

Times Past

Storrington & District Museum Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow

NEWSLETTER • Issue No.9 • August, 2001

A MUSEUM OF FAMILY HISTORY

Storrington and District Museum is a museum of local and family history, and, as such, is destined to be an increasingly important resource for local schools and researchers. Family history has become an enormously popular pastime in recent years, as people have discovered the excitement of tracking down their ancestors. But it is not just a matter of constructing detailed family trees; it is just as exciting to find out what we can about the people themselves – after all, they were all human beings like us, so what motivated them in their distant lives? The accessibility of the records and the wealth of advice available through books and magazines and, more recently, the internet have all contributed to an explosion of interest in this hobby, as have the regular Family History Fairs and other events.

The main point of this article is to ask a simple question – which should produce a flood of correspondence. It is this: “which is the oldest Storrington family?” We know the names of many local families – Crowhursts, Goatchers, Greenfields, Hammonds, Hughes, and so on. But which family, currently living in the Storrington district can claim the longest unbroken residence?

Being completely biased on the subject, my own claim would naturally be for the Linfields. **John Linfield**, Chief Fire Officer at Storrington for 27 years and a local resident for most of his life, is directly descended from **Peter Linfield** (1734-91) who moved to Storrington in 1779! Born in the parish of Nuthurst where his ancestors had lived for over 200 years, Peter moved to Palmer's Farm in West Chiltington in the 1760s. He was a butcher and transferred his business to the premises of a Mrs. Nash in Church Street, presumably to take advantage of a busier location. However, he retained ownership of his 12 acre farm in West Chiltington, which was rented out to John Humphrey.

Trying to discover the elusive bits of information which can add “flesh to the bones” is probably the most challenging and rewarding part of family history, and local newspapers are always worth checking. There are at least two interesting references to Peter Linfield in the ‘Sussex Advertiser’: (16th April 1781) “*Last Monday, a remarkably fine ox, fatted by Sir Cecil Bishopp, of Parham Park, weighing near 190 stone was killed by Mr. Peter Lindfield, of Storrington*”. On another occasion, Peter was summoned with fellow butcher Edmund Searl before the Steyning magistrates at the Chequer Inn. They were accused of contempt for refusing to be sworn in at an earlier session when their evidence was needed to convict John Scardefield of supplying two poached hares to Henry Baker, a local farmer. Their punishment was to pay £10 plus costs to the magistrates and publish a cringing apology for their “scandalous behaviour” in the local press! This was reported on 11th October 1779.

Peter's eldest son, **William Linfield** (1769-1835), continued to run the family butcher's business whilst increasing the farming interests when he leased Hurston Street Farm and Perrett's in 1816. His sons, **Henry and William**, continued to manage these farms until the 1850's. Another son, **Thomas** (1812-84), became the third generation butcher to run the business in Church Street. It remained a butcher's shop until 1972, latterly managed by the Seldon family.

Thomas's son, **Jack Linfield** (1842-99) was a painter by trade,

and in 1870 he married **Friend Fuller** of Storrington. He was a very keen cricketer and played for the local village club. In this capacity, he captained the famous team which defeated W. Hammond's XI on 17th January 1867 – the match having taken place on the frozen village pond! His team won by 112 to 89. The photograph (in the museum collection) shows (from left to right): Jack Linfield, Harry Crowhurst and Ernest Hammond.



According to his daughter **Evelyn May**, who was the youngest child of a family of nine, her father supplemented his income by snooping on racehorses exercising in gallops on the lush grass of the South Downs' foothills. He was paid by the *Sporting Life* and other papers for his services! Incidentally, May celebrated her Golden

Wedding to **Joe Page** in 1963 and their anniversary was the subject of an article in the *West Sussex County Times* which also claimed her family to be the oldest in Storrington! When May was born in 1888, her parents were living in Brewers Yard.

Being the youngest of nine meant she never knew her grandfather or grandmother. When she got married, the Rector, **Arthur F. Faithfull**, told her how he used to go and watch her grandfather kill his pigs in the yard behind his shop (although I fail to see the attraction!)

Jack Linfield died in December 1899; he was only 56. His wife died in 1902. Poor May was therefore only 11 when her father died and 14 when she lost her mother. It was at this moment in her life when she found a job at the White Horse Hotel. She was still working there when she married Joe Page in 1913; soon after, she became the caretaker of Storrington Village Hall, and they moved into the little flat above where they were still living at the time of their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Just like his father-in-law, Joe was a passionate cricketer who played for his local club. He was also very proficient at the game, and was noticed by local author **Hugh de Selincourt** who immortalised him as the character ‘Sid Smith’ in “*The Game of the Season*”.

My own branch of the Linfield family are much more recent to the local area. Our connections with Thakeham began in 1913, when my great-grandfather **Arthur Linfield** (1859-1938) purchased Town House Farm to establish a nursery for his three youngest sons. We are distant cousins to the Storrington Linfields, being descended from Peter Linfield's elder brother William, who was born in 1727. As a family, we haven't really moved very much – but it certainly makes searching the records a little easier.

Malcolm Linfield

STORY OF A STORRINGTON VOLUNTEER IN WORLD WAR II

Early in the War, volunteered as an Instructor Officer, R.N, Hostilities only. (usually known as a 'Schoolie').

First two years spent talking about matters electrical to various groups of trainees – boring for them and boring for me!

- 1942 Posted to aircraft carrier HMS Hermes.
- Feb.20 Sailed from Milford Haven in convoy on SS Theseus (cargo ship with some passenger accommodation) arriving off Durban, SA, Mar.26.
- Mar.28 Sailed for Adelaide on "Ceramic". During the voyage radio announced the sinking of HMS Hermes by the Japs, so my posting had gone. Arrived Adelaide Apr.13.
- Apr.18 Arrived Melbourne, where the Naval Office would give me another posting.
- Apr.23 Sailed for Perth (Freemantle) on SS Nankin (passenger/cargo ship).
- May 5 Left Perth on SS Nankin bound for Ceylon (unescorted) with 321 on board (104 passengers including 39 women and children; 46 Lascar seamen from "British Motorist" sunk by the Japs off Darwin; 26 officers and engineers; 145 Indian crew).
- May 10 Captured by German raider "Thor" at 90° 08'E, 27° 03'S.
- May 14 Transferred to German supply ship "Regensburg". For several weeks the Germans moved their ships around the Indian Ocean with gay abandon, knowing that the Allies did not, at that time, have ships or planes for effective reconnaissance. We were told that we would make a trip to the Nankin and have 10 minutes to collect what we could bring away – this was carried out.
- July 7 Arrived Yokohama and transferred to German MS Ramses in the harbour some six days later.

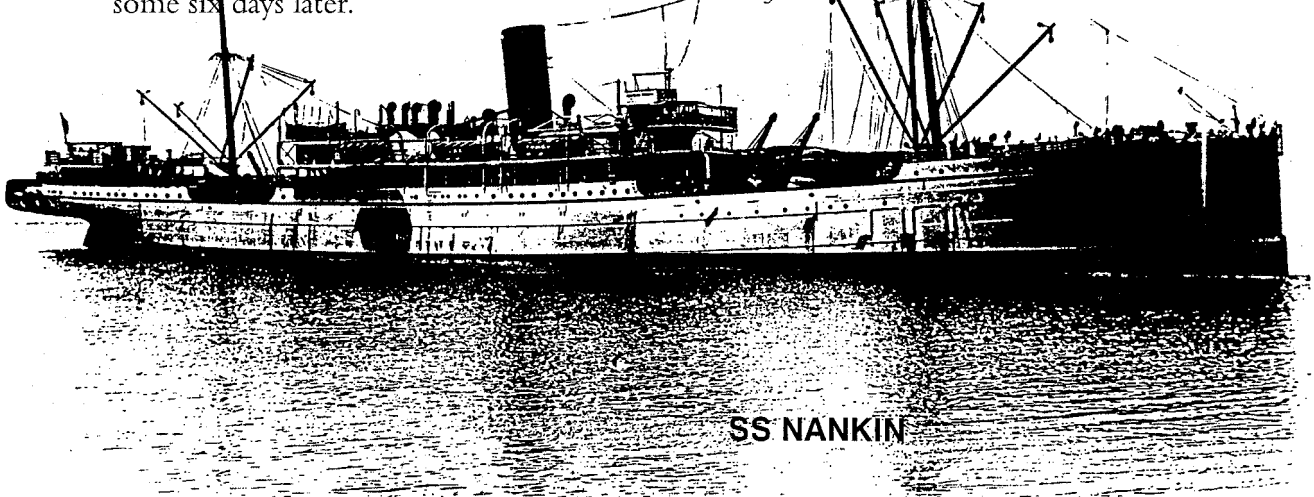
- Aug. 25 Moved ashore to camp at Kawasaki between Yokohama and Tokyo. Working parties started soon after.
- 1944 November – First US reconnaissance plane seen at a great height.
- 1945 February – First appearance of Allied carrier-borne planes.
- Apr. 15 Huge area between the two camps and far beyond burnt right out in an incendiary raid.
- Aug.10 Atomic bomb on Hiroshima (400 miles west).
- Aug. 15 Back from work early and news of the end of war.
- Aug.25 Air drops of supplies (mainly food and clothing).
- Aug.30 Lorries take people to landing barges in Tokyo Bay and over the next couple of days the start of the journeys home. My route was to Manila on HMS Speaker then to Leyte on USS General W C Langfitt, thence to Victoria, BC, across Canada by train to New York and home to Southampton on the Queen Elizabeth.

Jim Blomfield.

Jim Blomfield spent his childhood in Storrington, living with his family at Oldfield House in Fryern Road. His father, subsequently, built Oak Dell next door and the family moved there.

Jim attended Steyning Grammar School and belonged to Storrington Cricket Club. He has many vivid memories of the village and is still remembered by some of the older residents. Now in his eighties, he lives with his daughter in Nova Scotia, Canada. He corresponds regularly with Elizabeth Hembrey who now lives in Oldfield House.

Jim asks whether anyone knows the whereabouts, or what happened, to the father and son who lived in their stable at Oldfield?



SS NANKIN

Phone/Fax: (06) 356-7977

E-mail: Joanb@xtra.co.nz

1 Anglesey Place,
Palmerston North.
New Zealand

September 12, 2000

I am a keen genealogist and was fortunate enough to spend an afternoon in Storrington during a visit to England in August. I spent some time looking at graves in the churchyard and then visited the museum, where the lady steward was most helpful.

However, I am particularly interested in the Half Moon Inn (now, I understand, known as the New Moon). I have a family postcard, taken c. 1900, which shows the inn with the name of the proprietor – J. Barnes. Could any of your readers tell me a little about the history of the inn and/or clarify for me who the J. Barnes was?

My father-in-law John (Jack) Barnes (1875–1952) emigrated from Storrington to New Zealand some time between 1908 and 1911. I have a photograph of the victorious Storrington cricket team of 1908, which includes both Jack and his brother Frank. They were the sons of Henry Barnes (a corn miller) and Jane (née Duke). I believe that the proprietor of the Half Moon for a time may have been either my father-in-law or his uncle.

I would be most grateful if any of your readers could help.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Barnes

Maude Petre – A Memory

May I please add an anecdote to the article "Three Graves in Storrington" by Philip Beaumont, which was published in issue No. 7.

"It all came about because I had decided to change my army billet to Earls Court in preference to the Paddington area. Alas, I only had one night's sleep there, because the house had a direct hit from a bomb the following evening.

About 9pm, just as I was about to 'bed down' in the basement, the building collapsed about me and I was unable to rid myself of the great weight on my legs.

Nineteen hours elapsed before I was rescued and transferred to St. Mary Abbots Hospital.

On the second morning after my admittance a little elderly lady appeared in the ward asking to see me. Although I had never set eyes on her before, I guessed her identity from a description given me by Mrs Rosie Lee, my late sister's mother-in-law.

She had travelled up that morning (Sept. 5th, 1940), all on her own, to bring comfort and hope to an injured soldier.

It was indeed a magnanimous gesture, so it is little wonder that I remember her as 'The Lady of Mercy'.

Alas! I never saw her again, nor did I know where she lived until recently."

Charles Frewer.

MUSEUM NEWS

The following Special Exhibition will be taking place in the Museum over the coming months:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| August: | Recent Acquisitions. |
| September: | The Air Training Corps [with additional material with an RAF theme]. |
| October/November: | The Escape of Charles II after the Battle of Worcester [with additional Civil War material]. |
| December/January: | Small exhibitions reflecting the other neighbouring parishes within the Museum project. |

Please note: these exhibitions may be changed at short notice.

FRIENDS' NEWS

We would like to remind all our members that the Second Annual General Meeting will be taking place on the evening of **Thursday, 13th September 2001** (not 20th September as printed in the Summer programme) – a copy of the Agenda, a Winter Calendar and a Membership Renewal Form for 2001/02 is enclosed with this newsletter.

On page two of the form is a **Gift Aid** declaration box – please fill in and send back with your subscription, if you have not already done so. Subscriptions become due on October 1st, and remain the same as last year: £5 for individuals and £7 for family members (two adults at the same address plus any dependent children under the age of eighteen).

A most welcome donation to our funds has recently been made by 'Mrs. Tritton's Charity Trust' for the sum of £500. This generous gift is much appreciated, particularly at a time when there are so many calls on our limited funds – we are very grateful to the trustees.

On Sunday October 7th (details below) we hope you will all come and support our second major fund raising event – the **Antique Fair and Valuation Day**, to take place at the Old School. There will be over 20 stallholders selling their wares, and between 1pm and 3.30pm local expert Rupert Toovey will be available to value your antiques and collectibles. Rupert has very kindly offered his services free of charge. This will be a busy day and we are going to need several volunteers who can help with the many tasks required (door duties, in the kitchen, serving food and drink etc.) If you would like to help, please contact Gina on 01903 892210.

Gina has once again organised a fascinating lecture programme for the coming season, details of which are given below. We thank all our members for their valuable support during 2000/01, and look forward to the challenges and exciting times ahead as the Storrington and District Museum continues to evolve for the future. Please support us in 2001/02!

Malcolm Linfield

AUTUMN AND WINTER PROGRAMME 2001/02

All Thursday evening meetings will be held at the Old School, School Lane, Storrington – starting promptly at 7.30 pm. The price will be £2.00 on the door. There is no charge to attend the AGM.

Thursday, 13th September

Members' Evening & Annual General Meeting

The main part of the evening will be a showing of the film "Tansy". Made about 1925, this story of love was filmed in Fittleworth, Petworth and locally on the Downs. The evening will include Members' Displays and a glass of wine. Members are requested to bring along any interesting objects they would like to share with all present.

Sunday, 7th October

Antique Fair and Valuation Day With Rupert Toovey

This will be our major fund raising event for the year, and will take place at the Old School between 10 am to 4 pm. From 1 pm to 3.30 pm, local expert Rupert Toovey will be available to value your antiques. Price: £1-00 per item or £5-00 for several. Refreshments available: ploughman's, wine etc.

Thursday, 11th October

"Costume from Old Photos"

Anne Wise of Worthing Museum

Please bring along any old photographs you would like dated.

Wednesday, 17th October

Visit to Wiston House with Janet Pennington

Meet at Wiston House 2.15 pm. Tickets £5-00 (to include tea and a cake) direct from Gina (01903 892210).

Thursday, 8th November

"Sussex Folk Lore" by Jacqueline Simpson

Thursday, 6th December

"Smuggling Days in Sussex" by Chris Hare

To include a festive glass of wine and a mince pie. Also a Gift Stall (contributions most welcome – any unwanted presents or suitable items which can be sold on the night – please contact Gina).

Thursday, 3rd January 2002

"Sex and Scandal in the Sussex Weald"

by Jane Le Cluse (From Church Court Records)

Thursday, 14th February

"Parham House – a Walk through History"

by Marcia Edwards

Thursday, 14th March

"West Sussex on Film" by Alan Readman

of West Sussex Records Office

**Members will be sad to learn of
the death of Con Ainsworth
in Worthing on 4th August, 2001**

An Obituary will be included in the next issue