BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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CONTENTS

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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN

I have before me the Society's TRANSACTIONS FOR 1950 - 1951 which record a Battle community meeting in the church hall in November 1950 with its decision to form a Historical Society, the inaugural meeting of December and the first lecture at the Pilgrim's Rest in January 1951, Dr L F Salzman on "What to look for in Archaeology"; with the visits during the year to places of local significance. Almost half a century later one surveys the Society's latest year, with its lectures on the King's German Legion, the Crusades, Anglo-Saxon Jewellery, Bede, the eleventh-century church in England, Bronze Age excavations at Eastbourne and Pevensey beyond its castle. Visits continued: to Syon House and the palace at Richmond, Windsor Castle with its post-fire restoration and the local abbeys of Robertsbridge and Bayham. The library re-catalogued, the JOURNAL in its third year, new members welcomed. As my term of office comes to an end, I would like to express my thanks to the Committee and other members beyond, for their success in keeping the Society prospering; and to wish it many years of making known the history of Battle and its locality and its relationship to the centuries of national history. Sadly I have to record the death on November 15th of Mr Peter Harding. Peter Harding was a devoted member of the Society and the Committee; and from 1988 to 1996 as Honorary Treasurer built up the financial security we have today. His funeral service overflowed with representatives from Battle's community who expressed to his widow Mrs Hilda Harding and members of his family their sympathy and sadness at his passing and their gratitude for his work for Battle.

J F C Springford

MUSEUM TRUST REPORT

The complete redecoration and refurbishment of the Museum during the winter undertaken by Anne Ainsley with her many willing helpers has brought widespread approbation. It was indeed, an enormous project which took numerous hours of hard effort. Sadly Anne has had to resign as Curator but thankfully she will continue on the committee.

The Museum had a total of 5526 visitors during the season, a slight increase on last year and the accounts show a small surplus. Ten school groups have attended for talks and guided tours.

Audrey Swann, the Education Officer, has in addition been the Museum's representative on the Rother Museum's Group committee, working with a firm of consultants to assess and advise each of the six museums - an enormous task.

Continually bombarded with demands about the Internet, www, CD roms, marketing and fund-raising, health and safety, job descriptions etc., it has been a very hectic and worrying year, far removed from the normal routine. There is now an Abbey Museum and next year, two "Discovery" rooms on the Battle of Hastings and the History of the Town are being opened in the Abbey gateway area for schools and families, so we are facing possibly overwhelming competition. Do come to join us if you are interested in helping the Museum.

Derek Akers

JOHN SPRINGFORD

Some years ago I read the autobiography of a retired General and when I reached the end of the last chapter, concluded that I doubted very much if I would have found him a congenial companion. I may well have misjudged him, for in recounting his time in Sudan he paid special tribute to the work of the British Council staff there and making particular mention of one John Springford who was also, he said, the organist of Khartoum Cathedral.

I suspect that John displayed in Sudan the same qualities that made him such a splendid Chairman of the Historical Society; quiet efficiency, helpfulness and diplomacy. These attributes he has used to considerable effect, not only as Chairman of our Committee, but also as the Society's representative on some outside bodies in whose work we have an interest.

John took over the Chairmanship at a difficult time when there had been what was probably the largest bulk turnover in committee membership in the Society's history. Yet very quickly the new members assumed the responsibilities vacated by the old and were working as an energetic team. While at the helm he has not been content with "steady as she goes". In instituting the Research Group whose labours have already resulted in a paper on "The Deans of Battle, 1588 - 1660" (to be found in the library) he has made something of a return to the early days of the Society; when in addition to a programme of excellent lectures and enjoyable outings, members took part in archaeological digs. This resumption by the Society of a more active role is much to be welcomed.

I am told that, at Committee meetings, John was prone to lapse into Latin. This must have been disconcerting to members, but will inevitably have raised the tone of the proceedings.

NON OMNIA POSSUMUS OMNES (We are not capable of everything). Maybe so, but John is clearly capable of many things.

Keith M Reader

EDITORS NOTE

Members are reminded that the Society's Constitution has been amended to include the new Life Membership category. Copies are available on request to the Honorary Secretary.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this journal and who have assisted in its production. Responsibility for the facts and opinions contained herein, rest, as ever, entirely with the author.

Dawn Elliott, Editor

THE KING'S GERMAN LEGION IN BEXHILL

Mr Fred Rye 23 January 1998

Mr Rye began by talking about the barracks in Bexhill. Before the Napoleonic period barracks did not exist; soldiers were just billeted on the local populace. However at the time Napoleon had become a threat, there was such unease about the french revolution that the government decided that if the locals continued to be obliged to house the troops, they might become fractious or even rebellious and carry the troops with them. So barracks were the answer. Bexhill was chosen because Napoleon had troops massed across the Channel at Bologne, together with a fleet of shallow draught boats and had also said that he would land where William the Conqueror had landed. Bexhill was at that time a small village on the top of a hill with extensive views to both Eastbourne and Bulverhythe.

In 1803 George III was in reasonable health and taking an interest in the military. George, as well as being king, was also the Elector of Hanover; his son the Duke of Cambridge was Viceroy. In the summer of 1803 Napoleon sent an army of 14,000 men against the Electorate. The Duke wished to fight, but the Hanoverian politicians did not wish to as they feared that they would lose. It was thought prudent to evacuate the Duke and his entourage back to England. The Duke's men thought the world of him and the officers, NCOs and men followed the Duke, landing mostly at Portsmouth. There were infantry, artillery - horse and foot and cavalry - light and heavy, they just kept coming. By the end of the year the Duke was instructed to form the King's German Legion. There were 1,350 officers and 29,000 men. They were part of the British Army formed into regiments, three light dragoons, three light hussars, infantry consisting of two light battalions, eight battalions of the line and two batteries of horse artillery and a number of foot artillery. They were commanded by Col. (later General) Carl Von Alten and fought valiantly alongside British regiments during the Peninsular Wars. In 1815 at Waterloo, Wellington positioned part of the Legion alongside famous British regiments and they fought particularly hard at the La Haye Sainte Farmhouse, holding it until their ammunition was finished and they had to fight with butt and bayonet. Only 40 men survived to make their way back to the Lines.

With the peace treaties of 1815, there was no need for a large army and so the remaining members of the King's German Legion went back home and were assimilated into the New Hanoverian Army.

Joanne Lawrence

THE ORIGINS OF THE CRUSADES

The Rev. Herbert Cowdrey 13 February 1998

There can be little doubt that the audience was prepared for a review of eleventh-century Byzantine Christendom, Holy Land and a Moslem world into which the Seljuk Turks had made their intrusive appearance. But the speaker began with the proposition that the crusading movement came to life through deep developments and pressures in western Christendom itself generations before Pope Urban II's sermon at Clermont in November 1095 triggered the first crusade. The empire of Charlemagne had, with its powerful monarchy, provided public peace for the time. But this had crumbled, not least south of the Loire in France where local lords from their castles terrorized countryside and community (Stephen's reign in England, when "God and his saints slept" might be recalled). The Church stepped in, seeking through councils to restore peace and eradicate violence. It has been argued by Carl Erdmann that what transpired was a diversion to transfer such violence to targets outside the Christian world, whether in Spain or the eastern Mediterranean; while those responsible for enforcing peace, the armed knights, could form a force ready to take part in a holy war.

From this, however, Marcus Bull dissented. The Aquitaine "peace movements" were of limited effectiveness; while the "broad knightly class" turned out in fact to be a small group of great nobles whose early involvement in such movements, in time faded. None the less, did the movement revitalize a concept of peace in western Christendom stemming from ancient Rome, from writers such as St Augustine and Jonas of Orleans, and from the Carolingian Empire perhaps still in remembrance? Peace and concord. Who were to be their authorities, lay rulers first seen in Aquitaine, or the popes and bishops of a papacy ever growing in strength after the reforms of 1046? The Emperor Henry III of Germany (1039-56) set an example. Abbot Berno wrote to him of the undreamt of peace and concord within his realm. Having thrashed the Hungarians, Henry re-established the defeated king Peter on his throne in a spirit of reconciliation. Beside this can be observed Gregory VII's interceding in France during his pontificate (1073-85), accusing Philip of ruling "inutiliter" - unbeneficially and in Germany where he deplored the devastation of the land and its churches, killing and persecution of the poor. Henry struck back. It was Gregory's pronouncements themselves which had disrupted the scene. The conflict between them persisted.

Eventually the concept of "peace", fostered by the clergy, began to win ground in Normandy and Flanders in France and even in southern Germany though here the process had begun of the peace being imposed by the temporal ruler, not the

prelate, Henry IV himself initiating a peace in 1103 extending to the whole of his realm. Even so, Urban II had eight years before, at Clermont, decreed a "truce of God" which must contribute to stability in the west while the Crusaders were away. "Every day monks, clerks, women and those with them should remain at peace...on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday an injury inflicted will not be deemed a breach of the peace...but in the other four days it will be, and punishment will ensue".

In conclusion, by the time of the first crusade, there was a demand for peace and concord, whether promoted by the pope or temporal ruler. Gregory's fear was that departure from it would plunge western Christendom into disorder; while only the papacy could promulgate such peace. His successor Urban used the German movement to criminalise violence, to inveigh against the Seljuk Turks' treatment of eastern Christians and their attacks on the realms of Byzantium. Of course spiritual benefits, the concept of pilgrimage and of holy war, not to say temporal rewards, played their part in assembling the host of knights for the first crusade. None the less it was the preceding centuries' contemplation of peace and concord among themselves which led men to think of Christendom as a whole. It set the stage, if it did not play the major role, in the motivation and the ideology of the crusading movement.

A question after the lecture - "What part did the English play in all this?" Answer - "None".

John Springford

ANGLO-SAXON JEWELLERY

Mrs Leslie Webster 27 February 1998

Mrs Webster started her lecture with an Anglo-Saxon text called 'Maxims' which comprised of proverbial sayings for the instruction of the audience. "These fitly belong - gold on a man's sword, exotic ornament and jewellery on a woman, as an arrow for the poacher, rings for a bride, books for a student and with a heathen, sins". Jewellery and treasure were very important for the Anglo-Saxons as their literature, annals and archaeology bear out. Jewellery signified power and status, but also identity, whether tribal, religious or personal, it brought luck, good or bad, sometimes even curses. For centuries it was the last and most intimate thing to accompany the dead into After Life and in times of trouble it was the most precious thing to be buried for safe keeping until better times returned. In poetry, jewellery was most jealously guarded by dragons, the adornment of queens and the

gift of kings.

Mrs Webster defined the topic. To most of us today jewellery means brooches, necklaces and rings worn by women, but in the Anglo-Saxon mind it included the equivalent decorated male dress accessories. Sword fittings for example. Weapons were so very important in Anglo-Saxon culture and the fittings on a fine sword was one of the ways to express wealth and status. They were made in gold and decorated with filigree and semi precious stones. Shields were also a status symbol and in particular men went in for decorated buckles and belt mounts. In the later Anglo-Saxon period rings became an important part of men's jewellery as were brooches, as seen illustrated in the Bayeux Tapestry as in the scene of the priest and the lady, where he is shown wearing an elaborate brooch on the neck of his cloak.

The Anglo-Saxon period lasted for about 600 years from 410 AD to 1066 AD. It was a long period full of change and upheaval, both political and social and this reflected in the jewellery. However we need to bear in mind how disparate the evidence available is, particularly in comparisons between the early, so called pagan, period - the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries, where most of the surviving jewellery comes from grave assemblages and the later period from the 8th century onwards, where the deposition of grave goods ceased and our sources come primarily from hoards, rural and urban settlements and casual losses. So from the 8th century the quality of our evidence is much poorer. We then saw many very beautiful slides of some of the British Museum's collection of Anglo-Saxon jewellery. Mrs Webster illustrated how some of the jewellery was used - to pin the shoulders of dresses and to close the bottoms of sleeves, as strap ends and buckles and to close purses. Jewellery was portable wealth also - one could not easily lose one's gold and silver when one was wearing it. Jewellery also denoted regional origin. Bede wrote that the population of those days comprised Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The Angles settled in East Anglia and further north their brooches were in cruciform or long shape. Saxons on the other hand, who settled in the Thames valley, Essex, Surrey and Sussex were influenced by the late Roman period and had brooches in the shape of discs or saucers. The Jutes who Bede said came from Jutland and settled in Kent and the Isle of Wight, were clearly influenced by the Scandinavians, using animal forms in their decorations. They also showed Frankish influences denoting trade across the Channel.

To end, Mrs Webster pointed out that we should not forget the Romano-Britons. They did not all depart west when the roman army left, some of them assimilated with the local population and there are clues that some of the jewellery in the museum was made as late as the 6th century in Roman workshops in this country,

that were producing some elegant and very beautiful jewellery. Mrs Webster ended by showing some slides of Sutton Hoo treasure, that are surely some of the most beautiful and precious things that the British Museum owns.

Joanne Lawrence

THE WORK OF THE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

Mr Roger Povey 13 March 1998

Roger Povey, County Archivist, addressed the Society on the work of the East Sussex County Record Office (ESCRO). He explained that ESCRO was responsible for looking after the Archives of East Sussex and the separate authority of Brighton and Hove. They were obliged to maintain the records by cleaning, resorting and reconstituting the material and by arranging, listing, indexing, sorting and generally ensuring its preservation and, whilst so doing, making material available to scholars and researchers. Most research (60%) involved family history and ESCRO now provide an in-house research service which is a financially rewarding facility. The next most popular area of interest is house history, but this is actually, quite a difficult subject, not least because the custom of numbering houses is fairly recent thus making old properties, particularly in towns, difficult to identify.

Anecdotally, Mr Povey mentioned that material came from various sources, public and private, the most bizarre being documents retrieved by a JCB from a council rubbish tip. Equally strange were some of the requests for documents. One researcher asked to see ancient parchments, not to read them but to analyse the pattern of wool holes and so ascertain the wool yield of medieval sheep!

The earliest records date back to 1100 and come from Battle Abbey; additions are still (and will always be) made. Old documents are difficult to read for a variety of reasons. Before 1733 official records were written in latin; only from that date were they required to be in English. Documents from the middle ages were commonly latin or norman french. Even latin scholars would find the heavily abbreviated script difficult to decipher and of course, the handwriting is elaborate and ornate and requires experience to understand.

Mr Povey stressed that most records were not consciously written for posterity and were normally truthful; researchers should advisedly not allow their prejudices and

assumptions to blind them to what the documents actually say.
The variety of records relating to Battle were then listed and include :-
(i) Official records - County Council from 1889; Electorial Registers back to 1837.
(ii) Records of civil authorities - Borough; Parish; Urban District Councils. Extensive records and correspondence from Rye Borough (Rye being the normal crossing route to France for many years).
(iii) Lord Lieutenant reports. These reflect the responsibility for the defence of the county in the Napoleonic War. In 1803 a census of resources was taken to detail what was available in the county in the way of livestock, weaponry and even stacks of corn. It includes plans to evacuate one third of the coastal area to deprive the French of these resources.
(iv) Local courts of law - Quarter Sessions; details of transportations. The local House of Correction (in Battle until 1853 for the east of the county).
(v) Police records back to 1840.
(vi) School records, including the journals formerly kept by head teachers in which they recorded school life.
(vii) Care of the poor. Before 1830's the parish was responsible. In 1835 the Poor Law Union created the workhouse (Battle Hospital). Full records exist from 1835 to 1930 (still semi-used to 1948).
(viii) Records of Sewer Commissioners. This body had the responsibility, especially in the 17th century, for embanking rivers and reclaiming fertile lands, maps etc.
(ix) Records of manors and hundreds. These include a very extensive manorial record of Battle Abbey from 1645 to the 20th century. Earlier records are in America but ESCRO have micro films of these.
(x) Church records - Parish Registers from 1609; Church Warden accounts from 1630; Vestry minutes from 1657; Methodists (1827); Unitarian (1780 - 1928); Wills proved by the Dean of Battle 1531 - 1850 (Battle being a Royal Peculiar).
(xi) Battle Abbey estate records. The estate passed on the dissolution of the monasteries to the Montague's and were sold to Sir Thomas Webster in 1721 who added to the estates. His descendant in the 19th century, Sir Godfrey Webster, a profligate friend of the Prince Regent wasted the estate and sold the muniments for the derisory sum of £350. These records were passed eventually, in 1923, to the Henry Huntington Library in America, where they remain. The Webster family records however, are at ESCRO and contain a wealth of material (over 400 volumes) on the administration of the estate, as well as personal material such as Great War letters.
(xii) James Woodhams' valuation books 1861 - 1946.
(xiii) Records of the Battle Tannery.

(xiv) Battle Golf Club 1894 - 1905.
(xv) Bexhill and Battle Conservative Association (the old Rye Division back to 1886).
(xvi) Maps from the 18th century including tithe maps - a rich source.

The remainder of the talk was illustrated by slides and included fascinating examples of early documents, including the 1100 Royal Charter of Henry I to the Abbot of Battle.

Another showed how documents were repaired. ESCRO never replace missing parts of documents nor do they rewrite. It was crucial that restoration be obvious.

A further slide showed part of the early 15th century account roll of Battle Abbey which had come from the Manor of Alciston. This manor had been sold to the Gage family in 1530 and the roll had thus escaped being included in the records now in America (the manor had the duties of the Almoner of Battle Abbey).

Other slides showed extracts from the great Rental Survey of 1433 - 1434 (listing manorial tenants) - the Charter from the Crown by which Battle Abbey was granted to Sir Anthony Browne; a beautiful illuminated roll, 20ft long, of the Pedigree of the Oxenbridge family of Brede.

The wealth of material - much of it relating to Battle manorial records is vast and little researched; a fruitful ground for the Society perhaps!

David Sawyer

THE VENERABLE BEDE
The Robertson Memorial Lecture

Professor Henry Mayr-Harting 27 March 1998

Bede, commonly called the Venerable Bede was born in Northumbria in 672 and as a child of seven was placed in the twin monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth. These were formed a few years earlier by Benedict Biscop, who was a warrior and who had travelled widely. He had formed a close relationship with Rome and had brought to the monasteries books, pictures and artifacts from the Mediterranean. So Bede would have been familiar with the works of such people as Pope Gregory the Great and always followed his teaching that priests however exalted should be humble and penitent.

His works cover a wide field in theology, science and history. The most important in the eyes of his contemporaries and no doubt, his own, is his Ecclesiastica Historia. His methods were to use allegory. His aim was to hand on the learnings of the Fathers and not to enliven it with contributions of his own. The popularity of Bede's works was proved by the numerous manuscripts which were copied during the middle ages.

Bede's interest in chronology arose from the pascal controversy regarding the date of Easter between the Roman and Celtic churches. He came down firmly behind the Roman church but his great contemporary, the Irish Aidan, was firmly on the side of the Ionan Celts. His Historia Ecclesiastica was written over a fairly short period and is in clear and vigorous latin. It was used in the compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles in the 9th century and from that time onwards has occupied a prominent place in the work of every serious historian who had concerned himself with the earliest phases of English history. In Mean's Patrologa Latina, there were 5,000 columns of Bede's work. The Ecclesiastica Historia occupies 200 - 250 columns and if we add his works of hagiography, his Life of Cuthbert and other biographies, you get at the most 1,200 columns. Of the 3,800 columns left, all are allegorical interpretations of the scriptures. Bede corresponded with scholars outside Northumbria and these contacts, together with the magnificent libraries at Wearmouth and Jarrow make it clear that he was no solitary scholar working in a remote part of northern England. He was a historian, skilled in the control of his material. He was also a master of the art of vivid narrative and his story has lost none of its freshness through the ages. Never had the voice of an Englishman carried so clearly across the centuries.

The best summary of his life is that which he appended to his own Ecclesiastica Historia; "I have passed the whole of my life within the walls of that monastery devoting myself entirely to the study of Scripture. Amid the observance of the monastic rule and the daily charge of singing in the church, it has been my delight to learn, or to teach, or to write.

Joanne Lawrence

BATTLE'S TUMBLEDOWN STILE

Mr David Hasted 9 May 1998

This lecture was arranged as the result of a letter originally to the Museum Chairman and passed to the Society, from Mr David Hasted of Harrogate, a

specialist on stiles, drawing attention to the existence of a "tumbledown stile" just of Battle Hill, a historical legacy which could well be preserved. The stile, which stands at the entry to the footpath across the fields to Crowhurst, was thereupon examined, its timbers particularly below ground discovered to be in poor condition and discussed with the Town Clerk of Battle and the Footpaths Officer, East Sussex County Council. As a result, East Sussex County Council would be looking to its repair and conservation and might consider a replica to be constructed and placed elsewhere.

The Society decided to arrange a lecture offered by Mr Hasted, on the lines of the 1997 lecture on the wall paintings of St Mary's Church, ie. open to Historical Society members and also other parties interested, the local authorities, Battle Ramblers and others; and this took place in the Methodist Church Hall, chosen for its proximity to the stile which would be visited as part of the occasion. Incidentally it was learnt from the Ramblers during this visit that the stile had been moved by local authorities some fifteen years previously further away from the Battle Hill road. Further along the footpath was a second (step) stile erected by the Battle Chamber of Commerce in 1953 to commemorate the Coronation.

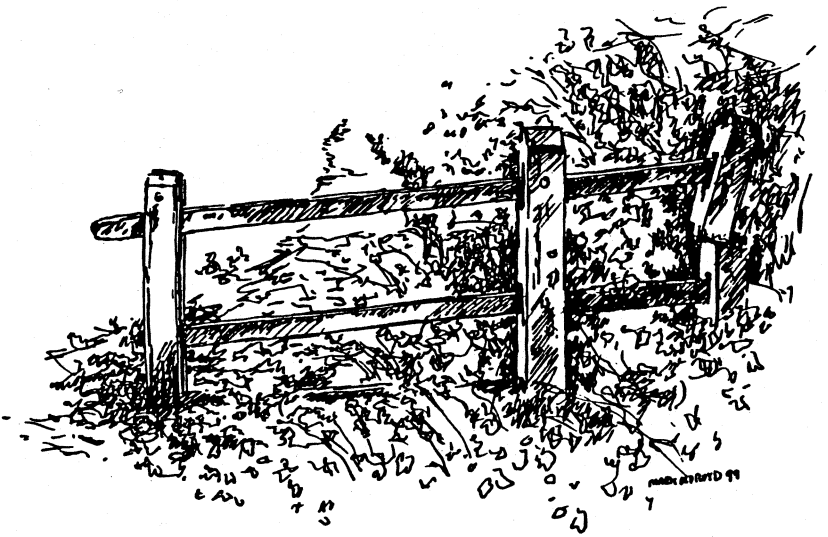
Mr Hasted gave a comprehensive illustrated lecture "Stiles - Monuments to Ingenuity' on 9 May 1998 on the varied types of stile to be found throughout the country. He had originally been attracted to the subject through the experience of country walks in areas between the South and Glasgow. He conjectured that they grew in number with the Enclosure Movement with the need to restrict animals though allowing the free passage of folk along their traditional field paths; though pointed out that references to stiles occurred in Shakespeare, Mallory and Chaucer and even one in a charter of Offa in the 8th century. The traditional stile consisted of steps over a stone wall or wooden fence; but equally traditional were 'squeeze' stiles, narrow apertures through which for example coffin-bearers to a distant church across the fields, could make their way; and there were 'kissing-gates' with a swing gate within a triangular frame. In the 19th century some could be made of iron, indeed to enhance garden decoration.

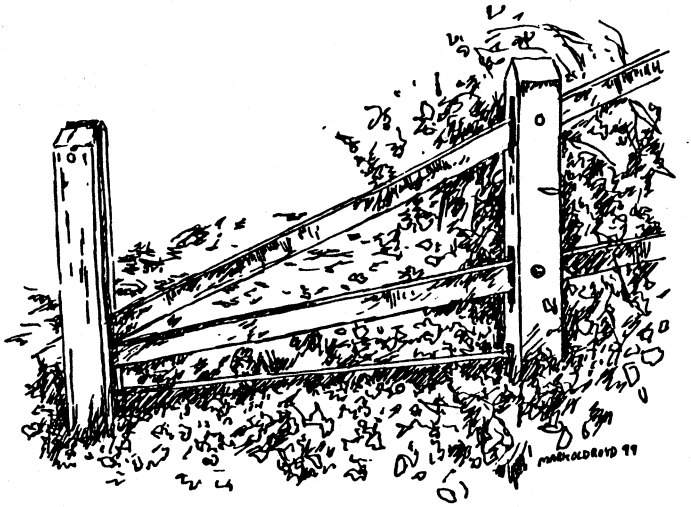
Turning to 'tumble-down' gates, there was a reference to such in the Revd W D Parish's "Dictionary of Sussex Dialect and Provincialisms" of 1875, stiles whose horizontal members could be pressed down at one end to permit access across them, but recovered their position on release through a central pivot-post, the other ends of the horizontal timbers being weighted. Alternative names were clapgate, clappergate or clapperdown / clatterdown (clappers were stones across a flooded road). References to the Battle 'tumbledown' occurred in *Country Life 1957* and *Sussex Stiles 1970*. There are other similar stiles in the vicinity, though

'tumbledown' seems to be exclusively Battle's. The field to which the path leads is known as 'tumbledown', though most likely takes its name from the stile.

In the visit to the stile following the lecture, it was observed that the stile had been uprooted and laid on its side, though vandalisation could happily be ruled out. The posts below ground were well rotted and the stile at this point was less liable to damage on the ground until its conservation. Warm thanks were expressed to Mr Hasted for his lecture and his interest which had brought him to Battle.

John Springford





FORTRESSES OF GOD AND KNIGHTS OF CHRIST: THE NORMAN IMPACT ON THE ENGLISH CHURCH

Professor Christopher Harper-Bill — 9 October 1998

Professor Harper-Bill was introduced not only as a distinguished medieval historian but as one already closely connected with Battle in that for twenty-two years he had attended every Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies held; and was now the Chairman of that Conference, founded in fact by a past-President of the Society, Professor R Allen Brown. The occasion of the Commemoration Lecture was therefore appropriate.

The revival of the Church in England after the Conquest was knit closely with monasticism; of which there could hardly be an earlier example than the building of Battle Abbey itself, in secular terms the celebration of a victory and a lasting emblem on the skyline of the new power in the land. But there was a further element. Although Pope Leo IX had blessed the expedition, at the same time the church condemned violence; hence his legate Ermfrid's penitentiary of 1070 imposing penance on all Normans who killed, plundered or otherwise sinned during the Conquest; the stripping of the slain in the Bayeux Tapestry; and a Bishop of Winchester reference almost a century later to the massacre of the innocents. St. Benedict's Rule of AD 560 had by the eleventh century seen the rise of a great monastic order concerned with peace among people and threatening eternal damnation for the violent and the wicked. Hence a Norman carving at Caen of the Last Judgement and the concept of bishop, abbot and priest interceding with God to propitiate against that last day. The abbey of Cluny, founded in AD 909, began to exercise great influence on the life of the Church and lay behind the reforms of Gregory VII. Prayer went on there twenty-four hours a day; even Anselm visiting Cluny exclaimed it gave him no time to think. Citeaux had similar monastic influence. Powerful lords, William de Warenne for example, began to endow priorities and local churches as a spiritual insurance; their younger sons and daughters would enter them. "Knights of Christ" were now monks.

This situation had not escaped the attention of 10th century rulers in England. Edgar in AD 970 presided over the monks of all England to devise a new Rule. There were such Church leaders as Dunstan, Oswald and Aethelwold. Peterborough sprang to life. To the king and to this new sense of religion it meant order in and re-conversion of the realm. Despite this, sadly the Saxon Church remained backward; while in the North, Scandinavian influence indicated England as a northern kingdom rather than a part of the new Christian continent. In

Normandy it was different, when from after AD 1000 Mont St. Michel and over thirty new monasteries established in the Duchy signified kingship and religious orders hand in hand. Even so, it should not be missed that in his new town of Caen with its great churches, centre of the invasion of England, William I did not fail to stress his authority. Thus with the invasion of England came a new invigoration of church life there. The White Tower, symbol of power, had its Norman chapel enshrined within; Archbishop Langton's frequent celebration of Mass before the king; and Selby Abbey, founded by French monks as was Battle Abbey; all again, both contrition for the slaughter of 1066 and the harrowing of the North three years later and also signs of regeneration of religious and cultural life in which new architecture and links with the new continent were to wax.

There were however on the continent in this universal church new concepts forming; for example, in theology a new esteem for the Virgin Mary; in the Papacy a role not only to re-order life within the Church, but to monitor, influence, even control the secular world around it. Within the Church, Leo IX attacked simony whereby religious holdings could be purchased and the concubinage where priests indulged in 'clerical marriage' while their sons inherited their livings. (In 1070, said the lecturer, all the clergy of St Paul's had women partners.) William supported his higher clergy in the eradication of these abuses. There was however, growing, notably under Gregory VII, a further aspect of Papal authority - a domination of secular rule and the power to depose such rulers as were viewed unseemly. The 11th century conflict between Pope and Holy Roman Emperor with all it led to, is well known. William and his successors saw such instances themselves, to quote but two, Anselm and Becket. But at the outset, Gregory on the continent could not afford to antagonise William I. Thus while 'Peter's Pence' would continue, Papal Fief was not to be entertained; and bishops were to do homage for their lands.

Professor Haper-Bill's illustrative slides emphasising the development of his lecture have not yet been referred to, but at this point a picture of Norwich Castle made great impact - a powerful keep laced with Norman arcading one would associate with a cathedral interior. Thus finally, military, commercial and ecclesiastical 'colonisation' took root. Up and down the country, Norman monastery and stone village church, founded by local lord, bishop or abbot, replaced fragile Saxon predecessors. Revivified were the deserted 7th century sites of the North, Whitby, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, with the Venerable Bede and St Cuthbert finally brought together in the western end of the new Durham Cathedral. It may be noted that the seal of the Bishop of Durham displays sword and shield as, literally, defender of the North. The Anglo-Norman Church exercised both spiritual and temporal power and by the 12th century owned twenty-five percent of the total

lands of England. To conclude, the Conquest brought new spirituality, intellectual learning and power to a Church which had seemed in Saxon times to loose its way in the end in a flaccid society beset in the south by baronial intransigence (note Godwin) and in the north by a Scandinavian culture. After 1066, England was brought into direct, if brutally inflicted, contact with the new world of 11th century western Europe. This, concluded the lecturer, might have happened anyway in time, but, without the Conquest, in an unvigerous and diluted form.

John Springford

THE SHINEWATER EXCAVATIONS, EASTBOURNE

Dr. Andrew Woodcock — 13 November 1998

Dr. Woodcock prefaced his lecture by affirming that Shinewater was one of the most important prehistoric sites in the South East of England. Finds from the Bronze Age, excavated at Shinewater were to be on display at the British Museum from November 1998 and at Eastbourne in 1999.

The circumstances of the discovery of the site were mundane and unexpected and had much to do with the industrial and residential development of Eastbourne. Because of the Downs, Eastbourne can really only expand to the East and North onto land that is, basically, marsh and meadow; this brings the risk of flooding and to counteract this, the Council planned a series of large lakes to absorb the surplus water and to provide amenity activities and a haven for wildlife. Within the system was to be developed Shinewater Park - a large lake with an island and recreational pitches. On the western side is the re-aligned A22.

Wherever such development occurs, it is common practice for an Environmental Impact Study to be initiated. In this case, the Clerk of the Works was told to keep a watchful eye for the existence of wood remains, eg. boats as the site was known to have been a tidal creek on the margins of the old shore line. It was not expected that much would be found, but with the perversity of life, the first signs of an important site were unearthed just before a Bank Holiday weekend in 1995. Rows of upright timber were discovered which, at first, were suspected as being the remains of lines of posts erected during World War II to deter enemy gliders. The unearthing of quantities of Bronze Age pottery soon dispelled this idea.

The conditions were deplorable; mud and trenches filling rapidly with water but what was basically found was that the remains were below a metre of clay; - a substantial wooden platform sitting on a dark layer of peat and above it the earth

full of occupational debris. It soon became clear that this was a very important site indeed.

The revealed wood turned out to be the remains of pointed timber stakes, expertly felled and shaped, driven into the sub-soil and supporting a walk-way across the marsh; they held in place a platform consisting of a corderoy of logs on the surface and bearing the remains of brushwood and rush matting. There was evidence of gravel, sand and sawdust and deliberately constructed hearths with thick layers of puddled clay and chalk to build fires without setting light to the platform.

It was a delicate operation to excavate because of the mud-soaked nature of the site; the wood was friable and could only be explored with fingers because metal tools would damage it. Although the wood appeared as if it had been cut yesterday, because of it's great age (about 3,000 years) it had lost all physical strength and once dried out would pull itself apart in two to three weeks.
It was apparent that the trackway was a substantial structure, carefully planned and executed, about 10 to 15 feet in width and extending for at least three-quarters of a kilometre. All the upright posts were oak and the brushwood hazel, alder or willow. It was estimated that at least 1,000 oaks would have been felled and processed within a period of six months, an expertise that revises our perception of the ability of the Bronze Age man. Even more telling was that fact that pollen retrieved showed that the valley had been virtually treeless.

Most of the finds were shards of domestic pottery, including some exotic pieces from the Continent; bone smashed to extract marrow (from cattle, pigs, goats, deer, dogs and even from crows and frogs) and some human remains. The last act of the digger had been to disinter the skeletal remains of a ten to twelve year old child, deliberately buried with a complete pot and a shell bracelet.

Many decorative items surfaced; amber beads, possibly from some distance and a quantity of lead weights and bronze artefacts. These later included a bracelet and a fine winged axe, very sharp and polished. Interestingly, the bronze tools appeared to have been rendered non-functional deliberately by having handles broken before burial, seemingly as a gift to the gods.

The star find - unique to England - and the centre piece at the British Museum exhibition was a small bronze reaping hook for cutting rushes, with the wooden handle intact. This circumstance makes it extraordinarily rare; the cost of preservation alone costing about £10,000.

The site is owned by Eastbourne Council who quickly set up an Advisory

Committee with experts from various bodies, such as English Heritage. The site has to be protected as no further excavation is possible at the moment. This means filling in trenches and preserving the remains in a water-logged condition so that work can be resumed whenever funds are available or the site is deteriorating. Constant monitoring involved nine stations where measurements are taken of the depth and condition of the water which need to be free of oxygen.

The lecture was illustrated by a series of fascinating slides which showed graphically the difficult and uncomfortable conditions under which excavations had been made.

A panel of experts have prepared a written strategy for future investigation. Who knows what is yet to be discovered ?

David Sawyer

PEVENSEY WITHOUT THE CASTLE

Mr. Hugh Miller — 11 December 1998

Two thousand years ago the site of today's village of Pevensey was a promontory or peninsular some two miles in length, surrounded on three sides by water. To the north and east there was a large lagoon or inland harbour and to the south was the sea. The lagoon stretched as far inland as Hailsham today and it was dotted with small islands, which today can be seen as hills in the marsh with names like Northeye, Horseye, Rickney, Chilleye and Langley - the old Saxon word for an island being eye. The northern side of the promontory gave excellent and sheltered moorings.

Midway through the first century AD, the Romans arrived and built their great fortress of Anderida. This was part of their defence system which went from Dover to the Isle of Wight and the great curtain walls still stand on three sides of the castle today.

The next thing we hear of Anderida is from the Anglo Saxon Chronicles where it is stated that in 644 AD the settlement around the castle was sacked and every man, woman and child was killed. The Saxon lord Peofne then built his own small market town and seaport, calling it Peofneseye or as it is called today - Pevensey. The port was large enough to charge harbour dues.

When William the Conqueror landed the lagoon had started to silt up and there

were large areas of mud flats intersected by water channels. However the harbour under the castle's north wall was still deep and sheltered. The Bayeux Tapestry commissioned by William's brother, Odo shows William's own ship with the words "Et Venit at Pevensi".

In 1207 King John granted the port a charter making it a 'llyme' or branch of Hastings.

By the early 17th century the importance of Pevensey began to ebb. The river Ashbourne, which had scoured the channels out, began to have a reduced flow, due to the good drainage of the land around it and with the 'eastward drift' of the shingle caused by the prevailing south west winds, the mouth of the bay closed.

By the time of the Armada the southern walls of the castle had fallen due to undermining of the sea but it was still thought to be worth fortifying the castle with two culverins, one of which remains in the castle today.

By the 19th century the sea was nearly a mile away, but seven Martello Towers were built in the parish and in the second world war the castle was fortified yet again, with machine gun emplacements.

Mr Miller completed his talk with pictures of the many listed buildings in Pevensey, built during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, some being built of stones taken from the lower parts of the castle.

Joanne Lawrence

SUMMER VISITS PROGRAMME
SYON HOUSE AND RICHMOND - 24 June 1998

Syon House oozes history. It was the place from which Lady Jane Grey set out on her brief tragic reign and it was also here that the children of Charles I found refuge. It is still the London home of the Duke of Northumberland although one suspects that living beneath the flight path of Heathrow probably limits his visits. The sound of low flying aircraft was constant and pervasive.

The house itself is a square within a square. The inner apartments facing a private courtyard are the personal rooms of the family and not open to the public, whilst the outer skin comprises the State Rooms which we were permitted to visit. The design of the building means that the rooms of the State Apartments are long and narrow, very formal and intimidating but a wonderful illustration of the opulence

that money and rank could buy.

The apartments had been remodelled by Robert Adam whose influence was everywhere. Carpets matched ornate ceilings; furniture and mirrors were designed for particular places and the right sort of classical statuary filled the appropriate alcoves. There were portraits everywhere, not only on the walls, but painted onto the ceilings themselves. Because of the royal connection many of the portraits were of kings and princes and these were rivaled by the equally grand depictions of the Percy's who, one suspects, considered themselves as equals rather than subjects.

Some things stick in the mind :- the long gallery lined with leather bound books and rare porcelain next to a photograph of the present Duke and his young family; a portrait of a pale young girl that is identified as both Lady Jane Grey or the young Elizabeth; and another portrait of a three year old who became the Percy heiress and who was widowed twice by the age of sixteen. Outside the house we passed through the giant conservatory which pre-dated the Crystal Palace and which must surely have influenced Joseph Paxton.

After lunch we drove the short distance to Richmond Green for a brief, but extremely interesting guided tour. Between the Green and the Thames are found the remains of Sheen (Richmond) Palace and surrounding the 20 acres or so of the Green are elegant, early Georgian houses.

Both Henry VII and Elizabeth I died at Sheen, but James I declined to live there and thereafter the Palace was left to rot; pulled apart by Cromwell and redeveloped residentially by Queen Anne. Today, very little remains of the old Palace apart from the Wardrobe buildings and a gateway. The history of many of the houses facing the Green was fascinating including a glorious terrace called the Maids of Honour one of which had, incongruously, been owned by a Rolling Stone. Our visit to Richmond was too short and run at a canter including, along the towpath, a race against the incoming tide.

David Sawyer

WINDSOR CASTLE - 29 July 1998

On July 29th we went on a full day visit to Windsor Castle. The castle was founded by William the Conqueror in 1080 as one of a chain of fortifications around London. It had a central motte with two baileys. It was originally entirely defensive but its proximity to the old hunting forest (now Windsor Great Park)

made it useful also as a residence. Henry I, Henry II, Henry III, Edward III, Edward IV, Henry VIII and Mary I all both lived in the castle and carried out extensive rebuilding. Elizabeth I, Charles I, Charles II, George III, George IV, Queen Victoria, George V and George VI all greatly enlarged and improved the State Apartments.

In many ways the castle reached its zenith with the reign of Queen Victoria, when it was the principal palace of the monarchy as well as the focus of the British Empire. For most of this century the castle has remained as it was in the 19th century. Then on the 20th November 1992 there was the disastrous fire, the great St. George's Hall, the Grand Reception Room, Private Chapel, State Dining Room, Crimson Drawing Room and many subsidiary rooms were destroyed. The contents of the rooms were almost all removed in time.

It was decided to restore the damaged rooms as they had been and to rebuild the destroyed rooms to new designs but in the gothic style. We were able to see all the rooms open to the public with very little queueing.

We saw the Gallery with the magnificent china services, still used for royal banquets and the Waterloo Chamber with the portraits of the leaders that defeated Napoleon. We saw the King's Drawing Room, Bedroom and Dressing Room, where Charles II preferred to sleep. They are full of paintings by Rubens, Durer, Canaletto and the wonderful painting of Three Aspects of Charles I by Van Dyke. Also there are two Rembrandt's. Then there are the large State Rooms all superbly decorated and furnished and full of Gobelin tapestries and Grinling Gibons carvings, damask wall hangings in either scarlet, gold or green.

We were greatly impressed with the new Lantern Lobby. It is a tall octagonal lobby, inspired by the Octagon in Ely Cathedral and the beautiful ribbed vault is in laminated oak. Most interesting of all was the new St. George's Hall. The room is 180 feet long and before the fire had a flat ceiling, decorated with the Coats of Arms of all the Knights of the Garter. The new Hall has a hammerbeam of green oak. It is the largest such roof to have been built this century and it greatly improves the appearance of the room. Windsor Castle is one of the major repositories of the Royal Collection, for where incomparable works of art are displayed in the historic setting for which they were collected or commissioned by successive monarchs.

Joanne Lawrence

ROBERTSBRIDGE AND BAYHAM ABBEYS - 2 September 1998

The final visit of the summer embraced the ruins of the two medieval abbeys of Robertsbridge and Bayham, both dissolved by Henry VIII. Of Robertsbridge, a Cistercian house of the late 12th century, Mr Brian Enwright described what remained above ground, principally warming-house, a dorter wall, refectory and notably the prior's guest-house (now the owners residence) with its stone-vaulted undercroft and 13th century timbered roof. Mention was made of an abbey document of about 1320, now in the British Library, to which had been added the earliest known pieces of intabulated musical notation (though of continental music - three 'estampies' and three religious motets).

After tea in Lamberhurst the visit proceeded to the more extensive remains of Bayham Abbey where the group was conducted round by Mr Jonathan Coad of English Heritage. Bayham was a Premonstratensian house of about 1211. The long narrow church with high buttressed nave walls, the claustral area, dorter and gatehouse at the river, some way off, were impressive, even with the knowledge that the ruins were 'romantically landscaped' during the 18th century when the house adjacent was built on 'Strawberry Hill' Gothic lines. One concluding thought perhaps emerged, that both abbeys were built in low-lying river areas which must have frequently flooded; with the possible inference that the pious landowning founders let go land perhaps not quite as profitable as higher ground which they retained.

John Springford