

East Grinstead Viaduct

The
BULLETIN
of the
EAST GRINSTEAD
SOCIETY.

No. 17

August 1975

T H E E A S T G R I N S T E A D S O C I E T Y

The Society was founded in April 1968 to protect and improve the amenities of East Grinstead and its environs. The town has a long history and a unique architectural heritage, and represents a trust placed for the time being in the hands of our generation. It should be our concern that such contributions as we in our turn make are worthy of the past and a fitting bequest to the future.

The Society arranges regular talks, discussions, films and visits to local places of interest. It produces a Bulletin of its news and articles of local interest three times a year. In 1969 it produced a special report on the High Street Conservation Area which was well received as the basis for future policy. It has also published a booklet of reminiscences and a set of picture postcards and held four exhibitions. It is very active in making representations to the local authorities on planning matters. With the re-organisation of local government its importance as a watchdog has increased.

MEMBERSHIP

The strength of such a Society lies in the extent to which it can be seen to represent public opinion: the larger its membership the greater its influence. The subscription is 75 new pence a year (additional members in same family 25p, to be renewed on 1 January every year, except by those joining at or after the previous A.G.M. Subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, Barclays Bank, East Grinstead.

The Society is registered as a charity. A copy of its constitution is available on request to the Secretary.

PRESIDENT G. JOHNSON SMITH, M.P.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman	M. J. LEPPARD, M.A., Sackville School, East Grinstead (25005)
Vice-Chairman	C. W. GOOLDEN, Top End, Felcourt, East Grinstead (Dormans Park 274)
Treasurer	A. C. COMBER, Barclays Bank, East Grinstead (27555)
Secretary	Mrs L. FRANCIS, The Gatehouse, Dunning's Road, East Grinstead (22344)

R. H. ADDERLEY, A.L.A.; Mrs J. CREIGHTMORE; Mrs K. INGWERSEN;
D. G. JEFFERIES; Cr R. E. S. MILLER; S. PAGE, R.I.B.A.; Cr Mrs
T. VALLANCE; P. D. WOOD.

PUBLICATIONS

Matter for the Bulletin should be sent to Mr. Leppard (as above), from whom also the Society's publications may be obtained (list on request). Unsigned contributions are the work of the Editor and officers. Opinions in signed articles are not necessarily those of anyone but their authors.

CORRESPONDENCE

Applications for membership, subscriptions and notices of change of address should be sent to the Treasurer, all other correspondence to the Secretary. The Society's current programme and forms of application for membership may be obtained from either.

EDITORIAL

The editor apologises for the extreme delay in presenting this Bulletin after the last. He can only plead pressure of other activities and the fact that once again he and the two Mr Woods have been left to write virtually the whole of it. It is hoped, however, to bring out another issue before the end of the year. The more that members will submit material the more worthwhile it will be. He also apologises for the fact that for many of the activities only a sketchy interim report is possible, simply because of the speed with which events are moving and situations changing. A spare-time production such as this can seldom be as up-to-date as one would like.

M E E T I N G S

EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE YEAR enabled Mr Arthur Percival of the Civic Trust to open our eyes to much that we can easily overlook or take for granted. The meeting (on 16 April) was a particularly stimulating one, to which we were pleased to welcome representatives of several kindred societies from neighbouring places.

RE-ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT was the subject of our meeting on 11 June, at which Mr J.A. McGhee, Chief Executive of Mid Sussex, gave a thorough outline of the new system and how it affects us, then coped courteously with a number of lively questions. We were pleased to welcome the Chamber of Trade and the Rate-payers' and Residents' Association as our guests.

SUMMER OUTING: A visit to an exhibition of the history of architecture in Brighton and to some of the buildings involved is being planned. The detailed notice should be ready for sending out with this Bulletin.

NEXT MEETING: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 8 p.m. Wednesday 15 October, Small Parish Hall. The usual business and an open forum for suggestions, criticisms, questions, complaints and opinions on matters within the Society's competence.

THE COMMITTEE met on 9 April, 14 May and 2 July. Next meeting 24 September.

A C T I V I T I E S

EXHIBITION: At the time of going to press we have no financial figures ready, so the report is held over till next time. But meanwhile hearty thanks to Dennis Jefferies and all his helpers for a particularly well received show.

INNER RELIEF ROAD: In response to our request West Sussex has deposited a copy of the inner relief road map at our County Branch Library for public inspection.

SPRING COPSE: We added our voice to those who protested to Mid Sussex at its plan to build houses on the woodland and play area at Spring Copse.

TREES: Thanks to concerned members' having drawn the committee's attention to them we have written to Mid Sussex concerning the tulip tree in St Swithuns Close and the trees by the new buildings in Garden House Lane. Members are reminded that our concern for trees is being co-ordinated by Mrs T. Vallance, Westering, Dunnings Road (21283).

OTHER ACTIVITIES in more detail on other pages.

M E M B E R S ' P A G E

MEMBERSHIP: Current membership is about 307. Members are reminded that a considerable time has been allowed before a reminder of lapsed membership has been sent out and are urged to keep careful record of when their subscriptions fall due and to renew them promptly. Better still, use a banker's order.

DON'T BE A QUITTER: Your Chairman was sorry to meet a gentleman recently who said he had not renewed his membership because the Society had not protested at the new Sainsbury's. A lady wrote explaining that she had not renewed hers because she felt the Society 'could have done more and spoken louder on certain planning matters'. But such people who care strongly are the ones we need as members, actively being the Society and seeking election to its committee. Far better to stay put and improve an institution from within than to drop out and criticise from outside.

DELIVERY OF CORRESPONDENCE: Many members will have noticed that as many as possible of our Bulletins and notices are now being delivered by hand by members of the committee, easily saving two thirds of our heavy postage bill. Any who would like to help in this way should contact Mr Leppard(22511), stating which streets they could cover.

TREASURER: On the promotion of Mr R.G.Cooper to Eastbourne we welcome in his place Mr A.C.Comber, his successor at Barclays Bank. Our gratitude is due to Mr Cooper for the considerable time and attention which he always gave to our finances and for the healthy state in which he left them.

AFFILIATION: It was decided that the local history side of our work would be aided by affiliation to the Sussex Archaeological Society, which has now been arranged. For some years we have benefitted from generous comment in its Newsletter and the availability (to those of us who are members) of its library and muniments for research. It is worth pointing out that the S.A.S. is suffering from rising costs and static membership. Since 1846 it has done good work by its publications, its museums and its historic properties open to view and has recently re-thought and planned its activities. There must be many who sympathise with its objects and appreciate what it provides. Yet fewer than 20 of our members belong to it. Further details from Barbican House, Lewes.

Our COVER PICTURE, from P.McDermot, The Life of Joseph Firbank (1887) shows his Imberhorne Viaduct under construction in c. 1882. The Viaduct is in the news again with the Bluebell Railway's proposed extension back over the line to the town, a suggestion which has (rather surprisingly) received the hearty consent of the County and District Councils. Your Committee, discussing it on 15 January, decided that the need to buy back parcels of track incorporated into neighbouring properties, to cut through the High Grove tip and to make the Sharpthorne tunnel usable in all weathers ruled out any such hopes and that no observations from us were therefore necessary.

MEMBER'S QUERY:

I should be most grateful if any member could give me the Christian names of Mr & Mrs Wilson who owned the large draper's store in the town in the early part of this century and whether they have any living sons or daughters or grandchildren whom I might contact in connection with the history of my mother's family.

J.HOLMAN(Miss), 5 Woodstock Close, Bexley, Kent.

THE NEW CHURCH GUIDE

A Review by P.D.Wood

The first guide to our Parish Church was written by the Rev. G.Golding Bird in 1931. Since then it has been revised, enlarged, reduced, rewritten and now, with a new approach altogether, edited by one of our members, Mr G.M.Smart.

Faced with fearsome printing costs and the need to sell the product at 10 n.p., Mr Smart has confined himself to what the title proclaims - a guide. The antiquarian digressions of the original, the ample transcriptions and descriptions of inscriptions have been reduced to a couple of pages of concise historical summary and the numerous illustrations to two, unhappily poorly reproduced.

The main part of the guide is headed 'A walk round the Church' and provides a careful, detailed commentary on the principal internal features. Many are dated and ascribed. Few people will realise how many famous artists have contributed figures and memorials and this section is full of interest to those who do not.

No description of the fabric has been attempted. This seems a pity: our Church is obviously an impressive piece of architecture but it is an uncomfortable place and an appreciation of its virtues as a building might enable one to come to better terms with it.

But within its necessarily strict limits the guide is excellent value and it is truly a guide, addressed not to 'the crew who tap and jot and know what rooflofts are' but to any interested visitor who may be curious about the furnishings of a fine building.

A LOCAL MUSEUM

We are pleased to announce that the Town Council has offered us the use of a room on the ground floor at East Court in return for our providing a small museum of local history. We have set up a sub-committee to look carefully into the implications and the possibilities and to seek professional advice. We realise that initially we can only operate in a modest way (perhaps regularly changing small displays in the entrance hall and our room only occasionally opened though permanently used for storage, research, preparation and committee meetings) but we are anxious to do what we can as well as possible and in such a way as not to need undoing later. We are now cataloguing our property, nearly all of it donated unbidden by wellwishers to whom we are very grateful, to which we understand the Town Council is to add various documents, maps and pictures which it no longer needs. It is hoped to give fuller details of our property and of definite plans for action in our next Bulletin. If interested in any way please contact Mr M.J.Leppard, Sackville School.

LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE: At this year's Local History Conference at Sussex University on 10 May we mounted an exhibition of our publications for the first time, the only amenity society to do so. Several favourable comments were made on our enterprise, and sales brought in some welcome revenue.

THE SUSSEX LANDSCAPE, recently published by Dr P.F.Brandon, who spoke to us in December 1972, is part of a series on the making of the English Landscape under the general guidance of Dr.W.G. Hoskins and is excellent value at £3.90. P.D.W.



11 and 12
MIDDLE ROW

Article on
facing page

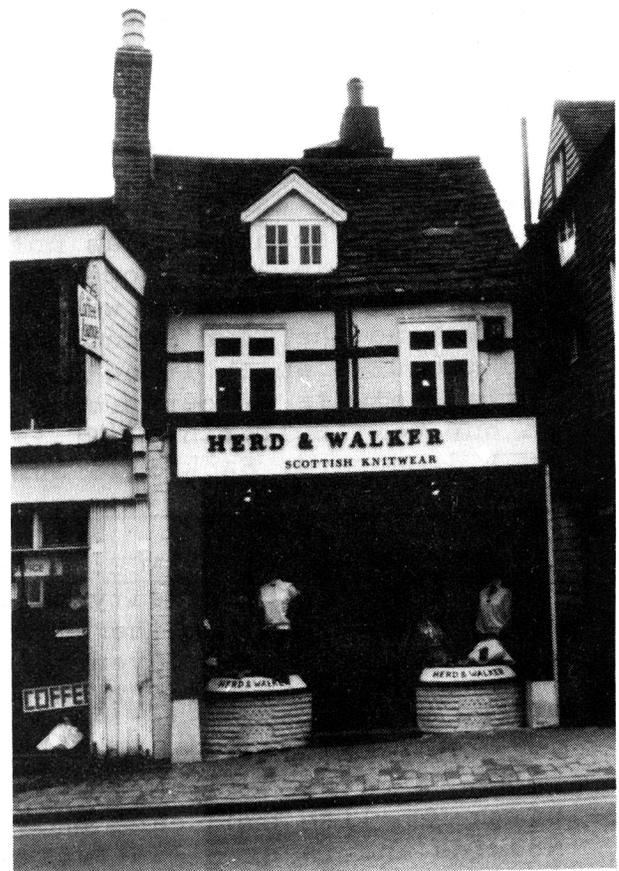


Photographs

1

2

3 4



11 & 12 MIDDLE ROW

by R.H.Wood

The buildings are distinct (photos 1-4) but a few general remarks apply to both. Separated from the rest of Middle Row by the passage on the west, they stand slightly angled to the other buildings and from one another, as may be seen from the plan (fig.1) which is not an exact survey but conveys these re-

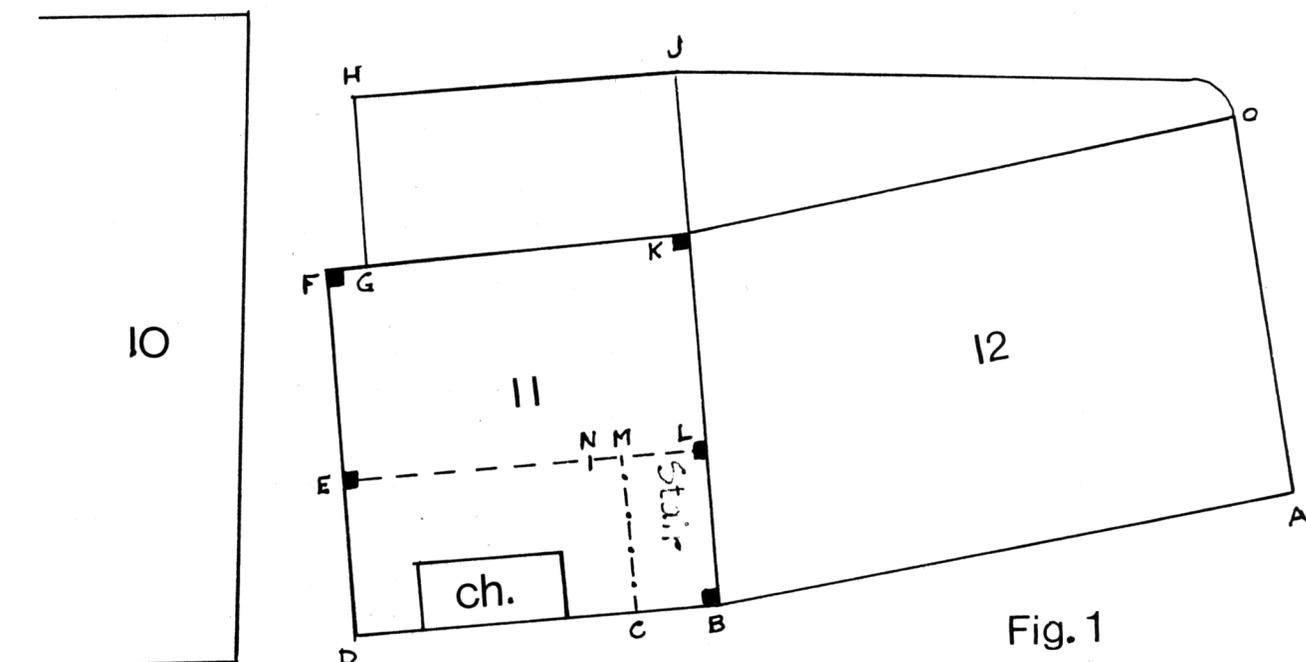


Fig. 1

relationships well enough and is approximately to a scale of $\frac{1}{8}$ " to 1 foot. Walls are shown only in single lines. The site is narrow, tapering to the east and steeply downward sloping from north to south. The lowering of the level on the south side may well be attributable to some centuries of road wear in turning into or out of Hermitage Lane. Earlier buildings than 11 & 12 have been identified at 4, 5 and 9 (P.D.Wood in Sussex Archaeological Collections, vol.106 (1968) and East Grinstead Society Bulletin, No.8 (January 1972)). It is remarked in the S.A.C. article that in the survey of the Borough of 1564 Middle Row contained eight properties and, in terms of integral structures, still does. Attention is drawn to a southward curve in the frontages of early burgages of just the shape required to accommodate the present Middle Row and so presumably existing since about 1350. No surviving building in Middle Row has been dated earlier than about 1500 so there is room, but no plain evidence, for earlier development than that, or later re-development.

Number 11

The surviving timber-framed unit is lettered BCDEFGKL on the plan. The south wall has been rebuilt in modern brick as has a part of the west wall (photos 1 & 3). Part of the original wall framing remains on the north (photo 4). Almost the whole of it remains between E and F on the west and in the west gable end DEF. This framing is filled with brick nogging in narrowish dark red bricks. Post F and part of its rootstock are clearly seen outside carrying the end of the north wall plate. GHJK (photos 2 & 4) is a modern single storey extension of the shop. The writer seems to remember a less modern one when, years ago, the premises were kept by the Misses Payne.

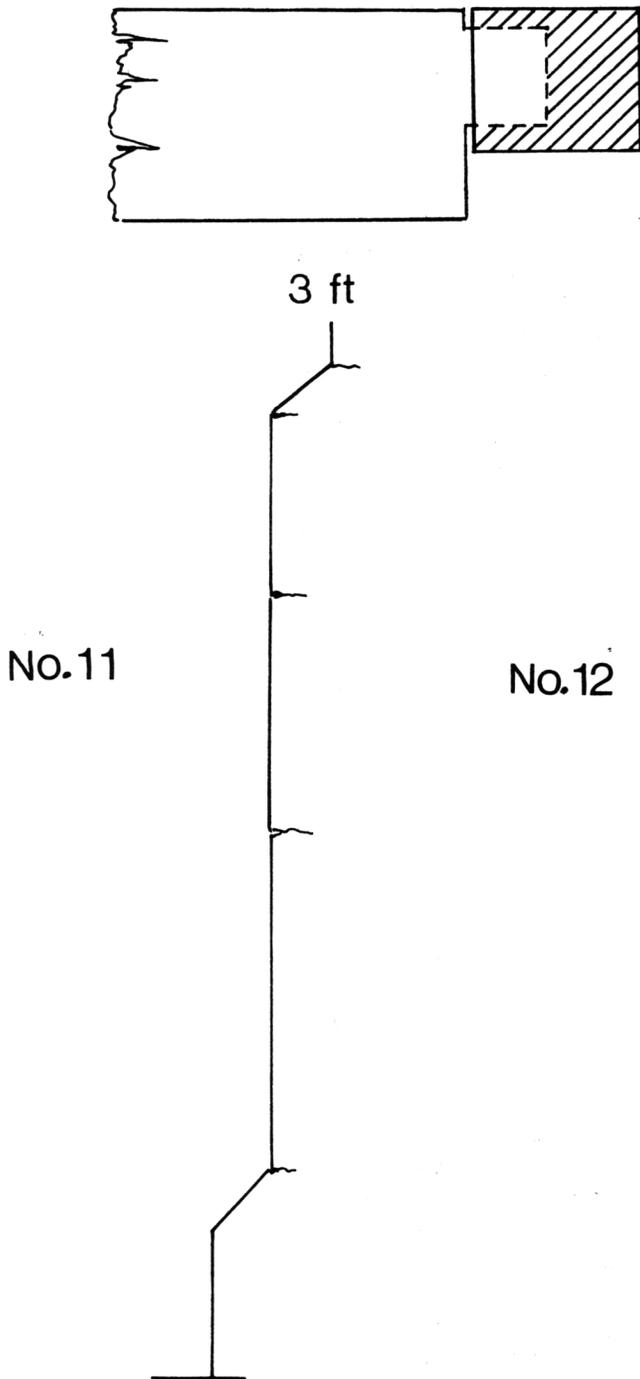


Fig. 2

The survey of 1564 accounts for two shops in Middle Row but there is no clear evidence that no.11 was one of them. It is therefore treated here as a small square cottage. It is, after all, little more than 15 feet square, looking very high from south and west sides. Nearly a twelfth of its superficial area is occupied by the chimney (photos 1 & 3). This is a fine 4-flue affair, the stack stabilised by a central rib on three of its sides. On the south side it has an arched recess. Four fireplaces were made and used, one in the cellar, one in the roof space and two in the intervening storeys, indicating the need to use every inch of living space. Including cellar and roof space the building is on four levels and the plan suffices for reference to them all.

One may begin with the cellar (photo 5) where walls below ground level show partly coursed rubble stone and narrow bricks upon which seems to have been brushed a hard setting mixture including sand. Two arched openings, now bricked up, presumably led to storage recesses below shop or ground level on the north (photo 5). On the east, against no.12, the cellar wall is a good deal patched with modern brick but at L (fig.1) remains a sort of pier of sandstone ashlar (photos 5 & 6), barely 2 feet wide. Figure 2 illustrates its profile facing westwards to no.11. A horizontal wall beam is shown in section and to this is mortised the 9" x 8" chamfered bressumer EL. (Both appear in photo 6). This pier or isolated piece of walling is rather mysterious. Its plinths are such as one might

expect in external walling or buttressing but there is no sure sign of weathering. If it be a hint at re-development it is very slight. Ignoring later work it seems likely that entry to the cellar from the floor above was at the south end of the area BCML, co-inciding with the upper stairways.

At ground floor level the main posts are partly visible inside. A large open fireplace is said to be behind shelving and goods on the south side. The bressumer EL is twice chamfered between E and L and stopped at both ends as sketched in figure 3. The beam is pared away between L and M for headroom at the bottom of the stair. There is suggestion of one-time partitioning along CM on both ground floor and first floor.

On the first floor parts of all the main posts can be seen. The third bressumer co-incident with the line EL is in full view and is also cut for headroom on the stair leading to the roof space.

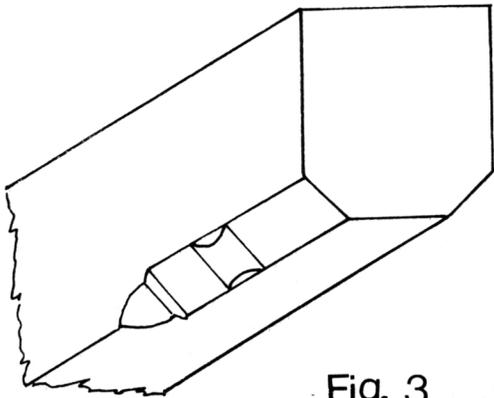
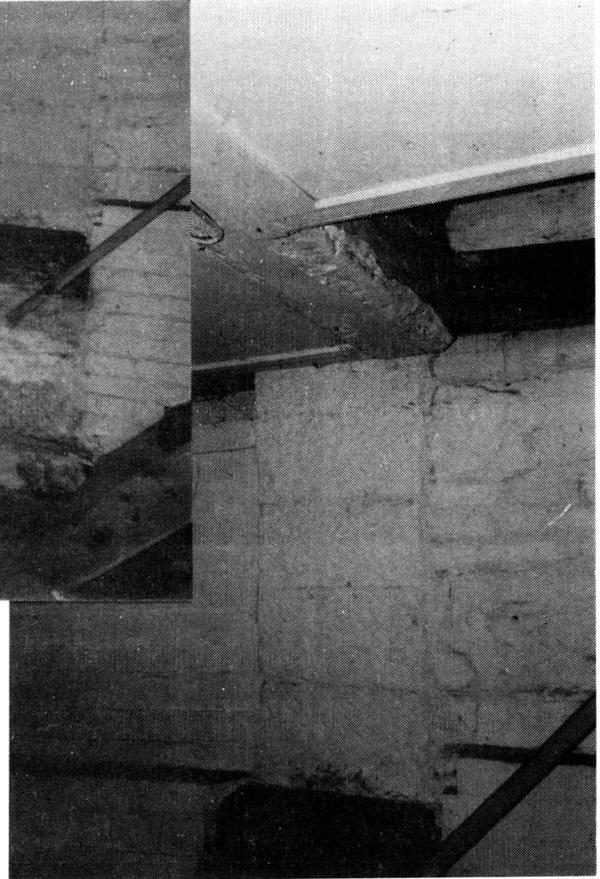
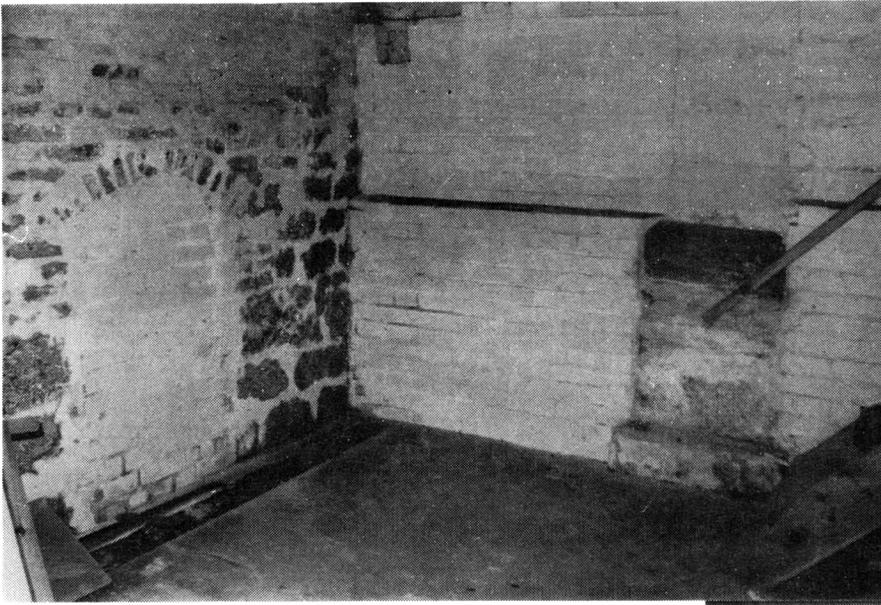


Fig. 3

Photographs 5 & 6

Of roof timbers the east and west tie beams and collar beams remain together with the

vertical members in the gable ends (photos 7 & 8). The panel filling of the latter on the east is of early type and probably original. Principal and common rafters are concealed. A sort of central collar beam (photo 8) is halved at two points in a most irrelevant way and is surely an intruder. What can be seen of the rafter feet from the outside points to later general replacement. One doubtfully original purlin is chamfered and shows no sign of windbracing. Some broken panel filling in the east gable (photo 7) reveals a few riven oak laths apparently nailed on from the direction of no.12. The structural state of affairs where 11 and 12 conjoin at this level could not be established: nor indeed at any other level. A great deal of interior detail is necessarily obscured by fittings and stock.

Dating will principally depend in this case on the evidence of framing and panel filling. Such framing as remains seems appropriate to the first half of the 17th century. On



the other hand this is, perhaps, somewhat early for original brick nogging in so small a building. Even so there would hardly be a sufficient time gap between them for wattle and daub to have so far deteriorated as to need replacing. A date around 1650 may therefore be suggested.

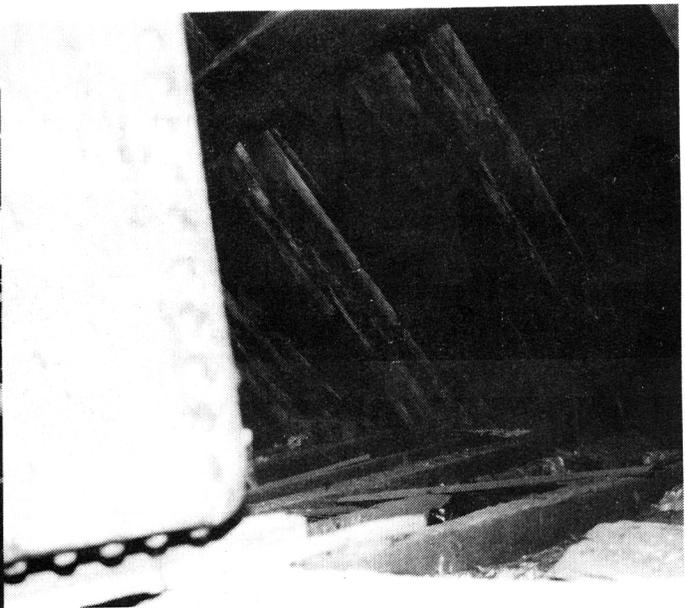
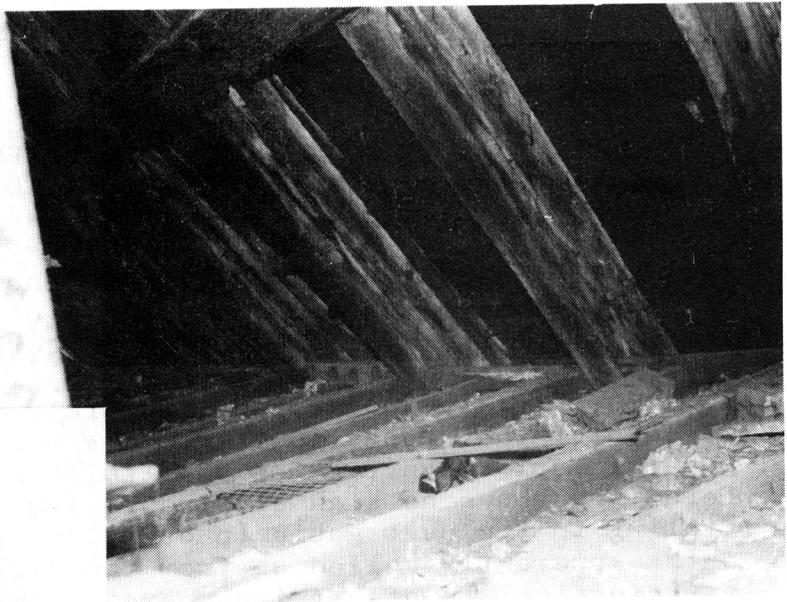
Photograph 7

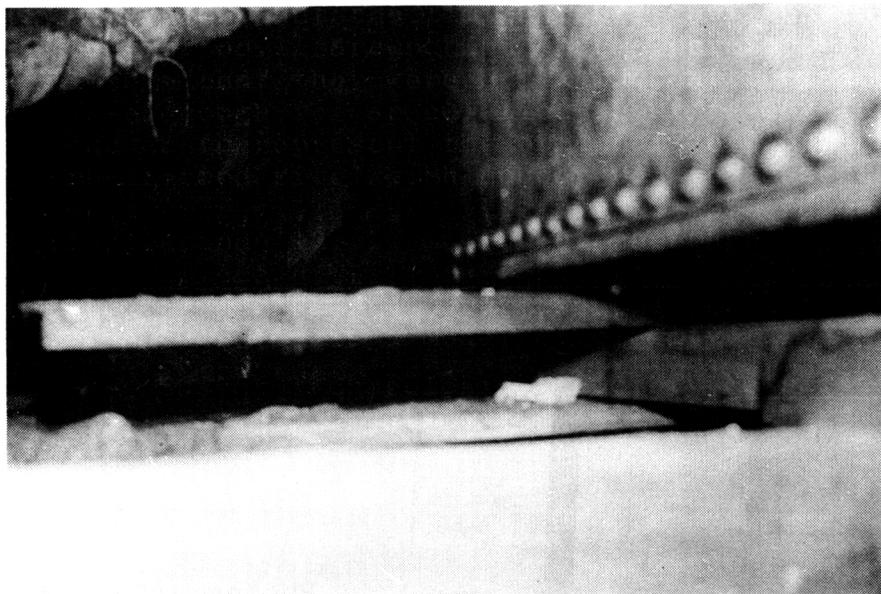
Photographs

8

10

9 11





Photograph 12

Number 12

As will be seen from photographs 1,3,4 & 9, ridge and eaves are consistently at a lower level than those of no.11. On the plan ABKO represents the original building, KJO being a modern addition (photos 2 & 4). Access to the roof is very restricted but it is

quite clear that the timbers of the east gable end (photo 9) are original and in good order, as are rafters, purlins and windbraces (photos 10,11,12) continuing westward. The camera had to be held at arms length through a hole and missed picturing the windbraces. About halfway along appeared to be a collar beam and two unstable queen posts (photo 12) but beyond little could be seen.

The shop front of KJO is of quite graceful style. A photograph provisionally datable to 1862 does not show it. In that year still survived in the east end on both floors the 'quill pen' windows of ogee shape associated locally with three generations of Palmers, an almost incredibly versatile family who cut pens among other occupations.

Below eaves level the original structure is almost completely disguised. A lorry driver's misjudgement revealed (photo 9) rendered sandstone facing. Such an external finish is hardly reconcilable with a roof type seldom dated later than about 1600. One cannot really doubt that the building was at first timber framed. Bargeboards and wall finish might belong to the first half of the 19th century.

The interior is equally obscured by changes of ceiling level, partitions and fitments. Photographs 13, 14 & 15 show what might be called a 'tie beam'. It is at the proper level. The vertical props above it support a raised ceiling. All is rather too ruggedly picturesque. At its north end (photo 15) there is halving for a lap joint, seeming provision for a curved brace to meet the adjoining post, but the post has no mortice to receive it.

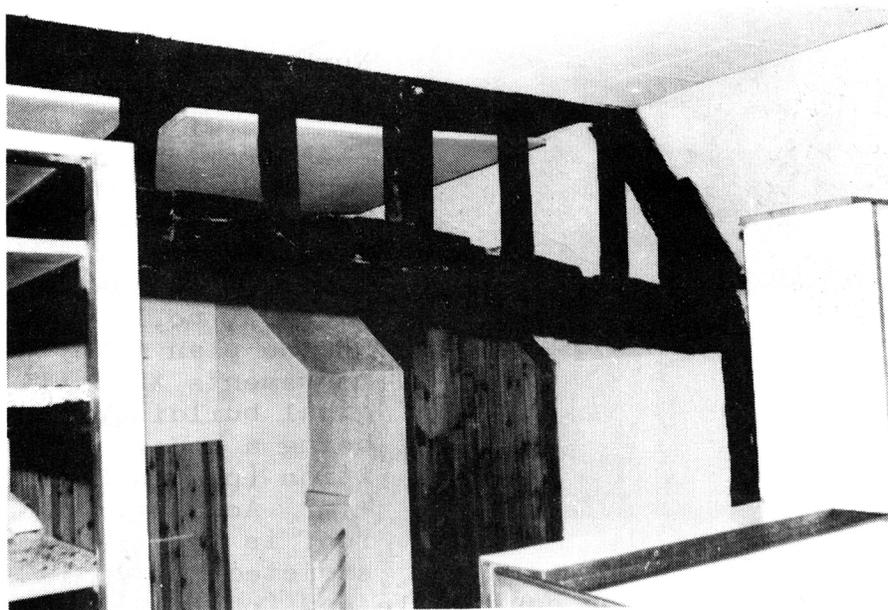
There is a fireplace in the cellar as in no.11.

It will be apparent that the roof timbers are the only dependable dating feature left. They are of a type seldom seen after 1600 but the limitation is not absolute and a date like that of no.11 around 1650 seems permissible. It is not unlikely that they were built much at the same time. They are late enough for speculation about re-development and early enough to represent the original development of an awkward and restricted site which nobody was in haste to use for building.

Photographs 13, 14 & 15 over the page

'The Bulletin is a model of clarity'

- Sussex Archaeological Society Newsletter, March 1975.



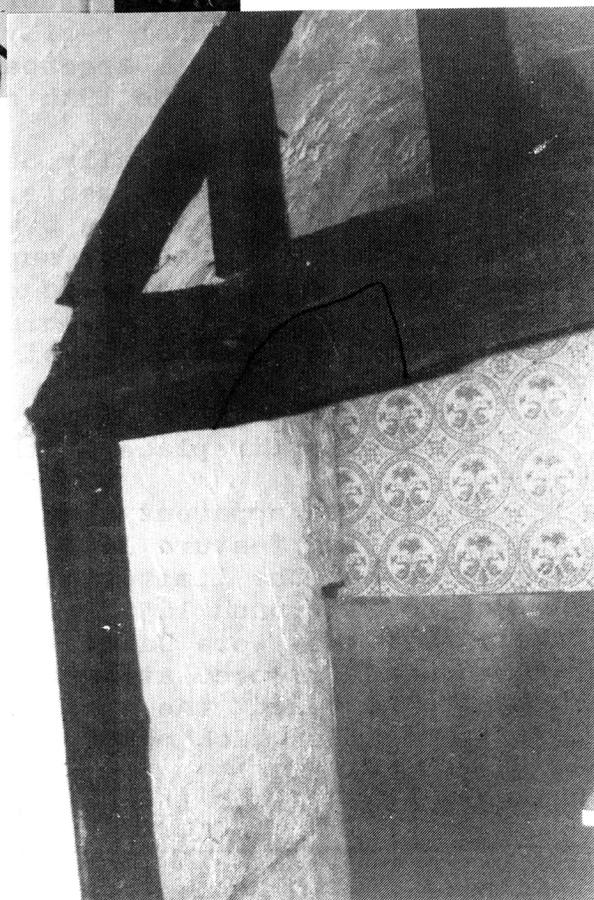
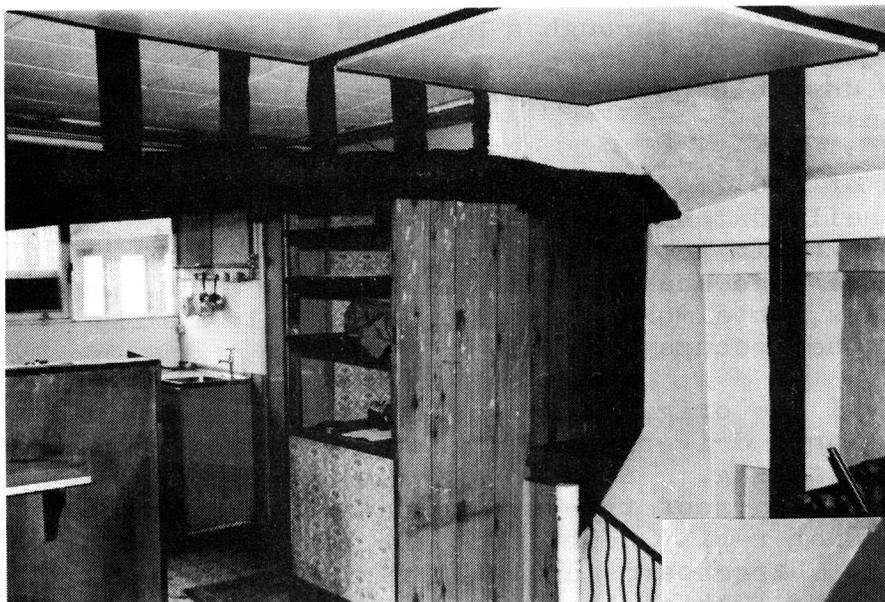
11 and 12
MIDDLE ROW

Photographs

13

14

15



159-161 LONDON ROAD (Bulletin 16, pp.6f): The owners of the site have kindly examined the deeds, at our request, and report that they only go back to 1898 but reveal that an earlier name for the cottages was Thunder Hall. The readers who pointed out that they were never called Gassons' Cottages are quite correct: the words were added to the title merely as an aid to identification for those who do not remember them.

M.J.L.

THE GOODS SHED PROJECT

by M.J.Leppard

Thanks to generous reporting over several months by both local papers, all members will be aware that we have taken a leading part in the campaign to save the town's disused Goods Shed to serve as a young people's drama and arts workshop. At the time of writing the County Education Committee, though sympathetic, has decided that it cannot find the money to finance the re-alignment of the slip road threatening the building. Only the Roads and Transport Committee can save it now, by allowing for the extra costs in its inner relief road budget, a matter of some £11,000, as estimated by the surveyor's department, which has agreed that the line can be redrawn within the relevant regulations, though embanking and a retaining wall will be required; hence the extra cost.

It was our member Mrs Creightmore who first foresaw the possibilities of the building in our column in the Courier of 27 February. The idea was enthusiastically taken up by the local Youth and Community Officer, Mr J.F.McBratney, and a committee representing the Town Council, local schools and youth work and ourselves was set up. On behalf of the Steering Committee this Society, as a body of suitable standing, has put in a planning application for change of use, to which the Town Council has decided to raise no objections.

The building is ideally suited to the use proposed without any necessity to do violence to its fabric, for what is required is a large covered space permitting flexibility of use in all kinds of creative drama, as opposed to the limitations imposed by a conventional auditorium. The upper floor would be suitable for associated, or independent, painting, photography and various crafts. Thus a long-felt need for such facilities would be met and provision for such worthwhile activities (in the running of which the young people themselves would take a substantial part) would bring real social and educational benefits to the good of the whole community. At the same time a fine building would be preserved in use.

Unfortunately our attempt to have the building listed as of architectural and historic interest was unsuccessful, but it is highly regarded by the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society as 'a particularly fine example of a good design of Victorian Goods Shed, of which few still remain'. The S.I.A.S. has urged the County to spare it if at all possible (and, if not, to permit it to make a full survey and record).

As most readers can easily see it for themselves no description of the exterior is needed here. Inside a platform occupies one side and a through running track the other. An interesting old chain hoist survives. It was built in 1866 at the same time as the line was extended to Tunbridge Wells.

Further information from Mr J.F.McBratney, c/o The Wallis Centre, De La Warr Road (21585). Those who care strongly enough for the building or the scheme are urged to write to the Chairman of the Roads and Transport Committee, County Hall, Chichester.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY: Members are reminded that our share of the West Sussex County Record Office's photographic survey continues to the end of the year and cannot have too many helpers. If you have a camera and can spare (say) an afternoon or two, please contact the co-ordinator, Mr C.W.Goolden, Top End, Celcourt (Dormans Park 274, after 6 p.m.).

THE SOCIETY'S SECOND SET OF POSTCARDS

'With customary initiative the East Grinstead Society is producing packs of excellent postcards of period photographs of the town's life'. Thus the Sussex Archaeological Society's Newsletter, no.15 (March 1975). Most members will know by now that we were able to bring out our second set at our exhibition where they sold readily to townspeople and strangers alike. We have also reprinted the first set, which sold out in six months. Both sets are available at 25 n.p. at the Corner House Restaurant or (by post only, postage extra) from our treasurer, Barclays Bank.

As before, they are reproduced from old photographs or original glass negatives belonging to members of the Society and printed by Messrs Pamlin Prints of Croydon. The following notes may be found helpful. Further information will always be welcomed by Mr C.W.Goolden, Top End, Felcourt (Dormans Park 274, after 6 p.m.) or Mr M.J.Leppard, Sackville School.

CG0049 YOUNG & SONS, 39 HIGH STREET, 1911

This family business succeeded that of the Sawyers (traceable back as far as 1734) towards the end of the 19th century. The premises shown and the grocery business were given up some years ago but the draper's and ladies' outfitters' business continued further along the street until very recently. Can anyone identify the people in the picture?

CG0158 TOPPING OUT STENNINGS' CHIMNEY, 1913

Most readers will remember Stennings' timber yard in London Road, another old-established business (1792 was always claimed as the date of establishment) now replaced by Grinstead House mammoth office building. It is probable that we shall carry an article on the firm in one of next year's Bulletins.

CG0200 FIRST MOTORISED LOCAL MAIL VAN, c.1903

This photograph was taken outside the East Grinstead Motor Garage (next to Moat Church) which ran the van under contract to the Post Office. Some twenty years ago the East Grinstead Observer published a 1909 picture of Mr. Alfred Catt at the wheel of a De Dion Bouton claiming it as the town's first motor mail. Perhaps it was the first operated entirely by the Post Office itself. Can anyone enlighten us?

CG1587 MOAT CHURCH QUARTET, c.1913

The music is Sunday School Anniversary Hymns and the double bass player is believed to be Mr Hollingsworth the Church organist. We should like to know who the others are.

ML24305 LEWES OLD BANK (Barclays), 24 March 1905

The building, 31 High Street, is now the Corner House Restaurant. A private bank was opened there in 1807 by the brothers John and Andrew Burt but it failed in 1816 and was succeeded by an agency of the Lewes Old Bank which in 1896 became one of the constituents of Barclays & Co. Ltd. The bank moved to its present premises in 1930, extending them in 1964. Perhaps some yet remember Thomas Voice?

NEXT BULLETIN: before the end of the year. Contributions to Mr M.J.Leppard, Sackville School, by 31 October, please.