RPS NEWSLETTER

RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY *AUTUMN 1996*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As we approach winter it may be a relief to many to shut their windows and keep out the noise of traffic and aeroplanes. The West Sussex County Council has outlined proposals for traffic calming measures to be introduced at the bottom, end of Church Street, from Kilnfield Road to the junction of the A281. Unfortunately this does not address the problems at the top end of Church Street where traffic rarely obeys the speed limit. I have heard several complaints of excessive aircraft noise. that aeroplanes appear to be flying much lower over our Village. One of our members in Lynwick Street has made good use of FREEPHONE 0800 393070 and four calls have resulted in airlines being fined for excessive noise. Cameroon Airlines have twice been fined £1,000!

The Society was invited to respond to a publication from SERPLAN, "A Fresh Strategy for South East England". SERPLAN is composed of elected County, Unitary, District and London Borough Councillors. Its publication had two purposes, the first was to inform - to let people know the strategic issues that currently face the region. The second was consultation - to make sore that it has access to a wide range of views. It is equally important to make the point that this document is an attempt to explain what 'sustainable development' really means. This is a matter open to individual interpretation. All organisations who respond at this stage will be consulted further. Local Authorities in the South East of England, including West Sussex County Council, are working together to review the regional guidelines for land use and transportation development in the region to cover the next twenty years or so. SERPLAN, which is the forum for these discussions, must also take account of relevant international and national concerns.

The West Sussex Structure Plan, 3rd Review takes us up to the year 2011. It has been calculated that between 1994 - 2011, 9,000 new houses would be required in the Horsham District. Planning permission for 6,700 has already been granted leaving 2,300 to be found within the district. Either this will mean a new settlement on a green-field site, or new housing being added to existing settlements. There are rumours concerning development at Christ's Hospital and the proposed new by-pass at Billingshurst will provide 555 new homes if approved. We will keep you informed of the latest plans as it is very possible that Rudgwick will be asked to provide land for more development and Churchman's Meadow may be next in line. We will not know the outcome of this review until early 1997.

Planning permission has been granted for L'Antico, Bucks Green to be divided back into two dwellings and for two attached houses to be built behind it. There is now a similar application for the Queens Head Public House to become a residential property and for two houses to be built behind it. We consider this to be an over-development of the site and have objected to the plan. Both these properties are listed buildings. The Talon Garage site, opposite Catchpoles in Church Street. has permission for eight houses to be built with garaging and accesses. It has been decided that there will be six 3 bed roomed houses and two 4 bed roomed houses but at the time of writing this, details on materials and landscaping have yet to be agreed.

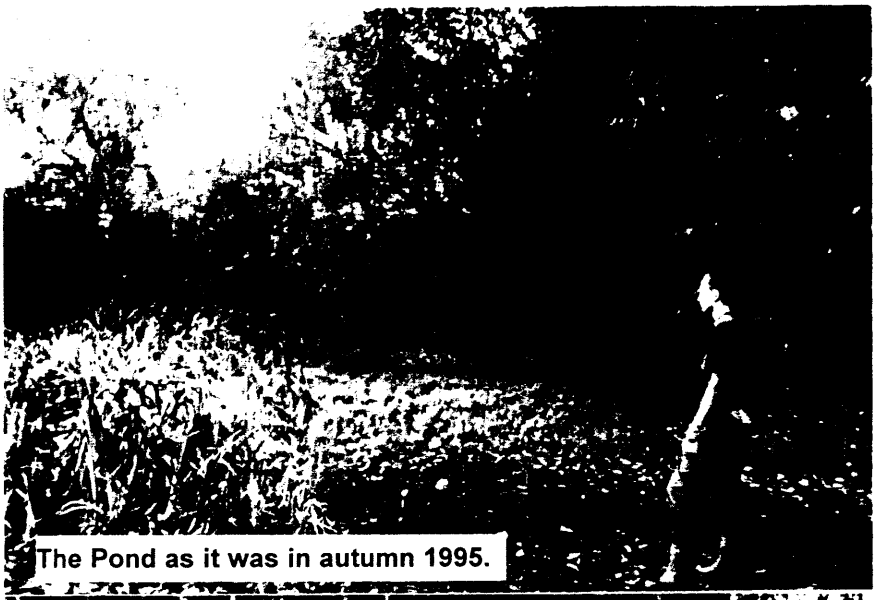
Planning permission has been granted on appeal for four large houses to be built, at Ridge, Church Street. It was an application that was difficult to resist as a precedent had been established next to it. We did object to four houses being built and had hoped that two or three houses would be considered reasonable. Sadly the Inspector appointed by the Department of the Environment did not agree with us.

Our Autumn meeting Takes place at the Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green on Monday 25th November.1996 at 7.30pm. Michael Rowan, Architect and Conservation Officer of the West Sussex County Council will give an illustrated talk on traditional Sussex Buildings - The Sympathetic Adaptation and Extensions to Listed Buildings. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served during the interval and everyone is welcome.

Vanessa Lowndes

SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

GASKYNS POND



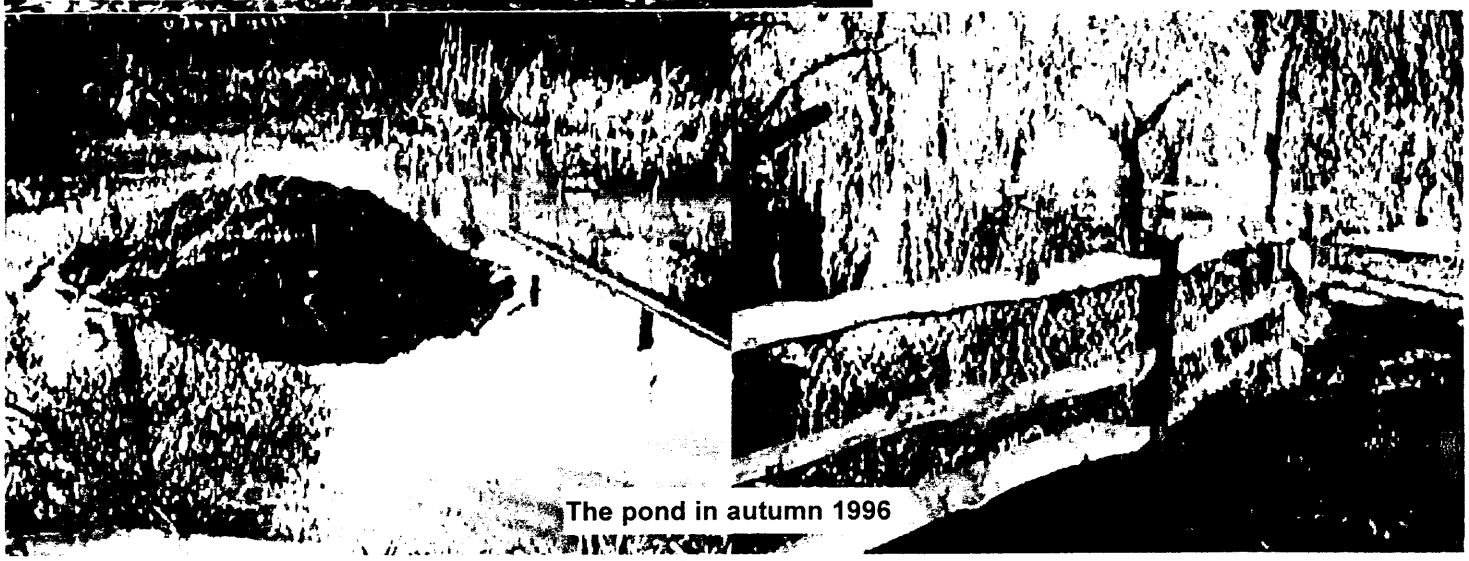
The Pond as it was in autumn 1995.

As many of you will know the Preservation Society has taken over the license from West Sussex County Council to restore and maintain the pond in Gaskyns Close. A small sub-committee consisting of Geoff Ayres and myself and four residents of Gaskyns Close are overseeing the conservation work. We are also receiving expert help from the

Project Supported by

rural action

FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



The pond in autumn 1996

WSCC Countryside Service, initially from Neil Mitchell and now from his successor John Kirkham who is the Countryside Ranger for this area. Last Autumn we started the clearing by digging out the silt at the bottom of the pond and heaping it into two islands which we hoped would attract moorhens or ducks back to the pond to nest. We didn't see any ducks this year but we did have a pair of moorhens which successfully bred and brought up three chicks. We successfully applied to Rural Action for the Environment for a grant to re-fence the pond and this work has just been completed with a very splendid post and rail fence supplied by Rudgwick Fencing. During National Pond Week in September we organised a whole day's clearance work during which we cleared a large amount of shrub and trees which were overgrowing the pond margin. This should now let much more light into the pond and now also makes it very much more attractive and visible. We have also dug the two smaller islands into one larger one and cleared back some of the reed from the centre of the pond to the edges.

The pond completely dried up in the summer and whilst this allowed us to work on it more easily it is obviously not something we want to see continue to happen. We have asked WSCC Highways Department to investigate what appears to be broken or blocked drainage into the pond so that hopefully next year we will have a pond with water in it. We need some paving slabs or concrete blocks to shore up the island. We also need a Hawthorn tree (the white flowered variety *Cretaegus monogyna*). If any of our members can help with these I would be pleased to hear from you.

Leslie Hawkins. Tel: 822967

Site of Ancient Ironworks at Dedisham

The Furnace Ponds

We are concerned about the increasing commercial use of the Furnace Ponds. Whilst we welcome the many improvements and general management of the site of the Ancient Elizabethan Ironworks, and the amenity value of excellent fishing facilities, we are opposed to any further development that would radically change the character of this relatively unspoilt stretch of countryside. Many years ago we were able to gain a measure of protection for this site of industrial archaeological importance.

The future of this site is under review and we will keep members informed of the outcome of the current consultations.

Stan Smith

Summer Walks Programme

As you will all know, the Society organises a series of Tuesday evening walks during the summer. The coordinator of this programme is our president Stan Smith. Stan sends the details to the County Council and they are included in their book of summer walks. We are the only village in the county to provide such a programme, and our county was the first to publish such a book. The Rudgwick walks are very well attended, and are fast becoming a tradition. This summer's walks were no exception, with an average turnout of about forty people, coming from as far afield as the coast and outer London.

Date	Leaders
7th. May	Dave Buckley
14th. May	Andrew & Joan Pye
21st. May	Judy & Michael Knights
28th. May	Wendy Bourne
4th. June	Geoff Ayres
11th. June	Malcolm Francis
18th. June	Bridget Pusey
25th. June	Stan Smith
2nd. July	Paul Frenchum
9th. July	Chris Jones
16th. July	Simon & Marilyn Quail
23rd. July	Malcolm Francis
30th. July	Mollie Cheer
6th. August	Susan Bostock

Arrangements for walks each Tuesday at 7.00p.m. helps walkers to plan ahead. Ideally, we should like to continue walks to the end of August, but there is always the difficulty of getting volunteers to act as leaders. We shall be glad to hear from volunteers and about Christmas time we will do our best to produce an even better programme. Please contact Stan Smith on R.822723.

Geoff Ayres

A WINTER WALK

The start and finish of this walk is the King's Head. Time approx. 2 hours.

1. Take the Sussex Border Path, which is 100 yards to the north, just opposite "Hawkridge". This path runs west, we leave it at the first stile and follow the edge of the adjoining field in a more northerly direction. The path is well marked as it gently follows the ridge and then turns north to meet the road to Baynards. The path crosses the road and the site of an old, moated house can be seen. This was most likely a 13th century construction but was burnt down in Victorian times. Nothing is left of the building but some years ago servants' livery buttons, made in the late 18th century, were found on the site. It does give a little indication of the household that lived there. Pause a moment to think of all the generations that must have known that house, and all the history that it has seen. Now it is just a silent, tree clad knoll.

N.B. The path now enters the Baynards Estate, the Public footpaths must be followed.

2. Take the path past the moat, keeping close to the fence, and following the series of white arrows that indicate the route of the path, which then passes diagonally across a large field.

The park has an atmosphere that must be due to its long history. It was in 1447 when Henry VII granted William Sidney permission to "empark" 800 acres in the parishes of Cranleigh, Ewhurst and Rudgwick.

The path goes through a small wood and emerges close to a small Nissen hut. It then crosses one of the long drives that lead up to the ruined Baynards mansion. Look for the white arrow that indicates the entrance of the next section of path through more woodland. Then take the path up the right hand side of the next field until the old clock tower comes into view, this is all that is left of the old mansion.

Baynards mansion was burnt down in mysterious circumstances in the late 1970's. It had, in its time, been described as "a fine specimen of Tudor architecture".

The history of the park and mansion is complex and sometimes confusing, and unfortunately but not surprisingly, not all that has been written about it is true. There is evidence of an original site (known as Pollingfold Manor) to the west of the mansion site, and we know that for the past 500 years it has been in the ownership of many powerful men.

In 1534 it was owned by Sir Edward Bray, who became Sheriff of Sussex and Surrey. His son, Edward the younger, was married to the granddaughter of Sir Thomas More, whose decapitated head was kept at Baynards for a time before being interred at Canterbury - hence the reputation of being haunted!

Later in the 16th century Baynards was bought by Sir George More of Loseley, and later owned by the first Lord Onslow. There were a number of intervening owners before it was bought by Rev. Thomas Thurlow in 1832. Thomas Thurlow was the son of the Bishop of Durham, and he added to and virtually rebuilt the mansion under the direction of Sir Matthew Digby-Wyatt. There is a suspicion that this 19th century rebuilding lost all the original Tudor construction. By 1850 the building housed a fine art collection, including works by Van Dyke, Rembrandt and Holbein. Thomas Thurlow was very much a local benefactor, and did much to encourage music making locally. He gave Rudgwick church its first organ.

3. The footpath now travels down a slope and over a small footbridge (**not the wider bridge to the east**) and bears left past the silage clamp to join the farm track. Turn left (west) passing some white cottages, which were built by the Rudgwick builder, Harold Tate, in the 1930's, walk up the hill and at the top turn left. Follow the ridge through the woodland for some time until the

old railway line is reached.

There is now a brickworks to the west of the line. This was known locally, for many years, as the "Fullers Earth works" as this mineral, used in the chemical industry and the manufacture of pesticides, was found in a productive seam here. The works had their own sidings and shunting engine.

4. Take the Downs Link past the old Baynards station. This has been beautifully restored by the present owners, and to the right is the Thurlow Arms, ready and waiting to provide a thirst-quencher after walking so far.

The railway line from Horsham to Guildford was lost at the time of Beeching "axe" in 1965. Construction on it had started in 1860 and it was opened in 1865. Many landowners opposed the original construction, but Thomas Thurlow of Baynards welcomed this development, possibly giving the railway company land for the trackway across the park. His own station, Baynards Station was opened with much celebration in 1865.

Whilst the line was still open, Baynards was a favourite venue with film producers and several films, including "Room at the Top" , "The Grass is Greener" and an old TV version of "The Railway Children" had location shots taken here.

5. Follow the Downs Link signposts to head south. West of the Downs Link is the site of tumulus, known as Broomhall Motte and sometimes referred to as the Rudgwick castle. A survey was carried out at the turn of the century, with trenches being dug to a depth of 5'. Green glazed Norman pottery and red floor tiles were found, and the site was originally thought to be an early Norman castle. However, there is some doubt about this conclusion as the archaeologist responsible for this survey did not have a particularly good professional reputation.

The motte is about 90' in diameter and may well have been no more than a house platform. The position, without tree cover, must have commanded a view for some 30 miles to the south but on the other hand the forestation was much thicker than at the present time, so how much observation would have been possible?

The view to the east encompasses a glimpse of the church and the top of Rudgwick village. There is a seat in memory of John Hill along this path, which makes a welcome stop.

When you have rested, you will see that the path to the east is the quickest way back to the Kings Head, along the Sussex Border path. Alternatively you can carry on along the Downs Link to Rudgwick Health centre.

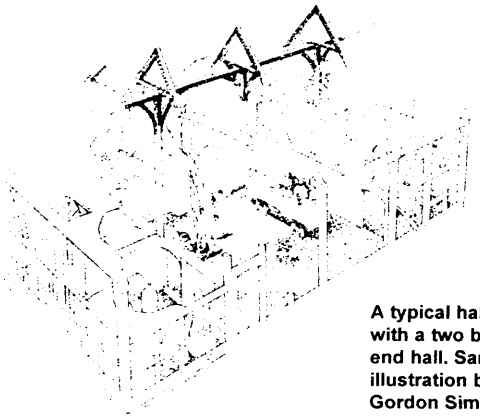
But either way, it's home for tea and toast!

Malcolm Francis

BOOK ON TIMBER-FRAMED BUILDINGS

We are pleased to inform members that the book written by Diana Chatwin and published by the Society should be available by the Autumn Meeting.

The book contains 230 pages, 110 illustrations and plans and 99 photographs of all the known timber-framed houses in Rudgwick. We are very fortunate to have had sponsorship from Rudgwick Parish Council, The Havenhope Trust, Horsham District Council, West Sussex County Council and The Council for British Archaeology. Without their financial support it would never have been possible to produce this marvellous account of Rudgwick's History as seen through the development of its timber-framed buildings. The book contains a wealth of fine detailed illustrations by Gordon Simkin and nearly 100 photographs many of which were taken especially for the book by Ken and Celia Cronin.



A typical hall house with a two bay open end hall. Sample illustration by Gordon Simkin.

Photograph of Snoxalls, Bucks Green, By Ken Cronin

The book is priced at £15.95 but for members of the Society there is a special 15% discount price of **£13.56.** Postage, if required, is extra at cost.

The book is being distributed by Roy Yates Books. You can place your order with Roy Yates either by telephone on Rudgwick 822299 or Fax 823012 or in writing to Smallfields Cottage, Cox Green, West Sussex. RGH12 3DE. We will also be taking orders at the Autumn Meeting on November 25th.

FROM LITTLE ACORNS ....

by Alan Siney

In an article that once appeared in "Tree News", Oliver Rackman posed the question of what it is that differentiates the English landscape from that seen on the continent. The answer is fundamental, if not immediately apparent: in truth one can travel from Boulogne to Athens without seeing a tree that is more than 150 years old. It has always been policy across mainland Europe to cut down and use trees in their prime, thus excluding from the landscape the majestic oak that dominates ours and denying themselves the glamour of old trees and their value as a natural habitat. However, the oak provides more than this, it is a living monument of rural history that can last for 600 years and indeed in some circumstances for longer.

The oak tree passes through various, gradual stages of growth, maturity, die back and old age and, whilst its age can only be roughly approximated, these stages can be used by studying the comparisons between them to connect them with period of land enclosures or road building, since the trees invariably grew in the hedgerows adjoining such features.

Of the several thousands of species and sub-species of tree now found the Britain, only 35 or so are true natives. As the last ice retreated some 10,000 years ago and plant life spread slowly northwards over the former frozen tundra, so did the melting ice raise the sea levels until the sea broke through, separating Britain from the mainland some 6,000 years ago.

It was during this relatively short period of time that some hardy species spread into southern Britain, ranging from the Silver Birch - an opportunist that rapidly propagated itself throughout the length of Britain, to the beech - a slow spreader which only grew naturally as far north as the English midland counties (those further north having originally been planted), and it was the sturdy oak, which emerged as the dominant king of the forest.

At 150 years an oak tree has just reached maturity, over the next century or so it starts to develop a "stag's head" whereby the crown becomes bare and the outer branches start to die off. At this stage the tree should not be regarded as dying, since the leaves feed the growing wood and thus, as its foliage is past the first flush of youth, some of the outer branches are sacrificed to allow the trunk its continued expansion. To put it simply, the tree is graciously accepting middle age and sensibly reducing its commitments.

At about 300 years the tree is moving steadily into old age, with an ever increasing amount slowly turning into dead wood, until eventually it stands as an apparently dead, bare hulk, with its withered branches reaching into the sky. But wait, the following year clumps of leaves may grow out of one or two boughs, unusually close to the trunk, which indicates that there is still a seam of living tissue passing through and in this condition it may well stand for the span of another lifetime. Indeed, in the storm of 1987 many of the older oaks remained standing whilst younger ones, still in full foliage, fell all about them.

The dead outer branches of the middle aged tree are attacked by fungi and wood boring insects, in pursuance of Mother Nature's policy of returning everything to the soil that stems from it, and predators move in, beginning the process that gives the tree its own, self-contained ecosystem. In approaching old age sections of limbs loose their heartwood, bees may nest in the hollows or an owl may take up residence. This is the most interesting period of the tree's life, and one which those on the European mainland never see. Sadly however, it is claimed that pollution is already causing premature die-back, and this could be an unknown variable in any generalisation on the aging of trees.

The oldest oaks, dating from the Norman - Medieval period, were pollarded. The top branches were lopped off, leaving club headed stems that grew a thick head of new branches. This limited the top growth and created a regular harvest of branches, increasing the density of the foliage and the girth of the trunk with each pollarding. Many of these specimens, some over 1,000 years old and with trunks like enormous hollow cylinders, still stand today, particularly on land that was formerly part of the royal parks. For centuries, these pollarded giants had supplied firewood to the great houses, thereby reducing the need to cut down timber trees for such a purpose.

As we can see oaks that have stood for a millennium, I would like to see oaks planted, preferably from their acorns, that will last throughout the next millennium. One may ask what the future will hold for them, with pollution, global warming, development and vandalism, but we must be optimistic and assume the continuity of natural life. Many landowners may wish to participate, but let most be planted in prominent places. Let parishes select perhaps two spots to plant their oaks, in conjunction with landowners and Highways Authorities, each protected for the first 40 years of its life with an iron fence bearing a plaque "AD 2000", so that it can be recognised as a millennium oak. Let children participate and learn the significance of trees as a part of our natural heritage, so they will remember and show it to their children, each generation seeing it grow during their lifetime. Let the millennium oaks be revered and even protected by statute if necessary, until large enough to exert their own presence in the landscape.

At some time the trees will need to be pollarded, and again in the far future. This is certain to raise howls of protest at the apparent desecration of a prominent tree, but it will be a necessary process to ensure its strength and longevity. Let us remember that the ancient monarchs of oaks standing today were grown to produce firewood from their branches. If such a scheme is to be operational, now is the time for the major conservancy organisations to prepare a supply of saplings, the greatest proportion of the costs being borne by the millennium fund, which should be used not only to build useful structures of contemporary design but also to perpetuate our natural heritage in the countryside and on

the village green. The ceremonial planting of any other type of tree on the occasion of a new millennium would be a pretence, even the magnificent beech rarely lives for more than 200 years.

HARVEST 1964

By Malcolm Francis

I recalled in an earlier article the days of harvest before the advent of modern combine harvesters, but I think that an account of harvest time in more recent years is also worth recounting, showing that modern farming also means a great deal of hard work.

I spent all my spare time in my late teens working on a local farm that belonged to a distant relation, adjoining Baynards Park. The farmer grew a lot of cereal, for the farming policies of the late 60's encouraged every spare acre to be turned over to cereal production. The trend for larger equipment put a lot of pressure on small fields and narrow gateways, but although a few fields had been enlarged by the removal of a hedge or two, there was not the widespread destruction of the former landscape that was seen in East Anglia. The only local exception being the land to the east of the B2128 to Cranleigh, which was part of the Baynards/Coxlands estate, where many acres of woodland was torn out, the only present day bonus being the resulting beautiful view of the North Downs.

Let's recall a typical summer day when everything was set to make a start on the winter wheat, the forecast is good (but forecasting 30 years ago was less accurate than today's) and the 2 combine harvesters have been prepared. One is the latest model, the other was picked up at a farm sale and has a doubtful history, but the price was right. Both machines are large, cutting a 16ft swathe of corn on each pass, but they do not have cabs to protect the drivers. They are "tankers", with the grain being stored in large tanks rather than sacks. (The old system of grain sacks required a 2nd man, or boy, and grain was often lost when a full sack was sent down the chute and split on landing on the hard ground. These grain sacks also required collecting up which was another labour intensive job.) The barns have been modified now to accommodate a bulk crop, by constructing makeshift silos from ex-army ammunition shelters, custom designed storage silos have yet to be built. The grain will be lifted into them by large, but unreliable, electric augers from the grain trailers that shuttle from field to barn.

The morning sun climbs higher in the sky, the dew is burning off and the crop may appear to be dry but a moisture test is done to make sure. A small amount of wheat is ground up in a hand mill and mixed with acetylene powder. It is then put in a pressure container and the greater the moisture, the greater the pressure created, giving a reliable indication of the moisture level in the crop. If a crop is harvested whilst too damp it will heat up in storage and need to be artificially dried, costing both time and money.

The farmer and the second driver climb aboard the combines, clad in boiler suits to protect them from the dust. Children from a nearby cottage watch with excitement, they are not allowed to climb aboard for safety reasons, but it is a sad fact that tragic accidents still happen on farms. The driver of a large combine, sitting high above the ground, has only limited vision to the rear when manoeuvring and I know of one accident between a combine and a tractor in a reversing incident where 2 days of good weather were lost as the vehicles were feverishly repaired.

The two combines start work at 10 am, cutting around the head land - a tedious procedure as branches from adjacent trees, even though they were cut back the preceding winter, can still get in the way, constituting a hazard to both driver and machine. Soon the field is covered in broad stripes and good progress is made. The drivers are concentrating all the time on the cutting, they get little time to look up from watching the chattering cutter bar as it scythes through the crop. The cut wheat stands momentarily before it is engulfed by the ravenous machine, but all sorts of things can stop the flow - a hidden broken branch, a piece of ragstone and, on reclaimed land, old hedge roots. Watching the cut has a mesmerising effect on the driver, adding to the fatigue of breathing in clouds of dust (wearing industrial masks and goggles help a little but cause discomfort in the heat) and barley is the worst crop for this, having the most irritating dust of all. The constant noise stuns the driver, the roaring of the engine, the thrum of the threshing drum and the chattering of various sieves all combine to form a blanket of sound, a sudden change in which alerts the driver to the fact that something has gone wrong.

By early afternoon the acres of tow-coloured standing wheat give way to an every increasing pattern of golden straw. The straw, as it leaves the combine, settles like snow on to a carpet of freshly crushed vegetation. The tractors and grain trailers have been taking the precious cargo back to the barn all morning, off-loading each combine whilst on the move to save time; it is vital that their speeds are matched to the combine for an error can shed a hundred-weight of corn on the ground in a few seconds. Just as a driver is looking back to check the grain unloading, a large piece of stone is ingested into the combine, warning horns sound, and luckily the slip clutches protect the main drum from damage. Only minor damage is done but half an hour is lost in unjamming straw tightly wound round a large auger.

The other combine is still slicing away at the crop, the roar of its diesel engine receding as it works over the steep hill backing onto the railway track. An occasional train's progress is marked by little puffs of steam drifting up from the deep cutting. When the combine reappears the driver looks anxiously for the grain trailer, as his tanks are full, he eventually has to stop as grain starts to spill over the top of huge "saddle" tanks. A lone figure is seen running across the field, with the message that the grain trailer has a puncture and with a full load of grain still on

board ..... another delay as a laden trailer has to be jacked with care and one slip of the jack could mean a serious accident.

It is now early evening but the temperature is still high, dust from each machine streams away as if it were smoke. A baler is making slow progress with the day's straw, trying to keep out of the way of the combines as they sweep past. A small team stacks the bales in groups of 8, after lifting a few hundred their energy flags and thirst takes over, it's a pity they can see the Thurlow in the distance. The olive coloured oaks start to cast a welcome shadow as the sun slowly sinks in the west, and the last row of standing wheat succumbs to the polished blades. The combines are brought home, their threshing gear slowly spinning to a halt, to Collins Farm.

Everybody is tired and covered in dust they lean against the machinery drinking mugs of tea that have appeared from the farmhouse. There are still the chores to be done, the pigs are getting restless because somebody forgot to feed them, there's more work to be done on the combines, one needs some of its "fingers" sharpened and the older one needs a bearing replaced (the last hour was marred by an unwelcome noise from the rethresher that wins the final grains from the ears.) Will the local factor have this small unit in stock and can it be fixed overnight - the vital replacement is located and a landrover is dispatched.

Midnight, the bearing has been installed but will the weather hold, tomorrow is designated for the 40-acre field. Everyone is numb with exhaustion, my ears are still singing from the hours of noise, I was the second driver!

I fall into my car, it seems exceptionally quiet, and drive home through the dark lanes to Rudgwick, there is still some lightness in the northern sky but dawn is only a few hours away. Its time for a bath and to fall into bed.

RUDGWICK

(The following brief history was prepared by Stan Smith at the request of Waverley District Council. It will be featured on an information board on the Downslink near to the Surrey/Sussex border)

The Parish of Rudgwick lies in the heart of the Low Weald in the North West of Sussex. It is bounded by the Surrey/Sussex border running along the ridge of rising ground which gave the Parish its name - "Regwick" (1210), meaning the farm on the ridge. The Parish Church stands on the ridge, dominating the whole area. The tower of the Church was built in the late 13th century and the structure contains some Roman tiles.

The word Weald comes from the Saxon word for "forest" and lies between the North and South downs. The early Saxons settled the coastal plain of Sussex which was very fertile. The Saxon economy was based on transhumance, the seasonal movement of animals from one area to another. Animals were driven from southern settlements up into the Weald to graze on the woodland pastures of their outliers. Large numbers of pigs came north in the Autumn when there was an abundance of acorns and beech nuts.

Gradually permanent settlement occurred in places which hitherto had been occupied only seasonally by herdsmen and woodsmen. It is this system of outliers which explains why so few places in the Weald are mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.

Clearance of woodland for agriculture, known as assarting, continued for the next two centuries and the first recorded account of Rudgwick appeared in the Nonae Rolls of 1341. Clearly life was hard and managing the wet clay soil made farming difficult.

However, in the 15th century ironworks were developed in the Weald, where iron ore was plentiful, and the large areas of woodland provided charcoal. In Rudgwick an Elizabethan ironworks was set up at Dedisham, where there was both a furnace and a forge (hammer). In the 16th and 17th centuries there was a minor industrial revolution, which for a time created prosperity in the Weald.

Ironworks declined in the late 17th century and the next important event was the coming of the railway in 1865, when Rudgwick had a station on the Horsham - Guildford line. Travel by rail gave ordinary people greater freedom of movement, but sadly the railway line was closed down in 1965, just 100 years from its opening.

The old track however became of great amenity value, since it was taken over by Surrey and Sussex County Councils, and we have the delightful bridleway through open country called DOWNSLINK.

(With acknowledgments to Diana Chatwin)

This postcard of 'Rudgwick Street' (Church Street) was recently found in a bric-a brac sale at Midhurst. The reverse shows that it was posted in Bucks Green on March 20th 1905. The area to the left of Church Street, looking from Church Hill, was green fields. The remains of the Horsham Stone path shown clearly on the left of this photograph can still be seen on the bank leading up to the Church Gate.

RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

AUTUMN MEETING

Monday, 25th November 1996

7.30pm, Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green

MICHAEL ROWAN

BSc Hons., DIP ARCH., MSc., ARIBA, DIP ARCH Conservation - Rom -

Conservation Officer of the West Sussex County Council

Michael will present an illustrated talk on the sympathetic adaption and extensions to listed buildings

Where listed building consent is required, planning authorities in the county ask him to assess & advise on the merits of each application for changes to the structure of all important buildings.

MULLED WINE AND MINCE PIES WILL BE SERVED IN THE INTERVAL

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Mr & Mrs R. J. Nash
Southdown House
Church Street
Rudgwick
West Sussex RH12 3