Times Past

Issue No. 18, Summer 2004

Storrington & District Museum

Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CURATOR

As I write this column we find ourselves in a state of limbo. The lease on the Old School building ends at the end of August and, at the time of writing, there is no clear picture of what will happen after that date. We do not even know whether we shall be allowed to remain in the building until matters are settled or whether we will have to pack everything up and go into store.

When the Museum opened its doors on Easter Monday 2000 we were not aware of the lease arrangements of the premises, and, until about 18 months ago, had no idea that the Lease was due to terminate this year. Since the situation became known we have explored a number of options for relocation and/or storage of the collections, but, at the time of writing, have only one definite option of commercial storage for the artefact collection and a possible option for storage of the archive collections.

We hope that, at least until the future of the building is finally decided, we will be allowed to remain where we are and operate as normal. What happens after that date is impossible to predict as matters stand at present. If we are unable to negotiate a suitable arrangement for remaining where we are then, unless another option emerges, we will have to go into store. At present there is no other option open to us.

Obviously, we do not want to shut up shop. Keeping the collections together and accessible to the public is our prime concern and we are working hard to find a workable arrangement, but, in the absence of the Old School premises, there does not seem to be anywhere local, suitable and affordable which would provide an alternative home.

It would be a tragedy if all the hard work of the Museum Committee, the Friends' Committee and membership and all our other supporters, benefactors and well-wishers was to come to nothing after just four and a half years, but this will not be wholly true; the work of the Friends as a local Historical Society will continue, as will that of the Education programme. In the meantime, please show your support for the Museum by bringing as many visitors as possible while we are able to remain open. Thank you for your support, past, present

AND FUTURE !

STOP PRESS

We have now been offered a lease on the Old School Rooms which is subject to negotiation - we ho pe to accept. For the present the situation remains unchanged for visitors.

AMBERLEY CASTLE

OR IS IT?

AND WHY WAS IT BUILT?

The term *"castle"* can he variously interpreted but is widely regarded as a fortified building with towers and castellations able to withstand a siege and of decreasing importance after the invention, in the 13th century, of the cannon. So we may discount Maiden Castle which datesfrom 2000 B.C. and the crop of Victorian fakes like Castle Goring, Coates Castle and that at Nutbourne. Many of these were built on behalf of the emergent nouveau riche of the industrial revolution anxious to demonstrate their new wealth and power.

Of course, habits and architectural styles do not immediately change and, for many years after the wider use of cannons in the 14th and 15th centuries, castles were being modified (for example, by replacing the square corner towers with round ones, less vulnerable to cannon fire and giving a wider range of vision for the defenders) But landed families still felt the need for some protection from possible enemies and the compromise fortified manor house flourished . The ruins of Cowdray Castle are a good example of this; where security of a sort also accommodated a considerable measure of comfort.

It was Bishop Luffa who first built, on the present site, a hunting lodge, no doubt after building Chichester Cathedral about 1200. Parts of his house still stand in the south-east corner of the enclosure. In 1377, King Richard the 2 nd gave a licence to Bishop Rede to *crenellate* the great hall with walls topped by battlements.

Some features of the medieval castle were common. One would expect to find gatehouses and drawbridges with a portcullis to renderhostile occupation nearly impossible. Most would also have a moat or be situated, like Bodiam, in a lake. Amberley was well served in this way by having the extensive water flats at its back. But somehow there are serious reasons for questioning its right to he called a castle.

Its 30 foot high walls are dramatic and imposing but they lack the width of, say, Bramber, and the corner towers seem to have no function other than to hold up the walls. Such towers were meant to provide viewing positions so that archers could shoot arrows from any angle but to do so requires the towers to project outwards. Those at Amberley project inwards!

Amberley's gate-house would not be a serious problem for determined attackers. Assuming that they had breached the portcullis, they would, in most genuine castles find a further substantial gate at the back of the entrance. Above them would be machiolations - holes through which defenders could shoot arrows or pour boiling oil on their enemies. Amberley had none. So we may fairly describe it as a fortified manor house with aspirations!

The fact is that Amberley Castle (or whatever!) was still an imposing and well-defendable building and its defects may well arise from its being built and occupied by ecclesiastics. But why should bishops fear an attack? It was unlikely that French ships would get past Arundel Castle and the Normans were in full charge by the time Amberley was built. Of whom were the bishops likely to he afraid?

There was always sharp conflict between the crown and the church until Henry the 8 th established the Church of England in the 16 th century, thus ending the distant rule of Rome and establishing the nation state that has survived to this day. In earlier times the superiority of church over temporal lords was substantial as is shown by an incident at Houghton in 1292. The Earl of Arundel was out walking with his dogs when he strayed into the forest belonging to the Bishop whose home was where Amberley Castle was later built. As punishment for his temerity and his refusal to apologise, the Earl was excommunicated! For months he held out but all the churches in the Earl's extensive lands were closed, sacraments were withheld, and burials refused. Eventually Arundel conceded. So bishops may well have feared revenge from the disgruntled lords temporal.

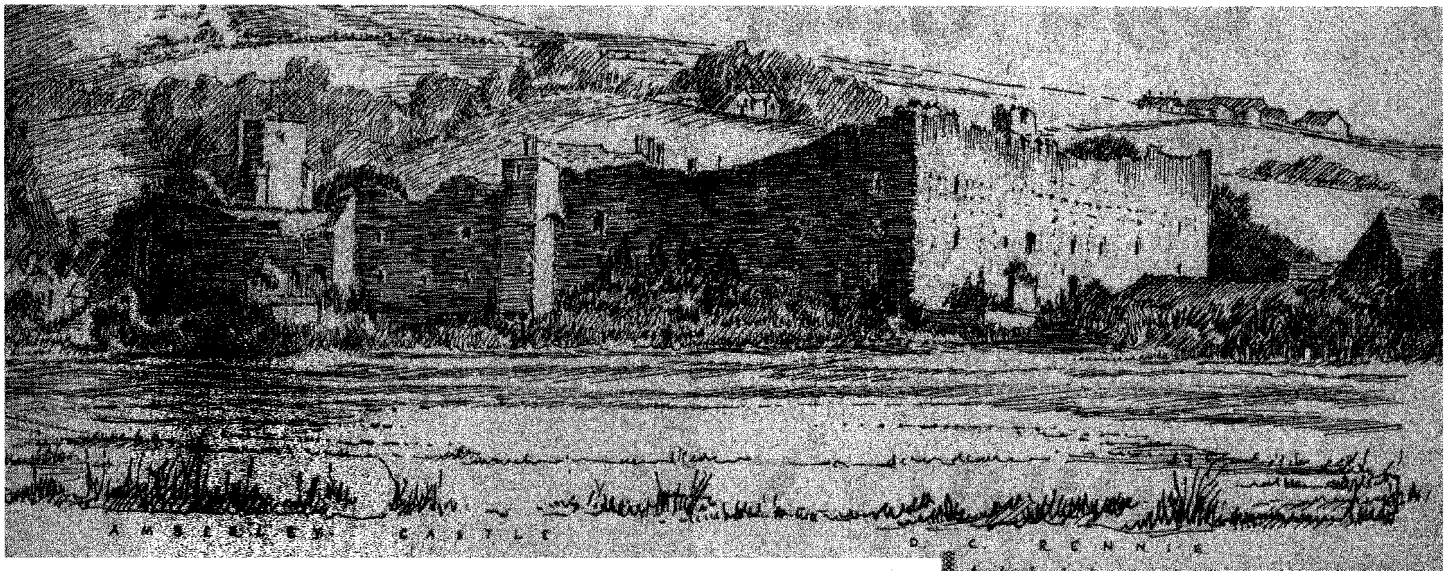
More seriously they had good cause to fear a general uprising of the peasants. The stormy years

of the 14 th century, especially those following the Black Death of 1348, when a third of the population died, had led to a shortage of servile labour and some lords had elected to pay wages to their erstwhile villeins or to allow them to pay rent instead of labour service. Areas where commutation had taken place, and this included Sussex, were demanding the same concessions (really the end of feudalism) for themselves. Fields lay untended and a series of famine years worsened the sufferings of the poor. Mostly of Saxon stock, they probably still retained a hatred for their mainly Norman rulers. Add to this the growth of an independent religious movement that wanted to abolish the church and all the bishops with it. They were called "Lollards" and were led by one, John Ball who asked, "When Adam delved and Eve span, Who was then the gentleman?" Led by Wat Tyler, the Peasants' Revolt rampaged through London, killing Church dignitaries - including the Archbishop of Canterbury - and wrecking their palaces.

Steps to enforce the Statute of Labourers of 1351, which attempted to peg wages at pre- Plague levels, coupled with the Poll tax, which was meant to pay for the century of war with France, was too much for the men of Kent and Sussex. Tax collectors were murdered and the revolution of 1381 was on but was bloodily suppressed. Could this he the main reason for Arundel Castle?

In the middle of David Rennie's drawing there is what appears to he a buttress the whole height of the wall but this is the means by which the *gardrobes* (two lavatories at the top) were emptied into the ditch below and presumably ended up in the Amberley Wild Brooks. An internal feature was a grating down which prisoners were dropped 30 feet to a pit below. This was appropriately called an *oublette* - French for "forgotten"

Amberley Castle has undergone many changes in recent years. A rich American, whose hobby was up-dating castles and chateaux, re-installed the potcullis - and operated it by slectricity! The present owners - Martin and Joy Cummings, - preside over a well-patronised hotel in delightful surroundings.



Amberley looks attractive from many directions. This view of the castle, which is privately owned by the Baroness Emmett, was sketched from the railway line and shows St Michael's Church and Amberley Mount in the background with Downs Farm to the far right. The artist is D. C. Rennie.

History of a Storrington Farmhouse

by

David Coward

Continued from the last issue:-

Upstairs.

1. A loft over the small chamber adjoining the hall. This had a bedstead and yet another 20 bushels of apples.
2. A loft over the hall with a bed, bed linen and a cradle.
3. A loft over the kitchen with two bedsteads, table, chair and stool together with a linen-store and a "muskett" valued at 20 Shillings
4. The garret loft. Another apple store and horse collars.
5. The smoke loft, with a vat, salt trough and "oast haire" (?)

When we come to the barns and stock with "implements of husbandry" one can see that the deceased was indeed, for his times, a substantial yeoman farmer. The barns are shown to have housed six oxen, eight cows together with calves and yearling bullocks, eighteen hogs and two sows together
with stocks of wheat, barley, peas, oats and hay.

The implements of husbandry included a "wayne cart", "dung carts" and a plough with all necessary furniture.

John Parham III died in 1614 and his son, Richard, followed him six months later. The property then passed to his son, yet another John(IV). On his death in 1649 Perretts once again descended to his eldest surviving son, Richard, who lived on the farm until he too died in 1683. That was the end of the Parham ownership of the property, as Richard had no male heirs. His sister Mary was certainly living at the farm at the time but she married a George Barnard soon after Richard's death, and whether she succeeded to the property or her new husband bought it, I have not yet discovered. George Barnard, in his will dated 6th May 1700 is described as "of Perretts, Yeoman", It shows that he also owned Roundabout Farm, and Coopers, all of which he bequeathed to his only son, another George, subject to the payment of legacies to his two daughters.

It is about this time it has been suggested that the farmhouse was enlarged with the addition of extra rooms on the North and perhaps the substitution of timber framed mud and wattle walls by stone ones.

George Barnard II, after succeeding to the property, in his turn made a Will in 1719 leaving it to his "cozen"(actually his nephew) Edward Mearsh, the son of his eldest sister Mary. After his uncle's death in 1732 Edward must have decided on marriage because in 1733 he entered into a Marriage Settlement with trustees "in anticipation of his marriage to Martha Green". By this deed Perretts, then in his occupation, with 40 acres of arable and meadow land. was conveyed to the trustees on trust for him during his lifetime and thereafter for his widow during her life "in lieu of dower" and thereafter for their eldest son and heirs. This document which has a magnificent green wax seal is in the Petworth HouseArchives, and I understand from a West Sussex Record Office source, has been used as an example in teaching conservation methods to students.

In 1755 the only son of the Mearshes, Thomas Mearsh, succeeded to the property but later sold it to Samual Andrew, an adjacent land owner. Samuel Andrew, in his turn, made his Will in 1762 devising Perretts and Oldfields and other property he owned in Storrington and West Chiltington, to trustees on trust for his nephew, another Samuel Andrew, on his coming of age. At this time Perretts is described as being in the occupation of William Baker, and then of a George Francis - the first occasion since the 16th century that the farm was not in the occupation of its owner.

On 8th April 1788,by an Indenture of Lease and Release, Samuel Andrew II sold Perretts to George O'Brien, Earl of Egremont of Petworth House for a sum of £1,950.

Just prior to this, it was interesting to learn from the Court Books for the Manor of Storrington that public notice had been given that the boundaries of the manor "would be perambulated and trodden" on 26th September 1786 and the attendance of Lords of the adjoining Manors and their stewards and agents was requested. The description of the boundaries show that the Perretts fields were included and formed one of the boundaries of the Manor.

The first map showing Perretts I have been able to trace is that prepared in 1788 for the Petworth Estate at the time of the purchase. There is also a schedule showing the fields and their acreages - totalling 114 acres - which made up Perretts Farm. It is difficult, however, to reconcile these details with the 1817 Estate map and by the time the Tithe Apportionment map was made in 1841 the total area had shrunk to some 35 acres, suggesting that a considerable part of the farm had been absorbed in the adjacent, and by 1789 jointly operated, Hurston Street farm.

Perretts and Hurston Street farms remained in the ownership of the Petworth Estate - as did many properties in Storrington, but with tenant farmers in occupation until 1920 when they were sold to the sitting tenant farmer, a Thomas Salway. By 1959 the two farms belonged to the Wren brothers who sold the Perretts farm cottage, by then in a fairly ruinous state, together with the adjacent barn to a local builder and developer, Maurice Eames. It was he who carried out the extensive repairs and converted the building into the present North and South Perretts, the former of which I bought from him in 1966.

From the 1831 Land Tax assessments it appears that although the tenant farmer, William Lindfield., was in occupation of the Perretts cottages,they were in fact being used to house two of his agricultural labourers and this is borne out by the Tithe Apportionment map and subsequent Censuses.

By the time the 1881 Census was taken there were ten people living in the cottage, which must have been a tight fit, since the building was much smaller then than it is now.

Hurston Street farm including the former Perretts fields were still in active cultivation when I first came and also supported a magnificent herd of Friesan cattle. Sadly it has now all been split up and although the fields remain, having so far escaped the inexorable progress of the developer across our lovely Sussex countryside, they are used only for grazing. For how long, one wonders, will they remain safe and constitute, as they do, a gap between our parish and that of the buildings which bound West Chiltington parish - or will it all become part of a contiguous built-up area?

FAMOUS RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT NO. 1

It is unlikely that many patrons of the delightful Washington pub, "The Frankland Arms" have ever wondered why it is so called, and few would have heard of

WIILLIAM FRANKLAND - EXPLORER AND INVFNTOR

Just off the A 24, on the Findon by-pass, where Long Furlong departs for Littlehampton and Angmering , there once stood Muntham Court, family residence of the Franklands whose forbears included Oliver Cromwell's daughter, Frances. William's father was Governor of Bengal and William was born there.

In 1760 William felt the need to visit England , but he was in no great hurry and decided to take in a great deal of the terrain between Asia and Europe. Disguised as a Tartar, he covered much of what we now call the Middle East, including Persia, Bahgdad, Babylon and the ruins at Palmyra.

His wanderlust satisfied, he settled down at Findon where he spent the remainder of a long life indulging in his love of science and things mechanical. Much of the construction of a large range of machines he did himself; where he could not, he hired craftsmen. His home was scarcely large enough to house the wonderful collection of his inventions and creations. One room contained his lathes on which he produced work of artistic merit. Another was a minature textile factory in which machines wound, spun and wove cloth of high quality. Printing machines occupied another room; yet another was filled with mechanical musical instruments.

Optical apparatus and even devices for generating electricity came under his scrutiny and invention. When, in 1805, aged 85, his wonderful life ended he was buried in Findon churchyard and his unique collection was sold off,. one item alone - a turning lathe - fetching three thousand guineas.

His ideas and inventions were far ahead of his time and anticipated the Industrial Revolution that was to make Britain the Workshop of the world.

What a wonderful museum his collection would have made!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,
I was delighted to see some of our local smallchurches celebrated in the lead article of Times Past 17. But they are often more problematic (and interesting, in consequence) than Mr. Wharmby's article would lead us to believe; the "numerous booklets which describe (their) histories" are seldom a reliable source. Actually, as the chief author of one of these "booklets", I am most surprised to read that Greatham Church "was built in the reign of King John"; the evidence of its fabric points to a much earlier date (perhaps 11 th century). It can be most easily approached from the road across a field rather than via Greatham Manor.

As for Hardam, there is no clear evidence as to whether it dates from before or - more likely - just after the Norman conquest (though its stonework is almost identical to Greatham's, pointing to a similar date). Its internationally important wall paintings aren't certainly the oldest in the country (Clayton is probably older). Though their date is unknown a most important fact has recently been established: they are in true fresco, on the lowest level of plaster, and the date of the church's fabric and its paintings must therefore be the same (an unplastered church would be unfinished)

Yours sincerely,
Robin Milner- Gulland
School of Humanities, University of Sussex.

P.S.
On page 8 of the same issue : the "Domesday" survey was made in 1086, not 1068, and we can hardly assume it was made by "men with an inadequate knowledge of the English tongue" !

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Dear Editor,

More about "Storks & Storrington?"

Philip Beaumont's item in "Times Past" No. 17 prompted me to look into the origins of the name of Storrington and its possible association with Storks, for largely personal reasons not un connected with an interest in Ornithology. The *Oxford Book of English Place Names,* while quoting Estorchetone (DB), Storkinton (1185), Storgetune (1242 Fees) and Storketon (1255 Sele) as recorded historic names for the village also says it may be explained as OE Storca-tun 'homestead with Storks', "which may be right".

When viewing recorded place names one has to bear in mind that few people in those days were literate, that there was no lexicon of the written language and scribes would write down alliteratively what they thought they heard. At the same time, the spoken language was slowly developing from the pre-Norman Old English of Domesday. It is surely not surprising, therefore, that the recorded name changed with time and that one place could, over the years, have had more than one spelling of its name. Indeed, some place names are still evolving with small changes in pronunciation and spelling.

Philip casts doubt on the reliability of Domesday as a picture of life in Anglo-Saxon times and, while noting that Herons are not unlike Storks, seems to imply that the peoples of those times could not have told the difference.

But White Storks (German name Weisstorch) and Grey Herons are not readily confused, and are highly unlikely to have been confused by country dwelling Anglo-Saxons. White Storks are large, white birds with prominent red bills and legs, they stand tall and nest on prominent features like church towers, tall buildings, posts and tall slim trees on which they build very large nests. Grey Herons, conversely, are much smaller, are essentially grey, have no particularly prominent features and nest colonially in large trees.

These days, White Storks are occasional visitors only to Sussex either as vagrants or wandering migrants. Their nearest breeding grounds are in Northern France and The Netherlands and it has reached the eastern shores of the North Sea. It is, however, a species which has failed to nest this far west in recent times although a pair was present in Yorkshire earlier this year in circumstances that suggested they might be breeding. The last recorded natural breeding attempt in Britain was

in 1416 when a pair nested on top of St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, of all places!

However, the archaeological record suggests that it might have nested in Devon following the Wolstonian glaciation (ca. 150,000-340,000 years ago) and bones have been found in Scotland and at Silchester, Berks. from Roman times which might have been of either residents or strays.

Despite its general omission from the folklore, however, there is no reason to suspect that Storks were not known in the lands of the South Saxons during the dark and early middle ages either as occasional breeders or visitors. After all, being illiterate, farmer Giles would not have kept notes, as ornithologists do today!

Your sincerely,
J. A. Hobson (Storrington)

Letters to the Editor should be addressed to "Woodside", Melton Avenue, Storrington

Obituary

Joan Margaret Ann Taylor - First Honorary Citizen of Storrington. Dec. 13, 1922 - May 26, 2004

Joan was a Friend right from the start and was always willing and able to help at any one of our functions, even when failing health made that very difficult. Anyone who shared a stewarding session with her soon realised that her knowledge of her native district was unsurpassed. She was often to be found in the Parish churchyard following on the work of her late husband with whom she now shares a resting place. Thank you, Joan, for a life well spent.

FAMOUS RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT - NO. 2

WALTER POTTER - TAXIDERMIST EXTRAORDINARY

The charming village of Bramber sits primly between bustling Steyning and more workaday Upper-Beeding and still has its castle, church and St. Mary's House to make a visit worth-while. But it used to have two very different museums that once brought visitors by the hundreds every year There was until, perhaps twenty years ago, the Pipe Museum where smokers could look nostalgically at the pipes, cigarette packets, long-bankrupted match-makers box designs, cigarette cards and anything else evocative of the days when nicotine ruled our lives and our lungs.

Even more bizarre was Walter Potter's exhibition of stuffed wildlife. He began as a child to stuff little birds and to make them into characters in totally unnatural charades. First one off was the Death of Cock Robin. It took him seven years to assemble the hundred birds - cuckoos, nightingales, wrynecks, and many other creatures of the woods and fields round Bramber; this was the great attraction for most visitors for over 70 years.

Other displays were added; rabbits at school, guinea pigs playing cricket and rats playing dominoes, apparently unaware that their great enemy - a dog - is looking over their shoulders.

Most nauseating for the present writer was the Pussycats' Tea Party in which kittens smiled sweetly across the table at each other and appeared to he enjoying the tasty tit bits provided by the generous Mr. Potter. We may wonder if the creatures died naturally before being taxidermised. The museum closed on Mr. Potter's death and the collection was sold.

FRIENDS' NEWS

Come what may, the "Friends" will continueas a Society in the form of a Historical Society with the aims of a charity to support any future district museum.

Hence the FoS&DM winter programme is being arranged as:-

September 9, Thursday

AGM (Brief) at the Roman Catholic Church Hall (as will all meetings until further notice) followed by "Old Rowley and his mistresses" - a talk by Helen Whittle, with a free glass of wine included.

October 14, Thursday

"Sussex Legends and Oddities " by David Tait.

November 11, Thursday

"Victorian Education" by Sue Millard of the West Sussex Record Office.

December 9, Thursday

"Quakers in West Sussex" by Jane Le Cluse.

Plus wine & present stall.

December 23, Thursday

Museum Supper - Venue to be announced.

January 13, Thursday

"The Greatest Britons?" - a discussion led by Philip Beaumont.

YOUR SUGGESTIONS WOULD BE WELCOMED - OR COME ALONG WITH SUPPORT FOR YOUR FAVOURITES.

February 10, Thursday

"South Downs in the Past" by Peter Brandon.

March 10, Thursday

"Images of Rural Life, 1920 - 1950" by Alison McCann of the W.S.R.O.

The Friends' committee is also going through a period of change and we are now in need of someone to undertake the duties of Membership Secretary as Jean Stow (previously Mrs Robinson) is giving up this position. We thank her for the years of dedicated work she has given for the committee. **If someone is willing to take up this position, which involves keeping membership details on computer files, would they please contact 01903 744388.**

All renewals and membership applications should now be sent to:-

Membership Secretary, FoS&DM
c/o "Woodside", Melton Avenue, Storrington

We are also short of Stewards for the Museum so if you feel that you could assist would you please contact the above address or telephone.

The next exhibitions at the museum wil be:-

September/ October - Holiday Souvenirs

November/ December - Toys - a glimpse into the past.

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