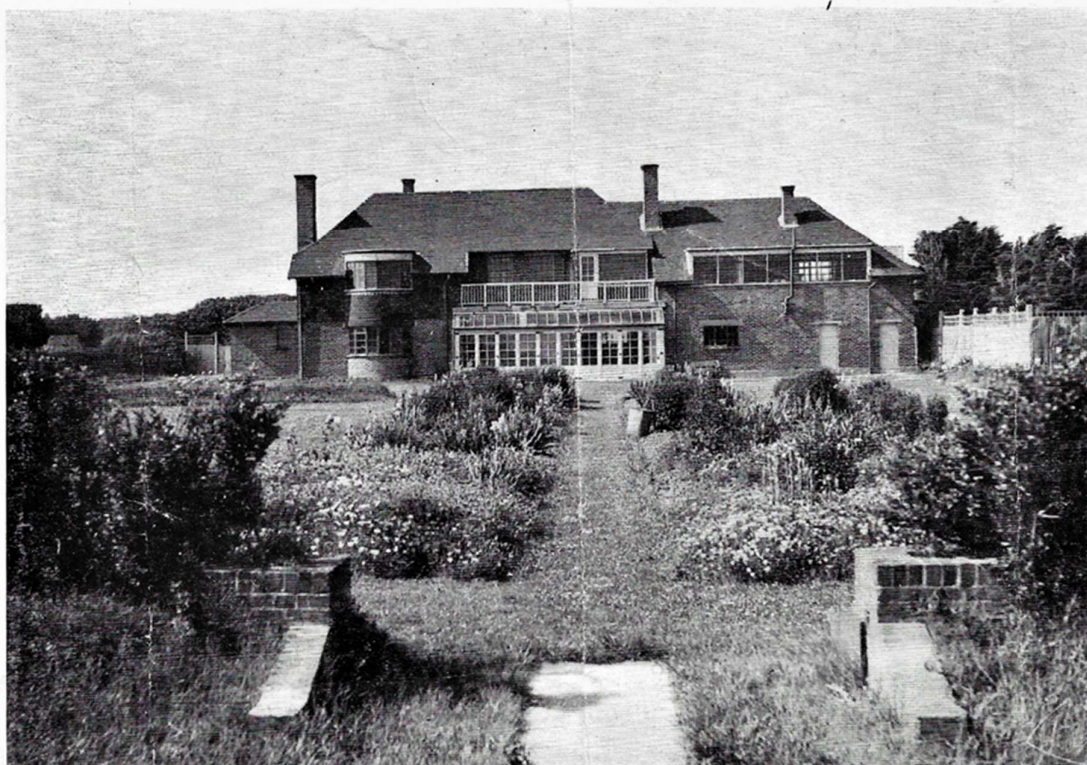


# FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE

2020

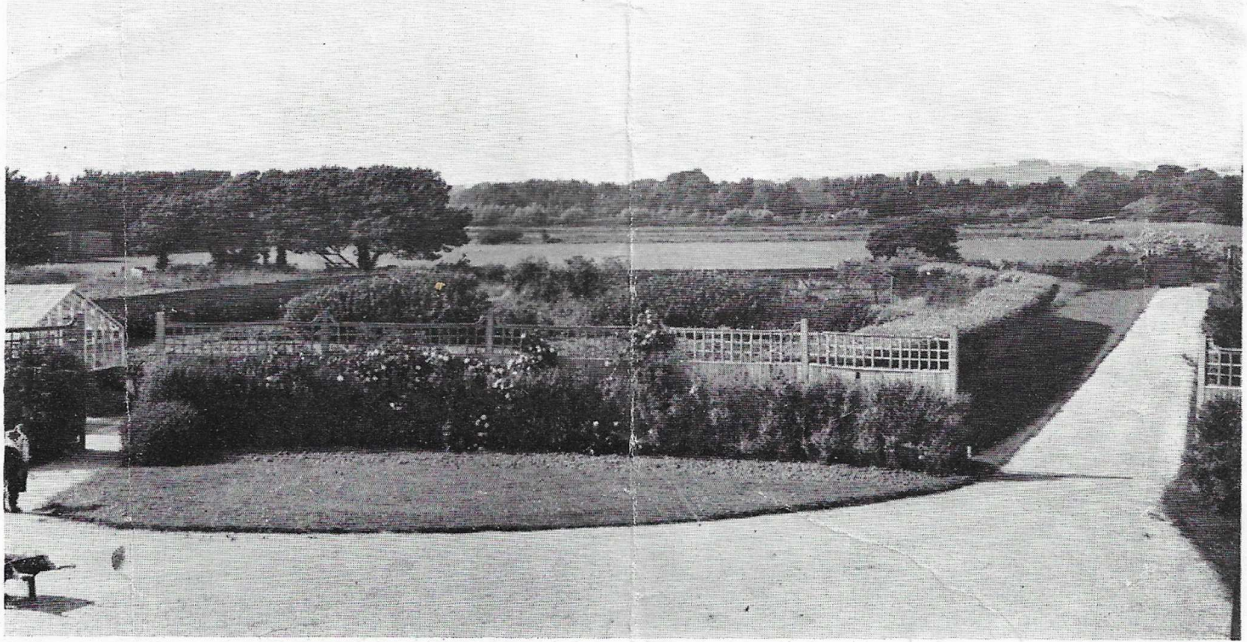
FOR SALE FREEHOLD.  
"SPINDRIFT,"  
SEA LANE, FERRING,  
SUSSEX.



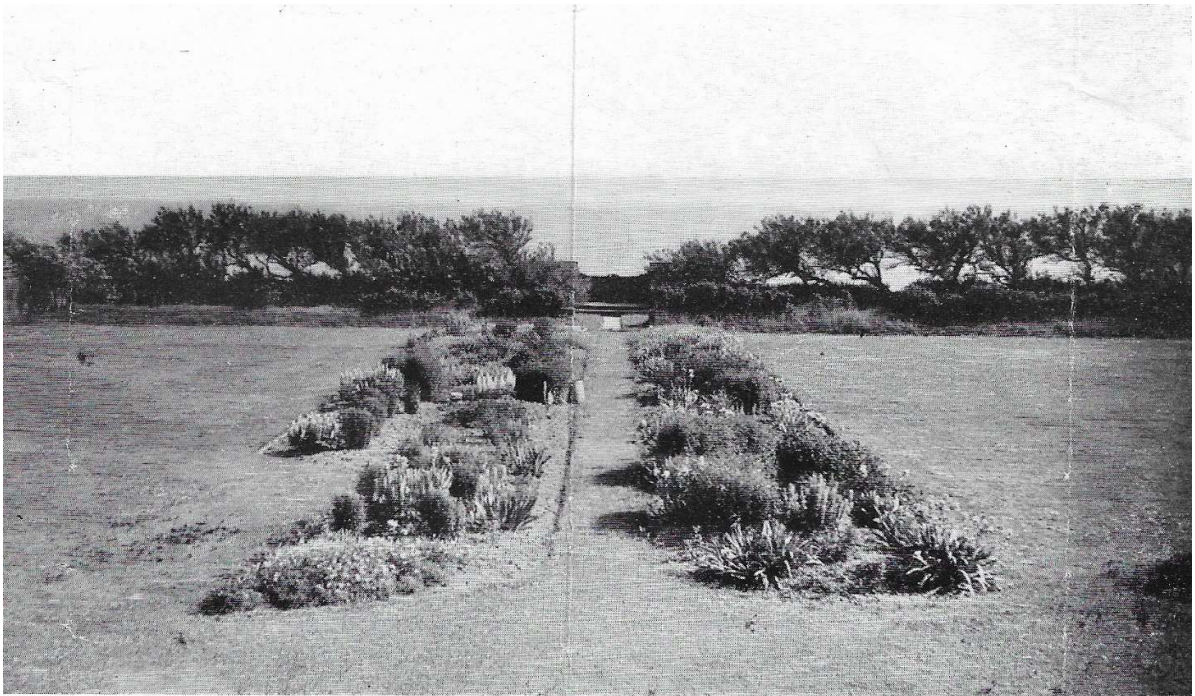
View of house as seen from  
entrance gates to beach.

*A* DELIGHTFUL SEASIDE RESIDENCE of modern construction in red brick with brown tiled roof, standing in approximately two acres of well laid-out ornamental gardens and kitchen garden, all in excellent condition. It is the nearest house, with private entrance, to the sea ; to London via Leatherhead, Dorking and Horsham through lovely country the whole way.





View from back of house  
over Sussex Downs.



View of sea from window  
showing private entrance  
gates to beach.

# FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE

Journal of the Ferring History Group. Compiled by Ed Miller: EdMiller43@msn.com No. 6

## Cover story: Spindrift

A copy of a sales brochure for this house appeared on Ebay recently. We knew where it was, or rather had been, because it was demolished in 1961 to make way for the south end of Herm Road and Ferring Marine. It was one of half a dozen large houses built on the sea front in the late 1920s, the only survivors of which are Milbury House and Far Corners. But when was this brochure produced?

There are clues. The presentation of the brochure looks more like the 1930s than the 1940s. The owner is evidently W H Heath but he is not living there; on the back of the brochure it says enquiries can be made to him at his London office, or 'during weekends residing at 'Green Shutters, South Drive'. It seems he owned both houses.

The Council's Building Plans Register shows that Spindrift was built for Brigadier Hugh Fenwick Brooke in 1929, and he is still listed as the occupier in the 1936 Street Directory. Brooke resigned as Chairman of the Parish Council in March 1936 saying that he was leaving Ferring. Heath must have bought it soon after because in September 1936 he applied to the Council for permission for 'Additions'. William Henry Heath is listed at Spindrift in the 1938 and 1939 street directories, and in one of the 1940s directories. The house may have been requisitioned by the Army in 1940, and may have been left empty for the next few years. No one is listed at Spindrift in the 1946, 1948 or 1949 directories. Heath does not appear in any of those directories but we know from a death notice in the Times that he died at Green Shutters in April 1950 (he is shown as the occupier in the 1951 directory, but that would have been prepared in 1950). So the brochure must have been produced between 1937 and 1950.

It could have been produced as early as 1937 because the brochure says 'the house is entirely renovated and redecorated', and that may have been done at the same time as his 'additions' (building up the east wing to two storeys). Also, the tamarisk bushes on the seafront seem to be not much higher than in a 1936 photograph of the seafront.

On the other hand, the advertised price of £12,000 seems rather high for the 1930s: St Malo, a slightly larger house in Sea Lane, also with a large garden running down to the beach, was advertised at £8,250 in April 1938. William Heath was 71 in 1950: the brochure refers to him as 'chairman of the company' and despite his age, he may have been still working at his London office, and spending his weekends in Ferring, just before he died.

A Ferring resident, Ralph Oliphant, tells me that his father bought the house in early 1949 for a much lower price. It seems therefore that the brochure was produced no later than 1948 and that William Heath was not able to sell it at £12,000, despite the renovation and redecoration. The Oliphants renamed it 'Lark Hall' and stayed there until 1953. They sold it to George Rawson, a sweet manufacturer, who changed the name again, to 'Spindrift House'. He lived there for some years, and finally sold it to a developer. The building was demolished in 1961.

At the end of that year, planning permission was granted for 45 flats, 8 houses, 5 bungalows and 45 garages in what was to become the southern part of Herm Road and Ferring Marine.

## **Robert Blight**

**by David Garnett**

Between the turmoil of the Civil War years and the First World War, it was common practice for the priests at St Andrew's Church to keep their position for a long time. William Albright and James Penfold, for example, between them held the post for almost a century (1716 – 1812). On the list of vicars of Ferring, one name stands out because of his very short time in the parish. He was Robert Blight (1886 – 1888), and the reason his appointment came to an end can be found in this report published by the Horsham, Midhurst and Steyning Express on Tuesday, 24 April 1888:

### *THE REV. R. BLIGHT CONVICTED OF DRUNKENNESS*

*'At Arundel Country Bench, on Monday, before J. Long and H. Penfold, Esqrs., the Rev. Robert Bight, formerly diocesan inspector of schools, and who has just reigned the Vicarage of Ferring, was summoned for being drunk and refusing to quit the New Inn, Ferring, on April 11th.*

*'It transpired that defendant entered the Inn about seven, and asked for a pint of beer, but being drunk, Mr. Hills refused to serve him, and asked him to leave. He refused to do so, and P.C. Malthouse removed him and saw him home. Defendant was rapping at the house at two o'clock that morning for half-an-hour. Mr. Hills got up and seeing who it was, went to bed again. He came again about half-past-five.*

*'The chairman said it was a sad affair, and said Mr. Blight (who did not appear), would be fined £5, and 12s. costs,'*

Similar reports were published nationally, in newspapers from the Pontypridd Chronicle and Workman's News to the Belfast News-Letter, and in London by the Evening Standard and Pall Mall Gazette. Some of these reports added that Blight 'did not cut a very dignified figure' during his court appearance — but this is journalistic exaggeration, as Blight did not appear at all. If he had gone to court, he may have explained what caused his unlikely behaviour in the New Inn (the original name of the Henty Arms).

Before becoming vicar of Ferring, Robert Blight had been a school inspector for the Chichester diocese, having held this position (at an annual salary of £400) since 1872. At this time, the diocese covered the whole of Sussex and Blight is listed in the Post Office Directory as living in Lewes. Prior to the first Education Act of 1870, it was estimated that Church of England schools provided primary education for half the children who attended school. (Approximately 4 million children in the country, half receiving no formal education at all, and a million each at church schools and 'voluntary' schools. This meant the Church of England educated a quarter of school age children — and even now a quarter of all primary schools are Church of England schools).

When Robert Blight became vicar of Ferring, the population of the village was under two hundred and his duties were probably not too onerous. He continued in his role as school inspector and in December 1886 appointed Rev E. R. Morris as his curate. But a later newspaper report says that he gave up his work as school inspector because of an unspecified 'illness' — and possibly his behaviour at the New Inn was connected with this. There is also the strong likelihood that he had serious financial problems and was trying not to contemplate what lay ahead . . .

Between the incident at the pub and his court case, Blight resigned as vicar. And very soon after that 'the trustees of the estate of Robert Blight' announced the auction sale of his 'Excellent

Household Furniture and miscellaneous Effects' — an extraordinary list of personal possessions. Estate sales are more normally associated with disposing of a person's effects after their death, but they can also be used in the case of bankruptcy. So the question arises: had the Rev Blight been drinking to forget he was facing bankruptcy, or was 'the short notice of sale' as a result of him becoming drunk and having to resign?

Blight returned to Lewes until 1890, but then sailed to the USA to make a new life for himself, and on 31 March 1891 he married Bertha C. Scharn in New York City, after which they moved to Philadelphia. There are several references to him in the Journal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. The earliest, in 1891, reports: 'Licensed the Rev. Robert Blight, of the Diocese of Chichester, to officiate in this Diocese for six months.' He was appointed to the Church of the Holy Comforter in Philadelphia, but then 'On December 1, 1891, the Rev. Robert Blight resigned the Rectorship of the Church of the Holy Comforter to become the resident Chaplain of the Educational Home.' This is listed in Boyd's Philadelphia Combined City and Business Directory, 1895, as an 'asylum' with Blight as superintendent as well as resident chaplain.

The Journal includes a report on the 'educational home' in 1894 which gives a clue to its purpose: 'The Chaplain superintends the Sunday School, and occasionally has two or three teachers to assist. Ten of the above-mentioned candidates were Indian girls from the Lincoln Institution.' The 'educational home' was a boarding school for Native American boys who were being taught to 'assimilate' into Western culture and society. They were given European names, forbidden to use their own languages and 'converted' to Christianity.

Blight's involvement with the Native American children was reported by the Philadelphia Times on 31 May, 1892: 'They began with a hymn by the Indian pupils of the Lincoln Institution and Educational Home, who were present under the care of Rev. Robert Blight.' It is not known how long he remained in his school post, but his death was reported in the New York Times, 1907: *'Philadelphia, March 28. The Rev, Robert Blight, well known as a writer, died in the County Hospital here to-day as a result of injuries received yesterday as a result of injuries received yesterday where a lamp exploded in his home in Norristown. Mr. Blight was born in England and was educated in the University of London. He preached in England, but in this country devoted himself entirely to magazine and newspaper work.'*

The last part of the report is incorrect, as Blight did not devote himself 'entirely to magazine and newspaper work' while in the USA. As for his writing, this began even before his short time in Ferring, as is shown by his inclusion in the Dictionary of British and American Botanists and Horticulturists, published by the Natural History Museum (1977). 'Blight, Rev. Robert B. ( - 1907) BA London 1870. Of Lewes until 1890. Curate, Bredwardine, Herefordshire.' Blight qualifies for the Dictionary via his 1870 article on the 'Reproduction and Growth of Mistletoe' for the Woolhope Club. Founded in 1851 'to study the natural, historical and social environment of Herefordshire', the club still exists today.

When in America, Blight continued writing and illustrating articles for various magazines, mostly on natural history, but also covering a variety of subjects and book reviews, often dropping the title 'Rev' from his by-line. In 1898 he wrote a piece for The Arena, a literary and political magazine, in which he returned to a subject he had covered for the Woolhope Club. Its title was "Mistletoe" — like all professional writers, Rev Robert Blight was adept at recycling his material . . .



## Marlipins – Shoreham's Mediaeval Gem

by Stephen Webbe

On a very warm day last June 24 members of the Group stepped into the cool interior of one of the finest medieval gems in West Sussex, when we visited the Marlipins Museum in Shoreham, gathering briefly on the pavement by its famous chess-board facade of knapped flint and Caen limestone before disappearing into the comforting gloom.



Marlipins, owned by the Sussex Archaeological Society, is one of those museums where the building is just as fascinating as its contents. One of the county's oldest Norman buildings dating back to the mid-12th Century, it displays some 2,500 exhibits. These tell the story of Shoreham over the centuries with an emphasis on its life as a port and shipbuilding centre that provided warships for the Royal Navy from the early 17th Century to the late 18th Century. Its archaeology gallery looks at the Shoreham area from early prehistory to medieval times and a large art collection permits a varied and ever-changing display of pictures on its ancient walls. And wartime Shoreham gets a look in, too.

Emma O'Connor, Museums Officer of the Sussex Archaeological Society, greeted members and then gave the group a short talk on the Marlipins in the museum's second-floor gallery. She explained that when the Marlipins went up for sale in 1922 it was owned by the builders W. A. Gates & Sons and used to store all manner of building materials. Earlier in its career, it housed timber merchants and engineers and, incredibly, during the First World War, a ground floor rifle range.

Given its prime High Street site, the Marlipins might have faced demolition. Fortunately Robert Gates, the firm's civic-minded owner, offered to sell the building for a reduced price if a committee was set up to preserve it. As a result, the Marlipins Preservation Scheme was launched by the Shoreham historian Henry Cheal whose celebrated book "The Story of Shoreham" had appeared in 1921.

A Brighton contractor called William Burstow hurriedly stepped in and bought the building for £500 while a committee was formed and began appealing for donations. Saved from destruction, Marlipins opened as a museum on August 15th 1923.

While public subscription in the shape of three fund-raising appeals accounted for the bulk of the purchase price, the balance, as Emma noted, was paid off by the newspaper proprietor Sir Hildebrand Harmsworth, younger brother of Sir Alfred Harmsworth who, as Lord Northcliffe, owned The Times and Daily Mail. Once the freehold was bought in 1925 and vested in the Sussex Archaeological Trust, Marlipins effectively became the property of the Sussex Archaeological Society which owns and maintains it today.

Emma O'Connor explained that the original purpose of the Marlipins and its curious name have long puzzled historians. So, what was the function of the striking, two-storey, parallelogram-shaped building that stood right in the centre of medieval Shoreham on Procession Street opposite the "Otmarcat," or Oat Market, and why was it so named?

Over the years, historians have suggested that it might have been a chantry or the remains of Shoreham's Carmelite priory. But if the 14th Century town plan in Henry Cheal's book is accurate, the priory was several streets away from the Marlipins. That it might have been associated with Shoreham's medieval hospitals (there were three of them) or served as a meeting-house for the Knights Templars, has also been mooted.

According to the Marlipins guide, both the Knights Templars and Knight Hospitallers established themselves in Shoreham in the mid-12th Century. But, in choosing locations south of the High Street (then Procession Street), they both lost their properties when the sea swept away the southern part of the town in the 14th and 15th Centuries, inflicting serious damage on both the harbour and its trade.

Over a century ago deeds discovered in what was then the Public Records Office revealed that in 1346 Marlipins was called 'Malduppinne' and described as a 'stone corner tenement' in the 'Otmarcat'. By the reign of Edward IV, its description hadn't changed but the building had become 'Malduppynne'. Then, in Henry VII's time, it was referred to as 'Malappynnys' and described as 'a cellar with a chamber or loft above it'.

Historians who have studied its name and its various spellings, have concluded that it must have been some sort of secure building and one most likely involved in taxing or storing wine - and perhaps taxing beer as well. One commentator, quoted by Lucas in his book, suggested an association between the name 'Malduppinne' (yet another spelling) and a tax on wines, a conclusion not a million miles from Henry Cheal's view that it was a store for wines - or wool and hides.

Emma told her Ferring visitors that, in her considered opinion, the Marlipins had been a bonded warehouse. (In modern parlance that's defined as 'a building or other secured area in which dutiable goods may be stored, manipulated, or undergo manufacturing operations without payment of duty'). The Marlipins was, as she later explained, a 'solid [and] secure building' that had been 'designed for the loading and unloading...of barrels and casks' and emphasised that 'the lower ground floor arrangement with the low door' indicates that it had, indeed, been a bonded warehouse. Adding that the building served 'to protect goods [going] in and out [and to] ensure money and other portable valuables were secure', she hinted that its role may have been more extensive than previously thought.

*Stephen Webbe's article continues on page 15, with an account of some of the contents of the museum.*

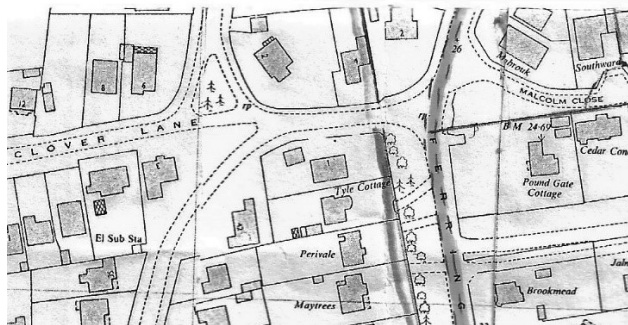
## Pound Gate

by Ed Miller

In last year's Magazine, I wrote a piece about the old rusty iron gate that stands in the verge of Ferringham Lane, opposite the junction with Clover Lane. I said, confidently, that it was the 'pedestrian' gate into The Ferring Grange grounds, or a gate into the fields. I was quite wrong.

A reader pointed out that the 'gate' I identified on the 1911 map was a good 100 yards further north than the actual position of the present relic. Looking at the map more closely, I see that he was right. If you plot the position of that relic onto the 1911 map there is nothing at all shown on the map, other than the farm track leading down to the Rife, with fields either side.

You have to look at later maps to find the answer. Just east of this site, in the 1932 map, stood



'Pound Gate Cottage'. No gate of any kind is indicated in this map or the 1943 map but on the 1962 25 inch to the mile map there is something, an unusual entrance. This survives on the 1969 25 inch map (left). In both cases the house is still 'Pound Gate Cottage'.

But what does it mean? There was an animal pound (for strays) in Ferring, as late as 1911. It is shown on that year's map as where the electricity substation is now, opposite the Ferringham Lane/Brook Lane junction, but this is a good 250 yards north of the cottage. The cottage was built shortly before 1928, and it is possible that the owner appropriated an old gate from the Pound to adorn his cottage. Or perhaps it came from another pound altogether. It is still a puzzle how the gate worked. It looks like a 'kissing gate' but does not work like one. Perhaps it was hung differently.

Pound Gate Cottage was a guest house in the 1930s, run by Mr and Mrs Winter. It survived into the 1970s (it's in the 1973 street directory), but it was replaced by a modern bungalow, with just the curious rusty iron gate on the grass verge hinting at its former existence.

## SUSSEX: WEST

a new publication reviewed by David Garnett

*Arundel Castle: The huge and spectacular Baron's Hall, 1893-8, occupies the site of the late mediaeval Great Hall. Hammer-beam roof. Two end galleries and two enormous hooded stone fireplaces. The excellent stained glass by Hardman & Co. depicts heraldry and historical scenes relating to the Fitzalan-Howard family. The room replaces a smaller one with the same title built after 1806 (an early example of such a full-blown medieval revival); in C14 style it was dedicated to 'Liberty championed by the barons in the reign of King John'. — from **Sussex: West** in **The Buildings of England** series by Elizabeth Williamson, Tim Hudson, Jeremy Musson and Iain Nairn, published by Yale University Press, 2019.*

Almost the entire Buildings series was researched and written by the architectural historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-1981). Born in Leipzig, he moved to the UK in 1933. Between 1951 and 1974, he produced 46 volumes, each one concentrating on a particular county. For 'The Buildings of England: Sussex', Pevsner sought the assistance of Iain Nairn (1930-1983). Pevsner wrote the East Sussex half of the book, Nairn wrote the half on West Sussex, and the volume was published in 1965.





Yale University Press has taken on the mammoth task of producing revised and updated versions of the entire series, and the Sussex volume has been divided into two volumes. Sussex: East with Brighton and Hove was published in 2013, and the launch party for Sussex: West was held in the appropriate setting of the Baron's Hall at Arundel Castle in June 2019.

Before Sussex, Nairn had also worked on a number of Pevsner's other volumes, and he had already written most of the Surrey book, but he made no significant contributions to the series after the Sussex volume. He was an architectural critic who wrote many books of his own as well as appearing in over 30 BBC television programmes, and his views were somewhat less objective and more idiosyncratic than Pevsner's. In the original Sussex introduction, Pevsner wrote that Nairn 'writes better than I could ever hope to write. On the other hand, those who want something a little more cataloguey and are fervently interested in mouldings and such like, may find my descriptions more to their liking.'

In his speech at the 2019 book launch, Arundel Castle's archivist gave an example of Nairn's style from the original 1965 Sussex volume: 'There is no getting away from the fact that Arundel Castle is a great disappointment.' He was pleased to note that the revised volume was much more complimentary about the castle. (Another line in the new section on the Baron's Hall specifically contradicts Nairn: 'Far from "dead" as Iain Nairn found it, the Baron's Hall seems to the C21 visitor light and colourful.')

Ferring History Group was represented at the Sussex: West launch — and the Ferring section now contains three listings, whereas the original book had only one. One of the new entries, however, isn't in Ferring and another isn't a 'building'. Highdown Towers has a Grade II\* listing; but as it is on the eastern side of the parish boundary and therefore in Goring, it should have been included in the Worthing part of Sussex: West. The new other new entry is for "Highdown Hill Camp", included because of its status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

One reason why a particular building may be included in Sussex: West, or any other volume in the series, is because of a high grade on English Heritage's 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest'. Only one building in Ferring qualifies through its listed status: St Andrew's Church (Grade 1). The editors could have included any other building they consider of special architectural merit or interest — but they decided that none of Ferring's twenty Grade II buildings qualified.

The introduction to the Ferring section in both the 1965 and 2019 volumes begins the same: 'On the coast of Worthing, the usual case of a flint village swallowed up in seaside housing. Church Lane preserves the fragments.' Iain Nairn also added: 'There is nothing to be said of — or for — the C20 buildings here.' This line is missing from the new volume.

Also missing is Nairn's opinion that St Andrew's is 'a pleasant change from the hardened flint churches hereabouts' but the observation that the interior 'keeps happy proportions, and a lot of soft village character' is retained. Although longer, the revised version is heavily reliant on the original and unfortunately repeats the same mistake: 'Mid-C13 s. arcade of four bays.' The arcade is on the northern side of the church. Also incorrect is the 1983 date of the vestry, which makes it seem like a new addition since the 1965 book. The correct date is 1953.

These are minor errors, however, and the description of St Andrew's is an excellent introduction to the church. *Sussex: West* is far more than a scholarly summary of the county's significant buildings, the book also provides concise geological and archaeological surveys, as well as a detailed history of the county. This is a rich and comprehensive work for which the authors are to be thanked and congratulated.

### **A Spot of Bother at the Crossing**

**by Ed Miller**

Many of our members will have seen the short comedy film made in 1936 or 1937, featuring Ferring residents waiting for the railway crossing gates to open. One of them gets out a large telescope to look for the train, two others start a game of cards using the bonnet of their car as a table: eventually they all adjourn to the Henty Arms. Eighty years later we are still complaining about being delayed for many minutes with no sign of a train coming.

But there was nothing new in the complaints in the 1930s. Eighty years before that, and only three years after the opening of the railway, a prominent Ferring resident had the Railway



*Edwin Henty 1804-1890*

Company taken to court for failing to operate the crossing properly. The *Brighton Gazette* reported the case as follows. Edwin Henty was going back to his house (Ferring Grange, just behind the church) on the night of 24 September 1849, and found the level crossing gates closed, and locked, against him (the barriers at that time were large pairs of wooden gates swung manually by the crossing keeper). He told Arundel Magistrates Court that he called out to the gatekeeper but there was no response. He then rang the bell, put there to attract the keeper's attention, and 'the man, after delaying him seven or eight minutes, opened the gate'.

Whether he muttered something under his breath we are not told but Henty, who by this time owned or leased half of Ferring, was not at all pleased. He reported the facts to the Parish 'Waywarden' (Thomas Trussler – one of his tenant farmers) and got him to take out a summons against the railway company for 'not having appointed a proper person to attend the opening and closing of the gates crossing the railway at Ferring'. When the case came up, the solicitor for the company asked, 'How long after you rang the bell were you detained?' (Henty: 'Five minutes'). 'Had you rung the bell in the first instance that would have been the length of your detention?' (Henty: 'Probably so, but I ought not to have had the trouble to ring or call as the Company have no right to shut down and fasten the gates across a public highway').

The Chairman of the Bench said, 'They have not only a right to shut the gates but are compelled by the Act of Parliament to do so. In this instance the detention was longer than it ought to have been, and there must therefore be a fine: but the smallest sum will be sufficient to meet the case. Fined one shilling'.

Henty could not have been the only resident who was put out by these delays but he had a strong sense of entitlement – he was a rich local landowner, a Magistrate himself (on the Worthing Bench) and he and his brother had been co-owners of the company that built the Shoreham to Chichester section. The one-shilling fine must have annoyed him even more than the eight-minute delay.

## Findon Archaeology walk

report by Ed Miller

On 19 May eighteen members joined me on a walk led by David Dunkin PhD, through the fields west and south of Findon village where Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British, Saxon and Early-Mediaeval inhabitants had lived and worked before the settlement moved to its present location one mile north-east of the church.

Dunkin, a retired professional archaeologist and long-time resident of Findon, began by explaining that move, evidently in the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century at a time when many Sussex villages were abandoned altogether. The cause was almost certainly the Black Death, a series of plagues starting in the 1340s and continuing into the early 1400s, which killed over one third of England's population.

We started at the Gun Inn and walked up School Hill, across the A24 and into Long Furlong, then up a footpath to the top of the hill. This was the Muntham Court Romano-British site, which showed evidence of much earlier settlement, with Bronze Age lynchets – ridges on the slope where ploughing along the contour lines had produced a still-visible 'stepped' effect - a well, over 200 feet

deep, ancient trackways and an Iron Age shrine or temple. From the top there was a good view of Black Patch Hill, Cissbury Ring and Church Hill, all sites of flint mines where Neolithic (New Stone Age) men hacked out the thin seams of flint, up to 50 feet below



David Dunkin explains the layout of the Romano-British site Photo by Adge

ground, to make the tools they needed for tree felling, primitive agriculture and domestic use.

Walking along a trackway towards Tolmare Farm, we crossed Long Furlong and walked up Church Hill. Here Dunkin showed us a number of flints he had recovered from the site many years ago – an axe head, a scraper, a knife and possibly a sickle. We walked down the hill a cornfield just north of the church, the site, Dunkin told us, of the original village. St John's Church still shows its Saxon origins in its north aisle (the original church) but most of it is Norman or Early English, much restored by Giles Scott in 1867.

Next to the church is Findon Place, rebuilt from a much earlier manor house – the juxtaposition is typical of the old Sussex villages. The present house is early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1761 it was bought by William Richardson, who had inherited much of Goring, and the whole of East Ferring, through his connection with the Westbrook family. That connection presumably explains why nine of the Richardsons were buried in Ferring rather than at the church on their doorstep.

We walked down the long drive, back to the village – which was cut off from its church by the by-pass constructed in 1938. The village retains many of its 16<sup>th</sup> and later Centuries cottages and is well worth a visit in its own right. A good walk, with much blossom and many wild flowers, as well as the rich archaeological interest.

## **Ferring Parish Council: the first 100 years** by Stephen Abbott, its current Vice-Chairman

At Ferring's Annual Parish Meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> March 1919, one of the items discussed was whether Ferring should become an independent Parish in its own right and it was decided to bid to establish a Parish Council. The bid was successful and a special Parish Meeting was called for the election of Ferring Councillors, to be held in the school on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1919 with Revd. A. Bagot-Chester in the Chair. The Sealed Order from West Sussex County Council establishing a Council for Ferring was formally read. Six nomination papers were received from prospective councillors for the five available posts and declared valid. Five were from Ferring residents and one from Mr Candy, a 'Gentleman' of Kingston (not then a Parish in its own right). A vote was taken, to elect the five Councillors required. Mr. Candy received the lowest number of votes (2) and was not elected. The five candidates duly elected were Revd. Hector William Grepe, the new Vicar of Ferring (6 votes); Revd. A. Bagot-Chester, his curate (5 votes); Mr. George Penfold, farmer, of Hangleton Farm (5 votes); Mr. Peter Tourle, carpenter, of Holly Lodge, Church Lane (5 votes); Mrs. Alma Georgiana Henty of Ferring Grange (4 votes).

The inaugural meeting of **Ferring Parish Council** was held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 1919, and the Revd. Hector William Grepe was voted-in for the one-year term as Chairman. The necessary formalities were conducted at the outset, including the appointment of Mr. White, the Manager, Lloyds Bank Ltd., Worthing Branch, as Treasurer. The Clerk, already serving as Assistant Overseer and Collector of Rates for Ferring, for which he received a salary of £12 per annum, asked for a revision of his salary to reflect the additional duties required as Clerk to the Parish Council. An additional £5 was granted, making a total of £17 per annum. There was now a functioning parish council for Ferring.

As the population of Ferring and the diversity of responsibilities continued to grow, so did the quota of Parish Councillors. This was increased from its initial five in 1919 (plus a Clerk) to seven in 1934, then nine in 1937. The quota is now 12, currently supported by two part-time employees (Parish Clerk and an Administrative Assistant) based in Ferring's own Parish Office. The Borough of Worthing made several attempts, over the years, to incorporate Ferring into an enlarged council with 'County Borough' powers like Brighton, (this would have extinguished the Parish Council, as had happened in Goring in 1929) but these approaches were always rebuffed by the Parish Council and the Ferring electors.

It was not until the Localism Act 2011, that eligible parish councils were freed of the constraints of *ultra vires* and were given a radical new power to 'do anything that individuals generally may do' as long as it is not limited by some other Act. This is known as the 'General Power of Competence' (GPC). An eligible council is one which has resolved to adopt the GPC, with at least two-thirds of its members being declared elected, rather than co-opted, and the Clerk must hold an appropriate qualification. This was adopted by Ferring Parish Council in 2017. The Localism Act also introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans. This was taken up by Ferring Parish Council, having successfully bid for government grant funding.

Following work undertaken by community-led working parties and by the Parish Council and its technical consultants, public consultations and review by a government appointed Inspector, the Ferring Neighbourhood Plan was overwhelmingly accepted in the local referendum of December 2014. It was subsequently adopted into the Arun District Council Local Plan.



## Butlin's and Bognor

report by Stephen Webbe

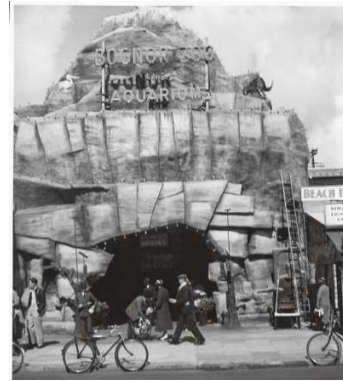
Billy Butlin seems to have been a thoroughly good egg. Anybody who took up the slogan 'Our True Intent Is All For Your Delight' and made it the watchword of a multi-million pound leisure industry clearly had his heart in the right place. If anybody knows Butlins and its boss it's local historian Sylvia Endacott whose talk to the Group on August 2nd drew on her long experience of working for the firm.

Butlin, a dapper, business-savvy showman who looked like a plump Clark Gable, ran his sprawling empire of amusement parks, holiday camps and hotels from his London office on Oxford Street. According to Sylvia, he sat behind a desk that had once belonged to Nazi foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.



Born in Johannesburg in 1899 to English parents, Butlin emigrated to Canada and on the outbreak of the First World War, joined the Canadian Army as a bugler and drummer boy, and served as a stretcher bearer. His mother came from a family of travelling showmen and after the war he returned to England and joined her funfair in Bristol, transforming a hoopla stall and, most importantly, its profits. Butlin soon had his own travelling fair and in 1927 he set up an amusement park in Skegness in Lincolnshire.

An amusement park in Bognor followed in 1932. Called "Butlin's Recreation Shelter." It boasted a 26-car dodgem track, a mirror maze, a rifle range, rides, clowns, housey-housey and a slew of one-armed bandits. Butlin later added a zoo and an aquarium. That same year Butlin opened an amusement park in Littlehampton where the old east bank fort and windmill had once stood. It had a huge rooftop roller-coaster and looked like the Colosseum.



*Butlin's Zoo and Aquarium, Bognor*

Sylvia explained that Butlin got his idea for holiday camps when running his hoopla stall. He noticed forlorn groups of holiday-makers standing around when the weather was bad unable to return to their B&Bs until the evening. Heedless of the weather, heartless landladies wanted them out between meals. Pondering the problem, Butlin realised that accommodation, meals and entertainment on a single site was the obvious answer.

As a result, he opened his first holiday camp at Ingoldmells near Skegness on April 11 1936 and his last one at Barry Island in South Wales in 1966. In between he created camps at Clacton (1938); Filey (1946); Pwllheli and Ayr (1947); Mosney near Dublin (1948); Bognor (1960) and Minehead in 1962. The famous chalets were born and the cheery Redcoats soon followed. According to Sylvia, Canada's Mounties were the inspiration for their striking red jackets. The renowned Knobbly Knees, Glamorous Grannies and Bonny Babies competitions weren't far behind.

During World War Two the Skegness camp was christened HMS Royal Arthur and became a training base for petty officers. "The Germans once claimed the Royal Arthur had been sunk by a U-boat," Sylvia told her Ferring audience with a smile.

Before opening his Bognor camp on July 2 1960 Butlin moved the amusement park and zoo into the complex. Today the Bognor site is owned by Bourne Leisure and boasts three highly contemporary hotels, a brand new £40 million swimming pool ('designed to bring the best of

the British seaside, inside') and a relaxation spa. In her book 'Butlin's: 80 Years of Fun!' Sylvia Endacott notes that, "If Billy returned to day there is no doubt he would feel satisfied as his original aim is still evident but with a new and modern interpretation."

In the course of turning holiday camps into a highly lucrative business, Billy Butlin was honoured with an MBE and a knighthood. Married three times, he retired in 1968 and died in 1980. His suitably expansive tomb on Jersey relates his life story in gold lettering and bears the following words as its last line: 'He was never too tall to stoop to help the underprivileged.' Sylvia told her us that he chose the grave site 'so the tourist buses will be able to see it.'

### **Eliza Belchamber**

**by Ed Miller**

A 'Did You Know' item in the April *Worthing Journal* said that an Eliza Belchamber died in Ferring in 1924 at the age of 93, and that she had been a servant with the Henty family for 69 years, beginning as a 'Nurse girl' at the age of nine-and-a-half. This seemed so extraordinary that I decided to look into it more. Yes, Eliza Belchamber did die in April 1924, at that advanced age; she did live for most of her life in Ferring, and she did work for the Hentys. But in none of the Census lists from 1851 to 1911 was she 'living in' with the Henty family, and either no occupation is shown or that of 'Dairywoman'. From 1891 until her death she lived at Dairy Cottage, immediately south of 'The Barn' (now the Barn Surgery) which belonged to the Henty family and was used as a dairy. Dairy Cottage was demolished in the 1930s and, in the 1960s, Regency Court was built just behind where it had stood. Before 1891 she was presumably a servant at Ferring Grange but, as a married woman, living out.

She was born Eliza Miles, in Rustington, in 1832, and married James Belchamber from Angmering (this was a large, long-established local family: there had been Belchambers in Ferring since 1716). When they married, in Ferring, in September 1849, she was 'a minor', probably aged 17. According to the newspaper account from which the *Worthing Journal* was quoting, she was working for the Hentys at the age of nine-and-a-half, so from around 1841, although she does not appear in the Ferring census list for that year. Her husband James was an agricultural labourer, some eight years older than her. They had a son, George, registered early in 1850 (the usual reason for a hasty marriage) and another two children subsequently. In the 1851 census they are listed as living in Hangleton, and the 1861 census at North Barn cottage. George married Mary Welch, in Ferring, in 1871 and their son George was born in Worthing in 1872. James was still working as a 'Cowman on farm' in 1901, at the age of 77. He died in 1909 aged 85.

In the 1911 census Eliza is shown as 'Old Age Pensions' (introduced that year). Her daughter, another Eliza, aged 44 is carrying on the trade as 'Dairy work domestic', and her grandson George, aged 38, is a 'Cowman on Farm' as his grandfather had been for the latter part of his life.

Eliza's funeral was reported in some detail in the *Worthing Herald* of 10 May 1924. 'Loved and respected by all who knew her, of that type, now rare, of old family servants, having faithfully served the Henty family for no fewer than 69 years'. There was a letter of sympathy from the family and representation by Col Arthur and Mrs E Henty, and a large attendance

headed by her sons George and James, daughters Miss E Belchamber and Mrs Grey, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren. Wreaths came from Adm. and Mrs Warren, other well-known Ferring figures, the children of Ferring School, and from Mr and Mrs Voyce, who had lived in the Gardener's Cottage (now the Old Flint House) for many years. Alma Henty did not attend or send a wreath, although she had left her £500 in her will.

As with the Gardener's cottage, the Dairy and its cottage were sold along with the rest of Ferring Grange in 1924. However, the old Home Farm continued, on a reduced scale, for another few years having been bought by the tenant farmer, Reginald Smart, and George Belchamber re-opened as 'Home Farm Dairy' at the back of the farmyard in Ferringham Lane. George and his sister lived close by, in Ferringham Cottages, on the corner of Brook Lane and Barbary Lane. In 1927 he sold the business to a Mr Reginald Pitt, who carried on working the dairy at Home Farm before opening a dairy shop at 1 Sea Lane, opposite the War Memorial in 1931. By 1935 the shop, and the Barbary Lane 'depot' had become 'Fuente and Scarce, Dairymen' but in 1939 the shop had become a draper's. A new business, Oaklands Dairy, had opened at 1 Onslow Parade in that year, and in South Ferring another business, Mortimer's Dairies, opened a shop in Ocean Parade, and had taken over the depot in Barbary Lane.

### **Our Christmas Social and Ian Gledhill's talk**

**by Stephen Webbe**

A warm and sunny talk on seaside resorts was just what the Group needed on a perishing cold night when it gathered for its annual Christmas beano on December 14th. Our guest speaker was the renowned lecturer Ian Gledhill who entertained us with a talk entitled 'Oh, We Do like To Be Beside the Seaside'. And of course, it had a pronounced Sussex focus.

Ian, a professional actor and talented speaker with a repertoire of over 40 talks including the magic of panto, Art Deco and British musical theatre, is an expert on the growth of Brighton as a seaside resort. As he explained, the turning of Brighthelmstone from an unremarkable fishing village into a popular resort with famous piers owes much to the Prince Regent. One of Ian's many striking illustrations depicted the lecherous Regent as a winged cupid wearing little more than a Garter Star and sash and kneeling lasciviously over a naked nymph, the personification of Brighton. (The 1944 painting by Rex Whistler is called 'HRH the Prince Regent Awakening the Spirit of Brighton' and hangs in the Royal Pavilion.)

But, as Ian noted, it was Dr Richard Russell who championed the medical properties of sea water and effectively founded Brighton as a bathing resort. The Prince of Wales (later Prince Regent) loved to be dunked in the bracing Channel waters by his favourite dipper, Martha Gunn who spent an extraordinary 70 years in the dipping business and died in 1815 at the age of 88. Ian went on to delight us with seaside sagas from Hastings, Worthing, Littlehampton and Bognor. He admitted to a soft spot for Worthing Pier which has certainly been in the wars over the years. Erected in 1862, it was wrecked in a violent storm in 1913 and all but burnt down in 1933. It was then cut in half in 1940.

If we had wondered how the great British beach hut came to be, Ian had a novel explanation. Apparently, when bathing machines came to the end of their days they were hauled to the top of the beach and with their wheels knocked off became the huts we know and love. Ian may have concentrated on Sussex but this was no parochial talk. He introduced his listeners to other British piers and found time to mention the Blackpool Tower, inspired by its big brother in

Paris and opened in 1894. He even squeezed in a mention (and a spectacular photograph) of the bathing machine built for Spain's King Alfonso XIII at San Sebastian in 1908. An outlandish kiosk, it ran into the sea on railway lines.

A delightful evening included a slap-up buffet (the trestle tables were fairly groaning with fare); a raffle with some lovely prizes appropriate to the season and a Sussex quiz with such questions as "Which British sovereign said 'Bugger Bognor?'" and "Where would you go from Ferring, in the late 1780s, to see a public hanging?" (Answers: George V and Horsham.) You can't go wrong with attractions like that and a talk by Ian Gledhill.

### **Ferring in 1940**

**by Ed Miller**

The first winter of the war was relatively peaceful but very cold. The Royal Navy had seen some action in the Atlantic, and the RAF had made some bombing (and leaflet) raids on Germany but the Army was standing-to in northern France waiting for the Germans to make their move. January was 'a severe wintry month, with frequent frosts and heavy snowfalls... the coldest month since 1895... the sea froze at Bognor Regis' says a weather history web site. Many houses in Ferring were empty – not through fear of invasion but because many of them were holiday homes and normally were left empty in the winter. There had been no bombing in London, and even the evacuees were beginning to move back. The days were short, the black-out was in force, food rationing had begun, and the mood was rather low. However, the proprietors of the 'Ocean Hotel and Garden Club', in what is now Inglegreen Close, had an advertisement in the Worthing Gazette of 3 January: 'Dancing, Darts etc. Join the Club and forget the black-out'.

Spring came but the mood did not lighten. All meat was now rationed. A 'Darts Fortnight' was held at the Ocean Club in March and raised £1 10s 6d for the Red Cross. An ARP exercise in the same month had 40 'casualties' rescued by the St John Ambulance Brigade after a heavy air raid, and 'treated' by the Red Cross at an 'emergency hospital' in the Village Hall. In April the war became more real: the Army, Navy and RAF were fighting in Norway and on 10 May Germany attacked Belgium, the Netherlands and France. But even then, there was no real sense of danger along the south coast. People expected the war to be fought out in northern France, as in 1914-18.

It was the fall of France in May and the British Army's retreat and evacuation from Dunkirk, in June, that brought the reality of war to Ferring. The German army had swept all before it, reaching the Channel in six weeks, and the British army had left most of its equipment on the beaches. Britain was suddenly vulnerable to an invasion. Ferring resident Douglas Goddard remembered playing in his friend's back garden when the boy's father (Bud Flanagan) called him in, saying, 'I have just heard on the wireless that the Germans have taken Paris. You have got to come in now'.

The Ferring Home Guard platoon was formed, regular soldiers arrived in Ferring and took over empty houses, and makeshift anti-invasion obstacles were put up on the beach. Sussex, along with Kent, was declared a Defence Area, with restrictions on visitors. A curfew was imposed on the coastal strip, making it an offence to be out of doors after sun-down unless on duty – in Ferring this applied anywhere south of Littlehampton Road. The village, which had been a receiving area for evacuees, was now sending its own children away. Many







families left, and a leaflet was distributed telling those residents that stayed put what to do in case of invasion.

For some months the bell at St Andrew's Church had been rung every noon, as a reminder to residents to pray for those in the services. But from 16 June it was to ring no more, even on Sunday. As elsewhere, the ringing of church bells was to be the signal that paratroops or other airborne forces had landed in the neighbourhood. There was to be no airborne invasion but in August the Germans were embarking troops onto barges in the Channel ports and on 7 September GHQ Home Forces issued the code word 'Cromwell' – invasion imminent. In many places, local army commanders had the church bells rung, to call out the Home Guard, but this did not happen in Ferring or Worthing. Instead, said the Worthing Herald in a 1946 article, the Brigade of Guards and the Home Guard combined forces according to a pre-arranged plan and the chief defence points on the beaches were established at Goring and Ferring. There were no pill boxes or even concrete blocks at this time and the regular soldiers and Home Guard had to dig themselves protective pits in the shingle and hoped for the best. The article said, 'The Home Guard's orders were to stand fast until the end and account for as many of the enemy as possible. The fully-trained regular troops would have fallen back gradually to a second line of defence inland'.

The Germans did have a serious plan for invasion in September, to land 25 divisions between Folkestone and Worthing (Operation Sea Lion), but it was never put into effect, for a number of reasons, including their lack of warships and air power to protect their armies during the crossing. Their attempt to achieve air superiority was played out in the Battle of Britain which now followed, watched from the ground by anxious Ferring residents.

That battle in the skies and on the airfields ended in October, to be followed by the bombing attacks on British cities, which ran on through the end of the year. Ferring was not directly affected by either of these battles but in December two more names were added to its 'Killed on Active Service' list – Richard Spencer, of Scotch Dyke, aged 19; and Harold Tenant, of Barn Site, Ferring Lane, aged 25 – both in crashes during RAF training.

### **What's in the Marlipins**

**by Stephen Webbe**

As Emma O'Connor showed us around the upper gallery of the Marlipins, she stopped at a portrait of Captain Richard Haddock who fought at the Battle of Barfleur in 1692, commanded the 70-gun HMS Resolution in 1708 (wrecked off Barcelona in 1711) and became Comptroller of the Navy in 1734. We peered hard at the left background as Emma pointed out a barely visible man-of-war firing a salute.

The youthful-looking Haddock in the portrait is actually the son of another Richard Haddock who fought with extraordinary bravery at the Battle of Solebay in 1672 when his ship the Royal James was burnt by Dutch fireships and he was shot in the foot. Knighted in 1675, he became Comptroller of the Navy in 1682, a Member of Parliament for Shoreham in 1685 and an admiral in 1690. (The Marlipins owns his portrait as well but I don't think we saw it. Perhaps it wasn't on show.)

When asked about the seafaring family later, Emma explained that "Marlipins has three Captain Haddock portraits." That's the aforementioned father and son and a third portrait on

display elsewhere. For those of a naval turn of mind, perhaps the best way of disentangling the Haddocks is to remember that *père* fought at Solebay in 1672 and  *fils* at Barfleur in 1692.

The Victorian naval historian John Knox Laughton was exasperated by this profusion of fishy admirals, grumbling that ‘the number of Haddocks serving in the navy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was very great and among the many of them who were named Richard it is difficult or impossible to avoid confusion.’

The waters are further muddied by the fact that the Art UK website has confused the young Haddock at the Marlipins with his father and namesake. To further irritate naval historians, young Haddock had a brother called Nicholas who, as commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean during the War of Jenkins’s Ear (1739-48), blockaded Cadiz and Barcelona and captured two Spanish treasure ships. Despite failing to destroy a seaborne invasion of Italy by two Spanish armies, he rose to the fourth most senior rank in the navy, that of Admiral of the Blue, in 1744.

As Emma discoursed on the Haddock portrait, she suddenly mentioned “Tintin” and his sidekick “Captain Haddock.” Our ears instantly pricked up. Apparently, Georges Remi (Hergé), the creator of the Tintin adventures, used the seafaring Haddock family for inspiration. But it wasn’t to create Tintin’s gruff, hard-drinking sidekick Captain Haddock with his repertoire of bizarre expletives. The bearded seadog got his name when Hergé’s wife Germaine served smoked haddock for dinner one night.

In fact, Hergé drew on the Haddock family to provide Captain Haddock with a swashbuckling ancestor. The Belgian creator of the world famous comic albums turned to Captain Richard Haddock, the valiant captain of the Royal James and father of the young commander portrayed at the Marlipins to create Sir Francis Haddock. Hergé gave him command of The Unicorn in Charles II’s navy along with Marlinspike Hall, a princely pile with a king’s ransom of pirate gold secreted in its cellars. The Haddocks were an extraordinary naval family, first going to sea in 1327 in the reign of Edward III. Salt water must have coursed through their veins. Somebody should tell their story.

Haddocks apart, the Marlipins’ top gallery also recalls Shoreham in the First World War when two gigantic concrete towers were built in the harbour. Only Germany’s collapse in 1918, prevented a line of them (12 by all reports) being sunk in the Straits of Dover between Dungeness and Cap Gris Nez to counter one of the Kaiser’s deadliest naval weapons.

With steel nets strung between them and backed up by minefields and submarine detection equipment, the huge towers were designed to prevent U-boats deploying from such Belgian bases as Zeebrugge and Ostend and playing havoc with Allied shipping.

Each one, hexagonal in shape and rising, ziggurat-like, 180 feet into the air from a massive base, was composed of 9,000 tons of concrete and topped off by a 1,000 ton steel cylinder housing men, supplies and the detection equipment. It’s hard to believe that none of the 5,000 troops and 3,000 labourers who toiled to make them knew what the towers were for. But apparently, they didn’t.

When the war ended, one of the towers was towed away to replace the lightship on the Nab Sandbank off the Isle of Wight and become the Nab Tower. The only other one to be completed was demolished.

The Marlipins' exhibits have varied over the years. When E.V. Lucas, a former reporter for the Sussex Daily News who worked for Punch for over 30 years, visited the museum in the 1930s, he found "a very miscellaneous collection with a strong salty flavour." It included a portrait of Frank Suter, a Shoreham sailor who saved 20 people from drowning; several cannon balls; a fire-back cast at Lower Beeding; a number of cutlasses and brass rubbings; a case of pistols and the lamp from the lighthouse erected at nearby Kingston Buci in 1846.

Lucas remarked that there was a more eclectic display upstairs but noted that its ship models maintained the museum's air of saltiness because, as he noted approvingly, Shoreham still boasted the renowned yacht builder, Thomas Stow & Sons and had been "even more maritime" in years gone by. Indeed, as Lucas told his readers: "In the last century it was outside 'The Marlipins' that seamen were wont to wait, to be questioned by skippers and mates, and, if fortunate, hired."

The merest glimpse of the Marlipins' flint and limestone frontage can transport one back to Shoreham's medieval past before the shingle spit began pushing the Adur eastwards and the estuary began to silt up. Those were the days when ships (like the cog on the town's 13th Century seal) crammed Shoreham's wharves unloading casks of wine and sacks of corn and taking on bales of prime South Downs wool.

One of the most significant dates in Shoreham's medieval history is May 25th 1199 when a flotilla of ships carrying King John and his army sailed into Shoreham from Dieppe and tied up. The king had arrived to claim the throne from his brother Richard the Lionheart who had died six weeks earlier. It was the prelude to one of the most disastrous reigns in English history. King John would go on to be humiliated at Runnymede in 1215 when rebellious barons forced him to affix his seal to Magna Carta and concede that he was not above the law and then lose his crown jewels in the quicksands of The Wash the year after.

After John was crowned in Westminster Abbey on May 27th 1199 he returned to Shoreham and on June 20th 1199, set sail for Dieppe with what was described as "a mighty English host" to do battle with Philip II of France. According to Henry Cheal, he had spent four days in Shoreham and had "in all probability...lodged at the house of the [Knights] Templars." John's subsequent campaign was a disaster. An inept military commander, he first lost the entire Duchy of Normandy and then the Angevin Empire.

In 2014 the Shoreham Herald reported that the Marlipins needed £30,000 worth of roof repairs and it quoted Emma as saying: "It is the sort of job that should be grant-aided but we will need some help with donations. We can't replace the roof because it is a listed building. The Horsham slate has to be re-bedded on to mortar and some of the timber has gone rotten." She went on to explain that everything used in the re-roofing process such as nails, tiles and lathes "have to be agreed with English Heritage in advance." Presumably, as almost six years have elapsed, the roof will now cost a good deal more to repair.

No doubt concerned by the state of the roof, two members of the Group were seen stuffing fivers into the donations box before emerging onto the High Street, blinking in the fierce Shoreham sunlight. Perhaps they were half expecting to see a bustling Oat Market and, beyond it, a clutch of cogs putting out to sea loaded with wool for the Staple at Calais.

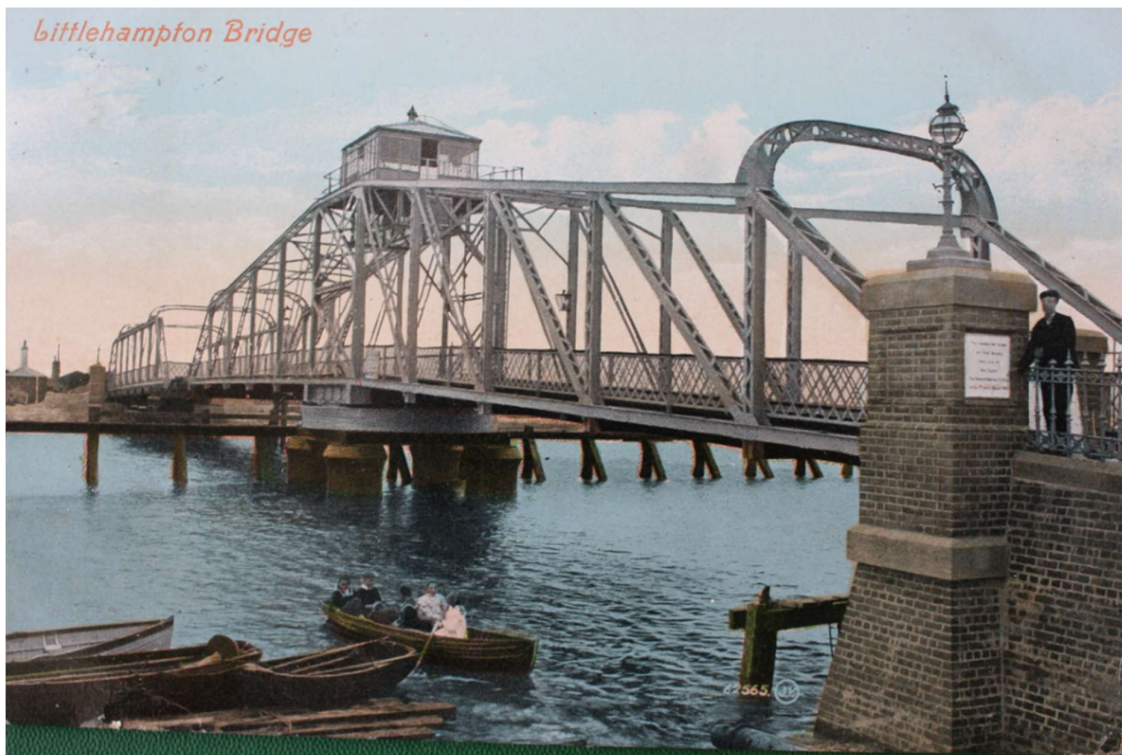
## Littlehampton's history

report by Ed Miller

Committee member **Adge Roberts** gave us an excellent presentation on the history of Littlehampton at our May meeting. He said the history of the town was very much bound up with its geography – its position on the river and the constant changes in its outlet to the sea.

The port of Littlehampton (originally just 'Hampton') developed from a fishing village in the Middle Ages, he said, but for many centuries it was Arundel that dominated the maritime trade and it was only in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as ships were getting larger and the passage up-river became more difficult that Littlehampton became the major port, and this was confirmed when the railway came to the town in the 1860s, enabling goods to be moved quickly and easily to, and from, far inland.

The railway also speeded-up the development of the resort that had grown up on the beach since the 1790s. 'Beach Town' was quite separate from the port town for another hundred years – the 1875 map shows eight fields between the big houses and hotels of South Terrace and St Mary's Church. The area between South Terrace and the beach, a pleasant lawn now, was then



rough grassland that had been part of the course of the River Arun in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

Adge explained that the mouth of the Arun had, in the distant past, been a long way to the east of its present position – possibly as far as Worthing – as a result of 'long-shore drift', the movement of shingle along the coast driven by the westerly winds and waves. It had been necessary to cut through these sand and shingle spits several times in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries to give a short and direct access from the sea to the port, and indeed the shingle is still piling up heavily against the modern West Pier.

*The Swing Bridge in the 1920s*

Along the banks, on both sides of the river, other 'port' industries grew up, he told us, –



shipbuilding  
and boat

building, saw mills, rope- and sail-making, and building materials (including sand dredged from the river mouth). But communication between the river banks was always a problem – the ferries, small boats for passenger and cumbersome contraptions for horse and cart, could hardly cope and the first bridge was built in 1908. The middle section swung to allow ships to pass through. It lasted until 1980, replaced by a footbridge in 1981.

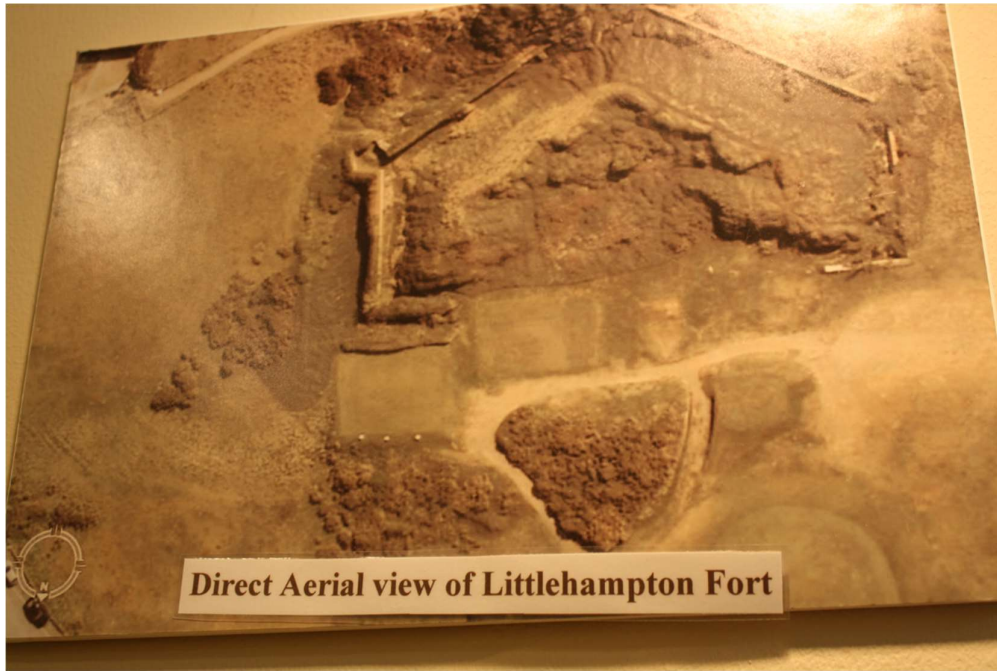
The port also provided a daily service to Honfleur, in Normandy, in the 1860s, as well as regular freight runs to the Channel Islands for early fruit and vegetables. Fishing continued all through the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> but only on a very small scale by the 1960s.

Far more important from the 1850s onward was the ‘resort’ industry. The hotels on South Terrace, facing the Green, marched further towards the town, especially after the railway came to Littlehampton but even in the 1920s, it was still regarded as a rather genteel resort, contrasted with Bognor. It was only after Billy Butlin had the Casino Theatre and the old windmill on the sea front demolished and an ‘amusement park’ built there in 1932, that the resort ‘changed its character for ever, Adge said.



*Left, the old Windmill under demolition 1932. The sign on the right says 'When it's wet, it's fine at Butlin's'. Right, the Amusement Park in the early 1950s.*

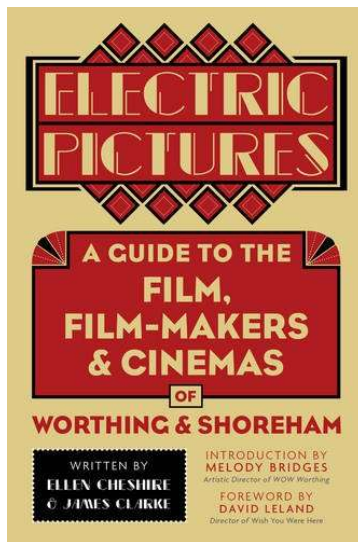
Adge also covered the military history of Littlehampton, from the early forts on the east bank of the sea front to the 'Palmerston' fort built in 1854, on the west bank. It was abandoned in 1891 and partly dismantled in 1965 but is now being excavated from the many feet of sand that had covered it for many decades. He also showed us pictures of field guns being loaded in World War 1 and traces that still remain of the tank traps that were set up in the streets in World War 2. As always, Adge gave us a fascinating talk full of detail, anecdote and good humour.



Our

#### February meeting - Sussex and Films

The 2019 Annual General Meeting was conducted with the usual dispatch. The group had had a good year in 2018, with interesting presentations, visits and walks. Membership was up and finances were very secure. The officers and committee members were re-elected, now joined by Stephen Abbott.



Our speaker was Ellen Cheshire, on 'Sussex and Films', co-author of 'Electric Pictures', and **Stephen Webbe** produced the following account of her presentation.

Ellen began her talk by noting that film was first shown in Worthing in 1896 or, more precisely, on August 31 of that year when Lieutenant Walter Cole, a gifted ventriloquist who used life-size dolls, started a one-week engagement at Worthing's Pier Pavilion.

One of the highlights of Cole's variety show was what Ellen called "the latest wonder of the age" and what Cole referred to as "Electric Animated Photos." Described by the Worthing Gazette as a "series of animated photos, the newest and most striking electric invention" and "the most novel item of the evening's entertainment," the "animated photos" were actually short films made by Robert Paul, an electrical engineer and scientific instrument maker from London. A leading pioneer of British film, Paul pictured Brighton beach, the Boat Race, a rough sea at Dover and, most notably, the finish of the 1896

Derby (won by the Prince of Wales' horse Persimmon) which he rushed into two London music halls the day after.

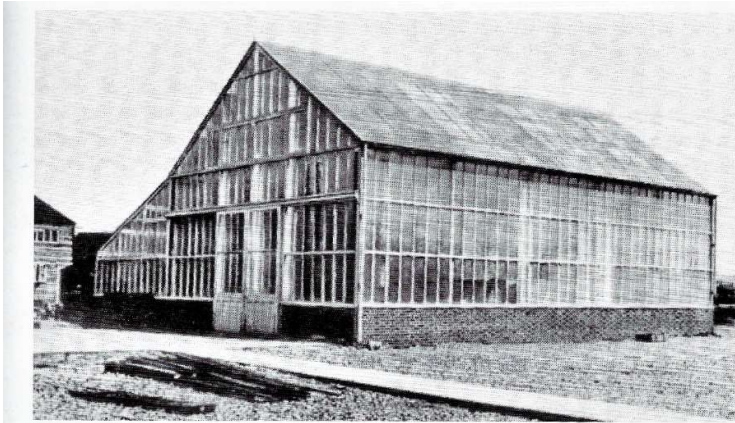
In Ellen's view, April 6th and 7th 1898 are red letter days in the history of Worthing and film. That's when the Scottish inventor William Kennedy Dickson, "one of the world's first superstar cameramen," as she described him, spent time in the town capturing "the realities of a British seaside resort on film."

Dickson, who devised the first commercially successful cinematograph system, made at least seven films over those two days in Worthing using a huge camera on a heavy iron tripod and a cartload of batteries. Three films survive: two of the Worthing lifeboat and one of the Worthing Swimming Club playing a water polo match at West Worthing's Heene Baths. In 1899 Dickson hauled his camera off to the Boer War and, although he never filmed actual combat, he recorded scenes at the disastrous British defeats of Colenso that same year and Spion Kop in 1900.

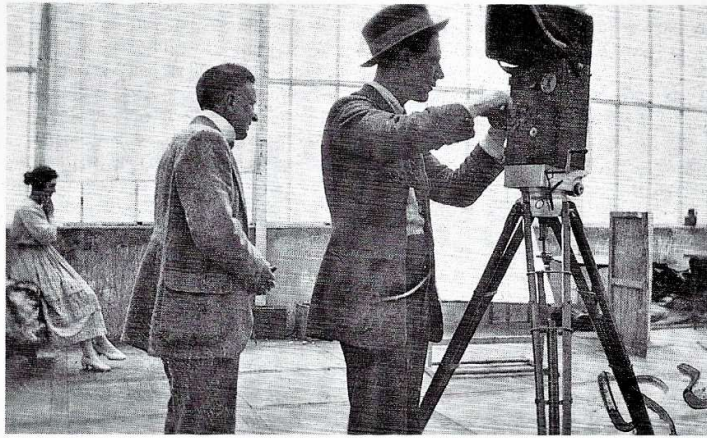
Shifting her focus, Ellen noted that the first silent film company to set up in Shoreham was the cheerily-named Sunny South Films. That was in 1914. It was a venture that involved theatrical scenery painter Francis Lyndhurst (grandfather of "Only Fools and Horses" star Nicholas Lyndhurst) and singer, comedian and Drury Lane music hall star Will Evans who both had holiday homes in Shoreham

Shoreham's Victorian fort became their studio and its parade ground their stage. Over the next year Sunny South made eight films (or perhaps nine) including its most ambitious, "The Showman's Dream" and "Moving A Piano." The latter, as Ellen was at pains to stress, didn't star Charlie Chaplin manhandling an old 'joanna' in the mud of the River Adur despite imaginative claims to the contrary over the years.





A glass daylight studio. (Courtesy of John Payne)



Progress Film Company filming at the glasshouse studio, Shoreham. (Courtesy of the Mavis Clare/Gillian Gregg Archive)

*Photos from the book 'Electric Pictures' by Ellen Cheshire and James Clarke*

ceased until the summer of 1919 when the Manchester-based Progress Film Company bought the studio complex.

Progress boss Frank Spring brought in writer and director Sidney Morgan and cinematographer Stanley Mumford. It proved to be a winning team. Morgan was delighted by Shoreham's long hours of sunshine and its pure, clean light unsullied by smoke and fog. Nothing was better for daylight production. Progress was soon living up to its name. It added a yard for building sets and storage for sets, props and equipment and it soon had an editing suite, preview theatre and a small laboratory for processing film.

With the growth of the studio complex, more and more actors and technicians began living in Shoreham's famous Bungalow Town that ran along the shingle spit for some two miles between Lancing's Widewater Lagoon and the Palmerston fort.

The advance guard of bungalows seems to have trooped onto Shoreham beach in the 1890s. There were certainly close to 100 there by 1910. According to Ellen, the arrival of music hall star Cecilia Loftus in Shoreham in 1900 "is said to have led the theatrical colonisation of Bungalow Town" and brought many of her theatrical and music hall friends down from London to enjoy its "idyllic setting." In her book 'Electric Pictures', Ellen reproduces a page from the Daily Express for August 16th 1904 which states that Bungalow Town then consisted of 'about

In 1915 Francis Lyndhurst returned to Shoreham on his own to set up Sealight Films just northwest of the Church of the Good Shepherd and build a huge glasshouse studio there the following year. It was fitted with special glass to magnify the natural light but, as Ellen noted, "it had no ventilation whatsoever" and the "extreme heat would make the studio unbearable" - so much so that the "actors' make-up would run." It looked like a giant greenhouse because it was built by a London firm of greenhouse specialists. Having survived World War Two, it was demolished in 1963.

Ellen explained that Lyndhurst only directed one short feature film at Sealight before financial pressures engulfed him. He defaulted on his mortgage and sold the studio. Filming at Shoreham



two hundred structures'. Most were built of wood and corrugated iron and were particularly vulnerable to fire and autumn gales.

The age of Progress Films had arrived. Most actors and crew lived in a 20-bed railway carriage bungalow called Studio Rest and work on the first film - "Sweet and Twenty" - got underway in 1919.

Sidney Morgan and his actress wife Evelyn Wood had a daughter called Joan and, according to Ellen, she took the lead in eight of the Progress films. A doe-eyed English rose who described herself as a "little soft blonde" and resembled Mary Pickford, Joan Morgan was most proud of playing Amy Dorrit in *Little Dorrit* in 1920 when she was only 14. "Miss Joan Morgan plays Amy Dorrit with a simplicity and naturalness that it would be difficult to improve on," declared *The Era*, an influential theatrical newspaper, on September 1st 1920.

As a result, Morgan was offered a lucrative, five-year Hollywood contract but because she was only 15 her father turned down the offer. Over 80 years later she still regretted the decision not to move to the Golden State. In all, Sidney Morgan directed 17 films for the Progress Film Company between 1919 and 1922 both in the famous glasshouse and on location. Several won critical acclaim. His last film for the company was "The Mayor of Casterbridge" shot in 1921 in the absence of his daughter who had gone out to South Africa to play the lead in "Swallow: A Tale of the Great Trek," an adaptation of Rider Haggard's novel about the Voortrekkers.

"The Mayor of Casterbridge" was partly filmed at the Shoreham Beach studio but chiefly in Steyning with other scenes shot in Dorchester, the actual setting of Casterbridge. The 65-minute film of the Thomas Hardy classic with Stanley Mumford as cinematographer was made with the hearty endorsement of its distinguished author (even though he thought films a fad) who genially offered advice on locations. Ellen's 2017 book "Electric Pictures" includes a delightful photograph of the filming in Steyning's High Street that bears the imprint: "Kinematographing at Steyning."

Ellen explained that Mumford had a knack for being at the right place at the right time. While on assignment for Pathé News, he was dispatched to the Derby on June 4th 1913 when suffragette Emily Davison ran onto the course at Tattenham Corner in front of King George V's horse. In her book "Electric Pictures," Ellen quotes Mumford from his memoirs: "I started to crank the camera. All of a sudden from under the rails opposite me a woman dashed out and ran bang slap into the middle of those thundering horses...before you could gasp she was knocked flying." Four days later Davison died from a fractured skull. Historians think she may have been attempting to pin a suffragette sash onto the King's horse.

One of the Progress films Stanley Mumford later worked on as a cinematographer was "Fires of Innocence" which made use of Shoreham's Church of the Good Shepherd and Bramber High Street as locations. Released in 1922, it was also one of the eight films Joan Morgan made for the Shoreham company.

Everybody thought "Fires of Innocence" had been lost until Ellen (with help from film historian Tony Fletcher) rediscovered it in the archives of the British Film Institute. Directed by Sidney Morgan, it was adapted from the novel "A Little World Apart" by female novelist George Stevenson. *The Era* called it "a vivid picture of life in a rural parish" and, in Ellen's opinion, the star of the film is the reverend's daughter played by Joan Morgan and not the mysterious widow.

1922 was an *annus horribilis* for the Progress Film Company. In December of that year a major fire broke out in Bungalow Town. With a howling gale blowing, the fire soon turned into an inferno. After Mumford (with his brother's help) had rescued a tin trunk containing the season's negatives, he managed to set up the camera in one of the bungalows. Recalling it in his memoirs, he explained: "The whole room was ablaze and I was getting some remarkable shots when all of a sudden with a cracking noise the roof...over my head collapsed, knocking both me and the camera flat."

Struggling outside with the precious camera, Mumford began to film several of the wildly blazing bungalows. The unavailability of the Shoreham Fire Brigade didn't help matters as Mumford's memoirs attest. "Owing to the Norfolk Bridge being closed, the fire brigade from Shoreham could not reach the area so it was many hours before Worthing Fire Brigade arrived. We stood spellbound at the sight that met us; the night was lit up for miles around."

When it was daylight, Mumford took several shots of the buckled corrugated iron and smouldering timbers. He then contacted Pathé Gazette. The footage was quickly packaged into "Bungalow Town Ablaze" and, as he noted appreciatively in his memoirs, "it was a news scoop for them and [a] fat cheque for us."

Although the devastating fire spared the main studio it reduced Studio Rest to ashes and put paid to the Progress Film Company, although it wasn't officially wound up until 1929. By then the talkies had arrived and Sidney Morgan and his daughter were long gone.

Ellen explained that when the silent film era ended Joan Morgan's "film work dried up." She made a talkie in 1932 called "Her Reputation" but her star was fading. She had other talents to draw on, however. A voracious reader and gifted writer, she became a scriptwriter for early British talkies using the pseudonyms Iris North and Joan Wentworth Wood. Her most high profile screen-writing success was the 1932 war film "The Flag Lieutenant" starring Anna Neagle and Henry Edwards that was made at Elstree. As Ellen noted, Joan Morgan went on to write 13 novels and several plays, later turning her hand to renovating country houses.

In 1998, Joan Morgan was interviewed about her film life at Shoreham by Alan Readman, Assistant County Archivist at the West Sussex Record Office and the exchange survives on YouTube. As she told Readman: "It was all wooden bungalows, a lot of them on railway carriages and it was the holiday area for all the stars of the music hall [who would] come and sing the songs that made them famous. You had a wonderful life then."

There was a moment, perhaps, when Shoreham beach might have become Britain's Hollywood-on-Sea, the Tinseltown of Sussex. But the ancient port with its clear air, old fort and glasshouse studio couldn't match California's climate and financial muscle. However, as Ellen observed, both towns have provided prime film locations over the years. Shoreham's art deco airport (the oldest in the Britain, and Grade II Listed) made an appearance as Vienna's swastika-draped airport in the 2015 film 'Woman in Gold.'

There is a fuller version of Steve Webbe's report in the Members' section of our web site, with more on modern-day location filming in Worthing and Shoreham, and a surprising revelation of Joan Morgan's political views.

**Back Story: what the Luftwaffe saw****by Ed Miller**

The photograph opposite was taken by a German aircraft in the middle of World War II. It ended up in the United States National Archives, and this copy came to us from Ferring resident Michael Tanner, who died last year. It was taken from 33,000 feet on 22 April 1942. At this stage of the war the Germans were no longer thinking seriously about invading Britain, but trying to wear her down by bombing industrial centres, ports and residential areas. West Sussex was of no particular interest and the pictures were presumably taken en route to London- the aircraft seems to be flying north. The only worthwhile target in Ferring was the Radar station on Highdown but it is difficult to see anything of it in these photographs – most of the installation was under the trees. Neither is the Pill Box visible, although under strong magnification one can see the line of concrete blocks above the beach.

What is of more interest to us, nearly 80 years later, is the state of housing development – frozen since 1939 and unchanging until the late 1940s. South Ferring is very recognisable: the layout of the roads was substantially complete except for the south-east corner, where there was still farmland south of Tamarisk Way, and only Jersey Road of the ‘Channel Islands’ estate. A few long-gone sights stand out – the five tennis courts between Ocean Drive and Chalet Road, the empty field between Ansisters Road and Barbary Lane, and the isolation of Greenways Crescent. With a good magnifying-glass, one can also see the site of the bomb that killed two residents in what is now Sea Lane Gardens (north) a year earlier.

North of Church Lane, there is much less development. Where now we have Rife Way, the Glebelands and Meadow Way estates, there was still, in 1942, the farmland that formed part of ‘Ferringe Towne Field’ on the 1621 map. The Village Hall is barely visible but immediately south of it is the field here the cricket team had played, and the Village Fair was held, before the war - now occupied by Symonds and Reading and the Co-op). North of the railway, the Langbury Lane – Highdown Way – Downview Road estate is clearly visible but Cissbury Road is only just begun, stopping at a large field (in fact an orchard).

On the east of the village the Goring Gap is almost empty but note Goring Way, laid down in 1938 - only six houses at the Ferring end but Goring is reaching out along the other end, and down Rudgwick Avenue, and that the seafront road, and roads striking north into the gap have been laid out ready for an extension of the Goring Hall estate. Thankfully, this never happened.

**OUR PROGRAMME FOR 2020****MEETINGS – all at 7.30pm, on Fridays in Ferring Village Hall****7 February:** Ed Miller on **Ferring in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century****1 May:** Sqd.Ldr Joe Marsden on **Tangmere RAF Station and Museum****7 August:** John Breach on **Castles of Sussex****6 November:** Tim Baldwin on **Sussex and Painters****11 December:** Social: Guest Speaker to be arranged**VISITS AND WALKS**

Dates and details to be arranged early in 2020 but we shall be offering our usual programme of guided local walks and visits further afield. For up-to-date information on this, our research and our other activities, please visit our web site **[ferringhistorygroup.co.uk](http://ferringhistorygroup.co.uk)**

## Ferring in April 1942

This photograph was taken by a German reconnaissance aircraft at 33,000 feet.



From the collection of the late Michael Tanner.

By kind permission of Mrs Sally Tanner.