

# RPS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2000

Welcome to the new look RPS newsletter. Members tell us that they very much enjoy reading the stories and news items that make up our twice-yearly publication. We hope that through the newsletter we can keep in touch with our members and that the local history and other stories of local interest inform you of how our village was in the past as well as the topical issues of today. However we need your help. We would like to hear from anyone who would like to write a contribution, whether it is something of historical interest or about issues that affect us today. Please let me know if you have anything to contribute to the Autumn newsletter.

The Society would like to express its gratitude to Martyn Mann of Copytec. Copytec have for several years copied the newsletter for us at less than commercial rates and we are very grateful for their generous support of the Society's work.

Leslie Hawkins  
822967

## PLANNING MATTERS

### THE GREAT HOUSING DEBATE

Central Government is about to decide the number of houses that will be required in the South East up to the year 2016.

The first proposal was produced by SERPLAN, which consists of 136 local councils in S. E. England, who recommended that 668,500 new houses be built in the period to 2016. This in itself is a pretty frightening figure.

John Prescott then appointed Professor Stephen Crow and his panel to carry out an Examination in Public of the SERPLAN document. The CROW REPORT is now with the Government to decide what account to take of the report when producing an eventual Regional Planning Guide (R.P.G.9).

Crow recommended that the 668,500 new homes proposed by SERPLAN in the South East should be increased to 1.1 million. This would mean an increase in West Sussex of 63% from 44,900 to 73,000.

This produced an outcry from all sections of the Community. The C.P.R.E. in giving evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on the CROW REPORT said, "it bears little relation to the suggested strategy which all 138 authorities in the South East agreed, and that the suggested strategy in the

South East could have a devastating effect in terms of congestion and sprawl". The C.P.R.E. made the important point that the CROW REPORT flatly contradicts a number of policies which Government has adopted eg. a return to "predict and provide" instead of "plan, monitor and manage".

The Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies has been actively opposing the CROW REPORT and Derek Kemp, a member of the Federation Executive, who was present when Professor Crow appeared before the Select Committee, reported that he opened his case protesting at what he called unfounded accusations of bias and scurrilous criticism which he felt was outrageous.

Answering a key question when asked: "You have been accused of basing your recommendations on 'Predict & Provide' (a method the Government promised not to use). Professor Crow replied: "Human preferences cannot be ignored". Later he was asked: "do you realise that your proposals will destroy the countryside?" Professor Crow: "I believe too much of the countryside is protected already". On: "What do you think of strategic gaps?" Professor Crow: "They are unnecessary in the Crawley/Gatwick area".

The timetable for the Great Housing Debate is as follows:

(a) The first pronouncement will be

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## GUIDED WALKS

May will soon be here and once again we have a full programme of guided walks running from May 2nd to August 8th. These walks are easy going and last about one and half hours. Please make a note of the start points and we look forward to seeing many of you on Tuesday evenings. Our thanks again to Geoff Ayres for organising this year's programme.

## REMINDER

Subscriptions are soon due for the next year. We will be collecting subscriptions at the spring meeting so for those of you who will be coming would be of great help to us if you could come with the right money. The subscription remains unchanged for at least the next year £3 family members, £2 for single members and £1 for retired members.

# GUIDED WALKS PROGRAMME 2000

All walks are on Tuesday evenings, open to all and start at 7-00pm.

Once again we will be offering our programme of guided walks this summer. Full details of the walks are published by WSCC in their booklet, obtainable from libraries at 50p. We hope to have some copies available via the RPS. The average walk is 4 miles in 2 hours. Dogs on leads please. These walks are fun, and often end in the pub. Our thanks again go to the Frazer-Claytons for their kind permission to visit to Baynards Station.

Date	Leader	Start Point	Grid Ref TQ-
May 2nd	David Buckley	The Fox	078330
May 9th	John Parker	Haven Road (Bucks Green)	084326
May 16th	Geoff Ayres	Thurlow Arms (Baynards)	076351
May 23rd	Joan & Andrew Pye	Pephurst (layby towards Loxwood)	056318
May 30th	Malcolm Francis	Kings Head (to Baynards stn.)	090343
June 6th	Peter Kachel	Kings Head	090343
June 13th	Chris Jones	Mucky Duck (park in lane)	067323
June 20th	Geoff Ayres	Pephurst (layby towards Loxwood)	056318
June 27th	Malcolm Francis	Kings Head	090343
July 4th	Bridget & David Cozens	Village Inn (Slinfold)	118315
July 11th	Jean Marshall	Chequers (Rowhook)	122342
July 18th	Eric Slade	Kings Head	090343
July 25th	Bridget & David Cozens	Chequers (Rowhook)	122342
Aug 1st	Peter Kachel	Blue Ship (Haven)	084305
Aug 8th	Susan Bostock	Lime Burners (Newbridge)	073255

Parking —most of the pubs have allowed us to park, thank you. Please give them your custom in return.

Use the lane beside the Mucky Duck. Some walkers missed the group at the Chequers last year. The main parking is up the lane, not at the front.

**GEOFF AYRES**

P.P.G.3 which sets out guidelines for house building. It is hoped that this will give greater control to Planning Authorities of both design and setting for future housing development. Mr. Prescott has explained that Government was especially keen to ensure that environmental and social considerations were taken into account in economic planning. Fine words but the local planning authority must be given the necessary powers to carry out these policies. Development in this Village has been far too cramped and inappropriate to the rural setting of our Village.

(b) Then comes the adjudication on SERPLAN by John Prescott to determine once and for all how many new homes are built in the South East of England. (R.P.G.9 will become a planning bible).

(c) Following that, Government will publish two critical white papers on Urban and Rural life.

ban and Rural life.

However, there is hope for the future.

The Government has embarked upon an ambitious experiment in town planning. This follows the creation of the "Garden City" principle created by Ebenezer Howard a century ago. The proposed "Millennium Village" is an ecofriendly 1.400 homes development alongside the Millennium Dome, planned at Greenwich. In a report in The Times, if it succeeds, the Government may plan a 50.000 home "Millennium City" on sustainable lines outside Stanstead or Ashford. There is no reason why the "Garden City" principle could not be followed in any future development in the countryside. We may not like building on green fields, but if deemed necessary, it would at least be attractive combining the advantages of town and country instead of the cramped development we have witnessed in Rudgwick, with 9 houses to the acre.

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# SAXES PLAT

## Tismans Common

### by Alan Siney

This little gem of a photo was lent to me by Barbara Kenwood, our Parish Clerk and bears the pencilled annotation 'Saxes Plat Tismans Common c1880'. It is an unexpected glimpse of a small cottage built off the edge of the common exactly how it had looked before Tismans Common (or officially, Exfoldwood Common) was enclosed by an Act of 1851.



SAXES PLAT TISMANS COMMON. C1880

It stood on the site of the present large house called Saxes Plat, and is unusual in being a bungalow /agricultural labourers' cottages built around the edge of the common were usually built as pairs, so this cottage may possibly have been converted from a low farm building.

The small field behind it, and extending to the west, was called Saxes Plat on the Tithe Schedule, so the name continues today because the present house stands on what was Saxes Plat, (plot) that had long previously been enclosed off the common. Leading away behind the garden hedge on the right was a trackway that gave access from the common and across Saxes Plat to very old enclosed fields - possibly medieval - that lie within the triangular network of roads around Tismans Common.

The 1851 Enclosure Act allotted most of the remaining common land to the adjoining freeholders, and the land shown here in the foreground was given freely to John King Esq. of Loxwood House. Although the cottage garden was vital to the sustenance of labourers and their families, thirty years

later Mr King and/or his successors had still not granted his cottagers the favour of extending the gardens out to the road.

Who was this lady? alas I cannot say. Undoubtedly her and her family's names do appear on the 1881 population census returns, but unfortunately the names of their cottages do not, and she could have been of any one of a dozen or so families vaguely addressed as 'Tismans Common', all being agricultural labourers.

She and her husband had probably brought up a family on ten shillings a week; she managed because she was a provider and had used the skill and thriftiness taught to her by her provident mother. The lack of money did not mean a lack of pride and dignity, and so she poses in the front of her neat cottage garden with all the poise and serenity by which she would have wished her grandchildren to have remembered her.

Ref my paper 'Who took the Common from Tismans' published by Rudgwick Preservation Society 1996.

## OUT OF THE FAT AND INTO THE FIRE

Malcolm Francis's tale in the last RPS newsletter relating the mishap that occurred whilst removing the bomb damaged oak tree in Lynwick Street prompts me to relate another wartime story.

My house at The Riddens in Loxwood Road with its semi-detached neighbour, has a pair of outbuildings at the rear. Each contained a brick-built wash copper, a lavatory, and also served as the general wood and tool shed. They are roofed in corrugated iron, whereas they would have originally been covered in slates as were the houses and I had often wondered why.

In 1992 a man from Alfold called on me having seen my name and address in a publication: he told me that when he courted his wife during the war her family lived in my house having come down from London after losing their home in the blitz.

One night - he thought it was in 1943 - a lone German raider was illuminated in a beam from a searchlight placed on high ground over at The Haven. As was normal practice, the crew released their bombs to duck and weave the plane to escape the beam. From the fall of the bombs it was clearly heading north-westwards towards Dunsfold and within half a minute or so would have received attention from light ack-ack guns by the Alfold - Dunsfold Road on the southern approach to the airfield.

A pair of high explosives fell just south of Exfold Farm, and a stick of half-a-dozen incendiaries dropped into the back garden of number 4, with the leading bomb falling into the outhouse and setting it ablaze. Hence the corrugated iron roof, and it also explains why only a year or so previously, I had found it necessary to level and returf some small depressions in my lawn where only weeds would grow: after fifty years, the burnt magnesium, or phosphorous, still contaminated the soil.

The occupying family must have thought how ironic it was that having come down to sleepy old Rudgwick they almost faced disaster a second time and were no doubt aware that had those incendiaries fell 20 to 30 feet shorter, they would have come crashing down through the house whilst in their beds.

ALAN SINEY

# BUCKS GREEN

By Alan Siney



This picture of the shop and post office, now Morgans Organs, was possibly taken around the turn of the 20th century. The boys were privileged to have had 'safety bicycles' at that time. The building up the road on the left was the old smithy and wheelwrights shop and beyond that it seems that the tollhouse was still standing, jutting out to where today would be in the middle of the road by the Haven Road junction.

The road through Bucks Green is ancient, but it did not extend beyond Lynwick Street to the west, and Bowcroft Lane (where the later railway crossed the road) in the east. In 1809 it became part of the newly built Guildford and Horsham Turnpike Road, which gave the parish a direct route to those towns. The Turnpike Trusteeships were disbanded in or about 1870, and the gates removed, - there was also one across the entrance to the Haven Road - and the upkeep of all parish roads was then the responsibility of the Parish Surveyor of Highways and paid for by the parish rates with perhaps 50% borne by the newly formed Local Highways Committee on 'disturnpiked' roads, or what was considered by them to be main roads

In 1884, the then Parish Surveyor, Mr Edwin Edmunds, ordered 500 yards of 'Farnham Gravel' for Rudgwick's roads. We can imagine what a task that was to cart from the railway sidings, with each cart carrying perhaps one yard weighing about a ton. In 1895 the newly formed Parish Council resolved that "A steam roller be used for the repair of Parish roads."

The Guildford to Horsham Road was not tarmacadamized generally until the early 1920s: before that time the surface was of loose rolled flint. The old expression of 'deflinting the tyres' still survives, even if it is rarely necessary nowadays.

In 1840 this house was two cottages forming part of the farm holding of Bunnells and Tanners "with 15 acres of land belonging to John Allberry of Wanford Mill. The old house of Bunnells still stands just beyond so presumably this was the Tanners bit, and with the stream running down from Greathouse Hanger and the tall slender building alongside, (gable end apex just visible), it may have been used as a tannery. The c.1800 Board of Ordnance Survey

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Finally, there are several points we would like to emphasise:

- (1) Real housing need is for so-called social housing. Those of our villagers on low pay in our service industries, must ~~be~~ provided with houses to rent or buy (affordable!).
- (2) The Green Belt must be protected.
- (3) Future housing on such a scale provides the opportunity to introduce solarpanel lighting at relatively low cost. International goals to check global warming have to be met.

Horsham District Council the Local Planning Authority is merely an agency of Government, charged with the unenviable task of deciding where future development should take place. Almost an impossible task.

N.B. At the time of writing, it is announced that John Prescott has decided upon the figure of 860.000 houses to be built in the South East to the year 2016. A compromise between the SERPLAN figure of 668.500 houses and the CROW REPORT of 1.1 million. Why not accept the SERPLAN figure? The best news is that the new strategy of "plan, monitor and manage" will be adopted, under which targets will be reviewed every five years. This will provide a more cautious progression and must be regarded as good planning.

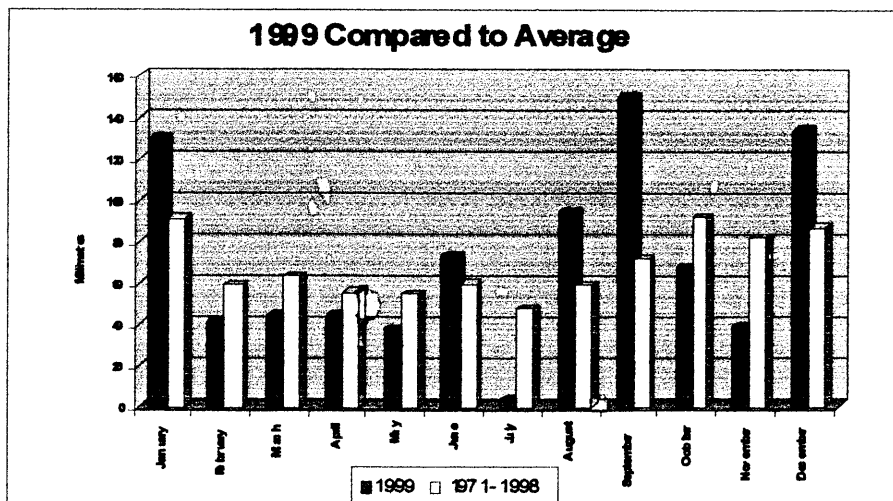
**Stan Smith.**

6th March 2000

## RAINFALL TISMANS COMMON 1999

The rainfall in Tismans Common in 1999 was, at 859.5mm (33.84 inches), a little above the average of the last 28 years. However, the individual month's figures were anything but average. The year started off with 129.5mm in January. That is about 42% above average. The next four months were all well below so that by the end of May we were running about 8% below for that time of year. June was above but July, traditionally the driest month, the rainfall, at only 3.5mm, set a new record low. August was up as was September when the 149.5mm recorded was more than double the amount expected. October and November were both down the latter being less than half the average for that month. To finish off December was 53% up and we ended up within 5% of an average year.

	1999	1971 - 1998		
		Average	Record High	Record Low
January	129.50	91.37	211.83	13.00
February	41.00	58.75	149.86	5.50
March	44.00	63.37	133.35	4.80
April	44.00	55.16	119.38	4.06
May	38.00	54.35	127.25	1.78
June	74.00	59.91	152.91	8.64
July	3.50	47.94	130.05	13.00
August	95.25	58.78	153.92	1.00
September	149.50	72.46	190.75	9.40
October	67.50	92.22	270.51	8.64
November	39.25	82.1	181.61	19.81
December	134.00	87.36	166.88	13.50
Total mm	859.50	823.77	1113.27	619.26
Total Inch	33.84	32.43	43.83	24.38



**Don Muir**

# AGRICULTURE IN CRISIS

**By Jim Harrison**

Agriculture is in crisis; it is now entering its fifth year of recession. Prices paid to farmers are down by a third from those received five years ago and, although the costs of some of the inputs into farming have reduced, the fall in real terms in farmers' incomes is 60% and still falling, leaving them already at the lowest level since the 1930s. This is in stark contrast to the rest of the economy, which has seen a rise of 4% over the last two years and is forecast to rise a further 3% this year.

A combination of factors has led to the collapse of farm prices and incomes, but three in particular stand out:

The overvalued pound is the major culprit, in 1995 it would buy just 2.2 Deutschmarks, while today you will get over 3. The infamous Common Agricultural Policy did in fact foresee the repercussions of such a fluctuation in exchange rates and set up the machinery of agrimonetary compensation payments to farmers to temporarily help in such a situation. Half of the cost was to be funded by Brussels and half by the Member State. Unfortunately, Margaret Thatcher in her highly acclaimed Fontainebleau Agreement, where she reclaimed large amounts of our VAT which was going to Europe, agreed as a quid pro quo, to the considerable scaling down of Brussels compensation. Now instead of 50% coming from the EU, only 15% is claimable and the other 85% has to be met by a reluctant British Treasury supported by an unresponsive government. So far the U.K. Government have only claimed £88 million out of the £450 million which our industry would be qualified to receive. This is equivalent to 20% of the total income generated from farming in the U.K. during 1999. The whole nation benefited from Fontainebleau, now agriculture, in its hour of need, is having to shoulder the downside.

The tragedy of the BSE outbreak still haunts us, with little or no export market for British beef despite irrefutable evidence that it is now the safest in the world. To make it so, farms have had to go to hell and back and the ongoing legacy is a bureaucratic burden of form filling, which as well as having a financial cost, has a human cost too. It is ironic that the recently released statistics of over 70 farming suicides in 1998 is seven times greater than the average number of people dying from new variant CJD in the last 5 years. That is in no way meant to demean the ravages of this terrible disease.

Meat and bone meal, completely banned in this country, is being freely used in pig and poultry rations on the Continent, and being considerably cheaper than the alternative, gives the continental producer a financial advantage in our market place. This is compounded by the higher welfare standards we have to meet, with sow stalls outlawed and many more animal friendly criteria that have to be met; all very worthwhile but with a cost. Unfortunately in the marketplace all this is disregarded and price is king. Cheap pigmeat floods in, some of it only cut and packaged here, and labelled British produce! In my view as a nonpig producer it is a national disgrace.

The final nail in the coffin of British agriculture has been brought about by the collapse in World commodity markets brought about by the Asian and Russian financial crisis.

Some may ask what can the ordinary man or woman in the street do to help. The answer is to Buy British and make sure it is British. Support the rural economy. Highlight your support to your local M.P., mainly to stop burdening U.K. rural businesses with everincreasing costs and remove unnecessary red tape and finally enjoy the countryside farmers conserve.



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shows that there was another building alongside the stream just off the immediate right hand side of the picture which could have housed a waterwheel to agitate the steeping skins with water penned upstream in the hanger but documentary evidence has yet to be found. Later it was converted to a village shop and Post Office.

In 1899, the Parish Council resolved that the "Postmaster General be asked to make Bucks Green a Postal Telegraph Office." This was the site chosen being more central to the parish than the Post Office at the far top end of the village. The telegraph was certainly in place by October 1901 because the Horsham Postmaster recommended that it be called 'Rudgwick Telegraph Office' and omitting 'Bucks Green', "there being only one Telegraph Office in the Parish of Rudgwick." So here was Rudgwick's first Telephone exchange from where lines were run out to private subscribers.

There is perhaps the absence of one tenuous clue to date this picture: in front of the telegraph office and well visible from the road would have been a sign bearing the message, "You may telegraph from here", and there is no evidence of one.

# ROOKS

## by Malcolm Francis

Rudgwick has a diversity of wildlife, our bird population thrives and it is always pleasant to see the wide variety that visit the bird-table. My wife loves identifying the various finches and tits, but I get a lot more pleasure in identifying the more common birds, especially the scavengers visiting the garden. This includes most of the crow family, including rooks, crows, jackdaws and magpies.

The crow family have always had a bad press: rooks, searching for leatherjackets (crane fly larvae), upset corn seed beds exposing them to other scavengers. Magpies and jays raid nests, jackdaws block chimneys and carrion crows have many associations with folklore.

People often get mixed up when distinguishing between rooks and crows, the rooks have the lighter, almost white, areas to their beaks, whilst carrion crows are totally black, with a call that sounds like a raucous purr.

My family have grown up with a love of this species, rooks and jackdaws are often referred to as the "Black Squadron", and if the toaster has had a bad morning, burnt toast put on the lawn is taken within seconds by jackdaws or the occasional carrion crow. The biblical expression "wing-ed tribes" often seems an apt description.

The jackdaw population of the village is thriving, but where have all the rooks gone? There are a few nests close to the Scout Hut but Rudgwick's population of rooks seems to have declined steadily over the past 20 years. It must be a combination of weather conditions, shooting and the siting of nests – think how many elms have been lost to Dutch Elm Disease.

We lived for some years close to a rookery in Cox Green. Spring time always meant weeks of the rooks busily building or rearranging their nests and in due time the chicks would be heard calling from these precarious, windswept eeries. To me the noise of a rookery is the essence of the countryside.

Whilst we were living in Cox Green, I took a nest count each year and there were usually over fifty nests, but after the 1976 drought there were only seven. That rookery has never reached more than 20 nests since.

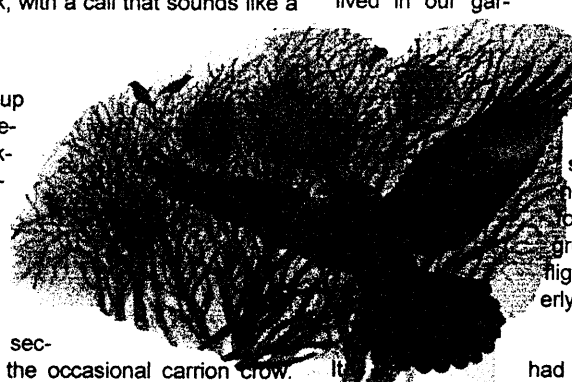
If rook chicks fall from the nests they are not fed by the parents on the woodland floor, as is the case with some species, but are left to their fate, to be taken by the ever-patrolling foxes or other opportunist scavengers. Even a chick hanging desperately on to a low branch, a few feet above the ground, is doomed. I must admit to having given quite a few a second chance. Rook chicks are very intelligent, learn to hand feed very quickly and given a high protein diet, often of cheese and scrambled eggs, can be released back to the wild in a very short time.

One year a strange thing happened, which shows how the crow family must have earned its place in country folklore. In that year the rook chick that we were nursing must have had a very poor diet in the nest; its developing feathers were brittle and the primary flight feathers snapped off as they emerged from their casings. The poor bird was virtually flightless and became extremely tame. We had, of course, to give it a name and Roger, the Lodger, lived in our garden, managing to avoid the neighbouring cats. He roosted in an old plum tree close to the house and, having been with us all summer, was allowed in to sit by the Rayburn on cold nights. Eventually, by the following spring, Roger had grown a new set of primary flight feathers and was properly able to take to the skies.

It had been fascinating to see such a large bird at such close quarters and to have bonded with it. Having literally "found his wings" Roger spent all day with the flock of rooks from the neighbouring rookery, grazing on the nearby fields, but it was possible to call him down from the flock as they wheeled overhead. The first time I did this I, and my two-year old daughter, was amazed that having shouted "Roger" at the flock, he circled slowly down to land at our feet.

Roger firmly disproved the claim that wild creatures cannot lead a double life. For many months after he had, in theory, returned to the wild he would land with a great flapping of wings at our back door, tap sharply on the base of the door to gain admission and fly in to be fed. Having been given a large piece of cheese, he would stay on your hand for a few minutes, his bright eyes scanning our every movement, until he flew back out of the door and back to the flock. Once he had been fed he was gone again until the following morning.

This pattern of behaviour went on for many months, until one morning he failed to appear. On the evening of that day my father died and we never saw Roger again.....



## **SPRING MEETING**

The spring meeting will held on 17th April at 7.30 in the Village Hall, Bucks Green. The meeting will commence with the Annual General Meeting followed by a coffee break at 8.00. Our speaker is Jon Openshaw who will talk to us about the DOWNSLINK. Jon is the Countryside Ranger responsible for the stretch of the Downslink that passes through Rudgwick. He will talk about the work that has been done on this part of the track and the plans for future development and improvements. All are welcome

## **TIMBER FRAMED BUILDINGS**

The Preservation Society's book on the Timber-Framed buildings of Rudgwick will again be on sale at the Spring meeting. The book is selling well and will be out of print when the remaining copies are sold. If you would like a copy for yourself or for a relative or friend make sure of your copy by buying it at the meeting - price £15.95 (members £13.56).

# **WELL WELL**

## **by Malcolm Francis**

Over the last few years there has been an increased interest shown in vintage stationary engines. Every steam fair exhibits rows of smaller models, that are reasonably portable and that have been restored to a condition that is better than new, chuffing away under the watchful eyes of their owners. There were many different makes, sizes and models of stationary engine built in the early part of the 20th century, as the internal combustion engine took over from steam as the main source of motive power. They were designed to run efficiently on low-grade fuels, and they were made in tens of thousands and exported all over the world. One tends to forget that until the advent of electrical power via the National Grid such engines were the only form of motive power, particularly in country areas, and provided the energy for pumping water, generating electricity, cutting wood, milking cows, etc., etc. .... The list is endless.

My father, who was born in Rudgwick, left school at the end of the First World War, at a time when mechanisation was in its infancy. He worked for a local firm, whose business included the maintenance and repair of stationary engines. He had a flair for engines and recalled having had the task of starting an old "Titan" American tractor on the Dedisham farm, that had defeated other "experts". Thousands of tractors were imported during the First World War to aid food production.

Some of the larger houses of the village used stationary engines to power small generators, which supplied the electricity for lighting and carried out pumping duties, well water being pumped up into roof storage tanks. Rudgwick did not have a mains water supply until the 1920's; and mains electricity arrived in the main part of the village in the 1930's.

One of the larger houses of the village that had such an installation was Gaskyns, now Pennthorpe School. The lighting equipment for Gaskyns must have been very effi-

cient, since on one occasion a power cable was temporarily laid across the fields to the Rudgwick School, in Bucks Green (the only suitable venue) to light a performance of one of George Bernard Shaw's plays - in the presence of the author!

My father related two stories on the subject of wells and pumps, that I now recall.....

When mains water was installed in the village not everyone wanted to be connected, wells having served them perfectly well for many generations, despite the associated health risks. Health Inspectors took samples of well water for analysis, in order to coerce the owners into connecting to the mains water supply. One day an Inspector took a sample of "well" water from a bucket standing in the kitchen of a house in Church Street. In due course he returned to tell the elderly lady owner that her well water was a health risk. Imagine his thoughts on being told that the "well" water he had sampled, came from her neighbour's mains supply, the lady being so restricted by her arthritis that her neighbour was kindly filling her buckets for her, to save her winding up the water from the well!!!

There was also a building firm in Slinfold that was responsible for maintaining the pumping engines of several houses in the area, but which appears to have been rather unscrupulous. A pump situated in a well was giving trouble at one of the larger houses in the area. The owner was informed by the foreman that it would cost a lot to repair, as they would need to send for a "man from London" to look at it. The "London engineer" who appeared was, in fact, an off duty local postman, well briefed on how to carry out the simple repair to the pump in the well. This plan nearly misfired when the lady of the house met him by chance, and commented on the fact that he looked familiar. Of course, he replied that he had never been to Slinfold before in his life!



## PARISH RECORDS

Before parish councils were set up by the Local Government Act 1894, the parish was governed by the Vestry, an unelected assembly of prominent parishioners to which only male ratepayers normally attended. It was an elitist group, but one must admire the dedication with which a lot of men served their parish, and controlled everything that we take for granted as being done by District, County, and National Government today.

The parish was responsible for maintaining law and order and to prosecute any wrongdoing; it had to relieve its own poor and maintain its own roads and bridges. Overseers had to continually tour the parish to collect the Poor Rate, the Parish Rate, the Church Rate, and even government taxes such as the land tax and income tax, which ratepayers had to pay according to the rateable value assessed on the property that they occupied, which had to be above a certain amount. On top of all these rates and taxes they had to pay a tithe to the Anglican Church whatever their religious conviction. Ten men were nominated annually and sworn in as Parish Constables. They had to be qualified and liable, i.e. rate payers who were bound to serve as jurymen still are today. The Parish Overseers and Surveyors usually worked with a committee of ten, and their books and accounts were audited annually by the Vestry; so there was little chance of corruption.

The record books were normally kept by the Parish Clerk, and in the 1920s the then Clerk, William Botting, handed the vestry book 1799 - 1860 to Mr D.S. Secretan the Chairman, who deposited it with the County Record Office, and is a useful source of Rudgwick history. Recently our Parish Clerk, Barbara Kenwood, lent me the Parish Council Book 1894 - 1922, which I have transcribed and given a copy to the West Sussex Record Office.

More recently came an unexpected find when Nicola Francis, former Secretary to the Parochial Church Council, made available to me the Vestry Book from 1860 which I am transcribing at present. This will be followed by transcriptions of books after 1922, so when all is finished the County Record Office will have an uninterrupted record of Rudgwick administration from 1799 until recent times. Copies of the transcriptions post 1860 will be kept in the parish by the Parish Council and the Preservation Society, with the original typescript by myself, so copies can be made available to interested persons and to students. Being typed on A4 sheets they are much easier to read than the originals.

**ALAN SINEY**

## SACRED SOUNDS

**by Malcolm Francis**

Prior to the 1840's Rudgwick Church had a musicians gallery located at the west end of the church, in the tower. A small band of musicians, led by the Parish Clerk, formed the core of church music for the services. There is also a suggestion, in old accounts, that a barrel organ was used on occasion. This would have been a small mechanical organ, relying on punched cards to play a selection of hymns. The musicians were 5 or 6 in number and appear to have also been the core of the village band that was formed in the 1850's.

There is some confusion about the exact date of the removal of the gallery, the Vestry Book of 1842 reports an extension of the gallery to house the Sunday School children, whilst an entry in 1837 suggests that that was the year of the gallery's removal.

By 1885 the records show that there was a decision to replace the small harmonium organ with a large pipe instrument, to be located against the Vestry wall (at the east end of the north aisle). A Faculty (a legal document, granted by the Diocese) was required to make the necessary alterations to the fabric of the church, and eventually this was granted enabling the new organ to be installed. This organ was the gift of Mr Thomas Thurlow, the owner of the Baynards Estate, and there is evidence that it had previously been installed in the mansion of Baynards, the cost being re-

corded as £160. Its installation in the church was completed by 10th August 1890.

In 1897 the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated in the parish by enlarging the Vestry and moving the organ to its present position in the Chancel, to bring it "in touch with the choir". This relocation of the organ was not without its critics, and one person described it in its new position as resembling a tomb. The rank of pipes that can be seen above the Vestry door are all that remain of the original organ but are, in fact, purely decorative.

The voicing of the original organ given by Mr Thurlow is not known, but the organ has existed in its present form since 1906, when it was overhauled and enlarged in memory of Mr Frederick Barker of Gaskyns (now Pennthorpe School). The organ was overhauled and rebuilt by Hill, Norman and Beard in 1964.

With the coming of the new Millennium we have a proposal to once again put a gallery in the Church tower, this time to house a ringing chamber and underneath to provide an enclosed area at the west end of the church, where children may be amused and other activities take place, without distracting the congregation as a whole. Far from being the innovation that some think, this takes us in a neat circle to the church of 200 years ago.



# RUDGWICK PRESERVATION SOCIETY



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on **MONDAY, APRIL 17<sup>th</sup> 2000**  
at 7.30pm Rudgwick Hall, Bucks Green



### 7.30 pm. - BUSINESS MEETING

\* Election of Officers & Committee \*

Coffee will be served at 8.00 pm

\* followed by an illustrated talk by \*



**JON OPENSHAW**



our Countryside Ranger

### on **DOWN'S LINK**

Jon is the Countryside Ranger responsible for the maintenance of our section of this great amenity, which traverses our village. He will outline plans for future improvements.



**ALL ARE WELCOME!**