



 An Executive Agency of
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

A259 PEVENSEY TO BEXHILL IMPROVEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

VOLUME 2 : Archaeological Assessment
Report

September 1994

John Samuels Archaeological Consultants

John Samuels
Archaeological Consultants

*6 Old North Road
Cromwell Newark
Nottinghamshire NG23 6ER*

*Telephone (0636) 821727
Fax (0636) 822080
Mobile (0636) 163822*

A259 PEVENSEY - BEXHILL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

CONTENTS

Final Report together with supporting maps

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Appendix 1. | Extracts from the Sites and Monuments Record |
| Appendix 2. | Earlier maps |
| Appendix 3. | Relevant articles |

1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.** John Samuels Archaeological Consultants were appointed as sub-consultants to Derek Lovejoy Partnership to undertake the archaeological assessment of the proposed A259 Pevensey-Bexhill improvement.
- 1.2.** The Study Area was approximately 700m either side of the existing A259 from Haven Roundabout to the junction with the Bexhill and Hastings Western bypass (see Fig.1).
- 1.3.** Most of the area is part of the Pevensey Levels, a large flat open landscape of reclaimed marshland rising fairly steeply at the eastern end of the A259 just beyond the Lamb Inn.

2.0. METHOD

- 2.1.** Relevant information was obtained from East Sussex County Council's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and analysed (see Appendix 1).
- 2.2.** A search was made for any relevant maps in East Sussex County Records Office and copies of maps obtained for analysis (see Appendix 2).
- 2.3.** Lists of relevant aerial photographs were obtained from the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and the University of Cambridge Committee for Aerial Photography.

- - 2.4. A rapid walk-over survey of an area approximately 50.00m either side of the proposed route was undertaken in August 1992 to identify known sites on the ground and to indicate areas suitable for more detailed fieldwork such as surveying, intensive fieldwalking, geophysical surveys, paleoenvironmental sampling or trial excavations.
 -
 - 2.5. A visit was made to Lewes Museum to see if any further relevant information was available.
 -
 - 2.6. Informal discussions have been held with East Sussex County Council's Archaeologist and the Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage on the method of assessment and its results.

3.0.ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- - 3.1. All of the available archaeological information has been analysed, plotted and an assessment made of the impact of the proposed road scheme based upon the requirements of DOE Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 and best archaeological practice.
 -
 - 3.2. East Sussex has an established history of archaeological research through the Sussex Archaeological Society which is reflected in its well-maintained Sites and Monuments Record.

- 3.3. The Pevensey Levels is an area of marshland which has been reclaimed since the medieval period and its present pattern of drains, fields and roads was established by the early 19th century. This process has been well described and discussed by Salzmann, 1910 and Dulley, 1966 (see Appendix 4). The only major alteration in the area since then has been the replacement of the Old Marsh Road by the present A259 in the 1930's.
- 3.4. The Sites and Monuments Record identified eight sites of archaeological interest. Two of these, Manxey and Northeye, are deserted medieval villages and are both Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). Both occupy slightly higher ground and consist of substantial earthworks. Another earthwork (SMR 529) adjacent to the south side of the Old Marsh Road had been described as a moat but is thought to have been a sheep enclosure of medieval or later date. All of the other recorded archaeological sites are areas of medieval salt-panning which consist of irregular low mounds.
- 3.5. No further archaeological features are recorded on any of the maps examined and the rapid walk-over survey failed to identify any other sites of interest.
- 3.6. Aerial photography does not appear to have identified any further sites of archaeological interest.
- 3.7. None of the sites identified (see Fig.1 and Appendix 1) will be affected physically or visually by the proposed road scheme.

- 3.8. There is no requirement for further archaeological evaluation.
- 3.9. The possibility of new sites being found when road construction commences is low and, by raising the road on an embankment, the damage to any buried site is minimised.

Dr. John Samuels BA, PhD MIFA

Wednesday 23rd September, 1992

Appendix 1

**Extracts from East Sussex County Council's
Sites and Monuments Record**

SMR 526 : Homestead including moat and enclosures - Site of Manxey DMV

SAM 209

Grid. Ref: TQ65140702

Description :

At TQ 6514 0702 there is an area raised slightly above the general level of the marshes. On this is a large well-preserved moat, with some enclosures and a pond (clearly contemporary) adjacent on the north.

This was discovered and surveyed during field investigation.

The moat is shown and described as 'Pound' on Richard Budgen's map of 1724, and the field in which it is situated is called 'Pound Field' on the Pevensey Tithe Map of 1838. 'Pound' may refer to a later use.

The features are in Manxey Level and the raised area probably represents the original 'Mannic's Island' (see EPN Sussex II 444-5).

A Chapel at Manxey is well authenticated and its site has probably now been established some 200m SSW of the moat (see Sussex 69 NE 4). It is also recorded that a messuage and 12 acres and 1 rood of land 'in Haylesham and Manaksey' was granted to Michelham Priory in 1341 (a), and that in 1405 Robert de Mankesey granted 60 acres of land, with all the buildings on it, to provide a chaplain for the chapel (b).

In a 16th C. Rent Book two messuages are mentioned at Manxey (c). The features described probably represent the site of the manor house at Manxey and buildings and earthworks connected with it.

A homestead moat and associated earthworks, now under pasture, as described by Authy 1. The moat is rectangular and part-waterfilled, measuring overall c.84.0 m NW-SE by c.62.0m transversely, with arms 12.0m wide, which are cut into the higher NW side to a depth of 2.0m, but reduced on the lower SE side to c. 0.5m where it is retained by an outer bank. Disturbed ground on the NW side of the enclosed area indicates the probable site of a house (2).

The associated earthworks suggest a typical small DMV with sunken trackways and enclosures.

Published survey (25" revised).

There may be a direct connection between the deserton of the homestead moat and probable DMN and the decline of the salt workings from the 13th C onwards situated c 600.0m to the SE (3).

References :

1. A. Clarke, 24.2.60 and C.F. Wardale 2.3.60
a. Sx. A.C. VOL 6 (1853), P. 37
b. Sx. Rec. Soc. vol. 46 (1942-3) pp 319, 363, 376
c. Sx. A.C. vol 45 (1902) pp. 147-179
2. PAS 9.4.73
3. NK 10.5.73

SMR 526 : St. Mary's Chapel (site of)

Grid Ref : TQ 65090684 A

Description :

Mankeseye, a chapel dedicated to St. Mary annexed to St. Nicholas's Church, Pevensey. In 1455 Thomas Colbrond quit claimed to Chichester 60 acres of land called Shmehopp or Churcelond which Robert de Mankesey formerly granted, with all the buildings on it, to Herculando (sic) de Bourbon, Pope's merchant and his heirs on condition of his finding a chaplain to serve the chapel. At that date (1405) it was apparently a chapel of ease of Pevensey.

(TQ 6509 0684) 200m. SSW of the moated site (TQ 60 NE 3 q.v) in a field called 'Church Acre' on the tithe map for Pevensey dated 1838, there are indications of a former building.

The evidence consists of a roughly rectangular raised platform measuring approximately 23m by 11m by 0.3m in height and orientationed nearly E-W. A faint scatter of building debris occurs in mole-hills and probing reveals traces of foundations. (2)

The field-name and dimensions and orientation of this building, together with its close proximity to the moat, leave little doubt that this is the site of Manxeye Chapel.

The site of Manxey Chapel is as described in Authy 2, though the building platform has been reduced by cattle to a less regular shape. No building debris was visible. Published survey (25") correct (3).

References :

1. C.F. Wardale 2.3.60
a, Sx. Rec. Soc. vol. 46 (1942-3) pp 319, 363, 376
(A Chichester Cartulary)
2. A. Clarke 24.2.60
3. PAS 9.4.73

SMR 527/528 : Medieval saltworking site.

Grid Ref : TQ 658065 A

Description :

Mounds, probably connected with early Md saltworkings, are visible on Pevensey Marsh centered TQ 658065. See TQ 60 NE 17 (for type site) (1).

The saltworking site is marked by a group of 6 irregular mounds (including a fragmentary mound at TQ 65730600).

They measure up to 70.0m in length and c 1.6m high and are composed of desalinated silt with an absence of any datable material. Some mounds show signs of disturbance and some have been incorporated into Md sea defences.

No information on Tithe Maps. Surveyed at 1 : 2,500. (2).

In common with other saltworking sites on Pevensey Marshes and elsewhere in Sussex, the mounds occur fairly close to higher habitable ground. In this case the homestead moat and possible DMV of Manxey (TQ 60 BNE) is c 600.0m to the NW and the decline of the salt industry from the 13th century onwards may have resulted in the abandoning of the settlement. (3)

References : 1. Sx AC 104 1966 26-29 plan (A J F Dulley)

 2. PAS 11.4.73

 3. NKB 10.5.73

SMR 529 : Enclosure (?) Pound (TQ 6615 0597) Moat (G.T) Earthwork (G.T)

Grid Ref : TQ 66150597 A

Description :

This earthwork is situated on the Pevensey marshes SE of and parallel to the Pevensey-Bexhill road (A.259).

It is near-square on plan with sides measuring internally 52.0 m in length. The enclosed area, featureless and raised but slightly above outside ground level, is surrounded by a very shallow ditch part-waterfilled when visited but probably dry for most of the year.

The original entrance, a slight causeway, survives in the NW side, and there is a minor mutilation in the centre of the NE side.

This feature is not a homestead moat. It would appear to be an enclosure (or pound ?).

AM Survey correct. (3)

The earthwork is described by Authy 3, and is at present under rough pasture. It was probably a sheep enclosure, post-dating the embanking of Waller's Haven c 1340; the land before that date was subject to frequent inundations by the sea. (4).

Published survey (25") revised.

References :

1. O.S. 6" Prov. EDN
2. O.S. 25" 1909
3. A. Clarke 24.2.60
a, 'The Inning of Pevensey Levels' Sx. A.C. Vol.53
(1910) P. 60. (L.F. Salzman)
4. Sx AC 104 1966, plan (A.J.F. Dulley)

SMR 530/531 : Medieval saltworking site

Grid Ref : TQ 679080 A

Description :

Mounds, probably connected with early Md saltworking, are visible on Pevensey Marsh, centre TQ 679080. See TQ 60 NE 17 for type-site.

The saltworking site is marked by a group of 10 irregularly-shaped mounds (including a detached mound at TQ 67380734) in pasture on reclaimed marshland.

(1)

They measure up to 40.0m in diameter and c 1.5m high, composed of desalinated silt with an absence of any datable material. Some mounds show signs of disturbance and some have been incorporated into Md sea defences and embankments. No information on Tithe Maps (2)

Surveyed at 1.2500

In common with other saltworking sites on Pevensey Marshes and elsewhere in Sussex, the group of mounds occurs close to rising ground, in this case to the N and SE. Northeye DMV is about 600.0m to the SE and its deserton may be a direct result of the decline of the salt industry due to marsh reclamation from the 13th c onwards. (3)

- References :
1. Sx AC 104 1966 26-29 plan (A.J.F. Dulley)
 2. PAS 11.4.73
 3. NKB 10.5.73

SMR 532 : Mound - possible salt extraction site

Grid Ref : TQ 673073

Description : Mound, probably associated with early M saltworkings (1).

References : 1. SxAC 104 1966 26-45 (A.J.F.Dulley)

SMR 533 : Deserted Medieval Village of Northeye and Chapel of St. James (site of)

SAM 421

Grid. Ref: TQ 682070 A

Description :

(TQ 682 070). Northeye, a limb of the Cinque Port of Hastings from temp. Henry III with a chapel dedicated to St. James (deed of endowment dated 1262), is not mentioned in Domesday but as it was a manor of Bexhill it is possible that one of the two churches mentioned at that place in the Domesday survey applies. The town had apparently ceased to exist by the time of Charles II and it is last mentioned as a manor in 1828. (a)

It is not noted in Bereford's list of Sussex desertions. (b).

The site of Northeye and its chapel is indicated by the field-name 'Chapel Field' and its associated earthworks (c) which are typical of a deserted village. This is confirmed by the evidence of early cartographers who show and describe the ruined chapel at this point (d) Turner's evidence for the site is conflicting and it is clear that he has confused Northeye and other minor desertions in the locality (for possible earlier site TQ 60 NE 8) (e).

An excavation here in 1952 revealed the possible foundations of the chapel (f) but MS notes on the excavation barely support the supposition (g)

The site of the deserted village of Northeye is indicated by the usual sunken roads, buildings sites and enclosures which are visible in the area of 'Chapel Field'.

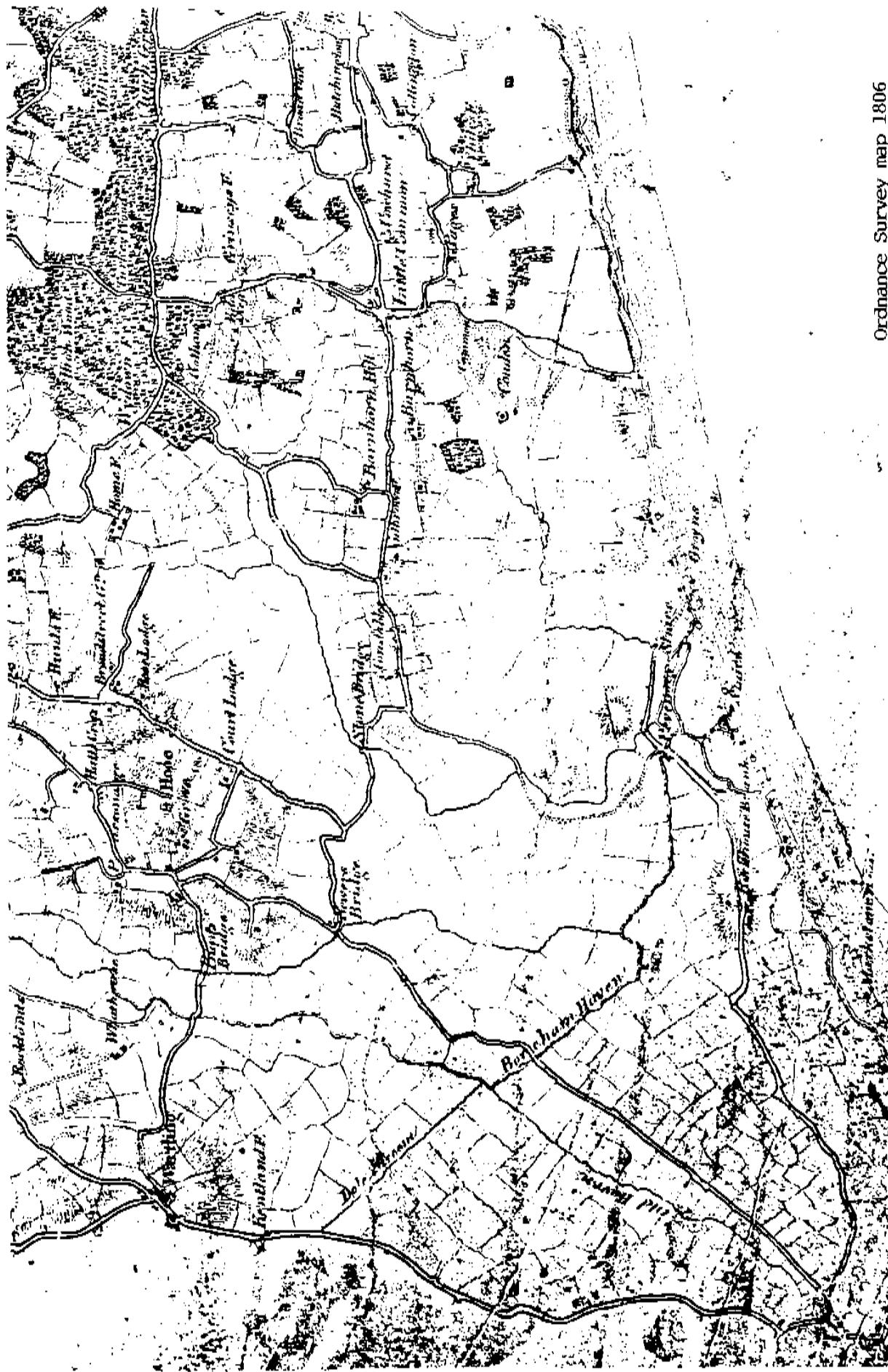
AM Survey amended.

The remains of Northeye DMV, situated at YQ 682071 on an island of Wadhurst clay c. 10.0m above the area of the surrounding marsh, generally as described by Authy 1. Only the earthworks within Chapel Field are extant; the rest of the surrounding works have been reduced by ploughing to amorphous banks and ditches.

The site of the chapel, at TQ 6823 0710, on the highest part of the island, is marked by disturbed ground indicating past excavation, first in 1939 by L. Beasley of Normandale School, when flint walling and ashlar dressings were exposed, and then in 1952 (See Authority 1). (3).

- References :
1. C.F. Wardale 1.3.60
 - a) VCH. Vol.9 (1937) pp 120-3
 - b) 'The Lost Villages of England' 1954 pp 387-8 (M.W. Beresford.
 - c) C.S. 6" 1928-40
 - d) Norden's Map of the E. Sussex dated 1724.
 - e) Sx. A.C. Vol. 19 (1867) pp 1-35 (Rev.E. Turner)
 - f) MS Notes and plan, WC Woodhouse O.S.
 2. C.F. Wardale 1.3.60
 3. PAS 4.4.73

Appendix 2
Relevant Maps from East Sussex
County Council's Records Office



Ordnance Survey map 1806

Scale Two inches : one mile

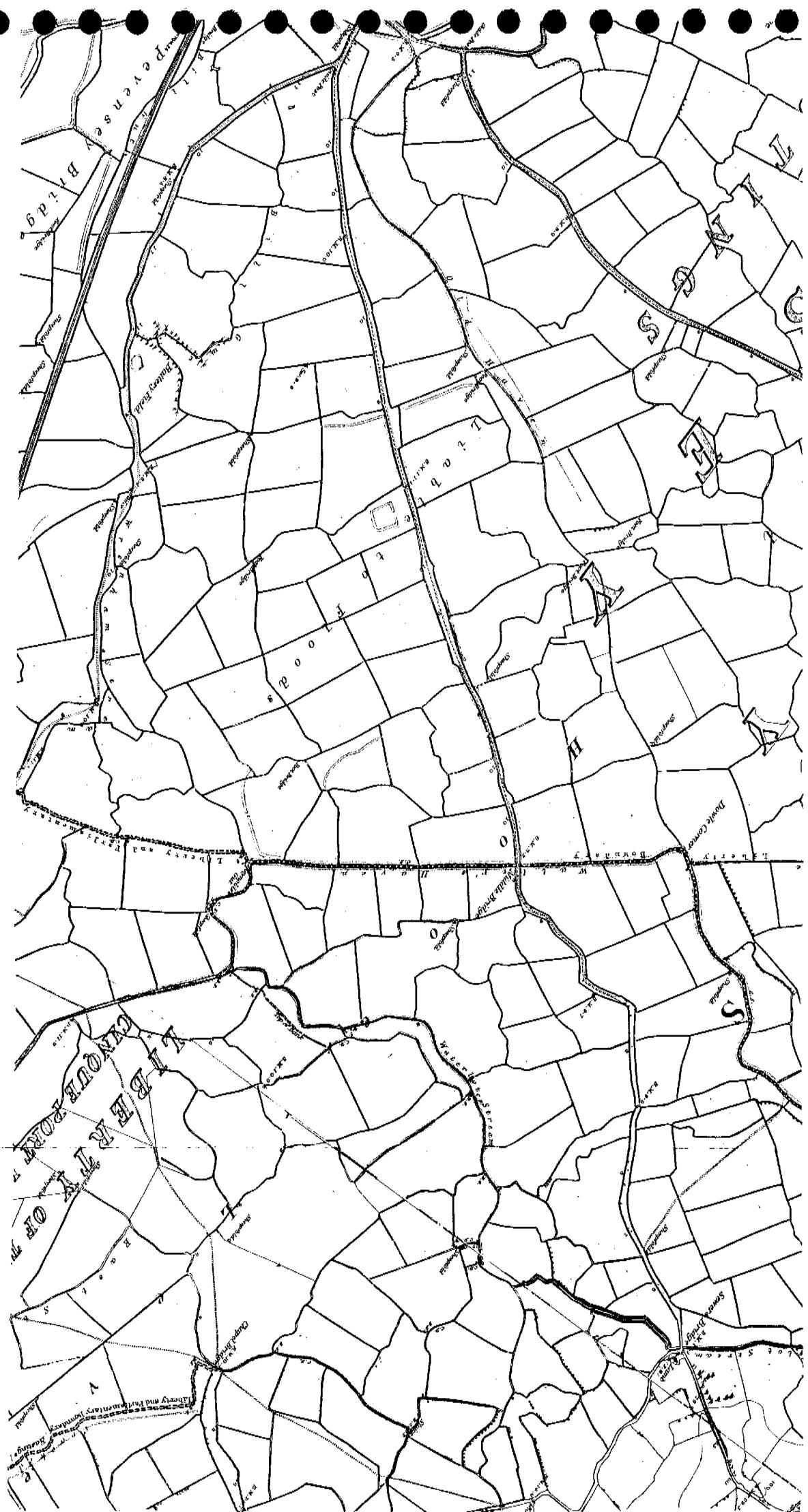


1st Edition Ordnance Survey map
Published 1831, railways
inserted 1884



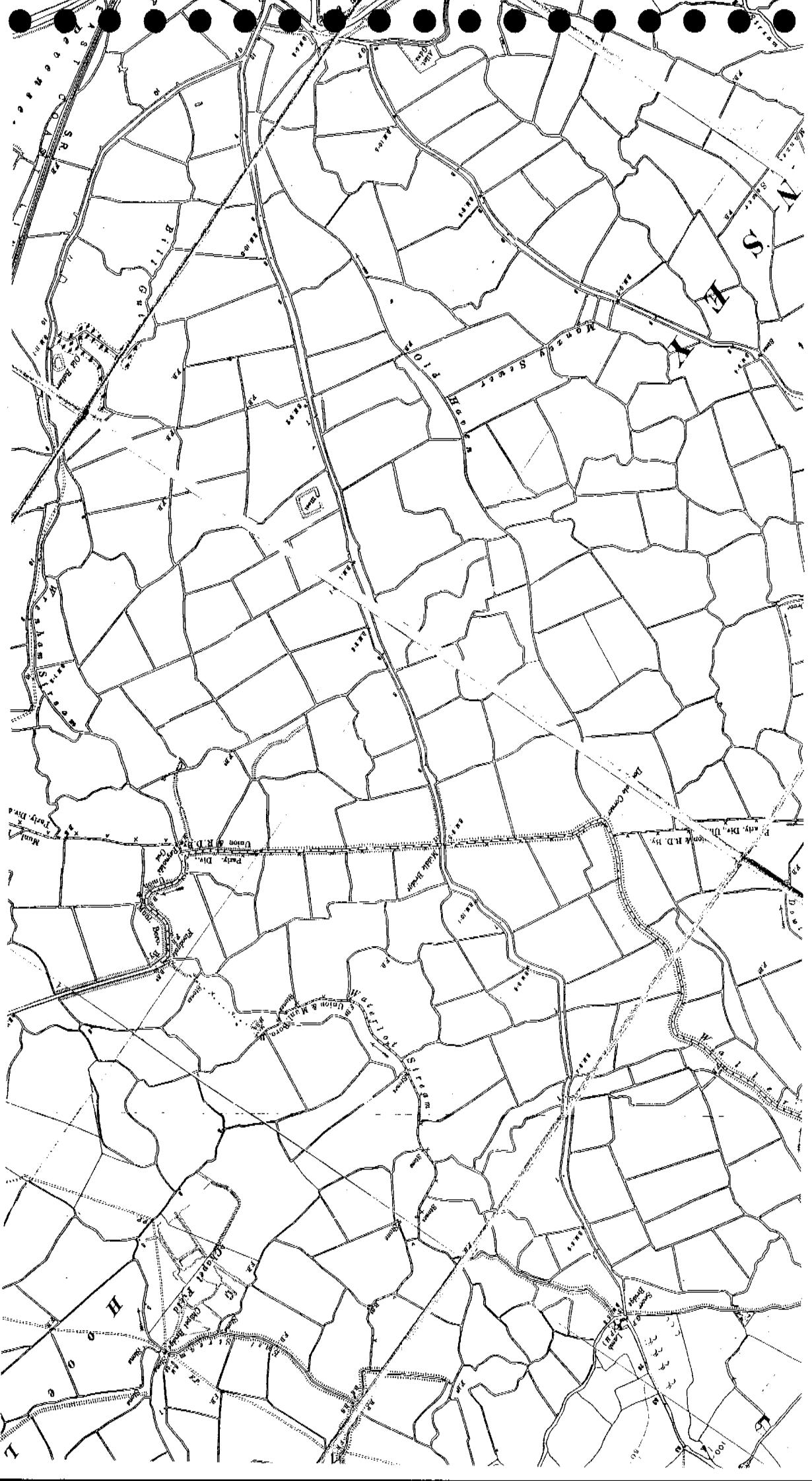
Christopher and Greenwood
1825 Survey

scale one inch : one mile
Page 19



1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map
1873 - 1876

Scale six inches : one mile



3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Map
1928-31

Scale six inches : one mile
Page 21

Appendix 3

Relevant Articles

The Inning of Pevensey Levels by L.F. Sulzmann

The Level and Port of Pevensey in the Middle Ages by A.J.F. Dulley

The Inning of Pevensey Levels
by L.F. Salzmann

Sussex Archaeological Collections
Vol 53, 1910 pp 30 - 60

THE INNING OF PEVENSEY LEVELS.

By L. F. SALZMANN.¹

In his paper on "The Sussex Coast Line," Mr. Ballard has pointed out the former existence of a great inlet to the east of Beachy Head. All the rich grazing lands of Pevensey Level must have been for centuries one great lagoon. What the appearance of this district must have been when the Romans looked out from the walls of their fortified station of Anderida could be realised by anyone who saw the Levels during the exceptional floods in the early winter of 1909, when the whole country resembled a great lake. From the figures given by Mr. Ballard we learn that high tide in Pevensey Bay is from 9 to 10-ft. above the mean water, which is taken as the Ordnance datum; it follows therefore that if the protecting sea banks were removed all land of which the height is given on the Ordnance maps as less than 10-ft. would be overflowed by the sea at high tide. Taking into consideration the rise of the ground during the course of centuries, a rise particularly rapid in the case of land lying at the foot of hills and constantly liable to inundation, we shall probably be well within the mark if we consider that all land below 12-ft. was submerged at high tide during the Roman period.

The boundaries of this great lagoon are formed by the bases of the high hills of Eastbourne and Willingdon on the west, Hailsham on the north-west, Herstmonceux and Wartling on the north-east, Hooe and Bexhill on the east, with an arm of low land pushing up between Wartling and Hooe as far as Ashburnham. From Polegate, on the borders of Hailsham and Willingdon,

¹ For much assistance in the preparation of this paper, especially in the identification of local names, I am indebted to Mr. J. E. Ray, of Bexhill.



MAP OF PEVENSEY LEVELS.

Based on Teakell & Gardner's Survey, 1780.

a ridge of high ground pushes out into the Level, dividing at Stone Cross, one branch turning south and ending at Langney, a second stretching east to Pevensey, and a third turning north to Hankham and Rickney. Just to the west of this Hankham ridge, but separated from it by a narrow valley, is the island of Glenleigh, with Priesthawes at its southern end, and north of this island a tongue of high land runs down from Hailsham to Down Ash. Horsey and Chilley, at each of which a height of about 30-ft. is recorded, must have stood out as islands, as indeed their names imply, and a number of little hillocks extend westwards from Bexhill as far as Northeye.³ Two main streams, one from Bodle Street and Ashburnham, sometimes called the Ashburn, but more often Wallers Haven and the Old Haven, and the other Hurst Haven, from Herstmonceux and Magham Down, formerly united at Pevensey, after receiving various tributaries, such as Chilley Stream, to form Pevensey Haven, the mouth of which formed the port of Pevensey; the Ashburn, however, was afterwards diverted and runs out at the sluice by Northeye. The high ridge running from Stone Cross to Langney cuts off a portion of the Level at the back of the present town of Eastbourne, and through this Bourne Level a stream runs down from Willingdon and formerly entered the sea at the Crumbles.

The general height of the marsh land appears to be about 8-ft. At New Bridge and for some distance east and west 8-ft. is recorded, falling on the north to 7-ft. and on the east at the point where the footpath from Herstmonceux Church meets the trade, or marsh road, from New Bridge to 6½-ft. White Dyke, in Hailsham, shows a height of 9-ft., but a little further east, along Horseye Sewer, 5-ft. and 6-ft. are shown, and the general elevation of Horseye Level is not above 7-ft., while at Widear Marsh, half-way between Horseye and Rickney, the ground sinks to 4-ft., the lowest recorded on the map. The road from Marshfoot in Hailsham to Eastbourne and the Church-acre Drove average 8-ft.; along Wallers Haven

³ Rockhouse Bank is of different formation to the other low hills, being of blown sand. Mr. Ray considers that it may be of comparatively recent date.

banks 9-ft. is shown, but this falls to $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ft. at the foot of the Hoe hills, and a similar level occurs between Otham and Priesthawes. Round Chapel Bridge, part of Northeye in Bexhill, 9, 8 and 6-ft. are shown. In Bourne Level Hidney Bridge is 9-ft. and Lott Bridge 8-ft., while 7-ft. is shown along Lott Bridge Sewer and close to the Eastbourne Gas Works. As a whole the lowest ground is found round the edge of the levels at the foot of the hills, where the scouring of the tides would have had the greatest effect, and everything points to these portions being some of the latest to be drained.

When we come to the question of how and when the Pevensy Levels were drained we are driven to the piecing together of circumstantial evidence. It seems fairly certain that the work was very largely assisted by the natural action of "the eastward drift." The Channel currents, with their persistent eastward tendency, find in Pevensy Bay a suitable place to deposit their spoils of shingle quarried from the western shores and from the cliffs of Beachy Head, and so a bank of shingle was gradually accumulated all along this coast. The outward scour of the immense body of water from Pevensy Level was enough to keep the channel of the Haven open, but at quite an early date the mouth of the Bourne Level Stream must have been blocked at Langney, and the stream was gradually forced eastwards until at last it found an exit by the common Haven. How soon men began to initiate the action of nature and build embankments to shut the waters out seems impossible to say. Although the Romans had a strong coastguard station at Pevensy (Anderida) and something of a settlement at Eastbourne there is no evidence of their having done anything for the drainage of these marshes, and they certainly attempted nothing on the scale of their operations in Romney Marsh. That the work of recovery began in a small way at an early date seems probable, for in the charter^{*} by which Offa gave land at Bexhill to the See of Selsey in 772 the boundaries recited include "the ealdan

merc dic," "andlang stremes west abutan than sealtan merse" and "up on the ealdan dic and lang dice." The charter is usually admitted to be a forgery, but it is no doubt based on a genuine grant, and the boundaries may be accepted as at least pre-Conquest. If therefore these dykes were already "old," it is clear that in the neighbourhood of Cooling and Barnhorne some land had early been reclaimed.

The term PEVENSEY LEVELS is used to denote all the marsh land between Bexhill and Eastbourne. These Levels are divided and sub-divided into several smaller portions for the purpose of drainage and assessment of scots or rates for the works carried out by the Commissioners of Levels for the protection of the marsh lands. The three principal divisions are:—^{6a}

1. Willingdon Level, comprising the marsh between Eastbourne, Polegate and Pevensy.
2. Pevensy Level, being the main portion of the marshes between Pevensy and the borders of Bexhill.
3. Hooe Level, comprising the remaining portion in the parishes of Hooe and Bexhill.

These are, or were, separately drained into the sea, the first at Langney, the second at Pevensy and the third at Northeye, though the first and second now both flow into one outlet.

One of the principal sub-divisions of Willingdon Level is MOUNTNEY LEVEL, drained by Mountney Sewer, which flows into the Langney Sewer.

PEVENSEY LEVEL properly is made up of the following levels, commencing at the north-west:—

WHELEY LEVEL. This is bounded on the south by Marshfoot and Horseye Level and on the north by Hurst Haven; it runs to a point on the east where the Whelpley Sewer, which drains it, enters the Hurst Haven at New Bridge.

MAGHAM LEVEL adjoins Whelpley on the north, and has for its southern boundary Hurst Haven, and for its

^{6a} I have to thank Mr. Ray for this list of the Levels and their boundaries.
D 2

north-eastern Puckeridge Sewer; it is drained through the centre by Magham Sewer, which enters Puckeridge Sewer just above New Bridge.

BOWLEY LEVEL lies to the north-east of Magham Level. It has the Puckeridge Stream for its eastern boundary and Bowley Sewer for its western. At its southern end it runs to a point, like all these northern levels.

SACKVILLE LEVEL, on the east of Bowley, also comes to a point on the south where its sewer enters Hurst Haven at a place anciently called "Sakevylestrow."

BAWLEY LEVEL is a small level between Suckville Level and the upper part of Mauxey Level. It is drained by the Mill Stream on its south-eastern border.

HORSEYE LEVEL lies to the south of these, and is, unlike them, within the Liberty of Pevensy. It is bounded on the south by the road from White Dyke to Rickney and on the east by Hurst Haven, and is drained by Horseye Sewer, which falls into Hurst Haven at Yortham.

DOWN LEVEL is immediately south of Horseye. It has Downash to the west of it and Hurst Haven to the east. The southern boundary is Glenleigh Sewer, which falls into Hurst Haven at Rickney. It is drained by Down Sewer, which enters Hurst Haven at the same place.

SALTMARSH LEVEL is a small level to the south-west of the last, with the portion of Glenleigh Level drained by Holm Sewer to the south of it.

GLENLIGH LEVEL is divided into three portions,

drained respectively by Holm Sewer, Marland Sewer and Drockmill Hill Gut.

HANKHAM LEVEL is to the north of Pevensy Castle, and its western boundary is Hurst Haven.

It is sub-divided into portions drained by Martens Gut, Hankham Gut, &c.

on the north-west by Langney Sewer and the Old Haven, while it adjoins the sea on the south. It was formerly drained by the Bill Gut, but now the Salt Haven runs through the middle of this level.

MARXEY LEVEL is the largest division of Pevensy Level, and in the fifteenth century was sometimes called a parish. It is bounded on the west by Hurst Haven and on the east by the Hooe Levels. Its sub-divisions are drained into Chilley Stream, which in its turn enters Hurst Haven. Its sub-divisions are as follows:—

The northern portion, as far south as the Church-aero Drove, is drained by the Kentland Fleet. East of this is a portion drained by Burg Fleet. South of this is a portion comprising Lampham, through which runs the Dowle Stream, bounded on the west by the Watling Trade Road. To the west of this is the main portion, drained by the Chilley Stream itself, having Hurst Haven for its southern boundary.

There remain two portions, one between the Hooe Trade Road and the Old Haven, and the other immediately to the south, bounded by Wrenham Stream.

Anticipating the results of an examination of the documentary evidence, we may say that the main changes in the methods of draining the levels were as follows: (1) From the first inning down to the end of the fourteenth century all the levels drained out at a point on the borders of Pevensy and Westham, due south of the Castle. (2) In 1396 a large cut was made from Penee Bridge to Wallsend, to replace the former outlet. (3) In 1402 the greater part of the Ashburn, draining Hooe Level, was diverted to the Shue. (4) The diversion of the Hooe drainage was completed in 1455 by a new ditch in Nartheye. (5) As a result of the diminished volume and decreased scour of the water the outlet at Pevensy silted up and the mouth of the Haven was forced eastward until it eventually reached the shue, though on a number of occasions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries its mouth was

re-opened at different points between Wallsend and the Sluice.

The Domesday survey of 1086 shows that the salt water still flowed freely over much of the marsh. In Hailsham there were thirteen salt pans,⁴ in Bowley four, and in Hooe four. That all those places lay on the edge of the marsh,⁵ while the more central estates, such as Horseye, Horns in Glenleigh, and Peeling, had no salt pans, bears out what has already been said about the borderlands having been the last to be drained. At the time that Othiam Abbey was founded by Ralph de Bene, about 1180, the founder granted, amongst other lands in the neighbourhood, his "new marsh," which indicates that enclosure and drainage was at that time in progress. About the same time Gilbert of L'Aigle granted to the same house the right to take sixty cart loads of peat yearly in his moor of Pevency, "so long as the moor shall last," agreeing to pay them 2s. 6d. yearly when the moor came to an end.⁶ Another hint that conditions were changing is to be found in a deed of the second half of the twelfth century, by which Richard, the Porter of Pevency, granted to the monks of Lewes that the sea water may have free entrance and passage to their mill of Langney through my marsh, which is close to that mill, and this entrance they shall hold of me and my heirs so long as the mill stands, for 12*lb.*⁷ This suggests that difficulties had arisen about the supply of water for the mill, apparently worked by the tides, and that even with this new arrangement there were doubts as to the permanence of the mill.

More light is thrown upon the question by a conveyance of land executed in 1223, by which Gilbert of

⁴ Places for making salt from sea water.

⁵ There were five salt pans attached to "Lockstone," but the identity of this manor is uncertain. In J.C.H. Storer I have suggested Buldington; this was part of the manor of Othiam, and it is worth noting that there was a salt pan at Othiam about 1210 (Sakmann, *Hist. of Hailsham*, p. 177).

⁶ *Hist. of Hailsham*, p. 174.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁸ Dy. of Lanc. Misc. Bks., 112, f. 52.

L'Aigle granted to Hervey Gazel 100 acres in Pevency,⁹ since:

All the old wall which leads from the house of Wudman to the house of Stephen le Stunt and all the land which lies between the same wall and the ditch which is the boundary between the banks of Edmund de Hastings and Petronilla his wife until of Ralph Burel and of Edward Willard and of Stephen Stunt and the ditch which divides the demesnes of Edmund and Petronilla de Hastings and the land which Adam de Barent held of them, except two acres of land which lie near Wilders where were the houses of Walter Luke, which shall remain to Edmund and Petronilla and her heirs; also all the land lying between the ditch which goes in a straight line from the land of Ralph Barol to Fischiellot and between the path which leads from the house of Stephen le Stant to Sleigat and from Sleigat by the little ditch to Fischiellot, also half the fishery of Fischiellot so far as those 100 acres extend; and for 1*½* acres of land the whole fishery between the first wall of Wallers as far as the head of Godwin Stunt's land which is towards the west, so that so long as the water of the fishery is there the whole fishery shall remain to Hervey and his heirs and if perchance it becomes four land then the half of that land nearest to Hervey's land shall remain to him and his heirs and the other half to Gilbert and his heirs.

The land, or rather water, here in question, "Wilders," is that Widcar Marsh which we have already mentioned as showing the lowest level marked on the Ordnance Map. It is rather a suggestive circumstance that the boundary between Hailsham and Pevency parishes, after following Down Sewer to the south-west corner of the Widcar Marshes, suddenly strikes across a field to the Rickney road. This road then forms the southern boundary of Hailsham, while the Glenleigh Sewer, which at first runs parallel and almost in contact with it, forms the northern boundary of Westham. The space between the road and sewer forms an intruding tongue of Pevency parish, only then spreading out to enclose the Lewens, to the west of which it is some 500 yards broad. At this western edge of the Lewens the Hailsham boundary turns south, and again cutting across a field from one ditch to another, reaches Glenleigh Sewer, from which point the sewer becomes the common boundary between Westham and Hailsham. These eccentricities of the boundaries would

⁹ *Feet of Fines (Sussex Record Soc.), No. 186.*

become explicable if, at the time that the parish boundaries were laid down, Widcar and the Lewens were both "fisheries" or tracts of permanent water. Their western limits, forming the bounds of Hailsham, might well not coincide with the ditches dug after they were drained, while in the case of the Lewens, the Westham boundary might have been formed by the southern border, the Gleaving Sewer (? Fish Fleet), and that of Hailsham by the northern, the line of Rickney Road, the fishery being unassigned, but after it was drained considered as in the parish of Pevensy.

Coming down to 1263, we have a record of the enclosure of another portion of the Level.¹² Agnes, widow of William Montacute, had as part of her dower a third part of her husband's lands, including part of a lagoon or swamp (*marecum nurris*), two-thirds of which were held by Ingeman de Mankesey, who subsequently gave them to his brother Ralph. Agnes, with William de Northeve and others, who had holdings in the lagoon, took steps to enclose it with a sea dyke, and as Ralph refused to contribute towards the cost, Agnes defrayed the expense of enclosing his two-thirds with her own third, and retained them in her own hands until she should have recovered her outlay, "for such is the custom of the sea coast." In the end Ralph, for a payment of 20 marks, granted his share to Agnes and her second husband, Nicholas Mahneynes, to hold for their lives, with reversion to the Prior of Michelham, the chief lord of the fee. The Montacute lands we know from various references to have been principally in "Besentover," which is that part of the Level lying south of Hoe Trade between Pevensy and the Liberty of Northeve. For instance, in 1220 John Montacute granted to Martin de Bestenover for life 100 acres in Besentover, Martin undertaking to keep up the walls belonging thereto, "both the head wall (*capiteine*) and the other."¹³ As the only lands in Bestenover belonging to the Priory of Michelham appear to have been Wrenham, on the borders of the Liberty of Northeve, it

would seem that this must be the holding referred to. In this same level of Bestenover was Wildmarsh, and the Assize Roll for 1263 records¹⁴ that Stephen, father of Geoffrey de Wyldemers, held 50 acres in Pevensy, which he could not protect from the sea, so he made agreement with "a certain Prior of Winchelsea,"¹⁵ the predecessor of the present prior,¹⁶ and leased the land to him for 40d. apparently on condition that the prior should defray the cost of protecting it. The failure of any landowner to act with his neighbours in constructing, maintaining or repairing banks and dykes would, of course, render their actions of no effect, and we therefore find that if any tenant refused to recover his land when it had been inundated the neighbouring landowners would do the work, and he would incur "the penalty according to the law of the sea coast, which is called *bisket et trisket*,"¹⁷ but what exactly that penalty was is not stated. It would seem, however, that it is referred to in the agreement between the Abbot of Battle and William de Colding that if either failed to repair their joint dykes the other should do all the repairs, and if the defaulter did not pay his share "before the morning of the next day" he should pay double, and if he failed to pay the double costs within two weeks he should pay treble.¹⁸

In no other class of landed property was it so necessary to cultivate good relations with neighbouring landowners, for arrangements had constantly to be made for the drainage of one property by means of ditches running through other properties. Several such agreements were made by the Abbey of Battle with regard to their estates at Barnhorne during the thirteenth century. In 1248 the Abbot granted to William de Northeve¹⁹

¹² Assize R., 912, m. 13.

¹³ This must have been the Prior of the Grey Friars, unless there is some mistake. The Prior of Michelham is much more probable.

¹⁴ Assize R., 129, m. 23b. The reference is to marshes in Leckham, but would also apply to those of Pevensy.

¹⁵ Adm. MSS., 6, 341, f. 16t. Mr. Ruf makes the very probable suggestion that "bisket et trisket" is intended for bi-scoit and tri-scoit.

¹⁶ *Feet of Pests (Sussex Record Soc.), No. 49,* Cf. the agreement made with William de Hastings, Lord of Northney, in 1201: *Theque, Battle Charters*, 20, 56.

All the land which is outside the marsh called Stuttansersse [Tolles Marsh near Barnhorne] on the west side of the green wall and the wall itself with all the land between Stuttansersse and William's demesnes in la Tunge¹⁷ towards the Brook of Homo so far as the said demesnes of la Tunge extends; also all the pasture called la Trade, serving to the Abbot right of way with his cattle¹⁸, so that they do not graze there, and the right of making and repairing his gutts; and it shall be lawful for the Abbot to drain (asservare) his marsh of Stuttansersse through the middle of William's demesnes of Norleye¹⁹ as far as the middle of the gutt of Babbington²⁰ at his own costs, and if they cannot drain the said land by this said gutt they may drain it at their own costs by the gutt of Swamland; moreover the Abbot may drain his marshes between Berham²¹ (Barkham near Gooding) and la Trade by the said gutt of Swamland and his pleasure may put a gutt between Bradsterghe and Northere, provided William's road is not interfered with, and the Abbot may likewise make another gutt where it seems most useful to him; and whonover it shall be necessary to make or repair the said gutts the Abbot and his successors shall provide two thirds of the cost and William and his heirs the other third.

It would seem that the greater part of Mountney Level, lying between Langney Cliff and Pevensy, must have been reclaimed by the middle of the thirteenth century. But the sea had not yet relinquished its claims, and continual care was necessary to preserve the reclaimed lands. In particular, we find the patch of land containing 36 acres between Langney Sewer and the sea, known as Oldland or the Island, requiring special attention. In 1282 two furlongs of wall at Ylond were mended at a cost of 7s. 1d., some small repairs were done to three rods of wall towards the sea and a gutt was repaired.²² Next year 13 men were employed one night watching the wall at Ylond on account of the exceptionally high tide (*pro nimis fluctu aquae solte*), and 1 furlong 2 rods of the wall were repaired, as well as a gutt. Two years later, in 1285, 16 rods of this wall were mended and 33 rods of ditch were dug at

Eldeleond, and in 1290 90 perches of the wall at Ylond were heightened, possibly as a result of an accident in the previous year, when the sea made a breach in the wall by the beach (*juste perterritum*).²³ It must have been about 10 or 15 years later that Gervase Alard of Winchelsea, the famous Admiral of the Cinque Ports, petitioned the King²⁴ for a grant of "a small piece of land of the fee of the Barony of Egle at Pevensy called le Hand, lying right on the sea," which had been held by Berenger Yrel, whose heir he apparently was. It would seem that before his request was granted both King and Admiral had died, but Edward II. in 1307 gave the land to Henry Alard. The inquisition²⁵ held before the grant was made showed that the place called Honde contained within the walls 36 acres, worth 10d. an acre or 30s. in all. With this was given 400 acres of salt marsh adjoining the sea, of which 200 acres were covered with beach and shingle, the whole being valued at only 20s. These 400 acres were to the east of Oldland, in Bestenover, as in 1326 Robert, son of John Alard, founded a chantry in the church of St. Thomas of Winchelsea for the souls of his wife and his brother Henry, and endowed it with 100 acres in Bestenover.²⁶

These 36 acres of "la Hyconde" were entered in a rental of 1292 as sheep pasture, and with them are given 100 acres in Godlessond and Forhaveue.²⁷ As the latter are only valued at 20s., while all the other pasture is put down at 12d. the acre, it is probable that they were only partly reclaimed, and in 1318 the King licensed Robert de Sapu and Alina his wife to reclaim the marsh called Godlessond, which was then over-flowed by the sea; they were to pay a pair of gilt spurs yearly for rent, and it was calculated that it could be enclosed for £200, and that it would then be worth 12d. an acre, but how many acres there were could not be said, owing to its being under water.²⁸ Four years later,

¹⁷ La Tunge was near Tonleigh Bridge, now Stone Bridge.

¹⁸ That is, by the East Stream.

¹⁹ Crooked Ditch.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Anct. Pet., 1, 171.

²² Harl. MS.

²³ Revals and Survey, 663.

²⁴ Ind. ad jd. domini, 128, No. 11.

²⁵ Mins. Accts., 1, 97, No. 17.

however, the King's charter was returned for cancellation,²⁸ the grantees not having enclosed any of the marsh, probably regarding it as too expensive and speculative a venture. But it would seem that in course of time circumstances permitted of the marsh being reclaimed, as in 1353 Alina de Supy held, by a charter recently acquired, 300 acres of land called Newbold, paying therefor 50s. 2d. yearly,²⁹ and Godlessond is elsewhere stated to be 300 acres in extent.

About this time the reclamation of the marsh was evidently proceeding rapidly. In 1336 John de Shelvesrode, who held Bestenover, inned four parcels of salt marsh, containing 36 acres, without the King's licence, and Philip de Hydenye inned 20 acres in Wyldemerssh,³⁰ and before 1342 John Lot had inned 2½ acres near the port of Pevensy, John Westcole four acres by the Castle, and Robert de Lampham two acres near Lampham.³¹ By the inning of the said lands and by the walls by which the course of the water is restricted the port of Pevensy is much injured.³² Here, as in the Rye and Romney marshes, the extension of the dry land diminished the volume, and therefore the scouring effect of the tidal water, with the result that the haven soon began to silt up.

Although most of the entries we have given so far refer to the marshes on the coast and round the mouth of the Haven, work was going on all the time further inland. Between 1283 and 1286 we find dykes dug at Moorbrook (22 rods long), Castelwisse (31 rods), on the north side of the Castle, and at Cheesehouse, apparently the same as "the Dairy," where part of the ditch was made into a watering place for the cattle.³³ The manorial court of the Lowey was also busily engaged keeping the

various landowners up to the mark. In 1357 the Abbot of Bayham was fined for failing to repair a bridge at Brokebridge (12d.) and a wall at Rockland (12d.), also 3s. 4d. for a blocked ditch at Moorbrook, and 40s. for allowing "a ditch between Boreham and the sluice of Pevensy" (*i.e.* Wallers Haven) to become choked, and other offenders were fined for broken walls and bridges and paths.³⁴ But it was early felt that some additional control was desirable, and this was emphasised by the disastrous floods of 1287, when Old Winchelsea was swept away. That Pevensy Levels suffered at that time is clear from a significant entry of the cost of collecting 172 sheep and tegs which had been drowned by the sea in the marsh, carrying them to the boat and so to the Castle, and there skinning and salting them.³⁵ Accordingly in 1289 Roger Lewkeur and Luke de la Gare were appointed Commissioners of Sewers for the coast of Sussex,³⁶ which office they held for the next six years; and from that time the appointment of such commissioners for the county, or, more usually, for the particular Levels, became almost an annual occurrence. The beginning of the experiment was not very happy, as in 1290 the Abbots of Battle and Bayham and others complained that Roger and Luke, with the Prior of Michelham and others, had begun to make a bank across the Haven of Pevensy with a sluice, whereby the fresh water would be checked in its course and the land flooded; John de Lacy and William de Etchingham were therefore ordered to inquire into the matter, and if necessary undo the commissioners' work.³⁷

Unfortunately few reports of the proceedings of the Commissioners of Sewers have survived. The earliest of these records the report made by a sworn jury to the Abbot of Bayham, the Prior of Michelham, Sir William Fiemmes, William Makende and John Broke at

²⁸ Close R., 15 Edw. 1*t.*, m. 32.

²⁹ Rentals and Surveys, 666.

³⁰ Another 30 acres called Witemersh by the Haven of Pevensy had been inned by John de Battlesheld and were granted to him on payment of a due in 1356; Mins. Accts., 1328, Ap. 3.

³¹ Asele R., 9*t.*, m. 11*t.*

³² Mins. Accts., 1327, No. 17.

³³ Court Rolls, 20*t.*, No. 18.

³⁴ Mins. Accts., 1327, No. 17.

³⁵ Pat., 17 Edw. 1., m. 2*t.*

³⁶ Pat., 18 Edw. 1., m. 16*t.*

Westham on St. Matthew's Day, 20 Richard II. (21st September, 1396) :—^{sp}

The bank beginning at Borhambridge and going to the land of Sir William de Hoo is in decay, through the fault of this Abbot of Bayham and his carers. From thence the bank leading to the land of Stephen Paystot, through the fault of Sir William de Hoo; and from thence the banks reaching to the boundary of Marlopston, through the fault of Stephen Wither and Walter Sampier; and the banks reaching from that place to the land of John Swetfode, through the fault of Sir Philip Sentele; and thence the banks leading to the land of Sir Philip Mestel, through the fault of John Swetfode; and thence the bank stretching to the land of Sir William Rentes, through the fault of Sir Philip Mestel; and thence the bank leading to the land of Simon Lot, through the fault of Sir William Rentes; and thence the bank leading to the old sluice of Pevensy, through the fault of Simon Lot. All which persons, by reason of their land holdings within the said marsh, were obliged to repair and maintain those banks by parcels, their ancestors and those whose estates they had buying so done time out of mind. Through such their neglect many losses had befallen these parts.

The jury also presented that—

The sewer beginning at the bounds of Squabber and extending to Gorbreggs, and so to Sakervestrow and so to Yordham, and thence to Rikenbridge and so to the old sluice of Pevensy, and thence to Wylyndonestrow and so to the guilt made through the midst of a hillock (?) by which the fresh waters descending to the sea from 6358 acres $\frac{3}{4}$ rods of land, meadow and pasture were wont to pass, —from the said bounds of Squabber to the said old sluice of Pevensy is filled up and obstructed with grass, reeds and other filth suffered to accumulate thereto, and also from the said sluice to the said guilt so that by the shallowness therof the course of this water is much obstructed — through the fault and negligence of all the tenants of the said 6358 acres of roads, who according to their proportions ought to do these repairs, namely: — the tenants of 299 acres in the marsh of Megham, 2 furlongs 17 perches of the sewer, from Squabber to Gorebridge; the tenants from Gorebridge to Sakervestrow one moiety of the said sewer towards the north, and all the other tenants holding 199 acres in the marshes of Megham and Whelpole the other moiety towards the south, containing in length 16 furlongs; the tenants of 316 acres in the marshes of Roughtale, Ballie and Herstmonceaux, from Sakervestrow to Ladytrowe, 7 furlings of the said sewer; and from Ladytrowe the tenants of the said lands in the marshes of Megham, Whelpole, Boghale, Ballie and Herstmonceaux, 7 furlongs unto the place of Yozham; from thence the tenants of 81 acres in the marshes of Yozham, 3 furlongs 4 perches unto Rikenbridge; and from thence to the old sluice of Pevensy and thence to Wylyndonestrow the

sewer ought to be repaired by all that hold the said lands in Westling Otham, Herstmonceaux, Horsye, Mankesoye, Huylesham, Westham and Pevensy, in common, because that in the evanuation of the fresh water by this said sewer if it should be enlarged they should have benefit and full security, — and thore should be no contribution made from lands and tenement's in Bonnes Langenyey and Wylyndonestrow, which ought not in future to contribute to their repair, as those lands could not in anywise be preserved by the said sewer.

Another sewer beginning at the Hokes and oxfording to the Clyre of Lengone and so to Wylyndonestrow, by which fresh water in the marshes of Bonnes, Langenyey and Wylyndonestrow descending to the sea were voided, which sever the tenants of the said lands ought to repair. The said sewer in Wylyndonestrow unto the said guilt ought to be repaired by all the headwaters within the above specified limits in common, because the fresh water being conjoined by both the said sewers passes to the said guilt, which guilt ought to be repaired at the common charge. From the sluice of Pevensy to the said place called Wylyndonestrow it ought to be repaired at the charge of all the tenants in Westling Otham, Herstmonceaux, Horsye, Mankesoye, Huylesham, Westham and Pevensy, and hence to the said guilt at the expence of the tenants of the which marsh. It is necessary for the safety of the marsh to enlarge the said sewer in breadth 2 perches and in depth 3 feet at the charge of all the tenants of the marsh.

From Wylyndonestrow by the side of the said old sewer on the east it would be well to have a new sewer made in the common marsh, in breadth 3 perches and in depth 15 feet extending to the said hillock; also a new guilt through the said hillock, in length 20 perches, in breadth 8 feet and depth 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and to enlarge the old guilt to 60 feet in length—the estimated cost being £200. The tenants being summoned before the Constable of Dover denied that they were bound to repair the sewer from Squabber to Gorebridge, to Sakervestrow, to Yorkham, to Rikenbridge and so to the old sewer, or that it was of use to them. But they said that there was a sewer called Mankesoyestrow beginning at Horstbot and extending below Wallers Haven to the old port of Colding, which they used, so far as their lands in that district were concerned.

The sewer beginning at Squabber is Hurst Haven, and Squabber is probably the same as "Scoperedes," to the east of "Ambeleghisbridge," i.e., Amberstone Bridge. Measurement shows that Gorebridge is Spindle Bridge; Sakervestrow was evidently a quarter of a mile east of New Bridge at the point where the Sackville Sewer enters Hurst Haven; Ladytrowe was half-way between that point and Yotham, which is the point at which Horsye Sewer enters Hurst Haven, 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ furlongs above Rickney Bridge. The old sluice must have been at the angle of

^a Cluny, Misc., vol. 86, fol. 1, No. 21; printed in Dugdale's *First of Exeterking*. The original record is a good deal damaged and in places illegible.

Pevensie Haven, where it is joined by Old Haven, or Walkers Haven; and Wyllindonstrow was south of Pevensie village, where Willingdon, or Langney, sewer joined the Haven, probably close to Old Lands.⁴⁰ The hillock (*hokum*) through which the gutt passed, apparently to the sea, is not so evident, but may have been an artificial embankment. The second sewer started at the Hokes, early Headmans Oak, the western limit of Westham parish; a name of some interest, as the "Oak" is thus shown to be a corruption of Hook, or Knoll, referring to the little hill at this point, while the "Headmans" suggests the Wallfrew,⁴¹ the place on the borders of the Liberty, at which criminals were hanged, according to the Pevensie Custom.⁴² Langney Cleye, or cliff, is the southern end of the high ridge running down from Stone Cross. As to the Wankesye Stream, I am inclined to think that Herstbol was the south-western limit of Herstmonceux parish, on Horst Haven; the port of Cooling was in Boxhill parish, east of Northeye, and it may be added that Walkers Haven at this date did not turn eastwards, but continued down what is now known as Old Haven, to Pevensie Haven. The new sewer, made as recommended, must have been the cut from Penee Bridge to Wallsend.

In 1402 the Prior of Michelham, Thomas Barbyngham, William Branches and other commissioners for Hoee Level took evidence and reported, that:

The common watercourse between Ashbarlano Myle and Balesford and Godyngebury was so obstructed with sand, mud, brush, &c., that 1783 acres of land were drowned. The common channel from Morespichewalle to the Mark Dyke, 6 furlongs in length, ought to be sounred, which chaned all laudowments above Boreham Bridge, at Rokland, Morhale, Hoe, Ladyland, Cratle and in the land formerly held by Cristiana ante Mersle ought to seour. Also the channed from Markylou to Pevensie, 13 furlongs in length, was filled with mud and

⁴⁰ Woldswere = vargle = gallows.

⁴¹ S. J. C., Vol. XVIII, p. 51. But "Wickeow" occurs as a field name in the Pevensie Quarter, Vol. XII, p. 176.

⁴² Chanc. Misc., vii., 5. Printed in Hugdale's *Hist. of Eastarking*. It was at this time that the commissioners drew up the Statutes of Pevensie Marsh, printed in S. J. C., Vol. XVIII. Statutes on the same lines had been drawn up by the commissioners under Richard II., but they were to be considered, intended if necessary, and returned into Chancery: Rot. 3 H. 4, IV, p. 1, m. 26.

sand by the ebb and flow of the tides. A new sluice was therefore needed at Pevensie Bridge, which should be 20 feet long, 11 feet broad and 4 feet high, and would cost £10.

To the cost of scouring the sewer and making the sluice the tenants of the lands above mentioned, with the exception of 20 acres belonging to John Ashburnham above Borehambridge in Broadwyshe and Cornbroke, ought to pay a full contribution. Tenants from above Tonleghebridge to Goudenebridge should pay half a share, and those on the south of Morespichewalle half. Tenants in the marshes of Mankesye, Rustonare, Marchants, Bunkers and Wykham⁴³ should this time pay a quarter share, but it should not be demanded of them in future.

It was also considered necessary for the safety of Pevensie haven that all brooks on the other side upon the salts, from Morespichewalle to the sea, should be broken and removed. If the old haven of Pevensie should again be stopped up with mud and sand by the ebb and flow of the tides, so that the fresh water from the sluice cannot have its course, then it would be needful to pull up the said new sluice and set it down anew at Wyldemershe between the sluice of Hoo and the sluice of Mankesye, and to make a new sewer from the sluice so placed through the naust of the land of John Askे to the Kekyr of Mankesye, paying for the land of the said John Aské according to the law of Romney Marsh.

It would also be beneficial for the lands of the Abbot of Bayham at Rokland to have a little sewer with a bolt fastened below the common watercourse at the Brooks⁴⁴ of Hoee for evacuation of the dead water from rain and springs in the said lands of Rokland, this to be made at their own cost, the abbot to maintain the said watercourse from that bolt called Morespichewalle and if the winter of the said sluice should go out of its course the tenants of Hoee might shut up the said bolt until the abbot recompense them.

Here Wallers Haven is under consideration and we see that it still ran from the Mark Dyke to Pevensie by the Old Haven. Morespichewalle, which occurs frequently as a landmark, still survives in the shortened form of Mispies, but Oralle is lost, though it clearly lay just south of Ladyland marsh. Tonleghe Bridge⁴⁵ was Stone Bridge at the foot of Barnhorne, and Condeyne, or Cooling Bridge, was somewhere near the present Sluice. Wildmarsh, as we have seen, was in Pevensie Bridge Level, but where the sluices of Hoee and Mankesye were is not quite clear, but the suggested new sewer may

⁴³ Wykham Marsh, just north of Wrenhaus.

⁴⁴ Brooks = brookland.

⁴⁵ "Tonleghe" and "Tunylegh" occur in the fourteenth century Court Rolls of Weringham Manor.

have been the straight piece of Wallers Haven from Dowle Corner to Reynold's Gut. Half a century later, in 1455, a session was held at Morescheswall^s by the Abbot of Battle, Bartholomew Bolney, John Colbey, Baillif of Hastings, and John Broke, steward of Eton College, for their demesnes of Hooe.⁴⁶ The viewers then reported as follows:—

The common watercourse between Hatesford and Ashdown^t Hansemyll and Quayngeshaven and from the bridg^u of Pevensy to the Newneshead of Wallershaven and thence by the sea to the point of Quedyngshaven and thence to Romenste^v or to Ballenassutt^w and thence to Swyneshambridge^x and thence to Swyneshambridge^y is choked with sand and mud by the ebb and flow of the sea and with grass, reeds and other silt and by the accumulation and "swarfing"^z (scouring)^{aa} of fresh water, and 1,472 acres of land are drowned by the fresh water, of which each acre used to yield yearly 2^b, and now they yield nothing. It is needful for the saving of these lands that a new sewer and trench for the common eourse of the water from Hastings to the sea shall be constructed, 30 feet broad and 6 feet deep and 8 furlongs in length, within the bounds of Northie, which trench can be made for £10. And 6 acres of land or less will be sufficient for making the trench. And the lord of Northie cannot take any haru thursdron but rutter advantage, for 300 acres of his lands which are now drowned will be saved during the winter by that trench. Also it is reasonable that the lord of Northie shall be remunerated for each acre so cut away for the sewer and trench according to the custom of Romney Marsh and not at a higher rate.

Beginning at Battavien beyond Northie at the sea the sewer would go through the piece of land called Gretewronham in Northie and so beyond the Flote there and thence into another piece of land called Littlewronham and again to the said Flote and so beyond Shipton^{cc} to Hastingswall^{dd} and a sluice shall be newly made and put there 24 foot long and 20 broad and 4 feet high, which sluice could be made for 20 marks. And if the fresh water coming down from the upper ground cannot have sufficient passage to the sea by this said sluice, then the said sluice must be pulled up and set down anew in Hastingswall where it may soon most useful. Also it is necessary that the water in Wallershaven shall in future be received between Markedale and Blakewall^{ee} where it may soon most convenient, and if it be received at Mackodyke, then to run thence direct to the new

⁴⁶ Chanc. Misc., Vol. 81, fol. 1, No. 21. Not printed by *Hugdale*.

^{aa} Granted to Abbot on the seizure of the property of foreign monastic houses.

^{ab} Probably near Gooding Most.

^{ac} Deneys Marsh.

^{ad} Picknill.

^{ae} Probably Whydow Bridge.

^{af} Blakewall, now Blackwell.

trench in Northie aforesaid, 5 furlongs in length; and if it is received in some other place higher up towards Blakewall or at Blakewall then to run direct to Landeyko and so into the Posthaven.^{gg} And Wallershaven shall be abusid from the place where it is so received as far as Horwythy both by scouring and by digging always to the bottom in all places where it requires cleansing. Also all tenants on the south side of Morescheswall^{hh} shall thoroughly repair Moroscheswallⁱⁱ and a new gutt with two bolts shall be put there and so they shall keep the same wall and gutt at their own costs, so that the water shall run down from the said gutt, as set out by the advice of the said tenants or of the greater part of them, as far as the Esthunon. Also it is needful that the gutt of Morehul^{jj} and the gutt of Rokeland^{kk} be well repaired and kept in the same way as in former times, and also all the wells from Borhambridge to Markedike.

So it is agreed that the trench and sluice be made as aforesaid and that all the owners and tenants of lands in the marsh of Hoo both above Borhambridge and below whose lands are drained by the said sewer shall maintain and repair the sewer and sluice on behalf of the lord of Northie at their own charges, and if the lands of the lord of Northie are in future drained by the said sewer then he shall pay his contribution in proportion to the quantity of his lands so drained. And the tenants of land above Borhambridge, Rokeland, Morehul, Hoo, Ladyland, Gralls and the lands once of Christiana atte Mershe and lands from above Tonibroughbridge^{ll} as for us Cawdenesbridge shall pay a full share towards the making of the sewer and trench; and in future all tenants south of Morescheswall^{mm} and all from above Tonibroughbridge to Cawdenesbridge shall pay a half share in proportion, as in former times. And all tenants outside the limits aforesaid, whether within Libertiesⁿⁿ or without, who in the future are drained by the said sewer shall pay their share by the assessment of the baillif and twelve shawors (*scutatores*). And it is needful that there be educated a baillif, a collector, a treasurer (*ezecutior*) and other shawors from the residing tenants of this lands so drained who shall have power to act in this matter according to the law of the marsh of Romney, and it would be also for the advantage of the same marsh of Hoo that the Commissioners, by advice of the lords and community of the marsh should frame new rules and regulations on the lines of the customs of Romney Marsh and that they should be returned into Chancery and ratified under the Great Seal.

[William Chayne, esquire, was then chosen as baillif, John Kneller as collector, Robert atte Mille, clerk, us treasurer and twelve others as shawors.] "The said shawors so chosen and sworn then and thero assessed the seot for making the said sewers and trenches at 2^o on every acre.

^{gg} William Chayne, esquire, was then chosen as baillif, John Kneller as collector, Robert atte Mille, clerk, us treasurer and twelve others as shawors.] "The said shawors so chosen and sworn then and thero assessed the seot for making the said sewers and trenches at 2^o on every acre.

^{hh} The Blakewall scheme would have diverted the water into Waterlot Stream.

ⁱⁱ In Nutfield Parish.

^{jj} In Wurlding Parish.

^{kk} Stone Bridge.

^{ll} I.e., privileged districts, such as the Cinque Port liberty of Northgate.

The tenants assessed to the scot were : Thomas Assheburnham, *John a Broke* of Ashburnham, Richard Taddle, Richard Bratte, Stephen Lonceford, Sir Richard Fenus, the Lady of Warsting, Lord de Say, Ralph Motte, Alice atte Mille, Thomas Collond of Borham, Thomas Colbord carpenter, Thomas Playstele, James Tysehurst, John Smyth, John Bray senior, John Webb, William Wright, Robert Standard, John Neston, Richard Holier, Robert atte Mille, the Lord of Morenhale, Geoffrey Hayward, Thomas Newyn, John Kneller, Richard Borell, Thomas Fernayng, John a Wettis, Rowart a Crouche, John Iken, John Parker, William Scot, Henry Faukes clerk, Thomas Broker, junior, William Puffe of Hooe, John Jakelbyg, William Shirlot, Richard Elfrith, John Palmer carpenter, Thomas Burdon, John Fyichte, William Cheyne esquire, Henry Elfrith, John Whiting, Peter Palmer junior, William Nutbrone of Hooe, Richard Tapton, John a Broke of Ninfield, the Lord of Hone, Robert Farnham, Elizabeth Shoswell, John Jane (?), William Grewenwale, Robert Balkor, John a Clyve, Richard Nutbrone, John a Crouche smith, John Lonesford, the Abbot of Battle, Simon Redhill, William Nutbrone of Bernham, John Unfray, William a Crouche, the Abbot of Bayham, John Coggar and John Bokelund. The twelve names in italics are those of the shawors.

Then follows a summary of the laws and regulations to be observed in future, practically identical with those drawn up in 1402 for Pevensey Marsh, which had not previously applied to Hooe Level. They provide for the holding of a chief last, or water court, yearly at Micham at which the shawors and overseers shall be elected ; the shawors to take an oath to deal fairly and without favour ; in the event of tenants refusing to pay their scots their goods to be distrained upon and kept three days at most and then, as the tides wait for no man, to be sold and the money applied as required.

The eventual decision of the shawors was evidently in favour of taking the water from Mark Dyke, as suggested, through Northeyc, and we can thus date the closure of the Old Haven channel of Wallers Haven and the

diversion of the latter eastwards to the neighbourhood of the present sluice to 1402, and the new channel at the sluice to 1455.

No further reports of the Commissioners are known, and we are dependent for our knowledge of the struggle between the land and the sea upon isolated notices. In 1428 the sea had overflowed the much tried "Eyland alias Oldeland," and also Homstall, Hailsoppis and Stonrige.⁵⁷ Ten years later, in 1438, the portreeve in claiming that certain items should be written off mentions : "Two Dokkes near the port of Pevensey made for boats to land at and lie in, formerly in the tenure of Simon Gokeman at a rent of 4^d, now lying empty and unoccupied because a sluice has been made between the said Dokkes and the sea so that no boat can land at the said Dokkes. Also two places called Botelhouses lying upon Stonyruogg by the sea shore formerly held by Simon Gokeman and John Martin at a rent of 16^s, and 8 acres of land lying below Stonyrigge, formerly in the tenure of Simon Goodwyn at a rent of 3^s 5^d, now in the lord's hands because the said places and land are totally destroyed by the inundation of the sea."⁵⁸ Docks of the kind here mentioned, little bays cut in the side of the dykes, are to be seen in many places in the marsh, especially near the sea, to the present day, though for the most part they have long been disused. The portreeve in 1463 claimed allowance of a rent of 4d. "for a parcel of land called the Dokke by the Haven of Pevensey, late in the tenure of Simon Henly, because the tenants of the manor are not willing to allow Simon to occupy it on account of the excessive injury which would result to the lord King and the said tenants."⁵⁹ Two years later this same piece of land was overflowed by the sea ; the Hooe was in its usual condition of submersion, and the sea had even broken in and flooded 35 acres at Hobney.⁶⁰ Four years later, in 1469, there was a serious

⁵⁷ Mins. Accts., 412, No. 7,114.

⁵⁸ Mins. Accts., 412, No. 7,120.

⁵⁹ Mins. Accts., 413, No. 7,130.

⁶⁰ Mins. Accts., 1,028, No. 6. Hobney is in Westham, south-west of the Castro.

THE IRMING OF PEVENSEY LEVELS.

inundation of the sea which drowned 300 acres of 'Phonius Sacellville's land at Higland and another 66 acres called le Wysland.^a In 1481 also considerable injury was done by the sea, which overflowed 60 acres belonging to John Alcock, as much belonging to Thomas Redden, another 60 acres called Wylystrand, 134 acres of William Thistys^b and another 100 acres belonging to other tenants, including John Aske and William Alard. These lands had not been recovered in 1485, when an inquiry was ordered.^c

The 300 acres mentioned above as drowned in 1469 must have been held by Stuckville of the prior of Lewes, or else, which is more likely, the priory were given leave to reclaim as much as they liked of it. At any rate, in 1508 it was reported that John, prior of Lewes, and his predecessors had gradually reclaimed 92 acres thereof at great cost to themselves,^d thus reclaimed land, which appears to have been that on the east of Pevensy Haven afterwards known as 'the Hundred Acre',^e was again overflowed somewhere about 1542, as appears from certain

Instructions concerning Pevensy Marsh to be engrafted unto the Kings General Surveyors of his Tenures Lands.^f

M^r There is in all Pevensy Marsh lying and being within the Duchies of Lancaster in the County of Sussex viij. in miles xxvii (6,368) acres whereof two acres lie in one Lavelle called Reshmore Lavelle. And the Landholders therof ys clarged and the County Rentayres to the said Lavelle what is to say Sir Audlour Brown, Knight, for iiii. xxvi acres; John Pudde for 1 acre; William Wylforne for 1 acre; Thomas Hayvelyst for 1/2 acre; the late Lorde Ducas for xxx attaines of the same lond. And wherein late John Aske sone also also one hundred acres belonging to the late monastary of Lewys Bessex and more in the kinges graces handes by the late Lorde Ducas. Which so said acre acres were stornished and drowned there standing upon the said marsh. And whiche was wont to be fonsel maintained and kept at the proper costes and charges of tho

^a Mins. Accs., 43, No. 7, 136.

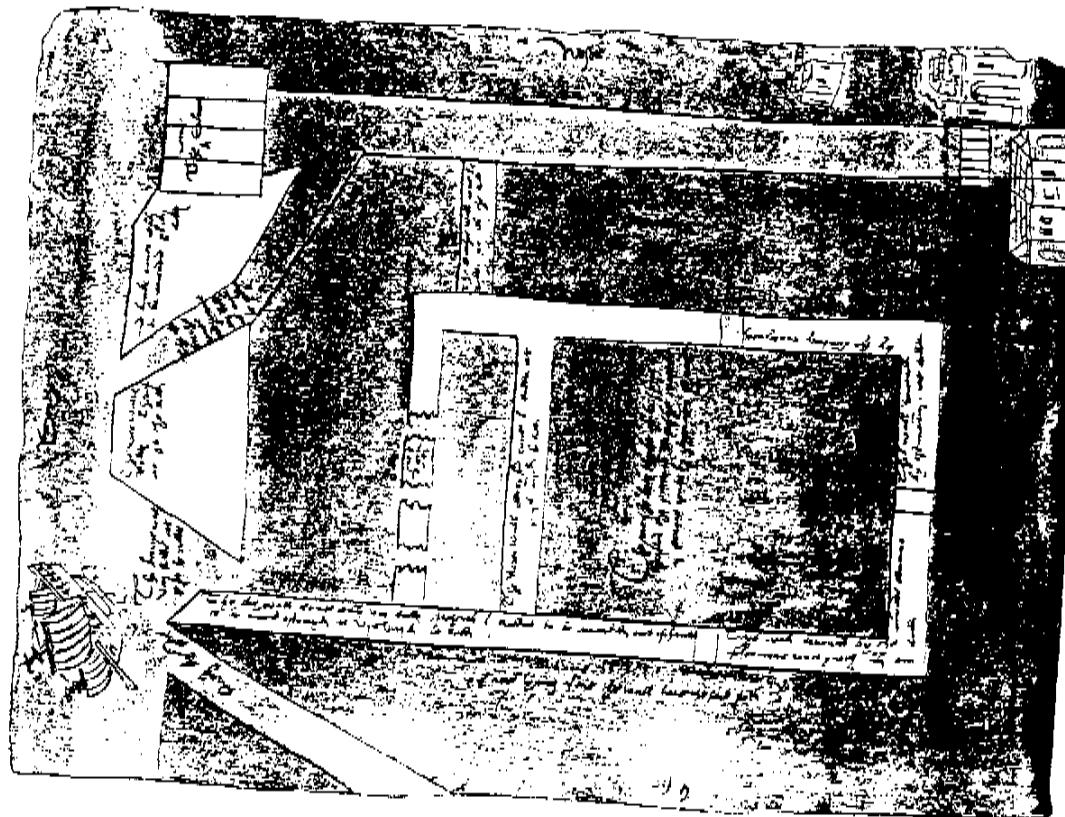
^b Ry. of Lanc., Deince Brs., II., 8.

^c Mins. Accs., 44, No. 7, 146.

^d Ry. of Lanc., Spec. Com., 221.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY PLAN OF MARSSES AT PEVENSEY.

The dark tint represents land, the lighter tint water; the banks are shown hatched.



said priours of the said Monastery. And about xi yeres past was
Inn'd and Recovered by the same late Monastery.

An ostymate of the costes and charges in making of the sea wallys
in Pevensey Marshis aforesaid nowe in Bayne and Deane.

That is to saye

Poldle Walle

Firste from the landus into the lordes Daeres. The said oldde walle
being now in decaye contayneth unto the late breche cxxij^{iiij} viij
Rodles whiche the said Prior in his tyme repayred mayntayned
and kepte. And is Ruled by the Cantryre for mounding of the same
every Rodle at vij viij and aounteith to the sume of lxxij xij^{iiij}
Item the late breche contayning viij Rodles, for the making of
ever Rodle ex^e whiche amounted to the sume of xlviij
Item the xliij Rodles to be made and repairet joyning to the
sumles and gravel in the sou' brakkes towards the old breche y^e
Rated at xv the Rodles and aounteith to the sume of xxiiij
Item the Olde breche contayning viij Rodles y^e Rated by estymacon
at viij^{iiij} the Rodles and aounteith to the sume of xxiiij

In [Rodles celij]
Money chixij xij^{iiij} viij^{iiij}

The Newe Wall

Firste from the foreside late Lord Daeres landes of the olde
wall unto the newe wall appoynted counteyneth clxxij Rodles over
and besyde xxx Rodles abutted of the foresaid sume of ciiij^{iiij} viij
Rodles for the deane of the said Marshie every Rodle Rate^d at vij viij^{iiij}
the Rodles and aounteith to the sume of li^{ij} xij iiiij^{iiij}

Item the i^{ij} Rodles of the Newe Wall ys rated at xij^{iiij} iiiij^{iiij} and
aounteith to the sume of xxiiij vij viij^{iiij}
Item li^{ij} Rodles belonging to certain landes of the Duchie of
Lancastre xij^{iiij}

Item the said viij Rodles of this olde breche before rated at viij^{iiij}

y^e purvew of the churc^h of this wall. And yet theris no more Welles

belonging to this said wall xxxij^{iiij}

In [Rodles clxxij]
Money cxxx^{iiij} x^{iiij}

The anulling of the wall by the suys more charge by axxij^{iiij} viij^{iiij}
than the newe wall ys. But yet lures of grounde ys saved thorby.

M^r also hwo ys xxij Rodles more than the see wall ys in
circuite.

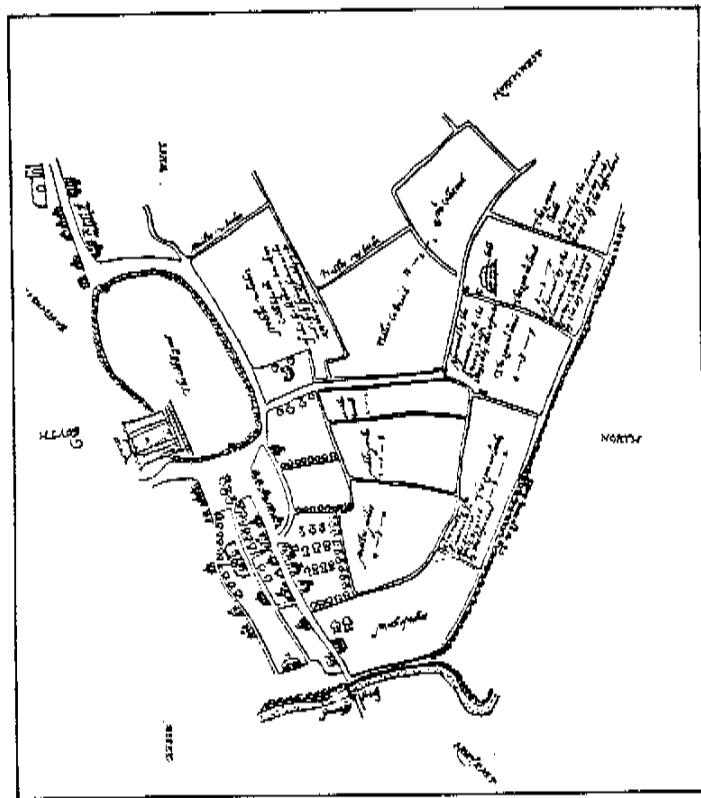
To illustrate this scheme, or rather these two alternate
schemes, a rough diagrammatic plan⁶⁵ was prepared, of
which, by the courtesy of the authorities at the Public
Record Office, we are able to reproduce a tracing. This
shows all the points referred to; the broken wall, the
suggested new wall within it and the old sea wall outside

⁶⁵ Dy. of Lanc., Maps, No. 11.

it, more costly to repair but enclosing half as much land again as the other. The marshes, walls and streams are here treated with as little regard for meticulous accuracy as the Castle itself, but the stream running from the old staine to the new shane must be Langney Haven, while from the appearance of the Haven on the other side it would seem that the mouth of the Salt Haven at that time ran pretty much on the course of the present Bill Gout.

During the next reign we find that other suggestions were made for improving the drainage of the marsh by allowing the salt water to flow higher up. William Pirelle, of Boxhill, who had a lease of the Queen Salts from Henry VII, complained that "by the procurement of certain gentymen . . . for their singular larcy and advantage" a suggestion had been made to the Commissioners of Sewers by the twelve shawers "that yef the elde gytys and slowss at Pevensye Bryge were taken upp and newe made at a place called Rykeney brygge and the olde banke or wall at every syde of the haven unto Rykeney brige were suffyciently made, that then the country uppwarde shoulde be well sewed and dryed." The suggestors not realising the danger and some of the commissioners being "lytle usyt to the operacion and warkynge of the see in crykes and merches," this was ordered to be done. But if the old sluice were removed the salt water would overflow the Queen Salts; he therefore desired, and no doubt obtained, supersedeas to the baylyff spoudous juratours and officers of the said levele of Pevensye⁶⁵ to refrain until a duly appointed commission had reported upon the matter.⁶⁶

The Queen's Salts here referred to lay just north of Pevensye village, between the south bank of Pevensye Haven and another bank further south. They were demesne lands of the maner and a dispute as to their extent in 1595 resulted in the drawing up of a plan,⁶⁷ of which the Public Record Office authorities have kindly permitted me to make a tracing. The plan is interesting, as the draughtsman included not only the lands in



PLAN OF THE "QUEEN'S SALTS" AND OTHER LANDS
AT PEVENSEY, 1595.

⁶⁵ By. of Lanc., Plearolls, Vol. 22, 'L. 2, temp. Edw. VI.
⁶⁶ By. of Lanc., Rep., 28 Eliz., No. 43.

dispute and the fields immediately adjacent, but also the town of Pevensey and part of Westham. The large house shown to the east of the Castle can be identified with the old timbered manor house which stood on the site of the present market until about sixty years ago, but a comparison of the drawing with an earlier Elizabethan survey of the burgages suggests that the placing of the remaining houses is not reliable, and the artist has certainly omitted the house which stood in 1563,¹⁸ and still stands beneath the north-west angle of the Roman wall. The point which concerns us here, however, is the existence of this bank to the south of the present containing bank of the haven, and of a similar bank on the north side. All along the south bank of Pevensey Haven and its inland continuation, Glenleigh Sewer, occur similar strips of demesne lands known as Queen's Salts or King's Salts, and it would seem that the outer banks¹⁹ mark the former limit of the haven and sewer, and that as the volume of the water decreased these strips were recovered, and the streams confined within the narrower limits which they now possess. The occurrence of the name, King Harry's Salts at Glenleigh, suggests the reign of Henry VIII. for the date of this reclamation.

From the careful survey of the Sussex coast made at the time that the Spanish Armada was expected (1587-8) it would seem that the mouth of the Pevensey Haven had been forced considerably eastwards, and that much of the water which formerly passed into the sea at this place now found its way as far east as the shingle near Northey. The eastward drift continued apace, and in 1609 the blocking up of the haven had become so common an occurrence that it was stated²⁰ that "as often as the sea by reason of raging and violent winds shall or doth swerve or kill up the small haven at the mouth" of the stream from Pevensey Bridge to the sea, "in whose

¹⁸ By. of Inst., Misc. Bks., Vol. 112.

¹⁹ These were evidently "the old baute or wall at every syde of the Haven"
referred to above.

²⁰ By. of Inst., Ms. 8 Jas. I., No. 60.

liberty soever the same falleth, the same is to be opened again and usually hath been opened again for the preservation of all the Levels, at the charge of the country by the Commission of Sewers." At this time Richard Carpenter, gentleman, a man of only forty-six, deposed that within his own memory the haven mouth had moved a mile east, and John Saxpes, of "Cowden" (i.e., Cooding), deposed that "ten years since there was a haven at Pevensey which is now gone up into the Rape of Hastings eastwards about half a mile; it was two miles distant from Pevensey Castle and is now two miles and a half." The Shuisse, indeed, had supplanted the old haven as a port of lading until, about 1580, Herbert Pelham and Mr. Stofion had started bringing iron, the principal export of the district, down the ditches in barges in the winter when the "tuggs" or waggons were unable to use the marsh roads. This water-borne iron was stored close to Pevensey Bridge and exported from the haven, so that the old port of Pevensey enjoyed a brief renewal of its ancient activity.

The sea, which had so long attempted to reconquer Pevensey Level, now began to relax its efforts and to yield up the debatable ground along its borders. A survey of "derelict" lands in 1633²¹ mentions 50 acres of salt marsh until recently overflowed by the spring tides, extending from the stream leading from Pevensey Shuisse on the east, to Pevensey Haven on the west, abutting on the Uplands of Pevensey and Bexhill on the north and on the sea south, then held by Philip Drinker, of Ulmore, and Abraham Kentesley, of Westham; and another 20 acres in Pevensey held by the same Abramian Kentesley, adjoining Pevensey Haven on the cast; and yet a third parcel of 40 acres in Bexhill parish, adjoining Pevensey Haven on the west, enclosed by the Earl of Dorset 30 years before. In 1663 a similar survey²² showed a piece of marsh called the Salts, abutting on Colchurbour house on the west and the port of Pevensey on the east, and containing 80 acres which had long been "left bare and dry by the sea." And, finally, in 1696

²¹ Each. Spec. Com., 6, 913.
²² Each. Spec. Com., 6, 504.

an inquiry was held about two other pieces of land reclaimed upon the edge of coast.¹⁸ One of these, containing 50 or 60 acres, was known as Sampson's Salts, alias Grumble, or Grumble Creek ; these salts adjoin Pevensie Haven on the east, Old Lands on the west, and the sea beach south ; the sea overflowed all this to such an extent that small boats could row up the creek, until "about six years since," when the Earl of Sussex caused William Stone and John Trilly to enclose it ; if the banks were thrown down the sea would again cover the land. The other parcel was Rocklease Salts, containing 15 acres, adjoining Bexhill parish and abutting eastward on Pevensie Haven, south on the sea beach, north-west on Rockhouse land ; this had been inned about 10 years before.

By this time the Levels had practically reached their present condition,¹⁹ and Pevensie, which had once played an honourable part in the confederation of the Cinque Ports, had ceased to be a port. When commissioners were appointed in 1698 to survey the southern coast and discover the best place for a great naval base they conscientiously visited Pevensie, made a careful map, which shows that the recognised harbour occupied the present position of the mouth of the Salt Haven, a mile and a quarter south-east of the Castle, while the "Old Outlet" is indicated close to the present hotel at Wallsend, and reported that, "About four or five years since vessels of 50 and 60 tons took in their loading at the bridge of the town, but of late a shut bath been made upon the river very near the haven's mouth, beyond which no vessel can now pass. A vessel of 14 tons now meets with great difficulty to get within the mouth of it."²⁰ They therefore decided, and I think rightly, that Portsmouth would be more suitable for a naval base than the ancient and extinct port of Pevensie.

¹⁸ Chanc. Petty Bks., Spec. Com., Vol. 6, No. 4.

¹⁹ The alteration of the coast line by the rapid accumulation of shingle, and the consequent blocking of the channels, still continued. Between 1739 and 1748 the mouth of the Haven had become blocked and a fresh cut had to be made at a cost of £1,100. Ex inf. Mr. J. F. Ray, from a survey in the Hastings Corporation records.

²⁰ Shear. MS., 3, 233.

The Level and Port of Pevensey in the Middle Ages
by A.J.F. Dulley

Sussex Archaeological Collections
Vol. 104, 1966 pp 26-45

THE LEVEL AND PORT OF PEVENSEY IN THE MIDDLE AGES

By A. J. F. DUNLEY

The history of medieval Pevensey is dominated by the changing relationship between land and sea and the use that man made of each of them. The documentary evidence for that relationship has already been discussed in these pages by Mr. L. P. Salzman.¹ However, in addition to the documents preserved in the Public Record Office and elsewhere, there remain the faint but visible vestiges of man's impact on the landscape, some of which, particularly some of the early sea walls, are still sufficiently noticeable to have been recorded on the Ordnance Survey plans, though many have only become apparent since the advent of air photography or have had to wait until excavation in other parts of the country has given a clue to their probable nature. It is the purpose of this paper to attempt a synthesis of these two types of evidence, in the hope that a fuller picture of the history of the area may emerge.

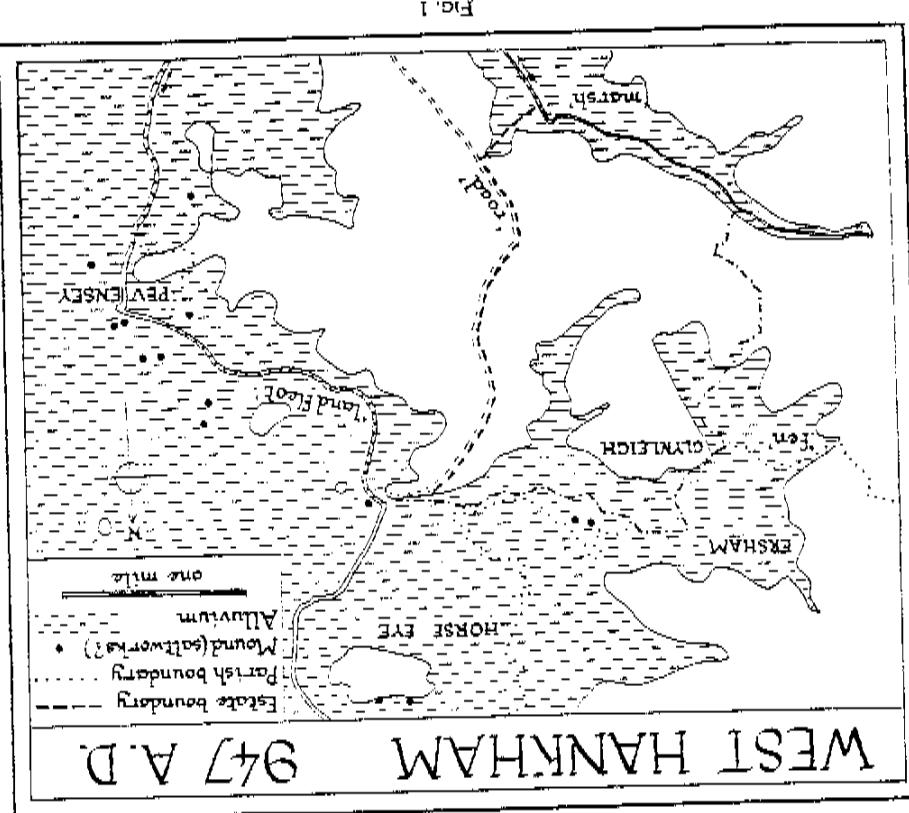
The first we hear of Pevensey under its modern name is in a charter of the 10th century, and the little that we know of the earlier Roman settlement is mainly a matter of conjecture. It is likely that throughout the historical period there has been a shingle beach roughly on the line of the present shore, but there is no evidence of Roman occupation on the marshland behind it, which was presumably unclaimed, so that at high tide, much, if not all, of the level was a lagoon, with the Saxon Shore fort occupying a position analogous to that of Portchester in relation to Portsmouth Harbour.

Nor is it likely that much was done in the way of reclamation before the Norman Conquest. There are two surviving Anglo-Saxon charters which dealt with land bordering the levels. The earlier, by which in 772 Offa of Mercia granted the Bishop of Selby an estate centred on Bechulf, gives bounds of three hides at Barnhouse, the southern margin of which was 'salt marsh' as far as the Hoe Stream.² The second, which dates from 947, relates to land at West Hankham and Glynehead.³ The boundaries east considerable fight on the state of the marshland at that period. They begin at a watercourse called 'Landritte' and follow a north-south road which can only be that from Rickney by Stone Cross to Langney, turning off it to 'marsh' in the upper part of Willington Level,

¹ The history of Pevensey Level, in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 53 (1910), pp. 30-60. Unless references are given below, the relevant sources are printed or summarised in this paper.

² Eric Barker, *Sussex Anglo-Saxon Charters*, Part 1, in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 86 (1947), pp. 42-101. The Bechulf charter is No. xiv.

³ Eric Barker, op. cit., Part 3, in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 88 (1949), pp. 51-99 (No. xxii).



presumably along the present parish boundary, as far as an unidentifiable 'border enclosure'; from there they went north through 'leas' to meet and march with the boundaries of Esham and Horse Eye until they reached the 'Landfleot'. There was also a salt-works on the north side of this stream, opposite Pevensy. The name 'Landflethe' reappears in a manorial rental of 1292, when the bridge of Landflethe spanned the Glyndebourne Sewer at Ricketey.¹ The Landfleot must have been the main channel of Pevensy Haven. If the salt-works were using the normal medieval method of obtaining salt from sea-water, they must have stood on unreclaimed saltings, for the technique was to scrape up the salt-rich surface of sand or mud, leach out the brine and boil it to extract the salt. The process produced, as a by-product, mounds of desalinated mud, often used to provide a dry footing for the buildings. These mounds might attain a considerable size and remain as a permanent feature of the landscape long after the industry itself had ceased. They have recently been identified in the Adur valley, where salt production in the Middle Ages is well documented,² and it can be no accident that essentially similar mounds can be found in several parts of the Pevensy Levels, among them the area immediately to the north of the Saxon 'Landfleot'.

The mounds in question are between three and five feet high, irregularly oval in shape, and about fifty yards in average diameter, although there is considerable variation in size. All are at present under grass, but where they are cut by drainage ditches, they seem to be composed of the same clayey alluvium as the rest of the marsh. The only exception to this is an isolated mound north-west of Boreham Bridge, which appears to rest on a bed of brushwood and is made up of a bright orange ferruginous or burnt material which contrasts vividly with the brown of the normal marsh clay. This mound however, is so far separated from the others and a long way inland of them, that it can hardly be regarded as typical.

There are four principal groups of mounds, two alongside the stream that flows from the valley between Hoe and Barnhorne, another along the north bank of the Old Haven, and the fourth, the area described in the charter of 947, beside Pevensy Haven. There are in addition a number scattered elsewhere on the marsh. Nearly all of them are quite close to former tidal channels, though they are usually conveniently sited for access from solid ground, a fact that makes it unlikely that they were constructed as refuges for livestock in time of flood. In a number of cases it is clear that they antedate the reclaiming of the surrounding marshland, since they

are incorporated into the sea walls and are respected by the drainage ditches, which make a circuitous course around them.

Fieldwork by itself can only furnish presumptive evidence of their purpose, but there is ample documentary proof of salt-making in the area during the early Middle Ages. The charter already mentioned is the earliest reference to the industry, but it is clear that by the end of the following century it had grown to some size, for Domesday Book ascribes over 100 salt-works to neighbouring manors.³ The largest concentrations were at Hoe (34) and Eastbourne (16). It is probably a coincidence that the biggest group of mounds is in the southern corner of Hoe Parish, for the attribution of eight salt-works to Netherfield shows that they could be located some distance from their parent manor. Some of these works were valuable assets to their lords, two at Eastbourne being together rated at 40*l*s., more than the total worth of many of the smaller manors of the district. The general scale of production was smaller than this, however, the entries having a median value of 2*s.* 5*d.* per unit. Their economic importance was recognised by the new overlords of the rapes, for between them they controlled three-quarters of the total production.

There are intermittent references to the industry in the following two centuries. Shortly after 1148, Bishop Hilary of Chichester assigned to his Chancellor part of the Clapeth of Pevensy, which he had recently received from King Stephen, including a render of salt.⁴ A salt-works called 'Guldenesaltkote' was in operation in 1199,⁵ and in 1230-1 William de Monte Acuto, who seems to have held land in Besetover (modern Pevensy Bridge Level), was receiving 18 numbers of salt from part of his lands.⁶ In 1234 the Norman abbey of Guestain was confined in the right to 100 numbers from the salt-works of Pevensy Marsh, but it was probably a sign of the times that six years later, in another list of the rights of the abbey, the scribe wrote the phrase 'a share of the salt in the marsh of Pevensy according to the annual production' but later deleted it.⁷ This is the last reference to active production. When we next hear of a 'saltcote', it is the name given, at least as early as 1292, to part of the arable land of the home farm of the Castle, just opposite the mounds that stand beside the Glyndeigh Sewer. There were several causes at work to bring about the decline of the industry, but most important was undoubtedly the progressive reclamation of the tidal flats, which first reduced the original lagoon to a network of narrow creeks and then cut these off from the sea.

¹ H. C. Darby and E. M. J. Campbell, *The Domesday Geography of South-East England* (1962), p. 457.

² *Chichester Cartularies*, ed. by W. D. Peckham (*Sussex Record Soc.*, vol. 46)

referred to below as 'Chichester Cartulary', No. 260.

³ *Sussex Feet of Fines*, ed. by L. F. Salzman (*Sussex Record Soc.*, vol. 2), No. 264. One number = 4 bushels.

⁴ *Cad. Close Rolls*, 1231-34, p. 496. *Ibid.*, 1237-42, p. 246.

⁵ P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, S.C. 1/1663.

⁶ E. W. Holden, 'Salt Works at Badoles,' in *Sussex Notes and Queries*, vol. 15 (1958-62), pp. 304-6. I am indebted to Mr. Holden for additional information about these and for drawing my attention to several of the Pevensy mounds.

Evidently the saltmakers could not follow the advancing frontiers of the reclaimed land, for it is noticeable that the surviving meadows are all some distance from the present coast, the nearest being about three-quarters of a mile from it. The decreasing salinity of the water in the creeks and the lack of extensive mud-flats were no doubt crucial factors, as well as the increased distance from which the large quantities of fuel needed had to be fetched.

The date at which reclamation began is uncertain. It would appear that little if any had been done by 1086, for the small amounts of meadow belonging to bordering manors contrast sharply with the large areas in the Ouse valley. There Domesday Book names three villi with 200 acres or more, and two others with over 100, while around Pevensey the largest holdings were of 60 at Willington, 38 at Witting and 25 at Eastbourne. Significantly, there were only three villi in the Ouse valley with saltworks (23 in all), as against eleven with 102½ at Pevensey. There are also entries for pasture, but except at Pevensey itself there is no certainty that they relate to marsh grazing. The pasture at Pevensey was worth 7s. 3d. in 1066, while twenty years later Alured the Butler had 15s. 4d. from the 'herbage' (the distinction between the terms is obscure). Alured's descendants held land in Beslenuo to the east of Pevensey in the 13th century,¹ and it may be to this area that the Domesday entry relates. His income may just as well have come from summer grazing on the flats as from reclaimed marsh, though a study of the surviving sea-walls makes it clear that this was one of the nuclei from which reclamation began.

The course of these walls is shown on Fig. 2. They are especially common on the seaward parts of the marsh, although they accompany the main channel of Pevensey Haven far inland. In their present form many date from the 16th or 17th centuries, when much of the work of enclosing the marshes had to be done anew, but all the indications are that the men of that period for the most part followed the work of their predecessors, reusing and strengthening the old embankments but leaving them substantially unaltered. Where they had to start again from scratch, they followed a different technique of construction, building a wall entirely of dredged material from a parallel tidal channel (a processuation at this time being to keep the channels open) rather than making them by digging two parallel ditches and piling the upcast in between, which was the method invariably used earlier. As a result it is easy to distinguish the last phase of the process, but the sequence in the earlier periods is not always plain, particularly since roads and sea-walls were made by the same technique. Indeed the roads often follow disused walls, which offered a dry footway even in time of flood. But there is one feature which, if present, distinguishes walls from roads, namely

the tendency for the ground level outside a sea-wall to build up slowly with the deposits of silt left by high spring tides while the level inside remains unchanged. If the process is allowed to go on for any considerable time before the land beyond the wall is reclaimed there may be a difference of as much as two feet in the level of the marsh on either side, the higher always being the later to be reclaimed. There have been so many vicissitudes in the history of the Levels that one cannot use this as a criterion for absolute dating, but as an indication of relative date it is extremely valuable. As has been said, one of the centres from which reclamation proceeded was in Beslenuo, around the square ditched enclosure on Moat Marsh (fn. Q. 661060). A start had been made here well before 1200, and by 1263 a lagoon or swamp to the east, on the site of the later Wrenham Marsh, had recently been drained. The drainage of Hoe Level was presumably already confined to the narrow embanked channel still traceable, which followed a curving course to the north and west of the site of the lost village of Northeye to join the Wrenham Stream and eventually debouch into the sea south of Rockhouse Bank. It was known in the Middle Ages variously as the 'Esthaven', 'Godyngeshaven', or 'the old port of Coding', which last suggests that at one time drifting shingle must have pushed its mouth further east towards Coorden. Though too narrow to take any but the smallest craft, it was enough to justify Northeye's status as a non-corporate member of the Cinque Port of Hastings.

As the process of reclamation advanced, the owners of the newly enclosed lands found it necessary to guard themselves against unneighbourly conduct that could imperil the precarious balance between land and sea. Although there were no formalised regulations until those of Romney Marsh were adopted in the 15th century, the description of the joining of the swamp in 1263 already mentioned alludes to the customary procedure for dealing with landowners who would not co-operate in reclamation. In the following century, and probably already, the Lowy courts were exacting fines for obstruction and neglect of watercourses within their jurisdiction.¹ But there was need for private agreements for the disposal of surface water. We find the Abbot of Battle in 1248 granting part of his marshland at Barnhorne to his neighbour William de Northye in return for the right to drain the rest through William's demesne lands, which lay between them and the sea.

In the western and northern parts of the marsh the same process was going on, although it is not possible to reconstruct it in detail, perhaps because it was substantially complete at an earlier date, when documents were fewer and less informative. But the fact that the Prior of Lewes found it necessary to secure his rights to

¹ W. Hudson, 'The Manor of Eastbourne,' in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 4 (1851), pp. 208-18. Larking, in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 4 (1851), pp. 208-18.

¹ For the workings of these courts, see the *Perency Customal*, ed. by L. H.

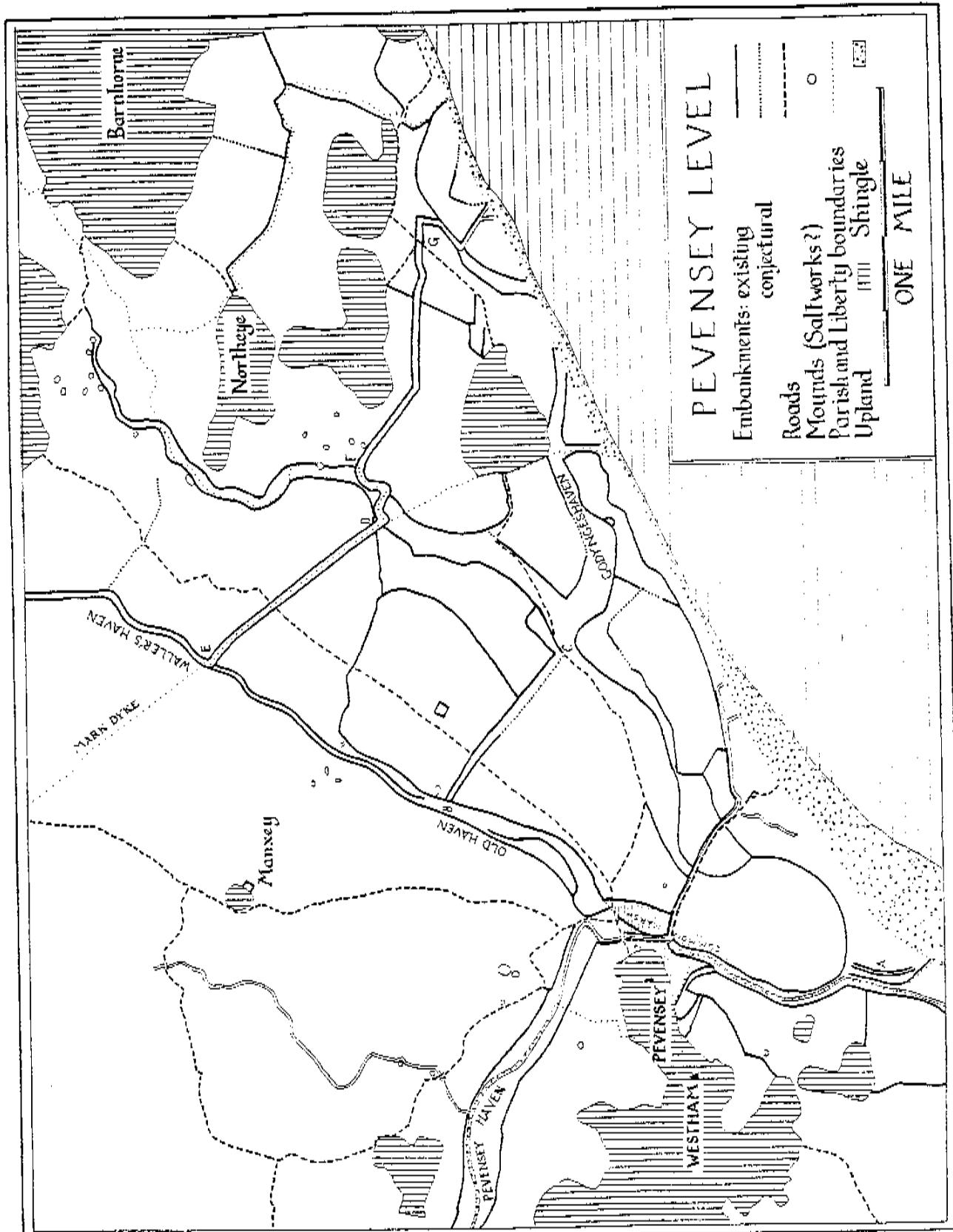
water to turn his tidenull at Langney c.1160-65 suggests that most of Willingdon Level was already enclosed, even though a lagoon or lake long persisted behind the shingle of the Crumbles, to support a fishery and fishmarket into the 15th century. So too, south of Horse Eye, much had been accomplished by 1223 and the tideway reduced to a narrow channel, the reclamation of which was already envisaged and had been completed by 1292. Across to the east of Horst Haven the foundation of the chapel of Manxey c. 1240 implies the existence of a congregation and land to support them.¹ The endowments of the chapel are marked on the Tithe Map as 'Rector's Lands', either side of the road from Chilley Bridge to Pevensy.

On the eve of the great flood of 1287, which had serious consequences for this as well as other parts of the Sussex coast, almost all the present marshland was reclaimed. The tide flowed between the sea walls as far as Rickney Bridge and along the Old Haven from Pevensy to Waller's Haven, as well as in the Esthaven, while between Pevensy and the sea was an archipelago of islands of marsh or shingle intersected by tidal creeks. This archipelago seems to have suffered badly in the flood, but the sea also broke into the marshes north of the Castle and probably in other places as well. The damage was such as to cause the appointment, two years later, of the first recorded Commissioners of Sewers for the Sussex coast, Roger Lewkenor and Luke de la Care, the former a landowner in the marsh and the latter Bailiff to the Honour of Aquna, of which Pevensy formed part. They decided to dam Pevensy Haven, either at the modern Pevensy Bridge or, more probably, just to the north, at the junction with the Old Haven. This provoked protests from other local landowners, who believed that the new dam and sluice would cause flooding by fresh water, which would have greater difficulty in flowing away if the scouring effect of the tide was lessened by reducing the tidal part of the estuary. Though their fears were in the event justified, their protest seems to have been ineffective, for the survey of the demesnes of the Castle made in 1292 includes 36½ acres of salt marsh between the bridge of Landrith and Pevensy and 15 between Chilley and Rickney Bridge, worth 8*s.* per acre (as against 12*d.* for the rest of the pasture) on account of the sluice.² This must plainly be the area either side of Pevensy Haven known later as the King's Salts or Queen's Salts, now reclaimed for the first time and not yet as productive as the older innings.

Reclamation went on steadily during the following century, but it is not until its end that the general pattern can be seen in a clear light. By 1396 the danger feared by the objectors a century earlier had materialised. An Inquisition of that year attests the deterioration of Pevensy Haven and recommends various improvements.

¹ E. W. Holden, 'Manxey,' in *Sussex Notes and Queries*, vol. 15 (1958-62), p. 319.

FIG. 2



The old channel at this time discharged by what would appear to be an artificial cut through the shingle south of Pevensey.¹ The channel was still tidal but needed widening, with the addition of a new outfall at the mouth, parallel with the old. The site of this is marked by old sea walls behind the shingle of the Crumbles, and they include traces of an old embanked channel parallel with Wellington Haven but diverging southwards to the sea (A, Fig. 2). However, since all this region was again tidal in the late 16th century, when ships of 60 tons could sail through it up to Pevensey Bridge, these embankments in their present form at least must belong to a later period. Indeed there must be considerable doubt whether the recommendations of the jury at the Inquisition were ever put into effect, for the landowners in the marsh, who would have had to pay the cost, asserted that the old channel was beyond repair and claimed to use a totally different method for draining their land. This involved bringing the water from Hurnt Haven through Manxey Haven into the Old Haven and thence by a cut that can still be traced into the Old Port of Codding (Godyngheshaven; B-C, Fig. 2).

But this channel also was giving trouble. The *Imprimitus Narrationis* makes it clear that flooding was widespread in the valley of Waller's Haven in 1340. Hove had 400 acres flooded, Wartling 200, and at Ninfeld 'the greater part of an estate called "Morihale"'² was under water: the tithes from it would be worth 6s. 8d. In 1402, when an inquiry was held into the drainage of the whole valley, now entirely flooded, two alternative improvement schemes were proposed. The former, which seems to have proved effective, measures advocated in 1396 were acted on and proved effective, was to clear out the Old Haven and build a sluice at its Pevensey end. If this failed—as it did—another cut was to be made between the old Haven and Godyngheshaven (D-E, Fig. 2).

This cut itself proved of only limited effectiveness, for in 1455 it had to be extended (F-G, Fig. 2), cutting across the neck of the bend in the tidal channel, the upper reaches of which were now cut off, although its seaward parts remained a tidal creek at least until the 16th century.

The risk of flooding by fresh water was thus alleviated, but the sea now reasserted itself. From about 1540 onwards the greater part of Bestenover was reduced to salt marsh, partly through neglect of the sea walls of those marshes which had been former monastic property, and partly because drifting shingle was blocking the tidal channels. The net result was that by the date of the Arundel Survey, which is the earliest recognisable map of the whole district, the

¹ L. F. Sulman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

² This can hardly be the modern Morichall, which is on a hilltop. Perhaps the area round the moated mound called 'Castle Green' on the O.S. maps (TQ 681116) is intended. This has an area of 30-40 acres taken adequate for a title of 6s. 8d. by marshland standards), and is bounded to the south by the Moorsall Stream.

²⁴ Goddingeshaven had disappeared or been reduced to a backwater, and the old channel south of Pevensy had been revived, curving in a horse-shoe to join the Willingdon Sewer and reach the sea at Wallsend. This in turn was affected by shingle drift, so that the mouth moved rapidly eastward, leaving a long, narrow channel parallel with the coast as far as the original Goddingeshaven mouth. Further surgery was necessary. This time the work can be followed with greater certainty and in some detail in the Deceit Books of the Commission of Sewers, which survive from 1609 and are now in the East Sussex Record Office. The first hint of trouble comes on 24 September 1617, when it was presented that 'the great open place neare to the Havens mouth was very much swayed up for that the water that came in by the tide came up by the old haven which haven being but narrow was more than halfe swayed up by means whereof . . . there passed noe water downward to the sea after halfe ebb, but only a little drall in parte of the old Haven. See that above the said partie of the Haven the water laye toward Pevensy bridge very deep and cold not choose in reason but make the water swell above the bridge.' Expenditure on a new sluice was sanctioned on 8 August 1623, and later that year the Willingdon, Bourne and Langney Levels were assessed to contribute, at one fourth of the rate for Pevensy. Two years later the cost was spread over the eastern levels as well, on the understanding that they could use the new sewer, the 1455' channel being no longer adequate. The total expenditure is not stated, but £207 had been spent in the twelve months prior to 26 August 1630, and a dispute about payment of £212 'lately disbursed about cutting forth of Pevensy Haven at a place called Ollivers Gull' occupied the Commissioners in 1633.

By 21 April 1634 the work was finished, although next year more groynes were needed to stop the shingle drifting back across the new mouth. The big horse-shoe bend described above had been cut across its neck by the modern channel from Fence Bridge, where the sluice was erected, towards Wallsend.¹ This proved satisfactory until the end of the century, for the Deceit Books refer to nothing except routine expenditure until 1687, when a scut was levied to keep open the haven mouth. On 12 April 1694, 'uppon a view of Pevensy Haven mouth . . . it is thought fit and absolutely necessary that imediate action be taken for maincyning and keeping open a havens mouth'. On 1 November, William Markwick, 'Engeneer', was engaged to see to the building of a new sluice and allowed to carry timber for it across neighbouring lands. Markwick's sluice was at the very mouth of the haven and cut off all the remaining tidal creeks, which were soon drained. To compensate for the loss of a haven for shipping, such as it was, the Commissioners arranged for the building of the present road from Pev-

sey to Norman's Bay, partly across the dry bed of the old Goddinges-haven, 'the said way to be free for all manner of carriage employed by any person or persons whatsoever which anyways concern navigation. Barring unhappy accidents, the sea was now shut out from Pevensy for good.'

The details of the story outlined above are many of them obscure, but one thing is certain: that over the years an immense amount of money and toil was expended on keeping the sea out of the marsh. It remains to see why this expense was entered on at a period when much of the upland of the county was still virgin, and why it was maintained even through periods of economic depression. Some idea of the scale of work involved can be obtained by considering two examples. One of the earliest pieces of reclamation must have been that centred on the moated site in Moat Marsh. This is surrounded by a bank about two miles long, which in its present much-dammed state contains about 20,000 cubic yards of earth, enough for a wall about five feet high and 18 feet wide. What this meant in terms of man-hours is largely guesswork; on the results of the Overton Down experiment,² where chalk was dug with primitive tools at a rate of 5 cu. ft. per man-hour, about 14,000 man-days of eight hours each would have been required. This is probably too slow for medieval tools, but makes no allowance for other work than digging and carrying, so that the total is in all likelihood not too far wide of the mark.

The other example is the new sewer of 1455. This was to be eight furlongs long, 30 feet wide and six deep, requiring a total of about 25,000 cubic yards of soil to be removed, enough perhaps to occupy 100 men for eight months, if one takes into account the extra distance that the earth would have to be moved. The work could only be done at certain states of the tide and would have to be pushed forward with some speed if it was not to be filled up by fresh silting, and hence the labour force at work was probably sizeable, even if it was only employed seasonally.

The uses to which this expensively drained land was put were various. At the present day almost the whole of the Levels is used for grazing cattle and sheep, and this has been the case since Tudor times. It seems too that this was the earliest use that they were put to. Apart from the references to pasture in Domesday Book, the earliest evidence we have is that, some time before 1293, the tenant of 100 acres in Bestover did service yearly to his lord 'of 20s. with 50 sheep which he had from him.'³ Though there are many references to land in the marsh in the following century, there is no information about land use until near its end, in a series of farm

¹ If Satzman is right in dating this to 1496, the same breach c. 1542 cannot have flooded both the hundred Acre to its SW. and Hestonover to its NE.

² P. Ashbee and I. W. Cornwell, 'An Experiment in Field Archaeology,' in *Antiquity*, vol. 35 (1961), pp. 129-34.

³ P.R.O., *Circus Regis Rolls*, 24, m. 2d.

accounts for the Castle demesne for the years 1283-94.¹ These may not be typical years, and they include that of the great flood, 1287, but they give a detailed picture that is available from no other source.

Most of the farm was pasture, 177 acres out of 277. Here was kept a flock of between 400 and 600 sheep, valued for their wool and cheese, but not for their meat. The remainder was arable, with a dairy herd of 25-30 head grazing on the fallow until 1289, when it was moved to Willingdon. On average 71 per cent. of the arable was under crop, but the proportion rose to around 80 per cent. after the removal of the cattle. The 71 per cent. was made up mainly of oats, with wheat and beans and occasionally an acre or two of barley (see Table I). None of them fared particularly well. There was wide variation from year to year, especially in the wheat, which no doubt suffered from winter flooding: in a good harvest there was a return of more than five-fold, but a bad one did not bring in enough to cover next year's seed. The arable land, so far as one can tell, was on the older marshland, and the newer marshes were devoted to sheep, with disastrous results in the flood of 1287, which drowned the whole yearling flock. In normal conditions, however, it was no doubt sound husbandry to keep the sheep where pastures were likely to be fewest.

The demesne was leased out after 1294, and see detailed accounts for its farming cease, but the returns made to the *Registrum Naturalium* of 1340 show that this form of mixed husbandry persisted and was profitable.² The figures given for the relevant parishes are set out in Table 2, and for comparative purposes the statistics of charters for East Sussex as a whole are summarised in Table 3. Although these returns were extracted from the parishioners on oath, they need to be viewed with a certain scepticism. The values given are usually approximations or at least add up to a round total even when the component parts include odd halfpence for the sake of artistic verisimilitude. More serious is the possibility of deliberate misrepresentation. The basis of the valuation was the *Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas, which assessed the wealth of benefices in 1292 for ecclesiastical purposes. Against this the commissioners offset income from sources other than the great tithes and from land exempt from scutal taxation. The Barons of the Cinque Ports enjoyed this exemption both inside and outside their territories, and as both the Lowy of Pevensey (the parishes of Pevensey, Westham and parts of Hastings and Wartling) and the Liberty of Northeye were members of Hastings, by far the greater part of the marsh was subject to exemption; and indeed the parish of Westham does not figure in the record at all. Northeye is included, where it belongs.

in Bexhill parish. Most, if not all, of Pevensey is assessed under Chiddingly, for in 1292 both were treated jointly as part of the emoluments of the Chancellor of Chichester Cathedral. It was in the parishioners' interest to exaggerate the yield of these lands, and this may in part account for the high valuations put upon them. But they cannot be entirely discounted when the parishes in the lower valleys of the rivers flowing through the towns, all of which have sizeable areas of alluvium, also tend to be valued above their neighbours. There can be no doubt that these districts, along with the coastal plain west of Brighton, contained the most productive corn-land in the county in the 14th century. The impression is confirmed when we consider land values as given in contemporary surveys. The Battle Abbey estate of Barnhorne lay partly in the marsh and partly on the upland. The upland parts were worth between 3*l.* and 6*l.* per acre in 1314, flooded marshland towards Hove 4*l.* (rising to 10*l.* if properly drained), and the seaward marshes 12*l.*³ Twelve pence per acre seems in fact to have been an average valuation for marshland in the locality, for this was the rent-chARGE imposed on the endowments of Manoxey Chapel c.1240 and most of the Castle demesne was reckoned to be worth the same. But when the Bishop of Chichester's scattered estates came to be valued in 1388 12*l.* per acre was the maximum. Pasture (probably marsh) in Bexhill reached this value, but the arable there was only worth 3*l.*, as in many places elsewhere in the county.⁴

The general impression, then, of remarkable agricultural prosperity in 1340 is not to be rejected, even when among the bordering parishes Eastbourne, Flote and Ninfield all had upland fields that had gone out of cultivation since 1292. Nor can one lightly dispute the detailed figures, despite the similar totals for corn at Manoxey and Horse Eye and the overwhelming predominance of Portsmen at Hailsham. They clearly imply that, although sheep-keeping was important (the figures for fleeces indicate a population of 4,500), most of the land was under corn except in the flooded valley of Waller's Haven. At Horse Eye and on the coastal marshes of Pevensey there were seemingly no sheep at all, and in Hailsham corn provided 96 per cent. of the Portsmen's tithe, though Bayham Abbey had a moderate flock. These Hailsham figures are doubly interesting, for, since they list individual payments, we can gain some idea of the size of holdings. The Abbot of Bayham paid a total of 20*s.*, 14*d.* for corn, 3*s.* 6*d.* for fleeces, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for lambs. In 1528 just before the Dissolution, he held 96 acres at Olliam, plus another 16*a.* in Horse Eye Quarter, part of which may also have been in Hailsham. How much of this should be attributed to his

¹ *Registrum of Battle Abbey*, ed. by S. R. Scargill-Bird (Camden Soc., 1887), pp. 17-19.
² R. A. Petman, 'The Agricultural Geography of the Chichester Estates in 1388,' in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 78 (1917), p. 299.

predecessor in 1340 is uncertain, but 96 acres is a minimum, and the total may have been nearer 200.¹ Among the 73 Portmen there were seven who paid as much as the Abbot and 14 others paying at least half as much.² The median payment of 3s. 4d. would represent a minimum of 16 acres and a maximum of about 35, while the poorest, who paid 1s., must have had at least five.

These figures are only very approximate: there is no means of telling how much of each holding was fertile marsh and how much relatively infertile upland. But they are probably a more reliable index to the size of individual farms than the only alternative source, namely the rentals and surveys of the manor of Pevensey. Four of these survive, for the years 1292, 1363, 1564 and 1649,³ and all give details of acreages as well as rents, while the last two provide a great deal of topographical information. Much of this is difficult to interpret, but the general distribution of the lands that owed suit to the manor court is clear. There were two categories of tenant: board portreeve service tenants (*servientes habiti*, 1292), who owed suit of court, rent and tallage and served in rotation as Portreeve captain, 1292, who only owed suit of court and rent, often nominal. The former's lands were concentrated in Cilyneleigh, Hankham and Downham, and the latter's in Manney, but they were not always contiguous with each other, and a farm might easily contain land both within the manor and outside it.

While the rentals are therefore valueless as a guide to the absolute size of farms, they are useful for internal comparison. Though there had been a certain amount of sub-division between 1292 and 1353, these two years stand together in marked contrast to the two later years (see Table 4). By the mid-16th century there had been an increase in the average size of tenant holding and a dramatic decrease in the number of dwellings on the manor. While almost every holding in the 14th century had a house attached, hardly any had 200 years later. The reason must lie in the change from the arable husbandry implied by the *Inquisitio Monasterii* to the modern pastoral regime, with most of the land in the hands of absentee owners and used principally for summer grazing under the superintendence of a hired 'louker'. The contrast in numbers employed was great, and as the old pattern of farming survived at least the first outbreak of the Black Death, which is known to have raged violently in the district, it seems that this is not simply a case of depopulation by plague. Indeed, if anything, the manor was more densely inhabited after the plague than before it. Any holdings that were tenanted must have been eagerly snapped up by landless men, perhaps immigrants from the poorer soils of neighbouring parishes, some of which were reported poverty-stricken in 1340. Indeed, the population of

the marsh probably remained fairly high at least until the beginning of the 15th century, for a dispute between the Chancellor of Chichester and the Vicar of Pevensey in 1406 resulted in the collection of some useful information about the state of the parish.⁴ There had been little change in the balance between arable and pasture since 1340, and it was reported that 'the cure of the church [of Pevensey] and chapels [at Manney and Horse Eye] is large and burdensome for they are a mile and more apart and the parishioners of the chapels have no easy access to the church in winter owing to the dangerous roads and floods' from which one would gather that there was still a sizeable population at both the latter places.

How soon after this the decline began is uncertain. In 1440 the Common Fine of the eight hundreds of the Honour of Aquila was reduced, being restored to its original form as a poll-tax of £1 per head on inhabitants over the age of twelve.⁵ The date when this had been commuted to a round payment by each hundred was probably during the latter part of the previous century, if not earlier. The reductions were large, equivalent to a cut in taxable population from c.6,700 to c.1,500, and they were most marked in the seaward parts of the Honour, where nine villas were said to be almost depopulated and their lands unheld as a result of the plague. The district concerned did not include the Lowy of Pevensey but bordered upon it to the west and comprised about half the Rape, so that it is likely that it too was a victim of the same epidemic.

The mid-15th century then can reasonably be taken as marking the end of the old farming community of the marsh. It also seems to have marked the decline of the town of Pevensey, though the relations of town and marsh are by no means simple. The origins of the town, like the early history of the marsh, are obscure. The charter of 947 is the first to use the modern name but does not indicate whether it applied to a settlement or not. If it did, it is hardly likely to have been of much consequence; otherwise its absence from the list of burhs in the Burghal Hidage is puzzling, when its position and its Roman defences suited it for that purpose. But by 1066 at least a town had developed, for Domesday Book records a total of 52 burgesses, 24 belonging to the king and the rest to various ecclesiastics. They suffered severely from the Norman landing, and only 27 were left when their town was transferred to Robert of Mortain, but rapid growth followed, now that Pevensey was the administrative centre of its Rape and the site of a permanently garrisoned castle. The port, too, which had been of some importance before the Conquest, was more frequented now that links with the Continent were closer. As a result, by 1686 there were 110 burgesses, more than double the number of King Edward's day, and the income from tolls had

¹ PRO, Rentals and Surveys, S.C. 1/1663, 666-7; Duchy of Lanc., Misc. Books, D.L. 42/12; Parly. Surveys, E. 317, Sussex, 39.

² Chichester Cartulary, No. 1072.

³ P.R.O., Duchy of Lanc., Ministers' Accounts, D.L. 29/442/7117.

quadrigated. A mint and a mill were other, apparently new, assets.¹ The Counts of Mortain were active in church building as well as fortification, to judge from the remains of a substantial 11th-century structure which form the core of the present parish church at Westham. This is probably to be connected with their creation of the Chaplaincy of Pevensy.² This included the cure of souls in the present parishes of the Lowy as well as the duties of a domestic chaplain at the Castle. The two parishes may not have been divided until King Stephen gave the chaplaincy to the Bishop of Chichester, who gave Pevensy to his Chancellor, while Westham ultimately came into the hands of the Norman abbey of Grestain. However, there had probably been a church at Pevensy before the Conquest, since those burgesses who were not tenants of King Edward held of the Bishop or of other priests. Topography suggests, even so, that the church in its back-street position was a late-comer to the town plan, when both sides of the main street from the Castle and market place to the ferry and the quays had been occupied by burghages, and back lanes had already begun to develop to the south. Excavation at a number of points south and south-east of the church has failed to disclose anything earlier than the 12th century in this quarter, which was probably never very intensively built over.³

This century in all likelihood saw the apogee of the town's prosperity. Already at the beginning of the next the inhabitants were contemplating removal to a new site between Pevensy and Langney somewhat on the shingle bank at the mouth of the haven. In 1207 they paid 40 marks for a charter empowering them to make the move,⁴ but nothing further seems to have been done, despite the steady silting of the haven which must have provided the chief incentive for the proposal. Pevensy was still a port of some local importance, ranking perhaps third or fourth among Sussex ports, but a long way behind Winchelsea, Rye and Shoreham, if we may judge from the details of shipping movements given in the Close Rolls (see Table 5).⁵ The same source hints that Pevensy ships may have carried a considerable amount of goods which never saw Pevensy itself. In 1242, for example, there is mention of a ship of Pevensy at Dunwich with a cargo of wool and leather belonging to a Winchelsea merchant.⁶ In 1304 another Pevensy vessel was

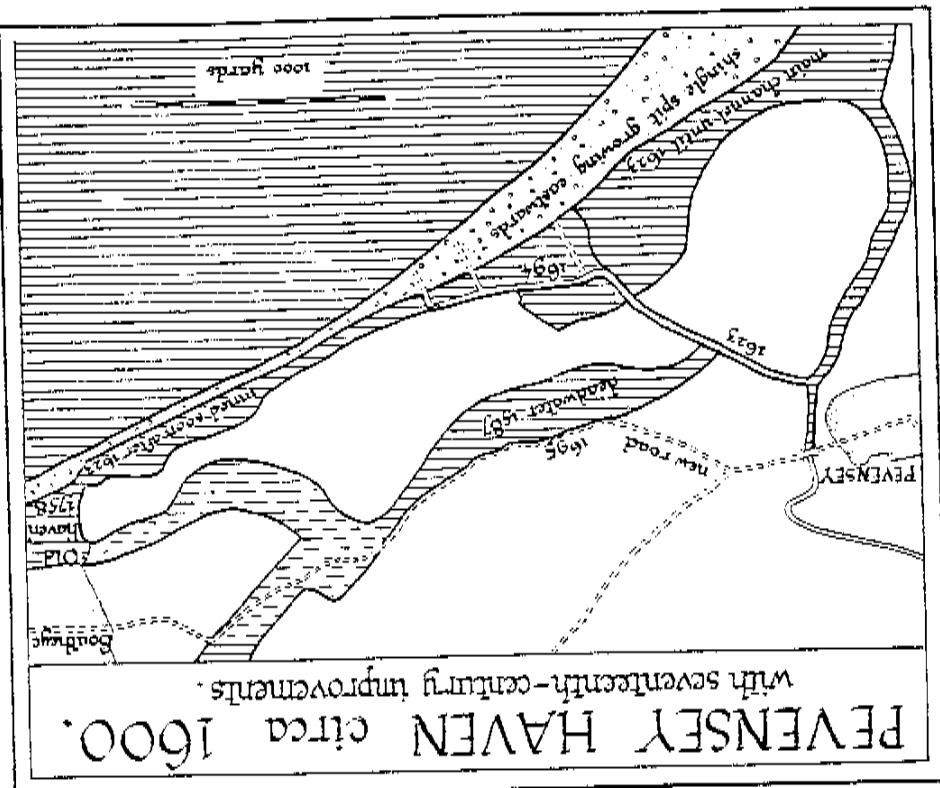


FIG. 3

¹ A memorial mill was in operation at least to the end of the 13th century, and accounts for building works at the Castle in 1288-91 (*Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 49 (1906), p. 9) refer to men digging for stone in the moat and mill-pond. This must be for details from the Roman walls. The pond was S.E. of the Castle where a complex of embankments marks the site.

² *Chichester Cartulary*, Nos. 116, 115, 260.

³ A. J. F. Dulley, 'Excavations at Pevensy,' in *Sussex Notes and Queries*, vol. 16 (No. 2, 1962), pp. 63-4.

⁴ *Cal. Charter Rolls*, vol. 3, p. 220.

⁵ Compiled from *Royal Literary Manuscript*, vols. 1 and 2, ed. by T. D.

⁶ Hardy (Record Comms., 1833, 1844).

⁷ *Cd. Care Rolls*, 1237-42, p. 480.

robbed by pirates between Flanders and Sandwich while carrying spices and other goods for a Londoner.¹ Fishing, too, provided employment for local ships in distant waters. Pevensy's membership of the Cinque Ports confederacy implies participation in the Yarmouth herring fishery at least as early as 1207 and probably much earlier still; instructions about keeping the peace there were addressed explicitly to the town along with the other Ports in 1298.² So far as local trade is concerned, the import of wine is vouchered for in the Close Rolls for 1239, as well as being implied by finds in the Castle.³ Archaeology also suggests that there was trade down the Channel as well as across it, since fragments of Devon slate have been dug up in some number. As for exports, these were almost entirely of wool in the 14th century.⁴ Pevensy provided a natural outlet for the forest products of the Weald, although by this period its harbour could not vie with that of Winchelsea. Earlier it is likely that the local saltworks also exported part of their production.

In the 14th century trade was in a decline. Already in 1288 the Castle building accounts indicate the difficulty of landing goods. Most of the stone used was quarried at Eastbourne, and in summer this was brought to Pevensy by road, but in winter the roads were impassable and boats had to be used. Sea-going vessels could not sail direct to Pevensy but had to unload into lighters at the Hooe at the haven mouth for the journey to the Castle, at a total cost of 4s. per 100 stones as against 3s. by road. The state of the haven may have been made worse by the storm of the previous year, but nothing that was done in the succeeding century can have improved it. In the 15th century we find mention of boathouses on the beach, now subject to erosion. Harbour dues seem never to have amounted to more than 1s. per year as against between 4s. and 5s. at the end of the 13th century, and it is not until the reign of Queen Elizabeth I that we again hear of sea-going vessels berthing at Pevensy itself. But this was only a temporary revival, due to the great threats of the sea in the previous few decades. A survey of the ports and harbours in Pevensy Rape made in 1565 records the presence of a haven, but no vessels, mariners or fishermen belonging to it.⁵

The town, however, was not wholly dependent on the harbour and survived its decay for some time. The rental of 1292 names 46 burgess tenants holding 62 tenements, with six others empty. In 1353 the total number of tenements was the same, though there had been some subdivision and amalgamation in the interval. The

number of tenants had declined by one, but only two holdings were untenantled. Later rentals, particularly that of 1564, which gives a great deal of topographical detail, make it clear that these tenements did not make up the whole area of the town, though they did include part of the village of Westham. They had their origin, presumably, in the 60 burgesses of Count Robert in 1086, but their intervening history is obscure. In the 16th century they included most of the houses in the village, but there is no means of telling what the proportion was at the time of the earlier documents. Two things, however, they do make plain: firstly that this was still a genuine town in the 14th century, despite the loss of its harbour, for there was no agricultural land attached to the tenements, and very few of the burgesses figure as landholders elsewhere in the rentals; secondly, that the initial onset of the Black Death left no permanent mark on the town. How soon its decay commenced we cannot be sure. The depopulation of the surrounding countryside and the gradual neglect and decay of the Castle must have been potent factors in causing its decline. The manorial accounts show that great difficulty was found in obtaining tenants for the burgages in the middle of the 15th century,⁶ and by 1564 there were only about twenty houses in Pevensy and another seven in Westham for which rents were still being paid. The former harbour had been drained and parcelled out among the few remaining burgesses. Barns, stables and gardens occupied the sites of former houses and, except for the outward forms of municipal government, there was little to distinguish the place from a village.

TABLE 1: DEMESNE FARM 1283/94

Crop	Average			Average Acreage (%)	Average Rent (sh.pence)	Average Value per acre (sh.pence)
	Wheat	Barley	Oats			
Beets	19.7	0.7	34.5	5	15.4	—
Barley	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.7	6	12.9
Oats	1.1	1.1	1.1	16.4	3.5	7.3
Beans	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fallow	28.7	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE 2: INQUISSIO NONARUM: MARCHLAND PARISHES

Parish	Corn £ s. d.	Value of one ninth of hectres £ s. d.	Farms £ s. d.	Corn value per acre per acre sh.pence	Acre shaded
Bexhill	7 4 0	13 4	6 0	2 4	—
Eastbourne	32 7 2	6 8	13 0	11 2	—
Hailsham	24 19 2	14 0	6 0	15 4	—
Hastings	10 14 2	10 0	10 0	5 1	—
Hove	4 17 0	1 6	1 10	4 7	400
Nairfield	4 0 1	1 6d.	1 3 7	19 6s. 8d.	—
Northgate	5 0 0	1 0 4	13 0	13 7	—

¹ *Ibid.*, 1302-07, p. 240.
² *Ibid.*, 1296-1302, p. 206-7.
³ *Ibid.*, 1237-42, p. 159; G. C. Dunning, 'A Norman Pit at Pevensy Castle and its Contents,' in *Arch. Journ.*, vol. 38 (1938), pp. 205-17.

⁴ R. A. Pelling, 'Timber Exports from the Weald during the 14th Century,' in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. 69 (1928), pp. 170-82.
⁵ P.R.O., S.P.D., E67, vol. 18, No. 28.

⁶ e.g. P.R.O., Duchy of Lanc., Ministers' Accounts, D.L. 29/442/7120.

Parish	Value of one-eighth of cure				Corn value per acre	Acre farmed
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<i>Lands exempt as belonging to Parishes (indented in list above)</i>						
Bexhill	18	4	—	—	—	—
Eastbourne	1	4	—	—	—	—
Hastings	22	6	8	10	0	10
Hove	17	0	—	—	—	—
Romney	—	—	—	all	all	all
Pevensy	—	—	—	all	all	all
Wilmington	—	—	—	14	34	10
						2
						6

TABLE 3: INQUISITIO NONARUM: LEWES ARCHDEACONRY

Region	Value of corn crop (pence per acre)							Total Parishes
	below 2.5	2.5-5.0	5.0-7.5	7.5-10.0	10.0-15.0	15.0-20.0	20 & over	
High Weald	2.5	4.9	7.4	9.9	14.9	19.9	over	63
Clay Weald	15	35	9	4	—	—	—	15
Down: Scarfboat	—	1	7	5	2	—	—	1
Down: Summitis	—	—	2	5	5	3	1	19
Down: River valleys	—	—	1	3	2	3	—	14
Coast Plain and Alluvium	—	—	—	3	5	2	2	15
Total	—	17	47	27	16	12	9	7
								135

Note.—The acreages upon which this and the previous table are based are those for the modern parishes as given in V.C.H. Survey, vol. 2 (1967), pp. 217-28. Calculations based upon them can only be approximate and the error may be large in some of the coastal parishes, where taxation has taken place. But the table may serve to indicate the background against which the Pevensy figures should be viewed.

TABLE 4: MANORIAL TENANTS (EXCLUDING BURGESSSES)

Total holdings	1292	1353	1564	4649
Average acreage	—	92	49	63
Messages and tenements	—	34	26	52
Average acreage per message, etc.	—	72	34	12
	45	42	273	220

TABLE 5: SHIPPING ARRESTED 1205-27: SOUTH-EAST COAST PORTS

Port	Vessels released	Cargo	Fishing	Total	Sent from other ports:	Owned at:	British sent to:
Sandwich	—	26	8	34	5	—	x
Winchelsea	—	19	—	19	4	—	x
Shoreham	—	14	—	14	—	14	x