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

BATTLE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

DECEMBER 1993 No. 12

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 1993-1994

THE SOCIETY

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

President

Professor H.R.Loyn,M.A,D.LITT,F.S.A,F.R.Hist.S,F.B.A.

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Mrs.J.Lawrence	Mr.D.G.S.Akers (co-opted)

Dr.D.L.Nicol (co-opted until March 1994)

THE MUSEUM TRUST

(registered as a Charity, No.306336, on 29 August 1967)

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Mr.F.R.Marshall	Hon.Archivist
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Mr.R.J.Mears	(co-opted)

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FROM THE RETIRING CHAIRMAN

At the end of my term of office I may perhaps be permitted a few general observations on local history and on the Society. This may seem a little presumptuous in one who had no connection with either until some nine years ago, but six years of organising the winter programme have given me a fairly thorough introduction to the subject.

What is the nature of the appeal of a subject which, in a place the size of Battle, can produce a Society of almost 300 members and audiences of 80 to 90 people in a not very comfortable hall at meetings on winter evenings? We have, I think, a natural curiosity about the past and particularly about the past of the place in which we live. Many of our members will have been attracted to Battle not merely by the natural beauty of the area but in addition by the romantic nature of its historical associations. But there is more to it than this. Those of us who have given no thought to the main events of English History since our schooldays fifty or more years ago are fascinated to learn how more recent scholarship has modified our view of people and events in the past and to hear that some information is contradictory while other data, which we would love to have, is missing. A subject which began with the attraction of reading a novel takes on the additional fascination of a crossword puzzle or a detective story.

It is often the missing data which most stimulates our interest in that we can bridge the gap between one clearly established fact and another only by imagination and by placing ourselves, as far as possible, in the position of those taking part. It is of course questionable how far we can understand the ideas and motives of people whose background and experience were widely different from our own, but we do share some important characteristics with our predecessors in history, and even prehistory. In his

History of the English Speaking Peoples Churchill comments on Swanscombe Man "...there is no reason to suppose that this remote Palaeolithic ancestor was not capable of all the crimes, follies, and infirmities definitely associated with mankind."

The fascination of the study of history also shows itself in the willingness of distinguished academics to come and talk to our Society. I am always impressed by the way such people are prepared to make an evening journey to a not very accessible place to deliver a lecture for which they will receive so little reward. Nobody is going to enhance his academic reputation by even the most brilliant lecture to the Battle and District Historical Society. The fee which we can offer is very modest and is often declined, while such travelling costs as are accepted must often leave the speaker out of pocket. Yet such speakers often tell me afterwards how much they have enjoyed themselves and appreciated the keen interest of our members.

Of course, not all our speakers are academic historians. Some have a purely amateur interest in local history and are happy to share their findings with us. They are like Chaucer's Oxford Cleric who "...would gladly learn and gladly teach." Indeed they are sometimes natural teachers who have followed other professions. In its early days our Society had many talks from its own members and this is the ideal way of maintaining a vigorous society, but today the rival claims of household duties, DIY and gardening take up the spare time of many would-be historians. Happily there are still a few exceptions and we were all delighted by John Springford's scholarly talk on the village of Crowhurst which he has studied for so long.

Our constitution speaks of "...the local history of Battle, East Sussex and the surrounding area". How big should we consider the "surrounding area" to be? Previous chairmen have taken the view, with which I fully agree, that one cannot appreciate local history

except in the wider context of British and European history. Thus I have cheerfully claimed that the "surrounding area" includes the whole of the South of England (including London) and the North of France! Furthermore, I would argue for the inclusion in our studies of events which occurred outside this area but which had a bearing, direct or indirect, upon it. For example I have long hoped to have a lecture on the Viking invasion of 1066 and the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Alas, all the experts in this field seem to be found in northern universities and their travelling costs would be beyond our means.

While the presence in Battle of a number of people with an interest in history may lead naturally to the formation of a Historical Society, there is nothing natural or automatic about the running of such a society. There are a large number of rather tedious tasks to be done to ensure that the business of the Society, its lectures, its summer visits and its financial affairs run smoothly. While these tasks may well occupy the mind, and in some instances exercise the muscles, they hardly stimulate the imagination. It is perhaps not surprising that we find so few people willing to do them. The problem is not unique to Battle. Last year the Federation of Sussex Local History Societies was forced to close down for lack of officers and I understand that the Tunbridge Wells Branch of the Historical Association has recently been in similar difficulties. Nor is the problem limited to historical societies, for we hear of other clubs and societies facing the same difficulties. It is tempting to ascribe the problem to recent social changes and the decrease in leisure, but reading between the lines of our Society's earlier publications and minutes I fancy that it has always been with us.

Whatever the causes, we have to contend with the difficulties. The present position is that my three year term of office as Chairman ends in November 1993. I am quite sure that three years is long enough

for the good both of the Society and of the Chairman. I also think that is is correct that I should withdraw altogether from the Committee at the end of my term of office. However, as members will be well aware, there is no Vice Chairman to succeed me and all efforts to find another Chairman have been unsuccessful. The solution which the Committee has agreed upon is as follows. Bernard Gillman-Davis has kindly agreed to take on the position of Vice Chairman in addition to his work in organising the Summer Programme, and he will preside at all meetings of the Committee. At his request I will preside at lectures for the remainder of the 1993/94 season, although I will hold no office in the Society other than that of co-opted member of the Committee. The task of organising the lecture programme from October 1994 onwards has been taken on by Mrs. J. Lawrence and I am most grateful to her for doing so.

Finally, may I thank all members of the Society for their kind tolerance of a scientist rather than a historian in the chair of the Society. Last year I quoted the reference to history in Bacon's essay *Of Studies*. In the past three years I have often felt uncomfortably aware of another sentence from this essay - "If a man read little he need have much cunning to seem to know that which he doth not". In history I have read very little and I have often doubted whether my natural cunning would be equal to the task. Now perhaps I may have time to take advantage of our library and read a little more.

Donald Nicol

After the Chairman had given his last report at the Annual General Meeting, Mr. John Springford, on behalf of the members, paid him the following tribute:

"Dr. Don Nicol has been our Chairman for the past three years, and for the three years before that served as Vice Chairman. He was in his career both

scientist and civil servant and I would like to say that this served our Society well. In the first place he took care to analyse what members wanted from their Society, and as a result of this, when some local history societies are having a lean time, we have enjoyed a series of diverse and interesting winter programmes, summer programmes, and a variety of other local pursuits (the recording of old memories of Battle, the ever-changing face of our ancient streets, and local town walks, for example) which some of us only take in at the Annual General Meeting.

Secondly, at committees he was invariably cheerful and effective. He took care to keep abreast with the wider world of history - The Historical Society, the Sussex Archaeological Society and other associations of local history; deftly picked our distinguished President's brains; and at a time when the Museum Trust was being re-organised, kept our relationships both amicable and workmanlike. He always said he was no historian. I have a recollection of when I was putting something together on our local gunpowder industry. Charcoal, plenty of that around. Sulphur, the volcanoes of southern Italy. But nitre? One source in early times was the scrapings of farmyard and cattle-shed walls. How was this done? Don put into my hands his own scientific treatise on how farmyard muck could be brewed up into potassium nitrate. It took something like 150lbs of wood to produce a pound of nitrate. And if that isn't a contribution to historical research, what is? Don, thank you for what you have done for the Society's present prosperity. And Ida."

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MUSEUM TRUST (with assistance from John Hill)

I took over as Chairman from John Hill in July and would firstly pay tribute not only to the quite magnificent work that he has done in revitalising the Museum over the years, but also to the outstanding leadership he has given to the Committee and the

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Custodians, on whom the success of the Museum depends. The 9000 visitors during the season testifies to this. It is a great relief to know that John will continue to help the Museum as Vice Chairman.

During the close season, our Curator, Mr. Stanley Bennett, and his assistant, Mr. Reg Marshall, reorganised and improved the display of many interesting artefacts, and Mrs. Audrey Swann, the Schools' officer, spent a great deal of time in producing notes and booklets, to make the visits of school children even more interesting.

Unfortunately, on the nights of May 3rd and 20th, for the first time in all the Museum's twenty-five years in Langton House, we had some very unwelcome visitors in the form of burglars. A quantity of old coins, medallions and a flintlock pistol were stolen, and a certain amount of damage was suffered including the complete removal of the extractor fan, high on the back wall. The Museum had to be closed for some days while fingerprints were taken, locks and keys replaced and a burglar alarm fitted. The culprits have not been found, although the police did ask if we could positively identify a James 1 sixpence.

I also pay tribute to Stanley Bennett who is retiring from the Committee; his work as Curator over the past five years has been invaluable and it is reassuring to know that he will give advice and help when required. Fortunately, Mrs. Julie Ede-Borrett has volunteered to take over as Curator, and we do welcome her to the Committee. We have applied for a grant from Rother, specifically to improve the showcases, so there is prospect for further development. I also thank the Historical Society Committee for their help and kindness. We plan jointly to improve the Library during the winter and hope that more members will make use of its books in greater comfort in future; there is scope for a whole variety of projects on Battle which could enhance the facilities available to visitors, especially young people working on their National Curriculum topics. John Hill continues his study on "Battle in the Last War" and Carol Gilbart on "The Poor in Battle". Our

special thanks are due to Mr. David Cresswell for the splendid six page Museum leaflet which he designed with delightful art-work; so popular was it that within a week we had to order a reprint.

Finally, John and I do thank the Committee and all the Custodians for their excellent contribution towards the Museum's success this year.

Derek Akers

CUSTODIANS: Mrs. R. Armitage, Mrs. G. Bolton, Mr. W. Charman, Mr. & Mrs. Downes, Mrs. L. Ford, Mrs. C. Gilbart, Mrs. F. Hall, Mr. F.R. Marshall, Mrs. J. McMurray, Miss H. Moore, Mrs. M. Patmore, Mr. & Mrs. Rigby, Mr. J. Saunders, Mrs. A Swann.
RELIEF CUSTODIANS: Mrs. & Mrs. Barnes, Mrs. J. Cresswell, Mrs. D. Knight.
SCHOOL GROUP ORGANISERS: Mrs. A. Swann, Mr. J. Saunders.
SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE: Mr. R.J. Mears.

LECTURES

THE ORIGINS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Mr. Christopher O'Brien — 8 January 1993

Mr. O'Brien opened his remarks by telling us that a talk on the history of Photography was like trying to explain the history of the world in two minutes flat. But photography had been a very important factor in verifying history itself. He went on to tell us that there was evidence, before the birth of Christ, that philosophers and mathematicians knew about the forming of images by light. Aristotle, in 350 BC, saw sunlight glinting through leaves and noticed the shadows on the ground. During an eclipse of the sun he saw discs of light turn into crescent shapes as the moon moved across the sun, thus witnessing the principle of "pinhole camera obscura". This same principle was again noted in the 10th century by an Arab scholar Alhazen who was experimenting with lenses on pinhole cameras using a tent as a camera obscura or darkened room. He also noted that the image became clearer if the hole was smaller.

This pinhole camera technique was first put to practical use by artists in the 15th-18th centuries. They used it to trace images, seen through the lens, on to a screen. This tracing would then be squared up on to the canvas to produce very detailed and accurate paintings. Canaletto used this method for his cityscapes and his paintings are almost photographic in their detail as a result.

Books began to be produced on the use of drawing aids and in 1544 Gemma Frisus published the first scientific manual which included an illustration of the camera obscura. The demand for portraits produced the "silhouette". The subject would sit sideways on to a large sheet of paper with light from the opposite side so the shadow of the subject's face would be reproduced for the artist to trace. This was a very cheap method of producing portraits and called silhouette after a French Cabinet Minister who was considered to be a "cheap skate" as a result of his economic policy.

Up until the 19th century no way had been found to retain an image chemically but in 1826 Nicéphore Niépce, while trying to find a new way of making an engraving with light and chemicals instead of tools, produced the first picturegraph on polished pewter. Niépce teamed up with Louis Daguerre, a landscape painter, and they worked together on the new process to bring it to a high standard reducing the time of exposure to sunlight from hours to 20 minutes. Although what was produced looked like a photograph it was in fact a negative image on a polished piece of metal. The surface of the negative could easily be damaged so it had to be mounted and protected by glass in a locket. It became known as a Daguerreotype. Niépce died in 1833 and Daguerre sold the patent to the French Government so that anyone could use it and the invention would stand a better chance of improvement.

In England, Fox Talbot was making his own photographic experiments. He would place plants on to a sensitised piece of paper, put it in a frame and leave it out in the sunlight. Eventually the background would darken, he would then take it into

the dark room and "fix" the image which would turn black. These were the first negative images, but he could only produce them from strong sunlight. When he tried to produce the same negative with a camera, nothing would appear. But he made a small, match-box size camera - its being small, the light was more intense - and he eventually got a negative image with his camera in September 1840. Fox Talbot could be called the inventor of photography, for with the discovery of developer he produced the first positive prints from negative images. He called this new process Calotype - beautiful print. He also published the first book containing photographs in 1844.

Octavius Hill, a Scottish painter, was the first to use photographs as a reference for his paintings. He worked with John Adamson who took the photographs for Hill's paintings and together they produced numerous paintings - mainly portraits - over the next decade. They also produced an album of their pictures which was bought by the Royal Academy. Photography had a great influence on painting. As the camera could now produce exact reproductions of people and scenes, artists began to change their styles and techniques, so Abstract Painting was born.

In 1851 the method of producing negatives was improved by the Wet Collodion Process, discovered by Scott Archer. This process involved coating the glass plates in the camera with a sensitised collodion substance which produced incredibly clear negatives. Subjects could now be photographed that previously could only be described or painted and there was a ready market for pictures of foreign lands and spectacular scenes. For example - Roger Fenton, founder of the Royal Photographic Society in 1853, was commissioned to photograph the Crimean War. He became the first "war" photographer. In America, Matthew Brady took photographs of the American Civil War producing a true, if somewhat gory, document now held for posterity. In 1861 Samuel Browne recorded uncharted scenes in the Himalayas. Nearer home Francis Frith became the original picture postcard producer with his book *The Gossiping Photographer in Hastings.*

Photography also had a great influence on social life and in many cases living conditions of the poor were improved as a result. For example - Thomas Annan was commissioned by the Glasgow City Improvement Trust to photograph slum dwellings which led to redevelopment of buildings and was also a record of living conditions in Glasgow in the 1860s. Jocob Riis, an American immigrant, was employed as a police reporter in the slum district of New York. His series of photographs was a major influence in the rebuilding of the area and his book *How the Other Half Lives* a true record of slum life in New York in the 1880s.

A group of photographers was employed by the American government to record the plight of the Mid-West farmers during the Depression of the 1930s. Their photographs not only provided a true record but also helped to raise funds in order to help the farmers and relieve their misery.

Photography also began to be used commercially. Manufacturers would photograph their products both as a record and to advertise. Visiting cards became very popular, with a portrait of the caller on one side and the name on the other.

Dr. Barnardo employed a photographer to record all the children in his homes and he used the photographs as publicity to attract sponsors. The photos would show the children before and after entering his care.

Lewis Carroll was an accomplished photographer and produced an unique set of portraits between 1856 and 1880 including miniatures that were used in jewellery and popularised by Queen Victoria.

Up until the 1880s the photographer had to take his dark room with him as each plate had to be coated with the wet collodion substance and processed immediately after the photograph was taken. But in the 1880s dry gelatine replaced wet collodion and dry plates could be used, thus the processing could be delayed until the photographer returned to his studio. Cameras were improved to take several plates at one time so reloading was not necessary after every shot. George Eastman introduced photography to

the general public replacing the plates with roll films. He used the brand name "Kodak" and produced the Brownie box camera already loaded with film by the manufacturer together with the slogan "You press the button, we do the rest". The age of the snapshot had arrived.

Photojournalism developed during the early part of this century and periodicals such as Life Magazine and Picture Post appeared with events and news heightened by dramatic photographs. Documentary film-making became a speciality in its own right, television now being the main producer. Over the past 100 years the camera has become history's greatest "prop" for not only do we now have documentary history but this is supported by photographs giving a true record of events. The "photograph" plays an important part in all our lives, whether it is in books or magazines, television or films or just a simple family snap.

Mr. O'Brien closed his talk with a photograph of the first Moon landing - a picture transmitted through space - and compared it with the very first photograph by Niépce 140 years earlier. This was only one of 80 rare and fascinating slides illustrating his talk. He also had on show early photographs for us to see, including two Daguerreotypes.

Margaret McCrorie

IN THE WAKE OF THE 1987 HURRICANE

Mr. Bob Ogley — 22 January 1993

This is a summary of Mr. Ogley's own words.

Between 2 and 6 a.m. on Friday 16th October, 1987, the worst storm in living memory to reach this country struck the southern part of England. Winds of over 100 miles an hour came in waves over Sussex and Kent, destroying more than a million trees in the Sevenoaks area alone.

Couples in bed huddled together for comfort as the wind became a deafening roar. Many families moved to safe rooms or cellars taking their children with them. Chimney pots crashed, garden walls fell apart, the night was illuminated with constant flashes as trees toppled on to power cables. The National Grid failed, blacking out all southern England, phones went dead, gas and water supplies were cut off. The following morning I staggered to the top of Toys Hill (Westerham) to survey the damage to my favourite spot - The Hare and Hounds! Thankfully, it was still standing. But as editor of the Sevenoaks Chronicle, I had to find a way of recording these historic events; photographs taken from the air seemed likely to be the most effective way, but how to hire a plane when all lines of communication from my office had been destroyed? A visit to the local telephone exchange, where one line was still working, enabled me to contact Biggin Hill Airport, but all their planes, I was informed, had suffered in the storm - well almost all, just one old plane might be all right! It was, so I made my way to the airfield and we took off.

The resulting photographs were so dramatic that I decided the best way of publishing them, while at the same time raising money to help cover the cost of repairing some of the damage to the countryside, would be in book form, before Christmas. Thus it was that I urgently contacted Hodder & Stoughton, the book publishers in Sevenoaks, and was invited to meet their Chairman. On my arrival at their offices, my photographs, over one hundred of them, were laid out on the boardroom table, and, having studied each one of them very carefully, the Chairman announced his keen interest and the fact that he would discuss the final arrangements at a Board meeting in a few days' time.

I returned to The Hare and Hounds and ordered drinks all round in anticipation of the promised telephone call which, when it came, was to the effect that the Board had decided not to proceed with the idea.

I collected my photographs, and on the return journey to the office took them to a small printer, who, although interested, explained that he was busy with

Christmas orders. I managed to persuade him otherwise, and we were off and away, with the first 2,500 copies of *In the Wake of the Hurricane* distributed and sold within days of publication. Reprint followed reprint; then came the accolade, with our entry at No.9 in the Sunday Times Best Seller List, *The Hip and Thigh Diet* by Rosemary Conley was at No.8. Gradually we climbed the list with Hips and Thighs always just one place ahead, until when at No.4, the BBC telephoned to say that in their opinion we would be at No.1 next week, and would I then like to be interviewed on the radio? I protested that Hips and Thighs was at No.3 and was always just ahead of us, but no, they assured me, that from their experience, we would be on top of the next Sunday's list.

Well, I could not wait for Sunday, and then was down to the paper shop ten minutes before it opened; when it did, I waited impatiently for what seemed like hours as the string was cut on the numerous parcels of newspapers. At last, clutching the Sunday Times, I made my way back to the car where, in spite of telling my wife I would wait until returning home, I excitedly fumbled through the pages; finally I found it and, putting my fist over the list, slowly drew it down until, there it was, at No.1 at last *The Hip and Thigh Diet*! In spite of this, I still went on air and was interviewed very happily by Derek Jameson.

But, with writing books taking over my life, it was time to retire from my job as editor and to concentrate on becoming a full time author. So I said my thanks and goodbyes to all those who had helped me in so many ways; this involved a return visit to Biggin Hill where the Station Commander asked if I would write the story of that famous wartime airfield. This in turn led me into investigating experiences of V1 and V2 bombings. Then followed a telephone call from Jamaica, inviting me to write about, as they said, "a real hurricane" - Hurricane Gilbert, which devastated that island.

John Hill

DOMESDAY BOOK AND DOMESDAY STUDIES

Professor G.M. Martin — 5 February 1993

Professor Martin, Keeper of the Public Records at the time of the celebrating of the nine hundredth anniversary of Domesday Book, said that from the year 1086 there can be traced in England a continuous history and development of governmental revenue procedure and keeping of public records. Domesday Book consists of two volumes, Great and Little, the former covering 33 counties from the Tweed to the south coast, the latter, in greater detail, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex - a priceless records of lands and their revenue potential to the Crown. To augment its value, the Pipe Rolls from 1130, if not earlier, record the payments made by the shires to the Exchequer down to the 19th century; while the *Dialogus de Scaccario* of 1189 completes this early mediaeval trio, a question and answer exercise to instruct exchequer clerks in the procedures of the sheriffs and the royal clerks for raising and accounting for the king's revenue. As the post-harvest Great Audit of Michaelmas demonstrates, this revenue principally derived from land dues; in later mediaeval times tax from trade was to be added.

The two volumes were customarily kept in the King's Treasury at Winchester, but "Winchester Book" never replaced in popular parlance "Domesday" - literally "The Day of Judgement". For practical purposes copies of the two volumes were made in subsequent mediaeval times, the respect for the document being such that the copy would be made in the original script; which would also prevent misconstruction. By the time its practical value at last began to decline, it had become a national historic treasure. In 1780 it was printed in manuscript characters (every MP secured a copy); and in 1850 taken from the Chapter House of Westminster where it had narrowly escaped the fire of 1834 which destroyed the Parliament buildings, and lodged in the new Public Records Office in Chancery Lane. In 1861 it was zinco-photographed by the Ordnance Survey in Southampton, and its eight hundredth anniversary celebrated in 1886 with due ceremony.

With the passing of the 19th century its role once again changed. From a venerable curiosity, it became recognised as an invaluable source of information to scholars of history and historical geography. In 1952 when examined during rebinding and discovered to have been bound county by county, scholastic theory of some ten years earlier was confirmed that the detailed information collected from local sources at local level had also been condensed and edited at that level. During further rebinding for the nine hundredth anniversary (that of 1952 was somewhat tight) Tudor repair and late 11th century stitching came to light, revealing that the parchment folios of 1086 were originally bound very shortly after their compilation.

Professor Martin then turned to the countrywide inquests which had produced the material of Domesday. Commissions consisting of two earls and two bishops, chosen to enquire into areas where they had little or no personal holding or connection, were sent to the counties to collect information on the tenure and value of land. Their questions were precise - the placename, who was the current holder, who held it before 1066, what was it worth then, what now, how many ploughs and their villagers, mills, how much arable, meadow, wood. The procedure was clerically efficient. "T.R.E." was, for example, recognised shorthand for "In the time of King Edward". The information thus produced from inquest has survived in original form in several documents - Ely and Cambridge for example. They reveal that for reasons of practicality not only was skilful reduction of the information collected needed, but whole categories, for example animals, had to be left out. Such information, produced from jurors at the shire court in the main, was condensed and re-written in manageable (feudal) form, most likely in the county towns, and returned to the Exchequer. It is to be noted that towns themselves figure little in the inquests save where they related to land holding.

The work was fast. Planned early in 1086 it was virtually complete by September of the following year when William died and it was proceeded with no

further. The Exchequer became possessed of a full valuation of the countryside which was to last for centuries. It also had some daunting effect on popular opinion. "The land was vexed." "Not a cow nor a pig...was left unnumbered." It cannot be escaped that twenty years after the Conquest there was a body of officials, and not least one or two shrewd policy makers close to the King, who were able to devise, mount and carry through so huge a task so effectively, and so capably protected.

To the question (1) as to how far down the social scale would the impact of the Domesday enquiry have been felt, Professor Martin replied that it would primarily concern the great tenants answerable to the sheriff when the time to pay tax came round. The effect would of course percolate down ("half a villein" for example was a recognised tenement); one local interesting fact revealed was the 400 slaves in Sussex. (2) The counties were quite well defined by 1086 though precise boundaries were not always clear. (3) There were references to churches but this was not a Domesday concern unless there were special reasons for reference; and the absence of mention cannot be taken that no church existed. (4) The cost. Earls and bishops would have men-at-arms, clerks and horses, as part of their lifestyle. The expense of accommodating the commissions probably fell mainly on religious houses who had resources to provide for wayfarers, not least the King's emissaries.

To summarise. Domesday was to be both an immediate assessment for William of the value of the land he had won, and a precious working document for the future valuation and taxing of the kingdom. It reveals how twenty years after 1066 such an enquiry could be put in hand and enforced. It marks the beginning of a royal, later a government, service which was to administer the realm. Finally, when its practical value had ended, Domesday, like Magna Carta, became a national heirloom, to this day a source (13,428 placenames!) of unrivalled historical information.

John Springford

THE HISTORY OF IGHTHAM MOTE

Mr. James Fowler — 19 February 1993

The National Trust was founded in the late 19th century in order to preserve old buildings of outstanding interest. It bought its first building, Alfriston Old Clergy House, in a derelict state for £10 in 1896. Almost 100 years later, in 1985, it received Ightham Mote as a bequest.

The House lies in a hollow at the junction of eight parishes. The origin of the name is uncertain, but may be derived from the moat surrounding the house, or from the word moot (meeting place) from its position.

The Great Hall and part of the Gatehouse are the oldest parts of the building, the roof timbers dating from 1342. As originally built the Great Hall had no panelling, the fireplace was in the centre of the room with the smoke escaping through louvres in the roof, and the high table was against the back wall with a canopy above it. The floor was composed either of packed chalk or possibly of a repellent mixture of cow dung and sour milk! It must have been cold, draughty, smoky and very uncomfortable. In 1872, when alterations were made to the Great Hall, a blocked up cupboard was found which proved to contain a seated skeleton. No one knows who it was or how it got there.

The Oriel Room was originally the Solar, the private quarters of the house owner. It had no fireplace but was warmed by cattle living below. The Chapel next to the Oriel Room also dates from about 1340.

In the 15th century the house was considerably extended, the remainder of the Gatehouse and the south and west wings dating from this time.

Much further work was done in the 16th century. The Tudor Chapel, which prior to 1700 was a gallery, has a very rare barrel vaulted ceiling made of oak and decorated with pomegranates and other Tudor devices. It is strongly reminiscent of the pavilions erected

for court festivities and could have been given by Henry VIII. Unfortunately the painted decoration is fading fast and may not be visible for much longer. The stained glass is of the same period and is German from Cologne but is not thought to be original to the House. Incidentally, when the glass was removed recently for conservation, some was found to be installed back to front, with the delicate stained side outside!

The Drawing Room as rebuilt in the 17th century by Sir William Selby (the Selby family owned Ightham Mote for 300 years until 1889), and various additions were made in the 18th century including the Palladian window and hand painted Chinese wallpaper.

The last private owner of Ightham Mote was Mr. Charles Robinson, who had visited and admired it when he was a young man. Although an American, he lived in the house for several months each year, and it was he who bequeathed it to the National Trust.

Despite extensive repair work done by both Mr. Robinson and his predecessor, the National Trust found that major restoration of the building fabric was necessary. The work was planned in ten phases, starting with the East Wing. This was covered in sheeting, which though unsightly allowed work to continue even through snow. Extensive rot was found in the timbers, needing major dismantling, and stonework has been replaced where necessary. Work of this quality requires specialist carpenters and masons following research to ensure that the repairs reproduce the original as closely as possible. Even the sand used came from the same pit as was used in the 15th century!

Two years on, work has been started on the staircase (unfortunately causing difficulties for visitors) and on the Tower, where the stonework is being examined using the latest techniques, including radar.

Skilled work using the best materials and the latest examination aids is, of course, very expensive. Phase 1 cost £1¼million, more than originally estimated because the damage was worse than anticipated. Phase

2 has so far cost £½million, and the total cost is now estimated at £7million, the money coming from entrance fees and special funds set up for the specific purpose. The National Trust welcomes all contributions!

Mr. Fowler's talk, based on his intimate knowledge of Ightham Mote, and illustrated with some fascinating slides, particularly of the repair work in progress, added enormously to the interest of the Society's visit to Ightham on 27th May.

Alan Kinnear

LONDON BRIDGE THROUGH THE AGES

Mr. W.N. Black — 5 March 1993

The Thames at London has been the site of the most important river crossing in the British Isles ever since the Roman Londinium became an important trading and administrative centre in the 1st century AD. From archaeological evidence it seems highly probable that a wooden bridge was built at some time during the Roman occupation and it seems likely that this bridge was wholly or partially destroyed by a Danish fleet in the year 994. Whether a bridge existed in 1066 and whether it was defended is doubtful. William the Conqueror, on reaching Southwark, made no direct attack on London but, proceeding westwards, crossed the Thames at Wallingford and then turned eastwards leaving a trail of desolation. At Berkhamsted the leading Saxon nobles and clergy offered him the crown.

What is generally known as "Old" London Bridge, the second bridge on the site, was the first stone bridge of any importance to be built in this country. It owed its existence entirely to the devotion and energy of one man, Peter de Colechurch, a priest, who was responsible for planning, raising funds and construction over a period of 29 years. Work was begun in 1176 and the bridge was completed in 1209. It was never out of service for more than a few days during the next six centuries. Unhappily, Peter de

Colechurch did not live to see the culmination of his life's work. He died in 1205 and was buried in the chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury on the bridge. Building a chapel on a bridge was by no means unusual in the Middle Ages and Mr. Black showed a surviving example at Monmouth, although perhaps the best known is at Avignon.

The width of the Thames at London was some 900ft. The bridge was carried on 19 piers which, with their protective wooden sterlings, took up 600ft. Thus the flow of the river was so constricted that the bridge was in effect a weir, and "shooting the bridge" was a well known hazardous exercise for small vessels. To permit the passage of larger ships there was a break near the Surrey side covered by a drawbridge. At the southern end of the bridge was The Great Stone Gate, one of the gates of the City, which closed at night, and above which the heads of traitors were displayed on pikes as a warning to those who might be contemplating treason.

The most notable feature of the bridge was its surface, for Old London Bridge was a street. The bridge itself was 20ft. wide with a roadway of 12ft. down the centre. On either side were three-storey houses which projected some 10ft. beyond the flanks of the bridge and were supported by shores of timber from the piers. On the inside the upper floors of the houses overhung the roadway and in some cases were even joined by a room going across it. The ground floors were shops and the upper ones living quarters. Life on the bridge was considered to be very healthy and its inhabitants were spared many of the epidemics which troubled the rest of London. The many cesspools which made the city so unpleasant also meant that the river received very little pollution; this situation was reversed in the 19th century. Shops on the bridge were very prosperous for almost everyone crossing the river went past their doors. In the 14th century there were 138 shops on the bridge representing most of the trades of the Middle Ages. There was a break in the lines of houses near the centre of the bridge, known as "The Square", and this was the only place at which two wagons going in opposite directions could pass.

The rents of properties on the bridge were at first the main source of revenue for its maintenance and repair, but for a time in the 13th century this income was lost. Eleanor of Provence, the Queen of Henry III, was noted for her avarice and was exceedingly unpopular. On one occasion when her barge was passing under the bridge, the citizens of London took the chance to express their views with rotten eggs and other emblems of disapproval. A few years later she induced the King, shortly before his death, to award her the revenues of the bridge, with the result that for nearly ten years no maintenance was done. In 1282 a hard frost followed by a sudden thaw sent massive blocks of ice sweeping down the Thames and caused the collapse of five of the twenty arches. Temporary repairs were immediately put in hand and the new King, Edward I, immediately revoked the Queen Mother's grant. From that time onwards the revenues of the bridge have always been applied to their proper purpose.

While in the Middle Ages the rents of shops and offices probably provided the main source of funds for the upkeep of the bridge, Peter de Colechurch had also given lands that he owned in what is now the London Borough of Southwark to set up a trust, The Bridge House Trust, to maintain the bridge. With the expansion of London south of the river in the 18th and 19th centuries the Bridge House Estates became extremely valuable and today the income from them serves to maintain not only London Bridge, but every other bridge which crosses the Thames into the city of London.

By the 18th century it was clear that a 12ft. roadway was inadequate for the flow of traffic into and out of London and the houses on the bridge were demolished to allow the full 20ft. to be used. The traffic problem was further eased by the opening of the first Westminster Bridge in 1750, but even so it became clear by the beginning of the 19th century that a new London Bridge was needed. This bridge, the third on the site, was designed by John Rennie and opened by King William IV in 1831. It was built of granite and had five semi-elliptical arches, the centre arch having a span of 152ft. The width of the

roadway was 54ft. In 1832 "Old" London Bridge was completely demolished and the piers taken up. This work revealed many thousands of Roman coins, medallions and articles of pottery and produced the main archaeological evidence, supported by later excavations, for the existence of a Roman bridge.

In 1904 the width of the third London Bridge was increased to 63ft. by corbelling, but even this proved inadequate for the traffic of later years. The present bridge, the fourth on the site, was begun in 1967 and opened by the Lord Mayor in 1971. It is a post tensioned concrete structure of three spans faced with polished granite. The roadway allows for six lanes of traffic. The third London Bridge was purchased by an American businessman, carefully dismantled, and re-erected in Arizona as part of a leisure complex.

Donald Nicol

THE BRASSEYS OF NORMANHURST

Mrs. Pamela Haines — 19 March 1993

The story must begin with the first Thomas Brassey, born in the year of the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805. He became an able and successful contractor engaged in the laying of railway track in England, France and other countries. At the height of his activities he was supervising the work of 75,000 navvies, and remember that in those days there were no earth-moving machines. Laying track was undertaken by men with pickaxes and shovels, horses and wagons. He was what we would call today a "workaholic" - he became a millionaire, but found time in later years to build a dream house in Sussex. He favoured Burton's St. Leonards as a holiday resort for his wife and family, and eventually chose an estate between Ashburnham and Battle Abbey to set about building his house. He was always interested in architecture, but whether the style of the French château particularly appealed to him, or whether he believed that his family had Norman connections, is not known. Whatever the reason, that was the style he chose for his huge flamboyant elaborate mansion, and he called it

Normanhurst. It took five years to build - from 1865 to 1870. He employed the finest craftsmen from London, particularly stonemasons, but the labour force required must have made quite an impact on Battle and the surrounding villages. He survived to see the house completed, but only just - he died in December 1870 at the Royal Victoria Hotel in St. Leonards, and was buried in Catsfield churchyard.

Normanhurst really came into its own through his son Thomas, who became Sir Thomas, then Lord Brassey, and finally Earl Brassey. He was Liberal Member of Parliament for Hastings, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, at one time Mayor of Bexhill, and Master of the East Sussex Foxhounds, building the kennels at Catsfield. Whilst Normanhurst was being built he married Annie, daughter of a wealthy wine merchant, an heiress in her own right, and they lived at Beauport Park - now the hotel of that name. Once they moved into Normanhurst, however, it became the scene of receptions, balls and houseparties, and visitors from all walks of life were invited to see and share the glories of the house. The first Thomas Brassey had accumulated fine furniture and tapestries, but Lord Brassey and his wife added to it considerably with objects from their extensive travels abroad, together with rare and exotic plants for the conservatory and garden. The house was opened to the public on Tuesday afternoons! A ticket had to be bought from a shop in Battle High Street, presented at the door, and the visitor was taken on a guided tour by the housekeeper - the eyebrows of the neighbouring aristocracy were raised at that innovation - who had ever heard of such a thing! The generosity of the family was paramount, hardly a church or public building in Hastings does not have some token of their support, they gave away a great deal of money to all sorts of good causes, and Lady Brassey campaigned vigorously for the St. John Ambulance Brigade, as she felt it important that as many people as possible knew the basic principles of First Aid. Lord and Lady Brassey had four daughters and one son, although one daughter died aged six, and living in the style they did, they created an enormous amount of employment in the area and much business for the local shops..

The great love of Lord Brassey's life, however, was the sea and sailing. He commissioned the building of a steam yacht called Sunbeam, and was never happier than when on board. His wife and family shared his enthusiasm, and the highlight of their sailing activities was a round the world cruise in 1886 which became the subject of a "best seller" book written by Lady Brassey, subsequently translated into eight languages. Unhappily it was on another such voyage that Lady Brassey contracted malaria, died, and was buried at sea. Things were never quite the same at Normanhurst.

Lord Brassey married again, and was invited to become Governor of Victoria, Australia, making an immediate good impression on the people of that land when he sailed out on Sunbeam to take up the appointment, successfully docking in Melbourne during a fierce storm. They returned to England in 1900 to a terrific reception in Hastings where a huge decorated arch had been erected at the Fishmarket, and crowds of local people turned out to welcome them home. At this time, Lord Brassey handed over Normanhurst to his son, another Thomas, but known as Tab, and built a house for himself, his wife and new daughter near Nutley in the Ashdown Forest. He always retained his interest in Hastings and Normanhurst, and was on hand with his son directing operations when a serious fire broke out there in 1908. He built what is now known as the Brassey Institute (Public Library) in Claremont, Hastings, and employed specialist craftsmen to incorporate elaborate decoration in the building such as mosaic tiling of the front hall, which shows the Brassey Emblem - a Mallard Duck - which was also on the buttons of Normanhurst servants.

Lord Brassey died in 1918, and sadly his son and heir died shortly afterwards as the result of a road accident outside the House of Lords. No one seemed to want Normanhurst. Countess Brassey lived on for many years following her husband's death, in a neighbouring property, Parkgate Manor. The great house was used as a hospital in the First World War, became a girls' school between times, and housed soldiers in the Second World War. Eventually it was decided to demolish Normanhurst, and this took place

- with difficulty it is said because it had been so well built - in 1951.

So what is left to remind us of the house and the family? Portraits of Lord and Lady Brassey which once graced the dining room now hang in Hastings Town Hall; his library of some 3,000 books was given to Hastings Public Library; a piece of statuary can be found in Grosvenor Gardens, St. Leonards; much of the collection from the famous Round the World Tour can be found in the Durbar Hall at Hastings Museum; other statuary passed to a Museum in Liverpool. The yacht Sunbeam was eventually broken up in 1930, but the prototype model originally made for Lord Brassey's approval before the yacht was built, and which once had pride of place in the entrance hall of Normanhurst, is now to be found in Hastings Museum. The Estate now houses a caravan park! The walls of the enclosed garden still stand, the home farm with buildings made of Ashburnham bricks remains, and traces of the terrace which led from the house to the garden can still be found among the weeds.

Bearing in mind the great ages of neighbouring great houses, Ashburnham Place and Battle Abbey, Normanhurst had a very short life - but a gay one!

Kathleen Honeysett

COMMEMORATION LECTURE

TEACHING THE NORMANS

Dr. J.C. Fines — 15 October 1993

The nine hundredth anniversary of the completion of the Domesday Book in 1987 was marked by the production of a full colour facsimile of the original with new translations, maps and commentaries. This work was described to the Society by Professor G.M. Martin, who was Keeper of Public Records at the time, in his lecture of 5th February, 1993. Our President, Professor H.R. Loyn, who had been much involved in the commentaries, suggested that some of the county volumes which remained unsold might be used for educational purposes. Dr. Fines undertook the task of

bringing this idea to fruition and enabling school children of average ability to make use of a Mediaeval Latin text. His Commemoration Lecture described the way in which this was done.

The first step was to stress the administrative difficulties with which William was faced at the beginning of his reign. He had made extensive grants of land to his more important supporters in return for services rendered in the invasion of England, but in the 11th century there were no maps of the country. A man granted a fiefdom had first of all to find the place and then determine its extent. He would have no written documents and his only title would be a promise made by the King in the presence of witnesses. The problem of defining an estate would be further complicated by the problem of language. Few Normans spoke any Anglo-Saxon and indeed the King himself made two unsuccessful attempts to learn it. Also, in the days of more isolated and less mobile communities local and regional accents would be very different. To add to the problem, an important Norman baron, of which there were a mere 80, could not manage his extensive estates himself but would appoint tenants and sub-tenants whose land holdings might be equally uncertain.

Furthermore the Norman barons could not rest on their laurels after 1066. They were extremely busy men. They had not only to manage, and quite probably to defend, their holdings in different parts of England but to do the same for their estates in Normandy. William himself made no less than 11 journeys across the channel between 1066 and his death in 1087. The barons were also required to report regularly to the King about the state of affairs in their territories, for there was probably no time in his reign when William felt entirely secure from local revolts or from invasion. Just as there had been nobody who could unite England against the Norman invasion so there was nobody who could surrender the whole country when it was successful.

There was thus ample scope for both error and dishonesty and by 1085 the King was in considerable doubt as to what he owned and who held it. Therefore

he sent Commissioners to all parts of the realm to take evidence under oath from the local inhabitants and to record the relevant data. While this was done primarily for the purpose of taxation its object was also, in the words of Bishop Henry of Winchester "..that every man should know his right and not usurp another's".

The school children were asked to place themselves in the position of the King's counsellors and to advise him what questions the Commissioners should ask in any place. With a little encouragement they produced a series of questions very similar to those of the original brief as recorded in the Ely Abbey documents. Being brought up in a society which emphasises individual rights they had some difficulty in appreciating the differences between "freemen", "villagers", "cottagers", "slaves" and the other complex social relationships of the mediaeval world. However, they took readily to a card game designed to illustrate how a peasant with a few strips of land and a duty of service to the Lord of the Manor could rapidly become either richer or poorer by a mixture of luck and skill. With this preparation, children of no more than twelve years could achieve a surprising measure of success in extracting information from the Mediaeval Latin text dealing with their county.

The outcome of Dr. Fines' work was a school edition of the Domesday Book comprising :-

Vol. I The Primary Source. The manuscript folio of the county in full colour facsimile together with maps.

Vol. II The Secondary Source. A translation of Vol. I arranged by columns for ease of reference and having an introduction by an authority on the subject.

Vol. III Domesday Book Studies. Sixteen essays on Domesday England and on the manuscript itself. The introduction to this Vol. is by Professor Loyn.

This edition is available to schools at a price of £70 and Dr. Fines exhibited it to the meeting.

Finally, Dr. Fines invited us to reflect upon the efficiency and the energy of Norman administration. The gross national product of England in 1086 was some £73,000. Of this the King took 11% and the church 19% - hardly oppressive taxation by modern standards. The material collected at Winchester for the Domesday Book was corrected, abridged, and copied into a single volume by one scribe in a little over one year. When a printed edition was produced in 1783 its preparation took 16 years. A computerised version is being produced by the University of Hull and this task will also take many years. It is not surprising that when, in 1087, the scribe at Winchester heard that the King was dead he firmly and finally laid down his pen!

Donald Nicol

CROWHURST: A VILLAGE IN HISTORY

Mr. J.F.C. Springford, C.B.E. — 5 November 1993

Crowhurst, on the western slopes of the Hastings Ridge running down to the Combe Haven, lay always off the beaten track. No great highways or urban centre here. Yet with its woods, its ghylls, and its iron ore strata, by the 1st century AD it formed part of the Roman iron industry with its centre in Beauport Park, as the excavated bath-house and stone inscription of the vilicus Bass(us) there demonstrate. With the coming of the Saxons, the Haestingas occupied the borderland between the kingdoms of Kent and Sussex; and Offa of Mercia with his conquest of the latter gave Bexhill and certain outlying districts, of which "Croghyrste" was one, by his charter of 772 to the Bishop of Selsey. Evidence of those six hundred years of Saxon history is sparse. We imagine a community ploughing, raising animals, working timber, fyrd or fleet service...the burh of Hastings, the hundred moot of Baldslow, and much closer, the demands of the lord of the manor. In 1066 that lord was Harold Godwinsson, the King.

At the Conquest, according to Domesday, Crowhurst "vasta est"; with the lordship of the still very considerable manor given to the Scotney family. Of

their stewardship three facts deserve note. The church of St. George, with its link of a priest from Hastings Priory, would appear to have been first dedicated in the early years of Richard I. The manor house, of which an appealing ruin still remains, is likely to have been built within the next half-century. Finally, in 1259, the last of the Scotneys, Walter, was executed for attempting to poison his master the Earl of Gloucester; his estates fell into the King's hand, and Edward I promptly made Crowhurst a prebend of his Collegiate Church of St. Mary in the Castle. Though the priory link continued. By now, state papers record the names of tax payers under Edward II, of the swordsmen, pikemen, and archers on the Muster Roll of 1339, and of those who, with the decline of manorial labour, secured copy-hold farms with names familiar today - Adams, Crouchers, Nash's, Groundilly, to quote but four. In 1425 the Pelham family were granted the manor and held land till 1944, and the patronage of the church to this day. Their buckle device is to be seen on church, bridge, and mansion.

By the late 16th century, Croghyrste, that "wooded slope at the bend of the river", would be recognisable today - the Court Lodge ruin sadly in decay, some twenty timber-framed farmhouses scattered across the parish, lanes to Hastings, Catsfield and Battle, and cottages where the Asten and the Rackwell streams converged and there was a bridge, obvious site in later times for The Plough and the Recreation Ground. Moreover the village rang to the thump of the forge hammer powered by the Asten dammed at Court Lodge. The age of the iron furnace ran out in the mid-17th century, to be replaced eighty years later by a gunpowder mill, again water-powered, which survived until 1874 when it was moved to Dartford.

The 18th century was the age of the great estates. In the north-east the group of little mediaeval farms was bought up by James Pelham MP to form Crowhurst Park. Under Thomas Papillon (by Pelham family female descent) a century later the estate had grown to include the greater part of the parish. There were two other estates - both absorbing farms along the Catsfield Road - Hill House, and Hye House. Alchorn

the ironmaster, and Nicholas Maynard of Catsfield, gentleman. There followed the age of Victoria: The Plough, opened 1811, the Village School of 1843, bakery, village shop, post office and tea-gardens, the railway through to Hastings in 1849, and a station and branchline to Bexhill in 1902. The population grew, the mediaeval church, many times repaired, was decrepit and too small. It was pulled down in 1857 and rebuilt, but with its "Pelham tower" of the 15th century surviving. Today it is a farming landscape once more, though not with the intensity of Tithe Map times. There is a population of eight hundred, many of whom seek their livelihood beyond the village, or are retired.

The lecture was illustrated with slides, a slight disadvantage in some ways said the speaker, for though they allowed a good perception of landscape and ancient buildings which had survived, it was less easy to reveal through them the lives of Crowhurst inhabitants in history. The Scotneys had to be imagined through the alabaster effigies of the Temple Church in London; there was a portrait of Col. Papillon in the church vestry; and a postcard picture about 1908 of a little girl, Catherine Goodsell, whose greatniece still lives in the village. There was one source however which threw light on Crowhurst from the 13th century on - documentation. We found Nately, Nash and Grundhele taxed by Edward II, names which re-appear in the Muster Rolls a century later along with Crull, Collins, Twynem, King, Chyllehele. Collins and Chilhill were little farms swept away by the Crowhurst Park of 1744. The Kings were everywhere by 1450. The church registers, the flue tax and the land tax, the Tithe Map and the censuses record the families; the Relfs who opened the iron furnace in the time of Elizabeth; the parsons when the Reformation allowed clerical marriage and the new problem of providing for widows arose; and the Rev. H.J. Rush whose wife recorded in the family Bible not only the birth day of their children, but the hour.

As an example the speaker cited the Court Roll of 1407, only the day before finally transcribed by Mrs.

Lawrence, a Society member. The courthouse, now the manor ruin. The day, the Friday after St. Luke's. Nicholas Crulle and John Natle, "fugitive villeins of the lord", to be apprehended. (Thomas Nately gave the altar silver to St. George's in 1684. He is described in the Ashburnham papers as "Old Goodman Nately", but on the inscription as "generosus" - gentleman). John Myllond the younger accuses Gilbert atte Style of trespass. (The Mellonds were at Blacklands. John is elected as Reeve in the same Court Roll.) Thomas Crulle transfers his house and twenty acres to John Hunt. (The Crulles were at Bowership, next the rectory; the Hunts at Groundilly.) John Huldane is under arrest for felling nine oaks in the lord's park - a heinous offence, oak smuggling out by sea was rife. William Fysshe, elected as Receiver, is his professional defence. When the Court Rolls of the 15th and 16th centuries are fully transcribed, as it is planned to do, Crowhurst of the time will come to life. Meanwhile, concluded the speaker, it may be recorded that Crowhurst won the award of Best Kept Small Village in 1984, and in 1992.

Abridged by the Speaker

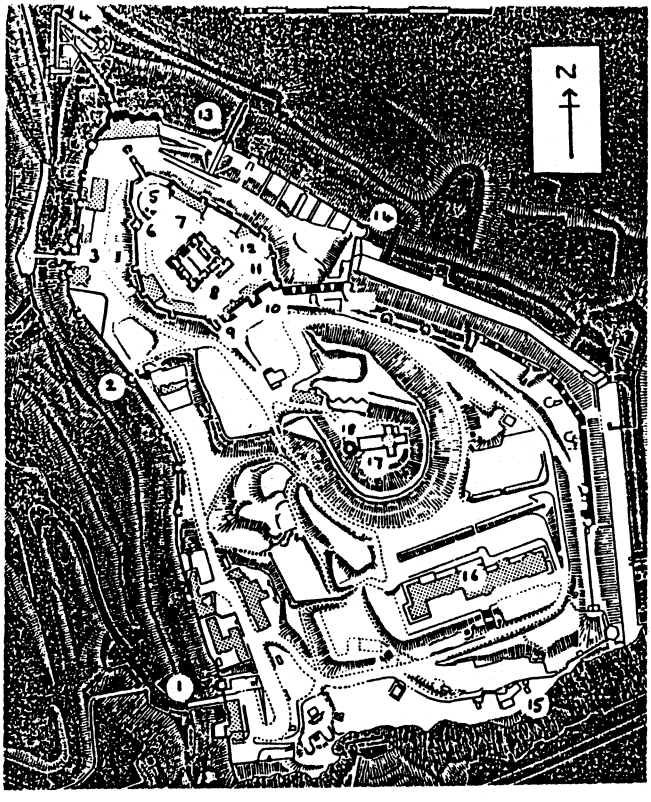
DOVER: A FRONTIER FORTRESS

Mr. Jonathan Coad — 10 December 1993

Occupying the high chalk cliffs overlooking the harbour and town of Dover and the narrows of the English Channel where the continent lies closest to Britain, Dover Castle, it was no surpirse to hear, had been for some two thousand years the principal defence centre of south-eastern Britain. Before the Roman invasion, the site was occupied by an Iron Age hillfort whose precise dimensions were hard to determine, so much chalk earthwork having been shifted in the building of the later mediaeval castle. There was no doubt however of the importance of Dover to the Romans of the first and subsequent centuries AD and to the Classis Britannicus which guarded the strait and appears to have had a hand in

the economic administration of the area, not least the iron industry. The pharos, the lighthouse, stands to this day; and in the 18th century a second was identified across the bay on the western heights. In Saxon times a burh - an occupied stronghold - succeeded to the site, today's principal evidence being the Saxon church, restored after use in the 17th century as a coal store.

William the Conqueror after his victory at Hastings took immediate care to seize Dover and erect a fort there, probably within the Saxon burh - an indication of the strategic significance the castle was to retain to 1958 as the oldest continuously occupied military building in England, barring the Tower of London itself. It was in the time of Henry II that, with a major proportion of royal revenue allotted for the purpose, the castle began to assume the mediaeval features which characterise the view of the eastern heights we have today - a powerful towered keep of basement and residential storeys with walls some twenty feet thick, and inner and outer wards each with their towered walls and heavily protected entrance gateways. The king's engineer was Maurice. John and Henry III continued the building of one of the greatest concentric defence systems in mediaeval Europe. The narrowly-defeated attack on the castle by Louis of France in 1216 had been a warning. Towers, moat, gates, were all strengthened, notably towards the north, a particular source of weakness where the high ground overshadowed the castle precincts. The massive Fitzwilliam Gate, the Constable's Tower and residence, within the inner bailey a great hall, kitchens and stables, long disappeared; and the keep itself with its state apartments down to its garderobes. By 1250 the castle fulfilled a dual function, that of fortress, and of staging post for the monarch and personages of the realm en route to and from the continent.



1. Canon's Gate 2. Peverell's Tower and Gate 3. Constable's Tower and Gate 4. Underground Works and Redan 5. Northern Barbican 6. King's Gate 7. Inner Bailey 8. Keep 9. Palace Gate 10. Arthur's Gate 11. The 1745/56 Barracks 12. Arthur's Hall 13. Fitzwilliam Gate 14. Avranches Tower 15. Admiralty Look-out and Signal Station 16. Officers' Mess 17. Church of St. Mary-in-Castro 18. Roman Pharos

The development of artillery by the 16th century had radically altered the art of war and with it the castle's defensive value. To counter the threat of enemy fleet attack or sea-borne invasion supported by naval gunfire, Henry VIII constructed the gun castles of Sandwich, Deal, Camber, and elsewhere along the coast, with low profiled building and carefully aligned field of fire from the heaviest non-mobile battery cannon available. In this exercise, apart from one western gun platform, Dover was ignored. There was further decline in utility as coastal defence came to depend on a fleet supported by naval dockyard. So the mediaeval fabric had had its day. But as the 18th and 19th centuries progressed with their continental threat, not least in the time of Napoleon, the sheer position of Dover as a south-eastern bastion could not be denied. Bulwarks and gun positions at lower levels were constructed, together with elaborate defensive works on the western heights overlooking town and harbour; while the castle hill itself became a warren of gun emplacements, subterranean interconnections, and barracks. The two master-gunners of 1725 with their eight men had become by 1740 a garrison of eight hundred; and at one time the castle was to hold forty thousand rifles. In 1756 that weak element, the northern defence, was once again tackled, this time by a spur to hold gun batteries, with a redan; while in the keep itself the roof was strengthened to support the heaviest cannon. Mediaeval towers were reduced in height to improve field of fire. By 1797 the cliffs themselves were being excavated for casements, and barracks for several thousand men who could serve as both defence force and field army.

In Victorian times the process redoubled, while the western heights were linked to harbour level by an intricate system of shafts and stairways. The lecturer illustrated the mid-19th century changes in naval power and strategy by a "wooden wall" warship of 1857, and a steam-driven ironclad of 1860 whose naval gun range had risen from two to nine thousand yards. On land, even heavier batteries demanded reinforced fortification - Fort Burgoyne on the high ground to the north-east, the steam driven steel gun

turrets of the 1880s, and the Admiralty Pier Fort, which were to see Dover through the First World War.

There was a final radical upheaval in the war of 1939-45. From Dover the evacuation of Dunkirk was controlled. By 1941 there were plans to construct between six and seven miles of tunnelling within the cliff at three levels, one to embrace a military hospital. But by 1957 the military occupation of Dover had come to an end. Just as previous centuries had destroyed Saxon earthwork and mediaeval wall, so in turn much Victorian military building was demolished, to reveal something of the castle's earlier architectural history. English Heritage had taken responsibility for Dover Castle, that great historic monument to the defence of south-eastern Britain from the time of the Roman lighthouses guiding in the Classis Britannicus, to 1941 when the latest Battle of Britain was fought over Dover - in the air.

(Jonathan Coad is Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings)

John Springford

NEWS

1993 SUMMER PROGRAMME

VISIT TO DERBYSHIRE, 16 - 20 APRIL

Once again we were lucky in getting away from Battle without getting wet as the forecast had not been too promising. Having made our usual comfort stop at Newport Pagnell we went directly to Southwell in Nottinghamshire where we were due to have a light lunch. A minor hiccup at the Saracen's Head when the Manager advised me that he had not received my confirmatory letter but all was well after a few minutes but you should have seen the chef's face when the Manager shouted into the kitchen for sixty mixed sandwiches.

Afterwards we visited the Minster where they were expecting us. The present building was begun in 1108 replacing a Saxon church. It is the Cathedral of the Diocese of Southwell since 1884. The North Porch,

West Door and the Nave are all Norman. In the Sanctuary behind the High Altar the four lower panels of the windows are 16th century Flemish glass from the Temple Church, Paris. The Chapter House, which is 13th century, contains some of the finest stone carving in England. Known as "The Leaves of Southwell" they are world renowned.

Leaving Southwell we then headed for the Swallow Hotel at South Normanton where we, or some anyway, swam before dinner.

Saturday morning we drove directly to Chatsworth House, when out came the sun and after visiting the house we were able to enjoy the gardens.

Chatsworth, of course, is the home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire but we must go back to the 16th century when the first house was built by "Bess of Hardwick" and her second husband, Sir William Cavendish. Building began in 1552 and continued for many years.

One enters under the arch of the Porter's Lodge into the North Entrance Hall, once the kitchen until the 1760s; fine Roman 1st century marble busts and a mother and child and the ceiling, executed by Guido Reni, are fine features of the Hall. We passed into the North Corridor, which was once an open colonnade until enclosed by the 6th Duke, to see a huge collection of 17th century paintings and some fine furniture by William Kent. On to the Painted Hall which is quite magnificent. The upper part of the Hall has not been changed since it was painted in 1692-4 with scenes from the life of Julius Caesar by Louis Laguerre. The ground floor and stairs have been altered many times over the years but virtually nothing has been changed during this century.

On the first floor landing is a curious baby carriage designed by William Kent and made to be pulled by a goat! From the staircase leading from the landing one enters the State Rooms. Apartments of state were intended principally for the reception of the King and Queen but it was not until the reign of Queen Victoria that a monarch visited Chatsworth. The State

Dining Room has a ceiling painted by Verrio in 1691-2 and the whole room is unchanged since the 1st Duke's time. Gilt tables by Kent, carvings by Watson, Lobb, Young and Davis make this room quite exceptional.

The State Drawing Room also boasts a wonderful painted ceiling and cove whilst the walls are hung with tapestries woven at Mortlake around 1635. The room was used as a dormitory by the girls of Penrhos College in North Wales which was evacuated to Chatsworth when their school was taken over by the Ministry of Food.

In the State Music Room is a painting of a violin on an inner door - a *trompe l'oeil*. It is so realistic that it is hard to believe that you cannot lift it off the door! The ceiling is by Laguerre and shows Phaeton begging Apollo to allow him to drive his chariot. The ensuing catastrophe is shown in the coving on the east wall.

Space does not permit of a full description of this amazing home and its grounds but it is a stately home that could be visited over and over again to appreciate fully its contents and decoration. We had lunch in the Carriage House restaurant and then left for a tour round the Dales stopping at the famous Blue John cave where a few stalwarts fought their way through a howling gale to the entrance to the mine but nobody ventured down!

On Sunday we went to Haddon Hall and Hardwick Hall. The weather was rather unkind but Haddon Hall is unique. It is the most complete and authentic mediaeval house in England, dating back to the 14th century. The site was initially given to William Peverel the bastard son of William the Conqueror and the Norman Tower still bears his name. The superb 14th century chapel, its walls adorned with frescos, the mediaeval kitchens and the Great Hall are just as they were 600 years ago. The Long Gallery is testimony to the craftsmen of the late 16th century.

A hot lunch to counteract the chilly conditions outside and we were off to Hardwick Hall. Built in 1590 by Bess of Hardwick, to whom I have already

referred, it has features highly prized by her contemporaries at Elizabeth I's court. Symmetry and an ingenuity in design, huge windows - a 16th century status symbol - are all part of this fascinating pile.

The Main Entrance Hall runs from front to back at right angles to the usual arrangement in great mediaeval houses. The great overmantle displays the Hardwick coat-of-arms. Two embroidered cushion covers which are listed in an inventory of 1601 lie either side of a portrait of Bess in later life and some appliqué hangings made in the 1570s hang on a screen at the far end of the hall. The Main Staircase was designed as a great ceremonial route from the Hall up to the state rooms above. The tapestries are English from Mortlake. It leads into the Drawing Room, clearly designed for the tapestries which hang here. Woven in Brussels, they were bought by Bess from Sir Christopher Hatton, Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor, who died heavily in debt. Paintings and needlework cushion covers add to the decoration of this room. The upper half of the Main Staircase, the Great Chamber, the Long Gallery and the many other rooms that this house contains must be remembered for the incredible collection of tapestries which constantly catch the eye.

The swimming pool and the whirlpool spa bath were welcome sights when we returned to the Swallow for our evening meal.

We had an early start on Monday morning in order to visit the Royal Crown Derby works for a change from historic houses. Having sorted out the Derby roadworks and diversions we arrived slightly late but to a friendly welcome from our two guides who were to take us round the factory. The whole manufacturing process was fully explained from the mixing of the clay, the pressing into moulds, the glazing and decorating and finally the firing in the kilns. We visited the showroom and shop but the prices seemed to inhibit the purchase of too many souvenirs!

We left after this most interesting visit to go to Kedleston Hall where lunch had been arranged to fortify us before touring the house.

Sir Nathanial Curzon, first Baron Scarsdale, for whom the present house was built from the year 1757 onwards, was a fervent admirer of the architecture of ancient Rome as was Robert Adam, the young Scot who had recently returned from an extensive tour of Italy. So was Kedleston born. The principal rooms are all grouped around the Marble Hall. The hall reflects the Roman enthusiasms of both architect and patron. Top-lit only so that no views from windows would distract attention from within the room, it is dominated by the twenty huge columns with Corinthian capitals and pilasters which line the walls with niches behind. Reminiscent of an atrium the figures in the niches are of classical gods and goddesses whilst the ceiling is decorated with arabesque stucco patterns.

Entering the Music Room one notices the restrained Ionic decoration which appears as pilasters on the organ and the chimney piece. The ornate chandelier was made from silver boxes presented to Lord Curzon while Viceroy of India and melted down. Passing down the Family Corridor one enters the Drawing Room, the only room at Kedleston before Adam became Curzon's architect. The outstanding features are the finely proportioned Venetian window and the four pedimented doorcases. The carpet is original dating from 1765. The walls are literally covered with a huge and varied selection of paintings and amongst the furnishings is a cabinet containing a fine ivory chess set given to Lady Scarsdale in 1815. Once again I must refrain from describing all the rooms for lack of space but needless to say there are many - for example, Dressing Rooms, the Dining Room, Bedrooms, and the Indian Museum. An exhausting house but a treasure house nevertheless.

On Tuesday we said good-bye to the Swallow Hotel to return home but not before we made our second factory visit, this time to the Tutbury Crystal Glass. I think that most of the members found this even more interesting than Crown Derby. We saw the glass being

blown, some members even tried their hand at it, and then hand cut and engraved. This time the stock in the shop was depleted quite considerably.

Finally, to Calke Abbey, built at the beginning of the 18th century where little has changed over the last hundred years. Unoccupied for most of this time it is in a time warp. The rooms contain furniture and effects including old oil lamps, childrens' toys, general household goods and general Victorian clutter. Not very attractive but definitely unusual. A cup of tea and a short stop again at Newport Pagnell and we were home again after another successful but rather strenuous five days!

VISIT TO IGHTHAM MOTE, 27 MAY

The largest number of members that have taken advantage of the summer outings visited Ightham Mote on a dry but overcast afternoon. I would refer you to the report on page 17 of the lecture on 19th February as the details of the progressive renovations as described in the lecture were studied by all.

The Society's first visit to Ightham Mote in 1959 was fully reported in Transactions No.8, and three further visits, in 1968, 1975 and 1986, noted in Transactions Nos.17 and 24 and Newsletter No.5.

THE FRIARS, AYLESFORD, 6 JULY

Forty-three members and friends were blessed with a fine day when we visited the Friars - a working Priory on the banks of the Medway. We were met by Brother Michael who gave us a most interesting and, at times, a most amusing talk on the history of the site.

The ancient Carmelite priory was founded in the middle of the 13th century and prospered until the Dissolution when the property passed into the hands of Sir Thomas Wyatt, of Allington Castle, along with the abbeys of Boxley, West Malling and East Malling. He never resided at The Friars and after his death it passed to his son. As one of the leaders of the rebellion against Queen Mary's proposed marriage to

Philip of Spain he was arrested and executed and his property taken by the Crown. Many well known persons owned the premises over the next 350 years until a disastrous fire in 1930 burnt out the main part of the house. This revealed many of the original mediaeval features which had been covered up over the centuries. Once again it changed hands and was extensively restored. In 1949 The Friars was put up for sale and Carmelites throughout the world contributed in order to re-purchase their ancient house. A visit to this wonderful serene retreat in the quiet of the Kent countryside is the only way to appreciate what words cannot describe.

Transactions No.5 contains a description of the Priory when visited in 1956. Between then and the second visit in 1965 extensive building work was carried out, as recorded in Transactions No.14.

BIGNOR ROMAN VILLA AND GOODWOOD HOUSE, 10 AUGUST

On a typical summer's day, boisterous winds and fitful sunshine, thirty-four members spent a most informative and enjoyable day listening in the first place to a most erudite talk at Bignor by the great-great-great-grandson of George Tupper who first discovered the villa in July 1811 when ploughing. Little did he realise that he had discovered one of the largest and what was to become one of the best-known villas in Roman Britain. The site is still owned by the family who are constantly trying to maintain and improve the facilities. The original excavation was supervised by the famous antiquary Samuel Lysons and the site described at length in his *Reliquiae Britannico-Romanae*: it is of interest that this work was illustrated by C.A. Stothard whose illustrations of the Bayeux Tapestry are to be seen in our Museum. Excavations are still being carried out, mainly by volunteers, and we saw a busy group braving the elements.

A fine museum contains a model which illustrates how the whole site must have appeared in its heyday and even the floor to the museum is the original, containing the remains of a geometric mosaic. There is a wealth of mosaics, more than eight in number,

the most significant being the one in the large apsidal-ended room on the north side which had underfloor heating and was probably used as a winter dining-room. It depicts Venus and the Gladiators but there is considerable doubt about the identity of the goddess. The north corridor contains the remains of a geometric mosaic which measures 24 metres long and is thought to be the longest on display in Britain.

After a short drive we arrived at Goodwood House where we enjoyed an introductory talk by one of the house stewards. The house is the historic Sussex seat of the Dukes of Richmond and Gordon and the home of generations of the Gordon Lennox family. Charles Lennox, the first Duke, born on the 29th July 1672, was the natural son of King Charles II and the house is now occupied by the 10th Duke who was born on the 19th September 1929. Besides the magnificent paintings by artists such as Van Dyck, Canaletto and Stubbs, we enjoyed collections of Sèvres and other china, to say nothing of the furniture and carpets. We had tea in the Ballroom in most sumptuous surroundings to end a superb day out.

Short accounts of visits to Bignor in 1962 and 1981 are given in Transactions No.11 and Newsletter No.1; and of the first of the two Goodwood House visits, in 1961 and 1980, in Transactions No.10.

CLANDON PARK, GUILDFORD, 27 SEPTEMBER

This was our last visit this year and although the house is not particularly impressive from the outside the same cannot be said regarding the interior. Here, again, we received a very full introduction to the history of the house and its contents. Clandon Park has been the home of the Onslow family since 1641 when it was purchased by Sir Richard Onslow. The Elizabethan house which he bought was rebuilt about 1731 by his great-grandson. It was designed by a Venetian architect Giacomo Leoni. Eventually, the house became impossible for the fourth Earl to maintain as it had become derelict over the years and he sold it to his aunt, The Countess of Iveagh, who in turn presented it to the National Trust in 1956. Much of the contents of the house was sold over the

years but a magnificent bequest by Mrs. Davis Gubbay of one of the finest private collections of 18th century English furniture and English, continental and oriental porcelain has enabled the Trust to restore and furnish Clandon as a great 18th century house. The Marble Hall is probably the most striking room of the whole house. It is a perfect cube, forty feet square and forty feet high. The plasterwork to the ceiling is remarkable and the figures appear to be breaking out from the ceiling. I suppose it is the Gubbay collection which most impressed the majority of members. There are seventy-nine items of English pottery and porcelain, seventy-five of continental origin including Meissen, Delft and Sèvres. Oriental porcelain with the emphasis on *famille verte* and *famille rose*, enamels, jade and crystal, in all some 240 examples of the craftman's exquisite skill.

The 6th Earl died in 1971 and his son and family now live in a house in the park which he owns and farms but he still takes a close interest in the welfare of his former family home.

Clandon Park was previously visited in 1976, as reported in Transactions No. 25.

Bernard Gillman-Davis

ORAL HISTORY

William Shakespeare wrote "There is history in all men's lives".

What better than to record that history if it tells us of past life and customs in our local communities? Future inhabitants of Battle and the surrounding areas would be able to listen to first hand descriptions of farming and commerce, or accounts of events by those who were actually there.

Twenty-two different audio tapes with just such recordings are at your disposal in the Battle Public Library and can be taken out on loan.

Following is a list of subjects:

NARRATOR	SUBJECT	RECORDED
BATTLE		
Brig.D.A.Learmont	Background History	1976
Mr. Herbert Newbery	Fire at Battle Abbey	1976
Mr. A.H. Sinden	Memories of Battle	1976
Mr. D.A.Beaty-Pownall	Battle in mid-19th century	1976
Mr.Fred Holland (Butcher)	Life in Battle	1983
Mrs. A.Somerville Cowan	Virgins Lane 1930-86	1986
Mr. Herbert Newbery (re-recorded by Mr. Eric Augele 1992)	Property around High Street	1986-7
Mrs. Lucy Ross	Twinning with St. Valery: Festival of Britain 1951: Queen's Visit 1966	1987
Miss R.H.Chiverton	Battle during the War; Festival of Britain 1951; Novocentenary 1966: Silver Jubilee 1977	1988
Mr. Denis Hale (Tailor)	Life in Battle (3 tapes)	1988
40th Birthday Meeting of Historical Society		1990
Dr. Donald Nicol	The Society	
Mr. John Hill	The Museum	
Mr. David Jenner	Jenner and Simpson	
Mr. Tony Emeléus	The Old Pharmacy	
Mr. Herbert Newbery	The Jam Factory	
Mr. Dennis Campbell	Thorpe's Shoe Shop	
Mr. Tony Emeléus	Early life in Battle in 1920s	1991
	Battle High Street in 1920s	1992
Mrs. Barbara Elvey and Mrs. Kay Sparks	Battle 1920-92	1992
Mr. W.C.Allwork (script of talk given in 1952, read by Mr. Eric Augele)	Battle in 70 years 1882-1952	1992

ASHBURNHAM

Mr. Jack Harmer	Brickyard;Country Information	1983-4
Mrs. Boxall (widow of Chauffeur to Lady Catherine Ashburnham	Memories of Ashburnham Place	1986
Mr. David Boxall (son of above)	Memories of Ashburnham Place	1986
Mr. George Hutchinson (read by Mrs. Sheila Bishop)	Timberyard, Carpenter's Shop and Sawmill	1986
Mr. Wilfred Barden	Childhood; Ashburnham and Penhurst:Earl of Ashburnham; Local Characters;Gardens;Hop Gardens;Furnace (3 tapes)	1987
Mr. Jack Harmer	Brickyard,Brickmaking;Woods (2 tapes)	1988

CROWHURST

Mrs. Reynolds	Childhood in Crowhurst	1986

HOOE

Mr. George Carey	Childhood in Hooe; Army Life: Maundy Money	1986
Mrs. Ethel Pilbeam	Childhood; Early Teaching Career	1989
Mr. Donald Newport (brother of above)	Early Life in Hooe	1989

NINFIELD

Mr. Ronald Wells	History of the Bakery	1986
Farmer's daughter aged 90	A Farm in Ninfield c1900-10	1986
Mr. Charles Watson	Farm Life in Ninfield	1987

Eric Augele

OBITUARY

THE RT. REV. DR. RICHARD DARBY, B.A., D.D.

The news of the death on the 26th December, 1993, of Bishop Darby, a Vice President of the Society, will have saddened many members; and not only those who knew him as Dean of Battle between 1970 and 1975.

Even those who knew him well may not have been aware, until his obituaries appeared, that our Vice President had spent four years as a prisoner of war, working as a coal miner in Japan, and that he delighted in restoring old Bentleys.

Before coming to Battle "Dick" Darby had been the incumbent at Waltham Abbey and had been responsible for the restoration of the church of the Abbey which Harold Godwinsson had refounded and lavishly endowed, and where many believe he was ultimately buried. So the move to Battle, where Harold was killed, seems very appropriate, and, not surprisingly, Dean Darby and his wife soon became members of the Society. As Dean of Battle he showed himself a warm hearted and humble man of God, a very caring pastor, and with a great sense of humour including the ability to laugh at himself - as on the occasion when he took the Service at Telham and forgot to preach the sermon. Those who met him only after he became Bishop of Sherwood soon came to understand why he is remembered in Battle with much affection.

In 1973 he became a Vice President, and in 1974 he gave a talk on Brecon Priory, a daughter house or cell of Battle Abbey. He made no claim to be an academic, but this did not prevent him from preaching a very good and relevant Commemoration Sermon in 1989. Those who spoke to him afterwards, or at a Commemoration Party, will quickly have grasped that there was little of the "My Lord Bishop" about the Bishop of Sherwood. Dr. Johnson once said of an individual "I would as soon think of contradicting a bishop" but then he knew not Bishop Darby who would not have objected at all. We mourn his passing, but it is with a smile that we remember him. And that, we are confident, is what he himself would wish.

Keith Reader