

SOME TIMBER-FRAMED HOUSES IN THE
KENTISH WEALD.

BY H. S. COWPER, ESQ., F.S.A.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN the great clay plain which traverses Kent from west to east, and lies wholly within the Weald, there are perhaps two features which are especially characteristic. One is the extraordinary number of ponds which dot the map, and the other is the timber-framed houses and farm buildings of various dates, into the construction of which as a general rule brick does not enter, and stone only for foundations.

The connection between houses and ponds may not at once be apparent, but the number of the latter has never been completely explained, and it is possible that many of them have been dug for the marly clay, from which the so-called loaming, which filled the panels of these timber houses, was made. When one considers that in every house and barn not only the outer walls, but the inside partitions were largely made up of this filling, it will be recognized that a large supply was required.

The timber houses themselves are so often disguised by tiling and weather boards, or have been subject to structural modification and modernizing, that it is difficult to realize how numerous and interesting they are. It was the purchase of the old timber-framed residence of Loddenden, Staplehurst, that turned my attention to these buildings, and I now venture to put before the Society some notes, plans, and details of a few in this part of the Weald.

The study of these houses is a fascinating one, for anybody who cares for old domestic work. On examination it

is possible to group them into types; but it seems to me, that although these unpretentious dwellings have received some notice from antiquaries and architects, sufficient attention has not hitherto been paid to the development of the ground plan, which probably is the best way of classifying them: The difficulties in the way of dating them by the means of detail are very great, owing to the overlapping of styles during the sixteenth century; and this difficulty is increased by the fact that in certain areas the houses appear to have originated for different purposes. By this I mean that some of these houses were erected as manor houses for the small manors which were characteristic of Kent, some for the larger yeomen, and some for influential clothiers' families; and the character and finish of the work put into them was, I think, influenced by these facts.

Again, in dealing with the houses by detail, one is largely handicapped by the process of decay and reconstruction, since the first has often caused the removal of the original windows, barge boards, and sometimes the fascia boards protecting the joist ends. Reconstruction, weather tiling, and boarding, have covered up features right and left; but in most cases a survey, if done with sufficient care, will reveal the original plan. Still further, I believe that a study of detail and mouldings alone will be found very confusing, identical mouldings being used long after their first introduction. The overlapping of styles also appears to have caused the use of detail that in more pretentious buildings would probably have been quite out of fashion.

There are indeed so many points to consider in discussing rural architecture, that probably only a writer thoroughly versed in local history and trained as an architect can treat it adequately, so that I feel some diffidence in approaching the subject. Yet the desirability of recording ground plans must be my excuse.

When, hunting for precedents, I began to examine these houses I was astonished to find how many houses still exist which have been constructed on the mediæval open-roofed hall plan. So numerous are these, that probably in many

parts of the Weald it is impossible to go a mile in any direction without finding one. In no case, however, have these halls been left open to the roof, for at some subsequent date a floor has been laid to make bedrooms over, and other structural alterations have generally been carried out at the same time. These inserted floors have of course always remained, except in one or two instances where a house of this character has been acquired for the purpose of bringing out the ancient features.

Now in many parts of England such a thing as an open-roofed hall hardly exists, even in manor houses, much less in yeomen's homesteads; and such is the case in Cumberland and the Lakes, which were formerly largely owned by statesmen (estatesmen) or yeomen, and where very hard stone formed the building material. This makes it more interesting to find them so numerous in a district where timber alone was obtainable.

Reverting to the question of dating timber houses, I have ventured to say that the plan and general arrangement appear to have been neglected. Certain suggestions have indeed been made as to guides in the date of a building, among which we find—

1. If the upright intermediate posts (which were in general use in the home counties) are placed close together the building is early.

2. That if the joist ends which project to carry the floor of the oversailing, or jetty storey, are covered with a fascia board, the building belongs to a later type, since this was done to hide the joists, which were becoming lighter as timber got rarer.*

3. Exactly the reverse of the above, viz., that it is a sign of early work if the joists are covered with a fascia board.†

From my own observation I feel much inclined to doubt any of these rules, at any rate for this part of Kent, and I think it would be easy to point out both early and late

* R. Nevill, *Old Cottage and Domestic Architecture in S. W. Surrey*, 1889, p. 36.

† P. H. Dilchfield, *The Manor Houses of England*, p. 69.

houses in which the fascia board is used, and late ones in which the timbering is close. As a matter of fact this close timbering was generally used only on the front elevation, and was I believe chiefly decorative, and it was simply a question whether the original builder cared for the appearance of his house and could afford it.

I would prefer to adopt the following criterions of date :—

1. The ground and sectional plans as first built.
2. The measurements of main posts and corner posts and measurements and sections of girders.

But even in an external examination there are certain rules which may be taken as almost definite :—

1. A house which oversails or overhangs at each end of the front, but not in the middle, is early.
2. A house that oversails at the first floor the whole length of its elevation is later.
3. A house that has no oversailing storey at all is generally late.
4. A house supported on four corner posts is probably early and untouched externally.

The reasons for these propositions will be apparent in this Paper, but it may be pointed out here that, in the first, the fact that it oversails at each end, but not in the middle, is an almost certain indication of the open-hall type, because the oversailing storeys shew that floors are laid at each end of the building of which the joists project, and that such joists are absent in the middle, which means usually that there was no floor originally laid there.

Of course the open-hall type, of which I shall describe two examples, takes precedence of the others as a type. But the question is, At what date did the erection of this type come to an end? And also whether open-hall houses were ever erected after the fashion for building with rooms over the hall, and for inserting the floors, had set in. The Renaissance began about 1516, affecting at first the detail of houses and not the plan,* and may be said to have been fully

* Gotch, *Growth of the English House*, pp. 134, 136.

established in the time of Inigo Jones, say a hundred years later, *i.e.*, 1616. I think therefore it is reasonable that we may, when not treating any individual example, class roughly the open-hall type of homestead as a fifteenth-century type, while those built with rooms over the hall may be sixteenth century or later. It is only by examination of numerous examples that we can ascertain if the fifteenth-century type houses were often erected in the sixteenth century, or if any of the later type were erected before the conclusion of the fifteenth century.

In the majority of the older timber houses of the Weald I have come to the conclusion that for safety's sake the cooking was done in a kitchen built quite separate, beside or behind the offices which always adjoin the hall. At any rate, in no single instance that I have been able to examine is there any trace of an original kitchen as part of the structure. These out-of-door kitchens have now disappeared, and it is pretty evident that with the disuse of the hall it sometimes became the kitchen. Therefore inside these houses the only original fire was the central hearth, from which the smoke escaped through a roof vent, and doors and windows. The same change of habits and new wants which made them build in floors for extra bedrooms, called for brick fireplaces and flues, and these were generally obtained by erecting an enormous chimney of brick within the house from eight to ten feet in width in order that it should carry four flues, one from the much curtailed room formed from the hall, one from the room behind the hall—either the old parlour or else a new parlour made out of the old offices—and one from each of the bedrooms above. If they had put the chimney-stack at the back of the hall instead of practically in it, it would have only given them two fireplaces, so that the other course was generally adopted. But this system set the example for the new houses, so that we find the great chimney-stack built in the same way inside the house and between hall and parlour, and taking up so much space that it made the frontage nine or ten feet longer than otherwise would have been necessary. The amount of internal space

lost in the older houses by this building-in process was very great.

Into the very interesting methods of construction, framing, and materials, etc., I do not propose to enter here, since it would occupy much space, and also because the subject has been well treated by Mr. Charles Baily, Mr. Ralph Nevill, and others.* Both methods and materials are indeed so utterly different to those in general use that the subject well deserves attention, especially as they are methods and materials which though of the utmost excellence can never be revived in England.

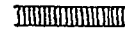

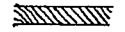
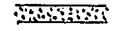

The examples now to be described will no doubt illustrate sufficiently the above remarks.

PATTENDEN, GOUDHURST.

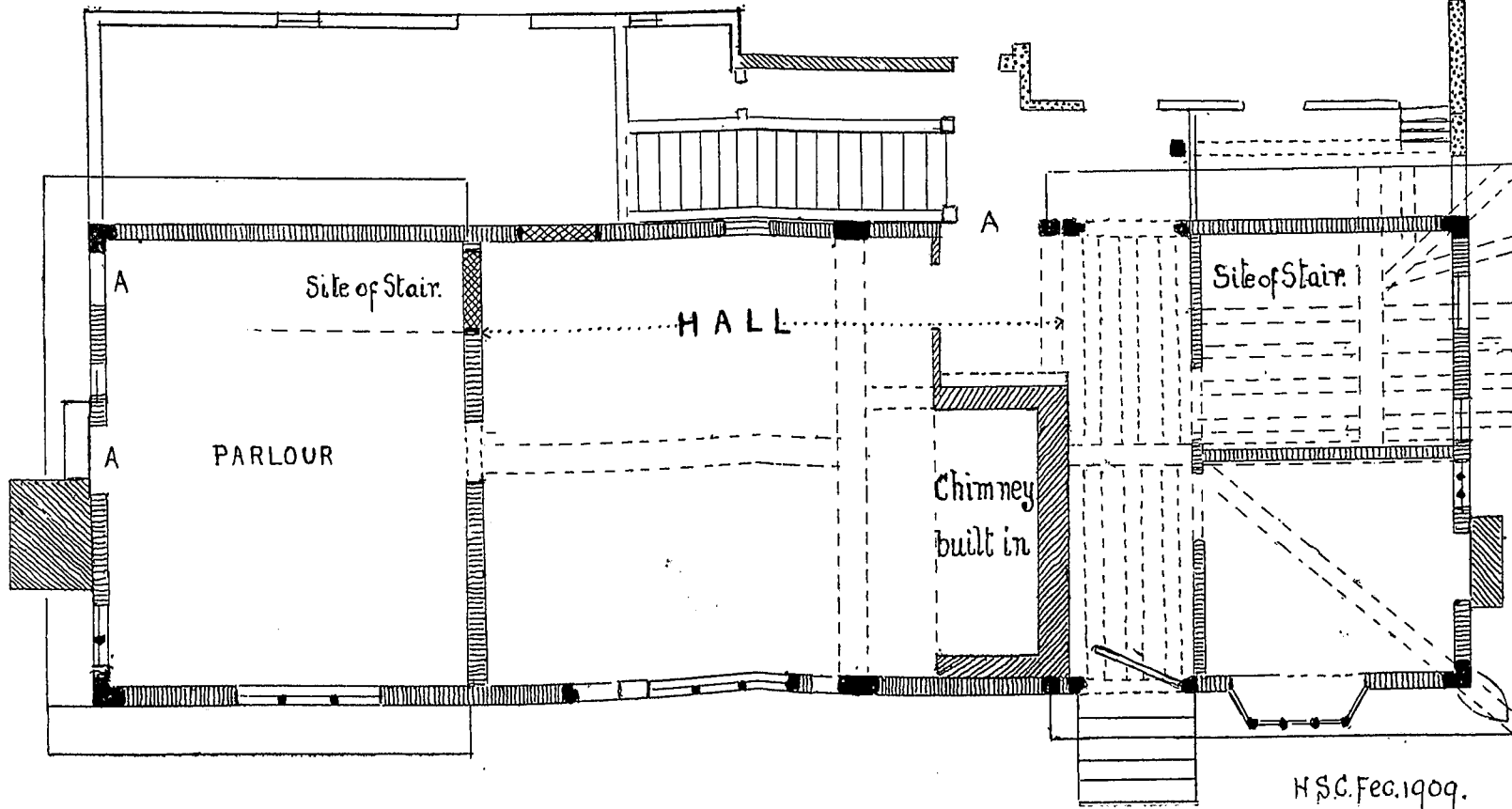
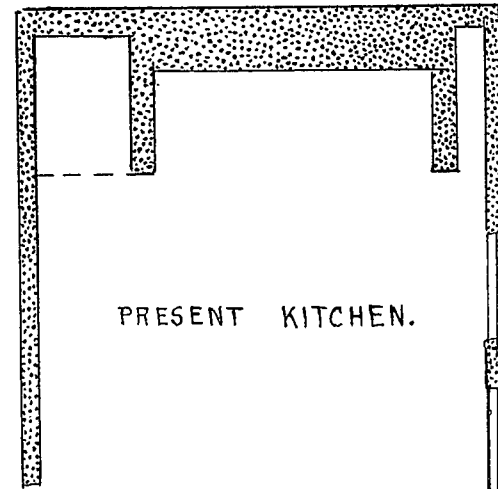
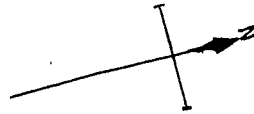
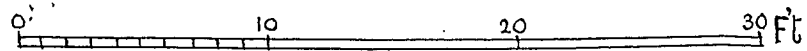
The ancient timber house of Pattenden nestles at the bottom of Goudhurst Hill on the right hand of the road leading nearly due south to Bedgebury. It faces east, and its high pitched tile roof is a noticeable feature from the bridge crossing the line from Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst. It is now the property and residence of Mr. W. Dungey, who has lived here for many years, and I should like to say, before describing the house, that it is difficult to find a timber house which has been treated with better judgment. All old features have been reverently preserved and cared for, and where new features were absolutely necessary, they have been carried out with simplicity, and in the substantial manner which the old homestead deserves. Besides the acknowledgment which is due to Mr. Dungey for his care of an interesting relict of the past, I must add my thanks to him for the courtesy he shewed me personally.

* Charles Baily, *Remarks on Timber Houses* (Surrey Arch. Collections, vol. iv.); R. Nevill, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., *Old Cottage and Domestic Architecture in S. W. Surrey* (Guildford, 1889, and a later edition).

PATTENDEN. GOUDNURST.

-  15th Century
-  16th Century
-  16 Century?
-  Uncertain
-  Blocked.

AAA are probably modern openings.



H.S.C. Dec. 1909.

Pattenden is a fine example of the older type I have alluded to. The total frontage is 59 feet long; but while there is no overhang for 25 feet in the centre, there is a strongly projecting jetty storey on each side, that on the north being rather the wider. As this projection is continued round at side, front, and back, an additional four feet is added to the total length of the building, which on the first floor is therefore 63 feet.

To describe the house as it was originally built we must picture the wide brick chimney-stack and the two floors cleared away from in and over the part marked "Hall" in the accompanying plan. We see then that there was a fine hall extending from floor to roof and measuring 25 feet by 19 feet. The screens passage with its front and back doors was at the north end, and to the right of this lay the two usual offices. There is, however, an arrangement here which is not quite normal. In most timber houses the front and back door were actually in the hall, and if there ever was a screen at all it was actually erected in the hall. At Pattenden, however, both the doors and passage between are in the north wing and under the floor of the bedroom; so that the screen, which I think no doubt actually existed at Pattenden, did not project into the hall at all, but must have stood flush with the north wall above it.

The roof of this hall was supported by two fine main posts, from which, just above the level of the inserted first floor, spring heavy arched supports, and over which was a fine tie-beam carrying a king post. The position of this part of the truss is not central to the hall, being only eight feet from the northern end; and although this lack of symmetry is probably not unusual, it is a little difficult to see the reason, though here it may have been to give room for the wide window in the east wall, of which the jambs nine feet apart can be traced, and which may originally have been a bay window.

The main posts* themselves measure in their lower halves

* The main post is sometimes termed story or storey-post, and the intermediates punchions, quarters, or studquarters.

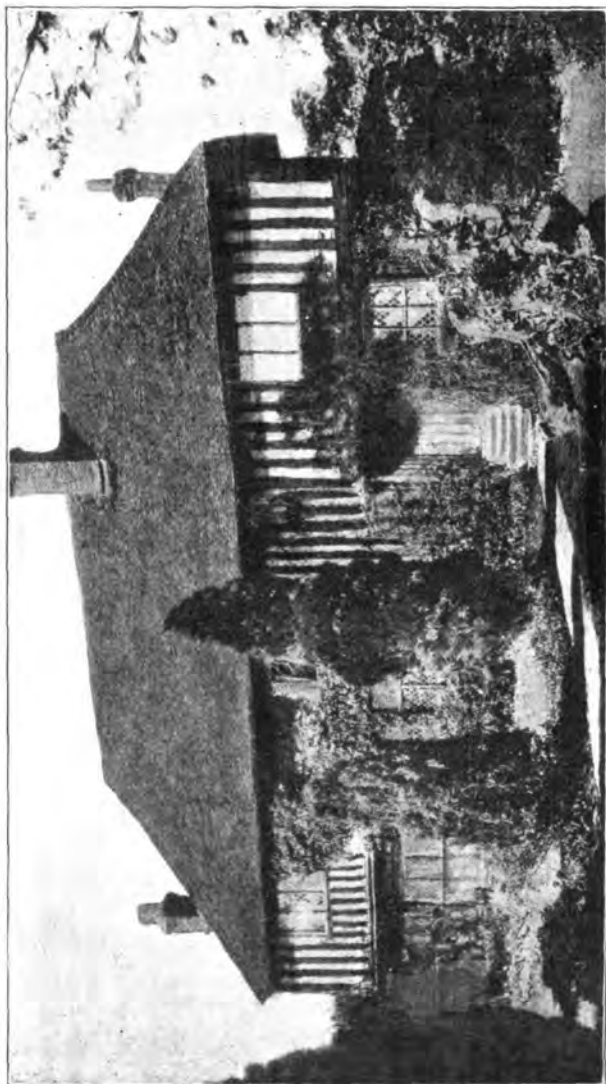
16 inches by 9 inches, but they are apparently cut from a tree reversed, as they are shaped into broad corbels projecting inward at the upper ends to carry the tie-beam, and here they measure about two feet from front to back and about 15 inches wide. Externally the main post on the front of the house is worked into a buttress-like projection of perpendicular character, a form of treatment only found in better class timber houses; while internally we find the underside of the great curved braces moulded with a hollow chamfer and bold round (Fig. 1), and springing from a cap or corbel something like the capital of the king post which will be later described. These caps have been cut and tampered with, and it is not clear if they simply acted as brackets, or if they stood on columns or pilasters worked on the inner side of the main posts below, but which may have been chiselled off in subsequent alterations.

The tie-beam on which the king post stands is 12 inches wide and 16 inches deep. The king post itself carries a horizontal beam on which are short tie-beams tenoned into the rafters, of which there are fourteen pairs clear within the hall roof, each eight inches wide. As usual in these houses there is no ridge piece.

The king post is octagonal with well moulded capital and base, and measures 5 feet 3 inches high (Fig. 2). Its character will be seen in my sketch, and as is usual in the roofs over these halls, both the king post itself and all the timbers above the roof are smoke stained. There is no trace left of any smoke vent or louvre.

Before describing the sixteenth-century alterations it will be best to notice the other original features of the house.

To begin with, as shewn in the plan, this house at both ends had a somewhat wide oversailing storey at the first floor, and this was carried round all three outside walls. Now, whenever this "overhang" was carried round two sides of a building it could only be effected by carrying a diagonal (or "dragon") beam anglewise over the corner, into which short joists could be mortised and project both ways; and without which of course the joists could be only laid in one



PATTENDEN, GOUDHURST.

[Photo F. FRITH & Co.]

direction, in which direction only could there be an "overhang." This was accordingly done in two ways, and the dotted lines in the north end of the plan shew the methods. In one side the diagonal beam was carried right across the room from a main girder, but in the other side a secondary transverse girder was inserted, and a short "dragon" beam carried from that to the angle. The object of this was undoubtedly to leave room for the short original flight of steps to the upper rooms, which undoubtedly existed here, and of which this arrangement is now evidence. It will be seen that in houses of this character, where the hall filled up the centre of the house, there was no communication upstairs between the first-floor rooms at one end of the building and those at the other. This necessitated another flight of steps at the other end of the house, but the great inconvenience attending such an arrangement was probably one reason why the halls were invariably divided into floors when once the fashion had been set. Accordingly we find that at Patten den there was another flight of stairs in the same position at the other end of the hall, although neither of these staircases have survived to the present day.

These diagonal beams were laid on and mortised to four fine corner posts, each of which is about $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and the mouldings of which and general appearance are shewn in my sketch. (FIG. 3.) The existence of these four corner posts and the oversailing round both sides and ends of the structure prove with certainty that we have here a complete house of the period, and that all other offices, including the kitchen, were built separate.

The original front entrance at the east end of the screen's passage has a Tudor arch with oak jambs measuring 14 inches by 12 inches, enriched by a bold moulding of hollow, ogee, and round. (FIG. 4.) The door itself is original, 6 feet 8 inches high, and 4 feet 4 inches wide, made up of six overlapping oak planks each $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide worked into vertical ridges and hollows so as to conceal the joins, and have something of the appearance of a bold linen pattern. The whole effect is solid and dignified. On the right are two doors

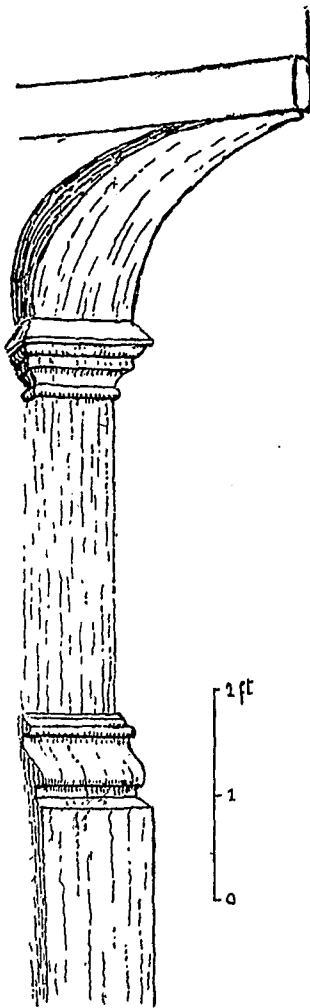


FIG. 3.

hidden in a cupboard) was high up on the east wall of the hall, and may have been intended to light a small gallery above the screens passage; if so, this gallery was probably reached from the adjoining bedroom.*

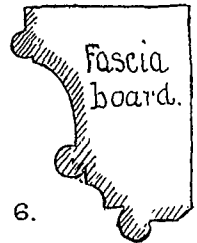
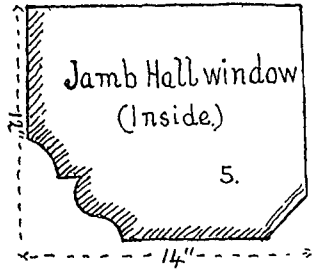
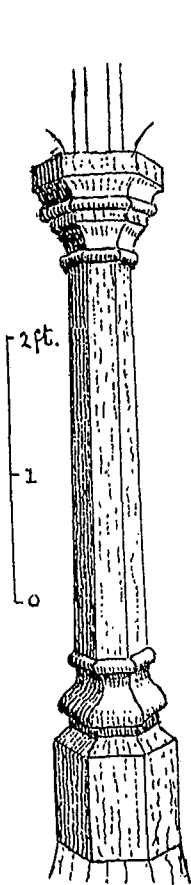
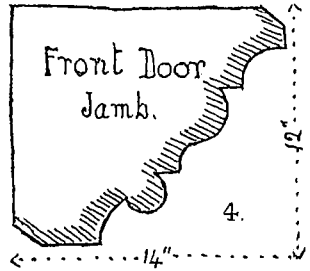
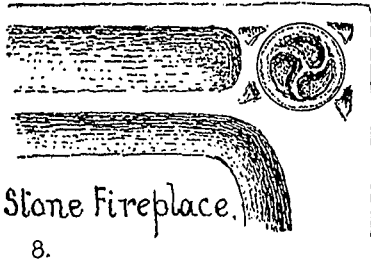
The original house, therefore, consisted of the hall with

* I have omitted above the jambs of the hall window, which are presumably original. (Fig. 5.)

with the original Tudor arches which entered respectively the offices commonly called buttery and pantry, though the east one has now become a small parlour. The third door which must have opened to the old stair has gone. There is a cellar under these rooms which is now approached from the later kitchen, but which originally may have been entered from under the staircase.

The only other original features existing, or perhaps we should say exposed, are the moulded door frame opening at the back end of the screens passage, the frame of the door at the south or dais end of the hall opening originally to the destroyed staircase, and the boldly moulded fascia boards which cover the projecting joist ends of both jetty storeys on the front. (FIG. 6.) There is also one window left, which must be original, though its position is peculiar; it is of two lights without transoms, but as far as can be seen from the garden a hollow chamfer and segmental heads to the lights. This little window (which indoors is now

0 6 12 In.



PATTENDEN DETAILS.

two offices behind the screens, and at the opposite end a parlour which, when the stairway existed, was only fifteen feet square. Above on each side were two bedrooms of larger area than the rooms below by the width of the "overhang." This was all the accommodation within the house, whatever else was outside.

When the owners became dissatisfied with these arrangements they carried out their alterations in a substantial way. They built in a large chimney-stack with its back to the screens passage which was retained as a passage, and put in two floors over the hall. This work was well done. They threw a great oak girder across the hall fixed by mortise and tenon to the upright main posts, and from it two secondary girders, one central to the hall and the other to one side, in order to let its end rest on the brick jamb of the fireplace. The main girder is 15 inches across, and the secondary ones about 14 inches, and all are richly moulded, the main girder having eleven rounds and hollows on each side above the lowest. The other girders are similar, and even the common joists are moulded as shewn in my sketch. (FIG. 7.) The great beam over the chimney opening is similar, and the whole effect of this room now, with all the woodwork carefully oiled and polished, is very good.

Upstairs we find in the room over the hall, instead of an oak lintel to the fireplace, a stone one of the design shewn in the drawing (FIG. 8), and the end of which (not sketched) is carved with an oak or maple-leaf. There is a late Gothic character about this, but it is built into the brick chimney-stack, and there is no reason, I think, to doubt that it is of the same age as the other inserted features. Above this fireplace, on the ceiling, there is some reeded "panelling," which is evidently a portion of that described briefly in Parker's *Glossary of Gothic Architecture* (1840).*

"In the principal room upstairs of a timber house, Patten-den near Goudhurst, the walls and ceilings are lined with oak boards reeded with mouldings of the linen pattern, but

not panelled. In one of the other rooms in the same house there was a ceiling similar to that before mentioned at Sherborne Abbey.”*

It has been said that practically all original windows have gone, but good oak-framed windows with transoms exist in several rooms and have well moulded mullions of the type shewn in my sketch. (FIG. 9.) These are to be found in the small north parlour, the larger south parlour, and, if I remember right, there is one (closed) in the west wall of the hall. All these are of the date of the alterations, but the combination of hollow and round mouldings appears to be purposely chosen to match the mouldings of the fascia boards under edge of braces, etc., which must all be of the earlier date.†

In the hall window there are four quarries of stained glass of yellow tint:—

1. A monkey drinking.
2. A pomegranate crowned.
- 3 and 4. A rose crowned.

What the first signifies I do not know, but the others being the badges of Henry VIII. and Catherine of Arragon must be before 1533, and probably give us the approximate date of the alterations to the house.‡

Externally there is not much to notice except the generally picturesque aspect of the house. Like most other houses of this style, the tile roof is brought down over projecting wings and central hall as if all the front was in line. The plate is carried along from one projection to the other and supported by two large curved braces of oak, and on the under side of this plate are large mortise holes which I am unable to explain, unless a sort of barge-board was originally

* The allusion is to a ceiling at Sherborne Abbey, “a good timber one divided into squares with flowers carved at the intersections”: but there is nothing like this to be seen now.

† There is a small window in the north wall of the north parlour which was of the old unglazed type and probably original. No doubt there were others.

‡ These badges might I think also be used by Mary I., the daughter of Catherine. But she used other badges as well as the pomegranate, and as they are both crowned here they much more probably represent Henry VIII. and Catherine.

fastened underneath it. The two chimney-stacks at the north and south ends are of uncertain date, but not original,* and so also is the kitchen, which is built of old materials. The back of the house is a good deal obscured by modern buildings, within which is the modern staircase, an excellent one of oak erected by the present proprietor. Just outside this there is a small length of wall which is old, apparently part of a sixteenth-century construction.

Pattenden appears to have been both a dene, a borough, and a manor. As a dene it was held of Loose manor.† It was a borough under East Farleigh;‡ and in the time of Edward I. there was a prison at Patynden in which Goudhurst malefactors were imprisoned.§ A summary of the descent of it is found in Hasted. It belonged to Pattendens from at least as early as the time of Edward I., and this family was returned in 1451 by Jervase Clifton's Commission as bearing *Arma Antiqua*.|| One of this family alienated the estate to Sir Maurice Berkeley, standard-bearer to Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth; and he by will, 1581, gave the manor to his fourth son Robert, from whom it passed to Mr. William Beswicke, and afterwards to the Mariotts.¶

Sir Maurice Berkeley married Elizabeth, sister of Thomas Sondes, eldest son of Sir Anthony Sondes of Throwly, and the said Thomas alienated to him the manor of Boycot in Ulcomb.**

There can be no doubt that Pattenden was built by the Pattendens, possibly about 1470, and the alterations were made by Sir Maurice Berkeley in the early years of the sixteenth

* That at the north end has its lower courses of stone, and probably is sixteenth century.

† Furley, *History of the Weald*, ii., p. 709.

‡ Hasted, vii., p. 77.

§ Furley, ii., p. 241. (Quo Warranto Rolls.)

|| I find the following in the Streatfield collection relating to Kent in the B.M. Add. MS. 33,883: Pattenden, Wm. de Patendenne 12 Ed. II., 10 Ed. III.; John his son 11 Ed. III., 15 Ed. III.; John Patynden 5 Hen. VI. The Pattendens had property in Goudhurst as late as the reign of Chas. I. See will of Pattenden, clk., dated 2 June 1643.

¶ Hasted, vii., p. 77.

** Hasted, v., p. 393.

century, and probably not later than 1533, when Catherine of Arragon was divorced, since her badge is in the hall window.

There is a fire-back in the hall dated 1636 on which are two shields, each bearing the same coat, which is quarterly of nine, under a helmet, crest and mantling. It is so burned away that I was able to make little of it; in fact not one of the quarterings seems decipherable.*

SMARDEN HOUSE (now CHESSENDEN), SMARDEN.

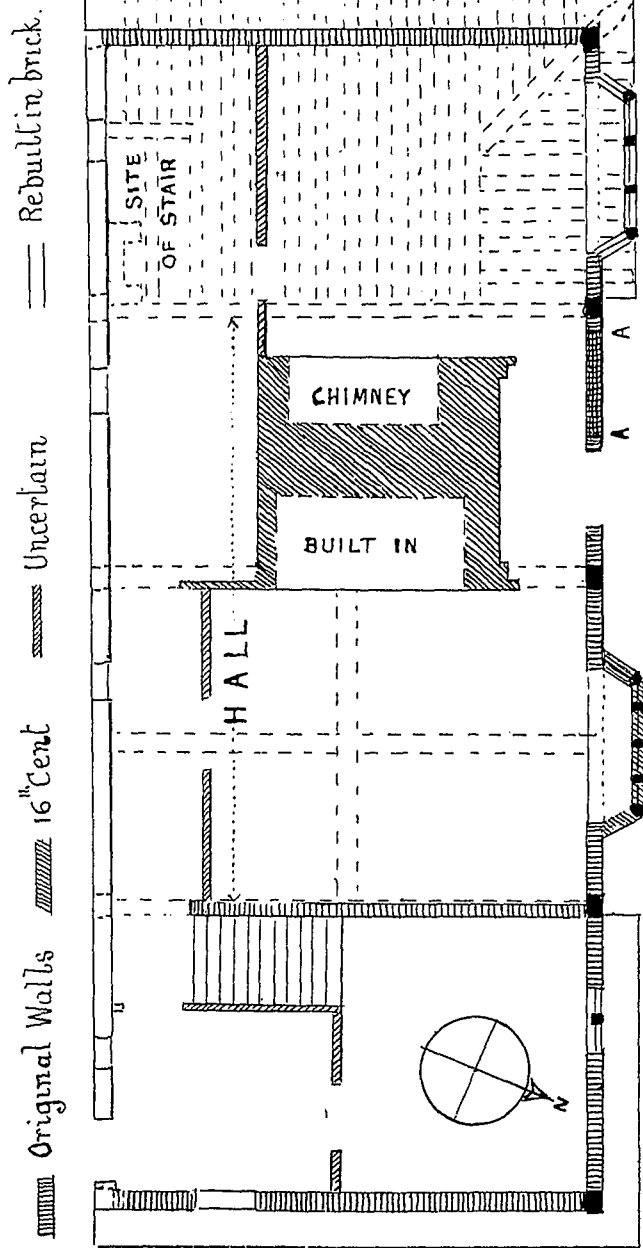
Smarden is one of the most picturesque and characteristic places in the Weald, and as it was anciently a market town, and has not suffered from development like some villages in this part, it still contains several houses worth study. The one I have selected is not rich in detail, but it affords a type which illustrates my present purpose.

Smarden House lies a little way along the street from the church as you leave Smarden by the road to Pluckley and Charing. It is close to the road, and therefore faces about north-west, but for the purposes of description it will be treated as facing north. We have in it a house of the same type as Pattenden but of smaller dimensions, since the front only measures $47\frac{1}{2}$ feet, or, with the projecting ends measured in, just over 50 feet.

In spite of the small size of the house, its hall, before it was cut down and floors inserted, measured no less than $23\frac{1}{2}$ by 19 feet, or only $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet shorter than Pattenden and of equal width. It was in the same way divided into two bays, the eastern one of which was $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet and the western one only 10 feet. No reason is apparent for this inequality.

* I made the following note: 1, On a chevron three . . . (P); 2, A bend, or else two bendlets; 3, Looks like a wheel; 4, A bend raguly (P); 5 and 6, Both seem chevrons; rest quite undecipherable.

SMARDEN HOUSE, (now CHESSENDEN)



H.S.C. Dec. 1910

The truss is of the same arrangement as at Pattenden, but the posts are plain and not so heavy. There are no mouldings or corbels, and the curved braces under the tie-beams have been mostly cut away. The king post which stands on the central tie-beam is 5 feet 6 inches high and is of plain character, the capital and base being practically the same, so that it could be reversed. The sharp edge of the capital (marked A in sketch) is however rounded off in the base. (FIG. 1.)

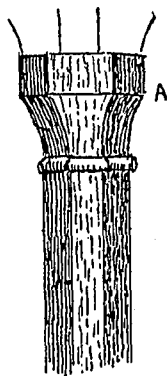


FIG. 1.

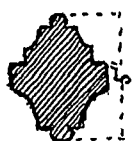


FIG. 3.

The original entrance to this hall was between the point marked A A on the plan, but it was blocked long ago. The opening was 7 feet high and 4 feet 3 inches wide, with the usual depressed arch, and hollow at the angle. No doubt there existed a door opposite, but, as shewn in the plan, a brick wall has been substituted for the original one on the ground floor, so that this door has altogether disappeared.

We now come to the one puzzling feature. In the normal house of this type the offices should be on the side next the entry, and the parlour at the other end. In Smarden House, the parlour is next the entry and the offices at the opposite end. At first sight it looks as if we had here a modified type, in which the custom of servants and family living in the hall was under process of abandonment, and the front door was moved to the parlour end of the hall to serve the purposes of the owner and his family rather than for all.

I am not sure that this is the right explanation. An examination of the two ends of the building will shew the present east end containing offices is of worse work, with a corner post of poorer character, crooked joists and lower floors. I am inclined to think that this end has been destroyed, possibly by fire, and rebuilt in inferior work; if so, the change of parlour to the other end may have been effected

at that date. Unfortunately the evidence we should look for in corroboration of this theory is missing, for when the sixteenth-century alterations took place, the partition at the west end of the hall was bodily removed, so that we cannot see now if it had the usual two doors which should lead to the offices. On the other hand, the opposite end of the hall is crossed by an embattled plate about one foot deep, below which the partition is of what may be called the plank panel type, consisting of upright posts between which, in grooves, oak planks are slipped. Some of the planks are 12 inches wide, but most about 7 inches or 8 inches. In this wall there appears to have been doors at either end, but they do not look like the two doors leading to the offices, which were generally side by side.

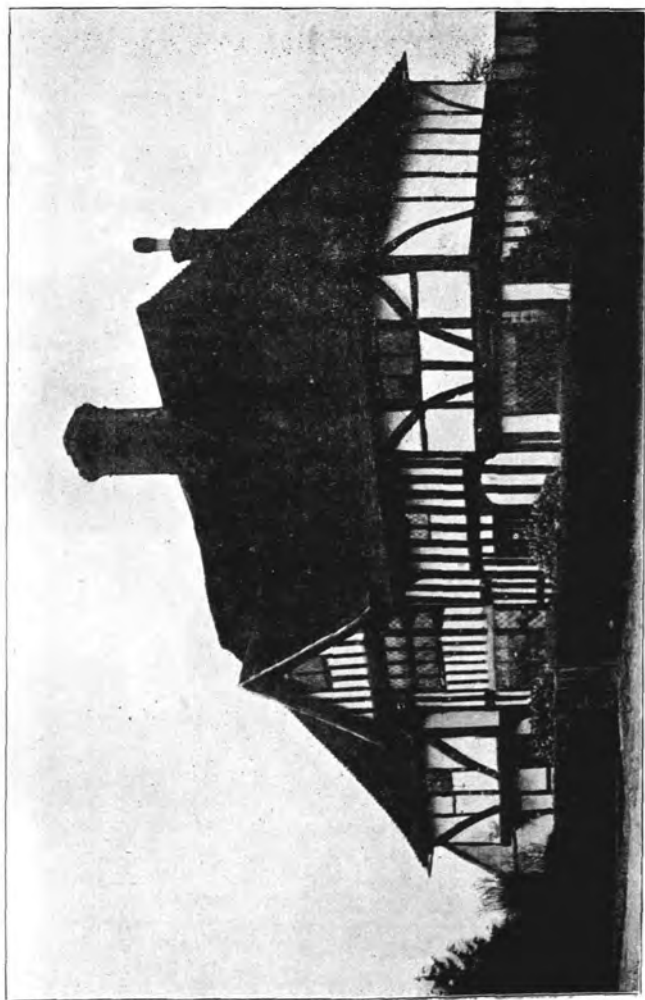
The present parlour at the west end of the house contains no original feature except the joists, which are good though plain. Outside the existing partition, however, a short cross-beam in the ceiling shews where originally the staircase went up in a similar position to that at Pattenden. The present staircase at the other end of the house is not original, and there is no evidence of the original staircase at this end, which was probably not reproduced when this wing was (supposing my surmise correct) rebuilt.

I have said that this building did not oversail at the back. Consequently there are only two corner posts, and they differ in character, the one at the west end having better mouldings than the other and standing $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet from top to foundation sill. (FIG. 2.) In reckoning the number of joists projecting in the west end I found the number did not tally with those shewing within the building, the reason being that dummy or false joist ends are inserted next to the diagonal beam to fill the gap which would otherwise exist.

There are no traces of kitchen or other buildings of the same date.

The subsequent alterations are instructive and appear to be all one date. They are—

1. The insertion of a chimney-stack.
2. The insertion of two floors over the hall,



SMARDEN HOUSE.

[Photo GOULDEN & WIND.]

3. The adding of a bay window the whole height of the house.
4. Closing the old front door and inserting a new one.
5. The substitution of a newer type of windows.

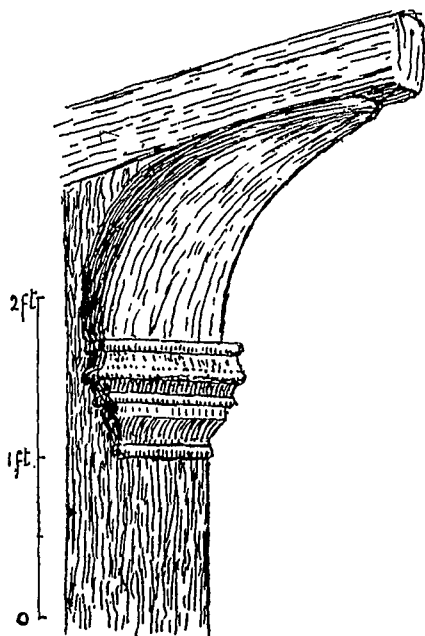


FIG. 2.

The chimney-stack on the ground floor measures $8\frac{1}{2}$ by $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet. In order to make a roomy west parlour it was built quite inside the hall and not flush with its ancient west wall, which was entirely removed. The hall was thus curtailed to $12\frac{1}{2}$ ft. width, although from the finish of the new beams, etc., it was evidently still the best room.

The projecting bay in front is carried up, and ends in an overhanging gable with the old but plain barge-

boards still on it. The bay window on each floor had four front lights and two side ones, and the upper, and no doubt the lower also, had transoms. The effect of the added bay and gable is exceedingly good and quite alters the appearance of the house. Other houses of the same type in the district were treated in the same way, and the effect was always a success.

In consequence of the position of the brick stack the old front door would not open, so a new one was formed, entering the passage alongside the chimney-stack. This is only 5 feet 9 inches high and 3 feet wide, and has a very flat head and a slight chamfer at the jamb.

The ceiling of the new hall-parlour is divided by a main girder lying east and west about 10 inches wide, and two

secondary girders tenoned into it in the middle 7 inches wide. The joists are seven in each square, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, 10 inches apart, and parallel with main girder. All the girders and joists have a neat round moulding stopped at the euds. The inside of the bay window has nice double mouldings round it, and the same moulding is found on the bressumer beam carrying the overhanging gable. Under the window is a nicely panelled cupboard with panels 9 inches square.





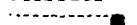
The mullions and transoms downstairs are mostly gone except the angle mullions, but upstairs the bay window and one or two others are well preserved. The section of the mullions is shewn in my sketch (FIG. 3), but there is a lighter one of similar design. These windows evidently belong to the same period as the other alterations, and all original windows are removed. They may have been all of the old unglazed type with running shutters.

I take it that all these alterations date from the middle of the sixteenth century, and from the size of the hall the house itself must date from the fifteenth century.

A plate or beam crossed the recessed part exactly as at Pattenden, and the same roof covered all. But there are no mortise holes on the underside as at Pattenden. Externally the recessed part was close timbered, but the oversailing storeys and ends had only a few intermediate posts and diagonal or curved braces across the panels.

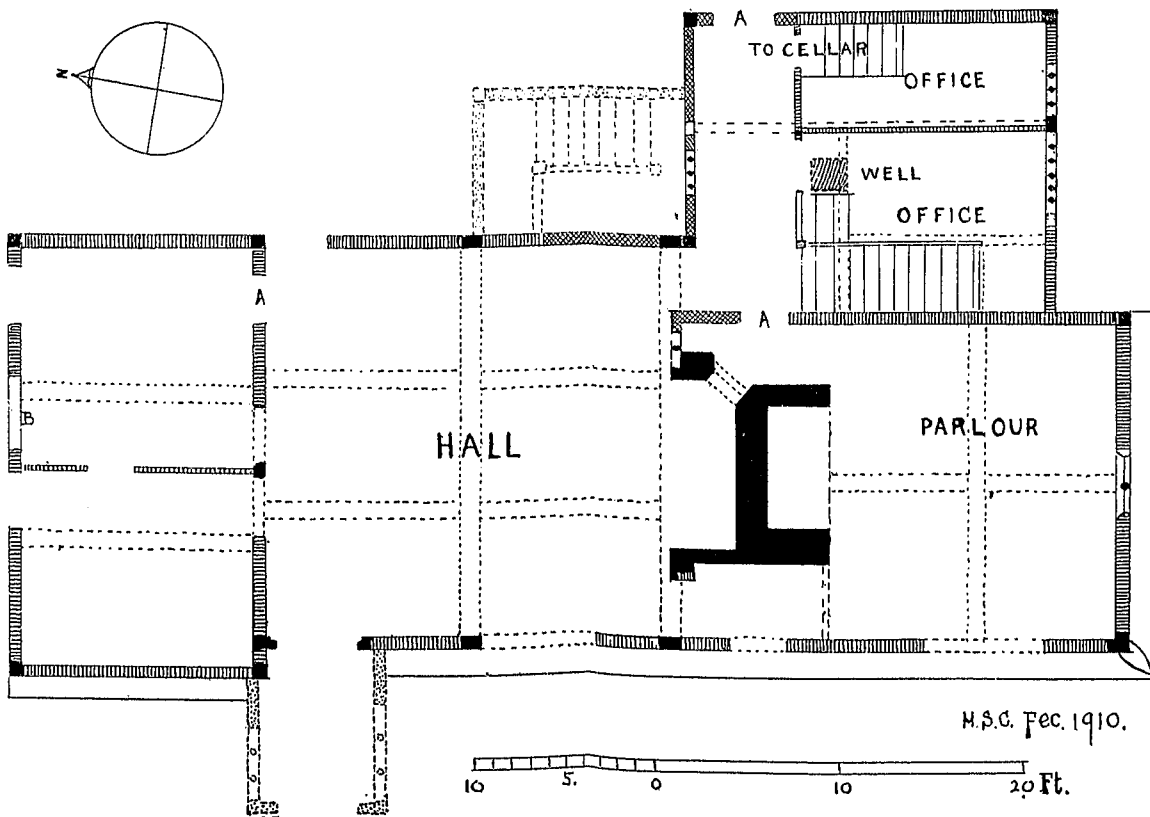
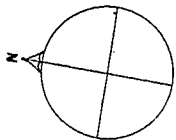
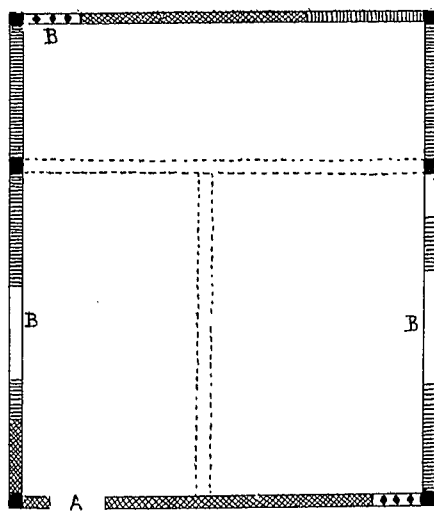
I have used the name Smarden House for this building, but Mr. W. T. Hinds has allowed me to have a look at the title deeds, and it does not appear that this is an original name; and Mr. Hinds of Goudhurst suggests that it originated by the house having been leased at some time by the parish. It appears to have passed through several families in the last two hundred years, but looking at the work and finish it may have been built by one of the numerous clothier families. It is now known as Chessenden, having been re-named by Mr. Hinds' father from an old home of the family in Rolvenden.

LODDENDEN, STAPLEMURST.
Omitting all 18th Cent^y additions.

-  Original Walls.
-  Ditto, removed.
-  Brickwork.
-  17th Century.
-  Girders & Posts.

A.A.A. Doors, position uncertain.

B.B.B. Windows, ditto.



LODDENDEN, STAPLEHURST.

We have seen that in the first half of the sixteenth century a standard-bearer to the King, and a knight, was content in Kent to be housed in a timber house like Pattenden, and how he curtailed the hall to modest dimensions for the sake of privacy and convenience. In Loddenden we shall see what an ancient family of yeomanry living on an estate long in their possession sometimes considered necessary.

The old village of Staplehurst being close to the railway is one of those which has changed much and is likely to change more. When Hasted wrote, Loddenden, an "ancient manor house" as he rather misleadingly called it, was at the entrance to the village, whereas now nearly all the road as far as the station is bordered by houses. Loddenden itself has, since it was first built, been very largely added to, but all these additions are to the back of the house; and the front, except the windows and porch, retain much of its ancient appearance. As I am preparing a full account of Loddenden, the records of which in fact reach at least from the time of Edward III., I shall confine myself here almost entirely to the present structure as it was built. The plan which is given shews all the original structure; but added to, as the back part is, it was not a simple matter to disentangle accurately the work.

The frontage of Loddenden measures just under 61 feet, or with the overhang, which exists only at the south end, just over 62 feet, which is practically the same as Pattenden. The house was built with floors throughout, and was made to oversail at the first floor for all its length. The ground plan may be described as an irregular L shape, with a very shallow projection at the north end, which was finished with a low gable, partly balanced by another gable of slightly smaller dimensions about the middle of the front. Both of these gables are original, as the mouldings of the bressumers are identical with some internal ones.

Looking at the ground plan, and disregarding the fact that the hall was not open to the roof, the arrangement and propor-

tions are such as might exist in a fifteenth or even fourteenth-century house. There is the big central hall with entrance and back entrance opposite each other at the screens end and next to the two offices, which were opened into by two doors now blocked; at the other end, the square parlour or with drawing room. The chimney-stack, imitating, I suspect, the model resulting from the prevalent fashion of building in chimney-stacks in the king-post houses, is placed inside the house to warm both hall, parlour, and two rooms over. Here, of course, it is part of the original design.

The hall measures 21 feet by 22 feet, and the ceiling is in six compartments, divided by a main girder east and west, 14 inches wide, and two pair of secondary girders north and south 11 inches wide. A second main girder is built into the brickwork of the chimney-stack, and these two main girders are tenoned into main posts measuring 12 inches by 9 inches which go right up to the rafters, and widen out to 14 inches from front to back to carry a tie-beam at the level of the attic floor. The main posts are quite plain, but the girders are moulded with simple mouldings, the main one with the plain round, and the secondary with the double round of the same character as those of the sixteenth-century alterations at Smarden House. The joists are still ceiled over, but I believe they are not moulded. The doors (front, back, and office) are all square openings, and unfortunately the actual edge of the jambs is in each case covered up, and I cannot see if there are mouldings. The actual front door is old and good, but I am not sure if it is original. It is made up of four upright oak planks, and is divided vertically on the outer side by nine moulded fillets which cover the joins and are also intermediate. These fillets are clinched to the door by big nails, and the door is strengthened at the back by five oak transverse bars also clinched with big nails. A curious feature is that there are two heavy hinge straps on the front passing under the fillets, but they have no rings at the end, and the door is hung on plainer hinges fastened on the inner side. These hinge straps probably came off a much older door, and sketches of them with their curious herring-



LODDENDEN, STAPLEHURST.

[Photo H. S. G.]

bone ornament is given. (FIGS. 1, 1A.) There is also a nice ring-handle of spiral wrought iron fastened to the door by

FIG. 1.

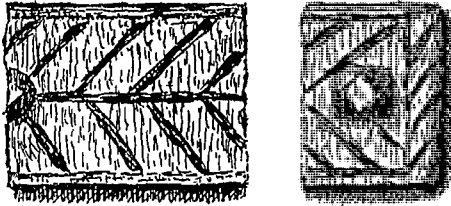


FIG. 1A.

its original plate. (FIG. 2.) The size of this door was originally 5 ft. 10 in. wide and 6 ft. 3 in. high, but the head of the door frame has been cut out, and it has been made higher with a glazed top.

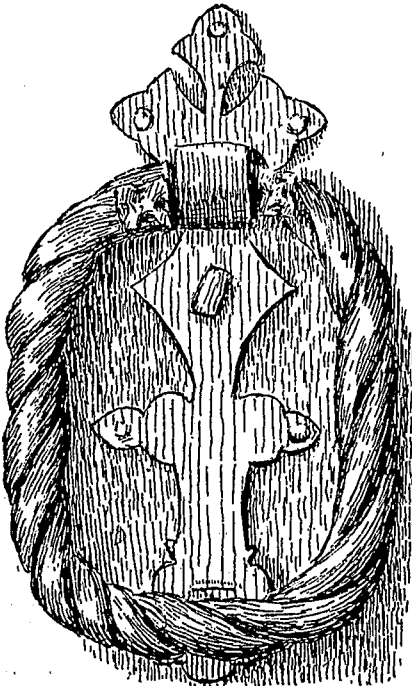


FIG. 2.

The two doors leading into the offices are blocked up, as is also the back door. At the opposite end of the hall is the big open hearth 9 ft. wide with a heavy oak lintel. The brick jambs and the oak beam have only a plain chamfer, but character was added to the appearance of the hearth by a brick doorway within it, which originally opened into a

cupboard or closet adjoining the parlour, and this closet was lighted by a small two-light mullioned window opening into the hall, of which only one light now remains, owing to the alterations made when the later staircase was erected. These cupboards alongside the chimney-stacks are a feature in Kentish houses, and the uses they were put to are uncertain.

I take it this open hall was used by all the household for meeting and feeding in when the house was built. There is, as usual, no original kitchen in the house, and I take it that as the fashion for more privacy spread, the family retired to the parlour, and they abandoned the outside cook-house and used the hall as kitchen. Evidence of this is seen in the holes in the big hearth beam for attaching a spit. Still later they built a new kitchen, not shewn in the plan, and about 1719 they divided the hall into a parlour and passages by partitions which I have removed.

The parlour, which lay south of the hall, is $15\frac{1}{2}$ by 17 feet and had an open hearth of similar character to the hall, but only about $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide. The ceiling has main and two secondary girders with the double round moulding, but the joists are hidden by plaster. There must, however, be the usual "dragon" beam, since there is a corner post.

The parlour is not so wide as the hall, but in rear of it is a projection which originally contained the staircase in exactly the same position as at Pattenden. The structural evidences of the position of this staircase are not at first discernible, but they are to my mind quite conclusive. The other part of this projection was occupied by a through passage and on its right two offices which had a raised floor, and a low cellar under, in which is a well. This well is brick lined and on the edge was a dated brick, 1647. The evidence in this part of the building is very perplexing, but I have come to the conclusion that the cellar and well are undoubtedly original, and the latter was only brick lined at this date. The steps, both descending into the cellar and ascending to the room over it, are of the block sort, and I think the original step stair to the first floor is now used for access from the first floor to the attics.

There are no original windows in the front of the house, though those on the first floor are old casements, perhaps dating from 1719. The hall and parlour unfortunately contain sash windows. But in the south wall of the parlour I found a small two-light window, in which the mullion sections were as shewn in my sketch (FIG. 3), but it had been mal-

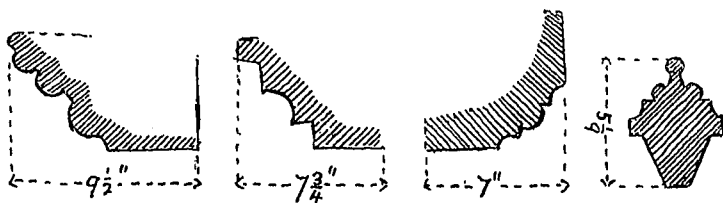


FIG. 5.

FIG. 6.

FIG. 7.

FIG. 3.

treated and blocked. On the other hand, in the first floor at the back of the house I have found the site of an unglazed window in which the lozenge-shaped mullions were firmly let into the plate, and which, I think, must have been original. The long window shewn in the back office also was of this character; and I am rather inclined to doubt if any of the windows at the back were originally glazed. There are, however, one or two blocked which I may be able to examine.

The corner post, 8 feet high, is curiously rude in design. (FIG. 4.) I do not feel quite sure whether it is debased, or archaic, and taken from an earlier rudely-built house. The series of monotonous mouldings is quite unlike most corner posts; but as a matter of fact there is a certain roughness and lack of finish in most of Loddenden, and I am inclined to think it is debased work.

The square building in rear is now incorporated in the house, and much altered. Except, however, for the position of windows and doors it is accurately shewn, and two three-light unglazed windows have been traced on its first floor. The rooms were lower than in Loddenden itself, and its work was rougher and inferior. There appears to have been no fireplace or chimney before 1743; and the only conclusion

I can come to is, that it was either accommodation for employees or used in some industry. From the style of work

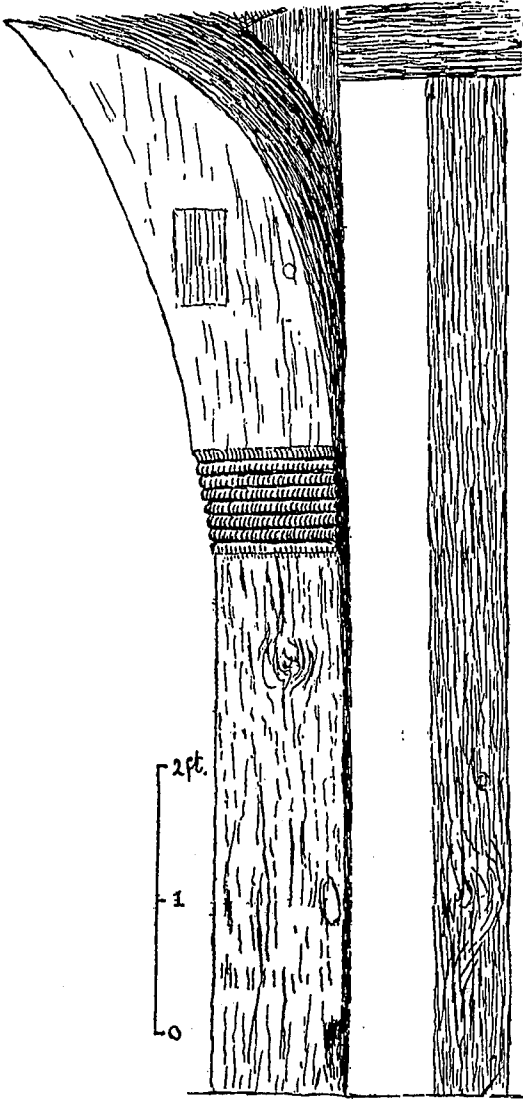


FIG. 4.

and chamfers used I consider it probably coeval with the house itself.

With regard to the exterior we should notice that close timbering was used on the front, and also on the walls of the ground floor at both ends of the main block, but not on the wall of the first floor of the north end or the back. The first floor at the south end is at present weather-tiled. The ground floor of the front has had a later face of timber and plaster added to it in front of the original one, but not advanced as far as the overhang. Thus the original windows are destroyed and even the timbering is hidden.

The fascia boards on the joist ends are curiously not uniform. From about the main post in line with the front of the chimney-stack up to the corner post and along the south end it is made up of rounds as shewn in FIG. 5, but from the main post north it is as FIG. 6. I am quite at a loss to explain this, especially as this fascia board is carried along the front inside the porch, which is one, but only one piece of evidence that the porch is an addition.

The porch, which adds a good deal to the character of the house, was built I believe in the first half of the seventeenth century, and the moulding round the square framed doorway is shewn in FIG. 7, and this moulding is repeated in the bressumer at the overhang. No doubt all the front windows had well-moulded mullions, and some were certainly bracketted out as bays. The southern end of the house also originally ended in a hip roof similar to the north end.

About 1690 the new staircase, a fairly good one, with turned oak balusters, was built, and the old one done away with. During the sixty years following that date a great deal of re-modelling and additions were effected at the back of the house, making it as it now is.

Loddenden was one of the denes of the Weald, one of eleven in Staplehurst parish, and was held of the hundred of Marden, and I think originally of Milton, to which Marden was appendant. It was also a borough, and was represented regularly at the view of Frankpledge held at Marden, in the rolls of which it is, in the time of Edward III., always spelled Lodelyndenne. At this date the family of Usborne was resident in the borough, and it is

possible that one of them married the heiress of a family of de Lodelyndenne which existed at the same time, and thus became principal owners.

I have in preparation some account of the Usbornes, with a pedigree from the beginning of the fifteenth century down to the middle of the nineteenth century, when they died out, and the estate passed to relatives, from whose representatives I purchased the residence. In spite of their antiquity as landowners and the size of their house they never entered a pedigree at the visitations nor the College of Arms, a fact possibly due to their political or religious opinions. They seem to have been Kentish landowners of substance, large yeomen I take it, and for several generations they were certainly tanners carrying on probably a big business. In the first half of the eighteenth century some became city merchants and bankers, and one, Edward, consolidated the property and built a good deal. The arms which Hasted attributes to them, and which at this date they actually used—*Quarterly: 1 and 4, Ermine of five spots; 2 and 3, Azure, (over all) a cross or*—are the same as Osborn, Duke of Leeds, which family indeed sprang from Ashford. But from a search made at the Heralds' College it appears that they were borne without authority, and I have no evidence of any use in the seventeenth century.

Again, though Hasted and subsequent writers call Loddenden a manor house, I cannot ascertain that Loddenden ever became a manor, or that it ever was the manor house for Staplehurst. But the small adjacent manor of Spilsill did, in the time of Hasted belong to the Usbornes by marriage, and hence it might for the time being be called a manor house.

Though the Usbornes take hardly any part in county history, they married into some of the armigerous families, and looking at the long run they had as landowners, they are of some interest.

Loddenden was probably built by Thomas Usborne, born 1520, and died 1588, and no doubt after the death of his father in 1534. Certain legal transactions about 1566 incline

THE COTT., BIDDENDEN.



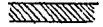

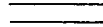


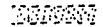
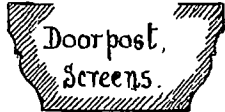
-  Original Walls.
-  Ditto, removed.
-  Wall of Addition.
-  Ditto, removed.
-  Late Brick wall.
-  Posts.
-  Chimney.
-  Parlour c.1800.

Fig. 1.



Mullion.

Fig. 2.

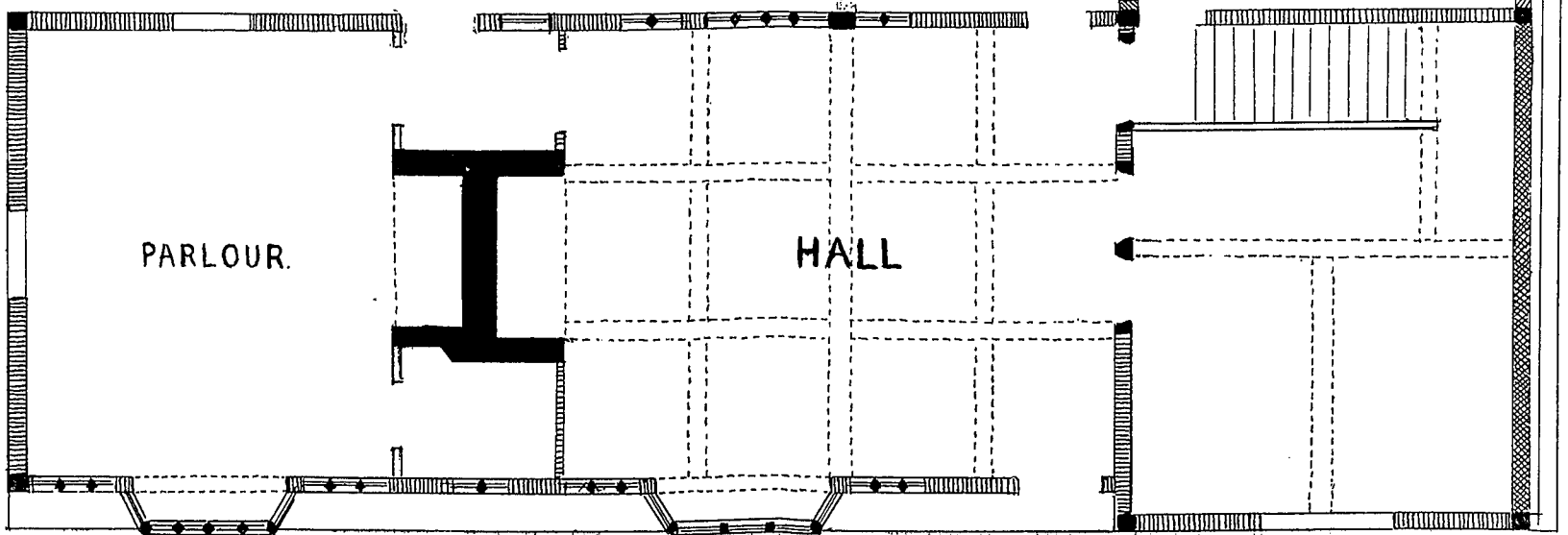
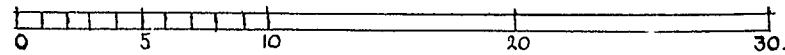
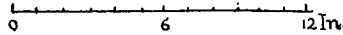


Doorpost,
Screens.

Fig. 3.



Doorpost.
Upstairs.



me to think that that is about the date of its erection, but there must have been an earlier house.

THE COTT, BIDDENDEN.

Biddenden is a village of somewhat similar character to its neighbour Smarden, and in and about it are several houses and buildings of interest. It was in the old days a cloth centre, and not being on the main line, it has, in some ways fortunately, escaped rapid development.

Of these houses, one of the most picturesque is that which has long been known as the "Cott." Placed on a side road near the little station, it lies so snugly and privately that it generally escapes observation. At the present time it is in the hands of its owner, Mr. G. F. Tracy Beale, who has commenced certain alterations. Indeed, the plan which accompanies this account is partly based on one which he made for the purpose of these alterations. This plan he kindly lent me, warning me that it was not sufficiently exact for publication, so that it has been checked by measurements of my own. As, however, some of the rooms were packed with furniture, and some partly dismantled, these measurements were not easy to take, so that probably this plan has not quite the same degree of accuracy as those of Pattenden and Loddenden. Certain of the windows and doors shewn are now blocked, but as the intention is to shew the building as originally constructed they are drawn as if open. The plan, however, is sufficiently accurate for its purpose.

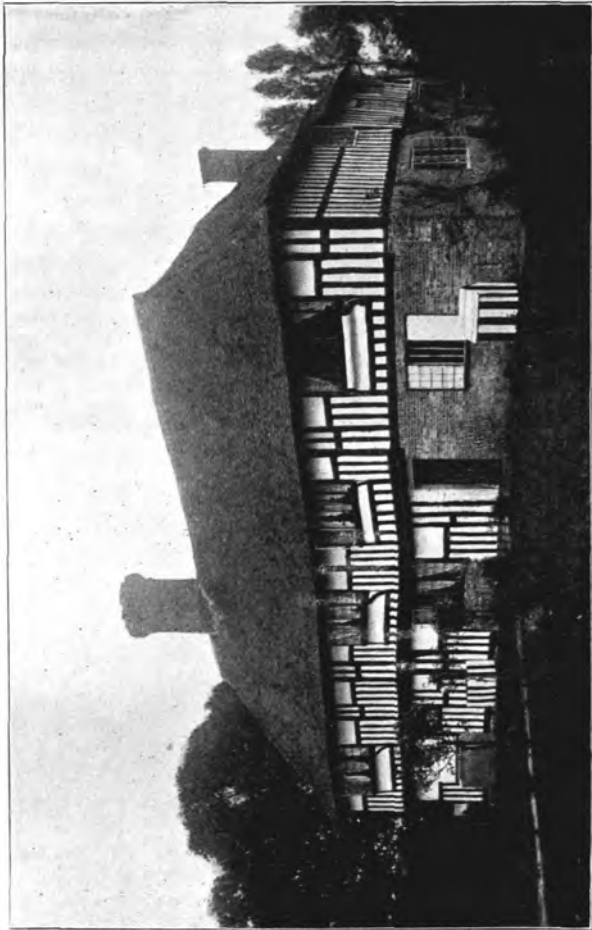
The plan of the house is a rather long parallelogram lying east and west, with a projection south at the west end, which apparently is not original, but which gives the whole a characteristic L shape. The frontage was originally $63\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length on the ground floor, but the old west wall of timber and plaster has been cleared away and a brick wall substituted flush with the overhang of the jetty storey, which was carried

along the whole of the west side, both of the original house and of the added kitchen.

The general arrangement is similar to that of Loddenden, but reversed. The entry was at the north, the hall was on the left of it, and the offices on the right. The chimney-stack was built at the east end of the hall right inside the house, and was part of the original plan. The parlour occupied the east end beyond the chimney-stack.

The hall, which by my measurements is 23 feet by 18 feet 9 inches, is now separated from the passage by an eighteenth-century panelled partition which is omitted in the plan. The timber work, door posts, and ceiling beams are all of good character, and most of the work is exposed. The ceiling itself (to use the inapplicable but only available word), differs from the others described, since it is divided into twelve compartments by means of girders and joists. The main girder north and south is 11 inches in diameter (tenoned as usual into a storey post), and from this east and west lie two pair of secondary girders. Crossing these again at right angles, and therefore parallel with the main girders, are other short beams which are not girders, but really only joists made larger for effect. They do not appear to be constructional, though they are $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide like the secondary girders. The girders and these principal joists are all well moulded with the same double moulding found at Smarden House and Loddenden, where it is certainly sixteenth century. The finish, however, is better than at Loddenden; but the measurements are less, as the width to be spanned is not so great. At the Cott also the common joists which are north and south, are neatly chamfered with a stop at each end of the chamfer.

With regard to the lighting of the hall, it is Mr. Beale's opinion that the existing bay is not original, like that in the parlour. This may be so, but I think it is very probable that there was an old bay, even if it had been pulled down and re-erected. It will be noticed in the plan that every large window has small windows on each side of it, and although most of these smaller windows are now blocked, the mullions



THE COTT, BIDDENDEN.

are still there embedded in plaster. (FIG. 1.) There was a large window with two such small ones on the south side, but all these are blocked, and in fact, of six hall windows only the bay (reconstructed?) is now open.

The doors, where the old framing is exposed, are all of the same pattern. Unfortunately, however, the front door has been modernized, though I suspect the old framing is still there. This is certainly the case with the door opposite, where a small piece of the old oak moulding is still exposed over the opening. Furthermore, the position of the door frames leading into the offices, which is always one of the most interesting features in these houses, has been just altered in recent modifications. These doors were three in number, and I believe that their original position is accurately shewn on the plan. The mouldings on the oak jambs of these doors are shewn in my sketch; and I personally cannot help deeply regretting that these doors have been in any way altered. (FIG. 2.)

The open hearth at the opposite end is also crossed by an oak beam with mouldings, and as the oak plates or beams to carry the floor joists also have the same mouldings as the girders, the general effect is very good.

The parlour has had its south and east windows modernized, and it is now lined with early eighteenth-century panelling, so that nothing really can be seen. The bay window itself has been blocked for probably nearly two hundred years, and has only recently been repaired, though it has not yet been opened into the room.

At the office end there are certain points to notice. To begin with, although the front wall has been rebuilt in brick, this brick wall is on the same foundation as the older timber wall, and there never was any jetty storey here, as at the west end. That this is the case is shewn by the fact that all the joists up to the front lie east and west, and there is no dragon beam as at Pattenden; and without that feature it was impossible to construct a house overhanging both ways at the angle. Consequently there never was a projecting corner post. Besides this, just to the right of the front

door there was a main or storey post in line with the brick wall, and it has been cut off and underpinned by the brick wall itself. Therefore the ground plan of the house at this end had always a slight projection similar to that of the office end of Loddenden, although in the latter, the joists being laid at right angles to the front, there was also an overhang to the front, and there was therefore a projection of the whole elevation which was finished with a gable, whereas here the overhang was on the side not the front at this end.

The nearly square space occupied by these offices was no doubt originally divided into about equal halves by a partition under the transverse girder.* The rear half contains the staircase, and although Mr. Beale considers this not original, I personally entertain no doubt on the subject. It is, first of all, almost the normal position for the staircase, occupying exactly the same position as in the earlier example of Pattenden. But irrespective of this, the structural evidence is all in favour of it. It will be seen in the plan that the secondary girder in this half of the office square is purposely laid well out of the centre, in order to rest the ends of the two beams on which were fastened the steps (no doubt originally solid ones, though now replaced). This alone is pretty conclusive evidence, as this girder would certainly have been laid in the centre, if a staircase had not been planned here. But if further evidence is wanted it will be found in the fact that the chamfer, which is carried along the east side of this girder, is stopped just before it reaches the staircase, since there was no reason to carry a chamfer where it would be invisible.†

The kitchen which lies behind is of old construction, but I am inclined to agree with Mr. Beale that it is not original. It contains, however, very little to date it by, since the west

* The rather general feature of a cellar is omitted in this house.

† It is true that as you ascend the stair, the beam on the left at first floor level has one or two mortise holes shewing, which at first sight suggest that the floor crossed the stair opening. But mortise holes in these timber houses are found in the most inexplicable positions, often being apparently the timbers of older houses,

wall on ground floor has been rebuilt, and most of the outside is weather-tiled. There appear to have been two windows in the east wall, but they have long been removed. The only other building on the ground floor is the small parlour of comparatively recent date.

Upstairs most of the beams have mouldings similar to those of the hall, but lighter. The fireplaces have also mouldings; and some of the original doorways are very low and characteristic. The most curious feature, however, is that opposite the chimney-stack on the south side, and, therefore, over the garden door below, Mr. Beale has discovered the framing of a very good doorway, with a similar moulding to those in the screen's passage, but deeper. (FIG. 3.) This door is in the outer wall, and therefore can have only led into a destroyed wing, or to an external flight of stairs. The outside of the house is here weather-tiled, so no other evidence can be seen; but looking at its position I am rather inclined to the latter explanation, though I should much like to see what would be revealed if the tiles were stripped. There is also opposite this door a nicely panelled cupboard against the chimney-stack, of which the panelling appears to me early and possibly as old as the house.

The northern front of the house facing the road is highly picturesque, since it practically has no modern feature, and even the chimney is of original brickwork and good character. The overhang, including the fascia board, has a projection of 19 inches; and above there are four bay windows to the bedrooms, each of which had small windows on either side like the windows below. These small windows are now blocked.

The fascia board only extends as far as the front door and is original. The jetty floor is partly supported by brackets cut apparently solid with the posts from which they project.

It is curious to notice also that the brackets which carry the bedroom projecting windows are not only not uniform, but differ in style. The two easterly ones are carved with a trefoil and are late Gothic in character, while the two

western ones must belong to the later style, the one over the offices having a scroll or volute design. The work of all is rough, and I do not think it signifies any difference in date.

It will be noticed that close timbering is used in the Cott all along the north front, and on the west side both in the older and newer parts. Unfortunately, as the south side is weather-tiled it cannot be examined, but this house was never a king post house, and there never was a corner post; and in fact the house has none of the features of the early type. Most of what has been said about Loddenden as regards arrangements applies here, and I presume here also the original kitchen was outside.

With regard to the history of the Cott I have none, but it is part of the possessions of the Beale family, a member of which, Richard Beale, clothier, lived at River Hall close by in the time of Charles II. ;* and looking at the general finish and detail of the building I think we have here a complete house of the same century as Loddenden, but somewhat earlier, possibly about 1535. It should be noticed that while at Loddenden a somewhat larger house was required, the mouldings and finish of the timbers at the Cott are both more lavish and careful, a difference possibly due to a difference of culture and taste between the builders of the respective buildings. But the two houses illustrate each other very well.

Mr. Beale assures me that "Cott" is the proper old name of this house. Cott of course is akin to our cottage and only means "little house," which suggests that it was built by someone owning a more important one.

* Hasted, vii., p. 136.

APPENDIX.—THE OLD HOUSE AT HEADCORN.

As an Appendix I add some notes on a particularly interesting timber building at Headcorn, which hardly belongs to the series described, since both in plan and style it presents unusual features. This house stands right on the road near the church, facing due east, and with one end against the churchyard. It is, unfortunately, so divided up and let in cottages that I have not yet attempted a plan, and indeed in this case I doubt if a plan would be of much use, as I suspect the building is only a fragment.

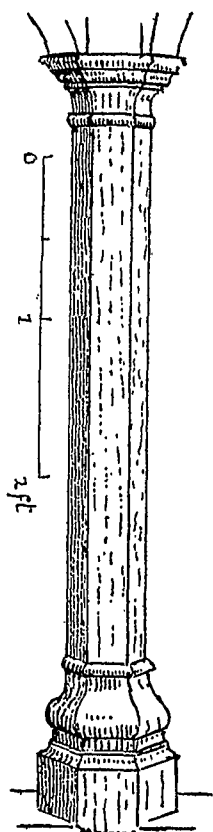


FIG. 1.

The building is an oblong block, and the main rooms are on the first floor. Here we find a fine room $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet long by 17 feet wide divided into three bays by two Tudor arches of timber. This room is now ceiled in at the tie-beam level (9 feet), but I have no doubt it was originally open to the rafters, since over each arch there stands a very good king post. (FIG. 1.) They are, however, so covered with whitewash that the smoke blackening (if it exists) is concealed.

The interesting feature about this room is the carving in the spandrels, or rather on the faces of the large curved braces which fill up the space between the main post and tie-beam, and which of course form the arch, if it can properly be so called.

The carving is as follows:—

South Arch, south side, west spandrel: Within a cusped quatrefoil a character which is either an heraldic chess-rook or a very unusual letter I. (FIG. 2.)

Same side, east spandrel: The letter A in a similar quatrefoil. (FIG. 3.)

On the north side in both spandrels we find a big rose with foliage behind.

North Arch, south side, west spandrel: A and I joined by a knot. No quatrefoil, but foliage behind the letters. (FIG. 4.)

Ditto, ditto, east spandrel: The chess-rook badge (?) and A joined as above. (FIG. 5.)

On the north side both spandrels have leaves and foliage very well treated.

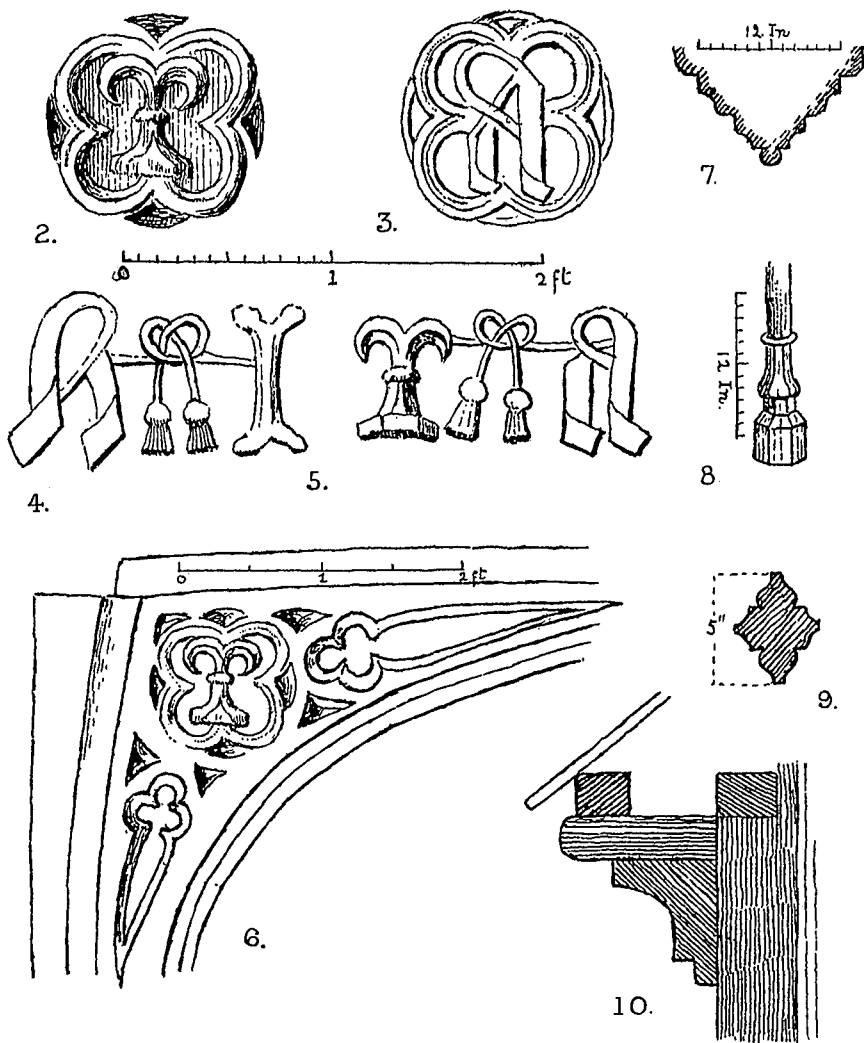
Besides the initials, etc., the spandrels are ornamented with cusps and trefoil figures of late Gothic character. (FIG. 6.)

The main or storey posts which carry the tie-beams of this building are very richly moulded (FIG. 7), and the inner members or mouldings are continued along under the spandrels which form the Tudor arch. This moulding has an octagonal base at the level of the floor of this room. (FIG. 8.) The posts themselves of course extend to the ground floor level.

This room is entered by a depressed arched doorway at the north end of the west side.

At the north end of this room, and occupying the same width is another room with the same type of tie-beam arch and king post. The spandrels, however, are uncarved. In this room facing the road is a little original window, the only original one left. It has two lights with small arched heads and a mullion, of which the section is shewn in FIG. 9. There are also in this room two Tudor arched doors leading to another still more northerly part of the house, in which there is said to be nothing of interest. It is in fact in the other cottage.

The outside of this house is noticeable in the following way: There is no jetty storey, and yet the house is manifestly early. The roof is constructed very curiously. Instead of resting directly on the wall plate it projects on a series of false joist ends which are carried on brackets, tenoned apparently into the main posts and intermediate posts. (FIG. 10.) This is presumably intended to carry the rainfall



DETAILS OF HOUSE AT HEADCORN.

clear of the walls. A similar roof at Dunster, Somersetshire, is shewn in Parker and Turner's *Domestic Architecture*, Fifteenth Century (part ii., p. 339).

At the south corner of the east wall may be seen an interesting little carved column similar to the base moulding of the posts in the big room. It appears to have ornamented the jamb of a window.

I have not yet been able to make up my mind if we have here a house with the hall upstairs, but I incline to believe it a fragment, or a building for special purposes. It merits longer study than I have yet given it.

I find that this house was visited by the Kent Archæological Society, 28 July 1880, and is mentioned in Vol. XIV., p. xxxix. The carvings are there briefly described, and the suggestion is made that the house was built by someone of the name of Rook, whose initials, coupled with those of his wife, were I. and A. R. It is also described as a cloth hall occupied by Mr. Goodwin. Nevertheless, Mr. T. W. Burden, the present owner, tells me that this house was never occupied by Mr. Goodwin, and that the writer has confused it with another timber house in High Street, which was a cloth hall, and is still occupied by the Misses Goodwin.*

The suggestion that the curious letter is a chess-rook used as a rebus or badge is very good, but I am not satisfied that it has anything to do with the Rook family. Ruck is certainly a Kent name. Arthur Ruck was Mayor of Sandwich 1607.† Rooke of Mersham and Monks Horton also bore arms: *Argent, on a chevron engrailed Sable, between three rooks proper as many chess-rooks of the field.* There is a pedigree in the 1619 Visitation and three pedigrees in the 1663 Visitation.‡ Nevertheless, I see no connection with Headcorn, and we are free to search further.

* On re-examining the passage for verification I find that the Society visited two houses, occupied by Mrs. Paige and Mr. Goodwin, and the carved spandrels are described as in the latter. Apparently the names of the occupiers got transposed.

† *Archæologia Cantiana*, XVI., p. 194.

‡ See also Hasted, viii., p. 55.

Half-way between Headcorn and Biddenden and about two miles from each place was a property called Lashenden or Lessenden, which belonged to Boddenhams or Boddendens until they died out about 1600, and their estate passed to the Randolphins, clothiers, by a female heir. These Boddendens or Boddenhams bore for arms *Azure, a fess between three chess-rooks Or.** They were I fancy a family of some position. Biddenden Church has several monuments, and the last of the family was knighted: so that it appears to me much more likely that the chess-rook is that of the Boddenhams or Boddendens than of the Rucks. May I go further and suggest that they were also clothiers, as all self-respecting people at Biddenden were in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and that this was one of their cloth halls.

On the other hand, the present owner, Mr. T. W. Burden, believes that this house ought to be identified with a house called by the ugly name of Horcheyard Podsole, which is mentioned in the will of William Borden of Hedcorn in 1531. There are, however, no old title-deeds, but he believes that the pieces of land mentioned in the will point to this identification. He also tells me that it used to be known as Orchard House, and he says that it belonged at different times to Howlands and Waghorns. I am not in a position to criticize this identification adversely or otherwise, so I append below an abstract of the will in question.

The detail and work of this house are good throughout, and it is a great pity to see the fine woodwork smeared with bad paint everywhere. It was evidently a building of some importance when erected in the fifteenth century, and the section of the mullion is the same as that often found in the mullions of chancel screens† of the middle of that century.

* Hasted, vii., p. 135, and Gwyllyms' *Heraldry*, 1660, p. 318.

† See illustrations to a paper on *Screens of Oxfordshire*, by E. F. Howard, *Archæological Journal*, lxxvii., No. 266, pp. 173, 178; also Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*, 1840, Plate 63, a similar mullion from Lincoln Cathedral, 1450.

Will of William Borden of Hedcorn, dated 11 Feb. 1531. Walter Hendeley, gent., William Lynche, Nicholas Batnor, executors. Sir Ed. Wotten, Knt., overseer.

Bequeaths his messuage, 2 gardens, a forstall, 3 pieces of land formerly called Southlands and 2 pieces of land called Ryngsell, purchased of Sir Wm. Kettesden, formerly Vicar of Hedcorn. Mentions 2 meadows lying to the church bridge upon the den of Crothenden. To Edward his son "my tenement of Borden with 100 acres of land and meddow and my tenement at Wike with such lands as he holds of me by indenture under a false pretence of marriage of Johane, daughter of John Aleyn, Baron of the Exchequer."

His wife to occupy "my principal messuage Horcheyard Podsole, a tenement and piece of land called Borowfyld." Also mentions "2 pieces of land called Keles and Somerlese and other lands lying on N. side of street from Hedcorn to Leneham."

[Abstracted from "Pedigree of Richard Borden, who removed from the County of Kent, Old England, 1637-8, and settled at Portsmouth, Rhodes Island," by Thomas Allen Glenn. Privately printed, Philadelphia.]