

Thursday last, the day appointed for the annual autumn gathering of our County Archaeological Society, was one of those bright days which so often cheer us in this part of the country at the time when days "draw in, telling of the glories of a summer passed away." But far more enjoyable than a Midsummer day is a glorious autumnal day in the "open". The air, especially on our breezy South-downs, is pure, fresh, and invigorating. We can enjoy a "tramp oe'r moor and fell" with intense pleasure and with no fear of being overtaken by a sunstroke.

We always enjoy these autumnal gatherings of the Sussex Archaeological Society, for if they are not in their nature so intensely scientific as are the annual summer gatherings: they partake more of the nature of a large family gathering. We have attended these meetings down the Brookside, over the hills to Alfriston and elsewhere, but never to our recollection has there been a more pleasant gathering than that of Thursday last at Withyham and Hartfield.

Where is Withyham and where is Hartfield? It may be that some of our readers will be asking. Well, we are not surprised at the question, for they are down the East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells line from Three Bridges and as good-humoured joking has long prevailed, that East Grinstead, although traditionally believed to have an existence, was never "discovered" until the line of railway was opened to it in 1856. But, for all this, the villages we have named lie in a very beautiful part of the county, - beautiful especially when seen under the glorious autumnal sky of last Thursday. We left Brighton on Thursday morning, by the 8:50 train, in company with Mr Charlie Bellingham, Mr Napper, Mr G. D. Sawyer, and a couple of other members, forming the Brighton contingent of the party. Arrived at Three Bridges we found a few of the members who had arrived by the Horsham and west country train, but the bulk were expected by the Lewes and Hastings train – from Lewes as headquarters, due in another half-hour. In due course the train arrived bringing with it the "executive" – the Rev. William Powell, of Newick, the Hon. Secretary, the Rev. W. de St. Croix, of Glynde and others of the Committee. The Railway Company had kindly provided a "special" and this was soon got off under the direction of Mr Charles Lyne, son of well-known Brighton parents, the ever active and obliging Station Master. The country soon after leaving Three Bridges is very picturesque; soon we find ourselves in a deep cutting, and soon amid some most beautiful scenery. At the sides of the rail there are many specimen farms, the autumnal tint of which is beautifully rich. We pass Rowfant and Grange Road, and look out for the inhabitants, but with the exception of the railway stations – "in my cottage near a wood" – can discover no signs of human habitation. And so on, through and by the side of woods where we observe the rabbits at play, and the pheasants and partridges in happy freedom, until we come on to East Grinstead, "a borough by prescription," concerning which a local guide tells us "it consists of one principal street, but is fast improving and increasing in size." Shortly after leaving East Grinstead we look out for the remains of Brambletye House, the memory of which has been especially rendered famous by the novel of the late Horace Smith, who, like Harrison Alesworth, loved to entwine a tale or legend around some well-known spot, thus investing it with wondrous interest. Few travellers pass down this line (there are but few at the best of times) without looking out for Brambletye House; if the traveller does not look out for himself, some agreeable fellow-passenger is sure to point it out to him, - "That's Brambletye, sir." Far more pleasurable impressions does this evoke, - but yet the desire for imparting information is the same, - than are produced as we pass down the London and Northern Line; we have often done so, and never missed hearing the gratuitous information, "That's Rugely, sir, where Palmer came from," and then the conversation inevitably drifts into tales of murder and dark deeds.

But to our archaeologists. We arrive at Withyham, and wend our way to the Church, the first point of interest in the programme of the day. This Withyham is not altogether a "deserted village," for, although the population has decreased much within the last 25 years, it has still some 1500 inhabitants, and it has a post office, kept by one Thomas Collins, both grocer and draper, to whose arduous (?) official duties have lately attached those of a postal telegraph office keeper, a wire running from the station to his office. On our way to the Church we are joined by many more members and friends of the Society, and among the company we now find Mr Francis Barchard, of Horsted and his brother Captain Barchard, of the Uckfield Rifles; Mr George Grantham, of Barcombe; the venerable and much-loved editor of the Society's journals, the Rev. Edward Turner of Maresfield, and his son, the Rev. Thomas Richard Turner; the Rev. H. Campion, of Westmeston, - we beg pardon, - Prebendary Campion, which appointment he received on the death of the Rev. Henry Smith, Vicar of West Firle; Sir Walter Stirling, of Burswood, Tunbridge Wells (we are in the immediate vicinity of "the Wells"); the Rev. H. T. Cole, Chaplain of the County Gaol at Lewes; the Rev. F. R. Hepburn, Rector of Chailey; the Rev. Edward Green, of Seaford; the Rev. Pierre De Putron, of Rodmell; Mrs and Miss De Putron; the Rev. Edward Bray, of Kingston; the Rev. W. Powell, of Newick; Mr Thomas St. Leger Blaauw, of Newick; several F.S.A's - Charles Hill, Esq., Dr. Diamond, George Smith, Esq., H. Kampkin, Esq.; the Rev. A. Edes, of Ticehurst; Mr and Mrs Thompson, of Ashdown Park; H. G. Heoe, G. P. Bacon, C. Powell, J. Parsons, Esqrs.; Mrs Rosseter; the Rev T. F. Radeton Read (the Rector of Withyham), and the Rev. E. Polehampton (Rector of Hartfield) - our local ??, for the ?? our guides, philosophers, and, - we will trust for much longer, our friends.

After a pleasant walk and crossing the Churchyard, wherein "The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep" in happy ignorance of the mighty civilizer, on the line of the railway, now passing close to their former homesteads, we repair to the Church and are at once struck both with its grandeur and its beauty - its grandeur as manifest in its proportions, its beauty as manifest in its simple but exquisitely beautiful decorations for a harvest festival. (We had almost forgotten, however, to note a curious memorial slab outside the east end of the chancel, which was pointed out to us prior to entering the Church, curious by reason of the hard division of words into lines, such as "here lye" in one line, and "th" in another, reminding us strongly of the far famed Pickswickian discovery, (the Bill Stumps fecit) The Church, as we have said, was decorated for a harvest thanksgiving festival, either recently held or shortly to be held, with illuminated texts and flowers, and had a very pleasant appearance. The building is doubtless of the Norman style of architecture, but it is very evident that, from time to time many and extensive alterations have been made in the original. We find that there are records of its having been many times "restored;" about 1663, when it suffered much from being struck by lightning, one such a restoration took place, and as this was about the time of the Puritans, they "restored" it after their fashion, erecting a roof to span the whole building and placing a ceiling below, thus taking off much of the architectural effect but affording a platform for successive generations of Churchwardens to "bedaub with untampered mortar." But the present century, as we gratefully remember, has been noted for better things, and in 1861 a more worthy restoration of Withyham Church took place, under the auspices of the present Lord Buckhurst, then the Rector of the parish. In the chancel are windows containing figures of St. Katherine, St. Thomas of Hereford, St. George and St. Edward the Confessor; there is a window in the north wall placed there by the King of Wurtenburg, in memory of his having attended Divine service here; and there is a fine east window - indeed two east windows, one being in the Sackville Chapel, of which we must have something to say.

This Sackville Chapel is an especial feature in the Church, and has been for many centuries the burial place of the Sackville family. The most conspicuous object in the chapel is a beautifully-executed, noble monument, to the memory of Thomas Sackville, the youngest son of Richard, 5th Earl of Dorset, and Frances Cranfield, his wife. On the top there is a reclining figure of the young lord, whilst figures of his noble parents, life size, kneel on either side. An inscription tells us: "This monument was designed to be erected before ye decease of ye Rt. Hon. Richard Earl of Dorset, father of this youth, who departed this life ye 27th August, in ye year of our Lord 1677, and in ye 55th year of his age; and of ye Rt. Hon. Frances, Countess Dowager of Dorset, relict of ye said father, and mother of ye said youth, who erected ye same to perpetuate ye memory of her husband and sone, in ye year of our Lord 1679."

On the west end of the monument are some beautiful lines ascribed to Pope; if written by him of course it was many years after the demise, and the quaint style and arrangement of former days is consequently only an imitation. Our readers will like to peruse them:

Stand not amazed (Reader) to see us shead,
From drowned eyes vaine offerings to ye dead,
For he whose sacred ashes here doth lye
Was the great hope of all our family,
To blaze whose vertues is but to detract
From them, for in them none can be exact;
So grave and hopeful was his youth,
So dear a friend to piety and truth,
He scarce knew sin but what curst nature gave,
And yet grim death has snatch'd him to his grave,
He never to his parents was unkind,
But in his early leaving them behind,
And since h'ath left us and for e'er is gon,
What mother would not weep for such a sin.
May this fare monument then never fade,
Or be by blasting time or age decay'd,
That the succeeding times to all may tell,
Here lieth one that lived and died well.

Here lyes the thirteenth child and seventh son,
Who in his thirteenth yeare his race had run.

THOMAS SACKVILLE

This young lord must have been a very paragon of virtue, if only one-half the inscription on the monumental structure is to be believed.

The virtues of other members of the family are recorded, but in a minor degree, on the north and south sides of the monument; on the north, a bas relief represents the six other sons, all noble youths; whilst on the south side is another bas relief representing the six daughters, of course all lovely damsels. This monument, which was the work of Caius Gabriel Cibber, cost £350.

On the walls around we perceive monuments to other members of the family, one, to the memory of a former Duchess, has figures on either side, representing her Grace's daughters, the Countess Amherst and the Countess Delawarr, both lately deceased. On the south wall there is also to be seen an inscription recording the death of Lord Cantalupe, eldest son of the late Lord and Lady

Delawarr, a young nobleman who represented for a time, if we mistake not, the Borough of Lewes in Parliament since thirty years ago.

Flags that have "braved a thousand years," banners of the Earls and Dukes of Dorset, who lie buried here – the well known pair of cats are especially prominent - are hung around this Chapel.

Belonging to more recent times we observe a banner with the Sackville arms, which we are told was formerly in St. George's, Windsor, being only removed from there on the death of the late Earl of Delawarr, a Knight of the Garter.

A very interesting genealogical window is conspicuous on the north side of the chapel. It traces the descent of the Sackville family, in a direct line from one of William the Conqueror's Knights, down to the 4th Duke of Dorset and his two sisters. Underneath is the inscription, "Noblis familia Sackville hic expectat resurrectionem," whilst above are the crests of the Sackvilles, the Cranfields and the Curzons.

After we had inspected the Church, we were much gratified with an interesting account of the building and its history, given to the visitors by the Rector, the Rev. T. F. Ruston Read. In this he told us of the value of the living in the time of Edward I. It was 45 marks, about £30, the said Edward at that period receiving from Pope Nicholas IV. a grant of the tenth of all benefices to assist him in another crusade. He further told us how, that in the time of Edward II., Withyham was attached to the Benedictine Priory of Morteyn in Normandy – the Earl of Morteyn having much property in the neighbourhood; how that in 1372 Withyham became a Priory with a Royal patron, the advowson being granted to the famed John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster; how that, in 1405, William of Wykeham, the celebrated Bishop of Winchester, became patron of the Church, and that soon after this Henry IV. gave the manor of Withyham with the advowson of the Church to the Prior and convent of the Holy Trinity at Hastings; how that after this, Withyham became a rectory, consequent on Henry V. dissolving all connections with foreign religious houses and alien priories, vesting their estates in the Crown; how that in the reign of Elizabeth the manor and advowson of the Church were conferred on Lord Buckhurst, and how that they have since continued in the possession of his descendants.

In common with all present, we expressed our thanks to the Rev. Mr Reed for his historical and descriptive sketch, which had the effect of imbuing the sacred edifice with far more interest than it would otherwise have possessed.

The pleasing announcement being next made by Mr Read that Lord Delawarr had kindly consented to allow the members and their friends to walk through the house at Buckhurst, we, in common with the others, thither repaired, passing through the rectory grounds and so on into the estate, crossing a truly picturesque rustic bridge over a stream – when there is plenty of water it is doubtless, with its mimic waterfalls, truly romantic – and through beautifully laid out gardens, till we reached the summit of the hill on which Buckhurst is built. The view from here across Ashdown Forest is grand and extensive; it is one of the most magnificent views to be met with in Sussex. This demesne (and we are again indebted to the Rev. Mr Read for our information) was originally another gift of William the Conqueror – (how freely he disposed of other peoples' Possessions) to a Knight who had helped him to the throne, one Robert de Dene, who was both Lord of Buckhurst and many other places in this county. The Sackvilles inherited the property by marriage – the Lady Ela de Dene ?? herself in the days when "Twas merry in the Hall when the beards wagged all" – with one Sir Jordan de

Sackville, who "flourished" in the times of Stephen and Henry II. This Sir Jordan was a descendant of another of those fortunate ones who "came in with the Conqueror," his grandfather, Herbrand, standing first in the genealogical window in the Church to which we have referred.

What was the value of the land at this time (1274) may be gathered from the account given by Mr Read. Marled land is described as worth 6d per acre, and unmarled as worth 2d per acre! A royal chase existed in Ashdown Forest till the time of Charles I., when it was "disestablished," but a small park of stone land remained enclosed until, as recorded, the "malicious people of these times" killed the deer, threw down the fences, and laid the forest open and waste. So it continued till "Charlie got his own again," when the "merrie monarch" gave a lease of the forest to the Earl of Bristol, but this afterwards became void, and in 1678 it was finally granted to the Earl of Dorset, in whose family it still continues.

After Mr Read had told us all he knew about the origin and owners of the house we took a ramble through the "show" rooms, the most notable being the dining room, notable for its carved oak panelling, which has been removed from Halnaker House near Bognor. There are also many paintings of interest, conspicuous among these being a portrait of the late Lady Delawarr, a copy of a famous Vandyck at Wiston, - Lord and Lady Pembroke, and a portrait of Lady Cecilia Shirley of Wiston, wife of a Lord Delawarr who was Captain General of Virginia and the America colonies in 1630 and who gave his name to the Delawarr river in America. We also observed a fine old chimney piece to which a legend attaches; it represents a female at the stake, a dove coming from Heaven to comfort her, and the light of a martyr shining out at the back. But who the glorified female is does not transpire.

And now for Old Buckhurst, to gain which we pass by another route, and cross several fields. "Is this all!" we ask, there is only an old tower standing, and this of no very vast proportions. Yet this represents what was for more than six centuries the residence of the Sackvilles from whom the Dorsets and now the Delawarrs descended. This estate is another which that same Ela brought into the family by her marriage to Jordan de Sackville, and traces are pointed out to us showing that doubtless the place was once of considerable importance; that the tower is all that remains of a building which had a frontage of 200ft. and helped to enclose a square of 110ft. in width, the mansion being surrounded by a moat and approached over a drawbridge. Here resided, from about the beginning of the seventeenth century, the first Earl of Dorset, a favourite of "the virgin Queen," but at her instigation his Earlship removed to Knole, in order that he might be nearer his royal mistress, not that the distance from London or Windsor was much less, but the roads near Buckhurst were so bad that it was a matter of great difficulty to journey over them. They are not much better in some parts now, but they are not so bad as to give cause for the reason, formerly alleged, of the Sussex maidens having such long legs, - their having to drag them out of the clay with such great exertion when travelling. Mr Read told us this legend and he raised many a smile and blush from his fair hearers.

We believe old Buckhurst does not owe its distinction and present condition so much to the destroying hand of time as to a piece of parsimony on the part of that said favourite of Queen Elizabeth, or, at any rate, of his successor, who, anxious to found Sackville College at East Grinstead (of the doings in connection with which so much was made a dozen years ago) wanted the materials of Buckhurst for his purpose. And so he pulled the main building down, and used its old stones for Sackville.

And now, following our leaders, we repair across fields and along turnpikes to Hartfield, the Church there being the next subject of interest. We may describe Hartfield village as a worthy compeer of Withyham, its population being about the same, or perhaps somewhat less. The village appears to have been lying asleep for a century, and no Hartfield Rip Van Winkle awaking from his slumbers would be at all disconcerted with the changes modern civilisation has made. Inasmuch as there are but few, if any. There is the Church as it ever was, concerning the origin and date of which the rector, the Rev. Edmund Polehampton, confesses himself to be in ignorance; there is the blacksmith's shop, where, close by, but not under the spreading chestnut tree, for the tree is wanting, stood the smith, - "a brawny man is he," - looking aghast at the half-hundred visitors who had invaded his territory; there is the "Dorset Arms Hotel and posting house," approachable from the street by its half-a-dozen shops, possessing its wooden balcony, and looking as though it had just stepped out of a picture. Still life, but apparently a very happy life.

To the Church we are bound, and after the ladies of the party have rested and refreshed at the Rectory by the kindness of the Rev. Edmund Polehampton, the Rector, we thither repaired; and here the Rector tells us he knows little or nothing about the building, - he would feel obliged if anyone would tell him something. He only knows that it is supposed to have been built about the year 1380, and he points out to us its square tower, its high shingled spire, its nave and south aisle and its west gallery. Of the spire, though, he is rather proud, for he tells us it is a pure "broach spire, of which there are only four in England. He knows that it is dedicated to St. Mary, and that it has long been held in the patronage of the Dorset family. He points out to us the monuments of the Maitland, Swiney, Honniker, and Jewett families, and we observe a handsome tablet which he has placed in the Church to the memory of his brother, who was Chaplain to the ill-fated garrison at Lucknow, perishing there during the memorable siege of 1857. This Church we also found decorated for a harvest thanksgiving festival, very pretty, showing that willing hearts, fair hands, and pious minds had been at work. About five years ago the Church was repaired, when the ugly old plastering was knocked off and the original beams exposed, although these are not in their original state, the decay caused by time having necessitated the cutting off and repairing the ends. The old lich gate which we passed under as we went from the Church to the town is a curiosity, - it is veritable relic of the olden times.

According to the programme, luncheon was now to be the order of the day, and very much it was required, after our having been three or four hours in "the open." It had been notified that this was to take place at the Dorset Arms at Hartfield, but hungry souls were made far from fat on arriving there, by the notification that the locale had been altered, and that we must travel on another mile and a quarter, even to Bolebrook, before we could refresh. And so on went the Sussex pilgrims in quest of Bolebrook and refreshments. It was a long mile and a quarter, - distance may lend enchantment to the view, it certainly adds gusto to the appetite.

Arrived at Bolebrook we found it to consist of but the remains of an ancient brick mansion, no doubt formerly a very handsome building, but now there only remaining a gateway, tower, and the north-east portion of the house, so altered, externally, as to render it difficult to decide where the original ends and the modern begins. As we subsequently gathered from Lord Delawarr, who met us here, the building dates back to the middle of the fifteenth century; that it was ?? ?? to decay in the reign of the first James; that it was formerly the property of the Dalyngrudges of Bodiam, passing from them to the Sackvilles on the marriage of Margaret, daughter and heiress of Sir Edward Dalyngrudge; that the Tuftons, again by marriage, succeeded to the estate, and subsequently

bequeathed it to charitable purposes; that it was sold under a decree of the court of Chancery to Lord George Germain formerly Lord George Sackville, who was created a Peer by the title of Viscount Sackville, and who took from it his second title of Baron Bolebrook; that in 1790 it was again united to the house of Dorset, being bought by John Frederick Sackville, third Earl of Dorset, who was the maternal grandfather of his present Lordship of Delawarr, who is the fifth Earl, and who succeeded to the Sackville estate through his marriage with the Lady Elizabeth Sackville, daughter of the third Duke of Dorset, her Ladyship being the last of the old family of Sackville.

It must not be thought that we heard all this before luncheon, - it would not have been then received with half the interest. No; for by the liberality and kindness of the Earl, a luncheon of a most substantial character had been provided for all in the spacious and ancient kitchen of Bolebrook, now used as a farm house by Mr Whittome, who kindly gave up possession of it for the occasion, who superintended all the arrangements, and who, with the aid of Mrs Whittome and his family, decorated the apartment most charmingly and helped prepare the luncheon, which, by the bye, was mainly served by Mr and Mrs Edwards, of the Dorset Arms, at Hartfield.

The luncheon, over which Earl Delawarr presided, was of the most substantial character. At its close the noble Earl told the company he did not mean to trouble them with many toasts, but they must drink the health of the Queen. Of course this was done as archaeologists know how to do it. And then his Lordship made a few excellent pithy remarks on these Societies, which, unlike now-a-days, formed for making researches into every department of human knowledge relating to the future, turned their attention to and did not absolutely ignore the past. He told us that he regarded such Societies with considerable interest, as, by their aid we learned something of the manners, habits and customs of the people who lived in times coeval with the building wherein they were now gathered, and which they also that day been viewing. He felt grateful to the Sussex Society for coming to visit him, and trusted they had all spent a pleasant and interesting day.

After we had loudly cheered his Lordship, Mr Francis Barchard expressed to him the thanks of all for his courteous reception. He desired also to tell their friend the Rev. Mr Polehampton, of Hartfield, that although he admitted that he knew not much of the history of the place, yet that an Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Bradwardine, was reputed to have been born there.

"And I am glad of it" said Mr Polehampton.

"Yes," rejoined Mr Barchard, but, he added that other places also claimed the honour; it was not known whether he was born at Hartfield, or Hatfield, or Heathfield, and a claim had also been put in for Cowden. Here were excited roars of laughter, and when these had subsided, Mr Barchard, in order to reassure Mr Polehampton, said it was quite certain his Grace was born in the Diocese of Chichester, probably in Chichester itself. Here was another hearty laugh, and the happiness of the company generally was increased. Mr Barchard, however, after this diversion, returned to his text, and with the help of all the company his Lordship's health was most enthusiastically drunk.

After his Lordship had acknowledged the toast we betook ourselves to view many interesting chambers, staircases, and the like, in the old house, and were much struck by the Goth and Vandalism which had bricked and plastered up a score of fine old mullioned windows. "Ah, but that was done when the window tax was on, and those windows cost a heap of money." A happy thing for us that we live in more enlightened times, when heaven's light and heaven's air are as free and beautiful as in heaven itself to all.

To Mr Whittome, the tenant farmer in possession, our thanks are due for the kind way in which he received the "gentlemen of the press." His courteous reception was a pleasant finale to a truly

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happy day with the Sussex Archaeological Society, sad as we walked to Hartfield Station, and from there proceeded by rail via Three Bridges to Brighton, we could only regret that so pleasant a day should, even after all we had seen and done, have been brought to a close