Battle and District Historical Society

JOURNAL

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BATTLE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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 Programme of illustrated lectures given by specialists.
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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Miss. M Millar MA
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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT for 2008-9

Judging by the comments I have heard the programme of the Battle & District Historical Society was enjoyed by the Society's members. The credit for this must go to the lecturers and to Julie Ede and latterly Malcolm Stocker who prepared the programme. Joanne Lawrence Nick Hollington and Trevor Devon who organised the visits to places outside Battle also deserve our special thanks. Joanne has now retired from the committee after many years of skilled service and she was presented with a token of our appreciation. Although these expeditions were all successful in the end it has proved a thankless task organising them. Too many people leave it until the last moment to decide whether to participate. For both financial and practical reasons (such as booking for group entry to exhibitions) makes the organiser's lot if not unhappy, certainly difficult. So we have decided to end this part of our activities for the time being. Our secretary Neil Clephane Cameron and our treasurer David Sawyer continue to keep the essentials of the Society in good order. As chairman I am particularly in their debt.

Also as Chairman I venture to express opinions which I suppose are not really part of an annual report so I apologise but I think that they need saying!

When somebody loses their memory it is very sad; amnesia is never considered an advantage. There are disturbing signs that we as a nation are losing our common memory and that this is accepted by governments and much of society. There is a great deal of talk of the need to strengthen a sense of "Being British" but this cannot be done in a vacuum of understanding what "Being British" derives from namely our history.

Opinion polls have repeatedly shown an astonishing ignorance of the basic facts of history especially among young people. For instance according to a recent poll about half the adolescent population do not know the year in which the Second World War began This is in spite of the war memorials in nearly every town and village, the huge numbers of books and articles the frequent television and wireless broadcasts and many famous films about the conflict. There are also the memories of those over 75 most of whom were in their early sixties when the present 18 year olds started school.

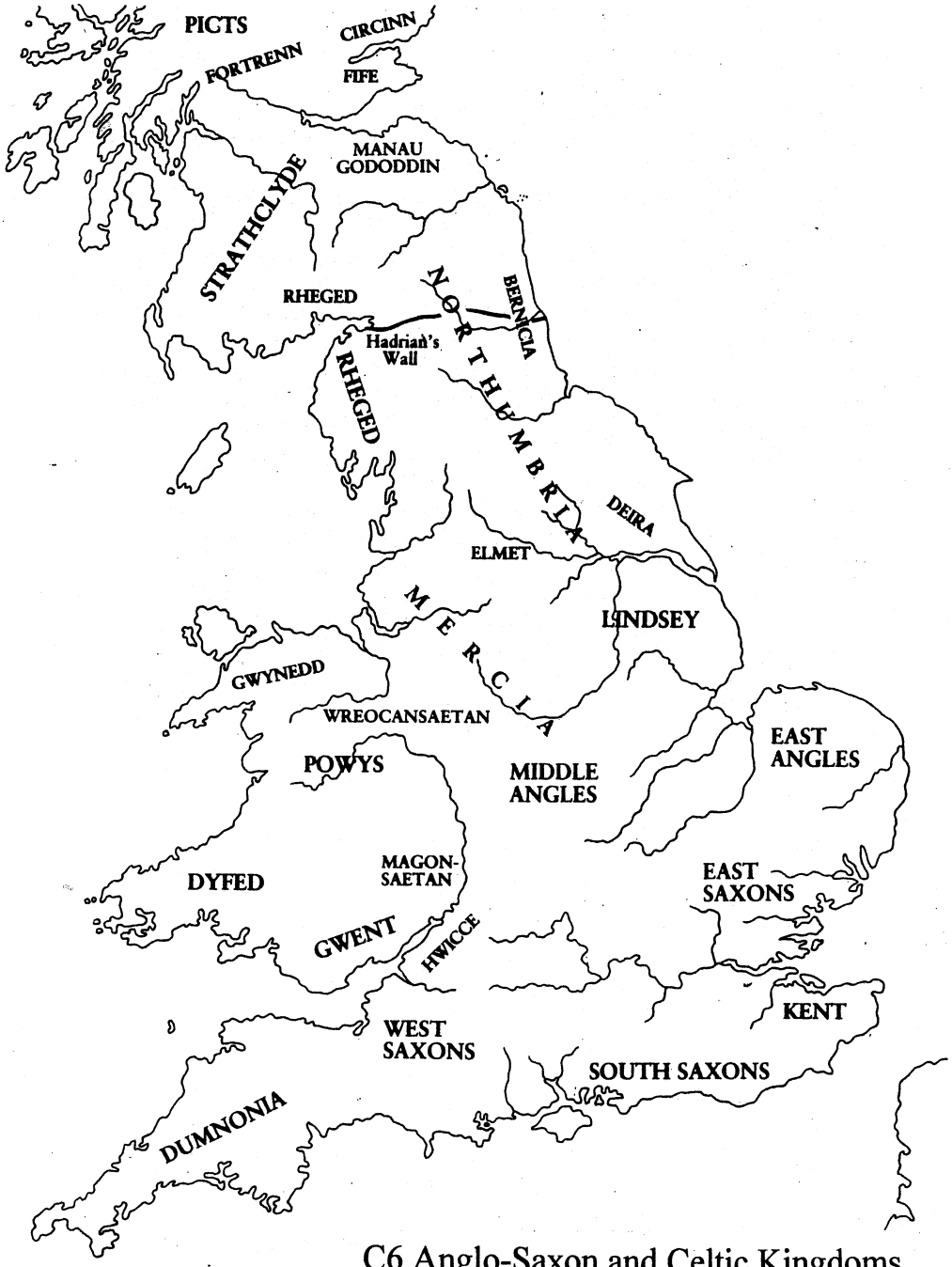
Of course dates on their own are boring but in context they illuminate and inform. To try to understand the past without chronology is like trying to study medicine while remaining completely ignorant of anatomy. History is the tale of what happened next and why. Without a minimum of shared awareness of our shared although varied backgrounds there really can be "no such thing as society" and no national solidarity.

With this in mind the Society plans to celebrate the 60th anniversary of its foundation at a special meeting on Saturday 23 October 2010. There will be a day of meetings which the Dean of Battle has kindly agreed can be held in the parish church, which for centuries has played a central part in the life of Battle.

The subjects for consideration will be of national importance but with special reference to Battle.
The first will be about an aspect of the Normans who literally put us on the map
The second will be about the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII with special reference to the Abbey which is our most famous building and the source of much of our commerce.
The third will be about the Gunpowder Plot the foiling of which is so vigorously celebrated by the Battel Bonfire Boyes every November to the advantage of many local good causes.
The fourth will be a look back to Britain in 1950 the year of our foundation

So we will show how events and people that still influence our lives are part of local and national history – part of the inheritance which has shaped the character of the British people. So we will demonstrate the truth of our motto "Per Bellum Patria" The literal translation from the Latin is "Through Battle the Fatherland" but "Patria" has more resonance than "Fatherland" containing the ideas of ancient legends and nation, shared history and geography. Even today most people have heard of 1066. We have the opportunity to remind ourselves and I hope others of why that is the case and why it matters

Richard Moore Chairman



C6 Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Kingdoms

EARLY ANGLO SAXON KINGDOMS

Professor Barbara Yorke 10 October 2008

Barbara Yorke began her lecture with a map of Anglo Saxon Britain which showed the country divided into some 13 or 14 kingdoms, not all existing at the same time as a result of inter-kingdom warfare. Despite the Norman Conquest many of boundaries of these old kingdoms remain as administrative districts to the present day.

What is a kingdom? Bede in his "Historia Ecclesiastica" written in 731 AD (we are very dependent upon Bede) was quite particular on what constitutes a kingdom, it must have a Bishopric. From a range of information he had gleaned from various sources he had to establish a chronological order of kings and the areas in which they held sway. Of Ireland at this time we have no details.

Where do kings come from? What is a king? They appear to have derived from the elected leaders of the Anglo Saxon settlements in the 5th and 6th centuries AD recruited by the Romano-British population to help defend the country against further seaborne attacks, following the departure of the Romans. The period of the 5th century saw major climate change in Western Europe which led to the migration of people from Denmark, Sweden, Norway and North Germany. In the 1stcentury AD the Roman historian Tacitus made a study of the Germanic people. He found that they chose their kings by their birth and their military leaders for their skill and prowess. Not all tribes had a king but in an emergency, say the threat of war, elected military leaders, some of these later declared themselves kings "as we are ever successful at war we must be blessed by the Gods"

We were then shown a slide that located where the treasures found in the famous Sutton Hoo ship burial came from; they ranged across Europe from Sweden to Constantinople. This highlights that there were greater contacts between Britain and the Continent than we may have imagined. Behind all Anglo Saxon kingships the link with the past era of the Roman Emperors was expressed.

The first king which we know something about was Oeric who was King of Kent; he was succeeded by Octa, then Eormenric then Ethelbert. In AD 597 he was the first king to be converted to Christianity. They claimed to be related to Hengist (old Norse for horse) and Horsa (another horse!) not necessarily real

people but horse deities. When the Kent King and his people were converted to Christianity what were they to do with their pagan ancestors? The missionaries convinced the converted that these ancestors were not Gods but ordinary people; sensibly however they were accepted as heroes. All the written sources of these Kent kings indicate that they were successful war leaders at a time when war was absolutely horrific, killing off all the males on the losing side, pillage and rape and making slaves of the rest, it was extremely profitable for the victors. The most successful kings became overlords of minor kings who had to pay tribute.

There was order behind this seeming chaos; all of Anglo Saxon Britain was divided into taxable areas measured in hides (the land occupied by the South Saxons, present day Sussex, was valued at seven thousand hides). One explanation of how this came to be established is that when the Anglo Saxons came to Britain there already existed a Roman system that they took over. The country was more organised than one might think but it could easily be overturned say when a king was killed and his land taken.

Coinage was developed by the 7th century AD, and special supervised trading places established e.g. at Southampton, London, Canterbury and York where traders were protected by the King's Reeve. Coinage was first introduced in Kent which was closer to the Franks on the Continent and was then copied by other kingdoms in Britain.

What was the impact of Christianity on kings and succession? Until you have a king to protect traders and missionaries you cannot carry out conversions, it was a top-down process, kings were the religious conduit. Which areas of Europe were the richest? The warm Mediterranean where the Christians were, the pagans lived in the cold wet north, a lesson made by the Pope's missionaries. Kent converted first then others followed, when Anglo Saxons were admitted into the church establishment is less clear. The traditional pagan burial mounds could be and were converted into Christian sites.

Right up to the Norman Conquest, bishops were appointed by the kings, the former bringing some improvement in the latter's behaviour. Alfred the King of Wessex could read and write and studied Christian texts and had them translated into English. A great soldier but a philosopher king. Christianity had made a difference to Anglo Saxon Kingship.

Malcolm Stocker

THE BODIAM BANQUET
HIGH STATUS FOURTEENTH CENTURY FOOD

Alan Stainsby 24 October 2008

Alan Stainsby has been a member of the BDHS for over ten years. He has also been a volunteer at Bodiam Castle for many years. In this latter capacity he has been required to "bring to life" our local Castle when talking to school children, especially whilst in the domestic room and when taking them on a tour. Being a purely "mechanical cook" (his words), and an ex-policeman, he thought he should use his investigative skills to research Bodiam's kitchen and the meals which might have been produced there. The lecture he then gave and his slides proved he had done just that. There are no details available of the food served at Bodiam, so Alan suggested his audience might like to pretend how a feast might have occurred.

The feast, which would have taken place at mid-day, would have been to celebrate an event, e.g. a christening, birthday or important visitors. Sir Edward Dalyngrigge would have been seated at the high table in the Great Hall with its high ceiling and facing the three arches leading to the kitchen. (Very few ladies would have been present, only his wife and one or two others.) There was probably a screen in front of these arches, with a gallery over for musicians. His other guests would have sat at tables down the two sides of the Great Hall, facing into the room, where there would have been a central fire burning. The Hall would have been illuminated from the large windows.

Research has shown that kitchens of this period were all approximately the same size, i.e. 24-ft x 24-ft. At Bodiam there is a well in one corner of the kitchen, with pigeon holes let into the walls above, which would provide fresh meat. It is believed there were three meatless days per week at the Castle. There was a large open fireplace together with an oven. A large store of wood would have been kept in the kitchen for fires and oven; one small, covered, fire being kept alight all night to relight the main fires in the morning. The risk of fire being ever prevalent, in later years the kitchen became separated from the main house. Research has shown that wood was burnt in the oven and when hot, the wood raked out and the oven used for baking purposes. Trivets and cauldrons were used for cooking. The similarity between breast-plates used as armour and cauldrons, both having been riveted together, was made.

It is thought the kitchen would also have had a buttery and pantry, together with a clerk's room. Again these two rooms would have been of similar size to other castles i.e. 12-ft x 12-ft. They were used to store beer and wine (water could not be drunk because it was known to be contaminated and would make you ill), flour, spices and utensils etc. Records show that Lord Curzon discovered a cellar during his excavations. Alan informed his audience that the kitchens were male establishments, with male cooks and an almost hierarchy for serving food, this being passed from one up to another, with the top man serving the Lord first. Everyone would have their own eating knife but wooden or pewter spoons would have been provided.

The Great Hall might also have had a sideboard on which to display any gold or silver objects. The drink was also served from the sideboard. We were informed that people of this time were not the gluttons, throwing food about and swigging wine or beer, as we have seen in films. They were very civilized and would have washed their hands on entering the Great Hall before the feast. It was customary to eat in pairs and the steward would present a platter from which you selected one or two items which you put on your "trencher" (piece of dried bread; at the end of each course these were given to the poor and a new one issued).

Alan then distributed a menu for a Meat-Day Dinner with six courses. The courses were not dissimilar to modern day banqueting with nibbles, a starter, a fish course followed by a roast, pudding and sweets. He stressed that the senses, sight, taste, etc. were very much involved in such a feast and suggested that in each course there might have been alternatives and the portions would have been quite small. "Entertainment" was also "served" in between the courses and took the form of a stuffed life-size swan, a boars head spitting fire and in one case a castle with a live man inside !

Alan's slides were delightful, although as he said, some were artist's impressions. His slide of a feast showed the very pointed shoes which were in vogue at the time and remarked that the 24" long points worn by lords and gentlemen had to be tied to the legs to prevent the owner from falling over !

An extremely informative lecture and I suspect many in the audience went home planning their next Christmas banquet with possibly a stuffed swan centre-piece instead of the usual candles and holly !

Diane Braybrooke

HISTORY OF THE OMNIBUS IN SUSSEX.

John Bishop. 14 November 2008.

The nominal title of the talk was "The History of the Omnibus in Sussex";- in the event, John Bishop treated the Society to a wallow of nostalgia - on film- of trolleybuses in Southern England; the last days of trolleybuses in Bradford and the story of the short-lived Top Line dereg--ulated bus service in Hastings and Eastbourne.

Mr. Bishop made the interesting point that street traffic changes at a far greater rate than the buildings by which it passes and it was clearly apparent that the increase in traffic volume would have driven the con--vent ional tramway and trolleybus networks off the road. In fact, lack of investment and obsolescence had already done this.

It was a delight to see again London and Hastings trolleybuses and to re--call that the round-about by the Cooden Beach Hotel was built to allow the vehicle a turning circle at the end of the long journey along Cooden Drive. Hastings trolleys lasted for 30 years before withdrawal in 1959; London followed shortly thereafter. The last trolleybus service in the UK ran in Bradford and ceased in 1972 thereby bringing an end to a form of transport that was quiet, clean and environmentally friendly.

The story of the Top Line service in Hastings was an interesting comment upon the ill-advised deregulation of Public transport in October 1986. Too many bus companies competed against each other for too few customers. The result was inevitable- none of them made any money.

From the writer's point of interest -i.e. an unreformed transport buff- the films were a joy and John Bishop's commentary amusing and "different." What we did not hear was the History of the Omnibus in Sussex but we did learn some amusing anecdotes. Dogs could get an electric shock when relieving themselves against trolleybus tyres and folding doors would often exclude the passenger but admit his cigarette.

DAVID SAWYER.

TRADITIONAL TRADES CRAFTS AND INDUSTRIES OF KENT AND EAST SUSSEX.

Richard Filmer. 9 January 2009.

Members expecting to hear a talk on Rorke's Drift were unexpectedly - because of the indisposition of the speaker- treated to a lecture on the subject of Traditional Crafts and Trades of Kent and East Sussex. No-one was disappointed.

Richard Filmer's talk was a delight- he spoke affectionately about a way of life that had survived to the 21st century but which was on the cusp of disappearing. He illustrated his talk with wonderfully evocative slides and explained the country ways and practices in fine detail. These were real skills and had lasted for centuries. Clearly mechanisation and modern techniques have replaced some of them but others defy progress and are probably not replaceable.

What is a threat is the change of taste and habit in Society and the simple economics of a business premises being more valuable as a development site than for anything that can be manufactured within it. And, of course, the apprenticeship that some of these trades require is unattractive to young people who are not wooed by solitary and lowly paid employment. Few youngsters would wish, for example, to follow the highly skilled trade of cricket ball assembly. This requires a particularly esoteric ability to produce a ball of a precise shape, size and weight. We saw a slide of this very craft and it was obvious that the worker was probably the last of an exclusive breed.

Charcoal burning is an occupation that survives well. Not surprisingly what looks simple is actually highly specialised. As with so many of these crafts it is solitary and uncomfortable. It *can* involve the worker remaining by a smouldering heap of branches for five days to prevent the possibility of stray sparks causing fires when blown by a changing wind.

Another interesting snippet was that oak bark has a commercial use. It is rich in tannin and a valued ingredient of the tanning industry. Leather has been largely replace by synthetic substitutes but there is still a market for bespoke footwear such as military and hunting boots. We saw a slide of a skilled craftsman (in his eighties) who prospers, with an order book filled for twenty years. This veteran still used a deer bone to apply the final polish- modern technology has not come up with anything better, !

Cask making is a traditional trade that survives and which requires incr--edible precision. Barrels contain an exact quantity of 36 gallons and are assembled by coopers whose eye and deftness of touch can produce a

watertight keg that uses neither nail nor glue.
Coppicing still thrives and is an essential feature of woodland manage--ment. Each wood harvested has a particular use.
Chestnut, for example, is weather resistant and can be used for hurdles, fences and gates. In the past the fences were thatched to shelter Romney Marsh sheep whilst, in Scotland, they are still excellent snow protection. In the orchards of Kent, chestnut wood provided long, stout ladders with splayed feet.
Silver birch does not weather but is tough and resilient. Appliances that are not left out in the open can be made from it;- hay rakes and malt shovels.
Hazel is a particularly flexible material and can be woven as wattle. In earlier days the wattle could be daubed with straw and mud as a basis for house construction.
Willow is not coppiced but pollarded ;I.e. the branches are chopped at six feet to encourage new shoots. The cropped wood is used to weave baskets and one slide showed a lorry piled high with a mountain of baskets destined for the old Covent Garden market.
Wooden wagon wheels use a combination of elm for the central hubs, oak for the spokes and ash or beech for the rims. The iron tyre has to be pre--cisely forged and applied within two seconds.
The whole lecture was full of such treasurers and Mr Filmer could clearly have told us much more. Hopefully he will return ....

DAVID SAWYER

THOMAS PAINE: REVOLUTIONARY

David Powell 23 January 2009

David Powell gave an interesting and eloquent talk on the life of a charismatic figure whose words were quoted by President Barack Obama in his inaugural address. Paine's beliefs have been subjected to many interpretations and he has suffered from various different viewpoints, for instance Roosevelt referred to him as "a filthy little atheist" while Napoleon thought him "worthy of a gold statue in every town"

Paine was born on 29 January 1737 in Thetford Norfolk, the son of a Quaker corset maker. He attended the local grammar school but as the Quakers were generally regarded with deep suspicion he was not allowed to learn Latin or any foreign language. On leaving school he went to sea but returned to become an apprentice corset maker. After another spell at sea he went to London where he was appalled at the contrast between the lives of the rich and the poor. Extensive changes were taking place at that time in society including the enclosure of common land, the industrial revolution and also the revolt against British rule in America. His philosophy was influenced by these factors and also by the harsh laws at home e.g. there were 111 capital offences on the Statute book including relatively minor ones such as face-blacking, poaching and moving fence posts.

In 1768 Paine obtained a post (in which he remained for six years) as an Excise Officer in Lewes. This was a risky job at that time as the smugglers in this area (such as 'the Westfield gang') were notoriously brutal. The pay for an Excise Officer was £48 per annum but this included £20-30 expenses for a horse. Eventually in 1774 Paine left Lewes after being sacked for protesting about the poor rate of pay. At this period Lewes was a bastion of non-conformity and at the town's 'Headstrong Club' he met John Wilkes (1727-97) a member of the 'Hell-fire Club' noted for free speech and a self-styled 'friend of liberty'. Edmund Burke was initially a friend and supporter but following the French revolution he turned against him. At this time he also met Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74), and his friend Benjamin Franklin (1706-90) an agent for Massachusetts. The latter suggested that Paine should emigrate to America and gave him a letter of introduction. After a difficult crossing of the Atlantic he recovered his health and wrote and published "Common Sense" advocating American independence which quickly became a best seller. This was followed

by drafting the 'Declaration of Independence' on 4 July 1776, written in conjunction with Jefferson. Although it stated that "...all men are created equal" a reference to the abolition of slavery was removed before publication.

The war of Independence progressed and by Christmas 1776 the King's Hanoverian army had been routed at the Delaware river. For the next five years Paine was heavily involved in American politics. In 1781 at Washington's suggestion he went on a mission to France to borrow money from the king to fund the war against England. During his absence in France Paine was tried and found guilty of seditious libel in an English court. When the Revolution started in France he was optimistic about its outcome and was granted honorary citizenship despite the fact that he could not speak French. Returning to London he wrote "The Rights of Man" which was published in 1791. The reforms advocated included many items which later appeared in the Beveridge report of 1945 such as the provision of free healthcare, education, pensions and general welfare. Foreseeing the bloodshed of the Jacobin inspired "Terror" he returned to France and pleaded for the life of King Louis. In 1793 a warrant was issued for Paine's arrest he was imprisoned but narrowly escaped execution. Paine was released in 1794 and readmitted to the Convention. Following the fall of Robespierre he was released Later he met Napoleon and discussed with him plans for the French invasion of England However as Napoleon became more of a dictator he condemned him as "the completest charlatan that ever lived"

In 1802 he returned to America where his views on religion expounded in "The Age of Reason" were generally condemned. Possibly influenced by his Quaker background he believed in the existence of a god (Deism) but rejected revealed religion saying "my own mind is my own church". Congress gave Paine a farm at New Rochelle, New York where he was buried after his death in 1809. Bizarrely his remains were excavated by William Cobbett who intended to return them to England. However somehow they were lost and have now completely disappeared.

My own interest in and admiration for Tom Paine was limited until I heard this lecture which has considerably re-inforced my knowledge.

Ann Stocker

EARLY HISTORY OF FLIGHT & FORMATION OF RFC

Col. John Nowers **13 February 2009**

British military interest in flying was first roused by Royal Engineer officers attached to the Federal army's balloonists in the American Civil War. As the scientific corps of the Army the Royal Engineers investigated and developed the military application of flight. Experimental ascents by tethered balloon were made from 1862 to 1873 and in 1878 a grant of £150 was made for the production of balloons and field equipment at Woolwich Arsenal. A key figure was Captain James Lethbridge Templer of the Middlesex Militia an experienced aeronaut with his own coal gas filled balloon who was appointed Superintendent of the Balloon Factory. Working with regular RE officers training began in1880 at Aldershot with tethered balloons and some free runs. In 1882 the Balloon School transferred to the School of Military Engineering Chatham.

In December 1882 Templer made a free flight with Lt. Agg-Gardner and Mr Walter Powell MP starting from Bath in fine weather which deteriorated and on hearing the sound of breaking waves they descended close to the cliff edge at Bridport. In danger of being swept out to sea Templer threw out a grapnel and told the others to jump, he and Agg-Gardner did but Powell did not and was never seen again. The wreckage was later found in the French Alps.

Two main problems of ballooning, producing hydrogen in the field and the envelope material. Templer solved how to compress the gas into steel cylinders and the envelopes were made from the gut of an ox by a secret process by the Weinling family who entered Government service for thirty years.

In 1886 balloon detachments were sent to Suakin to support the Gordon relief expedition and to China at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. In 1900 three detachments took part in the Boer War. The arrival of the internal combustion engine and its application to airships and aeroplanes led to the move of the school from Aldershot to Farnborough later to become the Royal Aircraft Establishment. Soon afterwards Col. Templer retired though acknowledged as the father of British military aviation he received no recognition for his service.

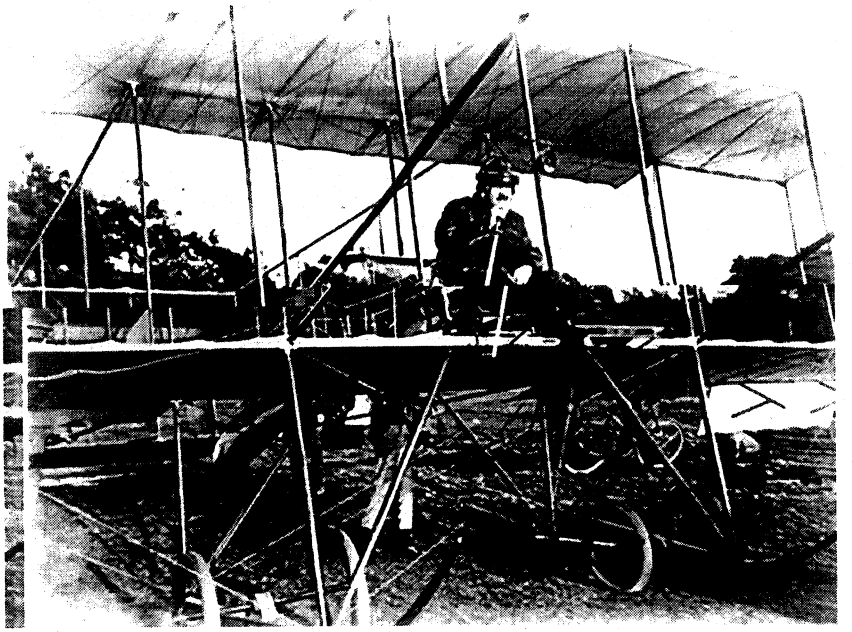
The Army wanted airships and aeroplanes but had only a second hand 50hp Antoinette engine purchased for its first airship Nulli Secundus. Attempts to get the Wright brothers to enter British service failed meanwhile another American Samuel Cody who had perfected man lifting kites became instructor to the Royal Engineers. Cody built his own aeroplane borrowed the engine and made his first flight of 50 yards on the 16 May1908. His later flight on the 16 October

is recognised as the first powered flight in England. In August 1913 he was killed in a crash and was buried in Aldershot Military Cemetery.

Dirigible no.1 flew in 1907 and variety of aircraft appeared. At that time if you bought a plane the designer taught you to fly it. Lt. Cammell bought a Bleriot and gave demonstration flights along the south coast but was killed in an accident in 1911 the first soldier to die on flying duties. In April 1911 the Air Battalion RE was formed and No.1 Company with airships balloons and kites at Farnbough and No2 with aeroplanes at Larkhill Salisbury Plain. No training in flying was given a man was expected to pass his own pilot's licence the War Office gave a grant of £75 towards the cost. A board chaired by Lord Kitchener decided that flying was no longer an experimental business and that a separate air arm should be formed to become in 1912 the Royal Flying Corps. The Royal Engineers responsibility for flying came to an end. Later in 1918 the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service combined to form the Royal Air Force. Many Sappers continued to fly with the RFC and three of these won the Victoria Cross in the Great War, Hawker, Mannock and McCudden.

Colonel John Nowers had given the Society an excellent and informative talk on the little known history of the formative years of military aviation.

Malcolm Stocker



SECRET SUSSEX RESISTANCE IN WWII

Stewart Angell 27 February 2009

One of Britain's best kept secrets of WWII was how our speaker Stewart Angell described the Home Guard Auxiliary Units. In May 1940 a Colonel Gubbins was instructed to set up highly secret resistance groups called Auxiliary Units, a deliberately non-descript title using the Home Guard as a cover for their real purpose. An Intelligence Officer was appointed to the 12 operational area units. The Auxiliary Units were organised into small Scout Patrols recruited from men who had a good local knowledge of their surrounding area. Potential recruits were vetted and required to sign the Official Secrets Act and placed on the strength of a Home Guard battalion, the 203rd battalion for the Southern England. None of these battalions were officially recognised and therefore were not covered by the Geneva Convention.

East and West Sussex had a total of 24 patrols with a total strength of 139 men, Hampshire 47 and Kent 33. The smallest patrol numbered four men and the largest eight, the attached map reproduced from Stewart Angell's book "Secret Sussex Resistance" 1940-44 shows the location of the Sussex patrols. The training of the men who would form the patrols was undertaken by the Intelligence Officers and specialist regular soldiers. The men were issued with Instructional manuals disguised as "The Countryman's Diary 1939", and training in guerrilla warfare, use of explosives and unarmed combat was undertaken at Coleshill House Highwoth Wiltshire an isolated manor house set in extensive grounds. Tottington Manor Small Dole West Sussex was the regional headquarters for the Sussex units. The patrols were equipped with rifles, Tommy guns, grenades, plastic explosives, wireless and field telephones. Reserves of ammunition, food and water were stored in carefully concealed underground hideouts. In the event of a German invasion the patrols would occupy the hideout and operate usually at night behind enemy lines attacking vehicles, ammunition dumps, small army posts and sniping. They would also gather intelligence for the opposing British forces. A letter dated 8 August 1940 from Duncan Sandys to the Prime Minister (reproduced in Stewart Angell,s book) details progress of the Auxiliary Units.

Our speaker then described at length with the aid of diagrams and photographs the design and construction of the patrol's hideouts which were to a basic plan of a concealed entrance a lobby with store and Elsan toilet either side leading to a larger area some 22ft. by 10 ft. and 8ft high fitted with bunks and an escape tunnel at the far end (never to be used as an entrance). They were ventilated naturally and connected to a look- out post by telephone. Situated in woodlands they were dug by hand, many by Canadian R Es who would not have known

where they were! Constructed of timber and corrugated iron and covered over with soil and plants most in the intervening years have collapsed and are lost.
In his research Stewart Angell managed to interview some of the surviving members of the Sussex patrols hearing first hand of their training and experience. Regretably we did not hear from our speaker what was their thoughts when they volunteered for this hazardous duty, how did they react when they found out that their anticipated operational survival period was two weeks? Or to the danger of reprisals to their families and local communities. Perhaps these were too difficult to discuss even now over sixty years on, but a missed opportunity as most of these brave men are now deceased.

On the 30th November 1944 all the Auxiliary Units were disbanded and later the members were given a commemorative lapel badge but no other recognition was made of the existence of these units. We were privileged to hear this almost forgotten episode of WWII.

Malcolm Stocker

ANGLO SAXON BROOCHES

Dr Andrew Richardson 13 March 2009

Our speaker asked us to look at and remember his first slide as he said he would be referring to it throughout his talk which was as a result of his work in the Portable Antiquaries Scheme.

The slide showed a beautiful silver brooch which Dr Richardson explained was a dress accessory used exclusively by women to hold items of clothing together. This might have been a single brooch on a cloak or a pair of brooches to fasten the tubular dress of the time at the shoulders.

Numerous brooches have been found on the Kent and Sussex boundary dating from the 5th and 6th centuries. Many were made in Kent by Scandinavian migrant workers from copper alloys with gold, silver and garnets, etc used for decoration. Various art styles were used but three main ones have been identified, which brought us back to the original slide of the brooch which was of cruciform shape.

The Quoit Brooch is of Germanic origin and has a geometric design.
The Nydam Brooch has Norwegian/Scandinavian designs and is based on Roman designs.
The Bernhard Salin Brooch has designs from mythology, cults, gods and religion and often portrayed a horned figure with a spear.

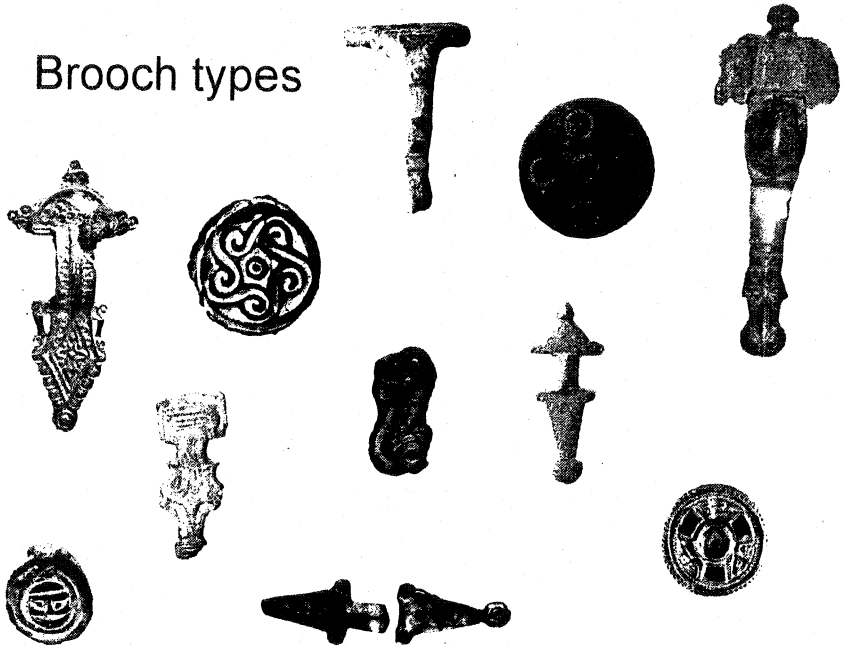
The Saucer Brooch is, Dr Richardson explained, a Saxon Brooch, the design of which copies that of a shield and is roughly the size of a modern 50 pence piece. Artists and craftsmen worked together on the design, i.e. cross, saucer, square headed or button and also decided on the materials for embellishment, i.e. gold, gold leaf, glass, etc.

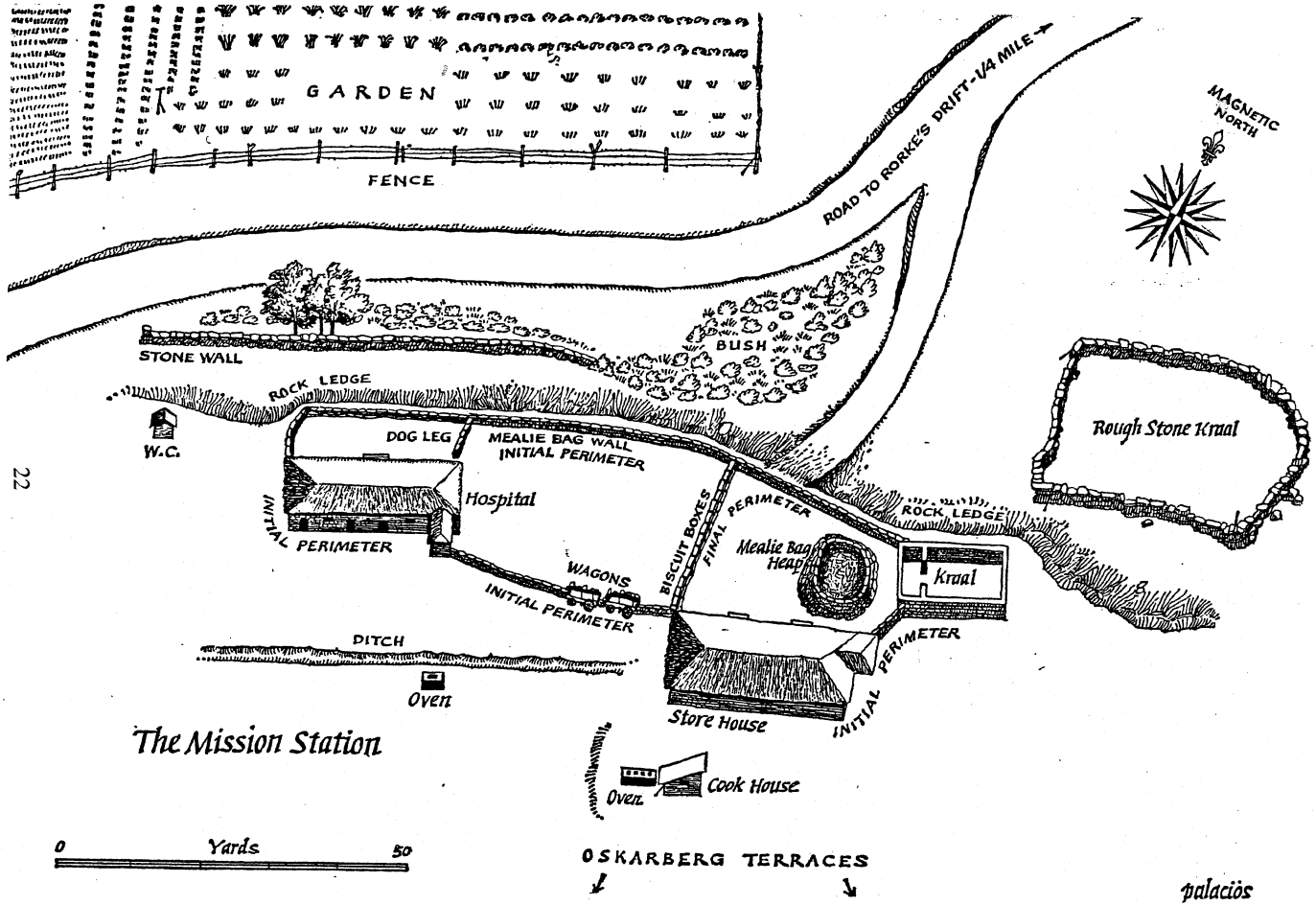
The majority of the brooches found, of many different designs, have been excavated from graves, although some were casual finds. Because a brooch is a small item and can easily become unfastened and dropped, hundreds would have been lost and when found the site would not have been registered. With the age of the metal detector, more are being found resulting in the more finds being registered. From those which have been registered none have been found in the Weald which was not highly populated at that time, the others only where communities had been

established, for example on the coastal areas. The styles of individual craftsmen are easily identified and similar styles of brooches have been found in Kent, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and also in Northern France. Dr Richardson told his audience that the Dark Ages was a formative period with a regular exchange of objects and ideas with cross Channel links and although the original brooch design came from the shape of a shield, they were culturally accepted by Saxon women.

Another thought provoking lecture which illustrated the ability of the Anglo Saxons to produce not only beautiful but also useful objects.

Diane Braybrooke





Plan from The Washing of the Spears, Donald R Morris 1966

THE BATTLE OF RORKE'S DRIFT

Dr. Adrian Greaves 27 March 2009

Originally programmed to be given in January but postponed as the speaker Dr. Greaves had lost his voice, tonight he was audible throughout the hall without the aid of a microphone and regaled us with a tale of courage of the British soldier and the Zulu warrior illustrated with his photographs of the sites of the battles which remain virtually unchanged from 1879. From his study of the Zulu war and his visits to battlefields he concluded that the popular film 'Zulu' did not tell the true story and he would attempt to present what actually happened.

In 1814 the Dutch colony of Cape Town was ceded to Britain. As the Dutch farmers (known as the Boers) had moved northwards they had encountered the African Xhosa people who were coming south which led to conflicts known as the Kaffir Wars. Many of the Boer settlers were unhappy with the British Administration so in 1835 thousands undertook 'The Great Trek' across the Val and Orange rivers to establish the Transvaal and Orange Free State. They also settled in Natal which was annexed to become a British colony. The British forces in the ninth Kaffir War were led by Lord Chelmsford and he achieved an easy victory over the Xhosa by the traditional tactics of lines of infantry firing volleys. This may have contributed to the general underestimation of the military capabilities of the Zulus which, unlike the Boers, the British not experienced. The powerful Zulu kingdom which bordered Natal and Transvaal was considered a threat by the High Commissioner Sir Bartle Frere so without the authorisation of the British Government issued an ultimatum to Cetshwayo the King of the Zulus in December 1878. The ultimatum which had to be accepted within 20 days or face military action required; (1) The dismantling of the Zulu army system (from the age of 16 until 60 a Zulu male was placed in a regiment which made up the Impis). (2) Mature Zulus to be allowed to marry without royal consent, one wife only. (3) Missionaries to be free to teach in Zululand. (4) A British Resident to be installed to advise the King.
The conditions were totally unacceptable to Cetshwayo who declined so on the 11 January 1879 Lord Chelmsford's army crossed into Zululand.

To forestall an attack on Natal, Lord Chelmsford divided his army of some 16,000 including 9,000 native levies, into three columns, the largest the Central under his direct command marched east from the Helpmaker hills, the Coastal from the SE coast and the Northern, with the plan to converge on the capital Ulundi. This was a potential weakness as they could be attacked separately by larger Zulu forces. The regular red-coated professional infantry comprised of eight regimental battalions each of eight companies (approximately (100 men) equipped with the single shot breach loading .45 calibre Martini-Henry rifle,

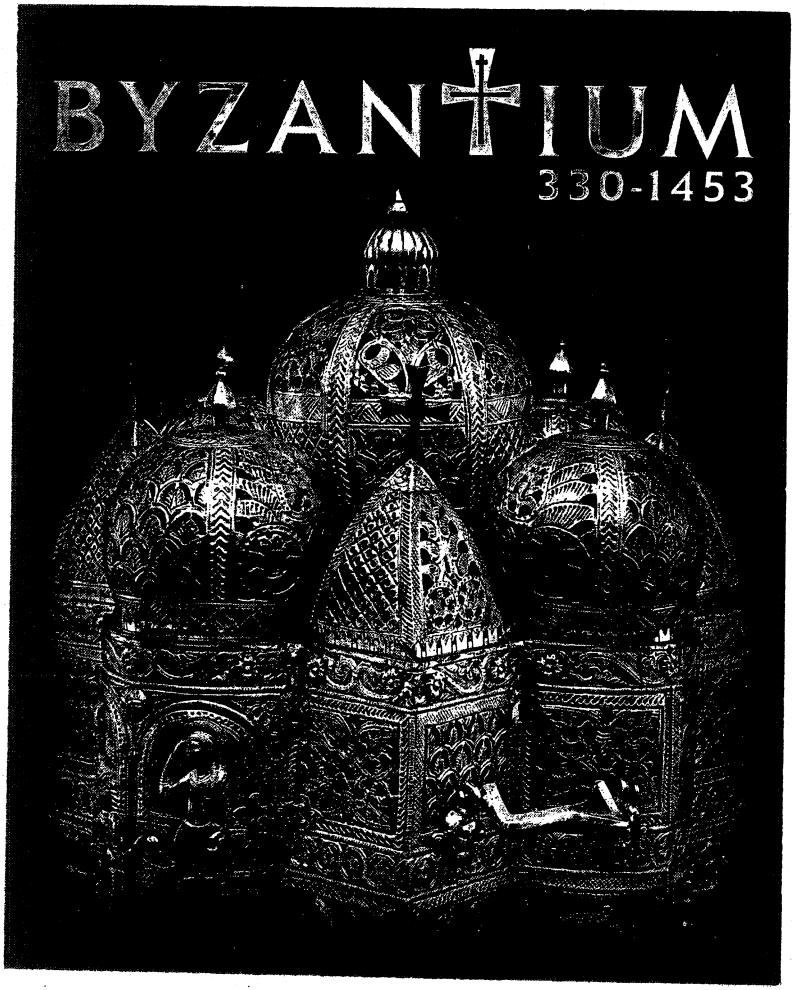
supported by artillery. Chelmsford advanced from the Helpmaker hills some 10 miles (at 2mph) and set up camp at the foot a mountain called Isandhlwana leaving behind a small force at Rorke's Drift mission station to protect the Buffalo river crossing and the army's stores and tend the sick. This was made up of B company of the 2nd battalion 24th regiment (Warwickshire Regiment not then called the South Wales Borderers according to our speaker), commanded by Lt. Gonville Broomhead. In charge of the river crossing was Lt. John Chard Royal Engineers, and Captain Stephenson a colonial volunteer with 300 Kaffirs.

At Isandhlwana on hearing that Zulu concentration had been seen (a decoy) Chelmsford set out on 22 January with part of his force to intercept them.
Col.Pulleine stayed in charge of the camp with 800 regulars and 400 African auxiliaries and 2 guns. The tented camp was not considered to be under any threat but at 11am a huge Zulu force appeared on top the hills opposite; this was part of an Impi of 20,000 warriors. Outnumbered 30:1 the British companies drew up in a line in front of the camp some three feet between each soldier, leaving the back of the camp unprotected. The Zulus attacked from the front and by an undetected force from the side overwhelming and killing the defenders. Only a few managed to escape, including Lts. Coghill and Melville who would be caught and killed later. Chelmsford returned to discover this disaster and wonder what was the fate of the garrison at Rorke's Drift?

It was not until the afternoon when two horsemen Lts. Vane and Adendorff galloped into the camp bringing the news of the disaster and telling Chard and Broomhead that a wing of the Zulu Impi of 4500 warriors was approaching. Led by Dabulamanzi, Cetshwayo's half brother, he and his warriors had not taken part in Isandhlwana and therefore were keen to have their share of glory and spoils.
For the defenders to retreat would be suicidal so encouraged by Sgt.Major Dalton it was decided to stand and fight. With the aid of plans and photographs he had taken Dr.Greaves explained how the station was fortified and defended.
Work started immediately on reinforcing and heightening an existing perimeter ledge with heavy biscuit tins and mealie sacks from the stores. The perimeter extended from the rear of the hospital to the front of the storehouse. The north side was enclosed but the south side was more exposed with the hospital having four unconnected rooms with doors opening directly to the outside. These were hastily blocked up with mealie bags and the walls loopholed. In these rooms were the sick that it was too late to move, those that were able assisted the soldiers allocated to hold these rooms. At this point Otto Witt the owner of the station fled towards Helpmaker to join his family. More serious was the defection of Capt. Stephenson and his African auxiliaries leaving just over 100 men to defend the now overlong perimeter. Chard now ordered a new wall to be built across the centre of the yard that separated the hospital and the store which

would give a shorter perimeter to defend when the outer perimeter could no longer be held. The Zulus attacked on all sides but with little cover they suffered heavy casualties and made little progress against the walls and store but concentrated on the external rooms of the hospital the thatch roof of which was on fire. The conditions in these rooms must have horrendous, the noise and smoke from the Martini-Henry rifles in a confined space, stabbing assegais, blood and cries, and by six o clock the men in front and in the hospital could hold out no longer and had to withdraw across the yard in the dark to the shorter perimeter. The defenders in the rooms had made holes through the separating walls with their bayonets and managed to drag and pull some of the sick and wounded through to and across the yard though four patients died as did three of the defenders. Despite terrible casualties the Zulus continued to attack through the night until 4am in the morning but by sunrise they had gone. After nearly ten hours of hand to hand fighting the British losses were 17 killed and 7 wounded, the Zulu losses were estimated at 500 dead plus wounded.
Eleven Victoria Crosses were won at these battles, one at Isandhlwana and ten at Rorke's Drift.

Malcolm Stocker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BDHS EXCURSIONS 2009

Last Autumn the BDHS Excursions Team (Joanne Lawrence, Trevor Devon and Nick Hollington) enthusiastically put together a programme of 5 varied trips that, when advertised in the initial brochure, seemed to attract great interest from members. However, not all of these trips could be organized.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY — 18th February 2009

This trip attracted 30 people and featured a visit to the Byzantium exhibition in the morning, a break for lunch and a private tour of the Madjeski rooms in the afternoon. The main event was the exhibition of Byzantine art, spread over several rooms, comprising everything from intricate gold, ivory and mosaic domestic objects to large icons and even massively carved wooden city gates. The descriptive material was particularly well presented, covering both the history of the Byzantine Empire, centred on Constantinople from AD330 to 1453, as well as the different art forms. The exhibition certainly illustrated the extraordinary splendour of the Byzantine period.

The afternoon tour of the Madjeski Rooms was a more intimate part of the day with a really knowledgeable guide taking us around the historic rooms of the upper floors of the Royal Academy. These rooms illustrated the various developments of interior décor courtesy of famous Academicians and featured displays of original works of art submitted by Academicians on being admitted to the R.A. At the conclusion of a fascinating tour, we were taken up to see the famous one metre circular Taddei Tondo marble sculpture by Michelangelo Buonarrot of The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John.

On the coach trip home it was very evident that everyone had greatly enjoyed the day out to see both the amazing Byzantium exhibition and the impressive Royal Academy itself.

BEXLEY'S BEST KEPT SECRETS — 28th May 2009

Again 30 participants took the opportunity to discover Bexley's surprising secrets on a fine late-spring day. In the morning we visited **Hall Place**. Very few of us knew of this stunning Tudor Mansion, based on a medieval Hall House, with a Stuart red-brick addition and a lovely Restoration Courtyard. The mansion has been fully restored and has only just reopened to the public. After a guided tour of the

house we had time to explore the beautiful formal gardens and to take lunch in the Riverside Tea Room or picnic in the park.

Our second secret, **Danson House**, only a few miles away, is a classic Georgian Palladian villa with a sumptuous interior. Built for wealthy merchant John Boyd in 1766, it has been entirely restored to its original design after facing collapse in the early 2000s. Knowledgeable guides took us through the gilded Dining Room, the glittering Octagonal Salon and an impressive library with an organ, then up the dramatic elliptical staircase to the arcaded gallery from which radiate the family bedrooms. We had time for tea and scones in the Breakfast Room overlooking Danson Park and a quick stroll in the park before returning to Battle.

In a single day we had witnessed – in Bexley – almost the whole history of English domestic architecture before 1800. We only weren't sure whether we should keep these fabulous secrets to ourselves – or tell the world.

WALKING TOUR OF LEWES & DUNGENESS/DENGE MIRRORS

Unfortunately these two 'own transport' trips based on previous Society lectures, could not be organized for reasons beyond our control. The repairs of Lewes Castle were not completed on time and a suitable date for the owners of the Denge Mirrors site could not be found. It is hoped to organize these outings next year.

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Both our coach outings this year were extremely well received by their participants. They reached a sufficient number to cover the cost, but barely so, and it has become too much of a struggle to find sufficient people for such trips, with the nagging anxiety all the time that an excursion might be run at a loss. Therefore we did not proceed with the planned late-Summer excursion to Chartwell and have, with the Committee's approval decided that **the Society will not run any further outings by coach this coming year and until further notice**. My willing hard-working team ran these excursions - as they have always been run - as a service to the Society, but an insufficient number of members now support them. However, many thanks to our loyal band of members and friends who regularly came on these trips and fully enjoyed them – as we did.

Nick Hollington

WINTER PROGRAMME 2009-10

2009

Friday 16 October
Commemoration lecture
THE ZEAL OF THE SPIRIT. MONKS THE DYNAMO BEHIND A NEW EUROPEAN CULTURE C9-C14 Patricia Wright

Friday 30 October
SAMUEL PEPYS A MAN OF HIS TIME
Jean Bannister

Friday 13 November
BRITISH SLAVE TRADE & ABOLITION 1760-1807 Professor David Killingray

Friday 20 November
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Photographs of old Battle and surrounding villages

Friday 11 December
SEEING IT THROUGH THEIR EYES (an entertainment) Michael Gandy

Illustrated lectures and the AGM are held at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall Battle
A complimentary glass of wine will be available at the end of the Commemoration , December & Robertson Memorial lectures. Coffee is served at other times

2010

Friday 15 January
IDEA to ITEM HISTORY of SILVERSMITHING 1238 to date
Alan Moore

Friday 29 January
HOPS & HOP PICKING
Richard Filmer

Friday 12 February
ELSIE BOWERMAN Survivor of the Titanic
Judith Kinnison Bourke

Friday 26 February
ARCHAEOLOGY of the DEFENCES of EAST SUSSEX from the TUDORS to the PRESENT Chris Butler

Friday 12 March
STUART LONDON
Ian Beavan

Friday 26 March
Robertson Commemoration Lecture
IN THE FOOTSTEPS of the LEGIONS
Mark Parry Nash

BDHS Research Group History Project

The past year or so our activities have been dedicated towards recording and indexing the BDHS document collection held in the Battle Museum. While that task is still ongoing, the indexing process and creation of a computer database is now sufficiently advanced for the Group to consider its original mission, that of undertaking a comprehensive historical research of Battle.

During the next year a prospectus for initial research studies will be prepared and distributed to all members of the Society to solicit active participation in any of the projects. It is hoped that by this means we can set up small, specifically focussed research teams that can be coordinated by the Research Group towards the goal of the first collective history of Battle.

In addition, we are aware that a number of individual historical studies are being undertaken by local people for their own purposes, e.g. family history, tracing houses and businesses, military and eccesiastical history. It would be of great benefit to the BDHS Research project to know of these studies and wherever possible obtain a copy of any material that might be available.

A History of the Parish Church of Battle.

Battle Abbey's surviving Chapel.

Published this summer of 2009 the above History researched and written by a member of the Society recounts the Parish Church's history from the twelfth to the end of the nineteenth century. It recounts the circumstances of its inception through its several phases of enlargement to its controversial Restoration in the second half of the nineteenth century supervised by a Church based organisation which was also the de facto ruling council of the town of Battle.

All these topics and others not previously covered are contained in this colourfully and well illustrated, fully referenced book; a must for all interested in the history of Battle.

The book may be obtained directly from the author and publisher, Clifford Braybrooke, at 17, Dukes Hill, Battle. TN33 0LD.

The book is priced at £20. (If required to be posted please add £2).

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PER BELLUM PATRIA

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