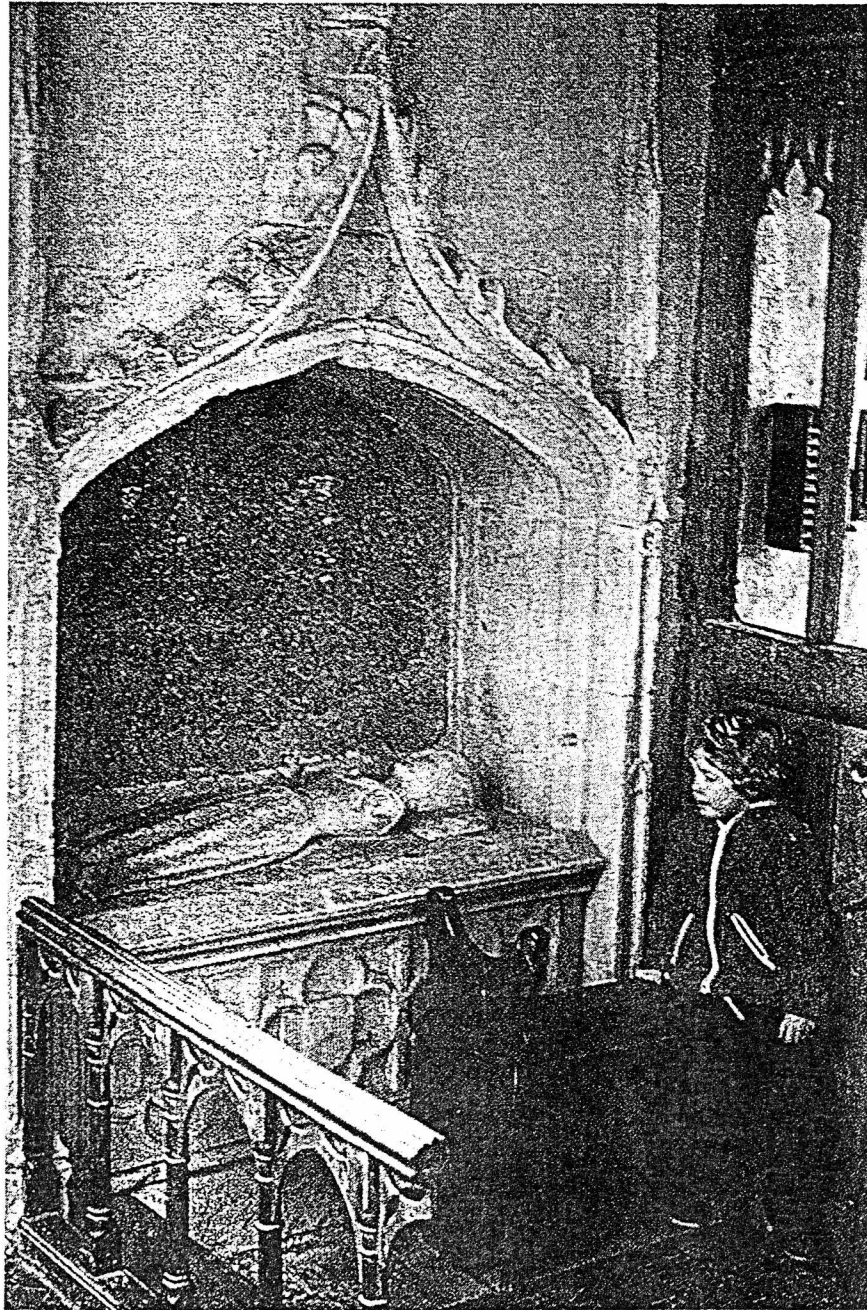


Burton church: does it have a future?



Above: Dated about 1480, this tomb is probably that of a member of the Dawtre family who owned Burton. Below: The splendid mid-Tudor Renaissance tomb of Sir William and Lady Elizabeth Goring.



In an article published in the W.S.G. last year on the downland churches at Sutton, Bignor, Barlavington, Coates and Burton, I mentioned that difficulties were being experienced in maintaining Burton Church, which has few parishioners and is somewhat remote from the other four villages.

Most passers-by on the road from Petworth to Chichester would be unaware of the existence of an ancient parish church there. It stands in the grounds of Burton Park, a country mansion which is now the home of St Michael's School for Girls.

Although the girls do assist with maintenance work, they have their own school chapel.

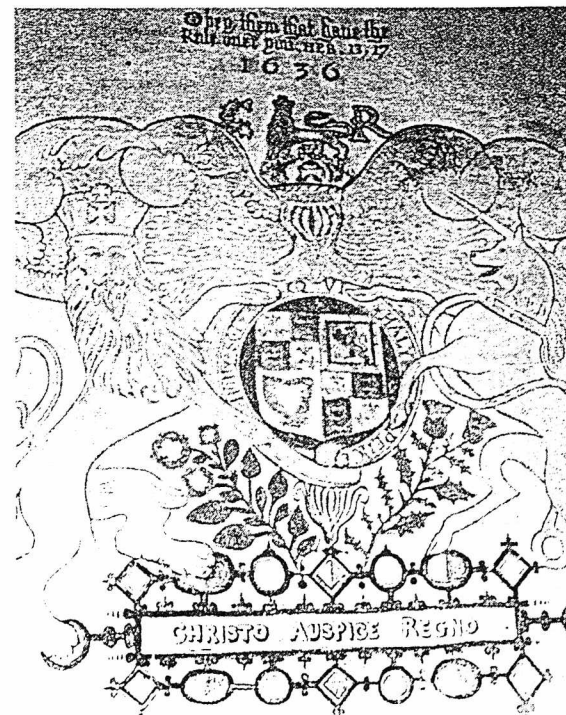
The Rector of Sutton, the Rev. Ronald Johnson, holds services at Burton every fifth Sunday, which means that there have been only a few services so far this year.

By Graham Tite

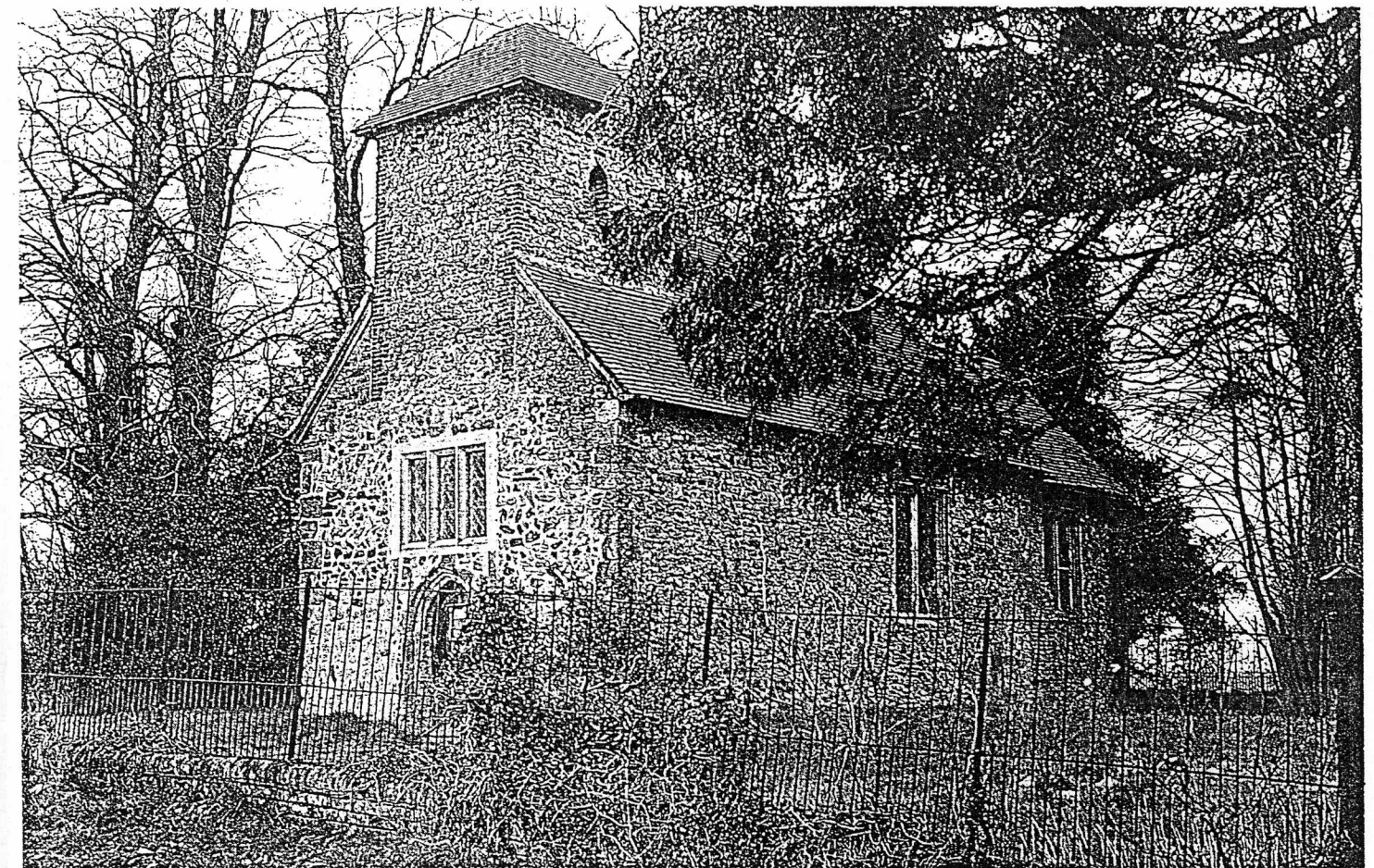
In common with many small Sussex churches, Burton has no heating and no electricity — and shifts in the foundations have moved the walls and dislodged several monuments.

EARLIEST

The font is among the earliest in Sussex, but its great stone mass leans now at a perilous angle. It has been estimated that repairs and conservation of the interior could cost £30,000, a sum which is clearly



Above: Since most were erased in Cromwellian times, the arms of Charles I in churches are rare survivors. These are clearly marked 1636. Below: The leaning font and 15th Century woodwork inside Burton Church.



Burton Church, which is plain, aisleless, and structurally unremarkable.

from when they were installed many hundreds of years ago.

PLEASURE

To lovers of classical music, opera, or ballet, it is the fine performance of a work which gives them the keenest pleasure; to the art lover, the equivalent is to see a church like

Burton — faded a little, but each object still bearing the imprint of the hand which made it.

The Bridges Report in 1960 predicted that, over the following 20 years, about 800 churches in the provinces of Canterbury and York would become redundant. Formal declarations of redundancy have

followed at a rate of about 100 a year, and more quickly in Canterbury than in York due to the greater concentration of churches in Southern England.

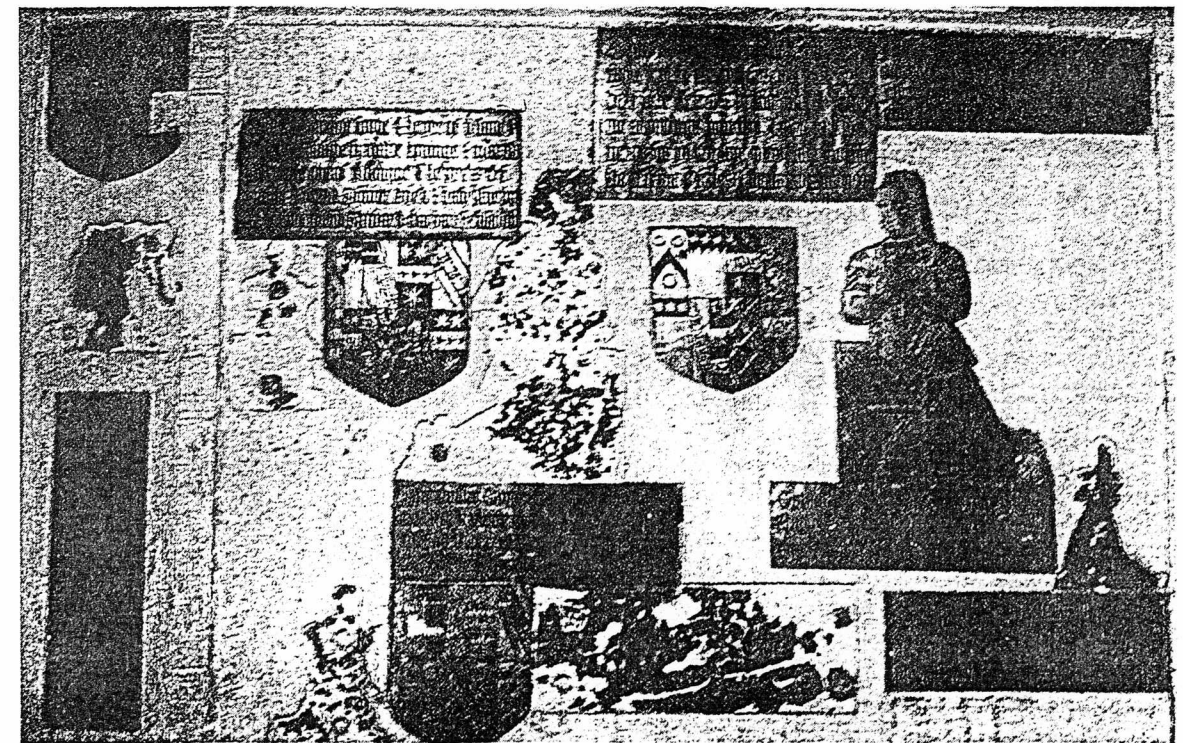
Churches at Chichester, Tortington and Warminghurst are the West Sussex examples of custody passing from the Church of England to the Redundant Churches

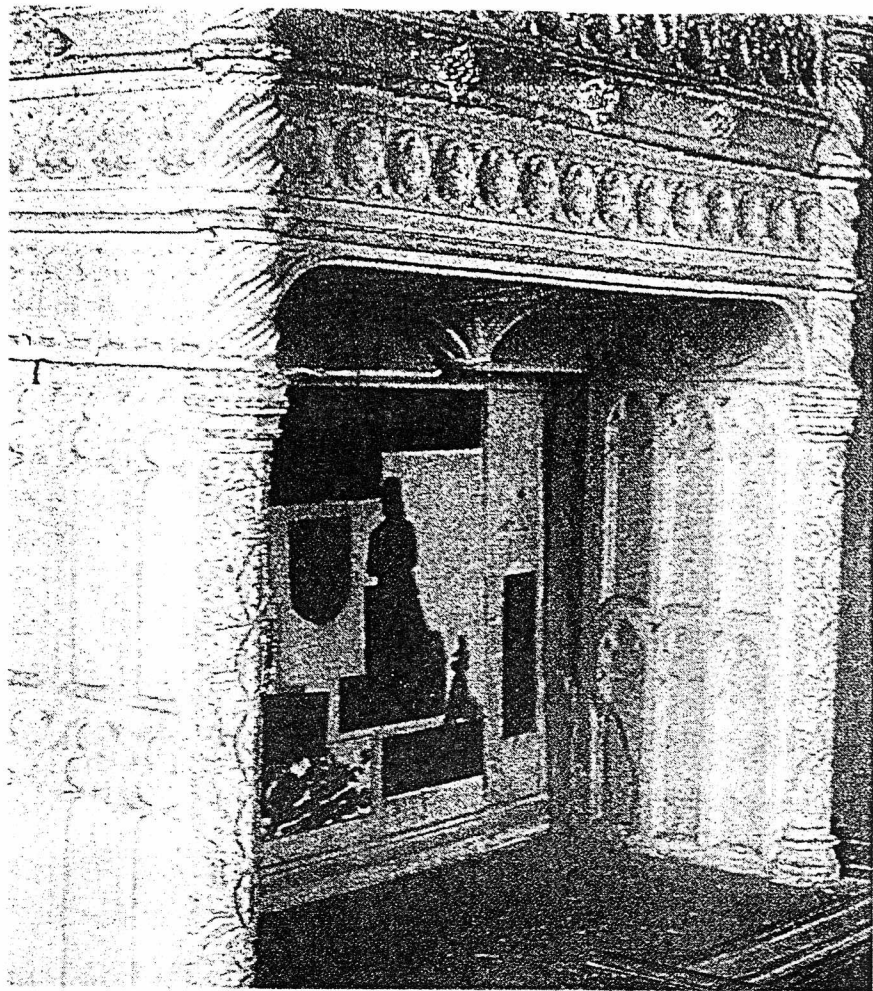
Fund. Since 1969 this organization has been caring for the churches which are too important to demolish.

In those years the fund has accumulated much valuable expertise, and is giving advice to the parishioners about the grants which are available to help maintain churches which face this kind of difficulty.

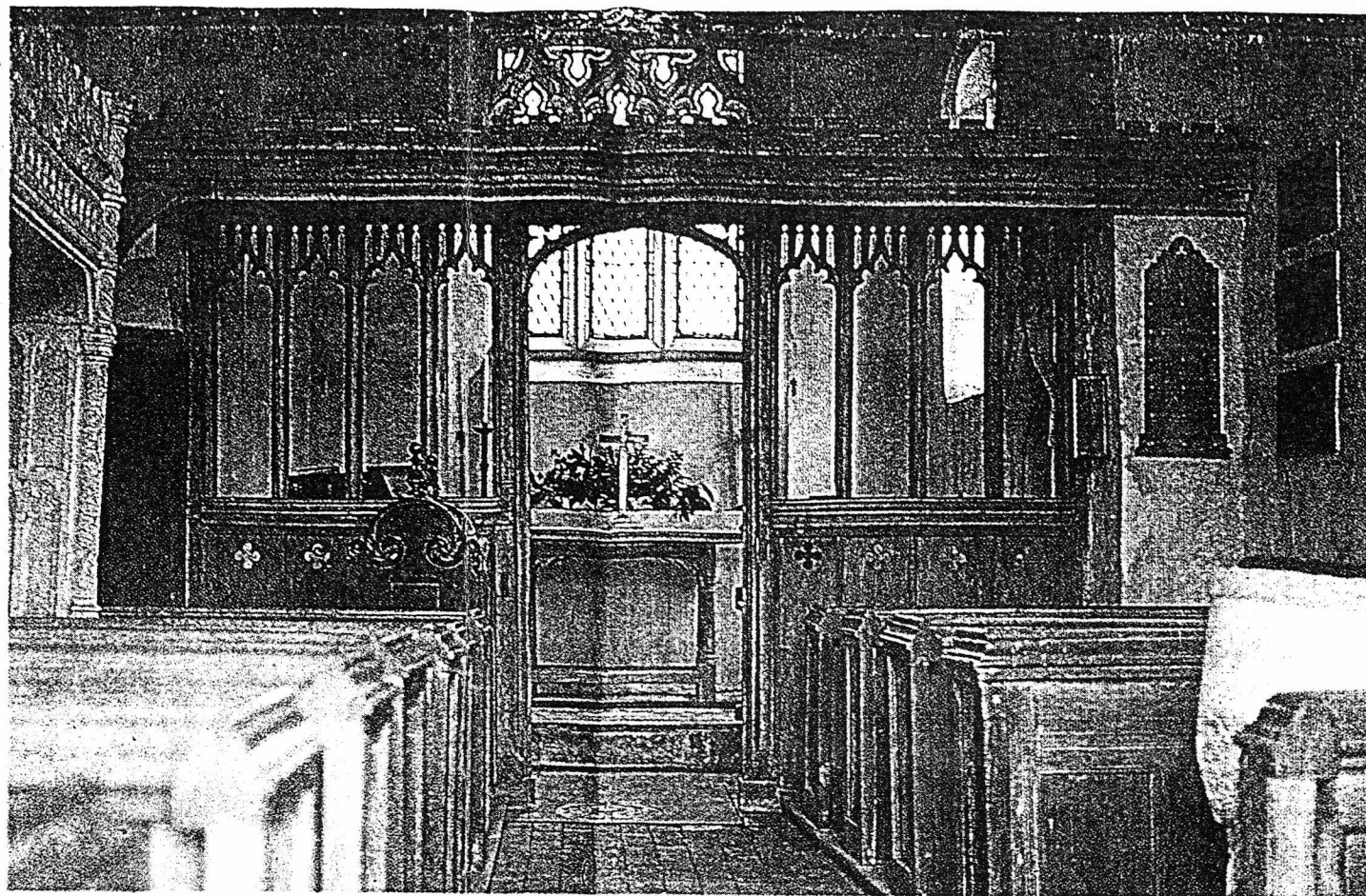
ARTISTIC

The perilous existence that the church has led over the past two centuries or so contributes to its charm and to its value as an artistic and historical monument. For the reasons indicated, it has never been expensively or thoroughly restored; it has merely been conserved, which means that the wall-paintings and furnishings have come down to us in a state which is reasonably





Burton Church.



unaltered from when they

Brasses on the back wall of the Goring tomb.



The painted figure of St Uncumber, who was crucified upside down — popular treatment in the Middle Ages for wives who had grown tired of their husbands.

A colourful 'Pinafore'

Give three cheers, and one cheer more, for a rousing production of "H.M.S. Pinafore" by Chichester Amateur Operatic Society, which ended its run at the Assembly Rooms on Saturday.

It is one of Gilbert and Sullivan's jolliest and most colourful comic operas, and the players gave their all to make it a success, under the musical direction of Michael Walsh and general production of Vivienne Aitken.

The tale of romance and intrigue aboard the good ship Pinafore was jostled along with such memorable tunes as "When I was a Lad" (sung admirably by Reg Treagust as Sir Joseph Porter), "Poor Little Buttercup" (a good performance by Margaret Schofield), and "He is an Englishman."

CHARMING

As the Captain of the Pinafore, David Russell proved again that he has acting ability as well as a naturally strong and charming voice, while Alison Mobbs, as the captain's daughter, displayed

Delightful, too, was Anthony Nixon as Ralph, with a fine tenor voice.

It was worth going along just to see the hilarious music hall-type turn by David Russell, Alison Mobbs, and Ray Treagust during the song "Never Mind the Why and Wherefore."

Top marks to John Glover and his team for an impressive set, capturing perfectly the seafaring spirit and the Portsmouth sea scene.

"H.M.S. Pinafore" was presented with Sullivan's "Cox and Box," which was all right to warm up the audience.

The production was a colourful tapestry, brilliantly and expertly woven by an operatic society which doesn't need the "amateur" tag as a rider.

● Our picture of the colourful chorus (right) was taken by staff photographer Robert Cristina. — Picture 8204-1.



Book review

A harbour's 13 villages

Chichester Harbour, now the haunt of pleasure boaters, was once an industrious and sometimes violent place, reveals Jill Dickin in her new booklet on the 13 harbour villages.

Several of the villages had fishing fleets, and regular coastal traffic carried all types of cargo. There were several tidal mills, salt pans and oyster beds, and on dark nights on a full tide villagers wisely remained deaf to strange noises as the unofficial importers went about their secret business.

An artist who works from the old mill at Birdham, Jill Dickin has a special feeling for the harbour and has drawn some romantic impressions of the harbour in years gone by, using her imagination to recapture historic scenes.

HELPING

These include a stab at what the round Roman temple might have looked like on Hayling Island; Warblington Castle, of which only one tower sur-

Islanders helping to launch Earl Godwine's boat which he fled the country in 1052 having rebelled against the King.

DRAWINGS

There are fine drawings of Dell Quay and other villages, where happily some of the former character remains, and the mood is entirely nostalgic, not a plastic floating gin palace to be seen.

The 13 villages of which she includes brief histories take the reader from West Wittering to Hayling Island on the opposite shore, Itchenor, Birdham, Apuldrum, Fishbourne, Bosham, Chidham, Nutbourne lumped in with Prinsted and Southbourne, Thorney Island, Emsworth, Warblington, and Langstone.

"Chichester Harbour, The Thirteen Villages," by Jill Dickin, is published by Chichester Harbour Conservancy at £1.50. — A. J.