The photograph of the Entrance Hall of South Park gives us some idea of the magnificence of this building which is the subject of our latest publication: “Wadhurst’s Princely Mansion – South Park”. The house which eventually became the epicentre of Wadhurst College on Mayfield Lane was a supreme example of the elegance and extravagance of many a 19th century dwelling belonging to the seriously wealthy with taste. The many photographs in our book will help you realise what “extravagance” means! No expense had been spared by John Bruce and it contained much state-of-the art technology, of which the installation of electricity must have caused a considerable stir at a time when a single light bulb cost the same as the average weekly wage. Another source of wonder was Bruce’s extensive collection of art and statuary and this photograph does provide a certain amount of evidence of that. The white marble statue entitled Paul and Virginia was particularly admired as was the staircase with its ornamental carvings and its large stained-glass window.

www.wadhursthistorysociety.org
Meetings to come:

Talks begin at 8 pm and take place in the Commemoration Hall. Bar opens at 7.30.

Thurs. 8th April  So Far So Good (behind the scenes at Buckingham Palace)

Thurs. 7th May  Bayham Abbey

Sat. 30th May  Day trip by Coach to Chichester Flower Festival in the Cathedral

Thurs. 11th June  Women of the Raj

Sunday 28th June  3 pm: - VE/VJ Day Garden Party with Wadhurst Brass Band

Thurs. 9th July  The City of London – the Dark Side of the City.

SUMMER BREAK

MONTHLY TALKS:

NOVEMBER 2019:
Sussex Graves and Gravestones, by Kevin Gordon.

Kevin’s return to the society provided a fascinating evening. He explained the circular graveyards, such as at Berwick and Hellingly, by showing their pagan origins some 5,000 years ago. Their use over so many centuries means that often there are over 300 bodies reflected by every gravestone, and the height of the ground has increased considerably.

Plots to the south of the church were the most popular since they would be passed by people on their way to church and so receive more prayers. The clergy themselves, whose stones carry a cross, tended to be interred in the church itself as were the more distinguished gentry. Several churches, like Brightling and Selmeston, have memorial brasses.

Funerals took place normally the day after a death as bodies could not be kept cool. They were put in a winding cloth and on the day of the funeral the vicar would meet the coffin at the lychgate or tapsell gate prior to the service. Many afterwards were then tipped into the grave so that the parish coffin could be reused.

During the 19th century many graves were made more secure to prevent body-snatching for medical research. As well as the large stone family vaults, there were iron railings although much would be taken away in the 2nd World War for melting down for aircraft and munitions.

Kevin showed how gravestones can be very helpful for researching into family history, providing family details, sometimes occupations as with a blacksmith at East Dean or an apothecary at Ditchling, or someone’s hobby through the carving of a piano accordion, or the cause of death such as at Walberton where Charles Cook was killed by a falling tree and a girl was killed by a beer barrel rolling from a cart. The swing bridge which Thomas Tipper designed at Newhaven was reflected in a carving on his gravestone. The symbolism on gravestones was explained: angels, cherubs, a skull, an anchor, an hourglass or shaking hands showing a couple reunited in death. Some show a coffin lid opening, indicating a spirit released into heaven. Similarly he explained the significance of particular flowers, such as daffodils for deep regard and ivy for affection.

Graveyards have tended to be relocated out of town, partly because of their overcrowding, partly because of anxieties over their proximity to wells. They have also become more neglected as the population has become more mobile.

An intriguing evening which will teach those of us present to discover more of our local history as we look more carefully at the details of our churchyards.

David James
January 2020:

The Rye Lifeboat “Mary Stanford”
Disaster of 1928
by Hugh Willing

The New Year opened with a mesmerising account of the tragedy of 15th November 1928 when seventeen RNLI volunteers from Rye Harbour lost their lives. The events were all the more vivid through the accompanying slides of the bleak lifeboat station and its exposed coast, the photographs of the men and of their craft, the sombre gathering of people on Camber Sands and the mass grave at the Church of the Holy Spirit. Interspersed with these were some outstanding seascapes, albeit not of this particular storm, but showing waves at their most violent and challenging.

Hugh initially outlined the background to the event, describing how the lifeboat station had been built in 1882 and how many hands were needed to launch and recover the lifeboat over the expanse of shingle and, at low tide, sand. The “Mary Stanford” had been in use for sixteen years, requiring fourteen oarsmen, and with some sail, and was not a self-righting craft because its design was considered to be more appropriate for the conditions at Rye. During its twelve years of service it had received sixteen calls and saved ten lives. The men wore kapok life jackets, considered to be lighter than the previous cork.

The coast was well supervised in those pre-electronic communication days, with ten lookout stations between Dungeness and Hastings, to challenge opportunities for smuggling or invasion from France, and to be alert to busy Channel shipping.

We then heard of the developing storm conditions of 14th November. The “Alice” of Riga became involved in a collision and sent a distress signal. This eventually led to the launch of the rockets which called the men of Rye Harbour to cycle to the lifeboat station and to launch the “Mary Sanford” after pulling her across the shingle and sand. By 6.50 a.m. news arrived that the men from the “Alice” were safe, but in the stormy conditions the men on the “Mary Sanford” failed to pick up the signal to return.

That arrived just five minutes too late.

Later in the morning a boy on Camber Sands saw a boat being flipped over in the rough seas and ran to report it. Over a thousand people gathered, helpless as the breakers brought in the bodies and the craft itself. Fourteen were recovered by nightfall, one was found at Eastbourne three months later, and one was never recovered.

The funeral was held on 20th November and a mass grave and memorial established at the Church of the Holy Spirit. “We have done that which was our duty to do”. The Coroner concluded “Death by Accident”, but questions remained: whether the waterlogged kapok jackets played any role and, specially, why the “Mary Sanford” had chosen to take the dangerous route to the Rother across the sand bar.

In its tragedy and with so many harrowing “if onlys” it had been a totally intriguing evening.

David James

February 2020:

Florence Nightingale
by Major Paul Whittle

Florence Nightingale, venerated as the founder of modern nursing, was born on 12th May, 1820 and it was timely, therefore, to commemorate the 200 years since her birth with a presentation on her life and work. We were fortunate in securing the services of Paul Whittle who gave us an engrossing talk, giving us an insight into the achievements of a most remarkable woman who initiated revolutionary changes in healthcare and sanitation from which we all continue to benefit. His talk was considerably enriched by vivid descriptions of the historical events that formed the backdrop to her work.

Florence Nightingale was born into a wealthy, upper class and well-connected British family at the Villa Colombaia, in Florence and was named after the city of her birth. Her older sister Frances Parthenope had similarly been named after her place of birth, Parthenope, a Greek settlement in Naples. The family moved back to England in 1821 and Florence spent her childhood in the family’s homes at Embley in Hampshire and Lea Hurst in Derbyshire. Her father, a Cambridge graduate, personally oversaw her education and through him she acquired a wide range of knowledge encompassing mathematics, science, philosophy, literature and foreign languages. She became fluent in French, German, and Italian and had a good grasp of both Latin and classical Greek.

In February 1837, she underwent the first of several recurring experiences that she believed were calls from God telling her to devote her life to the service of others. When she announced to her parents that she felt “called” to become a nurse they were far from pleased because at that time nursing was held in very low esteem as a profession. It was frequently associated with low social status and even with prostitution, drunkenness and alcoholism. Sarah Gamp, the nurse grotesquely portrayed by Dickens in Martin Chuzzlewit, offers a striking (if somewhat extreme) example of those perceptions of the
profession. Although Florence was initially respectful of her family’s opposition to her vocation she was, nevertheless, a highly determined young woman and, during her twenties, while travelling widely, she worked hard to educate herself in the art and science of nursing. At the same time she rebelled against the expected role for a woman of her class and status to become a wife and mother. Although receiving many offers of marriage, she remained resolutely single believing that marriage would deflect her from her main purpose in life.

In 1850, she visited a Lutheran religious community at Kaiserswerth-am-Rhein in Germany, an institute devoted to the care of the sick and deprived. She regarded this experience as a turning point in her life and, for the first time, received some formal medical training. Three years later, at the age of 33, she acquired her first job as superintendent at the Institute for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in Upper Harley Street, London, a position she held until October 1854. By this time her father was reconciled to her choice of career and had given her an annuity of £500 (roughly £40,000 in today’s money) thus allowing her to live comfortably.

In October 1853, the Crimean War, a conflict between Russia and Britain, France and Turkey, broke out. In September 1854, the allies landed troops in Russian Crimea and began a year long siege of the fortress of Sevastopol. Very soon afterwards reports started to come back to Britain concerning the horrific conditions suffered by the troops and their casualties. Florence was acquainted with Sydney Herbert, the UK Secretary for War, and he gave her permission to travel to treat the wounded at a field hospital at Scutari. This was sited in Turkey across the Black Sea from Varna and 295 miles from Balaklava, where the main British camp was based. Florence took with her a staff of 38 women volunteer nurses whom she had trained and 15 Catholic nuns. On their arrival early in November, they found overworked medical staff trying to care for wounded soldiers with inadequate medical supplies and poor facilities for the preparation of food. Basic hygiene was grossly neglected resulting in mass infections and a very high mortality rate. Ten times more soldiers were dying from illnesses such as typhus, typhoid, cholera and dysentery than from battle wounds. Officialdom appeared indifferent and initially Florence was cold-shouldered by the military who shared the common low opinion of nurses.

Undaunted, Florence quickly deduced that poor sanitation was a major contributor to the high mortality rate and set about implementing strict hygiene rules. She also sent a plea to The Times for a government solution to the poor condition of the facilities, calling for a Sanitary Commission to improve the sewers and ventilation. As a result of her initiatives, the mortality rate was reduced from 43% in February 1855 to 2% by the June. The British Government also responded by commissioning Isambard Kingdom Brunel to design a prefabricated hospital that could be built in England and shipped to the Dardanelles. The result was Renkioi Hospital, a civilian facility that had a death rate less than one tenth of that at Scutari. To address the food issue, Alexis Soyer, a famous French chef, was sent to the Crimea to reorganise the provisioning of the army and its hospitals. He designed his own field stove, the Soyer Stove, and trained and installed in every regiment the “Regimental cook” so that soldiers would have an adequate meal and not suffer from malnutrition or die of food poisoning.

In addition to her efficiency and clear-thinking, Florence soon became appreciated for her compassion. She would check up on the wounded long after all the medical officers had retired for the night and even wrote letters home on behalf of dying soldiers. An 1855 report in The Times, which described her as a “ministering angel” making her solitary rounds “with a little lamp in her hand”, won her widespread fame as the benevolent “Lady with the Lamp” and transformed her into a Victorian icon. Paul pointed out, however, that the romantic image of her bearing what he called a “Wee Willie Winkie candle” on her rounds is false. He showed a slide of her real lamp which was far more robust and practical.

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Nurses’ Day”. No accolade is more richly deserved.

When the Indian Mutiny broke out in 1857, Florence offered her assistance immediately. Although her services on the ground were not required, she researched the sanitary condition of the army and civilians and her findings prompted the establishment of a Sanitary Department in the Indian government. Although she never visited India, she wrote extensively on the causes of famine and poverty, the need for irrigation and the improvement of village sanitation. In 1858 she presented powerful evidence to a Commission investigating the sanitary condition of the army. As a result, an army medical college was opened at Chatham in 1859 and the first military hospital was established in Woolwich in 1861. During the American Civil War (1861-65), both sides benefited from her advice, particularly in relation to the proper ventilation of their hospitals which were specially built in accordance with her theories. In addition she assisted the Union side in compiling soldier mortality statistics. Florence also used her considerable influence to bring about significant changes in Britain by supporting the establishment of numerous nursing societies, institutes and associations and, most notably, by successfully pushing for legislation to compel all extant buildings to connect with main drainage. This had a direct effect on extending Britain’s national life expectancy.

Florence Nightingale died in South Street, Park Lane, London, on 13th August 1910 at the age of 90 and was buried in the family plot at East Wellow, Hampshire, an offer of burial in Westminster Abbey having been refused. Memorial services took place in St. Paul’s Cathedral and Liverpool Cathedral. Three years before she died, she had been awarded the Order of Merit, the first woman to be so honoured.

Paul concluded his talk with a fascinating illustrated tour of sites in Britain and abroad associated with Florence’s life and work, explaining clearly also our contemporary history as regards Russia and its relationships with the countries of the Black Sea. Paul also drew particular attention to the range of commemorative plaques and statues to her. It was gratifying to learn how Florence Nightingale continues to be honoured one hundred and ten years after her death, not least by the celebration of her birthday around the world as “International Nurses’ Day”. No accolade is more richly deserved.

Arthur Dewar

As always – thank you to our reviewers, alongside our Bar tenders and those who set up the Hall.

FUND-RAISING!

We produce unique calendars, cards, postcards, pictures, notelets etc; we take part in jumble sales, organise garden parties or barbecues, and occasional suppers and are very grateful for your help with these. We have to arrange two major fund-raising events each year to keep going. Occasionally we are asked why we have to do so much fund-raising. Well, basically – to do all that I have mentioned above.
Your subscriptions cover the speakers, the hire of the Hall and the newsletters but we have to provide so much else.

- the rent for our accommodation in the Centre (£1500 per year, increasing annually)
- insurance and telephone costs – expensive because we are treated as a business – which we are not!
- furniture and storage facilities for often valuable items (Filing cabinets and drawers are rapidly filled. In the Centre, we started with four cabinets and four index card drawers, we now have sixteen cabinets and eight drawers which contain over 1,000 cards each)
- computers which have to be maintained and updated, and then replaced fairly quickly, printers, scanner, bookshelves and racking
- c £8,000 has to be available to underwrite the publication of every WHS book before a single copy is sold
- stationery and postage, photocopying costs, and underwriting the initial cost of goods for sale
- research costs
- occasional purchases of artefacts particularly relevant to Wadhurst.

So that, I hope, explains things. If you have any further questions, perhaps you can wait till the beginning of April and both Chairman and Treasurer could be available to answer them. (Well, HE will at least!)

It just leaves me to thank you most sincerely, meanwhile, for your continued support and encouragement.

With best wishes, 

*****

THE CENTRE continues to be busy and we are looking forward to meeting visiting friends from Australia in May and another group in June. They will no doubt enjoy a walking tour of Wadhurst, treading in their grandparents’ footsteps, so we shall hope for decent weather!

Thanks to a generous contribution, we are going to be able to update our computer technology and this should make working, and supporting research and administration a lot easier and much less frustrating.

We are really delighted with the responses we have received as regards our latest publication Wadhurst’s Princely Mansion: South Park’ with its stunning cover. It proved to be a difficult project but definitely well worth the effort. That will no doubt encourage us as we approach our next venture(s).

In the coming months we shall be commemorating the end of the second World War, always remembering that there were two dates involved – 8th May and 15th August, and so that is one reason why we are holding our Garden Party on Sunday, 28th June in between those two significant dates. It also means the Brass Band can once again make their popular and much-appreciated contribution to the proceedings.

~~~~~~~~~

Paul Eldridge handed in this article – very appropriately as this month we are welcoming a farming expert as our March Speaker.

This article covers the period when Darby’s Farm had been farmed by just two families – that of Leomard Sewell between 1919 and 1968 and Neville Gould from 1968 onwards. More than a century has been completed!

Len Sewell was born in 1891, one of a family of five sons and four daughters. He went to France in 1914 with his brothers and fought on the Somme in 1916. In 1917, he became ill due to fighting conditions and eventually was transferred from hospital to an army unit to learn agricultural skills.

He took on Darby’s and Walland Farms, part of the Whiligh Estate in 1919, but, because the house remained in occupation by the previous tenant, spent the first three years living in a tent which he found preferable to life in the trenches.

The farm was mixed, with a herd of about 20 cows and they also had pigs and sheep. Hops and cereals were grown for which he won many prizes in the inter-war period. Horses provided the motive power along with half a dozen men of varying abilities who were employed and housed in cottages tied to their jobs.

Additional income came from his being the National Farmers Union Secretary and he was well-known in the area through this.

In 1940, Len married Joyce Huntingford of Walland Oast and they had four daughters and a son who still continues the Wadhurst family farming tradition at Little Pell.

After the 2nd World War tractors took over and the workforce was reduced to two. Len died in 1967 and the tenancy was taken on by Neville Gould and his family.

~~~~~~~~~

You may remember at the AGM in December we discovered that the copy of the Annual Accounts had somehow been corrupted. You will be pleased though not surprised to know there was nothing at all wrong with the accounts themselves. For those who were not at the subsequent January Meeting when we issued a “proper” version, please find here the correct version and perhaps put a line through the version in Newsletter 44.
Wadhurst History Society  
Accounts to the 12 months ended 31st August 2019

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<th>Income</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
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| Deficit for the year                         | £-943.38 | £-921.10 |

Balance sheet

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| Net Assets                                  | £15,366.67 | £14,445.57 |

Notes

1. Stock:  
(i) Books are valued at cost less 75%. To compensate for two slow moving publications their value has been reduced by a further £1388
(ii) Wine is valued at cost.

2. Equipment:
(i) Items costing less than £500 are written off in the year of purchase.
(ii) Depreciation of items of £500 or more is 25% of the reducing balance.

3. Tabard Room Costs: Include rent, telephone and broadband access plus the purchase of small items.

4. Creditors Includes £500 donated to upgrade IT facilities.

Signed:  
Adam Smith (Treasurer)  
A. Willats ( Examiner)
From the Archives
Great Butts, Cousley Wood

A Place of Antiquity and Historical

In August 1961, it was reported to be reputed to be an old rest house for the monks, it being in the vicinity of Monks, Old Monks and Monks Park. This seems possible as these names may have been derived by this legend. It is understood that monks usually rested where yew trees were planted and it is observed there are lines of yew trees from Great Butts to Shoesmiths and consequent footpaths.

In September 1961, William Hobbs refers to the early-known names of Great Abbots – the 1795 map refers to Great and Little Butts, so the others must have been earlier.

In view of the above, it seems unlikely that the name refers to rifle butts.

In August 1963, at Miss C(ourthope)’s fete at Whiligh, some old maps were on view and one (undated but probably between 1600 and 1700) refers to Little Butts as Little Abbots, so the previous notes seem feasible.

BC/AM/1110

From the November 1924 edition of the Parish Magazine, the Traders who were advertising:

- BALDWIN & WATTS, Gentlemen’s and Juvenile Outfitters, High Street, Wadhurst (now CHAT) - ‘phone 35 and at Ticehurst. Strictly Moderate Charges made for “High-Grade Tailoring,” “Liveries, Breeches, etc.” Cutting by London Expert, Skilled Workmanship only. Ready-to-Wear Clothing, Hosiery, Shirts, etc., Hats and Caps, Boots and Shoes. Gloves, Handkerchiefs, Scarves, Ties, Collars, Slippers.
- Tel.67 W.A.LATTER late H. Deeprose Est. 1903 Fishmonger, Poulterer, Game Dealer, Fruiterer and Greengrocer. Fish Fresh daily. Families waited upon. Hotels, Boarding Houses, etc., a speciality. Proprietors invited to apply for terms.
- Telephone:104 D. GOODGER Fruiterer and Confectioner, High Street, Wadhurst Also FANCY DRAPER.
- E. GARDNER, Grocer & Draper, The Stores, High Street, Wadhurst - Telephone No. 18 HIGH CLASS GROCERIES and PROVISIONS AT LONDON STORE PRICES.
- Telephone No. 5 O. T. CORKE & SON, FAMILY GROCERS, GENERAL DRAPERS and FURNISHING WAREHOUSEMEN, ALE, PORTER, WINE and SPIRIT MERCHANT, St James’ Square, Wadhurst. The favour of your Orders and Recommendations respectfully solicited. Agents for “ACHILLE SERRE” Dyers and Cleaners.
- C. W. ASHBY, Horticultural and General Builder and Undertaker, Wadhurst Window Blinds of every description made and repaired. ESTIMATES FOR GENERAL REPAIRS.
- Telephone 31 P. SMITH 7 CO., Family Butchers, High Street, Wadhurst. Choice Dairy-fed Pork. Veal and Lamb in season. All meat sold by us is guaranteed of the finest quality
- F. BROOKS, Pastry Cook and Confectioner, Bride Cakes A Speciality, The Bakery, High Street, Wadhurst - All kinds of cakes to order. Hovis and Wholemeal Bread. TEAS A SPECIALITY. Families waited on daily.
- Established 1877, ARTHUR HOWARD, Tailor and Breeches Maker - Upper High Street, Wadhurst - Tailoring of every description. Suits Cleaned, Repaired and Pressed. Chauffeur’s Liveried, Dust Coats,
Gloves, &c. Scotch Tweeds for Sports Suits, &c, &c, Lowest Possible Prices.


- Tel.: Office 26, Station Wharf 27 Telegrams: “Cheesman, Wadhurst” Established over a century. CHEESMAN & NEWINGTON, LTD., Corn, Coal, Coke, Wool, Seed, Oil Cake and Manure Merchants Wharf: S.E. and C. Station, Wadhurst. WADHURST Corn and Coal Delivered by own Van
  Agents to the Royal Fire and Life Insurance Co.

My goodness, what a huge range of services and products were available in 1924.

Questions and Answers

You agreed with me about having a more interactive Newsletter and we have received questions but we do now need some answers and information. Please send them to the editor direct and they can be incorporated in the next Newsletter editions. The responses could well create discussion.

1. What are the origins of these local names? Are they named after people, events or what?
   - **Faircrouch** Lane
   - **Brinkers** Lane
   - **Cockmount** Lane
   - **Jonas** Lane/Drive

2. Washwell/Sheepwash Lane: When were the names changed and which came first? Why were they changed? Or.......... or is this just another legend?

3. The story goes that the village well used to be in the banking down Blacksmiths Lane past Little Pell Farm i.e. between the bend and Keepers Cottage. This was where all the villagers apparently had to get their fresh water. (Does this mean from Wadhurst “Town” and not Durgates, Best Beech etc.). Have you heard of this? Are there any photographs? Any stories?

4. Why are the Donkey Steps so called?

5. There were two pubs in the Town named “The Spotted Cow” and “The Vine” but where were they located?

6. The first School for the education of the poor, the credit for which lies with Vicar Robert Barlow Gardiner, was built in 1840. Where was it built? Have you any further information?

7. Where was the football club started?

8. Why is St James’ Square so called when the Church itself is dedicated to St Peter and St Paul?

Any crumbs of information or comments gratefully received. HVOW

R.S.V.P.

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Two events to look forward to:-

Chichester Cathedral Flower Festival

Saturday 30th May 2020

The WHS Coach will leave the Greyhound at 8.30 am. and will return to Wadhurst around 6.30 pm.

This is a wonderful opportunity to see what will undoubtedly be a stunning interpretation of this year’s theme:

REALMS OF GLORY

Chichester Cathedral Flower Festival, in 2010
More of Interest

We published this picture in our last edition but, though some people thought they recognised faces, we have received no actual names. Please could you help us inform future generations by letting the editor know any names and any further family and/or work details, giving a guide to where they are sitting.

Wadhurst Parish Church Harvest Supper on 8th October 1965 (or 1968?)

Titbits from the “Still-to-Be Archived” of the Bocking Collection:

MAPPLEHURST FARM: The 1875 map shows this approximating the Castle Park and probably included part of Wadhurst Farm and the Castle grounds. This was the name of the old house known as ‘Maplehurst’ which used to stand where Wadhurst Castle is now built. (cf. The Story of Wadhurst – by Wace).

MARKWICKS FARM: had been ‘Marquicks’ and the 1864 map shows ‘Great Wisketts’. There is also a legend about Hangman’s Wood and the excise man. There are stories about smugglers also. [We shall have to ask the current owners of Markwicks if they can fill us in on the gaps and perhaps write an article for a future Newsletter.]

And other varied news items have come to light also:

- **E D MAY:** In 1909 Mr May was the first Chemist at the newly built shop [where the present Chemist’s shop stands] on the site of former cottages adjoining the entrance to Austen’s sale yard, [later the Wadhurst Market ] which were demolished in 1888 when ‘Gobles’ formerly ‘Casterton and Boyes’ was built. [Now Jackie Martel].

- On the OS map of 1878, the following **MILLS** were shown:

  - Cousley Wood for corn
  - Riverhall for corn
  - Riseden for corn
  - Moosehall for corn
OLD DURGATES FARM: Was the old name by which Lomas Farm, Best Beech Hill, was known. [And now read its subsequent reincarnation history in our latest publication.]

PROSPECT HOUSE, PROSPECT PLACE or SUNNY HILL: now [probably in the 1870s] the house known as “The Lodge” below the Church. Lately it was in the occupation of the Misses Amy and Evelyn Watson, formerly of ‘Uplands’, now demolished to create the secondary school (in the 1960s).

DISCOLOURED WATER = A Letter from the Mid-Sussex Water Company – November 1964

It is four years since the company took over responsibility for the supply in your area. Two problems faced us. First priority has been given to ensuring that water is available in sufficient quantity. This programme is almost complete and in spite of nearly 3,500 additional consumers full supplies have been given every year.

The next problem to be solved is quality: the Directors are aware that the iron content of the water is too high. This part of Sussex was the cradle of the iron industry; moreover, the water naturally affects iron pipes. Years of iron deposit have accumulated in the mains, some of which are heavily encrusted. The larger supplies of water have stimulated the consumption and so water has travelled faster along the mains. This has aggravated the discoloration problem, stirring up the deposits and carrying them through consumers’ taps.

The first step was to improve treatment at the works to remove iron from the incoming water. This has been done. The next is to get rid of the deposits in the mains. They are now being regularly flushed out at night. A programme of scraping the mains by Specialist firms has begun: the aim is to scrape 10 to 15 miles of main a year. For a time after a main is scraped the iron nuisance may apparently be worse for the consumers supplied from it: then things should improve. In some cases more drastic action may be required. It will take some years to cover the whole area affected but during this time improvement should be progressive. In another district tackled previously the trouble has practically vanished.

This message is intended to tell you what we are doing about the trouble. It takes time and costs money but it is being done: in the meantime be assured that there is no danger to health. In any special difficulty please inform the District Office (Crowborough 3444) and the staff will do their best to help.

WADHURST’S NURSERY SCHOOL is now in sight, thanks to rapid progress within the past few months, Mrs E C Tincombe told the 3rd Annual General Meeting of the Wadhurst Nursery Centre. It is to be built in the grounds of the Wadhurst Primary School.

Mr (Eric) Thomason the architect who designed the project presented his plans for the school building, a brick-faced traditional type built on one level to accommodate up to 50 children – 25 in the morning and 25 in the afternoon sessions - at a total cost of between £4,600 and £5,000. There will be a qualified nursery teacher and assistant and the class will form part of the Primary School. Children who will be four years old and live in Wadhurst will be eligible for admission from September 1972, provided that their parents intend them to transfer from the nursery class to the Infant Department the following year. The whole of the cost is being borne by the Wadhurst Nursery Centre, formed in 1967 for the express purpose of providing qualified nursery education in the area, because under present government restrictions, authorities are not able to build nursery classes.

Wadhurst Nursery Centre which now has over 200 members was formed by a few mothers who were particularly concerned with the recommendations made by the Plowden Committee about nursery education. Since that time interest has grown in Wadhurst (and) they now have £4,500 in the bank which has been raised over the last four years from every sort of activity.

FIRE – BUT FIRM GIVES FULL SERVICE

Recovering from a fire which gutted a storage building about three months ago, Cheesman and Newington Ltd., an old-established firm of agricultural merchants of High Street, Wadhurst, is still giving a full service.

Mr Richard Griffin who runs the business with his father Donald Griffin said: “We have hired two barns from a local farmer and are using them for storage until we get a new store built”.

Another of the firm’s buildings, near the one destroyed, was undamaged, and, on the opposite side of the road it has a shop where business continues as usual.

A large part of the trade is the supply of seeds and animal feeds to farmers. The firm does a substantial business in cattle, pig and poultry feeds, and supplies large quantities of horse feed to stables, riding schools and private residents. A big stock of feeding stuffs and machinery for processing the feeds were lost in the fire, but there was no break in the firm’s service to customers.

“We came away from the fire at 3.30 am. and opened for business at 7.30 the same morning,” said Mr Griffin. “We are replacing machinery that was lost and are carrying a full range of everything we normally supply.”
Notes from the Editor.
The next Newsletter should appear in June/July. Please submit comments, ideas, information and articles for inclusion and also any questions that you may have. Also can we have some answers to the questions in this Newsletter. Such contributions should be sent to The Editor, Chequers, Stone Cross Road, Wadhurst TN5 6LR or e-mailed to handew@waitrose.com before Friday 22nd May 2020.

The Griffin family’s connection with the firm began over 70 years ago. “My grandfather, Fred Griffin, came to manage the business in 1908, when it was owned by the Corfe family.” said Mr Griffin.

BC/AM/1184

As many of you will be aware, the Wadhurst Twinning Association is celebrating this year the 20th Anniversary of the signing of our Charter in 2000. Jacques Dehut, the Chairman of the Aubers Twinning wrote an article for their History Society magazine about the special memorial garden which they have created in Aubers. Extracts have been translated below:

Battle Site Garden

The many foreign cemeteries in our region bear witness to the terrible carnage which was suffered here, and although the Battle of Aubers Ridge has been mentioned in our magazine, it is much better known by the English than the French.

Links were established between Aubers and Wadhurst. An exhibition helped us to better understand the facts, especially of the loss of 11,161 victims on that one day, 9th May 1915, including the 25 from Wadhurst. The majority of the dead have no known grave, their names are inscribed on the War Memorial of Le Touret-La Couture. As a result, links were created between the two history societies and led to the establishing of the Twinning.

Often, as they passed through the area, the English wanted to visit the memorial at Le Touret and to take part in remembrance events. The Aubers Twinning therefore thought it right to create a place specifically focused on that aspect of our history. A space was cleared, re-developed, given the name; Battle Site Garden and dedicated in the presence of representatives from both Twinning groups and the Wadhurst Brass Band on 9th May 2015.

The garden with its panels of information which overlook the actual field of battle illustrates all too well how a tranquil village became a field of devastation and how thousands of men lost their lives. It pays homage to all who crossed the Channel to defend Freedom, and through them to all the victims of that conflict. The garden includes a bench presented to Aubers by the Wadhurst Twinning Association and also a specially designed and commissioned stainless steel plaque by Bryan Bell, mounted on Sussex oak, showing the names of the men of Wadhurst who gave their lives at the Battle of Aubers Ridge.

Jacques Dehut

Publications: Besides all our other nine books:

Wadhurst’s Princely Mansion – South Park £12

All our publications are available at WHS meetings, from the Centre on Tuesday mornings, and from Barnett’s Bookshop. They make excellent gifts for current and former residents of Wadhurst.

Besides our various greetings cards, notelets and postcards, we now also have the following items for sale:

- Two new postcards: Sussex by the Sea and Celia Turner’s linocut of Wadhurst 50p each
- Notepads (25 pages) of paintings from a previous WHS calendar (very useful) £2.
- Mounted pictures of Wadhurst £4.

To see more of our archives, consult www.wadhursthistorysociety.org