

COCKING AND ITS CHURCH.

By PHILIP MAINWARING JOHNSTON, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

For the beauty of its setting Cocking can challenge comparison with any village in Sussex, which is saying a great deal. It has by nature all the elements that make for the picturesque—undulation, water, noble trees, verdant turf, copses, hedgerows, wild flowers, varied soils, and in foreground and background lofty downs and wide-stretching blue distances. Of the 2,370 acres in the parish more than 600 are coppice or woodland.

It must always have been an exceptionally beautiful spot, and, happily, in spite of man it has remained so. One says 'in spite' even with reference to the changes that have been wrought by the last hundred years of our vaunted progress. Prior to that date man and nature had moved in unconscious sympathy, each enriching the other, both inspired by the God of beauty. But, alas! the wave of uglification that reared its crest in the nineteenth century did its best to spoil the homely beauty of church and cottage, manor-farm and parsonage. The village-cross, the ancient wayside inn, the mill, the barn, the tree with hundreds of years behind it: all these, only touched to mellowness by time's gentle finger, the coarse hand of 'utilitarian improvement' has literally swept away, or robbed them of the charm of age. No one human instrument more than another invites our blame. Apathy, as well as bad taste, has helped to work the mischief; but the loss of much that we should treasure—the needless loss—is none the less lamentable. Its sting rankles all the more, because there is no consolation but the faint pen and pencil record of vanished beauties: no remedy but a change of heart in rich and poor.

Sussex is always quoted as the conservative county *par excellence*, obstinate in clinging to old-fashioned ways. Her somewhat uncomplimentary motto, with the porcine symbol, is, 'I won't be druv.' However strong this trait may be in the constitution of the average South Saxon, it does not avail to stay his hand in pulling to pieces the

ancient things handed down from his remote ancestors. He seems almost to find a perverse pleasure in destruction and replacement. As an instance, I had carried out a very difficult piece of underpinning and repair, in connexion with a twelfth-century church tower, and when leaving the work at my last visit, I strove to elicit the approval of the fly-driver. It was something of a shock to hear him say: 'If you ask me, sir, I wish you'd pulled 'en down, nasty ugly old thing, and put up another in red brick.' One does not often get at the unvarnished mind of the man of the soil, but I fear this is all too typical: and to be quite frank, with large exceptions, the same spirit of dislike of ancient things and blindness to their beauty and teaching-power has been sadly conspicuous in squire and parson, as well as landlord, farmer and labourer. 'What became of the beautiful late fourteenth-century screens in Clymping church, figured in Brandon's *Parish Churches* in 1848?' I asked Miss Jane Boniface, whose people had long lived in the parish and neighbourhood. She replied, 'They were taken down in poor father's time, and chopped up for firing for the poor, one cold winter.' 'Who authorised such a barbarous act?' 'Oh, one of the churchwardens: the vicar said, "A good riddance of old rubbish!"' Comment is perhaps superfluous, yet a similar deed of villany was perpetrated barely twenty years ago in an East Sussex church, and the vicar was hotly indignant because the Sussex Archaeological Society remonstrated and eventually compelled the higher powers to act.

After all, what *is* an Archaeological Society for, if not to teach, protest and protect—to educate a wider public opinion, in short? Let it *record*, by all means, and edify itself with goodly tomes, but that is only a part of its functions, rightly understood. If it attracts the odium of the vandal and the scoff of the fool—it is a proof that it has risen up to its true position.

Cocking shall, I hope, adorn this tale, but it so far gives point to my moral, that one has to lament the disappearance since the beginning of this century, of many a quaint old cottage, that might well have been adapted to modern requirements; and going back a little further, as will presently be set forth, of many beautiful ancient features in its church; while the forgotten record of its

lost village cross (the recovery of which record has inspired this paper) was penned in the middle of last century.

Cocking has never boasted more than five or six hundred inhabitants, until lately, when the total has risen by a hundred or more. There has been, in all likelihood, a settlement here from pre-historic times: and the Saxons only continued to occupy a settlement that the Britons had themselves inherited from earlier races. Cocking was old when the Norman Conquerors came to supplant the Saxon ealdorman and his churls. The name of course is Saxon, and reminds us that the tribe or family of Cock gave their patronymic to supersede some British place-name for ever lost to us. It has parallels in Cockington (Devon), and no less than eleven other villages beginning with 'Cock,' in Cumberland, Durham, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Shropshire: which suggests that the tribal influence of Cock and sons was as exceptional as their energy in spreading themselves to widely scattered habitations.

It is interesting to note that Cuckfield¹ in our county, is but a variant of 'Cockfield'; which consideration opens the door to another set of place-names, too numerous for our present consideration. The u and o in 'Cuck' and 'Cock,' are as convertible as in 'Pul' and 'Pol,' 'Bul' and 'Bol' (Pulborough, Poling; Bulverhithe, Bolney, etc.)

The Domesday entry as to Cocking runs thus: 'The same Robert² holds of the earl³ COCHINGES. Azor held it of king Edward. Then, as now, it was assessed for 12 hides. There is land for 11½ ploughs. On the demesne are 2 (ploughs), and there are 18 villeins and 8 bordars with 9 ploughs. There (is) a church, and 6 serfs, and 5 mills yielding 37 shillings and 6 pence. Of this land Turald holds of Robert half a hide, and has half a plough there; and in Chichester is 1 haw [i.e. shop] of 12 pence. In the time of king Edward, as now, it was worth 15 pounds; when received 10 pounds.'

It is recorded⁴ that king Edward I, in a progress

¹ Cf. Cuckmere.

² Robert, son of Tesbald, sheriff of the rape of Arundel, and tenant of what was afterward the honour of Petworth. He may have been the rebuilder of the church in c. 1080.

³ Earl Roger de Montgomery, to whom

the Conqueror granted the rapes of Chichester and Arundel.

⁴ *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, ii, 155 *et seq.* Dates of documents are from Cocking, 14 June (*Cal. Pat. Rolls* 1301-1307, pp. 364, 365, 369; *Cal. Close Rolls* 1302-1307, p. 271).

through Surrey, Sussex and Kent in 1305, came on 12th June to Cocking. On the next day, a Sunday, he was at Midhurst and Cocking, and on the Monday left Cocking for Chichester. It was while at Midhurst that he had a stormy interview with his degenerate son, afterwards Edward II: and it was from the little town that the prince dated his abject appeal to the earl of Lincoln for his mediation with the angry king.¹ 'He is so angry with us,' writes the prince, 'that he has forbidden us, that neither ourselves nor any one of our suite should be so bold as to enter within his household; and has forbidden all his officers of his household and of the exchequer that they should neither give us nor lend us anything whatever for the sustenance of our household; and we have remained at Midhurst in order to wait for his good pleasure and his pardon, and we will at any rate proceed after him in the best manner that we may be able, as at ten or twelve leagues from his household, until we may be able to recover his good pleasure, for which we have great desire.' Prince Edward at this date was twenty-two years old, and already betrayed those vicious and frivolous tastes which led ultimately to his deposition and cruel murder. As he grew up he must have been a constant cause of irritation and exasperation to his noble-minded father. There was nothing large even in his follies and excesses. As Henry Knighton the chronicler² writes: 'Not caring to associate with the nobles, he clave to buffoons, singers, actors, grooms, labourers, rowers, sailors, and other mechanics, indulging in drinks, readily betraying secrets, striking bystanders on light occasions,' etc. His youthful favourite, Piers Gaveston, degenerate son of a worthy knight of Gascony, led the prince into this foolish style of living. The pair were a short while before this letter was written, jointly inculpated in the riotous breach of the bishop of Chester's park, and the killing of his deer. The prelate, being the royal treasurer, preferred a weighty complaint, and the heavy displeasure of the king was brought to bear upon his worthless son.

At Cocking, from the twelfth century, there was a cell of the abbey of Séez, which, with other possessions of

¹ *S.A.C.* ii, p. 84.

² Knighton, *Chron.* (Rolls Ser.) i, 407.

The passage is actually copied from Higden, *Polycronicon* (Rolls Ser.) viii.

the abbey, was, in 1380, transferred to the newly-founded college of Arundel.¹ Considerable remains of the buildings abut upon the western boundary of the churchyard, and although much has been destroyed within the last century, the outer or eastern wall, containing the setting of several splayed windows, blocked up and obliterated externally, remains as evidence of fourteenth or fifteenth-century work. Massive sandstone quoins and plinths and neatly dressed flintwork also mark this wall as a relic of good solid building. Inside—it is unroofed—may be seen many older stones (Caen), worked into the splays. From the thickness of the walls of the present farmhouse, which is largely on the site and actual foundations of the cell, one may judge that, with abundance of material to select from, the builders of the sixteenth or seventeenth century could afford to be lavish. Some definite relics of the medieval building, such as arched doors, are incorporated in the present house. What is of more definite interest is the fact that the early buildings formed a square enclosing a court or cloister, and the extent of the whole may be determined without much difficulty.

Cocking mill, one of five mentioned in Domesday, still exists, its massive wheel turned by the waters of the Cocking stream. One of the most beautiful views in the country is that of the little church, on its spur of rising ground, framed in towering aspens and beeches, reflected in the still blue water of the mill-pond; behind it the red-roofed manor farm, and that distant outline of the downs. Cocking down is one of the finest beauty-spots hereabouts. One is looking from the east; but the western view, with the little church embowered in trees lying below, is hardly less to

¹ Letters patent of 1 April 1380, printed in *Monasticon* vi (3), 1377-1379.

My friend, Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, M.P., in his book on *The Priory and Manor of Lynchmere and Shulbrede*, p. 36, quotes from the confirmation of a charter, granted *tempore* Ralph de Neville, bishop of Chichester from 1224 to 1243, by the dean and chapter to Lynchmere (Wlenchmere), or Shulbrede priory, in which occurs the phrases—'whereas the abbot and convent of Seez (*Sagium*) by divine intent of love, have granted to the prior and convent

of Wlenchmere their right of patronage in the church of Selebrede (? Lynchmere), we having seen the charter which the said prior and convent of Wlenchmere have; therefore, in consideration of their poverty, we grant them a warrant for it with all its belongings so that they deal honestly by that church in providing a worthy secular chaplain and sustaining all the useful burdens of the church, saving to the church of Coking its accustomed and ancient pension in it, and saving to us and our successors the pontifical and parochial rights.'

be admired ; and I know of few pictures more attractive than that which the church makes from the south as seen across the stream and water-meadows where the noble trees dwarf the tiny building and throw a golden mist over it in the summer. As at Poling and Tortington, so here, church and farmyard are quaintly mixed up, and the same road gives access to both from the north.

In the NW. corner of the parish, the earls of Arundel had a house, the park of which is still in existence, with a fosse which surrounded the house. Sir William de Percy was the lord of this estate in 1290, and it is recorded that Henry of Horsdenn was paid 5*s.*, and Alexander, the queen's chandler, 6*s.* 8*d.* ($\frac{1}{2}$ marc) on one day at Cockyngge, and the latter a mark the next day, for services rendered. So Cocking must have fairly hummed in the closing decade of the thirteenth century !

From here the king dates an increase in the dowry of his queen Margaret ; and at Cocking is dated the royal pardon for three men of Guernsey, who had fled on account of the murder of one Joan Florisent, on condition of their surrendering themselves to the prison on that island. Hence also issued a writ of privy seal for the granting of the prebend of Wytering in the cathedral church of the Holy Trinity of Chichester, void by the death of Richard de Arundel, to Odard de Monte Martini ; and a mandate is sent concurrently to the dean and chapter to assign a stall in quire and a place in chapter to the said Odard.¹

The geology of Cocking has exercised a wide influence on its fortunes from prehistoric times ; for the village stands upon the hard chalk rock, or malm, which crops up to the surface of the ground. The Romans dug or quarried this excellent and easily wrought stone-substitute, and employed it extensively in building and road-making. Seventy years ago the large remains of Roman buildings were partially excavated at Dinsworth, in Funtington parish, a few miles distant ; and it was then noted² that the wrought ashlar 'was brought from the malm rock, which occurs immediately beneath the chalk, and is to be found at Cocking.' This same malm is the material of which the fourteenth-century church-tower is built, and

¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1301-1307, pp. 365, 364, 369 (14 June 1305).

² *S.A.C.* x, 175.

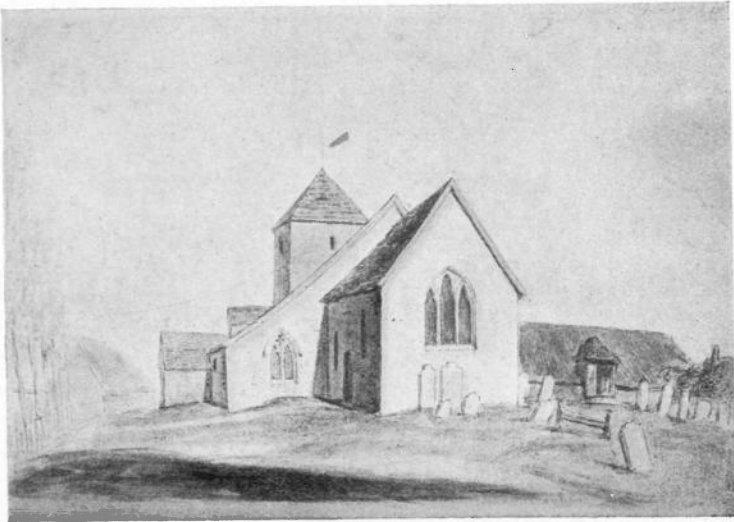
it can be studied to advantage as to its lasting qualities both inside and out. One marvels that as an absolutely accessible material it is turned to so little account in building to-day. Here, for instance, are cottages of every degree of ugliness built during the last century, and in hardly one is this native material employed. The ugly red and yellow bricks, beloved of the modern builder, are used instead.

Lower writes :¹ ' A curious phenomenon is observable in this neighbourhood. From the leafy recesses of the hangers of beech on the escarpment of the Downs, there rises in unsettled weather a mist which rolls among the trees like the smoke out of a chimney. This exhalation is called ' Foxes-brewings,' whatever that may mean, and if it tends westward toward Cocking rain follows speedily.' [I can confirm this abundantly from observation]. ' Hence the local proverb :—

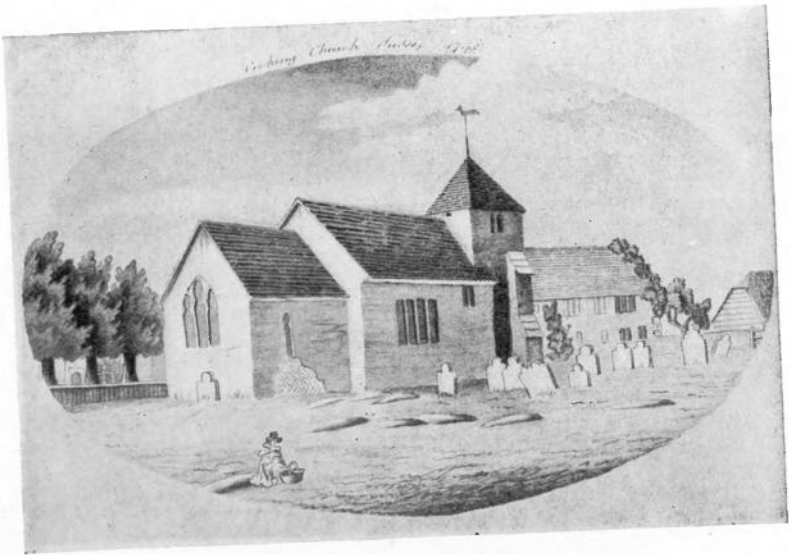
' When Foxes-brewings go to Cocking,
Foxes-brewings come back droppin.'

By the fortunate accident of my obtaining the late Mr. Edgar Sharpe's consent to photograph his priceless collection of early drawings of Sussex churches, we are enabled to judge of the appearance presented by Cocking church in 1804. The original drawing, here reproduced, (plate 1), is by Henry Petrie, F.S.A., and shows the church from the SE. with the characteristic lengthened slope of its nave and aisle roof, the old plastered porch, now no more, and the gabled dormer which lit the gallery-stair beyond. The Sussex ' cap ' on the tower is of sharper pitch than we see it now (45°), and it seems to have been lowered by re-cutting the decayed rafter-ends not long after this drawing was made. In the same view the fourteenth-century east window appears as it used to be, together with the charming window in the east end of the aisle : and in the south wall of the chancel, between the two existing windows is shown the priest's doorway, now gone, which my friend the Rev. H. L. Randall tells me was of Georgian date, formed to make a short cut to the old parsonage-house across the churchyard.

¹ *Hist. Sussex*, i, 119.



COCKING CHURCH FROM SOUTH-EAST IN 1804.
From a tinted sketch by Henry Petrie, F.S.A.



COCKING CHURCH FROM NORTH-EAST IN 1795.

From an anonymous sketch.

But one of the spurs to the writing of this paper has been another happy chance, by which three small sketch-books of the end of the eighteenth century have come into my hands. Some thirty of the views of churches in these were without title or clue to their identity, and it has been both a pleasant and a keen interest to recover the true name of each. The kind owner has generously consented to the local Archaeological Society's photographing these very valuable, and hitherto unknown,

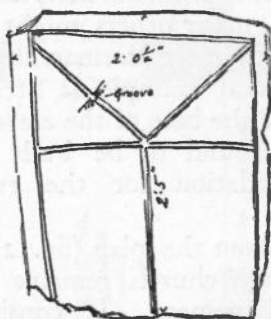


FIG. I. PRE-CONQUEST GRAVE-SLAB.

drawings, which, I may add, are some ten years or more older in date (1795) than those by Henry Petrie. One's only disappointment is that at present the artist of these older views remains unknown.

It is fortunate that the 1795 view (plate 11) is taken from the NE, thus giving the unpierced north wall of the nave before the north aisle was added, with a four-light cottage window, and a smaller one under the eaves, to light the western gallery. Mrs. Boxall, still living, recollects this gallery, its stair across the south aisle, and this tiny window which lit it from the north. Besides the east window, the drawing clearly shows the existing trefoiled light in the north wall of the chancel; and, which is peculiarly interesting, a patch of herring-bone rubble, where the plaster has scaled off that wall. Mr. Randall tells me that this early walling was met with in the restoration of 1896.

That there was a pre-Conquest church on the present

site may be taken for granted: but in all likelihood it was of timber, and the present building was probably newly erected at the date of the Domesday survey of 1086. In the restoration of the tiny early Norman chancel in 1896 a grave-slab was taken out from under the foundations of the north wall, and is now to be seen built into the same wall inside (fig. 1). It has a rude Y cross roughly chiselled on its surface, and it is a reasonable assumption that it had marked the grave of a Saxon priest or important layman before being commandeered as building material by the Norman masons. It is probable that, had the footings been explored all round, many others might have been found as in the neighbouring early Norman church of Chithurst.¹ and in the other local example at Stedham,² where the Saxon grave-slabs at the base of the eleventh-century wall were found to be built kist-fashion as a foundation for the rubble walling.



As will be seen from the plan (fig. 2), the shell of the late eleventh-century church remains after centuries of alteration and enlargement. It consists of a chancel, 15 ft. east to west and 14 ft. wide, and a nave 31 ft. long by 18 ft. wide, separated by a low round-headed early Norman chancel arch, 8ft 8 in. wide, of one order, with plain square jambs, relieved only by a hollow-chamfered impost at the springing (fig. 3). It is worked in a greenish yellow sandstone, brought from the quarry at Henley wood, and this stone was employed for the quoins, windows and other mason's work in the early period. The walling seems to have been of sandstone rubble, probably packed with chalk and flints and plastered both inside and out: but except in the case of the later tower all this original plaster coating has been removed. It is clearly shown in both our old views of the church; proving that the Norman builders often followed the older pre-Conquest tradition of plastering their walls—a tradition commonly preserved in Scandinavia also.³

High up in the centre of the south wall of the nave one of the original Norman windows was opened out in 1896. It had been left in the haunch of the two arches pierced

¹ *S.A.C.* lv, 105, in a paper by the writer.

³ *Cf. Poling church, S.A.C.* lx, 77.

² *S.A.C.* v, 20.

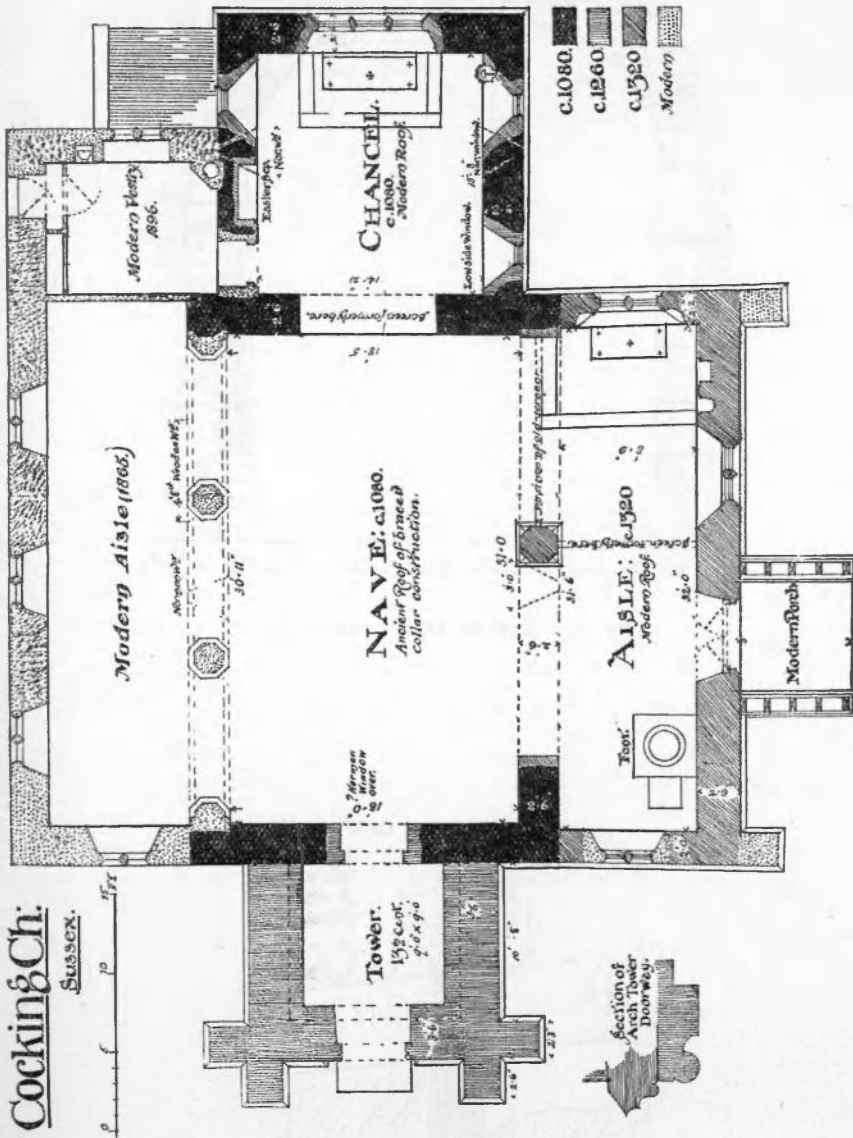


FIG. 2. PLAN OF COCKING CHURCH.

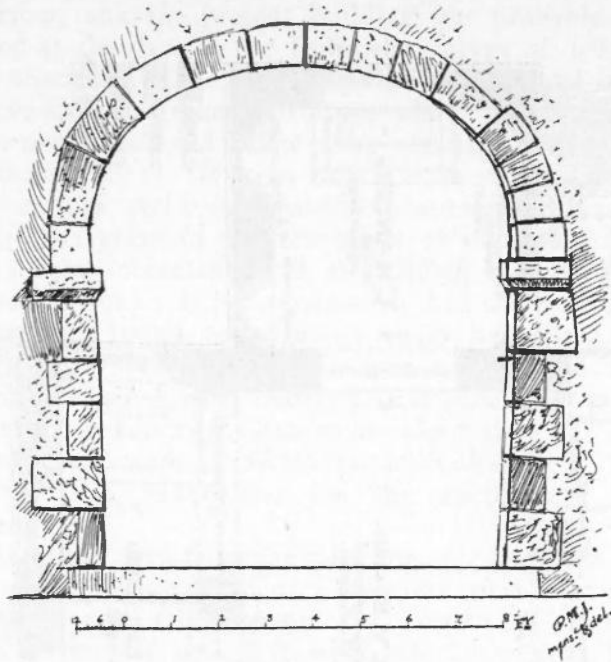


FIG. 3. CHANCEL ARCH, WEST SIDE.

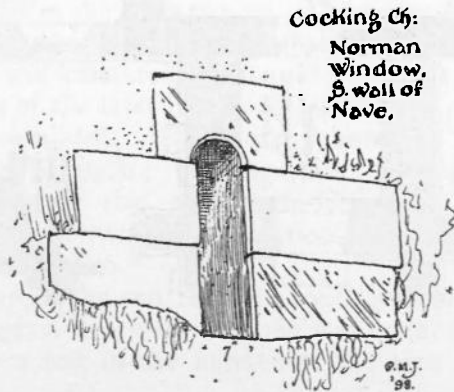


FIG. 4. NORMAN WINDOW IN SOUTH WALL OF NAVE.



I. COCKING CHURCH FROM SOUTH-WEST.



2. COCKING CHURCH :
SOUTH AISLE AND ARCADE, WITH NORMAN WINDOW OVER.

through the wall in the fourteenth century and simply blocked up (plate III, 2). It is perfect, save for the bottom of the right-hand splay, and has an external opening nine inches wide formed of large pieces of sandstone, the head being cut out of a single stone (fig. 4). On the eastern splay is a remarkable early thirteenth-century painting (fig. 5), figured and described by me in *S.A.C.* xliii, 232.



FIG. 5. WALL-PAINTING IN SPLAY OF NORMAN WINDOW.

The subject, as will be seen from the accompanying drawing, is that of the star of Bethlehem and the appearance of the angel to the Shepherds. The angel holds a palm-branch in his left hand, and with the uplifted right points to the star above a border of conventional clouds. The star is of the flaming meteor type. The two shepherds hold crooks or staves upside down like hockey-sticks, and have blue cloth shoes. The foremost shepherd

in a red gown, lined with pale blue, with a pink hood over his head, has gloves of the primitive two-fingered variety, and is shading his eyes with his right hand as he looks at the angel, of whom, unfortunately, only the arms, a wing and the left foot, remain. When complete, he must have been half as large again as the taller shepherd. Between them a small terrier dog, with a collar round its neck, sits back on his haunches and barks at the angel—a quaint touch which occurs in some early illuminations of this subject, and also on a pillar of the north transept of Faversham church, of the same thirteenth century date. The shepherd's lad behind has a pink gown and pale blue hood, with a flat bonnet or cap. His attitude plainly suggests astonishment, or fear. The internal arches and jambs of two similar early Norman windows, one on north and one south, were also brought to light in the chancel, and left exposed, though blocked. The single window that must have been in the centre of the north wall of the nave had been destroyed when the north aisle was built in 1865: the original pair that, in all probability, occupied the east wall of the chancel—with perhaps a circular opening in the gable—had been displaced in the early part of the fourteenth century by the original of the present modern east window: and as to the west end of the nave, there was doubtless a single opening, as at Terwick, or a pair of little windows, which ceased to give light when the tower was added, and such a window or windows would most likely be found, blocked up, in what is still the Norman wall, were the plastering removed. At Amberley, for example, a large single early Norman window in a very perfect state is to be seen in the west wall of the nave looking into the thirteenth-century tower. The quoins of the eleventh century, at the east and west angles of the nave, are probably in position, concealed by plaster, save in the case of the south-east quoin, which appears to have been taken out for the sake of the stones re-used in the fourteenth-century aisle. The NE. quoin was renewed in 1896, apparently.

The roof-pitch in nave and chancel, about 50° , is that of the early Norman church, and there is no reason why the actual timbers of the nave roof—that of the chancel was renewed in 1896—should not be of that early date, including the rude tie-beams; but the rafters, etc. are

at present hidden by the panelled deal boarding nailed over them in 1865.

Of the ancient floor in the nave in which were set some medieval coffin-slabs (see appendix) nothing remains: nor is any of the old internal plastering left, save in the splay of the Norman window. Judging by the fragment of old painting so fortunately preserved in 1896, there must have been others of unusual merit and interest, till the 1865 restorers hacked the old plaster off the walls.

Only one other early feature remains to be mentioned—the plain tub-shaped font; and this is more probably a relic of the still older church that preceded the little Norman building. It is of a hard, coarse-grained grit-stone, one of a family of early fonts numerous in this corner of Sussex. I believe that all, or nearly all, of these plain tub, or pudding-basin, fonts are of pre-Conquest date, and there is no reason why they should not date in most cases from the period of the evangelisation of the south Saxons by St. Wilfrid. There is certainly no one county of England that has so many fonts of this early period, or grouped together within a small area, as in this case.¹

The height of the font-bowl is 1 ft. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., and its diameter at top 2 ft. 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. The internal diameter is 1 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and depth 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. The bowl curves inwards in outline, and stands on a short circular pedestal and chamfered plinth, which appear to be later medieval additions. It is probable that these bowls originally stood on a rough cushion-stone such as still exists at Walberton. In the destructive restoration (save the mark!) done at Walberton in 1903, the bowl was taken off the cushion-stone and set upon a modern pedestal, carved with knotted patterns by the vicar's daughter, but the present vicar, at my suggestion, has very wisely brought the font and cushion-stone together again, and removed the impertinent piece of modern-antique work—not, however, before it had got into the latest guide to

¹ At Cocking, Bepton, Selham, Trotton, Graffham, Chithurst, Diding, Woolbeding, Fernhurst, Milland, Lodsworth—all close together: and further south at Burton, Poling, Littlehampton, Yapton, Walberton, Tangmere, North Mundham, Chidham, West Wittering and West Thorney.

Related to these, but re-cut at later dates, are the fonts at Stedham and East Marden. Westmeston is an east Sussex example, and there was another at Clayton, lost since about 1830, of which the cushion-stone has lately been recovered.

Sussex as 'part of a Saxon gable cross, with well-executed knot-work of the best Anglian period, that was found embedded in the wall in 1903.' Thus is history made!¹

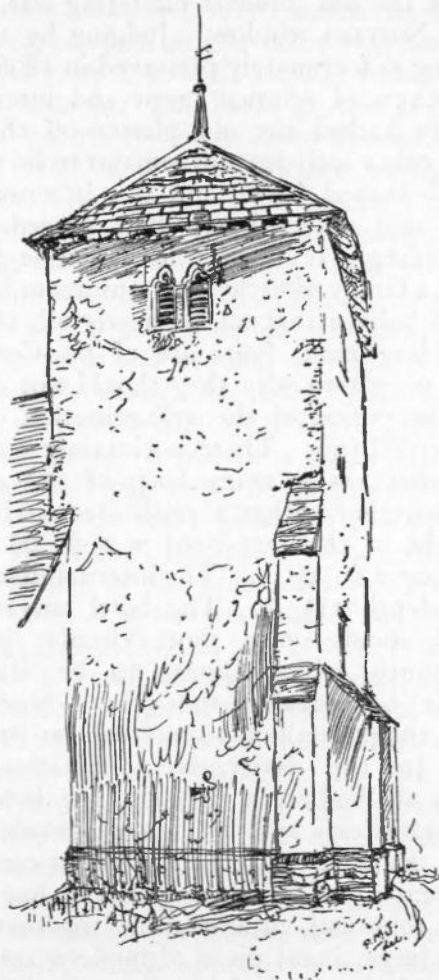


FIG. 6. . WEST TOWER.

¹ Even this preposterous mare's nest has some foundation in fact. When the west gable of Walberton church was partly rebuilt in 1903 the quoins were found to be of large well-preserved Roman bricks, and built into the apex of the gable was an undoubted

Saxon gable-cross cut out of Quarr Abbey stone. I secured two photographs of this rare relic, which it will hardly be believed has since disappeared. When last seen it was on a rockery in the vicarage garden.

The highly picturesque western tower was added about the middle of the thirteenth century (plate III, 1, and fig. 6). It measures 9 ft. square internally on the ground-floor, with north, south and west walls 3 ft. 6 in. thick: in the uppermost storey they are the same as the nave—2 ft. 6 in., thus affording a width of 10 ft. 6 in. for the bell-chamber. These walls are built of the before-mentioned malm rock, or hard chalk-stone, the window and door-cases being of dark yellow-brown sandstone. There is no tower-arch, but a plain chamfered and rebated doorway opens into the church, and would appear to ante-date the tower by about twenty years. It is quite different in character from the external doorway, which has a continuous roll and hollow moulding, crowned by a label of later character. (Cf. the north doorway in Poling church, *S.A.C.* lx, p. 80, and that in the chapel of the Knights Hospitallers, *S.A.C.* lxii, p. 101). The label in this case was remade or re-cut to a fifteenth-century section (see sketch on plan, fig. 2), almost identical with that at Poling priory.

There is a chamfered plinth all round the tower and its buttresses, which also continues along the south aisle and chancel. The buttresses are of curiously different height, three with modern tiled weatherings replacing stone, and that on the north has a double off-set, with the old stone weatherings, and is carried a stage higher than the south, while the pair on the western face, which are the lowest, are possibly later additions.

The windows of the top storey on north, west and south are of two trefoiled lights, divided by a broad mullion. The corresponding opening on the east is of plain square form. In the intermediate stage there were originally single-light trefoiled openings on the west, south, and east sides, of which only that to the west remains open. Below it on this side is a plain square-headed oblong light to the ground storey.

To those interested in our ancient belfries, an examination of the ingenious and perfect timber construction of the intermediate stage and the bell-chamber may be commended, as a sound piece of medieval carpentry by which the strain of the bell-ringing upon the tower walls is greatly relieved (fig. 7).

There is a complete and independent frame in the

intermediate stage, resting on the floor-beams below, with angle-posts, plates and arched braces; and on this rests the floor of the bell-chamber, with its equally elaborate braced frames for the bell-cages. There is every reason to believe all this good carpentry to be late thirteenth-century, coeval with the tower. As one examines it, recollections of many another fine piece of timber framework in towers come to mind; some, alas, as at Rogate, displaced by hideous and harmful steel constructions, to suit the *ipse dixit* of modern bell-founders and campanologists, as dangerous a species of enthusiasts as

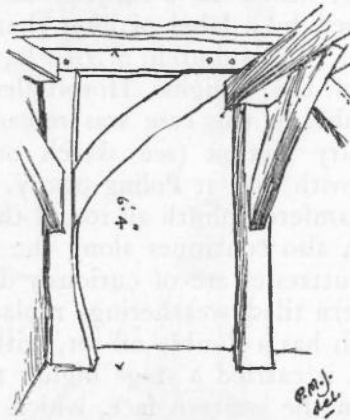


FIG. 7. FRAME-WORK IN CHAMBER BELOW BELLS.

the 'enlarged organ' advocates. The activities of both should be jealously watched by the bishops' advisory committees, from which we hope for much.

There are three bells still hanging in their old frames. I made a careful examination of these in 1915, with the aid of a well-known bell-founder, and our conclusion was that for a trifling sum the cages, wheels and bells could be repaired and re-hung, without removal from the tower, which it is much to be hoped may be done without long delay.

The bell classed as second is the oldest. Our veteran expert, the late Mr. Amherst D. Tyssen, dates it between 1420-1440, and shows that it belongs to a group of bells cast

at the Wokingham foundry, Berkshire. All the bells of this group bear a stamp known as the broad face, a cross of four fleurs-de-lys, surmounted by a crown, and a coin, being the impress of the reverse of a group, of a type first struck in 1351 : with the mixed black letter inscription, **Sancte Johannis Ora Pro Nobis.**

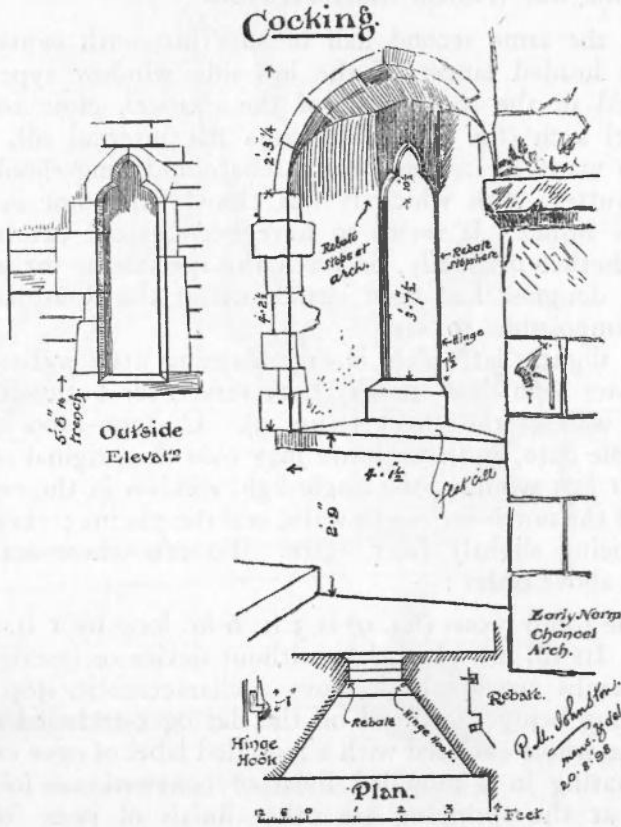


FIG. 8. LOW SIDE WINDOW.

The first bell, inscribed **Sancta Catrina Ora Pro Nobis**, is one of a group having the same groat, crowned cross and broad face, with the addition of what is known as the R.L.W. shield, which is now recognized as the mark of Roger Landen, of Wokingham, who is mentioned in the Eton college accounts as doing some founder's work

there in 1448. He is credited with the first bell at Easebourne, a few miles away from Cocking.

The third bell is inscribed :

IW RK 1616 T ✠ W—the letters and figures being reversed. The two first pairs of initials probably represent the churchwardens at this date. The vicar at the time was William Mattock, A.M.¹

In the same second half of the thirteenth century a trefoil headed lancet of the low-side window type was inserted in the south wall of the chancel, close to the chancel arch (fig. 8). This has a flat internal sill, and, like so many of its class, has a rebate and hinge-hooks for the shutter, with which it was closed when not in use, on the inside. It seems to have been glazed externally, but whether originally, or when the special use for which it was designed had been abandoned at the Reformation, it is impossible to say.

Of slightly later date is the charming little wall-tomb, or Easter sepulchre—it may have served for both—in the north wall of the chancel (fig. 9). C. 1290-1300 is the probable date, and with it we may class the original of the present east window, the single-light window in the eastern part of the north and south walls, and the piscina; the south aisle being slightly later again. To take these features in the above order :—

The tomb recess (fig. 9) is 3 ft. 6 in. long by 1 ft. 3 in. deep. Its sill is a plain slab, without device or inscription. The jambs are moulded above a characteristic stop, the moulding being continued on the flat ogee-trefoiled arch, and the whole enclosed with a moulded label of ogee curve, terminating in a moulded finial of conventional foliage, while at the springing are other finials of rude foliage resting on portrait heads. One of these heads is new (1896), replacing a mutilated original preserved in the vestry. This little tomb, or Easter sepulchre, is worthy of note because of its early date. We have few such recesses, if any, in Sussex as old that may have served as the depository of the wooden shrine with the pyx and

¹ The incumbents of Cocking are sometimes styled vicar, sometimes rector, the latter being the present-day title.

crucifix in the mysteries enacted between Holy Thursday and Easter.¹

The story of what happened to the east window is a sad one. In the restoration of the chancel in 1896 the rector was assured by his architect, the late Mr. Pritchett,

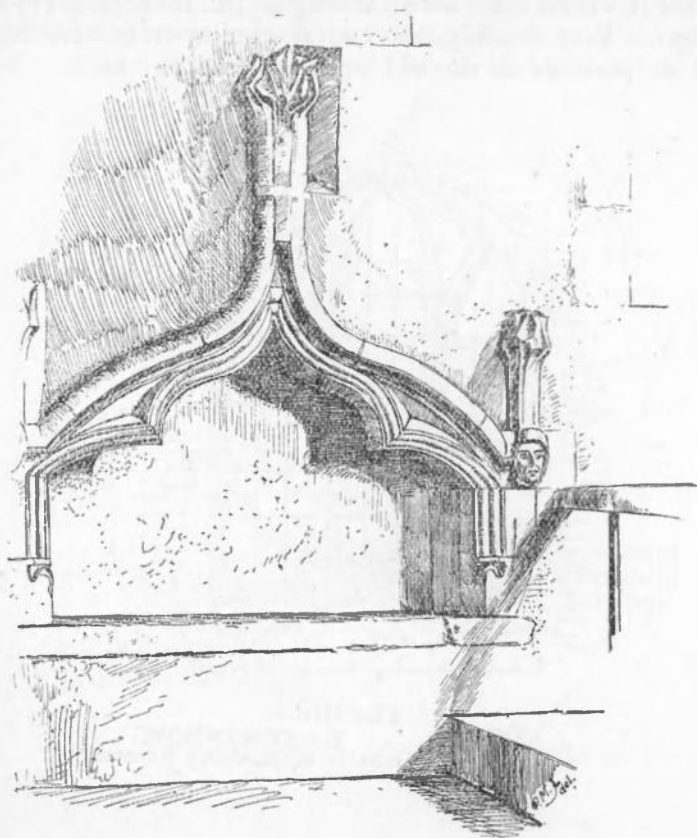


FIG. 9. WALL-TOMB IN CHANCEL.

that the window was too decayed to be worth repairing. A copy was therefore made in new stone, the whole east wall being rebuilt with it, and the new window set much higher in the wall, to give height for a tall reredos—a very mischievous proceeding from the archaeologist's point of

¹ A recess in the north wall of Sompting church, late twelfth century, may have served as a 'sepulchre.' It is small, about the size of an aumbry.

view. At the same time, the contractors, Messrs. Rattee and Kett, of Cambridge, re-erected, stone for stone, the old east window and its surrounding walling in the grounds of the rectory, where it forms a very attractive feature, and a little examination suffices to show that with trifling repair it would have lasted as long as the modern copy, or longer. Very sensibly, the coeval window-irons have been left in position in the old openings (see fig. 10).



FIG. 10. OLD EAST WINDOW.

The single light windows, north and south, close to the east wall, are widely splayed and have ogee-trefoiled heads. They were largely renewed in the 1896 restoration, and the walling around them, of coursed rubble, is a re-facing. These windows resemble those in Rogate church, a few miles away.

In the south wall is a curious piscina, shown in fig. 11, with a sort of shell or alcove in the back, the drain of

which was restored in 1896. It has a straight-sided head, like that in the south aisle, and dates from early in the fourteenth century.

We now come to the slightly later work of the south aisle, which would appear to have been added in about 1320¹; so that it still belongs to the earlier period of Decorated Gothic. It is 32 ft. long, by 8 ft. 9 in. wide, the east and west walls being only 2 ft. thick, while the

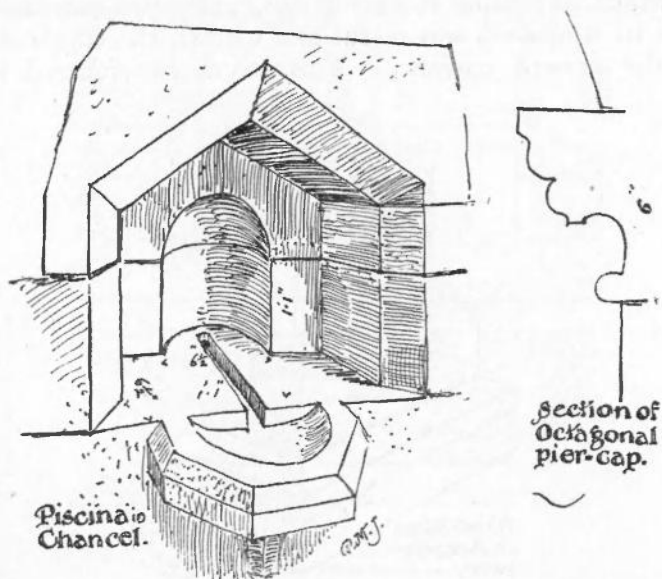


FIG. II. PISCINA IN CHANCEL AND SECTION OF PIER-CAP IN SOUTH ARCADE OF NAVE.

south wall is 2 ft. 9 in. Two low-pitched, pointed-segmental arches of two chamfered orders were pierced through the Norman south wall of the nave, with plain square responds, and a central octagonal pier rising from a square base with a chamfered plinth. Where this gathers into the octagon there are bold angle-stops of hollow and ridged knob form (fig. 12). Instead of a capital there is a moulded impost of unusual section (fig. 11). There are

¹ Perhaps when Robert de Putteworth was rector. He was instituted in 1311.

indications in the stonework of pillar and arch of the former existence of the *parclose* screens referred to in the Rev. Thomas Valentine's notes in the parish registers (see appendix).

The west window of the south aisle dates from 1865, and we have no record as to its fourteenth-century predecessor, whether single or double light.

The south doorway of the aisle replaces of course the Norman south doorway in the unpierced wall of the nave, of which no visible stone remains, unless we may assume that its stonework was re-cut and used in the construction of the present entrance. This has a two-centred head

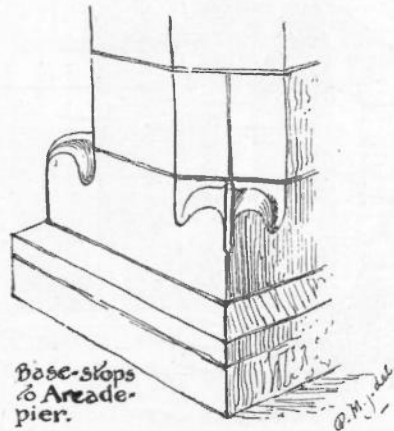


FIG. 12. BASE-STOPS OF PIER IN SOUTH ARCADE.

and jambs in sandstone, continuously moulded with a sunk chamfer. The present double doors are of 1865, as is the porch of oak on stone and flint footings, which replaces a simple gabled and plaster-faced porch shown in the Sharpe Collection drawing.

There used to be, till 1865, a small door westward or this that gave access from outside to the gallery in the west end of the nave, by means of a staircase carried across the aisle and an opening through the nave south wall; to light which staircase there was a gabled dormer in the



FIG. 13. SQUARE-HEADED WINDOW IN SOUTH AISLE.

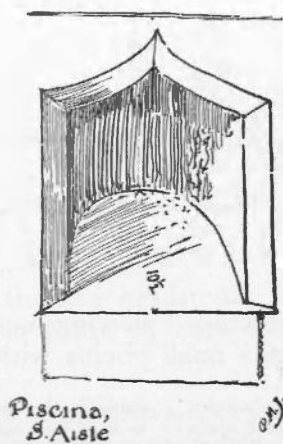


FIG. 14. PISCINA IN SOUTH AISLE.

western part of the aisle roof, which also figures in the Sharpe view.¹

There is a square-headed fourteenth-century window eastward of the porch (fig. 13), having cusped ogee arches

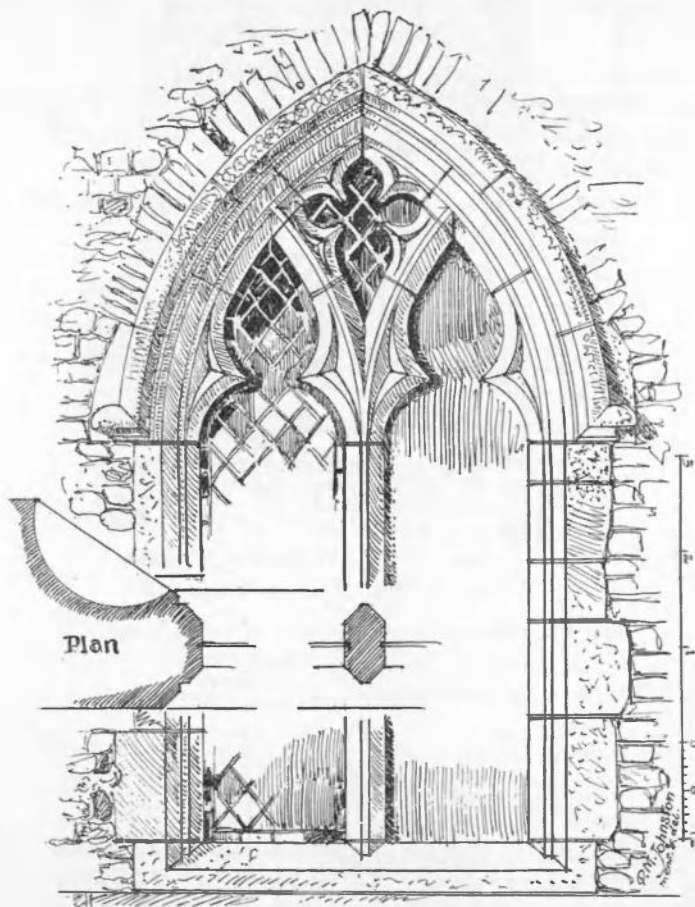


FIG. 15. EAST WINDOW OF SOUTH AISLE.

to the two lights, with cusped piercings under the head, and beyond this again are a small piscina with a rounded back

¹ Another feature of this 'churchwarden' period, now no more, was a small square-headed doorway in the south wall of the chancel, which some still living remember,

shown in the same drawing. This is said to have been made to enable the rector to obtain direct access to the chancel from the old parsonage.

and gabled head of unusual form (fig. 14) and an oblong-square-headed aumbry, rebated for a door, both worked in hard chalk. In the east wall is a remarkably rich and graceful two-light window (fig. 15). Its lights have trefoil cusped heads of pointed horse-shoe form, with a quatre-foiled piercing under the arch of the enclosing head, and a moulded label. The most is made externally of the thin wall by spreading the splays and sinking in each in chalk, an elegant cinquefoil-arched niche (see plate iv and plan). I do not know of anything else quite like this treatment in Sussex, though it is to be met with in other counties. There was, of course, an altar beneath it, perhaps dedicated to our Lady. The little buttresses that terminate the aisle east and west are apparently modern.

Of the modern north aisle (1865) and vestry (1896) nothing need here be said. The building of the latter has involved the making of a small doorway into the chancel westward of the Easter sepulchre. Beyond the vestry is a sunk chamber for the heating apparatus.

Of the medieval monuments doubtless once in the church floor or on its walls, none now remain, though the register witnesses (see appendix) that down to about 1850 there were 'in the paving of the nave one or two coffin-shaped slabs of Petworth marble worked in.'

Built upright into the south wall of the chancel is the grave-slab of an eighteenth-century incumbent of Cocking, James Barker, A.M., archdeacon of Chichester, who died 17th August, 1736, and whose Latin epitaph modestly avers that 'he was contented with his lot, though not unworthy of a better,' and that he was vicar here for twenty-eight years, dying at the age of seventy-one. At the head of the slab are carved in slight relief within three circles, an hour-glass, a skull and spray of bay leaves, and three cross-bones, arranged like the Chi Ro monogram on a Roman coin.¹

On one of the old headstones from the churchyard, brought into the tower in 1921 for better preservation,

¹ Of this worthy, Mrs. Randall would have me quote the lines:

'Remote from towns, he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place.

is a very quaint example of the gloomy and heathenish taste of the same period. The inscription runs:—

IN MEMORY OF
SARAH, DAUGHTER OF WILLM.
AND ELIZABETH WHITE,
who departed this life,
January 16th, 1772,
Aged 25 years.

Weep not for me, my parents dear,
Since God was pleased to lay me here,
It was the small-pox I did crave,
Which now hath brought me to my grave.
'Crave' is used here for 'fear' (cf. craven).

The carving above this inscription has a sort of broken pediment of two scrolls meeting on a fluted pilaster crowned by three cherubs' heads and wings. Sarah White, in the stiff bodice and flounced skirt of the period, leans in a stricken attitude against the pilaster, on the other side of which is her guardian angel, also in a tight corset and ample skirt, holding a palm-branch; while behind the swooning lady stands Death the skeleton, about to aim the fatal dart. There are other and simpler headstones noteworthy for the quiet beauty of their lettering.

In another category is the stone to 'Charles Bradlaugh, only son of Charles and Susannah Bradlaugh. Died July 15th, 1870, aged 11 years.' Mrs. Randall believes that the father, who in later days became such a prominent political personage, was staying with, or near, Mr. Richard Cobden, the corn-law agitator, at Heyshott, hard by, at the time of his son's death.

In vol. xxxix of *S.A.C.* is a note by the late Mr. J. L. André, F.S.A., recording that another Sussex antiquary, the late Mr. J. Honeywood, had in his possession ten coins said to have been discovered in the hand of a skeleton disinterred in this churchyard—probably at the time of the building of the north aisle in 1865. One of these coins was a shilling of Elizabeth, proving that the interment must have taken place after the middle of the sixteenth century. It is stated that this superstitious practice was still in vogue a hundred years later in France, the idea being to ensure a better reception to the deceased

in the other world. Mr. André cites a similar discovery in a Dorset churchyard, but there the money was found in the mouth. It would seem to be a survival of a pre-Christian practice, one commonly observed by the ancient Romans, who frequently buried large sums of money, with the dead. Dr. Milman, in his *History of Christianity* (iii, 434) remarks: 'It is still more strange that the Christians continued this practice, particularly of the piece of money in the mouth, which the heathen intended for the payment of Charon. It continued to the time of Thomas Aquinas, who, according to M. R. Rochette, wrote against it.' Dr. Milman cites an instance of a Romano-British interment in which the jaw-bone, now in the Taunton Museum, 'is stained with the copper from the Roman coin found in its mouth.'

One does not quite understand how Mr. Honeywood became possessed of the coins. Every ancient church should have a suitably constructed glazed cupboard or case, in which such 'unconsidered trifles' would be preserved, with a note as to the date and circumstances of their discovery. Bosham church, in this county, thanks to the late vicar, the Rev. K. H. Macdermott's antiquarian zeal, is an example to all others in this respect.

My kind friend, Mrs. Randall, of Cocking rectory, adds some notes on some old buildings that have disappeared. One of these was a long barn—doubtless a tithe-barn—against the west wall of the churchyard. It was taken down by the Rev. J. Barker, who, also, opened a doorway in the south wall of the chancel, for quicker access from the old parsonage-house. This doorway was blocked up by the Rev. R. R. D. Ashe, and the present rector, the Rev. H. L. Randall, set up Mr. Barker's tombstone against where the doorway had been when he restored the chancel in 1896, filling in the grave within the chancel with concrete.

The old parsonage-house was pulled down in 1858 or '59. It stood to the south of the church in a low and marshy site, and it is said that during most winters there were 2 ft. of water in the cellar.

Brook house, hard by, was suffered to fall into ruin and finally destroyed in 1900-1901. It is possible that this interesting half-timber house was used as the post-

Reformation parsonage. When it was demolished a series of black-letter texts of Elizabethan date was discovered, painted on the plaster panels of the best parlour. These were photographed by Mrs. Randall, and I am allowed to reproduce her photograph. The texts are framed in a square border with a scroll-pediment; the first reading:—

Man liueth not by breade							
only but by every worde							
that proceedeth out of the							
mouth of the Lord	-	-					
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

and the second:—

The Sacrifices of God	-						
contrite spirit	-	-	-	-			
a broken heart	-	-	-	-			
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

These quotations are from the bishops' Bible of 1570, No. 1 being from Deuteronomy viii, 3: and No. 2 from Psalm li, 17. In the last half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth the decoration of the walls of houses, as well as the churches, seem to have consisted largely of Scripture texts and moral sentences as in the cases of Pokes, Chiddingly¹; the White house, Balcombe; Hangleton house; and at Scarlett's mill, Cowden, just over the Kentish border—all dating, so far as the decorating is concerned, from the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The tempera paintings at the Mint house, Pevensey, and the Old Flushing inn, Rye², belong to the first half of the sixteenth century.

As such items in our smaller domestic architecture are

¹ *S.A.C.*, liii.

² *S.A.C.*, i. Some interesting 'domestic' wall-paintings have been found at South

Harting, near Cocking, one of c. 1540 (now in the Society's museum at Lewes); and the other late seventeenth-century.

disappearing day by day it may be worth while to record the existence of two picturesque old cottages—one with a thatched roof (the only instance of thatch remaining in Cocking) on the Causeway: the other most charmingly perched on a steep bank in Bell lane, also timber-framed and with stone-rubble filling, flint-cobble and wall and tile hanging. This has a steep-pitched roof. Both date from the sixteenth century. The old toll-gate house, now the village men's reading-room, is of course two centuries later. The cottage behind this, now tiled, used to have a thatched roof.

A bolder effort on the part of 'sleepy Sussex' to preserve such items in its old-time heritage from the so-called 'march of modern improvement' is clearly wanted: that is my excuse for calling attention to such unconsidered trifles. Preserve jealously everything that can be preserved: and where you cannot preserve, record while they still remain these relics of the old England that is changing so rapidly under our saddened eyes—the humble homes of 'the rude forefathers of the hamlet.' If only every parish would make its own record of what has gone and what survives, it would be better than any Government Survey of Ancient Monuments.

I cannot conclude this paper without expressing my very cordial obligations to the Rev. H. L. Randall and Mrs. Randall for much kind assistance in its compilation. It really represents the gatherings and gleanings of more than a quarter of a century, and is for me a memorial of friendship and hospitality.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACTS FROM 'SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PARISH OF COCKING' BY A LATE VICAR
(THOMAS VALENTINE), IN THE PARISH REGISTER [Date about 1850]¹

There was a screen of woodwork between the south chapel and the nave: 'the ends of the upper beams of which are still remaining in the wall.'

There were anciently stalls and 'the places of their insertion in the chancel pavement may be still traced.'

'The lower part of the wooden screen which divided the chancel from the nave still remains under a circular arch of the Norman period.'

'In the paving of the nave one or two coffin-shaped slabs of Petworth marble are worked in, but though their shape marks their age, the

¹ The Rev. Thos. Valentine, M.A. was instituted to the living in 1823.

cross or other memento which once adorned them has long since been effaced.'

'The pulpit is of oak, in the south-east of the nave, and is of the time of James I, though on an old stone foundation of ancient date.'

'The nave is divided from the south aisle already described by an arcade of the same age as that aisle, viz. the fourteenth century, and against the middle column, and opposite the southern door, stands the font, of Petworth marble,¹ and of a circular shape. It is of the same remote date as all the fonts in this part of Sussex, and evidently coeval with the first establishment of Christianity and erection of churches in this district. It is lined with lead, and on the edge are still to be seen the iron staples by which it was securely locked, to secure from profanation the hallowed water and chrism : which in the days of sorcery and witchcraft were supposed a potent ingredient in the composition of charms. It is highly affecting when one stands beside this hallowed relic of a remote and comparatively barbarous age, to reflect on the numerous generations which have here by the regenerating waters of baptism been admitted into covenant with Christ.'

' . . . At the west end of the nave is a tower, which simple as it is in its construction, is an uncommon feature in a Sussex church, and owes its erection to the facility of procuring the malm rock, on which, as has been before mentioned, the village stands : it is of the fourteenth century, the arches of the doors and windows being formed of sandstone from the vicinity of Midhurst. It is finished with a chevron roof, which rises but little above the roof of the church, and contains three very good toned bells, on one of which is inscribed " Sancta Catherina ora pro nobis " ; on another, " Sancta Agatha ora pro nobis." The inscription on the third bell has been worn out, apparently by the fingers of those who have taken hold of it to assist them in getting into the belfry, and there is a coin worked into it. . . .'

'Opposite to the west end of the church stands the Manor farmhouse, which is of considerable extent, though once much larger, as it was a quadrangular building having a court in its centre, but about thirty years since, much of the building having become ruinous, in order to avoid the expense of the necessary repairs, three sides of the edifice were taken down, leaving only the outer walls standing, which mark the original extent. There are several rooms of large size in the present house, and some have arched door-cases of the age of [blank]. This has apparently formed a cell or residence for the monks belonging to the mother abbey in Normandy, as some always resided on their estates in this country to superintend them. In the centre of the village, a spot still called " the Cross." There was once a small green on which stood the village cross, the steps and pedestal of which were in existence in about [blank] years since ; when an unlucky boy having put gun-powder in the groove² which once received the shaft of the cross, split it, and the ruins were drawn away, and used in some buildings on the adjoining farm. A magnificent sycamore overshadowed with its venerable boughs these remains of the cross ; but a farmer, who lived in the opposite house, unfortunately for the picturesque appearance of the village, having a farm in the opposite direction, caused the great ornament to the village street to be cut down, that he might be enabled to overlook the operations of the workmen on it.'

¹ It is of a hard grey stone.—P. M. J.

² i.e., socket.