

# AN INTRODUCTION TO DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGES IN EAST SUSSEX

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## INTRODUCTION

Previous published work<sup>1</sup> on the deserted villages of Sussex has been very restricted indeed.<sup>2</sup> The present paper only mentions sites known in East Sussex and is intended as a stimulus to more detailed work by local researchers into this neglected aspect of the history and archaeology of the county.<sup>3</sup>

Geographically this survey covers the modern region of East Sussex (Fig. 1). The study discusses the period from the compilation of Domesday Book (A.D. 1086) through to modern times, although there appear to be few desertions after the 18th century.

Any settlement which our documentary evidence informs us was occupied by more than five households (giving a population of between 15 and 25 persons; see below) at any time within the medieval period,<sup>4</sup> and which was probably nucleated, and which at

<sup>1</sup> This survey was completed while the writer was an undergraduate in the Dept. of Archaeology, University College, Cardiff. The original dissertation is available for consultation there.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Holden published a list of deserted medieval villages in *Sussex Notes and Queries* (abbreviated hereafter to *S.N.Q.*), vol. 15 (1962), pp. 312-14, which included fifteen sites then known in East Sussex. There have been notes published on Aldrington, Barnhorne, Broomhill, Balmer, Balsdean, Exceat, and Northeye. The Winchelsea area and Hangleton have both been fully published. However, nothing comprehensive has so far been attempted for either East or West Sussex. Since completing this survey, Dr. P. F. Brandon has pointed out to me that a number of the deserted sites mentioned in this paper were noted by him in his unpublished University of London Ph.D thesis, 'The Commonlands and Wastes of Sussex', 1963, to which the reader is referred.

<sup>3</sup> The writer is currently preparing a similar survey of deserted villages in West Sussex.

<sup>4</sup> From A.D. 1086 to about the beginning of the 16th century for our purposes. This definition follows that adopted by Beresford, Hurst and other workers in this field, except that unlike them it does not include pre-Conquest material.

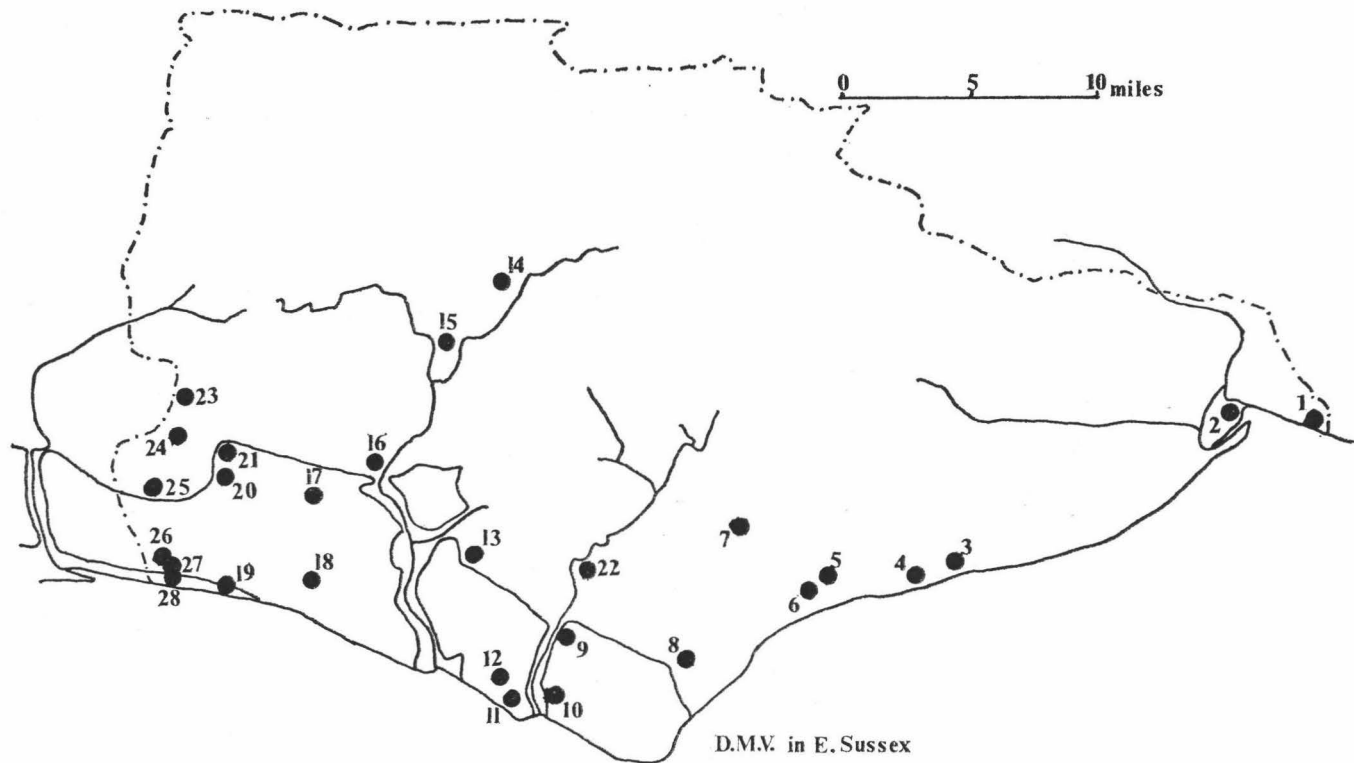


FIG. I.

Key to numbered sites: 1, Broomhill; 2, Iham & Old Winchelsea; 3, Hastings (7 parishes); 4, Bulverhythe; 5, Barnhorne; 6, Northeye; 7, Herstmonceux; 8, Hydneye; 9, Lullington; 10, Exceat; 11, Poyning's Town; 12, Sutton; 13, Heighton St. Clere; 14, Buxted; 15, Buckham; 16, Hamsey; 17, Balmer; 18, Balsdean; 19, Hove; 20, Pangdean; 21, Pyecombe; 22, Arlington (Shrunken); 23, Albourne; 24, Newtimber; 25, Perching; 26, Hangleton; 27, West Blatchington; 28, Aldrington. N.B. Arlington is included because of the importance of its earthworks. Domesday desertions are excluded from this distribution map.

some time subsequent to having a population of more than five households lost all or most of its population, is considered here a Deserted Medieval Village (abbreviated hereafter to D.M.V.). The figure of five households is arbitrary but convenient.

It is generally considered that the force making for nucleation has been principally one of agricultural practice: the typical nucleated village was one where the production of cereal crops was the principal economic activity. Scattered settlement is more commonly associated with pastoral activity, and with forest areas. Nucleated villages are obviously the easiest to detect archaeologically when deserted. If the local soils are light, a common association with non-nucleation the chance of detecting visible remains is reduced. Also, in forest areas, another association of non-nucleation, the prevalence of timber buildings minimises successful detection. It is for these reasons that the Wealden district of East Sussex is largely devoid of deserted sites: it was an area largely of non-nucleated settlement within our period, and in any case the evidence suggests that very little depopulation occurred at any period.<sup>1</sup>

Shrunken sites (i.e. those which have been partially depopulated) have been included in a detailed gazetteer because for one reason some of the best preserved archaeological remains in our area are at the shrunken site of Arlington, and because many deserted sites were once shrunken, since the process of depopulation was often a very gradual one.

#### REASONS FOR DESERTION

A factor which appears to have caused the destruction and/or depopulation of at least ten sites in East Sussex is the erosion and encroachment or the retreat of the sea, for instance at Hydneye and Northeye on the Pevensey marshes. Although the sites in this group are related in that they are coastal and were depopulated for similar reasons, they were not all deserted during the same period.

It is generally accepted that the early and middle 13th century was a period of land colonisation, and that many villages were expanding and utilising more marginal land, and this appears to have been true of East Sussex generally.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this may

<sup>1</sup> Deserted sites, however, do exist. Buxted (TQ 486231) is a good example of desertion, but here the reason appears to be emparkment. Arlington (TQ 543075) is a very good example of a shrunken site with good earthworks still visible. Other Wealden sites appear in the gazetteer.

<sup>2</sup> See three papers by R. A. Pelham: 'Timber exports from the Weald during the fourteen century', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (abbreviated hereafter to *S.A.C.*), vol. 69 (1928), pp. 170-82; 'Some further aspects of Sussex trade during the fourteenth century', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 71, (1930) pp. 171-204; and, 'The distribution of sheep in Sussex in the early fourteenth century', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 75 (1934), pp. 130-36.

not have been so much an increase in wealth as that land became scarcer (possibly because much was becoming unproductive and infertile) and more expensive while the population was increasing.<sup>1</sup> At Hangleton there is archaeological evidence for such an expansion,<sup>2</sup> and at least one D.M.V. (e.g. Drigsell) may have become non-nucleated through this need for marginal land to cultivate. However, by the latter part of the 13th and early part of the 14th centuries, a reversal of the situation had taken place, and a retreat from marginal land began which seems to have reached its climax in the second half of the 14th century. This is, apparently, the major period for desertions in East Sussex and there are as many as a dozen sites whose depopulation can be attributed to this period (e.g. Exceat, Hangleton, and West Blatchington). The contemporary documentary evidence comes mainly from the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, A.D. 1341 (abbreviated hereafter to *Non. Inq.*).<sup>3</sup> Some of the results of the decline in prosperity and retreat from marginal land evidenced in *Non. Inq.* may be perceived in the evidence provided by the *Nominarum Villarum* of 1428 (abbreviated hereafter to *Nomin. Vill.*).<sup>4</sup>

Many of those sites which were greatly affected by the general economic poverty c.1300-50 probably had their depopulation aided by the plagues of the mid-late 14th century. We have definite evidence of the effect of the Black Death at the probable D.M.V. of Lullington and among the shrunken sites in the Alciston area (see Gazetteer). The only site for which there is a precise date was a victim of a later plague of 1603,<sup>5</sup> and it is possible that one or two adjacent sites (e.g. Pangdean and Newtimber) suffered depopulation at this time for the same reason.

A relatively minor cause of depopulation in East Sussex was the emparking of land and displacing of villages in consequence.

<sup>1</sup> J. Z. Titow, 'Some evidence of thirteenth century population increase', in *Economic History Review* (abbreviated hereafter to *Econ. Hist. Rev.*), vol. 14 (1962), pp. 218-23. Dr. Brandon tells me that work done so far in Sussex has shown that there was widespread advance of reclamation on to hill lands up to the eve of the Black Death. Although instances of settlement retreat are also found there appears to be no evidence of a general decline in settlement in the middle ages. References are cited in P. F. Brandon, 'Medieval clearances in the east Sussex Weald', in *Trans. Institute British Geographers*, vol. 48 (1969), pp. 135-53.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Holden, 'Excavations at the Deserted Medieval Village of Hangleton, Part I', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 101 (1963), pp. 54-182.

<sup>3</sup> *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Scaccarii*, ed. G. Vanderzee (Record Commissioners, 1807).

<sup>4</sup> *Feudal Aids*, (1908), vol. 5.

<sup>5</sup> I. R. Phelps, *Pyecombe Parish Church* (not dated).



Unfortunately, the exact date of the granting of a licence for emparkment at only one site (Herstmonceux) has been traced so far. A few possible cases of emparkment appear in the gazetteer.

Closely linked with emparkment is the migration of sites. Migration refers to a village being re-sited, often but not always because the original site has been emparked. Often the move was to a site not very far away (as in the case of Pyecombe). When migration occurs the village will continue to be named in tax assessments and other documents. This continuity of the name in documentation does not aid the detection of the migration itself and makes it even more difficult to establish the chronology.

In fact, research to date has found it impossible to give precise reasons for the desertion of many of the sites in the gazetteer. Equally, it has not proved possible to date the period of desertion at many sites even within one century. The reasons for this will become clear later.

#### DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The documentary sources used in this survey were employed in the hope of discovering whether possible sites were ever of village status, at what period they were in existence, how populated they were at various dates, and what was their general economic condition. Thus it was hoped their decline would be elucidated. Unfortunately, the survival of relevant documents is largely governed by chance and Sussex has had its fair share of disasters in this field. Also, most of the documents obviously were not intended as primary sources for the researcher into deserted villages, and individually are rarely reliable enough to allow valid conclusions. Collectively, however, they often do point the way to desertions.

In fact the written evidence for many sites is virtually non-existent, and for many others is not particularly informative. This, coupled with a disheartening lack of archaeological evidence at most sites, has meant that many sites are relegated to the position where neither the reasons for nor the period of their desertion may be reliably stated. Usually, as might well be imagined, depopulation has occurred over a long period of time, often centuries, culminating in desertion, general economic conditions being the most common reason.

In East Sussex the author has not been able to isolate any depopulations due to turnover from arable farming to sheep grazing, as has been demonstrated for many Midland villages.<sup>1</sup> It is now

<sup>1</sup> M. W. Beresford, *The Lost Villages of England* (1954).

proposed to briefly discuss the individual documentary sources, the principal ones first and more fully.<sup>1</sup>

### DOMESDAY BOOK (1086)

So much has been said about the reliability and use of the Domesday survey that it is not the writer's intention of repeating common knowledge here.<sup>2</sup> It was hoped to learn from D.B. which settlements, taking geographical situation into consideration, would seem likely to have been nucleated villages by 1086. Where D.B. mentions a church in existence this has been taken as an added guide towards nucleation.

It is generally accepted that each person (i.e. villein, cottar, etc.) mentioned in D.B. would correspond to a householder with a family, and that to arrive at a reasonably accurate estimate of a village's population in 1086 the number of householders should be multiplied by a figure of about three to five.<sup>3</sup> In the Gazetteer the D.B. figures are simply quoted, allowing the reader to estimate the probable size of the community himself. In any case the number of householders recorded is often more than high enough to have formed a settlement of village size. D.B. is thus a document which allows a reasonably accurate idea of population size to be made for rural areas.

It should be noted that some villages which appear in twelfth and thirteenth century records may have existed in 1086 but were accounted for under other vills.<sup>4</sup> This is possibly true of settlements at Pangdean and Balsdean, for instance.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the present section, and indeed through the entire essay, my indebtedness to the writers of two previous papers will be obvious. They are K. J. Allison, M. W. Beresford, J. G. Hurst, and other members of the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group (abbreviated hereafter to D.M.V.R.G.), *The Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire* (1965); and by the same authors, *The Deserted Villages of Northamptonshire* (1966). Much that is not discussed in detail here will be found elaborated in those two works.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Victoria County History* (abbreviated hereafter to V.C.H.), *Sussex*, vol. 1 (1905), pp. 351ff.; S. King in H. Darby and E. Campbell, ed., *The Domesday Geography of South-East England* (1962), pp. 407-82; and, F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond* (1897). Throughout I have used the translation of Domesday Book (abbreviated hereafter to D.B.) in V.C.H., *Sussex*, 1 (1905), pp. 387ff.

<sup>3</sup> S. King, op. cit., p. 435; C. C. Taylor, 'Three Deserted Medieval Settlements in Whiteparish', in *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*, vol. 63 (1968), p. 39. This is no place to discuss the validity of the arguments involved.

<sup>4</sup> S. King, op. cit., p. 420.

## LAY SUBSIDIES

The tax lists of 1296, 1327, 1332, 1334, 1524 and 1621 have been used where possible. There are not returns for every site since some sites were assessed with others, while other sites (e.g. dependents of the Cinque Ports such as Northeye, Hydneye, and Bulverhythe) were not assessed at all. Often not every site has returns in every subsidy; sometimes we suspect this is because the site has become depopulated, but in other cases a site might be assessed in 1327, not in 1332, then again in 1334. Often all the vills in each Hundred were assessed together and only the total for the Hundred recorded. This does not help in estimating the population of individual sites.

These subsidies used the units of Hundreds<sup>1</sup> within each Rape,<sup>2</sup> and vills or boroughs within each Hundred. These vills or boroughs are tax units whose boundaries often do not correspond to the boundaries of parishes, villages or manors,<sup>3</sup> but even where they do not they are usually near enough equivalent to village boundaries to enable us to use subsidy returns as a guide to village population. In some cases the names of vills or boroughs do not correspond to those of manors or villages.

It is well known that the amount each person paid was often 'cooked' by the collectors,<sup>4</sup> but in any case we know the total number of people mentioned at least in 1296 and 1327 was less than the total number living at each settlement.<sup>5</sup> These figures only refer to the householders, most of whom would have been the head of a family, and, as with the D.B. figures, we may multiply the number of taxpayers by between three and five to arrive at an approximate estimate of the true population. There is some evidence to suggest that, ignoring women and children, only about two out of every five persons were assessed to taxes; what proportion of others evaded or were too poor one cannot guess.<sup>6</sup> As an example Salzman refers to the 40 names which occur in the Court Roll for Herstmonceux in 1330, of which only eight can be traced in the Subsidies for 1327 and 1332, with another four instances of similar surnames.<sup>7</sup> What we have then is a minimum number of people for each vill.

<sup>1</sup> A. Anscombe, 'The Names of the Sussex Hundreds in Domesday Book', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 60 (1919), pp. 92-125.

<sup>2</sup> J. E. A. Jolliffe, 'The Domesday Hidation of Sussex and the Rapes', in *English History Review*, vol. 45 (1930), pp. 427-35; L. F. Salzman, 'The Rapes of Sussex', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 72 (1931), pp. 20-29.

<sup>3</sup> W. Hudson, 'Assessment of the Hundreds of Sussex to the King's Tax in 1334', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 50 (1907), pp. 153ff.; L. F. Salzman, 'Early Taxation in Sussex, I', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 98 (1960), pp. 29-43; 'Early Taxation . . . , II', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 99 (1961), pp. 1-19.

<sup>4</sup> L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, (1960) & (1961).

<sup>5</sup> L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, (1961), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, (1960), p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

The Rolls of 1296, 1327 and 1332 preserve the names of taxpayers as well as the contributing districts,<sup>1</sup> but that of 1334 (and most subsequent subsidies) preserves only the latter.<sup>2</sup> The reason is that for Lay Subsidy 1334 the amount chargeable for any particular district was fixed, and so if the sum from any particular district was accounted for, the King's Commissioners were not concerned to know the names of the people who paid it. This is rather unfortunate from our point of view since it means we do not have even a rough idea, using the 1334 list on its own, of how many people were paying tax in each district. However, one can get an idea by comparing the amounts with the previous Rolls of 1327 and 1332. The return for 1334 was in fact based on that of 1332<sup>3</sup> and only the payments differ; the 1296 and 1327 Rolls do not correspond to the same degree. The Lowey of Pevensey, Hastings, Rye and Winchelsea do not appear on these Subsidy Rolls, the Cinque Ports dealing directly with the King. These Subsidies were a tax on people's moveables, i.e. trade stock in towns and farm stock and produce in the country over the value of about ten shillings.<sup>4</sup> That of 1296 was 1/11th of the value; in 1327 1/20th; in 1332 1/15th; and in 1334 1/15th.

Although Salzman concludes<sup>5</sup> that conclusions based on these Subsidies (as with other medieval documents, e.g. *Non. Inq.*) may well be misleading, from the evidence he presents we may be fairly certain that the number of people taxed in any Lay Subsidy will be considerably less than the number of people actually inhabiting a vill, so that if five people are taxed the actual population may be five times or even more than that figure.

#### NONARUM INQUISITIONES, 1341

These enquiries were conducted in the early months of 1341 but were related to agricultural production during 1340.<sup>6</sup> Parliament

<sup>1</sup> 1296: W. H. Blaauw, 'Subsidy Roll of the Rape of Lewes in 1296', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 2 (1849), pp. 288-306; 1296, 1327 and 1332: W. Hudson, 'The Three Earliest Subsidies for Sussex', in *Sussex Record Society* (abbreviated hereafter to *S.R.S.*), vol. 10 (1909), pp. 1ff.

<sup>2</sup> W. Hudson, *op. cit.*, (1907), pp. 153ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, (1961), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, pp. 350-403. These returns are commonly dated to 1342, but in fact the inquisitions were conducted in the spring of 15 Edw. III, which dates them to 1341. Since the returns are based on the previous 'harvest' year this makes the evidence relate to 1340. Baker, Yates and others appear to have mis-dated this return. The 1341 date is corroborated by the appalling winter and summer recorded in other sources for 1340. See P. F. Brandon, 'Late-medieval weather in Sussex and its agricultural significance', in *Trans. Inst. Brit. Geogr.*, 54 (1971), pp. 1-18. I am grateful to Dr. Brandon for bringing this fact to my attention.

was granted a ninth on the net yield for the year after payment of tithes, for it was expected to equal the amount at which the church of each parish was rated in 1291.<sup>1</sup> It was assumed the valuation of 1291 was based solely on the 'great tithes' of corn, wool and lambs.<sup>2</sup> The returns for the rural parishes of Sussex are very full. They give the names of the parishioners making the returns, the values of the ninths in that year, and the reasons why they do not reach the valuation of 1291. Most discrepancy arose because clerical incomes included more than the 'great tithes,'<sup>3</sup> but some because of changed agricultural conditions, most notably a reduction in the acreage of cultivated lands between 1291 and 1341.<sup>4</sup>

On the coast land had been destroyed by the sea (e.g. at Hoo, Rottingdean, Hove, etc.); land was lying uncultivated because of the poverty of the parishioners, and their inability to find seed (e.g. East Blatchington and Hoo); the weather had killed sheep and caused harvest failures (e.g. East Blatchington and Hangleton); and, finally, French raiders had destroyed property and killed villagers (e.g. at Seaford and Patcham). In fact these Nonae Returns record a year of great poverty and hardship throughout a wide area of Sussex,<sup>5</sup> and reflect the general economic poverty in many parts of East Sussex during the period which it seems coupled with the plagues of the mid-14th century, led to the depopulation of many villages. We will return to the question of a reduction in the acreage of cultivated lands in Sussex as evidenced by *Non. Inq.* later.

Having now covered perhaps the more complex of the documentary sources it is intended to treat the others as briefly as possible.

One or two references to sites not mentioned, at the earliest before Lay Subsidy (abbreviated hereafter to L.S.) 1296 have been found in the 1274 Hundred Roll for Sussex,<sup>6</sup> but the survey contains nothing of great significance for our purposes, in any case the returns for Sussex are not detailed, being only 'Extract Rolls.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate Papae Nicholai IV circa 1291*, Record Commissioners (1802).

<sup>2</sup> L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, (1961), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> A. R. H. Baker, 'Some evidence of a reduction in the acreage of cultivated lands in Sussex during the early fourteenth century', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 104 (1966), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> A. R. H. Baker, *loc. cit.* Also, A. R. H. Baker, 'Some evidence of a reduction in the acreage of cultivated lands in England during the early fourteenth century', in *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, vol. 19 (1966), pp. 345-65.

<sup>5</sup> W. H. Blaauw, 'On the Nonae of 1340, as relating to Sussex', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 1 (1848), pp. 58-63; E. W. Holden, *op. cit.*, (1963), p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> *Rotuli Hundredorum*, Record Commissioners (1812), pp. 201-20.

<sup>7</sup> L. F. Salzman, 'The Hundred Roll for Sussex, Part I', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 82 (1942), pp. 20-34.

The *Nomina Villarum* (abbreviated hereafter to *Nom. Vill.*) has been employed to check the existence of a township in 1316.<sup>1</sup> In 1428 there was a tax (subsidy of 6 Henry VI) on parishes and towns graduated in proportion to the sums at which their respective churches were taxed for ecclesiastical tenths. A parish of fewer than ten persons was not to be taxed, and a list of such parishes under their deaneries with the names of the inhabitants of each parish are recorded for Sussex.<sup>2</sup> They serve to show how certain parishes had become either depopulated or almost depopulated, and are thus extremely valuable for our survey. In fact each person recorded probably means each householder.<sup>3</sup>

Coming to the Subsidy of 1524-25<sup>4</sup> we are more in touch with reality than in the later 16th and 17th century subsidies. It was aimed at all classes and just about everyone over the age of 16 who owned property or lands or was paid a wage was taxed. Despite Salzman's reservations,<sup>5</sup> we are justified in taking the number of people recorded in each vill or borough (when they are given separately from the Hundred) as a rough guide to the total population, remembering that not all those taxed will be living in the villages and that the tax was not on every person.

Extracts from the *Liber Detectorum*<sup>6</sup> of 1586-87 have been used to depict the poor state of several of the churches at our sites during this period. This has been used as evidence for the poverty of the parishes concerned, thus weighing in favour of depopulation where this is suspected but uncertain.

The Ecclesiastical Returns from 81 parishes in East Sussex made in 1603<sup>7</sup> have been used as evidence of the size of population in the villages under discussion, since they record the number of communicants and dissenters in each parish, thus giving us a good idea of population size at the time.

<sup>1</sup> *Feudal Aids*, (1908), vol. 5, pp. 132-43; M. W. Beresford, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Feudal Aids* (1899), vol. 1, pp. xxvii-xxviii, and (1908), vol. 5, pp. vii and 165-66.

<sup>3</sup> M. W. Beresford, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

<sup>4</sup> J. Cornwall, 'Lay Subsidy Roll for Sussex, 1524-25', in *S.R.S.*, vol. 56 (1956).

<sup>5</sup> L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, (1961), pp. 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> W. C. Renshaw, 'East Sussex Churches in 1586', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 53 (1910), pp. 1-4.

<sup>7</sup> W. C. Renshaw, 'Ecclesiastical Returns for 81 parishes in East Sussex made in 1603', in *S.R.S.*, vol. 4 (1904), pp. 5-17.

Despite the probability that it is only of doubtful validity, an L.S. of 1621 collected within the Rape of Lewes has also been utilised as it is readily available in print.<sup>1</sup> Salzman<sup>2</sup> has written on the 'farcical' nature of these 17th century assessments, and concludes that not only were individuals under-assessed but that the proportion of persons actually taxed to those who clearly should have been liable was very small. This presumably means we have a minimum of people taxed in each district and may take the size of the actual population to be substantially more than the numbers recorded for the subsidy.

The Hearth Tax returns for 1664-65<sup>3</sup> record the names of the owners of houses with taxable hearths in each parish and the number of such hearths. From this we arrive at a minimum population in each parish since most of the houses taxed would presumably have had more than one occupant. Calculations as with D.B. figures may be made to obtain a more realistic estimate of the total population. As the records are for parishes not villages we again have to decide whether or not we are in an area of nucleated villages if we are not already sure from other evidence that we have a nucleated village in the parish which would account for most of the inhabitants.

In 1676 a religious census was taken of all people over 16 living in each parish in Sussex.<sup>4</sup> For the 1377 Poll Tax (see below) it has been suggested<sup>5</sup> that 50% should be added to the numbers given and perhaps this figure should be added to the numbers recorded by this 1676 census.

The final documentary source used for most sites is the 1801 census,<sup>6</sup> the first full census taken in England. It is a record of the population of each parish in 1801. On occasion, use has been made of later 19th century censuses.

In addition to the documents discussed above a number of other sources have been used, mostly relating to individual villages, references to which occur in the *Gazetteer* in the appropriate place. Two important documents for tracing population size, which exist for some parts of the country have not been scrutinised for this

<sup>1</sup> W. S. Ellis, 'Subsidy Roll collected within the Rape of Lewes, 19 James I, A.D. 1621', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 9 (1857), pp. 71-88.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, (1961), pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Rape of Lewes: Public Record Office (abbreviated hereafter to P.R.O.), E. 179/258/15; Rape of Pevensey: P.R.O., E. 179/258/16; Rape of Hastings: P.R.O., E. 179/258/20 and P.R.O., E. 179/258/21.

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Cooper, 'A religious census of Sussex in 1676', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 45 (1902), pp. 142-8.

<sup>5</sup> M. W. Beresford, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> Population tables in V.C.H., *Sussex*, vol. 2 (1907), pp. 215-28.

essay. The Poll tax return for 1377 is either non-existent for parts of our area or in such an incomplete and unsatisfactory state as not to be worth using for our purposes. Although in 1517 an Enclosure Commission was formed to enquire into the number of deserted towns and villages in Sussex and the extent of enclosures, no report of this Commission appears to be extant.<sup>1</sup>

#### GEOLOGY, ECONOMY, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF SETTLEMENT

The D.M.V. of East Sussex are directly related to the three geographical regions into which it is possible to divide the county: the Coastal area, the Downs and the Weald.

The coastal area in East Sussex consists of two distinct districts. In the west is the small area of valley gravels and brickearths, an extension of the West Sussex coastal plain. This was an important area for both corn and wool production in the medieval period, at least until the 15th century.<sup>2</sup> It is at the junction of these soils and the chalk of the Downs that settlements, e.g. Hangleton and West Blatchington, are sited, while other settlements actually lay on the gravels and brickearths. Today, of course, most of this area is within the conurbation of Brighton and Hove. Excluding the chalk which meets the sea, the other coastal strip runs from Eastbourne to the eastern border of the county. It comprises a mixture of badly drained Weald Clay, resistant beds of Wadhurst Clay (the 'eye' of Northeye, Hydney, etc.), and various sandstones. There are also large tracts of alluvium on the Pevensey marshes and around the Rother estuary. The juxtaposition of sands and clays together with the low elevation provided a good basis for settlement and agriculture. Villages were numerous and there were saltpans on the Pevensey Levels.<sup>3</sup> This area included the boroughs and Cinque Ports of Pevensey, Hastings, Rye and Winchelsea.

In the 14th century these coastal districts contained the most productive cornland in the county. The *Non. Inq.* implies arable husbandry on the Pevensey Levels but by the mid-16th century this had given place to the modern pastoral regime.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Holden, *op. cit.*, (1963), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. F. Dulley 'The Level and Port of Pevensey in the Middle Ages', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 104 (1966), p. 37; E. W. Holden, *op. cit.*, (1963), pp. 66-67; R. A. Pelham, 'Studies in the historical geography of medieval Sussex', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 72 (1931), pp. 157-84; R. A. Pelham, 'The exportation of wool from Sussex in the late thirteenth century', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 74 (1933), pp. 131-39; and R. A. Pelham, *op. cit.*, (1934), pp. 130-36.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. F. Dulley, *op. cit.*, pp. 31ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.



The higher levels of the South Downs have thin soils, but the lower slopes and dry-valley floors were both cultivated and settled in the medieval period (e.g. Balsdean, Atlingworth, Exceat). The South Downs must be regarded as one of the most fertile areas of medieval England, especially along the valleys which broke through the chalk. D.B. records substantial amounts of meadow along the Ouse valley, for instance, together with fisheries and saltpans.<sup>1</sup> The Downs, as might be expected supported a valuable sheep rearing economy,<sup>2</sup> especially in the 14th century. As this area was so productive it was also the most densely settled: in the scarp-foot zone of the Downs (e.g. Alciston area), along the spring-line at the junction of the Chalk and Gault Clay—and along the river valleys cutting through the Downs (e.g. the settlements in the lower Ouse valley).

There is, by contrast, a marked scarcity of Domesday and later medieval settlements in the northern half of Sussex, especially on the Weald Clay and High Forest Ridge of Hastings Beds except where the juxtaposition of sands and clays provided the basis for settlement, for example, around East Grinstead. It was the poor drainage of the Weald Clay and the heavy soils of this region which partly accounted for the lack of sizeable settlements. In D.B. much of the wood entered under the villages to the south (especially that of the Downs villages) was probably here.<sup>3</sup> In the medieval period the Weald was a wooded area with swine pastures and occasional centres of cultivation; a great timber producing area<sup>4</sup> with few nucleated settlements. The High Weald comprises sandstones yielding a poor soil; on them are the Ashdown and St. Leonard's Forests, which during the medieval period were wasteland.<sup>5</sup>

Before completing this section something must be said about the shrinkage in the area of arable land during the 14th century, as evidenced by the *Non. Inq.* In 1931 Pelham showed how there was an overwhelming predominance of corn-growing even among the settlements in the chalk zone, long regarded as primarily a sheep-rearing district.<sup>6</sup> There was a marked concentration of sheep on the South Downs, however.<sup>7</sup> In the Weald area, Gulley<sup>8</sup> found the existence of untilled land was not always indicative of declining

<sup>1</sup> S. King, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-82.

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Pelham, *op. cit.*, (1934), pp. 130-36.

<sup>3</sup> S. King, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> R. A. Pelham, *op. cit.*, (1928), pp. 170-82.

<sup>5</sup> S. King, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-82.

<sup>6</sup> R. A. Pelham, *op. cit.*, (1931), pp. 157-84.

<sup>7</sup> R. A. Pelham, *op. cit.*, (1934), pp. 130-136.

<sup>8</sup> J. L. M. Gulley, 'The Wealden landscape in the early seventeenth century and its antecedents', unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Univ. of London (1960).

prosperity. Gulley concluded that the early 14th century was one of general stability in Wealden agriculture (and presumably in population until the Black Death). But it is fair to say that there are less cases of untilled land in the Weald referred to in the *Non. Inq.* than on the coast and South Downs. However, the reduction in the acreage of cultivated lands must be ascribed largely to natural disasters (e.g. losses to the sea) rather than considered as indicating the onset of any general retrenchment in agriculture. On the coast neglect of drainage channels and embankments may have facilitated flooding.

Despite Beresford we know there was some positive correlation between villages having uncultivated lands recorded in 1341 and villages which were later to be deserted in Sussex, since several mentioned in this condition by *Non. Inq.* appear as depopulated by 1428 (e.g. West Blatchington), though of course the Black Death probably speeded their depopulation. In fact those villages which were deserted may have been so because they suffered more heavily from the plague than those villages mentioned as having untilled lands but which survived.<sup>1</sup>

After the 14th century plagues there may have been a retreat from more marginal areas, such as the upper slopes of the Downs, to the more productive lowlands, e.g. as occurred at Hangleton and probably at West Blatchington, Exceat and elsewhere. It is possible that the population of the Pevensey Levels was higher after the plague than before, perhaps because of a migration of population from the Downs.<sup>2</sup> Against this may be set the evidence in *V.C.H. Sussex*,<sup>3</sup> where the Black Death and the plagues of 1361 and 1366 are said to have caused nine townships on the sea coast within the Rape of Pevensey to become desolate and uninhabited.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

From most of the sites under discussion the evidence in the field for former medieval settlements is very limited and often non-existent. In the cases of some of our sites (e.g. Broomhill) this is because they have been eroded by the sea, and therefore one would not expect to find visible remains anyway. In most cases it is because Sussex is such an intensely cultivated region that agricultural activities have removed all or most traces of former houses, roads and

<sup>1</sup> For more details see the two papers by A. R. H. Baker in *S.A.C.*, vol. 104, and *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, vol. 19; M. W. Beresford, *op. cit.*, p. 204; E. W. Holden, *op. cit.*, (1963), pp. 66-67; and R. A. Pelham, *op. cit.*, (1931) and (1934).

<sup>2</sup> A. J. F. Dulley, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>3</sup> *V.C.H., Sussex*, vol. 1 (1905), p. 511; *V.C.H., Sussex*, vol. 2 (1907), pp. 180-83; Duchy of Lancaster, Ministers Accounts 442, No. 7117. As yet these nine sites are unidentified.

crofts. Since 1939 especially an agricultural 'revolution' has taken place<sup>1</sup> which permits good crops to be grown and cattle to be maintained on the thin soils of the chalk uplands which were previously used only for sheep. For example, most traces of Poynning's Town near Seaford have been removed. Elsewhere, on the dip-slopes and at the scarp foot of the Downs, and in the river valleys, more intense cultivation has meant that ploughing has removed remains of former settlements where it is known archaeological evidence existed, e.g. at Hamsey in the Ouse valley and at Alciston and Perching at the scarp-foot of the Downs. A more extensive archaeological air-survey than exists to date would undoubtedly reveal much evidence at sites where little or nothing is visible on the ground.

Some former village sites have been built over, for example, Hydneye near Eastbourne in the thirties of the present century and Hangleton near Hove in the fifties.

However at some sites earthworks are visible. At Arlington a site well inland on the alluvium of the Cuckmere valley, extensive earthworks may be seen. The site is a good example of a shrunken settlement and is not a full D.M.V. The earthworks survive because the land is poorly drained and used for pasture, while the mounds themselves make it difficult to plough the land. Even so, the site has been partially destroyed by the straightening of the river's course, while a farm track has also partly levelled some of the mounds.

At Northeye, on a gentle rise in the Bexhill marshes, the evidence consists of a few low mounds of no definite pattern, and although now pasture the land has been ploughed in the past. At nearby Barnhorne, former earthworks have been destroyed by recent ploughing. At other sites where there are visible remains,<sup>2</sup> these are neither extensive nor particularly informative, except perhaps at Balmer.<sup>3</sup> In fact, archaeological evidence for D.M.V. in East Sussex is on the whole rather disappointing.

It was hoped the architectural history of the churches at some of our sites might yield some information regarding the period at which desertion had taken place. Some evidence for the decay of churches came from documentary sources, but even those churches in ruins last century have since been re-built, thus preventing first-hand observations. Only the excavations of the churches at Exceat, today barely visible under heavily ploughed downland, and at Lull-

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Holden, *op. cit.*, (1963), p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> For details see *Gazetteer*.

<sup>3</sup> But now see Buxted.

ington, the chancel of which is still standing, have been of real help.<sup>1</sup> The evidence of churches standing in, or virtually in, isolation has always been assumed to be possibly indicative of the former existence of villages, especially in those districts whose geology, water supply and economy would favour nucleation.

## GAZETTEER

### KEY

The entries in the Gazetteer follow a standard pattern. The name of the former settlement in its modern form, except in the case of Domesday desertions, is given first. The place-name is followed by the sheet number of the 1-inch O.S. map (7th Edition), and then by the two-letter and six-figure National Grid reference to each site. If the site has been only approximately located, the map reference is preceded by *c.* If there is doubt about the suggested location, the map reference is preceded by a question mark. Following the National Grid reference an abbreviation gives the period when each site is thought to have been deserted. This classification is based on the following broad categories.

- I. Early desertion: no reference other than in Domesday Book, 1086.
- II. *c.* 1100—*c.* 1350
- III. *c.* 1350—*c.* 1450
- IV. *c.* 1450—*c.* 1700
- V. after *c.* 1700.
- N. Uncertain date.

A further abbreviation gives the quality of the visible remains of the village. This classification in terms of field evidence is based on the following categories.

- A+ Excellent visual quality: very good pattern of roads with house-sites visible.
- A Very good pattern of roads but absence of clear remains of houses.
- B Medium quality: good earthworks of roads (hollow-ways), but otherwise confused earthworks.
- C Poor: either church or church ruins but no earthworks of precise identification, or uneven ground and vague bumps only.
- D No visible remains.
- E Lost to sea by coastal erosion.
- U Location unknown.

<sup>1</sup> W. Budgen, 'Excete and its parish church', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 58 (1916), pp. 138-71; A. Barr-Hamilton, 'Excavations at Lullington Church', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 108 (1970), pp. 1-22.

The classification is qualified in some entries by an additional abbreviation.

- P Site now ploughed.  
 REB Resettled, c. 1800-1918.  
 HOU Resettled since 1918.  
 M Migration of village to new site.  
 S Shrunk: a village that has been more extensive but now reduced to a few houses.

The next part of each entry consists of a series of dates followed by population or taxation statistics. Each of these has already been discussed in the Introduction.

- 1086 The year of the compilation of Domesday Book. The following figure refers to the number of householders recorded at the site.  
 1296 Lay Subsidy. The entry gives the number of taxpayers and the total paid.  
 1316 A settlement is listed in the *Nomina Villarum*.  
 1327 As for 1296.  
 1332 As for 1296.  
 1334 Lay Subsidy. The entry gives the total paid.  
 1341 Poverty of tenants or soil infertility is mentioned in *Non. Inq.*  
 1428 Parish had fewer than ten taxpayers.  
 1524 As for 1296.  
 1603 Total number of communicants and dissenters.  
 1621 As for 1296.  
 1624 Tax for Maimed Soldiers: amount paid.  
 1664 Number of houses with taxable hearths.  
 1676 Number of people in parish over 16 years.  
 1801 Total population of parish. Later censuses are sometimes also quoted.

After the main documentary sources examined have been noted in this form, a discussion of each site follows taking no standard pattern, and often varying considerably in length. The standard form used in the Gazetteer and set out above is adapted from that used by the D.M.V.R.G., for example in their monographs on the deserted villages of Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire.

#### DESERTED SITES

ALBOURNE. 182 TQ 257162. N. D.P.  
 1316. 1327: 35, 62s 3d. 1332: 24, 56s 4½d. 1334: 68s. 1524: 33, 267s 10d. 1676: 100.

Historically parish in Rape of Bramber but in 1907 transferred to East Sussex. Today consists of three houses and medieval church on north-east edge of Albourne Place Park. About half-mile north-east on A23 lies Albourne Green, a fair-sized community

which was already quite extensive by the time the Tithes Map was made, c.1840. Although appearing in *Non. Inq.*, no mention is made there of any poverty in the parish. In 1586 the parishioners report their church in need of 'healing'. Probable migration to Albourne Green (TQ 265165) at some unknown date, possibly when the land around Albourne Place emparked.

ALDRINGTON. 182 TQ 266053. V. E. REB.

1086: 73. 1332: 26, 56s 4d. 1334: 63s 4d. 1603: 8 or 9 (East Aldrington). 1624: 8s. 1664: 3. 1801: 2. 1821: 2.

In 1341 it is recorded that Hove, Aldrington and Portslade together had lost nearly 300 acres to the sea since about 1290. However, Aldrington was not one of those places granted tax relief in 1428. Church was in poor state in 1586. A further Hearth Tax of around 1680<sup>1</sup> records payment for only two houses in East Aldrington. Aldrington not named at all on Morden's map in 1695 *Britannia*, yet Thomas Cox in *Magna Britannia* (1738) says in 1700 Aldrington consisted of a row of houses by sea and had a population of 200. In consequence, I would refute Holden's judgement<sup>2</sup> that West Aldrington had been lost to the sea by 1624 and suggest that the place referred to in 1700 was West Aldrington and that East Aldrington ceased to exist by c. 1700. Leaves unexplained non-appearance of West Aldrington in 17th century record. Cox records that by 1738 few houses remaining in (West) Aldrington; rest destroyed in storms of 1703 and 1705. Budgen's *Survey of Sussex* (1724) notes that since 1699 sea had gained on that coast "six perches". In 1724, according to Budgen, parsonage only house left yet in 1690 Aldrington was one of the places ordered to aid the poor of Brighton which was suffering from inroads of the sea and "foreign and intestine commotions". V.C.H., *Sussex*, records last two houses disappeared between 1743-45, while in 1772 the church still existed. In 1821 only the tollgate keeper and his wife were left. Horsfield<sup>3</sup> writes that in 1835 there were two farms in the parish and no other buildings except the ruins of the church. Horsfield also records that according to old people in the vicinity a street still stood in 1742. It is recorded that the church was still in ruins 1860, though also still two farms in parish.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. E. 179/191/416.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Holden, op. cit., (1963), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> T. W. Horsfield, *The History Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex* (1835), vol. 1.

<sup>4</sup> E. Turner, 'Domus Anchoritae, Aldrington', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 12 (1860), pp. 117ff. A Barr-Hamilton in *Sussex County Magazine* (abbreviated hereafter to *S.C.M.*), vol. 26 (April 1952), pp. 166ff., also inclines to the view that the 200 people said to inhabit the area in 1700 belonged to West Aldrington.

BALMER. 183 TQ 359102. N. B.S.

1086: 5. 1296: 29, 96s 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. 1327 (with Falmer): 20, 42s 3d. 1332: see below. 1334 (with Falmer): 20s. 1341.

In 1086 there was a chapel (*ecclesiola*) in 'Burgemere', a hamlet in Falmer parish. Subsidy Roll for 1332 under Balmer and Falmer records: *Lucia relicta Johis de Muston 5s 4d. Et non plures de istis villatis quia nativi. Prioris de Lewes quorum redditus et servicia excedunt taxationem.* In 1537 Falmer and 'tenements in Boromer' were quitclaimed to the King and in 1538 were handed to Cromwell. In the records of the 'State of the Diocese of Chichester' in 1563 there is no mention of Balmer chapel. In all probability it had been demolished between 1537 and 1563. From the evidence of *Non. Inq.* chapel probably in disrepair from mid-14th century.<sup>1</sup> Clear traces of former buildings on Upper Green Field, but Estate Map of 1819 and 1838 Falmer Tithe Map show no buildings. In 1838 map farm marked as 'Hamlet of Boromar' and there is a 'Church Laine Field' south of buildings then in existence. Farm and cottages remain.

BALSDEAN. 183 TQ 378059. N. C.

1327: 10, 39s 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. 1332: 10, 33s 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. 1334: 41s 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. 1664 (with Rottingdean): 26.

A hamlet in Rottingdean. Its history has been traced elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Chapel came into being between 1121 and 1147, although 'Baldeдена' is mentioned as early as 1091-98. Charter of 1180-1204 confirms chapel on vicar of Rottingdean. *Non. Inq.* records Rottingdean parish suffered from an abandonment of 240 acres of its arable land through the infertility of the soil and the poverty of those who used to cultivate it. It is probable that depopulation at Balsdean began about now as it was on marginal land. Manor formed part of possessions of Lewes Priory and in 1537 confiscated. In 1579 vicar of Rottingdean was required to hold service four times a year in the chapel of the 'village' of Balsdean. Most of the houses assessed for Hearth Tax in 1664 must have been in the village of Rottingdean. Visitation report of Bishop Bowers in 1724 under Rottingdean refers to a 'farm called Baseden in which there is an old chappel and chappel yard and a small parcell of land leading up to the hill belonging as is said to the Vicar and called the Butt, but never enjoyed by the present vicar'. Nave of chapel (chancel having

<sup>1</sup> R. B. Tibble, 'The medieval settlement at Balmer', in *S.C.M.*, vol. 29 (1955), pp. 194ff.

<sup>2</sup> N. Norris and E. Hockings, 'Excavations at Balsdean Chapel, Rottingdean', in *S.C.M.*, vol. 25 (1951), pp. 222ff; and in *S.A.C.*, vol. 91 (1953), pp. 53-68.

collapsed) converted to a stable and in 1852 one writer claimed divine service had not been said there for centuries. Chapel and Georgian farmhouse and all adjacent farm buildings destroyed by army in 1943. Since then more farm buildings have been erected close by.

BARNHORNE. 183 TQ 695078.<sup>1</sup> III. P.

1296 (with Telham, Glasseye and Buckstep): 22, 58s 6d.

Earthworks marked on 1928 revision of O.S. 6in. sheet LXX. N.W. south of Barnhorne Cottages have been levelled by ploughing in recent years. On 1840 Tithe Map of Bexhill immediately west of Barnhorne Farm with its adjacent buildings (including an Old Town Barn) is the Old Town Field in which these earthworks were formerly situated. (For mention of previous investigation at the site see below under Northeye.) It was these earthworks presumably which constituted the last vestiges of the Barnhorne settlement. Recently medieval roofing slate was found in the upcast of a trench which had passed through the remains of a building on the site.<sup>2</sup> Apart from former earthworks there is little surviving evidence for the existence of a village at Barnhorne. The site was clearly related to nearby Northeye to which it is still linked by a sunken lane marked on the Tithe Map as the 'Droeway'. The mound interpreted in 1952 (see under Northeye) as a windmill (TQ 693079) was probably related to Barnhorne rather than Northeye. Apart from 1296 Subsidy there is little documentary evidence. By 1327 Barnhorne apparently detached from Half-Hundred of Battle and added to Bexhill.<sup>3</sup> 1539 Muster Roll for Hastings Rape shows Barnhorne with Mountjoy, Whatlington, Telham, Uckham and Bucksteep assessed for 40 men. However, as at least three of the others were sizeable settlements by this date, it seems unlikely Barnhorne supplied more than a few men and was probably already a farm.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In *S.N.Q.*, vol. 15 (1962), p. 314, this reference is the first of the two given for Northeye, but obviously refers to Barnhorne.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Holden, 'Slate Roofing in Medieval Sussex', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 103 (1965), p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> V.C.H., *Sussex*, vol. 1 (1905), p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Now see the recent paper by P. F. Brandon, 'Agriculture and the effects of floods and weather at Barnhorne, Sussex, during the late Middle Ages', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 109 (1971), pp. 69-93. It appears the move from the site in Old Town Field began before 1305 when *Oldeton* first mentioned (P.R.O. E.315/57). By 1433 only one cottage existed at Old Town compared with a cluster of tenants' dwellings at new site (P.R.O. E.315/56). Brandon, p. 70. Depopulation at Northeye probably began at this time too.



BROOMHILL. 184 c. TQ 988183. IV. E.D.

This site was in Kent until 1895. It lay on edge of sea marshes between Rye and Dungeness, and was destroyed by coastal erosion. There is little documentary evidence. Silting and inroads of the sea caused the abandonment of Broomhill over a period of centuries. The main damage seems to have been done by the great storms of 1284-87, which destroyed Old Winchelsea. As late as 1474 and 1478 large tracts of land between Rye and Romney, including Broomhill, were in danger of inundation from the sea. Further massive inundations occurred both in 1570 and in 1627. Houses are shown at 'Promehill' on Stonham's Map of 1599. It is interesting to note that there was a mill at 'Promhulle' in 1335.<sup>1</sup> The exact period of abandonment of the settlement is not known, but probably its existence had ceased by the storms of 1627, certainly the church was in ruins by 1637.<sup>2</sup> By 1938 only a few stones served to indicate the site of the church.

BUCKHAM. 183 TQ 452206. N. B.  
1296: 9, 16s 8½d.

A hamlet in Isfield. Earthworks in grass field just south of Beeches Farm. Site is threatened by ploughing (Feb. 1972). See Buxted.

BULVERHYTHE. 184 TQ 768082. IV. E. HOU.  
No D.B. or L.S. 1801: 20.

This part of coast for centuries subject to severe erosion by sea. Today area covered by modern settlement of Bulverhythe, although part of medieval chapel associated with original settlement still survives as ruin (TQ 765084). Bulverhythe was an attached limb of the Cinque Port of Hastings, but probably had lost its importance as a harbour to erosion by end of 14th century, and declined in importance, as did Hastings itself at this period (see below). The earliest mention of the place as a port is in the 13th century and the chapel is first recorded in 1372,<sup>3</sup> subsequently falling into ruin, it is not certain exactly when, and not rebuilt. Bulverhythe is mentioned as a port in 1500<sup>4</sup> and was still considered such in 1676,<sup>5</sup> though had lost any significance as a port long before the latter date. Indeed, by the end of the 17th century the greater part of the town had been eroded.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. M. Cooper, 'Notices of the Abbey of Robertsbridge', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 8 (1856), p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> V.C.H., *Sussex*, vol. 9 (1937), p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> *S.R.S.*, vol. 33, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1494-1509, p. 214.

<sup>5</sup> W. D. Cooper, 'Notices of Hastings and its municipal rights', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 14 (1862), pp. 117-18.

<sup>6</sup> W. Jeake, *Charters of the Cinque Ports* (1728).

BUXTED. 183 TQ 486231. V. A.

A suspected emparkment. Hollow way with house platforms running NNW. and NE. of church across park. 13th century sherds recovered from mole-hills. Little documentary evidence for medieval village, but late 18th century illustrations show houses close to the church. By Sussex standards this is a well-preserved site and should be scheduled. Sketch surveys have been made of both Buxted and Buckham (*supra*) by C. F. Tebbutt who has published a fuller account of these two sites in *S.A.C.*, vol. 110 (1972), pp. 31-35.

EXCEAT. 183 TV 523988. III. C.

1086: 21. 1296: 24, 221s 0½d. 1327 (with Westdean): 17, 78s 1¾d. 1332: 26, 130s 1d. 1334: 149s 0d.

In the field the foundations of the church are still reasonably clear though the area is now ploughed. Field west of church shows disturbances. Church site excavated in 1913.<sup>1</sup> Despite the prosperity shown by the 14th century subsidy figures, Exceat was already shrinking in size. The 1342 *Non. Inq.* records poverty and destruction by French raids at other sites in the area (e.g. Friston and Seaford), and we may be fairly certain Exceat did not escape these troubles. By 1428 in *parochia de Excete* lived *Henrius Chesman et non plures*.<sup>2</sup> In 1460 the inhabitants of the two remaining houses said church in ruins.<sup>3</sup> These people declared parishioners of neighbouring Westdean, and in 1528 two parishes formally united.

HAMSEY. 183 TQ 414122. N. D.P.

1086: 30. 1316. 1327 ('villatta de Southborgh'): 34, 117s 2½d. 1332: ('Suthborgh'): 31, 121s 5½d. 1334 ('Southborgh'): 130s 4¼d. 1524: 42, 219s 0d. 1664: 25. 1676: 127. 1801: 367. 1831: 608.

Original settlement lay by present isolated church. Main settlement of parish today is at Offham. Little trace of former habitations around church, though in 1321 a manor-house was constructed east of church.<sup>4</sup> Ruins of latter still visible c.1780.<sup>5</sup> Slight disturbances apparent south and west of church, and medieval pottery, chimney pot and quern fragments have been retrieved.<sup>6</sup> It seems likely that

<sup>1</sup> W. Budgen, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Feudal Aids* (1908), vol. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Bodleian Library, MS. Charter\_Sussex, 311; W. Budgen, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-9

<sup>4</sup> *S.N.Q.*, vol. 3, pp. 133-6.

<sup>5</sup> T. W. Horsfield, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

<sup>6</sup> By E. W. Holden and the writer.

an original nucleated settlement around Hamsey church gradually dispersed to other parts of the parish, possibly through lack of building space on the narrow neck of land above flood level on which the church is situated.

HANGLETON. 182 TQ 268074. III. HOU.

1086: 44. 1327: 25, 83s 6¼d. 1332: 13, 38s 8d. 1334: 58s 8d. 1341. 1428: 2. 1624: 6s. 1664: 5. 1801: 36.

This well-known site has both been recently excavated and fully published, and full references will be found in Part I of the excavation report to sources for the history of the parish.<sup>1</sup>

HASTINGS PARISHES. 184 c. TQ 800090. III. E & REB.

In Bishop Praty's Register, 1440, it stated parishes of St. Andrew, St. Leonard, St. Michael and St. Margaret destroyed by sea or depopulated. Already for two centuries at least there had been records of inundations in Hastings area. In April 1236 an inquisition said old church of St. Clement destroyed by sea.<sup>2</sup> Earlier to Praty's record there is evidence of *Nomin. Vill.*, 1428. This plainly states parishes of St. Leonard, St. Margaret, St. Michael, St. Peter and St. Andrew-sub-Castro depopulated. Site of St. Peter lost,<sup>3</sup> and as it is mentioned in 1428 but not in 1440 presumably sea totally washed it away between those two dates. In 1458 it is recorded there was a free chapel in St. Leonard's parish, but in 1548 it was stated that 'for time out of mind' the inhabitants had attended the church of Hollington. Apparently the chapel survived depopulation of the parish. At beginning of 19th century St. Leonard's still 'a desolate little parish' until founding of new town in 1828.

St. Michael's, St. Peter and St. Margaret grouped together in *Taxatio*, 1291 and valued at £10 but in 1341 value reduced to 20s. Foundations of church of St. Michael rediscovered in 1834.<sup>4</sup> From about 1656 (i.e. date of earliest reference) parish of St. Margaret became known as St. Mary Magdalen. In 1801 it had population of 51 and in 1824 13 houses, but by 1832 district entirely agricultural.<sup>5</sup> In 1870 reconstituted as parish in new town of St. Leonard's. St. Andrew's parish still desolate in 1832 with three inhabited houses, until in 1869 new church erected and gradually parish absorbed by spread of modern Hastings.

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Holden, op. cit. (1963), pp. 54-182; and J. G. Hurst and D. G. Hurst, 'Excavations at the D.M.V. of Hangleton, Part II', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 102 (1964), pp. 94-142.

<sup>2</sup> T. W. Horsfield, op. cit., p. 454n.

<sup>3</sup> *S.A.C.*, vol. 39 (1894), p. 223.

<sup>4</sup> *S.A.C.*, vol. 40 (1896), p. 262.

<sup>5</sup> M. A. Lower, *The History of Sussex* (1831), vol. 1, p. 222.

HEIGHTON ST. CLERE. 183 TQ 478075. IV. C.

1296: (with West Firle): 21, 85s 8½d. 1316. 1327: 24, 54s 2½d. 1332: 24, 57s 6½d. 1334: 74s 6½d. 1341. 1524: 22, 49s 2d+.

Site in West Firle Park with group of houses known as Heighton Street being nearest settlement. Site marked by few irregular mounds and silted pond. It has been surmised that Heighton St. Clere manor-house was abandoned before 1496.<sup>1</sup> In 1517 John Gage leased 'to Richard Ballard of Westfyrle, husbandman, site of the manor of Heighton Sencler in the parish of Westfyrle, and all the demayne lands'.<sup>2</sup> Position of site among a line of shrunken settlements from Beddingham (TQ 436069) to Winton (TQ 517038), documentary evidence, such as it is, and existence of local tradition, all suggest here was once a sizeable settlement which was apparently depopulated between c. 1450 and c. 1600.

HERSTMONCEUX. 183 TQ 643103. III. M.

1086: 42. 1296: 30, 85s 2¾d. 1316. 1327: 13, 34s 8¾d. 1332: 11, 40s 7d. 1334: 54s 7d. 1676: 250.

Today settlement of Herstmonceux lies 2 miles north of church, which is mentioned in D.B., and Herstmonceux Castle and its park. Church Farm is the only other settlement in vicinity of church. Salzman drew attention to Court Roll for Herstmonceux of 1330 in which occur 40 names, of which only eight can be traced in subsidies 1327 and 1332, with another four instances of similar surnames.<sup>3</sup> On 5 February, 1441 Roger Fenys was granted permission to empark 600 acres of his land,<sup>4</sup> and it is this act which it is suggested led to the migration of the village to its present site. No traces of former houses are visible near the church on the ground. The newly-sited village quickly grew to a fair size.

HOVE. 182 TQ 286048. ?V. REB.

1296: 30, 148s 11½d. 1327 (with Preston): 32, 66s 7d. 1332 (with Preston): 33, 62s 5¼d. 1334 (with Preston): 80s 0d. 1341. 1603: several score. 1621: 4, 36s 8d. 1664: c.27. 1801: 101.

*Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas (1291) records tithe for Hove at 106s 8d. but ninth in 1341 well below this. Also, *Non. Inq.* records 150 acres eroded by sea and widespread poverty in parish. In 1586 parish reported 'Or church is in such decaye that wee are not able to amende it'. Around 1700 Bishop Warburton refers to Hove as 'a ruinous village, which the sea is daily eating up; it is in a fair way of being quite deserted'.<sup>5</sup> Authors of *Magna Britannia* (1738)

<sup>1</sup> *S.C.M.*, vol. 29, No. 4.

<sup>2</sup> East Sussex Record Office (abbreviated hereafter to E.S.R.O.), Gage MSS.

<sup>3</sup> L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, (1960), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. of Ch. Rolls.*

<sup>5</sup> T. W. Horsfield, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

said Hove 'almost entirely swallowed up by the sea'. In 1735, they write church stood away from any houses and was in mutilated and contracted state: side aisles and chancel destroyed. Quantities of molten lead around the ruins. Church already partly in ruins by 1724. In fact total desertion probably never occurred, and in 1801 Hove described as 'a small village consisting of one street, which runs inland from the sea shore'.<sup>1</sup>

HYDNEYE. 183 TQ 609028. N. HOU.

In early thirties of present century site described as "a rise of grassy land, bare and lonely",<sup>2</sup> but before 1940 area covered by houses. 1st edition O.S. 6in. Sheet LXXX. N.W. (1879-80) shows road system well, and nearby a circular mound. Until c. 1930 medieval church stood nearby. Practically no significant documentary evidence. Hydneye was port attached to Hastings from early times,<sup>3</sup> but when it ceased to function as port and was depopulated remains obscure. Turner<sup>4</sup> maintains earliest reference to Hydneye is in deed on Hastings dated 1229. There are mentions in charters throughout period 1235-60 of a Simon de Hidenie, and to a John de Hydenye in 1308.<sup>5</sup> Probably a small harbour here silted up in period 1250-1350 depriving the attending community of its livelihood.

IHAM AND OLD WINCHELSEA. 184 TQ 902174 & c. TQ 914177.

Iham: ?III. C. 1428. Old Winchelsea: II. E.

History of Old Winchelsea well known and no reason for it to be repeated here.<sup>6</sup> Suffice it to say a Patent Roll of 1280 states that old town of Winchelsea for most part submerged by sea, and another of 1283 says town threatened with total submergence. In 1292 New Winchelsea founded on Hill of Yham, and Old Winchelsea inundated by that date.

<sup>1</sup> J. Edwards, *A Companion from London to Brighthelmston, in Sussex* (1801), quoted in E. W. Holden 'Militia Camps in Sussex, 1793 . . .' in *S.A.C.*, vol. 108 (1970), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> A. A. Evans, in *S.C.M.*, vol. 7 (1933), p. 25

<sup>3</sup> V.C.H., *Sussex*, vol. 39 (1937), p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> E. Turner, 'The Lost Towns of Northeye and Hydneye', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 19 (1867), pp. 1-35.

<sup>5</sup> *S.R.S.*, vol. 38, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> W. MacLean, 'The marshes between Hythe and Pett', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 79 (1938), pp. 199-223; W. M. Homan, 'The founding of New Winchelsea', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 88 (1949), pp. 22-41; M. W. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages*, (1967), pp. 14-28; M. W. Beresford & J. K. S. St. Joseph, *Medieval England*, (1958), pp. 221-25; and W. D. Cooper, *History of Winchelsea* (1850).

Little town of Yhamme appears to have principally covered the slopes west of St. Leonard's church and foundation walls of houses could still be traced there in 1949. It is not improbable that small church of St. Leonard is one of five mentioned in Domesday as being in 'Ramslie', it stood where Winchelsea windmill is now.<sup>1</sup> There were eighteen houses on the part of the hill not belonging to abbey of Fecamp, of these only two on ground taken over for new town. Other sixteen probably on western slopes south of Iham.<sup>2</sup> Hill of Iham, therefore, probably fairly populous before New Winchelsea constructed. As coast inundated population moved up hill. In Patent Roll of 1283 New Winchelsea referred to as 'the new town of Yhamme'. Abbott of Fecamp's town was in contemporary documents mentioned as the little town of Iham or as South Iham. It has been suggested<sup>3</sup> this indicates another settlement on hill, and it may be parts of this other settlement's buildings which have turned up in and around St. Thomas' churchyard. Presumably this hypothetical settlement destroyed by laying out of New Winchelsea. Settlement of Iham gradually abandoned as New Winchelsea shrank and its harbour silted. Exact period of desertion uncertain as town of Iham does not appear in records after 1292. Iham recorded as depopulated in 1428.

LULLINGTON. 183 c. TQ 528031. N. C.

1296: 21, 79s 8½d. 1524: 29, 37s 10d. 1676: 20. 1801: 32. 1831: 49.

Excavation 1965-66<sup>4</sup> has shown the first church on the site was built c. 1180, and this building slightly enlarged and its tower dispensed with c. 1350. After the tower rebuilt following a fire in the 16th century, it collapsed during the second half of the 18th century. Lullington is first mentioned in 1192 and its church in 1249. The place-name is pre-Conquest, In *Non. Inq.* appears an entry for 'Alcystone cu' capell de Lullynton'. The settlement suffered badly from the Black Death,<sup>5</sup> and we may be fairly certain that at least half the population died in 1349, judging from the size

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Homan, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, roll 663, 1291.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Homan, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> A. Barr-Hamilton, 'Excavations at Lullington Church', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 108 (1970), pp. 1-22.

<sup>5</sup> J. A. Brent, 'Alciston Manor in the later Middle Ages', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 106 (1968), pp. 89-102.

of the population in 1296. The excavator of the church says<sup>1</sup> he knows of no visible sign of the village's former extent but believes that it may well have had houses in the vicinity of the church, aligned with 'lost' road running from footbridge at Alfriston, past Lullington church, north-east to Windover Hill. Two dwellings remain on this line just south of the church, both of which are marked on a map of 1799.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that documents show Lullington had an active congregation until the 18th century, it is perfectly possible that a nucleated settlement around the church had been destroyed in 1349, and certainly in later centuries the population of the parish was scattered. Certainly any nucleated settlement had gone by the mid-18th century and the church was in ruins by 1780. Reasons have been given elsewhere for this 18th century decline in population.<sup>3</sup>

NEWTIMBER. 182 TQ 271134. N. C.

1086: 21. 1296 (with Pyecombe): 28, 76s 4½d. 1316. 1327: 12, 28s 3d. 1332: 15, 75s 7¼d. 1334: 82s 0d. 1603: 40. 1621: 2 paid. 1664: 12. 1676: 47. 1801: 148. 1831: 172.

Today heavily restored medieval church and rectory stand alone on southern edge of Newtimber Place park. On other side of park lies Newtimber Place with adjacent buildings. Though mentioned in *Non. Inq.*, there is no particular record of poverty at Newtimber. In 1586 church not in good condition and Horsfield (1835) says the 'village small'. There is a reference to the 'site of the manor of Nytymbr' in 1395,<sup>4</sup> possibly indicating that the manor house shifted position. Evidence of church and rectory on their own, as well as slight archaeological evidence, suggests that population moved from vicinity of these two buildings. It is also possible from the evidence of 1603 and 1621 that Newtimber was badly affected by the plague of 1603 (of Pyecombe), and depopulation occurred between these two dates. In which case the evidence for repopulation in the latter 17th century refers to a non-nucleated settlement pattern within the parish, such as exists today.

<sup>1</sup> Private communication, 15/7/70; I am grateful to Mr. A. Barr-Hamilton for much of the material in this section.

<sup>2</sup> E. S. R. O., Adams MS. 51.

<sup>3</sup> A Barr-Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Lewes Priory Misc. Books: F. G. Duckett, '... History of the Priory of St. Pancras at Lewes', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 35 (1887), p. 117. See also *S.A.C.*, vol. 37 (1890), p. 189, for abstract of a deed relating to land in Newtimber, dated 11th June, 1318.

NORTHEYE. 183 TQ 683072. III. B.

Revision of 1928 to the O.S. 6in. map (sheet LXX. N.W.) shows considerable banks, mounds and two large depressions on the site. Most of these earthworks are still visible (1970) in the area known as Chapel Field but the southern part of the site has been ploughed, although this has not yet removed all sign of earthworks. Compared with most East Sussex sites Northeye has received considerable attention in the past. In 1867 the Rev. E. Turner published an article<sup>1</sup> which, though confused, contains much important material on Northeye, as well as Barnhorne and Hydneye. Not least of Turner's discoveries was the existence of a tradition in the district of former settlements in both the Chapel and Old Towne Fields. Two unpublished excavations in the last forty years proved the existence of medieval structures in Chapel Field if nothing else.<sup>2</sup> There exists a small quantity of documentary evidence for the former presence of a village at Northeye. Foundation charter of the chapel dedicated to St. James and dated c. 1262 does survive.<sup>3</sup> This chapel survived as a ruin until the 1850s. Northeye is mentioned in a charter of c. 1229 as a dependent limb of the Cinque Port of Hastings. The site's position also suggests it was once a small port. A 'place called Northie Chappell' is mentioned in the *Parliamentary Surveys*, 1649-53. As Hasting's Corporation lost all its records of Northeye and other dependent limbs of the Cinque Port in the 16th century, we do not know when the port of Northeye ceased to exist. There are numerous reasons why Northeye was depopulated. By 1100 the drainage of the Pevensey marshes had begun, so eventually the harbour would have been abandoned. This part of Sussex was badly hit by the late 13th century storms, which destroyed Old Winchelsea, and no doubt Northeye suffered too. The Nonae Rolls produce plenty of evidence for economic hardship and poverty in the early 14th century, especially on the Sussex coast, and nine townships on the sea coast within the Rape of Pevensey are reported as being deserted in the mid-14th century. The evidence seems to be overwhelming in suggesting a desertion for Northeye by 1400.

PANGDEAN. 182 c. TQ 294117. N. D.P.  
1086: 28.

Under *Pinhedene* and *Pinwedene* in Domesday 20 villeins and 8 bordars are recorded. Charters of c. 1140 and c. 1147 refer to the church at *Pingedene*.<sup>4</sup> Today there is neither church nor village on

<sup>1</sup> E. Turner, op. cit., pp. 1-35. For discussion of Turner's paper the reader is referred to the writer's undergraduate dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Table I.

<sup>3</sup> *S.R.S.*, vol. 11 (1910), p. 264.

<sup>4</sup> *S.R.S.*, vol. 38, Chart. of St. Pancras Priory, Lewes, A.D. 1444.



the site, only a farm. Tradition says that during the 1603 plague which destroyed neighbouring Pyecombe, a farmer of Pangdean lived in a cave at Waydown nearby in order to escape the plague. When he returned many weeks later he was the last to die from the disease. His monument was at one time visible in Pyecombe churchyard.<sup>1</sup>

PERCHING. 182 TQ 242115. N. C.<sup>2</sup>

1086: 14. 1316. 1327: 14, 40s 7½d. 1332: 11, 64s 8d. 1334: 80s. 1621: 7. 1664: 13.

On early editions of O.S. 6in. sheet LII west of Perching Manor farm is marked 'Supposed site of Perching Manor House' together with fairly extensive earthworks in the form of long banks. A visit to site showed some of banks still visible (1970) but others have been obliterated by ploughing. Only buildings on site now are those of Manor Farm.

POYNINGS TOWN. 183 TV 508985. III. C.

Much information on the history of this site comes from a paper published well over a century ago.<sup>3</sup> It appears from *Non Inq.* that Seaford suffered badly from French raids in the early 14th century and her trade had also suffered in consequence.<sup>4</sup> The town also seems to have suffered badly from the plague of 1349. In 1356 it was recorded Seaford 'has lately for most part been burnt down' and 'devastated by pestilence and the calamities of war'. One James Archer 'maliciously designing to destroy the better part of the remainder of the buildings not already burnt . . . from day to day does pull down many of them, and does sell and carry away timber, chalk, and stones, to the manifest destruction and disfigurement of the town'. The townsmen had petitioned the King to help them before they were compelled to desert the town. The King replied (1356) that the townsmen were not to let James Archer or anyone else dismantle their town, but if they themselves wished to rebuild their houses elsewhere they could.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. R. Phelps, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Site listed in *S.N.Q.*, vol. 15, p. 314, as a D.M.V. consists of several small platforms which have produced medieval pottery. They are situated in a dry-valley on the Downs (TQ 243103) and probably constitute foundations of temporary dwellings.

<sup>3</sup> M. A. Lower, 'Memorials of the Town, Parish and Cinque Port of Seaford, Historical and Antiquarian', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 7 (1854), p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, p. 355.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. of Close Rolls*, 30 Edward III, 18 May 1356, M.13 (1908), pp. 268-9.

Previously, in 1347, the family of de Warenne who formerly held Seaford, became extinct and the Poynings took possession. Lower suggests the Poynings erected a new town within the parish of Seaford with a view to restore the place to its former importance, and he goes on to imply he thinks the remains on Chington Farm are those of the Poyning's new town, hence 'Poyning's Town'.

What Lower records of the archaeological evidence is of the greatest importance. He says that two miles east of (the then) present day Seaford 'are the remains of a large collection of houses still traceable'. Foundations of buildings extending over 15-20 acres (*sic*) were visible in the irregularities of the turf. Lower described how the neighbouring land was cultivated but not the site itself 'in consequence of the foundations, which renders the operation of the plough impossible'. He maintained the area usually called 'the Walls' but that the old name was 'Poyning's Town'. On the 1879 O.S. 6in. survey (sheet 79) both 'Poyning's Town' and 'Walls Brow' are marked. Lower claimed 'the series of mounds covering the foundations of buildings in all directions afford ample evidence of at least an incipient town'. While examining the site he found evidence of flint, brick, masonry, mortar, broken tile, and 'other debris of building'. He also claims all fragments bore traces of burning.

There seems no real reason to doubt the main evidence of Lower's account. That some 120 years ago there existed considerable earthworks and foundations of stone buildings on Chington Farm is corroborated by several pieces of evidence today. The place-names themselves are highly suggestive. On the site today (1970) are three or four possible house-platforms which, however, are rapidly being ploughed out. An air-photograph,<sup>1</sup> taken under poor archaeological conditions of an army camp which occupied part of the site during the last war (and which probably destroyed much of the archaeological evidence), reveals considerable indications of previous occupation of the site. Possible medieval structures, the army hutted camp, strip lynchets (still visible on the ground), and probable strip ploughing on the floor of the Cuckmere valley (TV. 514987), are all visible on this photo.

From all this evidence we can only conclude a settlement of some size existed on the site. However, an acute lack of documentary evidence except *Non. Inq.* and the Close Roll of 1356 leaves the site somewhat of a mystery. Nevertheless, the most likely explanation is that suggested by Lower himself. On receiving the land around 1350 Lord Poyning saw the state Seaford had been reduced to by poverty, pestilence and French raids, and decided to construct a

<sup>1</sup> R.A.F., C.P.E./AK 1947, 3005. I am grateful to E. W. Holden for loan of a copy of this photograph.

new town on a different site overlooking Cuckmere haven. While this new town was in course of construction or soon after its completion, French raids utterly destroyed the new venture, or possibly a fire started by accident, and the venture was abandoned. The town gradually recovered on its original site. That the site was short-lived would account for the paucity of documentary evidence.

PYECOMBE. 182 TQ 293126. IV. D.P.

1296 (with Newtimber): 28, 76s 4½d. 1316. 1327: 24, 59s 5¼d. 1332: 8, 43s 6¼d. 1334: 46s 8d. 1603: 50. 1621: 4 paid. 1664: 14. 1676: 52. 1801: 134.

Pyecombe mentioned in charter of 1091-98,<sup>1</sup> and there is an entry for the village in *Non. Inq.*, but with no special reference to poverty. Parish Registers, which commence in 1561, record village suffered from plague several times, and in 1603 disease so serious that survivors fled, and later resettled village about a half mile from church (TQ 285129). Horsfield recorded houses in Pyecombe as 'few and scattered'.

SUTTON. 183 TV 494997. III. HOU.

1296 (with Chinting): 48, 195s 4¼d. 1316. 1327: 18, 42s 2d. 1332: 8, 32s 3½d. 1334: 50s 0d. 1341. 1428.

During medieval period and after there were two manors, Sutton-Sandore and Sutton-Peverall, on land now occupied by Sutton, a suburb of modern Seaford. *Non. Inq.* entry for *Sutton-iuxta-Sefford* refers to poverty of the inhabitants and severity of the weather; 99 acres lay uncultivated because of these troubles. Entry for 1428 reads *in parochia de Sutton non est aliquis ibidem inhabitans*. No clergy resident from about 1481 to about 1534 when parish joined with Seaford.<sup>2</sup> Church still survived in 1585,<sup>3</sup> and appears village growing again for what purports to be accurate survey of Sutton-Sandore manor in 1624 shows church and nine other buildings.<sup>4</sup> In 1645 church and rectory still existed for living sequestered from a Thomas Ballow, and a John Saxby had living in 1664.<sup>5</sup> Revision

<sup>1</sup> S.R.S., vol. 38.

<sup>2</sup> M. A. Lower, 'Further memorials of Seaford', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 17 (1865), pp. 161-3. Also, see note by Lower in *S.A.C.*, (1861), p. 315, where he quotes the deed annexing Sutton to Seaford; Sutton church being desolate, and there being no inhabitants in the place except a few shepherds. The deed is undated but must refer to a date after 1508.

<sup>3</sup> H. Ellis, 'Crown presentations to rectories and vicarages in Sussex during the reign of Queen Elizabeth', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 12 (1860), p. 256.

<sup>4</sup> E.S.R.O., Seaford MS. 688.

<sup>5</sup> F. E. Sawyer, '... Plundered ministers relating to Sussex', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 30 (1880), p. 130.

of 1624 survey dated 1740 does not seem to show church though marks churchyard and also nine buildings of earlier survey. By 19th century church in ruins; Horsfield writes 'part of Sutton church still survived'. By 1854 it could be said 'the church has long been destroyed, though its foundations are clearly traceable.'<sup>1</sup> Ruins of church depicted on early editions of both 6in. and 25in. O.S. maps.

WEST BLATCHINGTON. 182 TQ 278068. III. REB.

1296 (with Brighton): 32, 142*s* 10*d*. 1327 (with Patcham): 40, 143*s* 11¼*d*. 1332 (with Patcham): 34, 118*s* 11¾*d*. 1334 (with Patcham): 164*s* 5¾*d*. 1341. 1428. 1664: 2. 1676: 10. 1831: 58.

Church first mentioned in charter of c. 1147<sup>2</sup> and no doubt settlement existed by then. Documentary evidence indicates 'that West Blatchington church had been forsaken and neglected at some date before 1499',<sup>3</sup> and the village apparently by 1428. It is said that no rector was resident after mid-16th century,<sup>4</sup> and by that period parsonage house had ceased to exist or at least to be habitable. Church and parsonage house not kept in repair after that date, and Scrase family occupied only habitable place in parish. It is maintained that by 1596 the church had been disused for fifty years and manor-house only dwelling in the parish.<sup>5</sup> There were few marriages or baptisms in the 17th century. Church in ruins by 1686. Despite this, in 1690 Blatchington was one of the places ordered to help the poor of Brighton.<sup>6</sup> Horsfield says parish consisted of a village and large farm. Only the outside walls of the church were visible. The ruins of the church are shown on the 1876 O.S. 25in. map.

DOMESDAY DESERTIONS

Three places which had reasonable populations in 1086 do not appear thereafter in the documentary record as nucleated settlements. Their exact sites are not known.

<sup>1</sup> M. A. Lower, *op. cit.*, (1854), p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *S.R.S.*, vol. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *S.A.C.*, vol. 26 (1875), p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> W. C. Renshaw, 'Notes connected with the history of West Blatchington church', in *S.A.C.*, vol. 49 (1906), pp. 162-68.

<sup>5</sup> *V.C.H., Sussex*, vol. 7 (1940), p. 243.

<sup>6</sup> *S.A.C.*, vol. 12 (1860), pp. 117ff.

DRISNESEL. c. TQ 751232.

'Part of Salehurst Park Farm is still called Drigsell'.<sup>1</sup> In D.B. under Henhurst Hundred after Salehurst comes DRISNESEL, assessed for 3½ hides and one virgate. Land for eight ploughs. On demesne were two ploughs; 18 villeins and six cottars had 12 ploughs. This presumably gave a village of about 25 families. About 1210 Robertsbridge Abbey, a Cistercian House founded 1176, was moved from Robertsbridge itself to a site near Drigsell which was granted to the Abbey. From this time the estate was merged into the Abbey's Manor of Robertsbridge and by 1567 was known as the Farm of Parkhouse.<sup>2</sup> By 1567 there was only one house on the land. David Martin has suggested to me<sup>3</sup> that from the late 13th century onwards villeins and serfs were being granted copyhold and freehold land and were given tracts of wasteland to farm, consequently tenants moved away from the villages and into their own smallholdings. This is conceivably how Drigsell disappeared.

ESMEREWIC. ?U.

The place-name has not been identified, though Holden<sup>4</sup> maintains the entry in the Domesday Survey concerning 'Esmerewic' is probably the record of the manor of Benfields. In D.B. ESMEREWIC was assessed for 1½ hides. There was land for four ploughs. On demesne were two ploughs, and there were four villeins and six bordars with two ploughs.

WILDENE. U.

Again the place-name has not been identified. The D.B. entry under Hartfield Hundred says assessed for two hides. Land for seven ploughs. On demesne two ploughs, and seven villeins and three bordars had five ploughs. Worth 70 shillings.

#### POSSIBLE DESERTED SITES

The following is a list of sites where there is evidence to suggest that at one time there were probably larger nucleated settlements.

<sup>1</sup> A. Mawer, F. M. Stenton, and J. E. B. Gover, *The Place-Names of Sussex* (1930), vol. 2, p. 458; quoted by S. King, *op. cit.*, p. 418. A survey of the manor of Robertsbridge (1567) refers to fields on the 'Farme of Parkhouse' called Great and Little Drigsell and Drigsell Medes (*S.R.S.*, vol. 47 (1944), pp. 146-7).

<sup>2</sup> *S.R.S.*, vol. 47, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Private communication.

<sup>4</sup> E. W. Holden, *op. cit.*, (1963), p. 59. See also, V.C.H., *Sussex*, vol. 7, p. 280.

BIVELHAM. 183 *c.* TQ 633264.

1296: 25, 87*s* 2½*d.* 1316. 1327: 22, 50*s* 0¼*d.* 1332: 20, 59*s* 1¼*d.*  
1334: 62*s* 3¾*d.* 1524: 44, 89*s* 6*d.*

V.C.H. *Sussex*, 9 records Bivelham “disappeared from the Hundred (Hawksborough) before 1624”.

ORE. 184 *c.* TQ 836114.

1296: 26, 119*s* 11¼*d.* 1316. 1327: 19, 52*s* 3½*d.* 1332: 19, 84*s*  
4¼*d.* 1334: 92*s* 4¼*d.* 1341.

As early as 1361 the manor house was in bad repair and there were few tenants on the land. At the time of the compilation of V.C.H. *Sussex*, vol. 9 both manor house and church of St. Helen were in ruins.

PARROCK. 183 *c.* TQ 457358.

1086: 2. 1296: 13, 49*s* 5¾*d.* 1316. 1327: 26, 40*s* 11*d.* 1332:  
35, 54*s* 0½*d.* 1334: 68*s* 0½*d.*

Map reference given here refers to only one of three place-names incorporating ‘Parrock’ on the one-inch survey.

PEASMARSH. 184 *c.* TQ 888218.

1664: 38.

A possible emparking case. Church today situated in an em-parked area devoid of other buildings. Modern village outside park. There is said to have been a village near the church in the past.

SHERMANBURY. 182 *c.* TQ 215188.

1086: 7. 1428: 7.

A chapel (*ecclesiola*) here in 1086. Today there is a church by Shermanbury Place, but no village.

TOTTINGWORTH. 183 *c.* TQ 615219.

1296: 17, 61*s* 5½*d.* 1316. 1327: 21, 41*s* 6½*d.* 1332: 19, 50*s* 9¼*d.*  
1334: 54*s* 0¼*d.*

National Grid Reference here refers to farm south of Tottingworth Park and east of Little Tottingworth (TQ 604219).

## SHRUNKEN SITES

ARLINGTON. 183 TQ 543075. N. A.S.

1086: 5. 1327: 7, 6s 11½d. 1341. 1664: 17. 1801: 472.  
1831: 727.

Today comprises church (with pre-Conquest features) and no more than a dozen houses, mostly widely-spaced. South and west of the church in 'The Sluices' are numerous mounds and irregularities, some of which apparently are modern disturbances.<sup>1</sup> However, probable 12th century pottery has been recovered from the vicinity. Estate Map dated Sept. 1629<sup>2</sup> depicts buildings in perspective and gives field names. It shows most of buildings now in existence (or at least on same sites as present ones), and records three buildings including the old Parsonage House, and the pond, in the field where now there are only mounds to indicate former structures. Other documentary evidence includes a mention in the *Non. Inq.*, when it appears the value of the church had declined from 1291. In 1586 of the church it was reported the 'chancell in defalte of helinge', a common complaint of the period in this part of Sussex, indicating widespread poverty. 211 adults were recorded in the parish by the 1676 religious census, but the population was not concentrated in the village itself. In 1835 Horsfield says of Arlington that it was a 'small village but traditionally much larger'.

The following is a list of a few sites encountered during work on the deserted settlements. There are almost certainly many more and a great deal of useful work could be done on their history.

ALCISTON	TQ 506056	PEVENSEY	TQ 648048
BEDDINGHAM	TQ 445078	PIDDINGHOE	TQ 436031
	& TQ 446075	RODMELL	TQ 420063
BISHOPSTONE	TQ 472010	SALEHURST	TQ 749243
BODIAM	c. TQ 785259	SOUTHEASE	TQ 423053
CHARLESTON	TQ 491069	SOUTH HEIGHTON	TQ 451028
HOOE	c. TQ 683093	TARRING NEVILLE	TQ 443039
IFORD	TQ 408073	TELSCOMBE	TQ 405034
ISFIELD	TQ 444182	TILTON	TQ 495066
	NEW WINCHELSEA	TQ 905175	

<sup>1</sup> For a plan of these earthworks see the writer's undergraduate dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> Barbican House, Lewes. E/15. Acc. 1153.

## CONCLUSION

This survey is no more than an introduction to the deserted villages of East Sussex. Based on the fifteen sites listed by the D.M.V.R.G. and published in *Sussex Notes and Queries*, vol. 15 (1962) by Holden, the survey and recent work by other researchers, has added a further twenty-two sites, at least, which should constitute full D.M.V. In addition there are another six sites which are possible D.M.V., but for which there is very little evidence. In other words, there are about thirty-seven full D.M.V. in East Sussex recognised to date, besides numerous shrunken sites. Of these 37 only a dozen, less than one-third, had any visible earthworks in 1971, and only at four of these (Balmer, Buckham, Buxted and Northeye), again one-third, were the earthworks at all extensive.

Of the shrunken sites recognised so far a few have visible earthworks, e.g. Beddingham and Bodiam, while Arlington has particularly good field evidence of its former extent.

Something has been said in the introduction about the lack of good field evidence for our Sussex deserted sites, and it cannot be stressed too much that immediate and extensive fieldwork is needed to record those remaining sites with earthworks of any quality before agricultural activity and redevelopment obliterate the last traces for all time. Meanwhile new sites particularly in the Weald must be located through the documentary sources while the history and fate of known sites must be clarified by more detailed study.

Finally, two other steps should be taken. There is a pressing need for a far better aerial survey of Sussex deserted sites than exists to date.<sup>1</sup> Also, fieldwork alone is not sufficient. We must attempt to preserve our better sites now while we have the chance. For example, sites needing immediate preservation would include Buxted, Balmer, Northeye and Arlington. At the same time we must be ready to carry out rescue excavation at short notice on sites threatened by agricultural activity or any of the other everyday dangers of our times.

<sup>1</sup> In E. Sussex Dr. J. K. S. St Joseph of University of Cambridge has photographed Balmer, Balsdean and New Winchelsea. Although R.A.F. and other surveys do cover some sites (e.g. Poyning's Town) these photos were not taken for specifically archaeological purposes



## APPENDIX

## TABLE I

Excavations at East Sussex D.M.V. sites<sup>1</sup>

BALSDEAN (TQ 378059) 1950; medieval church and structures; excavated; N. E. S. Norris and E. F. Hockings, 'Excavations at Balsdean Chapel, Rottingdean', *S.C.M.*, 25(1951), pp. 222ff.; and *S.A.C.*, 91(1953), 53-68.

BARNHORNE (TQ 695078) 1960s, medieval structure; observed; E. W. Holden, 'Slate roofing in medieval Sussex', *S.A.C.*, 103(1965), p. 78.

BULVERHYTHE (TQ 768082) 1861; medieval chapel; excavated; W. D. Cooper, 'Notices of Hastings and its municipal rights', *S.A.C.*, 14(1862), pp. 117-18.

EXCEAT (TV 523988) 1913; medieval church; excavated; W. Budgen, 'Excete and its parish church', *S.A.C.*, 59(1916), pp. 138-71.

HANGLETON (TQ 268074) 1952-54; six medieval structures; excavated; E. W. Holden, 'Excavations at the Deserted Medieval Village of Hangleton, Part I', *S.A.C.*, 101(1963), pp. 54-182.

——— 1954; four medieval structures; excavated; J. G. & D. G. Hurst, 'Excavations at the D.M.V. of Hangleton, Part II', *S.A.C.*, 102(1964), pp. 94-142.

HYDNEYE (TQ 609028) 1930; medieval structures; excavated; no report published, but see note in *S.A.C.*, 72(1931), p. 277.

LULLINGTON (TQ 528031) 1965-66; medieval church; excavated; A. Barr-Hamilton, 'Excavations at Lullington church', *S.A.C.*, 108(1970), pp. 1-22.

NORTHEYE (TQ 683072) 1938; medieval structure; excavated; no report published, but see L. Beesley, 'Excavations at Northeye', in *The Norman*, 1939, (magazine of Normandale Preparatory School, Bexhill).

——— 1952; medieval structure; excavated; no report published, but see *S.A.C.*, 103(1965), p. 78.

SUTTON (TV 494997) 1944; medieval burials and rubbish pits; observed; E. Cecil Curwen, 'Twelfth century burials at Sutton, Seaford', *S.N.Q.*, 10(1944-45), p. 67.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. W. Beresford and J. G. Hurst, *Deserted Medieval Villages* (1971), pp. 164-5.

TABLE II

## Areas of desertion of East Sussex villages

COASTAL	DOWNLAND	WEALD
Aldrington	Balmer	Albourne
Barnhorne	Balsdean	Buckham
Broomhill	<i>Esmerewic</i>	Buxted
Bulverhythe	Exceat	<i>Drisnesel</i>
Hastings parishes:	Hamsey	Herstmonceux
St. Andrew-sub-Castro	Hangleton	<i>Wildene</i> (6)
St. Clement	Heighton St. Clere	
St. Leonard	Lullington	
St. Margaret	Newtimber	
St. Mary Magdalen	Pangdean	
St. Michael	Perching	
St. Peter	Poyning's Town	
Hove	Pyecombe	
Hydneye	Sutton	
Iham & Old Winchelsea	West Blatchington (15)	
Northeye (16)		

TABLE III

## Periods of desertion of East Sussex Villages

Period I (soon after 1086)	..	3
Period II ( <i>c.</i> 1100- <i>c.</i> 1350)	..	3
Period III ( <i>c.</i> 1350- <i>c.</i> 1450)	..	13
Period IV ( <i>c.</i> 1450- <i>c.</i> 1700)	..	4
Period V (after <i>c.</i> 1700)	.. ..	4
Uncertain but probably III	..	2
Uncertain but probably IV	..	3
Totally uncertain date	.. ..	5
Total	.. ..	37 villages

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