

Times Past

Storrington & District Museum Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow

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FLORENCE MARY GREENFIELD December, 1900 to February, 2002

My old friend Florrie was born in a house in the centre of The Square, Storrington, next to one of the two shops of the family emporium at the beginning of the 20th century. "Greenfields" was Storrington in those days, supplying everything you could want from cradle to grave. The family were prominent in village life and deeply involved in every aspect of it from the Village Hall to the Parish Council, the annual Flower Show to the Parish Church. Florrie was a true Greenfield in that way and loved her home village, its history, beautiful surroundings and its activities, although she began her working life elsewhere.

Florrie was one of six children born to Edwin and Laura Greenfield, and the last survivor of them. She went to the village school, where her photo still appears in a group, together with the headmaster Mr Rhoden, in the main hall of the Old School, now a public meeting place and home to Storrington and District Museum. Her life's work was teaching at which she excelled, and after spending the war years at Southbourne, (the Museum has her Red Cross Certificates for First Aid and Civil Defence Gas training) she returned home to spend her remaining career teaching at Rydon Secondary School. On one occasion she was telling her class about Storrington's past, and mentioned that their new school was once the site of the old Workhouse. "Still is, Miss!" came from one of the pupils. She once told me that to get a teaching post in her time, you had to be able to play music. She created a pipe band at Rydon School, helping her pupils to make their own bamboo pipes and cases for them, combining music with handwork. (We have them in the museum).

Florrie devoted her life to teaching and training young people – as a Sunday School teacher she increased her class size immensely, and as a Brown Owl and Guide leader passed on her wide knowledge of the local flora and fauna and geology. She was a natural teacher, and retirement did not stop her, it merely opened new doors. She gave talks to W.I. meetings and various other groups and engaged in serious research which enabled her to write and

publish two books, "Round about Old Storrington", and its companion book, "More about Old Storrington" which are still in demand. She contributed a regular column to the Parish Magazine on various aspects of local history and memories, and was extremely generous with her knowledge and collection of photographs, as this writer has cause to know. We are very privileged that she and her sister Margaret ensured that this priceless collection of photographic history eventually came to the Museum.

They encouraged local artists and commissioned several local views around the village, which are greatly enjoyed by Museum visitors. Both Florrie and Margaret were devoted supporters of the formation of a local museum for many years, and it is a lasting sorrow that Margaret died days before we heard that we would have premises with Parish Council support. On the afternoon of the day we opened, however, the writer made a special visit to Birklands, where Florrie was then living in care, and had the great pleasure of telling her that Storrington and District Museum was a reality and had opened for the first time. Dear Florrie, then blind, almost deaf and 98 years old, bounced in her chair with excitement, saying, "Oh, I wish I was twenty years younger!"

I think that is a memory of her I shall always treasure, as well as the many times I sat with her and Margaret in their Church Street flat, drinking tea and reliving Storrington's history. How they loved "going back" as they called it.

Now she and Margaret lie together in the churchyard, so close to the Museum which neither of them ever saw. R.I.P.

Copy for the next Issue should be
submitted to Mercury Ideographics at
5 Mill Lane, Storrington by mid-July.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

STORRINGTON'S WINDMILLS

Standing like sentinels on various high points around the village were the windmills. John Joyes, who came to Storrington as a six-month-old child with his family in 1855, said that when he was a small boy he could remember 60 windmills working in a radius of 10 miles around, but by the time he recorded his memories in the early 1930s not one was left. The Joyes family worked the mills in Storrington and Fittleworth, and their big barn stood where the flower shop is now in West Street, coming right out to the roadside. Next door was their bakery, which later passed through several hands, and known even now to many local people as "Dibbles", the family who ran it for many years.

The two Bine mills, water and wind, were part of the large property known as The Dawes, standing on the site of today's Post Office, and occupying a large area of land between West Street and North Street, as well as grazing rights on the commons. All were manorial property. It was leased to Thomas Bonus in 1731 with "...sufficient ground at the top of Bine Common to erect and use a windmill." The piece of common was leased for 500 years at a rent of 2s 6d. Thomas Coates was the next owner, and he leased the windmill to John Lidbetter, yeoman for £180 and £20 for the assignment of the remainder of the lease on the common. At his death in 1784 it was leased by Thomas Scutt and ten years later by William Botting who also acquired all the farmlands called Bine Place Farm, or Mill Farm together with the water mill. He paid £180 for the water mill and 30 acres to Jacob Pope. Botting did not run the mills himself, but leased them to two millers, Stephen Martin and John Harland. Two gentlemen named Fuller, were also involved, Leases in those days tended to be a matter of several people on each part. The millers raised a mortgage for £1500 on the property including the mills and after some more exchanges and a redemption of the mortgage for £1774 it was leased to George Hard who also raised a mortgage of £550 and died in 1853, still possessed of the property. The 1844 Manor Rental shows George Hard as the leasehold tenant of "...windmill and piece of ground in Bine Common ..."

Wooden mills with the air full of flour dust, and the friction of the working parts were a natural fire hazard, and that is how many ended.

The Black Mill stood high on Byne Common on a site near the junction of Mill Lane and Fryern Road. It is remembered today only by the name, Windmill Copse. Its end came in 1871 when it burnt down, and local legend tells of a red-hot millstone rolling downhill to end in the millpond with a mighty splash

and clouds of steam.

A beautiful post mill which was the subject of many paintings and photographs stood on a knoll on Sullington Warren. This was known as the White Windmill and standing knee-deep in purple heather with the some of the Hecks' flock of teddy-bear-faced Southdown sheep around it, must have made it a magnet for artists and picnic parties. It worked until the turn of the 19th century, when it gradually deteriorated. Efforts were started to try to preserve it, but like the Black Mill, this one died by fire, but not of its own making. The conflagration that engulfed it started one hot August day, in a hedge bordering the Warren and soon the tinder-dry heather and gorse was ablaze. There was no water or fire brigade available, and volunteer beaters did their utmost to put out the flames, but the mill burnt and the nearby cottages were threatened. The Puttick girls who lived in the cottages clearly remembered their mother taking great jugs of tea out to the fire-fighters. Every available man turned out to beat the flames, and although the cottages were saved, they smelt of smoke long afterwards, and the underlying peat smouldered on for about six weeks until heavy rains finally extinguished it. The iron shaft which carried the sails lay among the heather for years, until it was finally rescued and mounted on concrete plinths with an explanatory plaque

Another Black Mill stood on Kithurst Warren with a round house under it, on a site in Kithurst Lane now occupied by a house with paths made of millstones. This made an attractive artist's-eye view from the village pond, rising at the foot of the Downs before many of the intervening houses were built. It was built by Robert Crowhurst, miller, who died in 1872. After his death the head of the household was Mary Crowhurst aged 76, miller and baker with her two sons and their families living with her and helping in the family business. Her two sons died young, but old Mrs Crowhurst carried on as miller and baker until her own death in 1886 aged 81. The Black Mill had been built and worked by one family, who, in keeping with tradition, had a bakery and coal merchant's shop in West Street near today's travel agent, Allez France. There was a row of four cottages occupying the site which is now the Tandoori Restaurant frontage at that time. One memory of that old bakery was told of the oven, with a door so warped that the baker would seal it with dough when in use. Children going across to the village school called in and were given this cooked dough to eat! The Crowhurst mill was Storrington's last surviving windmill, suffering the usual fiery end in 1923.

RETAINED FIRE SERVICE EXPERIENCES – JOHN LINFIELD

My first involvement with the Fire Brigade came as a 'messenger' at the age of fifteen. There were three of us and our job was to call the firemen during the 'quiet hours' between 11pm and 7am. We were called by someone from Fire Control which was then based at the home of the Chief Fire Officer, Charles Mant, in Church Street. Each messenger's job was to go by bicycle and call two or three firemen who would then respond to the call.

The station was then in West Street opposite *Greenfield's* grocery shop (now *Bunce's*). It was of timber construction with a corrugated iron roof and was very cramped, both for the men and machines. On responding to a call, entry was gained through the front doors and then down a narrow passage to the kit room. It became quite chaotic after the first two or three arrivals because once you had obtained your fire kit, you then had to go back down the same passage to the appliance room, meeting men still going in the opposite direction!

On reaching the age of eighteen, the Second World War having started, I joined the Royal Navy. After initial training at Portsmouth and further training as a Radar Operator in the Isle of Man, I was posted to *HMS Newcastle* (a Cruiser), which was despatched to the Far East to take part in the war against the Japanese. We returned after three years and at the end of the war I was demobilised, returned to the Isle of Man and got married.

My wife and I stayed in the island for almost six years and then together with the children returned to Storrington to live. One day soon after our return I met Mr. Mant, chatted for a while and was then persuaded to re-join the Fire Brigade as a fireman.

The station was still in West Street and the machines consisted off a wheeled escape and a Bedford towing vehicle with a trailer pump. On the escape, the cab was only big enough for the driver and officer in charge so that the remainder of the crew had to ride outside holding on to the escape. This wasn't too bad in the summer but bitterly cold during the winter.

The fire siren was situated on top of the Chanctonbury RDC offices in Church Street. This operated between the hours of 7am and 11pm; for the quiet hours, each fireman had a large bell installed by the GPO - mine was situated in the bedroom.

One day we had a fire call when a minor disaster occurred. Joe Boxall was opening the appliance room doors, which folded back in concertina fashion and were partly glazed, when the hinges pulled away from the frame and the whole lot collapsed into West Street!

Many calls were quite mundane, but others, of course, were of a much more serious nature. The serious ones that spring to mind are the *Rivoli Cinema*, Worthing; *Marringdean Manorhouse*, Billingshurst; *Woolworth's* at Bognor (these two were attended from the new station in School Hill); and the kitchens and dining-room at *Barn's Farm Camp*.

Road traffic accidents were invariably serious and very stressful, particularly when children were involved. One of the worst was on a lovely summer evening when we responded to a call at Dial Post. There we found that the turntable ladder from Worthing, responding to a call from Gatwick airport (which turned out to be a false alarm) had lost control on a bend and crashed head-on with a small family saloon. Out of a family of four - husband and wife and two children - only one child survived.

Having to combine one's job with being a retained fire-fighter could be quite stressful at times, particularly during late night or early hours of the morning calls. One had to adjust very quickly from a deep sleep, jumping out of bed, throwing on some clothes, driving to the fire station and dealing with a complexity of emergency calls. However, some very good results were achieved and a great deal of satisfaction gained.

During my twenty-nine years service, I attended over three thousand calls and over those years was promoted to Leading Fireman, Sub-Officer and finally Station Officer in charge, a post I held for fourteen years until retirement

LINFIELD EXHIBITION

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Lin(d)field One Name Group, a family history society dedicated to researching this surname and its variants, a special family gathering and exhibition has been organised to take place at the Old School, Storrington on Saturday, 1st June. A mailshot has been sent out to every Lin(d)field address in the UK inviting the recipients to attend this special event and learn about their ancestors. A number of computers will be on hand to collect information to add to the Group's database of some 30,000 names. This exhibition will also be open to everyone who may be interested in coming along and finding out more about these families. The exhibition opens at 10 am and closes at 5 pm.

A special exhibition on the Linfields will also be taking place in the museum itself, to follow the Queen's Golden Jubilee display, which finishes on 4th June.

All of the parishes covered by the Museum have important Lin(d)field connections. In Storrington, for instance, **Edmund Linfield** was making brass dial clocks in the village from the 1750s, whilst his kinsman, **Peter Linfield** set up as a butcher in Church Street, moving to the village from his farm in West Chiltington in 1779.

Continued overleaf

FRIENDS' NEWS

A special lecture has been arranged to take place at the Old School on **Thursday, 11th April** to coincide with the monthly exhibition in the museum on **The Romans**. David Pinder has kindly offered to give a talk on 'The Roman Invasion'; his lecture starts at the usual time of 7.30 pm and costs £2.00 per person. Everyone is welcome!

The following walks have been arranged for this year's summer programme. As in previous years, the first walk, in April, will be on a Sunday morning; the others will take place on weekdays, some during the afternoon and the remainder during the evening. There will be a standard charge of £2.00 per person.

Sunday, 14th April: 'The Port of Arundel' with Rosemary Hagedorn.

Meet at 11.00 am in the car park opposite the Castle (by the remains of the *Maison Dieu*).

For those who would like lunch, a table has been booked at the 'Swan'. Their Sunday roast costs £7.95. Numbers are limited, so please make a prompt reservation with Gina Wilmshurst (our Programme Secretary) to secure your place (01903 892210).

Thursday, 9th May: 'Washington and Sullington Churches'.

Meet at Washington Church (turn right past the 'Frankland Arms') at 2.15 pm.

You may wish to bring a picnic. Walking boots recommended.

Tours of both churches will be arranged.

Friday, 21st June: 'Sundown on Chanctonbury Ring' with Anne Induni.

Meet at the Wiston car park at 7.30 pm (turn right off the A283 towards Steyning, where sign to Chanctonbury Ring.)

Bring a bottle of wine and watch the sun go down on the summer solstice at this mystical place.

Thursday, 11th July: 'Warminghurst and Thakeham Churches'.

Meet at Warminghurst Church at 7.15 pm (In Ashington, find shops and turn down Rectory Lane for a mile). Walking boots recommended.

Thursday, 8th August: 'Bramber Castle, St. Mary's and Sele' with Trevor Povey.

Meet in the castle car park at 2.15 pm. Please bring a picnic.

Due to the overwhelming success of our coach trip to London last summer, another trip has been booked for this year on Sunday, 7th July to Eltham Palace and Chartwell House. Eltham Palace is an Art Deco House with a magnificent medieval hall, the childhood home of Henry VIII (entry £5.50). Chartwell, a National Trust property, is famous for being the home of Sir Winston Churchill (entry £5.50). We will be leaving Storrington at 9.15 am, returning at approximately 6.00 pm. Anyone who would like further details, or to book a place should contact Gina fairly soon on the telephone number above. Tickets cost £10.

Malcolm Linfield

Linfield Exhibition continued

Thakeham's long association with mushroom growing began in 1913 when the Worthing firm of **A G Linfield and Sons** acquired the dilapidated Town House Farm. They initially built a granary and a few mushroom houses, but after the Second World War mushroom growing became their most important commercial activity, expanding rapidly as a result of cultural improvements and extensive mechanisation. By 1960 they had become the largest mushroom growers in Europe.

The former parish of Warminghurst (now part of Thakeham) was, for many years, the home of the famous Quaker **William Penn** and his family. Penn bought Warminghurst Place in 1676 and we know of at least one Linfield Quaker marriage taking place at his house, when **John Linfield**, *Blacksmith* of Ifield married **Mary Wolvin** in 1693.

In the parish of Sullington, **Edward Linfield** (1774-1861) ran a 3-acre market garden at the crossroads where Water Lane crosses the Storrington to Thakeham road. One of his sons, **Harry** (1807-78) completed 50 years service working for the **Carew-Gibsons** on the Sandgate Estate, and we have a wonderful photograph of him wearing a traditional Sussex smock.

The main objective of a 'one name' society is to record every instance of the surname being researched in order to build up a comprehensive picture of that family. So far we have identified 10 main Lin(d)field branches; in time, we hope to link all of them together – if the records allow – because we feel certain they all originate from the same source, a place in Surrey which was originally known as Linkfield and is now part of Redhill.