Battle and District Historical Society

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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 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 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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Review of the year

In the absence of both a Chairman and Vice-Chairman your Committee presents this brief report of the Society's year.

Adopting a 'revolving' Chair approach at Committee meetings has worked extremely well, not only with regard to letting a number of members stretch their wings but also in demonstrating abilities that some of us didn't realise we had! To this extent the absence of incumbents for these posts has been a matter of internal administrative inconvenience for your Committee, the members of which have willingly pulled together to ensure the business of the Society runs as smoothly as possible. From the more public side the absence has meant that speakers were necessarily welcomed by the Honorary Secretary, which I feel lacks the dignity usually accorded: however all have been understanding of our present situation. Looking forward to 2007-8 we already have a promising start with a candidate for the Vice-Chairmanship (to find out more you will have to attend the A.G.M.).

The future of the essay competition has exercised the minds of your Committee throughout the year and continues to do so. Taking a year out to seek and review advice from local teachers a decision will be made over the winter of 2007-8 as to whether to continue for 2008. It is interesting to note that the lack of interest which we experienced from schools in the Hastings and Rother areas has also been encountered by at least one other society locally.

In January 2007 our lectures were temporarily relocated to St Mary's Parish Church whilst the church hall underwent refurbishment. As well as giving us an unexpectedly magnificent venue for the two lectures this change presented ample demonstration of how fortunate the Society is in having volunteers that are flexible and enthusiastic. Special mention must be made in this regard to our sound engineer, Alan Kinnear, who had to acquaint himself with a new sound system, and to Peter and Wendy Roberts who liaised with the PCC – and ensured that the heating was on!

The future of the Summer Programme of visits was another matter which was of considerable importance this year. Following close examination of members' responses to the questionnaire that was circulated, Nick Hollington has worked tirelessly to come up with an approach that more closely reflects the wishes of members. A pilot visit took place to the Weald & Downland

Open Air Museum, Singleton which was much enjoyed by all who attended and tied-in with the lecture we had in January. Look out for details of an excursion to be arranged over the winter.

Finally I must mention that your Committee has turned its attention to how best to mark the Society's Diamond Jubilee in 2010. This is an achievement that merits a special celebration. At present we are looking into the possibility of a lecture day with high-profile speakers, however there are any number of ways in which we might celebrate and your Committee would very much welcome members' suggestions.

Neil Clephane–Cameron
Honorary Secretary

Editor's Note

THE REALITY OF ROYAL POWER IN LATE ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

Dr Richard Huscroft 13 October 2006

Dr Huscroft commenced by stating that there is a consensus among historians with regard to the institutional soundness of pre-conquest England. This consensus recognises a kingdom divided into administrative units (shires) as far north as the River Tees and each supervised by a sheriff, responsible for overseeing the royal lands, levying armies, collecting taxes and presiding over the twice yearly shire court. Each shire was sub-divided into 'wappentakes' (in the Danelaw) or 'hundreds' elsewhere and these were in turn administered by a bailiff or reeve, local men answerable to the sheriff, who enacted and enforced the sheriff's orders. Each hundred also had its own monthly court. A national coinage and system of taxation together with developing legal concepts of royal pleas and national peace further indicate a high measure of centralised government as does the system of the sealed writ, described by Sir Frank Stenton as 'the most efficient means of publishing the ruler's will which western Europe has so far known.' It might almost be seen as a heresy to argue against this but Dr Huscroft felt that some balance was required and regarded the reality a less clear cut.

The further north one went, the weaker central control became. North of the Humber might be regarded as 'foreign country' by the largely southern rulers, whilst even nearer to the royal power-base significant numbers of hundreds were in private hands, albeit theoretically with royal permission but nevertheless loosing to the king direct legal and financial control. Indeed the large number of surviving writs generally only record land transfers or confirm privileges, not commands or executive orders and surely, Dr Huscroft wondered, Rome's or Charlemagne's officials would challenge the administrative supremacy claimed for the writ. Certainly elements of a national infrastructure existed but localisation remained a major factor. Nevertheless it was universally accepted that the king headed the political system.

The king ruled by God's will, having been separated from other men when consecrated with the Holy oil at his coronation. Ruling by the example of Old Testament monarchs such as David or Solomon his duties were to protect the Church and defend his people. He exercised extensive powers – at least in theory – having the sole right to raise armies for national defence, raise

national taxation, create national legislation and have his image on coins. Bridging the gap between theoretical and actual powers was ultimately a matter of the individual ability, will and personality of the king. Aethelred II, Edward the Confessor and perhaps more understandably Harold II failed to do this, so there is a real sense that in eleventh-century England English kings (in contrast to the Danish and Norman ones) lost the ability to rule effectively, not through a deficient system but through personal deficiency.

Dr Huscroft examined this assertion by looking at what contemporary documents had to tell us of the reigns of Edward and Harold. Edward was throughout his reign struggling with the competing factions of the Normans and Godwines. Any decisions of this otherworldly king are as likely to be the result of factional ascendancy rather than Edward's own will. A situation encountered four hundred years later in the reign of Henry VI. Such weakness led to an almost irreversible decline, indeed near emasculation, of royal authority and two revolutions were needed to halt it.

The first of these was the coronation of Harold II. This closed the gap between royal authority and comital power. Nor was he passive: a proven and energetic warrior his campaign in 1066 was very nearly successful, and in his brief reign John of Worcester states he set about legal reform, improved public safety and was 'good to the Church' – close to the model of the perfect king, but the shortness of his reign and the sectarian polarity of sources prevent any detailed or confident assessment.

It is only the second revolution, begun by Duke William's military victory, which gave to English kingship the opportunity and time to recover. William's bloody victory removed factional strife by eliminating the power of the Godwinesons: his personality and capacity for single-mindedness and ruthless determination did the rest.

To conclude Dr Huscroft asserted, "The English kingdom was rich, prosperous and well-governed in 1066, but this was because it was robust, resilient and institutionally strong enough to cope with the weaknesses and shortcomings of its kings. English kingship by contrast was in crisis at the start of 1066 and its future was uncertain. Harold Godwineson might have rescued it, but William I definitely did.

Neil Clephane–Cameron

EARLY HISTORY OF BROADCASTING

Robert Mears 27 October 2006

Robert (Bob) Mears is a long-standing friend and member of the Society and so it was with eager anticipation that his audience awaited his lecture. He reminded us that it was ten years since he lectured on Sixty Years of Television, which commenced on the 2 November 1936, the first high definition television system in the world. Shut down during WW2 it started transmitting again in June 1946, the BBC became a public corporation in 1926, and to complete the anniversary he was born in 1916. Starting with pictures illustrating the poverty that existed in the early post WW1 years, he considered that the introduction of broadcasting was instrumental in bringing about consequential changes to society.

In the early 1900s several academics were working on the theory of broadcasting. In 1901 Marconi, having tried unsuccessfully in Italy where his work was not well received, was invited to England. He began conducting experiments in Cornwall and succeeded in transmitting the first wireless signal across the Atlantic to a receiver in Newfoundland. In 1904 the Wireless Telegraphy Act was passed to control broadcasting on all frequencies as there were already too many stations and some amateurs were causing serious interference.

The first wireless set able to receive the spoken word (not a Morse signal) was made in 1914 but its general application was delayed until after the end of the Great War. By 1920 Marconi was transmitting programmes from a studio in the Adelphi in London albeit that every twenty minutes of broadcasting time required prior approval. A broadcast of this period was made by Dame Nellie Melba singing in to what now appears to be a wonderful loudspeaker contraption. Radio transmission was now in a chaotic state with too many competing stations, and in 1922 the leading manufacturers, Marconi, GEC, Metrovic, BTH etc. met and decided to form the British Broadcasting Company, with Lord Gainsford as Chairman. He appointed a Scottish engineer John Reith as the General Manager responsible for all broadcasting and it was he who established the high standards of the BBC with the aim of providing a nationwide service.

Programmes needed to be announced and in 1923 the Radio Times was published. Children's Hour was early favourite programme, but news items were not allowed to be broadcast until after 6pm by which time the

newspapers had been sold. King George V made his first broadcast to the nation in 1924 from the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, and a microphone installed recorded the chimes of Big Ben. People had to build their own wireless sets and erect a 30ft. long and 30ft.high insulated aerial connected to an accumulator with a night switch in case of lightning strikes. A ten shilling licence fee was charged, half going to the Post Office and half to the BBC

Transmitting from an aerial on top of the Adelphi and later from the top of Selfridges London 2LO had a radius of just 20-30 miles and by 1924 there were ten stations and relay stations each with a similar coverage. There was no network between the individual stations, connection being by GPO land lines. Reith had always wanted a nationwide service so he instructed his Chief Engineer Eckersley (a Marconi man) to build a high powered transmitter at Daventry. The location was chosen as the centre of gravity of the UK from where everyone could receive the transmission. The making of the BBC was the 1926 National Strike when the independent unbiased reporting by the BBC was recognised. A Committee that was looking into the future of broadcasting decided in favour of a national public service and in 1926 the British Broadcasting Corporation came into being with Reith as its Director General.

Outside broadcasting began in 1927, events included the Boat Race, the Cup Final and Promenade Concerts (Reith had taken these over when they were failing and introduced the BBC Symphony Orchestra), Jack Paine's Band, and Albert Sandler's Palm Court Orchestra from the Grand Hotel Eastbourne. The 1930s saw the introduction of drama with sound effects, the Daily Service, the Weather Forecast and in 1934 the first Christmas Broadcast by the Monarch, all to become regular features. Edward VIII made his abdication speech in 1936.

Turning briefly to television, which started in 1936 at Alexandra Palace the speaker joined in 1938. He was told "I'm not sure whether we have a future service". He described the two rival television systems Baird's mechanical scanning system that was developed at Hastings and EMI's electrical system which proved succesful and is used today.

Bob concluded with a tribute to Lord Reith, a unique leader.

Diane Braybrooke

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME 1916

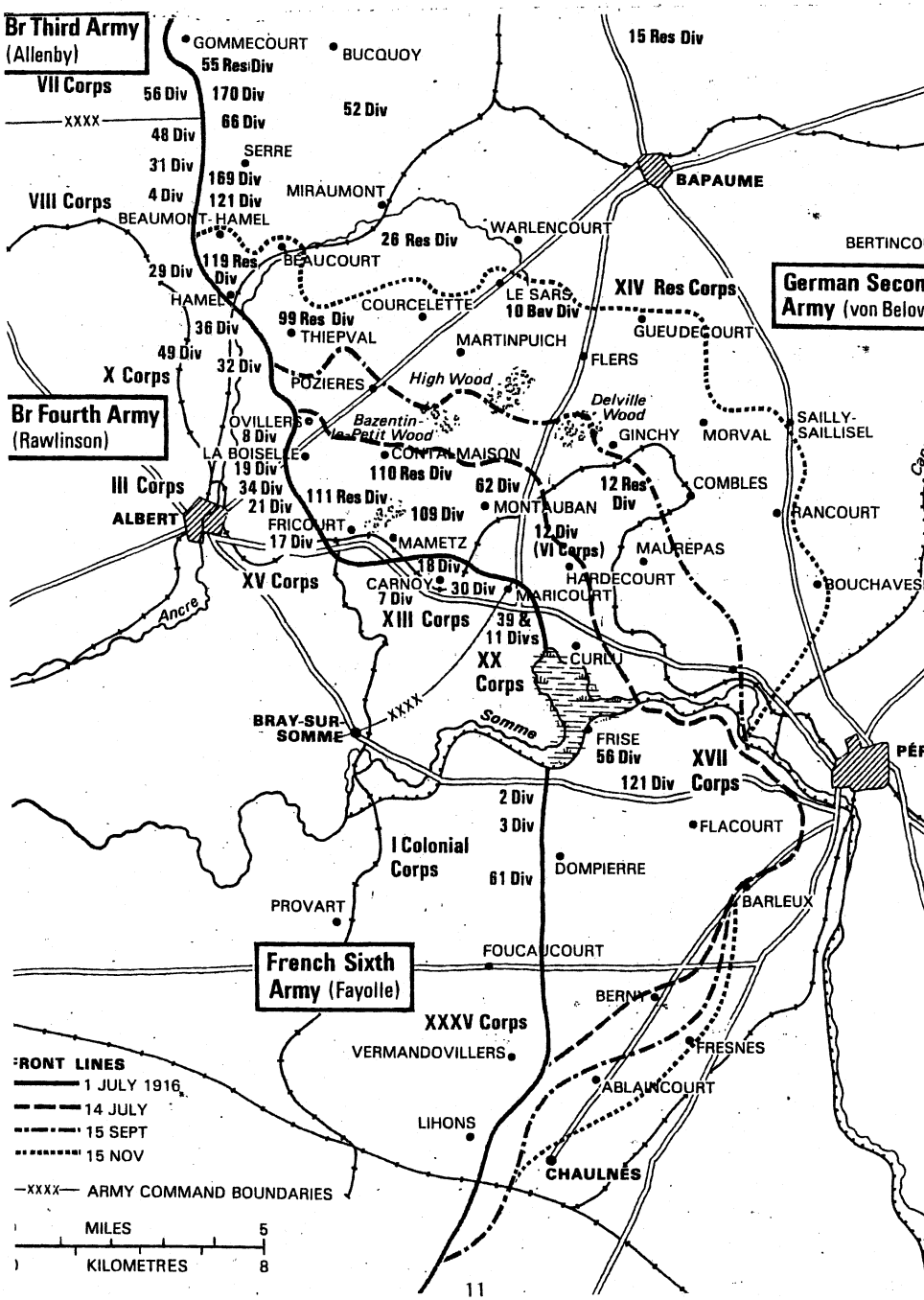
Laurie Milner 10th November 2006

The Battle of the Somme opened at 7.30 am on 1st July 1916 and lasted for 142 days ending on 18th November. It was the intention of the speaker to take the audience on a virtual battlefield tour explaining how the battle unfolded. As more information has recently become available to military historians so their perception of events has changed from that published in the 1960s. It was not just bungling generals sending heroic volunteer soldiers to their slaughter but the professional German Army that killed them, as current research has put them back into the picture.

Topographically the salient features of the battlefield were the Albert-Bapaume road that ran across the British and German lines, the valley of the river Ancre that divided the battlefield in two and a high ridge running the length of the German lines with wooded areas and incorporating the fortified villages of Serre Pozieres, Beaumont Hamel, Thiepval and Fricourt and the Schwaben Redoubt. The Germans had occupied this high ground since early in the war and considered it as the new frontier of the German Reich constructing strong and deep trench systems.

Why attack on the Somme? It had no strategic reason it was just the junction between the British and French armies. What were the Allies hoping to achieve?
To relieve the pressure on the French army at Verdun and to draw German divisions away from this sector of the front. The plan was to breakthrough the three German lines and strongpoints and advance up the Albert–Bapaume road and push them off the Pozieres Ridge. Following a week long intense bombardment the break through was to be made by General Sir Henry Rawlingson's 4thArmy and the French 6th Army on a fourteen mile front and exploited by General Sir Hubert Gough's Reserve Army. Despite firing over eleven million shells the bombardment failed to cut the German wire and did not destroy their artillery positions and the strongpoints. There were not enough heavy guns and high explosive shells and too many targets. The British infantry was exposed to heavy machine gun and artillery fire resulting in catastrophic casualties on the first day. Of the some 100,000 attacking infantry 19,420 were killed and nearly 40,000 wounded or missing. There were no significant gains in the British sector only in the French sector where objectives were achieved due to better co-ordination between the infantry and their artillery

The speaker then explained in some detail the attack of 1st July along the length of the British trench line, the objectives, opposition, casualties


Br Third Army (Allenby)
VII Corps
XXXX
VIII Corps
X Corps
Br Fourth Army (Rawlinson)
III Corps
XV Corps
XIII Corps
XX Corps
I Colonial Corps
French Sixth Army (Fayolle)
XXXV Corps
XIV Res Corps
German Second Army (von Below)
XVII Corps
GOMMECOURT
BUCQUOY
55 Res Div
56 Div
170 Div
52 Div
66 Div
48 Div
SERRE
31 Div
169 Div
4 Div
121 Div
MIRAUMONT
BEAUMONT-HAMEL
26 Res Div
WARLENCOURT
119 Res Div
BEAUCOURT
29 Div
HAMEL
COURCELETTE
LE SARS
10 Bav Div
99 Res Div
THIEPVAL
36 Div
MARTINPUICH
GUEUDECOURT
49 Div
32 Div
POZIERES
High Wood
FLERS
Delville Wood
Bazentin-le-Petit Wood
OVILLERS
8 Div
GINCHY
MORVAL
SAILLY-SAILLISEL
LA BOISELLE
CONTALMAISON
19 Div
110 Res Div
62 Div
12 Res Div
COMBLES
34 Div
21 Div
111 Res Div
109 Div
MONTAUBAN
RANCOURT
ALBERT
FRICOURT
17 Div
MAMETZ
12 Div (VI Corps)
MAUREPAS
18 Div
HARDECOURT
CARNOY
30 Div
7 Div
MARICOURT
BOUCHAVESNE
39 & 11 Divs
CURLU
Ancre
BRAY-SUR-SOMME
Somme
FRISE
56 Div
121 Div
PÉRO
2 Div
3 Div
FLACOURT
61 Div
DOMPIERRE
PROVART
BARLEUX
FOUCAUCOURT
BERNY
VERMANDOVILLERS
FRESNES
ABLAINCOURT
LIHONS
CHAULNES
BAPAUME
15 Res Div
BERTINCOUR
Canal du
FRONT LINES
1 JULY 1916
14 JULY
15 SEPT
15 NOV
ARMY COMMAND BOUNDARIES
MILES 5
KILOMETRES 8

incurred, gains and German response. After the failure of the first day the British CinC General Sir Douglas Haig was put under intense pressure by the French High Command to continue with the attack but the character of the battle changed from one of a breakthrough to one of attrition. As the British continued to attack the Germans counterattacked ordered by their CinC Eric Von Falkenhayn "not one foot of ground to be lost", with consequential high casualties on both sides. What the military historian John Terraine called "the true texture of the battle".

Quoting from diaries and letters (many now held in the Imperial War Museum archives), the speaker read out examples of the experiences of the frontline soldiers including those serving in the Pals battalions of Kitchener's New Army. A more successful attack was made on 14th July pushing up from the earlier French gains including the village of Montauban which the Manchester and Liverpool Pals had captured on 1st July. The 15th September saw the first use of tanks, though in small numbers, when Courcelette was captured by the Canadians. Two weeks later on the 1st OctoberThiepval and the Schwarben Redoubt were taken, and the last attacks took place between 1st and 18th November

What have we learned about the battle?
Leadership. Between the summer of 1915 and the summer of 1916, Sir Douglas Haig saw his command increase tenfold. A man who was lacking the necessary experience in 1916, but had gained this by 1918, he led the British Army to defeat the main German Army and end the war. There was inexperience at all levels of command with lack of co-operation between Command, Army Corps and Divisional, later this improved with poor commanders removed and experienced company commanders moving up the command chain. The battle had been a hard learning curve for the BEF, but Eric Von Falkenhayn was forced to remove divisions away from Verdun and he was sacked as German CinC in August 1916. In December 1916 Joffre the French CinC was replaced by General Robert Nivelle.

The speaker concluded by quoting three eminent military historians supporting the current more balanced view of the battle including Professor Richard Holmes who in 2005 wrote, "I take comfort from the fact that many of the simplistic views of the 1960's have been replaced by an altogether more balanced approach by scholars analysing primary sources to illuminate the appalling conflict which had a profound and lasting effect on Britain".

Malcolm Stocker

Footnote

The 4th Army of Sir Henry Rawlinson was 20 divisions strong of which 4 were Regular, 4 Territorial, 10 Kitchener's New Army, and 2 other. More than half the attacking infantry had less than two years training; this was a major factor in the planning and execution of the attack as the New Army battalions were ordered to advance in straight lines at a walking pace on the assumption that they would encounter minimum resistance. But the huge preliminary bombardment failed to overwhelm the German defences and the wire was largely undamaged. In many sectors the barrage lifted off the front lines prematurely allowing the defending Germans to come up from their deep dugouts and open fire even before the attacking infantry had reached the wire and inflict the horrific casualties incurred. It was the New Army battalions, the "Chums" and "Pals" recruited from small local communities that bore the brunt of the losses and the impact on these communities is the reason why after ninety years the Somme battle is still resonant in the British memory today.

The 10th Bn. the Lincolnshire Regt. (the Grimsby Chums) was one of the twelve battalions of the 34th Division, III Corps that attacked La Boisselle on the 1st July. The Corps Commander had ordered the artillery to lift off the German lines a full ten minutes before zero hour allowing ample time for the defenders to man their trenches. Raked by machine gun fire the "Chums" suffered heavily, as did the other battalions of the 34th Division which sustained the highest casualties, 6380 on the first day. In three days the "Chums" suffered over 50% casualties the effect on the town of Grimsby can be imagined, my wife's uncle Lt Raymond Eason age 21 was one of the first to die on the 1st July.

To quote John Keegan a respected military historian, "Whatever variation in tactics or equipment the basic stark fact was that the conditions of warfare between 1914-18 predisposed towards SLAUGHTER"

Malcolm Stocker

VIOLENT LONDON.

Prof. Clive Bloom. 12 January 2007.

Prof. Bloom addressed the Society on the subject of Violent London, in advance of the publication of his book "Terror Within " in May 2007. The violence to which he referred was not that of murder nor criminality but of riot and disorder and, on occasion, political protest and demonstration.

He suggested that Londoners were not particularly good at changing political regimes by riotous behaviour as their actions, whilst often containing a powerful message commonly lacked a forceful and effective messenger. One problem was that London has alway been a city of strangers- a refuge for other people's dissidents or outcasts and so ,rarely, came together for a united common purpose.

A recurring theme across the centuries was discrimination against Catholics which was later subsumed in the 18th and 19th centuries by a dislike of the Irish. This was , in practice,a continuation of anti-Catholicsm in disguise. Jesuits were always feared.

Queen Elizabeth 1st. oddly enough believed that London was full of "black people". She feared them but there is no evidence that they posed any problem. No doubt anti-Semitism , common the the 20th century would have been prevalent had not Richard 1st celebrated his coronation by massacring a goodly number of the Jews thereby ensuring that they were barely represented in London Society.

Paradoxically the one group *never* persecuted were the Moslems; perhaps their religious observances were so different as to be seen as no threat to the establishment.

London has always sheltered dissidents from abroad and these emigres have often created particular districts where radicals could gather together and be tolerated; such places as Clerkenwell, Spitalfields and the East End. Karl Marx and Lenin both found refuge and even Stalin popped up in Stepney- remember the Siege of Sidney Street.

According to an Act of 1702, a riot requires no more than three people to be gathered together, who refuse to go home when requested. The person doing the requesting.i.e. "reading the Riot Act" was usually a local functionary or land owner whose reading was invariably ineffective and often resulted in greater defiance.

In the absence of a police force (at least until the 19th century) the rioters usually had the stage to themselves and the ultimate agent of their control was the Army. The Army were the instrument of enforcement until the Chartist Riots of 1832.

The year that the first policeman was killed was 1833 in the Coldbath Riots and another fatality, by riot, did not occur again until the Broadwater Farm incident in the late 20th century. In the 1833 case, the jury refused to find anyone guilty because of police provocation.

In this context, Prof. Bloom was of the opinion that the police often act as agent provocateurs because it is easier to stop a riot if you know who are the main players.

The first significant violence in London was Boudicca in AD 60, who is reputed to have killed 30000 whilst sacking the town. The number of the dead is seriously disputed.

In 1381, during the Peasant's Revolt, the gates of London were opened by artisans who were already in rebellion.Their aim was to kill people they hated, namely Churchmen and wealthy merchants.

In 1517, the curiously named "Evil May Day" was a riot inspired by John Lincoln who simply disliked foreigners, particularly bankers who tended to be Lombards. The Government used the opportunity to rid themselves of people they feared who, after a brief trial, were summarily executed by hanging, drawing and quartering. This was a particularly loathsome form of punishment which was not abolished until the 18th century. Executions were held in public until 1868 and were intended as a deterrant but were perversely celebrated as popular entertainment.

The Gordon Riots of 1780 were the worst ever experienced by Londoners and are said to have been more destructive than the London Blitz. The prime spark was anger caused by a proposal to enfranchise the Scots which somehow trans-mogrified into anti- Catholicism. An orgy of destruction followed in which 400 people are believed to have perished, many from an excess of gin when a prominent distillery was looted and alcohol literally flowed in the gutter. The nominal leader, Lord George Gordon did not suffer, personally for his rebellion. Later-bizarrely- he converted to Judaism.

Finally Prof. Bloom mentioned the case of May Billinghurst, a suffragette from Beckenham, whose idea of terrorism was to pour molasses and sugar into letter boxes. A disabled lady, the police's retribution was to immobilise her wheelchair by deflating the tyres.

This most interesting talk was held in the nave of the Church in place of our normal venue in the Church Hall.

David Sawyer.

THE WEALD & DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM

Richard Harris – Director 26 January 2007

Our speaker introduced himself by saying that he had been at the Museum far too long having started working there in 1975. Most of his time he had been the Director of Research, a grand title for someone working for himself. Since 2001 he has been Director of the Museum, raising funds and directing research.

Mr Harris thought he should first describe an "Open Air Museum". He went on to explain that probably the first such museum was started in Dorset in 1870 by General Pitrivers who was the first Inspector of Ancient Monuments. This was simply a public pleasure park for people on their bicycles for a day out. He also reconstructed some buildings on the site, based on the influence of a gentleman who founded the open air museum idea outside Stockholm and who was a collector of folk life artifacts. His idea was to display the artifacts in a realistic situation in an attempt to create Living History. This idea was copied by many European countries but not immediately in England.

After the war, there was a general interest in "re-building" and renewal. In 1951 a small group of amateurs, consisting of geographers, chemistry teachers, housewives, etc. was formed, all of whom were interested in what was called "vernacular architecture" and what this meant in relation to historical artifacts. Interest slowly grew in building conservation in general and timber framed buildings in particular. 1975 was European Architectural Heritage Year and since then conservation has become a major industry. Subsequently, all open air museums and especially the Weald and Downland Museum, should be seen as a part of the building conservation movement. Our speaker liked to think of the museum as similar to a forensic laboratory and to give a home to buildings for which there was no room on their original site. Comparing the Museum to those in America, Mr Harris explained he did not approve of first person interpretation.

He then went on to give a brief history of the Weald and Downland Museum which was one of the most successful in the country. It was founded in a group of "mad enthusiasts" in 1967. They had a tremendous stroke of luck in that they were given their beautiful site by the Edward James Foundation. The Museum opened its doors in 5th September 1970 and huge numbers of

visitors came. In 1975 150,000 visitors were recorded, three times as many as any other museum. Numbers fluctuated until 1990's when the numbers started dropping. In 1975 many of the buildings had already been reconstructed. In 1982 the Museum was invited to dismantle and reassemble a timber framed cottage. This was done very carefully with everything being recorded. In 1989 –British Food and Farming Year – the Museum celebrated this by furnishing the Hall House with replicated furniture, pottery and fabrics and also the farm buildings outside together with a farm, orchard and landscaping. In 1992 the Museum combined with Bournemouth University in setting up a three day workshop teaching the conservation of timber framed buildings. These workshops have continued to expand in adult education together with 75,000 school children visits.

Because the artifacts and workshops were housed two miles from the site, in 1996 it was decided to purpose build a timber-frame building combining a storage house and workshop, together with an education centre and basement. Because of the sloping site, this could be done below ground and the car park was put back on top. Our enthusiastic speaker then showed some very interesting slides starting with the new building. This has been built in a grid shell shape with the roof beams bent into shape and was then clad in green oak. The cost of the building construction was £1.5m, receiving £1.2m from the Lottery fund. The whole project was £2m.

The Museum has a 4,500 "Friends" organization representing 10,000 members together with a large volunteer group of over 400. The Museum is designated by the Government as being of National Importance and receives about £70,000 for special projects, but no public funding.

Other slides showed the earliest building, together with a pair of semi-detached, plastered front, cottages, which hid the timber framed building. His other slides showed various houses including the School House with its new kitchen in which "real" food is cooked. The Museum has three shire horses – illustrating the history of farming and they are also training Sussex Oxon. Mr Harris concluded by informing us that the Museum uses no Pest Control, indicating that if the buildings are kept dry there is no problem.

A fascinating lecture with slides which I am sure will encourage many of our audience to visit this delightful and interesting museum.

Diane Braybrooke

THE SUSSEX FILM PIONEERS -part 2.

Frank Gray-Director South East Film and Video Archive. 9th February 2007.

As this lecture was accompanied by copious film excerpts, the writer excuses himself for the comparative brevity of this report.!
Mr Shaw returned to the Society to give the second part of his talk on the Sussex film pioneers (q.v. last year's journal).
Sussex played a significant role in the developement of World Cinema and had its own Shoreham based studios until the early 1920's.
The onward advance of cinema as a viable commercial venture was significantly enhanced by the construction of purpose built cinemas. The Duke of York Cinema in Brighton is Britain's oldest surviving theatre, opened in September 1910. Early cinemas were not regarded with the reverance that characterised them in the 1930's nor were they anywhere near so grand. Usually they were uncomfortable, unhygienic ,smoke ridden ,smelly and noisy. The films shown were crude and disjointed, commonly one-reelers, lasting little more than 15 or 20 minutes. Plots were basic and the absence of sub-titles made them hard to understand.
In 1915 D.W.Griffith revolutionised the industry with his multi-reeler "The Birth of a Nation" ; three hours in length , it told a meaningful and powerful story. This lead to the domination of the industry by America and the beginnings of the star system and fan adulation. Cinema became part of life with its accompanying fan magazines and fan clubs.
British producers could not compete with America. They had neither the cash nor the technical facilities and so tended to adopt an insular attitude, promoting the Union Jack as a logo and adapting the Classics as the source material. Whatever the film, it was immeasurably improved by the accompaniment of live music, usually a single piano. The larger cinemas would have a special music score and orchestra ; the lesser venues a three-piece and the local flea pit the ubiquitous piano. The music would follow the action on screen, throughout all its moods.
Sussex's production company , the Progress Film Co., was based at Shoreham and owned and directed by Sidney Morgan. His usual female star was his own daughter Joan who survived until recent years and was interviewed by Mr. Shaw. Filming was operated from a glasshouse with natural light, screen and filters. Scripts were written in the winter; shot in the summer and the film distributed in the autumn. Few fragments of the studio's output survive and the buildings themselves were destroyed by fire in 1923 and Morgan wa adjudged bankrupt.

Mr Shaw then showed the members a number of film excerpts which charted the progress of the commercial cinema.
First a feature made by Williamson in Hove in 1908 entitled "The £100 Reward" This told the brief tale of a sacked man's dog finding hidden jewels and tracking thieves. The sets were crude and sparse and the acting amateurish. The film was shot using natural light and the simplicity of the plot spoke for itself.
The second excerpt was from "Jane Shore" released in 1915. This was a dramatic technical advance with a recognisable plot, professional actors and hundreds of extras. In addition to studio sets, exteriors were shot at Devil's Dyke with spectacular scenes of fighting armies furiously cresting the downs. The insertion of sub titles made the plot easy to follow.
The third excerpt was from a production by Cecil Hepworth (1922) entitled "Tansy", filmed at the Walton-on-Thames studios. Exteriors were shot at Burpham in Sussex. The screenplay was adapted from a popular novel and, by today's standards, was romantic and naive. Probably, even in 1922, the pace was too slow for an audience looking increasingly to Hollywood.
After 1923, Sussex cinema tended to be restricted to amateur film makers using hand held 9.5 or 16 mm cameras. The products were typically factual represent--ations of everyday life. We were shown examples from the output of Percy Nightingale of Crawley (1928-30)- the local horse fair and church parade.
Hopefully we will be allowed to see Part 3 of Sussex cCnema at some future, but not too distant, date.

David Sawyer.

THE RINGLEMERE GOLD CUP

Mr Keith Parfitt 23rd February 2007

Mr. Parfitt of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust began by asking us to go back to a windswept moor in Cornwall in 1837 when two workmen wanting more stone to build a road, dug into a burial cairn in Rillaton, near Bodmin and unearthed, as well as a skeleton, a magnificent gold cup. After discovery it was sent to the Royal Collection by the Duchy of Cornwall Treasure Trove Trust. There it remained for about a hundred years until the death of King George V in 1936, at which point the importance of the cup became appreciated, and it was given on loan to the British Museum. It was rumoured that King George had kept his collar studs in it. The main body of the cup was beaten out of a single lump of gold of the highest purity. The corrugated profile would have required great skill to achieve, as in addition to being pleasing; it added strength to the thin gold. The handles have two sets of grooves and are neatly riveted to the body with lozenge shaped washers. It was dated between 1700 and 1800 BC

In November 2001 Mr Parfitt had a phone call from a Mr Cliff Bradshaw to say that while out with his metal detector, near to Sandwich in Kent, he had unearthed a gold cup and that he was sending some photographs. Mr Parefitt could see at once that, although badly damaged by a ploughshare, the cup was identical to the Rillaton one. It was of pure gold and exactly the same date, height and weight; it also had the same ribbed design with a row of tiny punched dots all around the rim and the same lozenge shaped washers. There was no known archaeology in the area but he and other archaeologists went to the field, which was on a farm in the small hamlet of Ringlemere. The land had been ploughed for centuries but they could just detect a slight mould in the middle. The farmers agreed to a trench being hand dug and although it did not disclose much, it was enough to mount a much larger dig. Eventually after several seasons work it was clear that there had been a Neolithic settlement surrounded by a ditch with a circumference of about 150feet. No burials were found but there were many pits, postholes and hearths. An enormous number of pieces of grooved pottery and flintworks of every shape and size were unearthed and the settlement was dated at about 2600 BC

About six centuries later, in the early Bronze Age, a shallow mould had been built on top of the topsoil of the old Neolithic site. It was a low mound, little more than a platform, but there was evidence from postholes that a timber henge had been on the top of it. Just below the henge, a pit had been dug out and it is believed that the damaged cup had been in there along with several pieces of decorated amber. The Rillaton cup has a flat

base and the Ringlemere cup has a curved base and could not have stood up, so it has been suggested that the Kent cup was used for votive offerings. It has never been established where the cups were made but only three others have ever been found and they are in Europe Whatever their uses, these wonderful cups are a testimony to the great skill of the early Bronze Age craftsman

The find was reported to the local coroner and through the Treasure Act of 1996, was declared treasure trove. It was bought by the British Museum for £45,000 and the money was split between Mr. Bradshaw and the Smith brothers who owned the farm .The money was raised with donations from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Friends of the British Museum, where it is now on display.

Joanne Lawrence

FIGHTING THE FRENCH
The Hundred Years War 1337-1453

Professor Kathleen Burk 9 March 2007

The lecture began with a recording of L'Homme Arme one of the most popular 15thC songs which Professor Burk considered conveyed the terror felt by the soldiers and the hapless civilians caught up in the war. It was not just an Anglo-French war it embroiled other territories even the Papacy. The war is unusually complicated therefore she set out the background to the conflict, the resources of the two sides, their main military weapons and the campaigns.

William the Conqueror was the Duke of Normandy and by the reign of Henry II (1154-89) the king of England controlled Normandy Maine Anjou Touraine Poitou and the duchy of Aquitaine, the so-called 'Angevine empire' that stretched from the Channel to the Pyrenees. Succeeding kings lost all these possessions to the French and in 1259 Henry III surrendered his claim to them in exchange for confirmation by the French King Louis IX of his tenure of Bordeaux Bayonne and Gascony. Crucially he in turn accepted Louis as his liege lord and henceforth he became the vassal of the King of France. This relationship would be the direct and immediate cause of the war as the English Kings repeatedly attempted to safeguard expand and retain their French territories, to claim the crown of France until the final French victory drove the English out for ever.

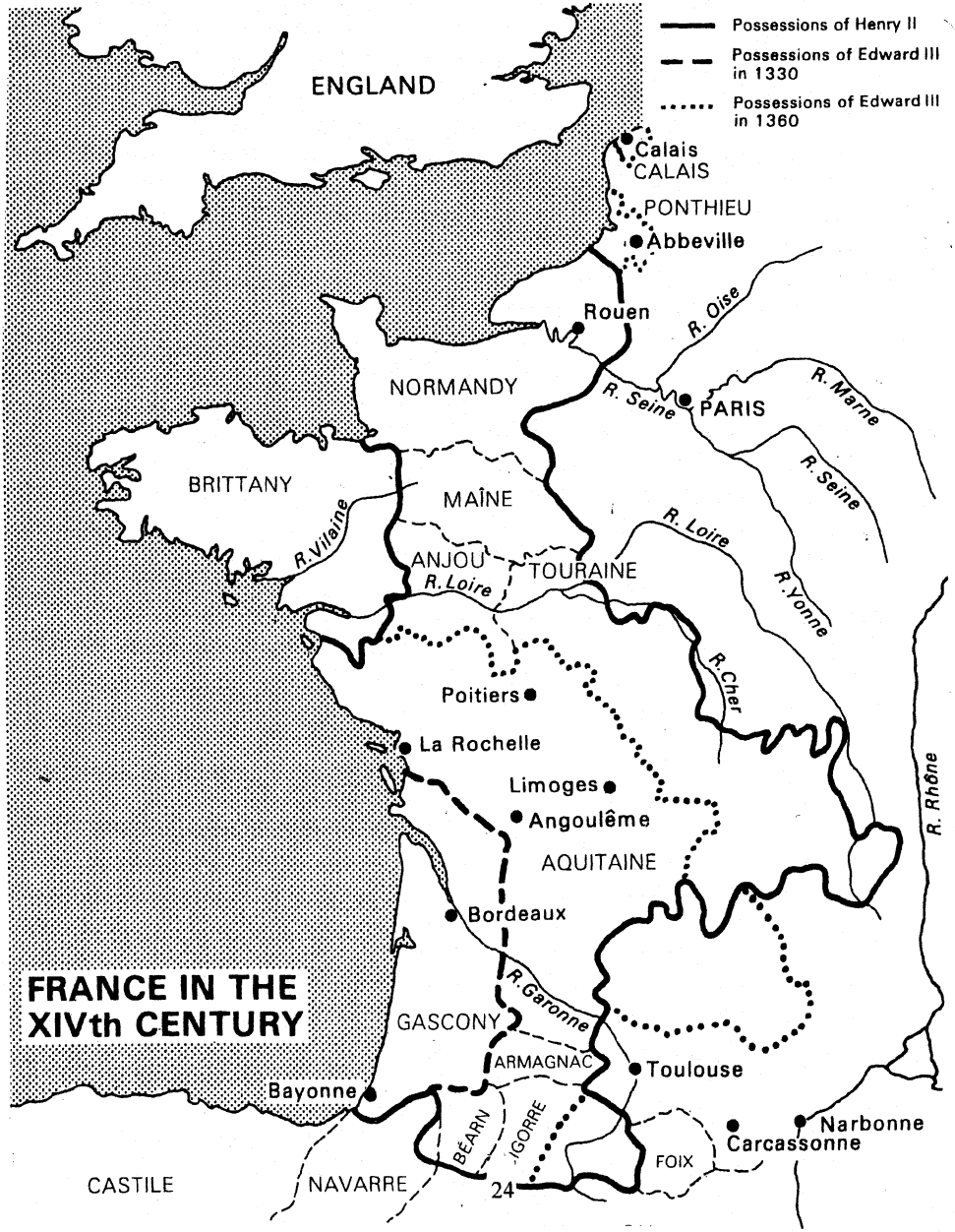
The resources of the two sides were distinctly unequal, by 1328 the French population at 12.5 million was twice that of England. The French King had a larger direct tax base and therefore could raise larger armies, whereas the English King was required to obtain the consent of the Commons to raise money to finance the war. The French had the advantage of being on home ground the English had to transport their soldiers across the Channel, the French had their own and the Genoese navy the English relied upon requisitioned merchant ships that were employed in the wool trade upon which the country's greatly depended. Further because of the French-Scottish alliance the English had to maintain a defensive presence on the border with Scotland.

The lecturer then described the English military resources and tactics. Men-at-arms were mounted armoured (chain-mail in 14thC, plate by the 15thC) soldiers who might be knights. They acted as cavalry but

increasingly they dismounted drew up in ranks and fought on foot. Armed with a lance when they were mounted and a long straight sword and pole axe or mace when on foot. Very important were the archers mounted or on foot the former carried a long- bow and a lance and their ability to achieve rapid movement and to act in concert men-at-arms made them arguably the most important element in the English army. The foot archer armed with a 6 foot long-bow and two dozen arrows could shoot at a rate of ten a minute to a range of 150 yards and at 60 yards pierce armour. Every village in England was required to provide one or more archers and by law practice shooting in the butts. Archers also carried swords and axes. Other fighters were kerns or knifemen who stabbed the bellies of the enemies horses. The French had men-at-arms and archers but preferred the cross-bow to the long-bow, it required less training, was easier to shoot had greater accuracy but was heavier and had a slower rate of fire at best 4 bolts a minute. It was the combined force of men-at-arms and archers which was to prove so lethal to the French at Crecy in 1346 at Poitiers 1356 and at Agincourt 1415. Battles were infrequent the French evading them but when they did take place they could lead to a loss of a duchy.

The most terrifying tactic employed by the English was the 'chevauchee' a group of mounted men-at-arms and archers who rode through the countryside killing, raping, burning and plundering and taking those rich enough to be ransomed. Large towns were avoided, the abbey, chateau, farmhouse and village were the targets. The chevauchee main objects were to gain booty and to make it clear to the victims that their lord could not protect them. The aim was not conquest since land could not be held unless fortified towns and castles were also held and to take these required sieges, these could take months even years and were often unsuccessful.

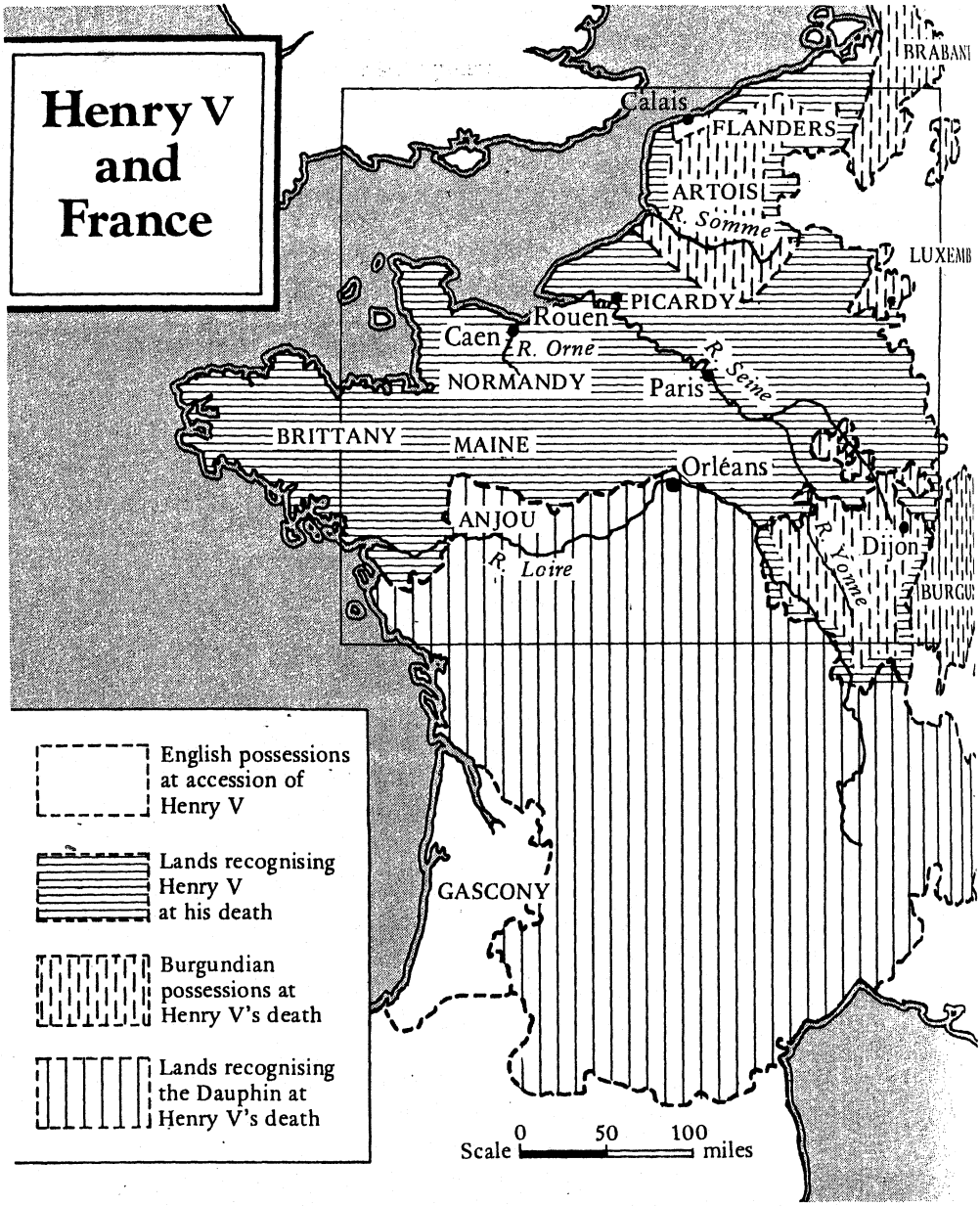
Professor Burk now detailed the cause of the outbreak of war. The brother-in-law of Philip of Valois the king of France had fled to England, when Edward III refused surrender him to Philip. He was thus giving aid to an enemy of his liege lord. In May 1337 Philip ordered that Edward's lands in France be confiscated and launched an invasion of Gascony. The first three years of the war did not go well for Edward, he invaded northern France in 1339 but achieved little and withdrew. Meanwhile the French attacked Aquitaine and raided the south coast of England. In 1340 Edward declared himself King of France through his mother's line. The tide turned when the English won an overwhelming victory at the naval battle of Sluys in 1340 which removed the threat of a French invasion of England.


Possessions of Henry II
Possessions of Edward III in 1330
Possessions of Edward III in 1360
ENGLAND
Calais
CALAIS
PONTHIEU
Abbeville
Rouen
R. Oise
NORMANDY
R. Seine
PARIS
R. Marne
R. Seine
BRITTANY
MAÎNE
R. Vilaine
R. Loire
ANJOU
R. Loire
TOURAINE
R. Yonne
R. Cher
Poitiers
La Rochelle
Limoges
Angoulême
AQUITAINE
R. Rhône
Bordeaux
FRANCE IN THE XIVth CENTURY
R. Garonne
GASCONY
ARMAGNAC
Toulouse
Bayonne
BÉARN
IGORRE
FOIX
Carcassonne
Narbonne
CASTILE
NAVARRE
24

In 1346 Edward landed in France leading an English army of between 7,000-15,000 men and after a short siege Caen fell and the army moved to within sight of Paris. It then crossed the Seine stalked by the French army. On the 25th August Edward's army camped near the town of Crecy and drew up his 11,000 men on rising ground his right and front protected by the river Maie his left flank by a large wood. The French would have to attack up the slope whilst exposed to the fire of the archers. At 5pm the French over 30,000 strong including 20,000 men-at-arms attacked with the Genoese cross-bow men leading. At this time a short violent thunderstorm broke out hindering the advance, the English archers fired a hail of arrows from the flanks which cut down the Genoese and the following mounted men-arms. The French made fifteen charges in all to no avail and the following morning the English counted over 1,500 French nobles including a duke and eleven counts and 10,000 commoners dead at a cost of fewer than 100 English. The capture of Calais followed. The Scots meanwhile had invaded England but were decisively defeated at Neville's Cross near Durham and their king David II captured.

As a 16 year old Edward the Black Prince the son of Edward III had shown his heroism at Crecy but it was at the battle of Poitiers in 1356 where he lead the 2,200 strong English chevauchee that defeated a pursuing 10,000 strong French army and captured the French King John II that he made his reputation. In 1360 a treaty was signed giving Edward III full sovereignty in Calaise Ponthieu Portou and Aquitaine in return he would no longer call himself King of France. The next fifty years saw a decline of English fortune with the early death of the Black Prince and the loss of many of the gains and by 1389 England held only Calais and Gascony.

Encouraged by internal divisions in France the new English King Henry V began a campaign to recover the lost territories. Raising an army of 15,000 men he invaded Normandy and in August 1415 invested Harfleur which surrendered after a two months siege but at a cost of a third of his army lost through wounds and disease. Withdrawing towards Calais he was intercepted by the French army led by the Dauphin Charles. On the 24th October Henry's army took up its battle position along a ridge near the town of Agincourt with its flanks protected by woods. The English army now numbered fewer than 6,000 men of which some 5,000 were archers exhausted, suffering from dysentery and rain soaked they faced 40,000 French men-at-arms. At dawn next day the rain stopped but it had turned the ploughed fields into slippery mud which proved a death trap for the French as they attacked under fire from the archers. The French lost some


Henry V and France
BRABANT
Calais
FLANDERS
ARTOIS
R. Somme
LUXEMB
PICARDY
Rouen
Caen
R. Orne
R. Seine
NORMANDY
Paris
BRITTANY
MAINE
Orléans
ANJOU
R. Loire
R. Yonne
Dijon
BURGU
GASCONY
English possessions at accession of Henry V
Lands recognising Henry V at his death
Burgundian possessions at Henry V's death
Lands recognising the Dauphin at Henry V's death
0
50
100
Scale
miles

10,000 men including 3 dukes 7 counts 120 barons and knights. The English lost the Duke of York the Earl of Suffolk and some 300 men. After the battle Henry marched to Calais and sailed for England. In 1417 Henry again invaded France and by the end of 1419 regained Normandy. By the Treaty of Troyes 1420 Henry V became heir to the French throne but on 31st August 1422 Henry died followed six weeks later by Charles VI of France and Henry's infant son Henry VI was King of France and England. But this was not recognised throughout France so the English and their allies continued to advance and in 1428 besieged Orleans. This was a turning point, a seventeen year old peasant girl Joan heard God telling her to raise the siege of Orleans and place the Dauphin Charles on the throne. Inspired by her leadership this was achieved and she continued to campaign but was captured by the Burgundians in May 1430. She was handed over to the English who put her on trial as a witch and was burnt at the stake at Rouen, she was just nineteen. In 1435 the Burgundians abandoned Henry VI and the financial strain of holding down so much territory in France became too much for England and by the end of the war in 1453 all that remained in English hands was Calais.

What had began as a dynastic war over feudal rights ended as a war between those that identified themselves as English or French. It lead to the break up of the feudal system and the French language replaced by the English language in England's law courts. Professor Burk ended her detailed and fascinating lecture with a recording of the Agincourt Carol that was written soon after the battle.

" Deo gracias Anglia, redde pro victoria"

Malcolm Stocker

THE REFORMATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR BATTLE

Dr Terence Clifford-Amos 23rd March 2007

Dr Clifford-Amos began this year's Robertson Memorial lecture by considering the consequences of the Reformation in the North. In 1569 the Northern Earls rebelled under the banner of Mary Stuart and, as a result of their defeat, over 700 Catholic nobles were executed and their families dispossessed of their estates. In Sussex, by contrast, where the nobility was equally Catholic, the consequences of the Reformation were far less severe as both titled and untitled Catholic gentry remained loyal to the crown and even acted as its servants. As a result their recusancy was "informally allowed" to continue, either more or less secretly, in many parts of Sussex throughout the Elizabethan period. Battle was the "most popish" town of all.

In the Tudor age Sussex was remote and difficult to reach. Isolated by "the impenetrable Weald", it remained throughout "a federation of communities controlled by country gentry" where neither the episcopate nor the Lord Lieutenant had much authority nor sought much to exercise it. Under Henry VIII, in any case the, church largely remained "Catholic without the Pope" in its religious observances. Under Elizabeth I, while Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy were passed in 1559, it was not until 1570 that the new Bishop of Chichester, Richard Curtis ,was specifically charged to enforce in Sussex the so-called 'Religious Settlement' which introduced the obligatory use in churches of the newly revised Book of Common Prayer as well as compulsory church attendance.

In many areas of Sussex by that time little compulsion was required to effect the reforms. Catholic belief among the laity was steadily eroded after 1570 on a wave of nationalism after the Northern and Western Rebellions and with imminent threats of invasion from Catholic Europe. Also most of the Sussex gentry, for example Sackville (later Buckhurst) West, Gage and Ashburnham gradually came to accept the 'settlement ' so that whereas in the 1560s over half of the Sussex gentry were (more or less secretly) Catholic, by the 1590s less than 20% were.

But this 'peaceful Reformation' in Sussex took place very gradually. Throughout the Elizabethan Age Catholic priests from Europe continued to arrive at Sussex ports to hole up (literally, in 'priest holes') in country estates where they would more or less clandestinely minister to their patron and their local flocks. To a large extent the authorities turned a

blind eye to their activities as their patrons remained loyal and dedicated to the crown; they were not seditious and did not generally plot or conspire (Thomas Howard was, or might have been, an exception) and thus there were few executions. However those who overstepped the mark in terms of the ostentation of their religious practices could lose land or position and over-zealous clergy caught with sacraments or preaching any idea of a counter-reformation might well be executed.

The only example of what might seem open defiance of the Crown, and yet which carried on with complete impunity, was in Battle itself where the Montagues kept, throughout the sixteenth Century, a large open Catholic house of 80 persons with an adjoining chapel in the Abbot's House of the former Abbey. This could be seen as ironic in that the Viscounts Montague were, in fact, 'Brownes', descendants of that same Sir Anthony Browne, servant of Henry VIII, who colluded with the dissolution of the Abbey in 1538 and received for his pains ownership of the abbey estate after the expulsion of the monks and the destruction of one of the most beautiful churches of its time in England. His magnificent gilded alabaster tomb, of course, lies in our local church.

It surprised members to learn that Sir Anthony Browne, who died in 1548, was a staunch Catholic, as were his heirs and forebears. His son (also Anthony), the first Viscount Montague, married Magdalen Dacre in 1556 at a wedding attended by the queen. Together they could be said to have virtually 'sponsored' Catholicism in eastern Sussex throughout Elizabeth's reign. They took charge of the recruitment of European priests to the area and created in Battle ,as a sort of HQ, "the finest chapel in the country" where mass was said publicly 3 times a day to some 120 persons and all feasts and offices of the dead were celebrated . After the death of her husband in 1592 Lady Montague dedicated herself almost entirely to promulgating and protecting her faith in the Battle area and became, according to her biographer, "the most worthy patroness of the holy faith and the singular ornament of the Catholic religion in England" Through her efforts Battle became known as "Little Rome", a place where people "do what they list'. Professor Clifford-Amos wondered whether this latter statement was still true of Battle people today!

After Magdalen's death in 1608 Catholicism gradually dwindled in the town as the Viscounts Montagues spent more time at their estates in Cowdray and their house in London. They eventually settled in Cowdray maintaining their Catholicism throughout the Civil War and until the end of the line in 1793.

In sum, while the dissolution of the Abbey profoundly altered the make-up of the town of Battle, and must have had a traumatic psychological effect on its inhabitants, its remoteness and the lack of central civil or religious authority (Battle had its Dean not subject to the bishops) allowed the Montagues, while remaining loyal to the crown, to 'soften the blow' of the Reformation and maintain an outpost of recusancy throughout the period. Battle also demonstrated how Catholics and Protestants could live peaceably together in a Sussex town provided there was loyalty to the crown and mutual respect. This was not, of course, always the case in this heady age or later, after the Gunpowder Plot, when cries of 'no popery' could be heard and papal effigies burned at the county's famous bonfires even into the last century.

Nick Hollington

SUMMER EXCURSION 20TH JUNE 2007-09-28
Weald & DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM, Singleton
And WEST DEAN TAPESTRY STUDIO

Blessed by one of the few fine days in June and an excellent coach driver (Dave), 24 members and friends set off for Singleton to arrive in time for coffee and our guided tour of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, a wonderful collection of over 45 historic homes, farms and workplaces rescued from destruction and restored almost to their original condition.

We'd had a popular lecture earlier in the year from the Museum Director, Richard Harris, to whom I wrote to arrange this visit. Whether he personally selected the guide or it was just luck, we surely received in Mike Farr their most experienced and knowledgeable guide who, on our arrival, announced himself at our disposal for as long as we wished. His tour was not for those who wanted superficial gimmicky knowledge. Although Mike's expositions inside each building were clear and often colourful, he did not 'dumb down' in any way and gave us the full benefit of his huge in-depth knowledge of both domestic architecture and social history. Furthermore, true to his word, Mike carried on way past his appointed slot to deposit those who wished at the new Gridshell Building for a separate tour. This first timber gridshell building in the UK has won many awards and houses the Museum's conservation workshop and a fascinating collection of rural artefacts.

After lunch there was some free time to wander or sunbathe by the lake before leaving for West Dean College only 5 or 10 minutes away. Dave just managed to steer the coach through the college's narrow wrought iron entrance gates to park right outside the door. Caron Penney, the Director, led us through to the Tapestry Studio where we were enthralled not only to hear what they are doing now but to actually see them at work. The Studio, one of only 5 such studios in the world, works to commissions using traditional Gobelin techniques, dyeing all of its own yarn according to the colour palette. The process starts with artwork and a scaled line drawing called a 'cartoon'. Then the weaving begins and we saw the final stages of 'The Unicorn is Found' being woven on the huge loom as well as the original colourful designs a young artist is working on for the altar rail of a local church and the kneeler he had already completed. The studio was also preparing for the vernissage of an exhibition of its work ('Interwoven') at Petworth House to which the Society was invited.

Amazingly, leaving just before the rush hour, we had a clear run back to Battle to end what some participants called 'a perfect day', thus warming the heart of the excursion organizer, as did the Treasurer's news that the trip had broken even. (But come on society members, support these excursions or lose them!)

WINTER PROGRAMME 2007-8

Friday, 12th October
Commemoration Lecture
IDENTITY AND STATUS IN THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY:
THE ICONOGRAPHIC AND ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE
Dr Michael Lewis, Deputy Head of Portable Antiquities and Treasure,
The British Museum

Friday, 26th October
Social Evening: Lecture with wine & light refreshments
WITHOUT LET OR HINDRANCE: THE HISTORY OF PASSPORTS
Mr Martin Lloyd, Author

Friday, 9th November
"MAY THE LORD GOD HELP RUSSIA !"
TSAR NICHOLAS II AND HIS FAMILY IN 1917
Fr T. A. McLean Wilson and colleagues

Friday, 23rd November
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2008

Friday, 11th January
SIGNIFICANT ASTRONOMICAL EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND
Mr Guy Hurst, Editor of 'The Astronomer' Magazine

Friday, 25th January
ANGLO-SAXON MANUSCRIPTS
Prof. Michelle P. Brown, University of London

Friday, 8th February
THE BATTLE OF STALINGRAD – HOW THE RED ARMY TRIUMPHED
Dr Michael K. Jones

Friday, 22nd February
LINKING THE PAST: CONTINUITY OR CHANGE AT BUTSER ANCIENT FARM?
Steve Dyer, Archaeologist

Friday, 14th March
A BRIEF HISTORY OF ACOUSTIC EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS
Dr Richard N. Scarth, The Romney Marsh Countryside Project

Friday, 28th March Robertson Memorial Lecture
KIPLING'S BOY JACK
Mr Hugh Miller

FIRE

Fire can be a frightening thing,
But to all, good news I bring.
With a Stirrup Pump –quite small,
You need not be scared at all.

Water-buckets, two or three-
The hose for you, the pump for me;
One to carry too-
And that's all you have to do.

Little water is required,
"Three" can pump, when "Two" is tired.
Just keep your head, and if your bold,
A hefty blaze is soon controlled.

Say this over till you tire,
"Spray" for Bomb and "Jet" for Fire.
It's important, - don't forget,
For Bomb use "Spray", for Fire use "Jet."

Gently open wide the door,
Get down flat upon the floor.
Even though a big fire's there,
Near the floor you get more air.

On your elbows creep around,
Keep your head close to the ground.
Hose hold high, and- don't forget,
Which is "Spray" and which is "Jet."

Another thing to understand,
To,- always keep your hose in hand.
'Tis your life line in the gloom,
And helps to guide you from the room.

Don't waste water! Reasons three
(Just as they were told to me,)
About six gallons is enough,
So, no need to waste the stuff.

Too much water causes smoke,
Blinds your eyes and makes you choke.
Flames are bad, but Fumes are worse,
Fire's a foe, but Smoke's a curse.

Remember poor old "Number Two"
(The Chap who works the pump for you)
Pumping's hard on any man,
Try to save him all you can.

Damage (this is widely known),
Isn't caused by Fire alone.
A little water – on the spot-
Acts just as well, and saves a lot.

If you've done as you've been told,
Your pump is worth its weight in gold.
Keep your head and don't forget:
For Bombs use "Spray", for Fire use "Jet."

Source : Item K4 - " Siren Songs" a book of poems by Norah Hurdman , Air Raid Warden. All profits from the sale of the booklet went to the Spitfire Fund.

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PER BELLUM PATRIA

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