Battle and District Historical Society

JOURNAL

JAN.-JULY 2003 No. 8

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Battle and District Historical Society
2002-2003

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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT January- June 2003

You may be wondering why you have received the Journal at this time of the year and why it has reports on only six of the nine lectures of the 2003-4 programme.
The Committee's decision to change the publication date was due to two related points; firstly to economise on postage costs by distributing it with the A.G.M. papers. Secondly our long-standing arrangement with Rother District Council on the production of the Journal has come to an end. I wish to record on behalf of the Society our thanks for their support over the past years.

With my Editor's hat on the latter did cause some minor problems especially with the tighter deadlines for the write-ups, hopefully when the next full year 2003-4 issue is published a new routine will have been established.

Jane Bergin who has for many years successfully carried out the duties of Press Officer has announced her intention to resign at the end of next year, and welcome to Susan Moore who has joined the Committee.

Judging by the attendance numbers last winter the change of venue for our lectures has proved popular and St Mary's Church Hall has been booked for the next series.

It is the intention to widen the scope of lectures to cover all aspects and periods of history, family, local, social, national, cultural, military and industrial and my preview of next year's lectures shows this is being implemented. Suggestions for subjects or speakers are welcomed.

Arranging visits to places of historical interest is always a difficult task, not made easier by our setting off point from the extreme South East. Peter and Wendy Roberts are to be congratulated on making this year's visits a success.
I would be interested in members views on whether we should have a series of themed lectures with associated visits and further overseas visits (which I understand were popular in the past].

Finally may I on behalf of the Society congratulate Anne Ainsley the curator and her team on the opening of the new Battle Museum of Local History and their success in winning a Sussex Heritage Award.

Malcolm Stocker
Chairman

EDITOR'S NOTE

Neither the Committee nor the Hon Editor is responsible for the opinions expressed by the contributors to this Journal.

THE ROMAN INVASION OF BRITAIN IN AD 43

John Manley 10 January 2003

The lecture was in two parts, the historical and the archaeological evidence of the invasion. The historical evidence is small but interesting. The largest piece of information comes from Cassius Dio, who was a Greek writer, born in Turkey but living and writing history in Rome in AD 230. He almost certainly got his information from the works of Tacitus and Suetonius, some of which are long lost. He states that there were four Roman Legions plus auxiliary troops, which comprised in all of about 40,000 men. The fleet had about 900 to 1000 ships, which carried the packhorses, fodder, food and supplies, as well as the men. Dio does dot say where they sailed from but until recently it was generally accepted that they landed at Richborough in northeast Kent. If this were a fact they would probably have had to sail from Boulogne, which is only 36 nautical miles from Richborough. However if they had landed in the Solent, which is a possibility, they would have probably left from either Cherbourg or the mouth of the Seine. However that would have meant sailing about 84 nautical miles. We know that they sailed in three flotillas and Dio says that they sailed from east to west. Richborough is to the north of Boulogne. There is little information about Roman shipping but almost certainly the ships were propelled by sails and oars. It is known that the Emperor Claudius did not sail with them and also that their ultimate destination was Colchester (Camulodunum). Dio states that the landing was unopposed and the first engagement with the enemy was in Gloucestershire which is easily reached from the Solent, and that the army then turned east and waited south of the Thames until Claudius arrived. He duly arrived and the army crossed the river and took Colchester. In a piece of work by Tacitus that has survived, he states the general Vespasian (later Emperor) was credited with the victory rather than Claudius. However, Claudius headed the victory parade in Rome. Before he left Britain Claudius installed Togidubnus as a local chief and ruler of a large area of southeast England and Togidubnus lived at Fishbourne. In all Claudius only remained in England 16 days.

The archaeological evidence is from both Richborough and Fishbourne. The site at Richborough has greatly changed over the centuries and a considerable area of land has been eroded by the river Stour and the site greatly truncated. There are two parallel defensive ditches and a causeway, which show traces of a timber gateway. They have been proved to be Claudian by shards of dateable Samarian ware of AD 41-53 and up to 600 coins of Claudian dates. Later during and after AD 53 Richborough became very important and had a harbour, shore fort and granaries. It was then and afterwards a point of entry and exit from Britain and there are signs that there used to be a large triumphal archway.

However if the main fleet had landed in the Solent, Richborough may have been used as a supply point. If the army had landed in Kent it would in all probability been opposed (Dio says that the landing was unopposed) they then would have had to march either northeast or west and then north to circumnavigate the Weald, which was impassable to a large army because of its clays and dense forest. There is a legend that the army crossed and had a battle on the river Medway but there is no archaeological evidence for this. There is the Bredgar hoard of gold coins, now in the British Museum, which were found near Sittingbourne with the latest coin dated AD 42 but there is no way of knowing why they were buried and by whom. Cassius Dio

and Josephus definitely state that the Romans were in Silchester and Gloucester before they went over the Thames. The site of the palace at Fishbourne has been extensively excavated but a new dig has recently uncovered the large military buildings just west of the palace. These buildings and a military ditch, put together with a previous excavation by Professor Barry Cunliffe, seem to be part of an orthodiagonal arrangement of structures and roads that are likely to be military. Aratine ware of AD 39-42 was discovered but at the present time the site can be no more securely dated than the decade AD 40-50.

Mr Manley ended the lecture by saying that archaeology was about 5% fact and 95% interpretation and that archaeologists work in terms of possibilities and probabilities. It is easy to translate these uncertainties into truths, and so it would be better to be thought that the Richborough invasion route was a hypothesis rather than a proven fact.

Joanne Lawrence

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CHANNEL TUNNEL

Helen Glass 24 January 2003

In a spontaneous and informative lecture Helen Glass, Senior Archaeologist, Rail Link Engineering gave an account of the archaeological investigations that have been undertaken to date on the route of the Rail Link between the Channel Tunnel portal near Folkestone to Kings Cross London, concentrating on Section 1 between Folkestone and Gravesend which is due to complete in Autumn 2003. Section 2 from Ebbsfleet Valley Gravesend to Kings Cross is to be open early 2007

The archaeological impact of the railway falls mainly on Kent a county with a rich heritage and people have been travelling through this natural corridor across the North Downs for thousands of years.
The Rail Link follows this established route.

Helen Glass's first involvement was as an undergraduate with the Oxford Archaeological Unit that was gathering data for the route selection and in 1994 an Environmental Impact Assessment was produced to support the Act of Parliament for the construction of the railway. The process involves gathering all possible information from the archaeological and heritage records of sites that may be affected by the various proposed alternative routes. Checks are made on County and Monument records, Historic Building lists, historic maps, academic published and unpublished papers, and trying to understand what the impact will be of the construction. When you have built up a picture you then go out into the field and start looking for sites. The construction of the Rail Link has provided the archaeologist with an amazing opportunity to uncover new information, which may rewrite the early history of Kent.

As an example a slide was shown of the area around Boxley Abbey a medieval site and Boxley Village near Maidstone, which are protected by a series of planning designations and contain many outstanding buildings that were indicated on the map. What worries the construction engineers are the blank spaces between as they fear that the archaeologists will make discoveries and the job will be held up. To avoid this problem the archaeologists go out into the ploughed fields looking for pottery scatters plotting the disposition of exposed pottery pieces and worked flints and carry out geophysical surveys to understand sites that are no longer visible. Having identified these hot spots trial trenches are dug before any construction works are undertaken. If the site will eventually be under an embankment the site can be left insitu, but if it lies on the path of a cutting then the site has to be excavated by the archaeologists, preservation by record rather than preservation insitu. The first question an archaeologist has to ask is do I have to really dig this site? As archaeology is a finite resource once dug only published records and bits of pottery in museums remain.

With the aid of slides of some of the excavated sites Helen Glass took the audience through a journey in time from the early prehistoric to the 18th Century. On Section 1 over a period of 2 years 40 sites were dug, at one time up to 100 archaeologists were working at 12 sites.

Starting with the Neolithic Period 4000/2000 B.C. at a site off the Pilgrims Way is White Horse Stone a sarsen, one of a series known as the Medway Megaliths close to here an Iron Age settlement was identified. Excavated to a depth of 5m through various strata it enabled a picture to be built up of the changing nature of the environment. A Neolithic longhouse was exposed only one of fifteen known in Britain and the most southerly and the only one in Kent. In outline it was 6m wide by 18m long and had been a timber structure with wattle and daub walls and a thatched roof. As no rubbish pit was found nearby the building may have served a community use like a village hall. As little is known about the people who lived and farmed in these times the site was dug out completely and the soil and debris taken away for analysis.

Moving on the Roman Period, Thurman Villa Detling (first recorded in1833] this site in the space of three hundred years expanded from an Iron Age roundhouse enclosure into a Roman villa with a hundred acre farm. Started around 70A.D. the villa was built with 600m thick Kentish Ragstone walls, no mosaic floors have been found. Also exposed were postholes for massive timber posts of another structure in the complex, a domestic annexe perhaps. Objects found in an area in this building, brooches, rings, tweezers, bone comb, mirror fragments when plotted three dimensionally help in understanding what the rooms were used for and engages the archaeologist with the original occupants.
Springhead Roman Town in the Ebbsfleet Valley near Gravesend is a 1st Century A.D.cemetery with two temples that was discovered. It contained unusually inhumation burials in coffins and cremations in pots or insitu, some 600 people altogether. As the soil is very acidic it is poor for osteological purposes. Not a rich cemetery from the items recovered but still an important find, which after investigation will be preserved under a new slip road

At Saltwood near Folkestone a large Anglo-Saxon cemetery was unexpectedly found dating from the 5th Century to 7th Century A.D. The East Saxon Kingdom was very rich with dynastic links to the Merovingian Kingdom on the Continent. Unfortunately the cemetery was in the Greensands beds, which are also very acidic and little remains of some 200 burials, often just grave shaped holes. Five burials were quite rich in artefacts, one was a warrior who had been buried with all his weapons and a beer barrel, another grave which we referred to as "the lady of substance" was buried with amber and amethyst beads and a gold coin pendant. The coin came from Marseilles and the single most beautiful object found, a composite brooch, 4 inches across, unique with an iron safety pin on silver back covered with gold foil and filigree set with garnets, blue glass and ground cuttlefish and was manufactured locally. Artefacts tell us about trade, eg garnets come from Pakistan. On the edge of Ebbsfleet an Anglo-Saxon horizontal watermill was uncovered whose timbers were dated by dendrochronology to roughly 200AD To finish she showed 17th Century Bridge House at Marsham near Ashford on the edge of an existing railway cutting which was to be widened. The house was therefore slid 60 metres up the hill and as the house was not dismantled it retained its listing.

Analysis of Stage I has now started and is due for publication in 2-3 years time and archives and artefacts will eventually be deposited in local museums

Malcolm Stocker

A LITTLE OF WHAT YOU FANCY - HISTORY OF THE MUSIC HALL

Walter Williamson 14 February 2003

This was an unusual talk for the Society - no slides but musical performance from the Speaker accompanied by members, perfectly reflecting the essence of the old Music Hall, ie audience participation.

Mr Williams explained that the true Music Hall existed from about 1850 to 1914; before it had been entertainment within the tavern to boost the sale of beer; after it became the Variety Theatre, which lasted until the advent of television in the 1950's.

Music Hall was a peculiarly British institution. America had Vaudeville but nobody else had anything similar to this essentially working class venture. It was unique, being at the same time a vehicle for social comment but also, on a simpler level, a forum in which the audience could join in, in a convivial atmosphere. The most important ingredient was the Chairman who could introduce the 'turns' and became something of a turn himself when barracked and bantered by the audience.

Starting in the taverns of the 1830's when the landlord found that customers would spend more money if a particular performer sang a few songs. Most of these songs were bawdy but well received, and it was only when the music moved from the tavern to the purpose built hall that explicit vulgarity gave way to innuendo. Once the lyrics were cleaned up, a mass audience was gained.

One of the first venues, in 1844, was Evans (late Joys) of Covent Garden. This proved extremely popular and was frequented by the likes of Dickens and Thackeray. It was the first hall to provide a proper stage and it was not long before the arrival of the genuine theatre in the guise of the Canterbury in Westminster Bridge Road (1852). The owner was Charles Morton who quickly developed a circuit of Halls with regular artistes (note the description) in such places as the Tivoli in the Strand and the Palace Theatre of Varieties in Cambridge Circus. Here the working man could drink his porter and his wife gin, whilst both supped on jellied eels and saveloys and joined in the songs.

By 1860 there were 300 Halls and by 1870 500 in London alone. The working man loved them but the middle classes totally disapproved believing them to be depraved and immoral (although it did not stop many of them sneaking in!).

By 1904 the food and drink had gone along with the Chairman but the honest vulgarity and humour remained, personified in the person of such performers as Marie Lloyd and Harry Champion. The Church and the Temperance movement naturally opposed the whole institution but it remained unshakeably popular, probably because the songs reflected the everyday lives and experiences of the audience, lives which were hard and impoverished. Also hard, was the life of the performer who would often perform 2 or 3 shows a night in different theatres, predominantly in London, as evidenced by the mass of cockney and costermonger tunes.

There were thousands of songs which nostalgia has painted as being classics; in fact, most were dreadful and mercifully consigned to oblivion but some - a very few - live

on. Such songs as My Old Dutch and The Old Bull and Bush are still performed and the members of the Society were happy to join in the chorus of some of them.

A few themes dominated, all readily familiar to a Music Hall audience: such subjects as food and drink; too much alcohol; nagging wives and worthless husbands; and contrarily love, romance and marriage. The Society were delighted that Mr Williamson performed a number of these songs and thoroughly enjoyed a 'different' sort of lecture.

David Sawyer

HISTORY OF SUSSEX WINDMILLS

Peter Hill 28 February 2003

As Chairman of the Sussex Mills Group, Peter Hill is well versed in the practical as well as the historical aspects of mills and milling, which he presented to the Society in a breezy manner.

When man began to cultivate cereal crops the need arose to crush grains of the cereals to produce flour. At first this was achieved by pounding the grain by hand using a simple pestle and mortar. This developed into the Saddle Quorn which is a stone with a concave surface into which a handful of grain is thrown and reduced by rubbing it against the concave surface with a hand held pound stone. The principles of all future milling were established in the Stone Age with the invention of the Rotary Stone Quorn. This consists of a circular Bed stone, which does not move, (it is asleep) with an upper stone known as the Runner stone, which is turned by a handle to rotate on the bed stone. Grain is fed through a hole in the centre of the runner stone known as the eye and on rotation the grain passes between the surfaces of the stones and is cut and crushed and emerges as flour. The Rotary Stone Quern is still used in areas of Africa.

The amount of flour that could be produced by this method was insufficient to meet the demands of the increasing world population. To use larger stones was not an option as they were too heavy to turn by hand and to turn the stones using animal power did not work, as sufficient speed to grind the grain could not be reached. An alternative source of power had to be found.

Water power was the first to be harnessed, an early example of a vertical water wheel is described by Vitruvius [20-11 B.C], but it was to be another twelve hundred years before windmills were invented. Essentially to work efficiently the sails [or sweeps as they are known south of the Thames] have to face into the eye of the wind and how this was achieved is shown by the development of windmills.

With the aid of three small models of the different types of windmills Peter Mills then took us through the history of windmills with particular reference to Sussex. In 1800 there were said to be 10,000 mills in the country, mainly in the south and east, and at one time 900 mills were recorded in Sussex.

The earliest type recorded [1165 A.D] was the Open Trestle Post mill where the whole body of the mill turns around a central post which was supported by the trestle. The snags of the Post Mill were the limited storage capacity and being of timber construction of limited height and very vulnerable to fire. In the C14/15 two new types of mills came into use, the wooden tower Smock Mill, so called as it looked like the traditional garb of farm workers, an octagonal battered structure on a brick base known as a roundel, and the brick or stone Tower Mill.

In both types only the cap, which carried the sweeps, was manually turned into the wind by pushing on a tail pole that projected down from the rear of the cap. In 1740 the Fantail was invented, this is a small windmill set at right angles to the rear of the

main sweeps. If the wind is blowing into the sweeps the fantail remains stationary, if the wind veers the blades of the fantail rotate and through gearing gradually turn the cap into the new direction of the wind.

Sussex is fortunate in that 80 mill buildings are still extant though not all as mills. Distribution of the types of mills is random and mills were often moved to new sites as the 'wind was taken out of their sails'. There were more windmills in East Sussex, than in the west of the county where there was a greater use of water mills. With the aid of a map and photographs the speaker showed typical examples of windmills including:

Post Mills
Ashdown Forest; one of only five remaining open trestle post mills in the country
High Salvington: an early C18 enclosed trestle post mill.
Herstmonceux; the tallest post mill in Sussex.
Jack & Jill, Clayton; Jill is the ultimate in post mills and had a fantail fitted when she was moved to her present site in 1852. With Jack (a post mill) they form the only pair left in the county.
Hog Hill Icklesham; owned by Paul McCartney.
Nutley; late C17, the oldest working mill in Sussex.

Smock Mills
Shipley; 1879, the only working smock mill in Sussex, once owned by Hilaire Belloc.
Beacon Hill; 1802 marked on Admiralty charts, as are four other Sussex mills.
West Blatchington; 1820 unique six-sided built on a flint stone base, drawn by Constable.

Tower Mills
Polgate; 1817 brick cylindrical restored working mill.
Stone Cross; 1876 brick cylindrical restored working mill.
Jack Mill, Clayton; base now a Chapel of Ease.

Many other mills have been converted to domestic use, including Kings Head Mill Battle built in 1806 converted into a dwelling in 1920, sweeps now electrically operated The first recorded mill in Sussex was in 1185 at Amberley, the last one built in 1884 at Pagham which is now converted into a dwelling. The demise of the windmill for grinding cereals was brought about by repeal of the Corn Laws with cheap imports from Canada and the introduction of steam powered mills.

Malcolm Stocker

THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (BEF) IN FRANCE IN 1940
A REAPPRAISAL

Dr Gary Sheffield 14 March 2003

Dr Sheffield illustrated his talk using viewfoils showing the disposition of British, French and German forces both before and after the British Army retreat to Dunkirk and the subsequent seaborne evacuation.

He explained that the lessons of the 1914-18 war had been forgotten and recalled that the British Army had been at its best between August and November in 1918; arguably that in 1940 at Dunkirk it suffered its worst ever disaster. The BEF had established itself near the Belgian border under the command of General Lord Gort VC. However, the German 19 Panzer Corps crossed the River Meuse and by 20 May 1940 had rapidly advanced to the French coast at Abbeville, Boulogne and Calais. Consequently the British Army was trapped and retreated to Dunkirk; the 51st Highland Division were captured at St Valery-en-Caux and the BEF survivors were evacuated by sea from Dunkirk to Britain. On 10 May 1940 Winston Churchill became the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the defeat at Dunkirk was presented to the nation as the victory of the little ships. Britain was now facing the distinct possibility of invasion; the Home Guard was being formed and soon followed the Battle of Britain and the German bomber blitz.

Dr Sheffield then highlighted what had gone wrong at Dunkirk. The British and the French, who were in the majority, had fought side-by-side and experienced significant failures. However, the British retreat while the French held a defensive perimeter around Dunkirk effectively ended the alliance with the French and subsequent relations between the two countries became difficult.

The French reaction to the 1914-18 war was 'never again'; therefore they did not develop an offensive strategy. Instead, they built the Maginot Line at great financial cost thus leaving insufficient funds for aircraft, tanks, armoured cars and other military equipment. This slow and ponderous strategy was unrealistic and failed to cope with the German offensive. Poor communications led to the collapse of command and control and also demoralisation at being outfought and defeated.

The Germans, having been defeated in 1918, rearmed from scratch and introduced Blitzkrieg; some 15% of their army being armoured and/or mechanised, backed up by air power in the form of dive bombers. They circumvented the Maginot Line and literally ran rings around the French.

The British, like the French, thought 'never again' after the 1914-18 war and adopted a strategy between that of the French and the Germans. The Army was largely employed in policing the Empire. In terms of funding it became a poor third to the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. Initially leading the world in the development of tanks the British produced cruiser tanks for reconnaissance and infantry tanks for infantry support; this remained unchanged until 1945. These tanks were under-armed and some under-armoured and became known to the Germans as 'Tommy cookers'. Between the wars Britain maintained a small professional army plus Territorials and there was no conscription. It was thought that any future conflict would be fought primarily by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force backed up by a small Army

contribution.

At the outbreak of the 1939-45 war Britain deployed the BEF to France where they were to train and expand. They had insufficient weapons and equipment and in May 1940 comprised nine infantry divisions and a tank brigade made up of regulars, territorials and so called 'humper and dumper' units. There were a few motorcycle reconnaissance units and much of the infantry was untrained. Victory in 1918 was seen as somewhat hollow because of the huge loss of life. Since then the Army had been starved of money, equipment and training facilities; the public perception at the time was that anything was better than a repeat of the 1914-18 war. A period of shallow pacifism prevailed and taxpayers were not particularly supportive of too much defence funding. In 1940 Britain had one well-equipped armoured division but it was in Egypt. The 1st Armoured Division was still forming and only saw action in piecemeal small units in France.

Generally speaking the commanders at the outset of war were replaced later by those more junior who had learned 'on the job' with the BEF. General Lord Gort VC was overwhelmed by the scale of his responsibilities but in retrospect his decision to retreat ensured that the nucleus of the Army survived to expand, retrain and continue to fight in subsequent campaigns. His corps commanders such as Alexander, Montgomery and Horrocks (who at the time was a battalion and brigade commander) went on to succeed later in the war.

Leaders at Dunkirk performed as well as could be expected bearing in mind that their troops were inadequately trained and under-resourced. The British Army, when on its own, displayed their traditionally good defensive skills. The Royal Air Force participation was scaled back because their forward bases were overrun, range considerations and the perceived need to conserve pilots and aircraft to fight in the subsequent 'Battle of Britain'. The 'little ships' made an important contribution to the evacuation of some 280,000 soldiers from Dunkirk, but the majority were rescued by the Royal Navy who were outstanding in organising and marshalling troops for embarkation. Perhaps the greatest miracle of Dunkirk was the calm sea which enabled a successful seaborne evacuation of a defeated Army which was successfully rebuilt and became victorious as the war progressed.

Many lessons were learnt from Dunkirk and applied in subsequent operations. The Germans made better use of tanks, but the British armoured formations were tank heavy and insufficient infantry integrated with the tanks. Also, the Army was encouraged to feel that they were elite. The need for better inter-service cooperation was most apparent and led to much improved tri-service combined operations. It could be argued that defeat at Dunkirk laid the foundation for many future victories.

Peter Roberts

MY GRANDFATHER'S MEMORIES
BATTLE & HASTINGS in the 1860s

Christopher Hare 28 March 2003

The information on which Mr Hare based his talk came from two sources, a Diary and a Journal kept by his great grandfather. The Diary was kept whilst going around the country as a young man, looking for work and the Journal which he wrote in the 1930s when in his early eighties. By this time he was quite well known for his involvement in the Temperance movement. The Diary and the Journal illustrate the current social history together with commentaries on great events of the day.

Mr Hare's great grandfather, Guy Hayler was born in a small cottage (now a cake shop) close to Battle Abbey on 5 November 1850, hence his name 'Guy' The 1851 Census return shows that 18 people lived in this cottage, 4 of them lodgers.

In his journal Guy Hayler wrote "...the town of Battle, Sussex in the middle of the last century was a thriving market centre and had been so for many years". He notes that according to his eldest son Wilfred's research the Hayler family were Huguenots who fled from France in 1685.

Guy's early years were spent in Battle and later moved to Hastings, where Guy attended school. His father was a tailor, a Chartist, who suffered for his outspoken opinions. Hastings was a political flashpoint and Guy remembered the political meetings that his father took him to. He became a supporter of the secret ballot. Whilst attending St Mary's school in St Leonard's he first heard of Teetotalism and was invited to sign the 'Pledge of Temperance'. Although only six and a half years old, he with others signed. Two years later he joined the anti-liquor youth organisation the Rock Band of Hope (named after 'White Rock')

His mother died in 1861 when he was ten years old; he does not mention the death of his father in Ore Workhouse who had married three times. At the age of twelve he started work with a firm of painters and decorators in Hastings. On the first day he fell from a ladder, fortunately into a cart containing sand. A doctor was called, who finding no bones were broken suggested he be given some stout every day. As a Band of Hope boy Guy refused, the doctor rejoined, "unless you drink stout you will never be a man". Guy replied, " I will be a boy all my life"

Aged sixteen, with no parents and unemployed he went to Worthing looking for work and finding none onto Horsham and Clapham, London. There he witnessed the Hyde Park riots over electoral reform. The account of the riot recorded in his diary tells a different story from the press reports as illustrated by slides of the "Daily Telegraph" and the "Chronicle of Great Britain"

In 1868, still without work or lodgings Guy tramped the streets of London looking for employment then on to Barnet, Stoney Stratford and Oxford without success. He describes how he walked about 30 miles a day, sleeping in workhouses and eating only bread. Eventually he obtained a job as a painter and decorator at the Elephant and Castle for four months and afterwards returned to Hastings.

By 1870 working class men had been given the vote and Guy tried to get elected as a labour candidate (not a political party), working for the opening of galleries and museums on Sundays and excursions to the country. His life became more settled; he married Elizabeth Judge from a family famous for its cakes and possibly related to Judge's postcards of Hastings. He became more involved in political activities, including support for the Paris Commune uprising in1871.

It was the Temperance Society which took him to Hull where he ran a Temperance hotel. In 1918 he stood unsuccessfully as an Independent Parliamentary candidate for East Surrey. He and his wife celebrated their Diamond wedding in 1934, quite an achievement for the time. He died in 1943 shortly before his 93rd birthday.

Had his hard life and lack of alcohol contributed to his long life, Mr Hare wondered?

Diane Braybrooke

Summer Programme 2003

In May we went on "The Waterloo Experience". We met our Blue Badge Guide at the Albert Tavern, in London before visiting Apsley House, which became the home of Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, given to him by a grateful nation following the Battle of Waterloo. The sumptuous interiors made a wonderful setting for the impressive art collection and many gifts presented to the great Duke. This was the first house on the old toll road into London, and the address became **No 1 London**. The eighth Duke and his family still live there. We then went up inside the Wellington Arch, which was last used to house London's smallest police station, to look at the spectacular views, and a closer look at Quadriga, the largest bronze sculpture in England. Finally we visited the Army Museum and saw, among other things, a huge model of the epic battle.

Our second visit in June was to Greenwich. We walked through Greenwich Park from the Blackheath Gate until we arrived at the Royal Observatory, enjoying one of the best views in the country, the historic buildings of Royal Greenwich against a backdrop of the Thames, the City and Canary Wharf. The house, built by Wren for the first Royal Astronomer, houses a collection of clocks including the magnificent Harrison Timekeepers. We then visited the many exhibitions at Greenwich, all went to the Maritime Museum, many of us seeing The Elizabeth Exhibition, which , fortunately for us was there at the time of our visit. Some visited the Queen's House. We ended our visit with a boat trip to the Thames Barrier and back.

Firle Place was the venue for our July visit, home of the Gage family for the last 500 years, despite history's trials and tribulations. We were greeted at the entrance by a guide, divided into two groups, and given a very comprehensive tour. The house, originally Tudor, built of Caen stone, thought to be from a monastery dissolved at the time of Henry VIII, was remodelled in the 18th century, is now thought to be similar in appearance to a French Chateau. It contains a magnificent collection of Old Masters, fine English and European furniture and an impressive collection of Sevres Porcelain.

Wendy Roberts

Digitally printed by Parchment (Oxford) Ltd, from copy supplied
Printworks, Crescent Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2PB
email: print@parchmentUK.com www.PrintUK.com