

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society.

OCTOBER 20, 1890, TO MAY 27, 1891,

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXIII.

BEING No. 3 OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

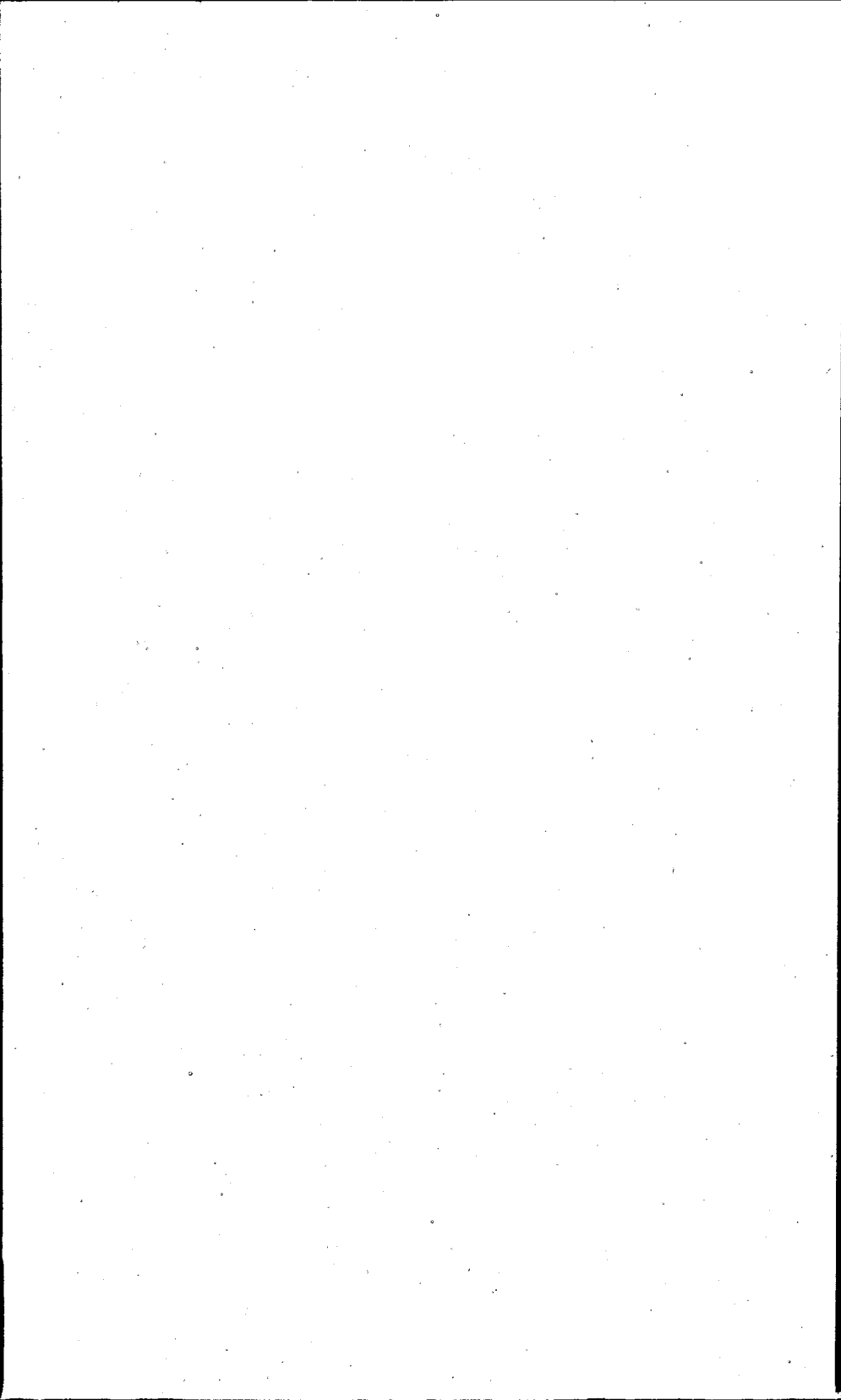
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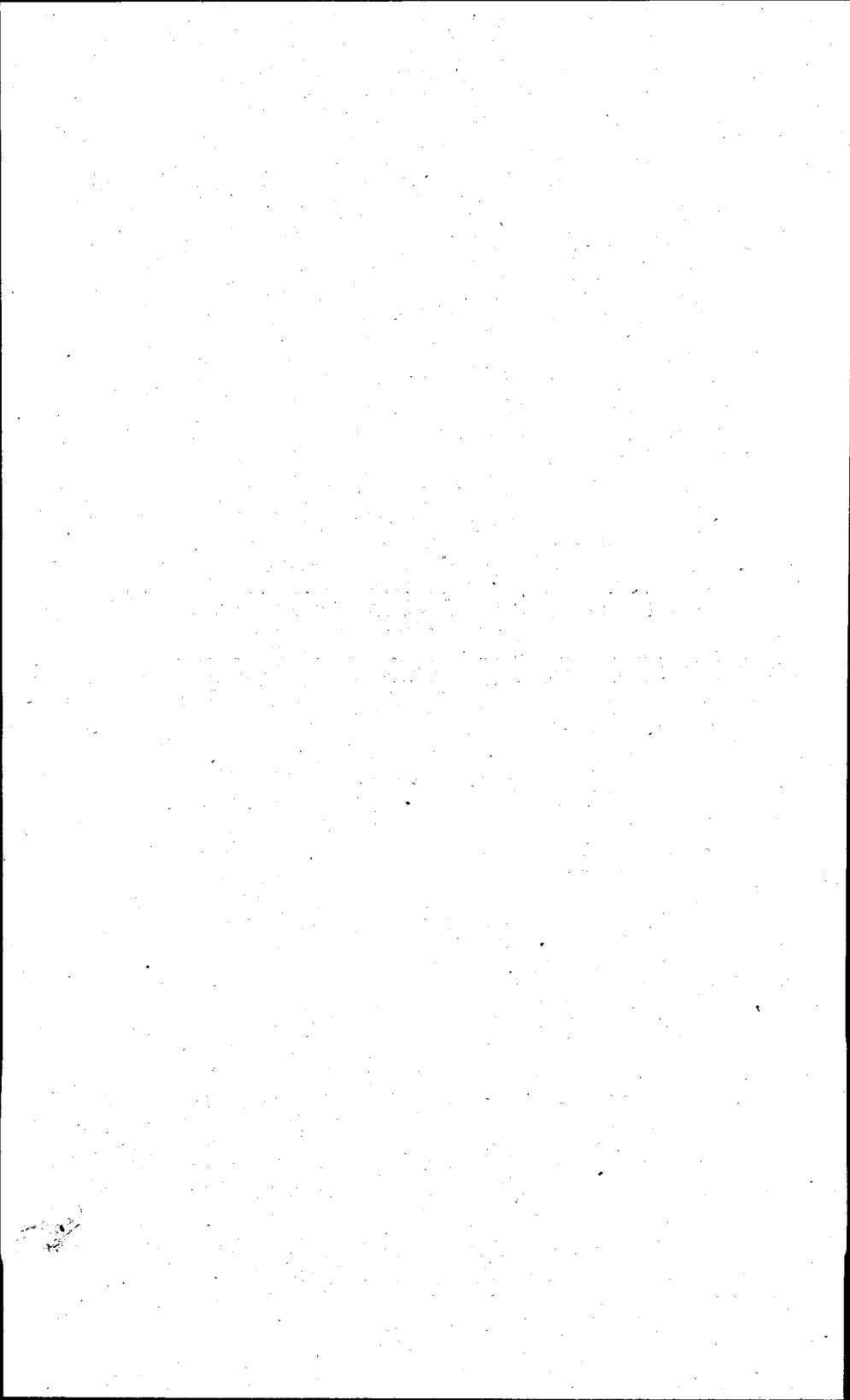
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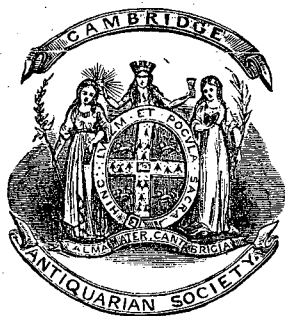


CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
PROCEEDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS.



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OF THE
Cambridge Antiquarian Society,
WITH
COMMUNICATIONS
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VOL. VII.



NEW SERIES.

VOL. I.

1888—1891.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED FOR THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

SOLD BY DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; AND MACMILLAN & BOWES.
LONDON, GEORGE BELL AND SONS.

1893.

Cambridge:

PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A. AND SONS,

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

CONTENTS.

1888—1889.

	PAGE
Exhibition of Roman Pottery found near the Madingley Road. By Professor MACALISTER	1
On a skeleton of a Stag (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>) from Manea Fen. By J. W. CLARK, M.A.	2
On the University of Stamford. By E. G. DE SALIS WOOD, B.D.	2
On an Egyptian <i>Stele</i> . By Professor MACALISTER	3
Notes on an altar-cloth from Lyng Church, Norfolk. By Professor MIDDLETON	4
On an early Christian Inscription at Mertola, Portugal. By H. GADOW, M.A.	7
Exhibition of a medal of Queen Anne, dated 1704. By Miss JODRELL	9
Notes on two Chasubles from Sawston Hall. By Professor MIDDLETON	10
Exhibition of a bronze figure. By Professor HUGHES	13
Exhibition of a sheet of Hamond's plan of Cambridge, 1592. By J. W. CLARK, M.A.	13
Notes on some recent discoveries in Linton Church. By W. M. FAWCETT, M.A.	15
On a collection of Egyptian skulls of the xivth dynasty. By Professor MACALISTER	17
On a MS. copy of the <i>Scala</i> of Johannes Climacus. By F. J. H. JENKINSON, M.A.	"
On certain sculptured stones. By Professor BROWNE	"
Exhibition of the Will of General Arnold. By F. C. WACE, M.A.	18
On the stone of Jællinge. By E. MAGNÚSSON, M.A.	"
On antiquities found near Hauxton. By Professor HUGHES	24
On three choir-stalls from Brampton Church, Hunts. By Professor MIDDLETON	28
On Fine Art as applied to the illustration of the Bible, Sec. ix—xiv, exemplified chiefly by Cambridge MSS. By M. R. JAMES, M.A.	31
Annual Report (No. XLIX) for 1888—89	70

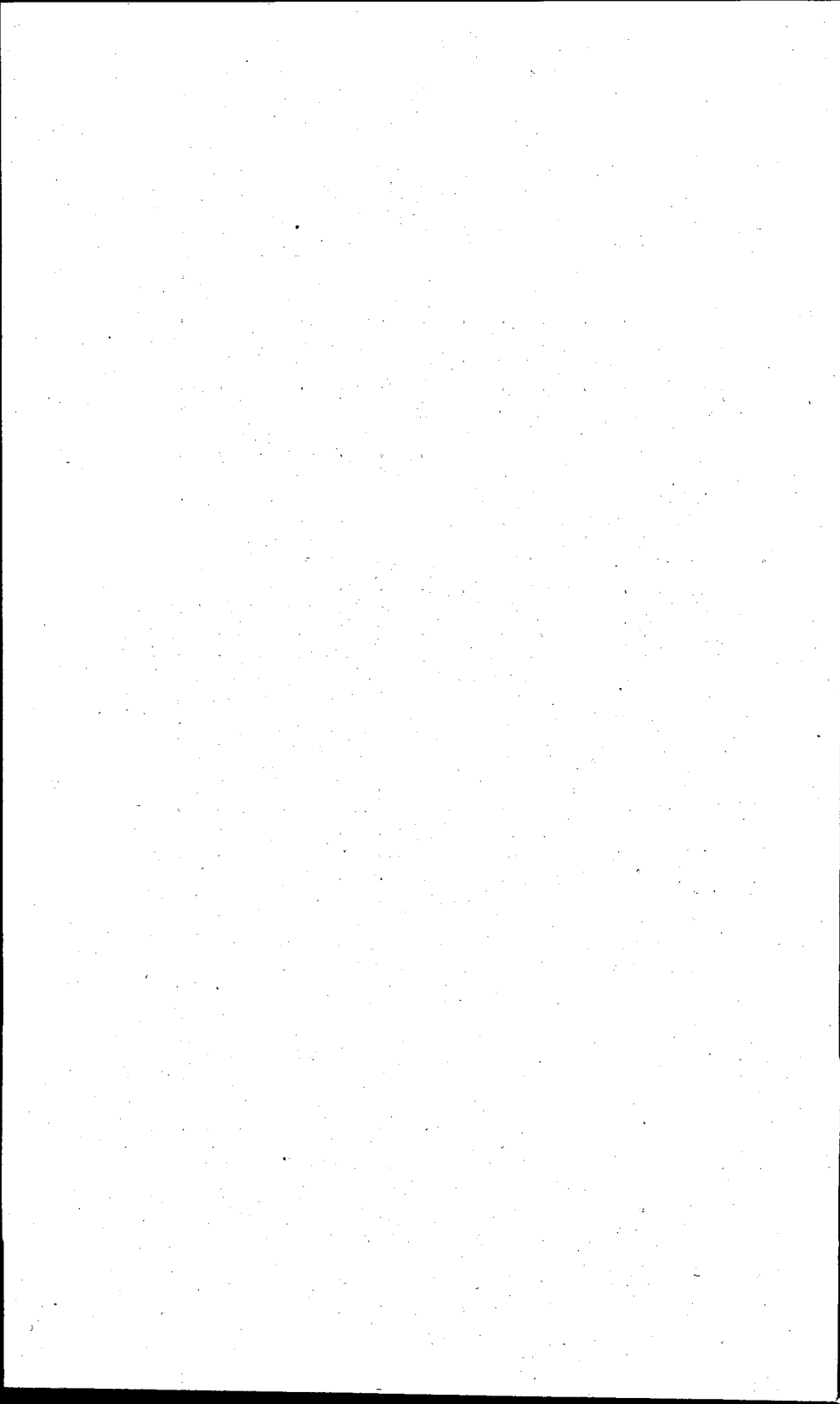
	PAGE
On a blue-glazed Oenochoe of Ptolemaic manufacture	72
List of presents, 1888—89	77
Treasurer's Report	82
List of the Council, 27 May, 1889	83

1889—1890.

On a sculptured stone with a Runic Inscription from Cheshire. By Professor BROWNE	86
On a sculptured stone with an Ogam Inscription. By the same	88
On the old altar-slab of S. Benedict's Church, Cambridge. By the same	89
On the house of the Veysy family in Cambridge. By Mr T. D. ATKINSON	93
On a book printed at Cambridge by John Siberch. By F. J. H. JENKINSON, M.A.	104
On fragments of alabaster retables from Milton and Whittlesford. By Pro- fessor MIDDLETON	106
On the Great Fen Road, and its path to the sea. By Mr E. M. BELOE	112
Exhibition of Bronze Ring-Dials: with remarks by Professor ADAMS	131
Exhibition of sundry objects by Professor and Mrs HUGHES	"
On the purchase of the manor and advowson of Mepal in the xivth century by the Prior and Convent of Ely. By Archdeacon CHAPMAN	"
On the Syriac and Coptic versions of the martyrdom of S. George of Cap- padocia. By E. A. T. W. BUDGE, M.A.	133
On Shengay and its Preceptory. By Rev. W. H. SHIMIELD	136
Notes on the Cultus of S. George of Cappadocia. By E. G. DE SALIS Wood, B.D.	"
Exhibition of a collection of British coins. By Mr F. LATCHMORE	152
On the formation of the ancient Diocese of Ely. By E. G. DE SALIS WOOD, B.D.; and Rev. E. VENABLES, M.A.	157
Annual Report (No. 1) for 1889—90	168
On a sixteenth century Cullen ware jug. By Professor MIDDLETON	169
On a Christian engraved gem in the Lewis Collection. By the same	171
On the parish registers of Abington Pigotts. By Rev. W. G. F. PIGOTT, M.A.	175
On a Roman refuse-pit in Alderney. By Baron A. von HÜGEL, M.A.	"
List of presents, 1889—90	176
Treasurer's Report	182
List of the Council, 19 May, 1890	183

1890—1891.

	PAGE
On stakes and pottery from Loch Maree. By Professor HUGHES . . .	185
On Roman antiquities found at Newton. By Mr HURRELL . . .	„
On a letter from P. Kaetz to J. Siberch. By F. J. H. JENKINSON, M.A. . .	186
Notes on the history of the parish of Tadlow. By Rev. H. W. STEVENS, M.A.	189
On coins and other objects found in Peterborough. By Mr J. W. BODGER . .	„
On a hitherto unknown book printed by John Lettou. By Mr E. GORDON DUFF	190
On a signet-ring of the 15th century. By Professor MIDDLETON . . .	193
On the canopy carried over Queen Elizabeth when she visited Cambridge in 1564. By J. W. CLARK, M.A.	194
On a bird's-eye view of Clare Hall, taken in 1714. By the same . . .	197
Are the Cambridgeshire ditches referred to by Tacitus (Annals xii. 31)? By W. RIDGEWAY, M.A.	200
On the date of Ingulf's History of Croyland Abbey. By Rev. W. G. SEARLE .	207
Notes on the architectural history of Horham Hall, Essex. By Mr T. D. ATKINSON	210
An attempt to trace the architectural history of Barnwell Priory. By J. W. CLARK, M.A.	222
Exhibition of a bronze medal, dated 1794. By Mr RHODES	252
On some antiquities found at Great Thurlow. By Professor HUGHES . . .	„
Letters of Wren and Hawksmoor on a proposed new bridge at S. John's College, 1697—98. By R. F. SCOTT, M.A.	254
Letters concerning the controversy between S. John's College and Trinity College on the enclosure of Garret Hostel Green and Trinity College Walks, 1599—1600. By the same	261
Speeches commemorative of Rev. S. S. LEWIS, Secretary	286
On Sakit Canoes. By S. J. HICKSON, M.A.	289
Annual Report (No. LI) for 1890—91	295
Address by the President, Professor HUGHES	296
Exhibition of antiquities found near Newmarket, and presented to the Museum by Mr A. C. WRIGHT	307
List of presents	308
Treasurer's Report	314
List of the Council	315



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTES ON LINTON CHURCH, CAMBS.

Plate I.	Transverse section of Linton Church, Cambs. }	To face p. 16
— II.	Longitudinal " " " " }	

ON THE STONE OF JÆLLINGE.

— III.	View of two sides of the stone	p. 18
--------	------------------------------------------	-------

ON ANTIQUITIES FOUND NEAR HAUXTON, CAMBS.

— IV.	Two millstones	p. 25
— V.	Three specimens of pottery	p. 26
— VI.	Group of iron objects	p. 27

ON THREE CHOIR-STALLS FROM BRAMPTON, HUNTS.

— VII.	Carvings on the misericords	p. 30
--------	---------------------------------------	-------

ON FINE ART APPLIED TO THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE BIBLE.

— VIII.	Fig. 1. Vision of Ezechiel; from Bible in Corpus Christi Coll. Library. Fig. 2. A Trial; initial letter to the Wisdom of Solomon; ibid.	p. 34
— IX.	S. Luke; from the Gregorian Gospels; ibid.	p. 46
— X.	Fig. 1. The Sacrifice of Isaac; from a ms of the Psychomachia of Prudentius; ibid. Fig. 2. Abraham and Melchisedek, from the same ms	p. 56
— XI.	Fig. 1. Lot carried into captivity. Fig. 2. Abraham and the three Angels. From the same ms	p. 56
— XII.	A page from the Biblia Pauperum; from Corpus Christi Coll. Library	p. 58

ON AN OENOCHOE.

Plate XIII. A blue-glazed Oenochoe of Ptolemaic manufacture	To face p. 72
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

ON THE ALTAR-SLAB OF S. BENEDICT'S CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE.

Fig. 1. The Altar-slab	p. 89
— 2. One of the crosses on the slab	p. 90

ON THE HOUSE OF THE VEYSY FAMILY IN CAMBRIDGE.

Plate XIV. Cellar plan, and section on line BB.	To face p. 100
— XV. Ground-floor plan	" p. 100
— XVI. First-floor plan	" p. 100
— XVII. Outside elevation of north wall	" p. 100
— XVIII. Section on AA.	" p. 100
— XIX. Details of windows, chimneys, etc.	" p. 100
— XX. " internal woodwork	" p. 100
— XXI. Elevation and details of west fire-place, Room C	" p. 100
— XXII. Part of the same fire-place, on larger scale	" p. 100
— XXIII. Elevation and details of east fire-place, Room C	" p. 100
— XXIV. " " fire-place, Room G	" p. 100
— XXV. Carvings on above fire-place	" p. 100

THE GREAT FEN ROAD.

— XXVI. Sketch plan, shewing the path of the Road	" p. 116
— XXVII. Plan to shew the position of the sections given on Pl. XXVIII.	" p. 116
— XXVIII. Sections of the Road	" p. 116
— XXIX. Roman pottery found at Eldernell	" p. 116

ON ALABASTER RETABLES FROM MILTON AND WHITTLESFORD.

— XXX. } Fragments of the retable from Whittles-	
— XXXI. } ford Church: for description see p. 110	" p. 110
— XXXII. }	
— XXXIII. }	

SHENGAY AND ITS PRECEPTORY.

Fig. 1. Rough plan of Shengay and its neighbourhood	p. 136
— 2. Site of Preceptory	p. 137
— 3. Gravestone of Robert Dalison	p. 140
— 4. Reduced copy of Cole's sketch of Shengay Chapel	p. 145

ON AN ENGRAVED GEM IN THE LEWIS COLLECTION.

— 1. The Good Shepherd, from a gem	p. 173
----------------------------------------------	--------

ON A VIEW OF CLARE HALL, DATED 1714.

Plate XXXIV. Bird's eye view of Clare Hall	To follow p. 196
Fig. 1. Hamond's plan of Clare Hall, dated 1592	p. 199

ARE THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE DITCHES REFERRED TO BY TACITUS?

Plate XXXV. Map of the county described	To face p. 200
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NOTES ON HORHAM HALL, ESSEX.

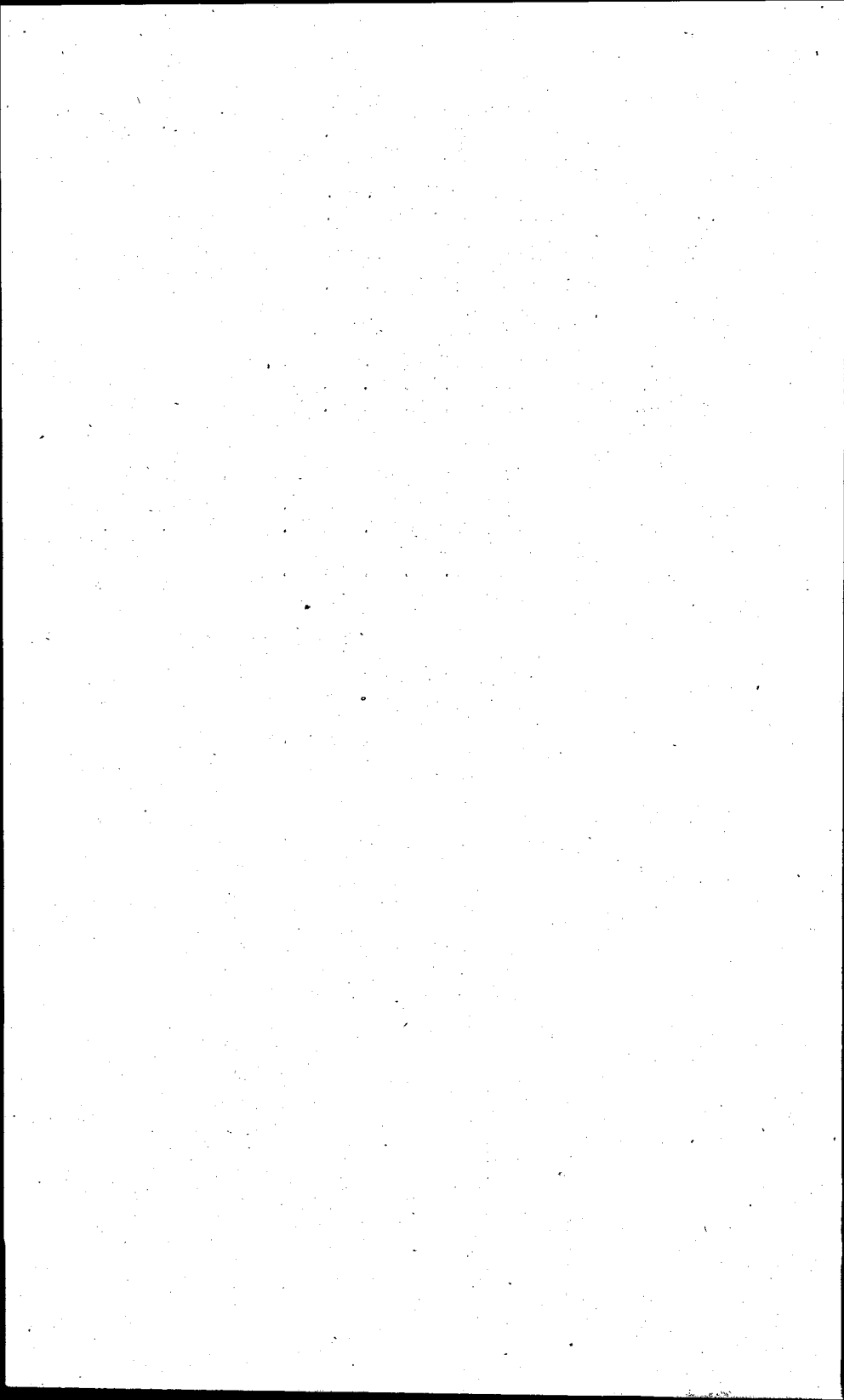
— XXXVI. Ground-plan of the Hall	p. 212
— XXXVII. Plan of the Roof	p. 214
— XXXVIII. Details of the same	p. 215
For description of these plates see pp. 220, 221.	

ON THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF BARNWELL PRIORY.

— XXXIX. Ground-plan of existing remains	p. 238
— XL. Elevation of portions of the same	p. 239
— XLI. Ground-plan of the site, with suggested arrangement of the buildings	p. 248

ON PROPOSED BRIDGE AT S. JOHN'S COLLEGE.

— XLII. Plan by Nicholas Hawksmoor for S. John's College Bridge, 1698	p. 255
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Dr LUARD stated that even that pioneer of historical investigation, Dr Maitland, had quoted stories from Ingulf as if they had been undoubtedly genuine, and mentioned that the XIth century was the usual time for forgeries of this kind rather than the XIVth. With regard to *Charters*, he thought that genuine charters had frequently the names of false witnesses attached to them, which had been introduced at a later time in order to give a higher value to the document; so that often charters were a better test of the witnesses than the witnesses of the charters.

Mr T. D. ATKINSON made the following communication :

NOTES ON THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HORHAM HALL, ESSEX.

The general history of the manor of Horham and of the families who have possessed it has been written very fully by Mr H. W. King, Honorary Secretary of the Essex Archaeological Society¹. In these notes, therefore, no more will be attempted than an outline of the architectural history. It may be useful, however, before describing the building, to quote from Mr King some of the principal facts about its various owners.

Horham² is one of the five manors into which Thaxted was divided shortly after the Domesday Survey. Its history down to the end of the fourteenth century can be traced in some detail, but this is succeeded by a gap of fifty years, during which nothing is known of its owners. In 1451 the manor was held by Richard Large, of London, who was probably heir of Robert Large, Mercer, Lord Mayor in 1349, but when and how it came into the possession of this family does not appear. It was sold by the executors of Alice Large in 1494 for eight hundred marks to Richard Quadryng of Lincolnshire, who sold it again in 1502 to Sir John Cutte.

¹ "The descent of the Manor of Horham and of the family of Cutts." *Trans. Essex Archæol. Soc.* First Ser., Vol. iv.

² The name Horham is said to be derived from the Saxon *Ora*, a skirt or border, and *Ham*, a house, i.e. the house on the boundary. If this be so, a more appropriate name could not have been chosen, for the boundary between the Parishes of Thaxted and Broxton passes through the Hall.

The Cutte family is the most interesting of those who possessed Horham. This Sir John was Treasurer of the Household to King Henry VIII., and he seems to have been the founder of the family fortunes. It is not known who his father was. He is said to have built the greater part of the present house, but he left it—or at least the chapel—unfinished at his death in 1520; for he directs in his Will that his body shall be buried in Thaxted Church until his own chapel shall be finished. His large possessions passed to his eldest son, a boy of thirteen, who married, when seventeen, Lucy, widow of Sir Anthony Browne, standard-bearer to Henry VII., and daughter and coheiress of the Marquess of Montacute. But he died on reaching manhood (1528), leaving a son three years old, who died when he was but thirty (1555) leaving a son of ten. This latter, John, the last of the family to possess Horham, lived to the allotted threescore and ten years, being born in the reign of Queen Mary and dying in that of King James. He appears to have lived chiefly at his other seat, Childerley, in Cambridgeshire; and, his magnificence finally obliging him to part with Horham, he sold it in 1599 to Thomas Kemp. Kemp sold it to Sir William Smijth of Hill Hall, Essex, in whose family it remained till 1854, when it was exchanged for another estate, with the present owner.

The present house forms a part only of the original building, or at all events of the original design, of Sir John Cutte. It is said that the moat¹ surrounded the house; that on the bridge which crossed it opposite the porch there stood a gateway tower; and that adjoining the north wing there was a chapel. Of course there must also have been large outbuildings. I do not know that there is any evidence that all these buildings were ever finished, but I believe there is no reason to suppose that they were not, and the foundations of some of them, at least, may be traced on the turf in a dry summer. We know that Sir John died before his chapel was finished, and it is possible that no building-work was done during the long

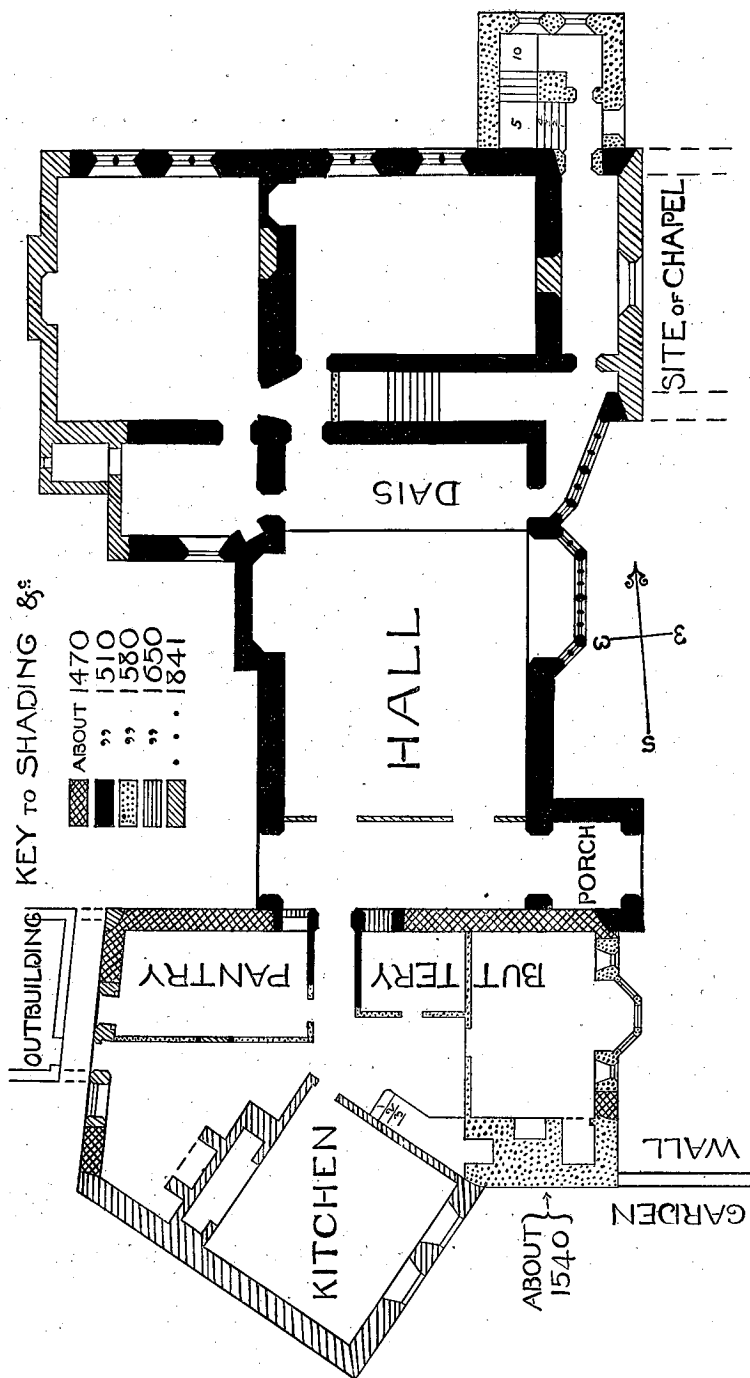
¹ At present the moat begins opposite the porch, encircles the northern half of the house, and ends again about opposite the western entrance.

HORHAM HALL GROUND PLAN

SCALE 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 FEET

KEY TO SHADING &c

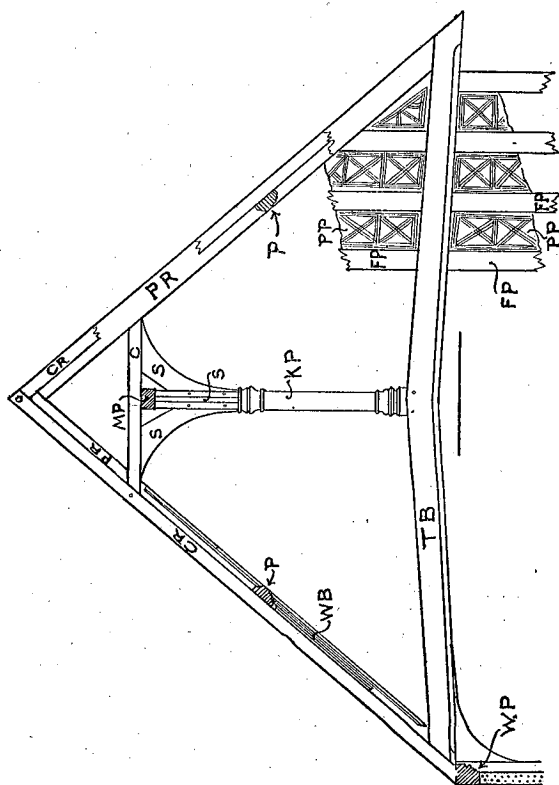
	ABOUT 1470
	" 1510
	" 1580
	" 1650
	" 1841



minorities of his son and grandson. If this be the case perhaps the buildings were never finished.

The general arrangement of the house, and the periods to which the different parts may be referred, will be understood from the ground-plan (Pl. XXXVI). It still retains the general arrangement of a typical medieval house, as shewn, for instance, in the block of buildings between the upper and lower courts at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire. The hall, as the principal and most important apartment, occupies a central position. At the south end are the kitchen and offices, at the north end the private rooms of the owner of the house. Each of these wings is in two floors. The hall is of the same height as the wings, and, having no rooms over it, forms the only means of communication between them. The inconvenience of this arrangement was in some houses avoided by constructing a gallery along the side of the hall at the level of the upper storey; but no such gallery exists at Horham. The irregular bay window at the north-east corner of the hall, which makes such a pretty feature outside, was no doubt designed to light the passage leading to the chapel. On the upper floor it lighted a ladies' gallery, which had also a window commanding the hall. From the screens there were originally three doors leading to the offices; one—still used—leading to the kitchen, and two others, now blocked, opening into the pantry and buttery respectively. Over these are two windows, one of which was perhaps a door to the gallery over the screens. The hall has a flat ceiling, with an opening communicating by a shaft with the lantern in the roof.

There are some peculiarities in the plan, due in most cases to the alterations that have been made at different times. The position behind the dais of the stairs leading to the cellar is unusual, though I am not sure that this is not a part of the original design. If so, the stairs leading to the upper floor may have been in a straight flight over them, a landing at the top giving access to the ladies' gallery, to the bedrooms, and probably also to a gallery for the use of the family in the chapel. On the other hand we might



HORHAM HALL

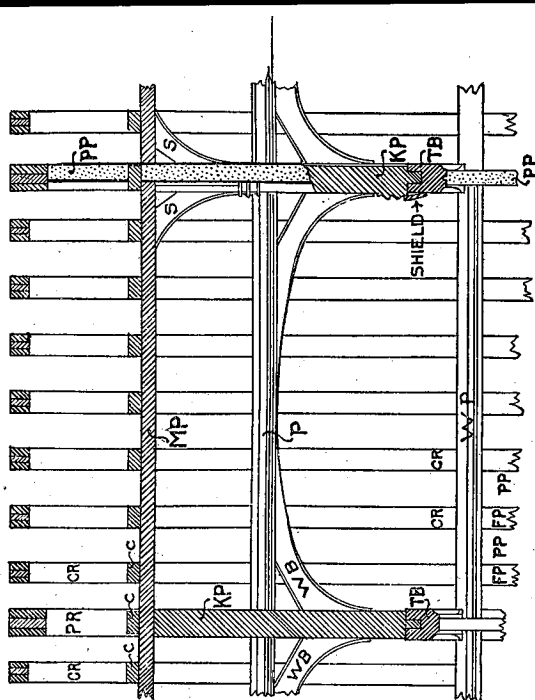
ROOF OVER SOUTH WING

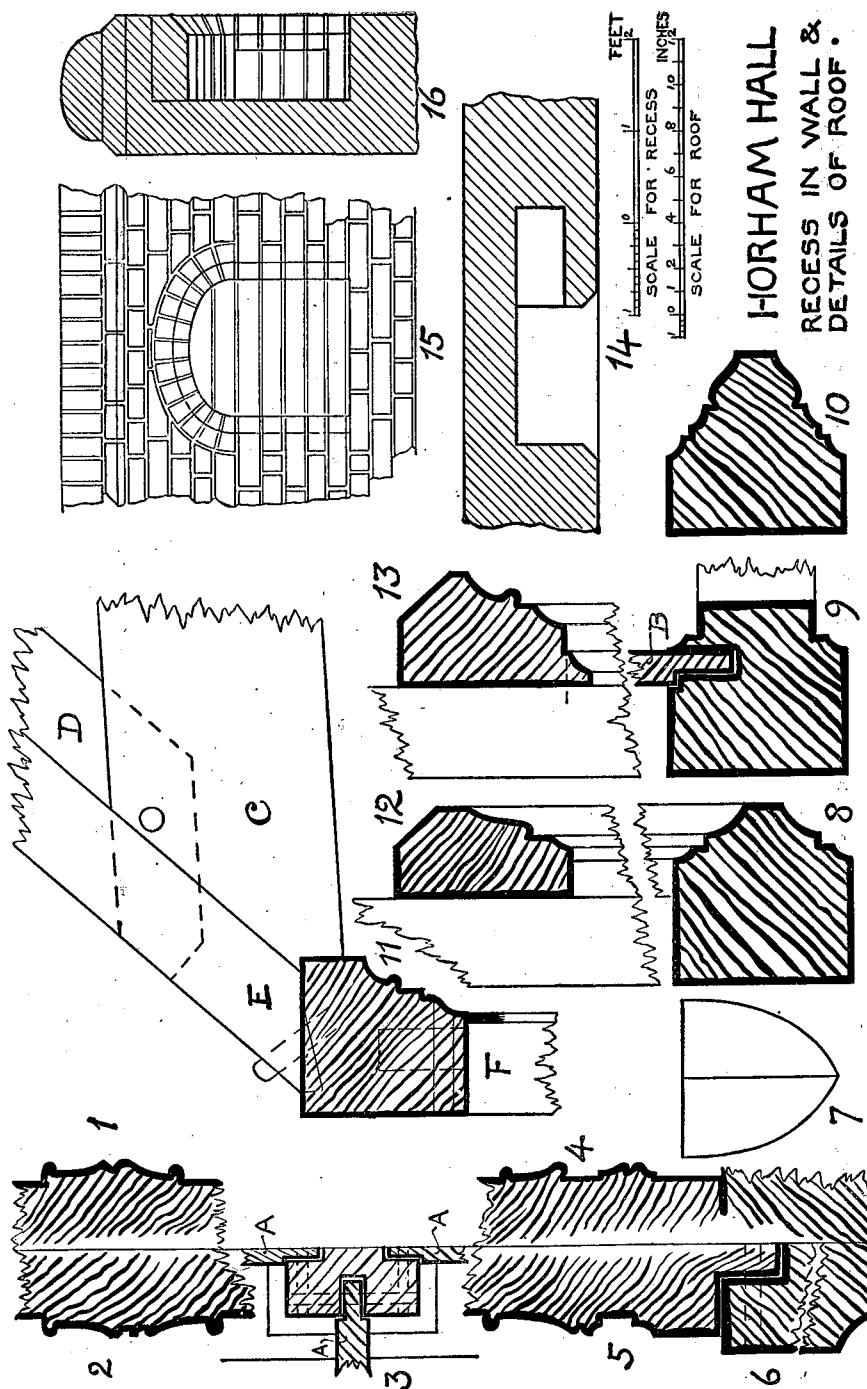
SCALE 0 5 10 FEET

NAMES OF TIMBERS &c

TB Tie-beam.
KP King-post.
S Shrub.
MP Middle purlin.
C Collar.
PR Principal rafter.
CR Common rafter.
P Purlin.

WB Wind-brace.
WP Wall-plate.
FP Framing of Partition.
PP Fuggering in Partition.





HORHAM HALL RECESS IN WALL & DETAILS OF ROOF.

have expected to find these stairs in the angle between the west side of the hall and the north wing, where there is now a small room; but, in the present instance, I am inclined to put them over the stairs leading to the cellar. The arrangement of the existing principal staircase is also unusual. It occupies a tower at the north-east corner of the house, with a room at the top from which a turret-stair leads to the roof.

I am quite unable to explain the irregular setting-out of work of two distinct periods in the south wing, namely the west wall and the kitchen. Possibly the position of the moat, or of some buildings now removed, may have had something to do with it.

In the south face of the garden wall, part of which is shewn on the plan, are three recesses, of which illustrations are here given (Plate xxxviii, figs. 14, 15, 16). What their use was, I cannot positively say. It has been suggested to me that they are nests for pigeons. This is extremely probable, as the plan is exactly that of a cell of a pigeon-house. If this be so, they would, presumably, have been used for a few specially valuable birds, as they would only accommodate six birds in all. There must moreover have been a lean-to shed against the wall, forming a coop, but the wall now shews no signs of this.

The Architectural History, to which we may now proceed, has been generally supposed to begin with Sir John Cutte in 1502, the hall and the two rooms to the north of it, built by him between 1502 and 1520, being thought to be the oldest part of the house. I think that there is good reason for believing that the greater part of the south wing is older, and that it was built by Richard Large, some fifty years before (Plate xxxvi). The general architectural character of this part of the house is that of about a century later, new windows having been inserted, and a very beautiful chimney-stack built, at that period. The remains of the earlier work are (1) the roof, the existence of which was not known till I had the good fortune to discover it in the summer of 1890, (2) the gable walls.

(1) The very beautiful and richly moulded open timber

roof (Pls. XXXVII, XXXVIII), at present hidden by a modern ceiling, clearly once belonged to one of the best rooms of the house—probably the solar—and not to any part of the offices, as at present. Now this part is, and always has been, allotted to the servants in the house as it now exists, for it is contrary to all known arrangements of medieval houses that any of the family rooms should be placed at the kitchen-end of the hall. The roof in question must therefore have belonged to an earlier house. That it is in its original position, and has not been brought from another building, is certain, for, in the first place, the spaces between the timbers of the central truss are filled in with upright timbers and pugging covered with plaster, so as to form a partition (Pl. XXXVII), and this would hardly have survived a removal. Moreover there is a partition of the same character, and clearly contemporary with the roof, below the tie-beam. In the second place the trusses are connected by the original wind-braces¹, and these would probably not have been so carefully refixed in a roof over butteries. Thirdly, these wind-braces shew that the trusses are at the proper distance apart, and as the latter divide the length of the building into four equal intervals, it follows that the roof must have been designed for the present building, or for one of exactly the same length.

But, in addition to the evidence afforded by its situation, the character of the roof itself points to its being earlier than the rest of the house. The central truss is ornamented with a small shield² of early form (Pl. XXXVII, fig. 2, Pl. XXXVIII, fig. 7); and, though the mouldings are late in style, the method of construction is also early. A tie-beam carrying a central post and cross-beam to support the middle part of the principal rafters is characteristic of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, later roofs dispensing with the tie-beam and post, and supporting the principal rafters more directly from

¹ The rafters are carried by horizontal pieces called *purlins* (Pl. XXXVII, *P*) resting on the trusses. These purlins are strengthened by diagonal struts called *wind-braces* (*Wb*).

² It is unfortunately not charged with any arms, but is quite blank.

the walls. I was at first surprised to find late mouldings and an early method of construction employed together, but I presently discovered why the early method of construction had been adopted. There is just room to pass the hand between one of the old wall-plates and the modern ceiling, and on doing so I found that there were large mortices, or holes to receive the ends of upright timbers, at regular intervals in the wall-plate (Pls. XXXVII, XXXVIII, fig. 11), shewing that the south side at least of the building had been constructed of timber. Thus it was necessary to have a tie-beam to prevent the feet of the rafters from spreading outwards, and pushing over a slight timber-wall. But for all this the roof can hardly be later than the last half of the fifteenth century—let us say 1470.

Clearly then—from its position and richness taken together, and from its architectural character—the roof must have covered some of the best rooms of an earlier house, not improbably a house with a hall in a similar position to the present hall and with kitchens where the present sitting rooms are.

(2) To this may be added some evidence of a technical character—not as to the use, but as to the early date of the building—namely, that afforded by the gable-walls. This evidence is afforded by the irregular character of the brickwork. It is common enough to find the use of either of the two systems of bricklaying known as *English bond*¹ and *Flemish bond* accepted as evidence as to date, but I have nowhere found it observed that no system at all was followed till brickwork had been in general use for some little time, namely (in East Anglia) till about the beginning of the sixteenth century. The work is quite irregular, and generally there are far too great a number of “stretchers.” It was evidently done by masons—men accustomed to work in a material too irregular to allow of a rule of thumb. This is true not only in the rarer instances of thirteenth and fourteenth century brickwork, but down to quite the close of the

¹ It may be explained that in English bond (the earlier system) one course of bricks shews only the ends (*headers*), the next only the sides (*stretchers*) and so on, while in Flemish bond every course shews sides and ends alternately.

fifteenth century. Of course the two methods—or rather the method and the want of method—overlap, according as a good or bad bricklayer was employed; and so we sometimes find irregular brickwork of a later date than a piece of good English bond. It should also be observed that in early examples of English bond, the bricklayer was easily put out by having to form a chequer pattern of blue bricks, which rather interfered with his system, and so the work, at first sight, looks like the early irregular walling; later, he was able to form this pattern without allowing it to make any material irregularity. Both the gable-walls of this wing are of this unsystematic character, and in strong contrast with the work of 1510, which is in good English bond with a chequer pattern. Also the bricks used at the two periods are of a different size.

These facts, namely, that brickwork of this description occurs alongside a piece of early brickwork in good English bond; that the roof is of an early character; and that one so ornamental covers buildings which were used early in the sixteenth century as butteries, lead me to put the date of this part of the house in the latter half of the fifteenth century.

For what use it was originally designed is a matter of pure speculation. It may have been the chapel (it runs east and west) or it may have been the hall and solar of the Large family; the partition under the middle truss forming the division—partly open—between the chancel and nave, or between the solar and hall, as the case may be. It should be mentioned that the eastern half of the roof is more richly ornamented than the western, as will be seen by comparing the drawings of the western principal and purlin (Pl. XXXVIII, figs. 8, 12) with those of the eastern principal and purlin (Ibid. figs. 10, 13).

In 1502 comes Sir John Cutte, builds his grand new place, and converts the older building into what we should call his offices, his kitchen probably occupying a position somewhat similar to that of the present one, and his buttery and pantry being to right and left of the passage leading to it, very much as they are at present, but with the doors, now blocked, opening into the

screens. Sir John, as befits a high court official, has rather advanced notions on the subject of personal comfort, and builds three rooms, besides the hall, on the ground-floor—unless the smaller one was the space occupied by the staircase—two or three bedrooms and a private chapel.

His short-lived son and grandson did little or nothing in the way of building during their long minorities, and possibly did not even finish the chapel. The staircase-tower was probably added by his great grandson, whose extravagant hospitality, however, obliged him to part with the manor. Except the rebuilding of the kitchen in about 1650, and some alterations made in 1841, there are no further architectural changes to record.

The house has suffered severely at the hands of the vandals. The panelling has been removed from the hall and all the rest of the house has been fitted up in a style suited to the taste of fifty years ago.

Mr A. P. HUMPHRY mentioned that early in the present century the panelling had been removed from Horham Hall to the House of Commons.

EXPLANATION OF THE PLATES.

(Pl. XXXVI—XXXVIII.)

PLATE I. *Ground plan.*

(Names of rooms shew their *original*, not their *present* uses. Of the dates assigned to the different parts, 1510 (approximately) and 1841 are derived from documentary evidence; the others are conjectured from the style of the buildings to which they are attributed.)

PLATE II. *Roof over south wing (Buttery and Pantry).*

Fig. 1. Centre truss, shewing part of the partition.

Fig. 2. One bay, shewing centre truss and east truss.

PLATE III. (a) *Details of roof over south wing* (Figs. 1—13); (b) *One of the recesses in the garden-wall* (Figs. 14—16).

- (a) Fig. 1. Section of capital of king post : centre truss.
 " 2. Do. do. west truss.
 " 3. Plan of king post : west truss : shewing struts (A.A.)
 tenoned in.
 " 4. Section of base of king post : centre truss.
 " 5. Do. do. west truss.
 " 6. Section of tie-beams.
 " 7. Elevation of shield on east side of tie-beam of centre truss.
 " 8. Section of principal rafter : west truss.
 " 9. Do. do. centre truss : shewing wind-
 brace (B) tenoned in.
 " 10. Do. do. : east truss.
 " 11. Section of wall-plate : shewing (C) end of tie-beam : (D)
 foot of principal rafter : (E) foot of common rafter :
 (F) top of timber framing (now removed), which formed
 the south side of the building.
 " 12. Section of purlin : west of centre truss.
 " 13. Do. : east of centre truss.
 (b) " 14. Plan of recess in garden wall.
 " 15. Elevation do. do.
 " 16. Section do. do.

N.B. In the details of the roof, the dotted lines shew tenons and pins.

Mr T. D. ATKINSON then made a preliminary report, illustrated by a plan, on the excavations made by Mr C. P. Allix in 1890 on the site of a Priory of Benedictine nuns at Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridgeshire.

Mr ALLIX mentioned that some interesting ironwork and pottery had been found at Swaffham, and expressed a hope that he would be able to continue his excavations next autumn.

CONTENTS

OF PROCEEDINGS, No. XXXIII.

VOL. VII. No. III.

	PAGE.
On a letter from P. Kaetz to J. Siborch. By F. J. H. JENKINSON, M.A.	186
On a hitherto unknown book printed by John Lettou. By Mr E. GORDON DUFF	190
On a canopy carried over Queen Elizabeth on her visit to the University, 1564. By J. W. CLARK, M.A.	194
On a bird's-eye view of Clare Hall, 1714. By the same	197
Are the Cambridgeshire Ditches referred to by Tacitus? By W. RIDGEWAY, M.A.	200
On the origin and date of Ingulf's History of Croyland Abbey. By Rev. W. G. SEARLE, M.A.	207
Notes on the architectural history of Horham Hall, Essex. By Mr T. D. ATKINSON	210
On the architectural history of Barnwell Priory. By J. W. CLARK, M.A.	222
On some antiquities found at Great Thurlow. By Professor HUGHES .	252
Letters of Wren and Hawksmoor on a proposed bridge at S. John's College. By R. F. SCOTT, M.A.	254
Letters on the enclosure of Trinity College Walks and Garrett Hostel Green. By the same	261
Comments on the loss of Rev. S. S. Lewis (Secretary)	286
On Sakit Canoes	289
Annual Report (presented 27 May, 1891).	295
Address by Professor HUGHES, President	296
List of Presents	308
Treasurer's Report	314