



RPS NEWSLETTER

RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

SPRING 1990

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A major subject of comment recently has been the litter-strewn state of some parts of the village. This seems to have become a chronic problem in spite of the best endeavors of those who help in litter clearances and of shopkeepers who provide containers for rubbish.

We know that the Council is responsible for keeping the streets clean but it appears that staff cannot keep up with the rate at which we, collectively, dirty them. In countries like Germany and Switzerland householders have by law to keep clean the streets in front of their houses, while in some parts of the U.S.A. the job is done by inmates of the local penitentiary. Here it is us, the inhabitants, or them, the Council.

Already, some public-spirited inhabitants clean up the litter outside their own properties. Perhaps the situation would improve if all members of the Society took an active part in spreading this habit and in 'bin-ing' the rubbish dropped by those who seem to care less about their environment than we do.

As part both of a national scheme to protect the environment and of its own strategy for nature conservation, West Sussex County Council, over the next two years, will be collating and then producing a definitive list of 'Sites of Nature Conservation Interest'. These will be the next tier of protection after Sites of Special Scientific Interest and will 'protect and nurture' wider areas.

Sites of Nature Conservation Interest will preserve 'habitat types and species the loss of which would cause irreparable damage to wildlife and science'. The main protection for SNCI's will be a presumption, generally speaking, against harmful development and priority amongst other interested individuals and organisations in the allocation of aid and advice.

The Society welcomes this indication of the County Council's commitment to the preservation of the countryside and hopes to contribute to the identification of appropriate sites.

The Society's Spring Open Meeting will be held at 7.30pm. on April 23rd at the Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green, and will be divided, as usual, into the Annual General Meeting and a talk, this year to be given by Mr. Tony Wales on 'Horsham Folklore'. All Officer and Committee posts are open to election at the AGM and any member wishing to nominate a candidate should, having obtained that person's agreement, inform the Secretary in writing no later than April 16th. For this purpose, the Secretary's address is: 2, Perry Lodge, Tisman's Common. We hope as many people as possible will support this event.

JOHN COZENS

FIELD PLACE and SHELLEY

By Andrew Shelley

During the last months of 1989, RPS has joined with the Warnham Society, The Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Parish Councils of Warnham, Broadbridge Heath and Rudgwick in trying to prevent the insertion of a paragraph in the new Horsham District Plan which would allow development at Field Place. Our objections were put to the Inspector just before Christmas. His decision will probably be given in June.

Field Place is a Grade 1 listed building. Its Medieval Hall dates from the mid -14th century, while the rest of the building has been constructed and rebuilt over six hundred years so that it now represents an extraordinary sequence of styles. Field Place is built round what was originally an open courtyard. The north, south and east sides were originally timber framed, but by the mid 17th century it had been encased in stone. The Michells, who lived in Field Place at the time, owned stone quarries at Stammerham. They also constructed the western side in 1678, when most of the earlier buildings were probably relegated to servants' quarters. The roof is mainly Horsham slabs and many of the roof timbers are original. The west front with its entrance pillars was constructed in the nineteenth century, so the best known view of the house is quite unlike that which the poet Shelley knew, though the inside is very largely the same.

The main reason for Field Place's Grade 1 listing is that Percy Bysshe Shelley was born there in 1792. Little is known about his very early years. He was the eldest of six children and apparently an attractive, lively boy. He was very much the other children's leader and often kept them amused with fantastic stories of the great tortoise who lived in Warnham pond or the old grey alchemist who lived in the Field Place garret. Shelley had a passion for playing with fire and used to carry a pail of flaming liquid through the kitchen to the back door, on one occasion setting fire to the butler whom he then soused with a bucket of water.

After a fairly unhappy period as a boarder at Syon House School, Shelley went to Eton where his eccentricities made him the butt of his school fellows. He defied a number of ancient school customs, such as "fagging" which he refused to do. For a period there was a regular "Shelley hunt" every day at noon. Shelley became an atheist at Eton, though it is not clear if this was in the modern sense of denying God's existence or the classical sense of one opposed to the gods. Either way it was not popular in the early nineteenth century. At Eton he became interested in chemistry and electricity. On one occasion his tutor caught him in the act of producing a "blue flame" and seized hold of a mysterious implement

on the table. In an instant he was thrown against the wall, having grasped a highly charged electrical machine. On holiday, back at Field Place, he sought to repeat Benjamin Franklin's experiment of flying a kite in a thunderstorm.

When he returned for the holidays he usually had an eccentric quantity of hair and on at least one occasion his sister made him sit down while she cut it off "to make him look like a Christian". [in some respects things have not changed much in 190 years]. He took part in the usual outdoor activities and was a good shot, on one occasion shooting three snipe with three shots. (What a pity that these days the fields are too well drained to support snipe). Later he became bored, or opposed to field sports, and would let the keeper do the shooting while allowing his mother (who was keen on "manly" sports) to think the bag was his.

Shelley eventually went up to Oxford, where his interest in atheism and organic chemistry increased. His friend Thomas Hogg reported that though his rooms had been freshly painted, the air of freshness was "obscured by the indescribable confusion of books, boots, papers, shoes, philosophical instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition, and phials innumerable. Money, stockings, prints, crucibles, bags and boxes were scattered on the floor and in every place; as if the young chemist, in order to analyse the mystery of creation, had endeavoured first to reconstruct the primeval chaos."

Shelley only lasted nine months at Oxford before he was expelled. Not only was he a revolutionary, rebelling at the extreme poverty of the time, but he also published a pamphlet entitled "The Necessity of Atheism" which proved to be the last straw. He had never been on very good terms with his father and after his expulsion only once went back to Field Place. He eloped with, and then married, Harriet Westbrook. He left her three years later and eloped with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. Harriet committed suicide in 1816, enabling them to marry. Two years later they left for Italy, which Shelley loved and where he wrote his greatest poetry. Tragically, aged only 29, he was drowned in 1822 in a storm at sea. Until her death in 1851, Mary kept his heart, wrapped in a silken shroud, between the leaves of the Pisa edition of "Adonais".

He has out-soared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain.

from "Adonais"

The notes on Shelley are taken from "Shelley in England" by Roger Ingpen and those on Field Place from a Brief Historical Summary by Dr. Anna-belle Hughes which was presented at the inquiry

ENFORCING PLANNING CONTROL

By Stan Smith

Both the Haven Preservation Society and our Society are concerned about the weaknesses and ineffectiveness of enforcement notices. In particular the long delays in implementing the unauthorised siting of a mobile home at Cousins Copse in the Haven have given cause for grave concern. Although an enforcement notice was still valid on this site prohibiting a mobile home and despite further notices, a mobile home is occupying this piece of land after two years of delays through legal arguments and various appeals. A fence and two brick-built pillars (with lights on top) have been erected since the enforcement notice was issued and water, electricity and telephone have been installed.

We have written to our M.P. Sir Peter Horden, who has been very helpful and is aware of the problem. Our letters have been passed to the Department of the Environment whose replies are unsatisfactory since they are relying on the Carnworth Report (February 1989). The report agrees that if penalties imposed by the Courts are inadequate and do not have a deterrent effect, the length of time taken by enforcement procedures becomes unacceptable. Furthermore, the Dobry report in 1975 described enforcement procedures as "probably the weakest link in the planning system).

Nevertheless the Carnworth report recommends that unauthorised development should not become a criminal offence.

The basis of our argument is that it is quite feasible for someone using the current enforcement procedures to their advantage to avoid successful action for a period of some eighteen months to two years. The Chief Planning Officer of Horsham District Council agrees that experience shows that the only sure remedy is that unauthorised development should be unlawful, in other words it should become a criminal offence. The remedy then would be completely simplified and resolved with despatch. The DOE have rebutted our arguments by claiming that the Cousins Copse case is most unusual. As a result the Chief Planning Officer has cited two other cases where enforcement notices have been served in Billingshurst with even more serious delays.

As Brian Murgatroyd (Chairman of the Haven Preservation Society) has put it, the Minister "is still not regarding the problems of the inherent difficulty of dealing with infringements of planning procedures with adequate decisiveness."

Sir Peter Horden agrees that enforcement procedures are proving quite unsatisfactory and he has been very helpful in conveying our misgivings to the Secretary of State. Meanwhile he has been in touch with both the Chief Planning Officer of the Horsham District Council and the Secretary of State and we are awaiting the outcome of their deliberations.

MEMORIES OF RUDGWICK

By Eileen Tuff

I came with my parents in 1920 to live in Rudgwick. My father bought a village shop that was next to St John's Church. He continued to carry on the business until 1937, when the premises became a private house. From my bedroom window I could look across to a meadow known as the common and on winters' mornings I would see the cowman, a Mr Cheesmore from Exfold Farm, with his lantern rounding up a herd of cows and driving them to the farm to be milked. This was done by hand, as there was no supply of electricity in the village until the 1930s.

I went to the village school next to the Fox Inn, with a group of Children whose ages ranged between 5 yrs and 14 yrs. As there were only six people in the village who owned cars, it was safe for us to bowl hoops or to skip with ropes as we went to school. There were no pavements and the roads were not macadamised until the 1930s. As there was no provision for school dinners until the 1930s, the children either went home for dinner, or took sandwiches etc. In summertime the children liked to picnic at the bottom of the school garden, and sometimes have forbidden paddles in the brook.

Empire days and Jubilee days were popular occasions as they were halfday holidays. On those days the children paraded in the playground and saluted the Union Jack flying on the flagpole, then after singing some patriotic songs the rest of the day was a holiday.

Rudgwick was lucky to have a Railway Station, (which was where the Health Centre now stands) as there were no buses until 1926 when the Aldershot and District Bus Company began the service from Guildford through Rudgwick to Horsham. Before people had cars they drove in pony-traps, cycled or walked. At the Roman Gate corner the old Toll House was used by an elderly woman as a small shop where she sold ginger beer and cakes etc. to thirsty passers-by.

There was great excitement one summer's day in the early 1920s when an aeroplane was seen circling over the village. It was a bi-plane and it had run out of fuel, so the pilot decided to land it on a field at Howick Farm. As soon as it had landed people in the village who were able to leave their homes or work, hurried to the farm to see the plane. While the navigator went to get fuel the pilot stayed with the plane and talked to the excited spectators who waited to see the plane fly away. There were some large families in the village with as many as eight or nine children, so there was a Boot and Shoe club to provide foot wear for families who needed help and numerous jumble sales helped with clothing etc. There were tea parties for children attending Sunday school and Outings, usually to the sea-side. These were by train until the Coach Companies began operating.

Other highlights were outings to the British Empire Exhibition and Aldershot Tattoos. An annual event was the flower show and sports day held in a field behind the Queen's Head. The field is now the Penthorpe School sports field.

Rudgwick was lucky to have a good band with keen membership, and in Mr Harold Tate a fine Band Master. The band greatly helped in making local events enjoyable and successful. Before the amount of traffic passing through the village increased to the present volume there was an annual Church Parade on Remembrance Sundays, and Guy Fawkes processions that ended with a bonfire and fireworks.

In the 1920's the Rev. Chambers together with helpers produced an annual pantomime which was enjoyed by the cast and audiences. These took place in the school next to the Fox Inn. The school and the Village Hall were used for concerts, whist drives and other social occasions.

There was no street lighting until after the 1939-45 war and when we went out after it became dark we carried lanterns or torches containing batteries. For lighting our houses we used oil lamps and candles.

As there was no piped water until the 1920s we had to use buckets to get it from wells or by pumps.

When the Queen's Hall was built next to the Queen's Head it was used for various meetings and social events.

Before there was a bus service shopping was difficult so there were carrier's vans. These went round the village in the morning and the drivers collected orders for goods from the shops in Horsham and returned later in the day with the goods. Before 1940 there were the following organisations in the village. The Girls' Friendly Society, The Church Lads' Brigade, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, The Mothers' Union, The Womens' Institute, The Pals for Ex-Servicemen and Clubs for Cricket, Football, Tennis, Stoolball, Angling and Gardening.

WEALDEN BUILDINGS STUDY GROUP - Timber-framed buildings in Rudgwick

Readers will remember that we reported on the progress of the Study Group in our Spring Newsletter last year. At that time 12 buildings had been surveyed - the number now stands at 25

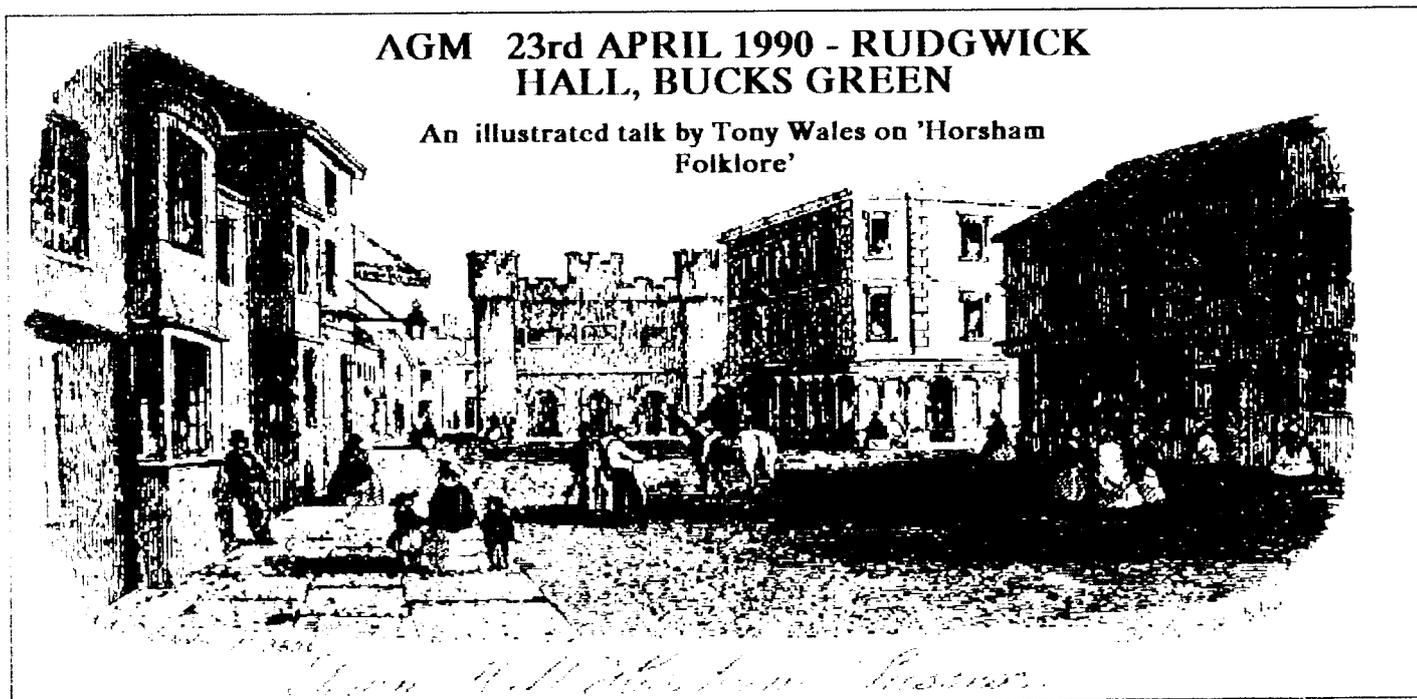
The Wealden Buildings Study Group was formed in 1964 to promote the study of the rich tradition of old houses and other small vernacular buildings in the Weald

Diana Chatwin, a member of the group, who lives in Slinfold, has undertaken the production of a complete record of all the timber-framed buildings in our Parish.

We are grateful to owners who have allowed us to record their property and hope that we shall have the willing co-operation of those owners yet to be approached for future studies.

There are over 60 timber-framed buildings in Rudgwick so with 25 having been completed in 18 months we expect the project to last well over three years. We will be showing a complete list of those surveyed so far at the AGM on April 23rd and an up-dated list will be published in our next newsletter.

PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWS



HORSHAM TOWN HALL

A building of no great antiquity; was originally erected upon arches. The late Duke of Norfolk completely repaired and enlarged it in 1812 when the ground storey was enclosed, and a lower court room formed. It is now, after again (in 1868) undergoing considerable repairs and improvements, - the expense of which was defrayed by public subscription - used for the County Midsummer Sessions, the fortnightly meeting of the Magistrates, the Court, the Revising Barrister's Court, the Savings Bank and other public business. *Description and Illustration taken from 'The Strangers Guide To Horsham' April 1869*

"GUIDED WALKS" 1990

Sponsored by the West Sussex County Council. The following five walks organised for Rudgwick are all on Tuesdays starting at 7 pm.

DATE	LEADER	STARTING POINT
May 15	Dave Buckley	The Fox Inn
June 5	Paul Frenchum	The Parish Church
June 12	Geoff Ayres	Pephurst Farm (Lay-by)
June 19	Stan Smith	The Parish Church
June 26	Malcolm Francis	The Parish Church

These are leisurely walks and are intended for young and old alike and should take about 2 hours. Last year over 80 people turned out for Dave Buckley's walk, some coming from long distances.

In view of the initiative of the West Sussex County Council planning a strategy to identify Sites of Nature Conservation interest these walks will almost certainly cover some of these areas, which may become part of a definitive list in our parish. The Society will make recommendations of possible sites in Rudgwick, some of which we hope will be adopted.

POETRY COMPETITION

The Preservation Society is sponsoring a competition to find to find a new Shelley among its members. No, we're sorry, the prize isn't Field Place but we are offering £25 to the winner. The theme of the poem should be 'conservation' but otherwise there are no rules on style or length. The competition is open to all members of the society and their families. It will be judged by the committee and for this reason whilst committee members (those serving after the AGM) are welcome to enter they will not be eligible for the prize.

Closing date is May 5th. Please send your entries to Mrs Pat Reading, Sailtops, Cox Green, remembering to enclose your name and address and age if under 15.

The winner and others will be published in the next newsletter. So that you can see what the standard is going to be, here are a couple of early entries that we have received.

They hang the man and flog the woman
Who steals the goose from off the Common
But let the greater criminal loose
Who steals the Common off the goose. *George Ewart Evans*

Sweet is the love which nature brings
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beautiful form of things
We murder to dissect. *William Wordsworth: The Tables Turned.*