

A Growing Membership and Widening Activities

This third edition of our *Newsletter* will be delivered to 70 addresses, and over 100 members. There has been a steady growth of membership over the last six months and a series of interesting meetings, outings and research activities. We have also had regular reports of our activities in the *West Sussex Gazette* and the *Parish Magazine*.

Many of our members simply enjoy the talks and presentations we put on in the Village Hall every three months. Others have joined us on our walks and excursions to local sites of ancient and modern historical interest. A small number have taken part in the work at West Sussex Record Office, transcribing old Ferring wills and probate records and getting them onto computer files or typescript, and into our own archives. There is a wealth of material here which needs to be interpreted and collated before being written up as new insights into Ferring history. Work is also being done on the series of census returns from 1841 to 1901, and on the early 19th century Baptisms Register – a gap in our archive. Other pieces of work include the history of clubs and voluntary organisations in Ferring, and on the local tradesmen and shops that have served the changing community over the last 150 years. We need more of this original work; the material is all around us, in, for example, the remnants of old flint walls one sees all over the village (what buildings, or boundaries, did they demarcate?), the various ponds and watercourses that survive (what was their purpose?), and in the memories, photographs and mementos of people who were living in the village half a century ago (we have at least one former member of the local Home Guard).

Our next four talks and presentations are already booked (*see back page*), and further excursions are planned. We have a display at the Library at the end of May and into June, and we shall have a stall at the Jubilee celebrations. Please use these contacts, or phone or write to Committee members, to get more involved in the work or suggest further activities; we are very keen, in particular, to encourage the sort of original work referred to above. – *Ed Miller*.

History in the News - Ferring's Windmill

A Planning Application soon to be considered by Arun Council's Development Control Committee refers back to the 18th century for its justification. The Applicants - MacIntyre Nursery, Littlehampton Road, Ferring - want to build a 'traditional smock windmill' on their land just below Highdown Hill, and say this would be a replacement for the mill which stood just to the north of this location in the 1790s.

But the application has been opposed by a number of local groups (and many individuals) as unwelcome commercial development of agricultural land, a bad neighbour for the National Trust area of Highdown itself, and a potential cause of further traffic problems on the busy Worthing – Littlehampton road. The application includes 'a visitor centre/shop and eight car parking spaces'.

Among other objections, points have been made about the authenticity of the proposed replica. The Sussex Windmill Trust have pointed out that the mill owned by Olliver (of 'The Miller's Tomb') was a post mill, not a smock mill, and that it stood (naturally) on the top of the hill, not below the hill. They also maintain that it would be impossible to build a replica of any kind of 18th century windmill in appropriate materials for the cost the developers have proposed.

Despite some educational value in having a full-scale working model of a mill in Ferring, and not too far from the old site, there are many objections on environmental grounds and as we

go to press it looks unlikely that Arun will grant permission. One wonders what John Olliver would have thought about it all. Turning in his Tomb?

Ferring in 1901

By Ed Miller

The Census return for Ferring in 1901 became available on microfiche earlier this year: a close study of it, and detailed comparison with the returns from the 1841-1891 censuses, throws up much interesting information about the village.

There were 242 people staying on Census night, and 59 households – almost exactly the same figures as for 1841. The figures had not changed very much in the intervening years – always around 250, except for a peak of 312 inhabitants in 1851. The distribution of that population had not changed very much either – with most of the cottages grouped around the church and Ferring Grange, the farms in Sea Lane, Hangleton, Franklands, and behind Highdown. Where all the 20th Century development now stands there was of course, simply fields – nothing south of Home Farm Cottages in Ferringham Lane, or west of Sea Lane below what is now Beehive Lane.

As in 1841, the community was entirely based on agriculture – there is no industry and no fishing, only a few tradesmen, and only one or two people of independent means. Practically everyone (of the males over 14) is listed as a farmer, farm labourer, shepherd, (market) gardener, or as practising a trade which supported the agricultural workers and employers (shoemaker, carpenter, housemaid, grocer). Many of the names of the cottages are the same as in the 1891 or earlier censuses (although in most cases they are not named at all) and many of the old Ferring families or their descendants are still in the village (*see below*).

But although there is continuity, there is also change. Only 44 per cent of the individuals living in Ferring in 1901 were born in the village, and only 30 per cent were living there ten years earlier. There are similar figures for the previous censuses and they show that the traditional view of villagers as settled in their communities for generation after generation is not necessarily correct. Even allowing for the deaths and births between censuses, the figures show (and a comparison of family names confirms) that there is a substantial migration. Most of the birthplaces, where not Ferring, are quite local (that is, the West Sussex Downs and coast) but the farm workers, and the tenant farmers themselves, were obviously moving around the county several times in their working lives. Even those who remained in Ferring often seemed to have moved house. Kath Worvell has pointed out to me the probable reason for this – the tied cottage system and the hiring practices of the farmers.

The longest-surviving names are obviously those of the tenant farmers and the one or two landowners – but their younger sons often ended up as labourers. The Henty family runs through the decades, of course: Edwin Henty was in his heyday in 1901, owning about three quarters of Ferring by this time. His occupation is given as ‘Bank Director’ – the only profession represented in the village in 1901 (there were not even any clergy living at the Vicarage – on 31 March, at least). The Cortis family were still farming, as they had been since at least the 1790s. There were two branches of the Bennett family, a Ferring name that goes back to the early 17th Century. George Penfold had Hangleton farm, which his father had in 1861 (the family name first appears in 1524). There are at least another ten families who go back to the 1841 census. One or two of these names can still be found in the village in 2002, along with others which first appeared in later censuses.

It is interesting to trace the route taken by the 1901 enumerator. He starts with the few cottages north of Highdown – around what are now Woodlands Riding Stables and Northdown Farm Buildings. He then goes to Sea Lane, starting at the farm house where we now have the junction with Midhurst Drive, and a few associated cottages and then the few cottages before ‘Manor House’, the farm house that stood opposite East Ferring House. This house (still standing, of

course, and possibly the oldest in Ferring) was occupied by Albert Hills and his wife and five children, and just one domestic servant. Hills is described as a farmer – but only ten years earlier he was a ‘Licensed Victualler’, at the New Inn (now the Henty Arms). The enumerator then deals with the remaining cottages in Sea Lane and then switches to what he calls West Ferring.

Few of the cottages (and only one of the roads) in the village centre are listed by name, but by comparing residents’ names in the 1891 census one can see him moving down Ferring Street, starting with the Dairy (next to what is now the Barn Surgery), across to the Vicarage (now Barberry Lodge), and down to what are now called Smugglers and Evergreen Cottages, and continuing down Church Lane, ending up at the Post Office in what is now Holly Lodge. Then he goes to The Grange, where Edwin Henty was entertaining three visitors and keeping his eight servants busy. On the other side of what is now Ferringham Lane he finds ‘St Maurs’ (now Greystoke) uninhabited, and (Home) Farm house no longer occupied by a farmer, but a farm manager (plus six adult children) is in ‘South View’ (*is there still a house here that faces south?*). Last in this section of the village is ‘The Garden/The Grange’, that is the house and market garden which served The Grange (this may be what is now ‘The Old Flint House’, later a dairy, in the continuation of Church Lane.

Now the enumerator retraces his steps back up Ferring Street (there was no Greystoke Road) to the next group of houses (and shops) near what is now the Village Hall. The first is Rose Cottage (still there, just north of the bus stop), another cottage, and then ‘The Shop’ (Wesson the grocer) and one other cottage on that side, then crossing the road to check ‘Railway Crossing’ (inhabited by a Platelayer and his wife the Gatekeeper) and The New Inn. This was the village’s only pub, managed by the son of the 1891 innkeeper (who was now living at East Ferring House) and tenanted by his uncle (a farm bailiff), wife and daughter, with a coal merchant and his family next door.

He then goes up what is now Langbury Lane, taking in the two farms (either side of the Littlehampton Road), a market garden and three cottages, which were collectively known as ‘Hangleton’. Finally he comes along the Littlehampton Road to check out North Barn Cottages and turns right at Ferring Lane, back towards the village centre to deal with ‘Franklands’ the hamlet that takes its name from one of the earliest of all recorded Ferring families. In 1901 this consisted of Franklands House (now Franklands Manor), Franklands Cottages (now known as Clematis and Jasmine Cottages) and Franklands Farm (now Franklands Green Cottage). From here it was but a short walk back to the ‘New Inn’, where, one imagines, the enumerator refreshed himself before going home to write it all up.

More articles based on the 1901 census will be appearing in the next Newsletter. Meanwhile, if any member would like to check a name or address they are welcome to give me a ring.

Early Days

On 8 February, County Archaeologist John Mills gave a presentation on ‘Sites and Finds around Ferring’ to a well-attended meeting in the Village Hall.

Ferring really is rich in archaeology: his map showed up to 20 locations where items had been found or excavations made. Highdown had long been known as an Iron Age hill fort but more recent excavations have shown clearly that the bank and ditch are Bronze Age (c. 1000BC) and there is no doubt about the Bronze Age metalwork found here. Boundary ditches and trackways from this era were found last year at the Roundstone Nursery building site, along with a Bronze Age pin. The best known find from this era was the hoard of palstaves (axe heads) found in the banks of the Rife (near the footbridge) in 1983, but in 1978 building work at Northbrook College revealed evidence of Bronze Age huts, and two sites under excavation now, at Roundstone Nursery and the Angmering By-Pass, are turning up fresh evidence of settlement.

Like the Stone Age which preceded it, the Iron Age which followed it left fewer traces in Ferring. Roman finds are much more prevalent: the Roman villa now under Northbrooke College, the bath house and other buildings just west of Highdown, and a number of cremation urns, like the one found at St Malo Close. Last year, excavations at Roundstone had shown evidence of a minor Roman road, complete with cart ruts. This may be linked with the more substantial road thought to have run from Chichester to Brighton, along the line of the A27.

With the Anglo-Saxons, in the 5th and 6th Centuries, John Mills said, we begin to move out of pre-history and into documented history. Sussex, the land of the South Saxons, is teeming with Saxon place names. The brick-earth of the coastal plain has always supported substantial farming communities, but archaeological remains from this era are difficult to see – apparently being much more perishable than Roman or Bronze Age remains. Highdown is an exception, with its Saxon cemetery, rich with artefacts (mostly in Worthing Museum) but evidence is now showing up in the Angmering By-Pass site – the first settlement of huts to be identified on the coastal plain.

Rings and Thimbles

Several members of the Group are working on the transcription of the many wills of Ferring residents which were given probate in the Chichester Consistory Court between 1552 and 1853. The handwriting (of the clerks who copied it into the court records) is often extremely difficult to decipher. This one, from 1707, was transcribed by Colin Excell. Typically, there are no full stops or commas, but the spelling is remarkably modern:

In the name of God Amen I Elizabeth Summers of Ferring in the County of Sussex being sick in body and of perfect mind and memory thanks God to God therefore Doe make my last Will and Testament in maner and form following Imprimis [First] my body to be buried in Christian Burial according to the discretion of my Executors hereinafter named and my soul to God that made it and renouncing my worldly Goods which it hath pleased God to bestow upon me give for the maintaining and bringing up of my two Sons Thomas & George Summers till they are fit to shift for their living and should be any spare after they had attained to their mens estates this is my Will so that it be paid them by my Executors and I make my two friends Edward Manning and John Smart both of this parish of Ferring my Executors in trust and desire them to take and dispose of my goods and shattles to the best advantage for the maintaining and breeding up of my Children But I desire that my Executors Doe not sell or dispose of three Rings and two silver thimbles but that the Ring that was my mother in law and a small ring and one of the thimbles be kept for my Son Thomas and that my own Wedding ring and the other thimble be given to my Son George to be given as aforesaid to both my sons when they attain to their age of One and Twenty years Elizabeth Summers her mark and I signe Seal publish and declare this to be my last Will and Testament this Eighteenth Day of March 1708 in the presence of Mary Marten:- Mary West her marke.

We can see from the Parish Registers that she was buried on 12 March 1709 (or, as the Vicar recorded it, 1708/9 – because the legal year did not begin until the end of March) but probate was not granted until May 1711. What could have been the problem?

Ferring's Christmas Parcel Post

(or I'm dreaming of Wookyi-tipi)

Joan Quarry's sister writes: 'In 1949, as a 17 year-old Worthing girl home from music college, I applied to the Post Office for some Christmas work. Rather to my dismay, I was assigned to the Ferring parcel lorry – parcels being a much bigger concern in the late forties than they are now. My duties began about ten days before Christmas, when I cycled up to the

Worthing Drill Hall for a 7.45 am start. The Lorry and its driver would probably have been on hire from a Ferring nursery, and the parcels were already sorted and loaded onto the lorry by the postman. He and I then clambered aboard via a rope hanging from the roof, and on reaching Ferring we were joined by a second lady helper. Our day's work then began.

It is so long ago now, that I cannot remember the route we followed, but we certainly had some fun along the way. One memorable stop was at 'Wookyi-Tipi' in Sea Lane; to my recollection, shrouded in greenery and a bit of mystery. Almost always there were parcels for this address, and I wish I had taken more notice of the house and its owner. 'Wookyi-Tipi' has long since been demolished to make way for St Aubin's Court.

Then there was the saga of the goose. A lady in Little Paddocks notified us early that a goose had been posted to her, and each day she came to her gate expecting its delivery. When it finally arrived (and our postman insisted on making this the first call) I remember handing over the goose, feet first, and being told that it had probably 'gone off' by then!

On one occasion there was an almighty crunch and the lorry's back axle had come to grief. This delayed us until a replacement lorry could be sent for. Another time a runaway horse caused confusion, the driver and postman feeling obliged to set off in pursuit. The last round was on Christmas morning, and by 12 o'clock every parcel had been delivered. Then it was back to Worthing in time for Christmas dinner.

After 50 years, I wonder if anyone in Ferring remembers the parcel post being delivered in this way. In 1949 I worked with a married lady called Peggy. In 1950 Peggy was replaced by an elderly lady who experienced considerable difficulty getting on and off the lorry, whilst in 1951, my companion was a girl of my own age. On Christmas Eve she took me home to meet her parents. The house was large, or seemed so to me, but I cannot recall where it was. Is it too much to expect that any of these ladies, or their descendants, still have connections with the village today?

Ferring Dynasties 1: The Tourle Family

by Mrs Mavis Tourle

Many readers of this *Newsletter* will remember my late husband Pete and will know that he was born in the village. In fact, his family came here in the 1860s and you will find Tourles here in every census since 1871.

Peter's great-grandfather William Tourle was born in West Grinstead, in 1832 (one of eleven children) and married Ellen at Goring Church in 1857. They lived for some years on a farm near Goring Station, but by 1871 they and their six children were at Lilac Cottage, Ferring (where 'Pump Court' now stands). William was a 'Carpenter', Ellen was a 'Laundress' in the 1881 census and classed herself as an employer in the 1891 census. By 1901 she and her daughter Ada both classified themselves as 'Laundresses working on their own account'. William had died the previous year.

William's son Peter (born 1864) followed him in the family trade - carpentry, and by 1891 was living with his wife Alice at Franklands Cottages. The next year, they moved to Holly Lodge, which became the Post Office. 'Old Peter' died there in 1958, at the age of 94. By the time of the 1901 census they had six children, of which William, my husband's father was the eldest.

The census lists Peter Tourle as a 'Jobbing Builder' and an employer. But there were more strings to his bow. In the 1911 Kelley's Directory he is shown as Postmaster, Wheelwright, Undertaker and Parish Clerk. He was still managing his building business in the 1950s, at the age of 90, and had been involved in many aspects of village life - as a verger and school manager, for example, for many decades before that.

William the younger married in 1920. He too was a carpenter and undertaker in the family business. His two brothers Peter and Sid were also carpenters, and worked for the family firm. Sid lived in Langbury Lane from the time of his marriage in 1928 and was still there 50 years later. William moved to 'The Ramblers' after his marriage (the house within the churchyard – very handy for an undertaker). He had one daughter and one son, my late husband, Pete, (born 1924). William died young, and when Pete went into the family business he was working with his grandfather 'old Peter'.

I lived just over the border in Goring, but I went to St Andrew's Church and we were married there in 1950. We lived in 'The Ramblers', where Pete was born, up to Pete's death in 1996. As many of you will remember, he carried on the family carpentry/building/funeral business until 1988 but Pete could turn his hand to anything, including thatching, flint wall building and plumbing – he even painted the scenery for our Dramatic Society – and was involved in every aspect of village life, including a long spell on the Parish Council. I know I am not the only one who misses him.

We had daughters, not sons, but the family name in Ferring will live on for many years yet. Pete's uncle Sid had a son William (Bill), whose son Andrew still lives in Ferring, and Andrew has a son William, aged 9. So this William is the seventh generation of Tourles to be living in Ferring. I wonder if any Ferring family can beat that?

New Year Walk

More than 50 members and supporters came out on New Years Day for a Guided Walk to East Preston. The Group's Chairman, Kath Worvell, led the party from Ferring Beach, along the coast path, past Kingston Gorse, then up Peak Lane to the East Preston and West Preston manor houses and back along the Rife stream to the Ferring Seafront.

In fine weather, with a blue sky and the bright sunshine sparkling off the calm sea at high tide, the party set off over the frosty grass of Kingston Gorse 'greensward'. They heard about the development of this beachside community, from the 1920s and 1930s when celebrities like Geraldo and the Crazy Gang had holiday homes and weekend houses there, to the present day. Kath told the story of the Coastguard Cottages at Sea Lane and the violent activities of the smugglers in the 18th Century. Nearby was a listed building from the late 1920s – a house designed by Marcel Breuer.

Where Peak Lane comes down to the sea, Kath explained the layout of the site in Mediaeval times – with the lane continuing another half a mile down to Kingston Chapel, and a lane along the coast. All this area was now under the sea. Erosion had always been a problem here – the last record of the chapel was in 1621, when the churchwardens wrote to the bishop of Chichester to salvage the building stones. Even at extreme low tide there is now no trace of the chapel, but archaeologists in the 1970s found the remains of a well.

The next stop was West Kingston House, previously the manor house. The present building, and its little chapel and gatehouse, dates from 1798 erected by William Olliver, from a farming family that was doing very well out of the rich soil and the economic development of the industrial revolution. One mile further on was East Kingston House, owned by George Olliver. The building is still basically the 16th century manor house – the centre of a tiny hamlet which, nevertheless, lost four residents in the First World War, as its poignant little war memorial records.

The way home was via the Rife – a stream that had marked the Ferring boundary for over a thousand years, and where several important archaeological finds had shown that the Romans and even the Bronze Age people had settled.

Littlehampton Museum

There is an excellent local museum in Littlehampton, run by the Town (i.e. parish) Council. It tells the story of the town and the port from earliest times to the present, with over 500 items on display, including the Roman hoard of silver coins found at Climping a few years ago. It is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10.30 to 4.30 and admission is free.

Apart from the main collection there is the Sea Room, devoted to local maritime history, the Lens Room (a collection of cameras and other items from the 1920s onwards, and a series of temporary exhibitions: some are listed below. For the more serious student of local history there is a Local Studies Room, with a collection of over 20,000 items of one sort or another about this area and its past, plus non-local material.

Programme May - September 2002

4 - 25 May: *Beach Town History Exhibition*

28 May - 26 July: *Photographs. West Sussex Villages in the early 1900s*

28 May - 8 June: *Jubilees. Celebrating the Queen's Golden Jubilee.*

11 June - 13 July: *350 Years of the Quakers*

27 June - 14 September: *Time. Calendars, Clocks and History*

And much else besides - always worth a visit!

The Monk family in Ferring

By Ed Miller

After our November meeting one of our members asked if the Group's archives showed any trace of her grandmother's family - the Monks. Grandmother came from Suffolk but there was reason to believe that her father originated from Ferring. We looked into this together.

The first clue was that the father was called William Whittington Monk, and that a William Monk had married Sarah Whittington at Goring Church in 1795. William was recorded as 'of Ferring', Sarah as 'of this Parish' (i.e. Goring). The other clue was that William and Sarah Monk were mentioned in Ferring Past¹ as occupiers of Home Farm Cottages in 1830.

The Ferring Parish Registers do not show any entry for 'William Whittington Monk' but there are many entries for the Monk family: Thomas Monk married Elizabeth Knowles, by licence, at the Parish Church on 19 July 1757. Eight children of theirs were christened at Ferring, among them a William Monk who in due course married Sarah Whittington in the same Parish Church. The mother's maiden name was often adopted as a middle Christian name for children and the eldest son would often be named after his father. One would therefore expect to find him listed as a child of this marriage but there is no corresponding entry in the Ferring register.

This is certainly the right family, however. Thomas Monk is listed in the Land Tax Register² as occupying two properties belonging to William Richardson in 1780, and until 1783. These passed to Mrs Monk in 1784, who retained the smaller property until 1788, and the larger (described in 1798 as 'Land') until 1799. This property was described as 'House and Land' in 1801 and was occupied by Mr Monk and Mr Bushby. In 1802 Mrs Richardson became the owner, and in 1803 another (presumably adjacent) property was added - a Mill occupied by Mr Olliver. Monk, Bushby and Olliver continued to occupy the amalgamated property to

¹ By R Kerridge and M Standing. Pub. by Phillimore 1993.

² Photocopied and analysed by Frank Leeson

1809. (This property was probably on Highdown, the obvious place for any Mill and especially one owned by the Olliver family.)

The same register shows William Monk as occupying a 'House and Land' (*thought to be at Hangleton Cottages*) belonging to Mrs Bennett, from 1816 to 1817. (This was almost certainly his sister, as we shall see below). Then in 1831 and 1832 he both owned and occupied a different 'house and land' (*presumably Home Farm Cottages – see below*). In the 1840 Tithe apportionment report he is shown as occupying Kent's Croft (very close to what is now The Henty Arms), owned by Edwin Henty; a 'Cottage, Garden etc' (just south of there), owned by the Executors of the late Ann Henty; Mitchells Field (adjoining on the East); The Wall Croft (also adjoining); and occupied a tenement (opposite). He also owned and occupied a 'Cottage and Garden' which was a single property now known as Home Farm Cottages (as we go to Press it is up for sale).

'*Ferring Past*' traces the history of Home Farm Cottage. In 1830 the will of George Oliver Penfold (son of the Vicar) 'records that William Monk and Sarah his wife occupied the old farmhouse, and they were admitted to the property [*i.e. became owners*] on 25 March 1831 .. as lifetime occupiers'. Then in 1840 'after the death of William and Sarah Monk' the property was acquired by Edwin Henty (Penfold's brother in law) *Ferring Past* says the house was known as 'Andrews' until 1840, and that Henty probably divided it into two cottages at that time when he was reorganising his estate.

William Monk is mentioned in two Ferring wills. Thomas Marten made his will on 9 September 1809 and named as his executors 'my good friends, William Monk of East Ferring, Yeoman..[and two others]. To see the relevance of the second we need to go back to William's own family. Two of his seven sisters married into wealthy local families.

Fanny (born 1773), 'of West Ferring' married John Bennett on 4 June 1800 Emmeline (or Amy) Monk (born 1767) married Samuel Richardson (of Rustington) at Ferring in October of that year, and a third, Anne (born 1767), married Richard Street ('of this parish') at Ferring in 1785,

John Bennett, of Hangleton, yeoman, made his will on 10 October 1851. If his only child, Fanny, were to predecease him, one eighth of the residue of his estate was to go to 'the children of late Uncle William Monk'. John Bennett must have been the son of Fanny Monk after she married John Bennett the elder. The younger John Bennett left other eighths to the children of other late Aunts. Two of these are certainly William's other sisters – Ann (Street), and Amy (Richardson).

William's marriage to Sarah Whittington produced another eight children, born between 1796 and 1813, all christened at Ferring Church, but none of them were married there. Curiously, none of these children was named William: the 'William Whittington Monk' we were looking for may have been a grandson. His 20th Century descendant will no doubt continue the search.... None of the children seems to have stayed in Ferring (no Monks are recorded in the 1841 or 1851 censuses). Nevertheless, William's sister's son was referring to 'the children' in late 1851 when he was writing his will.

As one looks through the Parish Registers and other documents in the Archives, one is struck by how small the village was, and how 'knitted together' the families were, by marriage, property ownership and tenancy, and relations with the Church. Not only did the Monks marry into the Richardson and Bennett families, and occupy land owned by those families, but William Monk was a Churchwarden while Penfold was the Vicar. Penfold's son left 'Home Farm Cottages' to the Monks, his daughter married George Henty (also a churchwarden). The Hentys were related to the Ollivers, one of whom held land jointly with William Monk – an so *ad infinitum*.

Three Downland Churches

The Group went further afield than usual in April – for a conducted tour of Coombes, Botolphs and Buncton churches, all early Norman (or older) and all serving ‘deserted villages’.

Twenty-five members came out for the afternoon, and in rather uncertain weather, the day after Easter Monday, drove off to have a look at these three tiny churches, all still functioning, strung out along the Adur valley and the foot of the Downs. The visit to Coombes happened to coincide with lambing at Coombes Farm which added a secular seasonal touch to the closeness of the Christian festival. This has been ‘sheep and corn’ country for at least a thousand years and the mediaeval village, still discernable in the hummocks and mounds under the turf, was based on prosperous agriculture. Coombes Church is celebrated for its large fragments of mediaeval wall paintings of bible stories – a visual aid for the generally illiterate congregations – which had been covered up during the Reformation and rediscovered in 1949. Today, the few houses at Coombes barely add up to a hamlet, and services are no longer held weekly but Evensong here (once a month) is evidently a strong attraction for visitors in the summer months.

Botolphs, further up the valley, is an even smaller community, once known as ‘St Peter by the Bridge’. The Adur was then a wide river, bringing ships right up to Steyning. The tide also brought salt water, which was diverted into salt-pans and evaporated, to provide the old village with one of its sources of income. This and the usual ‘sheep and corn’ agriculture supported, from the 11th century onwards, a thriving church which was extended in the 13th century. But, Kath Worvell told the group, prosperity declined when the waterway silted up, the port of Steyning died and cheaper salt became available from the continent, and the community died out in 15th century. The church continued however, supported by local landowners, with new bells in the 16th century (still in place) and a fine new pulpit in the early 17th (again, still there).

Buncton was the smallest and least restored of the three churches – set in fields well off the road and with no obvious village community around it. The building incorporated some Roman tiles and some recycled masonry from the ancient priory which had stood nearby and may have been built as a chapel for the local priory (no trace of which remains) or for the old Manor House (which does still remain, with its mediaeval moat). Buncton was once thought to be closely linked with Ferring, because the Charter of 791 AD which gave a piece of woodland to support St Andrews Church was signed at ‘Biohchandoune’ but later research shows this was probably the name of a field in Durrington.

Bramble Cottage, Sea Lane

One of the oldest cottages in Ferring has been studied by architectural historian Annabelle Hughes. This article is adapted from a detailed report she made on the cottage earlier this year.

‘The cottage lies parallel to Sea Lane, orientated north/south, the roof gabled at each end with internal end [chimney] stacks. It is built in coursed flint with brick dressings, the flintwork on the front being nicely knapped. The roof is thatched, the front entrance is central. On each gable can be seen the bricks for the earlier roof line, which extended down over a single-storey outshoot along the western elevation. The outshoot is now double-storeyed, with a dormer.

After discussing the pattern of joisting, and other internal features, including the surviving bread oven, she comes to the following conclusions..

This cottage was built with end stacks heating two ground floor rooms, three first floor rooms of which one at least may have been heated from the beginning, and a single-storey outshot

with a catslide roof that contained the service rooms, such as scullery and pantry. The thatch would have been deeper [than now] and in the more traditional local style.

It is possible that the original first floor access stair was within the central bay, set back from the 'lobby' entrance. Alternatively it could have risen in the south-east corner. The ground floor rooms would have corresponded with kitchen and parlour, each with 'chambers' above, and there was also a 'chamber over the entry'.

There are some anomalies in the construction, most notably the style and scantling of the joisting to the first floor. It is more usual to find squared off timbers, the joists let into the girders. The knapped flintwork of the front façade could be either the original distinction of the 'public' face of the building, or a later 'face-lift'.

The most significant change has been the creation of an upper storey to the outshoot and the alteration of the roof pitch to accommodate this. When this was done, the thatch was still laid and tied in the traditional way. It is very likely that the first floor was re-joisted at the same time, which would account for the similarity between the rafters and joists, and the 'eccentric' style of the joisting.

From a sequence of ownership established from the court records, the cottage was built by 1657, but not earlier than 1635, and the construction would suggest a dating not long before 1657. The Hearth Tax of 1670 was on only two hearths, so either both those at first floor were later, or there was some miscalculation.

In the 18th century James Terry raised money by a mortgage to the Coates of Storrington, and when he defaulted, the property passed to Thomas Coates. This could suggest a period of poor maintenance, so that when Edward Coates inherited in 1754, he needed to invest in a major programme of repair and alteration. This is the most likely point in the sequence for the re-roofing and re-joisting, as it was divided into two occupations by 1839, and probably soon after 1806, and was not restored into one until c.1930.

Frank Leeson adds: 'The cottage was last re-thatched c.1972, by a Mr Jarvis. 'Magpies' house was built in the former garden and stables area of Bramble Cottage in 1993'.

Forthcoming Meetings – dates for your diary

Our next four meetings in the Village Hall (7pm) are as follows:

Friday 24 May: Kath Worvell – 'A Short History of Ferring' (*Kath will follow this with a guided walk round the old Village core, at 11 am on Sunday 2 June*).

Friday 16 August: (AGM and) 'The Port of Arundel' – by Rosemary Hagedorn

Friday 1 November: Cynthia Bacon: 'Glorious Goodwood – its Owners and Treasures'

Friday 7 February 2003: Caroline Adams on the Turnpike Movement in Sussex

ARTICLES WANTED

...for this *Newsletter*. Any member of the Group who would like to share a memory, or a discovery, or a point of view, on Ferring's past is warmly invited to contact the Editor, in good time before the next edition (November). Write it down in any format you like, and I'll be glad to adapt it as required to fit the *Newsletter's* style and the space available. – Ed Miller.

And a Layer Out ...

Have any of our members got the equipment and skill to make a better job of presenting this material? Any offers gratefully received.