1974
A Petworth miscellany
2024

An anthology from 50 years of the Petworth Society Magazine

Petworth Society Magazine No.195 June 2024

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. Full membership, which includes the 48-page quarterly magazine, 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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NOTE In by-lines and elsewhere, where a specific issue of the *Petworth Society Magazine* is quoted it is abbreviated to *PSM*.

FOREWORD Max Egremont

The Petworth Society at fifty

Fifty years ago, the Petworth Society began in an atmosphere of anger, during the great bypass controversy, when feelings ran high in the town. The Society was part of the campaign to protect the Shimmings valley, one of several deeply unsuitable routes that had been proposed by the West Sussex County Council.

What had been a pressure group, however, soon became, under the extraordinary chairmanship of Peter Jerrome, one of the most scholarly and enthusiastic local organisations in the country.

These articles from the Society's bulletin and magazine show a great variety of subjects, all of which reflect Petworth's past and present and show how lucky we are to have such a force for good in our community. Our debt to Peter Jerrome and to those who have worked with him is immense. Let us hope that those who come after us will be able to celebrate many more such anniversaries in the future.

INTRODUCTION Andrew Loukes

A potentially valuable organ

From its beginning the Petworth Society has issued a publication to its members. Initially appearing sporadically as the 'Bulletin', the first fourteen editions were largely given over to current local issues, the most pressing of which was predictably traffic, with the second – perhaps more surprisingly – being litter. Early issues also captured updates on the Society's developing purpose and structure, and shared reports of its growing programme of meetings and social events.

A landmark issue was No.15, February 1979, the first printed under the chairmanship of Peter Jerrome, who also became the Editor and continued in this dual role for forty-one years. Fittingly, Lord Egremont's tribute to Peter, published to mark his retirement in 2020, closes this compendium. In his first Chairman's Notes, Peter straightaway announced his vision for a regular new-look quarterly: 'This is an ambitious undertaking for a town

of Petworth's size but I have long seen the Bulletin as a potentially valuable organ for making available information about Petworth, and I think it is right to be adventurous at this time.'

No.15 was also the first to feature a 'Cover design by Mr J. M. Newdick' with Jonathan becoming and remaining largely responsible for the publication's continually evolving visual character and quality of production. He should also be thanked for the excellent idea of this commemorative miscellany, which with typical imagination he has enhanced with additional illustrations. It was on the occasion of issue No.50, December 1987, that the retitling to 'Magazine' was introduced alongside Jonathan's first single-issue cover and distinctive title font, with Peter reflecting 'It maybe that over the years the traditional title of "Bulletin" has become something of a misnomer.'

In seeking to celebrate the extraordinary wealth and breadth of articles from the *Petworth Society Magazine* and its forerunner it is no coincidence that this selection, made by Peter's editorial successor Miles Costello, Jonathan and myself, has no examples from before Peter's chairmanship. We consciously decided not to include anything published more recently than 2022.

The trademark mainstay of the publications, pioneered by Peter and carried on by others, has been articles which capture local memories, usually obtained through conversations with the named contributor. Already, some of those from the 1980s and 90s have left us with first-hand accounts of lived rural and small-town experience of school, work and leisure from up to a hundred years ago. These frequently reveal incidental details such as lunches enjoyed by the Shimmings Brook or out in the fields, along with more sobering observations perhaps witnessed during wartime or concerning the workhouse. We are also sometimes reminded of how different Petworth was not so long ago: the Cowyard, for example, remaining fully in use by the Leconfield Estate well into the 1960s with no public access to the park via the tunnel.

Some of the articles, whether based on conversations or the author's own researches, lend local historical detail to subjects of broader national significance – Petworth's Polish camp in relation to international post-war displacement, for example, or the Estate's Friendly Society to debates of the day around associated medical provision for such schemes. Meanwhile, the magazine has also provided an unparalleled platform for sharing archival newspaper articles which may have otherwise gone unread by many, covering stories from a Victorian fire at Petworth House to the more recent obituary of Elizabeth Wyndham.

Other contributions have been written by or about notable Petworth residents, which here include excerpts from the wartime memoirs of the

acclaimed artist Gwenda Morgan and an insight into working alongside one of the town's great photographers George Garland, whose extensive visual record of early-to-mid twentieth-century Petworth has also added greatly to the magazine over the years. Separate pieces by Lord and Lady Egremont capture something of their Petworth lives and are sure to become particularly valuable records for future historians with an interest in Petworth House and its residential family. The legacy of the wider Estate has been inevitably interwoven throughout the pages of the magazine and we here publish together Roger Wootton's recollections of the building department, which among other things remind us of how almost all of the visitor route at Petworth House was largely reconstructed by the Estate at the request of the National Trust throughout the 1980s and 90s.

The town's wider and architectural landscape have been frequently explained and contextualised by contributors and we have included pieces which elaborate upon St Mary's church, the ruins of Bedham School, the round-the-hills walk and the railway station. Jeanne Courtauld's account of Burton Park forms not only a valuable record but also touchingly evokes a lost world not dissimilar to that of the fictional Gosford Park. The enigmatic and supernatural have frequently formed recurring themes in the magazine and may be revisited in this selection in the form of witch-hares and a Woman in White.

It is hoped that this miscellany offers an enjoyable illustration of the variety of ways in which the *Petworth Society Magazine*, and formerly its bulletin, has formed a vital repository which can be as moving and humorous as it is fascinating. We have tried to represent its essential genres and could have made an equally strong selection two or three times over. Thankfully, the magazines are all now brilliantly digitised on the Society's website, making it possible for anyone to consult every issue of this outstanding local achievement for which all those who have ever contributed can be justly proud.

Finally, an abridged quotation from *The Rising Down* by Alexandra Harris, recently published by Faber[1] which seems to encapsulate the ethos of this magazine: '"Local" has so often been associated in modern culture with "minor", but for at least seventy years local work has been attracting some of the most groundbreaking historians. Thinkers from many other disciplines are increasingly attentive to subjects that have been undervalued because they are provincial, regional or rural. In the twenty-first century local is major.'

1 Alexandra Harris is professor of English at Birmingham University and a great supporter of the Petworth Society and its magazine. She will be discussing *The Rising Down* at the Petworth Literary Festival in November.

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

BULLETIN NO. 1 MAY 1974

It is hoped to issue to members once a quarter, a Bulletin giving as much information as possible of the activities of the Society and of the various groups working within it. We thought that this issue should be used to bring you up-to-date since our Inaugural Meeting and ask you to state how you think you would best be able to help the Society in an active manner.

You will have read of the result of the election for the Executive Committee. At its first meeting on 4th April the Committee first elected the Officers:-

Chairman - Colonel Alan Maude.

Vice Chairman - Sir Leslie Fry.

Hon. Secretary - Mr. Arthur Hill.

Hon. Treasurer - Mr. Horace Probin.

The first page of the first bulletin of the Petworth Society in May 1974. Set by typewriter, eight pages duplicated on flimsy paper and measuring 8 x 6½ inches, it seemed an inauspicious beginning to what would become an invaluable repository of Local History. At the time the Society had three areas of interest – Conservation; Countryside; and Local history. It was this last, under Peter Jerrome, that became the backbone of the Society's magazine. On page six of the above Bulletin we read that 'Mr. Jerrome thinks a preliminary meeting of those interested would be best.' It seemed a good start.

Two-and-a-half-hundredweight sacks

Working at old Coultershaw
Ernest Hollingdale, *Bulletin* 36, June 1984

As my father and grandfather had both worked at Coultershaw Mill it wasn't surprising that I should start there when I was twelve; working Saturdays until four o'clock as a flour packer. Gwillim's Digestive S.R. Flour was packed in one-penny and two-penny packets, each paper bag being filled with a scoop but not weighed. They were packed twelve dozen to a box and as many as a couple of dozen boxes would be packed and sent off by train to Brighton. We would also pack plain flour in a similar way. For local people, however, we packed flour in 1½ and 3 1b bags with the tops turned over and stuck down with flour paste. The self-raising flour did not come ready made; it was mixed at the mill itself: plain flour being rather laboriously mixed with bicarbonate of soda and cream of tartar and the mixture revolved in a barrel. There was also our quota of orders and some packets that would be kept as stock. I went on full-time in 1919 when I was fourteen and stayed till I was twenty when I went to work for Boxalls the builders – rather to my father's regret – he had hoped I would continue the family tradition of working at Coultershaw.

I did whatever jobs needed to be done besides flour-packing. One was to clean the flour-sacks ready for re-use: any that were torn or needed stitching I would patch or restitch using a sewing machine. We had a barn nearby where hay was kept and a chaff-cutter in the basement of the mill and we would cut chaff and bag it up. It was widely used for horse-feed and the mill itself had a special mixing room where we used to keep different kinds of meal – a ton of each at a time and mix it manually. When bagged and weighed up this meal was used for feeding pigs and cattle.

Different kinds of meal were barley, oatmeal and three kinds of offal from grinding flour-bran, pollard, which was a finer product, and sweet crammings, the finest of all. The mill stones ground the wheat and barley meal that would be mixed with the by-products of flour production and sold as mixed meal. Not all grinding was done with the stones however, as the old mill had small steel rollers which could grind one-and-a-half sacks of flour an hour. The stones were turned by a paddled water wheel and the water coming on to the wheel was controlled by a flood gate. A shaft from

the water wheel went through the bottom floor of the mill and from this shaft different sized pulleys took belts up through the different machines on the three floors of the mill. In fact the machinery was basically on the middle floor, for here were the steel flour-rollers, and the big grinding stones that were the mill's basic equipment.

Local farmers would bring in wheat in their wagons to be ground at the mill. The foreign wheat arrived by rail. For breadmaking English corn needed strengthening with foreign or it would be too soft. Farmers didn't just come: there would be an advance arrangement and the mill employed a representative who would go round to the neighbouring farms and came to an agreement with the farmers. The grain was packed in two-and-a-half-hundredweight sacks and a few sample ones would be checked for the weight.

The normal working hours at the mill were 7 till 5 but the two 'shiftmen' or millers worked shifts from six in the morning till six at night and then on again from six to six. The mill closed at twelve midnight Saturday and opened again at midnight on the Sunday so that Saturday night and Monday morning formed a split shift. The shiftman had to supervise the grinding operation. This was something he had to keep an eye on but it could usually be left for a while. They would dress the mill-stones and when the wheel was not working, re-cut the close-fitting grooved sections of the stones – something they would do perhaps twice a year.

Mr. John Gwillim had four mills at this time: Petworth, Midhurst, Fittleworth and Wassell at Ebernoe. The last two were at this time used only for grinding corn for farmers. Petworth and Midhurst were the only mills that made flour.

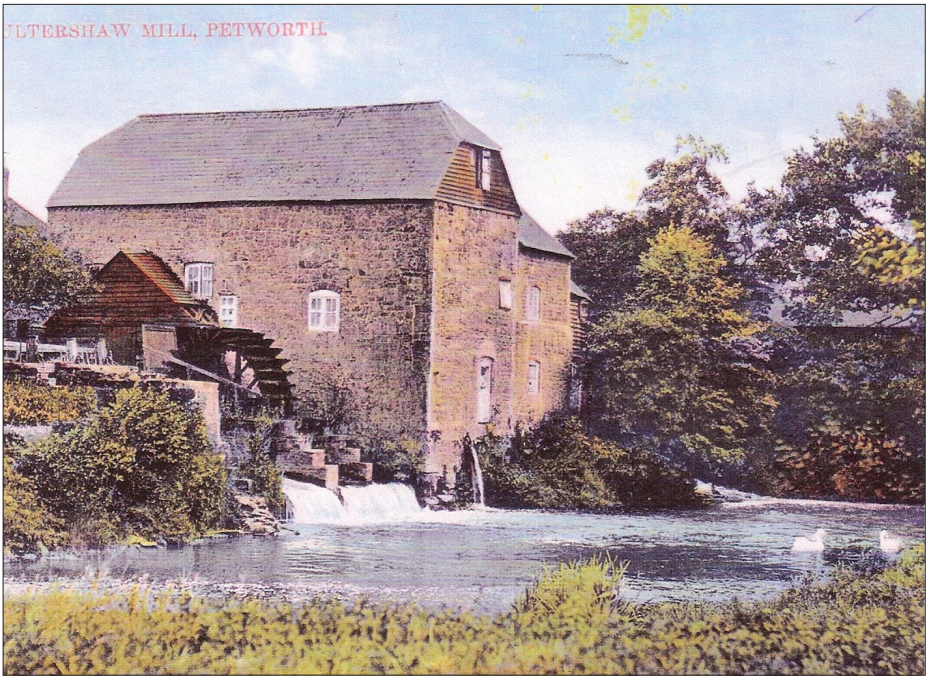
The great fire at Coultershaw in 1923 changed the pattern of working quite radically. We lived at Heath End then, my family, originally from Tillington, having moved there in Maurice Ireland's time, Mr. John Gwillim's predecessor. Horace White was the last man on the twelve o'clock shift that Saturday night and he saw nothing amiss when he went off duty. The fire was first spotted between 2.30 and 3 o'clock but by that time there was no

OPPOSITE
Jonathan Newdick, *Wassell Mill, Ebernoe* (above). The pen and ink drawing was made before the mill was converted into a private house.
Below. Old Coultershaw Mill reproduced from an Edwardian postcard.

possibility of saving the mill: part of it being tarred and weatherboarded. The first I knew about it was when a man from Station Cottages came up to Heath End to sound the alarm. I was out of bed in no time but my father was in such a state that he put both legs into a single leg of his trousers and got rather left behind. I remember them getting the horses out of the stable opposite the mill in case the fire spread. The horses had been used among other things to go to the station to get coke. This was used to heat the water which dried the wheat after it was washed. It would be taken upstairs in cups on a elevator and dried by a kind of square tank filled with hot water. The Coultershaw fire had an obvious effect on the whole milling operation. My father and I went to Midhurst for a while and from then onwards an automatic flour-packing machine was installed at Fittleworth. This did away with the scoop and everything was filled and weighed by machine.

When I first went to Coultershaw to work the only lighting was a piece of wood with three nails holding a candle. This would be carried around the mill but the spilt grease made the floors very slippery. To pull up the flood gates outside at might, we had to take a candle outside in a jam-jar and it was quite dangerous. Soon after I arrived they had a dynamo put in which ran off the wheel. This was much better except of course that if the mill slowed down your light also went down. Another innovation soon after I arrived was an elevator. Prior to that, material had been moved from floor to floor by a chain and pulley. A chute allowed material to be loaded on to wagons and carts outside but you had to be careful to see the recipient was ready or he might be hit and injured by one of the heavy sacks.

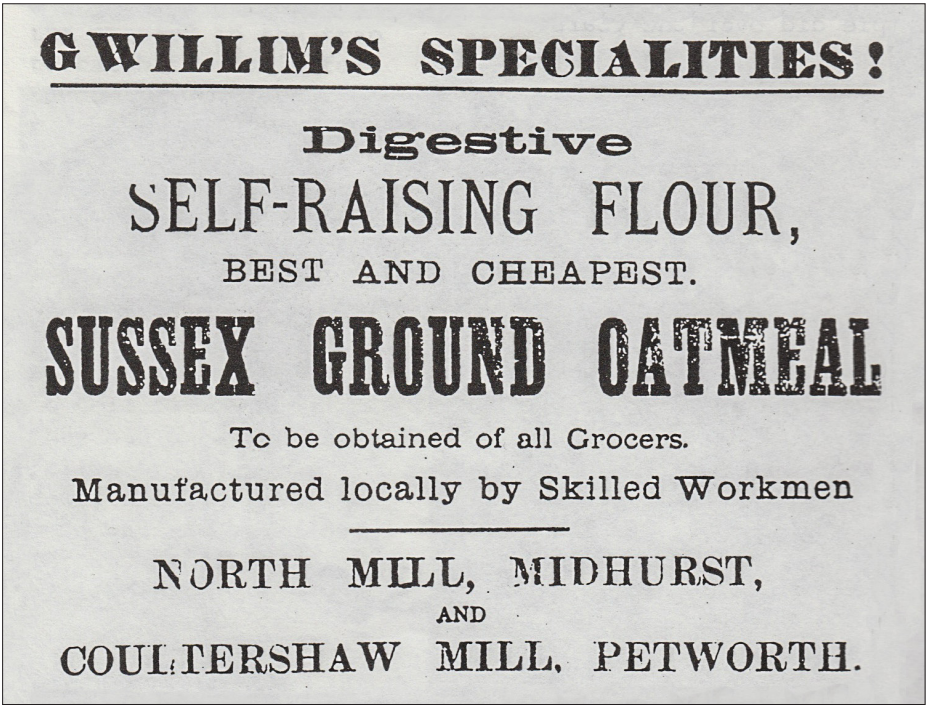
When the floods came up we had to clear everything off the bottom floor and hence we kept only the old corn-washing machine on that floor. The water would rise to a foot or eighteen inches all over the floor and the water-rats would take over. They were huge and completely unafraid and would just sit there and defy you to make them move. Fortunately they would go off as soon as the water subsided. Mr. Daniel Batchelor was employed by the Leconfield Estate down at the wharf building and it was part of his job to see that the Coultershaw water-pump wheel pumped water up to Lawn


ULTERSHAW MILL, PETWORTH.

Hill. He had to start up the pump and the wheel and stop it at night.

In 1917 the mill had two horses and carts used for local deliveries. These were replaced by a Foden steam-wagon and later solid-tyred lorries. As part of my job I would often go round with the drivers. There was hardly a village around which didn't have its own bakery then: Mr. Hare at Sutton, Pescods and Alberys at Graffham, Hardings and Picknells at Fittleworth and others at places like Northchapel, Lurgashall, Windfallwood and Lickfold. The mill would also deliver bags of flour as far afield as Brighton and Worthing. In Petworth of course there were several bakers, Arch Knight in Lombard Street, Mrs. Harris at the Tavern and Hazelmans, but we would also deliver packeted flour to the grocers like Mrs. Gordon Knight or Olders.

The mill had an eel-trap by the flood-gates, built with brick and iron-bars and with a small gate. When there was a thunderstorm my father would lift up the gate for a time, then close it and you might find half a hundred-weight or more of eels in there.



Gwillim's Specialities! This advertisement appeared in the *Midhurst Times* in 1913.

A pound of Sylvan Glen for ½*d*

Working at the International Stores
Nora Hollingdale, *Bulletin* 41, September 1985

When I left the International Stores in 1935 it was still conducted very much on the old-fashioned principle of being served by the assistants, as opposed to present-day ideas of serving yourself. You would say what you wanted and the assistants would get it for you. The centre space was left vacant with the fixtures and shelving hugging the walls. The counters ran round the perimeter. As you went in there was a long counter to your left for bacon, cheese and fats, while another counter catered for jams, marmalades, teas and biscuits. There was a counter just for fruit and I can remember bananas at a penny-halfpenny each. On the right hand side as you entered were the patent medicines, sweets and sugar. Just inside the door on the right was the cash desk where Edna Nairn and Miss Rapley would sit. There was at that time a door in the corner so that the cash desk controlled the two exits.

There was a great deal of manual work to be done and the International then employed a staff of about sixteen to eighteen, including a number of men. There was a delivery service and Mr. Field was employed to go round taking people's orders. As I have said, the store operated as did all others in those days, on the principle that you would indicate what you wanted and it would be cut or picked out for you by the assistants. Bacon might be rashered in a variety of different thicknesses and would be cut as you waited. The cheeses were of the old-fashioned kind, needing to be skinned before cutting. Butter was still done in pats. A customer would order a pound of Sylvan Glen for ½*d* and it would be cut straight from the block. It was rather similar with sweets: they would be on the shelves in boxes and jars and weighed out for you as you wanted them, at eight pence a pound.

Christmas was a particularly busy time because people would begin from about mid-November to take out their clubs. They'd start in January, paying in at the desk at a rate of so much a week, a shilling perhaps. This would be marked down on a special card, separate from the weekly account. At Christmas time the club orders would come in like a flood: people wanted things like dried fruit and peel for Christmas puddings or glacé cherries and sultanas for cakes. We might have to work till 10 o'clock to get the club orders finished but there would be no extra money for the time we had spent.

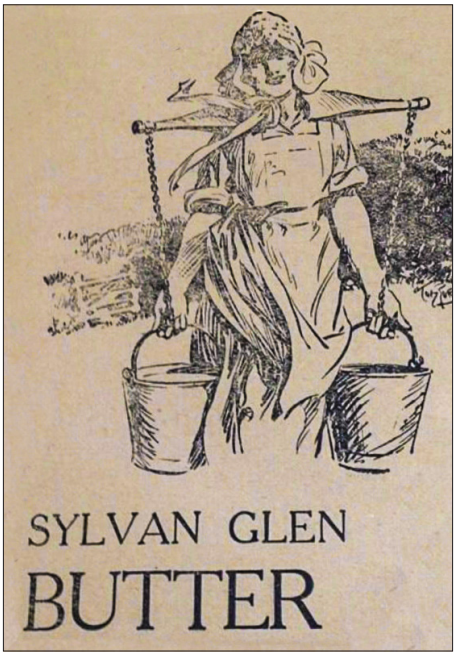
Every week, two of the staff had to go out the back and down the steps into the warehouse. Here they used to weigh-up the different sugars, flours, rolled oats, soda, all sorts of things which were weighed-up out of great bins and bagged-up in small quantities to be ready when the customers wanted them. Items like flour were bagged-up in 1½, 3 and 6 lb units and stacked up in great piles ready for the counters. The sugars too, granulated, moist, caster, lump and preserving, also needed to be bagged-up.

Each counter tended to be a unit on its own and individual staff would be responsible for filling up before they went home. As you served a customer, you gave them a numbered white ticket, wrote the price on the ticket and initialled it. The cashiers had spikes and as the tickets were brought to the cash desk to be paid, the numbered tickets would be stuck down on the spike. If a number was missing they would know that particular ticket hadn't been settled, and they would call out, say, number seventeen, to check. Customers would tend to pay after a visit to a particular counter, then go to another counter, collect another ticket, pay, and move to another counter. It was almost like a series of different shops under one roof. It did take a while longer than modern shopping but of course one counter might have several different items, for instance bacon, cheese and butter would all go together and come on the same ticket.

Fixtures were mainly attached to the walls and the customer would look at the outside of the containers and order from the shelf. Sometimes the prices were printed on the box or jar but often we just had to remember. Biscuits were another item for the customer to point to and for us to weigh out. For weighing we had the old-fashioned scales with brass weights.

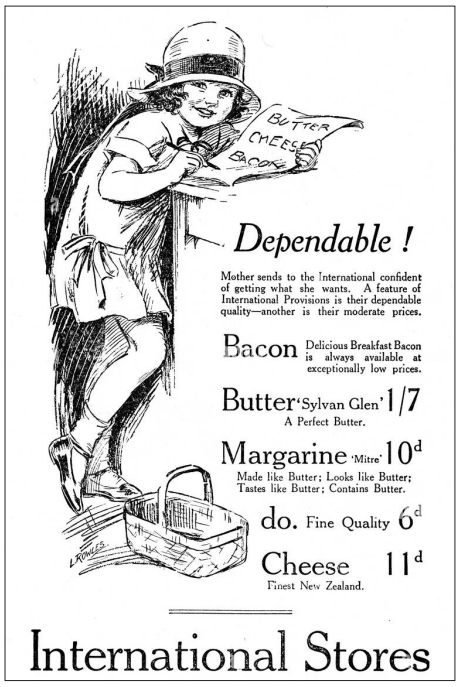
Every Saturday evening the windows were emptied and the display cleared away in readiness for a fresh one on Monday morning. We were never allowed to start on this till a quarter to eight (we closed at eight) and if people came in during the last quarter of an hour we had of course to serve them. We hardly ever left work on time. We closed at six o'clock weekdays, except for seven o'clock Friday and eight o'clock Saturday. Half-day Wednesday we closed at one o'clock. I was 17 years old when I started at the International, having worked for a while at Coates Castle when I left school. I biked in from Duncton in all weathers and never earned more than twenty-eight shillings a week.

OPPOSITE International Stores publicity and packaging from the time when Nora Hollingdale was working there.


SYLVAN GLEN
BUTTER


INTERNATIONAL STORES
FAMOUS FOR FINE TEAS
CEYLINDO TEA
A PERFECT TEA
Country house
PEKOE TIPS TEA
INTERNATIONAL STORES
FAMOUS FOR FINE TEAS


"A Spring Dawning"
1909
CEYLINDO TEA
A PERFECT TEA
FRESH GROWN, DELICIOUS DRINKING, ARTISTICALLY BLENDED.
INTERNATIONAL STORES
TEA SHIPPERS & IMPORTERS OF FOOD PRODUCE.
BRANCHES THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM.
CEYLINDO TEA
A PERFECT TEA
FRESH GROWN, DELICIOUS DRINKING, ARTISTICALLY BLENDED.
1909
Reproduced specially for The International Tea Company's Stores Limited from the Original Oil Painting in their possession


BUTTER
CHEESE
BACON
Dependable !
Mother sends to the International confident of getting what she wants. A feature of International Provisions is their dependable quality—another is their moderate prices.
Bacon Delicious Breakfast Bacon is always available at exceptionally low prices.
Butter 'Sylvan Glen' 1/7
A Perfect Butter.
Margarine 'Mitre' 10d
Made like Butter; Looks like Butter; Tastes like Butter; Contains Butter.
do. Fine Quality 6d
Cheese 11d
Finest New Zealand.
International Stores

A runaway train

Petworth railway station 1859-1966
Ken Smith, *Bulletin* 18, December 1979

On August 10, 1857, the Mid Sussex Railway Company was authorised to construct a railway line from Horsham to Petworth via Billingshurst and Pulborough. By railway standards, progress on the line was brisk and just over two years later, on October 10, 1859, an official inspection was made of the line. The tour began at 8 a.m. at Three Bridges and progressed to Horsham where a considerable time was spent inspecting the new station. Later, the ceremonial train proceeded southwards into the Sussex countryside. A reporter for the *West Sussex Gazette* wrote: 'The land in this neighbourhood is not of the first quality, and the district is very thinly populated; indeed, it looks as one would imagine the backwoods of America do … The people, when they were seen, looked scared at the appearance of the steam engine, as also did the horses, beasts, turkeys and other things, which ran from us in great horror.' Apart from being an official inspection of the line, the train was also being run to deposit various of the company's servants at their new positions along the line.

Although owned by the Mid Sussex Railway Company, the line was leased by the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway, finally being acquired by them three years later in 1862. The picturesqueness of Petworth Station, which is situated about 1½ miles south of the town at Coultershaw Bridge, obviously pleased the reporter, who wrote: 'The little station, which is built of polished deal, lies nestling under the hill in all the pride of perfect security. The railway buildings here are very numerous … There is also a pretty little engine house for pumping up the water into a tank to supply the engines.' At the time of the opening, a new inn, 'The Railway Inn', [now Badgers] was being built close to the station and it is more likely that the local people appreciated this than the pleasantness of the station after their long walk from the town. However, subsequently a Mr. Dempster ran an omnibus to meet all the trains, but at 6*d* the fare would seem rather exorbitant for the times. The inaugural train service was fixed at five passenger trains each day to Petworth, the journey taking one and a quarter hours from Three Bridges. Five additional trains ran only as far as Horsham. On October 18, 1859, only a few days after the line was opened, an extremely successful special was run to the Crystal Palace from Petworth, the return fare being 3s. 6*d*, which included admission to the Palace. A few days

later, on October 22, Sharp Engine No. 79, having been lit up and steamed with the regulator wide open, ran away from the old shed at Petworth. She got as far as Horsham, 17½ miles away, where a cleaner on his way along the line saw her pass with three sets of crossing gates on her buffers. She was then going quite slowly and he caught her. Fortunately, Hardham Junction and Itchingfield Junction were not then in existence and so there was a clear run to Horsham. One wonders whether the Horsham man who stopped the engine was suitably rewarded. The position of the Petworth cleaner and fireman no doubt warrants some sympathy; apart from the inevitable interview with Mr. Craven, the Locomotive Superintendent of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway Company, the men were forced to sit and wait for whatever ghastly news the morning might bring, since at this time there was no block telegraph and therefore no way of knowing of the recapture of their engine.

An extension to Midhurst was authorised on August 13, 1859, and so slow was the progress on this, that it seemed that the line would never be completed. The tunnel at Midhurst caused some difficulty in April 1863 when a man was injured by a fall of earth. Initially, considerable delay had been caused over protracted wrangles over prices and compensation paid to local landowners. The line was ready for traffic on October 15, 1866, and was greeted ironically by the *West Sussex Gazette* thus: 'Wonders will never cease – The Petworth & Midhurst Railway, alias "Death's Line", was opened on Monday. This project has been so long in hand that we began to despair of seeing it fully carried out during the present generation.' The line, only 5¾ miles long, had taken just over seven years between authorisation and completion. Initially, the service consisted of six daily trains from Midhurst to Pulborough, plus two extra which ran only as far as Petworth. This long delay meant that the rival London South Western Company were the first to reach Midhurst, opening their line from Petersfield on September 1, 1864. Although the act authorising this line stipulated that the railway must have a station at Selham, this did not open until July 1872.

The original Petworth Station was demolished in the late 1880s (a photograph taken by Walter Kevis in 1889 is believed to show the original station just before its demolition). The present single storey wooden structure,

OPPOSITE Two views by Walter Kevis of the new Petworth Station in about 1900.

situated slightly west of the old station, was opened by the Duke of Connaught, who was staying at Petworth House with a shooting party at that time. It does, indeed, seem strange that a wooden structure was chosen to serve the town and seat of one of the county's greatest landowners. In its details an obvious effort was made to achieve an effect, even out of materials which the Brighton company never favoured. Patterning on the weatherboarding was achieved by the use of diagonal planking above and below the main wall panels, and wrought iron work on the booking hall roof, stained glass windows, an interior finished in polished deal, full length platform canopy and a booking hall entrance canopy all helped to add that extra touch of class. However, the most striking contrast with the lesser stations lay in the goods facilities, Petworth having both a goods shed and a crane inside and a second crane outside. There was a water column on the platform and a fully signalled passing loop, although the signal box, which was a typical product of Messrs, Saxby & Farmer, was usually closed.

The late Ted Challen, who served for 26 years at Petworth as Signalman/porter from 1904, in an interview in the mid-1950s, recalled how busy the station could be. E. V. Lucas and A. E. W. Mason were frequent passengers to London, as well as James Buchanan (as Lord Woollavington was then known) and Capt. Douglas Hall, who lived at Burton Park and was the Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight. Royal visitors must also have been quite frequent to the area, what with Goodwood Races and the friendship between King Edward VII and Mr. James at West Dean Park.

In 1923, the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway became part of the Southern Railway and as early as 1932 there was a decline in local traffic. The nationalisation of Britain's railways in 1948 spelled out the end for many small, unprofitable branch lines and by 1955 passenger services at Petworth came to an end. Freight services ceased on May 20, 1966; although the occasion was witnessed by only a few, the customary detonators were placed on the line to mark the end of 106 years of service.

A 25-minute amateur silent film of the Petworth, Midhurst and Petersfield line made in 1955 is available on line free of charge from the British Film Institute at Screen Archive South East.

There were so many displaced persons then

Remembering George Garland
Peter Jerrome, *PSM* 100, June 2000

This is the 100th magazine, and, appropriately enough, the centenary of George Garland's birth. In his early seventies when the Petworth Society was formed, he was an interested onlooker but in no sense a prime mover. When he died in 1978 the Society was still finding its feet, finding its direction. I like to think that, over the years, it has reflected the best side of Garland's spirit. I don't mean on the superficial level of using Garland's photographs for illustration, although we do of course, constantly. It's more that, at its best, the magazine fosters a sense of continuity that lies at the very heart of the Garland archive.

The beginnings, as I have shown elsewhere, were fragile enough. Born at 113 Preston Road, Brighton he seems to have come to Petworth as a child. The earliest years are irretrievably lost. Certainly he never spoke of them to me. There was a father he never knew and his mother coming to Petworth as housekeeper to the bluff Henry Streeter at the Railway Inn, a widower some twenty years her senior. They married in 1908 but how long Mrs. Garland and George had been at the Railway before that seems impossible to say. For him there followed spell at the Misses Austins' rather refined private school at Boxgrove in Pound Street, then Midhurst Grammar School in the days when, for most pupils, university would be neither an obvious nor even a possible sequel. Friendship during the 1914-18 war with the Franciscan brothers at Duncton, a few clerical, more lay, poetry, pipe-smoking and a little photography – just as a hobby. There was a spell in a bank at Fleet, then severe eye trouble and photography was banned because of the effect of flashlight on his fragile eyes. He was almost blind for a while. The holy grail was writing for a living, sending off at a venture to magazines; there are lists of them, at the back of his early Press Books. There was more hope for the freelance in those innocent days but even in the 1920s it was a precarious modus subsistendi. There are a few notes and fragments of a diary, surviving effectively as a palimpsest in an old notebook. There was chess, too, with the Lodsworth club, representing Sussex and then the South of England.

Journalism remained his first love with the photography very much a back-up. Unsolicited articles were more likely to catch an editor's eye if they had an apposite picture with them. The prints, Jack Purser once told me,

were sometimes washed in the trough at the Railway Inn. A few pages of autobiographical writing survive, written apparently for Mrs. Gray, wife of Garland's long-term friend John Gray at Storrington. They would seem to come from between the wars. The 'Young Man' is so transparently Garland himself that the nom de plume, if such it is, is pointless. With the 'October flood waters deep in the fields, the wind raking through the fir trees outside, a torrential rain beat a wild devil's tattoo against the windowpanes … And so as the elements were venting their fury upon whatsoever they could a sad and patient woman in this same little house passed over to the Great beyond.' The loss of his mother would be a watershed in Garland's life. He was left with his stepfather and stepsister and since his mother and her husband had been unhappy for many years before her death it can the more readily be understood that in a very little while the Young Man went his own way and left his step-relatives to go theirs. He took lodgings with a local family in a tiny hamlet near to his old home. In fact, Garland stayed for a while with the Goatcher family at Duncton Post Office. Eventually while retaining a pied à terre at Duncton, the Young Man found 'two unfurnished (and unfurnishable!) rooms down by the butcher's slaughter-houses in the nearest town.' The Young Man's alter ego took lodgings in Lombard Street near Boorers the butchers. 'And before Christmas came he had decided to go out to South Africa, there to join an uncle who was the only living relative he had left.' There followed a period of waiting, a time 'to think of the past and hope for the future'. It was a time of growing friendship with Miss Knight, a supply teacher he had met locally but who was now working some distance away. Meanwhile 'the prospectuses of various liners were being eagerly scanned by the Young Man … And then there came a day when he got news of his uncle's death in South Africa. And, with the coming of that fateful green cable form, all his visions and hopes were burst in the air as one sees the passing out of a pretty bubble.'

Echoes of this critical moment were still with Garland fifty years later. I can remember him talking of it over his solitary supper at Windmill House, his home in High Street. Marriage to Miss Knight soon followed and the building of what would be the Station Road Studio. 'Originally it was intended that this should be an office, for the Young Man was resolved upon making a living as best he could out of his old calling of journalism. Subsequently the idea of this building was changed and a wooden building with a glass skylight and glass at the sides came into being.' Note the emphasis on journalism and the subordinate (in theory at least) role of photography.

And so, effectively, ends this youthful apologia and with it autobiography

comes to an end. Garland was not in later years an introspective man, or not obviously so. Certainly there was nothing of this kind at Windmill House when he died. He does not seem to have kept either a diary or personal notices. Perhaps he considered his nearly 70,000 negatives a kind of biography. In later years he would talk of the 1920s and 1930s, of old Shep, one of his more constant models, going away to live with his son. Old Shep at once protégé and doyen. Garland had a natural sympathy with an older generation, talking to them of those receding days before 1914. It was, I would think, an attitude running clear counter to the spirit of the times. An impatient post-war generation would be looking to a labour-saving future rather than recalling a labour-ridden past. Much of this recollection has been gathered in the books *The Men with Laughter in their Hearts* and *Old and New, Teasing and True*. Such material is usually recovered from newspaper cuttings but may be only a portion of what once existed. Much, one suspects, has been truncated by harassed newspaper editors.

I have written elsewhere of Garland in the 1920s as a kind of 'rural paparazzo' but there is a difference between then and now. Modern denizens of the goldfish bowl at least affect an aversion to publicity, polite society in those days perhaps made only the most token protest. There were so many Magazines, *Queen*, *Eve*, *Tatler* and others that would accept sharp pictures, published in black or sepia, and pay reasonably well for them. 'Lord —— shares a joke with the Hon. Mrs.—— at a meeting of Lord ——'s hunt.' By the 1930s either Garland had moved on, or the coherence of that social world was cracking – a bit of both perhaps.

A rare glimpse of Garland's own viewpoint comes in a brief typed synopsis, obviously for a speech, perhaps to a local Women's Institute. Garland recalls A. E. W. Mason, the novelist, in the 1920s, then living at Tillington and at the height of his fame, and the celebrated 'Tillington' passage at the beginning of *The Winding Stair*. Mason and E. V. Lucas formed a kind of unofficial local literary hierarchy. As a young man at the Railway Inn, Garland would watch them pacing the station platform waiting for the train to London. When Mason moved to New Grove, Garland interviewed him for *The Bookman*. Two morning visits with 'good wine and cigars'. 'I once heard him speak at a Women's Institute gathering at New Grove and was much struck by his ability in this sphere. Mason's habit of walking up and down the lane leading to Quarry Farm when he was thinking out portions of his books.'

Then there was the great occasion of King George V's renting of Pitshill House for Goodwood week in 1928. Garland took a group photograph of

the King and his entourage. How Garland pulled off such a coup is not clear. He recalled changing the placings while the King was changing his hat. 'Be quiet, sir, the photographer is doing his best for you. You can take as many as you like but I want my lunch.' Then, later, when the King was ill at Craigwell House, 'of how I, with other newspaper men, was driven away'. Even in the mid-1930s Garland sees himself as much as newspaperman as photographer. Perhaps by this time he made little distinction between the two.

And so to the 1940s and a friendship with C. E. M. Joad of 'The Brains Trust'. Did Garland tell me once that Joad had a house or cottage at Stedham? I may be wrong. Certainly the two were very friendly. Chess was a shared passion and, I think, a love of Jane Austen. Joad said to him at the beginning of the war, 'You'll go bust.' The photo-journalism had always been precarious and the newspaper market was set to change. The old men and time-forgotten villages would give way to news of the war. As I remember, Garland said to me that Joad found him some kind of official job taking identity pictures: there were so many displaced persons then, refugees, aliens, combatants, evacuees. There are very many such pictures among the Garland negatives, largely unconsidered at present, but no doubt a treasure trove for future researchers. Probably these were taken at the studio by Garland and his staff. My impression is that Garland went to a War Office centre, took them, and the authorities kept the negatives. He would talk about this travelling to Storrington by the back road via West Chiltington, and I had the impression that he came out this way to work.

In 1942 there was the school bombing. It still troubled him thirty years on, as, of course, it would trouble any man. He had seen what no man should have to see and it had burned into him. Sometimes he would talk compulsively of it, his usual rather detached persona briefly set on one side. It would always be with him.

After the war 'George Garland' had a well-defined local role; the days of evoking a lost world nationally had gone and with them the old men who had begun a long life of toil as urchin bird-scarers. A portrait such as that of old Edwin Rackham at Stopham House in the early 1950s comes almost as a surprise. Does Garland's work now lack a certain haleine? It may have considerable interest for those of us who knew Petworth in those years but it does probably lack the vigour and general relevance of the period between the wars. The glory (in a sense) has departed. At this time habit begins to fossilise: the year bringing a succession of regular events, a backbone for Garland's work. Petworth and West Grinstead ploughing matches, Ebernoe Horn Fair, Findon Sheep Fair, Petworth Fair, the few village revels that had survived the war, the Station Road studio

running to a rhythm of Mrs. Garland's making and Mr. Garland's breaking. Regularly at a quarter to six Mrs. Garland would come up Pound Street and into the shop – shops kept open longer forty years ago – as often as not decidedly uncomplimentary about the master's administrative skills.

After more than a quarter of a century at South Grove the Garlands had moved to Windmill House in High Street. For Garland himself it was a kind of homecoming – a conversion of two former Leconfield cottages, in one of which as a boy he had gone to buy seeds from old Mrs. Butcher. Shops were often in private front rooms then. There was the windmill too, an evocation of a vanished past. A poster for its sale a hundred years before was uncovered, but ironically the man of a thousand (and many more) pictures never found one of the windmill. To chronicle Petworth in the immediate post-war period. Not really a town at ease with itself. Death had at last removed the familiar figure, at once comforting and disconcerting, of Lord Leconfield, there was an awareness of the sad later years of Violet Lady Leconfield, the silent legacy of the bombed school, the loss of the church spire, a half-consciousness that nothing prospered in Petworth and, like as not, never would. Painful adjustment to a 'postfeudal' situation if you want to put it in those terms. Newspapers would ring for 'Mr. Garland' at night, the familiar 3232 yielding no reply, then ring my parents as the alternative number.

Then it would be up to the Red Lion to find him, very much a man of habit. Even if we did find him, as often as not he wouldn't ring back. To the last he was the master of a certain insouciance. At this time I knew him largely at a distance, although there was a real bond between my parents and the Garlands. Everyone knew 'George' or thought they did, but few actually penetrated his reserve. None of my contemporaries would call him 'George', or if they did, he wouldn't approve. I never did, even in later years. He could be distant, peremptory perhaps. I have his voice on a random tape, the machine left on by mistake and the tape kept to use again. It still surprises with its authority.

There were friends, but not too many, a select coterie if you like. John Gray the chemist's son from Market Square had an antique shop at Storrington. It was Mrs. Gray, 'Poddles', for whom the early autobiographical fragments had apparently been written. There was 'Dorrie' Pollard at Storrington, once an actress working with Will Hay and others. He'd met her again after some forty years and recalled a brief flirtation in the 1920s. In those days, she said, she had 'men to burn', and I never doubted it.

Mrs. Garland had fallen over in the street in 1965 and lay in bed,

forbidding him to call in medical aid. She had the same mistrust of doctors as she had of organised religion. A terrible dilemma for him: should he risk her wrath and call someone or delay and hope that things would right themselves, as surely they would…? In the event, with Sally weakening by the day, it was time for a risky subterfuge. Dr Griffiths would come in to see about buying a typewriter, George Garland had a penchant for buying, and selling, typewriters, binoculars, army surplus of various kinds. It was too late. I saw more of him after that, but it was downhill most of the way. Without Sally to organise it, the business became increasingly peripheral. Illness, periodical sojourns in various homes, then back to Windmill House for a time, the Cottage Hospital. Some people don't fit easily into the routine of such places. George Garland has become a legend of a kind, and, as one who knew him, I suppose that just the tiniest part of that legend now attaches to me.

A George Garland classic from the 1920s. Flooded fields at Pulborough, reproduced from a double-page spread in Peter Jerrome and Jonathan Newdick, *Not Submitted Elsewhere*, 1980.

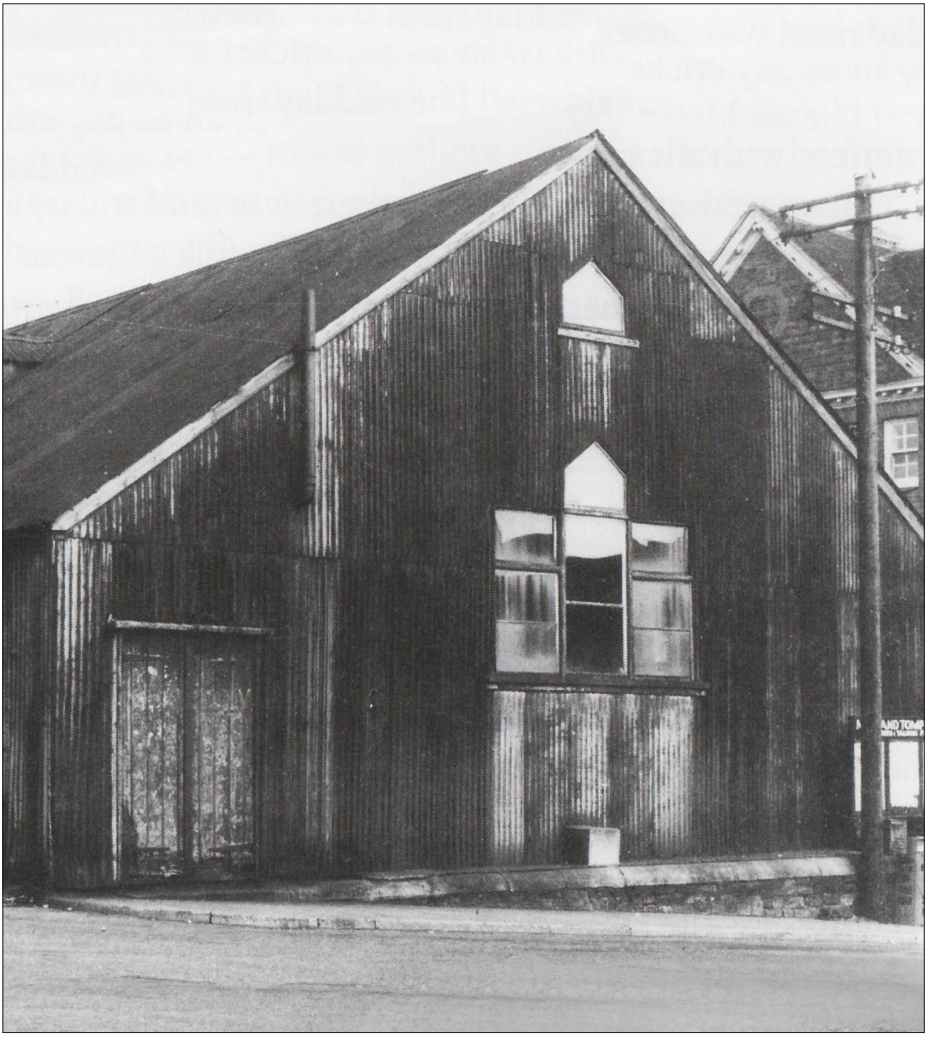
A somewhat improbable Petworth icon

The Iron Room
From the *Midhurst Times*, introduction by Peter Jerrome,
PSM 156, June 2014

Casual mention of the 'Iron Room' can be puzzling for many. The photograph opposite was taken by George Garland just before its demolition in 1963. *On the right is the rear of the present NatWest bank. The Iron Room had been erected to accommodate the congregation of St Mary's Church during extensive restoration in the early twentieth century. It would become for some sixty years a Petworth institution. The following extract from the report in the Midhurst Times, of Friday October* 18, 1963 *reflects the passing of a somewhat improbable Petworth icon.*

Petworth's old landmark in Market Square, the Iron Room – for so long the centre of local social functions – is no more. Demolition workmen moved in last week and the 59-year-old building has now been reduced to a heap of rubble. Standing on the site of the forgotten Petworth inn, the Black Horse, the Iron Room was formerly the headquarters of the Petworth Amateur Dramatic Society, which later became known as the Hampers Green Drama Group. Said Mr. Harold Huggett, secretary of the group and producer of many past Petworth productions: 'It was about four years ago since we last played at the Iron Room. After having played there for so long, we were sorry to leave at first, but the building was getting rather dilapidated. Although it was not as comfortable as the Leconfield Hall, it had a wider stage, better acoustics, and was generally more suitable for the larger productions which we like to stage from time to time.' Boxing tournaments, too, used to be held there. Organized by the late Mr. Ben Wareham, the tournaments used to attract the best amateur boxers from Bognor, Chichester, and even further afield… and were correspondingly popular. The Iron Room was also the headquarters of Petworth Boxing Club and Petworth Badminton Club, both of which are no longer in existence since the Iron Room closed down.

Horticulturalists, too, used the building. Said Mrs. May Stoner, secretary of the Petworth Produce Association and County V.P.A:s 'I'm sorry to see the Iron Room go. Its proportions were ideal for flowers and we've held many a successful show there.'



The Iron Room, looking more like something you'd find at the undesirable end of a failing industrial estate than a tin palace of dancing and laughter where trysts were made and hearts were broken.

Last tenant went bankrupt

Early photographs of Sladeland Mill, *PSM* 64, June 1991

In *PSM* 63 a photograph of an unidentified mill was reproduced in the hope that a reader might be able to identify it. In the following issue a Mrs. M. Talman was able to help. She had the same print but with the photographer's stamp on the back 'W. Ward. Ockley. Surrey'. She also had another print of the same mill which seems to have been taken at roughly the same time but not necessarily by W. Ward. The photographs at one time belonged to the late Hugh Kenyon but it is not known how he came by them. On the reverse of one of the prints Kenyon has written 'Kirdford (Sladeland) Mill, Undershot. Last tenant went bankrupt. Mill used to flood and corn was usually kept on 2nd floor. River dried out in summer'. The two photographs were in poor condition but have now been restored and are reproduced here along with another associated photograph from a postcard.

Sladeland bridge over the River Kird. Reproduced from a postcard, *c.* 1904.

Sladeland Mill and farmhouse, *c.* 1890, above and *c.* 1897 below.

I inherited two horses, two cows and a tractor

On leaving Gownfold Farm
John Treadwell senior, *PSM* 102, December 2000

I shall be leaving Gownfold Farm at Michaelmas after sixty-two years, since coming here in the early spring of 1938. I had always been in farming but this was the first time I had my own farm, before that I was on a farm in Oxfordshire. My brother-in-law Tom Biggs at nearby Crawfold had heard that Gownfold was becoming vacant so I came down to see Captain Briggs the Leconfield Estate agent at his Petworth office. My father had to guarantee the rent for two years: it was £73 per annum for a farm of 112 acres. Dad stayed on in Oxfordshire. The outgoing tenant at Gownfold, a Captain Peacock, was keen to go. He wanted to train for the Church of England ministry and went off, I believe, to East Sussex with his wife and daugther. I met him when I took over but once he had gone I never saw him again.

There wasn't a lot at Gownfold but the farm was in very reasonable order. Tom Biggs, Dad, and I valued the stock at what we thought was right, while Bill Boxall of Newlands Tomkins valued for Captain Peacock. There wasn't a lot of difference; Captain Peacock just wanted to go, he wasn't particularly concerned about the valuation. He'd farmed Gownfold for twelve years and before that had been at West Chiltington. Before him the Brooks family had been here for fifty years. Some of the family were still about but their tenure of the farm was never discussed. There were other things to think about.

Of late years I've been told that Gownfold is mentioned in a record of 1271. The name appears to be a corruption of de Gundeville, a family name. Later, Gownfold went with the Madgwick family. What relation any building from this time has with the present farmhouse is not clear; some think the present house is mostly eighteenth century with a much older core, possibly a medieval hall-house. There are smoke-blackened timbers in the roof, often indicating a hall-house, although sometimes such beams have simply been re-used. Gownfold's later history is cloudy, but it was bought by the Leconfield Estate in 1884. Possibly it's then that the Brooks tenure began. A definite link with an older Gownfold is the gnarled twisted weeping ash on the front lawn, even if it's not quite as old as it looks. It withstood the 1987 hurricane with ease. It's the last tree to put on leaf in spring and the first to lose it in autumn.

When I came to Gownfold I inherited from Captain Peacock two horses,

two cows and a tractor. Until the Peacocks actually moved out I lodged at Crawfold. In fact I didn't come to live at Gownfold until I moved in with my new wife in the April. A cottage went with the farm and I had a worker there. Mr. Enticknap, a pensioner by this time, who had worked at Gownfold all his life, came occasionally from Kirdford to help. Milking was done by hand. The full-time man tended to work with the horses while I drove the tractor, but I had been used to handling a pair of horses and could do so if needed.

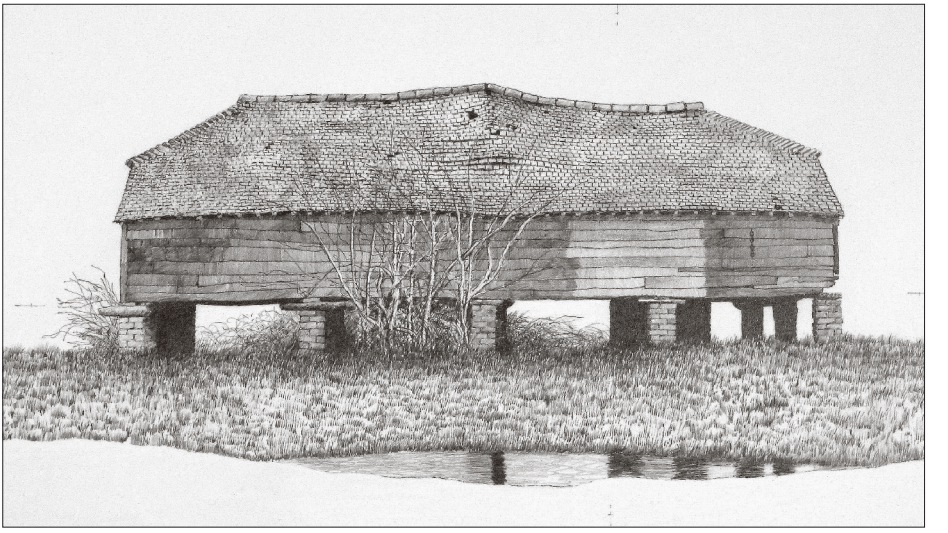
1938 was particularly dry year and I soon made the acquaintance of Mr. Allison the Leconfield Estate water foreman, who was having a trying time keeping up supply on an estate that stretched from Upwaltham to Wisborough Green and Pulborough. Coming south in 1938, I only once attended an audit dinner at Petworth House, I suppose it wouldbe the last before the war. It was a sit-down affair, held on two separate nights, divided alphabetically by names I think. It was November. There was another rent-day in June but that was much less elaborate – simply a glass of beer with bread and cheese.

I hadn't been long here before the war came. We weren't at that time a

Jonathan Newdick, *A timber-framed barn converted to a Dutch barn at Gownfold Farm*, 2011, charcoal and chalk on paper, private collection.

milk farm, with just the two hand-milked cows. It was corn, cattle and Kent sheep in the winter. In those days the 'Kenters', as they were called, still came to Billingshurst by rail and were then driven to the various farms that would overwinter them. In the spring they were returned to a collecting point at Kirdford. The Kent farmers on the marshes needed to rest their ground over the winter. Still do. We'd raise heifer calves to sell on, our shorthorns being serviced by the red Sussex bull at Crawfold but we'd also buy in forward store cattle to sell on for fattening up.

The war brought many changes: one was petrol rationing. We got ours at the Pound Garage in Petworth, in exchange for coupons. Agricultural petrol was specially dyed, I think, to distinguish it. I can remember bombs falling at the top of Fox Hill and a big one at Shillinglee. We were in the lounge and everything on the mantelpiece shook with the blast. We used to sleep downstairs and when the doodlebugs came over you could see the flames of the engine. That was alright, because it was when the engine cut out that you knew it was going to drop. Once we actually saw the engine stop and it went on to hit a house at Northchapel. We were supposed to have evacuees but there was some mix-up and we were told they'd got off at the wrong station. We never heard any more. We had no telephone or electricity – candles and lamps for light, no running water and an open fireplace. Water was from the well. We still salted our own bacon from our own pigs, usually once a year. Someone's sow would have a litter and we'd have one of them. The hook's still



on the beam in the scullery where the pig would be hung up. Joby Enticknap, at one time the Kirdford Butcher, would come out to kill the pig. He was working at Tom Biggs' butcher's shop in Petworth.

After the war we went more into milk, the regular Marketing Board cheque each month being decidedly useful. We'd buy calves for the dairy herd at Pulborough Market. The milk went to the Express Dairy at Billingshurst, the churns being collected every morning. We grew wheat, oats, mangolds, swedes and clover. It was well after the war before we had water laid on, the lack of it, of course, had severely restricted our milking activities. Both water and electricity came to Gownfold long after it had come to Kirdford itself, our water coming over Fox Hill and through from Marshalls Farm. In early days summer often meant a shortage of water and the need to rely on the river. We had a horse-drawn water cart, with buckets; the farm pond would dry up quite quickly in hot weather.

All in all the Kird was very important to us. It forms our boundary on one side. The remains of Kirdford, Sladeland or Gownfold Mill (three names for the one mill) are still visible on the other side of the river from us. It was probably always a precarious living; There are some notes by Mr. Kenyon to the effect that the last tenant went bankrupt, the river was too low to work the undershot wheel in summer, and because of the risk of flooding the corn was kept on the second floor.[1] Certainly the mill had gone long before my time – perhaps at the turn of the previous century. In some ways Gownfold was less isolated in the 1930s and 1940s than it is now. We had cars and bicycles but someone from Ireland's shop in the village came up for our grocery order in the morning for it to be delivered in the afternoon. Thompsons would leave the newspaper at the end of the drive – again from the village. The butcher called twice a week, Tuesday for Wednesday delivery and Thursday for Saturday, by this time we had a little van. At first a baker came from Wisborough Green, then the Cokelers[2] all the way from Loxwood, then Hazelmans from Petworth. In theory we hardly had to go out at all, a tallyman came from Billingshurst for clothes but we preferred to go out and buy them in Eagers at Petworth, or occasionally we might go to Horsham.

1 See page 30.

2 'The Cokelers' were The Loxwood Dependents, a non-conformist religious sect. Their founder, John Sirgood, was an advocate of cocoa-drinking and 'cocoa-drinkers' became 'cokelers'.

OPPOSITE Jonathan Newdick, *The granary at Gownfold Farm*, 2011, graphite on paper, private collection.

I can still remember some of the games

A Petworth childhood
W. W., *Bulletin* 21, September 1980

When I went from Lodsworth village school to Petworth girls school, the only thing that I liked about the school for about the first two years was going home at the end of the day. 'Least said, soonest mended'. But suddenly it all changed. In the middle of term we went to school on a Monday morning to find a new Head – Miss Wootton, and after she came school was for me a happy place.

Because of the distance that we had to walk we took our lunches with us, and were at school until 4 p.m. During the lunch break in summer we used to take our lunch 'round the hills' and play and paddle in the stream. In the winter we would sit in the classroom, near the tortoise stove, and cocoa would be made on very cold days – we took our own mugs. We had to pass the workhouse on our way to school, and would occasionally see the inmates in brown corduroy, sweeping the garden paths. Once, for a very short time, a girl came to school from there, in a pale brown corduroy dress, with close-cropped hair, and I used to wonder about her. A hazard we had was passing the boys school (which was so tragically bombed during the war). The boys would try to snatch our hats off. They did not always succeed. We also passed both lots of almshouses, and often saw the old people living in the lower rooms, they would be looking out of their doors or sweeping the steps.

We began school with a hymn and a prayer, and ended it in the same way. I can remember the Rector coming in occasionally for religious instruction. Reading, writing and arithmetic – how I hated the latter and loved the first. Once or twice I was allowed to read to the class while the other girls sewed. Sewing we did, and I remember having to make a white petticoat of fine cotton for one of the teachers, and sewing on the lace was such a trial, it was rather black by the time that it was finished. I enjoyed enormously the poetry readings and recitations. They introduced me to a pleasure that has lasted and enhanced all my life. I remember also a fête or some festive occasion at the rectory, when a maypole was set up, and we plaited the ribbons and did country dancing, after some tuition of course.

Because of having the walk to school every day, mother allowed us to

choose whether we would go to Sunday School and I chose to go (little prig). I went until I was confirmed. 'Haven't you a white dress my dear?' Oh, the humiliation; I had not. It was pale pink with little pink and black roses on the skirt, ever so pretty, but not white. We could not afford a new white dress for just one occasion, and this had been passed on to me by a cousin for the ceremony, and I was really being accused of wearing the dress because it was pretty. I couldn't explain, and I couldn't tell mother afterwards or she would have been hurt.

I can still remember some of the games that we played during playtime, and wonder where they came from, and why all team games?

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1 'Here comes a man across the common to get a job of work.'
Answer: 'What work'?
'Any work.'
Answer: 'Show us your trade.'
And then the 'man' would mime his work, and the rest would have to guess it.

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2 Sally, Sally Wallflower, growing up so high,
We shall all marry, we shall all die,
Excepting ——— . She's the only one.
She shall dance and she shall skip,
And she shall turn the candlestick.
And so and so when named, had to go into the circle while the chorus was repeated and someone else chosen. This was sung. Was it to do with witchcraft?

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3 'Here come three Jews from Salisbury Plain,
To take away your daughter Jane.'
Answer: 'Our daughter Jane is far too young,
And cannot bear your chattering tongue.
Go away corkscrews' (curls?)
And this went on and on about the most beautiful girl and what she would be given if she would go away with the Jews.
This was sung. Where did it come from?

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4 Have you any bread and wine?
We are the Romans,
Have you any bread and wine?
We are the Roman soldiers.

Yes, we have some bread and wine,
We are the English,
Yes we have some bread and wine,
We are the English soldiers.

Will you give us bread and wine?	We will not give you bread and wine,
We are the Romans,	We are the English,
Will you give us bread and wine,	We will not give you bread and wine,
We are the Roman soldiers.	We are the English soldiers.

Are you ready for a fight?	Yes, we're ready for a fight,
We are the Romans,	We are the English,
Are you ready for a fight?	Yes, we're ready for a fight,
We are the Roman soldiers,	We are the English soldiers.

Shoot! Bang! Fire!
And the two armies linked hands and tried to pull each other over a line. Again this was sung, and I remember all the tunes – but why does one remember this sort of thing? And do they still sing them at any local schools?

FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE *PSM* 83, June 2021

Petworth House Fire. *St James's Chronicle*, November 21, 1846
Petworth House was in imminent danger of being destroyed by fire last week. On Tuesday evening some of the domestics discovered a quantity of smoke and a smell of fire in Miss Wyndham's sleeping-room, but, attributing the circumstance to a screen having been placed too near the fire no further notice was taken of it at that time. About three o'clock in the morning Miss Wyndham awoke, and, finding the room full of smoke, called up her maid; but after setting the window open, and seeing no cause for alarm, she again retired to rest. In the morning, the smoke continuing to increase, with at the same time a strong smell of burning, a further search was made, when the smoke was seen to issue from under the stove. Mrs. Wyndham went, with great presence of mind, to the servants' apartments, and gave directions that water should be taken up in buckets and the engine got out. On the floor being cut away, it was found that a large piece of timber, technically called a 'girder', was on fire and nearly burnt through. Three engines had in the meantime been got ready in front of the house, and one of them having played on the burning mass, the damage was confined to a very small space. Half an hour more, and we have very little doubt that a great part of the mansion would have fallen before the devouring flames.

Nissen huts for about 60 families

The Petworth Polish Camp
Ziggi Janiec, introduction by Miles Costello, *PSM* 174, December 2018

The Petworth Polish Camp at Petworth Park was established during the late 1940s and continued through to the very early 1960s. Situated immediately north of the Lower Pond in the Park in what was a former military holding base that had become vacant, the camp, which after a certain amount of refurbishment, eventually became officially 'The Polish Housing Estate'.

Home to a large number of displaced Polish families, the camp had a surprisingly static population with most families leaving only when permanent homes were found, consequently a substantial number of residents remained in the camp for many years and indeed considered it very much as home. What became apparent from hearing the memories of those bought up in the camp was the sense of community that developed and which survives among former residents to this day. While there appear to be conflicting opinions on the exact size of the camp there can be little doubt that it was substantial as a surviving Rural District Council rental register lists the tenants of some 104 huts.

With no previous connection to the camp I was fortunate enough to be invited to a reunion picnic of former camp 'children' in August this year that was planned to be held in Petworth Park. The weather on the day was foul but the now quite elderly 'children' were determined to visit the site of the camp. Unfortunately nothing obvious remains although it is still possible to determine the location of individual huts, no mean feat when considering that some of the 'children' had not been back for sixty years. The huge oak upon which the children once swung survives as do the deep grooves in a branch created by its rope. The picnic, which due to the weather was held at The Hampers Green Community Centre, was a great success with former camp residents coming from as far afield as Essex, and further reunions were planned.

This recollection is the result of a recent conversation that I had with Zigei Janiec (formally Zigmunt Krawcyk) along with extracts from an account of his time at the camp which he wrote for a web-site created by Ryszard Starzec which can be found at www.petworthpolishcamp.com.

My mother was just sixteen when war broke out and she was taken by the German Army from Poland to Austria where she spent the duration of the war working on a farm. Meanwhile, my father was in the Polish army which retreated into Russia and he eventually ended up in the Middle East and North Aftica before becoming involved in the battle for Monte Casino.

At the end of the war there were of course a huge number of displaced people and one of the first places where camps were set up was newly liberated Italy and that is where my parents met. Like so many refugees they were given a choice as to where they preferred to go. They could of course be repatriated back to Poland but that would have meant living under the Russians, the other options were France, Britain or America. France was thought too close to possible future troubles in Europe while America seemed too far. Britain, however, was far enough away but not so far if things improved in Poland and they were able to return home. Having settled on Britain to make their home my parents first went to a resettlement camp at Diddington in Cambridgeshire where I was born at No.6 Polish General Hospital in June 1947. Later that year we transferred to a camp at Slinfold before finally arriving at Petworth Park Camp No.3 in June 1948.

Petworth Camp No. 3 was located on the northern banks of the Lower Pond, within the Park; the number three was a military reference as the camp had been used during the war in preparation for D-Day. Camp numbers one and two were evidently further along the London Road in what is now Pheasant Copse. Our camp contained Nissen huts for about 60 families although you suggest that there may have been many more. There was a chapel and a priest's house, a shop, a small school and a large community hall. There was a main gate and the road ran round the perimeter of the camp in a large circle. A second gate had been closed off but one could see where it had been, as the rebuilt wall was quite new. There was a bus stop at a muddy layby opposite the camp gate. Just inside the main gate was a small roundabout then the road carried straight on

BEIOW Six residents of the Petworth Polish Camp. From left to right: Mrs. H. Krawezuk, her son Tadeusz, Krystof Krawczyk, Rosalia Krawczyk, Zygmunt Krawezyk and Lydia Stefanska.

running parallel with the north shore of the lake or lower pond as you now call it before eventually turning and returning back to the roundabout. At the top of the camp there was a short spur off the road with three or four huts, but generally most of the homes were on the main camp road.

The camp's perimeter was a six-foot high fence constructed to keep out the park deer and protect our crops. We were able to grow our own potatoes, cabbages, peas, broad beans, beetroot, carrots, cucumbers, radishes and many herbs. We also kept a large number of chickens, rabbits and pigeons for the table. This self-sufficiency was quite necessary as the population of Britain was still on ration books and each family was limited as to how much food they were allowed to purchase. Most families would also preserve cabbage and cucumbers in a large wooden beer barrel. In many ways we were extremely fortunate as each hut, or barrak as we called them, was allocated a large plot of land, in fact much more than most of the locals had.

I lived with my parents and younger brother in hut 67, which was approximately six metres wide by 12 metres long. It was split into two bedrooms and a large living area. The corrugated metal roof and sides were covered in black pitch for waterproofing. There was no insulation and when it rained it was very noisy indeed. At one end of the living area was a kitchen sink with just a cold tap. A small porch attached to the front of the hut protected us from the worst of the elements. There were two small windows in the brick-built front and back walls and one large dormer type window cut into the curved side of the hut. A short walk from each family hut was a W.C. block with individual lockable toilet cubicles and cold showers. Most children tried everything to avoid showering and the fortunate among us were able to bathe in hot water, heated in the hut and poured into a small tin bath.

I don't recall any sort of hierarchy in the camp, though there may have been. After all we were really just council tenants and so everything would have been administered from Newlands at Petworth. Of course Father Busiuk the priest was very important and would have had considerable standing in the community as I suppose would Mr. Cisek the teacher who I knew very well as he was our neighbour and lived in the barrak next door. He was a very pleasant man who after school would teach us Polish history and language.

I remember Petworth Fair; it was a wonderful sight with the bright lights and noise. I remember the chair-o-planes so vividly as though it were

yesterday, in fact I have been back to the fair and I must say that very little has changed, perhaps a little smaller but the atmosphere is still there.

I went to the infants school in the town when I was five though I knew no English at all, however, like many of the other Polish children I soon picked it up. We children would walk in to Petworth two abreast with perhaps two adults marshalling us, it was quite a long way for small children but not unusual in those days. I seem to remember walking to the girls school for lunch but you suggest it would have been the boys school at Culvercroft by Bacon's shoe shop. It is sad to see the shop has gone, in fact the town is not quite the same without it.

Petworth traders would come to the camp to deliver goods. I can certainly remember the baker's van and I believe that we even had a milk delivery each morning. Occasionally my family and I would walk out on a Sunday afternoon to Pheasant Copse where there had been other military camps though by then they were derelict and covered with rhododendrons and other shrubs. I remember the large concrete water tower and the ponds though they were very overgrown in those days. My mother often went apple-picking at Kirdford as did many Polish women and she also worked in the kitchens at Seaford College at Duncton. She had several good friends in Petworth and sometimes my younger brother and I would go and stay with Mr. and Mrs. Whittington, who lived in in a cottage in Damer's Bridge which was later demolished to make the entrance to the present car park, until my mother finished work. They were a lovely elderly couple and as a young child I was most impressed that they had a television which was quite unusual in those days. As most of the residents of the camp were Catholic the church played an important role in in the social life of the community. I recall that on the feast of Corpus Christi the people would build and adorn with flowers and foliage four altars and the congregation would walk in procession singing and reciting prayers, from the chapel to the first altar, and then to each altar in turn, with flower petals being strewn on the ground by the children who had just received their first Holy Communion.

Christmas was always very exciting for a small child. We would have a large Christmas tree adorned with home-baked biscuits, crepe paper twists and small red candles and with a Polish version of the crib beneath. On the feast of St. Nicholas, which was celebrated on the sixth of December all the families would gather in the community hall and eagerly await the arrival of our Father Christmas (St. Nicholas) who would enter the hall in procession

dressed similar to a Bishop, wearing a mitre and carrying a crozier. He would have many attendants who were dressed as angels and elves. Father Christmas would make his way up on to the stage where he sat down on a large throne to preside over the ceremony of present-giving. In front of him was a huge pile of wrapped gifts destined for every child present. As your name was read out by an attending angel you had to leave your seat, walk up the central aisle and on to the stage. Handed a present and asked if you had been good he presented you with a birch twig which he neatly tucked under the ribbon of your present, saying 'This is for your parents when you are naughty'. Gripping your present tightly you would run in fear back to your seat and the safety of your family. I could not say if the twig was ever used, but I have been good ever since.

Eventually my family circumstances changed and in late 1955, having found improved accommodation, we left the camp. Most of the remaining families were eventually housed in council houses in Petworth or within the local villages of Plaistow, Kirdford, Northchapel, and Bury. All around the Petworth area, where they were in groups of two or three families, integrated into the local village life. On reflection, I think this was very forward thinking in 1956. I am pleased to say that a few of us still keep in touch and meet from time to time.

SOME FORMER RESIDENTS OF THE CAMP

Mr. and Mrs. Krawczuk with their children, Lila, Tadek and Krystyna, Mr. and Mrs. Starzec with their children, Stasha, Krystyna, Ryszard and Tadeusz, Mr. and Mrs. Dulas with their daughters Zosia and Marysia, Mr. and Mrs. Krawczyk and their sons Zygmunt and Krzistof, Mr. and Mrs. Stempien with their children George, Joseph and ?, Mr. and Mrs. Pisarek with their children, George, Maria and ?, Mr. and Mrs. Kusy with their children, Mrs. Bandrowska with her daughter Krystina and her mother, Mr. Czeslaw Ogrodnik and his sons Olek and Edward, Mr. Franczisek Cisek, the schoolteacher, Mr. and Mrs. Zajac, Mr. and Mrs. Saganowski, Mr. and Mrs. Turek, Mr. Wenglasz, .Mr. and Mrs. Wisniewski, Mr. and Mrs. Sczotka with their daughters Elizabeth and Krystina, Mr. and Mrs. Krol with their children Anna and Henrick, Mr. Swienton with children Andzej, Micheal and Joe, Mrs. Kopiec and her grown-up son Mr. Jozef Kopiec, Mr. and Mrs. Czarnopolski and their son Janek and daughter Janka, Mr. and Mrs. Wasielenko and their children, Mr. and Mrs. Konarski, Mr. and Mrs. Hubert and Mr. and Mrs. Rutowska.

Of cabbages and champion bulls

John Giffin, Leconfield Estate farm manager in conversation with Caroline Egremont and the editor. *PSM* 177, September 2019

It is not known when the Petworth breed of Sussex cattle was first at Petworth, only that by 1782 the third Earl of Egremont had established a herd at the newly developed Stag Park. The ground had been cleared of forest and scrub, hedges planted and the land under-drained. Many of the drains remain in working order to this day. The cattle themselves are commonly thought to descend ultimately from the wild red breed that once roamed the primeval forests of the Weald. The farmhouse and model farmstead were raised in a single calendar year to accommodate the Sussex herd as well as the various hay barns, granaries and stables required to operate a mixed livestock and arable farm of 650 acres. In his *Agriculture of West Sussex* (1793), Arthur Young makes reference to the third Earl's contribution to improving the Sussex herd and to the 'veritable garden' the Earl had created from scrubland, while the Sussex Herd Books from 1855 to 1878 refer to 'Sussex cattle' in the hands of other breeders. The second Lord Leconfield is mentioned in 1878 as a founding member of the Herd Society but it would not be until the time of Charles 3rd Lord Leconfield that Petworth's Sussex cattle were first registered. This was in 1908, with entries backdated to 1894. There is a tradition that the great house originally looked upon the Herd Book as a passing fad.

Ardingly 1972. Elation. It was the South of England Show and as the Leconfield Farms foreman I was leading the First Prize bull Petworth Concorde III around the ring as was my privilege. A good day was about to get better. Two men came up to me 'Is he for sale?' They were Ayrshire breeders looking to expand into Sussex cattle. We settled for £2,000, a significant sum at the time. This was immediately followed by a less welcome interruption – the show secretary with an urgent message. I was to leave for Petworth without delay. Jeff Simpson the stockman would take over. John Wyndham had died.

I returned to a Leconfield Estate in thrall to death duties; an estate in which showing might be important for morale but in financial terms something of an indulgence. Death duties were to paid in half-yearly instalments over an eight-year period. The Cheveley Report [1] had insisted that the Leconfield Estate could not continue to run on what amounted to pre-war lines. It had to pay its way in a world that had become alien to its spirit. The recommendations

of the report needed to be implemented. Some provision had already been made: John Wyndham had been ailing for a time, as too, the long-serving land agent John Shelley who would soon retire. To reduce capital taxation, outlying farms had been let out in the late 1960s to be followed now by Frog Farm, one of the home farms. One or two farms like Parsonage at Witley and the smaller Great Brockhurst at Lurgashall had been bought in with a view to improvement and resale. Unmodernised properties might be sold or, in some cases, pulled down, while the property sales that had been such a feature of the 1950s and 1960s would continue. These of course were originally to pay duties on the death of the 3rd Lord Leconfield.

Of properties demolished I particularly remember Snow Hill, a large house in Petworth park, indeed the only property in the park, latterly unoccupied but used in connection with the deer. Snow Hill had neither mains water nor electricity, to say nothing of telephone, and the cost of installing services would have been prohibitive. Snow Hill had the curious feature of attracting snow when it was raining on the slopes below. I have always supposed that this was why it was called Snow Hill. No trace of the building survives now.

The Leconfield Estate was large and diverse, comprising grass, potatoes, livestock, dairy and arable. Its development had been thwarted by the drain on capital from death duties and a punitive rate of taxation on income. Financial stringency apart, it was clearly sensible to consolidate the home farms under one management as opportunity offered, i.e. as leases expired and tenants retired. South Dean at Tillington, with a dairy herd of 160 was a case in point. It was a very productive farm, had always been, and was eminently suitable for direct administration, while items like the dryer would now come into estate use. At Stag Park I was managing with five radial flow bins. Stag was a farm of 716 acres with 80 Sussex cows and followers and a few Sussex bull calves. As farms like South Dean came under direct control, I might be driving a thousand miles a week before the coming of the mobile phone. I had my first one in the mid-1980s. It cost five or six hundred pounds at the time and could be used only when I was in a vehicle.

I'd gather the workers together in the morning to plan out the day's work – obviously people like shepherds were not involved: their daily routine was clear enough, varying only with the season. A feature of these morning meetings

OPPOSITE Three full sisters aged, left to right, nine, seven and four years, (above). They were the winners of the Group of Three class at both the Royal Show and the South of England Show in1998 and (below) Petworth Matador 9th, exported to a breeder in Natal for the record price of 15,000 guineas.


SOUTH OF
SHOW

would be an exchange of surplus garden produce, some simply given to anyone who might want it. A huge cabbage did not find any takers, an old worker complaining that he hadn't a large enough saucepan in which to boil it.

In 1976 we had mounted a display of Petworth Sussex cattle in Petworth Park by the lake and in full view of the House itself. The display was a joint initiative of Lord Egremont, Charles Wolseley the new agent, and myself. The aim was to promote the Sussex breed in general and the Petworth herd in particular. About twenty breeders attended, mostly from Kent and East Sussex but others had come from abroad – South Africa and what was then Rhodesia. It was the year of the great drought and already in June the Park was parched and yellow. It was a lot of work for a single-day show but a great success. I remember the sheer hard work of bringing in and constructing the hurdles and the difficulty of driving the stakes into the dry ground. Roger Wootton, freshly arrived at Petworth, was a great help. As we had hoped, we had orders for Sussex bulls, while Lord Plumb, the NFU president made the opening speech. John Glanfield was here from Rhodesia: we put him up at the Crown at Chiddingfold. The Snow Hill paddocks were brought into use and lunch was served in the big white marquee visible on the right of the photo on page 50.

We were exporting bulls for breeding to South Africa, Rhodesia, Zambia and elsewhere. Sussex bulls adapt readily to African conditions and thrive in a dry heat, but I would find that the sapping humidity of places like the Gulf of Mexico suited them much less well.

In 1982 I was asked to judge the Sussex cattle at the Rand Show in Johannesburg, a considerable honour for me and for the Leconfield Estate. I flew out in April, leaving Heathrow where the temperature was two degrees and landed in Jo'burg where it was 30. The following day I found myself in the bull ring. The first class in the morning was the year-old Sussex bulls. I was somewhat dismayed to see 44 animals come into the ring. The usual number of cattle to be judged in a class in this country is ten or twelve. My other difficulty was that the handlers looked identical. I was used to bulls being led round by a variety of handlers who might be anyone from an old man, a young girl, a man with a beard *&*c. This makes it easier to mark them in your mind as they walk round. In this case the handlers were all native South Africans who wore identical red overalls and white wellington boots. Feeling a bit exposed in the full sun I gradually picked out from the circling bulls the first to the forty-fourth, judging each individual. Luckily I could see immediately which were the best five bulls, but after that it is less easy. In the third class, 18-20 month old bulls, – twenty bulls in this class – my chosen

winner 'Brookshall Resolution' was champion bull of the Sussex breed that day. His progeny went on to win all the prizes in South Africa for the next few years. The last class was the Sussex cows – 25 in this class. My chosen winner 'Start Olivia Adette' was later judged, by an independent judge, to be Overall Champion of the Rand Show, winning the gold cup. Clearly I had created sufficient impression to be asked back to Africa five years later.

Ardingly in 1983 was a memorable success. 'Matador 9th' was the overall winner of the show and sold to a breeder in Natal. But times were changing and the immediate threat posed by death duties was easing little: was the use of the home farms for conventional agriculture the best way forward? Might vegetables be a better use of the land? It was not a question that could simply be brushed aside. Leeks, cauliflowers, overwintering onions to supplement the potatoes? We engaged a marketing group to act as our agents. They would sell the produce on our behalf and provide the necessary labour while we prepared the ground, provided tractors and whatever else was necessary. It would be basically a single annual crop economy but even then I had reservations about taking leeks off the ground in the depths of winter. The labour force always intrigued me. My favourites were the Sikhs – cheerful and hardworking and arriving on the agency coach as a family unit: muffled in the bitter cold, they would put up a tent and cook their own food. Eight o'clock sharp they would be on the land. Other workers were Portuguese and already there was a sprinkling of east Europeans. The agency would ring me with an order for so many bins of leeks, parsnips or whatever. The leeks would be cut with a fearsome looking machete, lethal I always thought, in the wrong hands. We still had 150 acres of potatoes at Frog Farm and a good crop of winter barley, and were using our own slurry on the land.

Exporting Sussex bulls to Africa was a complex business, and an expensive one, but then a champion bull could be worth a lot of money. Even in the 1980s 'Matador 9th' was sold for 15,000 guineas and 'Matador 4th' for 8,000. Ironically the latter would prove to be the better buy. Strict quarantine was the order of the day. An animal to be exported might spend three months in the courtyard of the stables at Petworth House. He would then be put into a strong crate and lifted on a crane for the journey to Southampton, en route to Africa. The shipping line would now take responsibility with costs defrayed by the purchasers. A young stockman might accompany the animals.

As was customary with most farmers in the 1980s straw which was surplus to requirement was burned in the field and incorporated into the soil. It gave us a good start to the year, in much the same way as glyphosate does today.

One year, having completed our burning programme, the wind blew from the south-west at gale force, causing the straw cinders to be blown into Petworth and Tillington. I had so many phone calls regarding the inconvenience it had caused, from a baker who had his iced buns ruined to a lady with soiled baby-clothes. The worst affected were offered a sack of potatoes to help calm the waters and all went well until I was called to the kitchen of the Herbert Shiner School: it was in a sorry state. There were five dinner ladies and they demanded a sack of potatoes each. The most embarrassing part of the episode for me was that we had been fortunate to win Champion Farm at the ploughing match the previous year. When I went to retrieve the cups in the Agent's office to give back to the organisers to re-present them they were found to be a third full of ashes. No more stubble burning after that for us and anyway, the practice was banned nationally the following year.

I remember the great fire at Stag Park. It coincided with the funeral of the Estate accountant Ken Brownsey and meant that I was unable to attend. It was not, as some suggested, caused by spontaneous combustion (nor, thankfully, by stubble burning) but by mice nibbling the electricity cables. The heat was such that you couldn't put your hand to the adjacent stable door for days after.

1 The agricultural consultants Cheveley & Company prepared a report on the then current farming activities at Petworth with recommendations for future policy. The report ran to 47 foolscap pages.

BELOW The display of Sussex cattle in Petworth Park in 1976, the land parched and savannah-like in what would be the driest summer anyone could remember.

Hold it up and you'll hear it tick

On nurturing the Leconfield Estate through difficult times
Max Egremont, *PSM* 72, June 1993

My parents lived in London in the late 1940s and I was four when we came to Petworth to live at New Grove in 1951. I have a vivid memory of being brought to Petworth House to see my great-uncle Charles. He was obviously very ill and I suppose that even as a child I sensed he was about to die. He had the ground floor room that we now use as a dining-room converted into a bedroom. There was a nurse in attendance and I distinctly remember being brought in to see him. He had an enormous gold watch, or so it appeared to me, and he gave it to me to hold, saying, 'Hold it up and you'll hear it tick.' I held it up and could hear it tick just as he said. He was in his pyjamas, lying in bed. He had a red face and seemed a kindly old man. He spoke very gently to me. It was the only time I saw him for he died soon afterwards.

My parents didn't move into the big house immediately. The title had passed to Lord Leconfield's brother, Hugh Wyndham, a noted antiquarian, who was married but had no children. He too was elderly by now and had already decided that he did not want to come and live at Petworth House. My own grandfather, Edward Wyndham, Lord Leconfield's next oldest brother, also declined. Both brothers gave up their right to inherit, leaving the Estate in trust for my own father, John Wyndham, Lord Leconfield's nephew. A lot of work needed to be done at the house; central heating in the private rooms and much else so we stayed on at New Grove for a while.

As a child I could know nothing of such matters but unbeknown to me the Leconfield Estate was passing through a crisis unparalleled in its long history. I don't mean that it was threatened by changing attitudes, Lord Leconfield would have known better than anyone that the old days of implicit obedience and a huge workforce were gone for ever. The Leconfield Estate could live with that. Any large estate will evolve in response to changing patterns of social thought, or fail to do so at its own peril. The problem was at once more straightforward and more directly threatening, one that cut to the Estate's very heart. It was death duties. Lord Leconfield had been a landowner on the grand scale – had it not been said that in the early century one could walk from Petworth to Shoreham and never set foot on non-Leconfield land? The route may have been circuitous but in essence the saying was true. There had

been desultory selling before 1952 but never enforced selling in response to a massive capital demand. Death duties posed the dilemma that the Estate could survive as an entity only at the cost of being partially dismantled. It is a dilemma that has haunted us ever since 1952. A slight relief was that no duty was payable on the House itself; that had been made over to the National Trust in 1947. For the rest, however, the situation was desperate. A large part of the Sussex and Cumberland estates would need to be sold and the whole of the Yorkshire estates. The price of land was low then which compounded the problem. In addition a number of pictures and much of the good furniture was given to the nation in lieu of duties. It was a watershed. In the face of such a massive financial blood-letting, the Leconfield Estate could never again be the force it had been. Commenting on its later history, people so often suggest that my great-uncle would have lamented this or that. 'It wouldn't have happened in Lordie's time', or 'The old Lord Leconfield would have a fit if he saw what was going on'. Such comments merely illustrate a misunderstanding of the crisis of 1952 and after.

Nothing could ever be the same again. Great-uncle Charles was a realist. He knew that things could never be the same again, he knew that an age had gone. It is not the Leconfield Estate that lives in the past, it is those who look to transplant the situation before 1952 into the utterly changed world of today. It cannot be done. I too wish it were possible but I have to live in the real world. It is no service to my great-uncle to live out a phantasy. The old Leconfield Estate had died with him in 1952.

Hugh Leconfield died in 1963 and my grandfather Edward Wyndham became Lord Leconfield until he too died in 1967.The two brothers' forfeiture of the right to inherit had spared the Estate another set of death duties and the title passed to my father John Wyndham. In recognition of his services as private secretary to Harold Macmillan he was created Lord Egremont, technically a new title but also a resuscitation of an older one which had been in abeyance since the death of the third Earl of Egremont in 1837. Yes, he could have called himself Lord Leconfield, as I can. I am Lord Leconfield as well as Lord Egremont. In practice, however, we have tended to use the Egremont title which is, in a way, older than Leconfield, Colonel Wyndham being created Lord Leconfield by QueenVictoria in 1859.

We continued living at New Grove for a year or more after Lord Leconfield died but most afternoons I would come up to the House to play with the marvellous train set that had belonged to Lord Leconfield's adopted children, Peter and Elizabeth. It was probably 1954 before we finally came to Petworth

House to live. I had a little room of my own and I liked that. In 1956 I would be sent to boarding school, Heatherdown, near Ascot. It doesn't exist any more. I didn't dislike the idea: I quite looked forward to it, after all I would meet children of my own age. My upbringing was in some ways more subject to what was considered appropriate than most people's. Being heir to somewhere like Petworth House imposes its own restrictions. There are things you can do in my position and things you can't. I would not say you have a greater or lesser freedom of action. It's a different kind of freedom. Before I went to Heatherdown I had a governess, Miss Austin, who lived with her sister in Percy Terrace, while 'Nanny' spent a lot of time with me as was normal in a household such as ours. 'Nanny' is over eighty now but remains a family friend whom we are always pleased to welcome back here on holiday.

I do not want to give the impression that life before Heatherdown was solitary. It was in no way that. My particular companions at that time were Andrew and Patricia Wales whose father was clerk of the works then, and Michael Robertson, son of the head forester, who went on to appear on children's television. It was at this time in the 1950s, either before I went to Heatherdown or during the holidays that I really got to know Petworth and was out in the town for much of my time. Not only that, but I would ride all over the Estate with Mr. Barnes the groom. A real martinet he seemed to me but he certainly taught me to ride. A favourite excursion was to ride out to Stag Park, Chillinghurst and Ragham, while another was up into the Gog woods and into Flexham Park. At first it was just Mr. Barnes and I, later my sister, who was four years younger, joined us. It seemed a huge age gap then, less so now of course. I think if you are as I was, 'inducted' into a particular countryside at that age, the consciousness of it never leaves you and you have an awareness of, and sensitivity to, change that you could not acquire in later years.

Looking back today on Petworth in the 1950s, what strikes me most is that Petworth has lost the old feeling of being the centre of an agricultural community. It is no doubt a process which had already started between the wars. After all, agriculture is no longer the major employer it once was. The town seemed more crowded in the 1950s, there was a tangible impression of people coming in from the villages and there were lots of little shops to cater for them. So many in Lombard Street for instance. And the tradespeople – Miss Older in Angel Street, Arch Standen the tailor in Market Square; Mr. Moss the chemist was still in East Street where Wilson Hill had been. There were the Eager brothers, or, perhaps my favourite tradesman, old Mr. Bishop in Lombard Street. When I was very young he called me Max. As I grew a

little older he graduated to Mr. Max. He always seemed in memory to be standing at the door of his little shop. I suppose he went back into the shop sometimes but I only remember him at the door. There were buses bringing people in from the villages, people who had feel of the country about them, more exactly perhaps a feel of the land. There were still characters, but there was a difference from those George Garland had portrayed in his photographs of Petworth life between the wars; such few characters as remained were becoming divorced from their true agricultural roots, on the way to becoming eccentrics rather than genuine characters.

Surely I am right in thinking the traffic was worse then – I remember the long lines of traffic on Sunday nights stretching right down Pound Street and Station Road, and the Specials at Bacon's Corner and the Pound. At Goodwood time we would stand outside the main entrance collecting for the Red Cross. Goodwood seemed more of an occasion, less anonymous than it is now. The traffic was horrendous.

The loss of the regular buses has made a difference. Even the half-forgotten bus stops seem symbolic now, the one by the old Iron Room and the one outside the Leconfield Hall. I know that buses still stop outside the hall – but only intermittently. [1] It was the regular hourly service that inspired confidence and kept Petworth in close touch with its hinterland. There were more pubs too. Again I think this was connected with people coming into Petworth more than they do now. Almost every Sunday I was at Sunday School, Mr. Yorke being the Rector then.

There were many more people working in the Estate yard in those days and I was allowed to play about with tools and other bits and pieces. In this period in the 1950s I was as close to Petworth as any child could be and it is a feeling that has never left me. I am never sure whether to be amused or upset at suggestions that I have lived in a kind of cocoon, sheltered from the real Petworth. Who would be so bold as to claim to know the real Petworth? Does anyone? What is the real Petworth?

Eton followed Heatherdown. It was a predictable enough progress I suppose for someone from my background, just as Heatherdown had been predictable before. I was back, however, every holiday. Petworth, after all, is my home, always will be, always has been. Even when I went to Oxford I still had that awareness of the Petworth in which I had grown up. After Oxford I

OPPOSITE The brochure for the 1957 Leconfield Estate sale. It measures 15 x 10 inches, contains 142 pages and lists 170 lots from Elsted in the west to West Chiltington in the east.

THE LECONFIELD

Petworth Estate

1957

worked in publishing for a couple of years before my father became seriously ill. He was only 52 when he died in 1972 and I could not reasonably have anticipated succeeding to the title at such an early age. After all, if he were still alive he would be only 73 now and the Wyndhams generally are a long-lived family – look at great-uncle Charles and his brothers.

It was the early seventies, I was two years out of Oxford and the Leconfield Estate was facing such a crisis as it had never known in all its long history. Worse even than in 1952. After all, in 1952 we had much more land to sell, perhaps even some that could have been considered expendable. Anything now would cut to the quick. Capital was still depleted after 1952 and my father had simply died too soon to enable provisional planning to take proper effect. The Yorkshire Estates were already gone, and much of the Cumberland. Extensive sales would be needed and the very future of eight hundred years of history was at stake. I could not carry on in London; here was a crisis that demanded my total attention. I needed to be on the spot. I could not handle the situation by being an absentee landlord, nor did I want to. I wanted to see the crisis out, living here with it. Hence the sales; not a cynical operation to raise money but something that the Leconfield Estate had to do to survive in any recognisable form.

Contrary to some suggestions Leconfield does not raise capital at the instigation of its agents in order to earn them commission. We sell to pay taxes imposed by the state and I can assure you I keep too close an eye on this to allow any agent to hoodwink me! Taxes have led to this retrenchment – taxes and borrowing money to pay taxes. Don't misunderstand me. I am not complaining about the system. It is right that we should be taxed. This is a democratic society and these taxes are the result of decisions of successive elected governments. Leconfield has never questioned this. At this time I had no technical training in farming management. Why should I have had? My father was still a young man when he died. I had not been to agricultural college, all that I knew of the Estate, and it was a good deal, had been picked up almost casually over the years. I had a lot to learn, and quickly, but I have always found this stimulating and twenty years on I like to think that I am still learning. I cannot be remote. I have to make day-to-day decisions. I would like to stress this: someone in my position cannot be remote from their estate.

The idea of remoteness is a romantic myth. Two hundred years ago perhaps a landowner might be remote from the workings of his estate but even then only at his peril. You need only to read the letters of Charles Seymour, sixth Duke of Somerset, in the eighteenth century to see what an iron grip he kept on

his estate, even when he was away at court he knew exactly how many melons were in each glasshouse. Remoteness is not a tradition at Petworth and in this day and age is a practical impossibility. I read books about agriculture, I talk to people and I try to learn from my mistakes. A golden rule is not to make any decision in haste or under pressure. I am dealing with an entity that has been formed over many centuries. One false decision could dissipate a great part of it. Caution must be a watchword. Take the question of possessions. I am surrounded by the treasures of hundreds of years. They are mine and yet I hold them in trust for future generations. I don't find this oppressive but it does give me a heavy responsibility and a recurring dilemma. Should I sell for the sake of the Estate or do I, by selling for the sake of the Estate, diminish that Estate and break the trust that is reposed in me? Which is the greater duty – to use them for the benefit of the Estate or hold them because they are part of that Estate?

We do not employ on the scale we once did. We can't. Labour is very expensive. Petworth and its villages are not dependent on the Leconfield Estate in the way that they once were. But before we lament the passing of the Estate as a significant force in the area, remember that we still run 12,000 acres. What would have happened to this without the Estate? What about the piecemeal developments, the gradual changes in the character of the land, that would have happened if we had sold it all off in little plots and parcels? It is a question I never hear asked. More than this, however, the Estate is all I have. The idea that somehow it doesn't matter to me is ludicrous. It has to matter to me. It is my birthright and my trust for the future. I have a heavy responsibility not only to the future but to the present. Our priorities are to look after our own employees and our pensioners and to see that our tenants are able to farm profitably. They must come first.

We have about 250 tied houses and cottages and since 1972 we have been engaged in constant upgrading. With a reduced workforce there is of course a surplus over requirements for staff. But it's not as easy as some think. Many properties need drastic modernisation to be let or sold. The constant process of renovation is hampered by the equally constant burden of death duties. Death duties have repercussions over long periods. Money raised to pay them can still be a drain on resources many years later. I agree that the process of renovation has been slow. No doubt there have been mistakes in management. No organisation is perfect. But in the circumstances this renovation must be slow. Death duties remain a brake on capital spending. Yes, there are improvement grants, but these are a proportion of outlay. I

am always rather bemused by simplistic comments about empty Leconfield Estate housing as if this could solve the town's housing problem at a stroke. If only the problems and their solutions were as simple as the pundits think. The Leconfield Estate is not a statutory authority; it has no obligation to house people who are not or have not been its employees. We are not the District Council. We do help with housing, we always have done but we have no statutory duty to do so. Rents were fixed by fair rent officials of the District Council until this system was done away with a few years ago. Since then we have consistently charged local people less than the full market rent. But we cannot give these houses away. What else would you have us do? Rents are high in this area. If we charge uneconomic rents then other pieces of the Estate will need to be sold to make up the shortfall. Is that for Petworth's ultimate benefit? The Leconfield Estate cannot take on the role of a kind of substitute welfare state. There may have been an element of this in the past but it is not possible now.

I have seen great changes. Farming methods have altered; farming is, and has to be more intensive. Leconfield farms cannot opt out of this. Fields are larger and there is a bias toward crops rather than animals. Not just here – look at the downland. I know that we no longer hold land on the Downs (our last piece at Upwaltham was sold in 1957) but that does not invalidate my point. Having conceded that we have to move with the times in farming, we are still aware of a continuing stewardship over the land. We have planted thousands of trees in my time. On the home farms, which we cultivate ourselves, we farm commercially but have tried not to change the look of the landscape. The Leconfield attitude to public access is very relaxed as compared with estates in other parts of the country. I do not mind people walking over the Estate as long as they do not leave gates open, start fires, or let their dogs run out of control – access is a reciprocal thing surely. But you cannot keep an estate like this as if it were a garden. We do the best we can but there are an awful lot of fences and gates and we are always going to have restricted resources as regards men on the ground.

We employ as many men as the Estate will bear and I always try to avoid redundancies. I would like to think further about change. Petworth is often dismissed as 'feudal'. But is it? You only have to set the idea down on paper to realise that it is absurd. E. V. Lucas visiting Petworth at the turn of the twentieth century could write that the Leconfield Estate was 'as present in the very air of the streets as is the presage of a thunderstorm' – or that Petworth was 'like Pompeii with Vesuvius emitting glory far above'.[2] If by

Vesuvius he means the Lord Leconfield of the time I hope no one thinks of me like that! Any incumbent of Petworth House in the 1990s must be aware of drastic social changes and be prepared to act accordingly. Of course I am on all sorts of committees but I do not make a point of attending all of them. How could I? I have a young family and I could easily be out most evenings during the week. But it is more than that. I do not see my role in Petworth as one of making decisions relative to particular local organisations. I am diffident about becoming a public figure in that sense and I think I am right to be so. Local organisations need to regulate their own affairs without 'his Lordship's' views. I will always give advice if asked – but I would rather be asked. I would not want to 'foist' myself on the town.

I am not remote. If people want to see me, I will see them. I have always done this. I am particularly pleased to be a governor of the Herbert Shiner School but I am pleased above all to be in Petworth – Petworth is my life. I have a great commitment to Petworth and I do like to be involved. I am amused to hear that I am 'never in the town'. I can only think that those who say this either do not know me by sight or think that it can't be his lordship because he's wearing scruffy clothes. I can assure them it is!

Relations with the National Trust are excellent. I am delighted to have an old friend from Cumberland, David Sekers, as Regional Director and this year to welcome Dr Diana Owen as administrator at the House. Norman Thomas, who has worked so hard on town-Trust relations, has retired. I know Diana is extremely keen to continue along these lines. Of course I have a predictable line on the by-pass issue but what I lament most is the feeling of division that the discussion engenders. David Sekers and I feel this very keenly.

I hope this article gives some idea of the range of issues that concern me; of course, my writing gives me an alternative focus which I am sure provides a certain freshness in dealing with day-to-day Estate matters. It is a great privilege to live at Petworth House. It is good to have such a house so near to, and part of, the town. So many of the great houses are miles out and cut off from their immediate environs. Above all, I hope that my great-uncle would feel that we had, in very difficult circumstances, kept his Estate together as a recognisable entity and that we had kept his memory and his tradition alive as he would have wished.

1 The situation has improved significantly since this was written.

2 E. V. Lucas, *Highways and Byways in Sussex*, first edition 1904, Macmillan, 1928, pages 96-7.

A gigantic waste of time?

On nurturing a garden
Caroline Egremont, *PSM*s 162, December 2015 & 163, March 2016

What is the point of gardening? Some see it as the most gigantic waste of time.Why not just mow bit of lawn, plant a few trees and shrubs and forget about it? You would then have much more time to get on with other things. My husband, a writer, may secretly think this. His books will last and might be read in a hundred years time, whereas my gardening efforts of the past 35 years will be forgotten the moment my back is turned and I am no longer here.

In spite of this undeniable fact gardening is what I love more than anything. I never set out into my garden without a sense of excitement and anticipation. It may be on a lovely March morning with a tray of oxslip plugs to set into the long grass or to see if the cyclamen corms planted last year have come up under the lime trees. Or in early summer to encourage the new woodruff plantings to hurry up and complete their circles under the crab apples. I want to be out of doors and I like being out in all weathers.

I grew up on the west coast of Scotland. Nobody in our family thought it was right to be indoors during daylight, particularly my father, the dominating force who believed that not only should we children be outside but doing useful work. My brother, sister and I spent much of our time, under his direction, cutting down bracken and rhododendrons and making bonfires. The only escape was to pretend to want to go fishing. So I did a lot of fishing. My first efforts at digging were to look for worms in the windswept walled garden. After some experimental excavation I knew where to find them, usually under a heap of rotting seaweed piled in a corner for use as mulch. These worms went into a rusty oatcake tin to be skewered later on a hook and dangled in the burn in the hope of luring a large brown trout.

To be alone in a garden as a child with long idle hours ahead gave me a love of wild places. One absorbs with an intensity, never later recaptured, the colour of flowers seen at eye level, the smell of the earth, the cry of sea birds. The memory of enchantment at suddenly finding, in a sunlit corner, a crowd of bright, spice-scented lupins as tall as myself has stayed with me always, particularly as I am sure I spoke to them.

I wanted to recreate something of these childhood memories in my

gardening efforts at Petworth. When I came to live here in 1978 I knew very little about how to garden. I knew the name of a few rhododendrons and knew that I did not want to plant any of them. My father spent thirty years growing them in Argyll. As he got older he began to think they did not fit well into the soft landscape of the West Coast. He found their presence gloomy, the leaves too heavy and the flowers too blowsy. He spent the second half of his life happily digging them up. He concluded that native birch, oak woods carpeted with moss, bluebells and ferns looked best in that gentle, grey landscape and I agreed. He did allow large plantings of deciduous azaleas (*Rhododendron luteum*). These, he decided, sit happily among bluebells and are worth growing for one of the most delicious scents in the world.

I call my father's approach ungardening and my guiding principle goes back to this. It is a question of what to impose on the landscape and what to leave out. A sense of place can easily be lost. How easy to strike a wrong note and to plant shrubs and trees, however beautiful in themselves, that do not fit with their surroundings. I am not a plantsman keen to plant any and everything in every variety. I don't find such plantings harmonious. Mixed shrubs from China, New Zealand and Japan seem awkward in each other's company as if at an ill-arranged drinks party. I am certain that what you don't plant is more important than what you do. I like the balance between calm and busy, open spaces among drifts of bold groupings of one species. Or a single shrub or tree given room to display its particular beauty. You need space for this but I would apply the same principle in a small garden. I accept that I am in a minority and those who do not agree might find my garden a bit empty and lacking in 'interest'.

Equipped with these vague ideas I wanted to make something of the garden at Petworth that our young children would love, and that might give them their own lupin moment. We live in the south end of a house, the rest of which is open to the public. The private garden close to the house had not changed since 1870 when Salvin worked on this end of Petworth. Wide gravel paths led a long way across a huge lawn, mown every week, which had the feel of a well-kept golf course. Children faltered half way and there was nowhere to sit down. When you reached the walled garden a different world opened. High brick walls, some dating from the 1720s enclose three large spaces of six acres. These walls which once contained twenty glasshouses and employed thirty gardeners were built to provide vegetables and fruit for the house. When I came to Petworth two thirds of the walled garden had been grassed and turned into paddocks. The crumbling Victorian glasshouses,

once expertly tended by Fred Streeter, the head gardener who became famous as a BBC radio broadcaster, had been taken down in the 1960s as no longer economical to run. A vegetable garden remained, together with a couple of glasshouses, an abandoned tennis court and a sunken garden designed by Fred. I loved these old walls and wanted to spend time inside them. As you go through the arched doorways the air feels different, the wind calms and there is an immediate sense of enclosure. I had no idea other than to plant climbing roses all over them. The ancient wiring which once had held espaliered pears was still in place, with some of the lead labels attached. I had never ordered a rose and did not know one from another. A catalogue of Murrels Roses was given to me in which there were a few sketches but no photographs. Beguiled by the descriptions and a thought that buff, cream and white roses would look best against the brick I ordered a dozen which included Paul's Lemon Pillar, Reve d'Or, Jeune d'Esprez, Mermaid, Gloire de Dijon, Seagull, Alister Stella Gray and Marechal Niel. Marechal Niel soon died but the others are here after thirty years. They like the soil, dug deep for many years by Fred Streeter and his men.

Framed by arches in high brick walls, a classical urn rises from oxeye daisies on a June morning.

From this uncertain beginning I slowly made a series of garden rooms within these walls, trying to keep a sense of place and scale and to give a different atmosphere to each one. Atmosphere in a garden, that intangible sense, is something one remembers from other gardens and notices if it is not there. A tennis court, perfectly fitted within the walls and the scene of tennis parties during my husband's childhood had become pitted with holes. We decided that we had played enough tennis so took it away. In this space I have made a place for reading in a newly named Cloister garden. A pair of pergolas of *Wisteria sinensis* underplanted with cream camassia form two sides of a square gravel garden planted with iris, lavender, cistus, romneya, yucca and Gallica roses. A spring, redirected from the park bubbles in a pool in the middle. John Brookes, the designer with whom I once studied and worked gave me this idea. He persuaded me that Mediterranean plants loosely planted thrive in gravel and it is good to walk among these rather than gaze sideways at massed blocks of plants in a traditional herbaceous border. Some, such as *Verbascum bombyciferum* seed randomly in the gravel and give a jolly air of chance and asymmetry within the framework.

A Wisteria floribunda 'Alba', contrasting with the architecture of a clipped yew hedge and obelisks.

The long walk from the house presented a challenge. How could I make the scale more intimate and more interesting? Laurence Fleming, a writer and garden designer who was staying with us just after we married, came up with the solution. Take out the gravel paths, make huge sweeping curves of longer grass with mown paths cut through, plant thousands of bulbs and reposition three eighteenth-century urns. With Laurence's help and drawings, this is what we did. His judgement was perfect. The urns which define the space are in the right place, the balance of long and short grass seems right and children love running through it.

I have been lucky to have the space to plant many bulbs from snowdrops and aconites in January through to camassia and *Narcissus poeticus* in May. Not to inherit any large yellow daffodils was a blessing. A friend who does not like their gaudy company has, in despair, taken to blazing them with a blow torch but with little success. We planted trees to allow this area to blend with the eighteenth-century park over the wall. Some of these, now sixty feet high, cast enough shade to grow big circles of cyclamen at their base. I look at them now and they make me feel old.

One of many good things about gardening for a long time in one place is that there has been time to undo mistakes. I have tried to take out as many as I can of the 'superior' purple Dutch crocus put in with such enthusiasm at the beginning. It is nearly impossible to dig up 1,000 naturalised Dutch crocus but this last wet year has been helpful. Not only charmless crocus but brutish docks have come out like well-extracted molars, complete with foot-long roots attached.

It is lovely to live close to the South Downs, those ancient rounded hills that come between the Weald and the sea. To make a focal point I cut a round hole in a boundary hedge and discovered that I had opened a clear window on to the Downs. In the foreground, figures in white can sometimes be seen playing cricket. This lively picture makes a good contrast to a solemn urn or immobile statue. I have not gardened all of the walled garden and let a small flock of Southdown sheep keep half an acre. These woolly creatures with teddy bear ears and smiling expressions belong to this part of Sussex. They keep the grass down, eat the spare apples, snooze under the trees and are generally no bother in their restful glade.

In 2001 we made one of the biggest changes. On the south façade we turned a window into a door and built a bridge out to a grass terrace. This new terrace, designed by the architect Peter Inskip and built from local stone by our estate craftsmen, gives us more pleasure than I could have imagined.

It links the house, park and garden in a new way. We have more outdoor life and it is convenient for small children and dogs. To give shade to the terrace our architect son-in-law Adam Richards has built a painted arbour, modelled on a design by Soane. Now festooned with jasmine it is perfect in scale and a masterpiece of elegance.

Two years ago I remodelled the kitchen garden. The large area under cultivation was unmanageable. To reduce this we dissected the space with brick-lined paths of Breedon gravel and grass and set a nineteenth-century fountain basin in the middle. The large granite basin, which had once been on the South Lawn, was found abandoned in a shed. It is now filled with flowers rather than water and makes a sturdy central feature. Artichokes and crown imperial lilies give it structure, Eremurus lilies shoot up like rockets and *Crambe cordifolia* foams in the centre. Round the edge an annual mix of Pictorial Meadow gives us beloved cornflowers in jolly mixed colours at eye level.

As the years pass and I grow older and watch the garden mature, and with our grandchildren running about, I know I have been very lucky to realise a childhood dream.

A stone disc set in the daisy-covered brick wall, (left), a birthday present from my husband, is carved with a line from Andrew Marvell's poem. His words 'Fair Quiet Have I Found Thee Here' seem to hover in the air as the bees buzz around them.

I can still see a group of young carol singers

A North Street childhood
Gail Huggett, *PSM* 146, December 2011

How we ended up in Petworth goodness only knows. Dad had been in the RAF for quite a few years and I suppose that having been demobbed he needed a job and we needed a home. After a stay in Crawley, fate, or whatever, would see us move the twenty odd miles to Petworth and the Leconfield Estate. Dad had successfully applied for the position of mechanic and second chauffeur to John Wyndham at Petworth House and we duly moved into 307 North Street. The house was a rambling property over four floors if you included the cavernous cellar, which with its open fireplaces had clearly once been an inhabited part of the house. I was six when we moved to Petworth and the youngest of four children, two boys and two girls.

Our arrival at 307 was not auspicious. Mum had brought her cherished cat with her and on entering the house she opened the basket and the cat flew straight up the chimney. The rest of the move must have been relatively uneventful as that is the only recollection that I have of it. We children loved 307 as there was so much space, especially having moved from the small modern semi in Crawley. The third floor of the house was almost given over to us children except for one room where Mum and Dad kept cases and odd pieces of furniture that had travelled with them around the various military bases that had previously been their homes. Our parents didn't really come upstairs at all and we were very much left alone to enjoy ourselves just as long as we behaved.

No.307 was immediately next to Thompson's Hospital and the vehicle entrance which now serves the almshouses and several other North Street properties was once part of our garden, I must say that it is sad to see so much of our lovely wild plot buried under tarmac, but then I guess that is progress. Our garden ran down the hill towards the Shimmings Brook at the bottom of the meadow, Dad kept chickens and rabbits in the garden and there was a pigsty with an old copper for cooking up the swill. At the foot of the garden was a small orchard of fruit trees.

Our garden was joined on the north side below the almshouses by beautifully tended allotments where Mr. Fowler, the Leconfield Estate carpenter, Charlie Peacock the builder and Harold Cobby who worked in the Petworth House gardens, could be seen on most evenings. The neighbouring property to the

south, or the town side, was Springfield House where Mr. Hamilton lived, I can't remember what he did for a living but no doubt he worked on the Estate as did most people in North Street in those days. I wonder if there is a single Leconfield employee living in the street today? Past Springfield House there lived the Clarks, Granny and Grandad Playfoot, Mrs. Wakeford and Mr. and Mrs. Whittington. Mr. Whittington kept a smallholding at Flathurst on the Horsham Road, completely disappeared now but every year the most beautiful daffodils still pop up in the hedgerows surrounding the plot. An annual reminder of what once had been.

North Street was really quite insular when I was growing up, everybody knew one another and quite a few children lived in the street. Serious mischief was impossible as any bad behaviour would soon be spotted and reported back to our parents. The long hill up North Street was a natural deterrent to any venture into the town though of course there was the daily trudge to the infants school, or occasionally with Mum to the shops, but social trips into the town were scarce. At that time my brothers were at Culvercroft in Pound Street and my sister at the East Street Girls School.

The North Street year would begin with pushing an old pram out to the 'dilly woods' near Fox Hill to pick huge bunches of daffodils which we would bring home and sell for pennies to our neighbours or passing locals. Bluebells and primroses were picked closer to home in the hedgerow by the Shimmings Brook. The school summer holidays would mean leaving home early in the morning and going off on what seemed like endless bike rides to Gunters Bridge or as far as Holland Wood on the Balls Cross road. Remember, I would only have been about ten and my accompanying brother only fifteen months older than me. Can you imagine children today given that sort of freedom?

Our favourite playground was much closer to home and was the Shimmings Brook which ran along the bottom of the meadows behind North Street. We would spend hours building huge dams of mud and wood, making camps and defending imaginary islands from our older brother. Bullheads and sticklebacks were caught in the brook and proudly carried home in jars as trophies to show our parents. While all this merriment went on we children

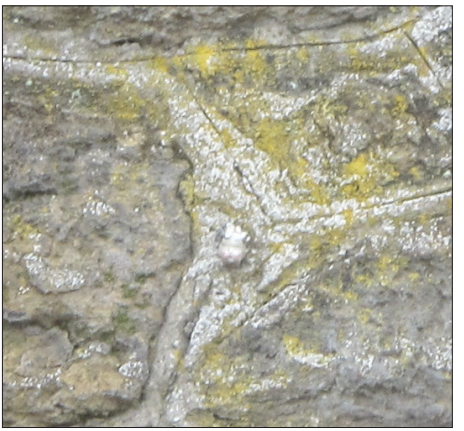
were always on guard for Mr. Scriven the farmer at Shimmings. I don't recall having a rational fear of him, perhaps it was just that he represented the only authority that would occasionally intrude into our lives. Much the same as a parent, or policeman or teacher. Anyway we were terrified of him and any sign of his approach would send us children scattering in search of a hiding place. July was perhaps the most important month of the year for us. Not only were the school holidays beginning but equally important it was Goodwood races and the opportunity to get some pocket money. Each morning and evening we would stand by the front gate waving handkerchiefs and yelling at the top of our voices 'throw out your rusty coppers' to the endless stream of racegoers who passed along North Street. The morning stint was worth doing but not usually that productive. Clearly most people were saving their money for the races. The evening session, however, was different, this would be when we would put all our efforts into waving and shouting. Pennies, thrupenny bits and tanners would shower from the cars and coaches. We children were under strict instructions not to rush into the road to collect rolling coins but invariably the temptation would be too much, anyway such was the weight of traffic that the cars rarely got above a crawl and most drivers were well aware of the hazards having already been assailed by children at Hampers Green or Station Road depending upon which end of the day it was.

Petworth Fair day was the other red letter day for children. Sadly the fair had been rather neglected for some years but still seemed an important occasion to us. You see it was really quite unusual to be in the town after dark and what with all the shops staying open late and such bright lights the whole town seemed to be alive with excitement. Eager's would have their traditional Christmas window display on show and the arrival of the fair would herald the festive season. Carol singing was usual at Christmas. Not organised, but just a few local girls would sing as a group. I remember one year we were singing outside Somerset Hospital in North Street and George Garland took a photograph of us. I can't remember if it had been arranged beforehand though I wouldn't have thought so. A North Street child carries a badge of honour throughout their life, for only one bought up in the street would know exactly where the china doll's head looks out from the pointing in the Park wall. It really is amazing that the doll has never been vandalised, though clearly the builder who placed it had the good sense to put it just out of reach of children and chose a head so

OPPOSITE 'Bullheads and sticklebacks were caught in the brook and proudly carried home in jars as trophies to show our parents'. Shimmings Brook in 2024.

small as to be not easily seen by the unacquainted passer-by.

Dad's mechanic's workshop at Petworth House was at the top of the Cowyard in North Street. There he worked with Jim Martin, the other mechanic and Mr. Roberts who was the principal chauffeur and in charge of the workshop. Mr. Roberts lived with his family in the garage flat just across the yard from the workshop. Sometime later they moved into the house at the bottom of the yard. The workshop had three pits and so could take quite a few vehicles at any one time, and next door there was a smaller workshop that was not used very often, though I seem to recall that the precious four-wheel-drive Haflinger truck was stored there out of the weathers.This vehicle had been quite a revolutionary purchase by the Leconfield Estate when times were really tough and was the talk of the town. Evidently they could drive through just about any conditions though I don't know why it was brought to Petworth or how successful it was. To the right of the workshop was the building where the old Leconfield fire engines were kept. I seem to remember two of them then but they would soon disappear and I was told that they had been sold. Further down the Cowyard and on the right against the North Street wall were small workshops in various states of disrepair, while on the left behind the garages were huge drainage pipes stacked up against the Pleasure Ground wall. We would climb up on to the pipes and sneak into the gardens and then the park.



'Not easily seen by the unacquainted passer-by.' Now hardly recognisable as such, the tiny doll's head in the mortar of Petworth Park wall opposite Thompson's Hospital which has somehow survived more than sixty years of vibration from North Street traffic.

At that time the Cowyard was a busy place with workmen and machinery coming and going all of the time, the footpath through the tunnel was not open to the public and the gates were usually locked. The tunnel was used as a store for building materials and home to dozens of bats which we were told would get tangled in our hair if we were foolish enough to enter. At harvest time Dad, like many Estate employees, would help on the farms and he could often be found driving a combine harvester. I imagine that this was quite useful as he was a very good mechanic and the machines

were always temperamental, especially those that were only used at harvest. John Baigent would usually drive the tractor and trailer that collected the grain from the combine. He would let me sit in the huge high-sided trailer as it was being loaded, this wouldn't be allowed today and was really quite dangerous. I used to love harvest time but invariably went home with sores over my legs from the chafing of the grain. Dad would often be sent to the outlying Leconfield farms to mend a tractor or get some piece of machinery working. Remember that even in relatively recent times many of the farms still generated their own electricity and even after they went on the mains it was important to keep the back-up generators in working order.

Moor, Stag Park and Mitchell Park were important Leconfield home farms and Dad spent a lot of time out there. He had a saw-bench which he towed behind his car and he would take it out to Pheasant Copse at Limbo where he would saw up logs to get us through the winter. Goodness knows how he managed to tow the bench as it was a heavy unstable machine and you certainly would not be allowed to tow it on the road today. Dad loved cars and was always tinkering with them. Our garden at North Street always seemed to be home to several vehicles in various states of repair or more usually disrepair. There was an old Standard Vanguard and a very old black London cab. It

'The precious four-wheel-drive Haflinger truck.' When introduced by Steyr-Puch, its Austrian manufacturer in 1959, the Haflinger was marketed as 'a four-wheeled mountain goat' which seems a little unkind to mountain goats.

had just one seat in the front and an open area for suitcases and suchlike. Dad, being a Canadian, had a fondness for American cars and I particularly remember a huge one with big fins on the back. Needless to say we children would eventually commandeer these vehicles once Dad had given up on them and we would have great fun.

Another job where Dad could earn overtime was sheep-dipping. I don't remember it but my brother recalls seeing hundreds of sheep penned by the side of the road in Pheasant Copse and a long concrete pit which was filled with dip. The sheep would be thrown in at one end and driven through the pit to the other sloping end where they would stagger out into a holding pen. Dipping was a dirty, unpleasant job for those who took part.

Dad being second chauffeur would occasionally have to drive the Wyndham children around if Mr. Roberts was busy with John Wyndham. I remember Dad taking Harry Wyndham, his nanny and me down to Littlehampton for the day where the family had a beach hut. This was quite a regular occurrence during the holiday season and a great treat for me. On another occasion it was my birthday and we went off to Horsham so that I could choose a new doll's pram. On the way back the pram was stored in the space between the driver and his passengers and it seemed so grand. I suppose that may have been an old fashioned Rolls-Royce though I can't be sure. I do recall that it was Lady Egremont's own car.

Growing up in North Street was really quite special. It was a time of great change in Petworth though of course we children were not aware of it. The old Petworth was disappearing rapidly and the advent of television and the huge increase in the volume of traffic would speed up that process. New schools would shortly be built to replace the Victorian buildings that we have such fond memories of, and eventually I and most of my friends would leave the town. Much has changed and I haven't lived here for many years. However, I can still walk through the town and chat to people that I knew then, and if I close my eyes tightly I can still see a group of young carol singers and Mr. Garland setting up his camera on a cold, clear Christmas evening in North Street. Happy days.

Damn and blast Hitler

Gwenda Morgan records the outbreak of war in 1939
Introduction by Peter Jerrome, *PSM* 93, September 1998

Gwenda Morgan was a great supporter of the Petworth Society, with her wood engravings frequently used on the cover of this magazine. She achieved national recognition for her work, but was rather reticent about this, many people in Petworth probably never knowing that she had done wood engraving at all. Of late years she lived with her step-mother Una at Ridge House in Station Road and, for a while, when Una died, on her own there. Gwenda died in 1991. *In* 1939 *she went to work as a land girl, and she kept a diary of her experiences. At this time she was living with Una at the Old Bank House in Market Square. Gwenda was a somewhat retiring person but clearly thought her diary a work of some interest and envisioned it being read in later years: it was carefully preserved among her papers and one or two sentences have been carefully erased or (occasionally) neatly cut out with scissors. It comprises four exercise books. For the many who knew Gwenda the diary will have a particular poignancy, but those who did not know her will still find this account of the days heading up to the outbreak of war of great interest. The first entries are very full. In the nature of the case, later entries tend to be cursory at times, farm-work being rather repetitive. Gwenda started at Hallgate Farm, Byworth, moving to Frog Farm, Petworth, in* 1940. *Mr. and Mrs. and Peter T. are the Thorn family. Peter still farms Hallgate [*1998*]. Cymru is Gwenda's dog. Captain Oglethorpe is one of the principals at the Market Square solicitors. O.B.H. is Old Bank House.*

AUGUST 28, 1939 First day on the land. Arrived at Hallgate at 9 o'c. Mr. T. took me up to the potato field where I picked up potatoes in bucket and filled sacks while the men dug. Later in the morning went to see sheep rounded up and treated with powder for fly sores and some disinfectant stuff (that smelt like Jeyes') for maggots. Ate apple turnover under a tree on the way home for dinner. Back by 2 o'c bus and to the hayfield behind Parker's cottage. Helped at elevator with pitchfork. Very hot day and I got very thirsty. Mrs. T. asked me to have tea under rick with herself, Mr. T. and Peter. Walked home over fields the way Mrs. T. showed me.

Felt tired and rather blistery but think I shall like it very much. Hope weather won't get hotter, though. Don't think it possibly can. Have drunk quarts of water since getting home. Land Army working outfit arrived but shan't wear it this hot weather. There were lots of seagulls in the field beside the potato rows.

AUGUST 29 Tried on new outfit. Much too large everywhere but shan't send it back yet as my own overalls are cooler. The rubber boots are O.K. Shall keep them at the farm. Took bus to the Welldiggers Arms. Followed path across big field to the hayfield by Mr. Hurley's house. There were lots of cows in the big field and when I saw red boards up in the hedges I thought they meant there was a bull in the field so was a bit nervous. No need to be however for when, later in afternoon I asked an old man while shaking hay what the boards meant he said they are to warn huntsmen against jumping the hedges because of wire in them. A hot day but not so oppressive as yesterday. Mrs. T. brought tea to field. Wrist began to hurt after tea and a lump came up. Left at 6.30. Walked home over fields and bathed wrist in Virgin Mary Spring. Thirsty again. Go to same hayfield tomorrow at 2 o'c. Men keep calling the elevator, the alevator. Thought at first they were saying alligator. The other thing is a sweeper (or sweep?). It broke down today owing to a hole in the ground where water pipes had been laid and not properly filled in. It seemed to be alright later. Everyone takes bottles of liquid (cold tea?) to drink at intervals. A good idea, I shall always bring lemonade.

AUGUST 30 To same hayfield at 2 o'c. Shook hay and made a field full of beautiful cocks. Lovely day not quite so hot, but nearly. The sweep was one borrowed from Mr. Smallridge and he wanted it back so Mr. T. took it behind the tractor, up endways. Tea with Mr. Mrs. T. and Peter in field. More hay cocks after tea till 6.30. One man said he wished

OPPOSITE Gwenda Morgan, *Rainy Day* 1938, wood engraving 14.0 x 10.3 cm. Private collection.

Hitler would come to Byworth so that he could have a go at him with his pitchfork. Wrist not so bad as the work was lighter today. The walks home in the evening with a wash and drink at the Spring are lovely. Everyone says there are no cornfields on the farm this year so do not know what the work will be when haymaking is finished. Someone suggested hedge trimming. I'd love all this if it wasn't for the prospect of a war. Same time and same field tomorrow (It's really two fields side by side). There are two more fields after this one.

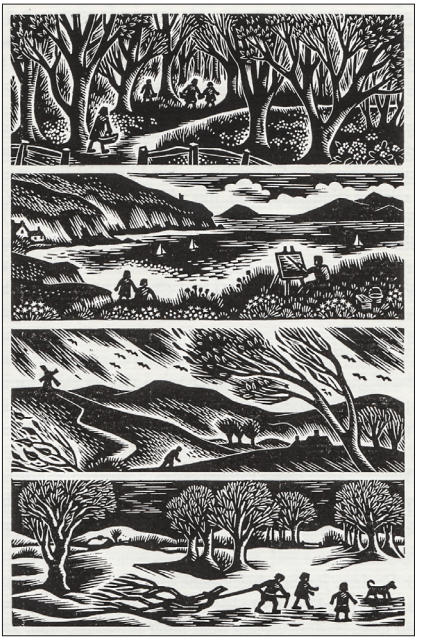
AUGUST 31 Rained, so went to farm instead of to hayfield. Cleared up after all, however, and turned out hot and sunny. Dug potatoes in Mrs. T.'s garden and put into sacks. Nice big potatoes but rather boring after an hour or two. And the stinging nettles. Would rather have gone haymaking. Lemonade and cake for tea sitting among the potatoes all alone. Evacuation of London begins tomorrow. Thoroughly depressed and wrist rather a nuisance again. Must help to billet the children tomorrow so it will get a rest. Hope Cymru will be alright with all these children coming.

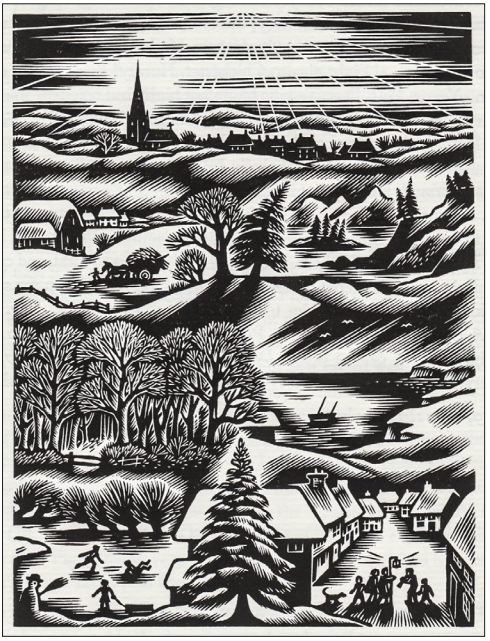
SEPTEMBER 1 Germany has begun to bomb Poland. Damn and blast Hitler. Didn't go to farm. Billeted children.

SEPTEMBER 2 Not going to farm again till Monday. More children to be billeted today and tomorrow. Capt. Oglethorpe says we shall declare war today or tomorrow. How awful. The children yesterday were nice little things. Rather tearful. Mostly from Peckham. Mrs. Morley Fletcher was marvellous at the billeting table. Don't know how we should have managed without her. This is how it was all done: Children arrived by bus from Billingshurst station with luggage labels round their necks with their names on. They sat at desks while their small parcels of luggage were tied together and labelled. Then they were taken to the lavatories, and then ten at a time to the nurses who looked at heads, chests, and throats. Then they were given buns and milk. Then they came ten at a time to the billeting tables where their names were written down in a book with names and addresses of foster mothers and amount to be paid to each foster mother. Then name and address of foster mother was pinned to each child and they were taken to their billets by girl guides or boy scouts, with a bag of

rations. (Rations consisted of corned beef, condensed milk, biscuits and chocolate). No children sent to us at O.B.H. yet.

SEPT. 3 SUNDAY At war with Germany. Oh, well, we expected it. Finished sticking up ventilators *&*c. in gas-proof room. All dark curtains are up and some of the windows stuck over with brown paper to obscure light. Policemen are wearing their gas mask haversacks and steel helmets. I suppose it is necessary but how silly it seems in peaceful Sussex. Roads are painted with white lines so that people can find the way in the dark. Sat in the boys school all the afternoon and evening expecting more people to arrive from evacuated areas but they didn't come after all. Rather a muddle about it somewhere. A few mothers with young children arrived at the infant's school and were found billets (with difficulty, as no one seems so ready to take in adults as children). Lots of aeroplanes went over during the night. British, fortunately.





Gwenda Morgan, *Changing Year* undated, wood engraving 12.9 x 8.2 cm., and *Midwinter*, wood engraving 12.6 x 9.4 cm. Both private collection.
Gwenda Morgan's complete diary was published as *The Diary of a Land Girl* in an edition of 300 copies by the Whittington Press in 2002.

I shall never forget it, not to my dying day

Some witch-hares of north-west Sussex
Shaun Cooper, *PSM* 165, September 2016

'They talk about witches and witch hares at Plaistow,' George Aitchison wrote in his book *Sussex*, published in 1936 – a mere 80 years ago. The belief in witches survived until relatively recent times in some rural areas of Sussex, and here, as in the country as a whole, the most common type of witch legends are those which revolve around the belief that witches could transform themselves into animals. In Britain, witches were mainly believed to change into hares, but there were some who turned into other animals, and these were also mostly small ones like cats, dogs, rabbits, toads, and foxes – although in a few places there were witches who changed into cattle or deer, and there was also a handful who became trees. Sussex had two witches who disguised themselves as cats, two who changed into dogs, one who could take various animal forms, and a couple who could even become birds, but the vast majority of the county's witches who shape-shifted were those which transformed into hares. And one of the parts of Sussex with the most recorded (published) accounts of witch-hares is the region which lies west of the River Arun and north of the Downs.

The belief that witches could turn themselves into hares goes far back in time, long before the rise of Christianity, and was to do with the fact that a shape seen on the moon when it is full resembles a hare, and that the ancient goddess of those type of worshippers who later were called witches was Hecate, who was a lunar deity. The most common tale concerning witch-hares is rather like the one recorded at East Harting: a witch-hare was chased all the way to the cottage of an old lady, locally believed to be a witch, and just as the hare entered the cottage, through the drain or an open window, a hound that was chasing it managed to bite one of the hare's hind-legs. Then, when the huntsman opened the door, he saw the old woman inside, with blood pouring down one of her legs. Similar tales, about witch-hares being wounded just as they get back into a witch's cottage, have been recorded in many villages throughout this county, and there are also variant tale types – such as the hare was only chased, and the old witch was just seen panting afterwards; or even that the hare was mortally wounded, and a woman who was reputed to be a witch later died of similar injuries – but mainly in tales of

witch-hares, the hare is chased and injured, and, surprisingly, there are very few accounts of such uncanny animals actually being killed.

However, there is no record of the witch at Bury being chased or wounded while disguised as a hare, indeed the only thing that has been written about her is this: 'Why, "she" has been seen running at night off West Burton Lane. Turns herself into a white hare, she does, like a ghost.'

And near Upwaltham, another witch who disguised herself as a hare was not chased either – although she did get injured. The following account was published in the *Sussex County Magazine* (*SCM*) in 1931 – the first witch legend that the magazine carried. Much of what we know about Sussex witches comes from the *SCM*, which continued to publish tales and articles about them throughout the nineteen-thirties and -forties. This tale was told by an old woodsman called Moses, who lived near Eartham, and ''ooman' was his way of saying 'woman'.

> My mates and me were resting under a hedge nigh Up Waltham, 'aving our dinner, when a hare comes hopping along. Darky Trussler sez 'That bain't a hare, it's that old 'ooman downalong under' (speaking of a village where we was lodging). I takes up a stone an' throws it an' it catches that hare. She didn't half holler, letting out a screech jus' like an' ol' 'ooman; an' then she goes a-limpin' away. That night, when we was down in the village, ol' Sary Weaver, wot people said could make a cow run dry by lookin' at 'er out 'er cottage – folks said she were a witch – cums 'obbling outer 'er cottage. When she sees we, she lets out a screech, same as hare did, an' goes a limpin'off, for all the world as if she were that there hare. She were lame in the same leg wot the hare was but she 'an't been afore.

The vast majority of the Sussex witches about whom there are recorded legends, tales, or anecdotes, were women. This is also true of the country as a whole, but an interesting thing about its male witches is that hardly any of them were reputed to be able to transform themselves into animals. This is

the case with wizards as well. But the north-western part of Sussex has a lot of local legends, and a lot of unusual ones, and so it should not be surprising to find one here of a wizard who becamea hare, and got wounded – and yet, it is surprising, because no other county seems to have any records of such an individual. This strange tale was first published in *PSM* 27, in 1982.

> At Fox Hill there used to be a public house called The Fox and the man that used to keep it they called him a wizard. The innkeeper went out one night and turned himself into a hare and ran across a meadow and a gamekeeper saw this hare and shot at the hare and hit it in the hind legs. The innkeeper turned himself to a man again but was very lame. The gamekeeper followed him and called at The Fox Inn and when he saw the innkeeper and saw how lame he was, the innkeeper said 'You nearly had me tonight, hit me in the legs.'

Besides the landlord of The Fox, Petworth also had a witch, but there seem to be no records of her doing any shape-shifting – nor of any of the witches known to have lived at the following places changing themselves into animals either: Henley, Gunter's Bridge, Balls Cross, Billingshurst, Pulborough, Kirdford, Rudgwick, Inganise Hill, Burton Park, Bishop's Ring, Wisborough Green, and Fittleworth which had two.

However, it should be noted that the large number of places that have witch legends in north-western Sussex does not mean that there were indeed a lot of witches in the region from the mid-1700s (after witchcraft stopped being a crime) to the mid-1950s. No, it's unlikely that many of these women even considered themselves to be witches. What it is a reflection of is that there were many people in this part of Sussex who were very superstitious. Witch legends did not arise around a person who was reputed to become a hare, or fly on a broomstick, or stop the milk from churning, *&*c. but instead, the beliefs about witches were taken from the pamphlets and ballads about certain notorious witch trials which had taken place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (when witchcraft was a crime) and these beliefs were spread round the country by travellers, carters, and Gypsies, and were grafted on to those individuals who, for one reason or another, were feared or shunned by their neighbours, in various villages. A certain cranky or ugly old woman, who lived on her own near the edge of a village, might become known to be a witch simply because someone had told somebody else that she became a hare at night, or could lame a horse just by looking at it askance, or that she

Unknown artist, 'Shape-shifting witches,flying on a pitchfork, causing a thunderstorm'. Woodcut from *De Lamiis et Pythonicis Mulieribus*, 1489.

had even killed a neighbour with her witchcraft – all of which activities had previously been reported in pamphlets and ballads based on the witch trials of the earlier period when witchcraft was still a criminal offence. Another point worth making is that although so many places in north-western Sussex had witches, there is no indication at all that any of them were in covens. Indeed, covens are hardly ever mentioned in British folklore.

Most books about the folklore of this country (but none of the Sussex ones) tell that it was widely held that only silver bullets could harm a witch. However, almost all silver bullet tales actually feature witch-hares, or other shape-shifters, rather than any witch in her normal human form. It is odd too that so many folklore books mention how silver bullets were used against witches, because there do not seem to be that many recorded witch legends involving them. This next tale, which is one of the very first that I recorded, comes from an article by Revd G. P. Crawfurd, 'Slinfold Fifty Years Ago' published in the *SCM* in 1932.

> I will begin with its belief in witchcraft. It had not quite died out in my time. I remember one day when I was ministering to a chronic invalid, Beccy Farley, who lived in the cottage just opposite the Rectory, that she gave me a rambling statement concerning a witch who came through the hedge and ran through her garden in the shape of a hare. I have no clear idea of the matter of her story. But it is confirmed by another story which I think concerns the same hare as Beccy Farley's, and which was confirmed to me recently. The Squire had then a field adjoining Beccy's cottage, and his keeper, George Andrewes, a believer in the same cult, decided to kill it, and rid the village forever of this supernatural pest. But he said from what he had always heard it was no use to try and shoot a witch with lead shot: it must be silver, and so he broke up some silver coins into small pieces, loaded his gun with them and shot the hare. I have an idea that it was a white one.

Tales of witches being shot, with any type of bullets, are curiously uncommon in this country, and those that tell of witches getting killed, whether disguised as animals or not, are quite rare. Generally, in the few tales that there are of witches being killed, their death came about at the hands of someone else, usually a white witch – and so, although the vast majority of witch legends were grafted into place from other sources, which is why there are many that are similar to each other, this next tale, the sad account of how the Stedham

witch met her end, may well be unique. Certainly, I haven't found a similar tale from anywhere else.

> There is the story of the witch at Stedham who . . . had the power of turning herself into a hare at will, and was torn to pieces by foxhounds when in the form of a hare.

Another unusual type of witch legend is that where a witch-hare is actually quite aggressive and doesn't get chased or hurt at all. Even in Sussex, tales of witch-hares doing anything else other than being seen, chased, and injured, are not common at all. Yet there was a witch at Barlavington who, in the shape of a hare, went after a man on horseback and so bewitched the horse that its rider was thrown off, and then the hare just sat and watched him as he lay in agony. The full account of this incident is recorded in *Tales of Old Petworth.* The witch had strong connections with the local smuggling fraternity, but the most notorious witch of this area – indeed, of the whole county – must have been the one at Graffham, to judge from the many tales there are about her.

Taken collectively, these tales seem to indicate that she lived at least as late as the 1930s. Not only could she transform herself into a hare, but she could become other animals too, including birds. But the most interesting thing about her was that although she could transform into a hare, and she could immobilize wagons, she could also immobilize wagons while she was in the shape of a hare. There were just three other witches in Sussex who were powerful enough to immobilize a wagon while in the shape of a hare, and one in eastern Hampshire too – but I've yet to find any other county where there were witches who could do both of these activities at the same time. The reason for this is almost certainly because the belief in witches survived until relatively recent times in the south, and that the storytellers who told such stories about certain old women were well aware that tales of witch-hares and wagon-stoppers were the two most common types of witch legends in the country as a whole. This next tale, of the Graffham witch, is from *Sussex Ghosts & Legends* by Tony Wales.

> On another occasion a cart stuck on the hill near her cottage, and the carter was unable to make it move. He struck at the wheel with a piece of metal, and a hare ran out straight into her cottage. When this happened a second time, dogs were let loose. The hare darted up a drain pipe outside the witch's cottage, but one of the hounds caught it by the leg and drew

> blood. Mother P—— was later found upstairs in her bed, with blood flowing out under the bedclothes.

It was widely believed that drawing the blood of a witch, either from her being bitten or wounded, was a sure way to break her spell, and this is why in many tales of witch-hares, it is always the old woman who is seen bleeding inside her cottage, and the hare is never recorded as being in there as well. And whoever conjured up this tale about the Graffham witch, also knew that the spell over an immobilized wagon could be broken by the counter-charm of cutting or whipping the wheels. I mentioned the storytellers just now, which is the term I use to describe the people who originally told all these old witch legends about one or two of their neighbours, and it is important to understand that although I tell of quite a lot of local witches in this article, it is much more concerned with these storytellers than it is with any real wicked old hags we may have had in the region, once upon a time. I'm not writing about witches here, so much as I'm describing the many superstitious beliefs that were imported from other places and grafted on to certain old Sussex women in the area by local storytellers. This part of Sussex may well have had lot of witches, or none at all – but it certainly had an unusually wide selection of storytellers with rich imaginations. And some of those people were proud of the villages they lived in, and wanted the public to know that these villages had history and legends that made them distinct from other places. Indeed, there are many witch legends that end with some sort of emphasis concerning the truth of the tale, where the person telling it added a comment which implies that he is telling the truth, whether it was something which he personally experienced, or something that an old relative or friend had originally said. A good example is this next tale, which is another of those about the Graffham witch. It was related to George Aitchison, who also lived in Graffham, and was published in *Sussex Notes & Queries* in May 1933.

> An old man, well over eighty, hearing witchcraft described as 'all rubbish', got very excited and exclaimed 'All rubbish! It ain't. Why, I knew a witch myself in this very village. Her daughter's alive still. I'll tell you what happened to me once.' The old man told how he went to fetch help for a sick person very late at night. 'By that hedge over there I saw the dark form of a woman. On getting up to her I saw it was Mrs. —— says 'Why, Mrs. ——, you ain't got no call to be out so late as this.' And I tell you, as true as I am sitting here, she vanished, and instead of her I saw a

hare running through the gap in the hedge. I saw it – and you could have knocked me down with feather. I shall never forget it, not to my dying day.

This is an interesting and unusual tale in that it was related by someone who actually saw a woman transform into a hare. There are hardly any accounts of witch-hares getting chased, and maybe wounded, and then being seen as they transformed back into the more usual human appearance, and so, as is often the case with witch legends of north-western Sussex, there is a twist in the telling.

I have been talking about north-western Sussex here as a region that is quite distinct from the areas around it, and it is. Besides its many witch legends, the region has a dragon legend on Bignor Hill, fairy legends at Pulborough, Milland, and on Tarberry Hill, and there is also a very unusual legend concerning the Devil at the far western end of the county. However, the eastern border of this region is not the mid-county boundary that divides West Sussex from East Sussex, but along a line formed by the River Arun and Stane Street. The region east of the River Arun, as far as the mid-county boundary, also has some fairy legends, on the Downs, and a legend of the Devil, and of a dragon, near the Surrey border, but only three witch legends. One of these concerns a shape-shifter at Dial Post who could make herself invisible, even in daylight. But the point here is that some areas of the county either have very few recorded witch legends, or none at all, and yet there are also regions, like north-western Sussex, where these archaic traditions and superstitions survived for much longer than anywhere else in the country, and were actively maintained and adapted by the imaginative wealth of our own very local home-grown storytellers.

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Pulborough witch. A. N. Spong, *Sussex County Magazine* 1947 (p.34).
Henley witch. Alice Tudor, *Fernhurst*.
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Fittleworth, Rudgwick, Kirdford, & Dial Post witches. Tony Wales, *Sussex Ghosts & Legends*.
Fittleworth witch. The Hon. Lady Maxse, *The Story of Fittleworth*.
Balls Cross & Gunter's Bridge witches. *Petworth Society Magazine*.
Inganise Hill, Wisborough Green, & Billingshurst witches. Rhoda Leigh, *Past and Passing*.
Milland witch and fairy legend. Eleanor Boniface, *Some People of Hogg's Hollow*.
Dragon, fairy and Devil legends. Jacqueline Simpson, *The Folklore of Sussex*.

Mr. Ayling had two thumbs on his right hand

A view of Byworth
Joy Gumbrell, *Bulletin* 48, June 1987

I was born in Petworth in 1891 but we left for Byworth when I was a baby. My parents were the last tenants in a cottage in High Street that was pulled down about this time. There are now gardens on the site just south of Stone House. I don't remember the old cottages that were there and their replacements were built to the back.

One of my earliest memories is of being shown from the bedroom window the fire over Petworth when the bakery at the top of Lombard Street burned down. Another is of going to the park for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, and being carried downstairs from my cot on Christmas morning, with my stocking over my shoulder. Other Christmases I recall sitting on the hearth rug and being told by our eldest sister what to ask Father Christmas for, while our parents had gone shopping.

All working people did their shopping Christmas Eve; shops kept open until eight p.m. as they did most nights. I remember our stockings on Christmas morning usually contained a small toy, perhaps a paper book, one orange and apple, a few chestnuts and cob nuts (home grown), also a few sweets and dates, and in the toe a new penny. After I started school each Christmas Mr. Hanger gave each child a handkerchief with a sixpence in the corner; this we gave to our mother who gave us back a penny, with the rest she would buy a pound of sugar, twopence, and a large cottage loaf, threepence. With our penny we bought sweets. Grannie Hersey at the shop sold Fry's Chocolate Cream; one section cost a farthing and one section those days was like half a bar today. Other prices I remember were treacle 2*d* half a 2 1b jar, it came from a barrel, cheese 8*d* and 6*d*, butter 7*d* and for a shilling enough pudding beef and suet to make a large pudding that would last three days. The meat came from Knights, the butcher in High Street, served by a Mr. Ayling who had two thumbs on his right hand, and when he cut the meat would pop a small piece of fat in his mouth. We always had plenty of vegetables; Father was a keen gardener. Another treat were the bread puddings Mrs. Hunger would send round the cottages. She was B. Steddy Austin's daughter. I also remember the death of Queen Victoria and a man telling our father, 'The Boers have killed our Queen'; also going to a treat in the park for either the

relief of Ladysmith or Mafeking, I'm not sure which. The boys only attended Byworth school until they were eight; then they went to the boys school at Petworth. Girls finished their schooling at Byworth; if we attended all week Miss Singer gave us a few sweets and nuts wrapped up in a page of old an copy book on Friday afternoon.

When it snowed in winter we would start at Hunger Farm corner, then known as Fattening Stalls, with a small snowball and roll it along the road to Byworth corner to arrive with a large ball and a clear road. In those days each village had a Lady Bountiful; Byworth's was, I think a Mrs. Watson from New Grove, who would distribute each year secondhand clothes or a hundredweight of coal. Miss Alice Daintrey was the Lady Bountiful for Limbo. We also paid in the coal club 6*d* a week from January to autumn and then received half a ton of coal along with a load of faggots and any windfall wood we could find. This was our winter fuel supply.

I remember also Mr. Caplin in Angel Street with his barrel and ladder, filling, trimming and lighting the old oil street-lights. These would be put out again at about eight p.m.

Petworth Fair day was a holiday. The fair started at twelve mid-day with Lord Leconfield having the first ride on the roundabouts. Rides on things cost a penny; we usually had sixpence to a shilling to spend. The stalls sold small toys and watches and beads for a penny and twopence, and Mrs. Hammond's famous brandy snaps cost a penny, or sometimes two for a penny. We always took one or two home for Mother. We had to be home by tea time, and for a treat it was always soused herrings. Mr. Fielding brought them round on his cart at 25 for a shilling – we had about three pence worth; the herrings came from the boats at Worthing.

Another holiday was May Day. The evening before we would go out to get wild flowers and our father would make our garlands. In the centre we always had auricula from the garden. Then early next morning, soon after seven, we would start for Petworth and visit all the larger houses with our garlands. Sometimes we would get 3*d*, sometimes a penny, sometimes nothing. Miss Alice Daintrey would sit in the hall and wait with a bowl of coppers; we always had two pennies from her as our father worked for her. At certain times there were scrambles, one outside Otways where the Co-op now is. They would throw sweets into the road, not tarmac roads and not wrapped sweets. Another scramble was at Greens opposite the church; they would throw out biscuits. We finished up at Miss Gould's at the Trofts, Byworth and she always had the auricula from the garland. It had to be before twelve noon; this was

the custom. We would then drag our garland home and give the money to Mother. When we lived at Petworth my father, Tom Courtnay worked for Miss Daintrey at Daintrey House in East Street and he continued doing this until he died. Miss Daintrey had the old Bailliewick Farm (less the farmhouse, the house did not go with the farm then) as a private pasture farm, basically using the farm to provide for Daintrey House's household requirements. It was a small farm, just a few meadows running up from the brook with usually six cows, a few pigs, some hundred or so chicken, and apple trees and allotment land in the meadows. Most of the farm-buildings were up in the left-hand corner. Dad worked the farm himself except for a lad some afternoons and his faithful helper, Bob a lovely sheepdog who would open the farm-gates. Miss Daintrey seemed a stern lady to me as a Tom Courtnay child and she certainly didn't approve of strangers wandering about on the farm. I remember once when Dad had had to go off and had left me to stop the chickens from roosting in the trees, that Miss Daintrey even stopped me to ask me what I was doing there.

Dad had an old-fashioned yoke for carrying milk and he supplied the Cottage Hospital. The people from Shimmings would also come to the end of the lane for milk. Dad was very strict to time, always starting at seven o'clock and going right through to bedding up the cows last thing at night. In what spare time he had he'd do his garden; he was a very keen gardener. When Dad was 80 in 1934 George Garland had a photograph of him published in the *West Sussex Gazette* with a short account of his life. Like so many of his generation he had started work at eleven as a shepherd's boy. He worked from morning till night for fourpence a day. He could remember a pig market being held at Petworth every Saturday and the County Jail in operation.

When harvesting was still done with the sickle, the wives and children of agricultural workers appeared in the cornfields for gleaning as soon as the last shock was carted. 'In my young days,' he said, 'the corn was threshed by flail in the barns and in the winter, farm workers would sooner do this job then any other since it was more comfortable than working about on the farm in the cold and wet.'

During the First World War I was working at haymaking on the Bailliewick farm when some Canadian soldiers came up, took the rake and did the work for me. Yes, there were Canadians here during the Great War – not just the last war. I had two sisters older than myself and a brother. My sister, later Mrs. Shoubridge, worked for the Daintreys as a cook at Daintrey House. Miss Con and Miss Alice who lived there were the sisters of Mr. Daintrey, at one time a

solicitor in the town. Miss Con was an artist of some ability and spent a good deal of time abroad working on her art. Quite a few pictures of hers survive locally, some of local scenes but many of places on the continent. Miss Alice kept a stern eye on the farm. She was a hardy lady who always had a cold bath before breakfast, sitting in a saucer bath, shaped like a big saucer which she kept under the bed. The maid would bring up the cold water, then empty the bath when Miss Alice had finished with it. The domestic staff consisted only of the cook and the maid. When my sister was the undermaid she used to wait table. The cook made a butter cake and was told she could make herself a dripping cake. The cook, however, made herself a butter cake. When Miss Alice saw the cake she said, 'That dripping cake really does look nice, we'll have that in the dining-room'. Cook had to set to pretty quickly to make a proper dripping cake. If she'd let the other cake go into the dining room Miss Alice would have known it hadn't been made with dripping.

The servants had to be in at eight o'clock and were allowed out Sunday afternoons provided they weren't 'pleasuring' as Miss Alice put it. Miss Alice herself went to church every morning. Byworth was mainly cottages then with the two farms as now, Barnsgate and Hallgate. Mr. Richardson lived in what is the present Barnsgate farmhouse and moved from there to the Manse in High Street. He eventually left the Manse to the United Reformed Church. A number of different people lived at various times at Trofts but most of Byworth belonged to the Leconfield Estate. Byworth wasn't traditionally Leconfield territory but the Estate had bought extensively during the nineteenth century. The bakers belonged to Mr. Hersey whose mother had come originally with her Aunt Penfold – a young woman then but capable of lifting the 240 lb flour sacks that were in use then. Every week during the winter two pigs would be killed, then hung all night on hooks outside the shop window. Next morning they would be cut into joints and, often as not, tubbed up as pickled pork.

Byworth found it difficult to have a village life of its own, living as it did very much in the shadow of Petworth. It did, however, have its own church and its own school which were one and the same building. I can remember the chancel of the church being built on to the schoolroom. A screen shut off the two parts when the school was in session. One of the Petworth curates was responsible for Byworth and there was quite a congregation on Sunday evenings and even a surpliced choir. Byworth at one time had its own cricket team too. Despite this, entertainment was still somewhat lacking so a visit to the Church Army evangelist with his magic lanterns was eagerly awaited. For this everyone went to Barnsgate barn, lit by the old carbide lamps. The

Church Army didn't have their own horses and the local farmers lent them theirs to move their caravan from place to place. Something that really brought the village people out was the passage of the car belonging to Mr. Otway, the Petworth grocer, solemnly preceded by a man walking with a red flag. The entire village turned out to see the novelty proceed so very slowly through Byworth. If we were out in the trap when the monster appeared one of us had to get out to hold the terrified pony.

I passed exams to leave school at twelve, being taught at Byworth before going to the old Petworth boys school in North Street to be examined. If you passed when you were twelve you could leave school, otherwise you had to wait till you were thirteen. There were about fifty pupils at Byworth school in those days, coming from places like Egdean, Shopham Bridge and Strood, as well as from the village itself. I remember my first day at school with Kate Sadler, who later had the Post Office, taking me off to school one thick foggy autumn morning. The old Post Office was across the road from the one most people remember. The school had two teachers, the Misses Singer, who lived

Byworth had its own church and its own school which were one and the same building.

in the school house. The school was church-run and the curate came once a week for a bible-reading. We'd also sing a hymn and there would be prayers. Once a year a Mr. Heath came to give us our scripture examination; he was an elderly clergyman who had a habit of stroking his beard. This mannerism fascinated us so much that it tended to put us off our answers. When he was coming we'd wear a new pinafore and go to school with our hair done up in plaits. One day Mr. Heath caused consternation by coming early and before we'd had time to undo them! We used to take our dinner to school, with cold tea in medicine bottles. We'd stand them round the open coke fire to warm up. We'd bring bread and cheese. I could have gone home but preferred to do this. There were standards for each school year and, as in most village schools, just two separate classes. When I left school I helped my mother at home. She wasn't strong.

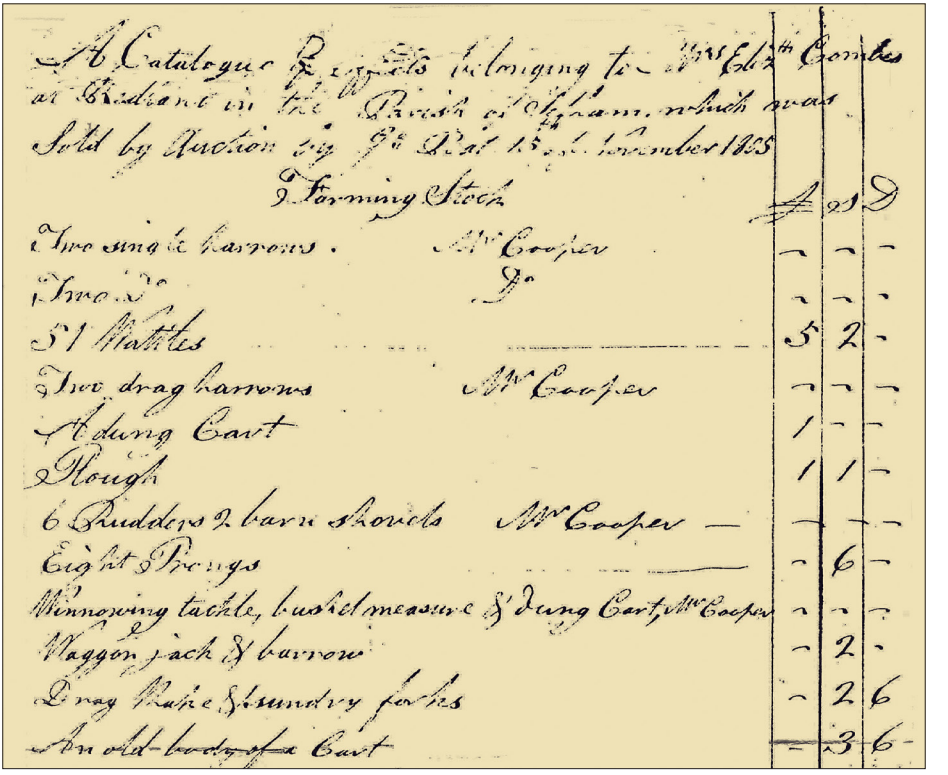
Soldiers were billeted in Byworth during the Great War. It was the last stage for them before being sent to France and I remember Mrs. Steer in the village telling me that they weren't allowed to use her beds. They had to sleep on the floor to get them used to living rough when they were on active service. Most Byworth men worked on the land and perhaps rather fewer of them went to the war proportionally than in other villages. Mr. Clayton was the first landlord of the Black Horse I can remember. His daughter used to warm her feet in the oven when the weather was cold. Mr. Jones was a bit later: he had at one time been coachman to the Wilberforce family at Lavington. Much of our shopping of course had to be done in Petworth. Mr. Eager I well remember, he was always known as 'Whispering Dick'. 'Have you got any news?', he'd say. Old customers would have the shop chair and a small glass of wine. Mr. Kevis, the photographer I can see now. He was a member of the congregation at our church. It must have been the General Election of 1906 when the Conservatives held this seat and there were great celebrations. As the carnival came down Lombard Street Mr. Kevis shouted at them, 'You may have won here but you haven't won the country.'

Cottagers received two rabbits from the Leconfield Estate at Christmas, tradesmen two pheasants. Cottagers had beer, bread, cheese and cold meat when they paid their rent in November. If you brought a bag you could take your meal home with you if you preferred. Our cottage was the most expensive in Byworth at three shillings a week. Farmers had a four-course meal twice a year on audit days. My brother-in-law knew one farmer who regularly had too much to drink on these occasions, on one occasion being so bemused that he poured mayonnaise on his fresh fruit salad thinking it was cream.

Two candlesticks and a snuffer stand

A farm sale at Redland, Selham in 1805
Peter Jerrome, *PSM* 25, September 1981

Oglethorpe and Anderson 1267-1316 is a miscellaneous collection of papers all related to the estate of John Combs, formerly of Redland in the parish of Selham. The farm mentioned is clearly Redlands Farm on the northern extremity of Lodsworth, just to the west of Leggatt Hill. John Combs himself may well be that John Combs who, according to the Window Tax Assessment of 1762, was at that time tenant of the Swan Hotel in Petworth. Perhaps the most interesting document in the gathering is 1305, a handwritten catalogue of a sale of Mrs. Combs' effects, sold at auction by George Peat in September 1805, John Combs himself had died a few years previously.

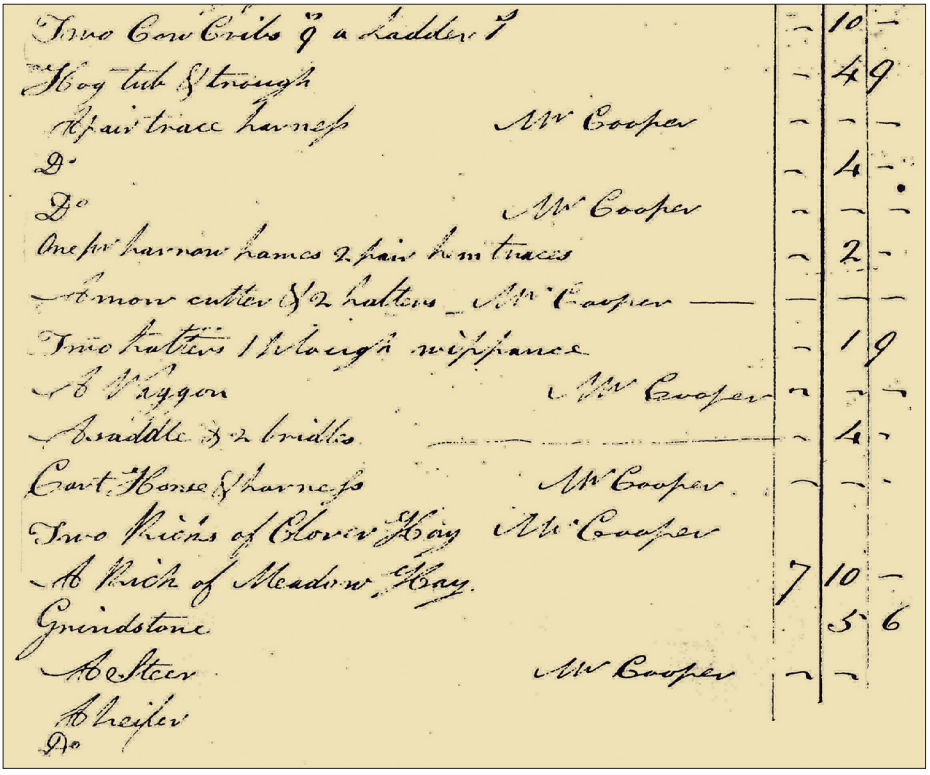


A Catalogue of Effects belonging to Mrs Eliz.th Combs
at Redland in the Parish of Egham which were
Sold by Auction by Geo. Peat 18.th September 1805

		£	s	d
Farming Stock				
Two sing.e harrows	Mr. Cooper	–	–	–
Two D.o	D.o	–	–	–
51 Hurdles		5	2	–
Two drag harrows	Mr. Cooper	–	–	–
A dung Cart		1	–	–
Plough		1	1	–
6 Riddlers & barn shovels	Mr. Cooper	–	–	–
Eight Prongs		–	6	–
Winnowing tackle, bushel measure & dung Cart	Mr. Cooper	–	–	–
Waggon jack & barrow		–	2	–
Drag Rake & laundry forks		–	2	6
An old body of a Cart		–	3	6

The catalogue is handwritten on four pages of which the first is reproduced below. This page lists farming stock alive and dead but the other three provide an inventory of the house contents going from room to room and giving prices fetched, but not the identity of the purchaser. The catalogue is interesting as reflecting a transitional period when rural life was already beginning to change but when many of the older pieces of household equipment, familiar from seventeenth and eighteenth century probate inventories, were still in use.

The farming stock presents few surprises and, although indistinct, can be followed on the reproduction. Mr. Cooper clearly was the incoming farmer and had already bought what he required – no price is given for this in the catalogue. Cooper did not purchase any of the household items, 51 wattles at two shillings each were presumably for sheep, while 'rudders' were perhaps large paddles for stirring feed. Hames are the curved wooden pieces that form the collar of a draught-horse. A wippance is probably what


Two Cow Cribs & a Ladder
Hog tub & trough
Pair trace harness Mr Cooper
Do
Do Mr Cooper
One pr harrow hames 2 pair hm traces
Snow cutter & 2 halters Mr Cooper
Two halters 1 Strap & wippance
Waggon Mr Cooper
Saddle & 2 bridles
Cart Horse & harness Mr Cooper
Two Ricks of Clover Hay Mr Cooper
A Rick of Meadow Hay
Grindstone
A Steer Mr Cooper
A Heifer
Do

was usually called a whipple-tree, the crossbar on which an animal's harness is fastened to keep it away from the animal itself. A prong is a pitch-fork. There were two ricks of clover hay and one of meadow hay but it is probably the household furniture that gives the greatest interest today.

The pantry contained among other items a drip-pan (used to catch the dripping from roasting meat), and a basting ladle, a pestle and mortar, six earthen dishes, a joint-stool (the carver's seat at the head of the table) and a 'lard beater', apparently used for making pats of lard rather as one would do with butter. 'Pewter spoons' reflect the wider use of pewter (once a rather aristocratic metal) instead of wood, while stone jars might be used for wine or beer. The meaning of the phrase 'couple tub' is not clear. Possibly it was a tub with a smaller vessel inside that would be used for separating sediment from a liquid, or perhaps fat. 'Water pot' does not specify the material it was made of – probably earthenware, while 'roasting dogs' one would expect. The pantry also contained an armoury of tools of various kinds, a hay-rake, saws, augers, jack plane and smoothing plane, hammers, a wedge, an adze, a grubaxe, five scythes, a mow cutter and four 'spuds' (forks). The final item is 'a bell metal skellet'. The kitchen had the inevitable roasting spits with roasting jack to turn them, knives and forks, bacon rack and mantle shelf, It also had four tables, two of oak, one of walnut and one described as 'Inn'. These were perhaps not as imposing as they sound, the two oak tables fetching thirteen shillings, the walnut 1/9*d*, and the Inn 3/3*d*, Seven chairs fetched 4/3*d*, and an arm-chair 1/9*d*. The kitchen also had two candlesticks and a snuffer stand, a tin saucepan, coffee pot and flour box. A 'candle box' was a hinged metal cylinder attached to the wall by the mantel and a 'box iron' was an iron with a brass case having a flap at the back to allow the hot iron to be put back into the case. Most readers will know the steelyard, still sometimes seen, one of the most ancient instruments for weighing, and indispensable at any farm at this time. The kitchen also had 'two tongs and a cottrell', usually spelled 'cotterel', a crane or bar used to hang a pot over a fire. The most valuable item, a fowling piece worth 9/6*d*, would be kept along with the musket (2/3*d*) in a rough rack above the fireplace.

BELOW An eighteenth-century rushlight holder in a wooden base, and a wicker bird cage. The rush would be placed in the pliers-like jaws at the top of the holder and held in place by the effect of the weight on the left. The bird cage is a modern copy.

After the kitchen, the very centre of the household existence, the garret is quickly disposed of. There was a malt-mill (sold for £1.5.0*d*), an oak chest, a bedstead, ten rip hooks (another name for a fag-hook), and various sundries. The 'dark' chamber must have been dark indeed to earn such a name. Here was a 'goose-feather bed and bolster' worth £2.6.0*d*, a bedstead, three blankets and a quilt, two oak chests, two old chairs, a box and a clothes-horse.

The 'chamber' seems to have held such items at Redland as tended away from the purely utilitarian. Beside the bedstead, oak chests, chest of drawers, blankets and quilt, there was a spinning wheel and a bird-cage (almost

certainly of wicker at this time). There were also sundry china cups and saucers and six Delft cups and saucers with tea-pot and cream-jug and various jars, mugs, basins and wine glasses, The 'salt seller' would almost certainly be of pewter. Salt might well be the only foodstuff a farm like Redland would bring in from outside. It was often kept in a special salt box close to the fire to keep it dry. The box would be hinged with leather because iron hinges would rust as the salt attracted moisture. The most expensive item in the chamber was a 'feather bed and bolster' sold for £3.19.0*d*. The chest of drawers made £2 but no other single lot in the chamber was worth more than 18/6*d*. The 'parlour' offered only a wainscot desk and a pair of shears, a rather curious combination in a single lot. The cellar had a wooden hoop (for binding barrels) and a generous assortment of very large casks. There were also two 'powdering tubs' (for powdering animal flesh, i.e. seasoning or spicing it, or more probably here, pickling or salting it), a small 'tun-tub' (probably a fermenting vat), a wash-tub, a barrel stand, an iron hoop and an 'oil barrel and lights'. We are probably dealing here with rush-lights, peeled rushes, dried and then filled with melted fat. The rush would be held in an iron holder with a wooden base. The 'brewhouse' had a 'furnace' – perhaps some kind of copper, a 'milk kettle' valued at £1. 1. 0*d*, a 'bucking tub' (a familiar item in the old inventories and meaning a tub used for bleaching and steeping in lye), a mash-vat and another armoury of spades, turnip hooks, bill-hooks, cleavers and similar tools. Lastly there is the 'dairy'. Here predictably was a cheese-tub, churn, trays and milk pail, sieve, strainer and wooden dish, A cheese 'kiver' would appear to be a cover for a cheese tub. Four wooden 'bottles' (casks or kegs to our way of thinking) were worth 5/3*d*. Here too were milk pans and crocks and '9 cyder hogsheads' worth £2. 6. 0*d* and '14 half hogsheads' worth £3. 6. 9*d*.

The sub-totals, room by room, for prices fetched are as follows although whether these monetary values adequately reflect the relative importance of the various rooms is probably open to doubt.

Live and dead farm stock £ 41.12. 0*d*
Pantry £ 2. 7. 9*d*
Kitchen £ 3. 0. 6*d*
Garrett £ 1. 12. 3*d*
Dark Chamber £ 3. 6. 0*d*.
Chamber £ 9. 9. 9*d*
Parlour £ 1. 10. 2*d*
Cellar £ 3. 11. 6*d*
Brewhouse £ 5. 16. 9*d*
Dairy (including stock of cider) £ 7. 11. 0*d*

With the reputation of the society in tatters

The Petworth Park Friendly Society seeks a doctor in 1907
Miles Costello, *PSM* 100, June 2000

A wag once described Petworth as 'full of Whitcombs and pubs', a rather sweeping statement perhaps but I suppose to an extent justifiable in that Petworth was certainly celebrated for the generous number of hostelries in the neighbourhood and equally so the Whitcomb family – which while not the most prolific – certainly commanded an influence in the town which was unmatched among the other working- and middle-class families. Henry Whitcomb in particular held several leading positions in the social and business framework of the town.

Clearly a man of considerable talents, Whitcomb managed to execute his duties as manager of the Leconfield Estate office while at the same time sharing his undoubted administrative skills with many of the leading local societies. Indeed by his diligence he had elevated himself into a position of almost unrivalled authority at Petworth. Little if anything of consequence went on in the town without his nod of approval, and even less reached the ears of Herbert Watson – the Leconfield Agent – or indeed came to the notice of Lord Leconfield himself without Whitcomb knowing of it first. It is difficult to assess the depth of the respect bestowed upon him, especially by the Leconfield workforce. However, it may in a way be illustrated by an eye-witness account of his funeral, the record describes the scene on the day, and while it is noticeable for the lack of emotion expressed by the diarist it manages to retain an element of casual deference when depicting a scene which was clearly quite extraordinary, 'Henry Whitcomb's funeral, impressive sight, over 500 mourners and 70 wreaths carried by men'. One may perhaps read a certain ambivalence into the entry though at this distance in time it is only possible to make assumptions. Perhaps the diarist was privately displaying his antipathy towards the great man, who knows; after all Whitcomb in his various roles cannot have succeeded in pleasing everyone all of the time, though if there was some underlying element of animosity it would certainly have been a foolish man who chose to display it openly at Petworth.

As one of his multifarious duties Whitcomb was secretary to The Petworth Park Friendly Society (PPFS) for which he was paid the sum of £10 per annum. It is while fulfilling this particular role that fate and circumstances

elevated both Whitcomb and the society from the relative security of anonymity into the very heart of a bitter dispute of national proportions, that had rumbled on for the best part of the previous half-century.

The PPFS was established in 1850, a comparative late-comer to the friendly society movement, and was formed exclusively for the benefit of past and present employees of the Leconfield Estate. While membership was not obligatory it may be assumed that Lord Leconfield in his hereditary role as president of the society would have been well aware of the gains to be had by encouraging his employees to make provisions for periods of ill health. For every man who joined a friendly society meant one less who was likely to become a burden upon parish relief or the workhouse, and with the increase in membership came the consequential decrease in the parish rate, to which the Leconfield Estate was a major contributor.

Most 'clubs', and the PPFS was no exception, were constituted to provide sickness, medical and funeral benefits for their members in return for a monthly contribution which varied according to the age of the member and the number of dependants who were also eligible for relief. The sickness benefit entitled the claimant to a weekly sum known as 'full pay' for a total of six months in any two-year period and alternatively to a weekly sum known as 'half pay' for any period when he was not entitled to 'full pay'. To obtain his benefit the claimant had to produce a surgeon's certificate on every Friday morning at the Steward's Office at Petworth House. Funeral benefits were by their nature the least complicated; on the death of a member a person previously nominated by him would receive a set sum to pay for the funeral expenses. Lastly, the medical attendance benefit: this entitled all members, their wives and children under the age of 16 years to the services of a doctor appointed by the society.

By 1906 the society was clearly in a period of decline, the membership stood at 118 paying members with a further 116 dependant women and children entitled to the services of the society doctor, and yet only nine years earlier the annual balance sheet had recorded a paying membership of 155, a significant reduction in the roll of such a small society. It is difficult to account for the decline leading up to 1906; however, it may have been the result of recent legislation which had imposed restrictions on 'clubs' financing their social customs from members' contributions, and as these practices included 'club days', festivals, and even refreshments at meetings which were seen as an important inducement to prospective members, it was obviously going to have an effect on the growth of the society. To finance these practices

separate funds had to be set up into which the membership would have to make additional contributions. This was clearly a deeply unpopular move as many members felt that these occasions were the only tangible reward for paying their fees and it may be surmised that many existing members would have resigned at this time. Clearly there must have been other underlying factors in the decease in membership of the PPFS; perhaps there was a reduction in the Leconfield workforce, or, as seems more likely, one or more of the national societies such as the Oddfellows or Foresters were at the time offering more attractive benefits to their membership. Rather ironically, considering the state of the society an independent report from 1906 into the finances of the PPFS concluded 'the society is well grounded, and appears to have been efficiently managed in the past'. A cautionary remark made in the valuer's report warns of 'the excessive cost of sickness claims', and advises the committee to 'amend the rules as to provide that the fund shall not be available for pension allowances'. This last note highlights the difficulty of providing for an ageing and increasingly infirm membership with the resultant increase in sickness and pension payments. Societies that failed to attract a younger membership were doomed to failure, and despite the valuer's seemingly positive report, the first signs of an impending crisis are evident.

The rate of sickness benefit for members stood at twelve shillings a week for twelve months followed by a reduced benefit of eight shillings a week for the remainder of the sickness or infirmity. This rate seems generous considering the financial difficulties faced by the society. Apart from the sickness benefit, each member and their dependents were entitled to the services of a medical officer or doctor who was contracted to attend to their needs. For each married member the medical officer was paid eleven shillings per annum, and for single members the sum was five shillings. The total fee paid to the doctor in 1906 came to £68. 1s. 8*d* which equated to little over four shillings for every person he was responsible for. It is not difficult to deduce that the income generated was unlikely to satisfy many qualified practitioners and indeed it was generally accepted that such a position would be favourable only to a doctor who had not yet succeeded in building up a private practice. There can be little doubt that the existence of the 'club' doctors was precarious at the very least. They were usually employed on annual contracts and renewal was dependant upon them being re-elected by the membership of the society at the annual general meeting, which in the case of the PPFS usually took place in May. Any attempt by a doctor to improve his terms of employment or to decrease his workload often resulted in an

evaporation of the support afforded by the members and the consequential loss of the contract at the following election. On the other hand there were occasions when established doctors took on these contracts in order to prevent younger and more ambitious doctors from establishing themselves in the area.

Towards the end of 1906 the incumbent society medical officer was Dr A. H. Spicer who had served the PPFS since January 1902. Spicer applied to the committee for an increase in his contract fees, and a meeting of the committee was arranged to discuss the doctor's request at which Spicer was allowed to address the assembled committee. He explained that his present remuneration was not sufficient for the amount of attendance he had to give, especially to the wives and children, and asked that the amount be increased, otherwise he was afraid that he would have to resign. Whitcomb as secretary of the society was instructed by the committee to contact the secretaries of

A friendly society in crisis? All seems as normal as Petworth Park Friendly Society march down East Street in June 1907. Photograph by Walter Kevis.

other local friendly societies and to establish what they paid their doctors. The meeting was then adjourned to December 28, 1906. The record of this next meeting makes no mention of the outcome of the secretary's enquiries but simply records that Dr Spicer's request for an increase in his pay had been turned down. One could suppose that the committee had discussed the matter and concluded that their doctor's remuneration compared favourably with that paid by other societies, and with little documentation available for this period it is difficult to make any informed judgement on the matter, but we do have a copy of the rule book for 1906 of the 'Heart in Hand' Court of the Foresters Friendly Society which held its meetings at Kirdford.

It appears that the surgeon to that society was paid six shillings a year to attend to the medical needs of each paying member, but unfortunately there is no mention of the duty to provide medical attendance to the dependant wives and children of the members – this important point was of course a principle grievance of Dr Spicer. It seems he was determined to resign his position with the Society and gave the committee notice to the end of January 1907. The committee refused to accept this resignation on the point that as he was paid half-yearly he should give six months notice, but without prejudice – and probably because they had few grounds on which to force him to work out an extended notice – they reduced this period to three months and added that he could go earlier if a successor could be found. Spicer agreed to none of these conditions and he reiterated his plans to leave at the end of January regardless of the posturing of the committee. It appears that at this point the committee woke up to the fact that they were about to lose the services of their surgeon and Henry Whitcomb was instructed to make alternative arrangements for the medical attendance of the membership. At first Whitcomb approached the Petworth practice of Barnes and Beachcroft offering them the post but the doctors rejected this on the grounds that they were not prepared to undertake the duties on the same terms as those paid to Dr Spicer. The committee now realised that what was initially an inconvenience was now turning into a crisis. On the one hand the Society could not hope to attract new members without being able to offer the benefits of medical attendance, while equally the committee was aware that in order to attract a new doctor they might have to offer an enhanced payment, and to do so would require the unlikely agreement of the membership to an increase in their subscriptions.

In a seemingly desperate attempt to resolve the matter locally the secretary was directed to contact the other societies with a view to appointing one doctor for all the clubs in Petworth. No record survives of the results of Henry

Whitcomb's enquiries with the other 'clubs', and we must assume that he received a negative response to his committee's suggestions, for it would seem highly unlikely that any of the other local 'clubs' would wish to take part in a scheme whereby the only initial beneficiary would have been the PPFS.

Frustrated locally, Whitcomb appears to have taken it upon himself to write to the offices of *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*, and in letter of January 14, 1907 he instructs them to place the following advertisement in that week's issue.

> Petworth, Sussex. The members of the Petworth Park Friendly Society are in want of a Medical Officer at the end of the present month to attend the members, members' wives and children. The number of members is 125 and the average amount paid for the past ten years has been about £75 per annum. Applications, stating age, qualification, &c., to be sent to the Secretary, Estate Office, Petworth.

The *BMJ* declined the advertisement out of hand and *The Lancet*, while initially displaying a reluctance to accept the advertisement, requested a copy of the rules of the Society before any final decision could be made. Whitcomb tried again with *The Lancet* on January 16 but rather surprisingly failed to include a copy of the rules in his letter. The following day a telegram arrived at Petworth with the terse message 'Advertisement declined'. With this response would begin a battle of words between Charles Good, the manager of *The Lancet* and Henry Whitcomb. A little later Herbert Watson in his role as chairman of the PPFS would join the increasingly vitriolic debate. Instead of accepting the decision of *The Lancet* and looking elsewhere for a replacement doctor, Whitcomb had embroiled the PPFS in a bitter dispute from which no glory could be gained. To suppose that Whitcomb had entered the debate in innocence would be to underestimate his intelligence, the dispute between the medical profession and the friendly society movement having been raging on and off for half a century. The disagreement mainly focused on the meagre rates paid to contracted doctors, and as far back as 1869 the British Medical Association was advising its members to boycott those societies which failed to offer a reasonable remuneration, or who had terminated the contract of the sitting doctor in favour of a cheaper applicant. This dispute not only affected the friendly societies but also the poor law institutions such as the workhouses and infirmaries. However, an increasing awareness of the importance of the medical staff had lead to a vast improvement in the lot of

the poor law doctor by the turn of the century, and the medical profession as a whole considered the workhouse appointment to be somewhat superior to the similar role performed by the friendly society doctor. The argument had largely been conducted in the medical and friendly society press but on occasion the national newspapers had taken up the story and extensively publicised both sides of the argument. For Whitcomb to be unaware of the implications of confronting the medical profession is unthinkable and yet it is impossible to tell what he could possibly hope to gain from locking horns with the all-powerful establishment. Two days after his receipt of the rejection telegram he once again wrote to Charles Good at *The Lancet* and demanded to know his reasons for rejecting the advertisement.

> With reference to the advertisement I sent you for insertion and to which you wired 'Advertisement declined,' I must ask you in common fairness to my Committee and the President to the Society, Lord Leconfield, to state your reasons for not doing so, and if there are any special conditions for inserting in *The Lancet*.

The response from Charles Good was swift and succinct. Good declared that it was not their policy to give reasons for declining advertisements, and in any case Whitcomb had failed to send a copy of the rules. To add insult to injury Good in an almost casual way adds that they had also received information which had confirmed their earlier decision to reject the advertisement. Still Whitcomb would not let the matter drop and he proceeds to escalate the dispute by involving the chairman of the society, Herbert Watson. On January 22, 1907 Watson composed a stinging rebuke of the editorial policies of *The Lancet* and, rather foolishly considering he was writing to a member of the press, threatens to publicise the matter.

> I must say that it is somewhat hard that a body of labouring men should thus be apparently boycotted by the doctors in the place and not even allowed to make their wants known through the ordinary channels of the medical profession. I most certainly shall, unless you are prepared to reconsider your determination not to insert the advertisement, make known as publicly as possible, the tyranny of the medical profession, for I can call it by no other name. We hear of trades unionism amongst the working classes, but I do not think from my present experience of the medical profession that it is confined to one class.

He concludes his letter by charging Good that he should as a matter of duty disclose the name of his informant mentioned in the previous correspondence, and to do otherwise would reflect badly on the other two doctors in the town. Charles Good replies in a short letter dated January 23 in which he castigates Watson for failing to enclose a copy of the rules. Watson was clearly embarrassed by the failure of both himself and Whitcomb to send a copy of the rules to *The Lancet* and having blamed the error on 'an oversight of my clerk' promptly dispatched the offending article along with a valuer's report to Mr. Good.

At this point it seems that Good decided that to continue the debate would serve no further purpose, after all he had made his position clear to Watson and on the 25th he writes thanking him for the copy of the rules but proceeds to abdicate his role in the affair by declaring that he has passed the matter over to his editorial department. Whether Watson was aware of the implications of Good's decision is difficult to tell, perhaps he felt a sense of triumph in that Good appeared to be abandoning his argument. One thing that is certain is that Watson could not have foretold what would happen next.

The following day an editorial appeared in *The Lancet* effectively pre-empting Watson's threat to publicise the matter and at the same time ensuring that the journal's account of the affair became the authorised version. The editorial clearly aims to propagate that side of the argument which shows the medical officers as the poor downtrodden servants of powerful organisations, underpaid and forced to work long hours with no means of remedying their situation. Every effort is made to prove that figures supplied by the PPFS to justify the poor salary paid to Spicer were inaccurate and by using figures supplied by Spicer, rather than those of the official auditor they set out to dismantle the society's case.

> We refused recently to publish an advertisement sent to us by Mr. Henry Whitcomb on behalf of the Petworth Park Friendly Society. We did this because we don't accept advertisements of vacancies for medical officers to such societies until we have seen the rules of the society, or until we have had an opportunity of learning the position enjoyed by the previous holder of the appointment. Mr. Whitcomb asked us to state our reasons [for declining the advertisement] . . . the remuneration of the medical officer to the Petworth Park Friendly Society works out on the present terms at under three shillings per head per annum . . . we want Lord Leconfield to grasp the fact that this is extremely bad pay, and we do not want to help the society over which he presides in any

intention which that society may have to continue to give such terms.

The editorial offers no sympathy for the conditions of the members of the friendly societies, who without recourse to the society doctors would have few means of obtaining medical attendance for not only themselves but also their families. *The Lancet* attempts to ridicule both Whitcomb and Watson and having selectively reproduced the less than flattering letter which Watson sent to Good they conclude with what the editor expected to be the coup de grace.

> The agent to the Lord Leconfield has a few things to learn, as well as how to write a polite and coherent letter. Responsible journalists are not to be bounced into accepting advertisements, because the agent 'to one of the largest private estates in the South of England,' makes threats of letting the public know his disapproval of them if any other course is pursued. The demeanour assumed by Mr. Watson may prove efficacious when collecting the rents of the said estate, but off Lord Leconfield's soil he will find it futile. The fact that the medical men in the locality refused the post – we thank Mr. Watson for the information – sufficiently proves what the figures we have given indicate. The terms of the Petworth Park Friendly Society are unfair to the medical officer.

Watson was clearly furious at what he saw as a slanderous attack on both himself and the society, and responded by demanding that the editor makes a 'private and public apology to both the society and Lord Leconfield' and unless he inserts the advertisement in his paper Watson threatens to 'send the whole episode to the local press'. Watson did not achieve the response that he had hoped for to his threatening letter. The editor chose instead to argue that he had every right to print what were after all only statements made by the agent in the first place. Watson, clearly exasperated responds by penning a closing letter in which he berates the medical press for their failure to print the full facts surrounding the argument, and for publishing letters which were clearly marked private. He concludes by stating 'that it is not my intention to carry this correspondence any further in your journal, but I hope that the whole will appear elsewhere and probably the Friendly Society may get some sympathy and a fair hearing'.

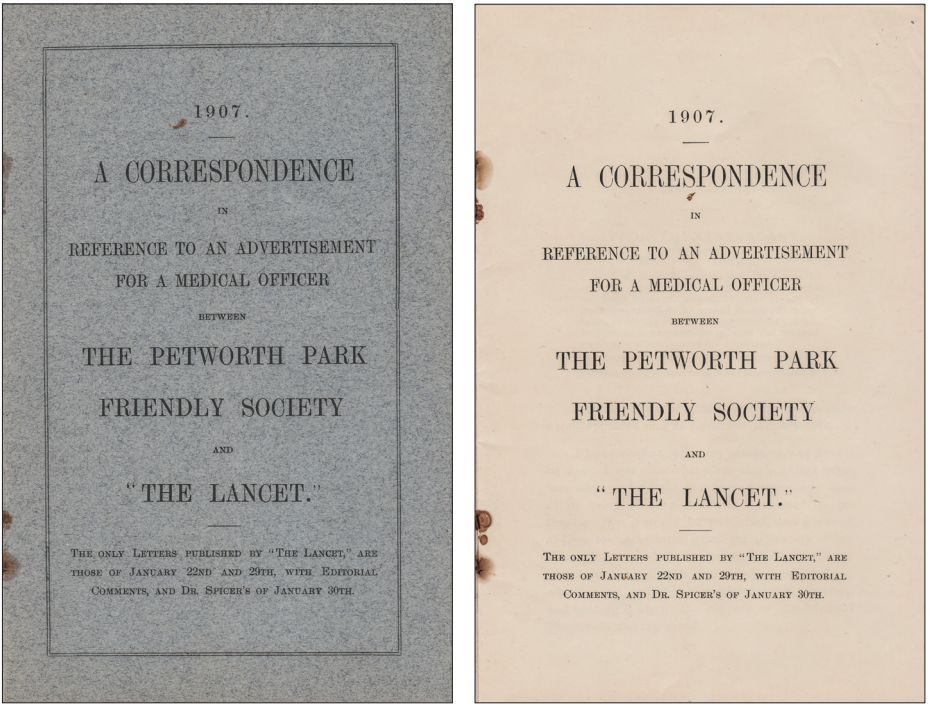
At a committee meeting held during the last week of Dr Spicer's tenure with the Society, Henry Whitcomb informed those present that both of the medical journals had refused to publish their advertisement and that he had instead placed advertisements in *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post* and

The West Sussex Gazette. It would appear that Dr Spicer had been invited to this meeting in the hope that he might even at this late hour reconsider his position; indeed in a mood of disguised desperation the committee requested that Spicer name the lowest figure that he would accept to remain with the Society. He replied that he would require an extra £30 a year to stay, and this was rejected by the committee. Knowing that it was pointless in trying to prevent the departure of Dr Spicer, the committee in a final act of irony decreed that Spicer could resign his position from the 31st of that month, the very day on which he had insisted that he was leaving anyway.

Having failed to secure a replacement for Dr Spicer it now became obvious that the Society would be lacking in its duty to provide any official medical attendance for the membership and so it was agreed that individual members should make their own provision and if the need arose they should then present the medical bill to the committee who would then consider the matter further. However, it was noted at a committee meeting of April 11, 1907 that three members had continued to use the services of Dr Spicer and in fit of petulance it was decreed that in future no further bills would be paid for him. Dr Beachcroft of the firm Barnes and Beachcroft attended this same meeting. Addressing the assembled committee, Beachcroft declared that he would be pleased to undertake the contract on condition that the scale of pay be increased by one penny per week from each member from that paid to Dr Spicer. This proposed rise in the remuneration considerably exceeded that which had been refused to Dr Spicer and it was clear that the committee would have no alternative but to reject the proposal. However, after due consideration they recommended that an increase of two shillings per annum for the attendance of each married member should be offered to Beachcroft. The following day it was reported to the committee that Beachcroft had rejected this latest offer and the negotiations were considered at an end.

On April 12 Beachcroft, realising that the resolve of the committee was unlikely to be thwarted, finally agreed to accept the revised terms and with considerable haste he was elected society surgeon for the ensuing year. The sense of relief felt by the committee and Whitcomb and Watson in particular must have been significant, the crisis had been averted albeit with the reputation of the society in tatters. Watson attempted to regain some modicum of credibility by publishing in booklet form his own account of the events which had so nearly crippled the society. Needless to say this version as opposed to that promulgated by *The Lancet* tended to show the society in a favourable light and we can suppose that he distributed the booklet within the friendly society

circle and also to anybody who may have shown an interest. How effective Watson was in publicising the wrongs which he believed were committed by the medical profession is difficult to judge, certainly the booklet must have had only a limited circulation. History records that Mr. Watson, barely five weeks after the election of the new doctor, resigned his position with the society, Henry Whitcomb who perhaps innocently instigated the sorry affair had managed to extricate himself from responsibility for the debacle and continued to serve the society for many more years. Dr Beachcroft continued in his role as society doctor until 1913 when he resigned his position.



1907.

A CORRESPONDENCE

IN

REFERENCE TO AN ADVERTISEMENT

FOR A MEDICAL OFFICER

BETWEEN

THE PETWORTH PARK

FRIENDLY SOCIETY

AND

"THE LANCET."

THE ONLY LETTERS PUBLISHED BY "THE LANCET," ARE THOSE OF JANUARY 22ND AND 29TH, WITH EDITORIAL COMMENTS, AND DR. SPICER'S OF JANUARY 30TH.

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The front cover and title page of the booklet published by Herbert Watson in 1907 in which he gives 'his own account of the events which had so nearly crippled the society'. An ambitious publication, the booklet measures 8½ x 5½ inches and is professionally printed with 20 pages of high quality paper.

SOURCES *A Correspondence Between The Petworth Park Friendly Society and The Lancet*. 1907.
P. H. J. H. Gosden. *The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875*, Manchester 1961.
Ernest Muirhead Little. *A History of The British Medical Association 1832-1932*, London 1932.

A hybrid of Ava Gardner and Anita Ekberg

Elizabeth Wyndham – a redoubtable figure
Miles Costello, *PSM* 188, September 2022

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

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

> Dear Miles,
> It was a great pleasure to meet you yesterday. Thank you for taking in the books. I hope they will find good homes. Thank you too for the magazine you gave me. I read it from cover to cover at Petworth house, sitting amongst bluebells. An excellent magazine! Prompted by it, I browsed for a while on the Petworth Society website last night and found an article, I think by you, from December 2017, which was about bookplates. In the article was a reference to Elizabeth Wyndham (adoptive daughter of the 3rd Baron Leconfield, and, among other things, ex-Bletchley.) I should think this must have been the EW who was my parents' next door neighbour in Chalfont St. Giles (my father looked after John Milton's cottage there from 1989 to 1992). Elizabeth was a redoubtable figure, with many a colourful story to tell! I seem to remember she also piloted Spitfires from factories in the north of England down to where they were needed in the south.
> Simon May.
>
> Dear Simon,
> Yes it was good to meet and what a coincidence that you came across the bookplate piece that I wrote. I recall that following Elizabeth's death, the

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

remains of her library were brought back to Petworth and left in an old stable at Petworth House. After the books had been pillaged by all and sundry we were offered the remainder for the Society's book sale which gave me the opportunity to pick out some wonderful bookplates for my collection. I was indeed very lucky. Would it be OK with you if I used your email as a letter in the September issue of the magazine? I think that it may stimulate some reaction from the readers, many of whom will never have heard of Elizabeth, or indeed her adoptive brother Peter.
Miles.

Dear Miles,
An amazing coincidence about the bookplate article and Elizabeth Wyndham. I didn't know that her library came back to Petworth. Do quote from my email for your September magazine. She was an amazing lady and I

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mario Praz was a friend; the pianist Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli would play for her, something he would do for no others. On one occasion, according to Ann Elwell, (an MI5 officer in Rome to read captured documents, who stayed at Elizabeth's flat in Piazza Montecitorio) he threw himself before Elizabeth declaring: 'For me you are the eternal woman.' From Rome Elizabeth managed to get to Berlin after the end of the war to be with the man she had fallen in love with at Bletchley, and she worked on education projects for the Allied Kommendatura in the city. The parties, at which she is remembered as an awesome figure, were incredible, with the victorious Allies striving to outdo each other in opulence of entertainment; there were mountains of caviar, and armed guards concealed behind curtains behind every chair.

Ultimately, Elizabeth had to return to Petworth, leaving her great love behind, to look after her now ailing and aging adoptive father. She was 26 and Lord Leconfield 79. She married briefly a charming but inappropriate man. Her divorce she later celebrated with a silver divorce party. Through her aunt Dolly Bruntisfield she worked doing public relations for the Order of St John. In 1955 she travelled in Spain with Peter Wildeblood, Kenneth Tynan and his wife, the novelist Elaine Dundy (obituary, May 9, 2008), joining Tennessee Williams in Valencia where he filled his bath with mineral water and gin as there was no running water.

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

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

women was overshadowed by her amorous successes with local men. Her glamour was enhanced because she briefly kept a cheetah.

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

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

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

A mule with white ears

At Stag Park in the 1930s and '40s
Sid Scriven, *PSM* 31, March 1983

I came to Petworth in 1931 to manage the home farm at Stag Park. When the Petworth job came up I went to be interviewed by Mr. Griffith, the Petworth agent but I think this was just a formality: everything had already been decided over dinner by my previous employer and Lord Leconfield. It was how things tended to be done in those days. Managing a home farm was different to being a tenant farmer. I didn't pay rent and I was paid directly by Lord Leconfield. As a home farm too, we had special responsibilities towards the great house: butter and milk would go to Petworth House as well as mutton and poultry if needed. We might also have to carry manure for the gardens or even do the occasional carting job.

By this time the self-sufficient days when the home farm supplied the great house with everything were almost a memory, but in 1931 the system still worked to a limited extent. Stag Park was a mixed farm. Lord Leconfield's Sussex herd was kept there but there were also feeding cattle, a lot of sheep and, of course, cereal crops. Work was still done almost exclusively by horses: there were twenty working horses when I first came and the two tractors were almost as new as I was. My time at Stag Park spanned the great change from horse to tractor; if there were only two tractors when I came there, there were only two horses left when I moved to Shimmings in the early 1950s, and they did little or none of the farm work. Stag Park soil was on the heavy side and while I always liked working with horses, some of the work was very heavy even for the strongest horse. It's often forgotten just how hard those horses had to work. The heaviest jobs were working on the binder or cutting hay: the horses had to pull very hard indeed to work the knife and the work was continuous. We had to change teams at luchtime and I've known the teams be changed again at tea-time. Other regular farm tasks like rolling weren't quite so hard for them and there were moments of respite. As the process of mechanisation advanced all the implements had to be adjusted, even the wagons themselves. We didn't get rid of the horses; they worked on with us, but we didn't go on breeding at Stag Park and gradually the supply of working horses dried up. The war gave a great impetus to mechanisation; bailers came in and combines. Labour was so short then and

everything had to be done so quickly, whereas horses were labour-intensive and time-consuming.

In the early 1930s Stag Park employed about twenty men: there were three or four carters, two or three cowmen, a shepherd and a number of 'day men', casual but not unskilled labour. These men knew about hedge trimming, rick-building, thatching, ditching – dying crafts now. There probably aren't too many people now who even know how to milk a cow. It was policy not to have a large turnover of staff; a constantly changing labour force was not good either for the farm or for morale, and if you upset one member of an old-established family you could easily lose them all.

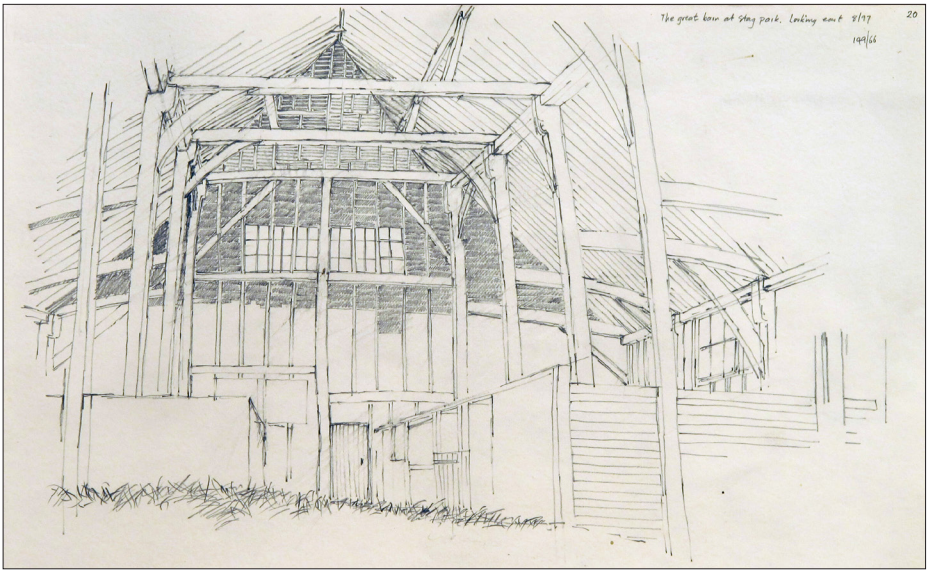
It was not everyone that wanted to live in so remote a part as Stag Park and those who had been bred out there were always the best. The cottages were spread out too – there were two at Stag Park and others at Copse Green and Chillinghurst. They were quite scattered but Stephen Payne, the carter, would walk from Copse Green to Stag Park – quite a distance – for lunch every day and never be a minute late. He was a first-class carter and knowing the country as he did was part of the reason why he was so good. I often worked with him at breaking in horses. This was to get them used to drawing a plough and to farm-working generally. We'd start by having him pull something like a big log to get him used to the harness and the jangling of the chains. He would have an experienced horse working with him to help give him the idea. We broke in a lot of horses at Stag Park but it needed two men and you really wanted someone like Stephen Payne who knew and understood them.

Fertilisers we didn't use too much in the early days. It wasn't that we were against their use in principle but simply that they weren't easy to get. There was nitrogen about then and we used basic slag for the grass but manure from the yard was our staple fertiliser. Spreading dung from the cart with a prong fork was a painfully slow job; mechanisation has taken so much of the back-breaking work out of farming.

I was accountable in theory to the agent but I didn't see him much. As long as a farm appeared to be competently run, a manager would be given a fairly free hand. Lord Leconfield I saw quite a lot, particularly of a Sunday. He liked to cast an eye over the stock and would usually come up on his own. In some ways he was a solitary man. When I saw him I knew that if he wanted me he would put up his stick – if he didn't I knew he would prefer to be alone. If he wanted me to come to Petworth House he'd send a note down with the milk cart.

His lordship often hunted in Stag Park and if the hounds were coming we'd make sure there was nothing in the vicinity of the woods that might get in the

BELOW
Jonathan Newdick, *The great barn at Stag Park looking west*. A page from a sketchbook. This is the remaining one of a pair of eighteenth-century barns on the farm, the other being destroyed by fire in 1986. See page 50.



way – that was part of my job as manager. I remember once we'd cultivated a field for drainage and carefully left a track round the field to enable the hunt to pass. A few days later the hounds met at Last Lodges on the London Road and came up through the field. His lordship's horse went off the track we had left and got on to the cultivated part of the field. He was forced to dismount and sank into the mire. 'Scriven, what the hell have you done with Cocks Field?' he roared. 'We've cultivated it to two feet, my lord,' I replied. 'Two feet be damned,' replied his lordship, 'I've gone down three already'.

His lordship always liked fat mutton and one day he came up to me and said, 'Scriven, can you get the sheep fatter, there's not enough fat on the mutton'. Well, fattening sheep is a somewhat slow process, so I had to buy in a few fat sheep unbeknown to his lordship. After a while he came up to me again and said, 'We can't have any more of that mutton, Scriven, I like it but no one else will touch it and I have to eat it all myself'. His lordship was fond of pigeon pie and we used to send up pigeons from the dovecote at Stag Park.

The true strain of pigeon at Stag Park was black and we tended to shoot the lighter birds – they were crossed with tame doves.

Pheasants were kept at Stag Park. I remember the keeper taking the young ones into the woods after they had been reared. This was done about four o'clock in the morning so that they were in the woods while it was still dark. This was the best time to release them into the wild. The shoots were not let out then and the shooting was almost invariably done by house parties. They would shoot once a year in Stag Park and would come to Stag Park House for lunch. We set aside a big room for them. Everything was brought down from Petworth House and the butler arranged it all.

For the Coronation celebrations in 1937 Lady Leconfield wanted me to construct a temporary farmyard outside Petworth House. The idea was that at twelve o'clock midnight, she would bring her house party out of the House, the floodlights would be gradually switched on and they would suddenly and unexpectedly find themselves in the midst of a Sussex farmyard. It wasn't an entirely new idea, I think her ladyship had heard of it having been done at some other great house. In order to show up in the floodlights the animals had, as far as was possible, to be white. It was a somewhat daunting prospect but we set to and put up pens outside the House. We had a mare and foal, a mule, two cows with calves, a quartet of sheep, some white chickens from Mrs. Wardrop and several ducks. As far as possible we chose white animals but one or two needed attention from us. For instance we had to paint the mule's long ears white so that the floodlights would catch them. He looked most peculiar with his illuminated ears but of course the paint was only on the outside fur and came off very quickly when it was all over. The chickens and ducks had to be tied to stakes, on a kind of lead, just like the old gamekeepers did with them when the birds were laying. We had to try to get each of the animals to make the appropriate farmyard noise in turn as the spotlight shone on them and with the occasional judicious prod it worked reasonably well. Her ladyship was delighted with our efforts. I remember hearing that the dinner table was arranged in the form of a ship. They had staff down from London to do it.

That indefinable feeling of mystery

Round the Hills
Peter Jerrome, *PSM* 188, September 2022

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

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

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

With the passing of the old field system, the town fields became pasture and the distinctive lynchets an integral but no longer functional aspect of the landscape. Certainly, by the time of Ralph Treswell's great estate map of 1610, the Ideshurst or Hideshurst taking in the old communal fields, is clearly marked as the demesne land it had always been but now as pasture. Treswell even ventures a few stylised cattle.

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

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

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

It is clear that, in the opinion of Dr Bounde, the terms of the agreement, such as it was, had been infringed. In 1655 Nicholas Morris,[5] looking back to the time of Dr Bounde, recalled the Rector's barn being burned: the rubble had, for a time obstructed the path before being eventually removed. Indeed,

BELOW
Both sides of a postcard franked at Petworth on October 28,1904 and printed by E. Arnold, Petworth. Captioned 'Gog view, Petworth' it shows the classic and unchanging Round the Hills view. The message on the reverse reads 'Very disappointed. There are no views of old cottages and quaint corners.'

John Parker, testifying at a second hearing in 1677 had heard tell how, over half a century before, in the time of Dr Bounde, William Satcher, carrying a cartload of charcoal, had halted at the barn to fetch the keys of the gate from the rectory: obviously crossed the bridge over the brook. Unbeknown,

however, to Satcher and his companion some of the charcoal was not properly cooled. Satcher's companion, one William Gale, abstracted some sticks and hid them in the rector's barn to collect later. They ignited some straw and set the barn on fire. Even today there is a small plateau a little way up the hill on the curving wain way and tradition has it that a barn stood in this position in the nineteenth century. This seems a reasonable suggestion for the site of Dr Bounde's original structure.

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

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

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

the crop. The Upton family sold Grays in 1926, the land reverting to Lord Leconfield, the Upton tenancy becoming void.

The steeply sloping 'Withy Copse' along which the footpath runs to the A283 is now a kind of unofficial nature reserve. Luxuriantly overgrown as the 'withy' is, access, even if permitted would be in practice out of the question. The 'Old Quarry' might be a more suitable name than the present Withy Copse which may or may not be an ancient usage. A century ago the Upton family farmed these man-made and precipitous slopes, clearly as a private fief rather than as a commercial enterprise. Even pleasure farming here would be a tour de force. The remains of a ruined byre can still be made out among the tangled vegetation at the foot of the slope. Private Upton family photographs confirm the existence of the little farmyard, something that in their absence would defy belief. The earlier history of the site appears unrecorded, although it would be reasonable to suppose that the workings of the quarry would have some connection with the Upton family, given their long dominance at the great house.

The possible obtrusion of 'informative' signposts will have the unfortunate effect of taking away that indefinable feeling of mystery and surprise that still casts a spell over this part of Petworth, like the very name 'Round the Hills', part of Petworth folk tradition and as beloved of Petworth people present as it is of Petworth exiles. That said, Round the Hills has for some a strange feeling of emptiness, tangible almost but perhaps reserved for those with a perspective of years. It is not the loss of the oak tree that once stood just across the brook and to the right of the bridge. The oak's demise if regrettable was a natural event, winter flood waters so undermining the roots that the tree fell into the waters it had watched over as long perhaps as anyone could remember. The silence is a belated realisation that the brook is no longer the haunt of children. No one tries to dam the brook at the bridge. No one plays there until the light fades. No one bowls large stones down the scarp trying to reach the brook, a practice that painful pastor Dr Bounde would certainly have eschewed. So many happy hours playing with mud, water, stones and tiny fish trying to hold back the ever-flowing brook . . . or in imagination half-expecting the mad coachman of legend to thunder down the slope from the Ideshurst, or play in the 'Alder Moor' with its wet and boggy ground, hiding among the holly thickets. An eerie spot as dark came on and it was time to trudge back home up the hill. **6**

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

She had come to inspect the Black Watch

Growing up at Coxland
Dorothy Wakeford, *PSM* 124, June 2006

I was born at Ripley in Surrey, the middle child of seven boys and two girls. Needless to say Mother had a busy time bringing us up but she made sure that we were never hungry or went to school dirty. Paper Court Farm where Father worked was near to the Wey Canal and we children only had to run across a field and by standing on the fence we could watch the brightly coloured barges go through the lock gates.

I have a vague recollection of moving from Ripley to Tillington but I was still quite young and wouldn't start school until after we had settled in at Coxland. Six of us children were born at Ripley and Stanley was the youngest but he wouldn't stay that way for long as Mother firmly believed in the old adage 'new house, new baby', and she proved it true on more than one occasion. I don't know why we moved to Tillington, it might well have been just a matter of a few extra pence in Father's wage packet, who knows? Anyway, we moved and Father carried on his job just the same as he had at Paper Court. He was a carter, a general man who could plough or bind or do just about any job on the farm that involved horses. I remember one particular team that he had at Coxland that were named Punch, Dolly and Violet. Strange how those names have stuck in my memory, for he must have had many other horses over the years. Ploughing matches were big events in those days between the wars and I know that Father regularly entered them and believe did quite well though the competition would have been strong even though horses were gradually being replaced with tractors.

I have so many lovely memories of growing up at Coxland but perhaps the best I recall was coming home from school at harvest time, Mum and I would make up sandwiches and bottles of cold tea and then we would take them out to the fields for my dad and we children would have our tea and play among the stooks of corn. Such idyllic days, sadly long gone now. The tenant at Coxland when we moved in was Mr. Bennett senior and it would have been him who sent Mr. Yeatman of Bailliewick to come and fetch our belongings at Ripley and move us into the rambling old farmhouse at Coxland. The house has long since been demolished but it must have been quite important in its day for I have a cutting of a magazine article written by Viscountess Wolsley

in which she mentions Coxland on a visit to nearby Sokenholes. Before we moved in the old house had been divided into two cottages and during our time there we had what seemed to be constantly changing neighbours. There were the Edwards, Worts and Linkhorns among others. Mr. and Mrs. Linkhorn lived there for quite a while. He was a rick thatcher for Lord Leconfield. We would call his wife Grannie Linkhorn and I would spend hours in her kitchen watching her make cakes and wine. Mr. and Mrs. Linkhorn had a daughter named Iris but she was older than me and was probably already working when we knew the family. Shortly after the Linkhorns left we also moved out and evacuees from London moved in for a while.

The old house was very dark with huge rooms. No electricity of course just oil lamps to provide light during the long winter months. No indoor toilet, just an earth closet up the top of the garden with two seats for sharing. Water was fetched in from the well at the back and we bathed in the old tin bath, all of us children using the same water. The house has gone but the well has survived and was recently rediscovered by Leconfield workmen. The water is still just as clear as it was all those years ago. Mr. Bennett senior had lived at the farmhouse but moved out before we arrived and went to live in Ivy Cottage up near Tillington crossroads. His son Jimmy was at college but would eventually take over from his father. There were, of course, other families living nearby, the Effamys were at Sokenholes along with a rather enigmatic Irishman named Leahy who lived around the back of the old house. My best friend was Anne Gibson; her father was the chauffeur at Petworth House and they lived at Park Terrace in Tillington. Anne and I grew up together and did the usual things, Brownies, Guides and church choir. We have been firm friends for 70 years now. There were three classes at Tillington School, infants, middle and older. Miss Stein taught the youngest children, she was very straight-laced and always wore her hair in a bun, she sat on a high stool and seemed very frightening to us small children. Miss Collins taught the middle children and lived in the teacher's cottage near to the Post Office, while Mr. Brown the headmaster took the older children. Later Miss Ward would arrive and take over from Mr. Brown.

I liked school but if one of my younger brothers was poorly I would usually

have to stay at home to look after him so that Mother could work in the field, hoeing or suchlike. I loved singing at school and probably got this from my mother for she was always singing one or other of the babies to sleep. To this day whenever I hear the hymn 'The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended' I am reminded of my mother singing it.

One day during the war we were told to come to school clean and tidy and then we were marched off up to Pitshill where we saw the Queen – not the present one but her mother. She had come to inspect the Black Watch who were stationed at Pitshill at the time. This was an exciting time for us children with lots going on around the village, I suppose the fact that there was a war going on hadn't really sunk in to us. Another time I remember was when we were collected in trucks and taken to Pheasant Copse where the soldiers gave us a Christmas party. We had a lovely time.

I only ever went to school at Tillington. This wasn't uncommon then and I left at the age of 14. Mr. Campion was vicar at Tillington while Mr. Chandler was organist. The village boys gave him the nickname 'Ghandi' but obviously not to his face. 'Ghandi' would get the boys to pump the organ during choir practice and if they got tired he would urge them on with a loud 'pump boy pump!' Mr. and Mrs. Bathe had the village shop and Post Office and Jack Townsend was the local postman. Later Nellie Peacock would take over the round and she continued for many years. Mr. Bathe eventually gave up the shop and retired to Station Road in Petworth. We moved out of Coxland into a new cottage that had been built on the big orchard that went with the house. In fact there were two cottages built, and most of the fruit trees were cut down with only an apple and a plum surviving. The apple tree is still there I believe. Dad kept chickens at the new cottage and tended a lovely vegetable garden. Sadly the garden is now rather neglected [2006] and the cottages are mostly inhabited by seasonal workers. The cottage may have been brand new when we moved in but it had few 'mod cons'. No electricity or flush loos. We only had cold water but we did have a bath at last, though the water had to be heated in the big copper and carried to the bathroom. Really there were quite a few small improvements and no doubt they would have meant a great deal to my mother. Eventually electricity would come to Coxland and we would at last move into the twentieth century though by this time I had grown up and was preparing to leave the village.

OPPOSITE The house at Coxland (above) which was similar to the early-seventeenth-century Coates Manor (below) once known as No. 24 Leconfield Estate, a few miles away and which remains today. The photograph of Coxland appeared in the *Sussex County Magazine* in 1933.

Relatively basic and notoriously unreliable

Mr. Pitfield's motorcar
Anonymous, *PSM* 111, March 2003

Mr. Pitfield was a big man both in physical stature as well as social standing. As the leading solicitor in the town, Unionist Party agent, social roundsman, and generally a person of some influence, Pitfield had to keep up appearances. Bellevue, which would later become the Petworth Police Station, was, at the beginning of the twentieth century, home to Mr. Pitfield, an impressive brick built house with a fine garden. It occupied a secluded site on what was then the southern fringe of Petworth, only the equally striking Red House, residence of Pitfield's affable neighbour Colonel Simpson, stood between Bellevue and the open country that sweeps away towards the South Downs.

I would have supposed that a gentleman in Mr. Pitfield's position would have ridden a horse, certainly Bellevue had stables, though it would seem that he relied heavily on Henry Streeter the publican and fly operator to provide him with a carriage and driver for journeys out of the town. As far as horse riding goes Mr. Pitfield had no real need for it.

We know that Pitfield had offices in Haslemere as well as in Petworth, and so some means of transport whether horse-drawn or mechanical, hired or owned, was essential to his business, and with Henry Streeter charging twelve shillings and sixpence for the round trip to Haslemere it would certainly make good financial sense for Mr. Pitfield to investigate any alternative means of transport.

Fortunately for us, Pitfield left a vast amount of material concerning every aspect of his life and among his papers is a unique collection detailing his purchase and subsequent ownership of a motorcar. Why Pitfield chose to take the rather extreme step into the world of motoring is unclear. Fragmentary and rather vague evidence suggests that he may have owned a motorbike in the years between 1912 and 1915. Perhaps it was this initial flirtation with the internal combustion engine that prompted his decision to buy a motorcar. Pitfield was no fool and was certainly not prone to making rash decisions, especially one that would involve a considerable amount of money. What we do know is that in the autumn of 1915 he became the proud owner of a G. W. K. motorcar, registration number RD 3432. By 1915 motorcars were no longer the revolutionary beasts of just a decade earlier and even as early as 1910 we find Florence Rapley[1] bemoaning the number of motors passing

Heath End on their way to the Goodwood races, and as lasting evidence of the rapidly growing popularity of motoring during that decade we have the garage business, constructed in 1911, that still occupies the site opposite Mrs. Rapley's cottage at Heath End and which until quite recently had borne her family name in its title.

Mr. Pitfield, it would appear, did not use Rapley's Garage. It seems likely that he rarely journeyed south from the town, after all the car was principally for business use and so would take him to Haslemere and north out of the district. Petroleum for his use could be bought from Austen & Co. which, situated conveniently next door to his offices in Market Square, sold fuel in gallon cans that were stored in a pit at the rear of the shop, no doubt a lad would be dispatched to fill the car without Mr. Pitfield ever having to leave the comfort of his office.

Any journeys to Chichester would probably be made by train, the thought of tackling Duncton or Bury Hill in what he would come to consider to be a rather unreliable vehicle was probably quite too much for Mr. Pitfield.

The period leading up to the Great War was an exciting time for motoring. Cars were still relatively basic and notoriously unreliable. Just to keep a vehicle roadworthy took a disproportionate amount of time, effort and money, and as such were really only playthings of the wealthy. Few gentlemen would have dreamt of actually getting involved in the nuts and bolts side of motoring; after all one employed a chauffeur for that kind of thing. It would not be until after 1918 that the huge technical improvements and the resulting mass production forced upon the motor industry by war would allow the tradesmen and minor professionals to become part of the motoring revolution.

Jack Holloway in *Petworth Society Magazine* 50 recounts a story of the years before the Great War when his father worked as a chauffeur at Rudgwick. The recollection goes some way to illustrating the problems of pre-war motoring which no doubt Mr. Pitfield himself experienced.

> He (Mr. Holloway) was driving his employer's Sunbeam back through Guildford when the rear light blew out. My father continued his journey unawares. A car was then effectively a carriage without a horse, the driver virtually sitting out in the open. He had hardly got back to Rudgwick and taken off his wet clothes when there was a knock at the door: a policeman had cycled after from Guildford to issue him with a summons for driving through the town without a backlight. How did the constable know where to go? Well, if anyone had a motor in those days, everyone

knew about it for miles around. He used to drive the car from Rudgwick to Scotland, stopping at one particular hotel which had a charging apparatus for batteries. He'd change tyres on the way up,the roads being so rough that they demolished a set of tyres going halfway.

Besides Rapleys and Austens, petrol suppliers were few and far between even as late as 1915. Ron Snelling of Kirdford Garage (*Petworth Society Magazine* 30) relates that when he got his first motorcar licence in 1910 there was only one other licence holder in the village, the chauffeur at Barkfold House. Clearly most of the trade, which Florence Rapley disliked so much, must have been passing through probably from Guildford or London.

Mr. Pitfield's G. W. K. had been built at the company works at Datchet in Buckinghamshire, where between the years 1911 and 1914 over 1,000 cars were produced. With the outbreak of World War I government contracts forced a cut-back in motor manufacture, though G. W. K. continued after the war in new premises at Maidenhead, finally ceasing production in 1926.

The particular G. W. K. that Mr. Pitfield appears to have owned was the standard model that had a twin cylinder water-cooled, sideways mounted engine behind the driver's seat. The vehicle was unusual in that it could boast, at least in theory, an infinitely variable gear; this was achieved by the contact of two flat wheels set at right angles to each other, the first disc or flywheel was attached to the end of the propeller shaft, while the second wheel or driven disc had a friction surface usually made of cork or compressed paper. The driven wheel was linked to the back axle via a shaft and could be slid sideways by a gear lever, across the face of the flywheel, a heavy spring ensuring that the two discs made contact. While the system was brilliant in its simplicity there was one drawback, which Pitfield was clearly not alone in experiencing, this was the risk of flat-spotting the friction material that covered the disc. Caused by the sudden engagement of the two discs with the engine running at a very high speed the result of the exceptional wear on the friction disc would often be a recurring beat as the flat spot momentarily lost contact with the surface of the flywheel. However, this flat-spotting, while a nuisance, could be easily rectified by the simple replacement of the friction surface.

Pitfield was certainly no a technical person and as proof there survives a considerable collection of letters and bills more or less chronicling the early mechanical history of the car. Bill Wareham recently recalled how as a trainee motor mechanic he would often be sent up to Angel Street to start the car for Mr. Pitfield. The young apprentice was offered the incentive of a shilling tip

if he could start it straight away; Bill recalls that the G.W. K. was a two-seater with a dickey seat for an additional passenger. The original receipt for the car has survived which shows that the vehicle cost a total of £187. 11s from G.W. K. agents The Sussex Cyclecar & Garage Co., of Grand Parade, Brighton. The cost, bearing in mind that this was a fairly basic vehicle even for those times, was not inconsiderable and would be the equivalent of almost £9,000 today.

Having taken delivery of the car in September 1915 Pitfield is almost immediately complaining about it. Clearly only the replies to Pitfield's complaints have survived but it is often possible to deduce the nature of the grievance from the quite detailed responses. The Brighton suppliers of the G.W. K. are the first to experience Pitfield's dissatisfaction with the car and on October 5 they agree to send up their Mr. Midgley to investigate a problem with the rear axle. Clearly Pitfield has also queried the guarantee period and the suppliers are quick to point out that while there is no written warranty there is an automatic six-month guarantee that takes effect on payment for the car. Perhaps this comment could have been an indication that Pitfield had not yet settled the invoice, who knows?

1 See Peter Jerrome and Jonathan Newdick, *So Sweet as the Phlox is – the Diary of Florence Rapley, 1909-1912*, Window Press, 1993.

BELOW A 1914 G. W. K. two-seater similar to the car that gave Mr. Pitfield so much trouble and looking perhaps rather dashing for a staid solicitor to be seen driving.

He came year after year, appearing mysteriously

Burton Park between the wars
Jeanne Courtauld, *PSM* 55, March 1989

My first impressions of Burton Park come from the spring of 1919 and are of being driven round the grounds. My father who had joined up in 1914 was now looking to buy a house in the area and not too far from his friends the Hornungs at West Grinstead. I remember my mother not being keen on the idea of buying such a large house. A large house it certainly was but my father had an architect's eye for change.

The Burton Estate had a long history, having been held for centuries by the staunchly Roman Catholic Goring family, the estate eventually passing by marriage to the Biddulphs. The original house had been up by the Catholic Church where the sports ground now is. The Biddulphs had moved up to the Chalet at Burton at about the turn of the century and Mrs. Biddulph was still there when I was a girl. I remember going up to visit her on several occasions.

When Sir Douglas Hall took over from the Biddulph family the Roman Catholic succession was finally broken. It had been a long succession: I was told that the dairy building was very old and had been used by the monks from Hardham Monastery when they came over to take services in the church. The tiny church is very old with some eleventh century features. An unlooked-for side-effect of the Roman Catholic succession was that for a long period nothing had been done to repair Burton church; the Goring and Biddulph families, as if refusing to acknowledge its transfer to Protestant use at the Reformation, having denied access to the church for repair and renewal.

An early ally at Burton Park was Frank Holland, my mother's first cousin, who was brought in to act as agent. Sutton End was constructed for him from local materials, stone from the old quarry at Barlavington, bricks made near Crouch, mortar from sand at the end of the garden and tiles from old barns on the Estate. The Burton Park Estate was a composite of three different farms based respectively at Barlavington, Crouch and Lodge Green – the last being the home farm. My father and Frank Holland were not at all afraid of innovation, not for its own sake but in a practical and pragmatic way. In the early pre-mechanised days the Estate farms were worked with

Percherons, notable in having not 'feather' i.e. not having, like shire horses, a hairy heel. We reckoned this kept them much cleaner while working. The idea of using Percherons instead of shires may have been suggested to my father by the Burrell family at Knepp. The Burrells were old acquaintances of his. Red poll hornless cattle were another new import, good both for meat and milk and more usually found in the eastern counties. My father won many prizes with the red poll cattle. Equally unusual, but a feature at Burton Park for generations rather than an innovation, were the black and white Jacobs or Andalusian sheep, more agile than ordinary sheep and needing a much greater degree of fencing. The Burton Park herd of deer was, like the Jacob's sheep, something we took over rather than brought in.

Encouraged by his friend Mr. Hornung, my father established a stud farm and racing stable at Barlavington. It was good ground for mares and foals and my father had a number of very successful horses, once coming second in the Derby and on another occasion second in the Oaks. His racing colours were primrose with light blue stripes. Eventually he was made a member of the Jockey Club, a considerable honour for him. The farm at Barlavington was run in conjunction with the stud farm and stables while the red poll milking herd was based at Crouch.

I should mention a curious crop at Burton Park: this was the so-called alder moor in Black Pond Copse – the pond is now dry. An old man used to buy the alder copse from the Estate, fell the alder and shape the wood for pattens which he told me were used by the mill girls in Lanchashire. He'd roughly shape the clogs and pile them up in a great stack. The cut alder wood was a vivid orange. I would often go and talk with him. I suppose he lodged somewhere while he was working at Burton Park. He came year after year, appearing mysteriously and disappearing just as mysteriously. Perhaps he came and went on the 'Petworth flier' – the London train!

What a house the size of Burton demanded above all was staff; without staff you simply could not run such a house. The house staff alone under Mr. Rayner the butler numbered ten or more at any one time – two footmen, an oddman (I was never very sure what the oddman was supposed to do)

BELOW 'He'd roughly shape the clogs and pile them up in a great stack.' This photograph by George Garland appeared in Peter Jerrome and Jonathan Newdick, *Not Submitted Elsewhere* (1980) where the caption read: 'John Ashley, a Lancashire clogmaker working the so called alder-moor at Burton Park in April 1922. As one of a gang of three he is roughly shaping the clogs with the peculiar tool pictured. He worked with a kind of wooden horse and the hook of the cutting tool would go into the eye of the horse and swivel as he shaped the clogs. The 'clog boys' are also remembered at Petworth: some worked at Chillinghurst at Stag Park and some by the Virgin Mary Spring'. If the 'clog boys' existed at the very edge of oral memory in 1980, they are now beyond any living tradition.

LEFT 'The tiny church is very old with some eleventh century features'. On the right hand splay of the north window of the church at Burton Park is one of its few remaining wall paintings and which appears to show a red-haired woman falling head-first on to some hellish spikes. But according to a leaflet in the church it is '. . . a remarkable early sixteenth-century wall painting of a young round-faced, red-haired female figure tied head downwards on a St. Andrew's cross . . . The figure has so far defied identification . . .'

BELOW A painting of the Stuart Royal Arms dated 1636 on the south wall of the church which carries the strong advice to 'Obey them that have the rule over you' (Hebrews 13:17).

and a boy. There were also a cook and three young kitchen-maids, the latter often very miserable and homesick in such a faraway place. Mr. Rayner was imperturbable, a butler of the old school. I remember one of my father's changes was to take a stove out of the hall and replace it with a log fire. One evening he was not long home when Rayner appeared and announced in his usual voice, 'Excuse me, sir, the house is on fire'. It was indeed. The log fire had caught one of the beams and flames were licking up behind the sideboard. We soon set to and put the fire out. On another occasion a housemaid had left cinders in a wooden box and the box ignited.

The house was certainly large but perhaps not quite as huge as it seems. There was a big central hall which took up a lot of room. There were a dozen bedrooms which were in fairly frequent use as guest rooms. My father liked having people to stay: there were shooting parties and, on the Thursday of Goodwood week, a dance. Other people used to bring their own house parties and I remember one particular lady from Chichester appearing with a coachload.

A distinguished visitor was Queen Mary, at Burton House for a few hours, and I remember walking nervously across the lawn with her while in her rather Germanic tones she asked me things like, 'Had I come out?' Burton Park had formerly been part of the territory of the Leconfield meet but was now part of the Cowdray. The Cowdray would meet at Burton Park from time to time, I don't recall it as a particularly frequent occurrence; the number of Garland pictures of this event probably suggest the Cowdray came more often than it did. Burton Park provided a very photogenic backdrop which George Garland used whenever he could. Other staff? The enormous gardens needed ten or more gardeners. There were two chauffeurs and Mr. Pullen who drove the farm lorry and van when they were needed.

The first general election after the Great War had seen a Liberal, Major Rudkin, returned as M.P. for the traditionally Conservative Chichester constituency. The Conservative cause had not been helped by the incumbent being caught out by news of the impending election and finding it impossible to get back from South Africa in time. For the next election my father was adopted as candidate with a mandate from the local party to recapture the seat at the next election. He did, although at this time I was away at boarding school and have little recollection of it all.

My memories of elections come mainly from the 1930s. In those pre-television days a candidate's personality was more important than it is now – at least in my judgement. It was essential for a candidate that he visit every

village, every hamlet even, in person. People wouldn't necessarily come to his meeting, being quite content simply to give him a cheery wave from their gardens, but if he didn't come at all they would not be pleased. At election time this could mean as many as eight meetings a day, afternoon and evening. The candidate had to be seen to have remembered – no matter how obscure the outpost. At that time the Chichester constituency was, I believe, the second largest in the country, extending from the Surrey border to the sea and from the Hampshire border to the Arun.

Election meetings had a greater vigour then that television seems to have sapped, there was even some heckling although nothing organised, more like an old lady at Littlehampton muttering about, '£10,000 a year talking to ten shillings a week!' The declaration of the poll would be of course at the Chichester Assembly Rooms, my father coming out on to the balcony. Having won once back in the mid-1920s he was returned with increased majorities each election until he died. The Chichester declaration would be followed by a triumphal appearance at constituency centres like Littlehampton, Bognor, Arundel and Midhurst, finishing up in a packed Petworth Market Square. After a long day he'd return to Duncton and the Estate workers would haul the car across the park with ropes.

My father was a staunch ally of Churchill even in the wilderness period in the 1930s, often taking the chair as Churchill stumped the country arguing the cause of re-armament and non-appeasement. Long after my father died I remember being introduced to Churchill and him instantly saying, 'Your father and I fought the India Bill together.' The coming of the war brought life as it had been at Burton Park to an end. As the war went on the house was used as a base for Marine Commando operations. It wasn't really requisitioned: the question never really came up. It simply wasn't practical to keep a house of that kind going without staff and with the war the staff of course disappeared.

We soon had twenty-seven expectant mothers billeted with us from south London in accordance with the policy of getting everyone out of London before it was bombed. The trouble was that the ladies couldn't take to life in the country and were anxious above all to get back to London! I had to take them down to the maternity hospital at Lavington and they seemed to prefer me taking them to anyone else. When grandmother, who was ninety-six by this time, came down from Wimbledon we moved into the gardener's cottage.

We would never move back into the big house.

What became of poor Harriet Moore?

A sorry tale of Petworth Workhouse
Miles Costello, *PSM* 97, September 1999

Even the workhouse has charms, it is the only pretty workhouse I remember: with the exception perhaps of Battle, but that is, however, self conscious.
E. V. Lucas describing Petworth Workhouse in 1904.

December 24, 1859. *Apprehended Harriet Moore at Petworth Workhouse on suspicion of poisoning her illegitimate child.*
This short entry in the Sussex Constabulary Occurrence Book by Superintendent Kemmish at Petworth began an investigation that would, over the ensuing months, grip the imagination of a large proportion of Petworth residents, and would lead to heated, and often anonymous exchanges in the columns of the *West Sussex Gazette.*

On December 26, 1859 an inquest into the death of the infant Alfred James Moore was opened at the Petworth Workhouse in North Street, and as is usual in cases of suspicious death the inquest was promptly adjourned to await the results of the police investigation. Augustus Shout, the chief medical officer at Petworth, carried out a post-mortem on the infant on the day of the adjourned inquest and removed the internal organs. The following day Superintendent Kemmish was dispatched with the organs to the London laboratory of Dr. Alfred Swaine Taylor, a professor at Guy's Hospital and an expert witness in poisoning trials.

On December 28 Kemmish returned again to London with a portion of the stomach of the deceased infant. The inquest was re-opened on December 29 and once again further adjourned to January 5 when the coroner Dr Blagden began questioning witnesses. Dr Augustus Shout gave his opinion that an irritant, possibly white precipitate, had been administered to the child. The jury went on to hear the evidence of a trusted inmate named John Remnant who was employed as a porter and messenger at the workhouse. Remnant claimed that he had been asked by Moore to obtain a 'cipity' powder in order 'to do her head with it'. Just what exactly the accused meant by 'to do her head with it' remains unclear, though one could imagine that it was perhaps a deterrent to lice or some other infestation common in the workhouse. Evidently Remnant

obtained through another sperson a small quantity of precipitate from a lad named Whitcomb who was apprenticed to Mr. Morgan the chemist (Francis Gaudrion Morgan had a shop in Church Street which stood along with other properties in what is now part of the churchyard). It was not made clear whether the substance had been obtained by legitimate means, but Remnant was paid one penny by Moore for his trouble. A nurse by the name of Mary Holden was called to give evidence. She claimed that the child had cried out from the pain of large swellings on its stomach, these swellings were again noticed by the witness when she measured the child for its coffin, the nurse also claimed that she had previously given the child gin and water in an attempt to alleviate its suffering.

Another witness Eliza Eames claimed that Moore had confessed to having attempted to murder the child at the Guildford Union Workhouse, and since being at Petworth Eames had prevented the accused from smothering the child with a shawl and bed-clothes. Following further evidence from witnesses the coroner and the jury removed to the workhouse to take the evidence of John Smith who was sick in bed and who agreed that he was the person who had obtained the fatal powder from Whitcomb.

The inquest was adjourned until the following Monday January 9. The resumed sitting was held in the Market Room at the Swan Inn, as it was expected that there would be a large attendance, it being known that Professor Taylor would be giving evidence. William Morris, a local surgeon, gave evidence at the resumed sitting that he had assisted Mr. Shout at the post-mortem examination carried out on December 26, and he confirmed that in his opinion the child could not have died from natural causes. Professor Taylor was called to the stand where he gave an expert and dispassionate description of the condition and contents of the infant's internal organs, and he confirmed that he had discovered a quantity of white precipitate containing traces of mercury in the stomach and other organs of the deceased. Following the summing up the West Sussex Coroner Mr. Blagden advised the jury of its duties, stressing that if they had the slightest doubts concerning the evidence which they had heard, then they must return a verdict which reflected those doubts.

The jury then retired to an ante-room to consider their verdict. After an

alarmingly short retirement of just a quarter of an hour the jury returned to the hushed court-room where they announced that a verdict of wilful murder had been reached. It seems unlikely that the coroner would have had the authority to commit the accused for trial and so it may be supposed that following the inquest Harriet would have appeared before a magistrate who would have carried out the formalities of committal to the Assizes. No formal record exists concerning the coroner's opinions of the case, but it may be supposed that Blagden was not entirely satisfied with the regime which existed at the workhouse, for shortly after the committal of Harriet Moore to the assizes, Blagden sent a letter to the Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Petworth Union with which he enclosed a copy of the depositions taken before him at the inquest. In the letter Blagden suggests that an enquiry into the conduct of the workhouse officers and the mode of keeping their books should be initiated as soon as possible. On January 17 the Board of Guardians held their fortnightly meeting at Wisborough Green workhouse where, on hearing the contents of the letter from Mr. Blagden they agreed to form a committee of enquiry to investigate the coroner's concerns.

Only four days later on January 21 the investigating committee met at Petworth Workhouse where they announced that the investigation was complete and that 'The committee having enquired minutely into the subject to which their attention has been called by the letter of Mr. Blagden mentioned in the minutes of the last meeting of the board are unanimously of the opinion that no imputation of negligence is justly attached to Mr. Shout (the medical officer), who brought the suspicious circumstances of the case under the notice of the coroner.' The report goes on to suggest that the only failing may have been on the parts of the governor and matron who perhaps could have informed the medical officer of the dangerous illness of the child earlier. The verdict of the coroner's court instigated a heated debate on the morality and benefits of capital punishment.

The columns of the *West Sussex Gazette* offered a platform to the opposing sides who were adamant that theirs was the just cause. For those against capital punishment Mr. Arthur Daintrey of Petworth was the sole contributor, he reasoned that if the purpose of any punishment is to reform a prisoner, how could this be possible during the brief period between the sentencing and

BELOW Petworth Workhouse in 1930. It had hardly changed since E. V. Lucas praised it in 1904. When it closed, the building became a girls private school and the fine building was demolished in the early 1960s to make way for a garage.

subsequent execution of the offender? He goes on to argue that the threat of capital punishment can hardly be a deterrent to the committed criminal as the case has been proven that most of those convicted of capital crimes would rather choose the hangman's noose than face the prospect of perpetual imprisonment. This initial letter by Daintrey continues with a lengthy diatribe on the sanctity of life and the denouncement of a system that promotes collective and judicial murder while bringing to bear the full terror of that same system onto individuals who act outside of the law. Daintrey seems a surprising exponent of such a liberal view towards capital punishment; we might suppose that being a member of a long-established, influential and highly respected Petworth family and indeed by profession an attorney and solicitor he would have been more supportive of the traditional view of an eye for an eye. However, he was not alone in supporting this apparent liberalism which was more likely influenced

BELOW The infirmary Petworth Workhouse in 1930. The man nearest the camera died the night after this photograph by George Garland was taken and his relatives had it enlarged as it was the only picture of him that they had.

by religious ideals rather than any sense of a social conscience.

A decade or two earlier we find in Petworth another unlikely opponent of the death penalty in the person of John Mance, governor of the Petworth House of Correction. Mance was certainly no shrinking violet, and could not be described in any way as a liberal reformer – he proudly boasted a reputation for presiding over a strict and austere regime at the prison, where solitary confinement, subsistence rations, and hard labour were considered essential to concentrate the mind, and reform the character and soul of the convicted offender. Mance firmly believed in the need for all sinners to repent, and like Daintrey he considered that opportunity to be lost if the prisoner were to pay the ultimate price for his crime. In response to a further letter from Daintrey an anonymous writer who simply signs himself 'Brevis' aimed to strike a mortal blow by directing his attack at the integrity of Daintrey himself :

> Sir, I do not intend to enter into the controversy respecting the right or wrong of capital punishment. I merely wish to point out the inconsistency of Mr. Daintrey's writing against the punishment of the crime of murder, at a time when he is engaged by the Board of Guardians (for whom he is clerk) to get up the prosecution of Harriet Moore for child murder. Petworth, 1860 Brevis.

Daintrey was forced to reply to this personal attack, and in his defence he claims that at the time of his initial letter he had not been instructed to pursue the prosecution of Harriet Moore. Fortunately we can corroborate Daintrey's assertion of innocence by reference to the minute book of the Board of Guardians of the Petworth Union, where it is evident that the prosecution of Harriet Moore was no foregone conclusion, an appeal by the guardians to the Secretary of State to institute a government prosecution proved fruitless, and even a further appeal to Henry Wyndham (later 2nd Baron Leconfield), their Member of Parliament, brought no success so that finally the board decided to 'conduct the prosecution at the expense of the Union'. It remains unclear why the state chose not to proceed with the prosecution of Harriet Moore, the evidence submitted at the inquest would seem at a distance of a hundred and forty years to be quite conclusive; one may only suppose that either the Board of Guardians failed to submit a valid case for prosecution, or that the government considered the guardians to be capable, both in terms of financial resources and expertise, of conducting their own prosecution.

The flurry of letters slowly abated and finally ceased with the publication of yet another anonymous epistle from a correspondent who signed himself 'An Eye-Witness'. He directed his displeasure at the *West Sussex Gazette* reporter who, during the inquest noted the apparent lack of emotion shown by Moore following the verdict of wilful murder. 'Eye-Witness' then turns his attention to the reliability of certain witnesses at the inquest:

> It was very apparent the female witnesses, one excepted, were her enemies, and the thought of a journey to Lewis [*sic*], with several holidays from

the Union, caused a satisfied expression to rest on their countenances.

The *West Sussex Gazette*, like all newspapers, reserved the right to the final word on the matter, and following a stirring defence of the female witnesses, their correspondent adds the intriguing revelation that Harriet Moore is 'the illegitimate daughter of a tradesman of this town, but her conduct being such that he would have nothing to do with defending her'. At last we have a tiny glimpse into the background of Harriet Moore. We are able to hazard a guess at who her father was, a licensee of a certain Petworth public house would certainly fit the bill, although after a century and a half of anonymity would it be fair to speculate on his identity now? I think not. No sooner is the door slightly opened than it is once again shut and the correspondent seems to lose interest in the case. The final report comes from the Sussex Spring Assizes held at Lewes on Tuesday March 20, 1860, where following a short trial, lasting only two and a half hours, Harriet is found guilty of the wilful murder of Alfred James Moore and sentenced to death. On April 19, 1860 the capital sentence is commuted to penal servitude for life, and in July of that same year Harriet is removed from Petworth House of Correction to continue her sentence at the government prison at Millbank, London. In looking back over the previous four months it is apparent that little attempt if any was made to understand why Harriet Moore should murder her child.We understand from newspaper reports that she had at some time worked as a prostitute, it was also apparent that recently she had spent a considerable time in workhouses, it is known that her father lived at Petworth, but that Harriet was probably brought up elsewhere as she does not appear in the 1851 census as residing in the town.

There are several unanswered questions which would help fill in the missing pieces of this sorry tale, no mention is made in any of the documents of relatives other than her father, who clearly wished to remain anonymous. What became of poor Harriet Moore, did she die in prison? Perhaps we shall never know, though I cannot help but suspect that this is not the last we shall hear of her. Perhaps the most unsettling aspect of the whole tragedy must be that only a century and a half ago we had a judicial system in place which allowed a young girl of only 20 years of age to stand totally undefended in a court-room on a charge which carried the death sentence.

SOURCES Minutes of the Board of Guardians of the Petworth Union. Sussex Constabulary Occurrence Book for the Petworth Division. The *West Sussex Gazette*.
For further references to John Mance see *PSM* 90.

New bottom to saucepan

The work of a Petworth tinsmith
Miles Costello, *PSM* 187, June 2022

It is clear that we now live in a disposable society where household implements and appliances have manufacturers' built-in expiry dates. However, it was not long ago that most small towns or even villages had a blacksmith, a cobbler to repair shoes, a haberdashery for linen repairs and in quite recent times a television repair man. Those days are gone, although we are fortunate in Petworth to retain a cobbler, and it is generally assumed that it is easier and cheaper to replace rather than repair. We have, however, a bill from 1840 which illustrates the once common practice of repairing items. The customer is Harriet Palmer of Avenings, the house which still stands at the junction of Golden Square and New Street. The bill is for work carried out by William Stoper Wright, a tinsmith who carried on his trade from a workshop which stood hard up against the Star public house in Market Square. Besides the repairs it is very likely that the new items included in the bill were also made by Wright.

3 new saucepans 12s. 4*d*
Tinning large copper pan 2s
1 large round saucepan 1s. 10*d*
1 large oval saucepan 1s. 8*d*
2 small round saucepans 2s. 3*d*
1 stew pan 1s. 4*d*
Tinning 5 lids 2s
New bottom to saucepan 1s
Mending coffee pot *&* fish plate 6*d*
Mending teapot 2*d*
A new tin mould 4s. 8*d*
Total £1. 9s. 9*d*

FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

PSM 187, June 2022

A Caution. *Reading Mercury*, February 15, 1790.
Wheras Susannah Eade, wife of Henry Eade, late wheelwright at Upperton in the parish of Tillington, in the county of Sussex, has eloped from her husband, and threatened to run him in debt to ruin him; she having a sufficiency allowed to maintain her; I therefore forbid all persons to give her credit on my account, as I will not pay any debts she may contract in my name or otherwise. Witness my hand the 8th day of February, 1790. HENRY EADE.

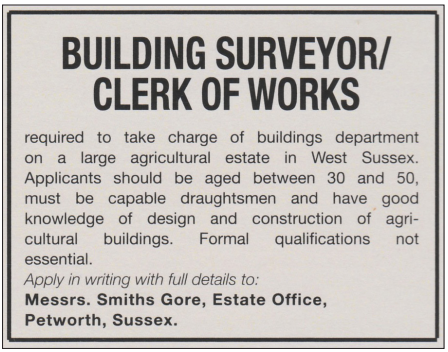
With the use of a Morris Marina car

Roger Wootton, Leconfield Estate Clerk of the Works in conversation with Caroline Egremont and the editor. *PSM*s 178, December 2019; 179, March 2020 and 180, June 2020.

My family and I moved to the south coast from Cambridge in 1970 where I had, on leaving school, obtained one year's provisional employment plus a five-year apprenticeship with Simplex Agricultural Engineering, part of the General Electrical Company, as an engineering draftsman, where the policy was (as the general manager stated) 'If you could draw it, you should be able to make it'. To do this I had to spend time on the workshop floor, the machine shop, sheet metal, welding, research and development, and time and motion departments. I remained with Simplex until I joined the Sussex-based firm of Langmeads at Selsey in 1970 whose company manufactured farm buildings. At the time Mr. Brian Langmead had one of the largest dairy farms, milking 648 cows three times a day.

I joined Langmeads as a Contract Manager to the Farm Buildings department responsible for the manufacture and delivery of their farm buildings which were erected throughout the UK. The firm expanded by taking over another woodworking company near High Wycombe which manufactured timber buildings including bungalows and this business was then transferred to new workshops in Monmouth and Llanwern in South Wales. I was responsible for overseeing this operation, including the labour force, but none of the staff wished to relocate. At the time I was travelling between Selsey (home) to High Wycombe, High Wycombe to South Wales, twice a week together with other destinations in north Wales and Lancashire. At one time my family moved to High Wycombe to be with me as my employer believed that families should be together. All this travelling with family commitments such as schooling resulted in my looking for alternative employment. On seeing an advertisement in the *Farmers Weekly* for a Buildings Surveyor/ Clerk of Works on the Leconfield Estate at Petworth, I applied, and was invited initially to see Sir Charles Wolseley, the Leconfield Estates Land Agent at Petworth. This was followed by a letter inviting me to a formal interview at Smiths Gore's London office ten days later, where I met Lord Egremont, Sir Charles and Mr. Fleming Smith who was then senior partner at Smiths Gore.

In January 1976 I was offered the position to succeed Mr. Charles Wales, Clerk of the Works since 1950, who was retiring that year. I joined



BUILDING SURVEYOR/ CLERK OF WORKS

required to take charge of buildings department on a large agricultural estate in West Sussex. Applicants should be aged between 30 and 50, must be capable draughtsmen and have good knowledge of design and construction of agricultural buildings. Formal qualifications not essential.

Apply in writing with full details to:

Messrs. Smiths Gore, Estate Office, Petworth, Sussex.

the Leconfield Estates on February 2, 1976 on a salary of £3,500 a year with the use of a Morris Marina car. We had the offer of Fred Streeter's old house in Petworth House gardens but it needed considerable restoration work. Mrs Streeter had died some years previously and Fred Streeter lived latterly in a sitting room with a kitchen and downstairs bedroom. He didn't venture upstairs.

I travelled up daily from Selsey, agreeing a lunch arrangement with the Golden Waggon (now Oakapple) at 68 pence for a three-course lunch. We ate upstairs and it was a first-rate meal. Dining was arranged in shifts – the Leconfield Estates staff at the first sitting, followed by the staff at the town's two banks and other office workers. We moved into Gardener's Cottage on completion of its restoration in June 1976. Once I was established in Petworth, my day would start at 7.30 to see the men as they reported for work. I would give instructions for any particular project, then go home for breakfast before returning to travel around the various projects in hand. Much of the work was put out to local contractors.

My position on taking over from Mr. Wales covered his ongoing maintenance programme and other projects: Moor farm for instance, new cattle building projects and also the Estate's almshouses, one of which was Somerset Hospital, the only Petworth almshouse functioning at the time, Thompson's and Egremont being uninhabitable. Somerset Hospital was full with eighteen widows or spinsters. Single rooms with three tenants sharing a single bath and W.C. Adequate pre-war perhaps but hardly appropriate at the time. I would soon make the acquaintance of Mrs. Smith, the characterful warden, and begin the process of modernization which included the early improvement of a lift.

When he started on the Estate in 1950 Mr. Wales (who had come from

Stratfield Saye, the Duke of Wellington's Estate) had inherited more than 1,000 cottages, spread far and wide over an estate which was then much bigger before its enforced reduction due to the onslaught of two tranches of death duty taxes. Most of the cottages were without running water, had no internal baths or toilets and were without electricity – just a kitchen 'Petworth' range for cooking and hot water. Mr. Wales upgraded these properties to provide internal running water, electricity, bath and toilet with hot water facilities. After the 3rd Lord Leconfield had died in 1952 some of the cottages were either pulled down as being uneconomical to upgrade or were sold. The Estate now has approximately 300 cottages, all of which have modern-day facilities as a result of a continuous refurbishment programme including central heating, new kitchens and bathrooms and double glazing where appropriate.

During Mr. Wales' time the initial programme for Petworth House concerned a major project of interior refurbishment, following the death of Lord Leconfield and before being re-occupied by Lord and Lady Egremont. This was undertaken by the building department staff under Mr. Wales and the house was re-occupied in 1954. I inherited some excellent senior craftsmen under Ron Parsons, the long-serving foreman: three skilled joiners, three carpenters engaged on outside work such as fencing, and four plumbers, also bricklayers and decorators.

We were nearing the end of the night watchman period at the House, the evening assembly in the Butler's Pantry for the night-shift. Patrolling was by torchlight. If the watchman dozed off and failed to report, the alarm would activate. Patrolling could be an eerie business. Up the stairs to the Old Library the torch would linger briefly on a picture of the two princes in the Tower and their assassins. Macabre, I always felt. The Great North Room was said to have a chilling feeling, something I had not noticed myself but Reg Wakeford, a marvellous locksmith and worker in metal had a particular dislike of the room together with other night watchmen.

One of my first projects in 1976, was Carlyn Wyndham's wedding on the second of May which was to be held in the chapel at Petworth House. Carlyn, of course, is Lord Egremont's sister. It was an event for which there was no

BELOW 'Just a kitchen "Petworth" range for cooking and hot water'. A survivor in the Petworth Cottage Museum. This design of kitchen range was supplied to other estates, the main difference being the name of each estate which was part of the casting of the door.

obvious precedent and it would be necessary to provide seating in the gallery of the chapel. If servants had once attended service in the chapel they would certainly have stood. To overcome this, we designed and erected staging in the chapel gallery to take stepped seating. Having been told of a cinema that was closing down in Coventry and looking to dispose of a numberof 'lift up' cast iron-framed plush seats at a token price of £1 each, I sent a lorry up to collect them and erected them on the staging to take the stepped seating and it all worked well. After the wedding they were put in store but the plush became damp and moth got into the fabric. They had to be discarded but they had served their purpose. The chapel in Petworth House has no music; to overcome this, the Dowager Lady Egremont and I visited Chichester

Cathedral to see what organs were available and finally a suitable one was hired and was placed in the small corridor at a high level alongside the chapel. As a temporary measure we took out a small window (plain glass, not stained) so that the organist, Mr. Gervase Jackson Stops, a family friend, could look down into the chapel, but even so, we found in rehearsals that he was playing too quickly so that he was almost through when the principals had hardly reached the chapel. So we deputed ushers to relay signals to the organist of the exact position of the principals as they walked to the chapel.

We catered for 131 guests of whom 60 would be in the gallery. Fireworks on the far side of the lake would light up the evening, together with a bonfire and a fountain. The fountain was placed in the lake, near the statue of the dog, which provided a 'fleur de lis' display lit with coloured lights, this being done by placing coloured film over lamp-lights, which could all be seen from Petworth House. The fireworks were provided by a chemistry master at Kimbolton School in Huntingdon. He didn't attend the site himself but gave very detailed instructions on how to set up the display. Fireworks are classified as explosives and are dangerous and on collecting the consignment we were advised that we could not travel through the Blackwall Tunnel, such material not being allowed, and a circuitous route had to be taken. Incidentally, at the event someone accidentally tripped over one of the wires and much of the display unintentionally went off at one go.

(Lady Egremont's words) 'My husband Max was working in the U.S. during the time that the wedding preparations for his sister were taking place. He remembers his mother ringing him up in Washington with the words 'I've found this marvellous new man.' Max's first thought was that his mother might have a possible husband in mind but it was not the case: she had found the new Clerk of the Works – Mr. Wootton'.

Another event in my first year was the Sussex Cattle Society Show on June 15, 1976. It was the famous hot summer – so hot that I remember the bulls being hosed down. There was a definite South African/ Rhodesian slant and it was a very ambitious and successful event. The marquees and refreshments were provided by Sussex Cattle Society. (See page 48).

By the mid 1970s with rising agricultural rents, tenant farmers understandably wanted corresponding farm improvements which were encouraged by government grants available at that time. Major investment was needed, new buildings for overwintering cattle, silage facilities, grain stores, beef units, and the rest. Only a few tenants insisted on sticking with what they had always had but they were very much in the minority. A programme of upgrading

farms was instigated: Battlehurst, Butcherland, Buckfold, Fisherstreet, Hallgate, Crawfold, Marshalls, Keyfox, Hortons, Kilsham, Limbo, Mitchell Park, Moor Farm, Osiers, Parkhurst, River Park, Strood, Soanes Farm, South Dean, almost all needed some attention. The Estate would itself be the main contractor but we would use independent local contractors extensively.

In 1976 Petworth House was being run with Lord Egremont's secretary Miss Gordon Williams acting as co-ordinator, supervising the opening of the house and passing the takings to Mr. Brownsey, the Leconfield Estate accountant and thence to the National Trust. In that year, we discussed with the National Trust Architect Mr. Bevil Greenfield the condition of Petworth House roof, which was leaking in several areas, particularly over the Turner Library. This I recollect had 46 water buckets strategically placed to catch the water, and all the bookcases were shrouded in protective polythene.

Petworth House roof was an assortment of different areas, the outer visible roof slopes were clad in green Cumberland slates while the inner unseen slopes were clad in Welsh slates or tiles which discharged water to valley gutters which in turn led to downpipes or parapet gutters. A programme of works was instigated starting with phase one over the Turner Library and work commenced in 1976 providing a new roof in the form of a crown flat over a complete area in aluminum with all the surface water discharging to the perimeter parapet gutters and downpipes solving the leak problem to the Turner Library and the chapel underneath it. Over the ensuing 15 years or so a programme to undertake the complete Petworth House roof repairs in phases was developed.

WE HAD TO PASS THROUGH THREE SECURITY DOORS

In the late 1970s the Leconfield Estate farm manager, John Giffin was considering the installation of a new beef cattle unit on the Estate and possibly to utilise the empty dairy unit buildings at Soanes Farm. The original Soanes Farm buildings were designed and built in 1962 as a 60-cow milking unit complete with milking parlour, dairy, covered straw yards and external silage clamp for the cows' self-feeding. The buildings were also used as a demonstration unit for the then Three Counties Agricultural Show which was held at Soanes Farm that year, prior to the show going to its permanent location at Ardingly and becoming known as the South of England Show.

The buildings had remained in use until 1970 when a dairy herd was diagnosed with brucellosis and the buildings were mothballed. The proposal being considered was to convert the existing covered straw yards to concrete

slatted floor panels over underfloor tanks. The animal waste would pass through the slats into the underfloor storage tanks, the manure then being pumped out when the tanks were full and spread over adjacent land.

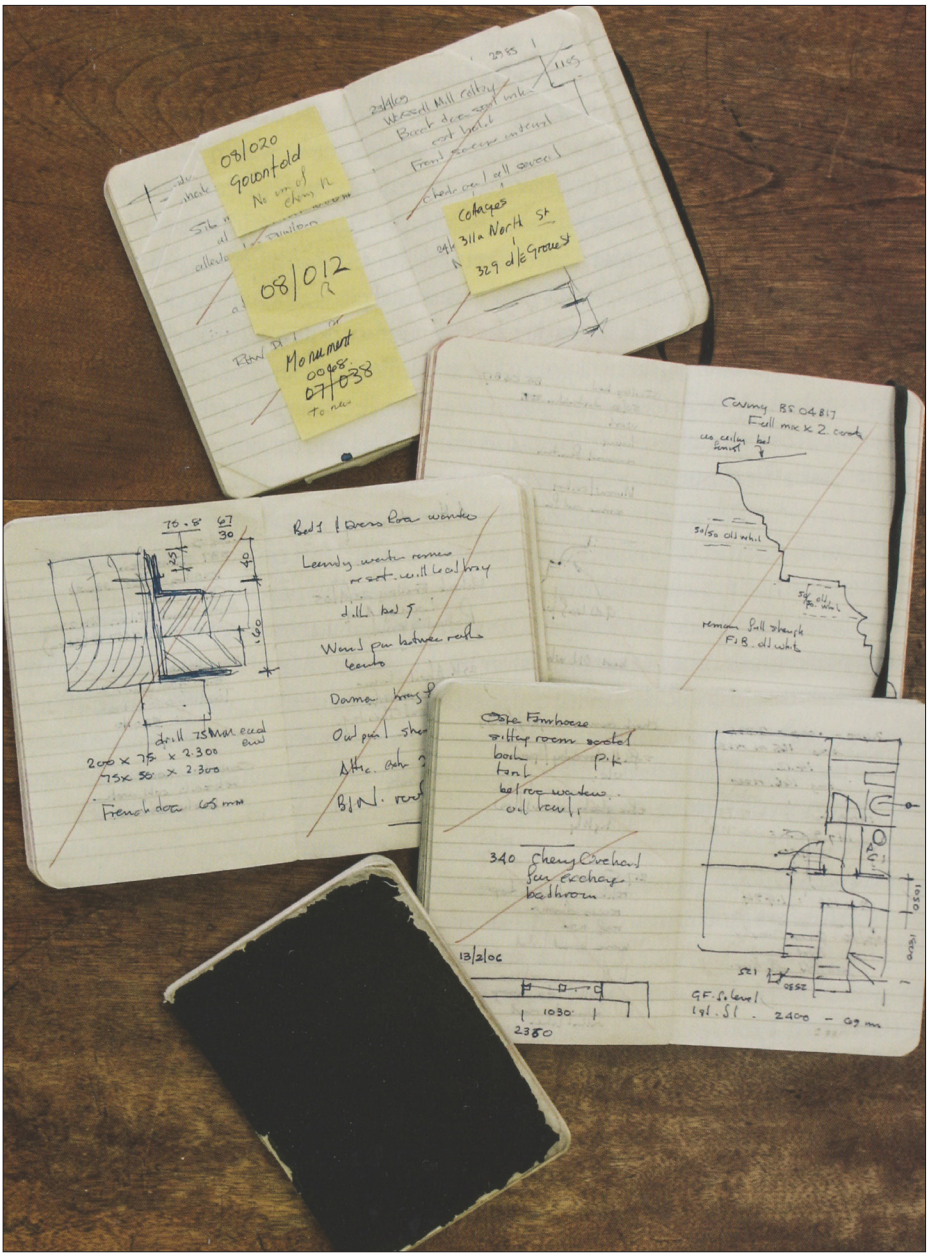
To assess the practicality of using the Soanes Farm buildings, in 1978 John Giffin and I made a visit to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to view Mass-stock units. We flew from Gatwick to Belfast where we were shown a Mass-stock system for housing beef cattle. This gave us the confidence to consider converting the Soanes Farm buildings into such a unit. I vividly remember this visit as it was at the time of the IRA troubles and hence security was at its highest level. We travelled by car from Northern Ireland to the Republic, crossing the border at Newry. It involved us driving over a number of sleeping policemen, very high ramps placed every several metres across the road. We were informed this was to prevent vehicles attempting to race through the crossing and possibly throwing explosives at the checkpoint. In addition to the sleeping policeman, on both sides of the crossing, they had metal netting approximately six metres high and at each end armoured cars were positioned facing into the crossing with their headlights on full beam. At our hotel we had to pass through three security doors.

On our return from the hotel by car to Belfast airport for an early morning flight to Gatwick we were stopped at an Army checkpoint by a British soldier, who enquired where we were going; on replying that we were returning home to England he asked if he could come with us. As we boarded the aircraft, I saw that the wings were being sprayed and I asked the flight attendant what was going on. I was told that they were de-icing them.

We returned to Sussex after an informed trip knowing that the Soanes Farm buildings could be converted, and this was completed and was in use from 1978 until 2000 when the unit was closed down and the buildings were transferred to the new tenants, Langmeads.

Also in the late 1970s John Giffin and I went to Romney Marsh in Kent to look at lambing sheep sheds for 1000 ewes and after our visit we designed and built a multi-purpose building to house 1000 lambing ewes along with cattle and a grain store. It is in Stag Park on the highest land to ensure sufficient ventilation for the livestock.

My position as Clerk of the Works involved being on call for emergencies, most of which were for minor issues such as water leaks or electrical issues which we resolved by sending out staff to attend to them if required. However, a major call out was as the result of the great storm of October 16, 1987. I was about in the early evening and there was an eerie calm, but nothing to suggest



Throughout his time as the Leconfield Estate Clerk of the Works Roger Wootton kept pocket notebooks detailing the various projects he was overseeing, of which these are only a few.

what was about to come. At approximately two in the morning I received a security call out to Petworth House (and as usual, I called out the Estate electrician Mike Stubbington, as we had to have a minimum of two men to attend the alarm call activation). Having checked the alarm control panel, it indicated an activation at roof level, where we had temporary scaffolding erected for phases 4, 5 and 6 of repairs. We also had plastic side cladding which was the source of the alarm activation as a result of it acting as a sail and consequently moving the scaffolding structure (the wind speed was up to 114 mph). Investigation also found that wind pressure on several points was moving large coping stones on the south and west elevations of the house on which the scaffolding was seated, which were in danger of collapsing inwards on to the bedrooms below. To solve the problem I called out additional staff and we cut slits in the side cladding to allow the wind to pass through. Having done this we stood down the staff and retreated to our attic mess-room until the storm abated. We later learned that some of the corrugated steel roof sheets were torn off and one or two ended up at Moor Farm about a mile away. While in the mess-room one of the staff, Jack Enticknap made a comment to me that he now knew what it must be like to be in a submarine being depth-charged with the roof sheets which had been blown off the roof clattering across the main structure. As the storm abated, I went out on to the roof to check for any damage and looking north I could see the destruction and felling of the trees in the Pleasure Gardens, some of which had been the highest in the park.

On the light-hearted side, during the same night a student was undertaking a survey of the number of acorns on a oak tree. He was therefore camped out under one of the oaks for several nights with a plastic sheet laid out to catch the falling acorns. Luckily he had left the site but when he returned, he could not find a single acorn or the plastic sheet he had left behind. On reflection, the storm and the damage it caused could relate to the fact that October was a mild month, trees were still in full leaf and we had three consecutive weeks of wet weather which would not have helped. The work on phases 4, 5 and 6 was temporarily suspended as a result of the storm as urgent repairs were required on phase 7, the Audit Room roof. The roof support beams were rotten at both ends due to historic water damage which again resulted in major repairs and restoration to its present condition. On completion of the Audit Room the Estate team relocated with in-house contractors to complete phases 4, 5 and 6 of the re-roofing programme.

In the late 1980s, the Leconfield building department was approached to

undertake specialist work at Uppark House by the National Trust architect as the Leconfield Estate team had undertaken a similar project at Petworth House in providing additional support to a floor support oak beam in the Square Dining Room. The work we were undertaking at Uppark was to provide additional support to the ground floor salon ceiling beams which in turn provided support for the ornate plaster ceiling which was in danger of collapsing as the end beams had corroded away. To do this we had to support the first floor beams by providing suspension steel rods which were bolted to a steel A-frame through the first and second floor timber stud-work above. The work for the suspension of the salon first floor beams was completed in February 1989.

Tragically, there was a major fire at Uppark in August that year. We were asked by the National Trust to provide labour to assist with the stabilising of some of the structure and removing the marble fireplaces *&*c. The ground floor salon was completely destroyed and the only remaining items were our suspension rods and the steel A-frame truss. The stainless steel mesh and lime plaster were intact. Fortunately, the site team leader, Tim Jemmet, had taken a one metre square photographic record of the original ceiling and these photographs were made available to the plasterers carrying out the restoration work to the ceiling. We withdrew from the stabilising work at Uppark due to existing commitment in Petworth House in the North Gallery, which I will refer to later.

In 1983 the Estate acted as main contractors to the boat-house in Petworth Park and arranged for the contractors G. T. Stemp *&* Sons Ltd., to undertake the work required by the National Trust. The lake water had to be lowered to do the work which was done by opening a sluice on the south end of the lake, which drained the water through a culvert, then through the park, under the Tillington road, through Frog Farm and eventually into the River Rother. The lake was not completely drained as we required access only to the boathouse foundations which enabled the remaining fish to be kept in the lake. The foundations to the boat-house had to be underpinned due to the roots of trees undermining the foundations. The trees were felled, their roots cut back to prevent further damage and we rebuilt and underpinned the lower walls as well as carrying out maintenance to the stone-work above the water level. We also supplied and hung new steel doors to both vaults before allowing the water levels in the lake to rise.

Records indicate that some ninety years after the then Earl of Egremont had built the boat-house in the 1700s, the lake was completely drained. The

number of cartloads of sediment, the number and types of fish and fresh-water mussels were all recorded in elegant copperplate writing.

Following the completion of phases 1 to 7 of the re-roofing programme of Petworth House and the old Estate offices and Audit Room for the National Trust, the Trust wished to consider the Servants Block.

The Servants Block had been vacated in 1948. It housed at ground floor level the Audit Room and old Estate offices which were usable, but the remaining areas – the old kitchens, servants hall, servants rooms and fourteen other rooms were not in use other than for storage. Overall, the buildings were in a poor state since no maintenance had been done since 1948. The building had two twin apexes with a valley gutter between them running the full length of the sixty-metre-long building and this was leaking badly allowing water to penetrate the first floor levels and, in some cases, down to the ground floor. External outer gutters were also leaking, causing structural damage to the roof. The National Trust therefore with their architect Mr. Greenfield scheduled the building to be re-roofed which we undertook under phase 8. This design provided a crown flat roof between the two apex ridges, thus doing away with the valley gutter, discharging rain water to outer roof slopes on both sides to new gutters and downpipes. The outer roof slops were clad in Horsham stone once the roof structure had been made sound.

When stripping out the first floor of the north end service block, we found a sealed room within the apex constructed in redwood timber. Investigations into its use suggested it was for the storage of duck and goose down which was used in pillows *&*c. At one time there were separate stairs to the secret room and we left it intact for historical reasons.

FROM THE NORTH GALLERY TO THE LECONFIELD HALL

In the early 1990s the Leconfield Estate building department were retained by the National Trust for a very considerable project. It involved complete internal and external refurbishment of the North Gallery in Petworth House, and the removal of all exhibits: only the massive Flaxman statue remaining, and that was securely boxed in. The pictures were taken to the North Bedroom, the floor was taken up and replaced with oak boards, and the apex roof lights were replaced by lantern lights much closer in style to the originals. Two large sculptures were relocated from the Audit Room, their sheer weight necessitating a concrete runway below floor level to avoid damage to the floor. A new damp-proof system was introduced; dehumidifying equipment for this and other rooms being ducted from controls in the 'iron' cellar below. This

had been a long and rewarding project, during which the visiting public could see what was being undertaken via a covered walkway from the Chapel Passage doorway into the North Gallery and around to the Red Room doorway.

In the Square Dining Room the main beams supporting the first floor Trellis Bedroom and Dressing Rooms were in danger of collapse due to infestation by death-watch beetle and overloading in the past. An architect-designed holding system was introduced. This involved inserting a set of steel 'A' frames from which one-inch suspension rods were hung, some of which passed through the studwork wall at the head of the bed, and at the foot of the bed others were inserted into dummy columns. These then passed through the floor where they were clamped to the main beams of the Square Dining Room. These works, which were all carried out by the Estate team, successfully relieved the loading on the Square Dining Room roof beams and the project created surprisingly little disturbance. Finally, the Trellis Bedroom was re-decorated with a pretty 'sweetpea' pattern wallpaper copied from Lady Egremont's house in Scotland.

Another urgent project was to reconstruct the oak staircase in the Oak Hall, and strengthening it with steel where necessary. On taking up the floor, parts of the original Percy staircase, a relic of the medieval house, were uncovered. We took the opportunity, once the strengthening was complete, to create an access hatch in the wall so that the old stairs could be seen again if required. While in the Oak Hall we strippedoff the 1950s emulsion-covered wood-chip wallpaper which had been pasted over an earlier paper, probably dating fromthe 1800s. By careful removal of some of the remaining fragments of the earlier paper, Allyson McDermott, working with the National Trust, was able to copy it and make a replacement. Allyson is arguably the world's leading authority on conserving, recreating and hanging historic wallpapers and was formerly Head of Sotheby's Conservation Studio. Currently working from her studio in Cockermouth, she was, at this time, conveniently situated in the old Battery House in the Petworth House Cowyard. Making the paper was one thing – hanging it quite another (the drop was 32 feet) and the three decorators led by Ian Cox, discovered in trials that the conventional paste dried too quickly for the bubbles and creases to be brushed out and a specialised paste was imported from Italy. This performed much better and the project was successfully completed.

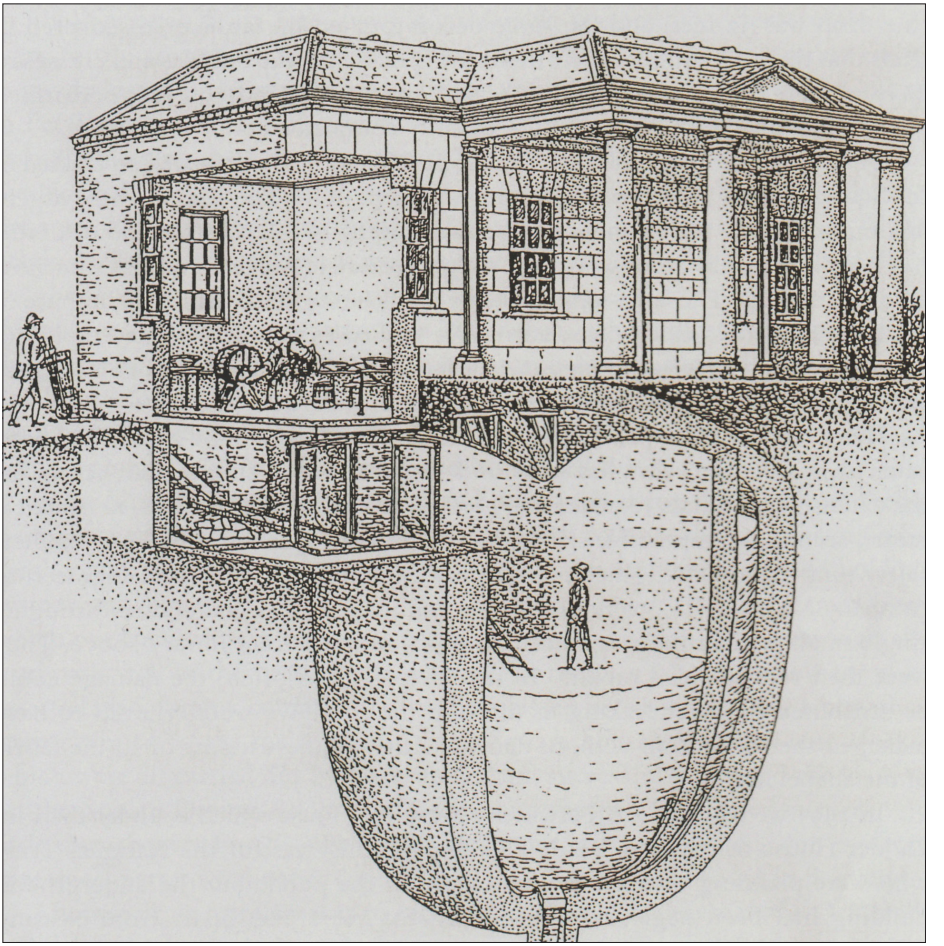
It had now become clear that a similar problem to that which we had tackled in the Square Dining Room was becoming apparent in the Red Room where urgent holding repairs to the ceiling were required. Many of the chestnut and

oak laths had been attacked by woodworm and the plaster had lost its key but was somehow holding itself up. The laths were packed very close together with a sparing use of plaster which could easily come adrift. We wished at all costs to avoid replacing the old laths and after vacuuming out the loose material overlaid it with a stainless steel mesh to which we attached a mix of plaster of Paris.

There was a similar problem in the Percy Chapel where the beams had been eaten away over the years and were in desperate need of support but access for the extensive materials required was, on the face of it, difficult and, in practical terms, seemingly impossible. However, under the supervision of Tim Jemmett, thirty tons of steel strengthening, which were supplied by the local engineering company Males *&* Co., were brought in and lifted with a giant crane through a single small pane in the magnificent window in the Turner library above. They were then re-assembled on site. In the Chapel, as so often, the damage could be attributed to water leaking in through the roof. We were relieved to have managed the restoration without damage either to the window or to the fabric of the chapel itself.

In 1997 we restored the Petworth House Ice House which is under the Fire Ladder House in the Cow Yard. This undertaking was for the National Trust who were planning to open the Ice House to the public but the underground building had been neglected and unused for years and, apart from clearing debris, we had to repair and renew timbers, repair brickwork and upgrade the antiquated electrical system. New doors to the tunnels were constructed in elm, a wood which is so resistant to damp that hollowed elm logs were used in the distant past for underground water pipes. It was ideal for the prolonged damp that is inevitable in an ice house. The old days when ice was brought in from the lake in Petworth Park are now long gone and no one has skated on the lake since the mid-1980s. It is difficult not to think in terms of global warming.

The private part of the House had always had single access via the Marble Hall, there being no access from the south via the private gardens and the Park. Between 1997 and 2002 we created an embankment to the level of the house windows and erected a stone bridge from which a new doorway was formed from an existing window opening. This was made in our workshops



A cut-away drawing of the Petworth House Ice House with the classical columns and portico of the Dairy / Fire Ladder House above. At the left a worker is wheeling in a load of ice from the lake in the park. He will take it down the steps and shoot it down to his (presumably very cold) mate below. Also in the drawing Is a milkmaid churning butter in the dairy which, sensibly, is placed above the ice. The drawing Is by Peter Brears and is reproduced courtesy of the National Trust.

by the head joiner John Staker. The original centuries-old chamomile turf was taken off and carefully re-laid in the protection of a wall in the paddock for three years. For the embankment, original Hythe stone was used, found in a seam at Cowdray, quarried at Easebourne and transported to Shropshire to be cut into rectangular pieces. It was then worked on in the stables at Petworth. The stone had to be left for three months and more to dry out before being used. Two new Bath stone urns stand proudly now on the site. They are replicas of the seventeenth-century urns in Alexander Pope's garden at Twickenham – with a difference: the narrow necks at the foot of the pedestals, vulnerable in such an exposed position, have been drilled through with steel rods to strengthen them.

Next for attention was the taking back of the Carved Room in Petworth House. It had been re-modelled in 1870 by Henry and Constance Leconfield. The idea was to go back to the Third Earl of Egremont's original conception of 1828 and return the Turner paintings to their old positions, removing a later dado and re-imagining the Third Earl's dining room. The Ritson wood carvings would be loaned back by the family and replaced in their original positions. John Hart almost miraculously married up the carvings with their original nail holes.

Between 1996 and 2002 we were working at Lodge Farm at River. This was an extensive conversion of redundant farm buildings into a modern office complex for the then Sofa Workshop. However, before we were able to make a start on the buildings we had to upgrade the existing access – a farm track – and to rebuild and strengthen its bridge over the river Lod to take heavy construction traffic. We worked to a Sofa Workshop design by the local architect Duncan O'Kelly and converted the two barns to ground- and first-floor offices; a cart hovel became a board room, a set of stables and cattle boxes were transformed into a reception area and toilets, and a granary became a staff canteen. All the works were undertaken by the Leconfield Estate Building Department and all the new woodwork for windows, stairs &c. was in oak and was manufactured in the Estate workshops. High-specification fire protection was, of course, essential and on completion of the project it was entered, and won, its category in the Best Conversion of Buildings 1997/99 Sussex Heritage Award.

The restoration of the Leconfield Hall as the decade ended was contracted to the Leconfield Estate, under the direction of the architect Raymond Harris. This involved repairs to the stonework and roof and we acted as the main contractor with the assistance of G. T. Stemp & Sons Ltd. of Northchapel.

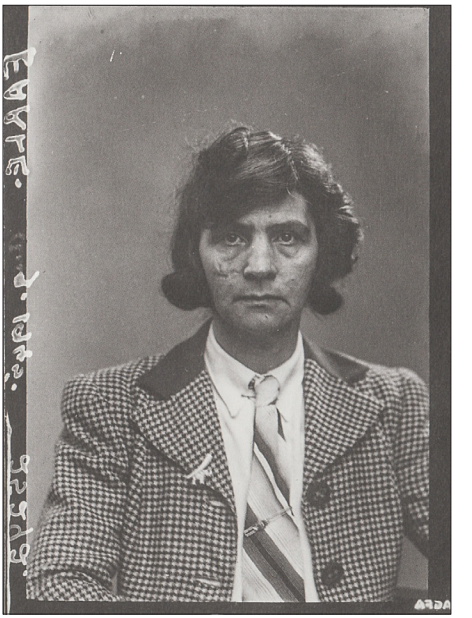
An untouched Edwardian portrait studio

Walter Kevis and George Garland
George Pellett, *PSM* 158, December 2014

My lifetime interest in photography goes back to my father. Even in the 1940s he had a dark-room, enlarger and an interest in ciné photography. There was one problem, however, and it was a serious one; he was severely allergic to one of the developing agents. This brought him out in great sores, so much so that even wearing gloves, he simply could not undertake darkroom work. A pupil at Midhurst Grammar School at the time, I was expected to help; in fact do the processing and printing. I was about thirteen.

Given this early initiation into photographic techniques, it was perhaps inevitable that I would gravitate towards George Garland, the Petworth photographer, beginning as a kind of unpaid assistant and soon I was working on a commission-only basis. This wasn't my only part-time job: summer holidays would be spent working on the Maxse fruit farm at Little Bognor. Commission-only meant going out to help with weddings and outside work. George Garland had always been a little impatient with the confinement of studio work, and while he certainly did portraits was probably not actively seeking such work. The arrangement I had was that any photographs I took that were submitted to the press would be forwarded by Garland. If accepted I would receive payment on a 60/40 per cent basis, the 40 being mine. Still at school, I was happy enough with this and would become more adventurous as my time at Midhurst drew towards an end.

My father and his brother were partners in Pelletts, the Market Square confectioners, tobacconists and hairdressing salon, one brother looking after the shop, the other (my father) travelling round to pubs and similar establishments in the area. I'd go down to the Square with my father just after eight o'clock to catch the school bus. My uncle would be there already. Unlike my father he was a large man, as was Charlie Bishop from the Lombard Street boot shop. Without fail the two would greet one another each morning with 'Hullo Fatty,' Charlie the while dipping into his snuff, and his ancient apron covered in glue and other markings of his trade. I often think about this; an exchange almost unthinkable in these rather more sensitive times. Another invariable early morning visitor would be the dapper Stanley Eager from the neighbouring Market



George Garland may not have been actively seeking portraiture but many of those he made were distinguished and were often ahead of their time. Clockwise from top left: Miss Moore, January 1942; Mrs. Bushy, August 1928; Mrs. Earle, August 1945; one of the Duchesne children, April 1942.

Square outfitters. Commercial Petworth bestirred itself rather earlier then than now.

I suppose that, almost without being aware of it, my way of working was influenced by George Garland's own. I'd travel out with him, all too conscious of his casual attitude to time. One regular stop would be to Etheringtons' garage in the Fleet at Fittleworth, where he might stay indefinitely swapping stories in the Sussex dialect. Junior as I was, I had sometimes to put in the occasional, 'It's getting late.' Findon sheep fair was another opportunity for broad Sussex stories as, too, would be a visit to Petworth House and a meeting with Fred Streeter.

In the early nineteen-fifties Garland was commissioned to take photographs of some of the pictures at Petworth House and took me with him as assistant. It was a short step from working under Garland's tutelage to finding my own work, again forwarded to the press from the studio. My father, travelling around, would have his ear to the ground for likely stories. I remember being told that the octogenarian landlady at the Red Lion pub at Fernhurst was retiring and I had a feature published in the local newspaper. Another early independent item involved pictures and a write-up on a local pig farm for the magazine *Pig Farming*. A similar commission was the retirementof the long-serving Mr. Wilkins at Midhurst Grammar School.

Looking at my scrapbook it's sometimes difficult to remember which photographs were done 'officially' for George Garland and which are my own independent work and form no part of the Garland Collection at the West Sussex Record Office. The idea of keeping a scrapbook was, no doubt, suggested by practice at the studio. Mrs. Garland (Sally) kept a meticulous account of press publication, not, as now it's all too easy to imagine, as a record as such, but simply as a check on incoming payments.

Not all outside work involved travel, weddings might be at Petworth church and I remember photographing work on the church tower in 1953, the steeple having been removed in 1947. Did I go through the belfry or by a ladder on the outside? I can't remember now but either way George wasn't having any of that. The ensuing photographs went out under the Garland name.

My parents both had an interest in local motor-cycle events: scrambling and trials and I would often go with them. Motor-cycling wasn't something George was particularly interested in although he had his motor-cycle and sidecar in the 1920s. I began to take photographs at events and soon established contact with the editor of *Motor Cycle* magazine. I already knew that I wanted to work in photography and, after I left Midhurst, was studying at Guildford College,

sometimes in digs, sometimes travelling from home. I was soon covering events anything up to fifty miles away. It could be a tough schedule; the pictures had to be at Pulborough in time for the first London train and I might be working till one o'clock in the morning after a day at the event. John Willis who lived just down the road from us, took them to the station when he went to pick up the newspapers for his morning delivery round.

I had done a few months at Guildford when in 1954 the college suggested I do my National Service but I returned as soon as I was demobilized. I also branched out into selling motor cycle magazines at events to supplement my income from photography. I made it my business to be on hand at Southampton when regional television was born and during preliminary trials was lucky enough to fill a gap with a silent film of cows at Guildford market, taken with a camera borrowed from the college. While waiting for a camera to be supplied, I went out and bought a suitable one of my own. I was initially to be a freelance 'stringer' for television with a contract covering the area from Petersfield to Brighton and by the time I left Petworth in 1960 I was working in television full time.

Long before this, in 1908, Herbert Earle had taken over Walter Kevis' Lombard Street photographic premises, Kevis being his uncle. Kevis had worked as the Petworth photographer from the late 1870s. Herbert Earle kept the tobacco and sundries part of the business on the ground floor of the premises but dropped the photographic side which was upstairs. He died in 1951. I didn't really know Earle, and in a sense he was a competitor to the family business just down the road in Market Square. It was 1952 and, while still at school, I was already working with George Garland who was told that there were glass negatives upstairs in the Lombard Street premises and that Earle's executors wanted them cleared. Garland was told he could take them all or none at all. What we didn't realize was that we were dealing with glass plate negatives by the hundredweight, perhaps, even, by the ton. George sent me up to have a look. To my amazement, here was an Edwardian portrait studio simply suspended in time, untouched since before the 1914-18 war. Slowly we began to clear the attic studio, bringing the glass plates down and loading them in to George's car.

We made a number of trips and by the time we had finished, the negatives took up a large part of Garland's Station Road studio. They would do so for some years. There were perhaps a couple of hundred local views, mainly whole-plate and what seemed an endless array of portraits, a few whole-plate, some half-plate, but mainly quarter-plate. Curiously there were virtually no wedding groups although Kevis certainly took them. There was

also the studio equipment, obviously untouched during two wars and four decades: screens for backgrounds with clouds, rocks, vegetation and the like. I think George had the idea of using them himself but in practice they were bulky and too much of the period. I don't know what became of them eventually. Rather similar was a number of ornamental pillars and balustrades.

I had done a certain amount of routine copying of extant Kevis sepia mounted prints for Garland, but copying this lot was something on a totally different scale. It was strange, almost exhilarating, to be able to print from the original glass plates, the ensuing pictures as fresh and clear as if they had been taken the day before.

The genre of subject for which George Garland is well known, and which has been the pictorial mainstay of this magazine for fifty years. His caption to this picture, which appeared in the *Evening Argus* on February 1, 1961 is 'The heavy rain over the week-end brought a return of the floods to West Sussex. This road at Ebernoe was impassable to motor traffic but the tractor with its load of hay in charge of Fred Phillips (employed by Mr. Ivan Wadey of Highbuildings Farm) managed to get through'.

One of the parties had proposed Badlands

Proposals to build a school at Bedham
Miles Costello, *PSM* 126, December 2006

Most readers will know the story of Bedham School, the derelict church-like building which stands below the road that wends its way through the tiny rural hamlet. Never really viable, the school led a fragile existence for many years before finally succumbing to the demands of a modernising educational system and an apparently irreversible fall in the pupil roll. But why was this isolated location chosen for a school in the first place? Never a foregone conclusion, Bedham seems to have been selected as much to placate local landed interests as for any logical reason. Certainly the existing schools in the district would see the new establishment as a threat to their own pupil rolls and consequently their government grants. Influential landowners and rate payers, who no doubt would eventually pick up much of the bill for the new school, rightly demanded their say in the matter, and the local clergy saw it as an opportunity to extend their sphere of influence in the face of a seemingly unstoppable advance of a secular education system.

By chance a file of papers has survived which records the communications between the main participants involved in the decision to establish a new school. As is so often the case much of the correspondence is made up of almost illegible copy letters, however there is a considerable number of original letters from which it is possible to form an understanding of the issues. The principal parties involved locally were Lord Leconfield, W. H. Ingram Lord Leconfield's agent, Sir Walter Barttelot at Stopham and the Reverend A. B. Simpson Rector of Fittleworth. Acting for the Education Department at Whitehall was Mr. P. Cumin. Interested parties on the margin of the debate included the Revd Holland at Petworth and the members of the Wisborough Green School Board.

To understand the need for a new school it is first necessary to consider the location of the existing schools in 1876. Those at Kirdford, Wisborough Green, Stopham, Fittleworth, Byworth and Petworth formed a large ring around one of the most sparsely populated areas in West Sussex. These small villages had well-established schools and in the case of Wisborough Green an influential school board. Many members of the clergy as well as the large rural landowners viewed these school boards with suspicion. Supposed to be hotbeds of nonconformists and liberals, they were resisted strongly in areas where the landowners and

clergy could influence the establishment of voluntary schools. The Education Department (E. D.) had set a time limit for the building of a school to serve the area. If this limit was not met then a school board would be established with the power to raise the necessary funds from local taxation. This threat should have been enough to concentrate the minds of the local worthies but such was the apathy or failure to agree on seemingly trivial matters that the patience of the E. D. was stretched to breaking point.

Bedham was, as it is today, a dispersed community and those children who attended school would probably walk to Fittleworth or Wisborough Green. Perhaps a few would have gone to Stopham and those nearer Flexham Park would have found the walk into Petworth the easiest. Stories of Victorian children walking barefoot to school dressed in little more than rags abound in contemporary literature. West Sussex school records frequently tell us of children being sent home or suspended for being inadequately dressed. Legislation was looming which would shortly make it compulsory for children up to the age of twelve to attend school and crucially each district would be bound to provide a school place for every child. Clearly there had been some debate prior to 1876 over the need for a school in the triangle formed by Wisborough Green, Fittleworth and Petworth, but for whatever the reason it was Sir Walter Barttelot of Stopham who chose to have an informal meeting with Lord Sandon at the Education Department some time in 1876 to discuss the possibility of a new school. Sandon, a keen promoter of voluntary schools, agreed in principle that there was indeed a need, but he wanted the local landowners to become involved and to suggest suitable locations. The matter seems to have gone quiet for at least a year for it is not until August 1, 1878 that a letter from Cumin to Lord Leconfield's agent W. H. Ingram announces:

> Sir, I am directed to state that the attention of this Department has been called to the need of a school at or near a place called 'The Fox' in the parish of Petworth to supply the outlying population of the parishes of Petworth, Fittleworth, Kirdford, Egdean, and Wisborough Green. H. M. Inspector reports that he believes there is an urgent want of an efficient school in the neighbourhood above described, both on account of the distance from other schools and the impassable condition of the roads in winter. My Lords understand that there has been some communication on the subject between Lord Leconfield and Sir W. Barttelot and that it is contemplated to provide the required school accommodation by voluntary effort.

Ingram was only too aware that a school at The Fox would seriously encroach on the catchment area of the existing schools at Petworth and he was quite sure that Lord Leconfield would never accept another school so near to the town. Ingram immediately set about planning the demolition of the Department's proposals and instructed his clerk of works Robert Downing to gather information that disproved a need for a school at The Fox. Ingram's principle argument would be that as The Fox was so close to Petworth, children had no difficulty making the walk. The following note from Downing to Ingram is worthy of reproduction just to illustrate the details in their investigation.

> The distance from The Fox inn to the national school in North Street is 1 mile 5 furlongs and 154 yards. That is a mile and three quarters all but 66 yards. In chains the length is 137 and there are 80 chains in a mile.

Ingram in his response to the Education Department repeated Downing's figures and consolidated his argument by pointing out that the road between The Fox and the school in North Street was 'a good hard road as the Ordnance map will shew you'. He went on to state that 'It was never contemplated to build the school at or near the Fox.' How the parties had come to such a misunderstanding is hard to imagine though it would be fair to say that the Inspector of Schools had probably little local knowledge, or as was more likely the case, the E. D. had, in order not to affect pupil rolls, tried to site the new school as far as possible from the exiting schools at Wisborough Green and Fittleworth and had not taken into account the consequence this may have had on the Petworth schools. Ingram suggests that any new site should be in the neighbourhood of Hawkhurst in Wisborough Green parish and that if the E. D. felt inclined to send down an inspector he would be happy to meet him and provide any assistance he could.

Ten days later the E. D. replied with a simple statement announcing to Ingram that they will communicate with the School Board for Wisborough Green on the subject of his letter. It is at this point that the Revd Simpson of Fittleworth enters the debate. He can well see the problems that a new school in the vicinity of Hawkhurst could pose for his schools at Fittleworth and Stopham. However, he would also be aware that as some of the pupils attending the new school would be from the Fittleworth area it would be an opportunity

OPPOSITE The school-cum-church of St Michael and all Angels at Bedham just after being built in 1880 and as it was when photographed by Dan Sneller in 2021.

for him to gain a place on the Wisborough Green School Board and of course the influence that went with that position.

Naturally all attention was now focused on the Bedham and Hawkhurst areas and the search for the site began in earnest. Sir Walter Barttelot had already made plain his preference for a site to the east of Hawkhurst and near 'Burdocks' on Brick Kiln Common. Ingram, on behalf of Lord Leconfield had recommended a site west of Hawkhurst near to Bignor Farm on the road from Petworth to Stroud Green. Neither party gave any reasons for promoting their site and there was no indication as to whether land was actually available at these locations. What was certain was an offer from W. Mitford of land at Bedham; this offer was being actively promoted from Fittleworth by the Revd Simpson. Mitford was Lord of the Manor of Bedham and despite a cool reception from Ingram and Sir Walter it did appear to be the obvious answer to the problem. Furthermore, the E. D. had given their sanction to Mitford's offer. Having narrowed the location down to Bedham it was now going to require an extra effort to agree on the actual site. One of the parties had proposed Badlands as being the very centre of the proposed school district and so as good a place as any for the new school. Mitford rejected this suggestion as not being part of Bedham Manor and besides it was held as a life copyhold and would be impossible to acquire. Meanwhile he had made it clear in a letter to the Revd Simpson that his preference was for a site below Bedham known locally as 'Hill Foot'.

It was obvious to the Revd Simpson that the three landowners were going to find it impossible to agree on a site and with the time limit imposed by the E. D. coming to an end he knew that if the whole scheme was to be saved he would have to wring concessions out of the E. D. and if even then the landowners would still not agree on a site he would concede defeat having satisfied himself that he had tried his best. As expected the E. D. came up with the concessions required by Simpson and he passed the news on to Ingram:

> Since I saw you I have received an answer to my letter to the Education Department about the Bedham School, making very considerable concessions if the school is built by voluntary effort.
> a) They will be satisfied with a 'certified efficient school.' Which does not require a certified teacher.
> b) We need not find accommodation for boys over nine years of age.
> c) They will give their best consideration to any definite proposal for a site.

With the boys' age reduced to nine years, a much smaller school could be built at a greatly reduced cost to the landowners, and with the need for an expensive certified teacher removed from the requirements, the landowners could have little objection to the establishment of a voluntary school at Bedham. All that was required was for Leconfield, Barttelot and Mitford to agree on the site.

How the final location for the new school was eventually chosen is not recorded. A compromise of some sort may have been made, or it is just possible that the disagreement over the site had been a clever charade all along, orchestrated perhaps by Ingram in order to squeeze the concessions out of the E. D. Who knows? Certainly the three landowners must have been satisfied that they had got the best possible deal out of the E. D. and there would have been nothing to gain by delaying things any further.

Almost as an afterthought a site near Arundel Holt was suggested, though this was swiftly rejected and the little school finally opened its doors in 1880. The forty-five years of the school were difficult to say the least. There was rarely a consistent school roll and without regular attendances it was not easy to get the essential government grants. The poverty of the surrounding area meant that many of the pupils could not afford the small fee which was required and though this was usually ignored by the authorities it was often felt better to keep a child from school than to suffer the ignominy of being singled out as a non-payer. The decision to educate boys only up to nine years must have at some stage been abandoned for Jack Purser, recalling a period prior to 1914, gave the following short account of Bedham School in the *Petworth Society Bulletin* No. 25, September 1981.

> I left school at thirteen and a half just before the First War but I was already used to farm-work then. I would milk at Bennyfold before I went to school. I didn't go to school at Petworth but at Bedham where my family had been before they came to Bennyfold, and two of my sisters taught there. The school, an hour's walk from Bennyfold, had three teachers and numbers varied. Sometimes there were nearly fifty pupils, sometimes much less, they came from Pallingham and all round. People had large families in those days, eights and tens, and it didn't take many such families to bring up the numbers. I didn't actually start school until I was seven and I was no scholar. Many a thrashing I had from Miss Day, the head-teacher, because I wouldn't or couldn't read and I never did learn. We used to do needlework and I was very good at that but now I can't hold a needle because of arthritis.

The medieval structure was of timber

The rise and fall of Petworth's spire
David Parsons, *PSM* 183, June 2021

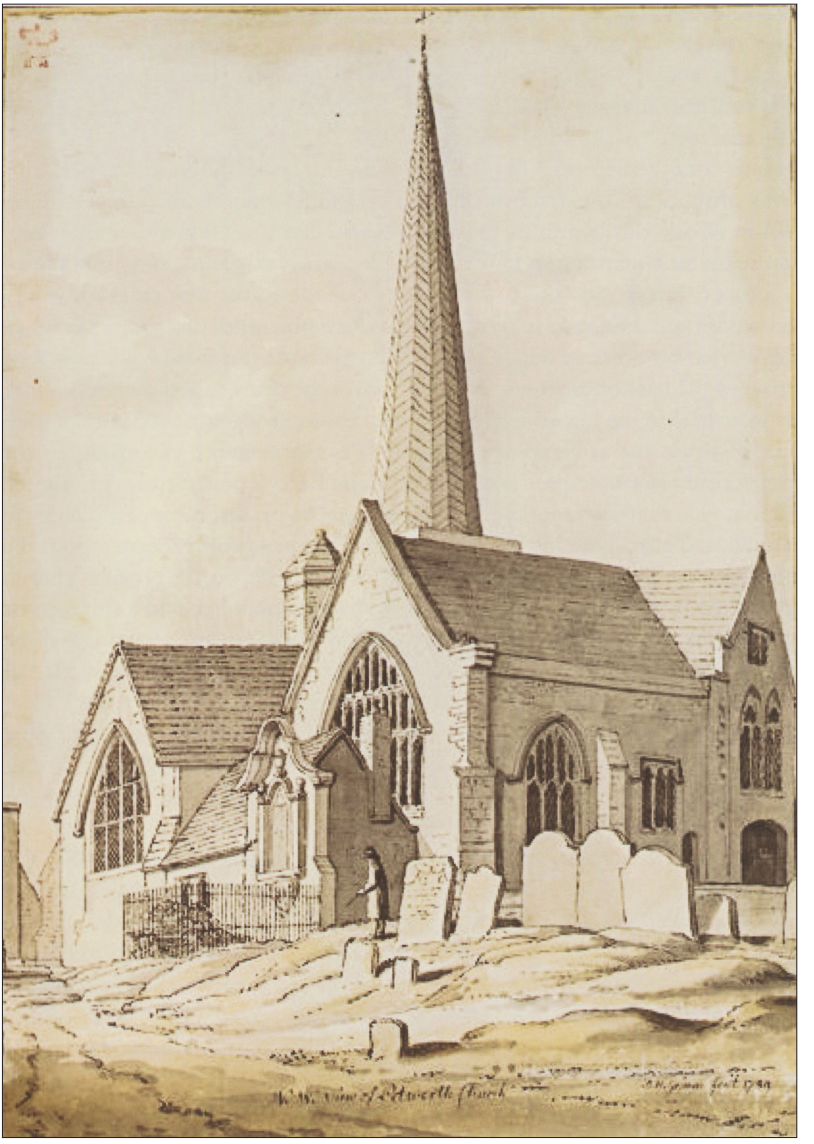
The spire of St Mary's, Petworth was first mentioned by John Leland in his *Itinerary*, which recorded his observations during his travels between 1535 and 1543. He claimed that it was built by 'Parson Acon', but no-one of that name figures in the list of rectors. The identity of this clergyman was established sixty years ago in a note published in *Sussex Notes and Queries*: he was John de Acome (Acomb), and he held the living from about 1382. By 1399 he was referred to as 'late parson of Petworth', so if he really was responsible for having the spire built, it must have been done within the less than twenty years of his incumbency – somewhen around 1390, a date which is consistent with what we know about the style of the spire.

What we know is dependent on a number of drawings made in the late eighteenth century, most famously by Samuel Hieronymous Grimm in 1789, who showed it from the north-east, with St Thomas's chapel in the foreground. Grimm also included a distant view of it in his picture of Petworth House in 1780. J. M. W. Turner also drew a view similar to Grimm's 1789 watercolour, which is known from what appears to be a pupil's copy, and made another of the north side of the church around 1792–94, which shows part of the base of the spire. Turner's well-known view of the spire, showing behind the façade of the House in the 'Dewy Morning' painting, is not that of the medieval structure, however. The sketch for this picture, made in 1809, does not show a spire: there was none at this date. The finished picture, exhibited in 1810, was later retouched, and shows the spire added by Charles Barry in 1827–29.

The medieval structure was of timber, covered with shingles; according to most authorities they were of lead, though firm evidence is lacking. In 1803 it was decided to remove it, to raise the tower by twelve feet and to add pinnacles. A specification for the work was drawn up in December of that year, but it was not carried out until 1804. The watercolourist Henry Petrie visited Petworth in the following year; of his two views of the church one clearly shows the new parapet and pinnacles above a string course. An 1803 diagram in the Petworth House Archives confirms that the distance between the string and the top of the parapet was in fact twelve feet.

The new arrangement did not last for long, however, because the architect

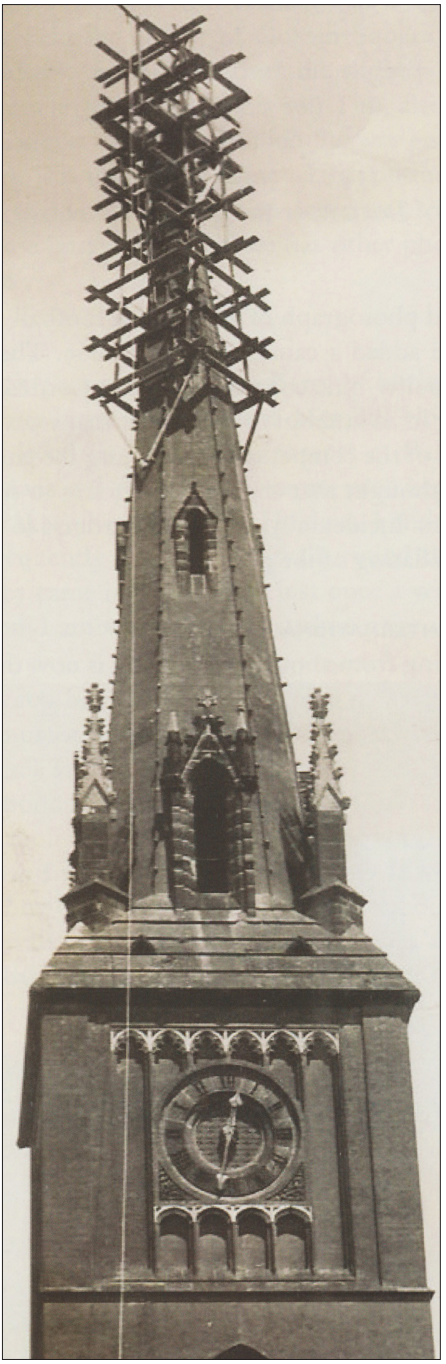
BELOW
Samuel Hieronymous Grimm's 1789 watercolour of St Mary's Church, Petworth from the north-east with St Thomas's Chapel in the foreground.



OPPOSITE
An almost filigree construction of scaffold planks during repairs to the spire of St Mary's in July 1935. Photograph by George Garland.

Barry was brought in to extend the church by adding a south aisle and building a new spire. Work was begun in 1827 and Turner has provided a dramatic view of the spire under construction in that year. The work was apparently completed by October 15, but it was found that the wall of the tower was cracked; it was declared unsafe and the church closed from December 30 until October 1829 while remedial works were carried out. The foundations were reinforced and a new arch built between the base of the tower and the nave of the church. Meanwhile, church services were held in the Leconfield Hall. Apart from the topmost section, the spire was built of brick and covered with stucco ('Roman cement') according to the summary account presented to Lord Egremont by Barry's contractor. Among the materials listed in that account there were over 340,000 bricks, some of which were presumably used elsewhere in the church. There has been some debate about the origin of the spire design. When Barry began work at Petworth, his new church in Brighton, St Peter's, had just been built. He had proposed to add a spire to the tower there, but it was not carried out for lack of funds. Several drawings of the proposal survive, and it has been suggested that the unused design was used at Petworth. A recent discussion of the question was inconclusive, but made it clear that as the design for St Peter's was used at Petworth it must have been somewhat adapted. In 1827 Barry exhibited at the Royal Academy a 'View of the new steeple now being added to the parish church of Petworth' (cat No. 496); this drawing might have settled the question, but it is unfortunately missing.

Less than a hundred years later the spire was already giving trouble. On August 9, 1904 the *Mid-Sussex Times* referred to 'the much-needed restoration' having been carried out. On September 19, 1935 the *West Sussex Gazette* reported on the collapse of scaffolding in the course of repairing the spire, said to cost in the region of £800. On April 24, 1947 the *Gazette* carried a report on the dangerous state of the spire and on May 15 referred to fund-raising activities to defray the anticipated cost of the spire's removal (£10,000). According to the church log book the spire was finally condemned in April 1948. It was then demolished, though a stump remained until 1953; the top of the tower was made good and given the present pyramidal cap in 1954.



The woman in white

A letter, John Morris,
PSM 110, December 2002

Please find a small photograph of a ghostly woman making her way towards the Leconfield Hall on a long-forgotten summer's day in 1924. The cars are both American, the one in front is an air-cooled 1922 Franklin; behind it is most probably a rare and short-lived make known as a Jewett, of some 4.1 litres. It seems that they both ran as taxis. The Jewett was the only car in the area that could climb Duncton Hill in top gear, quite a spectacular achievement in those days. I love the tranquillity of the scene, particularly the wheelbarrow outside Austens – another world to be sure.

I've got the bell – a beautiful one at that

The surprising history of the sanctus bell in St Mary's church
Peter Jerrome, *PSM* 68, June 1992

George P. Elphick in his *Sussex Bells and Belfries* (1970) singles out the sanctus bell at Petworth as being of all Sussex bells the furthest from its natural home. Its inscription written in Church Slavonic reads 'from the factory of T. G. Olovyanishkov in Yaroslavl.' Yaroslavl is on the banks of the Volga 150 miles north-east of Moscow and was the principal centre of bellfounding in Tsarist Russia. Elphick could not be specific about the age of the bell and suggested that it may have come to England as a result of the Crimean War. In fact three letters written to Lady Leconfield in 1924 show that the bell came over in that year and that the bell was one of a very great number sent into Russia when the Germans invaded Poland during the 1914-18 war. The Poles hoped thereby to prevent the Germans using the bells for munitions. The Bolsheviks returned them after the war to their own land and they lay unwanted in a Warsaw churchyard largely redundant because so many Russian Orthodox Churches had been pulled down. The letters do not say what gave Lady Leconfield the idea of having a Russian bell, perhaps a chance conversation with Lady Max Müller when she was a house guest at Petworth as she may well have been. The relevant parts of the first letter dated April 6, 1924 read:

> BRITISH LEGATION, WARSAW.
> Dear Lady Leconfield,
> I've got the bell – a beautiful one at that. It was quite a hunt to get it, and I am sure that if it could tell its own tale it would be even a longer one than mine. One day when passing a church I saw hundreds and hundreds of bells, and, with the help of our clergyman and the Metropolitan, I found out that these were bells which the Russians had sent into Russia during the German invasion so that the Germans should not benefit by the metal, and the Bolsheviks had now returned them to this country. As so many of the Russian churches here have been pulled down, the Metropolitan told our clergyman that he had no objection to you having the bell as we told him for what it is wanted, and with his kind help it was bought. While transporting it from the Metropolitan's house to our clergyman's abode the poor man, a Pole, was arrested by the police for having stolen church

property and was put in prison for three hours until he was bailed out by our clergyman. I do hope you will like it; I think it is very beautiful, though not as old as some of them, but owing to the way they had been sent backwards and forwards so many of them were smashed. I shall as soon as I can have it packed up and addressed to you at Petworth, but it will have to come by boat via Danzig and may therefore take anything from three weeks to three months.
Your sincerely,
Wanda Max Müller.

The 'Russians' mean apparently adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church domiciled in Poland.

A second letter reads:

BRITISH LEGATION, WARSAW.
June 3, 1924
Dear Lady Leconfield,
Just a line to tell you that the bell has left, and I hope that within six weeks or three months you may have it at Petworth! There have been so many formalities as it was called a work of art, which it is forbidden to export; however, thanks to the kindness of a friend at the Foreign Office, we got it through without any difficulties. I enclose some photographs, as it may interest you to see the place where your bell was found. Please excuse a typewritten letter, but I am fearfully busy as I have the King's Birthday party to-day, and I want to get this letter off by the bag.
Yours sincerely,
Wanda Max Müller.

There is also extant a letter to Lady Max Müller from the United Baltic Corporation Ltd. confirming delivery and forwarding to Lady Leconfield. The two photographs reproduced on the following pages show the Warsaw churchyard where the bell was found. There seems no mention of the installation of the bell in *St Mary's Parish Magazine* but the Rector's letter for July 1924 does record 'the beautiful new hangings and altar frontal that Lady Leconfield has placed in St Thomas' Chapel. This almost completes her plan for the redecoration of the Chapel begun some months ago'.[1] The installation of the bell would seem to be connected with this redecoration.

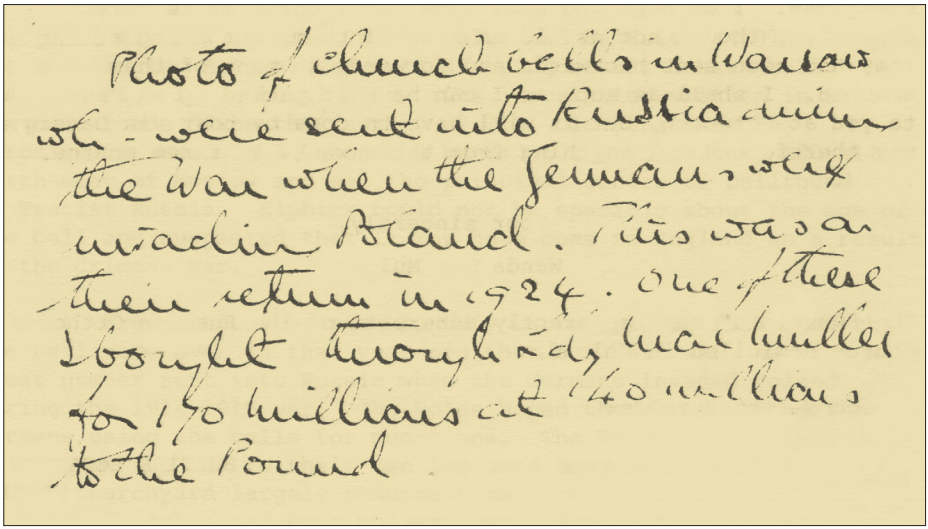
LEFT AND OPPOSITE
Church bells in a Warsaw churchyard in 1924. They had been sent into Russia during the Great War and returned to Poland by the Bolsheviks after the war. The photographs, now old and faded, were taken by Lady Wanda Max Müller. One of them (opposite) is inscribed on the back in Lady Leconfield's hand.

Lady Max Müller, née Wanda Maria Heiberg (1883-1970), was the wife of the diplomat William Grenfell Max Müller who held the office of Consul-General in Budapest until the outbreak of war after which he was appointed British Minister to the newly-formed Polish Republic.

A portrait of Lady Max Müller, now in a private collection, was painted by Philip de László in 1915.

1 The Parish Magazine reference is from Mr. C. G. Rix.

Lady Leconfield's inscription reads: Photo of church bells in Warsaw which were sent into Rusia during the war when the Germans were invading Poland. This was on their return in 1924. One of these I bought through Lady Max Müller for 170 millions at 40 millions to the pound.



Irate tradesmen at Balls Cross

George Barker – a book sale reflection
Peter Jerrome, introduction by Jonathan Newdick, *PSM* 162, December 2015

The monthly Petworth Society book sales were introduced in 2000 *as a way of generating funds to support an increasingly demanding magazine. This magazine. They also offered scope for Peter Jerrome to write a regular essay on his response to each sale. At first these tended to consist of observations on a particular sale on a particular day – Peter might be taken by a rain-lashed Market Square, and the rain-lashing effect on book-buying, and he would end most of his pieces with a note about the success (rarely otherwise) of each sale. But as time passed he would turn his attention to his responses to a book that had come in – usually unusual and frequently a title that even the most determind bookseller would not tolerate for long on the shelves. The following piece is typical.*

It's August 1938. A young Canadian writer is staying in London, half studying, half on vacation. She is Elizabeth Smart. It's a hot day and in Charing Cross Road she picks up a volume by a young poet a year or two older than herself. There is an endorsement by T. S. Eliot. Struck by one of the poems she determines to find more about the writer: George Barker.

George Barker is married and struggling to make a living in literature. Compromise is alien to him and money is desperately short. His wife Jessica, devoutly Roman Catholic, and he have already given up their first child for adoption. After a spell surviving in the West Country they have moved in May to 'Boxholme' just along the Kirdford Road from Balls Cross. There is the prospect of some extra-mural teaching in the autumn but, with no formal education, even given Eliot's backing, Barker is finding it difficult to break into London literary circles. A friendship develops with David Gill, another newcomer to the district and his wife Elizabeth. Not particularly literary, Gill's pragmatism contrasts with Barker's febrile intensity. 'He was the perfect antidote to artistic pretension.' [1] The two families would meet at the Stag and even became involved with Horn Fair, although Barker's biographer rearranges the traditional date of Horn Fair and probably exaggerates Barker's role in the festivities. George Garland was very much involved in the fair at this time and he and Barker must have had, at the very least, nodding acquaintance.

If life at Boxholme could, in theory, be idyllic, it was rendered intolerable by the Barkers' chronic shortage of money. Before Barker could embark on his not over-lucrative university extension course it was time to move on: local tradesmen were laying siege to Boxholme Cottage. Barker would be recruited to an unlikely lectureship in a university to the far north of Japan.

It was not a suitable position for Barker, nor was the timing ideal; Japan was already on a war footing. Elizabeth Smart had meanwhile managed to establish contact with Barker and his wife Jessica. After a short sojourn at the university Elizabeth was able to use such financial clout as she had to get the Barkers to the United States. She almost certainly saved them from an internment at best uncomfortable, at worst brutal.

Torn between residual feelings for a loyal wife whose religious principles would not release him, and drawn like a magnet to Elizabeth Smart whom he would never marry but who would bear him several children, Barker seemed to have a perverse fascination with playing off an allegiance to a Catholic faith in which he had been brought up and to which his long-suffering wife adhered ever more strongly, and consciously flouting Catholic principles. Barker and Elizabeth became lovers. Her *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* is her scalding cry of pain at the lovers' situation, their mutual disquiet at Jessica's predicament and their refusal to be parted.

Barker would live again locally for a while in the 1950s in a remote cottage on Blackdown. Even his admirers saw him as irredeemably feckless but he always put his self-appointed poetic mission first. He would have fifteen children by various partners, finally re-marrying late in life after Jessica's death. His work is perhaps most accessible in the 'Penguin Modern Poets' series (No. 3, Barker, Bell and Causley, 1962). Although praised at different times by such diverse luminaries at T. S. Eliot, Robert Graves and Lawrence Durrell, and having aroused the jealousy of Dylan Thomas, Barker will probably be assessed differently from one critic to another. It would be generally agreed that his work is very uneven and that he wrote too much rather too easily.

1 Robert Fraser, *The Chameleon Poet – A Life of George Barker.* (Jonathan Cape 2001).

But I never saw him again after that

Remembering George Barker
Richard Gill, *PSM* 163, March 2016

I can't comment on George Barker being at Box Cottage (Boxholme), Balls Cross in the late 1930s. It was before my time. In the 1940s and 1950s I always knew him as 'Gran', an abbreviation of his middle name Granville. My very earliest memory of him was from 1945, perhaps at the Ebernoe V. E. Day celebration, perhaps at Horn Fair. It may be that he came to both. My father had a consuming interest in puppetry and had booked the well-known puppeteer Panto Puck – possibly for both events.

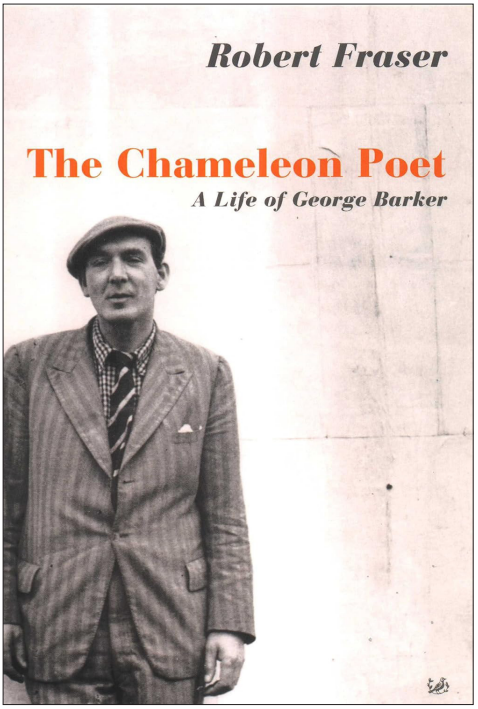
Gran was a family friend but with a penchant for evenings in the local pubs. As perhaps befitted a 'professional poet' he was invariably flat broke and he and his entourage would take ages over a single drink before moving on to the next hostelry. My parents were at this time living at Hollands on the Balls Cross road. At some time in the late 1940s or early 1950 Gran rented an ancient cottage belonging to Herne Farm just below Roundhurst. I often went there and finally collected a few books he had left when he departed. He was living at the time with 'Betty' but not married to her: his first wife, Jessica, a devout Roman Catholic living in the United States would not countenance divorce. There was a bust-up at the cottage and very beautiful Betty went off to America with another, younger, member of the Barker clan.

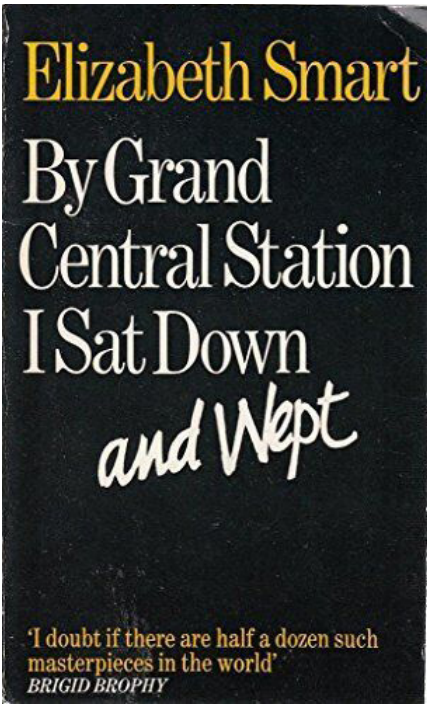
The Barkers were a large family and Gran's mother was Irish and had a very considerable influence on the rest of the family. I never knew Elizabeth Smart, someone Gran never married although he would have several children with her. Gran's parents had a large London flat and I think he may have stayed there from time to time. He was a career poet without a day job and he had a considerable literary following in the late 1930s. He and Dylan Thomas were the most discussed of the avant-garde poets of the day. It was said that Thomas was envious of Gran's growing reputation.

I liked Gran very much, although I'd have to say that he could be truculently Irish in his cups. We would see him particularly at apple-picking time when what appeared to be the entire Barker clan would come and pick in my father's orchards. In those days I was 'The Champion

BELOW
The front dust jacket of Robert Frazer's *The Chameleon Poet – A Life of George Barker* and the front cover of the Penguin edition of Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept.*

Boy Magician' – and did many shows with George Garland's excellent concert party. I had a fascination with the circus – something which has never left me. So, having completed my National Service, with a year to spare before Oxford, I went to audition for Lord George Sanger's Circus at their winter quarters at Horley – and, to my amazement, was taken on for the season. For some reason Gran insisted on coming along to this audition – and I can remember him being entranced by the animals and performers. The last time I saw him must have been in the early 1960s at the opening of an Ivon Hitchens exhibition at the Waddington Gallery, to which he accompanied my parents. I had been very fond of Gran – but I never saw him again after that.





Woollen stockings and a pale green silk slip

A raid on River House in 1945
Richard Gill, *PSM* 164, June 2016

By the late autumn of 1945, war-weary Britain was struggling to re-adjust after six years of conflict. The new Labour Government had been swept into power on the promise of Nationalisation but were being accused by the Tories of some serious failures, namely not concentrating on the conversion of industries from wartime production to that of peace, not providing housing and not procuring the steady release of the vast numbers still within the Armed Forces.

But not everyone had agreed to fight in 1939. A total of 61,000 refused and became known as conscientious objectors or 'conchies'. If the objector was suspected of being a Nazi sympathiser, then he or she would be interned in prison without trial under Regulation 18B of the Defence (General Regulations) Act 1939; there were 5,500 such internees. These internees were released more speedily than those in the armed forces and a group of them created the League of Christian Reformers. One of its leaders, a Captain T. G. St Barbe Baker, came to live at River House in 1945. The house had just been derequisitioned (having been used during the war for re-housing civilians from the south coast) and was reportedly placed at the disposal of the League by a Mr. Geoffrey Barlow of Kingsley Green, Fernhurst, who had himself been recently released after five years internment under Regulation 18B. The house was renamed Kingdom House and was occupied by a group of disciples of the League.

According to the *Daily Express* [1] of November 28,1945, Captain Baker described the League as a purely Christian movement where the talking of politics is absolutely barred. There was, however, a far more sinister side, for the organisation also believed that, quoting from the same article, 'Hitler is a divine being' having been 'sent on Earth to scourge the World'.

Meanwhile, in London, the furniture and effects of the former German Embassy were being auctioned; one of these was a substantial granite bust of Hitler which was bought by a Captain Canning for £500. Canning too, notwithstanding a First World War Military Cross, seems to have been a member of the League as, by November 29, the *Daily Express* was reporting that, once someone could be found to transport the bust, it was

to go to Kingdom House (or 'Hall' according to the newspaper).

No doubt not helped by daily stories appearing in the *Express* which seemed to have a reporter encamped in the driveway of Kingdom House, the locals in the Petworth area began to remonstrate. The villagers of River were reported as protesting against the setting up of a 'Hitler cult'. Protests were planned to be made to the local MP, the church authorities and to Lord Leconfield, the Lord Lieutenant of the county. This brought a reaction from another occupant of Kingdom House, a Mr. Arthur Schneider, a further ex-18B detainee and who seemed to being running the house. All callers were turned away.

By this time, the *Daily Express* reporter was clearly becoming bored, for, under the headline 'Pink Shirt', he wrote (on November 29) 'on a clothes line beside the main entrance hung a man's pink shirt, some woman's woollen stockings and a pale green silk slip'. He also reported that the local vicar had been given a pamphlet by Mr. Schneider which said that Hitler was the second Messiah. Apparently the vicar was so shocked that he took it to the police and warned his parishioners 'to be on their guard'.

By December 1 the continuous press articles were having an effect. It was reported that a convoy of Gunners had halted on the road outside Kingdom House shouting 'Is this the Hitler house?' and 'What have you done with the bust?' A further incident occurred on the same day when a sailor tried to get into the house via the cellar door but this attempt was clearly quickly defused as he was spotted and promptly taken inside and given a cup of tea. Two days later, Kingdom House received further visitors. The first appeared be an erstwhile supporter, namely a Mrs. Littlejohn, who claimed to be a former militant suffragette. She went away with a copy of the pamphlet. Her visit was followed by Lord Leconfield himself (plus his black Labrador), both having walked over from Petworth. He commented to the *Daily Express* reporter 'I have read about these people. I just came to have a look at them but they are really not worth bothering about'. The reporter went on to comment 'and he then walked back to his castle again'.

Visitor number three was a preacher who arrived in a car, played 'Jesus, Lover of my Soul' on a gramophone, read twelve verses of St Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians through a loud speaker and then preached a sermon. For his pains, he too was given a cup of tea by Mr. Schneider.

By this stage, the editor of the *Daily Express* had probably realised that there were far better things for their reporter to do than investigate the League and Kingdom House so the articles ended. However, meanwhile, a fuse had been lit among a group of bored naval officers who were based at the then Carrier Trials Unit at Ford Naval Air Station and were simply waiting to be de-mobbed. A cunning plan was hatched and the editor of the *Daily Express* was forewarned. The leader of the raiding party was Clive Wilkinson who had been brought up locally at West Burton and, pre-war, had hunted with the Leconfield and had partied and cricketed with the Mitfords at neighbouring Pitshill. The raid had three objectives. Firstly, Mr. Schneider was to be debagged and deposited in Petworth Square. Secondly, the League's papers were to be taken in order to ascertain who were its 'disciples' and, thirdly, the bust of Hitler was to be daubed with graffiti.

In 2001, many years after the event, Clive Wilkinson wrote to the owner of River House, sending copies of the *Daily Express* articles and saying:

> We dressed in civies so that, if necessary, we could pass ourselves off as RAF officers from Tangmere. We drove to River in four cars; my sister being one of the getaway drivers in the family Wolseley. A chap called Bailey and I led the fleet in a 1920 open 4½-litre Bentley. The operation had been planned to the extent that everyone had an allotted task. After cutting the telephone wires, we knocked at the door which was opened by fascist thug, Schneider. Bailey and I danced a three man tango with him into the kitchen. We crashed into the dresser which toppled over. The iron man was eventually subdued and hogtied on the floor littered with shards of broken crockery. Elsewhere, a couple of chaps sat on Baker and others ransacked and unlocked drawers of the study desk for enemy intelligence. With us was a mild mannered observer – a dab hand at radar calibration but not cut out for the rough stuff. He was appointed guardian of the priestesses who were on their knees in the library praying to Hitler's bust. One of them grabbed a phone from a sideboard and began to phone for the police. Her screams were effective in so much as to

give the impression that the law was on its way. Everyone scarpered, leaving Bailey and I to tote the roped and writhing Schneider to the Bentley and thence to Petworth Square where he was debagged and photographed.

The successful raiding party had celebrated in a pub at Bury for some time before it was realised that the observer was missing. In the rush to get away, he had been overlooked, not least because he had discovered that he could not achieve his task which had been to daub the bust of Hitler in green paint – he had forgotten to bring the paint!

The raid – but not its ultimate conclusion – was faithfully placed on the front page of the *Daily Express* of December 14. The raiding party had to return to Kingdom House in order to see if they could negotiate the release of the hapless observer who, by this stage, was in the arms of the local police. Mr. Baker agreed not to prosecute if the League's documents were released, which they were, having been copied. The Commanding Officer at Ford decided to treat the raid as a schoolboys' prank but forbade any further communication with the press.

However, those in the raiding party were grilled by MI5 agents who appeared convinced that the young naval officers were communists. The stolen papers revealed one big surprise in that Air Chief Marshall Dowding (the commander of RAF Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain) was revealed as a disciple. And what happened to the bust of Hitler? Who knows? Perhaps it is buried somewhere in the garden.

This story was originally written in January 2011. Three years later, I was approached in our driveway by a middle-aged lady with a Canadian accent who enquired 'was this Kingdom House?' Luckily, the name she gave for the house was familiar. She turned out to be the youngest daughter of James Battersby who, having been interned during the war, came to live at Kingdom House as one of the disciples of the League of Christian Reformers. She was undertaking research about her father (who had sadly committed suicide some ten years after the raid) and his time immediately post-war, with a view to publishing a novel and having a film made based on her father's life and his internment.

1 In the early years of the war the *Daily Express*, which before the conflict had been in favour of appeasing Hitler, began an 'intern the lot' campaign with reference to Nazi sympathisers. See Robert Hewison, *Under Siege – Literary Life in London 1939-45*, chapter 1.

Pleasant green-tinted sandstone outside

The earlier history of Egdean church
Peter Jerrome and Michael Till, *PSM* 152, June 2013

A. A. Evans, for twenty years the rector of Friston and East Dean, near Eastbourne, retired and living in North Pallant, Chichester, visited Egdean[1] in the early 1930s. It was Monday, a washing day, and he was pleased to find, 'white lines fluttering out on the common and getting bleached in the summer sunlight.' Evans' great interest was church architecture and he was soon making his way to the church of St Bartholomew, no doubt his reason for coming to Egdean in the first place. Given the date 1622 'cut in brick over the doorway' Evans saw a rare example of what he called the 'Laudian revival'[2] to be compared with South Malling and the graceful church porch at Ford. He thought 'the pleasant green-tinted sandstone outside' had come from the Ventnor quarries, while the brickwork of the rest of the building was of the highest quality. Evans had come prepared: he knew of an older church building apparently taken down, although he thought that the old font had somehow survived. He knew too of the arrival as resident minister in 1663 of one George Bradshaw, dispossessed under the Commonwealth, whose subsequent career had included a spell as an alehouse keeper. Worn and broken in health, he had held the cure until his death five years later. Of Bradshaw's predecessors at Egdean, Evans clearly had no knowledge.

Fifty years on from Evans' visit[3] I had attempted by using newly-available documentation from Petworth House to outline the church's earlier history but found the extant material allusive and incomplete. I could do little more than draw attention to Ralph Blinston's role in building the church and ask a number of questions to which I had no satisfactory answer. A further thirty years later, my discussions with Michael Till, while leaving much obscure, have provided a measure of context for Blinston's activities.

While the ecclesiastical parish of Egdean is now served from Petworth, this is a relatively modern arrangement. Ancient Egdean's connections were with the Priory at Hardham, sited at the important junction on the old Roman road, and a foundation of Augustinian canons going back at least to the twelfth century. The canons, four in number, under a prior, were not enclosed monks but ordained priests, each responsible for a ministry or ministries. By 1279 Walter Dawtrey, tenant in demesne[4] had a significant local territory that

included Egdean. He had a charter for an annual fair[5] on the May Day and free warren. As an act of piety, Dawtrey made over the benefice of Egdean with its dues to the priory at Hardham, the arrangement being undisturbed when the demesne passed by inheritance to the Goring family at Burton.

By 1521 the Augustinian canon John Frankwell from Hardham had responsibility for Egdean, St Bartholomew's being part of a wider pastoral responsibility. The living was not now supported by tithes, if it had ever been, Frankwell like his predecessors had a 'corrody'.[6]

By the early mid-sixteenth century, Sir Henry Goring from Burton had attained the position of Knight of the bedchamber to Henry VIII and would, no doubt, be all too aware of that king's intentions with regard to the monastic foundations. It would be an appropriate, not to say opportune, time, to take back what Sir William Dawtrey, in a less secular age, had so long ago made over to the now threatened priory at Hardham. The benefice became a 'discharged rectory' with the dues passing back to the old demesne and hence to the Goring family. The priory link was severed, leaving the ancient obligation to provide a perpetual curate in limbo on the death of the last priest in 1547. By this first year of Edward I, Egdean had no officiating minister: in technical terms the parish of Egdean had been 'impropriated'. Inevitably the church fell into disuse. After William Smart's will of 1547, seeking burial in 'the church yarde of Egden' and the customary memorial masses, there is silence.

The period from 1547 to the appearance of Ralph Blinston in the early 1620s to expose the 'concealment' under Henry VIII is obscure, but clearly the old Hardham days gradually passed from memory. Seventy years and a cataclysmic religious revolution passed, while the land involved came into the possession of the powerful Earls of Northumberland at Petworth. At once free-spending and indigent,[7] they had been happy enough to let out the old parsonage glebe and church, even the old church bells had been appropriated to the landlord's use, while the fabric of the old church had been reused for secular purposes.

With the 'concealment' now revealed, Blinston had a strong case, at least in theory. It was strong enough for the Lord Keeper to agree to him being presented as incumbent. In fact Blinston met determined opposition, being kept out of the parsonage and glebe[8] 'with force and strong hand.' At some point the Lord Keeper instructed the sheriff of the county to put Blinston in possession of the cure of Egdean employing whatever measures were appropriate. At the same time Blinston received the King's licence 'to collect alms and benevolences from subjects in divers several counties and cities for

the speedy perfectynge and finishing of a parish church.'

Ralph Blinston seems to have had influential friends; he also had, on his doorstep, some determined opponents. John Dee, apparently the most prominent Northumberland tenant, brought an action against Blinston in King's Bench for trespass, claiming that the sheriff had put him (Dee) out of his legal possession. The Earl's own position was equivocal: clearly acting under advice, he was prepared to reply to Blinston's petition but 'not upon his oath or upon his honour.' He did, however, delay a diffident reply sufficiently for the law term to expire and for Blinston to have left London.

At some time there was talk of resolving the situation by appeal to those who had recollection of the period before 1547. Blinston reasonably pointed out that anyone who could give first-hand testimony would have to be over eighty at the very least and could not be expected to travel to give evidence 'without great hazarde and danger of their lives.' They would have to be examined quickly or they might die and 'the same might trench to the losse of the said gleebe and disherison of the said church.' Blinston would prepare a list of questions for witnesses, on the assumption that such people existed. If he did so the questions do not survive. All that is extant are interrogations on behalf of the Earl and John Dee. They seek to establish details of the occupation of one Frye, one Roper, and the transference of a lease from one Stone to Skinner and thence to Skinner's widow. They also seek details of the sheriff's forcible removal of the Earl's tenants, and whether the church has been in use between the death of the last incumbent and the coming of Ralph Blinston. Clearly it had not. The Earl's position, legally shaky as it was, would not have been helped by his uneasy relationship with King James, nor do the interrogations tackle the basic question at issue. Re-establishing the position after 1547 had little bearing on what had happened before. There is no indication that the interrogations ever received a reply.

At present we have some clarification but insistent questions remain. Who was Ralph Blinston? He remains as elusive as ever. How long was he incumbent at Egdean? William Jenner was rector in 1677 whether as successor to Evans' Bradshaw is not clear, Evans gives no authority. The register begins in 1646. And the attribution to Saint Bartholomew, a saint very much revered by the Saxons, as was Hardham's Saint Botolph. An echo here of a time long centuries before 1547?

OPPOSITE The date 1622 incised into the brickwork over the doorway in the porch at Egdean church which A. A. Evans saw as a rare example of what he called the 'Laudian revival'.

1 *A Saunterer in Sussex* (1935) Chapter xviii.
2 Michael Till found Evans' use of the term problematic. Egdean was built in 1622 before Archbishop Laud came to power and influence. Michael associated the phrase with high or moderately high churchmen, centuries later, putting hangings round an altar hung in the William Morris pre-Raphaelite way from iron rails, of silk (or other cord). It appealed as asserting continuity with the church of the Middle Ages. Till (1935 – 2012) was Dean of Winchester between 1996 and 2005. He spent his retirement in Petworth.
3 *PSM* 20 (June !980).
4 Essentially freehold.
5 Quite separate from Petworth's November fair with which it has often been linked. Petworth fair is older and by prescription rather than charter.
6 Originally the right to free quarter, due from vassal to lord during the latter's periodical circuit. The word would later be used exclusively in the ecclesiastical sense of a pension or food provided by a religious house in this case, of course, the priory. See *Compact O.E.D*. sw. corrody.
7 See for instance Peter Jerrome, *Cloakbag and Common Purse* (1979) chapter 4.
8 Petworth House documents as quoted in *PSM* 20.

A richly contemplative mind

An appreciation of Peter Jerrome and his work for the Petworth Society
Max Egremont, *PSM* 183, June 2021

I first heard the name Jerrome some sixty-seven years ago, when, as a child out walking with my nanny in Petworth, I saw Peter's father outside his shop in Pound Street. 'Look,' Nanny said, 'that's Mr. Jerrome – don't get in his way' and I stepped to one side to avoid a quick-moving, purposeful man in a long khaki warehouse coat, obviously in a hurry as he filled his van with deliveries. This was during the 1950s, in a different Petworth, when there were several food shops, a variety of butchers, greengrocers and a fishmonger. What was on offer took the form of good plain fare, with the occasional new excitement. I remember a window display in Meacham's of a neat pyramid of Heinz baked bean tins livened up by the latest gastronomic breakthrough: baked beans mixed with pork sausages. My family mostly bought our provisions from Hazelman's, on the corner of Middle Street and High Street, where The Hungry Guest is now. I do remember, however, that Mr. Jerrome was popular and respected in the town, one of Petworth's notable figures. The family had a link to the Leconfield Estate through Peter's grandfather Arthur Allison who had been my great-uncle Charles, Lord Leconfield's water bailiff. Not until later, however, did I get to know Peter although there were tales throughout my childhood and youth of Mr. Jerrome's son who studied at Cambridge and his intimate acquaintance with the biblical languages.

Before my father died in 1972, I was away from Petworth much of the time, at boarding school or university: then working in London, the north of England and the United States. It was my father's death, when I was twenty-four, that changed everything. The estate was faced with a huge tax bill that threatened its survival and I had to come back to Petworth to try to find a way forward. It was about this time, I think, that Peter also returned to help with the shop.

I found that I faced not only the tax authorities but a divided and angry town. Because of my father's work for Harold Macmillan, the Prime Minister of the time, my parents had often been in London during the twenty years of their control of the estate, after my great-uncle Charles's death in 1952, leaving the management in the hands of insensitive agents.

The anger became clear in the early 1970s when the West Sussex County Council (which had money in those days) tried to solve Petworth's traffic problems by building a by-pass. Two possible routes – both horrific – were

proposed: one through the Shimmings valley, the other across Petworth Park. A battle commenced, with each route having its partisans, and a group was formed to save the Shimmings valley.

This called itself the Petworth Society and was narrow in its aims, one of which was to put the bypass through the park. It had little interest in local history and was controlled by a retired ambassador who was said to have been upset that my parents had seldom invited him and his wife up to the big house.

The National Trust did a splendid job in defending the park, showing that we had been right to have given the park and house to the Trust in 1947. But it became clear that my family was a liability. One chairman of the County Council clearly disliked us, saying with glee 'I'm afraid that new roads always hurt someone and this time it's you.' What solved the problem was not the County Council's vast Highways and Planning departments but the local butcher Bert Speed with his proposal to improve existing roads for the re-routing of lorries: much cheaper and less damaging to the landscape than the previous ideas. The divided town, however, remained. As the bypass row faded, the Petworth Society found itself stranded. What was its purpose now? Some of the campaigners died, others moved away or found different causes, doubt arose about its future – and this was Peter Jerrome's hour. How he achieved his dominance I'm still not quite sure although I now know the mesmeric effect of Peter's immense learning, his humorous charm and quiet yet firmly persuasive personality.

He changed the Society into a much more broadly based interpreter of Petworth's character and past. For Peter Jerrome saw that Petworth – the town and the community – was a fascinating and unique place. To make the town realise this, he had to carry its people with him and avoid the Society becoming either a narrowly based pressure group (as local conservation bodies often are) or a collection of dusty antiquarians. The past should be brought into the present, to explain the town. No group consisting mostly of those who'd come recently to Petworth could do this, for 'old' Petworth would turn away from it.

He showed himself to be natural leader who could win everyone's respect. As Jumbo Taylor, who was also immensely knowledgeable about Petworth (and, alas, died recently) said, 'Peter's genuine.' Peter's books and the increasingly unusual and interesting Society's magazine helped; an early work, *Cloak-bag and Common Purse*, about enclosures and copy-holders in the sixteenth century, showed that he was no landlord's puppet, as it revealed my sixteenth-century ancestors in a far from flattering light. More books followed: histories of Petworth and of Ebernoe, of Petworth Fair, photographs from the collection left by George Garland, the town's photographer from the 1920s to the 1960s and an old friend of Peter.

The interviews conducted by Peter, latterly with my wife Caroline, will be invaluable for historians. He never uses a tape recorder but makes rapid notes of the conversation, always accurate and getting the flavour of the subject and how he or she speaks. Such conversations were often made easier by Peter remembering the subject's parents or grandparents or other members of the family, showing yet again his deep knowledge of Petworth. To find the servants who'd worked in Petworth House, he and the National Trust's administrator Diana Owen often had to travel to distant parts of the country to meet retired housemaids, gardeners, farm labourers or footmen. The book about them – *Those that are never seen* – shows a vanished way of life, the people interviewed apparently having no bitterness or regret. Among Peter's other works is an account of his own eight favourite books that includes novels in Spanish and French, *My Ántonia* by the American writer Willa Cather, the essays of Montaigne, St John's Gospel and the Old Testament Book of the prophet Jeremiah. Also, who can forget Peter's charming reminiscences of life in the shop or his own poems? These personal writings show not only his familiar humour and sympathy but also a richly contemplative mind.

But the Society needed more than scholarship to keep it going. Those who know Peter realise that from behind that gentle façade can come an occasional flash of sharp steel, always in a good cause. He showed his will-power and administrative talent in arranging the moving visit of the Canadian veterans of the Toronto-Scottish Regiment who were stationed in Petworth during the war, in the opening of the new Cottage Museum in Grove Street (and research into the life of its earlier resident Mrs. Cummings), in the yearly struggle of organising the Petworth Fair and in supervising the book sales that are so important for the Society. His wife Marian and he also provided a haven for meetings and discussions in their book-filled house in Pound Street.

Is this farewell? [1] We must hope not. Petworth needs Peter Jerrome and those who live here must not allow him to move too deeply into the shadows. The town must know that the lights are still on during winter evenings in the Pound Street house, that the door might suddenly (or perhaps gradually) open to reveal a familiar stooping figure in a woolly hat as Peter emerges to call on someone or to check the accuracy of some statement made about a landmark in the town, or simply to go for a walk. It is essential for us who live here to be able to feel for as long as possible that Petworth can still benefit from the most reliable interpreter of its character and its past.

1 This appreciation was written on Peter Jerrome's retirement as chairman of the Petworth Society.