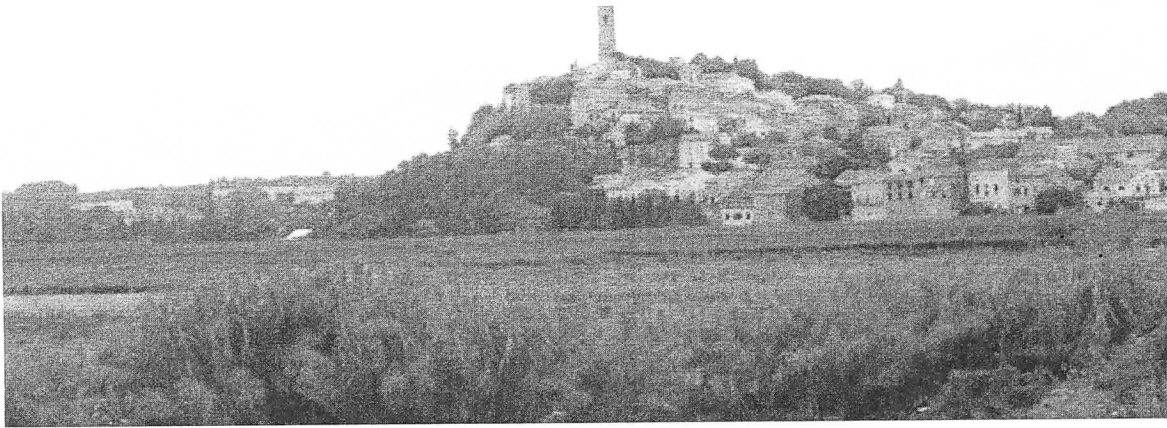




A view of the old monastery from local vineyards

The Green, Green Grass Of home!

The Chailey Reunion this year brought a special bonus, the journey down that took me through the East Sussex countryside. The lush spring grass, bluebells and cowslips together with the fresh green of recently leaved trees in sunshine gave the traveller a wonderful sense of well being – and it felt great! Truly, there is nothing that can better the Sussex countryside at this time of the year.

Compare that with L'Herault where I now live – hectares of vines in early leaf, mostly conifer type woods and copses with some deciduous trees, wild rocket, poppies, anchusa, borage and euphorbia, all growing in a dry, stony soil. What a comparison.

Gardening down here requires a completely different approach, not only due to the soil conditions but also the dry climate over the best part of the year. We do have rain but in short, heavy spells in January to March and hardly anything else for the rest of the year so planning is important. When we moved in the virgin garden was covered in weeds but from which we were able to select wild iris, viola, euphorbia and scabious to group in what eventually became the 'natural' part of our garden. Some of the weeds were unknown to us, so a few of the larger specimens were kept as feature plants. Our neighbours, who had expected us to create 'le jardin anglais', were at first horrified that we should encourage weeds though as time has gone by they have expressed approval of our approach, commenting on the success of the wild area. We have also planted traditional shrubs and bulbs but first a great deal of moisture retentive compost had to be dug in. And yes, we do suffer from snails who indulge on our lettuce – these we collect and dump elsewhere!

We are currently struggling to create a small area of lawn and it will be interesting to see how it pans out in such a dry climate.

The local wildlife is varied and beautiful with sightings of swallowtail, small brown, orange tip, red admiral and the occasional blue butterflies. The garden provides a home to preying mantis, Egyptian locusts and carpenter bees – and lots of lizards! Sparrows, swallows, swifts,

nightingales and redstarts are among the local inhabitants and, out in the countryside, we see buzzards, kestrels and choughs. The hills are full of wild thyme, broom, scrub oak and rampant with wild boar. Though rarely seen by walkers the local hunters do try to keep the numbers manageable.

We consider ourselves blest that we have such a varied type of wildlife just a short step away in the countryside. It is no better or worse than East Sussex, just so very different – and it is that difference which helps one appreciate each. I so look forward to next year's Reunion when I can again drift through Maresfield, Balcombe, Newick and all those other wonderfully named settlements to enjoy the beautiful Sussex countryside.

Peter Sedgwick

ALBERT EDWARD HARRISON

1937-2008

The news that Albert had lost his fight against cancer on October the 27th after many months of treatment saddened all who knew him.

As a young child Albert was struck down with polio, spending most of his early years in a Luton hospital, before arriving at Chailey Heritage in 1948. In the school itself his interest was in printing, among his out of school activities was Scouting, and Albert was a founder member of the school Troop, an activity he continued as an adult, becoming a Scout Leader in his local Troop.

Printing being the trade he had learnt at the Heritage he sought to follow this as a career; however this was not to be. Albert began his working life in a local garage, and so began a lifelong career in the motor trade, in which for many years Albert ran his own business.

Thinking of Albert's life in the context of Chailey Heritage, he will best be remembered for his work with the Old Scholars Association. Together with his close friend, the late Ian McGarry, he sought to make sure that the Association helped to keep the Old Scholars in regular contact with one another in the closing years of the twentieth century. One of the first things they did was to revive the magazine.

The constitution which had not been looked at since its inception in 1947 was in need of some revision. This work was difficult but was undertaken with enthusiasm. However, Albert will best be remembered by old scholars for his personal touch, not only by phone and e-mail, but by the many personal visits he made, travelling many miles up and down the country. On leaving the committee, Albert accepted an invitation to become one of the Association's vice presidents. It was not only in this country that Albert travelled - in the last few years he enjoyed visiting friends in Hungary.

As a young man Albert became a Christian, and his faith became a lifelong commitment to his Lord, to whom he bore witness for all to see in his daily life by friendship and concern for all with whom