. Anthony Poole, in his fascinating and exhaustive book [1] on the people of Fittleworth found only one instance of a linen shroud being stipulated in the Fittleworth registers: in March 1717 Anne Edsaw, from a well-known Fittleworth family was 'buried in linnen'; as the local squire, her husband, did not want her buried in common or garden wool. The deceased might be brought from their homes on a simple wooden bier on rollers or wheels – one survives in Bury church dated 1667 – to the entrance of the churchyard. Alternatively, getting the body to the church could be a way of giving money to the poor: in 1766 the landlord of the Swan requested to be taken to the churchyard 'by six of my poor relations, for which I give to each of them one guinea'. In some parishes there was a simple wooden parish coffin which was used for everyone. One typically melodramatic Victorian painting shows the coffin of a small child being carried in by the older sisters in a sheet. Often there was a lychgate (from the old English word 'lych' meaning a corpse) at the entrance. The medieval ones were made of timber so they haven't survived, but we would probably have

had one in Fittleworth as the 1549 Prayer Book required the priest to receive the body at the church gate, and a covered structure kept the family and the priest dry. Many churches have a Victorian lychgate, but sadly we don't. However, the north entrance was enhanced by an attractive metal arch to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Christians are buried facing east – with their feet towards the rising sun, originally a Jewish custom symbolising hope, and also to face the Lord who will approach from Jerusalem in the east on the Day of Judgement. Priests, however, are buried with their feet facing the church, to symbolise that they are still looking after their flock.

Burials were important events in Fittleworth. (Anthony Poole's book is an invaluable source). People wanted a good send-off. In 1633 William Stone, a local husbandman – i.e. a tenant farmer, or small landowner – stipulated in his will that 'at my burial 3 barrels of beer are to handed out to the poor and my neighbours and friends who come to the burial, and four bushels of wheat made into bread'. And in 1638 Edward Fogden, who lived at Sorrells farm and was a glover and landowner, gave forty shillings at least to be spent on beer.

After the Restoration in 1660 gravestones became more common in English churchyards. Seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century headstones are smaller and thicker with simple lettering. We have a very early headstone, to the Duke family, to the north-west of the church. In good light the lettering can just be read and it has been deciphered and recorded in the numbered list of graves, so we can see the stone dates from 1691. The Duke family were bricklayers – Jespher calls himself, rather wonderfully, Jasper Ducke in church records – and they were wealthy enough to afford a headstone for Jespher, his wife and two sons. The lettering is large and simple and covers the whole of the stone. Gravemarkers also became common in the seventeenth century, with two posts joined by a board recording the details of the deceased. They were called dead-boards or 'leaping boards' and a fine one survives in Sidlesham churchyard from 1658. Being wood, they have mostly disappeared and none survives at Fittleworth. Originally there would have been a foot-board as well with an epitaph or a verse from the Bible.

As the eighteenth century progressed stones become thinner and larger with more elaborate inscriptions – the finest headstones are eighteenth century with cherubs and skulls and skeletons and all sorts of carving. One by the north wall of the church has a lovely curvy top. It is the grave of Anne Stent who died in 1725 age 31 who is recorded as 'a joyous wife when lying with her husband here'. Crosses are rarely seen until the mid nineteenth century as they were thought of as Popish.

Fittleworth has some very fine box or chest tombs in the churchyard and

Here / lyeth the body of / JESPHER / DUKE who died / Jan 1647. Here also lies / JOHN the son of / JESPHER DUKE who / died Jan 1672. Here / lies the body of EDWARD ^{e}y son of JESPHER DUKE / who died June 1691.

On the back of the stone:
Here / lyeth / JANE the / wife of / JESPHER DUKE / who died / June 1644. [?]

OPPOSITE The seventeenth-century Duke family headstone with its transcription as it appears in the numbered list of graves. Photograph by Henry Alexander.

obviously anyone who could afford such a tomb was a wealthy member of the community. Richard Fogden's tomb shows he died in 1774 and was a 'Grocer and Citizen of London'. The Fogdens were a very important Fittleworth family who owned many of the farms around. Another wealthy family were the Salters, and John Salter styled himself gentleman. There may well be small vaults under the box tombs, especially if there are several names recorded, and bodies were buried in the ground and the tomb erected over them.

Some churchyards have family vaults which aren't always obvious. In the Bartons Lane cemetery in Petworth, the Egremont vault was last opened up for the burial of Lord Egremont's mother in 2013 and there are numerous coffins on shelves, rather like a wine cellar, including that of the third Earl of Egremont with his coronet on the top. Once the grass turves were replaced there is no indication of what lies beneath.

The nineteenth century saw the introduction of mass-produced headstones and all sorts of statues, huge angels, and elaborate Celtic crosses became fashionable. Local stone was replaced with white marble and granite as the railways made transportation easy. Monumental masons set up all over the country and new technology meant that machines cut the lettering, instead of stone-carvers. There are now strict guidelines as to shape and materials for gravestones, which have to be observed.

With the rise in population during the Industrial Revolution, and the high mortality rate, many churchyards literally became full up and the first cemeteries were established in 1832. We are very fortunate that we have a very large graveyard in Fittleworth, but in Petworth for example, the area around the church has long been closed, as has the graveyard in Bartons Lane, and there is a cemetery on the Horsham Road and another at Hampers Green. In the twentieth century there was a craze for clearing churchyards to make them easier to mow, and the walls were lined with headstones – as at Tillington. We are very fortunate that ours has remained untouched.

The wall around the churchyard was built by a father and son Charles and George Whittington of the Fleet in 1869, and the ironstone wall dividing the old and the middle churchyards would then have been the boundary wall.

If we look at the Land Registry map, you can see that our graveyard is divided into three. The part numbered 1 according to the Land Registry was once part of the Manor of Bury, and that is a very ancient record which refers to medieval land ownership. If we look at the churchyard map in the porch it includes areas 1 and 2 and was drawn by the Revd Anthony Smyth in the 1990s. All the grave plots are numbered. There are many graves in the north part, but there is a large empty space to the south side with no gravestones, (although there will certainly be bodies buried there) and this may be because they were removed when the nave was demolished in 1871. A fascinating watercolour, painted at the time by the daughter of the Revd Stephen Cattley, shows the mess the builders made. It's also interesting to see Orchard House in the distance. There are so many more trees now, so that view is completely obscured. Also visible in the watercolour is an unusual memorial plaque on the outside north wall of the church which survived the rebuilding of the nave. Another watercolour, dated Tuesday July 22, 1868, painted three years before the demolition of the nave also shows how the graves

ABOVE The 1871 watercolour by the daughter of the Revd Stephen Cattley which she made after the demolition of the nave.

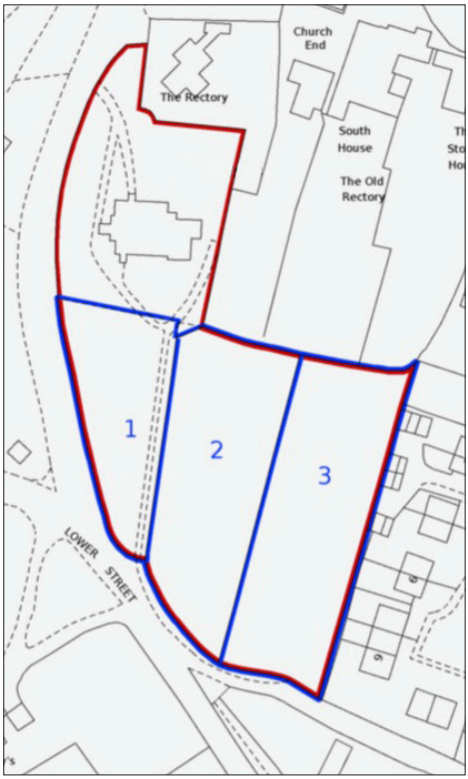
OPPOSITE A detail of the Land Registry map showing the three parts of St Mary's graveyard. The church is within the red boundary line.

had footstones as well, and mounded earth between them. Only the headstones now remain. One can also see that the memorial between the two lancet windows was removed and replaced with a buttress and one of the beautiful lead downpipes, all marked 1871, the date of the new nave. These watercolours hang in the church.

Cremation was finally legalised in 1884 and interment of ashes at Fittleworth was originally along the south wall of the church, but is now along the ironstone wall which is a lovely place for those who walk up to the church from the south.

In 1897 the second Lord Leconfield of Petworth House gave the middle graveyard, marked 2 on the Registry map, to the church and it was legally given to the Ecclesiastical Commissioner by the third Lord Leconfield in April 1913, and consecrated at a Confirmation Service on May 21, 1914, just before the outbreak of war. There were 33 candidates from Fittleworth (those were the days!).

The War Memorial was erected in the middle churchyard in 1921 and dedicated at a service that October. It was unveiled by Lieutenant-General Sir Ivor Maxse and has recently been beautifully cleaned thanks to a very generous donation from the Fittleworth Stores community fund. Remembrance Sunday in the churchyard is still an important and well attended service in Fittleworth.



A watercolour by Claude Muncaster, painted in 1935, shows the churchyard as still relatively empty. In 1942 the third Lord Leconfield sold the final part of the graveyard, well over half an acre, to the Fittleworth Church PCC and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England for £30 'to be devoted when consecrated to ecclesiastical purposes forever.' It was eventually consecrated by the Bishop of Horsham in October 1969. We are very fortunate that the generosity of the Leconfield family means we have a graveyard which will last for many, many years.

God's Acre is a haven for wildlife. Churchyards have usually been left natural, without the use of pesticides, so wild flowers can grow and lichens

appear on the stones. There are many initiatives to encourage and record wildlife in our churchyards including the conservation charity Caring for God's Acre. We have waxcap fungi, rare lichens, mosses and liverworts, but of special interest is an unusual rustyback fern, *Asplenium ceterach*, which can be found on the churchyard wall. The churchyard is surrounded by private gardens and close to two commons, so it is part of a larger complex of unspoilt countryside which we should cherish.

One of the duties of a churchwarden is the responsibility to keep the churchyard tidy. I am hugely grateful to the members of the Green Gym who keep Fittleworth churchyard looking so wonderful. Visitors often comment on how loved and cared for the churchyard is. I am really proud of it. Many readers will have loved ones buried here. What a beautiful, peaceful place to lie forever. And anyone who lives in Fittleworth or has family connections, can choose to be buried in this churchyard and be part of the history of this special place.

The watercolour by Claude Muncaster, painted in 1935, showing the churchyard as still relatively empty.

1 Anthony Poole, *Fittleworth 1540-1840: its people and their way of life*, 2019.