Battle and District Historical Society

JOURNAL

DEC 2000 No.5

CONTENTS

Battle and District Historical Society and Museum Trust 2000-2001
Official address: Langton House, High Street, Battle
East Sussex TN33 0AG

THE SOCIETY
Charity No. 292593

President
Professor John Gillingham

Vice-Presidents
Mr E G Creek MA
Mr K M Reader MA
Mr J F C Springford CBE

Committee

Chairman	Mr C Eldridge
Vice Chairman	Mr M Stocker
Hon Secretary	Mr N Clephane-Cameron
Hon Treasurer	Mr D Sawyer
Ms J Ede	Miss M Millar
Mrs J Lawrence	Miss J Bergin
Ms D Elliott	Mr C Braybrooke
Mrs D Braybrooke	Mrs B Francis
Museum Representative	Mrs A Ainsley

THE MUSEUM TRUST
Charity No. 306336

Chairman and Curator	Mrs A Ainsley
Minuting Secretary	Mrs A Flowerday
Treasurer	Mr D Akers
Archivist & Society Representative	Mr D Sawyer
Schools Liaison	Mrs A Swann

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 1999-2000

In its 49th year I think the Society can be well satisfied that it is upholding all the hopes and aspirations of its founders all those years ago. Total membership for the year was 257; 69 new members joining in that period. Maureen Millar, a servant of the Society for many years, is largely responsible for the looking after of existing members and the enrolment of new, and these figures bear witness to her success. Maureen retires at the end of this year from that office, with the grateful thanks of the Committee ringing in her ears. Membership Secretary duties are being taken on by Diane Braybrooke.

Much of the Society's continued success is due to the excellent Lecture Programme. Here Joanne Lawrence is the inspiration searching out lecturers on any subject which is likely to be of interest to you, our members, and right well she has succeeded. Her latest coup was to invite our new President to lecture - though I suppose that lecture is technically in next year's programme.

The Summer Programme also plays its part providing our members with events away from Battle, this year including a Battlefield tour in France and visits to Eltham Palace, Glynde Place and Hampton Court. Beryl Francis has done the legwork for these visits and she is to be congratulated on the programmes she has put together. She is now leaving the district and the Summer Programme has been taken over by Joanne Lawrence who would be happy to receive any suggestions you may have for possible future visits.

The Committee during the year has had to consider, apart from bread and butter items, various plans and ideas for the battle site where the Society prepared its own report, proposals for "improving" the Memorial Hall, the Battle Partnership proposals, planning applications affecting the battle site, the viability of the Society's Library and the move of the Museum to the Almonry.

As regards the Library, a decision has been delayed for a year to ascertain how much, if at all, the Library is actually used. Some 13

members used the Library on 39 occasions during the season. A small nucleus of members uses the Library in the half-hour before meetings and some 17 books have been borrowed. The future for the Library looks bleak.

As to the Museum - at the Extraordinary Meeting, the move to the Almonry was agreed, subject to the raising of the necessary finance, planning applications, etc. Subsequently, it has been discovered that there are advantages, when seeking funds for the move and the setting up of a modern Museum, in the Museum becoming a fully separate entity and divorcing itself from the BDHS. The matter is still being discussed in Committee and the views of the members will be sought at an Extraordinary Meeting, before this separation of the ways can formally take place.

The work of the Research Group goes on apace. Subjects covered and in the pipeline include: Battle families; roads, stagecoaches and inns; trades and crafts; education in Battle; medicine and dentistry; Battle Abbey occupants after 1600; Parish Church after 1600; barracks and the military; the Poor and the Workhouse; the churches of Battle; oral interviews and battlefield relics. Great activity under the enthusiastic Chairmanship of John Springford.

Sales of the Malfosse booklet are steady and next year should have covered the initial cost of printing and publication. If you haven't got your copy yet you had better hurry - there might not be a reprint!

Colin Eldridge

MUSEUM TRUST REPORT

The summer season of 2000 was a difficult year with the number of visitors to the museum continuing to drop. Income from entrance fees, including school parties, totalled £3,353 compared with £3,961 in 1999.

There is no doubt that Battle Abbey and Buckley's are strong

attractions and the museum is finding it increasingly difficult to compete. Access to the museum is the main problem. It is therefore clear that to try to survive, the museum must consider moving to more accessible and attractive premises and be in a position, as a fully registered museum, to approach various funding bodies for support.

Future of the Museum

A full application to the Heritage Lottery Fund has been made to fund the proposed move to the Almonry garage site. A decision is not expected until June 2001. Our application to the East Sussex Rural Development Area for matching funding has been accepted in principle and the full application has now been submitted.

Registration

One of the highlights of the year was when the museum received Full Registration from The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. This puts us in a much more secure position when applying for grant aid.

Goodby and Hello

I would like to thank Maureen Millar who has served on the committee as Historical Society Representative for a number of years and who resigned earlier this year. We have all benefited from her knowledge and advice. Our thanks to David Sawyer for stepping in as Historical Society Representative as well as in his role as Archivist. I would also like to thank both Ann Luke and Audrey Flowerday for their contributions to the Committee and as custodians.

Trustees

Long standing trustee Keith Reader stepped down as a Trustee at the AGM. On behalf of the Museum Management Committee I would like to thank Keith for all his work and especially his wise council which I hope he will continue to make available to the committee.

Mrs Paula Fisher and Mr Anthony Mitchell were voted in as Trustees at the AGM on 24th November 2000, joining Ken Clarke and Robert Emeleus.

Committee
The Management Committee stood en bloc at the AGM and were voted in for another year.

Schools
Audrey Swann has been trying to retire from her role as Education Schools Officer for some time. Audrey is a difficult act to follow but if anyone knows of someone who would like to take over from Audrey please give her a call.

Roster Secretary
The work of the Secretary has been divided up to make the work load easier. If there is anyone who would like to take over organising the roster of custodians please call Joyce Mugridge or John Polush. I would like to thank our Assistant Archivist Eric Augele who has kept up his keen interest in the museum and been most supportive. A number of committee members have had personal pressures to deal with and I would like to thank them for still finding the time to continue with the museum work.

Custodians
I would like to thank the team of volunteer custodians who have not only worked hard to keep the museum open all summer but have willingly given up their session fees to help the museum finances. This will also help our application to have the rates zero rated.

We are always seeking more volunteers so I would be grateful if you could contact any member of the committee if you can help out.

Anne Ainsley

EDITOR'S NOTE

In order to commemorate the Society's 50th anniversary, this Journal contains as a feature, the report for the year 1950-51 giving details of the Society's formation. As Editor, I am especially grateful to Maureen Millar for contributing this fascinating document and I hope that the

current membership will find it of particular interest.

Thanks go also to all the other contributors to this Journal, with whom responsibility rests for the facts and opinions expressed. I would also like to invite any member with an interest in writing up lecture notes or contributing an article of special interest, to contact me, as assistance in this area is always welcome.

Dawn Elliott, Editor

HADRIAN'S WALL

Mr Alan Beecher 14 January 2000

Mr Beecher started his lecture by explaining that the Romans came to these islands early in the first century because the then Emperor, Claudius, needed to have a military victory and it was thought that the British would make a good, easy target. The Roman conquest of Britain was not a quick one as the Norman Conquest had been - it took some eighty years to reach Scotland. The problem was that prior to the invasion of this country, the Romans had been largely working on the basis that they would conquer the world. However, it was clear that the more lands they conquered the more were still left to do. When the newly elected Emperor Hadrian visited Britain in AD 122 he had already decided that the frontier system that had been set up on the continent, in particular in Germany, should be stabilised.

Looking at this country he decided that the best way to make a frontier marking the northern boundary of his empire would be to build a wall and he chose the isthmus between Wallsend-on-Tyne to the east and Bowness-on-Solway in the west. Over the six years following, professional soldiers, legionaries and some local labour built the wall, which ran for 80 Roman miles (73 modern miles). Work started in the east on a stone wall, some 5 metres high with perhaps a parapet. This ran as far as the River Irthing. The next section of wall was built of turf, but sometime later was changed to stone and the last section to the Tyne was again of stone. The wall was a

sophisticated piece of engineering. Every Roman mile there was a milecastle guarded by at least eight men and there were two equidistant turrets between each milecastle. Thus a close check could be made on the movement of goods, people and animals crossing the frontier. The wall was never meant to be a defensive position - it was just meant for the control of movements and a customs barrier.

After the wall was first completed the army expanded northwards and the Antonine Wall was built, but this was soon abandoned and the frontier moved back to Hadrian's Wall. A few years later the wall appears to have been strengthened and large forts were constructed. These and other supply forts to the south housed auxiliary soldiers, many from Belgium, Germany and Yugoslavia. These forts also served as crossing points and civilian settlements grew up around them.

The wall when finished was over ten feet thick with dressed stone on each side and in-filled with rubble. To the north of the wall was a deep defensive ditch and to the south another deep ditch or "vallum", flanked by high mounds of earth. The area between the ditches also contained a military road and the whole was considered a military site.

By the early 5th century the Empire was in decline and Britain became cut off from Rome. Frontier defences were neglected and as pay ceased to arrive, soldiers drifted away. Settlement patterns changed. The wall's stones appeared in local farmhouses, field walls and also churches. It is only relatively recently that interest in the wall as an archaeological monument has grown. As Mr Beecher showed us with his beautiful pictures there is still a great deal of it to see.

Joanne Lawrence

SUSSEX HILL-FORTS

Mr John Manley — 28 January 2000

Mr Manley began by telling us that there are twenty-five examples of Bronze Age and Iron Age forts in Sussex and his first slides were of

two famous men who have influenced what British archaeologists think about hill-forts - Julius Caesar, a Roman statesman and Sir Mortimer Wheeler, a 19th century archaeologist. Mortimer Wheeler dug at Maiden Castle in Dorchester and was greatly influenced by the writings of classical authors, in particular Julius Caesar who had talked about "storming" what appeared to be an Iron Age hill-fort. Wheeler, being an ex-military man, thought very much along the lines that pre-Roman hill-forts were for defence and were rebuilt to repel the Romans and defend the local population.

Hill-forts are fortifications on the top of hills, dating from about 1,000 BC to the Roman conquest AD 43 and what is left today are ramparts or banks encircling the top of the hill. Both Caesar and Wheeler described the people who built these sites as Celts. When Caesar invaded for reconnaissance in 55-54 BC he described a very odd feature of the local population in Kent - they fought from chariots - and he remarked that the Celts in Europe had long since given up chariot warfare. We were told that the Celtic warrior did not actually fight from the chariot. The function of the chariot was to bring the warrior to the battle. Both Wheeler and Julius Caesar thought that the hill-forts were used by people called Celts who had invaded this part of the country from Europe. Today, archaeologists are not happy with this thought but are content with the term Celtic which describes the artefacts found. The Roman writers described the Celt people as being very war-like and who enjoyed fighting and raiding, summarising them in a phrase "war-mad but not of evil character". Sling stones have been found in hill-forts and it is thought this was how they defended themselves.

A slide indicating a typical construction of a large Iron Age hill-fort was shown, that of Maiden Castle which was excavated by Wheeler, indicating a succession of banks and ditches, seemingly protecting whatever took place inside. The main entrance was through the eastern gate and the earthworks block the access. During his excavations Wheeler found what he thought to be a war cemetery for men fighting against the Romans.

Cissbury Ring was then explained to us. Another idea of 19th century archaeologists was that the hill-forts were not for defence but were more like Iron Age towns where at certain times of the year the chief would gather with warriors, religious leaders, crafts-people; the fort being surrounded by fields and hamlets. The buildings expected to be found inside Cissbury would have been the round houses, which may have been used for living, sleeping, praying etc. Very little excavation has taken place.

At the west end there are remains of Neolithic flint mines. Peculiarly, when later builders came, they did not level off the holes made by the flint mines. Why?

Other structures found in the hill-forts are, what are called by the archaeologists "four posters" i.e. the remains of a building with a post in each corner, and which are assumed to be agricultural storage buildings.

Mr Manley then proceeded to describe in some detail, various hill-forts on the chalk Downs of Sussex. Again, very little has been done on these hill-forts but the information given helped us possibly to understand the reason for and use of these constructions.

At the large site of Harting Beacon, only "four posters" have been found, no circular buildings and very few domestic artefacts. This might have been used as a corale for animals.

Harrow Hill is a small site and the aerial slide showed small pot marks which are entrances to flint mines dating from about 3,000 BC. No structural evidence was found but hundreds of cattle jaw bones were. The north east entrance was opposite a mine entrance and it has been suggested this has a religious meaning.

At Hollingbury there are 2,000 BC tumuli which again were left intact by later builders - possibly out of respect. At Trundle, pits were found containing, possibly deliberately broken, quirn stones again perhaps with ritual meanings. Some 150 pits were found in the chalk at

Caburn containing broken chunky metal-like pieces, not associated with household rubbish.

The excavations at Garden Hill, have found two round houses and the site also contains Roman buildings, in particular a Roman bath-house. On closer examination this bath-house was poorly built and not used by the Romans. It is therefore thought that a later, influential person had the bath-house copied for his own use. No structures have been found at Devils Dyke which is in a rift in the chalk.

The orientation of entrances was shown during the lecture with north east, south east, west and south predominating, emphasising some symbolic meaning.

In conclusion our speaker informed us that the Sussex Archaeological Society tell children that there is no one single coherent story. Hill-forts come in all sizes and shapes - they may be fortified towns, they may be for defence or they may be the centre of territories. They are also about religious and ritual practices, places of magic and mystique and are certainly places of pilgrimage.

A fascinating lecture.

Diane Braybrooke

THE ROMAN CITY OF LONDON

Mr Robin Densem — 11 February ~~1999~~ 2000

Mr Densem began his lecture about the archaeology of Roman London by giving us a very brief history and explained that when the Romans invaded Britain in AD 43 they moved north from the Kentish coast and crossed the Thames in the London region and built a wooden bridge, just east of the present London Bridge. The Thames was deep and as far as London was tidal; soon the bridge led to settlers and inevitable growth, the flourishing city of Londinium.

In AD 60 Queen Boudicca of the Iceni burnt the city down in a revolt against Rome. However, the city was rebuilt and by AD 120 there was a forum, several temples, a basilica, many bath-houses and a governor's palace. There was also a large garrison billeted there. By AD 200 London was one of the largest Roman cities north of the Alps but during the next century mercenaries from many parts of northern Europe began to be used to man the various forts. London was beginning to arrange its own defence and in AD 410 Emperor Honorious renounced responsibility for the British provinces.

After this short history Mr Densem continued by looking at the beginnings of archaeology in London. In the early 17th century the rich began to travel abroad for pleasure and to take an interest in Greek and Roman artefacts, which they brought home to adorn their houses. Then after the Great Fire of London, Christopher Wren, while he was rebuilding the city began to unearth artefacts and the remains of buildings and roads. He itemised and noted them all and produced what he thought was a map of Roman London before covering the city with his churches. Although it was alright to paint pictures of sites of antiquities abroad and to bring objects home, Roman sites in London were being destroyed because builders did not want to delay building work.

By the late 19th century people were beginning to be concerned by the number of sites being lost. Some were rescued such as a large and beautiful mosaic which was discovered in Broad Street, but this was subsequently lost in the fire at Crystal Palace! In the early 20th century more care was taken and a few private digs were undertaken. In 1908 a room in County Hall was put aside for items found.

After the blitz a great deal of rebuilding was carried out and archaeologists were allowed in during the weekends but work would resume with the building on Mondays. In 1973 the City of London finally funded a full-time archaeologist based at the new Museum of London and in 1990 the Government decided that developers should pay for any work necessary to preserve archaeological remains on their sites before the contractor could start to work. A government

regulator was appointed to oversee this work. There are 23 different digs going on in London at the moment and hopefully no more sites will be destroyed.

Joanne Lawrence

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF OAST HOUSES

Mrs Gwen Jones 25 February 2000

This interesting talk relied heavily on slides showing the development of oast houses from the simplest small and crude building to the multi-rounded oast houses at Beltring -a progression that had begun in the mid-1600's and which reached its apotheosis in the 1830's.

Surprisingly the growing of hops pre-dated the oasts; evidence of their cultivation is recorded in stone on capitals in Southwell Minster, which date from the 13th century. This belies the popular belief that they were introduced in 1535. Hops need a rich alluvial soil and this is to be found, predominantly, in the Weald but also in Herefordshire. Kent and East Sussex were however the areas of greatest activity. They were grown because the farmers wanted to "get rich quick"; there was adequate manure from cattle which was vitally important to maintain the richness of the soil and there was abundant woodland. Timber was required for hop-poles and sensible coppicing could provide a permanent and replaceable source of this important commodity. Additionally, wood provided charcoal which could be processed on the farm by itinerant charcoal burners and which was used mostly to start off the fires when burning anthracite.

Hops *are* perennials but need to be renewed every fourteen years. They were harvested at the end of August when the ripened crop was brought to the oast. Here, very simply stated, they were laid on a slatted floor, upon a hessian cloth and above a kiln whereby they were dried. Once dried to a state of brittleness, they were raked evenly to prevent damp areas polluting the crop. The skilled men who were employed as dryers did not leave the oast throughout the processing

as it was vital that the fire did not extinguish.

Once lifted from the kiln they were pressed, originally by foot but later by machine - again a skilled job as the final product was required to contain resin and preservative to make the beer bitter and to have the proper colour (i.e. *not* sun-bleached). Hops were placed in a long bag called a "pocket", very tightly to exclude air as, being vegetable matter, they would decay speedily. If well pressed, hops will keep for a year and maintain a good market value.

To get them to market, the pocket was sewn and stenciled with the name of the grower and the county. They were then stored until a buyer was found by a hop factor based in Southwark. Obviously, the pocket was not sent to London. What happened was that an itinerant sampler would visit the farm, open up a bag and remove a small segment. This would be sliced to see whether the hops remained whole; to check the colour (brown was *not* acceptable) and to smell them. Brewers would buy on the sampler's recommendation. Only then would the pockets be transported, originally by cart and boat from Rye but latterly by train. It was vital that they remained completely dry.

And now for the development of the buildings. Brewing started on the Continent in the 8th century and by the 13th century hopped beer was being imported into England. In the 16th century, one Reginald Scott from Brabourne went to Flanders to see how the Belgians made their beer and returned full of ideas and influence. The Government encouraged the growing of hops as it added another crop for hard-pressed farmers. The acreage required was modest - commonly one-half to 2 acres, *but* it required a building to process the crop and this could be expensive (and not only expensive but also perilous in that a thatched roof and a timber frame containing an open fire was an enormous fire hazard).

The original design of an oast was nothing more than two small rooms and a kiln. There were no chimneys and probably no vents or flaps. The fuel was wood and, perforce, the beer tasted of smoke. The

problem was always to avoid moisture contaminating the hops and the cliche that necessity is the mother of invention certainly applied here. Over a period of two hundred years, refined furnaces, iron stoves, brick in place of wood, square towers and funnelled chimneys, cowls and then roundels created the ideal structure. Buildings were expensive, particularly after the removal of brick tax in 1850 which produced a safer but costly edifice (something in the region of £700). By 1836, John Reed of Horsmonden had produced the ideal round kiln, economical in brickwork and stronger. Heat was ducted around the building, rising continuously and bringing the heat closer to the hops but, most important of all, being contamination free. This had always been the ambition of growers (one infamous court case was reported where a brewer was convicted of slowly poisoning drinkers because he had bought hops contaminated by arsenic released from Welsh coal!).

In the late 19th century Sussex growers were affected by foreign competition and many small sites were cleared. By 1914 beer production had halved and many gardens were grubbed up. Things improved after 1918 and the wide application of electricity meant that furnaces were safer and more efficient in that heat could be controlled and fans introduced into the roundels which both cut drying time and increased capacity.

Many slides were shown by the speaker illustrating the progression of development which continued into the 20th century. Today a labour intensive industry has been replaced by one of sophisticated mechanisation, where production is controlled by a very few large concerns.

David Sawyer

SUSSEX INNS AND ALEHOUSES

Mrs Janet Pennington 10 March 2000

Mrs Pennington started in a humorous vein by explaining why she had visited so many pubs. The reason was, apart form enjoying the occasional drink she was doing research for a Ph.D. and investigating buildings and their evolution from pubs to homes and vice versa; this also entailed a lot of architectural detective work.

She observed that in the past an innkeeper would stay in the same pub for years, handing over to another family member in times of illness or old age. Now, it seemed that pubs changed hands very rapidly as with all other jobs. A good source of research could also be found in old documents which can often be seen hanging on pub walls and the landlords themselves have been keen to impart whatever knowledge they have on the history of the building. Even tombstones had provided information. One such epitaph went along these lines, a sort of advertising from beyond the grave:

Beneath this stone awaiting Zion
Rests the Landlord of the Lion
Resigned to the Almighty will
His son conducts his business still

Even police records provided information for the researcher. Apparently, during the last century at Lockswood north of Horsham, the local policeman, a PC Boyes would round up any drunks from the local pub and put them into a wheelbarrow and tip them over the county border into Surrey. They then became another county's problem.

What came as a surprise during her years of research was just how small pubs were, often only one tiny room was used as a "bar". Other rooms served other trades butcher, baker, candlestick maker; you name it, and the landlord's family seemed wholly capable of supplying your every need.

Geology played a part in the siting of pubs. The roads were notoriously bad in Sussex due to the Wealden clay, so that stops by travellers were of necessity but probably of short duration. Mrs Pennington then went on to read a poem of the time of King Henry VIII:

Essex is full of good housewives
Middlesex full of strife
Kent as hot as fire
Sussex full of dirt and mire

We can only hope, said Mrs Pennington, that the poet was referring to the roads! In about 1650 Sussex was described as a fruitful county but very dirty for the traveller; obviously things had not improved much in one hundred years. The description goes on to say that the county may be better measured to its advantage by days journeys rather than miles. Indeed when travelling by coach in Sussex you were charged by the hour, in every other county you were charged by the mile.

Mrs Pennington then went on to show several slides starting with a medieval picture of circa 1400 showing a tavern. She went on to clarify that this was a place purely for socialising and drinking wine. Taverns were only seen in large towns or cities such as Chichester or Lewes, they were heavily taxed and licenced, usually displaying a carving of a large bunch of grapes over their sign. Alehouses by contrast were frequented by the lowest of the social orders and showing a slide of a painting by H Bosch called "The Prodigal" her statement was vividly illustrated. The alehouse by the name of the Swan had flagon stuck on a pole to denote that ale was brewed and ready for drinking but who but the worst kind of person would venture inside? Dirty and broken windows, the barmaid in the doorway accosted by a raggedy man, another man is relieving himself against the side wall, clothes hanging from windows, all in all a vile scene.

Inns of course were mainly used by travellers and offered food and accommodation. Mrs Pennington revealed some quaint habits from the past such as sharing beds with strangers, sleeping in the nude

apart from a linen head covering and keeping sundry weapons such as swords and daggers handy. This made one very glad that we live in the year 2000. A travellers' guide from 1617 warned against locking the door (if there was one), placing your coin purse under the pillow along with your garters and keeping a knife nearby at all times.

Obviously from this warning, travelling could be a very dangerous activity and staying at inns could be a quite hazardous occupation. It seems that not until the late 17th century did persons of quality demand separate rooms with doors, locks and private entrances. By this time an inn would be more or less self-sufficient, with its own stabling and smithy. As fashion demanded, rooms were used for specific purposes such as a smoking den and coffee parlour. Outside, a passing recruiting sergeant would possibly set up a table and literally "drum up" a few fellows persuading them to take the King's shilling, after they had partaken of too much ale. Describing a slide of the Red Lion at Shoreham, Mrs Pennington referred to a sketch by Henry Nibbs. This inn was an excellent example of how a tiny, poor, Sussex inn had been extended over the years into a substantial building and is even now a thriving business.

Ending with pubs and inns in Battle, Mrs Pennington mentioned that Piggotts directory of 1839 was a source of information. Listed under the commercial section were the Chequers, the George and the Star (now the 1066). Other public houses were the Black Horse, Conquering Hero, Kings Head, Wellington and the Half Moon. The pub known as the Star could have been a reference to the Ashburnham or Penhurst families' coat of arms indicating their patronage. A rather sad incident is recorded in the recently published volumes of the Sussex Coroners Inquests 1485-1668. It occurred at the Chequers, the tale being told of the sad fate of Lucy aged 12, a servant of John Love, who fell into a pit full of water and was found drowned. This happened on the 4th March 1522. Interestingly, the Chequers was then known as the George.

Mrs Pennington commented on the brickwork of the George Hotel which was excellent and a feature not obvious to all passers by was,

that it was rounded at the entrance to prevent coaches bumping into it. The beautiful staircase, with its mirrors and the large assembly room at the George made it obviously a place to be seen in and many important dances and banquets must have been held within the delightfully proportioned rooms.

Julie Ede

IN THE CONQUEROR'S FOOTSTEPS? HASTINGS AND AFTER

Mr Jim Bradbury 24 March 2000

Mr Bradbury introduced his lecture by emphasising the importance of the question mark in its title. Although the events of the battle and subsequent campaign are well attested, their location is far from clear. To demonstrate this lecture was divided into three parts: "Sources", "Battlefield" and "The March to London".

Sources

The difficulty in making sense of the chronicles is their lack of, and sometimes conflicting detail, which requires sensible and detached interpretation. Mr Bradbury though stating that the traditional battle-site is probably correct, emphasised **probably** and explained that vested interest from the 12th century to the present day have prevented a properly unbiased interpretation of the sources in relation to the precise location of the battlefield. Mr Bradbury listed the major sources for the battle, showing that in none of them was the location specifically identified.

Battlefield

The summit of Caldbec Hill is known to have been the junction of three administrative boundaries and Colonel Lemmon identified fourteen such sites that were each marked by a tree. Caldbec Hill is therefore accepted as being the site of the Hoar Apple Tree. The location of the battlefield is generally accepted due to the presence of the Abbey, but the commissioning of a commemorative Abbey is,

surprisingly, not mentioned by any of the contemporary (11th century) sources. The only claim for its location on the battlefield (and for the High Altar marking the spot where King Harold fell) is the Chronicle of Battle Abbey; a document in which truth is subservient to the Abbey's prestige (the monks of Battle being known to have forged documents in support of their claims for the Abbey's privileges) and whose accuracy, except in matters of local geography, is otherwise questioned.

The "D" version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives the most complete Saxon account of the Battle, which it describes as being fought "at the Hoar Apple Tree". Mr Bradbury gives a literal meaning to this, rather than its describing an area (for example battles taking their names from the nearest settlement, although some distance away) and concludes that the battlefield is therefore Caldbec Hill. In support of this, Mr Bradbury pointed to the generally accepted location of the Malfosse incident being Oakwood Gill (immediately to the rear of Caldbec Hill) and descriptions in the chronicles of the Saxons emerging from the forest (Andredsweald) prior to the battle. The presence of trees in the Bayeux Tapestry is a further suggestion that the edge of the Andredsweald was nearby, and Caldbec Hill was nearer to the forest than was the "Senlac" ridge.

Mr Bradbury pointed out that only one chronicler, Oderic Vitalis, mentions the name "Senlac" in association with the battlefield and does not give its location. Mr Bradbury therefore avoids referring to the traditional battle site as Senlac, preferring to use the neutral description "Battle Hill", ignorant of this being the name of the hill immediately to the south.

The March of London

The claims of some historians to have identified the movement of the Norman army after the Battle of Hastings provides a clear example of the need to apply sensible interpretation to the sources, in this case Doomsday Book. William Poitiers describes the route as:
Hastings - Romney - Dover - Canterbury - Southwark - Wallingford - Berkhampstead - London.

The Honorable F Baring, 1898, suggested that the route could be more closely traced by reference to the wasted and devalued areas recorded in the Doomsday Book. The theory was developed by a body of subsequent historians and found its illogical conclusion in John Bealer's Warfare in England". The movements being identified as:

Hastings - Romney - Burmarsh - Folkestone - Dover - Patrixbourne - Beakesbourne - Canterbury (where joined by raiding parties from Littlebourne, Preston, Chislet and Sturry). Then to Lenham (where joined by raiding parties from Eastling, Chilham, Braybourne, Selling, Crundle and Pluckley). Then to Maidstone - Seal - Westerham - Limpsfield - Oxted - Tandridge - Godstone (where it was rejoined by the advance party to London that had been detached at Seal and moved via Cudham - Chelsfield - Orpington - Eltham - Lewisham - Southwark - Battersea - Tooting - Merton - Godstone).

The army then proceeded to Ewell - Ashtead - Leatherhead - Guildford - Compton - Wanborough (where a detachment was sent south via Farnham - Hartley - Mordet - Farringdon to meet reinforcements moving north from Chichester or Portsmouth via Fareham - Wickham - Bishops Waltham - Droxford - Exton - Warnford - West and East Meon) - Basing - Micheldever - Sutton Scotney - Hurstbourne.

The whole army then moved north in two columns;
Left Column: Lambourne - Faringdon - Sutton Courtenay - Wittenham - Wallingford.

Right Column: High Clere (where it divided, part going directly to rendezvous with the left column at Wallingford and the other moving via Wantage to Wallingford).

The whole army then moved along the Icknield Way to Risborough and Wendover, where it divided into four;
Flanking Column: Sent to Buckingham.

Left Division: Aylesbury - Luton.
Centre: To Luton via the Icknield Way.

Right Division: Along the valley of the Ballbourne to Langford.

The left and centre divisions join at Luton then separate, the centre division moving directly to Hertford and the left division moving via Bedford to Hertford, where they are rejoined by the right division, including a detachment that had been sent to Hitchen and one that had moved via Potton and Cambridge. The whole army then marched to London.

The degree of waste/devaluation is deemed to indicate the size of the bodies of troops, thus we have main army, columns, divisions, detachments etc. However, there is nothing in the Doomsday Book which links wasted or devalued land with the Norman army. The areas of greatest waste do not form any discernible route and the devastation may reflect natural disasters, earlier Danish raids or a privileged tax assessment to benefit the landowner.

Neil Clephane-Cameron

COMMEMORATION LECTURE
THE KILLING-FIELD OF BATTLE
(A bloody view of the significance of 1066 in English history)

Professor John Gillingham 13 October 2000

Our 50th anniversary season of lectures commenced with our President, Professor John Gillingham, providing an insight into the conduct of warfare in the late Saxon and early Mediaeval periods.

Making reference to the extensive rain and flooding of the past few days, Professor Gillingham reminded us of the Yorkshire historian who, writing in the 1190's reported that within Battle Abbey...

"whenever there is a light shower of rain the spot at which occurred the greatest slaughter of Englishmen fighting for their country sweats real, and to all appearances fresh blood, even to this day, as if to proclaim that the voice of all that Christian blood still cries out to God

from that very same earth, which had once opened its mouth and received that blood at the hands of people who said they were fellow Christians".

A number of other early sources also testify in similar terms to the great slaughter, remarking particularly upon the high number of English leaders/nobility that were killed.

By contrast the Battle of Lewes in 1264, witnessed similar slaughter in terms of overall casualties, but only two noble persons were killed on the loosing (Royalist) side whilst over thirty were taken prisoner. The story of Philip Bassett, who vowed to fight so long as his strength lasted and was captured after receiving twenty wounds, serves to illustrate the extreme measures undertaken by the victors to avoid killing of nobles. Professor Gillingham wondered how it was that such a change had occurred, arguing by reference to the great slaughter of nobles at Evesham in 1265, and the killing of only one (French) noble at the second Battle of Lincoln in 1217, that it was more than the contrast between scenarios of foreign invasion (1066) and civil war (1264). Indeed, the mutilation of Simon de Montfort's corpse after Evesham is reminiscent of that of King Harold's corpse at Hastings.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides only the briefest of details in its recording of battles, but a consistent theme (whether describing fights between Saxons or Saxons and Danes) is that many nobles are slain. Bede, too, records how a Saxon noble sought to escape death after a battle by dressing as a peasant.

Reference to post-conquest land ownership, as detailed for example in the Domesday Book, suggests that those Saxon nobles not killed at Hastings were absorbed into the new regime and not dispossessed or killed. This, Professor Gillingham proposed, was evidence of a new era of "enlightened" government in which enemies were reconciled rather than executed, William's widespread slaughter and dispossession of Saxon nobles being a much later response to rebellion. Professor Gillingham argued that Duke William fought an "English" battle at Hastings, meaning that he fought a battle of no

quarter toward the enemy leaders, but that his later campaigns show a nascent code of chivalry derived from Continental warfare, in which mercy is shown to enemy nobles; a practice that was to mark warfare in England for 199 years until Evesham, when the killing of nobles reappears as standard practice in battles in England.

A further aspect in which Hastings marked a watershed is with regard to treatment of the dead. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle we read time and again of bones littering fields of battle, clearly indicating that it was not customary to bury the dead after a battle in Saxon England. Undoubtedly, the dead of the Norman army were buried, but the chroniclers record that the field was littered with bones for many decades afterwards, implying that the Saxons were left unburied. William of Poitiers in fact records that Duke William did indeed leave the Saxons unburied or rather, euphemistically, that he allowed the relatives to recover the bodies! This hints at a disapproval of Duke William's failure to bury the dead and, by extension, that burial after a battle was established practice on the Continent (although there is no direct evidence that has come down to us). Burial pits, so much a part of mediaeval battlefields, have not been identified at Hastings which, when taken with the evidence of the chronicles suggests that Hastings was the last battle in England in which the dead were generally left unburied.

The reason for Duke William's conduct of the battle in the English manner is given in the Norman sources. These repeatedly describe the English as barbarians, citing their inhuman treatment of enemies, for example the blinding of Alfred (Edward the Confessor's brother) in 1036 and King Harold's cruel fratricide of Tostig at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066. The English were undeserving of pity and deserved everything that was meted out to them at Hastings. But having conquered the English, it was beholden on William to educate them in more civilised and chivalrous standards of behaviour. This, then, was the bloody significance of the Battle of Hastings in the course of English history.

Neil Clephane-Cameron

THE PIERS OF SUSSEX

Dr Fred Gray 10 November 2000

Dr Gray started by stating that our piers in Sussex are wonderful examples of what is of essentially English seaside architecture. There are a few piers in the United States but these are brick built rather grand affairs that have had a comparatively short life and there are a few new fairly short piers built with wooden piles, on the Baltic coast of Germany. But piers such as ours have often lasted over one hundred and fifty years and have had huge popular appeal.

Their popularity reached its peak in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, although the Palace Pier in Brighton still draws in some 4.5 million visitors a year. Dr Gray showed how piers illustrate well the history of the English seaside. The first stage was in the early 1800's when open decked piers were built, especially in Brighton, for people to embark on sailing boats to France. The owners of these piers soon realised that people would pay to walk on them and so it led to the next stage, which could be called pleasure piers. These generally had some buildings on them, which could be used either for shelter or for plays and concerts. The third stage could be called fun piers. These arrived in the late 1800's and the early 1900's these had games, rides and cafés on them.

There seems to be the beginning of a fourth stage, which could be called heritage piers, which is the preservation of the oldest, and best ones. The first pier in Sussex was the chain pier in Brighton which was opened in 1832 and which was blown down in 1896. Both Turner and Constable painted pictures of it. Worthing pier was built in 1861 and Bognor a few years later. The West pier in Brighton was built in 1866, as was the pier in Eastbourne. The last pier built was the Palace pier in Brighton, which was completed in 1891. These piers were all built on iron piles, which were screwed into the seabed and very few have had to be replaced even some hundred and fifty years later. Dr Gray told us how fire was the greatest hazard for piers, as the superstructure had to be built of wood, and that most of them

had been damaged sometime during their existence but as the piles always survived, they were easily rebuilt. Dr Gray then showed us many pictures of all our county's piers.

Joanne Laurence

DOODLEBUGS AND ROCKETS

Mr Bob Ogley 8 December 2000

Bob Ogley spoke to the society on this emotive subject, still very much in the memories of many of the audience. The subject matter had grown out of a previous book "Biggin Hill on the Bump" where he had met and interviewed Battle of Britain pilots and members of the Home Guard. He came to the new project with words of warning from the pilots; "Be careful of stories fifty years old; they get better with time".

Heeding this cautious advice, he wrote to practically every local newspaper in the South East, asking for memories of the missile campaign and received over 500 replies. Many were personal and localised. Some were extremely significant. For instance, he was invited to interview Constance Babington-Smith who, as a young WAAF officer, had served as a photographic interpreter and had identified, for the first time, a midget "aircraft" and a sort of ramp. The site was Peenemunde and this was the first affirmative evidence of rocket activity. She put Mr Ogley in touch with Colonel Kenneth Post, who had served as military advisor to Duncan Sandys, the Chief of the Crossbow Committee (which was set up to investigate the existence of rockets). Colonel Post produced letters still marked "secret" which recommended the saturation bombing of Peenemunde, the outcome of which was the delay of the rocket campaign by six months, and certainly the foreshortening of the war.

On 13th June 1944, barely a week after D-Day, the first doodlebug was spotted from the Martello Tower at Dymchurch sounding like "a model-T Ford going uphill". It passed across Kent landing in a potato

field at Swanscombe, causing no casualties. This was the first of many hundreds that were sent over, *not* to strike military targets but solely aimed against a civilian population, to terrorise and demoralise. They were not sophisticated enough to hit a particular target but were directed towards such a large one (London) that they could not fail to kill and maim civilians.

The first deaths occurred at Bethnal Green when a V1 landed on the railway bridge of the main line from Liverpool Street. The last fell on Orpington on 27th March 1945, so for a period of nine months the south of England suffered an horrendous campaign of indiscriminate onslaught. Statistics prove the point; 1,400 were shot down over Kent; 900 over Surrey and 900 over East Sussex; the worst area for strikes being Battle Rural District where 374 were brought down, most, mercifully, causing little damage.

Mr Ogley spoke of the moving interviews he had with survivors. He spoke with the widow of the gunner who had shot down a rocket over Kent and whose elation had turned to horror, and a lifetime's torment, when he learned that the device had struck a children's home for evacuee babies, killing many of them with their nurses. As a result of this, gun batteries were removed to the coast. Other preventative expedients were the tipping over of rockets by Spitfires flipping their wings beneath them and the occasional entanglement of rockets in the wires of barrage balloons. Every rocket downed was a life saved.

Mr Ogley had discovered in a box at the Public Records Office the manuscript of a book by H E Bates who had been commissioned to write a history of the rocket campaign. Bates had given the finished work to the Air Ministry whereat it was straight away suppressed by the Censors and had been lost from sight and forgotten for fifty years. Ogley had shown the manuscript to Bates' widow who had been convinced that the manuscript had long since been destroyed, and who movingly asked that it be published and the royalties made over to the RAF Benevolent Fund. This has now been done.

The lecture was very moving and completed by some interesting

anecdotes from visitors to the lecture, including one gentleman who had been present at the site of the last incident at Orpington ten minutes before the bomb fell; he had been speaking to, and just left, the final civilian casualty of the Second World War. One result of Mr Ogley's book was that this lady's grave was now marked with this historical fact.

After the lecture, the Society offered all present a celebratory glass of wine to commemorate the fifty years of its existence with the hope that it will continue to entertain and inform its members and guests.

David Sawyer

SUMMER PROGRAMME 2000
THE 1066 MALFOSSE WALK

15 April 2000

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers" (and sisters). Nothing daunted by a dull and damp day, a party of twelve met outside the gatehouse of Battle Abbey. Marking the Society's recent publication, the Summer Programme 2000 commenced with a guided tour of the variously conjectured sites of the Malfosse in the company of the walk's compilers Neil Clephane-Cameron, Joanne Lawrence and David Sawyer.

At Chequers Corner we noted the positions of the Saxon and Norman right flanks, the Hoar Apple tree and the steep reverse slope of Senlac ridge descending to Professor Freeman's Malfosse. Above Little Park Farm on Caldbec Hill we turned to view the line of approach of the Norman army from Black Horse Hill and the rout of the Saxon left flank over the ground that we had just walked.

Noticing the deviation of Mount Street from the alignment of the ancient Rye-Uckfield ridgeway, we progressed to the site of the Hoar Apple Tree and Saxon camp on the night of the 13th/14th October 1066, then to Oakwood Gill where we looked down on the bramble

and scrub covered location of the true Malfosse, established by C T Chevallier.

Having next explored the site of M A Lower's Malfosse at the foot of Netherfield Hill, we proceeded to The Watch Oak (noting en-route the enormous feat of construction that was required to cut and embank the turnpike road) where we followed the alignment of the ancient Rye-Uckfield ridgeway along Chain Lane to North Trade Road. A short digression along Chain Lane enabled us to gain a general view of Lower's Malfosse.

The thick mud of Mansers Shaw (the Honorable F Baring's Malfosse) reinforced our appreciation of the hazard that each site held in addition to severe topography. Emerging from Manser's Shaw we walked alongside Sir James Ramsay's Malfosse, distinct from the other sites in that Ramsay does not envisage it to have laid between the combatants.

We then made our way back to the gatehouse of Battle Abbey and dispersed.

Neil-Clephane-Cameron

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR'S NORMANDY

12-15 May 2000

The party left Battle by coach for Dover, cross-Channel ferry and a drive to Bayeux and its Churchill Hotel at the centre of a bustling ancient town. Caen the following day was, by contrast, a large modern city, well laid out not least because of wartime bombing and restoration. Its historic survivals - a citadel with towering battlements from where to view the whole town, Abbaye-aux-Hommes with, in the Abbey church the tomb (more than once destroyed) inscribed "Hic sepultus est Guillelmus conquestor obiit anno MLXXXVII" and a nearby marble slab commemorating a visit of "City of Hastings" and local representatives in 1927, the 900th anniversary of William's birth.

They presented two panels of the choir railings. Well away lay Abbaye-des-Dames, built in penitence for William's marriage to his cousin Matilda, who is buried there. Just across the road from Abbaye-aux-Hommes lay a reminiscence of Battle - a now-ruined parish church built by the monks to provide a separate place of worship for the townsfolk.

To the majority of the party, the following day gave the tour's climax. Since adolescence we had seen pictures of, and been lectured on, the Bayeux Tapestry...Norman supremacy of 1066...Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, William's half-brother...Saxon needlewomen somewhere in south England...an embroidery some 230'x 1' 8". We waited for the doors to open, before the crowds gathered, and the reward was breathtaking. A hushed, empty, specially-built hall, with the Tapestry stretching into the distance. From only a few feet away one clearly saw the linen, the embroidery stitchwork, the figures, the abrasions and the repairs, above all the thoughts of those who laboured at it just some twenty years after the Conquest: moments not lightly forgotten.

That afternoon was Falaise, the Conqueror's birthplace. His son, Henry Beauclerc, began the castle. Henry's grandson Henry II added the "Petit Donjon" keep, with the "Tour Talbot" the work of the eventual French successors.

The final event on the return drive to Calais and Dover, was the field of Agincourt where our guide gave an outline of the battle. Looking across the quite literally stretching fields of corn, it was not entirely easy to imagine exactly where the archers and chevaliers fought it out. The church and the little museum helped, not to say the later crucifix memorial in a nearby close. Henry V was victor. But within half a century the land passed to France, with at the end Calais engraved on Mary's heart.

Something of a magical tour, totally enjoyed even the climbs up and down the Falaise "donjons" by those who took part.

John Springfield

ELTHAM PALACE AND DOWN HOUSE

9 June 2000

We had a guided tour of Eltham Palace, the home of Virginia and Stephen Courtauld. The art deco house was built in 1936 and is adjacent to the 15th century Great Hall, all that remains of the original Palace, the boyhood home of Henry VIII and once one of the largest royal Palaces in Britain; the Hall later becoming the Courtauld's music room. Our guide gave us a most interesting history of the exotic lifestyle of the Courtaulds, and of the house, recently restored by English Heritage, in order to give a very fine example of art deco and the feeling of a Cunard ocean-going liner. The Courtauld's were only there for ten years, leaving in 1944 to escape the bombing of south London. They did not return and the house was handed over to the Crown Commissioners in 1945 and then to the Royal Army Education Corps who occupied it until 1992.

In the afternoon we went to Down House at Biggin Hill, the home of Charles Darwin, Victorian scientist and author of the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, published in 1842. He married his cousin Emma Wedgewood and moved to the country in 1842. The house was originally a farmhouse dating from the 18th century. The ground floor has been refurbished to reflect the family life of the Darwins with family paintings and furniture of the period.

The gardens have been restored to the Darwin plans with the sand walk or "thinking path" that he walked daily, also the greenhouses where he carried out his plant studies. The first floor of the house was given over to a display of Darwin's life and work.

Beryl Francis

GLYNDE PLACE

5 July 2000

A small party visited Glynde Place, near Lewes and were rewarded with a superb stone-built house, surrounded by acres of lush Sussex countryside. The view from the house can hardly have changed since it was built in 1579 and it was a delight to visit a place that had been lived in by members of the same family throughout its existence.

The present owner is Viscount Hampden, a direct descendent of William Morley whose grandson Colonel Harbert (sic) Morley was a prominent Parliamentarian during the Civil War. The house passed from the Morleys in 1679 to cousins, the Trevors (the widow of the last Morley marrying, conveniently, the first of the Trevors). The Trevors yielded to other cousins, the Brands in 1824, in whose family it continues.

The house was built as a square, containing within it a courtyard and so the tour started and finished at the Front Hall. Here were displayed two coronation portraits of George III and Queen Charlotte by Ramsay, not originals but mass produced contemporary copies which were sent to British Embassies. The portraits here came from the Embassy in the Hague. In fact, paintings were a feature of the house, many of them being recently inherited by the present owner.

Another room contained a superb collection of miniatures and also the Grey pendent. This contains the hair of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire whose illegitimate daughter (by Lord Grey) was an ancestress of Lord Hampden. But for me, the highlights were an incredible silver centrepiece presented to Henry Brand by Liberal members of the House of Commons, on his retirement as their Chief Whip. It is a massive example of High-Victorian silver, adorned with a figure of Queen Victoria and busts of statesmen. The other was an impressive and ingenious circular table composed of various interlocking leaves which had been found hidden away by the present owner.

Disappointingly, we were not able to visit the adjacent church which was unaccountably locked on a visiting day, but tea and the avoidance of heavy rain compensated. This is a house worth visiting, close at hand, easy to park and compact.

David Sawyer

HAMPTON COURT PALACE

19 September 2000

We crossed the Thames to the palace where Cardinal Wolsey started building in 1514, and had almost completed by 1525 when Henry VIII took it over and entered through an archway into the clock court so named after Henry's astronomical clock, which is over the gateway.

From this courtyard stairs lead into the Tudor state apartments which include the great hall, the largest room in the Palace with it's splendid hammer beam roof. This hall replaced an earlier one built by Wolsey. The great watching room above is said to be the only room to have survived in its original form; here the Yeoman of the Guard controlled access to the King. Henry remodelled the Chapel Royal, which has been in constant use for 450 years. He also added new kitchens and cellars and these are said to be the most extensive surviving 16th century kitchens in Europe; they catered for approximately 600 people in Wolsey's time rising to 1,200 during Henry VIII's reign. He also added a tennis court, bowling alleys and a tiltyard and stocked the grounds with deer and game for hunting.

Henry continued to live at Hampton Court, where he married Jane Seymour after Anne Boleyn had been beheaded. She died after giving birth to Edward VI. Catherine Howard, his next wife was accused of adultery and her household was dismissed there and then in the great watching chamber. Her ghost is supposed to be heard shrieking in the haunted gallery. After her death, Henry lived quietly here with his last wife Catherine Parr. Elizabeth I did not use the Palace much, but she did add a new privy kitchen in 1567.

James I spent his first Christmas at Hampton Court in 1603 and the following year presided over the conference of churchmen who introduced the Authorised Version of the Bible. Charles I lived at the Palace and brought part of his famous art collection before being imprisoned there in 1647 and later beheaded at Whitehall. Charles II repaired the now rather dilapidated Palace and brought his wife Catherine of Braganza there for their honeymoon, but otherwise only came for short visits.

The accession of William and Mary instigated the next great building programme. Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to update the Palace and had intended to demolish the whole of the Tudor buildings but time and money ran out so only the east side was built in the baroque style. The new buildings comprised the King's and Queen's separate apartments and a fountain courtyard. The King's apartments were badly damaged by a fire in 1986, but they have now been restored to their former glory of 1700. When Queen Anne succeeded she had the drawing room painted by Verrio and the gardens re-designed.

The last time the Palace was used by the Royal family was during the reigns of George I and II, when it was used for the entertainment of important visitors, and became a favourite summer residence of the court, with balls, parties and boating trips on the river. It was subsequently divided up into grace and favour apartments under George III and these are still in use.

Queen Victoria opened the state apartments to the public and Hampton Court became a favourite outing for Londoners especially after the arrival of the railway.

The rain became very heavy during the afternoon so the gardens were not seen by many of us, but looked wonderful through the windows. The visit to Hampton Court was most interesting giving a glimpse into the domestic arrangements of the Royal families from 1529 to 1737.

Beryl Francis

FEATURE

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1950-1951

Formation of Society

1. This Society was formed as a result of the decision of the Battle Festival of Britain Committee to arrange an exhibition of objects of local historical interest as part of its programme. It was soon clear that there was a great deal of material, and an experimental display was arranged at the Autumn Flower Show of 1950.

2. Its success was startling, and in view of promises of support, a meeting was held on 9th November to decide whether or not an Historical Society should be formed. The meeting unanimously decided in the affirmative and appointed a temporary Committee to draft its constitution. The inaugural General Meeting of the Battle and District Historical Society took place on 13th December, 1950 with Mr R W Fovargue in the Chair. The report of the temporary Committee was presented, the rules prepared by them adopted and the beginning of the financial year fixed as 14th October, the anniversary of the Battle of Hastings.

3. The first officers of the Society were then elected as follows:

President	Professor G M Trevelyan O.M. C.B.E.
Vice-Presidents	Mrs Harbord
	Miss Hope Muntz
	The Very Rev A T A Naylor D.S.O. O.B.E. M.A. Dean of Battle
Chairman	Mr A E Marson
Hon Treasurer	Mr J H Bailey
Hon Secretary	Miss F M G Gausden

Committee Members

Mr B E Beechey
Mr R H D'Elboux M.C.
Lt. Col C.H. Lemmon D.S.O.
Mrs C Pantlin
Mr L H Pyke
Mr C T Chevallier
Miss C A Kirk
Sir Alan H Moore, Bart.
Miss M J Powell
Miss R Willson

4. All these accepted office, with the exception of Sir Alan Moore. During the year, Mr Bailey and Miss Gausden regretfully found it necessary to resign their offices, and Mr J B Marson was elected Honorary Treasurer, while Miss M S Millar undertook to act as Honorary Secretary.

Membership

5. The Society began with 26 foundation members. The membership increased rapidly, and by the end of the first financial year had reached a total of 252 (including two honorary members), and 30 junior members.

Affiliation

6. In July 1951, the Society was formally elected as an affiliated Society to the Sussex Archaeological Society and the Sussex Archaeological Trust.

Lectures

7. During the year four lectures were given at different centres in Battle. The first took place on 19th January 1951, when Dr L F Salzman of the Sussex Archaeological Society spoke on "What to look for in Archaeology" and gave advice on some of the methods a young Society might adopt in its initial researches into local history.

8. This was followed on 9th February by a talk on "Battle before the Normans" by Mr C T Chevallier. This dealt with the various tribes who had inhabited the district before and after the Roman invasion, the location of pre-Conquest manors, and the origin of local place-names.

9. On 2nd March, Lt Col A H Burne D.S.O., the military historian, visited Battle to speak on "The Battle of Hastings", presenting the battle as a piece of pure military history.

10. The final lecture of the Society's first year formed part of the programme for the Battle of Hastings Commemoration Weekend and took place on 13th October. Squadron-Leader L G Pine, Editor of Burke's Peerage, spoke on "Political Events in England for fifty years

before 1066", dealing with the reigns of the Danish kings, the rule of the House of Wessex and the various claims to the English succession.

11. On 5th October Mr H E Bunce F.R,I.B.A. gave the first of his five fortnightly talks on architecture. These talks, illustrated by slides, will act as an introduction to the styles of architecture which may be seen in the buildings visited by the Society.

Visits to Places of Interest

12. The first visit took place in January in Battle itself, when members of the Society were conducted round the Parish Church by Mr W C Allwork, who explained in detail the history and architecture of the church. Mr Allwork led two similar tours later in January and in February.

13. In the Spring, excursions were commenced on a larger scale out of doors, the first being a tour of Battle Abbey led by Mrs Harbord and Mr D'Elboux. Members were shown parts of the grounds and buildings not normally seen by visitors, and were given a comprehensive picture of monastic life in the Abbey.

14. This was followed in May by a tour of Ashburnham Place, by kind permission of Lady Catherine Ashburham. Some one hundred and fifty members took advantage of this opportunity of seeing the fine collection of paintings and many other objects of historic and artistic interest. Members were shown round the house and chapel by Lady Catherine Ashburnham, assisted by Mr Rupert Gunnis, Mr R D Bickersteth and Mr R H D'Elboux.

15. Bodiam Castle was chosen for the next outing in June, when Mr Alfred Duggan conducted members round the castle, giving an account of its history and a vivid picture of former life there.

16. In September, Mr W E Meads of Bexhill, led two excursions to local churches, describing especially the architectural features to be found in them. The first visit was to Brightling and Burwash churches and the second one later in the month to Etchingham and Mountfield.

Visit to Battle by Maidstone Scientific and Antiquarian Society

17. Members of the Maidstone Scientific and Antiquarian Society visited Battle in September, when they were welcomed and shown places of interest in the town by the Battle and District Historical Society.

Field-Work and Excavation

18. During the summer, excavation was carried out by the Field-Work Sub-committee, under Lt Col C H Lemmon and Miss C A Kirk, with help from interested members. The existence was proved of two second-class local Roman roads linking the Romano-British ironworks near Footlands Farm, Sedlescombe, with the main Roman road which ran from this neighbourhood to Rochester on the Watling Street. One, leaving the main road at Little Castlemans, Sedlescombe, was exposed and cut in three places; photographs being taken and diagrams drawn of the sections. Mr I D Margery, Chairman of the Sussex Archaeological Society, and authority on Roman roads, kindly came to see the work, and confirmed the discovery as genuine. The thanks of the Society are due to the owners and tenants of the land who kindly gave permission for excavation.

Exhibitions

19. Exhibitions of objects of local interest have been held from time to time. In January and in April, six displays were arranged by Mr L H Pyke at the Youth Centre; exhibits included the Allwork Bequest, flint tools and objects lent by local residents.

20. As a contribution to the Festival Celebrations, a larger Museum exhibition was held for a fortnight in July and August in Battle Abbey, by kind permission of Miss Sheehan-Dare and the Abbey Trustees. The exhibition, which was visited by over 2,000 persons, included a comprehensive selection of historic documents relating to the Abbey, and excellent collection of Sussex iron, and many other documents, prints and objects of local historic interest. The Society is greatly indebted to local museums and numerous private owners for the loan of exhibits.

21. It is the ultimate aim of the Society to establish a permanent museum. In the meantime, they have rented a room in the Old Brewery Yard where exhibits may be shown, including gifts which have already been made to the Society.

Commemoration Weekend

22. To mark the anniversary of the Battle of Hastings and the end of its first year, the Society held a Commemoration Weekend, comprising as well as the lecture by Squadron-Leader Pine, a special Service of Commemoration, with the co-operation of the Dean of Battle, in the Parish Church. The lessons were read by Mrs Harbord and Mr A E Marson, and the Reverend R C Vere-Hodge preached the sermon. It is intended that such an annual Commemoration should form a prominent feature of the Society's activities.

M S Millar, Hon Secretary

OBITUARY - A E Stevenson

A E Stevenson, a neighbour of mine in the High Street for many years, was widely known and respected as a bookseller. His business life combined with an enthusiastic and deep involvement in our local community will be sorely missed. He served as a committee member of the Battle and District Historical Society in the 1960's and was Vice-Chairman in the early 1970's.

A member of the local Royal Naval Association, active in the Chamber of Commerce, a strong supporter of Battle Memorial Hall and of the Arts - both Battle Players and Battle Light Opera Group - these represent only a few of his attributes and interests. Above all he shared a wonderful family life with Molly and their daughters and families.

His very many friends will each treasure individual memories. I thank him simply for his friendship, and, on a light-hearted note, for his many appearances in comic costume on late-shopping nights.

Robert Emeleus

OBITUARY - Lorna Sanders

Lorna Sanders followed her husband Jack as Hon Treasurer of the Historical Society 1978-1982. Then, on the resignation in 1982 of the Chairman (the late George Creek), agreed to take the chair for two years (1982-1984) on the understanding that Keith Reader (Vice Chairman) would then occupy that position. This arrangement proved highly successful, for the Society was in a sad state at the time with no one willing to take office. Under Lorna's guidance, membership of the Society increased and it can safely be said that her efficient handling of the delicate situation she inherited, saved the Society from disintegrating.

John F Hill