

## Local History County Yarns

David Arnold would like to hear from readers of *County Yarns* who have stories and illustrations about Sussex to share with us. Email david.arnold@me.com or write to him at 14 St John Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2QE.

# Trio of architects who built big reputations in Sussex

**A**s the headline implies, this week I am writing about three architects who have all made significant marks upon historic Sussex buildings. By great coincidence, two of them once lived in the village of Buxted, north of Uckfield, though neither was there at the same time as the other.

First born of the trio in 1881 was Walter Hinde Godfrey. He was the son of a wine merchant but chose a career in architecture. He also became a distinguished antiquary, topographical historian, landscape designer and illustrator!

Walter made his home in Buxted in 1915 and later moved his London-based practice to offices in Lewes House on School Hill in the county town. By 1938 the practice was located in Church Lane and the architect was living in Bull House in Lewes High Street (once the lodging place of the radical Thomas Paine).

W.H. Godfrey was greatly interested in the conservation of historic buildings such as Ann of Cleves House in Lewes and also churches and castles. Herstonmeux was another of his Sussex projects but he also worked as far afield as Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire, burial place of Queen Katherine Parr, last surviving wife of Henry VIII.

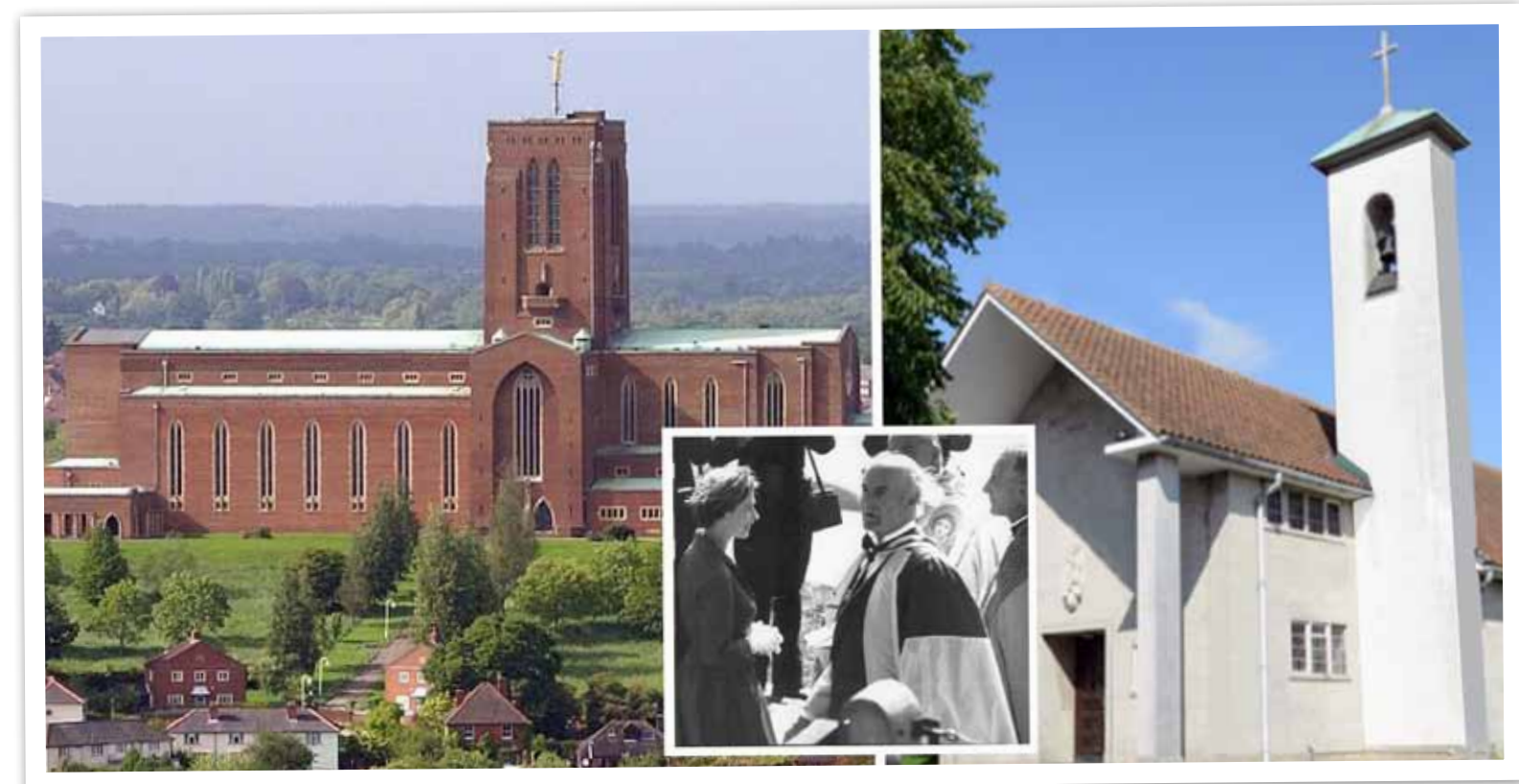
The many Sussex churches he helped restore or repair included Saint Anne's in Lewes and churches at Seaford, Southease, Hamsey, Plumpton, Friston and Keymer.

Walter's most notable achievement was the founding of the National Buildings Record in 1940. His aim was "to meet the dangers of war then threatening many structures of national importance". In the war's aftermath he worked on the restoration of bombed buildings. One of these was the Temple Church in London. In 1963 the NBR became the National Monuments Record and today is contained within the Historic England Archive.

W.H. Godfrey CBE, FSA, FRIBA passed away in 1961.

My second distinguished architect is Edward Brantwood Maufe who was born in 1883. His birth name was Muff before he changed it to one pronounced "M'orff". Early success in building design allowed him in 1926 to acquire a property at Shepherd's Hill, Buxted. After restoration the house became his second home.

In the Great War, Maufe first joined with the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve before transferring to the army. He was a lieutenant in an artillery unit in 1917 and served in the Salonika Campaign that saw British, French and Serbian forces in action against a Bulgarian army reinforced by German.



Austro-Hungarian and Turkish formations. Fighting persisted in Albania and Greece until an armistice was signed in September 1918.

Post-war, Maufe resumed his career in architecture. In 1932 he emerged first out of 183 entries in a competition to design a cathedral for Guildford. Construction of his "simplified Gothic" structure took 25 years.

Like Walter Godfrey, Maufe was prominent in repairing buildings damaged in World War II and worked on London's Grays Inn and Inner Temple. The two men must have met frequently. From 1943 Maufe served as Principle Architect for the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission, a role for which he was knighted in 1954. He also undertook work on a number of Sussex churches.

His Sussex connection was cemented in the late Fifties. A neighbour of Maufe's Buxted second home was a governor of Lewes Grammar School for Boys. Headmaster Neville Bradshaw had struggled for years to raise funds for the construction of a chapel in the school grounds in memory of the 55 former pupils who had lost their lives in the Second World War.

When Maufe heard the story from his neighbour he agreed to donate his services at no charge. The architect's timely intervention was key to fulfilling Bradshaw's long-held dream when the completed chapel was dedicated by the Bishop of Chichester on 10th July 1960. Three weeks later Neville Bradshaw retired.

Sir Edward Maufe RA, FRIBA

**Above left: Guildford Cathedral's "simplified Gothic" style was envisaged by Sir Edward Maufe. He is pictured inset with Queen Elizabeth at the 1961 dedication ceremony. Maufe had a Sussex home and gave his services free as architect of the impressive Memorial Chapel (right) beside present-day Priory School, Lewes.**

**Below left: Walter Hinde Godfrey was another influential Sussex architect. For a time he resided in Bull House in Lewes High Street. One of his many books - "The Sign of the Bull" - recounted the historic building's history.**

retired to live permanently at his Buxted home in 1964. He died aged 92 in Uckfield Hospital in 1974.

Now for our third distinguished Sussex architect. Walter Emil Godfrey was born in 1913 as the son of W.H. Godfrey. Early life was spent with his family in Lewes. He was destined to follow his father into architecture and after World War II went into partnership with Andrew Carden (1910 - 1996). Their work included the restoration of war-damaged buildings and churches that included those at Beddingham, Bishopstone, Brightling, Rodmell and Poynings. Saint John-sub-Castro in Lewes saw another project. Fishbourne Roman Palace and the Bishop's Palace at Chichester were two of the historic remains they

worked on. The younger Godfrey also on occasion informally partnered his father on sites.

Walter Godfrey died in 1982.

I am indebted to Peter Harrison of the Court House Museum, High Street, Pevensey BN24 5LG (tel: 01323 733419) for making me aware of the Godfrey family's immense contribution to England's architectural heritage.

For the remainder of October there are Saturday and Sunday afternoon special displays at the museum (1 pm-4pm) featuring Pevensey in wartime - "Radars, Regiments and Ramparts" - together with a display on the life of Sir John Pelham, Constable and Royal Gaoler of the town's ancient castle. Admission is free.

