

A STUDY OF FARM BUILDINGS IN SELECTED PARISHES OF EAST SUSSEX

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Farm buildings have received much less attention than other forms of vernacular architecture, and this article seeks to add to the picture by looking at the farm buildings in the parishes of Chailey, East Chiltington and Falmer. The agriculture of this area has been influenced by geology as well as by national trends; and the differences in agricultural systems have left their mark in the variations in the type and form of farm buildings found in the three parishes. For example, where dairying and cattle breeding and fattening predominated there are lots of cowhouses and yards; and on the downlands where there was large-scale sheep-corn farming there are larger barns and a greater proportion of shelter-sheds. Most of the buildings date from the nineteenth century, but others of earlier dates were found, including one fourteenth-century barn. Although building methods in the three parishes were similar, materials differed, since locally available materials were used, and these varied from parish to parish.

INTRODUCTION

The study of farm buildings as vernacular architecture is still a recent development, but an important one, since these buildings can give insights into, and add to our knowledge of, past farming methods, agricultural developments and building methods and techniques. They can also illustrate the way of life of a class of people for whom other records are scarce. The recording of farm buildings is made more urgent by the fact that they are, and always have been, constantly altered and adapted so that they can be used to maximum advantage.

This article looks at the parishes of Chailey, East Chiltington and Falmer, which are contiguous and yet extend over different geological formations and thus represent the diverse physical regions of East Sussex and the differing farming economies within those regions, until c. 1880. This terminal date has been chosen since the agricultural depression beginning then and continuing for the next 50 years or so halted widespread investment in building and any further developments in methods and techniques. The present administrative parish boundaries were used, to avoid having to deal with detached portions. The farm buildings within the parishes were recorded and with one exception these were found to date from no earlier than the sixteenth century. Information from farmhouses has been used only where it seems to relate directly to the farm buildings. The farms were initially located from early maps¹ and were then visited and recorded following R. W. Brunskill's revised recording system.² A sketch plan was made of the layout, and details noted of the acreage, now and in 1842 (when tithe schedules were made out), of the location and layout of the farmstead, of the function, plan, form and materials of the buildings, and of constructional details and the type of soil on which the farm was sited. Sixty-eight farmstead sites were visited, and in the discussion of farm buildings and layouts whenever a farm is mentioned it is followed by the number which represents it on the location map. Seven farms where the buildings were in ruins or gone completely have been lettered (a) to (g).

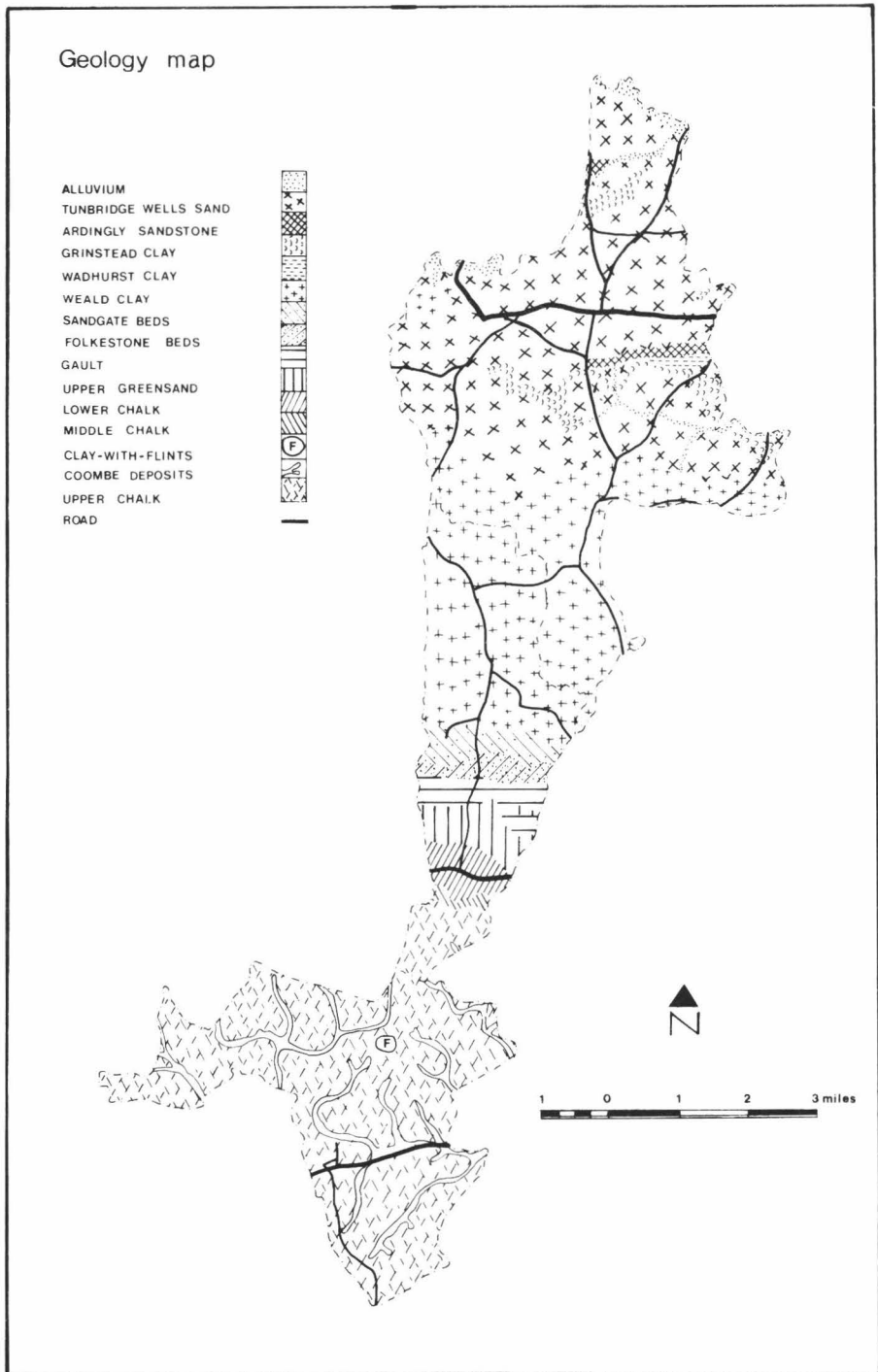


Fig. 1. Geology map.

AGRICULTURAL BACKGROUND

To understand the farm buildings most fully it is necessary to know as much as possible about their context. Other articles in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* and elsewhere have dealt with agricultural developments in the county, including Chailey, East Chiltington and Falmer,³ so only a brief outline will be given here.

The three parishes lie on different soils and this has affected the types of agriculture which could be practised in them (Fig. 1).⁴ The northern part of Chailey lies predominantly on Tunbridge Wells Sand which gives rise to heath and woodland on high land and to comparatively poor grass on the lower slopes. Rich meadows are found only on the alluvium of the valleys. South of the sand is the Weald Clay, on which lie the southern part of Chailey and the northern half of East Chiltington. This soil provides pasture, although it is wet and needs draining. Both here and further north transportation and communication were made difficult by the soil and lack of suitable building materials. Several different geological formations run between the edge of the Weald Clay and the foot of the Downs. The Sandgate Beds provide good pasture and the Gault is also rich, but the Folkestone Beds tend to be infertile. Falmer lies entirely on the Upper Chalk, which provides permanent grassland, although water is scarce and the grass is suited to sheep rather than cattle-grazing. Although the different types of soil would have mixed where they adjoined, the major outcrops retained their different characteristics, and these helped to determine the types of agriculture which were best suited to the three parishes, and which differed from an early date. In Falmer there was an emphasis on sheep from the early fourteenth century⁵ while the heavier, wetter soils at the foot of the Downs were generally used as pasture for cattle.⁶ Mixed farming with some emphasis on livestock was carried out in this scarpfoot land, while further north in the Weald farming was centred upon cattle.⁷ Wood was also an important crop in the Weald, especially as the demand for it grew in the sixteenth century with the need for fuel in the iron industry and for fuel and poles in the hop industry.⁸

Probate inventories, which for these parishes start in the early eighteenth century, have given information about the types of farming then used, and in a few cases can be related to actual farms.⁹ Although they do not mention the size of the farms some indication comes from the value of cattle, crops, etc., and in some cases acreages of planted fields are given.

For Chailey there are twelve inventories dating from 1712–1749, and from these the main activities emerge as being arable cultivation, cattle fattening or breeding and dairying. The arable, perhaps, was most important, the soil being conducive to it and improved by manure from the cattle (although on two farms there was no arable at all). Wheat and oats were the most important cereals and hay the most important fodder crop, the farmers taking little advantage of the new fodder crops available at that time. Sheep, pigs and two flocks of geese were found on the farms, and wood was another crop of minor importance (although one farmer apparently specialised in it). Hops were grown on five farms, two of them having an oast- or hop-house. Limekilns and chalk at three farms witness attempts at agricultural improvement. Oxen were still favoured as draught animals, largely outnumbering draught horses.

The situation in East Chiltington was rather different. Five probate inventories survive and reveal that the prime consideration here was dairying. All the farmhouses had provision for dairy production and even where there was no other arable production hay was grown, presumably as a fodder crop for the dairy herds. In the less significant areas of husbandry the farmers of East Chiltington were like those of Chailey, growing wheat and oats as their main cereal crop, keeping a few sheep, pigs and geese, and growing hops on one farm.

The emphasis in Falmer was different again. Only three probate inventories survive for this

parish and on all three farms there was a balance between sheep and corn, with quite a large number of fattening or breeding stock, and a dairy herd on one. The main arable crops were wheat and barley. One of the farms is remarkable for its size and value when compared to all the other farms in the study area. It is interesting in being an example of one owned by a large-scale farmer who was running a mixed farm on progressive lines, using horses as draught animals and making use of new types of fodder crops. Such large-scale farming was increasingly profitable on the chalkland as grain prices rose and the demand for Southdown wool increased. The period 1780–1830 was one of reorganization and consolidation of the downland farms to create larger farms with a mixture of land types to provide sufficient arable, sheep pasture and brookland (for hay and grazing for cattle plough-teams).¹⁰

By contrast most of the farms in Chailey were small and the techniques used were traditional ones. There was at least one improver, William Poole, who purchased The Hook in Chailey in 1732, and who experimented with growing various types of fodder crops and using different agricultural techniques.¹¹ However, Arthur Young's comments about this area in 1813 show that little progress had been made in improving methods of farming. His commentary indicates that the types of agriculture practised on the different soils were still much as they had been a century earlier; and they continued thus throughout the nineteenth century with farmers in both sheep–corn and mixed farming areas benefitting from increased demand in the 1860s and 1870s. However, the later years of the century brought an agricultural decline which hit first the grain producers, then the large-scale downland farmers, and finally the wealden cattle farmers. Until this depression ended in about 1939 investment in agriculture and in agricultural buildings was reduced to a very low level.¹²

THE BUILDINGS

The farmstead

One of the first things to strike the eye when looking at a farmstead is the way in which the buildings are clustered, and the location of the farms and their buildings can give an indication of the type of farming practised there. From the location map (Fig. 2) it can be seen that there are more farms per square kilometre in Chailey than in East Chiltington and Falmer. Looking at the geology of the area (Fig. 1) it emerges that only ten farms are located on chalk compared to 23 on clay, and 27 on the different sands. The more widely dispersed farms are also related to the higher land found in Falmer. The correlation of chalk and height above sea level does not necessarily mean that settlement cannot be intense, since in the eighteenth century there were at least two tenements of 50 acres at what is now Balmer Farm (54).¹³ It reflects, rather, the type of farming which the soil and topography made possible. The high chalklands lent themselves to large-scale farming, and in Falmer this is reflected in the presence of a small number of large farms. In 1842 the average farm size in Falmer was 328 acres. The largest farm, Falmer Court (55), was 792 acres; three others were of between 300 and 450 acres, and none were below 150 acres. This contrasts sharply with East Chiltington, where there were no farms *over* 150 acres, and only three over 100 acres, the average size being 86 acres. The situation in Chailey was similar, the average farm size being only slightly larger, at 93 acres. Here there were eight farms of between 100 and 200 acres, and three of over 200 acres (the largest being Hurst Barns Farm (17) with 409 acres). That the farms were much more densely distributed in Chailey and East Chiltington than in Falmer was probably because the land was good enough to support small farmers, but not so good as to encourage larger landowners to move in and gradually consolidate estates. Whereas by 1842 the whole of Falmer formed part of the

Chichester estate, in Chailey and East Chiltington although four landowners (James Ingram, Robert Blencoe, Lord Abinger and the Earl of Sheffield) held fairly large acreages it was left as small farms, the most effective mode of farming on the clay, and none of them held more than 719 acres.

The location of farmsteads also varies, with a contrast particularly between Falmer and Chailey, as revealed in table 1 below. The differences between the downland and wealden parishes probably go back to the early days of settlement, when common-field agriculture was practised in Falmer, the villeins sharing equipment and so living together in a village to make this easier;

TABLE 1
The location of farmsteads

<i>Position of farmstead</i>	<i>Chailey</i>		<i>East Chiltington</i>		<i>Falmer</i>	
	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>
Isolated on cul-de-sac	28	62	8	53	4	50
Isolated on roadside	16	36	7	47	2	25
In village	1	2	—	—	2	25
Total	45	100	15	100	8	100

whereas in Chailey land was enclosed by settlers, who set up on their own on isolated farms from the eleventh century on, and especially in the sixteenth century.¹⁴ Amongst others the farms of Wapsbourne Manor (32) and Warningore (51) in Chailey date back to before the twelfth century, when they are first mentioned in documentary records,¹⁵ and the farmhouses of 27 of the Chailey farms and ten of the East Chiltington farms date back to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, or even earlier. For the most part the farmhouses were isolated from the farmyards, particularly in Chailey, although in several cases it seems that an isolated farmhouse did at one time form part of the group of farm buildings, but was left standing alone later when the farmyard was reorganised.

In the layout of the farm buildings various combinations were used. In all the parishes 40% or 50% of the farmyards have scattered buildings, although these may not have been scattered originally. Where modern buildings have replaced the old, as at Great Homewood Farm (14) and Balmer Farm (54), an earlier L- or U-shaped yard may have been destroyed; and at others, where there are a lot of buildings, as at Cinder Farm (8) and Falmer Court Farm (55), there may have been scattered buildings in addition to an L- or U-shaped room or courtyard. Almost half the farms had a yard, but there was a greater proportion of farms with yards in Chailey and East Chiltington than in Falmer. This reflects the difference in the importance of cattle in the different areas. Sheep, which were the main livestock concern in Falmer, were kept in the fields most of the time, whereas cattle, which were more important than sheep in Chailey and East Chiltington, were often brought in to winter in the farmyard, and dairy cows would have been brought into the yard throughout most of the year for milking. There may have been yards from an early date, but those that are to be seen today appear to date in most cases from the late eighteenth century on, and particularly from the mid-nineteenth century, a period when livestock were becoming increasingly important.

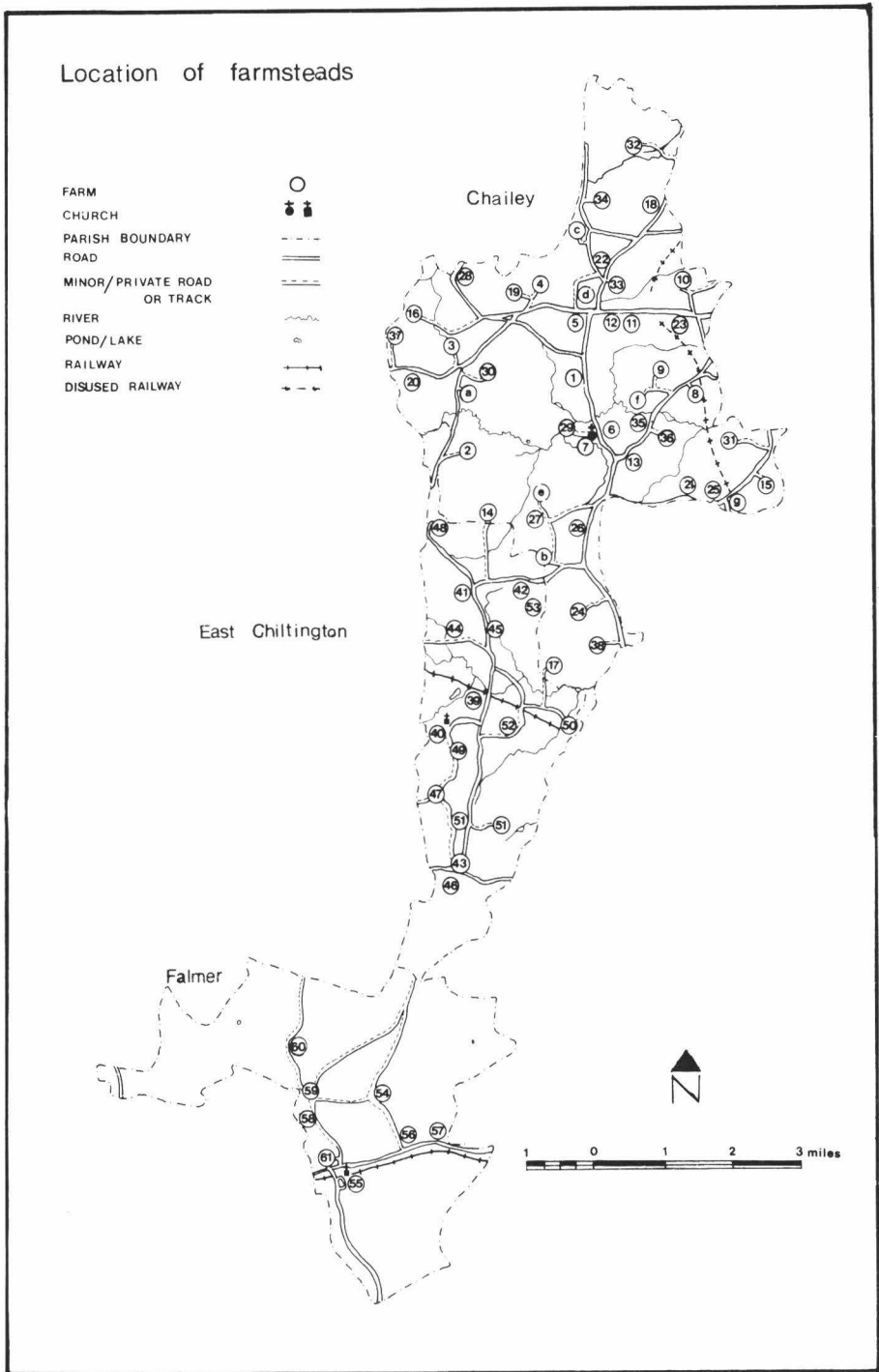


Fig. 2. Location of farmsteads.

Key to farmsteads:

Chailey

- (1) Binham Farm
- (2) Bower Farm
- (3) Broadstone Farm
- (4) Bush Farm
- (5) Chailey Garage
- (6) Chailey Place
- (7) Church Farm
- (8) Cinder Farm
- (9) Cinder Farm (2)
- (10) Coxes Farm
- (11) Frick Farm
- (12) Frick Farm House
- (13) Furzegrove Farm
- (14) Great Homewood Farm
- (15) High House Farm
- (16) Holford Manor
- (17) Hurst Barns Farm
- (18) Lane End Farm
- (19) Leyland Farm
- (20) Longridge Farm
- (21) Markstakes Farm
- (22) Middleton Farm
- (23) Oaklea Warren
- (24) Old Barns Farm
- (25) Shelleys Farm
- (26) Simmons Farm
- (27) Southam
- (28) Teagues Farm
- (29) The Moat
- (30) Townings Farm
- (31) Tutts Farm
- (32) Wapsbourne Maor
- (33) Warren Farm
- (34) Warr's Farm
- (35) Whitelodge
- (36) Wildings Farm
- (37) Wivelsden Farm
- (38) Woodbrooks Farm

- (a) Breens Cottages — ruins
- (b) Broomfields — twentieth century farm on earlier site
- (c) Joy's Farm — nothing old left
- (d) Mounts Place — nothing old left
- (e) The Hook — estate headquarters rather than farm
- (f) Vixengrove Farm — twentieth century farm
- (g) Woolgers Farm — nothing old left

East Chiltington

- (39) Brookhouse
- (40) Chiltington Chapel Farm
- (41) Homewoodgate Farm
- (42) Hurters Barn
- (43) Newstead Farm
- (44) North Barns Farm
- (45) North Hall
- (46) Novington Farm
- (47) Novington Manor
- (48) Shaw Farm
- (49) Stantons Farm
- (50) Upper Burrells
- (51) Warningore Farm
- (52) Wootton Farm
- (53) Yokehurst Farm

Falmer

- (54) Balmer Farm
- (55) Falmer Court Farm
- (56) Housedean Cottages
- (57) Housedean Farm
- (59) Ridge Farm
- (60) St. Mary's Farm
- (61) Swan Inn

TABLE 2
The farmstead layout

Layout	<i>Chailey</i>		<i>East Chiltington</i>				<i>Falmer</i>	
	no.	%	no.	%		no.	%	
Scattered	18	40	6	40		4	50	
L-shaped:								
joined	6	13 } 20	4	28 } 34	3	37 } 37½		
unjoined	3		1		7		—	
U-shaped:								
joined	11	24½ } 33	1	6½ } 13	1	12½ } 12½		
unjoined	4		1		6½		—	
Courtyard:								
joined	2	4½ } 7	2	13 } 13	—	— } —		
unjoined	1		—		—		—	
Total	45	100	15	100		8	100	
With yard	20	44½	8	53		3	37½	

The water supply of each farm was largely determined by topography. The Chailey farms were plentifully supplied by streams, springs, wells and, in particular, by ponds. Ponds were the main source of supply for East Chiltington too; but in Falmer wells were the major supplier, and, of the two ponds one was a dewpond. There were probably other dewponds which no longer survive, since they were made from the seventeenth century on, and soon fall into disrepair if not constantly maintained.¹⁶ Where a stream provided the water supply the farmstead was never sited nearer to it than about 10 m presumably because of the danger of flooding, and also because the alluvial soil near it would provide inadequate foundations for buildings and yet good agricultural land which could not afford to be wasted.¹⁷

The barn

Of the actual buildings of the farmstead the barn is the most imposing. It is also one of the most ubiquitous buildings. In Chailey there are 31 barns among 38 farms, in East Chiltington eleven among fifteen farms, and in Falmer seven among eight farms. They range in size from the two bay barn at Middleton Farm, Chailey (22) to the fourteen bay barn at Falmer Court Farm (55), which is over 50 m long (Figs. 4 and 5). There is no apparent correlation between the sizes of barns and the periods when they were built, barns of different sizes being found at similar periods within each parish, but the range in size and location of each type reveals an interesting distribution. Of the four barns of seven or more bays three, including the two largest, are in Falmer (at Falmer Court [55] and St. Mary's Farm [60]). These two large barns are the only ones in the area to have more than one threshing floor. The smallest Falmer barns are of five bays, whereas in Chailey five-bay barns are the largest type, and the majority are of four or three bays (although some of the three-bay barns are as large as the ones of five bays, for example the barns at The Moat [29] and at Wildings Farm [36]). In East Chiltington there are three- and five-bay barns in almost equal proportions, with one large seven-bay barn at North Barns Farm (44). Another of the East Chiltington barns, at Wootton Farm (52), was extended from its original five-bay form with aisles and additions. With four

TABLE 3
Barn sizes

<i>Size</i>	<i>Chailey</i>	<i>East Chiltington</i>	<i>Falmer</i>	<i>Total</i>
2 bay	2	—	—	2
3 bay	12	4	—	16
4 bay	8	—	—	8
5 bay	7	6	3	16
7 bay	—	1	1	2
9 bay two threshing floors	—	—	£	£
14 bay two threshing floors	—	—	1	1
Fodder mill/barn	1	1	—	2
Total*	30	12	6	48

*Some farms have no barn; three have two barns (in one case the second being a fodder barn).

exceptions the Chailey five-bay barns all belonged to farms which in 1842 were well over 100 acres. It might be thought that the even larger barns of Falmer reflected the even larger sizes of the farms. This is partly so, but other factors also seem to have had effect. St. Mary's Farm (60) for example has a nine-bay barn with two threshing floors, yet in 1842, near to the time of construction, the farm was only 151½ acres. This contrasts with Hurst Barns farm in Chailey (17) which had only a five-bay barn despite its large size of 409 acres. Such a contrast is probably the result of the fact that cereal production was of more importance in Falmer than on the Weald Clay. It is interesting that the two fodder mills/barns are found not on the larger downland farms, but at Shaw Farm (48) and Hurst Barns Farm (17) on the clayland, where the emphasis was on cattle. Livestock management became increasingly efficient in the nineteenth century when these fodder mills were built, and traces of the horse engine which would have powered different preparation machines at Shaw Farm (48) still survive in the cobbled horse track and central post.

The largest barn, that at Falmer Court Farm (55), is also the oldest. This barn dates back to the fourteenth century, although after a fire in the sixteenth century the middle part was rebuilt. Its size is probably due to the fact that this was the manorial barn and needed to be large to house the demesne produce. Since the twelfth century the manor had belonged to the Priory of St. Pancras in Lewes, so it may also have been used to hold the tithes collected by the priory. Barns were used not only for storage, but also to house sheep, cattle and horses. In the Rape of Hastings, the other side of East Sussex, barns have frequently shown evidence of having housed cattle,¹⁸ and in Chailey the barns at Old Barns Farm (24) and Hurst Barns Farm (17) seem to have had feeding racks and housed cattle at an early date. Because of the loss and/or rebuilding of earlier barns the evidence for them comes largely from the limited documentary sources. In the study area the earliest mention is of 'barnes' at Wootton Farm (52) in 1671, and at Stantons Farm (49) in 1741.¹⁹ By the seventeenth century barns are thought to have been 'numerous', and '... many yeoman farmers who rebuilt their dwellings during this period used other profits to rebuild their barns.'²⁰ Of the barns recorded several are earlier than this; and from the evidence, as set out in the table below, it seems that there was more barn building (probably much of it *rebuilding*) at an earlier date in Chailey and

TABLE 4
The dates of the barns

	<i>Chailey</i>	<i>East Chiltington</i>	<i>Falmer</i>
Pre-sixteenth century	—	—	1
Sixteenth century	2	3	—
Late sixteenth/early seventeenth century	4	—	—
Seventeenth century	6	3	—
Eighteenth century	11	—	—
Late eighteenth/early nineteenth century	—	1	—
Nineteenth century	7	5	6
Total	30	12	7

East Chiltington than in Falmer. This may well reflect the growing prosperity of wealden farmers in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which led to the 'Great Rebuilding' of many of their houses.²¹ In Chailey the barn building continued in the eighteenth century reflecting the continuing well-being of livestock farmers. The fact that in East Chiltington there is only one eighteenth-century barn and this dates from very late in the period may reflect the specialism in

dairy farming which the probate inventories reveal in the early and mid-eighteenth century, when very little arable farming was done and so few barns recorded. The later dates of the barns in Falmer may be deceptive, since older barns may well have been replaced as part of an estate policy of rebuilding which does not seem to have been affected by the fluctuating fortunes of the sheep—corn farmers. The nineteenth-century barns in Chailey and East Chiltington may again replace earlier ones; but also reflect the fact that money was available to spend on them.

Many of the barns in all the parishes had lofts, generally only on one side of the threshing floor, or part of one side, (which is the case for twenty out of the 30 barns with lofts). A smaller number had lofts on both sides, or part of both sides (7), and three (two of them fodder mills/barns) had a loft throughout. The doors at either end of the threshing floor were both of full height in over half of the barns. Proportions varied however, as although about half the barns in Chailey had both doors full height, in Falmer this was the case for over 80% of the barns, while only 27% had them in East Chiltington. Here a full height door one side only predominated (55%), whereas Chailey had only 32% like this, and Falmer none. This difference may reflect, again, the different emphasis on arable cultivation in the three parishes, the full height doors at both ends of the threshing floor making the entry and exit of loaded carts easier, or it may simply reflect different building traditions. There are only two barns with a single winnowing door at one end of the threshing floor instead of double doors, one being the barn at the Old Forge, Falmer (58) and the other being the field-barn at Warningore Farm, East Chiltington (51). Other variations are the large sliding doors at Novington, North Barns and St. Mary's Farms (44, 45 and 60), all built about 1850, and the double lintel over the doorways of the barns at Housedean Cottages (56) and Housedean Farm (57), which were presumably used to prevent sagging. The doors of several barns (two or three in each parish) are raised a couple of feet above the ground, and in the doorposts, are grooves to hold planks. This construction would have enabled the doors to swing clear of any manure in the yard, and also meant that the doors could be open for threshing, yet the planks would stop any farmyard fowl from wandering in.²² Such doors occur at barns dating from the seventeenth century on, although they may have been a later addition to the earlier barns, and were probably originally used at other barns and have since been replaced. The barn at Southam (27) is the only barn with a porch, although where a barn had an aisle with low eaves and a full height door on that side the doorway might project above the main roof, as at Wildings Farm (36). Alternatively the full height door would be recessed, with the low-roofed aisle projecting either side of it, as at Wootton Farm (52). At three weatherboard barns the boards have been angled to give a slight projection over the doorway (at Old Barns Farm (24), Simmons Farm (26) and Hurters Barn (42)).

Such constructional details and differences were the result of the different materials from which the barns were built. Aisles are found only at weatherboard barns, where presumably the walls were not strong enough to support the weight of the roof alone. The only non-timber aisled barn is at Falmer Court (55), where the span of the roof is so great that even though the wall are of flint they would be unlikely to be able to bear its weight. The building materials used were those which were at hand. Thus, on the chalk, flint was used, with brick to provide regularity around openings, at corners, and at the base and top of the walls. All the Falmer barns are flint, with slate or tile and one thatched roof. In East Chiltington a variety of materials were used. There are flint, weatherboard and brick barns in almost equal proportions, with slate or tile roofs, and one case of a barn built of Sussex Marble, where the farm (North Barns Farm (44)) is near to an outcrop of this stone. In the wooded parish of Chailey the vast majority of barns (84%) are of weatherboard, with a few of brick and one a mixture of brick and sandstone. Many of the weatherboard barns now have a brick or sandstone (or mixed) base. At some this appears to have existed at an early date, at others it was added later. The early method of

weatherboarding was to have a frame with fairly large squares (about 3 ft. square) across which wide boards were fixed. Later, in the eighteenth century, narrower boards were used, and they were fixed to studs of smaller scantling which were closer together (about 12–8 in.). In two barns in Chailey there are signs of early half-timbered parts, but it seems in most cases that although the roof timbers and main posts might survive from an early period the actual walling and roofing materials were replaced several times. Tile was the most common roofing material in Chailey, with some slate. Ventilation slits could only be built into solid walls, so whereas they were used in all the Falmer barns, they are only found in 27% of the East Chiltington barns and in 6% of the Chailey barns. Instead some of the Chailey barns had windows or pitching holes (18%), these always being rectangular. The location of the pitching hole of one East Chiltington barn, at Novington Farm (45), is interesting, as the barn has been built with its end into the slope of the down, so that the pitching hole at this end is at ground level.

The prevailing wind in this area comes from the south. This means that if a barn was sited to protect the yard from the wind it would also shade it from the sun. Perhaps this is why there is no consistency in barn orientation in any of the parishes.

Out of the 49 barns only 14 (29%) stood on their own. The rest were attached to another building at one or more ends or sides. In Falmer over half of the barns stood alone, two were attached to shelter sheds, and one to a cowhouse. In East Chiltington attached barns predominated, being attached to cowhouses, shelter sheds and stables in an equal proportion. In Chailey attached barns again predominate. Here cowhouses account for nearly 50% of the attachments, loose boxes for 20% and shelter sheds for 16%. There are a few stable and granaries attached (9% and 5%), and in three cases the barn is placed between a stable and cattle accommodation. Cowhouses and loose-boxes would have been the main consumers of straw from the barn, so it would make sense to build them as close to the stable as possible. That this was not done in Falmer was because there were very few cows, and so little provision for their accommodation — the one cowhouse that there was in this parish did in fact adjoin the barn. This difference is therefore another one which results from the different types of agriculture practised.

Cowhouses

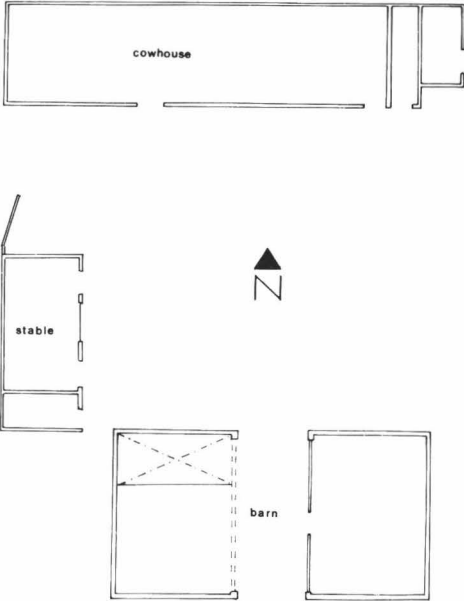
As has been noted already there was only one cowhouse in Falmer. In Chailey and East Chiltington there was on average one cowhouse to each farm, although some farms had more than one, while others had none. This distribution reflects the different emphasis on cattle in the different areas.

The most common type of cowhouse is one in which the cows stood along the length of the building facing the back wall (71% of the cowhouses in Chailey and 73% in East Chiltington were of this type). In all except three of these longitudinal cowhouses, there was no feeding passage and the cows were fed from behind. Apart from this type there were four examples of a cowhouse in which the cows faced the side walls of the building, backing onto a central passage from which they were fed and manure was removed. This type seems to have been a later development, occurring for the first time at Housedean Farm (57) in the early nineteenth century. A third type of cowhouse found only in Chailey is one in which the cowhouse was divided up into boxes. Generally the boxes seem to have been inserted in an earlier building and this type is probably associated with the increasing importance of fattening and breeding in this area in the nineteenth century.

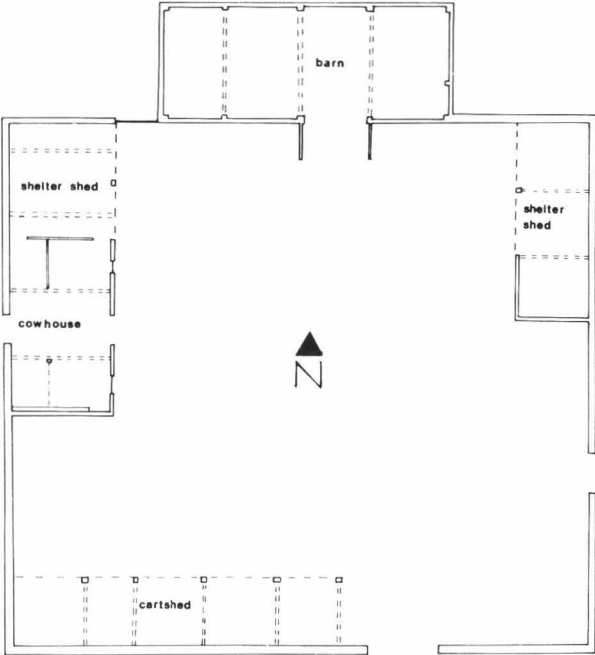
The Falmer cowhouse had a loft partly in the side walls. There are only three other cowhouses with lofts, and these are all in the roof only. Such lofts improved heat insulation at the expense of ventilation, although this, in any case, seemed of little regard: only in two Chailey cowhouses was there even provision as basic as raised alternate ridge tiles. All the cowhouses have been much

Farmyard plans

Woodbrooks Farm, Chailey (38)



Southam, Chailey (27)



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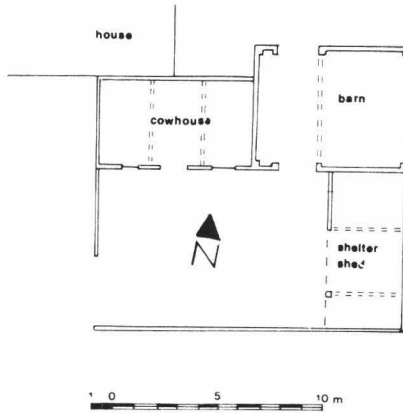
Fig. 3. Farmyard plans.

altered, presumably in response to governmental demands since tuberculin testing was introduced in the 1940s. Evidence of original stall divisions remains only in the cowhouse at Southam (27) (Figs. 3 and 4), where the stalls were about 5 ft long and 6 ft wide. In Chailey, where so many of the barns were of weatherboard, only 10½% of the cowhouses were of this material. A few were of a mixture of board and brick or stone, and there is one of sandstone and brick, but the majority (63%) are of brick. In many cases this seems to have replaced earlier weatherboarded buildings (e.g. at Chailey Garage [5] and Woodbrooks Farm [38]). In East Chiltington a third of the cowhouses are of brick, and only 13% have any weatherboard on the building at all. Although Leonard Mascall in the sixteenth century recommended that cattle stalls be built so that they opened to the south, the cowhouses, like the barns, follow no particular orientation, and those that are to be seen today seem to be more representative of those which Young saw in the early nineteenth century and described as being 'ill-contrived' and exposed to the elements.²³ The earliest cowhouse is one at Newstead Farm (43) which seems to have been built originally in the seventeenth century. A few others seem to be eighteenth century, but the majority date from the nineteenth century. It may be that few were built before then, for the seventeenth and eighteenth century wills and deeds mention barns and stables, but no cowhouses (or 'hovels' as they are known locally), although they may have been classed as some of the 'appurtenances' which are mentioned. Alternatively, it may be that the nineteenth-century cowhouses are replacements of earlier cowhouses. In Chailey and East Chiltington the cowhouses are found on farms irrespective of size, and they appear at farms of under 100 acres as often as on those of over 100 acres.

Stables

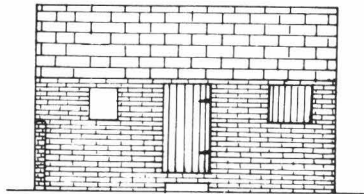
Like the cowhouses, stables are found at farms irrespective of size, so long as they were more than about 50 acres or so. The one exception to this is at Chailey Garage, which was a coaching inn and had two coaching houses and a stable, with only six acres of land attached to it in 1842. Half of the farms in Falmer had a stable, and these would have been needed to house not only the riding and carriage horses, but also the draught horses, which were beginning to be used alongside the draught oxen from the early eighteenth century on (as shown by the probate inventories). In East Chiltington 66% of the farms had stables and in Chailey over 75%. That the number of stables, unlike cowhouses, is fairly well spread throughout all the parishes is probably explained by the fact that horses were used for riding and haulage even where draught animals were not needed for arable farming. This would have been the case in East Chiltington. In Falmer all the stables had boxes for the horses, set either side of a passage (the two boxes at Housedean Farm [57]), or with separate entrances (the two boxes at Balmer Farm [54]). In East Chiltington boxes again predominate (60%), in most cases each box being provided with a separate entrance. It has been suggested that from the last quarter of the nineteenth-century looseboxes were preferred to stalls for hackney horses, since they were inactive in the stable for long periods and could benefit from the greater opportunity of exercise in a loosebox rather than a stall.²⁴ However, although this may explain the prevalence of boxes over stalls in the East Chiltington stables, where horses were used more for haulage than in the fields, boxes were still the generally preferred form (used in 73% of the stables). There are two cases of the horses and carriage(s) being kept in the same buildings, there being two coaching houses at Chailey Garage (2), and a carriage section in the early eighteenth-century stable at Chailey Place (6). More of the stables had lofts than cowhouses — thirteen in Chailey, six in East Chiltington, and one in Falmer. Despite the risk of pollution from rising foul air, grain was stored above the stables at Chiltington Chapel Farm (40) and Stantons Farm (49). Although only a small proportion of the stables had ventilation holes or windows which would help overcome the effect of

Middleton Farm, Chailey (22) . Farmyard plan



Middleton Farm, Chailey (22) . Cowhouse

SOUTH ELEVATION



Southam, Chailey (27) . Cowhouse and shelter shed

EAST ELEVATION

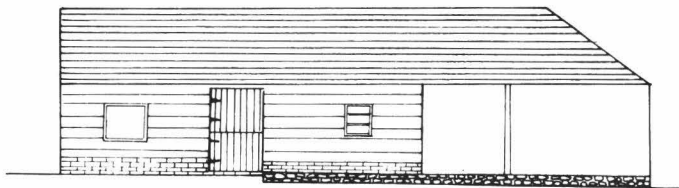


Fig. 4. Farmyard plan and cowhouses.

the loft many of the boxes with separate entries had heck-doors, the upper part of which could be left open to give light and ventilation. Although these are generally of twentieth-century manufacture they may well have been preceded by doors of the same type.

There were stables in this area from at least the seventeenth century, when in 1671 a description of Wootton Farm (52) mentioned the 'stables' which were 'in very good repayre'.²⁵ Two of the stables at Cinder Farm (8) show signs of a seventeenth-century date, one having two seventeenth century-type roof trusses, the other retaining a piece of wattle and daub walling on a sandstone base characteristic of the same century. The stable at Stantons (49) still has two half-timbered walls, infilled with wattle and daub. Stantons was a substantial farm of an early date and has a barn of the late sixteenth century. It seems that the stable was built not much later, although it was altered in the eighteenth century. The rest of the stables in the area were built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that at Homewoodgate Farm (41) being built in the early years of the nineteenth century at the same time as the farmhouse was given an extension.

Like the cowhouses the stables are generally built of solid materials—flint in Falmer; brick in East Chiltington with two of flint, one of weatherboard, and the half-timbered and brick one at Stantons Farm (49); and brick for 66% of the Chailey stables, the rest, apart from two weatherboard ones, being of a brick and stone combination. As with the barns and cowhouses no particular orientation was preferred. Over half of the stables are isolated and where they are attached it is generally to some other livestock building, especially cowhouses; although in four cases they are attached to the barn, which would have shortened the distance over which straw and hay would have had to be carried.

Granaries

The granary was not an essential building to the farm. A survey of seventeenth-century houses in the Rape of Hastings revealed that in over 75% of the sample crops were stored in the house, generally in the garrett.²⁶ This was still the case in Chailey, East Chiltington and Falmer in the eighteenth century. In 1727 Edward Pollington had £2 worth of wheat in his house, and at Woodbrooks in 1736 there was a sheaf of oats in the garrett. A year later, in John Hill's probate inventory, twenty bushells of oats were recorded as being in the garrett, and a further two bushells of wheat in the milkhouse chamber.²⁷ This being the case it is not surprising that there are not many granaries in the area—one in Falmer, four in East Chiltington, and ten in Chailey. The earliest one is at Chiltington Chapel Farm (40) and it dates from the sixteenth century. At nearby Stantons Farm (49) there is a granary over the late sixteenth-century stable, and the two buildings may have been built by the same farmer, since both farms were owned by one family at that time. None of the other granaries seems to be earlier than the mid- to late eighteenth century, with half built in the nineteenth century. They may have been built as grain yields increased and more room was needed for storage than the house could provide. Alternatively, they may represent a changing trend to store grain in a granary rather than in the house; or they may simply be replacements of earlier granaries. They appear, for the most part (80%), on farms of over 100 acres. There are three on farms of less than about 100 acres, two of these being under 50 acres. Most of the largest farms in each parish (twelve out of the eighteen largest) have a granary, so it seems that there is some correlation to size, and no doubt granaries on other large farms have been destroyed.

The granary was invariably raised above ground level to make it harder for vermin to get at the grain, and to give good ventilation. Half of them were raised over cartsheds, and in these examples there are piers in the cartshed to reduce the span of the floor joists and so help strengthen the floor which had to carry a heavy weight. Granaries over cart- or implement sheds were preferred to those

Falmer Court, Falmer (55). The barn

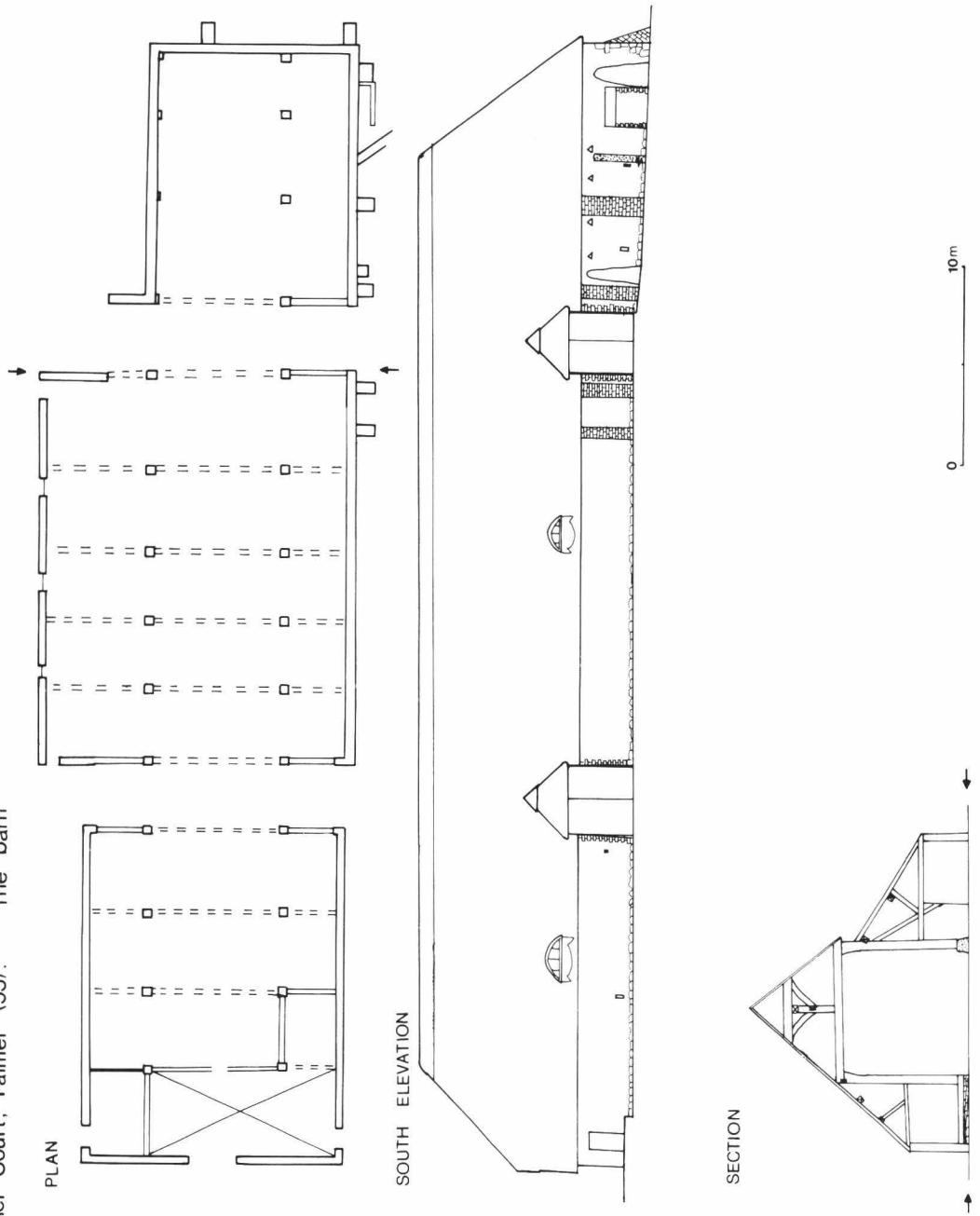


Fig. 5. Falmer Court barn.

over cowhouses or stables, since in the latter the grain would be contaminated by foul air rising from below. Nonetheless, there are two examples of granaries over stables in East Chiltington, and one granary over a loosebox in Chailey. Another granary is raised high over a shelter used for hay. At Wildings Farm (36) the granary is raised only a foot or two above the ground on sandstone staddle-stones. This granary is also unique in being the only granary in the area to be wholly of weatherboard. There are three flint granaries, and the rest are either of brick; a combination of brick and stone or weatherboard; or, in the case of Stantons Farm (49), of half-timber. It is not surprising that solid-walled granaries were preferred, since it was necessary to protect the grain from damp as well as vermin. At Wildings Farm (36), the one case where the walls are not solid, the granary is lined with horizontal boards instead. The floors of the granaries are of close-fitting boards. Only in two do the corn compartments survive, although in three others the trusses, with a broken tiebeam, acted as divisions. Entry was usually through a door in one end (in 79% of the granaries), being at the side in only one case, and from inside the building below the granary in two others. Windows, which would have given light to work by, appear in two-thirds of the granaries. They vary from being unglazed openings or having wooden slats or shutters, to domestic-type glazed windows of either the casement or horizontal-sliding sash variety. Over half the buildings stand on their own, and where they are attached tend to be next to non-livestock buildings, probably for the same reasons as for not being positioned over livestock accommodation. In the two cases where the granary is attached to the barn there is access between the two buildings; indeed at Towing Farm (30) the only way into the granary is from the barn. Such entries would have speeded up the process of moving threshed grain from the barn to its storage place in the granary.

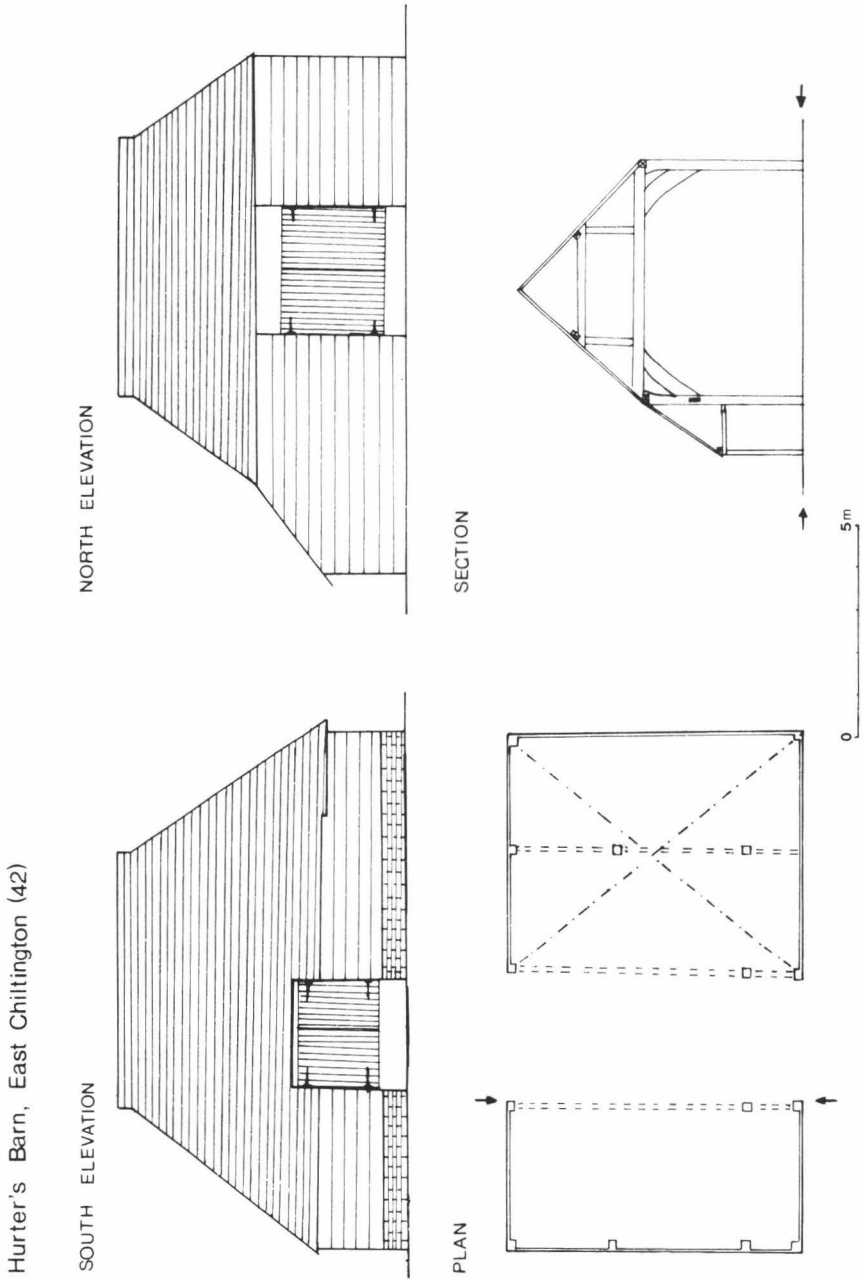
Cartsheds

Like granaries cartsheds are not found on many farms (only on sixteen), and again tend to be found on the larger farms of over about 100 acres (88%), with all the farms on which they are found being over 50 acres. The earliest cartshed is that underneath the sixteenth-century granary at Chiltington Chapel Farm (40), and the rest seem to date from the late eighteenth century, and mostly from the nineteenth century. That there was a need for such shelters earlier in the eighteenth century is shown by the probate inventory of Nathaniel Webb, perhaps of Falmer Court Farm (55), made in 1740, which listed waggons, carts, harrows, ploughs, wheels, rollers, hay cutters, yokes, chains, posts, rails, shovels, ladders and 54 rakes;²⁸ but any sheds of this period must have been replaced. The cartsheds frequently had a side entry (63%) and less commonly an end entry (25%). Generally they seem to have been built out of odds and ends of materials. One was built wholly of flint, one of sandstone, and three of brick, but the rest were of a mixture of brick, stone, flint, slate, weatherboard, vertical board and half-timber. At Old Barns Farm (24) and Southam (27) the cartsheds were made using the yard wall as two sides, so saving on building materials. None of them had lofts; but it is interesting to note that all but two were orientated so as to give protection from the prevailing, rain-bearing, south wind.

Shelter sheds

Somewhat surprisingly the shelter sheds, unlike the cartsheds, were not necessarily built to provide protection from the prevailing wind. Such protection was given by only fifteen out of the 35 shelter sheds (43%).

These buildings were found on farms irrespective of size, although there were more per farm in Falmer than in the other two parishes, and more in Chailey than in East Chiltington. This may be because of a higher survival rate in Falmer, but it is probably also due to the different type of



Hurter's Barn, East Chiltington (42)

Fig. 6. Hurter's barn, East Chiltington.

agriculture practised. Here shelter was needed for sheep rather than cows, and this was provided by the shelter sheds, whereas in Chailey and East Chiltington it was provided mostly by cowhouses. Over one-third of the shelter sheds served areas other than the farmyard, although in only six cases (17% of all the shelter sheds) were they at any distance from the farmstead. One of the most interesting of these is at Warningore Farm (51) where the shelter shed is attached to a field barn and has a chimney in one corner, perhaps enabling feed to be prepared for the animals that would have been in the building.

Of the shelter sheds 40% are isolated, the rest being attached to other farm buildings, most commonly to a barn, or else to a cowhouse. The materials they are built of are flint in Falmer; flint, brick and weatherboard in East Chiltington; and brick and weatherboard and some stone and vertical board in Chailey. The wall posts are frequently based on a brick plinth, which in some cases is a later insertion. Bearing in mind the insubstantial nature of these sheds it is not surprising that 69% of them are no earlier than the second half of the nineteenth century; and only two are earlier than the nineteenth century (one at Bineham Farm [1] and the other at Cinder Farm [8]).

Others

Looseboxes are found on farms irrespective of size, and built of the different materials generally in use in each parish. They date from the nineteenth century, and would have been used to house horses or cattle, and in particular those which were being fattened up for slaughter. They would also have been used to house calves and to isolate sick animals. The majority of the looseboxes in this area (sixteen out of twenty) are in Chailey, reflecting the greater emphasis on fattening and breeding here than in the other two parishes.

The only *oast-houses* to be found in the area are also in Chailey. A survey of Wootton Farm (52) in East Chiltington in 1671 mentions a 'Hop Kiln' and a 'Hop roome', but hop production is mentioned in only one East Chiltington probate inventory compared to several cases in Chailey. It is in the north of this parish, at Wapsbourne Manor (32), that the two oasthouses that have survived are sited. The earlier of these two oast-houses is a two-storied, rectangular, brick building, dating from the seventeenth century. The roof is hipped and originally had gablets at each end, which is an early roof form in this area. The fire for smoking the hops was in the northern half of the building and would originally have been set under an inverted square cone. This cone would have directed hot air upwards to the square, slatted drying-floor above, which still exists.²⁹ The drying-floor was open to the upper room, although separated off by a low wall. The hops would have been laid out on it, and the hot air directed out through the roof by another square cone. Attached to the west side of the early oast-house is another, of the square, eighteenth century type. The drying process was the same, and again the slatted drying-floor has survived. At one time there was a cowl on top of the hipped roof which would have been a later addition.

Pigsties occur slightly more frequently than oast-houses, at three Chailey and two East Chiltington farms. At Markstakes Farm (21) all that is left is the outer wall of a row of pigsties, with three feeding holes. Elsewhere the pigsties occur in ones or twos, and consist of a low, gabled shelter with a small yard.

No evidence survives of dovecotes or fowlhouses, but there was provision for *pigeons*, apparently made in the nineteenth century. At North Barns Farm (44) there are pigeon boxes in the gable of the cowhouse, and there are pigeon boxes attached to the cowhouse at Warningore Farm (51), and in the barns at Wapsbourne Manor (32) and Wildings Farm (36). In the latter the pigeon box is fixed to the roof of the porch over the doorway.

Another nineteenth-century provision is the separate *dairy*. Until this time dairying work

seems to have been carried out satisfactorily in the house, and most of the eighteenth-century probate inventories mentioned a milkhouse in connection with the house. Only two nineteenth-century dairies survive, however, one in Chailey and one in East Chiltington.

There are three other minor buildings of note. One is the small *game larder* at Wildings Farm (36), which is built of brick with a tile roof. The inside walls are lined with tiles and the roof provided with a louvre to keep the building cool. Secondly there is the *kennel* at Frick Farm House (12). It is built of brick with tiny casement windows, and is set inside an iron-railed compound. The third building is at Housedean Cottages, and is a railway *warehouse* which was built at the original Falmer railway station about half a mile away in 1840, and in 1880 was moved to this farm, where it was used for storage.

Materials

As will have been noticed, the materials of which the farm buildings were made varied according to what building materials were available locally. Thus in Falmer there is flint and some weatherboard, and in East Chiltington weatherboard, brick, some flint and half-timbering, and one farm built of the local outcrop of Sussex Marble (North Barns Farm [44]) described by Young as 'an excellent stone for square building'.³⁰ In Chailey there is a similarly diverse variety, including sandstone and vertical boards (although without the flint). It is likely that in many instances half-timbered wall were later replaced with weatherboard, as happened in part of the barn at Wapsbourne Manor (32).

In timber construction the scantling of the timber used gradually became smaller, and curved braces were replaced by straight ones. These changes occurred during the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, although there were always exceptions. For example, ogee shaped braces and struts were used at the late eighteenth-century barn at Townings Farm (30). Another change that was taking place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the type of tiebeam—wall plate—wall post construction. Instead of the wall plate being embedded in the wall post it became a bridge between the wall post and the tiebeam. The eighteenth century also saw the introduction of the practice of sharply jowelling the top of the wall posts. Wind braces went out of use or were replaced by diagonally laid plank braces, and such plank braces also replaced the wall braces. The earliest type of weatherboarding used wide planks (about 12in wide) fixed to a frame, which consisted of large squares (about 2ft 6in to 3ft square). During the latter part of the seventeenth century onwards the boards became narrower (about 7in to 9in), and the frame was made up of posts of smaller scantling. These formed rectangles rather than squares and contained even thinner vertical struts about 12in to 18in apart, onto which the boards were nailed. At Wapsbourne Manor (32) one early weatherboard square has had two struts fixed into it (which appear to have been window mullions) to close it up somewhat before the narrower type of boards were fixed to it.

Brick was not regularly used until the eighteenth century. Before that such bricks as were used were soft. They varied in size, although they were always narrow (about 2½in wide and 9in to 9½in long). The eighteenth-century bricks were more regular in size and colour and harder. A pleasing effect was often obtained by using glazed, grey-blue headers in Flemish bond. During the nineteenth century more decorative effects were created, as at one of the barns at Wildings Farm (36) where the bricks project around the doorways and at the eaves to provide a dentil decoration.

Slate, tiles, pantiles, corrugated iron and corrugated asbestos were all found used as roofing materials. In Falmer slate was used more frequently than were tiles, and there was one thatched roof, that of the barn at Falmer Court Farm (55). Here the rafters have been stained by the tar from

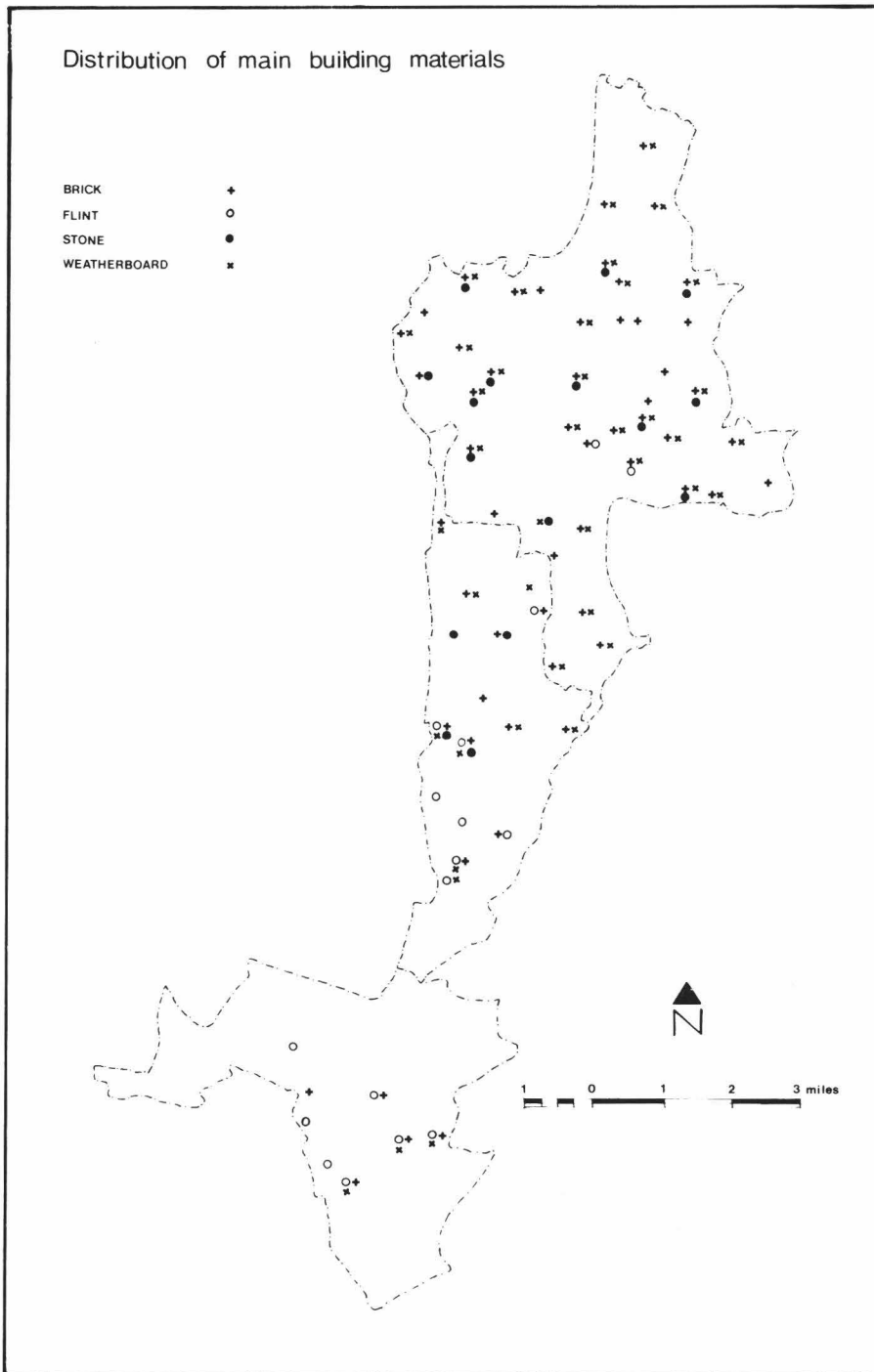


Fig. 7. Distribution of main building materials.

hemp ropes which were used for tying thatch to the rafters from the middle of the nineteenth century. In the early nineteenth century Arthur Young wrote of the South Downs that, 'the winds have been known to strip . . . the covering from all thatched buildings',³¹ so it is not surprising that in most cases thatched roofs have been replaced. The slate which now forms the main roofing material of Falmer would have had to be brought into the area, and probably became popular in the early years of the nineteenth century. In East Chiltington slate is less favoured than tile, and in Chailey tile is by far the most common roofing material. The clays in this area were suitable for brick and tile-making and so tiles would have been used from an early date.

The earliest type of roof construction found in the area is a hipped roof with gablets. Half-hipped, hipped and gabled roofs were used in Falmer, and in East Chiltington and Chailey there were many different combinations of these basic types. The half-hipped roof was the most popular type for barns in Falmer and Chailey, but for barns in East Chiltington and other types of building in all three parishes, gabled roofs predominated.

Several different types of roof truss were used throughout the area, although a few types were more common than others. The crownpost trusses in Falmer Court Farm barn (55) are the earliest trusses and the only ones of their kind in the study area. There are a couple of examples of queen post roofs (at Wapsbourne Manor barn [32] and in one of the coaching houses at Chailey Garage [5]), but the most frequent type of roof construction was that which used queen struts and through purlins. This type seems to have been used particularly in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century other types became predominant, in particular common rafter roofs with a collar and tiebeams every six, seven or eight pairs of rafters, using a plank ridge piece. Iron king pins, bolted to the underside of a tiebeam, were used in several buildings, and in others a king post, again bolted to the tiebeam, and from which struts ran to principal rafters. It seems that many earlier buildings were re-roofed during this century, and plank ridges were added to roofs which before had had no ridge piece. Unlike the roofing or walling materials these types of roof truss were used in equal proportion in all three parishes.

CONCLUSION

The study of farm buildings in Chailey, East Chiltington and Falmer has produced some interesting results. Firstly there is the difference in the building materials, which were dictated by the local supplies of flint, stone, timber and clay. The comparative uniformity of the buildings in Falmer and the use of non-local materials is probably due to the fact that they were built by one estate owner, for whom costs were less of a dominant factor than they were for the small-holders of the Weald, and who would have been more aware than they of national fashions.

The pattern of land-holding and size of farming units varied between the parishes, and was linked to the geological differences which dictated the most effective types of agriculture. The latter in turn, affected building requirements, and so different types of buildings are related to the different farming areas—cowhouses in Chailey and East Chiltington, looseboxes in Chailey, and shelter sheds and large barns in Falmer.

As in so much of Sussex there is a significant variety of geology and soils in the three parishes studied, and this has resulted in different types of agriculture and available building materials, and hence given rise to the diversity in building types and styles which are found within this small area.

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