

## INTRODUCTION

The notable event in 2015 was not a new publication but a sale. At the end of April several lots of drawings by Henry Petrie were auctioned by Sotheby's at their London auction house. Members may recall the seminar we held at Michelham Priory in 2013, at which many of the Sharpe Collection watercolours and drawings of Sussex churches were exhibited. The bulk of this collection, which belongs to the Sussex Archaeological Society, were also drawn by Petrie in the early years of the 19th century, and since one of the lots at Sotheby's consisted of Sussex views, it was seen as a probable complement to this. The Society made a successful bid and is now in possession of a considerable number of watercolours and sketches, not only of Sussex churches but of castles and stately homes in the county as well. The church illustrations mainly depict places of worship already represented in the Sharpe Collection, but in most cases drawn from a different viewpoint, which makes the Society's overall holding a major resource for the study of Sussex churches before the Victorian restorations. It is hoped that in due course all these pictures will be digitised and available on line for research purposes.

The value of Petrie's drawings was emphasised after our first visit of the season to St Thomas à Becket in Pagham. We noticed that the blind arcading and the rose window in the west wall of the nave, supposedly part of the 19th-century restoration of the church, appeared to be very weathered, and wondered whether it has in fact survived from the medieval fabric (Ian Nairn in the Buildings of England volume thought the arcading 'very convincing'). The question was easily answered by looking at Petrie's watercolour of 1805 (no.248 in the Sharpe Collection): if they had been of medieval origin they would have shown in his view of the west elevation, but there was no arcading and the window was quite different from the one there today. So, despite their superficial appearance, these features are in fact of 19th-century date.

Pagham was our first visit of the season, to which we were pleased to welcome some new members and guests, and took place barely a fortnight after a relatively early Easter. The reasons for choosing St Thomas's included its position on the east side of Pagham harbour, the cradle of South Saxon Christianity with St Wilfrid's base on the opposite side of the bay, possibly at Church Norton; its close connexion with the Archbishopric of Canterbury; and the fact that it is one of only a small number of Sussex churches that have been the subject of archaeological excavation to modern standards. The fabric of the church is also fairly complex, and well worth getting our teeth into.

The early summer visit at the beginning of July coupled two churches dedicated to St Mary: Glynde and the nearby Ringmer. Glynde was chosen as a rare example of a single-period church built from the ground up in the Classical style, and Ringmer for its structural complexity, with much medieval evidence surviving an extensive but well-documented Victorian restoration. Members were dismayed to discover at the last minute that we would be competing with a jazz festival at Glynde, with possible difficulties of parking and access through the village to get to our second port of call. In the event, the festival turned out to be very well organised and kept well away from the village; even the noise of the concerts was hardly obtrusive. At Ringmer, following an introduction to the history and structure of the church, Nick Milner-Gulland, who is organist at St Mary's, gave us an impromptu talk on the extraordinary

history of the organ and demonstrated its range and power in a short recital while we made our way to tea in the adjacent parish rooms.

The last visit of the season took us to Cuckfield and Staplefield for a veritable feast of work by C E Kempe, not only glass, for which he is famous, but wall painting and ceiling decoration as well. We were ably led by Nicholas Rowe, who had been responsible for the most recent restorations.

There has been no opportunity this year of visiting a non-Anglican place of worship. In the Pagham area there are no historic Nonconformist or Roman Catholic churches; the Glynde/Ringmer visit was already full enough with two parish churches, while in the Cuckfield area we were spoilt for choice: in Cuckfield itself there is a Baptist church built in 1772 and enlarged in 1968, but the congregation had embarked on building a new church on the car park of the old one, which made for logistic problems, while at Staplefield an early 19th-century Baptist chapel became the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady of Fatima in 1966. We had to pass up this intriguing place of worship in favour of the parish church, whose Kempe connections were appropriate for comparison with his work at Cuckfield Holy Trinity.

## GRANTS

Our organisation exists to further the objects of the Trust and makes a modest contribution to its funds. We therefore indirectly support places of worship in Sussex as they contend with the problems of maintaining their historic buildings. The list below shows the various places of worship to which grants have been offered in the last three years. It is a pleasure to note the fact that the Trust's constitution allows it to grant-aid all denominations and thus the inclusion on the list of the Blue Idol Meeting House and Unitarian churches at Billingshurst and Hastings.

Alciston, dedication unknown	Hastings, Unitarian Church
Apuldram, St Mary	Henfield, St Peter
Billingshurst, Unitarian Chapel	Icklesham, All Saints
Bishopstone, St Andrew	Itchingfield, St Nicholas (Spiller)
Bolney, St Mary Magdalene	Lewes, St Michael
Brighton, St Michael and All Angels	Newick, St Mary
Brighton, St Nicholas	Northiam, St Mary
Brighton, St Peter	Pagham, St Thomas à Becket
Clymping, St Mary	Poynings, Holy Trinity
Coolham, Blue Idol Quaker Meeting House	Pulborough, St Mary
Coolhurst, St John	Shipleigh, St Mary the Virgin
Dallington, St Giles	Shoreham, St Mary de Haura
Eastbourne, All Souls	Slindon, St Mary
Eastbourne, Christ Church	Tillington, All Hallows
Firle, St Peter	Upper Beeding, St Peter
Folkington, St Peter ad Vincula	Wadhurst, Sts Peter and Paul
Framfield, St Thomas à Becket	Willingdon, St Mary the Virgin
Frant, St Alban	Willingdon, St Mary the Virgin

## NEXT YEAR'S PROGRAMME

Two of last year's proposals are still on the table: Stopham (W) and the Barttelot brasses, and Church Norton and Selsey (W). We also have in mind to visit one or more churches to which the Trust has given grants in recent years. Joy and I will meet early in the New Year to look at the practicalities and finalise a programme of visits. We hope that at least one of the visits will take place on a Sunday, formerly our customary excursion day.

In addition to the Friends' own activities, the Trust is aiming to organise a series of events in celebration of its Diamond Jubilee, having been founded in 1956. There will be an enhanced awards ceremony for Ride and Stride participants on Saturday 5 March at 2.00 pm in Chichester Cathedral, and a church service (by invitation) at St Anne's Church in Lewes on 2 July 2016. Other plans include a lecture by Professor Richard Marks, who was formerly Director of the Royal Pavilion, Museum and Art Gallery in Brighton, and a major contributor to the book *Sussex Churches and Chapels*, which accompanied an exhibition on 'Treasures of Sussex Churches' held in the autumn of 1989. It is also hoped to organise an evening of music, including an organ recital by Nick Milner-Gulland, who has in the past led performances of Evensong at the end of Friends' visits. The dates of these events will be circulated in due course.

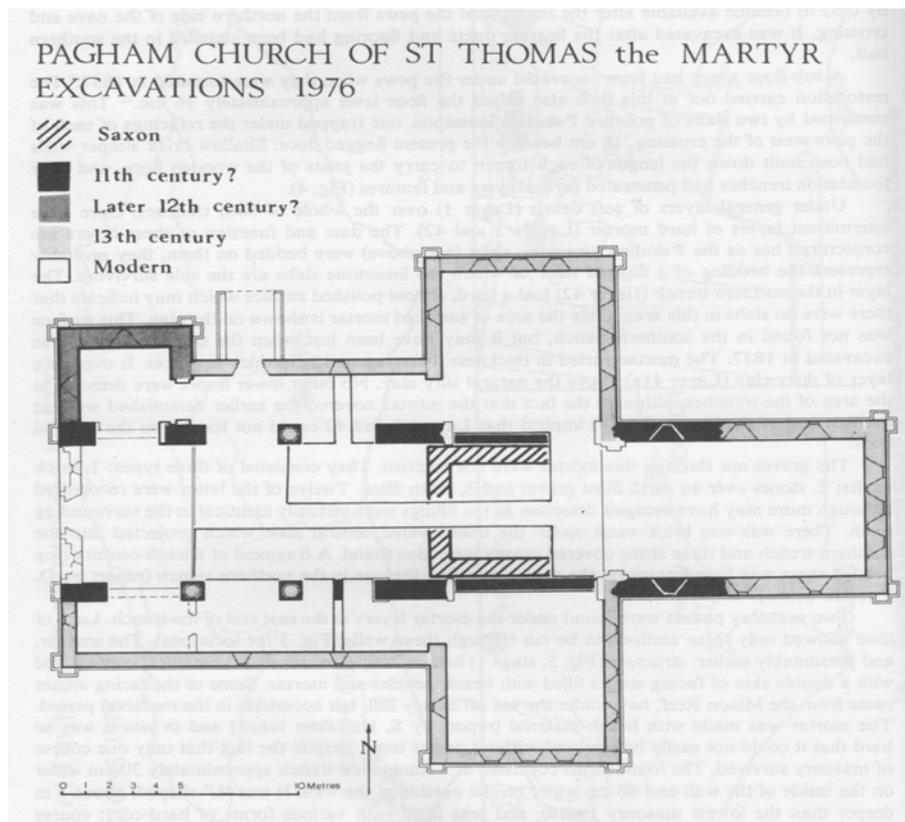
Dr David Parsons  
Chairman

## REPORTS ON VISITS 2015

Saturday, 18 April

### Pagham, St Thomas à Becket

The dedication to St Thomas of Canterbury is of course not original; the saint's martyrdom took place in 1170, and there is plenty of evidence for a church at Pagham long before that. The change from the earlier dedication (unknown, but possibly St Andrew) was no doubt strongly influenced by the close association of the archbishops of Canterbury with the area from a very early date. Though some of the charters purporting to be from the Anglo-Saxon period are thought to be later fabrications, they seem to embody a genuine tradition. According to this, Pagham formed part of the estates granted to St Wilfrid, and subsequently became the property of the archbishop, who at the time of the Domesday survey held the whole of Pagham hundred, including Tangmere, where there is evidence of an early church in the form of a carved stone window head. The archbishop also held the nearby manor of Nyetimber Barton, where the hall of the manor house with part of the chapel still exists. The chapel east window is a triple lancet, indicating a 13th-century date. This



property has been developed in recent times as a group of private dwellings, and thus could not be included in the Friends' visit.

Archaeological finds in the area, burial urns of both early Anglo-Saxon and prehistoric date, suggest that ritual use of the site may go back a long way before the introduction of Christianity. Excavation in 1976 revealed a church earlier than the

standing fabric, possibly of the 10th or early 11th century. The area that could be investigated was limited, but the complete extent of the west wall and parts of the north and south walls were discovered towards the east end of the present nave; the west wall was roughly aligned on the west walls of the present transepts. It is not known how far the building extended, or how it terminated to the east, but the walls located were consistent with a typical aisleless rectangular nave, or even the base of a west tower (see plan). An important find from this period was a piece of Anglo-Saxon carved stone, still on display in the church, along with a provisional reconstruction. Seemingly undistinguished, this is part of a wheel-head cross (that is, a cross head with expanded arms joined to form a circular feature surrounding the whole), made of *calcaire grossier* stone from the Paris basin. It is thought to be a memorial cross, which is a rare form in the south-east of England; there is very little Anglo-Saxon carved stonework of any sort in Sussex. The stone of which it is made was imported into Britain in the Roman period, and there are columns made of this material in Fishbourne Roman palace; the Pagham cross may have been a piece from the palace, recut.

Despite the small amount of physical evidence, all this adds up to an Anglo-Saxon church of some importance at the head of the hundred that takes its name. There are also remains of a chapel at Little Welbourne, to the west of the parish church, which may be significant, but is probably too far away (about 50 yards) to invite speculation about the Anglo-Saxon tendency to build multiple churches in line.

The Anglo-Saxon church appears to have been superseded by a long narrow church built around it, and represented in the present fabric by the side walls of the nave and the western parts of the chancel walls; once again nothing is known about the east end of this church. The chancel walls contain some herringbone masonry, often taken as an indicator of pre- or early post-Conquest date, and the assumption that this phase of the church was built in the 11th century is a reasonable one. The next phase was the construction of the tower on the north side of the church at the west end, an unusual position in terms of church architecture generally, though eccentrically-placed towers are relative common in Sussex. The arch connecting the tower to the nave has scallop capitals of the late 12th century, which further serves to suggest a late-11th or early-12th century date for the nave. However, the claim in the *Sussex* volume of the *Buildings of England* series that the tower has 'a Norman west window which can be trusted' is contradicted by Petrie's 1805 watercolour apparently showing a narrow lancet in this position.

Then in the 13th century the side aisles and transepts were added and the chancel extended. Arcades were introduced into the north and south nave walls, with stiff-leaf capitals typical of the 13th century. The long tongues of masonry between their eastern responds and the transept arches show that the arcades were inserted into an existing wall: another indication of the position of the nave in the overall chronology of the fabric. The new work used the typical early Gothic lancet window, with graded triples in the gable ends of the transepts and a more ornate group with shafting and dog-tooth decoration in the chancel east wall. There, as in so many West Sussex churches, the development stopped; only the clerestory has detailing of the 14th or 15th century. Beginning with the chancel in 1671 the roof was rebuilt (the west tie-beam is dated 1682).

Storm damage in 1836 led to a restoration by John Elliott in the two years following. He renewed many of the windows and introduced a new rose window into the nave west wall, where Petrie shows a six-light window under a depressed arch; below this, blind arcading in the Romanesque style – ‘convincing’ according to Ian Nairn, but bogus on the evidence of Petrie’s watercolour. Inside the church there were (and still are) plaster ceilings and a west gallery, both in the Georgian idiom. Ten years later galleries would be out of fashion.

David Parsons

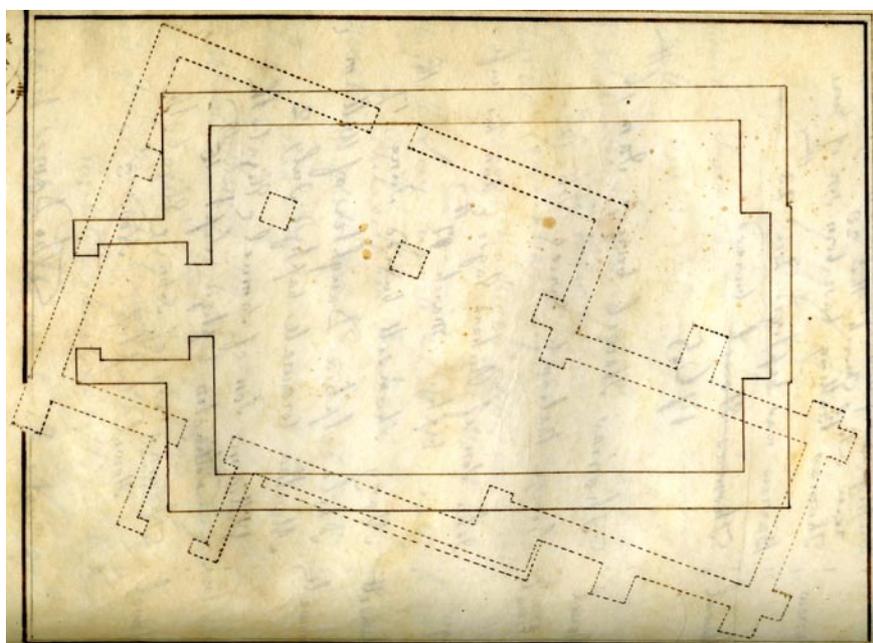
**Saturday 4 July**

**St Mary, Glynde, and St Mary, Ringmer**

### **Glynde**

St Mary’s at Glynde is a rarity: a new purpose-built church of the mid-18th century, which has been altered relatively little, and thus an example of a single-period building. Elsewhere in Sussex the only rival is the chapel at Crowborough, where previously there had been no Anglican place of worship. There a building in the Classical style was erected in 1744, twenty years before Glynde was built, but substantially extended and remodelled in 1881-83, again in 1895-98, and yet again in 2002. The only obvious feature surviving from the 18th century is the tower. (For illustrations of its original appearance, see the Sharpe Collection, no.101, and Lambert’s drawing in *Sussex Views*, no.50). So Glynde stands out as the only real example in Sussex of what a small Georgian church looked like.

There had previously been a church on the site. A two-page memorandum in the parish register (ESRO PAR 347-1-1-1, pp.98-99) describes the demolition of the ‘old church which was in a ruinous condition’; work began on 1 August 1763. The new church was built on completely new foundations, with its axis turned some 30° to the north; the relationship between the old and new building is shown in the plan from the register entry, reproduced here.



The new church was first opened for divine service on Sunday 30 June 1765. The following day the parishioners proposed a vote of thanks to be conveyed to the Patron by the Vicar and Churchwardens and requested that the memorandum be written in the parish register.

The Patron had in fact borne the whole cost of the rebuilding. He was the Rt Rev Dr Richard Trevor, Bishop of Durham, whose private residence was Glynde Place. The house was and still is very close to the church, whose fairly small dimensions give the impression of a private chapel, as Pevsner's *East Sussex* volume remarks. Unlike its predecessor it was not a conventional nave-and-side-aisles structure, but an open rectangular single cell, an example of the 'auditory church' or 'preaching box' much in favour at the time. The Word of God, read from the Bible or declaimed from the pulpit, took precedence over other elements of worship, and this type of building and its furnishings was designed to make the Word audible to all. There is no chancel, and the altar, little used in the 18th century, is accommodated in a modest recess in the east wall. Behind it is a wooden reredos, in front a balustered communion rail, and to either side seating for communicants while attending the Eucharist. At the west end of the church is the obligatory gallery with a small organ, added as late as 1841.

The exterior is largely plain, with coursed knapped flint walling on an ashlar plinth and with dressed stone quoins and window surrounds. The openings are large and round-headed, except that in the east wall, which is a Venetian three-light window. Only the west front is at all elaborate, with an ashlar porch flanked by empty round-headed niches; the pediments above porch and nave are of the usual Classical low pitch, with ashlar masonry, dentil frieze and stone-carved coat of arms to the nave gable. At the east end of the church is a similar pediment with an *œil de bœuf* window.

Apart from the west gallery the main addition to the original fabric is the window glass, which is Netherlandish and reset by Kempe in 1894.

### **Ringmer**

St Mary's is a complete contrast to Glynde: a larger and more complex building serving a more substantial settlement. It retains much of its medieval fabric. By the late 18th century the west tower was ruinous (see James Lambert's drawing, *Sussex Views*, no.132) and was rebuilt in 1884-85 by Ewan Christian, who also extended the nave.

The earliest evidence in the church fabric is a number of moulded stones incorporated in the walling, especially in the south-west buttress of the nave. These are Romanesque in style, and were claimed by Dr Freda Anderson to be reused material from Lewes Priory. More recently it has been suggested that they may have come from the collegiate church at South Malling, where equally building stone was dispersed in the 16th century. However, there is one particularly delicate pattern on a stone low down in the buttress, behind a gravestone; this is very difficult to

photograph, but there is a picture of it in the website of the Corpus of Romanesque Stone Sculpture in Britain and Ireland (CRSBI). A closely similar stone has recently been recognised in the wall of Southover Grange, where the origin of the reused masonry is not in question, so that Dr Anderson's identification can be confirmed. The likelihood that these stones come from an earlier phase of Ringmer church itself is slight. The 16th-century west window reused by Ewan Christian from the original west wall of the nave provides a context in which masonry released from monastic sites at the Dissolution could have been incorporated.



The earliest part of the building proper is the chancel; the present east window is a three-light Perpendicular one, but Lambert's drawing shows two widely separated lancets either side of a (?later) buttress, which indicates a date in the 13th century. In the nave, the typically double-chamfered 14th-century north arcade has bases which are possibly also 13th-century. Apart from this, the body of the church is 14th-century, with windows in the Decorated style in the side aisles. Chapels flanking the chancel were added in the Perpendicular style; wills dated 1499 and 1535 refer to these. The north chapel was given a flat plaster ceiling in the 17th century.

In the churchyard a rail-and-post monument to one of the Martin family dated 1798 appears to be the sole survivor of a type of which several are shown in photographs taken at the time of the Victorian restoration. They are often a prominent feature of late 18th-century illustrations, such as those of Grimm and the Lamberts.

David Parsons

**Saturday 19 September**

**St Mark, Staplefield, and Holy Trinity, Cuckfield**

### **Staplefield**

A simple church of nave and chancel, the glory of St Mark's are the chancel wall paintings by Charles Eamer Kempe, and the interesting connections with the Messel family of Nymans. The church was repaired, redecorated and new lighting installed in 2009-10 when Nicholas Rowe was Inspecting Architect, with conservation of the wall paintings carried out by McNeilage Conservation.

As background, the church was built in 1847 year for £4,051 3s., the site having been purchased the previous year for £40 2s. 6d. The parish was carved out of the then very large parish of Cuckfield. The church was designed by Benjamin Ferry (1810-80), a friend of Augustus Welby Pugin, and his early drawing master was his friend's father Charles Augustus. In 1835 Ferry entered the competition for the new Houses of Parliament, and was appointed Diocesan Architect to Bath and Wells in 1841. He went on to become 'the preferred Architect' of the Ecclesiologist Society, RIBA gold medal winner (1870), and eventually RIBA Vice-President. A good choice for Staplefield.

Charles Eamer Kempe is primarily known for his stained glass windows, and there are several in St Marks's. The three tiny south chancel windows are by T Baillie & Co to Kempe's design, before he had his own studio; the St John the Baptist nave window of 1897 is more typical; and the three-lancet East Window is by Kempe & Co from 1919. The outstanding feature however is the Kempe wall paintings to the upper chancel walls. These comprise a frieze divided on the north and south walls into 'panels' by the corbels and roof timbers. In these are angels standing on a grass base between trees with stylised fruit, holding an unfurling scroll, on which are the words of the Laudate Dominum (psalm 117). The east and west walls have a stone pattern at high level, and the design incorporates the stonework of the east windows.

After some 150 years the condition of the paintings had deteriorated, and need for conservation had become more obvious with the new lighting. With the roof watertight, the first job of the McNeilage team was to clean off the dirt and cobwebs of ages, the damaging conduits and lamps having already been removed. The work then progressed through the careful repair of the plasterwork, and the exceedingly careful cleaning of the paintwork. This was followed by the consolidation of the paint, with the final stage being the toning in of the missing parts, so that on completion the design would appear as complete. One fascinating find during the work was the signature of A E Tombleson, a key figure in the history of the Kempe studios. A director after Kempe died in 1907, he would only have been 18 when working on these wall paintings.

### **Cuckfield**

In 1992 Cuckfield held a week of celebrations to mark the 900th anniversary of the church, one highlight being lunch in the High Street for 1,200! The church was one of many founded by William de Warrenne, a right hand man of the Conqueror, in thanksgiving for a life-threatening crossing of the Channel.

The earliest parts of the present building date from the 13th century, a single cell nave with a rectangular chancel, the same width as the present church, but one bay shorter. The footprint of this plan was exposed in 1927 when a new floor was put in, and again in 2012 when the church was re-ordered. Later that century the tower was added, and after some 50 years a south aisle was created by knocking through the south wall, giving us the line of round Norman piers. In the late 14th century the church was greatly extended – the nave by one bay, a new north aisle was added with hexagonal piers, and the south aisle extended to match. In addition, a large new chancel was added with chapels north and south to the same length and width. All this

we can read from the internal stonework and architectural evidence – and it didn't end there.

The larger church had three roofs hiding the tower (with the east tower window now opening into the church), so the tower was raised a floor higher. Then in about 1460, the change which gave the church its present unique character was carried out, a single-pitch roof was placed over the whole church, with outer walls being raised and the windows altered to suit. And to keep up with the scale, a spire was added to increase the visibility of the church. All this we can read from the exterior of the church – as Nick Rowe says in his tours, this church *tells* you its history. With only the addition of a mortuary chapel (now a vestry) in about 1612, and the present 19th-century porches, the church has remained unchanged – except for the rebuilding of the spire following a potentially disastrous fire in 1980.

Inside, the medieval arrangement was replaced by a three-decker pulpit placed centrally at the chancel crossing – wiping out any evidence of a rood screen. This in turn was swept away in the 1855 reordering of George Bodley, brought in by the dynamic new vicar TA Maberley who shared his Oxford movement ideas for church worship. With open views to the elaborate reredos, every surface of the chancel was to be highly decorated. But the tour de force was the ceiling. This was and is still the medieval timber ceiling, oak boarding onto the original rafters and ties, with barber-poling creating 'panels' with bosses at the intersections. It was plastered in about 1810 to conceal deterioration. Several bosses have heraldic devices on them, which tell us its history. It was built by Edward 1st Lord Bergavenny, who inherited Cuckfield from his wife, an heiress of the Warrennes. Of the powerful Neville family, his mother was Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt. All this we can read from the ceiling.

Bodley employed his young protégé C E Kempe to decorate the ceiling as one of his first commissions, on which he included a painted panel ending "...*qui idem fecit* 1865." Later in 1886, Kempe was invited to paint the nave ceiling. Now with his own successful studio, he added his wheatsheaf coat of arms to a vacant boss. The conservation of these ceilings was carried out in 2003 by Hugh Harrison and Ruth McNeilage. The structure of the ceiling was repaired – with stainless steel wire to support plaster panels where the lathes had 'gone' – with plaster of paris inserted by vet's syringes to secure top coat plaster to base coat – with 2.5 tons of roofer's pointing removed from on top of the ceiling – 150 years of surface dirt cleaned off – paint consolidated and secured – and finally, missing pattern toned in so that on completion the design would appear as complete. One fascinating find under a boss with a Beauchamp gryphon, was a pair of devils' heads, one facing east, the other west.

Finally, the group walked round the church to see the stained glass windows and the many interesting wall monuments. And in the floor at the crossing, a bronze plaque commemorating the Queen's Golden jubilee, with symbols of the State, the Church and Cuckfield.

Nicholas Rowe

Among the many monuments which we saw at Cuckfield was that to Sir William

Burrell, bt (1732-1796), the antiquary upon whose work the written history of the county depended for at least a century after his death. According to his wishes Burrell was buried in the family vault at West Grinstead, where his second surviving son held the remainder of his Uncle Merrik's estate.

Burrell's widow Lady Sophia commissioned John Flaxman (1755-1826) to produce monuments at both West Grinstead and Cuckfield. The famous sculptor visited both churches, and found that the space above the door at Cuckfield better suited to a mural plaque.

William Cole, a fellow antiquary, described Burrell as 'an active, stirring, man, and a good antiquary. He is rather low, and squints a little; but very ingenious, and scholar-like' (BL, Add. MS 5864, fol. 69).

Christopher Whittick  
Chairman of the Trust