From a map of Sussex by John Nordon, augmented by John Speede. a.1616 d.

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

DECEMBER 1991 No. 10

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BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM TRUST

Official Address : Langton House, High Street, Battle, TN33 0AQ

Affiliated to The Historical Association, The Sussex Archaeological Society, The Sussex Archaeological Trust, Sussex Record Society, The Federation of Sussex Local History Societies and South Eastern Federation of Sussex Museum and Art Galleries

Officers and Committees 1991-1992

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(registered as a Charity, No.292593, on 8 May 1986)

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN
1990/1991

It may sound conventional, even complacent, to report that the Society has had another successful year, but in large measure it is true. Our Winter Programme of lectures was well attended, apart from one meeting (8th February 1991) which had to be cancelled because of heavy snow. The Summer Programme was more successful than ever, all except one of the visits being oversubscribed. We enjoyed a very pleasant Commemoration Party, which was well supported despite other social events in Battle on the same evening, and our Commemoration Service was made more memorable by the dedication of the Webster Memorial Tablet and the Whistler Memorial Window. The main item on the other side of the balance is the acoustics of the Langton Hall, which continue to place some strain on both speakers and audience. However, your Committee has managed to achieve some improvement and will continue their search for a complete solution to the problem.

Thanks to the diligent efforts of our Treasurer the financial position remains sound, and for the third year in succession no increase in subscriptions has been needed. This happy situation cannot continue. All our costs are going up, most of them by more than the rate of inflation, and the recent falls in interest rates will result in an appreciable decrease in our investment income. However, our subscription has always been very small, and to judge by the unanimous view of the Annual General Meeting, members would much prefer a modest increase in subscription to any reduction in our activities.

This satisfactory year is the outcome of much work by Committee Members and others to all of whom I am extremely grateful. I ought however to make special mention of two members of the committee who retired at the last Annual General Meeting. Dorothy Denny has been Membership Secretary for as long as I can remember, and David Thompson has been editor of the Newsletter for the past three years. The Society owes a great debt to both of them. Nor must I forget George

Creek who this year gave up the office of auditor which he has held since 1982, ever since he ceased to be Chairman.

However, every successful year presents the problem of how to repeat it, and if possible, improve upon it. In one aspect of our activities I am very confident. Ernest Goldsworthy has already planned the 1992 Summer Programme and I have little doubt that it will prove as popular as ever. The formulation of a programme of lectures always presents some difficulties for our members have very varied interests in historical matters. Some are attracted by history in its widest sense, and would agree with John Buchan's description of it as "...the attempt to write in detail the story of a substantial fragment of the past, so that its life is re-created for us, its moods and forms of thought reconstructed and its figures strongly represented against a background painted in authentic colours." There is certainly scope for this approach in our Society, for local history can be understood only in the wider context of British and European history.

Other members find their main interest in the past events of our immediate vicinity, and our constitution speaks of "...the local history of Battle, East Sussex and the surrounding areas." But, how are we to interpret the phrase "surrounding areas"? Should it mean the town of Battle and the villages within a few miles, or should it encompass most of Southern England and Northern France? Certainly the events of 1066 would seem to call for the wider interpretation, and we may remember that as recently as the mid 19th century London was considered to be within walking distance of Battle by at least one of its more prominent business men.

There are also members whose interests are in the history of particular subjects such as railways or gardening, or in the industrial aspects of the past such as ironmaking or the design of wind and water mills. Such matters, provided they are not too specialised, are very appropriate to our Society, particularly when they also have strong local

interest. The Committee does its best to provide a balanced programme with something for all tastes. The main problem in arranging the Winter Programme is not the selection of topics but the discovery of speakers who can deliver an attractive lecture to a non-specialist audience. In the search for speakers we gain much help from our membership of such bodies as the Historical Association and the Federation of Sussex Local History Societies. Over the past four years during which I have been concerned with preparing the Winter Programme I have been most impressed by the willingness of many historians, both academic and amateur, to travel 50 or 60 miles each way on a winter evening to talk to a local group about which they know next to nothing. I am also happy to report that many of them depart with a high opinion of the Society and its members and with memories of an enjoyable meeting. While it is inevitable that most of our lectures are provided by visiting speakers, this does not mean that we overlook the possiblity of contributions from our own members. On the contrary they are most particularly welcome. Any member who would care to talk to the Society on a topic arising from his or her own historical interests has only to have a word with the Secretary.

Perhaps the most difficult problem for our Society, and one which we share with many similar bodies, is that of finding members who are prepared to do the many jobs necessary to maintain our activities. There are more than 300 members but the day to day running of the Society is in the hands of a very few. Thankfully all our retiring officers were willing to stand for re-election at the Annual General Meeting, but we were able to find only 9 out of 10 other members of the Committee and this only because some retiring members were willing to continue. Furthermore, many of those on whom we most depend are well into the "Senior Citizen" category, and although their energy and enthusiasm belies their years, they cannot be expected to continue in office indefinitely. The continued well-being of our Society must depend upon members who are prepared to take some part in running it. At the moment all is well, but I wish I

could feel a little more confident about the future.

Donald Nicol

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MUSEUM TRUST

The Museum enjoyed a very successful year from almost every point of view. The number of adult visitors was up by 265 on the previous year, and we made a nett profit of £697 compared with £65 in 1990. As children accompanied by adults are allowed in free, we have not recorded their number, but we estimate that about 1,700 came through our doors, and none were left behind!

This happy situation did not just happen. It is the result of a concerted effort on the part of your Museum Committee and co-operation by a team of loyal and reliable Custodians.*

Those of you who have read my 1991 report, distributed prior to the AGM, will be aware of this situation. But I make no apology for repeating it, and for referring again to the great debt of gratitude which members owe to all concerned.

Apart from committee members and Custodians I would also like to thank Mr. Bob Mears, the Historical Society representative to our committee, for his advice and diplomacy, and Mr. Eric Augele and Mr. Les Dando for arranging to provide the very attractive murals on the entrance walls of the Memorial Hall, leading to the Museum.

I said at the beginning of these notes that the Museum year had been successful "from almost every point of view". The only disappointment is that not more members of the Society seem interested in it. In one sense I can undertstamd this, because members do not join the Society to become involved in the Museum. They join the Society to enjoy the events arranged by the Society's committee. However, the Museum has a part to play in making the past history of the town in which we are lucky enough to live interesting to

visitors, and also in conserving its history for the benefit of future generations.

Looked at in this way, it is a challenge, and I feel sure that there must be a number of members who relish a challenge. If you would like to be involved, please let one of the committee know.

Since my report, the Museum has held its AGM - for the first time on a night other than with the Society. The reason, as explained at the time, was because both the Museum and the Society had a number of important items to debate, and time would therefore be too limited. In the event, few members were able to attend our meeting, but I am pleased to say that two new members have joined the committee for next year - Mrs. A. Swann and Mr. F. Marshall. Both are warmly welcomed.

*Custodians:

Mrs. A. Armitage, Mr. W. Beard, Mrs. G. Bolton, Mrs. J. Cresswell, Mrs. A. Curry, Mrs. L. Ford, Mrs. C. Gilbart, Mrs. W. Hall, Mr. F. Marshall, Miss H. Moore, Mr. A. Murduck, Mr. S. Ockenden, Mrs. M. Patmore, Mrs. A. Swann, Mrs. G. Young

John Hill

THE HARMER PLAQUES OF EAST SUSSEX.

Mrs. M.E. Merifield 4 January 1991

Jonathan Harmer was born in 1762 in Heathfield, son of a stonemason. After a brief sojourn in New York he returned to England after his father's death and took over the family business in 1800 when he began specialising in terracotta plaques which were fixed to headstones.

Terracotta is baked clay and was first used as early as 3000 B.C. and is still being used in building today. It varies in colour from cream and buff to bright red and it is believed that Jonathan obtained the red clay locally from Heathfield Park and the paler colours from Fulham. He used his mother's bakehouse as a kiln, the firing temperature reached being as high as 500°C.

There are 7 main types of terracotta plaques to be found -

1) Basket of fruit and flowers

2) Urn with ramshead handles

3) Figures of Faith and Hope

4) Tureen shaped vase

5) Cherub with crown and rays

6) Charity group

7) Rosettes

The plaques are not large, varying in size from 5"x5" for rosettes to 15"x11" for a vase. The detail of carving is exquisite and many plaques are edged with little beads of clay.

All plaques erected during his lifetime bear Jonathan's own mark - "Harmer fecit", while those taken from the stock remaining after his death bear

just the name "Harmer" and the date mounted.

Apart from terracotta plaques, only two made from other materials have been found - one in cast iron at Wartling Church and probably made at Ashburnham furnace and one made from Portland stone at East Grinstead.

Sixty-six plaques have been found and recorded, 65 in East Sussex and one only in Kent, including some found by Mrs. Merifield herself such as that in All Saints churchyard at Hastings. Mrs. Merifield had taken photographs of all these plaques and they were passed round at the end of the talk with a reminder that a set of the terracottas and some of the moulds can be seen at the Barbican Museum in Lewes.

Jonathan died in 1849 and is buried in Heathfield churchyard but his headstone bears no plaque.

Margaret McCrorie

VICTORIAN LANDSCAPE ARTISTS IN SUSSEX

Dr. Peter Brandon — 18 January 1991

Dr. Peter Brandon showed an impressive number of pictures painted by artists who settled in Surrey and Sussex, and by those artists who, in the early eighteenth century, travelled from London by coach and horses.

In the days before railways, artists would get to country districts in the southern counties, or for that matter to outlying suburbs of London such as Brixton and Tooting, by horse, to paint landscapes and river scenes.

A real country-looking scene by George Scharfe was, in fact, Acre Lane, Brixton, in 1820. Other paintings of London included John Varley's embankment scene in 1820, and that by Frenchman Gustav Dorbe who depicted the frenetic London atmosphere. Dr. Brandon showed us pictures such as George Lambert's view of Box Hill in

in 1730, and of later date George Scharfe's painting of Dorking Church in 1820. Another of George Scharfe's paintings was a country scene of the River Wandle at Caterham at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and it was noted that John Ruskin rued the appearance of industry round the Wandle at that time.

The Victorians were very fond of pictures depicting the countryside, and artists made a living selling to London patrons pictures showing cottage scenes with floral surrounds, many by Helen Allingham. Richard Redgrave, deputy director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, painted at Abinger in Surrey for 37 consecutive summers. George Warren, an associate of Redgrave, painted in the countryside near Cranleigh.

Sussex was an important area during this period. The fifth Duke of Norfolk at Arundel was a great patron of the arts, and several artists stayed at Arundel Castle. The Duke befriended John Constable who took great pleasure in painting the parkland. The water-colourist Copley Fielding, who was a tutor to Ruskin, lived in Worthing, and painted romantic pictures of the 1830's, including a water-colour of Arundel for the fifth Duke. Copley Fielding died in Hove, Sussex. In the 1860's another artist, Vicat Cole, was the first to paint autumn tints along the River Arun showing trees in all their russet glory.

George O'Brien Wyndham inherited the Petworth Estate and became the greatest patron of the arts in the nineteenth century. John Phillips, an American, lived in Petworth House, as did J.M.W. Turner. Turner was the son of a London hairdresser, and his many pictures are on display in the Clore Gallery at the Tate. When staying at Petworth between 1828 and 1829 he drew a sketch in chalk of each of the rooms. These interior sketches have since been used when renovation has needed to be made to the decor in Petworth House.

Petworth Park was designed by the landscape gardener Capability Brown, and it was here that Turner spent much time painting.
Mad Jack Fuller, a local eccentric, was another patron of Turner and it was Jack Fuller who bought Bodiam

Castle so that builders could not use stones for structures in Hastings. Bodiam Castle was included in paintings by Turner, as was the Vale of Ashburnham. He had a great affection for Hastings, and indeed Hastings was painted by artists more than any town in Sussex.

Dr. Brandon showed many slides of paintings carried out in this romantic period. Records of them are in the British Library Print Room, The Arundel and the Wallace Collection, the Tate Gallery, New Bond Street Galleries, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Eric Augele

WATERMILLS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER POWER

Mr. M.F. Tighe — 22 February 1991

This lecture was a fitting sequel to the very enjoyable talk on windmills given by Mr. Tighe on 18 November 1988 (Newsletter No.7 p.28).

The word "mill" is derived from the Latin "molinare", to grind, and describes man's first machines dating from the very beginning of the agricultural era. It predates the use of water power and the later use of wind power. At first corn was ground by a quern, a term restricted to a hand grinding device worked entirely by one person, the word mill being used for a machine in which the turning action is provided by men, horses, wind, water, or other power source. A well-known reference to a man-powered mill is in the Book of Judges Chapter 16 verse 21 "---and he (Samson) did grind in the prison house". Horse mills continued in use on farms into the present century.

The first use of waterpower appears to have been in Greece in the first century B.C. A simple horizontal water wheel was directly connected to a millstone. Other early examples of the Greek or "Click" mill have been found in Denmark and in China, both dating from the first century A.D. By 600-700 A.D. "Click" mills were widely distributed in Ireland, Scotland, and the Western Isles, but until recently no sign of them had

been found in England. However, it is now established that such mills existed at Old Windsor in about 690 A.D. and at Tamworth in the ninth century. The Click mill had severe technical limitations, but was suitable for a very "lowtech" economy. Some of them persisted in Norway until this century, and one at Geiranger was put into use during the German occupation.

The first century A.D. also saw the development of the "Roman" or vertical mill wheel. This lent itself to far more elaborate development, although it had the disadvantage of requiring gearing rather than direct drive. Mills of this type are mentioned by Vitruvius ca. 25 B.C. It was long thought that the Romans did not try to develop these mills on an extensive scale, being concerned at the effect on the large amount of slave labour which would be displaced. However, eight sites have now been identified in England one of which was a substantial factory which, it is estimated, could grind about four to five tons of corn per day. This is enough to feed a population of 12000. Installations of comparable scale have been traced in Tunisia and in Palestine.

It was at one time the accepted belief that the mill virtually disappeared in the Dark Ages. However, we now have sites clearly identified as operating in 600 - 700 A.D. and the 5624 mills mentioned in the Domesday Book cannot have sprung up overnight. Most of the latter were watermills although some were horse driven. The windmill did not appear until the 13th century. It is estimated that there were more than 10000 watermills in England by the mid 14th century, but the Black Death and consequent agricultural depression probably halved this number and led to some resumption of horse or hand milling. As the economy recovered there would be a strong incentive to redevelop watermills on their previous sites to make use of past investment in dams and water courses, and to use surviving buildings. Thus there is the strong presumption that later watermills occupy the same sites as their predecessors mentioned in the Domesday Book.

In the design of watermills we may distinguish four main types:-

UNDERSHOT. These mills rely on the impact of a stream of water on flat paddles, and were probably the earliest. However they depend upon a fast flow of water and are best suited to hilly country.

OVERSHOT. In these a stream of water is directed into buckets at a point just beyond the axis of the wheel. Overshot mills are operated by the weight of water in the buckets and the stream needs to run only fast enough to keep the buckets filled.

PITCHBACK. This design is similar to the overshot wheel save that the water is delivered to a point just before the axis of the wheel i.e. it is an overshot wheel running backwards. The advantage of this arrangement is that it enables some energy to be recovered from the tail race.

BREASTSHOT. This was an 18th century variation of the pitchback mill in which the water was delivered part of the way up the wheel. It enabled wheels of larger diameter to be used at a given site.

For the first 16 centuries of its life the development of the watermill was limited by wood technology which dictated the maximum size of the wheel. In Roman mills the wheels were probably about 2 feet wide and 7 feet in diameter, while in Wealden iron sites 1500 years later the width was much the same although the diameter had increased to 14 feet. If demand was greater and water was available the only answer was to instal more wheels. With the advent of cast iron in the 18th century a new generation of millwrights was able to produce much larger wheels. One installed at Styal (Cheshire) in 1820 was 21 feet wide and 32 feet in diameter. It developed 100 horsepower.

The industrial revolution was founded more on waterpower than on steam. The early steam engines were very inefficient in generating rotary motion and were

used mainly for pumping, particularly for pumping water out of mines. The water which had been pumped up was sometimes used to drive water wheels. At this time water wheels began to be used for purposes other than corn milling, e.g. operating hammers for fulling cloth or forging wrought iron.

The further development of steam and gas engines meant the inevitable end of the watermill as a source of power. In this area the watermill at Whatlington and the windmill on Caldbec Hill were superseded in 1912 by the mill in Battle High Street driven by a gas engine (Newsletter No. 9 p. 28). The more significant development was, however, the construction of very large mills at the ports to process imported grain.

The watermill may now be relegated to the museums of industrial archaeology, but its direct descendant the water turbine is very much alive and operates in hydroelectric schemes all over the world.

Mr. Tighe concluded with a reference to the restored watermill at Batemans and the turbine which Kipling installed on the site to provide electric lighting for the house.

Donald Nicol

Note

There is an account of the installation of this turbine in "*Something of Myself*" - Chapter 7 - in which Kipling points out that the turbine, installed in 1902, ran for a quarter of a century in which time it wore no less than a sixteenth of an inch off its bearings. More suprising to the present day reader is that in the late 1920s a house the size of Batemans should have had an electric power supply of only 3 Kw.

D.L.N.

ROBERTSON MEMORIAL LECTURE

CHARLEMAGNE - FATHER OF EUROPE?

Professor D.A. Bullough, Professor of Mediaeval History, University of St. Andrews 1 March 1991

History is about the society to which we belong, and the past has a real bearing on today. In all humility we may ask, "Is Charlemagne the Father of Europe?", and this is not just an examination question for students. It is surely significant that when, after the second World War, a prize was instituted for outstanding services to the cause of European unity, it was called the Charles the Great Prize; significant in that a ruler of 1200 years ago has been snatched from the past as a uniquely unifying figure.

To his contemporaries, and to himself, the name Charlemagne would have been unknown. He knew himself as Karl, and as such he would have been known to his drinking companions. The name Charlemagne first appears in the 11th century "Song of Poland", but this is not history. In one of the passes of the Pyrenees the mountain Basques fell upon the rearguard of Karl's successful expedition against the Saracens of Spain, and cut it to pieces at Roncevalles. Among the slain was Roland, "commander of the Breton March". The fame of this work created an idealised Charles, a legendary figure who captured the imagination.

How has he acquired his reputation? Is there behind this legendary figure a recognizable human being? The problem of seeking to recover such an individual, of removing later notions about a figure of the distant past, lies in the lack of any personal documentation by mediaeval rulers. We have only highly selective accounts from other people.

Some facts do emerge. What did he look like? There is a 10 inch high figure of a horsed warrior made at Metz for his son Charles the Bald, but this is a representation, not a portrait. Some 14 or 15 years after Charles's death there was written the most famous biography of the Middle Ages, Einhard's "*Vita*

Caroli"; unusual both in that it is a life of a lay person and not of a saint, and also that it is written by a layman when most of those who could write Latin were clerics. (Einhard describes the monarch's appearance and habits: tall, strong, loving exercise, riding, hunting and swimming etc; but his vivid portrayal is probably idealised. K.M.R.)

How did his reign appear to his contemporaries? A manuscript of the Gospels, produced in the last year of his reign, is rich in symbolism, shows a baptistery, a representation of rebirth, epitomising the spiritual and literary achievements of the age. And a Latin poem of the early 9th century in the tradition of Virgil and recording an actual event in the poet's lifetime, a meeting of Charles and the Pope in 799 A.D., calls Charles "Pater Europa". Few then would have thought of Europe as a geographical entity, but even allowing for poetic language this is clearly a statement of something sensed as fact. From Metz statuette to Virgilian epic exemplifies the progress from Frankish warrior king to monarch of Western Christendom.

His reign was long, from 768 to 814. The first phase is that of the warrior king. He consolidated the Frankish kingdom, asserting his authority over Aquitane, vanquishing and forcibly converting the pagan Saxons and adding Saxony to his realm, acquiring Lombardy by conquest, subjugating the Bavarians and the Bretons, destroying the kingdom of the Avars, establishing the Spanish March and the first clearly defined frontier boundary against the Slavs.

Until 790 he travelled perpetually and extensively around his vast kingdom in order to make his presence felt by his subjects, but in that year when his authority was unquestioned he settled in Aachen. Ten years later, on Christmas Day in 800 A.D., Pope Leo III crowned him Emperor and Augustus in Rome. After his assumption of the imperial title his reign enters a long grey phase, certainly not as exciting in military terms. But to his court at Aachen he attracted a cosmopolitan entourage of famous scholars and teachers (including the Northumbrian Alcuin), and

the final phase of his reign is marked by achievements of another kind.

There are thus different elements of achievement in his reign, and this is evidenced by the written word. There is Einhard, giving a retrospective view, looking back from a time when decline had set in. There are the Annales - year by year entries, terse and limited and not unlike our Anglo-Saxon Chronicle save that they are in Latin and not in the vernacular. They are biassed in that they emphasise the ruler's achievements but are silent about his unsuccessful campaigns. There are the Capitularies, short chapters consisting of administrative commands, exhortations, and occasionally new laws.

What emerges is the conviction that the function of kingship is seen as the creation of a Christian Society. Charles was a reformer of the Church. A decree of around 780 lays down the extracts of the Gospels to be read at Mass, and he commissioned a Book of Worship. He laid down procedures to be followed in legal disputes which, alongside the old customary procedures that depended on oral testimony of local people, allowed Divine intervention to come into play through trial by ordeal.

Surviving letters to and from Charles's court are unusual both in quality and quantity; we have to go back to Republican Rome for anything similar. Copies were made and kept at the Frankish court, and this itself is an unusual feature. One third of the correspondence is with the Pope, 280 letters are the work of Alcuin, and letters were exchanged fortnightly. In short it was a highly literate court, where scholars could be very critical of the poor Latin in a document sent by the Greek Church from Constantinople! The court also produced a very sophisticated literature, played literary games, and created poetry of a very high quality, along with splendid illuminated manuscripts. The chapel of the Palace at Aachen, with its magnificent bronze panels, survives, along with a mass of coins which after about 806 are well cast in imperial fashion. Towards the end of the reign things began to go wrong, but this is not

an impression one will get from the artistic achievements of those years.

Charles married four times and had many bastards, but only one son survived and the empire passed to him, Louis the Pious, who lacked his father's strong personality. There was civil war among his sons, and the empire broke up into what were to become the nation states. The incursions of the Norsemen accelerated the decline.

Some idea of Charles's personality does emerge from the achievements of his reign. They would seem to confirm the contemporary emphasis on his restless energy and intellectual curiosity. Clearly he was a good judge of talent. He facilitated change and made available the resources for it, for the revival of Latin scholarship and literacy, for ecclesiastical reform, and developments in administrative machinery.

Is Charlemagne the "Father of Europe"? In one sense the answer must be No. At the same time his age established both the idea of a proper order in society, with our European culture planted firmly in the Latin tradition. These form roots common to all those territories which later took on the inheritence of Charlemagne. The age is a beacon, a ray of light in a period of darkness. Perhaps "Charlemagne, Beacon of Europe".

K.M. Reader

(It is impossible in a brief summary to do justice to the lecture, or convey the impression given by the splendid slides which illustrated it. Those who may, rightly, consider the summary inadequate should consult Professor Bullough's profusely illustrated book "*The Age of Charlemagne*". K.M.R.)

A ROMAN BATH HOUSE IN EAST SUSSEX

Dr. Gerald Brodribb — 15 March 1991

During its occupation of Britain from 43 A.D. onwards, the Roman invasion force established a number of iron-

working sites in the South East, in order to exploit the region's wealth of iron-ore.

One such site, established and administered by naval authority on an extensive area of land north of Hastings (Beauport) became the headquarters of iron-working in the locality. From there, the wrought iron produced was shipped to provinces throughout the Empire at least until 250 A.D., when the navy, recalled to Rome, walked out, leaving the works occupied by local labourers.

Having fallen into disuse, the site, with its sloping landscape and overgrown heap of slag, remained largely undisturbed until early this century when Mr. Straker recorded its existence in his book "*Wealden Iron*". Investigation revealing nothing but fragments of pottery, no further interest was taken until 1970, when Dr. Gerald Brodribb organised an archaeological dig on the site prior to its development as a municipal golf-course.

The first find of a red pottery dish was made two feet below the surface of the heaped slag investigated earlier. Eight feet down, an oak water-tank, complete with oak feeder chute, was unearthed. The layer of clay and slag covering the top of the tank formed in turn the foundations of a stone building, which, tucked into the hillside and buried beneath centuries of descending silt and slag, ultimately emerged as the remains of a Roman Bath House. Having been saved from development by Dr. Brodribb's important discovery, the area's excavation could continue, hampered by the tremendous build-up of silt and slag, yet assisted by the well-preserved condition of many of the discoveries.

Further investigation revealed that the House, with its hot rooms and cold plunges, was built from locally quarried sandstone, and roofed with clay tiles supplied by one or more of the eight local naval tile sites. Floors were tiled by eight-inch square clay tiles and skirted by quarter-round mouldings, with the exception of a cold-plunge entry which had been provided with a non-slip stone surface. Layers of

plaster coloured with up to 12 vegetable dyes were applied to interior walls before being decorated with splashes of paint. (Interior decoration could not run to frescos in a naval Bath House.)

Underfloor heating fired by furnaces was provided by the hypocaust system. The best preserved specimen of Roman chimney-pot/ventilator to have been found in Great Britain was discovered at Beauport. Missing from the site, though, were the anticipated plumbing components of lead pipes and a bronze water tank, probably removed by the departing navy.

In addition to its functional purpose, bathing was regarded as an important recreational activity by the Romans. Situated 40 miles from the nearest town, those occupying the site must have found the recreational facility offered by its Bath House of particular importance, and the later addition of two rooms housing hot plunges a welcome improvement.

The overall standard of construction and materials used at Beauport was high. When excavated, sixty per cent of the walls were discovered still standing from between four to eight feet in height, despite the tremendous weight of the stout roof beams and heavy tiles they bore. Pillar bases used to support the floors above the hypocaust heating remained intact, as did a number of heat-conducting box flues and a bath built into a semi-circular recess twelve feet above a furnace still with an eighteen inch layer of ash beneath it.

Of the 1100 tiles used for the roof, 700 had been accounted for by the beginning of 1991. 12 different types of tile have been found at Beauport, some marked, whilst still unbaked, with the letters CLBR of the naval authority, some with batch numbers and some with impressions of human or animal feet, of leaves, plants or woven cloth. Tiles around the front door bore a rare inscription, indicating that the area Procurator had given permission for the Master of the ironworks, obviously a man of importance, to use his own stamp.

One room, referred to as Bassus' because his name was found on several of its roof tiles, was of poorer quality than the rest, however, having been built with irregular blocks of poorly pointed stone.

As details of the Bath House emerged, so too did evidence of its occupation.

Alongside the remains of a wooden boat, found at what was the bottom of a nearby pond, lay a pair of leather sandals, whilst within the house were unearthed wooden pattens worn when walking across heated floors, a pair of tweezers, and even a baby's feeding bottle! Decorative as well as functional objects were revealed in the shape of fragments of Syrian blue/green millefiori glass, and the yellow, blue and red enamelled handle of a knife.

One unique find was of a coarse black pot to which a mannikin figure is attached. Found at the entry to the cold plunge once inhabited by unidentified squatters, the purpose of this pot remains a mystery.

Much has been achieved at Beauport, but, chiefly as the result of financial cut-backs, much has still to be accomplished. As yet the Bath House remains closed to public viewing, despite being one of the best preserved Roman buildings in Great Britain, and so far, only five per cent of the entire iron-working site has been uncovered.

Footnote: At the time of the Roman occupation, certain sections of the East Sussex coast-line ran further inland, which would explain why the site was run by a naval executive.

Audrey Swann

COMMEMORATION LECTURE

RECONSTRUCTING THE PAST

Professor H.R. Loyn — 11 October 1991

We are much indebted to our President for coming to Battle at some personal inconvenience to deliver the Commemoration lecture. It will be apparent that this unillustrated note cannot do justice to a most original and stimulating talk, which fascinated the audience.

Professor Loyn's interest in the "reconstruction" aspect of history stemmed from his collaboration with an artist, the late Alan Sorrell, in the production of an illustrated book on Norman Britain. This collaboration in 1963-65 led to a friendship which lasted until Sorrell was killed in a car accident in 1974, a little before his 70th birthday.

Alan Sorrell was a most talented artist whose early work was much concerned with the illustration of the results of archaeological "digs", but who turned later to the production of books which sought to reconstruct the past in the most vivid and informative manner possible. His philosophy was set out in an article which he contributed to "*Current Archaeology*" in the last year of his life. He insisted that archaeology should deal with humanity, that is with people in their environment of nature and of architecture, and that the interpretation of their activities in the past cannot properly be done without art. It could not be achieved by the mere formulation of factual information which he described (wrongly) as technology. For example figures of people should be put into a drawing not just to give scale to the surroundings, but should be shown as the actors in some comedy or drama. In this way the artist may show that the stubs of walls, which all too often are the final achievement of an excavation, are the indications of what were at one time the dwelling places of people much like ourselves.

He also had strong views on the limitations of

photography in the art of reconstruction, maintaining that its main use was in those instances where all the information required could be expressed in two dimensions rather than three, e.g. the number of bricks in a fragment of wall, or an aerial photograph of the layout of a site. The angles in a photograph were almost always wrong and spatial values non-existent. A good drawing approximated far more closely to what the human eye would see than any photograph. At the same time he was insistent that good art (and he would not accept that anything less was worthy of the name) demanded the greatest precision and did not permit any loose or sloppy attitude towards facts. It was rather an extension of sensibility in their interpretation.

He took the view that in any archaeological study there are three phases:- the excavation - the report - the reconstruction, and the reconstruction was not an afterthought to be dealt with if funds permitted, but a logical extension and culmination of the second phase. Ideally the artist should be brought in at the very beginning of the project, although it is not good for him to know too much for he must always be ready to listen to the historian and the archaeologist.

As might be expected such a man did not deal easily with officialdom despite a long connection with the Ancient Monuments Division of the Ministry of Works and its successors. When, on reaching the age of 65, he received a communication about his Retirement Pension, he replied "I am <u>not</u> retired, merely old"! This is a view with which many of the more active members of our Society might agree!

However, drawing is not the only one of the arts which can be used to reconstruct the past. Architecture may also be involved, and Professor Loyn drew our attention to the work of William Burgess and particularly his reconstruction in 1868-80 of Cardiff Castle for his patron the 3rd Marquis of Bute. The latter was possibly the richest man in the world at that time and Burgess's commission was to turn the remains of a mediaeval fortress into a dream castle for an introspective man of 13th century ideals.

There are three ways of dealing with such a problem, the strictly conservative, the antiquarian, and the modern. The strictly conservative approach in which the structure is preserved and nothing is added is generally too austere, and justifiable only when the remains are of high interest in the history of architecture, or precious for some other reason. The antiquarian approach is a mixture of preservation and interpretation and entails replacing everything which archaeology would lead us to suppose has been lost. An example is the battlements at Conway and Caerphilly. The modern approach combines the two but is more drastic. It is conservation so far as preservation of the old is concerned, but also involves appropriate additions such as clearing the surrounding area and building annexes, not as a copy of any earlier building but for the creation of a handsome piece of architecture.

William Burgess adopted the modern approach with great success, but we must remember that Cardiff Castle is not a restored ancient ruin but the seat of the Marquis of Bute, and a high Victorian fantasy.

Professor Loyn illustrated his theme by showing many slides depicting castles as they are now, and the drawings of Alan Sorrell which reconstruct them as they were when serving their designers' purpose. He also showed some excellent views, both external and internal, of Cardiff Castle.

Our President's lecture was a splendid example of John Buchan's conclusion that "History must have science in its method, philosophy in its spirit, and art in its presentation".

Donald Nicol

EXCAVATIONS AT MILL HILL, DEAL 1982-1989

Mr. Keith Parfitt — 8 November 1991

The Mill Hill excavations are on a chalk ridge above Deal. They are the result of the expansion of the town when a number of chalk quarries were opened up to

provide lime for the building contractors, and archaeological material such as pots and brooches were found. The builders gave permission for the Dover Archaeological Group to undertake excavations between 1982 and 1989 and these took place in advance of the growing housing estate.

The whole area appears to have been used as a burial ground and the archaeological finds cover three periods -

1) Prehistoric

2) Roman

3) Anglo-Saxon

The major prehistoric feature is assigned to the Bronze Age and consists of a large ring-ditch, ten feet high - the remains of a round barrow. Here many animal bones and sherds of prehistoric pottery were found. Around the barrow several small pits were excavated, revealing pottery dating to the Iron Age. The most important find here was the remains of an Iron Age warrior with his sword in its bronze ornamental scabbard, his shield, a decorated bronze headband and a brooch - all Celtic art work dating around 200 B.C.

A further 28 graves were uncovered, one producing the skeleton of a horse, but few had grave goods and none was richly furnished.

Four cremations were found dating to the first half of the first century A.D. Two of these are of the classic Belgic type and contained Gallo-Belgic pottery - a Tiberian butt-beaker, a Colchester brooch and two vessels of Terra Nigra.

The Roman occupation dates to the 2nd Century A.D. and its main features are field boundary ditches which seem to indicate the site was occupied by a farming community. Several post holes were found but no remains of any buildings. Three definite burials were located, one of which produced a complete red flagon

of Much Hadham Ware. A chalk shaft leading to an underground chamber was also located and may have been a subterranean shrine, as a small chalk statuette was found - an important piece of figurative Celtic Art which became known as the 'Deal Man'.

Over 80 Anglo Saxon graves were uncovered on two distinct sites and they produced swords, spearheads, shields, beads, brooches, glass, silver and bronze vessels. These finds date the cemeteries to the 6th century A.D. Because of the quality of the goods found it would appear these were burial grounds for the 'upper classes'. No coffins were found and the graves always appeared to be too small with the figures in a bent or crouched position. In some cases a man and woman were found buried together and in one grave a man, woman and child were found together, indicating some kind of family tragedy.

The site has now vanished under a housing estate but the metalwork finds are in the British Museum and the other Celtic and Anglo-Saxon finds are to be displayed in a new Museum in Deal.

The Mill Hill excavations have revealed the intensity of ancient settlements on this chalk ridge over a period of two and a half thousand years with the original Bronze Age barrow being the focal point for all subsequent burials.

Work continues on other chalkland sites in Kent.

Margaret McCrorie

THE ADVENTURES OF A SUSSEX KNIGHT IN THE 14th CENTURY

Mr. Alun Murduck — 6 December 1991

Unfortunately, it was not possible to prepare a note of this lecture, with its extensive and complex background material on the 14th century, in time for the present Newsletter. It has therefore been deferred until next year.

Donald Nicol

1991 SUMMER PROGRAMME

VISIT TO ROUEN, CHARTRES AND GIVERNY, 19th-22nd APRIL

We left Battle on the 19th April in rain with forecasts of snow on the way. Nevertheless we had a smooth and comfortable crossing and travelled to our hotel in watery sunshine. Having mastered the art of opening bedroom doors with plastic cards and solved the mystery of modern plumbing a few intrepid spirits walked into Rouen to gain their first view of the Cathedral whilst the majority put their feet up in preparation for the morrow. With hindsight a wise course.

The morning saw us at breakfast looking out on a snow storm which continued during our journey to Chartres. In a warm coach it was possible to exclaim with pleasure at the beauty of the trees and fields clothed in snow. Our first glimpse of Chartres Cathedral, rising above the seemingly flat landscape, was magical but it was with some unease that we left the warm coach to make our way to the Cathedral to meet our guide Malcolm Miller. Firstly we were given a brief history of Chartres and its Cathedral which became one of the most popular pilgrimage shrines of medieval times after Charlemagne's grandson, Charles the Bald, presented Chartres with its famous holy relic, the Sancta Camisia, which the Virgin Mary was said to have worn when she gave birth to Christ. Every window and doorway in the Cathedral tells a story and Malcolm Miller 'read' to us a number of windows including the Good Samaritan, the Passion and Resurrection, and the Jesse windows. The city traders of the 12th and 13th centuries paid for 42 windows and these windows contain many fascinating scenes depicting their occupations. It was bitterly cold and we were glad to take time off for lunch before rejoining our guide who continued with his 'story telling' including the story of the magnificent North and South Doors which together, in 200 stone figures, set out the story of the creation through to the final judgement. Malcolm Miller is justly famous for his lectures and one can only be grateful for his introduction to this beautiful cathedral. He did not have time to talk to

us about the sculptured choir screen which begins and ends with scenes from the life of Mary. Although badly lit it is still possible to admire the detailed works. Perhaps not so pleasing to some eyes was the painted wood statue of the Virgin which, heavily gilded and surrounded by light bulbs, appeared rather garish in its setting.

The next morning was sunny and most of the party enjoyed a walk round the market area of Rouen where Joan of Arc was burnt alive. Then in the afternoon it was off to Claude Monet's house and gardens at Giverny. The gardens have been replanted as they were in the artist's time and, as we strolled along the footpaths and admired the spring foliage, the gardeners in the party competed to find the unusual and the rare. We all paused for photographs on the famous Japanese bridge and then went into the house where the famous artist lived and entertained from 1883 to 1926. A surprise to many of us was the priceless collection of Japanese engravings which, on enquiry, we were told Claude Monet had put together in his lifetime and hung for his personal enjoyment. Most of the women in the party were much taken by the kitchen with its enormous range, blue and white wall tiles, and scrubbed table.

Monday morning was spent in Rouen with an official guide. Rouen, being a well developed and flourishing industrial centre, suffered much damage during the last war and we were reminded of this recent history by the bullet holes in the facade of the Town Hall and the plaques to be seen commemorating civilian deaths. We had a guided tour of the Cathedral, one of the largest in France and, with its cast iron steeple erected in the 19th century, the highest. There are some fine examples of the 13th century glass but overall the Cathedral lacks the richness of the windows and sculptures of Chartres. Perhaps too it does not attract as much public support as the stonework is in much need of restoration. We were reluctant to brave the rain but by sheltering in doorways much of the time were able to enjoy a walk through the restored town centre with its half timbered houses and famous Gros-Horloge. A visit to

the very modern but beautiful Joan of Arc Church completed the official tour. It is warm, light and welcoming. 16th century glass removed for safety in the war from a church that was subsequently bombed has been installed at eye level and enables one to appreciate the art of the glass makers.

We then had time to wander the narrow streets around the Cathedral before boarding the coach for home with again a very smooth ferry crossing. Apart from the weather the outstanding memories must include Malcolm Miller's talks and the Monet gardens.

VISIT TO CHATHAM DOCKYARD 20th JUNE

We were fortunate that our visit to Chatham was arranged for the one fine day in June because the site covers 80 acres! There has been a royal Dockyard at Chatham for four centuries and the buildings form the most complete Georgian and early Victorian Dockyard to survive in Britain. Chatham's first warship was launched in 1586 and more than 400 were to follow in the years until 1984 when the Royal Navy left Chatham. Our guided tour of two hours took us into most of the buildings including the Ropery, 1140 feet long by 47 feet wide, the longest brick built building in Europe, where we were able to see samples of the raw material and watch rope being made in the traditional manner. We were also shown the Covered Slips, built to solve the problem of timber rot in newly built ships. The five surviving Covered Slips illustrate the development of large span structures. In the Sail and Colour Loft we were able to see Riggers and Sailmakers at work and the ladies of the Flag Loft stitching brightly covered flags for sale all over the world. (The new flag flying from the tower of St. Mary's, Battle was made at Chatham.) Perhaps the most popular exhibition was the Wooden Walls Gallery, a reconstruction of the 18th century dockyard, which enabled us to follow the working life of William Crockwell, aged 15, who started work in November 1758 to learn the shipwright's trade as 'servant' to John North, the carpenter of the Valiant, a third rate Ship of the Line then being built at Chatham. There are voice overs of the various

characters and animated figures which make it most entertaining. A very good day but exhausting.

VISIT TO HEVER CASTLE 9th JULY

Hever Castle was the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, second wife of Henry VIII and mother of Elizabeth I. In the late 13th century it was no more than a fortified farmhouse surrounded by a moat but two centuries later a Tudor dwelling house was built inside the protective wall. After the beheading of Anne Boleyn Henry VIII acquired the house, and his fourth wife Anne of Cleves lived there for 17 years after her divorce. Nothing of note appears to have happened at Hever in the next 300 years but in 1903 William Waldorf Astor purchased the property and set about his work of restoring the fabric of the Castle and redecorating the interior. As part of the redecoration the panelling and carved screens in most of the main rooms including the Inner Hall, Dining Hall, the Minstrel's Gallery, the Drawing Room, and the Library and Study were added between 1904 and 1906 by W.S. Frith and his staff of 30. They appeared to have 'borrowed' freely as much of the work is copied e.g. the oak panelling in the Drawing Room was copied from Sizergh Castle, the staircase and gallery from King's College, Cambridge, and the general design of the bookcases from Magdalene College, Cambridge. The only original Elizabethan panelling on view is in the Entrance Hall and the Long Gallery but even here the 16th century style ceiling was installed in 1904. It is in the Long Gallery however that one feels closest to Anne Boleyn although the atmosphere is spoiled by set tableaux of court scenes. The Castle does hold interesting collections of furniture, paintings and objets d'art. Until 1903 only a modest garden existed and the construction of the gardens as they appear today required tremendous movement of soil and rock, diversion of the river course, and excavation of a lake of 35 acres, provision of streams and fountains. There is a spectacular Italian Garden containing statuary and sculptures dating from Roman to Renaissance times which William Astor had collected during his service as American Minister in Rome in the 1880s. (Shades of Lord Elgin!) The formal gardens

include a walled Rose Garden and a maze (claustrophobic and very wet underfoot!). An interesting place to visit.

VISIT TO ROMNEY MARSH CHURCHES 7th AUGUST

A rather dull day but one which enabled us to appreciate the distant vistas of the flat countryside. Our guide on the coach, Brigadier Harper, gave us a most interesting commentary as we travelled the Roman road across the marsh land to our first church Brookland, well known for its detached wooden bell tower which has recently been re-shingled courtesy of the Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust. Brookland Church retains its Georgian pulpit and box pews. The box pews are very high and anyone under five feet six inches has great difficulty in seeing over the sides which could lead to a great deal of inattentiveness during services. There is too a marked outward lean of the nave arcades and outer walls caused by subsidence many years ago. There is a most interesting wall painting of St. Thomas Becket but the most famous feature of the church is the circular lead font of Norman or Flemish workmanship with its sides decorated with signs of the Zodiac and the months of the year. We also entered the bell tower, arranged specially to be open for our visit, and inspected its dark cavernous interior. On then to St. Mary in the Marsh with its Norman tower and shingled spire added later. There too we saw box pews, possibly the original high Georgian pews cut down we were told. Again the black text boards bearing the Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer which are such a feature of the Romney Marsh Churches and the Royal Coat of Arms of George II. Enid Nesbit was a parishioner of this church and her simple wooden headstone erected by her husband is to be seen in the churchyard. Our final call was on Newchurch with its 'bent' ragstone tower started in 1410, abandoned after two stages when subsidence caused it to lean, and continued again 60 years later in correct alignment which gives the tower its odd appearance. The Jacobean pulpit has some very fine linenfold carving but generally there was an air of neglect about this church added to by the waist high grass in the churchyard. Then on to an excellent

tea at the Railway Station Hotel at Appledore.

VISIT TO FROGMORE & WINDSOR 26th SEPTEMBER

Our last outing of the year was to Frogmore House, open for its first full season. After a leisurely journey via Ashdown Forest on a beautiful autumn morning we arrived at Frogmore around midday. Visitors have to walk from the coach park or travel on an estate bus but the system appears quite efficient. The nucleus of the present Frogmore House was built in 1680 by Thomas May but when Queen Charlotte purchased the property in 1792 she set about enlarging it and landscaping the gardens. The alterations were carried out by James Wyatt whose brief was to transform the house into a modern 'Trianon' where the Queen and her daughters could enjoy their favourite pastimes painting, drawing, japanning and needlework, reading, music and 'botanising'. The Queen had a serious interest in botany and she formed a fine botanical library, and flowers became a major theme in the decoration of the house. The Queen left Frogmore to her then eldest unmarried daughter, Princess Augusta, and on her death in 1841 Queen Victoria offered Frogmore to her mother, the Duchess of Kent. The Duchess substantially redecorated the house, using it regularly until her death in 1861, and she is buried in the circular colonnaded mausoleum sited on a mound beside the lake. Since her death the Royal Family have used Frogmore intermittently but on view are some photocopies of letters written at Frogmore by the future Kings Edward VIII and George VI to their parents. From the Hall visitors climb the main staircase decorated with early 18th century murals, the most likely artist being Louis Laguerre whose work we saw on an earlier visit to Blenheim. The murals were apparently covered over in 1760 and rediscovered in 1983 during repairs to the stair well. The subjects of the murals are taken from Virgil's Aeneid and although they are remarkable they are also very gloomy and, philistines we may be, but in our opinion they do nothing for the appearance of the stair well especially if one tries to visualise the effect in the subdued lighting of the 18th century. On then to the Cross Gallery decorated by Princess Elizabeth, third

daughter of Queen Charlotte, with a decorative theme of painted flower garlands alternating with panels of paper cutouts in the Etruscan style. We then visited two rooms arranged by Queen Mary in the 1920s, the Flower Room which contains an array of mid to late 19th century wax and silk flowers under glass domes and the Black Museum with its collection of black papier-mache and lacquer furniture dating from 1820 to 1880. What collectors the Royal Family are! Then on to what to us was the most interesting room of all - the Duchess of Kent's Sitting Room. This room has splendid views of the lake and gardens and has been recreated using the evidence of surviving fabrics and of hand coloured photographs taken for Queen Victoria at the time of the Duchess's death in 1861. The walls are in soft lilac picked out in gold, a favourite colour scheme of the Duchess. But the bright yellow silk curtains and rather garish Brussels carpet are at odds with the soft lilac, and the heavy cotton lace curtains hide the views. There is the usual crowding of furniture and ornaments in the room and many family portraits. Then on to a series of smaller rooms including the Mary Moser Room, named for the flower painter who decorated the room with garlands of flowers in the mid 1790s. Two rooms, the Duchess of Kent's Drawing Room and Dining Room, are being restored and it is hoped completion will be in 1992. The Dining Room contains a small exhibition detailing the history of the house and its occupants including extracts from the diaries of the Duchess of Kent and Queen Victoria describing the same event, a birthday party for the Duchess, which although not contradictory, are written from different perspectives! We had time for only a short visit to the garden before rejoining the coach to take us into Windsor. There we all followed our own interests, some making for the State Apartments whilst others visited the St. George's Chapel.

Ernest and Joan Goldsworthy

BATTLE STREET INDEX

Although pressure of other activities has prevented further study of old street directories, the main part

of the work, the recording of changes in the Battle Conservation Area, has continued in the same way as before. Regrettably, the decline in business generally is reflected in the closure of a number of shops in the High Street whose former premises are now unoccupied. The most notable change at the time of writing is the announcement that Tills of Battle Ltd. (19 High Street) will shortly close down. This will mark the end of an ironmongery business which has operated in the High Street for some 300 years, and is one of the oldest in the country. There seems little doubt that the end of this business is due mainly to the competition of the massive D.I.Y. supermarkets on the edges of Hastings and Bexhill.

Those who came to Mr. Kenneth Gravett's lecture "Architectural Implications of Shopping" (Newsletter No.9 p.6) will see this as another case of the rise and fall of the shop window. At one time Tills' premises included No.18 High Street with its splendid and rare example of an early 19th century shop window, built in the days before it was possible to make large panes of glass and when all glass was, by modern standards, of very poor quality. Tills' present shop has the large plate glass windows of a modern high street. The D.I.Y. supermarkets have no windows at all and could easily be mistaken for factories by the casual observer. Photographs of No.18 High Street when occupied by Tills are to be found in our Museum and in the illustrations of Aylwin Guilmant's book "*Bygone Battle*". Photographs of Tills as it is at present form part of the Street Index.

The by-product of the Street Index, the "*Battle Walk*", has continued to be sold successfully by both the Tourist Information Office and our Museum. As from August of this year it has also been on sale at the Almonry, where it has been in considerable demand, no doubt by those visitors whose interest has been stimulated by the Town Model. The "*Battle Walk*" has been updated twice in the course of the year and the opportunity was taken to make a small amendment to the description of one building after some very interesting information from the owner.

Although other historical societies visiting Battle are attracted mainly by the Abbey and the Parish Church, it has become the custom to give them a short talk about the town, based largely on the "*Battle Walk*". This proved of particular interest to the Lyminge Historical Society, who visited us in July, for they had recently prepared a "*Lyminge Walk*". There is now a copy of it in our library.

Donald Nicol

ORAL HISTORY

When the Battle Library moved to its new premises it provided a timely opportunity to lodge our collection of audio tapes with it to enable a system of hiring the tapes to be put into action.

This collection of tapes, gathered over a number of years, contains recordings by mostly older members of the community about their early days and gives a personal, first hand account of local history.

Some of the tapes contain items such as a recording by Mrs. Boxall who was born in 1891 in Crowhurst and was one of a family of 14. Her father was a coal merchant and wood merchant and her mother ran a laundry and served teas to the children in Ancaster House School, Bexhill.

There is a recording of Mr. Jack Harmer talking about Ashburnham Brickyard and brick making in those days; Brigadier Learmont, C.B.E., giving some background history of Battle; Miss Chiverton on Battle during the last war; Mr. Tony Emeleus on life in Battle in the 1920s, etc.

A list of tapes is available in the Library. They are of the type which can be played on a domestic tape recorder and may be hired from the Library in the same manner as hiring a book, and they do make enjoyable listening.

Eric Augele

THE SUSSEX LOST WAYS PROJECT

The progress made by the Society during 1990 for its part in the Lost Ways project was unfortunately not maintained during the past year. Since the retirement of the Leader/Coordinator at the end of 1990 it has not been possible to find a replacement who could continue the initial enthusiasm and coordinate the efforts of the various groups.

John and Celia Saunders have done much work in the Ashburnham/Penhurst areas, while Pamela Corbett has wide and long-standing knowledge of the history of Battle Great Wood.

If any member would like to take on the role of coordinator in this most worthwhile project, would they please inform the Hon. Secretary or any committee member. Alternatively, Pamela Haines of the Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group (HAARG) would be pleased to supply more general information or assistance on the project.

A. R. Denny

REVIEW

The Fuller Letters: Guns, Slaves and Finance, 1728-1755 edited by David Crossley and Richard Saville.

xxxxviii + 307 pages; index and 10 illustrations.
Sussex Record Society, Volume 76; ISBN 085445 037 8
Price £17.50.

This letter book is one of the most important collections of business and social correspondence from a leading eighteenth century county family to be published in recent years. It records the rise to wealth and influence of the Fuller family of Brightling Park. Originally from humble beginnings in an inhospitable and forested part of the Weald in Sussex, they had in the eighteenth century diversified into slave owning in Jamaica, expanded their ironfounding and gun-casting in the Weald and greatly enlarged their Sussex estates, and by mid-century held

significant holdings in London stocks. The letters explain how these business interests worked, and give the reader unique insights into the life of an eighteenth century landowner.

The letters also contain the only major surviving record of the charcoal iron industry to include substantial comment on the technical problems, how furnaces were operated, how guns were cast, and where they were sold. The Fullers were one of the major gun producers for the Navy and the Army at this time; their products were in demand as far away as Sardinia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

There is much information on Wealden weather and road conditions, on the difficulty of running a Jamaica sugar plantation, and the problems of involvement in the London sugar-refining trade. There is extensive comment on Wealden agriculture, based as it was on one of the more intractable soils in southern England, on how tenants were dealt with, and the crops they grew. As befitting a county family there is material on political affairs - the Fullers were Tories - on social and educational questions and the arrangements made for sons to go into business. Of interest to all who want to know more about Sussex history, this volume will also stand on its own as an important contribution to our knowledge of gun-casting and ironworking, Wealden agriculture, the Jamaica sugar trade, and how eighteenth century landowners organised their estates.

David Crossley is a Reader at the University of Sheffield. He teaches archaeology over the historic periods, from the medieval to industrial, as well as economic history. His excavations have largely been on iron and glass making sites, subjects involving the study of water power and the history of woodland management. He edited the journal *Post-Medieval Archaeology* for ten years, and is now joint editor of *Historical Metallurgy*.

Richard Saville is a Lecturer at St. Andrews University. He teaches economic history from the seventeenth century, and his publications include work on both Scottish and English history.

The book is available from the Sussex Record Society, Barbican House, High Street, Lewes, BN7 1YE