

married Thomas Hooper, M.A., who for fifty-two years was rector of Beckley, and lived presumably at Church House in that parish.

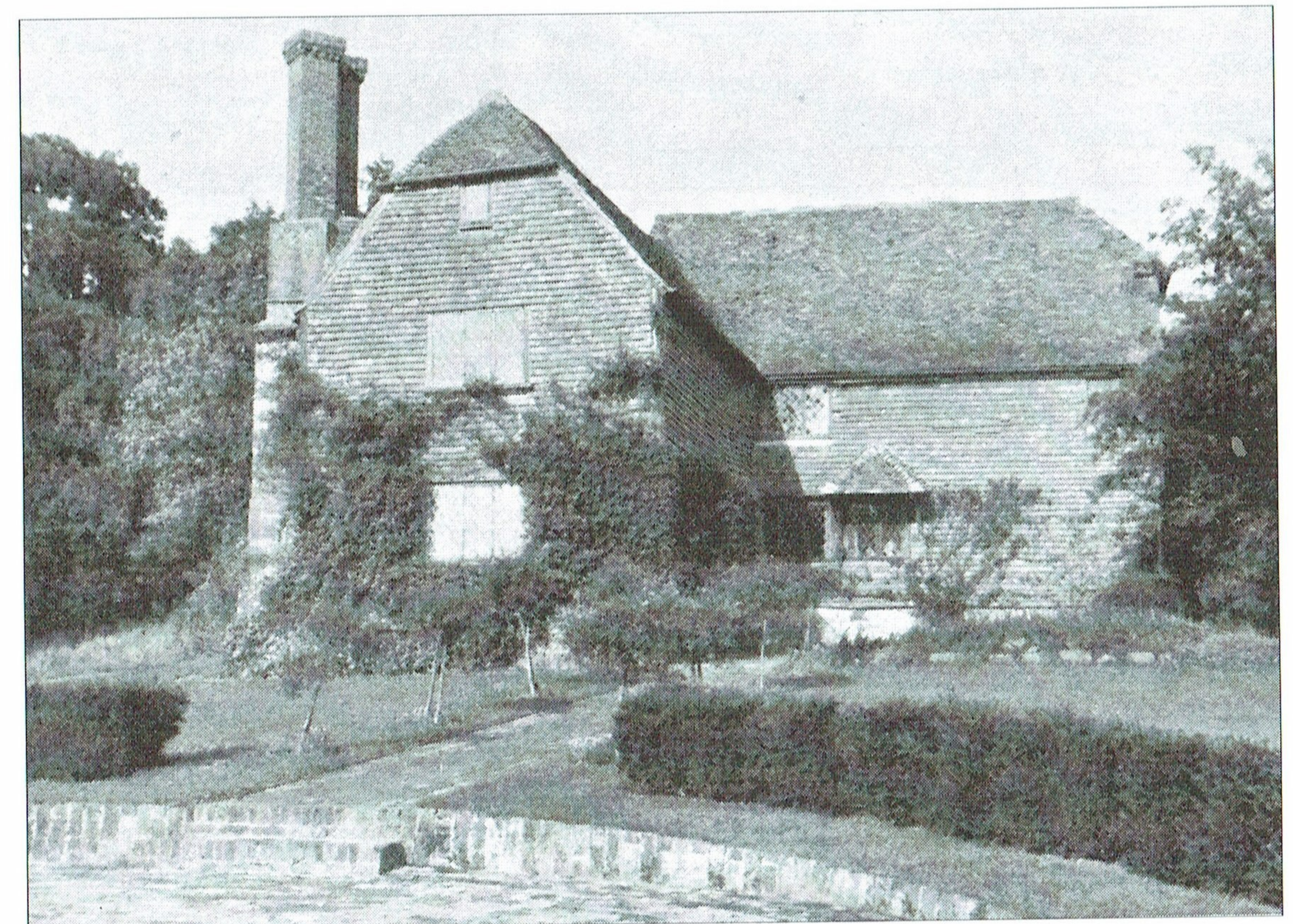
You will perhaps recall the initials W. E., and the date 1744 at Church House, and how we were somewhat puzzled by them. They were said to belong to Walter Waters and Elizabeth his wife. We have now traced her as a direct descendant of the Wittersham Odiarnes, for she was the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Hooper. It is thus that the story of one house often links up with that of another in spite of its being in another county.

45 HUNT'S BARN

MAYFIELD

A short distance to the south of Mayfield, hidden away from week-end and holiday traffic, you will discover three most interesting small old-world houses. The first of these is old Mill House, then you come to Moat Farm, and finally, a little winding lane will take you, by a turn to the left, across a stream to Hunt's Barn.

As you pass along between the hedges, you will see in a northerly direction, upon high ground, the picturesque silhouette of Mayfield village. Its houses are seen on the sky-line, and



our little lane, after it has passed the garden belonging to Hunt's Barn and its commodious oast-houses, will take you to the Mayfield-Ticehurst road. The lane at times is so narrow that we dread the possibility of meeting a wide car; it is deep sunk and picturesque, so for several reasons it is advisable to proceed slowly along it.

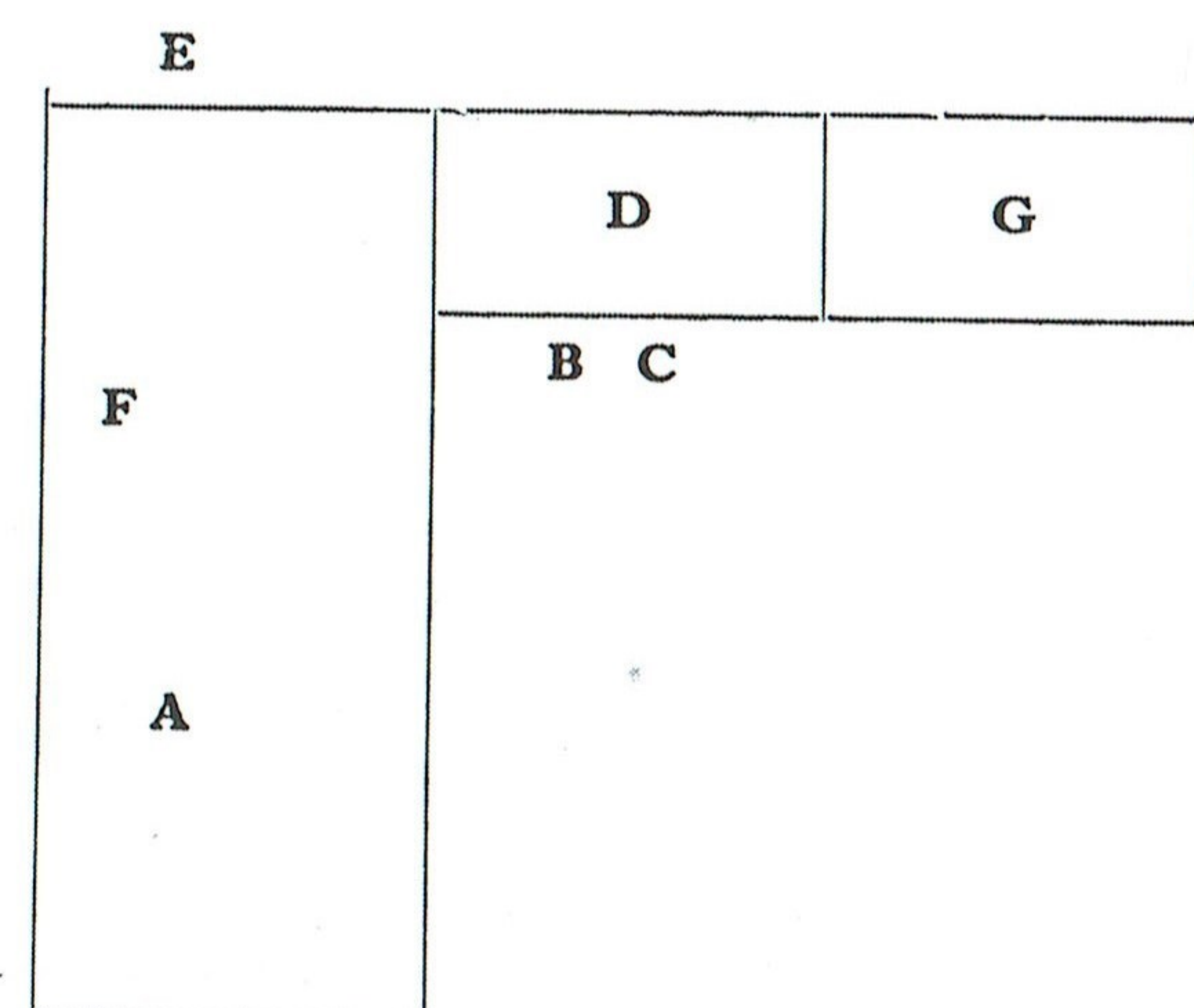
It was on a still, mild September day that a friend and I halted the car near the oast-houses. We found that Mrs. Evans, the owner of Hunt's Barn, had cleverly converted them into a garage with adjacent rooms for her employee. We retraced our steps southwards to gain entrance to the garden, and mounted up, across the greensward, to obtain a nearer view of the small L-shaped house which holds a commanding position. Just below it, Mrs. Evans has levelled a circular plateau. Upon its brick paving stands a wrought-iron ornamental well-head, probably brought from a foreign land.

From this spot we have a pleasing view of cultivated fields that rise in a sort of half circle. On the Tithe Roll of 1843, these numerous enclosures comprise, under "Hunte," some 78 acres, 2 roods, and 15 poles. It has been suggested to me by Mr. Edward Shoosmith that this may point to the property having been an ancient freehold, because 75 acres was the original yeoman's holding. The field-names are interesting, and have remained unchanged for some few hundred years. They are: "Greening Field," "Sheep's Guts," "Sweeting Field Shaw," "Warren Shaw," "Sliding Field and its Shaw," "Alder Shaw," "Orchard," "Home Field," "Bridge Field," "Old Hop Garden," "Orchard Field," "Barn Mead," "Broad Field," "Great and Little Doublet."

Let us now turn and study the house, the entrance side of which faces approximately south-west. The lower part of its walls consists of large blocks of yellow coloured stone, above which is weather tiling. The tiled roof is rendered attractive to the artist by the green moss and lichen growing freely over it.

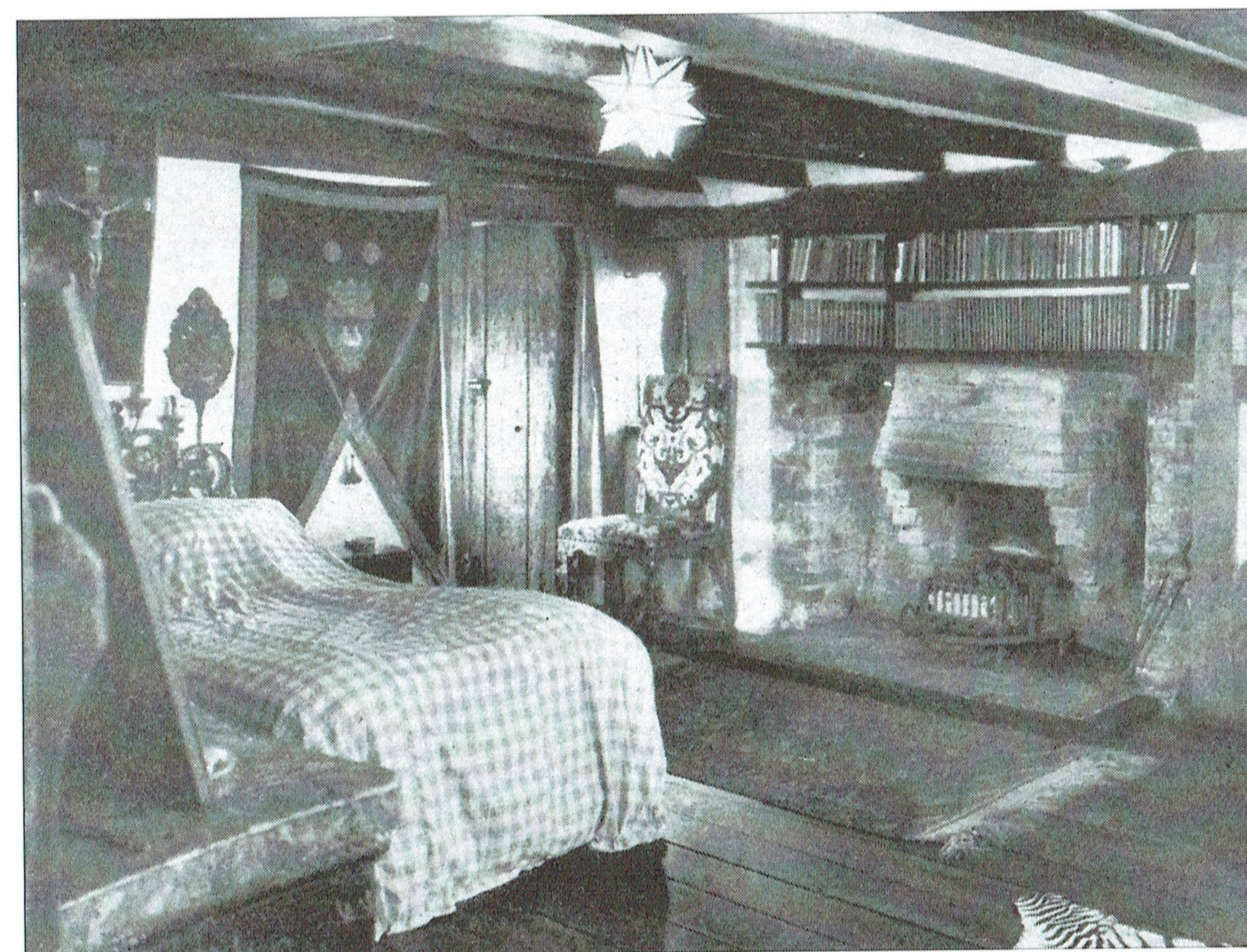
My small ground plan of the building will show the general construction. If, as I think, there was once a Great Hall, this room was in all likelihood at **D**; the stairs which ascend at **F** having been added in Tudor days, when the Hall was converted into two rooms, one above the other.

The front door, an old moulded oak one, came, I understand, from another house. It is reached



GROUND PLAN

- A.**—Gable Front
- B.**—The present day Front Door
- C.**—The position of the original Front Door of which the porch alone remains.
- D.**—Once the Great Hall
- E.**—Kitchen and Scullery
- F.**—The staircase in two flights ascending to the attic floor.
- G.**—The Morning Room

*Mrs. Evans' bedchamber*

by ascending three very ancient grey stone steps. As I was anxious to ascertain whether the house had once held a Great Hall, my friend and I were first shewn the attic floor. We hoped there to discover some charred remains, to prove that the smoke from the medieval hearth in the Hall below had at one time found a vent-hole in the roof. We therefore ascended two flights of stairs at **F**, the housekeeper explaining that that the attic above **A** will some day be converted into an attractive long room. The beams immediately below the roof had, I found, been replaced by new ones, and so our search for blackened ones was in vain.

We then were shown a small room above **G**. It was immediately below the roof, and had a charming outlook towards the east. Its small latticed window, with dainty wrought-iron fasteners, looked down upon a stately herbaceous border.

In the next small bedroom, more or less above **D**, but where a passage had been taken out of it in modern days, we discovered an old cambered wall-beam. This was suggestive of its walls having once formed the summit of the Great Hall. A secret hiding place exists between the west end of this room, and where the stout Tudoresque chimney rises.

We then descended to the best bedchamber floor, and admired greatly what is called the

"Italian" room. This is above **A**. It is well furnished with a few very choice foreign pieces. The ceiling beams have spear-shaped chamfering, and there is a powder closet on the west side. Within the room in the east wall there were distinct remains of a small medieval window. Its position is above **B**, and the weather tiles hide it on the exterior of the house,

I noted two wide, massive, and beautifully wrought-iron hinges to the doors. Their handsome outline seemed to combine an ecclesiastical cross, together with a semblance of the well-known Pelham buckle. This may only have been an embroidery of my imagination, always looking out for some symbol of past owners.

We then crossed the landing to find ourselves in a bedchamber above **D**, where again the cambered wall-beams seemed to carry out my supposition that this had formed part of the medieval Hall. A wide open hearth had been inserted when the north chimney was built in Tudor times.

The bathroom on the west side had ancient beams, and a quaint iron door hinge of medieval leaf-like design.

There were traces of where an ancient doorway had connected the bedchamber above **D** with the adjoining small one above **G**. This latter room may have been the Solar, and to my great delight I found that its walls held many different kinds of "combings" or designs in the plaster. A wide lattice pattern alternated with a graceful flowing design, in which groups of circles were held together by one curved stalk or thread.

The wooden bobbins of the oak doors, the wide oak boards that formed the flooring, and the wooden bolts to the ancient beams, all go to prove how unchanged the house has remained throughout many centuries.

We then descended to the ground floor, and passing to the right near the present front door, we entered the living room **D** which still goes by the name of "the Great Hall." This bears out my theory that its original high walls are traceable still, right up to the summit of the house. It was only in later times that it was converted into three rooms, one above the other.

A dark moulded and very massive wall-beam stretches right across the west wall of this room.



Combing on bedroom wall

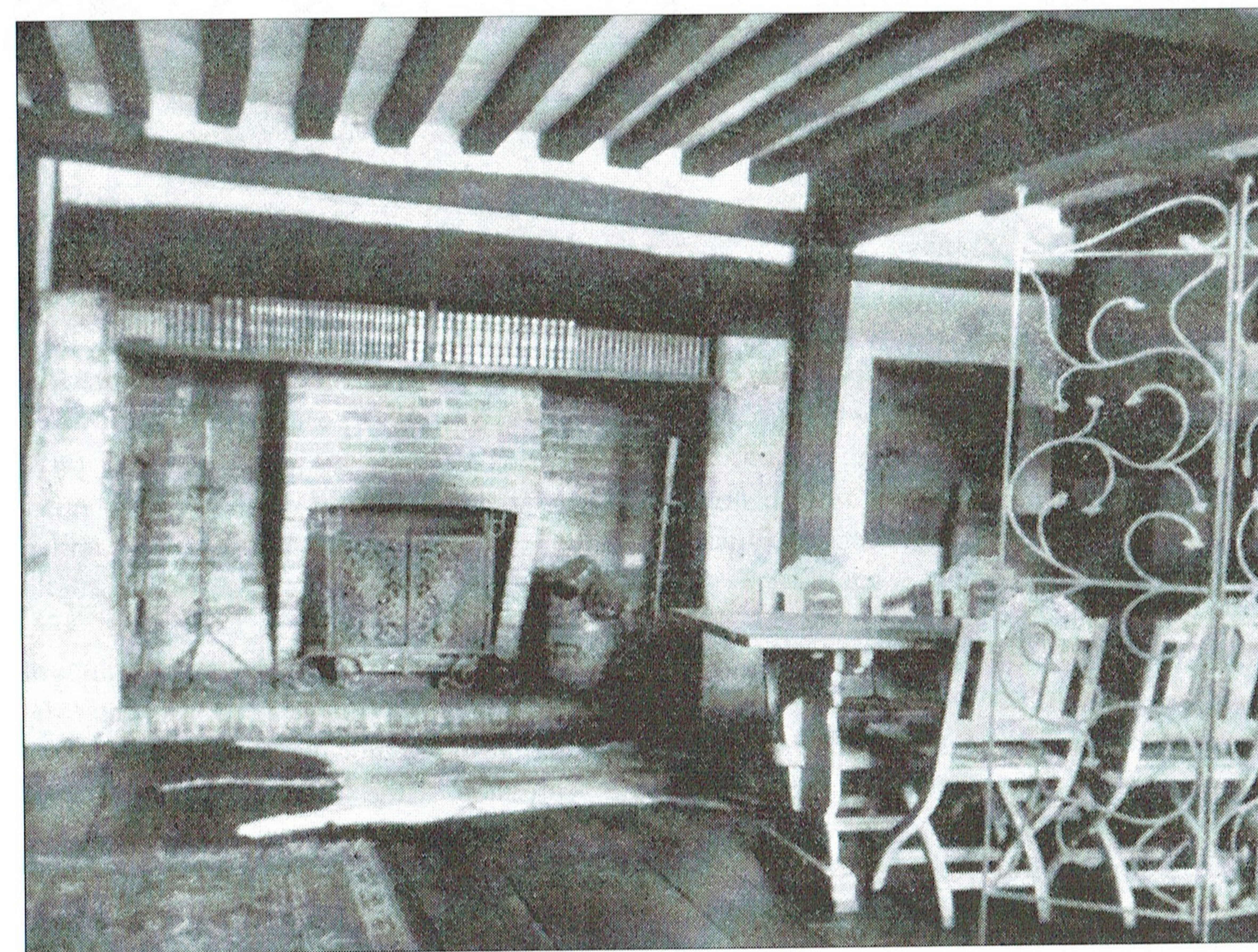
By a careful examination, I was able to detect a leaf-like decoration at its south end. It had the appearance of two slightly curved leaves united at the base only. At the north end of the beam we detected a Tudor rose carved upon an heraldic shield. There are fine iron hinges upon the door of this room.

The Morning Room at **G** was the next one to be examined. There is a massive beam above its wide open hearth. This room may, at one time, have been the Solar.

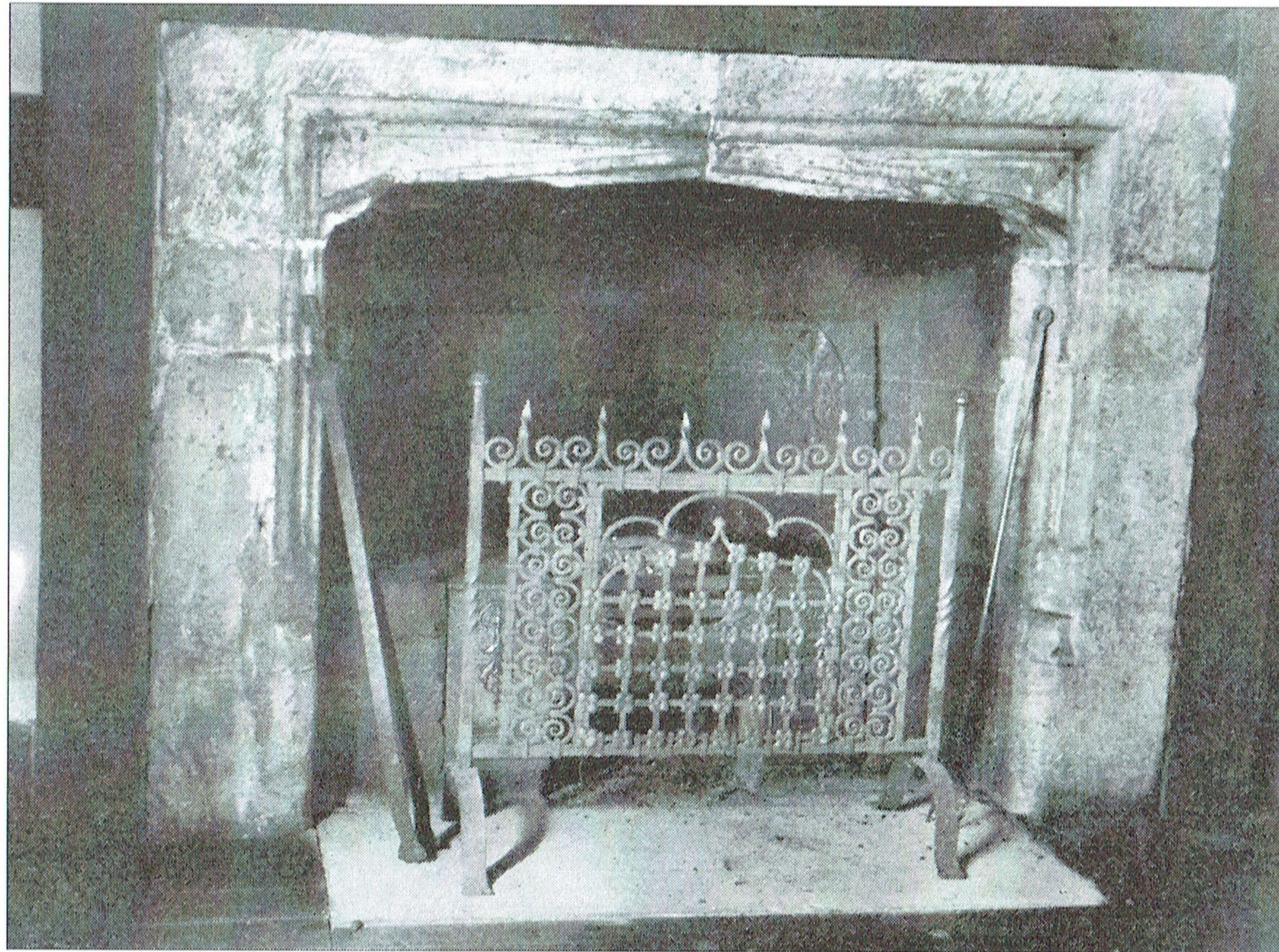
We were also shown the kitchen and scullery at the rear of the Great Hall, and it appeared to me that there were traces here of a tall medieval window, which may have given light to the Great Hall on this side of the house.

In the dining room, which is at **A**, there was a fireback upon which the date 1635 had been cast, together with the initials I.A. and a fleur de lys. Emblems these, which, if one knew with certainty that they had always been within this hearth, might guide one in regard to the past story.

Upon the woodwork, near the narrow stone Tudoresque overmantel, were carved lines that may have been intended for a mason's mark. This particular group of strokes resembled one of those shown in *Archæologia* vol. 50, part I, descriptive of a paper written by Edwin Freshfield,



The morning room



The fireplace in the dining room with fireback dated 1635, and inscribed I.A.

LL.D. It is of the arrow-head type found often upon very early buildings. The room which holds this woodwork is said by the local inhabitants to belong to the oldest part of the house.

I must confess that a certain amount of research has been necessary in order to piece together a few scattered details of the history of Hunt's Barn. Sometimes it is called Hunt's Farm. The earliest mention in regard to its ownership occurs under the hundred of Loxfield-Camden in Mawer's *Place-Names of Sussex*. There he notes Hunt's Farm was the home of John Hunte in 1388 (Feet of Fines).

Through the kindness of the owner, Mrs. Evans, I have ascertained that it lies in the Manor of Baynden, of which it appears to be a freehold tenement. Unfortunately the deeds which she possesses do not go back very far, but they do tell us that the Manor of Baynden, one of the Archiepiscopal manors of Canterbury, was in the possession of the Glynde estate since very early days. Mr. Thomas Pickard, when agent for Admiral the Hon. Thomas Seymour Brand, carried out the enfranchisement of Hunt's Barn in 1900. He tells me that the Manor of Baynden, as well as Baynden Farm, have been the property of the Glynde Estate since the thirteenth century. It was the property of the Walleys family in 1264 and passed successively to the Morleys

and the Trevors. Mr. Pickard also says that according to the Patent Roll of 1446, the custody of the Manor of Baynden was granted to Sir John Fortescene, William Walleys being an idiot.

The Manor of Bivelham, or Bibleham, adjacent to Baynden Manor, was purchased, together with some woodland and a farm or two from the Pelhams, about 1771, either by Dr. Richard Trevor (Bishop of Durham) who died in that year, or with monies left by him for that purpose. The Manor of Bivelham extends to the parishes of Mayfield, Wadhurst, Tidebrook and Ticehurst, and comprises 67 tenements large and small. It paid a Castle Guard rent to Hastings Castle and there was an extra Quit Rent payable every leap year. Incidentally one old gentleman who had to pay an extra penny-halfpenny every leap year, on every occasion used to argue the point by writing several letters requiring an explanation!

According to the Court Rolls of the Manor of Camden-Mayfield, I understand that in 1602 a certain John Modell senior, held a portion of land called Huntysfeld and an adjacent piece called Hunts. It seems to me probable that this land was additional to the 70 acres called Hunts, which was in the Manor of Baynden. Whether John Modell lived at Hunts is a question which needs enquiring into. It is noticeable that many members of the Modell family resided at Mayfield in the early seventeenth century. We also come upon them at a later date in Miss Catherine Pullein's *Rotherfield*, where we find that in 1700 to 1710 Thomas Muddle (a corruption of Modell) made lantern clocks.

The next authentic information of Hunt's Barn comes from a deed dated 1610 relating to Tottingworth in Heathfield. It shews that one of the parties concerned was a John Fuller, yeoman, "of Hunt's." Somewhat later we read again about John Fuller of Hunt's in "Exchequer Depositions." I have not space here to give a complete extract, but briefly this John Fuller owed £400 to John Sackville. In 1621, in lieu of that debt, he sold six "closes." The names are so interesting that I insert them here: Popes, Mothers, Godwell, Coggers, Greens, and Sheepecott Hill. These formed part of the land that belonged to Hunt's messuage which then consisted of about sixty acres.

In later times we come upon the names of Shipp, Baker and Grove as holding Hunt's Barn. I learn from Messrs. Hunt of Lewes, who hold the Court Rolls of Baynden Manor, that in 1724 a John Stephens was in possession.

I have already alluded to the beautiful hinges in Hunt's Barn and the impression I had of an ecclesiastical meaning as well as a semblance of the Pelham buckle which they held. The outline of history that I have pieced together may shew my readers that as both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pelham family held interests in the Manor of Baynden, it is not improbable that both wished to record their connection in the design of these hinges.