

EXCAVATIONS AT TITNORE LANE

Preliminary work has begun for the new St Barnabas hostel, just north of Northbrook College in Titnore Lane. Working closely with West Sussex County Council, trial investigations on the site have revealed Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman remains, which will be excavated by archaeologists before building work begins. The 12 week archaeological survey started at the beginning of August and it is hoped that there will be opportunities for the local community to meet the archaeologists and view the finds from the site. [We shall organise a visit for the History Group.]

Phil Emery, associate archaeologist at environmental consultants Gifford, said: 'This is a rare site at the foot of the South Downs on the Coastal Plain - a tract of prehistoric landscape characterised by shifting settlement. Unlike sites on top of the Downs which are readily visible, those on the Coastal Plain tend to be concealed and protected by a blanket of accumulated sediment. Our task is to ensure that the investigations are scientifically rigorous, accessible to the public, and undertaken efficiently, allowing St Barnabas and the project team to start the construction phase on schedule.'

Finds so far include a Roman copper-alloy brooch pin and spring, a 2nd Century AD Roman terra cotta bowl, and a bronze ring which dates from either the end of the Bronze Age or the early Romano-British period. These are no doubt linked to the finds at Northbrook College itself, during its construction in the 1970s when post holes of Iron Age huts and remains of Roman buildings (possibly a villa) were found. Meanwhile, back across the border in Ferring, one of the fields just below Highdown, which must have similar archaeology, has been saved (at least temporarily) from development. At the beginning of this year, the owner of the Equestrian Centre in Hangleton Lane started digging up the field for a new complex of buildings just north of the Vineyard. No planning permission had been applied for and Arun District Council issued a 'stop notice'. As this *Newsletter* goes to press we are still waiting for the Council's decision on the application that was subsequently submitted.

This Issue

Regular readers will have noted that the May issue did not appear. The *Newsletter* will from now on be an annual publication, unless there is a flood of contributions- Ed

Our December Social Meeting

Please book early for our end of year social meeting. The usual buffet, raffle and good company, with this year a presentation on 'The History of Punch and Judy' by Trevor Jennings, followed by the usual scenes of domestic violence and retribution. Saturday 6 December 2008, at 7.30pm in the Club Room of the Village Hall. Tickets £7 each.

CHURCH VISIT

The Group put on an extra event in September – a visit to the oldest building in Ferring (by a good 500 years), St Andrew's Church. Group member Canon Paul Simmonds welcomed everyone and talked about the religious history and architecture

of the church, followed by Ed Miller on the social history and the tombs and monuments.

Paul began with the Saxons (although there were Christians among the Romans, there was no organised church in Britain); with Augustine in Kent, and Wilfrid in Sussex in the 7th Century, and the grant of the territory of Ferring for building a 'monasterium' in 765. A further grant in 791 refers specifically to 'the church of St Andrew in Ferring' and there is good reason to think this was a wooden church on the same site as the present (mainly Norman) building. He traced the changes in the form of Christian worship over the succeeding centuries in the various additions and alterations to the building and its furnishings.

Ed talked about the importance of the church in the social life of the village – the services being the only time when the whole village got together, and the various civil and secular purposes it served. Baptisms, weddings and burials were important civil functions; from 1601 the parish administered the Poor Law; in the 19th Century it took on education. Some of these responsibilities continued until 1894, when the District Councils and Parish Councils (initially just a Parish Meeting in Ferring) were set up. Paul continued with the more modern history of the building and worship and Ed pointed out the tombs and monuments of the dominant families in the village – the Westbrooks and the Snellings of the 17th Century, the Richardsons of the 18th, the Hentys of the 19th, as well as the monuments to the two dominant Kingston families – the Ollivers and the Gordons (reminding us that St Andrews served Kingston too).

The afternoon ended with some very pleasant tea and biscuits in the Church Centre.
(Ed's notes on the social role of the church and details of the memorials are available to anyone who might like copies)

WORTHING'S MUNICIPAL ORCHESTRA 1926-1978 by Joan Quarry

The opening of the Pier Pavilion in 1926 saw the Borough presenting a 'Municipal Orchestra' of seven members under the first Director of Music Joseph Shadwick. The group became an octet in 1928, and in 1935 Herbert Lodge took over as director. His popularity countered threats to disband the orchestra and he stimulated musical interest with symphony concerts at the newly opened Assembly Hall. In 1937 both Sir Henry Wood and Sir Thomas Beecham accepted his invitation to conduct there. At the beginning of the war Lodge left the town, and from 1940-45 served with ENSA.

On Sunday 29th November 1942, as a fifteen-year-old, I was escorted to the Assembly Hall by my first boyfriend. This was a 'GO-TO-IT Brighter Black-Out' concert, including melody, novelty and entertainment. There were ten assorted instrumentalists, with Tom Priddy as Director of Music, and including one woman, Gloria Britt, as 1st violin.

The programme (which I still have) is interesting in that it reflects the general mood of a war-time audience.

1. Overture - Morning, Noon and Night
2. Suite - Peer Gynt
3. Song - The Pipes of Pan (Ethel Bowton)
4. Selection - The Dancing Years (by request)
5. OUR GUEST ARTIST

6. Tom's Episode - In a Toy Shop
INTERVAL
7. The Municipal Dance Orchestra
8. Song - The Reason (Ethel Bowton)
9. OUR GUEST ARTIST will again oblige
10. Finale - The Bing Boys are Here
GOD SAVE THE KING

Prices ranged from 'Reserved' two shillings and a shilling, 'Unreserved' sixpence (inc. tax). You could, if so inclined, take out a monthly season ticket for three shillings or a 3-monthly one for 7/6. On the reverse of my programme there was a notice about the Red Cross and St. John Prisoners of War Appeal for the following week. This included a Huge Bring & Buy Sale, a Mammoth Bridge Whist Drive and a Grand Dance on the Friday. Saturday was Flag Day. Needless to say, all these events took place in the Assembly Hall as the Pier Pavilion had been closed for the duration.

I have many happy memories of our orchestra. I don't recollect Gloria Britt but Harold Macpherson on violin and saxophone could always raise a laugh. And then there was Verdi Shaw on the drums. As his name implies, Verdi was born into a musical family and he was a well-liked figure at the back of the orchestra. At a concert just after the war Verdi was the soloist in a drum spectacular of sorts, and, the tale goes that, in practising most of the previous night, his efforts rattled around the Assembly Hall with such gusto that he was heard out in the street too.

In 1945 Herbert Lodge applied to return to Worthing but was refused in favour of Alan Crooks. Crooks served briefly before Lodge was re-engaged in 1946. The Municipal Orchestra now entered its heyday. It consisted of 12 players and gave regular Sunday concerts as well as numerous other engagements. Herbert Lodge finally retired in 1954. Writing to the Herald, he said that because of a nervous complaint which had been aggravated by recent anxieties his public appearances after retirement would be few.

By 1968 the winds of change were taking effect and a new era began for the orchestra. Jan Cervenke took the octet to local schools to attract young people and in 1971 the first 'Sunday Symphony' was presented at the Assembly Hall. I can remember going to one of the Sunday concerts at the Pavilion with my father in the mid-sixties, but larger orchestras and T.V. were now the norm and sadly the octet sounded rather thin. I never went again.

The writing was on the wall, and in 1976 the orchestra was voted out by 16 to 10 in the council chamber. The final performance for the seven members was its usual 'Music at Three' session at the Pavilion in September 1978. Following this, Worthing's Municipal Orchestra — the last survivor of its kind in England - was disbanded, 52 years after its formation.

ANGMERING TO POLING

A dozen members, a few 'guests', and a dog assembled for our New Year Walk from Angmering village green across some very muddy fields to Poling Church. We began with a diversion, walking past The Lamb, a fine 18th Century inn and back up through Church Lane to St Margaret's, taking in the fine range of old cottages 'Baker's Row'.

From there we walked along Rectory Lane, just north of the Church and onto The Thatchway, and then onto the footpath. The Church was virtually rebuilt in Victorian times but is of Norman origin – the old school house, now the Library, was rebuilt at the same time. The Thatchway runs along the edge of Old Place Farm before turning south, and at that point we joined the footpath across the fields.

‘Old Place’ was the original manor house for West Angmering, and was superseded by ‘New Place’, a mile to the north, built by the Palmer family in Tudor times. All that can be seen from the lane is a cluster of not-very-old farm buildings. We walked on westwards and soon came to the site of Angmering’s Roman Villa (or rather the larger of its two Roman villas). I had not done this walk before and asked our Chairman, ‘Adge’ if there was anything at all to mark the site. ‘Only’, he said, ‘when the field is not covered with crops and it has been raining. Then you can sometimes see pieces of Roman roof-tile’. Conditions were just right because we saw dozens of pieces of red clay tiles, washed clean by the overnight rain.

The villa was partially excavated in the 1930s and seems to have been at least as large as the one at Bignor (the one associated with the bath house on Highdown Hill must have been a much more modest affair). This one was on the banks of a waterway which is now just a stream (The Black Ditch) but was evidently then part of a broad estuary of the Arun.

Crossing the ditch on the footbridge, we came into Poling parish – where the mud was even worse – and walked along the track to the Church. This is a much older building than St Margaret’s, Angmering, and has been little altered in modern times. The nave is thought to be Saxon, and the rest of the building Norman. Among the headstones in the churchyard is one for Colin Cowdrey, former England cricket captain, whose second marriage was to one of the Duke of Norfolk’s daughters. They lived in Angmering Park. Ian Nairn in *The Buildings of England: Sussex* described Poling in 1965 as ‘A good place to see what the Sussex Coastal Plain was like before the 20th Century got there’, and it has not changed much since then.

An interesting walk, full of history, but best done on a dry day!

CHANCEL REPAIRS

by Ed Miller

Two Ferring residents have told me recently about an obscure point that has been raised by the purchasers’ solicitors when they have sold their house – the liability of the purchaser to pay charges for Chancel repairs, and the payment the vendor must make (£100 - £150) to cover the cost of an indemnity against any charges. What, they asked me, was the historical basis of such a liability?

The chancel is the east end of the church, where the altar stands and was, before the Reformation at least, very much the precinct of the clergy; the nave is the middle and west end where the congregation assembled. In the middle ages the upkeep of the two parts of the building were financed separately – the chancel being the responsibility of the Rector, the rest of the building (and the churchyard) the responsibility of the parishioners. In general, both responsibilities were taken over by the churchwardens several centuries ago. However, it is argued that, in some cases, the owners of the land that once belonged to the Rector could still be subject to a levy for chancel repairs. How might this apply to Ferring? Not at all, as we shall see below.

The Rector was, historically, the director or governor of the parish – the Vicar was only his agent or deputy (the Latin word ‘vicarius’ means ‘standing in the place of’). The Rector would usually be the governor of several parishes: he took the majority of the tithes and often owned land in the parishes (the ‘rectorial glebe’). He was of course a clergyman but he often rented out his ‘estate’ (tithes plus glebe) to a lay person. In Ferring, the Rector was a Canon at Chichester Cathedral, known as the Prebendary, and the rectory estate was known as the Prebend. The lay person to whom he leased the Prebend was known as the Impropriator – and we know that one of these Impropriators was, in 1571, reported by the churchwardens for failing to put right the dilapidated state of the chancel (the obligation seeming to go with the lease).

This was Richard Shelley, who lived in Lewes. The churchwardens reported him again in 1573 and said they had reported it every year for the previous six years and nothing had been done. We know the names of several other Impropriators in the 16th and 17th Centuries but there is no other record of any claim for repairs. In 1724 the churchwardens reported that ‘the chancel is repaired by Mr Mose the Impropriator & is in good condition excepting one Wall that is a little foul & the floor sunk in one Place’.

By the end of 18th Century the lease of the Prebend was being sold together with the lease of the Manor House and its demesne, and the last Impropriator was Edwin Henty. In 1840 the Rectorial Glebe consisted of five acres around what is now Middle and West Onslow Close, one and a half acres north of Downview Avenue, and nearly one and a half acres (including what is now known as The Old Flint House) up Church Lane, where the old ‘Mansion’, or ‘Parsonage’, owned by the Rector had stood in the previous century.

It was still standing in 1828, when George Henty’s lease of the Prebend Estate was drawn up. The tithes and the property were specified, with an obligation to keep the property in good repair *and also to keep the Chancels of Ferring and Preston churches in good repair*. By the time of the 1837 Tithe Survey the Mansion house had gone, leaving only the Parsonage Barn and the cottage which is now known as The Old Flint House.

George Henty died the next year and his son Edwin took over the lease. In 1859 the Church Commissioners sold him the freehold of this land and buildings: the conveyance noted that the Prebend had been declared vacant in 1841. In 1874 they also sold him the ‘freehold’ of the right to the income from the rent charges to which the old Rectorial tithes had been converted in 1840. If any obligation for chancel repairs continued it would have been attached to the ownership of this rectorial glebe land – less than eight acres out of some 950 acres in the parish.

Payment of tithes (since 1840, in the form of rent charges) was abolished altogether in 1936 but some theoretical liability for chancel repairs continued. These were all reassessed after the War and in 1947 an ‘Ascertainment’ for Ferring recorded that the only liability remaining was on the property marked 127 on the plan [the Ordnance Survey map] – which turns out to be those one and a half acres around The Old Flint House. The theoretical liability seems to be for under 10 per cent of the cost of repairs.

However, when this Record of Ascertainment was sent to the Vicar of Ferring: the Church Commissioners said in a covering letter dated 5 July 1948, '*The Church Commissioners .. regard themselves as solely liable to repair the chancel notwithstanding ... the apportionment of the liability as set out in the Record*', which, they said, was '*therefore only of a formal nature*'.

It is therefore absolutely clear that no one in Ferring is, or ever will be, liable for chancel repairs. Anyone who needs a copy of the 1948 letter should get in touch.

OLD PORTSMOUTH DOCKYARD

Mike Ross entertained a large audience at our 9 May meeting, with his story, and comprehensive model, of the Royal Navy Dockyard at Portsmouth. Mike was one of those enthusiasts for his subject who spoke without notes but held the audience in his grip all evening.

He started with a survey of the Dockyard as it was in July 1939 – as represented by his model: *HMS Hood* in port, along with *Rodney*, *Warspite*, *Royal Oak* and other battleships, cruisers (including *Belfast*, still afloat 69 years later) and various destroyers and small vessels, preparing for the war that broke out three months later. He then went back to the early days – the almost-landlocked harbour and the safe anchorage at Spithead appealed to the Saxons, the Normans and the Plantagenets but the first serious construction was ordered by Henry VII. His son, Henry VIII, was the first to order purpose-built warships and the modern Navy was under way. These larger ships needed special docks for supply and repair and 'Number 1 basin' was started in 1660.

Later innovations like iron hulls and steam enabled ships to become bigger and bigger, with new requirements for docking and repairs, and the Dockyard was extended in the 18th and 19th Centuries. The biggest innovation perhaps was the *Dreadnought*, a huge, all big-gun battleship completed in 1906. It required a new, equally huge, dry dock, the spoil from which was used to build up 'Whale Island', the RN Gunnery School.

In its heyday, the 1920s and 1930s Portsmouth was the home of the large, 'blue water' navy, and its ships played a decisive role in the Battle of the Atlantic, the sinking of the *Bismarck* and the invasion of Normandy. The navy of today is much smaller, and Portsmouth is no longer a dockyard but it is still our largest Naval Base, and it has preserved a good deal of its 17th and 18th Century buildings and other installations - an excellent day out for anyone interested in our local and national history.

Mike Ross was thanked for a talk of great interest and stirring spirit.

WORTHING BETWEEN THE WARS

A family chronicle by Caroline Carta
I must admit to a great interest in family and local history and mine began in Worthing in the Britain of many years ago. My grandmother, Elizabeth, retired to Worthing from rural Buckinghamshire between the two world wars. Worthing was considered to be a very respectable but inexpensive place to live. She hoped to be nearer her son Reg, who was in the Royal Navy and was moving between postings in Navy towns like Portsmouth, Plymouth, Ipswich and Chatham.

My grandmother married in 1870. She was considered fairly old as a bride for Victorian times, being well into her twenties. Her husband Charles was an auctioneer and farmer in Buckinghamshire and they had five children. Unfortunately, two of them died - one on either side of my father Reg. This was not unusual for Victorian times but did rather isolate him from his older brother Harold and his sister Edith. Brother Harold went to Kenya to work in Nairobi. Edith married and went to live in Hertfordshire. Women usually led a very domestic life close to their husbands and Edith certainly never had a job outside the family apart from voluntary church work. She did not have a vote for many years to come. Many people were educated in the UK and then went to live and work abroad in the British Empire a powerful and stable unit throughout the world at the time.

Reg visited his mother regularly in her small house in Worthing where she lived very quietly with her maid, a young girl of about 15 years of age. Many children then left school at 14 and domestic service was a large area of employment. Elderly ladies taught these young inexperienced girls straight from school like Agatha Christie's Miss Marple. Later they would move on to grander establishments while the old ladies had to start all over again with their training schemes. I remember playing with the maid in the kitchen where visiting children like us were sent to keep noise levels down.

My father, Reg, was bought up on a farm in Buckinghamshire, so it is really unusual that he made his career as a sailor. He was born in 1888 and eventually went to train at Guy's Hospital in London. The family farm had been divided by the coming of the railways, as the line ran through the farmland. There was no chance for him to make a successful living with the remaining land and the difficult economic conditions in farming at the time with foreign competition. A family friend had suggested dentistry and offered a partnership after he had trained at Guy's Hospital, so off he went to London. However, by the time he had trained as a dental surgeon, Reg, hoped to stay on at Guy's Hospital and become a doctor as well, as was the new trend. However by 1914 the First World War had started and there was a great call for all young bachelors to join up. It was quite overwhelming. Posters everywhere proclaimed, "We Need You", "We want You in the Armed Forces". No proud young man could resist and Reg enlisted.

Reg was directed to the Royal Navy, a very large element in the struggle against Germany. He spent the war years on the flagship *HMS Thunderer* and became a Surgeon Commander. With the terrible losses during the war the crews of the ships became very close and many firm friendships were made. You never knew when or where you would see your pals again. Horrible memories never went away. I recall my father sitting his three children in front of him with his illustrated history book of the war years telling us again and again, "We must never have another war. This one was named 'The war to end all wars'".

It was a very hard life for most people after the war and Worthing did not escape. The men in the forces came home but many could not find any work. There was very little money available in allowances from the Government. Often families had lost the breadwinner. Women had worked in the men's places during the war years but now they were expected to give up their jobs and incomes to the returning men. This rankled and led to unrest. Young women no longer wanted the once inevitable domestic work although, in gratitude for war work; voting was gradually introduced for women. It was hard for families too. The wage for many workers was thirty shillings a week, £1.50 today. It is difficult today to understand the pre-war value of money. Fortunately cheap food came in from the Empire but it was a tough struggle

and severe poverty was endured everywhere. Navy ratings had minimal child allowances and were in despair.

This lack of cash had a knock-on effect, and life in Worthing and elsewhere was very slow in comparison to the wild spending today. Reg and his 11 associates were asked to stay on in the Navy and they all promised to stick together, but by the 1930's, due to Government cuts in the forces, only one remained- the other 11 were retired to civilian life. This meant you were on the Reserve List to respond instantly, whatever your circumstances, in the event of another war. A friend of Reg's set up a private practice in London but times were hard in the 1930s — his patients forgot their bills and in the end he committed suicide because of his debts, realising that not everyone like him believed in payment for an honest day's work.

Reg continued to visit his mother regularly as she lingered in old age in Worthing. It was the usual practice to have a companion and, as today, there were many abuses in the system. Old ladies were targeted as they had some capital and did not want to be a burden to their families. One day Reg called and found his mother unhappy but her companion never left her side and kept her hand on Elizabeth's shoulder. Reg decided to stay and found her companion was diverting the housekeeping money to her own pocket, keeping Elizabeth on short rations and preventing her complaining to anyone else. How many others shared the same fate in retirement towns like Worthing without the help of a devoted Reg?

War soon came around again in 1939. Reg was summarily recalled several times before the war. On the Reserve List, you had to drop everything and report in a few hours to the shore establishment. Reg's mother died and he transferred to mainly Hampshire land bases because of his age. He worked hard for King and Country and once more retired. . He was due for an operation but the Navy was only interested in those fit for the next war. It was postponed for nine years, before he found a place in the Masons Hospital. A doctor murmured he had waited too long and would be dead in 6 months. And he was. We lost our contact with Worthing until now and I am happy to find it again living close to old memories.

A WALK TO GORING

Our August Bank holiday walk this year was to Goring Hall. About a dozen of us met at Ferring Village Hall. We waited ten minutes for the rain to stop and, led by Keith and Sue Richards, walked down Ferring Street to the old heart of the village and then left into Little Twitten, across to Sea Lane. This footpath, which continues through the houses north of Midhurst Drive, was known in the 1920s and 1930s as 'The Bull Path', because it led to the Bull Inn at Goring. We turned right at Sea Lane and took the more modern path to Goring – the Ilex Way, laid out as a carriage drive from Goring Hall soon after that house was built in 1840.

We turned off just past the Hall into Aldsworth Avenue but Ilex Way continues, as another carriage drive, to Goring Church. Turning right again into a short footpath we crossed the third avenue of trees – this one enclosing a footpath down to the sea – The Plantation. This brought us to the back of Goring Hall.

Keith Richard explained that this was the centre of the very large estate, mainly in Goring but partly in Ferring, bought by David Lyon in 1838 from the Richardson family, out of the fortune he had made in Jamaica. The house was built in 1840 but burned down in 1888, while the family were at church, and was replaced by an exact copy (but without the stucco) almost immediately. In 1938 it was taken over by a

boys' school, and after that closed in the 1980s it lay derelict for some years before being taken over by the private hospital which it houses today.

We walked back across the fields south of Ilex Way, past the little copse which, with its little pond, marks the parish boundary, and along an old flint wall which marks a field boundary, and out onto the lovely footpath beside Sea Lane (created by the County Council in 1937) and back up to Little Twitten and St Andrew's Church. A very pleasant stroll, as promised; the sky cleared and it did not start raining again until we all got home.

GEORGE HENTY - Ferring Dynast

by Ed Miller

Four generations of Hentys lived in Ferring Grange and were the dominant family in Ferring for 140 years. The first was William, described in 1790 as 'an opulent farmer of Little Hampton', who took the lease from the Shelley family in 1786 and then a lease direct from the Bishop of Chichester in 1795. By this time William was 64 (an old man in those days) and in the same year he leased it to his eldest son George, also giving him all the hay, livestock and farm equipment. William died the next year, leaving all his other property in Ferring to George and his property in Littlehampton to his younger son, Thomas (who later emigrated with his family to Australia). It was George who built up the Henty fortune in England, and the family estate in Ferring. William's estate at death was worth less than £1,000; George's was worth well over £36,000 when he died 33 years later, and he had twelve children.

George was baptised in Littlehampton in 1766 and presumably lived with his parents in Ferring for some years before his marriage in 1790. He married Anne Penfold, the daughter of the vicar (part of another landowning Ferring family), in something of a hurry, in June that year and the first child was born six months later. Over the next 30 years he acquired many other properties in Ferring, as copyhold land and cottages became available. But this may not have been the source of his great wealth. In 1818 he was described as 'Banker and Landowner', and in his will of 1829 he refers to his 'brewhouses', which he had bought some years earlier..

The Henty Bank seems to have been the Worthing bank, commonly known as Henty, Henty & Hopkins. This Bank was founded in 1808; Mr Margesson of Offington, George Henty of Ferring, his brother Thomas Henty who lived at Tarring, and a Mr Hopkins being the first partners. It was carried on until it was sold to the Capital and Counties Bank in 1896, at which time it had branches at Horsham, Crawley, Steyning, Storrington, Arundel and Littlehampton. Capital and Counties Bank merged with Lloyds Bank in 1918.

Twice the Bank suffered robbery; in 1826 money which was being sent to London by the Worthing and London coach was stolen and in 1840 the Horsham branch was robbed. With regard to the former theft a letter, dated September, 23, 1826, was sent by post to Mr James Henty and read as follows:-

" SIR, - the Party that Robbed the Coach of your Parcel is Richard Collard and the two Brothers Names Nightingales and Wm. Welch and Richard Childs and Collard is the man that Sit with the coachman and if they are taken the Coachman will now him and the other Partys as well and you are sure to gett your money Off them if they are taken but you must Keep their Names as Private as Possible or Else they will gett out of Reach and be sure to

keep there Names Private and ask Ellis if he dont now them but not show him this letter. I remain, a Friend."

The Brewery was based in Westgate, Chichester. There is a plan of it dated 1800 in the West Sussex Record Office. It merged with the Constable Brewery of Arundel and Littlehampton in 1921, and then was taken over by Watneys in 1954. As well as brewing the beer, the company came to own a large number of pubs, including 'The New Inn' (after 1928, the Henty Arms) in Ferring.

George and Ann Henty had five sons and seven daughters, born between 1790 and 1811. The eldest son, William, lived to a good age and died in York; The next son, James, became a mine owner and a stockbroker (and was the father of the Victorian author of boys' stories, G A Henty); the next was George, who became a Town Commissioner in Worthing; then Edwin, who inherited the Ferring estate; the youngest was Robert, who is the great-great-grandfather of Ferring History Group member Liz Agar in Melbourne. Two of the daughters (Elizabeth, Louisa, Jane, Harriot, Anne , Amelia and Charlotte) died as infants, and another at age 17. The rest reached adulthood and moved away. (*Genealogical information courtesy of Liz*).

George was convicted, but ultimately acquitted, of smuggling in 1818. I have written about the case in an earlier *Newsletter*: it involved the landing of casks of gin at the end of Sea Lane. The evidence was confused and mainly rested on the testimony of two informers who were subsequently convicted of perjury. The incident cannot have been a complete invention (some of the witnesses admitted to being involved in an incident the following evening) but it seems very unlikely that George, described in the proceedings as a Banker, and obviously a wealthy man, would be tempted into this sort of crime. A large number of people in Ferring did not believe it in any case and subscribed to the large trophy vase, congratulating him on his acquittal, now in Worthing Museum.

George's will, made shortly before he died in 1829, ran into 15 pages; carefully disposing of his property and his money so as to provide for his widow (who lived another three years) and his children. It certainly provided well for Edwin, who many years later bought the freehold of the estate (and many other Ferring properties) from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

HOW WE LIVED THEN - Mediaeval buildings in Ferring

Local historian Mike Standing (co-author of *Ferring Past*) gave a detailed presentation to the Group on 15 August on the varieties of cottages and more substantial houses being built in Ferring in the Middle Ages, and how elements of them still survive in the some of the still-surviving buildings in the village.

The obvious characteristic, he said, was the fabric of the building – the flint which was available everywhere here (and could be lawfully taken from the beach as late as 1916): timber was not plentiful on the coastal plain, and brick was relatively expensive. Flint was difficult to bind with the lime cement of that age and the walls were kept low, the interior height being created by steep thatched roofs on 'pole' rafters, through which the smoke from the central hearth had to percolate.

None of these buildings had survived but the basic form – a ‘hall’ for general living and a ‘service’ room for food preparation and storage – did survive. In larger houses a third bay was included – a ‘chamber’ or principal bedroom. As buildings acquired flues and chimneys (perhaps at a time of ‘global cooling’) houses became larger still and made more use of an upper floor – for more bedrooms and storage areas. This layout of rooms survived well into the 18th Century, and is still visible in Ferring’s old cottages today.

Mike Standing said the evidence for this was not only in these cottage buildings but in the Probate Inventories of the 17th and 18th Centuries, which listed the contents of the houses of the deceased, room by room. From the names of the rooms, the order in which they were listed and the furniture and household effects found in them, it was possible to recognise development of and continuity with the mediaeval design. The ‘kitchen’, the ‘buttery’, the ‘brewhouse’ and the ‘cheesehouse’ all derived from the service room; the ‘parlour’ from the hall; and various descriptions of ‘chambers’ in larger houses named after the room below.

The 68 members and visitors present responded with great interest to this analysis of the living arrangements of Ferring residents of several centuries past. Earlier, in the Annual General Meeting, the Chairman looked back on a very successful year for the Group. Joyce Cooper, Adge Roberts, Ed Miller and Peter Bentley were re-elected as President, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

WILL POWER

by Ed Miller

Most of the wills left by Ferring residents in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries are very conventional in their bequests – mainly money left to immediate family members – but some of them show a definite quirkiness and determination on the part of the testator to have their own way.

One such is that of Mary Westbrooke, leaseholder of the Bishop’s Ferring estate and Lord of the Manor of East Ferring up to her death at the end of 1735. She had inherited these and other local properties from her father William Westbrooke, and must have been a woman of considerable wealth. She never married and it was not obvious who would inherit from her. None of her sisters was still alive when she wrote her will but she had a number of female cousins, nieces and great-nieces in whose lives she obviously took a close interest. Her bequests to them are carefully graduated.

She left £50 and ‘my snuff box inlayed with Mother of Pearl’, ‘my Suffay [sofa?] and fire screen of Blue and Silver Silk’ to her eldest sister’s daughter Barbara Johnson. Barbara’s daughter Mary £150 got at age 18, £350 at 21 and ‘my small silver hand candlestick’, and another daughter Barabara got £50 at age 18. Five female cousins and one of their daughters all got £20 each; another female cousin got ‘my strong box’ [presumably empty], another ‘my Ring with the Onyx stone in it’. Her youngest sister’s daughter, Mary Chowne, was to get £150 and ‘my Ring with the Coronet over and my Lady Derby’s hair in it.’ The Countess of Derby was to get a ring of 20 shillings value.

The main bequest was to her eldest sister’s daughter – Elizabeth Richardson. She was to get the lease of the Ferring estate, the Lordship of the East Ferring Manor and all her landed property in Ferring, Goring and other places in Sussex – which would have been worth many thousand pounds. But Elizabeth’s husband is obviously not to be trusted: the property is left in Trust for Elizabeth alone, and if he outlives her the

estate is to stay in Trust for her heirs. Mary Westbrooke seems to have had very little time for him – she wanted to be buried in St Andrew's Church (although she lived in Chichester for the last few years of her life) and charged Elizabeth with her funeral arrangements, specifying that there must be no 'intermeddling therein' by her husband.

The picture so far is of a rather mean-spirited woman but the will ends with an astonishingly generous bequest to her servant Jane Greest - £500 and all her linen, silver, pewter, china, clothing and other personal effects, including all her furniture 'except for my Sett of Chairs with the Yellow Sattin seats'. She also left £5 to each of her other servants, and £10 to the poor of Petworth, £10 to the poor of Ferring and £5 to the poor of Goring.

Did she have something against men? Possibly: all the bequests were to women. Was she settling some old scores with her extended family? Probably: she certainly used her will to do just what she wanted, from beyond the grave.

OUR PROGRAMME

Our programme for 2008/09 is as follows:

Meetings (all Fridays, at 7.30, in Ferring Village Hall):

7 November: **Suburban inter-war development in Sussex** by Geoff Mead

6 December: Christmas Social (including **The History of Punch and Judy**)

6 February: **A Wartime Worthing Diary** by Chris McCooey

8 May: **A History of Amberley** by Bob Hutchinson

21 August: **Archaeology in Shoreham** by Simon Stevens (AGM 7.15)

6 November: **The Royal Sussex Regiment in World War I** by Alan Readman

5 December: Christmas Social (presentation to be arranged)

Walks and Visits

The 'Worvell Walks' continue in 2009, organised now by Keith Richards. He writes, 'As usual we will be organising three walks throughout the year. This year for a trial we will not be having the walks on some Bank Holidays as it is felt that many people have other commitments on these days. So, we are to organise the walks as follows:-

Walk 1: Thursday 1st January 2009. The lower Rife, seafront to Patterson's Walk, Marine Drive and Manor Farm. Meet at 11.00, Brook Lane Workshop. 2hrs.

Walk 2: Sunday 10th May 2009 A pleasant flat walk from S Ferring along the greensward/beach to East Preston central area and return to central Ferring. Meet at the Blue Bird café at 11.00 Approx 2 hours.

Walk 3: This is to be arranged and advertised later and is to be held on Sunday 30th August 2009.

As usual all walks will be advertised on the two village notice boards (1; outside village hall 2; next to recycling compound.) two weeks before due date.

We would also like to run some coach trips to historic sites in Sussex. There is no shortage of interesting venues. Please look for notices or phone Ed Miller for details.

Research

Joyce Cooper is bringing her work on the history of Ferring families to a close. The material she has collected, over many years, will be passed to Worthing Local Studies Library for safe keeping.

The articles in our *Newsletter* are all the product of work done by our members, using local records. There is a great deal that can be done from home. Do contact one of the Committee if you would like to follow up your own interest in any Ferring subject.