

187. June 2022

THE PETWORTH JUBILEE *magazine*

No. 187. June 2022



THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

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April on the Rother: This moorhen's nest is only just above water level – the parent birds will be keeping their fingers (or wings) crossed for no storms of heavy rain for a week or two.

FRONT COVER

A selection of postage stamps commemorating past royal celebrations with five of those celebrating the current Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The small Queen Victoria stamps were printed to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee although they didn't carry any wording to that effect.

BACK COVER

A fine open-growing oak tree in the field of cattle towards the beginning of the Virgin Mary's Spring walk. See page 43.

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 plus the parish of Egdean; to encourage interest in the history of the district and to foster a community spirit'. It is non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit making. Membership is open to anyone, anywhere and the annual subscription is £16.00, single or double; postal £20.00, overseas nominal £30.00. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Alexandra Soskin

At the time of writing, we have been blessed with lovely spring weather for a while, including over the Easter weekend and for the Gog Walk. There was a good turnout, and while clambering up the Shimmings it even became quite hot.

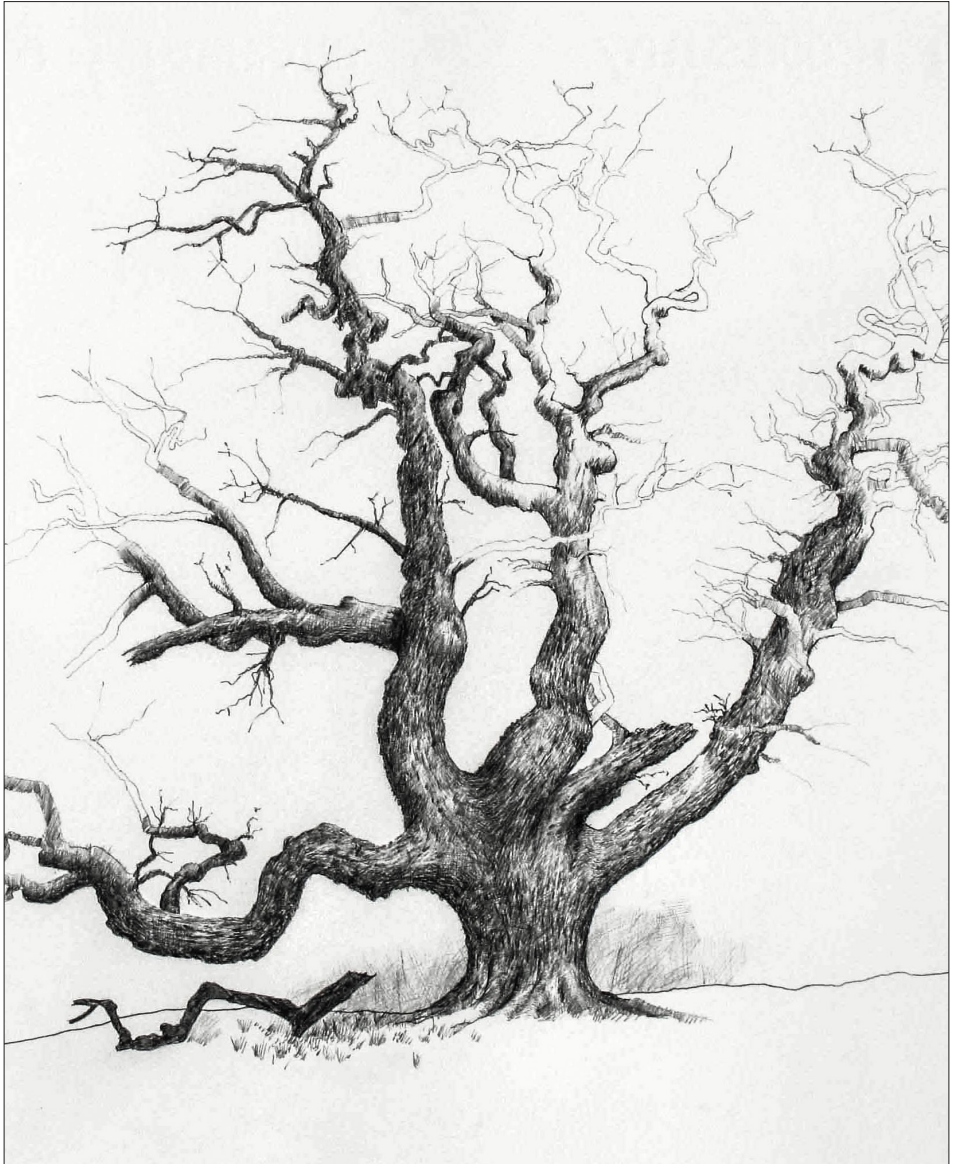
In Costello lore, to be a true Petworth parishioner, you need to know about and where to find three things: the dog's grave, the ancient Virgin Mary's Spring, and 'the-doll's-head-in-the-wall'. Miles led the Gog Walk, and by taking us past the first two of these, it provided a good initiation for anyone as yet unfamiliar with these important and memorable sites. The doll's head is a little trickier to find – for the curious, just apply to Miles for help!

We have what promises to be another excellent walk coming up at the beginning of July. Gerald Gresham-Cooke has generously volunteered his time to take us on a tour of some of the ancient trees in Petworth Park. As some of these go back several hundred years, and are amongst the oldest in Europe, this promises to be an awe-inspiring experience. There is no charge for the walk and you'll find joining details on the enclosed flyer.

On the committee, I regret to report that Gemma Levett will be standing down at the end of this year. Gemma has managed the herculean task of handling all our membership matters. Many idiosyncrasies have introduced themselves over the years, so this is no mean feat. We are very grateful that Gemma has made time for this alongside her other significant and time consuming obligations. We will miss her calm and capable mental juggling keeping it all together.

On the positive side, I am delighted to report we have three new members on the Petworth Society committee: Phil Stephens, Mike Mulcahy and Florence Churchill. Phil will be taking over the Treasurer role when Nick Wheeler steps down at the end of August. Mike will be picking up membership matters from Gemma, in due course. Meantime he is kindly looking into some membership management software. This will work in conjunction with the online new and renewed membership facility we are currently working on. Florence is kindly picking up the Events 'hat' on the committee. So you will no doubt be hearing more from her with the rollout of the Society's events during the year.

OPPOSITE Jonathan Newdick, 'An ancient oak in Petworth Park'. Graphite on paper; private collection. This may well be one of the trees to be seen on Gerald Gresham-Cooke's tour of ancient trees in Petworth Park in July.



EDITORIAL

Miles Costello

It will of course be too late to comment in this issue on events in Petworth during the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. However to give some sort of crude comparison I have produced a short account of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Being 125 years apart it is impossible to accurately equate the two events and the town at the very end of the nineteenth century was quite different to that of today. Petworth being then much more insular, entertainment was home-grown and people tended not to travel far if at all. Royal occasions were hugely popular and especially one as rare as a Diamond Jubilee and the celebrations were still talked about favourably some decades later. I do wonder in this rather transient society we now live in if fond recollections of the present jubilee will last as long. What will of course outlast the celebrations is Jonathan's skilfully designed commemorative magazine cover which I think will you agree does justice to the occasion.

This jubilee year also marks the 75th anniversary of Petworth House being passed to the nation, a not insignificant event which brought to a close a hugely important chapter in the history of the town. To recognise the occasion Lord Egremont has kindly allowed me to include an essay he wrote for the Paul Mellon Centre for Arts entitled 'Early Days at Petworth'. I think that you will find it very interesting.

Sadly fortune did not look favourably upon the Society's spring programme. First the Big Band event planned for January fell foul of the Covid restrictions while my own talk on Petworth Beyond Living Memory coincided with storm Eunice and the resulting power cuts. Reports on both the re-scheduled Big Band Event and the Society AGM will appear in the September issue.

Saturday March 12th saw the first book sale of the year in the Leconfield Hall. Hopes were high for a well-attended sale and so it was pleasing to see that at 9.30am, with still half an hour to go, the queue stretched out of the door and down the side of the hall. The day was a great success and the atmosphere evoked memories of the early years of the sale. If you have books to donate please let me know or bring them in on the next book sale day which is on Saturday 9th July.

I am pleased to report that the Petworth Society/Petworth Past Gog Walk took place on Easter Saturday and with a good turnout and fine weather it went ahead as planned. While most of the walkers were familiar with the route it was nice to see a few new faces. For those unable to make the 'Gog Walk' Jonathan has included it on one of his popular maps on page 45 of this issue. Just a couple of

weeks before the walk I visited the reopened 'Round the Hills' footpath following its long closure. What a pleasant surprise it was. I am sure that it has been many years since it looked so tidy and well maintained. Congratulations must go to the Leconfield Estate, the Town Council and of course the Golden family for all their efforts in what must surely have been a complicated and costly undertaking.

Saturday April the 2nd saw me venture across the parish boundary into our neighbouring parish where I enjoyed the Tillington Men's Breakfast in the village hall. What a wonderful innovation which, much to my surprise, has been going on for quite some time, how did I not know about this? Each breakfast is followed by a short talk which this month was on Victorian Petworth. No sooner was I home than I set off for Lurgashall where I spent a couple of hours at their wonderful village archive open day. While both events were splendidly well organised, and made all the more enjoyable by the excellent company, they did make me reflect on why these small communities manage to play host to such events that are generally unavailable closer to home. Unfortunately I came to no conclusion. Congratulations to both Gerald and Sarah for their sterling efforts.

After a three-year sabbatical our much loved November fair will hopefully return later this year, and with a new and enthusiastic organising committee it has been rebranded as Petworth St. Edmund's Fair. Another change is that from now on it will be held on the nearest Saturday to November 20th; this year it is November 19th, and thanks to the Town Council the event will include the switching on of the Christmas lights. While the change of date may seem like a break in tradition it will still fall within the traditional feast of St. Edmund as it has done for many centuries, however being at a weekend it will make it easier for people to attend and slightly lengthen the operating time of the fair. Lots of exciting details about the November fair will appear in the September magazine and the local press. Incidentally, did you know that St. Edmund is the patron saint of plagues and pandemics?

And on the subject of pandemics . . .

Some older members may recall the Society conducting a survey of the dialect of Petworth back in the mid-1990s. The results were quite amazing but sadly highlighted what most of us already feared that besides occasional individual words and phrases our local dialect had more or less vanished. Undeterred, I continued

to collect surviving local words as and when I came across them and eventually included them in a list now held at the West Sussex Record Office at Chichester. Meanwhile my interest in the evolving English language has continued and thanks to the pandemic a whole new industry has sprung up creating a tsunami of words and phrases that we have slowly come to learn to live with. Boosters, shielding, furlough, lockdown, PPE, work from home, self-isolating, circuit-breaker, social distancing, flattening the curve, asymptomatic, herd-immunity, variant, bubble, anti-vaxer, anti-masker, long covid, covidiot, track and trace, the R number, patient zero, lateral flow, contact tracing and vaccine passport are just a few of the Covid related words and phrases that have slipped into everyday usage during the contagion. Many of these words will retreat into obscurity over the coming months and years and it will be interesting to see which if any survive in the long term. Do you have a pandemic related word or phrase that we can add to the list and save for posterity?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Petworth (almost) Beyond Living Memory and early cinema

Dear Miles,

It was unfortunate that your recent talk on ‘Petworth Beyond Living Memory’ had to be cancelled at the last minute due to the awful storm, but it got me wondering how far back I can remember for I reckon I must be among those whose memories go back as far as many of the present population of the town. As a comparative newcomer to the Town – I have only spent the last 62 years living in Petworth. Elsewhere, I have childhood memories of the 1930s, when there was a queue of veterans of the Great War, some without an arm or

a leg, outside the Labour Exchange, but also glorious summer days travelling by the Camber Tram to paddle at the Sands. Then came the second world war, the Battle of Britain overhead, evacuation, ‘Hit and Run Raids’, ‘Doodlebugs’, Sunday School and chapel followed by teenage scouting, schools plays and tennis. Next came National Service in the RAF, college for teacher training and the first post in a secondary modern school on the Isle of Wight, marriage, two children and then the move to Petworth and there are many who share my memories of the last fifty years.

Two banks, a 'proper, purpose-built post office', three butchers, two greengrocers, three garages with filling stations, SCATS, two fish shops – one sold chips, the Swan Hotel – a Trust House, six grocers, tea rooms, including the wonderful East Street Dairy run by the Wareham sisters, ladies and gentlemen's outfitters, a shoe shop, fabric and haberdashers, jewellers, clockmakers, two chemists, two newsagents, cycle, radio and television shops, the Iron Room, only two antiques shops and probably fewer hairdressers than today. The swimming pool, schools at Culvercroft (junior boys), East Street (junior girls) the infants school where the library stands now, and of course, the newly-built Herbert Shiner County Secondary School (happy memories of Sir Herbert himself). The wartime air raid siren calling out the Fire Brigade, Special Sergeant Clifford directing Goodwood traffic at Pound Corner, with his motor cycle and side-car parked alongside, and the children along Station Road calling for 'rusty coppers', the Regal Cinema, Hampers Green Drama Group, the Petworth Edwardians, Fair days and the visit of the Toronto-Scottish Regiment veterans and all it meant to them and to the Town, the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations. Then there were all the personalities we associate with these places and events.

What have I left out? What have I got wrong? Yes, the passenger trains no longer came through Petworth Station, but the goods trains were still shunting and delivering coal to the yard. New-

comers to the town may find it difficult to picture what living in Petworth was like not so very long ago. It would be good to have some reactions.

Keith Thompson, Petworth.

Dear Miles,

Thank you for such a good mix of really interesting pieces in the last magazine.

One picture in particular took my attention. It was the photograph of the Regal Cinema, and my mind went straight back to a tale that my husband used to tell. He was born in 1920 and left Fittleworth school when he was fourteen years old, as many children from rural schools did in those days. During this time it was easy to get into Petworth either by bus or train and so a visit to the cinema to see the film of the week with his mum was often on the cards. However, the cinema then was not the brick building of 1937 but in another building entirely at the bottom end of Pound Street. It was built of corrugated iron which the youth of Petworth found most appealing, for they soon found out that picking up any old stick, holding it in a good, firm grasp right against the building and running as fast as they possibly could, would make the most marvellous rickety-rickety-rack sound inside the cinema. However, this activity completely obliterated the soundtrack of the film being shown. Perhaps one of your readers could say when the grand Regal cinema replaced this old building and the problem was resolved.

Judy Sayers, Fittleworth.

Dear Madam

Miles Costello

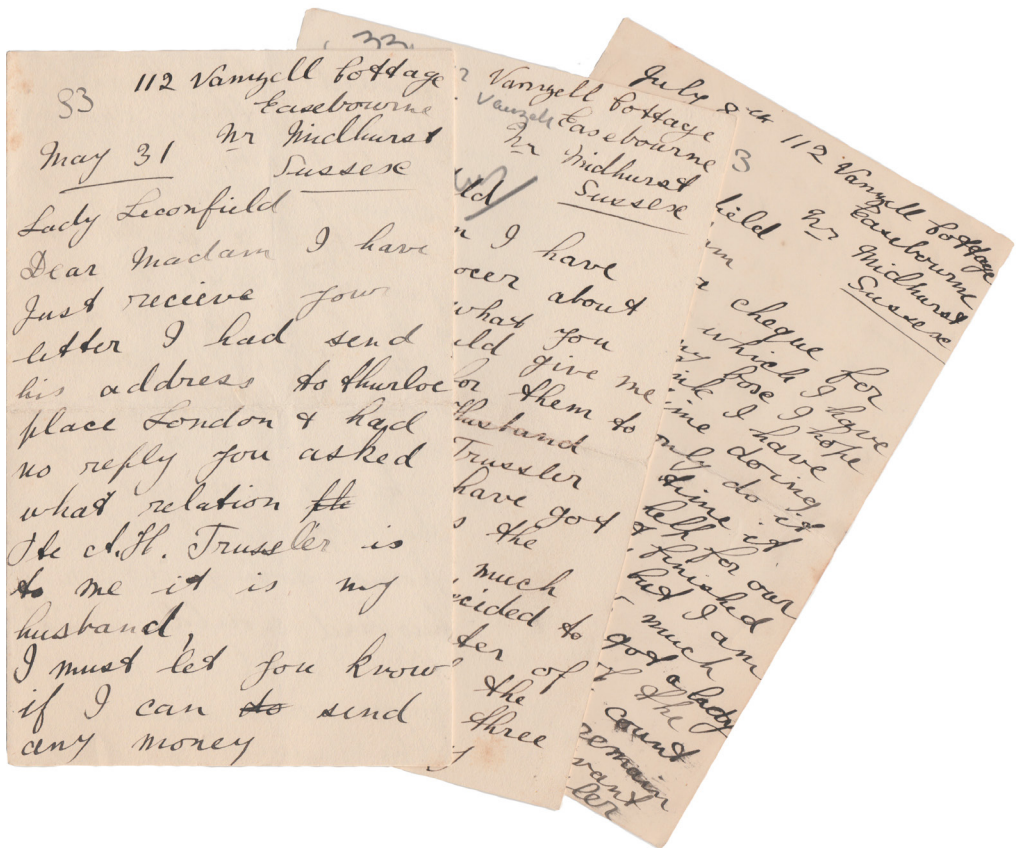
At first glance it appeared to be just a small bundle of neatly wrapped paper tied with a double bow on a tattered length of red ribbon. On closer inspection it turned out to be a short series of letters which, having lain undisturbed for over a century, spanned the vast social divide that existed between a young Easebourne mother and Lady Violet Leconfield of Petworth House. Sadly the notes reveal only the conversation from Easebourne to Petworth, but relate the concerns of a wife for her soldier husband held in a German prisoner of war camp.

From the summer of 1918, the wife, who sadly didn't feel familiar enough to reveal her Christian name, is K. Trussler of 112 Vanzell Cottage, Easebourne and she writes on behalf of her unfortunate husband Alfred, a private in the Royal Sussex Regiment, who is held prisoner in a camp near Dulmen in Germany. The recipient, Lady Violet, wife of the 3rd Baron Leconfield had recently become deputy President of the Sussex Red Cross and took a great interest in the fortunes of Sussex prisoners of war.

The beginning of the correspondence is missing but the letters are primarily about sending comforts to the POWs and raising money at home to pay for relief parcels. 'K' the dutiful wife must, it seems, remain anonymous, a symbol of the hardship and anxiety experienced by those left at home. Ironically her husband, having enjoyed the relative luxury of army food, along with the usual periods of enforced inactivity common to frontline soldiers, had gained weight since enlisting. Alfred, a Cowdray Estate worker, known to all as Fred, survived the war despite being wounded prior to his capture. A popular member of the town band where he played the big drum, Fred passed away in February 1932 at the age of 43 following an operation for appendicitis. He left behind 'K' and two children. I have not attempted to correct the spelling or punctuation.

May 31.

Lady Leconfield. Dear Madam I have just receive your letter I had send his address to Thurloe Place London and had no reply.¹ You asked what relation A.H. Trussler is to me it is my husband. I must let you know if I can send you any money towards the parcel. I am willing enough but I am not strong and I only get my 19s 6d a week to pay my rent and rates & keep myself & my little girl of four years & half I have to go out charing when I can get it to help keep the home going as my husband would wish it. I had a card from my



husband this week and his address is No. 19599 Pte Alfred H. Trussler, 9th Royal Sussex Regt. 47 B Company, 30 B. Barrack, Group 3, Gefangenemlager, Dulmen. I am filling the paper up for his clothes as much as I know but I don't [know] his size as he had got so much stouter since he has been in the army.² I have answered your letter by return of post as I want my dear husband to get his parcels God knows they will want them out there. I remain your humble servant K. Trussler.

June 19.

Lady Leonfield. Dear Madam I have seen my grocer about the smokes what you said you would give me a permit for them to send to my husband Pte Alfred H. Trussler in Germany. I have got the prices and as the cigarettes are so much dearer I have decided to send him a quarter of tobacco a fortnight the cost of which is three shillings and as my husband was so fond of making his own cigarettes would the grocer be allowed to put in a packet of cigarette

papers and a pipe or should I send the pipe to you to put in his parcels, & dear Madam I have seen in the paper about the shortage of funds for parcels for the boys & I am willing to collect money as I am not in a position to help myself & if you would like me to I can get locked boxes from the band what my husband belong to & if you would let me know what to do I should be please to do my best.

Your humble servant K. Trussler.

July 8.

Lady Leconfield. Dear Madam I enclose a cheque for four pounds which I have collected in my box I hope you wont think I have been a long time doing it but can only do it in my spare time it will be a little help to our boys. I have not finished Easebourne yet but I am going to see how much more I can get. I got a lady to keep the key of the box and just help to count it that is all.

I remain your humble servant K. Trussler.

p.s. The Rev. Lascelles [of] Rotherfield House took your address to send you a cheque I hope it was a good round amount. K. Trussler.

Aug. 12.

Lady Leconfield. Dear Madam I am so sorry to trouble you but would you send me my husband's letters I should not have sent them so quickly but I have not got his new address so I cannot write to him, I received the receipt for the fund quite safe, I hope dear Madam that you will forgive me for troubling you.

I remain your humble servant K. Trussler.

Oct. 23.

Lady Leconfield. Dear Madam thank you very much for your kindness in writing to me. I am so pleased to know that they are going to have a nice Xmas parcel. I have heard from Mrs Watson & ask me to send it to her and she would make up the rest. I am posting her ten shillings off tonight. I think it is so kind of her. I will see what I can collect later on after the fete is over for the fund again. Thank you.

I remain your humble servant K. Trussler.

1. This is probably 4 Thurloe Place. A Leconfield property lent to The War Office and home to the Central Prisoners of War Committee. It is likely that they didn't respond to letters and parcels from private individuals.

2. Filling the paper up. This was the Red Cross form which was used to allocate clothes sent out to prisoners.

Miss Botting wore bloomers

Steve Moorey

I was born on the 10th day of September 1944 at Chalet Corner in Burton Park Road just four months after the Normandy Landings had taken place. My entry into this world was assisted by my Aunty Bett who was the youngest sister of my mum Jessie. Aunty Bett was just sixteen years old at the time and worked behind the counter at Rapley's Garage at Heath End. The cottage we lived in was rented from Dr Morley Fletcher who lived at Burton Corner, the main house. My dad at this time was on active duty in the RAF in Palestine after spending most of the war in India.

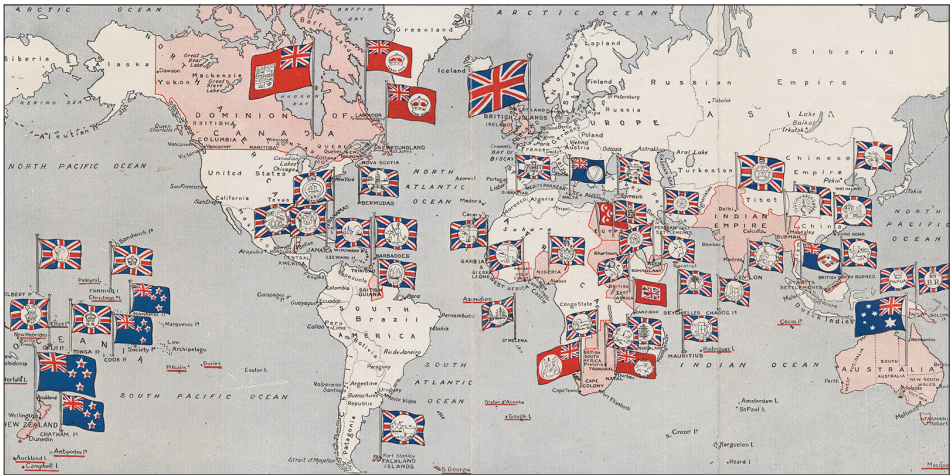
I started at Duncton School when I was five years old and was immediately met with some hostility, not only from the headmistress Miss Botting but also from some of the local boys. I presume it was because I was an in-comer and not a local boy, as my mum had been evacuated from her home town of Portsmouth due to the bombing. After showing some of the local boys that I was no pushover, I settled down and enjoyed my early education under the wing of Miss Ratcliffe who I liked.

Miss Ratcliffe's classroom as well as Miss Botting's was large and heated by a single coal fire close by the teacher's desk. The room was very cold in winter and often the third of a pint milk bottles arrived frozen solid. I can't remember what age I moved up into Miss Botting's class but it was not a good experience. It was evident that she took a dislike to me and often put me down when I was in competition with my two friends, Martin Dadswell and John Connor.

Miss Botting wore bloomers; I know this because they became evident when she climbed some steps to retrieve some books on a high shelf. She marked our exercise books with a very thick red or green pencil. My book had many red crosses. The desks were two seaters with a hinged lid. Woe betides any child who allowed the lid to slam shut. The inkwells were topped up with something that looked like a teapot and it was the highlight of your week when you were allocated a new pen nib and a clean square of pink blotting paper.

Behind Miss Botting's desk on the wall was a large map of the world and I remember that most of the countries were coloured pink. We were also fascinated by the coloured pictures in some big books which depicted cavalry charges and early battle scenes. Also at the front of the class was a large abacus on a stand and we all knew our ten-times tables off by heart. Occasionally we had singing lessons and Miss Botting's favourites seemed to be 'Little Brown Jug' and 'Polly Wolly Doodle all the Day'.

If you needed to go to the toilets, you asked to go to the 'offices'. No, I have no idea why that little building was called that. Just inside the 'offices' was a urinal with



'On the wall was a large map of the world and most of the countries were coloured pink.'

a pipe running along a black-painted wall. Flies settling on the pipe were an attractive target for little boys in short trousers. To the right of the urinal was the three-seater. I won't go into too much detail but using it was not a pleasant experience

Playtime always seemed to involve red coloured beanbags which had to be collected up by a favourite pupil and when the bell rang, we all marched back to the classroom in single file. The playground was tarmac which resulted in lots of skinned knees and the crab apples in the adjoining garden looked inviting but you soon learnt they were inedible. If it rained, we boys sheltered under the veranda and kicked sparks on the tiles with our boots which were fitted with Blakey's studs, much to the annoyance of old Mrs Connor who was the dinner lady in the adjoining canteen. Liver must have been plentiful in those days and it took me many years before I could ever eat it again.

Mr Taylor replaced Miss Botting when she retired and he took me under his wing and coached me in maths which was my weakest subject and it still is. Despite his generous help, I failed the eleven plus and went to Midhurst Secondary Modern School. My two school friends went to the Midhurst Grammar School. I had a good education at Midhurst and to this day I proudly display the initials F.E.P. on my business cards. ¹ Very few people have ever asked me with it means and I suppose they think I am a Fellow of some profession or college.

My sister Roberta attended Duncton School and now her daughter, my niece Helen Martin is Head Teacher of Duncton and Graffham Schools.

1. Failed eleven plus.

Early days at Petworth

Max Egremont

Petworth House was given by my family to the National Trust in 1947, with a huge endowment of some £400,000. My great-uncle, my father's predecessor, was still alive in 1947; he died in 1952 with the house still closed to the public, partly to reassure the confused and apprehensive old man that the change of ownership would have little effect. My parents moved into Petworth in 1953.

I remember being taken to see my great-uncle Charles Leconfield (or Lord Leconfield) a few months before his death.¹ Already bedridden, he had moved from his former bedroom on the first floor, called appropriately enough (given his passion for foxhunting) the Hunting Piece, to what had been my great-aunt's sitting room (now our dining room) at the south end of the ground floor, a long rectangular room that gets the sun in the middle of the day and (during the summer) in the evening. Pictures, mostly of children, that my great-aunt had hung in the room had been taken down, to be replaced by ones of his favourite hunters.

Uncle Charles, as my father called him, was sitting up in his single bed, dressed in striped pyjamas: a grey-haired, small, dumpy, pink-faced smiling man with a straggly moustache, not at all gruff. I was four years old and he may have been uncertain how to amuse this silent boy, the eventual heir to his beloved Petworth, a place cherished by him not for the house and art (which he knew little about and was bored by) but for the land across which he had ridden and hunted for more than fifty years.

What could he say to his great-nephew? He reached across to a small table by the bed, lifted up a large circular gold watch on a thin leather strap and held it in front of my face. 'Put this up to your ear', he said, 'and you'll hear it tick.'

We did not stay long because he was tired and soon afterwards uncle Charles died. There are photographs of the long funeral procession with my father and the Leconfields' adopted son Peter leading the mourners. For Petworth, for the town, the estate and the house, it was the end of an epoch, for Charles Leconfield, known by neighbours as the last of the feudal barons, had been the master there since inheriting from his father in 1901. His wife, my great-aunt Violet, was by 1952 in an asylum, being treated for insanity that had involved appearing naked out of the lift in the lobby of Claridge's hotel.

One of the last glimpses that my father had of his uncle was of reins tied to the end of the bed and Charles, in pyjamas, pulling on one side or the other as his old groom Bill Barnes read aloud from old hunting diaries that described winter days

BELOW Alfred Grenfell Haigh, Lord Leconfield with an unidentified huntsman being presented with his portrait seated on a hunter, 1931. Photograph. Petworth House. Digital image courtesy of Petworth House. (All rights reserved).



of long ago. His life, after inheriting, had been divided between sport (hunting, also shooting and fishing) and what in his obituary was called public service, as lord lieutenant of Sussex and chairman of the County Council.

Charles Leconfield liked the country, seldom going to London. His politics were strongly Tory and imperialist (he had fought in the Boer War), suspicious of abroad. When the Belgian ambassador came to stay, Charles was heard to exclaim just before dinner: ‘Damn these foreigners, they come between me and my food’: reactionary and crude, perhaps, but in the spirit of the times.

But good points echo across the years. Charles Leconfield had a sense of duty, was patient with his unhappy wife and had two adopted children, Peter and Elizabeth, who adored him. A shy inarticulate man, he had a gruff sense of humour, sometimes misunderstood. ‘Oh, sorry Lord Leconfield – am I sitting in

your chair?’ a young guest asked at Petworth. ‘All the chairs are my chairs’ was the deadpan, admittedly not startlingly witty, response.

On the estate, the hunt was paramount. Rides in the woods were trimmed so that riders could go along them in an undamaged top hat, woods were planted to hold foxes, keepers employed to preserve them, also to stop up the earths or holes down which they might escape the hounds. The annual earth-stoppers’ dinner was a popular and riotous local function. Uncle Charles could lose his temper with foolhardy followers of the hunt. Random jumping especially annoyed him; it was not, he thought, part of the day’s purpose and he held to the old nostrum, ‘He who leaps unnecessarily is an abomination.’

The seriousness of all this seems absurd. But the hunt – its hierarchy and customs – was then an extraordinarily important part of county (and country) life, a master of foxhounds having almost royal status. Even when I was a child, the then MFH was stopped for speeding and told the police that they must let him go immediately or he would be late for the meet.

Charles Leconfield had many possessions: houses (a castle in Cumberland, a ruined castle in Yorkshire and until 1947 the palace of Petworth in West Sussex), art and land. It was the art that he appreciated least, leaving it to his cultivated if eccentric wife Violet to take guests round the collection. If he had to do this, he peered at the pictures in the hope of a label to tell him the artist’s name.

Inevitably such an owner fell into the hands of frauds. During the 1920s the fashionable picture cleaner was Kennedy North who once boasted to Kenneth Clark that he was still ‘bluffing the buggers and making them pay’.² Charles Leconfield, no doubt following advice, got Kennedy North in to clean several of the Turners. The result was disastrous, all character and life drained through damaging methods. Now, apparently, some of the work of the once admired John Brealey, brought to the Petworth collection during the 1950s by Anthony Blunt, is thought imperfect. How will recent conservation work be regarded sixty or seventy years hence?

Much had to be done when my parents moved into Petworth House in 1953 from a then charming house called New Grove on the southern edge of the town. There were few bathrooms, the atmosphere and taste were dingy, the heating system primitive. The work took several years and involved new boilers, the installation of the lift, turning the Red Library into a study for my father (with new tall bookcases), re-gilding the White Library ceiling, moving the dining room into my great-aunt’s sitting room (where Charles Leconfield had died) and gradual redecoration of my parents’ bedroom (the State Bedroom) that later involved the use of what remained of Jonathan Ritson’s carving, painted white on a pink background, possibly chosen by John Fowler and reminiscent of the style of Rex Whistler or Oliver Messel. Some of this work was done while my

parents were still at New Grove, the rest after we had moved in.

In 1953 the house was opened to the public for the first time under the auspices of the National Trust. During the family's ownership, parties had been taken round at set times by a dignified figure called the commissionaire, usually a retired member of the estate staff. But in May the new era began. Harold Macmillan, then minister of housing, for whom my father worked, came with Lord Esher, chairman of the National Trust, to perform the opening ceremony. I remember sitting on the terrace, a small boy in shorts, next to Lady Esher, an American. As Macmillan spoke, a small crowd stood in front of him on the grass, including many estate employees: skilled craftsmen, painters, carpenters, electricians and plumbers, all in their best suits, who had been involved in the recent work to prepare the public rooms.

The house's ground floor was divided between the show rooms to the north and the private south end. The public was let in for I think some five days a week from half past two until 5 o'clock from the start of April until the end of October, their cars coming through the Grand Entrance Lodge on the drive also used by the family. The car park was in the Stable Yard, once busy with uncle Charles's many horses, governess carts, traps and carriages.

The person put in charge of the opening arrangements was Miss Harris, a cultivated, intelligent, intellectual woman who had been my great-aunt's secretary and now took on a similar role for my mother, as well as working for the National Trust. The administration of the public and private parts of the house was in the hands of this short-haired, bespectacled, middle-aged chain-smoker who had been to London University, subscribed to the *New Statesman*, voted Labour and had seen all the plays of Shakespeare.

Miss Harris found at least one aspect of my mother most impressive. One visiting expert, the furniture historian Ralph Edwards, was told that 'Mrs Wyndham' (as my mother then was) 'will be down soon' before Miss Harris's voice dropped in awe to add, 'I must warn you – she is very beautiful'

Miss Harris controlled the stewards. There was one in each public room and they were all retired estate workers and wore white jackets, never engaging in any conversation with visitors unless asked a question. If the question was about the family, they could answer; if it was about the house, its history or the art, the enquiry was referred to Miss Harris who wandered through the rooms wearing a large white badge on which was written 'secretary'. The steward and the cleaners were also supervised by Mr Doolin, a fussy man who wore a butler's dark jacket and striped trousers.

Few visitors came, there was no shop or café, just a table with postcards and guidebooks for sale in the North Gallery watched over by Mrs Moss, the wife of the house carpenter. Only about seventy cars could fit into the car park, which



'...the furniture historian Ralph Edwards, was told that "Mrs Wyndham" (as my mother then was) "will be down soon" before Miss Harris's voice dropped in awe to add, "I must warn you – she is very beautiful."' Anthony Buckley, Pamela (nee Wyndham-Quin), Lady Egremont, 1949. Modern bromide print after original negative. National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG x 75966). Digital image courtesy of estate of Kenneth Hughes / National Portrait Gallery, London. (All rights reserved). Reproduced here courtesy of Lord Egremont.

was usually half empty. If you did not know the town, the entrance to the house was hard to find, for the man then in charge of National Trust properties, Robin Fedden, a writer and traveller often out of the country in Syria or Egypt or the Pyrenees, thought that advertising was vulgar.³

Opening hours were shown on tiny notices, outside the Church Lodge or in the nearby tea shop called The Four and Twenty Blackbirds: very hard to see. Fedden was also in love with my mother, who did not want the place overrun by the public.

It was equally hard to get into the park and when you found an unlocked gate, an array of notices declared that no bicycling was allowed, the deer should be avoided during the rutting season and fox hounds and their puppies might be wandering about outside the hunt kennels so you should 'beware of the bitches': not the most enticing of welcomes.

The park was closed on Sunday mornings so that my parents and their guests could have it for themselves. Later we discovered that this had caused bad feeling in the town. Visitors complained that the atmosphere of the public rooms was bleak and dull because of badly lit pictures, dreary paint colours and unimaginative placing of furniture. John Walker, the retired American director of the National Gallery of Washington, who had a house near Petworth, compared it unfavourably with Parham.

It was not only the house that went to the nation. Many works of art were transferred as well in lieu of tax in a pioneering negotiation made necessary by the vast death duties after my great-uncle died. The arrangement let these works stay in the house, on show for the public. Twenty Turners were among them, with other pictures by Claude, Titian, Van Dyck, Le Nain, William Blake, the head of Aphrodite by Praxiteles, and some of the best furniture: all traded in at values that now seem absurdly low. But sales on the open market would have removed them from the house completely so the family approved of the 'in lieu' scheme. In fact, my great-uncle had surreptitiously sold about a dozen good pictures in the late 1920s, by Rembrandt, Bronzino, Chardin, Watteau and Holbein, trying to disguise this by having copies put up in their place.⁴ The copies were so bad that the rest of the family spotted the difference immediately.

The expert chosen to select works of art for the in-lieu arrangement was the art historian Anthony Blunt. Although I came to know Blunt much later, I was too young to meet him in the 1950s when he was often at Petworth, sifting through the collection. My parents liked him, although long before he was exposed as a Russian agent I heard them discuss his known Soviet sympathies. He once nervously accepted an invitation to a weekend at Petworth, perhaps imagining that the company would be mostly political (because of my father's work for Harold Macmillan) or social. Afterwards he assured my mother that he had enjoyed the experience. Much later, however, after Blunt's exposure, another guest, my mother's sister Mollie Salisbury, said that she had found him patronising and sinister. This may have been a form of point-scoring, for the two sisters were very competitive.

Anthony Blunt wrote an essay in the 1980s about his rehangings of the public rooms for the National Trust in preparation for the opening of these to the public.⁵ He was determined, he said, to thin out the previously thick 'country house' hang and praised my mother for her help in arranging many of the Turners (all of which went to the nation in lieu of tax) in the same room, then called the Red Room. Such a display now seems cold and academic, resembling a public gallery or museum.

The first time I met Blunt was in about 1968 when he was director of the Courtauld Institute, then in Portman Square, and I was still an undergraduate at Oxford. My parents took me to an evening party at the Institute where a picture

by Bronzino, sold by my great-uncle in 1928 and bought back by my father in the late 1960s, was on show (I'm not sure why) alongside two large other pictures from Petworth, in poor condition, by Andrea del Sarto, still owned by my family.⁶ Those by del Sarto some twenty-five years previously had been rejected by Blunt for the nation and were now being restored at the Courtauld, already clearly more exciting than had been thought. Blunt, thin and elegant in a dinner jacket, hosted the occasion in a quietly grand manner, saying humorously to my father: 'I thought we should put up a notice saying that the pictures on view this evening are the property of Lord Egremont unless it says otherwise.'

When we met at a dinner party in London nine years later (still before the exposure), I found a more approachable, even slightly fragile, personality. About four years after this, the National Trust picture expert Bobby Gore brought Blunt (still not revealed as a Soviet spy) to lunch at Petworth.⁷ By that time, I was married and Caroline, I and the experts went up in the afternoon to look at the pictures in store in a series of cold, unused first-floor bedrooms. There was much dust, the frames were dirty and the canvases dark after years of neglect. Near the end of the session Bobby said: 'Anthony, we must leave in about 10 minutes to catch our train. Oughtn't we to wash our hands?' Blunt held up his long, splayed, darkened fingers: 'If it's the pictures or washed hands, can't we choose the pictures?' Bobby, a fervent admirer, agreed so they turned back to the art and later got into the National Trust local representative's car to go to the station in an unclean state. These works in store, taken down by Blunt in the 1950s, were to be the basis of Alec Cobbe's brilliant re-hang some four years later.

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1. Charles Wyndham, 3rd Baron Leconfield, GCV0 (1872-1952).
2. Stanley Kennedy North (1887-1942): see 'British picture restorers, 1600-1950 - N', National Portrait Gallery, London, <https://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/directory-of-british-picture-restorers/british-picture-restorers-1600-1950-n>; see also Richard D. North, 'Stanley North (later Stanley Kennedy North) 1887-1942', https://www.richarddnorth.com/archive/elders_bettors/stanley_kennedy_north.asp, both accessed 13 February 2020.
3. Henry Robin Romilly Fedden, CBE (1908-1977).
4. Thirteen paintings in total are recorded as having been sold, including four by Rembrandt: see annotated copy of C. H. Collins Baker, *Catalogue of the Petworth Collection of Pictures in the Possession of Lord Leconfield*, London: The Medici Society, 1920, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London.
5. Anthony Blunt, 'Petworth Rehung: The Restoration and Rehangings of the Petworth Collection 1952-53', *National Trust Studies* 1980, London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1979, pp. 119-32.
6. When the Bronzino was sold privately in 1927 a copy was commissioned, 'A Florentine Youth', which is also now at Petworth, NT 486777.
7. Francis St John Corbet 'Bobby' Gore, CBE (1921-2010).

Petworth House of Correction

Many will be aware that Petworth was once home to a House of Correction or prison. Standing in the area between the medical centre and the British Legion club it was a substantial building only eclipsed in size by Petworth House. Closed in 1876 and demolished in 1881 the prison had a deserved reputation for a cruel and unforgiving regime of total silence accompanied with pointless and relentless work. The inmates were generally minor criminals and the sentences relatively short with hard labour. There were no capital punishments carried out at Petworth.

The following article which appeared in *The West Sussex Gazette* of the 21st of April, 1859 is titled 'A Day in Petworth' but is in reality an interesting contemporary account of the prison. (Ed.)

A Day in Petworth.

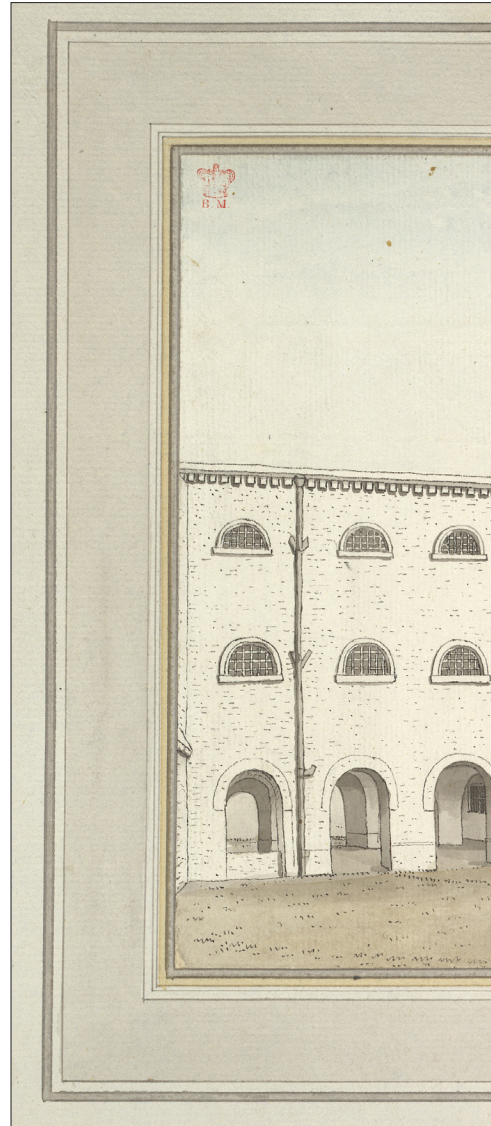
Petworth is a remarkable place. If we were asked to give its origin, we should say, with Topsy, 'we 'spect it growed.' It is very certain that it was never designed by any architect, unless it was done so by way of a lark, to play hide and seek in. It would be a capital place to fortify; for there are no end of corner houses, and a few guns placed in them would rake in ever so many directions. Probably, as Petworth is an inland place, the old houses, which are built chiefly of wood, were meant as feeble apologies for 'the wooden walls of old England', and were placed in positions for defence; as there is no more regularity of design in the construction of the town than there is in the fortifications and moats in the town of Portsmouth, which the bewildered civilian looks upon with open-mouthed awe. Petworth, too, seems to be at a most inconvenient distance from everywhere, and to be associated closely with round-frocked jurymen, fox hounds, lean prisoners, and Jonathan Ritson. And yet it is a jolly little place.

The inhabitants seem to form a little clan of their own, and live a life of contentment. 'If you want to know how to enjoy yourself', observed a friend, 'go to Petworth.' This is all very well; and, no doubt, a great number who go to Petworth do enjoy themselves; but we have something to say about them who go to Petworth for other purposes than enjoyment. There are two prominent buildings in Petworth, which may be called the St. Giles and the St. James of the place. One is Petworth Prison, and the other is Petworth House. Our present visit is to the former, and we will give our readers a little sketch of the place, and let them know what is the meaning of 'one month's hard labour.' It is a popular error to suppose that 'one month's hard labour' is no punishment. There are people who believe that the meaning of it is, that you are taken to Petworth Prison and placed

within its walls for that period, and that you have only to eat, drink, laugh, play with a ball, occasionally read the newspaper and crack a joke with your companion, and live in the perfect enjoyment of everything – save liberty. It's quite a mistake. And if any of our friends are on the point of committing a criminal offence under this belief, we shall be happy to set them right. It is no joke at all, and whatever jollity there may be in the town of Petworth, we can assure them that there is a perfect absence of this sort of thing in the prison. By the way, it has occurred to us that, as Petworth is so notoriously merry, whether it might not be attributed to the fact, that there is a certain amount of happiness to be distributed among mankind, and that when the poor wretches who enter the gaol are robbed of their share, it is distributed among their honest brethren immediately outside. But this is what West Sussex people call 'non-nominee' logic, and may therefore be taken for what it is worth.

Petworth Prison is beautifully situated on a hill, and is reached, as every other Petworth building is, by way of a lot of obscure twistings and turnings. Although it may be a stone's throw from you, enquire the road, and you are told to take the first turning on the right, then the next turning on the left, and then keep straight up a winding hill until you see another turning to your right, and the first door on the left is the prison entrance. If you should happen to make a mistake in any of the turnings, or pass heedlessly by the prison door, you will follow an obscure passage, which has turnings in all directions; and after dodging about and following such a peregrination as one might be led into in playing an active game of kiss-in-the-ring, you will probably, after a sharp walk of a mile, find yourself in the same street you started from, only at the other end of it. There is an air of cleanliness about Petworth Prison which is quite refreshing. It is a red brick building, and in every part you notice that the eye of the governor has been active. Visitors can inspect the building upon procuring an order from any county magistrate, and having been favoured with a note from J. L. Ellis, Esq., our old and highly-respected coroner, – whose name we now introduce for the purpose of letting our readers have the gratification of knowing that he is still in the enjoyment of good health, – we soon present it to Mr. Linton, the Governor – a sharp-looking and intelligent gentleman, who seems to have no time to attend to anybody or anything; and who is very sorry for it, but hopes you will excuse him. We are placed in the hands of an ancient turnkey, who conducts our little party through iron doors and obscure passages – all in unison with the town – and we soon find ourselves in a court, exposed to the open air. Here is a melancholy scene, sufficient to expel the notion of the joke of imprisonment in town – and we soon find ourselves in a court, exposed to the open air. Here is a melancholy scene, sufficient to expel the notion of the joke of imprisonment in one moment. This is a long courtyard, with very high brick walls round, where there are a body of prisoners working at crank labour. They are pumping up water for the use of the prison. It is done in this way: there is a large wooden building, made into cages as if

to contain wild beasts. The front parts of these are covered with wirework, and each compartment is about 6 feet from back to front, and 30 inches wide. A long crank runs from one end to the other; and in each of the divisions is placed a prisoner, who has to turn the iron handle for ten long hours a day. He sees nothing but a blank wall before him during the whole day. He knows not who is in the next compartment, and has no opportunity of speaking to any individual. He has to work, work, work, incessantly, with the exception of an occasional stoppage of five minutes; and during the day an officer walks backwards and forwards at the back of the cage, whose duty it is to see that the men stick to their work. There is no possibility of skulking, for you know not when the officer has his eye upon you; and there is an index to tell the number of gallons pumped up, and a certain quantity has to be done in the ten hours. Can anyone fancy a more degrading thing than for a man to be caged in such a place day after day? Can anyone fancy a more monotonous thing? He has nothing to look at; and even the few flowers, which were cultivated in front of the cages in the days of Mr. Mance, have been destroyed. It is too great a luxury even for them to look at flowers! Let us follow the prisoner who is committed for twenty-one days. He is first taken to the bath room, and in a little square cupboard he has to strip off the whole of his clothing, and stand there until the medical officer examines him. He is then plunged into a bath, and dressed in the prison dress. If he be a felon, he is distinguished by large stripe of bright yellow on his trousers and jacket.



BELOW

Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1733-94), 'The House of Correction at Petworth drawn from the inside courtyard in 1791'. Ink and watercolour. © British Library, London.



He is then equipped for 'hard labour', and has a ticket put upon him which denominates his cell. The bell rings at half-past five in the morning, and he must be on the move. He will grind away at the crank from six o'clock until breakfast time, when he will have notification that his meal is prepared, and he is let out; and his breakfast, consisting of eight ounces of bread and one pint of gruel, he takes to his cell. He has no opportunity of converging with anyone in the journey from the court house to the cell. He is locked in. The cell is a place about eight feet square, and lighted with a window in such a manner that he cannot see anything but the sky from it. It contains his bed, a water closet, a water tap, a place for washing, and a gas light. There is also a drinking horn, a prayer book, and bible. It has a double door, and a watchman walks backwards and forwards all night. He is let out again to pursue his work; and if a prisoner has his own brother in prison, the probability is that he will never even see him, although he may be working within a few feet of him for days.

Everything is on the silent system; and the same monotony of work, work, work, takes place day after day, and the same locking in the cell at night. The prison allowance for a man confined for twenty-one days is breakfast – eight oz. of bread and one pint of gruel. Dinner – eight oz. of bread. Supper – same as breakfast. The gruel contains two oz. of Scotch oatmeal to the pint, and is sweetened every alternate day with three quarters of an ounce of molasses, and on the other days seasoned with salt. Now, there is no joking in this; and the man who attempts to shuffle, or who attempts to infringe the laws of the prison is stopped his meal and starved into subjection. If he should be refractory, there is a cell, which is as dark as pitch, in which he is placed until he comes to his senses.

But there is another class of men. Those committed for trial, and not for hard labour. These are still confined to the cell, and learn to weave, or make children's bells, work at mats, picking oakum; or if a man be a carpenter, a tailor, shoemaker, or such like, he is put to a cell in which are the materials for plying his avocation. If a shoemaker is convicted – he repairs the shoes of the establishment. The same with a tailor, who does the clothing; and a plumber works at cisterns or other things.

Then those men, who are not employed at the crank, are taken out for exercise an hour during the day, this is in a yard, surrounded with high walls. Each man is placed about four yards from the other, and has to walk round and round on a pavement for an hour, while an officer stands in the centre, to see that they do not speak or even look in any direction but before them. They tramp, tramp, tramp, at the rate of four miles an hour. Here, as in the crank houses, it is sad to see the number of old men, who have reached the frosty side of sixty, labouring and degraded, at a time when nature requires rest. But as they make their bed so must they lie on it.

Then there are the County Court debtors. In a long narrow mill we saw two miserable-looking objects picking oakum. These were confined for debt and are allowed to converse with others; and so also are the insolvent debtors. By the way,

there is no insolvent debtor now in Petworth Prison, and the man who goes first in will be in solitary. There are different scales of dietary in the prison. The prisoner who is in for three days is allowed only 1lb. of bread per day. The longer the sentence the better the diet; as the stamina has to be kept up. Still it is anything but a sumptuous fare, as will be seen by the following. Convicted male prisoners employed at hard labour for terms exceeding five months: breakfast Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 1 pint of cocoa or milk, and eight oz. of bread. On other days 1 pint gruel and eight oz. bread. Dinner, Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 1 pint of soup, ½lb. of potatoes, and 8oz. bread. Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday – 6 oz. of meat (with bone before being cooked), 1lb. of potatoes, and 8 ozs. of bread. Supper – 1 pint of gruel, and 8 oz. bread. A man who has to work at the crank for ten hours a day until the perspiration boils out of him, is not likely to consider this sumptuous!

There is also a store room in Petworth Prison, and the articles made by the prisoners, such as door mats, coarse towelling, rope and string, pig nets, and other things are sold. These things are made of the strongest material and the Governor will be glad to sell them to anyone. They are all hand made, and therefore are strong and serviceable.

Some of the prisoners are employed in cooking, others in sweeping out the passages and such work as the Governor may direct. This probably depends upon the nature of the crime. The end of the building is the female department. In this place all the washing and ironing is done. This wing of the building is being extended, by the addition of several cells.

There is the strictest discipline throughout the whole prison. Even at chapel the prisoners are placed in separate compartments. They see the clergyman but cannot see each other; this is the case also in the school room. The punishment of the silent system is the greatest that can be inflicted. If a man can converse with another, and talk over his misfortunes, it relieves the monotony of his confinement; but when he has nobody to converse with, nobody to sympathise with him, nobody to care for him; but to grind, grind, grind away at the crank day after day, with nothing but a blank wall before him, to sit in his cell in solitary confinement, to live for no object whatever, then it becomes the most degrading and the most monotonous life that one endowed with the faculties of man can submit to.

Some there are, perhaps, and many, who are the victims of misfortune, and deserve our pity; but many there are, no doubt, bad in grain, and who deserve all the degradation they are subjected to. But let no man who would commit a crime, think lightly of the punishment of twenty-one days in Petworth Prison, for he will be woefully deceived if he should be trapped. It is impossible to conceive a man more humiliated; and it should be the care of every one not to abuse our glorious laws; the consequence of which is that the offender is removed from an atmosphere of freedom scarcely enjoyed by any other people in the world, and consigned to one of ignominy and detestation.

Another Jubilee

Miles Costello

By the time you receive this magazine Petworth will have begun celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and hopefully everyone will be enjoying themselves and the town will be suitably decorated for the occasion. While the actual date of the accession was February the 6th it is a long-held tradition that such occasions are celebrated during the warmer months. There was, however, no such issue in the case of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee as her uncle William IV had conveniently passed away in the early hours of June 20th 1837 and so it was that some sixty years later Tuesday June 22nd 1897 was the date chosen for Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Never before had a British monarch celebrated a Diamond Jubilee and there was no doubt that the country planned to enjoy the historic occasion.

The actual day of the jubilee being a Sunday, services of thanksgiving were held throughout the town and the national anthem was sung on each occasion. Congregations were large at Petworth though the morning service at the parish church was somewhat marred by the collapse of the organ, which, being beyond repair, was replaced by a harmonium. Tuesday the 22nd was declared a public holiday and with Lord Leconfield's agent Herbert E. Watson in the chair of the Petworth Jubilee Committee the day was sure to be a success. Charles Whitcomb, the Market Square chemist, acted as secretary to the committee and he ensured that the festivities went as planned. The day began warm and sunny and continued that way throughout the celebrations. Fortunately the fine weather would continue for the next two days before violent thunderstorms hit the south of England.

Local schoolchildren, dressed in their Sunday clothes, bearing banners and waving Union flags, assembled in the Market Place at 10.15. Besides the young revellers a large crowd had gathered and the air was full of excited expectation. The band of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, smartly turned out in their ceremonial uniforms, played until 11.00 a.m. before marching off to the Park followed by the schoolchildren and the accompanying crowd of onlookers. Having arrived at their destination the children were treated to a splendid dinner such as many had never seen and each child was presented with a jubilee medal.

A huge marquee had been erected in the Park and at precisely 1 p.m. the clergy, ladies, gentry and tradesmen of the town and neighbourhood, some 300 to 400 persons, sat down and enjoyed dinner together. Beginning at 3 p.m. the afternoon was celebrated by sports and amusements before pausing for a period while almost 2000 residents of the town who had applied for tickets from the Jubilee Committee

enjoyed tea. After tea the amusements continued into the evening with dancing and fairground rides before a torchlight procession which, having left the park, followed the band through the town which was decorated and illuminated for the occasion.

As tradition demanded at great state occasions a huge bonfire had been erected on the ridge at Westland Farm which could evidently be seen all across the Weald.

The logistics of putting on the event were not inconsiderable. The main dinner was prepared 'on-site' with a temporary kitchen erected near the Cricket Lodge by permission of Lord Leconfield. The crockery alone for such a dinner would have run into well over a thousand items – no paper plates or plastic cutlery in those days – and no doubt competition for the hire of such items would have been fierce. A photograph that has survived of the occasion shows a wagon belonging to Ricketts, the High Street carrier, offloading supplies into the park in preparation of the day.

Such was the success of the occasion that the princely sum of £67, a considerable amount, being surplus from the subscription raised to support the Jubilee Committee was donated to the Cottage Hospital, while Mr. Brydone gave a gift of five shillings each to the residents of Thompson's Hospital in North Street and Mr Holt of The Hermitage donated similarly to every inmate of Somerset Hospital.

The 1897 Jubilee celebrations in a flag- and banner-decked Petworth Market Square.



Petworth banks

Trevor Howard

The Rise and Fall of Provincial Banks.

Until the mid-eighteenth century, the majority of banks were located in the city of London. The politician Edmund Burke stated that in 1750 'there were not above a dozen bankers, outside London, in the country'.¹ By 1798 there were just over 300 country bankers. In the early 1800s almost every market town had its own bank.

Those banks situated outside London were known as 'country' or 'provincial' banks. Nearly all provincial banks would have had a London agent, who would deal with stockbrokers, bill discounters and acceptance houses on their behalf. He would also give advice and act as a 'lender of last resort'.

Incredibly there was almost no regulation of banks at all. The only legislation was to control and protect the monopoly of the Bank of England. Anyone could set themselves up as a bank and start printing banknotes. The issue of banknotes was equivalent to money borrowed free and lent at interest. In 1808, the Government introduced a licence which any bank issuing their own notes had to purchase annually, at a cost of £20, from the Stamp Office.

Banknotes were payable on demand, it being an act of bankruptcy not to immediately meet such a demand. Banks therefore had to keep enough coin in hand to meet likely calls for redemption of notes. This 'promise to pay' is still present on modern banknotes, although, since the 1925 Gold Standard Act, gold sovereigns and half sovereigns have ceased to circulate as everyday currency.

Banks could become bankrupt through an unusually large demand for payment of notes. This might happen through a fear that the bank was not safe. When France declared war on England in 1793, the resulting crisis brought down over two thousand firms including about a hundred banks.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, farmers increased their corn-growing acreage as the Continental System restricted imports. When this ceased in 1814, corn prices fell rapidly and there was a financial crash in 1816. Eighty-nine banks became bankrupt.

In 1825 a crisis occurred which saw the collapse of many private banks. A major factor was the over-issuing of notes such that they could not be honoured if a number came in for payment together. Other contributory factors included a tighter fiscal policy by the London banks and bad speculation in the booming industries coinciding with a slump in agriculture. The collapse of one or two banks caused a run on the others creating a 'domino effect' and general panic set

in with the result that seventy-nine banks stopped payment.

The 1826 Country Bankers Act allowed the establishment of joint-stock banks with more than six partners, provided that they had no place of business within 65 miles of London. Whilst the partners were still responsible for their debts the act did provide for the appointment of 'public officers' through which the banks could sue and be sued. This had the effect of establishing the banking scene. It also created very tough competition for the private banks.

In 1844, the Bank Charter Act aimed to eliminate note issue by all except the Bank of England. The maximum value of notes that any bank could have in issue after the 10th of October 1844 was fixed at the average circulation for the 12 weeks previous to the 27th of April 1844. This had the effect of immediately reducing the number of provincial banknotes in circulation. This was the first time that the government, (which had controlled the minting of coins for hundreds of years), had attempted to regulate the production of bank notes.

The end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century saw a number of take-overs and amalgamations leading to the situation we see today, with just a few large banks with many branches. By 1921, the last provincial note issue had ceased.

Petworth Bank.

Petworth Bank was established in about 1806 as Upton & Co. by William Upton, a solicitor; William Stoveld, a timber merchant; Thomas Poling Upton, carpenter and surveyor and cousin to William; and Robert Upperton. The bank's London agents were Masterman & Co. The bank was situated at one side of the Market Square in Petworth. That building is now known as Old Bank House.

After William Upton retired in 1810,² William Stoveld became the senior partner. Thomas Poling Upton also retired from the partnership in 1815.³ In 1822 Robert Upperton, then described as 'banker, dealer and chapman', became bankrupt and left the partnership.⁴ Following Robert's departure, William Stoveld was then joined by his nephew John.

In 1822, a Luke Upperton had sold Robert Upperton some wool. Robert had given him a cheque drawn on the bank; this was taken to the bank, where the clerk rightly debited Robert's account and credited the amount to Luke Upperton's account. About a month later, on Robert Upperton becoming bankrupt, William

Stoveld altered the books, striking out the credit to Luke Upperton resulting in his account being overdrawn. William then sued Luke for the amount of the overdraft (£225). The judge found for the defendant, calling William's action 'scandalous'. The bank is known to have issued banknotes of £5 and £10 denominations. However, by 1830, it seems that William and John had stopped issuing their own notes as they are no longer listed as having a licence.⁵

William Stoveld died in 1841.⁶ John Stoveld now carried on as sole partner, trading as 'John Stoveld & Co.'. Following the failure of the Bank of Petworth in November 1841 (see below), the following motion was passed unanimously at a meeting of the town's inhabitants.

That this meeting entertain perfect and entire confidence in the banking establishment of Mr Stoveld, and that such confidence is grounded upon the knowledge which several gentlemen present possess of the extent and value of Mr Stoveld's landed property, and other resources, and of those of Mr William Stoveld, his late uncle, great part of which, under his will, have now invested in Mr John Stoveld, and that such confidence is strongly supported by Mr Stoveld's well-known diligent and careful habits of business, and by the willingness, when he has voluntarily expressed to several of his friends, to lay before them a full and perfect statement of all his affairs.

In 1845 the London & County Banking Company, later to become part of NatWest Bank agreed to buy the premises. They took over the running of the bank in March 1846.⁷

London County & Westminster Bank.

The London & County Bank was a joint stock bank, established in Southwark in 1836 as Surrey, Kent & Sussex Banking Company. In 1839 it changed its name to the London & County Banking Company. The bank took over a number of smaller banks including the failed Arundel Bank of Hopkins and Drewitt, in 1842, and the Petworth Bank of John Stoveld & Co., in 1845.

In 1901 the new bank was built in Market Square and in August 1909 the London & County Bank merged with the London, County, Westminster & Parr's Bank Ltd. This mouthful of a name was shortened to Westminster Bank Ltd in 1923. Westminster Bank Ltd merged with the National Provincial Bank Ltd on the 1st of January 1970 to form the National Westminster Bank Ltd and was rebranded as NatWest in 1995.

Arundel Bank / Bank of Petworth.

James Hopkins, wine and spirit merchant, was a partner in the Worthing & Sussex



The London & County Bank looking self-important and rather incongruous in about 1906.

Bank of Margesson & Co., which had a branch in Arundel. In 1827, he left and in partnership with John Dreitt and William Wyatt, started their own bank in Arundel High Street. The bank's London agents were William, Deacon & Co. James Hopkins was brother-in-law to Thomas Henty, one of the founders of the Worthing & Sussex Bank, and uncle to James Henty, another partner. John Drewitt was a gentleman farmer and brother-in-law of James Hopkins, having married his sister Jane. William Wyatt was a gentleman of Patching. In 1833 Wyatt shot himself, the verdict of the inquest was 'aberration of mind'.⁸ He was 60 years of age.

The bank opened a branch in Petworth, styled Bank of Petworth, in 1836. The bank's chief clerk, William John Phillips, was born in Petworth and this may have been the motivation. It is possible that this branch only operated a few hours per week. In the 1841 census, both surviving partners and the chief clerk were all living in the Arundel area.

Examination of surviving specimens of banknotes suggest that they were signed by John Drewitt but dated, issued and entered in the note register by William Phillips. It is likely that William Phillips travelled to Petworth, with a quantity of pre-signed notes, once a week. The notes issued by the bank sport a vignette featuring the market house (Leconfield Hall), it may be that the bank operated from this building.

In 1841 the bank failed;⁹ John Drewitt had been ill for some time. His son Robert was evidently heavily involved in the bank as, in June 1839, he drew his father's attention to the fact that James Hopkins owed the bank £14,000 (equivalent to

£1.5 million today); the partnership agreement allowed an overdraft of only £1000. At a meeting between the partners, James Hopkins' explanations were apparently unsatisfactory and John Drewitt decided to separate from his partner as soon as circumstances permitted. James Hopkins said that he was expecting a considerable estate to come to him in the near future and so John Drewitt decided to wait.¹⁰

Margaret Bushby of Goring, sister of the late Thomas Bushby, banker of Arundel, (for it was her estate that was waited on) died in July 1840 and probate was granted in October. The estate was expected to be paid in September 1841. In conversation with Robert Drewitt in October 1841, James Hopkins stated that it was not expected to be paid until December and that his share would be 'trifling' – he could not expect to make any reduction to his debt until the following year.

Following consultation with his father, after the hours of business on Saturday the 27th of November, Robert Drewitt took the keys of the bank and retained them in his father's name thus suspending the bank's business. A meeting was held on the following Wednesday to lay the facts before the creditors. A fiat of bankruptcy was issued on the 30th of November. John Drewitt and James Hopkins both paid their personal liabilities in full. John Drewitt was granted his certificate in April 1842 and James Hopkins his in October the same year. The bank's liabilities of over £40,000 were paid at 15s 11d in the pound, in five payments over six years. The first dividend of ten shillings was paid in October 1842; the final dividend of 5d was paid in October 1847.¹¹ The banking business in Arundel was taken over by the London & County Banking Company, with James Hopkins' son, James Holmes Hopkins, becoming manager of the Arundel branch.

Midland Bank / HSBC

The Birmingham and Midland Bank was formed on the 22nd of August 1836 as a joint stock bank. It acquired the Central bank of London in 1891 and became the London & Midland Bank. The acquisition of the City Bank in 1898 saw the name change to London City & Midland bank, which opened a Petworth branch in Whitehall, Golden Square in about 1912. Merger with the London Joint Stock Bank in 1918 meant the name changed to London Joint City & Midland Bank. In 1992 the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation acquired Midland Bank in one of the biggest ever banking mergers. Midland bank was rebranded as HSBC in 1999.

1. *Letters on a Regicide Peace* October 1796.

2. *London Gazette* 23 October 1810.

3. *London Gazette* 22 August 1815.

4. *London Gazette* 14 May & 16 August 1822.

5. *Twigg's Corrected List of Country Bankers* 1830.

6. Prerogative Court of Canterbury and

Related Probate Jurisdictions: Will Registers.

7. *Hampshire Telegraph* 7 March 1846.

8. *Sussex Advertiser* 15 April 1833.

9. *London Gazette* 6 December 1841.

10. *Sussex Advertiser* 6 December 1841.

11. *London Gazette* 5 April 1842 et al.

New bottom to saucepan

Miles Costello

It is clear that we now live in a disposable society where many household implements and appliances have a manufacturers' built-in expiry date. However it was not so 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 grand 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 the Market Square. Beside the repairs it is very likely that the new items included in the bill were also made by Wright.

1840 Mrs Palmer			
3 new saucepans	12s 4d	Tinning 5 lids	2s
Tinning large copper pan	2s	New bottom to saucepan	1s
1 large round saucepan	1s 10d	Mending coffee pot & fish plate	6d
1 large oval saucepan	1s 8d	Mending teapot	2d
2 small round saucepans	2s 3d	A new tin mould	4s 8d
1 stew pan	1s 4d	Total	£1.9s 9d
Settled July 9th 1841, W.S. Wright			

FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

A Caution. *Reading Mercury*, February 15th, 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.

The war and Audrey

Joan Dench, part two

At the beginning of 1944, there was lots of speculation about when there would be a 'second front'. The Allies were expected to make a combined attack on the coast of France in an effort to liberate the occupied countries, defeat Germany and end the war. King George VI made a tour of the South Coast and is reputed to have said that with so many men and so much machinery brought together in this area, he thought it a miracle that this part of England hadn't broken off into the sea. On the night of the 5th of June, Dad was on guard at Red House which was the headquarters of the Home Guard. He always had the first 'watch' so that he could have a couple of hours' sleep before going to work at 4 a.m. When he came home for breakfast, he said something must have happened because planes had been roaring overhead all night. We turned on the news and heard that what was later called 'D-Day' had begun: at the sixth hour, on the sixth day, of the sixth month, Allied forces had landed on the beaches of Normandy. That same evening we stood out in the garden, and the sky, as far as the eye could see, was full of planes towing gliders full of soldiers on their way to France. All those with men folk involved must have been very anxious, but we did feel a sense of relief that there probably wouldn't be any more air raids.

Nevertheless, one week later, the flying bombs (doodlebugs) started. These were pilotless planes fired in the direction of London. They rattled their way over southern England until they ran out of fuel and their engines stopped; then they crashed and exploded. Fighter pilots, anti-aircraft guns and barrage balloons destroyed many. Paul recalls watching a Spitfire fly alongside a doodlebug, and then tip it over with gentle wing nudges to make it crash in open country. The ones that got through caused casualties and property damage in London and around the countryside. Apparently during this time, the enemy destroyed 24,000 houses in London alone and badly damaged 800,000. One night seven doodlebugs went right over our house, but thankfully not one of them crashed.

One day, Audrey and I were over the fields when, led astray by her adventurous spirit, we found ourselves on the roof of a small building belonging to the water-works. I believe there was a water pump inside. Being accident-prone, it wasn't long before I had put my foot right through the asbestos roof. We hurried off home, and I spent an anxious couple of weeks imagining the police knocking on my door.

Then, one night, the horrible sound of a doodlebug right overhead woke up

everyone in Grove Lane; when the engine stopped, we held our breath and waited! There was a very loud explosion in a field close by. We all heaved sighs of relief because we were still alive and our houses were still standing. Everyone went outside, all in high spirits. Some people had ceilings down or windows blown out but no-one was injured, and I really think if someone had suggested a party – at 3 a.m. – and if we'd had something good to eat and drink, we would all have been in it! Audrey and I went for a walk down the lane in our dressing gowns. There was a nasty acrid smell and smoke everywhere, but we couldn't tell where it had landed. My grandad turned up on his bike from Tillington because someone told him it looked as if the doodlebug had landed on Grove Lane. He was so relieved that we were safe, I'm sure if there had been a party he would have joined in, except that he was anxious to get back to Granny to tell her the good news; not many people owned cars or telephones in those days. The next evening, Audrey and I went round the fields to see the damage and found, to my great joy, I must admit, that the doodlebug had landed very close to the pump house (where I had trodden a hole in the roof) and had blown it down! What luck, not only for me, but also because it had landed in a dip beyond a steep bank which had protected our houses.

After a few weeks, we noticed that no-one did anything about all the bits and pieces of brick that were scattered around the bombsite. We had started a bit of a garden at Audrey's place and needed some bricks to edge it with, so we went across there, filled a sack each and then discovered that bricks are heavy. We had to take most of them out again before we could even lift the sack. As we struggled up the hill, my dog kept tugging at my sack, so I let him have it and he dragged it right up to the top. However, before I could get there he had taken it right down to the bottom again and then lost interest, and I had to go a long way back to get it. We needed to make quite a few trips before we collected enough bricks to edge the garden.

We actually gained something else from this doodlebug incident. A few weeks earlier, Mum had been trying to open the living-room window and couldn't budge it. She was really cross, so picked up a flute that was on the windowsill and pushed the window frame with it. Her hand slipped and the flute went through the glass. When the 'powers that be' came round to assess the bomb damage, they included our window – much to our delight.

During this 'exciting' period, Uncle Jim from Rugby came to stay with us; gassed during the first world war when he was a very young man, he suffered badly from respiratory problems every winter. After a particularly bad time, his doctor advised some country air. He brought his little dog, Shave, with him; the two of them spent many hours walking around the fields. Aunt May was doing what was termed 'war work'. She worked in a factory, but managed to come down for a weekend from time to time. After three months, Uncle Jim went home, but always remained very grateful to Mum and Dad for 'saving his life' as he put it. Amazingly, although his chest was always a problem to him, he lived an active life right up until his death well into his 90s.

Our forces gradually captured or destroyed the doodlebug launching pads but, in September, the Germans started sending over V2 rockets from launch sites deep in Germany. These couldn't be intercepted and were a very serious menace. In all, 2,000 V2s landed in England: of which 1,230 fell in the London area. These caused lots of casualties and property damage. Eventually the rocket launchers were captured, and the threat of air raids was finally over.

From then on, we followed the progress of the Allied forces very keenly and tried not to miss the 9 o'clock news on the radio every night; we couldn't wait for the war to end. Eventually, in May 1945, the Germans surrendered with VE Day (Victory in Europe), a public holiday that was declared on the 8th of May. Dad didn't get to join in, though, as he was baking bread all day. Everyone hung out Union Jacks and we tried to wear something red, white and blue. I had a powder-blue dress and wore it with a red and white spotted belt. The Town Square was full of soldiers and girls jitterbugging to music relayed over loudspeakers. It was all very exciting but, of course, the war wasn't really over as our forces were still fighting the Japanese. In August, the allies dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, within days, the Japanese had surrendered. On the 15th of August, VJ Day (Victory in Japan) was declared. I can't remember the celebrations this time, but there must have been some. I think people were shocked at the devastation caused by the atomic bombs, so many felt they really didn't have much to celebrate after six long years of war.

Audrey and I, together with our mothers, went on a London outing which was organised by the Women's Institute. The object of this was to see the Victory Illuminations. It was pretty exciting going to London anyway, but to see it all lit

This photograph of VE Day celebrations in Trafalgar Square on May the 8th 1945 appeared in the daily newspapers of the time and must have been known to Joan and Audrey. The Imperial War Museum have recently identified the two girls (but not the sailors). They are Joyce Digney on the left and Cynthia Covello and there is a possible tenuous Petworth connection – they both worked for the Women's Land Army on several farms south of London and both met and married Canadian soldiers who were stationed in the area. After the war they both emigrated to Canada.



up (after so many years of the blackout) was fantastic. We thought it magical to see Buckingham Palace floodlit in pink. At last, we were able to believe that the war was really over.

My Middle Years. 1945 to August 1950.

Just before the end of the war, Miss Heard, the organist at St Mary's Church, invited me to join the Ladies' Choir. I had been playing the piano for Sunday School for years, and I suppose she assumed that I could sing in tune. I certainly joined at the right time because, with the war ending, there were many thanksgiving services with all the traditional hymns. I spent five happy years singing in the

choir and enjoyed it all very much. Jean Deas and Phyllis Hillman (also from Grove Lane) were in the choir, and the three of us would go together to practice and then to the two or three services on Sundays. Margaret Robinson (later Sadler) was another friend I made through the choir and, years later, she came and spent two memorable holidays with us here in Australia.

We all looked forward to the choir festival, held once a year in Chichester. The choir of every parish in the diocese learnt special settings of the music sung at Evensong, plus anthems and wonderful rousing hymns. We met in the cathedral on a Saturday afternoon where Mr Hawkins, the cathedral organist, put us through a rehearsal accompanied by lots of caustic comments which we all enjoyed. The next stop was afternoon tea in a nice restaurant before heading back to the cathedral for the Evensong service. The cathedral was always full.

Our choir also went to Chichester, once a year, when the cathedral choir took a month's holiday. Each evening one of the parish choirs took a turn to sing Evensong. We had afternoon tea in the Bishop's house before the service, and it was here that I experienced one of my many embarrassing moments. As we walked into the Bishop's sitting room, we could hardly believe our eyes! Not only were there dainty sandwiches but also delicious-looking jam sponges – iced in lemon, strawberry, or coffee icing. We were all longing to get at the sponges; however, we very politely took a sandwich as they came around. I have always been a slow eater, and was still eating my sandwich when the others were eating their first slice of sponge cake. Then they pressed a second slice upon us which was my first slice, of course. As an afterthought the lady brought the cake round a third time, and I was the only person to take a slice. I felt everyone looking at me and don't suppose I enjoyed it, but I was determined not to miss out. The other girls teased me about this, and I can't remember going there again, so maybe they wouldn't let me in.

At Christmas time the choir went carol singing. We younger girls had a lot of fun doing this, but I really admired the older women who must have found it very tiring – particularly the nights we went all around Byworth. We walked every inch of the way; it was usually bitterly cold or raining and, one year, there was very deep snow. We knew invitations for refreshments awaited us at two places along the way: the lady from Gore Hill giving us ginger wine and biscuits; and another lady, almost next door, giving us cocoa and mince pies. It didn't mix very well but as we knew that was all we were going to get, we didn't refuse anything.

Two years in a row, I became ill after the carol singing and couldn't eat a thing all over Christmas. The second year, I had very bad gastric flu and still wasn't feeling very well on New Year's Eve. The rector and his wife were giving a dinner for the choir and bell-ringers, and I decided I wasn't going to miss that,

so went along feeling decidedly delicate. After a lovely meal and some games, we all went up into the belfry (a few at a time I would imagine) and watched the bellringers ring in the New Year. We then played more games before coming home. I am surprised I can remember it all so vividly because, during the course of the evening, I drank three glasses of port. I had hardly touched alcohol up to then, and still don't like it much, but I must have been so fed up with feeling rotten that I thought it would 'kill or cure'. Those of us who lived down Grove Lane linked arms and sang all the way home. I can remember feeling as if I were floating on air. I'm sure we must have frightened the ghost away when we passed New Grove. Mum and Dad were in bed when I arrived home, and when I went into the living room, the dog looked up and gave me such a dirty look that I leant up against the wall and couldn't stop laughing. Mum came to investigate and must have had quite a shock. I slept very well and woke up completely cured, with no sign of a headache or any of my previous aches and pains. Many years later, when we watched 'All Creatures Great and Small' on TV, I was amused to see that it was always at the bellringers' dinner that 'Tristan' met with disaster!

Once, a young Church Army sister visited our church for a month. Amongst her activities, she held a service one evening a week during which she played two solos on her piano accordion, accompanied by Miss Heard on the piano. One week, Miss Heard was going to be away, so asked me if I would accompany the visiting sister instead. Knowing how terribly nervous I always felt when I had to play by music, I wasn't at all keen, but she gave me two pieces of music to practise, and assured me I'd manage it easily. The two pieces were 'O for the Wings of a Dove' and the 'Minuet in G'. I practised diligently and, when the dreaded evening arrived, turned up at the church with Mum and Aunt Syb coming along for moral support. The sister and I met up at the front of the church and discovered that the music I had been given was different from hers. We were both rather put out, and she suggested we each pick one piece of the other's music. She chose 'O for the Wings of a Dove', and I chose 'The Holy City' which I knew was very tricky to play because I had learnt it years earlier. Her other piece I didn't know at all. When we started to play 'The Holy City' I quickly realised there was no way I could play all the complicated chords at the right speed, so abandoned the music and played it by ear. We both finished at the same time which I felt was a bonus! After the service, I asked Mum how we had sounded. 'Fine', she said, 'but why did you play 'The Holy City'? I don't remember you practising it.' Neither did I; that was the problem!

When Audrey's brothers came out of the army, they bought a large car and ran a taxi service. They were often hired to take people to see ice hockey at Brighton and, if there was room, Audrey and I would go too. We became fans of the Brighton Tigers although we never understood the rules nearly as well as

the children who heaped abuse on the referee throughout the game. We enjoyed going to Brighton and seeing it gradually take on its peacetime appearance again. During the war, all the beaches were out of bounds as they were mined and covered in coils of barbed wire to deter invaders. The piers had large sections removed and were also festooned with barbed wire. It took ages to restore the seaside towns to their original peacetime glory.

After the war, Dad eventually managed to get a week's holiday once a year; he and Mum usually went out for a day here and there. Sometimes, on a Saturday, I joined them on a trip to Brighton and we always ended the day out with a visit to the Hippodrome. There was always a good variety show on, with lots of different acts in the style of the old vaudeville theatre. On one occasion, after a very pleasant day looking around the shops, having lunch and walking on the pier – but not on the beach with its crippling pebbles – we went to the Black Cat Café for afternoon tea before the show. When we came out, Dad and I argued about the best route to take to the theatre. Against my better judgement, I followed him and we became well and truly lost. Time was running out and tempers were fraying, but by breaking one of Dad's unspoken rules and actually asking someone for directions, we eventually found our way there. The show had already begun and we took our seats as quietly as possible, but when I glanced at the programme I saw the following advertisement: 'After the show, why not visit the Black Cat Café? Just around the corner from the Hippodrome.' We all had a jolly good laugh.

Audrey's family had friends who lived in Portsmouth, and she and I went to stay with them for a week, several years running. We also visited my great-aunts and uncles in Gosport and Fareham, and also went to Southsea where there was a large Butlin's amusement park. I wasn't too keen on the scary rides, though. The high spot of our holiday was going across to the Isle of Wight on the ferry. We always seemed to pick a really beautiful, sunny day and the sky and sea seemed bluer over there. We loved the town of Ryde and, one year, we caught a train to Ventnor which was even more fascinating. I always wished we could have spent more time over there to explore the rest of the island.

The Iron Room in Petworth was the place where most of the social activities of the town took place and, in 1947, it was the venue for a lovely party. Joy Hillman, who lived opposite us in Grove Lane, had her 21st birthday; her parents invited lots of people to help them celebrate this event. Both Audrey and I (and our families) were invited, and I had a new dress for the occasion which was an event in itself. We knew there was going to be a band, and a chap who was boarding with Audrey's family tried to teach us to dance – without much success if I remember rightly – but I do recall doing a few shuffles around the floor. It was a great party, and I am sure everyone had a really good time. To be continued

A walk to Virgin Mary's Spring

Gerald Gresham-Cooke, HeartSmart walk leader

This is an interesting walk suitable for all ages through woodland, by a stream with a 'healing' spring towards the end.

A lovely way to walk to the Virgin Mary's Spring – south east of Petworth – is to take this circular walk starting from the Sacred Heart Church in Angel Street. Walk 50 yards away from the town and from the church, and at the gate look out across the beautiful Shimmings Valley, known locally as 'Little Switzerland'. Do not go down into the valley, but turn right and walk on the path for 75 yards until meeting the main road (A283). Cross carefully, turn left and walk along the track which veers away from the road. Follow the track around, and before the path descends the slope, turn right on the path under the gardens of Sheepdown Drive. After 200 yards along the path where the gardens stop, continue straight ahead, keeping the valley on your left. Go through a kissing gate into a large meadow. Here there may be cows; a friendly herd but take care with dogs.

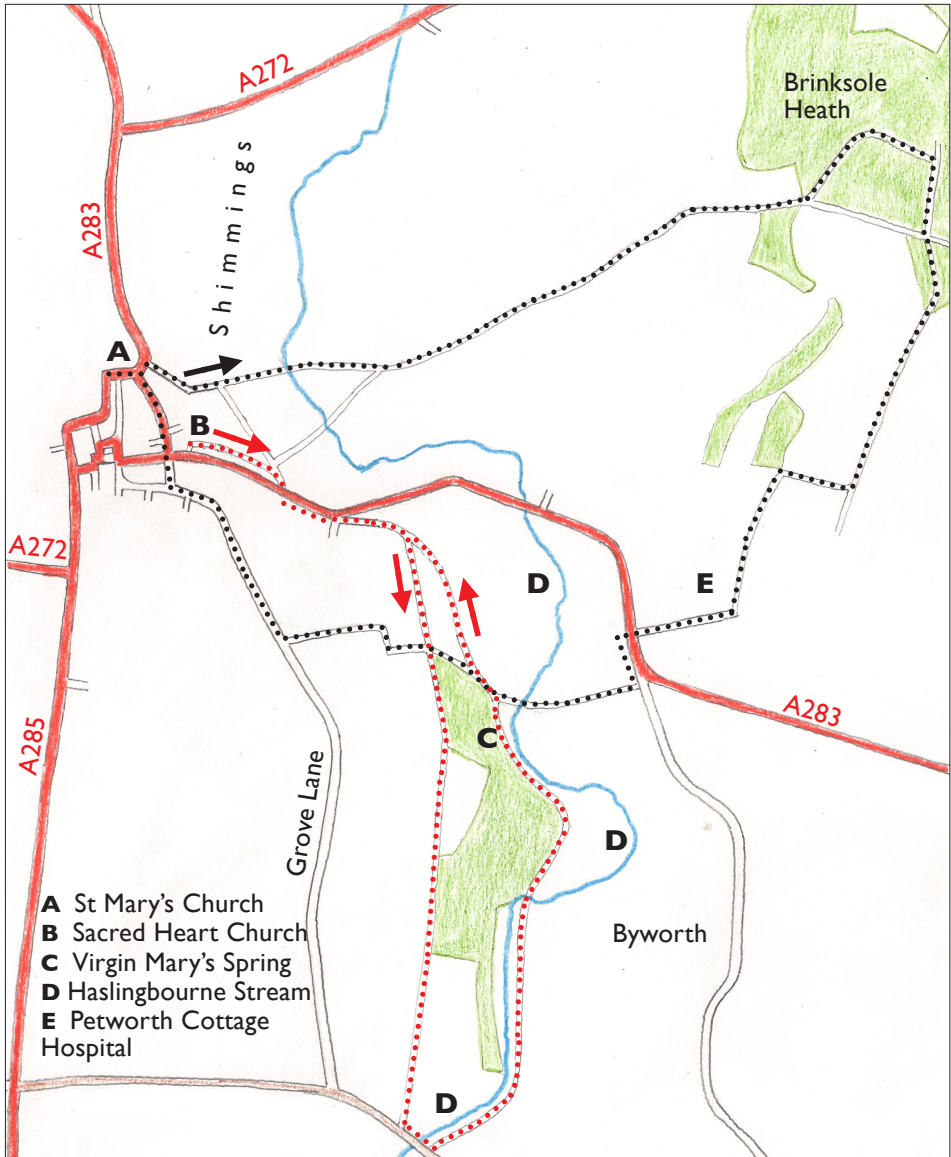
There is a natural path across the field but veer right (top path) as you are making for a gate at the far end on the right hand side. A lovely long view of the South Downs comes into view. Go through the gate; Grove Lane houses are now across a field to your right and, in the Spring if you are lucky you will hear the timeless calling of rooks in the rookeries on the left and the happy cries of schoolchildren at the primary school away to the right. Keep to the side of the wood, on the edge of the field, following the power lines. At the end there is a footpath sign pointing directly across the field. It is a right of way to cross this field so do not worry about walking across whatever the farmer has sown – he should have marked a path for walkers. At the other end, the path leads directly to a gate on to the drive of a house. In this case, we can thank the householder for making a very decent surface for us!

At the end of the drive we reach Haslingbourne Lane – the other main road leading from Petworth/Duncton to Fittleworth. Now be careful here as you need to turn left and walk on the side of the road for 50 yards, until reaching a lay-by on the left (PBH depot is on the other side of the road). Once safely at the lay-by, cross the stile, which can be slippery, on to the path by the side of the Haslingbourne stream and a collection of supremely unappealing telegraph poles. But ignore these and walk along this lovely glade, with the bubbling water on your left and wet meadows and fields on your right. After 800 yards, cross a wooden bridge with integral stiles at its ends, turn right and then left immediately continuing to follow the path up and across a field, now leaving the stream on your right. Continue on the path

Mosses, liverworts and a tiny spurge
surrounding the cool waters of the ever-
flowing Virgin Mary's Spring towards the end of
the walk.



This map shows the route of the walk to the Virgin Mary's Spring (in red) and, in black, the route of the Petworth Society/Petworth Past Gog Walk noted in the Editorial on page 6.



towards a kissing gate at the end, where you re-meet the stream. Here, if the sun is shining, will be a beautiful walk through light and shade on a woodland path in a peaceful setting. Walk along enjoying God's creation, until 50 yards before the end, unexpectedly on your left comes gushing out of the side of the slope, water through an iron pipe. This is the Virgin Mary's Spring. Its clear water pours over a flagstone-lined basin built up at the sides with brick and stone.

Besides acting as a water supply to Petworth people over the years, it gets its name from the healing properties of the water – clear Downs water, full of minerals. It is especially known for healing eyes, and its taste is very refreshing as well. The story goes that pilgrimages were made to it along the Rother valley from Petersfield, Midhurst, and Tillington which may explain the high proportion of Churches dedicated to St. Mary or St. Mary the Virgin.

After taking your fill of the waters, continue your walk. After 20 yards there is a path and foot-bridge on your right which takes you to Byworth, and the Black Horse pub. We continue ahead and out into the open, taking the right hand fork of the path. After 100 yards, the path rises, finishing with a sharp ascent. Take your time! At the top, re-join the path which leads straight ahead for half a mile towards your starting place of the Sacred Heart Church.

HeartSmart is a scheme organised by Chichester District Council in which local volunteers lead walks. It aims to describe routes and to encourage people to maintain a healthy heart.

FROM THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

Attempted Suicide? *Hampshire Chronicle*, October 15th 1796

A few days ago a girl aged eighteen, named Peacock, in consequence of a dispute with her mother, threw herself down a draw-well, seventy-two feet deep, at Egdean, near Petworth; but the circumstance being observed by a man who was a small distance from the spot, he ran and let down the bucket, which the girl after a while got into, and was almost miraculously drawn up without any material injury. Both the girl and her exemplary mother, it appeared, had been sacrificing rather to freely at the shrine of Bacchus.

My mother: Evelyn Mary Alder

Caroline Gilbert

My mother Evelyn Mary Alder was born at Byworth on the 6th of June 1928 to parents Christiana and Charles Alder, and was a new sister to Maurice. The cottage was at the north end of the village just before the road joins the A283. Her mother Christiana Mary Alder was born and raised at Thornham in Norfolk. Evelyn has a vague recollection of her grandmother and of visiting Thornham but only recalls that her grandmother was very old at the time. Her other grandmother on her father's side was a housekeeper at Trofts in Byworth. This was the home of the Montford-Bebb family and Evelyn's grandfather was gardener at the house.

Following the Great War employment was hard to come by and so her father Charles Alder, known as Charlie, took up chimney sweeping. Charlie would later become a painter and decorator and as part of his job Evelyn recalls him doing some gold-leaf painting at Petworth house. Charlie was also a part-time fireman. Before they married Christiana had been a ladies maid and travelled extensively with the family she worked for, including trips to the south of France.

When Evelyn was about four years old the family moved from Byworth to 316 Damers Bridge in the centre of Petworth. The house, a Leconfield Estate property, had four bedrooms but no bathroom and the toilet was outside in the back yard. The kitchen was at the back of the house. During the war a family of evacuated relatives, Frank and Valerie Ripper and their granny, came to stay. Granny had to sleep in the front room while Frank and Valerie who were about the same age as Evelyn slept upstairs. Dad's brother Uncle Herbert also came at weekends; he wasn't married then and worked in a factory in London. Needless to say the house was often very full and for a short while they had a soldier billeted with them before he was sent to France. Her brother Maurice, uncle Herbert and the soldier all shared a room with three beds in it. Bathing was done in a hip bath in the kitchen and for washing the water was heated in the kitchen and carried upstairs to a washstand. By the late 1950s the family were told to move from Damers Bridge as the cottage, which had become known as Alder's House, was to be demolished to make an entrance to the proposed new public car park.

The new house would be a little further out of town at the far end of a row of three cottages at Mount Pleasant in Angel Street. Growing up during the war was difficult, there were of course food shortages and rationing and so the two allotments, one on Station Road and the other near the Sheepdowns were

essential and a great deal of time was spent tending them. Evelyn's mother was very active in the Womens Institute and the two of them would attend church at Petworth where they both sang in the choir. Her father Charlie was a bell-ringer while her brother Maurice cycled to Graffham where he played the church organ.

As a child Evelyn attended Petworth Infants School and later the girls school in East Street before gaining a scholarship to go to Chichester High School for Girls in 1939 at the age of eleven. With no direct buses from Petworth to Chichester she would cycle from the house to the railway station near Coultershaw, take the train to Midhurst before catching a bus on to Chichester. She would then run to the school having usually missed morning assembly. At Petworth Evelyn was very much involved in amateur dramatics and was an active member of Petworth Players. She still remembers performing in 'Charlie's Aunt' in the Iron Room and fondly recalls some of her fellow performers such as Fred Everest, who was the local Police Sergeant, Teddy Horseman, Pat Lanaway, Sophie Bebb and Kathy Meachen.

Charlie and Christiana passed away in the 1970s and are both buried at Hampers Green, but the family connections with Petworth remain strong. Maurice died in 2017 and is buried at Fittleworth while Evelyn who has suffered recently from ill health still has fond memories of her early years at Petworth.

The almost symmetrical Alder's House, which the Alders had to leave in the 1950s before it was demolished to provide the entrance to the new public car park. The timber-framed building on the corner is Rosie Ricketts' sweet shop.

