

2001/2003: Another successful year for the Group

At the AGM in August, we took the decision to put the membership subscriptions on an annual basis, confident that we had now established ourselves as a continuing organisation with a lively membership and a full programme of meetings and other activities for the year ahead. It is good to report that the great majority of people who had joined us on the original single-subscription basis have taken forward their membership in this way.

Kath Worvell reminded the AGM of the various meetings, visits and walks the Group had enjoyed from September 2001 to date, and referred to the research undertaken by various members - some of which had been featured in a display at the Library, or appeared in the *Newsletter*. There was clearly no shortage of local material to investigate and publish, and plenty of speakers to give us a wider view - of county and regional history. Tony Hayes reported that there was a balance of £279 at 31 July - although there were a number of large bills to be paid. The new subscription will put us on a firm financial footing.

The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary were all re-elected, along with Committee Members Pat Attree, Joyce Cooper, Mavis Ibbett and Penny Maisey.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS***St Richard of Chichester***

April 2003 will mark the 750th anniversary of the death of St Richard. Original sources on his life are scarce but much has been compiled from the few extant documents. Since it is important to always relate any project to its historical background, it might prove useful to try to investigate the social conditions which gave rise to the published material - and of course, its motivation - and try to determine the probable basis for the written accounts relating in particular to Ferring. We do have one account of the 'Feeding of the 3000' here. With a population here at Domesday of 150 how can this be justified? Will be interesting to come up with some conclusions! *Any help in this please, to Kath Worvell 248694*

Ferring's Changing Coastline

This will be an attempt to correlate the published material and maps to try to gauge what dateable changes have taken place along our coastline - and for example, to postulate whether the River Arun really did flow out at Ferring in the distant past! Some early maps show intriguing Channel markings for the local area such as The Park (underwater now) off Selsey and the Oare Rocks - and were these a possible hazard to potential Viking invasion in the 10th century. Might be able to come up with some new hypotheses! *Any help to Kath, as above.*

THE SILENT LISTENER OF FERRING

Members may have seen a story recently in *The Argus*, about the discovery of a large and elaborate early-1940s radio aerial in the loft of a house in Sea Lane, and speculation that it had been used by a spy to send messages to the enemy. Ken Browne, who found the apparatus, has just joined the Group, and wanted to set the record straight.

'Nothing could be further from the truth', says Ken. 'It was indeed part of a war-time clandestine radio operation, but it was used for *listening* to the enemy secret services, not sending messages to them. It was part of the Radio Security Service, picking up coded enemy radio signals from within occupied Europe and passing them on to the code breakers at Bletchley Park. One of the staff of the museum there came down and identified the apparatus. He said that the occupant of my house would have been a 'Radio Ham' before the war and then been recruited as a Volunteer Interceptor or 'V.I.' when war broke out'.

Their original task was to listen out for unauthorised transmissions from this country and they had powers to enter premises where they might be coming from. Later they were used to listen to a certain range of enemy signals from within Europe. The purely military signals were intercepted by our own military intelligence services but the V.I.s were listening to messages from German and Italian intelligence and security services, including the Gestapo. The V.I.s had no idea what they were listening to – the messages were in code, the transcripts were posted off to Bletchley Park (via a PO Box No) and no information came back. But there is no doubt that the V.I.s made an important contribution to the ‘secret war’. The Official History Of British Intelligence in WW II says 268,00 messages from the Radio Security service were decrypted at Bletchley Park. These helped to break the Enigma ciphers and to reveal the innermost dealings of the German Secret Service.

The V.I.s worked in strict secrecy themselves, bound by the Official Secrets Act and were often given ‘cover’ appointments in the Royal Observer Corps or the Special Constabulary. The whole subject remained ‘Classified’ until 1979.

‘The V.I. working from my house’, says Ken Browne, ‘was presumably Mr Dyson-Gavard, who lived here from 1929 to 1945. The man from Bletchley Park would not confirm this (it is still an Official Secret). I found the wires leading from his aerials under a window seat. I wonder if he kept his set there, well out of sight? I have not been able to find out much about him – presumably he kept himself very much to himself. But I wonder if any History Group members have heard the name, and know anything about him?’

HOUSE FOR SALE

‘A Beautifully Designed Modern Country House, with Lounge Hall, Four Reception Rooms, Billiard Room, Twenty Bed and Dressing Rooms, Bath Room, Excellent Domestic Offices, Central Heating, Petrol Gas, Modern Drainage, Post Office Telephone, Private Water Supply. Well-Timbered Park and Beautiful Grounds, Tennis and Croquet Lawn, Orchard, Productive Kitchen Garden, Glasshouses., Home Dairy, Four Cottages, Nearly 25 Acres ...’

You could have had all this, and a 240 acre farm, eleven cottages and ‘ample farm buildings’ for just £27,000, if you had been at the auction for Ferring Grange on 24 May 1921 Mrs Henty, widow of Edwin Henty (1844 -1916) was selling up (in fact it was ‘bought in’ by Mrs Henty at that price, and sold privately several years later). The sale catalogue, now in the History Group’s archives, gives a fascinating picture of how the Henty family lived in the ‘golden age’. Each room and outbuilding is described in full and there are several photographs of the interior and the grounds which do not seem to have been reproduced elsewhere.

The catalogue tells us that Edwin Henty senior acquired the freehold of Ferring Grange and much of the farm land from the Bishop of Chichester (who had held it since before the Conquest) and the Church Estates Commissioners in 1864, and the house was probably built very soon after. We presume that it was built on or near the site of the old manor house Henty’s father had leased, along with the farm, in 1795 – but no trace of that earlier building has been found.

A visitor arriving there around 1900 would have been brought down Ferring Street, past the Lodge, along the ‘Gravelled Carriage Drive’ and deposited by the ‘Porch with stone arched doorway’ (still there), and brought through the ‘Entrance Lobby with mosaic floor’ into the ‘Beautiful Galleried Lounge Hall’. He may have been shown into the ‘Elegant Drawing Room’ and thence into the ‘Conservatory’ or into the ‘Library’. Later, he would eat in the ‘Comfortable Dining Room’ and might then be invited to the ‘Well-lighted Billiard Room’. He would sleep in one of the ‘Eight Principal Bed Rooms’, four of them with separate dressing rooms. There was only the one ‘Fitted Bath Room’, albeit one of some magnificence.

In the morning, perhaps he would go riding, taking a horse from ‘The Stables’, or even shooting, calling at the ‘Gun Room’ for his weapon. Otherwise he could go for a walk in ‘The Charming Old Grounds’, or ‘The Fine Old Park’. (The grounds were divided from the park by iron fencing; no doubt the iron gate recently removed from Malcolm Close was part of the fence – do any other pieces survive in the Grange Park area?). He could look at the ‘Well-sheltered Fish Pond, with an Island connected by a Wooden Bridge and a Boat-house on the banks’ (Little Paddocks pond today), or have a look at the ‘Double Vinery and Flower House’ or the ‘Well-stocked Orchard’.

And so on, and so on. All this required a substantial number of servants, gardeners, grooms and other staff. Their accommodation, equipment and work areas are all detailed too. There is quite an ‘Upstairs, Downstairs’ story here. *Would anyone like to borrow the catalogue and write some of it?*

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Sailing up to Arundel

‘The Port of Arundel’ from Norman times to the 1920s was the subject of the August meeting. There was a good attendance as Rosemary Hagedorn, a long-time resident of the town and vice-president of its museum, took the meeting through the story of the port which served the castle and the small market town for centuries, before it was superseded by the port of Littlehampton.

The Norman port was probably at Ford, she said, rather than Arundel town, because the tide only reached that far: a large spit seems to have lain across the mouth of the Arun, reducing the flow up-river. Erosion of this spit, and other natural and man-made changes to the river’s course, brought the tide further and further north. By the Tudor period enough water was coming to Arundel to establish the port there, and there is some evidence that a new channel was dug at this time, to bring the river right into the town: certainly the Town Quay dates from then. Exports at that time included timber, grain, cattle and horses; imports salt, fish, wine, oil, soap and other consumer goods.

The heyday of the port was from 1750 to 1850, with craft using the new network of canals as well as the coasting trade. Coal was the most important cargo in Victorian times, and in the period before the first world war, as many old photographs show, and the port was also an important shipbuilding and boatbuilding centre. The Nineveh Shipyards were dismantled within living memory.

All through this period, Littlehampton, the other ‘port of Arundel’ was gaining on its rival, and in the 1920s took over the Customs responsibilities. Some trade continued at Arundel but the building of the railway bridge at Ford, and its alterations in 1936, were the final blows. Only pleasure craft would now be able to make the eight mile journey up the Arun to Town Quay.

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Among the Stones

By Frank Leeson

*‘Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree’s shade
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap
Each in his narrow cell forever laid
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep’. (Gray)*

With the news in the Parish Magazine that the churchyard is now closed for full burials and that no marker stones will be permitted for new cremations we enter a sad new era in the history of family memorials. There will be a Book of Remembrance, of course, but this will probably, like most such books, be limited to names and date of death. This news comes unhappily at the same time as legislation is being proposed for the restriction of information on copy death certificates so that the cause of death and the address of the informant would not normally be shown.

It is therefore appropriate at this time to review what we already have in the way of historic information in the Ferring churchyard. The oldest tombstone outside the church is that of William Anscomb, dated 1718 with a skull and crossbones device. It is a few yards back from the right-hand side of the path as one enters the churchyard through the lychgate. On the other side of the path and nearer the church is a stone to John Tidy dated 1720, decorated with twin angels. This is a double stone and gives an unusual amount of information as it is also in memory of his daughter Ann, the wife of yeoman John Oliver who died in 1765.

Close to the path on the right, just beyond the lychgate, are the next two oldest stones - a crenellated one to Mary Worley, widow, aged 70, dated 1727, and a smaller but similar one to Thomas, the son of Thomas and Ann Worley who died in 1729 at the tender age of 5 years. Even inside the church there is only one surviving stone earlier than these; it is to be found on the floor at the west end of the north aisle - 'Here lieth ye body of John Snelling, deceased December ye 13th 1679 and in the 61 year of his age.' The parish register shows that he was not buried until the 9th of January following.

In 1790 'The Topographer' magazine reported that there was then a floorstone dated 1657 in Latin to Barbara the wife of Captain John Westbrook, who himself was buried beside her in 1666. This was the first (limited) listing of Ferring memorials and was followed in 1893 by a total survey by E H W Dunkin of those inside the church and some of the principal monuments in the churchyard.

When I finished a survey of the churchyard in 1992 there were 374 memorials shown on my plan, but even as I worked there was movement among the stones, at least eight disappearing, while since then, many more have been added. My survey, of which copies are held by the Vicar and the Ferring History Group library amongst others, does not therefore necessarily represent the position at the present time.

Most of the memorials to the families whose heads held the lease of the manor of West Ferring from the Bishop of Chichester, such as the Westbrook, Richardson and Henty families are to be found inside the church, but the Richardsons and Hentys are also represented in the churchyard, the former, in one case, by a large mid-Victorian altar tomb with fine carvings of arms on both ends near the north-west corner of the church.

As few, if any, of the Vicars of Ferring were natives of the parish it is not surprising that memorials to only three of them who were buried in either church or churchyard are, or were, still visible. Memorials to Rev. William Albright (1766) and Rev. James Penfold (1769) are in the church and Rev. Henry Dixon (1870), Vicar for nearly forty years, in the yard. The stone to the latter, in the south-east corner, shared with his wife, had in 1992 recently had a bonfire lit on top of it which had destroyed the part of the inscription (visible in 1893) devoted to him. The parish registers show that the burial rites of at least seven 16th and 17th century incumbents were conducted at the church but no memorials survive.

A curious feature of the churchyard is that in 1907 it was extended to the north on the east side of the lychgate by the incorporation of what had much earlier been the village pound and the demolition of two old cottages. The only remaining evidence of these is the standpipe that served them, bringing water from a pond formerly at the rear of what is now Greystoke Manor. The late Peter Tourle, then sexton, told me in 1992 that a skeleton was found under the kitchen floor of one cottage but too old, he said, to justify police investigation.

BUILDING FERRING IN THE 1920S

The Census taken on 19 June 1921 showed the population of Ferring to be 256, virtually the same as it had been all through the 19th Century and, no doubt, for many centuries before. The village consisted of a group of cottages around the church and Ferring Grange (built on the

site of the old manor house), a string of cottages along Sea Lane, south of East Ferring House, and a number of scattered farmhouses north of the railway with other cottages nearby for the agricultural labourers. By the 1931 Census, the population had more than trebled, at 795, most of South Ferring had been laid out with the roads we know today, and bungalows and houses had spread over what had been open fields.

What had precipitated this storm of development was the sale, of 'Ferring Grange and Home Farm' with its 266 acres. This was the core of the Henty family estate, and comprised the whole of the area south of the church, bordered by the Rife to the east and Sea Lane to the west, right down to the sea. The estate was first put up for sale at auction, on 24 May 1921, as a magnificent country house 'in the Elizabethan style' (although it was built in this form only in Victoria's reign) plus a working farm (mainly arable but with some cattle) but as the sale brochure points out *'With its extensive coast frontage of about half a mile and the long frontage to Sea Lane, the Estate offers considerable opportunity for development without interfering with the Residential attractions of The Grange'*. The auction was a failure and the estate was 'bought in' for £30,000. However, three years later it seems to have been sold in four or five large parcels to a number of local developers, including the tenant of Home Farm, Mr Smart, the Hon Lionel Guest, and Norman Draycott.

'The Grange' and its park remained as a central feature of Ferring for another 20 years. It was bought by the proprietor of a private school, which operated there briefly, then to Major McNab, who opened it as a hotel in 1927, then in 1930 or 1931, still as a hotel, to Col. Weekes. In 1946 the hotel burned down but was not entirely destroyed - part of the shell survived and was later converted to flats (now known as Phoenix House) - and houses were built in what is now Ferring Grange Gardens, Grange Close, and Grange Park Road.

Home Farm was soon broken up into building plots but the farm house remains (corner of Ferringham Lane and Brook Lane), as does a pair of its cottages 100 yards to the south. Other survivals include one large stone barn now occupied by Ferring Carpet Warehouse and another which became the 'Tudor Close' (the latter, despite claims of great antiquity, is unlikely to have been built before 1860). Among the first roads to be laid out were Ferringham Lane (following the an existing track from Home Farm to the fields in South Ferring, and turning into Horse Marsh Lane to reach the Rife), Ocean Drive (continuing the line of the main stretch of Ferringham Lane), South Drive and West Drive. This 'square' was completed by 1926. By 1931 Beehive Lane had been completed through to Sea Lane, but Telgarth Road and Florida Road stopped at Jersey Road; beyond that there were open fields.

The 'Building Plans Register' of the East Preston Rural District Council reveals the pattern and pace of development after the sale of Home Farm was completed in August 1923. The first applications were for houses in Sea Lane (in one application referred to as 'East Ferring Lane'), presumably because they did not involve laying out any new road. Then in 1925 there is the first mention of Ferringham Lane, where 'a brick house' was to be built. In the same year, Ocean Drive is shown on a building plan as a 'new road' where two houses are to be built, one for the Hon. Lionel Guest and one for Draycott. On both sides of the road the land is marked as 'cornfields'. Guest, who lived in 'Woogyi-tipi', Sea Lane, had another four houses built in Ocean Drive later that year.

West Drive is first mentioned in January 1926, when plans for a 'Timber Bungalow' were submitted. More substantial brick houses followed at the end of 1926 and into 1927. South Drive completed the rectangle, with several houses built in 1927. Then the builders started eating into the cornfields, with a plan for Ferring Close submitted in July 1927. Similarly on the other side of Ocean Drive, a road was driven through to Sea Lane (and named 'Beehive Lane') with the first timber bungalows built in 1927 and 1928.

Further north in Sea Lane another road was laid out, a cul-de sac running westwards into the fields – Park Drive. The original plans were rejected because of inadequate width but a slightly wider version was accepted in 1926.

Apart from these ‘estate’ roads and their bungalows and modest houses, a number of large houses with long drives now started to appear – drives that are now familiar names like Greenways Crescent, Elverlands Close and St Malo Close. The 1927 ‘Worthing and District Blue Book’ lists some of the new proprietors – Maj. Charles Draycott in ‘Greenways’, the Hon Lionel Guest in ‘Wookyi-Tipi’, Norman Draycott in ‘Little Paddocks’. Milbury House was built in 1927/28 for the actor Raymond Massey.

North Ferring was completely undeveloped in the mid-1920s. Mrs Henty still owned 275 acres – nearly all of the land north of the church and up to Highdown Hill – in 1928, and this remained as arable, meadow, or market gardens. But the writing was on the wall. Some small plots had already been sold for building and after she died, her executors (members of her family, the Somersets) put it all up for auction, primarily as *‘exceptionally attractive freehold building land, ripe for development’*. The only farm shown on the catalogue was ‘Highdown Hill Farm’, tenanted by the Penfold Brothers. Hangleton Farm and Franklands Green Farm had been broken up into building plots. But even Highdown Hill Farm was offered with development potential: along with Highdown Hill and another adjacent field it was suggested for a Golf Course.

The land the other side of Highdown Hill, (North Down Farm and the woodlands to the Goring boundary) seems never to have been considered for development, and must have looked in the 1920s almost exactly the same as it looks today.*

Across the Rife

Richard Standing is the historian of East Preston and Kingston, and an honorary member of Ferring History Group. This piece is adapted from some notes he has given us on the links between those villages and our own.

Crossing Ferring Rife by either of the footbridges we find ourselves in Kingston parish and manor, some variation of the route being the ancient way between Ferring and Kingston, more direct than any road. A path to the north of Kingston continues through East Preston ending at its church, and is referred to as the Parson’s Way, from the time when the Vicar of Ferring officiated at East Preston.

The boundary between the two parishes is the centre of the Rife. However, up until the later years of the 20th century the boundary took a much more contorted line, which was inherited from the old route of the stream, as found in the Tithe Maps of circa 1840 and earlier. The course of the Rife was evidently smoothed out before the Second War, and at the same time provided with a straight culvert into the sea, whereas the natural outlet had been to the west. The old course is indicated on maps up to 1932 but a decade later and the present stream is shown on maps, but with the parish boundary unchanged as yet.

A late 18th century map has a delta mouth to the stream, which cannot be confirmed from the 1759 estate map. However, it is unlikely that the stream was embanked in the way it is today and the mouth might have changed over time. The whole of the brooks pastures no doubt flooded more regularly than can now be permitted.

There is some doubt about the antiquity of the name ‘Ferring Rife’. In Sussex style, the usual way was to refer to the stream and its tributaries as ‘The Brooks’. No particular name has been found in old maps or surveys, but there is an 1843 source in which the stream was called ‘Ferring Brook’, and this is more likely to be the old name of the rivulet.

Kingston has always, in known history, been a manor distinct from Ferring or East Preston. The

name does not appear in Domesday, not because the village did not exist, but because it was a subsidiary part of another manor or estate. Both Kingston and Wick, near Littlehampton, were probably parts of Lymminster estate until they were given to Tewkesbury Abbey in the 12th century. Kingston Village has long since disappeared but there are clues as to its location. Peak Lane is perhaps a gentrification of Pig Lane, as local people knew it fifty years ago, when all that was there were farm buildings and cottages. A century earlier and locals spoke of going “down street” reminiscent of the eighteenth century and earlier, when it was Kingston Street - with several farmsteads of the old village scattered along each side of it, as vouched for by surveys and maps.

The original route of the Street was directly north to join the present Kingston Lane west of Kingston Manor. This was no doubt too close to the house when it was enlarged in the mid 19th century and grounds to the south were set out as garden and park, thereby that part of the Street was abandoned and Kingston Lane laid out in its present course.

By that period the village was but a memory. Back in the 17th century rather under twenty households for the whole village, a population comparable with East Preston, were concentrated here and south towards the chapel. Their arable common fields surrounded them, at Undertown, East and West Fields, Mill and North Fields. But the reorganisation of the farms and the incursions of the sea swept all this away. Nature and the monopolistic Olliver family brought about the downfall of the village.

The parochial status of Kingston was always a contentious issue. It was considered to be a Free Chapel, and was not a mere chapelry within the parish of Ferring. The loss of its chapel building (to the sea) in the 17th century, with churchwardens no longer appointed, tended to reduce its status. But for Poor Law, highway, and other purposes it was certainly self-governing, and now has its own civil Parish Council. After 1913 it was detached from Ferring Prebend, and has since been an ecclesiastical parish in East Preston with Kingston Vicarage.

East Preston, on the other hand, has always been a separate parish, even when the vicar of Ferring officiated there. There is no authority for the name ‘Parsons Way’ being very old, but it was the most direct way from the centre of Ferring to East Preston, and between the churches. A “greenway” along this general course existed in the 17th century. Although now only a path, it would formerly have been used by horses and perhaps farm vehicles. The vicar and curates, as well as parishioners, walked and rode between the churches and the Vicarage, and this was a well-used route. Other paths at various times crossed from the central East Preston village to Kingston village, and from Parsons Way through to East Kingston, and so on to Ferring, but the northern path was the most direct between the churches.

East Kingston is not the name of a village but of the house at the eastern end of Kingston Lane. The name reflects the division of Kingston manor about 1810, when Samuel Henty acquired this half through marriage to an Olliver daughter. The house has three wings, the two larger and back-to-back wings dating from the 18th and 19th century, but the small south wing with its vernacular flintwork is earlier. ‘The Old Cottage’ is the only ancient dwelling nearby.

The farm attached to the manor house included the area of Kingston Gorse, and north to the manor boundary at Parson’s Way. This was true for the 17th and 18th centuries, but it is not possible to say how much of this comprised the demesne in earlier periods. Such little evidence as there is suggests its lands may have been partly dispersed amongst the common fields, and the central farm was of rather lesser extent.

Mr Candy built several of the farm cottages and houses around East Kingston House, early in the 20th century; Froyle Cottage was named after the village in Hampshire where he had previously lived. After a few years as the tenant, he became the owner of the farm in 1914, later selling part of it to Mr Peskett who then developed the Kingston Gorse estate.

West Kingston was never the name of a village either: it is the name of the estate developed in the 1930s in the western part of Kingston, owned by the Gordon family of Kingston Manor. George Olliver 1799-1861 largely rebuilt the small house that had been on the site since the middle of the previous century. His daughter Frances 1844-1933 was the last of the immediate family, having married Charles Gordon brother of the earl. Their son John was killed on active service in 1942 leaving a widow who died there in 1994.

Kingston Manor still survives, as a listed two storey house with a balustraded parapet, and rusticated rendering to the walls: on each side there are single storey wings with knapped flint panels, pilasters, and parapets.

By the road are the ruins of the gatehouse. This octagonal feature made few concessions to convenience, and those who lived there had only three small rooms, of the most extraordinary shapes. Hardly less daunting was Rose Cottage some distance north from there, where a shepherd lived in four tiny rooms.

The estate was first planned for Mrs Gordon in 1930 although a small attachment to Angmering-on-Sea had already been built at Golden Acre, with proposals for development that would have taken in most of her farm, excluding only those fields immediately surrounding the mansion and to the north. Peak Lane area and lands to southwest of East Kingston were all included. The southern part of Golden Avenue would have been a crescent taken off the west side of a main road south. Other roads ran north from Coastal Road on the east side of Peak Lane.

It was no doubt the intervention of War that curtailed development, after which local planning became more concerned about infilling between the villages. This has saved the Kingston Gap but very few other such green belts. The local plan of 1929 had indeed already called for protection of these belts so as to preserve the village communities.

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FERRING'S FARMS

From long before Domesday, right up to the early 1920s, Ferring was a farming village. Today only the farmland north of the Littlehampton Road and east of Sea Lane survives - the rest is buried under the housing developments of the mid-1920s, the 1930s and the 1950s/1960s. But even in that modern development there is plenty of evidence of the agricultural past.

'West Ferring'

Home Farm House and Home Farm Cottages point to what for most of the period must have been the largest of Ferring's farms – *Home Farm* as it came to be called eventually. When, in late Saxon and early Norman times 'the Bishop himself [held] Ferringe in demesne', with his plough teams and his meadows, this must have been the core of the manor's estate. The manor (of West Ferring) was rented out to a range of tenants and a 16th Century rental account shows Agnes Bytfield with a lease on a 'farme house' and the 'demesne of the Mannor of Ferring' which seems to comprise most of the land south and west of the church. In 1795 William Henty of Littlehampton bought the lease. His grandson Edwin bought up other adjacent land and by 1840 (as the tithe records show) he owned half the parish. At about this time he reorganised his holdings ('Ferring Farm') into a free-standing country house ('Ferring House', later 'Ferring Grange') and park, and two main farms - the 'Home Farm' of 135 acres, stretching down into South Ferring, let to William Marshall, and another farm based on Highdown.

Home Farm was mainly arable – wheat and barley, but with some meadow and pasture land along the Rife. Edwin Henty at various times let it to tenants or managed it through a Bailiff – neither of them necessarily lived at Home Farm House. In 1901 the Bailiff (and his six adult children) was living at ‘South View’ close by (presumably now demolished). The farm buildings would have included the barn now used by ‘Ferring Carpets & Interiors Ltd.’. In 1921 Home Farm, along with Ferring Grange, was offered at auction – as offering ‘considerable opportunity for development’. In fact, the estate was not sold until 1924 (in large parcels) but development got quickly under way and this western part of South Ferring was covered with houses by the end of the 1930s, although the Farm House, two cottages, survives, as does another group of Home Farm barns at the other end of Ferringham Way – now the ‘Tudor Close’ pub-restaurant.

Hangleton Farm was based on the farmhouse which still stands in Langbury Lane (now a pair of semi-detached houses ‘North Hangleton’ and ‘South Hangleton’). The Bennett family had the farm from the 17th century (at least) until the 1880s, when it was acquired by Edwin Henty. Ten years later Charles Lower was the tenant, and by 1907 he ran it principally as a poultry farm, and after the First World War as a market garden. After Mrs Henty died (1929), the farm was divided up into parcels for development, and sold in the second great auction of the Henty estate in 1930. Nearly all the houses of North Ferring stand on what was the farm land.

Highdown Hill Farm (previously *Upper Hangleton*) was on the other side of the Littlehampton Road, with the farmhouse (now ‘Highdown Cottage’ half-way up Hangleton Lane). Another branch of the Bennett family had the original farmhouse and a few acres in the 17th century but Edwin Henty acquired it in 1866 and added it to his ‘Highdown’ farm. The new unit was farmed by the Penfold family from that time, until Mrs Henty’s executors sold it as ‘Highdown Hill Farm’ (47 acres, arable) in the 1930 auction. It was bought along with the other 34 acres below Highdown Hill, and the hill itself (52 acres), for development into a Golf course. Such a development never took place, and the land has remained more or less agricultural (stables, nurseries, and a few other uses).

Beyond Highdown, there was *Northdown Farm*, one of the few corners of Ferring never owned by the Hentys. The freehold belonged to the Duke of Norfolk (in 1840) and was farmed by the Olliver family of East Preston. At this time the farm boundary was Potlands Lane, running, as it still does, down the north slope of Highdown. On the east side of the lane was a ‘coppice’ belonging to Henty and a few arable fields owned by David Lyon, an extension of his Goring estate. One of these fields was marked as ‘The North Downs’ on the 1621 map of the manor, but it was not part of Northdown Farm. The farm buildings still survive, on the west side of the lane, and the land is still used for agricultural purposes.

The last farm in ‘West Ferring’ was *Franklands Farm* lying behind what is now Franklands Green Cottage on the last bend before Ferring Street meets the Worthing-Littlehampton road. It took its name from one of the oldest families in Ferring (first mentioned in 1327). The family seems to have died out at the end of the 17th century and 100 years later the farm was owned by the Ingram family, who in 1845 sold it to the Hentys. The tenant from 1881 (at least) until 1906 was Reuben Meetens. It was probably always a small farm (20 acres in 1881) and when Meetens sold up in 1906 the stock comprised ‘a black cart mare, two cobs, 4 dairy cows, three shuts (i.e. pigs), 50 head of poultry’ and some arable and dairy equipment. The farm house seems to have been let separately, and the land sold long before the auction of the Hentys’ North Ferring estate in 1930.

‘East Ferring’

East Ferring had been separate from the manor of ‘West’ Ferring for many centuries, lying south and east of the site of East Ferring House. The Henty family eventually acquired the section between Jersey Road/Little Paddocks and Sea Lane and added it to Home Farm, but

the area between Sea lane and the Goring boundary remained outside their grasp, and in the Victorian period it consisted of two farms – ‘East Ferring Farm’ and ‘Manor Farm’, the farm houses and farm buildings practically back to back just off Sea Lane.

East Ferring Farm was the more northerly. We do not know much about its early history but John Cortis, from an old Ferring family (who owned East Ferring House), had sold the land to David Lyon in December 1838. Cortis was still occupying it in 1840. He is not in the census of 1841 but is shown farming 110 acres in 1851, and still farming in 1861. By 1871 his son, William Peter Cortis was farming it, as he was in 1881 (250 acres), 1891 and 1901. It is still shown as a farm in the 1932 OS map (and in the 1943 revision, although houses had been built just to the north). It is not clear how long farming continued, or whether it was amalgamated with Manor Farm before the area was developed for housing. ‘Ferring Past’ tells us the farmhouse was renamed ‘White House’ by 1914, sub-divided into flats in the 1950s and was demolished late 50s or early 60s, to be replaced by a house called ‘Derwent’. The junction of Sea Lane and Midhurst Drive now stands on the site.

As the name suggests, *Manor Farm* was the original demesne farm of the East Ferring Manor. William Watersfield owned it in 1635. His daughter Barbara married John Westbrooke and the farm descended through the Westbrooke and Richardson families. In 1840 it was owned by William Westbrook Richardson and occupied by a William Olliver, a farm of 69 acres, running down to the sea (all this from ‘Ferring Past’). The farmhouse was occupied by farm labourers (Bennetts) in the 1871-1901 censuses and was known as Manor House in 1901 and until it was demolished in c.1963. The lower sections of the walls are still visible in the undergrowth of the copse that is there now. An inventory of 1895 (WSRO) shows Manor Farm having been tenanted by William Barker. It includes 51 acres of wheat and 90 acres of oats. The livestock and ‘deadstock’ were sold in 1897 by his widow, together with that of Court Farm Goring.

PROGRAMME FOR 2003

Meetings

Our last meeting of 2002 is on Friday, 1 November, at 7.30pm with Cynthia Bacon giving a presentation on ‘**Glorious Goodwood – its owners and treasures**’.

Our quarterly meetings continue through 2003. All will start promptly at 7.30. The first is on 7 February with Caroline Adams from the West Sussex Record Office on ‘**The Turnpike Movement in Sussex**’, and on 9 May at 7.30pm one of our own members, ‘Adge’ Roberts, from East Preston will be giving us a presentation on ‘**The Arun-Wey Canal**’.

On 15 August we have Mark Nash, a descendant of John Nash, architect to George IV, on **Building the Brighton Pavilion** and on 7 November, Michael Smith on **Smuggling in Sussex**

Visits and walks

We enjoyed a number of outings in 2002 – our New Year Walk to Kingston, the Downland Churches, the Jubilee Walk around the village, and Littlehampton Museum. Kath Worvell will be leading the way again on 1 January 2003 and there will be at least one other local walk, in the summer. Car-sharing visits will be also be arranged, including possibly a return to Fishbourne Roman Palace, where new important new finds were reported in October.

Research

More and more of our members are exploring Ferring’s history at first hand – using the material in Worthing Library, the West Sussex Record Office or our own archives. This can be a matter of tracing the history of your house (using, for example, the Plans Registers of the old East Preston Rural District Council), following the movements of families in the successive census returns, documenting local trades and shops, or social organisations. Some

of this work is reported in the *Newsletter*, and some displayed from time to time in the Library.

Any member who would like any help to get started, or get further, on a project is warmly invited to get in touch with Kath Worvell, Frank Leeson or Ed Miller. You can borrow material from our archives or catch a lift with us one Friday, to the Record Office at Chichester.

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