

# ◆ Contrasting communities

## ANGLICAN ECCLESIASTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN BARCOMBE AND HAMSEY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By Pam Combes

*Reflecting the general trend over much of Britain, the population of the Sussex parishes of Barcombe and Hamsey rose significantly throughout the nineteenth century. Clearly there were concerns that the locations of their ancient churches made it difficult for them to serve the developing communities. In both parishes new churches were built in what had become more densely populated areas. In Hamsey, the new church at Offham was dedicated in 1860 and the ancient church remained in use as a mortuary chapel. The change appears to have caused little local controversy perhaps because the rector was a member of the Shiffner family, by 1840 the greatest landowners in the parish. Although from as early as 1836 there had been plans in Barcombe to build a new chapel to the north of the parish, St Bartholomew's at Spithurst was not dedicated until 1880. That simple statement masks a story of parochial controversy that had wracked the parish community for over 40 years. The differing responses to similar circumstances reflect the underlying contrasts between the two communities. Hamsey was essentially a downland parish with an influential resident landowner, whereas Barcombe, a more complex and essentially Wealden community, lacked a dominant individual with sufficient power to implement change on his own terms.*

### THE NEED FOR CHANGE

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, as urban areas rapidly developed and the overall population of Britain also increased significantly, the Anglican Church, backed by acts of parliament, sought to create new parishes and establish new churches or chapels within existing large parishes.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, the reforms were principally driven by the growth of dissenting congregations, particularly in the new urban areas. But in some rural parishes, including Barcombe and Hamsey, demographic change and a similar development in dissent prompted questions about the ability of the existing churches to serve the growing population. Not only were the buildings and sometimes their churchyards too small, but they were also remote from the new population centres. Despite their disparity in size and population, the problems were common to both parishes, and new churches were built in response to the demographic changes; however, the process of establishing new churches took dramatically differing courses.

In these parishes the population increase of the nineteenth century was accentuated both

by the generation of new transport links and the establishment of new landed estates. The Lewes–East Grinstead turnpike road was developed from the middle of the eighteenth century, and in the 1790s the Upper Ouse Navigation was completed, the latter being largely superseded after 1847 by the Lewes to Uckfield railway. Industrial development soon followed in the wake of improved communication (see Table 1). However, these improvements, which predominantly served to link the rural communities more easily to the outside world, did nothing to improve everyday internal, largely pedestrian, travel.

The chalk pits at Offham in the south of Hamsey utilized the Upper Ouse Navigation to supply the insatiable demands of agriculture for

Table 1. Population and land area per head of population in Barcombe and Hamsey 1801, 1901.<sup>2</sup>

|          | Year | Area in acres | Population | Acres per head |
|----------|------|---------------|------------|----------------|
| Barcombe | 1801 | 5027          | 615        | 8.17           |
|          | 1901 | 5027          | 1165       | 4.32           |
| Hamsey   | 1801 | 2747          | 367        | 7.49           |
|          | 1901 | 2747          | 552        | 4.98           |

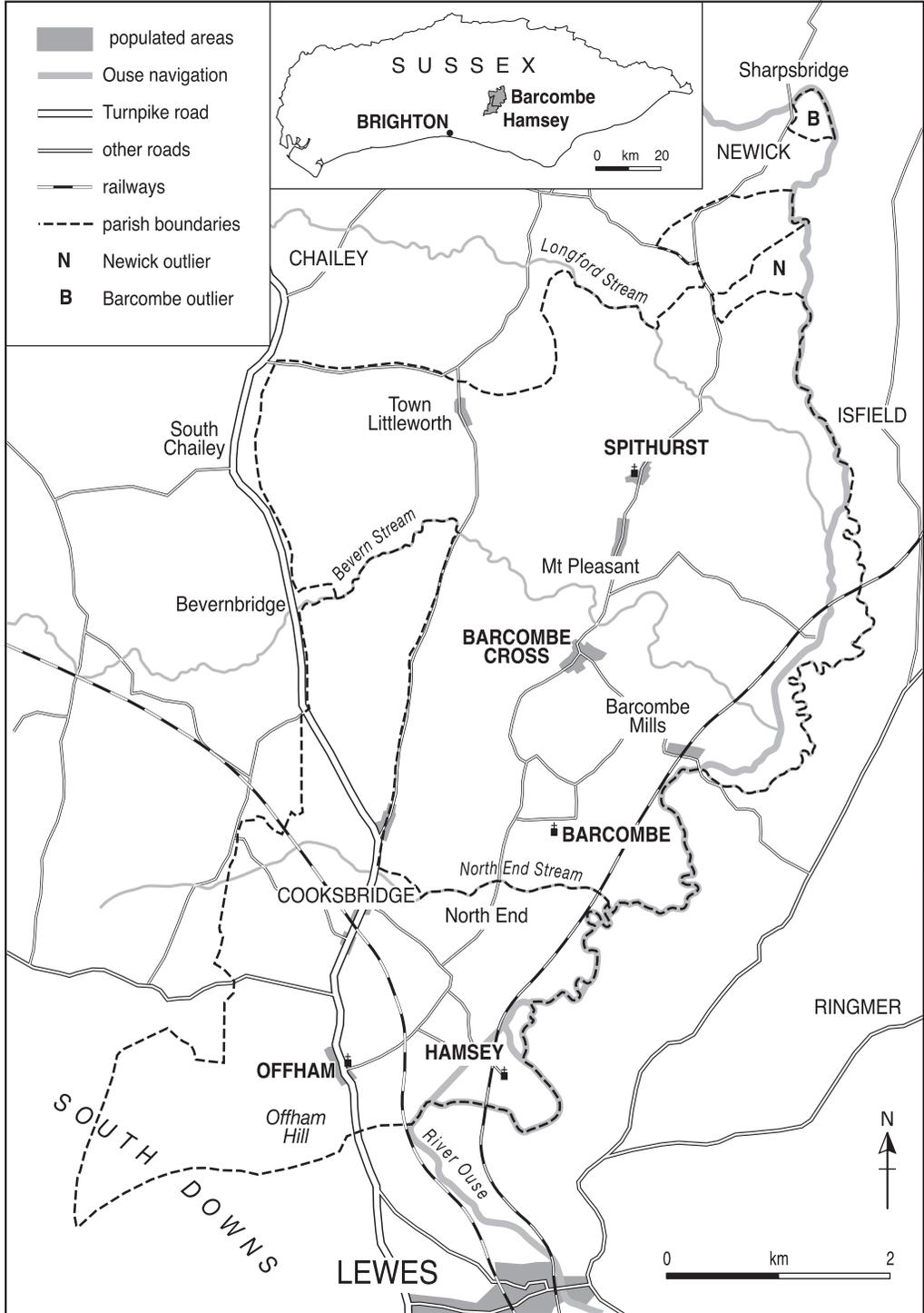


Fig. 1. Barcombe and Hamsey, late-nineteenth-century settlement and transport links.

lime, while at Cooksbridge, towards the north of the parish, brickyards and brewing were developed, served first by the turnpike road, and later by the railway. The flourishing estates at Coombe and Offham attracted an increased labour force to serve both the farms and the households. These developments, many on the periphery of the parish, were not well served by the old church of St Peter's, which lay close to the river far to the east, one and half kilometres distant from Offham and four kilometres from Hewenstreet. When the provision of a new church to serve these new communities was proposed in about 1855, progress was rapid and St Peter's at Offham was dedicated only five years later<sup>3</sup> (see Fig. 1).

In Barcombe the problem of access to the parish church of St Mary's was even more acute.<sup>4</sup> The church lies close to the southern boundary of the parish, five kilometres from the northern boundary with Newick and nearly six kilometres from a parochial outlier at Sharpsbridge (see Fig. 1). The problems were further exacerbated by the difficulty and occasional impassability of the terrain created by two major tributaries of the River Ouse: the Bevern and Longford Streams. This problem was slightly improved by the development of the navigation and the turnpike road which served the east and west of the parish respectively. The new navigation encouraged the exploitation of water power for paper-mills at Sharpsbridge, the development of the existing flour mills and the creation of new oil-mills at Barcombe Mills 1.5 km from the parish church, while the turnpike road promoted the exploitation of the Wealden resources, which included timber and clay, especially from the northwestern part of the parish at Balneath. These materials were extensively utilized, first by brickyards within the parish but eventually by potteries and brickyards which lay just over the boundary in Chailey. To the north of the parish and at Barcombe Cross and Barcombe Mills, large landed estates were created and new mansion houses had been built by 1840. As at Hamsey, this development contributed to an increase in population, many of whom were living at a distance from the existing parish churches. In the south of the parish John Dodson (later Lord Monk Bretton) completed his new house at Conyboro by 1868, the former mansion, on a nearby site, having been demolished in about 1816.<sup>5</sup>

Here in Barcombe, although a fund was set up in 1836 to provide a chapel at Spithurst to the north of the parish, the new church of St Bartholomew's was not dedicated until 44 years later in 1880. Meanwhile the church of St Mary's, threatened at one stage with possible demolition, was subject to extensive alteration and restoration, completed by 1879. To satisfy the demand for additional burial space the old churchyard was substantially enlarged by 1867 and a burial ground was provided at the new church<sup>6</sup> (see Fig. 1).

The need for reform of the church was perceived but often proved difficult to attain. In some areas the ideal parish and church, with the squire in his pew, his friend the parson in his stall, respectable farmers in pews and on benches the labourers and their wives, no longer existed, and in others, perhaps it never had.<sup>7</sup> One notable achievement in the non-religious sphere was the bill passed in 1836 to introduce the commutation of tithe to a standard cash payment. But in Barcombe that change appears to have sparked off a dispute, the repercussions of which were still felt nearly 40 years on. More bitter still were the antagonisms brought about by doctrinal changes in the established church.

Throughout the nineteenth century English society and specifically the Church of England was undergoing a crisis of confidence. In the late seventeenth century the assurance created by the defeat of the perceived threat of a renewal of Catholicism allowed the development of an established church, to which all citizens were assumed to belong, within an unquestioned Christian society. Those certainties were undermined during the next century. The influence of charismatic preachers, including John Wesley, whose original intention was to revive and reform the Church of England, led to the creation of dissenting congregations, while lack of what would be perceived today as 'civil rights' for their members was increasingly resented. Across the channel the French Revolution allowed not only that individual freedom should be accepted by the state, but also raised the spectre of atheism; after 1789 France was no longer an avowed Christian society. At the other end of the spectrum formal union with Ireland in 1801 raised the necessity of either the representation or the disenfranchisement of about five and a half million Irish Catholics. Once again the ghost of 'popery' arose in the country, but now

action was unavoidable. By 1830 major reform had taken place. The old Test and Corporation Act was repealed in 1828, freeing dissenters to serve in public office. The Catholic Emancipation Act was passed in the following year by a Tory government fearful of the prospect of civil war in Ireland.<sup>8</sup>

With these reforms the supremacy of the Church of England was perceived to be undermined and there was much concern about political interference in ecclesiastical matters. But the Church of England itself was not united on how best to regain pre-eminence. There were two major schools of thought within the church — the Evangelicals and the Tractarians.

In the Georgian church, the sermon was the dominant feature of the Anglican liturgy. The focal point in the church was the pulpit, situated either in the nave, or sometimes immediately in front of and obscuring the sanctuary — a use identified with the Evangelical movement in the church. For Evangelical clergy, preaching and missions to the poor were the way forward.

Not only were the altar and sanctuary no longer the centre of worship as they had been in the medieval church, and chancels frequently neglected and ruinous, but the spiritual mysteries of religion were also neglected. In most churches Communion was celebrated only four times a year, if that. Congregations were frequently served by ill-paid curates who worked in benefices often held in plurality by absent, but powerful, rectors. The buildings themselves were falling into disrepair and music was provided by assorted musicians and singers housed in west galleries.

Many churchmen believed that a return to the medieval roots of the Anglican Church was needed. Gothic architecture was seen to epitomise the spirituality and mystery of the early church by those who also believed that the altar and sanctuary should once again become the centre of worship. The Classical style, preferred in the Georgian period, was perceived to be the architecture of dissenting chapels not churches. Pulpits were relegated to a place beside the chancel arch, raised chancels with choir stalls and an altar placed on the east wall became commonplace — and organs replaced the west gallery musicians. The service was intoned, and a choir led the singing of psalms and new hymns. The proponents of these and other reforms, known as Tractarians from the *Tracts for the Times* in which their views were expressed,

eventually had so great an influence upon church architecture that few Georgian church interiors survive intact today.<sup>9</sup>

Although not overtly visible in the records of either parish, the prevailing fear of both Tractarian and Evangelical influence within the Anglican Church, so well described in Trollope's 'Barchester' novels, may have been hovering under the surface of this local dispute. One of the most energetic and eloquent leaders of the Tractarians, Henry Edward Manning, served initially as curate and later Rector of Lavington and Graffham, as Rural Dean of Midhurst from 1837, and from 1840 until his conversion to Catholicism in 1851, as Archdeacon of Chichester.<sup>10</sup> Familiar as twenty-first-century churchgoers are with ecclesiastical furnishing and vestments, we can easily forget that they were seen by many as the outward signs of incipient Romanism. The wearing of surplices, for example, famously caused riots in Exeter in 1845, while in 1857, in Lewes, John Mason Neale, Warden of Sackville College in East Grinstead and a well known Tractarian, and some of the newly created Sisters of St Margaret's were forced to take refuge from a 'No Popery' mob when they attended at All Saints the burial service of one of the sisters, Miss Emily Scobell. Miss Scobell was the daughter of the rector of All Saints and Rural Dean of Lewes who, after her death, 'accused Neale of inveigling his daughter into the sisterhood for the sake of her estate'.<sup>11</sup>

The changes introduced in two relatively insignificant Sussex rural parishes have to be seen in the context of the gradual reform and development of the Anglican Church in the nineteenth century. It is clear from the form of the enlarged and newly-built churches in both parishes that, as well as perceiving the need for accessibility, there was in both Hamsey and Barcombe a clerical desire to introduce some modest changes to the decoration, music and possibly the ritual that had formerly been provided. Such changes, when implemented here in Sussex, could potentially have caused concern to largely conservative rural congregations.

#### PAROCHIAL CHANGE IN HAMSEY

In Hamsey the influence of the Shiffner family was all-pervading. The association of the family with the parish began in 1787 when George Shiffner,

son and heir of Henry Shiffner of Ewyas Harold in Herefordshire, married Mary, only daughter and heiress of Sir John Bridger of Coln St Aldwyns in Gloucester and Coombe in Hamsey. Shiffner was created a baronet in 1818, the year in which his third son, also George Shiffner, was installed as rector of St Anne's in Lewes and St Peter's in Hamsey, of which his father had been the patron since 1816. On the death of the first baronet in 1842, his second son, Admiral Sir Henry Shiffner, succeeded to the title. On his death in 1859 his brother George succeeded as the third baronet. He was by then one of the most influential canons within the Chichester Cathedral Chapter. He was prebendary of Eartham from 1829 and from 1848 one of the residentiary canons, who customarily held parochial livings as well as their prebendal stalls. The Chapter of Chichester Cathedral was the patron of two Hampshire cures: Amport and Applesham, to which Shiffner was appointed, resigning his Sussex parishes. His son George Croxton Shiffner, who had been serving as curate, was installed as rector and retained the cure until his death in 1906. In 1863, on the death of his father, he inherited the baronetcy and became Rural Dean of Lewes in 1877<sup>12</sup> (see Fig. 2).

The appeal for funds to provide the new church was probably launched in 1855. The draft notes that:

'the present church has long been found, from its inaccessible position, to be totally inadequate for the spiritual wants of the parish. It is situated at its very extremity, far distant from the residences of the greater part of the population, and only to be approached by much exposed and very bad roads ... It is therefore proposed with God's blessing to build a new church in the village of Offham, a locality containing in itself a large proportion of the population, and communicating by good roads with all the other parts of the parish'<sup>13</sup> (see Fig. 3).

In 1858 Sir Henry expended 1s. 3d. of the donated funds to purchase a small vellum-covered account book in which he carefully recorded the 34 individual donations to the appeal, including the collection of £32 6s. 7d. taken at the consecration service. The Shiffners themselves were the most generous donors. Sir Henry and his brother gave £500 apiece while gifts from other members of the family amounted to just over £495. A further £600



Fig. 2. The Reverend Sir George Croxton Shiffner. (Reproduced by permission of John Sclater.)

was raised from the Church Rates while the most generous of the other individual donors were Mr and Mrs Thomas Whitfeld of Hamsey House; Mr Whitfeld was the proprietor of the Lewes Bank. A donation of £28 was received from the Chichester Diocesan Association in 1859. By that time a total of £3151 had been raised and a further gift from the Reverend George Croxton Shiffner balanced the account.<sup>14</sup>

In 1856, Sir Charles Merrick Burrell, tenant for life of a substantial estate within the parish, after some deliberation about his right to alienate the land, transferred to Her Majesty's Commissioners for Building New Churches 16 perches of land; a further 26 perches were alienated in 1860. Both plots adjoined the land on which the church was

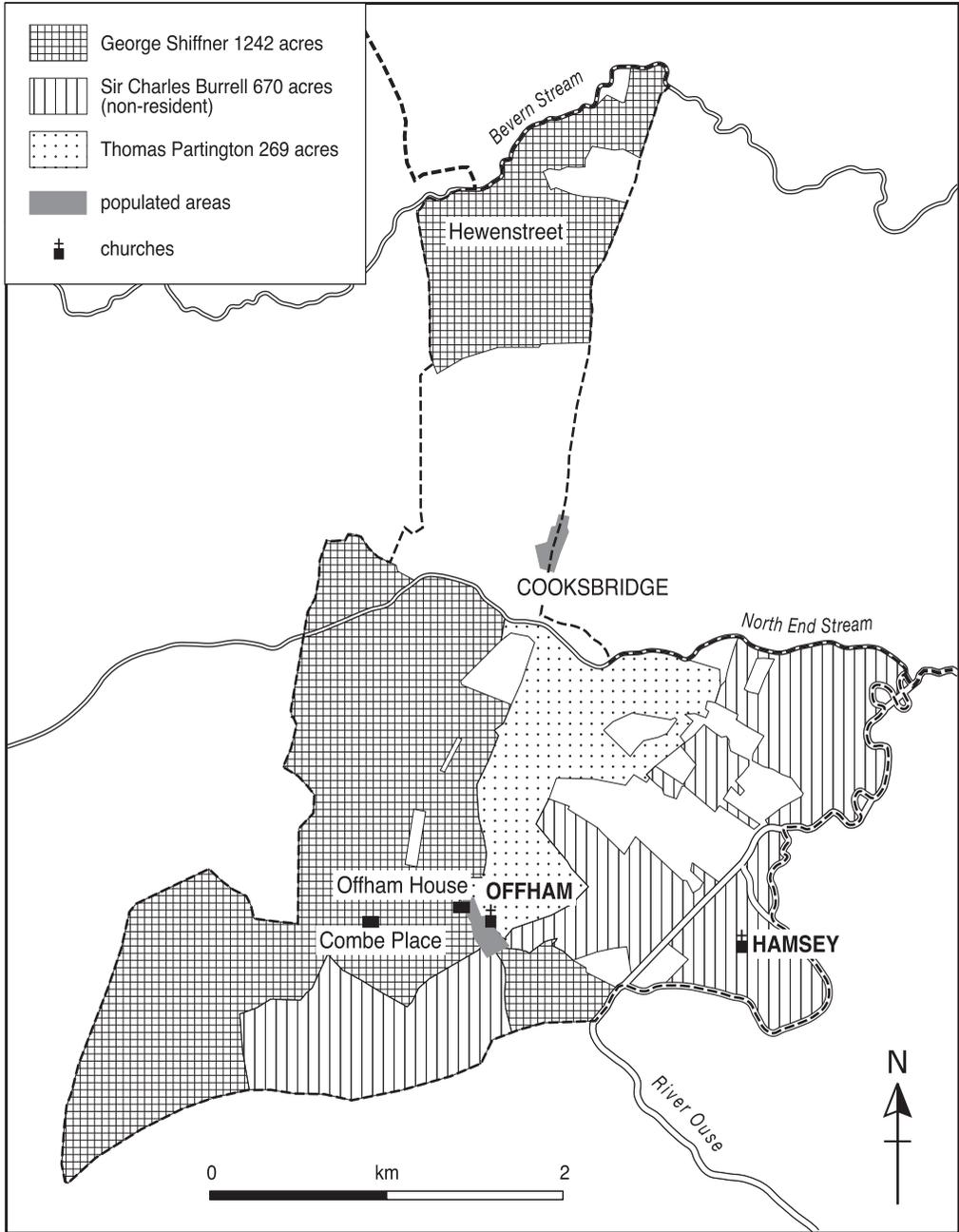


Fig. 3. Hamsey parish 1840, estates of over 200 acres and the location of the old and new parish churches.

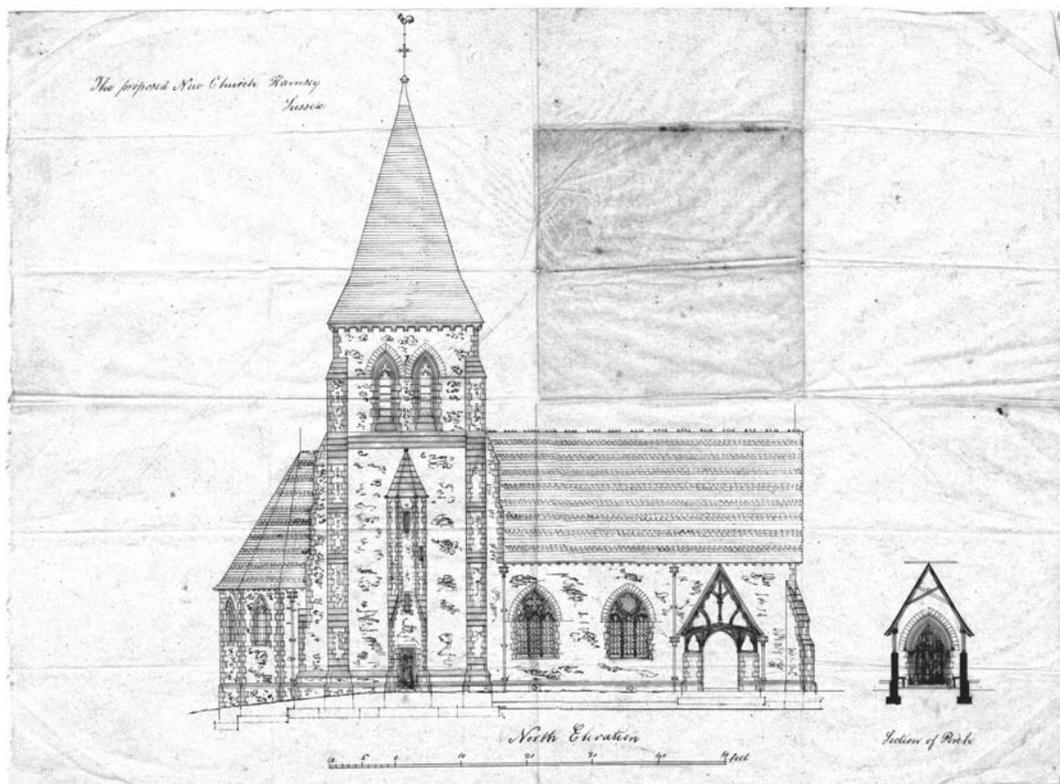


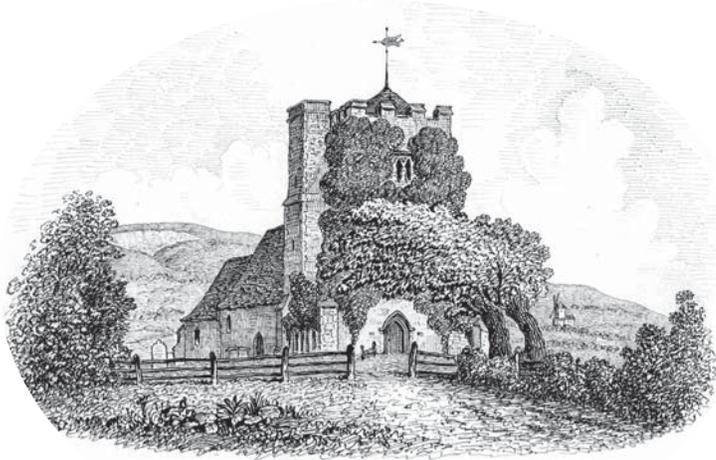
Fig. 4. Elevation of St Peter's Church, Offham. Ewan Christian, architect. (ESRO SHR 3688)

to be constructed and were valued at £25 in total. Burrell also gave permission for chalk for the construction to be taken from his pit at Offham. Following the death of Sir Henry in 1869 the Shiffners also had to negotiate the terms of various family trusts, to sell for £16 the land (1 rood 1 perch) on which the church had been built.<sup>15</sup>

In June 1858 Sir Henry and the Reverend George Croxton Shiffner signed a contract with the architect Ewan Christian to build the new church at a cost of £2381; Thomas Norman, the publican at The Blacksmith's Arms, provided dinner and refreshments for 30 people at a cost of £4, to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone. The contractor was to be P. Ayres and Company, then engaged on building the Sussex County Lunatic Asylum, Haywards Heath, which rather curiously served as their registered address.<sup>16</sup> The building work appears to have progressed almost without a hitch, one small dispute between the architect and the contractors about the quality of part of the work being soon resolved. The amounts due

when the church had been roofed were paid in October and December 1858. Injuries sustained by a workman buried in a fall of chalk at the quarry caused some consternation. Ewan Christian suggested that a letter should be sent to the editors in Lewes requesting them not to refrain from remarking upon the incident, since from what he heard at Lewes, exaggerated reports were already circulating; certainly the accident was not fatal.<sup>17</sup>

The interior of the church was completed in the course of the following years. Clearly the form of its furnishing was influenced both by the Gothic revival and to some extent the changes in emphasis away from the pulpit and towards the altar and chancel. The chancel was tiled and 'writings' decorated the walls. There was provision for a choir and, initially, a miniature eighteenth-century organ was obtained from St Anne's in Lewes.<sup>18</sup> Oak pews were provided as well as a pulpit desk and screens and the specific provision of a 'firing vault' suggests that the comfort of the congregation was not forgotten (see Fig. 4).



Hamsey Church. Sussex.

Fig. 5. St Peter's Hamsey mid-nineteenth century. (W. J. Quartermain *The Parish Churches of Sussex* 1, 127. Barbican House museum)



Fig. 6. Robert Allen, rector of Barcombe 1826-1877. (Reproduced by permission of Edward Reeves, Lewes.)

On 21 July 1860, the new church of St Peter's at Offham was dedicated by Ashurst Turner Gilbert, Bishop of Chichester (see Fig. 4). All the rights and endowments of the old church were transferred to the new and the ancient building, also dedicated to St Peter, was no longer used for regular services but remained in use as a mortuary chapel serving the burial ground.<sup>19</sup> The new building at Offham still remains in regular use, and the wise decision to leave the old structure standing has left us with a fine and rare survival of a maintained, but not restored or enlarged, ancient church (see Fig. 5).

#### PAROCHIAL CHANGE IN BARCOMBE

Achieving a similar aim in Barcombe took a markedly different and much more protracted course. The patronage of the living was in the hands of the Lord Chancellor rather than a local proprietor, and although the incumbent, the Reverend Robert Allen, had been rector for ten years when the proposal to build a new church or chapel was made, Barcombe was his first living. Unlike Shiffner he did not enjoy the privilege attendant upon owning a landed estate, although he appears to have had private means other than his stipend. His family were from Lymington in Hampshire and he had been educated at Winchester College and New College, Oxford where, after graduating, he remained as a fellow<sup>20</sup> (see Fig. 6).

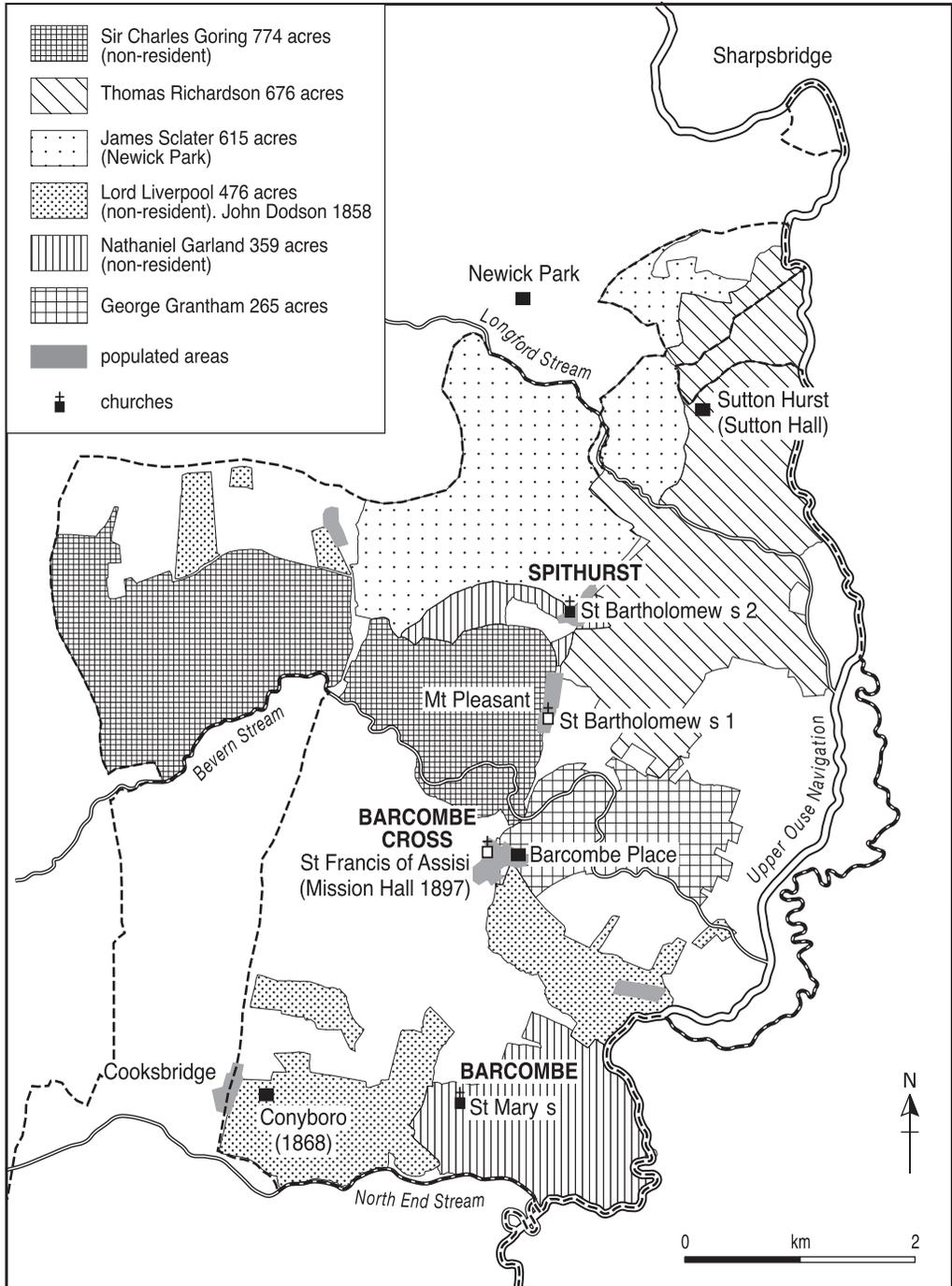


Fig. 7. Barcombe parish 1839: estates over 200 acres, and showing the location of existing and former Anglican churches 1839–2008.

Barcombe was not an easy parish in which to minister. The parish church lay well away from the centres of population and travel was not easy. In order to support his proposal for a new central church Allen pointed out to the Bishop of Chichester that before his appointment to the living in 1826, there were no proper roads, and in winter and rainy weather the parish 'consisted of three different islands absolutely cut off from each other' making it difficult, if not impossible, for many parishioners to regularly attend services. The population was not evenly distributed within those three areas: the greater number of inhabitants lived around Barcombe Cross in the centre of the parish<sup>21</sup> (see Fig. 7 and Table 2 below).

Although he clearly had the best intentions regarding the care and development of his parish, setting up a fund to finance the provision of a new church and acquiring a plot of land for a school, Allen was never popular with his parishioners. By 1833 he was in dispute with Richard Knight of Court House, a substantial farmer and Lewes butcher, about tithe dues. Not only had Knight forced Allen to take his tithes in kind but, according to Allen, he had been seen by some of his labourers fraudulently removing some of the wood set aside for the purpose. Allen claimed to have treated the incident with levity, but nonetheless Knight responded by resorting to a dissenting meeting house in protest.<sup>22</sup>

After 1842 Allen was seldom, if ever, resident in the parish and a note in the vestry minute book records that he chaired his last meeting in 1837.<sup>23</sup> But possibly most damaging to his plans for the parish was his intense dislike and distrust of one of the principal landowners and the largest donor to the fund for the new church, Captain Thomas Richardson. In 1828 Richardson, who had served as an officer of Dragoons in the Peninsular Wars, inherited a substantial estate in Barcombe from his aunt, Mary Richardson (formerly Margesson).<sup>24</sup> The estate consisted of three farms, but lacked a principal residence. Richardson, who was then living in Lewes, continued to purchase additional land in the parish and in 1836 he built his new mansion house Sutton Hurst (Sutton Hall)<sup>25</sup> (see Fig. 8). Allen complained to the bishop 'I have had much to contend with in Capt. Richardson's predominant influence as the principal proprietor and magistrate'. He noted Richardson's coarse jocular and imperious manner as well as his



Fig. 8. Captain Thomas Richardson of Sutton Hurst. (Reproduced by permission of Edward Reeves, Lewes.)

'influence with the lower classes and especially farmers, he calls himself T. Richardson, farmer'.<sup>26</sup> Clearly the feelings were mutual, as on an earlier occasion Allen had been told plainly by Richardson that 'as I came after a Predecessor who was detested, I ought to have been popular but was more detested'.<sup>27</sup>

#### SETTING UP THE FUND

In 1836, when the building appeal was made, Richardson, who was then in the process of building his new house, made the largest donation of £150.<sup>28</sup> The principal donors were the rector, who gave £100, and Russell Gray and Mrs Gray of Barcombe Mills, who together gave £100. Apart from some donations from the clergy of neighbouring parishes and the bishop of Chichester, the other donors were all Barcombe landowners, many of whom were not resident in the parish. It seems that the form the building scheme was to take had not been

fully agreed by all the parties when the appeal was made. Recalling the events and summarizing them for John Dodson (Lord Monk Bretton) in December 1867, Richardson stated that the purpose of the original fund had been to provide either a district church or a chapel of ease. Only afterwards, according to Richardson, was the chapel of ease decided upon.<sup>29</sup> However, it is clear that although the rector provided figures to support his claim for funds to provide a chapel of ease, he never completely abandoned the idea of providing a district church.<sup>30</sup>

Two years after the fund had been established, an eligible site, on which St Bartz, the former St Bartholomew's Church now stands, was acquired, plans obtained and a contract entered into for the erection of the church.<sup>31</sup> But problems immediately arose and the rector claimed that he had reservations about the validity of the title to the land conveyed to him for the church. From the surviving sources it is difficult to comprehend the precise problem. Initially, in a letter written in 1839 to The Church Building Society (later the Ecclesiastical Commissioners), Allen claimed, quite correctly, that the grant had been made to him personally and not, as he had expected, to him in his capacity as rector.<sup>32</sup> Significantly, in the same letter he maintained that there was no valid reason why the grant of £120, agreed by the Commissioners, should not be made available, even if the church were to be built on another site.

The problem of the grant to him personally appears to have been overcome and everyone, bar the rector, accepted that the title to the land was good. But Allen then raised another problem. The land in question was granted from waste of the manor of Barcombe, but it lay immediately adjacent to outliers of two other manors, Rodmell and Allington. Allen claimed not only that the land was possibly waste of one of those other manors, but that the tenant of one of the manors had traditionally enjoyed the right to cross it. As a result of his conviction that the land was waste and not copyhold he arranged to pay £10 compensation to extinguish any common rights. In this instance he was not correct, the land was copyhold and his decision created another problem for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who feared that to pay compensation in this case would create a dangerous precedent. In order to remedy the

situation Richardson arranged for the monies to be repaid to the churchwardens.<sup>33</sup>

Despite Allen's protestations about the legality of the land transfer, almost certainly the principal underlying problem was that the tenant of the adjoining farmland at Spithurst was none other than his old adversary Richard Knight. It is also possible that Allen resented Richardson's dominance in the matter of the new chapel. Not only did the site admirably serve the needs of the owner and tenants of Richardson's estate but the chapel architect, William Moseley, had also designed his house, Sutton Hurst. Whatever his reasons Allen 'refused to allow the church to be erected on the site and has obstinately persisted in the same'; the situation remained in an uneasy stalemate for over 20 years.<sup>34</sup>

After the problem had emerged, a decision was taken to lodge the appeal funds with the Chichester Diocesan Association. In all, £520 2s. 0d. was deposited with the Association: £365 in 1838 and £155 2s. 0d. in 1839.<sup>35</sup> One of the later subscribers, George Grantham of Barcombe Place, who gave only a modest £5, was a newcomer to the parish. Grantham, a Lewes businessman, had purchased the estate only that year, but he soon established himself as an active participant in parochial affairs and served almost continuously as churchwarden during his lifetime. He died in 1849. His son, also George Grantham, vigorously participated in the debate regarding the provision of a new church.<sup>36</sup>

## PAROCHIAL PROBLEMS

Meanwhile, following the debacle of the land acquisition, conflict in Barcombe continued and Robert Allen's fragile relationship with his parishioners deteriorated even further. Allen himself was inclined to associate Thomas Richardson and George Grantham, then one of his churchwardens, with a scurrilous letter published in the *Sussex Advertiser* in July 1841.

'Sir, I find by the newspaper that the rent Charge in lieu of tithes for the parish of Barcombe amounting to about one thousand pounds per annum is settled. Will some parishioner be pleased to inform me ... whether there is a curate, or any school in the parish, and whether much is spent among the tradespeople or given away in Charities in his

Parish out of the £1000 per annum which the Rector made of the tithes the greater part of which he took up. (signed) Publicola.<sup>37</sup>

The views expressed were clearly influenced by knowledge of the precise value of the living of Barcombe — knowledge that was freely available to all after the tithe commutation of 1840. Similarly, the final comment remarking that the rector had taken up the greater part of the tithe may have been provoked because he had accepted the tithe on cottage gardens, which had not formerly been subject to payment. Indeed, in June 1842 Allen claimed that the issue 'had raised so strong an excitement and feeling against me that in March last I felt it my duty to consult the Secretary of State for the Home Department as a violation of the peace was expected'. He obviously had difficulty in collecting the tithe payments from the smaller landowners since he later proposed to the bishop that a public officer should be appointed for the purpose. His living, valued at £984 19s. 0d. was indeed substantial, easily exceeding those of the neighbouring parishes of Hamsey and Newick.<sup>38</sup>

Barcombe parishioners petitioned the bishop in December 1841 about their more immediate problems with the incumbent. They lamented that the rector 'suffers under a nervous affection which in the performance of the church services renders his reading and preaching totally unintelligible'. As a result, the church was almost deserted with only 30 or 40 parishioners present, while some 200–300 parishioners attended dissenting meeting houses and neighbouring parish churches. Finally they appealed to the bishop to appoint an experienced and competent curate. The seventeen signatories represented a wide cross-section of the population of Barcombe consisting of tenant farmers, house owners and great and small landowners. Two of the signatories to the petition, William Reed and George Grantham, had also served as churchwardens.<sup>39</sup>

For a short time even the appointment of churchwardens was a bone of contention between the rector and the vestry. In March 1842 Allen refused to nominate a rector's churchwarden. His reason for the refusal was that, in his opinion, the churchwardens had not responded as expected to a sermon preached in aid of the funds of the Diocesan Association. It was usual, when for some reason the congregation at the service was small, to make a house-to-house collection, but on this

occasion only three shillings had been raised instead of the expected £3 to £4. For their part the assembled inhabitants resolved to adjourn the meeting for five days, when they rejoined by stating that they generally refused the office of churchwarden under the present rector.<sup>40</sup>

By the following year some attempts had been made to resolve the problems. But once again the rector's inability to work with others proved a major stumbling block. The first curate appointed, Mr Scott, was soon in dispute with him and resigned.<sup>41</sup> At the vestry meeting in March 1843, chaired by the Reverend William Crole, George Grantham was appointed rector's warden and William Reed represented the parishioners. But even then all was not well; Crole was an unfortunate choice. A month earlier concern about his suitability had been expressed to Bishop Gilbert by his registrar J. R. Freeland. 'I am truly sorry that Mr Allen has selected a Curate who is so unacceptable to his parishioners ... it will I fear require some time to dispossess Mr Crole'. Crole had clearly distressed many of the parishioners by refusing to accept into the church building the corpse of a child who had died of scarlet fever, ostensibly because of the possibility of contagion, but more probably because the child's parents were dissenters.<sup>42</sup> Crole was dispossessed and, following Allen's refusal to re-appoint Mr Scott, John Griffiths served briefly. After he had married and left the parish, the Reverend Nathaniel Constantine Strickland was appointed. But Allen was soon in dispute with him about the payment of his stipend. Strickland was also accused of purloining fruit and grapes for wine-making from the rectory garden, selling the produce, and asking Allen's gardener to do work for him. Not surprisingly Strickland resigned in 1846 and the Reverend Henry Dowson took his place.

Meanwhile the absent rector was still actively pursuing his visions of a reformed parish, in which the site at Spithurst had no place. In 1847, when detailing to the bishop what he described as his 'long intended plans' for the district church, Allen's intentions were clear. He hoped to provide a new church in the vicinity of Barcombe Cross where it would serve about 700 of the parishioners, while the remaining 300 would be attached to the old church, which would become a chapelry<sup>43</sup> (see Table 2).

However, despite this optimism, Allen again found himself in dispute with his curate about the

Table 2. Statistics used to support the Rector's claim in 1857 for Chichester Diocesan Association funds to be made available for building his new church. He proposed two divisions: 1 and 2 forming the area to be served by the existing parish church and 3 and 4 to be served by the church at Mount Pleasant.<sup>44</sup>

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Total population of Barcombe 1831                                    | 933 |
| 1 Surrounding the present church                                     | 191 |
| 2 Surrounding Barcombe Cross proceeding north from the parish church | 356 |
| 3 Surrounding the site of the proposed church (at Mount Pleasant)    | 307 |
| 4 To the north of Longford   | 79  |

payment of his stipend, but in this instance he had met his match. Dowson took legal action in the ecclesiastical courts to obtain redress, action that in 1850 resulted in a monition from the bishop ordering Allen to pay the £375 owed.<sup>45</sup> By October that year yet another curate, the Reverend Spurrell, was chairing the vestry meetings, but he had found preferment by 1853 and the sad procession continued with the appointment of the Reverend A. Hawkes in 1854 and his eventual appointment as rector of Rushden in 1856. In 1857, however, everything changed with the appointment of the Reverend Alfred Allen as curate (see Fig. 9). He was popularly believed to be a relative of the rector's, although their exact relationship has not been established.<sup>46</sup> Shortly afterwards the rector acquired another plot of land from Sir Henry Shiffner in exchange for a tithe rent charge of 13s. 11d. from the glebe which he immediately handed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners<sup>47</sup> (see Fig. 12 below). Clearly, word of this action reached the ears of the Chichester Diocesan Association, since in 1859 the secretary thought it prudent to establish the wishes of the original donors regarding the use of the church building fund they held.<sup>48</sup>

THE CHURCH AT MOUNT PLEASANT

The year 1867 saw a renewal of activity in Barcombe. Mrs Cope (formerly Mrs Garland), the owner of Court House Farm, agreed to sell a plot of land to allow the existing churchyard to be extended.<sup>49</sup> But most significantly, the rector's intention to build his long-wished-for district church on the new plot of land he had acquired at Mount Pleasant began to take shape. In that year Allen approached the Diocesan Association asking



Fig. 9. Alfred Allen, curate of Barcombe 1857-1877. (ESRO ACC 9754)

them to release the funds that had been deposited with them to enable him to build a church on his new site. In June he was told by the secretary, who was then unaware of the wishes of the subscribers to the fund on the subject, that they were willing to make over subscriptions towards the building of a 'district church' provided the plans were approved by the bishop. It appears that at that time the bishop himself was in favour of the provision of a district church, but he too was ignorant of the subscribers' and parishioners' lack of knowledge of the rector's plan.<sup>50</sup>

Neither the association nor the bishop remained long unaware of their views. Between 1868 and 1869 subscribers and parishioners presented to the Lord Chancellor, the bishop and the Association no fewer than four petitions, opposing the provision of a district church. However, it seems that the Association soon modified its stance, since already by December 1867 Allen was threatening them with an action in chancery if they did not release the funds.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile a new and influential Barcombe parishioner had appeared in the person of the MP



Fig. 10. John Dodson of Conyboro (1825-1897) created Lord Monk Bretton in 1884. (Reproduced by permission of Edward Reeves, Lewes.)

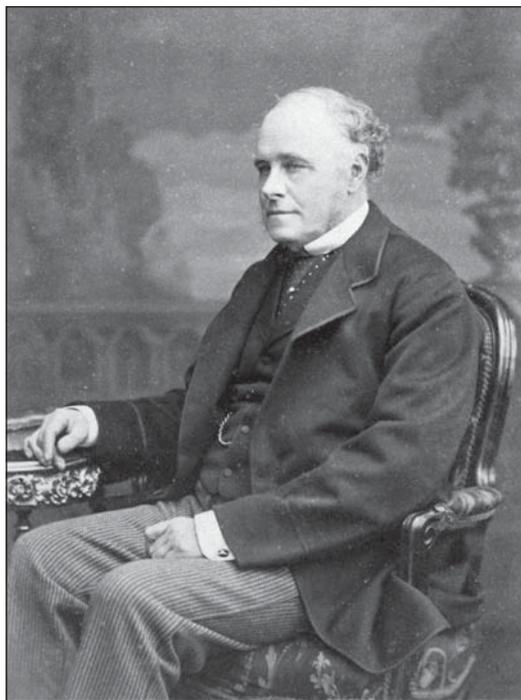


Fig. 11. James Henry Sclater of Newick Park (1819-1897). (Reproduced by permission of John Sclater.)

for East Sussex, John Dodson. Dodson had inherited the Conyboro estate in Barcombe from his father, Sir John Dodson, in 1856. He took up residence possibly as early as December 1867, and certainly before August 1868 (see Fig. 10).<sup>52</sup> His arrival on the scene occasioned a flurry of letters about the outstanding local issue from several local landowners. Prominent among them was James Sclater (Slater) of Newick Park (see Fig. 11).<sup>53</sup> Although not a parishioner himself, a large part of his extensive estate lay in Barcombe, giving him an interest in the provision of a church in the north of the parish. His letters to John Dodson regarding the issues, reveal clearly and entertainingly the tensions underlying the relationships of the Barcombe squirearchy.

In 1868, faced with the Association's continued refusal to release the funds, Robert Allen took a radical step which was evidently calculated to force the issue and bring some sort of resolution to the impasse that had arisen. On 24 August James Sclater received a belated announcement from the

curate that he was that day 'to lay by the Rector's desire, the first stone of St Bartholomew's Church'. Sclater considered the action to be without the express consent of the Lord Chancellor (as patron of the living), without that of the bishop and, furthermore, 'contrary to the feelings and wishes of all the parishioners ... and we ought to stop it, if possible'. Clearly at such short notice they could do nothing to prevent the ceremony, which duly went ahead at 5 pm on the same day. The report in the *East Sussex News* gave a detailed description of the intended building but also pointed out that because of the well-known disagreements between the rector and the more influential of his parishioners 'it was not surprising that the gentry of the parish were conspicuous by their absence'.<sup>54</sup>

Notwithstanding the absence of John Dodson, a meeting was convened in Lewes the following day, apparently in the office of Edmund Currey, the registrar of Lewes Archdeaconry, for the purpose of drawing up a formal note of protest regarding

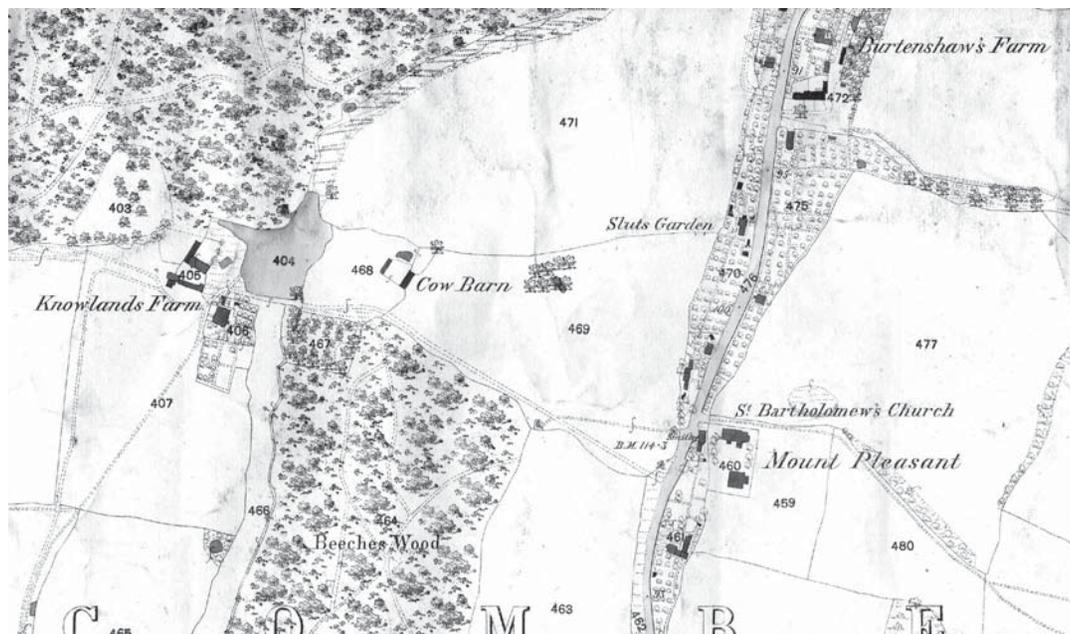


Fig. 12. St Bartholomew's Church and the parsonage house on the site at Mount Pleasant. (ESRO OS 40/14 1873)

the rector's action. Writing to Dodson to report on the lively event, James Slater noted that the meeting consisted of 'the indignant landowners of Barcombe'. He recalled that Richardson's feelings were succinctly summed up by the pithy remark that 'old Allen ought to have been hung long ago'. Slater himself had hoped 'that with the present Rector the Church differences of Barcombe would have died out, but the Curate throws in a fresh apple of discord for another generation'.<sup>55</sup>

Following the meeting an appropriate formal note of protest was drawn up and duly despatched to both the bishop of Chichester and the Lord Chancellor. Dodson himself, when he returned to Conyboro at the weekend, wrote to Alfred Allen asking for an explanation of his role in recent events. The curate responded with an elaborate and detailed apologia on behalf of the rector, culminating in the comment that he did not wish to be 'mixed up in the controversy anymore than was unavoidable' and also alluding to the likelihood of the whole situation becoming the subject of judicial enquiry.<sup>56</sup>

Meanwhile the rector went ahead with his plans at his own expense. The Ordnance Survey of 1873 clearly shows both the church and, despite

the bishop's reservations, the parsonage house.<sup>57</sup> (see Fig 12). The house, now known as Rest Harrow, still survives, and the site of the church building is part of the garden.

The energetic Slater reported to Dodson that work was proceeding, continuing in his customary sardonic tone that he had heard that the rector's object was

'to divide the clerical work of the parish so that he may put [Alfred] Allen the less into the charge of half its duties, while he returns to the Rectory, and stammers through the service to empty benches in the old Church. Allen the less is to contribute the money for the new Parsonage, so the Rector plays his game and makes his Curate the Catspaw to take all the hot chestnuts out of the fire, while the Curate from behind the Rector is sapping up a living for himself. It will be a very pretty game of chess now. The Rector thinks he has got a pawn well placed in the game, so does the Curate. I hope we shall be able to play a strong defence'.

He thought it likely that the curate was in fact 'using the old Rector as a stalking-horse behind whom he can establish himself in a living'.<sup>58</sup>

### THE CASE IN CHANCERY

Desperate attempts were still being made to avoid the hazards of a case in chancery. The bishop explained to Dodson that it had been 'openly mentioned at our last Chichester Diocesan Association meeting that there were attempts at negotiation with Mr Allen ... Clearly anything is better than a suit in Chancery ... but Allen is not reasonable'. All efforts were in vain and a bill was filed on 17 April 1869.<sup>59</sup>

Her Majesty's Attorney General brought the action on behalf of the relator, the rector Robert Allen, who claimed that the Chichester Diocesan Association was wrongly refusing to hand over to him funds which were needed to enable him to continue with building the church of St Bartholomew. Joined as plaintiffs with Allen were all the other subscribers to the Barcombe Church Fund except the defendant Thomas Richardson and such of the subscribers as were represented by him. Richardson himself had died since the original case was filed and he was represented by his executors William George Margesson and Bernard Husey Hunt. The other defendants Francis Barchard, the Duke of Devonshire and Viscount Gage represented the Diocesan Association.<sup>60</sup>

One of the immediate problems to be addressed was the death of many of the original subscribers to the fund. However the secretary to the Association had wisely established the wishes, not only of those who were still living, but also of the heirs or representatives of the deceased. Only two, Allen himself and the Reverend Thomas Baden Powell, thought that their subscriptions of £105 should be made freely available to the rector without the approval of any other person. Three — Thomas Richardson, George Grantham and James Sclater — agreed only to their subscriptions of £165 being applied to building a chapel of ease but not on the spot where the rector had recently erected the new church. Nine others subscribers of £113 approved the building of any church, provided that it was approved by the rector and either one or two others of the bishop, the Association or the parishioners. Three donors of £102 2s. wished their subscriptions to be returned. Three others, who had given £20 in total, did not respond.<sup>61</sup>

The outcome of the case was not clear-cut, and when he gave his final judgement in June 1872 Lord Romilly left matters very much as they had

been. He made a declaratory decree that the funds in question were to be applied for the provision of additional church accommodation for the benefit of the inhabitants of north Barcombe, and that it was up to the rector and his flock to reach agreement on where the additional church was to be situated. For the time being the Master of the Rolls was happy for the funds to remain deposited with the Diocesan Association rather than tied up in a new scheme where he felt they would be likely to be dissipated in legal costs.<sup>62</sup>

In formulating the decree, there seems to have been an element of confusion as to whether the required agreement should be between the rector and his parishioners or between the rector and the subscribers to the fund or their successors. It was not at any rate considered to be a matter for the public vestry to decide, since that meeting would include those who were not parishioners, namely the ever-problematic dissenters.<sup>63</sup>

So matters appear to have remained for the next few years; it was not until after the death of Robert Allen that any further decisive steps were taken to resolve the impasse. The church and adjacent parsonage were left unfinished, although both buildings were roofed and in a state nearing completion, and no further steps were taken to divide the parish into two districts.

Meanwhile another influential resident had moved into the parish. After Thomas Richardson's death Frederick Smith (later Shenstone) bought the Sutton Hurst estate and had moved into the newly extended and modernised house, renamed Sutton Hall, by 1871 (see Fig. 13). Shenstone had succeeded his father as the mineral agent for the Earl of Dudley, one of the wealthiest landowners in the country. He lived in some style at Sutton Hall and served as High Sheriff of Sussex in 1887, but despite that honour he was not always viewed with approval by his fellow landowners.<sup>64</sup>

### RESOLUTION

Robert Allen died at Lyminster in Hampshire in September 1877; the *Sussex Express* referred to the event only briefly. His successor as rector of Barcombe was Edward Garbett, a canon of Winchester, who was evidently a man of considerable energy and personality. It is perhaps of note that, although moderate in his own stance, he was an apologist for the views of Evangelical clergy,



Fig. 13. Frederick, Augusta, Adela Shenstone and companion at Sutton Hall.

editing their journal *The Record* from 1854–1867.<sup>65</sup> He carried out extensive refurbishment work on the old rectory and he obviously played a key role in the decisions to refurbish the old church and complete the plans for the provision of the new one. Debate on the church question was still taking place between the landowners, and the surviving correspondence makes it clear that Garbett had to navigate his way between differing schools of opinion on the subject.

Shenstone and Grantham, and initially the new rector, were in favour of a new central church at Barcombe Cross, but others were not. Sclater's attitude to his new neighbour, Shenstone, is encapsulated in his description of a visit from him in January 1878. Shenstone turned up at Newick Park 'with a extra dash of perfume and evidently *chargé d'affaires*'. After some unsuccessful verbal fencing to elicit Sclater's views,

'he began by saying that the idea of the Parish was on the decline ... and that the great thing now was to group populations round central

Churches with Schools attached, and that his idea was to begin *de novo* in Barcombe, to sweep away all its existing Church buildings and to erect a Central Church near Barcombe Street for 350 people at a cost of, say, £3500 but without a tower or spire *in initio* ... Having diffused a little more "Ambrosia" our friend departed.'<sup>66</sup>

Grantham had offered land for such a church at Barcombe Cross but he was not prepared to make provision for a graveyard. He too approached Sclater on a similar mission promoting what his reluctant host described as 'Grantham's modern Jerusalem ... stuck in a field near the village without spire, tower or surrounding walls'. Grantham descended on Newick Park complete with 'ulster, beard, black bag and slouched hat'. Despite attempting to hide behind 'a wide spreading thorn bush', Sclater was found out and regaled for more than an hour in the cool vinery, into which Grantham had adroitly steered him, with 'unfinished sentences and shaky statements from amongst the flower pots'.<sup>67</sup>



Barcomb Church. Sussex. 1859.

Fig. 14. Barcombe Church 1859, before restoration and the acquisition of the additional churchyard. Note the window to the west gallery and the door into the chancel. (Quartermain 1, 28)

Although before his death Captain Richardson had also come to favour the provision of a central church, neither Sclater nor Dodson favoured the idea. The bishop also considered that '... any new church could not be substitute for the existing parish church'.<sup>68</sup> In truth the problem had no realistic solution. In such an extensive parish it was virtually impossible to provide a church or churches that suited all the residents. From his Newick-orientated point of view, Sclater vigorously opposed the provision of a new church at Barcombe Cross. But his witty summary of his opposition to the proposal encapsulates the situation in which they found themselves. 'If we did erect our tin Jerusalem Reuben and Gad would only be able to come up once a year, Sharpsbridge people would take to the worship of Father Ouse, and Cooksbridge might take to the cult of Norman's Brewery'.<sup>69</sup>

Despite all the active lobbying, by the middle of 1878 a consensus had been reached to abandon the idea of a new central church and to concentrate instead on restoring the old parish church and completing the buildings on the late rector's site at Spithurst (see Figs 12 & 14).

The final decision was undoubtedly influenced by Dodson's decision to make a significant

donation towards the restoration costs. The appropriate Licence or Faculty to cover the work on the parish church was duly issued in November 1878. The old west gallery, that had formerly housed the choir, was taken down, the pulpit was moved from a somewhat dominating position bordering the old ramshackle south aisle to beside the step into the reformed choir and chancel, and an organ was installed in the newly rebuilt and enlarged south aisle.<sup>70</sup>

As regards the Spithurst church, it appears that an application was made in Chancery in the course of the summer which resulted in an order that the partially completed building should be completed on the rector's site at Mount Pleasant; but this arrangement ran into difficulties. One problem was a financial one; because the costs of defending the chancery case, almost £400 had been met from the appeal funds held by the Diocesan Association, insufficient resources remained to complete the work and clearly opposition to the site continued.<sup>71</sup>

However, help was forthcoming to fund an alternative solution. Shenstone in particular was prepared to put up £500 on condition that the church building was transferred to the



Fig. 15. Elevation of St Bartholomew's Barcombe. (Reproduced by permission of the Bishop of Chichester and the Diocesan Archivist.)

original site at Spithurst, and enlarged to provide accommodation for the tenants and workers on his estate. There were some misgivings about the suggestion. Sclater questioned whether Shenstone had considered who was to furnish a clergyman to minister at what he described as 'Shenstone's Folly'. However, the objections were overcome and both Grantham and Sclater eventually agreed to contribute to the costs, and Sclater may well have augmented the original gift of land. This alternative scheme for a new church, with final designs by Henry Card, evidently met with approval (see Fig. 15).<sup>72</sup> The consent of the bishop, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Lord Chancellor (as patron of the living) was obtained, and the matter was finally put to the parishioners at a meeting in the schoolroom in December 1878 where 'it was decided to pull down the whole of the partially erected structure and erect it on Spidhurst [sic] Green, about half a mile distant'.<sup>73</sup>

The newly completed church of St Bartholomew was finally consecrated on 17 April 1880 by Bishop Gilbert, and the Reverend Alfred Metcalfe was appointed curate in charge. After the ceremony Mr and Mrs Shenstone entertained the assembled

company, which included Dodson, Sclater and Grantham, to luncheon at Sutton Hall. In his speech Shenstone paid generous tribute to the role his predecessor, Captain Richardson, 'who lived in the hearts of the people of the neighbourhood', had played in the provision of the church.<sup>74</sup>

#### THE AFTERMATH

The story, with all its attendant problems, does not end there. It seems that the outstanding costs of the parsonage built on the Mount Pleasant site were raised by subscription, Sclater having already promised £20 towards the total of £97 and with a further contribution also coming from Dodson. Although initially 'The Residence', as it was known, was used by a curate who held a Sunday school on the premises, later the site became a burden on the parish. Writing to Dodson in 1894 the rector, the Reverend Robert Salmon, pointed out that it had 'now stood empty for nigh on two years; and, so far as I can see, is likely to remain unoccupied as I cannot find a tenant in consequence of the absence of water ... and curates who are single and who are best suited to the parish, naturally object to being

bothered with a house, and prefer to live in the village in lodgings.'

It was not until 1920 that the property was sold to Mrs Wells, then the tenant, for £1350.<sup>75</sup>

Sadly, in the longer term the new church did not meet the requirements of the inhabitants of the area around Barcombe Cross, and possibly in response to the development of flourishing dissenting chapels in Barcombe, Sir William Grantham provided a Mission Hall which was functioning by 1898 on the site of a former dissenting chapel. In 1919 a licence was granted to perform services in the hall. The site was eventually given to the parish by the Grantham family in 1945 in memory of Sir William; it is now the church of St Francis of Assisi.<sup>76</sup>

By 1970 the congregation at St Bartholomew's was in decline, but the church was much loved and efforts to close it were unsuccessful. The parishioners drew up a petition against the proposal and an Order in Council was passed to keep the church open. In 1985 the church was belatedly licensed for marriages, but only two marriages ever took place and the decline continued; the church finally closed in 1994. The building, however, remains and in October 2002 St Bartz was opened as a diocesan retreat and conference centre.

It took a curious combination of circumstances to create such a furore of discontent within a parish that the bishop characterized it as 'the thorn of his Episcopal career'. On the occasion of the reopening of the parish church, after the refurbishment, the bishop summed up the character of the person who probably did more than anyone to create the predicament that had dogged Barcombe during so much of the nineteenth century 'Your late Rector' he said, 'earnestly wished to do what was right but his self-will and perverseness led him onto antagonism with those he desired to serve'.<sup>77</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The contrast between the parallel journeys of the parishes of Barcombe and Hamsey as they strove towards a similar objective is stark. It would be tempting to attribute their differing experiences to the presence of determined individuals pursuing their own interests, and to some extent that was the case. But the underlying reasons are more complex. The social structure of the two parishes was different to a large extent as a result of their geographical

locations. Hamsey was essentially a downland parish with a single dominant landowner, the Shiffner estate, which not only owned the advowson of the church but also provided its incumbent. In 1840, excluding cottagers, there were 12 landowners. The Shiffners held an estate of 1242 acres, nearly half the available land; only two others owned estates of over 200 acres<sup>78</sup> (see Fig. 3). Of the other greater landowners Sir Charles Burrell, with over 600 acres, was not resident and Thomas Partington, then lord of the manor, who held a modest 260 acres, appears to have taken little interest in parochial affairs; certainly he was not a significant donor to the appeal. But it was not only the power and influence of the Shiffner family that made the decision so simple. The choice of site was undisputed, not only because the majority of the parishioners were dependent on the Shiffner estate, but because in this relatively small parish the new church was more convenient than the old church for the majority of the parishioners, and it served their needs well.

Barcombe, in contrast, was a predominantly Wealden parish nearly twice the size of Hamsey. Land, especially in the north of the parish, consisted of tenements held of no fewer than seven manors and many of those tenements were free.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the principal copyhold tenements of the manor of Barcombe lay close to or to the north of Barcombe Cross. This diversity of lordship, especially in the north of the parish, together with the fact that the lords of Barcombe were never resident in the manor until John Dodson built his house at Conyboro in 1857, encouraged the development of many substantial estates. By 1840 there were 37 landowners, six of whom owned over 200 acres but none predominated. (see Fig. 7) The ecclesiastical circumstances were also crucial. Unlike Hamsey, from the last decade of the 11th century the patronage of the living was never in the hands of a local landowner. By 1090 the church, with tithes, had been granted to Lewes Priory by Ralph de Chesney. After the dissolution the advowson remained in the hands of the crown and is still in the gift of the Lord Chancellor.<sup>80</sup> The dispute about the site for the new church demonstrates how difficult it was for the parishioners to make their views known to all the individuals with an interest in the living: the rector, the bishop and the Lord Chancellor. The fragmentation of interest in the parish rendered

a united decision impossible, and when one was eventually made it was almost certainly not the one that would have best served the majority of the parishioners. In the end, individual wealth was, to some extent, the decisive factor in the developments. Despite the fact that the parish church was not in a convenient place to serve many of the parishioners, a costly restoration was undertaken mostly financed by John Dodson whose new mansion house, Conyboro, lay close by. However, it was not self-interest that swayed his decision but more probably his regard for history. His antiquarian interest was shared by his daughter who, to her credit, recorded, in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, the ancient church as it was before restoration.<sup>81</sup>

In north Barcombe the Spithurst site was preferred for other reasons. The somewhat flamboyant Frederick Shenstone was prepared to finance a development that was convenient both for himself and his family and the tenants and workers on his estate. So the site at Spithurst

was preferred, despite the fact that the rector's site at Mount Pleasant would have better served a larger number of parishioners living at or adjacent to Barcombe Cross. Here in Barcombe the decisions taken, especially in relation to building St Bartholomew's church, were not always in the interests of the majority of the parishioners. But, in this large and awkwardly shaped parish, to please all the parishioners was always an impossible aim.

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Church Building Acts, 1818 (58 Geo III c45), 1819 (59 Geo III c134), 1822 (3 Geo IV c72), 1845 (8&9 Vict c70) and 1856 (19&20 Vic c55)  
<sup>2</sup> W. Page (ed.) *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex 2* (1907), 23.  
<sup>3</sup> East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO) SHR 3688. The draft of the appeal document is undated, but other evidence suggests 1855. West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO) EpII/26/7.  
<sup>4</sup> In the nineteenth century not only was the parish of Barcombe more extensive than it is now, but two areas within the present parish lay parochially in Newick and Chailey (a large part of Vuggles Farm and a pasture field in Old Park respectively). Barcombe parish included a parochial outlier at Sharpsbridge and the northwestern boundary extended to the old road, predecessor of the turnpike, west of Balneath. The Barcombe/Newick boundaries were rationalized in 1934, Vuggles Farm was transferred to Barcombe and Sharpsbridge to Newick. Balneath was transferred to Chailey in 1990.  
<sup>5</sup> ESRO TD/E 134; ESRO OS 25in. 41. John Farrant (ed.) 'Sussex depicted', *Sussex Record Society* **85** (2001), 154. W. P. Courtney, 'Dodson, John George, first Baron Monk Bretton (1825–1897)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7758, accessed 14 January 2009].  
<sup>6</sup> ESRO PAR 235/10/4.  
<sup>7</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church 2*, 151–217, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church 1*, 1–232, 1970. Henry D. Rack, 'Wesley, John (1703–1791)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29069, accessed 14 January 2009].  
<sup>9</sup> Christopher Webster, 'Absolutely wretched: Camdenian attitudes to the Late Georgian church' and Geoffrey K. Brantwood, 'Mummies of a Popish character' — the Camdenians and Early Victorian Worship in 'A Church as it should be' *The Cambridge Camden Society and Its Influence* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2000).  
<sup>10</sup> David Newsome, 'Manning, Henry Edward (1808–1892)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17970, accessed 16 Jan 2009].  
<sup>11</sup> Susan Drain, 'Neale, John Mason (1818–1866)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19824, accessed 14 Jan 2009].  
<sup>12</sup> T. R. Horsfield, *The History and Antiquities of Lewes* (Lewes 1824). Nigel Yates, 'Change and continuity, 1790–1902', in Mary Hobbs (ed.), *Chichester Cathedral* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1994) 125; Joseph Foster, *Peerage and Baronetage* (1881).  
<sup>13</sup> ESRO SHR 3688; undated.  
<sup>14</sup> ESRO SHR 3689; SHR 3688: letter 5 December 1859.  
<sup>15</sup> WSRO EpII/26/7.  
<sup>16</sup> ESRO SHR 3688, invoice, 16 June 1858.  
<sup>17</sup> ESRO SHR 3688: letter dated 8 October 1858; ESRO XA 28/28.

- <sup>18</sup> The Rev. R. E. A. Lloyd, *St Peter's Church, Offham guidebook* (1967), 8; ESRO SHR 3689. Further work was undertaken later including the provision of Minton tiles, painting commandments on the walls, stained glass windows and lamps. The final recorded total of expenses c.1868 was £3801. A new organ by Hills was installed in 1893 at a cost of £326.
- <sup>19</sup> WSRO EplI/26/7; ESRO OS 25" 40/14.
- <sup>20</sup> J. M. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses 1715–1886 A–K* (1887).
- <sup>21</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3.
- <sup>22</sup> Richard Knight was farming Court House, Culver and Spithurst Farms in 1840. In 1809 a licence was obtained by George Stanford of Lewes, the owner of Gallybird Hall in Barcombe, to hold a dissenting meeting. By 1836 there was a chapel at Barcombe Cross, ESRO ADA 179 and TD/E134. F. H. Dodson, 'St Mary's Church, Barcombe', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, (hereafter SAC) **30** (1880) 61.
- <sup>23</sup> His signature does not appear in the parish registers after 1842; ESRO PAR 235/12/1.
- <sup>24</sup> Richardson was born at Warminghurst Place in West Sussex in 1791. He was the youngest son of Thomas Richardson and Frances, the younger daughter of John Margesson. In 1807 he was commissioned in the 20th Light Dragoons and served in the Peninsular wars, retiring on half pay in 1817. He inherited his Barcombe estate from his aunt, Mary Richardson, his mother's elder sister, who was married to his father's nephew, William Richardson of Findon. Mary and William were childless.
- <sup>25</sup> Originally Sutton Hurst; the name Sutton Hall was adopted after the estate was sold in 1869.
- <sup>26</sup> There was a good reason for Richardson's claim to be a farmer. In 1840 he retained in hand 555 acres of his estate and was tenant of a further 161 acres of fine agricultural land.
- <sup>27</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3 (1842).
- <sup>28</sup> The National Archives (hereafter TNA) C 16/543.
- <sup>29</sup> ESRO MOB 656.
- <sup>30</sup> Lambeth Palace Archive (hereafter LPA) ICBS 2039, ff. 1 and 2. Writing to the Church Building Commissioners in 1836 Allen says that he is 'prepared, if possible, to make it more than a chapel of ease by settling on the revenues of the rectory under the late Act of Parliament an endowment equal to whatever will be raised by the landlords or from any other source jointly to constitute the district or perpetual curacy with a stipend equal to that fixed for the whole parish if the other parties will go as far'.
- <sup>31</sup> LPA ICBS 2039, f. 23; for Moseley see Howard Colvin (ed.), *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (Yale University Press, 1995).
- <sup>32</sup> LPA ICBS 2039, ff.13–17; ESRO ADA 179.
- <sup>33</sup> TNA C16/543; ESRO MOB 656, 662, 674. It is notable that when describing the problem to Dodson much later Richardson was cautious about committing the full details concerning the dispute about the right to the land to paper. He tells Dodson he will give him the details when they meet which suggests that he suspected the rector's true reasons for prevarication.
- <sup>34</sup> ESRO MOB 656.
- <sup>35</sup> ESRO MOB 656; TNA C16/543. The aims of the Chichester Diocesan Association, which was founded in 1838 by Bishop Otter, were: (1) to provide additional church accommodation whether by building, purchase or otherwise; (2) to assist parochial clergy either by contributing towards the maintenance of additional curates or in certain cases by the temporary augmentation of existing endowments; (3) to promote education in the diocese on the principles of the church. By 1939 the name was amended to become 'The Chichester Diocesan Association for Church Building Clergy Aid and Education'.
- <sup>36</sup> ESRO PAR 235/12/1. After the death of George Grantham, his sons, George and William, moved to live in Brighton, returning to Barcombe Place in 1864. Following their return George sustained concussion of the brain following a fall from his horse and eventually became subject to epileptic fits.
- <sup>37</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3 (1842).
- <sup>38</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3 (1842); by comparison Hamsey and Newick were valued at £679 and £404 respectively.
- <sup>39</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3 1842. The document survives as a transcription of the original. The signatories were William Reed, Richard Knight, George Cheesman, James Brook, George Grantham, Thomas Cox, Henry Howell, Henry Austen, James Funnell, James Coppard, John Simmonds, William Reed (junior), James Cripperton (possibly a mistranscription for James Crippes Cox), George Morley, Samuel Baker, Thomas a Bule (?Bull), William Funnell. The names represent a cross-section of Barcombe tenant farmers, house owners and landowners; ESRO TD/E 134.
- <sup>40</sup> ESRO PAR 235/12/1; WSRO Epl/48/3 (1842). Allen's reasoning was complex and suggests he was suffering from a degree of paranoia. He stated that he would continue to support William Reed as his churchwarden, but he felt he was being led astray by others. He enquired whether at the bishop's visitation it could be established whether the churchwardens were bound to assist a collection enjoined by the bishop.
- <sup>41</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3 (1843, 1844). According to C. E. Hutchinson (rector of West Firl and Beddingham), for whom Scott had apparently served as curate, the rector had accused Scott of being 'too fond of his gun'. Hutchinson goes on to say that 'Scott shoots occasionally but only a dozen times during his service at Barcombe and the report of the neighbourhood was in his favour'. Scott neither chaired a vestry meeting nor signed the parish registers.
- <sup>42</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3 (1843). The basic problem appears to have been that the parents of the child were dissenters. In a letter to the bishop defending Crole Allen states that there had been several cases of scarlet fever in the parish and some the children 'had died quite suddenly'. Crole had refused to allow the corpse into the church on some real or supposed danger. 'Knowing how tenacious the dissenters especially are of that supposed right, which in fact the rubric makes the subject of the clergyman's discretion and responsibility. I know that on occasions I have found it impossible to act on it without disturbance of the services and have been justly censured for my want of firmness by the right thinking. He certainly told me his principle was to let the dissenters alone'.
- <sup>43</sup> ESRO MOB 656; Epl/48/3. Allen had used the same figures to support his claim to the Church Building Commissioners in 1836. He then claimed 792 (part

district 2 and all of district 3 and 4) to be served by the prospective new chapel or, if a perpetual curacy was established, the district church would serve 386 of the population (districts 3 and 4).

<sup>44</sup> TNA C16/543.

<sup>45</sup> WSRO Epl/48/3. Subsequently Henry Dowson served as rector of Little Horsted 1854–1856.

<sup>46</sup> ESRO PAR 235/10/2; ESRO PAR 235/1/2/1. No specific records for the appointment of curates survive and it is difficult to identify with certainty which of the ministers whose names appear in the parish records was serving as curate. In the parish registers two terms: 'officiating minister' and 'curate' are used. Sometimes one person uses both terms – others just appear as officiating minister. Where the term officiating minister has been used alone it has been assumed to refer to someone standing in temporarily, not an appointed curate. Alfred Allen was thought to be the rector's nephew, but none of Robert Allen's siblings were called John, the name of Alfred Allen's father, so their exact relationship is uncertain.

<sup>47</sup> TNA C16/543; the Ecclesiastical Commission took over the work of the Church Building Commission in 1856.

<sup>48</sup> TNA C16/543.

<sup>49</sup> ESRO PAR 235/10/4. Mrs Garland had reverted to using her maiden name of Cope some time before agreeing to sell the land to the churchwardens. Mrs Sarah Grantham guaranteed the purchase money of £140 pending raising a parish rate to complete the purchase.

<sup>50</sup> ESRO MOB 656.

<sup>51</sup> TNA C16/543; MOB 655; on 23 December 1867 George Grantham, then one of the churchwardens, wrote somewhat frantically to Dodson to say that some sort of immediate action might be necessary as the rector was threatening the Chichester Diocesan Association with legal proceedings if they did not agree to release the appeal funds to him.

<sup>52</sup> ESRO ADA 179 and 180; both Dodsons are named sequentially as lords of the manor of Barcombe from 1856. Presumably both the estate and the lordship were purchased from the Earl of Liverpool at the same time.

<sup>53</sup> His father, James Henry Slater (1793–1864) had made a donation to the church fund. In the first half of the nineteenth century the family name was consistently spelled Slater. Eventually Sclater, an earlier form of their family name that originated in Orkney, was adopted. In the 1850's, when George Grantham and his brother William (later Sir William) moved temporarily to Brighton after the death of their father, the younger James Henry Sclater and his family lived at Barcombe Place.

<sup>54</sup> ESRO MOB 659; *East Sussex News* 28 June 1868.

<sup>55</sup> ESRO MOB 660.

<sup>56</sup> ESRO MOB 663, 666.

<sup>57</sup> ESRO MOB 670, ESRO OS 40/14.

<sup>58</sup> ESRO MOB 664.

<sup>59</sup> ESRO MOB 671; TNA C16/543.

<sup>60</sup> TNA C16/543.

<sup>61</sup> TNA C16/543. The curious statement was made that Bishop Otter (or more probably his heir) was not approached since his subscription was not thought not to have made at the time of the enquiry. Bishop Otter died in 1840.

<sup>62</sup> ESRO PAR 235/4/1/1.

<sup>63</sup> ESRO MOB 680.

<sup>64</sup> When he bought the estate he still used his family name of Smith. Later, after inheriting Shenstone Hall in Staffordshire from his father, he changed his name to Shenstone. For details of his brother and family see Gerald Crompton, 'Smith, George Samuel Fereday (1812–1891)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48197, accessed 14 Jan 2009]

<sup>65</sup> A. R. Buckland, 'Garbett, Edward (1817–1887)', rev. Stephen Gregory, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10339, accessed 14 Jan 2009]. For an obituary see *The Times*, 13 October 1887, 11C.

<sup>66</sup> ESRO MOB 757.

<sup>67</sup> ESRO MOB 656, 763.

<sup>68</sup> ESRO MOB 656, 670; TNA C16/543.

<sup>69</sup> ESRO MOB 768. The reference to Reuben and Gad is biblical. They were sons of Jacob and leaders of two of the tribes of Israel. Norman's Brewery was at Cooksbridge.

<sup>70</sup> ESRO MOB 674, 678. Dodson's own meticulous calculations of the costs of the alternative solutions suggest that his contribution probably amounted to £1500; F. H. Dodson, *SAC* 30, engraving opposite page 54; Heather Shephard, *Guide to the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin* (2005), 7.

<sup>71</sup> ESRO MOB 771; the costs amounted to £398 18s. 11d.

<sup>72</sup> WSRO EplII/27/79, LPA ICBS 2039. The plans by William Moseley for a flint and stone church 39 ft × 21 ft on the original site were approved, but no longer survive in the Commissioners' archive. The designs for the rector's church which was to be have a 47 ft 6 in. × 20 ft nave with a chancel 18 ft 6 in. × 14 ft 6 in. were by R. Ferrey of Charing Cross. The County Surveyor Henry Card produced the final designs, also in flint and stone for the Spithurst site. Both the similar dimensions and the title 'Plan of the unfinished church to be removed to another site' suggest that Card modified Ferrey's original plans to accommodate Shenstone's extension for his workers and the addition of the bell turret.

<sup>73</sup> ESRO MOB 681; *East Sussex News* 20 Dec 1878. There is a strong Sclater family tradition that land was given by them for the provision of the church. After the original grant the family had acquired the land immediately adjoining the church site to the north and south. By 1880 the land had been enfranchised and no longer appears in the manor records. It is quite conceivable that some of that land was given to augment the original grant in order to provide the graveyard.

<sup>74</sup> ESRO MOB 751; *Sussex Express* (ESRO XA 28/56).

<sup>75</sup> I am grateful to Ian Hilder for information about the use of the house as a Sunday school; ESRO MOB 782; PAR 275/4/3/1–46. In 1919 there was still no water on the premises. The tenant was paying £1 5s. 0d a year for the use of a well on the other side of the road from which all the domestic water had to be carried.

<sup>76</sup> *Kelly's Directory* 1899; ESRO PAR 235/5/1/1

<sup>77</sup> ESRO MOB 751; *Sussex Express* 18 November 1879.

<sup>78</sup> ESRO TD/E 111; excluding cottagers there were 12 landowners in Hamsey in 1840.

<sup>79</sup> Barcombe, Barcombe Camoys, Balneath (all with

manorial centres within the parish), free tenements of these manors all lay north of Barcombe Cross. Rodmell, Warningore, Houndean and Allington had substantial manorial outliers in the parish, all lying north of Barcombe Cross.

<sup>80</sup> L. F. Salzman (ed.), *The Chartulary of the Priory of St Pancras*, Lewes, *SRS* **38** (1932) 17, 21, 40.

<sup>81</sup> MOB 761. F. H. Dodson, *SAC* **30** engraving opposite page 54; Heather Shephard, *Guide to the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin* (2005), 7.

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