

Short articles

Lower Palaeolithic surface finds from northern scarp of the Downs at Kithurst Hill, Near Storrington, West Sussex

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In the course of a review of recent Palaeolithic discoveries in Sussex, a small number of previously undocumented surface finds were brought to the attention of the author. Most noteworthy among these were two flint handaxes from the north scarp of the South Downs near Storrington, West Sussex. The handaxes were discovered during the late 1980s, on two separate occasions by George Layzell, the retired Head Keeper of the Knepp Castle Estate. The discovery of Palaeolithic surface finds became rare in the latter part of the 20th century, with only ten recorded in the county during the last 20 years. The artefacts are noteworthy for their unique location and a condition that suggests limited exposure since their discard in the Middle Pleistocene.

The first handaxe (Fig. 1a) is a cordate (Wymer 1968, type J e/v) with a lustrous, orcheous patina suggesting some weathering, and iron staining. There is some damage to the edge of the tool but, while the scar ridges are polished smooth they exhibit little or no abrasion. The artefact was found on the surface of the scarp slope of Kithurst Hill, Storrington (TQ 079127). The second handaxe (Fig. 1b) is an ovate (Wymer

1968, type K e/v). The tool has a slight lustre through weathering but the edges are still sharp and the scar ridges exhibit no abrasion. The tool has a green to honey-coloured patina and a distinctive pattern of dark concentric bands within the raw material. The tool was also found on the surface of the scarp slope to the west of the first find (TQ 070125). Both tools are finely worked across both faces and were manufactured, at least in the latter stages, by soft hammer reduction. Both tools would fall in Roe's 'ovate' group (Roe 1968).

Mr Layzell's finds are noteworthy for their context, being the first recorded finds from the scarp slope of the South Downs. The overwhelming majority of Palaeolithic finds in Sussex have been recovered from either the raised beach deposits of the Coastal Plain, at sites such as Boxgrove (Roberts & Parfitt 1999) and Slindon Park Pit (Calkin 1934), or from the ploughsoils of the Chalk plateaux. In addition a small number of finds have been recovered from river terrace deposits, notably those of the Arun and Rother (Garraway-Rice 1905) and, rarely, from surface contexts in the Weald (Woodcock 1981). While these are the first handaxes to be recovered from the scarp slope at Storrington, other Palaeolithic material has been found in the local area. These finds include two poorly provenanced, and unfortunately lost, Middle Palaeolithic artefacts recorded from 'Storrington Down' and the contextually unrelated material from the Arun terrace gravels at Storrington, Wiggonholt, and Parham (Garraway-Rice 1905; Grinsell 1929; Woodcock 1981).

The scarp slope implements are in a relatively fresh condition, especially compared with the heavily patinated and frost-damaged nature of finds from ploughsoils on the South Downs. The condition of the tools and their relative proximity may suggest that the handaxes had remained sealed within

colluvial deposits until they were exposed through weathering and soil movement during the Holocene. The 'embedding' of artefacts within plateau deposits of the chalk has been suggested as an explanation for apparently *in situ* Palaeolithic material recovered from Clay-with-flints deposits in Kent (Scott-Jackson 1994). At the site of Wood Hill, Scott-Jackson recovered handaxe thinning flakes and large quantities of small debitage clustered within a single 3 m × 1 m test pit, indicating an exceptional degree of preservation. There are, however, no mapped Clay-with-flints deposits capping the Downs above Storrington and the depositional history of the artefacts prior to recent exposure remains unclear.

While undoubtedly of less scientific value than finds from the controlled excavation of fine-grained sediments, Lower Palaeolithic artefacts from plough soils and colluvium still represent trace fossils of extinct hominid species and require documentation. The evidence for relatively well-preserved Palaeolithic sites from

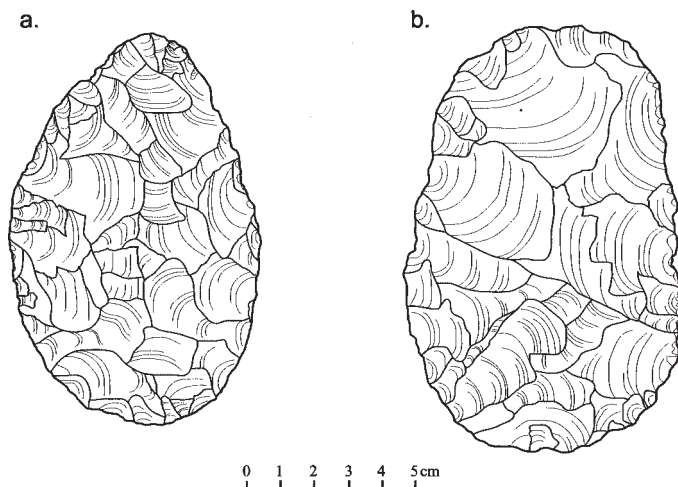


Fig. 1. Handaxes from Kithurst Hill: a) the cordate axe; b) the ovate axe.

the chalk plateaux of Kent offers the possibility that, with active prospection and the diligent mapping of such finds, similar localities might be revealed on the South Downs. It is hoped that this short note will encourage other collectors to report similar discoveries and reverse the decline of new Palaeolithic surface finds during the latter part of the last century.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank the finder George Layzell for reporting and allowing access to the finds, John Mills for bringing the finds to my attention and to Mark Roberts and Dr Andrew Woodcock for their advice and comments.

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Table 1. Hundred Acre Field, Moon's Farm: the flintwork.

Hundred Acre Field	Field-walking systematic finds*	Non-systematic finds*	Other finds*	Total
Hard hammer-struck flakes	158	117	20	295
Soft hammer-struck flakes	45	85	8	138
Hard hammer-struck blades	2	4	0	6
Soft hammer-struck blades	13	11	1	25
Bladelets	10	10	3	23
Axe-thinning flakes	2	4	0	6
Flake/blade fragments	48	50	9	107
Shattered pieces	9	9	0	18
Chips	1	1	0	2
Crested blades	1	3	0	4
Core tablets	2	2	1	5
Core rejuvenation flakes	3	2	0	5
One platform flake cores	6	18	0	24
Two platform flake cores	14	23	2	39
Three platform flake cores	2	6	1	9
One platform blade/bladelet cores	1	4	0	5
Two platform blade/bladelet cores	3	5	0	8
Discoidal core	0	1	0	1
End scrapers	14	6	1	21
Side scrapers	3	1	0	4
Piercers	3	1	1	5
Notched pieces	3	0	0	3
Serrated blade	1	0	0	1
Cutting flakes	1	1	0	2
Chisel arrowhead	0	1	0	1
Barbed and tanged arrowhead	1	0	0	1
Microoliths	2	0	0	2
Misc. retouched pieces	1	4	0	5
Ovate	1	0	0	1
Polished axe flake/fragments	1	0	1	2
Small tranchet axe	0	0	1	1
Tranchet axe sharpening flakes	0	0	2	2
Pick/axe fragments	0	1	0	1
Fabricator	0	1	0	1
Unidentified core tool	1	1	0	2
Hammerstones	1	4	0	5
Total	353	376	51	780

* Finds made in the vicinity of fieldwalking/immediate locality.

Mesolithic and later flintwork from Moon's Farm, Piltdown, East Sussex

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THE FIELDWORK

In October and November 1986, Robin Kenward, her extramural students and Robin Holgate, conducted a fieldwalking survey in Hundred Acre Field at Moon's Farm, Piltdown (TQ 445210) (Fig. 1a). A number of pieces of prehistoric flintwork had been recovered previously from the field by Robin and Denis Kenward.

The systematic fieldwalking was based on 20 metre

collection units on 20 metre transects oriented north–south in the southern section of the field (Fig. 1b) and most of the prehistoric flintwork was recovered from the river terrace along the southern edge of that part of the field. Other flintwork was recovered subsequently from the field, in an unsystematic fashion, and further artefacts were found in the vicinity, especially along the footpath route between Sharpsbridge and Barkham Manor. A full record of these locations is contained in the archive, deposited at Barbican House Museum, Lewes.

THE RESULTS

A small amount of medieval and post-medieval pottery was found during the fieldwalking exercise but the majority of the artefacts recovered were prehistoric flintwork (Table 1). The flintwork assemblage comprises 780 pieces. Some 353 were found by the systematic field-walking exercise, 376 were collected at other times from the Hundred Acre Field and the remainder were found in the immediate locality. Most of the collective assemblage is debitage and 38.2% of the 487 flakes,

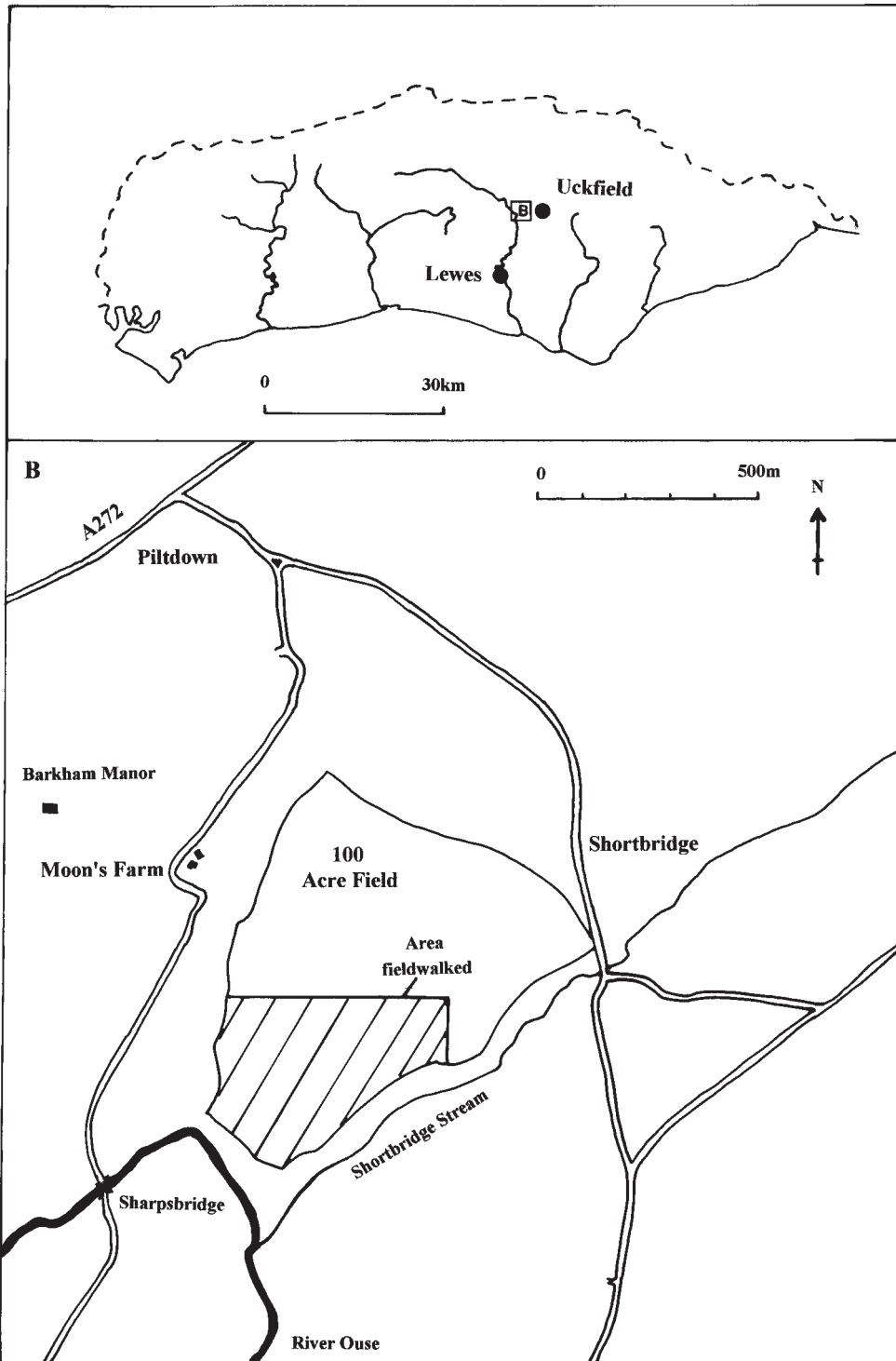


Fig. 1. The location of Moon's Farm and the Hundred Acre Field.

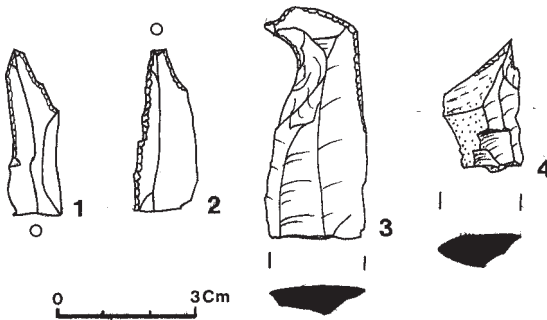


Fig. 2. Examples of Mesolithic flintwork from Moon's farm: 1 & 2) microliths; 3) miscellaneous retouched piece; 4) piercer.

blades and bladelets are soft-hammer-struck. A total of 86 cores make up 11% of the assemblage and the 60 implements make up 7.6% of the total.

A significant proportion of the assemblage can be identified as dating to the Mesolithic period (335 pieces, comprising 42.9%). These include hard- and soft-hammer-struck blades and flakes with evidence for platform preparation on the remaining platform, and soft-hammer-struck bladelets. The cores include both flake and blade/bladelet cores with prepared platforms, together with distinctive Mesolithic crested blades, core tablets and core rejuvenation flakes.

The Mesolithic implements include end scrapers, piercers (e.g. Fig. 2:4), a serrated blade, a miscellaneous retouched piece (Fig. 2:3) and two microliths. One of the microliths is an example of the blunted-down-one-side variety (Fig. 2:2) and the other is an isosceles triangle (Fig. 2:1). Both of these can be dated to the earlier Mesolithic period. A small tranchet axe was found to the north-west of the Hundred Acre Field and two tranchet axe sharpening flakes can be identified amongst the axe-thinning flakes assemblage.

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age flintwork was also recovered by the fieldwalking exercise, including hard-hammer-struck debitage, two polished axe fragments, an ovate, a chisel arrowhead, a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead and other implements.

DISCUSSION

This assemblage of Mesolithic flintwork, taken with other finds from the immediate area (Wymer 1977, 309; Tebbutt 1978, 403) implies that the locale was exploited by hunter-gatherer groups. The concentration of material on the river terrace, the availability of rock shelters within 2 km (Drewett *et al.* 1988, 15) and the adjacent riverine resources suggest that this was a preferred location. Flint obtained either locally or from the South Downs was being worked to produce utility implements such as scrapers, piercers and cutting pieces. Two microliths were found, together with bladelets and bladelet cores but there is no direct evidence (e.g. in the form of microburins and bladelet segments) for the manufacturing of microliths on this site. Mr House of Fletchling found two tranchet axes at the north-east end of the field and the finds of tranchet-axe-sharpening flakes and the small tranchet axe during this work suggest that tranchet axes were being used and re-sharpened

here.

Palynological work undertaken at Sharpsbridge (Fig. 1) suggested that 'the vegetation cover may have been locally removed or significantly disturbed by Mesolithic man' (Scaife & Burrin 1983). That hypothesis is borne out by this survey in that the flintwork recovered demonstrates activity by Mesolithic hunter-gatherer groups in the vicinity and the evidence for the local use of tranchet axes does suggest that localized clearance of the vegetation cover was taking place.

Later prehistoric activity is evidenced by several artefacts (see above and Table 1) and there have been a number of other finds in the vicinity, including a polished axe found by Mr House (near Old Farm, Piltdown) and a chisel and a fabricator. Furthermore, water-pipeline-laying in 1976–77 uncovered a concentration of flintwork at the northern end of the field (Tebbutt 1978, 403).

During the laying of the water pipeline, the probable site of a Roman bloomery was also identified toward the northern end of the field (Tebbutt 1978, 403) and, although this fell outside the area fieldwalked in the systematic exercise, some pieces of glassy slag were found and adjacent patches of yellow and reddish soil containing pieces of slag and kiln-type material were noted on the western edge of the field. A single sherd of a Roman sandy orange-coloured fabric was found toward the northern end of the field.

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A Neolithic polished axe from Barcombe

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A polished flint axe with faceted sides (Fig. 1) was found by Harold Stroude during potato harvesting south of Barcombe (at TQ 419138), near to a stream which drains into the River Ouse.

The axe is 140 mm long, 60 mm wide and 28 mm thick (at its maximum) and it weighs 310 g. It has been extensively polished over its entire surface, causing faceting of the edges and working into some of the shallow flaking scars. The surface has attained a grey patination with some iron staining but the piece is otherwise in a fairly fresh condition. It is produced from flint, probably mined from the South Downs. The cutting

end is damaged and some of that damage appears to be connected with its original use. The largest damage scar is more recent and was probably caused by a plough. There is no evidence of hafting, although this may have been removed when the proximal end was broken off in antiquity.

There are no local finds of Neolithic date or of flintwork of any date recorded on the East Sussex Sites and Monuments Record. However, recent fieldwalking at Hamsey and Barcombe has produced a background scatter of prehistoric flintwork of which part is Mesolithic but part is likely to be Neolithic in date. Some seven kilometres upstream, at Sharpsbridge, a polished axe, polished axe fragments, a chisel and other examples of Neolithic flintwork have been found (Butler 2000). These finds are all within a short distance of the River Ouse, suggesting that some land clearance may have taken place in the river valley during the Neolithic period.

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I would like to thank Harold Stroude for allowing me to report this find and Claire Goodey for illustrating it.

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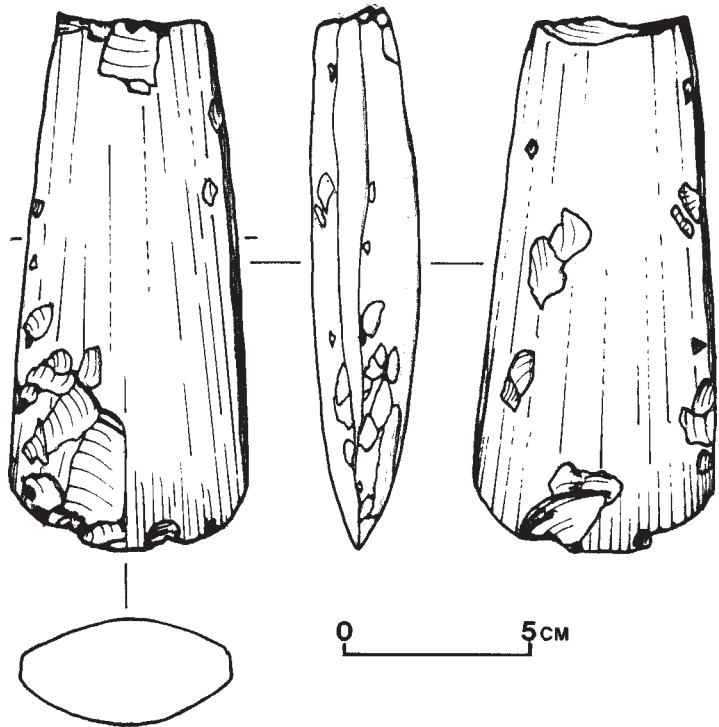


Fig. 1. The Neolithic polished axe from Barcombe.

New evidence for Saxo-Norman settlement at Chantry Green House, Steyning, West Sussex, 1989

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with contributions from
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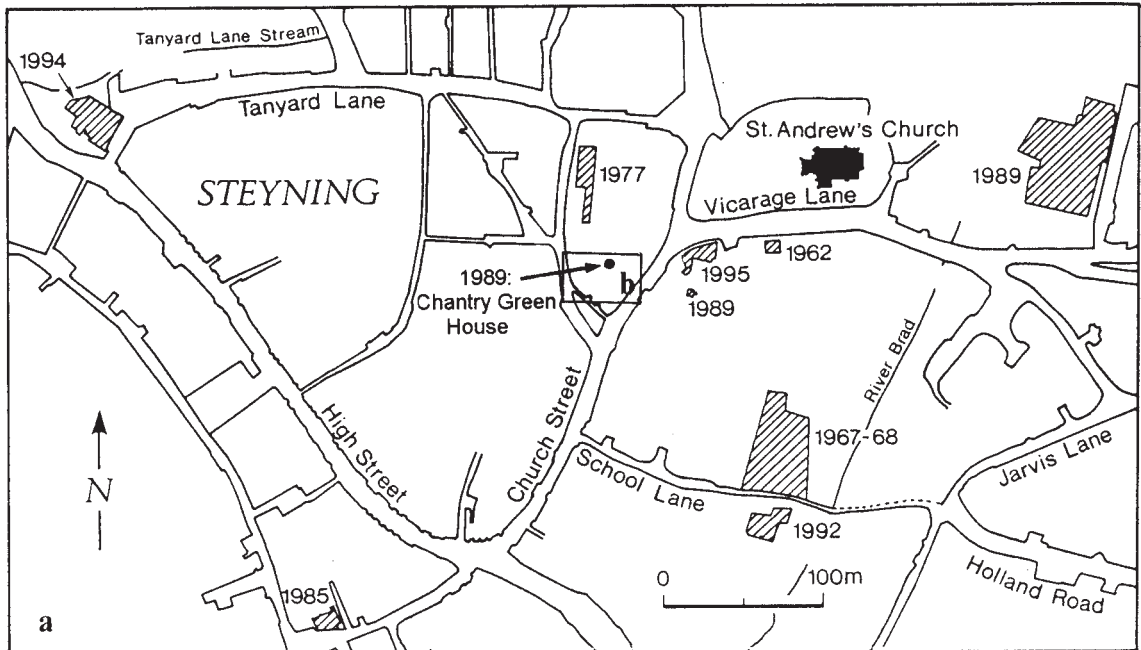
In February 1989 part of a masonry wall was uncovered during landscaping work behind Chantry Green House, Steyning (TQ 17751135). Concrete had already been laid in some of the foundation trenches but, after seeking advice, the owner decided to delay the remainder of the work and invited the author to excavate and record those areas still available.

THE EXCAVATION

Narrow foundation trenches had been cut by a mini-excavator

on two sides of the lawn and, apart from a small area (2.6 m × 1.8 m), had been filled and covered with concrete. Sherds on the spoil heaps indicated that two or more features were present below the concrete and to the south-east (towards Church Street) a concentration of sherds on the spoil heap over an area of approximately 2.5 m suggested that a large feature had been broached. Within the open area ground levels had been considerably reduced during exposure of the masonry wall. The wall, which stood to a height of up to 0.90 m, ran north-west/south-east through the trench with a right-angled return (Fig. 2) and was built of chalk-rubble and mortar. The long side was not continuous and had been robbed-out or partly demolished. The area behind the masonry wall was loosely filled with large greensand fragments and some pockets of humic topsoil.

In the remaining exposed area of the trench parts of three pits were defined in plan. Possibly one-eighth of the total circumference of Pit 2, at the south-western side of the trench, was within the limit of excavation but had been removed down to the basal fill, a firm, mid-brown, silty clay containing Saxo-Norman pottery and animal bone (Context 3). Context 3 and Context 15 (a layer of orange clay which partly sealed it) were both cut by the masonry wall. Layers above Context 15, visible only in the trench section (Fig. 3, Section 3), appeared to be demolition material containing brick, tile and mortar and were also cut by the wall. It is considered likely that these less compact demolition layers are fills of a later feature which cuts pit 2 but, because natural levels had been severely truncated on this side of the trench, no evidence for this could be seen in plan. Pit 4, up to a third of which may have been



within the limit of excavation, was filled with dark, silty clay (context 5) containing Saxo-Norman pottery, animal bone and charcoal fragments. Context 6, thought to be the primary fill, was similar to context 5 although darker and with more charcoal visible. The boundary between these two contexts was notional, especially at depth where visibility was poor. Both fills contained lenses of re-deposited natural orange clay, possibly thrown in to seal layers during a gradual filling process. Access to pit 4 was limited and became increasingly difficult. In an attempt to test the depth, excavation of the pit continued to the north-western end of the trench, approached by a ramp. It proved impossible (at 1.5 m) to reach the bottom of the feature, making it deeper than similar straight-sided or partially straight-sided rubbish pits of this date found at Market Field (Gardiner 1993, fig. 12). Pit 9 could be seen in plan but its fills, visible only in the trench section, had been removed (Fig. 3, Section 2). Relationships were unclear due to machining and concreting but it seems likely that context 7, some of which remained, is part of pit 4 and a continuation of context 6. The main fill of pit 9 (context 10) contained brick and tile. Ground level on this north-eastern side of the trench had been previously reduced to make a tennis lawn and pit 9 may originally have been more substantial.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE by Janet Pennington

Chantry Green House, presumably the former residence of Steyning's chantry priests, comprises an early 16th-century

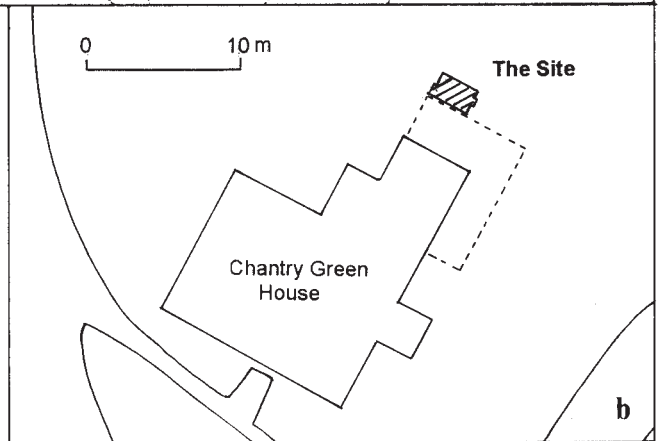


Fig. 1. a) Location of excavations in Steyning (after Gardiner & Greatorex 1997). b) Location of the site in relation to Chantry Green House.

timber-framed east range with an extra bay added on the west in the early 18th century when the brick south facade was built. The original axis of the house was parallel to Church Street onto which the front door then opened.¹ It now presents its attractive secondary frontage to Chantry Green where, on 23rd July 1555 the death of John Launder from Godstone, Surrey, one of the many Protestant martyrs burnt during Queen Mary's reign, took place.²

Most English chantries were small-scale, sharing busy altars at the local church, and many towns had more than one. The priest would have assisted the vicar and often acted as schoolmaster as part of his duties. The chantry institutions

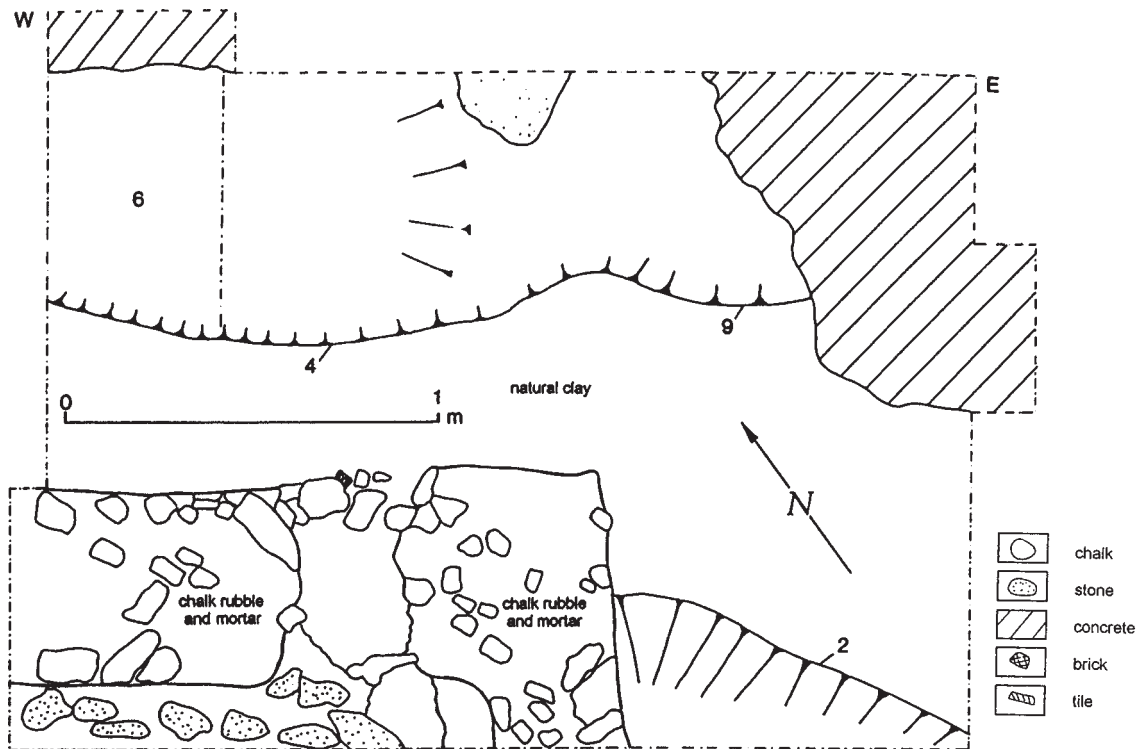


Fig. 2. Chantry Green House 1989. Plan of excavation.

were frequently well-endowed and that of Steyning was no exception. By 1548, as well as Chantry Green House, there were other properties, lands and growing timber in and around the town. The Chantry Act gained the royal assent on Christmas Eve 1547 under Edward VI's first parliament. The dissolution process began on Easter Day, 1st April 1548 and Chantry Green House was just one of the numerous properties confiscated by the Crown. It was then referred to as a tenement with appurtenances '... lying in Steyning called the Chauntereye howse in tenure of Owen Hardwey ...' who paid an annual rental of 8s. 4d. for it.³

A chantry of St Mary in Steyning was in existence by the end of the 13th century and a chantry had existed, at the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St Andrew's Church, there prior to 1406, though this would not necessarily have meant that a house was also provided.⁴ A chantry was founded in 1417 by John Norton in discharge of a debt owed to him by ten Steyning men.⁵ Chantry Green House was, however, built at a later date than this. G. H. Recknell, who purchased the house in 1944, published a short paper in 1957 saying that it was '... most unlikely to be earlier than 1500; and it is almost impossible for it to be later than about 1525 ...'.⁶ Architectural analysis supports an approximate early 16th-century date for the first build,⁷ though Freke has quoted an incorrect interpretation of Recknell's dating by the Lacey in 1974 and written 'Chantry Green House ... was built in 1525' as if this was fact.⁸ There is no physical evidence for an earlier house on the site, but a map traced in 1792 by solicitor Thomas

Medwin, town clerk of Steyning from 1786–95, indicates that Chantry Green House was an 'old Boro' house ... and therefore entitled to a parliamentary vote, due to being 'built on old foundations'.⁹

From the Crown the house passed to other owners, including the dukes of Norfolk and the Goring family of Wiston and the tenancy often changed hands.¹⁰ In 1615 Thomas Taylor bequeathed it to his son Richard who on his death in 1668 had a lease worth £120 'for divers years yet to come'.¹¹ It was described as a house, garden, orchard, little croft, stable and coach house in 1718 when it was conveyed for £210 to Thomas Dennett Esq. of Woodmancote Place near Henfield, who leased it to John Green.¹² Recknell gives a building date of 1705 for the early 18th-century range, but it could be that Dennett, who was appointed High Sheriff of Sussex in 1719, spent money on the house c. 1720.¹³ In 1762 Bysshe Shelley, lawyer and grandfather of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, was the lessor.¹⁴

THE FINDS

POTTERY By Keith Oliver

Excavation and surface collection recovered a small assemblage of 254 sherds, weighing 2.682 kg, comprising mainly Saxo-Norman pottery but also including some later wares. The majority of this assemblage, 55.6% by weight, comes from Context 1, an unstratified surface collection, thus providing no information about the features. The other 44.4% from

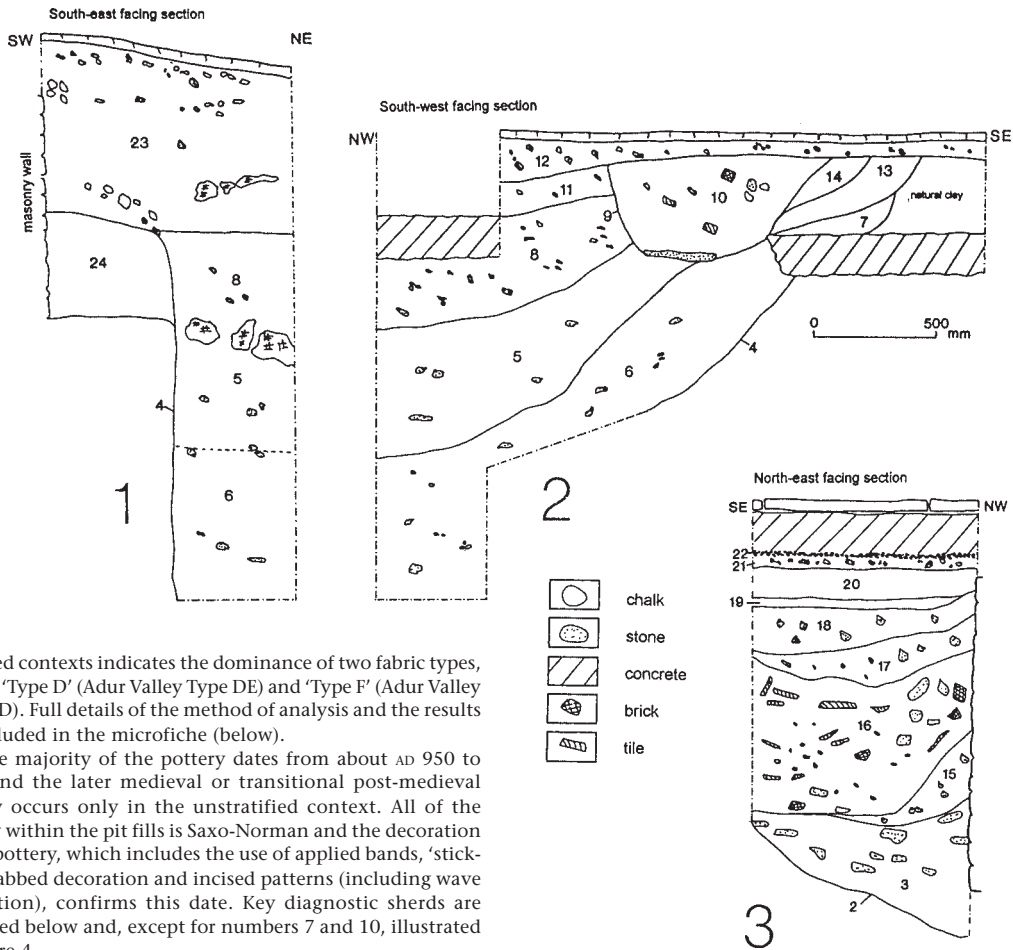


Fig. 3. Chantry Green House 1989. Section drawings.

stratified contexts indicates the dominance of two fabric types, termed 'Type D' (Adur Valley Type DE) and 'Type F' (Adur Valley Type DD). Full details of the method of analysis and the results are included in the microfiche (below).

The majority of the pottery dates from about AD 950 to 1150 and the later medieval or transitional post-medieval pottery occurs only in the unstratified context. All of the pottery within the pit fills is Saxo-Norman and the decoration of the pottery, which includes the use of applied bands, 'stick-end' stabbed decoration and incised patterns (including wave decoration), confirms this date. Key diagnostic sherds are described below and, except for numbers 7 and 10, illustrated in Figure 4.

1. A rim sherd of a bowl recovered from the unstratified Context 1. It is identified as a bowl due to the shallow nature of its side as well as its large diameter. On the upward-facing surface of the rim a double band of incised wave decoration can be seen while on the inner surface of the lower parts of the sherd glaze occurs but only as sporadic spots. This suggests that the glaze was only intended to cover the base of the vessel.
2. Rim sherd of a storage jar again found in Context 1.
3. Rim sherd of a large storage jar or small cooking pot found in Context 1. It has an added rim which over-hangs the top of the vessel on both the inner and outer surfaces.
4. Rim sherd of a hand-made bowl from Context 1. A deep groove marks the conjunction of the rim with the body, while on the upper face of the rim stabbed decoration occurs. The ornamentation has been stabbed by a two-pronged instrument which was dragged, creating a hoof-like decoration. The impressions are randomly spaced.
5. Two sherds from the same vessel, a jug, one a simple rim

sherd and one a rim sherd with a handle, found in two different Contexts, 5 and 6 respectively. Decoration on the neck takes the form of two ridges worked in the throwing of the pot and an incised wave decoration occurring where the neck adjoins the body of the jug. The handle has thumb-impressed decoration down both sides of its outer face.

6. Two adjoining rim sherds of a cooking pot from Context 6, a hand-made vessel with a wheel-thrown rim and an applied band of thumb-impressed decoration located below the rim. Another sherd is likely to belong to the same vessel, its heavily sooted base indicating its use.

7. (Not drawn) Eleven adjoining sherds from the side and base of a cooking pot, found in Context 1. These sherds show no sign of sooting and therefore no sign of use and may have been used for storage. Alternatively the vessel may have been broken soon after firing and before it could be used.

8. A rim sherd from a small storage jar from Context 1. It has

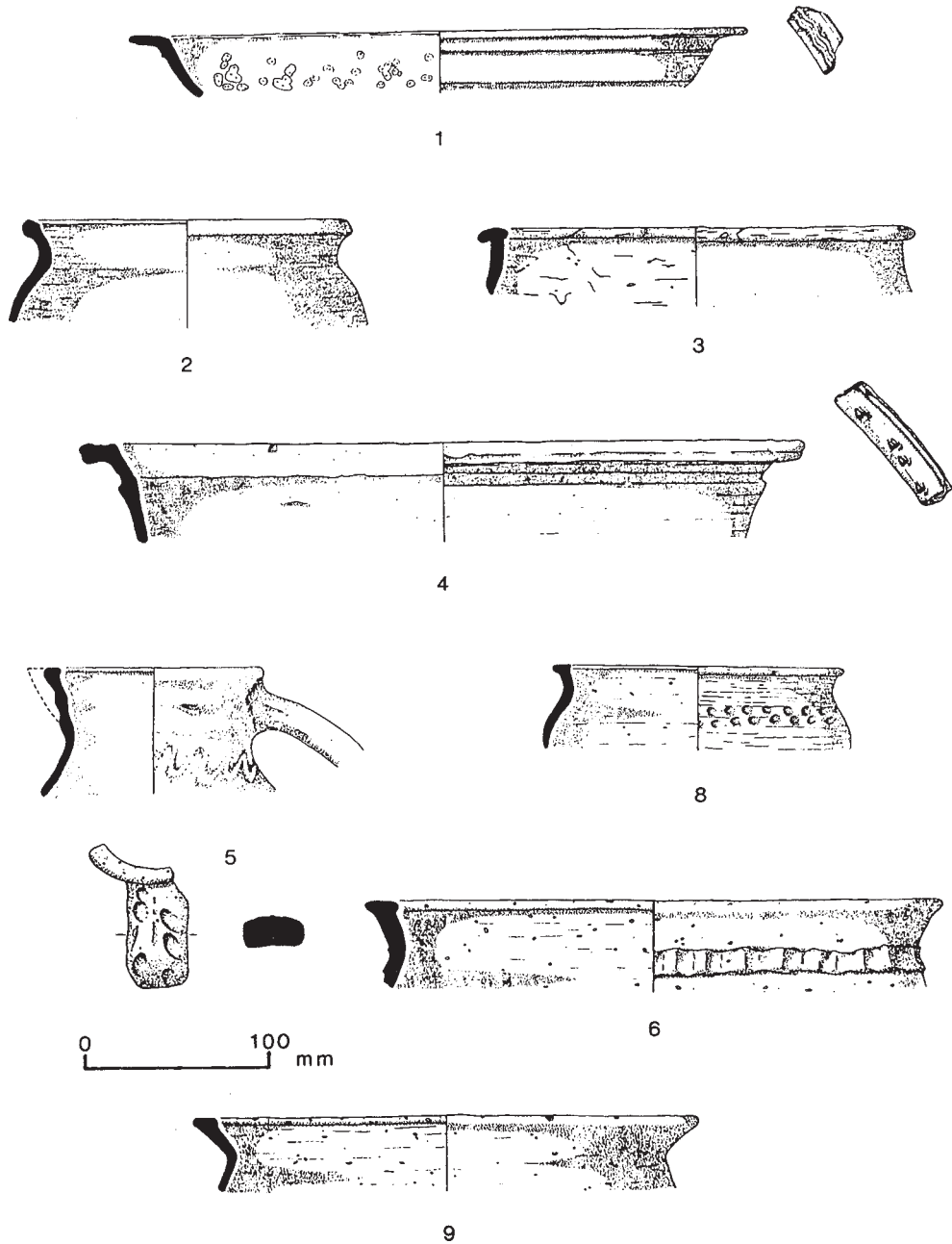


Fig. 4. Chantry Green House 1989. Pottery illustrations.

a double row of stabbed circular 'stick-end' decoration around the top of the body.

9. Two rim sherds, one with an adjoining body sherd, of a large storage jar from two different contexts, 5 and 6. The lip

of the vessel is quite prominent and the rim protrudes slightly into the vessel.

10. (Not drawn) Base sherd of a chimney pot, very coarse and poorly finished.

ANIMAL BONE By Lucy Kirk

A total of 104 bone fragments were recovered from the excavation, from four separate contexts (1, 3, 5 & 7). Of the total assemblage, 65% were identifiable to bone type and species and the full analysis is included in the microfiche (below). The presence of the bones within the pit fill contexts (3, 5 & 7) suggests that the pits were used for clearing or discarding domestic refuse from the main occupation areas.

GEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

A fragment of imported lava stone, probably Niedermendig, was found in Context 5. One surface appears to be been roughly worked suggesting it is part of a quern.

DISCUSSION

The small excavation at Chantry Green House has provided useful information and confirms the view that the focus of the early town was south and west of the church. Excavated contexts produced Saxo-Norman pottery dating from the late 10th to the middle of the 12th century and it is noticeable that even the collection of unstratified pottery contained only five sherds of a later date. This suggests that in the immediate area many features may remain below ground, and since 1989 this has been borne out by frequent finds of Saxo-Norman pottery by the owners. No evidence for Saxo-Norman structures was found during the investigations but the existence of pits is a good indicator of settlement and Gardiner (1993, 38), points out that groups of pits are often found close to houses. Butchered bones from pit fills and a fragment of imported lava, probably from a quernstone, reinforce this view. Two fragments of daub may also suggest structures nearby.

Early material has been found at Chantry Cottages north-east of Chantry Green House (Evans 1986) and Freke's excavation in Tanyard Lane (1979), just north-west of the site, identified two Saxo-Norman pits. Freke found evidence for ironworking and considered the possibility of an industrial zone within the town. This block of land, close to the main east/west through road and near the original market place, would have been eminently suitable for the purpose. This model is reinforced by the discovery of a pottery waster among the Chantry Green House assemblage suggesting undiscovered kilns in the vicinity. The waster, part of a green-glazed spout, is of interest as it is earlier in date and of a different fabric from wasters excavated at the western end of Tanyard Lane (Gardiner & Greatorex 1997).

A considerable amount of excavation has taken place on the south-eastern side of Church Street (Barton 1986; Gardiner & Greatorex 1997; Reynolds 1992) but, apart from Freke's work at Tanyard Lane (1979), little is known of the area immediately to the north-west. The material at Chantry Green House indicates the potential of this part of the town and may suggest limited settlement and small-scale potteries fronting Church Street, perhaps continuing up Chantry Lane towards industrial works at Freke's Tanyard Lane site. Gardiner (pers. comm.) has suggested that Steyning is in many ways similar to Ringmer: both were minor market towns with well-established pottery industries exploiting the local clays. It seems likely that future work in Steyning will locate more evidence for kilns north of Church Street.

The masonry, which created the initial interest in this site, has proved difficult to date. It clearly cuts demolition layers

containing brick which precludes it from being part of a house built for the chantry of 1417 (*see above*, Documentary Evidence). It is possible that a late 15th-century house existed, demolished to make way for the early 16th-century house, which may account for the late 18th-century opinion that the house was 'built on old foundations'. It seems unlikely, however, that brick, only just accepted in the south of England at that time for large prestige buildings, would have been used for a comparatively modest dwelling. The masonry, presumably chalk footings for a wall and set approximately 400 mm into the clay, is up to 500 mm wide and is perhaps too substantial for foundations of an outbuilding. The only secure evidence for dating the wall is that it must post-date a pit containing brick debris, either generated when the present house was enlarged in the early 18th century or from a postulated earlier building. As the area at the back of the wall was loosely compacted and had been infiltrated by pockets of humic topsoil it seems probable that the upper courses had been demolished comparatively recently.

Acknowledgements

The owners, Jane McNeil and Roger Forrow, and the gardener, Jack Grant-White, are to be congratulated on their prompt and appropriate response when the material was first discovered. I am grateful to them for acting on the recommendation of the late Hilda Holden and Janet Pennington that I be invited to carry out the work. My thanks to Nick Landon who assisted throughout the excavation and to all specialists who provided reports. David Rudling kindly gave permission for Lucy Kirk to prepare the bone report. Keith Oliver is grateful for Mark Gardiner's advice on the pottery. Pottery illustrations are by Keith Oliver. The owners have generously donated the finds to Steyning Museum where they will be deposited with the archive.

NOTES

- 1 T. P. Hudson (ed.), *Victoria County History, Sussex*, vol. 6, part 1, (1980), 223.
- 2 E. W. Cox & F. Duke, *In and Around Steyning: a Historical Survey made in 1953* (1954, Steyning), 9–10.
- 3 P. Cunich, 'The dissolution of the chantries', in P. Collinson & J. Craig (eds.), *The Reformation in English Towns 1500–1640* (1998), 159–63; M. H. Bloxham, 'Notes on places visited at the Annual Meeting, 14th August, 1863. 'The Churches', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter SAC) **16**, (1864), 238–9.
- 4 Hudson, 242.
- 5 G. H. Recknell, *Chantry Green House, Steyning, Sussex*. (October 1957). Recknell does not quote any documentary sources for his four page paper and many of his statements are incorrect; it was written over 40 years ago.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 H. M. Lacey & U. E. Lacey, *The Timber-Framed Buildings of Steyning*, (Worthing, 1974), 141–3. The owner has documentary evidence that the original building was in 1525 followed by extension etc. in 1705. Our findings on purely structural evidence support these dates. The 'documentary evidence' is presumably Recknell's paper.
- 8 D. J. Freke, 'Excavations in Tanyard Lane, Steyning, 1977', SAC **117** (1979), 139.
- 9 S. Fraser, *Controverted Elections*, vol. 2, (1793), fronting p. 251. N. B. Duke & Cox (1954), between pp. 1–2, has a re-

traced copy of this map from which the site of Chantry Green House has been omitted in error.

- ¹⁰ Arundel Castle Archives, MD 1394.
¹¹ West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO), Wiston Ms. 6402.
¹² WSRO, Wiston Ms. 2484.
¹³ J. F. Huxford, *Arms of Sussex Families* (Chichester, 1982), 244.
¹⁴ *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 31 May 1762.

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Reynolds, A. J. 1992. Excavations at Steyning New Museum, Church Street, Steyning, West Sussex 1989, SAC **130**, 60–68.

NOTES

The valuation is high for a book of the early 16th century. Brought to his attention, Dr Blair felt it may have been a relic, possibly a lavishly illuminated copy of the *Life*. The churchwardens may have thought it a personal possession of Cuthman's. Dr Blair thought it another interesting piece of evidence for the revived interest in Anglo-Saxon saints' cults in the late medieval period.⁴

- ¹ J. Blair, 1997. Saint Cuthman, Steyning and Bosham, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **135**, 173–92.
² West Sussex Record Office, Par.11/9/1, f.5. I am grateful to John Townsend of Partridge Green for drawing this entry to my attention.
³ T. P. Hudson (ed.), *A History of the County of Sussex*, **6**, part 1 (1980), 241; part 2 (1986), 81–2. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
⁴ Personal communication from Dr Blair.

Three Lewes martyrs of 1557

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Work has been done in recent years to set the Marian martyrdoms of Sussex in their social and religious context,¹ but little is known about the local backgrounds of most of the individuals concerned. This account seeks to record a little more about the lives of three of those who were burned at the stake in Lewes on 22 June 1557, and whose names are recorded on the obelisk above the town: Alexander Hosmer of Rotherfield, and Margery and James Morris of Heathfield.

ALEXANDER HOSMER OF ROTHERFIELD

Catherine Pullein conducted some very thorough research, published in 1928,² into the identity of Alexander Hosmer, who in the 16th-century accounts was described as servant to William Maynard of Mayfield (another of the martyrs). She quoted from John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1562), better known as the *Book of Martyrs*, and from other contemporary sources, and used the Rotherfield manor court book 1556–60 to show that Alexander belonged to Rotherfield, where he was admitted on 6 December 1556 to the customary estate of his late father Richard Hosmer. This had been held by his mother Joan during a 16-year minority, and the admittance marked Alexander's coming of age. On 29 April 1557 he was given licence to let part of the land. Then occurred the conclusive entry of 14 December 1557 which stated that Alexander, formerly seised of one swyne of the ferling of Denners, had been convicted of heresy at Lewes, had been committed to the laity, and had suffered according to the law of the land.³ On 10 March following, the forfeited lands were granted out by the lord of the manor to Alexander Fermor, and their subsequent disposition can be traced through the later court

St Cuthman's book?

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John Blair's article on St Cuthman, Steyning and Bosham is based on the Latin *Life* of this local saint.¹ Shortly after its publication an entry in the Ashurst Churchwardens' Accounts of 1528 came to light.² It reads as follows:-

'It[em] for 1 boke of saynt chuttmand[e]s 6s. 4d.'

Ashurst and Steyning parishes share their south/north boundaries. Ashurst Church, dedicated to St James, was begun before 1200 and remained a chapel of Steyning parish until the 16th century. Before the dissolution of Steyning's college of secular canons c. 1260, Ashurst parish was served by a curate of Steyning.³

books and other sources.⁴ They were evidently of some extent: Pullein identifies some 60 acres of bond and assart land in the vicinity of Jarvis Brook.⁵

Since Alexander came of age in 1556, he was probably born in 1534 or 1535, and would therefore have been aged about 22 at death. His father Richard had died in August 1540, and in his will he had made provision for the care of the lands of his (unnamed) son during the minority.⁶ The will also named six daughters, Thomasine, Anne, Margery, Joan, Jane and Mildred, and the parish register further records the burial of a son John in December 1539. Richard's widow Joan subsequently remarried a widower, Richard Shurlocke of Withyham, who himself died in 1553 or 1554, referring in his will (among others) to his widow Joan, and to Mildred, Joan's daughter by Richard Hosmer.⁷ Joan's own will, as 'Joan Shorlocke widow of Richard, of Withyham' was dated 3 November 1560, and proved at Lewes on 16 December 1560;⁸ she named her daughters Anne, Margery, Joan, Jane and Mildred, and her son-in-law John Saxpes.⁹

Joan's other daughter, Thomasine Hosmer, evidently died before her mother, administration of her estate ('of Withyham, virgin') being granted at Lewes on 26 October 1560 to William Knobbe of Rotherfield [tailor] and Thomas Day of East Peckham [weaver], husbands of her sisters.¹⁰ What is interesting is that on the same day, administration was also granted to these same two men, described as being of the deceased's family,¹¹ of the estate of Joan Hosmer of Rotherfield, widow. Since the two grants are associated with each other, and since it is very unlikely that any Hosmers other than members of this immediate family would have named these two men as administrators, it looks very much as if Joan was Alexander's widow, probably married for a very short time before his execution. There were no (surviving) children, as they would otherwise have been referred to in the grant. Withyham parish registers do not survive for this period, and the contemporary register of Rotherfield unfortunately has a gap from 1555 to 1558, with imperfect recording of the next three years.¹²

Pullein refers to the tradition that Alexander Hosmer was servant to William Maynard of Mayfield, another of the martyrs. She suggests, optimistically, that Maynard may in fact also have been a Rotherfield man, but she rejects out of hand the notion that Alexander can have been his servant: 'We cannot for a moment believe that Alexander Hosmer ever occupied the position of a serving man'.¹³ This rejection seems to be based on the assumption that Alexander would not have served in a menial capacity. But it is quite reasonable to envisage a young man of good estate being 'taught the ropes' in the household of one of his peers, either with estate management in mind, or else more specifically (in view of the locality) with an eye to the potential offered by the burgeoning iron industry. It may well have been Maynard¹⁴ who influenced the young Alexander (and his maid Thomasine a Wood, another martyr) in his religious views.

There were many Hosmers in Rotherfield in the 16th century; the subsidy rolls of 1524 name seven adult Hosmer males in Rotherfield Hundred (but none elsewhere in the county).¹⁵ All of these can be shown to have had descendants in the locality, spreading in the 16th century into neighbouring parishes in Sussex and Kent.¹⁶ Richard Hosmer, father of Alexander, in his will of 1540, named among others his brother William Hosmer the elder.¹⁷ William's son Jasper Hosmer was to appear before the Rotherfield court on 30 April 1560 and

produce as evidence of his tenurial status a copy of court roll dated 3 March 1401 which recorded the admittance of one John Hosmer to 13 acres of assart land at Dengate, to hold to himself for life with reversion to his bastard son Thomas Hosmer.¹⁸ Jasper held the same land in 1560, and claimed descent from Thomas the bastard (*de quo predictus Jasper venit*). His first cousin Alexander was of the same descent, with roots and connections in Rotherfield consequently going back a century and a half.

MARGERY AND JAMES MORRIS OF HEATHFIELD

The mother and son martyrs are traditionally identified as of Cade Street, Heathfield, though it would appear that the localization to Cade Street comes from 16th-century narratives, rather than from contemporary administrative documentary sources. The family can be traced back to an entry in a Bishopstone manor survey of September 1504, in which John and Agnes Morys were stated to have been admitted on 21 April 1501 to a messuage and (?25 acres of land and one acre of heath of new assart at Heathfield, the joint admittance perhaps marking the date of their marriage.¹⁹ John is named in the 1524 subsidy rolls for Hawksborough Hundred (which included the Cade Street area), when he was assessed at £1 6s. 8d. for lands. His name was immediately followed by that of John Morrys the younger, assessed at £1 for wages.²⁰

A Bishopstone survey of 1552 records that on 2 March 1528 James Morris was admitted to the above property (the area now stated as 30 acres), which he still held in 1552 to himself and his wife Joan.²¹ The custom of the manor was that youngest sons should inherit their father's customary property, and the 1528 admittance may have been occasioned by the death of John the elder (though if the admittance was a joint one to James and his wife, it may alternatively mark the date of his marriage).

It would appear likely that John Morris the younger (in 1524) was the elder or eldest son of John the elder, perhaps born shortly after 1501. He witnessed the will of Thomas a Wood of Heathfield in 1545.²² Although he did not inherit his father's customary tenement, he evidently held lands, since he was charged before the Lewes Archdeaconry Court in February 1552, 'of Heathfield', with having withheld tithes from the vicar, Francis Hebden (or Heberden). The record states that the parties compromised, and that the case was dismissed.

At the same court John's wife Margery²³ was cited by the same vicar for failure to attend communion for the past two years, an omission to which she confessed in person. The sentence of the court was that on the next Sunday, with her head humbly covered with a cloth, she should kneel praying in Heathfield church while the vicar should read out a homily on the subject of obedience. Then she should turn to the congregation and publicly acknowledge her penitence and her intention to do better for the future. She should then receive communion.

In April 1552 the vicar certified that Margery had not performed her penance, and she was excommunicated. She was, however, present in court, and a similar sentence was again pronounced.²⁴ The outcome is not recorded. This recalcitrance, and a presumed active continuance of it, probably marked out Margery and her son James as suitable candidates to be held up as examples when the Marian

persecution of heretics was under way. The wealden area was particularly a centre of beliefs of a Lollard kind, which were considered subversive. Details have not so far been discovered of the very hasty arrest, trial, and execution (on 22 June 1557) of the ten Lewes martyrs,²⁵ though the Rotherfield court book entry for Alexander Hosmer states that a church trial had taken place at Lewes. A very rough estimate would suggest that Margery was aged in her mid-fifties at the time of her death, and that James was about 30.

It is not clear whether John Morris, Margery's husband, was dead by the date of her execution. When Sir Edward Gage of Firlle became sheriff of Surrey and Sussex in November 1556, his predecessor delivered to him the custody of prisoners, among them one John Morriss who had been detected for heresy in Sussex. Morriss was again named when Sir Edward transferred the custody in turn to his successor in November 1557.²⁶ No further clues have been found about the identity or fate of this John.

On 4 May 1559 administration of the estate of a James Morris of Heathfield was granted at Lewes to his widow Joan.²⁷ Almost certainly this was of the estate of James Morris, uncle of the martyr, whose wife was indeed Joan, rather than of the martyr himself.²⁸ Joan's will (as Joan Morris of Heathfield widow), was dated 15 October 1570 and proved 26 March 1577.²⁹ Thus it cannot at present be shown that Margery and James had direct descendants surviving them, though there would be close collateral relatives since Joan's will refers to sons Thomas and Anthony, and to daughters Margery, Anne, Joan, and Margaret, of whom Anne at least was already married with children. The son Thomas (who died in 1612)³⁰ had married at Warbleton on 1 February 1562 Ann Stolion, probably sister of the future Warbleton ironmaster Thomas Stolion.³¹ Unfortunately, the Heathfield parish registers begin only in 1581,³² but there were many Morris and other descendants of James and Joan in the Heathfield area in the 17th century.

NOTES

- ¹ Especially Jeremy Goring, 'Reformation and reaction in Sussex 1534–1559', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter SAC) **134** (1996), 141–54, and A. S. Gratwick and Christopher Whittick, 'The Loseley List of "Sussex Martyrs": a commission of enquiry into the fate of their assets and the development of the Sussex protestant martyrology', *SAC* **133** (1995), 225–40. These include more extensive bibliographical references.
- ² Catherine Pullein, *Rotherfield: the Story of some Wealden Manors* (Tunbridge Wells, 1928); see especially the chapter 'The Marian persecution in Rotherfield', 265–75. In some sources (Foxe included) the name Hosmer is incorrectly given as 'Hosman'.
- ³ *Item dicunt quod post ultimam curiam Alexander Hosmer seisitus existens de et in uno sue de ferlingat' de Denners per legem ecclesiasticam convictus fuit de heresia apud Lewse et pro eo commissus laicis et passus est secundum legem patrie*. Convicted of heresy by an ecclesiastical court at Lewes, Hosmer, like his fellow martyrs, would have been adjudged contumacious (i.e. persistent or wilful in his resistance to ecclesiastical authority or sentence). Such disobedience resulted in excommunication, formal signification to the secular authority, and execution under

the statute *de heretico comburendo* (1401). See F. Donald Logan, *Excommunication and the Secular Arm in Mediaeval England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1968).

- ⁴ East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO), SAS/Aber 85, ff. 19r, 23v, 25r, 30v.
- ⁵ Pullein, 273.
- ⁶ Richard 'Hosemer' was buried at Rotherfield 7 August 1540; for his will, see ESRO, W/A1a, 30 (probate date not stated).
- ⁷ ESRO, W/A3, 106. Dated 4 December 1553 and proved at Lewes 8 March 1554.
- ⁸ ESRO, W/A4, 468; inventory value £18 18s. 4d. Printed reference books, including the index of wills, state the date of the will as in 1559, but close examination shows that '1560' has been over-written.
- ⁹ Neither the will nor the next-recited grant of administration makes it clear which of the three husbands, John Saxpes, William Knobbe and Thomas Day, was married to which sister, though Anne was married since a daughter was named.
- ¹⁰ ... *viris sororum suarum*. ESRO, W/A4, 341; inventory value £8 14s. 0d. The value of Joan Hosmer's inventory (same reference) was £11 17s. 4d.
- ¹¹ ... *generis huiusmodi defuncte* ... Rotherfield register records the burial on 25 May 1559 of a 'Jhoan Hosmer', who may be the widow.
- ¹² ESRO, PAR 465 1/1/1.
- ¹³ Pullein, 270.
- ¹⁴ Pullein, who devoted several pages to members of the Maynard family in Rotherfield (400–433), including three contemporary individuals named William, was unable to show that the martyr was one of them (indeed her research proves that none of these can be the martyr). Mid-16th-century sources for Mayfield are poor, and no William Maynard is noted in the 1524 lay subsidy (note 15). A William Maynard did witness a Mayfield deed in 1521 (ESRO, DYK 713), but for the present his identity remains elusive.
- ¹⁵ Julian Cornwall (ed.), *The lay subsidy rolls for the county of Sussex 1524–25*, *Sussex Record Society* (hereafter SRS) **56** (1956), 133–4.
- ¹⁶ The author has extensive notes on the Hosmer and Morris families.
- ¹⁷ See n.5 above.
- ¹⁸ ESRO SAS/Aber 85, 48r. By custom of the manor of Rotherfield, assart land descended to eldest, and bond land to youngest sons. William and Jasper thus represented the senior male line of the family.
- ¹⁹ West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO), Ep.VI/12/1, f. 38v. Heathfield was part of the Bishop of Chichester's manor of Bishopstone until it passed to the crown in 1559 and was subsequently granted out: *Victoria County History of Sussex* **9** (1937), 201.
- ²⁰ SRS **56**, 147.
- ²¹ WSRO, Ep.VI/12/4.
- ²² ESRO, W/A1, 59. Dated 6 April 1545.
- ²³ Margery Morris' maiden name has not been traced.
- ²⁴ WSRO, Ep.II/9/1, f. 29, 30v (1552 trial references).
- ²⁵ With the exception of the trial of Richard Woodman of Warbleton, whose examinations by the bishops of Chichester and Winchester were fully reported by John Foxe in 1562.

²⁶ ESRO, SAS/G36/9,10.

²⁷ ESRO, W/A4, 313; inventory value £9 14s. 4d.

²⁸ The lands and goods of executed felons were forfeit, and it was held that they could therefore not make testaments: Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law* 4 (1788), 56. By the same reasoning, although no express prohibition is stated, there would have been no estate of which to make a grant of administration.

²⁹ ESRO, W/A7, 52; inventory value £7 6s. 8d. (W/B1, 57r).

³⁰ Buried at Heathfield 15 July 1612 (from bishop's transcripts); will ESRO, W/A14, 76; dated 13 July 1612, and proved at Lewes 13 January 1613.

³¹ The Stalion family was of Heathfield in the earlier part of the 16th century. Thomas Stalion moved to Warbleton in about 1574 (author's notes).

³² ESRO, PAR 372 1/1/1.



Why did Horsfield leave Lewes?

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In 1827 the Rev. Thomas Walker Horsfield, who had served the congregation of Westgate Meeting since 1817, left Lewes to take up another appointment. J. M. Connell, whose *The Story of an Old Meeting House* is a major source of information for Horsfield's ministry in Lewes, offers no explanation for the sudden change of direction: he merely states that 'he accepted an invitation to Mary Street Chapel, Taunton'. On the face of it, however, it seems strange that he should have decided to depart for distant Somerset just as he was beginning work on 'his great *History of Sussex*'.¹

Generally speaking, things seem to have been going well for Horsfield in Lewes. He continued to enjoy a fruitful ministry at Westgate: large numbers were attending his theological lectures and, after he had effected a merger with the General Baptists from Eastport Lane in 1825, the regular congregation had grown considerably. Something of a polymath, he had also enjoyed giving talks on chemistry, electricity and galvanism at the Lewes Mechanics' Institute, which he had recently helped to found. Furthermore, he had just completed his *History and Antiquities of Lewes and its Vicinity*, which had earned him the respect and friendship of many local people and the coveted Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries. In 1827 he seemed to be at the height of his powers and at the peak of his success. Why then did he decide to leave Lewes?²

The short answer is that he was in some financial difficulty and, with a growing family to support, needed to take up another appointment with a higher stipend. Mary Street Meeting at Taunton could offer him a more generous remuneration than the one he received at Westgate, where the recent deaths of some wealthy members had evidently reduced the receipts from subscriptions. But he was not totally dependent upon his ministerial stipend: much — indeed perhaps most — of his income came from fees charged for teaching at the school he kept on St Anne's Hill. And here came the rub: by 1827 the income from his school had been greatly reduced, as his close friend Henry Acton was later to explain. Acton, who had grown up in Lewes and knew the

town well, said that Horsfield's school had been 'much injured through the influence of political enmity on account of the active part he had taken on the liberal side in public affairs'. Those in the 'anti-liberal' camp seem to have realized that the best way to drive their opponent from the town was to hit him in the pocket by persuading people to withdraw their sons from his school.³

Throughout his time in Lewes Horsfield had taken a keen interest in public affairs. He was a member of the radical Bundle of Sticks Society, formed to uphold the liberties of Englishmen, and had eventually become its chairman. He had taken an active part in movements for political and constitutional reform. But it was not until 1826 that he clearly emerged as one of the leaders 'on the liberal side'. In the general election held that year to return two Members of Parliament for the borough Benjamin Ridge, a prominent Westgate member, had the temerity to propose — and Horsfield, who was probably the prime mover, to second — the nomination of an 'ultra radical' candidate Alexander Donovan in opposition to two pillars of the local establishment, the Tory Sir John Shelley and the Whig Thomas Read Kemp. That summer the *Brighton Gazette* vilified Horsfield for an anti-Tory speech, 'which gained him a cognomen he will never lose in the borough of Lewes': for reasons that are not altogether clear this new and opprobrious nickname was 'the cuckow parson'. Furthermore, his radical political opinions were likened to those of Tom Paine's disciple Richard Carlile, who had recently been released from a six-year spell in prison for publishing a journal called *The Republican*.⁴

Feelings ran especially high in Lewes during this election campaign because a major issue was Catholic Emancipation. Donovan, an 'outsider' of Celtic Irish descent, supported the repeal of the penal laws against Roman Catholics — a cause close to the hearts of Horsfield and all Rational Dissenters, whose favourite toast was 'Civil and Religious Liberty the World Over'. This affirmation of freedom for everyone, including those whose beliefs and practices were the polar opposites of their own, had earlier led a prominent Westgate member Thomas Johnston to provide the first place for Roman Catholic worship in Georgian Lewes. Horsfield, moreover, was an active member of the newly formed national Unitarian Association, which in 1825 had publicly protested against the 'intolerant laws' that denied civil rights to their 'fellow-Christians of the Roman Catholic persuasion'.⁵

Such liberal attitudes were rare in Lewes. Many local Dissenters and not a few Anglicans were fervently anti-Catholic in sentiment. In a town that had lately produced more petitions against Catholic Emancipation than anywhere in England outside London, Horsfield's libertarian stand was bound to arouse hostility. The 1826 election was a closely fought contest and, although Donovan was eventually defeated, bad feelings persisted; Horsfield, with his profile higher than ever, was the obvious person on whom to project them. Little wonder therefore if people approached the parents of his pupils to ask whether they considered such a dangerous radical a fit person to whom to commit the education of their children.⁶

So it was that Horsfield left Lewes for Taunton, where he continued to preach and teach and work away on his *History of Sussex*. According to Acton he also took up oil-painting, which 'elegant occupation was his perpetual solace and delight in the bosom of his family'. But he evidently meddled no more in politics. Perhaps he had had enough of the 'public affairs' that had made life so exciting, but so precarious, back in Lewes.⁷

NOTES

- ¹ J. M. Connell, *The Story of an Old Meeting House* (revised edn 1935), 98. See also F. W. Steer, 'Introduction' in T. W. Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities and Topography of Sussex*, 2 vols. (1835; repr. Dorking: Kohler & Coombes, 1974).
- ² H. Acton, obituary in *The Christian Reformer* (hereafter *CR*) **5** (1838), 66–7. Connell quotes extensively from this obituary but omits all references to Horsfield's political activities or financial difficulties.
- ³ *CR* **5**, 66–7.
- ⁴ C. E. Brent, *Georgian Lewes* (Lewes 1993), 199–201; *Brighton Gazette*, 1 and 15 June 1826; *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.n. Richard Carlile.
- ⁵ Brent, 202; R. W. Davis, *Dissent in Politics 1780–1830* (1971), 226; cf. G. I. T. Machin, *The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820–1830* (Oxford 1964), ch. 4.
- ⁶ Davis, 225.
- ⁷ *CR* **5**, 66–7.