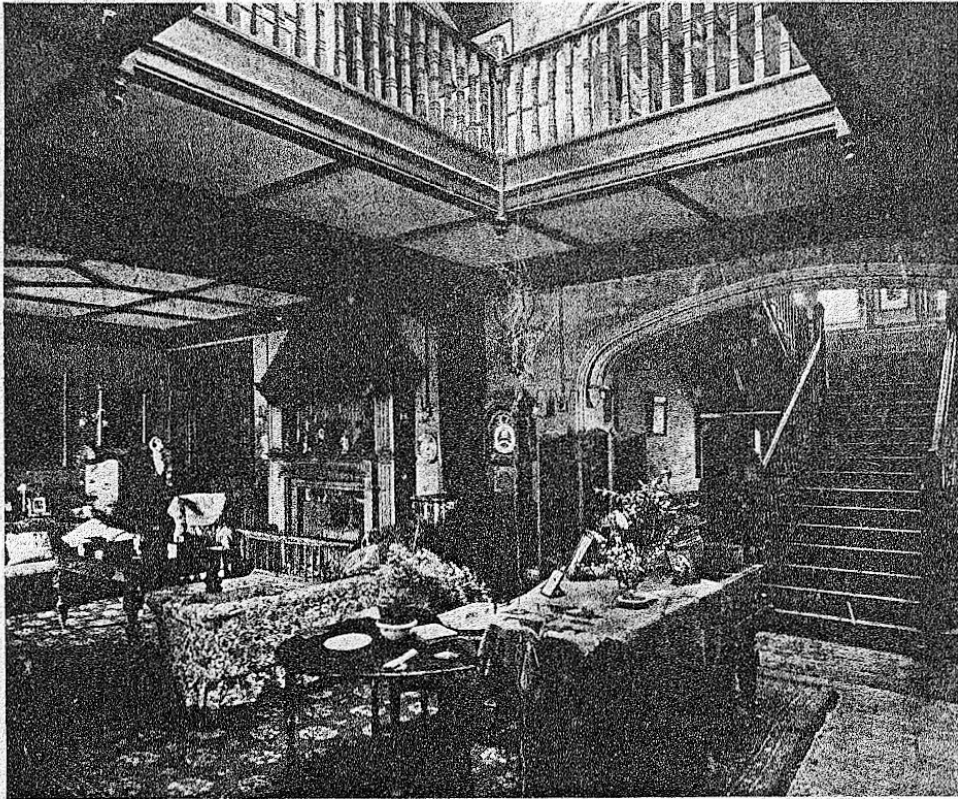


FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE

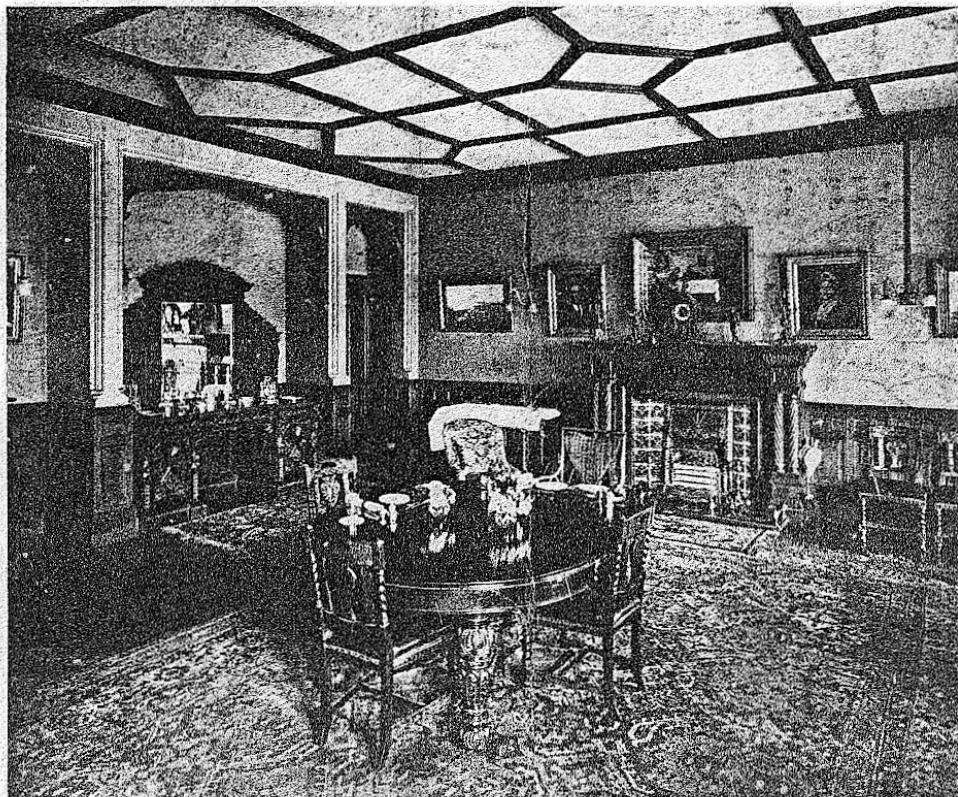
2022



Ferring Grange Hotel in the 1930s



The Lounge Hall.



The Dining Room.

FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE

Journal of the Ferring History Group. Compiled by Ed Miller: EdMiller43@msn.com No. 8

Editorial

The first half of 2021, like almost the whole of 2020, was washed out by Covid-19. Not only could we not hold meetings or go on walks or visits but facilities for research were rather limited: the County Record Office and Worthing Local Studies Library were closed for most of this time. However there is still a great deal of material on the internet (for the 19th and 20th Centuries at least) and in our archives, and we have been able to expand and catalogue our picture library thanks to our new Committee member Simon Cornish (born and bred in the village).

Our membership stayed with us, and we kept in touch through our circulars and our web site. We started up our meetings as soon as we could safely do so, on 6 August and squeezed in another three meetings before the end of the year, all with suitable hygiene precautions. It was not possible, however, to hold our usual Christmas Social. We also managed a visit (to Tangmere Air Museum) and a guided walk, through Angmering's Conservation Area. We hope to do better in 2022 – our programme is set out on page 12 of this magazine.

Cover story

It is 75 years since a fire almost destroyed Ferring's largest building. Read all about it below.

FERRING GRANGE - A RECENT HISTORY

by David Garnett

'The Ferring Grange Hotel is a detached building of three storeys, including an attic floor. It covers an area of approximately 11,200 square feet. The ground floor comprised the main entrance hall, lounge, dining room, bar, billiard room, drawing room and writing room. The first and second (attic) floors consisted of bedrooms and the usual domestic offices. A wide oak staircase led from the ground to the first floor and the main entrance hall on the ground floor opened up to the roof with a domed glass lantern light. The rear or west wing of the building comprised the kitchen, servery and domestic offices, together with guest rooms and servants' quarters.' (*Inquiry into the Fire at the Ferring Grange Hotel, Ferring, on the 30th October 1946.*)

The Hentys' seat

The Henty family occupied what was originally called 'the old manor house', throughout the nineteenth century, since William Henty (1731-1796) of Littlehampton first leased it from the Chichester diocese in 1786. William was succeeded by his son, George Henty (1766-1829), who in turn was followed by his



Ferring Grange in 1908 - the seat of the Hentys 1786-1924

son, Edwin Henty (1805-1890) -- and it was he who bought the freehold of the estate, from the Church Commissioners, in 1864. Edwin Henty's son was also called Edwin (1844-1916), and by the time of his death he owned two-thirds of Ferring, from Highdown Hill to the coast.

He and his wife Georgiana (1854-1928) had no children, and in May 1921 she put the southern half of the Henty property (between the sea and the railway line) up for auction. The reserve price was not met, and three years the estate was divided into a handful of sections and sold in separate lots. This is what happened to Ferring Grange, and its immediate surroundings on 30 April 1924, with a conveyance between (1) Georgiana Laura Alma Henrietta Elizabeth Henty (Vendor) (2) Charles Norman Draycott and (3) Percival Ridley Hooper (Sub-Purchaser)'.

The name 'Charles Norman Draycott' appears on many Ferring conveyances dating from this time, as Ed Miller explains in his book *The Day Before Yesterday: Ferring in the Twentieth Century*: 'In April 1923, Mrs Henty agreed to sell all the rest of the South Ferring estate, including Ferring Grange, for £25,000 to Charles Draycott a Shoreham estate agent. Over the next year he sold off sections of the estate and these 'sub-purchasers' paid the purchase price to Mrs Henty. By July 1924 he was left with about a quarter of the estate in his own hands, having laid out none of his own money'.

Ferring Grange School

Percival Ridley Hooper, the 'sub-purchaser' on the 30 April 1924 conveyance, was a school teacher and headmaster. His name is in *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, a list of every Cambridge student and graduate before the year 1900, which includes: 'Head Master of Charlecote Prep. School, Worthing, 1919-27'. It seems that in 1924 Hooper transferred his school from Byron Road, Worthing to Ferring, where it became Ferring Grange School.

There were about 40 boys at the school, boarders as well as day pupils, taught in classes of ten. Their ages ranged from seven to thirteen, after which they would have gone on to public school. But the school was not a success and closed in 1927. Percival Hooper became an assistant master at Brighton College, and a report appeared in the local press that Ferring Grange was under consideration as a convalescent home for railwaymen.

Ferring Grange Hotel

The new owner however, was Major Wallace John McNab, who opened Ferring Grange as a hotel in mid-1927. By 1930, however, Major McNab was gone and the business was taken over by Colonel Harold Ernest Weekes and his wife, Madeleine. Colonel Weekes had been an officer in the British Indian Army, with which he saw action in the Boer War and then in Egypt, Gallipoli and France during the Great War. He was awarded an OBE in 1919, rising to become Commandant of the First Battalion of the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force).

In December 1931, the hotel obtained a full license which allowed it to serve drinks to non-residents -- and the gun room was converted into a bar. Membership of the 'Ferring Grange Country Club' was offered locally, giving access to 'bridge, tennis, bowls, billiards, putting' (a squash court was later built; it still exists, converted into "Grange House" in Church Lane) and also 'drinks at club prices'.



Col and Mrs Weekes in 1933

Adverts in national newspapers declared: 'Most people in the know sooner or later spend a week-end at the Ferring Grange Hotel.' The hotel even advertised abroad, such as in

Singapore's *Straits Times*: 'The swallows return every summer. You too should join them in England this year at a beautiful country house. Golf. Tennis. Squash. Riding on the sands and South Downs. Fully Licensed. Proprietors late of India and Malaya. Lovely old House and grounds.'

In June 1932, ownership of 'the business of a hotel proprietor and licensed victualler' was transferred from Colonel Weekes to Ferring Grange Hotel, Ltd. The company was valued at £6000 in shares, with H.E. Weekes as chairman and E.C. Gair as secretary. By 1934, Edward Coleridge Gair was managing the day-to-day business of the hotel, which was successful enough for Colonel and Mrs Weekes to move into their own house, 'Court Field' in Grange Park, a short walk through the hotel grounds.

In a 1936 newspaper interview, Harold Weekes said: "The village has been developing at great speed. All the foreshore is privately owned -- that keeps the day tripper away. The rateable value has been going up all the time and yet the estate is only about half finished. We have now 500 residents; in the summer there is a population of 3,000, I should imagine that in five or seven years the whole place will be developed."

The Colonel was happy enough, however, to welcome 'trippers' to the Grange Hotel Annexe which he opened on South Drive in 1931. If guests at the main hotel had young children, the children were required to stay at the annexe (with their nannies, of course). For the hoi polloi, the annexe offered a 'beach cafe, bathing facilities' -- and all-day seafront parking for a shilling.



Ferring Grange Hotel Annexe

Guests at the main hotel were catered for on a higher level, although the regular menu probably didn't reach the heights of Christmas dinner, 1934: Caviare (Hot Toast And Butter), Turtle Soup, Rainbow Trout (Brown Butter), Sweetbread, Patties, Champagne Sorbet, Roast Turkey (Chestnut Stuffing, Fresh Asparagus, New Potatoes), Christmas Pudding (Brandy Butter), Mince Pies, Dessert, Coffee.

Running a thirty-bedroom hotel was a significant operation and in 1933 an accommodation block was built for senior staff. (The building still stands, as Ferring Grange Flats). At the outbreak of war in September 1939, the government compiled a National Register. All the staff who lived in the hotel were included; other staff would have been local and registered at their homes. (It seems that by this time E. C. Gair was no longer involved with the hotel.) The live-in hotel staff were: Secretary to the hotel, hotel manager, chef, head waiter, waiter, stillroom man, porter, kitchen porter, second chef, chambermaid, and staff corridor maid.

Harold E Weekes died in 1941. He was sixty years old and was buried in St Andrew's churchyard in the grave next to his brother-in-law, Lieutenant Douglas Pettigrew. Douglas was on leave from his regiment in India, staying with his sister Madeleine, when he was killed in a road accident on Hove seafront in 1934. Their graves are in the lower, north-east section of the churchyard, and the Pettigrew's is the one topped by a bird bath.

Madeleine and Douglas Pettigrew were from a military family, two girls and four boys, and all the brothers served in the British Indian army -- as did Madeleine's husbands. Her first

husband was killed in a shooting accident, and both of their children died in infancy, all in India. Her next two marriages ended in divorce, and Harold Weekes was her fourth husband. Two decades his junior, Madeleine was the Colonel's second wife, and after his death she ran the Ferring Grange Hotel - until the night of 30 October, 1946.

'FERRING GRANGE HOTEL GUTTED BY FIRE' was the front page headline in the *Worthing Gazette* of 1 November, 1946, which continued: "The fashionable resort of many West End celebrities was completely gutted by fire on Wednesday night. Damage is estimated at £70,000. Many valuable art treasures, including William Nash's 'Canterbury Gate', valued at nearly £10,000 were lost in the blaze started soon after ten o'clock in a second storey room.

'Within an hour the flames, fanned by a stiff breeze, had spread to the whole of the building. Eight fire pumps, drawn from Worthing, Lancing, East Preston, Littlehampton and Arundel were in use in an unsuccessful attempt to keep the flames spreading. The fire at one time threatened Ferring's famous old church, but it was not damaged. The church is a few yards from the north side of the hotel.



The fire at its height – the east front

Divisional Fire Officer S. Culmane, who was in charge of the operation, was quoted as saying: "If we could have got sufficient water I think most of the building could have been saved. Water was very short, certainly not sufficient for a fire of that size." The *Worthing Herald* of 5 October took up the story: '... with its old-world air of secluded grandeur and the oaken splendour of the interior with its grand central staircase, [the Grange] was one of the most prized historical relics in Sussex. It is believed that in the early stages the flames may have gained a firm hold behind the extensive panelling which was part of the Grange's charm. Then the roof was threatened and the flames broke through, and a rush of oxygen made the entire hotel an inferno within a few minutes.

'Nine guests were in residence at the time, and they helped employees to fight the blaze with extinguishers, but the flames gradually gained a remorseless hold and the entire old wing filled with smoke. Flames spread from east to west. They broke through the roof and lit up the countryside. As fire appliances continued to arrive and as the blaze grew brighter, crowds

began to flock towards Ferring by car. The fire was visible from Lancing to Littlehampton. At its height it was an awe-inspiring spectacle as flames shot high into the air to a height of nearly 50 ft. In the face of an inadequate water supply, however, the flames gained a remorseless hold and the old part of the building was soon a mass of flames.'

The Home Office ordered an inquiry. This was not to find the cause of the fire (which was most likely an electrical fault: a hotel visitor later commented that walking across a room could cause the lights to go on and off), but "to report into the efficiency or otherwise of the fire service at the fire; and into the fire protection generally of the Parish of Ferring with particular regard of water supplies.' The lack of water had been reported by both the *Gazette* and *Herald*. Ferring Parish Council was 'gravely concerned with the lack of fire fighting arrangements' in the village and asked for a public inquiry, and Worthing Rural District Council had made a similar request.

The inquiry was held at Worthing Court House, Union Place on 9 January, 1947, and it was revealed that an attempt to increase the flow of water to the pumps failed because 'the National Fire Service telephoned the wrong Water Authority' three times. The result was that 'the whole of the building was destroyed, with the exception of the west wing' -- this being the staff block built in 1933.

On 7 March 1947, *The Times* published a short article headed 'Report on Hotel Fire' which ran: 'A fire last October, at the Ferring Grange Hotel, Ferring, Sussex, concerning which allegations of inefficiency were made against the National Fire Service, is the subject of a report published yesterday by the Stationery Office (Cmd 7048, 1d). The report is by Mr. A.P.L. Sullivan, who dismisses the complaints. "No evidence was brought forward to show that the N.F.S. was in any way inefficient," says Mr Sullivan, "and I am satisfied they did the best possible in the circumstances." The fire service was hampered by a deficiency of water, but this, Mr Sullivan states, was due solely to the fact that the hotel was "a detached and unusual risk in a rural area." *The Times* report included the information that Mr Sullivan was 'deputy chief of the fire staff at the Home Office'.

Twelve hours after the initial outbreak, hoses were still damping down the last of the flames. Ferring Grange was literally a shell of what it had once been. Madeleine Weekes lost all her possessions in the inferno and had spent the night at the Vicarage, while the hotel staff and some of the guests stayed at the Greystoke Hotel, then owned by Colonel Oulton. Later, Mrs Weekes bought the Greystoke and ran it until she left Ferring a few years later.

On 22 June 1951, the *Worthing Herald* published the following advert: 'Mrs Madeleine Weekes, formerly of Ferring Grange Hotel and Greystoke Manor Hotel, Sussex, has recently taken the Royal Hotel and Shaston Club, Shaftesbury, Dorset, where she will be proud to welcome old and new friends'. Presumably she lived the rest of her life in Dorset, as in 1968 her death was registered in Poole. She was 70 and is buried with her husband, Colonel Harold Weekes, in St Andrew's churchyard.

After the Fire

By a conveyance of 8 January 1949 'Madeleine Weekes and Ferring Grange Hotel Ltd' sold Ferring Grange to her brother, Major Guy Pettigrew. And it is thanks to him that any of the Grange still exists. At a time when so many fine country mansions were falling into disrepair and being demolished, he chose to rebuild as much he could. His wife, Bunty, recalled him saying: I can borrow books, I can read, how difficult can it be . . ? New building materials were rationed, but Major Pettigrew bought a truck and drove around demolition sites, loading up with doors and windows, timber and steel, anything he could salvage.



The 1950s - the shell of the Grange behind St Andrew's Church

Reconstruction was financed by selling off the 'twelve acres of landscaped gardens' around the Grange, including what became Ferring Close and most of Ferring Grange Gardens. In January 1951, an architect drew up plans to 'reconstruct SE corner to form house for Major Pettigrew', which became the family home. In 1953 planning permission was granted to rebuild the eastern wing of the Grange, which is now Phoenix House. Old photographs

prove the two surviving sections of Ferring Grange are but a fraction of what once stood there. A 1940 newspaper report, for example, says it had 130 windows; and of the two dozen great chimneys which once dominated the Ferring skyline, only three remain, offering a glimpse of the architectural gem which once stood at the heart of the village.



"There are regular weekly dances throughout the summer and holiday times, and as we have a first-class radio gramophone, anyone can dance whenever they wish."

... an extract from our rather original booklet. May we send you a copy?

FERRING GRANGE HOTEL, Nr. WORTHING

A Walk round Angmering

Report by Ed Miller

Twenty-two of our members came on our guided walk in Angmering's Conservation Area on 8 October. We met at The Spotted Cow and walked the length of the High Street, looking at some of the village's 70 listed buildings with an expert commentary by Neil Rogers-Davis on their history and architecture.

The Spotted Cow was one of those listed. Not as old as sometimes claimed and no connection with smugglers, it was a farmhouse, built mid-19th century and only later a pub. On both sides of the road we saw many fine 18th Century houses, most of them aligned north-south to keep the dirt of the street away from their doors, suggested Neil.

Many of the houses had been altered over the years, so that their age is hidden by comparatively modern facades. Pound House, at the junction with Roundstone Lane, is a case in point, the front Georgian, the back Elizabethan. Pigeon House was one of the oldest, dating from 1348 but with a 17th or 18th Century front. The mediaeval timber frame can be seen at the back. Angmering Manor Hotel, Neil said, was an interesting building – the former Rectory, not ever a manor house but the Parsonage from the 1580s to 1920.

The Lamb Inn, on the east side of the 'Square' in the village centre, is not as old as it sometimes suggested, Neil told us. It was built in 1780 but took its name from an earlier pub in the High Street, later named the 'The Red Lion'. now a coffee bar and micro-pub. 'The Resourceful Squirrel'. We walked behind the Lamb, through Church Lane and the range of

old cottages known as 'Bakers Row', each with a fascinating history, and then up some steps to the secluded St Nicholas Garden (none of us knew it was there), the site of the old parish church of East Angmering, demolished in the late 16th Century.

We came back to the steps to look at Angmering Library, formerly Older's School, rebuilt in 1854 with interesting brickwork designs, and then across the road to see St Margaret's Church, a Norman building much rebuilt in that same year, and with some more recent work which Neil said everyone hoped would weather, and match the earlier stonework.



End of our walk - St Margaret's Church

Neil Rogers-Davis said there was much more to see, especially up Arundel Road but two hours had passed and it was time to get back to The Spotted Cow. There is a wealth of further information in the History Centre on the Angmering Village web site, written by Neil and Richard Standing. Go to: www.angmeringvillage.co.uk/history/hist_index.htm

Why has Angmering more than three times as many listed buildings as Ferring? The reason is that it was always a much larger village than Ferring, more like a small town. In 1331 it had a population of over 500 (compared with probably 150 in Ferring; by 1841 it had just over 1,000 when Ferring had only 285. In the Mediaeval period it had a licensed weekly market and in later centuries an annual fair, for hiring farmworkers as well as selling livestock.

Henry Dixon, Vicar of Ferring by Anthony Brook

A few years ago the Magazine reproduced what seems to be the earliest photograph taken in Ferring, in 1863, with the conclusion that it was probably Henry and Anne Dixon. The Vicar's life and strange death make an interesting story

He was born on 2 January 1798, the second of three sons of the Rev. Joseph Dixon, Vicar of the Parish of Rev. and Mrs Dixon 1863 Sullington from 1794 until



The Reverend. and Mrs Dixon

his death in 1824. Joseph ensured that all his sons went into the professions. William, the eldest, became a Captain in the Royal Artillery and served all his military career overseas; after Eton, Henry went to Oxford University to begin his training for the ministry in the Church of England; and the youngest son, Frederick, also after Eton, went to Bart's Hospital for first-class training as a doctor, returning to Worthing in 1827 to start his medical practice and pursue his geological/archaeological interests.

Henry served as Curate at St Paul's Church, Worthing for over a decade, until, in 1832, he became Vicar of Ferring, due to the patronage of the Henty family. In 1837, with a permanent livelihood and residence, he married Anne Austen (a cousin of Jane Austen's), but there were no children. Anne died in 1864, aged 65, and Henry succumbed on Sunday 6 November 1870, in unusual circumstances, as reported in the local press at the time:

The West Sussex Journal's version of events on 15 November 1870 was:
Ferring: Sudden Death of the Rev. Henry Dixon

'An Inquest was held at the Vicarage on Tuesday [8 November], by R. Blagden, Esq., on the body of the Rev. Henry Dixon, who was found dead in his bedroom on Sunday morning. The proceedings excited great interest. Mary Cheeseman deposed: I am servant in this house. The deceased was Vicar of this Parish. His age was 72 last birthday, as I am informed. I have been in his service 16 months. He was a widower: Mrs Dixon died about 6 years ago. The deceased was of good health, and could walk and get about well. On Saturday last he got about as usual, and ate and drank heartily. 'He went to bed about half past five in the afternoon, which was his usual time. He complained to me of pain in his leg. He said to me, 'How is Mrs Dixon?' I said, 'Who do you mean? He replied, 'My wife'. He was not quite right in his intellect at times. His delusion was that Mrs Dixon was still alive. At 5 o'clock he had his tea: he had nothing to eat or drink after that. No one slept in his room. He appeared able to take care of himself in his room. I never knew him to have a doctor. About 9 I went into his room: he was not asleep, and wished me goodnight. I was in the kitchen about 11, and heard him out of bed: that was his habit'.

On Sunday, about 9 a.m., I went to call him: as I opened the door, I saw him lying by the side of the bed on the floor. His right hand had caught hold of the curtain. He was on his stomach, almost turned over. His left arm was under him. He was in his shirt and stockings. He had been sick in the bed and on the floor where he laid. The utensil [chamberpot] was under the bed out of his reach. He was quite dead.

Mrs Bateman slept in the room next to the deceased, and the lad and I slept in the house. When he went to bed he seemed in his usual health.

William Vesalius Pettigrew, M. D. deposed: I am a physician, and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. I was called here on Sunday last, and found the deceased huddled up with his mouth upon the ground: his arm was extended, and his hand firmly clutched the bed curtain. By the circumstance of the extension of the arm and his mouth being on the ground, he was suffocated, I am sure of it. I did notice he had vomit on his shirt, and his mouth was on the carpet and not in any vomited matter. He fell off the utensil in trying to get up. I saw nothing to indicate that the action had been caused by anything unnatural, and I have not the slightest reason to believe such to have been the case. The Jury did not accept the opinion of the surgeon as to the cause of death, and returned a verdict of 'Died suddenly from Natural Causes'.

The West Sussex Gazette's version, two days later was:

Ferring Sudden Death of the Rev. Henry Dixon

The Rev. Henry Dixon, who has been, for a very long time, Vicar of Ferring, died very suddenly on the 6th inst. He was 72 years of age, and, on Saturday, seemed in his usual health, and went to bed at 5.30, his usual time, complaining of a pain in his leg. The reverend gentleman was not quite right in his intellect at times; on Saturday, he asked after his wife, who has been dead for some time, under the delusion that she was still alive. He was heard moving about in his room as late as 11 o'clock. On Sunday morning, at 9 o'clock, when his servant, Mary Cheeseman, went up to call him, she opened the door and saw him lying by the side of the bed, on the floor. He was huddled up, with his mouth on the ground, his arm extended, and his hand clutching firmly the bed curtain. Mr. Pettigrew, the physician, was sent for at once, but the deceased was quite dead. An Inquest was held on the following Tuesday, when the jury returned a verdict of 'Death by Natural Causes'.

The Hastings and St. Leonards Herald and Observer summed up the news as follows: 'From Ferring we receive the report of an inquest on the remains of the Rev. Henry Dixon, the Vicar of that Parish, who was found dead in his bedroom. The deceased gentleman was 72 years of age. It appears that the rev gentleman was sometimes a little strange, as he asked after the health of Mrs Dixon, although his wife had been dead 6 years. His delusion was that she was still alive. However, there was nothing to account for the death of the deceased gentleman but 'Natural Causes'.

A History Of Ferring C of E Primary School

by Simon Cornish

2022 is the 70th anniversary of Ferring Church of England Primary School at its present site in Sea Lane, and 2023 is the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the school on its original site in Ferring Street, so this edition of the Ferring History Magazine seems a good time to write about the background and history of our village school.

Ferring in the 1870s was an agricultural village, consisting of around 40 houses centred around the church and the grand houses (Ferring Grange and East Ferring House). The village had a population of 270 at this time. The only way into Ferring was from the Littlehampton Road via Ferring Lane. It wound its way south over the railway crossing, own through the village (no shops or village hall at that time), past the church, and then fizzled out just past Home Farm Cottages. Sea Lane had its present alignment, giving access to East Ferring, continuing down to the sea and was a dead end. No Goring Way, and no Marine Drive. The agriculture at that time was mainly the growing of wheat, barley and oats.

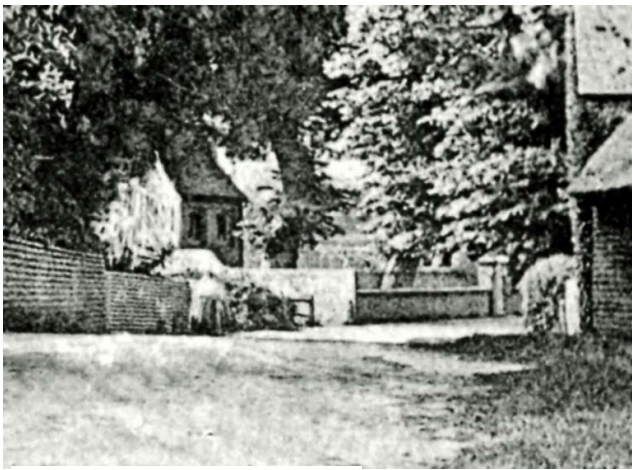
England as a whole was governed by the Liberal Party under William Gladstone, and they had been in power since 1868. In the previous Liberal administration of Viscount Palmerston (1859-1865), the Duke of Newcastle had been charged with heading a Royal Commission into the state of popular education. The commission started in 1858 and published its recommendations in 1861. It recommended the provision of 'sound and cheap' elementary education. At this time, such education was largely provided by the Church of England's National Society, although it had been receiving grants from government since 1833. By 1850 it had become clear that the churches were unable to provide sufficient school places, hence the need for the Commission.

The 1870 Elementary Education Act (known as the Forster Act, after W E Forster, the minister responsible for it) was a direct result of the 1861 Commission. It introduced compulsory provision for universal education for children aged 5 to 13. The government had

accepted responsibility for the education of the nation's children and this act was the start of a process that took twenty years to complete.

Voluntary schools were allowed to continue unchanged but school boards were formed to build and manage schools in areas where needed. The act compelled local authorities to establish a school board and to finance it from the local rates.

St Andrew's Church Of England School opened for the first time on 20th January 1873 on the site in Ferring Street now occupied by Abbeyfield. The school was officially opened by the vicar, Rev Gregory Pennethorne. The headteacher was Charlotte McIlwain, and there were 25 children on the roll. The original building was a small, single classroom building measuring 7.6m x 4.9m. The parish vicar had a managerial role overseeing the school, and both he and his wife gave lessons (religious instruction and needlework respectively). The school took children from the age of 5 to 13 and they were separated into 'standards' for teaching purposes.



The school as built. Pre 1903

The number of children on the roll seemed to fluctuate throughout the year, with the highest numbers being in the summer months. Presumably this was due to seasonal farm workers moving to the area for the harvest. Numbers grew steadily to a peak of 58 in 1920.

In 1903/04 the building was extended and a new room was added. The school log for 14th December 1903 states – “Closed school in the afternoon that workmen might put up partition for the new room”.

School closures to help stop the spread of illness are not a new phenomenon brought about by Covid-19. The school logs show several instances between 1904 and 1920 where the school was closed either on the orders of a doctor or the local education committee. One such example is the log for 8th December 1911 – ‘Closed school for diphtheria (Closed by order of doctor from 11th December to 22nd December)’. Other reasons for closure were measles and influenza.



The extended school

In January 1924, a re-organisation of schools in the area saw Ferring School re-classified as an Infant and Junior school, catering for children up to the age of 10. Children aged over 10 were transferred to Goring By Sea Endowed School. The number of children on the roll in January 1924 dropped to 28. It is unclear why, but the headmistress, E J Rowlands resigned at this point and her assistant, Gertrude Smith took over as “uncertified headmistress”. However, uncertified or not, Gertrude Smith must have proved satisfactory, as she remained in post for some 19 years.

Inspection of the school was very frequent. Annual inspections were made by the school board regarding the teaching and pupils' progress. The church also inspected with regard to religious instruction – sometimes this was done by the village priest and other times by someone from the Chichester diocese. The reports were dutifully copied into the school log by the head teacher at the time.

The school year in the 1870s was divided up in a similar way as it is now. There were no half-term holidays but days off were given for Whitsun, St Andrew's Day and other special occasions. The main difference was that the school year started after the Easter holidays, not in September as it does now. Another difference was that up to 1909, the main summer holiday was referred to as "Harvest Holiday". This was changed from 1910 to "Summer Holiday".

The school logs regularly mention pupils being absent at either end of the harvest holiday due to harvesting starting earlier, or running on. This is a clear indication that it was all hands to the pump at this time of year, regardless of age. Remember everything is being done by hand with very little mechanisation.

Through the 1920's and early 1930's numbers at the school remained in the region of 20 – 28, however, from 1935 onwards, the numbers started to climb once more. The population of Ferring had remained fairly stable from 1800 through to the 1920's at around 250-280. However, the population had trebled to 800 by 1931 and carried on increasing through the 1930's, thereby having an effect on pupil numbers.

At the start of the Second World War, more than 100 child evacuees were residing in Ferring. A second school was setup in the Village Hall to cater for their education due to the lack of space in the village school. Gertude Smith, the headteacher of the village school was involved but a Mr Cook, together with two other London County Council teachers (one's name was Miss Death) came to take charge. Teaching started on 18th September 1939, with the children having enrolled during the previous week. Charles Penfold (Hangleton Farm) gave permission for the field behind the Village Hall to be used as a school playing field.

With there being very little action during the Phoney War (the first 8 months of WW2), evacuees gradually returned home. By February 1940 numbers had reduced to 36. In May 1940, there was a second government evacuation scheme but the number of additional children enrolling was only 6. By July 1940 numbers had reduced to 19. The evacuees' school was closed on Friday 2nd August 1940 with 16 on roll. The infant and junior children were transferred to the main school and the senior children were transferred to a school in Worthing.

Ferring Village Hall continued its links with the village school. School dinners were served at the Village Hall and the children were marched from the school, up Ferring Street (no pavements then) to be fed. It is not clear when this started, (possibly under the 1944 Education Act) but it continued until the new school in Sea Lane opened in 1952.

After the war, new education acts became important for Ferring once more. Under the Education Act of 1944 the majority of Anglican Church Schools became voluntary controlled schools and it became the duty of the Local Education Authority to provide school meals and milk. The 1944 Act, was further extended in 1946 and meant that the LEA, school managers and governors of controlled schools were allowed to apply to the Ministry of Education for the minister to order the enlargement of a school, payable by the LEA. West Sussex County Council prepared a plan for post-war education and although expansion of the school on its Ferring Street site (presumably onto the site on which the library now stands) was considered

possible, it would have been a compromise that would have restricted any further development as the population grew. A new site was found by WSCC in Sea Lane, and a new school was built. It was the first school in West Sussex to be built under the provisions of the 1944/1946 acts, and the third in the whole country.

Lessons at the new school started on 4th June 1952. By this time, Mrs Edolls was head mistress, having taken over in 1944. The school consisted of three classrooms, school hall, kitchens, toilets and staff room, all in one building. The number of children on the roll at this point was 55 but the new school had provision for 120. The population of Ferring was 2200 at this time. The official opening of the new school was a few weeks later on 26th June 1952 and two former pupils who had joined the school on its first day on 20th January 1873 attended the opening of this new school – Mr P Tourle and Miss F Bellchamber.

Over the years, the school has been added to. 1963 saw two huts added, to take the provision to around 180. In 1969 the head teacher's office was added. Three further classrooms were built during the 1980's (one to the rear of the school and two to the front) but the biggest refurbishment took place in 2005/06. The three original classrooms were made into two larger classrooms, two new classrooms were built, making a total of seven, and a library was added. Huttred classrooms finally became a thing of the past. This is the school we see today.



OUR PROGRAMME FOR 2022

We expect to be back on our usual quarterly cycle of meetings in 2022:

4 February: James Sainsbury Archaeologist and Curator of Worthing Museum: Highdown

6 May: Malcolm Linfield, of Ferring Country Centre: The Worthing Greenhouse Industry

5 August: Simon Cornish, with our photographic archive: Ferring, Then and Now

4 November: Janet Pennington, Sussex Historian: A Thousand Years of Wiston

9 December: Social, with Ian Gledhill: A History of Gilbert and Sullivan.

Walks and visits at dates to be arranged – Cissbury Hill, Lost properties of Ferring, Shoreham Fort, St Andrews Church and Churchyard. Look on our web site: ferringhistorygroup.co.uk for these dates and other news and features on our local history.

Sussex Castles

report by Ed Miller

‘When is a castle not a castle’ was one of the questions posed by John Bleach, former custodian of Lewes Castle and an expert on the Sussex Castles, at our August meeting, the first since Covid. The answer, perhaps, he said, was, ‘When it is a crenellated manor house’. The early Norman castles like Arundel, Bramber, Lewes and Hastings, were clearly built for military purposes – the first three guarding important river crossings and the fourth guarding the coast right back to Beachy Head.



Arundel – a much-restored castle



Lewes – the Barbican

These were built by Norman nobles closely associated with William the Conqueror, and from them they ruled the ‘rapes’ – the county divisions of that name, which persisted for many centuries.

Other ‘castles’ in Sussex, like Bodiam, might look like classic fortresses but they were really large houses built, or rebuilt, in the ‘military’ style, sometimes to deter potential marauders, whether from the sea or thieves and rebellious barons inland; or often for prestige.



Bodiam Castle



Amberley Castle

Amberley Castle was another example – this time of a manor house surrounded by ‘castle’ walls. This practice, known as ‘crenellation’ required a licence from the King. The Bishop had little to fear from marauders in his manor of Amberley when he obtained his licence in 1377, and a later Bishop had even less to fear in Ferring when he applied for a ‘Licence to Crenellate’ the manor house there in 1447, along with his 10 other manor houses. However there is no further mention of the Ferring licence is recorded and there is no archaeological evidence of any kind for such a project ever being carried out.

John Bleach said military castles were built in later centuries in Wales and in northern England, for good military reasons, but not in Sussex. But the many fortified, or decorative stately homes, designed to look like castles, and restored castles like Arundel added enormously to the landscape and historical treasures of the county.

ELECTORAL REGISTER 1705

by Ed Miller

Before the Reform Acts of the 19th Century only a handful of people in Ferring had a vote in the election of their Member of Parliament. The main qualification was not residence but property ownership. Until 1832 the level of the property qualification varied town by town and county by county. Ferring was in the Sussex county constituency, and it seems you had to be a freeholder to vote (however, the Vicar seems to have had a vote in any event). A few of the registers of electors 'Poll Books' from this pre-democratic age survive.

The first is for 'Electors of the Knights of the Shire for the County of Sussex, 24 May 1705'. It shows Charles Cutter, John Cortis, John Dennett and John Tidy.

Charles Cutter was the Vicar of Ferring from 1670 to his death in 1715. He had a long tenure, like many of his predecessors and followers but we know little about him. His wife had twins in 1671, who died within a day or two and she died five months later. In his will he left £5 to the poor of Ferring, £1 each to his two servants, and the rest to his surviving daughter Elizabeth (stipulating that her husband was not to have any control over the money and chattels). His Vicarage was rated at three hearths in the Hearth Tax of 1670.

John Cortis was a wealthy farmer, whose family continued to own and farm land in Ferring into the last years of the 19th Century. We have his will and probate inventory of 1706, which tell us something about his life and lifestyle. Including his freehold land (in East Ferring), he had 42 acres under cultivation, and 57 sheep, plus a few cows and pigs. He lived in a substantial, well-furnished house, with servants, a well-equipped kitchen and two large bedrooms. His goods and personal effects were valued at £208 (about £50,000 in today's values).

John Dennett was born in Ferring in 1682 and died there in 1742. His probate inventory described him as a Yeoman (that is, a gentleman farmer) and valued his possessions at £9 – so he was not particularly wealthy. There were no items related to farming and only one bed and a chest by way of furniture; but there were decent clothes and a periwig, a gold ring, silver buckles, and an old horse. At the age of 60 he would have been an old man, and perhaps retired from farming.

John Tidy died in 1720. His will and probate inventory show that he was a man of considerable wealth. He was another Yeoman, the copyholder of eight acres in Hangleton and the freeholder of 'Woolvens', a house and land behind what is now the War Memorial. He left the Hangleton land to his daughter Anne, who later married John Olliver, the eccentric Miller from Goring (the house they built at the top of the lane still has the inscription J.A.O 1734 – for John and Anne Olliver). The contents of his 'Kitching' were worth £4 10s, those of his Brewhouse another £4-10, and there were more items in his Small Beer Buttery and Milk House, and in his Cellar.

The other rooms of the house were the 'Parler' (with a round table, eight chairs and four stools), one bedroom over the bakehouse (with two beds and expensive linen), another bedroom over the kitchen, another bedroom over the parlour, and another called the Boys Chamber (possibly for the servants but with only one bed). Outside he had 16 cattle, 6 horses and colts, 7 hogs, various agricultural equipment, as well as 22 acres of Wheat, 12 acres of Barley plus 15 acres of 'Pease & Tares & Oates'. Altogether, his goods were valued at almost £250.

Richard Rawlinson – of Military Intelligence and South Drive

by Simon Cornish

Lt Col Arthur Richard Rawlinson was born in London on 9th August 1894. He was educated at Windlesham House School just north of Findon, Rugby School, and Pembroke College, Cambridge. He was a British army officer who served in both world wars, on the Western Front, and in military intelligence. He was a Deputy Director of Military Intelligence for much of World War II and head of MI 9a (later MI 19), the department responsible for obtaining information from enemy prisoners of war and for assisting British POWs held in Germany. The sketch (right) was by one of his German prisoners.



Lt Col 'Dick' Rawlinson

He was awarded an MBE in 1919 for his service in WW1, and an OBE in the 1945 New Years Honours list.

He retired from the army on 5th January 1946. Between the wars, and after his retirement from the army, he tried his hand in business, and was not successful. He then started to write short stories, which were published, but it was as a screenwriter and producer where he had most success. IMDB credits Rawlinson with writing 62 films and TV series, and producing 11 films. He retired fully in 1964. He married Alisa Grayson in 1916, and they had two sons – Michael, a fighter pilot, who was killed in action in 1941 in the skies above Flanders, and Peter (Lord Sir Peter Rawlinson, Attorney General in Edward Heath's government 1970-1974). Richard Rawlinson died on 20th April 1984.

He lived at 35 South Drive – the large house to the left of the entrance to the beach huts and Bluebird Café. When it became too big for him to manage, he moved to a bungalow at 15 West Drive (which has since been demolished and replaced with two bungalows).

My father was a local builder and decorator and worked for Col Rawlinson for many years. I remember going to both properties with my father, and Col Rawlinson would try to get me to play his grand piano. When he phoned to speak to my father, he always said, “Is himself there?” In later years, his son handled his affairs, and we would often get phone calls from the House of Lords asking us to hold for Sir Peter, or letters on House of Lords notepaper. My mother reminded me recently that Col Rawlinson had a parrot. My father was embarrassed one day whilst painting the rear of 35 Ocean Drive, as the parrot kept wolf-whistling. My father was convinced that people walking along Patterson's Walk would think it was him. Sometime the parrot would say, “Speak you bugger, speak”, obviously repeating the Colonel.

The Other Three Colonels

by Ed Miller

We have just read about Lt Col Rawlinson, who retired from Military Intelligence to live in Ferring after World War II, and in our cover story about Col Weekes in the Grange, but Ferring had at least three colonels in residence in the 1930s. The most notable was Lt Col John Dodge, in ‘Florida’, on the corner of Ocean Drive and Florida Road, from 1930 to 1939. We have told his story in an earlier edition: son of Flora Guest by her first marriage, distinguished service in World War I, stockbroker, re-enlisted in 1939, captured, took part in the Great Escape of 1944. He did not return to live in Ferring after the war but visited many times to see his mother. He died in 1960, and his ashes are in the churchyard.

Just before him came Lt Col Sir Walter Gibbons, who bought ‘Hollidays’ (which he renamed ‘St Malo’) at the south end of in Sea Lane in 1929. Gibbons had been an officer in the Army Service Corps (later, RASC in World War I). He used his experience of supply organisation when he set up and ran an emergency food supply for London in the railway strike of 1919,



Lt Col Sir Walter Gibbons

for which he received a KBE in 1920. His main business was as a theatrical impresario – at one time he owned 40 music halls. The most famous was the London Palladium, which he opened in 1910. He seems to have lost his touch in the late 1920s, getting deep in debt, and had to put St Malo and its contents, and his London house up for auction in May 1931. He went to live with his son in London, was declared bankrupt in January 1933, and died in October of that year.

The third was Lt. Col F W Gibbon of Elm Bank, Langbury Lane, who came to Ferring in 1934. Not only was he a Lt Col with a very similar name, he was, like Sir Walter, a Knight of Grace in the Order of St John. But Fred Gibbon was a doctor, having earned his rank in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was long retired when he came to Ferring. He died in July 1937, at the age of 74.

A Pair of Spurs and a Pound of Pepper

by Ed Miller

In the Middle Ages the legal transfer of land was achieved not by a conveyance but by a fictitious suit in the Courts. The purchaser was represented as the petitioner or plaintiff and the vendor was represented as the defendant or holder of the land. The purchaser was, in theory, suing the vendor for the land he was paying for. The documents of record were called the 'Finalis Concordia' (final agreement) between them. They are, collectively known as 'Fines' and the summaries were written in triplicate, side by side, and at the foot of the document. The side-by-side copies were cut along a wavy line and given to the two parties; the 'foot' copy was retained by the court. These 'Feet of Fines', where they survive, give us much interesting information. Several of the earliest concern Ferring.

In one of them dated the 14th year of the reign of Henry III (that is, in 1230) at Westminster, on the first Friday after Easter, it was agreed that Amphrid de Ferring had inherited the 'molendinus' (the windmill) that was currently in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Chichester, but that Amphrid now relinquished his claim and was paid two marks (13s 8d) for his agreement. We know from an earlier charter that the Bishop had given the mill to Thomas de Ferring (probably Ansfrid's grandfather) in the 1190s, 'for his service to the Church of Chichester and myself' (Thomas was his Steward from 1187 to 1197).

Another of the Feet of Fines survives from 1249. The same Amphrid sold Richard de Ferring one hide and three virgates of arable land and eight acres of meadow, in Ferring, Goring and Amberley. The land was 'to be held of' Amphrid, and Richard was to deliver to him, as the superior landlord, 'unum par calcarum deauratorum', or six pence every Easter. Richard paid Amphrid 40 marks (£13 3s 4d) for this transaction.

Most of this was not difficult to translate from the Latin but I puzzled for some time over 'calcarum', which, when I looked it up, meant 'of spurs'. So the 'ground rent' was one pair of gilt spurs, or 6d, a year. A 'hide' was approximately 100 acres and a 'virgate' a quarter of a hide. In the Domesday Book (1086) an earlier Ansfrid is recorded as holding two hides in Ferring, and in this transaction it was probably his grandson who was selling most of the family's Ferring estate (and some other land in Goring and Amberley) to his son Richard, while retaining the rights of the superior landlord.

The estate stayed with the family until 1306, when a later Amphrid (possibly Richard's son) sold it to a John Kente for £20. At that time the ground rent was 'una libra piperis' (one pound of pepper). This would have been in peppercorns. When Kente transferred his holdings (including his Ferring land) to John Stopeham around 1340 the ground rent included one peppercorn and an arrow-head. These payments had evidently become nominal rather than actual, and a 'peppercorn rent' today means just that – a nominal payment that keeps a property as leasehold.

Fitted up in Hangleton Lane

by Ed Miller

A curious incident took place in Hangleton Lane in October 1854, involving Mrs Elizabeth Haines, a widow aged 63, her lodger, his horse, a pond, a police constable, and a carpenter.

The constable, William St Leger, based at Angmering, sued the lodger, George Newman, for assault. Giving evidence at Arundel Court he said he was making his way from Ferring Gate (railway crossing) to Mrs Haines' cottage in Hangleton Lane when he saw Newman in Langbury Lane, stumbling along and falling down, obviously drunk, leading a horse. He asked Newman whether he had been to Broadwater Fair and Newman had said that was his own business. He picked Newman up, telling him he was a police officer (he was not wearing uniform) and that he would take him and his horse home. Newman would not answer him but led the horse to a pond just beyond Hangleton Cottages, to give it a drink. He then fell in the pond. St Leger said he took the horse up the lane to Mrs Haines' cottage and (presumably having tethered the horse) went inside and asked for a pint of beer: she had no licence to sell beer.

St Leger said when he came out of the house he saw Newman, who called out that if they had served him any beer he was a policeman. Mrs Haines had then offered him his money back but he would not take it. Then Newman had grabbed hold of him and tried to strike him. St Leger asked a man called Holden (five times) to assist him and got him under control. He said. 'I put handcuffs on him, and asked him where he lived. I did not know he lived at that house. He asked if I was taking him in/ I said yes and he said he would not go without his horse. He offered me money not to take him in but I refused'. He said he took him to Angmering, and unable to get a 'conveyance' he 'stripped him' and put him to bed in The Lamb Inn until the morning and then took him to Arundel (to the Magistrates to get a summons for assault).

Newman's solicitor said the story was not really believable. Yes, Newman had been to the Fair, Yes, he had had too much to drink and yes, he had fallen in the pond. But what probably happened next was that St Leger had asked him where he lived and on being told, left him by the pond, went up to Mrs Haines house with the horse, told her how he had helped her lodger and said he should have a pint of beer for his trouble. He drank the beer and tried to force the money on Mrs Haines, who refused it. He tried again to pay, and during the altercation Newman reached the house came into the room. St Leger, frustrated in his attempt to 'fit up' Mrs Haines, turned on Newman, struggled with him, handcuffed him and took him away.

This version was borne out by the evidence of Mrs Haines and Henry Holden, the carpenter. He said he had met St Leger and Newman in the lane (Langbury Lane) saw Newman fall in the pond and St Leger pull him out. The policeman asked where the drunk lived and Holden had pointed out Mrs Haines house just across what is now Littlehampton Road. He had followed St Leger and saw him try to press money on Mrs Haines, which she threw into the street. Newman then came up and St Leger took him into custody. Newman had not resisted.

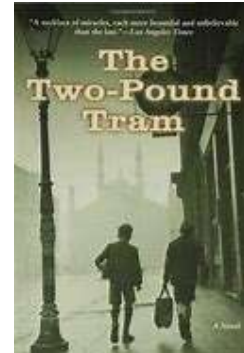
The Magistrates accepted this version: St Leger had no good reason to arrest Newman, or to handcuff him, or to take him to Angmering for the night. They dismissed the case. One of them asked, 'How long have you been a police officer?', He said seven months – before that he was in London, 'Were you a police officer there?' 'No', said St Leger. 'I should think not', said the Magistrate. There was laughter in Court.

William Newton and The Two Pound Tram

by David Garnett

The year 2003 saw publication of *The Two Pound Tram* by William Newton, a book which won the Society of Authors' Sagittarius Prize for the best novel by a debut author aged over 60. It starts as a whimsical tale of two young brothers who cycle to London to buy an old, horse-drawn tram. The first page sets the scene:

'We were born in the 1920s and grew up in the 30s . . . We lived in Sussex not far from the sea in a house called Greenacres.' As the book progresses, various references are made to the surrounding area: The Downs, Chanctonbury and Swanbourne Lake. On page 5 it is revealed that the brothers go to school in Worthing (most likely Goring Hall, which is also referenced in the book). By page 15 they are collecting butterflies in 'the fields between Ferring and Goring'. There is also a mention of 'Miss Marshall's Riding School' -- which was on Sea Lane, Ferring. But alongside accurate details such as this and 'the old forge, Goring' are several alternative facts: 'Worthing's two piers,' for example, and the torpedoing of the Cunard ship *Carinthia* 'seven miles from Worthing' rather than 80 miles from the north-west tip of France.



Opening in 1937, *The Two Pound Tram* is a mixture of nostalgic fantasy and reimagined autobiography, and was almost certainly written by someone who had lived in or near Ferring around that time. So who was 'William Newton'? One of the street directories of the period, the *Blue Book* of 1939/40, gives a strong clue by listing 'Frank Newton' as living in Sea Lane. Not only that, but the name of his house was 'Greenways' which must be the template for 'Greenacres' in the book. 'Greenacres', the author wrote, had 'spacious grounds' -- as did 'Greenways'. (It is where all the properties in Greenways Crescent, off Sea Lane, now stand.) According to Wikipedia, 'Frank Newton (1868-1963)' was an 'Engineer, Gold Prospector and Racing Driver' who had four children with his wife Margaret 'when he was in his 50s and 60s' -- and the youngest was called 'William Kenneth Newton'.

The name 'William' was on the cover of *The Two Pound Tram*, which the author wrote once he had retired, but during his previous profession he had used his middle name and on 22 April 2020 the *Daily Telegraph* published his obituary which began: 'Dr Kenneth Newton, who has died aged 82, was a Harley Street doctor who treated British and foreign royalty, the aristocracy and celebrities such as Deborah Kerr, Audrey Hepburn and Dame Margot Fonteyn'. (Newton's second novel was published posthumously, *The Mistress of Abha*, in 2011.)

Kenneth Newton was born in Ealing on 6 November 1927, and it took over six decades after growing up in Ferring until he fictionalised his childhood years at 'Greenways' -- but he was not the only novelist to have lived in that very house . . .

Kelly's directories for 1926 and 1927 list 'C. N. Draycott' as resident in 'Greenways'. This was very soon after the last Mrs Henty sold the family estates, and he was probably the first occupant. (For more on Major Draycott, see the article on Ferring Grange in this magazine.)

Then in 1928, the author David Lindsay and his family moved into the house. (See *Ferring History Magazine* 2018, page 2.) In October 1929, however, he moved to nearby 'Meadowbank' which meant that when Frank Newton brought his family to Ferring, they were neighbours of the Lindsays: in the 1938 *Kelly's Directory* for Sea Lane, there are only two properties between 'Newton N. F. (Greenways)' and 'Lindsay David (Meadowbank)'.

83 years separate the publication of David Lindsay's first novel, the metaphysical fantasy *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1920) and Kenneth Newton's first book. But for a short time in Ferring they lived about 100 yards from each other, and their paths must have (literally) crossed. Newton would have been about eleven at the time, Lindsay half a century his senior, and they would have had nothing in common. Perhaps the schoolboy was aware that the old man who lived nearby was an author and read one of his books, either then or later in life.

J.R.R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, two of the greatest ever fantasy authors, both acknowledged Lindsay's influence on their epic novels -- and maybe William Kenneth Newton was similarly influenced, choosing to interweave his own curious story with threads of imagined untruths.



'Meadowbank' and 'Greenways' both still exist, now surrounded by later developments. "Meadowbank" has been extended, become a number, and is in Sea Lane Gardens. 'Greenways' stands along Greenways Crescent, derelict and overgrown, as if lost within a timeless parallel Ferring.

Greenways in November 2021

Admiral Swabey of Home Farm House

Rear-Admiral Thomas Carlisle Swabey, as he was then, retired from the Royal Navy in 1929 and came to live at Home Farm House in Ferringham Lane. He became the Chairman of the Trustees of the Village Hall.

He joined the Navy in 1895 (Britannia Naval College), made Midshipman in 1897 and served as a gunnery officer on HMS Lord Nelson. He took part in the Gallipoli operations in 1915, for which he was awarded the DSO. From 1924 to 1926 he was Captain of the RN College, Greenwich and then until he retired in Sept 1929 he was on loan to the Royal NZ Navy as Commodore commanding the New Zealand Squadron.

He retired to Ferring and lived here until 1936. Recalled to service in 1939 at the age of 58, he served as a Commodore of convoys and in 1941 his ship was sunk and he spent several days in an open boat. In 1942 he was Flag Officer in Charge at Portland, responsible for launching one of the two US Divisions for D Day. He was promoted to Rear Admiral the day before his first retirement and promoted again, to Vice Admiral in 1935. He died in February 1952, at another 'Home Farm House' (not renamed by him), in Eartham, Chichester. *'Home is the hunter, home from the hill and the sailor home from the Sea'*. R L Stevenson.

by Ed Miller



Vice- Admiral Swabey 1947 |
(National Portrait Gallery)

Defending Sussex - RAF Tangmere

Report by Ed Miller

The Group had a very good talk, on 3 September, from Sqdn Ldr Joe Marsden, on the history of one of our local wartime RAF stations, Tangmere, and on its current role as a Museum of Military Aviation.

Marsden had spent 27 years in the RAF, as a pilot and in other operational roles and told the story with a professional insight. That story began in 1916, when an RFC aircraft flying from Gosport to Shoreham was forced, by engine failure, to land in a field outside the village. The pilot recommended the flat terrain as suitable for a regular landing field and it was put into service in 1917. A little later Tangmere was transferred to the United States Air Force as a training establishment but was closed down in 1918, as the war drew to an end.

The RAF took over the airfield in 1925 and based a squadron there in 1926 but it only became an important base in 1939, with fighter squadrons defending the south coast from German bombers. Joe Marsden told the story of the terrible attack on the airfield at the start of the Battle of Britain, on 16 August, resulting in 14 dead, and of the American pilot Billy Fiske who died shortly after landing his badly shot-up aircraft.

The story continued with Douglas Bader in command in 1941, and air ace Johnnie Johnson, but there was a nother side to Tangmere's activities – it was the base for the Lysander aircraft that landed SOE agents into occupied France and brought many of them back to Tangmere. And during the Normandy landings Tangmere was used as a Fighter Control Station.



Spitfires at Tangmere

Post-war, the airfield was used for fighter training and then became the base for the RAF High Speed Flight, leading to world-records for the Gloster Meteor in 1946 and the Hawker Hunter in 1953 (the latter witnessed by Ferring residents as it streaked along just off its beaches. The RAF Station closed in 1970 and much of the land returned to agriculture or built over with housing but in 1982 a group of enthusiasts managed to save some of the RAF buildings and open the Museum.

The History Group followed up this talk with a visit to the Museum and 22 members came out to see the aircraft and displays at first-hand. The record-breaking aircraft were there (surprisingly small, close up) and there were many interesting exhibits, explained and interpreted by friendly expert guides. The Museum is staffed entirely by volunteers and if you missed it on 14 September you would find it well worth a visit.

Sussex Landscape and Sussex Character

The report of our first meeting, in February 2001, by our founder, the late Kath Worvell.

Dr Peter Brandon, from the University of Sussex and well-known author on the most reputed books on Sussex history and landscape entertained a capacity audience with a totally enthusiastic review of our county. Starting by referring to the general geographical areas of chalk, clay, sandstones and coastal plain he stressed the differences based on agriculture and landscape had had on cultures within communities. He spoke of the historically differing attitudes living in isolated and distinct areas provoked and with them the regard of suspicion and even hostility such isolation could engender. Sussex until the arrival of improved communication was a series of quite identifiable and differing cultures, attitudes and communities.

Referring to Ferring, he related this to our historic outlier, Fure. - its place and function within the medieval Manor of Ferring. The onerous obligations to our Lord of the Manor, the Bishop of Chichester he highlighted with much relish.

Dr Brandon, from the University of Sussex and well-known author on the most reputed books on Sussex history and landscape acknowledged the importance of William Hoskins, author of 'Making of the English Landscape' (1953??). He stressed the importance of the radical change in the analysis and understanding of landscape that this book had engendered. Professor Wooldridge's book 'The Weald' (1953) surveyed this distinct geological area and from these, Dr Brandon's own work on the Sussex landscape stems.

Identifying human-like habitation in the Sussex Plain since Boxgrove Man - some half a million years ago - he put our current concept of the Millennium into statistical perspective by pointing out that these last two thousand years merely formed less than ½% of the time known 'man' has inhabited these parts.

Sussex derives from the 'Kingdom of the South Saxons' from the 6th century. An amalgamation of tribal communities, it became absorbed by King Alfred into Wessex in the 10th century. King Harold, defeated at Hastings, had a palace at Bosham and Ferring parish was owned by the Saxon Bishopric based at Selsey. With the coming of the Norman Lords church holdings were transferred to the Norman Bishops. The Norman conquest recast 'Wessex' and established the Norman ducal rapes which came to comprise Sussex and 'Sussex' remained the political region until the late 19th century establishment of local government. Reformed for greater administrative regulation, East and West Sussex were then defined.

Quoting Cobbett's 'Rural Rides' (1825), Dr Brandon outlined the diversity of landscapes that the South East encompassed - chalk down, heath, coastal plain brickearths, the maritime fringe, sandstones and heavy clays and correlated this to the diversity of communities and cultures that this historically had produced. Supporting differing types of agriculture, craft industries and landholdings, this had produced a region of diverse folk-lore and cultures. Geographical isolation in areas of poor accessibility in turn gave rise to communities, isolated, remote and consequently suspiciously regarding their neighbours as 'backward' and hostile. On the maritime fringe, the seafaring communities regarded any unrecognisable ship, local or foreign as 'fair game' for plunder. Correspondingly, the Londoner regarded Sussex as nothing short of barbarian!

The geographical isolation perpetuated local traditions long after the more sophisticated counties followed the changes in fashion. Separated from London by the intractable clays of the Sussex Wealden forests, blue farmers' smocks were worn later in Sussex than elsewhere. The much quoted stance of the Sussex labourer, '*We won't be druv*' re-iterated their impoverished independence.

However the social conditions of the labouring poor in the 19th century were extreme. Cobbett records for such currently idyllic villages as the Hartings and Treyford in West Sussex abject squalor, desperate poverty and starvation which had its reflection in the Swing Riots of the 1830's. Landowners financed emigration to Upper Canada (the lakes districts) and the western side USA to relieve the problem.

Dr Brandon then turned to our local history and reminded us that Ferring was composed of two parts within the Manor - Ferring parish and its outlier - Fure some 14 miles to the north comprising parts of the parishes of Billingshurst, West Chiltington and Thakeham. All the manors of the coastal plain had outliers pre-dating the Middle Ages. Its produce supplemented that of the coastal plain soils by providing wood for its crafted needs, iron ore and clay as well as a wooded landscape for pig fattening in the Autumn. It is still possible to trace the drove roads which connected the two parts of the Manor of Ferring.

He explained that since Norman times the Lord of the Manor had been the Bishop of Chichester with wealth equivalent to the most wealthy landowners eg the Earl Fitzalans of Arundel. These were of great political influence. The Bishops of Chichester held three castles from the 13th century, Wappingthorne, north of Steyning, Amberley and Cakeham on Selsey Bill. The Bishopric owned 8 deer parks, a London residence and many minor properties for their parochial perambulations. The holdings were run by peasants who tenanted land from their lord by Customal leases - agreements within which they were obligated to provide labour, work and resources to support the whole of the Bishops' estates. This often meant carrying (carting) supplies to other parts of the county or to the other Episcopical holdings. Life was perhaps less onerous in Fure, remote as it was from easy and direct supervision of the Bishopric and this stretch of land may well have provided a form of 'outback' to which landless peasants could remove, to set up holdings starting with a primitive hut and gradually clearing and building up a holding as the farm became established. Even so, a poor harvest, inclement weather, famine or disease could easily result in death.

Anecdotally Dr Brandon said that it would have been traditional for peasants to work bareheaded as seed was sown, in deference and trust to the prayed-for harvest bounty of God! Bringing the survey to date, Dr Brandon spoke of the impact of the 2nd World War on the Sussex landscape. With haste to produce food much of the downland was put under the plough but only two harvests were achieved: by 1943 the War Office had commandeered all of the Sussex Downs for armed forces training and manoeuvres.

Turning to specific industries which had long formed part of the traditional Sussex economy he discussed the importance of downland sheep flocks in their production of wool, meat and in his opinion, the most important - manure on which the fertility of corn production had once entirely depended. Additionally, the wattle and hurdle production of the Wealden woods were essential to the control, management and penning of sheep. He showed slides of the diverse patchwork of Wealden fields and holdings which contrasted not only in size but in industry and character with the wide open downs. Dr Brandon concluded with historic sketches of Shoreham, coastline, port and harbour and the industry and personalities of that historic town

What the Vicar had in 1635

In 1635 a document was drawn up for the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, detailing the holdings and income of the Vicarage of Ferring (that is to say the 'office' rather than the particular incumbent). This was for Laud's 'visitation' of that year. The word suggests something more than a social call, and it referred to an inspection of many aspects of church life in many parts of the diocese. Laud had been appointed Archbishop two years earlier. He was the enemy of the Puritans, who were strong in Sussex, and was determined to maintain traditional liturgy and ceremony.

There is no record of any complaint about the services at St Andrew's - and the Vicar, Owen Arthur, continued in office until his death in 1655 but the listing of the Vicarage property, the 'Terrier' survives in the County Record Office, and it tells us a great deal about the landholdings in the parish at this time.

It begins with a description of the 'Vickridg House' and its barns and various outbuildings, plus 'a garden on the east side and another on the west side of the house, a woodyard on the south west side of the house and an orchard on the southeast side. All this is bordered by Peachey's orchard on the south, by the Common field on the west, and by the Highway on the east. All about 1 acre.' The house had been largely rebuilt in the 1570s, and was to be rebuilt again in the 18th Century, but the site is clearly identifiable as that now occupied by Barberry Lodge (which had continued as the Vicarage until 1955).

The neighbouring sites are easily identifiable too. 'Peachey's Orchard' was at the back of Church Cottage, where Josias Peachey lived; the 'Common Field' was the large area of arable land, west of what is now Greystoke Road and Ferringham Lane, divided into one-acre strips; the 'Highway' was Ferring Street.

The Terrier continues with the Vicar's Glebe land – land which he could farm himself or lease out to supplement his income. This comprised 2½ acres to the north (now the Village Green), 2½ acres west of that (Meadow Road, St Maurs Road etc), the Churchway Acre (locate), 3½ acres south of the Common Field (between Little Drive and Ferringham lane) and 12 one-acre strips in the Common field – a total of 23 acres. This stayed more or less intact (leased) for the next 200 years. The Common Field strips were amalgamated, exchanged, bought and sold and rationalised around 1830 and the Vicar ended up with 16 acres in what is now the Meadow Way area. In the 1910 'Land Tax' survey he is shown as owning Glebe Farm (18 acres). It was farmed by George Harrison of East Ferring and Goring.

His other sources of income were his stipend, of £3 6s 8d a year and his tithes – in theory a tenth of the annual produce of the all the farmland in the parish. But in Ferring most of the tithes of wheat and barley (the most valuable tithes) were paid to the Rector (a more senior clergyman or a layman to whom they had been sold). The Vicar had these 'corn tythes' on only a number of very small plots, known as holybreads or holybreadths, plus the 'small tithes' – those on other crops and on livestock – on all the farmland. These 30 or 40 'holybreads', each of an acre or less, are described in some detail in the Terrier, giving their locations and the owners of the adjacent land.

It may be wondered how well a 17th Century Vicar of Ferring lived. We do not have the will or inventory of Owen Arthur but we do have the inventory of Stephen Worgar, one of his successors, who died in 1670. His 'wearing apparel and money in purse' was valued at £10. His house, the Vicarage, was spacious. He had four bedrooms, a large hall silver plate worth £3 10s, and a 'Studdy of bookes'.

More interesting in a way was what he had ‘Without doores’ – which included: two hogs, one cow, one horse, wheat growing worth £18, barley growing worth £7 10s, peas and tares, implements of husbandry including a dung cart, and eight hives of bees. This was his own little farm, on the 23 acres of his Glebe: the farm buildings were where Ferring Library stands.

It is difficult to know how much income the Vicar actually derived from the holibreads and from the small tithes on the larger landholdings. A list of the holibreads found inside the back cover of the first Parish Register gives not only the owner of each plot and its location but the expected revenue from its tithe. From the names of the owners we can be sure the list was written between 1606 and 1609. The typical area was half an acre, rated at one penny for the year, and the a total yield from the 57 plots of just over 7 shillings. No doubt these tithes, and the small tithes of the farmlands, were paid in cash: there is no record of a ‘tithe barn’ in Ferring where any tythes-in-kind might have been stored. By 1840 these ‘small tithes’ were valued at £91 13s 6d (equivalent to £40 in 1635).

This is not to say that Owen Arthur, the Vicar in 1635, actually received over £40 a year from tithes (several wills of this period leave money for ‘tithes forgot’, and the pennies due from the holibreads were hardly worth pursuing), or that what he did receive was his personal property. The upkeep of the church building and the furnishings had to be paid for, and the Vicarage frequently required repairs and, several times, rebuilding (although the Churchwardens reported in 1640 that ‘The vicars house with all things thereunto belonging are sufficiently repaired’). The stipend of a Curate, when there was one, would probably have been paid out of this income.

The Vicar did however receive payments for weddings, burials and headstones (more for vault or monument in the church, and there was an extra levy (a ‘mortuary’) on the death of the wealthier parishoners (150 years later this was 10 shillings for ‘a person posses’d of more than £50’). All in all, the Vicar did rather well. The village preacher in Oliver Goldsmith’s ‘The Deserted Village’, written in the 1770s but looking back to earlier years was ‘to all the country dear. And passing rich with £40 a year’. Owen Arthur did better than that. His widow left £50.

Sussex and the Artists

On 5 November Tim Baldwin gave us a well-illustrated talk on ‘Art in, and art about, Sussex’. He ran through 140 slides showing a wealth of material from the 15th Century to the present: watercolours, oils, etchings and pencil sketches, many by artists who had lived in the County, like William Blake and Ralph Ellis and others by those who loved to paint its landscapes – like Turner and Constable. Turner spent a great deal of time in Sussex, especially at Petworth, home of his wealthy patron Lord Egremont – and many of his paintings still hang on its walls.

Twentieth Century artists were equally attracted by the Downs and the coast. These figured in posters for the war effort and for British Rail – painted by Frank Newbold and others. There were also several artistic colonies like the one at Charleston in East Sussex, home of the



Incoming tide at Ferring, by David Barber

Bloomsbury Group. Tim showed several paintings by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant and the murals and stained glass windows that members of the Group produced for local churches. Tim’s knowledge of art and his interpretation of his 148 images gave us an excellent evening.

WANTED

This is a reproduction of a pen and ink drawing of St. Andrews church produced in 1802 and attributed to a 'John Bakersfield'. Both these names are incorrect because research has indicated that the sketch was produced by a Thomas Baskerfeild (1751 - 1816) F.S.A.



Thomas had a wealthy father and granted his son time and money to travel around the south of England to draw whatever took his fancy, and to produce maps of the country at that time. Research reveals that Baskerfeild (also spelt Baskerfield) was an English topographical artist and cartographer originally from Colchester, Essex who was active from around 1785 through to the time of his death in 1816. Investigation into his output by our Chairman - David, reveals that there are 235 of his drawings and plans listed in the British Library catalogue. Research also shows he was a patron of the artist Henry George Oldfield, which means that Baskerfeild was a man of means during these Georgian times.

Enquiries also reveal that shortly after his death in 1816, his collection of maps, books and other valuable documents were put up for auction through John Sotheby's in 1817.

This work, once hung in St. Andrews church for all to see and enjoy, was "stolen" from the church in August 1982. Enquiries reveal there are no known suspects. Why it was taken is not known, but I wonder if it is now hanging quite innocently on a local wall somewhere with the current "owners" not actually aware of its past history and ownership. Anyway it is quite distinctive and a beautifully crafted reproduction of our village church in the early 1800's. It is well worth looking out for! Good hunting.

Timothy Baldwin

REWARD