

# FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE 2021



James T Bennett

Sea Lane 1904

# Then and Now



The lychgate at St Andrew's Church, built in 1897, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee year, at a cost of £35.

Financed by contributions from Ferring residents,

Photographed in 1899, this view is looking out from the churchyard. The Ramblers on the far

left, Church Cottage near left and the old cottage on the right, demolished in 1T906 to allow and extension to the burial ground.

The same view in December 2020. Now Church Cottage has a tiled roof, and we can see Maytree Cottage. There are trees and gravestones in the 'new' section of the hurchyard. The lychgate and the pair of gates on the footpath look exactly the same.



Matching photograph by John Vaughan

# FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE

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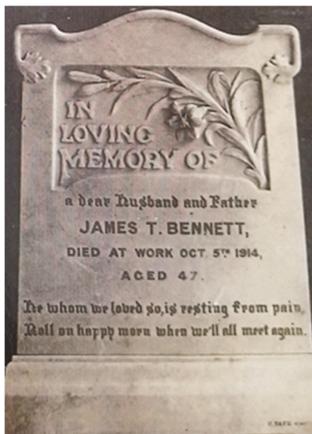
## Editorial

The year 2020 was almost a ‘wash-out’ for our History Group. We only managed one meeting before the Corona virus stopped us in our tracks. No guided walks and no visits. Very limited opportunities for research either – libraries very restricted and the County Record Office only open at all in the latter months and then only by appointment. However, more and more sources are available on the internet and this edition of the Magazine contains much information derived from them. We hope we can pick up in 2021 where we left off in February 2020. At that meeting I gave a talk on Ferring in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – a summary of which is set out on page 3. It was also our AGM and we re-elected our Committee, took note of a good financial and membership position and adopted a Constitution (which formalises our current arrangements). Of course, our next meetings are only possible when the restrictions, including social distancing, have been lifted. As I write this, on New Year’s Day, a meeting on 7 May looks probable.

Three topical items found their way into this issue: the history of Chatsmore Farm, which, if Persimmon Homes Ltd had their way, would be covered in an estate of 475 houses, the unveiling of a Blue Plaque for Col Stern at Highdown Towers, and the installation of a seat on Kingston Greensward commemorating the drowned chapel. The rest is the usual mix of articles and reports which we hope you will enjoy. As always, there is more material of interest on our web site: [ferringhistorygroup.co.uk](http://ferringhistorygroup.co.uk)

## Cover story: Died at Work

One of the most prominent gravestones in St Andrew's churchyard is that of James T Bennett.



Close to the church hall, its lead lettering spells out the stark words ‘Died at Work’. *FHG member Gwen Menezes reveals the full story.*

James Thomas Bennett was born in Ferring in 1867, the only son of George and Caroline Bennett who lived in Hangleton Lane. St Andrew’s churchyard holds the remains of James’ first wife, his parents, his grandparents, and many generations before them. There are more Bennetts in the parish burial registers than any other, as far back as Agnes Bennett in 1559. The 1911 census lists James Bennett as a ‘Horseman on a Farm’, living with his wife and five children at ‘Carisbrooke’, a cottage on Sea Lane. This was on the eastern side of the road, just south of the Ilex avenue, and was demolished around 1960.

James worked for George Harrison, who had a large farm which stretched from Goring Station down to the seafront and westwards to Sea Lane, Ferring. On October 5, 1914 James was working in the fields on the Goring side of the farm when he had a heart attack, which probably killed him outright. His workmates pulled a door off one of the outbuildings at the Bull pub and carried him back to his cottage. A contemporary newspaper report stated: ‘A carter named James Thomas Bennett died suddenly while at work on Mr Harrison's farm last week. Deceased, who was forty-seven years of age, had been suffering from heart trouble.’

In his early twenties, James was working as a carter for a nursery in Barnham when he met Elizabeth Ford. Born in Hampshire, she was a domestic servant in East Preston at the time. Three months after Elizabeth turned 18, they were married at St Andrew's. It was October 3 1891 and they moved to Ferring. Then on 9 September 1899, Elizabeth died of tuberculosis, and James was left with three children under the age of eight. Their address in the 1901 Census was 2 Hermitage Cottage, Goring. Also living with them was James's sister Alice who is listed as 'Housekeeper (Domestic)'.

Ellen Martha Winter, one of eleven children of Henry and Mary Winter, had been born in Norwich but now also lived in Goring. On March 31 1902, she became James's second wife. They were married at St Mary's Church Goring, then moved to Ferring. She was 25 and he was 35.

At the time of his death, James had six children with Ellen – and she was given notice to quit 'Carisbrooke' because the cottage was tied to James's job and needed for the new carter's



Ellen and her six children in 1917

family. The oldest of Ellen's children was twelve, the youngest eight months, and they all moved to Mayfield Cottage in Goring. (James's other three children had left home by this time.) One of Ellen's sisters had married and moved to Detroit, USA and opened a boarding house. Another sister had married and moved to Toronto, Canada. Ellen had received many letters from both and in 1920, at the age of 43, she packed up her belongings and sailed to Canada with her six children on board the *SS Tunisian*. She had twenty-five dollars in her pocket and her immigration paperwork shows she intended to be a fruit grower.

The Salvation Army paid for their passage in exchange for her caring for a British orphan while travelling. They landed in Montreal and took a train to Toronto where she delivered her sixteen year-old charge to the Children's Aid Society. With very little money and no income, they continued on to Detroit, to her sister's boarding house. They

only stayed for a few months as the rooms were needed for income. Ellen packed their belongings again and headed back to Toronto to stay with her other sister. With no spare rooms, the visitors all slept in a row on the attic floor. The Salvation Army helped out once again and found the family a permanent place to live, as well as jobs for those old enough to have one.

In 1930, they were fully settled into Canadian life and the children were grown and moved out. Ellen took a trip to Fenelon Falls, Ontario and fell in love with the fresh air, trees and lakes. She purchased a large amount of lakefront property and within a few years had cleared the land and built four cottages and, later, her own house in town. There was no electricity or plumbing at the time, but she enjoyed the work and did most of it herself. She became known around town as the lady who could do anything.

In one of her letters back to England, Ellen is reported to have said it was fortunate that James had died early in the month, because it gave her more time to prepare to leave their cottage. One of the last things she did before sailing for Canada was to commission a memorial from Francis Tate, the Worthing stonemason. The story that was passed on to me was that, as she was thinking of leaving the country, she was ironing one morning and dreaming of the new adventures ahead of her. She took the flat iron out of the fire and said "Roll on happy morn, James, we will meet again" and that is where the last line of his headstone came from.

On December 23 1965, Ellen Bennett passed away peacefully in her sleep believing, as she put on James's headstone, that we would all meet again. She was survived by five of her six children, nineteen grand-children and twenty-eight great-grand-children -- of whom I am proud to say I am one.

*Gwen Menezes - Angus, Ontario, Canada.*

### Ferring in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century



David Lyon: landowner of East Ferring



Edwin Henty 1804 – 90, principal landowner in West Ferring.

In what turned out to be the only meeting in 2020, Ed Miller gave over 70 members of the Group a presentation on the village in the 19th Century. His main theme was how the Henty family, who leased a third of the farmland in 1801, ended up owning the freehold of two thirds of it by 1900. Queen Victoria dominated the Century at a national level but in Ferring it was 'the Henty Century'. The Lyon family, by 1838, owned most of East Ferring but the rest of their property was in Goring and, although David Lyon had the carriage-drive (now the Ilex Avenue) connecting his mansion at Goring Hall with Sea Lane laid out in the 1840s, the Lyon family played little part in the social life of Ferring. David was succeeded by his brother William in 1872 and then by his nephew (William Francis) in 1892. For most of the century the Lyons were, in effect, 'absentee-landlords'.

George Henty inherited the lease of the Bishop's estate in 1795, and his wife inherited many acres of copyhold land in the parish. His son Edwin then bought up many more copyhold tenancies and gradually converted all his property to freehold. He rebuilt the old Manor House as a modern gentleman's residence and paid for the restoration of St Andrew's Church.

But his main interest, Ed suggested, was not in farming but in banking and property development. Apart from his family bank, with branches in Arundel, Horsham, Worthing, Steyning, Storrington and Littlehampton, he had business interests in Worthing and in 1844 formed the company that built the Shoreham to Chichester railway (which ran through Ferring).

Ed contrasted the leisured life of the Hentys and the tenant farmers (they all had servants) with the life of the farm labourers - long hours in the fields (many of them still working in their 70s), and of the really poor - heavily punished for petty theft and likely to die in the East Preston Workhouse or even worse, as in two recorded cases of vagrants, out in the fields.

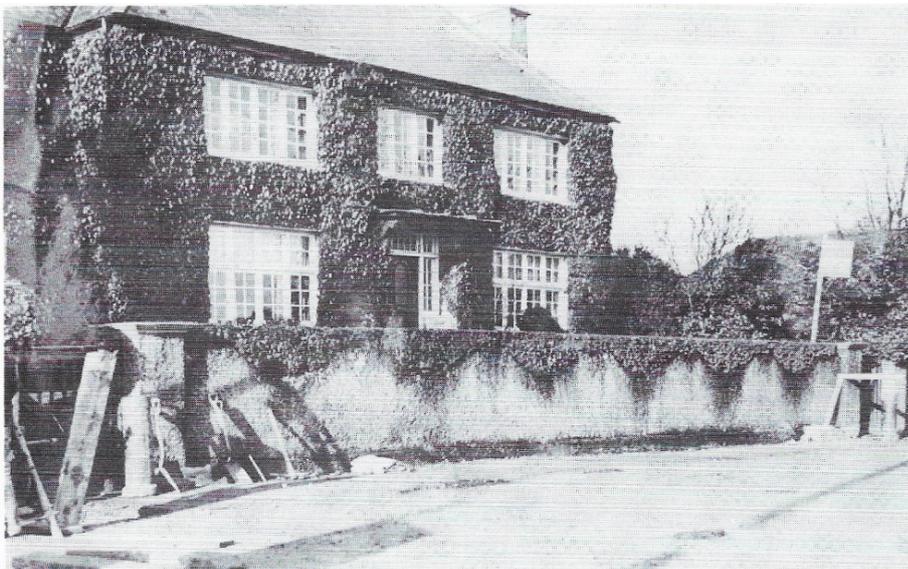
He ended his talk with the Worthing Gazette's account of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Ferring in 1897. A bonfire was lit on Highdown. Edwin Henty's son (another Edwin) invited all the men of the village to a 'capital dinner', speeches were made, a telegram of congratulations sent to the Queen, and a lavish tea was provided for the women and children, followed by a cricket match for the men and running races for the children. Asked whether he was going to write a book on the Century, to follow his 20th Century book, Ed said, yes, he was already working on it.

## Chatsmore Farm

by Ed Miller

In August 2020 the long-expected planning application was submitted for a housing estate on the northern Goring Gap, between the railway and Littlehampton Road. The site was referred to as 'Chatsmore Farm', a name long out of currency in Ferring and Goring except for what was 'Chatsmore Catholic High School' (since renamed 'St Oscar Romero Catholic School').

Chatsmore Farm was one of several farms on the Goring Hall estate, owned by the Lyon family since the 1830s and worked by tenant farmers. In 1910 George Harrison had 109 acres at Manor Farm in East Ferring but 884 acres in Goring, including Chatsmore Farm with 554 acres, and Highdown Farm. He lived at Field Place in 1892, then at Highdown Tower before selling it to Major Stern and moving to Chatsmore House. This was a 'gentleman farmer's residence' situated in Goring Street at the eastern edge of Chatsmore Farm, and separated from the farm buildings.



Chatsmore House, for sale in 1938.

(with thanks to John Vaughan)

Harrison and his sons continued as the main farmers of the estate after it was acquired by the property company, Hesketh Estates, in 1934. Houses were built on the western part of the estate up to 1939 but the farm continued under crops, and managed jointly with Walnut Tree Dairy Farm, in Goring Street, opposite the old

Chatsmore farmhouse. Harrison retired in 1937, after 45 years of farming in Goring and Ferring: the house was sold in 1938, and became a private school. He died in 1941, aged 75.

The new tenant of Chatsmore Farm did not manage it so well as the Harrisons. The wartime Government carried out a survey of all farms, in a drive to increase agricultural production. The report of the survey carried out on 14 August 1941 noted an infestation of weeds including docks, thistles, and milk thistles. In addition they noted a prevalence of the potato disease, haywire. Ham Manor and Chatsmore Farm were classified 'C' the worst classification, and under the heading Personal Failings they noted 'lack of experience'. The report stated: 'This is really first class land and should be carrying good crops. Goring Hall Estate arable [i.e. Chatsmore Farm] should yield more prolific crops if well done.'

Post-war it was presumably 'well done' and in recent years, the land (owned by successive property developers) has been farmed by the highly-efficient Langmeads, who started in West Sussex in 1881 and now farm all the surviving farmland in Ferring, Goring, Kingston and Angmering as well as many other districts in West Sussex. A new Catholic school was built behind the house (initially called St Mary's, later Chatsmore) in 1957. The old house was demolished in 1962 and replaced by a block of flats – another iteration of 'Chatsmore House'.

We earnestly hope that 'Chatsmore Farm' will not be reiterated as the name of a housing estate.

## Shoreham's Maritime History

Report by Stephen Webbe

The Village Hall was jammed to the gunwales to hear popular local historian Trevor Povey discourse on Shoreham's maritime history. There was no room to swing a cat. Portslade-born Trevor, a retired transport engineer, quickly established the difference between Old Shoreham and New Shoreham. When a muddy, meandering River Adur choked the life out of the former, the latter took root half a mile downstream as the 11th Century came to an end. New Shoreham grew rapidly, exporting South Downs wool and importing wine from Gascony.

Using the famous - and somewhat conjectural - plan of Shoreham in the mid-14th Century (devised by the historian of Shoreham Henry Cheal, and drawn by Arthur Packham), Trevor took his Ferring audience on a make-believe tour of the medieval port. We walked along along Procession Street (today's High Street) and reached the Marlipins with its distinctive facing of chequered Caen stone and flint panels. Trevor agrees with other historians that the 12th to early-13th century building was, in all probability, a bonded warehouse. Intriguingly, he thinks he's spotted a 'paying-in window' on what was Moderlove Street and is now Middle Street.

Trevor said that in the 12th and 13th Centuries, Shoreham was one of England's most important Channel ports and ship-building centres. Oak trees from St. Leonard's Forest in the western Weald were floated down the River Adur to the port's busy shipyards. "Shoreham literally turned St. Leonard's Forest into shipping," he said. In 1205 (during King John's reign), five out of 51 royal galleys were stationed at Shoreham. London itself only had five. That, Trevor said, "was the start of Shoreham as a maritime entity."

As his talk took us through Shoreham's medieval streets, he pointed out the 'cathedral-like church' of St. Mary de Haura (St. Mary of the Haven), the Carmelite priory of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the houses of the military orders, the Knights Templars and Knights Hospitallers. With the exception of St. Mary's, all three, lying to the south of the present High Street, were to fall victim to coastal erosion and vanish beneath the waves as the 15th Century dawned. The Hospitallers, who were more accurately known as the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, had cared for poor, sick and injured pilgrims in the Holy Land in the early 11th Century. Whether they ministered to pilgrims in medieval Shoreham is not recorded. But pilgrims were not unknown in the town. According to Trevor, they set off from Shoreham to pray at the shrine of St. James in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain.

The cathedral's identification with St. James, one of the twelve apostles, who died a martyr's death in AD 44 made Compostela one of the most celebrated of all medieval pilgrimages. By one account, a Shoreham ship called the Trinity, owned by one Thomas Attehalle, received a license to carry pilgrims to Spain in 1422 in either the reign of Henry V or Henry VI. Presumably the Trinity sailed to La Coruña where the pilgrims rode on to the Galician shrine in their long tunics and broad-brimmed hats in time for the saint's day on July 25th.



Some idea of the confidence Shoreham felt as a bustling port can be gauged from its borough seal. Commissioned in 1295, and one of the most striking illustrations in Trevor's talk, it shows six sailors in a medieval ship, one of whom is issuing orders through a speaking trumpet from the sterncastle. It's not thought to depict the familiar northern European 'cog' but rather the lesser known 'hulk'.

As Trevor explained, Shoreham, like Littlehampton, has always had to struggle with a less than ideal position on the Sussex coast. It's been plagued by what he called "littoral drift," the unstoppable process by which the currents and south-westerly winds have shifted thousands of tons of shingle across the mouth of the Adur, a process that started in the 15th Century. Lacking the strength to force its way to the sea through the resulting shingle spit, the Adur was pushed endlessly eastwards over the centuries.

While the spit probably protected Shoreham from the coastal erosion that had destroyed its great medieval buildings, it's estimated that it pushed the river mouth eastwards at an average rate of 118 feet a year. But nothing daunted, Shoreham's shipbuilders battled on. Trunks had to be sawn into planks and for that, as Trevor explained, a simple sawpit and a brace of men were required.

While they were being sawn, the trunks rested on planks known as "dogs." The man above who guided the two-handed whipsaw to ensure planks of an even thickness was known as the "top dog." The other man, standing in the pit enduring an endless shower of sawdust, was called the "underdog." It's not the only explanation for the terms, of course. Some think they've got much more to do with dogfighting. But that's Trevor's story and he's sticking to it. Working in a sawpit required extraordinary strength and patience. Trevor is clearly in awe of the men who cut the planking for Shoreham's ships. "They weren't going to be hairdressers and deejays," he told his Ferring listeners. "They were going to do real jobs." Shipbuilding was thirsty work. Trevor observed that at one point in its shipbuilding life, Shoreham boasted 57 pubs. The Builders Arms on West Street was a favourite for those who toiled in the shipyards. It had a huge cellar and closed in 1911.

As Trevor explained, once a ship's planking was in place, it had to be caulked. That required oakum, obtained by teasing out fibres from old rope mostly made of hemp. When treated with tar, the fibres were used to plug the seams between the planking. Trevor said that sometimes caulking gangs would be hired to do the work. Once a Scottish gang came down to Shoreham to display its skills. In his 1909 book 'The Ships And Mariners Of Shoreham'. Henry Cheal captured the beating heart of Shoreham when he wrote of 'the singing of many keen saws cutting through the stout oak timbers', and the sound of...adzes, wielded by skilful craftsmen as they shaped the keel and ribs of some new vessel.'

As ships rose on the stocks, he was fascinated by 'the blows of many hammers, the ring of the anvils (and) the shouts of the men.' When ships neared completion, he admired their 'tall masts...being hauled to their appointed places and wrote lyrically of 'a newly-launched vessel' with 'fluttering white sails impatient to breast the ocean wave.' Shoreham also numbered many block makers and sail makers among its shipbuilding community Trevor said. Blocks are probably best described as single or multiple pulleys and, according to Trevor, a 74-gun ship of the line in the 18th Century required 922 of them. There were several rope works - perhaps as many as nine - in the 19th Century Shoreham. "Green Lane was once called Ropemaker's Lane," Trevor observed.

Shoreham turned out scores of merchant ships in the 17th and 18th Centuries. Daniel Defoe, of 'Robinson Crusoe' fame, claimed the port was famous for its West Indiamen, sturdy vessels that sailed to the West Indies and North America. In the mid-19th Century Shoreham built ships of 800 tons that ranged as far as Australia. Of the 161 sailing ships registered at Shoreham in 1871, 88 had been built there. The yards were booming.

Shoreham also supplied the Royal Navy with warships, Trevor said. The timber was at hand and so were the guns, notably from Buxted near Uckfield on the edge of the Ashdown Forest. Here, in 1543, the ironmaster Ralf Hogge cast the first muzzle-loading iron cannon in England. The records show that there was a burst of naval shipbuilding between 1690 and 1696 in Shoreham. In those six years 17 men-of-war were launched. According to Henry Cheal, Shoreham specialised in fourth, fifth and sixth rate warships along with sloops and fireships. Among the sloops, none covered herself in greater glory than the 22-gun HMS Scorpion who displayed an extraordinary talent for capturing enemy sloops during the French Revolutionary Wars. In all, five Royal Navy ships have borne the name HMS Shoreham since 1694.

Over the centuries Shoreham has taken no end of a battering from wind and wave. “From 1703 to 1707, England experienced some of the worst storms we’ve ever seen,” Trevor told his Ferring listeners as he went on to explain just how grievously Shoreham had suffered in 1703. Shoreham caught the full force of the ferocious storm that struck central and southern England on November 26th that year, killing between 8,000 and 15,000 people. It was so violent that it destroyed 13 ships of the Royal Navy, including the entire Channel Squadron. Shoreham suffered such serious damage that took years to repair. “Half the town disappeared and the Market House was blown down,” Trevor told his rapt audience.

When Daniel Defoe published “A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain” between 1724 and 1727 he remarked on the devastation inflicted on Shoreham in 1703. He declared that unless one had personally experienced the storm ‘no pen could describe...nor tongue express...nor thought conceive’ of its destructive power.

Untroubled by the raging tempest of 1703, Shoreham’s shingle spit continued its march eastwards. In 1760, when it was fully four miles long, a new cut was made opposite Kingston just east of Shoreham. A pier either side of the entrance worked well. But, as Trevor explained, because some piles had not been driven deep enough, the old problem soon returned. As the river mouth moved inexorably east, the harbour silted up and new cuts had to be made in 1775, 1800 and 1810. After much debate and expenditure, the Kingston entrance was re-opened in 1821. To Shoreham’s delight, it was a success.

Trevor noted that once upon a time Shoreham was synonymous with oysters. What Henry Cheal called “succulent bivalves” brought considerable prosperity to the town in the 19th Century. The oyster beds lay in mid-Channel, some 20 miles long and about seven or eight miles wide. Shoreham built scores of oyster smacks to harvest the bounty and, as Trevor told his listeners, 50,000 tons of Shoreham oysters were shipped up 33 to London in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition. The oyster fishing industry peaked in 1869 when 295 boats employing 740 men and 89 boys were engaged in it. But by 1913 the fleet had fallen to 184 boats employing 397 men. Shoreham’s oyster smacks were no match for the steam-powered boats that muscled in from neighbouring ports.

Among the illustrations Trevor used in his talk was a map that showed the oyster holding ponds near the Norfolk Bridge. Clearly not all oysters were packed off to London. Just east of Shoreham at Southwick the hulk of the “Albion” was converted into a house and oyster shop. The oyster business may have faded away but fishing hasn’t. These days Shoreham is a commercial fishing port with some 26 boats catching cod and whiting in the winter; plaice in the spring; and sole, turbot and ray in the summer.

More significantly, the port of Shoreham is one of the largest cargo handling ports on the South Coast. Small cargo ships or coasters deliver steel, timber, grain and bulk aggregates as well as general cargoes. “Steel is one of the biggest imports into Shoreham,” Trevor noted as he concluded his talk, adding that a single coaster is a boon for the environment. “It takes 125 lorries off the road,” he said.

For those used to driving through Shoreham without giving it much thought and muttering about its unlovely scrap metal depot and sluggish High Street traffic, Trevor Povey’s talk was a revelation. Shoreham has a riveting maritime history.

## Summertime

by Ed Miller

The photograph opposite was sent to me by Janet Tilley (née Coles). It shows her father outside his shop at 2 Onslow Parade. It is still very recognisable as the newsagent’s but the name has changed several times. Onslow Parade was built in 1936 and the one of the first shops to open was ‘Springs’: Janet said her father thought it might be unlucky to change the name. She knew her father had taken over ‘Springs’ (and the accommodation behind and above the shop) in January 1939, and could guess at the date from the apparent age of her brother on the right-hand side of the picture.

But it is possible to work out the date precisely, from the newspaper billboards. The ‘Times’ board, behind the front wheel of the bicycle, says ‘----- WEEK-END TALKS AT BERCHTESGADEN’. The first word may be ‘AXIS’ or simply ‘THE’. Berchtesgaden was of course the location of Hitler’s mountain retreat. If this was any date after 3 September 1939 the headline would have been written in

a rather different, probably insulting way, and at least one of the placards would refer to the war. The photograph was taken in bright sunlight, and Mr Coles has his sleeves rolled up, so it was either Spring or Summer.

The Times Digital Index shows that the only story which matched the placard was the report of a meeting between Hitler, his Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, and the Italian Foreign Minister Ciano. These talks took place over the weekend of 12 and 13 August and were the lead story in the news pages of the next day’s issue. It must have been the weekend where Hitler and Ribbentrop briefed Ciano on the invasion of Poland which took place three weeks later.

Further confirmation comes from one of the other placards which says, ‘Escaped prisoners seen: Police Quiz Motorists’. This corresponds with another story on the same news page, about two escapees from Lewes Prison and the police throwing a cordon round Heathfield,



where a stolen car used in the get-away had been abandoned. So we can be sure that the photograph was taken on Monday 14 August 1939.

What was in Mr Coles' mind that sunny afternoon? What was he looking at? Looking up to Highdown? Could he possibly have imagined what the next five years would be like? And that 25 village residents would lose their lives? I thought of a verse by A E Housman (from 'A Shropshire Lad') :

*On the idle hill of summer/Sleepy with the flow of streams/Far I hear the steady drummer/Drumming like a noise in dreams./ Far and near and low and louder/On the roads of earth go by/Dear to friends and food for powder/Soldiers marching, all to die.*

Housman wrote this in 1896, long before even the *First* World War.

### **Sea Gulls and Wild Ducks**

We are often asked why so many roads in south-east Ferring are named after places in the Channel Islands: Jersey Road, Guernsey Road, Herm Road, et cetera. Part of the answer is that housing estates often have a theme in their road names and most of these particular roads were developed together in the late 1950s, on land previously belonging to the Guest family.

But why Channel Islands? This probably follows on from Jersey Road, the only one that was there before the war. But why Jersey? The answer may well be that this came from the small Jersey dairy herd that Mrs Guest kept on part of her land there in the late 1920s and 1930s. She sold most of the land to a property company in the 1950s, retaining only the house she and her husband had had built for them in 1922 – 'Wookyi-Tipi'.

Road names have, for a long time now been decided by the local authority, usually accepting developers' suggestions – but not always. The Worthing Herald of 31 August 1956 reported that Worthing Rural District Council has 'suggested that two new roads on the Wookyi-Tipi estate be named Alderney Road and St Helier Road, instead of Sea Gull Lane and Wild Duck Lane'. These were the first two roads to be built, and since most of the other 'Channel Island' roads lead off from these two roads, it must have seemed natural to continue that theme. After Mrs Guest died in 1964 Wookyi-tipi was demolished and in its place were built the apartments, 'St Aubin's Court' – named after yet another Channel Island feature, a small town on Jersey.

### **Ferring Parish Council: early concerns**

**by Stephen Abbott** (current Chairman)

#### *Footpaths*

When the Ferring Annual Parish Meeting of 24th March, 1919 applied to form a Parish Council, the main catalyst for this proposal was the frustration with the various council and corporate bodies over the poor condition and lack of adequate maintenance of the footpath leading to Goring Station, which 'had caused such a difficulty to the Parish over a considerable period'. The Chairman reported that he had 'communicated to the County Council regarding repair of same' and had been referred to East Preston Rural District Council, who in turn referred him to the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Company. Although appearing co-operative initially, the railway company eventually repudiated liability for repair although admitting the land was the company's property.

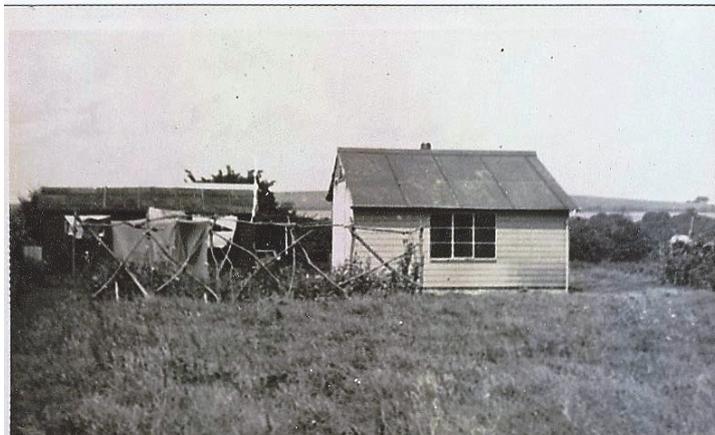
At the inaugural meeting of the Parish Council, Mr. G. Penfold (head of the farming family and now a Parish Councillor) was asked by the Council to supervise the 'making up and improving of that (footpath) leading to Goring station'. This first decisive action of the newly-formed council was carried out on the Ferring section of the path prior to the next FPC meeting on 22 March, 1920. It was then resolved to approach Goring Parish Council to carry out repairs on the remaining section.

The maintenance and repair of footpaths became a perennial topic in the business of Ferring Parish Council. Not only the 'Station' path but also the 'Bull' path required almost constant maintenance (the Bull path would have followed the line of today's Little Twitten footpath and the still surviving sections, continuing east into Goring to the Bull Inn). As there was no seafront road or Goring Way linking Sea Lane, Ferring to Goring, these would have been a much-used paths. Throughout the 1920s, questions about the maintenance of footpaths, stiles and bridges were frequently raised. There were various letters between FPC and the Rural District Council with the RDC eventually stating that they did not recognise any responsibility for the repair of footpaths (despite having carried out some of the earlier repairs).

### *Housing*

1920 saw repeated approaches by FPC to the RDC with regard to the erection of a cottage for the schoolmistress, 'for which an adequate rent would be paid'. It was also suggested that there would be no difficulty in letting an additional house if the two were built together and that the matter was urgent. However, this never came to fruition.

As development began in 1924 and increased rapidly thereafter, while additional 'cottages' (council houses) had been sought for the village, not all of the new developments were



'Le Chateau', The Grove, 1926. Self-build, and unsightly?

considered, to be favourable. The FPC meeting of 19 March 1926 referred to the erection of unsightly buildings now becoming prevalent in the village. It is likely that this referred to some of the self-build properties being erected in the south of the village and the council called upon the RDC to assist, 'through the Planning Act', to uphold the character of building in the district.

The January 1927 Parish Council minutes record that a letter had been received from the RDC enquiring if there was a need for 'Council cottages' to be erected in Ferring and if so, how many? The Parish Council pointed out that the RDC had already proposed four to be built in the near future but, nevertheless, duly requested a further six cottages. The four were added to the two in Ferring Street later that year and the six were built four years later in Langbury Lane.

### *Parking*

It seems surprising that car parking in Ferring was a problem as far back as the early 1920s. A particular hot-spot then for 'indiscriminate parking' was in the fields at the southern end of Sea Lane (there was no sea-front road towards Goring at that time). The FPC meeting of 17 July 1928, records that matters had become so bad that the Superintendent of Police at Arundel had

arranged for a Police Officer to be at Sea Lane when cars arrived at the weekend. The generally increasing number of private vehicles also brought an increasing number of 'trippers' to Ferring, resulting in some reports of what was considered to be inappropriate behaviour.



Parking problems, in the fields at the end of Sea Lane

This included large groups gathering by the groynes on the beach at the bottom of people's gardens and one report on file of a man 'inadequately clad;'. The level of disturbance and to what degree the man was inadequately clad is not recorded in the minute book. The reports

of such incidents extended beyond the Parish Council and required the Chief Constable, in 1929, to inform the Standing Joint Committee of the County Council that he would endeavour to arrange for improved Police supervision at Ferring during the summer months.

### *Utilities*

It was at the parish council meeting of 19 March 1926, that a matter was raised 'with regard to Electric Current for Ferring'. The Parish Council had received a letter from the Worthing Town Clerk saying that 'the Electricity Company intimated that they proposed to confer upon several parishes in the East Preston RD, including Ferring, the supply of electricity'. No doubt a welcome announcement!

It is with some nostalgic reflection on corporate culture that I add a note here from the minutes of the 17th. July 1928 meeting of the parish council. The Littlehampton Gas Company. confirmed its decision to progress with the laying of mains supply to Ferring, but that on account of the summer season, 'and not desiring to interfere with the comfort of visitors during August', the work would commence in September.

Following a lengthy campaign (rat infestations and other related health issues had repeatedly been raised over recent years) for regular household waste collections, the April 1929 parish council meeting records a request from the RDC for an apportioned cost contribution. For Ferring, this would be £95/5/0 towards 'the purchase of land in Roundstone Lane, for the purpose of home refuse' (disposal), at a price of £870. This was agreed and a contract was awarded for household refuse collections, including Ferring, to commence on 1 April 1930.

The late 1920s saw significant advancement in supplies of services to Ferring but as the 1930s dawned, there was still no immediate prospect of mains water and sewerage (properties still being reliant on wells, boreholes and cesspits). This was an argument put forward by some for becoming part of Worthing, such a move being considered to offer a greater chance of early connection to mains drainage. Despite this, such a merger (or perhaps 'take-over' would be more apt, as it would mean the end of the Parish Council) continued to be resisted.

### *'Ferring-by-Sea'*

1934 saw a proposal by the Post Office to change the name of Ferring to Ferring-by-Sea. As a Parish Meeting was to be held in June to elect two additional Parish Councillors (taking the number from 5 to 7 councillors), it was decided to address the issue at that meeting. Some of those present supported the proposal, arguing that 'with bad writing Ferring might easily be mistaken for Tarring' (reported in the Worthing Gazette). There were, however, concerns that such a name change could identify the village as a resort destination and attract even more cars and 'trippers'. This was probably born from the parking and inappropriate-behaviour issues raised in the preceding years, and seen as a direct consequence of the already-increasing number of trippers coming to Ferring. It was suggested by Col. Weekes that the name should remain unchanged and 'put to the vote, this was carried by a big majority'.

### **Ted Murrell and the Italy Star**

We all know about the Burma Star Association, not least because of Vera Lynn's patronage. This commemorates the Fourteenth Army fighting there from 1942 to 1945 – which the veterans called the 'Forgotten Army'. Not so well known is the Italy Star Association which commemorates the British Army that fought in Sicily and Italy from July 1943 to April 1945. The ridiculous Nancy Astor MP supposedly referred to them in 1944 as the 'D Day Dodgers', and the soldiers sardonically adopted the name for themselves.



A young Ferring resident was among those who served. Ted Murrell was 21, a Private in the Grenadier Guards. His family lived in Clover Lane, during and after the war. Ted was killed on the Salerno beachhead on 13 September 1943. This was the main invasion of the Italian mainland, led by the US General, Mark Clark. It was badly planned and commanded and faced heavy German forces (the new Italian government having surrendered the previous day). Clark had decided to stay on the beachhead until he had built up a big force but the Germans counter-attacked before he could do so, and there was much loss of life. FHG

member Maureen Hanlan's father was a veteran of that campaign, from the landings in Sicily on 10 July 1943, through Salerno, then the more successful landings at Anzio, the battle of Monte Cassino and beyond. He was a year younger than Ted Murrell, survived the war, and was an active member of the Italy Star Association. Maureen is the National Treasurer of the Association and instead of the usual anniversary commemoration (because of Covid) Committee members laid their wreaths on their local war memorials on his behalf. Maureen did that in Ferring, for Ted Murrell.



Maureen Hanlan lays the wreath

### **East Ferring and the Stopham connection**

**by Ed Miller**

In 1306 John Kent bought from Amfrid de Ferring, for the sum of £20, a house, five acres of arable land, two acres of meadow and a rental of one pound of pepper from properties in Ferring, Amberley and Angmering. Some 30 years later (between 1338 and 1342) John de Stopham made a major land purchase. He paid £200 (a very large sum in those days) to John

Kent the younger, his wife Elena and her sister Joan, for 13 houses, 187 acres of arable land, 20 acres of meadow, 40 acres of pasture, rentals of 71 shillings, a rental of a peppercorn and an arrow, in Ferring, Goring, Amberley, West Preston and East Preston. This purchase included the premises and feudal duties of numerous Ferring tenants including John Kent senior, John Franklin, and Amfrid de Southetoune.

The names 'Amfrid' and 'Stopham' provide a clear link to East Ferring. In the Domesday Book (1086), having described the assets of the Bishop's estate and then those of the 15 'villeins' and 14 'cottagers' who were his direct tenants, the entry continues, 'Of this manor Ansfrid holds 2 hides, with 4 bordars' (about one sixth of the manor, with four sub-tenants). This land stayed with the family of Ansfrid (or Amfrid) for another 200 years (it was noted in 1267 that 'the heirs of Amfrid hold 2 hides at Ferring from the Bishop'). This East Ferring land passed from Amsfrid to John Kent, and then to John de Stopham. One of the Stopham daughters inherited the family properties and married one of the Bartelott family.

Wikipedia tells us the Bartelott family 'settled at Stopham manor in 1379, with a residence at *La Ford* situated by the ancient crossing point of the River Arun, where they built the surviving bridge the tolls of which they controlled for many centuries'.



The 14th Century Stopham Bridge, between Pulborough and Fittleworth

It seems that they retained East Ferring land for at least two of those centuries because in 1577 Henry Goring bought East Ferring Manor from William Bartelott and his wife Anne. In 1617 it was sold to Edward Franceis and others. There the Stopham connection ended.

By 1635 the manor had been sold to William Watersfield whose daughter married William Westbrook. She passed it down through their family to William Westbrook Richardson who lived in Findon but was buried in Ferring in 1871. Records of the Est Ferring Manor Court are scanty but it is presumed that Richardson sold the manor to David Lyon, along with his East Ferring land in the 1840s.

## Chapel Seat

Members may have seen the stone seat, recently installed by Kingston Parish Council on the greensward at Kingston Gorse. It commemorates the lost chapel which the churchwardens reported to the Bishop as ‘utterly ruined by the sea’ in the late 1620s.

A plaque, on the back, says ‘KINGSTON’S LOST CHAPEL Some 250 yards out to sea from this commemorative stone, just south of the Black Rocks, which can be seen at very low tide, is the site of the Chapel that once served the old settlement of Kingston. Because of coastal



erosion it is said that the Chapel was lost to the sea in December 1626. A whimsical story tells of the Chapel bells tolling from beneath the sea whenever storms and spring tides batter the coast.’

There is room for doubt as to exactly when the Chapel was ‘lost to the sea’. The Churchwardens reported in December 1626 that ‘our chappell is much decayed and out of repayre by reason of the sea’ – a sea that ‘hath wrought away the land...to the very chappell so that it is not repayrable’ and that the congregation had now transferred to ‘the mother church of Ferring’.

The dissolution of the chapel was recognised by the Bishop in 1627, and villagers allowed to salvage what they could of the stonework and roofing, but it would have taken perhaps another ten years before the sea completely covered the ruins. And there is still some doubt as to exactly where it stood. Richard Standing, the historian of Kingston and East Preston, says it was indeed some 250 yards from the present shoreline but just *north* of the Black Rocks, not south of them.

The Welsh stone was unveiled on Friday, September 4th, by Councillor Geraldine Walker, Chairman of Kingston Parish Council. She said it would give the opportunity for residents to sit in a beautiful spot and look out towards the lost Chapel. It came down from Wales on a pallet, on a large lorry, and was stored locally by a helpful resident and then placed on the greensward using a telescopic handler (forklift).



Mid-Wales Stone said, ‘This was found in Trawsfynydd in mid-Wales, by a enthusiastic farmer always looking out for good artwork. We would class it as a glacial boulder. In the many years that we have been sourcing boulder seats, we haven’t quite known anything like this one. We are over the moon that this piece has gone to such a stunning location.’

## The Penfolds - A Farming Family

by Ed Miller

There were two Penfold families in Ferring in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. James Penfold was the long-serving Vicar who died in office in 1812. He was a substantial landowner and had built a large house in 1791, initially known as The Square House, then as St Maurs, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Greystoke Manor. His daughter Ann married George Henty in 1790. His son George Olliver Penfold inherited in 1812, and on his death the estate went to his sister Ann. Ann died in 1832 and the land became part of the Henty estate. There is no further record of this well-off family.

The Penfolds who worked on farms in north Ferring from the 1840s were probably only distantly related, if at all (Penfold is still quite a common name in Sussex). We see them in the 1841 Census: **James Penfold (1799-1848)** aged 50, a labourer (evidently a widower), with two sons; Charles 15 (no occupation shown), John (also 15, a Male Servant living with Thomas Trussler – one of Henty's tenant farmers), and two daughters.

In the 1851 Census there are three Penfold families: Charles (more accurately recorded this time as aged 28) with Elizabeth (aged 23, née Kellaway from Kingston), whom he married at Ferring in 1849, and two infant children Ann and Alfred; John (now recorded as 30), is married to Elizabeth with four young children; George (who had not been present in the 1841 Census) 37, is married to Eliza with three young children. All three men are 'Agricultural Labourers'. Their father James was not listed (he was presumably the James Penfold who was buried at Ferring in 1848, aged 57).

**Charles Penfold (1822-1889)** is shown in the 1861 Census as a 'Farmer', presumably having acquired the tenancy of Highdown Hill Farm. Elizabeth and the baby Alfred both died within weeks of the 1851 Census. Charles is now with *Jane* Kellaway (perhaps a cousin of Elizabeth's) whom he had married in 1854, at Brighton. There is no sign of Ann, who would have been 11, but there are two children by Jane: George 6, and William 3; George senior had died three days before the census date, leaving a widow and five children. John and his family seem to have left the village were not in any of the subsequent Censuses.

Charles' son, **George Penfold (1854-1928)** had Hangleton/Highdown Hill Farm after his father's death (since 1866 as the tenant of Edwin Henty). He married Susan Hedger in 1881 and had three sons: George (1888-1972), William (1885-1939) and Charles (1891-1983). In 1906 he added the 26 acres of Franklands Farm to the 265 acres he was already farming from Hangleton Hill Farm and in 1911 his son William was installed at the farmhouse. The three sons were all working for their father, who ran Hangleton Farm and Franklands Farm as one unit.

William married a local woman, Jane Field, in 1909, and lived at Franklands (or Franklins) Farm until his death in May 1939 at the age of 54. In 1911 George senior is still at Hangleton, with his 19-year old son Charles (born 10 August 1891). His son George aged 23, married to Alice (Tullett), is a 'Market Gardener Salesman', living at Smugglers Cottage, Ferring Street. Charles junior continued to work at the Hangleton farm until he volunteered for the Army in 1914.

The Worthing Gazette reported in July 1916: *'Applying to the East Preston Tribunal for exemption of two sons, one of whom is acting as Foreman and salesman and the other as a carter and machinist, and also for another carter, a Hangleton farmer stated that his holding of nearly 300 acres, 100 of which was pasture, 50 potatoes, 50 wheat, and 24 oats. He had 10*

*horses and 7 able-bodied men to do the work of the farm and if it had not been for the female labour he would not have been able to plant his potatoes. One of his sons was already serving with the colours. The Tribunal decided to allow 6 months conditional exemption.'*

This was George Penfold, asking for exemption from military service for William and George junior. Charles served as a Private in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment, through to 1919. He returned to Hangleton Hill Farm and stayed there up to, and beyond, his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

George senior died in 1928. After his death the brothers continued as a family firm and were still tenants of over 250 acres when the northern part of the Henty estate was auctioned (by lots) in 1930. They probably bought some of the farmland at that stage. George junior gave up his share of the business around 1935 but continued to live at Smugglers Cottage, in Ferring Street, until 1948 at least. His death was registered in Worthing in 1974. After 1939 Charles was left to run the farms on his own.

He gave an interview to Eric Joyce in 1981 (published in *Sussex Life* in July 1982) on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, looking back on early farming days. He had stayed on at Hangleton Farm, and only sold off his last five acres in 1977. He was still using horses to pull the plough in the 1950s.



Charlie Penfold in the late 1940s

He told Eric Joyce that tractors were nowhere near as good. He said his first paid work was at the age of seven, 'scaring crows for the occasional odd copper', and that at the age of ten he had to take his father's cattle to Clappers Meadow off Langbury Lane, on his way to school, and

after school round them up and drive them home for milking. His death is recorded in Somerset in the last Quarter of 1983, but I have found no evidence as to when or why he moved from Ferring.

### **Blue Plaque for the Sterns**

**by Ed Miller**

On a rainy October morning last year, the Mayor of Worthing unveiled a plaque at Highdown Towers to the memory of Sir Frederick and Lady Stern. Major Stern, as he was then, bought the house and its extensive grounds in 1909 and made his name as a botanist, plantsman and gardener for his research, exotic plant collections and the creation of Highdown Gardens.

But there was more to him than that. He joined the County of London Yeomanry (one of the forerunners of the Territorial Army) in 1905 and went to war in 1914. He fought at Gallipoli, and in Egypt and Palestine was awarded the Military Cross in 1917. In 1940 he was appointed Company Commander of Worthing Home Guard (to which Ferring's platoon belonged) and then, from September 1941, as Lt Colonel, he had the command for the whole of West Sussex.

He was also a keen amateur jockey, and in his younger days, a 'big game' hunter. He was a committed Liberal, and served as one of Prime Minister Lloyd George's secretaries at the Peace Conferences in 1919, and in that year he was awarded the OBE. Lloyd George pressed him to stand for Parliament as the Liberal candidate for Worthing but he declined, in favour of his plants. He was given a knighthood in 1956, for services to horticulture.

He married in 1919 (it was quite a year for him) and after his death in 1967, he left the gardens to Worthing Borough Council, and when his widow died in 1972 she left the house to the Council too.



Sir Frederick and Lady Stern

The house was built in the 1840s for David Lyon, who had bought up large swathes of Goring and East Ferring. In the late 1850s it was occupied by John Golds, a 'gentleman farmer', previously (from 1844) at Edwin Henty's Home Farm. In the Sterns' time it was much visited by high society and European royalty. Perhaps their biggest catch was Edward, Prince of Wales in July 1933, or the future George VI in 1935.

Despite his name, there does not seem to have been anything stern about Sir Frederick. The Times obituary in 1967 said his friends 'found his enthusiasm highly infectious and his generosity almost overwhelming'.

## **Our Tax Return for 1296**

**by Ed Miller**

The first tax record we have that lists individual taxpayers is the 1296 'Subsidy Roll' for the *Villat' de Garyng & Ferryng* (for the township or community, ignoring parish or manor boundaries). The Subsidy was a tax on moveables, paid at one eleventh of the value of goods (not land) owned. These taxes were not annual, regular or even frequent. The King was expected to fund 'government expenditure' out of the income from his estates. A 'subsidy' was called for to finance special projects, like the Crusade of 1188, and the recovery of Normandy

in 1207. The 1296 Subsidy was raised to pay for Edward I's war with Scotland. Goring and Ferring paid £7 1s 8d, as follows :

Henr' Treygoz	£3	10s	6d	Ricro Capellano	3s	0d
Johanne Purbyk		1	3	Matild' atte More	2	2
Willmo atte Gate		1	0	Rado le Swon	1	0
Alic' Relicta Org'		3	0	Willmo Peres	4	9
Alan' atte Rugg		4	0	Willmo atte Brouk	1	6
Willmo Tosseman		4	1	Willmo le Frye	3	1
Johanne Woluone		3	1	Johanne Peres	1	0
Johanne Tauy		2	3	Relicta le Frye	1	0
Rogo Wuluon		1	0	Willmo de Horscrofte	5	0
Robro de Mari		10	1	Robro Clerico	1	1½
Thom' le Frye		2	1	Ricro le Prude	2	8
Nicolao de Ferring		13	0			
	Sma [Sum total]	£7	1s	8d		

The list does not identify Ferring residents separately from Goring residents but there are some familiar names. Henry Treygoz was the Lord of the Manor of Goring, Alice Relicta Org was the widow of one of the Orgar family of Goring; some others match names in Goring's 1332 Subsidy Roll (including the the two Woolvens, although the family was in Ferring by 1431). The names that correspond with families in other mediaval Ferring documents are: Willmo atte Gate, Thomas le Frye, Nicolao de Ferring, Ricro Capellano, Willmo Peres, Willmo atte Brouk and Willmo de Horscrofte.

The highest payer of these was Nicholas de Ferring, whose family had held land in East Ferring since at least 1086. He paid 13 shillings. William Horscroft paid 5 shillings, Richard Capellan 3 shillings, William atte Brook 1 shilling and 6 pence and William atte Gate 1 shilling. This was a 'Lay' subsidy, not payable by the clergy so the Vicar does not appear on the list. Neither do the poor, so it is not surprising that the list is rather short. The form of the names is interesting. 'Relicta' is mediaeval Latin for Widow. 'Johanne' is Johannis, or John.

This record was made at a time when what we might call nicknames (originally 'eke' names – additional names) were evolving into family names. William atte Gate presumably lived at the entrance to somewhere. Le Frye is the modern 'Freeman'. Nicolas de Ferring speaks for itself, Richard Capellano would have had some connection with a chapel (possibly Kingston), 'Peres' was a variant of 'Peters', William atte Brouk may have lived close to the Rife, William de Horscrofte may have been connected with an enclosure for horses.

Of the other names, 'de Mari' probably denotes someone (presumably in Goring) with an estate by the sea, relatively wealthy since he paid 13 shillings tax; 'Rado le Swon' is Radalfus (Ralph) the swineherd; 'Robro Clerico' cannot have been a cleric but may have worked for one. 'Ricro le Prude' would have been named for his haughty manner, not for any prudishness.

A small glimpse into a vanished world.

## The Tudor - Closed

2020 saw the closure of the 'Tudor', the pub and restaurant in Ferringham Lane, after 71 years of operation, the building now to be conserved as residential accommodation. It is a building with some history but there was nothing Tudor about it except for the image on its inn sign.

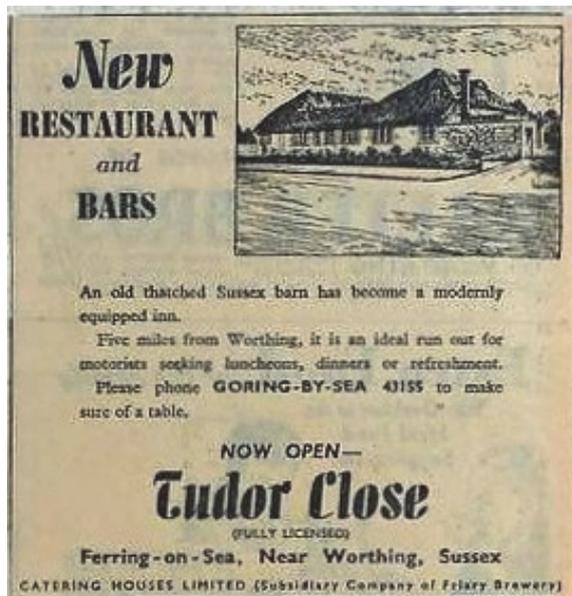
Previous owners had claimed that the building was mentioned in the Domesday book but that was a complete fiction. What we have is a conversion of a late-Victorian barn, and cowsheds. In fact, several conversions, first into a house and music room, then into a preparatory school, then into a pub.

The first evidence of these buildings is the 1876 Ordnance Survey map at 25 inches to the mile. If they had existed in 1837, they would have been shown on the large-scale map drawn for the Tithe Redemption operation and listed along with other farm buildings in the 1840 Settlement. They were on Edwin Henty's land but were not shown in Henty estate plans of 1866 or 1874.

When the southern part of the Henty estate was put up for auction in 1921 the buildings were described as 'Two Five-bay Fattening Sheds to tie 13 head, Three-bay Open Shed and Loose Box; Large Barn'. In the plans submitted to the Council for one of the first houses in Ocean Drive in 1925 these buildings were shown on the location map, labelled 'Sea Barn'.

One of these buildings, at least, was converted to a residence in 1925, by a Mrs Walter Rubens, and it continued to be known as 'Sea Barn' or 'The Barn' until it was converted into a Boys' Preparatory School in 1934 and 1935. It was the new owner and Principal of the School, Noel Cook, who coined the name 'Tudor Close'. The school continued until 1940, when the building was taken over by the Canadian army. One of the younger sons of the Emperor of Abyssinia attended the school and the Emperor (who had fled from the Italian occupation of his country) visited the school at this time, to watch his son in a school play.

Mr Cook must have been thinking of closing the school as early as 1944 because he applied for planning permission in that year to convert the building to a 'Guest House and Café.' Approval was given but he must have had second thoughts because the school resumed for a few years after the war, and one of the pupils from that time emailed me from New Zealand recently to ask if the building was still standing.



The school closed in 1948 and the premises were bought by a local brewery, who turned it into the pub and restaurant which opened in April 1949, retaining the name 'Tudor Close'. It passed through the hands of various breweries over the next 50 years, then operated as a free house.

Through all these changes, including the roofing over of the courtyard in 2004, the building retained its thatched roof and it is good to report that the thatch, and the whole north elevation of the 2020 conversion will be preserved, very much as it was in this advertisement in the Worthing Herald in 1949.

## Woolvens

by Ed Miller

One of the earliest Ferring wills I transcribed from the West Sussex Record Office files was that of Thomas Woolvin (his surname spelt in various ways). The first record we have of him

is in the 1525 tax assessment, where he and a certain Thomas Greenfield are by far the biggest payers in Ferring, at 40 shillings each. Woolven's wealth is confirmed by the 1535 'Valor Ecclesiasticus'.

In 1535, Henry VIII, having become Head of the Church of England, decided to carry out a 'Domesday' survey of all the church property, with a view to imposing a tax of ten per cent of its annual income. Known as the Valor Ecclesiasticus, or The King's Book, it gives useful information on not only the assets, chiefly farmland, but also who was farming them. So in Sussex, we find recorded the considerable estates and manors of the Bishop of Chichester, including Ferring, with valuations and other details.

The entry for Ferring states the annual income of the Bishop as £8 6s 8d from the lease of the manor farm and £25 0s 1d from the rents and other dues of the tenants of the other land within the manor. It names the leaseholder as Thomas Wulwyn.

The next record is from 1539, in a 'Muster Roll' of the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century Home Guard, intended to resist any invasion from the French. Thomas Wulvin is one of 17 bowmen, along with 16 'bylmen' (pikemen). One of the other bowmen is William Bytfield, who was the second husband of Wolvin's daughter and principal heir.

His will of 1543 shows he was a pious Catholic, bequeathing his soul to God and 'our blessed lady St Mary, and to all the saints in heaven' and asking to be buried 'on the north side of our ladys auter' in St Andrew's church. He leaves four pence to the 'hiy auter' and 'ten shillings to bye a baner for the best crosses there', and ten shillings for his burial. He ordered ten masses to be said at his burial and another ten to be said during the following month and another ten at the end of that month. He then leaves the parish priest ten shillings a year for the next seven years, to pray for him in his masses twice a week.

He leaves each of his married godchildren four pence and the unmarried ones two pence. Other bequests were to Richard Bennett two oxen, 20 sheep, and ten lambs and his silk gown; to Richard's daughter Alice, one calf; to Robert Pannet two 2 year-old oxen, one cow, 20 sheep, two 2 year-old steers, £4 6s 8d in money, a 12 month-old horse, and a bed. Then come his grandchildren; to William Watersfield one cow and one sheep; to William's brothers Edmond and Thomas each a bullock and three sheep; to Alice Watersfield one cow and 40 shillings in money; to John Brusthit six sheep; to Alice Woolvin two sheep; to Robert Spring his russet coat; to Thomas Higgins half a bushel of wheat and a bushel of barley. The rest of his goods (once his bequests, debts and funeral expenses are paid) he leaves to his daughter 'alys besfyld' (Agnes Bitfield). Also five shillings each for the two 'supervisors' of his will.

All this suggests a man of considerable wealth and influence. He does not mention his lease of the Bishop's estate in Ferring but his daughter Alice (or Agnes) no doubt took it over on Thomas' death. Details of her lease (the make-up of the 300 acres of the estate, the annual payment of £8 6s 8d and other payments in kind) are recorded in the Episcopal estate book of 1552. She passed it to her son Thomas Watersfield and he to his descendants up to 1647, when it was seized by Parliament.

Alice's Woolven ancestors had been farming land in Ferring since at least 1430 and 'the Widow Woolven's house is mentioned in the Glebe Terrier of 1635 as 'bounded on the north and west by the highway'. This corresponds well with the house to the left of the War Memorial in the 1924 photograph, opposite, which was still known as 'Woolvens', in 1744. when George Hide

mortgaged it to Robert Sanders. The cottage was acquired by Edwin Henty in 1832 and was later named Dairy Cottage, where the Home Farm dairy operated until 1924. The barn at right angles to it became, eventually, the Barn Surgery.



### **Onslow Caravan Park**

**by Wendy Redman**

In 1949 my father, Leonard Baker, sold the confectionery and tobacco shop he owned in Hanworth near Hampton, Middlesex, and we (my mother, father, brother, sister and myself) stayed in a caravan in Climping during the school holidays. This is when father became interested in caravans and the following year he bought Onslow Caravan Park in Ferring. We were still living in Hampton until we moved to “Homestead” in Brook Lane in 1951.

The park had an elderly residential warden and his wife, and another worker who also lived on site. They stayed on to show my father the ropes, and when I left school in 1952 I started work there. The roads were just gravel, and the caravans stood on grass. Part of the park had residential caravans but most were privately-owned and rented out to families staying in them at weekends and holidays. It was all very untidy and a lot of time was spent with an old jeep, pulling wire and all sorts of rubbish out of the ground and surrounding hedges.

Father had bought eight caravans to be rented out, in one of which we spent our school holidays. This was all new to us and we really did enjoy ourselves. Running through the park is the Rife, which had been a dumping ground for rubbish, and father spent time clearing it out to make it decent again. Trenches were dug in low-lying areas for land drainage, and flower beds were laid within the timber rustic work that father made. He was very proud of his geraniums that he grew from cuttings.

Every Saturday I used to help mother clean the caravans that we rented out so they were ready for the new occupants. This was not a favourite job. We changed gas cylinders when they ran out and also fitted new mantles in the gas lights, which we always had in stock. The toilet block

was cleaned regularly and painted every year, and any plumbing jobs seen to. We started grass cutting in early spring and continued every two weeks. Father walked many miles doing this, while I took all the cuttings to a heap in a trailer that I had to push – very hard work when the weather was hot.



Early days at Onslow Drive caravan site

We laid concrete flagstones to make paths from the caravans to the roads. Having the caravans on grass meant it was difficult keeping them tidy underneath, so father and I cut all the turf off and then went around regularly with a hoe to keep the weeds down. Eventually, all caravan parks had to have concrete bases for the caravans. The roads were improved, a new toilet block built, and father had an extension of the license. We were able to have another twenty-five caravans in the top field.

The residents in Onslow Drive weren't at all happy with the extra traffic the park created because the road was in a terrible state. I could only walk-in wellies in wet weather as any shoes would be spoiled. Onslow Drive wasn't tarmacked until after we had sold the caravan park. By 1955 we were living in 'Onslow House', which my parents had built at the entrance to the park as we really needed to be 'on the spot'. Father sold the caravan park in May 1960 and bought "Broadview" a bungalow on Clover Lane, which was completely surrounded by tall conifers with a very large garden, where he and my mother enjoyed their retirement.



Leonard Baker, sharpening his sickle after cutting grass at the ditch

I married Peter Redman at St Andrew's Church in October 1960, and we moved away from Ferring but used to come back every few weeks to see my parents. Mother died in 1990, and father died at the age of 97 in 2003.

## **Our 2019 Christmas Social – Report by Stephen Webbe**

The mystery guest speaker at our Christmas social in December 2019 turned out to be retired pharmacist Peter Hill who came with a witty talk entitled ‘Pills, Potions and Patients’ and a fascinating display of memorabilia. “It’s the most popular talk I give,” he said, explaining that he had run his own pharmacy on the Old Shoreham Road in Hove for 30 years and, ‘for the most part’, hugely enjoyed the experience.

Pharmacies ran in the Hill family. Peter’s father opened one in Leicester in 1939, later moving to West Street in Brighton. A man of notable business acumen, his father did a brisk summer trade selling Brownie box-camera film to day-trippers who streamed down to the beach from Brighton Station. He then sold them calamine lotion when, tired and sunburnt, they trudged back to the station for the journey home.

Peter’s father also stocked stage make-up for the many thespians and performers who appeared in Brighton over the years. Among those who dropped in for a jar or two were the comedian and character actor Terry-Thomas and singer Frankie Vaughan. ‘Dad’s shop was a little goldmine’, Peter told his audience, who packed into the Ferring Village Hall to hear him.

Interiors of old-fashioned chemists’ shops made several on-screen appearances during Peter’s talk. There were mahogany cases and display cabinets, apothecary bottles, mortars and pestles and swan-necked carboys, all dating from the days when skilled pharmacists prepared remedies for a whole variety of ailments such as boils and bronchitis, catarrh and lumbago. Carboys, glowing like stained glass windows in churches, have long had a place of honour in pharmacies. According to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society ‘as glass production developed in the 1700s and 1800s...these pieces of... glassware started to appear in the displays of chemists’ shops. Filled with coloured water mimicking chemical substances in solution, they advertised the trade that went on inside.’

As Peter Hill continued his jocular look at that trade, there was no avoiding certain sensitive topics. Although recalling the nation’s attachment to syrup of figs in its long struggle against constipation, he observed that one of the most fundamental means of combating irregularity were suppositories. “Some looked like bullets but the torpedo-shaped ones were easier to insert,” Peter helpfully advised his Ferring audience. When settling down gingerly onto another variety, he warned (to no little laughter) that it was imperative to “take the silver paper off.”

With a nod to the festive season, Peter discoursed on the flatulence often attendant on a hearty Christmas dinner. Charcoal tablets, he noted, have traditionally rescued the over-indulgent from such embarrassment. These, he explained, made short work of a flatulent condition by absorbing excess gas from the gut. But nobody gave feelings of fullness much thought that evening. It was the FHG’s Christmas do (complete with a Ferring quiz and a seasonal raffle) and a sumptuous buffet awaited on a long trestle table.

We lined up dutifully to pile our plates high. Some even popped back for a refill. We then tucked into an array of lip-smacking desserts and some particularly tasty mince pies. Flatulence be hanged.

### **Back story – Bennett’s return**

Our lead article in this edition told the story of James T Bennett – his tragic death and how his family made a life for themselves in the New World. One of the family came back in 1945 - James’ youngest son Frederick, born in 1910. In Britain with the Canadian Army, Cpl Bennett went back to the house where he was born and had this photograph (opposite) taken, standing on exactly the same spot as his father stood for the 1904 picture. The gate has been replaced and the wall to the left is now overgrown with vegetation but it is the same gateway, which led to Carisbrooke Cottage and Manor Farm. In the 1904 photograph James is leading a carthorse out of the farmyard into Sea Lane.

In the 1945 photograph, over Frederick’s shoulder, we can just see the upper storey of Manor Cottages, the building which had served as the old farmhouse for at least 300 years. Both the old farmhouse and Carisbrooke were demolished around 1960 but the track down which James led his horse in 1904 is still there – now as a public footpath that circles round the old farm buildings (some walls of which remain) and joins up with the Ilex avenue. It was renamed ‘Calgary’ after 1930, because a daughter of the family living there had married a Canadian soldier of the first World War in 1919 and emigrated with him to that city. It can be seen in some old views of Sea Lane. The site is now occupied by Crampnell Cottage, with a new ‘Calgary Cottage’, just south of it. Both bungalows were built in the 1960s.



Carisbrooke (renamed 'Calgary' in the 1930s) on the right, seen from the south in this postcard sent in 1959.



Frederick Bennett in 1945, at the gate of the farmyard and cottage where he was born