

FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE

2024



Georgiana and Edwin Henty, owners of three-quarters of Ferring, 1915.

Picture from the Regis family archive.

Meetings Programme for 2024

2 February: **'Tales from the Rails' by Bill Gage**

Dramatic incidents on Sussex railways

3 May: **'Some new discoveries on our Downland' by James Sainsbury**

This talk will look at some newly discovered sites on our local Downs, investigated with limited resources and numbers and found using new technologies:

2 August: **'Ferring From the Air' by Simon Cornish**

Simon will show aerial views from the 1930s to the present and from many sources, including the Luftwaffe

1 November; **'A History of Shoreham Airport' by Peter Fellowes**

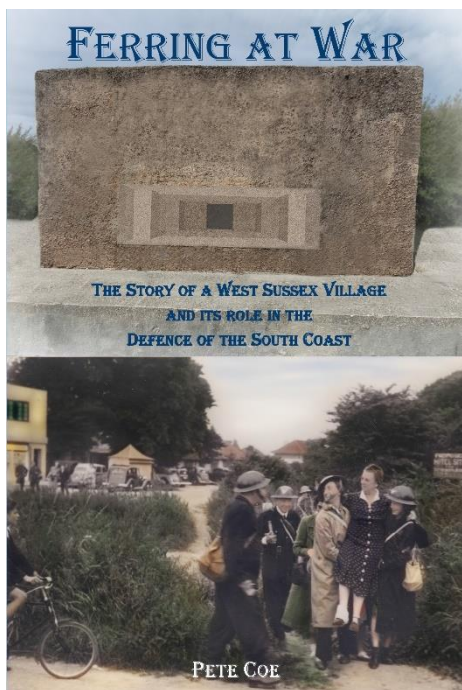
From the early pioneers, via two wars, to the service it provides today.

13 December Social: **Ian Gledhill**

Ian has entertained us with presentations on many subjects, and this will be another lighthearted talk from his extensive repertoire.

Walks and Visits will also be arranged as usual, during the course of the year.

A new book



Pete Coe, who has joined the Committee has published a book of great interest. Pete says:

Much has been written about Wartime West Sussex, particularly in relation to our larger neighbours, however little is recorded of life in the smaller communities that make up the Coastal Strip. 'Ferring at War' looks to address this and, more importantly to answer those questions you have and maybe those you didn't know you had. This includes classics such as "How much concrete was used to build the Pillbox and why was Patterson's Walk literally a minefield"; "Who was upset that soldiers and Nursing sisters were able to access the Beach when he couldn't?"; "Who were declared not to be in a verminous state?" "What was the fine for riding your bike without lights in 1940?" and most importantly "Who was the "Captain Mainwaring" of the Ferring Home Guard Platoon?"

To stop those sleepless nights pondering over such matters and to find out more about life in Ferring during WW2, then there's no better solution than to acquire your own copy of "Ferring at War - The Story of a West Sussex Village and its role in the Defence of the South Coast". There are 88 pages of text, photos, tables and charts. On sale at our meetings and elsewhere for £10.

All profits from the sale of the book will be used for the restoration and maintenance of the Pillbox.

FERRING HISTORY MAGAZINE

Journal of the Ferring History Group. Compiled by Ed Miller: EdMiller43@msn.com No. 10

COVER STORY- The last of the Hentys

by Ed Miller

Edwin Henty (1844-1916), pictured on our front cover with his wife 'Alma', was the last of four generations of his family to live in (and own most of) Ferring. His great-grandfather William Henty bought the lease of the Bishop's estate in 1786, his grandfather George Henty carried it on until his death in 1829, and his father Edwin Henty senior had it for the next 61 years (freehold from 1864). Edwin junior was born in 1844, the elder of two sons.

His grandfather had founded a bank in 1808 and this had become a substantial business by 1829. The Bishop's estate, and other land he had acquired, was let to tenant farmers and, succeeding his father, Edwin senior saw the bank as his main business. In the Census returns from 1841 to 1871 he gave his occupation as 'Banker'. He may have retired from banking by 1881, when he gave his occupation as 'Farmer' with 176 acres, employing 13 men. This would have been 'Home Farm' on the west and south of Henty's mansion, Ferring Grange. He had continued to acquire other land, and cottages, in Ferring, so that on his death, in 1890 his son Edwin junior inherited nearly three-quarters of the Parish.

Edwin junior had grown up at Ferring Grange. He went away to public school (Rugby) but was back in Ferring in the early 1860s. He joined the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the Sussex Regiment (part-time soldiering) in 1864, and entered the family bank, probably working at the Worthing branch. He is listed in the 1871 Census still at Ferring Grange, occupation 'Banker'.

He married the gloriously named Georgiana Laura Alma Henrietta Elizabeth Somerset at Hove in 1875. We know much less about her. She was a clergyman's daughter from Gloucestershire (born in Wales), a great-granddaughter of the Duke of Beaufort and related to the Somerset family at Castle Goring. Edwin and Georgiana went to live at a house named 'Deerswood', in Ifield (now part of Crawley, where there was another branch of the family's bank). In 1881 Edwin was again listed as 'Banker', at this house. He then had a new house built in 1882, in a similar style to Ferring Grange, which he named 'Goffs Hill' (this now houses Crawley Museum). At the 1891 Census they were still living at Ifield.

The couple returned to Ferring a few years after his father's death, living at St Maur's (now Greystoke Manor). When his mother died, in 1897, the couple moved into Ferring Grange. He and his brother sold the bank to Capital and Counties Bank in 1896 but he stayed on as a Director of the new bank. He was so listed in the 1901 Census.

They had no children. His 'private pursuits' were noted in the Worthing Gazette a week after his death, as 'gardening and farming'. He had won many prizes for his sheep – a pedigree herd of Southdowns. He sold this flock, and let Home Farm to a tenant, in 1908. He held various public offices: County Council Alderman, Magistrate, Deputy Lieutenant, High Sheriff and Honorary Major in the Royal Sussex Regiment. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquities and was responsible for the first excavations of the Saxon Cemetery on Highdown in 1893. He died on Christmas Day 1916. He left all his property and money to his wife. His estate was valued at £64,000.

She, who used various of her five Christian names, seems to have been a rather quiet, retiring, person. She outlived him by 12 years, and regularly put an 'In Memoriam' notice in the Times newspaper using the names 'Alma', and 'Wyn' – presumably what they called each other in private. Our photograph (the only one I have seen of either of them) shows them in the year before he died. She looks the stronger character but he was probably already ill.

By 1921 her younger sister Edith Somerset was living with her in Ferring Grange. Mrs Henty had no particular interest in the estate and tried to sell the southern half of it, including Ferring Grange, at auction in March 1921 but it failed to reach its reserve price and she 'bought it in' at £25,000. She sold a few fields off Sea Lane to Lionel Guest in 1922 and then in August 1923 she agreed to sell nearly all the remainder of the southern half to the developer Charles Draycott, who had recently developed an estate at Shoreham Beach. She left Ferring Grange and, with her sister, took up residence at St Maurs (a Henty family property).

She had not retired altogether from public life - becoming a member of the newly-created Parish Council in 1919, and donating the land for the village War Memorial in 1921. She will be best remembered now for donating the land for, and paying for the building of, the Village Hall, as a memorial to her dead husband, in 1924. Apart from that there is little mention of her in the local newspapers until her death in 1928.

She died on 28 October of that year. The report of her death in the Worthing Gazette referred to her 'delightful personality and very generous disposition', dubbing her 'Benefactress of Ferring' for her gift of the Village Hall (which cost £1,500 to build). Her funeral was well attended, the church full of wreaths with messages from her friends, staff and villagers.

She left an estate of £53,000, nearly all of it, plus some Somerset family heirlooms, going to her sister and other members of her family but with gifts to some of her servants and employees – notably giving the freehold of Lilac Cottage and £150 to her gardener and former coachman Walter Trice.

Probate was given to her executors (two brothers) in February 1929 but it was not until September 1930 that they put the remaining, northern, half of the estate up for auction (in lots, unlike the 1921 auction). In a codicil to her will in January 1929 she 'strongly advise[d] [her] Trustees not to sell the Highdown land, containing about 53 acres, for less than £12,000'. But the 53 acres of the Hill, plus Highdown Hill Farm and 80 acres with it, were sold for £7,800. In fact, the whole of the estate's 273 acres was sold for only £15,600.

Georgiana was not actually the last of the Hentys. Her brother-in-law Arthur, four years younger than Edwin, lived on to 1936 and, despite living in Broadwater and Chichester all his married life, wanted to be buried in Ferring. One of his great-grandchildren, became a disc jockey on Radio Caroline and a TV talk-show host in the 1960s. His birth name was Cyril Dodd but his mother changed the family name to Henty-Dodd in order to inherit some money from that side of the family. Cyril changed it again to the more snappy 'Simon Dee'.



Simon Dee 1935-2009

WOOLVYNS AND WATERSFIELDS - Two Ferring Dynasties **by Ed Miller**

The Woolvyn (spelled in various ways) and the Watersfield families were very prominent in Ferring from the beginning of the 16th Century to the middle of the 17th. The Woolvyns go back even further. The mediaeval Custumal, probably written in the middle of the 13th Century, lists 'William Woluyne' as holding a yardland (30 acres of arable land) in Ferring, and both Johanne Wuluone and Roger Woluon are listed in the 1296 combined Goring and Ferring taxation return. The same family is listed in the 1337 and 1332 returns (for Ferring alone). William Woolvyn is in the Manor Court records in 1502 – the tenant of a 'messuage' (large house) and a 'virgate' (30 acres of land, quite possibly the same piece as in the Custumal). The 1524 and 1525 tax returns show him along with other Woolvyns and he is also listed, as a 'bowman,' in the Muster Roll of 1539.

Thomas Woolvyn, one of the highest payers in 1524, must be the 'Thomas Wulvin' named as holding the lease of the Bishop's estate in Henry VIII's survey of all church property in 1535. His will, dated 1543, gives various amounts to the church (including 10 shillings to the Vicar for saying a mass for him twice a week for the next seven years). He also gives a certain amount of livestock to his family and friends. Everything else he left to his daughter Alys Besfyld. She evidently took over the lease because she passes it to Thomas Watersfield, her son by a previous marriage, in her will of 1552.

The Woolvyns continued to show in the Parish Registers up to 1631, with William Woolvin's burial in that year. His will names his wife as Joan, to whom he gives 20 shillings, leaving the rest of his property to another family member, John Howgrayve. But Joan would have retained the house, and any land in Ferring under the 'widow's bench' rule. She is no doubt the widow Woolvin mentioned in the 1635 Glebe Terrier as having a house in a location we can identify as just south-east of the modern war memorial, and four acres. *Ferring Past* notes that the house is almost certainly the one that was still known as 'Woolvins' in 1744, and survived well into the 20th Century.



Woolvens (then known as Dairy Cottage) in the early 1920s. The barn, to the right, later became the Barn Surgery

The Woolvin family line seems to have run out in 1630s: there are no more entries in the Parish Register. But Alys Woolvyn married William Watersfield c.1520 and their son Thomas began the next line of dynasty.

The Watersfields

His son John took over the lease when Thomas died in 1570. When Spain threatened an invasion, in 1588, John Watersfield loaned £30 to the exchequer after a nationwide appeal by Queen Elizabeth. He was the only person in Ferring to do so (presumably the richest). A younger son, George, was well provided for and went on to the priesthood, becoming Vicar of Ferring in 1578

John Watersfield died in 1594. His eldest son Thomas was only 16 years old. In his will John left the lease of the Ferring estate to Thomas but only after his wife's death or any remarriage (following the custom of 'widow's bench'). The family had acquired a good deal of land outside Ferring and when Agnes died in 1609, she left all her children well provided for.

Thomas married three times – first to Mary (maiden name unknown), presumably around 1609, and had two daughters (Marie 1610) and (Martha 1611/2) baptised in Ferring church. Mary died two weeks after Martha's birth. Six years later Thomas married Katherine Parsons, who already had three children (one named Katherine Patching, which might suggest that this was her third marriage). She died in 1635; coincidentally, his older daughter, Marie died a few days later. His younger daughter, Martha, had married Will Hewling, Gent, at Ferring in 1632.

Thomas' third marriage was to Dorothy Fisher, in Coombes in 1637. He was absent from Ferring from 1641 but still had the lease of the Bishop's estate in 1647 (but now held it jointly with two other local landowners) when it was sold by the Parliamentary Commissioners. It seems he bought the Manor House from them at this time but he was not living there in 1649 because he and Dorothy were living in Lewes, up to the time of his death in 1651. Dorothy came back to Ferring in that year to claim her 'widow's bench' but the Manor Court awarded Thomas's Ferring properties to his daughter.

Thomas' younger brother, William Watersfield, had inherited land in Rustington, as well as £50, from his mother. It seems that he had bought the Manor of East Ferring and its 240 acres, as well as land in Goring by 1635. On his death in 1649 these lands passed to his son John but John died in 1651, leaving these properties to his sister Barbara and her husband John Westbrook. They had married in 1637.

John Westbrook went on to take the lease of the West Ferring estate when it was returned to the Bishop in 1660. He passed it to his son William Westbrook before he died, so that by the early 1660s, the Westbrook family were leaseholders of the Bishop's estate (and copyholders of much other land in west Ferring) and outright owners of the whole of east Ferring.

Thus the leadership and wealth of Ferring, through inheritance and marriage, passed from the Woolvins, to the Waterfields, and on to the Westbrooks. They were followed by Richardsons, descended from William Westbrook's daughter Barabara. The Richardsons held much of East Ferring until 1870, when William Westbrook Richardson II died. They gave up their lease of the West Ferring estate around 1740 – which in 1786 passed into the hands of the unrelated Henty family, whose own dynasty came to an end in 1916.

DANIEL DEFOE 1660 – 1731 ‘A TOUR THROUGH THE WHOLE ISLAND OF GREAT BRITAIN’

Dr Geoffrey Mead, University of Sussex

Report by Helen McCutchan

On 3 February, following an extremely well attended AGM, Dr Geoffrey Mead introduced the audience to a lesser known work by Daniel Defoe, the author of one of the most recognisable classics, Robinson Crusoe. The work was Defoe's publication 'A Tour through the whole island of Great Britain'. Defoe more or less began a Grand Tour of the island. Chronicled in his book are his observations and impressions published a few years later as three volumes between 1724 and 1726.

Dr Mead concentrated on Defoe's account of the South East, walking us through several towns and villages using Defoe's descriptive account of places we know today. He demonstrated the changes in importance of various places, mainly due to the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, Defoe was often derogatory about some of the locations which today are the most desirable and prosperous areas of England.



We learnt that Defoe had lived a colourful life. Born in London as Daniel Foe, he had a humble start. He spent formative years in Dorking, the son of a grocer. Later in life he became well connected and to add an impression of being aristocratic, added 'De' to his name, hence becoming Defoe. He became a merchant, social critic, pamphleteer and a spy! It was the final occupation that may have facilitated collecting the information for his book. He spent time in prison, mainly due to his political writings which had upset the authorities.

Dr. Mead, a historical geographer, explained one of the most important elements of the book was the comparison of how the landscape had changed. Commencing his journey in Greenwich, Woolwich, Charlton and Shooters Hill, Defoe described the latter as mainly coppice woods. No South Circular in those days!

Continuing on to Gravesend, he describes it as mainly "marsh land" and "unhealthy grounds." Dr Mead informed us this area was one of the last areas in Great Britain where you could contract malaria, Ague or 'Marsh Fever.' Mosquitos were prolific until approximately the 1920s.

Moving on to Kent, Defoe wrote favourably about Chatham, in contrast to Sandwich, which he described as a 'poor miserable town'. Now an established home to the world-renowned golf course, Royal St. George's and a significant nature reserve, it demonstrates the changes in fortune since Defoe's visit.

On reaching Sussex, sadly some of our best loved towns and villages also failed to meet Defoe's expectations. He described Arundel as a 'decayed town' with a ruined castle. Dr Mead reminded us the castle we know today wasn't built until the 1880s. Defoe was also of the opinion there was 'not much to say' about Rye, Winchelsea, Hastings or Chichester. He also almost dismissed Brighthelmston describing it as a poor fishing town. Indeed, almost 100

houses had been consumed by the sea during the worst storm known at that time, in 1703. We know this town today as Brighton.

Compare that with Tunbridge Wells which suited Defoe's disposition to be noted socially. Dr Mead explained Tonbridge was a great place to promenade and 'be seen'. Such behaviour was very important in high society - perhaps the Instagram of its time.

Defoe described how farming methods had changed, including the management of livestock by introducing selective scientific breeding. During his visit to Steyning, Defoe came across huge cattle bred by a local gentleman farmer. Dr. Mead described how butchers from Smithfield Market in London came to Steyning to offer a very handsome price for the beasts. Their owner declined, favouring walking the bullocks to market. Unfortunately, by the time they reached London much of their valuable weight had been shed, subsequently the price was much lower than that which was originally offered.

One of the most striking images was the information that the coastal strip, including our village, was mainly laid to crops. The corn trade was extremely important to the local economy, and the grain would be sent to London to sell. Timber was also very important around the 1700s. It was a lucrative trade which included the making of charcoal.

It appeared Defoe was a social climber who enjoyed the company of important members of high society. He described his visit to Petworth most favourably and talked about the rebuilding of the House, particularly the Carved Room decorated with carvings by Grinling Gibbons.

It was a fascinating snapshot of a tour of Great Britain almost 300 years ago, particularly our own county of Sussex.

OUR AUGUST MEETING – WORTHING IN WORLD WAR 2 report by Ed Miller

Just over 100 members and visitors crowded into Ferring Church Centre, our usual venue being unavailable, to hear an illustrated talk on Wartime Worthing by Chris Hare. He began with some of the background, the late 1930s and in particular the prominence of the Fascist Party, whose local leaders were interned on the outbreak of war.

The most obvious impact of the war, Chris said, was a series of air raids which destroyed many houses and shops. One bombed site in Lyndhurst Road was cleared quickly but the gap in the row of terraced houses could still be seen only a few years ago. Worthing was never a target for the Luftwaffe but for bombers returning from raids on London it was the last opportunity to drop any bombs still in the bomb-bays. Later in the war, the great fear was of V1 flying bombs and machine-gunning from 'tip and run' raiders.

As everywhere else in the UK, Worthing residents had to endure food rationing, and Chris Hare showed a photograph of a long queue at a local grocers – the kind of picture that was never published during the war because of its propaganda value to the Germans, where food was not rationed.

Other impacts of the war were the blackout, the closure of the seafront, restrictions on travel, and the presence of many soldiers (including many French-Canadians) and the Home Guard. Chris Hare related many wartime stories he had collected from local residents some years ago, in his Oral History project, some very amusing and some heart breaking.

FERRING AND THE 1921 CENSUS

by Simon Cornish

The 1921 Census was taken on 19th June 1921. The Census was digitized by FindMyPast.com and was initially available on their website from 6th January 2022. Each return (household) incurred a fee to view, and it was not until October 2022 that it was made available to certain levels of subscription without additional fees – at that point, we were able to download each page relating to Ferring. For the first time, this census included information about the individuals' employer.

In June 1921, Ferring was a small farming community with a population of 256. There were some 56 census returns made, indicating that number of properties. There were a few professional people living in the village – a solicitor, a draughtsman, a civil servant, school teacher, and the landowners, but these only account for a handful of households. The majority were regular working-class people, mostly working the land.

The census was taken a couple of years before Mrs Henty started to sell off parts of Ferring Grange estate. She did attempt to sell 266 acres of the estate in May 1921, but it did not reach its auction reserve of £30,000. In fact, she must have been thinking about this momentous decision around this time – the effect it would have on the village, and the job losses from the estate that would follow. On 19th June 1921, Britain was in the middle of a scorching drought, and you can just imagine Mrs Henty sitting in the grounds of Ferring Grange that evening, contemplating all this.

One of the problems we have with this census is that roads and houses were not properly named in Ferring at this time. For example, we have several returns that simply state “Sea Lane, Ferring” with no indication of which property the people were living in. Others are quite helpful in that they state “Garden Cottage, Ferring”, or “Lilac Cottage, Ferring”. We know which properties these relate to. So, a bit of detective work is required, but there are still some that we cannot attribute to a specific property.

CENSUS, ENGLAND, 1921.

SCHEDULE.

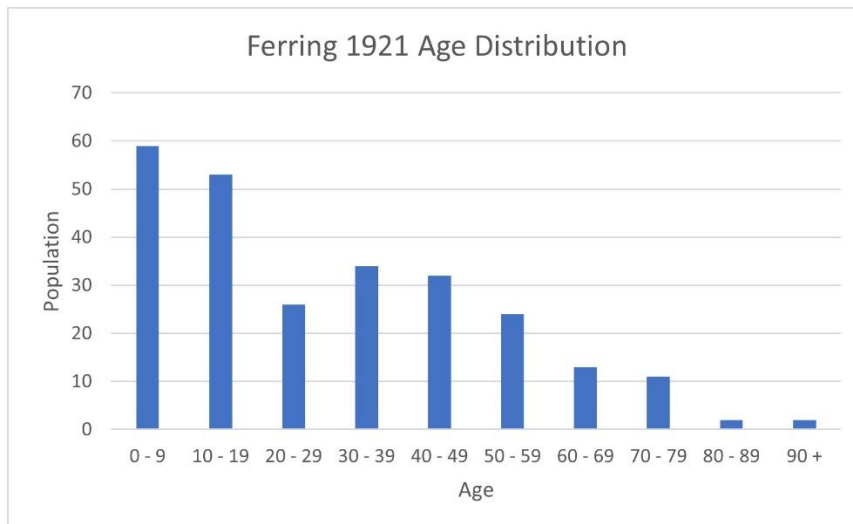
Prescribed by Regulations under the Census Act, 1920, as the form to be used in England (excluding Monmouth), for the purpose of returns in respect of (a) Private Households, (b) Hotels, Clubs, Boarding Houses, or Common or other Lodging Houses, and (c) Other persons in respect of whom no other form of schedule is prescribed.

This space to be filled up by the Enumerator.		
Registration District.	Registration Sub-District.	Enumeration District.
84	1	25.
Name of person responsible for making the return. <i>Mrs. Phillips</i>		
Postal Address <i>Sea Lane</i> <i>Ferring</i>		

Ferring - 1921 Census - Statistics			
Males	114	Females	142
Eldest Woman	Sarah Street, aged 90 from West Lodge, Sea Lane Eliza Belchamber, aged 90 from Dairy Cottage		
Eldest Man	William Denyer, aged 76 from Franklands Green		
Youngest Child	Joan Tourle from The Ramblers, Church Lane		
Boarders	5	Visitors	15

So, some statistics to start with:

On the night of 19th June 1921, there were 256 people staying in Ferring. I say “staying”, because 15 of them were visitors. It may also be the case that a few people that usually lived in Ferring spent the night elsewhere and therefore don’t appear on the Ferring census records.



The age profile of Ferring residents was quite different from that of today. Nearly half of the population of the village was aged under 20, and only 20 were of what we consider now to be retirement age (over 65), which represented under 8% of the population.

Let's have a look at a few of the properties in Ferring, and some of the interesting facts shown on their census returns:

Ferring Grange - The Census shows Georgiana Henty as head of the household. She was a widow of independent means (her husband Edwin having died in 1916), and lived at Ferring Grange with her sister, Edith Somerset. Ferring Grange is shown on the Census as having 30 rooms, and was also home to three servants, (a parlour maid, a house maid, and a housekeeper) and that night, to two visitors.

Church Cottage (opposite the entrance to the Church) – This was home to 12 people – Edward Bacon, his wife Alice, and their 10 children. The children's ages ranged from 1 to 19. Three of them were in work, two were infants, and the remaining five were at school. There were just 4 rooms in Church Cottage. Edward's occupation was 'Shepherd'



Dairy Cottage 1911

Dairy Cottage – Dairy Cottage stood on the site of Regency Court in Ferring Street, immediately south of the Barn Surgery. In 1921, it was home to one of the two 90 -year old's – Eliza Belchamber. Eliza lived with her daughter (also named Eliza), and her grandson George. George and Eliza Jr were employed by Mrs Henty at the Home Farm dairy, adjacent to Dairy Cottage (possibly the Barn Surgery). The cottage had a long history, partly told on page 3 of this magazine.

Garden Cottage (now Old Flint House). This was the home of the Ferring Grange gardener, Charles Voyce, his wife Edith, their five children (aged between 1 and 11), a boarder, and three visitors. We can tell that the family had been living in Ferring for approx. 7 years, having moved here from Sompting. The boarder was a postman, employed at the Goring Post Office.

Hangleton Farm (Hangleton Lane) was the home of George Penfold and his wife Caroline. George was a farmer, and one of the major employers in the village. Three of his sons also lived in the village, and worked for him – George at Smugglers Cottage, William at Franklands Green Cottage, and Charles at Hangleton Cottage.



Hangleton Farm 1978

Rose Cottage (Ferring Street) was the home of William Kirk, his wife Mary, and their sons Eric and Stanley. William was the chauffeur to Edwin Tate (of Tate & Lyle Sugar fame), but is listed on the census as “Out of work”. Rose Cottage had 7 rooms.

New Inn (The Henty Arms) was home to Frank Newman, his wife Alice, and their two children, Ralph aged 7, and Ida aged 6. Both children were born in Ferring, but Frank and Alice came from Hampshire. William was listed as a “Licensed Victualler”.



The Shop mid 1920s. Now Landalls.

The Shop (Landalls, opposite the Village Hall), was home to Martha Wesson and her son Sidney. She also lists 3 boarders, all of which were employed locally, and 5 visitors – we can presume therefore that she was running some kind of Bed & Breakfast from this address. The visitors were two groups – Kate and Clara Jenkinson, and Margaret Voakes and her two children. Kate Jenkinson is listed as a “Musician”, and Margaret Voakes as a shop assistant in a baker’s shop.

Gate House (the gate keeper’s cottage next to the railway), was home to Albert Chidzey, his wife Henrietta, and teenage children Albert, Leonard and Gladys. Albert worked as a plate layer (someone who inspects and maintains the railway track) for the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway. Henrietta is listed as the Gate Keeper, also employed by the same company. The two eldest children, Albert and Leonard were both working, but the youngest, Gladys aged 13 was still at school.

West Lodge (at the west end of the Ilex Avenue – then the carriage drive to Goring Hall) was occupied by the other 90 year old – Sarah Street, and her sister Harriett aged 77. Both of these ladies were single, and had been born in Ferring. West Lodge has long since been demolished, but there is a bungalow on the site which retains the name.

The Post Office (now Holly Cottage) was home to the Peter Tourle, his second wife Florence, four children from his first marriage, and one from his second. Peter ran a building firm and an undertaker's business. His firm built the Village Hall in 1924.



Peter Tourle's workshop (left) and Post Office in the early 1920s

The Vicarage (now Barbary Lodge in Ferring Street) was home to the 57 year old vicar Hector Grepe, his wife Mary, his sister-in-law Louisa, a cook, and a housemaid. Hector was the vicar here for only 5 or 6 years. The Vicarage is listed as having 14 rooms.

As mentioned at the beginning, Ferring was a farming community back in 1921. There were three main farms in the village – Home Farm – J B Hall was the farmer (although there is no record of him living in Ferring at the time), and he employed about a dozen men from the village, and presumably some from outside. He leased 279 acres from the Henty / Ferring Grange estate, and the farm stretched from the church across to the Rife, and all the way down to the sea. It was mainly an arable farm, but there were some cattle, and a dairy (please see 2023 Magazine for a photo of the cows being walked through the village).

George Harrison had the tenancy of Manor Farm and East Ferring Farm, owned by the Lyon family (at Goring Hall). The farm was on the east side of Sea Lane again down to the sea. Harrison also had the tenancy of Glebe Farm which was where Rife Way, St Osmund Road and Collingdale Road are today. Harrison appears to have employed six or so men from Ferring.

George Penfold was the tenant farmer from Hangleton Farm. This consisted of 250 acres north of the railway line, and was also part of the Henty / Ferring Grange estate. As well as his three sons, Penfold employed seven other men from the village.

There were various small market-gardeners in the village such as Charles Voysey and some people were self-employed in this capacity.

Another employer that features several times in the census was the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. The LB&SCR territory formed a rough triangle, with London at its apex, and practically the whole coastline of Sussex at its base. This company was wound up at the end of 1922 as a result of the 1921 Railway Act, and it merged with several other railways to form Southern Railway.

The 1921 Census is the last we will see released for some time. Unfortunately, the 1931 Census records for England and Wales were destroyed by fire in 1942. A register was taken in 1939 – just before the outbreak of WW2, but there was no census taken in 1941. The 1939 register is available now, but records for people still alive are redacted – so its usefulness is limited – although it is regularly updated. The next census we can expect to be released will be the 1951 census, and this will be available in 2052!

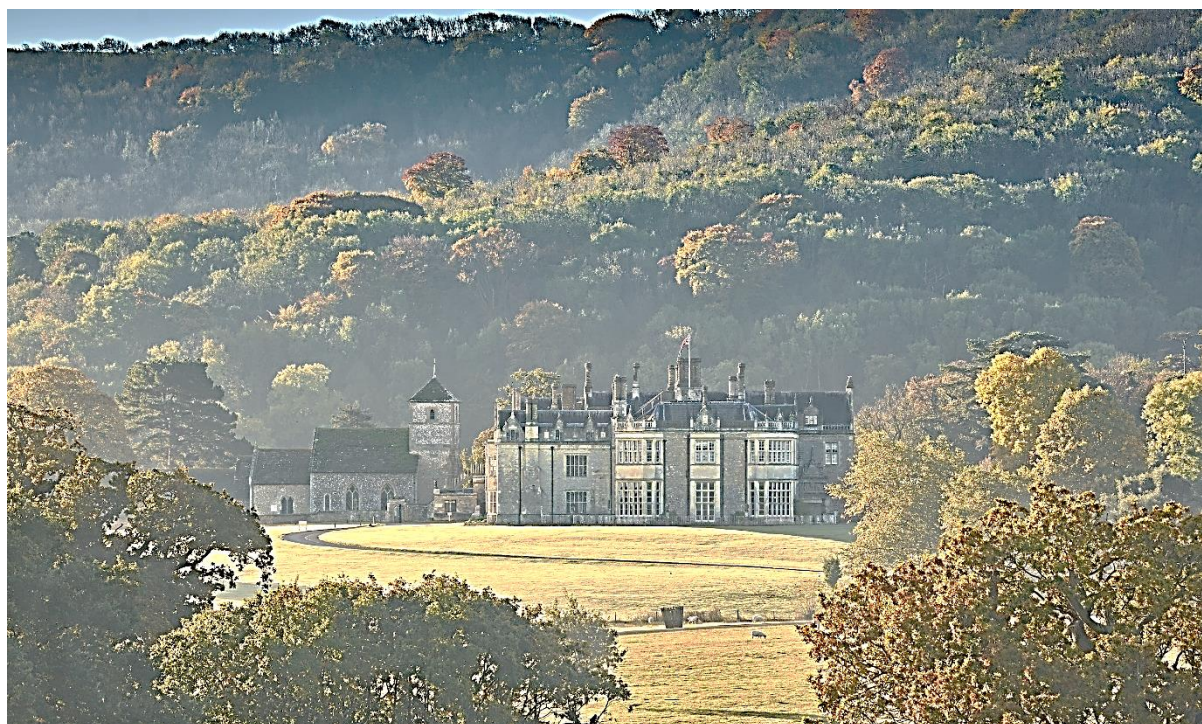
OUR NOVEMBER MEETING – THE WISTON ESTATE

report by Ed Miller

We had a well-attended meeting on 4 November, with a presentation by veteran Sussex historian Janet Pennington, on ‘The Wiston estate - A thousand years of history’. The estate, some 6,000 acres just west of Steyning, and including Chanctonbury Ring, goes back to Saxon times.

The first written record is the Domesday Book, which notes that it was held by one ‘Azor’ from King Harold, before the Norman Conquest, and then by Ralph de Buci, from William De Braose, whose family built Bramber Castle. By 1300 it had 53 tenants and nine farms but the Black Death in 1348 had reduced this number to eight tenants by 1354.

The manor house was rebuilt in the 16th Century as a fine country mansion and was the home of Sir Thomas Sherley, an Elizabethan politician and, as Janet put it, ‘conman’. On his death, with many thousands of unpaid debts, it passed to the Cranfield family, then to the Earl of Thanet (a supporter of Charles I in the Civil War), then in 1649 to John Fagge, the young MP for Rye – a Parliamentarian who turned his coat at the Restoration. From the Faggess, it descended to the Goring family (it was Charles Goring who planted the ‘Ring’ of trees in 1760) who still own it today. The current Charles Goring is well known for his ‘conservation’



Wiston House and St Mary's Church

management of the estate, including the Steyning Downland Project. As well as farmland and woodland the estate also has a thriving vineyard.

The house is leased to the Foreign Office, who moved their ‘Wilton Park’ conference centre here in 1950 and it has been used for many confidential negotiations and meetings ever since. It is not open to the public but the church adjacent to the house is not restricted and is well worth a visit. It served the ‘lost’ village of Wiston as well as the mansion. *Buildings of Sussex* praises its mediaeval tower and ‘elegant arcade’ and its stained glass but disapproves of its ‘blindest kind of mid-Victorian’ renovations. Wiston House and the Church are both approached from Mouse Lane, Steyning.

THE SEA AND THE RIFE

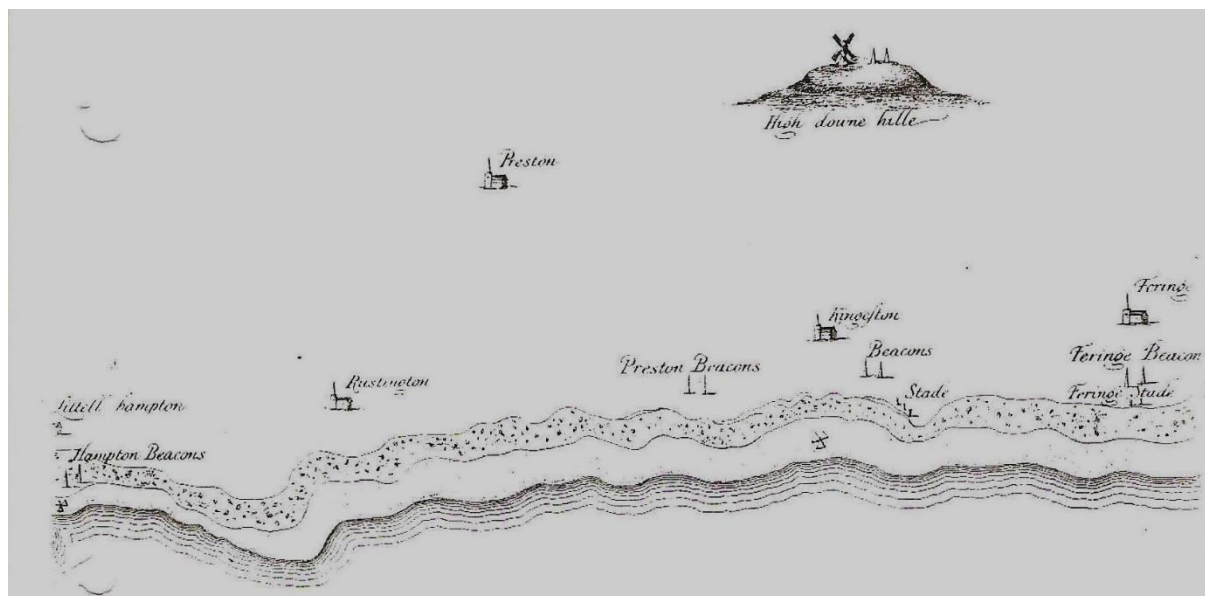
by Richard Standing

David Garnett reviews the 1926 'Holiday Book' of Marion Acton-Bond, aged 15, on pages 21 and 22. One interesting paragraph in her book is her brief and graphic description of the 'rife' (just another name for a stream then). It was of a still natural stream and floodplain, far different to how it has been within present-day memory.

The Rife in history

Despite a century of random development, there still remain a few fragmentary country walks in our neighbourhood. Such is the pleasant path along the Ferring rife to and from the beach and sea. But this is not the rife of former years as amply illustrated by the brief impression of it in the 1920s, quoted above, although by the 19th century it had already ceased to be the fairly natural stream with a delta outlet to the sea as portrayed by a Sussex map of c.1780.

In origin, the rife was a rivulet draining surface water from a large area below and east of Highdown, running through the north of Ferring and disgoring into the sea between that parish and Kingston, picking up a tributary from the west which marked the north boundary of Kingston, and draining the 'Lakes of Ecclesden'. The lower stretch of this rivulet coursed at will down an alluvial floodplain some ten chains or 200 metres wide, which in recent centuries was mostly in Kingston parish. On each side, coastal plain brickearth provided good arable land for the closely spaced villages. There is little that is known of the rife in ancient history, other than the clear knowledge that coastal erosion has lost a large amount of land and with it a small port belonging to Kingston and its manorial owner Tewkesbury Abbey, last recorded in c1410. Various sources make it conceivable that small compartments, extending from the Arun river lay along the coast, with Kingston port opening into one of these. Martin Kyngeston is one of those identified as a ship master in the 1332 Kingston and Wick subsidy (tax return), but he was of no remarkable wealth, and he is in the Kingston (less affluent) section of this subsidy. A 'stade' or landing place on the beach facing the open seas, still existed at the time of the Armada, and a map of 1587 showing coastal defences has it marked near the rife.



Part of the 'Armada' Map

Smuggling

Smuggling was perhaps more substantial in eastern Sussex, but this locality had its share in the 18th and early 19th Century, when newspapers arrived and had numerous reports. In 1791

Ferring sluice is mentioned, which indicates the rife outlet and some management of the stream. 'Mr Thomas Broad Comptroller of HM Customs with a party of the 10th regiment of light dragoons, seized at Ferring Sluice in the port of Arundel fifty casks of cognac, brandy, rum, and geneva. It was lodged at Arundel Customs'.

Mapping

At this juncture there also appeared the first well-surveyed maps of Sussex, as in c1780, with the rife accurately mapped and the outlet, interestingly, as a delta with three branches into the sea. This had disappeared by 1813 when the first OS maps were published. The whole of the flood plain meadows and the route of the rivulet on these two maps is much as in later years. Most significantly the 1813 map has the Signal House, to warn of invasion in the Napoleonic emergency, the remains of which survived until the 20th Century at the bottom of Sea Lane in Kingston but now lost into the beach, and not to be confused with Lighthouse Cottages.

The course of the rife marked the parish boundary of Ferring-Kingston through all history until the 20th Century. Parishes shared watercourses, but roads belonged to one parish or the other. Modern maps still show this boundary, now quite widely and eccentrically deviating from the present sedate course of the stream. The most notable was a deviation at the south end with the old sluice and tidal flap south of it well to the west of Bluebird Café. Further north, the rife had sweeping bends with doglegs, and adjacent to Foamcourt Way, the stream ran at the foot of their gardens. At the north end of Kingston parish near Park Barn, and where Parsons Way path runs through from East Preston, a bend to the west is cut off and there is now a pond with fishing. Little is now known of the old sluice and flap but it may be supposed to have been of Victorian vintage.

It was assuredly that spread of housing development that necessitated the 'canalisation' of the rife immediately before the war, only reaching completion with the present sluice gate at the south end when war had already broken out. The rife drains not only Ferring but also an area through Goring. Both the north and south of Ferring was being built with gardens edging into the water meadows. Any geological map will define how the brickearth arable of lands to the east and west are cut through with a wide strip of alluvial soils at the rife, quite narrow to the east but very extensive on the Kingston side, reaching across to Sea Barn in what is now Kingston Gorse. The meadows near the sea were referred to as 'saltings'.

The diarist first quoted above, was on holiday locally in the Twenties just prior to the canalisation, and her vision of the rife and brooks was that which many previous generations would have recognized - in flood more like a wide river. During a spring tide the sea forced its way through, while near to East Kingston farm, the whole floodplain may have been under water, both from the rife and as direct rainfall, spreading across some ten chains (or say 200 metres), mostly on the farm side. At other times of the year the ancient meadows had their spring flowers, such as cowslips which children were wont to pick.

The Brooks

It may not now be realised but in the not-so-distant past, villagers did not so much go to Ferring Rife as to the Brooks. That is the meadows that made up what amounted to water meadows in Kingston with their streams or ditches.

A family that lived in Kingston recalled: *"One year it was so wet in the evening when we were going to gather flowers from the brooks that Mother would not let us go. A few tears were shed, but when we got up next morning we discovered that Mother had already been out and collected all we wanted, Dad had made a wire frame for us. I told him what I wanted. We set to, and we soon had a 'flower arbour' in which we placed a doll on a swing, dressed as a May Queen. Cowslips grew in abundance in the meadows by our house."*

An earlier East Preston recollection: *“Miss Amy Warren, of Preston Place, was a rather ‘Pi’ lady and she ran a Sunday School In the spring she used to organise a Cowslip Sunday, and a gang of us used to walk across the fields from Kingston to Ferring Brooks, on a Saturday afternoon. At that time there were masses of cowslips there and we took baskets full of them, duly bunched up, and on Sunday afternoon they were taken to a service in the church, after which they were packed up and sent to the poor children in the East End of London.*

There are year-on-year news reports of floods and proposed remedies prewar. But work got under way on re-routing and banking the rife as it is today in the late Thirties. At that stage the final act took place in 1939-40 with building the present sluice and gate north of the café. There are pictures of it in local newspapers. However, the outfall appears still to have been to the west of the present gate into Kingston Gorse greensward. The construction of the present outfall east of the Bluebird Café appears to have taken place in conjunction with coast protection work in 1954-5 after previous, quite damaging inroads by the sea. [Ed Miller notes that this was of much more concern than the erosion along what is now Pattersons Walk]

There are many who will recall more recent changes as with the carving out of an area to the west of the rife, in c1986, as catchment ponds for any future overflow. This area with its tree planting and wild flowers including orchids, provides some manner of replacement for the meadows that had bordered much of the stream between Kingston and Ferring until about the same time. In the postwar period up to the 1980s, the rife itself had provided a less attractive walk, much as a scoured ditch between bare grass banks. Indeed, the stream is now on a straightened course between banks that nature never created, with the flood plain largely lost to ploughed fields and development at Kingston Gorse and Ferring village.

At the south end of the rife, a bridge provided access across in early years, and no doubt had been used by Coastguards on their patrols.



A postcard picture from the early 1930s

BROOK LANE GARAGE

by Ed Miller

GEM (UK) is not the first garage to be at the junction of Brook Lane and Ferringham Lane. The buildings there go back to 1953, when Steeles of Worthing rebuilt the old garage that had opened in 1929 or 1930. This was Bull's Garage, first mentioned in the 1930 street directory. The picture below (garage to the left) must have been taken just a few years later.



By 1936 the garage was owned by Edward Benton, who also owned the coal merchant and building supplies business in the old Home Farm yard (later Benton and Weatherstone). Benton owned it for the next four years but in the 1940 Street Directory it has a new proprietor, H Jackson. The 1946 Directory shows A V Chiswell as the proprietor (probably related to the N B Chiswell who had the Radio Shop in Ferring Street). In 1948 it was W A Ryder, still there in 1949. But the 1953 Directory has H D Steele & Son, running the garage and a car hire business.

Steeles had a number of garages in the area (including the petrol station in Goring Way which they still own and run). The son, Michael Steele, was kind enough to tell me more about the business and show me the interesting photographs overleaf.

He said, 'My father set up a garage business in 1933. I took it over in due course and my sons eventually took it over from me. Over these 90 years it has changed very considerably: now only part of the business, it has been quite a little empire of garages in the Worthing area.'

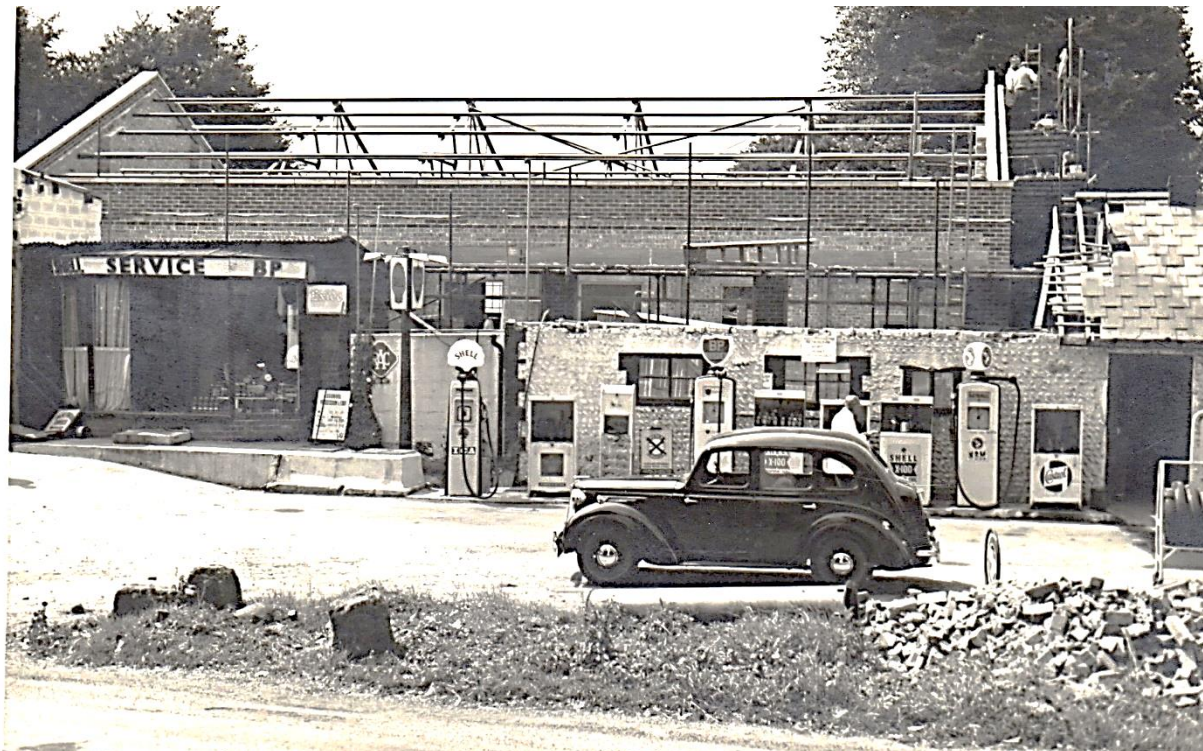
'We took over the old Brook Lane village garage in 1953 when the two forecourt pictures were taken and our petrol attendant at that time was a Mr Cooper. Shortly afterwards we redeveloped it into basically what is still there and in the picture on the next page you can see the new building going up behind the old petrol forecourt.'



A wet day at the old garage, 1953.

The flint-walled building in the background was shown on the 1876 25 inch OS map, presumably a cottage.

Below: the new garage buildings going up – still there today.



The Brook Lane Garage closed in 1982 and the premises were then used by a computer software company which also made amusement arcade machines. In 1995 it was leased to Ferring Country Centre, as a workshop for their clients. In 2009 it was taken over by GEM (UK) - a garage once again.

HANGLETON

by Ed Miller

The place-name 'Hangleton' evidently means 'farm by the sloping wood' and we may imagine that the old village of Hangleton, north of Hove, swallowed up in the housing estates of the 1930s and later development, took its name from such a downland settlement, although there is very little woodland left now. Our own Hangleton in the north-west of Ferring, a hamlet rather than a village, certainly fits the etymology. Hangleton Lane runs up the slope of Highdown and through what is still at its northern end, woodland. Highdown Hill Farm was still operating in the 1970s, from the farmhouse now called 'Highdown Hill Cottage'.

But there was a rather larger farm on the south side of the Littlehampton to Broadwater road, the farmhouse of which was later known as Hangleton Grange. This was also part of Hangleton, and until the mid-1930s this north-south section of Langbury Lane was named as a continuing section of Hangleton Lane. For many years both farms were called Hangleton Farm, the smaller, northern, farmhouse was sometimes referred to as the Upper House. Both parts of Hangleton were quite separate from the main village of Ferring. There were no houses between Hangleton Grange and Ferring Lane until the 1930s.

Hangleton Grange was divided into two semi-detached houses in the early 1950s. Over the doorway of the southern house, a plaque is inscribed 'JB 1717' but this refers to renovations carried out by John Bennett in that year: the building is older than that. It is most likely the one referred to in the 1635 Glebe Terrier survey and the 1647 Parliamentary survey. This was the home of the Bennett family (or rather one branch of them) for over 250 years. The two flint cottages opposite were built for the farm labourers. The house, farmland and the cottages were still owned by the Bennett family in 1890, when a granddaughter sold out to Edwin Henty.



The Bennett family have some of the first christenings recorded in the Parish Registers, in the 1560s. Even earlier than the Bennett family, is the reference to 'Richard de Hangleton' in the mediaeval Custumal, the list of feudal tenants and the services they owed to the Lord of the Manor. The date is uncertain but probably mid-13th Century. Richard is listed as a Cottager,

but without reference to where his 'cot' was, (six of the tenants with larger holdings than his were recorded as 'ByNortheton', which was probably another name for Hangleton).

Richard's cottage may well have been where Hangleton Grange is now. The other Hangleton Farm, the 'Upper House', on the slopes of Highdown, was in the hands of the Bennett family from at least 1635, and in 1647 it was listed with five and a half acres (that is, arable land). The family had the copyhold tenancy until 1712. Shortly after that it was acquired by John Tydie. When he died in 1720, he left the farmland (now eight acres) and house to his daughter Ann. She married John Olliver, who later took over the Mill on Highdown. John built a new house there (possibly incorporating some of the existing house) in 1734.



A plaque over the doorway confirms this: 'JAO [John and Ann Olliver] 1734'. They moved to what is now 'Holly Cottage', as a similar inscription shows, with a date of 1759. Anne died in 1765 and John moved on to the Mill and the Miller's Cottage on Highdown.

There were several other cottages between the Upper House and

'Herstle Street Lane' (Littlehampton Road), the oldest of which was White Cottage, formerly Gravel Cottage, which Kerridge and Standing believed incorporated a 'mediaeval two-bay property' similar to Holly Cottage before John Olliver's alterations. In the Parliamentary survey of 1647, it was attached to five acres of land (now occupied by the Peugeot-Honda dealership).

Like most of the other property in Ferring, it ended up in the Henty portfolio. Before the First World War, and for many years after, his gardener Henry Hoare, lived there with his large family. The house is still standing but much altered over the centuries.



Seven of the Hoare children, outside Gravel cottage 1916. The three older sons were serving in the war, the father probably at work.

Florence Villa is a mid-Victorian building, on the site of an older house that can be identified in the 1647 survey, with three acres of land attached. The land was still arable in the 1840 tithe survey but on the 1874 Ordnance Survey map it is shown as orchard. The 1911 OS Map shows the land covered with glasshouses and it remained as such for many years. It was described as 'Nursery' on the 1962 map.

In fact, the whole of Hangleton Lane below the farmhouse was devoted to horticulture and market gardening until well into the 1970s, of which now very little remains. Some very different businesses established themselves, behind high fences and hedges, usually without planning permission, almost destroying the rural character of the lane. Highdown Hill Farm, continued, with the last of the Penfold family still running it, until 1977, when Charles Penfold sold its last five acres. It then became an equestrian centre, the fields used as paddocks. Part of the old farmyard was taken over by the animal charity WADARS in 2014.

REOPENING OF THE PILL BOX

by Ed Miller

The highlight of 2023 was the beginning of the conservation project on the Pill Box on Patterson's Walk. Led by Pete Coe, this project took up where the History Group's efforts left off in 2007. Working with the Parish Council, we removed the bricked-up entrance and fitted a steel door. We did take some of our members inside, and explored the firing positions and embrasures but it was evident that a good deal of work needed to be done before it could be presented as a permanent exhibition of one of the key defences of the invasion coast. The steel door was locked and 16 years later we found that the locks had corroded and the keys no longer worked.

With the Parish Council's help again, we had a locksmith down and after quite a bit of work he did manage to get the door open and new locks fitted. On entering the Pill Box again, we found nine inches of water covering the floor and some rotting of the wooden mounts for the machine guns. We baled out that water with a bucket chain of our members, and Pete Coe began to explore the interior and to draw up a plan for its refurbishment. Together with Ferring Conservation Group, we have opened a fund for the project - to pay for the materials (the work will be done by volunteers).

Having baled out all the rainwater, the next step is to stop any more getting in. The cracks in the rendering have been filled and the whole structure will be covered with a sealant that has been developed for preserving buildings in locations like this. More work is planned for the interior, and the opening up of the embrasures. Pete Coe is managing the project, and his research on the whole topic of the anti-invasion defences is on-going.



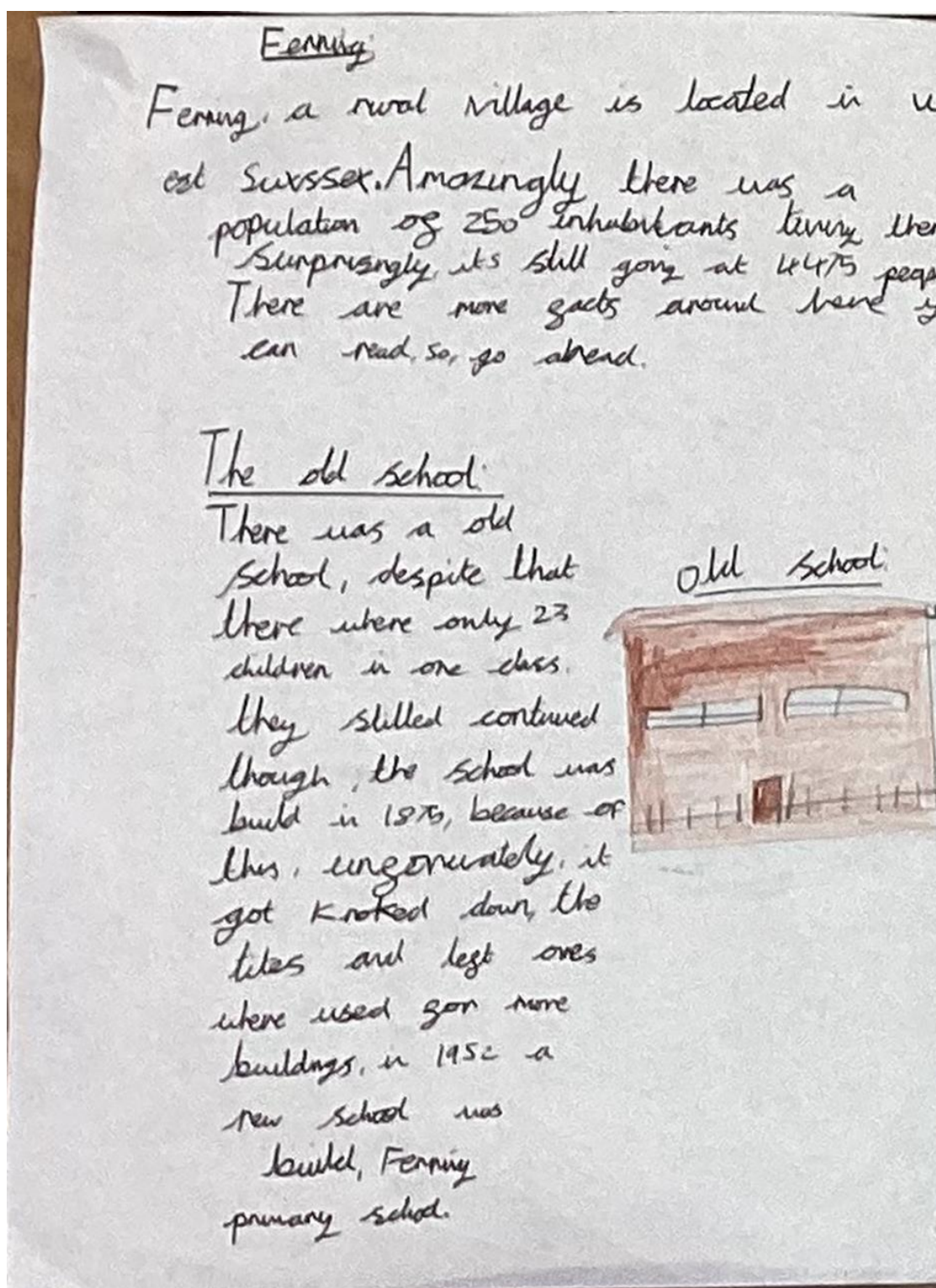
On 10 September Pete Coe gave a talk to 25 of our members. He told this group they were standing in the minefield laid down in the summer of 1940. (Photo by Simon Cornish)

FERRING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDIES FERRING

by Ed Miller

In April, Simon Cornish and I had the pleasure of showing children from Year 3 (7 and 8 year-olds) around the village centre and telling them about the buildings and the people who lived in them. Here, on the next page and on the inside back cover is some of the work they produced, in the form of a Guide Book.

This one was particularly good.






The two-page piece was the most pleasing, but there were many other insightful and amusing comments and illustrations, like this one of Mr and Mrs Henty and the fire of 1946 that almost destroyed Ferring Grange.




The church
The church was build in 1765. However, it has gone through lots of developments the place was often called St Andrews church. It was originally owned by Mrs Fennah. Strangely enough, there where 2 cottages, the church was run out of room in the cemetery, they took it down and discovered there was a skeleton under the goon! In 1897 CE a gate was build on Green Victorians jubilee, it

Edna & Mrs. Henty



The Henty Family
Mr and Mrs Henty owned about 3 quarters of Ferring, in 1910 CE Mrs Henty passed away, Mr Henty was heart broken, as a result, Mr Henty sold the 3/4 of land for 24,000 pounds, part of the land was a gam, Mr Henty also gave it up to. No one bought it. Finally someone bought it, kindly envelopes decided they would, the Henty crest was still here (name of the house)



SUMMER 1926: The Holiday Book of Marion Acton-Bond

Thanks to her daughter, Susanna Hall, Ferring History Group has had access to a unique record written by 15-year-old Marion Acton-Bond, whose parents bought a building plot in the village in 1924, exactly one hundred years ago.

Far more than just a diary, Marion's 50 page journal is illustrated by her own drawings and paintings, from full-page watercolours to thumbnail sketches of incidents mentioned within the text, as well as a number of photos she took at the time.

The only way to do justice to Marion's descriptive and artistic talents is by quoting some of her own words. Her journal begins with the heading:

Settling Down at "Avon"

We arrived at Ferring on July the twenty ninth and installed ourselves once more at our country bungalow "Avon", which is in a small village called Ferring, though it is now getting much bigger. We are not far from the sea and our nearest town is Worthing. The first thing we did was to unpack and get out our bathing things. Then we bicycled down to the sea, and in a few moments were enjoying a beautifully warm bathe. All being able to swim, it was all the more enjoyable, and we came back to enjoy a perfectly huge supper.



'Avon' in 1926, photo by Marion. A pair of bungalows are now on this site at 34 and 36 Ferringham Lane, with a similar design.

Next day, the station master at Goring (which is a village a mile away, Ferring having no station) sent us word that there were some parcels for us, just come down by goods train from London. The coal merchant brought them up to us, and we found them to be everything for a bell tent. It was from father and mother, so that we could camp out in our own garden as we were unable to go to camp that year.

From this, it can be seen that the Acton-Bond children (Marion the eldest, sister Jo, and younger brothers Michael and Brandon) have arrived in Ferring without their parents. But they have not been totally left to their own devices, someone must have prepared their "perfectly huge supper" -- and this can only be the peripheral figure which the Holiday Book occasionally refers to as "Nurse". Mr and Mrs Acton-Bond do appear soon and join their children on various "byke" rides, as far as Arundel to the north-west and Bramber in the north-east. These expeditions are interspersed with numerous punctures. (In one instance, Marion "*found two punctures, and as they were near enough together, I put one patch on the two*". Her drawing is of a bicycle wheel with its inner tube in a bowl of water, testing for leaks.) When venturing along the coast, between Littlehampton and Lancing, the family always stopped for a "bathe" -- even when they went by train to Eastbourne: "*After lunch we had a bathe but as I had hired bathing things on, it was not so enjoyable.*"

About Ferring

Ferring was, when we first came here, a sleepy little village, and had formerly consisted of a farm. It had a few cottages and one or two huge houses. One of these old ones had been converted into a boarding school for boys but as they have to have a lot of grounds it is not built on.

The Church is not very big, and one part of it is very old. It has a litch gate with a chain hanging down from its roof which is used for a lantern to hang on. The vicar is a relation of Admiral Jellico and the villagers are very proud of the fact. He is a good preacher and the people like him very much.

We stayed at Worthing two years ago and came here to see what our new land was like. It was a huge field with a track through and it was just being built on. The village shop sold ever so many things, sweets, darning wool, bread, mustard, bootlaces etc.

At Christmas time the sea comes inland by way of the Rife, which is a stream just opposite us. The sea floods this and it spreads over the field until it looks as if it is a huge river. In the pond near us the water rises two or three feet and the roads are mere tracks of mud, with big cart ruts. In the back of Ferring is High Down. This has Roman remains and a millers tomb. He was buried on High Down by his own wish as he did not like the idea of being buried in a churchyard.

Three pages of Marion's journal are devoted to the Miller's Tomb, and she transcribes most (if not all) of the inscriptions on the grave. *It is a big stone tomb with an iron rail all around, and is situated to the east of Highdown but is on the top. There are a great many "Olliver's" tombs in Ferring churchyard but whether they are relations of John Olliver I don't know. It does not say on his tomb from which parish he came.*

Worthing

Father had gone up to London so as it was not a very nice day we went into Worthing. The only thing we took for lunch was some salt, the rest we were going to buy. Worthing is not a bad sort of town, much nicer than Eastbourne or Littlehampton. It has a pier with many amusements on, also a great many kinemas, which are not so nice. We went and got lunch and then went onto the pier. High diving was by "Watson" a holder of many medals. Mother took us to a kinema, a thing we seldom go to unless it is one like "Across the Sahara" or "Mount Everest". This one was not so bad, indeed one was quite exciting. All about the world of South America.

Marion may have had a low opinion of kinemas via her father, a Shakespearean actor who used his surname as his stage name: Acton Bond. He died in 1941 and merited an obituary in *The Times*. When Mrs Henty sold the Ferring estate, William Acton-Bond was among the first people to build one of the new houses. He and Ralph Maddison, a local builder, submitted plans for "a timber-framed bungalow" in October 1924, which was completed in May 1925. It was located on the east side of what became Ferringham Lane (where Nos 34 and 36 now stand) and, judging from Marion's map, 'Avon' was on a substantial plot which included a tennis court. A subsequent extension (later a separate property) also had link with the Bard: it was named 'Stratford'.

Going Home

A week or two before we went back I was longing to go but when the night before came I did not want to at all.

We had a bathe and had to bring all the things back from the hut. Chairs, a pair of bathing shoes which had never been worn, bathing caps, and bathing suits. We took them back on our bicycles. At half past twelve we had lunch and in the middle a cart came from "Welch" for our luggage. It was all put in except our bykes and some suitcase and went slowly jogging away. I couldn't believe I was really going back to "London" at all and neither could the others. We none of us wanted to go at all and we all wished we could lose the train. As a matter of fact we only just caught it and managed to get an empty carriage.

At West Worthing I thought how easy it would be to get out and walk back. I nearly did so but thought it was not a proper thing to do as father had paid for my ticket.

And so summer 1926 and the Ferring holiday came to an end, although the family regularly returned to the village until “Avon” was sold around 1940. But later, when Marion had a family of her own, she brought them to Ferring for holidays.

Marion Acton-Bond’s artistic talents led to her becoming a student at two prestigious art colleges, Chelsea and the Central School of Art. She went on to work with Arthur Mee on his book series *The King’s England*, while the narrative skills of her Holiday Book continue to evocatively capture a long-lost era of Ferring history.

Diary extracts © Susanna Hall

THE EMPEROR COMES TO FERRING

by Ed Miller

In 1936 Haile Selassie, Emperor of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), was driven out of his country by an Italian invasion. He famously made an appeal to the League of Nations at Geneva to force the Italians out but it was only in 1941 that he was able to return to Ethiopia with a British army, after Italy declared war on Britain in June 1940.



Emperor Haile Selassie

He lived in England during his exile and stayed briefly at Warnes hotel in Worthing. It was reported in the Worthing Gazette that he was going to buy one of the big houses on Ferring seafront but this did not happen. Instead he bought a large house in Bath. He certainly visited Ferring and enrolled his youngest son as a pupil at Tudor Close preparatory school.

‘A former resident recalled the excitement in the village during the war years when the exiled Emperor of Abyssinia visited Ferring with his entourage to attend a school play at the boys’ school, now the Tudor Close where his son, the heir apparent was a pupil.’ [from the FROA Magazine 1986]. The visit must have been early in the war because by January 1941, Haile Selassie was back in Ethiopia, the school had closed down and the building was soon used by the Canadian Army.

The son may have been Prince Sahle Selassie (born 1932 – and therefore the right age to be a young pupil at the school in 1940). He was the youngest son of the Emperor but he could well



Prince Sahle



Prince Makonnen

have been the heir apparent because, Wikipedia tells us, he was the only legitimate son born to a reigning Emperor. It was more likely his older brother Makonnen, who visited the school in April 1937, as reported by the Worthing Herald. The 12 year-old ‘had lunch with the Principal Mr N Cook,’ but, the school said, ‘the Emperor had not yet decided whether to send his son to Ferring’. If

the Emperor came in 1940, Makonnen would have been 15 or 16 and rather over-age for a prep school. Whichever it was, in the event, neither of them succeeded their father. Haile Selassie lived on to 1975 (deposed by the army in 1974, and then murdered on their orders), whereas Saleh died in 1962 (of liver disease), and Makonnen in 1957 (killed in a road accident).

MORE FROM FERRING PRIMARY SCHOOL

