



RPS NEWSLETTER

RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

AUTUMN 1991

**THIS EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN SPONSORED BY
PENNTHORPE SCHOOL**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is the first newsletter since the committee changed following the annual general meeting in April. We have lost some familiar faces on the committee and gained others. One notable loss to the committee was Dr Bill Jarratt who was a founder member and active supporter of the Society's activities. Although we no longer see Bill at our monthly meetings we are pleased that he is continuing to give us 'behind the scenes' support. Members are still welcome to give their subscriptions in at the Health Centre for example. (A not so subtle hint to members whose subscriptions are still outstanding). Another loss to the Committee was Chris Griffin who had been the Parish Council's representative for a number of years. Chris has a prodigious knowledge of local natural history and seemed to know everything about every public footpath in the Parish. His contribution to the Society's work and the highly successful link he created with the Parish Council were valued. We are pleased, however, that his place as Parish Council representative has been taken by John Drake who, as we are beginning to learn, has an equal knowledge and enthusiasm for local matters. Our formal links with the Parish Council have always been good and we feel this is to our mutual advantage and to the village as a whole, as it adds considerable weight in representing the views of the village to the planning authorities.

I am also sorry to tell you that Andrew Shelley has decided to stand down from the committee. We would like to record our appreciation of his work for the Society especially for his representation of the interests of Cox Green residents. This leaves a vacancy on the committee. If any member would like to take a more active role in the Society's work I would very pleased to hear from you.

Whilst on the subject of committee work I must thank all those members of the committee, and others, who give so much of their time freely and enthusiastically to support the work of the Society. In particular we are indebted to Vanessa Lowndes who allows us to invade her house every month for our meetings.

Reading Stan Smith's account of some of the matters that have occurred over the last few months, will, I hope, give you some idea not only of the sorts of issues that we take up on your behalf, but will also give you some idea of the personal effort that Stan puts into the Society. As you will see we don't just meet once a month and write letters to the Council - a view that I know some members have. We make personal representations at public inquiries, we

attend D.O.E. Inspector's hearings, we make site visits and attend site meetings and recently we have met with our local M.P. In addition to this activity we have taken a leading role in organising the local walks which I know so many of you enjoy. We organise the twice-yearly meetings which are always well attended and have to date managed to attract some very well qualified, informative and entertaining speakers. We also take an active part in sharing our views with the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies of which we are a member. We are currently undertaking a project to renovate the traditional signposts in the village and have undertaken similar projects such as the restoration of the old post-box at Tismans Common. If members have suggestions for other ventures we would like to hear from you. This type of work of course takes time, and sometimes needs a certain amount of expertise and craftsmanship to undertake. We would very much appreciate hearing from anyone who could volunteer to help, particularly with the current signpost project. Another project which we help with every year, which also needs volunteers, is the village spring clean. Whilst it is an indictment of our society that such things should be necessary, anyone who has seen the mountain of rubbish that is retrieved annually from our verges and hedgerows will appreciate the value in undertaking this task. I hope that next spring we can count on more volunteers from the Society to help.

A project that we have been involved in for some time, is the survey of timber framed houses in the Parish. Stan Smith, who is helping Diana Chatwin of the Wealden Buildings Study Group to undertake this work, reports on progress elsewhere in this newsletter. When completed, in about a years time, this will provide us with a unique inventory of all of our ancient timber framed houses that we are so concerned to preserve.

Finally, of course, we produce this bi-annual newsletter which is intended to keep members informed of what we do on your behalf and what forthcoming events have been organised. The cost of reproducing the newsletter is always one of our biggest expenses. The last two editions have been sponsored by local businesses and I am pleased to say that this edition has also received sponsorship - this time from Pennthorpe School. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors for helping the Society in this way.

Please let me know if you have anything to contribute to the newsletter or would be able to help the Society in any other way. Hope to see you all at the Autumn Meeting on the 4th November.

Leslie Hawkins R.822967

PLANNING MATTERS.....

By Stan Smith

ENFORCEMENT OF PLANNING CONTROL

As far back as May 1989, the Society has expressed concern about the unauthorised placing of mobile homes/caravans in the countryside. Letters have been written to Sir Peter Horden, M.P., who has always been sympathetic to our view that enforcement procedures are hopelessly inadequate. The Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment has repeatedly rejected our plea for a change in the planning law. Our complaint is that the present system is completely ineffective, and in many cases existing procedures are treated with contempt. Furthermore, the local planning authority has a long list of cases where enforcement notices are totally disregarded, and by delaying tactics remain in situ for years. To use everyday parlance offenders "play the system" to their advantage. There is a case in the Haven where an unauthorised mobile home has resisted successfully all attempts to implement the enforcement notice for four years.

MEETING WITH SIR PETER HORDEN

On Friday 16th August, Sir Peter Horden was in Rudgwick to hear views on policy issues. Angela Murgatroyd (Rudgwick Parish Council), Brian Murgatroyd (The Haven Preservation Society), and Stan Smith (Rudgwick Preservation Society) met Sir Peter to express our deep concern about the ineffectiveness of enforcement notices, and misgivings about the inadequacies of the newly introduced Planning and Compensation Act, 1991. Although the Act introduces powers to issue injunctions and increase fines, it falls hopelessly short of "criminalisation", which is generally accepted as the only effective deterrent, and the only way in which the local planning authority can act decisively. Sir Peter was entirely sympathetic, and fully understood our concerns to protect the countryside, but he felt the new Act should prove adequate to deal with the problem of enforcement control; and we should wait and see how it worked in practice.

Cllr. Lesley Niven was also present, and arranged for Sir Peter to view the Smithers Rough site, so that he should be fully aware of the extent of the problem. Naturally, adjacent neighbours are greatly incensed by these events and feel threatened by this intrusion into the quiet, peaceful surroundings.

SMITHERS ROUGH - GUILDFORD ROAD

The site at Smithers Rough that Sir Peter was invited to see is perhaps one of the most disturbing examples Rudgwick has had of the unauthorised siting of mobile homes for residential use. This is a short account of the complete ineffectiveness of current planning law. An appeal was lodged against the Council's decision to serve an enforcement notice. A Public Local Inquiry was held on 20th August 1991, at the Old Town Hall, and we were

informed it might last three days. Present at the Inquiry were various members of the legal and planning department, and Mrs Angela Murgatroyd, Mrs Pam Henderson and John Drake of the Rudgwick Parish Council, Stan Smith of the Rudgwick Preservation Society, Mr and Mrs Heath of Smithers Farm, Mr Cookson of Tauntons, and Mr and Mrs Tarrant of Smithers Cottages.

Neither the appellant nor his legal representative put in an appearance. The inquiry was then adjourned for contact to be made with the appellant, and a telephone call to his solicitors brought the surprising news that they were in court elsewhere. The Inspector said he could not continue without the defendant, and it was agreed upon a revised date, 24th September. Thereafter the Inquiry turned into an unseemly affair, since the Inspector was at a loss in view of the complaints that this was a time wasting ploy; and a local farmer expressed his views very forcibly. The appellant had gained time, which was not surprising - a case of 'deja vu'. There was some discussion about costs.

On Monday, 16th September, came a new development - the defendant announced the withdrawal of his appeal. Clearly this was another delaying tactic, since the result is that the Local Inquiry will not now take place. Tony Curtis, Chief Planning Officer, has now stated that papers will be prepared to proceed with a prosecution and to consider other legal action.

Although there is a general feeling of frustration about the delaying tactics of the appellant, we are heartened by the news that illegally camped gypsies at Gerrards Rough, Pulborough, have had their appeal dismissed by the D.O.E. Inspector, to be complied with in two months. At Dunsfold, twenty two gypsy families who have lived illegally at Lydia Park for nine years, have had a shock decision by a D.O.E. Inspector that they must leave the site on 30th September. This seems a harsh decision, but it is a matter for Waverly B.C. to make suitable alternative arrangements.

NALDRETT FARM BARN

An application for a barn conversion was considered at an informal hearing at park house, Horsham, on Wednesday, 11th September, 1991.

Present:

Cllr. Lesley Niven, Horsham District Council.

Cllr. David Buckley, Chairman, Rudgwick Parish Council

Judy Knights, Rudgwick Preservation Society

Stan Smith, Rudgwick Preservation Society

Valerie Millwood, Naldrett's Farm

Judy Martin-Jenkins, Naldrett House

This is a complex case, since in 1984 an appeal to

18th.Century and was some forty metres long. However, in the great storm of 1987, about four fifths of the barn was completely destroyed, and it was de-listed.

In 1989 planning permission was granted to convert the remaining part of the barn into one dwelling, an application supported both by the Parish Council and this Society. However, we made it clear that in supporting the application, it did not conform to Policy CS8 (Barn Conversion Policy), which states *inter alia* that the building has architectural merit and is of **sound construction**. However there was a case for a modest three-bedroom dwelling on the site, since there was concern that it could be used by squatters or gypsies, with all the ineffectiveness of enforcement control.

Having gained the principle of barn conversion, the applicant then produced two further plans, one for a small extension for the proposal already approved, and another outrageous further application to build on the whole site, using extravagant language and claiming that this large plan would “restore the former splendour and majestic appearance of the barn”

After the informal hearing, where everyone was allowed to express an opinion in a fair and relaxed atmosphere, we were invited to visit the site, where the Inspector viewed the whole setting of the site, and was taken to Naldrett House and Naldrett Farm to ascertain the impact on adjoining houses.

It is hoped that sanity will prevail and that a decision will be made in favour of a minor addition to the original approved plan.

LATE NEWS - We have just heard from the Inspector and we are pleased to say that sanity has prevailed!

PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWS

TIMBER FRAMED HOUSES IN RUDGWICK

The study of these vernacular buildings continues after three years. Diana Chatwin has now completed sixty reports in detail, and there are still about a dozen more to complete the survey, which probably entails work for another twelve months.

Perhaps the most interesting recent study was that of Swain's Cottage, Tisman's Common, which dates from about 1325. This cottage stands on land which is part of Drungewick Manor, where Richard Swayn had a cottage at an annual rent of 2s.4d.

We in Rudgwick are deeply indebted to Diana for all her painstaking expertise in producing a priceless record of vital importance to our understanding of the historical background of our Parish.

RENOVATION OF TRADITIONAL SIGNPOSTS

We agreed to undertake this work, the County Council to pay for the cost of materials. Altogether there are six, the one outside the Queen's Head, Buck's Green, being completed. The old signpost removed from Watts Corner replaced by a complex of modern plastic type signs, was found abandoned in Broadbridge Heath Depot, and we persuaded the County Council to erect this at Lynwick street opposite the Fox. The work is proceeding, and we are indebted to Joe Boyd and John Drake for their work in renovating and replacing the old finger-posts. Meanwhile, the signpost columns need painting in black and white, and if volunteers would care to undertake a signpost near to their home, please telephone 822723.

GUIDED WALKS FOR ALL THE FAMILY, 1991

These walks are sponsored by the West Sussex County Council, and a booklet is produced of the programme from May to September each Year. This year nine walks were organised in Rudgwick, and not only was this a record, but the number taking part was highly rewarding to those volunteers who led each walk. The following are the names of the leaders and the number joining the walks.

14th May	Dave Buckley	RPC	54
21st May	Paul Frenchum	RPS	120
28th May	Geoff Ayres	RPS	45
4th June	Judy Knights	RPS	55
11th June	Dave Buckley	Cranleigh and District BTCV	35
18th June	Stan Smith	RPS	65
25th June	Geoff Ayres	RPS and British Butterfly Conservation Society	21
16th July	Malcolm Francis	RPS	55
23rd July	Hazel Powell	Rudgwick VentureScouts	35

The response this year was very good, although where the attendance was low, the weather was a important factor. However, the remarkable attendance of 120 for Paul Frenchum's walk to Baynards Station is a record. The Station, so beautifully restored by Frazer and Linda Clayton, is always a great attraction, and I acted as a guide at the rear of the column of walkers. This was so long that on arrival at the Station the vanguard had already left!

The programme for 1992 will be drawn up about Christmas time, and anyone who would care to lead a guided walk in Rudgwick (not more than two hours), please let me know. Don't worry about help in organising the actual walk, either the Griffin Brothers or a member of the Society will be present to deal with stiles, gates and the inevitable stragglers.

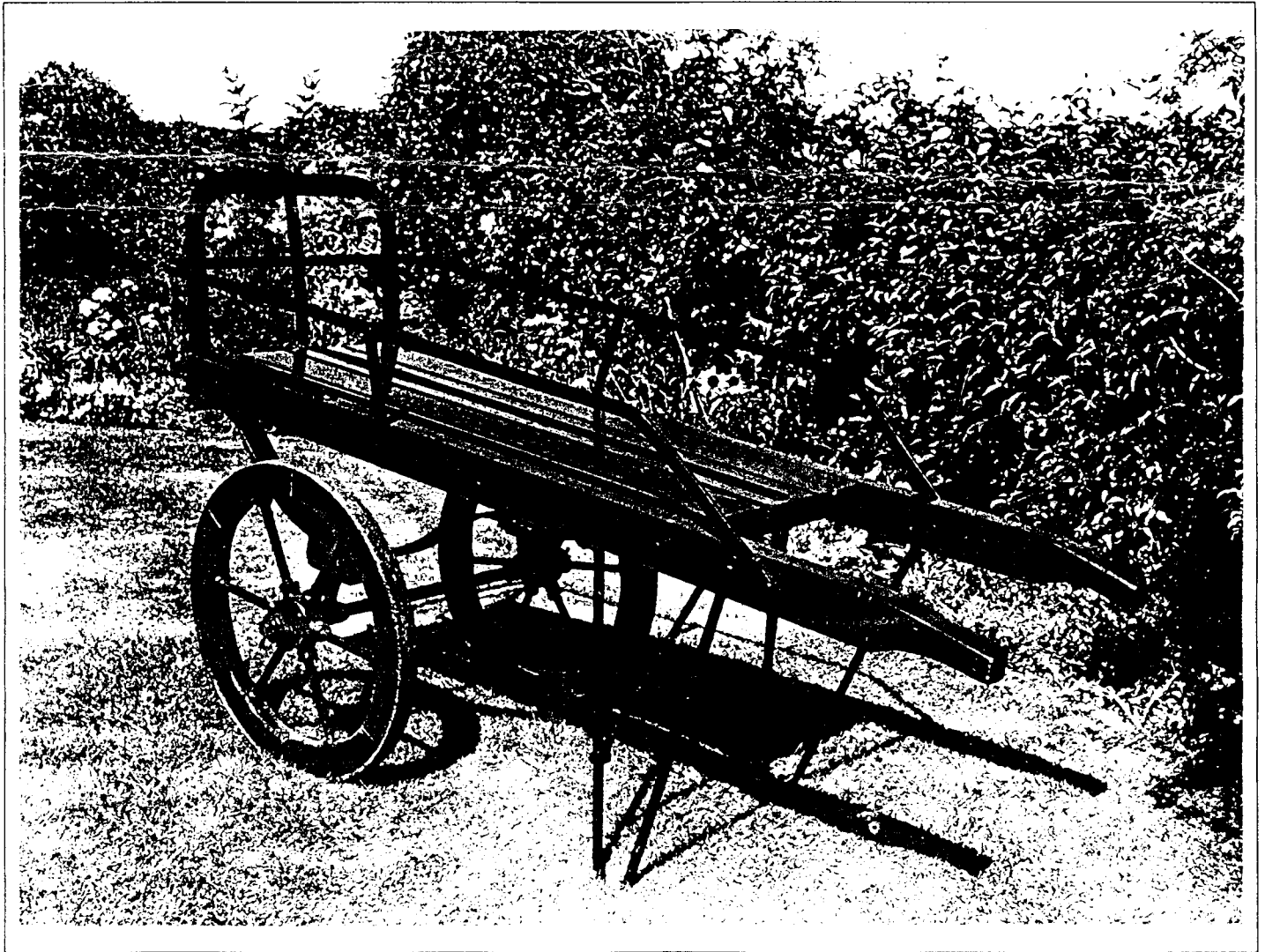
THE POST CART

By Cecilia Butcher

There are still people in the village who remember the Post Office cart, and when they see it they re-call memories of it and the postmen Mr Chriss, Mr Ireland, Mr Stenning and others who before the Advent of mail vans pushed the cart up and down Church Street to the Station and dispatched and collected the mail three times a day. The first mail of the day came on the goods train before 6am. and Mr Chriss kept the cart at his home at Woodside Cottages where it was handy for the morning collection of mail from the station. If the dispatch of mail from the Post office on Church Hill was light the postmen preferred to use their bicycles, but it was a heavy load at times and Frank often recalled being in bed at Eames House and hearing the cart trundling up and down Church Hill. It had iron wheels and made quite a noise. The cart dates from the turn of the century and one remembers that Church Street had quite a rough surface.

The cart came in useful in 1947, before we had mail vans to deliver parcels. We had a lot of parcels that Christmas; in those days people shopped and presents were then sent by post. Eric Thompson, a schoolboy from Collyers, who later became presenter of Magic Roundabout on TV, worked as a casual for us. He and I pushed a loaded cart down the street, along Bucks Green and up Lynwick Street delivering parcels. Quite a feat when one remembers the winter of 1947.

We were paid an allowance for 'housing' the cart which worked out at about 4d a week. (less than 2p in today's money). Eventually when mail vans took over and delivered parcels etc. and the cart was no longer of use, the GPO gave it to us and with it they gave us a lot of memories. The cart was recently restored by Ken Birchmore, and I treasure GPO cart No.14.



STARTING AT THE KING'S HEAD by Malcolm Francis

A Walk Round Rudgwick in The 1950's



THE
KINGS
HEAD AS
IT WAS IN
THE LATE
40's EARLY
50's

Rudgwick, like all villages, has changed over the years, but this change has been gradual, and it is only looking back that you realise how much has taken place in the last four decades.

Let's take an imaginary guided walk through the village in the Fifties, starting close to the church - the one building that remains unchanging. In front of the church is Mr. Humphrey's grocery shop. It stocks a wide range of food and drink, including a very good wine cellar, and the adjoining Post Office, run by Mrs. Butcher, it is always busy.

A few yards to the north is a grassy island at the junction of Lynwick Street, and from here we can see Dukes Farm, with its neighbouring paddock and barn that will become the site of Hawkrigde.

The King's Head looks very quiet, what hours does it open? Opposite is the large vegetable garden belonging to Woes Cottage, Mr Broadbridge is a keen gardener. Next to this a footpath runs down to the vicarage in Lynwick Street, which is used often by the Rev. John Tanner.

As we walk down Church Hill past the original village hall - built to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee - we come to Southdown House, the butcher's shop, and inside Mr. Haine is preparing meat on his large chopping block, made from the complete trunk of a tree. (There is another butcher's in the Loxwood Road which is run by Mr. Roger Clarke).

A very old Aldershot and District bus grinds slowly up

Church Hill; there's little traffic through the village at present.

As we continue down the village street we come to the Congregational Chapel, painted in sombre brown, and opposite is the entrance to Windacres Farm, there's Harold Bailey and his sister Jinny driving the cattle out of the large orchard on the left. It will be 20 years before any houses are built on it.

We walk on down the hill to Mrs. Fleming's newsagents and general stores, it stocks a wide range of items, and has a rare 'on' licence for wines. Mrs. Fleming also sells paraffin for heating and lighting - not all of the village is yet on mains electricity. Several people can be seen chatting in the shop, and a large black cat is asleep in the window.

Church Street continues down the hill passing Furze Road on the right, this is the only 'estate' in the village at present, and just past it on the left is Mr. Eggleton's Utility Store, later to become Watson's Electrical shop; and a little further down is the small bakery and grocery store owned by Mr. Birchmore. On the right is Talbot Motors, this garage has a real thirties atmosphere, its buildings were formerly Buckhurst Farm.

Further down on the right is the Martlet Hotel, an ugly Victorian building of red brick, with white quoin facing. On the opposite corner of Station Road there is the wool and haberdashery shop run by Miss Coomber, and next to it Mr. Luff's radio repair shop, with radios

awaiting collection or repair; a lot of these are pre-war, requiring their batteries to be recharged regularly. If we walk down the slope to the station, we smell the mingled scents of the lime trees and the coal in the station yard, Mr. Hempstead is in his coal office and there are two trucks being unloaded. The village consumes a lot of coal - there's no gas supply for nearly another 35 years.

As we stand and stare, we can hear the approach of an 'up' train, a few passengers are waiting on the platform, and there's an excellent service to Waterloo, via Guildford in under an hour!

Returning to Church Street, on our right is the Station Garage, run by the Laudet brothers, Marcel and Maurice, and opposite Trickett's Fair is pulling into the Station field, which will later become Bridge Road. If we walk over the railway bridge and look left towards Swaynes, and the bridge on the Horsham road, we can see the track and sidings, and on the right of the track are the allotments that will become the Marts.

Continuing down Gaskyns Hill we pass the shrubberies of Pennthorpe School (formerly Gaskyns House) where Gaskyns Close will be built and then we come the Victoria Farm Dairy, run by Mr. Davison who supplies the village with milk, and sells delicious cream and ice cream. Opposite is the wooden Scout Hut, and a few yards past it is the entrance to the former Canadian Army Camp, where building is planned in the near future. Until recently a number of families have been 'squatting' in the disused army buildings until the Horsham Rural District Council could provide them with accommodation.

We now turn right into Bucks Green, and a brown Bedford bus, The Hants and Sussex Bus Company, trundles past on its way to Loxwood, the village currently has two bus services. We continue along the road past the Bucks Green Post Office, commonly referred to as 'Haymans', and on the left, on the junction with the Haven road is the Forge garage, on the site of the former forge.

The Queens Head has alongside it the Queens Hall, used for many village functions in the past, and next door is the Goblins Pool Hotel and Restaurant, which will become L' Antico in the late eighties. As we continue westwards along Bucks Green, we pass on our left a small printing shop belonging to Mr. Percy Naldrett. He is renowned for his love of literature and his native Sussex, as well as for the fact that he knew the Sussex poet, Hilaire Belloc.

Walking along towards the Fox Inn we pass Park View Stores, run by Mrs. Gibbs, who provides an excellent service for this end of the village and Tismans Common. Then we come to the entrance to the Recreation Ground (properly called the King George V Playing Fields) and just inside is the Home Guard Hut, a narrow, green painted, wooden building with a diminutive stage and used for most village functions. A new village hall is planned when funds are available.

Moving on from the recreation ground we see plenty of activity in Mr. Farley's builders yard, the joinery workshop smells deliciously of freshly sawn timber, and the office and showroom has a fine display of bath suites in the

window.

Adjacent to this is the Rudgwick Garage, run by Mr. Furlonger, there is a smart row of 'Shell' pumps on the forecourt, and it has a taxi service as well.

Almost opposite, on the junction with the Loxwood road is the Bucks Green Garage, selling 'Regent' petrol. It is built of wood, well soaked with petrol and oil and must be a considerable fire risk. It boasts a rubber airline, to announce the arrival of a customer, much to the delight of the local small boys, who frequently stamp on it causing annoyance and confusion.

Backing on to the Fox Inn is Val Botting's little Transport Cafe and greengrocery - there's ample parking, and after all the lorries are small fry to today's giants.

Walking past the Fox we come the School, where some pupils will shortly be sitting there '11 plus' exams, those who pass go on to Collyers or Horsham High School for Girls, and there's a new secondary school being built in Billingshurst, which will be called the Weald School.

To complete our circular tour we now turn right into Lynwick Street, a narrow lane rich with wild flowers in the verges and hedgerows. On our right, in the garden of the first cottage is a small Plymouth Brethren Chapel, and we then pass a variety of houses, including Canfields Farm, which is only half its present size, before reaching the railway bridge. Here we can see a goods train rumbling down the line, pulling trucks from the 'Fullers Earth Works' at Baynards.

Walking on up the lane we pass Rudgwick Brickworks on the left. This is very small when compared to today's operation, the clay is being dug from a small face, topped and surrounded by thick woodland.

As we meander up the lane, the hill becoming steeper as we reach the top, we meet Mr. Corp of Greathouse Farm leading a fully laden wagon of corn sheaves, pulled by two horses and with a skid pan of cast iron under one wheel, which provides an effective brake on the steep slope, and which scratches a white mark in the tarmac all the way down the hill. Following this is a Fordson tractor towing a binder, the evocative smell of T.V.O. pervading the air.

Reaching the top of the lane we turn once again into Church Street, back to the Kings Head for some well earned refreshment.

POETRY COMPETITION

We have received 19 entries for the poetry competition. These are being judged by Julie Walters but as she is now on tour in America they have had to be sent to her.

We will reproduce the successful entry in our next newsletter and of course inform the winner as soon we hear of Miss Walters decision.

A VISIT TO THE BRICKWORKS

by Judy Knights.

Bricks have been made in Rudgwick since the turn of the century and the Fawke family have been making bricks at Lynwick Street since 1947.

Members of the Rudgwick Preservation Society were fortunate enough to be invited to tour the works, and on a sunny June morning about 30 members assembled. We were split into 3 groups, our group started with a gentle climb to the top of the clay pit. The clay is dug by mechanical diggers and allowed to weather for several months. We saw the different bands of clay in the pit, yellows, reds and greys descending to shale at the bottom. The green 'dinosaur' strata was pointed out to us in which many fossilised bones have been found. They are now in museums including Horsham.

We passed huge piles of sand and different coal dusts called 'coke breeze'. These are added to the weathered clay to give the different colours in the bricks. The weathered clay is dug from the heap by a mechanical digger and loaded onto a conveyor belt. It enters the works and into the pug mill (just like a large Kenwood food mixer) where it is thoroughly mixed with lots of water and broken down. The well mixed and liquid clay is then poured into moulds which are lined with sand, and then turned out onto trays. These are taken by conveyor to a gas fired drier room. Next fork lift trucks take these trays through to the massive hanger like rooms where the bricks are fired.

Stacking of the brick piles, or clamps as they are called, for the firing process is very swiftly and expertly performed by gangs of men. The clamps contain channels at the base into which gas burners are inserted and each clamp is surrounded by special refractory bricks which keep the heat in. Firing takes about 2 weeks and the clamp takes about a further 2 weeks to cool down before the bricks can be transferred to stacks ready for sale.

Not all the bricks are made in large production runs. We saw a workshop where wooden moulds of any shape or size are hand made and we watched craftsmen filling some of these special moulds by hand for

special orders. These handmade bricks are air-dried before firing in the usual way.

A great deal of water is used in brick making, and Rudgwick Brickworks has evolved a recycling system using a series of filter beds. One man-made pond we saw was teeming with fish, a sign of clean water. Plants had colonised round the edges giving it a natural look and a haven for wild life.

The whole tour took two and a half hours and when we returned to the reception area a very welcome cup of coffee awaited us and plates of delicious sandwiches and cakes. A great many questions were asked and expertly answered by our guides and our most grateful thanks go to Mr. Nash, Mr. Thatcher and Mr. Watkinson for giving us all such an interesting tour. Thank you also to Mr. Fawke the proprietor for so kindly making us welcome and also to Pat Reading for organising this worthwhile visit.



RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

AUTUMN MEETING
Monday, 4th November 1991
at 7.30 pm, Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green

MARK TAYLOR
will be giving an illustrated talk on
**THE DEVELOPMENT OF
WEALDEN IRONWORKS
~ IN TUDOR TIMES ~**

Mark is the County Archaeologist for West Sussex. He has obtained a B.A. in History and an M.A. in Mediaeval history at King's College, London and has formerly been involved in archaeological excavation both at home and overseas. He was assistant keeper of the field section at Oxford County Museum in Woodstock. His talk will include some references to our own Deddlesham (Rudgwick) ironworks

Coffee will be served in the interval
ALL ARE WELCOME!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PENNTHORPE SCHOOL

Pennthorpe School was founded in 1930 at Chislehurst in Kent by Herbert Braby. Having graduated from Cambridge to work at the meteorological office in 1910, his career was interrupted by the first world war, when he served in the Royal Artillery. At the end of the war he decided to take up teaching at a school in Bexhill and in 1930 moved to Chislehurst to found a boys' preparatory school with his brother Sydney, taking over a house that had previously been used as a girls' kindergarten. The school remained at Chislehurst until it was evacuated to Rudgwick in 1939 at the beginning of the second world war. Its first home in Rudgwick was the Mill House, Gibbon's Mill where it remained until 1948. At that time the school had about 30 boys, all residential, who by their own recollections seemed to greatly enjoy the experience. One of the old boys later wrote; "The school was set in the most lovely grounds with the fascinating Gibbon's Mill near the river and a romantic, rather ruined cottage, now lovingly restored by Mr Adorian, whose family now own the Mill House and farm. The grounds were ideal for boys' games and after tea, enjoying the benefits of the light evenings as a result of double British Summer Time, we were all allowed to play games on the front lawn. 'Kick The Tin' was very popular with everyone hiding in the surrounding foliage, as were fights with the Japonic apples (very hard these) messing about in the pond, climbing the numerous trees and scrumping for apples. To aid the war effort, the boys were encouraged to dig allotments, with very good results, especially a large compost heap for marrows. The football/cricket pitch had just been an ordinary field but in due time, became quite a respectable games field, and we boys were taught to mow it with an elderly ATCO mower by one of the two Headmasters, Mr S.Braby.

In those days, with petrol rationing, the roads had very little traffic and most of us had bicycles. We were allowed on our own to go as far as the Haven post office or occasionally, escorted by Mr H.Braby, to cycle as far as Billingshurst or Horsham to spend some of our meagre pocket money and sweet coupons. In fact, food and sweets were in very short supply during the war and the diet was sparse. We had to eat a lot of things with our eyes shut and, as a result of one of the cook's masterpieces 'rabbit stew with pearl barley', many of the pupils will have been able to enjoy a life of long abhorrence of that particular animal!"

In 1948 the school moved to its present home in Church Street. The large house called "Gaskyns" and the Gaskyns estate had been owned by the Barker family until 1931 when they moved to Wales and sold the estate to a Mr Jamilly. During the war years the house was used by the army as an officers' mess and Mr Jamilly lived in Gaskyns Lodge. In 1948 he sold the house and its grounds including what is now Pennthorpe playing field and the area of Orchard Hill to the school. Another part of the estate was later developed into what is now Gaskyns Close.

The founders Mr H and Mr S Braby retired in 1955 and were succeeded by Dennis White who held the post until


1974. In 1955 there were 31 pupils, much the same number as there had been during the war. The school however rapidly expanded in its new home; by 1957 there were 62 boys, in 1964 there were 85, in 1978 there were 120 which jumped to 158 in 1979 and 168 in 1980. Girls were accepted as day pupils for the first time in 1976 and as boarders in 1977.

The present Headmaster, Rev.John Spencer, took over from Dennis White in 1974. Since then there has been a considerable refurbishment programme and expansion of the School's facilities. This has included re-roofing of the classroom blocks, partial re-roofing of the main house, electrical re-wiring, a new surgery, the old stable block replaced by two new classrooms, refurbishment of the swimming pool, new changing rooms and toilet block, new computer classroom, a new playground and netball courts, a new sports hall, a new organ in the Chapel and improved staff accommodation. Activities introduced over the last 10 years include judo, shooting, sailing, horseriding, trampolining, and an outward bound course in the Lake District. The school also has an excellent Chapel Choir, a Cub and Brownie pack, and rugby, soccer and netball teams.

As one old boy wrote of his reminiscences of the Braby era "after forty years, one's abiding impression of Pennthorpe is the great affection and regard we had for Mr "H" and Mr "S". They were the most considerate of men and particularly fine examples for us to follow. They would certainly have been delighted that their creation of Pennthorpe is being so splendidly carried on and expanded in the school we see today." Today Pennthorpe has 270 pupils of which 50 are boarders and 30% are girls and is very much established as part of Rudgwick.

By Leslie Hawkins

From material kindly supplied by the Rev.John Spencer



**PENNTHORPE
PREPARATORY
SCHOOL**

**Rudgwick, Nr. Horsham,
West Sussex.**
(Member of the I.A.P.S.)

- ★ An independent boarding and day school for boys and girls aged 4-13.
- ★ Consistently good academic results.
- ★ Strong sporting and musical traditions.
- ★ Excellent facilities for Computing and C.D.T.
- ★ Thriving Cub and Brownie Packs
- ★ Help with travel arrangements.
- ★ Caring, friendly atmosphere.
- ★ Fee reductions for service personnel.
- ★ Reduction for brothers and sisters.

For further details and prospectus apply to:
The Headmaster.
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