

◆ The history of the hospital of St Nicholas, Lewes and its successors

By Christopher Whittick

Although there is little direct evidence for the hospital in the medieval period, it featured in accounts of the battle of Lewes and as a landmark. Its usefulness enabled it to survive the dissolution of Lewes Priory, its patron house, and it was gradually appropriated by the authorities of the parish of St Anne, while maintaining an independent charitable status which ensured its exemption from the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834. Featuring on maps of Lewes from 1618 onwards, its importance was recognised as early as the 1770s by an antiquary who commissioned drawings of the ruins. Redevelopment of the site began in 1867, and the erection of a school in 1910 produced further images in the form of architects' drawings and photographs. This article can be read as a pendant to the excavation report (for which it was originally commissioned — see this volume pp. 79–109) or as a piece of free-standing research, which should nonetheless inform any future archaeological investigation of the site.

FOUNDATION AND FUNCTION

When Lewes Priory made its return to the king's commissioners in 1535, it was believed that the hospital of St Nicholas had been established by William de Warenne, the first lord of the barony of Lewes and founder of the priory, as an infirmary for the poor under its control. The priory was suppressed the following year, and the brothers and sisters of the hospital were able to give a book containing copies of their foundation-charters to Ralph Cromwell, Mr Pollard and Mr Milsent, and so the statement was probably well-grounded.¹

A contemporary account of the battle of Lewes provides the first reference we have to the hospital, which formed the epicentre of the conflict; it describes it as a *domus leprosum* — a leper-house.² Its position at a crossroads at the edge of the town, in the suburb of Westout outside the boundary of the borough, lends credence to such status, and there are interesting parallels; a leper-house at Harbledown outside Canterbury, founded by Archbishop Lanfranc in about 1084, was also dedicated to St Nicholas, as were the early houses at Carlisle and York. Its foundation as a dependency of Lewes Priory resembles some documented continental examples; Orderic Vitalis records the establishment of an endowment for seven lepers out of the revenues of the abbey of St Evroult in Normandy between 1063 and 1066, and at least

seven leper-houses had been established in France before 1100.

Closer to home, in Southover the Cluniac Priory was linked to a leper hospital 'opposite the *Lortepool*', the pond of the west mill on the Winterbourne. Roger of Ash, who founded a leper hospital at Seaford before 1169, was also a benefactor of the priory.³ Brent has described how in Southover the enlargement of an existing leper-house enabled the *hospitium* at the priory's great gate to become a parish church outside the precinct of the monastery; this transformation seems to have taken place between 1257 and 1263.⁴ The striking similarity between the plans of St John Southover and St Anne, coupled with the proximity of the latter to a well and the change of its dedication from St Mary to that of the patroness of healing waters, prompts the speculation that at Westout, as at Southover, the priory merged a hospital and a leper-house on the site of the latter, freeing the former for use as a parish church. In favour of that argument is the anomaly of two parish churches having existed in Westout, and that the church of St Anne underwent expansion — albeit of the chancel — in the thirteenth century. Against it is the will of St Richard of Droitwich, who in 1253 bequeathed five shillings to 'the anchoress of the Blessed Mary of Westout at Lewes', a reference which is perhaps difficult to reconcile with the use of the building as a hospital.⁵ It is clear from two views of 1772 (Figs 1 and 2) that the



Fig. 1. View of the ruins of St Nicholas Hospital from the north-west by James Lambert the elder, 1772 (Sussex Archaeological Society, LEWSA 1997.7 f24).

masonry buildings at St Nicholas Hospital antedate the middle of the thirteenth century, so it would have to be assumed that, as at Southover, two institutions with a similar eleemosynary function co-existed in relatively close proximity.

The hospital's isolation, typical of leper-houses, made it a useful landmark. In 1285 Roger le Hert, one of the archbishop's free tenants in Ringmer, held his house in the Borough of Wellingham in return for the service of driving his lord's pigs. The territorial limit of this duty stretched from Framfield in the east to 'the hospital of Westout' in the west. The Canterbury custumal which records this service incorporates material of an earlier date and, given the antiquity of the lordship, there is no reason why the use of the hospital as a boundary should not date back to its foundation.⁶

With one exception, later references are to the 'poor people' of the hospital, but leper-houses

in the patronage of monasteries were generally short-lived and more likely to be converted to another purpose than those in secular patronage, and references to *pauperes* cannot be regarded as indicative of the original function of the house. The term 'almshouse' is frequently applied to the hospital after 1547, perhaps since the Edwardian legislation which dissolved chantries had also spelt the end of several hospitals.

It is clear that the hospital, at least after the dissolution, was always an establishment for both men and women; brethren and sisters are referred to in 1538, and a list of c. 1547 names six men and seven women. Women, probably poor widows, seem latterly to have been in the majority; between 1616 and 1633 the registers of Lewes St Anne record the burial of nine women and two men from what had by then become known as the Spital Houses.⁷



Fig. 2. View of the ruins of St Nicholas Hospital from the south-west by James Lambert the elder, 1772 (Sussex Archaeological Society, LEWSA 1997.7 f25).

ENDOWMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Before its dissolution, the hospital's administration was in the hands of Lewes Priory. By 1535 the total payment for the support of the 13 inmates was £5 10s. 0d. but, contrary to the evidence given by the *Victoria County History*, the only mention of St Nicholas in the accounts of the manorial officials and obedientiaries is to sums of a shilling paid by several accountants to the monastery's pittancer *pro dica Sancti Nicholai* — for the tally of St Nicholas.⁸

At the dissolution, such sums to which the priory's manors and offices were liable seem to have been consolidated into a single payment of 13s. 4d. to each of the 13 poor inhabitants, charged on the site of the priory itself. In 1628 the total of £8 13s. 4d., with a similar sum due to the 13 inhabitants of St James's Hospital in Southover, was still paid by

the Earl of Dorset as owner of the Lord's Place, the core of the priory's site.⁹

The increase of £3 3s. 4d. might well have been made up from other endowments, although no evidence of them is available until the end of the fifteenth century. An annual payment of 2s. 6d. was charged on the manor of Lewes Burgus and 13s. 4d. on Ditchling, both demesne manors of the barony of Lewes; the sums can be traced, intermittently, between 1496 and 1622, although they were in the form of allowances against the reeves' accounts rather than actual payments. Those sums, with a further unknown endowment, were possibly later consolidated into an annual payment of 18s. 4d. with which Lord Abergavenny's house, on the site of which St Peter's Place was later built, was charged; as a demesne holding of the lord of the barony it would have made a convenient source for the

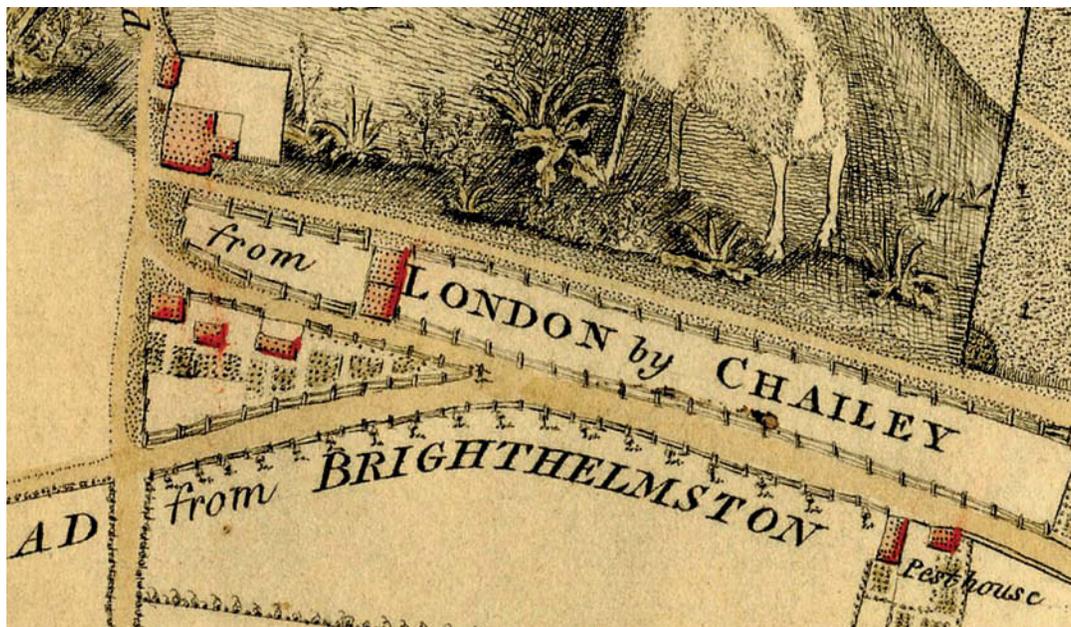


Fig. 3. Detail from a map of Lewes by James Edwards, 1799 (ESRO SHR 2869).

revenue. The Spital Garden in St Martins Lane also produced a rent, and the hospital owned a garden on the south side of Rotten Row, for which it was charged with a quitrent of 1s. 0d. in the rental of the manor of Lewes Burgus of 1624.¹⁰ These endowments were described in detail by the parish officers of St Anne's when making a return of their charities to the clerk of the peace in 1825.¹¹

The hospital and its inhabitants also received a steady income from legacies, the sums involved ranging from a shilling to 13s. 4d. In 1559 William Bossom, one of the inmates, left 6s. 8d. for repairs to the hospital, sixpence to each of the brothers and sisters, and sums of a shilling and 3s. 4d. for parties at his burial and month's memorial. He wished to be interred 'in the common burial within the hospital where I now dwell'.¹²

Most of these endowments gradually fell away. Those charged on Lewes and Ditchling can be traced as far as 1600, the rentcharge on the site of Lewes Priory does not seem to have survived the civil war, and charitable bequests all but dried up at the accession of Elizabeth; the last which has been identified was a sum of 6s. 8d. left by Thomas Broad of Lewes St Michael, who also remembered St James Hospital in Southover, in 1591.¹³

By what was probably a gradual process and one

which has certainly left no trace, the administration of the hospital passed to the parish authorities of Lewes St Anne. In 1812 the churchwardens and overseers declared themselves 'wholly unable to state' how they had come into possession of the property; the report of the charities inquiry of 1835 assumed either a lost post-dissolution grant, or that 'the parish, finding this property unoccupied, entered into possession'. The report states that the parish records contained evidence of uninterrupted enjoyment for nearly three centuries, that is, from the decades immediately following the dissolution. No such evidence survives today, and as early as 1809 'the dampness of that part of the church where the parish chest was kept' was blamed for the lack of title deeds to the site.¹⁴

The parish used the property both as a home for its poor and as a source of income to relieve them, but it is clear that, at least by the 1740s, the Spital was no longer regarded as a hospital. The lack of such a facility in the town led in 1742 to the establishment of the Pest House Charity. The building, also in the parish of St Anne (see Fig. 3 for its location), was to be used 'for an hospital or pest-house' 'when any person or persons ... happen to fall sick of the small-pox or any other infectious distemper'. The charity's catchment area

was defined as the Borough of Lewes, the Castle Precincts and all the houses between Westgate and the Spital Houses, the inhabitants of which are specifically referred to as potential beneficiaries of the new hospital.¹⁵

Maps of 1618 and 1620 (Figs 4–6) show a row of four cottages, almost certainly those planned in detail in 1867 (Fig. 9) and photographed, apparently on the eve of their demolition, in 1933 (Fig. 7). At the end of the eighteenth century, the Spital Field was rented out at two guineas, and the treasurer of the Brighton Turnpike paid an annual rent of £1, presumably for the land along the southern edge of the site, where work on the new road had revealed 'numbers of bones and skulls' in 1770.¹⁶

In 1795 Paul Dunvan related that places at the Spital were filled by the first comer; 'they all watched at the door till the corpse was brought out, and then literally contended tooth and nail for the succession'. Dunvan credits the reformation of the charity to John Kennard, elected as one of the overseers of St Anne in 1788,

'a man, to whose judgment and activity in office the parish are greatly indebted. He has made it a general retreat for the paupers of St Anne's, and does all in his power also to make it the scene of morality, as well as of humane accommodation'.¹⁷

The Napoleonic Wars, and particularly the building of barracks on the open land to the north of the hospital, provided the parish with an opportunity to enhance its income, which ultimately led to financial disaster.

Extensive barracks were built on 30 acres of land north of the Spital in 1803, but already in 1798 the parish had let some of its houses to members of militia regiments at the excellent return of 5s. 6d. or 6s. 6d. a week.¹⁸ Soon after the barracks had been built, a pair of Lewes bakers, Thomas and William Kennard (who may have been related to the reforming overseer), built a bakehouse and tenement at the north-west corner of the site, on land supposedly held of the manor of Houndean — they had somewhat speciously obtained permission to do so from Henry Shelley, lord of an eighth part of the manor. They also built 17 single-room brick-and-tile huts along the western frontage of the triangular site, which they let 'to considerable advantage' to soldiers for the purposes of cohabiting with their wives;

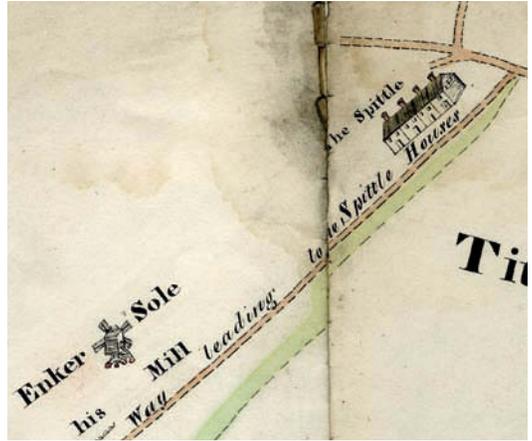


Fig. 4. Detail from John de Ward's map of Landport and Houndean Farms, 1618, redrawn 1838 (ESRO ACC 3412/3/387).



Fig. 5. Detail from George Randoll's map of Lewes, 1620 (ESRO ACC 3746).

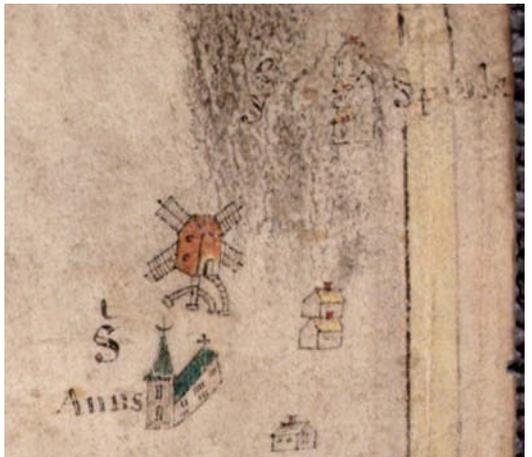


Fig. 6. Detail from John de Ward's map of Lewes, 1620 (ESRO ACC 2187).



Old Lewes is disappearing. The ancient Spital Cottages, on the site of the old St. Nicholas Hospital, which are to be demol

Fig. 7. Photograph of Spital Cottages awaiting demolition; *Sussex Express*, 8 February 1933 (ESRO).

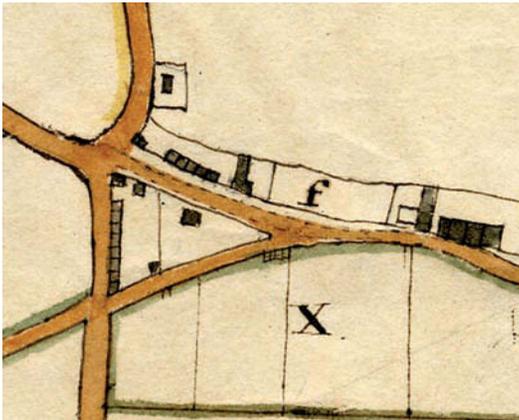


Fig. 8. Detail from a map of the parish of St Anne, c. 1810 (ESRO LAN 309B).

these buildings are shown on a map of c. 1810 (Fig. 8). The Kennards were charged £1 a year to use the well at the Spital Houses, and the barracks mess-man paid the parish 2s. 6d. a month for the same right.¹⁹

In 1806 the parish was given notice to quit the Pest House, and the vestry empowered its officers either to augment the accommodation at the Spital Houses or to sell them. It was thought that the presence of the barracks made the site unsuitable for a poor-house, and by the end of 1807 the parish had opted to sell the houses in order to buy the Pest House. The following April the vestry agreed to offer the freehold of the western half

of the site, including the huts, the well and a privy, to the Kennards, who were prepared to accept a title which counsel had described as 'extremely defective'. The sale, for £94 10s. 0d., was completed on 16 March 1810, and in December 1813 there was an abortive attempt to sell the remainder to a Mr Little; it was let for 11 years to Jeremiah Simmonds at £10 a year. In 1815 the Brighton Turnpike took more land along the southern boundary, and 20 feet at its eastern point.²⁰

The barracks were demolished in December 1814 but the bakehouse and huts remained, and soon became a nuisance. In 1818 the vestry sought counsel's opinion in an attempt to deal with the matter. The huts were now let to 'persons of the lowest, most debauched and worst description, property in the neighbourhood being deemed unsafe and the morals of the younger part of society debauched to an extent almost beyond description, in fact a nest of beggars, thieves and whores, against whose plunder vigilance cannot guard'.

As a way of removing the nuisance, the parish had attempted to buy the land back, but some of the owners, including the now-bankrupt Thomas Kennard, had refused to negotiate. It was eventually decided to indict the owners for highway encroachment — it had been noticed as early as 1808 that the huts had been built partly on the road — and the case, in which most of the inhabitants of the Spital Houses seem to have appeared as witnesses, came on at the Quarter Sessions at Easter 1819. After a hearing which lasted two days, the defendants were acquitted.²¹

The Kennards, who claimed to have spent over £700 on their development, refused offers of £400 and £450 for the land, proposing to demolish the huts or to move them into the field and improve them 'to accommodate a different class of people'; at one stage in the negotiations they demonstrated how St Anne's could make 5% by letting the property as it stood, and over 14% by expending £100 on repairs. They eventually extracted £500 from the parish authorities for the sale of the site, which was completed on 5 October 1819; the purchase-money was advanced personally by five members of the vestry.²²

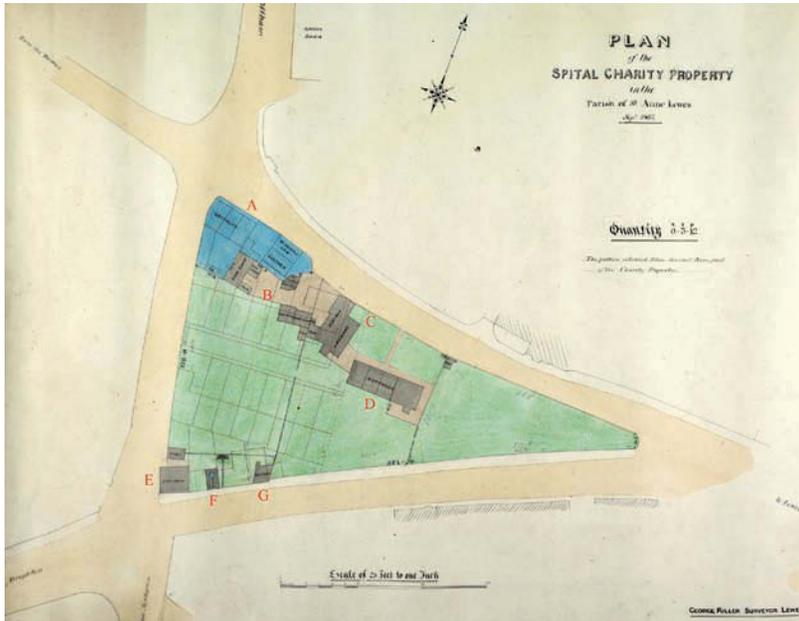


Fig. 9. Survey of the Spital Estate by George Fuller, September 1867 (ESRO ACC 5611/2/96).

In 1821 Jeremiah Simmonds, who had rented the Spital Land in 1814, began to farm the paupers, giving the parish three shillings a week for each individual and keeping their earnings. In the summer he made additions to the buildings, but the arrangement had evidently fallen through by August, and in February of 1822 Simmonds was allowed compensation for his alterations. The three remaining huts were to be dismantled and re-erected as a workshop at the Pest House, where Richard Terry employed the parish poor in a yarn-spinning enterprise.²³

In 1830 the parish authorities bought an insurance policy on their estate with the Sun Fire Office. The Spital Houses, four adjoining brick-and-tiled houses and a thatched house in two tenements, all occupied by the parish poor, were covered for £250 and £50, and the nearby brick-and-tiled Pest House for £300.²⁴

The charitable status of the endowment left it untouched by the new Poor Law of 1834. The parish authorities continued to administer the Spital and its endowment without disturbance until April 1865, when the vestry appointed a committee of seven to investigate its accounts, and to establish whether it would be advantageous to sell or lease the property.²⁵

The committee's report, submitted a year later, provides a detailed description of the site, which should be read in conjunction with a detailed plan by the Lewes surveyor George Fuller of September 1867 (see Fig. 9.) The land, with four cowsheds, a cart-shed, pig-pounds and a calf-pen (B), was let to Samuel Vidler at £5. A two-room cottage on the Brighton Road (G) was let to James Simmons at 1s. 6d. a week, and shared an underground well-house (F) with a five-room timber cottage at the corner of the Brighton Road (E), let to Richard Huggett, a huckster, at 3s. a week. An old thatched cottage containing three rooms (?part of D) was let for 2s. a week; a five-room cottage, with an old building used as a laundry near to it (C), was let to Mrs Lydia Smith at £10 a year, with an additional payment of 4d. a week for water. The remaining three cottages (D), occupied by Henry Holden, Reuben Reynolds and [blank] Rowland, were each let at 2s. 8d. a week. The whole yielded an annual income of £53 11s. 4d. The committee reported 'great complaints' from the tenants of the four northern cottages, who shared a single privy. They also drew attention to the five cottages built on the north-west corner of the site (A), and proposed that the charity's possible claim to them should be investigated.²⁶ The community at the Spital was considerable;

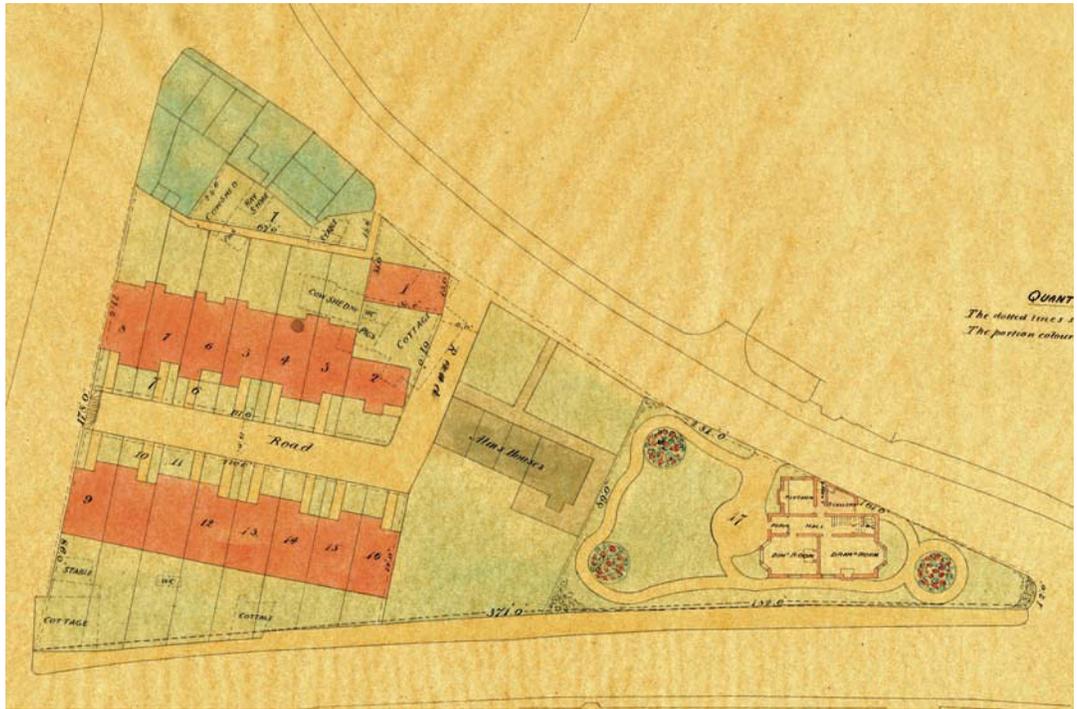


Fig. 10. James Berry's plan for proposed development of the Spital Estate, 1868 (ESRO ACC 5611/2/96).

in 1871 the site, including the *Windmill* beershop and the cottages near it, contained 11 households amounting to 59 people, including a hawker's family of seven living in a caravan. Nearby lay Richard Drewitt's extensive training stables.²⁷

On 2 July 1867 the Charity Commissioners appointed trustees for the parish charities of Lewes St Anne. In October the trustees proposed the sale of all but the four cottages with the ground behind them back to the Brighton Road, and that each be given its own privy rather than sharing a single one; work started only after a notice had been served by the Inspector of Nuisances in March 1868.²⁸ In February 1868 a plan for the development of 16 houses west of the cottages and a more substantial villa to their east (Fig. 10) was submitted by James Berry, a surveyor in the Cliffe, but the trustees eventually followed George Fuller's advice and offered both areas in single lots, albeit described as building land.²⁹

A Scheme for the united parish charities was sealed on 24 April 1868, its object in permitting the sale of the land being to provide 'the most

deserving and necessitous poor with lodging, furniture, clothes, bedding, fuel, medical or other aid in sickness, food or other articles in kind, or cash'.³⁰ The property, with the exception of the cottages, was auctioned in two lots in May 1868. Lot 1, the tapering plot east of the cottages, failed to sell; lot 2, the land west of the cottages, with one large cottage, and two small cottages and a well-house on the Brighton Road, was bought by James Cozens the younger of Lewes, butcher, for £460; the conveyance to him was executed on 18 June. Cozens demolished the large cottage on Spital Road, and sold the site to William Whitcombe, keeper of the *Bear* Hotel in Cliffe, on 23 November 1871. His widow died in 1908 and on 11 May 1909 Lewes Borough Council bought the land, offered for sale in six building plots, for £800 for the site of Western Road School. Ownership of the site passed to East Sussex County Council as a result of the Education Act of 1944.³¹

In September 1882 the town surveyor proposed the purchase of land lying to the east of the cottages, which was used as a vegetable garden; the trustees decided to investigate the sale of the whole



Fig. 11. James Cheetham's photograph of Western Road showing the St Anne's Institute, the gable and chimneys of St Nicholas and Westoute, the *Windmill* beershop, Lewes Prison and windmill, c. 1900 (private collection).

remaining endowment. In April 1884 the land was auctioned, but failed to reach its reserve. In September 1897 the land and estate agents Powell & Company, who were developing the Wallands Estate to the north of the Spital, made an offer for a long lease of the land; the trustees responded by offering the freehold if Powells took sufficient land to build a parish room. The Charity Commissioners permitted the sale of the Spital Garden in Old Market Lane on 1 October 1897, Powells' offer for the whole was declined by the trustees in March 1900, and on 5 March 1901 the land and cottages, which had been producing an income of £9 6s. 0d., were sold to Powells and others for £610.³²

On 6 May 1901 Powells sold the four Spital Cottages for £380 to Walter Lintott of Lewes, land agent, who sold to Harry Escott of Lewes, racing trainer, on 9 September 1902. Escott sold the property to James Batup of Castle Bank, Lewes, gentleman, who sold on for £485 to Mary Frances, wife of Howard Scott Potter of 221 High Street, gentleman, on 5 January 1924. Ownership of the cottages was divided between members of the Potter

family, who sold all four to Lewes Borough Council on 27 January 1928. Five years later the cottages were photographed, apparently on the eve of their demolition (see Fig. 7). The site was acquired by East Sussex County Council by compulsory purchase as a site for an additional classroom for Western Road School on 4 June 1948.³³

On 7 December 1901 Powell & Co conveyed the easternmost tip of the site to the trustees of a parochial hall or institute to be called The Victoria Institute and Parish Room 'for the religious and social benefit' of the parishioners of St Anne. In 1977 it passed to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, and was developed as the Canon O'Donnell Centre; now (2010) empty, its future is in doubt. In June 1904 Powell & Co submitted plans of two houses, to be called St Nicholas and Westoute, to Lewes Borough Council; the site of St Nicholas, east of Westoute, was sold by Powells to Albert Wells on 10 July 1905.³⁴ These buildings are evocatively depicted in a view taken by James Cheetham, the schoolmaster at Lewes Prison and an amateur photographer, in around 1910 (Fig. 11).



Fig. 12 View of the site from the north-west from James Rouse, *The beauties and antiquities of the county of Sussex* (London: Author, 1825).

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SITE BY CARTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

This section uses as its point of reference the survey of the site made by George Fuller in 1867 (see Fig. 9), on which the buildings have been identified by the letters A–G.

The earliest representations of the site occur in a map of 1618, and two maps of 1620.³⁵

John de Ward's map of 1618, redrawn in 1838 (see Fig. 4), shows a row of four cottages. George Randall's map of 1620 (see Fig. 5) shows a row of five houses, and suggests by the colouring that they were thatched and had brick chimneys. Another map drawn by John de Ward in 1620 (see Fig. 6) appears to show three houses. All these maps show the houses in the position relative to the rest of the site which the Spital Houses occupied when first accurately mapped in the nineteenth century, and clearly represent building D. The failure of the maps to show other buildings cannot be taken as definitive proof of their absence.

Several representations of the site by James

Lambert the elder of Lewes survive; they amount to two views, one from the north-west (see Fig. 1) and one from the south-west (see Fig. 2) and, although variously dated, were based on drawings made for the Lewes lawyer-antiquary John Elliot in 1772.³⁶ In 1861 an engraving of the latter view was used to illustrate an article by William Figg, who stated that 'the building remains nearly in the same state at present.'³⁷

Both perspectives show a massive masonry gable with a wide central window at its apex and a smaller window to one side at a lower level; each shows a different face of the reveal of the higher window, perhaps suggesting a splay. The south-west view shows a lower masonry wall, running away from the gable and at right-angles to it, which also continues a short way towards the artist. It also depicts a single-storey lean-to building with a chimney, built across the lower portion of the gable. At the very edge of the same view appears the corner of a thatched building. That building is clearly the long, largely stone house with a single chimney and thatched roof which forms the foreground of Lambert's north-



Fig. 13 Ernest Fuller's preliminary design for Western Road School, view from the north, 1910 (ESRO ACC 5611/3/558).



Fig. 14 Ernest Fuller's preliminary design for Western Road School, view from the south-west, 1910 (ESRO ACC 5611/3/558).

west view. That same building was again drawn by James Rouse of Fulham between 1821 and 1825 (Fig. 12), but his inclusion of the spire of St Anne's church in an otherwise identical perspective allows the precise point of view to be established, and the house identified as part of building C, the cottage and laundry, on the plan of 1867. Both Lambert and Rouse show the tops of two chimneys appearing above the masonry gable; these must be the chimneys of the Spital Houses themselves (D). The westernmost house, including its west gable, was shown in Ernest Fuller's preliminary design for Western Road School in 1910 (Figs 13 and 14) and the north front of all four houses was photographed, on the eve of their demolition, for the *Sussex Express* in 1933 (see Fig. 7).³⁸

Taken together, the views suggest that the masonry gable formed the western end of the Spital Houses, and the continuation of the lower wall westwards beyond the gable may indicate that it had formed an internal partition rather than a terminal feature; that interpretation is also encouraged by the representation of the window, which appears to be internal. The lower reaches of the gable are masked by the lean-to, but the existence of a ground-level opening beneath the large window cannot be excluded. The gable, with its round-headed windows and massive stone build, has the appearance of twelfth-century work, consistent, allowing for a preliminary timber phase, with what we know of the site's foundation. Ernest Fuller's designs of 1910 (see Figs 13 and 14)

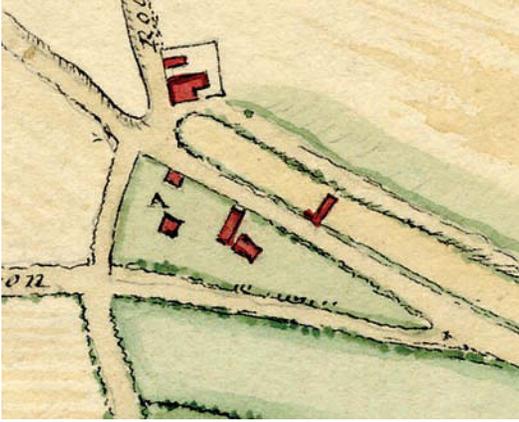


Fig. 15. Detail from a map of Lewes by James Lambert the younger, 1788 (ESRO ACC 3774).

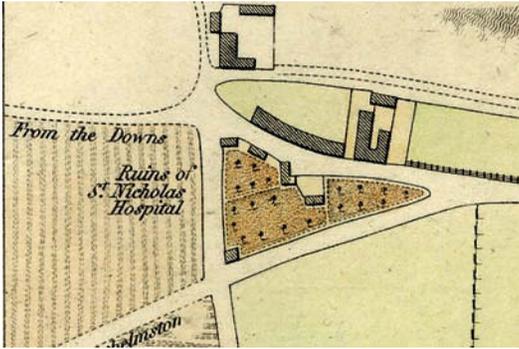


Fig. 16. Detail from a map of Lewes by William Figg, 1824 (ESRO AMS 6008/3/6/2).

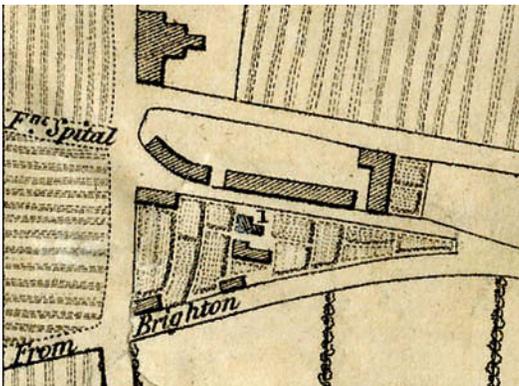


Fig. 17. Detail from a map of Lewes by John Marchant, 1824 (ESRO AMS 6008/3/6/3).

show the gable quite clearly, and demonstrate that the masonry did not survive at that date. Between 1789 and 1792 John Kennard, the improving overseer of St Anne's, sold 321 loads of stone, and we may speculate that the brick walls shown in the drawing and in the photograph of 1933 were the result of his work at the Spital; the fenestration of the north face of the houses is certainly consistent with such a date for the improvements. That underbuilding does not, however, seem to have involved replacement of the gable, which apparently remained in situ to be drawn by Rouse in the early 1820s (see Fig. 12).³⁹

Translating that information to the excavation, we find that the northern end of the masonry gable would have stood at the south-west corner of trench A, and that the postulated building to its east would have occupied the area which the graves found in that trench appear to respect.⁴⁰

The site is depicted in a map of Lewes in 1788, apparently by James Lambert the younger (Fig. 15) which, in addition to buildings C and D, shows a building on the site of the *Windmill* (A) and another unidentified structure to its south.⁴¹ A map of Lewes published in 1799 shows a similar (but not identical) configuration of buildings, and indicates the many gardens cultivated within the precinct and that the site tapered to a point at its eastern extremity, where a fingerpost stood. The map also locates the Pest House (see Fig. 3).⁴² An undated map of about 1810 (see Fig. 8) shows buildings A and B, with buildings C and D drawn together as one block. The map shows the boundary introduced in 1810 when the western portion of the site was sold to the Kennards, whose huts are also depicted. The southernmost hut occupies the site of cottage E, and cottage G appears on the western edge of the new boundary at its southern point.⁴³

Two maps of the borough of Lewes by William Figg the younger (Fig. 16) and John Marchant (Fig. 17), both published in 1824, show the buildings at the Spital. Figg, apparently the more accurate, labels the site *Ruins of St Nicholas Hospital*, perhaps suggesting that some antiquities were then still visible. In these *Collections* in 1861, Figg recalled that a cottage forming part of the hospital, 'with its small remains of a Norman wall', was formerly a public house bearing the sign of the *Windmill*.⁴⁴ In his *Beauties*, published in 1825, James Rouse refers to a masonry wall which was not depicted in his view (see Fig. 12). Apart from the removal

of all but the southernmost hut, the site was unchanged from that depicted in c. 1810.⁴⁵ The Spital appears on a map of the Landport and Houndean estates, drawn by William Figg in 1827 (Fig. 18).⁴⁶ By that date the Kennards' huts had all but disappeared – only the southernmost, building E, remained, apparently linked with structures F and G in a continuous run. The corner appears in two photographs taken in about 1900 (Figs 21 and 22), and the ragged appearance of the western gable of building G certainly suggests the demolition of buildings which lay in what was then a gap in the frontage. Figg's map also depicts the buildings at the north-west corner of the triangle as an obvious encroachment on the highway.

The tithe-map of Lewes St Anne, surveyed in 1843, shows the area in detail (Fig. 19). The buildings on the site of the three cottages at A were not present, but all the other structures, including the well-house (F), were depicted. Comparing the plan of building C with the Lambert and Rouse views, it is clear that by 1843 dwellings had been built on the west side of the building shown by the artists, which formed the 'old building used as a laundry' described in 1866. Richard Smith, one of the occupiers in 1843, was perhaps the husband of Lydia Smith, the washerwoman in 1866.⁴⁷

The particulars of sale of 1867 relied on Fuller's detailed plan (see Fig. 9). The only significant difference from the tithe map of 24 years earlier is the appearance of the three cottages west of the *Windmill*, of which the vestry committee had complained the previous year.⁴⁸

Between 1868 and 1871 the purchaser demolished the dwelling and the old building housing the laundry to which it was attached, and also cleared the sheds and pigsties from the land behind the *Windmill*. The site was surveyed at a scale of 1:500 by the Ordnance Survey in 1873 (Fig. 20); with the exception of slight adjustments at the well-house (F), its layout remained identical.⁴⁹

Many of the buildings on the site appear in a photograph taken for Ernest Fuller, the architect of Western Road School, in about 1910 (Fig. 21), and a Cheetham photograph of about the same date (Fig. 22). Particularly clearly depicted are buildings E and G, the latter carrying an advertising hoarding and the remains of a bicycle, presumably serving the same purpose. The doorway leading to the well-house (building F), now blocked up, still remains (2010) in the flint wall. A postcard sent to Lewes

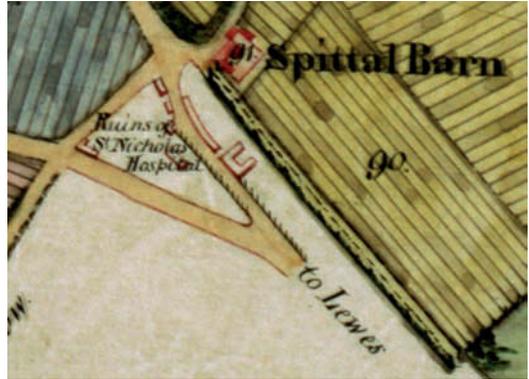


Fig. 18. Detail from a map of the Landport and Houndean Estates by William Figg, 1827 (ESRO AMS 6705/1).



Fig. 19. Detail from the tithe map of Lewes St Anne, 1843 (ESRO TD 3).

from Maidstone in 1915 (Fig. 23) shows a group of prison warders marching past building E, the southernmost of the Kennards' huts. It is identified by an endorsement as 'Huggetts Cottage'; Richard Huggett, a huckster, had been the tenant in 1866.⁵⁰ It was demolished in the winter of 1914, along with buildings F and G, to form the southern boundary of the new Western Road School.⁵¹

A photograph of the Spital Cottages, the demolition of which had been announced, was published in the *Sussex Express* on 8 February 1933 (see Fig. 7).

CONCLUSION

The documentary evidence examined here demonstrates that the area occupied by the hospital of St Nicholas was extensive, and that it has been

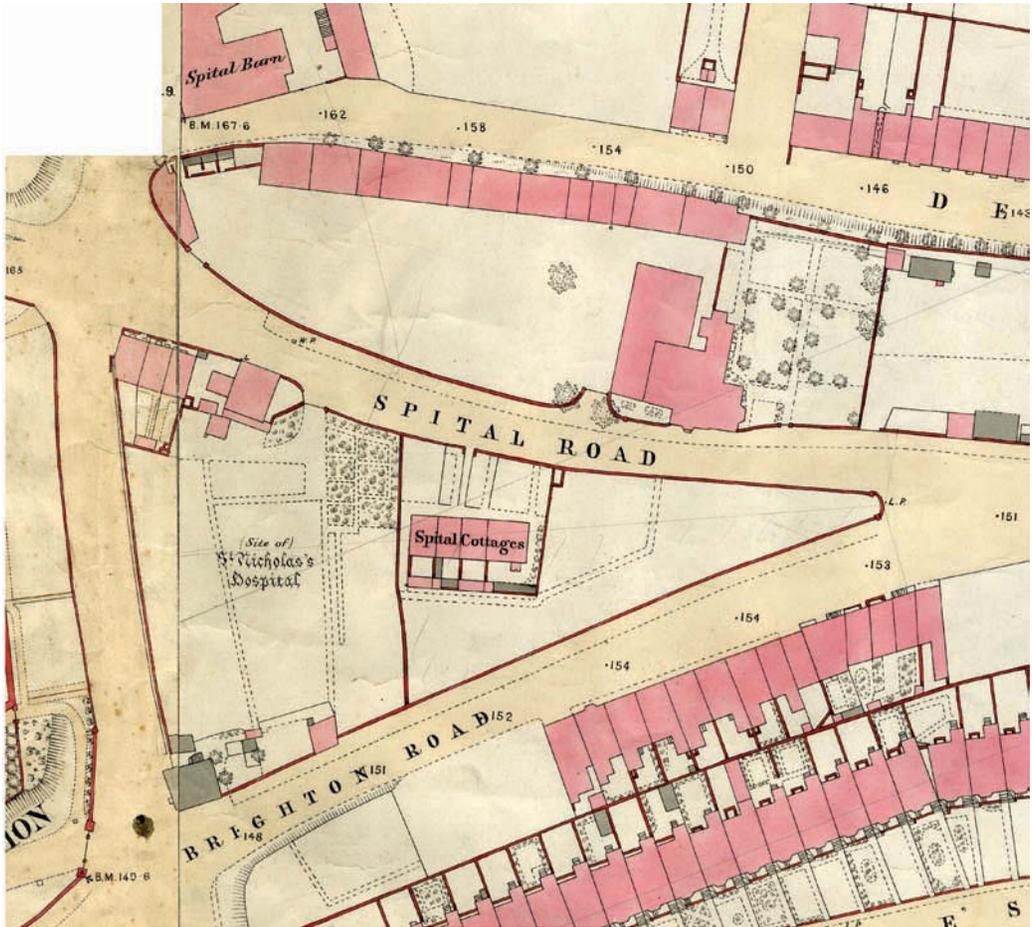


Fig. 20. Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:500 maps, 1873 (OS 54.13.9-10).

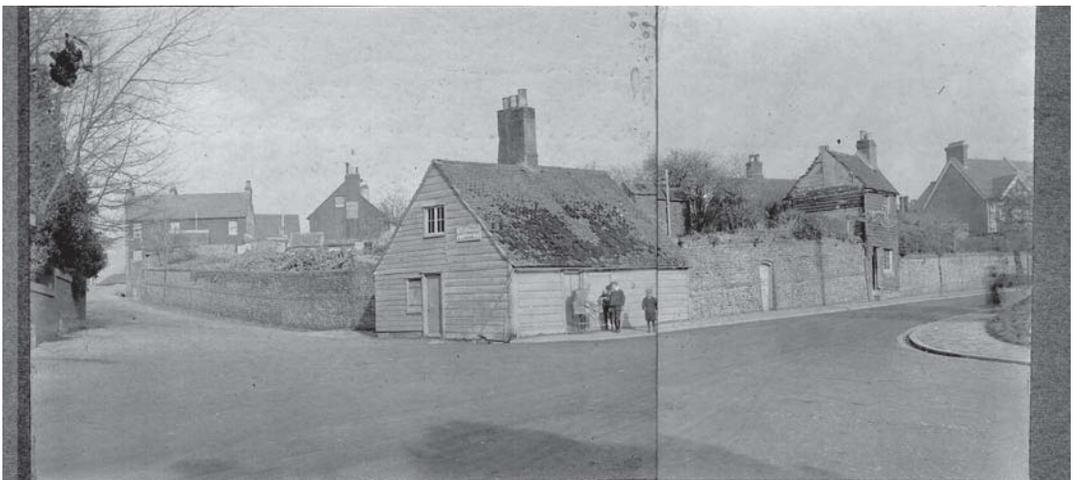


Fig. 21. Ernest Fuller's photograph of the site from the south-west, c. 1910 (ESRO ACC 5611/3/558).



Fig. 22. James Cheetham's photograph of the site from the south-west, c. 1910 (private collection).

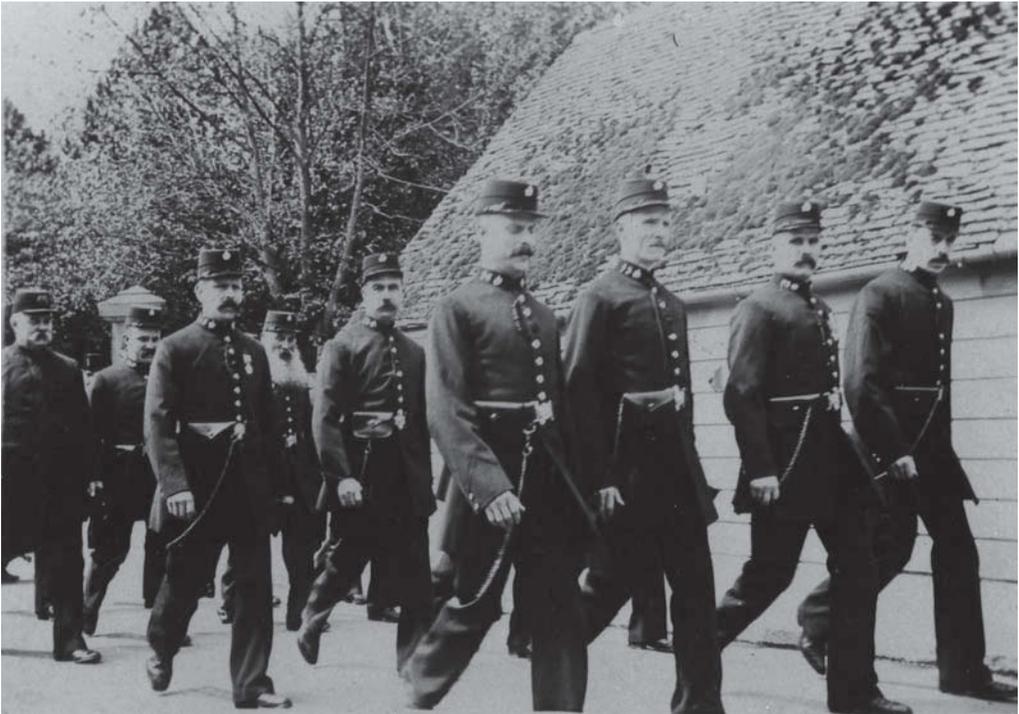


Fig. 23. Postcard of prison warders passing the south-west corner of the site, posted 1915 (ESRO AMS 6462/1).

both augmented by encroachment from the highway at its north-west corner, and truncated by road-widening both along its southern boundary and at its eastern tip. The survival, well into the nineteenth century, of standing Norman masonry, coupled with the unusual survival of cartographic and other visual evidence, should inform any future investigation of the site.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank John Bleach, Colin Brent, Bob Cairns, David Calvert, John Farrant, Mark Gardiner, David Martin, Jenny Shelley and the late Kate Washer for their help in the preparation of this article.

NOTES

- ¹ *Victoria County History of Sussex* (hereafter *VCH*) **2** (1907), 104; the same position was taken by the officers of St Anne's parish in 1825: East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO) QDS 2/1 p. 51.
- ² David Carpenter, *The Battles of Lewes & Evesham, 1264/65* (Mercia Publications, 1987), 28, 29.
- ³ I am grateful to Max Satchell of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Oxford, for information concerning the development of leper-houses. For the latest account of the medieval hospitals in Lewes, see Colin Brent, *Pre-Georgian Lewes* (Lewes: Colin Brent Books, 2004), especially 98–9 and 209; *Lortepool* is located on the map on page 141.
- ⁴ *Pre-Georgian Lewes*, 97–8.
- ⁵ *Pre-Georgian Lewes*, 112–51; David Jones (ed.), *St Richard of Chichester*, Sussex Record Society (hereafter SRS) **79** (1995), 66–70.
- ⁶ B. C. Redwood and A. E. Wilson (eds), 'Customals of the Sussex manors of the archbishop of Canterbury'; SRS **57** (1958), 88; for the lordship of South Malling, see F. R. H. du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury* (Nelson, 1966).
- ⁷ *VCH 2*; The National Archives, Public Record Office (hereafter TNA: PRO) SC6/Edw6/454; transcript at ESRO of West Sussex Record Office EpII/16/128A.
- ⁸ *Calendar of Papal Letters 5*, 417; TNA: PRO SC6/Hen8/3529 (microfilm ESRO XA 66); ESRO SAS/E 234. The entries noticed by *VCH* are payments to the monks' infirmary.
- ⁹ *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Elizabeth 1*, 307; ESRO ADA 45, 122, Centre for Kentish Studies U269 A1/8.
- ¹⁰ *Sussex Notes and Queries 5* (1934–35), 100 (Lewes); ESRO ABE 18R/1, 2, SRS **34** (1928), 54 (Ditchling); ESRO PAR 411 11/1; SRS **34** (1928), 16 (Spital Garden in Rotten Row; for a plan by Henry Card, October 1864, see ESRO ACC 3748).
- ¹¹ ESRO QDS 2/1 ff. 48–51.
- ¹² SRS **43** (1938), 151–2.
- ¹³ ESRO PBT 1/1/8 f. 464.
- ¹⁴ ESRO PAR 411 11/1; *Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring concerning Charities*, 712–13 (printed pagination), 315–16 (manuscript pagination); ESRO AMS 5809/12.
- ¹⁵ *Report of the Commissioners* 706–8 (310–12); for a deed of appointment of new trustees, 1772, see ESRO ACC 4608.
- ¹⁶ See note 35 below; *Sussex Express*, 10 Feb. 1933, 12; ESRO PAR 411 31/1/3; *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 23 Jul. 1770.
- ¹⁷ [Paul Dunvan], *Ancient and Modern History of Lewes and Brighthelmstone* (1795), 369; ESRO PAR 411 30/1/3.
- ¹⁸ Colin Brent, *Georgian Lewes* (Colin Brent Books, 1993), 79–80; ESRO PAR 411 9/1.
- ¹⁹ ESRO AMS 5809/12–44; ESRO LAN 309; ESRO PAR 411 12/1; the property remained outside the charity's endowment; in 1810 it was owned (subject to the challenge of the parish authorities) by the miller Moses Henty; there is no trace of a grant in the manorial court books (ESRO ACC 2953/27–9). The building was subsequently developed as the *Windmill* public house (Fig. 11), a name remembered by William Figg attached to one of the Spital Cottages (see note 37).
- ²⁰ ESRO AMS 5809/12–44, SAS/DD 581, 586–7; ESRO PAR 411 12/1, 10/23–38.
- ²¹ *Georgian Lewes*, 80; ESRO AMS 5809/19; ESRO PAR 411 40/1 (bill of Christopher Kell, attorney to the parish highway surveyors).
- ²² ESRO AMS 5809/20–33; ESRO PAR 411 12/1, 2; PAR 411 10/23–38.
- ²³ ESRO PAR 411 12/1, 2.
- ²⁴ ESRO ACC 4112, policy number 1116530.
- ²⁵ ESRO PAR 411 12/5.
- ²⁶ ESRO SAS/DD 823 (report), ESRO ACC 5611/1/96 (survey, with a copy of the report); AMS 5809/51 (committee minutes).
- ²⁷ TNA: PRO RG 10/1067 entries 133, 150–59, 255 (microfilm ESRO XA 53/123).
- ²⁸ ESRO AMS 5809/45, 51.
- ²⁹ ESRO ACC 5611/2/95.
- ³⁰ ESRO AMS 5809/46.
- ³¹ ESRO ACC 5611/1/96, the original survey of the site which includes a copy of the particulars as printed; ESRO, R/C4/439 (deeds of the site, formerly T2803); Cozens also offered £260 for lot 1 but was declined; in July 1868 the Revd J. A. Parsons proposed letting part of the unsold land for a parish school — ESRO AMS 5809/51.
- ³² ESRO R/C4/440 (deeds of the site, formerly T2801); ESRO AMS 5809/49, 51.
- ³³ ESRO R/C4/440 (deeds of the site, formerly T2801); after the CPO it was determined that Lewes Borough Council had acquired the site as local education authority; it consequently vested automatically in the County Council under the 1944 Education Act; *Sussex Express*, 10 Feb. 1933, 12.
- ³⁴ ESRO PAR 411 16/1; for the Institute, see ESRO BMW A13/5/11 and *Viva Lewes 42* (Mar. 2010), 67; DL/A25/247.
- ³⁵ ESRO ACC 3412/3/387 (John de Ward, 1618, copied 1838); ESRO ACC 2187 (John de Ward, 1620); ESRO ACC 3746 (George Randoll, 1620).
- ³⁶ Sussex Archaeological Society, LEWSA 1997.7, ff 24, 25; SAS Library, ACC 3167, 3794; Brighton Museum,

ACC 101417; Bodleian Library, Gough map 13a; British Library, K Top 42.22.m (I owe these references to John Farrant). Lambert had produced, for artistic rather than antiquarian purposes, a view of St James's Hospital in Southover which is dated to 1762 on later copies; a similar rustic scene was provided by the St Nicholas ruins, and the underlying work may well date from the same year: J. H. Farrant, *Sussex Depicted*, SRS **85** (2001), 43.

³⁷ William Figg, 'Memorials of old Lewes', SAC **13** (1861), 4.

³⁸ 'N.W. View of The Spital, Lewes', in James Rouse, *The Beauties and Antiquities of the County of Sussex* (1825), plate 87, 238–9; ESRO ACC 5611/3/558; *Sussex Express* 10 Feb. 1933, 12.

³⁹ ESRO PAR 411 31/1/3.

⁴⁰ I owe the interpretation of the topography depicted by Lambert and Rouse and the application of the plans to the findings of the excavation to David Martin.

⁴¹ ESRO ACC 3774 (formerly SAS/C15).

⁴² ESRO SHR 2869, by James Edwards of 22 Belvidere Place, Borough Road, Southwark.

⁴³ ESRO LAN 309.

⁴⁴ William Figg, 'Memorials of old Lewes', SAC **13** (1861), 6.

⁴⁵ ESRO AMS 6008/3/6/2, 3; Rouse, 238–9.

⁴⁶ ESRO AMS 6705/1.

⁴⁷ ESRO TD 3.

⁴⁸ ESRO ACC 5611/2/96; ESRO SAS/DD 823.

⁴⁹ Plans in the deed-bundle, ESRO R/C4/439; Ordnance Survey, 54.13.9, 10.

⁵⁰ ESRO ACC 5611/3/558; ESRO AMS 6462; ESRO SAS/DD 823; Ordnance Survey, 54.13.

⁵¹ The school was built by Alfred Chilton of Uckfield to plans by Ernest H. Fuller of Lewes, and was completed in February 1915: ESRO C/E 13/4, 5 (minutes), ESRO ACC 5611/3/558 (plans, drawings and photographs), DL/A25/457 (building regulations plans).

