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

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

DECEMBER 1992 No. 11

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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 Council for British Archaeology (South East Area)

and

South Eastern Federation of Sussex Museums and Art Galleries

Officers and Committees 1992-1993

THE SOCIETY

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

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

1991/92

In the essay *Of Studies* Francis Bacon wrote "Histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, morals grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend". I would not venture to claim that our Society confers all, or indeed any, of these advantages on those who join it, but I trust that members have at least derived some pleasure and interest from the activities of the past year. We have enjoyed a notable series of winter lectures and our programme of summer outings has been as popular as ever. In this connection I must pay particular tribute to Ernest Goldsworthy who has organised our visits for the past five years, but was this year obliged by ill-health to give up the task. His work for the Society has been invaluable. I am no less grateful to Bernard Gillman-Davis who took over from Ernest at short notice and carried through the 1992 programme with great success. He has now arranged a most promising series of visits for the summer of 1993.

The Commemoration Service was, as in recent years, notable for music of special historical interest, for which we are indebted to our Vice-Chairman John Springford in his capacity as the Organist and Choirmaster of the Parish Church. We were also very pleased that the Dean of Battle decided to preach the sermon himself this year. A later half term holiday at Battle Abbey School meant that our Commemoration Service had to be held a little after the traditional date of October 14th but it was nevertheless a well-attended and very enjoyable function.

I mentioned last year the Committee's decision that it would be wise to make a modest increase in the subscription which had remained constant for the previous three years. In doing this the opportunity was taken to make an adjustment between the "single"

and "double" subscription rates, since it was becoming clear that "single" members were contributing an unduly large share of the Society's income. With an increase of £1 in the "single" and £2 in the "double" subscription the Committee feels that we have come close to a proper and equitable distribution of the Society's costs among the members.

A domestic problem which has long been with us is the audibility of lectures. Thanks to the efforts of Alan Kinnear our microphone and amplifier system has been working a great deal better at recent meetings, but he is still seeking further improvements. I regard this as important since, unfortunately, those speakers who have the most interesting things to say do not always have the loudest and clearest voices. The Committee is quite prepared to spend more money on this problem, if need be, but I fear that a complete solution would entail rebuilding the Langton Hall, which even if it were in our power, is certainly beyond our resources!

Our membership, and the average attendance at our lectures, have shown a slight drop in the past year, but this may be no more than the usual year to year variation. A more worrying problem is the difficulty of finding members who are prepared to do the various jobs which are essential to the running of the Society. This matter is becoming more urgent as advancing years begin to take their toll of the health and energy of some of our present Committee. As mentioned earlier, Ernest Goldsworthy has had to reduce his activities and John Springford feels that he can no longer continue as Vice-Chairman, although I am happy to say that we shall still have his advice and help as a member of the Committee.

A similar problem has affected the Federation of Sussex Local History Societies, to which our Society has long been affiliated. Those who have been taking the lead for so long feel that they cannot continue in office, and since they are unable to find any successors, the Federation will be wound up as from

the end of 1992. Many of its functions will be taken on by the Sussex Archaeological Society, to which we are also affiliated, so the immediate effect on our Society will be small. It is, none the less, sad to see the end of an organisation which appeared to be thriving when we were the hosts of its Annual General Meeting in 1987.

Finally I must express my gratitude to all those members of the Committee whom I have not mentioned but who have borne added burdens to keep the Society running efficiently during the past year - truly "...the fewer men (and women) the greater share of honour".

Donald Nicol

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MUSEUM TRUST

It is pleasing to be able to report yet another successful year in terms of the number of Museum visitors and the ticket receipts (8,880 and £4,850 respectively). Also the number of school parties was higher than ever at 28, compared with 14 last year.

As has been said many times before, and I don't wish to appear to be overstressing the fact, but I am going to - these results would not have been achieved without the effort of the very dedicated team, consisting of the committee plus a most reliable band of custodians and school group instructors, and a very conscientious Society representative.

The dominant feature of the year was that of ensuring the continuity of your Museum. For months, due to lack of volunteers for the coming year, we were faced with closure. Numerous meetings were held and various desperate alternatives studied. But I am now pleased to be able to inform you that thanks to offers of help, particularly from two members of long standing (Miss Maureen Millar and Mr. Sidney Ockenden) and three new members (Mrs. Joyce Cresswell, Mr. Peter Sutton and Mr. Derek Akers), the Museum would appear to be safe for the foreseeable future. In addition,

Mr. Derek Bishop, who currently looks after the Memorial Hall, although not a member of the Society has agreed to assist us in the important task of liaising with the custodians. I am also grateful to Mr. Alan Scott and Mr. C.J. Eldridge for their offers of assistance.

During the year we suffered the sad loss of Dr. Roger Clark who was Museum Curator from 1980 until his retirement in 1991. An obituary notice appears at the end of the Newsletter.

I now come to an item of news which I hoped it would never be my lot to announce. For personal reasons, Mrs.Dot Knight, our Honorary Secretary for the last six years, has decided to resign. We cannot thank Dot enough for all she has done; it will require at least three people to replace her. For health reasons, the committee is also losing the valuable services of both Mrs. Gladys Young and Mr. Jack Cooke. Gladys Young was our Librarian for seven years and in addition has acted as Assistant Curator, Minute Secretary and a museum custodian, as well as undertaking the mammoth task of recording the Museum artefacts. Jack Cooke became Honorary Treasurer three years ago, and it is largely due to him that our finances are in such good shape. The Treasurer's work is carried on unnoticed by the outsider, but it is vital to the success of the organisation. Thank you to both Gladys and Jack, we will miss you both, and may your health improve.

John Hill

CUSTODIANS: Mrs. R. Armitage, Mrs. G. Bolton, Mrs. J. Cresswell, Mrs. A. Curry, Mrs. L. Ford, Mrs. C. Gilbart, Mrs. F. Hall, Miss H. Moore, Mrs. M. Patmore, Mrs. A. Swann, Mrs. G. Young, Mr. W. Beard, Mr. F.R. Marshall.
RELIEF CUSTODIANS: Mrs. D. Knight, Mr. A. Murduck, Mr. S. Ockenden.
SCHOOL GROUP ORGANISERS: Mrs. A. Swann, Mr. J. Saunders
SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. R.J. Mears

LECTURES

THE ADVENTURES OF A SUSSEX KNIGHT IN THE 14th CENTURY

Mr. Alan Murduck — 6 December 1991

This report was held over from Newsletter No.10.

In a wide-ranging talk, covering the 14th and early 15th centuries, Mr. Murduck began by describing a youth's training and general progression towards becoming a Knight.

Youths, whom it was thought suitable to train as Knights, were sent away from home, usually to live with a higher-ranking family. Initially they served as Pages being taught to sing and dance, receive religious instruction and gain a knowledge of heraldry, essential for recognition on the battlefield of both their companions and their enemies. They would also learn about falconry and be taught to hunt. Later, as Esquires, they would accompany Knights to jousts and tournaments, caring for their armour and tending any wounds sustained on the field.

Then, having themselves attained the status of a Knight, they could, according to their inclinations, serve with a religious order, such as Knights Hospitallers (known also as Knights of St. John). The Teutonic Order of Knights, which acquired some political importance, originated through the charity of some German merchants, membership being confined to Germans of noble birth.

Knights could be called upon to serve their overlords in various ways, both at home and abroad. In this country, throughout the early part of the 14th century, there were continuing skirmishes on the northern borders with the Scots. On one occasion it is stated that the King, accompanied by 500 of his Knights, succeeded in escaping to Dunbar and the sea.

Abroad, in the reign of Edward III they were to fight in 1346 at Crécy and 1356 at Poitiers.

However, after this latter victory, Sir Robert Knollys (Knowles), along with Sir John Calverley and Sir John Hawkwood, refused to return to this country with the King. "They then hired themselves independently to petty contending states in Italy, or remained marauding in Northern France, notably in Brittany, Normandy and Picardy." By this means they acquired various spoils and together with their companions became relatively wealthy men. Eventually they returned to this country.

Sir Edward Dalyngrigge was one such person who had accompanied the army to France. As a result he earned certain privileges, which become apparent as one reads the article which follows this one.

Sir John Chandos, who had also remained in France, fought in Brittany, at the Battle of Auray in 1364. There accompanied by Jean de Montfort, he commanded English troops and defeated Charles of Blois, thus ending the War of Succession which had begun about 1341.

One of Edward III's sons, John of Gaunt, whose second marriage was to Constanza, a daughter of Pedro I (Pedro the Cruel), King of Castile and Leon, found himself embroiled in a quarrel between Pedro and his illegitimate brother, Don Enrico, known as Henry of Trastamare. Together with a force of Castilian and English troops, John, accompanied by his brother, Edward the Black Prince, was victorious at the Battle of Navarrete in 1367. However, after Edward's departure, Don Enrico returned early in 1369 and killed Pedro in a quarrel. John came back to this country in October 1389.

As Richard II was only 11 years old when he succeeded to the throne in 1377, a Council of Regency was set up with John of Gaunt at its head. Because of John's sojourn abroad certain people at home believed that he had abandoned any hope of overlooking affairs in

this country. Therefore, Robert de Vere (9th Earl of Oxford) who also held a Dukedom in Ireland, and Michael de la Pole (Earl of Suffolk) resolved to drive John from power, only to be thwarted by another of his brothers, Thomas Woodstock (Duke of Gloucester) and John's son, sometimes known as Earl of Derby, who was later to become Henry IV.

Mr. Murduck's talk illustrated not only the problem of identifying details of events which occurred 600 years ago, but also that of following the thoughts and ideas of those who lived in a world so different from our own.

Ida Nicol

A further note on the Dalyngrigge family and Bodiam Castle

Mr. Murduck's talk prompted me to look for a little more information on this rather confusing subject. Some convenient sources of reference are *Bodiam and its Lords* by M.A. Lower 1870 (Society's Library), *Castles in Sussex* by John Guy (Phillimore 1984) and *The Castle Story* by Sheila Sancha (Kestrel Books 1979). A very readable account of the complex politics of the 14th century is to be found in Churchill's *A History of the English Speaking Peoples*.

The family name of Dalyngrigge appears to be derived from an extinct manor in the region of East Grinstead, and the first recorded member is John Dalyngrigge, who at some time in the reign of Edward II (1307-27) married Joan, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Walter de la Lynde of Bolebrook. Sir Edward was either the first or the second son of this marriage, and Lower gives his date of birth as "about 1346". However, Lower also states that "...he had accompanied his father in the campaigns of Edward III against France...and had shared in the glories of Crécy and Poitiers". Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) would suggest either an earlier date of birth or remarkable precocity!

However there seems little doubt that he took part in the long struggle for the Dukedom of Brittany between the Blois and Montfort families which extended from 1341 to 1364. This was an early example of great powers fighting a war by proxy, the Blois faction being supported by the French and the Montforts by the English. This struggle which ended in the victory of the Montfort and English forces at the battle of Auray (near Lorient) and the complete devastation of Brittany, has attracted more attention in fiction than in history. One episode, the battle between 30 Frenchmen from the castle of Josselin and the same number of Englishmen, Bretons, and Germans from the nearby castle of Ploermel, forms two chapters of Conan Doyle's *Sir Nigel.* In 1819 a memorial column was set up on the place midway between the two castles where the conflict occurred. This now finds itself in the central reservation of the busy road from Rennes to Lorient (N 24) and the approach to the spot is almost as hazardous as in 1351! It would also seem that Sir Edward served in Aquitaine since some authorities maintain that the design of Bodiam Castle owes something to the castle of Villandraut near Bordeaux, as well as to the Breton castle of Derval.

Englishmen who were successful in the French Wars had great opportunities for acquiring loot, and it would seem that Sir Edward Dalyngrigge was very successful. He returned to England and added to his wealth by marrying Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of John de Wardeux, the owner of lands at Bodiam. By this time the balance of power between England and France had begun to change. To quote the sonorous sentences of *A History of the English Speaking Peoples* - "The triumph and exhaustion of England were simultaneously complete. It was proved that the French Army could not beat the English, and at the same time that England could not conquer France. The main effort of Edward III, though crowned with all the military laurels, had failed" (Vol. I p.282). The continued resistance of the French was seen in Sussex by the sacking and burning of Rye and Winchelsea in 1377 and an attack on Hastings in 1380.

In 1377 Edward III had died after some years of declining powers and been succeeded by his grandson, Richard II, who was 10 years old at the time. A Council under John of Gaunt oversaw the affairs of the realm, and Sir Edward Dalyngrigge was appointed to this in 1380. He was given particular responsibility for the defence of the Sussex coast, and the arrangements he made were described in some detail by Mr. Murduck. In 1385 he received a licence to crenellate his house at Bodiam. Such a licence had been necessary since the early years of Henry II (1154-89), when the King, coming to power at the end of a period of civil war, had wisely decreed that only such fortifications as met with his approval should be built. This early example of "planning permission" had also applied to the Abbot of Battle when, in 1338, he built the Abbey Gatehouse.

Although a licence to crenellate appears to refer only to the fortification of an existing building, it seems that it could be interpreted to cover the construction of a new castle on, or near, the same site. Sir Edward Dalyngrigge certainly saw it in this light, and instead of strengthening his manor house built the Bodiam Castle we have today. No doubt as a man who had acquired much of his wealth by loot and pillage in France, he was well qualified to turn from poacher to gamekeeper and prevent the French from doing the same thing in Sussex. As it happened the tide of war changed again and Bodiam Castle was never called upon to serve any military purpose.

In 1392 Sir Edward was one of the Royal Commissioners who concluded a peace treaty with France on behalf of Richard II. It is generally considered that this treaty was prompted less by the King's wish to live at peace with his neighbour than by his desire to render himself independent of funds voted by Parliament. In the same year he was appointed Keeper of the Tower of London and Governor of the City, an appointment which is puzzling until one recollects that at that time the liberties of the City of London were seized into the King's hands.

It is thought that Sir Edward Dalyngrigge died in about 1395. He was succeeded by his only son Sir John Dalyngrigge who also occupied important positions at Court and carried out a number of diplomatic missions including escorting Henry IV's daughter Blanche to Germany for her marriage to the Duke of Bavaria (1402). For his various services he was granted the custody and Lordship of Bramber Castle. He also represented Sussex in four Parliaments. Sir John died without issue, and Bodiam Castle passed first to his widow Alice who died in 1443 and then to his cousin Philippa who, in 1483, married Sir Thomas Lewknor. The Lewknor family held Bodiam for the next 150 years.

Donald Nicol

THE CRAFT OF THE CLOCKMAKER

Mr. Mike Bundock — 10 January 1992

The accurate measurement of time is something we nowadays take very much for granted. A quartz watch, accurate to a few seconds a month, can be bought for as little as £5. But before the invention of clocks, the only way of telling the time of day was by looking at the position of the sun or by using a sundial - if the sun was visible! The first clock is thought to date from the 10th century, but its type is not known. Mechanical clocks appeared in the 14th century. They were made of wrought iron using blacksmiths' techniques, and so were large and simple. The clock preserved in Salisbury Cathedral is claimed to date from 1386 although there is some doubt about this. They were mainly used in churches as communal clocks, and told the time by ringing a bell, dials not appearing until later. Early dials used only the hour hand, enabling the time to be estimated to within a few minutes, adequate for people's needs and within the accuracy of the clock. The church clock at Edenbridge in Kent is of this single handed type.

With the invention of the dial came the possibility of smaller clocks and watches, and locksmiths'

techniques of cold metal working took over from the old blacksmiths' hot metal working.

Lantern clocks appeared at the end of the 16th century, made at first from iron, like miniature turret clocks, and later from brass. The name "Lantern" is of obscure origin, derived either from the clock's appearance, or from latten, a fine brass. Watches also appeared at about the same time, known as egg watches because of their flattened oval shape. They were very expensive and largely confined to Royalty. Time keeping was very poor at about 15 minutes a day. Both clocks and watches of this period were used as much for decoration as for timekeeping, and still had the hour hand only.

The next major development was the invention of the pendulum movement which gave greatly improved timekeeping. This was in the late 17th century and was used at first in Lantern clocks, these gradually developing into the familiar long case clock which permitted a longer and more accurate pendulum. Timekeeping improved to about 1 minute per week. the minute hand appeared about the middle of the 18th century, although single hand clocks continued to be made because of the cost.

In 1797 Parliament passed an Act taxing all clocks and watches. The result was so disastrous for the trade that the Act had to be repealed the following year.

Clocks and watches now developed in all kinds of ways. French clocks tended to be very decorative, and English clocks to have fine movements. Repeater clocks and watches would chime the last quarter on demand. "School" clocks had large dials and minimal cases, and so on.

Watchmakers were to be found in most towns by the 19th century. Apart from making and repairing clocks and watches, they sold other goods such as jewellery and optical ware, and were often general merchants. They worked with very simple handtools for the most

part, although they could make new gear wheels using a wheel cutting engine.

A typical watch supplied and repaired by a local watchmaker was the Turnip watch. This was a large pocket watch $2^1/_2$ inches or more in diameter and nearly 2 inches thick. It had a double case, was heavy and rugged, and contained probably 3 oz. of silver. Common faults included broken fusee chains and balance wheel pivots. Having repaired the watch, the watchmaker would stick his circular advertising label in the outer case. The BDHS Museum contains such a watch, complete with circular repair label, by the Battle watchmaker Apps.

Apart from his other duties, the local watchmaker also attended to the regular winding, cleaning and occasional repair of the turret clocks in his area. These clocks proliferated, and were now installed in churches, town halls and other buildings, both private and public. There was also a fashion for clock towers, which sprang up in town centres and along seaside promenades. Many of these clocks have now had to be converted to automatic winding, because of the difficulty of finding someone to wind them regularly.

Mr. Bundock concluded his talk by showing slides of some of the clocks inspired by late Victorian taste. These included Floral Clocks, sometimes found in public parks, and clocks with dial figures replaced with twelve letter phrases or mottoes, for example: MY DEAR MOTHER!

Alan Kinnear

MUSIC OF THE CHURCH IN PRE- AND POST-CONQUEST ENGLAND

Dr. Susan Rankin — 24 January 1992

Battle, it was said in introducing Dr. Rankin, had in its midst, in the abbey, a national monument as a constant reminder of the link between the Society's local studies and a wider historical past. Archaeological and economic studies of the abbey

aroused international scholarship. But what of the centuries of monastic life within its walls? The lecture was to investigate one aspect of it - its music - and in this field Dr. Rankin's research lay on the frontiers of knowledge.

Dr. Rankin began by saying that her research lay primarily in the period before the foundation of Battle Abbey. The place of music in Anglo-Saxon culture remained obscure. The harps from Sutton Hoo and in Beowulf were a pointer. But when, where and how was music performed? And with what was St. Dunstan familiar in the 10th century? The earliest church music, of which there was more than one centre, was conveyed by oral tradition. In Europe by the 9th century there was evidence from the manuscript books used in the service, of aides-memoire for the celebrant, and in the 10th, of systematic form. Ninth century art depicted Pope Gregory the Great with a dove at his ear, and below, copyists at work; a celebrant at the altar with five singers; and in a third illustration, eight singers, with the celebrant's book open at the introit for Advent Sunday. The inference: that Gregory was by then accepted as the source of the Roman liturgy and its music which under Carolingian influence had become paramount in western Christendom.

In the 10th century the English church under Dunstan of Canterbury, Oswald of York, and Aethelwold of Winchester enjoyed a revival. And with an increased vigorous monastic life arose the need for more precise instruction in the conduct of the service and its traditionally associated music. For the first time in England appear signs, "neumes", above the lines of manuscript text, to indicate movement of the melody and how articulation, and the sense and mood of the Latin text, might be conveyed. Neumes predate by centuries the stave and musical notation with which we are familiar. The science of transcribing them into modern notation is as yet not exact; indeed from the state of present knowledge it is largely impossible to transcribe with certainty

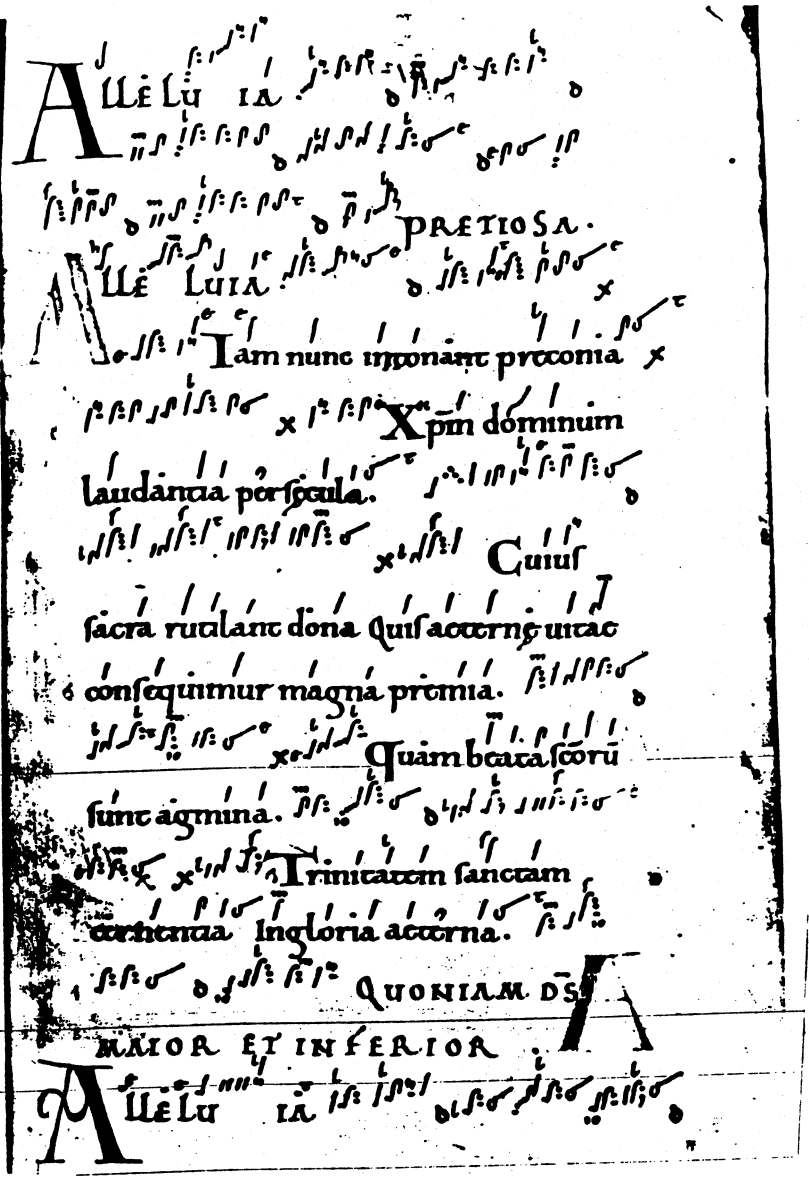
unless there is extant later mediaeval staff notation known to be identical.

In the ALLELUIA from the Winchester Troper illustrated opposite may be seen the neumes written in (not necessarily at a later time) above the text. Of this English calligraphy there appear two distinct forms, one upright, the other inclined. And there were regional differences to be found in the southwest (Exeter) and the southeast (Winchester and Canterbury). By the late 10th century Winchester had become one of the foremost creative centres of Europe both in art and in music. As Wulfstan describes, Roman chant of the 11th century was put both to the liturgy of the great feasts and to those of local saints. And to such latter texts might be added phrases specially alluding to or reflecting upon a local saint - "tropes".

The greatly venerated St. Swithun of Winchester Dr. Rankin here quoted as a case in point. By way of musical illustration her two singers, Dr. John Milsom and Mr. Alan Poppleton, sang extracts from two tropes, the one extolling the virtues of Swithun as patron and protector of the monks and his shrine, the other reflecting on his saintliness as a priest and on his tomb at Winchester, the object of veneration to all. The singing in itself was a lesson in the performance of plainchant - movement, flexibility, seamlessness - illustrating, as do the neumes, how the chant might be used to interpret the text and indicate changes of emphasis in the approach to its performance.

Dr. Rankin now addressed the beginnings of polyphony. The Winchester Troper, compiled between AD 996 and 1050, is the earliest known collection of pieces written in "organum", that is the say the melody written with a second voice a fourth below. Of this the singers gave a musical example, as Dr. Rankin said, strange to ears accustomed to modern harmony, but in the resonance of a great church, evocative, and not without beauty. There was a second method of early polyphony in the use in two-part harmony of a

With acknowledgement to Dr. Susan Rankin



single note or "drone", indicated in one neume text by a series of dots along a straight line - one imagined, "pitch this note and stay on it!" The stage had been reached where the purpose of neumes was no longer solely the preservation of an inviolable liturgical musical tradition. They could now record newly devised music.

The lecture concluded with two further musical illustrations, a full trope on St. Swithun in two part harmony with the occasional third appearing; and a "sequence" of St. Oswald from an early 12th century manuscript, known throughout England but distinct from anything previously encountered in that it contained the characteristics of a French secular song. The path had been traced from the simple monody of Gregory to a complex situation where innovation and composition were making their demands. The need had arisen for a notation to replace the neume and satisfy the new skills and the new perceptions. On this the cloister and the royal musician were at work.

During the question period Dr. Rankin opined that the organs of Dunstan, and at Malmesbury and Ramsey, were not used to accompany the chant of the service, but as an adjunct to the service in the same way as bells. Little or nothing was known specifically of musical practices in Battle Abbey. As a Benedictine house it could be assumed that it would follow established practice. (The original monks were from Marmoutier. But Henry, elected abbot in 1096, brought with him from Canterbury a number of monks and, as the Battle Abbey Chronicle informs us, "atque ut vircelebs et modestia clarus dei servitium cantuum ornatu dulcisono honestavit" - "as a chaste man, and one known for his correctness of conduct, he most fittingly adorned God's services with settings of ornate harmony." "Organum", Professor Eleanor Searle suggests, as sung at Canterbury.)

John Springford

THE ROYAL ARMS DISPLAYED

Mr. William Gardner — 7 February 1992

Mr. Gardner, artist and expert on the Royal Coats of Arms who had, in the past, designed some of the pre-decimalisation coins as well as the tail side of the current twenty pence piece, showed us numerous pictures, including many of his excellent designs of silver plaques relating to Royal sovereigns throughout the ages.

These silver plaques were cleverly designed, incorporating features applicable to each monarch represented, and were built up in balanced and most attractive formations.

The plaques included tributes to Richard I, Edward II, Edward III, Edward V, Richard III, Lady Jane Gray who had only been on the throne nine days before she was executed, and Queen Mary of William and Mary fame.

The first slide Mr. Gardner showed us prior to the various silver plaques was of the present Coat of Arms, which is the same today as the original, King Richard I's second seal.

The keeper of his seal fell overboard with the seal when coming back from the Third Crusade, so Richard had a second seal produced which enabled him to raise numerous customs charges etc for the Treasury.

There followed many pictures depicting coats of arms, some examples being: A new tiled floor given by King Henry VII and laid in the Chapter House, which included a Royal Arms pattern in the tiles; Coats of Arms which came to include fleurs de lis when around the time of Edward III feelings about France intensified; pictures of a 600 year old metal cast of the Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III, in Canterbury Cathedral, as a recumbent figure fully armed with coats of arms on his plate mail. The Black

Prince's tomb was mounted on a marble base with 12 inch high shields around it depicting coats of arms. The prince specified that the same number of these shields should depict peace as depicted war.

Most of these photographs were taken by Mr. Theo Cockerill, the son of Christopher Cockerill who invented the Hovercraft, and these showed close-up shots in fine detail.

In Westminster Abbey Edward III's tomb had shields which included fleurs de lis as well as lions and also had his daughter's shield which included castles of Castile and lions of Leon. She died at the age of 14, having been engaged to the heir to the Spanish throne.

An interesting anecdote told by Mr. Gardner was of his wish to see and photograph the figures of angels on the ends of the sixteen hammer-beam roof trusses in Westminster Hall, and having written to the Clerk of Works he eventually got the "go ahead" from a subsequent Clerk of Works some two years later, and was wheeled around on top of a mobile gantry to view and photograph the sixteen angels high in the roof.

A slide was shown depicting the vaulted ceiling in the Canterbury Cathedral Cloisters where there are 850 plaques of Coat of Arms fitted between joints in the ceiling, all put there in thanks to the nobility for paying for the restoration of the Cloisters.

One task Mr. Gardner was given to perform was to produce Coats of Arms in colour and in low relief on vellum, and together with colleagues he produced a book which exquisitely set out Coats of Arms in staggered positions so that they did not rub against each other when the book was closed and all notated in copperplate handwriting in an old English type. A work of real treasure!

Several examples of Heraldry over gateways at Cambridge and Oxford which had been restored by Mr. Gardner were shown, including the gateway at St.

John's College, Cambridge, and King Henry VIII's Coat of Arms at King's College, Cambridge.

The last view of the fleur de lis on a shield was on a medallion issued by the Mint to celebrate the union of Scotland with England.

In the 19th century the deputy Master of the Royal Mint allowed a Jubilee coin, issued to Queen Victoria, to be viewed.

In 1937 a coin was designed, made and engraved for Edward VIII but when Edward abdicated and George VI came to the throne another design was made and new coins issued.

Slides of some very fine work on plaster were shown; work which was produced by Mr. Gardner by designing and engraving much of the work in a reversed or mirrored fashion to produce moulds for casting the finished product. A most skilled operation which showed the first class craftsmanship and artistry Mr. Garner possessed.

Eric Augele

THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY AND SUSSEX

Dr. T.P. Hudson — 21 February 1992

The Victoria County History was founded in Diamond Jubilee year, 1897. It was the brainchild of Sir Laurence Gomme and H. Doubleday who set up a Council to plan an encyclopaedia of national history to replace the number of attempts in the past to produce such a work. It was dedicated to Queen Victoria as a celebration of her Diamond Jubilee, and was to be a comprehensive history of every county in England, an almost unmanageable enterprise such as could only be conceived in an age of opulence. The first editor was Dr. William Page of Bognor Regis who began work on the project in his garden shed. The best scholars available were called in to assist him but, due to financial problems, publication of the work had a

very chequered history always dogged by shortage of money.

Originally it was planned to publish the history in 200 volumes with separate volumes for large towns such as York, Oxford, Chester, Norwich and Bristol. As the original plan to make it a commercial venture, with subscribers, ran into difficulty, it had to be reduced owing to lack of money until eventually it was halted altogether. An approach was made to King Edward VII for monetary help but this was refused, help eventually coming from Lord Carnegie and also the generosity of the public. It was, however, resumed after the first war but again became financially insecure, until in 1933 it was taken over by London University under the editorship of Professor Ralph Pugh.

At the outset each county volume was to be published under headings: 1) archaeology, 2) social and economic history and 3) architectural history, but under the new editorship other headings were added, namely administration of the county, agriculture, industries, church history and the history of transport. With Volumes I and II for Sussex completed before 1914, it was planned to publish six volumes, one for each rape, but by 1937 under the editorship of L. Salzman, only three had been accomplished for Hastings, Lewes and Chichester, and the indices for each of these were not produced until 1984.

With such a large undertaking it is impossible to say when the work will be completed. Fourteen volumes are now finished, but it is estimated that the next 12 counties will be ready in anything up to 25 or 30 years' time. An even greater difficulty lies in keeping up with current trends, although revision is not contemplated and the impetus to finish the work is still strong.

Dr. Hudson is working on the Rape of Bramber for West Sussex, and he showed some 55 excellent slides of how he works on assembling the information he collects. Much physical effort is involved in visiting the area

which he is covering for this volume, checking boundaries, village streets, development of towns, buildings and old settlements, schools and houses, some of it with the assistance of graduates. Nowadays modern technology enters into the production, and information is put on discs and passed to the printer.

Hopefully this will speed up the whole process which, according to a slide of the original promotion leaflet, was to be "one of the greatest works ever written" and which started life in the garden shed of Dr. William Page, its first editor.

Gladys Young

THE ENGLISH CLERGY ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

Mr. Peter Heath — 6 March 1992

Mr. Heath is Reader in History in the University of Hull, and we are grateful to him for making the long journey to give us this most interesting lecture.

He began by saying that criticism of Pre-Reformation affairs from Protestants would cause no surprise; but a great volume of the criticism of Pre-Reformation clergy comes from faithful and orthodox Catholics of the time. Several examples followed. In 1519 there was Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, who in a famous sermon on the text "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed" spoke of the wicked lives of priests, their feasts and banquets, their sports and plays, their hawking and hunting. His was not a solitary voice. Another preacher, in York Minister, deplored oafish priests, swilling and drunken, wenching and hunting and hawking to advanced old age; and spoke also of their ignorance of literature, their sloth and idleness.

Fifty years earlier an Archbishop of Canterbury had complained of clergy drinking, of adultery, of wasting the property of benefices, of pretended papal letters, of bringing souls to loss. Again, Thomas

Gascoigne of Oxford University mentioned seven great evils, among them scandalous ordinations, plurality of benefices, and rapacity over tithes. Further back still, a 1420 Handbook for Preachers denounced ambition for promotion, and quoted Bernard of Clairvaux's complaints of hypocrisy among clergy.

Clearly then, these were not just Protestant views. The orthodox and the loyal seemed to agree. Moreover the problem went back a long way. Contemporary observers saw the 15th century as an age of decay when compared with the 13th century age of faith.

But was it really as bad as that?

Worldliness. Mr. Heath suggested that this was perhaps thrust upon them. If well-educated, and able, clerics were quickly drawn into the service of the King, rose high in Civil Service, and were rewarded (indeed paid) with several benefices. Bribery was not infrequent. Clerical lawyers and administrators had to be paid, and housed, with a proper farm and paddock. So a mid-15th century parsonage might be a matter of 40 to 50 acres. Repairs on all this were the responsibility of the parson and might be very costly. There were guests to entertain, servants and grooms to be paid, and (if benefices were far apart) chaplains to be remunerated. Glebe was an asset, but that too called for equipment, horses and staff, which were not always provided. So the incumbent was employer, salesman, tax-collector (for tithes) in addition to his task in the cure of souls. If an average parson needed £15 a year, he was often paid much less. No wonder there was neglect of repairs or of hospitality. Many preferred to be private chaplains, unbeneficed.

Perhaps it is the less surprising that some found solace in ale-houses. There were no coffee shops then; and it was the age of celibacy. Yet crime was perhaps less prevalent than Colet said. In over half the recorded law suits, the accused parson was acquitted. More often the women with whom they were

associated were charged and convicted - a sign of the times.

Benefit of Clergy. This phrase refers to the arrangement, long complained about, whereby clergy accused of crime must be tried in their own ecclesiastical courts. Much resentment was caused. Yet they were not necessarily acquitted there; and most of those convicted were in minor orders, e.g. lay clerks who did not advance to higher orders. There are stories of violence, but not much of this seems to have arisen in the alehouse. We have to remember, too, that it was a much more violent age than our own.

Ignorance. There were, of course, no theological colleges then, and not much in the way of ordination examinations. Some candidates were found to have cheated. Bishop Hooper of Gloucester, in a close enquiry into the clergy of his Diocese, found that out of 311 clergy, 168 could not recite the Ten Commandments, 33 did not know where they could be found, 10 did not know the Lord's Prayer, and 34 did not know its author. Perhaps, however, Gloucester was not typical. There is evidence that, compared with the 13th century, the proportion of graduates was increasing, especially among those who were on the King's business away from their parishes.

Monks and Regular Clergy. Thus far we have been thinking of the parochial clergy. In 1500 A.D. there were also some 12,000 regular clergy, i.e. those who were sworn to some monastic rule. The degeneracy here may be explained in part by the unrestrained flow, almost amounting to glut, of religious foundations in the 12th and 13th centuries. Some houses might have only two or three inmates. Later there were fewer aspirants. Zeal declined. The possibility was aired of candidates pursuing the devout life without taking the vow. In 1520 the Benedictines had a modest reform. They said that if the rule were made too strict, there might well not be enough monks. The Carthusians, a most austere regime, had only seven houses. Cardinal Wolsey, well before the reformation,

dissolved 25 unsatisfactory houses, using the proceeds to found schools and colleges (for the humanist movement had brought such into the forefront of worthy Christian endeavour). Nunneries attracted the daughters of the gentry. Again, a glut of foundations brought in unsuitable people. There were reports of extravagance and of showy dress, and in some places of men coming and going at night. Yet there were some monasteries and nunneries which maintained a devout and disciplined regime: Charterhouse in London, Mount Grace in Yorkshire, and a Warwickshire nunnery which had consistent reports of good behaviour and devoted service.

In general, the surviving reports were largely of failures rather than virtue. It is possible that denunciation is exaggerated as we have no idea of the proportion of good and evil. Contemporary comment measured the age against the myth of a golden age in the 13th century, a golden age that never existed. In fact, by the 15th century pluralism was more restrained, and education had improved. A true judgement is made even more difficult in that the same cleric might be at the same time noted for his lust, and esteemed for his diligence.

Perhaps this recorder of a most interesting lecture can be forgiven for feeling that, if the records of evil may sometimes be exaggerated, there was still more than enough residual truth to cry out for matters to be put right.

David Thompson

THE CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE OF FOUR RESORTS BRIGHTON, EASTBOURNE, HASTINGS, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Dr. Colin Brent — 20 March 1992

It was entirely appropriate that Dr. Colin Brent came by train to Battle to give his lecture on the Classical Architecture of Four Resorts, postponed because of the weather from last February. Clearly he has a healthy dislike of the endless lines of cars

whose glistening steel spoils the vistas of these four lovely towns. His talk was illustrated by a wealth of slides, clearly showing the architectural styles he was discussing.

Dr. Brent started in the pre-railway era, with the redesigning by John Nash of the Brighton Pavilion in 1815, in ebullient, Chinese/Hindu style. By this time, Nash had already established his reputation with his great set piece, Carlton House Terrace, built on a colossal scale in gleaming stucco, overlooking the graceful landscaping of St. James' Park. His design continued through Covent Garden, St. James's Square, Regent Street and Regent's Park - itself a massive landscape garden. This all splendidly reflected the Age of Imperialism.

Meanwhile, with Europe closed to tourists because of the Napoleonic Wars, Brighton developed as a seaside resort and Nash's Royal Crescent was the first building designed to face the sea.

In nearby Kemp town, also built on the Nash scale, Thomas Reid Kemp included landscaping in his total design of squares with mews, shops, and a church.

It was not until 1846 that the railway arrived in Eastbourne and brought development under the aegis of that eminent Victorian, the 7th Duke of Devonshire. His statue faces the town, as befits the Father of Eastbourne.

By contrast, Hastings had started to develop westwards from the Old Town of John Collier in the previous century, through George Street to Wellington Square. Here the typical sloping, Hastings site did not deter the architect, Joseph Kay, whose vigorous, charming design needs strong sunshine to emphasise the lines of the facade.

At the same time, Decimus Burton purchased the Eversfield estate in St. Leonards, where his 1820's design owes much to Nash. Look at the Victoria Hotel, with its flanking terraces, the Assembly Rooms

behind, and the villas surrounding Quarry Park, for the same grand scheme, set in a rural landscape, as is found in Regent's Park. Though by now, the classical style of Nash has given way to Gothic Victorian in the neo-Tudor villas of The Lawn, St. Leonards.

Inland at last, to the spa of Tunbridge Wells, which for a hundred years had centred its social life on the Pantiles, until James Burton bought the Calverley Park estate in 1810. Here the Italianate villas with their lovely views across Calverley Park to Holy Trinity Church illustrate the integration of house and garden. How delightful are their verandahs, trelliswork, balconies and conservatories.

This marks the end of the classical architecture of Nash, condemned by Ruskin as "unchristian" and the beginning of Serious Gothic. No doubt Dr. Brent enjoyed our delightful mock Gothic station.

Patricia Speedy

COMMEMORATION LECTURE

GETTING IT BACK ON PAPER: BATTLE ABBEY RECORDS IN THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY

Mr. Christopher Whittick — 9 October 1992

It may seem remarkable that one of the finest collections of English historical documents should be found in a library on the Pacific Coast of the United States. The explanation lies in the great obsessions of three men, Sir Godfrey Webster, Sir Thomas Phillipps, and Henry Edwards Huntington, and it is necessary to give some attention to the character and background of all three.

Sir Godfrey Webster was obsessed with politics, or at least with becoming an M.P. He was the great grandson of Sir Thomas Webster who purchased the Battle Abbey Estate in 1721 for £56,000. He also bought estates in Ewhurst and Bodiam (including

Bodiam Castle) in 1723, in Robertsbridge (including Robertsbridge Abbey) in 1726 and in Fairlight in 1733. His total expenditure was almost £100,000, an enormous sum for those days, and, not surprisingly, he soon found himself in debt. Despite prudent marriages, financial troubles seem to have beset the Webster family from then onwards. Sir Thomas's grandson, another Sir Godfrey, married Elizabeth Vassal, the 15 year old daughter of the owner of large estates in Jamaica. She subsequently eloped with Henry Fox, 3rd Baron Holland, and after her divorce and remarriage, was responsible for making Holland House a notable social centre and political salon. Sir Godfrey was M.P. for Seaford until 1790 and for Wareham (Dorset) from 1796 to 1800 when he committed suicide. His son, the Sir Godfrey with whom we are concerned, was 10 years old at the time of his father's death and subsequently inherited the Abbey which was in a ruinous condition, having had no money spent on repairs for the previous 30 years. Despite this he proceeded to spend very large sums of money seeking election to Parliament, and although elected as a Tory in 1812 he supported Liberal measures and voted with the Opposition.

In 1819 he fled to the Continent to escape his creditors, and trustees set about rebuilding his fortunes by selling timber, in which the estate was very rich. To their consternation he returned to England in 1823 and made three unsuccessful and expensive attempts to win the Chichester Borough seat. In addition to his political ambitions Sir Godfrey was also an inveterate gambler for high stakes. He died in 1836, when his personal assets were insufficient to pay a hotel bill, a charge for medical attention and his servants' wages. In the previous year, 1835, he had sold the muniments of Battle Abbey to Thomas Thorpe, a London bookseller, for, less than £300. His level of desperation may be judged from the fact that manorial records and estate accounts less than a century old were included in the sale.

Thomas Thorpe sold the muniments shortly afterwards for £1200, but he should not be thought of merely as a smart businessman who made a large profit. He bound the documents in 97 volumes and, more importantly, he produced a descriptive catalogue, 221 pages in length, of their contents. This catalogue, although it is not in a convenient form for historical studies, has been used by scholars ever since. On the front page it states "It is presumed no collection of manuscripts of equal importance, in a national point of view, has ever been offered for sale" - a claim with which few would disagree.

The purchaser of the 97 volumes, whom Thomas Thorpe almost certainly had in mind when he bought them, was Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872). He was a man of considerable wealth and his obsession was the collection of ancient books and manuscripts, particularly those on vellum, of which he acquired an enormous quantity. He wrote of himself:- "As I advanced, the ardour of the pursuit increased, until at last I became a perfect vello-maniac (if I may coin a word), and I gave any price that was asked. Nor do I regret it, for my object was not only to secure good manuscripts for myself, but also to raise the public estimation of them, so that their value might be more generally known, and, consequently, more manuscripts preserved. For nothing tends to the preservation of anything so much as making it bear a high price."

After the death of Sir Thomas Phillipps his great collection was sold in batches by his trustees over a very long period and it was not until 1923 that the Battle Abbey records came on to the market. They were bought by Henry Edwards Huntington, a railway magnate from the east coast of America. He had not only made a large fortune on his own account, but had inherited an even larger one from his uncle. His obsessions were rather modest in relation to his resources. He wished to amass the largest collection of British historical documents west of the Atlantic and to acquire more incunabula (books published before 1500) than the British Museum. He pursued this quest with

great enthusiasm, at first storing the collection in his New York mansion. He had however invested in the tramway system of the rapidly expanding city of Los Angeles and had bought a ranch at San Marino, then an isolated settlement nearby, surrounded by orange groves. In 1920 he had transferred his whole collection to a specially built library on this ranch. The city of Los Angeles has now spread around the area and the library now stands in an urban park which has been set out as a series of formal gardens, including a very notable Japanese garden. As soon as the building was completed Mr. Huntington set up a generously endowed trust to ensure the survival and maintenance of his splendid collection.

What then is the nature of these Abbey documents? Many of them relate to the tenancy of land, but it is important to realise that they do not cover all the possessions of the Abbey from 1066 to the dissolution. When the monasteries were dissolved a body known as the Court of Augmentations was set up with the duty of collecting all monastic records and distributing them, as appropriate, to the new owners of the properties. When a document referred to two or more properties which had been given to different people copies were made. The Abbey held manors, churches and endowments all over England and Wales, but Sir Anthony Browne received only the Battle Abbey Estate and hence only the records relating to this passed from the last Lord Montague to Sir Thomas Webster, less of course any referring to land which had been sold between 1539 and 1719. Thus the records in the Huntington Library contain hardly any reference to the manors of Wye or Dengemarsh in Kent, of Alciston in West Sussex, to Brecon Priory or the Abbot's Inn in Southwark. On the other hand there are documents relating to all the other purchases of land in the area by Sir Thomas Webster, and material from the families of Jorden (Sir Thomas's mother), Cheeke (Lady Webster's father) and Whistler (Lady Webster's maternal grandfather). Thus, what is held by the Huntington Library is not the complete records of a great abbey, but the archive of the Websters of Battle Abbey in the 18th century. The later records

of Battle Abbey were transferred to the East Sussex Record Office in the 1960s and the archive material is thus divided between Lewes and Los Angeles. This was the reason for Mr. Whittick's visit to the Huntington Museum.

It might be thought that the simplest method of bringing the records together would be to copy the Huntington material on microfilm, for the terms of the Trust prevent any of it being taken out of the Library in any circumstances. But, to film the whole mass of material would be quite beyond the resources of the Record Office, and the selection of the more important items is by no means easy. Henry Huntington was interested in collecting documents rather than reading them and the Trust, while generously endowed in most respects, is tightly drawn up and makes little provision for the cataloguing or study of the records. The Library still uses Thorpe's catalogue of 1835, which, although it gives a good summary of each document, does not attempt to put them in chronological order and mediaeval documents were seldom dated. To do this one needs to note the names of all the people mentioned, either as parties to the contract or as witnesses. If one has other knowledge of the dates of one of them then a rough date can be given to the document. Since the same names tend to recur, the documents can gradually be put in order. Mr. Whittick decided to concentrate upon the mediaeval records and by working six days a week for three months succeeded in translating over 900 documents. He gave an example of a mediaeval deed, its description in Thorpe's catalogue and his own translation, which included such interesting sidelights as the indicators of the place of the document and a copy of it in the Abbey's filing system.

Mr. Whittick concluded by expressing some concern about the use which might be made of the records in the future. When the Huntington Library was set up it was in an area which was predominantly English speaking and of English, or at least Western European, background. Today, population changes in

the United States have resulted in a population of Los Angeles of which about 20% speak Spanish and another 20% speak the languages of various countries around the Pacific Ocean. These proportions are increasing and there would seem to be a risk of the records of Battle Abbey being beautifully preserved among people who have no interest in their contents. However, he was hoping to make a further visit and he assured the Society that the obsessions of Sir Godfrey Webster, Sir Thomas Phillips and Henry Edwards Huntington were matched by his own obsession - to make available in East Sussex, in one form or other, all the documents relating to it.

After the lecture Mr. Whittick generously presented to the Society a complete catalogue (in two volumes) of all the Battle Abbey records held by both the Huntington Library and the East Sussex Record Office.

Donald Nicol

COACHING IN SUSSEX

Mr. Brion Purdey — 6 November 1992

The Victorians felt the same affection for the stage coach, then recently replaced by the railways, as many of us do today for the steam locomotive. From them we have inherited the traditional Christmas card image of coaching, but the reality in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries was rather different. To begin with, the roads in Sussex were notorious as being the worst in the country, and were deep in mud for much of the year. In the 17th and 18th centuries either the packhorse or the stage waggon was the preferred form of transport, the latter having very broad wheels which were less likely to sink into the soft ground. But, the average speed of a waggon was only about 2 mph and there are records of the journey from London to parts of East Sussex taking three days.

Improvements in roads were needed before there could be any appreciable improvement in the speed of travel, and in Sussex this was brought about by the introduction of Tolls. At one time there were some 20,000 miles of Toll Roads in the county. The only reminder of them today is the few remaining Toll-Keepers' cottages, of which there is a good example in North Trade Road. Toll Gates were often set at quite short intervals (3 - 4 miles) and the charges were quite high by the standards of the time. However, the ownership of Tolls, which could be bought and sold, was no easy route to riches, for the obligation of road maintenance entailed heavy expenditure. The Flimwell Toll Trust was £11,000 in debt in 1835. Despite its deficiencies the Toll system produced enormous improvements in road surfaces, particularly in the decade 1830 - 1840.

While roads were bad and speeds very low, deficiencies in the suspension of coaches could presumably be tolerated, indeed there is a drawing of Queen Elizabeth arriving at Nonsuch Palace in a coach which appears to have no springs of any kind. This may explain why, when visiting Northiam, she preferred to ride a horse. Complaints about the rough ride in coaches began to appear in the mid 17th century and from then on steady progress was made in the development of springs and other features of suspension design. This technical progress did not extend to the braking system, for brakes were generally disliked by coach operators as they wore out the wheels. Not surprisingly, most coach accidents occurred when going down hill. The effect of the combined improvements in roads and coaches was that by the end of the 18th century the journey from London to Eastbourne or Hastings could reliably be made in one day.

The rise in coaching brought about the development of the great coaching inns, of which the Swan at Hastings was a particularly fine example. It covered a large site in the High Street, but was demolished in 1889. Battle High street is lucky in retaining two coaching inns, the George and the Star (now named the

1066). Meals at coaching inns were apt to be less attractive in reality than in art or literature and were often rather hurried "20 minutes for dinner" being quite usual. There were however some coaches which took a longer and slower route determined by the quality of food at the inns on the way.

Faster coaches maintaining regular timetables brought about an interest in standardising time. Hitherto, local time based upon the church clock had been the accepted standard and the accuracy of some church clocks left much to be desired. However, when the London coach reached Eastbourne in the evening after a morning start from Charing Cross it was common for the locals to compare watches with the coachman who gave them "Horse Guards Time". The full standardisation of time all over the country came about only with the development of railways.

Coachmen were often remarkable characters and were the sporting heroes of their day. In addition to the professional coachmen there were a number of distinguished "amateurs", often members of the aristocracy who had ruined themselves by gambling, or were in the process of doing so. One of these, Sir St. Vincent Cotton, once lost £30,000 betting on a race between maggots. There were, not surprisingly, also races between coaches on the road of which the main record is the legislation to prevent the practice. Some coach owners built up very substantial businesses, notable among them being William Chaplin of London who, in 1830, owned 68 coaches, 1800 horses and was reckoned to be worth £500,000. He wisely foresaw the end of coaching and invested his money in railways.

One of the most important functions of coaches was the conveyance of the mails and at the peak of coaching, just before the coming of the railways, some 700 mail coaches were operating from Charing Cross. Records show that they ran on Sundays and on Christmas Day. The tradition that the mail must get through was so strong that if the coach was stopped for any reason the courier would go on alone on

horseback. On Christmas Day 1836 the Gloucester - Brighton mail coach was stuck in snowdrifts at Southwick, but the mail still reached Brighton in 48 hours. Mail coaches were exempt from tolls and the Toll-Keeper had to open the gate at any time of the day or night on hearing the post horn. In the more lawless days of the 18th century mail coaches carried a guard armed with a blunderbuss.

Coaching was an episode in our history which, though unduly glamourised in literature, was none the less very colourful and marked by some remarkable personalities.

Donald Nicol

THE HOUSE OF ASHBURNHAM

Mr. Mark Burlinson — 4 December 1992

Mr. Burlinson, after a tribute to the Reverend John Bickersteth, Vicar of Ashburnham and heir to the Ashburnham estates after the death of Lady Catherine in 1953, proceeded with his lecture illustrated with slides, on the history of the Ashburnham family and its house and lands. Though names have been linked with Saxon times and with the Domesday Essebourne, firm ground is not reached until 1166 when Reginald of Ashburnham is known to be holding from the Count of Eu. His family appears to have continued in possession throughout mediaeval times; but it was under Elizabeth I, no doubt assisted by profitable ironworking, that their ascendancy began. Despite lands lost in those years for recusancy, John Ashburnham MP was knighted in 1603, the same year in which his son John was born, who came to hold high position at court and to be a trusted friend and supporter of Charles I. There were drawbacks. His fortune dwindled and at one point, in 1636, the estate had to be sold, though later recovered, only to be further penalised under the Commonwealth. Nevertheless it was to John Ashburnham that after Charles' execution were bequeathed the king's watch, his shirt, and the sheet which had covered his body. A lock of the king's hair was later added, and all

remain the treasured possessions of the present family; though it would appear that although the flower-decorated face of the watch is genuine, the present watch itself is of a later date.

Prosperity returned at the Restoration. John retired to Ashburnham where he rebuilt the church in commendable gothic, with a vault for forty-five family burials; and set down a narrative of his part in the Civil War. His grandson received a barony in 1671, and in 1730 the title became an earldom. The second earl married an heiress of considerable fortune, and the family estates stretched to Heathfield. It was all reflected in the successive alterations to the house according to the tastes of the time which now took place over the following century and a half. John's house rose in the style of Wren and was enlarged by the second earl during the eighteenth century. About 1820 there was a reversion to Tudor stucco and stone guardian greyhounds. Finally in 1880, Bertram the fourth earl refaced the whole in Victorian red and grey bricks made on the estate. So arose the house, with imposing frontage, clock tower, a complex of buildings incorporating the church, formal terraces, an orangery, and not least the Palladian stables of about 1720 which happily survived and are at present under restoration.

Perhaps even more significant than the buildings was the work on the surrounding land. "Capability" Brown was contracted in 1767 to create out of paddocks a grand park based not on formality but on nature. The landscape was laid out in trees, greensward and lawn; and down the gentle hillside slope were dug three lakes crossed by a classical bridge and draining one into the other by conduits which served until recent safety regulations made imperative their replacement.

In later days the shades began to close in. Upkeep on a building with its elaborate staterooms, eighty-two bedrooms, a suspect roof, and vast incommodious Victorian kitchen, was not easy to contain. The seven sons of Bertram, the fourth earl, failed to produce

any male heir, and at their death the title became extinct. Lady Catherine to whom the estates descended, died in 1953 (taking that forty-fifth place), and they passed to the Reverend John Bickersteth, grandson of the fourth earl through a daughter. Settlement of high death duties was only achieved by the sale of art treasures and portions of the estate. A large unrestored and somewhat unprepossessing mansion in superb but unrewarding parkland attracted neither new resident owner nor institution. The National Trust would only accept it if there were an endowment of an accompanying one and a half million pounds.

For John Bickersteth the Book of Haggai provided the inspiration. "The glory", it runs, "of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former." The way through was found in the creation, in 1960, of the Ashburnham Christian Trust and the devotion of its resources to Christian Education. A good deal of the old and run-down house had to be demolished. What remained, together with the somewhat utilitarian new additions, boasted no great architectural merit. But "utilitarian" denotes purpose. Today Ashburnham is thronged by a worldwide ten thousand visitors a year intent on the conferences, conventions, meetings, and courses of study which are conducted and accommodated there. John Bickersteth died in 1991, his purpose well achieved, and his family still in possession of those relics of 1649.

John Springford

(The Ashburnham Christian Trust would like it to be known that the grounds of Ashburnham Place will be open to the public in 1993 on May 19 and 26 and June 9, 12, 13, and 23. There is an admission charge of £2.75 (children 75p). Further information may be had on Ashburnham from the Office, telephone 0424 892244.)

NEWS

1992 SUMMER PROGRAMME

VISIT TO YORK, CASTLE HOWARD, RIEVAULX ABBEY AND BELVOIR CASTLE 24th - 28th April

The morning of the 24th was cool but dry when we left Battle and after an excellent run north we arrived at our hotel overlooking the racecourse at York. Needless to say, the original arrangements which had been made by Mr. Goldsworthy were perfect and some members chose to take advantage of the heated indoor swimming pool or the Jacuzzi before dinner.

On Saturday morning we enjoyed a very informative guided tour of York Minster. The word "minster" originally meant a mission centre from which the surrounding countryside was evangelised. In 627 the Northumbrian King Edwin was baptised in a small wooden church somewhere near the site of the Minster; this was replaced by a stone one and in 1080 the first Norman archbishop, Thomas of Bayeux, started to build on the site of the present building. The building we see today was begun by Archbishop Gray in 1220 but it was not finished until 1472. It is the largest Gothic cathedral in England.

The Nave, begun in 1291 and finished in the 1350s, contains many notable features - the great West Window painted in 1338, the roof bosses along the centreline of the wooden vaulting portraying the life of Christ and his mother Mary, the Jesse Window (about 1310) and the Bellfounder's Window (early 1300s). The Transepts are the oldest visible part of the present building above ground, having been built between the 1200s and the 1270s in the Early English style. The Five Sisters' Window (about 1260) is the oldest complete window in the Minster; also in this North Transept is the Striking Clock with its 400 year old oak figures which strike the hours and quarters. In the South Transept, the one so badly damaged by fire in 1984, the restoration is quite

amazing. The Rose Window, which commemorates the union of the royal houses of Lancaster and York, broke into thousands of pieces and was restored in 1987. Six of the roof bosses were salvaged and six of the new were designed by children, winners in a *Blue Peter* competition. Also in this South Transept is the tomb of Archbishop Gray mentioned above, who died in 1255. Most cathedrals have magnificent East Windows and the one in the Minster is no exception. In fact, dating from 1405, it contains the largest area of mediaeval stained glass in a single window and depicts the beginning and end of the world, using scenes from Genesis and the Book of Revelation.

The trip had been designed to give members plenty of free time to do what they liked outside the organised visits and many visited the Castle Museum, the Railway Museum, Clifford's Tower, Fairfax House and even the odd hostelry.

Sunday morning was cool with fitful sunshine when we set off through the Yorkshire countryside to Castle Howard. Rolling up from the Vale of York, the Howardian Hills are the framework for Castle Howard. The first sign is a huge monument erected in 1869 by public subscription to the 7th Earl of Carlisle. It marks the southernmost point of an avenue running straight as an arrow for five miles. Straddling the road is Hawksmoor's Carrmire Gate through which our coach squeezed with about two inches to spare on each side! Leaving the coach we were transported by an estate train to the main entrance where we made our singular ways around the house. Built by the 3rd Earl of Carlisle, it was designed by John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor at the beginning of the 18th century. By Vanbrugh's death in 1726 the West Wing was still unbuilt. The house was completed by the 4th Earl's brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Robinson.

On the 9th November 1940 two-thirds of the South Front and the entire Dome were destroyed by fire. The dome was restored in 1960 by George Howard, later Lord Howard of Henderskelfe. In 1981 he built the Garden Room and in 1983 the Library.

The Tourist Entrance is in the East wing and the Grand Staircase, flanked by portraits of the first six Earl of Carlisle, leads to a landing housing a huge bookcase, now used as a china cabinet, containing a fine collection of Crown Derby, Meissen, Chelsea, Derby and Minton. Turning into a long corridor you reach Lady Georgiana's bedroom much as it was at her death in 1858. She was the wife of the 6th Earl and daughter of the Duchess of Devonshire. Besides the collection of prints, drawings and watercolours of her friends and relations there is an interesting silver-gilt and coral rattle. The next room is Georgiana's Dressing Room in which there is a fascinating Dutch Wastafel whose hinged top opens to turn an ordinary side table into a complete dressing and wash table.

The Castle Howard Dressing Room which follows contains an 18th century bed in which Queen Victoria slept on her visit to the house in 1850. The bedroom adjoining is furnished with a four-poster bed, chairs and bedside commodes all made by John Linell, Chippendale's favourite cabinet maker. Leaving the Castle Howard Bedroom one passes along the Antique Passage containing many antiquities collected by the Earls of Carlisle in the 18th and 19th centuries. There is some fine stained glass believed to be 16th century which was placed here from the chapel in the 19th century when the chapel was altered. Leading as it does into the Great Hall one appreciates the justification of employing Vanbrugh as the architect. The hall rises 70 feet to the dome and contains wonderful carving in its niches, arches, capitals and columns. Leaving the hall one passes through the Garden Room, the Music Room, containing two Broadwood pianos and a Gainsborough, "Girl with Pigs". The Tapestry Room with its collections of paintings by Reynolds, its George III side table, Hepplewhite chairs and Meissen porcelain leads to the Orleans Room. In 1798 the 5th Earl, the Duke of Bridgewater and Lord Stafford purchased part of the Duke of Orleans' collection of paintings. In this room are paintings by Bassano, Caracci, Bedoli, Feti and the

Rubens of Salome with the head of John the Baptist. Marquetry chests dating from 1690, William and Mary chairs and part of a 19th century Minton service make this a very special room. The Museum Room and the Long Galleries completed the tour of the house except for the chapel which has been extensively altered over the years but there are ingenious stained glass windows from a design by Burne-Jones and executed by William Morris. Behind the font is a bas-relief of the Madonna and Child by Sansovino (1460-1529).

Leaving the house we had time to visit the extensive grounds watching the peacocks display and the huge fountain displaying in a rather different way! As we wended our way back to the coach the heavens opened just to remind us that it was still April.

As the rain stopped almost as quickly as it had started we set off for Rievaulx Abbey some twenty miles through the Yorkshire Dales which were once again bathed in sunshine. Rievaulx Abbey was the first monastery built in the north of England by Cistercian monks in the 12th century. Sited in the valley of the river Rye, hence ryevalley, Rievaulx, it is ideally situated away from the temptations of the towns and cities! An unusual feature of the abbey is that it is sited on an almost south-north axis due to the considerable fall of the land to the west. Numerous parts of the original buildings are still partially intact especially the Nave, North and South Transepts, the Chapter House, Refectory and the lavatorium on the south side of the Cloister. As the clouds darkened the hailstones descended and we all took shelter until we were able to return to our coach with another delightful run through the countryside before changing for dinner.

Bright, and a little earlier than other mornings, we went by coach to the Jorvik Viking Centre where we had been guaranteed not to have to queue if we were on time and we were! The Centre is built on the site of the excavation of the Viking Street of Coppergate in Jorvik (York). We sat in small cars and were transported backwards over a thousand years to an

exact reconstruction of the street, complete with people, animals and even authentic smells of the time. Leaving this time-capsule we travelled on through the actual excavations and then into the well presented exhibition of many of the thousands of artefacts discovered during the dig. An unique experience and one which I'm sure everyone enjoyed.

Tuesday morning it was a question of paying accounts and making sure everything was packed before we set off to Grantham to visit Belvoir Castle.

The name Belvoir, beautiful view, dates back to Norman times and it was William the Conqueror's Standard Bearer at the Battle of Hastings, Robert de Todeni, who built the first castle on this site. Two civil wars in the 15th and 17th centuries and a disastrous fire in 1816 have broken the continuity of Belvoir's history and the present building was only completed after the fire. Having met our guides we slipped off to the restaurant for an early lunch and just before 2 o'clock started our conducted tours. First we were shown the Pre-Guardroom and the Guardroom. The Pre-Guardroom is lined on each side with arms for about 120 men. Above these are leather water buckets. In a little side room, known as the "speak-a-word room" the Duke used to interview his tenants. The Guardroom is quite magnificent - a description can hardly do it justice - built in Gothic style with large fireplaces at each end, it contains a large collection of arms and equipment; around the walls are muskets of the Leicestershire Militia, star-like arrangements of swords on either side of the arch leading to the staircase, large glass cases containing armour, saddles and an 18th century breastplate of the Pope's bodyguard. Climbing the Grand Staircase we passed numerous paintings of former dukes. The other rooms visited were: The Ballroom, designed by Sir J. Thoroton, containing the arms of the Duke as Knight of the Garter accompanied by the arms of Howard, the Coronation Robes of the Dukes and Duchesses of Rutland, waistcoats belonging to the famous Marquis of Granby and Pages' costumes. The Chinese Rooms, known as such because of their

Chinese decoration. The Elizabeth Saloon, named after the 5th Duchess of Rutland; decorated in the style of Louis XIV, the panelling came from a French Chateau, the carpet from Tournai and the Regency furniture was made for the room. The Grand Dining Room opposite, in which 30 persons can be seated at the table; probably the most outstanding item in this room is the silver punch bowl weighing 1,979 ounces and costing £616.10s. in 1682. The Picture Gallery, a fine room whose imposing gilded ceiling, bracketed cornice and ornamental frieze complement the numerous paintings dominated by Holbein's Henry VIII.

By this time legs were beginning to ache just a little but we still had to visit the King's Rooms, used by George IV as Prince Regent, the Regent's Gallery and the Chapel. On the left of the altar is a beautifully sculptured recumbent figure of the elder brother of the late Duke who died at the age of nine. Finally into the cellars where some of the old barrels could still be seen and the remains of the railway line by which all goods were brought into the castle in wagons drawn by horses before the modern road was constructed. I have omitted many details, there is so much to see at Belvoir and most members thought that this was the best visit we had made.

So we said goodbye and after an easy run home arrived in Battle about 7.30 p.m.

VISITS TO FISHBOURNE ROMAN PALACE AND ARUNDEL CASTLE 4th JUNE: PENSHURST PLACE AND GARDEN 2nd JULY

All three of these places have been visited by the Society and I refer you to Transactions Nos.17 and 22, and Transactions No. 16 and Newsletter No.1, as far as the first two are concerned.

Penshurst Place was reported at length in Transactions No.5, on the first of four previous visits.

VISIT TO ROMNEY MARSH CHURCHES 4th AUGUST

Three of those visited, Snargate, Old Romney and Ivychurch, have been reported in Newsletters Nos.4 and 6. The fourth church, Brenzett, aroused considerable interest. Unlike most of the Marsh churches, it is surrounded by trees. It is dedicated to St. Eanswyth, a Saxon princess who founded a nunnery in Folkestone. Although it has been extensively restored it retains a 13th century priest's door and some Norman herringbone masonry. The Lady Chapel contains a 17th century alabaster monument to John Fagg and his son. Unfortunately, the Victorians "modernised" the interior and removed the Georgian box pews and the three-decker pulpit.

Our mentor and guide on previous visits, Brigadier C.A. des N. Harper, CBE, has retired due to failing mobility, but we were delighted to meet again the Rev. John Green who gave us a most interesting afternoon.

Bernard Gillman-Davis

ORAL HISTORY

AUDIO TAPES

The Battle Library has a number of audio tapes recorded by members of the community over a number of years, which belong to the Historical Society and which have been made in an attempt to keep some records of the way of life of local people in bygone days. They contain personal accounts given by senior citizens of happenings when they were young in farming communities or elsewhere around the district. These tapes can be taken out on hire in much the same way as hiring a book and are very interesting and enjoyable to listen to.

Some examples are as follows;

A Mr. George Carey of No.2. Sawpits, Hooe:-

I was born on April 19th 1904. I started to work on a farm in 1916 when I was 12 years old at 5 shillings a week and my overtime all this summer was 10 shillings and then two and sixpence for the harvest supper.

I had seven sisters. We had a house with only three bedrooms so we had to sleep two at the top and two at the bottom (chuckle). I have lived in Hooe all my life.

When I was 12 years old I used to walk to Bexhill on a Sunday morning to my sister's where she was working in a house in the Hastings Road, Bexhill, to have a bath. On one morning, one Sunday morning, when I was there the lady of the house came back from church as she had forgotten her prayer book. We didn't know what to do, so my sister said "lock the bathroom door and keep quiet".

A Mr. Roland Wells (Master Baker) of Low Moor, High Street, Ninfield;-

My father bought Leicester House Bakery, High Street, Ninfield, in 1914, which consisted of the business and a pony and cart. The pony's name was Kit and the cart had two wheels, and later he bought one with four wheels. He bought the property later all off Mr. Britten.

I was born in 1916. My father was using then what was called a wooder which was fired with faggots of wood which were purchased from the local wood cutter. They were about five feet long and about two feet in circumference. They were placed right inside the oven and burnt; then the ashes were pushed to one side with a wet sack placed over and then the bread could be baked in the clear space

on the hot bricks, and the fire had to be started again before the next batch of bread.

The white dough, bread dough, was made overnight for the next morning by hand - very hard work....

The cheapest loaf I could remember was $4^1/_2$d a large loaf and $2^1/_2$d a small in old money. The bread had to be moulded and placed in tins to rise to a normal size before baking which would take approximately $^3/_4$ hour. People then were eating more bread, because there were three bakers in the village, also one from Sidley delivering to our village of Ninfield.

I went to Ninfield school and was taught by Mr. A.T. Ridal. I can remember when I came home from school watching them shoe horses at the forge which was where the United Friends car park now is, also pigs or cows being taken to slaughter at the butcher's almost opposite. Also I watched the old mill being pulled down which was on the land now called Millfield Estate.

Eric Augele

OBITUARY

DR. R.H.P. CLARK

Sadly, Dr. Roger Clark, a keen member of the Historical Society and a dedicated member of the Museum Committee, died in Oxford early in June 1992.

Roger Clark joined the Museum Committee in 1980 and was Curator from 1980 until 1991. I understand that he was proposed by his wife whilst he was in France on a fishing trip with friends! During 1987, when the Museum affairs were at a low ebb, he and Mrs. Gladys Young ran it virtually on their own.

He presented the Museum with the needlework panel (next to the last frame of Stothard's reporoduction) which illustrates the manner in which the Bayeux

Tapestry was probably stitched, and set it up in an ingenious way so that visitors could appreciate this for themselves. He had several favourite stories about Museum artefacts which he would "feed" to visitors; and was particularly fascinated by the 6th century missal from Canterbury which he believed was the design from which was taken the Tapestry scene depicting Bishop Odo blessing the meal in William's presence.

A deeply religious man, Roger had a wide range of interests, and until his eyesight failed, read both literature and poetry, painted in oils and watercolours, was a member of the Battle Arts Group and a Friend of the Royal Academy. He was also a skilful woodworker, an example of his work being a cabinet of some dozen drawers which contained a superb collection of butterflies built up during his time as a medical officer with the Burmah Oil Company.

Roger Clark was buried at a quiet ceremony in Battle on June 19th.

John Hill