

HERALDIC COACH PANELS

The
SUSSEX COUNTY
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The seal of the County of Sussex is circular, featuring a central shield with a lion passant guardant. The shield is surrounded by a wreath. The words "SUSSEXIA" and "FLOREAT" are inscribed around the top and bottom of the seal, respectively. A small cross is positioned above the shield.

72
1/6

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GRAFFHAM WEAVING, POTTERY AND GLASS

By FREDERICK T. BARRETT

THE award to Graffham by the Sussex Rural Community Council last autumn of the prize for "the most sensibly active" village in West Sussex has directed attention to this Domesday settlement of 500 souls lying secluded at the foot of the wooded Downs between Goodwood and Duncton. It must have given a good account of what it has done, and is doing, as a result of local tradition, enterprise and leadership. Until 1930 the life lived by Graffham people was almost feudal, the Sargent and Wilberforce tradition being followed by the paternal government of Lord Woolavington (Jack Buchanan of "Black and White" whisky fame), who did much for them in the best Lord of the Manor style. It was probably a reaction from this kind of life which resulted

in the village deciding to do things on its own initiative, instead of being spoon-fed. Communities respond in this way much as do individuals.

It is not, however, the purpose of this article to dwell on general activities here in Graffham, but to emphasise two branches of practical work which might well be copied in other villages in the county. They are weaving and pottery. The Graffham Craft Centre was founded three years ago by Mrs. Claud Mullins, who from her early years has been keenly interested in handicraft, particularly weaving. Rugs, tweeds, linen articles, scarves and ties are the main products. The standard achieved is indicated by the fact that at Heals' "Sussex Crafts" exhibition last autumn no fewer than forty exhibits were chosen from Graffham and that the Centre has been asked to demonstrate weaving at the Royal Counties Agricultural Show to be held at Horsham this month. It is housed in an old barn, and there the villagers may go during the day or evening to work on the looms. Some weaving is done in the home. Attractive basketry is also produced—trays, bread baskets, cat baskets and shopping bags. Classes for pulled linen have recently started. Part of the profits go to the Centre, part to pay for materials and the remainder to the workers, who represent a good cross-section of the community. Here is a practical example of what a village can do under good leadership.

Pottery was being made at Graffham as long ago as 1341, according to the famous Nonae Roll ("the Rector has the easement to the value of xiid. from men who make there earthen vessels"). In 1848 the Sussex Archaeological Society says "a pottery in



Colonel Godfrey Loring at his wheel in the Farm Pottery. From a photograph by Alan Duncan

good repute exists there at the present day". The last of the old potters, Mankin Todman, died about forty years ago, but last year the craft was revived by Col. Godfrey Loring, of Northwood Farm, which is near the probable site of the old potters' haunts. The new ware is already on the market, and the bowls, mugs, jugs and electric lamp holders are selling well. The potter's wheel is still of the ancient pattern, but the electric kiln would have amazed the old craftsmen.

Glass is not now made in Graffham, and it is only as recently as twenty-five years ago that evidence was first forthcoming that the Wealden glass industry centred round Chiddingfold and Kirdford had extended Graffham way. Then parts of typical Wealden crucibles, with glass adhering, were unearthed in a corner of the old Glasshouse Farm, but the furnace has not yet been located. Two old inhabitants have testified to me that in their young days it was said that "Frenchmen" used to make glass in Graffham and that this was the reason for some families having foreign names such as Goble (formerly spelt Gobbell) and Valour, or Gronnow and Vatter, which are recorded in the Church Registers between 1657 and 1682. The industry died when the glassmakers followed the coalfields as they opened up. Who knows but that, when atomic power has displaced coal, glass may again be made here? The local sand is particularly suited for the work. Graffham sand probably supplied the main Wealden furnaces to the north. On a map of 1629, belonging to Capt. Mitford, of Dean Manor, there are shown "peate pitts", "sande pitts" round Gallie Hill, and a recital sets out that there has been continual "... diginge of sand and the sellinge thereof to ye glassmakers." Mr. G. H. Kenyon, of Kirdford, the authority on Sussex glass, tracked down this piece of evidence quite recently.

What is the real basis of this village's activity? Will it persist, and not be a flash-

in-the-pan, as some doubters may suggest? Can other villages learn from its experience? Weaving, pottery and other crafts—can they be started? The answer is a decided "YES," but with a warning. The danger to the communal life of a village arises when two or three persons only provide the driving force. Graffham said to the Community Council: "A spirit of co-operation among *all* sections of the community is very evident, and this makes for a happy, satisfying village life." Michael Townroe, the energetic Rector of Graffham, sums it up as follows: "The spirit which draws the village together in harmony is essentially spiritual. People have taken an active part in village life primarily because they are Christian people, and because they feel the community is worth serving in that way." A better way, surely, than each spinning on his own little axis.

BRIGHTON'S FEAR OF WATER SHORTAGE

Brighton's fear of a water shortage in the not-too-distant future, owing to the increasing population and the building of so many houses on and near the water-bearing areas of the Downs, has led to the formulation of schemes estimated to cost nearly £3 million. The Mile Oak (Portslade) and Patcham pumping stations have or are being improved, and the old Lewes Road pumping station to the south of Preston Barracks has been re-opened after being closed for many years.

Experts are now carrying out tests with a view to utilising the water of the River Ouse, and there is talk of a huge reservoir on the north side of the Downs and a great system of pipe lines into the wide district supplied by Brighton—from Telscombe in the east to Lancing in the west.

Money is to be spent in other directions by the Corporation in order to ensure a continuance of the plentiful supply of water for which Brighton has long been famed.