

UCKFIELD OLD BRIDGE.

Sussex Archaeological Collections.

UCKFIELD, PAST AND PRESENT.

BY THE REV. EDWARD TURNER, M.A.

READ AT THE MEETING HELD AT UCKFIELD, MAY 12TH, 1859.

IN fulfilling the task assigned to me, of bringing under your notice the antiquities of Uckfield, I shall have no need to occupy any great space, for the objects of archæological interest are few; in truth, this place has become singularly modern; almost everything of antiquarian value about it, having of late years fast disappeared. In the absence of a baronial castle or a ruined monastery, a Roman station or an Elizabethan mansion, we have, generally, in the places selected for our meetings, a church of more or less archæological interest to fall back upon; but this is not the case here. The church of Uckfield is a structure of some fifteen or twenty years existence only; and, for a modern built church, by no means a very happy specimen of ecclesiastical architecture and arrangement. In the year 1779, Madame d'Arbly was equally at a loss to discover anything worthy of note in Uckfield; for, stopping here an hour or two with her intimate friend Mrs. Thrale, in a journey from Tunbridge Wells to Brighton, to refresh themselves and their horses, while dinner was preparing, she strolled out, she tells us in her Diary, to take a survey, but with no very profitable results; "for the place," she says, "afforded me nothing worthy of record, except two lines of a very curious epitaph, which I picked up in the churchyard:—

'A wife and eight little children had I;
And two at a birth, who never did cry.'

Had not "the author of *Evelina*" deemed these pathetic, but not very poetical lines, deserving of being handed down to posterity, even this substantial proof of the fecundity of the

situation, would have been lost to us, for they will now be looked for in vain.

Many may, no doubt, recollect a rather interesting old bridge, of three arches, spanning the little tributary stream which runs to the south of Uckfield. This too, like the family memento just alluded to, has disappeared. The views and principles of my excellent Uckfield neighbours are, unfortunately for us archæologists, become so thoroughly utilitarian, that they seem to have no notion of regarding anything for its antiquity; and the poor old bridge has this year fallen a sacrifice to the requirements of a new railway; and had not our Society, in accordance with its rules, determined to perpetuate it in the accompanying engraving, from a photograph by C. L. Prince, Esq., the time would shortly have come when it would have lived only in the recollection of the few who are old enough to remember a melancholy circumstance connected with its history, which took place towards the close of the last, or at the commencement of the present century, (for I have been unable to identify the exact time,) and the result of which was some loss of life. For reasons which will presently appear, I am led to fix upon 1797 as the year in which it happened. In the spring then of that year, a very sudden and heavy fall of rain took place, which inundated all the low lands of this neighbourhood. On the north-east side of Buxted Park the water accumulated to a very considerable depth, in consequence of a portion of the park fence, which the current had torn down and carried along with it, becoming fixed at last in the narrow channel on the Uckfield side, so as to prevent for a time its passage farther; but overpowered, as it would naturally be by the weight of the fast increasing waters, this barrier gave way, and the whole collected mass rushed forward with such uncontrollable impetuosity, as to carry all before it. Arriving in its course at the old bridge, the arches were much too small to allow of its free passage as it came down, and the consequence was, that the parapets were carried away, and with them some persons who, hearing the noise occasioned by its approach, had taken their stand upon it, to see the result, and they were drowned. The wooden palisades, which you see in the engraving, were probably put up at that time.

My reason for fixing 1797 as the date of this melancholy event is, because the late Rev. Sir Henry Poole, Bart., of the Hooke, Chailey, has left upon record, in an old book of accounts, a similar fall of rain, which happened in the spring of that year; it is as follows:—

“May 16th, 1797. On Sunday, the 7th of this month, I was engaged to officiate, at three o'clock in the afternoon, at St. Michael's in Lewes, for Mr. West; I had entered my carriage at half-past one to go there, not conceiving it possible I could be prevented, but a storm of thunder and lightning and hail came on, with great violence, as we were coming from Chailey Church, after morning service. I thought it too violent to continue any time, and had no doubt of going to Lewes, but it kept increasing, and the rain came in such torrents, that before half an hour the flood was immense. The sheep stood belly-deep in the green before the house, and the orchard, and the lawn, and the lower island pond were one sheet of water; and the rain so continued till past three o'clock, when the deluge was beyond description, and the water on the lawn was twelve feet deep, as I myself measured it, from where it had stood at against the old road that intersects it. Had I attempted to have gone to Lewes, the flood at Bevan's Bridge would have run in at the chariot windows; indeed it would have been useless to have attempted to pass, for at seven in the evening a man and horse were swimming there. But the very extraordinary part is, that there was no rain at Lewes; and there the congregation was all assembled, and waiting for me with great impatience. The hail was large, and broke some panes of glass, but did no other material mischief; in truth it was such a flood as never was known before, and as never covered anything like the ground, or fell in so short a time, at most three hours. I never saw anything like it, except some years ago, in London, when the people waded knee-deep in Piccadilly, and when so much of Tower Hill was torn up, that they talked of an earthquake; and there was neither then nor now any wind.”

In coming up the hill from the railway station into Uckfield, you perhaps observed, in a niche, high up in the front of a house occupied by Fisher, the saddler, the capital of a pillar, which, from its position, and the pains which have been taken

to display it, would naturally lead you to imagine that it was a genuine antique, and deserving of the Society's notice. Would that it were so; for I should then have had something more to expatiate upon, than unfortunately I have now. But, alas! it becomes my painful duty to tell you, that it is a sham only. It is but a trap set to catch unfledged and unwary archæologists, like Mr. Pickwick and the members of his club. It was manufactured and set up by some Uckfield Bill Stumps, some ingenious mechanic of the place, solely, I fear, *ad captandum*. It bears as its date the figures 1066, pretending thereby to be coeval with the Norman Conquest. How the Uckfieldians—who have really *little if any* sham in their composition—can tolerate the existence of such an unreality, such a deception, at the entrance of their town, I cannot imagine. I would recommend the Committee just formed under the new Local Government Act, to consider seriously whether it is not their incumbent duty to remove it, under the powers vested in them, as a nuisance. For that surely cannot be considered in any other light than a nuisance, which has a tendency to delude the members of an Archæological Society, like ours—the object of whose association is to examine, and, as far as they can, to preserve, the antiquities of the county—to enlighten the public on the history of those that have heretofore been but little known, and, as to-day, occasionally to spend a few hours in visiting some of those that are of more than ordinary interest, and in social and friendly intercourse with each other. Archæologists, however, are but fallible creatures, and in the prosecution of their laudable designs, very liable to be deceived. A careful examination of any counterfeit object which is brought under their notice, will, as in the case of this fictitious capital, generally lead to the detection of the fraud.

As then Uckfield, though unquestionably an ancient place, has but little left, in its buildings, to merit the notice of the archæologist (it having become an exception to the general rule, that there is nothing new under the sun, for in it almost everything is new); I must request your indulgence for a few minutes longer, while I go back into its remote history, and tell you all that I have been able to discover, from the records of antiquity bearing upon it—and little enough it is—previous to its becoming, as you now see it, a modern town.

That Uckfield is a place of decided antiquity there can be no doubt, though its church is not included in Hussey's list of those mentioned in the Norman Survey. In the hundred of Framelle, however, in which it is locally situated, the manor of Framelle is directly noticed in *Domesday*; it was then held by Lewin, of the Earl of Moreton. The manor of Framfield still includes a great portion of Uckfield; and Buxted is a *sub infeudation*. Framelle, Gorde, Horstede, and Beckingestone, are the four places specified in Framelle hundred; and though two mills are mentioned, no church is noticed. The whole hundred had been worth 100*s.* in the time of Edward; afterwards it had fallen to 50*s.*; but, in the Conqueror's time, it had risen again to 60*s.*¹ Uckfield is alluded to early in the thirteenth century, when it appears to have been a Vill or outlying portion of the parish of Buxted. How and when it obtained a separate and independent parochial existence from Buxted, I have been unable to discover; but as far back as our knowledge of it extends, "Buxted cum Uckfield" is the usual designation of the two. It is so described in Pope Nicholas's *Valuation*, taken in 1291, which is the earliest historical notice we have of Uckfield, though there was a church here probably nearly a century before this time. The *Lambeth Register* also mentions Uckfield Church in 1299.

With regard to the derivation of its name, I have once or twice met with it in old documents written Okenfield; and the Rev. Henry Hoare, in his "Notes on Buxted," printed in the *Sussex Collections*, Vol. IX., speaks of it as so spelled in the early *Lambeth Register*, to which I have just alluded. It is there called, he says, "Buckstede, cum capellâ de Okyngfeld." Now if this be the early legitimate mode of spelling the name—but unfortunately the way in which the names of places and persons, and even of things, were spelled in ancient times, was quite a chance medley; they are seldom found written twice in the same way—it would seem to imply that its designation was derived from its being situated in a district favourable to the growth of oaks. But here a geological

¹ There are twenty-two yard lands in the manor, composed of bond-land; and there is also assert-land. The widow has the bond-land during widowhood, if she

have no jointure; and the assert-land during widowhood, and one-third for dowry. *Watkins on Copyholds*, ii. p. 493.

difficulty arises; for Mantell tells us that Uckfield stands upon what is called the iron-sand formation; whereas all the finest oaks are found in the clay district. Within that district then only ought we to find places taking their names from this circumstance; and there we do find them, Okenfield, Oken-dean, Okenhurst, and other compounds of a like nature, frequently occurring in the Wealden, or Oaktree-clay formation; which, as most of you know, occupies a considerable portion of the northern part of the county. The derivation of the name Uckfield must then, as far as any light I can throw upon it is concerned, continue in the obscurity in which it has heretofore been involved.

But although the church of Uckfield is not named in the *Domesday Survey*, I am led to consider, from the way in which it is alluded to about a century and a half later, that Uckfield has, from a very early period, been a place of considerable importance; from local circumstances, more so perhaps than Buxted, to which it was a Vill only. Of its importance upwards of six centuries ago there can be no doubt, Edward I. having, during a progress which he made through the county in the year 1299, adopted it as his resting place for one night. What house the King was lodged in it would be impossible now to say; but this we have upon record, that the person who had the honour of entertaining him upon this occasion was named Arnald. Whether he was ancestor of Arnald, the present chimney-sweeper, of Uckfield, I am not prepared to say; and possibly, had I appealed to him for information in the matter, he would not have been able to have enlightened me much; for I suspect his coat of arms is not registered in the Heralds' Office, nor can he produce any well authenticated pedigree of his descent. But this, I think, may be taken for granted, that the humble cottage in which he lives cannot be the house in which the King took up his temporary abode. But whoever might have been his host, the King seems to have been most liberally and hospitably entertained. He was on his way from Canterbury to Chichester, and having entered the county at Lamberhurst, and passed the night there, on Sunday, June 21st, he came on to Mayfield on Monday, the 22nd; and to Uckfield on Tuesday, the 23rd; proceeding onwards to Lewes the next day. The King's visit seems

to have been good for the trade of the towns at which he sojourned, if we may judge from what took place at Uckfield, and particularly for the brewers, as appears by the following entry in the account book of his expenditure while here, which is still extant :¹—"To the clerk of the pantry, for 82 gallons of beer, bought for his office, from Arnald de Uckfield, at Uckfield, the 23rd day of June, 10s."

It must be borne in mind that the King's progress was necessarily performed on horseback, and that he was accompanied by a large mounted retinue; the badness of the roads, or, as the early historians are wont to express themselves, "the foul ways of the Sussex people," for centuries afterwards, not admitting of carriage travelling; and to this cause we must attribute the shortness of the stages he and his attendants were accustomed to accomplish in a day. The accounts then continue:—"To the clerk of the kitchen, advanced on his office of the chamber, by the hands of Arnald, of Uckfield, the host of the King there, the same day, 12*d.*; to the same, advanced on his office, for poultry, by the hands of John Atte Barre, the same place and day, 20*s.*" This sum would, at that time, purchase from sixty to one hundred chickens.

To the next entry I would bespeak your particular attention, for it is rather a curious one, and would lead us, with all due respect for the King's person and office, to imagine that he was fond of a practical joke, or, that he and his attendants, when out on these progresses, were rather mischievously inclined, and we have classic authority for the axiom, that

"Quicquid delirant Reges, plectuntur Achivi."

The King, you will observe, was just fifty at this time; but note the item of account:—"To Arnald de Uckfield, host of the King, for damage in his houses and curtelage, by the arrival of the King at the same place, by gift of the same King";—now mark, I beseech you, the reason why,—"in compensation to him for damage done by his Majesty's own hands, at the same place and day, 20*s.*" Here the accounts, as far as Uckfield is concerned, end; and I will only remark farther, that this Arnald must have been a person occupying a large house in Uckfield, and possessing considerable means.

¹ See *Sussex Archæological Collections*, Vol. II. p. 145.

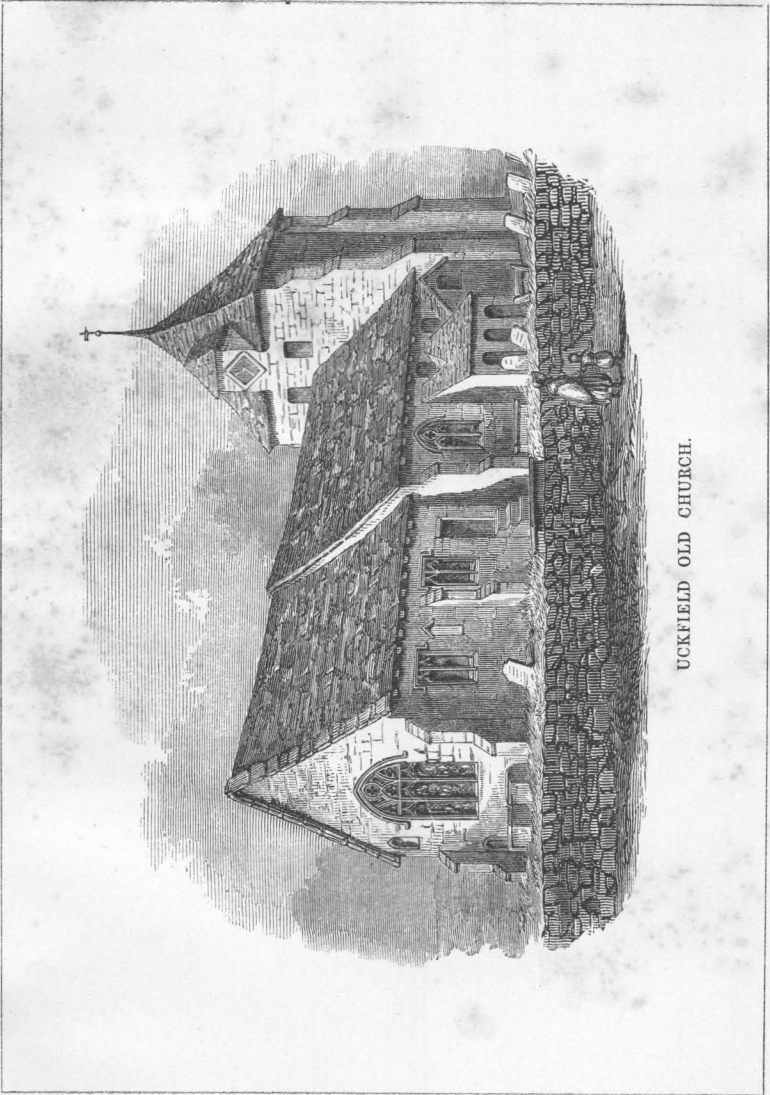
In 1305, the same King probably again passed through Uckfield, though it is not stated that he did so; for in a progress made during this year, through Surrey and Sussex, in his road to Canterbury, he was at Lewes on Saturday, June 26th; and on Sunday, June 27th, he is stated to have passed through Horsted on his road to Buxted, where he again rested for the night; and from thence he went on to Mayfield, on Monday, the 28th: Uckfield then would lie in his route.

I should fail in my duty, if, in bringing under your notice the past and present antiquities of Uckfield, as far as they are known to me, I did not make some allusion, though it can be but brief, to the old Church, a drawing of which, through the kindness of Mr. Cloake, I have had engraved. The church was taken down and the present one erected in 1839-40. This church is stated in the registers of the archbishops of Canterbury, the patrons of Buxted and Uckfield, to have been dedicated to the Holy Cross.¹ Its exact date is not known, but I have already alluded to its existence in 1299. Previous to the fourteenth century it is called "a chapel;" from which we may infer that it was, up to that period, a chapel of ease to Buxted; but since then it has usually been designated "a church." There was, in its architectural features, nothing very striking or remarkable. It was, as you see, from the engraving which is here given, a heavy, clumsy-looking building, much too low for its length, which consisted of a western tower, with a low shingled roof, nave, and chancel; a portion of which, with its rather peculiar, but not uninteresting, east window, and the tower—on which has been placed a well-proportioned shingled spire—is all that now remains. I should imagine its style to be Early-pointed, but an inelegant specimen of the kind. Previous to its being taken down, it had long been inadequate to the requirements of the parish, even with the aid of galleries, with which it was much encumbered. I may here mention that the connection between Uckfield and Buxted was severed, and Uckfield made a separate piece of preferment, by an Order in Council, in 1846.

The ancient Register Books of the parish consist of five con-

¹ For List of Incumbents till 1786, see *Suss. Arch. Coll.* Vol. IX; since then, 1786, Matthias D'Oyley; 1816, George

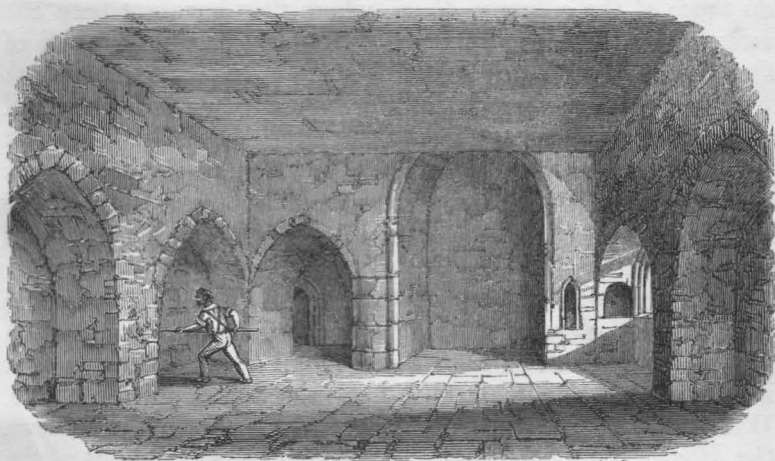
D'Oyley; 1820, Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.; 1846, Henry Kingsmill, Buxted, John Streatfeild, Uckfield.



UCKFIELD OLD CHURCH.

secutive volumes, the oldest of which commences in 1538, when Cromwell's injunction first issued; they contain no entries worthy of special notice.

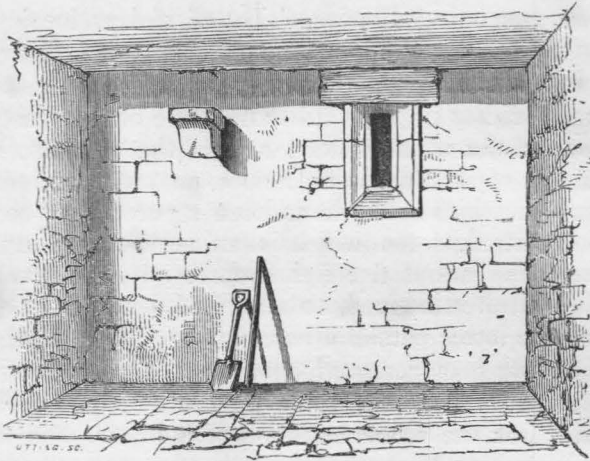
Almost the only extensive object of real archæological interest in Uckfield, is a stone room opposite to the King's Head inn, and the walls of which are of sufficient thickness to admit of arched recesses in their substance, two on the eastern and the same on the western side; and at the northern end are the remains of its double entrances, an outer and an inner one, each of which must have been secured by two sets of folding doors; between which is an arched opening into a small dark cell, about five feet square. The side walls have been considerably lowered, to admit of a house being built thereon; the lower part of a narrow lancet window, the upper portion having been removed, remains on the south side, and near to it a stone corbell, which no doubt helped to support the roof. For the accommodation of a baker, who uses the room as his bakehouse, one of the arches has, of late years, been filled up, and converted into an oven. A brick partition wall



North End—Uckfield Cell.

has also been erected across it, dividing the room into two: the whole indeed is much obstructed and disfigured by his working shelves and tables. Occupying the substance of the

wall, on the west side of the ancient entrance, are two deep recesses, resembling aumbreys, which were once secured by



South End.

doors, the grooves and hinge hooks of which still remain, as do those of the entrance doors, where they have not been cut away to increase the accommodation; the arches are all of them more or less pointed. This room is now for the most part below the surface of the outward soil; but, to understand its original position, and how the entrance could have been at the north end, you must bear in mind that anciently this was not the case. It has been occasioned by the raising of the roads, which run on two sides of it, within the memory of persons now living.

With regard to its history, we are much in the dark, having no written or reliable traditionary evidence bearing upon this material point. I have never found even an allusion to it in any ancient document that has passed through my hands. With regard to conjecture, Horsfield,¹ following, I believe, the *Magna Britannia*, connects it with the persecutions of the days of Queen Mary. "This place," he remarks, "is said to have been appropriated by Dr. Christopherson, Rector of Buxted with Uckfield, and subsequently Dean of Norwich and Bishop of Chichester, as his private prison, for the incarceration of

¹ *Environs of Lewes, parish of Uckfield.*

such persons as were unwilling to change their faith at the bidding of the monarch." And another historian goes even farther than this, and tells us, that Dr. Christopherson resided in a house over it. "How far," Horsfield continues, "this," alluding to his statement, "may be correct, I know not." That it is incorrect in some of its main particulars, I will take upon myself to say; for Dr. Christopherson, in the first place, was never rector of Buxted with Uckfield: during the time he presided over the diocese of Chichester, and was confessor to Queen Mary, he used to be much at Buxted, with his friend Dr. Alban Langdale, the then rector, with whom he appears to have been very intimate, and to have taken an active part in forwarding Protestant persecutions, together with what Fox, in his *Martyrology*, contemptuously calls "another fat-headed priest," doubtless of the neighbourhood, "whose name I know not;" and it was at the instigation of this Dr. Langdale, that Woodman, an ironfounder, of Warbleton, and who may be called the principal Sussex martyr, was tried and executed; the Bishop himself taking a prominent part in his examination and condemnation;¹ but I have searched in vain for any record of his imprisonment at Uckfield, or indeed of any other of the persecuted residents of this part of the county. Woodman was tried in London, and incarcerated during the time, in the Marshalsea, and when condemned to be burned, was sent direct to Lewes, for his sentence to be carried into effect; previous to which he is supposed to have been kept in safe custody in the crypt under the Star Inn, in front of which he suffered his punishment. Horsfield's conjecture then appears to me to be wholly without foundation. That this room was once used as a prison, "the massive rings and arched dungeons," of which Horsfield speaks, would seem to imply; for though the rings are now removed, their existence some years back is unquestionable; still the details of the architecture of the room are, in my opinion, of too ecclesiastical a character to induce me to think that it was originally built for a prison; a point on which I am at issue with the grandfather of the celebrated Dr. Edward Daniel Clarke, who, while rector of Buxted, made the antiquities of this neighbourhood his par-

¹ For an account of these trials, see a little book published by an active member

of our Society, Mr. M. A. Lower, entitled *Sussex Martyrs*.

ticular study, and who has curiously enough left his opinion of it on record, by a memorandum made in an old Tithe-book, now among the papers and deeds belonging to the trustees of Dr. Anthony Saunder's charities, of which he was one; which is, that it belongs to the feudal times, and is the remains of an ancient manor prison. While on this subject, I cannot resist quoting the observations of the quaint and amusing old historian Fuller—though, from their frequent use, they may perhaps be as familiar to you as household words—who, in alluding to Dr. Christopherson's being actively engaged in the Marian persecutions of this county, and their consequences, says, "such was his havoc in burning poor Protestants in one year (of males and females twelve were burned in the same fire with Woodman), "that had he sat long in that see" (the see of Chichester), "and continued after that rate, there needed no iron mills to rarifie the woods of this county" (he is speaking of Sussex). "The Papists," he says, "admire him as a great divine, which I will not oppose, but only say of him, as the man said of his surley mistress—

'She hath too much divinitie for me—
Oh! that she had some more humanity.'

From the old prison, if a prison it be, I proceed to mention the old library of the free school, which consists of about six hundred volumes of books, principally the works of the old divines, and early editions of the classics, with a few in black letter; among these there is nothing very rare or remarkable; still, as an ancient school library, it is worthy of a passing notice.

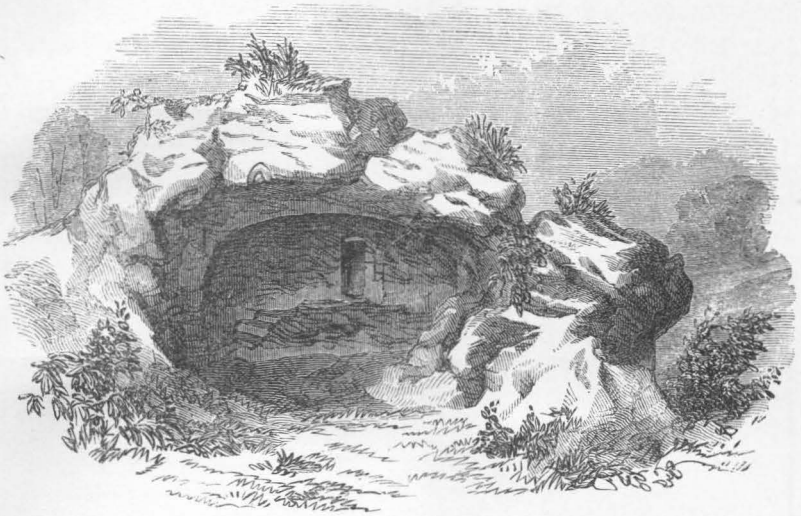
This school was founded by Dr. Anthony Saunders—who was rector of Buxted, vicar of Acton in Middlesex, treasurer of St. Paul's, and one of the chaplains of Archbishop Sheldon—about the year 1690. By his will, dated October 31, 1718, he provided for the gratuitous education of twelve boys, six of Buxted and six of Uckfield; and bequeathed his library to it, for the use of the schoolmaster and scholars for the time being. For the support of the school he gave land in Uckfield, together with the payment of ten pounds, charged on the Rock's Farm, in Buxted; the remaining proceeds of which he directs the trustees to apply in apprenticing poor boys of Buxted. By the great increase in the value of property, and by the profits

arising from timber felled and sold, these remaining proceeds became more than sufficient to fulfil the intentions of the founder; and there arose a large accumulated fund, invested in government securities, of which, for some years, they could make no use, but the interest of which, through the instrumentality of the Charity Commissioners, they have lately obtained the power to apply towards the extension of free education, and they are now instructing twelve boys, the sons of small tradesmen and farmers from each parish, instead of six, as originally designed. There is a very good house attached to the charity, standing in Church Street, Uckfield, of which the master has the use, and where the school is carried on. He is also permitted to take a limited number of boarders upon his own account. To the present master of this school I am indebted for the drawings from which some of the principal illustrations of this paper are taken.

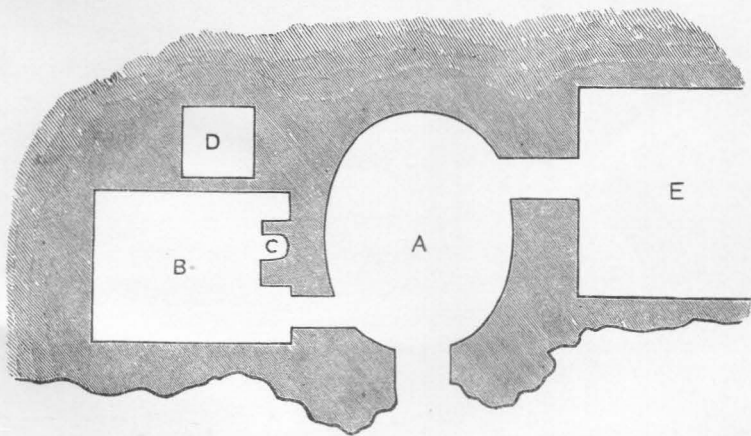
It is on Dr. Saunders's charity farm at Buxted that the old habitation, hewn out of the solid rock, is situated, which can be included among the objects of archæological interest, deserving and lying within the compass of a visit of inspection. There are two drawings of this habitation among Gough's *Topographical Collections*, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which were taken May 28th, 1785. They are in pencil, and are severally marked: the first, "Rocks in Buxted, in Sussex, called 'the Vineyard,' there being formerly a plantation of vines here, which throve well, being sheltered from the winds, and open to the meridian sun. N.B. The Rock which makes the foreground is hollowed out for a habitation;" the second, "Outside of the Rock habitation of the Vineyard Rocks near Buxted, in Sussex; it is decidedly of great antiquity." Traces of its having been a vineyard still remain.

With regard to this habitation and its arrangements, it appears to have consisted of three principal rooms, marked A. B. and E., on the ground plan, two only of which now remain in a perfect state, A. and B.; a portion of the third, E., having been cut away, to admit of an oasthouse being built upon a portion of it: these rooms are connected with each other by means of passages. That they were originally a habitation, as Gough calls them, of some kind, there can be no doubt; the easternmost of the three, B., which was evi-

dently the principal living room, having a raised projecting platform of about three feet square, C., left on the entrance side, which has evidently been used as a fireplace, and over which is a round hole cut through the solid rock, which forms the roof, for the smoke to pass away. Out of this is a small recess, D., cut farther into the rock, of about five or six feet square. How this room was approached it would be difficult now to say; and we are equally in the dark as to the use for which it was designed. The most plausible conjecture is, that it was intended for a cubiculum; in which case the occupant would have had to climb up between two and three feet to obtain admission into it, and then to drop down again about the same distance to reach the floor; for, though at the south-east corner of room, B., there are a few rude steps, which appear to have led to a narrow platform communicating with this small room, still the doorway is the distance, which I have just mentioned, above this platform, and the floor nearly or quite upon a level with it. This room appears to have been lighted by a round hole made through the partition wall between it and room B., to the right of the doorway, and close under the roof: this hole still remains. The doorway being considerably broken away at the bottom, seems to favour my hypothesis of the only access to it being by means of climbing: this doorway is tolerably well proportioned. The only outward entrance into this habitation is into the middle room, A., by a pointed-arch doorway, formed between two projecting points of the rock, the proportions of which have been much spoiled by their having been enlarged to admit of the rooms being used by the tenant of the farm, as a receptacle for his lesser agricultural implements not in daily employ, with which they are generally pretty well filled. The eastern room, B., is now open on the north side; but that it was originally wholly closed in, may be plainly seen by portions of the rock remaining at each end of the opening, the greater part having been cut away to facilitate the access into it, and to make it more generally useful; about the middle too of the open space, the top of a narrow lancet window is still visible: the ground floor of this room has been lowered about two feet below its original level; its dimensions are eighteen feet wide by twenty-four feet long; and the other two rooms are about the same



HERMITAGE ROCKS, BUXTED.



GROUND PLAN.

size. If there be any material difference, it is in the middle room, which is two feet narrower, but three feet longer; its shape too is oval, while the others are angular: the thickness of solid rock between rooms A and B is about five feet, and between A and E about ten feet; the roof of B is about twelve feet, and of A about nine feet from the floor.

The formation of this dwelling-place must have been a work of great labour and difficulty; and various have been the conjectures advanced as to the class of person for whose occupation it was intended. Tradition connects it with the illegal transactions of former days. Some have imagined it to have been a hiding-place for smugglers; others a covert for banditti and forest marauders; and many a tale is told of scenes of rapine and bloodshed, which are supposed to have been enacted here. Caves of this kind usually inspire a feeling of awe and dread on the uncultivated and superstitious minds of those who live in their immediate locality. But these excavations are far too ancient to be connected with contraband doings. They have every appearance of having been in existence for some centuries. Their antiquity seems to me to be unquestionable. The habitation is sometimes spoken of as a hermitage; and as such I am disposed to consider it. The life of a hermit is supposed to have had its origin in a desire to practise the austerities to which John the Baptist devoted himself during his residence in the wilderness of Judea; and this spot would be well adapted to the doing so. The huge mass of rock out of which this hermitage is hewn, stands by itself at the upper end of a field facing the north; and its situation is so elevated, as to command a view of the whole range of rocks, by which the field is bounded on the west side. A more secluded spot, or one approaching nearer in resemblance to the scene of the Baptist's ministrations, at the time this residence was formed, cannot well be conceived. I know of nothing in the county at all resembling these Buxted caverns, except a cave in what is called the Minnis Rock at Hastings, which consists of one room only, of much smaller dimensions than either of the three Buxted caves, and the area of which embraces a few yards only. Like the eastern of the Buxted caves, it has a fire-place left in the solid rock to the right as you enter, over

which is an aperture the thickness of the rock above, for the smoke to pass away. Within the memory of persons now living, there is said to have been (Moss, the historian of Hastings, tells us) a cross about the centre of this cave, cut out in the rock opposite to the entrance; by the side of which was a niche, designed doubtless for the reception of the image of some saint. These would seem to indicate, that in ancient times this cave also was the abode of some devout hermit. If I am right then in my supposition, these rock habitations are the only specimens of hermitages to be found in the county. The Buxted caverns are interesting to the botanist as well as the archæologist, from the variety of lichens and ferns with which their damp and creviced walls and roofs are partially covered. Of this anachoretic branch of monastic life I propose to treat more at large in a separate paper.

One other archæological object in Uckfield, will engage our attention. In a row of back cottages, as you descend the hill to the railway station, is a rather interesting mediæval mantel-piece, probably of the date of Elizabeth. It consists of three circular-headed small oak panels, fixed in fluted frames, each of which has painted on it a scripture subject. On the first is the adoration of the shepherds; on the second is what appears to be souls weighed in the balance on the day of doom, a common subject for mural paintings in our churches, where such paintings have been discovered; but this is not so clearly to be made out here, the whole of the paintings being much damaged, and this, which is the middle one, being in addition very much discoloured by smoke; and on the third is a representation of the crucifixion. Though manifestly not the work of a first-rate artist, it is an interesting remnant of ancient Uckfield. The whole room was, no doubt originally panelled, one side of this panelling, and that bedaubed with whitewash, under a thick coat of which it is scarcely perceptible, now remains.

On the history of the antiquities of the immediate neighbourhood of Uckfield I shall not enter, for an account of *most* if not *all* of them may be found in one or other of our eleven archæological volumes. Two will be brought under your notice during the excursion which we propose presently to make, viz., 1st, Maresfield church, with its interesting old

wooden porch. This church is a simple structure, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, and consists of a well-proportioned embattled tower, the best perhaps in this part of the county, and a nave, and chancel of the date of Edward III, the chancel walls showing externally portions of a much older building, both of which are much disfigured by galleries. A collection of antiquities has been prepared for the occasion at the parsonage, consisting of nearly a hundred Roman and Saxon coins, both in silver, middle brass, and copper; nearly a complete series of English coins from the Conquest to the present time; fragments of Roman pottery, both coarse and Samian, from the cinder beds at Oldland; ancient MSS. and deeds, swords, medals, specimens of oak carving; and the font of the old Nutley church, which was dug up in a field adjoining the site; &c., &c. 2nd, The church and parsonage of Buxted, and by the kind permission of Col. and Lady Catherine Harcourt, the tastily laid out grounds and gardens of Buxted Park. Of the church, views of different parts, and a very full account, will be found in our *Collections*, Vol. IX., p. 208. The parsonage was built by Dr. Anthony Saunders in 1694, and is a fine instance of the old moated clerical residence of former days. Having been much modernised by former rectors, it has been judiciously restored to something like its pristine architectural form and character by the present incumbent. In effecting this restoration, cannon-balls were found in some part of the foundation. The moat has been for many years laid dry. Among the attractions at this house is a large and most interesting collection of stuffed birds, principally British, collected and arranged by the present rector.

The following brief notices of some of the families whose ancestors lived in, or were otherwise connected with Uckfield, will not, I trust, inappropriately conclude my paper; in the selection of which I shall confine myself principally to the information to be obtained from the obituary memorials and inscriptions to be found in the church. The oldest monumental record now remaining, is a black marble slab, which was removed from its proper place when the old church was taken down, and is now lying for convenience sake, north and south, just within the communion rails. It is inlaid with brass. At the top of it is a shield with the coat-of-arms of

the deceased, having his name, John Fuller, on the scroll under it. Beneath this is a full-length figure of himself, with his hands in a devotional attitude. And below the figure are two square brass plates, on the upper one of which is an inscription commemorating his death and the benefactions which he made to Uckfield and other parishes into which his property probably extended; it is as follows:—"Heare lieth the bodie of John Fuller, Gent., late of Uckfield, who deceased the 6th daye of April, anno 1610, being of age¹ yeares. And hath given to the poore of the parish of Penshurst in Kent x. shillings a yeare for ever; to the poore of the parish of Isfield in Sussex x. shillings a yeare for ever; and to the poore of the parish of Uckfield in Sussex x. shillings a yeare for ever." On the second plate are verses 11, 12, and 13, of the third chapter of 1 John, and then the following lines, having reference to his charities:—

"Now I am dead, and layd in grave,
And that my bones are rotten,
By this shall I remember'd be,
Or else I am forgotten."

The coat-of-arms would seem to imply that he was of the family of Fuller, of Lewes and Rose Hill. He is supposed to have died at Lewes.

There are two other tombs recording not only the deaths of the benefactors, but the benefactions also which they made to the parish. They are to the memory of two sisters of the name of Ellis, both residents of Uckfield. The one states that Mrs. Mary Ellis died in 1718, giving "£4 a yeare for ever, to be paid yearely to some woman in the parish qualified to teach to spell and reade English ten poore children of the parishe." The other that Mrs. Dorothy Ellis died in 1731, "and by her last will and testament² confirmed and augmented her sister's charity by giving £5 a yeare for ever to be distributed in bread among 12 poore people of the parish, upon every other Lord's day throughout the yeare."

A small marble tablet on the north wall of the church, near to the entrance door, records the benefaction to the parish of Edward Holmes Baldock, of Hyde Park Place, London, who, in the year 1845, bequeathed the interest of £750. 3 per

¹ The space for the age is left blank.

² Dated 12th June, 1718.

cent. consols, to the minister, churchwardens, and rated inhabitants of Buxted, Uckfield, and Mayfield, to be distributed annually on the 14th day of May, among six poor persons of each of these parishes, who shall not have received parochial relief during the preceding year.

Of Dr. Saunders' considerate benefactions I have already spoken. He was buried in the chancel of Buxted Church in 1719, where a handsome monument erected to his memory states, that he was "vir prestanti literarum scientiâ conspicuus; assiduæ in Deum pietatis exemplar; pauperibus quotidianâ charitate beneficus; suavi in omnes comitate admirandus." The first master appointed by himself to the school which he founded in Uckfield was the Rev. John Lloyd, afterwards rector of Maresfield, who died in 1738, and a monument to whose memory is placed on the outside wall of the chancel, south of the east window.¹

Other monuments in the church record the deaths of some of the family of Egles, of Copwood, the oldest of which is a large cast-iron slab in the chancel, placed to the memory of Gabriel Egles, who died August 7th, 1707, in the 65th year of his age. Below the inscription is a shield displaying the arms of this family, *sa. six lions rampant or*, three, two, and one. Other members of this family buried within the church walls are, John Egles, of Copwood, Esq., who died in 1750, and who was probably son of the above Gabriel. He married Mary, daughter of George Goring, Esq., of Barcombe, who died and was buried in the church in 1774; their two sons died before them; their only surviving daughter, Mary Goring, carried the Copwood estate into the Streatfeild family by marriage with Richard Beard Streatfeild, Esq., second son of Henry Streatfeild, Esq., of Chiddingstone, in Kent. He died in 1770, and the estate passed to his son, Richard Thomas Streatfeild, Esq., who, after residing some time at Copwood, pulled down the old Egles' residence, and built the house called the Rocks, nearer to Uckfield. He married first Esther, daughter of Admiral Sir Chaloner Ogle, Knt., of

¹ The Rev. Wm. Rose, father of the Rev. Hugh James Rose, Principal of King's College, London, (born at the Vicarage, Little Horsted, 9th June, 1795, and died on 22nd Dec. 1838,) and of

whom a memoir is to be found in the *British Magazine* for 1839, Vol. XV. p. 327, was master of this school at the commencement of the present century; and here educated his sons.

Worthy, Hants, who died in 1796, and by whom he had no family; and secondly Anne, daughter of Robert Shuttleworth, Esq., of Barton Lodge, Lancashire, by whom he had three sons and two daughters. He died in 1813, leaving his estate to his eldest son, Richard Shuttleworth Streatfeild, who pulled down the house which his father built, and erected on the same spot the present commodious mansion, under the direction of Mr. Smirke, the architect. He died from the effects of an accident with his gun in 1851, leaving a son and two daughters. The son is still a minor. He married Charlotte Anne, daughter of James Brown, Esq., of Harehill's Grove, and Rossington, Yorkshire, who died at Nice in 1858. There are handsome marble monuments in the church to their memory as well as to the memory of Mrs. Brown, the mother of Mrs. Streatfeild, who died at the Rocks in 1858.

On the north side of the chancel window is a marble monument, erected by Sir Thomas Spencer Wilson, Bart., to the memory of Barbara and Anne Wilson, his sisters, who died, the former in 1730, the latter in 1744; also to that of Sir Thomas Wilson, Bart., his father, who died in 1759; Sir Edward Wilson, Bart., his brother, who died unmarried in 1760; and Dame Elizabeth Wilson, his mother, who died in 1768. They occupied the house in Uckfield standing back in a garden, and shut off from the main street by a high wall. Many interesting letters, some of them dated from Uckfield, and anecdotes of this family will be found in Vols. X. and XI. of our *Collections*.

One monument more in the chancel is deserving of notice, that, namely, which is erected to the memory of the Rev. Henry Courthope, rector of Brenchly, in Kent, who died in 1804. He was of the family of Courthopes, of Whiligh and Danny, and occupied the substantial square brick-built house standing to the east of the road, as the Wilson's residence does to the west. He married Mary, the youngest daughter of William Peckham, of Arches, in Framfield, whose death in 1836, as well as that of their only daughter, Mary, who died in 1826, are recorded on the same tomb. Many anecdotes of the Courthope family also, with some account of their history, will be found in the different vols. of our *Collections*.

Among the distinguished residents of Uckfield may be men-

tioned that acute critic and learned English writer, Mr. Jeremiah Markland, who occupied a house here from 1744 to 1752. He was an intimate friend of Dr. Francis Hare, Bishop of Chichester. Dr. James Stanier Clarke, and his brother, Dr. Edward Daniel Clarke, were also residents of Uckfield. Descended from ancestors celebrated for their great abilities and learning, and who for a long series of years reflected the highest credit on the literature of their country; two of them, their father and grandfather, having been successive rectors of Buxted with Uckfield—they became distinguished in the same honourable career. The rudiments of their education, as their father's had been before them, were received in Dr. Saunders' school, at Uckfield, under its talented but eccentric master, Mr. Gerrison: they were afterwards removed to the grammar school at Tonbridge, then ably presided over by Dr. Vicessimus Knox; from whence they went to Cambridge, where they graduated, the elder at St. John's College, the younger at Jesus. When old enough, James Stanier took orders, and was for some time curate of Uckfield; but having subsequently by his talents attracted notice in high quarters, he became Historiographer to George IV., a canon of Windsor, and rector of Tillington, near Petworth. His brother, Edward Daniel, became a fellow of Jesus, his father and grandfather having been fellows of the same college before him. Upon his brother's resignation of the curacy of Uckfield, it was offered to him; and as, since his father's death, his mother had adopted it as her place of residence, and his own partialities for Uckfield and its neighbourhood were very strong, he probably would have accepted it, had not the tutorship of the Duke of Dorset's nephew, the Hon. Henry Tufton, been offered to him by his grace, which, as it held out the prospect of gratifying the great desire of his heart, travelling, he preferred; and with him he made the tour of Great Britain. He afterwards travelled in the same capacity through Italy with Lord Berwick, and through Scotland and the Western Isles with the Hon. B. Paget. After his return from this third tour, his friends were very desirous that he should return to Cambridge, and take part in his college duties. But this at first he strenuously declined; a residence at Uckfield, and the society of his mother and of

his old and much valued friend, Mrs. Catherine Courthope, having much greater charms for him than the monotony and confinement of college life ; more particularly as the Duke of Dorset had placed at his disposal the shooting of all his lands and woods in the neighbourhood, which gave him the opportunity of indulging his love for field sports. What, however, the persuasion of his friends could not accomplish, an event connected with the circumstances of the times brought about. His name was put down at Uckfield for the supplementary militia ; and so great was his dread of being compelled to serve in this corps, that without awaiting the result of the ballot, he disqualified himself by taking a college office. "Tell the master," he says, in writing to a college friend on the subject, "that I will be bursar, shoeblick, or even gip, sooner than march in the awkward squad with a mob of undrilled recruits, with the certainty of being brought to a court-martial for disobedience of orders." To this untoward event, then, we owe all his future greatness as a traveller. For upon his returning to Cambridge as his college bursar, in 1801, he was appointed private tutor to John Martin Cripps, Esq., of Stantons, near Lewes, who had just commenced residence as a fellow commoner of Jesus, which, the following year, resulted in a tour, upon which Dr. Clarke's fame became completely established. Through Norway and Sweden they were accompanied by Mr., afterwards Professor Malthus, and Mr. Otter, subsequently Dr. Clarke's biographer, and Bishop of Chichester. Returning to Cambridge, Dr. Clarke was appointed Professor of Mineralogy ; and marrying, he settled down for the remainder of his life on the living of Helstone, in Cambridgeshire, where he died in 1822. His elder brother, Dr. James Stanier, who is also well known by his various publications, survived him about twelve years.

Uckfield is in the rape of Pevensey and deanery of Lewes, and gives its name to a poor-law union, consisting of eleven parishes, the united population of which in 1851 was 17,632. The Union workhouse is here. The area of the parish contains 1800 acres, and its population, by the last census, is 1591. For picturesque beauty and the salubrity of its atmosphere, its situation and neighbourhood, are not to be surpassed by any place in the county.