EASTBOURNE URBAN MEDIEVAL EXCAVATION PROJECT

During the next month the Eastbourne Natural History and Archaeological Society’s long-term project to excavate more than four thousand square metres of land opposite the Norman Parish Church of St. Mary, will be completed.

Archaeological evidence of Medieval Eastbourne was sparse and it was felt that evidence of medieval structures and artifacts should be sought in the Old Town area. The most obvious place was the open space in Church Street, opposite St. Mary’s Parish Church, whose foundation was known to be, at the latest, Norman. Eastbourne Borough Council, the owners, had cleared the site for road widening and building and kindly gave permission for a trial excavation to take place during June and July 1977.

The trial excavation, which revealed medieval remains, including the foundation walls of a building and associated pits, proved so rewarding that the Council agreed that the work could continue until the contractors moved in.

Clearly, if vital information about Eastbourne’s medieval history was not to be lost, a full scale excavation of rescue and research had to be mounted. Thus it was that in September 1977 a small unpaid and largely untrained team resumed work on the excavation of what was to become an extensive urban site. Tools were kindly lent by the Sussex Archaeological Field Unit, local builders and individuals and, through the generosity of the Sussex Archaeological Society, East Sussex County Council, and private donations, sufficient money has been available to continue the work.

Documentary evidence suggested the existence of medieval remains on the site, for it was known to have been the sites of both a 13th century vicarage and a building called the Jesus House, which was believed to have been the edifice of the Brotherhood of Jesus. Remains of both these structures were uncovered although the remains of the latter were sparse. When the 13th century vicarage was demolished in the late 17th century, a new vicarage was built in its garden and the remains of this was also excavated.

The Jesus House (right) and the Old Vicarage from a late 19th Century photograph.
The excavated area has revealed an interesting series of foundations with associated wells, cess pits, and cellar, covering a period between the 13th century to the present day.

The excavations in Church Street have produced a remarkable sequence of pottery dating from the late 13th century. Home-produced wares including typical storage jars and jugs of the 13th century, a significant collection of experimental Staffordshire ware and Delft ware.

The ceramic collection also includes numerous imported items including Räuren cups, Bellermine Jugs and Chinese plate. Some examples are extremely rare such as the drug jar made in Spain between 1400 and 1450. The jar is probably one of the most complete examples of the few so far excavated in Britain.

Eastbourne Greensand and local flint are the main building stone and other materials include medieval roofing slate from Cornwall and roofing slabs from Horsham. Both English and Netherlands floor tiles have been found. A few pieces of Caen stone have been found on the site, re-used in walls, and probably from the Norman Church building opposite.

The work has been carried out in four phases. Phase one was the subject of an interim report published in 1978 and this year an exhibition entitled 'Eastbourne's Medieval Excavation' at the Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, featured finds from the first two phases.

The excavation has provided Eastbourne with a wealth of archaeological evidence relating to the development of the town and its pottery sequence will be a valuable source of reference for excavation in the future, but like most excavations, it has left problems unsolved. Not least of these is the absence of 12th century artifacts on such a large site adjacent to the Parish Church of that period.

Phase IV is scheduled to finish at the end of September this year. Volunteers are urgently required to ensure that the project is completed on time, and donations to cover the work and the preparation of the Final report.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Town Hall, Lewes on Saturday, 3rd May, 1980. The President, Dr. K.M.E. Murray, the Chairman, Mr. L.R. Fisher, officers and 78 members were present.

President's Address. The theme of Dr. Murray's address was her pride in the Society. She paid tribute to the loyalty and hard work of the honorary workers and the officers, mentioning particularly Mrs. Rector, who had just resigned after 20 years devoted service and Miss Verena Smith, Meetings Secretary for 14 years.

It was right for the Society to take pride too, in its work: the research which had been made possible by the generous bequest from Mr. Margary's estate and the educational courses in both East and West Sussex.

The Membership was still increasing and Dr. Murray hoped that it would reach 2,000 during next year. Members, Area Representatives and friends of the various properties could do much to help. In conclusion Dr. Murray said she was very privileged to have been Chairman and President of the Society and she hoped that she would continue to serve it after her retirement from office.

Mr. Fisher thanked Dr. Murray, saying that the Society was fortunate to have had a President of such scholarship and distinction and was profoundly grateful for her many contributions to all aspects of its work since 1938 when she first joined. In appreciation of her services Mr. Fisher asked all members present to elect her as a Vice-President and this was enthusiastically supported.

Mr. L.R. Fisher then presented the annual report (published in Newsletter 30) enlarging on certain items after saying that he regretted that the Notice of the A.G.M. and the report for 1979 had been separated in the Newsletter. Mr. Fisher concluded by thanking committees, officers and honorary officers for their work for the Society.

Dr. Brent then reported on the museums in the Lewes area, stressing the importance of their contribution to education and tourism, and paying tribute to individuals concerned.

In the absence of Mr. Lelliott Mr. J. Farrant presented the accounts. He said that the finances were in a healthy state but care must be taken to avoid living off capital.

The New President Professor Barry Cunliffe was introduced by Dr. Murray who said how delighted she was that he had agreed to accept the invitation of the Society.

Other Officers
Mr. L. Fisher continues as Chairman, Mr. T. Beaumont as Hon. General Secretary, Mr. L.A. Lelliott as Hon. Treasurer and Dr. O.R. Bedwin as Hon. Editor. Mr. F.G. Aldsworth, Dr. C. Brent, Mr. L.R. Fisher, and Mrs. M. Rule were re-elected to the Council for a period of three years. Messrs. Thornton Baker were re-elected as Auditors.

Subscriptions to increase from 1st January 1981

<table>
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<td>Student Member</td>
<td>£4.50</td>
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</table>

The Hon. Membership Secretary Mr. K. Suckling encloses a separate circular and asks members who pay by Bankers Order to sign and return the form to Barbicane House.

Points from the floor. Dr. S. Farrant referred to the first paragraph of the Report of the Archaeology Committee (p197) stating that such proposals amounted to a change in policy and should have the approval of the General Meeting. The Editor pointed out that there was no intention to alter the content of the Newsletter. Changes proposed were in the presentation.

Mrs. Holt said she was disturbed that the Society's muniments were being dispersed, some to East and some to West Sussex. Mr. Dickens replied that the archives were transferred as a single deposit belonging to the Society and those going to West Sussex referred to that part of the County.

THE ROMAN SACRED SPRING IN BATH

In the afternoon some 200 members listened to Professor Cunliffe give a most interesting account of his work at Bath. The springs had attracted worshippers within twenty years of the Conquest and had developed into an important and popular sacred centre dedicated to Sulis.

He described the brilliant engineering of the original builders of the baths which he and his excavators discovered as they worked
under extremely unpleasant conditions. Their efforts were rewarded by the discovery of thousands of coins and offerings. Curses written on lead tablets by temple scribes provide interesting information about the everyday concerns of ordinary people and the final piece of an altar, found by lucky chance, indicate the interest of a more important personage.

This was a fascinating story told with great clarity and enthusiasm and much enjoyed by all present.

WILMINGTON PRIORY ADMISSIONS 1979. CORRECTION

The Office apologises for an error in the figure given in Newsletter No.30, p.198. This should have read 8,372 not 6,441.

VISIT TO BATH

Once more, Linda Lamont and the ubiquitous Ken Suckling deserve the thanks of more than one hundred members for an enormously successful outing on 17th May in glorious weather. Ken's absence alone (due to exhaustion?) marred this trip to Bath.

On arrival at Bath Station we were met by the Mayor's honorary guides. The writer's group was conducted into many secret corners by a naturalised German whose sense of humour was as great as his love and knowledge of the City. As in York one observed the cultural and social benefits which follow the removal of traffic from (originally) medieval streets: also the misery which continues elsewhere because this nettle has not been grasped as firmly as Professor Colin Buchanan recommended. The two cities are clearly comparable in the wealth of their character and interest for people of all ages.

Some of us visited the Pump Room and Roman Baths with particular interest after listening to the brilliant talk by our President on 3rd May. Others went to the Assembly Rooms and Costume Museum. The afternoon, for most of us, was spent at the American Museum at Claverton Manor. Here the skill with which complete rooms from 17th, 18th and 19th century American homes, mostly very modest in scale, have been fitted into a palatial mansion by the Director, Ian McCallum, is remarkable. A visit to a replica of George Washington's garden from Mount Vernon and tea and cookies on the lawn looking down into the glorious Avon valley completed a memorable day.

Can we do this again next year? Are there any volunteers to help with the organisation and paper work? What about Norwich, or Newark and Southwell, or even Beverley where Emily Godfrey is the Minster Architect? Please let the Secretary have your ideas in writing — now.

T.B.

PRELIMINARY EXPLORATIONS AT THE ROCKS, UCKFIELD, EAST SUSSEX

M.F. Hemingway, Downing College, Cambridge.

The shelters at the Rocks, Uckfield, are members of a group of rockshelters formed in outcrops of sandstone in Sussex and Kent. Although but little investigated archaeologically, past studies in these shelters have demonstrated both Mesolithic, and more recent material, while earlier material is known from the Oldbury shelters in Kent, which have provided Mousterian collections, and from Pulborough in West Sussex, where manuscript material associated with the important collection of early Upper Palaeolithic leaf points suggests that these too came from a quarried away rockshelter. The sandstone rockshelters of S.E. England can be considered of great potential archaeological importance, with the possibility of increasing the range and quantity of Upper and Middle Palaeolithic material known from the country, as well as of recovering Mesolithic material in stratigraphic context.

The Rocks estate straddles the B2102 west of Uckfield. To the north of the road is an artificial lake with sandstone outcrops to the north and south of it (Lake Wood Rocks North and South). Many of the shelters south of the lake are flooded, although some survive at higher level, but to the north of the lake most of the long sandstone outcrop lies at sufficient height above the lake to hold out the possibility of several metres of excavatable deposit.

To the south of the road a third line of outcropping sandstone (Rocks Shelters) faces south across the meadows that lie to the right of the river (Rocks Fields).

A visit to this complex of outcrops at Whitsun 1979 as part of a preliminary survey of rockshelters of potential archaeological interest indicated a promise that has been confirmed by subsequent work. Permission to investigate the site complex was kindly granted by the landowner, Commander N.J. Scarlett-Streatfeild, and a grant of £185 towards the cost of preliminary explorations of the site was made from the Margary Research Fund in September 1979.

The first excavation took place 22 — 28 October 1979 on the dripline of a deep shelter in Lake Wood Rocks North. The presence of burnt stone in badger throwout close by, the favourable aspect and position, together with a potential depth of deposit of several metres, led to selection of the site. Two adjacent square metres, perpendicular to the rock wall were excavated, and showed the steeply sloping bedrock at a depth increasing from 20 to 90cm away from the shelter wall. The few finds were all modern, suggesting either that the shelter line has been retreating rapidly, and any earlier material will be found further from the rock face, or that the shelters had been cleared — perhaps by water action — in the recent past.

The density of the undergrowth, and the depth of leaf mould in the lakeside shelters made explorations in these difficult, and during this period of study the shelters south of the road, and the meadows in front of these were surveyed.

This survey, and further surveys on subsequent weekends produced chipped flint material from molehills and rabbit throwout over an area of some hundreds of square metres, the few retouched pieces recovered suggesting a Mesolithic attribution. The low lying nature of the meadows suggested that they might always have been pasture land, and this is supported by local memory. The possibility that an in situ Mesolithic level might thus be preserved made investigation of the site an attractive prospect.

During the period 9 — 16 December four square metres were excavated on a slight rise in the meadow, c.25m from the nearest point of the sandstone outcrop, in one of the areas that surface collection had shown to be particularly rich. The deposit was excavated in spits of c.10cm, and wet sieved using sieves with a mesh size of 3mm. Heavy rain, which coincided with the excavation, led to waterlogging of the lower lying parts of the meadow, and limited the depth to which excavation could easily take place. However some of the details of the stratigraphy could be recognised. Below the rough turf was a depth of 20 — 40cm of grey sand, with scattered flints and flint fragments. The base of this deposit reached, over a large part of the trench, to just below the maximum excavatable depth, but sporadically, and over two areas in particular, a level of gentle undulating white sand could be distinguished. While itself apparently sterile, the surface of the...
white sand supported a level of material including cores, and horizontally lying flints. The greater quantity of material in the lowermost spit of the grey sand, and the localisation of material on the surface of the white sand might indicate the presence of an in situ Mesolithic level.

The material recovered in this excavation is listed in Table I, and the microliths and some tools are illustrated in Figure 1.

The range of microliths recovered, core types, and the presence of microburins and a serrated blade suggest an attribution of the material to the early Mesolithic, and more particularly to a late Maglemosian. Such material is scarce in general, and particularly so in East Sussex. The Rocks Fields site holds out the prospect of recovering a large sample from a potentially closely controllable stratigraphic context.

During the same period of excavation a sondage of one square metre was made in a shelter in the Rocks Shelters line. This again showed a steeply sloping bedrock, and again waterlogging limited excavation at the base, with only c.50cm excavated. A number of unretouched flakes were recovered, but the deposit also contained modern artifacts, including a 1917 penny and a cap badge of the Canadian Army Ordnance Corps. At a depth of c.45cm several bones of the leg of a horse were recovered. As bones cannot be expected to survive for long in such acid sediment as sand, the burial of the animal/part of animal is probably quite recent, and deliberate burial may explain the mixture of material recovered.

Preliminary explorations at the Rocks have confirmed the archaeological interest of the site complex, particularly as concerns the early Mesolithic. Future work will have a number of aims:
- detailed investigation of the Rocks Fields site, with microtopographical mapping, and detailed plotting of the positions of artifacts in the hope that localisations of material may reflect differing activities, or separate periods of occupation;
- recovery of a larger sample of industrial material, and if present of samples for absolute dating;
- further excavation in the Rocks Shelters, together with exploratory sondages in the lakeside shelters;
- survey of other shelters in the area, and of the meadowlands on either side of the river.

Notes:
3. Ms. in Barbican House Museum, Lewes. Originally published as Bronze Age daggers (Curwen Antiq. Journ. Vol. 29 (1949) pp. 192 — 193; Archaeology of Sussex 2nd ed. (1954) p. 137), these pieces were recognised as Upper Palaeolithic by Dr. R.M. Jacobi.
4. Thanks to Cmdr. and Mrs. Scarlett-Streatfeild, Mr. and Mrs. Brocklebank and Mr. and Mrs. Tebbutt and to David Scott, Caroline Malone, Caroline Harper, Andy Mawson, Margaret Harding and particularly Hugh Smethurst for their assistance.
5. To be investigated further by Graham Mayhew.
6. Equipment lent by the East Sussex County Council; the University of Cambridge Department of Archaeology; Mr. A.J. Legge, M.A.; Fuller & Askew Ltd., Lewes; and Mr. and Mrs. G.E.C. Hemingway, Seaford.
7. I should like to thank Dr. R.M. Jacobi for his advice on this point.

Table I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material recovered</th>
<th>B1—4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Non-tool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Unretouched Flakes</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete Unretouched Flakes</td>
<td>479</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burnt Flake Fragments</td>
<td>434</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core trimming Flakes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cores/Core Fragments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunks/Fragments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnt Chunks/Fragments</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microburins/Microburin notch spalls</td>
<td>4 986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Tool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? Burin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endscraper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serrated Blade</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denticulate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noch</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncated Blade</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obliquely truncated Blade</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piece emoussé</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blade with inverse retouch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retouched Flake/Blade</td>
<td>5 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Microliths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backed bladelet</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curved backed bladelet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backed and obliquely truncated bladelet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obliquely pointed bladelet</td>
<td>4 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIG. 1 1—5 Backed bladelets, 6 Curved back bladelet, 7 Backed and obliquely truncated bladelet, 8—12 Obliquely pointed bladelets, 13 Endscraper, 14 Serrated blade, 15 Obliquely truncated blade. 5 and 12 from surface collection on area of Site A, the remainder from excavation.
Early in 1971, a cliff fall exposed a vertical shaft, c.150ft deep, cut into the chalk. The top of the shaft lies within the area of the Beaker and Early Bronze Age settlement partly excavated by Richard Bradley in 1968 and 1969.

Since its original exposure, further erosion has caused the loss of much of the fill of the shaft, so that relatively little now remains. Since neither the date nor the function of the shaft have been established, it was decided to try and recover some of the shaft-fill, in the hope of answering one or both of these questions. This was carried out on 29 May 1980, by the writer, with the considerable assistance of the Birling Gap Auxiliary Coastguard Company, under the leadership of Mr. John Dann.

Two soil samples were taken; the first from greyish-white fill, c.70ft down, contained a sherd of heavily flint-gritted pottery, provisionally identified as Middle Bronze Age. The second sample was taken from mid-brown fill, c.25ft from the top. In addition, Mr. David Piper, one of the Auxiliary Coastguards, found a complete cattle bone (a metacarpal) in the lower part of the shaft-fill, c.50ft above the beach. It is hoped to obtain a C-14 date from this to add to the evidence of the potsherd.

The Sussex Archaeological Field Unit would like to record its grateful thanks to the Auxiliary Coastguard Company for their help in lowering the writer down the cliff-face at a point which was not ideal for the purpose.

RECONSTRUCTION OF PIDDINGHOE KILN
(SGR. TQ 432 632) by E.W. O'Shea

This kiln, which stands beside the Newhaven to Lewes road (A275) north of the village is the last remaining structure of the brick and tile works of this Ouse-side village. It is a simple updraught kiln, the last of this type in the South-East and was last fired in 1901. It dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and time and vegetable growth have taken their toll of the structure which is now in very grave danger of collapse.

I was invited by the owners to advise on its possible restoration and its condition is, to say the least, disturbing, making a detailed survey at this stage is impossible. It will be necessary to erect a scaffold, carefully remove the ivy and profuse growth of weeds and record and remove brick-by-brick and course-by-course.

The kiln has been built to take advantage of the fall of the ground with the stoke hole at the lower level and loading access to the firing chamber from the upper ground level. The stoke hole and firing chamber are rectangular on plan about three metres by four metres constructed of random rubble of flint, rock-chalk and brick in lime mortar. The cone is of one-and-a-half thick brickwork in clay and sand commencing at the full size of the chamber and gathering in to a circular cone to a height of about 5 metres. The clay and sand mortar is normal for this type of structure allowing a certain amount of movement for thermal expansion but the shape of the flue creates a very interesting geometrical form.

Reference has been made to it as a biscuit kiln, but there does not appear to be any evidence of any products requiring secondary firing and it was probably used for the manufacture of tiles, roof furniture such as finials, and I have also been shown very crude land drains which were said to have come from the last firing.

The Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society in conjunction with the Lewes Archaeological Group, intend to reconstruct the kiln and I have undertaken to direct the work. The cone will be taken down and reconstructed in sand/lime/cement mortar, the joints being raked out as the work proceeds and pointed on completion in cement and sand with a colour additive to simulate the clay joining of the original work. Because of the unusual shape of the cone a combination of tramell and batter boards will have to be developed. There are something like 8,000 bricks to be taken down and relaid.

The estimated cost of the work is approximately £1,300 using voluntary labour and generous aid from the Civic Trust, Lewes District Council and other contributors, who have between them raised 75% of the cost, have made this emergency operation possible. I am also indebted to Mr. Brian Dawson, R.I.B.A. of Lewes District Council for his most valuable support in getting this project off the ground as, without immediate action there is little doubt that the kiln would have collapsed.

Concurrently with the rebuilding operations will be a survey of the Piddinghoe brick industry by the Brick Study Group of this Society. If any reader has access to any records, drawings, photographs or like material relevant to this industry I would be grateful to receive any information, or offers of assistance in research.

Work on the kiln will commence on Sunday, 29th June and will continue on each Sunday and Thursday until completed. Volunteers are very badly needed, especially any with bricklaying experience. Offers of help should be sent to me at 14, Pelham Terrace, Lewes, BN7 2DR (telephone Lewes 2393). As the site is within private property, it will be appreciated if anyone intending to pay a visit should contact me first.

BOOK NEWS

BARBICAN HOUSE LIBRARY

The Library continues to be very well used and the work of classifying our book stock and amending the catalogues is making good progress. This is a necessary and worthwhile task but will take some time to complete.

It does, however, give us an opportunity to accept the British Library's invitation to co-operate in building up a Short Title Catalogue of all material printed during the eighteenth century. This is a national venture which will prove of great value to historical research. Our contribution seems likely to be of special interest as we have books and other items, some printed or like material relevant to this industry, which are to be found nowhere else in the country.

During recent months we have received some unusual gifts for the Library. These include numerous items illustrating the more immediate past of Sussex, guide books from between the wars, postcards of railway stations now closed, offprints from journals, public notices and local almanacks. These are not only welcome in themselves but are a valuable record of Sussex life and history. We have pleasure in recording our thanks to their donors.

We are also grateful to many members for their practical help and to the following for gifts to the Library.


This annual journal is devoted to the history of England south of the Thames, together with Gloucestershire and parts of Oxfordshire, London and Essex. Three articles, on property holding in Oxford and Canterbury, on land law in Berkshire, and on the affinity of the Courtenay Earls of Devon, are late medieval in setting. Others discuss the south-western rebellion of 1549, market towns in southern England 1500–1700, social crime in the rural south in the eighteenth century, and estate management in the lower Ouse valley 1840–1920. The longest, on schooling and the working class in Bristol 1870–1914, presents a grim Gramscian paradigm of elementary school teachers enforcing a competitive patriotic ethic, by means of sums, psalmody and the lash, on young proletarians who fought heroically back.

Apart from a survey of southern record offices, the remaining pages are given over to a select list of local history pamphlets, a review of periodical literature published in 1977, which might with profit be amplified, and book reviews. Some of those chosen seem eccentric — a life of Admiral Cochrane, the opposition to women’s suffrage, the formation of the national government in 1931. One yearns to know whether the childhood in Dover, portrayed in M. Winstanley’s Life in Kent at the Turn of the Century, was as remote emotionally from the Bristol paradigm as it was spatially. Future volumes might perhaps discuss those arcane treasures, unpublished doctoral theses.

One small Sussex quibble. Where is the village of Hawkenhurst from which a gang of smugglers terrorised the borders of Hampshire and Sussex?

Colin Brent

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OF THE STAR BREWERY SITE, EASTBOURNE. Published by the Eastbourne History and Archaeological Society at 50p. plus 20p. postage from The President, 21 Baldwin Avenue, Eastbourne. 14 pages, illustrated. Mr. Lawrence Stevens, Director of the Urban Medieval Excavation Project makes a very good case for examining further a site which has already produced evidence dating back 3,000 years. He appeals for support with both money and manpower.

GENEALOGISTS GUIDE TO THE WEST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE. by P.M. Wilkinson, 109 pp., price £1.25 plus 30p. postage from The County Archivist, Record Office, County Hall Chichester, PO19 1RN. The Guide provides a comprehensive description of the wide variety of sources available to anyone wishing to trace their family history in West Sussex. The major part consists of a handlist of parish registers, Bishops Transcripts, modern transcripts and monumental inscriptions; a second handlist covers less well-known material such as Non-Conformist and Roman Catholic registers, and cemetery, vaccination and school admission registers. The introduction gives details of other records of genealogical value, including wills, marriage licences, census records, poll books and directories, while a county map shows parish boundaries and the various ecclesiastical and civil divisions of Sussex.

VICTORIAN LIVES. Compiled by Colin Brent and William Rector. To be published early in July 1980 at £5.95

Three photographers, Reeves, Bedford and Bartlett, were at work in the town between 1850 and 1909. A vast store of their collected negatives survives in the Reeves and Bedford collections of the Sussex Archaeological Society, from which this fascinating pictorial record has been compiled, with well-researched captions, giving a vivid impression of the town during those 60 years and revealing the extent of changes since 1850. Royalties from the book are to go to the Sussex Archaeological Society.

BRIGHTON 1660 TO 1800, THE CHANGING URBAN VISTA, a town walk, by Dr. Sue Farrant.

Until the later eighteenth century the town of Brighton was confined within the area marked by East, North and West Streets, with the cliffs as the southernmost boundary. The area is approximately a square and is dissected by three streets which run north-south, namely Middle, Ship and Black Lion Streets.

The aim of this walk is to describe changes in the appearance of the town between 1660 and 1800 by using three dates, c.1660, 1760 and 1800 in order to give snapshot views.

In 1660 Brighton was the second largest town in Sussex (second to Chichester) and the economy had long been based on fishing. However, by 1660 erosion of the coastline immediately in front of the town was removing the beach which was so important to the fishing community. The economy was changing from fishing to seafaring and the ships were not based on the town because the beach was not sufficiently stable. The town was on the threshold of a decline in prosperity which continued at least until the 1720s. By 1760 Brighton’s fortunes were recovering and the town was on the threshold of a rapid increase in population. Dr. Russell had published his book on the use of sea water and had been established in Russell House for 7 years. Visitors had been frequenting the town for seabathing for at least 20 years. In 1800 Brighton was the premier seaside resort in Britain, the Pavilion had been standing for over 10 years (not yet embellished with minarets) and the development of the surrounding arable land was well under way.

On the sea front

START opposite the lower end of East Street. Looking westwards along the cliff top today it is obvious that the building line is generally a considerable distance from the sea because of the artificial extension of the roadway in front (since 1822). Prior to this essentially protective construction, the town had been troubled by erosion. Throughout our period a crumbly coombe rock cliff edge was exposed to the sea but was steadily eroded inland so that by 1820 the actual cliff line was very close to the present building line.

In 1660 there was a considerable expanse of land southwards in front of the present building line. On the cliff top stood a block house (between Ship and Black Lion Streets), east of which stood the town house on the market place. Behind these buildings some cottages marked the lines of the present Ship and Black Lion Streets, but a lot of cottages were standing in Middle and West Streets. The area on which the town hall stands today was also quite open and was called Bartholomews. In 1660 East Street was one of the most built up streets. On its eastern side just north of the ABC cinema, stood the East Gate facing Pool Valley, which was a small shallow outlet for the Winterbourne, which flowed down the Steine. Around the Pool on its northern and eastern sides stood a few cottages (round to the present Albion Hotel).

By 1760 the view of the seafront had changed considerably mainly because of the recovery of prosperity. But the seafront was showing the effects of a 100 years of erosion, the market house had fallen in the sea and only the back wall of the blockhouse remained. The building line we see today was emerging, as more houses had been built both along the sea front facing the sea and
up Black Lion, Ship and Market Streets. Housing was not yet continuous. East Street and Little East Street were being rebuilt and infilled, the East Gate had been removed and a new battery was being erected almost where you are standing. Turning towards Pool Valley, here considerable changes had occurred, the most obvious of which was the presence of Dr. Russell’s large house, standing on the cliff top on the eastern side of the Pool, away from the town, (erected in 1753).

By 1800 the sophistication (in a relative sense) of a spa or watering place was apparent. The sea front was graced by boarding houses and hostelleries (the latter being concentrated on East Cliff and in Little East Street). Approximately under the site of the ABC cinema stood Awtiers Baths (1769) and other baths were also standing in this vicinity where access to the sea was convenient because the land sloped up from the Pool thus pipes could be laid quite easily in order to pump water to the baths. Most of the baths were demolished during the 1860s and 1870s.

Around the Pool large houses replaced the cottages, except in the pocket of land behind the old Bunne Shoppe.

The beach was important to the town throughout this period but in different ways. The description of the cliff top has highlighted one problem, erosion.

In 1660 the beach below the cliff was reached by a series of ramps down from the cliff top, the openings being called gaps or gates. This form of access survived until 1800.

On the beach in 1660 stood nethouses, capstans to pull fishing vessels onto the beach, stakeplaces (presumably staithes) and a few cottages. The beach was being eroded quite rapidly and by 1700 most of this firm material had gone. In 1722 groynes were erected in order to trap shingle to protect the cliff top. However, seafaring was beginning to replace fishing due to the erosion of the beach.

In 1760 a few bathing machines graced the beach at low tide, being pulled up into the Pool or up the ramps when the tide came in. The lower lying area round the Pool probably acted as the focus for the now ‘local’ fishing boats and net drying was done in that vicinity and possibly on the Steine. Trading vessels were unloaded on the beach. The beach was trapped by groynes.

In 1800 there were more bathing machines along the beach, fishermen’s boats and cargo vessels still landed goods including coal, but Shoreham was also used as the size of vessels was greater.

Birds in this connection are often represented and are thought usually to be finches — clearly gold finches in many paintings, for example in Florence. But a dead bird I have seen nowhere else, and I can find no mention of it in a dozen or more books on Christian iconography. Nor has any explanation been offered by the various authorities I have consulted, sending a batch of excellent detailed photographs kindly taken by Miss Verena Smith.

As to dating and provenance, the Victoria and Albert Museum suggests the first half of the 16th century, provincial Flemish or North German. The British Museum further points out that the belt worn by the Virgin is of a type in use from mid-14th century just into 16th century. But an expert recommended by the secretary of the Society of Antiquaries believes the statue, ‘to be of the early 20th century,’ and, ‘probably quite new when described in 1927—29.’ The bird may have been the clay pigeon which, according to the Apocrypha, the Christ-Child modelled — though this flew away. The statue could be by a sculptor influenced by Eric Gill of Ditchling, and by Mr. R. James’ English version of the Apocrypha which appeared early in the 20th century!

Five attempts to get in touch with the Schott museum of 15th to 17th century wood sculpture, in Brussels, have failed, and our photographs have not been returned.

Mrs. Dora Arnold, the present Custodian of Priest House, kindly gave me the address of Mr. Jasper Ridley, it having been suggested that the statue may have come to the Society along with Priest House contents. Mr. Ridley tells me that his grandfather, John Godwin King, established it as a museum of local history, and he recollects that in the 1920’s it contained most of the objects which are there to-day. He would be surprised if his grandfather had placed a carving by Eric Gill or a Flemish 1550 carving there, as his aim was a museum of objects connected with West Hoathly.

So the mysteries remain. Where did the statue come from? What is its date? What is the meaning of the dead bird? Does any member of the Society recollect having seen a similar example?

MINOR MICHELHAM RESEARCHES — 2, by E.A. Wood

One of the exhibits at Michelham Priory is a three-foot high limewood statue of the Virgin and Child, thought to be Flemish dating from about 1550.

How the figure came to the Sussex Archaeological Society is not recorded, but it is in a list of possessions made about 1927; and Mr. N.E.S. Norris, who was appointed Curator in 1951, remembering sending it to the Institute of Archaeology for cleaning and treatment. It had traces of colour.

The statue strikes me as unusual in several respects. The Virgin, looking straight ahead, has a detached, slightly amused expression. The Child is more like a little old man. But most curious of all is that He clutches in his hand by the neck a limp and obviously lifeless bird.

(To be continued in the next issue)
LATE UPPER PALAEOLITHIC FLINTS

Nick Barton (144 Camden Road, London NWI 9HP) would be grateful for information as to the whereabouts of a small collection of flints from Bosham, belonging to B. Hooper, and listed in 'The Gazetteer of Mesolithic ... (&) Upper Palaeolithic Sites in England and Wales' Wymer & Bonsall, CBA Research Report No. 20, 1977, in connection with his research on the Late Upper Palaeolithic period in Britain and North West Europe.

NOTICES

CHICHESTER DISTRICT MUSEUM SUMMER EXHIBITION

The theme is 'The Roman Countryside of the Chichester district' and the aim is to illustrate the important economic resources of the countryside in Roman times and to explore the various features of the countryside such as rural industries, roads and communications, religion and especially the villas and agriculture. The exhibition opens on June 21st and continues until September 27th and is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10a.m. — 6p.m. Admission free.

S.A.S. HISTORICAL CONFERENCE, 1981: 'SUSSEX IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY'

Over the past year we have arranged, with valuable contributions from Christopher Whittick and Tim Hudson, five seminars, a linked seminar and field trip, and a 'town walk', for those members with an active interest in local historical research. They have been designed on the model of adult education classes for fairly small audiences and have been well subscribed — and, we hope, appreciated. We are happy to try and respond to proposals for further seminars, and these might come from affiliated societies or informal research groups as well as from individual members.

But something which can involve a larger number of members seems to be called for. It is therefore planned to hold an Historical Conference, on a Saturday in April or May 1981, probably in Lewes, on the model of the well-established Archaeology Conference held annually in October. The theme will be 'Sussex in the Eighteenth Century'. The programme may include lectures offering general interpretations and current research, discussion groups, and presentations of work in progress by affiliated societies and individuals.

An informal Steering Committee has been formed and will be pleased to receive suggestions for topics within the theme and for speakers, and also offers to make presentations, whether in the form of a short talk or a display, and to give general assistance. Please write to or telephone Dr. T.P. Hudson, West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RN (Chichester 785100) or Dr. Sue Farrant, 36 Brangwyn Drive, Patcham, Brighton, BN1 8XD (Brighton 501081).

All being well, details of the conference will appear in the December Newsletter.

John and Sue Farrant

EASTBOURNE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY MEETINGS 1980

Thursday 18th September Miss Vera Hodsoll 'Sussex Castles'
Thursday 16th October Mr. David Calvert 'Herstmonceux and its Lords' an illustrated talk.
Thursday 20th November 'Post Boxes, Licence Plates, and Lamp Posts' an illustrated talk on street furniture by Mr. M. Ockenden, and Mr. H.D. Spears.

Indoor meetings are held in the Lecture Hall at the Central Library, Grove Road, Eastbourne, and start at 7.30 p.m.

THE CELTS TO THE TIME OF ARTHUR

A study of the Celts from prehistoric times into the 'Dark Ages' combining evidence from archaeological excavations with information from historical documents. Two terms.
Portland Centre, Hove, Tuesdays from 30th Sept. 10 a.m.
Elm Court Centre, Seaford, Wednesdays from 24th Sept. 2 p.m.
Both are University of Sussex Adult Education Classes. Further information from the Lecturer, Mrs. Robin Kenward, M.A., F.S.A. (Chairman of S.A.S. Autumn Conference 1979) Little Sharps, Plitdown, Uckfield, E. Sussex TN22 3XG.

EAST GRINSTEAD'S EARLIEST PARISH REGISTER

The earliest volume of East Grinstead's parish registers, that for 1558 — 6112, long believed lost, has recently come to light again and is to be re-united with its successors in the County Record Office at Chichester. An account of the volume will appear in the Autumn 1980 Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society.

M.J.L.

DATES FOR NEWSLETTER COPY

April issue — February 7 August issue — June 7
December issue — October 7 to the Hon. Editor, Miss J. G. Pilmer, MA, MLitt, White Lodge, 1a Lavant Road, Chichester, PO19 4QY.