Battle and District Historical Society

JOURNAL

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BATTLE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1950 to encourage the knowledge and study of local history within Battle and the surrounding area, through:-

A Winter Programme of illustrated lectures by specialists in their subjects. Lectures take place in St. Mary's Church Hall in Battle at 7.30 pm on selected Fridays from October to March.

A Summer Programme of day or half day visits to places of historic or architectural interest.

An Annual Commemoration Lecture of the Battle of Hastings 1066 and participation in a service in St. Mary's Church.

A free annual Journal with reports on lectures and visits.

Free admission to the Battle Museum of Local History, and access to the Society's Library that is housed in the museum.

Membership of the Society's Research Group in the active study of all aspects of local history. No experience is necessary, new members are especially welcome.

Publication of local history guides.

The Society is affiliated to the Battlefields Trust and the Sussex Record Society.

To join the Society complete the application form on the end page.

Battle and District Historical Society

Charity No. 292593

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Vice Presidents - Mr. J F C Springford C.B.E.
Miss M Millar M.A.

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Chairman's Report

The Society's Committee Members meet seven times a year to manage its affairs, lectures, visits and the publication of the Journal. As in all similar organisations these tasks are undertaken by members of the Society who joined the Committee, and many of our existing membership have at various times in the past undertaken these roles. They will confirm the work though not onerous is undertaken by a few enthusiastic members and there are never enough people willing and able to take on these roles from serving Committee members who may wish to retire. Younger recently retired members are invited to come forward and join to ensure the future of the Society.

In February 2005 Richard Moore joined the Committee however two members of the Committee Peter and Wendy Roberts intend to retire this October. They have both made valuable contributions as Vice Chair, Summer Visit Organiser and Press Officer and will be greatly missed. Again I urge members to join the Committee and play a part in running the Society.

The current membership is 170 and attendance at the lectures remains high, with the subscription remaining as last year for the lectures at £8 a person [or £12 for a couple] not forgetting a free Journal represents exceptional value, so tell your friends what they are missing and encourage them to join.

This year we are introducing a Social Evening Lecture with Wine and Light Refreshments to replace Commemorative Wine and Buffet Party please give it your support the subject of the extra lecture will provide a topic for conversation.

It is the policy to publish a precis of each lecture in the Society's Journal and in recent years a tape recording been made to ensure accuracy of names, dates, and lecturers have been happy to co-operate. Regrettably in the last round of lectures one of the speakers laid down conditions which were contrary to the spirit of the Society's policy and therefore after due consideration the Committee decided not to publish this lecture.

Making the front page of the 'Battle Observer' and a mention on Meridian News is not an everyday occurrence for the Society but the cause justified the attention it received.

As a member of the Battle Abbey Advisory Group the representatives of the Society have played an active part at meetings with English Heritage where the presentation and future of the Abbey site was being considered. In 1999 following opposition by the Advisory Group to proposals put forward by English Heritage for the development of the site they gave an undertaking that a Master Plan would be prepared based on full consultation and wide consensus. The Plan would provide a framework for the future physical development of the site, its management, and the presentation of the this major important historical monument.

The current proposals for which English Heritage are seeking Planning Permission were presented as a *fait accompli* at the May 2005 meeting of the Advisory Group. Whilst welcoming initiatives for the site, in the absence of the Master Plan and consultation, it is the Society's view that these new proposals will be detrimental to the setting of the Abbey and are concerned that they will divorce it from the town. Accordingly a detailed written objection was submitted to the planning authority Rother District Council, though whatever the outcome of the application the final decision lies with the Secretary of State for National Heritage.

Malcolm Stocker
Chairman

Editors Note

COINS CONQUEST AND CONTINUITY

Dr Gareth Williams 15 October 2004

Introducing his talk Dr Williams said that his aim was to put the study of coins (numismatics) into a historical context by concentrating on the periods close to 1066 AD. Coins were inherently contemporary and directly from their time; they were an effective form of mass media because they were widely circulated and told how a particular ruler wanted to be seen. Coins also give much more information. Major changes occurred around the time of the Norman Conquest.

Recent use of metal detectors brought much to light, however, the discovery of hoards of coins told what had existed rather than what was used at the time. Much new information was coordinated on the internet and, based on available evidence, some uncertainty remains, particularly related to dating and historical events. Although discovered coins were dated they could have been buried as treasure or reburied at any time; those involved in such actions unfortunately did not leave a note related to date or reason for burial! Coin types changed every few years but rigid dating is unreliable. For example, coins showing KingWilliam's head and nothing else are not clearly identifiable because they could be either William I or William II.

Coins were used in Europe before the Norman Conquest but England was both the best and wealthiest in coinage. Dr Williams showed slides of examples of old coins which were rough and ready. English coins were clearer and made of silver or gold in the period 750 to 1066 AD; only eight coins survive of which six are kept at the British Museum. The silver penny was the main coin and for lesser amounts it would be cut in half or fourths (the latter perhaps being the origin of the word farthing), although farthings came later. Coins shown had Edward Rex on the head with the name and location of the moneyer on the reverse. King Edward's coin design was probably based on the head of German kings whereas coins with a bearded head would have been linked to Roman Emperors with a name and cross on the reverse. King Harold's coins were similar to those of Edward with a crown and head and a cross on the reverse, this being early evidence of continuity.

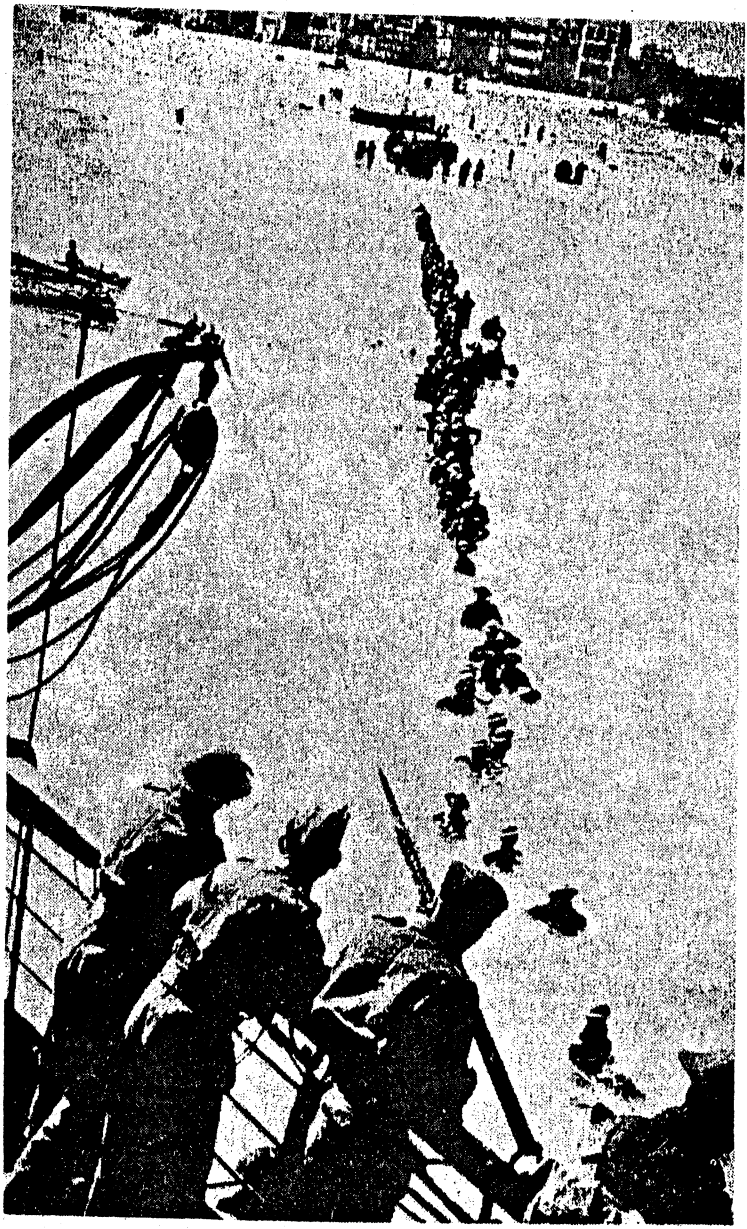
King Harold was to reign for only 9 months but of course he did not know this at the time. His coins were marked on the reverse with the word pax

(peace) and a cross which was probably a link with Christianity. King William's first coin was similar to Harold's but with his own head on the obverse and a flowery pattern and the name of the moneyer on the reverse; probably the same moneyers were used thus suggesting further evidence of continuity. Evolution was slow in the 11th Century with moneyers being predominantly Anglo Saxon and merchants becoming the middle classes.

Two slides were then shown of pillar graphs relating to coin finds from the period King Edward the Confessor (expanding cross) to King William I (profile cross and trefoils). The first one showed the number of mints (every county town and most ports had one) ranging from 37 to 62 and covering 14 coin types. The second slide showed the numbers of single finds per type across the same range of coins with find numbers varying from 10 to 55. During the period the number of mints showed a gradual decline and a small dip in coin production occurred after the Conquest, however the mint at Wilton showed a huge increase in coin production during King Harold's short reign. This was probably reflecting a need to pay troops, mercenaries and to cover bribes. Moneyers began to disappear after the Conquest thus revealing a break in continuity.

Single finds of coins only represented what was lost. The picture was changing and fewer coins were found after the Conquest and hoarding occurred during period. Several finds provided links with historical events one way or the other. In 1786 at Sedlescombe a hoard of 1,136 coins of the head facing type were found but dispersed before proper recording was possible. It is not known if these coins were completely representative; possibly it was the stockpile of a moneyer in Hastings or maybe this is just romantic speculation. Elsewhere, 6 pyramid type coins were found buried in a corpse, the coins being fastened to under-arm hair with beeswax as a way of hiding the coins. At Harewood, Yorkshire, some coins were found that were linked to the uprising in Yorkshire in 1065; these were possibly buried during the march from Northampton to Yorkshire. In Sussex 5 hoards, apparently buried in1066, were found; probably buried because of people's alarm during the Conquest. There was no attempt to get rid of King Harold's hoards and King William was unable to block him out of history. Long term evidence of single coin finds suggests that Norman coinage was as strong as the Anglo Saxon coinage before it therefore it can be said that English coinage was as strong after the Conquest as it was before.

Peter Roberts



The Grainger Collection

DUNKIRK ; THE POET LAUREATE AND THE BOOK THAT CHURCHILL BANNED.

Jon Cooksey. 12 November 2004.

The title of the lecture tells it all. The tale of a patriotic English author who wanted to record the miracle of Dunkirk and the preceding Flanders campaign; who wrote a book only to find that, despite being officially approved;passed by the Censor and set in proof, it was banned and banished from sight for thirty years.

The book "Twenty Five Days" is now to be republished and the speaker has been asked to write an introduction, ostensibly a simple and prestigious request but one that has uncovered a story of official intrigue and obfuscation.

Masefield is well known. By 1940 he had a long-established and distinguished literary career; he had combined serious writing with popular poetry and his appointment as Poet Laureate in 1930, by the Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald was widely regarded as a tribute to his compassion and of his championing of the underdog.

During the Great War, although medically unfit, he had been present throughout the Gallipoli campaign and written successfully about it; this success had led Sir Douglas Haig to ask him to write the history of the Somme,a commission which he readily agreed to undertake but which was never completed, because of political , rather than military, interference. It was a lesson he failed to learn and one that would be repeated 25 years later.

The Flanders Campaign and the "Miracle" of Dunkirk, Operation Dynamo, need not be repeated here. A defeat became a propaganda triumph. Over 338,000 men were delivered from certain captivity, if not death, by an improvised evacuation which, in hindsight, changed the balance of ultimate victory.

Masefield, as an inspired patriot wanted to write about it and decided to do so, seemingly without being invited. He wrote to the Foreign Office Librarian , Sir Stephen Gaselee, requesting information for a new book . His letter is worth quoting in full because it is easy to understand why it set alarm bells ringing throughout Whitehall.

"Dear Sir,"

I am writing to ask you for access to some Foreign Office Archives . I have been asked to write the story of the recent campaigns which ended at

Dunkirk. I am anxious to get precise details on the following points;

a). the exact promise given to the French by this country as to military help in the event of war. How many divisions did the Government send ; how many guns, squadrons etc. Enemy propaganda is very busy on this point already

b). the nature of the refusals of Holland and Belgium to consider staff talks with our General Staff before and during the War.

c). the lengths to which those two lands pushed their rigorous neutrality and the nature of the insults offered to them by Germany - ships sunk, seamen murdered and frontiers violated etc.

d). the nature of the appeals made to us by King Leopold or his Government for help on 10 May.

e). the precise excuse offered by the Germans ,if any, for their violation of Holland and Belgium.

f). any words of regret or extenuation offered by King Leopold for his surrender.

Perhaps if these papers may be seen in the volumes of confidential prints you could allow me to see them. "

Yours sincerely, John Masefield.

As might be expected , the letter stirred up a hornet's nest , disturbing military and civilian bureaucracy in equal measure.

Sir Stephen immediately perceived the obvious...."Asked to write..." which he underlined and annotated in the margin of the letter ..."by who ?" But the assumption had already been made by the Civil Servants that authority had been given "at the highest level", implicitly by the Prime Minister and that there was no reason to deny Masefield access to documents or to answer his questions.

Documents were duly made available and transcribed by Masefield who went home and blissfully, and with great speed and professionalism, wrote his book. Yet, whilst official co-operation was happily being provided, at a somewhat slower pace, it had dawned on officials to check precisely what permission Churchill had given. The truth slowly dawned..... Masefield *had* sent a telegram to Churchill, declaring his intentions but the Prime Minister had apparently passed this "down the line" without comment. No comment had been interpreted as no objection and hence approval.

It was only then that a memorandum from Churchill (10 July 1940) was brought to mind (and again I quote);

"Let it be very clearly understood that all directions emanating from me are made in writing or should be immediately afterwards confirmed in writing and that I do *not* accept any responsibility for matters relating to National

Defense on which I am alleged to have given a decision unless they are recorded in writing." The conclusion was obvious; the Prime Minister had *not* authorised the book and, in fact, nobody had asked Masefield to write one. Even so, at this precise moment ,the proof copy had been passed by the Censor and publication was expected within a few weeks.

Now enter the Secretary of State for War, Anthony Eden; he had announced in the House of Commons in August 1940 that it was too early to release details of the military campaign , so his negative attitude to the book is wholly consistent and readily understandable. His was an impossible job. He had to satisfy the many conflicting interests; -military secrecy, national security and the need to pacify French and Belgian sensitivity. There was no place at this time for a book that could be explicit and indiscreet so it had to be suppressed and suppressed it was. Moreover, Churchill agreed with him and it is clear that the official view was that, if a book were to be written, it should be within the auspices of Government approval and oversight. But definitely not now...!

Masefield was asked to rewrite but apparently never attempted to do so. Instead, he salvaged what he could and published a much smaller version entitled "The Nine Days Wonder", restricting himself to the evacuation. His publisher, Heinemann, was reimbursed the cost of setting in type but not the loss of profit and the whole episode was buried and forgotten.

It was not until 1972 that the full version was finally allowed to be published, by which time Masefield was dead and the details of the Flanders campaign public knowledge. It has to be said that authority for the book , and co-operation would never have been given had Masefield been honest in disclosing the emptiness of his claim that he was "asked to write" Was he naive or devious ?; probably not devious but certainly naive. Whatever the truth, we now await the authors book on the subject with interest.

David Sawyer

Henry V by an unknown artist; late sixteenth/early seventeenth century.

HENRY V: THE MAKING OF A MILITARY GENIUS

Professor Anne Curry 14th January 2005

Henry V was born in Monmouth castle in 1387 and died as a result of illness caught at the Siege of Meaux in 1422. During his short life he exhibited military genius characterised by brilliant daring, patient strategy, diplomacy and attention to detail. His care for the welfare of his fighting men made him a great popular hero. It was said at the time 'Nor do our older men remember any prince ever having commanded his people on the march with more effort, bravery or consideration, nor with his own hands performed greater feats of strength in the field'.

What was the secret of his success? Does military genius win a battle or do the enemies lose? Was it the established infrastructure that enabled Henry to raise a large army? Could he have won without the military system, the bravery and skill of his soldiers or is the crucial ingredient the leader himself? In medieval times the role of the leader was vital and all the conflicts in Henry's reign were fought for him personally, either to sustain his position against internal rebels or he was fighting for his claim to the French throne. So how did Henry learn to become a leader?

In 1398 his father Henry Bolingbroke was exiled by Richard II but he returned in 1399, seized the throne and became Henry IV. Young Henry, his elder son was made Prince of Wales and Duke of Aquitaine. He was given his first command in 1400, obviously with a council of advisors. He was present at the campaigns his father waged against the Scots but began his training in earnest against Owen Glendower in Wales. Between 1400 and 1409 there was almost continuous guerrilla type warfare; there were swift raids that were often very brutal and there was a constant need for the maintenance of key garrisons. Henry would also have learnt the constraints of campaigns in terms of provisioning, weather and terrain. He was constantly short of money and there are surviving letters from Henry to his father pleading for money to pay his men's wages and for provisions. At times he was forced to pawn his jewels, something he had to do again before Agincourt and in one letter he pointed out to his father that badly paid men desert.

By the end of that decade the Welsh wars had decreased but there were almost continuous uprisings at home. In 1403 Henry, at the age of sixteen, commanded his father's forces and defeated a rebellion headed by Henry 'Hotspur' Percy, son of the Duke of Northumberland at Shrewsbury in which Hotspur was killed. This was very much an 'archers' battle and although Hotspur had about the same number of archers, Henry's superior

tactics won the day. He, himself, was seriously wounded in the face but did not leave the field nor have the arrow removed until the battle was over. By 1410 due to the ill health of Henry IV, the Prince of Wales was effectively controlling the government, aided by his uncles Henry and Thomas Beaufort, the sons of John of Gaunt. In 1413 his father died and at the age of 25 he succeeded him.

So by the time Henry came to the throne he was by no means lacking in military experience. By now he was increasingly interested in France; he had restored English rule in Wales so why not France? In 1415 he defeated a much superior French force at Agincourt He followed this up with the conquest of Normandy and in 1420 forced the French to agree to the Treaty of Troyes. He continued campaigning in France until just two years later he caught dysentery at the Siege of the city of Meaux and died at the Chateau of Vincennes in 1422 at the age of 35. Henry had had a huge amount of experience at all types of medieval warfare before the age of twenty, more in fact than any king since Edward I, and he had shown great personal courage and very considerable military skill which was a very necessary part of medieval leadership.

Joanne Lawrence

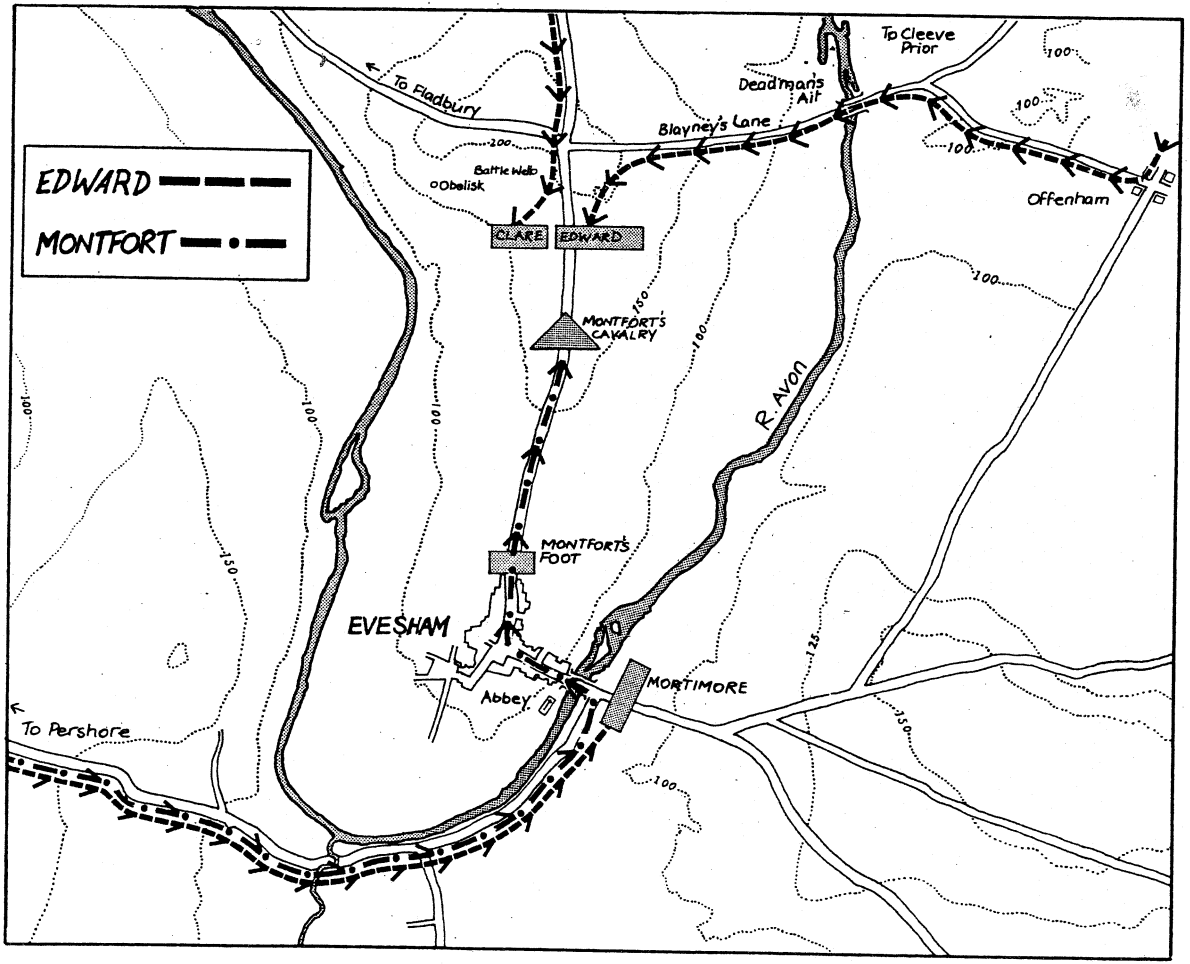
THE BATTLE OF EVESHAM 1265

Professor David Carpenter 28 January 2005

The speaker observed that there were many parallels between the battles of Hastings and Evesham, both were fought on a hillside, both were decisive and the outcome affected the dynastic history of England and both were killing matches. After Hastings in Anglo/Norman battles in the C12 and C13 noblemen were rarely killed but captured and ransomed, this changed at Evesham where Simon de Montfort and his supporters were all killed. This set the tone for the future conduct of the War of the Roses. Both battles are the subject of discussion between historians as to what actually happened, unlike Hastings where no new material has been found, a discovery in the last five years of a source which provided new details (not given in earlier known accounts) has caused embarrassment to the speaker and other historians.

Simon de Montfort was the youngest son of Count Simon de Montfort who played a leading role in the Albigensian Crusade. In 1230 he came to England to successfully claim the Earldom of Leicester and later married Eleanor the sister of King Henry III. He was charming, charismatic, self-righteous, a powerful magnate and experienced general and an unlikely candidate to lead a revolt against the King. Henry III was a simple God-fearing man and an extremely incompetent ruler. In 1258 a group of noblemen lead by De Montfort imposed a constitution "The Provisions of Oxford " on the King which was a far more radical document than the Magna Carta. In 1261 Henry III reasserted his authority and revoked the Provisions. Whilst many noblemen made their peace with the King, De Montfort would not accede and retreated to his estates in France. Again the King quarrelled with the barons and in 1263 De Montfort returned and on 14 May 1264 won a great victory at Lewes, capturing the King and the heir Prince Edward.

De Montfort effectively ruled the country but soon fell out with his greatest supporter Gilbert of Clare the Earl of Gloucester who changed his allegiance. In 1265 Prince Edward escaped from captivity and with the Earl of Gloucester gathered an army at Worcester threatening De Montfort who with a smaller army was 27 miles away at Hereford and separated from his son, also named Simon, who was at Kenilworth with an army. To avoid a battle with Edward and to unite his force with that of his son De Montfort decided on a night march, a difficult operation, to skirt around Edward's army via Pershore to Evesham then turning north to


EDWARD
MONTFORT
To Fladbury
To Cleeve Prior
Deadmans Ait
Blayney's Lane
Battle Wells
Obelisk
CLARE
EDWARD
MONTFORT'S CAVALRY
R. Avon
Offenham
MONTFORT'S FOOT
EVESHAM
Abbey
MORTIMORE
To Pershore
100
150
200

Kenilworth. Arriving exhausted in the early hours of the morning at Evesham Abbey the army rested unaware of the approach of Edward's army. Imagine De Montfort's surprise at dawn to see Edward's army arrayed on the ridge of Greenhill opposite Evesham. According to the chroniclerWalter of Guisborough, De Montfort sent a barber, who was an expert on heraldry, up the tower of Evesham Abbey. He reported that Edward was to the north with one division, the Earl of Gloucester in another direction and a third division under Roger Mortimer to the west and from behind. The river Avon loops around three sides of Evesham, the open side with two roads leading north is dominated by Greenhill, to the west at Bengeworth was a bridge over the Avon.

Edward had divided his army into three columns, Gloucester marching south to Greenhill, his own division continuing west to cross the Avon at Cleeve Priory then turning to join Gloucester thus blocking the roads north. The column under Mortimer followed the river to block the bridge. Another source (Trevett) states that the result of Edward's manoeuvres was that De Montfort had no alternative but to fight. The Evesham Chronicles are more ambiguous, and no contemporary account exists that specifically mentions the blocking of the bridge. De Montfort led his army out of Evesham and attacked up Greenhill at first with some success against the Earl of Gloucester's division but then was enveloped by the larger royal army and De Montfort was killed.

Described by Robert of Gloucester, a reliable contemporary chronicler,
"the murder of Evesham, for battle it was not."

This was the accepted version of what happened at the battle until 1999 when a new mediaeval account was discovered by a French scholar in the Library of the College of Arms, London. He sent a copy to John Madecott who consulted the speaker; after a study of the original they considered it to be genuine. The account was written on the back of a roll of genealogy of C14 kings and was produced early in that century. It gives a clear and detailed account of events including speeches by De Montfort to his followers. When Edward's army was seen in the morning De Montfort's knights said they were tired and not fit for a battle and suggested that they fortify the Abbey for a siege until his son Simon's army arrived.
De Montfort rejected this saying "churches are for chaplains, battlefields for knights, we must go out to fight". He led his army up the hill but saying to his followers "I am old my life is over, many of you are young with young children why don't you melt away across the bridge and save yourselves from the great peril to come". Later the account names Roger

Mortimer as the person who delivered the blow that killed De Montfort and therefore his column was not blocking the bridge. The author obviously had a good knowledge of local topography, for example, he states that Edward's army went into Mosham meadow, this is not marked on modern maps but is on a C10 survey of the Abbey's estate. Here Edward and Gloucester had twelve sergeants swear an oath to cut through the press of battle to De Montfort and kill him. This was a calculated decision as nobles were rarely killed in battle and never executed for civil crimes in the C 12 -13 and therefore it was a way to get rid of him. Not included in the new account was the manner of his death, he was stabbed, his head cut off and testicles stuffed in his mouth and sent to Lady Mortimer who "right sorely abused it" Some of his soldiers were pursued into the Abbey and slaughtered before the altar. This is where the new account ends.

Did De Montfort fight for reasons of honour? The speaker thought not, he had fled before at Newport and Southwark, and could have escaped personally, but to get his army across the bridge [unblocked] in good order was impossible and therefore his cause was lost.

Malcolm Stocker

THE STORY OF THE DANCE BAND
Music and Memories of the 1930's and 40's.

Don Dray 11 February 2005

Don Dray, ably assisted by his wife, Jean who synchronised the slide projector to Don's lecture and music, introduced us to an evening of song and music and started with Ted Heath's "Strike up the Band", which had all the toes of the audience tapping. He invited the audience to sing-along or get up and dance if they so wished.

Don Dray used the music to illustrate his talk on how dance music had developed. In the 20's and 30's, nightclubs, hotel ballrooms, village halls and even sitting rooms were given over to dancing. Between the two wars dancing blossomed and every strata of society irrespective of status or class enjoyed it. It was during this time that popular songwriters came into their own, e.g. Gershwin, Berlin and Porter. The "Roaring Twenties" was ushered into Britain, followed by American Dixieland Jazz. The dancing craze was also responsible for the shortening of skirts which stopped above the knees showing acres of thighs sheathed in shear silk stockings, enticingly topped with saucy suspenders.

About 1922 the Savoy was the first Hotel in London to offer the first syncopated dance band with several gentlemen in dinner jackets presenting themselves on the bandstand to play the music. Radio, in the form of the BBC opened up a new opportunity to groups of bands and 78 rpm records sold in their tens of thousands. The names of some of the orchestras were very familiar to the audience – Charlie Kunz, Henry Hall, Harry James, Benny Goodman, Ted Heath, Glen Miller, Victor Sylvester, etc.

The orchestras later invited vocalists to sing with the bands; again names we remember, Connie Boswell, Ann Shelton, Vera Lynn and others including Frank Sinatra.

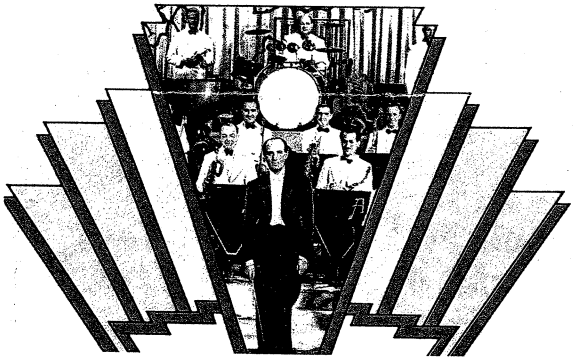
During the 2nd World War, a great sense of community spirit extended into the dance music with songs to suit every situation from farewell and return of loved ones, to patriotic and comedy songs. The Armed Services introduced their own dance bands, and music for the "Swing" era, one of the best known being the "Squadronaires" from the Royal Air Force. These later became synonymous with "The Big Bands".

BATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Presents

The Story Of

THE DANCE BAND DAYS



NOSTALGIA, MUSIC & MEMORIES FROM THE 1920'S, 30'S & 40'S

Friday February 11th 7.30pm
St Mary's Church Hall Battle

With the influx of American and Canadian soldiers came not only their dance bands but the new dances from America – the jitterbug and jive. These new types of dancing were very different from the almost sedate, strict tempo, type to which we had been accustomed but were quickly adopted by the young (and able).

At the end of the war, the most popular bands went on tour but the dancing days were almost over.

Don ended the evening of nostalgia and reminiscence by reminding us that although this type of music died away in the 1950's, here we were still enjoying the music of sixty and seventy years ago evoking memories of a more gentle age. His last song was "Dancing cheek to cheek" a very appropriate end to a delightful evening and "Valentine Day" lecture.

Diane Braybrooke

RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT THE WILMINGTON LONG MAN

Chris Butler — 25th February 2005

Our speaker started his lecture with three questions; when was the Long Man constructed? What was he for? And has his shape changed? He has been carved out of the steep scarp slope of Windover hill, facing north above the village of Wilmington. Above the figure nearly everything you can see is pre-historic. There is a Neolithic long barrow, several round barrows dated from the Bronze Age and a large number of holes that seem to have been for quarrying chalk.

Mr Butler asked what do we actually know about the figure? We can see that he is a man and is standing upright and holding two sticks or staves. Since Saxon and Roman times there have been coins and brooches on which there is much the same figure. The earliest reliable report of our Man is an indistinct drawing from the early 17th century. There is of course a rather similar figure at Cerne Abbas and that figure is first described in the 17th century also. However these figures have one similarity – they both are on hills above a Priory.

Early pictures of the Long Man seem to suggest that he was just an outline in the grass, which only showed up clearly after a snowstorm. In 1870 the local vicar had the figure outlined in light coloured bricks and these were in place until the early 20th century when they were replaced with larger red bricks, which were painted white. During the last war these were painted khaki in case German bombers could see them! In 1969 concrete blocks were laid and then painted white; these are still in place today.

In 2002 Mr. Butler took part in an excavation in an effort to date the Man. The trench was cut at his foot and at the bottom they found worked Neolithic flint tools and a type of snail, which liked shady woodland. Above that were snails that were only introduced in the Bronze Age and which liked open scrub land, presumably signs of early farming, and above that some medieval potsherds and pieces of fired clay. An exact match for the fired clay was found in a fireplace in the Priory below and dated to about 1550

The Sussex Archaeological Society has been carrying out further excavations to see if the figure has been altered in the past 300-400 years but no conclusions have been reached. So it is generally agreed that the figure was cut in the 16th century and that the figure does not seem to have been changed. However at the end of the dig it was noticed that there was a large sign burnt into the grass on the hillside, which read 'No Hunting Ban' and was visible from a long way off, so Mr Butler wondered if our Man was a protest figure. Certainly there is a story in Dorset that the Cerne Abbas Giant was a protest against Oliver Cromwell.

Joanne Lawrence

GUNPOWDER MILLS

Professor Alan Crocker 11 March 2005

Our speaker began by explaining how he and his wife Glenys became interested in the gunpowder industry when they visited Chilworth powder mills near their home in Guildford. Discovering how little was recorded of this now derelict mill they started researching this and other sites culminating with the setting up the national Gunpowder Mills Study Group in 1983.

Known to the Chinese in the C10 and used mainly for its pyrotechnic properties gunpowder is a mixture of 75% saltpetre 15% charcoal and 10% sulphur. The knowledge passed from Asia via the Arabic world to reach Western Europe by the early C13 and by the C14 a propellant form had been developed. This was used to shoot arrow like missiles and later solid spherical projectiles from small cannons in battles, the first recorded use by the English at the battle of Crecy in 1346.

With illustrations from early manuscripts and books Professor Crocker described the process and the development of the manufacture of gunpowder, starting with saltpetre. A major source of saltpetre, potassium nitrate in England during the Middle Ages was obtained from farm manure and the droppings in pigeon lofts. He then gave an admittedly flawed anecdotal calculation on how many pigeons were required to produce enough saltpetre for 100lb barrel of gunpowder. To obtain sufficient quantities remained a constant problem and England's demands were met by imports from Central Europe where a system was developed to produce it naturally in the ground Later in the C17 it was shipped from India by the East India Company.

Unrefined saltpetre was piled into clamps and natural weathering brought crystals of saltpetre to the surface. This was scraped off by saltpetre men and put into iron pans of boiling water, the surface skimmed off and filtered, the process repeated until only refined saltpetre was left. Only three of these iron pans are known to still exist one in Hastings museum and the other in the grounds of Powdermill House Battle. The grandfather of John Evelyn held a monopoly and controlled the saltpetre men in England, and John wrote a book on forestry called 'Sylva' (1664) in which the production of charcoal is illustrated.

Traditionally selected wood such as Alder, Willow, Blackthorn, was burnt in stacks under controlled conditions and then pulverised and sieved to produce an impure and uneven charcoal. Later the method of burning the wood in sealed horizontal iron cylinders was developed which produced a finer result.

Sulphur occurs naturally in widespread deposits, crystals of crude sulphur were heated over furnaces and distilled the yellow vapour was drained into the subliming chamber and after further heating the resulting brown vapour condensed into cakes for use in gunpowder.

Saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur were mixed in revolving drums and then on to the incorporating mills. Originally incorporating was by pestle stamp machines, these were made illegal in Britain in 1772 on safety grounds, except the Battle mill where it was permitted to make fine powder for fowling. Pestles were superseded by stone edge runners driven by waterwheels and later by steam and electricity. The runners were mounted asymmetrically to give a crushing and mixing action, moisture was added during the incorporation. The resultant mill cakes were compressed to make corn powder, fine grain for pistols and larger grain that exploded more gradually for cannons. Later in the C17 the powder was glazed to make it moisture resistant.

Accidents were frequent though fatalities few [compared with other industries] the explosions being directed upwards through the light weight roofs.

Gunpowder mills were initially concentrated in SE England, later spreading to Cornwall Wales and Scotland and was a Crown monopoly. Throughout the talk mills were named including Waltham Abbey Essex, Faversham Kent, and the local mills at Powder Mill and Peppering Eye.

It was an amusing anecdotal idiosyncratic talk full of diverse facts, for further information I recommend Glenys Crocker's book "The Gunpowder Industry" published by Shire.

Malcolm Stocker

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN ASHBURNHAM 1603-1671

Mr Rhoderick Jones - The Ashburnham Christian Trust 25 March 2005

John Ashburnham was born in 1603 to Sir John Ashburnham who had been knighted by James I. John's childhood must have been quite difficult as soon after his birth it is recorded that his father wasted his patrimony and lost his estates. A memorial in Ashburnham Parish Church records that 'by undertaking too lightly the financial burdens of his friends he had to sell Ashburnham for £8,000. to clear debts to a William Relfe'. Sadly he died in Fleet Prison .

John Ashburnham was seventeen when his father died but he was a determined young man as within two years had considerably reversed the family's fortunes. Following the tradition of marrying well, his first wife was Frances Holland, a wealthy heiress who sold her own estates in order that John could buy back the land his father had sold. John's second wife was Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Christopher Ken of Ken in Somerset and widow of John First Lord Poulent.

John had broken away from the rustic traditions of his family and attached himself to the Court in London. His mother, Elizabeth Beaumont, was from the same family as Lady Villiers, mother to the Duke of Buckingham, the King's favourite. After the assassination of Buckingham in 1628 John, the Cavalier, became a close confidant, adviser and friend to the King and was made Groom to the Bedchamber. He was quoted 'as entirely trusted by the King as any man in England'.

In 1640 he was elected as Member of Parliament for Hastings. He was popular with many, including Sir John Culpepper who commented on his 'entire confidence and friendship with Mr John Ashburnham'.

By 1642 the troubles between the King and Parliament were at such a pitch that John was charged by Parliament for contempt. The King wrote in his defence but by 1643 he was discharged from Parliament and disabled from the House for being in the King's Quarter and adhering to the Royalists. In September of that year his estate was sequestrated by Parliament; that sequestration was so severe that it caused his family much hardship.

Throughout the Civil War he was responsible for the accounts of the King which he kept meticulously. In 1646 he was involved in the Treaty of the Surrender of Woodstock House and was obviously a very influential and important person at the King's side. A letter from the King reads 'to our trusted and well loved John Ashburnham, Esquire, one of our Bedchamber' which indicated the great friendship between John and the King.

Following the surrender of Woodstock House, John led the King out of Oxford disguised as a servant. They headed towards London where the King thought people would rally but he changed his mind and they headed north. After ten days of indecision they went to Newark to join the Scottish Army who saw this as a great opportunity and as a result they were under house arrest and taken to Newcastle. John managed to escape to France to see the Queen and to rally help from the French, taking with him a letter from the King.

In 1647 the name of Sir John Berkeley became prominent alongside John Ashburnham. He and John were together in France when they were called back by the King . Sir John Berkeley was met by a messenger from Cromwell whose attitude to the King appeared to have changed. On being told that Cromwell wished to have a meeting with him, the King was not impressed. Charles preferred to await the arrival of John Ashburnham before discussions continued as many differing factions all wanted to use the King to their advantage.

John realised that a good deal could possibly be made with the Army who were preparing to support the King for his return to London. Suddenly the Army broke off discussions and did not want to meet the King, The Army had already done a deal with the City and now both Parliament and the Army were against the King. However, John did not give up and continued to work out the best possible solution for the King but was eventually forbidden to visit him.

In the meantime, Cromwell was insinuating that the King might be assassinated and if he were to escape Cromwell would have the opportunity to deal with him.

The king then received an anonymous letter warning him of great danger and arranged to escape from Hampton Court. Escorted by John Ashburnham and Sir John Berkeley they eventually reached Southampton but did not have an exact location and eventually decided to go to the Isle of Wight, a Royalist stronghold, from where a ship could take them to France. Charles was taken to Titchfield and a meeting took place with the Governor of the Isle of Wight, Colonel Hammond. This did not please the King who said to John 'What have you brought Hammond with you? Oh Jack thou hast undone me for I am by this means made fast from stirring'.

They finally decided to go to the Island. The King asked John to arrange a ship to take him to France but suddenly John was dismissed without reason from serving the King. He left the Island and never saw him again.

Sadly on 9th February 1649 King Charles was beheaded. To his 'dear friend John' he left his watch, the shirt he wore at his execution, an extra pair of under-garments, part of the cloth which was laid over him with the insignia CR and a locket containing the King's hair.

John was harangued by Parliament for three years for his support of the King. He was then imprisoned in London and later banished to Garnsey Castle for sending money to his Majesty. During this time he was fighting for his reputation and on many occasions for his life. Realising that he had been wrongly accused of treason to the King he wrote a narrative in 1650 to clear his name and explain his actions, stating that 'I have been taught that honour and honesty have clear contrary definitions in several men's understandings'.

In 1660 the monarchy was restored. John was made Groom to the Bedchamber for Charles II who said that he was satisfied that there had been no treasonable contrivance on the part of dear John.

The same year he was unanimously elected to Parliament for Sussex showing that the ultra Royalist County believed in him still.

He did not seek retribution and with his brother, William, worked on improving the Ashburnham estate, rebuilding the house and church. The rebuilding of the church included a crypt underneath the two side chapels where John built forty-five places for himself and his descendants. It is interesting to note that Lady Catherine who died in 1953 was the last Ashburnham and she filled the forty-fifth place!

John died in 1671 at the age of sixty-eight. His narrative was finally published in 1830 by the 3rd Earl Ashburnham ending with the words from Psalm 136 'Give thanks to the Lord for he is good : his love endures for ever. Mighty kings may be killed but his love endures for ever'.

His memorial with his two wives, four sons and four daughters is in the Ashburnham Church.

Sue Moore

SUMMER VISIT 2004 - SEPTEMBER

Our fourth and final visit for the 2004 summer season was on Tuesday 14th September. We had a full day visiting Clarence House and The Queens Gallery. Although we had allowed extra time to get to London, the traffic was particularly bad that day, especially the last stretch when we arrived at Trafalgar Square which was completely grid-locked. We arrived at Clarence House with only minutes to spare, which made it difficult to achieve a comfort break before our tour. Our visit to London was on the the day following the one where the man dressed as batman had climbed on to Buckingham Palace, so security was exceptionally tight.

Clarence House was designed by John Nash and built in 1825/7 as the London home of the Duke of Clarence.
There had been about 5 occupants between the Duke and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and is now the home of the Prince of Wales. We had been restricted to only 18 people per visit, so our total group numbered 36, but the staff added between two and four people to each of our groups. It was obvious why the groups had to be small, as the rooms were quite small. As in most changes of occupants the decorations had been changed by the Prince of Wales, the library, where the curtains and the book spines were matching, brought forth quite a few comments, and the dining room with its red velvet cloth and glass tableware and spotlights was, I think, to none of our taste. We were shepherded around the downstairs of the house by members of the staff who were very pleasant, but who were preoccupied with making sure we did not clash with the group in front or the one behind.

After a two hour break where we all dispersed and had lunch in different places, we went to see the George III exhibition in the Queens Gallery. It took our group about 30 minutes to get through security where even the slightest scrap 'pinged'. The exhibition contained personal items of the King and Queen, porcelain, paintings and some of the finest pieces of furniture made for royal use as well as gifts from the East.

SUMMER VISITS 2005

Legal London

Our first visit of the summer outings in 2005 was in May when we had a visit to the Law Courts. We had booked this with City and Village Tours whose guide met us in London on the Aldwych. After coffee we commenced our visit to the the Inns of Court, firstly the Inner Temple and then Middle Temple Hall where the barristers dine and where the tables were being laid for lunch. We were able to see all the history in the panelled walls and surroundings. We had hoped to enter the round Norman Church which had belonged to the Knights Templar, however on that day it was not open. The final visit of the morning was to The Royal Courts of Justice, where we witnessed the comings and goings of not only the barristers, but also the public who could take in their food and drink, once they had been through security. As it had been a cold and showery morning, we all had to check through our umbrellas. Cameras were not allowed so we had to leave them at a small pawnbrokers shop opposite, and collect them afterwards.
We split up for lunch which was taken at various places in the vicinity, and some of us managed to visit the RAF church of St Clements Danes. In the afternoon our coach picked us up again in the Aldwych and took us on a tour which included the Old Bailey and Staple Inn and finally we walked through Lincolns Inn where we were lucky enough to see inside the chapel, which was closed to visitors, but whose caretaker allowed our guide to take us in. We finally went by coach to the Barbican for a cup of tea before leaving London just ahead of the rush hour.

Chatham Dockyard

Our second visit was in June when we went to Chatham Dockyard where to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, we had a guided tour called The Footsteps of Nelson. Caught up in heavy traffic we arrived later than scheduled and had to forego our coffee break and start the tour. It was an exceedingly hot day made worse for our guide who was dressed in costume of Nelson's time. We visited the Museum, the great 18th C Ropery where we saw rope made from raw hemp spun into yarn then twisted into rope using the original Georgian and Victorian machinery with the operatives cycling the 1140 feet length of the laying floor, a process virtually unchanged since Nelson' s time. The Mast and Mould Loft where the first floor was used to lay down ship's lines including probably of H.M.S. Victory. The site has many attractive Georgian

buildings including the Commissioners House, Admiral's Offices and the Officer's Terrace. The tour ended in the Commissioners garden when we had time to visit other exhibits and see over historic warships including H.M.S. Cavalier a C class destroyer built in 1944 the last remaining one that served in W.W.II. Now awaiting restoration, and H.M.S. Gannet a restored Victorian sloop. A cool drink was welcome after such a hot day.

Brighton Pavilion

Again we were blessed with fine and warm weather for our July visit to Brighton Pavilion. We had a bonus as our driver took us on a scenic route and we were able to get out to view the sand sculptures (depicting Egypt) which were just being finished prior to opening to the public.
On this trip we had free time before our guided tour to visit the museum, gardens, shop and tea room
In 1787 Henry Holland a fashionable architect enlarged an existing farmhouse remodelling it into a Marine Pavilion for Prince George (the future Prince Regent and King George IV) and Mrs Fitz-Herbert. The interiors were decorated in the then fashionable Chinese style in 1802.
In 1804-8 a Riding School and Stables with a large dome was added to the designs of William Porden. The Pavilion we see today with its exterior dressed in Indian style motifs (a mixture of elements of Muslim and Hindo architecture) is work of the Princes favourite architect John Nash between 1815-22. The Pavilion has recently had a £10 million restoration.
Although there were many visitors to the Pavilion and grounds our excellent guide was able to make herself heard to all members of our group.

One more visit is planned for 2005 in September to Lambeth Palace and the Cabinet War Rooms a report on which will be included the 2006 volume of the Journal.

Wendy Roberts

WINTER PROGRAMME 2005-6

Anglo-Saxon Territories Prof. David Dumville University of Aberdeen	Friday 14 October
Battle of Hastings Service 11.a.m. St. Mary the Virgin Battle	Sunday 16 October
Social Evening Lecture with Wine & Refreshments The History of Bexhill Julian Porter Curator Bexhill Museum	Friday 28 October
The History of First Class Cricket at Hastings and Eastbourne Chris Westcott Author	Friday 11 November
Annual General Meeting	Friday 25 November
Music of the Tudor Courts Sheila Carey Conductor Queen's Consort	Friday 9 December
Cast Iron Firebacks Jeremy Hodgkinson Chairman Wealden Iron Research Group	Friday 13 January
Crusader Castles Dr. Richard Eales	Friday 27 January
Weaving the Unicorn Tapestries Caron Penney Head of the Tapestry Studio West Dean College	Friday 10 February
Bosworth 1485 Revisited Dr. Michael K Jones	Friday 24 February
The Sussex Film Pioneers Frank Gray Director S.E. Film & Video Archive	Friday 10 March
1066 New Biography of William the Conqueror Prof. David Bates University of London	Friday 24 March

SUMMER VISITS To be announced when arranged.

ORAL HISTORY.

Mr. Charles Watson of Sampsons Farm, Ninfield. (recorded 1987).

Thatching the straws was another job I was taught. In those days we used the straw instead of burning it. The thatcher would cut a cant of straw from the rick and then pull it out like a rope. He threw water over it to make it straight, then flipped it over with a pitch fork to flatten it. When this straw had been laid out for the thatcher it was called a yelm. This was laid across two sticks made to form a cradle so that it could be carried up on to the rick without bending it.

When the straw had been placed in rows across the top of the rick, hazel rods or running spars were laid across them. These were held in place by bending another piece of hazel rod into a U-shaped spar and placing it over the rod and driving it down into the rick. Wheat straw was used for thatching the ricks, and when it was finished the edges were trimmed with shears to make it tidy.

Sheep shearing was done each year, and the way I did it was to clear the head first. Then I would go down the tummy , round the body, and across to the backbone, not the Australian method. When I took the fleece off , I would turn it inside out, to keep it clean , then put a bond on it. This meant taking some of the wool from the neck and tying it round to keep it together, then put it into a poke of hessian.

ISAAC INGALL - BATTLE'S CENTENARIAN.

Was Isaac Ingall really 120 years old.?. Many people believed so and the parish register records;- "April 7th 1798. Isaac Ingall aged 120 years. "

A grave in the churchyard recites the same age on a stone that records, on the reverse side , the memorial for his wife Mary, who died in December 1751 at the age of 46.

The Sussex Weekly Advertiser of 7th April 1798 carried an obituary;-"last Monday died at his lodgings in Battle, which he had occupied just one week, Mr Ingall aged 120 years. The reason he assigned for leaving the Abbey, where he had been a servant, and chiefly in the capacity of butler near 95 years, is said to be that his nurse used him ill and a fear she should shorten his life by some act of violence."

In November 1797 a visitor to the Abbey saw Ingall and commented "there was nothing in his look which impressed on the mind the idea of a person more than four score years old, except a falling of the lower jaw which bespoke his more advanced age. " The same visitor mentioned Ingall's extreme deafness and remarked that a disagreement with his employer, Lady Webster, was because she thought the old man "careless of his personal appearance." Apparently he refus--ed to live anywhere but in "an antique out-building, near the castle gate, the whole of the building being nearly filled with billet-wood." His appearance was anachronistic ;- he wore a full-bottomed wig and a full-dressed chocolate suit with yellow buttons. In each of his withered hands he held a short, rude, beechen walking stick about three feet high...to take his rambles about the town.
So, what have we got. ? An old man, something of a local celebrity, defying nature not only for his own time, but also for ours, in claiming a vast age without it has to be said, a shred of proof. Ingall was *not* born in Battle so there is no baptismal record in the Parish Register , nor is there any suggestion that he was a Sussex man.

What clues there are suggest differently. The Hon. John Byng in his book "Tour of Sussex" 1788 says "saw yet a greater curiosity, the family butler Mr Ingall 103 years of age who had been a post boy in York in Queen Anne's reign ." Assuming "boy" to mean an adolescent, the inference is that Isaac could have been born about 1700 which would make him some five years older than wife Mary.

Another clue comes from Ingall's will, the contents of which are mildly scandal-

-ous viz; "devise to Edward Mitten otherwise Edward Ingall who was born of the body of Susan now the wife of..... Oliver formerly Susan Mitten spinster and whom I do acknowledge to be my son ...." The Battle Register records the bapt--ism of Edward, baseborn son of Susannah Mitten 14 January 1763, and the Ashburnham Register the baptism of Susan, daughter of Edward and Mary Mitten 8 February 1763.The likelihood of "85" year old Isaac fathering a child with 27 year old Susannah seems remote but not so improbable for a man in his sixties.

There is another clue. In 1768/69 Ingall accompanied Webster Whistler on the latter's first journey to Cambridge. Taking into account the perils of travel it would have been foolhardy to partner a young man with one nearing 90.

Ingall worked most of his long life for the Websters. In 1779 Sir Whistler Webster left £50 and an annuity of £20 to his "old servant Isaac Ingall " . In his old age "they decided that he was too old to go on working and they put him in a lodge , with the idea that he should open the gate....on one occasion Lady Webster thought he was too slow opening it and was rather cross he did not come at once. The old man took offence and walked into Hastings to get himself another job. He was sent after and brought back."

There is no doubt that Ingall was extremely old ; in the eighteenth century few people lived beyond seventy , particularly if they were working class. Isaac was obviously a tough old bird who outlived practically everybody who had known him even in his middle years. He never bothered to deny his age and clearly relished his notoriety. I suspect he *was* well into his nineties, maybe even 100 but not, I feel sure , his recorded age . But what a delight it would be if some day, a confirmed baptism is found and that he really was that vast age. !

David Sawyer

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