

## FOREWORD

About thirty years ago I found in a second-hand bookshop a London Street Directory for 1871 (the year my mother was born) and at leisure moments in the months that followed I made a list of the addresses of people I should have been interested to meet if my life had begun a hundred years sooner than it did. It gave some kind of extension to time, to stand at the door of 62 Avenue Road and know that Gounod had come to the house after the first night of Faust, or to know that my second-cousin and the actor Macready both lived in Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park.

Since we can't yet take the Wellsian Time Machine into the future we can at least glance over the backward limit of our consciousness and get a glimpses of what has gone before. And for that we need a guide, and what better guide in Sussex than Bernard Smith? In 1936 my wife and I went to live in an old mill-house at Coleman's Hatch. We knew that not far away were the A.A. Milnes at Cotechford Farm. What we didn't know, until Bernard Smith told us, was that twenty-three years earlier W.B. Yeats and Ezra Pound had rented a cottage even nearer to where we were living. Every time we had driven to Forest Row we had passed the end of the lane which would have led us to Stone Cottage.

The pages of this book give us the sign-posts we need, and the essence of the lives of these men and women whose homes we may seek out. Some I know well already. Each time we have

gone into the chemist's shop in Midhurst we have dipped into the boyhood and apprenticeship of H.G.Wells. All the places<sup>names</sup> that Belloc mentions "in place of a prayer", we share with him now, and often take a look at Courthill Farm on our way to buy a pumpkin at Slindon, passing on our way William Hayley's house at Eartham. And the chapter of the book which gives me the sensation of belonging (as I do indeed almost belong) to time-past rather than time-present, is the essay on Andrew Young. At Christmas time in 1957 I stayed with Andrew and Janet at Stonegate Vicarage, read one of the lessons at the Carol Service, watched the village children acting a Nativity play (Andrew loved and was loved by children), and after supper listened while Andrew and the poet Christopher Hassall went through together line by line the recently written A Traveller in Time.

Then there are the book's surprises. Often enough, after visiting the snowdrops at Iping, we have admired Woolbeding House, but in our thoughts it was tenantless until Bernard Smith peopled it with Charlotte Smith and her family. And until now Mark Rutherford to me was a townsman of Bedford, as I was, and a pupil at the Modern School, as I was, though seventy-five years divides our schooldays. It was good to come across him again in Sussex. The wide county from east to west has been given a fresh reason for us to explore, to visit those

places so splendidly caught by the camera of Peter Haas, and in our minds to reinstate these Sussex dwellers into their old haunts.

Christopher Fry

East Dean.