

The Group goes into its Fifth year

At our AGM on 13 August, Kath Worvell was voted President of the Group in recognition of her many efforts as co-founder and stalwart organiser of many activities. The other officers continue as before, and Ron Winton has joined the Committee. The Group goes from strength to strength; we now have nearly 100 paid up members (and a few more who have forgotten to pay their £2) and we regularly get more than 40 people at our meetings. Our visits too have proved popular (especially our recent one to Castle Goring) and this Newsletter is widely read (including, via the internet, in Australia and Canada).

We are getting well-known in the village through our posters, press reports and events in which we participate. As I write this, we have a display in Ferring Library. But our wider contacts mean that we get enquiries and material from all over the country and overseas. Some of these contacts have joined the Group and are contributing articles.

What we still need though are local members who can share their research, or just their knowledge, with us. And for those members who have never done any work on local history before, but would like to have a go, there are many pieces of work to be done on the material we already have – hundreds of old press cuttings to sort, for example, and family trees to be worked out. Those of us who are doing already doing research will be delighted to hear from you, and help you get started.

This issue of the *Newsletter* publishes some of the work that has been done in the last few months. I hope you find it interesting; I would be glad to get any comments on it.

Timber-Framed Buildings in Sussex

Annabelle Hughes gave an excellent presentation to our August meeting, on the mediaeval and post-mediaeval buildings of the middle classes of the county. The nobility built their castles and mansions in stone, the farm labourers their shelters in wattle-and-daub or other simple materials but the standard construction for the tenant farmers and traders was the timber-framed house with the spaces of the framework filled with brick or flint. Hundreds of these houses survive, often much altered but unmistakeable to the trained eye, even when the beams have been covered up.

Oak was the indispensable timber, abundant in the Weald but less so in the downland and coastal plain. Roofing might be of thatch or Horsham stone: locally available materials prevailed because of the difficulty in transporting bulky goods over long distances. Nevertheless, the fact that most coastal or downland manors had 'outliers' or detached portions in the Weald (Ferring had a strip of land near Billingshurst, called Fure) meant that some importation was possible.

Annabelle said the standard design up to about 1520 was the large hall, open to the rafters, with a fire in the centre and smoke finding its way out through the eaves. After this date chimneys were installed, with floors to form a second tier of accommodation. The larger houses had three bays (between the main posts of the frame) and these later developed into separate rooms.

Dr Hughes illustrated her talk with photographs of and anecdotes about some of the hundreds she had studied, including many examples from the Billingshurst/Adversane area. Two of these at least had strong connections with Ferring – Ranfolds Farm (a Stephen Ringfold is mentioned in the Ferring and Fure ‘custumal’ that has survived from the 14th century, and Fewhurst in Fure).

Bring back the stocks?

by Ed Miller

Ferring, like most villages in the 17th Century, had its institutions for punishment. Purely civil transgressions, like failing to maintain fences, or keep ditches unblocked, were dealt with by ‘ameracements’ (fines) of the Manor Court. There are many references in the Court Rolls to un-neighbourly behaviour of this sort, dates being set for remedial action and relatively small sums being set as a penalty (or ‘pain’) for default. Offences against decency, including laughing in church and - at one period - failing to attend church were dealt with by the ecclesiastical court (see Frank Leeson’s article, below). I have yet to research the work of the Justices of the Peace but serious offences like murder were dealt with by the judges at the Assizes, and the sentence of imprisonment or death would have been carried out a long way from the village.

Minor physical punishments certainly were carried out in Ferring because we have a note in the Manor Court Roll of 13 April 1647 ‘*the whypping post and stokes to be in decay and the pound and wee desyer a day for the repare until the laste of May ..40s’ payn*’. Presumably these punishments would be ordered by the ecclesiastical (Archdeacon’s) court for minor offences against decency and public order. I have not yet found any case of any Ferring resident sentenced to be whipped or serve time on the stocks but there are an awful lot of records to go through.

Where were the whipping post and stocks? Probably close to the pound (the enclosure where stray animals (or those subject to legal proceedings) were detained), since they are mentioned together in the 1647 note. We know that the pound was in Church Lane, at the eastern end of the churchyard, until the early 19th century (when it was moved to what is now the electricity sub-station in Ferringham Lane). This would have been a logical place to carry out and witness a public punishment – there was no ‘village green’ at this time, and the centre of the village must have been the cross roads at what is now the junction of Ferring Street and Church Street. The other two arms of the cross were, of course, the Twitten leading to Goring and the road marked on the 1621 map running south, past the Manor House and down along the line of what is now Jersey Road. None of these roads would have been metalled.

Further researches will show whether there was any mention of the stocks after this date. The ‘decay’ of the stocks and whipping post were not mentioned in the Court Rolls for October 1647, so they were either repaired/renewed or, possibly, abandoned.

AGNES HENTY’S DIARY, 1867

Liz Agar e mails us from Melbourne, with another extract from a Victorian dairy:

My great grandmother Agnes Henty, daughter of Robert Henty and granddaughter of George Henty of Ferring, travelled to Sussex again in April–May 1867, this time with another of her sisters, Josephine (Joey). In 1867 the Robert Hentys were living at Rothley Temple in Leicestershire.

(More details about Agnes' immediate family were given in the May 2004 *Newsletter*.)

Agnes, aged 20, and Joey, aged 28, visited their uncle George Henty and family at Northlands near Chichester, then their cousin Laura at Patching, and their uncle Edwin Henty and family at Ferring. Uncle Edwin and Aunt Laura had four children. Laura Catherine (Laurie) born 1840, married to George Carling Joad; Maria (Tee) born 1841; Edwin (Ted) born 1844; and Arthur (Tot) born 1848.

At the beginning of this extract, the girls have just arrived from Chichester to stay with their cousin Laura Joad at Patching.

MAY

7 TUESDAY

Drove to Worthing A.M. Left Tot at the Bank where we saw Ted, went on the pier with Joey. Aunt Laura & Tee to lunch. Played croquet P.M. & went to the Rectory with Laurie. Mr & the Miss Tews [1] in the evening for a round game.

8 WEDNESDAY

Walked in Clapham Woods P.M with Laurie & Joey.
Dined at Ferring. Tot returned home.

9 THURSDAY

Drove to Goring Station to catch the early train for Brighton, with Laurie & Joey. Joined at the station by Aunt, Tee & Tot. Shopped a little & lunched at Aunt Anne's [2] with Joey & Tot, then on the esplanade & then on the pier with the whole party. Picked up Mr & Mrs Jo. Nottidge [3] at the station & brought them back to Patching. Mrs Tew called in the evening.

10 FRIDAY

To a pic-nic at Arundel with Joe & Laurie. Arrived about 1. Went to the Bank and saw Ted. Joined the Tom Olivers [4] & party in the Park; lunched about 2½ & strolled about until 5, when repaired to Highon Tower for tea, where we were detained an hour by a thunder storm.

11 SATURDAY

Cloudy & a high wind.

Capt Warren [5], Mr Tew, Mr Brandrette [6] & Miss Hargood [7] came to lunch. Uncle, Tee, Ted & Tot came P.M. & stayed to dinner. Had two sets of croquet; played two games with Capt Warren & Laurie against Uncle, Tee, Ted & Tot & Mrs Nottidge. Played speculation in the evening.

12 SUNDAY

Dull cloudy day.

To Clapham Ch. A.M. with the Nottidges, Laurie & Joe. To Patching P.M. with the home party. Mr Tew did duty both services. After P.M. Ch. walked with Joe to Highdown Hill where we met the Ferring people.

13 MONDAY

Drove to Worthing, P.M. with Laurie & Joey.
Played vint-et-un in the evening. Like the Nottidges very much.

14 TUESDAY

Left Patching, P.M. with regret. Drove to Ferring with Laurie. Found there a large party of Worthing folk. Played whist in the evening. Very cold.

15 WEDNESDAY

Drove to Worthing P.M. with Tee & Joey. Shopped; spoke to Miss Hargood & Miss Sweete & called on Mrs Warren & the Miss Chumlieghs [?]. Played cribbage with Tots in the evening. Very cold.

16 THURSDAY

Aunt Laura to Brighton. A.M.

To Patching P.M. with Tee & Joey to fetch her, calling at Angmering Rectory on the way. Saw Mrs Orme [8]. Played croquet with Tot. Danced a little in the evening.

17 FRIDAY

Miss Sweete came to lunch. Shot P.M. made 33 & played croquet. Much warmer. Played Tot at backgammon in the evening.

18 SATURDAY

To Worthing P.M. with Tee & Joey to shoot at the meeting. Scored 18! Spoke to Hargoods, Harrises, Laurie & Nottidges [9]. Papa came in the evening. Played croquet after dinner & bisque with Tot.

19 SUNDAY

To Ferring Ch. A.M. Mr Dixon officiated. Ditto P.M. Mr Waters read & Mr Dixon preached.

To Highdown Hill after P.M. Church with Joey, Ted & Tee in the [?].

20 MONDAY

Wet all the A.M. ~~Laurie, Mr Romball & Lord Gordon came~~ A.M., played croquet in the set with Papa, Tee, Tot, Uncle & Lord G. The two stayed to dinner. Played cards in the evening.

21 TUESDAY

Papa left P.M. Wet the whole day: not out. Danced a little while after tea.

22 WEDNESDAY

Windy, showery, very cold. To the first Croquet Meeting of the season in the Steine Gardens [10] P.M. with Tee & Joe. Played with Ted & Miss Hargood against Laurie, Miss Sweete & Capt Warren & won. Spoke to Miss Holmes [11] & H. Hargood. Went into the Brandrettes for tea.

23 THURSDAY

The Harris's, Mr Hargood, Mr Wood & a Miss Fraser & Miss Sweete, & Laurie came P.M. & stayed till 8½. Cold & windy. Played croquet with Mr Wood & Laurie against Tot, Tee & Miss Sweete, & won 2 games.

24 FRIDAY

Rose at 6¼ & went to the Dairy & the beach before breakfast, with Joe & Tot.

Mr Wood, Lord Bertrand Gordon [12] & the Joads came P.M. Played croquet against Mr Wood & George [13] with Ted & Lord B and won. Bitterly cold

wind, driven in twice by the rain. The Nottidges came to dinner; the boys also stayed.

25 SATURDAY

Uncle, Aunt, Tee & Tot to Chichester A.M. & Ted, as usual to Worthing: so had the morning alone. Packed & made ready, & left Ferring very regretfully by the 2.41 train. Saw Capt & Mrs Warren at the station at Worthing. Reached Norfolk Sq. about 4. A Mrs Marden called [14]. Walked on the cliff before tea & saw the Watts & Horatia.

[Agnes and Joey stayed at Aunt Anne's in Brighton until 6th June.

NOTES

1. Rev Edmund Tew, M.A. of Magdalen Hall Oxford, was Rector at Patching. (Kelly's Directory 1867)
2. Miss Ann(e) Henty, Robert Henty's sister, lived at 6 Norfolk Square, Brighton (Kelly's 1867 Directory)
3. George Joad's mother was Harriet Elizabeth Nottidge so perhaps these Nottidges were George's cousins.
4. Thomas Olliver Esq. was living at Courtland, Goring in 1867. (Kelly's Directory 1867)
5. A Capt. John S. Warren, JP, lived at Gloucester Lodge, Chapel Road, Worthing. (Kelly's Directory 1867)
6. Thos. Shaw Brandreth, Esq., JP, lived at 15 Steyne, Worthing (Kelly's Directory 1867)
7. Admiral William Harwood, JP, lived at 1 Liverpool Terrace, Worthing. (Kelly's Directory 1867)
8. The then incumbent of Angmering Parish was Rev. James B. Orme, M.A., of Brasenose College, Oxford (Kelly's Directory 1867).
9. George Joad's mother was Harriet Elizabeth Nottidge.
10. Steyne Gardens, Worthing.
11. A Miss Holmes lived at 8 Bath Place, Worthing. (Kelly's Directory 1867)
12. Third son of Charles Gordon, 10th Marquess of Huntly, born 24 Jul 1850, died Sydney Australia 10 Aug 1869.
13. Presumably George Carling Joad, Laurie's husband.
14. Rev. Owen Marden, LL.B. lived at 22 Norfolk Square (Kelly's 1867 Directory)

Liz would be delighted to hear from other FHG members with questions or comments on this material [I will be delighted to put you in contact. – Ed]

TEA AT CASTLE GORING

More than 30 members of the Group paid a visit to Castle Goring on 10 September, and were given a talk by the tenants, Mr and Mrs Collins, who run a language school there.

The building is well hidden by the trees on the south side of the A27 but a slip road (part of the old A27) brings you to the entrance – broad lawns, old oaks and the 'Gothic' façade of the Hall. One is immediately reminded of Arundel Castle, and this is probably no coincidence because Sir Bysshe Shelley, who had it built at the end of the 18th century, was closely connected with the Duke of Norfolk (and says, Mr Collins, probably got his baronetcy through the Duke's influence). But, of course, it is not a castle at all, only a stately home, and something of a 'folly' in that the other side of the house, the south side, is built in a completely different style – the Palladian or 'Buckingham Palace' style. Instead of turrets, narrow-arched windows and gargoyles we have pilasters, a terrace and Greek statuary.

The south front looks out over the Park, where sheep still graze and the landscaping looks pretty much as it did 200 years ago, judging by the earliest maps. The rendering is white-painted, and on the sunny day we had the house looked a picture. But, as Mr Collins told us, there were real problems in preserving and rehabilitating the interior

of Castle Goring. The house had been neglected since 1939, when it had been requisitioned by the War Department. Much damage had been inflicted over the next five years (and not by the Luftwaffe) and very little money had been spent on it until the Collins family took up the 'repairing lease' 20 years ago.

Now they had a mission to rescue the building and open it up for visiting, wedding receptions and other decorous entertainment. Our own visit and tea party was another step in this direction. We were to take our tea on the lawn but the weather was uncertain so we went into the house itself, and saw something of its Regency charm. It was a very pleasant afternoon.

We have since heard that Worthing Borough Council has taken up the issues raised in a recent report by English Heritage, the body that looks after our 'Listed' buildings. Two years ago English Heritage said Castle Goring was 'at risk' because of structural problems. Worthing BC has a responsibility to help secure it for the future, and has now carried out a comprehensive survey to see what needs to be done. This is perhaps not as difficult as finding the resources and the will to take the necessary action, but we live in hope. Castle Goring is an asset to our area and should be a major feature of interest on the southern border of the South Downs National Park.

The following extract from Sussex Worthies by M A Lower (published 1868) is of interest. He includes Percy Bysshe Shelley, reluctantly, condemning his atheism etc).

'..Timothy Shelley Esq (of Fen Place in Worth, an estate acquired by marriage from the old Surrey family of Bysshe) ... was born in 1700 and went to America where he m'arried Miss Plum of New York. His son Bysshe Shelley after a variety of singular adventures came to England, and seeking a wife, laid siege to the heart of a wealthy Sussex heiress Mary Catherine Michell of Horsham, whom he married after elopement within the 'rules' of the Fleet Prison. On the death of this lady he again sought for beauty and fortune and found them in the person of Miss Sydney Perry of Penshurst, one of the greatest heiresses of Kent with whom too he eloped and was married.....

In 1806 Mr Bysshe Shelley, through the interest of the Duke of Norfolk, obtained a baronetcy, but he was a man of eccentric habits which were scarcely compatible with such rank. Though he built Castle-Goring a mansion half-Gothic half-Palladian, at a cost it is said of £80,000, he was in many respects a miser, and spent the last twenty years of his life in a small cottage on the banks of the Adur near Horsham. It is fair to his memory to conclude that he was slightly insane, since after his death bank-notes to the value of £10,000 were found secreted in his room between the leaves of books, in the folds of a sofa or sown up in the lining of his dressing-gown.

The Michell estates descended to his son Sir Timothy Shelley the father of the poet ..'

Along the tow path

History Group members, along with members of Chichester societies, took part in a guided walk on 16 October, along the Barnham – Ford section of the old Portsmouth to Arun Canal. Our guide was , 'Adge' Roberts, who had given us an illustrated talk on the subject in May last year.

Adge reminded us of the origin of the canal (a safe waterway to London during the Napoleonic Wars), and the commercial disaster it turned out to be (never carrying a fraction of the freight envisaged). The amount of work required on the Barnham – Ford section alone was prodigious, involving much excavation, embankment, culverting of streams and provision of ‘accommodation’ bridges to allow footpaths and farm tracks to pass over it. All this, of course was done with picks, shovels and wheelbarrows.

We had a bright sunny morning for our walk – a beautiful mid-autumn day, with house martins still flying overhead. The water in the canal on this stretch had long ago dried up or drained away but the canal bed was clearly visible for most of the four-mile stretch. The old tow path formed the modern footpath and the revetments of many of the old swing bridges, and some of the pivots and bearings, were still to be seen – many of them excavated and restored by the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society.

Any reader who does not feel up to a four mile walk can get a good impression of the character of the old canal by looking at the one brick-arch bridge which remains, very well preserved, at Drove Lane, Yapton, just off the B2233.

The Man who built The Poplars

by Ishbell Beatty

My great-uncle **Christopher Payton** played a small part in the development of Ferring, as I discovered from researching my mother’s family.

In 1929 he was living at ‘The Poplars’, the large house at the end of a long drive off Ocean Drive, with his wife and daughter. He shortly acquired the adjoining poultry farm, which became, in turn, a camp-site for holiday-makers and then a group of chalet-style bungalows around a central green. He remained in business for some years as an estate agent and small builder, erecting the houses at Little Paddocks also. After his death in 1949, his daughter Vera continued to run the Poplars estate Company. She died in 1992, and the family are all buried in St Andrews Churchyard.

Christopher Payton was one of eight children of a small grocer in South London (my grandfather was another), and he worked for a while in his father’s business. He married in 1911 and then served in the Army in the First World War. His only child was born in Brighton in 1919, where Christopher had become an orchestral musician. In 1922 he began conducting the West Pier Orchestra, hyphenating his middle and last names as Harman-Payton. The Brighton Herald carried admiring notices of his ‘attractive and well-varied programmes’ of orchestral music with noted soloists. He also accompanied public dancing during the winter seasons, and for two years spent summers at Colwyn Bay, conducting the municipal orchestra there. The autumn season found another conductor in charge the West Pier, and Christopher told a colleague in later years that he had suffered a nervous breakdown. At one time he played the organ at Angmering Church.

Another member of the Payton household was Robert Hall (1878-1955). He had been a wartime comrade of Christopher’s and a schoolmaster, who gave lessons to Vera in her early years. He may have had local connections.

I would welcome any information about this family and the running of the Poplar's Estate. I know little about Vera, but some of her wartime correspondence has come to me. At age 20 she helped at a Red Cross Canteen (the Alpha Canteen – was this in Worthing?) and served in the WAAF from 1942 to 1946, mostly at a local unit. After her parents' deaths she travelled widely at home and abroad with a touring caravan.
Ishbel lives in Bedfordshire but can be contacted via Ed Miller)

The King's day out

The Tower of London was not only a fortress, and a prison, but also housed the royal collection of exotic animals. James I took a particular interest in the lions, as this extract from a contemporary 'History of England' (owned by one of our members) shows. (Punctuation modernised)

This spring of the year the Kinge builded a wall, and filled up with earth all that part of the mote, or ditch, round about the west sid of the Lions den, and appointed a drawing partition to be made towards the south part thereof, the one part thereof to serve for the breeding Lionesse when she shall have whelps and the other part thereof, for a walke for other Lyons. The Kinge caused also three trap doores to be made in the wall of the Lyons' den, for the Lyons to goe into their walke, at the pleasure of their keeper, whiche walke shall be maintained and kept for especiall place to baight the Lyons with Dogges, Beares, Bulles, Bores etc.

Munday the third of June [1604], in the afternoone, his Maiestie being accompanied with the Duke of Lenox, the Earles of Worcester, Pembroke, Southampton, Suffolk, Devonshire, Salisbury and Montgomery, and the Lord Hoskin, Captayne of his highnesse garde, with many knights and Gentlemen of name, came to the Lyons' Tower and for that time was placed over the platforme of the Lyons, because as yet the two galleries were not builded, the one of them for the king and great Lords, and the other for special personages.

The Kinge being placed as aforesaid commanded master Raph Gyll, keeper of the Lyons, that his servants should put forth into the walke the male and female breeders, but the Lyons would not goe out, by any ordinary meanes that could be used, neither would they come neere the trap door until they were forced out with burning linkes, and when they came downe in to the walke they were both amazed, and stood looking about them & gazing up into the ayre. Then was there two rackes of mutton throwne unto them, which they did presently eat. Then was there a lusty live Cocke cast unto them, which they presently killed and sucked his blood; then was there another live Cocke cast unto them which they likewise killed but suckt not his blood.

After that, the kinge caused a live Lambe to be easily let down unto them, by a rope, & being come to the ground, the Lambe lay upon his knees, and both the Lyons stoode in their former places and only beheld the Lamb. But presently the Lambe rose up and went unto the Lyons, who very gently looked upon him and smelled on him, without signe of further hurt. Then the Lambe was very softly drawn up againe in as good plight as hee was let down.

Then they caused those Lyons to be put into their denne, and another male Lyon only to be put forth and two lusty mastiffs, at a doore, to be let into him. And they flew fiercely at him and perceiving the Lyons necke to be defended with hayre, as there they could not hurt him, fought onely to bite him by the face, and did so. Then there was a third Dogge let in, as fierce as

the fiercest one of them, a brended Dogge, tooke the Lyon by the face and turned him upon his backe. But the Lyon spoyled them all. The best Dogge dyed the next daye.

Field Names of Ferring

The survey of 1837, made for the new system of tithe payments reveals a great deal about the land use and social structure of Ferring at that time: this has been well analysed by Richard Standing in his booklet *The Great Tithe*. Frank Leeson has traced the field boundaries onto a modern street map of Ferring and it is remarkable how the lay-out of the estates of the 1920s and 1930s was influenced by the old field boundaries. This article looks at some of the field names listed in the Tithe Survey and what they might tell us about the earlier history of the village. Many of them must have remained unchanged for generations, and some appear on the 1621 plan of West Ferring Manor (Randall's map).

Many of the names are simple enough and refer to the size or shape of the field (The Nine Acres, the Twelve Acres, Long Mead); others to their location (Sea Field, Pond Field, North Barn Field). But even the location names yield valuable information. Street Field lay either side of the path from Church Lane to Sea lane; 'Street' suggests the importance of this route, which, of course, continued to Goring. Hovel Field and Pond Field east of Sea Lane point to features which have since disappeared.

Names referring to function are, again, mainly straight forward – Common Meadow (and various other Meadows and Meads), Orchard Field, Lucerne Field, Horsemarch Lane (now Ferringham Way and Ferringham Lane past the Tudor Close) but others are more mysterious (was Sawpit Field really used for timber preparation? Why 'Gun' Field, or 'Pen Piece' Croft?).

Names relating to ownership have mostly lost their significance. We know about the Franklin family of Franklins Croft (they go back to the 14th Century) and several others - and Vicarage Croft and Glebe Field are obvious enough but we do not know the identities of Kent, Kendall, Pledge, Saunders, Stopper, Mitchell, Greatman and several others whose names are attached to various fields and crofts and meads. What *is* significant is the references to various 'Common' fields and meadows – one where Lansdowne Nursery now stands, one around Meadow Way, and the largest around Clover Way and Brook Lane. By 1837 these were all in private ownership, but still mainly subdivided into narrow holdings reflecting the mediaeval strip farming on arable land or common grazing on the meadows.

Other names are more mysterious – Court Field, The Butts, Scotch Dyke Field, Mulberry Bank and Watch House, The Chantry, Old Ground, and Newfoundland Field. The Court Field was immediately south of 'Ferring House', the old manor house, and was shown as such on the 1621 plan. Could this refer to the Manor Court? The Butts may have referred to archery practice but no other references to bows and arrows have been found in the archives (it may simply have meant the 'butt end' of the parish, on the Goring border). Scotch Dyke was earlier given as 'Scott's Dyke' and may well refer to a drainage ditch on Mr Scott's land. Mulberry Bank was 'Milbarrowe Field' in 1621 and may refer to a Mill on an embankment of some kind, the Watch House perhaps refers to a Customs or Coastguard installation, or a look-out

for invading Frenchmen (nothing is marked on the 19th Century maps but this might have been the spot where 'Ferring Beacons' (marked on the Armada map of 1587).

The Chantry (where the Post Office now stands) is presumably Thomas Watersfield's 'Chantry Land' mentioned in the 1635 Glebe Terrier. At one time it would have been used to support a Chantry – a chapel, or the regular prayers said in it for the dead. Newfoundland Field almost certainly has nothing to do with Canada: this was 14 acres of arable land at the back of Highdown Hill, possibly newly ploughed when it was named. Perhaps most mysterious is 'Old Ground', where Ferring Nurseries stands today. Next to it, right on the Kingston border is Hog Trough Acre (whose meaning is clear enough) but why 'Old' and how old?

At the Archdeacon's Court

by Frank Leeson

Among the ecclesiastical records at the Chichester Record Office are those of the Instance Courts for the Archdeaconry of Chichester and the various Bishop's Deaneries and Peculiars. These correspond, for religious matters, to those of the civil courts of the Assizes. Instance causes were chiefly conducted in writing and at great length and were entered under court days in the Instance Books, so that to discover the end of a particular cause it is necessary to follow it through the book. However, the evidence itself was recorded separately in Deposition Books and there are series of these for each of the above jurisdictions.

The largest collection of Deposition Books is the 22 volumes for the Archdeaconry itself, covering the periods 1556 to 1641 and 1661 to 1694, and we are fortunate in that some years ago a team of volunteers calendared them in four typescript volumes, extracting briefly the nature of each cause (adultery, bastardy, laughing in church, fighting in the churchyard etc.) and listing the parties concerned plus the witnesses. In addition to their names and occupations, the latter were obliged to give age, birthplace, and places and periods of residence throughout their lives, and these invaluable details have all been included by the volunteers.

I found that card indexes of names and places for parts only of these calendars are filed in cabinets at the West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) but include little of the above information, which amounts indeed to the mini-biographies of hundreds of ordinary people (and sometimes gentry and clergy) living in West Sussex in the 16th and 17th centuries, some of whom even were born in the 1400s. This is a period when parish registers are often found wanting so, several months ago I decided to extract the details of the deponents into a computer database for possible eventual publication on CD. So far, I have covered the calendars for five of the 22 volumes, listing 548 entries between 1556 and 1588.

We have to thank Richard Standing, the East Preston historian, for pointing us in the direction of this valuable family history source and Clare Snoad, the IT expert at WSRO, for setting up the database, first in Microsoft Word and then in Excel and dealing patiently with the numerous problems involved in the transfer (for instance, Excel interpreted all source references in Word which comprised figures only with oblique strokes dividing volume and folio references as months and days!).

Unfortunately, there are only a few cases where the main parties are from Ferring, although a fair number of deponents so far listed are or have been residents of the parish . [Editor's note: The Ferring parties include Henry Wells (1574 case), John Godman, John Capon, John Watersfield, Christopher Watersfield (1584 case), Alice Wilkins, Mary Bennett (1637), Thomas Drewett (1638), Mr Cutter (Vicar), Thomas Sumner, Richard Spring (1692).]

THE WESTBROOKS AND THE RICHARDSONS

by Ed Miller

There are several monuments in Ferring Parish Church to the Westbrook family, and to their relatives by marriage, the Richardsons. Who, exactly were they, and when did they own the Manor House and East Ferring House?

John Westbrook married Barbara Watersfield (daughter of William Watersfield) at Ferring in 1637. There was a large Westbrook family in Godalming at this time and he may have taken her back there to live: certainly their oldest son William Westbrook was born there in 1638. There is only one mention of Westbrook in the Ferring Court Rolls of this period (1646, and that obscure) and we know that his youngest son, Richard, was also born at Godalming, in 1651. Evidently there were other sons because on Richard's memorial tablet the Latin indicates that he was the *youngest* son of John Westbrook. John Westbrook is described there as 'Armiger' or 'Gentleman'. He was buried at Ferring in 1666, named as *Captaine* John Westbrook, but whether this was an Army or Naval rank, we do not know. His wife was buried in Ferring in 1657, and a floor-stone was on view in the church in 1790 was inscribed for her with an additional dedication to John.

His eldest son William was well established in Ferring in the 1670s, and may already have had the lease of the Manor Place and its estates. A copy of a lease of 1682 survives showing William having surrendered an existing lease to the Bishop and being granted another, on the lives of his brother Richard and two of William's daughters. He was involved in other local estates too. In 1671, at the age of 39, he was the Steward of the Manor of East Preston & Kingston. In 1679 he was the Steward of the Manor of East Angmering. Finally in 1700 he became Steward of Ferring Manor, as well as lessee of the Manor Place and its demesne, and remained so until his death in 1702, aged 64.

By this time his brother Richard was dead, unmarried. His memorial tablet in the church refers to him as a merchant, who had been Consul at Cyprus for some 20 years. William renewed the lease after Richard's death, substituting a younger daughter, Phoebe (born 1681), as the third 'life'. Presumably the eldest daughter, Mary, took out a new lease on William's death but there is no record of it – only a lease of 1714 apparently renewing an earlier lease on the death of one of the lives. William had married Elizabeth Houghton in 1663 (in London, but there is a Memorandum to that effect in the Ferring register). She died in 1694 and the memorial stone in Ferring church to them both bears an inscription in Latin that it had been placed there by their 'weeping daughters'.

The Richardson connection

Of these daughters, Mary died unmarried in 1736, Elizabeth married Thomas Andrews and died in or shortly before 1732, Phoebe's fate is unknown but another daughter, Barbara, born 1667 married John Minshull. It was their daughter Elizabeth

Minshull who married Joseph Richardson, and produced a son who took the name of William Westbrook Richardson in honour of his grandmother and great-grandfather.

Mary Westbrook made Elizabeth Minshull her heir, implying that Barbara (Westbrook) had predeceased her. Mary was only the lessee of Ferring Manor and the lease passed out of the family on her death but the Westbrook family actually *owned* most of East Ferring (not East Ferring House, but Manor Farm and the best part of 80 acres across towards Goring and down to the sea.either side of what is now Sea This had come to them from the Watersfield family, who dominated the village in the hundred years before the Civil War, William Watersfield's daughter Barbara having married John Westbrook in 1637, the property would have been inherited by their son William Westbrook and passed via his daughter Barbara (or possibly Mary) to Elizabeth Minshull, thence to her son William Westbrook Richardson (died 1771), his son William Richardson (died 1801), and finally to his cousin, another William Westbrook Richardson. The Richardsons were based in Goring and Findon and rented out their land in Ferring but they must have had some emotional connection with the village. The elder WWR is buried in the church under a monument now hidden by the organ). The younger WWR (1788-1871) is buried in the big brown tomb just outside the church door.

FOUND ANYTHING?

Have you dug anything up in your garden that might be part of Ferring's history? One of our members, Gina Peckam, is a keen digger and showed me some of the pieces she has dug up in her Ansisters Road garden. There were shells – this is some way from the beach - sheep bones (it must be a long time since sheep grazed there), some pottery and some other material that was difficult to identify. She took some of it to Worthing Museum and showed it to Liz Wilson, the Finds Liaison Officer for the Sussex Archaeological Society.

The most interesting item in Gina's collection did not come from her garden but had been in her house for years. I thought it was a section of an old water-pipe but Liz Wilson immediately identified it as the neck of a 2000 year-old amphora (storage vessel) from the Mediterranean.

Local finds are invaluable to local historians. If you have dug up anything old or mysterious do let us know or go straight to Liz Wilson on 01273 405731.

December Social and our 2005 Programme

Our last meeting of 2004 will be a Christmas Social. We had a very enjoyable evening last year and this time there will be more food, more drinks and more entertainment. This will include a light-hearted quiz on Ferring's history and out-of-the-way places. If you can come with a bit of costume or props with some historical flavour, so much the better. Just turn up on Friday 10 December, by all means, but let one of the Committees know by 1 December if you can, so we can do some sensible catering.

Dates for 2005 are :

11 February 2005: Alan Redman on **World War II in Sussex**

13 May 2005: Peter Hill on **The Windmills of Sussex**

19 August 2005: (speaker to be confirmed) on **The Royal Pavilion, Brighton**

11 November 2005: Ann Wise on **A History of Worthing**

9 December 2005: Lizzie and David Gilks with **Below Stairs**