



Rudgwick Preservation Society Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The results of the great storm of last October have re-emphasised that common experience that we too often take for granted the beauty of the environment and do not fully appreciate it until it is irretrievably altered. Much of the damage done is irreversible and it has been truly said that parts of the landscape, including areas of Sussex, will never be the same again.

It may be however that this particular cloud has the proverbial silver lining. The need to repair damage to tree plantings of all kinds forces us to think in terms of a longer time scale than our own life span and to consider the effects of decisions taken now upon the appearance and needs of the countryside well into the next century and further ahead. Great landscape designers and planters have always done this as have generations of folk who have used the countryside for their employment, enjoyment and its proper exploitation. If of recent years we have rather lost sight of the need to think in this way, being forced to do so now may, for all the slow process of restoration, turn out to be for the benefit of future generations. We are all aware of the many tree-planting initiatives being undertaken both nationally and locally and the Society is pleased that its limited programme of planting in the churchyard, albeit not undertaken for this purpose, will contribute to a small degree to the ultimate making good of what has been lost.

While this newsletter is being prepared the Society and the

Parish Council are working together as part of the County Council's "clean-up" campaign, geared in part to the consequences of the storm, to do exactly that within the village and its surroundings between 19th.March and 1st.April. Both bodies are grateful to those who are going to help and hope that this event will act as a reminder to those whose thoughtlessness in part makes it necessary.

There is still no news of the next stage of the procedure for the District Council to decide on the siting of the additional 500 homes in the North Horsham area as required by the Secretary of State's response to the West Sussex structure plan.Indeed further consultations with Horsham District Council are still awaited on the proposed new developments on the Buckhurst site and at the end of Pondfield Road.

While it is clear that development of these sites can be considered as meeting the village's "obligation" to accommodate new development under the North Horsham District Plan, the continuing increase in property values locally has highlighted the long-standing and far from localized problem of young people wishing to remain in their home villages when they become independent of their parents but finding themselves unable to cope with soaring property prices. Mr David Clark, as reported in the current newsletter of the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies, speaking in his capacity as rural affairs

adviser at a Planning for Rural Changes conference held late last year at Sussex University made the point that the identity of village life is being eroded in Sussex as comparatively well-off middle-aged and retired people take over property that has become beyond the reach of local young people.

Whatever Mr Clark means by 'identity', it is clearly in the interests of any community that young people who wish to remain in it, support its organisations and traditions and eventually bring up their own children there, should be able to do so. For this reason the Society hopes that, when decisions about development at Buckhurst and Pondfield Road are finally made, provision for starter homes at affordable prices will be included in the plan.

The influence of market forces dominates many aspects of life at present but the ability of young people to afford to live in their own village, when they wish to do so, is, like the re-planting of our damaged trees, an aspect where local needs should count far more than market forces do.

JOHN COZENS

Readers will recall that in the last newsletter we asked for articles depicting life in old Rudgwick. This contribution from Miss Ivy Port is a graphic description of how villagers entertained themselves in the days before television and videos. Miss Port recently celebrated her 90th birthday and the Preservation Society would like to add its congratulations to those of her many other friends.

ANNUAL EVENTS

A flower show was held annually in the cricket field, which was then next to the Queen's Head. It was a great event and all the village turned out in their Sunday best to attend it. Many of them were exhibitors, of course. The Rudgwick Silver Band played merry tunes and for the children the greatest thrill of all were the swings and roundabouts

Then there was the Annual Fair, always called the Rudgwick Club which took place in the field opposite the King's Head. Another annual event was the Cherry Fayre held one Sunday afternoon in, of course, the cherry season. Sometimes this was held at the Fox Inn and occasionally at the now demolished 'Martlett' (The Martlett Hotel used to stand on the corner of Station Road and Church Street) As a child I thought this was very dull because all you did was to stand and gaze at the men swilling down mugs of beer or buy a few cherries which were arranged on a trestle table outside the pub. I think it really was an occasion for the publicans to sell their drinks. Eventually I believe there were no cherries although it was still called the Cherry Fayre.

There were great activities in the village on November 5th. A torchlight procession through the village headed by the Rudgwick band started the evening. I think the torches consisted of rags on sticks soaked in creosote. Most of the bearers were in fancy dress. The procession ended at a huge bonfire in the field opposite the butcher's shop, Southdown House, Church Street, and the proceedings ended in a grand display of fireworks. There was plenty of drink circulated and

the whole performance became very merry. Mr William Butcher, our Butcher, was the leading light in organising Bonfire night. For weeks beforehand he would collect fireworks and rubbish for the fire. He was a merry fellow and without his vivacity and personality it wouldn't have been such a lively evening or nearly as exciting. (William Butcher, Known to everyone as Billy Butcher, was the father of Mr Frank Butcher of the Post Office)

In the winter months the village hall (Church Street) was frequently used for Penny Readings. I suppose at one time one had to pay a penny for admittance but in the early 1900's it was raised to the terrific price of 6d front seats and 3d back seats. Four large tables were pushed together to form a platform and the performers mounted it by a chair or box. Local talent was well displayed by songs, recitations and dialogues which although practically the same programme was presented every time, was thoroughly enjoyed and there was a great demand for encores. Dr Boxall was the star turn at the Penny Readings. (Dr Boxall used to live in Church Hill House and his Daughters of course still live in the Village in The Ridge in Church Street). He was so popular in the village and to hear him sing old country songs on the platform dressed up as Farmer Giles was a great thrill. We stamped our feet and clapped in all his choruses. "The Village Pump, the Village Pump, the Village Pump, pump, pump, pump" was suited for thunderous stamping when we all joined in the 'pumps' with an extra thud on the last 'pump'. Another was "Wire in my lads" - the chorus lent itself to great applause and more stamping. "Wire in my lads, keep on living till you doy (die). If you keep on livin' long enough

you'll live as long as oi (I)."The turmit (turnip) 'oeing' was another and he'd scrape the platform with his hoe while he was singing. "The floy (fly) the floy the floy be on the turmits, and its all my oi (eye) if you do try to keep 'em off the turmits. Of course it needs to be sung to appreciate the fun of it all.

The Station Master was at first a Mr. Brightly followed by Mr. Moorhouse. I cannot remember much about the songs by Mr. Brightly but Mr. Moorhouse who came on later sang the well known songs of those days such as "Annie Laurie" and "Home Sweet Home" and when he suddenly leapt into something more modern such as "Mary Ann, she's after me," we all thought he had gone slightly off course and that he was sailing rather too near the wind. The older people were easily shocked by anything up to date.

The vicar who was then Rev. W.H. Chambers sobered us down a little when he recited long poems by our great poets. They were usually very long. One I remember was "The green eye of the little yellow god". It seemed to go on and on but we thought it was great because it was recited by our vicar.

Then the Magic Lantern was popular and occasionally there were shows given by the Vicar or someone who was 'au fait' with the working of the lantern. This was also given in the Village Hall, Church Street. Slides were put through the lantern which threw the picture on to a large white sheet hung on the wall. Sometimes there was a slight hold up because the lantern jibbed. A strong smell of paraffin permeated the air and the room seemed full of smoke. However this was part of the show and it all added to the fun as we had to sit in the dark for a bit.

Bucks Green School was another centre for entertainment. The Annual Chrysanthemum Show took place there in the autumn and was very popular both for exhibitors and the onlookers.

Displays of Marionettes were given there too and occasional concerts. The great thrill was when a silent movie was shown - one of the very first - very primitive but to the villagers it was a great affair and talked about for days.

Rudgwick would have been considered very go-ahead in those days and the people of the village would all join in and take an active part in one way or another. All very primitive and simple yet all thought it was great.

IVY PORT

HAS ANYONE SEEN ROMAN RUDGWICK?

Throughout history derelict buildings have been robbed of materials for reuse in later buildings - why bother to quarry, transport and shape when suitable stone is lying unwanted in a nearby field? This very human activity can be helpful to modern archaeologists and the presence of a number of Roman buildings has first been indicated by finding Roman tile in parish churches. In Surrey, tile from the villages at Fetcham and Ashted and the possible villa at Stoke d'Abernon all ended up in parish churches built some thousand years later. Further down Stane Street tile from the mansio is found in the church at Hardham; other Sussex churches with Roman tile include Arlington, Buncton, Chichester, Eastgate, Ford, Jevington, Rumboldswyke, Sompting, Stoughton, Tangmere, Walberton and Westhampnett. In

1874 the Surrey Archaeological Collections contained a paper on the Roman branch road from Stane Street at Rowhook to the temple on Farley Heath which mentioned Roman tile in Rudgwick church but subsequently this observation seems to have been forgotten. These tiles, mainly tegulae or roof tiles, are easily recognised by their size (40cm. x 30cm. x 5cm.) and occur in several parts of the church but there are none in the modern parts of the structure. They are found in the west tower, the oldest part of the church built in the early thirteenth century and in the fourteenth century south nave wall, buttresses, chancel and the gable end of the north aisle. Their shape is used in the framing of the decorated windows of the south nave. Probably the tiles were used in the first church, saved when most of that church was demolished and were among the materials re-used for the extensive fourteenth century rebuilding.

The obvious question that remains is - where did they come from? The nearest Roman site is the mansio at Alfoldean, about 4km. to the south-east. Certainly there is a large amount of tile there - every time the fields to the east and west of the A29 are ploughed the surface is red with tile - but to transport a heavy load by cart over unmade roads across the Arun valley and up the steep scarp of the ridge on which Rudgwick is built would have taken a considerable effort. Most of the fabric of the church is sandstone which could have been obtained locally - why bring a few cartloads of tile from Alfoldean? This must remain the most likely site, but it does no harm to keep an open mind and consider alternatives as long as it is recognised that any other suggestion is at present

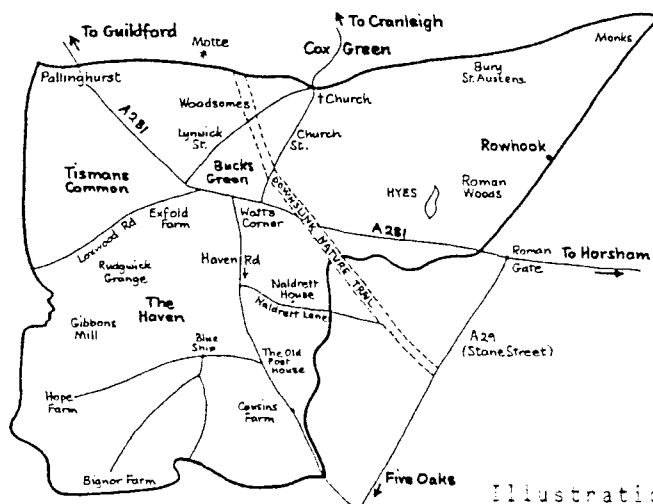


Illustration by Helen Long

The Parish map of Rudgwick may help you locate some of the place names in the articles by Judie English and Patricia Naldrett Peak. It may come as a surprise to some readers to see how far the Rudgwick Parish boundary extends. The Preservation Society, with the support of The Haven Society, represents the interests of its members within this area and in adjacent areas, particularly Cox Green, Baynards and Ellens Green.

little more than speculation.

The ridge overlooking the Arun valley somewhere close to Stane Street or to the Roman branch road would be a good site for a villa. Perhaps the answer lies in the woods and fields between Rudgwick and Rowhook.

In 1945 the Cranleigh branch of the Women's Institute wrote a scrapbook which mentions that Roman remains had been found in the soil of the pond opposite the Wheatsheaf at Ellen's Green which was one of the excavations for iron ore. There is now no pond immediately opposite the Wheatsheaf and none is shown on the Tithe Map, but there are several in the fields and woods to the east of the Ewhurst/Rudgwick road. Any of these could be the one referred to by the W.I. Two in particular give rise to curiosity. The route of the Roman road to Farley temple passes beside a small pond near Hoopwick Farm. This pond, with its annular island, is retained by a dam and is obviously man-made. It lies in a small copse surrounded by bank and ditch boundaries which may be of some considerable age. The ploughed fields to the north and south seem to hold little clue as to the origin of this pond. Further north, near Hillhouse Farm, is the Heron Pond. In 1874 this pond was reported to have been recently reduced in size, which probably explains why the retaining dam

is now some metres to the west of the pond. The Roman road runs a few metres to the east of the Heron Pond.

Either or neither of these ponds may be the one referred to by the W.I.; and that reference may or may not be accurate. What is certain is that the Roman tiles in Rudgwick church came from a Roman building. Perhaps the thirteenth century builders had them brought from Alfoldean. Perhaps not. It would be gratifying to think that detective work, following what clues we have, would lead to the site. Precedent decrees that luck is more likely to play a part. A farmer ploughing, someone walking a country path, a builder digging foundations or a brickworks digging for clay - these are the people most likely to find the building if it exists. Just a thought - were the tiles picked up close to the quarry which yielded the stone for the early church? My guess is that the answer lies within a mile or so of Rudgwick.

JUDIE ENGLISH

(Can any of our readers throw further light on the possible origin of the Roman tiles or the sandstone for the early church? If so we would be delighted to hear of your ideas. Judie can be contacted at 61, Hailey Place, Cranleigh. Tel.276724.)

THE NALDRETT OF RUDGWICK

There are those who like to claim that their ancestors came over with the Conqueror but I would rather be able to say that my family were already here and living in West Sussex. The family name is Naldrett and they lived at Naldrett House Bucks Green. The name itself is Anglo-Saxon, meaning 'at the alder grove' - most appropriate for the banks of the Arun. Every Naldrett knows it has to be spelled out and over the years it has taken many forms. Medieval records were written in Latin but clerks spoke English or French so that names appeared in several ways, e.g. de Alrete or Atten Aldrette. The 'n' in time became detached from 'atten' to prefix 'Aldrett.'

The earliest written reference comes in the Assize Roll, 1279 (Edward I), and mentions 'atten Alrette' in connection with a house at Rudgwick. In 1305 Robert atte Nalrette gave William a life interest in a house, one virgate and eight acres of land at Rudgwick and Billingshurst in return for a rose at the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. Thomas atte Nalrette in 1353 held a house and one hundred acres from the Manor of Drungwick which itself was under the endowment of the church at Chichester. At this time Drungwick held the two water mills, Gibbons and Wandford.

Although Rudgwick was their home, Naldretts scattered over a wide area. Younger sons had property in Slinfold and Billingshurst, Kirdford and Wisborough Green. Their name still survives at farms called 'Nalretts' at West Chiltington, Cuckfield and Wisborough Green (now called Link Farm).

By the time Parish records start in the 1530's, we are on surer ground concerning relationships, though this is confused by the fact that, owing to a high mortality rate, everyone in sight is called John. John Naldrett, who died in 1546, had two sons both called John. It was just as well because John, his wife Eleanor and John the Younger all died of plague within a few days of each other.

John the Elder who inherited had amongst other property 'Naldrats in Ruggeswyk' and, when he died in 1550, left it and Wandford Mill to his son, another John. He left many money bequests. He 'bequethed unto ye church of Rudgweke towards ye reparacious vjs vlljd (6s 8d) whereof ye aforsayd Church doth owe unto me lljs lljd (3s 3d).' Very generous. The family seem to have been living at Wandford Mill, as in a law suit of 1595 mention is made of 'an entailed house in Rudgweeke called Wandford with divers lands, etc.etc.' The John Naldrett concerned was the last to live there....'John Naldrett of Myll, householder' died in 1616. His will left his family well off and from this time to the end of the eighteenth century, like many in Sussex, they continued to prosper. His widow, Judith Cowper of Strood, died in 1634. Her son George paid 20s extra for her to be buried in the 'Chancell' of Rudgwick Church.

George Naldrett is described as a gentleman, as opposed to a yeoman. Born 1606, he was at one time compounded for knighthood which meant he chose to pay a fine rather than have the expense of the honour. He took his family away from the mists of the river to live at Naldrett House on the higher land to the south. Dallaway in his book 'Sussex', writing of

Rudgwick describes Naldrett Place as being the principal estate. Another account states there was a Dutch garden, two fishponds and eighteen riding horses. George also built the great barn in 1640, blown down in the storm last year. He was churchwarden of Rudgwick in 1637.

His great-grandson, George Naldrett born in 1706, was the last to live at Naldrett House. His parents married late and he was the only child, orphaned at fifteen. There were no close relatives apart from his aunt Elizabeth who had married Peter Bettesworth IV of Fitzhall, Iping, in 1681. George was a young man of considerable substance so it was surprising he never married. He became High Sheriff of Sussex in 1746 and when he died in 1778, aged seventy-two, was buried in the Chancel of Rudgwick Church. He also died intestate.

George may have been the end of his line but fortunately for the present day Naldretts there was another branch of the family descended from half-brothers, sons of the first George Naldrett. This branch had lived at Violetts Farm; come down in the world and moved to Westlands Farm at Wisborough Green. George Naldrett, junior, aged forty-seven, felt he had a claim to the Naldrett estate because the old man said he was his heir. Furthermore, the family solicitor, William Johnson of Petworth, agreed and put him in possession of the Estate. The solicitor, however, perhaps feeling he did not get enough out of it, looked round for another heir and came up with Mrs Ann Riggs, a widow, daughter of Peter Bettesworth V of Fitzhall, whose mother had been Elizabeth Naldrett. Several law cases later, Ann Riggs was in possession of the Naldrett Estate.

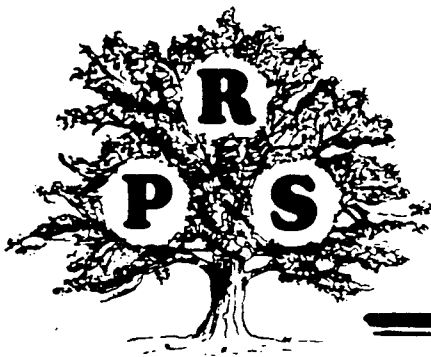
It was certainly a very curious business. There was doubt as to

the parentage of Mrs Riggs's father which was never properly resolved. There is no doubt that William Johnson, having all the Naldrett papers, suppressed and used what evidence he liked. Furthermore, George Naldrett could neither read nor write (his ancestors in the 1600's went to Grammar School) and, in 1732 swore an Affidavit that he was not worth £5. He was then assigned Counsel in an early form of legal aid. His Counsel was obviously negligent and in 1785 the case was lost by default. To mark her triumph, Ann Riggs put up the memorial tablet in Rudgwick church to the memory of George Naldrett, Esq., firmly stating it to be erected by her, 'his cousin, heir-at-law and next of kin'. So that there should be no doubt. The unfortunate George continued to live at Rudgwick with his wife and ten children within sight of Naldrett House, at 'Hurstlands' Farm, courtesy of Mrs Riggs.

When she died in 1793 she left everything to her half brother, James Piggott who had given evidence in the court case on her behalf. His son James pulled down Naldrett House and built the present house which had been considerably altered since. He also built and lived at Slinfold Lodge. The last of the line was the late Major Edward St. John who died in 1960.

There is one other Naldrett memorial in Rudgwick church and that is to Percy Naldrett, 1888 - 1973. He will be remembered as the village printer at Bucks Green and honorary Vice-President of the 'Magic Circle'. Though Naldretts are scattered the world over now, it is particularly appropriate that Percy, who was deeply attached to his County, wrote poetry, knew Hilaire Belloc and had great character, should have as his epitaph - 'A Man of Sussex'.

PATRICIA NALDRETT PEAK



RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
will be held on **MONDAY, APRIL 25th** at
7.30 pm, at the Village Hall, Bucks Green

7.30 pm. - BUSINESS MEETING
Election of Officers & Committee

8.00 pm JOAN HARDING. F.S.A.
will give an illustrated lecture on

"LOOKING AT OLD HOUSES"

Joan is the chairman of the Domestic Buildings Research Group of Surrey. She has researched and recorded 3000 historic houses in Surrey - a remarkable achievement.

8.45 pm. - COFFEE WILL BE SERVED

9.00 pm - Joan will show slides of some good examples of historic houses in Rudgwick

ALL ARE WELCOME!