

NEWSLETTER of the Ferring History Group Issue 19: November 2012

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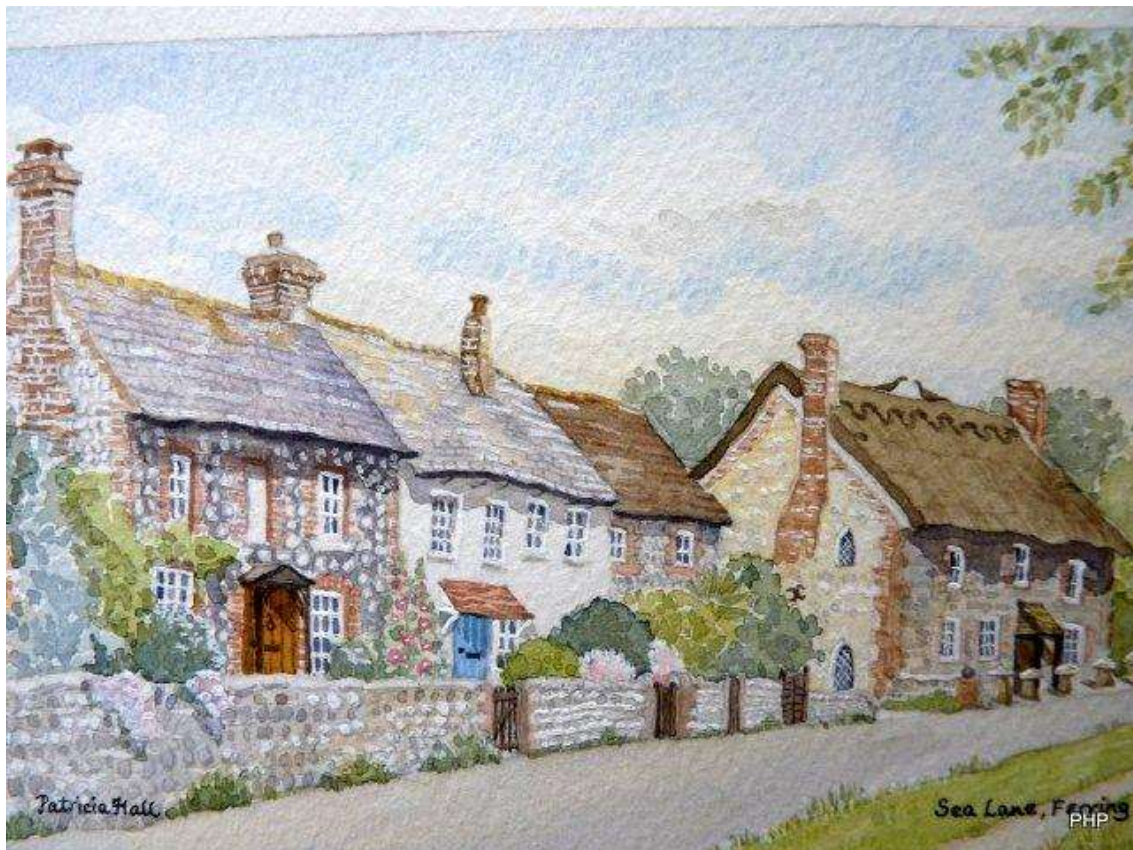
EDITORIAL

The History Group goes from strength to strength, with good, well-attended meetings in 2012, a new style Newsletter for this issue and a very good programme for 2013. Highlights include Tim Carroll, author of the recently published biography of Ferring's hero of two World Wars (reviewed inside), and a talk on Sussex VCs and GCs, by Tony Gledhill – himself a holder of the George Cross.

The change in the subscription arrangements may mean a smaller core membership but there is always a large audience for our talks. We welcome the interest Ferring residents (and others) show in what we present but I hope more *Newsletter* readers, the core membership, can make the Group even more of a success by doing some research on Ferring history, writing pieces for this Newsletter, or just suggesting topics for research, talks, walks visits and articles. Please speak to any Committee member for further encouragement.

THE COTTAGES IN SEA LANE

Between Sea Lane Gardens (South) and Beehive Lane is the group of four cottages in Patricia Hall's painting. Only one of them is more than 200 years old – and one was built only in 1993 - but they make a charming group.



What is now called 'Bramble Cottage' is certainly the oldest. On the north wall, a modern plaque says '1635'. The evidence for that date is indirect but it was certainly built by 1657, because the title can be traced back that far in the Manor Court documents. The architectural historian Annabelle Hughes wrote in 2001, 'The cottage was built with end stacks heating two ground floor rooms, three first floor rooms of which one at least may have been heated from the beginning, and a single-storey outshot with a catslide roof that contained the service rooms, such as scullery and pantry. The thatch would have been deeper [than now] and in the more traditional local style... It is built in coursed flint with brick dressings, the flintwork on the front being nicely knapped. On each gable can be seen the bricks for the earlier roof line, which extended down over a single-storey outshoot along the western elevation. ..The outshoot is now double-storeyed, with a dormer... The ground floor rooms would have corresponded with kitchen and parlour, each with 'chambers' [bedrooms] above, and there was also a 'chamber over the entry'.

It has had some alterations in the last 350 years. 'The most significant change has been the creation of an upper storey to the outshoot and the alteration of the roof pitch to accommodate this. At some stage, probably in the mid-C18th, it was converted into two cottages, for farm workers on Manor Farm, and it was still so divided in the 1911 census. For many years it was known as 'Stockers', from the family that held it from 1657 to 1705; in the 1841 - 1911 censuses it was not named. Its present name seems to date from around 1930, when it was converted back to a single cottage. It is a Grade II Listed building.

Next south is 'Magpies', built in the former garden and stables area of Bramble Cottage in 1993. This does not look like a modern in-fill: it was well-designed and finished to complement the terrace of three Victorian cottages immediately to the south – Fern Cottage, Myrtle (formerly Violet) Cottage and Random Harvest. These belonged to the Henty family (built probably in the 1840s) and were occupied by his workers on Home Farm. Random Harvest ('Fuller's Cottage' until 2000) must have been built a little later than the other two because Myrtle Cottage has a blocked-up window which looked south before Fuller's, with its different roof line, was built.

Thirty yards to the south stood Laburnum Cottages, demolished in the late 1950s for the construction of Sea Lane Gardens south (note survival of name in Laburnham Close, just to the west). The building was originally a long single house at right-angles to the road (*Ferring Past* identifies it with a C18th house called Sluggards) but later divided into two farm workers' cottages, probably by the Hentys who acquired it in 1803. It was sold, along with the rest of the Henty estate in South Ferring in 1924 and became the home of the Jenkins family, who ran their haulage business from the house and the field behind it until they sold the whole site for the Sea Lanes Gardens/Laburnham Close development. Shortly after that they moved their operation to the land at the end of Glenbarrie Way, which is still called Jenkins Yard, and itself constantly threatened with redevelopment for housing.

FERRING'S DEAD IN WORLD WAR I

Five Ferring residents were killed in the First World War. Their names are on the war memorial in strict alphabetical order: Bagot-Chester, Bennett, Hoare, Kilham, Winton. Their stories were researched by the late Kath Worvell (founder of Ferring History Group) and this article is largely a précis of what she wrote in 2000.

W G Bagot-Chester was the son of the Assistant Curate of Ferring, who lived in Elford House, Ferring Lane. He was a Regular Army officer, serving with the Indian Army from 1909 until the outbreak of war. In September 1915 he was Mentioned in Despatches for his bravery at the battle of Loos and in October 1916 his Gurkha battalion was transferred to Palestine to fight the Turks. The following year he was awarded the Military Cross for leading an attack on a Turkish outpost. Three weeks later he was badly wounded at Gaza and taken to Cairo 'by camel stretcher', for treatment. He returned to his unit in Palestine and, within two months he was badly wounded again and died that night. The official record says 'In the death of Capt. (acting Major) Bagot-Chester the battalion and the regiment lost an officer impossible to replace ... one of the very best regimental officers in the Indian Army.. The Gurkha ranks thought there was no one like him ..' Bagot-Chester's diary contains several poignant passages: he was a war hero but a very sensitive man. The entry for 5 February 1915 reads, 'I have had to endure the most frightful ordeal of shooting some of my own men for cowardice. Never do I want to command a firing party again. They died bravely and it will take me a long time to forget this morning's work'.

W A Bennett's background, service and death were quite different. He was also a Regular, but as a Corporal in the Royal Marines. His mother lived in Sea Lane. He was 38 when war broke out and was serving on an Armed Boarding Steamer, HMS Ramsey, patrolling off the east coast of Scotland. On 8 August 1915 the steamer encountered a German Minelayer and was sunk with all hands.

R A Hoare was different again: he volunteered in 1914 at the age of 19 and fought in the Rifle Brigade on the Western Front. His parents lived in the farm cottages in Langbury Lane and Reginald had worked as a Stable Boy at The Acre, Boundary Road, Worthing. He was Mentioned in Despatches for his conduct early on in the Somme campaign. That campaign lasted almost five months and cost 140,000 British and Dominion deaths. Reginald was one of them. His battalion was brought into the bloody battle for Delville Wood, which had changed hands several times. In a successful counter-attack on 1 September 1916, they suffered 32 dead, 167 wounded and 6 missing believed killed. Reg was one of the missing and his name is on the Thiepval Memorial to the 43,000 men of that campaign who had no known grave.

G Kilham was another volunteer, and another Rifleman. He was 24 in 1914 and died during the Second Ypres campaign, in April 1915. We know less about his death, only that it was in defending Hill 60. George Kilham was the oldest of four children, living in Franklands Cottages (now Jasmine and Clematis Cottages) in Ferring Lane.

J Winton also died at Hill 60, some three weeks after George Kilham. Hill 60 was fiercely contested because it overlooked the town of Ypres. John Winton's battalion, the 2nd East Yorkshire Rgt had just relieved another unit in the trenches there on 15 May. After 12 hours of intensive shell fire, Winton was one of two soldiers who was 'missing', presumed dead. His name is on the Menin Gate in Ypres, where 55,000 soldiers 'with no known grave' are commemorated. John Winton. It is not clear where in Ferring he was living in 1914 but the large family was living in Sea Lane in 1911. His father lived to 81 and gave an interview to the Worthing Herald in 1941, just before he died, including family stories about the smuggling his grandfather had done in the early 1800s.

HOME ON THE GRANGE

The May meeting had a presentation on Ferring Grange and the earlier buildings that had stood on this site at the heart of the village for a thousand years. What we see now is the remains of the Victorian mansion built by Edwin Henty, and largely destroyed in the fire of 1946, but there are records of the Manor House it replaced going back to the 16th Century. We even have a sketch of the house in an estate map of 1621.

The estate belonged to the Bishop of Chichester, and he was Lord of the Manor (this going back to the grant by the Saxon Earl for the building of a church-centre in 765), so the first house here was probably for the clergy, then for the Bishop's Steward who dealt with the administration of the Manor. No doubt the Bishop stayed there occasionally but Ferring was only one of his five manors and one of many parishes in the diocese.

By 1500 the Bishop had become an even more distant figure: two thirds of the manor was in the hands of hereditary tenants and the Bishop's own estate was leased out to a succession of 'yeoman' families – including the Woolvins and the Watersfields (their leases give some detail of the manor house that went with the farm). Parliament took it from the Bishop in 1643 (when bishops were abolished) and sold the freehold to Thomas Watersfield for £829. The manor house described in the 'sale catalogue' of 1647 is probably same one occupied by the leaseholders (and their tenants) from 1660 (when the Bishop recovered his freeholds) through to 1864 when the last of them, Edwin Henty, was able to take advantage of new legislation on ecclesiastical property and buy the freehold.

It was then that he rebuilt the old manor house as a country mansion fit for the successful banker, and landowner that he now was. His grandson died there in 1916 and his widow sold the house in 1924. It was briefly a school but by 1929 a flourishing hotel, and the second half of the presentation was well illustrated with the many photographs of it which survive.

HARD TIMES IN FERRING

Ferring has always been good farmland, Highdown for the sheep, along the Rife for dairy cattle and hay meadows and the area south of the Church for wheat and barley. It could easily support 30 or so families in the Middle Ages, pay its tithes, and provide a good surplus for its

landlord, the Bishop of Chichester. It was also usually able to pay the occasional taxes levied by the King. But there is evidence that times were occasionally very hard.

In 1340 the tax assessment for Ferring said that the 'jurors' who declared their liability to the 'Ninths' tax reported that '180 acres were fallow and uncultivated this year', and wanted an allowance of 4 pence an acre to be offset against the tax due from them. This would have been up to a third of the land that was normally planted with crops. The tax report says the 'ninths' of the grain crops are 'worth only £19 this year, and no more; that is the total'.

There is a similar report in the Manor accounts for 1429 (made that year to the Archbishop of Canterbury because there was no Bishop in post at Chichester). He says several farms or smallholdings do not have tenants this year, and the other tenants are asking for rent reductions. We have no population figures for the mediaeval period – there were no parish registers before 1558 – but it is likely that in those years, as in many others, the population fell because of plague. The Black Death peaked in 1370 but there were many recurrences.

From 1558 there is much better evidence. Comparing the numbers of baptisms and burials in each year gives a good indicator of prosperity and health. In that year there were 23 burials and 7 baptisms, compared with 15 burials and 24 baptisms the following year. The worst years from this point of view were 1678, with 12 burials and only 1 baptism and 1679, with 20 burials and 1 baptism. This net loss of 30 in two years accounted for 15 to 20 per cent of the population. Again, the explanation is probably disease rather than crop failures.

We have evidence of individual poverty in the late C18th and C19th because of the Workhouse records, the Poor Law accounts and the Census from 1841, where 'Pauper' or 'Living on the Parish' was occasionally given under 'Occupation'. The Victoria County History notes that in the last quarter of the C18th, Ferring was spending only around £100 a year on poor relief but this had risen to £235 by 1803. Ferring was one of the parishes which combined with others to build and maintain the East Preston Workhouse. Surprisingly few of its inmates came from Ferring, where the main form of relief was 'outdoor' (payments in cash or in kind). It would be interesting to compare the fluctuations in annual spending on poor relief with fluctuations in the national economy – they peaked at £375 in 1835 – but more likely they reflected changes in the age structure of the population. Paupers were usually too old to work.

A PENNY FOR CHRISTMAS

The Group's Christmas Social was the usual happy occasion and this year featured a talk by Ron Kerridge, co-author of *Ferring Past*, on the Old Penny and what you could buy for it. Roman pennies (denarii) have been found in Sussex, followed by a good sequence of Saxon pennies (some from mints at Hastings and Chichester), right up to Harold's short reign. These were all silver coins, 240 to the pound (in weight), and there was no smaller denomination until the C14th: halfpennies and farthings ('fourthings') were made by cutting along crossed lines on the reverse. Copper pennies came only in 1797 (weighing 1 oz.), replaced by bronze

coins in 1860 which remained unaltered until the decimal coinage was issued in 1971. Ron told the story as he passed coins round the group.

Ron collects not just the coins but examples of what the penny would buy in Victorian and later times. He passed round examples of the penny post (from 1840), penny newspapers (some going back to the C17th), comics and magazines, penny sweets, and many other small items. Some of these rang definite bells with the History Group members. Ron ended with a challenge: was there anything one could buy today with a penny (that is 2.4 old pennies)?

THE BROOKS FAMILY AND ELFORD HOUSE

The Probate Inventories of Ferring residents tell us a great deal about the lives of the people concerned, the layout of their houses and the economy of the village. I have been looking at one for Robert Brooks, who lived in what we now call Elford House (11 Ferring Lane) and died there in 1707. He is described as Wheelwright.

As always, the list and valuation is made by two neighbours of good standing. They begin with his 'wearing apparel and money in his purse' (£5), then money owed to him (£19) They then have to value his furniture and personal effects – goods in the kitchen (£5.10s), goods in the hall (i.e. the main room on the ground floor - £3.15s), the 'lower chamber' (another room on the ground floor - £4), the Drink House (£1.10), the brew house (£2.10s), then upstairs for the 'bedding and goods in the 'outer Chamber' (£2.10s) and into the 'Hall Chamber' (main bedroom above the hall) for 'one bedd & stedle and all thereunto belonging and all other goods in the Hall Chamber' (£3), and then all the linen there and around the house (£8).

Then they go into the barns, where they find 'barly & sacks & other Things' (£6) in one and a quantity of wheat in the other (£9). Outside there is 'one small cartt & wheels' (£1), and then they look at his crops – four acres of wheat (£2.16s) and four acres of 'Tares' – a fodder crop (£2.16s). All these are rather broad descriptions and round figures (C17th Inventories usually valued individual items of furniture and household equipment, often to a penny) and as a final makeweight they add £1.10s for 'Things seen & nott seen and forgotten', making a total of £127.17s.

Robert Brooks was born in Ferring in 1644. His mother was the daughter of Richard Sewell, who lived in this house in 1635 (it is referred to in the Glebe Terrier of that year, and it was known as 'Sewells' for the next 150 years). Richard Sewell's will of 1649 makes bequests to his son in law, 'Robert Brooks, Yeoman of East Preston' and it was only in 1689 that Robert junior obtained the Ferring property. When he died, aged 63 he had probably retired from the wheelwright trade because there is only one cart and a pair of wheels found in the Inventory.

This contrasts with the Inventory of his grandfather's goods at the same house nearly 40 years earlier, which includes 18 acres of sown wheat, 10 acres worth of barley in his barn, along with large quantities of oats and peas, plus 40 sheep, 20 pigs, 20 cows and all the equipment for an arable and meat-producing farm.

The Brooks family held this house until 1734. Robert's son John, is described as a Yeoman (i.e. tenant farmer) in his own Inventory, but there are no crops, livestock or farming equipment in it. He seems to have substantially rebuilt the house in 1727 because the layout of the house seems quite different from that in the two older Inventories and there is a plaque at the eastern end of the house with this date and his name. The description in the National Heritage List as Grade II, mainly C18th but incorporating part of a C17th farmhouse confirms this. John Brooks does not seem to have been living there in 1729; he had lodgings elsewhere in Ferring, with a William Souten. He may have been Ferring's first property developer.

His son, William Brooks claimed the house in 1734 but surrendered it the next year. John Pledge, another Ferring Yeoman, took a 21 year lease on the property in 1773, and the two fields either side of Ferring Lane are shown as 'Pledge's Croft' on the 1837 tithe map, and the house shown as 'Pledge's Cottage' as late as the 1899 Ordnance Survey map. By this time it had been added to the Henty estates.

WORTHING'S LOCAL HERO

Tony Brook, convenor of Worthing History Forum, gave us a talk last November on Worthing's 'local hero', Dr Frederick Dixon, 'an important figure', said Tony Brook in the town, the county and at national level'.

Dixon was born in 1799 and brought up in Storrington, son of the local vicar. One brother was an Army officer, the other went into the Church (and became Vicar of Ferring in 1832) but Frederick was apprenticed to a surgeon at Guys Hospital. He moved to Worthing in 1827 and stayed until his death in 1849. His house at 3 Union Place is still there but surrounded by the new residential complex.

Locally he was best known as a doctor, founding the Ann Street Dispensary in 1829, developing it into the Infirmary in Chapel Street (later moved to Homefield Park as Worthing Hospital), but he was also a Town Commissioner and involved in various good causes. At County level, he was a founder member of Sussex Archaeological Society, excavating Roman and Saxon items and lecturing and writing on his finds. Archaeology was very close to Geology in the 1840s and Dixon's interest in the fossils he had found all over the county led him into the first systematic study of the geology of Sussex. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Geological Society in 1840 but his great work on Sussex was published only after his death.

Tony Brook said Dixon was a major figure in palaeontology and geology at a time when these disciplines were just taking off. He was friends with Mantell, Lyell and Owen and corresponded with Darwin. His great collection of fossils was sold to the British Museum, but was broken up. However, his name lives on, in the names of 29 prehistoric species and in the name of a geological time period, some 90 million years ago.

'Who', asked Tony Brook, 'deserves better the title of Worthing's Local Hero?'

CLASS OF 1911

The census carried out on 2 April 1911 is not available in the form of neat schedules like the 1901 and previous censuses; house names and even roads are not always given, and in Ferring at least there are some obvious mistakes. However it does give us a great deal of information, especially when checked against the Inland Revenue Land Valuation Records of 1910 and the street directories of 1910 and 1911.

Total population was 256, very similar to what it had been since 1801; nearly all the residents were employed on the land or in some related trade. The biggest landowner by far was Edwin Henty, the family estate having been built up over four generations. By this time he had more or less retired at 67, and all his farms were out to tenants, though he was still a Director of the Capital and Counties Bank). On census day he was not at Ferring Grange but staying with his sister in Patching: his wife was absent too – possibly abroad because she has not been found anywhere in the census. They had no children, and there was only a small staff living at the Grange on that day (butler, cook, two housemaids, a kitchen maid and a footman). The coachman and his family were in what is now called Grange Cottage, the gardener in what is now the Old Flint House, the dairywoman in a cottage where Regency Court now stands.

The tenant of Home Farm did not live in Ferring, leaving the supervision of the farm to his Bailiff, Henry Harvey. The Farm House (now 'Home Farm House') was let to Mrs Roberts, 'Gentlewoman', and Harvey probably lived in a cottage near the main farm buildings. He did not live in the other big house in the village centre – St Maurs (now Greystoke Manor), another Henty property, because that too was a gentleman's residence, let to a retired Tea Planter from Ceylon. Ferring was becoming an attractive location for the upper-middle class: there was also a Lloyds Underwriter at Franklands Manor, a lady 'of no occupation' and her servant at East Ferring House, and Sir Louis Mallet, a senior diplomat, soon to become Britain's Ambassador to Turkey, had bought some land from the Hentys at the end of Sea Lane.

One should include the clergy in this upper-middle class group. The Rev. Arthur Deane, 74, lived in some comfort at the Vicarage, with three servants; his Assistant Curate, Rev. Algernon Chester, 57 (he must have given up on promotion) lived with three servants at Elford House.

Of the tenant farmers, only two of them actually lived in Ferring. Henty had George Penfold at Hangleton Farm and his son at Franklands Farm, and William Prince's 19 year old son was living with the Bailiff. William Lyon, who owned most of East Ferring, lived at Goring Hall and his tenants were George Harrison (who also ran the Glebe Farm owned by the Vicar) and the Greenyer brothers. None of these lived in Ferring.

The next social group is the tradesmen. Top of the list would be Percy Wilton at the New Inn (renamed Henty Arms, 1928). Then Peter Tourle, wheelwright, builder and sub-postmaster, at Holly Lodge. The only other tradesmen unconnected with the land were John Saunders, boot maker (the transcript reads 'bookmaker') and the Chidzey family in the house at the railway

crossing. The village school mistress, Ellen Laker, 51, probably belongs to this group too; although better educated, she would have been poorly paid and lived in two rooms in one of the village houses..

The rest were farm workers or domestic servants – some with specific roles, like Charles Young, a shepherd, Percy West a gamekeeper on Lyons’s estate, and various carters and cow men but mostly ‘agricultural labourers’. There was a ‘smith’s shop’ listed in the Inland Revenue survey, probably where Greystoke Avenue now cuts through Church Lane, but the owner, George Peskett, lived in Angmering

Such was the social structure of the village just over a century ago – a small society where everyone knew everyone else but everyone knew their place.

FASCINATING FILMS IN FERRING

Cliff Mewett entertained us on 3 February with a compilation of early films of Sussex life. His first clip was the oldest of all, film taken on Brighton beach in 1896, with crowds of Victorian holiday-makers – all very much overdressed by today’s standards. This and other footage of promenaders on West Pier, and happy crowds at the funfair on Devil’s Dyke was the work of pioneer amateurs Robert Paul and James Williams. Other film of Sussex before World War I showed Hastings in 1914, with shoals of fish being landed on the beach, an enormous Empire Day parade and a seaplane landing.

By the 1930s even amateur film making had become more ‘professional’ with close-ups, cutting and panning, and this was illustrated in a film of trug making and sheep-shearing in Hurstmonceux and several films of Chichester – one showing food processing and packing at Shippam’s factory in Chichester and another of the very extensive 1935 Jubilee celebrations. The scene then shifted to Bognor, starting with newsreel-type film of George V’s departure from Bognor after his three-month convalescence at Craigweil House. Advertisers sponsored several films of the town after this – as a healthy resort (‘The Key to Royal Health’) and as a location for ‘fashion shoots’ of the day.

It was then over to Brighton again, for a promotional film of 1957, with much that was familiar but some unfamiliar features like the trolley buses in the town and the ‘Promettes’ on the esplanade, acting as information officers but dressed like air hostesses.

Finally it was back to Chichester for the glorious 1955 ‘Guide to Opera’ cartoon by Halas and Batchelor, featuring pilchards, tomatoes and other food items, as well as the famous Shippam paste jars singing advertising material to the tune of famous arias and choruses.

History Group members thoroughly enjoyed this trip back to the Sussex of many years ago.

HISTORY IN HOUSE NAMES

Report by Eileen Godfrey

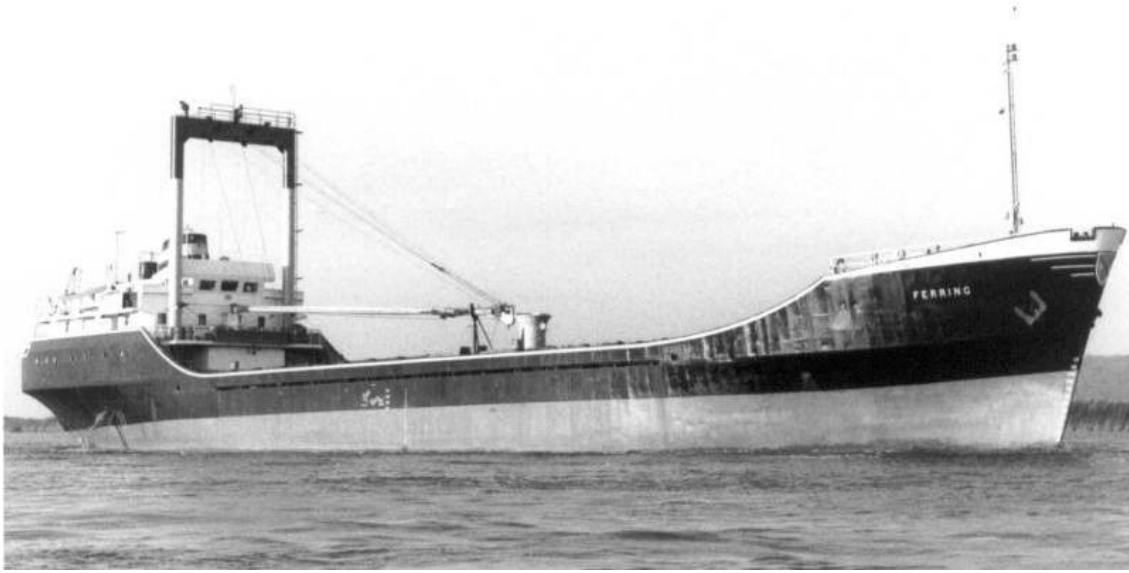
In February the Group had another excellent talk by Dr. Chris Lewis of King's College, London, this time on *The History of House Names*. He made special reference to the houses built in Rose Walk, Goring-by-Sea in the 1920s and 30s. Owners were compelled to name their houses as numbers were not allocated until the development in the road was complete.

Some names reflected picturesque spots at home and abroad, for example *Ambleside* and *Anacapri*. Others were connected to the garden such as *Fuchsias* and *The Briars*. Often the name reflected a word meaning a house such as *Victoria Villa* and *The Lodge* while some had a literary connection such as *Bleak House*. Other owners chose a name connected with the location of the house such as Corner Cottage and Sunnyside. In Goring many chose names connected with the sea such as *Seaward*, *Stella Maris* and even *Sea Glimpse!*

Some house names give the impression that their owners are rather pretentious, for example *Longleat* for a very modest house while others chose more modest names like *The Bungalow* or *Cosy Cottage*. Often a name may be an anagram of the owner's name or two names put together. Some owners chose foreign names perhaps reflecting their country of origin or because they liked the sound of it, for example *Casa Mia*.

One amusing name mentioned was *Better 'Ole*, referring to a World War I cartoon of two men in a shell hole, the owner having changed the original name which was *Cissbury View*. Another owner called his house *Coo Ee* which is a popular Australian phrase. *Dunroamin* is a name still to be found and one house was named simply *Brum*. Another popular house name is *Shangri'la* but in Goring, there is no record of a house with such a name!

Chris explained that there is much social history hidden behind the names we choose for our houses. The choice may tell us much about the owner's character, their aspirations or their contentedness. He finished his most interesting talk with a true story of a Birmingham primary school headmaster who retired to Goring with his wife and chose the name *Asgard* for his house. *Asgard* was the home of the Norse gods. Chris suggested that this couple's son, a student who was (then) embracing the new atheism, may have chosen it. The son's name was none other than Enoch Powell!



In November 1969, the Aberdeen shipyard of Hall, Russell saw the launch of the newest addition to the world's oldest merchant fleet. The shipping line was called Stephenson Clarke – and the ship was the MV (motor vessel) *Ferring*.

Brothers Ralph and Robert Clarke were master mariners from South Shields who bought their first ship in 1730, and their descendants were involved in the business for two and a half centuries. Jane Stephenson married Robert Clarke's son, John, in 1775 and the company became Stephenson Clarke in 1850. By then, its main business was shipping coal from Newcastle . . .

One of the fleet's regular ports of call was Shoreham, which was why in 1872 its latest steam collier was named the *Shoreham*. In 1888, another Stephenson Clarke ship was named after a Sussex port – the *Portslade*. So began a policy which was to see many of their ships given the names of Sussex towns and villages. The majority of these are in West Sussex, and locally include: Amberley, Arundel, Beeding, Bramber, Climping, Durrington, Findon, Lancing, Steyning, Storrington, Washington and Worthing.

Few of these places have any maritime connection, but it seems their names were chosen because by then some of the Clarke family lived in West Sussex. Colonel Stephenson Robert Clarke, for example, who was a partner in the family shipping line bought Borde Hill (near Haywards Heath) in 1893, which *Country Life* magazine now hails as “one of the country's truly great gardens” – and there have been two Stephenson Clarke ships named the *Borde*. Another branch of the family lived in nearby Horstead Keyes, and there were also two ships named the *Horstead*.

The Stephenson Clarke connection with the county continues to this day. In April 2012, Andrew John Stephenson Clarke was appointed by the Queen as High Sheriff of West Sussex. (The High Sheriff of Sussex in 1903 was Edwin Henty: see *The 1894 Highdown Excavations*, in this newsletter.) Stephenson Clarke Shipping, however, has not continued. After 282 years, the company was wound up in August 2012.

As for the *Ferring*, at 1,596 gross tons, a length of 285 feet and with a speed of 12.5 knots, the ship was a coaster which would have carried bulk cargoes such as wood, steel and grain, operating in home waters and to northern Europe. The name *Ferring* was removed from Lloyd's Register of Ships when the vessel was sold to another company in 1981. As the *Eri S*, it foundered off Cape Mayor, northern Spain, on 24th March 1992

AN ARUNDEL WALK

On 2 January, on a surprisingly fine day, a number of members followed Aidge Roberts on a walk in this historic town. History (some modern) was the theme and walkers who had been to the town many times in the past said they had learnt things they had never heard before.

The walk began in the Lido car park, and passing a malt house drying tower, left by the foot path south of the bridge where an example of how to build flint quoins was pointed out. This is a rare feature but can also be seen in Lavant House and Goodwood House around doors and windows. Across the road for a story about the building of the first bridge and where the stone work was “stolen” from, and then the story of the building of the new bridge in 1935 when the coffer dams (built to enable the construction of the piers on the river bed) caused an increase of current against the south bank and undermined the footings of the Bridge Hotel, causing part of it to fall into the river. The hotel was owned by the Swallow Brewery which was beside and behind the hotel and had a huge wooden swallow on the roof of the tower.

The giant post office was pointed out explaining that as the “builder” was the 15th Duke of Norfolk (who happened to be the Post Master General at the time) made it clear that he was not having a tiny sub post office on his patch. The story of Buller’s cottage was related which told of the family that ran a boating and tea rooms business on the river bank for several generations until possibly last year. The cottage was demolished to make way for the new bridge. Some WW2 defences were shown on the bridge. We also heard about the corn store and deck chair factory that burnt down despite the fire station being only a 100 yards away and having a whole river to supply water.

Crossing the road to enter Crown Yard car park we saw a replica of the Swallow from the brewery (in glass fibre) on the roof of the town hall. We were shown the remains of Bartlet’s steam mill now converted and enlarged into apartments with the chimney removed. Along River Road and from the front of the mill we could see from an illustration how the chimney was removed.

Early pubs were pointed out as was the Salt House, where fish and meat were stored (now apartments). We saw the former offices and boat house of the now defunct Arun River Board and the site of Turnip Green Square a terrace of poor houses (demolished in the 1950s) that had no modern facilities and whose toilets were in a separate building. Traces of their former existence are to be seen today. Next was a building that was once the Jolly Sailor pub and its neighbour the Rats Castle (still so named) which had been a lodging house for the sea farers that thronged Arundel. At the end of River Road was the inevitable house of ill repute.

Some wonderful flint work was seen in Arun Street and houses that were once shops were pointed out. Then to Tarrant Street where the Kings Arms pub was pointed out - reputedly the oldest pub in town. Along Tarrant Street westwards with more former shops to be seen and many fine Georgian buildings and coach houses. To the end at 'The Slipe' where we saw the remaining part of a wall built out of just about everything imaginable from false teeth to canon balls and bits of grave stones. It was built by a local "character" who was the rag and bone man and collector of "stuff". Into the Slipe (Slipway) to see the site of the port where the stone to rebuild the castle (1897-1907) was unloaded and also the last of Arundel's windmills (now a residence). *We haven't reached even half-way on this walk but space is limited. We'll come back in the next edition for the rest - Ed*

OUR HISTORY GROUP

Membership: Annual subscription £10 (£15 for a couple) gives free entry to the quarterly meetings, this Newsletter and e mail news of other events and other local history groups. Non-members pay £3 per meeting.

The Committee: Chairman – Tim Baldwin, Secretary – Ed Miller, Treasurer – Peter Bentley; other members – Adge Roberts, Hugh and Janet Faithfull, David Garnett, Eileen Godfrey. Volunteers to join the Committee are always welcome.

Meetings

2 November 2102: **Sussex Bonfire Societies** with Keith Leech

December 2012: **Christmas Social** with **Paul Holden** (Editor of The Worthing Journal)

1 February: **Ferring's Great Escaper** by Tim Carroll

3 May: **Winchester Cathedral and Ferring Churchyard** by Brian Day and David Garnett

2 August: **Ferring in the 1940s** led by Tim Baldwin and Ed Miller

1 November: **Victoria Cross and George Cross, Surrey and Sussex** by Tony Gledhill GC

December 2013: Christmas Social (with special guest presenter)

A full programme of meetings will be arranged for 2014.

Walks and visits: are arranged 'off-programme', to be notified at meetings, by e mail and by poster. Please give us your e mail address if you have not had any e mails from us, and we will let you know.

Research: There is still a great deal to do to build up our knowledge of Ferring's past – from ancient times to recent decades. If you would like to get involved, or if you would like some help in researching the history of your house, please contact the Secretary on 01903 502267.

E-Mail: If you are receiving this in hard copy, and you would be happy to receive meeting reminders or other news by e-mail) please let me know and I will add you to our e-mail list. *Ed Miller43@msn.com.*

THE DODGER by Tim Carroll

Mainstream Publishing, 2012, £18.99. ISBN 9781845967994

Most long-time Ferring residents will remember Flora Bigelow Guest who lived for many years at Wookyi-Tipi, Sea Lane. As Lady Lionel Guest she was the wife of the Honourable Lionel Guest, fourth son of the Earl of Wimborne and a first cousin of Winston Churchill, who purchased much of south Ferring when the Henty estate was broken up in the 1920s.

Flora Bigelow and her first husband, Charles Stuart Dodge, were both American. The couple had two children: Lucy, born in 1890, and John, born in 1894 – and it the latter is the subject of a fascinating new biography by Tim Carroll.

Born in Manhattan, educated in Montreal, John Bigelow Dodge moved to England in 1914 and became a British citizen in 1915. His mother had remarried in 1905, the wedding taking place in her South Dakota home – which was the original Wookyi-Tipi. In the First World War, “Johnny” (as he was always known) was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, later transferring to the army and rising to the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Johnny married an American, Minerva Arrington, in 1929 and they lived in London in a house given to them as a wedding present by his mother and step-father – but most weekends were to be spent in Ferring. At first they would stay at Wookyi-Tipi, but later Flora and Lionel gave Minerva and Johnny a home of their own in the village. The house is still there today, named after the U.S. state where they met – Florida.

During the Second World War, Johnny served in the army again and was captured in France, finally ending up in the notorious Stalag Luft III prisoner of war camp – which was to become the scene of the Great Escape, in which he was a key figure. Johnny was one of the 76 prisoners who escaped from the camp, and he also escaped the fate of the 50 of those who were executed.

John Bigelow Dodge DSO, DSC, MC, died in 1960, and his ashes are buried in St Andrew's churchyard. His remarkable life of adventure and bravery is brilliantly explored in Tim Carroll's excellent book.

Buy it, read it, have it signed by the author! Tim Carroll will be the guest speaker at the Ferring History Group meeting on February 1, 2013.

TIM CARROLL

THE DODGER

THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF
CHURCHILL'S COUSIN AND THE GREAT ESCAPE

