

# RPS NEWSLETTER

RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

AUTUMN 1995

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is my first newsletter as chairman and I look forward to an interesting and useful time in office.

The water supply situation has been a serious problem this summer. A large section of the village was without regular supplies for part of the day after only two weeks without rain. Horsham District Council was asked if water supply was a consideration in planning applications particularly in regard to the granting of permission for 49 new houses in the Parish. It is clear that it was not a major consideration and my letter has been passed onto Southern Water for their comments. We will follow this up with interest. It is obvious that pumps and mains are inadequate.

There has been a move to introduce traffic calming measures in Church Street. Although there is now a 30 m.p.h. speed limit, it is rarely observed and there has been an increase in heavy goods traffic using our village street. This is creating excessive noise and pollution. We will press for traffic calming measures to be introduced as soon as possible.

We continue our membership of GACC. The campaign against the second runway at Gatwick Airport was successful. The RUCATSE proposal was defeated because everyone was united against it. GACC consider that BAA are putting out misleading information to keep us quiet! The first priority of the campaign now is to ensure that no Councils are misled by this.

If you are having problems with noise from aircraft, please telephone FREEPHONE 0800 393070 and complain!

Our autumn meeting will take place on Monday 27th November, 1995, at 7.30 p.m. in the Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green. Our distinguished speaker will be Dr. Peter Brandon, Chairman of the Sussex branch of the C.P.R.E. There will be mulled wine and mince pies - everyone is welcome.

VANESSA LOWNDES

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## Planning Matters

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During the 6 months ended August 1995, the Society has considered, and commented on, over 40 planning applications in the Parish of Rudgwick. Whilst many of these have been uncontroversial such as small extensions, erection of conservatories etc., there have been cases where important questions of principle are at stake.

One such question is that of infilling. Generally this tends to be permitted within the defined built up area provided that the plot size is adequate to maintain the amenity of adjoining landowners. Outside the defined built up area infilling may be permitted but generally only where it is not detrimental to the character of the surroundings.

During the 6 months under review your Society has opposed infill applications, two in Cox Green and one in

Tisman's Common. One of these, in Cox Green, is under consideration by a Department of the Environment Inspector as a result of an appeal against refusal by Horsham District Council. The other Cox Green application was granted by Horsham District Council, having previously been granted by Waverley District Council when they had jurisdiction. Unhappily the application for infill development in Tisman's Common was granted by the Council despite strong local opposition. We have also opposed plans for back land development in Cox Green and that application has now been refused. Our prime concern in commenting on these applications is the preservation of the rural scene and the avoidance of unnecessary ribbon development and reduction of amenity of neighbouring property.

There are guide lines laid down under the Horsham District Plan in relation to Cox Green. The policy referred to as RW2 states that "Development within Cox Green will not normally be permitted if it would undermine the existing character of large dwellings within single plots fronting Church Street, either by intensification of development through infilling/redevelopment or by non-frontage development."

One unusual planning application that we commented on in July, concerned an application to "rebuild" a dwelling on the site of an old farmhouse at Brick Kiln Farm, Barnsfold. This just comes into Loxwood and is therefore dealt with by Chichester District Council. The unusual aspect of this case is that the applicants are seeking a 'Certificate of Lawfulness'; in effect seeking permission to rebuild on a site on which there is an existing dwelling. However Brick Kiln Farm has been unoccupied since 1952 and was demolished 20 years ago. It is now completely derelict. It is our contention that building on this site now, including the need for construction of a metalled road, would be an unwarranted intrusion into unspoiled countryside. For a Certificate of Lawfulness to be refused, abandonment of the premises has to be proved. We have submitted to Chichester that this site has long been abandoned and that the Certificate should be refused. Brick Kiln Farm has an interesting history which Alan Siney has recently researched. His article on Brick Kiln Farm and local brickmaking starts on page 2.

At the time of writing there has been press coverage regarding a possible new village settlement near Alfold Crossways, proposed jointly by the Prince of Wales' Institute of Architecture and the Centre for Environmental Structure. Further details and the reaction of the local community are awaited with great interest.

## PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE

## **BRICKKILN FARM AND LOCAL BRICKMAKING**

Brickkiln Farm, originally called Woodlands Farm, stood in what was then the Parish of Wisborough Green. With two nearby cottages, called Woodlands and Cousins Cottages, it was built alongside an ancient route linking Alfold and Rudgwick which fell into disuse to through traffic when the Alfold to Horsham turnpike road was built in 1809. In 1842 when the tithe map was produced, it was part of the estate of Denzil Onslow Esq., the Lord of the Manor of Drungewick, whose land covered much of the area stretching westward to Loxwood and northwards to the county boundary, and importantly, it's name had changed to Brickkiln Farm.

The farm was occupied and held jointly by widow Hannah Knight and her son Stephen, then aged 34, the holding having been in the family's hands since Stephen's grandfather, William Knight, had initially taken a 21 year leasehold assignment at £8 P.A. on the farm with 30 acres in 1769. His father, also Stephen, lived at Glovers, Tisman's Common, and died in 1845, so Hannah Knight was probably one of his several aunts. It appears that Hannah Knight had transferred the tenancy of most of the holding to Stephen, and although they must have worked it as one, they both paid their tithes separately, with Stephen Knight holding 57 acres and Hannah 18 acres. Another 15 acres was let out to Thomas Seward. It was an arable holding with 82 acres under the plough and just 10 acres being the total of meadow, pasture and homesteads etc. These figures are typical of the period when Corn Laws still dictated agricultural policy; all the while the price of wheat remained artificially high and protected by high import tariffs, the average amount of arable land far exceeded that of meadow and pasture. By the end of the 19th century the situation had reversed.

No bricks were produced at Brickkiln Farm after 1842 but there is every reason to suppose that they had been in the previous 30 years or so during which the name had changed, as Stephen Knight was a brickmaker, no doubt having learned the trade from his father. Here an interesting point arises: in 1836 his father raised £80 by mortgaging Glovers. I suspect that this considerable amount of capital was required to purchase or to set up the family's brickmaking interests at Pephurst. The tithe schedule names Stephen Jnr. as being the proprietor of the brick kiln, shed and yard, at Pephurst, half-a-mile to the south of the farm, where production continued throughout the 19th century, and by evidence of a local man, almost up to the outbreak of World War 1. The site with extensive clay diggings can be seen immediately behind the cottage at the bend in the road. This cottage was probably built to house a brick maker. There was always a demand for locally made bricks because of their

weight. It takes only 350-400 bricks to make a ton, which had to be delivered by horse or bullock cart over some of the worst of rural roads. Transport was therefore a prime cost and local needs had to be met with a local supply. The resources to make bricks at Brickkiln Farm was limited for several reasons: firstly, there is no reason to suppose that the old road through there was any better than the muddy bridleway is today and getting the bricks out must have been a struggle: there was also the supply of wood and clay on what was an arable holding: each firing of the kiln probably used a stack of faggots the size of a hayrick and as clay dries and shrinks in the kiln, the weight of the raw material far exceeds that of the finished product and so the kiln had to be built at the site of the clay digging. Across the entrance at Brickkiln Farm is a gullied trackway cut diagonally across the corner of the road junction. This is not a natural undulation but an excavation where the clay was taken. I think that having exhausted this supply the only recourse would have been

to take it from useable farmland, an act to which the Lord of the Manor would have been adverse. So by 1842 Stephen Knight was operating on what appears to be an ideal site at Pephurst.

The first part of the process was of course the back breaking work of clay winning. The

clay was placed in a mixing drum with added water. The drum was round, usually brick lined and turned by horse gin, where it was mixed to a smooth consistency with air excluded, then removed and carried to the moulding table. The brickmaker would cut off a lump of clay of the desired size called a clot, - did you ever wonder how that insult originated - where it was kneaded and folded on a table sprinkled with sand. Sand was an important ingredient: without it the pure clay would crack in the kiln, and too much caused a powdery brick. The sand was readily available: throughout the locality are small seams of it particularly along shallow crests, which are not discernable under the topsoil, but walk up the trackway from Barnsfold and at the top of the rise by the oak trees, it can be seen that the rabbits are kicking out pure sand. When kneaded the clot was firmly pressed into the mould ensuring it was well packed in all corners. The mould was a wooden box larger than brick size to allow for shrinkage, possibly lined with iron plates, with a block in the base to form the recess, or the key to the brick called the frog. The surplus was cut off across the top and the brick smartly knocked out of the inverted mould on a pallet board. The bricks were then placed on racks in the drying shed which had a very low roof and open sides, where they dried for between four and six weeks depending on season.

When dried ready for firing the green bricks were placed in the brick built kiln with an arched over roof, in spaced rows packed with faggots.(bundles of brushwood). The

**Readers will recall that in the last newsletter we featured an article about Vera Jones who spent her childhood at Brickkiln Farm in Barnsfold.**

**Alan Siney**

**has been researching the history of Brickkiln Farm and its links with local brick making**

opening was closed over with loose bricks packed in clay, with an opening above just large enough to throw in faggots.

In a description of brickmaking written by C.Gray in 1808, he tells how more and more faggots were thrown in after firing until all inside glowed white and the fire was then allowed to slacken for an hour or so before repeating the process of rapidly raising the temperature followed by a cooling off period. This was continued night and day for forty-eight hours or so until allowed to cool slowly for several days before opening the kiln.

All this required large amounts of wood and the most fiercely burning fuel of all was the furze (gorse) faggot. Furze was occasionally grown by farmers as a very useful crop: it was desired by bakers to give a rapid rise in heat to their ovens, putting a nice crust on the bread; it was laid out as a dry bed for hay and corn ricks; when the use of sweep's boys was abolished what better tool could sweep those broad farmhouse chimneys than a tight bundle of gorse trimmed to size; it was used to cattleproof holes in hedgerows and fences - nature's barbed wire; and the stems made good walking sticks. It could be cut as and when required and left to regrow. From the names of the areas of woodland they suggest that much of it was grown specifically to feed the brick kiln at Pephurst. As the agricultural depression bit deeply later in the 19th century the area of woodland increased.

The woodlands mapped here is shown as in 1842 but the names given to them are later, being taken from a map compiled from six inch survey sheets of indeterminable date. The name 'Furze' features prominently. Great Birchfield suggests a birch plantation and Great Scrubbs perhaps scrubland propagated with rapidly growing opportunist trees such as Silver Birch, Sycamore and Ash, which could be cut rotationally every two or three years and tied into faggots with a supple stem. Throughout the woodland are tracks easily distinguishable from the old roads as they are not defined with widely spaced enclosure banks. All these tracks lead out onto the old road leading down to Pephurst for the cartage of wood. As I walked down the old road to Pephurst from Brickkiln Farm I wondered how many times Stephen Knight had trudged along here in darkness a hundred and fifty years ago, trying to pick his way around the mud in the glow of a tallow lantern.

The map drawn here is a precise tracing from the Wisborough Green tithe map which covered a huge area stretching from Rudgwick to Fittleworth. (Loxwood was still of that parish on the 1891 census) The named fields are those of Brickkiln Farm as entered into the apportionment schedule, these I have annotated HK or SK to differentiate those held by Stephen Knight to those of Hannah. Their land extended northwards well beyond the edge of the map to the County boundary about 500 yards away but rather haphazardly and intermingled with fields held by others. Odd scattered pieces were rented to Stephen Fuller, a grazier who owned the Pig Inn at Tisman's Common and later bought the common land upon which the Cricketers, now the Mucky Duck, was

built. Most of the land around the eastern aspect of Brickkiln Farm was owned by John Laker Napper of Tisman's House, who owned several farms in the area.

As we walk through this uninhabited area today, often without seeing another soul, it is difficult to imagine the activity which once took place here: and being predominately labour intensive arable land even more difficult to deduce where that labour came from. With an ox team laboriously ploughing an acre a day there must have been many teams at work in the season, each requiring a man with a boy to lead. (In the population census returns many boys down to the age of ten are listed as ploughboys) At harvest time the corn was cut by lines of men swinging their scythes at a slow rhythm from dawn to dusk, with women and children usually picking up the corn and tying it into sheaves with twisted straw. Yet the whereabouts of every habitation is well documented and were few in numbers, so where did that large workforce come from? The answer can be found in the census returns.

This was a period of abject misery for many. Throughout the 1830's huge gangs of hungry displaced agricultural labourers - often hundreds strong - roamed and pillaged the countryside. Those with families usually had to leave them incarcerated somewhere in a union workhouse in accordance with the 1834 Poor Law. This was followed by the 'hungry forties'. Parish Officers were charged to negotiate with farmers to give employment wherever possible which many took advantage of and only paid the men parish relief rates - a mere pittance. The population census returns for the parishes of Wisborough Green and Rudgwick lists dozens of 'ag lab' of no fixed abode, particularly in the Rudgwick 1841 census. Their addresses were often put as 'part of' a particular farm. In other words, they dosed down in any building that provided some shelter. The old Rudgwick Poorhouse, (now The Fox) although then no longer titled as such having joined the Petworth Union, must have been bursting with the number of men that occupied it, including two with families. In this climate, even local men with families rarely had the chance to settle in one cottage for any length of time.

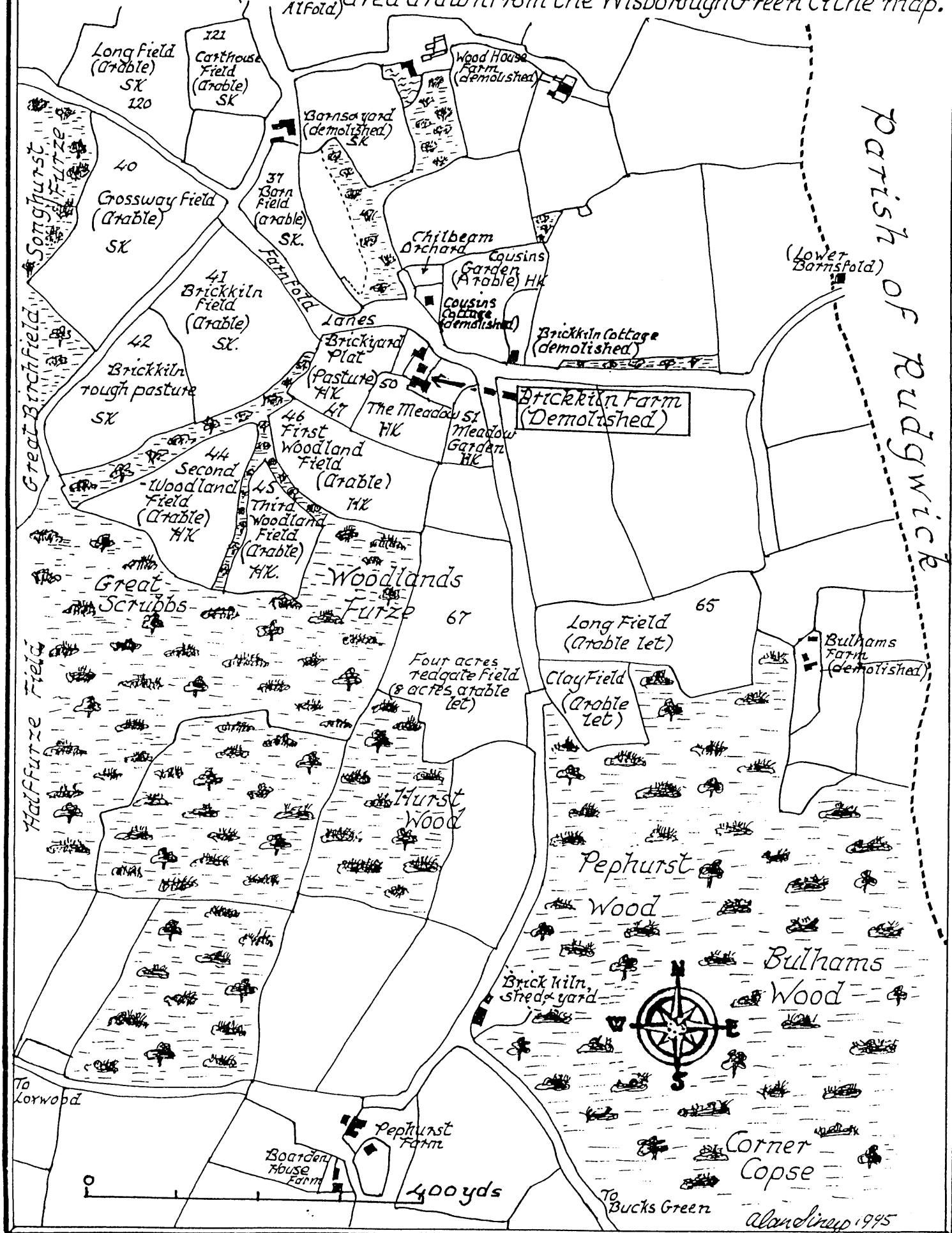
**TO BE CONTINUED.....**

## **CHRISTMAS IS COMING.....!**

The project to publish the survey of timber framed buildings in the Parish, undertaken by Diana Chatwin, is well under way. Diana has finished large parts of the manuscript and Ken Cronin has been busy all summer taking photographs of the buildings. We hope the book will be available for Christmas 1996. In the meantime there are still copies of the Video available which might make a good Christmas present this year. Price £12.

Copies of Alan Siney's booklet on the Lynwick Estate, which the Society published this year are also for sale, price £1.50. For copies of either publication telephone me on 822967. Leslie Hawkins

# Brickkiln Farm 1842 and the brick making area drawn from the Wisborough Green tithe map.



# A LITTLE LOCAL TIME TRAVEL

By Malcolm Francis

(or - "Plus ca change, plus ca la meme chose)

1.

It is a warm spring afternoon, the top of the village by the King's Head commands a fine view to the South Downs, their pastel blue outline has given a gentle edge to the southern vista for many centuries. The only sound to make me look up is the cawing of the rooks near their rookery - the timeless sound of a Wealden village.

Walking past the King's Head I meet a flock of sheep heading towards Ellens Green. Their shepherd passes the time of day for a couple of minutes as the stragglers catch up; dust from the flint road is stirred up by the flock. I then move down the street, passing the butcher's, with pigs squealing as they wait their fate.

There is not much noise, a local farmer with horse and heavily-laden cart creaks past, its iron tyres cutting into the flint.

I meet a few people out shopping, most items can be purchased locally, or supplied by the village carrier on his journeys to Cranleigh and Horsham.

There seems to be a lot of activity further down the road, it is the site of the new railway line. It was started in 1860 and is due to open soon, but there have been a lot of major problems with the gradients.

Children watch from every vantage point as a huge steam shovel gnaws away at the red clay. Teams of Irish navvies work alongside at a feverish rate, their picks and shovels glinting in the sun. Building a railway is a dangerous operation, some men have been badly injured and the Chief Engineer was killed during a difficult tunnelling operation at Baynards.

There is a lot of excitement over the building of the line. They say it will put Rudgwick on the map and a local business man is having a new hotel built, to be called "The Martlet", in the hope of encouraging visitors to the area.

I walk on, towards Bucks Green and its little store; the road to Horsham is still a toll road, but its gates are soon to be removed, at least that will be progress.

2.

The weather is unusually warm for April, no rain for many weeks, the farmers and gardeners are desperate for water. The sun is now so fierce that sunburn is a hazard. I slowly walk down the hill from the church, dodging the speeding traffic, and as I look up a Jumbo manoeuvres for landing. A majestic sight and I wonder what the Victorian engineers would have thought of 300 tons flying over their station.

The subject of conversation, with people braving the traffic fumes, covers the hose-pipe ban and the increase in traffic through the village. I pass the local grocers and watch the cars and lorries pavement hopping, whoever has the biggest "4 x 4" wins.

I wish for more shade, protection against the blazing sun, this part of Church Street needs more trees! A giant lorry stops to ask the way to Cranleigh, shall I tell him the truth or tell him there's a weak bridge - it soon will be with many more of his kind.

I walk down to Watts Corner and an accident has only just occurred. No-one hurt, thank heavens, but plenty of damaged cars to block the road in all directions. Just a typical Saturday - where will it all end.....

3.

It's a hot, sunny afternoon, Rudgwick basks in high temperatures, the view to the South Downs is better than 50 years ago - the atmosphere is at last getting cleaner.

The village has a Mediterranean look to it, which is not surprising as in the early part of the 21st century the whole climate has changed. We now have plants and flowers that would never have survived the old Sussex winters. The climatic changes were blamed on the pollution of the late 20th century and the Draconian measures introduced by Parliament finally seem to have had some success.

The village now is as peaceful as 200 years ago. There is passing traffic, but it is hydrogen-fuelled and speed through the village is limited by electronic means - no need for speed-check cameras now! Enormous aircraft fly over, to and from Gatwick, but again hydrogen-

fuelled, they are very quiet - pollution free power but very bulbous - and Jumbos were thought to be ugly!

I decide to follow the path of an earlier relative, there are now more shops than a century ago. Out of town shopping is no longer fashionable or affordable; the electronic tolls on main roads have made it a thing of the past.

As I head down the street, I walk past the site of the former Station Garage and have a look over the old Victorian railway bridge. I see a scene of great activity - the old flats, called The Sidings, have been razed to the ground to make way for a new Mono-rail station. There was pressure to get the old line re-opened for many years, in fact Cranleigh did manage to install a light rail-link, similar to the highly successful "Docklands Light Railway", up to Guildford as part of their Millennium celebrations.

Now a new system is being installed. It will be able to bring in goods to the villages as required and act as a fast link to the main line stations - A light Mono-rail, running silently alongside the well established "Downs Link" footpath, the track of the original Victorian line (though I understand the original old tunnel was on the point of collapse after 100 years of neglect.)

As I sit in the sun, contemplating the changes that have come and gone in the past 200 years, just one thing puzzles me - What was it like to sit in the sun without the mandatory hat?

# IN MEMORY OF ANGELA MURGATROYD

## An Address by John Stevenson

When Anne and I first heard of Angela's death we were in the Channel Islands. There it was a time of high tides and I could not help thinking then how like life the tides are. Sometimes shallow and gentle. Sometimes huge with heavy seas. The Murgs in the last few weeks have had to endure the heaviest of seas but these must moderate.

Earlier in the year when all was tranquil the idea that we would be here today would have seemed impossible. But life is transient. Yesterday we stood together thinking only of the present; seeing life go on much as it had in the past. Today we mourn Angela's passing. very suddenly she has been taken away from her family and a terrible sadness surrounds us all.

However we should be happy for Angela and rejoice in her very full, rounded and happy life. She had a great number of friends and her openness meant that for many she could overcome the narrow bonds of acquaintances and become much more; someone in whom you had complete trust.

Let us smile and think what she has left us. She has given us a marvellous example of energy, dedication and strength of purpose which came from her generosity, natural vitality and sense of joy. It was these qualities that Brian recognised in the new librarian at the Ashmolean as he sat studying in 1949 and which made him certain in his choice of a wife. That and, of course, the straightforwardness essential in the partner of any Yorkshireman. Angela and, B as Angela called him, were together and the combination of A+B = excellence. What a foundation for family life.

For many of us our friendship started with their arrival in Rudgwick in 1956. Angela was always purposeful and she inspired us all doing the paramount job of housewife and mother with such skill and perfection. Her interests soon expanded across the whole village. Badminton, tennis, and the village fête as well as the Parish Council, the Friendly Club and many fund raising activities. Wherever there was need Angela would help; totally dependable, always doing the things promised on time. No one was ever let down.

One of their early friendships was with the Rollings and it was about this time that on Sunday evenings the two families would get together over supper and a drink. This became known as the boiled egg. Quite when this was extended to that very hard core of present boiled eggs is not important but what was, was Angela's and Brian's enthusiasm for keeping in touch with old friends. Like many of these friendships the boiled egg has stood the test of time.

So we can smile as the memories come flooding back. The summer pilgrimage to Cornwall - camping at Porthcothan. We called it Rudgwick-by-Sea. An enormous part of four or five families well over 25 strong. Angela would preside over these with a 'now look here'" or a cheery 'well now' much to everyones' amusement. The

turns of phrase and the ability to talk to hind leg off a donkey were getting well-known. Not surprisingly competition came from the seagulls with their squawking; so much so that any seagull crying was immediately called Angela and has been ever since.

We are going to miss her very much. Not least the grandchildren who Granny Wipe Wipe was so proud of and devoted to. Few of us can say in life that we have done so much, pleased so many and enlivened us all. She was a bright light amongst us and though she could not make her sun stand still yet could she make him run.

For someone with so many interests and so many friends it is difficult to give more than a snapshot. Angela was always there to help, encourage and enjoy everything she did. In her company one was inclined to forget how busy she was and overstay ones leave but never ones welcome.

For the family, Sue, Nick, Jane and Andrew and for us all she was always available, an exponent in the use of the telephone. I know she will remain with us, engraved on our memories and always be there for us to draw strength from. Remember how good her life was and think of our own mortality as John Donne said:-

*No man is an island entire of itself,  
Every man is a piece of the continent a part of the mane;  
If a clod of earth be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less;  
as well as if a promontorie were,  
as well as if a Mannor of thy friend were;  
any man's death deminishes me because I am involved in  
mankinde;  
therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;  
it tolls for thee.*

## AN APPRECIATION FROM THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY - By Stan Smith

Despite the demands of family life, Angela was always involved in a variety of activities in the village. Rudgwick is singularly fortunate in possessing a strong sense of community, and without doubt Angela made an outstanding contribution among those who have done so much to make our village a friendly and neighbourly place to live.

Two areas were of special interest to her - the Friendly Club and the Parish Council. I can well remember the trio at the centre of the Friendly Club (Pam Henderson, Betty Armstrong, and of course Angela), which did so much to entertain and organise our elderly villagers. That has now changed, and others have taken over the good work. It continues to be a thriving organisation.

For many years she was a Parish Councillor and became Chairman of the Planning sub-committee. It was in this last office that I got to know Angela so well. Planning and the protection of the countryside was an abiding passion, which she did with an endearing sense of optimism and cheerfulness. It was my pleasure to have collaborated on many planning matters, where she set a standard we must try hard to maintain.

Our best tribute to her memory will be to continue her good work in preserving the good things in Rudgwick.



# **CLEAR SKIES**

**By Malcolm Francis**

The skies over our village, throughout the Second World War, saw thousands of aircraft, from the desperate days of the Battle of Britain to the "Thousand Bomber" raids. On the night of one of those raids, my mother in law, Mrs. Babs McWilliam, recalls that she witnessed a stream of bombers heading east that took three hours to pass over the village.

There were occasional interceptions of enemy aircraft overhead, one German aircraft crashed at Roman Gate and another at Knowle Lane.

This village was luckier than some others, with only a few bombs dropped from fleeing raiders. In 1944 a V1 flying bomb exploded in the fields behind Cox Green, near to the present site of the Rudgwick Steam Fair. It was a Sunday lunchtime and blast damage was confined to loss of windows and a demolished garage.

In 1948, at the age of 4, I can remember my father and a next-door neighbour, Mr. Barrett, dismantling the makeshift air raid shelter at the bottom of the garden of my parents' house in Lynwick Street.

Mr. Barrett, who was ex-Navy, spent every night of war in the shelter, sleeping in his hammock, he wasn't going to take a chance. I remember, at that time, asking my mother about "The War" - adult conversation always seemed to be ".....during the War", "..... before the War", etc. One was aware that there had been a great upheaval, but things had become a lot better.

I could sense the wartime atmosphere, there were a lot of Army camps around the area, at Gaskyns (the site of Queen Elizabeth Road), at Lynwick, and in the Haven close to the A29. Many homeless families post-war lived in these camps as there was a severe shortage of housing.

When visiting my grand-parents at Dunsfold I could see many "Blister" hangars, close to the road, at Dunsfold Airfield. These were the ones that looked like a giant Nissen hut, fronted by canvas curtains. The hangars housed "wartime" aircraft, actually they were cargo planes, some taking part in the Berlin Airlift, which were serviced at Dunsfold. There was also a red, flashing navigation light at the end of a runway close to the road, which seemed a sinister echo of the war to a youngster like me.

Air traffic over the village was very spasmodic, with only an occasional flight. Often they were the old DC3 "Dakotas", a favourite work-horse of post-war airlines - their slow progress being marked by the gently throbbing engines. A light aircraft sometimes passed and to see a helicopter was a major event! This was just a few years before Gatwick was established as a major airport - hard to believe it was dubbed a "white elephant" when it was first opened in the 50's.

Looking back to the war, Mrs. McWilliam relates that she was helping with a house-to-house collection for the

Spitfire Fund and had a very cold reception from the occupants of 'Kings' in Church Street. She later mentioned this to a friend, who promptly said "It would serve them right if they were bombed". A week later a stick of bombs fell across the village.

Where did they land? In Rudgwick Brickworks, close to the houses in Lynwick Street and opposite 'Kings' in Church Street!!

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## **Cecilia Butcher - 50th Anniversary**

September saw a remarkable Anniversary - Mrs. Cecilia Butcher's 50th year as our Post Mistress. It was on the 1st September, 1945 that Cecilia and her late husband, Frank, took over the village Post Office. In those days the Post office and the manual telephone exchange were located across the road, as part of the grocers and general stores owned by Mr. Moses Humphrey (father of Geoff).

On Friday, 1st September Mike Weeds and the Parish Council hosted a party at the Village Hall in honour of Cecilia's achievement. Those present included older inhabitants of the village, who have benefitted from Cecilia's years of dedicated service; former postmen, who have now retired, and the families of former postmen, together with past assistants at the Post Office, who have helped Cecilia maintain her excellent service.

The organisation of the Post Office was represented by senior members of local and national staff, and the village organisations by members of their committees.

All the Post Office representatives spoke of Cecilia with warmth and affection - not surprisingly Rudgwick was a favourite "posting" for staff because of Cecilia's wonderful hospitality, and Cecilia was presented with a number of gifts in recognition of her 50 years of service - a very rare occurrence.

The Rev. John Morris paid tribute to Cecilia's invaluable contribution to the life of the village and Cecilia replied with a speech which took the listeners back to her early days at the Post Office with Frank, when they first took over.

More informal celebrations of this special event took place on Saturday evening, at the Post Office, when Cecilia welcomed many of her family, friends and customers.

It is a rare village these days that can boast of having a Post Mistress who has served for 50 years, and Rudgwick was proud to be able to say thank you to Cecilia for all her past endeavours and her wonderful record of service to the village, and acknowledge her bravery in facing Frank's illness and death and her own health problems.

**Malcolm Francis**

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# OBITUARY

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## Alan Mitchell - 1922 - 1995

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It is with sadness that we report the passing of our friend Alan Mitchell.

Alan was the speaker chosen for our first public meeting of the Society in the Autumn of 1984. He set a standard for our subsequent meetings and his illustrated talk on "Trees in British Gardens" was received with great enthusiasm. Four years later we invited him again to talk on "Notable Trees". The talks not only had the virtue of being highly instructive, but were presented with a delightful sense of humour.

Alan made several contributions to British dendrology and arboriculture and the book that brought him to public notice was "A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe". This was a best seller and considered a masterpiece. He was regarded by the Royal Horticultural Society as the leading authority on British Trees.

He read Forestry at Trinity College, Dublin, and joined the Forestry Commission's Alice Holt Research Station as a dendrologist. His lasting contribution to dendrology will be the establishment of the Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI), a registered charity. He recorded the growth of many thousands of trees in his own card index system, now transferred onto computer. He travelled widely in the British Isles recording the progress of his selected trees and coined the phrase "tree watching". Alan possessed an endearing modesty and confided to me that he preferred to talk to a small Village like Rudgwick than to learned societies like the RHS. The University of Surrey conferred upon him an honorary M.A. and other awards included the Victoria Medal of Honour from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1970, which he valued highly, as it is limited to 63 recipients each representing one year of Queen Victoria's reign.

**STAN SMITH**

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## HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

### Deposit Draft

The local plan was published in March 1994, and is currently the subject of a local inquiry conducted by an inspector appointed by the DoE.

This is a complicated procedure considering objections and recommendations. This is not expected to be completed before the end of the year and then it is calculated that a further 12 months will be required for the Inspector to produce his recommendations. There are three major matters in Rudgwick that will concern us:-

1. Application has been made for development at Churchman's Meadow (land beyond Pondfield Road). The plan is for 40 houses and an open space.
2. Policy RW2 for Cox Green has been challenged
3. A proposal to extend the defined built-up area adjacent

to the Police House in Buck's Green.

These are matters that both the Parish Council and The Preservation Society have strenuously opposed, and I am informed that all three submissions have been opposed by the District Council.

The Council intends to adopt the Local Plan on a statutory basis to form the basis for new developments in the District up to the year 2004. To complicate matters a new Structure Plan (1995) outlines even more development up to 2011. We must repeat the warning by Tony Curtis (Chief Planning Officer, HDC), commenting on the Structure Plan that "despite the intention to control house building, there are still 2 options which will involve an increase in house building over that already planned". These are (1) an extra 500 houses on greenfield sites and (2) another 2,300 houses in a new settlement in the North of the District, linked with extra business development. Furthermore, Tony Curtis has warned that a major development at Gatwick is a real threat. In our last newsletter we posed the question as to how the DoE calculate the need for further development in the South East.

Although the need for social housing will continue, increase in the future house building programme is highly debatable. House property is readily available at all levels throughout the District. Additionally, new technology, with increasing office aids eg. computers, word processors, fax machines and automation in factories must inevitably involve a reduction in our workforce. Sir Ronald Oxburgh (Rector of Imperial College, London), the new President of the British Association, in his address said we live "in a world which is changing faster than it has done before". Another important factor is the growing pattern of short term contracts and the increase in part time work; these are social and economic factors that must influence those entering the housing market. The need for a continuing house building programme is therefore highly questionable.

The real needs and problems in a fast changing society, have not been properly addressed and the continuing pressures to build in our precious countryside must be therefore challenged.

**STAN SMITH**

## GUIDED WALKS PROGRAMME - 1995

Once again we can report a successful programme of summer walks in Rudgwick. We organised 12 continuous walks for the three months May, June and July. Attendances were maintained at an average of 40. We are grateful to those members of the Society, The Haven Society, The Scouts and The Parish Council who organised walks.

About Christmas time we shall be submitting a further programme for 1996 and we are looking for more volunteers to lead walks that might take us through August. Volunteers please contact Stan Smith on 822723. A winter programme has been organised by WSCC. Booklets are available from all libraries priced 50p.