

Times Past

Storrington & District Museum Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow

NEWSLETTER • Issue No.7 • February, 2001

CURATOR'S CORNER

The Museum Committee has now agreed the details of our proposed new cabinets and over the next couple of months these will be finding their way into the Museum. Obviously this will cause a certain amount of disruption but we are hoping that we will be able to manage without actually closing the Museum. Each new case will be introduced one at a time with things being moved round like a Chinese puzzle. It may mean that certain exhibits will disappear for a little while but it will mean that we can introduce new displays and finally start the regular "special exhibitions" in the "temporary display cabinets" just inside the door. We haven't yet worked out quite how we are going to display all our paintings as the two "Edmond's cases" [the big glass ones which are in

the centre of the room at present] will be moved down to the end wall which will mean the present display rail will be too low to accommodate the present range of pictures. Obviously we are all stretching our ingenuity at the moment to come up with an acceptable solution to this problem.

We are also hoping that we have solved the problem of accommodating our growing library and archive so that this can be accessed properly and further details of this will be given as soon as arrangements are finalised. In the meantime work is continuing on card-indexing both the general document collection and also the Parish Registers and Censuses so that Family History data will be, easily accessed within the Museum itself.

Helen Whittle

FRYERN PARK – STORRINGTON

In 1870, Henry , whose sister had married into the King family of Fryern Park, was the Canon Palmer whose diary has been appearing in the Herald Magazine of Storrington, Sullington and Thakeham for some years.

For the past half-century our family lived on the land which was originally part of the King family estate and have observed the old mansion house slide into decay.

Between the two world wars the last of the Kings left. After being requisitioned during the last war it was used as a hostel for foreign girls who worked at a local mushroom farm. Finally, in the seventies I think, the house was demolished and the gardens of rare trees and rhododendron walks became a wilderness.

In the fifties I used to wheel my youngest child through Fryern Park early in the morning before breakfast when the birds were in full song and the green fields spread for miles in the sunlight. As the years passed the grandchildren were wheeled in their turn, and finally my great-grandchildren braved the horse riders and cars which were increasing in number by the nineties, whilst the

birdsong grew less.

One Christmas Day in the seventies a group of family members took an evening walk under the stars to the site of the old Fryern House. There was a blackthorn bush (wild sloe) in full white blossom near where the back door of the mansion would have been. The moon came out and shone upon it and we wondered at its being in bloom so early in the season.

The following evening we decided to return once more to see the blackthorn bush in the neglected garden. The moon shone down and we looked towards the spot where we had seen the blackthorn but it was no longer there! The ground was undisturbed and we were all silent, for none of us could trust our eyes.

The stream from the mill pond still winds through the estate and paths are being cleared by the Council to give more access to the pleasant woodland walks. New houses are to be built and the character will change in the new millennium but I hope our last green lung will be with us still.

Angela Bolton

THREE GRAVES IN STORRINGTON

Anyone who, like this contributor, sometimes wanders round churchyards, may well have been puzzled by three grave-stones in the Parish Church burial grounds. They lie in a remote part and, significantly, almost as near the Roman Catholic Church as to St. Mary's. With dense hedges on three sides, it is clear that the occupants were to be placed as far as possible from others in the area.

Closer inspection of the first and largest stone (by Eric Gill) explains why the three graves are so remote.

OF YOUR CHARITY
PRAY FOR THE SOUL OF
GEORGE TYRRELL

CATHOLIC PRIEST WHO DIED
JULY 15th 1909 AGED 48 YEARS

FORTIFIED BY THE RITES OF THE CHURCH

R.I.P.

Close-by lies his friend, Arthur Francis Bell, a local poet who lived at "The Studio", Manley's Hill, and whose charming poem, "A Sussex Shepherd's Song", was featured in "Times Past" No. 5. We are told that Bell died on November 6th, 1918. Beneath is inscribed the phrase –

LUX PERPETUA LUCEATEI.

The third, and smallest stone, tells us little about the lady buried there; it simply reads –

R.I.P.

M.P.D.

Aug. 9th, 1863 – Dec.
6th, 1942

We are tempted to conclude that she saw herself as being of little importance in the life of Father Tyrrell. This was certainly not so, but it is consistent with their relationship that she should belittle her own role in his turbulent career.

George Tyrrell was born in Dublin on Feb. 6th, 1861, five weeks after the death of his father. He grew up like many other middle-class Dubliners – Anglophile and Protestant and far-removed in culture and income from the Catholic

majority. A fine scholar but one whose out-spoken and sometimes intemperate attitude made him some enemies. He "scraped through" the entrance examination to Trinity College, the Protestant University of Dublin, but failing to gain a bursary, he was unable to follow in the footsteps of his brother William, who had been a brilliant graduate there.

Now at 17, he came under the influence of Cardinal Newman, a famous convert to Rome. In 1869 George was accepted into the Society of Jesus as a novice, a move that stimulated his latent talents for study, debate and authorship. He soon gathered to himself followers from within and without the Catholic Church, people who felt that Christianity, and especially the Roman Catholic Church, had failed to accept the enormous strides made in science and technology during the 19th Century. These people were collectively known as "Modernists"; what we would more likely call "liberals" or "revisionists" today.

It is no part of this article to examine the merits of the views expressed so forcibly at the time by deeply sincere protagonists; we are merely concerned to know why our three Catholic subjects preferred banishment to conformity. It is sufficient to know that Tyrrell's outpourings, by debate, literature and correspondence led, inevitably to his expulsion from the Jesuits and final excommunication.

The third, and smallest, of our three gravestones covers the remains of Maude Petri, who lived at Mulberry House until her death in 1942, aged 79. She came from a Catholic family that included Mary

the First's Secretary of State, who was very active in the persecution of Protestants, as was another Petri, Edward, who was a Privy Councillor to James II.

Maude was attracted to George Tyrrell in two ways; firstly for his Modernist views and secondly for himself.

Her letters, entries in her diaries and her biography of Father Tyrrell show that her concern was more than merely intellectual. Nicholas Sagovsky, in his book "On God's Side", says; "For six months she had been pouring out her soul, praying for him, longing for



him, suffering with him ... By her determined attempts to love him, however much he hurt her, she intended to draw out the poison from him."

He frequently visited Storrington Priory as a relief from the growing demands on his time in London as confessor, writer, debater and adviser. To help him, Maude bought Mulberry House in the Square, ostensibly as a convalescent home for distressed women. She furnished a study for George overlooking the Square with its Mulberry tree, so recently cut down.

But Father Tyrrell did not reciprocate her affections; he was conscious of his celibate status and of her vow of chastity. In any case, he was frequently annoyed at Maude's excessive attentiveness and he could be very wounding in some of his correspondence with her. When, at Christmas, 1901, she suggested that they should spend it at Richmond, Yorkshire; he at his favourite retreat; she at lodgings nearby; he told her that he did not wish to see her. Her diary tells us he wrote "the hardest, most cruel letter he has ever written ... He is sometimes so sore and angry that he needs to hurt somebody and why not me?"

She financed much of his work and acted as hostess at Mulberry House to many of his friends including Bell who usually arrived, either in an invalid carriage or by pony and trap.

Tyrrell's position within the Catholic community as a whole and in the Jesuit order in particular was becoming untenable. His public image was that of "rebel priest" – a pose in a church that had seen many such deviants during almost two millennia. Expulsion from the Society of Jesus was followed, in turn, by excommunication. The final blow came after a personal letter from Tyrrell to an Italian supporter

was published in a Milan newspaper. In the letter George had bluntly criticised the Pope thus challenging the long-held acceptance of Papal infallibility. In another letter to "The Times" he predicted that the Pope's encyclical on "Modernism" would mean the wholesale expulsion of liberals and reformists. Within a month, in 1907, he was proved right.

By now, Father Tyrrell was clearly exhausted by the rigours and trials of his chosen life and his health declined rapidly. Maude Petri described his last days at Mulberry House in a letter to "The Daily Mail" of July 16th, 1909.

"He became ill on Tuesday 6th and became almost at once partially inarticulate, although I myself could distinguish a great deal ... When his condition became graver I decided to send for a priest from the diocese of Southwark, one of his friends, Baron von Hugel, an eminent Modernist, interpreted George's wishes to the priest that he wished for the last rites as a communicant but he would not want this to be interpreted as a recanting of his views. The priest gave him absolution and the extreme Unction.

A sad note in Maude's diaries reveals that her only kiss was as he lay dying.

So there they lie, closer perhaps in death than in life. Their monuments have a sad, neglected look, quite out of character in an otherwise well-tended cemetery. Is it beyond the goodwill of Christians, of whatever creed, to add dignity to these pathetic graves? Even better, could not the three friends be re-interred in their preferred hallowed ground?

E. P. Beaumont

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Mrs K.D. Bramham (04.12.00):

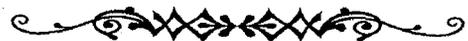
Dear Helen,

I would be most grateful if you could please correct a mis-statement in the article on A.F. Bell which appeared in the Museum Newsletter No.6.

It states that Bell's poems were collected by Miss Read in a book called "Sussex Verse". This is not correct. Miss Read used to drive Arthur Bell in a horse and trap, but had nothing to do with his poetry. "Sussex Verse" was an anthology of verse by Sussex poets, including Bell, Francis Thompson and others. It has a foreword written by A.F. Bell from The Studio.

I gave my copy of "Sussex Verse" to the Museum. This was given to my husband and me by Miss Read when we were living at The Studio - which we did for thirty years.

"Thank you."



We do indeed hold Mrs Bramham's copy of "Sussex Verse", and we are very grateful to her for donating it to the Museum

Helen Whittle

FRIENDS' NEWS

The Winter lecture programme has again proved a great success with packed audiences eager to devour the local history on offer. In November, Robert Harris gave a fascinating account of his family's long association with the fairground; Chris Hare gave the Christmas lecture this year on the unusual story of Vera Pragnell's "Sanctuary" at Washington, after which the Hams kindly opened the Museum for people to see the new Florence Greenfield Exhibition. In January, Sally White gave an interesting talk on the history of Worthing as a seaside resort. Our Programme Secretary Gina Wilmshurst is to be congratulated yet again on choosing excellent speakers who have provided a varied and interesting range of subject material.

Application for Charitable Status

The Committee have recently applied to the Charity Commission in order to register the Friends as a Charity. One of the major benefits of obtaining charitable status is that we will be able to claim tax relief on all subscriptions and donations (currently 28p for every £1). This represents a significant sum of money and we would therefore like to ask all our members to help us achieve this saving by filling in the form enclosed with this newsletter and sending it to me at the address shown.

IT WILL COST YOU NOTHING!

The only stipulation is that you must have paid in tax at least the amount we are claiming back from the Inland Revenue during the current tax year (i.e. on a subscription of £5, this would be £1.40).

Please do take the time to complete this form; it makes your money go a lot further, and you only have to fill it in once since it will remain valid for as many years as you renew your membership. This new system is known as "Gift Aid" and it replaces the old

"Deed of Covenant" which used to apply. It is a much simpler method for charities to claim tax relief, but its overall success for the Friends will obviously depend upon the number of completed forms which are returned! I thank you all, in anticipation ...

Summer Programme

Once again for the Summer months, the Friends have organised a number of local walks. The first walk, in April, will be on a Sunday morning, whilst the others will all take place on a Thursday evening and begin at 7.30 pm. There will be a standard charge of £1.50 per person.

Sunday, 22nd April:

'In Shipbuilders' Footsteps: Shoreham' with Trevor Povey. Meet at 11.00 am in Shoreham Community Car Park. For those who would like lunch, a table has been booked for eighteen at 'The Swiss Cottage'. As the numbers are limited to 18 places, please contact Gina promptly to make a reservation (01903 892210).

Thursday, 10th May:

'The Early Beginnings: Worthing' with Chris Hare. Meet on the steps of Worthing Town Hall.

Thursday, 14th June:

A walk around West Chiltington with Caroline Wells. Meet in the Church Hall car park.

Thursday, 12th July:

A walk around Ashurst with Con Ainsworth. Meet at the Fountain (with walking shoes!)

Thursday, 9th August:

'The Rest of Storrington' with Joan Ham who will be leading a walk around the parts of the village which were not covered in her walk last year. Meet in the Mill Square car park.

Malcolm Linfield

Bric-a-Brac Sale

The annual bric-a-brac sale outside Mulberry House will be taking place in the Spring.

(Date to be announced)

We would like to make an appeal for any contributions. These can be brought along to the next lecture meeting at the Old School on 8th March or you may contact Gina (01903 892210) to arrange collection.

WHY NOT JOIN THE FRIENDS AND HELP TO SUPPORT THE NEW MUSEUM?

The Friends of Storrington and District Museum have been established to promote, assist and support the Museum through fund raising and social activities. The subscription is £5 per annum for individuals or £7 for family members (which covers a household of two adults and their dependent children under the age of 18 years).

If you would like an application form, please contact our Membership Secretary, Jean Robinson, on 01903 743682.

Membership forms are also available in the Museum

**Deadline for copy for the next issue –
Good Friday, 13th April**